CORE RULES

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Special thanks to to the members of the Action-System and Action-Design Groups for their feedback, enthusiasm, and support.

Join the *Action! System* discussion group and get the latest news on *Action! System* products and free downloads, web site updates, and more! Visit the *Action! System* web site at **http://www.action-system.com** for information and a link to join the group.

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INTRODUCTION

GET READY FOR ACTION!

The *Action! System* is a set of rules for role-playing adventure games. It is designed to be easy to both learn and play, while offering flexibility for all types of players and genres. The *Action! System* is written to emulate the same kinds of stories you might read in books or comics, or watch on television and movies. Using the *Action! System* you can create characters and stories as fun and exciting as any you have seen, heard, or read. We think the most fun of Action! is to create wholly new stories, but no one kind of interactive storytelling is favored over another.

With the *Action! System* rules you can create characters and play games in nearly any setting, creating exciting adventures and interactive stories. You can play an honorable samurai, brave Musketeer, superhero, Wild West gunslinger, or just about anything else you can imagine. If you can imagine it, *Action! System* gives you the tools to tell your story interactively.

WHAT'S A ROLE-PLAYING GAME?

Many people think they don't know what a role-playing game is. We have all taken part in interactive storytelling in one way or another. As children we role-played "Cops and Robbers" and "Cowboys and Indians" along with other make-believe games. Sometimes a dispute would arise as to who could do what. As children, many of these issues worked themselves out. Adults are often exposed to role-playing in improvisational theater, corporate and technical training classes, counseling sessions and so on. In fact, most law enforcement academies use role-playing to evaluate the performance of recruits as part of their "final exams," before they are allowed to graduate.

Simply put, a role-playing game (RPG) is a form of interactive storytelling with rules. The rules guide play, gauge the performance of our fictional characters, and provide a sense of "fairness."

During a game session, all of the players act, or "play," the roles of characters in the story. These roles are called Player Characters (or PCs for short). One player acts as a moderator or "referee" and is called the Game Master (or GM for short). The GM generally prepares the basic elements of the story ahead of time, describes the scenes and events of the story as they unfold, and tells the other players the results of their characters' actions.

In *Action! System*, dice are used to generate random numbers to resolve certain events, such as whether a character can successfully navigate a car through an obstacle course or jump over a rolling barrel without falling.

The following section gives an overview of the rules. If you're new to role-playing, you should read through this section first.

WHAT DO I NEED TO PLAY?

The only things you need to play *Action! System* are this book and three regular (square), six-sided dice. Although dice don't come with this game, you probably have some in another game box or lying around the house.

This Book

The rules of the game are found throughout this book. They describe everything from creating your character through how to resolve combat to the effects of falling. All of the essential tools you need to play a role-playing game are here. You should read through the rules to become familiar with them and knowledgeable about how to play, especially if you are going to be the GM.

You can always refer to the book during the game if you have a question.

Dice

You'll need at least three regular six-sided dice to play the game. It's best if all of the players have their own set of three dice. Only one person will need to roll dice at a time, however, so if you don't have enough for everyone you can just use one set and share them.

HOW DOES ACTION! SYSTEM WORK?

In this section we present a quick overview of the most basic rules of the game.

Dice

Action! System rules use three six-sided dice. It's traditional to abbreviate "three six-sided dice" by writing "3d6." In this custom, the first number is the number of dice being used (in this case 3) and the second number represents the type of dice being used (specifically, number of sides they possess), so "d6" means "six-sided dice."

Six-sided dice are the common, square-shaped dice that can be found in many board games, such as *Yahtzee*® and *Monopoly*®. They can also be purchased in many general department stores, such as *Wal-Mart*® and *Target*®, but chances are you have at least three of these dice somewhere in your house, in other games.

There are options to use other numbers and kinds of dice, which are discussed later and in other optional rules called *Extensions* and *Variants*. But for now all you need to play *Action! System* using the basic, "core" rules are 3d6—three six-sided dice.

The GM

One member of the group assumes the role of moderator and controls the Non-Player Characters, or NPCs for short. This player is known as the Game Master, or GM.

In situations when the rules are unclear or need to be applied in a new or unique way, the GM uses his or her best judgment. The GM also constructs the basics of the game. Basics include the setting, theme, NPCs and some goals for the players' group, normally called a Party, but also referred to as a Team, Troupe, Group, or Cabal. We'll talk more about what makes a good Game Master later in this book.

Players and Characters

Each player has a fictional character, called a Player Character (or "PC"), a made-up person that the player will use during the game. The player chooses what his character does and says during the game.

Players are in no way assumed to actually *be* their characters. Players are real people. Characters are pretend. Think of the player as an actor, and the PC as a role that the actor is playing in a movie or play, and you'll begin to get the idea.

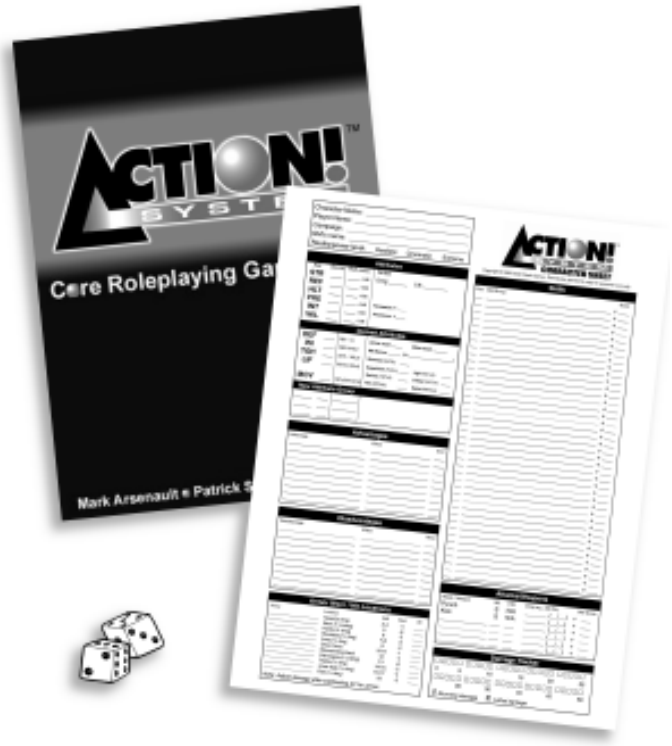
Attributes & Skills

Each character has attributes and skills that represent the character's personal ability or aptitude in various areas or for performing certain tasks.

Each attribute and skill has a numerical score. This score tells you how strong or proficient the character is in that area. Most characters will have scores from 1 to 10, which represents the normal human range of ability.

Attributes

There are six attributes, which are arranged in two groups: Body and Mind.



Each group contains a Power Attribute, an Aptitude Attribute and a Resistance Attribute.

New attribute groups can be added, providing more variety and additional attributes for characters, but the basic *Action! System* rules use only these two.

Skills

Each character also has skills, which represent the character's general ability or aptitude in various tasks. There are skills for arts and crafts, using weapons, and even diplomacy. Skills reflect how good your character is at what he knows.

Skills are also arranged in groups. Each group contains from 5 to 8 related skills.

Each skill is associated with a specific Attribute Group. Persuasion, for example, is associated with the Mind Group, whereas the Swords skill is associated with the Body Group.

When a character attempts a simple task, such as walking or opening an unlocked door, the player doesn't need to roll dice. But when a character attempts an action that has a chance of failure (such as attacking an opponent or maneuvering a car through an obstacle course), the player must make a skill roll.

Skill Rolls

Skill rolls are used to determine if a character is successful at some attempted action or task.

Players decide if they want their character to perform an action. An action can be as simple as walking through a door, which would not require a skill roll. Sometimes there is a level of skill involved in performing the action, however, so the player may need to make a skill roll for his character. The GM decides whether or not an action requires a skill roll.

Attribute + Skill

If the GM determines that a player's chosen action requires a skill roll, the GM determines which Skill and which Attribute (from the Attribute Group associated with the skill) apply to the task.

If a character attempts to shoot an opponent with a revolver, the player must make a Pistols skill roll. Because the Pistols skill is associated with the Body Group, the GM must choose either Strength, Reflexes, or Health as the attribute that the player uses with the Pistols skill. The logical choice is Reflexes, the Aptitude Attribute for the Body Group.

Difficulty Levels and Target Numbers

The GM then determines the Difficulty Level (or "DL") of the action being attempted. Each Difficulty Level has an associated Target Number (abbreviated as "TN;" see the *Difficulty and Target Number Chart* on page 33). The more difficult the action being attempted is, the greater the Difficulty Level and the higher the Target Number.

The Target Number is the number that the player must meet or beat when making a dice roll in order for the task to be successful. A Target Number of 18 would be shown as "(TN 18)."

Making the Roll

To make a skill roll, a player rolls 3d6 and adds his character's attribute and skill scores to the number rolled on the dice. If this new total is equal to or more than the Target Number, the attempted action is successful. If the total is lower than the Target Number, the attempt fails.

Attribute Rolls

Attribute rolls are made much the same as skill rolls, with the GM determining a Difficulty Level and assigning a Target Number. The difference is that instead of adding an attribute score to a skill score, the player simply doubles the character's attribute score and then adds that number to the dice roll.

John's character has a Reflexes score of 4. The GM tells John to make an Difficult attribute roll (TN 21) using his character's Reflexes. John doubles his character's Reflexes score (4) for a total of 8. He then rolls 3d6, and gets 13. Because 13 plus 8 equals 21, John's character's attribute roll is successful.

Damage

If a character suffers injury, such as from being hit by a weapon or falling into a pit, the injury is represented by *damage points*. Damage points are subtracted from the character's Life Points. When a character's Life Points are reduced to 0, the character is dying.

Campaign Level

Action! System is versatile enough to handle games simulating adventures of average, everyday heroes, cinematic action heroes from fiction (novels, television and movies), high-powered, epic or supernatural heroes, and even giant monsters! To reflect the type of heroes being portrayed in the game, *Action! System* uses Campaign Levels.

The three Campaign Levels in *Action! System* are Realistic, Cinematic, and Extreme.

Realistic Action!

Realistic Action! games are those in which the player characters are life-like, everyday heroes. The characters may be street cops (such as the characters portrayed in *Hill Street Blues*, *NYPD Blue* or *Third Watch*), investigators of the occult or Lovecraftian horrors (such as the characters portrayed in *The Dunwich Horror*), or soldiers in World War II (such as the characters portrayed in *Saving Private Ryan*).

Realistic Action! games typically involve real-world situations (and their aftereffects) faced by everyday heroes. Because characters are not as capable of physically handling devastating encounters and traumatic events as cinematic or heroic characters, *Realistic Action!* games tend to involve more roleplaying than combat and action, though this needn't be the case for all games. If elements of the fantastic are present in the game setting, they are usually obscure and mysterious and beyond the grasp of the PCs. For example, while many people may believe that magic and miracles are real, there is generally no way to scientifically prove so.

Cinematic Action!

Cinematic Action! games are those in which the player characters are larger-than-life action heroes such as those found in fantasy, science fiction and action stories. The characters may be maverick cops (such as the characters portrayed in the *Lethal Weapon* series, *Bad Boys* or the *Die Hard* films), unlikely but capable heroes (such as the characters portrayed in the *Indiana Jones* movies, *The Sixth Day*, *Patriot Games* and *Mulan*), avenging do-gooders and battlers of evil (such as the characters in *Zorro, The Scarlet Pimpernel* or *The Three Musketeers*), Japanese

chanbara heroes (such as the characters in the *Lone Wolf and Cub* and *Zatoichi* movies), or heroes in a science fiction setting (such as the characters in *Aliens*, *Judge Dredd*, the *Star Wars* movies, and *Cowboy Bebop*) or fantasy setting (such as the characters in *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Record of Lodoss War*, and *The Lord of the Rings*).

Cinematic Action! games typically involve lots of high-action and plausible, albeit unlikely, situations. The heroes tend to be highly capable, as do the major antagonists. Minor enemies (henchmen, flunkies, goons, mooks, etc.) are dangerous and numerous, but not as skilled as the heroes. *Cinematic Action!* games tend to involve as much roleplaying as they do combat and action. If elements of the fantastic are present in the game setting, they are usually accessible to the characters if not altogether common. For example, magic spells or advanced technology, such as blasters and starships, may be available in the setting.

Extreme Action!

Extreme Action! games are those in which the player characters are heroes of epic or supernatural power or abilities (or both), such as those found in superhero comic books, many *animé* films and cartoons, and even some video games. The characters may be superheroes (such as *Justice League*, *Spider-Man*, the *X-Men*, and the *Powerpuff Girls*), seemingly normal but powerful heroes (such as the characters portrayed in *Project A-Ko*, *Akira,* and *Ninja Scroll*), heroes with access to incredibly powerful abilities, devices, or supernatural creatures (such as the characters in *Pokémon, Card Captors*, *Everquest*, or *Gundam*) or themselves beings of incredible power or ability (such as the characters in *Dragonball Z*), Japanese *sentai* fighters (such as the characters in *Power Rangers*, *Ultraman*, and *Ronin Warrors*) or even giant monsters (such as those in the Japanese *kaiju* genre films, including the king himself—*Godzilla*)!

Extreme Action! games typically involve lots of high-action and implausible, if not impossible (in the real world), situations. Entire city blocks (and sometimes entire worlds!) may be destroyed in the wake of powerful battles between entities. The heroes are often among an elite group of super-powered beings, often called upon to save their locale from one threat or another. Minor enemies are an annoyance, though typically many in number and not nearly as skilled as the heroes. *Extreme Action!* games tend to involve more combat and action than roleplaying. Elements of the fantastic are a staple of this level of game play, though they are usually accessible only to a limited group of people. For example, super-powers may be present but the vast majority of people are "normals" rather than "supers."

OTHER *ACTION! SYSTEM* PRODUCTS

You will find a growing number of other *Action! System* products both from Gold Rush Games and licensed third-party developers and publishers, both amateur and professional. Just look for the *Ready for Action!* or *Action Packed!* trademark. Products bearing one of these marks either use or are compatible with the *Action! System* rules.

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There are two types of licensed *Action! System* products: *Action! Ready* and *Action Packed!*

Action Ready!

Products designated as *Action! Ready* are those that include *Action! System* stats (such as for characters, creatures or gadgets), *Extensions* or *Variants* (optional rules), or some combination but do not include the rules for play. Examples include genre and equipment source books, bestiaries, adventures, magazine articles, and the like.

Action Packed!

Products designated as *Action Packed!* are those that include the rules for playing the game. *Action Packed!* products must also contain either character creation rules or pre-generated characters for use with the game.

ACTION! SYSTEM LICENSE

The *Action! System License* allows companies or individuals to develop, publish and distribute products using the *Action! System* rules, including products designated as *Action! Ready* or *Action Packed!*

The *Action! System Open License*, as well as the complete text of the *Action! System Core Rules*, can be obtained at the *Action! System* web site, at www.action-system.com.

ATTRIBUTES

Attributes are scores that reflect the character's basic physical and mental abilities. In short, the core attributes define the character's "body and mind."

BODY GROUP

The three attributes that define a character's "body" or physical being are Health, Strength, and Reflexes.

Strength (STR)

Strength (abbreviated STR) is the "Power" attribute for the Body Group. STR represents raw physical prowess, including the ability to lift, push and otherwise exert force.

The total weight that a character can lift to waist level without moving (i.e., dead lift) is shown on the *Basic STR Table*. A character is able to carry (lift and move) weight equal to half his lift capacity. A character can drag or pull twice his lift capacity.

Canon the Barbarious has a STR of 7. He can dead lift 250 kilograms (about 550 pounds), he can carry 125 kilograms (275 pounds), and he can drag or pull up to 500 kilograms (1,100 pounds)!

Basic STR Table

Score	Drag	Dead Lift	Carry	Damage	Example of Dead Lift Weight
0	0	0	0	0	0
1	10 kg	5 kg	2.5 kg	1d3	Infant's weight, M1 Garand, shot-put
2	50 kg	25 kg	12.5 kg	1d6	Child's weight, full suitcase, 27" TV set
3	100 kg	50 kg	25 kg	1d6+2	Adolescent's weight
4	200 kg	100 kg	50 kg	2d6	Average man's weight
5	300 kg	150 kg	75 kg	2d6+2	Football lineman's weight, small black bear
6	400 kg	200 kg	100 kg	3d6	Sumo wrestler 's weight, small piano, GBU-12 (500-lb bomb)
7	500 kg	250 kg	125 kg	3d6+2	large black bear, seal, large stag, small boulder
8	600 kg	300 kg	150 kg	4d6	Grand piano, nuclear warhead
9	700 kg	350 kg	175 kg	4d6+2	120mm mortar, large wooden canoe
10	800 kg	400 kg	200 kg	5d6	Motorcycle, sailboat, male polar bear

For an *Extended STR Table*, see page 92.

Reflexes (REF)

Reflexes (abbreviated REF) is the "Aptitude" attribute for the Body Group. REF covers the character's agility, coordination, reaction, and overall speed. The higher a character's REF, the more dexterous and agile he is, and the better his sense of balance is. A REF of 0 represents total lack of control over one's muscles and movement (e.g., severe palsy or total paralysis).

Health (HLT)

Health (abbreviated HLT) is the "Resistance" attribute for the Body Group. HLT reflects the character's overall constitution, general health, resistance to disease, and overall fitness. The higher a character's health, the more resistant he is to illness and physiological degradation and injury. A HLT of 0 represents an absence of life (i.e., death).

MIND GROUP

The three attributes that define the character's "mind" or mental and emotional being are Presence, Intellect, and Will.

Presence (PRE)

Presence (abbreviated PRE) is the "Power" attribute for the Mind Group. PRE represents the character's general personality, charm, charisma, and innate persuasiveness. The higher a character's PRE, the more influential he can be. A PRE of 0 represents a total lack of personality, charisma, and emotion (e.g., a brick or a wall).

Intellect (INT)

Intellect (abbreviated INT) is the "Aptitude" attribute for the Mind Group. INT represents the sharpness of the character's mind, clarity of thought and overall alertness. The higher a character's INT, the brighter and more perceptive he is. An INT of 0 represents a complete lack of intelligence and thought (e.g., brain death or an inanimate object).

Will (WIL)

Will (abbreviated WIL) is the "Resistance" attribute for the Mind Group. WIL reflects the character's mental strength, ego, and force of conviction. The higher a character's Will, the greater his resolve, focus, and level of concentration. A WIL of 0 represents no resistance to emotional influence and/or a complete lack of self-awareness (e.g., an automaton, robot or zombie).

ATTRIBUTE SCORES

All attributes are based on a scale of one to ten (1-10), denoting the normal human levels of possibility. Characters in certain types of *Action! System* games may have attributes with scores higher or lower than humanly possible.

The higher an attribute score the better the character is in that area. For example, a character with a Strength of 3 is average, whereas a character with a Strength of 1 is roughly equivalent to an infant or small animal.

A score of 9 or 10 represents the pinnacle of human achievement. It should be rare to encounter someone with an attribute or skill at this level (at least among NPCs), and such a person may be well-known for his ability.

For example, a strength score of 9 could represent the strength of an Olympic weight-lifter and an Intellect of 10 could represent Hawking-like genius.

Scores higher than 10 are superhuman and are only possible through some unusual or supernatural means, such as drugs, magic, or paranormal power. Creatures, legendary beings, superheroes,

and otherwise extraordinary beings are not subject to the maximum score of 10 rule.

A score of 0 means the character has absolutely no capability in that area. Generally, if a character's attribute drops to 0 for any reason, the character is completely impotent in that area.

BUYING ATTRIBUTES

Characters in the *Action! System* have numerical scores that define their basic capabilities, called Attributes. Each character can also have traits, benefits, and skills. These are described in detail later in their own sections.

Attributes cost 1 Attribute Point for each level in an attribute. Buying a STR of 5 for a starting character, for instance, has a cost of 5 Attribute Points.

Each player gets a number of points to divide among the character's attributes. This number is usually equal to the average attribute score used by characters in the game multiplied by the number of attributes used, rounded to the nearest 5. (See the table below.)

Campaign Level	Avg Score	x	Attributes (Core Rules)	=	Starting Attr. Pts
Realistic	4		6		25
Cinematic	6		6		35
Extreme	8		6		50

Attributes can be improved after character creation by spending Experience Points (see *Experience*, page 86). To increase an attribute by one level costs 5 times the new level in experience points.

Tom wants to increase his character's current STR from 3 to 4. It will cost 4 x 5 = 20 experience points to increase Tom's character's STR to 4.

Maximum Attribute Scores

The recommended maximum score for any attribute depends on the campaign level of the game (See the *Maximum Attribute Score Table*). Players may purchase up to the maximum score for any primary attribute. This limit does not include any bonuses for applicable Advantages (see the chapter on *Traits*).

Jim is creating a character for a Realistic Action! game, with a maximum characteristic score of 6. Jim buys a REF score of 5 for his character and also buys the Physical Advantage trait and defines it as providing a +2 REF bonus to his character. This makes the character's effective REF score a 7, which is higher than the suggested maximum attribute score for the campaign, but is allowable.

The GM is free to ignore this rule for his or her game.

Campaign Level	Sugg. Attribute Maximum Score
Realistic	5
Cinematic	8
Extreme	None

Unspent Attribute Points

Any unspent Attribute Points may be converted to Character Points at a rate of 10:1. Character Points are used to buy advantages, benefits, or skills. This means that for every 1 Attribute Point that a player wishes to spend on something besides his character's attributes, the player can "exchange" the Attribute Point for 10 Character Points. Character Points can't be used to increase a character's attributes, however.

Attribute Values

Score	Description	PRE	INT	WIL	STR	REF	HLT
0	Null	Autistic	Brain dead	Automaton	Paralyzed	Severe palsy	Dead
1	Invalid	Dull	Handicapped	Indecisive	Infant	Trembling	Infirm
2	Weak	Impressionable	Slow	Gullible	Adolescent	Clumsy	Sensitive
3	Average	Average	Average	Normal	Adult	Average	Average
4	Good		Bright	Self-assured	Amateur athlete		Fit
5	Very Good	Personable	Cunning	Confident	Boxer	Nimble	Healthy
6	Impressive	Charismatic	Gifted	Motivated	Football lineman		
7	Great	Charming		Driven			
8	Outstanding	Enticing			Power-lifter	Olymp. gymnast	
9	Amazing	Enthralling	Brilliant			Martial arts star	
10	Legendary	Beyond words	Genius				Peak of health
11+	Supernatural	Supernatural	Supernatural	Supernatural	Supernatural	Supernatural	Supernatural

Creating New Groups

The *Action! Core* rules use only two attribute groups: Body and Mind. Some GMs will want to add their own attributes to characters for their games. Adding attributes and keeping them compatible with the *Action! System* is easy.

If your game uses additional Attribute Groups, make sure to increase the number of Attribute Points given to players when creating characters (see *Buying Attributes*, page 8).

What To Call It

First you need to decide what the "realm" or "effect" of the group is. Is it for psionic abilities? Maybe you could call it the Psi Group. Does it deal with faith, religious conviction, or karma? Maybe you could call it the Spiritual Group. Do you want to expand on social traits and skills? Create a Social Group.

Next, you need to create three attributes for your new group. In *Action! System*, each group has an attribute for "power," one for "aptitude," and one for "resistance."

For example, let's say you're adding a Psi Group. You could create the new attributes Prowess (PRW), Control (CON) and Mental Defense (MEN).

Do I Need Three Attributes?

If you don't want to create three new attributes, you could use one attribute for all three aspects of that group, but we recommend that you use three attributes. The *Action! System* was designed with three attributes in each group.

More Examples

You will no doubt see new Attribute Groups in various *Action! System* products, including those published by Gold Rush Games. These are optional. They add "flavor" and atmosphere to these games, but you are free to ignore than and use only the Body and Mind Groups in the *Action! Core* rules, if you like. We recommend giving these new Groups a try. New Groups can be both fun and add a lot to a game, especially if the game uses an exotic setting or unusual genre.

Using a Single Point Pool

Developers or GMs who wish to use a single pool of points for character creation may do so. Simply multiply the number of Attribute Points allotted times 10 and then add those points to the Character Points to form one pool of points used for character creation. The cost of attributes is also multiplied by 10. Thus, when creating a new character, it costs 10 Character Points to buy 1 level in any primary attribute. The cost of increasing Derived Attributes remains the same.

Example: Tom is running a Cinematic-level American Revolution game, set in the American colonies in 1776. Tom decides to use a single pool of points for character creation, so instead of giving each player 25 Attribute Points and 50 Character Points, he converts the Attribute Points to Character Points (25 x 10 = 250). He tells the players that they each have 300 Character Points with which to create their characters.

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES

There are a few special attributes in the *Action! System*. They are not assigned points during character creation like the core attributes. Instead, the following attributes are derived from attributes in the Body or Mind Group.

Derived attributes in the *Action! Core* rules are Defensive Target Number, Initiative, Toughness, Life, and Move. You can create new derived attributes in addition to these.

Some special attributes can have scores higher than 10; derived attributes are not necessarily scaled the same as a character's attributes, such as STR, INT or REF.

Derived attributes can be increased using Character Points (but not Attribute Points). The cost for increasing each Derived Attribute above its base score is given in the description.

Defensive Target Number (DEF)

A character's Defensive Target Number (abbreviated DEF) represents how difficult it is to successfully hit the character in combat. DEF becomes the base Target Number (TN) needed for any skill rolls made to hit the character in combat, for hand-to-hand, melee and ranged attacks. A character's DEF score may be modified up or down for variables such as distance, armor (heavy armor lowers a character's effective REF) and so on.

A character's DEF equals his **REF + 10**.

Mike's character, Barney Google, has a REF of 7. His REF+10 gives him a DEF of 17, so any characters who attempt to attack Barney must roll against a Target Number of 17.

The Defensive Target Number may be increased at a cost of 5 Character Points for each additional point of DEF. A character's DEF score may not exceed 20 in Realistic-level *Action! System* games, though it may be higher than 20 in Cinematic and Extreme level games.

Initiative (INI)

Initiative (abbreviated INI) represents how quickly a character can act in a turn.

A character's Initiative equals his **(REF + INT)/2**, rounding up. At the beginning of each turn of combat (or any other time the GM calls for the players to determine initiative), each player rolls 1d6 and adds the number rolled to his character's INI score.

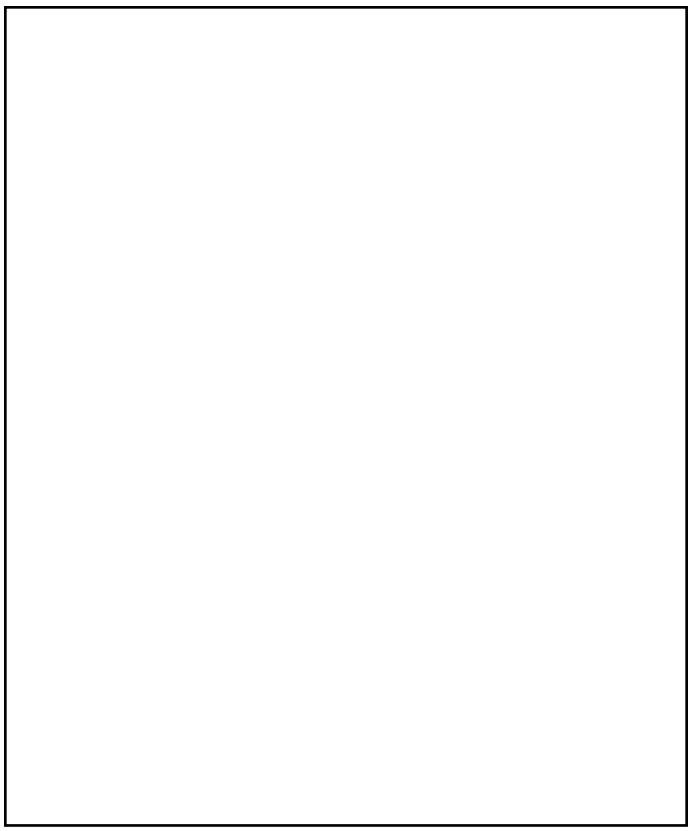
The character with the highest INI total acts first in a turn. In cases of a tie, the character with the higher REF goes first. If both characters have the same REF, then the characters act simultaneously.

For more information about how Initiative works, see *Combat*, on page 67.

Initiative may be increased at a cost of 3 Character Points for each additional point of Initiative. A character's Initiative score may not exceed 10 in Realistic-level *Action! System* games, though it may be higher in Cinematic and Extreme level games.

Toughness (TGH)

Toughness (abbreviated as TGH) represents a character's resistance to blunt force damage, such as from a punch, a baseball bat, or auto collision.



A character's starting TGH equals **(STR + WIL)/2**, rounding up.

When a character suffers damage from a pummeling, bashing, or blunt attack, subtract the character's TGH score from the damage, then subtract the remaining damage (if any) from the character's Life points (see *Life*, below). If a character suffers an amount of damage that does not exceed his TGH score, he suffers no loss of Life; he has completely shrugged off the attack.

For example, Swingin' Sam has a Health of 4 and a Toughness of 8. In a fist fight with a bad guy, Swingin' Sam is hit by his opponent, and the GM rolls 19 points of damage. Albert subtracts Swingin' Sam's Toughness of 8 from the damage, leaving 11 points of damage.

Toughness may also be used to decrease the damage suffered from some forms of *Special Damage* at the GM's discretion (see *Damage*, page 70).

Toughness may be increased at a cost of 5 *Character Points* for each additional point of Toughness. A character's Toughness score may not exceed 10 in Realistic level *Action! System* games, though it may be higher in Cinematic and Extreme level games.

Life (LIF)

Life (abbreviated as LIF) points are used to keep track of damage a character suffers during an adventure. Any time a character suffers damage, he temporarily loses a number of Life points equal to the points of damage inflicted.

A character's LIF points equal **(HLT x 3) + (WIL x 2)**.

Continuing from the example above, Swingin' Sam has a Health of 3 and a Willpower of 5, so he has 9 + 10 = 19 Life points. Albert subtracts the 11 points of damage from his character's Life points. After getting punched, Swingin' Sam has 8 Life points left.

Stunning and deadly damage are both subtracted from a character's LIF, but are kept track of separately (see *Damage*, page 70). If a character has suffered a combined total of stunning and deadly damage that exceeds the character's LIF, the character is unconscious but not dying.

Swingin' Sam has 19 LIF points. He has suffered 11 points of stunning damage from a punch and then a short time later he is shot (Sam's had a hard day) and suffers 8 points of deadly damage. Sam has suffered 11 points of stunning damage and 8 points of deadly damage, for a total of 19 points of damage, bringing his current LIF points to 0. Sam is unconscious. Until he regains some of his LIF points back (either from healing, medical aid or other means) he will remain unconscious.

A character may also be stunned or knocked unconscious by one mighty blow. Any time characters suffer an amount of damage from a single event or attack that exceeds half their LIF score (round up), after subtracting TGH (if applicable), they are stunned. A stunned character's STR, REF, PRE, and INT all drop to 0 for as long as the character is stunned. In addition, stunned characters lose their next action, which is spent "recovering from being stunned." On the subsequent turn, the character has recovered and may act normally.

If a character has not yet acted in the turn in which he is stunned, he loses his action for that turn but may act normally on the next (second) turn. If a character has acted in the turn in which he is stunned, he loses his action for the next (second) turn and may act normally on the following (third) turn.

Kyle's character has 20 LIF points and a TGH of 5. He is hit by a punch for 17 points of blunt damage. Kyle subtracts his character's TGH from the damage, leaving 12 points of damage. Because 12 is more than half his character's LIF, Kyle's character is stunned for one turn.

At the GM's discretion, a stunned character may go completely limp, fall down, or otherwise lose the ability to maintain his current action (for example, hold a rope, stay in the saddle, etc). A stunned character has a base DEF of 10, with no bonus for REF.

Life may be increased at a cost of 2 *Character Points* for each additional point of Life. A character's Life score may not exceed 50 in Realistic-level *Action! System* games, though it may be higher in Cinematic and Extreme level games.

Move (MOV)

Move (abbreviated as MOV) represents the distance a character can move in a single action. A character may move up to his MOV in meters each turn, as a normal Move action or, if running, up to 2x his MOV in meters per turn. A character may also sprint, moving up to 3x his MOV in meters per turn, but a character can only sprint for a maximum number of turns equal to his HLT, after which time he must rest for one minute for each turn spent sprinting (see *Taking Actions*, page 63).

A character's MOV is **REF + (STR+HLT)/2**, rounding up.

Albert is playing in a pulp adventure game. His character, Swingin' Sam, a brawler, has a REF of 6, a HLT of 5 and a STR of 4. Albert averages his character's STR + HLT and gets 5. Then he adds his REF of 6, for a total MOV of 11. Swingin' Sam can move up to 11 meters each turn normally (the equivalent of 13.2 kph or 7.8 mph) or 22 meters per turn when running (26.4 kph or 15.5 mph), and he can sprint for up to 6 turns at a speed of 33 meters per turn (about 40 kph or 23 mph)!

Move may be increased at a cost of 5 Character Points for each additional point of MOV. A character's MOV score may not exceed 10 in Realistic-level *Action! System* games, though it may be higher in Cinematic and Extreme level games.

Basic MOV Table

Speed (m/turn)	Kph	Mph	Example
1	1.2	0.7	
2	2.4	1.4	Leisurely walk
3	3.6	2.1	
4	4.8	2.8	Average walking speed
5	6.0	3.5	M113 APC (water speed)
6	7.2	4.2	Brisk walk
7	8.4	4.9	Power-walk
8	9.6	5.6	Jog
9	10.8	6.4	Running a 9-minute mile
10	12.0	7.1	
11	13.2	7.8	
12	14.4	8.5	
13	15.6	9.2	
14	16.8	9.9	Running a 6-minute mile
15	18.0	10.6	
16	19.2	11.3	
17	20.4	12.0	Running a 5-minute mile
18	21.6	12.7	
19	22.8	13.4	
20	24.0	14.1	
21	25.2	14.8	
22	26.4	15.5	Running a 4-minute mile
23	27.6	16.2	
24	28.8	16.9	
25	30.0	17.6	
26	31.2	18.4	
27	32.4	19.1	
28	33.6	19.8	
29	34.8	20.5	
30	36.0	21.2	
32	38.4	22.6	
34	40.8	24.0	Attack submarine
36	43.2	25.4	

For the *Extended MOV Table*, see page 96.

Creating New Derived Attributes

Other derived attributes can be added to an *Action! System* game, much like new Attribute Groups can be added (see *Creating New Groups*).

What to Call It

Adding new derived attributes and keeping them compatible with the *Action! System* is easy. First you need to decide what the effect of the derived attribute is. Is this new derived attribute designed to reflect magical "mana" for casting spells? Maybe you could call it Mana (abbreviated MAN). Does it deal with physical endurance and fatigue? Maybe you could call it Fatigue (FAT).

Next, you need to determine what formula will determine the base or starting value for this new derived attribute. As a rule, the base score for a derived attribute is some multiple of a primary attribute or an average of two or more primary attributes.

What Multiple to Use?

If the derived attribute is to be used as a variant of a primary attribute or used in dice rolls, then the derived attribute should be on the same 1 to 10 scale as other primary attributes.

If the derived attribute is to be used as a variant of TGH, such as a derived attribute to resist the effects of mental powers, then the multiple should be no more than 2 times the primary attributes.

If the derived attribute is to be used as a variant of DEF, such as a derived attribute to represent the value required to "overcome" the character, then the multiple should be no more than 3 times the primary attribute.

If the derived attribute is to be used as a variant of LIF, such as a derived attribute to represent the value required to "incapacitate" or "damage" some aspect the character, then the multiple should be 5 times the primary attributes.

What Improvement Cost to Set?

To determine the base cost for improving a derived attribute, first determine the multiple used and divide 10 by this number. If the derived attribute is roughly equal to five times a primary attribute score (e.g., 5 x STR), the base cost for a one point increase in the derived attribute should be 2.

If the primary attribute used is an Aptitude attribute (i.e., REF in the Body Group or INT in the MIND group), we recommend increasing the cost by one point, as Aptitude attributes are more valuable and likely to be bought to higher levels than ther attributes.

Lastly, consider how often the derived attribute comes into play. If it is useful in combat situations or used extensively in the game, leave the cost as-is. If not, consider reducing the base cost by one point or even reducing it by as much as one half of the base cost.

More Examples

You will find examples of new derived attributes in various *Action! System* products, including those published by Gold Rush Games. These are optional. They add flavor and atmosphere to these games, but you are free to ignore than and use only the Derived Attributes in the *Action! System Core Rules*, if you wish. We recommend giving these new Derived Attributes a try. They can be both fun and add a lot to a game, especially if the game uses an exotic setting or unusual genre.

If your game uses additional derived attributes you needn't increase the number of Attribute Points given to players when creating characters (see *Buying Attributes*, earlier in this chapter), because all derived attributes are based on the primary attribute scores and not purchased separately.

TRAITS

Traits are aspects of a character that differentiate him or her from the norm. Traits can be either advantages or disadvantages.

If you wish to select one or more traits for the character, simply note each trait on the character sheet along with its point cost (if an Advantage) or "refund" value (if a Disadvantage).

ABOUT TRAITS

Any time a situation occurs in a game that is covered by a character's trait, it automatically comes into play and will affect the character, influencing his behavior or actions, or otherwise limiting or expanding that character's choice of actions.

It is important to note that not all Traits may be appropriate for all game settings. The GM should decide which Traits will be allowed in his or her game before the players create their characters.

There are two basic types of traits: *Advantages* and *Disadvantages*.

Advantages

Advantages provide some benefit to the character in the game and thus cost points to "purchase" when the character is created.

Most Advantages have a related and opposite Disadvantage. A player may not buy an Advantage that is the opposite of a Disadvantage that his character already possesses without special permission from the GM.

Many Advantages have a mixture of positive and negative effects on the character, and this should be reflected in game play. For example, a character who is wealthy and well-connected can enjoy those benefits easily enough, but he is likely to attract bandits and thieves, who might want some (or all) of that money for their own. It is up to the GM to weigh the pros and cons of each benefit and, in the appropriate game circumstances, introduce them to the game.

Advantages cost 2, 5, or 10 points. These are bought during character creation when an Advantage is selected, using Character Points. The point cost of an Advantage is determined by its usefulness or level of benefit to the character in the game. A convenience, impacting or benefiting the character slightly or providing a bonus of +3 to one or more skill rolls (see *Using Skills*, page 33), costs 2 points. An edge, having a moderate to strong impact on a character or providing a bonus of +6 to one or more skill rolls, costs 5 points. A gift, which has a significant positive impact on the character or provides a bonus of +9 to one or more skill rolls, costs 10 points.

Description	Cost	Effect
Convenience	2 points	Slight; +3 on one or more skill rolls
Edge	5 points	Moderate-strong; +6 on one or more skill rolls
Gift	10 points	Significant; +9 to one or more skill rolls

Disadvantages

Disadvantages are situations or conditions—psychological, physical, social or spiritual—that present obstacles or hindrances to the character. Most Disadvantages have a related and opposite Advantage. A player may not take a Disadvantage that is the opposite of an Advantage that his character already possesses without special permission from the GM.

Like Advantages, many Disadvantages have a mixture of positive and negative effects on the character, and this should be reflected in game play. It is up to the GM to weigh the pros and cons of each Disadvantage and, under the appropriate game circumstances, introduce them to the game.

Because Disadvantages provide obstacles or hindrances to the character during play, they provide points rather than costing points. Disadvantages are worth 2, 5 or 10 points to the character. These are gained during character creation when a challenging trait is selected. These extra points may be spent just like regular character points—to buy or increase skills, buy Advantages or to increase an attribute (as long as the rules for maximum starting levels are adhered to).

Severity or impact on the character in the game determines the number of points gained for a challenging trait. An inconvenience, impacting or hindering the character slightly or incurring a penalty of -3 to one or more skill rolls (see *Using Skills*, page 33), is worth 2 points. A hardship, having a moderate to strong impact on a character or incurring a penalty of -6 to one or more skill rolls, is worth 5 points. A peril, which has a significant or severe impact on the character or incurs a penalty of -9 to one or more skill rolls, is worth 10 points.

Description	Value	Effect
Inconvenience	2 points	Slight; CS 5; -3 to one or more skill rolls
Hardship	5 points	Moderate-strong; CS 10; -6 to one or more skill rolls
Peril	10 points	Significant (e.g., impossible task); CS 15; -9 to one or more skill rolls

Control Rolls

Some Disadvantages (such as mental and some social traits) have a score associated with them. This is the Control Score (or CS) for the trait. This is the target number that the player must match for the character to overcome the trait if/when it comes up during play. If a player wants his character to do something that contradicts the limits described for the trait, the player must make a control roll for the trait. The higher the control number, the more difficult it is for the character to control or overcome the trait.

To make a control roll, the player rolls 3d6. The roll must be equal to or greater than the control score for the trait.

The control score for inconveniences is 5. The control score for hardships is 10. The control score for perils is 15.

Level of Disadvantage	Control Score
Inconvenience	5
Hardship	10
Peril	15

Buying Traits

Advantages are purchased with the pool of Character Points available for skills (see *Buying Skills*, page 32) or with Experience Points (with GM's permission). The cost (for *Advantages*) or the value (points gained for *Disadvantages*) is listed in the description of each.

Characters can buy innate traits only during character creation, except with the permission of the GM.

Detailed description of each trait are listed below. Guidelines for creating new Traits for your game are outlined at the end of the trait descriptions.

Innate or Developed

Note that a GM can prohibit certain traits from being purchased with Experience Points (rather than Character Points) depending upon genre considerations. For example, it probably does not make sense in most games to be able to buy the Tall trait at any time except during character generation. Players and GMs should discuss these kind of limits before playing to prevent misunderstandings.

The following Extension, or optional rule, may be applied to Traits if the GM wishes. If the GM chooses, it can simply be ignored and players allowed to purchase whichever traits they want for their characters, either before or after character creation.

Traits may be generally classed as either **innate** or **developed**.

Innate traits are those which a character starts with; that is, traits which the characters has either from birth or for which he possesses a latent ability for from birth (even if the trait develops later in life). Innate traits may, as a rule, only be purchased during character creation. Innate traits are indicated at the end of the trait's description.

Innate traits are identified by this icon:

Developed traits are those which, like skills, can be developed by the character later in life. Developed traits may, as a rule, be purchased after character creation; that is, once game play begins. Developed traits are also indicated at the end of a trait's description.

Developed traits are identified by this icon:

ADVANTAGES

Acute Sense

One of the character's senses is sharper than normal and receives a bonus on all Awareness skill rolls, as well as other skill rolls involving that sense (GM's discretion). This Trait may be purchased for each of the following senses—hearing, sight, smell/taste (counts as one sense), and touch.

The opposite of this trait is the Impaired Sense disadvantage.

The character's bonus to skill rolls involving the acute sense is:

Convenience (2): +3
Edge (5): +6
Gift (10): +9

Advanced

The character hails from a technologically advanced society by the standards of the dominant civilizations of the setting. The character will have access to technology superior to most cultures (in some cases vastly superior). The character receives a bonus to appropriate skill rolls when he has access to tools or equipment incorporating advanced technology.

The character's native culture may have a poor attitude and low tolerance for those from less advanced cultures, and/or may be unfamiliar with primitive technology and skills.

Examples of characters with this trait include alien visitors from an advanced civilization, Atlanteans in the Victorian Era, and Starfleet officers who go back in time to visit 20th century Earth.

The opposite of this trait is the Primitive disadvantage.

Compared to the majority of the cultures in the game setting, the character's native culture is:

Convenience (2): slightly advanced; +3 bonus to appropriate skill rolls when using advanced technology.
Edge (5): moderately advanced; +6 bonus to appropriate skill rolls when using advanced technology.
Gift (10): extremely advanced; +9 bonus to appropriate skill rolls when using advanced technology.

Ally

Allies are people or forces that are willing to aid, defend or otherwise assist the character. An ally can be an individual (such as a contact within an organization, confidential informant, and so on), a small group, or even an entire nation. The ally should make sense for the game campaign or story, however. The player should also define the origin or basis for the ally, even if the character himself is unaware of it (roleplaying a "surprise discovery" of one's ally and/or the reasons for them being the character's ally can make for a dramatic moment in a game).

An ally should show up only when requested or when needed (GM's discretion). If the character calls upon the ally in advance, the ally will provide whatever assistance he can. No roll is necessary; if aid is requested and the ally can provide it, he will. This

aid may be in the form of financial assistance, special equipment, or direct assistance from the ally personally.

The opposite of this trait is the Enemy disadvantage.

Overall, your ally is:

Convenience (2): less powerful than you, able to provide minor assistance, or is limited to a relatively small geographic area

Edge (5): as powerful as you, able to provide moderate assistance, or is limited to a county, province, or region

Gift (10): more powerful than you, able to provide major assistance, or has access to powerful weapons, supernatural abilities, or other resources

Ambidextrous

Using your off hand normally incurs a -3 penalty to the character's skill roll (see *Off Handed*, page 36). Ambidextrous characters can use the off hand with a reduced penalty or no penalty at all, depending on the level of the trait.

The opposite of this trait is the Bad Hands disadvantage.

The character is able to use his off hand at:

Convenience (2): only a -1 penalty

Edge (5): no penalty

Athletic

The character is a natural athlete, gaining a bonus to all skill rolls involving sports, athletic pursuits, or personal physical exertion (GM's discretion).

The opposite of this trait is the Out of Shape disadvantage.

The character's bonus to skill rolls involving sports or athletic pursuits is:

Convenience (2): +3 with a specific skill (e.g., Sports: Baseball, Climbing, Leaping)

Edge (5): +6 with all Athletic Group skills

Gift (10): +9 with all Athletic Group skills

Attractive

The character is exceptionally attractive and others take notice, to the character's advantage. An attractive person receives a bonus on all skill rolls involving situations in which his or her feature is important (GM's discretion).

This is a developed trait by default, because people can alter their features through their life (losing weight if obese, undergoing cosmetic surgery, chemically altering their smell, getting rid of a bad skin condition, and the like), either through magic, surgery, hard work or other "mutation." This Trait may also could be ruled an innate trait in some settings or genres, at the GM's discretion. In addition, this trait could impose a *penalty* to skill rolls in certain situations, such as interaction with individuals or races that find the feature unappealing, at the GM's discretion.

The opposite of this trait is the Unattractive disadvantage.

The character's bonus to skill rolls involving situations in which his/her appearance is important is:

Convenience (2): +3

Edge (5): +6

Gift (10): +9

Con Artist

The character is very believable and is an effective confidence man, gaining a bonus to all skill rolls involving persuasion, misleading, bluffing, or convincing others of something (whether true or not). It does not provide a bonus for forgery or other similar acts.

The opposite of this trait is the Honest disadvantage.

The character's skill rolls are at:

Convenience (2): +3

Edge (5): +6

Gift (10): +9

Cool Headed

The character keeps a cool head under moments of stress or intense emotion. Under such circumstances, the character receives a bonus to offset any penalties or increased difficulty for any skill rolls due to stress, distraction, or intense emotions such as anger or fear. The level of the trait dictates the bonus provided the character.

The opposite of this trait is the Bad Tempered disadvantage.

The bonus the character receives is:

Convenience (2): +3

Edge (5): +6

Gift (10): +9

Danger Sense

The character has a preternatural sense of danger to themselves only. This can represent a mystic sense, street smarts, *zanshin*, or whatever the player wants it to represent. Whenever that character is in immediate danger, the GM makes a secret WIL + Intuition roll for that character. The difficulty of the roll depends on the level of the trait. If the roll is successful, the character becomes aware of the danger, though some details may remain a mystery. Once aware of the danger, the character gets one free turn to perform one or more actions and has no penalty for surprise.

If the effect number of the character's WIL+ Intuition roll is 6 or higher, the character knows the precise direction and the general distance of the threat. If the effect number is 12 or more, the character knows the precise distance and nature of the threat.

The opposite of this trait is the Oblivious to Danger disadvantage.

The difficulty and target number needed for the character to sense danger is:

Convenience (2): Challenging (TN 18)

Edge (5): Tricky (TN 15)

Gift (10): Average (TN 12)

Eidetic Memory

The character has a near-"photographic memory" and retains much more information than the average person. The character rarely forgets anything he sees, hears, or reads. In addition, the character receives a bonus on any skill rolls involving memory (at GM's discretion).

The opposite of this trait is the Forgetful disadvantage.

The character can recall:

Convenience (2): important details; +3 bonus to appropriate skill rolls

Edge (5): minor details; +6 bonus to appropriate skill rolls

Gift (10): trivial details; +9 bonus to appropriate skill rolls

Famous

The character has gained fame for some notable deed or deeds. People tend to recognize any famous person when they see him or when they hear the name. Most people go out of their way to curry favor with the famous or to avoid getting on their bad side.

A character may be famous for something he did or *did not* do. A reputation, once earned, can be difficult to shed, regardless of its accuracy.

The level and effects of the character's fame depend on the level of the trait. The chance of someone *not* recognizing the character on sight (or upon hearing his name) is equal to the Control Score.

Note that this is a reputation for the individual character, not for their association with a notable group.

While the King's Musketeers in France are always recognized as such when they wear the uniform, they are not known as individuals unless they gain a reputation for particularly notable deeds as individuals (e.g., this man is a Musketeer but that man is Athos!).

The player should jot down (or at least have in mind) the reason for the character's fame. The specific effects of Famous are open to interpretation by the GM, and require some discretion.

A character who has gained fame for defending the weak (such as Zorro, Batman or the Iron Monkey) will receive a bonus to Social skill rolls when dealing with commoners but may incur a penalty when dealing with corrupt officials or other bad guys. On the other hand, such a hero's fame could also result in a bonus to Social skill rolls when dealing with criminals or corrupt officials if the hero is trying to intimidate them because they fear him! Once again, application of this trait requires a dose of common sense.

The Famous trait can be a double-edged sword, but as a rule it is predominantly positive.

The opposite of this trait is the Infamous disadvantage.

The character is:

Convenience (2): a local celebrity, gaining a +3 bonus (or a -3 penalty, depending on the circumstances) to Social skill rolls when he is recognized

Edge (5): a national celebrity, gaining a +6 bonus bonus (or a -6 penalty) to Social skill rolls when he is recognized

Gift (10): an international (or intergalactic) celebrity, gaining a +9 bonus (or a -9 penalty) to Social skill rolls when he is recognized

Fast Healer

The character heals more quickly than normal. Determine the normal rate of healing for the game (see *Healing*, page 72), and then apply the modifier listed for the appropriate level of the trait. For example, if characters normally heal a number of points of damage equal to their HLT every month, then a character with this trait at the Edge level would heal the same amount of damage every day. This trait can represent mystical healing, a cyborg's nanotechnology, regeneration, an alien physiology, and so on. This trait applies to all forms of healing.

The opposite of this trait is the Slow Healer disadvantage.

The character heals:

Convenience (2): one step faster on the time chart; skill rolls to aid the character are normal.

Edge (5): two steps faster on the time chart; skill rolls to aid the character are at +3.

Gift (10): 3 steps faster on the time chart; skill rolls to aid the character are at +6.

Fast Learner (Skill Group)

The character is a quick learner, and is able to retain knowledge more readily than the average person. A fast learner can improve any skills from a specific skill group at -1 CP from the normal cost, and also receives a bonus to skill rolls involving research, study or instruction on a topic relating to that skill group.

The skill group to which this advantage applies must be chosen by the player when the trait is purchased. This trait may be purchased multiple times, once for each skill group.

The opposite of this trait is the Slow Learner disadvantage.

The character's bonuses to skill rolls involving research, study or instruction are:

Convenience (2): +3

Edge (5): +6

Gift (10): +9

Fast Reflexes

The character has a natural gift for reacting quickly and gains a bonus to INI (see *Initiative*, page 67) and to any Awareness rolls to avoid surprise. Characters with a low REF score may take this trait, to reflect generally poor coordination and agility but a fast response time to unexpected events.

The opposite of this trait is the Slow Reflexes disadvantage.

The character receives:

Convenience (2):	+2 to INI and +3 to Awareness rolls to avoid surprise.
Edge (5):	+4 to INI and +6 to Awareness rolls to avoid surprise.
Gift (10):	+6 to INI and +9 to Awareness rolls to avoid surprise.

Follower

A follower is someone who works with or in some way assists the character. The character needn't want the follower or even like him, but they do work together regularly. A follower may be played by the player or the GM, and should adventure along side the character in most, if not all, adventures. The follower may be an assigned partner, co-worker, a sidekick, an unwanted tag-along, a loyal animal partner or familiar, and the like.

The opposite of this trait is the Dependent disadvantage. Note that characters can take both the Follower and Dependent traits, but they cannot apply to the same person or animal.

Compared to the character, the sidekick:

Convenience (2):	is incompetent or is a minor hindrance to the character, but has his uses
Edge (5):	is less competent or skilled or is a minor help to the character
Gift (10):	is roughly equal in ability and skill or is a major help to the character

Good Sense of Direction

The character has an instinctive ability to tell direction, even if he cannot see. In addition, the character receives a bonus to all Athletics, Focus, and Education skill rolls involving navigation or direction (GM's discretion).

The opposite of this trait is the Poor Sense of Direction disadvantage.

The character always knows:

Convenience (2):	specific direction (e.g., magnetic North by Northwest) and +3 to skill rolls involving direction
Edge (5):	precise azimuth (e.g., 137 degrees) and +6 to skill rolls involving direction

Good Sense of Time

The character has an innate ability to tell time, even without a clock. The character always knows what time it is with incredible accuracy.

The opposite of this trait is the Poor Sense of Time disadvantage.

The character can innately sense the time of day or night to:

Convenience (2):	the minute
Edge (5):	the second
Gift (10):	thousandths of a second

Hard to Kill

The character is extremely hard to kill. This can represent the character's exceptional will to survive, dedication to a cause, use of *chi* (or *ki*), a tough body, resistance to wounds, or anything else that the player wishes. The character can apply some of his Toughness to piercing damage (such as from an arrow, gunshot, or sword wound). The amount of TGH that is "resistant" to lethal damage depends on the level of the trait. The amount of resistant TGH cannot exceed the character's normal TGH score. The character's resistant TGH cannot reduce piercing damage below 1 point. That is, a character that suffers piercing damage and who has the Hard to Kill advantage but who has no other armor, will suffer a minimum of 1 point of damage from piercing attacks.

The opposite of this trait is the Easy to Kill disadvantage.

The amount of TGH the applies to piercing damage is:

Convenience (2):	2 TGH
Edge (5):	4 TGH
Gift (10):	6 TGH

High Pain Threshold

The character is able to withstand pain exceptionally well, and receives a bonus to skill rolls to resist torture or extreme pain, and suffers reduced penalties due to wounds (see *Wounds and Effects of Damage*, page 71). The opposite of this trait is Low Pain Threshold.

The character has:

Convenience (2):	+3 to Concentration skill rolls to resist pain and to offset penalties due to wounds.
Edge (5):	+6 to Concentration skill rolls to resist pain and to offset penalties due to wounds.
Gift (10):	+9 to Concentration skill rolls to resist pain and to offset penalties due to wounds.

Immunity

The character has an immunity to some substance, disease, or condition. The immunity is defined by the player when the trait is taken and must be for one specific substance (e.g, a character can have an immunity to sea snake venom but not an immunity to fire or bullets). Characters may take this trait multiple times, each time for a different immunity.

The level of the trait is based on how common and how dangerous the substance is in the game setting. Check with your GM to make sure that you purchase the appropriate level of the trait for the concept.

The opposite of this trait is the Addiction disadvantage. Note that characters can take both the Immunity and Addiction traits, as long as the condition or substance is not the same for both.

The character is immune to:

Convenience (2):	a rare and/or extremely dangerous substance (Iocane Powder).
Edge (5):	an uncommon, moderately dangerous legal or mildly dangerous illegal substance (methamphetamine).
Gift (10):	a common or mildly dangerous legal substance (alcohol, tobacco).

Indistinct

The character has a plain or "average" appearance and is completely unremarkable in most respects. A character with this trait is not easily remembered (e.g., witnesses have a hard time providing a detailed description or provide conflicting information). As a result, any skill rolls involving identification of the character are at a penalty and the character receives a +3 bonus to any Stealth rolls to avoid being shadowed and to Awareness rolls to spot someone shadowing him. This trait is particularly useful for covert operatives, shady criminals, and anyone else desiring to remain anonymous.

The opposite of this trait is Distinctive Features.

Skill rolls involving identification of the character are at:

Convenience (2):	-3
Edge (5):	-6
Gift (10):	-9

Knows a Secret

The character knows a secret that, if revealed, would cause problems for the person (or people) whom the secret involves. The higher the point value the more dire the consequences of the secret's exposure. A secret may be a criminal past, a secret identity or double life, a love affair, or anything that would be poorly received by others if discovered.

The subject of the secret may or may not know that the character knows the secret (player's option). If the subject knows, it may be that the character is blackmailing the person, protecting him, or simply that they share a common (but unknown) history.

If the secret is exposed, the character should receive another disadvantage of equal value, such as an Enemy, unless the player spends Experience Points to "buy off" the disadvantage (see *Character Improvement Costs*, page 86).

The opposite of this trait is the Secret disadvantage. Note that characters may have both the Secret and Knows a Secret traits, as long as they do not logically contradict each other. For instance, a super hero may have a Secret (a secret identity) and Knows a Secret (teammate is an alien).

If revealed, the secret would expose the person or group to:

Convenience (2):	ostracism or embarrassment
Edge (5):	arrest, harm or financial or social ruin
Gift (10):	death

Life Experience

The character has a broad and varied background and has accumulated a wealth of personal knowledge and experience. As a result of this life experience, the character gains a bonus to all skill rolls involving information that can be likely recalled from literature, cultural knowledge, or personal experience (GM's discretion).

The opposite of this trait is the Naïve disadvantage.

The character's bonus to appropriate skill rolls is:

Convenience (2):	+3
Edge (5):	+6
Gift (10):	+9

Light Sleeper

The character is able to awaken from even a deep sleep, with no skill roll required. The slightest noise may awaken the character, at the player 's option.

Any attempts to sneak up on or past a character with this trait must make a contested Stealth roll, as normal, against the sleeping character's Awareness roll; if the effect number of the sleeping character's Awareness roll is greater than the other character's Stealth roll, the sleeping character has been awakened by a sound (if the player so chooses).

The sleeping character gains a bonus to his Awareness roll to awaken, based on the level of the trait.

The opposite of this trait is the Heavy Sleeper disadvantage.

The character's bonus to Awareness rolls to awaken is:

Convenience (2):	+3
Edge (5):	+6
Gift (10):	+9

Long Lived

The character has a longer than average life-span. This can represent a magical effect, a natural or racial trait, or plain old good living.

The opposite of this trait is the Short Lived disadvantage.

Barring an unnatural death, the character can expect to live:

Convenience (2):	50% longer than average
Edge (5):	10x longer than average
Gift (10):	forever; he is immortal—again, barring an "unnatural" death (e.g., MacLeod in *Highlander*, elves in *Lord of the Rings*)

Lucky

The character is luckier than most. Even small misfortunes have a way of turning into advantages for the character. This trait can reflect a divine blessing, good karma, plain old-fashioned luck, or anything the player wishes.

In game terms, the character receives extra Action Points at the start of each game session. These extra Action Points do not count against the normal 3 AP starting limit for game sessions (see *Action Points*, page 61).

The opposite of this trait is the Unlucky disadvantage.

At the start of each game session, the character receives:

Edge (5):	1 extra Action Point
Gift (10):	2 extra Action Points

Membership

The character is a member of some group or organization. The character has the perks and responsibilities commensurate with his rank in the organization. For example, police officers can carry guns and make arrests but they also must obey laws and department policies, answer to the chief, are watched by the public and the media, etc.

Membership rank (MR) is rated 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest attainable rank within the group. When a character buys Membership in a group or organization, he pays 1 to 5 points for each rank within that group, depending on the importance or influence of the group in the campaign (see the table below).

Importance	Cost/Lv	Modern	Sci-fi	Fantasy
Trivial	1	Local/civil	City	Village
Minor	2	City	Planetary	City/shire
Moderate	3	State/prov	System	County/state
Major	4	National	Interstellar	National
Supreme	5	Global	Galactic	International

Christine is playing First Lieutenant Rebecca Fornier, a Green Beret, in a modern military special-ops game. Lieutenant Fornier has a Rank of 2 as a commissioned officer. The GM has designated commissioned military grades as having "Major" importance in the game, so being a First Lieutenant/O-2, with a Rank of 2, costs Christine 2 x 4 = 8 points.

What each rank means, in terms of seniority, authority, and privilege, depends on the organization in question. GMs are encouraged to develop Rank lists for groups and organizations specific to their campaign.

Campaign limits on the maximum starting score for attributes and skills also applies to Membership rank (i.e., starting characters in a *Realistic Action!* game cannot buy a rank higher than 5 and those in a *Cinematic Action!* game cannot buy a rank higher than 8).

Characters may substitute their Membership Rank for a skill in appropriate situations, at the GM's discretion. The GM should impose penalties and bonuses to an NPCs' effect number to reflect special circumstances.

Likewise, GMs may also allow characters with Membership in groups with higher importance than the opposing character to receive a bonus to their effect number. For each level of difference of importance of each character's Membership, the character belonging to the group with the higher importance adds +5 to his effect number.

Lieutenant Fornier (who has a PRE of 5) is trying to order an MP corporal (E-4, or Rank 4) to let her into the custodial barracks so that she can talk to one of her soldiers, who was arrested for striking an MP the day before. The corporal (who has a WIL of 4) has orders to only allow his supervisor or higher ranking MPs into the custodial barracks, so the GM tells Christine to roll her character's PRE + Rank +5 (for being one level "higher" in importance than the corporal, who is enlisted) + 3d6. She rolls the dice and gets 10, making the total of her attempt 5 (PRE) +2 (Rank) +5 (bonus) +10 (the dice roll) = 22. The GM, meanwhile, rolls 3d6, and gets 7, making the corporal's total 4 (WIL) +4 (Rank) +7 (the dice roll) = 15. Because Lieutenant Fornier's roll was higher, the corporal backs down and lets the Lieutenant into the barracks.

If the same situation had occurred in the dead of night, when absolutely no visitors are allowed into the barracks, the GM could apply a bonus (of, say, +3 or even +6) to the corporal's roll, or simply not allow a roll at all.

This rule is intended to allow some flexibility in the use of skills and to allow players with Membership and rank to use them instead of a normal skill to influence others, when appropriate. Players and GMs should note that, while making it easier to get other people to do things, using (or abusing) one's Membership and rank may still have its consequences.

The opposite of this trait is the Outsider disadvantage.

Night Vision

The character is accustomed to seeing in low light or even no light at all (depending on the level of the trait), and suffers no penalties to sight-based Awareness rolls in these conditions.

The character can see normally in:

Convenience (2):	starlight and/or moonlight (cat's vision)
Edge (5):	near-total darkness with ambient ultraviolet light (e.g., infrared vision, night vision goggles)
Gift (10):	absolute total darkness, such as in a sensory deprivation tank (e.g., true thermal or "heat" vision)

Perk

The character has some minor perk, such as an employee discount, free legal advice, or a license to do something that would normally be considered illegal (a right to collect taxes, hunt criminals, fire upon and loot foreign merchant ships and colonies, etc.). The exact nature of the perk is up to the player and subject the GM's approval.

Perks that are conferred to members of a group are given to those with the Membership advantage, and need not be purchased separately. For example, a police officer has powers of arrest, the right to carry a badge and gun, and so on, all as part of his Membership in the police department. Similarly, a samurai has the right to wear the two swords (*dai-shô*), the symbol of his status, by virtue of having Membership in a samurai clan.

The cost for a Perk depends on its importance or significance in the campaign (GM's discretion).

The opposite of this trait is the Duty disadvantage. Note that a character may have both a Perk and a Duty and they may be related or not.

The perk is of:

Convenience (2):	minor importance (e.g., a press pass, Confidential security clearance).
Edge (5):	moderate importance (e.g., concealed weapon permit, Secret security clearance).
Gift (10):	major importance (Letters of Marque, Top Secret security clearance).

Physical Advantage

The character has some physical condition or enhancement that enhances his life or otherwise provides a benefit to his ability to function. The condition or enhancement may be minor, moderate, or extreme. The condition or benefit is defined by the player when the trait is bought. Characters may take this trait multiple times, each time for a different condition or benefit.

The level of the trait is based on the frequency and intensity of the condition.

At Convenience level, this advantage benefits the character infrequently (once every two game sessions, on average) or in a minor way (provides a +3 bonus on related skill rolls, partially boosts a primary attribute by 1 point, or provides some other minor benefit).

At Edge level, this advantage benefits the character frequently (once per game session, on average) or in a moderate way (provides a +6 bonus on related skill rolls, boosts a primary attribute by 2 points, or provides some other moderate benefit).

At Gift level, this advantage benefits the character constantly or in a major way (provides a +9 bonus on related skill rolls, boosts a primary attribute by 3 points, or provides some other extreme benefit).

The positive effects of the trait may be countered or lessened with the application of medicine, a ritual or some other means, at the GM's discretion.

The opposite of this trait is the Physical Disadvantage trait. Note that characters can take both the Physical Advantage and Physical Disadvantage traits, as long as the condition is not the same for both.

The character's condition affects the character:

Convenience (2):	infrequently or benefits the character in a minor way (e.g., +3 to skill rolls).
Edge (5):	frequently and benefits the character in a moderate way (e.g., +6 to skill rolls).
Gift (10):	very frequently or constantly and benefits the character in a major way (e.g., +9 to skill rolls).

Sample Physical Advantages

Listed below are a number of suggested Physical Advantages. You are free to make up your own, use these, or both for your game.

Booming Voice; Double-Jointed; Extra Limbs; Extra Move; Flexible; Increased Strength; Increased Flexibility

Psychological Advantage

This is some psychological condition or strength that benefits the character or enhances his abilities in some way during the game. The player defines the condition as well as the circumstances that will trigger the condition (if any).

Psychological advantages always come into play in the appropriate situation. If a situation occurs that triggers the condition, the character receives the benefit of the advantage immediately.

The opposite of this trait is the Psychological Disadvantage trait. Note that characters can take both the Psychological Advantage and Psychological Disadvantage traits, as long as the condition or subject of the trait is not the same for both.

The level of the trait is based on the frequency and intensity of the condition, and how difficult the condition is to overcome.

Convenience (2): The condition affects the character infrequently (once every two game sessions, on average) and benefits the character in a minor way (the condition may influence the character's choice of actions, provides a bonus of +3 on related skill rolls). Examples include a slight affinity for a certain class or group of skills (such as animal-related skills, outdoor skills, or education and research-based skills), a mild resistance to fear or shock, or a mild passion that, when triggered, provides a bonus to skill rolls for actions that reinforce or support the character's passion.

Edge (5): The condition affects the character frequently (once per game session, on average) and benefits the character in a moderate way (the condition may limit the character's choice of actions, provides a bonus of +6 on related skill rolls). Examples include a moderate affinity for a certain class or group of skills (such as animal-related skills, outdoor skills, or education and research-based skills), a moderate resistance to fear or shock, or a strong passion that, when triggered, provides a bonus to skill rolls for appropriate actions.

Gift (10): The condition affects the character very frequently (twice or more per game session) and benefits the character in a major way (the condition may dictate the character's actions, provides a bonus of +9 on related skill rolls). Examples include an extreme affinity for a certain class or group of skills (such as animal-related skills, outdoor skills, or education and research-based skills), a strong resistance to fear or shock, or an extreme passion that, when triggered, provides a bonus to skill rolls for appropriate actions.

Sample Psychological Advantages

Listed below are a number of suggested Psychological Advantages. You are free to make up your own, use these, or both for your game.

Artistic; Calculating (or Methodical); Compassionate; Control of Emotions; Cooperative; Courage; Creative; Decisive; Focused Attention; Generous; Good Memory; Head for Numbers (Good at Math); Loves Someone; Motivated/Energetic; Outgoing; Patriotic; Pessimist; Realistic; Subtle/Low Profile.

Social Advantage

The character is at an advantage in social situations and dealings with other people. This trait may be defined as the character being charming, smooth-tongued, exceptionally considerate, chivalrous, well-bred, courteous, or well-mannered. Alternatively, the advantage may be due to a particularly disarming personal habit that the character has, a "gift for gab," general charisma, or any other explanation that the player thinks up (with the GM's permission).

While it might seem minor at first glance, this trait can have very positive or beneficial consequences, depending on the culture. Wooing a wealthy patron, impressing His Majesty the King and gaining the favor of an influential member of an organization are all good examples of where this trait might come into play.

The opposite of this trait is the Social Disadvantage trait.

Skill rolls involving social interaction are at:

Convenience (2): +3
Edge (5): +6
Gift (10): +9

Speed Reader

The character can read at a faster than normal rate and retain as much information as someone who reads at a "normal" rate.

The opposite of this trait is the Illiterate disadvantage.

The character reads:

Convenience (2): 10x normal speed (e.g., can read a novel in an hour)
Edge (5): 100x normal speed (e.g., can read a novel in a minute)

Strong Willed

The character has a stronger than normal will and is very capable of asserting himself. He is less easily influenced by others. This may represent high self-esteem or a desire for confrontation. The character receives a bonus to skill rolls to resist temptation, overcome fear, and the like.

The opposite of this trait is the Weak Willed disadvantage.

The character is:

Convenience (2): very self-assured; attempts to persuade him are at -3
Edge (5): extremely self-assured; attempts to persuade him are at -6
Gift (10): virtually unshakeable; attempts to persuade him are -9

Tall

The character is noticeably taller than the average human. This trait has benefits as well as drawbacks, but should only be used in campaigns or game settings in which it is more the former than the latter. For instance, in a campaign in which there are no humans and all the PCs are tall, this advantage would be inappropriate. The effects of this trait are explained below.

Being tall can also be a Distinctive Feature. It may not be purchased with the Indistinct disadvantage without the GM's permission. The opposite of this trait is the Short disadvantage.

The character is:

Convenience (2): tall, about 7 feet (e.g., most NBA players, Darth Vader and Chewbacca in *Star Wars*).

Edge (5): remarkably tall, about 8 feet tall (e.g., Fezzik in *The Princess Bride*).

Gift (10): a veritable giant, up to 12 feet tall (e.g., the Knights Who Say Nee in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*). Counts as Large size (see *Target Size*, page 68).

Wealthy

In *Action! System* games, characters are assumed to earn the average annual income for the game setting (see *Optional Wealth Table*, page 90). Characters with the Wealth advantage earn substantially more money than average. Characters with wealth may have high-paying jobs or be independently wealthy. This advantage may also describe characters who own expensive property or those with millions of dollars invested in stocks or other funds that can be converted to liquid capital on short notice. It is up to the player to define the reasons and circumstances for his character's financial situation.

For optional, more detailed rules and point costs for wealth, as well as a list of sample incomes for various settings, see *Optional Wealth Table*, page 91.

The opposite of this trait is the Poverty disadvantage.

Financially the character is:

Convenience (2): well to do, earning 5x the average income

Edge (5): upper class, earning 10x the average annual income

Gift (10): filthy rich, earning 1,000x the average annual income

Well Rested

The character can get to sleep more quickly and easily than the average person, even in adverse or unusual conditions. In addition, any rest the character gets is deep and refreshing, allowing the character to avoid the effects of fatigue from lack of rest. Characters with this trait can get the equivalent of a full night's rest in a much shorter time than normal (normally 12–HLT hours of sleep). Any time that the character spends in deep rest or sleep throughout a day is added together for purposes of determining if the character is "well rested."

The opposite of this trait is the Insomnia disadvantage.

The character can get the equivalent of a full night's rest with:

Convenience (2): 5 total hours or more of sleep in a day.

Edge (5): 2 total hours or more of sleep in a day.

Gift (10): no rest at all (doesn't need to sleep).

DISADVANTAGES

Addiction

The character must have a particular substance or situation or he will suffer severe mental or physical distress. The exact effectsvary widely depending on the addiction, but should result in a -3 to one or more Skill Groups or -1 to one or more attributes per level. For example, a character addicted to tobacco might suffer jitters, and -1 REF, after going too long without a smoke.

The opposite of this trait is the Immunity advantage.

The substance or situation the character needs is:

Inconvenience (-2): common (e.g., tobacco, Catholic Mass)

Hardship (-5): uncommon (e.g., an herb, imported food)

Peril (-10): rare (e.g., feather of a mystical bird)

Bad Hands

Using your off hand normally incurs a -3 penalty to the character's skill roll (see *Off Handed*, page 36). Characters with this Trait suffer a greater penalty than normal or cannot make any skill roll at all when using their off hand.

The opposite of this trait is the Ambidextrous advantage.

Any skill rolls made when the character uses his off hand are:

Inconvenience (-2): a -6 penalty

Hardship (-5): a -9 penalty

Peril (-10): impossible (not allowed)

Bad Tempered

The character has an extremely bad temper. Little things can set the character off, especially when things seem to go against the character's wants or desires. Disagreements over policy may be perceived as personal attacks, good-natured kidding as infuriating insults, sincere appeals for aid as self-righteous mocking and so on. The character may become verbally abusive, flail about, and even break things.

The opposite of this trait is the Cool Headed advantage.

When his temper flares, he will carry on, even at the risk of:

Inconvenience (-2): ostracism or embarrassment

Hardship (-5): arrest, harm or financial or social ruin

Peril (-10): death

Dependent

A dependent is someone who needs the character's protection and help, and who the character feels obligated to look after. The character will go out of his way to protect or nurture the dependent, and must make a control roll to overcome such compulsions. Dependents can include children, family, friends and comrades, or even strangers.

The opposite of this trait is the Follower advantage. Note that characters can take both the Follower and Dependent traits, but they cannot apply to the same person or animal.

Compared to the character, the dependent:

Inconvenience (-2): is roughly equal in ability and skill

Hardship (-5): is challenged or otherwise weaker in ability and skill (e.g., a child, an elderly relative)

Peril (-10): has special problems, requirements or associated dangers (e.g., dying relative, wanted fugitive)

Distinctive Features

The character stands out and is noticed in a crowd because of some distinctive feature, be it some aspect of his appearance, a style of dress, accent, or a combination. A distinctive feature should be role-played by the character and can be an important, fun (and even humorous) aspect of the character.

The opposite of this trait is the Indistinct advantage.

His distinctive features are:

Inconvenience (-2):	easily concealed (e.g., a scar, tattoo or attire)
Hardship (-5):	concealed only with some effort, such as using Disguise or performance skills (e.g., mannerism, hair color, speech impediment or accent)
Peril (-10):	not possible to conceal (e.g., a giant or dwarf, different race)

Duty

The character has an obligation to some person or organization. Such an obligation is usually undertaken voluntarily, though it may be involuntary. Examples of duties include: service in the modern U.S. Armed Forces, an officer's commission in Starfleet, a vocation as a full-time priest, or a knight's service to his liege. The character must meet this obligations or risk censure, expulsion, or even imprisonment, depending on the nature of the Duty (as defined by the player, with the GM's permission).

A Duty can be used to represent any job, but it is recommended that GMs not allow it for trivial obligations or "duties" which the character (or player) doesn't mind losing. A voluntary Duty should involve something the character wants or needs to maintain (e.g., the character needs the job to pay bills and rent) rather than something selected merely for the point value. Involuntary Duties or those requiring a term of service (such as U.S. military service) should involve some type of punishment if violated by the character (e.g., an Article 15 non-judicial punishment for a service member violating the Uniform Code of Military Justice).

The opposite of this trait is the Perk advantage. Note that a character may have both a Perk and a Duty and they may be related or not.

The character's duty affects his life:

Inconvenience (-2):	Rarely (once a month or less; e.g., a military reservist)
Hardship (-5):	Occasionally (once a week or more; e.g., active duty military service, a police officer)
Peril (-10):	Constantly (every day, once or more times a day; e.g., an undercover operative or a soldier in a combat zone)

Easy to Kill

The character has little ability to resist the effects of deadly damage. This can represent the character's lack of will to survive, apathy, use of *chi* (or *ki*), a weakened body, or anything else that the player wishes. The character suffers additional damage from piercing attacks (such as wounds from gunshots, arrows, or swords). The amount of extra damage suffered depends on the level of the trait. The amount of total damage cannot exceed two times the initial damage rolled for the injury. This trait is appropriate for minor NPCs, such as henchmen, "mooks" and other cannon fodder.

The opposite of this trait is the Hard to Kill advantage.

The amount of additional damage the character suffers from deadly attacks is:

Inconvenience (-2):	+1 point per wound
Hardship (-5):	double (2x) any lethal damage
Peril (-10):	1 point of lethal damage causes death

Enemy

Enemies are forces that are actively seeking to harm, imprison, or otherwise plague the character. An enemy should show up in some way in most, if not all, adventures in which the character participates. An Enemy can be a single person, a small group, or even an entire nation. The enemy should make sense for the game campaign or story, however. The player should also define the origin or basis for the enemy, even if the character himself is unaware of it (roleplaying a "surprise discovery" of one's enemy and/or the reasons for him being the character's enemy can make for a dramatic encounter).

The opposite of this trait is the Ally advantage.

Overall, your enemy is:

Inconvenience (-2):	less powerful than you, merely watching you, or limited to a relatively small geographic area
Hardship (-5):	as powerful as you, seeking to capture you, or limited to a county, province, or region
Peril (-10):	more powerful than you, wants to kill you, able to hound you to the corners of the Earth, or has access to powerful weapons, supernatural abilities, or other resources

Forgetful

The character has trouble remembering things. The severity of the character's memory loss is dependent upon the level of the trait.

The opposite of this trait is the Eidetic Memory advantage.

The character:

Inconvenience (-2): has difficulty remembering names and faces and generally known facts (-3 to relevant skill rolls).

Hardship (-5): has very poor memory and forgets details easily, even friends and family; skill rolls involving recollection are at -6.

Peril (-10): is suffering from bouts of virtual senility with inability to recall simple facts, including his own identity, and any skill rolls involving recollection are at -9.

Heavy Sleeper

The character has a hard time awakening from even a short nap, requiring an Awareness roll to do so. Even very loud noises may not awaken the character, at the GM's option. The difficulty level of the sleeping character's Awareness roll depends on the level of the trait. The sleeping character may use one or more free Action Points to boost the Awareness roll in appropriate circumstances (GM's discretion).

The opposite of this trait is the Light Sleeper advantage.

The character must make a successful:

Inconvenience (-2): Challenging Awareness roll (TN 18) to awaken from loud noises (shouting, slamming door, etc.).

Hardship (-5): Demanding Awareness roll (TN 24) to awaken from very loud noises (car horn, gunshot, loud stereo, etc.).

Peril (-10): Legendary Awareness roll (TN 30) to awaken from extremely loud noises (jet flying overhead, explosion, concert, etc.).

Honest

The character is compelled to tell the truth, even in situations that will result in negative consequences.

The opposite of this trait is the Con Artist advantage.

The character:

Inconvenience (-2): is uncomfortable being dishonest (CS 5).

Hardship (-5): must struggle even to exaggerate or omit an important detail (CS 10).

Peril (-10): must tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, even in the most extreme of circumstances (CS 15).

Illiterate

The character is not as well-schooled in reading and writing as some. (This may be normal in some cultures.)

The opposite of this trait is the Speed Reader advantage.

The character:

Inconvenience (-2): reads and writes half as fast as the average person

Hardship (-5): cannot read or write at all

Impaired Sense

One of the character's senses is duller than normal and receives a penalty on all Awareness skill rolls, as well as other skill rolls involving that sense (GM's discretion). This Trait may be purchased for each of the following senses—hearing, sight, smell/taste (counts as one sense), and touch.

The opposite of this trait is the Acute Sense advantage.

The character:

Inconvenience (-2): suffers -3 to any skill rolls based on this sense.

Hardship (-5): requires medicinal, technological, or magical aid to use this sense and suffers -6 to any skill rolls based on this sense.

Peril (-10): has no use of this sense whatsoever (e.g., totally deaf or blind); no skill rolls based on this sense are allowed (or are at -9, with GM's permission).

Infamous

The character has gained infamy for some deed or deeds. People tend to recognize any infamous person when they see him or when they hear his name. Most people go out of their way to curry favor with the infamous and to avoid getting on their bad side.

A character may be known for something he did or didn' t do. A reputation, once earned, can be difficult to shed, regardless of its accuracy.

The level and effects of the character's infamy depend on the level of the trait. The chance of someone *not* recognizing the character on sight (or upon hearing his name) is equal to the Control Score.

Like Famous, this is a reputation for the individual character, not for his association with a notable group.

While the Iga ninja in feudal Japan are recognized as such when they claim affiliation or are discovered, they are not known as individuals unless they gain a reputation for particularly notable deeds as individuals (this man is a shinobi, but that man is Hattori Hanzo!).

The player should jot down (or at last have in mind) the reason for the character's infamy. The specific effects of Infamous are open to interpretation by the GM, and require some discretion.

A character who is infamous for oppressing the weak (such as a local crime lord, supervillain, or a tyrannical leader) will receive a penalty to Social skill rolls when dealing with most people but may get a bonus when dealing with his henchmen, corrupt officials, or other bad guys. On the other hand, such a villain's infamy could also result in a penalty to Social skill rolls when dealing with leaders of free nations, police officials, or the public at large if the villain is trying to sweet talk them because they despise him! Once again, application of this trait requires a dose of common sense.

Infamy can be a double-edged sword, but as a rule it is predominantly negative.

The opposite of this trait is the Famous advantage. The character is:

Inconvenience (-2): a local figure, incurring a -3 penalty (or +3 bonus, depending on the circumstances) to social skill rolls when he is recognized

Hardship (-5): a national figure, incurring a -6 penalty (or +6 bonus) to social skill rolls when he is recognized

Peril (-10): an international (or intergalactic) figure, incurring a -9 penalty (or +9 bonus) to social skill rolls when he is recognized

Insomnia

The character is unable to get a good night's rest. This may be due to a chemical imbalance, frequent nightmares, or some other reason. Characters without adequate rest (normally 12–HLT hours of sleep) each night suffer a penalty (-3 or -6) to all skill rolls requiring concentration and alertness (GM's discretion) due to fatigue.

The opposite of this trait is the Well Rested advantage.

The character:

Inconvenience (-2): has difficulty sleeping and getting to sleep (loses an average of 1 hour of sleep each night)

Hardship (-5): can't sleep without some form of natural aid, such as wine or sleeping powder (loses an average of 2 hour of sleep each night)

Peril (-10): cannot sleep around any noise or movement whatsoever (loses an average of 4 hours of sleep each night)

Low Pain Threshold

The character has a low tolerance for pain. He has a penalty to Concentration rolls to resist torture or extreme pain, and suffers increased penalties due to wounds (see *Wounds and Effects of Damage*, page 71). The opposite of this trait is the High Pain Threshold advantage.

The character has:

Inconvenience (-2): -3 to skill rolls to resist pain and an additional -1 penalty from wounds.

Hardship (-5): -6 to skill rolls to resist pain and an additional -2 penalty from wounds.

Peril (-10): -9 to skill rolls to resist pain and an additional -3 penalty from wounds.

Minor

The character is not yet an adult in the game setting (at least legally), which poses a variety of physical, social, and legal problems. His parents or guardians still bear legal responsibility and authority for him. Most adults treat him as an inferior, and he may face restrictions such as curfews, drinking ages, and driving limitations. He also grapples with various physical difficulties; a young child has problems reaching countertops, for example, while a teenager may experience trouble with acne or embarrassing voice changes. Note that the age at which a character becomes an adult, at least socially and legally if not physically, varies from setting to setting.

While most disadvantages have an Advantage as their opposing trait, the opposite of this trait is the Senior disadvantage.

The character is a:

Inconvenience (-2): teenager (13-17 years old)

Hardship (-5): adolescent (7-12 years old)

Peril (-10): young child (6 years old or younger)

Naïve

The character has led a sheltered life, is generally gullible, and easily misled or fooled. Skill rolls made by others to persuade or convince the character with this disadvantage receive a bonus due the character's *naïveté*. The bonus is dependent on the level of the trait.

The opposite of this trait is the Life Experience advantage.

The character is:

Inconvenience (-2): mildly naïve and disbelieving of "really bad" things (+3 bonus to any skill roll made by others to persuade the character)

Hardship (-5): generally naïve and disbelieving of "bad" things (+6 bonus to any skill roll made by others to persuade the character)

Peril (-10): severely naïve and disbelieving of anything "bad" (attempts by others automatically succeed against the character, or are at +9, at GM's option)

Oblivious to Danger

The character has little or no sense of danger to themselves. This can represent ignorance, a death wish, or whatever the player wants it to represent. Whenever that character is allowed an Awareness roll to detect a threat (such as a booby trap, ambush, and the like), the character suffers a penalty to the roll. The severity of the penalty depends on the level of the trait. If a character does become aware of a threat, how the character reacts is still up to the player.

The opposite of this trait is the Danger Sense advantage.

Any skill rolls to perceive or otherwise detect a threat are at:

Inconvenience (-2):	-3
Hardship (-5):	-6
Peril (-10):	-9

Out of Shape

The character is not in good physical shape. Due to the character's relatively poor fitness he gains a penalty to all skill rolls involving sports, athletic pursuits, or personal physical exertion (GM's discretion).

The opposite of this trait is the Athletic advantage.

The character's penalty to skill rolls involving sports or athletic pursuits is:

Inconvenience (-2):	-3 to all Athletic Group skills
Hardship (-5):	-6 to all skill rolls involving physical exertion.
Peril (-10):	-9 to all skill rolls involving physical exertion.

Outsider

The character is not part of the dominant group, culture or organization in the campaign and, as a result, is treated differently. The character may be may be merely distrusted by most people, snubbed in social situations, ignored altogether, subject to restrictive laws (mandating where the character may or may not live, how he travels, civil rights, and so on), or even hunted, threatened with imprisonment or death.

The opposite of this trait is the Membership advantage.

An outsider is subject to:

Inconvenience (-2):	mild prejudice with few or no legal restrictions; -3 penalty to all skill rolls involving social interaction
Hardship (-5):	strong prejudice with numerous or severe legal restrictions; -6 penalty to all skill rolls involving social interaction
Peril (-10):	extreme prejudice or treated as inferior with few or no legal rights; -9 penalty to all skill rolls involving social interaction

Physical Disadvantage

The character has some physiological illness or condition that impacts his life or otherwise limits his ability to function. The condition may be mild, moderate or severe. The ailment is defined by the player when the trait is taken. Characters may take this trait multiple times, each time for a different ailment.

The level of the trait is based on the frequency and intensity of the condition.

At Inconvenience level, this disadvantage affects the character infrequently (once every two game sessions, on average) and impacts the character in a minor way (the condition slightly affects the character's actions, causes -3 on related skill rolls, partially incapacitates the character for hours at a time or completely incapacitates the character for minutes at a time).

Examples include a moderate allergy that causes a bad rash or sneezing, severe dyslexia, muteness, a missing finger, arthritis, a petit mal seizure that causes loss of muscle control or mild paralysis.

At Hardship level, affects the character frequently (once per game session, on average) and impacts the character in a moderate way (the condition moderately affects the character's actions, causes -6 to related skill rolls, partially incapacitates the character for days at a time or completely incapacitates the character for hours at a time).

Examples include Type I (insulin-dependent) Diabetes resulting in insulin shock if taken without food or unconsciousness if food is eaten without taking insulin, a missing limb, an early case of Cerebral Palsy or Parkinson's Disease causing mild tremors or a severe allergic reactions to common substances.

At the Peril level, the condition severely affects the character's actions, causes -9 penalty on related skill rolls or prohibits skill rolls altogether at the GM's discretion, or completely incapacitates the character for days at a time or permanently.

Examples include grand mal epileptic seizures, advanced cases of Cerebral Palsy, two or more missing limbs, or paralysis below the waist.

The negative effects of the trait may be curtailed or lessened with the application of medicine, a ritual or some other means, reflecting an addiction or need for regular medication. No Control Roll is allowed for physical disadvantages.

The opposite of this trait is the Physical Advantage trait. Note that characters can take both the Physical Advantage and Physical Disadvantage traits, as long as the condition is not the same for both traits.

The character's condition:

Inconvenience (-2):	affects the character infrequently and impacts the character in a minor way.
Hardship (-5):	affects the character frequently and impacts the character in a moderate way.
Peril (-10):	affects the character very frequently or constantly and impacts the character in a major way.

Sample Physical Disadvantages

Listed below are a number of suggested Physical Disadvantages. You are free to make up your own, use these, or both for your game.

Diabetes; Dyslexia; Epilepsy; Illness; Inflexible (Stiff); Lame; Mute; Overweight; Vertigo.

Poor Sense of Direction

The character has a poor sense of direction, even to the point of doubting a compass. As a result, the character incurs a penalty to skill rolls involving navigation or direction (GM's discretion).

The opposite of this trait is the Good Sense of Direction advantage.

On skill rolls involving direction or navigation, the character suffers a penalty of:

Convenience (-2):	-3
Edge (-5):	-6
Peril (-10):	-9

Poor Sense of Time

The character has a poor sense of time. The character never knows what time it is with any accuracy without a clock.

The opposite of this trait is the Good Sense of Time advantage.

Without a watch or some other obvious clues, the character can barely distinguish:

Inconvenience (-2):	the time more accurately than the hour
Hardship (-5):	day from night

Poverty

In *Action! System* games, characters are assumed to earn the average annual income for the game setting (see *Optional Wealth Table*, page 91). Poor characters earn substantially less money than average and must endure related hardships. Characters living in poverty may have low-wage jobs or be unemployed.

This disadvantage may also describe characters who own nothing of value or those with millions of dollars tied up in a trust account that they can't get to. It is up to the player to define the reasons and circumstances for his character's financial situation.

For optional, more detailed rules and point costs for wealth, as well as a list of sample incomes for various settings, see *Optional Wealth Table*, page 91.

The opposite of this trait is the Wealth advantage.

Financially the character is:

Inconvenience (-2):	below average, earning less than half the average annual income
Hardship (-5):	poor, earning less than 1/5th the average annual income
Peril (-10):	destitute, earning less than 1/10th the average annual income

Primitive

The character hails from a primitive society by the standards of the dominant civilizations of the setting. He is unfamiliar with modern technology and starts the game with no technology-related skills beyond those used by his home society—even untrained skills. The character also suffers a penalty to any skill rolls involving the use of "advanced" technology.

Examples of characters with this trait include a Native American from a tribe with no contact with settlers in frontier America, a tribesman from a lost valley of dinosaurs in a pulp-era game or a human on an Earth conquered by an interstellar empire in the year 2001.

The opposite of this trait is the Advanced advantage.

The character is:

Inconvenience (-2):	unused to modern technology; appropriate skill rolls at -3
Hardship (-5):	uncomfortable with modern technology; appropriate skill rolls at -6
Peril (-10):	terrified by modern technology; appropriate skill rolls are impossible or at -9 (GM's discretion)

Psychological Disadvantage

This is some psychological condition or disorder that affects the character and limits his abilities in some way during the game. The player defines the condition as well as the circumstances that will trigger the condition (if any).

Psychological disadvantages always come into play in the appropriate situation. If a situation occurs that triggers the condition, the character must endure the effects for at least one turn. On a successful Control Roll, however, the character may act normally on the next turn and thereafter, until another situation occurs that triggers the condition.

The opposite of this trait is the Psychological Advantage trait. Note that characters can take both the Psychological Advantage and Psychological Disadvantage traits, as long as the condition or subject of the trait is not the same for both.

The level of the trait is based on the frequency and intensity of the condition, and how difficult the condition is to overcome.

Inconvenience (-2):	The condition affects the character infrequently (once every two game sessions, on average) and impacts the character in a minor way (the condition influences the character's choice of actions, causes -3 on related skill rolls). Examples include a mild phobia resulting in anxiety, a dislike for someone resulting in irritation or tension when he is encountered, or a code of conduct that the character prefers but is not compelled to follow. (CS 5)
Hardship (-5):	The condition affects the character frequently (once per game session, on average) and impacts the character in a moderate way (the condition limits the character's choice of actions, causes -6 TN on related skill rolls). Examples include a strong phobia resulting in avoidance of the object of the character's fear, a mild hatred for someone resulting in threats or hostility when he is encountered, or a code of conduct that the character will risk much to follow. (CS 10)
Peril (-10):	The condition affects the character very frequently (twice or more per game session) and impacts the character in a major way (the condition dictates the character's actions, causes -9 to related skill rolls). Examples include a severe phobia resulting in catatonic shock, a severe hatred for someone resulting in a fit of rage when he is encountered, or a

code of conduct that the character will choose even over death. (CS 15)

Sample Psychological Disadvantages

Listed below are a number of suggested Psychological Disadvantages. You are free to make up your own, use these, or both for your game.

Battle Lust; Bipolar; Code of Honor; Compulsive; Coward; Credit Seeker; Cruel; Decadent; Delusional; Dishonest; Flashbacks; Greedy; Hopeless Romantic; Humorless; Impatient; Impulsive; Indecisive; Intimidating; Jealous; Lazy; Lecherous; Miserly; Obsessed; Optimist; Paranoid; Patriot; Pessimist; Phobia; Power-hungry; Prejudiced; Reckless; Schizophrenia; Sense of Duty; Shy; Stubborn; Uncreative; Uninspiring; Vain; Vow.

Secret

The character has a secret that, if revealed, would cause problems for him. The higher the point value the more dire the consequences of the secret's exposure. A secret may be a criminal past, a secret identity or double life, a love affair, or anything that would be poorly received by others if discovered.

The opposite of this trait is the Knows a Secret advantage. Note that characters may have both the Secret and Knows a Secret traits, as long as they do not logically contradict each other. For instance, a super hero may have a Secret (a secret identity) and Knows a Secret (teammate is an alien).

If revealed, the secret would expose the character to:

Inconvenience (-2):	ostracism or embarrassment
Hardship (-5):	arrest, bodily harm. financial or social ruin
Peril (-10):	death

Senior

The character is advanced in years, which poses a variety of physical, social and legal problems. His children or other relatives may bear legal responsibility and authority for him. Some adults may treat him as an inferior, and he may face restrictions such as driving limitations. He also grapples with various physical difficulties; an elderly person may have arthritis, for example.

Note that the age at which a character becomes a senior (at least socially and legally if not physically) varies from setting to setting and possibly from race to race (e.g., elves live much longer than humans). The following ratings of this trait are expressed in modern human terms. The ages may be adjusted for other periods, such as the Wild West, where a senior would be 40-55, elderly 55-70, and venerable 70+.

While most disadvantages have an Advantage as their opposing trait, the opposite of this trait is the Minor disadvantage

The character is a:

Inconvenience (-2):	senior adult (60-75 years old); Body attributes may not exceed 7.
Hardship (-5):	elderly (75-90 years old); Body attributes may not exceed 5.
Peril (-10):	venerable (90+ years old or younger); Body attributes may not exceed 3.

Short

The character is noticeably shorter than the average human. This trait has benefits as well as drawbacks, but should only be used in a campaign or game setting in which it is more the latter than the former. For instance, in a campaign in which there are no humans and all the PCs are short, this disadvantage would be inappropriate. The effects of this trait are explained below.

Being short can also be a Distinctive Feature (in the right setting). It may not be purchased with the Indistinct advantage without the GM's permission.

The opposite of this trait is the Tall advantage.

The character is:

Inconvenience (-2):	short, about 4 feet tall (e.g., human children), with a maximum MOV of 6.
Hardship (-5):	a dwarf, about 3 feet tall (e.g., dwarves and hobbits in *The Lord of the Rings*, Elwin in *Willow*, gelflings in *The Dark Crystal*) with a maximum MOV of 4.
Peril (-10):	a midget, about 2 feet tall (e.g., Mini-Me in *The Spy Who Shagged Me*) with a maximum MOV of 2. Counts as Small size (see *Target Size*, page 68).

Short Lived

The character has a shorter-than-average life-span. This might represent a the life-span of a different species or race, or it could reflect a terminal illness or other medical problem, such as a congenital heart defect, incurable cancer, or the final stages of AIDS.

The opposite of this trait is the Long Lived advantage.

Barring a miracle, the character will only live for:

Inconvenience (-2):	50% shorter than avg, or less than 50 years
Hardship (-5):	75% shorter than avrg, or less than 10 years
Peril (-10):	90% shorter than avg, or less than 1 year

Slow Healer

The character heals damage caused by physical injuries more slowly than normal and skill rolls involving attempts to heal the character suffer a penalty. Determine the normal rate of healing for the game (see *Healing*, page 72), and then apply the modifier listed for the appropriate level of the trait. For example, if characters normally heal a number of points of damage equal to their HLT each day, then a character with this trait at the Inconvenience level would heal the same amount of damage each month.

This trait can represent a condition or illness, such as hemophilia, complications from diabetes, a mystical curse, or some other effect.

The opposite of this trait is the Fast Healer advantage.

The character heals:

Inconvenience (-2):	one step slower on the time chart and skill rolls made to heal him are at -3
Hardship (-5):	two steps slower on the time chart and skill rolls made to heal him are at -6
Peril (-10):	three steps slower on the time chart and skill rolls made to heal him are at -9

Slow Learner

The character must work harder than or learns more slowly than the average person. A slow learner may improve any skills at double the normal cost. In addition, the character receives a penalty to all skill rolls involving research, study, or instruction. The disadvantage may be defined as the character having a mental block, a learning disability, or whatever the character wishes (with GM's approval).

The opposite of this trait is the Fast Learner advantage.

The character's penalty to skill rolls involving research, study or instruction are:

Inconvenience (-2):	-3
Hardship (-5):	-6
Peril (-10):	-9

Slow Reflexes

The character is slow to react and incurs a penalty to his Initiative in combat (see *Initiative*, page 67) and to Awareness rolls to avoid surprise. Characters with a high REF score may take this trait, to reflect good coordination and agility but poor response time to unexpected events.

The opposite of this trait is the Fast Reflexes advantage.

The character suffers:

Inconvenience (-2):	-2 to INI and -3 to Awareness rolls to avoid surprise.
Hardship (-5):	-4 to INI and -6 to Awareness rolls to avoid surprise.
Peril (-10):	-6 to INI and -9 to Awareness rolls to avoid surprise.

Social Disadvantage

The character lacks social graces is at a disadvantage in social situations and dealings with other people. This trait may be defined as the character being pompous, whiny, opinionated, bossy, discourteous, crude, tongue-tied, air-headed, or childish. Alternatively, the disadvantage may be due to a distasteful personal habit that the character has (such as picking his nose, belching, or flatulence at inappropriate moments), a speech impediment (stuttering, a bad lisp) or any other explanation that the player thinks up (with the GM's permission).

While it might seem minor at first glance, this trait can have potentially serious consequences, depending on the rules governing behavior in the culture in which the character is interacting. In feudal Japan, for example, a samurai who rudely lectures his daimyô risks extreme dishonor or, more likely, death!

The opposite of this trait is the Social Advantage trait.

The character's slip-ups risk:

Inconvenience (-2):	minor embarrassment; skill rolls involving social interaction are at -3
Hardship (-5):	major embarrassment, ostracism or injury; skill rolls involving social interaction are at -6
Peril (-10):	arrest, severe injury (or death), or financial ruin; skill rolls involving social interaction are at -9

Sample Social Disadvantages

Antisocial; Bad Reputation; Offensive Habit; Oppressed; Poor hygiene; Socially Inept; Unapproachable.

Unattractive

The character is exceptionally unattractive and others take notice, to the character's disadvantage. An unattractive person receives a penalty on all skill rolls involving situations in which his or her appearance is important (GM's discretion).

This is a developed trait by default, because one's features can be altered through life (gaining weight, suffering severe burns, developing stone-like skin, and the like), either through magic, a curse, an accident, or other mutation. This Trait may also be ruled an innate trait in some settings or genres, at the GM's discretion. In addition, this trait could allow a *bonus* to skill rolls in certain situations, such as interaction with races or creatures that find the feature attractive, at the GM's discretion.

The opposite of this trait is the Attractive advantage.

The character's penalty to skill rolls to which his/her appearance is important is:

Inconvenience (-2):	-3
Hardship (-5):	-6
Peril (-10):	-9

Unlucky

Accidents and freak mishaps plague the character for some reason. Things just seem to go wrong for him, regardless of any precautions he may take (from carrying a lucky charm to making thorough preparations far in advance). The trait might reflect a character who is inattentive, reckless, cursed, or just plain, well…unlucky.

The opposite of this trait is the Lucky advantage.

The character is prone to:

Inconvenience (-2):	inconvenient misfortunes in unusual circumstances (e.g., trivial accidents, spilling a drink on someone)
Hardship (-5):	a costly or dangerous misfortune in common circumstances (e.g., he misses his flight, or it's late)
Peril (-10):	deadly, life-threatening dangers often and seemingly everywhere (e.g., a blown tire during a high-speed chase)

Weak Willed

The character is reluctant to assert himself. He tends to follow the instructions and advice of others. This may stem from lack of self-esteem or fear of confrontation.

The opposite of this trait is the Strong Willed advantage.

The character is:

Inconvenience (-2):	reluctant to assert himself (max WIL: 3; attempts to persuade him are at +3)
Hardship (-5):	easily persuaded (max WIL: 2; attempts to persuade him are at +6)
Peril (-10):	putty in the hands of others (max WIL: 1; attempts to persuade him are automatic, or at +9 at GM's discretion)

CREATING NEW TRAITS

While a number of Traits are described in the rest of this section, GMs are free to create new Traits for their game. Use the *Advantages* and *Disadvantages* in this chapter as a guideline when creating new Traits.

What Will it Do?

When creating a new Trait, decide what problem or advantage you wish to represent. Every trait must provide some advantage or create a problem for the character. Situations that everyone faces at one time or another, such as catching the flu, are not acceptable Disadvantages, whereas a weakened immune system that makes the character extremely susceptible to ordinary illnesses might be a worthwhile Disadvantages, however.

It is up to you to define the "special effects" of the Trait. That is, how the Trait is described in "real life" terms is up to you. The effects of the Trait in game rule terms determines the cost or value of the Trait.

What Values Should I Assign?

When creating a new Trait, use the following guidelines for determining the effects of the Trait for each level. You should also examine similar traits presented earlier in this chapter to help determine the values and effects of your new Trait.

Advantages

Advantages provide the character with some bonus or advantage over characters without the Trait.

Convenience

A Convenience-level Advantage provides a +3 bonus to skill rolls in a limited situation. The bonus should apply to one to three skills in different Skill Groups or to all skills within one Skill Group. The situation should be one that occurs less than once per game session on average.

Alternatively, the Advantage may slightly enhance an Attribute, by +1, or provide some permanent, minor special ability to the character (GM's discretion) or a temporary, moderate special ability that lasts up to one minute.

A Convenience costs 2 character points.

Gift

A Gift-level Advantage provides a +6 bonus to skill rolls in a limited situation. The bonus should apply to one to three skills in different Skill Groups or to all skills within one Skill Group. The situation should be one that occurs once per game session on average.

Alternatively, the Advantage may moderately enhance an Attribute, by up to +2, or provide some permanent, moderate special ability or benefit (GM's discretion), or provide a temporary, major special ability to the character that lasts up to one day.

A Gift costs 5 character points.

Edge

An Edge-level Advantage provides a +9 bonus to skill rolls in a limited situation. The bonus should apply to one to three skills in different Skill Groups or to all skills within one Skill Group. The situation should be one that occurs twice or more per game session.

Alternatively, the Advantage may greatly enhance an Attribute, by up to +3, or provide some permanent, tremendous special ability or benefit (GM's discretion).

An Edge costs 10 character points.

Disadvantages

Disadvantages saddle the character with some hindrance or handicap that characters without the Trait don't have to deal with.

Inconvenience

An Inconvenience-level Disadvantage provides a -3 penalty to skill rolls in a limited situation. The penalty should apply to one to three skills in different Skill Groups or to all skills within one Skill Group. The situation should be one that occurs once every other game session on average.

Alternatively, the Disadvantage may slightly restrict an Attribute, by -1, or provide some permanent, minor handicap to the character (GM's discretion) or a temporary, moderate handicap that lasts up to one minute when the situation arises.

An Inconvenience is relatively easy to overcome and has a Control Score of 5.

An Inconvenience is worth 2 character points.

Hardship

A Hardship-level Disadvantage provides a -6 penalty to skill rolls in a limited situation. The penalty should apply to one to three skills in different Skill Groups or to all skills within one Skill Group. The situation should be one that occurs twice or more per game session.

Alternatively, the Disadvantage may moderately restrict an Attribute, by up to -2, or provide some permanent, moderate handicap (GM's discretion), or provide a temporary, major handicap to the character that lasts up to one day at a time when the situation arises.

A Hardship is relatively difficult to overcome and has a Control Score of 10.

A Hardship is worth 5 character points.

Peril

A Peril-level Disadvantage provides a -9 penalty to skill rolls in a limited situation. The penalty should apply to one to three skills in different Skill Groups or to all skills within one Skill Group. The situation should be one that occurs continually (three or more times per game session) or constantly.

Alternatively, the Disadvantage may greatly restrict an Attribute, by up to -3, or provide some permanent, tremendous handicap (GM's discretion).

A Peril is very difficult to overcome and has a Control Score of 15.

A Peril is worth 10 character points.

Example

Cathy tells her GM that she wants her character to be a daydreamer, whiling away the hours lost in her own fantasies. Her GM looks at similar traits and comes up with a new trait.

Dreamer

The character frequently becomes lost in daydreams and fantasies.

Daydreaming occupies the character for:

Inconvenience (-2):	a few minutes at a time
Hardship (-5):	a few hours at a time
Peril (-10):	days at a time

Later, Roger tells his GM that he wants his character to constantly have a "five o'clock shadow." The GM decides that, while a few people might find this unattractive, it's not really enough of a problem to be worth any points. He declines to create the new trait.

TRAIT LIST

Advantages

Advantage	Type	Opposite Trait
Acute Sense	Innate	Impaired Sense
Advanced	Innate	Primitive
Ally	Developed	Enemy
Ambidextrous	Innate	Bad Hands
Athletic	Developed	Out of Shape
Attractive	Developed	Unattractive
Con Artist	Developed	Honest
Cool Headed	Developed	Bad Tempered
Danger Sense	Developed	Oblivious to Danger
Eidetic Memory	Innate	Forgetful
Famous	Developed	Infamous
Fast Healer	Innate	Slow Healer
Fast Learner	Innate	Slow Learner
Fast Reflexes	Developed	Slow Reflexes
Follower	Developed	Dependent
Good Sense of Direction	Innate	Poor Sense of Direction
Good Sense of Time	Innate	Poor Sense of Time
Hard to Kill	Innate	Easy to Kill
High Pain Threshold	Developed	Low Pain Threshold
Immunity	Developed	Addiction
Indistinct	Developed	Distinctive Features
Knows a Secret	Developed	Secret
Life Experience	Developed	Naïve
Light Sleeper	Developed	Heavy Sleeper
Long Lived	Innate	Short Lived
Lucky	Innate	Unlucky
Membership	Developed	Outsider
Night Vision	Innate	None
Perk	Developed	Duty
Physical Advantage	Developed	Physical Disadvantage
Psychological Advantage	Developed	Psychological Disadvantage
Social Advantage	Developed	Social Disadvantage
Speed Reader	Developed	Illiterate
Strong Willed	Developed	Weak Willed
Tall	Innate	Short
Wealthy	Developed	Poverty
Well Rested	Developed	Insomnia

Disadvantages

Disadvantage	Type	Opposite Trait
Addiction	Developed	Immunity
Bad Hands	Innate	Ambidextrous
Bad Tempered	Developed	Cool Headed
Dependent	Developed	Follower
Distinctive Features	Developed	Indistinct
Duty	Developed	Perk
Easy to Kill	Innate	Hard to Kill
Enemy	Developed	Ally
Forgetful	Developed	Eidetic Memory
Heavy Sleeper	Developed	Light Sleeper
Honest	Developed	Con Artist
Illiterate	Innate	Speed Reader
Impaired Sense	Developed	Acute Sense
Infamous	Developed	Famous
Insomnia	Developed	Well Rested
Low Pain Threshold	Developed	High Pain Threshold
Minor	Innate	Senior (Disadvantage)
Naïve	Innate	Life Experience
Oblivious to Danger	Developed	Danger Sense
Out of Shape	Developed	Athletic
Outsider	Developed	Membership
Physical Disadvantage	Developed	Physical Advantage
Poor Sense of Direction	Innate	Good Sense of Direction
Poor Sense of Time	Innate	Good Sense of Time
Poverty	Developed	Wealth
Primitive	Innate	Advanced
Psychological Disadvantage	Developed	Psychological Advantage
Secret	Developed	Knows a Secret
Senior	Developed	Minor (Disadvantage)
Short	Innate	Tall
Short Lived	Innate	Long Lived
Slow Healer	Innate	Fast Healer
Slow Learner	Innate	Fast Learner
Slow Reflexes	Innate	Fast Reflexes
Social Disadvantage	Developed	Social Advantage
Unattractive	Developed	Attractive
Unlucky	Innate	Lucky
Weak Willed	Developed	Strong Willed

SKILLS

SKILL GROUPS

Skills are organized into Skill Groups, representing collections of skills with a logical common theme. Think of it in terms of a "skill tree," in which Groups are the "branches," with individual Skills being the "leaves."

In most *Fast Action!* games, only *Groups* are used. In many *Action! System* games, however, *Groups* and specific *Skills* (as well as sub-categories, called *Specialties* and *Types*) are used. Whether you use some or all of these in your game is up to you.

Game Type	Groups	Skills	Spec/Type
Very simple (*Fast Action!*)	X		
Moderate (*Fast Action!*)		X	
Detailed (*Total Action!*)		X	X
Very detailed (*Total Action!*)	X	X	X

Why Skill Groups?

Buying levels in Skill Groups is a cost effective way of increasing the character's proficiency with all the skills in the Skill Group. The cost is generally less (and at most the same) as buying levels with each individual skill, presenting a "discount" to players who wish to increase their character's scores for a group of related skills.

Skill Group Scores

A score in one level is applied to the score for all other levels below it, but does not add to the score of any higher level. So, a score of 1 in a Group adds +1 to the score for any Skill or Specialty in that Group. This is called a "cascade bonus," and is written as a second score, with any cascade bonus added in, in parenthesis after the basic score for that level. A score of 4 in a Skill does not add +4 to the score of the governing Group, however; Cascade bonuses only apply downward, not upward.

Goor the Barbarian has a score of 2 in the Melee Combat Group, and he has the Swords Skill at +4. He would record the skills like this: Melee Weapons +2, Swords +4 (+6).

When a character buys levels in a Skill Group, any skills within that group that require a "Type" must be defined when the group's levels are purchased. Skill Group levels apply only to the specific Skill "Type" selected by the character, not to all possible "Types" for that skill.

Creating New Skill Groups

A Skill Group must contain 5 to 8 related skills. This is for character creation balance, so that a player who spends points on Skill Group levels does not pay too little (for a Skill Group with more than 8 skills) or too much (for a Skill Group with fewer than 5 skills).

If a Skill Group you create has more than 8 skills, you should remove some of the skills (perhaps combining them with other closely related skills) or move them into another Skill Group (either an existing Skill Group or a new Skill Group that you create). If a Skill Group contains fewer than 5 skills, you must either create new skills or move skills from another Skill Group into it.

Mike buys two levels in the Arts & Craft Skill Group. Because the specific skills Art and Craft both require a Type, Mike selects Art (Painting) and Craft (Silk-screening).

SKILL LEVELS

The score reflects the level of competence or knowledge a character possesses for that skill. Skills are listed on the character sheet only if the character has levels in them. These are written on the character sheet as "**Skill +#**," where "#" is the level of skill.

Marge is playing in a modern conspiracy game. Her character, Special Agent Glenn, has the Driving skill at level 3, so Marge writes it on her character sheet as "Driving +3."

The definitions below are not absolute, but meant as a guideline for players and GMs. To see the proficiency each level of skill represents, comparatively speaking, consult the *Skill Levels* table (next page).

Specialties

Some skill names are followed by "(Spec)." These skills include a number of related specialties within the skill.

Players may buy additional levels with one of the specialties when purchasing the skill (see *Buying Skills*, page 32). The character pays 1 point for every 2 levels in a specialty. These levels are added to the basic skill score when making skill rolls involving the specialty.

Specialties are listed on the character sheet only if the character has levels in them. These are written on the character sheet as "**Skill +# (Specialty +#)**," where "#" is the level of the skill or the bonus in that specialty. Otherwise, only the base skill is listed.

Marge is playing in a modern conspiracy game. Her character, Special Agent Glenn, has the Writing skill with a specialty of Reports. Special Agent Glenn has a score of 4 in the base skill and she has two extra levels in the specialty "Reports," so Marge records it on her character sheet as "Writing +4 (Reports +2)."

Types

Some skill names are followed by "(Type)." These skills cover several sub-categories that may or may not be inter-related.

Players must select a specific "type" or category when purchasing the skill. The character's score for that skill applies only to skill rolls involving that specific category or Type (i.e., each "Type" represents a separate skill).

Group Skill levels apply only to those "Types" that the character possesses, which must be chosen by the player when the Skill Group levels are purchased.

Types are listed in parenthesis following the skill name, as "**Skill (Type) +#**," where "#" is the level of the skill.

Paradise wants to buy the Craft skill for her character. Because Craft requires the selection of a specific "type" of craft, Paradise selects Sculpting, and buys 2 levels in the skill. Paradise writes the skill on her character sheet as "Craft (Sculpting) +2."

Skill Levels Table

Score	Description
0	**Clueless (Non-existent):** Characters with a rating of 0 in a skill have absolutely no idea about that Skill or how it works. They may have never even had heard of it before, much less know where to begin trying to accomplish an action with that skill. All skills are rated 0 until the Player uses his Character Points or Experience Points to purchase at least 1 level in that skill.
1	**Novice:** The character is familiar with the field, having done moderate reading on the subject or watched the skill being performed by others, but has no actual hands-on experience of any significance. The character is new to the particular field or activity, essentially an apprentice or beginner (e.g., a hobby, a police academy recruit, a soldier in boot camp).
2	**Amateur:** This level of knowledge indicates the character has become more familiar with the field, having read extensively on the subject with little or no formal training (e.g., an apprentice, fresh academy graduate, probationer or rookie). (Basic)
3	**Trained:** This level of knowledge indicates the character has a general, working understanding of that field, having received instruction from someone of Experienced level (a skill score of 5) or above. The character has obtained hands-on experience and practiced extensively under the tutelage of his mentor (e.g., an Associate's degree, an experienced cadet, AIT or tech school graduate).
4	**Competent:** This level of knowledge indicates the character possesses a good grasp on the details and theories of his chosen field or is capable of performing the action on his own without supervision (e.g., a Bachelor's degree, 2-year cop, junior NCO, college athlete). (Professional)
5	**Experienced:** This level of knowledge indicates the character is well qualified and informed in his chosen field, having used his knowledge or completed the action on several occasions in actual situations (e.g., a veteran professional, a senior NCO, veteran cop, professional athlete, a Master's degree).
6	**Specialist:** This level of knowledge indicates the character has become highly trained or informed in his chosen field or skill to the point he practices his skills on a regular or daily basis, even able to earn his living using skills in an occupation. Others may come to the character for training (e.g., Army Ranger, black belt, Olympic athlete, a Doctorate degree).
7	**Expert:** This level of knowledge indicates the character has become an authority in his chosen field or skill, having honed his skills to perfection after continuous practice and use (e.g., a 10-year Special Forces veteran). Without regular training and active use of the skill it is nigh impossible for a character to exceed a score of 7 in most skills.
8	**Master:** This level of knowledge indicates the character has excelled in his field, surpassing others of lesser dedication to become superior in quality, skill or achievement. There is very little the character does not know about this skill (e.g., a pioneer in the field).
9	**Genius:** This level of knowledge indicates the character has risen to a level where he is using his great mental capacity, physical prowess, and inventive ability to make unique breakthroughs in his field, creating his own original styles and theories and setting new standards (e.g., Nobel Prize winning scientist).
10	**Legendary:** This level of knowledge indicates the character has achieved the most rare and highest level of skill or knowledge possible, becoming a revolutionary figure in his field. He has become so talented that he inspires wonder, and is capable of creating, theorizing or performing any most related action with minimum effort (e.g., noted physicist Stephen Hawking, martial arts master Bruce Lee, child prodigy chess master). (Normal human max.)
11+	**Supernatural:** This level of skill surpasses normal human thresholds and enters into the realms of the augmented, enhanced, or metaphysical (e.g., computers may demonstrate this level of skill).

BUYING SKILLS

You get a number of points to divide up among the character's skills based on the campaign level, as shown on the table below.

Campaign Level	Max Score*	Starting Points (Core)
Realistic	5	50
Cinematic	8	75
Extreme	N/A	100

** Doesn't include bonuses for applicable traits.*

Groups cost 5 points per level. Skills (including Skills requiring a specific "Type") cost 1 point per level. A Specialty costs 1 point for 2 levels. Levels in a specialty may only be purchased in pairs (i.e., a character cannot purchase 1 level in a Specialty).

The cost for each level of skill is shown below.

Level	Cost
Group	5 Pts./Lv
Skill	1 Pt./Lv
Skill (Type)	1 Pt./Lv
Skill (Specialty)	2 Lv/1 Pt.

Here's an example of how you might record some of your character's skills on your character sheet. We'll just use one Skill Group—the Arts & Crafts Group—in this example. In this example, the player has purchased 2 levels in the Arts & Crafts Skill Group, 2 levels in the Cooking skill, plus 2 additional levels in the cooking Specialty "Fast Food" (total cost: 13 CPs).

Name	Level	Total
Arts & Crafts	2	+2
Art (Painting)		+2
Cooking	2	+4
Fast Food	2	+6
Craft (Silk-screening)		+2
Jeweler		+2
Photography		+2
Smith		+2

USING SKILLS

Skills are used in conjunction with attributes to resolve actions. When characters attempt an action in the game that has an uncertain outcome, the player tells the GM which skill his character is using and how he is using it. The GM sets a difficulty level for the task (see *Difficulty Levels and Target Numbers*, below).

When to Roll

The most important thing to remember is that no skill rolls are needed for characters to accomplish everyday tasks related to their skill. Rolls are required only for tasks that are out of the ordinary for characters with that skill—no matter how hard they might seem to those without the skill.

Obviously, if everyone had to make a Driving skill roll just to drive to work, no one would survive the commute! Also, excess skill rolls only slow down the game. Save the rolls for amazing tasks or exciting action sequences involving great risks and daring acts.

Ben's character does not have the Piloting (Helicopters) skill. Trying to fly a helicopter will be very difficult for him, and will require Ben to make a number of Attribute rolls at high penalties.

Jenny's character, however, has the Piloting (Helicopters) skill. She does not need to roll her skill at all to perform ordinary piloting tasks, such as taking off, flying and landing under normal conditions. But Jenny will have to make a skill roll for her character to land her chopper after it has been damaged by a SAM fired by terrorists, for example, because this is an extraordinary task even for a trained pilot.

Here's another example.

Arzhange is playing the character of Dr. Raul Wayland, an emergency room physician aboard a futuristic orbital hospital in a science fiction game. Dr. Wayland has the skill of Medicine, along with various Science and Specialist skills representing his medical knowledge. Arzhange does not have to roll at all for Dr. Wayland to successfully diagnose ailments, suture lacerations, perform routine surgeries, and so forth. All these are everyday tasks for a trained physician, even though they might be impossible for a person without the skill of Physician to accomplish.

But when Peggy's character, Officer Becky West, is rushed to the ER on the verge of death after being riddled by laser f ire in a shootout, the GM tells Arzhange to make a Medical skill roll for Dr. Wayland as he tries to save her life. The extent of her wounds makes this an extraordinary task even for a trained physician. Also, the dramatic tension of treating another character who has been severely injured makes this an exciting time for a skill roll.

Difficulty Levels and Target Numbers

If the task or action that the character is attempting is a simple one (such as opening a door, climbing a ladder, starting a car, and so on), no skill roll is required—the character simply succeeds at the action. If the action has a possibility of failure, the GM should require the player to make a skill roll and set the appropriate difficulty level for the task.

As a rule, only tasks of "average" difficulty or higher (i.e., more difficult) require a skill roll.

The GM assigns a difficulty level based on how difficult he believes the task would be for an average person. Use the *Difficulty Levels & Target Numbers* table, below, to help you decide what kind of difficulty level to assign the task, if any. The Target Number (TN) is the difficulty target of a task that must be beaten by Attribute + Skill + 3d6, taking into account any modifiers.

Difficulty Levels & Target Numbers

Description	TN
Average/Easy	12
Tricky	15
Challenging	18
Difficult	21
Demanding	24
Extreme	27
Legendary	30

Target Numbers in Combat

In cases where a character is trying to attack another character, such as in melee or ranged combat, use the target's DEF as the base TN instead of the table above. If the character is actively defending himself, add the appropriate skill to the target's DEF score. In addition, the GM can then add any other modifiers, as appropriate. (see *Combat Modifiers*, page 68).

Pat is playing Jake, a barnstormer pilot, in a 1920s Lovecraftian horror game. Jake has a DEF of 15 and is pretty good at barehanded fighting, with an Unarmed Combat skill of +5. During the game, a mad cultist tries to grapple with Jake. The GM decides that because they are both using the Unarmed Combat skill that Jake's Unarmed Combat score can be added to his DEF. The final TN that the cultist needs to hit Jake is therefore 15 + 5 = 20.

Making Sense of Difficulty Levels

While this may seem a little confusing, it's really very simple. Here's an example.

Pat is playing in a Revolutionary War (American War of Independence) game. Pat's character, Nathan Greene, an idealistic young infantryman in the Continental Army, is walking alone down a dirt road when he spots a group of British Redcoats coming his way! Pat tells the GM, Mark, that his character dashes off the road and dives into the woods to hide. Mark decides that diving into the woods quickly, before the British troops can spot Nathan, requires a skill roll. Mark isn't sure just how difficult a task it is, however, so he looks on the Generic Difficulty Levels table. Looking at the table, Mark figures the level to be one of the following: Average, Tricky, Challenging, Difficult, or Demanding. Mark thinks that diving into the woods, which includes avoiding rocks and such, is more than "average" or "tricky" difficulty, but is less than "difficult" and certainly not "demanding," so he assigns it a rating of "challenging." Mark tells Pat to make a Challenging Leaping roll. Challenging difficulty has a Target Number (TN) of 18. Pat rolls the dice and gets a total of 19—a success! Nathan Greene leaps into the woods unseen, moments before the British soldiers pass.

Automatic Success & Failure

If the Target Number for any task is lower than the character's combined (**attribute + skill score + 3**), no skill roll is required—it's an automatic success for the character.

If the Target Number (TN) is greater than the character's combined **attribute + skill score + 18**, the player may still make a skill roll. In such cases, a natural roll of 18 on the dice (i.e., three sixes) indicates success.

Characters can also use Action Points to turn a failed roll into a successful one, allowing even untrained characters to succeed at nigh-impossible tasks, thus reflecting a more cinematic approach. The player characters are assumed to be heroes in most settings—there should always be *some* chance for heroes to succeed, no matter how difficult the task. (See *Action Points* on page 60.)

Expanded Target Number Table

The following table indicates the modified target number based on the assigned difficulty of the task.

To use the table, simply add the character's attribute + skill scores (for skill rolls) or use 2x the attribute (for attribute rolls). Find that number on the left column, then read across until you find the number in the column for the assigned difficulty level of the task. For a skill roll to be successful, the player must roll the indicated number or higher *on the dice.*

Bold italicized numbers indicate that the minimum roll needed is not obtainable with a simple dice roll, and that additional bonuses (such as the use of Action Points) may be required for the task to possibly succeed.

"No roll" indicates that the player does not need to roll the dice; the task is automatically successful.

Target Numbers (Roll needed, or more)

Attribute +Skill	Avg (TN 12)	Tricky (TN 15)	Chall (TN 18)	Diff (TN 21)	Deman (TN 24)	Extr (TN 27)	Leg (TN 30)
1	11	14	17	***20***	***23***	***26***	***29***
2	10	13	16	***19***	***22***	***25***	***28***
3	9	12	15	18	***21***	***24***	***27***
4	8	11	14	17	***20***	***23***	***26***
5	7	10	13	16	***19***	***22***	***25***
6	6	9	12	15	18	***21***	***24***
7	5	8	11	14	17	***20***	***23***
8	4	7	10	13	16	***19***	***22***
9	No roll	6	9	12	15	18	***21***
10	No roll	5	8	11	14	17	***20***
11	No roll	4	7	10	13	16	***19***
12	No roll	No roll	6	9	12	15	18
13	No roll	No roll	5	8	11	14	17
14	No roll	No roll	4	7	10	13	16
15	No roll	No roll	No roll	6	9	12	15
16	No roll	No roll	No roll	5	8	11	14
17	No roll	No roll	No roll	4	7	10	13
18	No roll	No roll	No roll	No roll	6	9	12
19	No roll	No roll	No roll	No roll	5	8	11
20	No roll	No roll	No roll	No roll	4	7	10

Which Attribute to Use?

All skills in *Action! System* are associated with a primary attribute group—either the Body or Mind group. This is the group that contains the attributes associated with the common applications of the skill. The primary attribute group is indicated for each skill after the skill name.

Skills associated primarily with the Mind Attribute Group are indicated by the Mind Group icon:

Skills associated primarily with the Body Attribute Group are indicated by the Body Group icon:

In addition, suggested uses of specific attributes are also given (in parenthesis) in the skill description.

Governing Attribute

Which attribute is used with the skill (called the "governing attribute") depends on *how* the skill is being used. The most appropriate attribute used depends upon what the player says he wants to do. If the task involves exerting force, overbearing, or general power, the GM should assign the group's Power attribute (PRE for the Mind group, STR for the Body group). If the task involves subtlety, finesse, accuracy, or aptitude, the GM should assign the group's Aptitude attribute (INT for the Mind group, REF for the Body group). If the task involves endurance, stamina or resistance, the GM should assign the group's Resistance attribute (WIL for the Mind group, HLT for the Body group).

Tony is playing Frank Marione, a gangster in the Roaring '20s. Tony tells the GM that he wants to have Frank Marione convince a beat cop not to arrest him on some trumped up charge. The GM asks him how he plans to do this. Tony says that Frank is going to try to intimidate the cop. The GM thinks about it and decides that intimidation is essentially a projection of the "power" of the character's charisma, so he assigns PRE to the skill roll. Tony reconsiders, because Frank's PRE score is only a 3, and decided to have Frank try to fast talk the cop, in the hopes that the cop would get confused and let Frank go. The GM thinks about it and decides that baffling the cop like that requires quick thinking and wit, so he assigns INT to the skill roll.

Unusual Applications of Skills

In most cases the logical governing attribute will be obvious. For instance, knowledge- and memory-based skills will most often use the INT attribute.

Occasionally, however, characters will use skills in such a way that using a different attribute makes sense. The GM should consider which attribute is the most applicable and assign it as the governing attribute for the skill roll. Which attribute from the primary group is used with the skill to resolve actions depends on how the skill is used, as described by the player.

Example 1: a player tells the GM "My character is going to stay awake and drive all night if he has to." The GM decides that knows that this requires the Driving skill. Ordinarily, a Driving roll would use REF, but using the REF attribute just doesn't make as much sense as using HLT in this case. HLT deals with stamina and fatigue, whereas REF deals with reaction and coordination. The GM decides to require the player to make a skill roll using

the character's HLT + Driving, and decides that "driving all night" is a Challenging task. The player must make a Challenging Driving roll using HLT (HLT + Driving + 3d6).

Example 2: Sean's character has the Conversation skill, allowing him to unobtrusively gain information in casual discussion. Conversation affixes to the Mind group. If the character tries to gain information by flattering or charming someone, he uses PRE + Conversation. If he tries to trick someone into revealing information, he uses INT + Conversation. And if he tries to keep a woman talking until she doesn't know what she is saying anymore, he uses WIL + Conversation.

Both Body and Mind

Some skills can be used with both groups, depending on the specific application of the skill. This is perfectly acceptable, as long as it is plausible and the GM agrees to it.

Frank Marione is arrested by the cop after all and now Frank is being interrogated in the station house. But the cops are not interested in mind games; they intend to beat a confession out of him. Although the Interrogation skill is associated with the Mind group, the GM thinks about it and decides that such physical tactics call for an exception to the rule, and the GM assigns STR to the roll.

Skills that are the most likely candidates for using either attribute group are indicated by both icons.

Making the Roll

The player rolls three six-sided dice (3d6) and adds the result to his character's skill score plus the governing attribute score. If the total meets or exceeds the target number (as indicated by difficulty level), the character has successfully used the skill.

Here is a summary of the steps of using a skill in the game.

Using a Skill—Summary

1. [Player] **Choose a skill** for the task
2. [Player] Tell the GM **how the skill is being used**
3. [GM] **Determine difficulty** level (and Target Number) for the task
4. [GM] Determine governing **attribute** for the skill roll
5. [Player] **Roll** 3d6 + attribute score + skill score
6. If total meets or exceeds the Target Number, task is successful

Pat's character, Nathan Greene, is a Minuteman in a Revolutionary War game. Pat tells the GM at one point that his character, Nathan, is throwing his tomahawk at a rope to try to sever it. The GM tells Pat that Nathan will need to make a Difficult Axes skill roll, using Reflexes (as the governing attribute). Nathan has Reflexes 5 and the Axes skill at +4. Pat rolls 3d6 (three six-sided dice) and adds Nathan's REF and Axes scores. Pat rolls 13 + 5 + 4 = 22.

In *Action! System* products, any time a skill roll is required or suggested, it is written as "a [Difficulty] [Skill name] roll (TN)." For instance, if Nathan's earlier escape into the trees were presented as part of a published scenario, it might read "diving off the road into the woods requires a Challenging Leaping roll (TN 18)."

Effect Numbers

The Effect Number (EN) of a roll is simply the number of points by which a skill roll (i.e., attribute + skill + 3d6) exceeds the Target Number. If the dice roll is exactly the target number, the effect number is 0. If the TN is 14 and the skill roll total is 19, the Effect Number is 5.

Effect numbers can be used in several helpful ways in the game. They are used to determine the outcome of contested skill rolls, to determine the winner of a contest (whose arrow is closest to the bullseye?), to determine the progress of a long task (such as complex repairs, a masterful work of art, ongoing research), and so on.

Contested Skill Rolls

When two characters are attempting to outdo each other using skills, it's called a *contested roll.* In a contested roll, both characters make their skill rolls, using any difficulty modifiers assigned by the GM. The character whose player achieves the higher adjusted skill roll total is the "winner." Examples of contested skill rolls include trying to sneak past a guard unseen (Stealth versus the guard's Awareness), an arm wrestling contest, and so on.

Margaret's character in a science fantasy game, Laura Starwalker, tries to block a blaster shot by an imperial trooper with her energy blade. Laura Starwalker has a REF of 5 and Energy Blade +7. The GM makes a skill roll for the trooper. The trooper must make a successful skill roll, otherwise Margaret won't need to make an opposed skill roll at all (there's no need to try to block a shot that will miss anyway!). The GM rolls well enough for the trooper to hit his target. Margaret now needs to make an Energy Blade skill roll to block the shot. The TN for the block attempt is equal to the trooper's attack roll total—in this case 15.Margaret rolls 9 + 5 + 7 = 21. She did it—Laura deflects the blaster shot with her energy blade!

In situations in which each character must achieve a minimum level of effect in order to be partially successful (e.g., an archery contest to see who can hit the target closest to the center), the GM may assign a TN to each player's skill roll. The player who achieves the higher effect number succeeds. In effect, the total of the first character's roll becomes the TN for the second character's skill roll. If both player's effect number is 0 (i.e., if the rolls are tied) there is no winner, because both characters failed at their respective attempts. (see *Effect Numbers*, above).

Mike is playing Robin Hood, who has entered an archery contest. The TN to hit the target is 15. In the contest, each character makes a Simple Missile Weapons (Bows) skill roll against TN 15. That target number indicates merely hitting the target. The higher the effect number of the roll, the closer to the center the shooter's arrow lands. Thus, the character with the highest effect number wins the round. One contestant rolled a total of 13, for an effect number of -2. The other contestants' effect numbers are 1, 2, 2, 4 and 6. Mike makes his Simple Missile Weapons (Bows) skill roll for Robin Hood and gets a total of 27—an effect number of 12! Robin Hood has won the round!

Skill Roll Modifiers

Complementary Skills

Sometimes a character's knowledge of a particular subject can help with a skill roll for another skill. For instance, any character with the Appraisal skill can appraise an antique vase. But a character with specific knowledge of antique vases, knowledge of the culture from which the vase originated, of glazing techniques, or of the family that owned the vase may have particular insights into the history of the vase, thus allowing the character to more accurately determine its value.

When one skill can be used to help with a task that uses a different skill, it is called a Complementary Skill. When a skill is Complementary to another skill, the player receives a bonus to the skill roll equal to one half of the Complementary Skill's score, rounding down.

Mike's character has the skills Tactics (Ambushes) +5 and Sub-machineguns +4. He is laying an ambush for some enemy soldiers. The GM tells Mike that he can use his character's Tactics (Ambushes) skill as complementary to his Sub-machineguns skill for the first turn of combat, due to his character's knowledge of launching effective ambushes. Because one half Mike's character's Tactics (Ambushes) score is 2, Mike adds +2 to his Sub-machineguns score, raising it from +4 to +6, for the first turn of combat.

At the GM's option, the bonus from a complementary skill can remain in effect for the duration of an event or task.

Off-handed

Characters are either right- or left-hand dominant (player's choice) by default. The character's non-dominant hand is his "off hand." Using your off hand incurs a -3 penalty to any skill rolls requiring manual dexterity, such as shooting a gun, throwing, writing, and so on.

Characters with the Ambidexterity trait suffer a reduced penalty or no penalty at all, depending on the level of the trait.

Time

Every task requires a certain amount of time to complete, as determined by the GM. If a character takes more or less time than usual to perform a task, he receives a bonus or penalty to the Target Number, respectively.

When determining the bonus or penalty for more or less time taken on a task, refer to the *Time Chart,* below. Simply find the level on the Time Chart that is closest to the amount of time the task normally takes. The GM should determine the average length of time normally required to perform the task, then consult the *Time Chart*. If the time required to perform a task is longer than the closest level on the Time Chart, then use the next greater time increment as the default level.

Pat's character is picking a lock. The GM feels that picking a lock should take an average person about 20 seconds. "20 seconds" is more than 1 turn but less than the "30 seconds" level, so the base time level for Pat's character's lockpicking attempt is "30 seconds" for purposes of determining any bonus or penalty for taking extra time or rushing the task.

Time Chart

1 turn (3 seconds)
30 seconds
5 minutes
1 hour
1 day
1 week
1 month
1 quarter (3 mos.)
1 year
1 decade
1 century
1 millennium

Taking Extra Time

Characters can take more time than normal to perform a task in order to improve their chance of success. By taking more time than normal, the task becomes easier. For each lower level down the *Time Chart* (i.e., for each larger period of time taken), the skill roll receives a +3 bonus.

Pat's character needs to pick a lock that he knows to be very tough. The GM has decided that picking the lock is a Challenging task (TN 18). Since there is no immediate danger and his companions are watching the passageway, Pat decides to take his time and concentrate. The referee decides that If Pat spends 1 hour on the task he will get a +6 bonus to his skill roll because "1 hour" is two steps lower on the Time Chart than 30 seconds. Not wanting to take quite that long Pat decides to take 5 minutes and gets a bonus of +3, making it equivalent to a Tricky task (TN 15).

Rushing

Characters can attempt to perform a task more quickly than normal. By taking less time than the "base time" for a task, the task becomes more difficult. For each higher level up the *Time*

Chart (i.e., for each smaller period of time taken), the skill roll incurs a -3 penalty.

Pat's character picks the lock and makes his way into a stable where he finds a horse. Pat decides his character is going to try to ride the horse out of the city. Unfortunately for Pat the horse is not saddled and his character is not very knowledgeable about horses and riding gear, so the GM tells Pat that he will need to spend 5 minutes and make a Challenging Riding roll (18) using INT in order to properly saddle the horse.

The city guards can also be heard nearby. Pat does not want his character to be found and captured, so he decided his character will rush the saddling of the horse, taking only 30 seconds to throw the saddle on and secure it as well as he can before riding off. Pat will suffer a -3 penalty for rushing, making the task a Difficult one (TN 21)!

Repeated Attempts

Characters who fail at a skill roll may make another attempt, with conditions.

A character who attempts a task again after failing it once may make a new skill roll, but is at -3 for each successive attempt. This penalty is cumulative and is in addition to any other modifiers for taking extra time or rushing (see *Taking Extra Time*, page 36).

Pat fails his skill roll to saddle the horse. But he really wants to get the task accomplished and soon, so Pat tells the GM that even though his character failed the first time, he is going to try again. The GM tells Pat that he can try another skill roll but this time at a -3 penalty. Pat decides to go for it, and he chooses to rush yet again. His character spends another 30 seconds on the task, the same as last time. Pat can make another skill roll, but this time with a -3 penalty for a repeated attempt, plus an additional -3 penalty for rushing, making the normally Challenging (TN 18) skill roll equivalent to a Demanding one (TN 24)!

Tools & Equipment

Some skills do not require equipment for their use. The use of specialized equipment with these skills may provide a +3 bonus to the skill roll, at the GM's discretion.

Some skills, on the other hand, require the character to have access to specific equipment in order to use the skill at all. Examples include a forge, for Blacksmith, or a weapon, for a weapon skill. If the character doesn't have the necessary items he cannot use the skill.

Skills which require specialized tools or equipment are marked with a white wrench icon on a black field, like this:

Other skills normally require tools of some kind but can be used with improvised tools. If a skill can be used with improvised tools, at GM's discretion, the character may attempt the task but suffers a -3 penalty.

Skills that allow improvised tools or equipment to be used are marked with a black wrench on a white field, like this:

WHICH SKILLS TO USE?

Note that not all of the skills listed will be appropriate for all campaigns. We have presented a number of skills that can be used in most settings. It is up to the GM to determine which skills will be allowed in a game. Several sample skill lists for different genres are provided in the back of this book (see *Optional Skill Lists*, page 98). The recommended skills for a specific setting or genre will be listed in published genre and setting books.

Generic Skill List

The following is a generic skill list for *Action! System* games. That is, it's not created for any particular setting or genre. GMs are encouraged to make up their own setting- or genre-specific skill list for their games, omitting and/or adding skills as necessary. For guidelines for creating your own skill list for your game, see the *Skills* chapter (page 31).

Italicized skill names indicate a Universal skill. All characters in all *Action! System* games receive this skill at +2 at no cost. Characters with no points spent on a universal skill still receive the +2 bonus. Any points spent on a universal skill add to this default level.

* Indicates a common skill (in modern settings)

GENERIC SKILL LIST

Skill Group / Skill	Tools	Gov Attr
Arts & Crafts		
Art (Type)	I	Body/Mind
Cooking (Spec)	I	Mind
Craft (Type)	I	Body
Jeweler	I	Body
Photography	R	Body
Smith (Spec)	I	Body
Athletics		
Acrobatics		Body
Climbing		Body
Contortionist		Body
Para (Spec)	R	Body
Sport (Type)	I	Body/Mind
Swimming		Body
Throwing (Spec)		Body
Unarmed Combat (Type)		Body
Zero-G		Body
Communication		
Instruction		Mind
Negotiation (Spec)		Mind
Orate (Spec)		Mind
Persuasion (Spec)		Mind
Poetry		Mind
Writing (Spec)		Mind
Covert Skills		
Disguise	I	Body
Forgery (Spec)	I	Body
Gambling		Body/Mind
Lockpicking	I	Body
Shadowing		Mind
Sleight of Hand		Body
Stealth		Body
Education		
Geography (Spec)		Mind
History (Spec)		Mind
Knowledge (Type)		Body/Mind
Language (Type)		Mind
Religion (Type)		Mind
Research (Spec)		Mind
Enterprise		
Accounting		Mind
Appraisal		Mind
Bureaucracy		Mind
Business		Mind
Economics (Spec)		Mind
Professional (Type)		Body/Mind
Trading		Mind
Focus		
Area Knowledge (Type)		Mind
Awareness (Spec)		Mind
Concentration		Mind
Intuition		Mind
Lip Reading		Mind
Meditation		Mind

Skill Group / Skill	Tools	Gov Attr
Heavy Weapons		
Artillery (Spec)	R	Body
Machine Guns (Spec)	R	Body
Missile Launchers (Spec)	R	Mind
Portable Launchers (Spec)	R	Body
Vehicle Weapons (Spec)	R	Body
Investigation		
Cryptography		Mind
Deduction		Mind
Forensics	R	Mind
Intel Analysis		Mind
Interrogation		Mind
Surveillance (Spec)		Mind
Medicine		
Dentistry	I	Mind
First Aid * (Spec)	I	Mind
Physician (Spec)	I	Mind
Pharmacology		Mind
Surgery (Spec)	I	Body/Mind
Melee Weapons		
Axes (Spec)	I	Body
Bayonets	I	Body
Flexible Weapons (Spec)	I	Body
Knives	I	Body
Maces/Clubs (Spec)	I	Body
Polearms (Spec)	I	Body
Swords (Spec)	I	Body
Military Sciences		
Combat Engineer (Spec)	I	Mind
Demolitions (Spec)	I	Mind
Gunsmith (Type)	I	Mind
Strategy (Spec)		Mind
Tactics (Spec)		Mind
Nature/Outdoor		
Animal Handling (Spec)	I	Mind
Fish and Game (Spec)	I	Body/Mind
Navigation (Spec)		Mind
Riding (Spec)	I	Body
Survival (Spec)		Mind
Teamster (Spec)	I	Body
Tracking		Mind
Performance		
Acting		Mind
Dancing (Spec)		Body
Instrument (Type)	I	Body
Juggling		Body
Mimicry		Mind
Singing		Body/Mind
Ventriloquist		Body
Sciences		
Astronomy		Mind
Biology (Spec)		Mind
Chemistry (Spec)		Mind
Mathematics		Mind
Physics (Spec)		Mind

Skill Group / Skill	Tools	Gov Attr
Simple Missile Weapons		
Boomerangs	R	Body
Bows (Spec)	I	Body
Crossbows (Spec)	R	Body
Sling Weapons (Spec)	I	Body
Slingshots	I	Body
Small Arms		
Black Powder W. (Spec)	I	Body
Pistols	R	Body
Rifles	R	Body
Shotguns	R	Body
Sub-machineguns	R	Body
Social		
Conversation*		Mind
Intrigue		Mind
Philosophy		Mind
Society (Type)		Mind
Style		Mind
Symbols		Mind
Social Sciences		
Anthropology (Spec)		Mind
Archaeology (Spec)		Mind
Criminology		Body/Mind
Politics		Mind
Psychology (Spec)		Mind
Technical		
Astrogation		Mind
Computers * (Spec)		Mind
Electrician	I	Mind
Electronics (Spec)	I	Mind
Engineering (Type)		Mind
Mechanic (Spec)	I	Mind
Operate Electronics (Spec)		Mind
Transportation		
Driving (Spec)*	R	Body
Piloting (Spec)	R	Body
Sailing (Spec)	I	Body/Mind
Starships (Spec)	R	Body/Mind
Watercraft (Spec)	R	Body/Mind

Italicized skill names indicate a Universal skill. All characters in all *Action! System* games receive this skill at level 2 at no cost.

* Indicates a universal skill (in modern or more advanced settings)

R = Requires speciliazed tools.

I = Usable with improvised tools.

SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

The following section provides descriptions for the skills listed on the Sample Skill List in the previous section.

Arts & Crafts Skill Group

Arts & Crafts skills are those primarily concerned with the creation of tools and knickknacks, entertainment and pleasurable pursuits.

Art (Type)

Characters with this skill are adept at creating works of art in a particular medium (REF). They also understand the finer points of artistic expression (INT) and can appreciate works of art more than the average person (PRE).

A type must be selected when this skill is bought. This skill may be purchased more than once, each time for a different type of Art.

Successful use of this skill means the character creates a quality work of art, recognizes the creator of the work, or appraises the quality or value of such works created by others. The effect number of the roll determines the quality of the work; the higher the effect number the better the quality, and, thus, the better the viewer's impression of the work.

This skill may also be used as a complementary skill to Social skills in the appropriate circumstances, such as if the character is giving a work of art as a gift (at the GM's discretion).

Types: Painting, Pottery, Sculpting, Sketching.

Cooking (Spec)

The skill of creating meals, from simple edible dishes to elaborate, gourmet meals (INT) including even artistic presentations of food (PRE).

Specialties: Cuisine, Ethnicity (e.g., Chinese, Italian), Fast Food, Gourmet.

Craft (Type)

Characters with this skill are adept at some craft, as defined by the player, and understand the finer points of their craft, including common tools, patterns, and methods associated with it (INT). The character is able to create attractive and/or functional items (depending upon the defined craft) and earn a living with his craft (REF).

Types: Candle-making, Glazing (i.e., lacquering), Cobbling, Shipwright, Tanning, or any other reasonable craft that the player and GM agree upon.

Jeweler

The skill of crafting fine jewelry from precious metals (silver, gold, platinum, etc.), stones and gems (REF). Characters can also appraise the quality and value of such items, create rings, necklaces, brooches, set stones, and so on (INT).

Photography

The skill of taking photographs of various subjects (REF) and developing them from film to print (INT). Use of this skill to take pictures requires a camera, and developing film requires access to a film lab, with the proper chemicals, photosensitive paper, and possibly other equipment.

Smith (Spec)

The skill of forging and crafting items from metal (bronze, iron or steel, depending on the period and technology level of the setting or culture).

Weaponsmith is the skill of creating bladed weapons, such as knives, swords, spearheads, arrowheads, and the like. The creation of handles and shafts requires woodworking (a specialty of the Craft skill), although if the character has access to these finished items he can complete the weapon in question.

Blacksmith is the skill of creating metal tools (such as hammers), blunt weapons, horseshoes and the like.

Specialties: Armorer, Blacksmith, Weaponsmith.

Athletics Skill Group

Athletic skills are those involving physical pursuits, exertion, and sport. The Athletic Skills group includes the following skills.

Acrobatics

Characters with this skill are very agile and able to perform flips, tumble, and swing in exciting, swashbuckling fashion (REF). Acrobatics is very useful for sailors who spend a lot of time up in the rigging, balancing on swaying masts, and so on. While any character can attempt such actions by making a REF check (see *Attribute Rolls*, page 5), characters with this skill do so in a much more flamboyant and impressive manner.

A successful use of this skill can also allow a prone character to regain his feet as a free action, to "roll with a punch" (halving any damage received from a blunt blow), reduce damage from a fall (subtract the skill level in meters from the distance fallen before determining damage) or impose a -3 to skill rolls for attacks made against him that phase, due to his incredible dodging ability (may be added to any bonuses for the Dodge maneuver).

Acrobatics may be used as a complementary skill to Climbing and Jumping (GM's discretion).

Climbing

Characters use this skill when climbing difficult surfaces or items, such as cliffs, walls, or ropes (STR). A successful check allows the character to move a number of meters equal to one half his MOV score or equal to his Climbing score (whichever is greater). Failure means the character has lost but regained his grip or footing, and has made no progress that turn. A serious failure (two or more levels below the difficulty of the roll) means the character has fallen (see *Falling*, page 73).

Climbing is a Universal Skill; all characters receive it at level 2 at no cost.

Contortionist

Characters with this skill can contort their body into difficult or unusual positions (REF), and remain in such positions for long periods of time (HLT). Contortionists often also have a complementary Physical Advantage, such as "double-jointed."

Para (Spec)

Characters with this skill can use various types of paraflight apparatus, including hang gliders, parachutes and paragliders (REF).

Specialties: Hang Glider, Parachute, Paraglider.

Sport (Type)

Characters with this skill are adept at organized athletic activities not already covered by other skills. Skills not covered by this ability include Archery and Swimming. The character knows the rules of the game (INT) and can compete in the sport. Some sports involve primarily stamina, such as long distance running (HLT), or strength, such as power lifting (STR). Most sports are predominantly agility-based, however, such as bowling, baseball, cricket, and similar sports (REF).

A Type must be selected when the skill is purchased. This skill may be purchased more than once, each time for a different type.

Types: Baseball, Basketball, Bowling, Cricket, Football (American), Hockey, Soccer (i.e., European football), or other sports allowed by the GM.

Swimming

Characters with this skill are able to swim in water deeper than waist-level (REF) and can stay afloat for long periods of time (HLT). No skill roll is needed to tread calm water. Rough water, however, requires the character to make a skill roll to keep his head above water each turn (STR). Failure means the character has gone under and may be subject to drowning if a character cannot resurface on the subsequent turn by making a successful Swimming roll (see *Asphyxiation and Drowning*, page 74).

This is an important skill for sailors, competition swimmers, Navy SEALs, and the like.

Throwing (Spec)

Characters use this skill to throw objects, such as rocks and stones, for accuracy (REF) or distance (STR). (See *Combat* for rules on making attacks, damage, and so on). It can be used to throw a grappling hook, toss a weapon to a friend, to play darts, or to hurl a spear at an opponent.

Throwing is a Universal Skill; all characters receive it at level 2 at no cost.

Specialties: Darts, Football, Javelin, Knives, Stones, et al.

Unarmed Combat (Type)

The skill of unarmed, hand-to-hand fighting. Characters must choose a type or style of unarmed combat when this skill is purchased. This skill may be purchased multiple times, each time for a different type of unarmed combat.

Unarmed Combat (Brawling) is a Universal Skill; all characters receive it at level 2 at no cost.

Types: Aikido, *Brawling* , Judo, Karate, Kung Fu, Sumo, Wrestling, et al.

Zero-G

Characters with this skill are accustomed to operating in a zero-gravity environment (REF). They can perform simple tasks without incurring a penalty for the lack of gravity, such as performing EVAs (extravehicular activities—spacewalks, planetwalks and the like), maneuvering at slow speeds, performing stationary repairs, and so on. Complex tasks, such as combat or fast movement, may be performed at no penalty with a successful Zero-G skill roll, or at a simple -3 with a failed roll.

Communication Skill Group

Instruction

Characters with this skill are able to teach others, imparting wisdom and knowledge to their charges (PRE). Characters may instruct others in those areas which the teacher himself is trained. The maximum skill level a student may obtain from study is equal to the average of the teacher's Instruction skill and the skill being taught.

Rourke has an Instruction skill of +4 and a Swords skill of +6. The average score of these two skills is 5, so the highest level he can train any student in Swords is a 5.

Instruction is a Universal Skill; all characters receive it at level 2 at no cost.

Negotiation (Spec)

Characters with this skill are adept at reaching compromises and relaying information without offending the recipient. Negotiation is an important skill for envoys, diplomats, politicians, and police crisis negotiators.

When engaged in negotiations, the character states his goal (or demand) and makes a Negotiation roll against a Target Number set by the GM. The difficulty number is based on the other's party's general reaction to the character's stated goal (see the table below).

Reaction to Demand/Goal	Base Difficulty
Adamantly opposed (e.g., to the death)	Legendary (TN 30)
Generally opposed	Extreme (TN 27)
Somewhat opposed	Demanding (TN 24)
Apathetic, unimpressed	Difficult (TN 21)
Somewhat agreeable	Challenging (TN 18)
Generally agreeable	Tricky (TN 15)
Enthusiastically agreeable	Average (TN 12)

The target number represents the difficulty for the negotiator to achieve his stated goal while also making several concessions to the other party.

If the effect number of the Negotiation roll is 3 or higher, then the negotiator need make only one concession. If the effect number of the Negotiation roll is 6 or higher, the negotiator achieves his goal without making *any* concessions.

Effect Number	Agreement with…
0-2	Several concessions
3-5	Only one concession
6+	No concessions

It is up to the negotiator (or perhaps his superior) to decide if the final offer is acceptable. If so, the agreement is made and the deal struck. If not, then the negotiations are called off, at least for this round.

Mark is playing Mssr. Armonde, a nobleman in a Musketeers game. Mssr. Armonde is negotiating with a local lord for the release of his daughter, who is currently a "guest" (i.e., hostage) at the lord's estate. The lord is demanding a sum of money and a portion of Mssr. Armonde's land in return for his daughter's release (i.e., two "concessions"). Mark tells the GM that his goal is the release of his daughter. The GM determines that this is something that the lord is somewhat opposed to (the lord is willing to release the daughter if his demands are met, after all) and sets the difficulty of the Negotiation roll at Demanding (TN 24). Mark makes a Negotiation roll and gets a 28, for an effect number of 4. Mssr. Armonde's EN of 4 means the lord agrees to release the daughter in return for but one concession from Mssr. Armonde. The GM decides that the lord is willing to forgo the demand for land and instead will settle for the sum of money to secure her release. Mssr. Armonde agrees. He pays the lord the money and his daughter is released.

Negotiations may last from several minutes to several months, depending on their nature and other factors, including the method of communication, and so on. It is up to the GM and the players to determine how much of the negotiations are covered by the skill roll. A Negotiation skill roll can represent the entirety of the negotiations, a single round of negotiations or each individual "point" of a negotiation.

This resolution system is intentionally abstract. A "concession" represents any reasonable demand or condition made by the other party that the negotiator can meet. If it is important to know the exact nature of the concessions, the GM should consider forgoing the skill roll altogether and simply role-play the negotiations in the game.

Diplomacy represents the skill of negotiation between nations or large organizations, Hostage negotiation is the skill of negotiating with hostage-takers, and Political negotiation is the skill of negotiation among or between politicians.

Specialties: Diplomacy, Hostage, Political.

Orate (Spec)

This is the skill of effectively communicating ideas and inspiring or moving an audience's emotions with the spoken word. Characters with the Orate skill know how to tell stories, issue commands, present information (such as news), give speeches, tell tales and otherwise inform (INT), entertain or motivate (PRE) listeners. Orate could also be used to kill time or bore someone to death (WIL).

Orate can be used as a complementary skill to Acting and Poetry (for monologues and one-person performances), Strategy (for leading and inspiring troops in battle) and Persuasion.

Specialties: Bard, Command (i.e., leadership), News Reporter, Speeches.

Persuasion (Spec)

This is the skill of using one's voice, logic, expression, body language, or some combination, to influence others. Persuasion can be in the form of an intimidating glare, a boastful challenge, batting one's eyes (seduction), stroking a cheek (consolation), grasping the handle of one's sword in a threatening manner, or invoking the name of one's superior (or even God).

The character makes a contested Persuasion roll against the subject's WIL + Concentration roll. If the character's roll is higher than the person he is trying to persuade, then he is successful. The other person sees things the persuader's way (at least to some degree) and will act accordingly.

The GM should allow skills appropriate to the situation to be used as complementary to the Persuasion roll. A character may also add one half of his Fame or Infamy score to the roll, if appropriate (GM's discretion). The GM may also award a bonus of +1 to +3 to the player's roll for good roleplaying.

Tim's character, Harcourt, is confronted by a would-be robber who has demanded Harcourt's purse. Harcourt grasps his sword handle, telling the robber "If you value your life, sir, get thee back. Retreat or I will run you through and leave you to be devoured by dogs, so help me God!" The GM gives Tim a +2 bonus to the Persuasion roll for good roleplaying. Tim makes a Persuasion roll and adds the +3 bonus, for a total of 24! The GM makes a Persuasion roll for the robber, totaling 17. The robber is "persuaded" not to accost Harcourt and, in fact, runs for his life!

Specialties: Bribery, Fast Talk, Intimidation, Propaganda, Romance, Seduction.

Poetry

Characters with this skill are adept at composing (INT) and reciting poetry (PRE). They also understand the finer points of poetic expression and can appreciate poetic recitals more than the average person (PRE).

Successful use of this skill means the character performs in a manner that moves the audience (PRE), or appraises the quality of such writing or performances by others (INT). The effect number of the roll determines the quality of the performance; the higher the effect number the better the performance, and, thus, the better the audience's reaction.

This skill may also be used as a complementary skill to Persuasion in the appropriate circumstances (at the GM's discretion).

Writing (Spec)

Characters with this skill are capable of composing creative written works (INT). They also understand the finer points of written expression and can appreciate compositions within their specialty more than the average person (PRE). It is an important skill for bards and anyone wishing to create original songs. The appropriate performance skill is required to actually perform the composition.

A specialty must be selected when this skill is bought.

Successful use of this skill means the character composes a quality work, or appraises the value or quality of such compositions by others. The effect number of the roll determines the quality of the composition; the higher the effect number the better the writing, and, thus, the better the audience or reader's reaction and impression.

This skill may be used as a complementary skill to the appropriate skill when the composition is performed. For example, Writing (Music) is complementary to the Instrument skill, Writing (Speeches) is complementary to Orate, and so on.

Specialties: Comedy, Journalist, Literature, Music, Playwright, Screenwriter, Speeches.

Covert Skill Group

Disguise

This is the skill of assuming another identity. It is usually accomplished by changing one's clothes, putting on a wig, applying makeup, and so on (REF). The GM should make the skill roll for the player in secret, noting the total of the roll and using it as the difficulty number for Awareness rolls for anyone who scrutinizes the disguise.

Forgery (Spec)

Characters with this skill are able to create remarkable forgeries of documents, seals and the like (REF). The total of the character's Forgery roll is used as the target number for Awareness checks made by anyone scrutinizing the forgery to detect its true nature.

The original being copied must be available to the character for an accurate copy to be made. If the original is not available, the character uses INT with the skill (because he is working from memory) and suffers a -6 penalty to the skill roll.

Specialties: Crests & Seals, Documents, Handwriting

Gambling

Characters with this skill know how to play common games of skill, such as cards, backgammon, and the like (INT). In addition, characters can use this skill to cheat at games of chance (REF), such as dice and roulette.

If used for games of skill, use a simple contested Gambling roll for each player; the person with the best roll wins the game. If used to cheat at a game of chance, the total of the character's Gambling roll is used as the difficulty number for Awareness checks made by the other players to spot the cheat (i.e., to catch him in the act). If not caught, the cheater automatically wins. If both players are cheating, use a simple contested Gambling roll for each player; the person with the best roll wins the game), and allow both players an Awareness roll to try to catch the other cheating.

Lockpicking

Characters with this skill are proficient with picking locks and bypassing other simple mechanical security measures (REF). This skill requires a set of lock-picking tools to be effective; -3 if only improvised tools are available.

Shadowing

The skill of following others without being seen (INT). Characters with this skill are able to keep a target within site while walking or driving behind him, while remaining inconspicuous and remaining unnoticed. The GM should require characters using this skill to make periodic skill checks, with the frequency and difficulty based on the environment and the shadowing character's chances of "blending in."

Charlene is playing Veronica X, an international secret agent. She is following her target through a crowded market in Cairo. The GM decides that a busy market in Cairo is pretty easy to hide in but Veronica X is a blonde and she is wearing her trademark black latex jumpsuit (so she stands out just a tad). The GM decides that Veronica must make a Difficult Shadowing skill roll (TN 21).

If the skill roll fails, then the subject gets a Tricky Awareness roll to notice the character. If the character being followed is actively watching for anyone following him, have both characters make a contested Shadowing versus Awareness roll. The character with the higher effect number wins the contest.

Sleight of Hand

Characters with this skill can lift items from others, misdirect viewers' eyes, and conceal items or cut purses and the like (REF). When a character uses Sleight of Hand against another, use a simple contested skill roll of the character's Sleight of Hand versus the subject's Awareness. If the subject's Awareness roll beats the Sleight of Hand roll, the other person has caught him in the act, knows which shell the ball is under, or otherwise wins the contest.

Stealth

This skill is used to hide oneself in shadows and move silently. The total of the Stealth roll is used as the difficulty number for Awareness checks made by anyone who may spot the character (whether actively searching or otherwise, as the situation dictates).

Diane's character Renee is trying to follow a man through the streets of London, without herself being seen by him. Diane makes a Stealth roll, for a total of 18. When the GM makes a Awareness roll for the man to notice Renee, his difficulty number will be 18.

This skill can also be used to hide items up to and including large animals, such as horses. A single roll is made by the GM. The effect number of the roll is used as the difficulty number for Awareness checks made by anyone searching for it.

Renee has ridden her horse into the woods to escape several pursuers. Thinking that she can escape notice if she hides her horse, she rides into the brush, dismounts, and attempts to conceal herself and her horse. The GM makes a Stealth check, for a total of 20. When the GM makes Awareness rolls for the pursuers to spot Renee, their difficulty number will be 20.

Stealth is a Universal Skill; all characters receive it at level 2 at no cost.

Education Skill Group

Education skills are those skills gained primarily from formal study, whether at a university, monastery or other institute. Most Education skills are associated with the Mind attribute group. The Education skill group includes the following skills.

Geography (Spec)

This skill covers knowledge of natural features of the earth, landmarks, climate, political, as well as cursory knowledge of the borders and inhabitants of the nations of the world. Characters with this skill can identify internationally known land marks, the location of major bodies of water, the average climate and rainfall of a given country, and so on.

Specialties: Specific region or continent.

History (Spec)

Characters with this skill know a great deal about history and can recall general or specific details with a successful skill check (INT). The more obscure the detail or more distant the subject from the character's locality, the higher the required difficulty of the roll is.

Sir Thomas, having recognized a tapestry as belonging to Lord Culler, tries to recall information about the lord's family from history. The player makes a History skill check for Sir Thomas and succeeds, so the GM tells the player that Sir Thomas recalls that Lord Culler died on the battlefield 20 years ago.

Specialties: Locality, National, Organizational, World.

Knowledge (Type)

Characters with this skill are knowledgeable about some specific subject. The player chooses the subject when the skill is purchased. The subject can be trivial or important in its scope. Most Knowledge skills are attached to the Mind group.

If knowledge skills involve the practical application of a skill, the character is also able to perform the task associated with it. A character may hold a job requiring the skill if the skill score is 3 or higher. Skill rolls for such skills may be associated with the BODY group or both the Body and Mind groups.

Peter Parker has the Knowledge skill Photography at 4. Peter understands how to use a camera, take pictures, develop film, and—because his skill is a 4—can even hold a job as a newspaper photographer. When taking normal run-of-the-mill photos, the skill uses Peter's INT. If Peter is taking photos at a sports event or in the middle of a fight, he might use his REF instead. Then, when he's back in the photo lab, developing the pictures, any skill rolls there would likely use INT again.

The GM is encouraged to develop different Knowledge skills, and to separate them as new, unique skills for his game or setting. Depending on the specific topic covered, a Knowledge skill may be considered as being a Type, a Specialty, or neither, at the GM's discretion. Knowledge skills can be renamed and even moved to a more appropriate Skill Group (or a newly created Skill Group), based on the GM's discretion and the setting or genre of the game. Knowledge skills should not be created that duplicate other existing skills, however.

Matt is running a modern arcane magic game. Initially he creates the new skill KN: Arcana and KN: Arcane Research. After considering the new skills, he decides to rename "KN: Arcana" to "Arcane Lore." He also decides that "Arcane Research" is an unnecessary skill and that the existing "Research" will suffice, and that "Arcane Lore" can be used as a Complementary Skill with "Arcane Lore" for magic-related research. Matt adds "Arcane Lore" to his skill list in the Education Group.

Suggested Types: Civil Science, Cuisine, Family History, Humanities, Military Traditions, Mythology, Navy Ships, Wines, or any other general or specific topic that the GM approves.

Language (Type)

Characters with this skill understand and can speak a foreign language. If the character is literate he can also read and write the language (does not apply to languages for which there is no writing system, such as traditional Navaho).

This skill much be purchased separately for each language that the character understands.

All characters start with a score of 3 in their native language (unless they have a trait which limits their starting score). The character's native language should be noted on the character sheet.

In addition to being used in skill rolls, the skill score represents the character's fluency with the language.

Level	Fluency
1	Rudimentary; simple words and phrases only. Thick, noticeable accent (obviously not a local).
2	Basic; simple conversations. Moderate accent (requires Average Awareness roll to detect).
3	Conversational fluency. Minor accent or regional dialect (requires Challenging Awareness roll to detect).
4	Fluent; complex dialogue and expressions. No accent.
6	Expert; speaks perfectly, better than most natives.
8	Master; command of the language rivals the most learned scholar (a rarity!).

Language (Type) is a Universal Skill; all characters receive it at level 3 for their native language at no cost.

The 20 most commonly used languages in the world (in alphabetical order) are: Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Malay / Indonesian, Mandarin, Marathi, Punjabi, Urdu, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish.

Religion (Type)

Characters with this skill are knowledgeable in the history, traditions, tenets and ceremony of major religions (INT). When this skill is purchased, the character must specify one primary religion to which the skill score applies.

Sir Thomas has the skill Religion (Christianity) +5. He has a skill of +5 with his specialty (Christianity) but no practical knowledge of other major religions.

Religion may be used as a complementary skill to other applicable skill rolls (GM's discretion). For example, the GM should allow Religion to be used as complementary to a Philosophy roll if the character is involved in a religious debate.

Types: Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Paganism, Wicca or any other religion allowed by the GM.

Research (Spec)

The skill of researching a topic (a person, place or thing, such as a rare artifact, an event or a ship) to discover clues, evidence or general or detailed facts about it. Sometimes research is simply a matter of locating where something is supposed to be, such as when looking for a known book in the library (INT). In other instances one must perform tedious research to find "the answer," such as when looking for an obscure passage in a huge tome with no index (WIL).

Research can be accomplished on the Internet, in a library, a laboratory, in a newspaper morgue, a corporate Human Resources office, floating city computer network, or wherever the GM thinks is reasonable and appropriate for the character to conduct the research. Remember, too, that sometimes getting into the place can be a task in and of itself!

The higher the effect number, the more information is gleaned about the topic.

Specialties: Internet, Library, Medical, Publications, Records, Scientific.

Enterprise Skill Group

Accounting

The skill of keeping track of the money in any venture. This includes, but is not limited to, receipts, supply expense, rent, and all other areas of a profit and loss statement.

Appraisal

Characters with this skill can appraise the approximate value of items, including items for which the character does not possess a relative skill. Appraising an item requires a Challenging Appraisal skill roll (TN 18).

The skill roll may be modified depending on the following conditions. All modifiers are cumulative.

-3	Character has no training in or knowledge of the item
-3	Item is a rare or obscure specimen
-3	Unable to inspect or examine the item closely

Characters may use appropriate skills as complementary to Appraisal (GM's discretion). For instance, a character appraising a sword could use Smith (Weaponsmith) as a complementary skill to the Appraisal skill roll.

Bureaucracy

The skill of dealing with bureaucracies and "cutting through red tape." Characters with this skill know what to expect from bureaucracies, how long things will take to get done and why (INT). In addition (and more beneficially), they also know how to get things done more quickly than normal, how to get in to see the "right people," and so on (PRE). Conversely, characters with this skill also know how to and how to slow projects down and impede requests to see people (WIL).

Business

The knowledge and skill of running a business, from a lemonade stand to a multinational corporation. Business focuses on the day-to-day running of the business, including inventory, customer service, public relations and sales, but also covers broader topics, such as supply and demand, marketing, taxes, and business laws (INT). Business can also be used for skill rolls involving customer service and public relations (PRE).

Specialties: Marketing, Operations, Personnel, Public Relations.

Economics (Spec)

The study and knowledge of the production, distribution and consumption of goods. Characters with this skill understand the basics, such as the law of supply and demand, as well as advanced economic theory. This skill is more the science of economics than the knowledge of running a bunsiness. Characters with the Economics skill can act as advisors, researchers, and the like, though they may have no practical experience running a company (that would require the Business skill, above).

Specialties: Business, National, World.

Professional (Type)

This skill represents a skill (or set of skills) for a specific profession not otherwise represented in the skill list. Characters with the Professional skill are able to do the job and operate any equipment normally associated with the profession. As with all skills, the higher the skill score the better the character is at his job.

Some professions may require special tools or equipment to perform adequately. The GM should determine if a given profession requires tools or not.

Professional (Type) is a Universal Skill; all characters receive it at level 2 at no cost. A Type must be selected for the skill.

Types: Specific career (attorney, farmer, fire-fighter, fisherman, page, police officer, rancher, soldier, student, weaver, etc.)

Trading

Characters with this skill are adept at negotiating a mutually agreeable price for a service or goods. Trading is an important skill for merchants, traders, service providers, and business owners of all kinds.

Either the buyer or seller can initiate a negotiation. When negotiating a price, the buyer and the seller make contested Trading rolls (use just WIL + 3d6 if a character does not possess the Trading skill). The winner gains a 5% advantage to the base (list) price for each point of difference between the winner's and loser's effect number. This represents the "best, final offer." It is up to the loser to decide if this "final offer" is acceptable. If so, the agreement is made and the sale made. If not, then the transaction is called off.

Lou is playing space marine Corporal Darren Newman in a science fiction game. Corporal Newman is in a distant starport browsing at a souvenir vendor's stall and finds a holocard (which has a list price of 10 credits) that he wants to buy for his son back on Earth. But Corporal Newman's money is a little tight, so rather than paying tourist prices he decides to try to haggle with the vendor. Corporal Newman doesn't have the Trading skill so Lou rolls his WIL of 4 + 3d6, and gets a total of 17. The GM rolls the vendor's PRE (4) + Trading (4) + 3d6, for a total of 15. Because Corporal Newman's effect number was 2 points higher than the vendor's was, he gains a 2 x 5 = 10% advantage in the price. Corporal Newman can buy the holocard for 9 credits.

This resolution system is intentionally abstract. The base price is the standard list price for an item (as determined by the GM or published price list). The initial price from each person isn't actually stated, and the "final price" resulting from the negotiations represents the best offer that the loser can get from the winner.

Focus Skill Group

Area Knowledge (Type)

Characters with this skill are familiar with the geography and popular culture of a certain area, be it a single street, a neighborhood, a shire, a city, a terrain type (mountains, caverns) or an entire planet or star system. With a successful skill roll, characters with an Area Knowledge know the lay of the area, and can locate major and minor landmarks, major businesses or organizations, utilities, transportation centers (e.g., bus stations, ship ports and airports), and even knows notable people in the area, such as local celebrities and other popular folk.

Ross is playing Max, a bounty hunter in a cyberpunk genre game. Max is in San Angeles, a huge metropolis, looking for his target. Lucky for Max (but unlucky for the person he's hunting) he grew up in the city. Max has an INT of 4 and the skill Area Knowledge (San Angeles) at +5.

The TN is determined by the level of detail sought by the character. If the player's skill roll total exceeds a higher difficulty than was required for the skill roll, the GM should provide an additional important piece of information to the player. Conversely, if a character is trying to recall as much detail as possible, simply have he player make the skill roll and compare the total of the roll to the listed DLs. The highest difficulty that the character's roll achieved represents the level of detail that the character is able to recall about the area. The larger the area, the higher the difficulty level to know or recall the same level of detail about the area.

Max knows that his target likes to hang out in expensive nightclubs frequented by local celebrities, so Ross asks the GM for a short list of likely places that fit the description. The GM decides that this information requires a Challenging Area Knowledge roll (TN 18). Because "big city" is the default area size for skill rolls, there is no modifier to the difficulty. Ross makes his skill roll—22! The GM gives him the names of three nightclubs that match his criteria. Because Ross needed an 18 but rolled high enough to achieve the next higher difficulty level, the GM tells Ross that of the three nightclubs, the "Neo-Matrix" is currently the hottest spot in town, since it changed owners last month. Ross takes the hint and Max gets on his motorcycle and heads for the "Neo-Matrix" club. He has someone to capture…

Area Knowledge can be used as a complementary skill to any appropriate skill rolls. A character with Area Knowledge of a city could use it as complementary to Driving skill rolls during a car chase through the city, a character with an Area Knowledge of a terrain type could use it as complementary to a Survival skill roll, and so on.

Difficulty	**Level of Detail**
Average (TN 12)	Minor detail (e.g., location of the nearest convenience store)
Tricky (TN 15)	Moderate detail (e.g., names of prominent citizens/local celebrities)
Challenging (TN 18)	Good detail (e.g., names of local leaders)
Difficult (TN 21)	Much detail
Demanding (TN 24)	Great detail
Extreme (TN 27)	Incredible detail
Legendary (TN 30)	Down to the last detail

Size of Area	Modifier
Apartment complex, street	+6
Neighborhood, village, town	+3
Large city (Tokyo, New York)	+0
State, small country	-3
Large country, continent	-6
Planet, star system	-9

Types: Specific locale or terrain.

Awareness (Spec)

This represents the character's ability to spot, smell, hear or taste things that may otherwise escape attention (INT). The GM should call for an Awareness check any time a character may encounter a potential clue, may spot a shadowy figure in an alley, or any other appropriate situation. A success means the character has perceived the person or thing (a slight breeze, a shadowy figure, a minor detail, or what have you). An effect number of 6 or higher means the character has perceived the item in detail; the GM should provide additional information about the person or thing in question that will assist the character.

Awareness is a Universal Skill.

Specialties: Hearing, Sight, Smell/Taste, Touch.

Concentration

This is the character's ability to focus his concentration on some task (WIL), as well as his general memory (INT). Concentration rolls can be assigned by the GM when a character is picking a lock in the middle of a huge brawl, laying still on a battlefield while cannonballs explode around him, keeping an eye on someone from hiding during a distraction, recalling the name of the man who gave you a coin two months ago, and so on. Success means that the character is able to concentrate on the task at hand, despite any distractions for that turn, including skill roll penalties due to wounds (see *Wounds and Effects of Damage*, page 71).

Concentration is a Universal Skill.

Intuition

This is the character's ability to know or understand something without conscious reasoning. Intuition can tell a character when someone is being dishonest or deceptive, whether a door is safe to open or not, or whether to go out on a date with someone he's just met. In short, Intuition can help a character decide what choice to make when logic or perception fails him.

A successful roll should result in the player gleaning some vague direction from the GM about the person or thing in question. Responses such as "Something doesn't feel right" are appropriate but responses such as "You think the car will explode if you turn the ignition" are not. Intuition should not be used as a replacement for the Danger Sense advantage.

The GM should prompt the player to make an Intuition roll any time he must make a choice that could have detrimental consequences. In addition, when the situation warrants it, the player may ask the GM "What does my character's intuition tell him?" The GM has the final discretion whether or not to allow the Intuition roll.

Bob's character is a cop cruising the streets in his patrol car. He decides to stop at a convenience store to get a cup of coffee. As he pulls into the parking lot of the Stop N' Go at 45th and Tyler, he checks out the store as usual, but Bob fails his Awareness roll, so nothing looks out of the ordinary. At that point the GM asks Bob to make an Intuition roll. He succeeds and the GM tells Bob "As your character opens the door of his patrol car, he gets a bad feeling about the situation." Bob is no dummy. He takes the GM's hint and tells the GM that he's going to wait in the car a minute and reexamine the scene. Suddenly the dispatcher's voice comes over the police radio. "All units be advised, 211 silent in progress at the Stop N' Go, 45th and Tyler. No telephone response." Thanks to his intuition, Bob narrowly avoiding walking into a robbery in progress!

Lip Reading

The ability to discern what someone is saying by watching his mouth move, without hearing what he is saying (INT). A successful Lip Reading roll means the character using this skill understands most of what has been said, though not necessarily the context nor any emotion (or sarcasm). The character will have to determine the context of the message based on the circumstances (who is speaking to whom, what is being discussed, and so on). An effect number of 3 or higher than required, the character understands everything said.

Meditation

Characters with this skill are able to enter a trance-like state, clearing their minds and exploring their inner psyche. Characters who are in a state of meditation are still somewhat aware of their surroundings and may "awaken" from their meditative state at will.

A successful skill roll is required to enter a state of deep meditation. Once in this state, however, the character can receive any one of the following benefits. The benefit of the meditation must be declared by the player before the roll is made.

Recover stun: The character recovers 1 point of stunning (nonlethal) damage for every two points of the effect number of the skill roll.

Eliminate fatigue: The character is able to ignore the effects of fatigue due to exertion or loss of sleep for one step down the time table for every two points of the effect number of the skill roll.

Clarity of thought: The character receives a +3 bonus to all Mind-based skill rolls and Mind attribute rolls for one hour after "awakening" from a deep meditation.

Ignore Pain: The character is able to ignore pain and suffers no distraction penalties to skill rolls normally due to pain or damage. Note that the character will still suffer damage, he just won't feel it. This effect last for one step down the Time Chart for every two points of the effect number of the Meditation roll.

Heavy Weapons Skill Group

Artillery (Spec)

Characters with this skill are adept at the use (REF) and maintenance (INT) of land-based, crew-served, artillery weapons, such as Howitzers, MLRS systems, and the like. This skill covers both towed and self-propelled artillery.

Specialties: AAA, Cannon, Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS)

Machine Guns (Spec)

Characters with this skill are adept at the use (REF) and maintenance (INT) of machine-guns and other automatic weapons (REF). The character selects a specialty for which the full skill level applies; all other types use the skill at one half level (rounding up). Heavy machine-guns include the Browning .30 cal., M2 .50 cal., and the Mk-19 grenade launcher. Light machine-guns include squad support weapons such as the M60, and M249 Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW).

Specialties: Anti-aircraft, Heavy, Medium, Light.

Missile Launchers (Spec)

Characters with this skill are adept at the use (REF) and maintenance (INT) of large guided missiles and missile launching systems (INT). The character selects a specialty for which the full skill level applies; all other types use the skill at one half level (rounding up).

(Note: Although some modern anti-tank weapons are guided by radio or wire controls, these are governed by the Portable Launchers skill.)

Specialties: Anti-aircraft, Cruise Missiles, ICBMs, Orbital Platforms.

Portable Launchers (Spec)

Characters with this skill are adept at the use (REF) and maintenance (INT) of portable grenade, anti-tank weapons (such as the TOW, Dragon, and M-72 LAW), grenade launchers (such as the M-79, M-203) and mortars (REF).

Types: Grenade launchers, Anti-tank Weapons, Mortars.

Vehicle Weapons (Type)

Characters with this skill are adept at the use (REF) and maintenance (INT) of modern, heavy, vehicle-mounted weapons. Characters using very simple weapons that have no guidance or "aiming" systems other than the aircraft itself, such as machine guns on a WWI bi-plane, can use the Piloting skill instead.

Specialties: Bombs, Cannon, Missiles, Rockets.

Investigation Skill Group

Cryptography

The skill of ciphering and deciphering data, including text, digital image files, and others (INT). The technology level of the setting will determine the kinds of equipment available to the character, if any, and the complexity of the ciphers and codes the character is likely to deal with.

A number of skills can be used as a complementary to Cryptography, depending on the circumstances and the GM's discretion. Characters deciphering a code that uses or involves a foreign language should be able to use their language skill as complementary, for instance. Likewise, Computer Programming could be used as complementary to Cryptography, for designing and running decryption software.

Deduction

Characters with this skill are able to take a few known facts and leap to a usually (at least partially) correct conclusion (INT). Successful use of this skill can reveal the names of likely conspirators, anticipate an ambush, or determine the likely motivation behind any unexpected action.

The player may ask to make use of this skill at any time. If granted, the GM should reward a successful Deduction check with some bit of information about the current adventure that the character does not currently have. Success means the character has gained one answer or several potential "right answers." Failure means the character has gained no insight or possibly bad "insight," suspecting an innocent, or some other misleading information that could result in an embarrassing (or deadly) confrontation if acted upon.

The GM should make the skill roll for the player in secret, telling the player only that which his character would "know," based on the outcome of the roll.

Forensics

The skill of handling (REF) and analyzing (INT) evidence. Evidence can include fingerprints, hair, fibers from clothing and carpet, and imprints (such as shoe and boot prints, tire tracks, and the like). Characters with this skill are able to identify the nature and origin of samples they analyze.

The higher the effect number of the skill roll the more information is gleaned from the analysis. Consult the table below for suggested results of successful Forensics skill rolls:

EN	Results
0-2	Trivial details about the item (size and style of footwear, content of a fiber, caliber of a bullet, etc.)
3-5	Minor details about the item (manufacturer of an item, the source of a fiber—vehicle carpet, wool jacket, etc.; make of weapon)
6-8	Important details about the item (manufactured at a factory in Korea, custom made, made exclusively for Ford, specific model number of a firearm, etc.)
9-11	Crucial details about the item (date of manufacture, lot number, city where item was originally purchased, and so on)
12+	Every detail about the item (serial number, exact store where item was originally purchased, VIN number, all known owners of the item)

Paul's character is analyzing residue from an explosion. Paul gets an effect number of 7 on his Forensics skill roll, so the GM tells Paul that the residue is from an explosive compound manufactured solely for the U.S. military by a contractor based in Vermont. If Paul's effect number had been 9, the GM might have told him the date of manufacture and delivery point for the explosive, as well.

Intel Analysis

Characters with this skill are able to analyze intelligence and determine the significance (if any) of details gleaned from it (INT).

An agent could use Intel Analysis to examine a satellite photograph of an air field to determine if any aircraft were loaded with nuclear warheads or had been recently moved. A soldier could examine a reconnaissance report from a scout to determine the quality of troops at an enemy base.

The quality and quantity of the data that the character has to work with determines the difficulty of the task.

A high-resolution satellite photo of a military base would provide a relatively low difficulty to determine what sort of base it was, whereas a smudged, rough sketch drawn by a child overlooking the base from a nearby hill would provide a very high difficulty for the skill roll.

Interrogation

The skill of obtaining information from an unwilling subject. The interrogator may attempt to use subtlety, confusion, or mental trickery (INT), sympathy or intimidation techniques (PRE), or simply try to "wear down" the subject through repetition and extended duration (WIL). Physically beating a confession out of a subject is also possible (STR), though not legal in most civilized nations.

When interrogating a subject, a contested roll is made against the subject's WIL attribute roll. If the interrogator's effect number is greater than the subject's, then the subject has been broken and reveals the desired information.

Surveillance (Spec)

The skill of watching and gathering information about a target (INT). Characters with this skill know how to set up an observation point, observe a subject and record information concerning the subject's movements and actions, without being themselves observed (it is similar to the Shadowing skill, but does not involve moving and following the subject).

Police detectives, private investigators, covert intelligence operatives, snipers and soldiers assigned to reconnaissance missions or observation posts, most often possess this skill.

Can be used as complementary to Awareness skill rolls in appropriate circumstances (GM's discretion).

Specialties: Bugging, Reconnaissance, Stakeouts, Stalking.

Medical Skill Group

Dentistry

Dentistry is the skill of cleaning and maintaining teeth. Successful use of this skill allows the character to diagnose symptoms (INT), treat minor and major dental problems (INT), perform procedures such as filling cavities, root canals, and the like (REF), and common procedures relating to dentistry, such as teeth cleanings. Dentists cannot prescribe medications, however.

First Aid (Spec)

Characters with this skill know the basics of treating injuries, from scrapes and cuts to compound fractures (INT). The character knows how to reduce pain, stabilize broken limbs, and when not to move someone to avoid risk of paralysis, etc.

Note that this skill may reflect different knowledge, based on the particular setting and technology level of the game. A character in medieval Europe will not know CPR, for instance, but he can still use herbal remedies to heal minor burns, leeches to remove "bad blood," and so on. GMs may wish to rename this skill to better fit the setting (e.g., Chirurgery).

Successful use of this skill restores 1 Life point to the victim and stabilizes him, so that no further Life points are lost due to bleeding or other continued damage (see *Stabilizing*, page 72).

Specialties: Primitive, Modern.

Physician (Spec)

Characters with this skill are proficient in the arts of healing the body. Successful use of this skill allows the character to diagnose symptoms (INT), treat minor and major wounds (INT), perform minor, out-patient surgeries (REF) and common procedures relating to his specialty, as well as identify and prescribe drugs and remedies available in the campaign (INT).

To perform complex and major surgeries the character should buy the Surgery skill.

This skill is common among physicians, EMTs, combat medics, and corpsmen.

Specialties: General, Neurology, Oncology, Pediatrics, Podiatry, Psychiatry, or any other specialty approved by the GM.

Pharmacology

Pharmacology is the science of drugs, especially as they relate to medicinal use. Characters with this skill are able to identify drugs and their medicinal effects, reactions, and properties (INT).

Surgery (Spec)

Characters with this skill are able to perform surgical procedures. It includes knowledge of barbery and chirurgery in low-tech settings (INT). Successful use of this skill allows the character to perform minor to complex surgeries.

This skill is common among surgeons and paramedics.

Specialties: Cosmetic, Emergency, Neuro/Brain, Oral, or any other specialty approved by the GM.

Melee Weapon Skill Group

Axes (Spec)

Characters with this skill are adept at the use and care of hand axes (includes tomahawks, hatchets, and other one-handed axes) and battle axes (includes two-handed axes or "great axes") (REF). This skill is used when making attacks with such weapons (REF). (See *Combat* for rules on making attacks, damage, and so on).

Specialties: Battle Axes, Great Axes, Hand Axes.

Bayonets

Characters with this skill are adept at the use and care of rifle-mounted blades (REF). This skill is used when making attacks with such weapons. (See *Combat* for rules on making attacks, damage, and so on).

Flexible Weapons (Spec)

Characters with this skill are adept at the use of chains, ropes (including lassos), and whips (including cat-o-nine-tails) as weapons. This skill is used when making attacks with such weapons, with or without a weapon attached to the end (REF). (See *Combat* for rules on making attacks, damage, and so on).

Specialties: Chains, Flails, Nunchaku, Ropes, Three-section Staves, Whips.

Knives

Characters with this skill are adept at the use and care of knives, dirks, and other small blades (REF). This skill is used when making attacks with such weapons. (See *Combat* for rules on making attacks, damage, and so on).

Maces/Clubs (Spec)

Characters with this skill are adept at the use and care of maces and warhammers. This skill is used when making attacks with such weapons (REF). (See *Combat* for rules on making attacks, damage, and so on).

Maces/Clubs is a Universal Skill; all characters receive it at level 2 at no cost.

Specialties: Clubs/Bats, Maces, Mauls, Tetsubô, Warhammers.

Polearms (Spec)

Characters with this skill are adept at the use and care of polearms, including spears, lances, halberds and glaives (REF). This skill is used when making attacks with such weapons. (See *Combat* for rules on making attacks, damage, and so on).

Specialties: Halberds, Pikes, Lance/Great Spear.

Specialties: Glaives/Halberds, Spears, Lances, Ôno, Pikes, Staves.

Swords (Spec)

Characters with this skill are adept at the use and care of swords, including cutlasses, sabers, epee, foils, and other medium-length bladed weapons (REF). This skill is used when making attacks with such weapons. (See *Combat* for rules on making attacks, damage, and so on).

Specialties: Foils/Epee, Long swords, Kenjutsu, Machetes, Rapiers, Sabers, Short swords, Two-handed Swords

Military Science Skill Group

Combat Engineering (Spec)

Characters with this skill know how to construct buildings, make fortified defenses, dig foxholes, lay (and remove) anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines, create roads and airstrips, breach barriers, construct bridges, etc., in a military environment or operation.

Specialties: Bridges, Defenses, Mines, Roads.

Demolitions (Spec)

The skill of assembling explosive devices, placing them for best effect, and also disassembling and defusing them (INT). Characters with this skill can also identify types of explosive compounds, triggers and other related devices on inspection.

With a successful Demolitions skill roll, characters may increase the effectiveness of an explosive. For every 2 levels with the skill, the character may opt not to roll 1d6 of damage, instead making that die an automatic 6 for purposes of calculating damage. Alternatively, a character may instead convert each such die to an "automatic 1," reducing the overall effectiveness of the explosive, if he is able to tamper with or move the device without triggering it.

Specialties: Bombs, C4, Mines, Primitive, Warheads.

Gunsmith (Type)

Characters with this skill are able properly maintain and effect repairs to firearms. In addition, the character can make minor modifications to the weapon, such as installing a custom mount or modifying the capacity of an ammunition magazine. The player must select a specialty when this skill is purchased. Knowledge of energy weapons allows the character to effect repairs to various energy weapons, including blasters, lasers, energy swords, and other high-tech or sci-fi weapons (Electronics may be used as complementary to this skill). Heavy weapons include all of the weapons in the Heavy Weapons skill group. Small arms include all of the weapons in the Small Arms skill group.

Types: Energy Weapons, Heavy Weapons, Small Arms.

Strategy (Spec)

Characters with this skill are skilled at managing multiple units in large, battle-sized engagements (usually of more than 100 soldiers per side). They can assess a battle, locate advantageous routes of advance (or retreat), determine the best place to establish a defense, and so on (INT). Successful use of this skill by the leader of an army gives his side an Initiative bonus of +1 for every two points of Effect Number. The bonus lasts for the duration of the battle (PRE). GMs may also wish to use this skill as a contested skill roll between commanders.

Specialties: Land Battles, Logistics, Sea Battles, Sieges, Space Battles.

Tactics (Spec)

Characters with this skill are skilled tacticians and are able to lead small units with 100 soldiers or fewer. The character can assess an engagement, locate advantageous positions, determine the best place to establish a defense or execute an ambush, and so on (INT). Successful use of this skill by the leader of a group of combatants also affords an Initiative bonus to that side for the duration of the battle (PRE). GMs may also wish to use this skill as an opposed test between commanders.

Specialties: Ambushes, Close Quarter Battle (CQB), Defensive Positions, Patrolling, Skirmishes.

Nature/Outdoor Skill Group

Animal Handling (Spec)

Characters with this skill are proficient at working with animals, including care, feeding and grooming (INT), as well as training (WIL) and controlling them (PRE).

Specialties: Birds, Camels, Dogs, Horses, Reptiles, et al.

Fish and Game (Spec)

Characters with this skill are able to track and catch game and fowl, fish, and set traps. Depending on the prey, Fish and Game may involve cunning and wits to locate and trap one's prey (INT) or simple patience to wait for a bite (WIL).

Specialties: Hunting, Fishing, Trapping.

Navigation (Spec)

Characters with this skill are able to determine their approximate position on a map, tell the time of day or night (by the sun or stars), and plot a course between two known points (INT). Navigation may be used as a complementary skill to Survival, Fish and Game, Sailing, Water Craft and other skills with GM's permission. For navigating in space, between and within star systems, see the Astrogation skill. This skill is common among professional trackers, rangers, scouts, soldiers and sailors.

Specialties: Land, Sea.

Riding (Spec)

Characters with this skill are able to ride domesticated beasts, manage tack and bridle, and perform simple care and grooming of their animals. A specialty must be selected when the skill is purchased. This skill may be purchased more than once, each time for a different specialty.

Specialties: Camels, Horses, or other beasts allowed by the GM (such as dragons, wolves, giant bugs, and so on).

Survival (Spec)

Characters with this skill are able to survive off the land (INT). They know which plants are edible, how to construct shelter, where to find fresh water, and the like. Even recreational campers may have some measure of this skill (e.g., a score of 1 or 2, or even higher for an avid camper).

A successful check means the character is able to survive in the wilds for a day, with food, water and shelter. A critical success extends this time to a week. A failed check means the character's efforts are insufficient for the day; he goes hungry and thirsty, is exposed to the elements, or what have you. A roll that fails by 6 points worse (i.e., an EN of -6 or lower) means the character has suffered some mishap. The mishap could be an accidental poisoning, an injury inflicting 1d6 damage, frostbite, or any other situation at the GM's discretion.

Specialties: Arctic, Desert, Temperate, Tropical, Water.

Teamster (Spec)

The skill of driving teams of domestic beasts, usually to pull a wagon. The character also knows how to manage harness and bridle, and so on. A specialty must be selected when the skill is purchased. This skill may be purchased more than once, each time for a different specialty.

Specialties: Camels, Horses, or other beasts allowed by the GM (such as dragons, wolves, giant bugs, and so on).

Tracking

Characters with this skill are able to track both man and beast (INT). Unlike Fish and Game, which allows one to locate fresh game and fowl, Tracking is used to follow prints made by man or beast, either fresh or old. Successful use of the skill means the character is able to identify the maker of the tracks and to follow them for one day or to a point at which the conditions have changed (e.g., tracks leading through a forest and to a river). If at this point the subject has not been found, then a new Tracking roll must be made to continue.

Performance Skills

Acting

Characters with this skill are adept at acting—more simply, feigning emotion and portraying roles that differ significantly from themselves (PRE). Actors also understand the finer points of dramatic expression and can appreciate theatrical performances from a more scholarly viewpoint than the average spectator (INT).

Successful use of this skill means the character performs in a manner that moves the audience, or appraises the quality of theatrical performances by others. The effect number of the roll determines the quality of the performance; the higher the effect number the better the performance, and, thus, the better the audience's reaction. This skill may also be used as a complementary skill to Persuasion or Orate in the appropriate circumstances (at the GM's discretion).

This skill is an important one for stage and screen actors, undercover police officers, shinobi (ninja), and any character to whom misleading others is important.

Dancing (Spec)

This is the skill of dancing with grace and/or style (REF). Ballroom dancing is performed at large, formal balls, such as those thrown by royalty or the wealthy, and (in some cultures) is one of the skills expected of any cultured gentleman or lady. Dancing can also be part of important ceremonies, contests and other situations calling for stamina more than style or skill (HLT).

Successful use of this skill means the character is able to dance competently, following the steps and keeping time with the music. The character may be noticed as an accomplished and graceful dancer that evening, perhaps gaining the special attention of his partner, another suitor, or another person of note or repute.

Dancing may be used as a complementary skill for all appropriate Social skill checks, at the GM's discretion.

Specialties: Ballet, Ballroom, Break, Disco, Popular, Tap, Tribal, or any other reasonable kind of dance that the player and GM agree upon.

Instrument (Type)

Characters with this skill are adept at playing a musical instrument (REF). They also understand the finer points of musical expression (INT) and can appreciate instrumental performances more than the average person (PRE).

The specific instrument (or family of instruments, with the GM's permission) must be chosen when the skill is purchased.

Successful use of this skill means the character performs in a manner that moves or entertains the audience, or appraises the quality of instrumental performances by others. The effect number of the roll determines the quality of the performance; the higher the effect number the better the performance, and, thus, the better the audience's reaction.

This skill may also be used as a complementary skill to Persuasion in the appropriate circumstances (at the GM's discretion).

Types: Drums, Banjos, Flutes, Guitars, Harps, Horns, Keyboards, Violins, etc.

Juggling

Characters with this skill are adept at juggling and balancing objects (REF), including heavy and unbalanced objects (STR). They also understand the finer points of these physical forms of entertainment (INT) and can appreciate such performances more than the average person (PRE).

Successful use of this skill means the character performs in a manner that wows the audience, or appraises the quality of such performances by others. The quality of a performance is determined by the effect number of the roll; the higher the effect number the better the performance, and, thus, the better the audience's reaction.

Examples of people with this skill include: Chinese acrobats, street entertainers and James Ernest.

Mimicry

With this skill, characters can mimic voices and other sounds (PRE). Some common applications of this skill include impersonating another person's voice, making non-human sounds (such as bird songs, cars or machine-gun fire), and so on. Mimicry can be used either as a ruse or for entertainment.

Mimicry can be used as a complementary skill to Acting (for impersonating a specific person) and to other Social skills (at GM's discretion).

Singing

Characters with this skill are adept at singing (HLT). They also understand the finer points of artistic expression (INT) and can appreciate singing performances more than the average person (PRE).

Successful use of this skill means the character performs in a manner that moves or entertains the audience (HLT), or appraises the value of song writing or performances by others (INT). The effect number of the roll determines the quality of the performance; the higher the effect number the better the performance, and, thus, the better the audience's reaction.

This skill may also be used as a complementary skill to Persuasion in the appropriate circumstances (at the GM's discretion).

Ventriloquist

The skill of throwing one's voice. Characters with this skill can perform auditory illusions (HLT), making it sound as though their voice (or any sound they can make with their throat or mouth) is coming from some other location, such as another person, from behind someone, or even from an inanimate object.

This skill can also be used as complementary to Mimicry.

Sciences Skill Group

Astronomy

The character has knowledge of the study of stars and planetary bodies (INT), and includes knowledge of astrometrics, black holes, and the like. The extent of the character's knowledge will depend on the era in which the game is set (e.g., an astronomer in 2001 would know a lot more about outer space, as a rule, than one in 1801). The skill score reflects the depth of knowledge possessed by the character relative to the whole body of knowledge available in the current era.

Biology (Spec)

The character has knowledge of biology (INT). The extent of the character's knowledge will depend on the era in which the game is set (e.g., a biologist in 2001 would know a lot more about biology, as a rule, than one in 1801). The skill score reflects the depth of knowledge possessed by the character relative to the whole body of knowledge available in the current era.

Specialties: Marine, Micro, or any other specialties approved by the GM.

Chemistry (Spec)

The character has knowledge of chemistry (INT). The extent of the character's knowledge will depend on the era in which the game is set (e.g., a chemist in 2001 would know a lot more about chemistry, as a rule, than one in 1801). The skill score reflects the depth of knowledge possessed by the character relative to the whole body of knowledge available in the current era.

Mathematics is usually a complimentary skill to Chemistry.

Specialties: Biochemistry, Inorganic, Organic, or any other specialties approved by the GM.

Mathematics

The character has knowledge of mathematics (INT), including calculus, geometry, statistics, trigonometry and so on. The character is able to calculate mathematical formulae without the aid of a calculator or computer, given enough time (and, typically, something to notations, such as a pen and paper or chalk and a chalkboard). The use of a calculator, abacus, or other calculating device will provide a +3 to +9 bonus to the skill roll.

Mathematics is usually a complimentary skill to Physics and Chemistry.

Physics (Spec)

The character has knowledge of physics and the laws of nature, including kinetic energy, the effects of gravity on mass, and so on (INT). The extent of the character's knowledge will depend on the era in which the game is set. The skill score reflects the depth of knowledge possessed by the character relative to the whole body of knowledge available in the current era.

Mathematics is usually a complimentary skill to Physics.

A specialty must be selected for this skill when it is bought. This skill may be bought more than once, each time for a different science.

Specialties: Astrophysics, General, Nuclear, Quantum, or any other specialty approved by the GM.

Simple Missile Weapon Skill Group

Boomerangs

Characters with this skill are adept at the use and care of boomerangs (REF). This skill is used when making attacks with such weapons (see *Combat* for rules on making attacks, damage, and so on). Some boomerangs are designed to return to the thrower if they miss their intended target (takes 1d3 turns). Some boomerangs are heavy weapons with one "arm" longer than the other, that are designed to deliver a deadly blow. The latter, heavy variety do not return in the same manner as their smaller, symmetrical cousins.

Bows (Spec)

Characters with this skill are adept at the use (REF) and maintenance (INT) of bows. This skill is used when making attacks with such weapons (see *Combat* for rules on making attacks, damage, and so on), or to string a bow in a hurry (STR).

Specialties: Longbows, Short bows, Composite bows.

Crossbows (Spec)

Characters with this skill are adept at the use (REF) and maintenance (INT) of crossbows. This skill is used when making attacks with such weapons (see *Combat* for rules on making attacks, damage, and so on), or to cock a crossbow in a hurry (STR).

Specialties: Hand crossbows, Heavy Crossbows, Light Crossbows, Spearguns.

Sling Weapons (Spec)

Characters with this skill are adept at the use (REF) and maintenance (INT) of sling weapons. This skill is used when making attacks with such weapons (see *Combat* for rules on making attacks, damage, and so on), or to hurl missiles great distances (STR).

Specialties: Atlatl, Bolas, Simple Slings.

Slingshots

Characters with this skill are adept at the use (REF) and care (INT) of slingshots. This skill is used when making attacks with such weapons (see *Combat* for rules on making attacks, damage, and so on), or to fire small missiles great distances (STR).

Small Arms Skill Group

Black Powder Weapons (Spec)

Characters with this skill are adept at the use (REF) and maintenance (INT) of primitive or low-tech firearms. This skill is used when making attacks with such weapons. (See *Combat* for rules on making attacks, damage, and so on).

In addition to firing a weapon, this skill can be used to reduce the time needed to reload one. The normal time required to reload a black powder weapon is 10 turns (about 1 minute). With a successful Challenging REF attribute roll (TN 18), the time required is reduced to 10 - EN turns (minimum time required is 1 turn).

Specialties: Blunderbuss, Pistols, Long Rifles.

Pistols

Characters with this skill are adept at the use (REF) and maintenance (INT) of modern handguns, regardless of the type of action of the weapon (i.e., revolver, semi-automatic). This skill is used when making attacks with such weapons. (See *Combat* for rules on making attacks, damage, and so on).

In addition to firing a weapon, this skill can be used to reduce the time needed to reload one or to clear a jam. The normal rate for reloading a revolver cylinder with loose rounds is 2 rounds per turn. Reloading a semi-automatic pistol (i.e., exchanging an empty magazine for a full one) or reloading a revolver using a speed-loader takes 1 turn. The standard rate for reloading an empty magazine is 1 round per turn. With a successful Challenging REF attribute roll (TN 18), the character can load a number of rounds into a magazine or cylinder per turn equal to his REF, or reload a semi-automatic weapon with a fresh magazine (or a revolver with a speed-loader) and fire the weapon in the same turn.

Rifles

Characters with this skill are adept at the use (REF) and maintenance (INT) of modern rifles, regardless of the type of action of the weapon (i.e., lever-action, semi-automatic, bolt action). This skill is used when making attacks with such weapons. (See *Combat* for rules on making attacks, damage, and so on).

In addition to firing a weapon, this skill can be used to reduce the time needed to reload one or to clear a jam. The normal rate for reloading a bolt action or lever action rifle is 1 round per turn. Reloading a semi-automatic rifle (i.e., exchanging an empty magazine for a full one) takes 1 turn. The standard rate for reloading an empty magazine is 1 round per turn. With a successful Challenging REF attribute roll (TN 18), the character can load a number of rounds into a magazine or weapon per turn equal to his REF, or reload a semi-automatic weapon with a fresh magazine and fire the weapon in the same turn.

Shotguns

Characters with this skill are adept at the use (REF) and maintenance (INT) of modern smoothbore shotguns, regardless of the type of action of the weapon (i.e., breech-loaded, pump-action, semi-automatic). This skill is used when making attacks with such weapons. (See *Combat* for rules on making attacks, damage, and so on).

In addition to firing a weapon, this skill can be used to reduce the time needed to reload one or to clear a jam. The normal rate for reloading a shotgun is 1 round per turn. With a successful Challenging REF attribute roll (TN 18), the character can load 2 rounds into a magazine per turn.

Sub-machineguns

Characters with this skill are adept at the use (REF) and maintenance (INT) of modern submachine-guns. This skill is used when making attacks with such weapons. (See *Combat* for rules on making attacks, damage, and so on).

In addition to firing a weapon, this skill can be used to reduce the time needed to reload one or to clear a jam. The normal rate for reloading a submachine-gun (i.e., exchanging an empty magazine for a full one) is 1 turn. The standard rate for reloading an empty magazine is 1 round per turn. With a successful Challenging REF attribute roll (TN 18), the character can load a number of rounds into a magazine or cylinder per turn equal to his REF, or reload a weapon with a fresh magazine and fire the weapon in the same turn.

Social Skill Group

Social skills are those relating primarily to social interaction with and the influencing of others. Social skills are generally governed by the Mind group, though some can be assisted by physical appearance or ability. The Social skill group includes the following skills.

Conversation

The skill of obtaining information from someone through conversation, without raising suspicion or, perhaps, without the subject even knowing he has been manipulated (INT). Conversation can also be used to make "small talk," to gain someone's trust or build a rapport with him (PRE). The difficulty of the skill roll depends on the reluctance or inability of the individual to provide the information and the circumstances under which the conversation takes place.

Intrigue

This skill is the art of uncovering (or covering up) secrets. A secret could be a love affair, a disreputable past, or a plot to overthrow the king. Intrigue can be used to oppose Deduction (but not Intuition) when trying to effect a "cover up" or otherwise conceal important or sensitive information from others, especially in a social setting (such as at the Royal Court, a meeting of Parliament or a formal ball or dinner thrown at an embassy). This skill may also be used as complementary to Conversation, Persuasion or other social skills (GM's discretion).

Philosophy

This is the skill of philosophical theories, discussion and debate, covering such topics as "What is the meaning of life?" "Is there a God?" "What is mankind's greatest error?" and the like (INT). Philosophy also includes knowledge of theology and thus can be complementary to the Religion skill.

Society (Type)

Characters with this skill are familiar with a particular subculture, whether through direct interaction or some vicarious experience. This knowledge extends to important or well-known personalities, tastes in music and fashion, language (slang and/or dialects), as well as popular social spots and important businesses, and the like. For example, characters with Society (Courtier) know the finer points of court etiquette and the proper behavior for ladies and gentlemen. This is a critical skill among courtiers, diplomats and nobility.

A specific sub-culture must be chosen when this skill is purchased. This skill may be bought more than once, each time for a different sub-culture.

A success means the character acts appropriately (+3 all social skill checks for the rest of the event) or gains one important piece of information from interaction with one or more members of the group. An effect number of 6 or higher means the character is noticed and gains the special attention of one or more important figures in the group (+3 to all social skill checks for the rest of the event, or the GM may role-play some special result at his discretion).

Erin is playing Adrienne, a commoner, in a Victorian Era game. Adrienne is masquerading as a noblewoman at a formal ball. As she mingles with the guests, trying to be accepted as one of them, the GM tells Erin that she must make a Difficult Society (High Society) roll (TN 21). Erin rolls and gets a total of 27! Because Adrienne's roll was 6 points higher than the required TN, the GM decides that she has gained special attention. He tells Erin that not only has Adrienne been accepted and performed as expected by the other guests, she has gained the notice of the Duke of Effingham, who invites her to dine with him!

A failed roll means the character has failed to gain any useful information or has made some simple, but forgivable, mistake (-3 to all social skill checks for the rest of the event). A roll that fails by 6 or more (i.e., a skill roll total that is less than TN-6) means the character has made some major gaffe, insulting the host or other dignitary at the function. The GM should determine an appropriate consequence of the character's *faux pas*. The character may have gained an enemy, been challenged to a duel, been captured by a press gang, or been mugged in an alley. In cases of a very low roll resulting in failure (e.g., 9 less than the TN), the GM can simply assign an amount of injury for the mishap (e.g., 1d6 B/S damage) or run the event as an encounter; perhaps with the intervention of the other PCs. The latter approach could easily lead to an adventure unto itself.

In the same situation, Erin rolls below an Average success, three levels below the required Difficult success. Disastrous! The GM decides that not only has Adrienne been exposed as a fraud, the Duke of Effingham is particularly offended and orders her to be arrested and placed in gaol!

The GM is encouraged to modify the Target Number of the roll based on circumstances.

Society may be used as a complementary skill to most, if not all, social skills, including Persuasion, Politics, and Conversation.

Types: Corporate, Courtier, High Society, Military, Streetwise.

Style

This skill covers knowledge of the latest styles and fashions, fashion design, and presentation. Characters with this skill can keep up with the latest fashion trends, identify the origin (region or designer) of fashion styles, design new fashions and coordinate fashion shows.

Style can be used as complementary to certain social skill rolls (GM's discretion).

Symbols (Type)

This skill represents the study and recognition of symbols. Characters with this skill are familiar with the various family, governmental and corporate crests, banners and devices (INT). A character making a successful Symbols skill roll will recognize the owner (individual, family, organization or nation) to which a symbol or other device belongs. The GM may subject the roll to a +3 to -3 modifier, depending on how well-known or obscure the symbol is in the local area.

Sir Thomas sees a regal crest on a tapestry in the market. Sir Thomas' player wishes to identify the owner of the crest and tells the GM so. The GM has the player make a Symbols (Heraldry) check for Sir Thomas, with a +3 to the skill roll because the GM knows the crest is that of a lord who lives some distance away.

Types: Arcane & Occult Symbols, Corporate Logos, Heraldry, Naval Flags, Runes.

Social Sciences Skill Group

Anthropology (Spec)

Characters with this skill are familiar with the customs, traditions, and myth about a culture, nation, or region (INT).

Skill checks are not needed for "common knowledge," such as local holidays, the names of important local people, and so on.

A successful Anthropology roll provides the character with more obscure facts, such as the names of important persons or deities, methods of food preparation, and other details about the subject.

Note that this skill does not convey information about the local underworld or seedier side of the area. For that information the character will need the Society (Streetwise) skill.

Specialties: Specific culture or civilization.

Archaeology (Spec)

Characters with this skill are trained in the systematic study of past (even prehistoric) human life and culture by the recovery and examination of remaining material evidence, such as graves, buildings, tools, and pottery. Characters also have knowledge of the science or study of antiquities (especially prehistoric antiquities), such as the remains of buildings or monuments of an early epoch, inscriptions, implements, and other relics, written manuscripts, and so on.

Specialties: Artifacts, Early Civilizations, Excavation, Paleobotany, Paleontology, Prehistoric Civilizations.

Criminology

The skill of crime-scene investigation. Characters with this skill can identify a crime scene (INT), as well as identify, preserve (INT), and collect (REF) evidence. Some common procedures include collecting samples of latent fingerprints, taking photographs, taking measurements, and preparing evidentiary diagrams. Characters also understand the basics of criminal behavior and *modus operandi* of suspects (INT).

This skill can be used as complementary to Awareness (for knowing what to look for as well as likely places to look for them) and Deduction (figuring out who did it and why).

Politics

Politics is the study of the processes, principles, and structure of government and of political institutions. Characters with this skill are familiar with government and the governing of a political entity, such as a nation or municipality, as well as the administration and control of its internal and external affairs (INT). Characters with this skill understand the procedures and rules of government, how to conduct a government meeting, draft bills and pass them into law, and how to engage in political debate (PRE). Characters also know how to garner and maintain public support, how to manipulate public opinion (PRE) and how to present information in the best possible light or to misrepresent information to avoid a scandal (INT).

Politics is an important skill for members of government (politicians), lobbyists, and even some special operations forces (such as counter-insurgents) and CIA operatives.

Orate can be used as complementary to this skill.

Psychology (Spec)

The character has knowledge of human behavior and the conscious and subconscious mind, including effects of abuse, the effects of mood disorders, and so on (INT). The extent of the character's knowledge will depend on the era in which the game is set. The skill score reflects the depth of knowledge possessed by the character relative to the whole of knowledge available in the current era.

A specialty must be selected for this skill when it is bought. This skill may be bought more than once, each time for a different science.

Specialties: Alien (species), Animal, Behavioral, Criminal, Counseling, Profiling, or any other specialty approved by the GM.

Technical Skills

Astrogation

Characters with this skill are able to determine their approximate position in space, plot a course between two known points and navigate between and within star systems (INT). Astrogation may be used as a complementary to the Starships skill and others with GM's permission.

This skill is common among professional starship pilots, merchants, and smugglers in a sci-fi campaign.

Computers (Spec)

The knowledge and use of computer language code to create or alter software programs. Characters with this skill can create programs, hack computer networks, and so on (INT).

Specialties: Hacking, Programming, Use*.

Electrician

Electrician is the skill of building, installing, maintaining, and repairing electrical devices and systems, such as those in computers, vehicles, environmental systems, buildings, and the like. Characters with this skill are able to effect repairs on, maintain and even rebuild items within their specialty (INT). The types of devices or equipment that a specialty will apply to depend on the technology level available in the campaign.

Electronics (Spec)

Electronics is the skill of building, repairing and, maintaining electronic devices and equipment. Characters with this skill understand the principles of electronics and are able to diagnose problems occurring in electronic devices and fix them.

Specialties: Appliances, Comm, Security Systems, Weapons.

Engineering (Type)

Engineering is the skill of designing, building, maintaining, and repairing systems. Characters with this skill are able to effect repairs on, maintain, and even rebuild items within their specialty (INT). The kinds of devices or equipment that a specialty applies to depends on the technology level available in the campaign.

This skill must be purchased separately for each type of engineering the player wishes his character to possess. Note that this is not the same skill as Combat Engineering (page 51).

Specialties: Architectural, Propulsion, Structural, Transportation.

Mechanics (Spec)

Mechanics is the skill of repairing and maintaining mechanical devices (INT), as well as diagnosing problems. When the skill is bought the player must select a specialty. Characters with this skill can repair axles, motors, brakes, and so on. (INT).

Specialties: Specific part or system (e.g., brakes, transmission, jet engines).

Operate Electronics (Spec)

Characters with this skill can operate electronic communication and sensor equipment, including both military and civilian versions, and those aboard vessels, portable and stationary devices, and so on. Characters can also maintain and make minor, emergency repairs to such devices, though any complex repairs will require the Electronics skill.

A successful skill roll also allows the user to detect objects using sensor equipment, such as sonar and radar. Operate Electronics can also be used to try to jam sensors as with jamming communications.

Attempts to jam communication equipment requires a contested skill roll, with both sides using the Operate Electronics skill. If one side has more advanced or powerful technology, the GM may allow a bonus of +1 to +5 to that side's skill roll. The side with the higher Effect Number wins the contest.

Specialties: Communication, Sensors.

Transportation Skills

Driving (Spec)

The skill of operating ground vehicles. The player must select a specialty when this skill is purchased. This skill may be purchased more than once, each time for a different specialty.

Specialties: Cars, Motorcycles, Tracked Vehicles, Tractors/Semis.

Piloting (Spec)

The skill of operating aircraft. The player must select a specialty when this skill is purchased. This skill may be purchased more than once, each time for a different specialty.

Specialties: Grav-vehicles, Helicopters, Jets, Mecha, Planes, Vectored Thrust.

Sailing (Spec)

Characters with this skill know the workings of and can perform as a crewman on a sailing ship. Seamanship is important for sailors and ships' crewmen, as well as ship captains and masters, who must issue orders to the crew. The player must select a specialty when this skill is purchased. This skill may be purchased more than once, each time for a different specialty.

Specialties: Sailboats, Tall Ships.

Starships (Spec)

Characters with this skill can operate interplanetary and interstellar craft. The player must select a specialty when this skill is purchased. This skill may be purchased more than once, each time for a different specialty.

Specialties: Capital Ships, Cargo Ships, Starfighters, System Boats.

Watercraft (Spec)

Characters with this skill know the workings of and can perform as a crewman on a powered sea-going vessel. The player must select a specialty when this skill is purchased. This skill may be purchased more than once, each time for a different specialty.

Specialties: Hovercraft, Large Vessels, Motorboats, Submarines.

ACTION POINTS

Action Points (abbreviated as AP) allow player characters (and important NPCs) to receive bonuses when performing dramatic or heroic actions (see *Using Skills*, page 33). By using Action Points, players can have their characters pull off amazing stunts and heroic feats, such as jumping off of a cliff, avoiding an explosion, or even dodging a gunshot or arrow! Rather than relying on a random chance as dictated by the dice, the *Action! System* allows players to create their character's successes when they need them most!

A character begins each game session with one free Action Point. A character can gain more Action Points by attempting dramatic and heroic actions. Players can be awarded additional Action Points by the GM at any time during a game. Generally, Action Points are awarded for attempting dramatic and heroic actions. GMs can also award additional Action Points for role-playing and anything else they deem appropriate. Action Points are not the only award that players will receive. There are improvements to be purchased and disadvantages to be eliminated using Experience Points as well (see *Experience Points*, page 86).

A character can save Action Points from one game session to the next, but never more than 3. If a character has more than 3 Action Points but does not use them by the end of the game session, they are lost. GMs should not be stingy with Action Points, and players should use them as often as possible, especially in cinematic style games.

WHEN TO USE ACTION POINTS

Dramatic or Heroic Actions

Action Points may be used for any dramatic or heroic action with GM's permission.

A dramatic action is any action or moment in the game that is especially exciting, tense, suspenseful, or is very important to the story. Think of it in terms of an action movie; if something happens that scares you, has you on the edge of your seat, makes you want to jump up and yell, "Yes!" or clap really loud, it was probably a dramatic moment in the movie.

Examples of dramatic moments include: In the movie ***Air Force One*** *when the President is hanging out of the back of the C-130 cargo plane hanging onto the cargo net; in* ***Raiders of the Lost Ark*** *when Indiana Jones is trying to outrun the huge rolling boulder in the cavern; in* ***The Patriot*** *when Captain Benjamin Martin and his two younger sons attack the British soldiers to rescue his oldest son, Gabriel, and also when Gabriel is stabbed by Colonel Tavington; in* ***The Mask of Zorro*** *when Zorro jumps off his horse over a low-hanging tree branch and lands back in the saddle; and in* ***The Phantom Menace*** *when Obi Wan witnesses Darth Maul kill Qui-gon and then attacks him.*

After the Dice Are Rolled

Action Points may be used after the dice have been rolled but must be used before the GM describes the outcome of the events for that turn. A player may not use more Action Points in a single game session than the character has, and no more than three Action Points can be used with any single action or skill roll.

WHAT ACTION POINTS DO

Action Points may be used in one of several ways to enhance a character's performance in a game.

A player may use up to three available *Action Points* in any single turn. These may be split up and used on different actions, events or dice rolls, as long as they all take place in the same turn.

Boost a Skill Roll

Each Action Point used to boost a skill roll adds a bonus of +5 to the roll.

Nicholas is playing in a gritty superhero game. His character, Dark Justice, is facing two gunmen in a shopping mall. One of the gunmen turns and fires his gun into the crowd. Nicholas wants to protect the innocent bystanders, so he tells the GM "Dark Justice is going to throw his mini-shield to hit the gun and knock it upward, so that no one gets hit." The GM considers the action

and decides that Nicholas needs to make an Extreme Throwing skill roll (TN 27). Dark Justice has REF of 7 and his Throwing skill is +5, for a total of 12. Nicholas rolls 3d6 and gets 14, for a total of 26. Ordinarily Nicholas would have failed the roll. But Nicholas decides to spend an Action Point. The GM allows it because it is a dramatic moment in the adventure. Nicholas spends one AP and adds 5 to his roll, making his new total 31, turning the failed attempt into a successful one. Dark Justice thwarts the evil gunman's plans and saves the innocents! Nicholas then marks off one Action Point from his character sheet, and the game continues.

Should the GM deem it appropriate, using Action Points to fulfill a heroic or important plot or goal may be reason enough to award an additional Action Point!

Boost a Control Roll

Action Points may also be used to add to the Control Roll of a Disadvantage, but only with GM's permission (see *Control Rolls*, page 12). Each Action Point used to boost a Control Roll adds a bonus of +5 and is calculated the same as the skill roll boost.

Tim's character has the psychological disadvantage Phobia (Claustrophobia) at the Hardship level. During a game, Tim's character enters an elevator. Because psychological disadvantages kick in automatically, the GM tells Tim that his character begins to experience extreme anxiety and that Tim must make a Control Roll to avoid mild panic and the accompanying +6 TN to all his skill rolls. The Control Roll is 10 for a Hardship, so Tim rolls 3d6 and gets an 8. Failure! But Tim tells the GM that he really needs to make this roll and spends an Action Point to boost the roll. Tim adds 5 to his roll, making it a 13, turning the failed roll into a successful one. Tim's character gains his composure and is able to control his phobia for the elevator ride.

Boost an Attribute

Each Action Point spent will temporarily increase a primary attribute by 1, or a derived attribute by 5.

Attributes increased in this way do not also increase derived attributes, although this may be used to increase the attribute for use with a skill roll.

This increase lasts for the duration of one "event" within the game, not merely one skill roll.

Ryan is playing Louisiana Smith, an archaeologist and explorer, in a pulp adventure game. In the game, Louisiana has just recovered a stolen artifact from a Nazi camp. As he sneaks through the camp, he comes face to face with a big, tough Nazi soldier who is guarding a Flying Wing airplane that Louisiana needs to escape. Louisiana's STR is only 3, he will do only 1d6+2 damage when Louisiana punches his opponent. Ryan knows he'll have to do more, because this guard is very big. Ryan spends one Action Point to increase his STR to 4 for one turn. Now, if Louisiana connects with a punch he will do 2d6 damage! His increased STR does not increase any of his Derived Attributes, such as his TGH, however. The GM determines that a fist fight is an "event" and allows Louisiana to keep his STR at 4 for the duration of the fight. Whether Louisiana wins or loses, however, once the fight is over his STR will return to 3.

Reduce Damage

Each Action Point spent reduces the damage from a single attack or event by 5 points. If the damage is effectively reduced to less than 0, treat it as 0 points of damage. This can simulate a "stroke of luck" in which an attack completely misses the character, a glancing blow, a miracle, or any other explanation agreed upon by the player and the GM.

During the fight with the Nazi soldier, Louisiana gets hit with a haymaker punch for 17 points of damage! Louisiana's TGH is only 3, so he will suffer 14 points of damage from the punch. Because this exceeds half his LIF, Louisiana will be knocked unconscious! Ryan decides to spend his last remaining Action Point to reduce the damage of the attack. By spending an Action Point, the damage is reduced from 14 to 9 points. Louisiana reels from the blow but he is still up and fighting!

Increase Damage

Action Points may be spent to increase the damage inflicted by one of the character's own attacks. It may not be used to increase the damage caused by another player's character.

Each Action Point spent in this manner increases the damage done by a single attack or event by 5 points. Damage may be increased up to 2x the maximum damage normally possible. This can simulate a "stroke of luck" in which a the opponent moves into a punch, a lucky blow, a miracle, or any other explanation agreed upon by the player and the GM.

Louisiana needs to finish the guard off, and Ryan tries for one mighty punch to the guard's head in an attempt to knock him out. Ryan makes his attack roll—success! Normally Louisiana would do 2d6 damage with a punch (from the previous example), but Ryan spends an Action Point to boost the damage.. Wham! The guard is hit, and Ryan rolls his damage (2d6) and gets 6. Then he adds 5 points for the Action Point for a total of 11, knocking the guard out.

GAINING ACTION POINTS

Characters can gain Action Points during the game. When a character fulfills one of the following criteria, the GM should award an Action Point to the character. GMs should not be stingy with Action Points, and players should use them as often as possible, especially in cinematic style games. For guidelines on how many Action Points to award in a game session, see the next section.

When to Award an Action Point

Dramatic or Heroic Actions

The GM should award one Action Point for any particularly dramatic and heroic action attempted by the characters during the game, whether it is successful or not (see *Dramatic or Heroic Actions*, page 60).

Meet a Goal

If a character manages to fulfill the "in-game goal" for his character, he should receive an Action Point. The fulfillment of the goal must be in a way that logically fits into the current adventure or story.

Louisiana Smith narrowly defeats the Nazi guard in a tough fist fight and climbs aboard the Flying Wing to escape with the artifact he came for. The GM decides that defeating the guard so that Louisiana could use the plane to escape with the artifact is a worthy goal and awards an Action Point to Ryan. Ryan notes the new Action Point on his character sheet.

Memorable Game Moments

GMs can award Action Points to players for especially good role-playing. Any time a player performs a particularly memorable "moment" within the game, portraying his or her character, or does something to improve or propel the story or that entertains the rest of the group in a significant way (GM's discretion), that player deserves an Action Point.

The young Samurai Tateno towered over Hideo, his older, more experienced foe. The older man looked up from his broken sword with wet eyes. "You have shamed me with your skills." "No," replied Tateno, "you have shamed yourself with your lack of them." Turning his back, Tateno walks quietly away, refusing to give Hideo even the death of a Warrior.

Give the GM a Plot Hook

If a player manages to role-play some aspect of his or her character in a way that allows the GM to work it into the main plot of the adventure—especially if it allows the GM to make a "complication" for the PCs out of it—the player should receive an Action Point. Many Disadvantages provide great plot hooks for the GM, such as Dependent, Enemy and Secret.

Nicholas's character, Dark Justice, hands over two recently captured gunmen to the police. As the last assailant is placed in a squad car, Nicholas tells the GM that Dark Justice uses his communicator to call his fiancé Nancy's apartment. "He's already running late for their dinner date," Nicholas says, "but he knows she will understand." The GM decides that this is a great opportunity to add a new twist to the story! The GM tells Nicholas that the voice on the other end of the phone is definitely not Nancy. "Good evening," came the voice of Cyrus, Dark Justice's arch enemy. "I am afraid the young lady has made other plans…"

Other Circumstances

GMs can create additional circumstances under which a character gains an Action Point, and some *Action! System* games will include additional guidelines for awarding Action Points, based on the setting or genre. For example, in a pulp adventure game, characters might gain an Action Point for incorporating their character's "tag line" into normal dialogue during the course of the adventure, for role-playing a scene exceptionally well and in-character, or any situation in the game that the GM feels is deserving of an Action Point award to one or more of the players.

How Many AP To Award

The GM should carefully consider how many Action Points to give out to any single character in a game session, however. Because characters cannot save more than three Action Points from one game session to the next, players will likely spend them freely. If a GM awards 10 Action Points to a character in a single game session, that's effectively the same as giving the player five "automatic successes" to use during the adventure. This is perfectly acceptable, if this is what the GM wants, but it also diminishes the usefulness of points spent on each character's attributes and skills, and some players may feel cheated.

As a guideline, GMs should award an average of one Action Point to each character in *Realistic Action!* games, 2 Action Points to each character in *Cinematic Action!* games, and 3 or more Action Points to each character in *Extreme Action!* games.

Mike is running an anime-style, Extreme Action! *game. Because the game is based on anime, the action is at times over the top, so Mike wants his players to use Action Points frequently in his game. Mike decides that he will award an average of 5 Action Points to each player in his game each game session.*

A player can save Action Points from one game to the next, but never more than 3. If a character has more than 3 AP but doesn't use them during the game, the extra points are lost.

RULES OF PLAY

TAKING ACTIONS

Throughout the game each player declares to the GM, one at a time, the actions his or her character is performing each turn.

A turn varies in length. There is no set amount of time for a turn; a turn can be a month, a day, an hour or a few seconds. The length of a turn is determined by the GM during play, except during combat (see *Combat*).

What Can I Do?

The GM can allow characters to perform any action that the GM thinks is reasonable, as long as the story continues.

What Is An Action?

An action can be something as simple as opening a door, talking to another character, or even waiting for something to happen. Actions can also be more complex, such as firing a gun at something (or someone), trying to solve a puzzle or riddle, or performing calculations on a computer.

If a character performs or attempts a complex action, the player may be required to make a skill roll. The GM's job is to decide when a player needs to make a skill roll for something the character is trying to do (see *Using Skills*, page 33).

Limitations on Taking Actions

One Action Per Turn

Characters may perform one action per turn without penalty while walking or standing still. Characters who are running may perform one other action in the same turn at a -3 penalty. Characters who are sprinting may perform one other action at -6.

Jim is playing Private Stewart, a soldier in a World War II action game. Private Stewart is walking across a field when he comes under enemy fire. For his character's next action, Jim tells the GM that Private Stewart is going to run for cover while firing a few shots in the direction of the enemy. Because Private Stewart is running, but not sprinting, Private Stewart can perform both actions in the same turn, but has a -3 penalty on his shot.

Private Stewart can't make it to cover in one turn so on the next turn Jim decides to have his character sprint rather than run. Because Private Stewart is sprinting this time, he can perform an action that requires a skill roll in the same turn but at a -6 penalty, so the GM tells Jim that his character can sprint and fire blindly while sprinting (i.e., with no skill roll allowed) or he can sprint and make an attack roll at -6 in the same turn.

No Impossible Actions

A character cannot perform an action that is physically impossible given the circumstances.

A character swimming in a river cannot suddenly "appear" in the middle of a desert. The character could get to the desert eventually, but it's impossible to do so in one turn. Likewise, a sword smith cannot forge a sword in a single turn; it is simply impossible to heat the steel, hammer and shape it, and so on, in a single turn.

Common sense and fair play should be the guides for the GM in deciding whether a task is physically impossible. For instance, in some game settings, the use of magic or high technology will allow characters to do things that would be impossible to do in the real world.

Declaring Actions

When declaring their character's actions, the players can simply describe what their characters say and do (called "narrative style") or they may talk "in character," talking the way they think their characters would (called, appropriately, "in character" style). Either way is fine. Most players of role-playing games use a combination of styles.

Here's an example of narrative style.

Player: *"My character tells the guy he's starting to annoy my character."*

Here's an example of in character style.

Player (in his character's voice): *"You're starting to annoy me."*

Here's an example of using a combination of the two styles.

Player: *"My character stands up."* (Then, in his character's voice) *"You're starting to annoy me."*

See? There's nothing to it.

Players who make especially good tries at role-playing and characterization should receive bonuses of +1 to +3 (added to the character's dice roll). GMs can also award Action Points to players for especially good play (see *Gaining Action Points*, pg. 62).

AVAILABLE ACTIONS

The following is a list of actions available to characters. This list is not exhaustive. There may be moments in your game when the players want to do something that is not specifically covered by the actions presented here. In these cases, GMs are encouraged to make up additional actions for use in their game.

Indeed, if some rule or modifier strikes you as inappropriate or just plain "wrong," then go ahead and change it for your game. *Action! System* is designed to be fun, so if you feel that any rule is getting in the way of you having fun, toss it out!

Defensive Actions

Defensive actions are those designed to protect a character from injury and harm. If a player has a held action, he may abort the held action in order to declare and use a defensive action (see *Wait*, below).

Characters may "abort" to a defensive action at any time during a turn, even if it means acting before their INI would indicate. If a character is attacked (or if a player otherwise feels her character is in danger), the player may declare that their character is aborting their normal action that turn in order to perform a defensive action. This is particularly useful if a character is ambushed or attacked unexpectedly.

Pat is playing in a modern military game and his character is getting ready to fire his weapon at a bad guy. Before Pat's turn comes around, however, the GM tells him that a grenade lands at his character's feet! Pat tells the GM that his character aborts his action that turn and instead dives for cover.

Block Melee Attack

Block can be used to thwart an attack. The character must have something sufficiently durable with which to deflect the incoming the attack. A plastic fork, for example, cannot block a sword blow. Edged weapons may not be blocked using the Unarmed Combat (Brawling) skill, though they may be blocked using other styles, such as Karate or Aikido, at the GM's option.

To Block a HTH or melee attack, the character must make a successful skill roll, using his REF + appropriate combat skill +1. If the effect number of the Block roll is equal to or greater than the effect number of the attacker's skill roll, the attack has been blocked and the blocking character gains a +4 to his INI against his attacker on the next turn. This INI bonus does not apply to actions against characters other than the attacker whose attack was blocked.

Characters who are blocking a melee attack receive a bonus of +2 to their DEF against melee attacks, but no bonus against ranged attacks. This bonus lasts until their next action.

Dodge

With this action, the character can avoid damage from a blow or other attack. The character must have an action available to use in the turn he is being attacked. No skill roll is required.

When a character is dodging, the character receives a bonus of +3 to his DEF. This bonus lasts until his next action. The character may also move up to one half his MOV in meters.

The player must declare he is dodging before the attack roll is made against the character. A character may use a held action to perform a Dodge.

Roll With the Blow

With this action, a character that has been struck by a melee or hand-to-hand attack can Roll With the Blow to avoid some of the damage. The character must have an action available to use in the same turn he was attacked. The character makes a skill roll using REF + (Unarmed Combat or Acrobatics skill). If the effect number for the skill roll exceeds the attack roll, the character suffers only half of the damage rolled, before subtracting his TGH.

Characters who are rolling with the blow receive a bonus of +2 to their DEF. This bonus lasts until their next action.

A player may declare this action after the attack roll is made but it must be declared before the damage is rolled for the attack. A character may abort a held action to roll with the blow.

Movement Actions

Crawl

With this action, the character may crawl along the ground or any surface he could normally walk on. The character moves a distance of up to one half his MOV (rounding up) in meters each turn spent crawling.

Crawling characters are treating as if they are prone and do not add their REF to their DEF while crawling.

Climb

With this action, the character may climb a distance of up to one half his MOV (rounding up) in meters each turn. Some surfaces may require the character to make a Climbing roll, at the GM's discretion (see *Climbing*, page 40).

Dive

With this action, the character can attempt to leap out of harm's way, avoiding the effects of an explosion, a hail of gunfire, or simply dive across some distance, such as an open pit. The player declares the spot (i.e., the target hex) where he wants to land and makes a STR + Leaping roll. The base TN for the roll is equal to 10, plus 2 for every meter of distance.

If the roll is successful, the character clears the distance and lands safely. If diving to avoid an area attack, a successful roll means the character avoids the attack altogether. A failed roll means the character was caught in the area of effect in mid leap, suffering normal damage or effect of the attack.

A character may dive up to one half his STR score in meters. Characters receive a bonus of +3 to their DEF while diving. This bonus lasts until their next action.

Roll

With this action, the character may roll over an object, along the ground, or on any surface he could normally walk on. The character moves a distance up to ½ his MOV in meters each turn. Difficult obstacles may require a REF attribute roll or Acrobatics roll to successfully pass over, at the GM's discretion.

Characters receive a bonus of +2 to their DEF while rolling. This bonus lasts until their next action.

Run

With this action, the character can jog or run across the ground or any surface he could normally walk on. The character moves a distance up to 2x his MOV in meters and may take one additional non-movement action at -3.

Characters receive a bonus to their DEF based on their total MOV velocity (see *Combat Modifiers*, page 68).

Sprint

With this action, the character can sprint across the ground or any surface he could normally walk on. The character moves a distance up to 4x his MOV in meters and may perform one other non-Movement action at -6.

Characters do not receive their REF bonus to their DEF while sprinting. This restriction lasts until their next action. Sprinting characters still receive a bonus to their DEF based on their total MOV velocity, however (see *Combat Modifiers*, page 68).

Walk

With this action, the character can walk across the ground or any surface he could normally walk on. The character moves a distance up to his MOV in meters and may take one additional action at no penalty.

Walking characters may receive a bonus to their DEF based on their speed (see *Combat Modifiers*, page 68).

Offensive Actions

Aim

When firing a missile weapon (such as a bow, crossbow, firearm, and so on) at more than short range, the skill roll becomes more difficult. By taking time to aim, characters can offset some or all of these range penalties. For each full turn spent aiming a weapon (and nothing else), the character receives a bonus of +2 to his skill roll. The maximum bonus is +6.

While aiming, the character must remain focused and his DEF for any attack rolls against him do not receive the benefit of his REF. Any attempt to react to an attack (i.e., to gain the REF bonus to his DEF) or to perform any other action ruins his aim and any bonus gained for it. The character must spend another turn aiming for any benefit, essentially starting from scratch.

Sean is playing in a Marine sniper in a modern covert ops game, Sergeant Mace Silverhawk. Mace's target is 400 meters away, imposing a -12 penalty, requiring Sean to make a Rifles skill roll with an effective TN of 22. Sean decides that Mace, who is hidden, is going to spend two turns aiming, reducing the effective TN from 22 to 18. Mace squeezes the trigger and Sean rolls the dice…

Bind Weapon

With this action, the character uses a melee weapon to bind or pin an opponent's weapon. With a successful combat skill roll at -1 (using Unarmed Combat or applicable weapon skill), the opponent's weapons are rendered immobile (e.g., the opponent's weapon arm is held, the two characters' weapons are locked together, etc.) and neither character can strike the other or otherwise use the pinned weapon.

To break out of a bind, a character must win a contested STR roll. Both characters roll STR + applicable combat skill + 3d6. The character with the higher total may either Shove his opponent, breaking the bind, or maintain the bind, at the winner's option.

Disarm

With this action, the character can disarm an opponent, causing him to drop a weapon, such as a sword or gun. The character must make a contested attack roll at -2. If the effect number of the disarm roll exceeds the effect number of the defender's roll, the opponent drops the weapon and is disarmed. Alternatively, the character may attempt a "take-away," with a successful Disarm indicating that the character has taken the opponent's weapon away and now has it in his possession and may be used against the opponent!

Characters attempting a Disarm receive a +1 bonus to their DEF. This bonus lasts until their next action.

Drag

A character that has successfully grabbed an opponent may drag or pull him. The maximum distance in meters that a resisting opponent can be dragged each turn is equal to the dragging character's STR + 1 minus the opponent's STR, up to a maximum distance equal to the dragger's MOV.

Jim has a STR 5 and Bob has STR 3. Jim has grabbed Bob and tries to forcefully pull him through a doorway, but Bob is resisting. Jim can drag Bob (5 -3 -1 = 1) meter for each action

spent dragging him.

The distance a character can drag an unresisting object (such as an unconscious person) is equal to the dragger's STR +1 minus the STR required to pull the person or object, in meters, up to a maximum distance equal to the dragger's MOV.

A firefighter is trying to drag an unconscious victim out of a burning building. The victim weighs 100 kilograms and requires a STR of 3 to drag. The firefighter has a MOV of 8 and a STR of 4, so the firefighter can drag the unconscious victim (4+1-3) = 2 meters per turn. The farthest the firefighter could possibly drag an item each turn is 8 meters.

Drop

A character that has successfully Grabbed or Restrained an opponent may drop with him to the ground. Both character and opponent will fall to the ground in a pile. Each character suffers 2d6 damage from the fall, and the opponent remains Grabbed or Restrained.

Grab

With this action, the character uses one or both hands to grab hold of the opponent. The grabbing character specifies an item (such as an article of clothing, a belt, etc.) or one limb that he will grab. The player rolls for the attack, using the Unarmed Combat skill, at -2. In addition, the grabbing character suffers a -2 DEF penalty.

If successful, the opponent is grabbed, and skill rolls for all actions attempted by the grabbed character are at -3. Once a character has an opponent grabbed, he may perform one of the following maneuvers: Drag, Drop, Restrain or Throw.

To break free from a Grab, the defender must overcome the grabber's strength with his own by making a contested STR + Unarmed Combat skill roll. If the grabber's total is higher than the defender's, then the defender remains grabbed.

Restrain

A character that has successfully grabbed an opponent may restrain him by expanding his Grab to restrain two limbs (either both arms or both legs). To successfully restrain an opponent, the character must succeed at a contested REF + Unarmed Combat skill roll against the opponent's REF + Unarmed Combat skill at -2. If the offensive character's total is higher than the defender's, the opponent is fully restrained and cannot use the restrained limbs, and any other actions attempted by the grabbed character are at -5. Once a character has an opponent restrained, he may only perform a Drag, Drop, or Throw, or he may release the opponent.

To break free from being restrained, the defender must overcome the restraining character's strength with his own by making a contested STR + Unarmed Combat skill roll. If the restraining character's total is higher than the defender's, then the defender remains restrained.

Take-away

This action is similar to the Disarm action, except that with this action, the character attempts to maintain possession of the weapon that he is taking out of his opponent's hands. The character must make a contested attack roll at -3. If the effect number of the disarm roll exceeds the effect number of the defender's roll, the character has taken the opponent's weapon away and now has it in his possession. The weapon may be used against his opponent on the next turn.

Characters attempting a Take-away receive a +1 bonus to their DEF. This bonus lasts until their next action.

Throw

A character that has successfully Grabbed or Restrained an opponent may throw him to the ground. The opponent falls to the ground and suffers B/S damage equal to the thrower's STR in dice. The opponent may reduce the damage suffered from the Throw by making a successful Acrobatics roll (see *Acrobatics*, page 40).

Unarmed Strike

With this action, the character can strike an opponent with a fist, elbow, kick, etc., to inflict damage. The character makes an attack roll using his REF + Unarmed Combat + 3d6. A successful attack inflicts B/S damage for the attacker's STR, as shown on the STR Table. For determining damage for a kick, treat the attacker's STR as +1.

Weapon Strike

With this action, the character attacks an opponent or object with a readied weapon. The character makes an attack roll using his REF + (appropriate weapon skill) + 3d6. If successful, the attack inflicts damage as per the weapon listing (see *Weapons*, page 75.)

Special Actions

Fast Draw

Fast draw is taken in conjunction with a weapon attack, such as drawing and firing a gun or unsheathing and throwing a knife. When performing a fast draw, the character receives a +2 INI bonus for that attack on that turn but the attack roll is at -3. The penalty lasts only for one turn.

Load Weapon

The character is spending the turn reloading a weapon. Reloading a weapon may take multiple turns to accomplish. As a rule of thumb, sling weapons and bows require 1 turn to reload, crossbows require 2 turns, and black powder weapons require 10 turns. Modern firearms may be reloaded at a rate of 1 loose round or one magazine (or clip or cylinder/speed-loader) per turn.

Mount/Dismount

The character is able to mount or dismount a steed (usually a horse, but may be any creature used for such a purpose, depending on the campaign) or vehicle. This action does not require a skill roll except in extreme circumstances (e.g., when the beast is running or the vehicle moving).

Characters who are mounting or dismounting do not receive their REF bonus to DEF. This penalty lasts until their next action.

Wait

With this action, the character is waiting to act. The player may either declare a specific intended action and a circumstance that will trigger the action (e.g., "My character is holding his action and will shoot the first person who walks through that door,") or simply declare that his character is waiting and will act later.

If the player declares a specific condition and a specific action, the character automatically acts first if the condition occurs.

If the player is simply waiting to act later in the turn but with no specific intent (as yet), the character can take an action at any point in the same turn. If a character does not use his held action by the end of the turn, the held action is lost and the character must wait to act until the next turn.

Characters who are waiting are still alert and able to defend themselves, and receives a REF bonus to their DEF, as well as any other applicable DEF modifiers (GM's discretion).

A character may always abort (that is, give up) a held action in order to use a defensive action.

COMBAT

In *Action! System* games, combat is handled in more detail than most other situations. When any character enters a combat situation—by either attacking another character or non-player character or being attacked—game time "slows down."

The following rules are provided to allow players and GMs to determine the outcome of combat encounters in their game. And let's face it, there is likely to be a lot of combat—or potential combat—in any cinematic game.

Combat Turns

Each turn lasts for 3 seconds of "game time." Each character may perform one action per turn (see *Taking Actions*, page 63).

Initiative

During combat, characters act in order of Initiative (INI). To determine initiative, each player rolls 1d6 and adds the number rolled to his character's INI score. The GM rolls once, for the leader (usually the bad guy with the highest PRE or Persuasion), using the leader's INI +1d6 to determine the Initiative for all of the bad guys. The character with the highest initiative score acts first that turn, the character with the next highest initiative score acts second, and so on.

In the case of ties, the character with the highest Intellect acts first. If both characters have the same Intellect scores, then the actions are simultaneous (see *Initiative*, page 9).

Characters with a different length weapon than their opponent may receive a bonus to their INI when at the optimal distance for their weapon (see *Weapon Size*, page 75).

Modifying Target Numbers

In combat, the Target Numbers listed in the *Difficulty and TN Table* on page 33 do not take into account the opponent's abilities. Rather than using the generic difficulty modifiers in melee combat, the Target Number for attacks against other characters is equal to the target's DEF (see *Defensive Target Number*, page 9). The target's base DEF is 10, to which modifiers may be applied.

DEF Modifiers

There are a number of situations that affect a character's DEF score and, therefore, an attacker's TN. Some examples and suggested DEF modifiers are listed below. All listed modifiers are applied to the target character's DEF score.

Character/target is…	**DEF Modifier**
aware of attack	+ REF
using a combat skill to defend	+ Skill score
at optimal distance for his weapon and fighting an opponent with a different length weapon	+3
Diving or Dodging	+3
Blocking or Rolling	+2
Grabbing another character	-2
Armor & Encumbrance	
Unencumbered (< STR kg)	No modifier
Partially encumbered (< Carry wt.)	-1
Greatly encumbered (> Carry wt.)	-3

Combat Modifiers

A variety of situations can affect a skill roll made to hit a target in combat. For example, skill rolls for ranged attacks are modified by the distance, size, and speed of the target. If a target is close, it will be fairly easy to hit. If a target is far away and moving quickly, it will be much harder to hit.

Some examples and suggested modifiers are listed below. All listed modifiers are applied to the skill roll for the attack.

Combat Modifiers Table

Target Size	**Modifier**
Gargantuan, 32m or more (ship, bridge)	+12
Huge, 16m or more (whale, house)	+6
Very large, 8m or more (city bus, big mecha)	+4
Large, 4m or more (horse, car, tree, sm. mecha)	+2
Medium, 2m (human)	0
Small, 1m or less (dog, barrel)	-2
Very small, 1/2m or less (cat, head, limb)	-4
Tiny, 1/4m or less (mouse, bullseye)	-6
Target Visibility	**Modifier**
Completely obscured/invisible	-5
Mostly obscured (heavy fog, good cover)	-3
Partly obscured (light fog, poor cover)	-1
Target Behind Cover	**Modifier**
Half body visible	-1
Head and shoulders only visible	-2
Head only visible	-3
Target silhouetted	+2
Elevation	**Modifier**
Target higher than attacker (uphill, mounted)	+2
Target lower than attacker (downhill, prone)	+1
Aiming	**Modifier**
Aiming	+2 per turn (+6 max)
Braced (stable base, bipod, pintle mount)	+2
Hip shot	-2
Miscellaneous Conditions	**Modifier**
Surprise Attack	-5
Improvised weapon (rock, bottle, small girder)	-2
Distance (ranged attacks only; offset by ACC)	**Modifier**
1 meter	0
2-3 meters	-1
4-5 meters	-2
6-15 meters	-3
16-25 meters	-4
26-35 meters	-5
36-50 meters	-6
51-100 meters	-7
101-150 meters	-8
151-200 meters	-9
201-300 meters	-10
301-400 meters	-11
401-600 meters	-12
601-800 meters	-13
801-1,000 meters	-14
Target Moving	**Modifier**
3-4 m/turn (walking)	-1
5-8 m/turn (jog)	-2
9-16 m/turn (running)	-4
17-32 m/turn (sprinting)	-6
33-64 m/turn (24-42 mph)	-8
65-128 m/turn (highway speeds, train)	-10
129-256 m/turn (small plane, helicopter)	-12
257-512 m/turn (racing car)	-14
513-1024m (1km) /turn (passenger jet)	-16
1025-2048m (2km) /turn (F-18, sound barrier)	-18
2049+ /turn (F-15 on afterburners)	-20

Ranged Combat Example

A character with REF 5 is standing 40 meters away. His base DEF is 10 + REF (5), or 15. If someone 40 meters away shoots at our character, the GM applies the -6 range modifier to his attack roll against the 15 DEF, making the total TN for the shot 21!

Action Modifiers

A number of actions that are available to characters impose a modifier to a skill roll, the character's DEF or both. Below is a condensed list of available actions and their modifiers.

For a more detailed description of each action, see *Available Actions*, page 64. Note: "Skill Mod" represents the modifier to the attacker's skill roll to perform that action.

Defensive Actions	**DEF**	**Skill Mod**	**Notes**
Block	+2	+1	+4 INI vs. melee attacks next turn if block is successful
Dodge	+3	+0	Up to ½ MOV in meters
Roll with the blow	+2	+0	½ damage
Movement Actions	**DEF**	**Skill Mod**	**Notes**
Crawl	+1	+0	No REF bonus to DEF
Climb	+0	+0	Up to ½ MOV
Dive	+3	+0	Up to ½ STR; req. Leaping roll (TN 10 +2/ meter)
Roll	+2	+0	Roll along ground or over obstacle; up to ½ MOV
Run	Var.	+0	Up to 2x MOV plus one non-movement action at -3; DEF bonus for velocity
Sprint	Var.	+0	Up to 4x MOV; plus one non-movement action at -6; DEF bonus for velocity
Walk	+0	+0	Up to MOV plus one other non-movement action
Offensive Actions	**DEF**	**Skill Mod**	**Notes**
Aim	+0	+2/turn	+2 per turn (+6 max); No REF bonus to DEF
Bind Weapon	+0	-1	Opponent's weapon immobilized; requires contested (STR + combat skill + 3d6) to break.
Disarm	+1	-2	Disarms opponent
Drag	+0	+0	Drag resisting person (STR+1 - opponent's STR) meters; max distance = MOV.
Drop	+0	+0	Fall with Grabbed or Restrained opponent; 2d6 dmg
Grab	-2	-2	Grab one item or limb.
Restrain	+0	+0	Fully restrains a Grabbed character; -2 to overcome.
Take-away	+1	-3	Takes opponent's weapon away.
Throw	+1	-1	Inflicts normal STR dmg as B/S; victim thrown to ground
Unarmed Strike	+0	+0	Does STR damage as B/S
Weapon Strike	+0	+0	Does dmg as per weapon
Special Actions	**DEF**	**Skill Mod**	**Notes**
Fast Draw	+0	-3	+2 INI
Load Weapon	+0	+0	Load a weapon & make ready
Mount	+0	+0	No REF bonus to DEF
Wait	+0	+0	Wait to act later in same turn

Autofire

A weapon with autofire "puts a lot of lead downrange," as they say.

When making an autofire attack, the player makes a single attack roll using his REF + Weapon Skill + 3d6 against the target's TN. To determine how many rounds hit the target, the effect number is divided by a number based on the type of attack being made.

Burst

A burst autofire (or "autoburst") attack consists of firing a short, controlled burst of fire at a single target. The shooter makes an attack roll against the target , with any modifiers for size, distance, and so on. On a successful attack roll, the target is hit by one projectile plus an additional projectile for every 2 full points of effect number. The maximum number of rounds that may be fired in a burst is 4.

Mike is playing Sergeant Larry Craft, a SWAT team member. Larry has a REF 6 and Submachine-gun skill +6. He is carrying a submachine-gun with a RoF of 20. During a drug raid, Mike's character spots a gunman and fires a burst of four rounds, with a TN of 18. Mike makes his skill roll and gets a total of 24. Because Mike's effect number is 6 (24–18=6), his target is hit by 3 rounds of the burst. Mike rolls the damage separately for each round that hits his target.

Stream

A stream autofire attack consists of aiming the weapon at a single target and releasing a stream of rounds or projectiles at it. This is sometimes referred to as "hosing" a target. The shooter makes an attack roll against the target at a –1 penalty for every 10 rounds (or fraction) in the attack, plus any modifiers for size, distance, and so on. On a successful attack roll, the target is hit by one projectile plus an additional projectile for every 2 full points of effect number. The maximum number of rounds that may hit a target is equal to the RoF for the weapon.

Sergeant Craft spots another gunman. Mike's character fires a stream of 10 bullets at the gunman, with a base TN of 18. Because Mike's character is firing more than a burst, he suffers an additional –1 penalty to his skill roll. Mike gets a 26, minus 1 for the stream penalty, for a total of 25. Because Mike's effect number is 7 (25–18=7), his target is hit by 3 rounds from the burst. Mike rolls the damage separately for each round that hits his target.

Spray

With a spray autofire attack, the shooter can attempt to hit multiple targets at once. The width of the area (in meters) must be defined by the player before the attack roll is made. This area is called the "fire zone."

The maximum number of rounds that can hit a given target in the fire zone is equal to the total width (in meters) in the fire zone divided by the number of rounds being fired, rounding down.

The attacker makes a skill roll for each target, with a -1 penalty for every 10 rounds (or fraction) in the attack, plus any modifiers for size, distance, and so on. On a successful attack roll, the target is hit by one projectile plus an additional projectile for every 3 full points of effect number.

Sergeant Craft spots three gunmen spread out in a warehouse, and fires a full 20 rounds into a 10-meter-wide area, hoping to hit them all. Each target can be hit by a maximum of 2 rounds (20 divided by 10 = 2). The adjusted Target Number (after counting all modifiers) for each target is 15. Jim (Sgt. Craft's player) makes a skill roll for each target, and gets a 14, 19, and 25, respectively. The first target is missed, the second is hit by 2 rounds, and the third is hit by 2 rounds (Jim's effect number was high enough to score 3 hits, but only 2 rounds entered his area in the fire zone).

Method	Modifier	Divide EN by	Max rds. per target
Burst	0	1	4
Stream	-1 per 10 rds	2	RoF
Spray	-1 per 10 rds	2	RoF/Fire zone (m)

Explosions

Explosive attacks cause damage in an area. Any targets in the area of effect of the explosion are automatically hit by the attack. The type and form of damage depends on the type of explosive attack (see the table below).

Type/Form	Example
Blunt/Stunning	Rubber pellet grenade
Blunt/Lethal	HE grenade or artillery round
Penetrating/Stunning	Flash grenade, stun energy grenade, sound/kinetic wave
Penetrating/Lethal	Anti-personnel mine, HEAP artillery round

Targeting Explosive Attacks

Explosive attacks may be targeted at a person or object (such as a vehicle), using the normal rules for combat. Because explosive attacks do damage over an area, however, its simpler to use a point on the ground (or a specific hex, if using a hex map) as the target.

Treat a 1 square meter area (or a 1 meter hex) as having a TN of 10 (similar to attacking a person with a base DEF of 10 but no REF bonus), and add any other applicable modifiers to the skill roll, such as modifiers for range, obscured visibility, and so on.

If the attack roll is successful, the attack lands in the intended spot.

If the attack roll fails, the attack misses the target. To see where the attack hits, roll 1d6 to determine the direction from the target, then roll another 1d6 to determine the distance the attack lands from the target (see table next page). The distance an attack misses

the target by is equal to the number of points the attack roll missed by for thrown, simple missile weapon and small arms attacks. Multiply this number times 2 for heavy weapons.

The maximum distance the attack can miss the target by is one half the total distance from the attacker to the intended target.

Direction Missed Attack Lands

1d6	Attack lands…
1	Left (attack lands to left of target)
2-3	Long (attack lands beyond target)
4-5	Short (attack lands short of target)
6	Right (attack lands to right of target)

Damage Reduced by Range

The farther a target from the center of the explosion, the less damage is done to it. An explosive attack does the listed amount of damage in a 1 meter radius. For every additional meter of distance from the center, the damage is reduced by 3 points. Treat damage below 1 point as 0. The maximum distance at which 1 point of damage is caused indicates the maximum effect radius of the blast. The blast radius of an attack is defined as the number of meters equal to one third of the total damage points done by the attack. (Damage points/3 (round down) = Blast radius in meters)

An anti-personnel grenade explodes doing 25 points of penetrating lethal (P/L) damage. Any targets within 1 meter of the grenade when it explodes are hit by a 25 point piercing lethal attack; targets 2 meters away suffer a 22 point attack; targets 3 meters away suffer 19 points, and so on, up to 8 meters away, where targets suffer a 2 point attack. Eight meters is the effective "blast radius." Targets nine or more meters away from the explosion's center suffer no effect from the blast.

Average Blast Radius

Rather than calculating the bast radius of the grenade based on the actual damage rolled, GMs can determine the average blast radius for an attack by adding the number of dice of damage for the explosion +1. The resulting number is the maximum blast radius for the explosion, in meters.

The GM decides to use the average blast radius of the grenade. Because the grenade's listed damage is 6d6, the average blast radius of the grenade (when it goes off) is 6+1=7 meters.

Using the average blast radius of an explosion can save the GM a lot of time during the game. For instance, if a 6d6 explosion goes off, the GM knows that the average blast radius of the explosion is only 7 meters. If the closest character is 10 meters away from the explosion, the GM doesn't need to roll any damage dice at all; none of the characters are close enough to suffer any damage from the explosion. Instead of rolling the damage dice to determine the blast radius, the GM can simply describe the explosion and move on to the next character's action.

DAMAGE

Damage in *Action! System* is categorized by its method of delivery (i.e., the "Form") and its effect (i.e., the "Type"). There are three Types and three Forms of damage. All damaging effects in *Action! System* use one descriptor from each category. For example, damage from a knife wound is considered Penetrating Lethal damage (abbreviated as "P/L"). Each is explained below.

Types of Damage

The three basic Types of damage are Blunt (B), Penetrating (P), and Special (Sp).

Blunt

Blunt damage represents damage caused by blunt force (known as "blunt trauma" in the medical world). Examples of blunt damage include damage caused by punches and kicks, falling, collisions, clubs, and the like.

When a character suffers blunt damage, subtract the value of any armor the character is wearing and the character's TGH score from the damage, then subtract any remaining damage points from the character's LIF.

Penetrating

Penetrating damage represents damage from an injury that penetrates the body, such as damage cause by bladed and pointed weapons, arrows, fast-moving projectiles, and the like.

When a character suffers penetrating damage, subtract the value of any armor the character is wearing, then subtract any remaining damage points from the character's LIF.

Special

Special damage represents damage or other effects from unusual attacks, such as gas, drugs (e.g., stimulants or anesthesia), magic spells, radiation, mental powers, and the like. Generally speaking, any effect that does not reduce a character's LIF points is considered a Special Attack.

Forms of Damage

The three basic Forms of damage are Stunning (S), Lethal (L), and Special (Sp).

Stunning Damage

Stunning damage is damage that temporarily weakens or incapacitates the character. Stunning damage can render a character unconscious but cannot kill him. It reflects the non-lethal and temporary effects of special substances and substances, such as pepper spray (oleoresin capsicum or "OC"), sleep gas, flash-bang grenades, depressants (such as alcohol or barbiturates), the dazing effects of a punch or mild concussion, sedation, general weakening from fatigue, and so on.

When a character's LIF is reduced to 0 because of stunning damage, the character immediately falls unconscious. An unconscious character will not regain consciousness until his LIF is raised to a score of 1 or higher, whether through healing, natural recovery, or medical or supernatural aid.

Stunning damage is healed more quickly than lethal damage (see Recovery, page 73).

Lethal Damage

Lethal damage is that damage that can kill a character. Lethal damage can render a character unconscious as well as kill him. Lethal damage can reflect the effects of a trauma or injury caused by weapon, a collision such as from an auto accident or a fall from a great height, the effects of high doses of radiation, extreme weakening from illness, and so on.

When a character suffers a number of points of lethal damage that exceeds his LIF, the character is dying. A dying character will lose 1 additional LIF point each turn until he reaches –10 LIF. Medical intervention is necessary to prevent the character from dying (see *Stabilizing*, page 72). If a character's LIF score reaches –10, the character is dead.

Lethal damage is healed more slowly than stunning damage.

Special Damage

Special damage is damage to some aspect of the character other than the character's LIF. Examples include the reduction of an attribute, the suppression of a paranormal power, medical symptoms (such as hallucinations or nausea) and so on.

This category is a catch-all, for any effects that can't be clearly defined as either stunning or lethal.

Wounds and Effects of Damage

Wounds come in progressive levels of severity, from Superficial to Fatal. The description for each level of wound severity and its effects are explained below.

Superficial Wounds

Any wound from which a character suffers up to 1x HLT in damage points (after subtracting any damage for armor or TGH) is a superficial wound. Superficial wounds include minor cuts, scrapes and bumps.

Superficial wounds do not restrict or reduce the character's movement, attributes or skills, although they may be painful.

In medical terms, characters suffering from superficial wounds are conscious and comfortable (at least as far as the injury goes), their vital signs are stable and within normal limits, and indicators point toward an excellent recovery. Medical patients suffering from one or more superficial wounds are generally considered in "good condition."

Light Wounds

Any wound that causes up to 2x HLT in damage points (after subtracting any damage for armor or TGH) is a light wound.

Not exactly superficial damage, but there is little if any chance a character will die from light wounds. The character will lose 1 additional LIF point each day for 1d6 days until stabilized (see *Stabilizing*, page 72).

All Body-based skill rolls are at -1 until the character receives medical aid. This penalty may be ignored for one turn with a successful Tricky WIL attribute roll (TN 15).

In medical terms, characters suffering from superficial wounds are conscious but generally uncomfortable, though their vital signs are stable and within normal limits. Indicators point toward a favorable recovery. Medical patients suffering from one or more light wounds are generally considered in "fair condition."

Serious Wounds

Any wound that causes up to 3x HLT in damage points (after subtracting any damage for armor or TGH) is a serious wound.

Serious wounds are just that. The character is wounded in such a way that seriously impedes his ability to do anything. Serious wounds include some gunshots, broken limbs, and major burns.

Left untreated, serious wounds can pose a serious health risk from infection, bleeding, and other serious complications. The character will lose 1 additional LIF point each hour until stabilized (see *Healing*, below).

All Body-based skill rolls are at -3 until the wound is stabilized and then -1 until treated. Any Mind-based skill rolls are at -3 until treated. These penalties may be ignored for one turn with a successful Challenging WIL attribute roll (TN 18).

In medical terms, characters suffering from serious wounds are acutely ill. They may not be conscious, their vital signs are unstable and not within normal limits. Indicators are questionable. Medical patients suffering from a serious wounds are generally considered in "serious condition."

Critical Wounds

Any single wound causing more than 4x HLT in damage points (after subtracting any damage for armor or TGH) is a critical wound. Critical wounds do not close and will not just stop bleeding. Critical wounds include torn limbs, deep punctures, and lacerations, severe head trauma, and so on.

Critical wounds can be fatal without immediate stabilization and fairly quick medical treatment. A character with a critical wound will lose one additional point of LIF per minute until he is stabilized.

All Body skills are at -6 until stabilized and -3 until treated. Any Mind-based skill rolls are at -6 until treated. These penalties may be ignored for one turn with a successful Challenging WIL attribute roll (TN 18).

In medical terms, characters suffering from critical wounds may not be conscious, their vital signs are unstable and not within normal limits, and indicators are unfavorable. Medical patients

suffering from a critical wound are generally considered in "critical condition."

Fatal Wounds

Any wound from which a character suffers more than 5x the victim's HLT in damage points (after subtracting any damage for armor or TGH) is a fatal wound. The character will die without immediate aid. Characters suffering from a fatal wound will lose 1 additional LIF point each turn unless stabilized (see *Healing*, below). Otherwise, treat this as a Critical Wound.

Wound Effects Table

Wound	Effects
Superficial	None.
Light	-1 to Body-based skills until medical aid received; -1 LIF per day for 1d6 days unless stabilized.
Serious	-3 to Body-based skill rolls until stabilized, then -1 until treated; -3 to Mind-based skill rolls until treated. -1 LIF per hour until stabilized.
Critical	-6 to Body-based skill rolls until stabilized, then -3 until treated; -6 to Mind-based skill rolls until treated. -1 LIF per minute until stabilized.
Fatal	-1 LIF per turn until stabilized; otherwise, treat as Critical.

Recording Damage

Damage that a character suffers should be marked on the character sheet in the boxes provided. Stunning damage is marked as a slash ("/") and lethal damage is marked as an "X."

A character suffers 2 points of lethal damage from a knife cut to the arm and 6 points of stunning damage from a kick to the chest. The damage from the knife wound is recorded on the character sheet as two "Xs" and the wound from the kick as six slashes.

If a character has suffered a total amount of combined stunning and lethal damage to bring his LIF to 0, any subsequent lethal damage should be recorded over (i.e., "replacing") any stunning damage on the character sheet. Any subsequent stunning damage is ignored.

Mike's character has 20 LIF. During a fight he suffers 12 points of stunning damage and 8 points of lethal damage. Because the combined total of damage is 20, he is unconscious. He is then hit again for 5 points of lethal damage. Mike changes 5 of the slash marks (that indicate stunning damage) to "Xs" (indicating lethal damage).

Healing

There are three basic parts to healing damage sustained by your character. Stabilization prevents the wound from becoming worse; Treatment repairs the damage sustained; Recovery heals the body.

For GMs who want simpler rules for healing, simply ignore the rules for Stabilization and make Treatment optional, relying primarily on Recovery to determine a character's healing rate. This has the affect of lowering the mortality rate for characters who are seriously injured.

For all First Aid and Physician skill rolls, the following situational modifiers apply. Note that in some settings or genres, some of these situations will not apply (e.g., "ample medical supplies" are simply not available in a medieval setting).

Situational Modifiers

Condition	Modifier
Very dirty or unsanitary conditions	-2
Makeshift sick bay (a bedroom or office)	-1
Improvised equipment and supplies	-1
Adequate medical supplies (first aid kit, med-pac)	+1
Ample medical supplies (sick bay, hospital)	+3

Stabilizing

Stabilizing a patient is the immediate treatment of an injury to prevent worsening of the injury or condition. This could involve setting a compression bandage, immobilizing an extremity (such as putting a splint on a limb with a broken bone), or tightening a tourniquet.

A successful First Aid or Physician roll will stabilize the wound, preventing the loss of any additional LIF, for a period of time. The difficulty of the skill roll is based on the severity of the wound (see the *Stabilization Table*, below). At the end of this time a new skill roll is required. A failed roll means that the character suffers additional damage, as per the severity of the injury (see *Wounds and the Effects of Damage*, page 71).

Jim's character has suffered a serious gunshot wound and has already suffered 23 points of damage, reducing his LIF to 2. He will continue to lose LIF points at the rate of 1 point per minute unless he receives medical aid. Luckily Tony's character has the First Aid skill. Tony makes his First Aid roll, so Jim's character will not lose any more LIF for that minute. Tony then makes another First Aid roll for the second minute but fails. Jim's character loses another point of LIF, lowering his score to 1. Tony rolls again for the third minute and succeeds! Fortunately for Tony the paramedics have arrived, who have better First Aid scores and can transport Jim's character to the hospital for treatment.

Stabilization allows a patient to be moved to a medical facility, whether by ambulance or some other conveyance, for treatment. It would also allow time for a priest to prepare a healing prayer or a late night flight to the Trauma Center in an aerodyne, depending on the genre being played.

Stabilization Table

Wound	Difficulty	Roll required
Superficial	No roll required	No roll required
Light	Average (TN 12)	every day
Serious	Tricky (TN 15)	every hour
Critical	Challenging (TN 18)	every minute
Fatal	Difficult (TN 21)	every turn

Treatment

Treatment is the active part of medicine. The doctor or medic will suture, medicate and repair some of the damage caused by an accident or violent event. This may include surgery to remove foreign objects, pin broken bones, remove dead tissue or toxins, and so on.

Treatment usually occurs within 24 hours; although some types

of treatment may take longer, these will not usually have a doctor as an active participant. These include long-term antibiotics, chemotherapy treatments, and the like.

Successful treatment can remove or "heal" up to one half the damage caused by a wound. The time required to properly treat the patient is shown on the Treatment Table below, based on the severity of the wound (note: this is "game time," not real time). At the end of the time period indicated, the treating character makes a Physician or Surgery skill roll (GM's discretion), using the target number indicated. Success indicates the patient has been completely stabilized and will not lose any more LIF due to the wound. In addition, for every 2 points of the effect number for the skill roll (rounding up), the patient regains 10% of the lost LIF from the wound, up to a maximum of 50%.

Nick's character, Doctor Barrett, is working feverishly to save a patient that's just been brought to the emergency room. The patient has suffered 24 points of Special/Lethal damage from an explosion. Because the wound is a critical wound, Dr. Barrett must spend 2d6 hours working on the patient before Nick can make a Physician roll. The GM rolls 2d6 and gets 5. After 5 hours of game time, Nick must make a Difficult Physician skill roll (TN 21). Nick rolls a total of 24! The patient has been stabilized and will lose no more LIF points due to his injury. In addition, the patient regains 20% of the LIF lost due to that wound.

Treatment Table

Wound	Difficulty	Time required
Superficial	No roll required	No roll required
Light	Average (TN 12)	1d6 minutes
Serious	Challenging (TN 18)	1d6 hours
Critical	Difficult (TN 21)	2d6 hours
Fatal	Demanding (TN 24)	2d6 hours

Recovery

Recovery is the type of healing that the body does on its own. Characters heal a number of LIF points each healing period equal to their HLT. The rate at which a character heals depends on the reality level of the game or campaign.

Recovery Rate

	Damage Type		
Campaign level	**Stunning**	**Lethal**	**Special**
Realistic Action!	Hour	Week	Month
Cinematic Action!	Minute	Day	Week
Extreme Action!	Turn	Day	Day

THE ENVIRONMENT

Falling

The amount of damage suffered from a fall depends on the falling object's velocity when it hits the ground. Damage suffered from a fall is 1d6 for every 2 meters of velocity.

Falling objects gain 10 meters of velocity per second. This is broken down on the chart as an increase of 2 meters/second for every 2 meters fallen. The maximum velocity of a falling object in the Earth's gravity is 60 meters per second. This is referred to as "terminal velocity."

Falling damage is Blunt/Lethal damage. Characters may subtract their TGH from any damage sustained before subtracting it from their LIF.

To determine the amount of damage suffered from a fall, simply find the total distance fallen on the first column of the *Falling and Velocity Table*, then read across that row to the "Random Damage" column. Alternatively, GM's may use "flat rate" damage for falls to speed things up a bit.

Mary's character has fallen off the roof of a 6-story building. The GM determines that 6 stories is roughly equal to 24 meters. The GM consults the Falling and Velocity Table and looks at the "Distance Fallen" column until he finds "23-26." Then he reads across that row to the "Random Damage" column and sees that a 24-meter fall will inflict 9d6 of damage on Mary's character, who will hit the ground after falling for two seconds (less than a full turn). The GM picks up nine dice and suggests to Mary that she review the rules for using Action Points to avoid damage.

A quick way to estimate damage from a fall is to determine how many seconds long the character is falling and multiply that number by 5, with a maximum of 30. This is the number of dice of damage that the character will suffer when he hits the ground.

Falling and Velocity Table

Distance fallen(m)	Velocity (m/sec)	Random Damage	Flat Rate Damage	Time (Seconds)	Notes/Examples
1-2	2m/s	1d6	3	1	6-foot ladder
3-4	4m/s	2d6	6	"	1-story building
5-6	6m/s	3d6	9	"	2-story building
7-8	8m/s	4d6	12	"	
9-10	10m/s	5d6	15	"	5-story building
11-14	12m/s	6d6	18	2	
15-18	14m/s	7d6	21	"	Mature Oak tree
19-22	16m/s	8d6	24	"	
23-26	18m/s	9d6	27	"	
27-30	20m/s	10d6	30	"	10-story building
31-36	22m/s	11d6	33	3	
37-42	24m/s	12d6	36	"	
43-48	26m/s	13d6	39	"	
49-54	28m/s	14d6	42	"	
55-60	30m/s	15d6	45	"	20-story building
61-68	32m/s	16d6	48	4	
69-76	34m/s	17d6	51	"	
77-84	36m/s	18d6	54	"	
85-92	38m/s	19d6	57	"	
93-100	40m/s	20d6	60	"	Statue of Liberty
101-110	42m/s	21d6	63	5	
111-120	44m/s	22d6	66	"	Giant Redwood tree
121-130	46m/s	23d6	69	"	
131-140	48m/s	24d6	72	"	
141-150	50m/s	25d6	75	"	
151-162	52m/s	26d6	78	6	
163-174	54m/s	27d6	81	"	
175-186	56m/s	28d6	84	"	
187-198	58m/s	29d6	87	"	
199-210	60m/s *	30d6	90	"	Terminal velocity.*

** Terminal velocity (maximum velocity when falling). Increase time by 1 second for each additional 60 meters (or fraction) fallen, but do not increase damage. For objects other than falling objects (e.g., thrown objects, vehicles, etc.), add +1d6 for each additional 2m/s of velocity.*

Asphyxiation and Drowning

Conscious characters can hold their breath for (10 x HLT) turns before suffering any negative effects. This number is halved for characters performing even moderately strenuous activity, such as swimming, fighting or otherwise exerting strength. After this time has elapsed, however, the character suffers stunning damage each turn.

Mike's character has 5 HLT, 30 LIF and 32 STUN and has fallen into a lake. Sadly, Mike's character cannot swim and sinks under water. He can hold his breath for 50 turns before suffering damage, unless he's panicking and exerting himself, in which case he can hold his breath for only 25 turns.

The amount of stunning damage sustained depends on the character's level of activity. A passive or calm character suffers 1 point of stunning damage per turn. A character exerting himself suffers 2 points of stunning damage per turn. TGH is not subtracted from this damage.

If a character's STUN is reduced to 0, he is unconscious. If an unconscious character continues being deprived of breathable air, he suffers 1d6 Sp/L damage per turn. Characters whose LIF is reduced to 0 from lack of breathable air have suffocated or drowned. Treat death from drowning as one single Serious wound, with successful stabilization (i.e., a successful First Aid or Physician skill roll) restoring the character's LIF to one-half its previous level (prior to the "death") and restoring the character's STUN to 1.

The Elements

Exposure to the elements can inflict damage on an unprotected character, and prolonged exposure can kill a character.

To determine how much damage an element inflicts, determine its severity, then consult the table below.

All damaging elements can use the same table, as it abstract in nature. The effects of harsh elements is the same, in game terms; only the special effect differs.

Element Damage Table

Severity	Damage	Examples
Mild	1d6 per day	Stranded in desert
Moderate	1d6 per hour	Sandstorm, blizzard
Strong	1d6 per minute	Extreme cold
Severe	1d6 per turn	Fire, mild radiation
Extreme	1d6 per second	Strong radiation

Element	Damage Type
Wind	Blunt/Stunning
Fire	Blunt/Lethal
Electricity	Penetrating/Lethal
Radiation	Special/Lethal

MAPS AND FIGURES

Keeping track of where all of the player characters and bad guys are can be a little difficult. This is especially true if there are a lot of bad guys for the characters to deal with.

Using figures and maps makes things much easier, and can add a great visual element to the game. It's much easier to look at a map and see where your character is than to try to remember from turn to turn.

Figures

We recommend using action figures or metal (pewter, not lead) miniature figures (usually an inch or so tall), which can be purchased at most game and hobby stores. If you don't have any plastic or metal figures, you can substitute plastic counters or tokens from any game, or even small cardboard or paper markers. Just make sure you can tell which marker or counter represents which character.

Maps

A map can be as simple as a piece of paper with buildings and trees drawn on it, or even a bare tabletop with erasers and tissue boxes set on it to represent buildings and trees and such.

We recommend using a scale of one inch to represent one yard on your map. You can use a ruler to measure the distance or just let the GM estimate the distance.

If you need help drawing your maps, you can ask a friend who draws well. But remember, the map doesn't have to be perfect. As long as everyone can tell a building from a tree, you're all set.

You can also buy preprinted maps, like posters, for different games at your local hobby store. Some use hexes while others use grids or squares. They may be of different scales, but as long as the GM and the players agree on the scale (how much distance each square or hex represents) they will work fine.

Another option is to use a vinyl hex or grid mat. This is a vinyl or plastic roll-out mat with hexes or squares printed on it. These mats are available with different sizes of squares or hexes. We recommend a mat with 1-inch-wide hexes on it.

The great thing about these vinyl mats is that you can write on them with water-based colored markers (such as *Vis-à-vis*™ brand markers) and then wipe them off with a wet paper towel when you're done with your map. Note: don't use a "dry erase" marker, as these will permanently mark your mat!

WEAPONS

Weapon Attributes

Each weapon has several attributes that describe and rate its performance within the rules.

The attributes that describe melee weapons are Damage (abbreviated "Dmg"), Type, Size, Initiative modifier (abbreviated as "Init"—note that this is not the same as the INI derived attribute for characters), Accuracy modifier (abbreviated "Acc"), Strength minimum (abbreviated "STR"— note that this is not the same as the STR derived attribute for characters), Weight (abbreviated "Wt"), Cost, and Notes.

The attributes that describe ranged weapons are Damage (abbreviated "Dmg"), Type, Size, Accuracy modifier (abbreviated "Acc"), Strength minimum (abbreviated "STR Min"— note that this is not the same as the STR derived attribute for characters), Maximum effective range (abbreviated "Max"), Rate of fire (abbreviated "RoF"), Ammunition capacity (abbreviated "Amm"), Weight (abbreviated "Wt"), Cost, and Notes.

Damage (Dmg)

The damage rating for the weapon indicates the number of dice of damage the weapon inflicts when used by a character with STR equal to the minimum STR score required for the weapon.

Ray's character, Spike, has a STR of 3. Spike picks up a chain during a fight. The chain has a damage rating of 3d6 and a STR minimum of 3. Because Spike's STR is equal to the minimum STR required for the chain, Spike will inflict 3d6 when he strikes an opponent.

GMs wishing to use the "flat rate" method of determining damage can convert the listed weapon damage by multiplying the number of dice times 3 and then adding any bonuses

Spike normally does 3d6 of damage with his chain. To convert the damage to flat rate damage, Ray simply multiplies the number of dice times three. Spike does 9 points of damage when using the flat rate method.

Characters with more STR than the listed minimum strength for the a weapon will do extra damage with that weapon. Characters with less STR than the listed minimum strength for a weapon may do less damage with that weapon. (See *STR Min*, page 76).

Type

This describes the type of damage that the weapon inflicts. The letter before the slash represents:

B = Blunt (TGH & armor apply)
P = Penetrating (only armor applies)
Sp = Special (TGH and armor may not apply; see notes).

The letter after the slash represents:

S = Stunning damage
L = Lethal damage
Sp = Special damage (see notes for effect).

For example, "P/L" indicates the weapon does penetrating lethal damage, so armor but not TGH is subtracted from the damage before applying it to the character's LIF.

See *Damage*, page 70, for more information about types and forms of damage and their effects in the game.

Size

Each weapon has an "optimal distance." This is the distance that the user must be from his opponent in order to effectively and properly wield the weapon.

The optimal distance is 1 meter for short weapons (such as knives, short swords, punches and grappling maneuvers), 2 meters for medium weapons (such as swords, clubs and kicks), and 3 meters for long weapons (such as most pole-arms).

When both characters are fighting with the same sized weapons, neither character receives a bonus, even if they are at the optimal distance for their weapon.

When characters are using weapons of different sizes, however, the character with the longer weapon receives a +3 INI and +3 DEF bonus. If the opponent successfully strikes with the shorter weapon, then the bonus is reversed, to simulate that the character with the shorter weapon "got inside" the other's defenses to his own optimal distance. If the character with the longer weapon retreats back to his optimal striking distance, he regains the advantage and respective bonuses.

Jim's character is a gladiator fighting in the coliseum. He is using a spear and his opponent is using a short sword. Because Jim's spear is a Long weapon, his weapon's optimal distance is 3 meters, while his opponent's is 1 meter because he is using a Short weapon. As long as Jim's character remains 3 meters away from his opponent, he will receive a +3 bonus to both his INI and his DEF. If his opponent successfully strike Jim's character, however, that means he has slipped into his own optimal distance—1 meter—and gains the +3 bonus to his own INI and DEF, and Jim loses the bonuses.

Initiative Modifier (Init)

Some weapons are bulkier and more awkward to wield than others, and some are smaller or better balanced and easier to use. To reflect these differences in weapon design, weight and balance, each weapon has a base Initiative Modifier (abbreviated "Init"). This modifier is applied as a temporary modifier to the INI score of the character using the weapon. The Initiative Modifier may be a positive number (e.g., +1), a negative number (e.g., -1), or zero.

If the character stops using the weapon the modifier no longer applies. If the character switches to a different weapon, then the new weapon's Initiative Modifier is used.

The Initiative Modifier is in addition to any INI modifiers for STR (see *STR Minimum*, below) or any other INI modifiers that may be available in your game, such as from supernatural abilities, special traits, and so on.

Accuracy (Acc)

Accuracy reflects the inherent accuracy of the weapon. The Accuracy modifier (abbreviated "Acc") is added to the character's skill roll (not the TN) when using the weapon.

Gail is playing Elissa Longstreet, a spy for the Colonial Army, in a game set in the U.S. Revolutionary War. Elissa has a Black Powder Weapons skill of 5. During the game she is spotted trying to sneak through British-held territory. As two armed British soldiers approach her, she draws a musket pistol she had hidden in her bag and fires at one of the soldiers. Because black powder weapons are inherently less accurate than modern guns, they have an Acc of –1. When making a skill roll for Elissa to hit the British soldier, Gail subtracts 1 from her character's skill of 5, making her effective score a 4.

Range Modifier (RMod)

The Range Modifier reflects the inherent accuracy of the weapon at longer ranges. The Range Modifier (abbreviated "RMod") is a bonus usable only to offset or cancel negative modifiers due to range. For example, a Range Modifier of +2 means that a character using the weapon treats a –4 penalty for distance as only a –2 penalty. A weapon's Range Modifier may not decrease modifiers for distance below 0.

STR Minimum (STR Min)

Most weapons have a minimum STR score. This is the minimum STR score required to wield the weapon effectively. Large, bulky or unbalanced weapons will have a higher STR minimum than small, balanced weapons. A weapon with "Crew" listed in the STR Min. column requires two or more people working together to operate the weapon, and no bonus or penalty is afforded regardless of their STR scores.

If a character has a STR score lower than the listed STR minimum for the weapon he is using, the character will incur a penalty to both INI and to any skill rolls made for using the weapon. For every point below the STR minimum, the character suffers a -1 INI and -1 to all skill rolls involving that weapon. In the case of melee weapons and bows, the character also does 1d6 less than the listed damage for the weapon.

These penalties are in addition to any initiative (Init) and accuracy (Acc) modifiers listed for the weapon. If damage for a melee weapon is reduced to "0d6" due to insufficient STR, then the character cannot wield the weapon well enough to inflict damage with it in a fight.

Bob has a STR 4, REF 5, and Machine-guns 5. Bob picks up a B.A.G. 92 machine-gun that has ACC -2, Init. -1, and STR Min 6. Bob's STR is 4 (2 less than the listed STR Min of 6), so he incurs a -2 to his Initiative and to his skill rolls. The total modifier to his skill rolls is -4, and the total modifier to his Initiative is -3. Bob's skill roll formula would look like this: REF (5) + Skill (5) + ACC (-2) + STR penalty (-2) + 3d6... or 3d6 + 6.

If a character has a STR score higher than the listed STR minimum for a melee weapon he is using, the character does extra damage. For every point of STR the character possesses above the listed STR minimum of the weapon, the character does an extra 1d6 of damage, up to a total maximum of twice the listed damage for the weapon. Having a high STR does not allow a character to do extra damage with a bow, crossbow, firearm or energy weapon.

Bob's machine gun has run out of ammo, but the bad guys are still coming, so Bob pulls out his trusty fighting knife. A knife has a listed STR Min of 2 and a base damage of 1d6. Because Bob's STR of 4 is two points above a STR Min of 2, Bob can inflict as much as +2d6 damage when he hits with the weapon. Unfortunately for Bob, 3d6 is more than two times the base damage for a knife, so Bob does only 2d6 points of damage with the knife. But that's still better than normal damage, and Bob's feeling pretty mean…

Maximum Effective Range (Max)

Maximum effective range (abbreviated "Max") is the maximum range at which a ranged weapon, such as a bow or firearm, can reasonably hit a target at which it is aimed. While weapons can fire a projectile (e.g., an arrow or bullet) beyond the listed maximum effective range, the chances of hitting a target at this range becomes a matter of sheer luck moreso than skill. As a result, shots beyond Max range are not allowed in *Action! System*.

Rate of Fire (RoF)

A weapon's rate of fire (abbreviated "RoF") indicates how often a ranged weapon may be fired and how many rounds are expended each turn. A whole number indicates the maximum number of rounds that may be fired per turn. A fraction indicates the number of turns required to reload the weapon between shots (e.g., "1/3" means the weapon can be fired once every three turns).

Ammunition (Amm)

Ammunition capacity (abbreviated "Amm") indicates how many rounds of ammunition or are contained in a ranged weapon or in an attached supply, such as a battery or magazine.

Simple missile weapons, such as crossbows and slings, have an Amm. Rating of 1 because they can't "hold ammo" (they can only fire a single arrow or stone that is loaded and readied for use).

Weight (Wt)

The weight of the weapon, listed in kilograms.

For players wishing to convert to pounds, simply multiply the listed number by two. The actual conversion is 2.2 pounds to a kilogram, but multiplying by 2 is easier and still provides a good

approximate conversion.

If you are not keeping track of the weight of equipment or other items carried by the characters in your game, then you can ignore this number.

Cost

Normally the cost of a weapon will be listed here, in the currency appropriate to the setting and era in which your game is set. We have not provided prices for the weapons in this book because it would be impossible to list accurate prices for all settings. What's more, many weapons are available in a variety of settings and eras; which one should we use if any?

GMs are encouraged to create prices for weapons in their game if they so choose. Prices appropriate to a particular setting, and in the proper currency for that setting, will be published in other *Action! System* products and will be available on the *Action! System* web site (www.action-system.com).

Notes

Notes contain additional information about a weapon, such as examples of the type of weapon, special effects, and special uses of or exceptions to the basic rules. While there are no special notes for weapons in the *Action! System Core Rules*, Extensions and Variants may include special rules that apply to weapons. These will be listed under "Notes" for weapons that use rules presented in those Extensions and Variants.

Steve is running a sci-fi game in which needler pistols are able to penetrate armor better than most weapons. Steve decides that the "armor piercing" ability effectively halves the armor value of the target, and notes "AP" for needlers on the weapon list under "Notes."

Sample Weapon Lists

Melee Weapons

Weapon	Dmg	Type	Size	Init	Acc	STR Min	Wt	Cost	Notes
Ax, battle	4d6	P/L	M	-2	-1	5	10		
Ax, hand	2d6	P/L	M	0	0	3	1		
Bat, aluminum	3d6	B/L	M	-1	0	3	1		
Bat, wood	3d6	B/L	M	-1	0	3	2		
Baton, police	2d6	B/L	M	0	0	2	.5		
Bayonet	2d6	P/L	M	-2	0	3	.5		Adds to rifle weight
Broadsword	4d6	P/L	M	-1	0	4	6		
Cane sword	2d6	P/L	M	0	0	3	.5		
Chain	3d6	B/L	M/L	-2	-1	3	1		
Club	3d6	B/L	M	-1	0	3	1		Tree limb, improvised weapon
Club, great/war	5d6	B/L	M	-2	-1	5	8		Japanese tetsubô
Fencing foil	2d6	P/L	M	0	0	3	.5		
Flail	3d6	P/L	M	-1	-1	3	5		
Glaive	5d6	P/L	L	-2	-1	5	6		Japanese naginata
Halberd	4d6	P/L	L	-2	-1	4	5		Japanese ôno
Katana	4d6	P/L	M	0	0	3	1.5		Samurai long sword
Kick	Special	B/S	M	0	0	0	0		Does dmg for STR+1 (see STR Table)
Knife	1d6	P/L	S	0	0	2	.25		
Lance	3d6	B/L	L	-2	-1	4	10		
Long sword	3d6	P/L	M	0	0	3	3		
Mace	3d6	B/L	M	0	0	3	4		
Nunchaku	3d6	B/L	M	0	0	3	1		
Pike	4d6	P/L	L	-2	-1	3	4		
Punch	Special	B/S	S	0	0	0	0		Does dmg based on STR (see STR Table)
Rapier	3d6	P/L	M	0	0	3	3		
Short sword	2d6	P/L	S	0	0	3	2		Gladius
Spear	3d6	P/L	L	-1	0	3	3		
Staff, short	2d6	B/L	M	0	0	2	1		Japanese jô, cane
Staff, three-section	3d6	B/L	M/L	-1	-1	3	3		
Staff, quarter	3d6	B/L	L	-1	0	3	2		Japanese bô
Two-handed sword	5d6	P/L	M	-1	-1	4	7		Claymore, Japanese nodachi
Wakizashi	3d6	P/L	M	0	0	3	1		Japanese short sword
Whip	1d6	B/L	L	-2	-1	3	.5		

High-Tech/Sci-fi Melee Weapons

Weapon	Dmg	Type	Size	Init	Acc	STR Min	Wt	Cost	Notes
Energy sword	5d6	P/L	M	+1	-2	2	.5		All weight in handle; difficult to wield
Stun baton	4d6	B/S	M	0	0	2	.5		
Vibro-ax	5d6	P/L	M	-1	-1	4	6		
Vibro-knife	2d6	P/L	S	+1	0	2	.25		Tree limb, improvised weapon
Vibro-sword	4d6	P/L	M	0	0	3	4		

Simple Missile Weapons

Weapon	Dmg	Type	Acc	Rmod	STR Min	Max	RoF	Amm	Wt	Cost	Notes
Atlatl	3d6	P/L	-2	0	3	x5	1/2	1	1		
Bola	3d6	B/L	-2	0	3	x5	—	1	.25		
Boomerang	3d6	B/L	-2	0	3	x10	—	1	.5		
Compound bow	4d6	P/L	0	+2	3	x20	1/2	1	2		
Crossbow, small	2d6	P/L	0	+2	3	50	1/3	1	2		
Crossbow, heavy	3d6	P/L	-1	+1	4	50	1/4	1	3.5		
Longbow	4d6	P/L	0	+2	4	150	1/2	1	3		
Short bow	3d6	P/L	0	+2	3	100	1/2	1	2		
Sling	2d6	B/L	-1	+1	3	100	1/3	1	.1		
Slingshot	1d6	B/L	0	+2	2	25	1	1	.1		
Speargun	4d6	P/L	0	+2	3	50	1/4	1	3		Stats for use out of water.

Modern Small Arms

Weapon	Dmg	Type	Acc	Rmod	STR Min	Max	RoF	Amm	Wt	Cost	Notes
Pistols (by caliber)											
.25 ACP semi-auto	1d6	P/L	-1	+1	2	50	4s	6	.5		SA
.22 short semi-auto	1d6	P/L	-1	+2	2	50	4s	6	.5		SA
.32 ACP snub-nose	2d6	P/L	-1	+1	3	50	3s	6	1		RD
.32 ACP revolver	2d6	P/L	0	+2	3	50	3s	6	1		RD
.22 LR semi-auto	2d6	P/L	-1	+1	2	50	4s	12	1		SA
9mm short	2d6+2	P/L	0	+2	3	50	4s	6	1.5		SA
.45 ACP (1865)	3d6	P/L	0	+2	3	50	2s	6	2		Peacemaker, RS
.45 ACP (1980)	3d6	P/L	0	+2	3	50	4s	7	2		M-1911A1, SA
9mm Para	4d6	P/L	0	+2	3	50	4s	15	2		SA
.357 Mag. snub-nose	4d6	P/L	-1	+1	3	50	3s	6	1.5		RD
.357 Mag. 6” barrel	4d6	P/L	0	+2	3	50	3s	6	2		RD
10mm Auto	4d6	P/L	0	+2	3	50	4s	10	2		SA
.41 Mag. snub-nose	5d6	P/L	-1	+1	4	50	3s	6	2		RD
.41 Mag. 6” barrel	5d6	P/L	0	+2	4	50	3s	6	2.5		RD
.44 Mag. 6” barrel	5d6	P/L	0	+2	4	50	3s	6	2.5		RD
.50 Desert Eagle	6d6	P/L	0	+2	5	50	4s	10	3		SA
Rifles (by caliber)											
.22 carbine	2d6	P/L	+1	+3	3	200	4s	10	1.5		
9mm short	2d6+2	P/L	+1	+3	3	200	4s	5	1		
12 gauge slug	6d6	P/L	+1	+4	5	100	2	5	3		PA; 5 or 8-rd magazine.
.30 carbine	5d6	P/L	+1	+3	4	200	4s	5	3		SA
5.56mm NATO carb.	5d6+2	P/L	+1	+3	4	200	4/20	30	3		SA/AF/AB; CAR-15
5.56mm NATO rifle	5d6+2	P/L	+1	+4	4	500	4/20	30	3.5		SA/AF//AB; M-16
7.62 x 39mm NATO	7d6	P/L	+1	+4	4	600	4/20	30	4		SA/AF/AB; FN-FAL
.50 cal. rifle	9d6	P/L	+1	+4	6	1000	3s	5	6		SA; Barrett M82A1

Sci-fi Small Arms

Weapon	Dmg	Type	Acc	Rmod	STR Min	Max	RoF	Amm	Wt	Cost	Notes
Blaster pistol	4d6	P/L	0	+2	2	100	1	30	1		
Blaster carbine	6d6	P/L	+1	+3	3	200	1-5	40	2		
Blaster rifle	8d6	P/L	+1	+4	5	400	1	30	4		
Holdout pistol	3d6	P/L	-1	+1	2	50	1	20	.5		
Laser pistol	4d6	P/L	0	+2	3	100	1	25	1		
Laser rifle	6d6	P/L	+1	+4	4	500	1	50	3		
Needler pistol	3d6	P/L	0	+2	3	50	1	20	1		Armor piercing

Heavy Weapons & Misc

Weapon	Dmg	Type	Acc	Rmod	STR Min	Max	RoF	Amm	Wt	Cost	Notes
Machine-guns (by caliber)											
7.62mm Light MG											
mounted	5d6+2	P/L	+2	+5	3	1000	20	100	15		Bipod/tripod; AF; M-60
carried	5d6+2	P/L	+1	+4	5	1000	20	100	9		Carried; AF; M-60
.50 cal. MG	9d6	P/L	+2	+5	4	1000	20	100	30		AF; M-2
Cannons											
Field cannon, small	12d6	B/L	+1	+3	Crew	1000	1/10	1	1000		"6 pounder" (18th cent.)
Field cannon, medium	15d6	B/L	+1	+3	Crew	1000	1/10	1	1000		"12 pounder" (19th cent.)
155mm	18d6	P/L	+2	+5	Crew	22 km	1/4	1	7154		M198 Howitzer
Ship's gun, 16-in.	24d6	P/L	+3	+8	Crew	50 km	1/20	1	—		Ship's guns
Support weapons											
Flame-thrower	4d6	B/L	+2	+2	4	40	1	50	32		M2-2
Grenade, frag.	6d6	P/L	0	0	3	STRx5	1/2	—	.4		M33A1, M57; EX
Grenade, tear gas	6d6	Sp/Sp	0	0	3	STRx5	1/2	—	.4		M47 (CS); EX
Grenade, stun	6d6	B/S	0	0	3	STRx5	1/2	—	.4		"flash-bang"; EX
M1 Rocket Launch.	10d6	P/L	+1	+3	4	110	1/5	1	6		WWII Bazooka
M72A2 LAW	10d6	P/L	+1	+2	2	350	1	—	2.4		Disposable weapon; EX
Mortar, 81mm	12d6	P/L	+1	+4	Crew	1000	1/2	1	18		EX
RPG	10d6	P/L	+1	+3	3	100	1/4	1	6		Rocket-propelled grenade; RPG-7; EX

ARMOR

Armor Attributes

Like weapons, armor has several attributes that describe its performance within the rules. These are not the same kinds of attributes that characters have, but they serve a similar function.

The attributes that describe armor are Armor Value (AV), Locations covered (Loc), Strength minimum (abbreviated "STR Min"), Weight (abbreviated "Wt"), Cost, and Notes.

Armor Value (AV)

The Armor Value indicates the amount of points of protection that the armor affords. Each point of AV reduces damage inflicted upon the character by 1 point. For example, an AV of 10 would reduce a 16 point attack to a 6 point attack. The armor's AV protects from all forms of damage unless otherwise noted in the description (e.g., chainmail is flexible and does not protect as well against Blunt and piercing attacks as it does cutting attacks).

Locations Covered (Loc)

The numeric body locations (from the *Random Hit location Table*, on page 94) that the armor protects. The AV of the armor is applied to any attacks that strike one of the protected areas.

If the GM is not using Hit Locations in your game, you can ignore these numbers.

STR Minimum (STR Min)

The minimum STR score required to move about and fight unencumbered by the armor. Armor that is rigid, heavy and/or restricts air flow will have a higher STR Min than armor that is less cumbersome, allows air to circulate around the wearer's body (to "breathe" and release heat) and doesn't restrict the wearer's range of motion.

If a character has a STR score lower than the listed STR minimum for the armor he is wearing, the character will incur a penalty to his REF. For every point below the STR minimum, the character suffers a -1 to REF and MOV. This temporary reduction in REF also affects the character's INI, and of course any REF-based skill rolls.

Bob has a STR 4 and REF 5. Bob puts on a suit of full samurai armor, which has a STR Min of 4. Because Bob's STR is 1 less than the STR Min of the armor, Bob suffers a temporary –1 to his REF and MOV for as long as he wears the armor.

If a character has a STR score higher than the listed STR minimum there is no bonus.

Weight (Wt)

The weight of the armor, listed in kilograms.

If you are not keeping track of the weight of equipment or other items carried by the characters in your game, then you can ignore this number.

Cost

Normally the cost of the armor will be listed here, in the currency appropriate to the setting and era in which your game is set. We have not provided prices for the armor in this book because it would be impossible to list accurate prices for all settings.

GMs are encouraged to create prices for armor in their game if they so choose. Prices appropriate to a particular setting, and in the proper currency for that setting, will be published in other *Action! System* products and will be available on the *Action! System* web site (www.action-system.com).

Notes

Notes contain additional information about the armor, such as "1/2 AV vs. Blunt damage."

Armor List

Item	AV	Loc	STR Min	Wt.	Cost	Notes
Clothing, light	1	Varies	0	1		Typical spring/summer garb
Clothing, heavy	2	Varies	1	4		Typical fall/winter garb
Brigandine	8	7-15	4	4		½ AV vs. Blunt damage
Chainmail	12	3, 5-15	5	10		½ AV vs. Blunt damage
Football helmet	10	3-4	2	2		American football (e.g., NFL)
Football pads	10	7-8, 10-11, 13-15	4	8		American football (e.g., NFL)
Helmet, kevlar	14	3-4	2	1		Military/police helmet
Leather	6	7-15	3	2		½ AV vs. Blunt damage
Modern body armor						"Bullet proof vest"
Level IIA	10	7-12	3	1		½ AV vs. pointed weapons
Level II	12	7-12	3	1		½ AV vs. pointed weapons
Level IIIA	14	7-12	3	1.5		½ AV vs. pointed weapons
Level III	16	7-12	4	1.5		½ AV vs. pointed weapons
Tactical	18	6-13	5	2		½ AV vs. pointed weapons
Trauma plate	20	13	2	.5		
Plate armor, full	16	3-18	8	30		½ AV vs. Blunt damage
Plate armor, partial						
plate sections	16	3-4,7-13	6	20		½ AV vs. Blunt damage
chain sections	12	5-6,14-18	—	—		½ AV vs. Blunt damage
Samurai armor	14	3-18	5			½ AV vs. Blunt damage
Space suit, modern	6	3-18	5	125		20th cen., includes 7 hrs life suppt
Space suit, future	10	3-18	3	25		Sci-fi, includes 24 hrs life suppt
Trooper armor	15	3-18	3	6		Sci-fi; ½ AV vs. Blunt damage

Partial plate armor *Full plate armor*

Persian (partial plate) armor *Roman (leather) armor*

INANIMATE OBJECTS

Eventually there will come a time when the GM or one of the players will want to know whether an attack can penetrate some material, whether it be a cinder block wall, a door, or even the side of a tank.

While living creatures have LIF points, non-living things have Hits. Hits work just like LIF points do, except that an object that has its Hits reduced to 0 doesn't "die" (the object isn't alive in the first place). Instead, when an object's Hits are reduced to 0, the object is presumed destroyed. "Destroyed" can mean several things, depending on the nature of the object and the GM's judgment. A "destroyed" vehicle becomes inoperable, a window is broken, a brick is broken, a wooden door is broken down, and so on.

When an object has sustained damage equal to twice its Hits, it is demolished, and is beyond repair. A "demolished" vehicle is crushed flat, a window is shattered, a brick is pulverized, a wooden door is splintered, and so on.

Realistic Values

The table below lists the Hits required to penetrate or break for some common materials that may be encountered in games of various genres. GMs wanting to apply an AV to an item (e.g., in order to keep track of cumulative damage) should split the number evenly between AV and Hits. For example, a two-inch-thick aluminum plate is listed as having 210 Hits. The plate could be treated as having an AV of 105 and 105 Hits.

Obviously if a listed item does not appear or even exist in your game setting you can ignore it.

AV of Common Materials

	Thickness				
Material	**10mm (.4")**	**20mm (.8")**	**50mm (2")**	**150mm (6")**	**1m (1.3 yd)**
Aluminum alloy	14	28	70	210	1400
Bronze	10	20	50	150	1000
Cement	2	4	10	30	200
Glass	1	2	5	15	100
Plexiglas, anti-ballistic	12	24	60	180	1200
Plexiglas, standard	2	4	10	30	200
Steel, tempered	26	52	130	390	2600
Steel, mild	18	36	90	270	1800
Stone	2	4	10	30	200
Wood, heavy	2	4	10	30	200
Wood, soft	1	2	5	15	100

Cinematic/Extreme Values

For GMs wanting the AV and Hits values for items in Cinematic- and Extreme-level games, use the optional AV/Hits table below.

Games with an anime or superhero theme should use these values, as they will provide a more powerful feel to the game, allowing the characters to have a greater affect on the world around them than if using the realistic armor values of substances, as listed in the table above.

Object AV/Hits Table

Material or Object	**AV**	**Hits**
Doors		
Airlock door	24	21
City gates, small, wood	15	30
City gates, large, wood	24	60+
Interior wood door	6	9
Interior starship door	18	12
Exterior wood door	12	9
Metal fire door	15	15
Safe door	30	9
Vault door, small	45	24
Vault door, large	48	27
Furniture		
Bookcase, small	9	12
Bookcase, large	12	18
Bookcase full of books	12	24
Card catalog, wood	12	21
Chair, standard	9	9
Chair, high-back, leather	9	12
Chamber pot	6	6
Computer, personal	6	6
Computer, mainframe	9	15
Desk, small	9	12
Desk, large wooden	12	18
Desk, large metal	15	24
Filing cabinet, small metal	12	12
Filing cabinet, large metal	15	18
Furniture, light wood	9	9
Furniture, heavy wood	12	15
Furniture, plastic	6	9
Furniture, steel-reinforced	15	15
Glass	2	3
Glass, reinforced	6	3
Hearth/fireplace	15	30

Lamp post, breakaway	15	9
Mantel	9	9
Painting, small framed	6	3
Painting, large framed	9	3
Picnic table	9	21
Planter, large	9	9-18
Stanchion, metal	9	6
Stanchion, plastic	3	2
Table, medium	9	12
Table, large	12	15
Turnstile	15	12
Washbasin (sink)	9	9
Locks		
House doorknob lock	9	6
Deadbolt lock	12	9
Magnetic lock	15	9
Padlock	12	9
Machinery		
Camera, surveillance	9	3
Copier, large	18	24
Escalator	27	24
Fax machine	6	6
Fire extinguisher	12	12
Hand cart, metal	12	6
Machinery, very light/small	9	6
Machinery, light	15	12
Machinery, medium	21	18
Machinery, heavy	27	24
Metal detector, hand-held	3	6
Metal detector, walk-thru	12	9
Monitor, video	6	9
Printer, desktop	9	6
Spacesuit	6	9
Telephone	6	6
Typewriter, electric	6	6
Typewriter, manual	6	9
VCR/DVD player	9	6
Vending machine	18	18
Water fountain, metal	9	9
X-Ray machine	18	18
Outdoor Items, Miscellaneous		
Awning	9	3
Boulder	15	29
Bridge, small (1.6 ktons)	27	21
Bridge, large (100 ktons)	27	27
Bushes	6	6
Cobblestone, single	12	12
Dirt, per cubic meter	0	30
Flagpole, breakaway	12	6
I beam, per 2m length	27	24
Manhole cover	27	15
Mannequin	9	9
Porta-potty	9	12
Railroad tracks	12	15
Stone, per cubic meter	15	57
Telephone pole	15	15
Trees		
Small tree, less than 2m	12	15
Medium tree, less than 15m	15	24
Large tree, 15m or more	15	33
Vehicles		
Armored car	24	54
Automobile	9	45
Bicycle	9	6
Cart, small	9	24
Cart, large	12	36
Chariot	12	24
Helicopter	9	52
Hovercraft	15	52
Jetpack/EVU	12	12
Motorcycle	9	33
Plane, light	9	39
Plane, twin engine	9	45
Plane, multi-engine	9	54
Railroad car	18	45
Spaceship, capsule	30	30
Spaceship, medium	30	60-120
Spaceship, large	45	90-240
Submarine	30	60
Tank (front armor)	60	60
Tank (side/top armor)	48	—
Tank (bottom armor)	42	—
Truck or bus	12	51
Wagon, covered	9	36
Walls and Fences		
Armored wall	39	21
Barbed wire	15	6
Brick wall	15	9
Concrete wall	18	15
Home interior wall	9	9
Home exterior wall	12	9
Office interior wall	9	9
Office cubicle wall	9	6
Reinforced concrete wall	24	15
Spaceship interior wall	24	18
Vehicle gate arm, wooden	6	6
Wire fence	18	9
Wooden wall	12	9
Weapons		
Heavy weapon	18	24-27
Pistol	12	6-12
Rifle	12	15-21
Sword	12	12-18
Very large heavy weapon	18	36
Miscellaneous		
Barrel	9	18
Control console, per 2m	12	12
Drum, 55-gallon steel	12	18
Crate, small wooden	9	6
Crate, large wooden (23m)	12	21

ADVENTURES

In this section we explain how to create and run exciting adventures or scenarios for your players. These are the same basic guidelines we follow when creating adventures that we publish.

STORYLINE

The first step is to come up with a basic storyline. What events will take place during the adventure? Who are the adversaries, and what are they trying to accomplish? What obstacles will the PCs face?

Every adventure or story has a theme. The theme can suggest events that will occur in a story and vice versa.

A good way to develop the basic story is to answer the five basic questions: Who, what, where, when and why? We will describe and give some tips to answering each one below. Once you can answer all five, you should have all the details of your story.

Who?

Who is doing the action, committing the crime or act that drives (or starts off) the story?

Adversaries

A person who does something "wrong" or illegal or intentionally harmful to someone else is called the antagonist. The antagonist is the bad guy or villain of the story. If a crime or injustice is planned in advance or committed intentionally (even in the heat of the moment), it is usually by an antagonist.

Enemies are usually people, but not always. Sometimes an enemy might be an animal, or even a natural disaster. For example, an earthquake rocks the city of Los Angeles. The heroes must free people trapped in the rubble, put out fires, and perform other heroic rescues. Some thieves might try to take advantage of the chaos to loot, requiring the intervention of the heroes, but the earthquake is the main "enemy" of the adventure.

As for human enemies, there are really two types. Ordinary enemies are minor foes, like bandits or enemy soldiers. Villains are singular adversaries, often as skilled or even more skilled than the heroes. They are typically the masterminds who pull the strings of the ordinary enemies.

Ordinary Adversaries: Bandits, enemy soldiers, street thugs—all are examples of ordinary enemies. These everyday foes are rarely inherently evil, though they may commit misdeeds out of a desire to follow orders, fear, desperation, or some other motive. Their actions cannot be condoned, but they are usually at least understandable to the heroes.

They are obstacles to be overcome in the pursuit of justice, not enemies in their own right.

Except on rare occasions, such as a lone sentry, ordinary enemies are often encountered in large numbers—typically two or more adversaries per hero. This enhances the challenge for the intrepid heroes, not to mention increasing the opportunities for derring-do.

Fortunately, ordinary enemies are normally not all that difficult for the heroes to overcome. They are fairly easy to intimidate, trick, disarm, elude, or otherwise defeat. You can encourage

this cinematic feel, and save yourself a lot of bookkeeping, by allowing ordinary enemies to quickly be taken out of the fighting. A single strong attack or clever strategem should be enough to subdue an ordinary foe.

This keeps the action fast-paced, reinforces the stature of the heroes and reduces the temptation for PCs to resort to killing their adversaries.

Villains: Black-hearted scoundrels with twisted morality—or none at all—villains are the true adversaries of the heroic PC. These masterminds spin webs of deceit and depravity, sending minions out to do their dirty work but rarely endangering their own precious hides to carry out their vile schemes.

In fact, the heroes may not face the villain directly—or even learn his identity—for several adventures. Only after disposing of his wicked plots and battling his many henchmen do they get an opportunity to challenge their true foe.

Villains are normally encountered singly, though occasionally two (or more) will form a temporary alliance to deal with a particularly dangerous enemy. These accords rarely last very long, however, since no villain can ever truly trust another. Betrayal is as natural to a villain as breathing.

Other common traits include enormous pride, overconfidence, greed, a devious mind, and a tendency for naked cruelty. Villains are fond of complex plots intended to trap those who would put a stop to their schemes. But villains seldom learn from their errors. Incompetent underlings or other scapegoats are always to blame for their failures.

Remember, enemies exist to ultimately be defeated by the heroes. Don't fall into the trap of liking your villains so much that you lose sight of this fact. Your players will accept that their adversaries often escape and sometimes even win temporary victories, but not if they sense you are fudging events just because you really like a particular villain.

Protagonists

Sometimes in adventure stories it's not a bad guy who gets the story going but a good guy. A good guy who starts off the adventure or story is called a "protagonist." If the person does something wrong by accident or does something that isn't "wrong" but causes problems, he is probably a protagonist. Their action, however innocent, could result in an accident or a situation that puts someone else in danger, or perhaps something that makes the antagonist (or "bad guy") angry enough to do something wrong.

Other Characters

Along with their adversaries, the PCs will meet many other people in their adventures. Some are people in need of their help, such as an innocent peon unjustly condemned to death by a corrupt official. Others are everyday people, such as a bartender or village blacksmith. And still others are family members, friends, or loved ones. A few may even be allies. Not everyone the heroes meet need be either friend or foe, with nothing in between, though.

These other characters are very important. Not only are they useful in creating dramatic stories (how will a hero react when bandits kidnap his sister?), they can help remind the PCs just who the real adversaries are.

Come up with names for the other characters the heroes might encounter in the course of the adventure, and a few notes on their personalities. Devising a simple "hook" for each character—such as a woman who constantly flutters her fan while talking to the PCs—will each one memorable for your players.

Finally, keep track of the information you've come up with. This way, you can re-introduce the characters in later adventures, helping the heroes build relationships with them over time.

What?

What is it the villain (or villains) is doing? This is the active plot of the story, which should lead to a conflict with the heroes.

The villains could be working toward some personal goal to achieve wealth, destroy the heroes (or someone else)—whether by simply humiliating them, frustrating them or killing them—committing acts of terrorism or sabotage, or building a secret device (or weapon) to unleash on an unsuspecting world.

The villain's plans can be as simple or as complex as you want. Even simple plots can make for fun adventures, though the most satisfying role-playing adventures tend to involve well-thought out plans by the villains, with plenty of complications and sub-plots throughout.

Where?

Next you need to consider where the adventure, or the individual scenes of the adventure, will take place.

Think like a Hollywood filmmaker. Invent imaginative sets for your major scenes—especially the climax! Why have a fight take place in an ordinary street when you can place the action atop the rooftops, or on a log over a waterfall, or aboard a burning ship in the harbor?

Likewise, come up with plenty of props for inventive heroes to use. It's hard to swing across a room full of enemies when the GM forgets to include anything to swing on! Swashbuckling action demands plenty of props. When you come up with a prop, jot down a few notes on how it might be used by the heroes. Figuring out Target Numbers for skill rolls involving the prop in advance can help keep your adventure from stalling while you look up a rule or come up with something on the spot.

When?

When do the events of the adventure take place? Do they occur all at once, or over the course of several days, or even weeks? This can be very important – the longer the heroes have to investigate, make plans and find equipment or allies, the more prepared they will be for the climax. Sometimes that's good, and sometimes it's not. It depends on the storyline for each adventure.

Why?

No one—not even a villain—does things for no reason at all. You need to consider why the adversaries are acting the way they are. Knowing the motivation of the enemies will help you figure out how they will behave and react during the adventure.

Some common motivations include revenge, greed, desire or lust for power, a battle of wits with the heroes, prejudice, and yes, even love.

SCENES

All stories have a beginning, a middle and an end. In the beginning, some threat or problem arises that gets the heroes involved. In the middle the heroes gain more information about the danger. In the end, or climax, the heroes resolve the problem – usually in a thrilling action scene. Then the epilogue wraps everything up.

Adventures in *Action! System* are divided into "scenes," similar to a movie. Each scene represents a part of the story.

The story switches scenes whenever it is appropriate to do so. Usually a scene will end when everything that the characters are doing (or trying to do) is resolved.

Simple adventures in *Action! System* games have three scenes—an Introduction, a Conflict, and an Epilogue. The Introduction presents the problem and may give the heroes a chance to gain more information. It's the beginning and middle of the story rolled into one. The Conflict is the exciting climax, and the Epilogue resolves any loose ends.

But not all adventures have to follow this formula. If they did, your players might get bored after awhile. So once you are comfortable designing adventures, throw in some variety. You might start the story off with a short action scene that introduces the key people in the adventure.

However you structure the scenes in your story, it should always have a beginning, middle and end.

AN INTERACTIVE STORYLINE

In a roleplaying game, unlike a book or film, you aren't the only person responsible for the storyline. The actions of the heroes can have a big effect on the story of your adventure. So figuring out what actions the PCs might take is also part of coming up with a storyline. After all, if the heroes set off for Paris when the rest of your storyline takes place in Los Angeles, you'll have a problem.

Fortunately, in most games the PCs are heroes, and you can predict fairly accurately how they will react in most cases. For example, if they spot brigands robbing someone, you can count on the PCs getting involved somehow. There's no need to come up with individual reasons for each hero to become involved in every adventure.

MORE GM TIPS

Here are some more tips for creating and running adventures.

Match your storylines to the interests of your players. If a player enjoys complicated intrigue, come up with a suitably intricate plot for him to unravel. If another player has fun using stealth, be sure to include plenty of chances to sneak around. Players who get to do what they enjoy are less likely to get bored or distracted. Besides, ensuring that everyone has a good time is part of your job as the GM.

Make sure that every hero gets at least one moment to shine in each adventure. Tailor a particular task, encounter, or challenge to each PC. Every player deserves a turn in the spotlight.

Play the parts of adversaries and other characters with flair. Use different voices or styles of speaking. Or try using an accent, even if it's a bad one. Get up from the table to act out how one character limps when he walks, or wave your hands around while pretending to be a frightened settler. Help your players get into their own roles by throwing yourself into yours.

Keep the action moving to reflect a cinematic style of play. Don't let the adventure bog down in minute details about what each PC is doing every minute in between action scenes. On the other hand, don't cut short a good planning session or character interaction if the players are having fun. Recognize when it's time to move on, and use a cinematic "cut scene" to skip ahead to more fun. The storyline needn't dwell on what the heroes are doing in between action scenes. The GM can just skip ahead by saying, "a few days later…"

It's best if the story takes place with all of the characters together most of the time. It's okay if some characters go off to do things alone or break into small groups occasionally, however. Sometimes it makes sense for characters to do things by themselves, such as picking up needed supplies, going to get help or scouting out a location. But it's important to make sure that everyone who wants to have his character present for the big action scene is able to do so.

Last, but not least, never present the players with a situation in which killing is the only solution. There should always be another way to resolve the problem, whatever it might be, without resorting to bloodshed.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

As characters finish each adventure and (presumably) accomplish the goal set forth for them, whether it be to rescue a falsely imprisoned person, capturing or eliminating an enemy unit, saving someone's life or safeguarding a secret message to the King, the characters should earn Experience Points (EP).

Awarding Experience Points

Character improvement is the primary method for the GM to express his opinion on how the players are doing. There are many ways to quantify success; goals achieved, excellent role and character playing, even contributions to the background of the world. The number of experience points to award to characters will vary from adventure to adventure. Some GMs will also award experience for mapping or other record-keeping duties, character sketches, or other contributions to the game as a whole. Here are some guidelines for GMs to help determine how much experience points to award at the conclusion of an adventure.

Spending Experience Points

Some players will want to scrimp and save for a big character improvement. Others will spend a point here and there just to spend them and improve some small bit. Either of these extremes is probably the wrong approach. In the best games, players should mix long-term and short-term goals, putting points into less expensive abilities while saving others for larger steps.

Characters can increase existing skills, increase existing abilities, and under certain conditions develop completely new skills and abilities. Which of these a player decides to pursue also determines how you proceed.

Most games will have a starting skill maximum. For this example we will use +5. No character can buy a skill higher than +5 at the start of play. This will also be the training skill maximum. That is, no character will be able to take advantage of instructor led training past +5. After that all progression and improvement will only be through experience within the course of the game.

GMs may also wish to limit the way experience is spent to abilities that are *used* or specifically studied in the game. A rule of thumb would be that if the character did not use a skill or ability that session, then that skill or ability cannot be improved. Some GMs will find this too restrictive.

Experience Point Awards

Description	**EP**
Base experience point award for an adventure	1
The adventure was…	
…Short (one game session)	+0
…Long (two game sessions)	+1
…Very long (three or more sessions)	+2
The adventure ended…	
…successfully	+1
…unsuccessfully, but with a chance for the PCs to fix things next session	+0
…unsuccessfully with no chance to fix things	-1
The character performed a dramatic or heroic action or speech that…	
…Added enjoyment to the game*	+1
…Accomplished a team goal*	+1
…Presented serious risk to the character*	+1
The player…	
…Contributed a major plot element	+2
…Contributed a minor plot element	+1
…Developed a character background	+1

Character Improvement Costs

Attributes	**EP Cost**
Increase Attribute score	5x new attribute score
Traits	**EP Cost**
Buy new Advantage	Listed cost of Trait
Increase level of Advantage	Difference in cost of current and new level (and GM's permission)
Buy off existing Disadvantage	Value of Disadvantage (and GM's permission)
Take new Disadvantage	No point benefit
Skills	**EP Cost**
Skill Group levels	New level x5 in EP
Skill levels	New level x1 in EP
Specialty levels	New level x .5 in EP
Action Points	**EP Cost**
Buy one Action Point	10 (and GM's permission)
"Cash in" Action Point	-1 (character gets 1 EP)

CHARACTER CREATION

The *Action! System* itself is a tool for creating and role-playing fictional characters to tell a story. In this section we present a recap of the of the character creation rules, including important table and charts, so that you don't have to flip back and forth to various pages throughout the book.

Characters in *Action! System* have numerical scores that define their capabilities. Each character has attributes, traits, benefits and skills. These are described in detail below.

Character Concept

The first step in creating a character is to think of a concept. What kind of character do you want to play? A strong-willed, square-jawed, two-fisted hero? A mild-mannered reporter? A sneaky covert operative? A rock star?

To simplify things, start with a single idea.

Ross is creating a character for a modern intrigue game, something like one of the conspiracy shows that is so popular on television. Ross only needs one idea to start. He think about it for a moment and into his heads pops "Jack Limps." In this one idea we know two things: the character thinks of himself as Jack, and he limps.

Where to go from here? Think about the five Ws: Who, What, Why, Where, and When?

Who is Jack? Jack is sometimes a nickname for John, but is also a name in and of itself. So is Jack a nickname? No. We decide that Jack is his given name. Does Jack have a last name? Yes. We decide that Smith fits as a last name. So we know that Jack Smith limps.

What does Jack do and where is he now? This doesn't have to be Jack's job. It can be a hobby or even a talent that Jack possesses. We give it some thought and decide that Jack was an astronaut. He was an astronaut, so he isn't one any more. He could have been hurt in an accident and that could explain the limp.

Why was Jack hurt? Jack was on a space mission and he discovered something. Whatever it was that he discovered, it shook him up so badly that he did something stupid and accidentally hurt himself, so now he walks with a limp.

Where and when did the accident occur? Was it recently? We decide that Jack was recently discharged from the space program, so the accident that caused his injury has also resulted in Jack being released from the space program. Maybe Jack didn't report what really happened out there in space that fateful day, so maybe Jack has a secret.

Ross records the character's basic information on the character sheet.

Character Name: Jack Smith
Player Name: Ross
Campaign: Agent X (modern intrigue)
GM's name: Mark
Reality/power level: Realistic X Cinematic Extreme

With the beginnings of the character firmly in mind, we can start thinking about and determining Jack's attributes.

Buying Attributes

Characters in the *Action! System* have numerical scores that define their basic capabilities, called Attributes. Each character can also have traits, benefits and skills.

Attributes cost 1 *Attribute Point* for each level in an attribute. To buy a STR of 5 for a starting character, for instance, has a cost of 5 *Attribute Points*.

Each player gets a number of points to divide among the character's attributes. This number is usually equal to the number of attributes used in the game multiplied by a number (based on the campaign level), with the result rounded to the nearest 5. (See the table below.)

Campaign Level	Avg. Score	Attributes (A!S Core)	Starting Attribute Pts
Realistic	4	6	25
Cinematic	6	6	35
Extreme	8	6	50

Attributes can be improved after character creation by spending experience points (see *Character Improvement Costs*, page 86). To increase an attribute by one level costs 5 times the new level in experience points.

The game Ross is playing in is a Cinematic level game, so Ross has 35 Attribute Points to spend on his character's attributes. Ross decides on the following attribute scores for his character, Jack Smith: STR 4, REF 8, HLT 5, PRE 7, INT 5, WIL 6. Ross records Jack's attribute scores and attribute-based information on his character sheet.

Attributes

Attr	Score	Roll (2xAttr.)	Notes
STR	4	8 +3d6	Dmg: 2d6 Lift: 100kg
REF	8	16 +3d6	
HLT	5	10 +3d6	
PRE	7	14 +3d6	Persuasion: +
INT	5	10 +3d6	Awareness: +
WIL	6	12 +3d6	

Calculate Derived Attributes

Once your character's primary attribute scores are determined, it's time to calculate your character's derived attributes. Record your character's derived attribute scores on your character sheet.

DEF	=	REF + 10
INI	=	(REF+INT)/2
TGH	=	(STR + WIL)/2
LIF	=	(HLT x 3) + (WIL x 2)
MOV	=	REF + (STR+HLT)/2

Ross calculates his character's derived attributes and records the scores on his character sheet. Jack wears no armor and doesn't have any INI bonuses, so Ross leaves those spaces blank. Because the character is being created for a Cinematic Action! game, his MOV can be higher than 10.

Derived Attributes

DEF	18	REF + 10	Armor mod: ____	Other mod: ____	
INI	7	(REF+INT)/2	INI Bonus: ____	(for ____)	
TGH	5	(STR + WIL)/2	Stunned (LIF/2):	14	
LIF	27	(HLTx3)+(WILx2)	Superficial (HLTx1):	5	Light (HLTx2): 10
			Serious (HLTx3):	15	Critical (HLTx4): 20
MOV	13	REF+(STR+HLT)/2	Run (MOVx2):	26	Sprint (MOVx4): 52

Unspent Attribute Points

Any unspent Attribute Points may be converted to Character Points at a rate of 10:1 to buy advantages or skills. That is, for every 1 Attribute Point that a player wishes to spend on something besides his character's attributes, the player can "exchange" the Attribute Point for 10 Character Points. Character Points can't be used to increase a character's attributes, however.

Ross has spent all of his Attribute Points so he has none left over to convert to Character Points.

Buying Traits

Advantages are purchased with the pool of Character Points available for skills (see *Buying Skills*, page 32) or with Experience Points (with GM's permission). The cost (for *Advantages*) or the value (points gained for *Disadvantages*) is listed in the description of each.

Characters can buy *innate* traits only during character creation, except with the permission of the GM.

For a detailed description of each trait, as well as guidelines for creating new Traits, see the *Traits* chapter (page 12).

Jack is a veteran and can stay cool under pressure. He is

TRAIT LIST

Advantages

Advantage	Type	Opposite Trait
Acute Sense	Innate	Impaired Sense
Advanced	Innate	Primitive
Ally	Developed	Enemy
Ambidextrous	Innate	Bad Hands
Athletic	Developed	Out of Shape
Attractive	Developed	Unattractive
Con Artist	Developed	Honest
Cool Headed	Developed	Bad Tempered
Danger Sense	Developed	Oblivious to Danger
Eidetic Memory	Innate	Forgetful
Famous	Developed	Infamous
Fast Healer	Innate	Slow Healer
Fast Learner	Innate	Slow Learner
Fast Reflexes	Developed	Slow Reflexes
Follower	Developed	Dependent
Good Sense of Direction	Innate	Poor Sense of Direction
Good Sense of Time	Innate	Poor Sense of Time
Hard to Kill	Innate	Easy to Kill
High Pain Threshold	Developed	Low Pain Threshold
Immunity	Developed	Addiction
Indistinct	Developed	Distinctive Features
Knows a Secret	Developed	Secret
Life Experience	Developed	Naïve
Light Sleeper	Developed	Heavy Sleeper
Long Lived	Innate	Short Lived
Lucky	Innate	Unlucky
Membership	Developed	Outsider
Night Vision	Innate	None
Perk	Developed	Duty
Physical Advantage	Developed	Physical Disadvantage
Psychological Advantage	Developed	Psychological Disadvantage
Social Advantage	Developed	Social Disadvantage
Speed Reader	Developed	Illiterate
Strong Willed	Developed	Weak Willed
Tall	Innate	Short
Wealthy	Developed	Poverty
Well Rested	Developed	Insomnia

Disadvantages

Disadvantage	Type	Opposite Trait
Addiction	Developed	Immunity
Bad Hands	Innate	Ambidextrous
Bad Tempered	Developed	Cool Headed
Dependent	Developed	Follower
Distinctive Features	Developed	Indistinct
Duty	Developed	Perk
Easy to Kill	Innate	Hard to Kill
Enemy	Developed	Ally
Forgetful	Developed	Eidetic Memory
Heavy Sleeper	Developed	Light Sleeper
Honest	Developed	Con Artist
Illiterate	Innate	Speed Reader
Impaired Sense	Developed	Acute Sense
Infamous	Developed	Famous
Insomnia	Developed	Well Rested
Low Pain Threshold	Developed	High Pain Threshold
Minor	Innate	Senior (Disadvantage)
Naïve	Innate	Life Experience
Oblivious to Danger	Developed	Danger Sense
Out of Shape	Developed	Athletic
Outsider	Developed	Membership
Physical Disadvantage	Either	Physical Advantage
Poor Sense of Direction	Innate	Good Sense of Direction
Poor Sense of Time	Innate	Good Sense of Time
Poverty	Developed	Wealth
Primitive	Innate	Advanced
Psychological Disadvantage	Developed	Psychological Advantage
Secret	Developed	Knows a Secret
Senior	Developed	Minor (Disadvantage)
Short	Innate	Tall
Short Lived	Innate	Long Lived
Slow Healer	Innate	Fast Healer
Slow Learner	Innate	Fast Learner
Slow Reflexes	Innate	Fast Reflexes
Social Disadvantage	Developed	Social Advantage
Unattractive	Developed	Attractive
Unlucky	Innate	Lucky
Weak Willed	Developed	Strong Willed

*adamant about not revealing anything to his former employers and is generally stronger-willed than the average person due to his experiences. Ross decides to buy the following Advantages for Jack to reflect his character's back story—**Cool Headed (Edge)**, and **Strong Willed (Gift)**. The total cost for the Advantages is 15 Character Points.*

*Because Jack saw something in space that he's keeping a secret from the government, Ross also selects the **Secret** disadvantage at the Hardship level, gaining 5 Character Points. He also selects the **Enemy** disadvantage because government agents are following Jack and trying to capture him to find out what he knows. Ross determines that this is normally worth 5 CP as a Hardship level Enemy, but the government also has far-reaching influence and access to tremendous resources, so the GM allows him to take it at the Peril level, for an additional 10 CP. Jack also has that limp, so Ross takes the **Physical Disadvantage** at Inconvenience level, as well.*

The 15 CP cost for the Advantages is covered by the -17 CP value gained for the Disadvantages, leaving Ross with 2 extra Character Points to spend on his character.

Ross records Jack's Advantages and Disadvantages on his character sheet.

Advantages

Advantage	Effect	Cost
Cool Headed (Edge)	+6	5
Strong Willed (Gift)	+9	10

Disadvantages

Disadvantage	Effect	Value
Enemy (Peril)	Hunted by U.S. govt	-10
Phys. Disad: Limp (Inconv.)	Can't Sprint	-2
Secret (Hardship)	Risks imprisonment	-5

Buying Skills

You get a number of character points to divide up among the character's skills based on the campaign level, as shown on the following table.

Campaign Level	Max Score	Starting Points (Core)
Realistic	6	50
Cinematic	8	75
Extreme	10	100

Skill Groups cost 5 points per level. Skills—including Skills requiring a specific "Type"—cost 1 point per level. A Specialty costs 1 point for 2 levels. Levels in a specialty may only be purchased in groups of 2 (i.e., a character cannot purchase 1 level in a Specialty).

A character must have at least one level in a Skill in order to purchase levels in a Specialty. A character need not have any levels in a Skill Group, however, in order to have levels in a Skill from that group.

The cost for each level of skill is shown below.

Level	Cost
Group	5 Pts./Level
Skill	1 Pt./Level
Skill (Type)	1 Pt./Level
Skill (Specialty)	2 Level/1 CP

Once you have purchased your character's skills, record the skill names and scores on your character sheet.

*Because the game is a Cinematic level one, Ross gets 75 CP to spend on skills for his character (see **Buying Skills**, page 32). Adding the 2 CP left over from his character's Disadvantages (after subtracting the cost of the Advantages), Ross has a total of 77 Cp to spend on skills.*

Here are the skill Ross buys for his character, Jack, using the Modern Espionage skill list (page 99).

Skills

Cost	Skill/Group	Score	Roll
5	Athletics Skill Group	1	+ 1
2	Climbing*	2	+ 3
1	Para	1	+ 2
2	Parachute	4	+ 7
3	Swimming	3	+ 4
2	Unarmed Combat (Brawling)*	4	+ 5
0	Throwing*	2	+ 3
0	Instruction*	2	+ 2
0	Persuasion*	2	+ 2
1	Propaganda	2	+ 4
2	Writing	2	+ 2
2	Reports	2	+ 4
3	Stealth*	5	+ 5
0	Language (Native)*	3	+ 3
2	Area Knowledge (Houston, TX)*	4	+ 4
3	Awareness*	5	+ 5
1	Concentration*	3	+ 3
5	Intuition	5	+ 5
3	Intel Analysis	3	+ 3
2	Surveillance	2	+ 2
2	First Aid	2	+ 2
0	Maces/Clubs*	2	+ 2
2	Fish and Game	2	+ 2
2	Hunting	4	+ 6
3	Navigation	3	+ 3
3	Survival	3	+ 3
5	Sciences Skill Group	1	+ 1
4	Astronomy	4	+ 5
3	Pistols	3	+ 3
3	Society	3	+ 3
5	Technical Skill Group	1	+ 1
1	Driving (Cars)*	3	+ 3
5	Piloting (Space Craft)	5	5

The total cost for Jack's skills is 77 CP. With all of his character's skill recorded on his character sheet, Ross is ready to move on.

A Few Last Thoughts

After you've selected all of your character's attribute scores, traits, and skills, and written them on the character sheet, there are a few things you may want to do before playing your character in the game.

Putting it All Together

Now that your character is almost finished, take a moment to review his attributes, traits, and skills. There may be something about your character that sparks an idea. Perhaps you selected a Disadvantage for your character that wasn't quite clearly defined, such as an Enemy that has yet to be named, or a Physical Disadvantage, such as an injury, that you haven't included in the character's background story.

Reviewing your character can give you ideas to tie up all the loose ends in your character's background, so that you can explain (or at least know yourself) why the character has a great shooting skill but a phobia of guns, or why the character comes from a wealthy family but has no real wealth of his own.

A well-rounded character is not just one that is point-balanced in terms of the game rules, but also one that has enough of a back story that the player can interact with other players in-character, or role-play, during the game. Understanding your character's fictional history can make deciding what actions your character takes during the game much easier.

Introducing the Character

Take a moment to describe your character to the other players and the GM. Try to describe your character in terms of what the other characters would perceive about him or her. What does he look like, talk like, and act like? Your character's motivations and other traits may not be immediately evident to casual observers.

If the other players' characters are not assumed to know your character well (i.e., if they are not already good friends, co-workers or relatives) then it's okay to keep a few secrets about your character that the other players (and their characters) can discover later.

Mike is playing a member of a S.E.A.L. team in a modern covert ops game. Mike has decided that his character is new to the team, so he describes his character's general appearance and also tells the other players and the GM that his character is a bit of a practical joker but dedicated to his job. What Mike also tells the GM, but doesn't tell the other players, however, is that his character has a Psychological Disadvantage (Prankster) which compels him to play practical jokes and gags on others, even at inopportune moments, such as during missions! The other players' characters will learn just what kind of joker Mike's character is when they find smoke grenades in the latrine…

Getting Into the Story

Think about how the character can get into the game. In other words, think of a way that the GM can introduce your character into the story. In more realistic games, the way a character is introduced should make sense. A character who works the night shift at the newspaper plant will not likely be found in a night club, unless the character is on his day off or perhaps just lost his job. The GM is free to set the opening scene of the adventure at any time or place that makes sense for the story, but if you provide the GM with some ideas or suggestions it can help out a lot.

In more cinematic and less realistic games, the characters could just "happen" to be at the place where the opening scene takes place. This is a common occurrence in superhero genre games.

Alternatively, the opening scene may not involve the characters at all. The opening scene may simply be a way to introduce elements of the story to the players but involve something that the characters will discover later. For example, the opening scene may involve the theft of an artifact from a museum in India, which the GM describes to the players. The characters they are playing, however, may only learn about the theft in a later scene. This technique is good for planting the seed of the adventure in the players' minds in order to grab and keep their attention. Characters of players who *want* their characters involved are much easier to get into the action!

The most important thing to remember is that games are supposed to be fun, so have fun with your character.

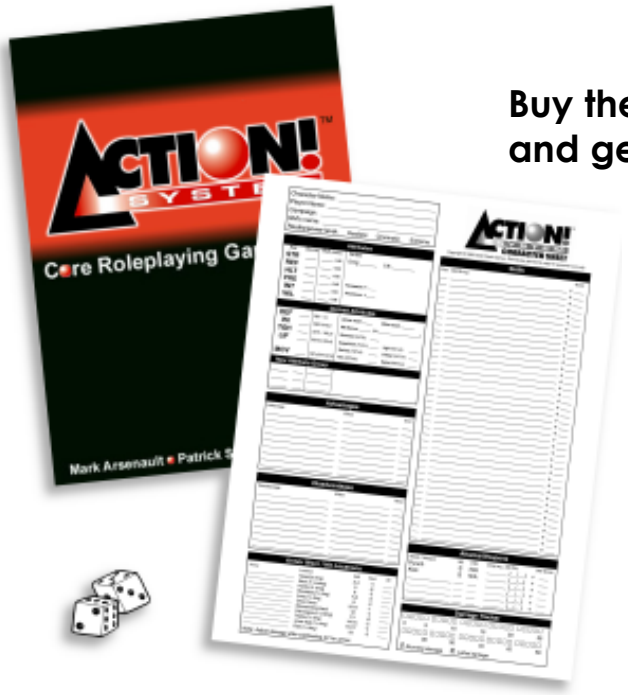
Time to Play!

Once you have your character's background thought out, and his attributes, traits and skills purchased, and everything is noted correctly on the character sheet, you're ready to play.

You should give your character sheet to the GM to look over, just to make sure that everything is okay for the GM's game.

That's all there is to it. While it may seem a little complicated at first, you'll soon find that it's quite easy to create a character and you'll be doing it on your own in no time. You're always free to use this section (or any portion of the book) to help you during character creation.

Get Ready for More



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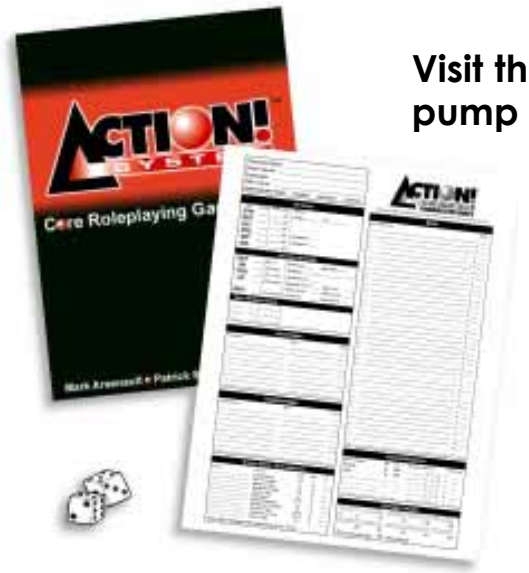

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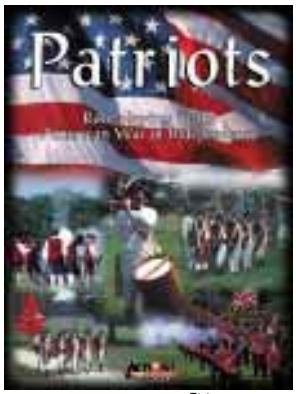

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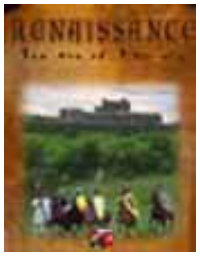

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