

Magic Words



How to play Magic Words

You play as superheroes who have superpowers, and who can transform to become even more powerful. To transform, to use a superpower, or to defeat a villain with a final attack, you use Moves. In order for your Moves to work, you must act out a short sequence from memory, and the Judge will determine whether you followed the sequence correctly. These sequences can include words, props, music, and more.

Phase 1: Write

In Phase 1 of the game, you come up with Moves. Moves come in three types: transformations for suiting up and becoming generally more powerful, superpowers to activate one-time special abilities with various imaginative effects, and final attacks to finish off villains for good. If the Judge agrees, some Moves can be used for more than one type. You may have as many Moves as you like, but all players should have the same number of total moves.

Each move has a level - a number between 1 and 6 indicating how powerful it is. Transformations set participating characters' Transformation level equal to the Transformation's Move level, up to the current Transformation Level of the villain. Final attacks add their Move level to the Finishing Total, in order to finish off a villain for good. Superpowers have story effects appropriate to their level; the Judge will tell you what superpower level best matches the move's Description, with simple superpowers requiring only a low level, and powerful superpowers requiring a higher level.

| Level | Transformation example | Superpower examples |
|-------|------------------------|---|
| 0 | Everyday citizen | n/a |
| 1 | Peak human condition | Get around city quickly, sense evil intent |
| 2 | Incredible ability | Create mundane object, resist mind control |
| 3 | Light superpowers | Pass through walls, find weak spot |
| 4 | Big superpowers | Resist incoming attacks, create illusions |
| 5 | Robot Battle Supertank | Freeze time briefly, shield city from danger |
| 6 | City-Stomping Robot | Turn defeated villain's heart good, change the past |

Write your move in three parts:

1. Description: what the Move does. Write down the effects of the superpower, or style of the final attack. Or, for transformations, write what the transformation looks like and what you transform into.

2. Requirements: the elements of a Script - Words (W), Gestures (G), Props (P), Ad-Libs (A), Music (M), and Teamwork (T). The more Requirements, the more powerful the Move is - the Move's level goes up by one for every unique Requirement (and goes up by 2 for using the Teamwork requirement). Write down which Requirements you are using and the Move's level.

3. Script: what exactly needs to be done to activate the power. Write the script, making sure it is totally clear how the Script will look when it is acted out. Try to memorize your Scripts because you will need to act them out later! Write the script like stage instructions, starting with a character name. Here's an example:

Autumn: "Wings of Heart!" 🎵 *Hands on heart, then raises Wand of Destiny*

More example scripts can be found at <https://MagicWords.Neocities.org>.

Write all of your chosen Requirements into your script. Follow these scripting guidelines:

- ◆ (W) - Write words with quotation marks, like "Tikki, spots on!"
- ◆ (G) - Write gestures in third person, with asterisks or italics, like **extends right, then left arm** You may also include pictures or diagrams.
- ◆ (P) - Write props in capitalized bold, like **Power Bracelet**
- ◆ (A) - Write ad-libs with vague dialogue description in brackets, like [Cheesy pun]
- ◆ (M) - Indicate the timing of the musical cue with music note symbols, like 🎵🎵
- ◆ (T) - Write teamwork scripts together with other players. To count the Teamwork Requirement toward the move's level, each teammate needs their own section that includes the move's other Requirements. For example, if the Requirements for a move are (W)(P)(T), each player must have spoken words and a unique prop in the script.

Phase 2: Play Out the Story

Structure of Play

In Phase 2, you and the Judge will imagine scenarios that their superhero characters run into, and try to save the day! The Judge will come up with challenges that players face, and players will tell everyone how they address those challenges. This plays out in several scenes, which together make a whole story.

The Judge acts out the part of a villain character. Villains threaten peaceful people, and the heroes must try to defeat them. The Judge starts with tokens called the **Upper Hand**, one Upper Hand corresponding to each player. This represents the advantage the villain starts with. The heroes begin at Transformation Level 0, and the villain begins the story at a Transformation Level between 2 and 4.

The first scenes set the stage - introducing the everyday world and how the villains appear to threaten it. In the next scenes, the heroes will need to investigate and/or battle the villains. In order to activate your superpowers, transformations, and final attacks, you act out the scripts to go with the Moves you wrote in Phase 1. Throughout the game, you will try to stop the villains by engaging in **Contests** with the villain as the story unfolds. In these Contests, the players will sometimes gain **Victory Points**, and the villains will sometimes gain **Villain Points**.

Contest Outcomes

If the Player wins the game of Rock, Paper, Scissors, things go the way the player wanted AND:

- ◆ If the player already had the Upper Hand, they keep it and gain 1 Victory Point
- ◆ If the villain had the Upper Hand but the hero still won, the player takes the Upper Hand.

If the Judge wins the game of Rock, Paper, Scissors, things go the way the villain wanted AND:

- ◆ If the player had the Upper Hand, but the villain still won, the villain takes the Upper Hand
- ◆ If the villain already had the Upper Hand, they keep it and gain 1 Villain Point

Spending Points

The villain may spend 4 Villain Points to gain new powers and cause the players one of three major setbacks (Judge's choice):

1. The villain transforms, and goes up a few power levels.
2. The villain can no longer be harmed by the heroes' typical approach - the heroes must retreat, and come up with a new strategy. The villain takes the Upper Hand from all players.
3. The villain can no longer be harmed by the heroes' powers - the heroes must retreat, and gain new powers from a mentor. The villain takes the Upper Hand from all players.

The players may spend 5 or more Victory Points to attempt to finish off the villain for good. This is most effective when using a final attack simultaneously. This attempt is successful if:

Heroes' transformation level
+
Final Attack Level
+
Extra Victory Points spent
(beyond 5)



Villain's Transformation Level
+
Current Villain Points

When the villain is finished off for good, everyone can play out one or two scenes to wrap up the story, and the game is over - until next time!

Contests

When an outcome of an action between a player character and a villain character is uncertain AND exciting, they will enter a **Contest**. In a Contest, you play Rock, Paper, Scissors with the Judge in order to see whether the hero or the villain gets what they want out of the situation. Tied games go to whichever character holds the corresponding Upper Hand.

Using Moves

In order to use a Move during Phase 2, you have to act out the corresponding Script that you wrote in Phase 1. Only the Judge is allowed to see the Scripts once Phase 2 begins. You must perform the script to the best of your memory, and the Judge will either award a **Thumbs Up** or a **Thumbs Down**, to indicate whether you followed the script correctly or not.

If you get a Thumbs Down:

Your Move does not activate successfully. The Judge will say what happened in the story to prevent the powers from working right. The Judge will tell you exactly what mistakes you need to fix, but will also choose **one** of three consequences:

1. The player cannot use their powers until the next scene
2. If the player had the Upper Hand, they lose it
3. If the team had any Victory Points, they lose one

If you get a Thumbs Up:

Your Move activates successfully. This works differently for the three Move types: transformations, superpowers, and final attacks.

Transformations, when successful, set participating heroes' transformation level equal to the Move level. In addition, whenever players transform, they gain the Upper Hand.

Superpowers, when successful, complete the effects from their description. These can vary considerably, but their usefulness and scale should be proportional to the Move level, at the Judge's discretion. The Judge may allow some Moves to affect the outcome of Contests, including granting the Upper Hand. Some combat-oriented superpowers may also be used as final attacks.

Final attacks make it easier to finish off the villain. When successful, final attacks add their final attack level to the finishing total which will determine whether they finish off the villain for good. To make this attempt, players must spend 5 or more Victory Points.

Please visit <https://MagicWords.Neocities.org> for more **Magic Words** resources!