

WFRP Quick Glance Character Sheet – Notes

By Robin Low

The *Quick Glance* character sheet is not intended to replace whatever sheet you are using, but to complement it. Its design is based on one simple goal: speed of use during actual play, an idea most character sheet designers seem utterly oblivious to. Let me expand.

The single most common reason for looking at a character sheet for any system is to find numbers that are required to base dice rolls on. It should be easy and quick to identify those numbers within a couple of seconds, so the dice can be rolled, the situation resolved, and the game progress.

In practice, however, and simple empirical observation lends a lot of support to this, players frequently have to waste time searching tiny text for the data, adding modifiers scattered across the sheet, even searching through up to six sheets of A4! New players are often completely lost and even experienced players familiar with a system can find their eyes wandering when faced with lists of densely printed skills and numbers.

Does this matter? For me, it matters big time. One of the experiences I want from roleplaying is *atmosphere*, and nothing wrecks atmosphere more thoroughly than getting bogged down in rules. Badly designed characters sheets bog you down.

So, here is the *Quick Glance* character sheet. The data it asks you to provide is data you need to resolve dice rolls, nothing more. The Characteristic line should be your character's current profile, taking into account Advances and Talents, because that contains the numbers you actually need during play. A character's starting and advance profiles can be kept on a separate sheet for out-of-game record keeping. Similarly, the Skills should be followed by a single number that takes into account whether the character has the skill and any degree of Skill Mastery. Bonuses from a Talent should also be added

in, but *only* if it provides a bonus in *all* circumstances. For example, Surgery gives +10% to all Heal Tests, so it should be part of the number following Heal, but Alley Cat only gives +10% to Concealment in urban environments, so +10 is not automatically part of the number following Concealment. In the case of the Alley Cat example and similar Talents, the bonus can be recorded alongside the Talent; in most cases its application will be obvious. The rest of the sheet contains information straight from the rulebook.

One thing you'll notice is that the sheet only asks for information required for resolving rules-based situations. For example, height, weight, eye-colour, place of birth and so forth are not asked for. This is all background information that does not impinge on rules. Obviously, there is nothing wrong with recording such details, but personally I've never seen anyone need to look it up during a game, so keep it separate from the details you *will* need to look up frequently. Similarly, there is no room to record encumbrance details, but I've *never* seen this required in any game – commonsense works just fine.

Such a strict approach, on only a single side of A4, results in compromises: there is not much room for detailing Talents, for example. For this reason, the sheet is also offered as a Word document file so each player can potentially customise it. For example, some characters might only ever carry two or even just one weapon, and perhaps not use armour at all. In that case, the relevant boxes can be reduced or removed and the resulting space used for other purposes. Similarly, if there are word-wrap problems, the point can also be reduced. However, I would hope that any modifications will follow a similar design philosophy: near-instant locating of a number required to resolve a dice roll. If anyone produces a better sheet, with text of equal or larger size and only on a single side, I will be very happy to see it out there.