

# Marvel Character Creation

*Okay. So here's the thing. We're running Civil War, and so far most of you seem to want to create your own characters. That's totally cool, but it raises an issue. One of the main themes in Civil War is the strain of fighting against people you respect – friends, role-models, etc. And fighting on the same side as people you don't respect.*

*The default character creation method doesn't do much of this, so I'm adapting the idea of phases from DFRPG and some ideas from the Smallville RPG to help make sure that your characters have strong links to each other and to the larger Marvel universe. It's also going to provide a little more structure to assembling a hero from scratch.*

*The way this works is that we work through phases of character creation similar to DFRPG. However, at each phase, we also steal a concept from Smallville and draw a bit of a chart on butcher paper. As we proceed, you will get to fill in all the bits of the character sheet, as well as chart out the important relationships and places in your life. It'll connect you to the larger universe, as well as giving you a fleshed out background.*

*The phases take you through building a character gradually. It's fine to come into this with your character mostly fleshed out—feel free to break from the guidelines presented here. They're just a way to structure things to keep them straight.*

*Here are the phases:*

## **Phase Zero: Concept**

*Come up with the basic concept for your character by whatever method works for you. Borrow ideas from an existing hero, or several existing heroes, do some rolling on the Random Datafile Generator, invent something out of thin air, whatever.*

## **On the character sheet**

*Come up with a cool power set or two. Just pick the main themes for them at this point; don't worry about their specific powers just yet. Remember, each power set points to a different source of your powers, or to radically different kinds of power. Thus, Spider-Man has a power set for his spider powers, and another for his tech (web shooters, spider tracers, etc.); Emma Frost has power sets for diamond skin and for telepathy.*

## **On the chart**

*Draw a square near the middle of the paper, and write your character's name in it. When everyone has done this, there should be one square for each player clustered near the centre of the sheet.*

## **Phase One: Origin**

*Come up with a cool origin story. It should cover a little bit about who you were before you became a hero, how you got your powers, and why you decided to become a hero.*

### **On the character sheet**

- *Add a Distinction based on your history, life, personality, or origin.*
- *Add one or two Specialties to represent your pre-hero abilities. By default, these are Expert (d8) Specialties—if you think you should have a Master (d10) Specialty, you'll need to justify it to me. It won't be too hard.*
- *Add a power to each of your power sets—these should be your signature powers, the ones most important to your character concept. By default, they start at d8, but I'm flexible on that, as long as you can justify a different die with your origin story.*
- *Add a Limit suggested by your origin story to each power set. For example, if you're a mutant, you've got the Mutant Limit on your mutant powers. If you're a gadgeteer, you probably have the Gear Limit.*
- *If your origin suggests a Milestone to you, make a note on your sheet. We'll fill in details later.*

### **On the chart**

- *Draw a circle on the chart near your character. In this circle, write the name of an NPC important to your character. This can be an iconic Marvel character—a hero you admire, a villain who wronged you, a hero group you aspire to join, a villain group you hate, whatever—or a character you invent, like a spouse, parent, sibling, friend, or what have you.*
- *Draw an arrow from your square to that circle, and label it with the relationship you have with that person. So, you might have a circle with the name Spider-Man in it, and label the line with Admire.*
- *If there is an important place related to your origin, draw a diamond on the chart near your character and write the name of the place in the diamond.*
- *Draw an arrow from your square to the diamond, and label it with your relationship with that place. So, you might have a diamond labeled Daily Bugle Building, with an arrow labeled Work There.*

## **Phase Two: First Appearance**

*Come up with a cool story of your first public appearance as a hero. It should cover the villain or villains that you fought, the circumstance surrounding it, and any heroes you might have met during the event. Did you succeed or fail? Was anyone hurt? Was there a lot of collateral damage? Did you keep your identity a secret?*

## **On the character sheet**

- *Add a Distinction based on your first appearance as a hero.*
- *Add an SFX for each power set. This SFX should be based on things you did during your first appearance.*
- *If you used a power that you don't currently have on your character sheet, add it. As usual, it defaults to a d8, but you can adjust this if you can make a good case for it.*
- *If you used a particular specialty that you don't have on your character sheet, add it. As usual, it defaults to a d8, but if you can justify it, I'll let you make it a d10.*
- *Assign your Solo die—d6, d8, or d10.*
- *If your first appearance suggests a Milestone to you, make a note on your sheet. We'll fill in details later. Remember that you can only have two Milestones at any given time.*

## **On the chart**

- *Draw a circle on the chart near your character. In this circle, write the name of the villain or villain group you faced in your first appearance. (e.g., Hydra, Dr. Octopus, street gang name, etc.)*
- *Draw an arrow from your square to the villain circle. Label this with your relationship to the villain. So, you may have a circle labeled Batroc the Leaper and an arrow leading to it labeled Escaped From Me.*
- *If a hero or hero group was involved in your first appearance, see if that hero is already on the chart. If not, add a circle and put the name of the hero or the hero group in the circle.*
- *Draw an arrow from that hero circle to your square. Label the arrow with the way that hero feels about you. So, you may have a circle labeled The Avengers with an arrow to your square labeled Grudging Respect.*
- *If there is another NPC—not a hero or villain—that's important to your first appearance, draw a circle on the chart and label it with the name of that character.*
- *Draw an arrow from your square to this circle, and label it with your relationship to the NPC.*
- *If there is a place that is important to your first appearance, and it is not already on the chart, draw a diamond and label it with the name of the place.*
- *If there is no arrow already pointing from your square to the place's diamond, add one, and label it with your relationship to the place.*

### **Phase Three: Adventure**

*On an index card, write a brief (one or two sentence) story about a case you worked as a hero. State what the challenge was—villain, villain group, disaster, invasion, etc.—and what you did to overcome it. Note any powers, specialties, or SFX you used.*

### **On the character sheet**

- *If you used a specific SFX that you don't currently have on your character sheet, add it now.*
- *If you used a power that you don't currently have on your character sheet, add it. As usual, it defaults to a d8, but you can adjust this if you can make a good case for it.*
- *If you used a particular specialty that you don't have on your character sheet, add it. As usual, it defaults to a d8, but if you can justify it, I'll let you make it a d10.*
- *If your adventure suggests a Milestone to you, make a note on your sheet. We'll fill in details later. Remember that you can only have two Milestones at any given time.*

### **On the chart**

- *If you faced a villain or villain group which is not currently on the chart, draw a circle and label it with the name of the villain or villain group.*
- *If you don't already have an arrow pointing to the villain circle, draw an arrow and label it with your relationship to the villain.*
- *If a hero or hero group was involved in your first appearance, see if that hero is already on the chart. If not, add a circle and put the name of the hero or the hero group in the circle.*
- *Draw an arrow from that hero circle to your square. Label the arrow with the way that hero feels about you. So, you may have a circle labeled The Avengers with an arrow to your square labeled Grudging Respect.*
- *If there is a place that is important to your first appearance, and it is not already on the chart, draw a diamond and label it with the name of the place.*
- *If there is no arrow already pointing from your square to the place's diamond, add one, and label it with your relationship to the place.*

### **Phase Four: Team-Up!**

*Hand your index card to the player on your left, and take the index card from the player on your right. Read over the story you were given, and add a sentence to tell how you helped out in the story. Remember that you are a guest star in this story, so don't steal the limelight.*

### **On the character sheet**

- *If you used a specific SFX that you don't currently have on your character sheet, add it now.*
- *If you used a power that you don't currently have on your character sheet, add it. As usual, it defaults to a d8, but you can adjust this if you can make a good case for it.*
- *If you used a particular specialty that you don't have on your character sheet, add it. As usual, it defaults to a d8, but if you can justify it, I'll let you make it a d10.*
- *Assign your Buddy Affiliation die—d6, d8, or d10. Remember, you've already assigned one of those dice to Solo.*
- *If your team-up suggests a Milestone to you, make a note on your sheet. We'll fill in details later. Remember that you can only have two Milestones at any given time.*

### **On the chart**

- *Draw an arrow from your character's square to the starring character's square, and label it with the way you feel about that character.*
- *If you don't have an arrow pointing towards the villain involved in this story, add one now, and label it with the relationship you have with the villain.*
- *If you already have an arrow pointing towards the villain involved in this story, draw an arrow from the villain circle to your square and label it with the relationship the villain has with you.*
- *Draw arrows to any other NPCs or places involved in this team-up and label them with your relationship to them.*

### **Phase Five: Assemble!**

*Hand the index card to the player on your left, and take the index card from the player on your right. Read over the story you were given, and add a sentence to tell how you helped out in the story. Remember that you are a guest star in this story, so don't see the spotlight.*

### **On the character sheet**

- *If you used a specific SFX that you don't currently have on your character sheet, add it now.*
- *If you used a power that you don't currently have on your character sheet, add it. As usual, it defaults to a d8, but you can adjust this if you can make a good case for it.*
- *If you used a particular specialty that you don't have on your character sheet, add it. As usual, it defaults to a d8, but if you can justify it, I'll let you make it a d10.*
- *Assign your Team Affiliation die—d6, d8, or d10. Remember, you've already two dice, so you should just have one left to place here.*
- *If your assembly suggests a Milestone to you, make a note on your sheet. We'll fill in details later. Remember that you can only have two Milestones at any given time.*

### **On the chart**

- *Draw an arrow from your character's square to the starring character's square, and label it with the way you feel about that character.*
- *If you don't have an arrow pointing towards the villain involved in this story, add one now, and label it with the relationship you have with the villain.*
- *If you already have an arrow pointing towards the villain involved in this story, draw an arrow from the villain circle to your square and label it with the relationship the villain has with you.*
- *Draw arrows to any other NPCs or places involved in this team-up and label them with your relationship to them.*

### ***Finishing Touches***

*Return the index card to the starring player, and retrieve your own. Read over the story, and add the finishing touches to your character.*

### ***On the character sheet***

- *If you are missing any powers, SFX, Limits, or Specialties from your concept, add them now.*
- *If you need to adjust any dice up or down, or swap some things around, do it now.*
- *Work out any Milestones you've selected. Make sure you have at least one Milestone fleshed out; you can choose another one from the Event Milestones.*
- *Flesh out the background, making note of important people, places, things, etc. These can be things of your own invention or iconic Marvel universe things.*
- *Choose a cool name.*

### ***On the chart***

- *If there is a square that you don't have an arrow pointing to, draw an arrow pointing to that character, and label it with the way you feel about that character.*