

Hero-U: Rogue to Redemption Technical Manual

Introduction: How to Play Hero-U: Rogue to Redemption

So, here I am alone with this self-proclaimed thief, Shawn O'Conner. What am I supposed to do with him?



Don't worry - Shawn isn't a *bad* thief. (Actually, he's a terrible one - no lock picks? No sneak skills? Why would anyone recruit him?)

Start by reading everything on the screen. There may be important clues. More often, the game (and Shawn) will try to amuse you.

But what about getting that text on the screen in the first place?

Well, that's up to you. Hero-U is designed to be played mostly with a mouse or other pointer. As you move your mouse cursor around the screen, you'll occasionally see words - these are the names of things on which you can click. Technically that's called a "mouseover" or "hover text".

Find one and click the **right** mouse button. Most of the time you'll see a box with some text appear in the bottom center of your screen. That's the **description** of the thing on which you clicked. You can dismiss the box - or advance to the next paragraph - by clicking anywhere in the box or by pressing the **Enter** key.

Note that Shawn didn't move, and no time passed, when you used a right-button click to see a description. That's always a "free move" in Hero-U. The right mouse button is your "look" button.

Now try clicking with the **left** mouse button. That's your "act" button. If you aren't pointing at anything, Shawn will move to where you were pointing, or as close as he can get to there. Shawn starts the game in a relatively small room, so there isn't much to explore. But later, he'll find himself in a huge castle where you will help him move around.

Now mouse over something that gives you hover text and click the left button again. That starts out the same - Shawn will walk over to the thing you clicked on - but now he can act on the clicked object. Sometimes that just results in Shawn saying something about the object, but usually you will see an **action menu** at the bottom of the screen. These menus give you a choice of ways to act on the thing on which you clicked.

Clicked on something by accident? No worries! Most action menus include the word "Done". Click on it and the menu will go away. Also use Done when you're finished (for now) with the object.

If you click on any option besides Done, something will happen. Most often you'll see a new text box describing what just happened and Shawn's reaction to it. Sometimes there will be animation, a

closeup or “vignette” image, or a sound effect. When you dismiss the text box by clicking on it, you might see another text box, a new action menu, or the original action menu.

Sometimes the options in the action menu change. That could be because Shawn has acquired or lost something that would give him an additional option, or because the menu led to a “once funny” line that we don’t think you need to read again, or because something in the environment has “changed state”.

What’s that about? I’m pretty sure I’m sitting here in the same state where I started playing Hero-U.

Ok, you caught us in some programming jargon. The state of the game reflects everything that has happened in the game so far. A lot of things change in Hero-U depending on its state. As a simple example, try clicking on the desk lamp and selecting “turn on the lamp” from the action menu. Now the scene (particularly the desk) is a little brighter, and you no longer have the option to turn on the lamp. But now you can turn it off.

Check out the things on the desk with the lamp on and off. Shawn gets a lot more information from them when they’re well lit, and very little when the light is off.

There are several thousand things that can change in Hero-U. Shawn makes some of them happen, and some - such as the passage of time - happen around him.

*Sure thing, but what can I **do** in this scene?*



Get Shawn to walk around, look at everything, and interact with things. Many of them are just there for fun, or to fill out the environment, but a few are important to the story. The desk lamp is one of the important ones, because there are some things Shawn just can’t do in the dark.

Meanwhile, Shawn has one main goal, to find the Lucky Coin. It could be hidden anywhere in the room, so he needs to look at everything. Maybe it’s in an obvious place, or it could be really well hidden. Interact with anything that seems unusual or where someone might hide a small coin. Use any tools you have available or can find.

Cool, I got the coin. Now what?

Well, that’s a start towards a future career as a thief. But thieves aren’t always looked upon kindly. Shawn might do well to get out of the house without alerting the residents, neighbors, or police. It shouldn’t be **too** hard, but things are rarely as simple as they seem.

Getting Started With Hero-U: Rogue to Redemption

Hero-U is a fantasy adventure role-playing game - a FARPG. That mouthful means that it is a game of exploration, discovery, character development, story, fantasy combat, and puzzle-solving.

Each game in the Hero-U series has a different main character, all students at Hero-University. In Rogue to Redemption, your character is Shawn O'Conner, a young man who has grown up poor, but aspires to be successful and important. You can help him reach his goals. Or should we say "your goals", since much of that is up to you.

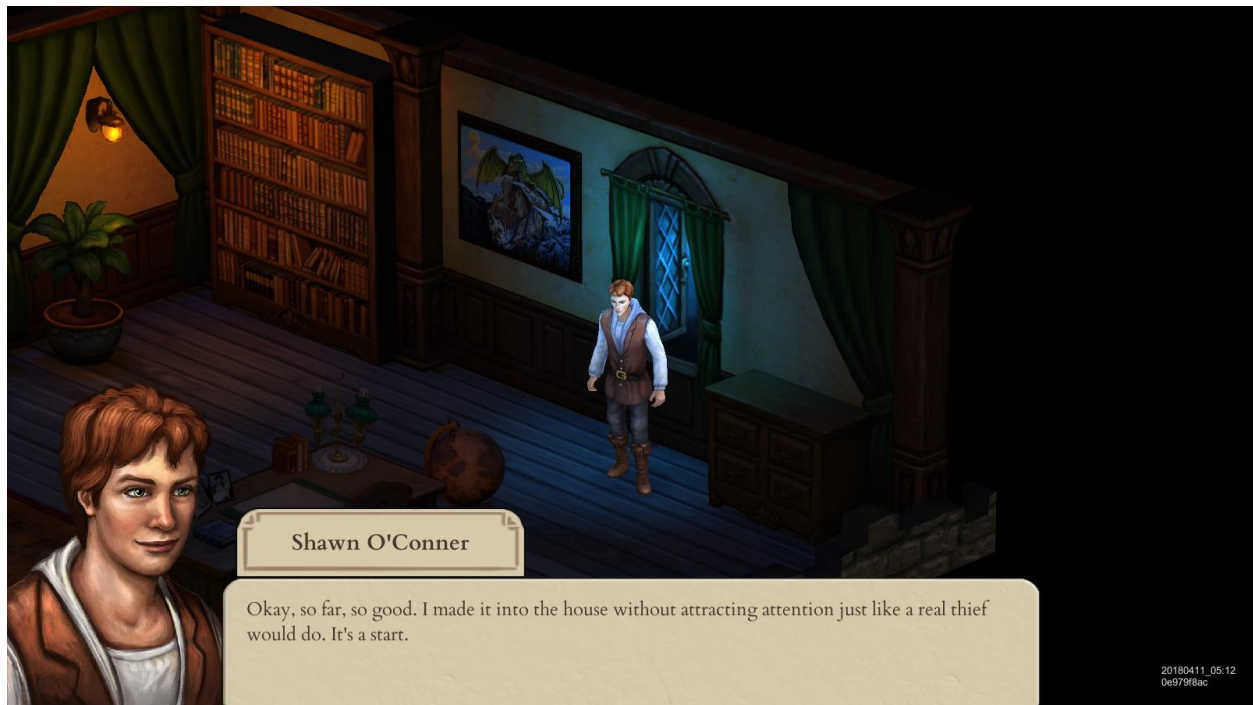
When you first run the game, you'll see an introductory screen, then the Main Menu:



Start by clicking the New Game button. Your other choices are to load a game you previously saved, see the game credits, or exit Hero-U. It's a little soon for that choice!

The opening cinematic will give you some context for Shawn's first adventure in the thriving coastal city of Caligari. Danger has come to that formerly-peaceful town.

But meanwhile, Shawn has a job to do, and it's up to you to guide him through it. He says he's trying to become a thief - just roll with that for the moment. Advance the text by clicking in the box or pressing the spacebar or the Enter key.



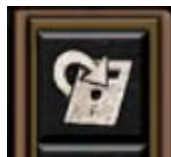
A notification flashes in the top right corner - "Journal Entry added. You also have a new menu on the left side of the screen. We call this the "RPG Bar" because it lets you look at the things that make Hero-U a role-playing game as well as an adventure.

The RPG Bar - System and Character Menus

From top to bottom, the RPG Bar has a clock, the current game day, and some icons - a disk, a head, a theatrical mask, a pack, a “paper doll”, and a book. You’ve probably guessed that the book is Shawn’s journal, but let’s start at the top with the clock.



The Clock and Game Day. Time is Shawn’s most precious asset in Hero-U. The game lasts exactly 50 days, and there are a lot of choices to make on every one of those days. Move your mouse over the clock to see the exact time. You’ll be using that “mouseover” technique throughout the game. The clock is not a button, so clicking on it or on the day won’t do anything.



The disk (remember those?) icon is your System Menu. Click it to Save your progress, Load a previously-saved game, adjust sound setting, or Quit back to the Main Menu.

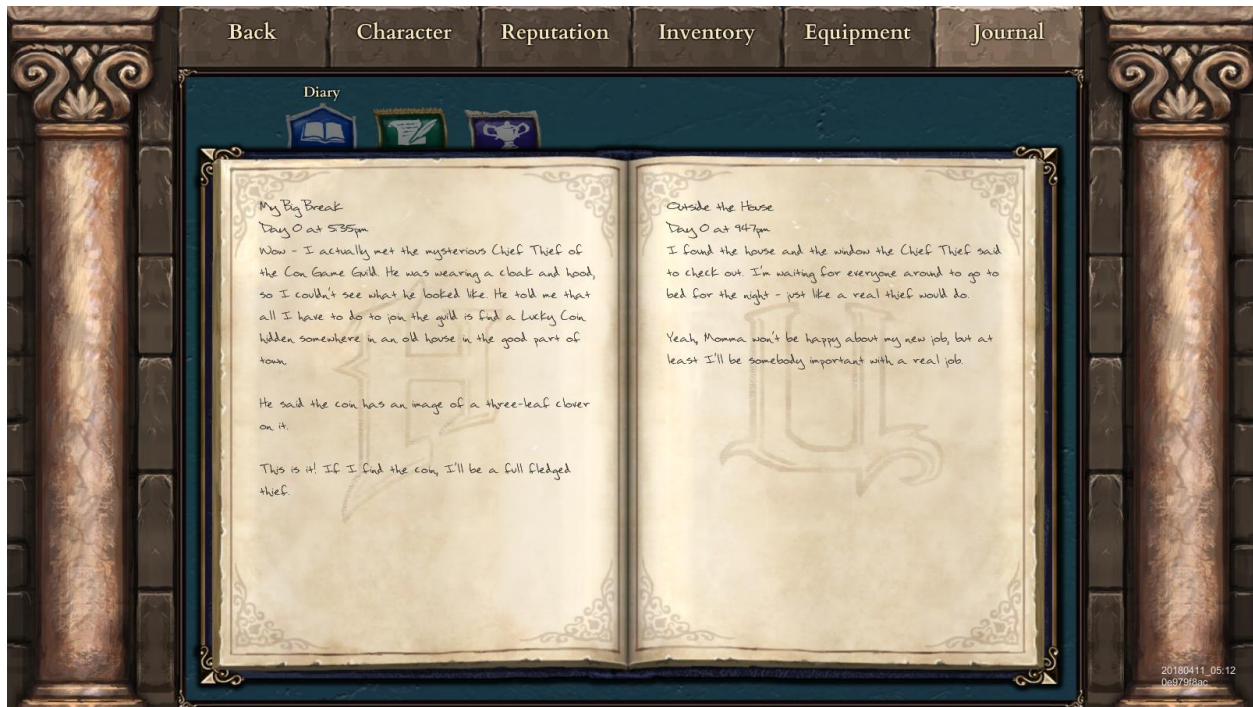
The head/face brings up Shawn’s Character Sheet. That shows you his current health and status, his abilities, and his skills. Hero-U uses the “practice makes perfect” metaphor for improving both skills and abilities.

The theatrical mask leads to Shawn’s Reputation Screen. This gives you a visual look at his relationship with other characters in the game.

The pack brings up Shawn’s Inventory. Once you open it, mouseover any object for its name, right-click for a brief description, or left-click to closely examine or use the item.

The paper doll takes you to the equipment interface. It shows the inventory items that Shawn can equip. Drag (hold down the left mouse button and move the mouse) an item onto the “paper doll” to equip it, or drag an equipped item into the inventory to take it off. Shawn will equip the item in its appropriate slot - ring, weapon, etc.

The book icon brings up the journal. Since Shawn just made his first journal entry, let’s bring that up and see what it says. We’ll work our way up the RPG bar from there.



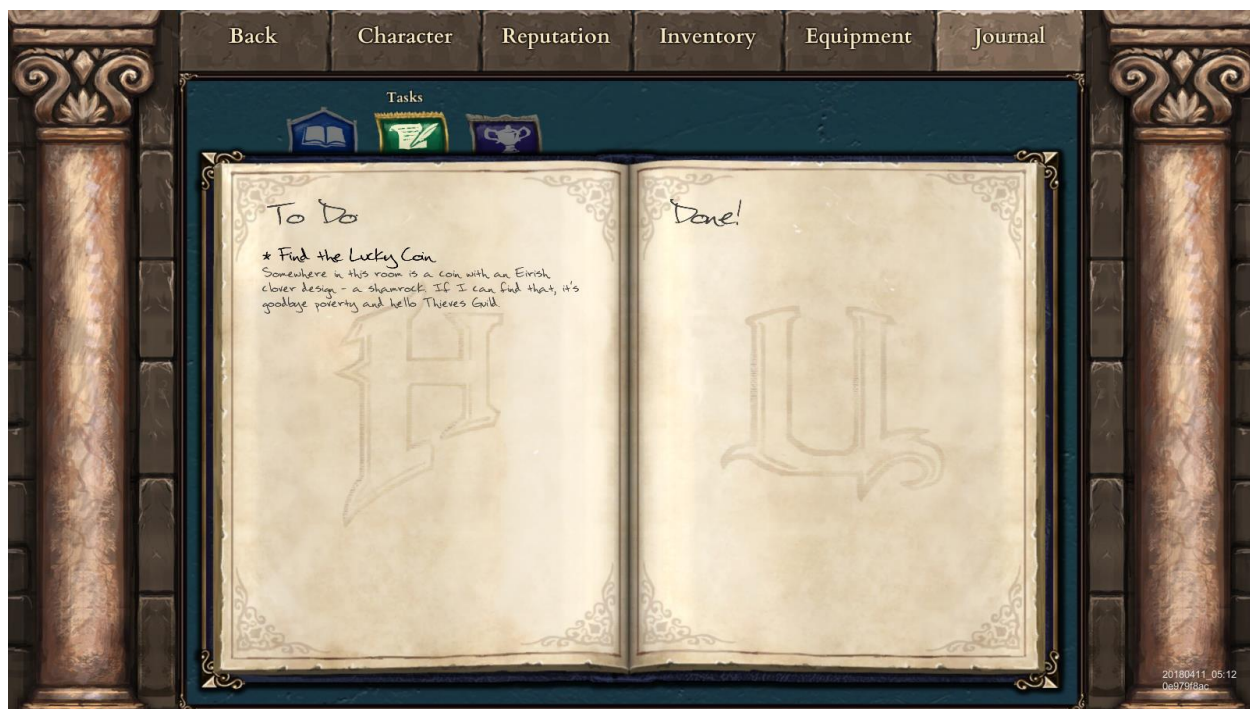
There's a lot to look at on this page. For your convenience, all of the RPG Bar icons except for the System Menu are duplicated here as buttons/tabs. The Back button returns to the game, so you'll definitely need that one. The other buttons let you jump to the character sheet, reputation screen, inventory, equipment, and journal pages.

The journal also has three tabs, and a fourth that will be added later. Click on any of the tabs to open that section of the journal - Diary, Tasks, Achievements, or Map.

The Diary (open book icon) contains Shawn's notes to himself about events he considers important. These can remind you of things you may have forgotten, and Shawn's notes occasionally add a bit to the story in his words.

As the journal entries grow, small "page tabs" appear on the bottom left and bottom right of the pages. You can use these to page through the diary and other journal sections.

Click on the second Journal tab - Tasks - the quill pen and parchment icon.



So far, Shawn has just one task - Find the Lucky Coin. It's on the To Do page. Once he accomplishes that task, it will move over to Done! It's possible to have several pages of things to do at one time, and of course the Done! list will also become large. Tasks are strictly optional, but they are useful game hints if you aren't sure what to do next.

Some tasks can take quite a while to accomplish; they will stay in the journal as long as it's possible to finish them. By the way, if Shawn fails to complete a task, there is no penalty - it is simply removed from both the To Do and Done pages.

The next tab (the trophy icon) brings up the Achievements page. If you are using Steam, the achievements on this page will be the same as your Steam Achievements, except only ones that you've earned in this play-through of the game are on this page.



Achievements are much like Tasks, but most of them are for bigger and more difficult accomplishments. The game also does not reveal achievements until you accomplish them. You get one “freebie” - the Studios achievement on being admitted to Hero-U. After that, they become increasingly difficult to, well, achieve.

The final tab is a map icon, and you won't see it until Shawn acquires one or more maps. Clicking on the tab brings up a full-window image of the map. Click on the map to dismiss it and get back to the rest of the journal.

The Equipment Page

Moving up from the journal, the next icon is the Equipment button. Once Shawn starts to acquire wearable items, you can use that to switch them around. Sometimes he'll need to wear the school uniform, but it isn't ideal for life and death (and usually messy) combat.



The items in boxes on the top left are things Shawn could equip. As usual, you can mouseover an item to see its name. Click on it to put the description in the large box. You can do the same things with your equipped items.

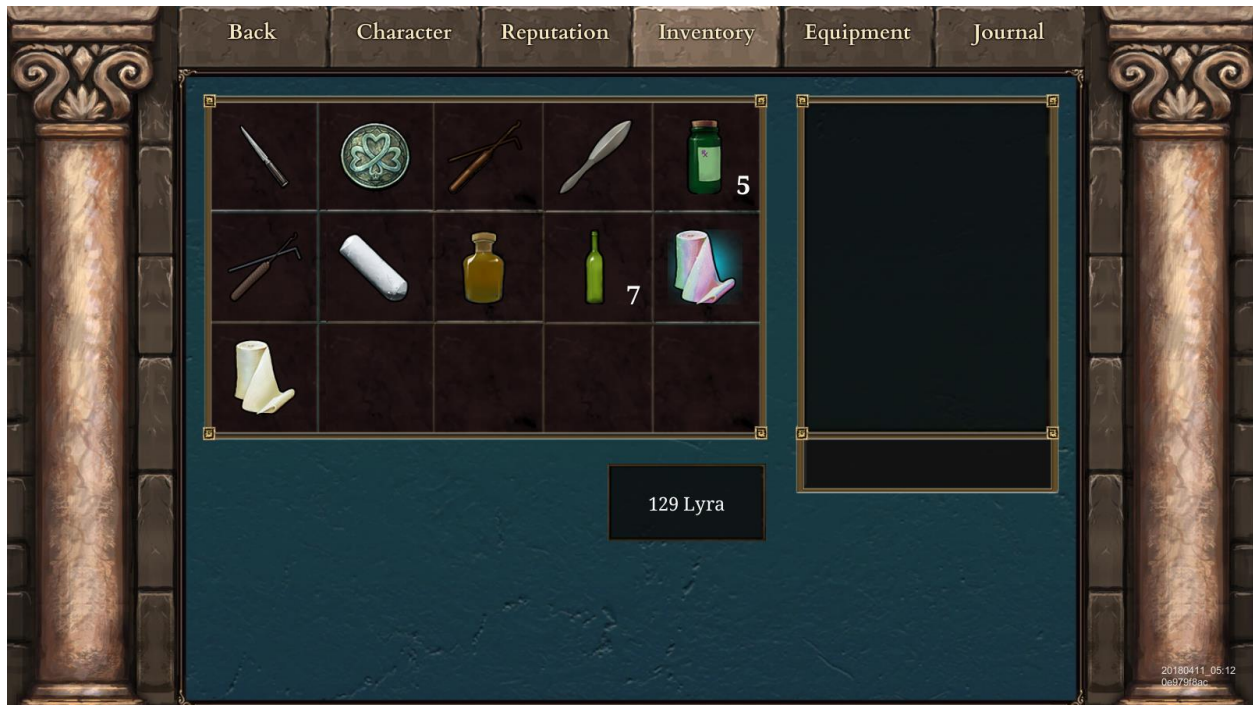
To equip an item, you need to drag it onto the paper doll. Point at the item, press the left mouse button, and keep the button held down while you move to the paper doll. When you release the button, the item will be equipped in the appropriate slot.

Unequip an item the same way - drag it from the paper doll into the extra equipment boxes. This takes away the benefits of the item, but also removes its penalties. For example, wearing thick gloves may improve Shawn's combat defense, but they aren't great when he wants to pick a lock. Some items also raise or lower Shawn's Charm ability depending on how "cool" he looks wearing them.

NOTE: Shawn's in-game image may not accurately reflect his current equipment. Check the Equipment page any time you want to know what he is currently wearing.

The Inventory Page

The messenger bag icon lets you see all of Shawn's inventory. As the school semester progresses, Shawn will pick up a lot of useful items, so the inventory can take up several pages. Once Shawn has more than 15 items, small arrows will appear to let you scroll through his inventory.



The inventory page works much like the rest of the game - mouseover an item to see its name, right-click to get a description, and left-click to examine it closely or use it.

Hero-U uses a different approach to inventory than previous adventure games. Rather than using an inventory item on something on the screen, just click on the screen object. If there is something Shawn can do with it and an inventory item, you'll get a menu option to do that.

There is one case when Shawn might need to use an inventory item directly - using a healing or "buffing" item. Shawn can use a bandage, drink a potion, or eat something directly from the inventory screen. Most of those items can also be used in combat, but it often pays to prepare before entering mortal danger.

The Reputation Page

The theatrical mask icon (face with hearts for love and flames for hate) brings up the Reputation Page. This shows how much each character in the game likes or dislikes Shawn. At the beginning of the game, Shawn doesn't know anyone else at the school, so the page is blank. As he meets people, they appear on the page.



The first people Shawn will meet are Mr. Terk, the school administrator, and Master von Urwald, the rogue - er, disbarred bard - instructor. (There are no rogues at Hero-U.) For reasons of their own, Mr. Terk starts out disliking Shawn, while Master von Urwald has a neutral attitude towards him.

As Shawn does things that characters like or dislike, their attitudes towards him will shift. Doing favors, having friendly conversation, and giving gifts can all raise Shawn's reputation. Dressing well and bathing regularly is also helpful. (Shawn's starting outfit is pretty ratty. Hey, he's poor!)

Some game achievements are based on Shawn's reputation with other characters by the end of the game. There are even several possibilities for romance and true love.

As much as you might like to drag a reputation bar to the right to improve your relationship with a character, it doesn't work that way in real life or in Hero-U. This page just shows how Shawn is doing at relationships.

The Character Sheet

Clicking on Shawn's head brings up his "character sheet", a term from paper role-playing. This page lets you see Shawn's current status and how he is progressing in building up his skills and abilities. The range is 0-100, where a skill of 0 can't be improved without special training, and 100 is the maximum "cap". Equipment and temporary buffs can raise a skill or ability above 100.

Not into numbers? Just use this to keep track of Shawn's status. Glance at the arrows to see which Abilities and Skills have changed since the last time you looked at the character sheet. The rest of that stuff is for players who enjoy the "accounting game" of fantasy role-playing.



If a skill or ability has improved since the last time you looked at the character sheet, it will have a green “up arrow”. Arrows also show temporary changes to abilities from using a “buffing” pill or potion or from equipping or removing magical armor or weapons.

We’ve divided Shawn’s character sheet into four sections - Status, Abilities, Skills, and Resistances.

Status is the most important. That section tells you whether Shawn is healthy, sleepy, hungry, poisoned, and so on. Take a nap if Shawn is sleepy, grab an apple in the dining room if he’s hungry. Stamina is Shawn’s current and maximum health. His maximum Stamina is based on Fitness, Agility, and Moxie. The easiest way to build up Stamina is to work out with the weights in the practice room every day.

You will also find Demerits in the Status section. If this number ever reaches 100, Shawn will be unceremoniously yanked out of Hero-U and sent back to the streets. It is nearly impossible to avoid getting some demerits, but don’t worry about that unless they get close to 100.

Closely related to status are Shawn’s Resistances. These are the result of magical items or potions Shawn uses. They are pretty rare in this game.

Abilities define Shawn’s character. Agility helps him do things like use tools and climb ropes. Fitness also helps with the latter, and it improves Shawn’s Stamina. Charm helps with getting along with others.

Luck helps in games of chance and in combat. Moxie represents Shawn’s brashness, willpower and strength of character. It helps him get away with “snarky” and otherwise rude actions.

Perception helps Shawn spot traps and hidden clues. Smarts helps him learn and pass tests, or at least get away with trying to appear intelligent. A Magic ability appears on the character sheet if Shawn has enough innate magical talent to activate magical runes.

Skills are very similar to abilities, but help with specific activities. Climbing in Hero-U mostly applies to climbing and crossing ropes; it's important in the Sea Caves. Combat and Defense are obvious to experienced role-playing gamers. The difference between an RPG and a "twitch" game is that Shawn's combat success comes from his skills and abilities as much as from player skill.

Tool Use combines lockpicking and trap disarming. It is a measure of Shawn's ability to work with small, delicate mechanisms. Disarming traps in Hero-U requires both Shawn's Tool Use skill and player ability to solve word puzzles.



Stealth improves Shawn's ability to avoid detection when he is sneaking. To make this work, you will have to be careful where he moves - no amount of stealth will save Shawn if he walks right in front of a hungry monster or angry school administrator.

Throwing is useful in combat for damaging enemies at a distance and for "pulling" them to you one at a time without getting too close to other enemies. It also improves Shawn's darts game results. Practice throwing daggers in the practice room near the Disbarred Bard classroom. The practice room also features target dummies for combat and defense practice, climbing ropes, and weights.

Gaming skill improves Shawn's success at Poobah and other games. It's useful for making money (or minimizing losses) and for having fun in the Recreation Lounge.

The Movement Bar

In the bottom left corner of the game window is another bar that lets you choose between three movement "modes" - Walking, Running, and Sneaking. You won't see this bar in the first room because Shawn hasn't yet learned Stealth and there is no room to run. Running would get him caught anyway.



This one is pretty simple. Click on the Walk icon to walk around at a normal speed. Click on Run if you're in a hurry, as long as you don't mind getting some demerits for running in the hallways. Click on Sneak - once Shawn learns the Stealth technique - to move slowly and carefully. Sneaking improves Shawn's Stealth skill and allows him to avoid many encounters with monsters and school administrators. But you have to be patient to use stealth effectively.

Interacting With the Game

Everything else in the game is done by interacting directly with the on-screen environment. Mouse over an object to see what it's called. Right-click to get a detailed description. Those actions use no game time and don't cause Shawn to move.

Left-click is used for everything else. Clicking on an empty place on the floor causes Shawn to walk (or run or sneak) there. Clicking on something that has a mouseover moves Shawn to it, then allows him to interact with the object.

Interaction is usually done with text in the box at the bottom. After you read the text, advance through it by pressing the spacebar or by clicking in the box.

Often you will get an “interaction menu” in the same box. Click on your choice of action or dialogue, or type the number next to your choice. Many menus have “Done” as the last option; clicking Done exits the menu without taking time or doing anything.

Oh yeah, that “time” thing. Moving takes time. Most menu choices, including dialogue, take time. Shawn will rarely have enough time to do everything he wants to do. That comes down to your choices, and also hopefully will give you a reason to play Hero-U: Rogue to Redemption many times to discover what happens if you play the game a little differently.

By the way, even though the school administration thinks that students should be on a strict schedule, Shawn is a rogue. Just because he’s sent to bed at 10:00 at night doesn’t mean he has to stay there. You may find yourself trying to squeeze one more practice session or visit to the wine cellar or sea caves into every precious hour of Shawn’s life.



Ever-Changing Menus

Never become complacent that you’ve seen every option with a character or object. As Shawn accomplishes tasks in the game and acquires items, menus will change. A simple example is in the first room - Shawn’s options with the desk change depending on whether he has enough light to see what he’s doing. Later on, he will acquire lockpicks, keys, and other items that open new ways of interacting with the game.

Character dialogue also changes constantly. Hero-U uses a state-driven dialogue system. This means that people will have different things to say depending on the game day, what Shawn has done so far, Shawn’s reputation with the character, and other factors. To get the full story, game experience, and build reputation, talk to the other staff and students every day.

It is impossible to see all of the character dialogue in a single play-through. If you choose to have Shawn make a charming response to something another character says, he can’t go back and try a smart or a snarky answer.

Other characters react to Shawn’s attitude based on their own character and their opinion of Shawn - sometimes they like the snarky approach more than the charming one. Don’t try to “get it right” every time, because often there is no right or wrong approach. Instead, get into the role you want Shawn to play. Decide whether he’s smart, charming, or willful (full of moxie). He will get better results picking an interaction style and sticking with it than by acting inconsistently.

Special Interfaces

When you interact with something in Hero-U, we will often show a closeup of the object so you can see it more clearly. In a few cases, a menu will give you the chance to interact directly with the closeup by clicking on places in the closeup. This will be obvious when it happens.

Two special interfaces deserve attention - the Trap Tapper interface for disarming traps, and the Puzzle Floor in the dungeon. On the puzzle floor, start by clicking anywhere on the puzzle, then click to move Shawn to an adjacent square of the puzzle. Which square? That would be telling. There are clues in nearby locations and in another a little farther away.

An experience Rogue will always check for traps before attempting to open a locked door or chest. If you find one, it's time to use the trusty Trap Tapper to disarm the trap.



The Trap Tapper is a triumph of science and magic brought together for roguish purposes. When applied to a trap, it translates the trap mechanism into a keyword. Guess the word to disarm the trap. Incidentally, pay attention to where Shawn finds the trap and to who may have set it; that will often suggest what word may have been used to set the trap.

Note that some letters are automatically blacked-out when you bring up the trap tapper. These are letters that definitely are not part of the word. The number of blocked letters depends on Shawn's Tool Use skill.

Use the Trap Tapper by clicking the arrows to rotate the alphabet wheel. When you've chosen a letter, click on any square of the word to try that letter there. If you've guessed the right letter, but the wrong position, you will get a minor penalty and the letter will remain on the wheel. The yellow light illuminates in that case.

Guess a letter that isn't in the word, and you'll get a bigger penalty and a "buzz" noise; the letter will be blacked out on the wheel. Finally, if you guess correctly, the letter will appear in the word and some of your penalties will be removed.

Note that some words have the same letter more than once. In that case, if you get it right, the letter will appear in the word, but will not be blacked out on the wheel. That's an important hint that you need to use that letter again in a different position.

If you get too many penalties - watch the "thermometer" gauge - Shawn has failed to solve the trap and will set it off. This can be quite painful. If you don't think you're solving the trap correctly, you can usually back out of it by clicking the "X" in the top left corner of the Trap Tapper interface.

Game Credits

People talk about games as though they are either the product of a single mind or the faceless work of a company. The truth is generally somewhere in between. Most games are developed by a team, with everyone on the team making important contributions to the final game.

Game Design and Writing:

Lori Ann Cole	Lead designer and lead writer
Corey Cole	Concept and technical designer, writer
Josh Mandel	Writer (which scarcely begins to express his contributions)
Joshua Smyth	Combat technical designer

Art and Animation:

John Paul Selwood	Principal artist - 2D and 3D
Al Eufrazio	3D Animator and Cinematics
Eric Varnes	Icons, Characters, Kickstarter Art
Paul Bowers	Background and Character Art
Aaron Martin	3D Environments
Chris Willis	3D Environments
Terry Robinson	Art and Character Design
Eriq Chang	Kickstarter Art and Character Design
Mark Povey	2D Character Animation
Bryan Ellis	Character Design

Programmers and Scripters:

Joshua Smyth	Combat and System Programming
Cidney Hamilton	Scripting, User Interface, Systems, Triage
Lori Cole	Dialogue and event scripting

Josh Mandel	Descriptive writing and scripting
Corey Cole	Bug fixes and technical design
Carolyn vanEseltine	Scripting
Jerry Shaw	Scripting
Robert Kety	Scripting
Charles Stuard III	Scripting, Special Interfaces, Cinematics, Poobah
Judy Feng	Poobah, Composer enhancements, Journal
Graham Laverty	Unity specialist, Build master, Steam integration
Ian Davids	Bug reporting system
Adam Thompson	Trap Tapper
Mike Croswell	Prototypes and Demo
Jonathan Cheatham	User Interface and System Programming
Rob Eisenberg	“Composer” Scripting System

Music and Sound Effects:

Ryan Grogan	Music composition and performance
Klang Studio	Sound Effects
	Additional free license and public domain sound effects

Administration:

Corey Cole	Project lead, finance, communications, fulfillment
Chris Fong	Data administration, chronicler, communications
Michael Cole	Marketing and Public Relations
Janet Weddle	Team organization

A Cast of Thousands:

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