

FAN PREVIEW Guide to Power Rangers Roleplaying Game Threats

In just about every episode of Power Rangers, our heroes encounter a new villain with a unique look and bizarre powers. The **Power Rangers Roleplaying Game** Core Rulebook includes over a dozen of these iconic creatures, from Putties to Rito Revolto, including several in standard and grown versions. This guide helps Game Masters use Threats to their best effect and includes rules for designing Threats of your own.

Using Threats

Threats play essentially the same as PCs. Their Essence Scores determine their Defenses and their Skills. Their Skills represent what they can do (and how well), whereas Perks and Powers show off unique abilities and where they excel. Unlike PCs, however, Threats aren't built systematically with an Origin, Influences, or a Role.

When running a Threat, let the stat block be your guide. Most Threats have a lot of Skills with the same number of ranks, a couple of Specializations, and one or two Skills with higher and lower ranks. When running Threats, especially lower level Threats, keep the following tips in mind:

- **Lean into your Specializations.** Roll your Specialization as much as possible. The Threat Specialized in that Skill for a reason. Usually, the reason is in the name of the Specialization.
- **Look for anomalies.** Anomalies are opportunities. If a Threat has d6 in every trained Skill, except one has d8, that's the stats block telling you the unique opportunities for using this Threat.
- **Speed is key.** Speed dictates how many actions creatures receive. Creatures with Speed 1 get a Standard action *or* a Move action on their turn. Unless they're in position to affect the PCs when they roll for Initiative, Speed 1 characters need to spend their first turn setting up for a future turn, hoping they last that long.
It's just as important to remember what high Speed characters can do. A creature with Speed 3 has a Free action. If they don't need to use it practically, like opening a door, they can do something fun with it, like buy additional movement.

By the time you reach higher levels and use more complex creatures, their unique powers overshadow what they can do with basic Skill Tests. This simplifies running them, and puts them in line with the power level of the PCs, who by then have honed the areas in which they excel. This doesn't mean Skills no longer matter to high level Threats. Skills represent their broad talents, whereas Powers represent their special abilities.

Like low level Threats, note how many Free actions your high level Threats gain. Odds are they have more than you'll ever need to use in one turn, meaning Powers that take a Free action that can be used multiple times per turn should be. Free actions are the high Threat creature's playground.

What Threat Level Means

Threats have a Threat Level (sometimes abbreviated TL or shortened to Level). A Threat's Level indicates how challenging it is. Four Rangers of a creature's Threat Level should be able to reliably defeat it. A combat is of the appropriate Threat Level if the PCs take a bit of damage and feel forced to use some of their limited abilities and equipment, but no one gets Defeated. If combat ends and the team has no limited use abilities left, you've run a combat that's probably about two Threat Levels higher than the squad's level—a perfect boss fight.

For example, four 10th level PCs should always be able to defeat a 10th level Threat in combat, but will probably take some damage. Four 11th level PCs should handle the Threat with minimal issue, and four 12th level PCs would see the Threat only as an inconvenience.

Going in the other direction, four 9th level PCs would find a 10th level Threat a challenge, and four 8th level PCs should only face a 10th level Threat as the boss fight of a Mission.

This all takes into account that the PCs have been on an adventure, while their Adversary is fresh. Threat Level also assumes the combat takes place in optimal conditions for the Threat. If a creature's powers all involve fighting in open water, they're considerably weaker fighting the PCs in a desert. Of course, if the PCs orchestrate a situation that catches a Threat outside of their comfort zone, you can reward your players' cleverness with an easier than expected combat.

Multiple Threats

Power Rangers don't always outnumber their opponents. Combats can include more than one Threat. Determining the Threat Level of a combat against multiple Threats can be tricky, but there are a few tricks to calculate it:

- **Threat Level Total:** The easiest way to determine the Threat Level of a combat is to add the individual Threat Levels together. If Pineoctopus (TL4) teams up with Pineapple the Clown (TL2) that's about a TL6 combat. Unfortunately, the more Threats in a combat, the less reliable this calculation gets.
- **The Greatest Threat, and Half the Rest:** A more reliable but less intuitive calculation for a group's Threat Level is to separate the highest Threat Level creature from the group, then add half of the total Threat Level of the group to the total Threat Level of the highest

Threat. For example, two Putty Patrollers (changeling) (TL2) would be Threat Level 3, not Threat Level 4. An attack that's strong against one is strong against both, so adding an additional Putty Patroller (changeling) to the fight increases the challenge, but doesn't really double it. Another example, three Putty Patrollers (changeling) (TL2) and Slippery Shark (TL4) would be Threat Level 7 ($4 + [2+2+2]/2$) not 10 ($4+2+2+2$). The Putty Patrollers (changeling) could distract a team of level 7 PCs while Slippery Shark gets in its hits, but all four foes would mostly bounce off a team of level 10 PCs.

More Or Less Rangers

If you're running a combat with a number of Rangers other than four, this equation calculates what Threat Level creature challenges them:

$$\text{(Number of PCs x average PC level)/4} = \text{Appropriate Threat Level}$$

So three 7th level PCs is about as strong as four 5.25 level PCs. Normally in an Essence20 Games, you round up remainders, but in this case that would make the team stronger than it is, so it's better to round down. That means Terror Toad (TL5) is an appropriate Threat for this small party, and Polluticorn (TL 7) would be an appropriate boss fight.

Conversely, six 7th level PCs is about as strong as four 10.5 level PCs. With that many attacks, Story Points, and variety of Powers, this oversized team could handle Finster (TL9) on their own easily, and might even be ready to take on Rito Revolto by themselves.

Threat Creation

Just like many players want to create their own Power Rangers character, many Game Masters want to fill Finster's shoes and make their own monsters.

Presented here are the steps for creating Threats for the **Power Rangers Roleplaying Game**.

Threat creation is equal parts science and art, so think of these as guidelines rather than rules. All of the following steps can be bent or even broken in the name of capturing a feel, changing the nature of the challenge, or balancing original Perks and Powers. For example, if you want a near impenetrable Threat, you could increase the Threat's Defenses above what the Essence Scores say they should be. However, to keep the Threat balanced and fair, you'd need to lower its Health. Any time you tweak a rule to make a Threat tougher for the players, tweak another that makes it easier for them.

1. Concept

What is this Threat? What do you want it to do?

Try to summarize your idea in a few words that emphasize what sets it apart. A gladiator pig at a cookout. A walking pile of eyeballs. A monster with a hero's purse as his head. The faster you can get across its unique qualities, the stronger the idea.

That said, there's no wrong way to come up with a concept. The purpose of this step is to give you ideas to fall back on if one of the later steps stumps you. If you prefer writing 1000 words

about your Threat before you ever build it, that should give you plenty of inspiration for its Perks, Powers, and Skills.

2. Threat Level

How dangerous is your Threat? Are you sending a dozen of them against your PCs, or is this for the fight at the end of an adventure? Maybe it's your end boss' right hand monster?

A Threat's Level dictates their Essence Scores. That establishes their Skill Points and Defenses. The Threat also has Perks and Powers, but unlike Skills and Defenses, they aren't strictly mathematically generated. **Step 5. Perks, Powers, and Attacks** discusses how working out Perks and Powers needs more give and take than other steps.

As explained earlier, in **What Threat Level Means**, four Rangers of a creature's Threat Level should be able to reliably defeat the creature. Victory should be all but guaranteed, as long as the players are willing to use a few expendable resources like Personal Power and Story Points. If you want to create an interesting lackey, your Threat should be two levels lower than your PCs. A special lackey would be one level lower than the PCs, and the leader of the lackeys would be equal level to your PCs. A Threat that necessitates the second most significant combat of an Adventure would be one level higher than the PCs, and the mastermind behind it all should be two levels higher than the PCs.

Of course, you don't need to know how you'll use a Threat to create one. You can choose whatever Threat Level feels appropriate for your concept and build it first.

3. Health, Size, and Movement

Your Threat's basic information that's easy to calculate.

Health

How much damage does it take to Defeat your Threat?

There are three ways to calculate a Threat's Health, depending on the purpose of the creature:

- **Resilient:** A primary combatant. Resilient Threats rely on attacks more than Perks and Powers, and are generally pretty straight forward.
Health = Threat Level x 1.5
- **Typical:** Your average creature. They have a few decent attacks, and a few Perks than manipulate a battle in their favor.
Health = Threat Level
- **Canny:** Battlefield manipulators. They use their various Perks and Powers to do the fighting for them, rarely attacking directly. Health = Threat Level x 0.75 (minimum 1).

Level 0 Threats should have a maximum of 2 Health.

Movement

Most Threats have a Ground Movement. In general, Resilient and Canny Threats have 30ft Ground Movement, and Typical Threats have 40ft Ground Movement.

4. Essence Scores, Skill Ranks, and Defenses

The essential statistics that define your Threat.

Essence Scores

Threat Level 0 creatures have 6 Essence Points to assign to their four Essence scores. For every additional Threat Level, add 2 Essence Points. So a Threat Level 10 creature has 26 Essence Points to spend. Put another way:

$$\text{Threat Level } \times 2 + 6 = \text{Essence Points}$$

Like when you're creating a character, every Essence Point you spend on an Essence Score gives you a Skill Point to invest in the Skills tied to that Essence.

Skills

Here are a few tips for investing your Skill Points:

- Fewer, higher ranked Skills makes a Threat easier to run. It's also easier to run a Threat when the majority of their Skills have the same Rank. For example, of Chunky Chicken's listed Skills, four of them have a d4 Rank.
- It's OK to leave some blanks. If you don't see yourself using Smarts and Social Skills, other than Alertness, you can still increase your Smarts and Social to shore up your Willpower and Cleverness without fleshing out where those Skill Points went. If you end up in a situation where an unexpected Skill comes into play, the GM can decide in the moment where it makes sense for the Threat's unspent Skill Points to be invested.
- A Threat doesn't always need both Might and Finesse. Pick the one that reflects its style of melee combat. The same can be said about Athletics and Acrobatics, and to a lesser extent Intimidation and Deception.
- Don't forget Initiative! If a Threat doesn't have any Ranks in Initiative, they roll the Skill Test with a Snag, just like everyone else. Not a great way to start combat.
- After d6, a Specialization is usually better than the next higher Skill Rank when it comes to the main Skill the Threat uses in combat.
- The minimum rank needed for a Specialization is d2. However, a Threat only benefits from d2 Specialization if they gain an Upshift on their Skill Test.
- If you can't find a way to get both the Defenses and the Skill Ranks you want, Perks are your friend.

Once you've assigned all your Essence Points and invested all of your Skill Points, you can calculate your Threat's Defenses. If the difference between your Threat's highest Defense and their lowest Defense is their Level or less, their Defenses are fairly balanced. If you feel your Threat's Defenses should be higher, you can increase them with Perks.

5. Perks, Powers, and Hangups

Perks and Powers are the biggest differentiators between two otherwise similarly built creatures. A Perk is a static or situational benefit. A Power is a benefit the Threat must spend an action to use. Hangups are flaws that limit what a Threat can do or weaknesses that PCs can exploit.

Perks

Threats gain 1 Perk at 1st level, and an additional Perk every 4 levels. Resilient Threats gain 1 fewer Perks than Typical Threats, and Canny Threats gain 1 more.

You can use a Threat's Perks to give it:

- A power;
- +1 damage to an attack;
- Dictate the defense an attack targets;
- +1 Health;
- Immunity to a type of damage other than Sharp and Blunt, or Resistance to Sharp or Blunt damage;
- +10ft to Ground Movement, Aerial Movement equal to their Ground Movement -10ft, a Climbing Movement equal to their Ground Movement, or an Aquatic Movement equal to twice their Ground Movement;
- A General Perk, from **Chapter 7: Perks and Grid Powers** of the **Power Rangers Roleplaying Game** Core Rulebook;
- A new, original Perk.

Going into all of the rules for balancing Perks is outside the scope of this guide. However, as mentioned in **Step 4. Essence Scores, Skill Ranks, and Defenses**, Perks can patch up another issue of your build, like getting your Defenses and Skill Ranks just right. "This creature uses Athletics for Initiative Skill Tests," "This creature treats Streetwise as a Smarts skill," "This creature rolls untrained Speed Skill Tests as though they had d2 Ranks in that Skill."

If a Perk is self-explanatory (such as +1 Health), you can adjust the Threat's stat block without listing it as a Perk. If you want to be transparent about how your Perks were spent, you could group all of these Perks together. For example, if you make a statue brought to life, you could give it a Perk called Living Stone and list +1 Health, resistance to Sharp damage, and +1 damage to its unarmed attack as the benefits.

Powers

Powers give Threats additional uses of their actions on their turn. Like Perks, the full range of Powers is beyond the scope of this guide, but all Powers share some basic qualities:

- **Action:** Most powers that target a creature take a Standard action to use. If it takes a Move action, it's more potent because the Power can be used on the same turn the Threat attacks. Free actions take the least amount of time to use, making them the most dangerous. If you give your Threat a power that takes a Free action to use, be sure to indicate whether there's a limit on the number of times your Threat can use it in a turn. High level Threats get a lot of Free actions.
- **Target:** A creature (which could be an enemy, an ally, or the Threat itself) or location that a Power affects. If the target is another creature, list whether your Threat rolls a Skill Test against one or more of the creature's Defenses, or a Contested roll.
- **Skill Test:** What Skill does the Threat have to roll to use this Power. A lot of PC abilities affect enemy rolls, so it's important to include Skill Tests for Threats to use their Powers. This is also an opportunity to use Skills that make sense for the Threat (such as Perform

for a creature with a musical attack) that don't normally have an offensive function. If a Power doesn't target a creature, the DIF of the Skill Test should be around 10+Threat Level.

- **Circumstance:** How many times per turn or combat can this Power be used, at what range, actions that can or can't happen first ("if this creature moves 10ft" or "if this creature doesn't move" for example), and flavorful triggers ("if this creature takes damage" or "if another creature is Defeated within 15ft of this creature"). The more specific or unusual the circumstance, the less it will come up, therefore the more powerful the effect can be (such as a condition that lasts extra long, or a faster type of action to use the Power).
- **Effect:** What the Power does. A Power's effect is usually a Condition, a Snag or Downshift (if affecting an enemy), an Edge or Upshift (if affecting an ally or themselves), or a change to another ability, such as increasing Reach by 5ft or forcing attacks to target a specific Defense.
- **Duration:** How long does the effect last? If it's more than a few rounds but less than a day, it's better to say it lasts until the end of combat instead of counting minutes. Also, if the effect can be mitigated by the action of another creature, list that here as well. A lot of players select options to help others in need, so having effects that can be treated before the end of a longer duration rewards such thoughtfulness.

Hangups

Just like the Hangups PCs gain from taking additional Influences, a Threat's Hangups are abilities that negatively affect them. You can take up to two Hangups, gaining an additional Perk per Hangup.

A Hangup should negatively impact a Threat as much as a Perk benefits them. If choosing a Perk completely negates your Threat's Hangup and provides no additional benefit, you've created a balanced Perk. In the case of purely numeric Hangups, like -1 Health or -10ft to Ground Movement, that's easy to calculate. For more complex Hangups, like Terror Toad's Weak Point, you need to trust your instincts.

6. Attacks

The basic, repeatable ways in which this Threat deals damage or otherwise negatively affects targets. Attacks follow this format:

- **Name:** A short explanation about what it is the creature is using to attack (like claw, bite, or energy beam).
- **Skill Rank:** What die is rolled for the attack, including any Specialization. This needs to be tied to one of the Threat's primary combat Skills (Athletics for thrown attacks, Might or Finesse for melee attacks, or Targeting for ranged attacks), unless a Perk allows the use of an exceptional Skill;
- **Range:** A number of feet for a ranged attack, or "Reach" for a melee attack;
- **Effects:** What happens on a success, listed in brackets. If multiple effects happen on one successful attack, the effects are divided by "and" (1 Sharp Damage and Trip). If

there are alternative effects you choose from before attacking, the effects are divided by a comma (1 Sharp Damage, Trip).

It's easiest to base an attack on a Weapon in **Chapter 8: Equipment**, modifying it as needed. Give your Threat at least two attacks, one ranged and one melee. You can give your Threat more attacks, but you should vary more than just the effects. If one attack is clearly worse than the others, it won't get used. If the only difference between two attacks is the effect, make one the alternate effect of the other attack.

7. Make It Yours

Have you read all of the guidelines for Threat creation? Great. Now throw them out!

OK, don't throw them all out, but don't let the rules get in your way. If one of the steps is more complex than you feel you need it to be, you can eyeball it. If you follow every step correctly and your gut tells you a number feels wrong, make it right. The more experience you get playing the **Power Rangers Roleplaying Game** and other **Essence20 Roleplaying System** games, and the more Threats you build, the more instinctive the process will become.

Once you've created a Threat, feel free to share it with the community on Renegade Game Studios social media platforms. Let them know if you're looking for feedback, or if you're showing off a Threat you're happy with. Who knows, maybe something you create will inspire a Game Master halfway around the world!