# HUGHESVILLE
# HIGH

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## THE 1980S ROLEPLAYING GAME
*Making Fun of a Decade that Demands It*

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# WELCOME TO

# HUGHESVILLE!

Hughesville (not to be confused with that town where Christmas was almost stolen) is a happy little suburb of Chicago sometime during the 1980s. Home to Hughesville High, Hughesville is that town you see in most every 80s teen movie, especially those by John Hughes. It's a content little place during a content little time when Reagan was president, America was the most totally excellent nation that ever was, and all was good and right with the world, at least to the extent that anyone in America cared to pay attention. Greed was good, communism was bad, and music videos were starting to become "a thing" thanks to some no-name cable channel.

Hughesville High (or "Hughes" from here on out, at least when we mean the game, not the high school) is a roleplaying game about high school kids in the 80s. High school kids with unusual powers and abilities, sure, but high school kids nonetheless. It's a lighthearted game intended to evoke the classic teen movies of the 80s, with the modern-day teen-monster shtick and other weirdness thrown into the mix for good measure. Unlike today's teen-monster genre, however, Hughes isn't supposed to be taken even slightly seriously. If you want a deeper take on this stuff, do yourself a favor and buy the *Monsterhearts* roleplaying game by Joe McDaldno. It rocks on toast. Hughes, on the other hand, is much more *Weird Science* and much less *Twilight*.

The characters in Hughes are ordinary teens living through the strange days of the 1980s, trying their best to live normal lives while dealing with the abnormal situations that keep coming their way. They may be aliens, monsters, robots (yes, robots), or whatever else, but more than that, they're teenagers, looking to survive high school, score a date for the prom, and avoid doing anything that could end up on their Permanent Record.

## THE DEAL

This is a tabletop roleplaying game. If you don't know what that means, why are you reading this? Maybe you thought this was

yet another installment of some cheesy teen vampire series that's made its author insanely wealthy—and no, we are not even the slightest bit jealous, thank you very much. Maybe you found the cover art too compelling to resist. Or maybe you're a nosy parent, sneaking a peek at what your kid's reading to make sure they aren't "doing the drugs." If so, good for you: we need more involved parents. Whatever the case, if you don't know what a roleplaying game is, here's the deal.

A roleplaying game is a type of game where a bunch of players get together and create a story. One of the players is called the gamemaster (GM), and the others are called players. The GM comes up with a rough plot outline of what will happen during the game. The players each play the part of one of the main characters in the story, called player characters or, when we get lazy, just characters. The GM, meanwhile, plays everyone (and everything) else in the game world (called "npcs," which is short for non-player characters). The GM also kind of controls the flow of the story. Yes, it's more work, but most GMs are relentless egomaniacs and don't mind it at all.

Game play is a lot like a conversation between the GM and the players. In this conversation, the GM and the players describe what happens in the story, usually moving from one scene to the next. Normally, the GM sets the stage for each scene and the players take it from there by reacting to whatever has been set up, or by pursuing their own agendas. The GM responds to what the players do, the players then react to that, and so on. This back-and-forth exchange continues until the scene comes to a natural conclusion (the GM is usually the one to make this call). At that point, the current scene ends and the GM moves on to the next one. The GM is typically the one who gets to describe what happens during each scene. However, because the GM is supposed to challenge (some might say torment) the characters, the players will often try to take narrative control for themselves in order to describe how they want a scene to unfold. That's

where these rules come into play. The rules help determine who gets to describe what happens in the game.

At the end of the day, tabletop roleplaying is nothing more than play acting, with a few ground rules. It's like improvisational theater (bad improvisational theater) with some problem solving thrown into the mix. You take on the role of your player character and try to act and think like that character while you play the game. Same applies if you're the GM, only you're doing this for everyone and everything in the game world other than the player characters. As GM, however, you do so with the understanding that the player characters are the heroes of the story and the stars of the show. You're always rooting for them, even while you're making their lives impossibly difficult. Even if you cackle as you do it. It happens.

# 1. CHARACTERS

Making a Hughes character is easy. There are only a few simple steps: assign each of your mundane roles a rank; select a unique role; and pick your drive, baggage, flaw, style, and music. Each of these steps is described below.

# ROLES AND RANKS

Every player character has five mundane roles that represent the archetypes typically seen in 80s teen movies. Characters will also have one unique role that represents an unusual ability or background. Whether mundane or unique, roles are rated from 1 to 6. The ranks are described below.

| Rank | Description |
|------|-------------|
| 1 | Bogus |
| 2 | Whatever |
| 3 | Okay |
| 4 | Excellent |
| 5 | Gnarly |
| 6 | Totally Rad |

## MUNDANE ROLES

There are five mundane roles. To create a new character, assign each of these roles a rank of 1 to 5. Each rank within that range can only be assigned to one role. The mundane roles are:

**Brain:** This would be the school valedictorian. That could mean the nerd that everyone picks on, but it could just as easily be the hot brainy girl who's untouchably perfect, or the quarterback who also happens to be a straight-A student. This is the role you use to determine what your character knows about things.

**Delinquent:** No parent wants their child to excel at this role. The kids who drink beer and smoke behind the school, who shoplift, and who sneak into places they shouldn't (the ones with a future in used car sales or politics) all have a high Delinquent rank. So do most kids from the wrong side of the tracks, even the good ones. This is the role you use to sneak around, steal stuff, and do other things you don't want anyone else to know about.

**Jock:** Not every character with a high Jock rank will actually be a student athlete, but most will. The common exceptions are the

kids who are too cool or too marginalized to participate. While the dumb jock is a classic movie trope, the genre also includes a number of smart jocks, many of whom are also rich. This is the role you use when doing anything athletic.

**Nerd:** Having a high rank in this role doesn't necessarily mean you're a pocket-protected, 98-pound weakling sporting thick glasses and braces. But this is a game about 80s teen movies, so it probably does. There are always exceptions, but they tend to keep their inner nerds locked and hidden away for fear of social reprisal (and rightfully so). This is the role you use when you want to do anything mechanical, scientific, or technical.

**Royalty:** The king and queen of the prom have high Royalty ranks. So do most cheerleaders. Not to mention that rich guy who looks like George Michael before he went solo, the one with the latest Members Only jacket and that awesome collection of Swatch watches. This is the role you use when you want to charm, command, persuade, seduce, or otherwise get someone else to do what you want them to do.

## UNIQUE ROLES

Unique roles represent special abilities that most normal teens don't possess, not even in Hughesville. All new characters begin the game with one unique role at rank 5. Pick one from the list below or, if you're going to be a total baby about it, go ahead and make up your own. Be sure to get the GM's approval when selecting your unique role, especially one you made up.

Whatever their unique roles, all player characters are, first and foremost, teens struggling with all the usual insecurities, issues, and hang-ups. Equally important, they're all at the mercy of their raging teenage hormones, even those with bodies that are artificial, quasi-incorporeal, or undead. Don't overthink this, just go with it. No matter what, player characters should act and think like teenagers growing up in the 80s. That's what they are at their core, and what this game's all about.

**Alien:** You come from another planet. Work with the GM to describe exactly what this role lets you do.

**Atlantean:** Look at this role. Isn't it neat? Whether mermaid or merman, you swim like a fish and can breathe water. Also, your senses work just as well underwater as they do on land. Last, you can talk to aquatic animals. Yes, really.

**Avatar/Scion:** You're the avatar of some deity, or the offspring of some naughty deity and a human being. Work with the GM to describe exactly what this role lets you do, but it presumably depends on the deity's sphere of influence.

**Celestial:** You're an angel or a devil trapped in human form. You can sense what's in people's hearts and minds. You know their deepest desires and their deepest fears. You can also grow feathered (for angels) or leathery (for devils) wings and fly.

**Cyborg:** Parts of your body have been replaced with advanced cybernetics. You have cybernetic senses, including the ability to see in the dark, hear high- and low-frequency sounds, that kind of thing. Also, you can interface with computers and electronics.

**Djinni:** You're a fire elemental trapped in human form. You're immune to harm from any kind of heat. You can create and control fire, but you have to really concentrate to do so, making it impossible to use this ability in a fight.

**Dragon:** You're a dragon trapped in human form. You have an incredible sense of smell and can see perfectly well in the dark. You can breathe fire, but you have to really concentrate to do so, making it impossible to use this ability in a fight.

**Ghost:** You're a spirit. Your body is made of ectoplasm, so you don't need to eat, breathe, drink, or sleep. You can also become insubstantial, allowing you to move through solid objects.

**Gnome:** You're an earth elemental trapped in human form. You can shape earth and natural stone like clay, and you can travel by tunneling your way through the ground. You can also sense whatever's in the ground under your feet.

**Golem/Robot:** You're some kind of construct, magical if you're a Golem or technological if you're a Robot. You don't need to eat, breathe, drink, or sleep, and you never get tired.

**Mutant:** You possess a unique ability that developed because your parents were exposed to radiation in the 60s. Work with the GM to describe exactly what this role lets you do.

**Psychic:** You can see the future, sometimes; other times, you're just daydreaming. If only it were easier to tell the two apart. You get glimpses of what will happen in the next few moments, in the next few decades, and in between. You aren't yet sure if what you see can be changed by your actions.

**Revenant:** You're dead, but your teenage willpower continues to animate your body and prevent it from decomposing. You're almost impossible to hurt, and on the very rare occasions when you do get hurt, you recover incredibly quickly.

**Shape Changer:** You're a doppelgänger of Germanic myth. You can make yourself look like anyone you want.

**Sidhe:** You're a creature of the fairy realm. You can see magic, which also lets you see in the dark. Additionally, you can create minor illusions and make people see and hear what you want.

**Sylph:** You're an air elemental trapped in human form. You can turn your body into a whirling funnel of air, and in this form you can fly. You can also create and control minor gusts of air.

**Telepath:** You can read minds and sense people's thoughts and emotions. You can also transmit your thoughts to others. You

usually have to concentrate to do this, but very strong thoughts and emotions sometimes pop into your head uninvited.

**Undine:** You're a water elemental trapped in human form. You can turn yourself into water, breathe water, and travel through any kind of water very quickly. You can also create and control small amounts of water.

**Vampire:** You're a vampire. You need to drink blood to live, but not human blood. Only freaks are into that. Same with the whole sunlight thing; it's not your fave, but you can deal. You can see in pitch darkness, and you can hypnotize people by talking to them as long as they're looking into your eyes.

**Weird Scientist:** You're a genius, able to create inventions that modern science can't quite explain. You often carry at least a few of your inventions around with you, usually disguised as school supplies, sporting equipment, or both. Work with the GM to describe exactly what this role lets you do.

**Werewolf:** You can turn into a wolf or some other predatory animal (sure, wereducks may exist, but only to get shoved into lockers). In human form, you have superhuman senses. Your agility and speed are greatly enhanced in your animal form.

**Witch/Warlock:** You're a practitioner of witchcraft or voodoo. You can cast blessings (which impart good luck) and hexes (which impart bad luck) that take immediate effect. You also know something about magic in general.

# DRIVE

A player character's drive is the one thing that motivates the character more than anything else does. As discussed in Chapter 2, player characters will have an easier time of it when doing something motivated by their drive. Being teenagers, all player characters will be motivated by all of the drives listed below, but

one particular drive will be more important than all the rest. Select the drive that's most important to your player character. The drives are as follows.

**Acceptance:** All player characters want to feel appreciated and validated by those around them, especially by their peers.

**Hormones:** All player characters are perpetually drowning in a sea of teenage hormones telling them, well, you know.

**Independence:** All player characters want to feel like grown-ups who don't need their parents to direct their lives.

**Romance:** All player characters want an intimate relationship with a significant other. No one begins the game involved.

**Stuff:** All player characters are living (loosely speaking) in a material world, and they want to have lots of awesome toys.

# BAGGAGE

All characters have some baggage—some mundane issue they have to deal with. Although it can be a pain at times, baggage is actually a good thing because players use their baggage to earn plot points (the currency of the game, discussed in Chapters 2 and 3). More specifically, whenever a player character is placed in a situation where his baggage might cause problems, the player can declare that it does and describe what happens. This earns the character 1 plot point if it results in a significant hassle for the character or his friends.

Sometimes, the GM will want to bring a character's baggage into play. When that happens, the GM makes the declaration and narrates what happens as a result. Again, this earns the player 1 plot point. If the player *really* doesn't want that to happen, she can spend 1 plot point to prevent it from happening.

Pick one kind of baggage from the list below or make up your own. Keeping with the spirit of the game, baggage should never be too serious. It should be fraught with comedic potential, not tragic consequences. As always, you'll need the GM's approval before making up your own baggage.

Because baggage can get played out, and because characters are supposed to grow over time, player characters can swap one type of baggage for another between adventures. A player who wants to do this needs to get the GM's blessing first, and she needs to describe how the change happens.

**Bully:** You have been a really awful bully in the past, or you continue to be one in the present. You're generally disliked, and downright hated by those you've picked on.

**Burnout:** Your favorite pastime has somewhat dulled your senses, making you generally less aware of things.

**Crush:** You're completely smitten by someone who doesn't like you, doesn't know you're alive, or is involved with a close friend or family member. (No, the person you have a crush on can't be a family member. Don't be gross.)

**Crushed:** Someone you have absolutely no interest in dating has a major crush on you. This poor sap can't hide his feelings and won't take a hint. Oh, and everyone knows about it.

**Dweeb:** You're a complete and total nerd to an almost crippling degree. Even really nice kids have trouble interacting with you or taking you seriously.

**Experienced:** You have a reputation, deserved or not, for being too experienced in romance. Many kids think less of you, and your motives are always being questioned.

**Frenemy:** One of your friends isn't really a friend at all, and in fact wants to take you down in some way.

**Inexperienced:** You have no romantic experience at all, and it really shows. Many kids think less of you, and your motives are always being questioned.

**Involved Parents:** Your parents are very involved in your life, and often meddle where they shouldn't.

**One of Them:** You're exchange student, a member of an under-represented minority, or otherwise different. Most kids don't know how to interact with you, so they don't even try.

**One of Us:** You're very popular and you have a strong social network that depends on being just like everyone else. It's very important for you to maintain that appearance.

**Practice:** You're very involved in some activity (often an art or a sport) that requires a lot of your time and attention.

**Silver Spoon:** You're very wealthy and you are (or you can come off as) a spoiled rich kid. This rubs everyone who isn't equally wealthy (and even some who are) the wrong way.

**Stress Case:** You're perpetually worried about, if not terrified of, how your actions will affect your chances of getting into the best possible college, or maybe of getting a scholarship.

**Uninvolved Parents:** Your parents can't be relied on for much of anything. They might be happily clueless, too busy to pay attention, or dealing with their own issues.

**Wrong Side of the Tracks:** You never have any money and you can sometimes be a little rough around the edges. You make people from the right side of the tracks nervous.

# FLAWS

All player characters have one flaw, a weakness or vulnerability connected to their unique role. Flaws work just like baggage, and are used to earn plot points in exactly the same way. Pick one flaw from the list below or make up your own. Again, you'll need the GM's approval to make up your own flaw.

**Aversion:** You fear or can't stand some mundane thing, like garlic, wolfsbane, or holy symbols. Gag you with a spoon. You won't touch it, and you have trouble even approaching it.

**Compulsion:** You have a lot of difficulty resisting certain urges, typically ones that could get you in serious trouble.

**Frenzy:** You have a bad temper and tend to go big-time berserk when you do get into flights. Those who see you snap will label you a major freakazoid.

**Hunted:** You're being hunted by some person or group. They don't want to kill you (that's way too serious for this game), but they do want something from you. Maybe they want you to do something for them, maybe they want to capture and study you, or maybe they just want to prove that you exist.

**Light Sensitive:** You're sensitive to bright light. You have trouble seeing in bright indoor lightning, and full daylight makes you dizzy and sick. You wear sunglasses all the time.

**Need:** You must satisfy some requirement every so often, or very bad things will start to happen to you. Some loser vampires have this with the whole drinking-human-blood thing.

**Nocturnal:** Your body is designed to sleep during the day and be wide awake at night. You're often drowsy during the daytime, and it's not unusual for you to fall asleep during quiet moments.

**Oath Bound:** You're compelled to keep any serious promise that you swear to, no matter the consequences. You can break your promises if you really need to, but it takes a lot out of you.

**Reaction:** You suffer some gnarly adverse effect when you touch or come within a certain distance of some common thing.

**Repair:** You're some kind of construct rather than a living (or, let's be fair, unliving) thing. You don't recover from injuries and instead have to be mechanically or magically repaired.

**Uncontrolled Transformation:** Assuming you have a unique role that lets you transform your body, some outside factor can trigger that transformation unless you really fight it off.

**Vulnerability:** You have a weakness to some common thing, which will completely house you if used against you.

# STYLE

Next comes the player character's style. This is like a description, but it's more about the overall impression the character makes and less about what she actually looks like. There are twelve possible styles. Pick whichever best suits the character.

- **Broke:** A sad collection of mismatched hand-me-downs.
- **Flashy:** An ever-changing fashion plate of 80s pastels.
- **Geeky:** Braces, glasses, pocket protector; oh, the humanity.
- **Goth:** Pale skin and black clothes.
- **Plain:** A simple look that hasn't changed since the 50s.
- **Preppy:** That casual air of fashionable wealth.
- **Punk:** Spiked hair, maybe a mohawk, and a lot of leather.
- **Sporty:** Sweats and athletic attire, maybe a team uniform.
- **Surfer:** Casually cool and always ready for the beach.
- **Tough:** Denim jacket, T-shirt, jeans or leather pants.
- **Uniform:** Private school uniform.
- **Western:** A lot like Plain, but with a cowboy hat and boots.

# MUSIC

Last, select the music that most suits the character. This could be the character's favorite kind of music, or it could just be the music that plays in the background whenever he's on screen. This is the music that best represents the character, whether or not he's aware of it. Pick one kind of music from the list below.

- **Alternative**
- **Blues**
- **Classical**
- **Country**
- **Foreign**
- **Heavy Metal**
- **Jazz**
- **Pop**
- **Punk Rock**
- **R&B/Soul**
- **Rap**
- **Rock & Roll**

# ORDINARY KIDS

Although the default assumption in Hughes is that the player characters are something more than ordinary kids, you don't have to play the game that way. If you prefer, player characters can be completely normal teenagers. If you want to create a normal teen, don't give her a unique role or a flaw. Instead, give the character a second type of baggage and one extra plot point. That's it. If you play Hughes the way we hope you do, this shouldn't have much of an effect on the game. The player characters will still have to deal with being teenagers in the 80s, they'll still end up getting involved in things that are way over their heads, and hilarity should still ensue.

# ASSETS

A character's roles generally determine what that character can do. However, the GM may want a character to have a temporary ability or item that lets him do more than he normally could. These temporary abilities and items are called assets.

Assets enhance a character's mundane roles or grant her unique roles; some do both. Assets that enhance mundane roles grant bonuses. For example, a crowbar might grant a character a +1

bonus to her **Jock** role when trying to open things. Assets that grant unique roles will do so at a specific rank. For example, a football helmet used for a weird science experiment might grant a character the **Telepath** role at rank 2. If a player character already has the unique role granted by an asset at an equal or greater rank, the asset provides no benefit.

Assets are temporary and come in three varieties: use assets, scene assets, and adventure assets. Use assets can be used once, scene assets can be used for an entire scene, and adventure assets can be used for an entire adventure. This has more to do with how important the asset is to the story than with how long it actually works. Once an asset expires, it runs out of gas, energy, et cetera. Or maybe it just gets tossed. Whatever the specifics, an expired asset becomes useless once it's served its purpose.

*Anthony's character is running from a mob of zombies. He tries to open the doors to the high school, but they're locked, and Anthony's character isn't much of a **Jock**. The GM tells him that there's a rusty crowbar lying in the dirt nearby. Anthony uses it, and gets a +1 bonus to his **Jock** roll to open the door. Being a use asset, the crowbar will snap in half the moment the door flies open.*

A player character can't acquire an asset permanently. Assets boost a character's ranks or grant her new roles, but they're inherently temporary. The only way for a player to permanently add an asset's effect to her character is by raising her ranks or buying new unique roles (see Advancement, below).

## ADVANCEMENT

Hughes is a game about teenagers growing up. It isn't an especially serious take on the subject, mind you, but that's still what the game's really all about. Accordingly, every time the characters finish an adventure, the players have to describe how their characters have grown as a result. This doesn't have to be a major life transformation. Just as in real life, growing up is more

likely to sneak up on a character, happening a little bit at a time rather than all at once. Growing up is like good foreshadowing; it suggests what will happen in the future, but you only see it in hindsight.

Once the players describe how their characters have grown, they can each raise one of their ranks by 1 point. Or if they prefer, they can purchase a new unique role at rank 1, as long as they can explain how their characters developed these new abilities. Additionally, every time a character gains a new unique role, he also gains a new flaw (selected by the player). The GM must approve the new unique role and the new flaw.

If the player characters are advancing too quickly for everyone's tastes, you can slow things down by having them advance after they complete two or three adventures. Find the pace that works best for your group.

# 2. PLAYING THE GAME

Hughes is a game about telling stories. The rules do one thing: they help you decide who gets to do the storytelling. Like most roleplaying games, the GM is the primary narrator, and the players run their characters. However, players will often take narrative control away from the GM, usually when they want to accomplish some action. Exactly how this works depends on whether the action is simple or dramatic.

# SIMPLE ACTIONS

A simple action is either irrelevant to the adventure or has to be resolved a certain way to move the story along. Simple actions that aren't relevant to an adventure are always narrated by the player running the character. For example, if you want your character to shoplift a Rubik's Cube from a toy store, and this action has absolutely no relevance to the adventure, then you get to describe what happens when your character tries it.

Simple actions that have to be resolved a certain way to move the story along, on the other hand, are always narrated by the GM. If everyone has to be captured by a secret government agency for the story to move to the next scene, then the GM describes how that happens.

In either case, the person narrating gets to describe the outcome however he wishes as long as it makes sense and keeps the story moving forward. Narrations that are untrue to the characters or that violate the spirit of the game are not allowed.

# DRAMATIC ACTIONS

A dramatic action, on the other hand, is important to the larger story of the game and has an equally interesting effect on that story whether it's accomplished or not. The default assumption is that the outcomes of all dramatic actions, even combat, are narrated by the GM. The players tell the GM what they want their characters to do and the GM decides what happens. Players make suggestions, but these suggestions carry no weight. The GM can use, modify, or ignore them as he wishes.

Generally speaking, the GM is expected to narrate whatever outcome moves the story forward and yields the most dramatic, entertaining, or interesting result. However, it's assumed that the GM won't go easy on the player characters. As long as the GM's in control, the characters will often spaz out and fail to complete tasks or accomplish them imperfectly, in either case

creating new complications or obstacles. Again, narrations that are untrue to the characters or that violate the spirit of the game are not allowed. Also, because this is supposed to be a lighthearted game, the GM isn't allowed to kill or seriously injure player characters when narrating.

# PLOT ROLLS

A player can try to take narrative control for herself by making a plot roll. The player rolls three standard 6-sided dice, two of one color (the action dice) and one of a different color (the critical die). Assuming she doesn't roll triples, she ignores the critical die (it's only relevant when you roll triples) and adds the total rolled on the action dice to her rank in whichever role applies to the action. This total determines who gets to narrate the result, as shown on the table below. As always, narrations that are untrue to the characters or that violate the spirit of the game are not allowed. Additionally, like GMs, players can't use their narrative control to kill or seriously injure anyone except mindless extras like zombies and really evil bad guys that totally have it coming.

| Total | Narration |
|---|---|
| 6 or less | GM |
| 7 to 8 | GM with Player's embellishment |
| 9 to 12 | Player with GM's embellishment |
| 13 or more | Player |

When one person gets embellishment rights, it means he can alter the other's narration in some small way. An embellishment should be a clarification or detail that expands on the original narration without contradicting it. An embellishment can't make the original narration untrue or meaningless.

If the player rolls triples, that's a critical result. She instantly earns 1 plot point and gains complete narrative control over the attempted action. The player should also be allowed a lot of

leeway when describing what happens. Critical results represent ridiculously good luck, unbelievable coincidences, and once-in-a-lifetime performances. Although the player still can't narrate something that's untrue to the characters or that violates the spirit of the game, she can push the boundaries.

*John is playing a nerd who finds himself in a life-or-death situation he can only escape by winning a breakdancing contest. Don't ask—it's a long story. Knowing there's no way the GM's going to just let this happen, John makes a plot roll and gets three 4s. Righteous! Normally, even with complete narrative control, John would have to come up with some clever or lucky way in which his character could pull this one off. But this time, John describes how his character executes some wicked moves, thanks to the fact that he's been practicing in his bedroom for the last six months, getting ready for the prom.*

Player characters suffer a cumulative -1 penalty every time they try to make a plot roll using the same role more than once per scene. For example, a player who has already made two **Brain** plot rolls in one scene will suffer a -2 penalty if she tries to make a third **Brain** plot roll in the same scene. Players can spend 1 plot point to refresh their roles at any time, eliminating all such penalties earned up to that point.

If the GM determines that a particular task is especially easy, the player can add a +2 bonus to his total. If the GM determines that a particular task is especially hard, the player has to apply a -2 penalty to his total.

Player characters attempting to do something directly related to their drive get a +1 bonus to their plot roll totals. On the flip side, player characters trying to do something that runs counter to their drive suffer a -1 penalty to their plot roll totals.

Players can help one another take narrative control away from the GM by describing what their characters are doing to help. As long as it makes sense, the player making the plot roll gets a +1

bonus per fellow player character helping in the effort. The GM is free to limit the number of characters that can work together to accomplish a particular task.

Or a player can bypass all of this and take narrative control away from the GM by spending a plot point. He can do this after attempting a plot roll, or he can skip the roll entirely. If the player spends the plot point after making a plot roll, the failed roll still counts as one use of the relevant role when determining the penalty applied for using a role multiple times per scene.

## EXTENDED ACTIONS

Extended actions are complex or demanding activities that can be broken down into multiple tasks, usually no more than three per player character involved in the scene. The GM must decide whether or not these tasks can be distributed among multiple characters. For example, you could have a chase scene broken down into three distinct tasks: running through darkened alleys, climbing up slippery fire escapes, and racing across moonlit rooftops. Every player character involved in the chase must accomplish each task on his own. By contrast, you could break down a debate against a rival high school's debate team into three separate tasks: establishing your argument, debunking the other team's position, and sealing the deal. Unlike in the chase, a group of player characters should be able to split these tasks among themselves. Because player characters suffer a penalty when using the same role more than once per scene, extended actions often require players to be creative in figuring out ways to bring multiple roles into the action. That's the idea.

# PLAYER VERSUS PLAYER

Players sometimes compete against or come into conflict with each other. When two players engage in any kind of player versus player conflict (pvp), each makes a plot roll using the role that applies to the conflict. Players ignore the usual penalty for

using a role multiple times in the same scene when making pvp plot rolls. Whoever rolls higher is the winner.

To determine narration rights, subtract the loser's total from the winner's total and check the table below. If the rolls are tied, the conflict results in a draw and both players must agree on the outcome. If they can't, the GM narrates the result of the draw. As always, narrations that are untrue to the characters or that violate the spirit of the game are not allowed.

| Difference | Narration |
|:---:|:---:|
| 1 to 3 | Winner with Loser's embellishment |
| 4 or more | Winner |

## FREE FOR ALL

When three or more player characters are all competing against one another, everyone involved in the free-for-all makes a plot roll using whichever role applies to the conflict. Everyone who rolls a total of 9 or more gets to narrate something about the outcome of the conflict. Narration happens in order of totals, from lowest to highest. A player's narration can be modified or even rendered meaningless by another's subsequent narration. Between players who roll the same total, narration happens in order of rank, again going from lowest to highest. When players who roll the same number also have the same rank, they must agree on their narrations; if they can't, the GM gets to narrate the outcome.

*Emilio, Judd, and Molly are stuck in Saturday detention, and they're arguing about how to sneak out early. Emilio and Judd each make* **Royalty** *rolls, while Molly makes a* **Telepath** *roll. When the rolls hit the table, Molly gets a 12, Judd gets a 10, and poor Emilio gets a 6. With totals of 10 or more, Molly and Judd earn narration rights. Having rolled lower than Molly, Judd goes first, and says that he convinces Emilio to pull the fire alarm. Molly goes next, and since she has a major crush on Emilio, that isn't going to happen. Instead, she*

*describes how, by telepathically reading their minds and knowing what buttons to push, she convinces them both to call Emilio's half-brother Charlie, who also happens to be a weretiger, to scare Principal Hunter out of the school.*

# FIGHT!

Like we said, the GM can't kill or even seriously injure player characters when narrating action resolution. So what options does that leave a GM who has to narrate the outcome of a fight when a character fails or chooses not to take narrative control? Well, how about these options:

- *Captured:* The player character loses the fight and ends up ensnared, stuck, or otherwise captured by their opponent.

- *Delay:* The player character wins the fight, but it either takes forever or leaves him seriously winded.

- *Escape:* The player character's enemy retreats and manages to give her the slip before either suffers any real harm.

- *Humiliation:* The fight gets cut short for some reason, but the player character is outfought and totally humiliated.

- *Injury:* The player character wins the fight, but he sustains a minor injury. He'll suffer a -1 penalty to all **Jock** plot rolls for the rest of the current game session.

- *My Clothes!* The player character wins the fight, but at the expense of trashing her outfit. She'll suffer a -1 penalty to all **Royalty** plot rolls until she gets herself cleaned up and into a new set of clothes.

- *My Hair!* Like *My Clothes!*, only it's the player character's hair that gets messed up and needs serious attention.

- *Overkill:* The player character wins the fight, but he goes way overboard in the process. Everyone starts gossiping about the character, and most think he's a total psycho.

- *Retreat:* Only applicable when involved in a truly dangerous fight, the player character is forced to run away.

- *Unconsciousness:* The player character is knocked out and stays that way for the rest for the scene.

## ARMED AND DANGEROUS

Player characters can use their **Jock** role to attack an enemy with their bare hands or with simple blunt weapons like chairs, mugs, and baseball bats. The use of deadly weapons like guns, knives, and swords, however, doesn't fall under any role described up to now. Accordingly, whenever characters use deadly weapons, they don't add anything to their plot rolls. As those of you who are good at math may realize, this means that player characters who try to use deadly weapons will often end up at the narrative mercy of the GM. For those of you who aren't so good at math, we suggest that you read that last sentence again.

Okay, but what if you want to use these rules to play an edgier game where the player characters are dealing with Bad Things that could use a good killin'? Well, it's not what the game was designed for, but if that's how you want to play, you can give every character an extra mundane role at rank 1: Violence. This is the role that covers the use of lethal weapons like swords and firearms. Why rank 1? Because even if you're going to use Violence in your game, player characters should start out as hapless kids with no real skill in this arena. Like any other role, however, Violence can be improved with advancement.

## THE BAD GUYS

It can be helpful for the GM to classify npc bad guys as either foes or villains. This is more of a guideline than a rule, but the basic difference between the two is described below.

**Foes:** These are ordinary bad guys. Player characters can defeat one foe each time they take narrative control of a scene. Not all foes are created equal, however. Weak ones are easy to defeat (granting the usual +2 bonus to plot rolls), while tough ones are hard to defeat (granting the usual -2 penalty to plot rolls).

**Villains:** These are seriously bad dudes and dudettes. Defeating a villain is usually a hard action, an extended action, or both.

# FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this game, task resolution is all about narration. It isn't about whether or not a character can accomplish a specific task, or even about who gets to make that decision and determine the outcome. It's about who gets to describe how that task moves the story of the game forward in the most dramatic, entertaining, interesting, or humorous way. This is a shared responsibility between the GM and the players, which is why the players are given a lot of narrative freedom in Hughes.

Although players with narrative control often just describe their characters accomplishing some task successfully, that shouldn't always be the case. A player who narrates a string of perfect victories for his character is missing the point, and also missing out on some of the fun. Failure is sometimes more interesting and often a lot funnier than success. Narrative control allows a player to make up stuff about the game world or move the story in a specific direction. This kind of creativity isn't just allowed in Hughes; it's expected. Players who gain narrative control are expected to use it first to keep the game fun and exciting and second to accomplish their character's goals.

As the person responsible for managing the overall story of the game, the GM can always veto any narration that conflicts with some story element she has in mind. The GM can even give important npcs plot immunity, preventing the player characters from mucking with them too early in the story. In general, however, the GM is encouraged to go along with whatever the players describe, even if it means altering her plans. Hughes isn't about having one person tell a good story; it's about having everyone collaborate to tell a great one.

# 3. PLOT POINTS

Plot points are the narrative currency of Hughes. Players earn plot points for making the story of the game more dramatic, entertaining, interesting, or humorous. They spend them to take narrative control away from the GM when it really counts.

# EARNING PLOT POINTS

All player characters begin the game with 1 plot point. They earn additional plot points over the course of play. Player characters earn 1 plot point in each of the following circumstances.

- Whenever they reach the end of an adventure. Characters who are regular kids with no unique roles and no flaws gain 1 extra plot point at the end of every adventure.

- Whenever their baggage or flaw makes life miserable.

- Whenever they rolls triples on a plot roll.

- Whenever they do or say anything that really brings home the absurd glory that was the 1980s.

- Whenever they do or say anything really cool, dramatic, entertaining, interesting, or humorous. In cases like this, the other players are also free to award the player one of their own plot points if they agree with the GM.

Player characters can also earn 1 plot point per game session by initiating or taking part in a tangential scene played purely for roleplaying purposes. The scene might be a brief interlude in the action of the story, a flashback to an earlier time, a flash-forward to what the future holds, or even something like a daydream. The scene must involve at least two player characters. Once the players finish roleplaying the scene, all characters involved in the scene immediately earn 1 plot point. Player characters can only earn 1 plot point per game session in this way, but they can initiate or take part in as many such scenes as they like.

# SPENDING PLOT POINTS

Players spend plot points in several ways, but the most common use of plot points is to take narrative control away from the GM. As mentioned in Chapter 2, a player can do this without making a plot roll, or he can spend the plot point after failing the roll. In either case, spending the plot point gives the player complete

control over the narration, just as if he'd rolled a 13 or higher on his plot roll.

As noted in Chapter 2, plot points can also be spent to refresh all roles used during a scene, ridding the player character of all penalties applied for using roles multiple times in that scene. This is most useful for especially long or involved scenes.

Another way in which players spend plot points is to resist having the GM trigger their baggage or flaw. This is especially costly, however, because having your baggage or flaw triggered normally *earns* you a plot point. The player has to spend a plot point in a situation where she could have gained a plot point, leaving her two points behind where she would have been if she'd let the GM have her way.

A player can also spend a plot point to make a factual statement about the game world. This statement can be about pretty much anything, and it can be as narrow or as broad as the player desires. As with every other type of narration, this declaration can't be untrue to the characters or violate the spirit of the game. Also, remember that the GM can veto anything that strongly conflicts with an especially important story element, even if the players don't yet know about it. If that happens, the player gets to keep his plot point.

# 4. RUNNING HUGHES

Hughes isn't a traditional roleplaying game. Roleplaying games usually concern themselves with how things work in the game world, which then helps you determine what happens in the game. Hughes, on the other hand, ignores these mechanics and focuses on one thing: determining who gets to describe what happens in the game world. This difference means you need to be aware of a few things when playing Hughes.

First off, the GM should be generous when applying the rules and determining what the player characters' roles let them do. Remember that roles describe the part a character is supposed to play in the story. They're supposed to be unrealistically broad and abstract. Accordingly, if a player thinks that one of her character's roles applies to a situation, the GM should generally go along with it. Can a character use **Nerd** instead of **Royalty** to impress a college recruiter? He certainly can. Can a character use **Robot** instead of **Nerd** to hack into a computer? Sure. If it's really a stretch, the GM can declare the action to be especially hard and give the player a -2 penalty to her plot roll.

GMs new to Hughes may at first find it difficult to challenge player characters. After all, they're the only ones with stats. Everyone and everything else in the game is just a description. How, then, can a GM present the player characters with a daunting obstacle? Well, the simple answer is that the GM can declare an action to be hard or make overcoming the obstacle an extended action. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, these options make it more difficult for the player characters to take narrative control away from the GM. However, they only do so in a mechanical way: they make a successful plot roll statistically less likely, or they force players to spend plot points.

But Hughes isn't really about task resolution. These mechanical options can be helpful, but the better answer is to remember that the GM can do whatever is necessary to challenge the player characters. The game mechanics are secondary, if not totally irrelevant, to this. The best way for the GM to challenge players in Hughes is by presenting them with enemies, obstacles, and situations that they can't just narrate away, even if they have narrative control. Bad guys that can only be defeated by exploiting some hidden weakness, obstacles that can only be overcome with ingenuity, and situations that present no easy solution—these are the kinds of things that GMs should use to challenge their players in Hughes.

One situation that can stump even experienced GMs is when something is hidden from the player characters. In a traditional roleplaying game, the GM usually asks the players to roll dice to see what their characters know about a particular topic or whether they detect something concealed from them. But here, the GM can't rely on a "knowledge roll" or "perception roll." Instead, he has to take narrative responsibility and decide what the player characters know or detect. This can be tricky because the GM has to balance keeping the players in the dark about things their characters don't know with giving them the ability to exercise narrative control. In that regard, the GM should keep two things in mind.

First, always consider a player character's rank in the applicable role. Rank 1 means that the character is clueless. Rank 2 makes her average. At ranks 3 and 4, the character has better than average knowledge or awareness—some at rank 3 and lots of it at rank 4. And at ranks 5 and 6, there shouldn't be much the character doesn't know or won't perceive.

Second, when a scene involves some element a character didn't know or perceive, a player who takes narrative control of that scene can describe its resolution in a way that indicates that her character was in fact aware of the hidden thing. For example:

*Matthew's character is a serious **Nerd**. While rifling through the high school computer to alter his permanent record, the GM decides that he's triggered some kind of alarm and the school has called the cops on him. Matthew, however, makes a very successful **Nerd** plot roll and takes complete control of the scene. He tells the GM that his character did in fact notice that he'd tripped the alarm. But thanks to some ingenious computer hacking, he made it look like the intrusion was coming from Principal Hunter's home computer. He also made it appear that the principal had been downloading information about the new lunch lady, a former Soviet weightlifting champion with a rather tragic hormone imbalance. And of course, when the police finally do get around to*

*questioning her about this incident, it will only add fuel to the massive crush she has on Principal Hunter.*

Resistance is another pitfall in a game like Hughes. Most roles are active; they come into play when a player character wants to do something. But how do you handle when a character needs to *resist* something? What happens when some government agent tasers the character, or when a spirit tries to possess his body? As with perception, there are two things the GM should keep in mind when handling player character resistance.

First, remember that it's all about narrative control. The person with narrative control is always the one to decide what happens, and whether a player character succumbs to whatever it is she wants to resist. And because narrative control is based on roles, characters will be more likely to resist things (because players are more likely to gain narrative control) when doing something related to the roles that are most important to them. In short, characters are most likely to overcome obstacles and resist adverse effects when doing whatever it is they do best.

Second, when a player character is about to fall victim to some external effect or influence, the GM should always let the player try to take control of the narration with one of his roles. The player may have to come up with a creative reason why the particular role applies to the situation, but as long as he does, he should be allowed to make a roll.

With all the rules-related stuff out of the way, the rest of this chapter is about something way more important: mindset. Everyone playing the game needs to understand that Hughes is about improvisation, problem solving, roleplaying, and storytelling—not about rolling dice or game mechanics. The rules help direct play, but play involves telling a story, ideally one that's funny, exciting, and maybe even touching. That's the fun part. What that means for the game is that adventures have to focus on the player characters themselves, not the enemies

they face or obstacles they overcome. The GM can't just throw mechanical challenges at the players and call it a day. The task resolution system in Hughes is very simple and abstract. If that's all your game is about, the players will quickly grow tired of it. Hughes games need to be about the player characters: about what matters to them, what they want, and what they're afraid of. And most of all, Hughes adventures probably need to be about growing up.

The one thing that all the best 80s teen movies have in common is that the characters have done a little bit of growing up by the time the movie is over. Maybe they become more confident in themselves, maybe they feel less alone, or maybe they repair a relationship with a loved one. Or maybe they grow in some other way. Whatever the specifics might be, these movies are all about growing up in one way or another. For a Hughes game to really feel like the movies it's trying to evoke, the characters have to change over the course of the adventure. That's why players have to describe how their characters have grown at the end of each adventure in order to qualify for advancement.

However, don't confuse what the *game* is about with what the *adventures* should be about. Hughes characters aren't normal teens, and they shouldn't lead normal lives. Their adventures should be about more than mundane teenage problems. They should be about alien invasions, comets that give off weird radiation that turns birds back into dinosaurs, A.I.s that attempt to enslave the world, evil sorcerers who want to summon things that would make H.P. Lovecraft giggle like a schoolgirl, heavy metal concerts that nearly devolve into zombie apocalypses— that kind of thing. However, the player characters' mundane teenage problems should inevitably complicate these situations. For example, in the alien invasion scenario, the leader of the invasion could be one character's jerky older brother who's just trying to impress a girl, and the girl could have a major crush on a different player character. Weird situations, yes, but weird situations in which the usual trials and tribulations of being a

teenager are definitely going to come into play. That's what adventures in Hughes should be like.

Despite what it says in Chapter 2, the most important thing for a GM to keep in mind when running Hughes is that she should actually listen to the players and take their suggestions into account. Although the GM is the primary narrator, players are encouraged and expected to take an active role in creating the larger story of the game. The GM should always try to include player input in the game. Yes, she does have the right to ignore player suggestions. And yes, she can veto any narration that throws a major monkey wrench into an adventure. But the GM should do these things sparingly. She should never be so in love with her story that she fails to realize when the players come up with something better, or refuses to change gears when that happens. Remember, it's all about collaborative storytelling.

It bears repeating that the players have to take an active role in the game. The GM has narrative control by default. The players have to make suggestions, and if those suggestions are ignored, they have to try taking narrative control away from the GM. That's how the game works. If the players just sit back waiting for the GM to feed them everything and tell them what to do, they've stopped playing a game and started watching a one-man show. The players have to understand that Hughes demands two things of them: truly roleplaying their characters, and taking an active role in creating the story of the game.

Assuming the players do want to take an active role in the game, there's one thing they have to balance carefully: metagaming. Metagaming means relying on information a character wouldn't know while playing him. Although players are often the ones who get accused of metagaming, GMs do it too. As a general rule in almost all roleplaying games, players are only supposed to act on information their characters would know or suspect. The game becomes pointless if the player characters know that they've got a pool of plot points sitting in their back pockets or

that the GM can't kill them. The players know this, but their characters don't, and the players can't act on that information.

However, as a game about narrative control and storytelling, Hughes does require some metagaming. The rules are very clear about the fact that when players exercise narrative control, they're supposed to think first about what will make the game interesting, exciting, and funny, and second about what their characters want to accomplish. That's big-time metagaming, but it's what the players are expected to do. In Hughes, it's all about finding the right balance of not metagaming while roleplaying, but metagaming while exercising narrative control.

Because of the level of narrative control afforded to the players, and the fact that only player characters have stats of any kind, Hughes doesn't require nearly as much GM prep work as most traditional roleplaying games. In fact, the GM should prepare only a rough outline of an adventure ahead of time. She should know the general plot of the adventure: how the story begins, how the player characters get involved, where she thinks it will go from there, and how she expects it to end. She should also know what npcs the player characters are likely to encounter and the locations they're likely to visit. And she should be ready with a few specific scenes she wants to include. But that's it. Too much prep work can sometimes make a GM reluctant to let an adventure move in unexpected directions. The GM should keep her outline loose so that she isn't tied to a particular outcome and the players can help direct the story with their narrations.

## ADVENTURE GENERATOR

So you want to run a game of Hughes. You somehow managed to convince your friends to play a game about 80s teens, but the game is tonight and you have no idea what to do. Everything looks bleak, and you're contemplating faking your own death and running off to Costa Rica. Before you go too far with that, take a gander at our handy-dandy adventure generator.

| Roll 1d | What's the Situation? |
|---------|----------------------|
| 1 | Derail an Invasion or Defeat Invaders |
| 2 | Destroy, Recover, or Transport a McGuffin |
| 3 | Handle the Monster of the Week |
| 4 | Prevent an Apocalypse, Again |
| 5 | Repair an Altered Reality |
| 6 | Uncover or Overcome a Conspiracy |

| Roll 2d | Who's Behind It? |
|---------|-----------------|
| 1-3 & 1 | Aliens |
| 1-3 & 2 | An Ancient Order or Cult |
| 1-3 & 3 | Evil Duplicates from a Parallel Dimension |
| 1-3 & 4 | The Government |
| 1-3 & 5 | The Great Old Ones |
| 1-3 & 6 | The Illuminati or Another Conspiracy Group |
| 4-6 & 1 | The Machines |
| 4-6 & 2 | An Ordinary and Completely Clueless Guy or Gal |
| 4-6 & 3 | Organized Crime, like the Mob or the Yakuza |
| 4-6 & 4 | Practitioners of Magic |
| 4-6 & 5 | Some Group in the Supernatural Community |
| 4-6 & 6 | Time Travelers |

| Roll 1d | Who's Affected or Involved? |
|---------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Classmates |
| 2 | Family Members |
| 3 | Friends or Enemies |
| 4 | Neighbors |
| 5 | Romantic Interest |
| 6 | Teachers |

| Roll 1d | Where Does the Adventure Start? |
|---------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Home |
| 2 | Outdoors |
| 3 | Popular Hangout (Arcade, Mall, Pizzeria) |
| 4 | School, After Hours |
| 5 | School, in Class |
| 6 | Someplace Weird |

| Roll 1d | How Do the Characters Get Involved? |
|---------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Asked or Forced to Fight the Situation |
| 2 | Blindly Stumble into It |
| 3 | Notice Something Strange |
| 4 | Receive Information from Beyond |
| 5 | The Situation's Impossible to Miss |
| 6 | Whoops! They Kind of Caused It |

| Roll 1d | Complications |
|---------|--------------|
| 1 | Academics (Finals, Midterms, Practice, Etc.) |
| 2 | Big Events (Concert, Holidays, Play, Talent Show) |
| 3 | Extracurricular Obligations (Part-Time Job) |
| 4 | Family Responsibilities (Babysitting, Chores) |
| 5 | Romantic Issues (Big Date, Just Got Dumped) |
| 6 | School (Big Game, Dance, Pep Rally, Science Fair) |

# 5. TOTALLY EIGHTIES

Whether you lived through the 80s or you just look back and wonder, "What were they thinking?" it was an interesting time. To help you capture some of what the 80s were all about, we've included this chapter of useful information.

# FASHION

The 80s had a definite look. While not everyone was a walking fashion plate, this was a decade with a distinct fashion ethos that wormed is way into almost everything. Consider the following tragic realities of the 80s.

**Big Earrings:** Earrings were big and flashy, big enough to hang down to your shoulder pads (oh yes, see **Shoulder Pads**).

**Big Hair:** Your average heavy metal rock band was a walking fire hazard with that much product in their hair.

**Bracelets:** Like Madonna herself, girls wore as many bracelets and bangles as they could possibly wrap around their arms.

**Bras Over Your Clothes:** Yep, that's right, over your clothes. Or under a mesh top and accordingly visible.

**Colors:** Seriously, lots of colors. Bright, pastel, glossy, matte, you name it, they made clothes in it.

**Denim Jackets:** They were the tougher crowd's version of the Members Only jacket.

**Distressed/Ripped Jeans:** This is when wearing semi-trashed jeans became something other than an indication of poverty.

**Fedoras:** White or light colored hats made a brief comeback in the 80s, but not everyone who tried could pull off the look.

**Fingerless Gloves:** You know: gloves with no fingers.

**Flat Tops:** A short hairstyle in which the hair on top of the head was cut so as to look completely flat.

**Goth:** Black everything. Fashion was only part of the whole Goth thing, but it was no small part. God bless you, Robert Smith.

**Headbands:** They kept sweat out of your eyes and hair out of your face, and made you look like a karate master.

**Heavy-Duty Makeup:** The natural look was for hippies. Women layered on gobs of serious makeup for all occasions.

**High-Top Fades:** The African American community's version of a flat top, but sometimes much taller.

**Izod Shirts with Upturned Collars:** You needed a shirt with a collar because you needed a collar to turn up. Ideally, this would be worn over a collared shirt with an upturned collar. Really.

**Jheri Curls:** A hairstyle popular among the African American community, it involved using a ton of often greasy products to loosen up the naturally tightened curls.

**Jordache Jeans:** The first, or one of the first, designer jean labels, every fashion victim needed these like plants need sunlight.

**Lace Accessories:** Again thanks to Madonna, girls wore a lot of lace in the 80s. Unmentionables were the least of it.

**Leg Warmers:** Thanks to *Flashdance*, or maybe because global warming hadn't kicked in yet, leg warmers were also in style.

**Madonna & Michael Jackson:** Simply put, if they wore it, then everyone else did too.

**Members Only Jackets:** The 50s had leather biker jackets. The 80s had these. The 50s could totally have beaten up the 80s.

**Miniskirts:** The practical limits of the miniskirt and minidress were tested back in the 80s, often with leggings.

**Mohawks:** The quintessential punk haircut.

**Mullets:** Long before they were coopted by scary country folk, mullets were a totally acceptable conservative look.

**Oversized Tops:** If a woman pulled it over her head in the 80s, there's a good chance it was big and baggy.

**Parachute Pants:** They were baggy, plastic, and had zippers up the side of each leg for no fathomable reason.

**Pastel Suits over T-Shirts:** We already mentioned the colors, but thanks to *Miami Vice*, this one demands separate attention.

**Rat Tails:** A mullet variant, or maybe a ponytail variant, where only a single lock of hair is grown long, usually in the back.

**Shoulder Pads:** The kind that could let you tackle a running back and not get hurt. Mostly in jackets, mostly for women.

**Skinny Neckties:** Men's neckties contracted an eating disorder in the 80s, getting way too skinny for their own good.

**Stirrup Pants:** Stirrup pants that made even supermodels look frumpy were all the rage, although good old fashioned leggings were sometimes worn as an alternate.

**Swatch Watches:** They were plastic and colorful (see **Colors**) and you wore lots of them at the same time.

**Sweaters Tied Around Your Neck:** If you were a rich jerk with a yacht, or just going for that look, this is what you were wearing.

**Tracksuits:** Whether it was the exercise craze or the magic of velour, tracksuits became "a thing" in the 80s.

**Trench Coats:** Maybe because the hero in *The Terminator* wore one, nerds and other social outcasts started wearing these.


# SLANG

The 80s wouldn't be what they were without the war-crime-level abuse of the English language that was popular slang. Here are some of the more common words and phrases that either made their debut or really found a home in this decade.

**Airhead:** A stupid or clueless person.

**Amped:** Excited.

**Awesome:** Bitchin'.

**Bad:** Not bad meaning bad but bad meaning good.

**Bag On:** To make fun of.

**Bag Your Face:** A harsh way to tell someone they're ugly.

**Barf Me Out:** Conveys dismay or disgust, maybe both.

**Big Time:** A very strong affirmation.

**Bitchin':** Excellent.

**Bite Me:** An insulting blow off.

**Bogus:** Completely and totally awful. Wrong.

**Book:** To move quickly, especially when leaving somewhere.

**Buggin':** Completely freaking out or panicking.

**Burn:** Used to convey having verbally bested someone.

**Dillweed:** A total jerk.

**Dude:** Bro, cuz, homey, man.

**Eat My Shorts:** A snappy comeback.

**Excellent:** Rad.

**Freakazoid:** A weirdo, psycho, or otherwise strange person.

**Fresh:** Hot, cool, stylish; used for concepts, things, and people.

**Gag Me with a Spoon:** A softer version of Barf Me Out.

**Get Bent:** An insulting way to tell someone to go away.

**Gnarly:** Can mean something bad, challenging, rough, or awful, or it can mean something really cool.

**Grody/Grody to the Max:** Describes something that you find really disgusting or distasteful.

**House:** To beat, demolish, or destroy.

**Illin':** Freaking out or being out of touch in a very uncool way.

**I'm Sure/I'm So Sure:** Sarcastic way to say you don't believe or totally disagree with something, or you think it's lame.

**Like:** It's, like, a placeholder. Sprinkle liberally, like, anywhere.

**Mallrat:** A kid who often hangs out at the mall.

**Mondo:** Giant, huge, massive, bigger than big.

**Most Definitely:** Yes.

**No Duh:** That statement is completely obvious.

**Not Even/Even:** The first phrase conveys strong disagreement. The second is the usual response to the first, and conveys that the original speaker hasn't changed her mind.

**Psyche!** What I just said wasn't true. Gotcha!

**Psyched:** Excited.

**Rad/Radical:** Righteous.

**Righteous:** Tubular.

**Space Cadet:** A stupid and clueless person.

**Stoked:** Excited.

**Take a Chill Pill:** You must calm down, chill out, or relax.

**Totally:** Very, but with that extra syllable for more oomph.

**Tubular:** Wicked.

**Veg/Veg Out:** To relax or to zone out.

**Wannabe:** Someone who wants and pretends to be someone or something they aren't.

**Wastoid:** A complete loser and waste of space.

**Whatchu Talkin' 'Bout?** I either don't understand or don't believe what you're telling me.

**What's Your Damage?** What's your problem?

**Where's the Beef?** Conveys that something is missing.

**Wicked:** Awesome (see what we did there?).

**Wiggin':** Completely freaking out or panicking.

**Yuppie:** Young urban professional.


# MUSIC

The following is a rather poorly researched list of some of the more influential or emblematic names in music during the 80s.

38 Special, 10,000 Maniacs, A-Ha, ABC, Accept, AC/DC, Adam Ant, Aerosmith, Afrika Bambaataa, Air Supply, Alan Parsons Project, Aretha Franklin, Asia, B-52's, Bananarama, The Bangles, Bauhaus, Beastie Boys, Berlin, Billy Idol, Billy Joel, Billy Ocean, Billy Squier, Black Flag, Black Sabbath, Blondie, Bob Seger, Bobby Brown, Bon Jovi, Bonnie Raitt, Boogie Down Productions, Boston, Bruce Hornsby & the Range, Bruce Springsteen, Bryan Adams, Camper van Beethoven, The Cars, Chicago, Chris De Burgh, Cinderella, The Clash, Corey Hart, The Cult, Culture Club, Cyndi Lauper, The Cure, David Bowie, David Lee Roth, De La Soul, Dead Kennedys, Debbie Gibson, Def Leppard, Depeche Mode, Dio, Dire Straits, DJ Jazzy Jeff & The Fresh Prince, Dokken, Don Henley, Doug E. Fresh, Duran Duran, Earth Wind & Fire, Eddy Grant, Elton John, Elvis Costello, Eric B. & Rakim, Eric Clapton, Europe, Eurythmics, Falco, Fine Young Cannibals, The Fixx, Fleetwood Mac, A Flock of Seagulls,

Foreigner, Frankie Goes to Hollywood, Genesis, George Michael/Wham!, George Thorogood, Gloria Estefan/Miami Sound Machine, The Go-Go's, Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five, Guns N' Roses, Hall & Oates, Heart, Howard Jones, Huey Lewis and the News, The Human League, Hüsker Dü, INXS, Irene Cara, Iron Maiden, The Jam, Janet Jackson, The Jesus and Mary Chain, Joan Jett, John Cougar (Mellencamp), Journey, Joy Division, Judas Priest, Kenny Loggins, Kid 'n Play, Kool and the Gang, Kool Moe Dee, L.L. Cool J, Laura Branigan, Level 42, Lionel Richie, Loverboy, Luther Vandross, Madness, Madonna, Marvin Gaye, Men at Work, Metallica, Michael Jackson, Milli Vanilli, Ministry, Motley Crue, Mr. Mister, N.W.A., New Edition, New Kids on the Block, New Order, Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark, Ozzy Osbourne, Pat Benatar, Patti LaBelle, Paul McCartney, Paul Simon, Paul Young, Paula Abdul, Pet Shop Boys, Pete Townshend, Peter Gabriel, Phil Collins, Pink Floyd, Pixies, The Pointer Sisters, Poison, The Police, The Pretenders, Prince, Psychedelic Furs, Public Enemy, Queen, Quiet Riot, RATT, R.E.M., Red Hot Chili Peppers, REO Speedwagon, The Replacements, Richard Marx, Rick James, Rick Springfield, Robert Palmer, Rod Stewart, The Rolling Stones, Run-D.M.C., Rush, Sade, Salt-N-Pepa, Scorpions, Sheena Easton, Simple Minds, Simply Red, Siouxsie and the Banshees, Sisters of Mercy, Skid Row, Slayer, The Smiths, Sonic Youth, Spandau Ballet, Squeeze, Starship, Steve Winwood, Stevie Nicks, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Stevie Wonder, Sting, The Stone Roses, Stray Cats, Styx, Talking Heads, Suicidal Tendencies, Tears for Fears, Terence Trent D'Arby, Thomas Dolby, Thompson Twins, Tiffany, Tina Turner, Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers, Tom Waits, Tone-Loc, Toto, Twisted Sister, U2, UB40, Van Halen, Violent Femmes, Whitesnake, Whitney Houston, Yes, ZZ Top.

# YOU MUST WATCH!

If you plan on running a game of Hughes, we urge you to watch as many of the following movies as you possibly can in order to get the feel of what we were going for with this game.

Adventures in Babysitting

Back to the Future

Better Off Dead

Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure

The Breakfast Club

Can't Buy Me Love

Ferris Bueller's Day Off

Fright Night

Heathers

Just One of the Guys

The Karate Kid

The Last Dragon

The Last Starfighter

The Lost Boys

My Science Project

Night of the Comet

Pretty in Pink

Real Genius

Say Anything

Sixteen Candles

Some Kind of Wonderful

Valley Girl

War Games

Weird Science

# HUGHESVILLE HIGH

**NAME:**_____    **CLASS:** _____

**Brain:** ___                **Drive:** _____
**Delinquent:** ___           **Style:** _____
**Jock:** ___                 **Music:** _____
**Nerd:** ___                 **Baggage:**_____
**Royalty:** ___              **Flaw:** _____
**(_____):** ___         _____

**Diary:** _____
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# HUGHESVILLE
# HIGH

*Welcome to Hughesville High! Like, totally!*

*Powered by the rules-light, narrative-heavy TNT game engine, Hughesville High is, like, a totally rad roleplaying game about high school kids in the 80s. High school kids with unusual powers and abilities, sure, but high school kids nonetheless. It's a lighthearted game intended to evoke the classic teen movies of the 1980s, with the modern teen-monster shtick and other weirdness thrown into the mix for good measure.*

LAKESIDE GAMES
COME PLAY AWHILE

POWERED BY THE
**TNT**
EXPLOSIVE GAME ENGINE