

# INTRODUCTORY PACK FOR UNISYSTEM PIRATES



*based on "Buffy the Vampire Slayer Roleplaying Game - Introductory Pack - First Day"  
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A typical cast for the game consists of a mixture of **Heroes**, **White Hats** and possibly **Experienced Heroes**. Heroes are the action types, with higher attributes and skills than the norm. White Hats are the normal folks caught up in bad times, with only average abilities but determined to make a difference. They do start the game with double the amount of Drama Points that Heroes do though. Most of the Original Cast listed here are very experienced, blurring the line between types, but that's to be expected, as they've been at this a while.

All characters have **Attributes**—basic physical and mental abilities. In the BtVS RPG these are Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Perception, and Willpower. Human Attributes range from one to six, with two being average.

**Life Points** (LPs) represent the amount of damage a character can absorb, and are calculated from her Attributes. When a character's Life Points are exhausted she is at or near death.

**Drama Points** are the extra edge that allows a character to succeed when it is vital, against overwhelming opposition. They allow for huge bonuses to actions, and quick recovery from devastating wounds. Starting Drama Points are based on the character type, but will go up and down throughout an adventure as they are spent and earned by the character's actions.

**Qualities** and **Drawbacks** are positive and negative traits that help round out a character. They can modify Attributes, Life Points, and provide special abilities or penalties. The game effects of the character's Qualities and Drawbacks are explained under each entry, and bonuses to other Attributes are already applied.

**Skills** are the abilities of the Cast Member. Skill level one represents an amateur. A two or three represents general competency. Extreme competence comes with levels four or five. Higher levels are possible, indicating mastery of the skill. There are 18 broadly defined skills in the *BtVS RPG*, allowing a character to be just as proficient in a number of areas as their typical TV counterpart. Where skills may overlap (such as the ability to sneak in the case of Acrobatics and Crime), it is up to you to decide which applies in any given situation. The Wild Card skill is a catchall that allows the player to define a narrow-focus skill for character reasons, or to create a new skill not otherwise covered (at your discretion).

**Maneuvers** are a list of a character's signature combat moves (punches and kicks, that sort of thing—not screaming like a girl and running). They include the Attribute and skill Bonus and Base Damages already, so you don't have to make like a calculator during play. Unless the Notes, which may contain modifiers, say otherwise.

## **Skills**

Acrobatics

Art

Computers

Crime

Doctor

Driving

Getting Medieval

Gun Fu

Influence

Knowledge

Kung Fu

Languages

Mr. Fix-It

Notice  
Occultism  
Science  
Sports  
Wild Card

*(Of course, some of these are not appropriate, like Computers, but it gives an idea. I'll be making my own skill list shortly and it'll be based on this. Sometimes only the name will change: Kung Fu will be renamed Fisticuffs, for example.)*

## The Rules

That's right, roleplaying games are still games, and like most games they have rules. The main rule is for you Directors and the players to have fun.

Rules are not necessary for many aspects of the game. Simple things like talking or picking up an object do not require rules. Only if the outcome of an action is in doubt and the results of that action are important, do the rules come into play. That's when it's time to start rolling dice.

*All tested actions are resolved with a ten-sided die (D10). Basically, a player rolls a D10 and adds the appropriate Attribute and/or skill to the number rolled. If the result is nine or higher, the action was successful. If the result is less than nine, the action failed. A higher total value means a more spectacular success, and some actions may be more difficult than others (when modifiers are applied).*

Most actions add the values of one Attribute and one skill to a D10. You always determine which Attribute and skill should be used for a particular action. When no skill is appropriate, the Attribute is usually doubled and added to a D10. Some tough actions don't get the doubling. You make the call on which Attribute is used, and whether it is doubled or not.

Example Away: Kevin is playing Pete Malraux, a White Hat. Kevin wants Pete to climb from a balcony up to the roof of a building. You decide that this should be resolved using Pete's Strength 4 and Acrobatics 2. The player rolls a four on a D10, and adds six (the sum of Attribute 4 and skill 2). The result is 10. Since this is higher than nine, Pete succeeds in making his way to the rooftop. Kevin then decides that Pete will attempt to jump down to a ledge on the neighboring building. You decide that due to the precarious footing required, once the jump is successful (using a Dexterity + Acrobatics roll), the player must roll a Dexterity (doubled) action for Pete to keep his balance. Pete's Dexterity is three, so this is doubled to six. A D10 is rolled and comes up six, for a total of 12. You inform the player that Pete wobbles, but is able to keep from falling from the narrow ledge.

Sometimes a character attempts something and another character tries to stop her or avoid the action. This is a **Resisted Action**. It is resolved as a normal action, but both sides get to roll. If both rolls fail, neither side gets the desired effect. If one fails and one succeeds, the successful character wins. If both rolls are successful, the better result wins. In the case of a tie, the defender (if there is a defender) wins; otherwise it is just a tie.

## Modifiers

Sometimes circumstances make an attempted task easier or more difficult. In such a case, a positive or negative modifier may be added to the attempt. The following table shows some modifiers that may be used.

**Base Modifiers Table**

Easy	+5
Moderate	+3 to +4
Average	+1 to +2
Challenging	No modifier
Difficult	-1 to -2
Very Difficult	-3 to -5
Heroic	-6 to -9
Shaah, right	-10 or worse

In addition to those modifiers, Drama Points can add bonuses to rolls.

### **Success Levels**

In some situations, you need to know more than whether the character has succeeded at something—you need how well she succeeded. When that's the case, check the result against the Success Level Chart. The greater the number of Success Levels, the better the character did. Some difficult tasks require more than one Success Level.

Example Me, Baby: When the character attacks someone, how well she struck influences how much she hurt the target. Add the Success Levels of the attack roll to the base damage of the attack. On the flip side, for uses of the Doctor Skill, each Success Level heals one point of damage.

### **Success Levels Table**

<i>Roll Total</i>	<i>Success Levels</i>	<i>Description</i>
9-10	1	Adequate
11-12	2	Decent
13-14	3	Good
15-16	4	Very Good
17-20	5	Excellent
21-23	6	Extraordinary
24-26	7	Mind-boggling
27-29	8	Outrageous
30-32	9	Superheroic
33-35	10	God-like
+3	+1	

## Getting the Wiggins

When the big hairy scary happens, the characters have to make a Willpower (doubled) roll (Qualities like Nerves of Steel or Fast Reaction Time help). This is known as the **Fear Test**. Modifiers may be called for. That's up to the Director.

*If the result of the roll is nine or higher, the character may be afraid or apprehensive, but she can act normally. If the result is eight or less, she wigs out. Use the Panic Table for inspiration.*

### Panic Table

<i>Roll Result</i>	<i>Effect</i>
7-8	Startled: The character is startled but not paralyzed, and can act normally. Initiative is lost, however; the critter wins Initiative automatically on that Turn.
5-6	Freak out: The character screams and/or flinches away. Only defense actions can be attempted on that Turn, and the character cannot go on Full Defense.
3-4	Run Away!: The character takes off running like a spider-eating spine-missing Zeppo for a full Turn, unless cornered, in which case cowering in terror is on the agenda. No attacks are possible, and defense actions are at -2. After each Turn (or handful of seconds), a new Fear Test can be rolled (reduce any penalties by one with each successive Turn, until the character snaps out of it).
2 or less	Total Terror: The character is not in control of her actions. She may lose her lunch, pass out or suffer some other oh-so-embarrassing fate.

## Combat

To make things go a bit easier when the rough stuff starts, the action is divided into segments, known as **Turns**. A game Turn represents a short bit of time—five seconds or so—during which characters can attack and defend. During a Turn, a normal character can attack once and defend from one attack without penalties. Experienced or fast characters can make more than one attack during a Turn.

At the beginning of each Turn, the players declare the intentions of their Cast Member. This is where they say, “I want to aim my crossbow,” or “I cast a Spell.” You decide if that action is possible in one Turn. Most simple actions are, but if a character wants to knock a large hole in a wall with her axe, she is going to need more than five seconds.

Then you determine who attacks first. The simplest way is to have each character roll and add their Dexterity (and any Fast Reaction Time bonuses).

Once initiative is determined, the intended tasks are rolled. Usually, a character may only take one action per Turn, but those with Dexterity 5 or greater gain extra actions according to the Additional Actions Table.

### Additional Actions Table

Dexterity	Additional Actions
5-6	1
7-8	2
9-10	3
11-12	4
+2	+1 per

As it is difficult to do more than two things at once (or walk and chew gum for some of us), additional actions suffer cumulative penalties of -2. The player only rolls once—successive attacks or defenses each reduce the total by two. If the target defends against any of those attacks, the character can no longer continue attacking on that Turn.

### Close Combat

In close combat, attacking uses Dexterity and the appropriate skill (Kung Fu bare handed or Getting Medieval with a weapon) or the Combat Score. In a pinch, Sports might be substituted for swinging attacks with a stick (baseball bat, hockey stick). When two or more attackers gang up against a single target, they get a +1 bonus to all actions for each attacker, to a maximum of +4 for four or more attackers.

Weapons may only be parried by weapons. A hand-to-hand attack may be parried by a weapon and that’s going to cause normal damage for that weapon to the bonehead who rushed in unarmed. A Parry uses Dexterity and Kung Fu, or Dexterity and Getting Medieval roll, or the Combat Score. Thrown weapons can be parried at a -2 penalty. Arrows and crossbow bolts are parried at a -6 penalty. No character can parry bullets unless she arrived in Sunnydale on a transparent plane from some Amazon island.

Anyone may attempt to dodge an attack. Dodging hand-to-hand attacks can be done once per Turn without penalty; dodging missile attacks (bullets, ninja stars, harpoons) suffers a -2 penalty on top of any other modifiers. Use a roll and add Dexterity and the highest appropriate skill (Acrobatics, Getting Medieval or Kung Fu), or just use the Combat Score.

Note that for those most feeble of Guest Stars and Adversaries (Combat Score 8 or lower), any chance at a successful attack requires Full Offense. This means the character foregoes any defense against attacks that turn, in exchange for a +2 on all attacks the character makes. The flip side is Full Defense, which allows the character to defend against two attacks at no penalty (and against others if extra actions are available), and gives her a +3 bonus to all defense actions (Dodges and Parries, for the most part). No attacks are allowed on any Turn the character is in Full Defense mode.

Sometimes a character just wants to grab someone and shake 'em until their teeth rattle in their head. She has to grapple them first, though. Grabbing people is fairly easy; use a Dexterity and Kung Fu + 2 roll, or the Combat Score + 2. The victim resists with a Dodge action. When Grappled, the target is at -2 to actions that involve the grappled limb, or -1 to all actions if grappled around the body. If two attackers grapple both arms, the victim is at -4 to most rolls, and cannot Dodge. The victim can try to break free with a Strength (doubled) roll, or the Muscle Score versus another Grapple action.

You Gussed it—Example Time!: Shannon, a Hero Type Slayer with Dexterity 7 and Kung Fu 4, finds herself up against three vamps in the graveyard. She's in a hurry to help a friend so she decides to attack each vamp in one Turn. That's fine, her high Dexterity allows her two additional actions, which she decides to take as attacks. Still, the second and third suffer penalties. She rolls a nine and adds her Dexterity and Kung Fu; the result is 20. That's over the first vamp's Combat Score of 18, so he gets hit. Shannon's second attack uses the same result (20) but subtracts two and becomes an 18. That ties the second vamp's Combat Score (18 as well), so the blow doesn't land (ties go to the defender). Finally, Shannon does not get her third attack as the second vamp defended successfully against her.

Now Shannon has a problem. She has one defense action available at no penalty. Unfortunately, she has two uninjured vamps in her face. One tries to Grapple. She Dodges with a roll of nine plus her Dexterity and Acrobatics (5), or 21, beating the vamp's Combat Score (18) + 2. The other strikes unhindered; his Combat Score (18) is greater than the minimum success total (9), so he automatically connects. Let's hope that Shannon's been eating her Wheaties.

## ***Ranged Combat***

Generally speaking, ranged combat works just like close combat. Attackers make their rolls or use their Combat Score, and the target tries to defend (usually by Dodging). Sometimes it pays to take careful aim—if the character misses the vampire's heart with a crossbow shot, she may not get a second chance. Aiming delays the shot action until near the end of a Turn. The player adds Perception and the appropriate skill (Gun Fu for guns, Getting Medieval for archaic ranged weapons) to the roll, or just uses the Brains Score. The shot action gets a bonus equal to the Success Levels of the Aiming roll.

To keep things simple assume no penalty at short range, a -1 penalty to shots at medium range, and a -3 penalty to shots at long range. Short range is under five yards for pistols, and 20 yards for rifles. Medium range is under 20 yards for pistols, and under 100 yards for rifles. Long range is up to 50 yards for pistols and up to 300 yards for rifles.

If shooting doesn't work at first, shoot them again and again. Most guns can fire more than once in a five-second period (in fact, most handguns can be emptied in five seconds). Roll and add Dexterity and Gun Fu; each additional shot uses the same roll, but drops down one Success Level. Bows use the Multiple Action rules. Crossbows and other single-shot weapons must be reloaded after each shot. *(Well, this of course applies to our muskets and pistols. No repeating fire in my game, no sir.)*



## **Damage**

Damage is measured in **Life Points**. Each attack action has a base damage number or a formula, which is calculated and listed under Combat Maneuvers for the Cast presented in this pack. The actual damage inflicted is equal to the base damage, plus one per Success Level of the attack roll, minus any Armor Value possessed by the defender (if applicable), multiplied by any damage type or other modifiers. In the case of bullet or slash/stab damage, damage is doubled against normal humans (bullet damage is not doubled against vampires). Bash damage has no multiplier.

**Bash** attacks (Punches, Kicks, baseball bats, and so on) can be turned into **Knockout** attacks, using a Dexterity and Kung Fu - 2, or Dexterity and Getting Medieval - 2 roll, or the Combat Score - 2. The total damage of the attack is halved, but the victim has to make a Constitution (doubled) roll (or use the Muscle Score) with a penalty equal to the Success Levels of the Knockout roll. If she fails, she goes down for the count. Recovery from a knockout is in your fiendish Directory hands; the victim may recover in a few turns, or wake up an hour later . . . possibly in captivity.

**Fire** damage is a special case. A person on fire takes three points of damage every Turn until somebody puts her out. If more than 20 points of Fire damage are inflicted on a character, some scarring occurs. Fire damage also heals at half the normal rate (or one Life Point per Constitution level per day for vampires); the player should keep track of fire damage separately.

## **Effects of Injury**

Characters reduced to 10 Life Points or below are severely injured, and find it hard to continue fighting; all combat rolls are at a -2 penalty. If reduced below five Life Points, this penalty goes up to -4. At zero LPs or below, the character is knocked down, stunned and semi-conscious. A Consciousness Test (Constitution and Willpower minus the number of LPs below zero) is required to remain conscious. So, at -7 LPs, a Consciousness Test suffers a -7.

At -10 LPs, a Survival Test is required (Constitution and Willpower minus one for every 10 LPs below zero). The Survival Test must be passed once each minute until the character receives some doctor'n. Each additional Test is at a cumulative -1. A successful Intelligence and Doctor roll stabilizes the character.

Bitesize Example: Jess, a White Hat, is bitten by a vampire for 51 points of damage before she can force it back with her cross. She had 38 LPs and is now at -13 LPs. Her Constitution is two and her Willpower is four. This total of six is reduced by one (she's at -13) for her Survival Test. She needs to roll a four or better to live. If she lives, she must make a Consciousness Test to avoid passing out. This is at a -13, so unless she uses a Drama Point (see p. [?]), she is going to go unconscious. If she does not receive any kind of medical attention, a minute later she has to make another Survival Roll with a -1 penalty.

## **Getting Better**

For most Cast Members (the purely human kind), injuries heal at the rate of one Life Point per Constitution level every day spent under medical care. Slayers, vampires and other critters heal much faster, at the rate of one Life Point per Constitution level every *hour* or faster. Use of Drama Points can greatly speed recovery.

## Drama Points

Drama Points are the great equalizers between the Slayer and the Slayerettes. They are what keep Xander's insides inside after some of the pummeling he's taken over the years, and what allows Buffy's mom to knock down Spike with one blow from an axe. Which is not to say Heroes don't need them; nothing beats a Drama Point or two when you need to dust a half-dozen vamps in time to save the world.

A player has to announce her character is using a Drama Point during the Intentions phase of a Turn, or before rolling during non-combat situations. Drama Points can be used in several ways:

**Heroic Feat:** By spending a Drama Point, the character gets a +10 bonus on some value. This can be an attack or defense roll, or any use of a skill, or even for a Fear or Survival Test. The Heroic Feat can also make things hurt more; the +10 bonus is added to the base damage in addition to any Success Level bonuses (then armor, damage type and other modifiers are applied). Also, only one Heroic Feat may be performed in a Turn.

**I Think I'm OK:** For a mere Drama Point, half the Life Point damage (round down) the character has taken up to that point is healed up. I Think I'm Okay can be used only once per Turn, but it can be used several Turns in a row, each use halving whatever damage remains. If the character had suffered enough damage to be incapacitated or unconscious, however, healing does not necessarily awaken her. You decide if the time is right for the character to revive and join the action.

**Plot Twist:** Once per game session, each character can spend a Drama Point and get a "break." This is not a Get Out of Jail Free Card. If the heroine stupidly walked into a vampires' lair and she is surrounded by a horde of bloodsuckers, a Plot Twist won't allow her to escape unscathed. If you decide that a Plot Twist is not possible, the player gets back the Drama Point.

**Righteous Fury:** By spending two Drama Points, the character gets a +5 bonus to all attack actions, including magical attacks, for the duration of the fight. These benefits are cumulative with Heroic Feats, above. Problem is, an appropriate provocation is necessary to invoke the Righteous Fury rule. A player can't decide her character is pissed about the existence of vampires, or global warming, or even the mystery meatloaf they served at school that morning. She needs to be truly provoked.

## Magic

The dark (and not-so-dark) arts are part and parcel of our universe, where anyone with the right books can summon forces from the beyond. Of course, calling on these occult powers does not mean your character can control and use them with impunity. More often than not, magic has unintended consequences. But the real kicker is that even succeeding does not mean everything works perfectly. There is always a price, both for success and failure. You have been warned.

*(This holds doubly so in our version of the world. Magic is a real thing, but it's very mysterious. Few know anything with certainty as it is difficult to separate the superstition from fact. Magic users are rare and often drag around a considerable amount of disadvantages because of its use.)*

Each spell has a **Power Level**. This determines the overall strength of the spell—the higher the Power Level of a spell, the more difficult it is to cast properly, and the more damaging the consequences of failure. Additionally, spells have Requirements—the ingredients or ritual components needed to attempt the magical endeavor. Finally, spells have an Effect. This is usually descriptive (“all the body hair is removed from the victim,” for example), but can also include rules concepts like damage inflicted, area affected, and duration.

Once everything is in place, casting a spell requires a roll using Willpower and Occultism. Drama Points can be used normally to increase the spell's chance to succeed.

Witches, meaning those with true power (or in this case, the Sorcery Quality), have an advantage when casting spells. Characters add their Sorcery level to any spellcasting roll, to a maximum bonus of +5. After that, additional levels of Sorcery stop adding up (although they still have other uses). With this bonus, Witches can cast high-power spells with a better chance of success than your typical book-reading spell-flinger.

If the roll fails (i.e, the total is less than nine), the spell doesn't work—the ritual simply fails. Generally, there's no other down side here; your character just wasted some time, candlepower and pretty speechifying.

If successful, the roll's Success Levels are compared to the spell's Power Level. If the number of Success Levels is less than the spell's Power Level, something magical happens—but it may not be exactly what the caster intended. The spell's intent may be twisted or perverted, and the caster may be injured—or even killed—as the magicks draw on her life force to fulfill their purpose. You can decide what happens, or you can roll on the Spell Side Effect Table.

*(There will be a chance to play a magic using- character. This can be a practitioner of voodoo (white or black), or a truly faithful man that receives his powers from the Lord.)*

### Spell Side Effect Table

Roll D10 and add the Spell's Power Level.

<i>Roll Total</i>	<i>Result</i>
4 or less	Phew! Lucked out, and the spell still works.
5-7	The spell is delayed. It appears the spell failed, but it will work normally at a time of your choosing (ideally, a dramatically appropriate time).
8-10	The spell works, but it's less effective than expected. The duration, damage or effect is halved (if not applicable, then the spell is delayed as above).
11-13	The spell works, but the caster is damaged by its energies. The magician takes five Life Points of damage per Power Level of the spell.

14-15	The spell affects the wrong target (you decide who gets to be the lucky recipient).
16+	Spell has a completely unexpected effect. The magical energies run rampant, often causing physical damage to the area or summoning dangerous entities from beyond our reality. This can also happen if the spell is disrupted during a critical point.

If the roll results in Success Levels equal to or greater than the spell's Power Level, all's well and the spell works. Unless, of course, the spell takes an unexpected turn no matter how many Success Levels were rolled. In some cases, a spell might work too well. But no good and true Director would do something like that, now would they?

## Multiple Casting

Every successive spell cast without a significant period of rest (at least two hours per spell Power Level) suffers at least a cumulative -2 penalty. So, the second spell of the day is at -2, the third at -4, and so on. Only powerful Witches can cast multiple spells in a row, and even then they'll probably have to burn some Drama Points to keep it up. Even worse, using the same spell more than once adds an additional -1 to the penalties above.

Exemplis Totalitus: Suzi, a White Hat Witch, attempts a relatively simple warding ritual to protect a young girl from the forces of darkness after her. The Ward has a Power Level of 3, which with Suzi's Base Spell Modifier (Willpower 4 plus Occultism 3 plus Sorcery 3 equals 10) should be a cakewalk. Unfortunately, Suzi has already cast two spells in helping free the girl from the Big Bad's clutches, so she's at -4 for this third spell of the evening. So instead of cake, we have very difficult pie. She needs to match the Power Level in Success Levels, which means a final score of 13 or better. She rolls a five, for a total of 11. Good enough for *something* to happen, but not necessarily what she was intending. You roll a 12 and compare that result to the Spell Side Effect Table. For a spell with Power Level 3, this means the Ward takes effect, but the energies also rebound on Suzi, causing 15 points of damage. Ouch!

## Dispelling

Some spells have continuing effects (curses, for example) or may even be permanent (some transformation spells). Canceling their effects requires access to the spell itself (ideally taking it directly from the magician's own books) and a spellcasting roll as above with the effective Power Level of the spell reduced by one (it's easier to undo a spell and return nature to its natural state).

There *is* another way to stop an ongoing magic effect—find the caster of the spell and get her to stop the spell, say by cutting off her head or turning her into a sports trophy. Either way, continuing spells stop working, but permanent ones may not. For this reason, and others, wholesale slaughter is discouraged.

## Quick Casting

Most spells require the caster to recite a formula or incantation out loud, or perform some type of ritual. All that hooaha takes time. Witches can cast some spells almost instantly, with only a single word or phrase, or even just a simple gesture. This won't work on spells that require a very specific ritual and cannot be speeded up, but some can be cast in a few seconds (as an action in a Turn). Whether a spell can be quick cast or not is detailed in that spell's description.

## Telekinesis

Witches can move objects with the force of their will. To use this power, the Witch rolls and adds her Willpower and Sorcery levels. Each Success Level in the roll becomes a point of “Strength” for the telekinetic effect. So, if the roll results in five Success Levels, the Witch could move an object as if she had a Strength 5—good enough to pick up a grown man and slam him against a wall. Lifting and tossing things around requires no additional rolls, but precise tasks (guiding a key into a keyhole, staking a vamp) require a Perception and Dexterity roll, or a roll using Dexterity and an appropriate Skill (staking the vamp would use Getting Medieval). These tasks have a -1 penalty because the Witch is manipulating the object at a distance. Tossing small objects at someone also requires a Willpower and Sorcery roll, and must overcome the target’s defense roll. The damage value of such an attack is two times the Success Levels rolled.

Two or more Witches can combine their power to move very large objects. Witches working together roll as above, and add their combined Success Levels to determine the Strength of the effect.

This power does not last long. Each turn after the first, another Willpower and Sorcery roll must be made, at a cumulative -2 penalty. So, the second Turn, the roll suffers a -2 penalty; on the fifth Turn, a -8 penalty is incurred. This penalty applies to all further uses of Telekinesis until the Witch gets at least three hours of rest between uses. This ability is good for throwing a few things around, but your character can’t go all Carrie with it.

*(I’ll have to see what kind of ‘default’ abilities I give a magic user.)*