

InSpectres Startup Edition

By Jared A. Sorensen

What you are reading is the Start-up version of InSpectres, not the full game. This version is meant to give you a quick overview of the system and get you playing within minutes. If you enjoy it, give the full version a shot. If not, then you can keep playing the Startup version for as long as you like (or pass them onto a friend).

About the Game

InSpectres is a business that specializes in ghost hunting, vampire slaying and research into various types of occult phenomena. Although there is public knowledge of the supernatural, normal folks aren't prepared to deal with it themselves. That's where your characters come in.

You've just opened your own InSpectres franchise and you're hungry for some new business. You might be a little wet behind the ears and your equipment might be a little out-dated...but you're hoping for that one sweet score. After all, you have bills to pay.

Now, let's get things started.

Creating an Agent

All InSpectres characters have the following four attributes:

Academics: researching information, remembering facts, casting spells.

Athletics: sweaty physical stuff requiring strength or agility (i.e.: fighting, shooting).

Technology: building, buying and using hi-tech gadgets (i.e.: computers, lasers).

Contact: persuasion, public speaking, interviewing clients, lying to people.

Start off by choosing an agent from the group on the right.

Each template is built around a central concept (in this case, the smart guy, the strong guy, the techie and the con artist).

Agent Templates			
Bookworm Academics: 4 Athletics: 1 Technology: 2 Contact: 2 Talent: Library Geek. +1 die when using books.	Hacker Academics: 3 Athletics: 1 Technology: 4 Contact: 1 Talent: Computer Geek. +1 die when using computers.	Jock Academics: 1 Athletics: 4 Technology: 2 Contact: 2 Talent: Strong. +1 die when performing feats of strength.	Face Academics: 2 Athletics: 2 Technology: 1 Contact: 4 Bonus: Good-looking. +1 die when flirting.

Agents have a special ability (called a Talent) that gives them a bonus in certain areas.

To make your own template, just distribute 9 points between the four attributes (minimum 1, maximum 4) and write down a Talent your agent possesses. This Talent doesn't need to correspond to any one Skill. An agent with the Talent: "Mechanic" would gain a bonus die when fixing a truck, identifying a car's make and model, swinging a monkey wrench in a fight or talking to fellow grease monkeys.

InSpectres: the Game System

Whenever you want to perform an action, you must roll a number of six-sided dice equal to your skill rating. So if you need to make an Academics roll and you have an Academics of 3, you'd roll three dice. If you have a Contact of 1 and you want to con someone, you roll one die.

After you make this roll, find the *highest* number shown and check the Skill Chart:

Skill Roll Chart		
6	Amazing!	Describe the result and gain two Job Dice.
5	Good	Describe the result and gain one Job Die.
4	Okay	Describe the result — you must provide a negative or humorous effect but the overall result should be positive.
3	Mediocre	Describe the result — you may include a positive aspect but the overall result must be negative.
2	Pretty bad	The GM decides your fate or you may suggest something suitably negative.
1	Terrible!	The GM gets to hose you or you may suggest something suitably dire for yourself.

Job Dice

Job Dice are a measure of how close the team is to completing their mission. The more Job Dice your agents acquire, the closer they will be to the end of their mission.

When the mission is finally over (the problem has been solved and the requisite number of Job Dice have been gained), the Job Dice are then given to the InSpectres team as payment.

Stress

Stress occurs when your character is angered, scared, tired or injured. When this happens, the Game Master will have the stressed character roll between one die (for common, low-key stressors) and five dice (for mind-shattering experiences and severe injuries).

After the Stress dice have been rolled, find the *lowest* result and look it up on the Stress Roll Chart.

Stress Roll Chart		
6	Too Cool	Restore a die to any penalized skill.
5	Blasé	No effects...you just don't care.
4	Annoyed	Suffer a 1-die penalty to your next skill roll (no matter when or where you perform it).
3	Stressed	Lose a die from an appropriate skill.
2	Frazzled	Lose two dice from an appropriate skill (or one die from two skills)
1	Mental Breakdown	Lose a number of skill dice equal to the number of Stress dice rolled.

Once a skill has been reduced to 0, use of that skill automatically fails.

Confessionals

During any scene, you have the option of "stepping into the Confessional" and breaking up the action with your character's thoughts and feelings. It's the only time your character can "speak" to the players (and not their characters) and it gives you free rein to introduce new story elements or plot complications. You can foreshadow events and then play them out during the game or "jump ahead" in time and describe something that has yet to happen in the game (but happened in the character's past). The only hard and fast rules for Confessionals are these:

- Players must address the other players as if on camera (i.e.: use first-person).
- Confessionals should always add; never negate or detract from the game.
- Only one player can give a Confessional per scene.

Jobs

All InSpectres games ("jobs") break down into a series of events, much like the formula that many television shows use. They are:

Client Interview

This will usually consist of some (or all) of the characters asking a prospective client about their particular problem. Such an interview is usually meant to "kick off" the story. In most cases, the client will contact the InSpectres and set up a meeting with them. Most often this is at the InSpectres' headquarters but a client who wishes to avoid public scrutiny (because of their position or fame) may decide to hold the interview in their home, in a restaurant or in an abandoned graveyard at the stroke of midnight.

It's important to note that when the client explains his problem to the team, it isn't necessarily accurate information. The client could be confused by the problem (after all, he's not a professional and wouldn't know the difference between a vampire and a dhampyr, right?). The client might be not telling the whole story – or he might even be hiding something. This is just a kind of jumping-off point, and what happens in the Investigation phase is usually what pins down the source of the problem.

The GM should come up with a maximum number of Job Dice needed for the mission. When the players acquire this number, the mission is successfully completed. For an easy mission, ten Job Dice are all that's needed. A tougher job warrants around twenty Job Dice and a truly difficult mission requires thirty or more Job Dice.

Investigation

This is a very important phase and a great time to start hitting those books and using your Academics skill. Talk to the client, interview witnesses, search public records, investigate the site of the problem and for god's sake -- take notes!

This is also where InSpectres gets a little kooky.

You see, the person running the game (the GM) doesn't necessarily know what's causing all the problems. Through a combination of GM-player interaction, roleplaying, problem solving and quick wits, YOU (the players) can try and "figure out" what the problem is that you're all facing. The GM will then secretly roll the appropriate dice (usually Academics or Contacts, sometimes Technology if you're using your expensive toys to do the work for you) and that will determine whether you're "right" or not.

Which brings us to...

Jobs (cont.)

Action!

Time for those death-defying stunts and by-seat-of-the-pants thrills and chills! Your #1 skill roll is going to be Athletics, with lots of Technology and Stress rolls to liven things up. This is the part of the job where you go in and kick butt.

Cleaning Up

To finish the mission, the players need to acquire a certain number of Job Dice. Once this number is reached, they may finish the job and get paid. If the characters continue to make skill rolls, they only stand to lose Job Dice if they roll poorly – they cannot gain more job dice than the number set by the GM at the start of the mission.

If the players want, they can end a mission prematurely -- but doing so will net the team *half* the Job Dice they've gained up to that point, regardless whether the mission was completed successfully. These dice can then be used to restore lost skill points or saved to spend during the next mission.

Playing InSpectres

Playing this game requires only a few things. Some paper and pencils, a handful of six-sided dice, some friends and most important of all, your imagination and a willingness to use it. This isn't the kind of game where the GM's job is to write the plot and the players' job is simply to portray their character. What is integral to InSpectres is the concept of "shared power." That while the GM can do a lot, it's the players who determine where the story goes and what happens to them. If you roll well but you think it would be funnier to trip over a fellow agent and "accidentally" blast that demon, then go for it. And if you really screw up a Skill roll, don't be afraid of narrating the outcome to its spectacularly painful outcome!

For the GM: remember that your major responsibility is to kick the game into gear and then keep the pace if the game starts to drag. If things get dull, jump ahead to a new scene, inject some action or ask the players, "So, guys...what do you want to happen now?" It's also your responsibility to make the players roll Stress rolls when you think they're called for — not to hose them, but to prod their characters into realizing, "Hey! This is dangerous, freaky stuff we're doing!" And no matter how grim things get, they'll always have their bonus Talent die to help them out.

The full version of InSpectres has much more material that GM's and players alike will find useful. Rules for teamwork and automatic successes, a cool new attribute (called Cool), a more in-depth look at how a team's financial situation affects its performance, how to play supernatural agents and much more. Look for it, as well as other tricks and treats, at:

[Http://www.inspectres.com/inspectres](http://www.inspectres.com/inspectres)

Credits

InSpectres: Startup Edition was written and designed by Jared A. Sorensen

Special thanks to: The Forge (www.indie-rpgs.com) for valuable advice and feedback.