



An **attribute** is a piece of data (a "**statistic**") that describes to what extent a **fictional character** in a **role-playing game** possesses a specific natural, in-born **characteristic** common to all characters in the game. That piece of data is usually an abstract number or, in some cases, a **set of dice**. Some games use different terms to refer to an attribute, such as **statistic**, **(primary) characteristic** or **ability**.

Contents [hide]

- 1 The nature of attributes
- 2 Common attribute names
- 3 Attributes in common systems
 - 3.1 Dungeons & Dragons and the d20 System
 - 3.2 Basic Role-Playing
 - 3.3 GURPS
 - 3.4 Hero System
 - 3.5 Storyteller System
 - 3.6 Shadowrun
 - 3.7 Tri-Stat dX, (including Big Eyes Small Mouth)
 - 3.8 Traveller
 - 3.9 Talarius gaming system
- 4 External links

The nature of attributes

Most RPGs use attributes to describe characters' physical and mental characteristics, for example their **strength** or **wisdom**. They often influence the chance to succeed in **skill** or other tests by addition to a die roll or by determining the number of dice to be thrown. As a consequence, usually a higher number is better, and ranges can be as small as 1–5 (for numbers of dice) or as great as 1–100 (when adding to results of **percentile dice**).

Some games work with only a few attributes (such as “Physical” or “Mental”), while others go into more detail. Having too many attributes is considered to be a sign of undue complexity in a game^{[[citation needed](#)]}; most games have about 4–10 of them. Most games try to give all attributes about the same usefulness to a character. Therefore, certain characteristics might be merged (such as merging a Charisma-type and a Willpower-type attribute into a single Personality attribute), or split into more attributes (such as splitting out physical Comeliness from Charisma in the original *Unearthed Arcana*), or even ignored altogether (for example, Intelligence and Charisma in a *hack and slash* adventure). In many games, a small set of primary attributes control a larger number of *derived statistics* such as *Armor Class* or *magic points*.

During **character creation**, attribute scores are usually determined either randomly (by rolling **dice**) or by distributing **character points**. Because they represent common, in-born characteristics and not learned capabilities (as **skills** do), in many games they are fixed for the duration of the game. However, in some games they can be increased by spending **experience points** gained during the game, or as part of the process of **leveling up**.

Common attribute names

Attributes are commonly referred to by their first two or three initials.

Strength *aka* Body, Might, Brawn, ...

A measure of how physically strong a character is. Strength often controls the maximum weight the character can carry, melee attack and/or damage, and sometimes [hit points](#). Armor and weapons might also have a Strength requirement.

Constitution aka Stamina, Endurance, Vitality, ...

A measure of how resilient a character is. Constitution often influences **hit points**, resistances for special types of damage (poisons, illness, heat etc.) and fatigue. Many games combine Constitution and Strength.

Dexterity aka Agility, Reflexes, Speed, ...

A measure of how agile a character is. Dexterity controls attack and movement speed and accuracy, as well as the difficulty of an opponent's attack (see [Armor Class](#)).

Intelligence aka Intellect, Mind, Brains, Knowledge, ...

A measure of a character's problem-solving ability. Intelligence often controls a character's ability to comprehend foreign languages and their skill in magic. In some cases, intelligence controls how many skill points the character gets at "level up". In some games, it controls the rate at which **experience points** are earned, or the amount needed to level up.

Charisma aka Presence, Charm, Social, ...

A measure of a character's social skills, and sometimes their physical appearance. Charisma generally influences prices while trading, and NPC reactions.

Wisdom aka Spirit, Psyche, Sense, ...

A measure of a character's common sense and/or spirituality. Wisdom often controls a character's ability to cast certain spells, communicate to mystical entities, or hear something in the distance.

Willpower aka Sanity, Personality, Ego, ...

A measure of the character's mental resistance (against pain, fear etc.) when falling victim to mind-altering, torture, or insanity. Some games combine willpower and wisdom.

Perception aka Alertness, Awareness, Cautiousness, ...

A measure of a character's openness to their surroundings. Perception controls the chance to detect vital clues, traps, or hiding enemies, and might influence combat sequence, or the accuracy of ranged attacks. Perception-type attributes are more common in more modern games. Sometimes

https://web.archive.org/web/20100402035320/http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attribute_%28role-playing_games%29

Wed Jun 04 2025 07:25:25 GMT-0700 (Pacific Daylight Time)

Willpower aka Sanity, Personality, Ego, ...

Perception aka Alertness, Awareness, Cautiousness, ...

Luck aka Fate, Chance, ...

A measure of a character's **luck**. Luck might influence anything, but mostly random items, encounters and outstanding successes/failures (such as **critical hits**).

[\[edit\]](#)

[\[edit\]](#)

- Strength - physical strength
- Dexterity - agility and speed
- Constitution - ability to resist damage and disease
- Intelligence - mental acuity
- Wisdom - intuition and sense of things around himself
- Charisma - force of personality and physical attractiveness

[\[edit\]](#)

- Strength (STR) - physical strength, ability to lift and carry
- Constitution (CON) - health and endurance, ability to resist damage and disease
- Size (SIZ) - mass (and height)
- Intelligence (INT) - mental acuity
- Power (POW) - basic ability to work magic, also luck and will-power
- Dexterity (DEX) - agility, manual dexterity, and speed

- Charisma (CHA) - leadership, charm, personality (earlier versions)
- Appearance (APP) - physical attractiveness (later versions)

Scores are usually rolled randomly, and range from 3-18 for most beginning human characters, except SIZ and INT which range from 8-18 in most versions. Non-human character score ranges can vary more widely.

[\[edit\]](#)

GURPS uses four (**basic**) **attributes** as well as a number of **secondary characteristics** that are derived from the attributes. Scores for basic attributes are bought or sold during character generation, starting at 10 each for base characters. Secondary characteristics can be modified relative to the primary attribute they are based upon. Skill values are based directly on a specific attribute; most skill rolls are based on **3d6** compared against the skill number.

- Strength (ST) — *physical* power and bulk, ability to lift, carry, and do damage
- Dexterity (DX) — *physical* agility, coordination, and manual dexterity
- Intelligence (IQ) — *mental* acuity and sense of the world
- Health (HT) — *physical* energy and vitality, ability to resist disease

- Hit Points (HP) — how much damage and injury can be sustained, based on *ST*
- Will (Will) — mental focus and strength, withstanding stress, based on *IQ*
- Perception (Per) — general alertness, based on *IQ*
- Fatigue Points (FP) — body energy levels, based on *HT*

The other secondary characteristics (such as running speed) are calculated from one or more attribute values using individual [tables](#) or [formulae](#).

[\[edit\]](#)

- Strength (STR, cost 1) - physical strength, ability to lift and carry
- Intelligence (INT, cost 1) - mental acuity, learning ability
- Constitution (CON, cost 2) - health and ability to resist disease
- Dexterity (DEX, cost 3) - agility and manual dexterity
- Ego (EGO, cost 2) - mental fortitude and willpower
- Body (BODY, cost 2) - ability to sustain damage leading towards death, hit points
- Presence (PRE, cost 1) - leadership, charm, personality

Scores start at 10 each for base characters and are bought or sold during character generation at the listed cost per point. Normal human maxima are usually defined to be 20 for each. Another set of *secondary characteristics* are derived from the above, though can be bought separately. They do not follow the same scale, rather directly influence game mechanics. These are:

- Physical Defense (PD, base STR/5, cost 1) - resistance to physical damage

https://web.archive.org/web/20100402035320/http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attribute_%28role-playing_games%29

Wed Jun 04 2025 07:26:01 GMT-0700 (Pacific Daylight Time)

Magic — magical energy. For beginning magic-tuned characters, this attribute started at the maximum starting at 02 and was reduced through trauma, surgery, or cybernetic implantation, or increased through ritual initiation. It is related very closely to Essence will alter the Magic attribute.

- **Reaction** — a derived statistic based on the average of Quickness and Intelligence, Reaction determined number of actions per round, the character's initiative in combat, and perception.

[\[edit\]](#)

[\[edit\]](#)

[\[edit\]](#)

- [\[edit\]](#)

[\[edit\]](#)

[\[edit\]](#)

[\[edit\]](#)

[\[edit\]](#)

- [\[edit\]](#)

[\[edit\]](#)

[\[edit\]](#)

[\[edit\]](#)

- [\[edit\]](#)

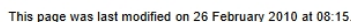
[\[edit\]](#)

- [\[edit\]](#)

[\[edit\]](#)

- [\[edit\]](#)

[\[edit\]](#)



[Contact us](#) [Privacy policy](#) [About Wikipedia](#) [Disclaimers](#)

https://web.archive.org/web/20100402035320/http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attribute_%28role-playing_games%29

Wed Jun 04 2025 07:26:46 GMT-0700 (Pacific Daylight Time)