

THE END OF THE WORLD

ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

ROLEPLAYING GAME







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THE END OF THE WORLD

ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

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Hospital

INTRODUCTION





"Shoot it in the head—that works in the movies!"

—A survivor who is more right than he knows

I'll tell you what, Jed, I can't for the life of me figure out why days like this always happen on Fridays. I mean, I get it, sure, people want to cut loose because it's the weekend, but why do they have to get out of their heads and ruin it for everyone else? I mean, he freaking attacked the delivery guy! Right in the street. It's nuts. Whatever. I'm home and you haven't destroyed the place—have you boy? Good boy!—and everyone's headed over to play. Oh! and Woody's bringing the pizza.

Why are you looking at me like that? What? Yeah, he attacked Steve. You know Steve. The delivery driver; he gave you that biscuit last week. Anyway, yeah, I'm at the shop, just got the lights on and the doors unlocked and there's Steve with our latest shipment. Mostly the usual stuff, that new RPG and a few other things, that new card game that Milla wanted. Steve and I chatted for a while, nothing major. He was telling me about that chemical spill on the south side. Sounds like we might just have to write off the river entirely.

Hey, do you remember what kind of pizza Woody said he was bringing? Of course you don't, it all just smells like people food to you anyway. Man, I could eat!

So anyway, Steve heads back to his truck and I start diving into the new inventory, when WHAM! Out of nowhere, this guy tackles him. Steve is freaking out! He's doing his best to get this guy off of him, but the dude is nuts! He's thrashing and snapping at him. Seriously! Snapping at Steve like he's trying to freaking bite him!

Don't give me that look! Yeah, of course I helped him. No one else was around, so I bolt out and try to haul this dude off of Steve. He must have been drunk or high or something. Either way, I was barely able to get ahold of him to get him on the ground. He didn't even seem to notice me. He was really going after Steve!

I don't know if I could have held him very long, but lucky for us, some cops drove by and Steve flagged them down. The cops were able to get the psycho cuffed. He wasn't saying a single thing I could understand the whole time. Just growled and snapped. Freaking nutjobs!

One of the cops said that this was the third time they'd gotten a report of this sort of thing. She said they had gotten a warning from their lieutenant that morning that something like this might happen. New drugs on the street or something. Who knows. Anyway, so one of them takes the dude away, and the other takes a look at Steve. Fortunately, the dude was more crazy than dangerous, but they called up an ambulance and took Steve to the hospital, just in case.

Okay, where are those guys? I need to get some pizza in me. Seriously, I'm freaking starving.

So, after all that went down, I went back inside, and I mean, what else was I going to do but go back to work? But as soon as I got inside, I noticed that crazy dude scratched up my arm but good. Seriously, it hurt like hell. Wasn't so bad as to need stitches or anything, but still, like hell.

I finished unboxing the order, and even got a few hours to look through that new RPG and get things ready for the session tonight. I thought I had made it through the day without any more insanity but then I'm headed home and I see, like, eight cop cars flying down the street, and like half a dozen accidents on the highway. What is going on today? Honestly, why Fridays?

And my arm is killing me, and I think I'm coming down with a fever, and I'm freaking starving! What the hell! Where are those guys? And where's Woody with that pizza? If I don't get something to eat, I might literally die!

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME to **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE**. By picking up this book, you've doomed yourself and everyone you know to a horrible end. But don't worry—it's all in good fun. **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE** is a roleplaying game in which you and your friends try to survive the end of the world while you avoid being eaten by zombies (a key aspect of survival, of course). Unlike other games, **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE** has players portray not mighty heroes or dangerous outlaws, but themselves! Likewise, the locations and other characters they encounter during the game are largely based on people and places they know in real life. So, in a game of **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE**, the players portray themselves trying to survive, running and fighting their way through familiar streets as zombies invade their town during a horrifying event. An easy-to-learn, flexible, and narrative-focused rules set propels the action, keeping the focus on the story and the players' actions without bogging things down in unnecessary bookkeeping.

If you've ever wondered how you and your friends would survive the zombie apocalypse, keep reading and find out!

WHAT IS AN RPG?

Although millions of words have been spent debating the answer to that question (mostly on Internet forums), for our purposes, a roleplaying game, or RPG, is a shared storytelling experience in which a group of players build a narrative by taking on the roles of characters in a fictionalized situation. A set of rules helps the players to determine the success of their various actions and decisions (and hopefully helps them avoid the kinds of arguments they got into while playing pretend as kids). In addition to rules and a setting, an RPG has three key elements: some players (three to five is usually a good number), a Game Master, and a scenario.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE is the first in a series of roleplaying games called **THE END OF THE WORLD**. Each game in the series presents a stand-alone play experience, but together they share a set of simple, narrative rules and the titular theme. Each book in the series explores a different, exciting way the world of humans might come to an end. This first book deals with, obviously, zombies and how a zombie plague might happen. Subsequent books will cover different threats and, like this one, each will explore multiple scenarios involving various takes on the danger.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

In an RPG, most players create a Player Character, also known as a PC, to control during the game. The PCs are the protagonists of the story and the players' primary means by which to influence its events. PCs each have a set of numbers, called characteristics, that represent their relative strengths and weaknesses, and determine their likelihood to succeed at a given task. Most games would mention at this point that PCs are given their own fictional backstories and motivations, but in **THE END OF THE WORLD**, the PCs are based on the players themselves! Obviously, getting into the head of, well, yourself should come more naturally than contemplating the mind-set of a thousand-year-old elven warrior-mage.

Like the characters in any good horror movie, the PCs are not the first people to die in **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE**. But they also might not all survive. It is the end of the world, after all.

THE GAME MASTER

One person in the group must assume the vaunted mantle of Game Master, or GM, rather than create a Player Character. Although the GM is taking part in the game, we make a distinction between the GM and players because the GM is running the game and not just playing it. The GM describes the world, narrates the story, presents obstacles and challenges for the PCs, and portrays all the story's other characters (known as Non-Player Characters, or NPCs). The GM is also responsible for applying the rules of the game and making a decision when a question about the rules arises.

Being the GM comes with more responsibility, but it can also be very rewarding. Further, in this game, it means you get to describe all kinds of horrible things happening to your friends without it being "weird."

SCENARIOS

Obviously, a roleplaying game isn't going to be very exciting if the PCs don't do anything. And while PCs do have a tendency to cause trouble, it's generally best if the GM is prepared with some sort of situation with which to challenge them. A game scenario is like a movie's story: it describes what is happening and the sorts of problems and enemies facing the protagonists. While other games often feature adventures in which the PCs attempt to achieve some noteworthy goal, this is not the focus of **THE END OF THE WORLD**. Instead, the PCs are simply trying to survive to see another day.



This book features five scenarios describing different ways zombies might bring about the end of the world. These scenarios include all the information the GM needs regarding what the zombies are, what they do, and how their activities destroy the world, but the GM needs to fill in the details about people and places, since the game takes place wherever the players happen to be. In addition to these scenarios, GMs can come up with their own takes on the zombie apocalypse to really keep players on their toes.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME DIFFERENT?

THE END OF THE WORLD is different from other RPGs you may have played for a few reasons. Possibly the most unique aspect of the game is the nature of the Player Characters. Rather than being heroic (or anti-heroic) characters with special skills and abilities based on a sci-fi or fantasy setting or a genre of fiction, the PCs in **THE END OF THE WORLD** are actually based on the players. In effect, the PCs are not only the players' avatars in the game world: they *are* the players, or at least fictionalized versions. And the game world isn't a far-off land or alternate universe: it's wherever the players really live. The events of the game unfold in the players' town or city, with the GM describing the destruction wrought by the apocalypse.

Because of its theme, **THE END OF THE WORLD** is intended for shorter, more defined play experiences than many RPGs, which often assume long-running campaigns or sweeping story arcs. Depending on your group's preferences and play style, you could wrap up an apocalyptic scenario over the course of two or three sessions, or even a single night. Of course, the game can go on for as long as it needs to, and it could last much longer if everyone enjoys living through the apocalypse and the following years in detail—and the PCs live that long.

Whereas RPGs often focus on some goal or mission, be it saving the world from supervillains or just acquiring a lot of treasure, **THE END OF THE WORLD** is really about putting the PCs in a difficult situation and seeing how they deal with it. They're not going to be stopping the apocalypse—the PCs are regular people, and the best they can hope for is to be among the few to survive.

THE END OF THE WORLD features a fast, narrative rules set to keep the players engaged and the story moving. While tactical, detailed combat works great for some games, that's not the focus here. You don't want to get into a protracted back-and-forth fight with a zombie—you want to shoot or bash it in the head and keep moving. If you get stuck in close with a zombie, you've probably already lost.

The same goes for the other actions PCs might attempt. We know more or less what we're capable of, so with PCs representing the players, a quick roll is all it takes to determine whether they succeed at a task and what the outcome is. Also, PCs in this game aren't powerful heroes: they can't be hit with swords and bullets and lose some arbitrary life points, with no other effects. PCs get worn down, not just from injuries in fights, but also from the stress and strain of dealing with the events of the apocalypse and even with their fellow survivors. The cumulative effects of stress and trauma help to reinforce the grim reality of being there when the world ends, and they have a significant impact on the ongoing story. PCs with a lot of injuries or stress might decide it's better to hole up and wait for help rather than try to make it to some other destination.

Players use the same characters for all five scenarios—after all, they're playing themselves. Each scenario presents a different take on the zombie apocalypse, making for five very different game experiences. In effect, each scenario hits the reset button and changes

reality. This puts the players in the unusual situation of experiencing a similar situation, but with different details. This keeps things fresh (or appropriately putrid) without requiring the players to learn new rules or a new setting, or even to create new characters. Of course, the PCs, like the players, are going to be familiar with the idea of zombies, and even the zombie apocalypse. But they don't immediately know what kind of zombies they face. Figuring out how to kill them and avoid becoming one presents a great opportunity for players to use their own knowledge of the genre without "cheating."

GETTING STARTED

We know you're anxious to start playing, but first things first. The Game Master—probably whoever bought this book—needs to become familiar with its contents. In particular, the GM should read **Chapter I: Playing the Game** and **Chapter II: Running the Game** (for obvious reasons). In addition, the GM should completely read whichever scenario will be played first. **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE** includes five different, unrelated scenarios. These can be played in any order, so it's not necessary for the GM to read them all before the first game session. The first few pages of **Chapter III: Scenarios** provide an overview of the different scenarios and the types of zombies in each, which can help the GM decide which one to play first. Of course, it doesn't hurt to read them all first if the GM has time; one advantage of this is that bits and pieces from different scenarios can be mixed and matched if the GM wishes.

The GM should be familiar with the rules but doesn't have to memorize them before playing. It's not a bad idea for the players to read the rules as well, but it's not necessary. By no means, though, should the players read **Chapter II: Running the Game** or **Chapter III: Scenarios**. A big part of the players' fun is figuring out what kind of zombies their PCs are up against, and looking at The Scenarios would ruin that. So, if you're a player, do not read the scenarios! That would spoil everything. If you're the GM, read the scenarios all you want.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE is divided into three chapters. (It also includes lots of pictures so you don't get bored.) The GM should become familiar with the whole book, or at least the rules and the first scenario to be run, but players absolutely should not look at **Chapter II: Running the Game** or **Chapter III: Scenarios** (especially not the scenarios).

CHAPTER I: PLAYING THE GAME

This chapter describes the rules and core mechanics of the game, including everything the players and GM need to know to resolve actions, fight zombies (or run away), and track the consequences of wounds and stress. It also explains how to create characters, including their characteristics, features, and equipment.

CHAPTER II: RUNNING THE GAME

The second chapter is specifically for the GM. It includes plenty of useful advice on running **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE**, including how to tailor the game to your players and town, pace the story and encounters, use the rules to enhance the story, and adjudicate rules questions (and anything not covered by the rules).

CHAPTER III: THE SCENARIOS

The final chapter presents five different scenarios in which zombies bring about the end of the world. The scenarios present different takes on the idea of the zombie apocalypse—and what happens after. Each one features a different kind of zombie, from the familiar slow zombies, to fast zombies, to voodoo zombies, and zombies with even stranger origins. The scenarios each include all the information the GM needs about how the zombies are created, how they can be killed, and how things escalate once they first appear. Each scenario presents new surprises and challenges for players. Playing them all allows the players to see how different survival strategies work out and to explore different parts of their world during and after the apocalypse.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO PLAY?

You'll need the following to play **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE**:

- ☒ This book (check!)
- ☒ At least two other people (preferably living).
- ☒ Three or four hours set aside to play (or more, if the world really has ended and you have the time).
- ☒ A handful of six-sided dice of two different colors (or sizes, as long as you can tell them apart).
- ☒ Some paper, pencils, and erasers (ink is a bit too permanent on the character sheet).
- ☒ Snacks (raw meat, though thematically appropriate, is not recommended).

Snazzy-looking character sheets and other play aids are not necessary, but they sure are fun. You can photocopy them from the back of this book or download them from the Fantasy Flight Games website (www.FantasyFlightGames.com). Maps of your town are available at your nearest convenience store. Although not necessary to play this game, a map will be very handy when the world actually does end and your GPS device stops working.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

WHY ZOMBIES?

Why **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE**? On a practical level, the zombie apocalypse is a doomsday scenario that everyone is at least somewhat familiar with. Movies, television, novels, comic books, and video games have all explored the concept, with various twists and varieties of zombies. Most such stories center on a small group of survivors, often everyday people, trying to pull through the disaster alive—a perfect setup for a roleplaying game, particularly one in which the players play as themselves. There's a good chance your players have even spent some time wondering how they might fare in the face of a zombie doomsday. Their knowledge of zombies could just save their characters' lives.

Zombies are the perfect manifestation of the end of the world. Inexorable, unstoppable, contagious, and beyond understanding—whatever scares you, whatever you think could destroy the world, it's represented through zombies. For everything from drug-resistant superdiseases and environmental disasters to murderous ideologies, there's a metaphor to be found in tales of the living dead. Zombies represent all the worst aspects of humanity pushed to eleven: unreasoning, self-destructive, merciless. It's not hard to relate to the survivors in a zombie story. They are among the only rational people left in the world, surrounded by mobs of brain-dead consumers. And if you're not careful, you'll lose your individuality, too. It might even be tempting to just give in and join them.

Mortality is our ultimate fear, and zombies are the ultimate expression of it. They are truly death incarnate: that which awaits us all. Just like death, they come after us slowly but unceasingly. They represent the mistakes of the past and the doom of the future. And as far as metaphors go, zombies allow for buckets of blood and outrageous gore. Whether that's incorporated for horror or shocking humor, at least you know you're exploring the human condition and all that.

And most importantly, zombies are cool.



THEY'RE (NOT) COMING TO GET YOU

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

It should go without saying that the events of **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE** are fictitious. Zombies aren't real (at least not yet), and the world (probably) won't end because of them. This is a game, and it's meant purely for fun. Of course, a resemblance to real people, both living and undead, is not a coincidence in this case, which can blur the lines in a way other games don't. Before playing, it's a good idea to talk with the other players about expectations for the game, to make sure no one is upset by events described during play. If some players aren't comfortable with detailed descriptions of people they know being devoured by zombies, leave it vague. If someone wants to play a more fictionalized version of themselves than the others, that's fine. The events of a zombie apocalypse are pretty horrifying if taken literally, so don't be afraid to approach them in a lighthearted, even comical way, if that's what your group prefers. The important thing is that everyone has fun, and the PCs all have at least a fighting chance to survive.

Voodoo is real, but it's nothing like in the movies (or this game). So don't worry about that, either.



PLAYING THE GAME





CHAPTER I

"We just gotta survive. If we can hole up, we'll be fine. The government will handle this. I mean, we're just regular people—what could we possibly do?"

—A survivor who hasn't quite grasped the situation

PLAYING THE GAME

WELCOME to the **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE**! As a player, you can find everything you need to know to play the game in this chapter. If you are the Game Master, you should familiarize yourself with this chapter and also read **Chapter II: Running the Game**, starting on page 41.

In **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE**, you play as yourself as you attempt to survive in an apocalyptic world plagued by the undead. As a player, you control the actions of your

character (you). You listen to the narrative presented by the Game Master (GM) and indicate how you react to the events as they unfold, rolling dice to determine how well you perform at the various challenges you face. In the end, shaping the story in **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE** is a collaborative process, in which you and the other players work with the GM to create the most thrilling, horrifying, and entertaining end of the world possible.

PERFORMING TASKS

WHenever you attempt a task in **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE** that has some chance of failure or of causing stress or injury to yourself, you must make a test. A test involves rolling several six-sided dice and interpreting the results to see whether you succeed at the task and if you suffer any stress as a result of your actions.

The GM decides when you need to make a test, though you should feel free to suggest one when you think it would be appropriate. In general, tests should be reserved

for important or exciting moments, when your success or failure matters to the story or to your character. Note that the same task might require a test in one context but not in another. For example, if you are running for fun or exercise, whether or not you complete your run successfully is unlikely to have a significant effect on the story, so you would not make a test. However, if you are running while being chased by a horde of ravenous undead, how well you can run suddenly matters a lot more, and you will likely need to make a test.

THE TEST

Tests are designed to be quick, easy, and fun. They allow you to roll the dice, integrate the results into the story, and continue on with your narrative. Once you have determined the task you are trying to accomplish, the test takes three steps:

- ❖ The GM determines the characteristic appropriate for the test.
- ❖ You assemble a pool of positive and negative dice.
- ❖ You roll the dice and, after all factors have been accounted for, if at least one positive die has a result equal to or lower than the target characteristic, the task succeeds.

Once the test is finished, the GM narrates the outcome of your actions based on the results of the roll. The test can also have effects beyond simple success or failure, depending on what you are attempting. See the following sections for full details on each of the three steps.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

THE DICE

Tests in **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE** require you to roll two different types of six-sided dice (or d6s): positive dice and negative dice. To roll for a test at the table, you will need several d6s of two different colors. Contrasting colors, one to represent "positive" and the other to represent "negative," are recommended, but you may use whatever color d6s you have on hand.

STEP 1: DETERMINE THE TASK

When the GM calls for you to make a test, you typically have some idea of what you are trying to do. This might be attempting to jump between two crumbling buildings, hacking into a secured computer, talking down a hostile survivor, or any number of other things. Before the dice are rolled, you should specify exactly what it is you are attempting, so that the GM has a clear picture of what you are doing.

Once you have specified your activity, the GM decides which of your six characteristics (see page 21) most appropriately apply to the task.

STEP 2: ASSEMBLE THE DICE POOL

For every task you attempt, you always start with a dice pool comprising a single positive die. You and the GM then add a number of positive and negative dice to the pool, based on several factors.

Positive dice represent training or circumstances that can help you complete a task. Adding positive dice greatly increases your chance of success and helps you avoid suffering stress from negative complications. The following elements can add positive dice to the pool:

- ❖ **Positive Features:** Each positive feature on your character sheet that could help you perform the task adds a single positive die to the pool. Usually, this feature shares a category with the characteristic being used for the test. However, if the GM allows it, you may use applicable features from other categories as well.
- ❖ **Equipment:** Each piece of readily available equipment that can help you with the task adds a single positive die to the pool.
- ❖ **Assistance:** Each additional character who assists you with the task adds a single positive die to the pool.
- ❖ **Situational Benefits:** Each environmental effect present that could make the task easier also adds a positive die to the pool.

Negative dice represent personal weaknesses or unfortunate circumstances that make the task more difficult or dangerous to complete. Negative dice have a chance of canceling positive dice results after rolling, and they can cause a character to suffer stress from attempting the task. The following elements can add negative dice to the pool:

- ❖ **Task Danger and Difficulty:** The innate danger or difficulty of the task can add one or more negative dice, depending on what you are attempting. The higher the task's probability of causing you physical, mental, or social stress, the more negative dice are added. (See page 44 for more specific guidance on adding negative dice due to danger or difficulty.)
- ❖ **Negative Features:** Each negative feature on your character sheet that could hamper you in performing the task adds a single negative die to the pool. As with positive features, a negative feature likely shares a category with the characteristic being used for the test. However, features from other categories can add negative dice if they are applicable to the task.
- ❖ **Traumas:** Each trauma that currently affects your character and shares a category with the characteristic used for the test adds a single negative die to the pool.
- ❖ **Situational Hindrances:** Each environmental effect present that could make the task more difficult or stressful also adds a negative die to the pool.

Many different factors can add positive or negative dice to a pool. You are encouraged to come up with creative reasons to add additional dice, but the GM is the final arbiter on whether or not a die may be added (see page 44 for guidance on GMs' management of dice pools).

STEP 3: ROLL AND RESOLVE

Once the dice are assembled, roll the entire pool and resolve the results. The first step in resolving the pool is to remove matching negative and positive dice. Once you remove these dice, you then determine whether the test succeeded and how much stress you suffer for having performed it.

To remove dice from the pool, look for any negative dice that have the same result as a positive die. If any negative die result matches the number on a positive die, remove both dice from the pool. A negative die can remove only a single matching positive die. For example, if the pool has two positive dice, each with a result of "3," and only one negative die with a "3" result, the negative "3" and one positive "3" are removed, leaving one positive "3" remaining in the pool.

Once all matching pairs of negative and positive results have been removed from the pool, if any of the remaining positive dice have a result that is equal to or lower than your characteristic chosen for the test, the task succeeds. Otherwise, the task fails.

In some cases, you or the GM might want to know how well you succeeded at your task. In these instances, you can count the total number of successes you scored on your test. Each positive die left at the end of the test with a result equal to or lower than the chosen characteristic counts as one success. The number of successes is primarily used to resolve attacks and opposed tests, but it can be used in any instance in which you are curious about just how well you performed at a task.

In addition to determining whether or not a character succeeds at a task, a test also indicates how much stress is suffered as a result of the attempt. Upon concluding a test, the character suffers a number of stress points equal to the number of negative dice remaining in the pool. (See **Stress**, on page 30). This stress is suffered in the category matching the characteristic used for the test. Note that the stress is equal to the number of dice—the results on those dice have no bearing on the amount of stress suffered.

EXAMPLE ☠

The group, fleeing from several shambling undead, reaches the door of an abandoned house. Finding the door locked, Milla attempts to pick the lock quickly before the zombies reach the group. George, the GM, has Milla make a Logic test to pick the lock. Milla starts with the single positive die and then adds two additional positive dice: one for her Quick Fingers feature and another for a bit of stiff wire that Simon hands her to help. Then, the GM adds two negative dice to the pool: one for the innate difficulty of picking the lock and the other for the pressure Milla feels as the zombies close in.

Milla rolls the dice, getting "2," "2," and "6" on her positive dice, and "2" and "5" on her negative dice. She removes the negative "2" along with one of the matching positive "2" results. Milla has a Logic characteristic of 3, so the one remaining positive "2" in her final pool means Milla succeeds at the test and the door opens! However, the remaining uncanceled negative die indicates that Milla takes a single mental stress point due to the pressure caused by the approaching undead.

PUSHING YOURSELF

When attempting a task, you can push yourself beyond your normal limits, increasing your chance of success but also exposing yourself to increased risk. If you choose to push yourself when performing a test, add one positive die and one negative die to the pool before rolling. You may do this only once per test.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

OPPOSED TESTS

Opposed tests occur when the task you are trying to perform is directly opposed by another character—usually an NPC controlled by the GM. An opposed test can be used for any task in which there are two or more competitors, from an arm-wrestling contest to a competition for someone’s affections.

To perform an opposed test, both you and the other character make the appropriate test as outlined on page 18, and whoever scores the greater number of successes wins the challenge. If the result is a tie, whoever has the higher value in the characteristic used for the test wins. If it is still a tie, or if you both fail the test, the contest is a draw. (If there absolutely must be a winner, the GM can have you both reroll the test until there is a victor, ignoring any stress indicated by the rerolled tests.)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

MULTIPLE OPPONENTS

On occasion, opposed tests may be made between three or even more characters. All participants make the appropriate test, and the character with the highest result is the winner.

EXAMPLE

A soldier is handing out food to survivors but only has enough left for one group. Woody is elbow-to-elbow with another survivor as they both try to convince the soldier to give their respective groups the food. George calls for Woody to make an opposed test against the other survivor using Charisma (a characteristic in which Woody has only a 2). George lets Woody add a positive die to his pool for his One of the Gang feature, as he tries to buddy up with the soldier. However, George adds a negative die to Woody’s pool because of the noise of the crowd around him.

The other survivor has a Charisma of 3, and adds two positive dice to his pool: one because he has children to feed, and the other because he is offering some ammo in trade for the food. However, this survivor also gets one negative die due to the noise of the crowd.

Both players roll their dice. Woody rolls a positive “5” and “6” and a negative “5,” canceling out any stress, but failing the test. The other survivor rolls a positive “3,” “3,” and “4” and a negative “5,” suffering one stress but getting two successes. With two more successes than Woody, the other survivor wins and gets the food from the soldier.



CREATING CHARACTERS

THE very first thing your group should do when you sit down to play **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE** is create characters. Character creation is a collaborative process that can be just as much fun as playing the game itself!

The premise behind **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE** is that you are playing yourself, thrust into these imaginary scenarios and forced to contend with the horrors of the end times. The process outlined in this section allows you to work with your friends to create an accurate portrayal of yourself in the game. If at any point you don't know what to write down on your sheet, feel free to ask everyone else at the table. They are sure to have some good suggestions!

The character creation process is broken into four steps. First, your group gets together and takes turns voting on each other's characteristics. Then, after the voting, each of you will break off and decide on your personal features, record any equipment you are currently carrying, and write down any traumas you are currently affected by *and* feel comfortable mentioning and including as part of the game.

Once all of these steps are finished, you are ready to take on the **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE**!

STEP 1: DETERMINE CHARACTERISTICS

Your characteristics are the basic building blocks of your character. They are numerical representations of your natural abilities, measured on a scale of 1 to 5. You have six different characteristics—one “offensive” characteristic and one “defensive” characteristic in each of the following three categories.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Some groups may wish to play **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE** as fictional characters instead of versions of themselves. This is totally fine and can result in a completely different game experience. Playing as fictional characters gives you the opportunity to explore the apocalypse from a totally new perspective. You could play as military personnel, as politicians, or just as fictional characters from the town in which you live.

It is recommended that everyone in the group play the same way—either all making fictional characters or all playing as themselves. Your group should sit down together before the first session of play and decide what kind of characters you would like to use. Making this key decision beforehand allows for a more cohesive game experience, and makes the GM's job much easier.

If you decide to play as fictional characters, steps 1, 3, and 4 of character creation are done a bit differently. First, before the group votes on your character's characteristics in step 1, you'll have to explain your character concept to the group so players know what they are voting on. Second, during steps 3 and 4, you will have to be creative and come up with your character's equipment and traumas yourself. Try and be as true to your character concept as possible—your accountant probably wouldn't be carrying a chainsaw around the office!

PHYSICAL

- ✳ **Dexterity (offensive):** Dexterity is your coordination and general motor skills. Balance, speed, and grace are all governed by Dexterity.
- ✳ **Vitality (defensive):** Vitality is your physical strength and toughness. It determines elements of your character ranging from how much weight you can lift to how well you resist disease and toxins.

MENTAL

- ✳ **Logic (offensive):** Logic is your awareness of your surroundings and ability to think on your feet. If you are hacking into a secure computer system or noticing an ambush, Logic is the characteristic you are using.
- ✳ **Willpower (defensive):** Willpower represents your memory and mental resilience. Everything from resisting the horrors of the world to recalling specific information from years ago uses Willpower.

SOCIAL

- ✳ **Charisma (offensive):** Charisma is your general demeanor and social skills. It governs how easily you can use words and actions to sway others, whether through careful negotiation or harsh threats.
- ✳ **Empathy (defensive):** Empathy is your ability to understand and sympathize with others. From determining whether someone is lying to predicting an adversary's next move, it can be very useful.

FICTIONAL CHARACTERS

To determine your characteristics, first you spend a number of points to set them at the values you think most appropriately represent you (or the character you are playing). Then, the rest of the players at the table all vote on how well they believe the characteristic values you chose in each of the three categories represent you. Based on the results of the vote, you increase or decrease your characteristics and adjust the number of features you will receive in their corresponding categories during the next step of character creation.

DISTRIBUTE POINTS

You start with a score of 1 in each of your six characteristics and ten points to distribute among them to increase their value. Each point distributed to a characteristic raises it by one. No characteristic, however, can be raised to a score higher than 5. Remember, you are trying to create an accurate representation of your own abilities. If you exaggerate your abilities in a particular area, you are likely to get voted down in that category.

VOTE

Once all the players have distributed their points, they take turns voting on each other's characteristics. To vote, each player will need one positive die and one negative die (see **The Dice**, page 18), and the group will need a bag or box in which to secretly place the dice for the vote.

One at a time, the players present their characters to be voted on. Each character undergoes three voting rounds, one for each of the three categories. When it is your turn, read off the values you chose for the two characteristics in your first category. Then, the rest of the players should pass around the bag, placing dice into it based on their votes:

- ⊗ **Positive Die:** One of the two characteristics in the category should be raised.
- ⊗ **Negative Die:** One of the two characteristics should be lowered.
- ⊗ **Both Dice:** The two characteristics should stay the same.

Once all of the votes have been collected, mix up the dice and dump them out on the table. Count up the total number of positive and negative dice. If there are more positive dice, raise one of your characteristics in that category by one point (without raising a characteristic above 5). If there are more negative dice, lower one of your characteristics in that category by one point (without lowering a characteristic below 1). If there are an equal number of positive and negative dice, leave your characteristics in that category as they are.

Once the votes are tallied, collect the rest of the dice secretly, and then redistribute them for the next vote. Make sure to record whether the group voted to raise or lower that category or keep it the same, as the result of that vote will affect how many features you receive in that category in step 2. Repeat the process for your other two categories.

STEP 2: CHOOSE FEATURES

Once you have determined your characteristics, you need to choose your features for each category. Features represent important aspects of your character and can be far more detailed or specific than a general characteristic assigned a specific numeral. Each feature is a word or phrase describing a strength, weakness, or eccentricity that affects you in a particular category.

There are two different types of features: positive and negative. Positive features represent strengths or special skills that can aid you, while negative features represent specific areas of weakness that may hinder you. For more information on features, as well as specific examples, see pages 25 and 26.

At character creation, you start with one positive and one negative feature in each of your three categories. Then, based on whether the group chose to raise or lower one of your characteristics in a category, you either lose a feature or gain an additional feature in that category:

- ⊗ **If the group voted to raise a characteristic:** Either add an additional negative feature in this category, or remove your positive feature in this category.
- ⊗ **If the group voted to lower a characteristic:** Either add an additional positive feature in this category, or remove your negative feature in this category.

Once you know how many negative and positive features you have in each category, you can decide exactly what those features will be, using the examples on pages 25 and 26 for guidance. There are no formal limits on what your features may be; they can be as varied and different as your imagination allows. However, if you are playing yourself, you should try to keep them true to your actual strengths and weaknesses. All features are subject to the GM's approval; if you are unsure about how they can apply to your character you should review them with the GM during the process.

STEP 3: RECORD EQUIPMENT

Now that all of the intangible details of your character are on paper, it's time to record the tangible facts that could affect your survival. First, you have to record all of the equipment you currently have with you. Since you are playing yourself and the apocalypse is starting immediately, look around you: this is what you've got!

In the equipment section of your character sheet, record any important items you have on your person or very close to you *right now*. Make sure not to leave out the details, either. How much battery does your cell phone have left? How much money is in your wallet right now? Do you have a replacement for that pair of contacts you're wearing? Any and all of these details can (and probably will) come up.

Maintaining supplies and outfitting oneself during the apocalypse is a hallmark of the survival horror genre. Depending on what the GM has in store, what you have and how clever you are at putting it to use can be the difference between life and a gruesome death.

For more information on equipment and how it's used, see page 27 through 29.

STEP 4: RECORD TRAUMAS

The last step in creating your character is to record any traumas you currently have that could affect you in the coming apocalypse. Traumas are physical, mental, or social "wounds" that will influence your performance but can be healed over time. Use only those traumas you feel comfortable discussing with other players and including as part of the game. **GMs should make it clear to all players that they are not expected to include traumas they prefer to keep private or that would spoil their enjoyment of the game.** For more information on traumas, and for specific examples of traumas, see page 32.

Do you have a twisted ankle you are still recovering from? Are you exhausted from too many late-night shifts at work? Did you just suffer a bad breakup with your significant other? Any of these things could be represented as traumas you start with at the beginning of the game.

The traumas you choose to start with should reflect real-world afflictions that currently affect you. You can start with up to one trauma in each of your three categories. Each of these starting traumas has a severity of 2 (unless, in a special circumstance, you and the GM decide another value is more appropriate).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Traumas in the game system represent the sorts of physical and psychological dangers that characters face during the horrors of **THE END OF THE WORLD**. Remember that the aim of **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE** is to play a fictional version of oneself during an extreme situation for the sake of a fun couple of evenings. To this end, players and GMs should never feel compelled to divulge any personal information they wish to leave out of the game. Indeed, physical and mental trauma can be a sensitive issue for many people and should always be treated with respect.

PERSONAL INFORMATION



THE CHARACTER SHEET

YOUR character sheet allows you to record and track everything you need to know about your character during the game: physical and personality traits, strengths and weaknesses, stresses and injuries, and so on. It's a good idea to use a pencil (rather than a pen) when writing on your character sheet—you never know what might change about your character as you struggle to survive the apocalypse!

A blank copy of this sheet can be found at the back of the book on page 144 or at www.FantasyFlightGames.com.

CATEGORIES

All of the character aspects outlined below contain elements that fall into one of three categories: physical, mental, or social. Each of these categories has a corresponding column on the character sheet. Whenever you acquire a skill, become stressed, or sustain an injury, it is classified under one of these three categories and is recorded in the appropriate column. If you are unsure which category is appropriate, discuss it with your GM.

1 CHARACTERISTICS (PAGE 21)

Characteristics are numerical representations of your natural abilities. Each one has a descriptive name and is assigned a number between 1 and 5. You have six different characteristics: one "offensive" characteristic and one "defensive" characteristic in each of the three categories. When you perform a task related to a specific characteristic, your characteristic determines how likely you are to succeed.

2 FEATURES (PAGE 25)

Features represent your specific strengths and weaknesses beyond your raw characteristics. Each feature, which can be either positive or negative, is a word or phrase describing a strength, weakness, or eccentricity of the character that can affect the character's day-to-day life. When recording features, mark a "+" in front of positive features and a "-" in front of negative ones to note the difference.

3 STRESS (PAGE 30)

Stress is a numerical representation of the strain your character has undergone due to physical, mental, and social trials. Your stress is tracked on three "stress tracks," one for each of the three categories. Each stress track consists of nine boxes divided into three tiers of three. When you undergo a certain amount of stress, represented by stress points, you fill in an equal number of boxes, starting with the first tier, proceeding up to the second once all three boxes in the first are full, and so on.

4 TRAUMAS (PAGE 32)

Traumas represent the tangible repercussions of sustaining too much stress. They are physical, mental, or social "wounds" that affect your actions and take time to heal.

Each trauma has two parts: a word or phrase naming it and a severity. The name of a trauma describes its effects, such as "Broken Ankle" (a physical trauma) or "Paranoia" (a social one). The severity, a number between 1 and 3, is tracked in the three boxes next to the name.

5 EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES (PAGE 27)

This section allows you to keep a list of all the useful items you (and thus your character) have readily available. You can record specific pieces of equipment under the categories in which they are most likely to help you (for example, a book on survival techniques would go under the mental category). However, equipment tends to be pretty flexible in its use. The category under which a piece of gear is recorded should have no bearing on how you choose to use it.

CHARACTER SHEET:

The character sheet form is titled "THE END OF THE WORLD" and includes a "NAME:" field. It is organized into five numbered sections:

- 1 CHARACTERISTICS:** Three columns for Physical, Mental, and Social. Each column has a circular gauge with a needle and a 5-point scale. Physical includes Agility and Vitality; Mental includes Logic and Willpower; Social includes Charisma and Empathy. Below each gauge is a "FEATURES" section with a grid of lines.
- 2 FEATURES:** A grid of lines for recording specific features.
- 3 STRESS & RESISTANCE:** Three rows of boxes for tracking stress levels in each category.
- 4 TRAUMAS:** A grid of boxes for recording trauma names and their severity levels.
- 5 EQUIPMENT:** A large grid of lines for listing equipment and supplies.

FEATURES

CHARACTERS are far more than a simple array of numbers defining their abilities. While characteristics exist to set the foundation for a character, features build upon that foundation and make each character truly unique. Features define a character's strengths, weaknesses, and eccentricities. They are not predetermined rules chosen from a list, but unique elements of your character that you define. The only limit to features is your own imagination.

Each feature falls into one of the three categories and is a short word or phrase describing an aspect of yourself. Not only do they describe something about you as a character, but they can affect how well you do on tests. There are two types of features: positive features that help you by adding positive dice to tests (recorded with a "+" before the feature name), and negative features that hinder you by adding negative dice to tests (recorded with a "-" before the feature name).



POSITIVE FEATURES

Positive features represent natural strengths, specialized training, or unique abilities you might have in the related category. These indicate more than just being very strong, smart, or charismatic: they are specialized edges that set you apart from your peers.

Whenever you make a test in the same category as a positive feature, that positive feature can add a positive die to your test if it could help you better perform the task. Feel free to discuss with the GM how you feel your positive feature can help you complete the task or avoid unnecessary stress from performing it. For instance, if you chose Long-Distance Runner as a physical feature, you would gain an extra positive die when making tests to do such things as outrunning a pursuing zombie horde, enduring the climb up a ruined building, or performing any other act of endurance.

When choosing your positive features, think about what sets you apart from the other players at the table. What skills, strengths, or abilities do you have that make you special? **Table 1: Positive Feature Examples** offers a list of positive features to use as inspiration when creating your own features. Do not feel restricted to the features suggested here; simply use them as a jumping-off point as you work with your GM and the other players to create features perfect for you.

TABLE 1: POSITIVE FEATURE EXAMPLES

PHYSICAL FEATURES	MENTAL FEATURES	SOCIAL FEATURES
DISTANCE RUNNER	HUMAN CALCULATOR	ALWAYS SMILING
WEIGHT LIFTER	TIRELESS READER	SNAPPY DRESSER
VERY FLEXIBLE	NURSING DEGREE	EXCELLENT LIAR
MARTIAL ARTIST	EAGLE SCOUT	WHEELER AND DEALER
CRACK SHOT	WELL-READ	NATURAL LEADER
IRON STOMACH	WORLD TRAVELER	EXTREMELY ATTRACTIVE



NEGATIVE FEATURES

Negative features, on the other hand, represent your weaknesses, insecurities, or unique quirks in a given category. As with positive features, these indicate more than just being out of shape or uncomfortable in social situations: these are traits and idiosyncrasies unique to you. Your negative features should represent singular challenges you face in your day-to-day life.

Whenever you make a test in the same category as a negative feature, that negative feature adds a negative die to your test if it could hurt your chance of succeeding or cause additional stress. Usually, when you perform a test, the GM will ask you what your negative features are in the category being used for the test. Once you list them, you and the GM can discuss whether or not they could affect your performance on that test. For instance, if you have Terrible Liar as a social feature, you get a negative die added to your pool when making tests to deceive other characters.

When choosing your negative features, think about what unique challenges you face compared to the other players at the table. What weaknesses, phobias, or quirks do you struggle with? As with traumas, use only those negative features you don't mind disclosing to players and includ-

ing in the game. If it would spoil your ability to enjoy the game, there is no need to use it as a feature. **Table 2: Negative Feature Examples** presents a list of negative features to use as inspiration when determining your own features. Do not feel restricted to the features suggested here; simply use them as a jumping-off point as you decide upon features appropriate to you.

TABLE 2: NEGATIVE FEATURE EXAMPLES

PHYSICAL FEATURES	MENTAL FEATURES	SOCIAL FEATURES
ALLERGIES	AVOIDS MATH	ANXIETY
SEDENTARY	NO SENSE OF DIRECTION	TOO HONEST
BAD BACK	EASILY BORED	SHORT TEMPER
VERY NEARSIGHTED	PRONE TO DISTRACTION	EASILY PRESSURED
INJURED EARDRUM	EASILY SURPRISED	TERRIBLE LIAR
WEAK STOMACH	COMPULSION	MISANTHROPE

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

As the world starts to collapse around you, the items you have with you may become critical to your survival. Things once commonplace in your daily life take on a new importance as travel becomes dangerous and access to replacements can no longer be taken for granted. As distribution breaks down and resources get increasingly scarce, people may become willing to kill over nothing more than a can of food or a gallon of gasoline.

You can track the equipment you are carrying in the equipment section of your character sheet. If any of your items could realistically help with a test you are performing, you may add a positive die to the pool for their assistance. Possessions beyond those you carry are allowed in the game. While you should keep track of these and their locations, do so on a piece of scratch paper or the back of your character sheet; you should reserve the equipment section of your character sheet for items you have with you, where they are easily accessible for help with tests.

This section goes over some recommendations for common gear that is fairly likely to be found in a game of **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE**. It also covers some additional rules for handling the effects of weapons and armor.

GEAR

The possibilities for gear you might end up using in **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE** are nearly endless. Things quickly packed up from your own home, items scavenged from abandoned stores, valuables stolen from other survivors—nearly anything can become useful when you're struggling to survive the end times. You are encouraged to find creative uses for any gear you find on your journey. You will need all the help (and positive dice) you can get!

Despite the nearly infinite variety of items you may end up using on your journey, certain items are seen more often than others. Whether equipment most people carry on them every day (such as cell phones) or items that become more necessary as the world ends (such as medical supplies), many common items are carried by a majority of survivor groups. In fact, acquiring these critical items could end up being a significant driving force for you early in the game.

Table 3: Common Gear offers suggestions on different pieces of common gear a group of survivors might end up needing or using. It also recommends the category

TABLE 3: COMMON GEAR

GEAR	HELPFUL CATEGORY	SUGGESTED USES
CELL PHONE	SOCIAL	COMMUNICATING LONG DISTANCE (BEFORE THE CELL NETWORKS GO DOWN)
WALKIE-TALKIES	SOCIAL	COMMUNICATING LONG DISTANCE (AFTER THE CELL NETWORKS GO DOWN)
FIRST AID KIT	PHYSICAL	HEALING PHYSICAL TRAUMAS
FICTION BOOK	MENTAL	HEALING MENTAL TRAUMAS
TEXTBOOK	MENTAL	PERFORMING SPECIFIC MENTAL TASKS, DEPENDING ON THE BOOK
JEWELRY	SOCIAL	TRADING FOR SUPPLIES OR INFORMATION
PLAYING CARDS	MENTAL/SOCIAL	TO EASE TENSE SOCIAL SITUATIONS OR RELIEVE MENTAL STRAIN
LIGHTER	PHYSICAL	STARTING A FIRE OR SPOTTING THINGS IN THE DARK
POCKETKNIFE	PHYSICAL	MANY DIFFERENT PHYSICAL TASKS, ALSO USED AS A WEAPON IN A CONFLICT
WATER BOTTLE	PHYSICAL	STORING AND TRANSPORTING WATER
IODINE	PHYSICAL	PURIFY WATER (ELIMINATE NEED TO MAKE TEST TO RESIST CONTAMINANTS)
ROPE	PHYSICAL	CLIMBING RUINED BUILDINGS, SECURING SUPPLIES OR CAPTIVES
FLASHLIGHT	PHYSICAL	SPOTTING THINGS IN THE DARK

each piece of gear would likely be most helpful in, as well as the different tasks it could specifically benefit. Don't feel restricted to the gear or uses suggested here; simply use them as a jumping-off point. Any and all uses of supplies you find on your journey are encouraged—do whatever you need to do to survive.

NOT ALL GEAR IS CREATED EQUAL

Two pieces of gear might perform very similar functions, but one could be significantly better at it than the other. For instance, everyday adhesive bandages help wounds heal faster by protecting them from exposure, but rolls of gauze and disinfectant would be significantly better. In these cases, the GM may decide that the superior piece of gear can add two positive dice to the dice pool instead of just one.

CARRYING CAPACITY

Depending on how lucky you are in **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE**, you can quickly accumulate a large quantity of resources as you scavenge for supplies. However, you are only human; you have a limit as to how much stuff you can bring with you, especially on your immediate person.

There are no strict rules regarding exactly how much different items weigh or how hard they are to carry, but you and the GM should work together to decide how much gear you can keep on yourself at one time. As a rough guideline, average humans can comfortably carry up to a third of their body weight in an appropriate backpack or bag.

WEAPONS

Protecting yourself is an important part of staying alive in **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE**. As such, even the most peaceful characters often find themselves carrying a weapon just in case. Because weapons have such an impact on your performance in combat, and because combat incidents can be important and tense moments in the game, weapons have some additional rules beyond those for other pieces of gear. A weapon contributes two things when you use it to attack an NPC or PC: it modifies your dice pool in some way, and it changes the amount of stress you deal to your opponent with your attack. (See **Attacking**, page 36.)

Much like normal pieces of gear, weapons which make attacks much more effective can add positive dice to your dice pool. However, using certain weapons can be much more difficult or dangerous than simply using your fists. To reflect this, not all weapons add a positive die to your pool—some add no dice at all, and others can even add negative dice.

While some weapons are more difficult to use, they can be more effective at harming your opponent. Each weapon has a damage value. This value is a positive or negative number that alters the amount of stress you deal to opponents when you attack them (see **Attacking**, page 36). Positive numbers increase the stress dealt to the target by the corresponding amount, while negative numbers reduce the stress dealt (to a minimum of 0).

Table 4: Weapons, on page 29, lists a number of recommendations for various weapons you might acquire. These are simple and general recommendations for entire categories of weapons. If you or the GM feel that a specific object or weapon doesn't fit into one of these categories, you can give it whatever stats you and the GM agree on. (Though, as a general rule, a weapon should never add more than two dice of either type or more than +4 damage.)

TRACKING SMALL DETAILS

Depending on what kind of campaign your GM wants to run, you may need to track more information about your gear than simply whether or not you have it. Once the power grid goes out, things such as the battery life of electronics you carry with you become very important, and tracking such elements can really add to the game. Other things, such as unspoiled food and potable water, are necessary to track in almost any game of **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE**, as such resources become very scarce. Some common things the GM may have you track are:

- ☒ Number of replaceable batteries remaining
- ☒ Battery life on electronic devices (cell phones, tablets, etc.)
- ☒ Total gasoline left in car
- ☒ Amount of drinkable water
- ☒ Amount of edible food
- ☒ Matches/lighter fluid remaining
- ☒ Units of ammunition in weapon and carried

Such items can be tracked in different ways. Items that get used up slowly and are tracked session-to-session should have quantities recorded in writing; items likely to be useful for only a few hours can be tracked by other means, such as spare dice or counters.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

TABLE 4: WEAPONS

TYPE OF WEAPON	EXAMPLES	ADDED DICE	DAMAGE
SMALL-BLADED MELEE	POCKETKNIFE, KITCHEN KNIFE	1 POSITIVE DIE	+2
LARGE-BLADED MELEE	MACHETE, HEDGE CLIPPERS	2 POSITIVE DICE	+3
SMALL IMPROVISED MELEE	BEER BOTTLE, TIRE IRON	N/A	+1
LARGE IMPROVISED MELEE	CRICKET BAT, CHAINSAW	1 NEGATIVE DIE	+4
THROWN OBJECT	ROCK, TOASTER, VINYL ALBUM	N/A	-1
PISTOL	GLOCK 19, M1911	1 POSITIVE DIE	+3
SHOTGUN	REMINGTON 12 GAUGE	N/A	+4
SINGLE-SHOT RIFLE	AMERICAN LONG RIFLE, WINCHESTER 1866	2 POSITIVE DICE	+4
AUTOMATIC RIFLE	M4, AK-47	1 NEGATIVE DIE	+5

WEAPON RANGES

From the reach of a bloody baseball bat to the trajectory of a thrown brick to the firing distance of a high-powered rifle, weapons have a variety of ranges. Further, elements ranging from wind to visibility can factor into how far a weapon’s reach extends in any given situation. Because of the narrative nature of **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE**’s combat, weapon ranges aren’t specified in the game. Whether or not your weapon has range to a target depends on the situation you are in and is up to the GM. However, as general guidance, here are some average ranges of different types of weapons:

- ☼ **Pistol:** 50 meters
- ☼ **Shotgun:** 35 meters
- ☼ **Single-Shot Rifle:** 1,000 meters
- ☼ **Automatic Rifle:** 400 meters

If you attempt to make a shot far beyond the average range of your weapon, the GM may add a negative die to your pool to reflect the increased difficulty. On the other hand, if you are making an incredibly short-range shot, the GM may add a positive die to reflect the ease of the shot.

ARMOR

While very few people will find themselves wearing any form of armor when they become aware the world is ending, armor can quickly become necessary to survival. Armor might not be actual medieval armor or bulletproof vests, but simply heavy, protective clothing that will help guard you against the dangers you face every day. When you are wearing any armor sturdy enough to protect you from physical harm, it adds a bonus to your physical resistance value (see **Resistance**, page 31). This bonus is usually pretty small but can make a huge difference in the long run. **Table 5: Armor** lists some examples of different armor types and the resistance bonuses they provide.

TABLE 5: ARMOR

RESISTANCE BONUS	EXAMPLES
+0	REGULAR CLOTHING
+1	FIREFIGHTER’S SUIT, BULLETPROOF VEST
+2	FULL BULLETPROOF ARMOR, RIOT GEAR, FULL MEDIEVAL ARMOR

STRESS, DEATH, AND TRAUMAS

As you weather the threats and challenges of the Apocalypse, you will be pushed to your breaking point. You will be injured, insulted, and brought to the brink of insanity. To reflect this constant strain and danger to your body, mind, and spirit, you suffer stress and traumas. Stress represents the damage you accumulate on a day-to-day basis from everything you do, while traumas represent the tangible repercussions and permanent effects of that damage.

Stress and traumas are tracked separately for your three different categories, reflecting the detrimental effects on the three different parts of yourself.



STRESS

Stress represents the damage and strain you undergo on a day-to-day basis in your three categories. Physical stress represents cuts and bruises, twisted ankles, broken bones, and any other physical damage. Mental stress represents psychological strain, shock from traumatic events, and general damage to your mental health. Lastly, social stress represents anxiety, damage to your trust in others, and an increasingly bitter attitude toward the world. That being said, stress is very much an abstract measure of these effects; it doesn't represent any single injury as much as the building repercussions from multiple small events.

Stress is tracked numerically in a set of boxes called the stress track. Whenever you acquire points of stress, you fill in that many boxes in the stress track in the appropriate category. The more stress you endure in a category, the more resistance you build up against further stress. However, if you ever completely fill up a stress track in a single category, you run the risk of dying or sustaining an extreme trauma.

THE STRESS TRACK

All stress is tallied on one of the three stress tracks in your three categories. Each stress track consists of nine boxes, which are divided into three tiers of three boxes each. Whenever you take points of stress, fill in an equal number of boxes on the stress track in the appropriate category, starting with the boxes in the first tier, proceeding up to the second once all three boxes in the first are full, and so on.

If all nine boxes in a category are full, you immediately die or experience a serious trauma (see **Death**, page 31).

SUSTAINING STRESS

Stress comes from two primary sources: performing difficult or dangerous tests, and experiencing traumatic events.

Whenever you make a test, you gain a number of stress points equal to the negative dice left in the pool. This stress is taken in the category matching that of the characteristic used for the test, and it represents the general strain or damage resulting from performing the task. Perhaps the weight you were attempting to lift caused you to pull a muscle, or hours spent studying has really stressed you out, or the sleazebag you were dealing with really got under your skin.

The other main causes of stress are traumatic events brought about by outside sources. Examples include being attacked by an opponent with a weapon, witnessing a horrifying sight, or being betrayed by a trusted

friend. When such an event occurs, you immediately take points of stress. This value could be determined by the game rules (such as during attacks), or it could be dictated by the GM based on the situation. (GMs: see page 45 for guidance on choosing stress amounts.)

Regardless of what source deals you stress, reduce the amount you receive by your resistance in that category before you record the stress on the stress track.

RECOVERING FROM STRESS

In general, stress cannot be readily healed. Stress is an abstract level representing the damage you have accumulated from the adversity you have faced. To reduce accumulated stress, you first need to diagnose the problem and realize how it is affecting you. By spending a short time analyzing how it has affected you, you can convert your stress into a trauma. This removes your stress from that track, but gives you a trauma in the same category. Traumas can hurt your performance by adding negative dice to tasks you attempt. However, they can also be cured over time. See **Traumas** on page 32 for further information.

RESISTANCE

As you accumulate stress in a category, you become more inured to the related dangers. Someone whose sanity has been tested by witnessing death over and over no longer recoils as quickly at the sight of a corpse. Someone who has been betrayed by comrade after comrade is no longer surprised when betrayed again. After a person has been beaten into submission, another hit is just a drop in the bucket. This is represented by resistance.

Whenever you are dealt stress from any source, you reduce the amount of stress you receive by your resistance in the matching category. Your resistance is equal to the number of tiers in the matching stress track that have all three boxes filled in. Thus, if you have three or more points of stress in a category, you have one point of resistance; if you have six or more points of stress in a category, you have two points of resistance.




Other things, such as armor, can provide additional resistance in specific categories (see page 29).

EXAMPLE

Bruce is having a bad day. He has accumulated 7 physical stress in an altercation with a hostile group of survivors and is now running for his life. He finds himself cornered on the roof of a one-story building, and he decides to jump rather than face his pursuers. He lands hard, suffering 3 physical stress from the impact. However, he already has two tiers of his physical stress track filled in due to his 7 stress, and so has two points of resistance. He subtracts his 2 resistance from the stress sustained, reducing it to just 1. Now at 8 physical stress, Bruce is injured after the fall, but still alive!

DEATH

Death is common in the **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE**. People perish all around you as you struggle to survive. But for the purposes of playing the game, "death" doesn't refer strictly to complete, physical death. Instead, it refers to several different ways your character can be retired from play. When you sustain enough stress to fill a stress track, you die, but the *kind* of death you undergo depends on which category of stress causes you to die:

-  **Physical:** This is normal, physical death. Your heart stops beating, and you die.
-  **Mental:** You are driven into irreversible insanity. Your mind is gone.
-  **Social:** You fall into an inescapable catatonic state. Your faith in humanity has utterly failed.

Even your death is part of the ongoing narrative. However you end up being removed from the game, make it your own. Tailor it to your character and whatever caused you to suffer that last bit of fatal stress. Deaths should be dramatic, unique, and memorable moments.

But while deaths are important, you are a main character in the story, and you have a chance to cling to life, even at the end. Whenever you completely fill a stress track, you don't necessarily have to die, but can try to cling to life by making a test using the defensive stat from the category in which you suffered the stress. If you succeed at the test, you are still removed from play in the way appropriate to the category in which you acquired the stress, but you are removed only temporarily. You immediately take a severity 3 trauma in the matching category and remove all stress from the top two tiers of the maxed-out stress track, leaving the three boxes in tier 1 filled in. You remain removed from play until the end of the current encounter—either unconscious, insane, or unresponsive—but then you return once you have a chance to collect yourself.

If you already have three traumas (of any severity level) in the category and cannot take on additional traumas, you cannot cling to life, and have no choice but to die.

OVERFLOW STRESS

It is not uncommon for a single source to deal enough stress to complete a stress track and "overflow" it, inflicting more stress than there are boxes left to fill in. If you cling to life and have overflow stress, that overflow stress is recorded on your stress track after you remove the stress from the top two tiers. You do not apply your resistance to this overflow stress, since your resistance was already applied to the Stress when it was originally dealt.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

TRAUMAS

While stress is a simple, numerical representation of the strain and damage you have sustained, traumas represent the tangible repercussions of that stress after it has built up. By taking some time to analyze the effects the stress has had on your body, mind, and spirit, you can convert that stress into a trauma. This removes the stress from your stress track, but introduces a narrative effect that will weigh on you as you try to recover from it.

Each trauma has two parts: a word or phrase naming it, and a severity. The name of the trauma describes its effects on you. For example, “Broken Ankle” describes a physical trauma that leaves you limping, and “Paranoid” indicates social trauma that causes you to trust no one. A trauma’s severity, on the other hand, is a number between one and three, tracked in that trauma’s three boxes, which are filled in from left to right. When you remove your stress to acquire a trauma, that trauma’s severity is equal to the number of tiers in the stress track that had any boxes filled in. The trauma’s severity determines just how hard that trauma will be to heal.

Traumas act a lot like negative features (see **Negative Features**, page 26). Whenever you make a test that could reasonably be hindered by trauma, you add a negative die to that test. Particularly severe traumas can add even more negative dice, at the GM’s discretion.

You can never have more than three traumas (of any severity level) in a category at once. If you ever suffer a fourth trauma in a category, you immediately die without any chance to cling to life (see **Death** on page 31).

ACQUIRING TRAUMAS

There are two ways to acquire a trauma. Usually, you acquire one by converting your stress into a trauma, which relieves your stress and helps you start to recover from the damage you’ve taken. Alternatively, certain special enemies can cause you to automatically undergo a specific trauma.

To convert your stress into a trauma, you have to have at least five minutes of downtime to spend analyzing how your stress has affected you. This process could take the form of looking over your wounds after a battle to see what is hurt, meditating on the mental strain you’ve been under, or confronting your trust issues. You can do this whenever you want, as long as you have the time. You can choose to remove your stress early and often, building up a large number of small traumas that are easy to heal but weigh on you. Alternatively you can ignore your injuries, avoiding immediate setbacks but risking their becoming even more severe before you have a chance to start dealing with them.

After spending the five minutes to look yourself over, you remove all of the stress in a single category. You then record a single trauma in that category with a severity equal to the number of tiers in that stress track that had any boxes filled in. Next, you determine the exact nature of the trauma and how it will affect you. This should be based on its severity and how you received the points of stress that were removed. If you sustained the stress due to falling out of a building, perhaps it results in a “Broken Leg” trauma. Or if you suffered the stress from witnessing your best friend die in front of you, maybe it induces a “Can’t Make Friends” trauma.

Table 6: Trauma Examples presents a list of traumas to use as inspiration when deciding what the nature of your trauma is. Do not feel restricted to the traumas suggested here; simply use them as a jumping-off point as you work with your GM to devise a trauma appropriate to your situation and character.

TABLE 6: TRAUMA EXAMPLES

SEVERITY	PHYSICAL TRAUMAS	MENTAL TRAUMAS	SOCIAL TRAUMAS
1	TWISTED ANKLE, FIRST-DEGREE BURN, INFECTED WOUND, SICKNESS, BLURRY VISION	FEAR OF THE DEAD, PREOCCUPATION, FORGETFULNESS, ACTIVE DENIAL	INDIFFERENCE, DISLIKE OF A PARTICULAR TYPE OF PERSON, UNEASE, WARY AROUND PEOPLE
2	BROKEN ANKLE, SECOND-DEGREE BURN, FESTERING WOUND, FEVER, PARTIAL BLINDNESS	DREAD OF THE DEAD, FIXATION, MEMORY LOSS, DENIAL	APATHY, HATRED OF A PARTICULAR TYPE OF PERSON, ANXIETY, DISTRUSTFUL OF PEOPLE
3	BROKEN LEG, THIRD-DEGREE BURN, GANGRENOUS WOUND, SEVERE FLU, BLINDNESS	PHOBIA OF THE DEAD, OBSESSION, AMNESIA, DELUSIONS	DISASSOCIATION FROM REALITY, RESPONDS WITH RAGE TO PARTICULAR TYPE OF PERSON, PANIC, PARANOID OF OTHERS

RECOVERING FROM TRAUMAS

Fortunately, most traumas can be healed over time. How you go about healing your trauma depends on what category the trauma is in and its exact nature as determined when it was incurred. The treatment might be first aid and medicine for a physical trauma, relaxation and personal reflection for a mental trauma, or the help of people close to you for a social trauma. The amount of time the treatment takes depends on the severity of the trauma, and whether or not it succeeds is determined by a test.

When you decide to begin treating one of your traumas, specify to the GM what measures you are taking to do so. You then must undergo the treatment for the amount of time specified for a trauma of that severity, as listed below (required treatment time is also marked in the severity boxes on the official character sheet):

- ⊗ **Severity 1:** One day
- ⊗ **Severity 2:** One week
- ⊗ **Severity 3:** One month

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PERMANENT EFFECTS OF TRAUMAS

Some traumas, such as losing a limb, can never be fully healed. The wound can heal over, and you can adapt to the disability, but your limb will never grow back. In extreme situations such as this, the GM may decide to add a negative feature to your character as the result of a specific trauma. For example, if you were to lose your arm, you could gain both a "Lost Arm" trauma and a "Lost Arm" negative feature. Over time, you could recover from the "Lost Arm" trauma, healing the wound fully, but you would never recover fully from the "Lost Arm" negative feature. The GM should reserve the addition of negative features from an injury for truly exceptional circumstances.

This time doesn't need to be one hundred percent committed to curing the trauma; you can do other things while you recuperate as long as they don't directly interfere with the treatment or make the trauma worse. For example, treating a broken leg might involve some form of cast or splint and refraining from putting too much weight on it for a month. This treatment wouldn't be interrupted by going about your daily life, but it would if you removed the cast or tried to run on that leg.

Once the entire treatment time has elapsed, you must make a test to see if the treatment succeeded. This test uses the defensive characteristic from the same category as the trauma (Vitality for physical, Willpower for mental, or Empathy for social). As with any test, this test gains positive and negative dice from any circumstances



affecting the treatment. For example, positive dice can be added due to helpful equipment or the assistance of allies, and negative dice due to interruptions or complications of the treatment.

If the test succeeds, reduce the severity of the trauma by one. If this reduces the severity of a trauma to zero, the trauma is healed and can be removed from your character sheet. If the test fails, or if the trauma still has a severity, you can continue treatment until it is fully removed. At the GM's discretion, when the severity of a trauma is reduced due to treatment, you can alter the nature of the trauma based on the in-progress healing. This may mean changing your "Broken Leg" trauma to a "Weak Leg" trauma as the healing progresses, or reducing your "Acrophobia" to a simple "Fear of Heights" to indicate that it is now a bit less severe.

CONFLICT

MOST scenes in **ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE** will play out narratively, with the GM narrating the story and calling on various PCs in your group to make tests as you decide to perform different tasks. However, surviving in the apocalypse can often be tense, and you might quickly find yourself in conflict with hostile characters or thrown into a dangerous circumstance in which every second counts. In these situations, it's helpful to have a bit more structure to the storytelling, guaranteeing that everyone in the scene gets a chance to contribute to the story and that all their actions time out evenly and fairly.

TIMING

As soon as a conflict (or any time-sensitive action scene) breaks out, the normal flow of the narrative stops, and the game enters “structured time.” In structured time, the game unfolds in a series of rounds. During each round, each character involved in the scene gets to take one turn. Once all characters have taken their turns, the next round starts. This continues until the action has concluded. Each round represents about ten seconds of in-game time, with all of the characters acting simultaneously during those ten seconds.

Whether your group or the opposing group goes first is determined by which group has initiative at the start of the combat.

DETERMINING INITIATIVE

If two or more opposing groups of characters are involved in a conflict, the order in which they get to take their turns each round can mean the difference between life and death. The first thing the GM must determine when the game enters structured time is which group has initiative—in other words, what order the groups will be acting in.

This initiative order is determined based on the circumstances that started the conflict. Whichever group “got the jump” on the other—or has a general advantage—acts first. If you and the other PCs end negotiations with another group of survivors by attacking them, you will have the initiative and will get to act first. However, if you are ambushed by a particularly quiet group of undead, they will have the initiative over you.

Once the GM has determined the order in which the various groups involved in the scene are acting, each character and NPC takes a turn. Each character in the first group can take his or her turn in any order he or she chooses (keeping in mind that each character can only take one turn per round). Once they have all finished their turns, the next group takes its turns, and so on.

TAKING TURNS

When it is your group's time to act in a round, you and your group members each take one turn. These turns can be taken in any order your group decides based on the situation, but each character must complete his or her turn before the next can go.

During your turn, you have approximately ten seconds (in game) to attempt whatever you want to do. This is usually enough time to move around a bit and then attempt a single task. In general, you have enough time in a turn to attempt no more than a single task that requires some form of test. If you describe to the GM what you want to do with your turn, and it seems like it would require more than a single test, it is likely something that needs to be broken into multiple turns. For more guidance on exactly what you can fit into your turn, along with recommendations on how to handle several common tasks, see the **Tasks** section, on page 35.

Once you describe what you are doing with your turn, including any movements, and you make whatever test might be required, the GM narrates the results of your actions based on the outcome of your test and any other details relevant to the situation. Then, your turn is over.

STANDOFF

While who has the initiative in most situations is usually fairly obvious, there are some instances in which everything explodes into chaos at once, and it isn't apparent which group should go before the other. In these cases, the GM can call for an opposed Dexterity test (see **Opposed Tests**, page 20). One member of each group is nominated to take the test. This represents that character taking the lead in the situation, guiding fellow group members in the group's response to the ensuing combat. The GM then determines the order in which the groups act based on their representatives' performance on the test, with the winner of the test going first.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



TASKS

As a general guideline, when you attempt tasks during a single turn of structured time, you can accomplish two things. First, you can do one minor task, usually movement-based. This might be ducking behind cover, backing away from your enemy, closing a door, or any number of other contextual actions. This minor task should be something that can be accomplished in a couple of seconds, should not require your full attention, and should be something that you would reasonably succeed at the majority of the time.

Second, you can attempt one major task. This is something that requires the majority of your attention and some amount of skill or luck to pull off. The most common example of a major task in combat is attacking an opponent. Because this action is so common, and because it can take many forms, there are specific rules for performing attacks; these are outlined in **Attacking**, on page 36. However, attacking is only one of an infinite number of things you can attempt to do during your turn. **Other Example Tasks**, on page 37, goes over several other common tasks that you might want to perform during your turn and offers recommendations on how the GM could handle them.

MOVEMENT AND POSITIONING

Most of the moving you do during a turn in an action scene doesn't require a test, and it can be performed in addition to whatever major task you are attempting to accomplish. This might mean slowly walking while you fire your gun, running up to your target before attacking, or just moving from room to room in an abandoned building. Usually, for this kind of minor maneuvering, an average character can move about twenty meters through an open area. However, the GM may decide that you cannot move as far due to environmental effects such as darkness, weather, or unstable footing.

On top of simply moving from one place to another, this minor task on your turn can also include one additional small, incidental thing you may want to do. Some suggestions include:

- ☒ Ducking into cover
- ☒ Pulling out a piece of gear
- ☒ Opening or closing a door
- ☒ Dropping prone or standing up
- ☒ Speaking to other characters

While a lot of movement during conflict can be handled as minor tasks, occasions may arise when you want to dedicate your full attention and energy to sprinting as fast as you can. In these instances, the simple act of moving that quickly through a tense situation requires a Vitality test and takes your full attention for your turn. On a success, an average character can move about sixty meters through an open area. On a failure, the GM can make you come up short (forty meters or less), receive physical stress, or even trip and fall, depending on the situation.

ATTACKING

The zombie apocalypse is by no means a peaceful event. For better or worse, when confronted with moaning horrors hungry for flesh, it is human nature to react violently, either toward the horrors themselves or towards fellow human beings in the frenzy of flight.

Probably the most common task you will attempt during conflict is attacking adversaries. Whether you are throwing a brick, shooting a gun, or swinging your fists, attacks are resolved using the same base rules—though they can be modified by the GM to fit the situation.

When you make a physical attack against another character, you roll a Dexterity test. You add positive and negative dice to this test just as with any other test; these can be due to features, environmental effects, cover, or any other effects. However, instead of adding the usual single positive die for having a piece of equipment, weapons add different types and numbers of dice based on how easy they are to wield (see **Weapons**, page 28).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

NON-PHYSICAL ATTACKS

The rules presented here for making an attack don't necessarily apply just to physical attacks. In certain circumstances, the GM may have you make similar rolls when you are mentally or socially "attacking" your target, such as when you are interrogating a prisoner or arguing with a rival. In these cases, follow the same rules outlined here for making an attack, but use the offensive stat from the appropriate category (Logic for mental or Charisma for social), and deal the resulting stress to the target's matching category. Obviously, physical weapons don't affect such a roll in the same way they affect physical attacks, but otherwise the test works in the same way.

If a Dexterity test to attack succeeds, your target immediately gains a number of points of physical stress equal to the total number of successes you scored on the test. This can be further modified by the weapon you are using. The stress suffered by your target follows all the normal rules for sustaining stress, such as being reduced by resistance (see **Sustaining Stress**, page 30).

To make an attack roll in the first place, you must be able to perform the attack. This means being physically capable of pulling it off, being aware of your target, and being in range with your intended method of attack. If the GM allows it, you might sometimes be able to attempt an attack even if you don't meet all of these conditions, but with extra negative dice added to your pool to represent the additional challenge. Examples include wildly swinging in a pitch-black room or firing at a noise you heard in the bushes.

EXAMPLE

The group finds itself surrounded by a gang of undead in a basement it has been looting. Milla pulls out the pistol she lifted from the sporting goods store and starts firing to cover her friends' escape. She adds three positive dice to her pool: one for the pistol, one for her Crack Shot feature, and one for being at nearly point-blank range. Then, George (the GM) adds one negative die to her pool for the darkness in the basement.

Milla rolls the dice, getting a "2," "3," "5," and "5" on her positive dice, and a "2" on her negative die. With her excellent Dexterity of 5, she is left with 3 successes and no stress after canceling the "2" results from her pool. She then adds +2 to her total successes, thanks to her pistol, dealing 5 total physical stress to the closest zombie.



OTHER EXAMPLE TASKS

The possibilities for things you might attempt to do during one of your turns are nearly endless. You should work with the GM to decide exactly how to resolve whatever task you want to attempt, choosing the most appropriate characteristic to use and adding positive and negative dice to the pool as appropriate. **Table 7: Example Tasks** offers a few recommendations on how to handle common tasks that you might want to try. However, these are just suggestions and can be changed to fit whatever scenario you find yourself in.

Any trying action performed during structured time can be resolved with a task. During the course of the zombie apocalypse, the characters are likely to face all manner of trials and hardships, especially while under the stress of imminent attack from either the walking dead or their fellow humans. For more information and guidance on adjudicating and interpreting tests during tasks, see **Running Tests** on page 44.

TABLE 7: EXAMPLE TASKS

TASK	RELEVANT CHARACTERISTIC	ADDS POSITIVE DICE	ADDS NEGATIVE DICE
CLIMBING, JUMPING, OR TUMBLING	DEXTERITY	ROPE, SOFT LANDING	SLIPPERY SURFACE, BEING UNDER ATTACK
HIDING FROM THE ENEMY	DEXTERITY OR LOGIC	DARKNESS, CONCEALING TERRAIN	BRIGHT LIGHT, IN DIRECT SIGHT OF ENEMY
SPRINTING (MOVING MORE THAN 20 METERS IN ONE TURN)	VITALITY	RUNNING DOWNHILL, RUNNING FOR YOUR LIFE	RUNNING UPHILL, SLIPPERY GROUND
PICKING LOCK	LOGIC	SIMPLE LOCK, LOCK-PICKING TOOLS	DIFFICULT LOCK, BEING UNDER ATTACK
COERCING ENEMY INTO SURRENDER	CHARISMA	YOU HAVE ADVANTAGE IN FIGHT, ENEMY HAS A REASON TO LIVE	ENEMY HAS ADVANTAGE IN FIGHT, ENEMY IS BEYOND REASON
TALKING ENEMY DOWN	EMPATHY	YOU HAVEN'T YET KILLED ANY OF THEM, YOU PUT AWAY YOUR WEAPON	ENEMY HATES YOU, ALLIES ARE ACTIVELY FIGHTING THE ENEMY