

Write And Roll – Powers ‘n Points (W.A.R - PnP)

A quick simultaneous play game for two sketchy schemers
(with variant rules for 3+ players)

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Object

End the game with the most points. Do this by selecting (and building up) useful special powers, countering your opponents' strategies, and predicting and investing in "point mines." Will you play it safe and invest in the most likely results, take risks and hope for a big payout, or split the difference? Success depends on good strategy; balancing attack, defense, and growth; and a splash of luck.

You Need

- These rules
- Two six-sided dice
- A W.A.R - PnP play sheet for each player
 - [Write-and-roll: Powers & Points - play sheet](#)
- A pencil for each player

Setup

- Give each player a play sheet and a pencil.
 - When you have your sheet, develop five boxes in your Powers and/or Points section.
 - Developing:
 - Every box in your Powers section and Points section has a light gray "O" in the upper-right corner. A box isn't active until you fill the "O" with something (like a star).
 - For Powers: When you develop a power, fill the "O" of the left-most inactive box in the row you've selected. (The box with the lowest roman numeral.)
 - When you develop a Powers row for the first time, pick what power you want to use when the main player rolls that row's number. Pick one of the powers from the list and

write its name in the blank to the right of the row you just developed.

- The highest value (Roman numerals i to vi) in an developed box in a Powers row determines how powerful the power's effect is.
- For Points, a Points column activates when one of the numbers at the bottom of the column equals the sum of the dice the main player rolled. For example, when the rolled sum is 5 or 9, your 5/9 Points column activates. When this happens, you'll pick a developed box in that Points column and get points equal to the number in that developed box (accounting for any modifiers, which we'll go over in a bit).
 - When you develop a Points column, fill in the "O" of the inactive box closest to the bottom of the column you've selected. (The inactive box with the lowest number.)
- For setup, you should fill in the Os you develop with an "S" so you know you developed it during setup.
- On following turns, put the round number in the O – on round four, you'd put a "4" in the O of any box you develop.
- Put the dice where everyone can reach them.
- Peacefully pick a player to go first. Give them the dice. The player with the dice is the main player. (Don't let it go to your head. It's not a big deal.)

Play

Play in W.A.R. - PnP is (largely) simultaneous. You don't take turns – everyone plays at the same time. There is a main player; that role passes at the end of each round. If there's a timing issue, start with the main player and go clockwise.

Play takes place in phases. Do not move on to the next phase until everyone is done with the current phase. The phases are;

- Develop a Power
- Develop a Points Column
- Roll
- Use and Resolve Powers
- Gain Points
- Check for the end of the game
- Pass the dice

Develop a Power

Each player fills in one "O" in their Powers area. Pick a row and fill in a vacant O in that row with the round number.

This follows the same rules you followed during Setup: You must fill from left to right and you get to pick a power when you fill your first “O” in a Powers row.

Develop a Points Column

Each player fills in one “O” in their Points area. Pick a Points column and fill in a vacant “O” in that column with the round number.

This follows the same rules you followed during Setup: You must fill from bottom to top.

Roll

The main player rolls the dice. Record the two dice in the history track on the top edge of your sheet.

Use and Resolve Powers

Use the powers on your sheet whose row numbers (the big number to the left of the row) match the numbers on the dice. You can resolve your powers in any order, but they (functionally) occur simultaneously. For example; If you use Grow (1) and Trap (2), you can't grow your trap, then use Trap (3). Even if you grow your trap, it'll only act as a Trap (2) this round.

Doubles lets you use the same power twice. Even then, both activations are simultaneous. If you double-activate a Grow (1), using it on itself, you only get two activations of Grow (1) – not a Grow (1) and a Grow (2) – and it'll end the round as a Grow (3).

The Powers

General terms

(eou) = Erase on use. Some powers let you make special marks on your sheet or other players' sheets. When you use a mark with (eou), erase it after you resolve it. Powers with (eou) depend on a mark being present in order to create an effect, and creating that effect “uses up” the mark, erasing it.

Numbers in [brackets] have six options in them, separated by a forward slash (/). Each option corresponds to one of the boxes in that Power's row, with the first option corresponding to the first box (box “i”) and the sixth option corresponding to the sixth box (box “vi”). For example, Grow says “Grow: [+1 / +2, oppt +1 / +2 / +3, oppt +2 / +3, oppt +1 / +3].” If “iv” is your highest-ranked active box in your Grow row when you activate that row, you'd activate the fourth Grow option; you'd get three Grow actions and your opponent would get two.

Marking; Some powers tell you to mark a box or point value. You may only mark an unmarked target. For example: If you're using Trap on me and my “25” has a mark, you can not mark my 25 (Note: Withering is an exception to this because it accumulates – described below.).

Power Explanations with Examples

1. **Grow:** This power gives you extra development and might give your opponent extra development. For each point of Grow, you (or your opponent) may fill the O for a Powers or Points box, following all normal develop rules.
 - a. If you have multiple opponents, you can distribute Grow you have to give to your opponents among your opponents as you see fit.
 - b. When an opponent uses a Grow you've gifted them, they pick what they develop - you do not.
2. **Double:** This power helps you gain points. This power lets you mark one or more boxes in your Points section with a "2x." When you gain points from a Points box with a "2x," (During Gain Points) you get double points and must erase the "2x" you just used.
3. **Bend:** For each point of Bend, you may treat the main player's roll's sum as one higher or lower than it really is. This does not affect what powers you activate – just what Points column you activate.
4. **Block:** This power prevents your opponent from gaining points. This power lets you mark one or more boxes on one opponent's Points section with an "X" When you use a Points box with an "X," (During Gain Points) you get no points and must erase the "X" on the Points box you just used.
5. **Steal:** This power lets you take points from another player, but it's limited by the number of points you get this turn.
 - a. Example: The main player rolled a 1 and a 4. You get to activate Steal (3) because you have that in Powers row 4. You have five boxes active in your 5/9 column. The fifth box in 5/9 is "15," so you'll gain 15 points this turn, but you can only steal 9 points (because the third box of the 5/9 column is "9").
6. **Cancel:** This power lets you prevent other players' powers from activating or lets you erase marks and other ongoing effects. When Cancel activates, you may prevent one other Power with as many or fewer active Powers boxes from doing anything, or you may erase one or more marks (one per point of cancel) from any sheet or sheets.
 - a. Cancel can only cancel a power with as many or fewer active boxes as Cancel. Cancel has no effect on a power with more active boxes than it.
 - b. You may cancel a Cancel, and if you have two active Cancels you can use your second Cancel to cancel a Cancel that's targeting your first Cancel to make the first Cancel succeed. (Alternatively, you pick the target the your first Cancel picked, but you do you.)
 - c. If you use Cancel to erase one or more marks, you can erase marks on your sheet or another player's sheet. You can split this erasing across sheets.
 - i. For example: If you have Cancel (3) you could erase two marks from your sheet and one mark from mine.
 - ii. Development marks that fill Os to are immune to Cancel. You can not use Cancel to erase them (...but activating a trap can).
 - d. If you erase Withering, subtract the value of your Cancel from the Withering, erase it, and write the new total in. If you have Withering (7) on your 6/8 Points column and use Cancel (5) to reduce the Withering, you'd erase the Withering (7) and replace it with Withering (2).

- e. You can not cancel a power and use “left over” cancel to erase marks or remove withering. Cancel doesn’t work that way. For that matter, you can’t mix cancel effects – You can’t stop a power and/or erase marks and/or remove withering with the same cancel effect (If you’re using two separate Cancel effects, each one can have a different target – you can remove marks with one and remove withering with the other)..
7. **Trap:** This power lets you set traps on your opponent’s scoreboard that’ll make them lose active boxes. When your Trap power activates, mark specific scores on your opponent’s Score track with a “T” to the right of the score. If your score is ever exactly equal to a value with a “T,” you’ve sprung a trap. (Example: I’ve trapped your “25.” You have 17 points and gain 10. Your score instantly goes from 17 to 27, skipping the trap at 25. The trap on 25 does not trigger. If you’d scored 8 points instead of 10, or if your next score alteration is losing two points, the trap on 25 would trigger.) Erase the “T” and the opponent who placed that trap gets to un-develop one of your active boxes (by erasing what was filling the O for that box). Un-developing a lower-rank box doesn’t invalidate higher-rank boxes in that row or column, so it’s usually best to un-develop the highest box you can.
 8. **Decay:** This power lets you reduce the number of points your opponent scores this round. For this round only, the Points box your opponent chooses to activate counts as being one to six rows lower than it actually is (minimum of no rows and zero points).
 - a. Decay is not cumulative. Activating Decay more than once on the same opponent in the same round does not have an additional effect.
 - i. If you get to use Decay twice in the same turn and you have more than one opponent, you can absolutely target two different opponents with two different instances of Decay.
 9. **PowerUp:** This power lets you get *lots* of points from one box on your Points chart. When you activate this power, mark one of your Points boxes with “PU#” where the # is the value/rank of the PowerUp you’re using, plus 1. For example: If “iv” is the highest-ranked box in the PowerUp you’re using, you’d mark “PU5”. When you activate a Points box with a “PU#,” (During Gain Points) multiply the points in the box by the PowerUp number and erase the “PU#” you just used. For example, if you activate “25” with “PU4” on it, you get 100(!!) points and erase the PU4.
 10. **Wither:** This power lets you archaically ask where something is. *No, just kidding.* This power lets you reduce the number of points all boxes in a Points column produce for the rest of the game (or until someone uses Cancel to erase the Withering). When you activate Wither, pick a Points column on an opponent’s sheet. Directly under the activation numbers for that column (eg: 3/11), write “W -#” where # is the amount of Withering you’re using.
 - a. You may target a column that already has withering. *This is an exception to the rule that says you can not mark something that’s already marked.* If you target a column that already has withering, erase the withering that’s there and add your withering to what was there.
 - i. Ex: If I have “W -4” on my 4/10 column and you add -5 Withering to it, you’ll erase the “W -4” and replace it with “W -9.”

- b. Withering takes effect before multipliers.
 - i. Ex: I activate “20” with a PU3 on a column with W -9. How many points will I get? I’ll get 33 points. 20, less nine is 11. 11 times three is 33.
- c. Withering can not reduce point gain below zero.
 - i. Ex: If I activate “5” on a column with “W -6,” I gain zero points. I do not lose one point.

Gain Points

Take the sum of the dice. Find the Points column on your sheet with a column number (the numbers below the lowest box in each column) that matches the sum. Gain points equal to any one active box (you do not have to pick your highest active box) in that Points column. If you have no active boxes in that column, you do not gain points.

Note: You can gain more than 100 points, even though your score sheet only goes to 100. If you exceed 100, write your total on your sheet. Powers that target scores (like Trap) can not target scores greater than 100.

Check for End of Game

If any player has 100 or more points and the highest scores are not tied, the game ends. The player with the most points wins.

Pass the Dice

Pass the dice and start a new round.

Ending the Game and Winning

If any player has 100 points or more after all players are done gaining points and the top score is not tied, the game ends. If there’s a tie for winner, play another round.

Origin & Credits

Roll-and-writes have been “the hotness” for a while and Desi and I got Space Base for Christmas 2022. I figured I’d take a stab at it, but with players writing *before* rolling instead of after the roll. I owe a lot to Space Base’s clever mechanical contrast of the random range of one die and the pyramidal spread of two dice.

The Points section originally had a column for each possible 2d6 sum (2 to 12), but it took too long to advance/evolve the Points columns. Condensing the activations accelerated the game. The Powers section originally had powers pre-assigned to each slot, but that removed too much player choice. I like the flexibility, player empowerment, and strategy that “choose as you play” enables.

I started thinking about this in earnest on 2023-01-01, wrote the first notes on 2023-01-08, printed the first prototype on 2023-01-10, wrote the first draft of these rules on 2023-01-12, and revised them on 2023-01-13.

Variants

Hard Decisions (limited rounds)

If no-one has won (100+ points) by the end of the 20th round, the game ends. The player with the highest score wins. Break ties normally (play another round).

Etc.

I'd like to make custom sheets with asymmetric setups, like the aliens in Eclipse. Unique powers; old powers with new twists/different costs/rankings; different Points progressions; etc.

This is a decent core mechanic to hang more game and theme on. I'd like to explore how this plays as a control system for city building or interstellar expansion or a Descent-style adventure game/arena battle.

I suspect W.A.R. PnP can play more than two players, but you'll need to take turns doing pretty much *everything* – especially Power activations. Start with the player who rolled activating one power and passing until each player gets two chances to use a power. You can pass without activating, but you forfeit that activation.

Design Notes

Concept

Instead of a roll-and-write where you write in response to rolls, a write-and-roll where you write, then roll and see what happens.

Borrowing the (1-6) + (2-12) from Space Base, have two tracks: a 1-6 track where you wager on a flat distribution and a 2-12 track where you wager on a pyramidal distribution.

The 1-6 track has powers on it that trigger.

The 2-12 track gives you points.

Flow of play

- Each player puts one dot in one of their 1-6 rows and one dot in one of their 2-12 rows.
 - Note: Each region's row (1-6 and 2-12) has a row of dots. Likely six.
 - When you fill dots, start from the box closest to where the number is marked/written on the sheet) and proceed away from it. Do not skip boxes.
 - The more dots you fill in a 1-6 row, the greater the effect.
 - This is the easiest place to customize and create different characters with different power sets.
 - The more dots you fill in a 2-12 row, the more points you get.
 - It's harder to customize here, but one could... Save that for "expansions"
 - Note: In setup, each player gets five free dots that they can put anywhere. With the two dots (1 and 1) from the first step of the first round of play, one region could start with six dots in it and one with one.
 - Roll the 2d6 - it doesn't matter who rolls, but I think the dice should start with one player and pass clockwise at the end of each round. Play is simultaneous, but passing the dice creates primary, next, prior, and non-primary players. We can use that for effect targeting. Also, passing dice at the end of a round is a nice ritual.
 - Each player resolves their effects. Most of the time, you can do this simultaneously. If order matters, start with the primary player and proceed clockwise (or fewest points on up).
 - When you trigger a 1-6 effect, pick one of the two numbers rolled and trigger it once for each time it was rolled. Yes, doubles trigger twice.
 - When you trigger a 2-12 effect, gain points equal to the highest box you've marked for that number. Gaining negative points subtracts points.

- When all effects are resolved, check for the end of the game. Play ends when...
 - It's the end of the 12th round.
 - Any player has at least 100 points.
 - NOTE: The player with the most points at the end of the game wins.
 - NOTE: If tied, play another round.

Powers

- More boxes: +1 box; +2 box, opt to left gains +1; +2 box; +3 box, opt to right gains 1; +3 box; +4 box, opts to left and right gain +1 (if same person, they get +2 instead)
- Point enhancement: Pick a 2-12 row, gain double points for that row next round; pick two rows; pick three rows; pick four rows; pick 5 rows; pick six rows.
- Decay: Pick a 2-12 row. No players gain points in that row next turn.
- Withering: Pick a 2-12 row. -1 to points gained in that row for the rest of the game. (May need a point cost to make that fair.)
- Bending: Alter one/both/choice die/dice (just for you) by 1, 2, 3 points.
- Re-roll: Re roll one/both/choice dice.
- Poke: Oppt loses points.
- Steal: Oppt loses, you gain.

Variants

- Add a field of battle (or that they're searching).
 - Fight
 - Treasure hunting
 - Maze
- Leave the number sections to the left of 1-6 blank. Let the players write the numbers they want to activate the powers in during setup (That way, different powers activate for different players. That's nice.)
- Put it on a 2-D path.
 - Side-scrolling fighter
 - Duel