

Hero System Resource Kit

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The Review:

Reviewed By Gordon Feiner

The Upside:

I picked up the Resource Kit some time ago as a hard copy and have used it to good effect, mostly at Conventions. I also picked up the PDF recently and have discovered a few different uses for it.

First, what the packet is, and what it isn't. The hard copy contains four parts - a forty-eight page booklet, three 22×17 double sided maps, three cardboard miniature pages, and a five panel GMs screen.

The Booklet. A short reference guide to help with character creation and game setup. The booklet contains no rules explanations, only tables and costs of various game elements. The book has four main parts to it.

Character Creation lists the basic character elements, point levels, costs of Characteristics. It also lists the basic elements and costs for all the creation elements. A complete Skills List, Base Movement, Martial Maneuvers, Perks, Talents, Powers, Power Advantages & Limitations, Power Frameworks and Character Disadvantages. Only Power Frameworks get any kind of description, the rest are simply lists of the costs for each item.

Equipment Creation covers costs for Automatons, Computers, Vehicles, and Bases. All in about two pages, again no descriptions just quick cost references.

Combat Summary starts with the combat sequence checklist, and covers all the major points of basic combat from figuring OCV and DCV to adding damage, Normal and Killing Attacks, Effects of damage, Knockback, Endurance and Pushing. It does not cover the optional rules.

Forms And Templates is the part of the book with all new resources. Starting with the basic two page character sheet. The new tracking sheets are a Character Bio Sheet for putting down a complete character background. Campaign Guidelines sheet for GMs to pass out to set power levels, tone and house rules. Campaign Checklist Sheet which allows a GM to give out a quick checklist of permitted, required or forbidden elements (Skills, Powers, etc...). Combat Record Sheet for the PCs and major NPCs. Minion Control Sheet for quick reference of lesser NPCs. Adventure Record Sheet for GMs to track major events for each game session or adventure. Vehicle and Base Record Sheets. And several Hex Templates: A four part Range Template (four 8 hex long strips that can be cut out and stacked end to end) that gives range modifiers out to 32 Inches/Hexes. And three Area Of Effect Templates for 2, 3 and 4 Inches Areas.

The Cardboard Figures. There are three sets of Cut out miniatures included (base stands not included). One fantasy with two human warrior variants, a human thief, a human shopkeeper, a human bard, two female priestess variants, a human mage, two goblin/orc warrior variants, and two ogre/giant type creatures. One Modern set with a girl on a bike, a fire fighter, a bum, a young woman, kid on a skateboard, a businessman, young man, a mailman, a female reporter and three cop/security guard variants. One Science Fiction set with a technician, two powered armor soldiers, a psionic, two human soldiers (one male, one female), human military officer, human rogue and four different aliens. The hard copy are on heavy cardboard stock, single sided. The figures are black and white, which gives the electronic copy a bit of an edge if you wanted to add a bit of color to them it's much easier with that version than the hard copy.

The Maps. Twenty-Two Inches by Seventeen inches. There are three double sided maps provided in 1 Hex = 1 Inch scale. The first one is a modern street and a modern warehouse. The second a fantasy tavern and a farmstead. The last a science fiction bar and the bridge of a spaceship. It's definitely easier to get the hard copy of the this than to try and print out the maps on your own. The hard copy are printed on thick paper stock.

The GMs Screen. A five panel affair containing just about every table the average Hero Gamer references during a session. Double sided so the players have a set of tables to look at as well as the GM. There are suggestions at the start of the booklet on how to modify this screen if needed. I actually found the PDF version of this more useful as you can print out the five panels separately and have them free floating to pass around the table (even nicer is having them laminated to make them more durable). Though the GMs screen itself is extremely useful if the GM uses one. It's printed on heavy card stock, so it doesn't fall over too easily.

The Downside:

For a system deeply rooted in Super Hero gaming I was surprised to find the miniatures didn't include a set of generic Supers or thugs for Super PCs to beat up. Or at the very least some Supervillains from Hero Games' own line. But seeing as how wildly individual people like their superheroes the lack of them doesn't disappoint me very much.

The Otherside:

Being a reference resource for the HERO System you might think this has no use at all for gamers of other systems. Mostly true, but not completely. The three pages of paper miniatures are useful to anyone who needs some more, especially some generic ones. The six included maps are also fairly useful, even if you don't use hex maps.

For a quick reference guide this set is more than adequate. Hero Games also gives explicit permission to copy any part of the set for personal use only, which is helpful in today's world of copyright awareness. For about Thirty Dollars US you can pick up both the electronic and hard copy of this supplement, which gets the most use out of it I feel.

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