

## Make Your Own Game Tutorial III: Creating Characters

### What Makes a Character?

A character is obviously any person who is represented in the story of your RPG.

There are two categories of characters in an RPG: Playable Characters (PCs) and Non-Playable Characters (NPCs). This tutorial is going to focus on Playable Characters.



*A Playable Character shown in the game Menu*

What is it that makes a Playable Character? Playable characters are not just a personality and force of the narrative in an RPG, they also have statistics to allow the player to overcome challenges in the gameplay.

In order to create a PC we are going to take our first foray into the Database. Quite a few parts of the database are dedicated to creating PCs, and throughout this tutorial we will be editing things in the following tabs:

- Actors
- Classes
- Skills
- Terms

As you can see, characters have a large number of components that make up what they are and what they can do. Weapons and Armors are also part of creating characters, but will be covered in the next tutorial.

Before we get to designing characters, let's go over the default stats and resources available to a character.

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### Character Stats and Resources

While more can be added through scripting, I will be going over the major Stats and Resources that each character possesses. Stats are static numbers used in equations to determine outcomes of actions, Resources are numbers that can be spent, lost, grow, and be regained over the course of a battle.

There are three major resources in RMVX Ace:

*HP (Hit Points):* HP is the amount of damage a character can take before dying. When you attack you attack or are attacked, damage is usually done to this resource. Maximum HP (MHP), is a stat that is specific to each specific character depending on how much damage he/she can take.

*MP (Magic Points):* MP is spent to use skills, usually magic, hence the name. Maximum MP (MMP), is also a stat.

*TP (Tech Points):* TP is spent to use skills. TP behaves differently than HP and MP in that the max TP of every character is 100. You gain TP over each turn based on what has occurred that turn.

There are six major stats in RMVX Ace. Of these, 4 are only used in damage formulas (Attack, Defense, Magic Attack, and Magic Defense), and are therefore useable in any way you would like. I will cover their default use here.

*Attack:* Attack represents the amount of damage done by physical attacks, such as hitting people with a weapon. Weapons generally also boost this stat.

*Defense:* Defense is generally used to lower the amount of damage you take from physical attacks. Armor generally boosts this stat.

*Magic Attack:* This stat is used to determine the amount of damage done by magical attacks.

*Magic Defense:* This stat is used to lower the amount of damage you take from magical attacks.

*Agility:* This stat determines turn order during combat.

*Luck:* This stat is used in calculating chances of taking/giving a status effect or buff/debuff.

Remember that all of these resources and stats can be renamed.

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*Evasion at Work*

### Character Stats (Cont.)

There are also 4 more minor character stats that we will use in the next tutorial.

*HIT (Hit Rate)*: Determines the chance of an attack hitting.

*EVA (Evasion)*: Determines the chance of avoiding an attack.

*TGR (Target Rate)*: Chance of being targetted by an attack.

*CRI (Critical Rate)*: Chance of a critical hit being scored.

### Stat/Resource Consistency

So what does this mean for your game? An important part of creating the game is creating consistent gameplay mechanics.

Without consistency, players can make mistakes in customizing characters. For instance if you had a weapon skill that did damage based on Magic Attack in a game where it is normally based on Attack, a player might be boosting his Attack to do damage with it and gaining nothing.

You also need to be consistent with resources, making similar types of skills always consume the same type of resource. This makes the game seem more cohesive as a whole.

For consistency, I'm going to lay out some ground rules for my example game.

1. Weapon Skills always consume TP and use Attack to do damage, and Defense to prevent damage.
2. Magic Skills always consume MP and use Magic Attack to do damage, and Magic Defense to prevent damage.



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### Character Design Concept: Variety

Let's move on to designing characters now. When it comes to designing characters, both from a narrative and gameplay perspective, variety is an important thing to keep in mind.

With narrative variety, you want characters to have different viewpoints and personalities. Just think of a conversation between two brooding heroes:

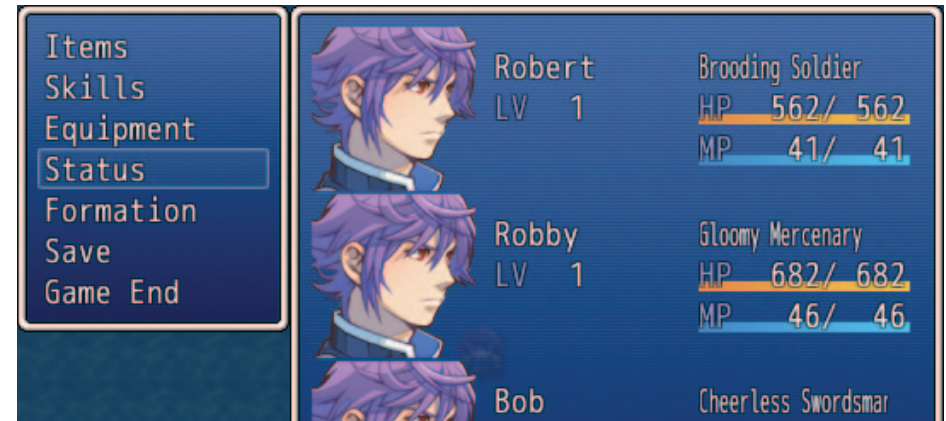
Character 1: "..."

Character 2: "..."

Not very exciting. This is an exaggeration, but consider any two characters who are too alike. Without contrast conversations between the characters would become boring.

With gameplay, you want different characters to play differently. If most of the characters are similar in how they play, they become interchangeable in play, and you lose a lot of party customization.

Keeping variety in mind, I decide that my three



*Not So Brilliant Character Variety*

characters will have vastly different backgrounds that have taught them vastly different skills.

The first character will be the village elder's son. He grew up in a rural area and is friendly and relaxed. He uses swords and doesn't use magic.

The second character will be a priestess. She grew up in a monastery and is very proper and dedicated. She uses Spears and casts healing magic.

The third character will be a mystic thief. Her past is mysterious and she is arrogant and aloof. She uses daggers and casts offensive magic.

## Make Your Own Game Tutorial III: Creating Characters

### Planning Is Everything

I'm sure right now you are ready to jump into the database and just start creating away, BUT that really isn't the best next step. The problem is, making a character in the database is spread across so many tabs, its not easy to keep track of everything about one character. Instead its best to plan out a character before you ever touch the program.

On the right is a profile template that I will be using over the next few pages for the characters I am designing for the example game. It includes the faceset of the character, a short description of their history, personality, and purpose in the game.

Under the profile is a screenshot of a games statistic planning spreadsheet I use to determine overall design before I touch the database in order to have all the information in one place for reference.

Take these character builds as exercises in learning how to think through the design of your party as a cohesive whole. For your own game, consider making your own characters, using similar processes.

### [Character Name]/[Class Name]

#### Character Face

**Character History:** This is used to just write a short version of what has happened to the character. No need to get too in depth.

**Character Personality:** Personality is incredibly important in an RPG. This makes a good guideline when you ask yourself: What would this character say?

**Character Purpose:** This is mostly just to cover what purpose they have in the game, both gameplay wise, and in the narrative

**Stat Priorities:** Here, you can just say what stats the character will have the highest, above average, average lowest. Keep it loose at this point in planning.

**Skill Focus:** What will the character be able to accomplish with their skills. This ties a lot into the character purpose.

Skillset 1				Level	MHP	MMP	Atk	Def	Mat	MdF	AgI	Lck
[Skill Type Name]: [Skill Type Category]				1	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##
Skill	Cost	Effect	Level	2	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##
XXX	## [Cost Type]	XXX	##	3	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##
XXX	## [Cost Type]	XXX	##	4	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##
XXX	## [Cost Type]	XXX	##	5	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##
				6	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##
Skillset 2				7	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##
[Skill Type Name]: [Skill Type Category]				8	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##
Skill	Cost	Effect	Level									
XXX	## [Cost Type]	XXX	##	Accuracy	Evade		Critical		Armor Types			
XXX	## [Cost Type]	XXX	##	##%	##%		##%		XXX			
XXX	## [Cost Type]	XXX	##									
Weapons												
Name	How found	Effect	+Attack									
XXX	XXX	XXX	##									
XXX	XXX	XXX	##									
XXX	XXX	XXX	##									

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### Ryan/Swordsman



**Character History:** Ryan grew up in a small village in the mountains as the son of the village elder. His sword skill is self taught.

**Character Personality:** Ryan is naive and good spirited. He isn't terrible educated. He is loyal and will help anyone in need.

**Character Purpose:** In the narrative, Ryan exists to be the heroic lead. He also serves as the area local. Mechanically, he serves the purpose of the party's main damage dealer.

**Stat Priorities:** Ryan will have a high attack stat. His MHP and Defense will be above average. His Agility, Luck, and Magic Defense will be average. His Magic Attack and MMP will be low.

**Skill Focus:** What will the character be able to accomplish with their skills. This ties a lot into the character purpose.

### Breakdown

I designed Ryan to be the character who represents the player. His lack of formal education combined with his lack of travel helps in excusing him from knowledge of the world outside of his small local area. This is a good thing as it lets him ask the questions the player might want to know the answer to without it seeming too odd.

I picked a more "heroic" personality mostly as preference and as an extension of his upbringing.

Gameplay wise, I mostly focus his character around doing straight damage. Magic Attack and MMP are kept down to a minimum as he will never use them.

With his skills I again focus on damage. The only skill not focused on damage is pommel strike, which does low damage + stun. Putting a few skills outside the main focus is good, as it makes them less one dimensional, but try not to diversify so much you lose your main focus.

Weapons will be covered in the next tutorial with the rest of Equipment.

Skillset 1				Level	MHP	MMP	Atk	Def	Mat	MDF	Ag	Lck
Sword Skill: Physical Weapon Skill				1	30	0	35	30	20	25	25	25
Skill	Cost	Effect	Level	2	32	0	37	32	21	26	26	26
Focus	10 TP	Increased Attack for 3 turns.	1	3	34	0	40	34	22	28	28	28
Pommel Strike	10 TP	Low Damage, Stun	1	4	36	0	42	36	23	29	29	29
Double Slash	15 TP	Attack Twice	3	5	38	0	45	38	24	31	31	31
Hero Slash	50 TP	High Damage, Hit All	5	6	40	0	47	40	25	33	33	33
				7	42	0	50	42	26	34	34	34
				8	44	0	52	44	27	35	35	35
Skillset 2												
None												
Skill	Cost	Effect	Level	Accuracy	Evade	Critical	Armor Types					
--	--	--	--	95%	5%	4%	Light/Heavy Armor					
--	--	--	--									
Weapons												
Name	How found	Effect	+Attack									
Basic Sword	Start	2 Hands	10									
Great Sword	Buy	2 Hands	15									
Lightning Blade	Collect Drops	Thunder Damage, 2 Hands	20									



## Make Your Own Game Tutorial III: Creating Characters

### Madilyn/Priestess



**Character History:** Madilyn grew up in a monastery. She has been trained from very young to perform her duties.

**Character Personality:** Madilyn is dedicated. She relies on herself and her faith and has a hard time letting people share her burden.

**Character Purpose:** In the narrative, Madilyn exists as a driving force. She also serves to bring the quest to the other PCs. Gameplay wise she is meant to be a healer and damage absorber.

**Stat Priorities:** Madilyn will have really high defense. Her Magic stats will be above average. Her MHP, MMP, and Attack will be average. She will suffer from low Agility and Luck.

**Skill Focus:** Her skills will mostly focus on keeping other characters standing and absorbing damage.

### Breakdown

When I went to create a second character, I wanted to create someone who personality wise contrasted Ryan, who is a very friendly outgoing guy. So when thinking about how to contrast a laid back character, I designed a character who was regimental and dedicated. From this came Madilyn.

She does share some traits with Ryan though, a bit of common ground, both grew up in somewhat sheltered areas, and each are naive to the world as a whole because of it. I decided to make her the type who tries to take on all the burdens herself to create a bit of PC disagreement.

In gameplay, I knew I would need some kind of healer. And if we have a character who is dedicated, why not work them into being a classical RPG Priest. I made her also have high defense to keep her from being the “frail damsel” cliché.

With her skills, she mostly focuses on healing or absorbing damage. Once again, I put in a contrasting skill with the Lunge skill just to add a bit of variety to her in battle use.

Skillset 1				Level	MHP	MMP	Atk	Def	Mat	MDf	Ag	Lck
Spear Skill: Physical Weapon Skill				1	30	30	30	50	40	40	20	20
Skill	Cost	Effect	Level	2	31	31	31	52	42	42	21	21
Shield Strike	20 TP	Low Damage, Increased Defense	1	3	33	33	33	55	44	44	22	22
Lunge	20 TP	High Damage, Lower Defense	3	4	34	34	34	57	46	46	23	23
Protect	15 TP	Guard other Players	5	5	36	36	36	60	48	48	24	24
				6	37	37	37	62	50	50	25	25
				7	39	39	39	65	52	52	26	26
				8	40	40	40	67	54	54	27	27
Skillset 2												
Prayer: Magical Skill												
Skill	Cost	Effect	Level									
Heal	6 MP	Heal HP	1		Accuracy	Evade		Critical		Armor Types		
Cure	4 MP	Cures Status Effects	2		95%	5%		2%		Robes/Light Armor		
Aura	12 MP	Heal HP all members	4									
Weapons												
Name	How found	Effect	+Attack									
Wooden Spear	Start	+2 M Attack	8									
Trident	Buy	+4 M Attack	12									
Ice Spear	Collect Drops	Ice Damage, +8 M Attack	16									

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### Winter/Mystic Thief



**Character History:** Winter grew up on the city streets. She was later recruited by a mysterious mystical organization.

**Character Personality:** Winter is mysterious and arrogant. She is very knowledgeable of the world. She is very closed off emotionally.

**Character Purpose:** In the narrative, Winter serves to be a foil to Madilyn's personality. She also serves to explain things about the world. Gameplay wise she is meant to weaken enemies.

**Stat Priorities:** Winter has high Magic Attack. She has above average Luck and MMP. Her Agility, Magic Defense, and Attack are average. Her MHP and Defense are low.

**Skill Focus:** Her skills will be mostly based around inflicting status effects and debuffs to the enemy.

### Breakdown

With the final character, I wanted someone who contrasted the other characters, while having similarities as well. With this, Winter was born. She is dedicated like Madilyn, while being more laid back about it like Ryan, but she has a lot of other things going on.

She is more knowledgeable than either of them, which gives me a character to explain details.

She also works as a foil for Madilyn, who's dedication and obsession with taking on burden comes up against Winter's assessment of her actual abilities.

From a gameplay perspective she adds a bit of strategy to the game. Both the other two characters are there to do straight forward things: Damage and Heal. I felt going with status effects would be more interesting strategically and keep her from being redundant.

Her status focus shows through with her skills. She also has two off type skills that help make up for her low HP and Defense.

Skillset 1				Level	MHP	MMP	Atk	Def	Mat	MDf	Ag	Lck
Dagger Skill: Physical Weapon Skill				1	20	40	30	20	50	30	40	30
Skill	Cost	Effect	Level	2	21	42	31	21	52	31	42	31
Distracting Slash	15 TP	Damage + Debuff Defense	1	3	22	44	33	22	55	33	44	33
Weakening Slash	25 TP	Damage + Debuff Attack	2	4	23	46	34	23	57	34	46	34
Poison Knife Barrage	40 TP	Damage + Poison All	4	5	24	48	36	24	60	36	48	36
				6	25	50	37	25	62	37	50	37
				7	26	52	39	26	65	39	52	39
				8	27	54	40	27	67	40	54	40
Skillset 2												
Magic: Magical Skill												
Skill	Cost	Effect	Level									
Darkness	8 MP	Blind Enemy	1		Accuracy	Evade		Critical			Armor Types	
Vanish	6 MP	Lower Aggro Rate 3 turns	3		98%	8%		6%			Clothes/Robs	
Drain	10 MP	Drain HP from Enemy	5									
Weapons												
Name	How found	Effect	+Attack									
Dagger	Start	+2 M Attack	6									
Dirk	Buy	+4 M Attack	9									
Fire Edge	Collect Drops	Fire Damage, +8 M Attack	12									

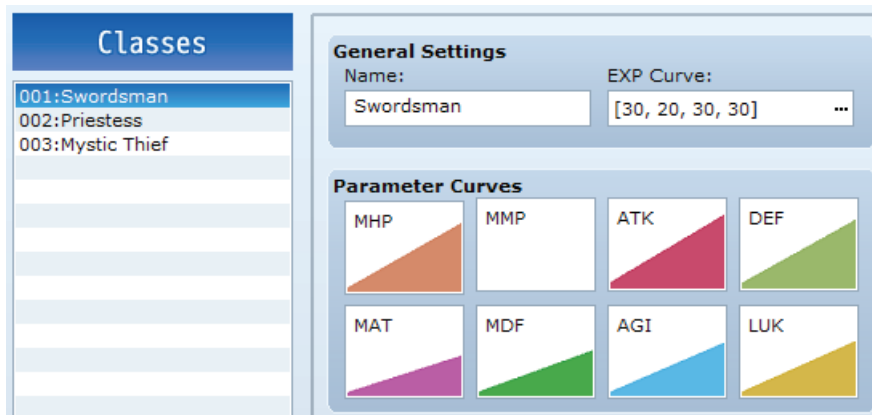


## Make Your Own Game Tutorial III: Creating Characters

### Starting with the Class Tab

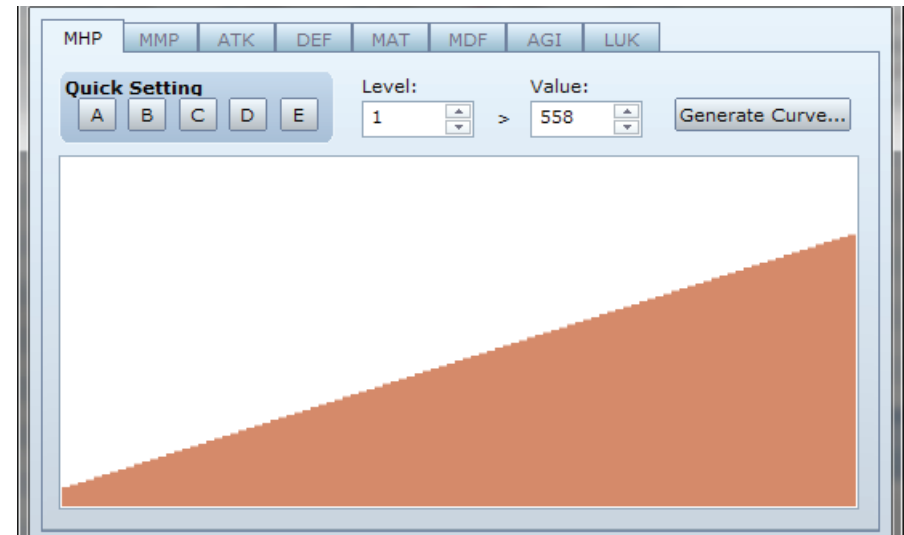
While you can start in the Actor tab, I prefer to start with the class tab when inputting the information we already have. I will walk through establishing one character's stats and menu information, then you can use the same methods to add the others.

The first time we go into the Class Tab, we will be concerned with only the portion shown below:



Here you can see the class name, and parameter curves for the class stats. Parameter curves determine what the stats will be rated at for each level.

After you put in the class name, double click one of the stats to have the parameter curve box to pop up.



Here you can set the parameter curve you need. You can set each level manually, use a Quick Setting button, or click the Generate Curve button to put in the rank at level 1 and 99 and have it create the curve for you.

Since we are still working with rough stats, let's use the quick settings. A for high, B for above average, C for Average, and D for Low. I use the Generate Curve button for MMP for Ryan, to set it to 0 at all levels.

## Make Your Own Game Tutorial III: Creating Characters

### On to the Actor Tab

Now we will move on to the Actor Tab. Here we will focus on the General Settings and Graphics section shown below.



**General Settings**

Name:  Nickname:

Class:  Initial Level:  Max Level:

Description:  
Ryan grew up in a mountain village and has honed his swordplay on monsters living in the area.

**Graphic**

Put in the name of your character, and then link the Actor to his class.

Next you can give the character a nickname. The nickname appears in the menu and you can also address it in message boxes. I'm using it for a short descriptor rather than an actual nickname.

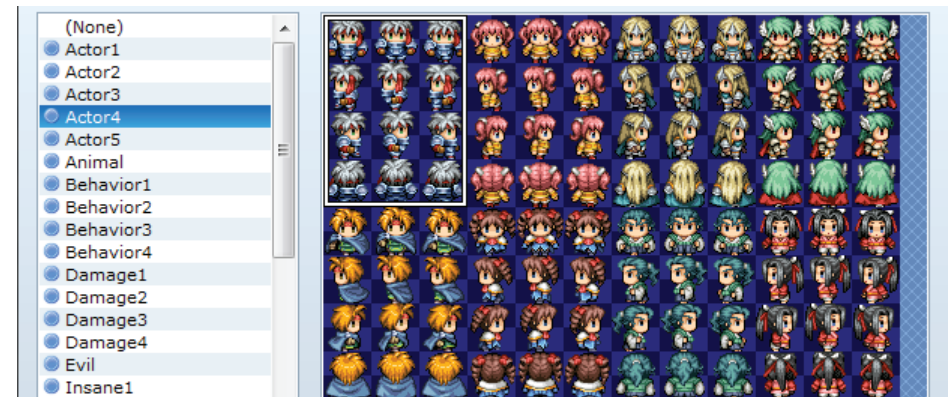
Since the game is short, I moved the maximum level to only 8. No reason for the player to be able to level higher than that.

The description appears in the Status menu in game, and is good for a quick overview of the character.

Now to select a face graphic, just double click on the face section to pop up the face selection window. Just put the White Box around the face you want and click ok.



You can then repeat the same process to pick a sprite. Double click on the sprite to open the sprite selection window, select the sprite you want and click OK.

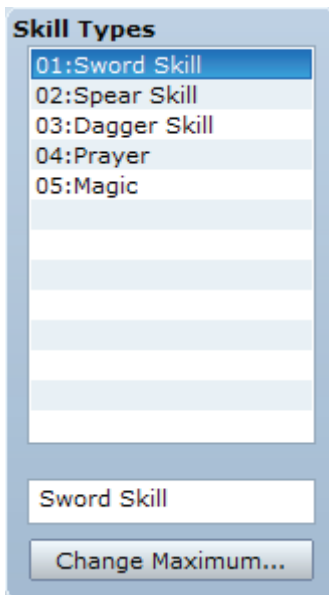


Now we've gotten the basis of the character down, let's move on to making some skills.

## Make Your Own Game Tutorial III: Creating Characters

### Creating Skills

The first thing we will want to do is flip over to the Terms tab. This might seem a bit odd, but we need to fill out all the Skill Types we will use. Skill Types are shown in the battle menus for characters select before being given the list of skills within that type to use.



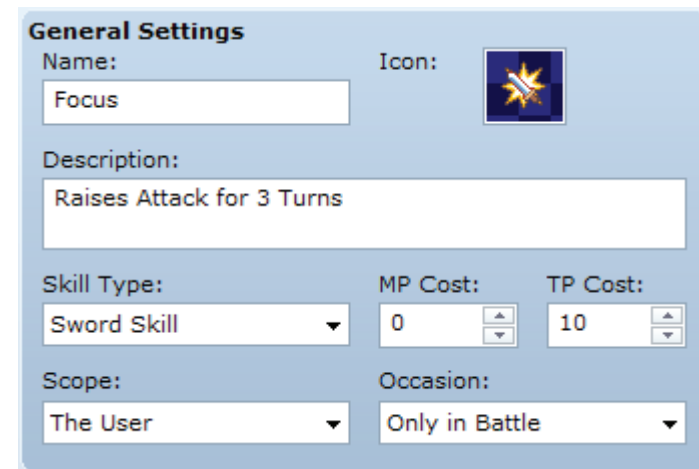
We can go back to the character planning sheets to find all the Skill Types (listed as Skillsets on the spreadsheets) we will need for characters.

Let's fill all those in. We might be adding more for enemies, but this covers the PCs. The list of what I used is shown on the left. Each character has a Weapon Skill, and Madilyn and Winter have Magic Skills.

Now that we have that done, we can move over to the skill tab. I will walk you through creating one skill, then cover damage formulas afterwards.

The first thing to know is that the first two skills in the database are the default Attack and Guard options available to all characters in battle. Don't edit these unless you want to change the way damage is calculated for the default options.

The skill I will be creating is Ryan's Focus Skill.



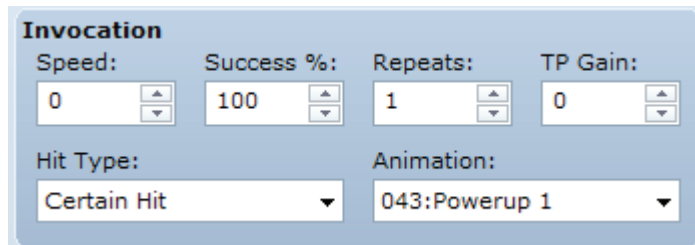
In the General Settings section we can set the name, description, Skill Type, Cost, Scope (Target), and Occasion.

We can also select an icon that will be shown next to the name in the menus. Most of this section is pretty straight forward.



## Make Your Own Game Tutorial III: Creating Characters

### Creating Skills (cont.)



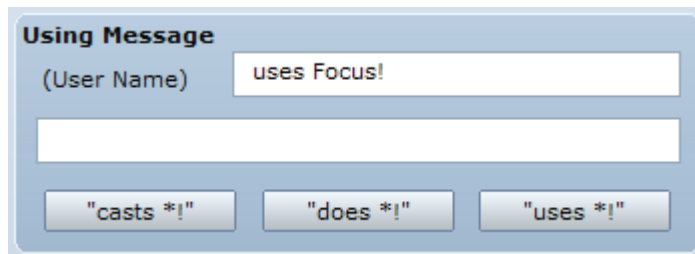
**Invocation**

Speed: 0 Success %: 100 Repeats: 1 TP Gain: 0

Hit Type: Certain Hit Animation: 043:Powerup 1

Below the general settings is the Invocation settings. This includes settings that affect how it is used by the player.

For Focus, we want the skill to have it only occur once (Repeats: 1), always succeed, and have a powerup style animation. If you want to preview the animations, or create new animations you can check them in the Animations Tab.

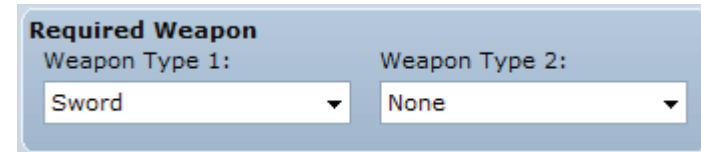


**Using Message**

(User Name) uses Focus!

"casts \*!" "does \*!" "uses \*!"

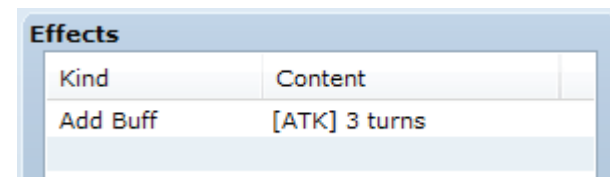
In the Using Message settings, we just fill out what we want it to say in the battle messages when the character uses the skill. I left this pretty basic for Focus.



**Required Weapon**

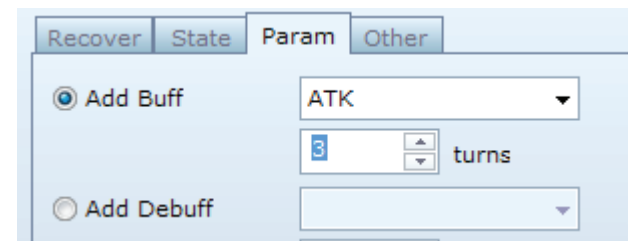
Weapon Type 1: Sword Weapon Type 2: None

Since this is a Sword Skill, I decided to make it require him to be wielding a sword to use it in the Required Weapons settings.



Kind	Content
Add Buff	[ATK] 3 turns

This section is a bit more complex. In the Effects settings double click on a blank line. This will pop up the Effects Box. You can create a huge variety of effects using this.



Recover State Param Other

☒ Add Buff ATK 3 turns

☐ Add Debuff

In the Param tab you can create a buff. Put in the number of turns you want it to last and click OK.

## Make Your Own Game Tutorial III: Creating Characters

### Damage Formulas

There is one last setting box that I didn't have to deal with making the Focus skill, but is vitally important to creating an RPG: The damage settings.

Ace lets us put in any formula we can think of. For the example game we will be using the default formulas.

Set up here is a spell that drains a target. To create the formula I used the Quick button. The Quick box is shown below.

When using the Quick box, an equation will be created based on the following:

$$x + y * (a.atk * 0.04 - b.def * 0.02) + z * (a.mat * 0.02) - b.mdf * 0.02$$

Where X = Base Value, Y = Physical, and Z = Magical. The standard default attack is based on Physical 100, Base Value = 0, Magical = 0.

Variance is the max percent the skill can vary from the result of the formula.

Remember that this is used for not only Damage, but also for recovery skills, just change the Type to Recover.

### Tips and Tricks: Default Database

When you first opened the Database, you may have noticed that it contains default skills, weapons, and characters already. You can use these yourself, but the true advantage of it is to learn how to make skills.

Don't know how to create a certain skill? Check the default database for something similar!

## Make Your Own Game Tutorial III: Creating Characters

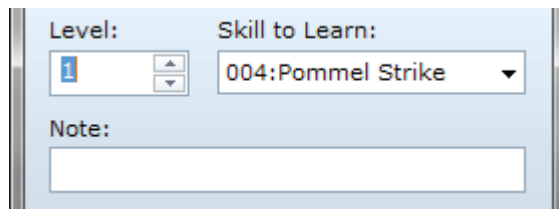
### Connecting Skills to Classes

Now we head back to the Class Tab to link the skills we made to the classes and determine what levels they are gained at.



Level	Skill	Note
Lv 1	Focus	
Lv 1	Pommel Strike	

In the Skills section on the Class tab, just double click on a blank line to open the Skills box.



Level: 1 Skill to Learn: 004:Pommel Strike

Note:

Here you can select the skill the class learns, as well as what level they learn it at, then click OK to add it.

*Sidenote: You may have noticed “Note” boxes in a lot of areas that I’m not using. You can use these to leave notes for yourself that the player can’t see. Some RGSS3 scripters also use them to extend functionality.*

### Tutorial Wrapup

This tutorial should have gotten you familiar with making your way around the database to create characters

The basics of the Actor and Class tab should be opened to you, and you should be able to create your own skills with ease.

You should have also discovered some fundamental character design theories. One such theory is character variety, in which you try and make character have not only narrative variety, but also gameplay variety.

We also explored defining character purpose, so that each character has a place in the game.

### Next Tutorial Preview

In the next tutorial, we will be exploring Features, an important part of creating characters in RPG Maker VX Ace. We will also get into creating Equipment and other Treasures, and create ways for our players to obtain them in game.