

JAGS Skill System

Major Concepts

Skills in JAGS

Characters created in JAGS will have areas of expertise and knowledge just like people in real life. This is reflected by buying skills for the character. A skill can be simply defined as anything learned, from medicine to karate. Some skills are useful in combat situations like skill with guns, knives, or unarmed combat. Others are useful in roleplaying situations like Etiquette for dealing with high society or Actor to fake an emotion that is not really felt. Still others allow the character to interact with the world or know things about it. A player will probably know nothing about the narcotics trade between the stars Epsilon Eridani and Alpha Centauri Prime but a character in a high-tech campaign with Streetwise Skill will—if he is experienced enough in that area.

Skills allow the character to do things that the player might not be able to do. A character with Chemistry Skill could identify chemicals, neutralize an acid which is eating through a starship hull, etc. A character in a fantasy campaign could use Occult Knowledge Skill to identify extraplanar monsters and find their weakness. A character with Acting Skill is a good liar even if the player is not.

Use of Skills

Skills are utilized when the GM asks the player to “make a roll.” This can happen at any time the character’s ability is called into question. The same way that an AGI roll might be called on to allow the character to jump off a falling platform, a skill roll can be called on to see if, for instance, a character can pick a lock or if the character remembers the formula for citric acid (should that data ever be important). Some skill rolls will be made in combat in the place of statistic rolls. For instance, a character with a black belt in karate will not use his base AGI score to hit targets—he would roll against his Karate Skill.

Skills should not substitute for roleplaying. This means that while the Acting Skill might let the character fake devastation after a friend dies (when the “friend” was really gunned down by the character) if the player does a totally unconvincing job of talking to the police the expertly forged emotion will not help. If the player’s story is no good even faking the emotion won’t help.

This rule is subject to much interpretation. If the character also had the Police Procedure Skill and knew how the police operated, had the Streetwise Skill and had been in similar situations before, or had some other applicable skill which would let the *character* know what to say even when the *player did not* the GM could well allow a roll against those skills to let the character come up with a good story. In this case the situation could—at the GM’s option—be handled entirely by rolls. Another, and possibly, better way to run the situation would be for the GM to help the player fabricate a story and then run the character telling it. The decision is up to the GM and player in the end.

* * *

Leyland sat back against the cool stone wall of a higher building. From the roof he could see the colorful flags and waving banners of the city. Higher still, down towards the docks was the castle with its white washed ramparts and crystal windows.

The girl—she was no more than sixteen summers, if that—stood in the sunlight. Her poor clothes hid the lean musculature he knew resided beneath the cloth and leather.

“So what do you want?” he asked finally. “You sought me, you found me. You want the location to my hideout? The town guard has a handsome reward—”

“I want to be your apprentice,” she said suddenly. “I want to learn.”

Leyland laughed. It was a sharp, clear sound, so striking that he imagined people on the streets below looked up.

She glared at him.

“If found you,” she said. “I followed you and chased you and climbed with you. That’s not enough? Damn you, Leyland! How dare you laugh at me.”

Leyland looked back at her. “The first rule of apprenticeship,” he said, “is never interrupt.”

* * *

Specific Concepts

Paying for Skills

Skills are bought using character points the same way, just like Statistics and Enhancements. For purposes of game balance, skills are divided into two classes: Difficult and Normal Skills.

Difficult Skills are either very difficult to learn (take many years of training and incorporate other skills) or are useful in combat. Normal Skills are more general skills. Most Difficult Skills are either Hard Sciences (medicine, electronics, computer, etc.) or Combat Skills (karate, guns, knives, etc.) It should be noted that some skills may seem to be misplaced to some people—a player who has a Masters degree in accounting will probably not consider it a Normal Skill. The reasons for the division are mainly for game balance (it's more effective in *most* campaigns to be a better fighter than accountant) and realism (if being a doctor were incredibly cheap many characters would be doctors and that would not be realistic). If the GM and players agree that a skill should have its category changed then change it. This should *NOT* be done with Combat Skills since ability with them affect damage done and other important game mechanics.

Level of Expertise

Every character with a skill will have a Level of Expertise. This is different from the skill roll that measures technical proficiency. Level of Expertise measures qualitative ability. It is what distinguishes a lockpicker from a safe cracker, the high school chemistry student from the chemistry Ph.D., a sidewalk artist from Michaelangelo. While either may have a high roll (indicating a high probability of success), the level of ability is *very* different.

Levels of Expertise range from 1 to 4. Level 1 is the Beginner level, Level 2 is the Average level, Level 3 is the Expert level, and Level 4 is the Master level and is exceedingly rare. A character with a Master level skill is one of the best in the world (this is a case where the character is *also* required to have a high roll—there are no Masters with low chances of success but there can be Ph.D.'s who are not as good as their fellows.)

When a character attempts a roll, the GM determines the level of the task. Normally, in *ninety percent* of the situations the level will be 2. This is an automatic assumption. If the character is *below* the difficulty level of the task (i.e. the character is a Beginner and the task is Average), the GM will assess a -3 to the character's roll for each level of difference.

If the character is above the difficulty level of the skill, the GM will allow the character to *ignore* up to three points of negative modifier imposed for each Level of Expertise above the task's difficulty.

Ex1: A tough lock is declared by the GM to be at -5 to be picked. A character with Level 3 Locksmith rolls at -2. A character with level 4 Locksmith skill would roll at no negative.

In fact, the GM may declare that the task is *easy* for a higher Expertise Level character and assign pluses to the character's success roll.

* * *

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For the client on a budget, the Series 1 System combines stalking and silent killing techniques with an eerily efficient sweep-and-destroy algorithm for those hard-to-reach insurgents.

* * *

Emmerson felt the pain in his knees vanish as he breathed. As the air of each powerful breath filled him, he felt more detached, and yet, more aware.

"You have come far." It was a statement, not a compliment.

Emmerson gave no reply.

"And yet you fail to achieve the highest level," the voice continued. "One—perhaps one in a thousand thousand has the potential that you do. Perhaps one in twenty of those squander it on poor instruction. I am old and I may not live to see you attain the summit."

The task continues, Emmerson thought. Ever higher—ever harder.

"You fail because you lack a form for your success," the voice said. "You do not understand? No? I see. Then understand this: all triumph begins in the mind as an image. Whether we know this or not. Without the image there is no victory."

If a Level 3 chemist (Doctorate) tries to identify a chemical in a solution—a high school chemistry problem—the GM could assign the character a +4 to his roll (+2 for each level of difference). This should only be done in cases where it is very clear that the task is below the character's skill level.

Ex1: Two characters are sneaking up on a sentry. One character is an army sniper and has Level 3 Stealth. He is taking the direct route across dry leaves. The other is a Level 1, barely trained supply officer. He is creeping around the long way—through deep shadows. The leaves give a -2 to one's Stealth roll but the sniper ignores that. The long way gives *anyone* a +2 to their Stealth roll—and the GM rules that the sniper would get a +6 if he had gone that way.

Zero Level skills are things anyone can attempt. These rules are used when someone without the skill attempts an action that is related. Not all skills have a Level 0 and in fact most don't. Usually the ones that do are physical actions or very common areas of knowledge.

Concentrations

Some skills require a *concentration*. What this means is that the skill in question has many separate fields within it and the character must choose one to focus upon. Law, for example, has a number of different fields within it (Criminal, Civil, Corporate, etc.) as do skills like History, Archeology, or Anthropology (which apply to specific continents). In this case, all rolls within the concentration are at the normal roll but rolls related to the skill which are outside the immediate field of study (a corporate lawyer trying a criminal case or an Egyptologist trying to analyze Mayan artifacts) are at -4.

If a character wishes to increase his rolls in secondary concentrations he may. If the primary concentration is a Difficult Skill, he may purchase a secondary concentration as a Normal Skill; if the primary concentration is a Normal Skill, then secondary concentrations are purchased as a Normal Skill with a -1 point break. Under no circumstance can the Level or roll of the secondary skill be greater than those of the primary.

At Level 4, the character possesses all the skill's concentrations at his base roll. (Montana Smith, archeologist extraordinaire, can, at Level 4, use his base skill roll on questions ranging from ancient Egypt to darkest Africa to early America to prehistoric Asia and beyond at no negative.)

Alternates

Alternates are different versions of the same skill. Although they are listed under one heading, each alternate is a *separate skill*.

Ex1: Vehicle Operation has alternates of many different vehicles. A character that can drive a car (car-truck) cannot fly the space shuttle (outer atmosphere) although they are categorized together. Often alternate skills may behave entirely different (the GM might well rule that 1000-yard long, imperial starships are *not* flown with joysticks and require eight pilots to adjust trim all running computer terminals with the Computer Operator Skill.

Emmerson breathed.

"I have a task for you," the voice said, suddenly quiet. "It will not be easy—it may even be deadly. You will travel to Japan. There is a man there—a man of great wickedness. You will find him and kill him."

Emmerson opened his eyes.

* * *

"Jonathan's a good auto man but for heavy locks—or even second story work, you'll need someone else."

* * *

"Flying a XR-2202 Imperial Assault Craft isn't like steering one of those seventy gigaton freighters—this thing doesn't fly itself, boy!"

* * *

MECHANICS

Skills Are Based On Secondary Stats

Skills are *based* on some secondary statistic. This means that the character's ability (score) with that statistic will affect the ease with which the skill is learned. The total cost of the skill will be based on the type of skill and the level at which it is desired.

Generally skills which are scientific in nature and deal with problem solving are based on Reason (RES) while skills which involve more memorization are based on Memory (MEM).

Physical skills are based on either Agility (AGI) or Coordination (COR) depending on whether they deal with gross motor (large muscle groups and the entire body) or whether they deal with fine motor (fingers and manipulation). Generally, hand-to-hand combat skills are based on AGI and ranged combat skills are based on COR.

Stat Enhancers

Even though skills are always based on one secondary statistic, having a high score (13+) in another, can sometimes help. Take Gambling Skill, for instance. It's a game of reason (RES-based) because the character must compute odds—but having a good memory also helps.

If a skill lists a STAT bonus, and the character has a score of 13+ in that secondary statistic, the stat *that the skill is based on* is treated as being at +1.

Ex1: The Visual Art Skill (painting, sculpting, photography, etc.) is based on RES. But, if the skill involves working with one's hands it gets a COR bonus. That means that if a character has a RES of 11 and a COR of 13 or higher, his RES is treated as being a 12 for purposes of buying that skill.

On the other hand, however, if a skill has a listed STAT bonus and the character's bonus statistic is naturally low (9 or below) *or the character has sold it down*, then the STAT the skill is based on is treated as being at -1.

Ex2: A painter (Visual Art based on RES with a COR bonus) has an RES of 12 and an RES of 13. To shave points off, he sold his COR down to an 11. This means that his RES is treated as only being a 12 for purposes of buying the skill.

In some cases there may be unusual bonus modifiers like STR (for Climbing or, say, Blacksmithing). It should also be noted that if a character has a Defect which lowers a bonus STAT (i.e. Crippled Hands) then the STAT on which the skill is based will take a -2 reduction instead of just a -1.

* * *

"I'm sorry, ma'am, your daughter simply doesn't have the aptitude. The Foundation is most specific about who they allow and her test scores simply don't register high enough."

"I see—are you aware that she shows a perfect genotype for late blooming artistic genius? The samples were taken directly from Da Vinci's paints."

"Well, that does change things . . ."

* * *

Alex looked at the cards—how did they do it? Every time some genius needed money in the movies they just went to Vegas and won what they needed at Blackjack until the casino threw them out.

He stared at the cards—he had no idea what to do next.

"Hit me," he said miserably. Behind him, he heard Linda's breath catch as the dealer reached for the cards. If we wind up hunted and broke they'll find us for sure, he thought.

The others murmured behind him. He's the world's preeminent nuclear scientist—a top ranked genius. He must be able to do this.

"Sorry," the dealer said. "Busted."

* * *

Difficult Skills (Combat Skills, Hard Sciences, Medical Skill)

The cost of a Difficult Skill is .25 points per point of roll up to the character's Statistic + 1. The cost then starts at 2 points per point of roll and doubles with each point until the cost is 16 points per point of roll. After that, the cost is flat.

Stat	Roll	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	8	1	1.25	1.5	1.75	2	2.25	4.25	8.25	16.25	32.25	48.25	64.25	80.25	96.25	112.25	128.25	144.25
	9	1	1.25	1.5	1.75	2	2.25	2.50	4.50	8.50	16.50	32.50	48.50	64.50	80.50	96.50	112.50	128.50
	10	1	1.25	1.5	1.75	2	2.25	2.50	2.75	4.75	8.75	16.75	32.75	48.75	64.75	80.75	96.75	112.75
	11	1	1.25	1.5	1.75	2	2.25	2.50	2.75	3	5	9	17	33	49	65	81	97
	12	1	1.25	1.5	1.75	2	2.25	2.50	2.75	3	3.25	5.25	9.25	17.25	33.25	49.25	65.25	81.25
	13	1	1.25	1.5	1.75	2	2.25	2.50	2.75	3	3.25	3.50	5.50	9.50	17.50	33.50	49.50	65.50
	14	1	1.25	1.5	1.75	2	2.25	2.50	2.75	3	3.25	3.50	3.75	5.75	9.75	17.75	33.75	49.75
	15	1	1.25	1.5	1.75	2	2.25	2.50	2.75	3	3.25	3.50	3.75	4	6	10	18	34
	16	1	1.25	1.5	1.75	2	2.25	2.50	2.75	3	3.25	3.50	3.75	4	4.25	6.25	10.25	18.25
	17	1	1.25	1.5	1.75	2	2.25	2.50	2.75	3	3.25	3.50	3.75	4	4.25	4.50	6.50	10.50
	18	1	1.25	1.5	1.75	2	2.25	2.50	2.75	3	3.25	3.50	3.75	4	4.25	4.50	4.75	6.75
19	1	1.25	1.5	1.75	2	2.25	2.50	2.75	3	3.25	3.50	3.75	4	4.25	4.50	4.75	5.00	

Ex1: A character needs a skill roll of 14 or less (written 14-) and the statistic it is based on is an 11. The cost is 9 points. If he increases his statistic to 12, the cost would be 5.25 points—considerably less.

Level Cost For Difficult Skills

In addition to buying the roll, the character must pay points for the level. The cost for each level is listed on the chart below. Also listed is a Minimum Roll. This is the lowest roll the character may have (or in the case of Level 1) the highest roll the character may have.

Difficult Skill Level Cost Chart

Level	Cost	Min/Max Roll
Beginner (Level 1)	-1 point	Max roll of 12-
Average (Level 2)	No cost	No Min/Max
Expert (Level 3)	4 points	Min roll of 13-
Master (Level 4)	16 points	Min roll of 15-

Ex1: Kenton has a character with an 11 AGI and wants to buy that character Expert Level Karate at a 15- roll. He checks the chart and sees that the cost for a 15- is a staggering 17 points. He also looks and sees that the cost for Level 3 (Expert Level) is another 8 points. This will cost a character-busting 25 points—just for Karate Skill. He can decide to have the character be a Level 2 Karate practitioner and just pay the 17 points for the roll (Level 2 is free) but he really wants Expert Level Karate.

Minimum And Maximum Rolls:

It doesn't make much sense for a character to be a world class nuclear physicist with a roll of a 12-.

That's why the Min/Max rolls are instituted. In some cases it is acceptable for a character to bend these rules.

Skills that have a real use at Level 1 (like basic secretarial skills) can be bought above the 12- roll.

In other cases, a character may be allowed to begin with a lower than allowable roll because he is out of practice, amnesiac, or a fraud with some advanced training. GM permission is required for this.

What he must do is increase his AGI statistic. He re-makes his character and boosts the AGI statistic from 11 to 12. Checking the chart he finds that the cost for the skill is now 9.25. He also remembers that the characters for this game are of the Heroic-type—and that halves the Level cost of Expert Level skills! The total cost now is 9.25 (for the roll) plus 4 (half the normal cost of 8) for the Expert Level. The total is still a very high 13.25—but the character is one of the best black belts in the country.

Normal Skills (Areas of Study, Street Skills, Culture Skills, Etc.)

The cost per point of roll for Normal Skills is not even. Up to Statistic +2, 1 point will buy 6 points of roll (so a 12 or less roll costs 2 points). Above Statistic +2 the cost is +2 for the next point of roll and doubles with each point thereafter until the cost is 16 per point of roll.

Normal Skill Cost:

What's the deal? Who came up with this ridiculous scheme? The reason the costs aren't even is that 1 character point doesn't divide well by 6—it's .16

Rather than have players keep track of .16 points, we made it easily divisible by .05. So the numbers go:

.15 .25 .50 .75 .85 1

See? No? Look closely at the chart.

Stat	Roll	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	8	.75	.85	1	1.15	1.25	1.50	1.75	3.75	7.75	15.75	31.75	47.75	63.75	79.75	95.75	111.75	127.75
	9	.75	.85	1	1.15	1.25	1.50	1.75	1.85	3.85	7.85	15.85	31.85	47.85	63.85	79.85	95.85	111.85
	10	.75	.85	1	1.15	1.25	1.50	1.75	1.85	2	4	8	16	32	48	64	80	96
	11	.75	.85	1	1.15	1.25	1.50	1.75	1.85	2	2.15	4.15	8.15	16.15	32.15	48.15	64.15	80.15
	12	.75	.85	1	1.15	1.25	1.50	1.75	1.85	2	2.15	2.25	4.25	8.25	16.25	32.25	48.25	64.25
	13	.75	.85	1	1.15	1.25	1.50	1.75	1.85	2	2.15	2.25	2.50	4.50	8.50	16.50	32.50	48.50
	14	.75	.85	1	1.15	1.25	1.50	1.75	1.85	2	2.15	2.25	2.50	2.75	4.75	8.75	16.75	32.75
	15	.75	.85	1	1.15	1.25	1.50	1.75	1.85	2	2.15	2.25	2.50	2.75	2.85	4.85	8.85	16.85
	16	.75	.85	1	1.15	1.25	1.50	1.75	1.85	2	2.15	2.25	2.50	2.75	2.85	3	5	9
17	.75	.85	1	1.15	1.25	1.50	1.75	1.85	2	2.15	2.25	2.50	2.75	2.85	3	3.15	5.15	
18	.75	.85	1	1.15	1.25	1.50	1.75	1.85	2	2.15	2.25	2.50	2.75	2.85	3	3.15	3.25	

Level Cost For Normal Skills

The below chart shows the cost for each level of a Normal Skill.

Level Cost For Normal Skills		
Level	Cost	Min/Max Roll
Beginner (Level 1)	-1 point	Max roll of 12-
Average (Level 2)	No cost	No Min/Max
Expert (Level 3)	2 points	Min roll of 13-
Master (Level 4)	12 points	Min roll of 15-

0 Point Level 1 Skills:

Although it looks as if you can gain points by taking a really low skill and making it Level 1—you can't. A skill has a minimum point cost of .15 for a Normal Skill or .25 for a Difficult one.

Just make the roll higher if you take it at Level 1 or eat the difference. If a character is declared to be learning a skill and pledges experience points in it (when he gets them) the GM may allow 0 point level 1 skills which have ultra-low rolls.

Specialization

A character may specialize in some specific aspect within a skill. Specialization is purchased as a separate Trivial Skill (see below) which can add to a character's base skill roll. Specialization works as follows:

- Level 1: A successful roll adds +1 to the base roll.
- Level 2: Every 5 points of success adds +1 to the roll (minimum of +1).
- Level 3: Every 3 points of success adds +1 to the roll (minimum of +2).
- Level 4: Every 2 points of success adds +1 to the roll (minimum of +4).

NOTE: Characters *cannot* specialize in Combat Skills.

Master Level Skills

Master level skills are usually very unrealistic and can be very unbalancing. In *any* campaign, a player must have explicit permission from the GM to take a Level 4 skill—even if the character has the points. Characters with Level 4 skills are usually very wealthy, well known, and respected. This is not appropriate to all campaigns (not to mention the fact that the existence of the skill itself in the game can have catastrophic effects).

Trivial Skills

Trivial Skills (also called Hobby Skills, Professional Skills, Areas of Knowledge, and Areas of Interest) are optional ways to customize your character. Trivial Skills represent a knowledge or ability in some area but not one prominent enough to be an entire skill.

The line between a Trivial Skill, a Craft Skill, or other general skill can be blurry. The below guidelines can be used to determine if a skill should be considered Trivial or Normal:

- If the execution of the skill requires or is greatly enhanced by creativity then it's probably a Craft Skill (Normal). An example is Carpentry vs. Plumbing. A table made by a master craftsman can be quite stylish, but even if a Plumber could do artistic things to your pipes and walls you probably don't want him to. (This is a judgement call on the part of the author: he is neither a carpenter nor a plumber.)
- If the skill is taught in colleges as a major then it's probably a Normal Skill.
- If the skill is useful in combat then it's a Difficult Skill.
- If it's very hard to define three or four levels for the skill then it's probably a Trivial skill.
- If the skill is used to make a living then it tends towards a Normal Skill (there are some obvious examples to the contrary but this is a generality).
- A Normal Skill can encompass several Trivial Skills (Ex. Administration includes Typing, Filing, and Taking Dictation . . . alone any of those could be considered Trivial).

Leyland spoke softly while she worked on the lock.

"That's a Jorland Lock," he said, "learned only within the Jorland family . . . unpickable."

She dropped it in frustration and looked up at him.

"I specialize in them," Leyland said.

"This man," Emmerson asked, "is he good?"

"The best," the old man replied. "You wouldn't believe how good."

"Jay-Nine?" the woman called. Through the ancient camera, she came in in grainy black and white. "I know you're in there!"

"I'm retired," he called from inside the cheap plastic door. His hands curled around the cool metal shape of the pistol.

"No you're not," she said. "You're coming with me—I need someone who knows the place I'm headed."

"I've been off world for the past eighteen years," Jay-Nine said. "I haven't seen you since college—leave me alone! I don't know how to find the frigging drug store down here—it's all so heavy."

"We're getting light," she said softly. "We're going up, Jay. I need someone who knows the Orbitals."

Picking a STAT to base the skill on is the easy part. Most are MEM or RES based but in a few rare instances they could be considered COR or AGI based (an example might be COR-based Bowling: it isn't quite a sport . . . but the GM might consider it trivial enough to be a Trivial Skill).

Buying Trivial Skills

For the purposes of all Trivial Skills (except Level 1 Trivial Skills; see below), the character's STAT is assumed to be a minimum of 10. If the character's STAT is lower, just assume it to be 10. Conversely, a character's highest effective STAT for purchasing a Trivial Skill is 15; if the character's STAT is higher, assume it to be 15.

Using Trivial Skills to Enhance Other Skill Rolls

You can sometimes use your Trivial Skills to help with other skill rolls. The GM may allow a successful roll in a Trivial Skill (at Level 2 or above) to give a +1 to a related Normal or Difficult Skill roll when dealing with the specific area of interest. On occasion a Normal or Difficult Skill may assist a Trivial Skill. This should be carefully monitored and controlled but it can lead to interesting and complicated characters.

Examples of Trivial Skills:

- Sports / Activities – Darts, Billiards, Surfing, SCUBA, Skydiving, Orienteering
- Games – Chess, Go, Card Games, Roleplaying Games, Video Games
- Hobbies – (specific) Trivia, Bonzai Tree Trimming, Aromatherapy, Juggling
- Professional – Plumbing, Bartending, Pet Sitting, Police Procedure
- Geographic Knowledge – (specific) Country, (specific) City, (specific) Forest
- Languages (including Sign Language) – covered in the Skills section
- Equipment Operations – covered in the Skills section
- Miscellaneous – Lip Reading, Bird Calls, Imitations, Tarot Reading, Kama Sutra, Stage Magic

	Roll	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Stat	10	.15	.25	.5	.75	.85	1	2	4	8
	11	N/A	.15	.25	.5	.75	.85	1	2	4
	12	N/A	N/A	.15	.25	.5	.75	.85	1	2
	13	N/A	N/A	N/A	.15	.25	.5	.75	.85	1
	14	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	.15	.25	.5	.75	.85
	15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	.15	.25	.5	.75

Level Cost For Trivial Skills

Level	Cost
Level 1	.10 pts
Level 2	0
Level 3 (min roll of 13-)	2
Level 4 (min roll of 15-)	4

Some Trivial Skills We Have:

David A. Tumarkin:
Level 3 English (we hope—he's the proofreader).

David Serchay:
Level 3 Comic Book and Sci-Fi Trivia (undefeated in Dragon Con trivia contests since 1993).

Kenton Hillis:
Level 3 1980's Roleplaying Game Trivia—played 'em all.

Marco Chacon:
Level 2 Chess on about a 14-. It's better than the average Strategy Score and he played Chess for money in Basic Training (but he isn't really good).

David Tonisson:
Level 3 Sports Trivia—comes in the top 10 on ESPN's fantasy baseball games.

Jim O'Brien:
Level 4 Tolkien. Identified the *son of the gatekeeper of Minas-Tirith* from three random lines read from the middle of the second book. (Good God!)

Level Effects For Trivial Skills:

Level 1: Basic Knowledge. The character has the skill at an 8- if his STAT is 7 – 11 or a 9- if the STAT is 12+. There is *no* Roll Cost. This represents a *starting* knowledge. A successful Level 1 Roll will not add to another skill roll unless the roll was made by 3+.

Level 2: Knowledgeable / Skilled. The character knows the area quite well. The character rolls at no negative. This can allow the character a professional level of expertise in a skill.

Level 3: Expert. The character has acquired a very high degree of knowledge. The character ignores up to -3 points of negative modifier for hard rolls and can do eerie things like quote entire 1970's B-Horror movie scripts verbatim, score a spare off a 7-10 split, or imitate almost perfectly the mating call of the blue-footed booby. The character is a top talent in professional areas.

Level 4: Master. The character has had entirely too much time on his hands and is a world expert in the trivial area. The character can ignore -6 points of negative modifier due to difficulty. The character is a world class practitioner.

Natural or Body Skills

Acrobatics

Difficult, AGI

Description: The character is a skilled tumbler and, at higher levels, a gymnast or trapeze artist. This skill involves a great deal of muscular control and balance. Although useful for competitions, its primary use to characters is that it allows greater mobility in combat.

Level 0: An Acrobatics roll can usually be substituted for any AGI roll with the exception that the Acrobatics skill ignores -3 points of negative modifier per level. Thus, if the GM calls for an AGI roll at -6, a character with Level 2 Acrobatics can make that roll at no negative. A character with Level 1 Acrobatics can make the Level 1 roll at -3. Whether a character with Level 3 Acrobatics could make the roll at +3 is a GM call. If the GM calls for an unmodified AGI roll then an Acrobatics roll can be used at +1 per level of Acrobatics (for characters with very little training and high AGI's, they may be better off going with natural talent). Tumbles are usually AGI rolls at -3, landing on one's feet from a fall is an unmodified roll. Walking a narrow beam is an AGI roll at -0 to -6 depending on the width. Running on mildly slick ground is a standard roll.

Level 1: Breakfall. The character can make a roll to take half damage from any throw. The amount the roll is made by subtracts from Damage Modifiers for longer rolls (if, for example, the character falls from a moving vehicle) up to a maximum of -3.

Level 2: Tumbling. The character can roll, stretch and jump with ease. With a successful roll the character can go from a standing start to "Sprinting" with a single Long move action. A character making a Long move and a roll is at an additional -1 to be hit (half-size as he is rolling) for size modifier. The character can perform a Dodge maneuver in combat using Acrobatics skill. If Ground Fighting (fighting while prone on the ground), a roll can be made to grant the character his normal Block and AGI

bonus (any Dodge roll will be unaffected).

The character can go to a standing position as a 3 REA move with a roll. The character can make a roll to receive a -3 Damage Modifier from any fall (straight down).

Level 3: Acrobat/Gymnast. The character is a professional, possibly Olympic, level gymnast. The character must be in excellent physical shape (STR must be equal to or above BLD). The character can conduct competition style routines (Olympic routines are at -4 to -6 usually and require three rolls). The character gets +3 to tumbling rolls as above. The character can "ignore" any obstacle of half the character's height with a roll. With a roll at -2 the character can ignore any obstacle of up to the character's full height. The character can perform a Dodge in combat using Acrobatics skill for 3 REA. A Level 3 Acrobat automatically gets his full AGI bonus if Ground Fighting or otherwise caught prone on the ground—with a successful roll he gets his normal Block roll. Once per turn the character can go to a standing position for no REA with a roll or take a 3 REA move to stand automatically.

Level 4: Master Acrobat. The character is capable of incredible feats of gymnastic ability. With a roll and a Long move, the character subtracts [skill -10] from any attempt to hit him. NOTE: This negative modifier may be used instead of, but not in addition to the character's natural AGI modifier. When the character stops this goes away. The character may "ignore" opponents simply jumping over them. With a roll at -3 against the opponent's AGI the gymnast may jump over the target and attack from behind. This move is a Medium action. Tumbling rolls are done at +6.



Climbing

Normal, AGI

Description: The character is skilled in climbing surfaces. At low levels this simply represents a high degree of experience with scaling things; at the higher levels it represents knowledge of the use of professional climbing gear. NOTE: A character with a STR greater than his Mass +10 may simply pull himself up a rope or similar situation with no climbing roll. This costs Sprinting Endurance though and the character may get tired and fall (assuming the character needs full STR to accomplish this!).



Level 0: Unskilled characters can climb any object with projections. The character usually moves at half his height per second and must make an AGI roll at any difficult spot. If the roll is failed the character is stuck that second. If the roll is failed by 5 or more, the character falls.

Level 1: Novice (Tree Climber). The character can climb anything that may normally be climbed in half the time due to sure-footedness. Only on a critical failure will the character fall if the climb is fairly simple. Anything that a normal person could not climb with some ease is similarly out of the character's ability.

Level 2: Beginning Climber. The character has trained the muscles necessary to help pull himself up with his arms. The character also knows how to use ropes to rappel up or down a surface. If using a rope the character gets +5 to the roll and knows how to tie it with safety lines, etc.

Level 3: Experienced Climber. The character can climb surfaces which are possibly climbable but beyond the ability of most people. With gear, and time, the character can scale a sheer surface (+3 to the roll for use of gear, an extra +2 if the character takes a long time to set it up). Even with no gear the character can use hands and feet to find crevices.

Level 4: Master Climber. The character can scale things like almost sheer building surfaces. The character can aid others, giving a +3 to other's rolls and gets a +6 himself. The character ascends at triple speed of normal climbers (usually 1 yard per 10 seconds if the climb is easy, 1 yard per 30 seconds if hard, 1 yard per second if climbing a rope, ladder, etc.). Any gear, whatsoever, gives a +3 to the roll. It is up to the GM what just can and cannot be climbed but there is probably little at this level that can't.

Meditation

Normal, RES

Description: The character is trained in esoteric techniques of mental, physical, and spiritual discipline. This includes exercises in breathing, self-denial, and focus. Instead of MEM, this skill receives a bonus based on WIL. Note: although Meditation is a Normal Skill, it is by no means commonplace. A would-be student will find an instructor able to teach them Level 1 or, at best, Level 2 Meditation before having to journey far and wide to remote locales to find a suitable master. The GM may rule that this skill is unavailable to characters.

Level 1: Novice. The character can recover Endurance 2x as quickly with a roll. The character must remain non-mobile for this to work (-3 to the roll otherwise). The character can also hold his breath for **[CON x (amount roll is made by x 2)]** seconds with 1 second of preparation (minimum of **[CON x 5]** seconds, see the Asphixia Rules). This skill can be had above a 12- roll at Level 1.

Level 2: Initiate. The character can enter a meditative state where WIL rolls are made at +1. It requires 5 minutes to enter such a state (-1 minute per point a roll is made by, minimum of 1 second). If the character has time to prepare (30 minutes; -5 minutes for every point a roll is made by, minimum of 1 minute), he can hold his breath for **[CON x (amount roll is made by x 10)]** seconds. With a cumulative -1 per day, the character can make a roll to ignore a day of not eating or drinking.

Level 3: Disciple. The character's meditation will give him +2 to WIL rolls and he can recover Endurance 5x as quickly with a roll. By meditating for an hour, the character can remove Endurance accrued from missing sleep (1 Endurance for every 3 points a roll is made by, minimum of 1). The character can hold his breath for **[CON x (amount roll is made by x 5)]** seconds with 1 second of preparation and with longer preparation (30 minutes; -5 minutes for every point a roll is made by, minimum of 1 minute), he can hold his breath for **[CON x (amount roll is made by x 50)]** seconds. He loses 1 Endurance per second when out of breath.

Level 4: Master. The character's meditation will give him +4 to WIL rolls and he can recover Endurance 10x as quickly with a roll. By meditating for an hour, the character can remove Endurance acquired by missing sleep (1 Endurance for every 2 points a roll is made by, minimum of 1). The character can hold his breath for **[CON x (amount roll is made by x 10)]** seconds with 1 second of preparation and with longer preparation (30 minutes; -5 minutes for every point a roll is made by, minimum of 1 minute), he can hold his breath for **[CON x (amount roll is made by x 100)]** seconds. He loses ½ Endurance per second when out of breath.

Combat Skills

NOTE: All weapon skills (NOT martial arts) have a Level 0 where the character uses AGI at -1 to hit, blocks at AGI - 4, and is at -0 REA to both the swing and back swing. Ranged weapon skills hit at COR - 2 and the character takes double all negative modifiers.

O1: Cheaper Level 3 Attacks. This is a very important optional rule. If using this, a character with a Level 3 skill may, once a turn, perform an attack which would normally cost him 5 REA for 4 REA. This doesn't make kicks, base 4 REA attacks, or attacks with a base REA greater than 5 any less expensive. The 4 REA attack must be a type that can be performed with the Level 3 skill in question (no 4 REA punches if you have Expert Firearms). The effect of this is to reduce the value of a 13 REA (the minimum usually need to move and strike) and increase the value of a 12 and 14 REA (at 14, most characters can perform 3 strikes).

Martial Arts Charts

Most HTH weapon skills and martial arts skills have charts given beneath them. The charts are an economical method of listing the effects for each skill level for the preceding skill. For martial arts the listings are as follows:

The amount added to offensive and defensive Grapple Scores

This listing summarizes the special effects (if any) for that level. The actual effects, and any special moves associated with that skill are detailed in the text for that level.

Jujitsu	Level	Damage	Grapple	OFF/ DEF	Block	U	B	S	Special
	Level 1	+0		+1 /+1		-1	-1	-4	Throw from grapple (STR +2)
	Level 2	+0		+2/+2		+0	+0	-3	Lock for STR damage
	Level 3	+1		+4 /+4		+1	+1	-1	Throw/Lock from Block
	Level 4	+2		+ [Skill -9]		+2	+2	+0	Super Throw, Easy block/throw

Amount added to the character's damage with a punch or kick.

This rather cryptic heading tells what roll the character blocks against at the given level. The **U** negative or bonus is used against *unarmed* attacks. The **B** listing is used against *blunt weapons* (Impact damage), and the **S** is used against *sharp weapons* (Penetrating damage). Knives that do +2 damage count as blunt weapons for purposes of being blocked.

Weapon

Weapon charts are similar but have different headings.

Add or subtract this number from the character's skill roll to get the character's *block* roll with that weapon. What you're blocking makes no difference.

Each additional swing of a weapon after the first in a single turn costs a little more REA. This is the amount that is subtracted from the REA cost for a weapon's Back Swing. Unless otherwise stated, the minimum cost is *always* 5 REA.

Axe	Level	Block	Swing	Back Swing	Special
	Level 1	-3	-0	-0	None
	Level 2	-2	-0	-1	None
	Level 3	-1	-1	-2	None
	Level 4	-0	-2	-3	Continued strike

This is the amount of REA the character subtracts from the REA cost for the weapon on the first attack made each turn (this is listed on the weapon table in the combat section). Unless otherwise stated, the minimum cost is *always* 5 REA.

Any special abilities the character gets at the listed level.

Axe

Difficult, AGI (COR for *thrown axe*)

Description: The character is skilled with an axe or any other swung, weighted weapon (mace, hatchet, hammer, etc.) Such weapons usually do a great deal of damage but have a high REA cost. A character trained in Axe skill can throw unbalanced weapons. Apply the points in combat skill as though the skill was COR based to determine the character's chance to hit with a thrown axe. The throw is a 5 REA (plus swing cost) Medium action and does normal damage. A shield can block the throw normally and even by normal weapons at -3.

Level 1: Beginner. There are no special effects other than those listed on the chart.

Level 2: Axe Skill. There are no special effects other than those listed on the chart.

Level 3: Axe Expert. The character can perform a Fast Draw.

Level 4: Axe Master. The Axe Master may "sweep" with the axe blow and continue a strike against two different targets within range for an additional 4 REA. The second target is at -2 to be hit.

Axe

Level	Block	Swing	Back Swing	Special
Level 1	-3	-0	-0	None
Level 2	-2	-0	-1	None
Level 3	-1	-1	-2	Fast Draw
Level 4	-0	-2	-3	Sweeping strike

See The
Weapons
Chart

Bow – or – Crossbow

Difficult, COR

Description: The character is a trained archer. Normally it is a Medium action to draw an arrow, a Medium action to draw the bow and then a Medium action to fire. For a crossbow, it may take considerable longer to load a bolt.

Level 0: A Long action is needed to fire or the character is at -5 to hit. The character gets no Damage Modification bonus for hitting by a large amount and it takes a Long action to place the arrow in the bow.

Level 1: Beginner. Unless the character takes a Long action to aim, the shot is at -3. The character cannot move and fire with any accuracy (-6 to hit plus movement modifiers!) The character does not know how to repair a bow (less important as tech level increases but strings can break anywhere).

Level 2: Archer. The character uses this skill to hit with bows.

Level 3: Expert Archer. The character can draw an arrow and draw the bow as a single 5 REA Medium action. The character ignores up to -3 points of negative modifiers.

Level 4: Legendary Archer. The character ignores up to -6 in negative modifiers and can draw the arrow and the bow as a Short action. Due to skill with drawing the bow (and practice) the character can draw a bow as if his STR were 2 higher. The GM may allow the character to perform 'tricks' (such as firing two arrows at once) although these should be at substantial negatives (usually -3 to -8).



Boxing

Difficult, AGI



Description: This is the skill of pure hand strikes. The skill emphasizes much conditioning and actual practice in getting hit. The damage bonuses and to-hit roll do not apply to kicks, grapples, or grabs. The blocks are at -1 against kicks not specifically targeted at the target's upper body.

Level 1: Slugger. The character's Cross does an additional +1 damage above the +1 that Cross gives (so his Cross would do +2 damage).

Level 2: Pugilist. The amount of damage necessary to put the character at Hurt condition is at +1 if the character's roll is 13 or higher. This does *not*

affect the character's Minor Wound score—only the amount of cumulative damage the character must take before a Sub-Minor Wound becomes a Minor Wound. The character's Cross does an additional +3 points of damage.

Level 3: Boxer. The character gets +1 Damage Point due to conditioning and +2 is added to his Hurt condition number (again, not Minor Wound). The character's can Cross for an additional +4 damage.

Level 4: Champ. The character gets +4 Damage Points and +8 is added to his Hurt condition number. The character's Cross does [skill -9] points additional damage.

Boxing

Level	Damage	Grapple OFF/ DEF	Block U B S Special
Level 1	+1 w/ cross <i>only</i>	+0	-2 -4 -4 None
Level 2	+1 punch / +3 cross	+0	-0 -4 -4 +1 to Hurt condition w/ 13- skill
Level 3	+2 punch / +4 cross	+0	-0 -4 -4 +1 DP, +2 Hurt
Level 4	+5 punch / +[skill -9] cross	+0	+1 -4 -4 +4 DP, +8 Hurt

Dual Weapon Combat Style

Difficult, AGI

Description: The character is trained to fight with two light HTH weapons—one in each hand (a race with more than two arms might have equivalent skills). The character must have another weapon skill at Level 2 to use this skill (the weapon which is going to be used in each hand). It should go without saying that this skill can only be used with weapons that fit in one hand. To gain the abilities of dual weapon use, the character must make a skill roll at the beginning of the round at -3 for each point of Base Damage the weapon does above 4 (so a Broadsword—Base Damage of 6—rolls at -6). If it is made the character may use the below benefits. If it is failed the character fights normally. Characters with this skill don't pay "Back Swing" REA costs for the second attack made in a turn (it's made with the second weapon) but is at negatives to hit with his off-hand unless he's Ambidextrous.

Level 1: Beginner. The character is not very skilled in the simultaneous use of both weapons and gets little advantage for wielding two at a time. The character gets +1 to blocks if he pays an extra REA point (making the block cost 4) to use the second weapon. The character can also pay a second REA point to make an attack at -1 to be blocked. A Level 1 Dual Weaponist cannot do both in the same turn.

Level 2: Dual Weaponist. The character can block and strike with two weapons. By paying an extra 1 REA point the character can block at +1 or make attacks that are either +1 to hit or -1 to be blocked. This may be done with each attack made in a turn.

Level 3: Dual Weapon Expert. The character is highly adept in the use of two weapons. The character can, by spending 1 extra REA, make his attack at -2 to be blocked or at +2 to hit. The character can block at +2 for an extra REA point spent on the block. For Strike +3 REA the character can perform a 'double strike.' This essentially doubles the damage the character does with a hit. A double strike may not be combined with a full swing or any other strike type modifier. After performing a double strike the character is at -3 to block and may not spend extra REA to improve the block. A double strike is at -3 to be blocked but if the opponent makes the block he blocks both weapons. If the character *would* have made the block if not for the -3 the character blocks one of the weapons.

Level 4: Dual Weapon Master. The character gets Skill -10 points added to his "REA" for purposes of weapon strikes and blocks *if* he makes a successful roll at the beginning of his turn. This REA does *not* add to initiative, ground speed, or anything else.

Fencing

Difficult, AGI

Description: The character is trained in a sword style that applies only to "light fencing weapons." It only applies to the epee, rapier, and saber (see the Fencing Weapons section). Fencing weapons are light and quick and the fighting is fast and furious. Characters using Fencing may *not* Full Strike.

Level 1: Beginner. As listed

Level 2: Fencer. The character may Lunge: for +2 REA the character may combine a Step action with any strike.

Level 3: Duelist. The character can perform a Fast Draw. He may also attack at Long Reach with his weapon (due to the fast, extended fighting style) and may perform either a 4 REA strike or a 2 REA block *once* per turn (this 4 REA strike is in *addition* to the one 4 REA strike that characters get at Level 3—so the Expert Fencer may perform two).

Level 4: Master Duelist. The character's strikes are at 4 REA and his blocks only cost 2 REA. His feints cost 1 less REA than the listed amount.

Fencing

Level	Block	Swing	Back Swing	Special
Level 1	-2	-0	-0	As listed.
Level 2	-1	-1	-0	Lunge
Level 3	+0	-1	-1	Fast Draw, Long Reach, Cheaper moves
Level 4	+1	-1	-2	4 REA strike / 2 REA block / -1 REA feints

Firearms

Difficult, COR

Description: The character has trained with light arms of some type. Weapon types are pistols and shotguns, rifles, and submachine guns, and machine-guns. It does not apply to AA guns or, say, phalanx antimissile guns as these have complicated electronic aiming systems or are computer controlled.

Level 1: Beginner. The character knows *nothing* other than how to aim and fire the weapon. The character cannot clean it effectively, may take it apart and not be able to put it back together, etc. It takes the character two seconds to insert a clip or speed loader. The character can have at most a roll of STAT in the skill at this level. The character is only familiar with *one* weapon (the one he owns). Jams take 10 seconds to clear if they are basic or hours if they are complicated. Other weapons of even a similar make are fired at -1.

Level 2: Marksman. The character knows how to clean any weapon of the type experienced with and can clean another weapon in triple the time normal (about three hours). The character can "Double-Tap" (fire two shots for a single 5 REA Medium action) at -2.

Level 3: Sharpshooter. The character has experience in tracking targets and can ignore up to -3 of range/speed/environment modifiers. At this level the character can make ammunition, modify weapons mechanically, and identify rare weapons. The character can perform a Fast Draw. The character can Double-Tap at -1.

Level 4: Expert Sniper. The character can ignore up to -6 of range-speed-size-and environment modifiers. The character can Double Tap at -0.

O1: Quick Draw Rule. A Level 3 or 4 Firearms specialist can make a special quick draw maneuver. If the character spends a Long action preparing the character may make a Firearms Skill roll instead of a REA roll for initiative purposes the next second if he 'quick draws.' This special roll applies *only* to drawing and firing the weapon. The number rolled is applied to the character's REA normally for purposes of taking any other actions that second. This allows the better gunman to come out ahead in Old West style standoffs.

Note: Expert gunmen (and archers) ignore modifiers for adverse conditions—this is subtracted *before* range modifiers are multiplied by other (say, size) modifiers. This ability to ignore negatives to hit does *not* apply to a target's AGI bonus.

see The
Firearms
Chart

Heavy Weapons

Difficult, COR

Description: This is the skill used to hit with rocket launchers, AA guns, etc.

Level 1: Specific Heavy Weapon. The character can use *one* specific type of heavy weapon. The character uses this roll to hit. This skill also applies to vehicle mounted cannons.

Level 2: Heavy Weapon Class. The character can use all the weapons in a given family (antitank rockets, antipersonnel mines, etc.)

Level 3: All Heavy Weapons. The character uses the skill with any heavy weapons system the character's military has that it is possible the character has trained

with. The character also ignores up to -3 points of modifiers with any heavy weapon.

Level 4: Heavy Weapon Wizard. The character can do things with weapons that are normally not possible (like shooting down cruise missiles with antitank rockets) with a standard roll. The character ignores -6 points of negative modifiers.



Jujitsu (Soft-External)

Difficult, AGI

Description: This skill represents martial arts (Jujitsu, Aikido, Sambo) that primarily involve holds, locks, chokes, and throws. They also involve kicking and punching but they are less emphasized than in other arts. For -1 point the character can know Judo instead. Judo teaches no punches or kicks (so the skill can't be used for them) but teaches the throws, holds, locks, and chokes. The character can substitute his skill for his AGI to hit with grabs or grapples.

Level 1: Student. The skill is used to hit with any unarmed strike (kicks, punches, grabs, and grapples). Other effects are as shown on the chart. If the character has an opponent grabbed or is involved in a grapple, he may perform a Martial Arts Throw.

Level 2: Stylist. In addition to the effects on the martial arts chart, the character can perform a Martial Arts Arm (or Leg) Lock (also called an arm bar). The character gains Ground Fighting and Breakfall capability as per Acrobatics.

Level 3: Martial Artist. In addition to the blocks and Grapple Score pluses, the character can attempt to apply locks and throws off of a block without needing to grab or grapple. When declaring a Block the character may elect to spend +1 REA (total of 4). If the block is made by 4+, the character may then spend *another* 5 REA to perform an Arm Bar or Throw immediately. Kicks may be thrown at Medium range (see reach rules).

Level 4: Master. The character gets [**Skill - 9**] added to his Grapple Score. When blocking an attack, the character need only be successful to attempt either a block or throw and it only costs 4 additional REA (for a total of 8). The character can perform an impressive "super throw." This is a normal throw except that for each -1 to the thrower's Grapple Score, the throw does an additional+1 damage.

Martial Arts Throw: A throw is a 5 REA Medium attack and (at Level 1) the target must either be grabbed or be grappling with a 'Success' with the thrower and both must be standing. An offensive Grappling roll is made against the target's defensive grappling roll. If successful, the target falls, taking [**thrower's (STR -10) + target's Mass**] in damage. The amount the grapple roll was made by is used for a Damage Modification roll on the Impact damage chart. A throw breaks the grapple and reduces it to a grab (or the thrower can let go).

Martial Arts Arm Bar: If an arm is grabbed or the character grappling gets a 'Minor Success' an arm may be attempted. A grappling roll is made, and if successful the arm is immobilized (weapons held are pointed away from the character). When the roll is won, and at will, for 5 REA Medium actions thereafter, the controlling character may do [**1/3rd Offensive Grapple (minimum of 4pts)**] in damage. The amount the initial roll was won by is used each time for the Damage Modification roll on the Impact damage chart. An arm bar remains until a break grab or break grapple attempt is successful.

Jujitsu

Level	Damage	Grapple OFF/ DEF	Block	U	B	S	Special
Level 1	+0	+1 /+1		-1	-1	-4	Throw from grapple (STR +2)
Level 2	+0	+2/+2		+0	+0	-3	Lock for STR damage
Level 3	+1	+4 /+4		+1	+1	-1	Throw/Arm Bar from Block
Level 4	+2	+ [Skill -9]		+2	+2	+0	Super Throw, Easy block/throw

Karate (Hard-External)

Difficult, AGI

Description: This applies to Shotokan, Kempo, and other hard, external styles. Hard-External is the philosophy behind the skill (strikes are met with forceful blocks and the style is concerned with defense more so than inner harmony). This is not to say that many, if not most, karate schools teach a philosophy of self control and self discipline. The skill is used to hit with any unarmed strike (kick, punch, or cross).

Level 1: Student. No effect other than those listed.

Level 2: Stylist. No effect other than those listed.

Level 3: Martial Artist. The character may attempt a "hard block" which is a strike against an attacker that works like a block. Kicks may be thrown at Medium range (see reach rules).

Level 4: Master. The character gets +1 to his base damage for each point of skill roll above 10. Additionally the character may perform "spear" or "knife hand" strikes using his fingers to penetrate his target like a blade.

Hard Block: The character attempts a 4 REA block at -1 (in addition to any other negatives). If successful the target's strike is blocked and the target takes [$\frac{1}{2}$ punch] damage. A character attempting a Hard Block must declare it before the roll to block is made.

Spear Hand Strike: The attack cost +3 REA, hits at -1, and does $\frac{1}{2}$ punch damage in *Penetrating* damage. If the target suffers a death result (or a non-Heroic NPC suffers a dying result) the attacker may be assumed to have ripped his heart (or other organ) out!

Karate

Level	Damage	Grapple OFF/ DEF	Block	U	B	S	Special
Level 1	+1	+0		-3	-4	-4	None
Level 2	+2	+0		-2	-3	-3	None
Level 3	+3	+0		-1	-2	-2	Hard Block (4 REA, -1, HTH+1)
Level 4	+ [skill -10]	+0		+0	-1	-2	Spear Hand strike

Knife Fighting

Difficult, AGI

Description: Knives are easy to use, not very defensive, and common in any weapons-making culture.

Level 1: This skill does not exist at level 1, or rather, all untrained knife fighters (Level 0) are at 'Level 1.' The character hits with AGI and blocks as though bare-handed.

Level 2: Knife Fighter. In *Close Combat* (i.e. in a grapple or after taking a 5 REA Long action to move to *Close Combat range*) the character gets +1 DM to any knife strike. This is added before any doubling. The block may only be applied against weapons with a Base Damage of 7 or less.

Level 3: Knife Artist. The character is exceptionally deadly with the knife and gets +2 to Damage Modification rolls with a +3 REA strike (in close combat this goes to +3 DM). This plus is added *after* damage doubling. When a feint is attempted, the blocking character is at an additional -1 to defend. The character may Fast Draw.

Level 4: Knife Master. The character gets +4 to Damage Modification (+5 in close combat) with a +3 REA strike. Attacks with the knife cost 4 REA and blocks cost only 2. If the character feints, defenders are at an additional -2 to block.

Knife Fighting

Level	Block	Swing	Back Swing	Special
Level 1	-4	--	--	AGI -1 for 0 points (there is no L1 skill)
Level 2	-2 (vs. unarmed)	--	--	+1 to hit (not applied to damage mods)
Level 3	-0 (vs. light wpns)	--	--	+2 DM, -1 feints, Fast Draw
Level 4	+2 (vs. light wpns)	--	--	+4 DM, 4 REA attacks, 2 REA blocks, -2 feints

see The
Weapons
Chart

Kung Fu (Soft-External)

Difficult, AGI

Description: The character has studied a style that focuses on fluidity and mobility. This skill is used to hit for all strikes.

Level 1: Student. No effect other than those listed on the chart.

Level 2: Stylist. The character's strikes are at -1 to be blocked.

Level 3: Martial Artist. The character's strikes are at -2 to be blocked. Kicks may be thrown at Medium range (see reach rules).

Level 4: Master. The character may throw a normal punch for 4 REA and block for 2 REA.



Kung Fu

Level	Damage	Grapple OFF/ DEF	Block U	B	S	Special
Level 1	+0	+0	-1	-3	-4	None
Level 2	+1	+0	-0	-1	-3	-1 to block character's strikes
Level 3	+1	+0	+1	+0	-2	-2 to block character's strikes
Level 4	+2	+0	+2	+0	-1	4 REA punch, 2 REA block

Military Combat Training

Difficult, AGI

Description: This is military style training (not involving firearms or other weapons). It may be acquired elsewhere. This is not specific to any military but teaches all-around combat.

Level 1: Bayonet. The character can strike with a weapon-mounted knife using this skill. Normally, due to unbalance, bad grip, and other factors, using a knife on the end of a rifle is at AGI -3.

Level 2: Pugilism. The character uses the skill to hit and blocks unarmed attacks at -2. The character cannot use the skill to throw kicks.

Level 3: Sentry Removal Techniques. The character is an expert in killing from behind. The character must attack from surprise. The character makes a skill roll before making a weapon roll. The amount the skill roll is made by adds to the Damage Modifier *including* the penetrating modifier (if the character has a penetrating weapon).

This makes it easy to dispatch someone with a knife. The skill is also the to-hit roll with a garrote. Otherwise, the character can block knives and small hand weapons at -2 to skill (as though the attacker were unarmed).

Level 4: Lethal Combat Techniques. The character blocks at -1 (this training doesn't teach much defense) but his strikes are lethal. The character can perform a Spear Hand Strike (as per Level 4 Karate) for +2 REA instead of +3. It does ½ Base Damage (minimum of 3). If the character strikes from behind and from surprise, instead of adding +1 per 2 full points of skill above 10, the character can add whatever the skill roll is made by. The character's Base Damage with a strike is +2.

Morning Star

Difficult, AGI

Description: This skill can be applied to many different weapons (flail, nunchaku, morning star, three sectioned staff, etc.) It involves the use of articulated weapons (the weapon has a joint used to help generate power). These weapons can be dangerous to the user due to their tendency to swing 'unpredictably.' Articulated weapons have a given negative to be blocked listed under the weapons table.

Level 0: At level 0, the character is at AGI -2 to hit with Flails and any miss by 3 will result in the character hitting himself—for full damage.

Level 1: Beginner. The character hits at skill -1. The character will only hit himself on a roll missed by 5.

Level 2: Advanced Morning Star User. None other than those listed.

Level 3: Expert Morning Star User. The character can perform a Fast Draw.

Level 4: Master Morning Star User. If the character is using a flail with a chain (great flail or morning star) a "pin weapon" maneuver may be attempted. Additionally, for +1 REA the flail is at an additional -2 to be blocked (this may not be done more than once per turn). A character may combine this with a feint to make the attack almost completely unpredictable.

Pin Weapon: A character using a weapon with a chain may attempt to wrap and "pin" another weapon. This is either a +1 REA Strike or +2 REA Block. The strike is at -2 to hit and the block is at -2 to block. If successful the opponent's weapon is *grabbed* with the flail holder's STR + 2. This can be disentangled by an 8 REA Long action or released by the flail holder for 5 REA.

Morning Star

Level	Block	Swing	Back Swing	Special
Level 1	-4	-0	-0	hits at skill -1, only hits self on miss by 5+
Level 2	-3	-1	-1	None
Level 3	-2	-2	-2	None
Level 4	-2	-3	-3	pin weapon. +1 REA for -2 to be blocked.

see The
Weapons
Chart

Shield

Difficult, AGI

Description: The character is trained in the use of a shield. The character can use the shield to block attacks instead of whatever weapon is being used (it should be noted that anyone can carry a shield but they don't get a superior block with it). Full information on shields is contained in the combat section.

Level 1: Beginner. The character can use skill -2 plus the shield's to-be-hit negative (so a beginner with a medium shield blocks at skill -0).

Level 2: Average. The character can use skill-1 plus the shield's to-be-hit negative (so an average character with a medium shield blocks at Skill +1).

see The
Shield
Chart

The character can block thrown weapons (knives, axes, spears, etc.) at no negative and slow missiles (arrows and spells—but not bullets) at -2.

Level 3: Expert. The character can block once per turn for 2 REA. He can use skill +0 plus the shield's to-be-hit negative (so an expert with a medium shield blocks at Skill+2). The character can block slow missiles at no negative.

Level 4: Master. The character can use skill plus 2x the shield's modifier (so a master with a medium shield blocks at Skill+4). The character can use the shield to block fast missiles at -0 to the roll and block slow missiles at +2.

Sling

Difficult, COR

Description: The character can use a leather sling (which may take either rounded bullets or regular stones). The Sling is a difficult weapon to use. It has a range and damage based directly on skill level. Well crafted bullets do +1 Base Damage.

Level 1: Beginner. It takes 5 REA to draw a bullet (2 can be held), 5 to load the sling, 5 to wind up, and 5 to fire. The damage is [STR-10] +1.

Level 2: Average. It takes 5 REA to draw a bullet, 5 REA to load, and 5 REA to fire. Damage is [STR-10]+2.

Level 3: Expert. It takes 5 REA to draw, load, and wind up, and 5 REA to fire. The character can ignore -3 pts of range/speed modifiers. Damage is still [STR-10] +2.

Level 4: Sling Master: The character can fire once per 5 REA. Damage is [STR-10] +4. The character ignores -6 points of range/speed modifier.

Spear (Also Lance)

Difficult, AGI

Description: The character can use a spear or pole arm. These are excellent weapons for keeping opponents at bay. Spears can be thrown, polearms get much higher initiative. If a character throws a spear instead of fighting with it, use the points spent and convert to COR to determine the to-hit roll. The lance skill is applied when the character is mounted.

Level 1: Phalanx Guard. The character is trained to brace with the weapon and hold off charging opponents. The character can use the skill only if an opponent attacks first, and then only if the character has initiative (and is waiting). This is the skill militiamen have who stand in ranks and hold off attackers with spears or halberds. It can also be used for wild boar hunting as the boar will charge. This skill may be higher than 12. If the skill is used to launch an attack, it is at -3.

Level 2: Spear Fighter. As shown on the chart. A character using a lance gets +1 damage if he makes a Riding Skill roll.

Level 3: Spear Expert. As shown on the chart. A thrown spear ignores -3 points of size/speed/range/environment modifiers. When mounted, the character does +2 damage if he makes a Riding Skill roll.

Level 4: Spear Master. If thrown, the character ignores -6 points of size/speed/range/environment modifiers. If mounted the character does +4 damage with a successful Riding Skill roll.

Spear

Level	Block	Swing	Back Swing	Special
Level 1	-2	-0	-0	Only if waiting with initiative
Level 2	-2	-1	-1	None
Level 3	-1	-1	-2	Ignore -3 points of mods with thrown
Level 4	-0	-2	-3	Ignore -6 points of mods with thrown

Staff

Difficult, AGI

Description: The character can fight with sticks. This is a very easy weapon to improvise and has (at higher levels) an innately good block. It also is an excellent lever and can be used to do more damage with greater swings.

Level 1: Club. The character has a block skill at -3 to weapons skill due to clumsiness with the weapon. The character swings the staff like a club (this skill also applies to billy sticks, real clubs, etc.). If this level is used, the character pays +1 Back Swing on additional blows after the first in a turn. It may be higher than 12-

Level 2: Staff. As listed

Level 3: Staff Expert. The character is at -2 to be blocked if he feints (see combat rules). A full strike with a staff does +3 damage instead of +2.

Level 4: Staff Master. The character is at -2 to be blocked per each level lower the defender is if he feints. The character can make a normal strike for 4 REA and block for 2 REA. A full strike with a staff does +4 damage instead of +2.

see The
Weapons
Chart

Staff

Level	Block	Swing	Back Swing	Special
Level 1	-3	-0	pays 1	Can be higher than 12-
Level 2	-0	None	None	Staves have no back-swing cost
Level 3	+1	None	None	-2 to block if feints, +3 dmg w/ full swing
Level 4	+2	None	None	4 REA Strike, 2 REA Block, better feint

Street Fighting

Difficult, AGI

Description: The character has been in many fights and is experienced. A character's attack gets an effective +1 to hit. This bonus does *not* affect Damage Modifiers (it does not add to the Damage Modification roll) but merely makes the chance of scoring a successful hit higher. If the target is at -1 or more to be hit due to AGI modifiers it *will* negate one point of negative AGI modifier for damage purposes. Street Fighting combines some grappling skill along with striking experience and can be used to hit with grabs and grapples in place of AGI.

Level 1: Bruiser. As listed.

Level 2: Brawler. Character gains Ground Fighting.

Level 3: Ruffian. In Close Combat (grappling or after stepping to *Close* range) or if the target is grabbed the character gets a +2 to his Damage Modifier due to the vicious nature of his attacks. Additionally, the character's +1 to hit *does* apply vs. Blocks and for Damage Modifier (giving him, in effect a +1 skill roll to-hit when in Close Combat). If, for some reason, the character's damage is Penetrating (i.e. he has claws and uses Street Fighting to hit with them) the +2 is added *after* to-hit modifier doubling. Kicks may be thrown at Medium range.

Level 4: Street Legend. The character gets +4 to Damage Modification rolls in close combat due to vicious tactics and [Skill -8 / Skill -11] are added to his OFF / DEF Grapple Scores respectively.

see The
Weapons
Chart

Street Fighting

Level	Damage	Grapple OFF/ DEF	Block	U	B	S	Special
Level 1	+0	+1/+0		-3	-4	-4	+1 to-hit
Level 2	+0	+2 / +1		-2	-3	-4	+1 to-hit
Level 3	+2	+3 / +2		-1	-2	-4	+2 DM (close) +1 to-hit
Level 4	+3	+ [Skill -9] / + [Skill -12]		+0	-1	-4	+4 DM (close) +1 to-hit

Sword

Difficult, AGI

Description: The character is trained in combat with a single blade (and not necessarily any shield although one may be used). This skill does not include familiarity with fencing weapons (that's Fencing Skill).

Level 1: Beginning Swordsman. As listed.

Level 2: Swordsman. As listed.

Level 3: Expert Swordsman. The character can perform a Fast Draw.

Level 4: Master Swordsman. The basic (minimum) cost for a normal strike is 4 REA instead of 5 and the cost for a block is 2 REA.

Sword

Level	Block	Swing	Back Swing	Special
Level 1	-2	-0	-0	None
Level 2	-1	-1	-0	None
Level 3	-0	-1	-2	Fast Draw
Level 4	+1	-2	-3	Min. of 4 REA to strike, 2 REA to block

see The
Weapons
Chart

Tae Kwon Do (Hard-External)

Difficult, AGI

Description: This could apply to a number of arts: Muay Thai, Savate, Tae Kwon Do, etc. It represents a hard-external martial arts style with an emphasis on kicking and kicks. According to some, it is designed to give smaller people back the power advantage they lack over larger ones.

Level 1: Student. The character is taught to kick at no negative to hit. The skill roll applies to both punches and kicks equally.

Level 2: Stylist. The character may throw a Medium reach kick (which is normally only allowed at Level 3+) and blocks all incoming kicks at +1 to his normal roll.

Level 3: Martial Artist. The character may throw 1 normal kick per turn at 5 REA instead of 6. This may *not* be thrown for 4 REA if playing with the optional one 5 REA attack for 4 REA rule.

Level 4: Master. The Tae Kwon Do Master can kick for 5 REA (kicks *cannot* be thrown for 4 REA, even if using the optional rule). Furthermore, his kicks do +[skill -9] damage.

Tae Kwon Do

Level	Damage	Grapple OFF/ DEF	Block U B S	Special
Level 1	+0	+0	-3 -4 -4	-0 to hit with kicks
Level 2	+1	+0	-2 -3 -3	Medium Range kick
Level 3	+2	+0	-1 -2 -2	1 kick per turn for 5 REA
Level 4	+4 / +[skill -9] kicks	+0	-0 -1 -2	5 REA kicks

Tai Chi (Soft-Internal)

Difficult, AGI

Description: This is a generic term for all soft-internal styles. Although combat techniques, these styles are more concerned with promoting inner harmony. They function very much like Jujitsu but with a meditative aspect. At Level 3+ this skill may be used to hit in combat.

Level 1: Student. The character knows breathing exercises and movement routines. This can be used to recover Endurance at double speed if a roll is made at -4 (the character takes the time and *then* makes the roll). Otherwise, it is an exercise routine.

Level 2: Stylist. The character can meditate which requires a skill roll and takes 5 minutes (-1 minute per point the roll was made by, minimum of 1 second). This meditation adds +1 to WIL rolls.

Level 3: Martial Artist. The character can throw and perform arm bars as per Level 2 Jujitsu. The meditation adds +2 to WIL rolls. Kicks may be thrown at Medium range (see reach rules).

Level 4: Master. The master's OFF / DEF Grapple Scores add [Skill -10 / Skill -7] respectively and he can apply his excellent block for 2 REA. The meditation adds +3 to WIL. The character can perform arm bars and throws as per Jujitsu Level 3.

Tai Chi Level	Damage	Grapple OFF/ DEF	Block	U	B	S	Special
Level 1	+0	+0 / +1	--	--	--	--	doesn't hit/block; 2x End rec.
Level 2	+0	+1 / +2	+1	-1	-3	+1	WIL, not used to hit
Level 3	+0	+2 / +4	+2	+1	-0	+2	WIL, L2 Jujitsu Throw/Bar
Level 4	+0	Skill -10 / Skill -7	+3	+3	+3	+3	WIL, L3 Jujitsu, 2 REA Block

Tangle Weapons (Whip, Bolas, Lasso, Net)

Difficult (AGI or COR)

Description: Tangle weapons are described fully under the section in the combat chapter. They are those devices that (possibly in addition to doing damage) bind the opponent. Low technology tangle weapons are difficult to use and almost impossible at Level 0 (try using a weighted net in combat!) Tangle attacks often must be readied (someone swinging bolas or a lasso)

and recovered when they miss (if a whip gets extended, it's useless). The exact rules for the effects of each level are described in that section. If the attack is actually thrown (bolas, perhaps a net) use COR. If it is used from the hand (a whip or lasso), use AGI. If the weapon is high tech (a foam gun, perhaps) use a more appropriate skill—like Firearms.

Thrown Blade

Difficult, COR

Description: The character is experienced with thrown blades. If the character has Keen Senses: Vision +4, he purchases this skill at COR +1.

Level 1: Beginner. The character can throw a balanced blade. If this skill is not had, a character who throws a blade has a 50% chance that even if it hits, the edge may not hit and it may not do Penetrating damage. The character is at -3 to hit anything but a stationary target.

Level 2: Knife Thrower. The character can hit targets with the blades with a normal roll and can draw as a Short action.

Level 3: Expert Knife Thrower. The character can throw one knife per 2 full points of skill above 10 (so a 16- roll allows three knives to be thrown). The Expert knife thrower ignores -3 points of size, speed negatives. The character gets +1 to aiming bonuses to throw single knives. The character can perform a Fast Draw.

Level 4: Master Knife Thrower. The character ignores 6 points of size and speed negatives. The character can double the number of knives thrown by using two hands (if the character has more than two hands, this is still the limit but there may be no 'off-hand' modifier.) The character gets +2 to aiming bonuses to throw single knives.

Thrown Weapon

Difficult, COR

Description: Similar to thrown blade, thrown weapon may apply to any weapon that is dissimilar to a throwing knife. Examples might be grenades, spells, balls used in sporting games, etc. This skill can be taken to improve the character's accuracy with any thrown object and is not limited to a specific type of weapon (a super strong character could use it to hit with any weapon picked up).

Level 0: Most characters can hit with a COR roll with a thrown object. If the object has a "business end" it will only strike 50% of the time on that edge. The character must take a Medium action to draw the weapon (or pick it up) and then take a Medium action to throw it. If it requires most or all of the character's STR (if its weight is within 75 pounds of the character's maximum lift) it is a Long action to throw it. Objects travel $[(STR - 10) / \text{Object's Mass}]$ yards and hit for $[STR + \text{Object's Mass}]$ damage. The maximum distance assumes a parabolic arc—if the distance for a super strong character is greater than

the object's terminal velocity (for all you physics majors out there) then it travels at its terminal velocity and may travel for several seconds. Unbalanced or oddly balanced objects travel half as far as normal and are a -1 to hit. A character at level 0 will never receive doubling bonuses, even if throwing a sharp object. Additionally, a character at level 0 may not "aim" with a thrown object.

Level 1: The character can throw sharp objects and receive full Penetration bonuses, is at no negative to throw strangely balanced objects, and can throw them the normal distance.

Level 2: The character can throw heavy objects as a 5 REA Medium action and the character may aim with a thrown object.

Level 3: He may ignore up to -3 points of range / size / speed modifiers when trying to hit targets. The character can perform a Fast Draw.

Level 4: As above except that the character may ignore -6 points of range/size/speed modifiers.

Wrestling (Non-Striking Grappling Art)

Difficult, AGI

Description: The character is trained in Wrestling: a combative sport that does not include strike training. This skill may *not* be used to hit with strikes.

Level 1: Journeyman. The character can perform a 5 REA Short action Block against any attempt to hit with a Grapple attack.

Level 2: Grappler. The character gains Ground Fighting.

Level 3: Shooter. The character may perform a Takedown (Advanced Grappling) as an 8 REA *Medium* action if he beats his opponent's REA roll by 3 instead of

the normal 5 (this is called a "Shoot"). Additionally, his Slam gets a +2 Damage Modifier.

Level 4: Wrestler. The character gets **[Skill Roll -8]** added to his Grapple score. He may perform a Takedown out of turn if he blocks an attack by 2 or more. The character may "Reverse" and take a grappling action *out of turn* if an opponent's Grappling attack misses or fails by more than 3.

Wrestling

Level	Damage	Grapple OFF/ DEF	Block	U	B	S	Special
Level 1	N/A (no strikes)	+2 / +2		-2	-4	-4	"Block" a grapple
Level 2	N/A	+3 / +3		-0	-4	-4	None
Level 3	N/A	+5 / +5		-0	-4	-4	Shoot; better Slam
Level 4	N/A	+ [Skill -8]		+1	-4	-4	Shoot out of turn; Reverse

Street Skills

Con Artist

Normal, RES

Description: The character can talk believably on the spur of the moment or inspire trust. This can be used to make characters enter into financial deals and con them or it can be used to tell a true story in such a way that the audience will be less likely to doubt the speaker. None of these skills are at all magic, the character must have *some* kind of story and may require props to make some stories work.

Level 1: Fast Talk. The character can come up with a plausible story *fast* and is adept at pushing it on people. It can be used to influence people to make snap decisions in favor of the character or confuse people who are listening (possibly making them give up on getting the story). An example of fast-talking is telling a police officer you saw someone inside the perimeter of a fence who seemed to be hurt and when you climbed over they got up and ran off. Target characters get a roll vs. RES. If the roll is made, they will inspect the story thoroughly. If the roll is failed, they will be distracted (the officer simply kicks the character off the property instead of investigating or running him in).

Level 2: Lie. The character can tell a story he does not believe as though he does. This does not fake strong emotions (the skill Actor is needed for that) but it will convey a sense that, at least, the character believes the story. If the roll is made vs. the target's RES, the speaker will seem to be telling the truth as he perceives it. Often this is enough to get the character off the hook or get a subject to go along with a plan.

This skill is also used to *bluff* whether in card games or with an unloaded gun. Essentially, this works the same as Fast Talk (above) except that the target rolls against the character's skill roll instead of just rolling against their own RES.

Level 3: Confidence. The character can, after speaking to a target for a while, come off as likable and trustworthy. The speaker makes a skill roll against the target's RES. If the roll is successful, the target will want to help the speaker (or get involved with schemes, etc.) Unlike Lie, this skill, on a normal success, and with a good *sounding* story, make the target want to invest large amounts of money, resources, etc. It will also let the character pass off an implausible story (alien abduction) with great success (in the right forum—talk shows and the like).

Level 4: Persuade. The speaker can convince people of the very unlikely. Such a character is all but immune to trial by jury (at least the first few times). As far as it is possible, the character can talk a target out of his money, his shirt, his car, etc. All the character needs is a story and a chance for face to face speech ("I'm an undercover police officer and I need your vehicle to chase the man who just robbed that store!") Against an unprofessional, it may even have some combat effect ("You've got the wrong guy! You've got the wrong guy! Stop shooting for a minute!")

Crime

Normal, RES

Description: The character is experienced in or has extensively studied some form of crime. The character is skilled in the commission of crime and knows things like police response times, how to search a house for valuables, and what common goods go for on the street. A successful roll will let the character commit a crime and not get caught or give the character specific knowledge about a crime. This does not substitute for Locksmith Skill (opening locked doors), Disarm Security Systems (as the name implies), or Streetwise (knowing who is doing what and when). This lets an experienced criminal character commit crimes while a character without it must roleplay picking targets, what to say at a holdup, where to look in a house, etc. A roll can give a character an idea of how to react to a situation that comes up while committing a crime or while a crime is being committed. The skill gives the character the ability to fence what is taken but does not give the character access to multiple fences like Streetwise does.

Level 1: Mugger. Crime types are mugging/hold-ups, selling street drugs, smash and grab (not really a skill but an experienced character will pick better targets and

get better things in the few seconds inside the store), fast change (for petty cash from confused cashiers), hold up gas stations, shoplift, etc.

Level 2: Burglar. The character can break-and-enter (rob suburban homes), transport drugs (knows routes, how to conceal them, etc.), get money from tellers at banks (knows what places encourage employees to cooperate), run con games (although Con Artist Skill is invaluable here), rob hotels, etc.

Level 3: Second Story Man. The character can commit classier crimes. This can include bilking casinos (Sleight of Hand is probably necessary too), robbing jewelry exchanges (requires lots of guys and tight planning), robbing museums (requires Disarm Security Systems—always), etc.

Level 4: Master Thief. The character can plan break-ins into banks, stock exchanges, and military installations. While this requires lots of skills, the Master Thief can hire talent and put together an airtight job. A character of such skill need only pull a job once a decade to live in a wealthy fashion.

Disarm Security System

Normal, RES

Description: The character can deactivate electronic security. This is the adjunct to Locksmith. Often both skills are needed. The skill also lets the character install systems of the level he can break.

Level 1: Knows Systems. The character knows how to install basic security systems, how they work, etc. The character can't break them per se but knows how to get around some of them. Simple systems or improperly installed ones can be broken with a roll. The character can spot bogus security stickers.

Level 2: Home System Specialist. The character can break into houses protected by security and disarm them with a successful roll.

Level 3: Security Specialist. The character can penetrate professional systems in secure businesses and expensive homes. The character *cannot* penetrate banks, military research bases, etc.

Level 4: Security Wizard. The character can penetrate any system with some study. This may require a lot of special gear and time but the character knows how to fool any system.

Disguise

Normal, RES

Description: The character is skilled in changing appearance. While listed as a Street Skill (since it can be used to aid fleeing felons, allow characters to deceive others, and make a character less noticeable) it is also used commonly by actors and movie make-up artists.

Level 1: Makeup. The character knows what minor changes will yield a different appearance. If the character takes an hour and makes a roll, he can give himself an effective +1 appearance. If the character is being followed (by people using Surveillance) a successful roll can give them a -2 to their success chances.

Level 2: Disguise. The character can totally alter his appearance so that onlookers will not recognize him. A successful roll places observers at -1 to their perception roll to recognize the character per point the disguise roll is made by. If the character takes time and has necessary makeup gear, the character can be assumed

to have rolled a 10 (average success). If the character is working fast or does not have the necessary materials then a standard roll is made. The character is at -1 per point of appearance modifier the target character has and may make one roll per hour (so it is difficult to disguise particularly striking people). Exotic appearance gives an additional -2.

Level 3: Disguise Artist. The character gets no negatives for the target's appearance and all makeup disguises will be at -3 to be seen through if the person disguised is not carefully examined. A character can be made up to look like another person if a -5 roll is made. The artist knows how to change fingerprints or (in a high tech society) retina prints.

Level 4: Disguise Master. The character can make one person look exactly like another at no negative. If the target is of average appearance the disguise master can add up to 4 points of any other appearance to him. He doubles the amount the roll is made by for his own face.

Electronic Underground

Normal, RES

Description: The character is familiar with the computer network underground and can get information, software, etc.

Level 1: Lamer. The character can get old software games and subversive files (the content of information will be slightly more illicit than that from normal network knowledge).

Level 2: Cracker. The character can get the latest games and, with a roll, can break into systems with low levels of protection—by finding out how someone else already did it! The character can get information about the latest electronics (some corporate espionage at a low level). The character can run a computer trace for a given person, looking for social security records, etc.

Level 3: Elite. The character can get detailed information about a target's credit history, break into systems which are protected (some, like a bank might be at -15 or more to the roll though!). The character knows how to call and access data banks to find out almost anything about high technology. The character can get police records about a target and all public files.

Level 4: Net God. The character can break almost any system (banks can be cracked at -5). The character can steal military secrets if they are on systems hooked to outside lines (truly secure systems use encryption, which the character *can't* break without other skills). The character can find anyone with an electronic skill and has a reputation that will make others want to work for him.



Escape Artist

Normal, COR

Description: The character has a talent for slipping out of restraints. This includes exercises in flexibility to physically manipulate oneself out of bonds and techniques that create gaps and slack in restraints as well as methods of secreting lockpicks on one's person or improvising them.

Level 1: Neophyte. If the character's hands are bound behind him, he can contort himself so that he can get his hands in front. This is an 8 REA Long action (unless the roll is made by 5+, in which case it is 5 REA Medium action or by 10+ and becomes a 3 REA Short action). At Level 2, he can perform this trick as a 5 REA Medium action with a success and as a 3 REA Short action with a success by 5 or better (8 REA Long action if the roll is failed). If the character is bound with nothing but ropes, Level 1 Escape Artist will let him escape (usually this takes 5 to 10 minutes minus one minute per point the roll is made by, minimum of 1 minute).

Level 2: Contortionist. The character can improvise lockpicks and handcuff keys from almost any common object (pens, paperclips, etc.) and can work

his way out of handcuffs (5 to 10 minutes minus one minute per point the roll is made by, minimum of 1 minute). The character is good at hiding things on his person: a searcher gets a Perception roll against Escape Artist skill (this roll is at +4 if the character is strip-searched).

Level 3: Escape Artist. The character can work his way out of straightjackets (5 to 10 minutes minus one minute per point the roll is made by, minimum of 1 minute), swallow and regurgitate keys and small tools, and otherwise slip through "unusual bonds." Tools and keys are almost impossible to find on such a character, usually he must be watched to be kept from escaping.

Level 4: Houdini. The character can free himself in seconds (30 seconds minus 5 seconds per point of roll made, minimum of 1 second). A character in a straightjacket, wrapped in chains, and tied in a leather sack can be free before a fire eating at the rope can reach him.

Forgery

Normal, RES

Description: The character is skilled at making false documents. At lower levels this will allow underage characters to get into bars and at higher levels the character can provide others with fake passports.

Level 1: Beginning Forger. The character can make a single type of common document (usually a driver's license). It will survive inspection (observers get a RES roll at -1 per point the Forgery roll was made by). This skill is also used to detect the same. If the character is examining an amateur forgery, the roll is at +1.

Level 2: Professional Forger. The character can make drivers licenses which are basically perfect (automatic -2 per level of forgery above the observers--so a character without forgery is at -4 in addition to whatever the roll was made by to see through it). The character can fake signatures if given a sample, and can create a myriad of other basic documents. Complicated documents (like FBI identification, passports, etc.) are made at -3.

Level 3: Expert Forger. The character can create complicated documents and licenses at no negative. The character can also counterfeit money (but standard detection techniques will work against it). Basic documents will only be detectable to another character with Level 3 forgery. Magnetic media identification like medical cards, credit cards, ATM cards, etc. are at -6 to duplicate and require special (expensive) machinery.

Level 4: Master Forger. The character can create perfect copies of any document, money, or electronic identification at no negative. The character can use normal materials to put together incredibly good forgeries (a simple color photocopier—available at the local copy shop, an ink jet printer, some old seat covers, and . . . voila! instant international concealed weapons license!)

Gambling

Normal, RES

Description: The character has studied both basic probability (and maybe advanced probability) and games of chance and skill. The character is skilled at any game involving wagering using randomizers. The suggested method for handling games is for the GM to assign a number needed for the character win (in standard casino games this can be as low as a 4- or as high as a 9- for single deck Black Jack). The character then rolls against that and when the character wins the odds are paid. Stupid play (betting the "hard ways" areas of craps) can lower the odds on a game (if the character has NO idea what's stupid and what's not then the GM may wish to deduct more from the game due to poor betting strategies).

Level 1: Basic Games. The character knows all the rules, terms (won't ask about 'five card Charlie' at a casino), and the strategies. The character, with a roll, can get the best possible odds for basic strategies at a game of chance. Against other characters (poker) the character simply understands the games.

Level 2: Gamesman. The character can compute odds based on the state of the game. The character can count cards in such games and possibly knows tricks. A successful roll adds +1 if made by 0 to 3 and +2 if made by more than 4 to the base chance of winning. It should be noted that varying bets at a casino is seen as a sign of counting and characters will be thrown out if there is even suspicion. Against other players whoever makes

the roll by the most, gets the bonus. A roll at -3 will allow a character to show no emotion. A similar roll can be used to tell whether or not an opponent is bluffing.

Level 3: Gambler. The character is an expert card counter and gambler. The character gets +1 to the base roll per point the roll is made by up to a maximum of +4. Against other players this roll is at +3 if they are at lower levels. A successful roll allows the character to show no emotion or detect a bluff.

Level 4: Oddsmaker. The character has an intuitive understanding of chance and chaos theory. The character can predict the odds of almost *anything*. Additionally, the character is great at games. Each point the roll is made by adds 1 to the character's chance of winning for every hand. This can even be applied at races. The character can be a fabulously rich gambler (although people like the IRS or organized crime may want a word with the character if he consistently cleans up at the races). A roll will tell the character what the odds of different given outcomes of a random event are if the character has anywhere near enough data. Finally, the character can choose to display no emotion or detect a bluff on a roll at +3 (this can be used to bluff and even fool psionics as the character is so good at giving nothing away).



Locksmith

Normal, COR

Description: The character can pick/make/install locks. This is mainly used for the former.

Level 1: Novice. The character can pick an interior lock on a normal door. This takes a minute.

Level 2: Professional. The character can break into any normal lock with a roll. Some locks (Kryptonite locks, for example) may be at -1 to -6. This takes 3 seconds for a normal lock and up to 2 minutes for a tough one. A character gets two rolls to break a lock—if they fail, he doesn't know how or just can't.

Level 3: Safe Cracker. The character can open normal locks as above and can open safes (personal safes, *not* bank vaults).

Level 4: Master Locksmith. The character can open bank vaults. This requires *highly* specialized skill. The character can also rob pay phones with no trace (something generally thought to be impossible). Such a character will be in exceedingly high demand by the underworld and the FBI (in the US).

Specialization: Steal Car (Level 2). The character can steal a car in 20 seconds with a roll. At Level 3 this allows the character to disarm automotive security systems. Many Level 1 thieves specialize to steal cars. Professional car thieves have level 2 Locksmith and Level 3 Steal Car.



Pickpocket

Normal, COR

Description: The character has the ability to steal items from a person's body without them knowing. Targets get a perception roll against the character's skill. In crowds, if the target is not alert, their roll is at -3. The character can also use this skill to plant an item on an unsuspecting target.

Level 1: Cutpurse. The character can take wallets from back pockets with a successful roll, cut purse straps, etc. Anything else is beyond the character. If the roll is failed the target feels the thief's hands.

Level 2: Pickpocket. The character can steal from a target by brushing against him. Targets are at -2 to

notice the attempt (-5 in crowds). Jewelry, watches, etc. are at a -4 to steal.

Level 3: Expert Fingers. The character can search and remove anything from a target with a successful roll. The target is at -4 to notice (-7 in crowds). The character is good at "peeking the poke"—sizing up targets for maximum cash benefit.

Level 4: Master Pickpocket. As above but the target is at -6 to notice (-9 in crowds). Such a character can wander through crowds, taking almost anything.

Sleight of Hand

Normal, COR

Description: The character can perform card tricks, make objects disappear, etc. This is an adjunct to the Stage Magic Trivial Skill; it gives the technical expertise for sleight of hand tricks while the professional skill lets the character perform and gives knowledge of intricate props (designing or constructing said props or creating new illusions would be a Craft Skill). Observers roll against perception. If the observer has sleight of hand and no distraction is used, the observer gets +1 per point a Sleight of Hand roll is made by.

Level 1: Novice. The character can palm coins and perform simple card tricks.

Level 2: Professional. The character can perform professional level tricks, cheat at cards, etc. Observers

watch at -2. In a card game, a successful roll will add 2 to the character's chance of winning.

Level 3: Card Mechanic. The character can bottom double deal with cards, make almost anything hand sized appear and disappear. In a card game, the card mechanic can win any game he plays (against other mechanics, whoever deals wins—unless they sneak cards onto the table). Observers watch at -4.

Level 4: Legend. The character can center deal (a "myth" amongst dealers). The character can cheat Card Mechanics. Observers watch at -8 and even mechanics watch at -6 since they don't know the technique.

Streetwise

Normal, MEM

Description: The character has knowledge of the underworld. The character knows names of higher level persons, knows where to go to find a fence, etc.

Level 1: Street Urchin. The character has been on the street for a short time (or is young). The character is familiar with street crime (knows where muggers are, how to fence a VCR, how to buy common drugs, who major figures are, etc.). The character does not know the intricate secrets of the street.

Level 2: Streetwise. The character can, with a roll, contact mid-level underworld figures, knows where professional fences are, can get a message to the Mafia, could fence most merchandise (something like diamonds might be at -1 to -5 depending on the amount), etc. The character can find contacts to

question about crimes (there will be a negative if the crime was committed by high level figures or, say, government agents).

Level 3: Connected. The character gets information about underworld activities as a matter of course (or just knows how they operate daily). The character can, with a roll, come up with a suspect list for any crime with a known M.O. or with an underworld motive.

Level 4: Crime Lord. The character may not *actually* be a crime lord but he gets information as though he were. The character will know about all major activities on a given coast and have in-depth information in a particular city. The character will know about anything organized *before* it happens. If the character is a crime lord the character's status is equal to a top Mafia head.

Hard Sciences

Astronomy

Normal, RES

Description: The character has knowledge about planetary systems. This skill is necessary to be an astrophysicist. It is a Normal skill.

Level 1: Amateur Astronomy. The character can name the planets, tell what they are like, identify constellations, knows how far it is to Alpha Centauri, etc.

Level 2: Astronomy Student. The character can use a telescope to examine and identify celestial bodies. Two critical successes in a row might find a new comet or asteroid at the GM's discretion (and many nights of watching).

Level 3: Astronomer. At this level, the character must have Mathematics and Physics at Level 2. The character can use and understand radio telescopes, decipher telemetry, and is an expert on planetary conditions and theory. The character could do research into how the solar system formed.

Level 4: Nobel Prize Astronomy. The character knows, or can guess things about the cosmos that no one else can. The character will be the first to make discoveries of other planets, etc.

Biology – or – Botany

Difficult, RES

Description: The character has studied biological processes. There are many specializations. In this context biology means both biochemistry and physiology. It does not cover the effects of drugs (that's a medical skill). Biology studies animals in this sense and Botany studies plants. These are different skills and a character may have both. At the higher level, this skill includes genetic engineering knowledge (Level 3 and above).

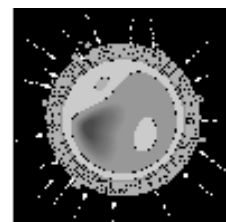
Level 1: Basic Biology. The character has a high school level understanding of biological process and can understand related questions.

Level 2: Biologist. The character can understand an organism, make predictions about what a creature might eat, how its body works, etc. Given a new organism, the biologist can classify it. The character can tell what toxins will effect a given organism.

Level 3: Advanced Biology. The character understands genetics and possibly genetic engineering. This skill would be needed for working on cloning technology, etc.

Level 4: Nobel Prize Class Biology. The character can make breakthroughs in the area of biology and genetics.

Specialization: microbiology, genetics, and physiology.



Chemistry

Difficult, RES

Description: The character can analyze and synthesize chemicals. This skill can be used to make useful chemicals, determine what something is made of, etc.

Level 1: Basic Chemistry. The character has a general understanding of chemistry and can identify common chemicals, remove chemicals from a solution, perform *simple* chemical reactions.

Level 2: Chemist --or-- Applied Chemistry. Chemist allows the character to identify complex chemicals in a lab, analyze a chemical reaction, or make simple acids, etc. Applied chemistry is the skill used to make homemade explosives, illicit but profitable pharmaceuticals, etc.—it contains little scientific

knowledge. To construct bombs Basic Demolition (Level 1) is required as well. A Level 2 chemist with only the applied knowledge gets a -.5 cost break to the skill (since he doesn't have formal training).

Level 3: Chemical Engineer. The chemist can synthesize chemicals in a lab, create complicated reactions, make new plastics, etc. With a lab the character can synthesize anything not biochemical in nature (some of those molecules still elude construction).

Level 4: Nobel Prize Class Chemist. The character can make breakthroughs in the area of chemistry and chemical engineering.



Computer

Difficult, RES

Description: The character is familiar with computer use and programming. Engineering skills are needed to build hardware.

Level 1: Computer Literate. The character can use any commercial software package and find his way through menu systems, read documentation files, etc.

Level 2: Computer Programmer. The character can write and read computer programs, whip up code to solve a problem, and otherwise use computers as tools to help him out (doing research on the net is considered Research or Electronic Underground, though). The character isn't extremely adept at breaking into computers, though.

Level 3: Expert Programmer / System Architect. The character has studied the electronics in computers and can use that knowledge to improve his roll. The

character can create more efficient programs and make use of hardware specifics. A system which the character studies for 48 hours is at +2 to be hacked.

Level 4: Master Hacker. The character is a wizard with machines. The character can write programs in 1/10th their normal time making hard problems easy. This gives the character +5 to any attempt to break into a system. The character can also write security which is at -5 to be cracked (in addition to the negatives if the attacker is a lower level cracker).

Specialization: Virus Writing, Operating System Writing, specific Operating System, specific Computer Type.

Ecology

Difficult, RES

Description: This is the complement to biology. It deals with interactions in a complex, real environment. This is the study of evolution, animal behavior, impact of man on areas, etc.

Level 1: Basic Ecology. The character knows catch phrases, can understand Greenpeace reports, knows something about primate groups, etc. This is at a basic college or high school level.

Level 2: Ecologist. The character can predict the ecological effects of things like dams, cities, etc. after studying an area. If the character studies a particular animal for more than 3 years, that ecologist can become an expert on that animal (using the same skill roll to answer questions about it). An ecologist will be able to make guesses about what something eats or where it might be *without* dissecting it.

Level 3: Ecological Engineer. As part of a project, the character can minimize environmental impact, make specific predictions about environmental factors, tell a *great* deal about an animal by studying it, and become an expert on an animal in a year. A Level 3 Ecologist can, given a preserve, make it thrive. Level 3 Ecologist can also make plans to save endangered species from extinction (breed them in captivity, etc.)

Level 4: World Class Ecologist. The character understands so much about ecology that he can change the way society views the world (the Gaia hypothesis is an example of Level 4 Ecological thought). The character is capable of overseeing or creating the technology necessary for terraforming, creating independent habitats, reversing eco-collapse, etc.

Electronics

Difficult, RES

Description: The character can use, modify, design, or create electronics. This requires Mathematics of at least one lower level than the skill is at (Level 1 Electronics requires no mathematical skill).

Level 1: Basic Wiring. The character can perform simple wiring, replace burnt out motors, install a car stereo without instructions, etc.

Level 2: Electrician. The character can wire a house, repair electric motors, fix appliances, and generally make a living as an electrician. Character can modify and merge existing systems.

Level 3: Electrical Engineer –or– Computer Engineer. The character can design new and complicated electrical systems (for a jet plane for example). If the character has Computer Engineering, he can work in design of computer chips. It is *not* necessary for the character to be a good programmer (although if he is, he'll make a better chip).

Level 4: Electronics Wizard. The character can repair "destroyed" items, make tiny electrical motors, build small servo arms, etc. The character can do above cutting edge design.

Geology

Normal, RES

Description: This area groups all earth sciences not dealing with life forms. The character can answer questions about geological events and processes. Because it is rarely useful in games, it is a Normal Skill.

Level 1: Basic Geology. The character can identify common elements, discuss the general structure of the planet and geological forces at work.

Level 2: Geologist. The character can, with a roll, identify any rock (this may require equipment in some cases). The character can work with teams predicting earthquakes or volcanic eruptions.

Level 3: Advanced Geology. The character is familiar enough with geological forces to have knowledge of such forces on other planets. The character can head or design projects to detect tectonic activity.

Level 4: Master Geologist. The character can answer any question dealing with geology and make breakthroughs in the field.



Material Science

Difficult, RES

Description: The character is very skilled in the construction of plastics and alloys for special purposes and specific strengths. To actually design new polymers, Level 3 Chemistry is needed but this skill will work for alloys and ceramics (usually it's a GM call as to what the character needs exactly).

Level 1: Identify Material. The character has memorized the melting points of numerous alloys, can talk about different plastics, and recognize them.

Level 2: Material Scientist. The character can determine what existing materials need to be used for a given project and can specify processing techniques. The character, if given a lab, can carry out the processes.

Level 3: Material Engineer. The character can design new alloys and apply polymers to make new materials and processes. Any machines designed for cutting edge applications (space stations, undersea domes, or in a high tech campaign "trans-hyperspace-vessels") will require someone with this skill to design materials for the components.

Level 4: Materials Wizard. The character is way ahead of his time. Materials can be designed on the far edge of current technology. Today that might include diamondoid nano-tech materials, magnetically stabilized plastics, etc.

Specialization: Environmental Engineering (each exotic environs is a separate skill), Vehicular Armor.

Mathematics

Difficult, RES

Description: The character is trained in math above the algebra level. This is necessary for Physics and most engineering skills as well.

Level 1: Upper Level Math. The character knows Calculus, Trigonometry, and Differential Equations. The character functions on a college level in mathematics and can do simple physics problems if the equations are known.

Level 2: Mathematician. The character can perform any necessary mathematics for modern science which are commonly performed. The character is not a mathematician in the sense that he explores new areas of math but the character is competent to solve any professional level problem.

Level 3: Theoretical Mathematics. The character is on the cutting edge of mathematics. The character can

work in the math communities and can generate new theories. This is useful for studying quantum physics. It could also be used to guess at, say, hyper-space geometries if the campaign world did not include space travel as a common occurrence. This can be used to make or break encryption but the roll must be made against the encrypter's roll (usually a -5 for secure systems). A roll requires a computer and 48 hours of work. Very secure commercial encryption (the DES, PGP, etc.) cannot be broken without a natural roll of a 0 or 1.

Level 4: Math Genius. The character can do things with math that almost no one else in the world understands. The character may make breakthroughs that could affect physics and engineering. The character gets +2 to any Physics or Engineering rolls. Normally unbreakable encryption may be decrypted at -10 using the above rules.

Mechanics

Difficult, RES

Description: The character can design, repair, and build machines. To have Mechanics at Level 3 or 4 the character must have Physics of at least one level lower than the Mechanics Skill.

Level 1: Basic Mechanics. The character can fix simple problems dealing with common machines. The character can replace belts, change oil, and otherwise maintain a car (he can even repair standard problems at -3).

Level 2: Mechanics. The character can work on many different machines and understands mechanical principles. The character can modify machines to work better, enhance performance, etc. The character can answer questions about materials, processing techniques, etc. Most automotive mechanics have

either Level 2 Mechanics or Level 1 with a specialization in Automobiles.

Level 3: Mechanical Engineer. The character can design new machines and vehicles. The character can answer questions about stresses, aerodynamics, etc. This is often used for vehicular design although it can be used to design or understand any machine.

Level 4: Mechanical Wizard. If a perpetual motion machine can be created, a Level 4 mechanic can do it. Machines that are almost completely destroyed will be jury-rigged and repaired; new machines may be created which make current designs obsolete.

Specializations: Aircraft, Automotive, etc.

Medical

Difficult, RES



Description: The character is trained in medical skills. This is a rare case where Level 4 specialists are common—they are the top-level surgeons of their field. There is an alternate skill, Veterinary Science, which works on animals (each skill can be used as the other at a -4).

Level 0: Characters can attempt to stop bleeding by tying tourniquets on limbs and stanching gaping wounds. A RES -4 roll and 5 minutes will stop bleeding. Simply bandaging wounds (even if done in an unprofessional manner) gives +1 to CON rolls to stop bleeding and takes 1 minute. Minor Wounds and Sub-Minor Wounds can be bandaged by anyone (this takes a minute and stops bleeding).

Level 1: First Aid. The character can stop bleeding, give CPR, perform the Heimlich maneuver, etc. A successful roll will restore 1 point of Penetrating damage or 2 points of Impact damage. A roll by 5 will stop the Dying effect if made almost immediately.

Level 2: Paramedic. The character has been trained as an EMT and can provide advanced lifesaving (pressure points to stop bleeding, administration of oxygen, use of gear to start heartbeat, etc.) A successful roll will restore **[Minor Wound / 2]** points of Penetrating damage or **[Minor Wound]** points of Impact damage.

Level 3: Physician. The character is a practicing doctor and can diagnose diseases, prescribe medicine and perform simple operational procedures. A character with a 15+ roll may be a Surgeon and can generally operate for standard procedures.

Level 4: Master Surgeon. More likely than not, the character is a specialist in some area (Neurosurgeon is a Level 4 specialization, Heart Surgeon, etc.) In this case the specialist is one of the best in the world. A true master surgeon can 'revive' a character who has failed a death roll up to CON minutes after the roll is failed if the body is in one piece (or even worse if advanced technology is available).

Physics

Difficult, RES

Description: The character understands physical forces and can calculate the effects of physical interactions. The character must have Mathematics at the same level as Physics.

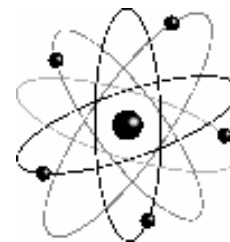
Level 1: Newtonian Physics. The character understands basic physics on a high school or beginning collegiate level. The character can, if given the proper information, predict the effects of friction, the rate of fall of an object, the uses of simple machines, etc.

Level 2: Physicist. The character is qualified to work in a lab, hunt for new particles with an accelerator, answer questions about fluid flow, building stability (from a physical standpoint), etc. If combined with Astronomy, an Astrophysicist can answer questions about the interactions of heavenly bodies.

Level 3: Quantum and Einsteinian Mechanics. Quantum Mechanics deals with the very small range of reality. Under this category is Nuclear Physics which is used in building bombs and reactors. Einsteinian

Physics deals with the very large and fast range of reality. It can be used to answer questions about time dilation, space warping, etc.

Level 4: World Class Physicist. The character can do things that no one else can do at the current technology level. The character might devise a Grand Unified Theory or a warp drive in a modern day campaign. The exact effects are up to the GM.



NOTE: As the character must be a master mathematician to be a master physicist, it is incredibly rare. Any great historical physicist can be assumed to have been a Level 4 Mathematician and a Level 3 Physicist.

Areas of Study

Actor

Normal, RES

Description: This skill is used to fake an emotion realistically as well as to act on stage. It is useful in non-cinematic situations in that the character can lie more convincingly by faking an emotion to back the story up.

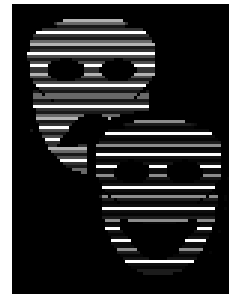
Level 0: Anyone can try to fake an emotion. If the character is highly familiar with it (the character's entire family was killed and the character wants to simulate rage and sorrow) this single emotion may be easy to fake. The GM assigns a modifier of -10 to +2 to an RES roll and uses it as an actor roll. The modifiers tend towards the high negatives (usually more than -5) if they are at all inappropriate. Actor rolls do not take these negatives but may benefit from the pluses (which should only be applied in extreme situations).

Level 1: Hack Actor. The character is good enough for college plays. Any attempt to fake a strong emotion is at -3 but the character can give a credible performance with simple roles.

Level 2: Actor. The character can fake any emotion with a roll and can play any role given (Hamlet is at -3 or so, though). The roll will also let the character impersonate people believably if the role is common (police officer, school teacher, etc.)

Level 3: Star Actor. The character is a minor star. The character can impersonate virtually any roll and even do credible imitations of real people (with disguise, a Level 3 Actor can pose as another person--but not to close friends, spouse, etc.)

Level 4: Super Star. The character can play any role at no negative and impersonate anyone (given a couple of days to study them). If the character is of normal appearance, the character will be a big Hollywood name (in America); if the character has great personal charisma, however, the character is a mega-star.



Animal Husbandry

Normal, RES

Description: The character has skill in training and taking care of animals. This is a skill possessed by woodsmen, zookeepers, circus performers, and veterinarians.

Level 1: Dog Trainer. The character can work with domestic pets. A skill roll will make a domestic animal in the character's care healthy and the character will know what to feed most breeds. This also gives basic skill in diagnosing common problems amongst such animals. Common pets can be taught basic tricks.

Level 2: Trainer. The character can train and work with exotic pets like falcons. In the wild, a successful roll will add +2 to any animal's reaction (use the Interaction rules). The character can train animals to a high degree over a period of months (10 months - animals RES).

Level 3: Expert Trainer. The character gets +4 when dealing with normal wild animals of all types and can train animals in half the time. The character may start with a highly trained animal as a companion. Normally this is something like a bird or a dog but may be more exotic at the GM's option. Players are discouraged from bringing in battle beasts to do all their fighting for them.

Level 4: Master Trainer. The character gets +8 with animals and can train animals in 1/4th the normal time. The character starts with an animal trained to cinematic standards--such animals can use phones to call for help, open locked doors, drive cars, etc. The GM is the final determiner of what such an animal can do and may rule that it doesn't know any specific trick. Additionally, the animal is not completely under control of the player—it can get the character into trouble and may not always respond as the character might wish.



Anthropology

Normal, MEM

Description: The character has studied the history (and some prehistory) of man on a given continent. The character must choose a continent as his *concentration*.

Level 1: Student. The character has read books about the cultures and could answer simple questions (name some cultures that do or did live there) and give some information about the relatively famous ones.

Level 2: Anthropologist. The character has studied the area extensively. The character can answer questions about cultures from that area.

Level 3: Expert Anthropologist. The character has spent time (probably) on the continent and traveled extensively and is familiar with specific data concerning the ancient and current state of affairs. The character can answer intricate questions about cultures.

Level 4: Master Anthropologist. The character has knowledge of all continents. The character knows about the entire history in detail and can immediately identify any artifact from anywhere.

Architecture



Normal, RES

Description: This is the science of designing and building structures. For exotic buildings or structures (space stations, nuclear bunkers, arctic colonies), Material Science Skill may be

needed as well.

Level 1: Floor Plans. The character can read and design floor plans that are at the very least serviceable.

Level 2: Architect. The character can build and design buildings for urban and suburban areas. The character can read a full blueprint and find power cables, etc.

Level 3: Expert Architect. The character can design

exotic and new structures. The character can make 'smart buildings' (which are more energy efficient) and construct special purpose facilities (prisons, banks, etc.). Since the character also knows how these buildings are built they may be useful when trying to break into or out of one.

Level 4: Master Architect. The character is way ahead of his time. The character can construct new types of buildings (if the character lived in ancient Egypt the Great Pyramids would be an example, in early medieval Europe—the Cathedral Notre Dame).

Archeology

Normal, MEM

Description: The character can find locations for, set up, and execute archeological digs. This skill also includes cultural knowledge about early man, dinosaurs, etc. This lumps the study of man in with the study of dinosaurs. The character must choose a continent have a *concentration* in.

Level 1: Assistant. The character can assist on a dig site, handle artifacts properly, identify bones, tools, etc. as such.

Level 2: Archeologist. The character can, with a roll, identify and classify artifacts that are mostly whole, answer questions about dinosaurs or early civilizations.

The character can set up a dig site and knows what will be needed and what types to hire.

Level 3: Prominent Archeologist. The character, with a roll and a year, can find valuable dig sites. The character may uncover new items and will generally find productive areas (this may mean traveling to unusual areas).

Level 4: World Class Archeologist. The character can read every ancient language. There is no specialization—the character knows it all. The character will find the most productive, unusual sites and will have major universities and research foundations vying for his or her expertise.

Art Appreciation

Normal, MEM

Description: The character has studied art and can discuss and critique it. There is a separate skill, Music Appreciation, which works the same way. Appreciation of written works is Literature Skill. This skill could also be applied to other subjects of possible appreciation such as wine tasting or dance critique. The character must pick a continent to be his *concentration*.

Level 1: Basic Artistic Knowledge. The character has read some books on art and can recognize the great works and discuss factual knowledge about the masters. The level of knowledge is good for a high school student or beginning college student.

Level 2: Connoisseur. The character has studied artistic



history. The character knows something about the techniques and has, overall, an impressive knowledge of the art from the studied region.

Level 3: Critic. The character has studied *extensively* and can make publishable criticisms concerning both new and old artists. The character has a deep

understanding and appreciation of artistic technique and beauty.

Level 4: Major Artistic Critic. The character is the foremost authority on art. The character can dominate any art discussion and has a profound understanding of the subject.

Civil Engineering

Normal, RES

Description: The skill of handiwork and creating buildings. At Level 0, a reasonably handy character can change light bulbs and hammer nails.

Level 1: Carpentry Assistant: the character can hang doors, cut lumber, and otherwise assist on a job-site.

Level 2: Construction Worker: The character can work by himself on a jobsite (this also applies to doing things like putting up fences expertly and making simple decks).

Level 3: Construction Expert. The character can build complicated structures himself (build his own house and make it *good*). The character can manage a site. Large buildings are reduced by 15% of the cost if the character works on them.

Level 4: Master. The character will reduce the cost of a building he works on by 30% or have it built in only 70% of the time it would normally take.

Economics

Normal, RES

Description: The character has studied the world's (or what is known to exist of it) economy and understands exchange rates, cash flow, trade balances, etc.

Level 1: Macro Economics. The character has a basic overview. This is the equivalent of a college or good high school class. The character understands interest rates, mortgages, and taxes at a basic level.

Level 2: Economist —or— Accountant —or— Investment Specialist. The character has studied in one of these areas (international/national economics, personal/business tax, stock investment) to the point where it is understood well enough to work in the field.

The character can make a business function more profitably in one of those departments.

Level 3: Expert Economist. The character is an expert in one of the above fields. The difference would be a tax accountant who works for a business and one who works on Wall Street finding shelters for Fortune 500 companies.

Level 4: Master Economist. The character has a deep understanding of the world markets. Such a character can do any of the above alternates in his home country. The character may be called to presidential economic councils, have pull with the Federal Reserve, be the king's right hand economic advisor, etc. No two such characters will ever agree on economic issues.



History

Normal, MEM

Description: This is the study of past and current events. A historian's knowledge differs from an Anthropologist's in that it is related to events rather than people (the anthropologist knows about important events to the culture, not specific histories of a nation). The historian must pick a continent as his *concentration*.

Level 0: Anyone with a high school level education (or the culture's equivalent) can make a MEM roll to know about some major event in the past (a civil war, a world war, etc.) This is very different from being able to recite dates, personages, etc. It simply grants the knowledge most educated people have. If a character has missed an education that is common he receives a -1 point defect (as opposed to the -3 point *Unschooling* Defect, which includes total cultural illiteracy).

Level 1: Armchair Historian. The character has the equivalent of a good high school course in the history of the continent. The character knows the basic geography, the current nations there, and a bit about the history of each one. The character is at -3 to answer questions about anything but current events.

Level 2: Historian. The character can relate the histories of the nations in the area. The character can name specific figures, tell stories about major wars, etc.

Level 3: Expert Historian. The character knows detailed specifics about the area. The character is at +3 to answer questions about current events in the area. The character can name heads of state all the way back to the creation of nations, etc.

Level 4: Master Historian. The character has no negatives for other areas and +3 to any question in his chosen area that is not *highly* obscure.

Hypnotism

Difficult, RES

Description: The character has been trained in hypnotism. Instead of MEM, this skill receives a bonus based on WIL. Hypnotism usually uses some type of aid such as a pendulum, metronome, candle flame or other like device to lull a subject. The Enhancement: Indomitable adds to a subject's roll to resist the effects of hypnotism (assuming he wants to resist).

Level 1: Trancer. The character can self-hypnotize himself with a success of 3+, giving himself +1 to WIL and MEM rolls. It takes 5 minutes to slip into this state (-1 minute for every point above 3 the roll is made by; minimum of 1 minute). If no aid is used, the character must make his roll by 5+ instead.

Level 2: Mesmerist. The character can self-hypnotize with a successful roll (no aid needed). With a roll of 3+ (5+ without an aid), he can hypnotize someone else, putting them into a trance state. While in this trance, they have +2 to MEM rolls. They are however quite suggestible and minor post-hypnotic suggestions may be made: if the tranced subject is given a suggestion he is inclined or wants to do (get newspaper at certain time in morning, stop smoking, etc) then the a normal roll is vs. WIL or the subject gets +1 will to resist a temptation. Suggestions against the subject's better interests will fail. If left undisturbed, an entranced subject makes a WIL roll at 3 seconds, 3 minutes, and 3 hours to snap out.

Level 3: Hypnotist. The trance adds +1 to WIL and +3 MEM rolls. The subject can be told not to feel pain (serving as a last-resort anesthetic). Post-hypnotic suggestions are more effective (+1 to skill vs. WIL, +2 to aid WIL); suggestions against the subject's better interests can vary from -1 (disinclined to do) to -6 (opposing central moral core.). A memory can be implanted or altered (suggested) with a skill roll -6 vs. MEM or WIL (whichever is higher). There may be additional modifiers due to complexity of the memory.

Level 4: Spellbinder. The character can put a willing person into a trance instantly and give them +2 to WIL and +6 to MEM rolls while in it. Post-hypnotic suggestions are more effective (+2 to skill vs. WIL, +3 to aid WIL) and memories modified at skill roll -3 vs. WIL. Furthermore, if the character's eyes are visible and his opponent can see them, he can, with an 8 REA Long action and a successful roll, "whammie" an opponent. The opponent makes a WIL roll as per CON vs. a Minor Wound (hypnotist made roll by 4+), Serious Wound (roll by 7+), or Critical Wound (roll made by 10+). The worst possible effect is Unconscious (victim is entranced, WIL rolls to snap out as above). The opponent may make a RES roll (+/- difference in hypnotist's WIL) to realize what is happening and can automatically block the whammie (look away, etc.) as a 0 REA Short action.

Law

Difficult, RES

Description: The character has studied law. This only applies to one nation (or to international law) but the character may make rolls at -3 in countries where the law is similar. The character must pick a field (contract law, criminal law, real-estate law, paralegal, etc.) as his *concentration*.

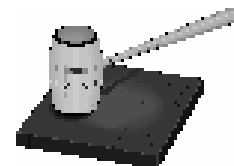
Level 1: Legal Aid. The character has an understanding of law and research skills. Each point the Legal Aid makes the roll by (the roll takes a base of 2 weeks (assuming present day technology) but may be more or less depending on the complexity of the case) gives the lawyer +1 to the roll to represent the case. The character can answer questions about law.

Level 2: Lawyer. The character can represent cases in court. If the GM wishes a case can be handled as simply as Law vs. Law skill but there are many more

factors (charisma, investigation of the case, jury selection, etc.). Interrogation Skill can be used instead of Law Skill when questioning or cross-examining witnesses (and occasionally is more useful).

Level 3: Expert Lawyer. The character gets +3 to rolls against attorneys of Level 2 (+6 against someone with Level 1 who finds themselves in a courtroom). The character is a highly paid attorney and can command fantastic rates if he keeps winning cases.

Level 4: Television Lawyer. The character almost never loses (+3 per each level the defender is of lower skill). The character has a reputation that lets him get away with outrageous lines of questioning, displays, etc. The character is fantastically wealthy if wealth is desired.



Literature

Normal, MEM

Description: The character has read and studied great works of literature. The character may choose any culture that has a body of literature which may be oral or written. Each culture is a separate *concentration*. This gives the character some knowledge of the history and culture (as per History and Anthropology). The character may make those rolls at +1 for each level this skill is at. If the character has *only* this skill, a roll made by 5 will act as a History or Anthropology roll for that culture of one level below the character's Literature level. There is an alternate skill, Theater Appreciation, which works the same way but exclusively for dramatic texts (-3 default to the other).

Level 1: Well Read. The character has read a medium body of the culture's signature literature. He knows the names of the great authors and something about them. He knows how that culture feels about important issues.

Level 2: Studied. The character has read a large body of the literature and *analyzed* it. The character can recall

major quotes from major works. This is the equivalent of a Master's in English (if the culture is English). The character can make informed critiques of works, proofread, etc. This skill doesn't teach the character another language—the character will have to read translations if the works aren't in one the character knows.

Level 3: Major Critic. The character has read the majority of the important works. The character has been published as a critic of literature and can discuss it on its highest level. The character can read and speak the language studied at Level 2 on a Literature -2 roll.

Level 4: Foremost Authority. The character knows *everything* about the area studied, can quote super-obscure passages, etc. The character is an expert in the language (Level 3 at his roll).



Languages

Trivial, MEM

Description: Other languages besides the character's own are bought with this skill. Each language is a separate skill. For the price of the next roll cost down, the character can speak the language but is illiterate in it (so Guy Jinn, who can speak but not read or write Japanese on a 16-, pays for the skill as it were a 15-). The average native speaker is considered to be Level 2 with a **[MEM+2]** roll. Related tongues (Romantic languages, Germanic languages, the Tongues of the 12 Tribes, etc.) are spoken at -2 Level and skill roll.

Level 1: Basic Communication. The character must make a roll to understand basic speech. His speech, even with a successful roll will tend to be broken and inarticulate. With the exception of a few key words (if that), the character is illiterate in the language.

Level 2: Fluency. The character can converse normally but does not have a great technical command of the language. The character has a noticeable foreign accent (Level 2 Actor at -3 to hide, Level 3 Actor at -0).

Level 3: Elegant Speaker. The character knows technical terms for unusual objects, can compose complicated and intricate sentences, speaks idiomatically, and can edit or proofread in his adopted language. The character talks with no discernable accent and is familiar with regional dialects.

Level 4: Master. The character is a world class expert in the language. He knows all dialects associated with the language and can translate instantaneously.

Occult Knowledge

Normal, MEM

Description: The character has studied the occult sciences. This differs from mainstream theology in that there is no general canon (different groups believe radically different things). Most people don't believe it at all (this skill may not exist in a campaign with well-known magic powers or perhaps in such a society, this skill might offer practical knowledge). How much is true is up to the GM but it can be useful for studying cult crimes, scaring people, getting out of jail in countries where occult belief is prevalent, etc.

Level 1: Dabbler. The character has read a few books (mainly paperbacks from mainstream bookstores) and can identify common occult terminology. The character has some knowledge of mythology.

Level 2: Occultist. The character has read a lot and can answer questions about many different occult theories, knows the names of cults, can quote Aleister Crowley, etc. The character can interpret Tarot cards, lead a seance, read tea leaves, etc.

Level 3: Master. The character has the same knowledge that a high-ranking member of a major Occult group would have. The character knows the current and past names in occult lore and knows secret rituals of at least one group. The character knows 'spells' but they don't have any immediate obvious effect (and whether they work at all is up to the GM—remember: the skill is cheap! Use the Magic rules if there's lots of easy, working magic.).

Level 4: Grand Master. The character is the head of an occult organization or has *extensive* knowledge of all of them (probably both). Even in campaigns where

the occult doesn't work the character knows how to do some strange things. At any rate, there are always

people willing to follow such a character.

Philosophy – or – Theology

Normal, RES

Description: The character has studied deeper questions of thought. The character can seek profound truths, argue with other philosophers, or try to convince people of a point of view with philosophy. A philosophy roll will let a character build a logical argument and give him ammunition (from his studies) to aid it.

Level 1: Sophist. The character knows a little about logic, the major philosophers, and basic interpretations. The character can discuss deeper questions on a basic college level (not very deep at all, really).

Level 2: Philosopher. The character has extensively read the great works and some obscure ones. The character can discuss philosophy with anyone and can examine an action for moral content (the character must specify a point from which to judge it). Conversely, the character can come up with *some*

justification for *any* action (someone will believe it). This is known as propaganda.



Level 3: Major Philosopher. The character is one of the leaders in the field and has many published works. The character's arguments on moral issues carry great weight with others of the same philosophy.

A Philosophy roll will give the character +2 to a WIL roll in a situation where the character's chosen moral code makes him right (this is used to resist temptations, overcome mind control, or use mental powers at increased effect against those who are *diametrically* opposed). For this to work the character must adopt a code and live by it. It won't work if the character is an ethical egoist or other such self-serving philosophy.

Level 4: Historic Philosopher. They'll be studying the character four thousand years after his death. This applies as per the Major Philosopher but if the character is true to his beliefs (and the philosophy is restrictive enough) in the *direct* pursuit of his moral code the character gets +4 to WIL rolls with a success (+8 with a critical success).

Psychology

Normal, RES

Description: The character has studied the human mind and has a deep understanding of human behavior, reaction to stimuli, mental illness, etc.

Level 1: Amateur Psychologist. The character can identify major psychoses, knows something about reinforcement, etc. This is the equivalent of a good college course or a lot of reading. The character can identify a textbook case of a well-known mental illness by name.

Level 2: Psychologist. The character understands what people want, what state of mind they are in, etc. A psychology roll can be used to predict behavior if the state of the target is known. This can also be used to help a person overcome phobias, talk about and heal childhood traumas, etc.

Level 3: Psychiatrist. The character can prescribe psychoactive drugs and can use advanced chemical techniques. The character has the equivalent of a medical degree (if the character does not *actually* have a medical degree). This can be used to get a good indication of what a character will do next given a string of events or to compose a profile on a target. A Level 3 Psychologist profiling a criminal gives the criminal a -1 to his Crime roll per 2 points the roll is made by (if the target is not *trying* to be unpredictable and is just acting normally—if the criminal is trying to thwart the psychologist the criminal gets an RES roll against the psychologist's roll.)

Level 4: Master Psychologist. The character can predict the likely behavior of anyone observed or well known. This can have uncanny effects. The character can make a psychology roll to predict any action given a stimulus if the target is known (this gives general data).

Occupational Skills

Administration

Normal, RES

Description: The character can manage an element of an organization. This represents training in running an office, conducting meetings, etc.

Level 1: Secretarial. The character can type, answer phones, take dictation, etc. A secretarial roll will enhance another's Administration roll by +1 per 2 full points the roll is made by. There is no maximum roll for this skill (unlike most level 1 skills).

Level 2: Administrator. The character can run a small business or a department in a large corporation. This does not include the technical skills that may be necessary but allows day-to-day interactions to be handled.

Level 3: Upper Level Administrator. The character can run a branch of a large corporation or large business. This skill also allows the character make business strategy. A roll may be made each 6 months and the better the roll the better the business does (with modifiers for aggressive but risky strategies, etc.).

Level 4: Corporate Executive Officer. The character is one of the heads of a major corporation. The character has a large hand in deciding what the corporation does, what resources it expends, what it acquires, etc. Depending on the corporation this may require some technical skill but often no other skill is really required.

Business

Normal, RES

Description: This is the knowledge of the application of some talent for profit. Business Skill will tell the character how to make money doing whatever he is capable of doing. It is usually used in conjunction with another skill which it augments (a character with a Visual Art Skill would use his Business Skill to get a good price for his work). This is not only good haggling but also finding the right buyer so it may take time for a good merchant to get the amazing prices he can.

Level 0: Any character with a merchantable skill will know the general value of the things he makes or does but he will not know the value of items offered him for trade, the inside information in areas where it is important (like the art world), etc.

Level 1: Amateur Merchant. The character knows the technical knowledge of a common trade and can, with a roll, tell how much a common item is worth. Haggling, where appropriate, can get the character a price break if he beats his target's RES or WIL roll by 2 or more (2½% per point made over 2). However, if the character fails the roll by more than two, he pays *more* (5% per point missed over 2).

Level 2: Merchant. The character can tell what any common item is worth (rare items are at -3 or more to appraise) and can ply his trade for optimal value with a roll. When buying, a successful roll will guarantee a fair price and a roll made by 2+ will get the character a better price break (5% per point over 2). If the character misses the roll by 2 or more he pays 5% per point above extra. A character with skill at this level or above can use it as a resistance roll.

Level 3: Expert Merchant. Works as above but with a 10% price modification per point made over 2 (and overpays 2½% for each point failed beyond 2). The character ignores up to -3 points of modifier for rarity.

Level 4: Master Merchant. The character can get an additional 15% worth of the value of anything being sold per point the roll is made above 2 and will *never* overpay more than the correct price for an item (as a matter of negotiation). The character gets no negatives when appraising items.

Craft Skills

Normal, Varies (usually MEM or COR)

Description: Many different skills fall into this category. Examples include: iron working, glass working, carpentry, sewing, armory, weapons making, and even some artistic type skills like dancing and sewing. The player must choose one craft. Generally if the craft is MEM based, there will be a COR bonus (since it helps to have a good COR when working with one's hands) but, depending on the craft, another STAT may apply (blacksmithing and STR for example).

Level 1: Apprentice. The character is only basically trained in the craft and can perform simple tasks. Such a character is better suited to assisting than crafting.

Level 2: Journeyman. The character can earn a living using the craft. In a modern society this will tend to pay between \$25,000 and \$35,000 per year.

Level 3: Craftsman. The character's work is extremely good and in high demand. Average (serviceable) work can be done in half the time or for half the cost of the Level 2 Craftsman. In some cases, this level allows different things to be done (for instance, an ironworker at Level 2 might be a sword smith at Level 3).

Level 4: Master Craftsman. The character is one of the world's best in his field. His works will be immortalized (a perfect example is the master samurai swords crafted by ancient Japan's master swordsmiths). Average level jobs can be done in an eighth of the normal time or cost and expert level jobs at a quarter.

Criminal Investigation

Normal, RES

Description: The character is trained in detective work and is learned in techniques to reach a conclusion from a variety of seemingly unrelated facts (using inductive and deductive reasoning, forensic evidence, etc.). To be a police officer, the character must also have the Trivial Skill: Police Procedure which allows the character to know arrest procedure, whether or not a search is legal, what licenses are necessary for what, etc (many criminals will have Police Procedure simply from interaction with police).

Level 1: Gumshoe. The character knows the basics of criminal investigation. He can dust for prints and assist in the investigation of a crime scene.

Level 2: Inspector. The character is skilled in the science of criminal investigation. He can theorize motives and M.O.'s for crimes and avenues of investigation (question certain witnesses, search the grounds, find out what 'XYZZY' means . . .). By rolling his Criminal Investigation Skill vs. a crook's Crime Skill (or RES if Crime Skill not possessed), the character can find clues (the GM is the final arbiter of what is and is not found): 0-4: finds a minor clue (won't break a case but will point the investigator in the right direction); 5-9: finds a major clue (incriminating evidence); 10+: case breaker (a case can be solved with this alone). If the character also has Level 3 Medical Skill, he can be a forensic pathologist at this level.

Level 3: Detective. The character is trained to see what and what does not fit and notices discrepancies as a matter of course with a roll (for instance, in a riot where many were killed by randomly flying bullets, the character will notice a death caused by several precise shots to the body – thereby suggesting deliberate murder). The character's roll-3 can be used as his base perception roll (instead of INT). He ignores up to 3 points of negative modifiers when searching for clues. This skill at this level is typical for FBI agents and other government investigation agencies.

Level 4: Criminologist. The character ignores up to 6 points of negative modifier when looking for clues and can use his roll at -1 as his base perception roll. Cases can be cracked in less than 24 hours, etc. The character can have the worst attitude imaginable, break rules, etc. and be considered too valuable to fire (although their bosses usually won't tell the character that). The character never gives up on a case once assigned . . .



Operations

Trivial, RES

Description: The character is trained to use one piece of equipment. This is usually a complex machine and is commonly a station on some high-tech vessel or some piece of military or medical equipment. Examples are Electronic Warfare Field units (military), Sensor Suite (on space ships), Communication Gear (on any vessel or in the field), Helm (on a large vessel), Fire Control (on a military vessel, etc.). Any piece of computerized equipment that requires specialized training and the user to make decisions (like breaking through jamming or testing for different radar signatures) falls into this category.

Level 0: Anyone who can read can follow instructions. If a piece of gear comes with instructions the character can operate in the time necessary to read them and then refer to them. In general most devices can be operated in a slow and clumsy manner. A very complicated machine will require multiple RES rolls. In any kind of negative situation the operator will be totally useless (try programming an old VCR under battlefield conditions).

Level 1: Basic Training. The character can turn the machine on and do basic functions. A character's job with it will more likely be testing and maintenance than use. Any negative modifier is doubled against the Basic Trainee.

Level 2: Operator. A skill roll will allow competent use of the machine. In some cases there may be skills competing against each other (Jamming vs. Communication, Stealth Suite against Sensors, ECM against Fire Control). In these cases the character making the roll by more wins.

Level 3: Expert Operator. The character gets +3 per level he is above the opposition or ignores up to -3 points modifier if there is no 'resisting' skill (subspace interference).

Level 4: Master Operator. The character gets +6 per level he is above the opposition or ignores up to -6 points of modifier if there is no 'resisting' skill roll. This allows the user to do things believed to be impossible (spot stealth bombers that have a radar signature the size of an insect).

Musical Instrument – or – Singing

Normal, RES

Description: The character can play a musical instrument or sing. The character can also read music with this skill (-.25 cost break if they cannot). Each instrument is a separate skill and very similar instruments may be played at a -3. The character purchasing Musical Instrument Skill gets a COR bonus for this skill (for CORs of 12 or higher, the character's RES counts as though it is 1 higher); there is no such bonus for singing.

Level 1: Hack. The character can perform well in a garage or high school band. The character only knows or can play a few chords and has only the most basic technical understanding of rhythm or melody. The character can read music but cannot write it (or at least not very well).

Level 2: Performer. The character can perform in nightclubs and small bands and can play backup for a major group or orchestra. The character can write music as well as read it. The character should specialize in some type of music (performed at +1, all others at -1).

Level 3: Star. The character can perform in a highly popular group as a lead. The character can go on world tours, etc. If the character has high personal charisma, stadiums will sell out and records will go platinum. The character can perform the specialized type of music at +3 (all other forms still at -2).

Level 4: Master Musician / Diva. A critical success on writing music (one attempt per six months) will be played as long as the musical genre is existent and recordings (should they exist) will be prized. Every album cut will be platinum.



Navigator

Normal, RES

Description: The character can find locations and directions on lengthy voyages. This usually applies to ships, aircraft, and spacecraft rather than cars (anyone can use a map). This is of more use in low technology societies as computer navigation renders this skill mostly obsolete (unless the onboard systems die).

Level 1: Apprentice. The character can chart out a commonly traveled course but must make three rolls per week of voyage or become lost. Usually an Apprentice will navigate only if a better navigator is watching.

Level 2: Navigator. The character need make only one roll per week of voyage. If the character takes readings for four hours a day, every day, this roll is at +2. Going

into uncharted area is at -4 (but if the character is lost, making a roll by 4 on any successive week will allow the navigator to fix location).

Level 3: Expert Navigator. The character need only make one roll per two weeks of voyage or become lost. The modifiers as above apply but the Expert Navigator gets +4 for constant course correction and new areas are only a -2 modifier.

Level 4: Master Navigator. The character need only make one roll per voyage (halfway through). If this is failed, the character can roll every 3 days to recover location. The Master Navigator gets +6 for constant study and gets no negative for navigating new areas.

Research

Normal, RES

Description: This is the skill of research, investigative or otherwise. It tells the character how to do library research, how to get information on a story, etc. A roll will also let a character ask questions which are pertinent and read the response. This skill is the mainstay of journalists, academia, and unauthorized biographers.

Level 0: A character can still use a library, of course, even without training. If the library is modern then computer assistance can be very useful, make a RES roll per 2 hours to find some important information. Otherwise, the RES roll is at -3. A librarian can help but only on a better than average Interaction roll or if the character successfully roleplays begging for help—("Please, please help me look up information on the strange 'Dark Water' co-ed mutilation cases . . . especially the decapitations, *please*."). A skilled librarian usually has Level 1 Research Skill at a 12 to 14 and gets +3 due to familiarity with the specific library.

Level 1: Librarian. The character is skilled in library use and can get information on a topic. A roll is made for the character to get data on an obscure person or topic. This only applies to data in the library searched but lets the character know what sources to check. This skill and may be possessed above a 12- roll at Level 1.

Level 2: Investigator. The character can get information from people and can conduct interviews. He can replace his Persuasion roll with his Research roll when attempting to get information from reticent subjects (leading questions, conversational techniques, etc.). A roll can also be used to "track" a person by following paper and electronic trails; with enough information about a person's life, habits, or appointments, the character can determine a target's probable whereabouts—useful to find deadbeat husbands or reclusive celebrities.

Level 3: Researcher. The character has a talent for looking in the right places. He ignores up to 3 points in negative modifier when looking for obscure data, whatever the medium.

Level 4: Master Researcher. The character ignores up to 6 points in negative modifier when looking for obscure knowledge. In conversations, the character can make a target talk about almost any topic without having them realize what is happening (until it's too late). Even with the most primitive of resources, the character can at least get a good idea where to go to get further information.

Sports

Difficult, Varies (usually AGI or COR)

Description: The character is trained to play some sport. In each case the GM will have to decide what specifics the levels grant. However, since this skill is difficult, the results should be something similar to what martial arts grant (i.e. a character who is a professional football player would get Grapple score bonuses and use the skill to hit with flying tackles at no negative). In this case it is left up to the GM as to the specifics. In cases where a skill vs. skill roll is called for (pitching vs. hitting, in baseball, for example) a lower skill character should be at -2 per level of skill below the other. A higher level character hitting against a lower level one should be at an additional +2 per level he is higher. A character may get a skill bonus for STR or from some sports (linebacker, marathon runner, etc.)

Level 1: Amateur. The character plays the sport better than an average man (but not necessarily better than a natural athlete).

Level 2: Minor League. The character is skilled enough to play in the minor leagues.

Level 3: Major League. The character can play professional sports. Due to the incredibly low number of available professional sports positions (compared to the population that plays sports) the GM is not out of line in requiring a 16+ skill roll for the player to be on a national team.

Level 4: Hall of Famer. The character is one of the best ever to play the game and will dominate lesser athletes. At the beginning of each game, the character may make a roll at -4. If successful, *double* the level differences against lesser players.

Vehicle Operation – or – Riding

Normal (See NOTE), COR

Description: This skill applies to manually driven vehicles. Large ships, spacecraft, and jumbo jets mainly fly by computer and may require a Navigator or Operations Skill for the steering equipment. This normally applies to cars. Adults in a society where cars are common are assumed to be able to drive them (aircraft, motorcycles, cars, etc. are all separate skills). An alternate of this skill is Riding. Horse Riding is the most common, although other riding beasts are possible. Each animal is a different skill (similar ones though are at -3 to each other). Riding also applies to driving beast-drawn vehicles.

Level 0: If the character is a youth then the character has a restricted license, if the character is an adult then the character can drive an automatic transmission under normal conditions. If driving a manual transmission car, RES rolls must be made each time the character starts or decelerates rapidly to keep from stalling. If riding an animal, the character can only successfully ride an extensively trained animal or under the guidance of someone more experienced. The character makes an AGI roll at -3 to handle any difficult driving or riding situations and all negatives are doubled. Exotic vehicles cannot be driven.

Level 1: Experienced Driver / Rider. The character can drive a manual transmission, knows all traffic laws, and makes a normal roll (with whatever modifiers the GM supplies). As most drivers and riders take double negative modifiers, the GM should note that what is at a -1 to the experienced driver is at a -2 to the rest of society. A ridden animal is more in control than the rider is and the character must make rolls each time he wants the beast to do something the character wants (like gallop away from a lynch mob when the horse is far more interested in the mare next to him).

Level 2: Professional Driver / Rider. The character can drive unusual vehicles (limousines or royal carriages for example). The character knows all traffic laws. The character can ignore up to -2 points of roll modifier

(normal characters without this skill make COR rolls to avoid collisions—the Level 2 Driver / Rider makes a roll but ignores up to -2 in modifiers.) A roll will decrease the turn rating by 1 per 2 points the roll was made by up to half the turn rate. At this level, a ridden beast will do pretty much whatever the rider wants without needing a roll but unusual circumstances (calming a spooked mount) will force a roll.

Level 3: Stunt Driver / Rider. The character can do stunts with the vehicle or beast. The character ignores up to -4 points of modifier. Such characters are usually stunt men or bodyguards (members of the Blue Angels would have this level on high rolls). The character can pick 1 type of craft or animal in the general family (wheeled vehicles, helicopters, airplanes, equines, bovines, etc.) per 2 full points of skill above 10 the skill applies to. A roll will decrease the turn rating by 1 yard per point the roll is made by up to 1/2 the number.

Level 4: Daredevil Driver / Rider. The character can drive/fly/ride anything in the chosen family and ignores up to -8 points of modifier. The Daredevil can push the vehicle or animal beyond its limits (whatever they are) by 20% with a roll. A roll will decrease the turn rating by 2 per point the roll was made by—up to the far limits of reality.

NOTE: For vehicles with fixed weapons, which the primary operator fires (like jet fighters with machine guns) Combat Vehicle Operation exists. It is a Difficult Skill (as it is a combat skill) which confers familiarity with the vehicle's normal weaponry. At Level 3 the character can ignore up to -3 points of negative modifiers to hit a target and can ignore -6 points of negative modifier at Level 4. This skill does not apply to things like army tanks or aircraft carriers (in the first case the person firing the gun rotates the gun rather than repositioning the vehicle; in the second the person firing the weapon isn't steering).

Visual Art

Normal, RES

Description: The character is an artist and can draw, paint, computer design, etc. Each medium is a separate skill or may be rolled against at -3. This only applies to pictures (sculpting and music are other skills). Visual Art gets a COR bonus if the art deals with working with one's hands extensively (painting would get this bonus, computer graphics and photography would not). If a character has Visual Art and a related Craft skill, the character's creations are both functional *and* artistic.

Level 1: Basic Art. The character can draw recognizable pictures with some small expertise. Basic people may be drawn. This

can be very useful for communicating non-verbally or illustrating an underground newspaper or comic strip.

Level 2: Artist. The character can use colors, shading, shadows, tones, etc. to create pictures that are pleasant and realistic. The character has studied composition and can make serviceable commercial art, draw for comic books, paint pictures (but not very valuable ones).

Level 3: Expert Artist. The character can make a good living off of artwork. Galleries will sell the character's work and museums may buy it. The character can command high prices in commercial fields.

Level 4: Master Artist. The character is one of the best in the world. A critical success and six months of work will be remembered forever.



Writer / Storyteller / Poet

Normal, RES

Description: The character can write novels, newspaper articles, compose poetry, lyrics, etc. This skill can be bardic in nature and allow the character to tell oral stories (in cultures where there is no written language, it is the only writer-like skill available)

Level 1: Technical Skills. The character can proofread for correctness. This is the skill used to edit. There is no maximum roll for this skill unlike most Level 1 skills. If the skill is bardic in nature, the character can check for the correct version of the story (what characters were whose sons, etc.).

Level 2: Writer. The character can write newspaper reports, technical manuals, etc. If the character is very

smart or creative, or can otherwise tell interesting stories, the character can be a novelist (but the writing will be of average quality).

Level 3: Major Writer. The character's books are best sellers, the character's stories may have won a Pulitzer Prize (critical success). The character has a group of fans and may get speaking engagements.

Level 4: Master Writer. The character is considered one of the best writers ever in the language. The character's books are at the tops of the charts and they achieve critical acclaim. They will be classics for hundreds of years after the character's death.

Military Sciences

Demolition

Normal, MEM

Description: The character is skilled in handling explosives, using them, and, when necessary, disarming them. The character can wire explosives, set shaped charges, and place explosives for maximum effect.

Level 1: Basic Demolition Training. The character can wire 'prepackaged' devices. The character can set timers, insert blasting caps, wire electrical ignition devices, etc. The only two types of detonators the character can set are timed and manual. Someone else must professionally manufacture all equipment.

Level 2: Demolition. The character can create different types of fuses, wire common vehicles to explode, set intricate detonation devices, and blow up structures. The character has had training to blow bridges and buildings, more exotic structures (or really big buildings) are at an automatic -3. This skill can also be used to blow safes.

Level 3: Expert Demolition. The character has been trained in underwater demolition, building bombs that

are difficult to disarm (roll vs. the setting character's skill any time the bomb is touched or modified). The disarmer is at -3 per level of skill below the bombmaker's. The character can blow any structure after an hour or two of examination and can determine how to blow most structures instantly. Car bombs may be set which are not visible from anything but a detailed inspection (but this requires more time to set the bomb).

Level 4: Explosives Wizard. The character has the innate ability to spot weak points on a structure and can destroy any structure with one tenth the explosives that would normally be necessary (the GM must determine what that is). Structures get -1 to their STC roll per point the character makes the demolition skill by making it very easy to take down a building with a minor amount of (or low grade) explosive.



Interrogation

Normal, RES

Description: The character is skilled in extracting information from a person by using subtle and not-so-subtle techniques. This includes asking the right questions, psychological mind games, and, occasionally, the use of varying degrees of physical discomfort. This skill can be used to replace an Intimidate score when attempting to get information from a target or a Persuade attempt if trying to convince a recalcitrant target to cooperate ("I'm on your side!"). It is often more reliable.

Level 1: Browbeater. The character can usually tell if the character is holding something back or is being less than completely honest. The character can detect a lie with a [skill -3] roll (maximum of 9- at Level 1).

Level 2: Interrogator. The character can perform a police interrogation and is schooled in eliciting responses from people through "Mutt and Jeff", asking questions over and over to detect contradictions in a story, changes of tempo and rhythm, and simple (but effective) forms of psychological pressure (like The Prisoner's Dilemma). The character will know what questions to ask to get the answers he needs. The character can be as unthreatening as he wishes, but unless sufficient impetus is given, the target, unless

persuaded, may not give up the goods (skill vs. WIL roll to make him talk; the target may have some training like Indomitable or Fearless that can modify the roll). The character is familiar with the application of pain to loosen tongues.

Level 3: Inquisitor. The character is trained in various psychological techniques to break down a person's resistance and is trained in the application of the First, Second, and Third Degree. The character can subtract 2 points of the target's WIL modifier (up to base WIL). If the character has Psychology at Level 3, he can "brainwash" a victim given [victim's WIL-10 x 2] weeks (minimum of 2 weeks) and a roll at -3. Brainwashing a character gives them up to 5 points in Psychological and/or Personality Defects (brainwasher's choice) for as many months as the roll was made by (permanent if made by 10, otherwise the brainwasher can simply maintain the effect by occasional renewal). A Level 3 Psychologist can "deprogram" a brainwashed character.

Level 4: Grand Inquisitor. At this level, the character is terrifying in his ability. The questioner can subtract up to 4 points of WIL modifier (up to base WIL). He can brainwash at no negative and can give up to 10 points of Psychological/Personality Defects.

Stealth

Normal, AGI

Description: The character is skilled in the art of hiding and moving silently. This is a skill taught to snipers, assassins, etc. Hunters and other people who don't want to be seen also use it.

Level 0: Characters moving slower than walking speed on hard surfaces are usually quiet and a perception roll must normally be made to hear such (this is unmodified). An AGI roll must normally be made to move any distance, and even then, the character only moves at about two yards a second. If a character is moving faster than about two yards a second, the roll is at -5, with an additional -1 per yard over 4 yards a second (so running at 8 yards a second is forces an AGI roll at -9). If the character is wearing shoes there is an additional -1 to all rolls unless they are of a very soft material.

Level 1: Move Quietly. The character's roll is applied against other's hearing perception rolls. There may be negative modifiers for dry leaves, broken branches on the ground or squeaky floors. This does not make the user harder to see, if he walks into plain sight, he is seen normally. Stealth may be had above a 12- roll at Level 1.

Level 2: Hide in Shadows. The character knows how to hide in dark places and use cover. The character is also skilled in remaining motionless. The character may apply the skill against an observer's perception roll if there are places to hide (it will not let the subject hide in plain sight). If the character is remaining motionless and has 5 seconds to hide, a roll will be made at +2 as the character selects an excellent hiding place and

conceals reflective surfaces. If an area is not under constant surveillance this skill can be used to sneak past guards (if the area is under constant watch, the guards must be distracted).

Level 3: Advanced Stealth. The character is trained to crawl on fingertips and toes to make no sound, to use clothing to break up humanoid outlines (which are more easily discerned by the eye) and to use camouflage. In a woodland environment the character is at [- (amount skill roll was made by)] to be seen, even in plain sight. If not moving the character is at +5 to the skill roll. In urban environments, with proper apparel and face paint, the character can double all negative modifiers to be seen (low light modifiers, distance modifiers, etc.).

Level 4: Ninja. The character exhibits the qualities of the mythical ninja. The character is a master of distraction techniques and can sneak past guards if they are not completely vigilant. When trying to move through a watched area, the character may wait and make skill rolls every minute. If a roll exceeds the watcher's RES rolls by 5 or more and they are not especially vigilant the character will see a way to pass by them (they are looking away). After that, it's up to how fast the character can move but the character running makes no sound. This could conceivably allow the character to run through a crowded party if the skill roll beat everyone else's by 5 (they are all watching something else). Obviously, this will not work on security systems.

Strategy

Normal, RES

Description: The character can make long-term plans for operations of a military nature. The character will decide what forces must be committed where, what short, medium, and long term goals will assure victory, etc. For this to be used, the character must be in charge of the battle, or at least a section of it, but it also applies to board games and guessing what another strategist will do.

Level 1: Armchair General. The character knows basic tenants of strategy. A successful roll will give the character a +1 to a RES roll to win any strategic game where the character knows the rules.

Level 2: Major. The character can command battles involving battalions of men. The character may use a

strategy roll against an opponent's roll to win any strategy game.

Level 3: Colonel. The character can command battles involving divisions of men. The character might control an entire theater. The character gets +3 against characters of lower level.

Level 4: General. The character can command entire armies. The character gets +3 against Level 3 strategists, +6 against Level 2, and +9 against Level 1 or 0. The character can use 'impossible' strategies which involve meticulous planning and extreme luck (it isn't really luck, it just looks like it). Such a character can beat computer strategists.

Surveillance

Normal, RES

Description: The character is trained in gathering intelligence on a target by tailing him, using electronic surveillance, etc. While not taught by most militaries to soldiers it may be taught to MPs, intelligence branches, and the like. It is commonly taught to law enforcement personnel.

Level 1: Shadowing. The character knows how to physically tail a target. This can be accomplished for short distances with Stealth (staying out of sight) but for vehicular tails and against targets doing complicated things or in very crowded areas or almost empty areas this skill may be needed (the target's perception roll is at -1 per point the roll was made by; the target is at an additional -3 if he does not suspect he is being followed.) With a group of people, the surveillance network gets +1 to its roll per 2 additional persons (up to a total of +5; after that the tracker gets +1 per 3 additional people). This skill may be bought above a 12- roll at Level 1.

Level 2: Surveillance. The character can install and check for telephone bugs, knows how to block listening devices, and can use counter surveillance equipment.

The character can make and install bugs on a standard telephone line.

Level 3: Expert Surveillance. The character can read lips (although this is also a Trivial Skill). The character can use high tech devices like laser listening devices (the laser records vibrations off glass) and can defend against them. The character gets +3 to follow targets with a lower level of Surveillance skill. If the character works with the Phone Company, bugs are at -8 to detect.

Level 4: Surveillance Wizard. The character is a nightmare to eavesdrop on—such a character can detect taps on any phone just by listening and making a roll against the installer's (yeah, this is supposed to be impossible). The character is assumed to have the gear to make the listening to any conversation difficult (white noise shields, specially coated windows, encryption on all messages, etc.) The character gets +3 to any surveillance roll per level of difference in the opposition. The character can tap into another's communications almost instantly with a roll

Survivalist

Normal, RES

Description: The character has been trained to survive in natural environments. The character can start fires, build shelters, catch food, etc. The standard environment is temperate woodland. Jungle environments are at -3. Arctic, desert, or tundra are at -6. In campaigns set on other worlds or with space travel, there may be other environments with different modifiers (airless world, with equipment the roll is at -2 but there's no food and navigating by the stars may be impossible). The GM may assign modifiers for inclement weather, unusual scarcity in the region, etc.

Level 1: Basic Survival Training. The character has the equivalent of a week's survival course. In temperate wooded areas, the character can find edible plants, navigate by the stars or sun (to head generally in a straight line), follow streams downhill, etc. Each day a roll is made and if it is successful the character continues moving in a given direction and gets food. Any negative penalties for inclement weather or harsh environments are doubled. The character can skin and gut an animal.

Level 2: Survivalist. The character has had an intensive survival course and can survive in some harsh environments. The character takes only standard

modifiers and can set simple hunting traps to catch animals (two survival rolls a day to find food). The character may pick a specific area and take a +2 in that area but a -2 is incurred in others. The character has practice orienteering (finding one's way using map and compass; it is also a Trivial Skill). The character can read the weather (tell if a winter will be cold, if its going to rain, etc.). This is a skill many forest dwellers will have in a fantasy campaign—it is called Forest Lore in such a setting.

Level 3: Expert Survivalist. The character can build igloo shelters in the Arctic, find and eat exotic animals in rain forest, and find water in the desert. The character has had intensive training in worldwide survival (usually only Special Forces get this). The character gets three rolls a day to find food. The character can feed more than one person (+1 person for each 3 full points the roll was made by).

Level 4: Master Survivalist. The character gets +3 to all survival rolls in any environment. The character can feed one person per 2 full points the roll was made by. The character's instinctive grasp of terrain allows the character to find areas where there is plentiful food.

Tactics

Normal, RES

Description: This is the science of small unit tactics and applies to battlefield commanders of small units or small areas of a larger game. A tactics roll will let the character know what a given small unit will do in combat (move left and try to flank, set up ambushes—there!)

Level 1: Second Lieutenant. The character can command/predict a single squad's actions (9 men). The character will employ basic tactics. In games where the GM rules there is a tactical element the character gets +1 to a RES roll to beat an opponent (RES vs. RES).

Level 2: First Lieutenant. The character can command/predict a platoon's action (30 men). The character can use this skill against at +2 against a person with Tactics Level 1 or +4 vs. a character with no skill at all.

Level 3: Captain. The character can command/predict a company's (100 men) actions. The character gets +3 per level of difference in tactics vs. tactics rolls.

Level 4: Master Tactician. The character gets +3 per level of difference and an additional +3 to the roll against non-Master tacticians.

Tracking

Normal, RES

Description: This skill is very similar to the survivalist skill but deals more with the following of tracks of potential prey. Tracking Skill allows the character to find tracks with a cursory visual inspection of the ground while a character with Survival Skill can usually only find well-used animal trails and must make a much more involved examination of the terrain. A successful attempt takes 3 hours and three rolls and will allow the character to find game if it is available (this assumes the characters have *no* idea if game is available in an area; if they have a better idea where to look, they the amount of times and rolls may be lessened). This can be much more fruitful than Survival Skill as, if the animal is large it can feed many people and the tracker does not need to rely on traps alone. This skill can also be used to track humans as well.

Level 1: Tenderfoot. The character uses the skill at +5 to find tracks which characters normally get a perception roll to see.

Level 2: Hunter. The character can find tracks in wooded or similar environments with a normal roll (+5 if other characters get perception rolls). The character can tell what kind of animal made the tracks and can tell if it was hurt, if there was a group how many, how long ago the tracks were made, etc.

Level 3: Tracker. The character can deduce much from tracks simply by examining the prints (know how heavy the quarry was, etc.) The character gets +2 to rolls to find tracks and gets +4 to stay on track due to a knowledge of how the tracked being would normally move, etc. The tracker can follow very faint traces and even in environments where food is rare, the Level 3 Tracker may still find something. The character can track persons in a town or city but he must have some significant trace and the roll will be (at least) at -3.

Level 4: Master Tracker. The character can tell what has happened in any location where even minute traces can be left by examining the tracks ("Two swordsmen fought here—both were masters. The loser went that way, the winner this . . ."). The character gets +8 to stay on a trail. The character will instinctively know the best places to look for specific animals or rare game and can make a roll to spot a lair if one is nearby. To find someone in a town or city, *any* identifiable trace can be picked up (small pieces of bubble gum on the bottom of the shoe count) and the character ignores -3 points of modifier.



Traps

Normal, RES

Description: The character is skilled at setting, detecting, and disarming traps. Obviously the types of traps will depend on the technology level.

Level 0: A character moving at 1/4th speed can make a normal perception roll at -1 or more to spot tripwire- or pressure plate-style traps (a camouflaged trip wire in the woods, after dusk would be something like -7.) If the character moves at 1 yard a second or less the character is almost immune to trip wires (unless they are hair-trigger in which case it is up to the GM to explain why they haven't been set off before the character got there). Tracking Skill can also be useful if the character has it on Level 2 or higher and follows the trail of someone who went

around the traps (of course a canny person could leave a trail *through* the traps).

Level 1: Basic Traps. The character understands how to set and conceal trip wires, covered pits, and any other very basic traps. The character gets +1 to perception rolls if this roll is made and the character moves at 1/4 speed carefully checking. The character can set such traps as well. This can be used to set simple hunting traps for small animals.

Level 2: Set / Disarm Trap. The character is familiar with common mechanical devices and booby traps. In a modern era, the character will know a little about electrical ignition explosives and wiring everyday

objects. In fantasy settings, the character will understand how to look for simple mechanical traps—pressure plates, mechanical trapdoors, portals rigged to set off mechanical devices when opened, etc. The character gets +1 to his perception roll per point the roll is made by when searching for a trap and is at -1 per point the trap setter made the roll by. Outdoors, Vietnam style booby-traps can be set and built with natural materials. With a roll against the trap setter's skill, the character may disarm a trap (+3 to disarm a Level 1 trap).

Level 3: Trap Artist. The character has the mechanical/electronic knowledge to set and build complex devices. Such a character can come up with intricate mechanical traps and highly unusual electrical devices. The character is an expert at sensing resistance by touch (and can tell if a door is wired by slowly opening it). The character knows most of the ways traps can be set. The character gets +6 to disarm a Level 1 trap and +3 for Level 2 traps (and a Level 2 trapper is at -3 to find or disarm a Level 3 trap).

Level 4: Trap Master. The character gets +9 to detect or disarm Level 1 traps, +6 for Level 2 traps, and +3 for Level 3 traps (a Level 2 trapper is at -6 to detect and disarm a Level 4 trap and a Level 3 trapper is at -3). The character can build incredibly complex and fiendish devices.



Social Skills

Diplomat

Normal, RES

Description: The character has been trained in arbitration, mediation, and solving disputes between people. The character is excellent at settling disputes, calming tempers, and maintaining civil relations.

Level 1: Novice Diplomat. The character has some small skill in keeping people calm. A successful roll will negate minor anger without making the character seem weak or afraid. This will rarely allow a character to talk himself out of situations but will mitigate them (a character might or might not be able to talk himself out of being arrested but may cause the police to behave in a friendly manner as he shows respect is generally diplomatic—they might even make mistakes.)

Level 2: Diplomat. The character can cover most blunders and forestall violence. With a roll, the subject will begin to *like* the character and will do things to aid him. This is not magic but the character can use it to calm a riotous crowd, talk one's self out of a circle of angry bikers—and perhaps even sway them to the character's cause. The character is smooth, calm, and reasonable. In situations which can be resolved by talking, the character can lower tempers and make the other party see reason. Such characters may work in public relations jobs for corporations, as mediators for

nations, or may be signed on as a messenger to a gang since bad news or even challenges can be issued without causing nearly the level of personal offense they would in unskilled hands.

Level 3: International Diplomat. The character can negotiate on a vast scale. The character can get an understanding of what another party wants without that party stating it. The character can, with a roll, determine what deals, what bottom lines, etc. are acceptable. A roll will calm almost any anger if the character does not precipitate it. Conversely, such a character can be very insulting if called for. Such characters work in embassies, on corporate negotiation and acquisitions deals, hostage negotiation teams, etc.

Level 4: Master Negotiator. The character can twist a target's mind into taking far less than a fair deal and being happy about it for (for a while anyway). This is different than the Con Artist skill in that the Con Artist's talent lies more in manipulating emotion than intellect. The target gets a RES roll to avoid taking the character's deal. The character's offer seems to have 200% value to the target if the roll is failed (not only money but other things as well).

Etiquette

Normal, MEM

Description: This is the skill of culture, manners, and social grace. The character can use it to mix with high society. It only applies to a single culture and may be disastrous in others (in the 'Nuclear Wasteland,' culture may be entirely different than upper class modern America). Another culture is another skill.

Level 1: Mannered. The character eats with the right fork, says 'excuse me', doesn't turn down the joint offered by the Wasteland Overlord, etc. The character is not especially slick but has the equivalent of a good book on Etiquette in his head.

Level 2: Cultured. The character can come off as polite, smooth, and cultured. The character orders the right wine with the meal, knows non-mandatory social graces, sends bouquets of appropriate flowers, turns off the vehicular flood lights when approaching the Wasteland check point, etc. Other people will find the character pleasantly cultured and will tend to like the character. In other cultures, the character can pick up on the society's mores in a few days and performs at -4 roll.

Level 3: Suave. The character handles himself very well. The character is an expert social dancer (although the 'artistic' dances require a lot of extensive training and are a separate skill). The character will be highly liked in cultured company and can make a roll to cover almost any mistake. This skill can be used to make NPC's instantly like the character (at least until the character does or says something really unlikable). The character can write manners columns for newspapers. In other cultures, the character is at -2.

Level 4: Authority. The character can set new standards for cultured behavior and they will be respected. The character picks up other cultures and their manners instantly and can apply the roll anywhere (when teleported from the colonial ballroom to the Wasteland throne room, the character looks around, strips to the waist and begins 'combat moshing' with everyone else—just exactly the right thing).

Politics

Normal, RES

Description: The character has experience in political matters. This includes training on the local government types, knowledge of current political events, and a good idea of how political maneuvering and dealmaking is conducted.

Level 1: Political Science. The character has basic training in political science and knows about different government types in the area. This skill can be used in a fantasy campaign to identify and decipher knight's coat-of-arms, to know others 'colors,' etc. In modern times it allows the character to have a working knowledge of local (state and city) governments and know what office to talk to about a specific problem (e.g. the character knows to call the governor to try to mobilize the National Guard when the Thing From Beyond The Stars is discovered to be lurking in the local river.)

Level 2: Aide. The character is qualified to be a personal assistant to an office holder. The skill grants knowledge of how to assist in deal making and how business is conducted in low level behind the scenes deals. This skill can be just as useful to a gangster or journalist as a political aide.

Level 3: Politician. The character is probably elected to office and if so can work effectively in one. The character understands how political deals work on the technical level (being persuasive is a matter of other skills and personality). The character is well trained at giving speeches and can doubletalk easily. The character can predict the effects of any political maneuvering and, if given familiarly with another person, is good at figuring out what motivates them. The character will make an excellent salesman whether the goods are political, financial, etc.

Level 4: Statesman. The character can be elected to high office if wanted. At Level 4 the character always knows the minimum concessions necessary to get other government officials (in the character's own government or foreign ones) to do what is wanted. The character can figure out how to motivate almost anyone and will be adept at presenting offers so that they are likely to be accepted even if they are not beneficial to the person accepting the offer. While most profitable in politics, this skill will make the character a preternatural salesman.

Revelry

Normal, RES

Description: The character is an experienced carouser and can be the 'life of the party.' This is useful for getting information in bars (everyone is in good mood and information slips), livening up an event, or blending with a college crowd. This skill applies to 'wild parties' and is inappropriate at subdued events unless the character intends to make an impression. Drinking effects: Buzzed: -1 RES, Drunk: -2 RES -1 COR -1 AGI, Smashed: -3 RES -2 COR -2 AGI, Wasted: unconscious unless a CON roll is made then -4 RES -3 COR -3 AGI (roll again each drink). This skill gets a CON bonus.

Level 1: Teetotaler. The character knows basic party jokes, drinking games, etc. The character is immune to Buzzed with a roll and can get Drunk and operate at only -1 RES and -1 AGI. The character can help liven up an event that is going badly.

Level 2: Party-Goer. The character can turn a sedate event into a 'happening' one with a roll. The character can get Drunk and operate as though only Buzzed with

a successful roll (others drinking with the character, unless similarly skilled will be Drunk). The character will be sought for similar events. The character can mix drinks as a bartender (although not all bartenders have this skill).

Level 3: Carouser. The character can turn any party into a historic occasion! With a successful roll, the police will arrive within 1d hours (as the party gains momentum). The character may even choose not to get drunk without standing out. Such a character (although much respected by those who respect such things) may not be invited back for months to the same place. The character shifts effects one better with a roll up to Wasted (if others are Smashed, the character is Drunk).

Level 4: Reveler. The character is invited to every party in the area (and many outside it). The character's presence is similar to a standup comic crossed with an expert bartender. The character is immune to alcohol with a roll and can sober up very quickly if necessary.

Showmanship

Normal, RES

Description: The character is an accomplished showman and can entertain an audience with his personality, wit, and knowledge of crowd manipulation. This serves two roles—for stand-up comics it is the primary skill used and for other performers it is a safety catch (although not a requirement). If a skill roll to perform a show is failed (and a full show will probably include more than 1 roll) a Showmanship roll can reduce or even negate the damage.

Level 1: Armchair Comedian. The character can entertain small groups of friends with this skill but it won't work with large crowds or people he doesn't know somewhat. The character will be identified as being good to have at parties, small clubs, etc.

Level 2: Entertainer. The character may be talented enough to be a stand-up comic (improv comedy is at -3 and a failure is usually ugly). This skill can be used to augment an existing act as outlined above. If a roll is made by 3 in social situations, the character gets +1 to his Entrance or Persuasion rolls (see Interaction).

Level 3: Stand-Up Comic. The character can simply go on stage and entertain. This combined with other abilities can make a character a much sought after entertainer (combined with Actor Skill the character can get roles in comedy movies, combined with musical abilities or stage magician type skills the character simply has a one hell of an act). The character should decide which skill is the "primary" skill; if another skill is being used the substance of the act will be determined by that roll—the other roll will simply augment the first.

Level 4: Master Showman. The character is so engaging that any public appearance will be noteworthy if the character is trying to make it so. In this case, it is usually part of the character's base personality. The character will be wanted for high paying roles in movies, stage shows, etc. The character can make almost *anyone* laugh with a successful roll and the skill can be used to talk one's way out of dangerous situations (get the king to lift the death sentence, stop a gang from thrashing the character, etc.) The character gets +1 to an Entrance or Persuasion roll for each point the skill roll is made by (minimum of +2 even if the roll is failed).

Vamp

Normal, RES

Description: The character has a talent for catching and keeping the attention of the opposite sex. This skill is partly presentation but primarily attitude. Note: this skill assumes that the target is interested in members of the opposite sex; the GM and players should apply Vamp as they see fit.

Level 1: Tease / Stud. The character can use his roll to replace his normal Enchant score and roll -3 to replace his Charm score. The character knows a few good pick up lines and (more importantly) how to deliver them. The character is good at flirting.

Level 2: Vamp / Romeo. The character can approach strangers without seeming obvious and is skilled in delaying tactics to postpone the unspoken promises of flirting. The character, by spending an hour with clothing and makeup, can "give" himself or someone he works on a level of either Attractive or Exotic with a roll (does not apply if the character already has Attractive or Exotic). This bonus is, of course, temporary and will usually only last a few hours (longer if touched up).

Level 3: Seductress / Lothario. At this level, the character can flirt subtly and eloquently using either verbal or non-verbal means (body language, smiles, fans, etc.). The character can string along several suitors without either one being resentful towards him or her (towards each other though . . .). If the character is working on someone who would be at negatives to Enchant (a devoted wife, a duty-minded soldier), the character can ignore up to -2 points of modifier. The character can add two levels of Attractive or Exotic (if the recipient already has Level 2 Attractive or Exotic it doesn't apply) or negate -2 modifiers of Ugly.

Level 4: Siren / Don Juan. At this level, the character radiates sex and sensuality in much the same way that a sun gives off heat and light. Their mere presence will turn heads and attract would-be suitors (and devoted enemies). The character ignores up to -4 in negative modifiers. The character can either add four levels of Attractive or Exotic (not useful if recipient is already Level 4 Attractive or Exotic) or negate -4 modifiers of Ugly. The character will always look good, no matter how disheveled or messy he or she might be.