



Creating a band

A band is created by selecting a genre, and then determining the names, descriptions, and characteristics of the band members. Over time, the band may hire a professional manager, who might also influence success and events. The band membership may also change as band members quit or expire.

Genre

A band is formed playing music of one of several rock-related genres:

Rock	<i>mainstream electric guitar-centered music</i>
Blues	<i>acoustic or electric music inspired by Black traditions</i>
Country	<i>American traditional songs of the south and west</i>
Folk	<i>roots-inspired acoustic rock</i>
Funk	<i>a mixture of soul, blues, and rock</i>
Hip-hop	<i>spoken-word pop music inspired by urban Black traditions</i>
Metal	<i>brooding, chord-driven rock</i>
Progressive	<i>artistic, classical or jazz-inspired rock</i>
Punk	<i>raw and aggressive fast tempo rock</i>
Reggae	<i>slow tempo electric rock inspired by Jamaican traditions</i>
Techno	<i>electronic dance music</i>

“New Wave”—a poorly-defined genre of the era—is considered as a form of rock here (albeit one that is influenced by punk, disco, and electronic music). Likewise, the “Grunge” genre that emerged late in the period can be considered another form of rock, clearly taking inspiration from the earlier punk movement. The same goes for “Alternative”—whatever exactly is meant by this term.

You may, of course, choose any genre not listed or invent your own (e.g., Australian bagpipe punk or Hungarian folk techno). Genre is for story purposes only—it has no direct effect on game mechanics.

Why no disco, you ask? Because disco sucks. No, just kidding, if you want to make a garage disco band, go ahead.



*I love rock n' roll
So put another dime in the jukebox, baby*
—Merrill/Hooker, performed by Joan Jett

Band Members

A band consists of three to five band members. For each band member, choose a name (consult the appendix on p.61 if you desire) and write a brief description of them on the Band Roster Sheet. Each band member is also identified by a number, from 1 to 5.

Each band member is rated on seven characteristics:

Musicianship (MUS)	<i>instrumental talent</i>
Voice (VOC)	<i>singing voice</i>
Song Writing (SW)	<i>ability to write lyrics and music</i>
Charisma (CHA)	<i>showmanship and on-stage presence</i>
Ego (EGO)	<i>confidence and sense of self</i>
Stability (STA)	<i>discipline and self-control</i>
Management (MGT)	<i>organizational skill and leadership</i>

Each characteristic is rated on a scale of 1 to 5. When a character is “tested” to roll against a characteristic, they need to roll on 1d6 a number equal to or less than their characteristic score.

Band members should begin with characteristics rated between 2 and 4. For each band member, assign one characteristic with a rank of 4, three characteristics with a rank of 3, and three characteristics with a rank of 2.

Optional: Some people really are more or less talented than others. If you wish, roll for each band member on 2d6. On a roll of 9-11, add one rank to any characteristic. On a roll of 12, add one rank to two characteristics. On a roll of 2-5, reduce one rank of any characteristic. You may increase a characteristic from 4 to 5 or decrease it to 1.

Optional: Characteristics may also be assigned randomly if you desire. For each band member roll 1d6 for each characteristic. A result of 1 through 4 returns the rank shown on the die. A result of 5 or 6 returns a rank of 3.

You may adjust one characteristic for one band member upwards by one and adjust one characteristic for two band members downwards by one. The same band member may have one characteristic increased and another decreased. A characteristic may be increased to 5 or decreased to 1.



Band Roster Sheets can be downloaded at
www.pastadventures.com

Each band member is assigned up to four roles in the band. Roles include playing an instrument, singing, songwriting, and manager. Most bands will include a rhythm section of bass (electric or acoustic) and drums, although some trios might do without one of these two. Common instruments include electric guitar (lead or rhythm may be specified), acoustic guitar, mandolin, banjo, pedal steel guitar, keyboards, violin, flute, trumpet, trombone, and saxophone. Less common instruments include bagpipes, hurdy-gurdy, didgeridoo, clarinet, balalaika, penny whistle, sitar, cello, and theremin. Band members with MUS of 3 may specialize in two different instruments; those with MUS of 4 or 5 may specialize in three different instruments. Choice of genre should be reflected in instrumentation. All bands must have a manager, who will be a band member initially. At higher levels, the band may have a professional manager who is not a band member.

In the early going, band members have not yet fully realized their potential; they're learning. At the beginning, reduce MUS, MGT, and SW for each band member by one, indicated by separating the adjusted level from the potential level by a slash (i.e., 3/4). The penalty on one of these three characteristics is automatically removed from each band member each time the band "levels up" or by specific events during play. Therefore, all penalties should be resolved no later than level 4. If an event increases a developing ability that still carries the slash rating, simply increase the ability to its "mature" rating and remove the slash—don't increase both the current and mature rating.

Individual characteristics may increase or decrease during play as a result of events.

Complete the Band Roster Sheet, indicating the description, roles, instruments, and characteristics for each band member.

The last box is "Status," which is initially blank for each band member.

Here's an example:

The Bananaz

Genre: Rock

#	Name	Role 1	Role 2	Role 3	Role 4	MUS	VOC	SW	CHA	EGO	STA	MGT	Status
1	Sharon Young	Singer	Guitar	Mandolin	Writing	3/4	4	2/2	3	2	4	1/2	
2	Derrick Bottoms	Bass	Guitar	Manager		3/4	2	1/2	2	3	4	3/4	
3	Craig Brown	Drums	Singer	Keyboards		3/4	3	1/2	3	3	5	1/2	
4													
5													

Replacing band members

It's not unusual for band members to quit for various reasons. When a band member leaves the band for any reason, they may be replaced. Generate a new band member using the same procedure outlined above. For bands that are level 3 or higher, don't apply the MUS, MGT, and SW penalties that are normally applied to novice members of garage bands—at this point the band should be able to attract a more experienced candidate. The month during which a new band member joins, the band must take the Rehearse action and no others.

Hiring a manager

Upon reaching level 4, local heroes, the band will have sufficient local fame and resources to secure the services of a professional manager. A professional manager is probably better than the band member who has served in that role so far. Hiring a manager may be done in any month after reaching level 4. Select a name and provide a description for the band manager, entering this information on the band sheet. Roll 1d6: on a 1 the manager has MGT 3, on a 2-5 they have MGT 4, and on a 6 they have MGT 5. A manager may be fired and replaced once per year or as allowed by Event E45. If for any reason, the Manager needs to apply a characteristic other than MGT, use a value of 3.

Sex and sexuality

The rock'n'roll scene was dominated for some time by overt sexuality and young heterosexual male libido—an adolescent impulse roundly satirized in *This Is Spinal Tap*. The perspective ranged from crude to outright misogyny. This sexual context remains part of the culture today, despite the reshaping of identities during the 1970's by artists such as David Bowie and Freddie Mercury. Early female rockers had to deal with this burden, sometimes presenting themselves as sexual objects or trying to out-masculinize the men. *Rock Band* deliberately ignores this historical context, making no assumptions about the gender or sexual identity of the characters in the story. Some events make reference to sexual and romantic relationships involving band members and the on-stage charisma modeled by “sex symbol” assumes a sexual component, but no assumptions about genders or sexual orientation should be inferred. Sexual relationships should reflect the diversity of human experience. This is a work of fiction—it need not reflect the least inclusive aspects of rock'n'roll culture.

Status

During active play, individual band members may receive various status “tags” as a result of events. These descriptors are recorded on the Band Roster Sheet and the effects, if any, applied as indicated.

Addicted

The band member is addicted to a drug that significantly compromises their personality and reliability. An addict receives a -1 to their STA score for as long as they have the Addicted status. This situation often generates Group Tension as well.

Conflict

The band member is in conflict with another member or the professional manager. There is constant tension between the two, which may boil over into a verbal or physical altercation. Write status as “Conflict with ‘Name.’” Conflict is always mutual.

Group Tension

The band member’s behavior, personality, or specific problem creates tension for the entire band. The presence of this individual, not matter how talented they may be, creates problems for the overall cohesiveness of the group and may prompt altercations.

Rattled

Typically, the Rattled state is present for a specific period of time—often just 2 months (current and next). The affected band member is at -1 for ALL characteristics while Rattled and may not write any new original songs.

Relationship

The band member is in a serious romantic relationship—either with someone else in the band or someone outside the band. This is usually a good thing, improving their STA and possibly their EGO. It may, however, make them vulnerable to the negative effects of certain events. Relationship may be mutual, if within the band.

Sex Symbol

The band member is especially attractive or otherwise compelling to a particular sex. They may be the subject of unwarranted attention from fans and envy from their band-mates.