

SPARKLER RPG

Character Creation

Starting Out

It helps to go into character creation with a general idea of the type of character you want to create. Starting with a general concept is always a good plan, so you can know what areas to focus on and create a character that makes sense.

Things to think about:

What types of characters are the other players making? It's always good to make sure each player has different strengths and weaknesses--so you have all your bases covered for your adventure, and also so you don't have the same skills as your teammates and never know who should use them.

Then, fill out the top of the sheet:

Name: Give your character a first and last name!

Age: Give your character an age that makes sense in the setting.

Gender and Sexuality: Decide your character's gender and sexuality as they are at the start of the game. Since the Sparkler RPG system focuses more on romance and interpersonal relationships than many other game systems, it's important to specify these from the start. Of course, it's totally fine to choose "questioning" or "unsure," and even have your character explore them over the course of the game.

Ignore "Power Level" and "Earned Points" for now.

On page 2 of the character sheet, there's space to fill out your character's backstory and describe his/her/their appearance, plus room to draw a portrait if you'd like!

Basic Stats

The Sparkler System starts with five basic stats: **Fitness, Knowledge, Social, Awareness, and Willpower**. These are broad categories that give an overview of how fit, smart, or socially adept you are.

Fitness	Physical skills. Includes combat skills, athletic skills like climbing, running, or dancing, and skills that require dexterity or reflexes like playing an instrument or driving.
Knowledge	Learned information. Includes "school" subjects like history or engineering, and less official types of knowledge like criminal or survival skills.
Social	Interpersonal skills. This includes persuading people, lying, or controlling how your character is perceived by others.
Awareness	Perception of the world around your character. Includes sight and hearing, the chance of noticing hidden details, and reading people.
Willpower	Control over your character's mind. Includes the ability to hide emotions, and work through pain, boredom, or distractions.

All stats start at **6**, and can be bought up and down.

For a new player character, keep these numbers between **4 and 8**. A higher number means you're more gifted in that area, and a lower number means you're less gifted.

The **Power Level** of your character is based on these stats. Every player should start with the same power level, as determined by the GM.

Power Level 0 = ordinary person

Power Level 3 = talented

Power Level 5 = superhuman

Talents & Struggles

Talents and Struggles are the core of the system. They help focus in on what kind of person your character is--the strong and weak parts of your character's personality.

When creating a character, you are required to choose **one Talent and one Struggle in each basic stat category**.

You can also choose to take up to two extra Talents and Struggles. For each Talent you choose, you **must** choose an extra Struggle--in other words, the number of Talents and Struggles should match. The extra Talents and Struggles don't have to be attached to the same Basic Stats, however--you can choose a Social Talent and "pay" for it using a Fitness Struggle, for example.

How to read:

Strong <= Title

+2 to actions requiring brute strength <= How it works: write this on your character sheet

Pairs well with: Slow, Clumsy <= Suggestion of a Talent/Struggle to take, not required

Conflicts with: Weak <= You cannot take this Talent/Struggle

You're physically very strong! You can lift weights and princess-carry pretty much anyone you want. In combat, this also adds to how much **damage** you do to your enemies.

Fitness Talents

Strong

+2 to actions requiring brute strength

Pairs well with: Slow, Clumsy

Conflicts with: Weak

You're physically strong! You can lift weights and princess-carry pretty much anyone you want. In combat, this adds to how much **damage** you do to your enemies.

Quick

+2 to actions requiring speed or reflexes

Pairs well with: Weak, Fragile

Conflicts with: Slow

You can move very fast! You're an excellent sprinter, and you have great reflexes. In combat, this gives you a bonus to **hitting** your opponents and **dodging** their attacks.

Tough**+2 to actions requiring endurance**

Pairs well with: Slow, Clumsy

Conflicts with: Fragile

You can keep going for a long, long time--and it takes a lot of damage to knock you out. In combat, you get **extra hit points**.

Graceful**+2 to actions requiring controlled or beautiful motion**

Pairs well with: Fragile, Weak

Conflicts with: Clumsy

You have the skills to be a great dancer, gymnast, or martial artist. If you take certain specialties (i.e. martial arts), you can use your Graceful bonus in combat.

Good Aim**+2 to hit a target with thrown or ranged weapons**

Pairs well with: Fragile, Weak

From tossing a baseball to firing a gun, you have excellent aim. In combat, you get a bonus when using **ranged weapons**.

Deft Hands**+2 to actions requiring skilled hands**

Pairs well with: Fragile, Weak

You're quick and skilled with your hands. This isn't a combat skill--instead, it allows you to play musical instruments, type fast, pick locks, etc.

Stealthy**+2 to move silently and remain hidden**

Pairs well with: Weak, Fragile

You have the ability to move silently, stand completely still, and avoid being seen or heard. A must-have for thief, tracker, or assassin characters!

Fitness Struggles**Weak****-2 to actions requiring brute strength**

Pairs well with: Stealthy, Deft Hands

Conflicts with: Strong

You aren't that strong--maybe you're small, maybe you just don't have much muscle tone.

You're at a disadvantage when trying to do anything that requires pure muscle. In combat, you do less damage than usual.

Slow**-2 to actions requiring speed or reflexes**

Pairs well with: Strong, Tough

Conflicts with: Quick

You just can't move that fast, and you don't have very quick reflexes. In combat, you have a penalty to dodging or hitting enemies.

Fragile**-2 to actions requiring endurance**

Pairs well with: Quick, Graceful

Conflicts with: Tough

You don't have much endurance, and you

Clumsy**-1 to any tricky physical act. On failure, player falls, drops items--something painful or embarrassing**

Pairs well with: Strong, Tough

Conflicts with: Graceful

You're a total clutz. You might be in great physical shape, or even pretty quick or sneaky when you have to be, but through spaciness, awkwardness, or just plain bad luck, you're always the one falling on her butt in front of her crush, or fumbling her sword in the middle of a fight.

Physical Disability:

These will limit you in different ways, up to the GM's discretion and the situation.

Some possible examples:

Missing/Paralyzed Arm

Missing/Paralyzed Leg

Paraplegic/Can't Walk

Chronic Illness/Pain

Knowledge Talents**General Knowledge:**

+1 when recalling or using knowledge in one of the following areas (pick 1):

Math and Science

History

Street Smarts

Criminal Skills

Survival

Medicine

Languages

Engineering
 Writing
 Music
 Art
 Strategy
 Computers

Special Training
Get two extra Skills

Quick-witted
GM gives you extra time to make time-sensitive decisions

Good Memory
Once per hour, the GM will remind you of information you've forgotten without a roll

Knowledge Struggles

Bad with Numbers
-2 on all math and science rolls

Technologically Cursed
Roll Kno-2 when using any kind of computer or complex technology to see if you break it

Bad at Writing
-2 on all rolls for written communication

Forgetful
-2 on all memory rolls

Book Smart
-2 on your first try using knowledge to do something in the real world.

Pairs well with: No Common Sense, any academic Knowledge

Conflicts with: Street Smarts, Dyslexic/Illiterate, Uneducated

You love reading and know a ton of information about all kinds of subjects...only you've never had a chance to put any of it into practice. So, for example, you might know in theory how to set a broken bone or mix cleaning supplies into a makeshift bomb, but you've never actually done it before. Roll normally to recall information (aka how to set a bone), but roll at a -2 to actually do it (set a broken bone).

Dyslexic/Illiterate

-2 to reading anything--books, signs, notes, etc. When trying to read something complicated, like a textbook without pictures, -4 or no roll allowed (at GM's discretion)

Uneducated

You will need to make a knowledge roll to know information that average people in your world would know

Slow on the Uptake

-2 to any knowledge roll under pressure or a time limit

Uncultured

-2 to any knowledge roll about manners, polite speech, the arts, upperclass/middle class society, or other markers of high class in your game world

Social Talents**Convincing**

+2 to persuade someone

Seductive

+3 to seduce someone

Apex of Beauty

+1 to all reactions by people attracted to the group you're the apex of

Must choose a gender and style that your appearance fits into:

Gender presentation: Male, Female, Androgynous/Genderqueer, Alien

Style: Jock, Intellectual, Classy, Bombshell, Nerdy, Boy/Girl/Person Next Door, Goth, Girly, Buff, Dark and Mysterious, etc.

Cute

+2 when asking for protection or leeway based on you seeming young and adorable.

Deceptive

+3 to lie convincingly

Social Chameleon

You can fit in seamlessly (without a roll) to a group if they have no reason to distrust or dislike you. If they do dislike/distrust you, roll against their soc with +2

Fashionable

Roll against Soc to make you--or someone else--more attractive or fit in better using clothes, makeup, etc. +2 to social rolls if you are successful (must have access to supplies).

Good First Impression

+1 to all interactions when meeting someone for the first time

Imposing

+2 when threatening or intimidating someone

Authoritative

+2 with people who respect your position, -2 to people on the “fringes”

Group Bond

+3 to responses when talking to other members of your group

You're a member of a group--a racial, ethnic, or religious minority, a military group or profession, a secret society, etc.--where people within your group are likely to trust, help, and believe you than most members of the community. This group must be substantially smaller than society as a whole.

Actor

+2 when playing a role or pretending to be someone you're not

Famous

+2 to people's reactions to you (if they know who you are)

Wealthy

You have 10x the money of an average character in the game (either a flat rate or a multiplier for a predetermined money cycle, like a salary) without any extra work. You may also have more resources at your disposal than the average person. Based on your backstory, the GM will decide what is and isn't allowed.

Powerful Connections

You know people who can get you out of trouble or help you out when needed. On a successful Soc roll, they help you out.

Social Struggles

Young/Unreliable

-2 to interactions when you want to be taken seriously

Pairs well with: Cute

Conflicts with: Imposing, Authoritative

Something about your appearance--your age, gender, physical traits or manner of speaking--makes people assume that you are less intelligent or capable than most other people in your society. They aren't necessarily right--you can be brilliant, deadly, and ruthless under your harmless facade--but strangers will dismiss or underestimate your character constantly. At least until you prove yourself competent without a doubt.

Social Stigma

-2 reactions based on your group

Honest

-2 to lie convincingly

Social Anxiety

-2 to all interactions with people you don't know or aren't comfortable with

Scary

-2 to convince people you're a good or harmless person

Awkward

Once an hour, the GM can put words in your mouth

Isolated

You have no reliable friends, family, or support system

Guarded

You have trouble getting close to people--roll against Soc to show affection or open up

Dependant(s)

Pairs well with: Overprotective,

You're financially and/or physically responsible for someone who can't take care of him/herself. This can be a gaggle of adorable younger siblings, a chronically ill best friend, a family back home that depends on your money to survive--anyone, as long as they're a significant drain on your time or resources. If your adventures force you to leave your home or quit your job, you'd better have a backup plan for taking care of them--and they also make excellent kidnapping targets and human shields.

Bad Reputation

-2 to reactions if the person knows who you are

Poor

You have 1/4 the money of an average character in the game (either a flat rate or a multiplier for a predetermined money cycle, like a salary) and have to work harder than the average person for it. You may also have fewer resources at your disposal than the average person. Based on your backstory, the GM will decide what is and isn't allowed.

Dangerous Secret

Either you choose this, or leave it to the GM's discretion so it's even a secret from you!

Dangerous Enemy

Either you choose this, or leave it to the GM's discretion so it's even a secret from you!

Unattractive

-2 on all seduction or romance rolls

Perception Talents**Good Eyesight**

+2 to seeing rolls

Good Hearing

+2 to hearing rolls

People Reader

+2 to detecting a person's mood, lies, or motives

This is for figuring out information from another person while they're talking to you--what their mood is like, whether they're lying or hiding something, etc.

Psychic Ability: Extrasensory Perception

There's a suggested list of possibilities for this in an accompanying guide.

Danger Sense

Roll against perception to tell ahead of time if danger is coming

Tuned to Nature

Per+2: On success, GM allows you to "read" the natural world (need access to outdoors) to predict weather, natural disasters, etc.

Tuned to Crowds

Per+2: On success, GM allows you to “read” a crowd or roomful of people (must be in or close to the crowd)

Are the students happy about the new council president? Is the strike going to turn into a riot? People seem excited, but where are they running toward--or running from? This skill lets you read any group of people by picking up bits of conversations and the overall feel of the crowd.

Tuned to ____

Spaceship/ship

AI

Herd, farm animals

Particular city, town, area

Perception Struggles**Hallucinations/Voices**

On a (secret to you) failed Awareness roll, you see or hear something that isn't there (at the GM's discretion)

Blind

(counts as two struggles)

Deaf

(counts as two struggles)

You may take one form of sign language for free (other non-deaf characters must buy it as a specialty).

Consider buying the specialty Lip Reading as a way to make communication easier.

Bad Eyesight

-2 to seeing rolls

Bad Hearing

-2 to hearing rolls

Can't Read People

-2 to detect a person's mood, whether they're lying or hiding something, etc.

Oblivious to Danger

No danger warnings from the GM

You're the one who wanders into the bad side of town with headphones on and a spring in your step, never noticing the shadowy figures following you

Zoned Out

-2 to notice anything if distracted or focused on something else

Gullible

-2 to detect when someone's lying to you

Narcissistic

-2 to notice anything negative that people think of you

Willpower Talents

Asexual**Immune to seduction and attractiveness**

Conflicts with: Overactive Sex Drive

You don't experience sexual attraction. You can't be seduced by anyone--in fact, you find other people's attempts at seduction transparent and awkward enough that you get a bonus the next time they try to convince you, lie to you, or sneak anything past you.

As with asexuality in real life, you can choose to get into any romantic relationship you'd like.

Stoic

+3 against anyone trying to read your emotional state

Shielded Mind

+2 to defend yourself from Awareness psychic powers

Psychic Power: Manipulating Forces

There's a suggested list of possibilities for this in an accompanying guide.

Stubborn

+2 against coercion

Focused

No penalties on rolls in high-stress situations

Withstand Pain

+2 to Wil to continue acting normally while in physical pain

Withstand Distress

+2 to Wil to continue acting normally while in emotional pain

Willpower Struggles

Overprotective:

-2 to put anything above the everyday comfort of your charge, -4 to do anything except come to your charge's rescue if he/she/it is in danger.

Unbreakable Code:

You have some belief or cause that you put before your own well-being. If you break your unbreakable code, the GM will immediately give you another struggle of their choice.

Loyalty:

You're loyal to a group, organization, or person and you must put them before your own well-being. Even if the group or person does something you don't agree with, you'll defend them. If you break this code, the GM will immediately give you another struggle of their choice.

Overactive Sex Drive:

-4 against seduction, -2 against requests made by anyone you're attracted to
Conflicts with: Asexual

Phobia

-3 to control yourself when near the thing you're afraid of

You're deathly afraid of something! Possibilities include heights, snakes, intimacy, etc. Pick a specific, single fear, although make sure the GM allows it in the scenario you're playing.

Hangup

-3 to get past the thing you're hung up on

Similar to a phobia, only you aren't afraid of something, you just can't help but obsess about it. If you're given a chance to meddle in it, you must roll Wil-2 to avoid it. If you're reminded

Heart on your Sleeve

-3 to hide your emotional state

Conflicts with: Stoic

Addiction

Reliant on an outside substance to function normally. If you don't have access or decide not to use it, -1 to all rolls per day until you get more.

Temper

-2 to keep your cool in stressful situations

PTSD

Roll Wil-2 when triggered. On failure you experience flashbacks, nightmares, anxiety, etc.

Skills

Skills are any **specific thing your character has worked hard at, practiced, and learned.** Whenever your character uses a skill, you get **+1 to the roll.**

A first-time character can take **two skills.**

Hand-to-hand combat

Informal fighting (street fighting, brawling, etc.)

Boxing

Kickboxing

Martial Arts

Close range weapons

Short Sword

Katana

Spear

Staff

Dagger

Billy Club

Long range weapons

Thrown Dagger

Throwing Stars

Bow

Crossbow

Rifle

Pistol

Sniper Rifle

Athletics

Football

Basketball

Tennis

Soccer

Gymnastics

Dance

Swimming

Climbing

Musical Instrument [choose one]**Art**

Painting
Cartooning
Sculpture
Sewing
Woodworking
Cooking
Baking
Gardening

Vehicle Skills

Motorcycle
Car
Semi Truck
Helicopter
Plane
Boat

Criminal Skills

Lockpicking
Pickpocket
Forgery

Science Skills

Biology
Chemistry
Physics

Math Skills

Statistics
Engineering

Repair/Mechanic Skills

Auto Repair
Plumbing
Electrician

Area Knowledge [specify location]**Computer Skills**

Programming

Hacking
Security Systems

Outdoor Skills

Tracking
Hunting
Survival [area]

Animal Skills

Horseback Riding
Veterinary
Dog Training

Medical Skills

First Aid
Surgery
Diagnosis

Building Skills

Carpentry
Blacksmithing

Academic Skills

Research

Special Knowledge [in subject of your choice]

Gameplay

Basics of Gaming

When to roll the dice

Roll against your abilities

You always want to **roll low**. For any action you're attempting, you'll first need to find the appropriate base stat. Then, you'll use any talents or struggles that apply to what you're doing, and add or subtract to your base stat number. Third, if you have a skill that applies, you'll add an extra +1 to what you're doing. Finally, the GM may give you an extra modifier based on the difficulty of what you're trying to do.

Add all these numbers together, then roll the dice. If the dice roll is **lower or equal to** than the added-together number, you **succeed**. If it's **higher**, you **fail**.

Critical successes and critical failures

The lowest--and best--number you can roll on two dice is two ones, or **two**. Rolling a two is an automatic success at whatever you were doing. In gaming, we call it a **critical success**, or **crit success**, and it's a situation where you won't just succeed, but succeed in some extreme way above what would normally happen.

Similarly, the highest--and worst--number you can roll on two dice is two sixes, or **twelve**. A twelve is an automatic failure, aka **critical failure** or **crit fail**. These failures are spectacularly extreme.

Rolling a 2 counts as a success even if your scores would normally not allow you to succeed at all. That way, there's always a chance of success when you roll. For something that's actively impossible, the GM simply won't allow you to roll.

Competition between characters

Whoever beats their roll by the most wins. In case of a tie, the defender wins.

Combat

Turns

To determine who goes first in combat, first separate the group into people who had **advance warning**, and people who are **caught by surprise**. Anyone with danger sense or is committing a surprise attack will have advance warning. Depending on the situation, the GM may have characters who are under attack roll to see if they notice what's going on.

Everyone in the advance warning group will roll one die. People with "quick" will add 2, people with "slow" will subtract two. Highest number goes first, then down the list. If there's a tie, the people involved should roll again until one gets a higher number than the other.

Then, the surprised group will roll. The same quick/slow rules apply. The surprised group will move after the entire advance warning group.

The GM should make a list of the attack order, and the players and NPCs will get to move in that order.

Attacking an opponent

Start with your Fitness

+ 2 Quick

+2 Graceful if you have a martial arts skill

- 2 Slow

- 1 Clumsy
- + 1 if you're using a weapon that you have the skill for

If you crit succeed an attack roll, your opponent doesn't have a chance to block.

Dodging and blocking

Both are initially based off of Fitness, but dodging is modified by Quick (+2) and Slow (-2), and blocking is modified by Strong (+2) and Weak (-2).

Ranged attacks

Ranged attacks can only be dodged, not blocked, and if you crit succeed at dodging, you can't attack your attacker back because he or she is too far away.

Damage

Damage is based off rolling a single die. Use this list to determine your damage--the number on the left is your fitness, the formula on the right is how you figure out the damage you do. 1d means roll a die and find the number, then subtract or add the number to the right.

If you have Strong, add +1 damage to your final roll. If you have weak, -1 damage to your final roll (these modifiers only apply to melee attacks, not ranged).

- 1: 1D-4
- 2: 1D-4
- 3: 1D-3
- 4: 1D-3
- 5: 1D-2
- 6: 1D-2
- 7: 1D-2
- 8: 1D-1
- 9: 1D-1
- 10: 1D
- 11: 1D
- 12: 1D+1

Getting out of jams

Aim--Spend up to two turns in a row focusing and aiming. As long as no one interrupts you (by attacking, distracting you, etc.), you get a +2 bonus to hit per turn spent aiming, up to +4.

Wild attack--choose a number to subtract from your attack value (up to 3). If you still make the attack, add that number to your damage. Whether you succeed or fail at the attack, subtract that number from any defensive rolls before your next turn.

Wait for an opening--skip your attack to get a bonus on your next attack: either +2 to hit, or +2 damage.

Last-ditch Defense--to just try to save yourself before you get knocked out, add +4 to your defense roll, but you don't get any combat actions the next turn--either attack or defense. This is good for if you think one of your allies can defend or rescue you on their next turn, or as a way to escape being knocked out so that you can do a non-combat action: yell for help, try to talk to your opponent, notice details about your opponent or surroundings, leave a token for your friends to find when they come looking for you, etc.

Hit Points (HP)

Hit points are equal to your Fitness and +2 for Tough, -2 for Fragile. A PC will never have HP lower than 3, and an NPC will never have HP lower than 1.

When HP reaches zero

When HP reaches zero, your character is knocked unconscious for five minutes, unless you have Withstand Pain. If you have Withstand Pain, you get to roll against willpower to keep fighting, and only go down once you fail a Will roll.

Character death

Character death is a place where house rules are in charge. In a horror game, maybe reaching zero HP DOES mean instant death, to add an extra layer of danger. In a less violent game (such as ESRPG), NPCs can die, but it has to be from an action taken after the character is KO'd or at the other person's mercy. PCs have what we call "PC immunity," and can't die, though they will definitely be punished if the GM feels that they're abusing the privilege.

Special combat skills

Using something like a psychic power to directly attack someone works the same as a normal attack, only you'll be rolling off your Willpower instead of Fitness.

Using a psychic power in combat to read someone's mind or emotions, manipulate your opponent, or do something to your surroundings will work just like using your ability outside of combat, although the GM will give you a penalty based on how quickly you have to act, how stressed you are by combat, and whether or not you've already been injured. These can be counteracted by the talents "withstand distress," "withstand pain," or "focused."

Your opponent will have the opportunity to fight off your attack in the same way they would outside of combat, too--willpower rolls for manipulation attacks, normal dodge rolls to avoid a

falling tree branch or similar, etc. Again, penalties for being in a combat situation should be applied.

Non-fitness abilities in combat

Remember that you may also use your turn in combat for non-combat moves--getting someone's attention, causing a distraction, trying to talk it out, or anything else you can think of!