

Memory ★ ICON



The Next Generation Players' Guide Icon Link

Expanding the ICON System

A distinguishing feature of the Icon system, as developed by Last Unicorn Games, is its flexibility of design. Within the course of play you will undoubtedly find new ways to adapt the system to your needs. Outlined within this **Icon Link** are some alternate methods to expand the Icon system to provide more options.

Before using, ensure that your Narrator has approved the use of these, or any other, optional rules.

Altering Package Allotments

When creating a character and developing their Background, you are afforded the opportunity to spend Development Points on pre-designed "packages." These packages represent particular experiences common to Starfleet officers (or Klingon warriors, Romulan soldiers, or Ferengi merchants) such as combat duty, deep space exploration, or training in advanced engineering, to name a few. Within these packages, characters receive additional skill levels, attributes and/or edges, advantages, and disadvantages, associated with the particular experience. Deep space exploration gives you skill in space and planetary sciences, and sensor use, for example.

To suit the player's individual tastes, alternate skills and traits may be selected, if appropriate, in lieu of those given. This allows you to customize your character even further. Come up with a story for your character, then modify the Background package to fit. While on your deep space mission, did you discover a new alien species? Then take the Diplomacy, Culture, or World Knowledge skill, the Cultural Flexibility or Species Friend advantages, or Chronic Pain (you were injured on duty). Was the ship attacked by a strange, space-borne creature? Then you could choose Systems Engineering (Electro plasma system) or Life Sciences (Exobiology), the Commendation advantage, or the Vengeful disadvantage.

These substitutions should be within the scope of the package and have a reasonable justification. You might pick up Diplomacy skill during a Medical/Rescue mission (you had to negotiate with the Regent of Palomar to obtain the needed medicines), but it would be a stretch to say you acquired the Heavy Weapons skill and Vengeful disadvantage as a result of your Political Upbringing. Whenever you change an entry in one of the Background packages, be sure to balance out the Development Points; if you drop the Space Sciences skill from the Deep Space Exploration Mission package, you have three DPs to spend on something else. In many cases, these substitutions provide an opportunity to expand a character's background and develop background-related skills.

Carl is creating a character who had a rather unfortunate childhood, selecting the Early Life Background package of "Orphaned" to reflect his character's growing up on the street. However, the addition of a +1 Empathy edge doesn't really sit well with his concept of Duron—a smart-mouthed cynic who has a knack for staying one step ahead of the law. Carl,

with his Narrator's approval, substitutes the Shrewd (+1) Advantage in place of the +1 Empathy edge. Notice that the DP values remain the same.

Matt wants to modify the First Contact Training package to suit his character concept. He figures his character—William Heller—is interested in studying alien cultures. He wants to keep the Diplomacy and Social Science skills, but wants to drop the Perception edge and take another skill—Culture. Dropping the edge gives him one DP to spend, two DP less than he needs to buy the extra skill. Matt elects to take the Code of Honor (Prime Directive) disadvantage, explaining that Heller takes the Prime Directive very seriously indeed. This gives him the two extra DPs Matt needs for the Culture skill.

Remember, during character generation, no skill should start higher than 4 (5) without the Narrator's approval.

Altering Development Points Per Stage

The Icon System builds characters on the foundation of Development Points—the number of DPs spent can compare the relative strengths of characters. This allows a Narrator to scale his or her campaign towards a certain number of points, be it more or less than those given in the **Core Game Book** and other **Star Trek®: The Next Generation™ RPG** supplements. This means that while Icon System currently uses a 54-point threshold to represent Starfleet Academy training (the Overlay), within an individual campaign Narrators can adjust the point values to better reflect their needs.

The reduction of points to simulate a more competitive environment, where Crewmembers have less of an "edge," should be done with care to ensure that necessary skills are not slighted.

In Alessandra's campaign she wants to have the characters begin with slightly fewer points, and have them start play during their cadet cruise. She never really agreed with the principle that all Starfleet officers learned how to be marksmen, so she eliminates the Energy Weapon (Phaser) skill from the Starfleet Overlays. For the Security Overlay she lowers the Energy Weapon (Phaser) skill to 1 (2). The players may, however, purchase the skill if they wish—they simply no longer receive it for free. The net result is that characters in her campaign are built with three less DPs.

When a Narrator increases the number of DPs allotted at a stage, he or she should weigh the costs appropriately, perhaps including an additional skill level or setting aside points for purely background-related skills.

John would like his Crewmembers to develop their character's background skills a little bit more to give them more personality. Happy with the allotment of points at the later stages of the Background History, John gives each player an Artistic Expression skill at level one and three Development Points to purchase an additional skill during the Early Life History stage. John qualifies the points with his players, stating the points must be spent on background-related skills that integrate with the character's history. Susan, as an example, has her character select Slight of Hand (Magic Tricks) to represent her character's fascination with tricks and entertaining. She purchases this skill with the three extra Development Points allotted for the Early Life stage.

Similarly, the Narrator can choose to scale individual stages of Background History creation, to provide player

characters with greater depth and detail, and to suit the series' demands. If the Narrator wants a group of highly-experienced, seasoned Starfleet officers, he can give the players more Development Points, in the form of "bigger" Background packages. As an example, the *TNG Players' Guide* introduces an optional four-point Cadet Cruise, to simulate truly momentous experiences during this period of a character's life (like single-handedly saving a Federation commissioner, receiving the Kragite Order of Heroism, and gaining her as an Ally). The original *Core Game Book* provided one point during this stage.

For your convenience, here are the points used to develop characters from the *Core Game Book*:

Species Templates – 50 each
Starfleet Overlays – 54 each
Early Life History – 5 points
Academy Life History – 8 points
Cadet Cruise – 1 point
First Tour of Duty – 10 points
Subsequent Tours of Duty – 5 points each

This system is particularly useful for characters generated using the Advanced system as outlined on page 77 of the *Core Game Book*. To create a new character for a campaign where the average Crewmember has three tours of experience, simply give the player an additional 10 points to spend beyond their initial 125.

New Skills

The *Core Game Book* provides many skills and specializations from which players can choose for their characters, but these do not comprise the limit. The Icon System can be expanded to include new skills or specializations as required, with no alteration. If you perceive a missing skill that you would like to include, check with your Narrator about possibly creating the new skill. Many times these skills can instead be best represented as new specializations, not meriting the creation of a new skill.

Owen wants his character, Halkin, to have some familiarity with temporal mechanics, but notices there really is no skill that effectively represents this field. After some discussion with his Narrator, Owen creates a new specialization under Space Sciences called Temporal Mechanics. Although his character only has a level 1 in Space Sciences, Owen purchases the newly created Temporal Mechanics for one Development Point to have Space Sciences (Temporal Mechanics) 1 (2).

For those instances where a new skill is required, a number of specializations should be created. When we created the Politics skill for the *Way of D'era*, we thought about how politics is "played" in the real world. Turning political events in your favor (such as using a vote to embarrass a political foe) became the Maneuver specialization while gathering information in the political arena became the Intelligence specialization. Think how the skill could be applied practically—those are your specializations. When defining the attribute off of which the skill is based, use common sense; skills relying on physical activity should be Fitness skills while those depending on eye-hand coordination should be Coordination skills, for instance. Keep in mind some edges may apply to certain skills and/or specializations that you create.

David plans a series of adventures linked together that deal with some unusual temporal phenomena. Knowing the characters in his campaign will need to make numerous tests during their adventures, he decides this merits its own skill (which he will provide the Crewmembers with for free). He creates the skill Temporal Mechanics and links it to the Intellect attribute. Because of the confusing nature of dealing with time, he resolves that the Logic Edge is particularly relevant when dealing with Temporal Mechanic Task rolls. Under the Temporal Mechanics skill he creates three specializations, Cause & Effect, Paradoxes, and Time Fluidity. He also decides to create a new Law specialization called Temporal Prime Directive. Because it is a Law specialization, his Crewmembers will automatically have the skill, as they all have the Law skill.

Remember that skills cost three Development Points per level to raise and include a free specialization at the initial time of purchase. Specializations cost one DP each.

While the Icon System provides you with the tools, remember that you ultimately build the game that suits your needs!

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