

Persona 4th Edition: GM Guide

January 28, 2013

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This is the GM Guide for the Persona tabletop ruleset. It's designed to offer suggestions on how to run the opposition side for a Persona campaign. The Persona tabletop is designed to be rather freeform, so this document is not designed as definitive. It is, in fact, more of a starting place.

Should, in the future, it become clear that more rules are necessary, those will be designed and added in future editions of these rules.

1 Persona and NPC Creation

1.1 Building Persona

(Note: this section appears in its entirety in the core rulebook. It is reproduced here for your convenience.)

This section is optional for GMs. A GM is free to design their campaign's Personae as they wish; these are merely suggestions.

A persona should start with a number of Resistances and Weaknesses. These should be done on a 1:1 ratio, that is 1 Resist for 1 Weak. Every persona should start out with at least 1 of each. Unless otherwise decided by the GM, the maximum should be 2 Resist and 2 Weak.

When you build a persona, they have a number of abilities. These abilities are divided into four Tiers, as seen in the Spell Compendium in the core rulebook. Each ability costs a number of points equal to their tier. A persona starts with 3 points at level 1 and gains level/3 points per level thereafter.

Points can be saved in order to buy higher tier spells. During these "off-levels", the persona instead gains something off the following list:

- +1 to any stat
- +1 to any skill
- +1 Refresh
- +5 to HP
- +LV/4 to AP, rounded up

Another way is to say that adult characters who only have a single persona get 6 spells at creation, with a maximum of Tier II spells. The actual spell list should be worked out with the GM.

Example: The GM is designing the Persona STRENGTH: Atlas. At 1st level, he has 3 points to spend, so gives Atlas three Tier I abilities. At level 2, he gives Atlas another Tier I. At level 3, he thinks it's about time Atlas started moving to Tier II powers, so he saves the point and instead gives Atlas +1 Refresh. At level 4, the GM now has 2 points to spend, so he assigns Atlas his first Tier II ability.

Later, the GM decides to start designing the Persona TEMPERANCE: Suzaku. Suzaku is the Persona for a college student character, so the GM decides he's starting Suzaku off with 3 Tier II spells and 3 Tier I spells.

1.2 Building NPCs

1.2.1 Aspects

As alluded to in the core book, important NPCs come with aspects. NPCs may have an arbitrary number of aspects; however, care should be taken in defining them. Not every NPC needs to come with an aspect. In fact, only if they are plot-relevant or have the potential to become plot-relevant should they have aspects.

Boss monsters can also have aspects; they count as plot-relevant NPCs. Remember, aspects are there to make the game more interesting. Use them as you see fit.

Example: The GM is designing the NPCs the PCs attend class with. There is no one of real relevance in most of the classes, so the GM assigns the block the aspect "Bored Students". The Dean, however, is fairly

important. The GM starts assigning him the aspects “Like a Father to his Students”, “Wields Red Tape Like a Deadly Weapon”, and “Has Probably Seen It All”.

1.2.2 Using Aspect Tokens

In addition to being able to compel PC aspects in exchange for giving them Aspect Tokens, the GM also starts every session with 4 AT so they can tag the Aspects of any NPCs if they need to.

2 Skill Challenges

A Skill Challenge uses rolls for any subset of the skills to complete a task. The task and difficulty is left up to the GM.

There are two ways to successfully pass a Skill Challenge:

- # of successes rolled
- sum of the number of successes

To start with, the GM declares the value of a “success” will be (1-6). The GM will then decide the number of successes needed to pass a challenge and a number to be matched or surpassed by successes to pass a challenge. If a player rolls either of these numbers, the challenge is passed.

Example: The GM requires that the party discover a piece of information. The skills that the GM decides are valid are Empathy and Charm (to get it out of a person) or Knowledge (to discover it through other means). For Empathy and Charm, the target number is 4, the number of successes is 3, and the match number is 12. For Knowledge, the target number is 5, the number of successes is 4, and the match number is 20.

One player rolls 5 Charm: 1, 3, 4, 5, 4. That is 3 successes, so that passes.

One player rolls 3 Empathy: 2, 5, 6. They reroll the 6: 2. They add $5+6+2 = 13$, which also passes.

One player rolls 4 Knowledge: 4, 5, 6, 1. They reroll the 6: 3. $5+6+3 = 14$. They only rolled 2 successes and did not make the match number, so that fails.

One player rolls 3 Knowledge: 2, 6, 5. They reroll the 6: 6. They reroll that 6: 5. That is 4 successes, so that passes. Additionally, that is $6+5+6+5$, which is 22, which would also pass.

3 Leveling

PC level progression is done through Experience Points (XP). That’s the simplistic answer. If you look at the Enemy list (Section 6), however, you’ll note that there is no listing for the amount of XP a particular enemy will give. This is intentional.

XP numbers are a bit handwavy. GMs can grant XP through combat and through roleplaying. We suggest allocating these at approximately equal amounts, but it is completely acceptable to weight one type higher than the other to facilitate a particular style of play.

Currently, leveling is static at 2000XP to progress to the next level.

Roughly speaking, we expect 2-4 game sessions per level of XP total, with 1-5 combats per session. We also expect 10 GP per every 1-2 sessions for Personae leveling.

4 Social Links

The core document lays out how S.Link progression operates. The main issue for the GM would be appropriate rewards for advancing a PC-PC S.Link at various ranks.

At level 10, the instigating PC gains an Aspect that shares a keyword with an aspect from the S.Linked PC’s list.

Example: The S.Link target PC has the Aspect “Jerk with a Heart of Gold”. The instigating PC at Rank 10 can gain the Aspect “Speaks Jerk”.

At other possible levels, per S.Link design, PCs can gain small bonuses or minor abilities/feats¹, as well as plot and side-quests, which could result in special equipment items.

Possible bonuses include +1 to a stat or skill, Resistances to damage types, Weakness mitigation, etc.

5 Combat

Detailed combat rules are in the core book. This section is to explain how to run it on the GM’s side.

As a general guideline, for non-boss fights, enemy parties should range between 1 to n+2 entities, where n is the party size. (So a party of 5 PCs should be facing a max of 7 enemies.) The relationship between power and amount of enemies should be inverse (the harder the enemies, the less of them on the field).

For boss fights, the boss(es) should be accompanied by between 0 and n-2 mooks.

Of course, these are merely guidelines. Feel free to throw them out the window if the need arises.

6 Enemies

This section is limited to standard, random encounter enemies.

For bosses, a general rule of thumb is that one should consider how many rounds the battle should last and what tier spells the party has to determine boss hit points. Bosses also get a number of Aspects and Aspect Tokens (2-4) that they are free to use.

This section includes some boss-level spells one could include in addition to the spells found in the Spell Compendium in the core book.

Enemies are divided into categories, based on party level.

The enemy stats listed assume the party fighting a group of 3-5 shadows. Adjust stats higher if it’s a solo fight (roughly 1.5-2x HP 1.25-1.5x for stats).

¹For everything but a high-power campaign, we suggest refraining from granting too many abilities.

6.1 Basic (Level 1-6)

- [GENERIC BASIC ENEMY BLOCK]

HP: 20-50

Stats:

STR 1-2 VIT 1-2 MAG 1-2

TEC 1-2 AGL 1-2 LUK 1

Weak: 1-3 elements

Resist: 0-1

Null: 0-1

Reflect: 0

Absorb: 0

Basic Attack: STRd4 or STRd6

Skills: 2-3 Tier I skills

- **Dancing Hand**

HP: 32-50

Stats:

STR 2 VIT 2 MAG 2

TEC 1 AGL 2 LUK 1

Weak: Fire

Resist: Wind

Null: Ice

Reflect:

Absorb:

Basic Attack: STRd6

Skills: Bufu (2), Pulinpa

- **Cowardly Maya**

HP: 24-42

Stats:

STR 2 VIT 2 MAG 1

TEC 1 AGL 2 LUK 2

Weak: Fire, Lightning, Wind

Resist:

Null:

Reflect:

Absorb:

Basic Attack: STRd4

Skills: Bufu (2)

- **Haughty Maya**

HP: 32-50

Stats:

STR 2 VIT 2 MAG 2

TEC 1 AGL 2 LUK 1

Weak: Wind

Resist: Lightning

Null:

Reflect:

Absorb:

Basic Attack: STRd6

Skills: Zio (2)

6.2 Low (Level 7-12)

- [GENERIC LOW ENEMY BLOCK]

HP: 40-100

Stats:

STR 2-3 VIT 2-3 MAG 2-3

TEC 2-3 AGL 2-3 LUK 1-2

Weak: 1-3 elements

Resist: 0-2

Null: 0-2

Reflect: 0

Absorb: 0

Basic Attack: STRd6 or STRd8

Skills: 3-4 Tier I skills, 0-2 Tier II skills

- **Frivolous Maya**

HP: 50-60

Stats:

STR 2 VIT 3 MAG 2

TEC 2 AGL 2 LUK 1

Weak: Wind

Resist: Lightning

Null:

Reflect:

Absorb:

Basic Attack: STRd6+3

Skills: Zio (2), Mazio

6.3 Mid (Level 13-20)

- [GENERIC MID ENEMY BLOCK]

HP: 70-180

Stats:

STR 3-5 VIT 3-5 MAG 3-5

TEC 3-5 AGL 3-5 LUK 2-4

Weak: 0-2 elements

Resist: 0-2

Null: 0-2

Reflect: 0-1

Absorb: 0

Basic Attack: STRd8 or STRd10

Skills: 3-5 Tier II skills, 0-3 Tier III skills

6.4 High (Level 21-30)

- [GENERIC HIGH ENEMY BLOCK]

HP: 180-300

Stats:

STR 3-8 VIT 3-8 MAG 3-8

TEC 3-8 AGL 3-8 LUK 3-5

Weak: 0-2 elements

Resist: 0-2

Null: 0-3

Reflect: 0-1
 Absorb: 0-1
 Basic Attack: STRd8 or STRd10
 Skills: 3-5 Tier III skills, 0-3 Tier IV skills

6.5 Epic (Level 31-40)

- [GENERIC EPIC ENEMY BLOCK]
 HP: 250-500
 Stats:
 STR 3-9 VIT 3-9 MAG 3-9
 TEC 3-9 AGL 3-9 LUK 3-9
 Weak: 0-2 elements
 Resist: 0-2
 Null: 0-3
 Reflect: 0-1
 Absorb: 0-1
 Basic Attack: STRd8 or STRd10
 Skills: 0-3 Tier II, 3-5 Tier III skills, 0-4 Tier IV skills, 0-2 Tier V skills
- World Balance
 HP: 1000-1500
 Stats:
 STR x VIT x MAG x
 TEC x AGL x LUK x
 Weak:
 Resist: Physical
 Null: Light, Dark
 Reflect:
 Absorb:
 Skills: Agidyne (3), Bufudyne (3), Ziodyne (3), Garudyne (3), Megidola, Mind Charge (3)
 Notes: This is a mid-boss type.

6.6 Legendary (Level 41+)

- [GENERIC LEGENDARY ENEMY BLOCK]
 HP: 500+
 Stats:
 STR 3-12 VIT 3-12 MAG 3-12
 TEC 3-12 AGL 3-12 LUK 3-12
 Weak: 0-2 elements
 Resist: 0-2
 Null: 0-3
 Reflect: 0-3
 Absorb: 0-3
 Basic Attack: STRd8 or STRd10
 Skills: 0-3 Tier II, 0-5 Tier III skills, 0-4 Tier IV skills, 0-4 Tier V skills
- Void Giant
 HP: 800

Stats:
 STR x VIT x MAG x
 TEC x AGL x LUK x
 Weak:
 Resist:
 Null: Fire, Ice, Elec, Wind, Light, Dark
 Reflect:
 Absorb:
 Skills:

6.7 Enemy Skills

These are enemy-only skills that are not available to the PCs in the core book's Spell Compendium. We recommend that these skills be applied mostly to mid-boss to boss-type enemies, or when the GM explicitly wants a more difficult fight for the players².

6.7.1 Tier I

6.7.2 Tier II

- **Creeping Ice**
 Tier II
 Ice Active Mark Ability (A)
 Effect: Target is slowed for a round. The mark can be maintained for a minor action. After two rounds, target will be immobilized if the mark is maintained (starting on round 3 of the mark being active).
 Target: One enemy within LOS 6.
- **Lightning Cloak**
 Tier II
 Lightning Active Sustained Ability (A)
 Effect: Area burst 1, centered on you. Create a lighting field around you so that any enemy that starts in or enters the area takes MAGd4+MAG Lightning damage. The area can be sustained with a minor action.
- **Firewire**
 Tier II
 Fire Active Mark Ability (A)
 Effect: Target takes MAGd4 Fire damage. The mark can be maintained for a minor action. Target is pulled 2 squares closer per round the mark is maintained.
 Target: One enemy within LOE 5.

²As the players would not have access to these spells and thus not have an immediate counter-strategy or even basic familiarity.

- **Crashing Vortex**

Tier II

Wind Active Sustained Ability (A)

Effect: Area burst 2, centered on you. Create a wind field around you so that any enemy that starts in or enters the area takes MAGd4 Wind damage and is pushed 1 square. The area can be sustained with a minor action.

6.7.3 Tier III

- **Maxwell's Silver Hammer**

Tier III

Wind Active Ability (A)

Effect: Does one of two things: push an enemy back MAG move straight back, dealing MAGd4 Wind damage if they hit an obstacle, or destroys any cover it hits instead.

Target: One target within LOS 5.

6.7.4 Tier IV

- **Forest of Bone**

Tier IV

Counterintel Active Illusion Ability (A)

Effect: Target spends 1d4 rounds locked in a hellish mindscape. They can only attack enemies their mind perceives. They may take damage from an outside force, at -AGL dodge dice. Damage does not knock them out of this state. The target has a (Discipline)x2% chance of breaking the illusion early each turn.

Target: One enemy within LOS 6.