

The Words – a RPG

Unlike ordinary people, your character is special. You have a list of special *Words* that allow you to do things that most people cannot. The GM will decide how many you start with.

Depending how dangerous your world is, thirty Words will make for a fairly effective starting hero.

For challenges, including combat, you'll **spend** your special Words to get the job done!

When spent, your Words are temporarily unavailable, until your character recovers them by resting.

1. For challenges the GM deems to be *important*, you'll spend **one** Word to succeed.
2. For challenges the GM deems to be important and urgent, spend **two** Words to succeed.
3. During battles, or for especially difficult or dangerous challenges, the GM will set a "Target Number" for your PC to roll.

You can spend up to **three** of your Words to try to meet a Target Number challenge.

You get to roll:

- a) 3D6 for the *first* Word you spend,
- b) 2D6 more for the *second* Word you spend, and
- c) 1D6 more for the *third* Word you spend. (That's a maximum of 6D6.)

If your roll adds up to **equal to** or **greater than** the Target Number you've succeeded!

A Target Number of 10 would be very easy. 17 is average difficulty. 20 is hard. 24 is very hard. 27 to 39 and beyond is much worse.

Often, you'll need to call on the other Player Characters to help you! And *occasionally*, a trusted NPC friend or relative can help you too! See "**Getting Help**", below.

Depending on your intent and the circumstances, a successful roll might mean you've:

- a) Injured, disabled or outright killed an opponent.
- b) Learned some important fact or clue.
- c) Negotiated a complex social problem or obtained someone's agreement.
- d) Acted decisively to save yourself or someone else from terrible danger.

You may use the Words to help narrate what your character does, but this is never required. You can let that part slide and enjoy the rare moments when it does work. We'll also enjoy the moments of comic desperation when your Word supply runs low!

Getting Help - *After* you roll, if you haven't succeeded, other Player Characters who are with you can each spend **one** of their Words to add a full 6 points to help you reach your target number. (They'll usually razz you, explaining what you did wrong, and how they fixed your error!)

And if the GM rules it's appropriate, your Character *may* have one or two NPC minions, friends or relatives that can help once a day with a full 6-point addition to your score. This of course may put them in harms way!

Recovering your Special Words

When you spend a Word, you tick it off. You can't use it again until your Character rests and recovers. The Gamemaster will confirm when you can refresh all **or** some of your Words.

Target number examples

- Roll 10 to **defeat** a *River-Jaw*.
- Roll 12 to *wound* a *Death Wurm*. (It can take 3 wounds before it's defeated.)
- Roll 21 to *wound* a *Hollow Giant*. (He can take 6 wounds before he's defeated.)

Your Words also count as HIT POINTS.

If you're hit by an attack, affected by a fall or another event the GM will ask you to tick off a number of Words to reflect how bad the injury is. (You'll choose which Words.)

This indicates that your Character is getting worn down.

If you run out of Words, your Character becomes exhausted and may have to be rescued by his friends. Or he might be seriously injured or die if the situation is dire.

“How can my character grow?”

At the end of each game session the GM *may* give you an additional Word to add to your list.

Also, Player Characters who've helped each other during the game session can get one new special Word from one of their PC companions.

You'll still retain any shared Word, but your friend has learned something vital from you. It *might* be a Word you've used to help your friend succeed, giving you another opportunity to rub in the fact that you saved them from failure.

~That's the end of the Rules!~

- A list of 233 possible character Words is on pages 3 and 4.
- Examples of Word use in game play can be found on pages 5 and 6.

The Words List – Chose 30 word for your Character

Accomplished	Cheerful	Dutiful	Generous
Accurate	Clever	Dynamic	Genuine
Adaptable	Committed	Eager	Good-natured
Adventurous	Compassionate	Efficient	Graceful
Affectionate	Competitive	Egalitarian	Handsome
Alert	Confident	Eloquent	Hard-working
Amusing	Conscientious	Empathetic	Harmonious
Analytical	Considerate	Encouraging	Helpful
Approachable	Cooperative	Energetic	Honest
Articulate	Courageous	Engaged	Honorable
Artistic	Courteous	Enterprising	Hopeful
Assertive	Creative	Entertaining	Humble
Athletic	Curious	Enthusiastic	Humorous
Attractive	Daring	Ethical	Idealistic
Avid	Dauntless	Even-handed	Imaginative
Balanced	Debonair	Expressive	Impartial
Big-hearted	Decent	Exuberant	Incorruptible
Brainy	Decisive	Fair-minded	Independent
Brave	Dedicated	Faithful	Industrious
Brilliant	Dependable	Fearless	Innovative
Buff	Detail-oriented	Fit	Inquisitive
Calm	Determined	Flexible	Insightful
Capable	Devoted	Focused	Inspiring
Careful	Dignified	Forceful	Intelligent
Caring	Diligent	Forgiving	Intuitive
Charismatic	Diplomatic	Friendly	Inventive
Charitable	Disciplined	Frugal	Jovial
Charming	Discreet	Fun-loving	Just

Kind	Personable	Sage	Toned
Kind-hearted	Persuasive	Scholarly	Tough
Knowledgeable	Pioneering	Self-disciplined	Towering
Level-headed	Plucky	Selfless	Trustworthy
Likable	Polished	Sensitive	Truthful
Lively	Popular	Sharp	Uncomplaining
Logical	Positive	Shrewd	Understanding
Lovable	Practical	Silent	Unorthodox
Loving	Pragmatic	Sincere	Unperturbed
Loyal	Precise	Skillful	Unpretentious
Masculine	Proficient	Smart	Unselfish
Mature	Prompt	Solid	Unwavering
Merciful	Prudent	Spontaneous	Unyielding
Methodical	Punctual	Stable	Upbeat
Meticulous	Purposeful	Steadfast	Valiant
Motivated	Quick-witted	Steady	Venturesome
Muscular	Rational	Stoic	Versatile
Objective	Realistic	Strong	Vigorous
Observant	Reasonable	Studious	Vital
Optimistic	Reliable	Suave	Warm-hearted
Organized	Resilient	Sympathetic	Well-built
Painstaking	Resolute	Systematic	Well-mannered
Passionate	Resourceful	Tactful	Winning
Patient	Responsible	Tenacious	Wise
Peacemaker	Responsive	Thorough	Witty
Perceptive	Ripped	Thoughtful	Youthful
Perseverant	Robust	Thrifty	Zealous
Persistent	Romantic	Timely	

Examples of Word use in game play

Example One: You need to get a boatload of supplies safely across a river. It's important but not urgent, so you decide to use a Word (like "Entertaining" or "Polished") to make sure the trip is safe.

Example Two: You need to save your family's annual festival dinner from disaster when the roast hind is overcooked. It's important and urgent, so you decide to use two words (like "Entertaining" or "Polished") to make it a remarkable feast!

Example Three: You must speak to an assembly of townsfolk. Your aim is to persuade them to follow your plan to stand fast and defend the town against a coming threat. It's a tough crowd. Some families want to flee, and you're asking a lot for them to trust you.

You decide to spend 3 of your most applicable Words, "Assertive", "Brilliant" and "Charismatic", so you can roll a full 6D6. You roll and it's a very good result, but there's still some dissent.

Luckily, you've two friends to chime in. One spends "Confident", the other uses "Eloquent", adding 12 points to your result!

The townsfolk are not only persuaded to follow you, but they'll work like they've never done before! Now you just better make sure *you* don't screw this up!

Example Four: While on a long trip in the wilderness, two Characters are attacked by a pack of four beasts. In the first round of battle, two beasts face off against each of PC. The GM sets the first Target number to defeat one beast at 12.

A) You decide to tick off just one Word, "Dynamic", worth 3D6, hoping for a good roll against your opponents. Bad luck! You roll an 8 which would be a failure for this round - but your friend saves you by ticking off "Loyal" from his Word list. That's worth +6 to your score.

With his help you kill one of the beasts. The GM says that the second beast claws at you and asks you to tick off one Word. You mark off "Merciful".

B) Your friend attacks with two Words, "Courageous" (which gives him 3D6) and "Fearless" (which gives him 2 more D6) – total of 5D6. He rolls 15. No problem! Another beast is down.

The GM says the second beast nips him, and he ticks off "Kind" to reflect that opponent's attack. The odds are turning in your favour and GM drops the target number to 10 for the second round.

Example Five: Later, on your wilderness trip, you and your friend have to fight a fierce *Hollow Giant*. Unfortunately, you haven't recovered from the beast attack, so the Words you've already ticked off aren't available.

The Giant will take 6 wounds to defeat, and he swings a big tree trunk club that will make one of you tick off three Words every round!

The GM says the Giant is temporarily surprised and your target number for this round is 16.

First round of battle. - You tick off the Word “Daring”, worth 3D6, plus 2D6 more for “Sharp”, hoping for at least an average roll. Good luck! You roll 18 and cause the Giant one wound.

Your friend attacks with “Plucky” (3D6) and “Fearless” (two more D6) – and rolls 16. Just enough for another wound.

The Game Master says the Giant thinks you’re his toughest opponent, and you have to tick off three Words, reflecting your efforts to avoid having your skull bashed in!

Round two – The *Hollow Giant* has now taken 2 out of 6 wounds and he’s mad! The GM says your target number is now 21 instead of 16! You spend three Words, roll a total of 6D6 and get 18. Darn, a miss!

But your friend saves you by ticking off “Observant”, worth +6 to your score. With his help you score another wound.

The battle continues, and luckily the Giant falls, before you’re both completely exhausted.

~The end is up to you~

The Words is a free-to-use Roleplaying Game created by Canadian novelist, Craig Russell, author of the fantasy novel, *Black Bottle Man* (Great Plains Publications) and the SF novel, *Fragment*. (Thistledown Press).

© Craig Russell, 2023.

If you’ve enjoyed these rules, please let me know at: russellc@mymts.net