

ADVANCED SKILL GUIDE



STARFINDER
COMPATIBLE





Introduction

Leadership

Reputation &
Relationships

Skill
Challenges

Skills in
Combat



ADVANCED SKILL GUIDE

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Everyman Gaming began as the blog of Alexander Augunas in January 2014, where he wrote about Pathfinder Roleplaying Game tips, tricks, and techniques for both players and GMs. In May of 2014, Alex began talks with the Know Direction Network about bringing his blog to their site under the name *Guidance*. At the same time, Alex transformed Everyman Gaming into the company it is today so he could begin self-publishing his works. In 2016, he teamed up with Rogue Genius Games to release *Ultimate Occult* and has remained with them since.

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Resounding thanks to developer Owen K.C. Stephens and editor Jason Keeley—this book would not have been one-tenth of its current splendor without your devotion and keen eyes. Also, all the thanks in the world to the fine folks who supported us on Kickstarter—the shout out to the lot of you in this book's appendix could never be enough to fully convey our gratitude at your help in making this book possible. Thank you.

ADVANCED SKILL GUIDE OVERVIEW

Below is a brief summary of the content you'll find within the *ADVANCED SKILL GUIDE*.

CHAPTER 1, LEADERSHIP

This chapter shows you everything you need to know about being a leader in Starfinder. It includes rules that allow you to calculate how effective a leader you are and recruit followers and cohorts into your ranks.

CHAPTER 2, REPUTATION & RELATIONSHIPS

Chapter 2 introduces new mechanics for tracking how much individuals and organizations like you, and whether those relationships are helpful or harmful to you. The rules are dynamic, and allow your legend to change based on your deeds.

CHAPTER 3, SKILL CHALLENGES

This large and robust chapter gives GMs everything they need to formulate complex encounters from a humble, unified set of tools that are comprehensive and easy to use. In addition to more general rules for skill challenges, the section includes four specialized variants: chases, contests, influence challenges, and verbal duels. Combined, this section allows GMs to craft the perfect skill-based challenges for their players that take guile and resolve to win.

CHAPTER 4, CHARACTER OPTIONS

In addition to providing completely reworked rules for combat maneuvers that use skills instead of attack rolls, this section introduces a new type of player option—skill unlocks—as well as new class features for *STARFINDER* classes, two new themes, and two new archetypes.

APPENDICES

The *ADVANCED SKILL GUIDE*'s appendices include a robust glossary and index that allow readers to quickly find information in the book, as well as a shout out to all of the Kickstarter supporters who made this book possible. Finally, legal matter pertaining to the *ADVANCED SKILL GUIDE* is located in this section.



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CHAPTER 1 LEADERSHIP

“Brace yourselves for impact!” Ess shouted as she grabbed onto the control module. Hansune hadn’t a moment to register her words before the *LADY LUCK* bucked violently, rattled by a barrage of enemy torpedoes and gunfire. An explosion soon followed on-deck. With his luck, it was probably something expensive.

“Ess, status report,” Hansune barked as he held his head in his palms, trying desperately to get the bridge to stop shaking.

“We’ve taken moderate damage to our engines and the gravity stabilizers are shot—another hit like that and we risk the whole ship exploding.” Hansune only nodded in reply.

“Kid, wheel us one-eighty and close the gap between us by a few clicks. Nuvami, fire at will when we’re in range. Ess, divert all power to forward shields. Yenzie, fix the damn engine already!” The room bustled to life at Hansune’s commands. Now there was nothing left to do but watch and wait.



LEADERSHIP

No matter the age or era, people look to their leaders for strength, guidance, and vision. Whether commanding armies, leading corporations, or simply directing a small band of starfarers to their next adventure, leaders chart the course of history. The following subsystem allows your character to become a leader in their own right, granting you the ability to recruit underlings to your cause for a multitude of purposes, such as assistants on your starship, informants on an alien world, or skilled help to perform professional tasks for you. Characters that you recruit using your Leadership Score are always NPCs; although you influence their actions, as a player you don't control them outright unless the GM specifically allows you to. GMs can use this system to round out an adventuring party, fill vacant starship roles during a starship combat, or simply give the PCs access to recurring characters whose very presence makes the PCs feel more connected to your campaign setting.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following terms are important to the Leadership system.

Cohort: A full character whose allegiance is to their leader. Cohorts have greater functionality than followers, but you are allotted fewer cohorts. For more information regarding cohorts, see page 8.

Follower: An abridged character who provides rudimentary services to their leader. Followers have fewer uses than cohorts and are typically only able to provide professional services, but you are allotted many more followers than you are cohorts. For more information regarding followers, see page 12.

Leadership Check: A check attempted when you are required to see how you handle yourself as a leader, or how your subordinates react to your commands. When attempting a Leadership check, roll 1d20 and add your total level + your Charisma modifier. If your GM says one or more of your Leadership modifiers (see below) are applicable to the check, add them to your check result as well. A Leadership check always counts as either a Diplomacy check to change a creature's attitude or an Intimidate check to bully, and is modified accordingly.

Leadership Modifiers: Bonuses and penalties that you add to your Leadership Score based on your leadership style and the kinds of actions you take as a leader. The GM decides which Leadership Modifiers you qualify for, if any. Leadership Modifiers are granted based on long-standing trends with your behavior rather than singular occurrences. Once you gain a Leadership Modifier, it typically takes a significant, prolonged effort to remove it (minimum 60 days), although at the GM's discretion, a single significant event might cause your Leadership Modifiers to immediately change.

Leadership Score (LS): A rating indicating your effectiveness as a leader. Your Leadership Score determines the total number of cohorts and followers that you can recruit, and is sometimes used for other purposes and effects.

CALCULATING LEADERSHIP

Your Leadership Score (LS) is equal to your total character level + your Charisma modifier. If you have a theme benefit, a skill unlock (see page 118), or some other ability that indicates that you're

famous, you gain an additional +2 to your Leadership Score. At the GM's decision, you may gain this theme bonus if your theme is appropriately linked to an appropriate organization. For instance, an ace pilot might receive this bonus for organizations related to piloting or racing, while an outlaw might receive this bonus for organizations related to thieving or pirating. Your Leadership Score is further modified by conditions known as Leadership Modifiers, which are summarized on Table 1-2: Leadership Modifiers. You add all Leadership Modifiers that you qualify for, as decided by your GM, to your Leadership Score to determine the number of cohorts and followers you have, as well as on Leadership checks that you make that your GM deems relevant to the check.

LEADERSHIP CHECKS

Sometimes circumstances will require you to prove your mettle as a leader to your subordinates, whether because you are trying to command them to do something they wouldn't normally do or because your subordinates are actively looking to you for guidance. Whenever similar circumstances occur, your GM might ask you to attempt a Leadership check. When you attempt a Leadership check, you roll 1d20 and add your Leadership Score + any Leadership Modifiers that your GM rules as being applicable to your check. For instance, if you are trying to convince your followers to take dangerous actions but you constantly suffer failure and setbacks (a -1 Leadership Modifier), the GM might require you to add this penalty to your Leadership check result.

Leadership checks always count as either a Diplomacy check to change a creature's attitude or as an Intimidate check to bully (your choice). When rolling a Leadership check, you add all applicable bonuses and penalties that you gain on the type of check you chose (Diplomacy checks and Diplomacy checks to change a creature's attitude or Intimidate checks and Intimidate checks to bully). For example, an envoy can roll her expertise die on Leadership checks if she could normally do so when attempting Diplomacy or Intimidate checks, while an operative adds their operative's edge bonus to Leadership checks.

The DC for a Leadership check is based on the circumstances that necessitate it, as shown on Table 1-1: Leadership Check DCs.

**TABLE 1-1: LEADERSHIP CHECK DCs**

Difficulty	Check DC
Easy	5 + 1-1/2 × the cohort or follower's CR*
Average	10 + 1-1/2 × the cohort or follower's CR*
Challenging	15 + 1-1/2 × the cohort or follower's CR*
Difficult	20 + 1-1/2 × the cohort or follower's CR*
Very Difficult	25 + 1-1/2 × the cohort or follower's CR*

* If you're attempting to inspire multiple characters, use the CR of the highest-level character among them to determine the DC.

WHY ROLL A LEADERSHIP CHECK?

The following circumstances might require you to make a successful Leadership check, at the GM's decision. Typically, you only attempt a Leadership check to get your cohorts or followers to do something they wouldn't normally do.

- » You are asking for aid or services beyond what a Helpful creature would normally provide. (See the Diplomacy skill.)
- » You are trying to inspire your cohorts and followers to do something they wouldn't normally do.
- » You are trying to recruit new cohorts or allies to your cause. (See pages 8 and 12 for more information.)
- » Your actions could indirectly rally people who aren't your cohorts or followers to your cause. Note that in this situation, rallying others is a byproduct of your actions. If you're actively trying to persuade people to join your cause, you must succeed at one or more Diplomacy checks, as determined by the GM, rather than Leadership checks.

PARTY LEADERSHIP

When multiple characters work together in a tightly knit group, it might make sense that they form a single, cohesive group of leaders. In such situations, you can establish a Party Leadership Score (PLS) for the entire group if your actions and leadership styles are cohesive. For instance, if you and your fellows are all leading a scrappy band of rebels against a galactic empire, the GM might decide that your Leadership Score for the rebel army is shared across the party rather than calculated on an individual basis.

When establishing a Party Leadership Score, your party uses its average level (APL) as its total character level and adds the Charisma modifier of the person with the highest Charisma score. Usually, this individual is considered to be the party's figurehead or leader. If any party member has a theme benefit, a skill unlock (see page 118), or some other ability that indicates that they're famous, add +2 to the party's PLS, plus an additional +1 for each additional character in the group that meets this requirement. In all other ways, your group's Party Leadership Score follows the same rules for an individual Leadership Score as described above, except when attempting Leadership checks. Even when attempting Leadership checks for a Party Leadership Score, you roll 1d20 and add your character level + your Charisma modifier and add any bonuses on Diplomacy or Intimidate checks that you possess; you don't use your party's APL instead of your level, and you don't get to use other party members' Charisma modifiers or skill bonuses on your check.

Your group gains Leadership Modifiers based on your

TABLE 1-2: LEADERSHIP MODIFIERS

Reputation	LS Modifier
The Leader...	
communicates frequently with their supporters.	+1
displays confidence in themselves and their supporters.	+1
is famous.	+1 per 10 points of Fame (see page 18)
is honest, fair, candid, and forthright.	+1
is known for their generosity.	+1
is positive and frequently compliments their followers.	+1
is successful.	+1
possesses an artifact.	+5
possesses a special power.	+1
supports their followers.	+1
takes decisive actions in the face of adversary.	+1
The Leader ...	
blames their supporters for their failures.	-1
constantly and consistently suffers failure and setbacks.	-1
doesn't possess clear goals or objectives.	-1
doesn't practice as they preach.	-1
is aloof or unapproachable.	-1
is indecisive.	-1
is needlessly cruel to their supporters.	-2
needlessly micro-manages their supporters.	-1
relies on force to motivate their supporters.	-1
takes the credit for their supporters' accomplishments.	-2

collective actions as leaders, as each party member's actions builds upon the combined legacies of your group. You add these checks to your Party Leadership Score and to applicable Leadership checks that you attempt, as decided by the GM.

At the GM's decision, your Party Leadership Score might be tracked separately from your own Leadership Score, meaning that you might have one Leadership Score to determine the number of underlings that are allied to your entire party and another Leadership Score to determine the number of underlings that are allied to you specifically. When doing so, reduce the number of cohorts and followers that you gain access to based upon your personal Leadership Score by half (rounded down); after all, when you're publicly part of a group it is difficult to distance yourself from that group.

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COHORTS

As word of your aptitude for leadership spreads, your reputation begins to attract well-trained NPCs known as cohorts. A cohort acts in nearly all manners as a PC and she can perform complex and sometimes dangerous tasks in order to advance in power by acquiring XP. Cohorts possess mostly the same abilities as PCs—they have their own Leadership Score, gain feats and class levels as they earn XP, and so on. Cohorts do not gain followers, and are typically controlled by the GM unless the GM wishes to relinquish control over the cohort to the players.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following terms are important to managing cohorts.

Leadership Score (LS): A rating indicating your effectiveness as a leader. Your Leadership Score determines the total number of cohorts that you can recruit (see Table 2-3), and is discussed in detail on pages 6 to 7.

Maximum Level Attracted: The highest level of cohort that you can recruit, determined by your Leadership Score. You cannot recruit a new cohort with a character level that exceeds this value.

Maximum Cohort Level: If your GM allows you to obtain multiple cohorts, the combined character levels of all cohorts that you possess cannot exceed this value, which is determined by your Leadership Score.

Cohort Modifiers: A number of special circumstances that modify your Leadership Score for the purpose of determining the highest level of cohort that you can recruit as well as your maximum cohort level.

COHORT BASICS

A cohort is an NPC intended to help and support the PCs. When building a cohort, you use the same process described in Appendix 1 of *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE*, as if you were building a new NPC except that any at-will spells can only be cast five times per day (except 0-level spells). When recruiting a new cohort, the cohort's total class level can't exceed your Maximum Cohort Level or your Maximum Level Attracted, but once you've attracted a cohort they can gain XP to level beyond this limit. A cohort's level cannot be greater than your total level – 2, however.

Cohorts can perform a number of useful services for your adventuring party. If your party is too small to tackle a certain challenge or lacks the proper number of characters to fully staff your starship, a cohort can serve as an ally to help round out your party. They can also perform other important tasks for you, like serving as your ambassador to an alien world, translating alien languages into another tongue, or crafting equipment for your party while you're off adventuring.

RECRUITING COHORTS

Usually you don't simply start play with a cohort; you need to recruit one first. Below are several sample ways that you can recruit cohorts to your cause. The GM can invent different ways for recruiting cohorts at their leisure, and might even elect to simply give you a cohort without any recruitment needed.

Character History: You can obtain a cohort by recruiting an NPC that you have some common history or roleplaying interactions with. This history can be one of mutual adventure (such as having rescued a would-be cohort from certain doom), relation (such as a sibling, cousin, or a childhood friend), tutelage (such as an aging master or a wiry apprentice), inspiration (such as a would-be cohort who was galvanized to join you after witnessing an act of heroism or villainy), and so on. Unlike other methods of recruiting a cohort, recruiting a cohort with whom you share a mutual history does not require an expenditure of time or credits beyond whatever means are required to motivate the cohort to join your cause. The GM has the final say in whether or not a character is sufficiently motivated to devote themselves to you as a cohort in this manner.

Promotion: You can promote one of your followers in rank and importance, making her your cohort instead of a follower. In order to promote a follower in this manner, you must be able to recruit a new cohort of the follower's level. Promoting a follower into a cohort doesn't require any expenditure time or credits. Once your follower has been promoted, they gain all of the benefits of being a cohort and can be advanced as outlined under the Advancing Cohorts section. Any special training that the follower had in order to perform a follower job is lost if that job is not one that can be performed by a cohort.

Recruitment: You can attempt to recruit a new character as a cohort. To do so, you first determine the class, race, and CR of the cohort you want to recruit. Finding a worthwhile candidate that meets your specifications takes a number of days equal to the cohort's CR. Once you've found a suitable candidate, attempt a Leadership check (see page 6) with a DC equal to $15 + 1\frac{1}{2} \times$ the candidate's CR. If you fail, the price to recruit the cohort is $1,000 \text{ credits} \times$ the cohort's CR. If you succeed, the price is reduced by half. If you fail by 10 or more, the price is doubled.

These rules should be considered a guideline for the GM, and the GM can modify the amount of time or number of credits needed to recruit a cohort as they see fit. Cohorts of an obscure race or class can take up to three times longer to recruit, while individuals might demand up to five times as many credits. Some individuals might be impossible to recruit until the PCs have earned their trust through their deeds, while others might be willing to join the PCs immediately at no cost as a reward for their service, for sparing them, or for similar reasons.



A COHORT'S ROLE

Cohorts are typically able to perform any task that a PC is able to perform, but they're sometimes relegated to specific roles so as not to throw off the game's encounter balance by allowing the PCs to excessively outnumber their adversaries. The following jobs are appropriate for nearly all cohorts, and unless noted otherwise a cohort can only perform one of these jobs at a time.

Adventurer: A cohort can go adventuring on their own in order to gain additional XP and effectively "catch up" in level to the PCs. (Although a cohort cannot have a level that exceeds their leader's level –2). When doing so, the GM describes a scenario in a line or two, then determines the adventure's CR by rolling 1d6–3 and adding the result to the cohort's CR. Next, the cohort makes a melee attack roll, a ranged attack, or a skill check to represent their attempts at completing the adventure. The DC for this attack roll or skill check is determined by the adventure's CR, as shown on Table 1-3: Cohort Adventures. If the cohort succeeds, they gain XP as if they had completed an encounter of the appropriate CR. If the cohort fails, they gain half this XP and return with half their total Hit Points and 1d4–1 points of ability drain in 1d3 random ability scores. For every 5 that the cohort failed their attack roll or check by, add the cohort's level to the amount of damage they take and increase the amount of ability drain the cohort takes to all ability scores by 1.

TABLE 1-3: COHORT ADVENTURES

CR	AC or Skill Check DC
Attack Rolls	
Cohort's Level – 2	$9 + 1\text{--}1/2 \times \text{cohort's level}$
Cohort's Level – 1	$10 + 1\text{--}1/2 \times \text{cohort's level}$
Cohort's Level	$11 + 1\text{--}1/2 \times \text{cohort's level}$
Cohort's Level + 1	$12 + 1\text{--}1/2 \times \text{cohort's level}$
Cohort's Level + 2	$13 + 1\text{--}1/2 \times \text{cohort's level}$
Cohort's Level + 3	$14 + 1\text{--}1/2 \times \text{cohort's level}$
Skill Checks	
Cohort's Level – 2	$0 + 1\text{--}1/2 \times \text{cohort's level}$
Cohort's Level – 1	$5 + 1\text{--}1/2 \times \text{cohort's level}$
Cohort's Level	$10 + 1\text{--}1/2 \times \text{cohort's level}$
Cohort's Level + 1	$15 + 1\text{--}1/2 \times \text{cohort's level}$
Cohort's Level + 2	$20 + 1\text{--}1/2 \times \text{cohort's level}$
Cohort's Level + 3	$25 + 1\text{--}1/2 \times \text{cohort's level}$

Craft: Your cohort can use their skills to craft items for you while you're on adventures. This follows the usual rules for crafting, as outlined in Chapter 7 of the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*. You need to supply your cohort with UPBs or other raw materials for crafting, and most cohorts charge 5% of the item's price for their labor unless the GM allows otherwise.

Day Job: If the cohort can attempt a skill check to earn a living with any skill that they are trained in that the GM deems reasonable, as well as any skill that can specifically be used to perform this skill task (such as Profession or Sleight of Hand).

Mount: If your cohort is an creature suitable for riding (as determined by the GM), you can use your cohort as a mount. If

TABLE 1-4: COHORTS

Leadership Score	Maximum Level Attracted	Maximum Cohort Level
1 or lower	—	—
2	1st	1
3	2nd	1
4	3rd	2
5	3rd	3
6	4th	4
7	5th	5
8	5th	6
9	6th	7
10	7th	8
11	7th	9
12	8th	10
13	9th	11
14	10th	12
15	10th	13
16	11th	14
17	12th	15
18	12th	16
19	13th	17
20	14th	18
21	15th	19
22	15th	20
23	16th	21
24	17th	22
25	17th	23
26	18th	24
27	18th	25
28	18th	26
29	18th	27
30	18th	28
31	18th	29
32	18th	30
33	18th	31
34	18th	32
35	18th	33
36	18th	34
37	18th	35
38	18th	36
39	18th	37
40	18th	38
41	18th	39
42	18th	40
43	18th	41
44	18th	42
45	18th	43
per +1	— ¹	+1 ²

¹ Regardless of your Leadership Score, you cannot attract a cohort of a higher level than 18th.

² For every 1 by which your Leadership Score increases beyond 45, your total cohort level increases by +1.

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your cohort is intelligent, you may only do so if they consent to being ridden by you, and you attempt Diplomacy checks instead of Survival checks to control your cohort in battle.

Starship Role: A cohort can assume a role during starship combat. See Chapter 9 in the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK* for more information about starship combat and the rules that characters play during it.

CREATING COHORTS

Cohorts can be built in one of two ways depending whether creatures of the cohort's type have racial traits. If a cohort can be built like a PC, you should build it using the same rules for PCs.

When you gain a cohort, you and your GM should work together to determine where that character comes from. Some players like to maintain strong connections between cohort and PC, so they recruit their character's close friends and family members as their cohorts. Others prefer to recruit and train their favorite NPCs that they encounter while adventuring as cohorts while others like the grandeur that comes with gaining the loyalty and trust of a stranger who sought their character out to aid them in a quest.

Whichever method is chosen, leaders often seek out specific qualities in their cohorts, so it is assumed that the PCs are able to customize their cohorts within reasonable limitations, as set by the GM. Players can even sponsor their cohorts for retraining via a *mnemonic editor*, provided the cohort is willing. Cohort balance, however, is a tricky subject that is difficult to gauge, so listed below are a number of tricks and strategies for GMs and players to consider when designing and recruiting effective cohorts.

TIPS FOR PLAYERS

The following tips for cohort construction are aimed at players, serving as guidelines to make interesting cohorts without upsetting the game. GMs should also take these tips into consideration as players present their cohorts for approval.

Complement the Party: It can be extremely tempting to design extremely powerful or effective cohorts for your party, but doing so often upsets the balance of the game and threatens to render PCs inadequate. Although this could lead to an interesting story where the cohort's motives for following orders issued by your PC are questioned, when a cohort outshines other players in the party it often leads to those players losing interest in the game. A well-designed cohort completes the party by providing useful abilities and skills that other characters don't possess or don't want to acquire. Making sure that cohorts don't compete with PCs for the spotlight helps to keep everyone at the table interested and helps to define the relationship between the PCs and their cohorts.

Stick to Simple Builds: Although it can be tempting to build an intricate cohort who relies on subtle interactions between several different character options, cohorts are most effective when they rely on relatively simple rules and concepts. As they become more powerful, PCs become complex enough that adding a second character that features

a build with too many moving parts is likely to bog the game down even further as you frantically switch between two sets of character sheets and notes twice per round. Cohorts that belong to classes with fewer, more streamlined options with simple combat strategies such as exocortex mechanics, operatives, and soldiers are better choices than more complicated characters such as envoys or mystics.

TIPS FOR GMS

Even if the PCs don't directly control their cohorts, the addition of a second character to a player's roster of resources is without peer in terms of sheer power. From a cost-to-gain standpoint, there isn't much else you could give the PCs that would so thoroughly boost their party's relative power.

That said, adding a cohort to a party has positive aspects. A cohort can fill a glaring weakness in the party, which allows you to increase the difficulty of the challenges that the party will face, ultimately pushing the party to continue adventuring longer without the need to stop and rest as often. Cohorts can provide an interesting and engaging tie-in to events that are happening in the world around the PCs, and can represent a very real consequence (either positive or negative) for actions that the PCs have taken. When a cohort joins an adventuring party as the result of heroic actions or villainous deeds performed by the PCs, it gives the players a sense that their actions and decisions matter to the people who inhabit that world.

The following cohort construction tips are aimed at GMs looking to make cohorts more management manageable for your campaign.

Dash Assumptions: It's important to remind the PCs that ultimately, their cohorts fall squarely under the control of the GM. Even when you allow your players to choose their cohort's actions, you have the right to decide when and where cohorts can and should be used. If you don't want the cohort to take part, simply roleplay a good reason for it on behalf of the cohort and they're gone, end of discussion. Don't be afraid to tell your players when their suggested courses of action conflict with their cohorts' alignment, thoughts, and opinions, and reminding them that recruiting cohorts takes time can help you turn the acquisition of a skilled cohort from a right to a reward, making the cohort's presence seem all the grander.

Instill Value: Your players might end up falling into the trap of seeing their cohorts as tools to be employed rather than individuals with their own ambitions and emotions. If your players don't respect their cohorts, they'll be hard-pressed to find value in the Leadership system. A good way to make your players more aware of their cohorts' opinions regarding them is through the Relationship system (see page 18). If your players recklessly abuse their cohorts, their Relationship with them will fall, while treating them with respect will cause their Relationship to soar. This system also adds some measure of concreteness to your cohort's actions—when they complain, your players will know that this is probably the result of their low Relationship and might become motivated to try and patch



things up with the NPC. On the other hand, when compliments and loyalty ensue, they can know that their Relationship is strong and feel proud of their accomplishments.

Limit Adventurers: Unless your pool of players is small (2 or fewer), don't let your party have more than one cohort participating in an adventure. Too many cohorts alongside too many PCs clogs up combat and skill challenges.

If all PCs have cohorts, providing them off-screen roles is a great way to make them feel useful. Allow your PCs the ability to assign their cohorts to various missions (see *Adventurer* under *A Cohort's Role* on page 9) that further the party's goals, or allow the cohorts to assist the players in ways that are low-involvement but nevertheless crucial to the plan's success. For instance, if the PCs are planning a heist, one cohort could act as the lookout while another acts as the getaway driver. You could also transform cohort selection into a minigame of sorts, where the PCs need to scope out their targets and choose which cohort is the most effective for the task at hand based upon what they've learned. When doing so, you suddenly you have a robust system where your players need to think tactically regarding who comes to adventure with them and why.

ADVANCING COHORTS

Cohorts advance by gaining XP in order to gain levels. A cohort counts as a PC when determining the APL of your party, and when dividing the total amount of XP earned amongst the characters who participated in the encounter, as described in the *Designing Encounters* section of Chapter 11 in the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*. Cohorts receive reduced XP on account of their lower level. When determining the amount of XP that a cohort receives, take the XP that the cohort is entitled to (their "share" after dividing the total XP earned amongst all characters who participated in the encounter) and multiply it by their XP modifier. This modifier is equal to the party's APL (excluding the cohort themselves) divided by the cohort's level.

The following example assumes a 5th-level cohort is adventuring with a party of four 7th-level PCs, who have earned 3,200 XP by defeating a CR 7 encounter.

- » Divide the XP reward by the total number of characters in the party, including the cohort. $(3,200 \div 5 = 640 \text{ XP})$
- » Take the cohort's level and divide it by the party's APL, excluding the cohort to determine the cohort's XP Modifier. $(5 \div 7 = 0.71)$

TABLE 1-5: COHORT MODIFIERS

Reputation	LS Modifier
The Leader...	
has an animal companion, drone, familiar, or a similar class feature.	-2
has caused the death of a cohort.	-2 ¹
has one or more cohorts whose alignment opposes their own.	-1 ²

¹ per cohort killed.

² per step difference between the leader's alignment and the cohort's alignment.

- » Multiply the cohort's XP reward by their XP modifier to determine the amount of XP that the cohort earns. $(640 \times 0.71 = 454 \text{ XP})$

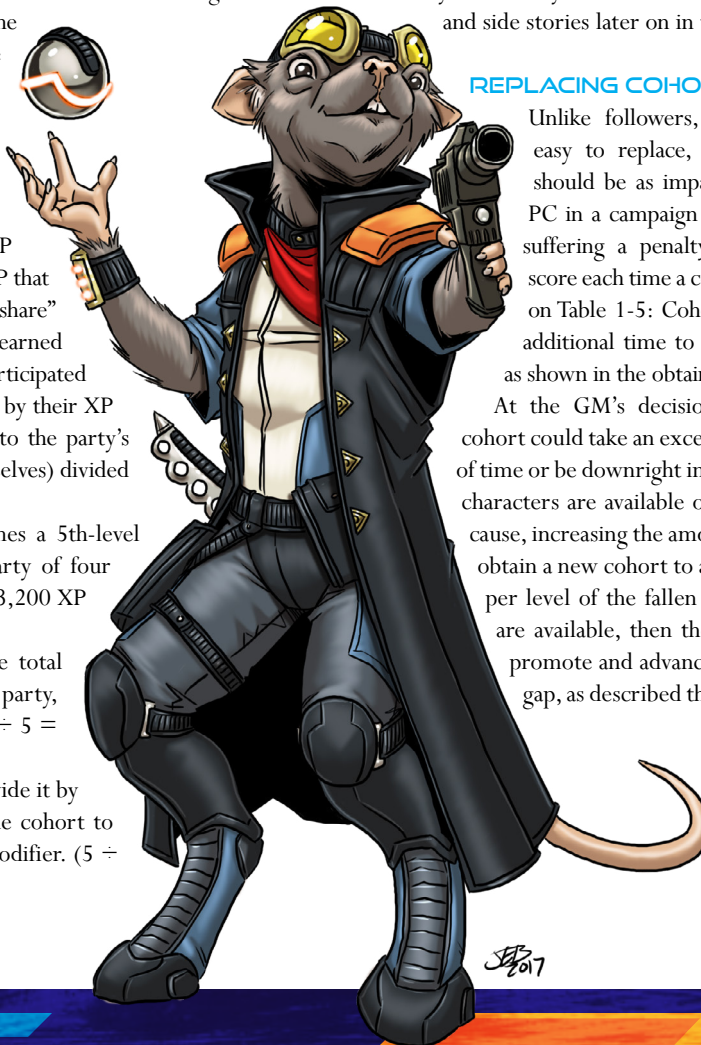
OPTIONAL RULE: AUTO-LEVELING

Rather than track XP for your cohort, your GM might allow you to assume that your cohorts gain a level whenever the PCs do, as the characters are assumed to be occupying their time by doing something that earns them XP, such as adventuring on a smaller scale (see page 9). This optional rule removes some of the headache of having to track each of your cohort's XP separately, but it can be tough to explain just what the cohorts did to earn this XP. Although a cohort's exploits can certainly be used by a skilled GM to introduce subplots and side stories later on in the campaign!

REPLACING COHORTS

Unlike followers, which are relatively easy to replace, the loss of a cohort should be as impacting as the loss of a PC in a campaign setting. In addition to suffering a penalty to your Leadership score each time a cohort is slain, as shown on Table 1-5: Cohort Modifiers, it takes additional time to recruit a new cohort, as shown in the obtaining cohorts section.

At the GM's decision, replacing a fallen cohort could take an exceptionally long amount of time or be downright impossible if no suitable characters are available or willing to join your cause, increasing the amount of time it takes to obtain a new cohort to a maximum of 10 days per level of the fallen cohort. If no cohorts are available, then the PCs can attempt to promote and advance a follower to fill the gap, as described throughout this section.



FOLLOWERS

Not everyone who supports you is going to be a bona fide badass, able to keep up with you on your adventures and support you on the field of battle. Most of the people you attract to your cause are followers, ordinary but helpful NPCs that are otherwise unremarkable in ability. Followers don't earn XP to advance, and in many cases they don't even have full stat blocks outside of whatever skills are relevant to the task they've been recruited for, but serious adventurers never scoff at assistance, no matter the source.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following terms are important to managing followers.

Leadership Score (LS): A rating indicating your effectiveness as a leader. Your Leadership Score determines the total number of followers that you can recruit (see Table 2-3), and is discussed in detail on pages 6 to 7.

Followers: An NPC that you recruit to perform a service for you. Each follower has a small list of skills associated with them, but they otherwise don't have a full stat block and doesn't advance like a PC or cohort does.

Follower Slot: A unit for measuring the total number of followers you can recruit based upon your Leadership Score and the follower's CR. You can recruit up to one follower per follower slot you have access to, based upon your Leadership Score. A follower's CR is equal to its slot's CR.

Follower Modifiers: A number of special circumstances that modify your Leadership Score for the purpose of determining the maximum number of followers that you can recruit.

FOLLOWER BASICS

A follower is an NPC who provides simple services to the PCs. Followers aren't built the same way that PCs or cohorts are; they're basically just a small list of skills and bonuses. If you need actual stats for a follower, build them using the NPC creation rules in *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE* rather than those for PCs in the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*.

When you recruit a follower, you need to assign it to one of your follower slots. When you assign the follower to your slot, they gain a CR equal to the slot's CR. This doesn't necessarily mean that the follower magically got better at their job overnight; it could be the result of improved resources and revenue because of their association with you, or simply because they have more opportunities to improve themselves as a result of working directly for you. Once you assign a follower to a slot, they remain assigned to that slot until you retire them or promote them to a new follower slot with a higher CR. Followers cannot be demoted once assigned to a follower slot, they can only be retired.

Retiring a follower takes 1 hour of communication, be it a simple text message or e-mail or face-to-face interaction. Promoting a follower to a higher-level follower slot takes 1 day, after which your follower's CR permanently increases to match that of their new follower slot. For more information about promoting followers, see page 15.

OBTAINING FOLLOWERS

You can obtain followers in the following ways.

Leadership Score Increase: Whenever your Leadership Score increases, you may choose to automatically acquire any number of new followers, up to your maximum allotment based upon your Leadership Score and character level. These followers need to be members of races with PC statistics, like humans or vesks, and never possess any special abilities from their array beyond those associated with their race. Followers recruited in this manner represent the masses, common folk willing to blindly devote themselves to your cause in search of a better life.

Recruitment: You can attempt to recruit a new character as a follower. To do so, you first determine the class and race, of the follower you want to recruit, then choose an available follower slot that you want to fill. Finding a worthwhile candidate that meets your specifications takes a number of days equal to half the CR of the follower slot you're trying to fill (minimum 1). Once you've found a suitable candidate, attempt a Leadership check (see page 6) with a DC equal to $15 + 1\frac{1}{2} \times$ the follower slot's CR. If you fail, the price to recruit the cohort is 500 credits \times the follower slot's CR. If you succeed, the price is reduced by half. If you fail by 10 or more, the price is doubled.

These rules should be considered a guideline for the GM, and the GM can modify the amount of time or number of credits needed to recruit a follower as they see fit. Followers of an obscure race or class can take up to three times longer to recruit, while individuals might demand up to five times as many credits. Some individuals might be impossible to recruit until the PCs have earned their trust through their deeds, while others might be willing to join the PCs immediately at no cost as a reward for their service, for sparing them, or for similar reasons.

A follower recruited in this manner has the normal number of special abilities for a creature of its CR, as referenced in the Creating Monsters and NPCs Appendix in the *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE*. Followers who are members of a PC race likely gain a class graft, while followers that are monsters keep their usual special abilities.

A FOLLOWER'S ROLE

Unlike a cohort, followers cannot be brought on adventures with you unless a special exception is made by your GM. Even with such an exception, followers do not gain experience and cannot advance in levels, as the bulk of the work done during the adventure is handled by characters of such a significantly higher



level (the PCs) that a follower gain next to nothing from the ordeal, much like a child being handheld through the process of building a house; not only is the task practically done for the follower, but the task is so far beyond the follower's capabilities that there are few applicable lessons for them to internalize.

Instead, effective leaders utilize followers as either freelance help or unskilled labor, based upon their needs. Any type of work that requires training in a specific class, feat, or skill is considered freelance help, as is any type of protection service, like guarding your home or acting as a bodyguard. Any type of work that doesn't require skill checks or class features is considered unskilled labor.

Freelance Help: You can call upon a follower to help you perform a task that they possess professional and skill and know-how in. This functions as if you were hiring a professional freelancer (see the Other Purchases section of Chapter 7 in the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*), except the cost is reduced by half (their skill bonus in credits per day). The GM can adjust this rate as needed based upon the PC's actions

towards the follower; if the follower owes the PCs a favor, they might do the work for less, perhaps even for free or for a meal and a night out. If the PCs constantly call in favors with the follower, however, they'll likely charge their full rate (4 credits per day or 1 credit per hour) or refuse to help. As long as you're in good standing with your follower, they'll take on work that could put them in serious danger for only 5 times the usual rate (instead of 10). If they're dedicated to your cause, however, they might do so for less, potentially even for free if they firmly support your goals.

Unskilled Labor: You can call upon a follower to perform unskilled labor for you at 1/4 the usual rate (1 credit per day, or 1 credit per 4 hours). The GM can adjust this rate as needed based upon the PC's actions towards the follower; if the follower owes the PCs a favor, they might do the work for less, perhaps even for free or for a meal and a night out. If the PCs constantly call in favors with the follower, however, they'll likely charge their full rate (their skill bonus \times 2 per day) or refuse to help. As long as you're in good standing with your follower, they'll take on work that could put them in serious danger for only 5 times the usual rate (instead of 10). If they're dedicated to your cause, however, they might do so for less, potentially even for free if they firmly support your goals.

CREATING FOLLOWERS

When you're creating followers for your PCs to recruit, you follow an abridged version of the rules referenced in the Creating Monsters and NPCs Appendix in the *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE*. If the follower you're recruiting already has a stat block, this process is even easier; just note their CR and their skill bonuses and you're done. If your follower doesn't have a stat block, use the following steps in conjunction with the *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE* to create your follower.

1. **Determine your follower's CR.** A follower's CR is always determined by the CR of the follower slot that you assigned them to.
2. **Pick an array.** You can pick any array you like for your follower (combatant, expert, or spellcaster). No statistics from this array are needed except your follower's number of skill bonuses and their values.
3. **Creature Type and Subtype Grafts:** Your follower gains the creature type graft associated with its type. If your follower's type also has a subtype (such as humans), it also gains the creature subtype graft associated with its type.
4. **Class and Template Grafts:** Ignore these steps unless you recruited a follower with the associated graft, or if you advanced a follower with one.
5. **Spells and Special Abilities:** Ignore these steps unless you recruited a follower with spells or special abilities, or your follower gained some through advancement.
6. **Skills:** Pick the skills that your follower has, based on their array. Note that some class grafts and subtype grafts require that you choose certain skills. Once you've decided on your skills, you're done!



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TABLE 1-6: FOLLOWERS

Leadership Score	Number of Follower Slots by CR									
	CR 1/2	CR 1	CR 2	CR 3	CR 4	CR 5	CR 6	CR 7	CR 8	CR 9
9 or lower	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
11	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
12	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
13	10	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
14	15	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15	20	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
16	25	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
17	30	3	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
18	35	3	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
19	40	4	2	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
20	50	5	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
21	60	6	3	2	1	1	—	—	—	—
22	75	7	4	2	2	1	—	—	—	—
23	90	9	5	3	2	1	—	—	—	—
24	110	11	6	3	2	1	—	—	—	—
25	135	13	7	4	2	2	1	—	—	—
26	160	16	8	4	2	2	1	—	—	—
27	190	19	10	5	3	2	1	—	—	—
28	220	22	11	6	3	2	1	—	—	—
29	260	26	13	7	4	2	1	—	—	—
30	300	30	15	8	4	2	1	—	—	—
31	350	35	18	9	5	3	2	1	—	—
32	400	40	20	10	5	3	2	1	—	—
33	460	46	23	12	6	3	2	1	—	—
34	520	52	26	13	6	3	2	1	—	—
35	590	59	30	15	8	4	2	1	—	—
36	660	66	33	17	9	5	3	2	1	—
37	740	74	37	19	10	5	3	2	1	—
38	820	82	41	21	11	6	3	2	1	—
39	910	91	46	23	12	6	3	2	1	—
40	1,000	100	50	25	12	7	4	2	1	—
41	1,100	110	55	28	14	7	4	2	1	—
42	1,200	120	60	30	15	8	4	2	1	—
43	1,300	130	65	32	16	8	4	2	1	—
44	1,400	140	70	35	18	9	5	3	2	1
45	1,500	150	75	38	19	9	5	3	2	1
46	1,600	160	80	40	20	10	5	3	2	1
47	1,700	170	85	43	22	11	6	3	2	1
48	1,800	180	90	45	23	12	6	3	2	1
49	1,900	190	95	48	24	12	6	3	2	1
50	2,000	200	100	50	25	13	7	4	2	1
per +1 ¹	+100 ²	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

¹You can continue to increase the number of followers that you possess if your Leadership Score exceeds 50. For every 1 above 50 that you possess, use the following guidelines to determine the maximum number of followers that you can attain, based upon your Leadership Score.

²Increase the number of CR 1/2 followers you possess by 100 for every Leadership Score point above 50 that you attain.

³You can command one-tenth as many CR 1 followers as CR 1/2 followers when your Leadership Score reaches above 50. You can command one-half as many CR 2 followers as CR 1 followers, one-half as many CR 3 followers as 3rd-level followers, and so on (round fractions up, except any fraction less than 1 rounds to 0).



ADVANCING FOLLOWERS

You can advance your followers by promoting them into new follower slots or training them with new special abilities. This process is described below.

Promotion: You can promote your follower from a lower-level slot to a higher-level slot, improving their CR. This takes 1 day of training and costs an amount of credits equal to $1\frac{1}{2} \times$ the CR of the follower slot that you wish to assign the follower to. Once you've promoted your follower, update their statistics to match their new CR based upon their chosen array. Note that a promoted follower doesn't gain any special abilities from their promotion; you must train them, to have those abilities (see below).

Training Abilities: You can add a class graft onto your follower if they don't already have one. Alternatively, you can train your follower to gain a feat, up to its maximum number of special abilities as indicated by its array. This takes 10 days for a class graft or 4 days for a special ability, and costs an amount of credits equal to $1\frac{1}{2} \times$ the CR of the follower slot that you wish to assign the follower to. You can reduce either the time or credits needed to train your follower by half if you possess levels in the class you want to train them in or the feat or special ability you want them to have. Once you've trained a class graft or a special ability onto your follower, note it in their description and update their skill bonuses accordingly, if any.

EXAMPLE FOLLOWERS

The following quick-build followers can be used to quickly pick a follower and put them into the game. All you need to do is choose their CR, record the corresponding bonuses on Table 1-6, and you're ready to go!

ACCOUNTANT

EXPERT

Master Skills Culture, Profession (accountant), Sense Motive
Good Skills Bluff, Diplomacy

COOK

EXPERT

Master Skills Culture, Life Sciences, Profession (cook)
Good Skills Sense Motive, Survival

DOCKWORKER

EXPERT

Master Skills Athletics, Profession (docker), Survival
Good Skills Acrobatics, Perception

GUARD

COMBATANT

Master Skills Perception, Sense Motive
Good Skills Athletics

HACKER

EXPERT

Master Skills Computers, Engineering, Profession (vidgamer)
Good Skills Culture, Sense Motive

HEALER

SPELLCASTER

Master Skills Medicine, Mysticism
Good Skills Sense Motive

TABLE 1-7: FOLLOWER SKILL ARRAYS

CR	Master	Good	Number of Skills by Array*		
			C	E	S
1/2	+7	+3	2 / 1	3 / 2	2 / 1
1	+9	+4	2 / 1	3 / 2	2 / 1
2	+10	+5	2 / 1	3 / 2	2 / 1
3	+12	+7	2 / 1	3 / 2	2 / 1
4	+13	+8	2 / 1	3 / 2	2 / 1
5	+15	+10	2 / 1	3 / 2	2 / 1
6	+16	+11	2 / 1	3 / 2	2 / 1
7	+18	+13	2 / 1	3 / 2	2 / 1
8	+19	+14	2 / 1	3 / 2	2 / 1
9	+21	+16	2 / 1	3 / 2	2 / 1

*The number listed to the left is the number of master skills the array grants, while the number to the right is the number of good skills the array grants.

TABLE 1-8: FOLLOWER MODIFIERS

Reputation	LS Modifier
The Leader...	
has a base of operations measuring 1,000 ft ² or larger.	+2
pays his followers a fair wage.	+1
needlessly endangers followers.	-1
directly or indirectly caused the death of other followers.	-1 ¹

¹ per follower killed.

LAWYER

EXPERT

Master Skills Culture, Profession (lawyer), Sense Motive
Good Skills Diplomacy, Intimidate

MAINTENANCE WORKER

EXPERT

Master Skills Engineering, Perception, Profession (maintenance worker)
Good Skills Athletics, Sense Motive

MEDIC

EXPERT

Master Skills Life Science, Medicine, Perception
Good Skills Diplomacy, Sense Motive

MUSICIAN

EXPERT

Master Skills Culture, Diplomacy, Profession (musician)
Good Skills Profession (poet), Sense Motive

PILOT

EXPERT

Master Skills Bluff, Computers, Piloting
Good Skills Engineering, Sense Motive

TECHNICIAN

EXPERT

Master Skills Engineering, Physical Science, Profession (general contractor)
Good Skills Computers, Profession (mathematician)

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REPUTATION

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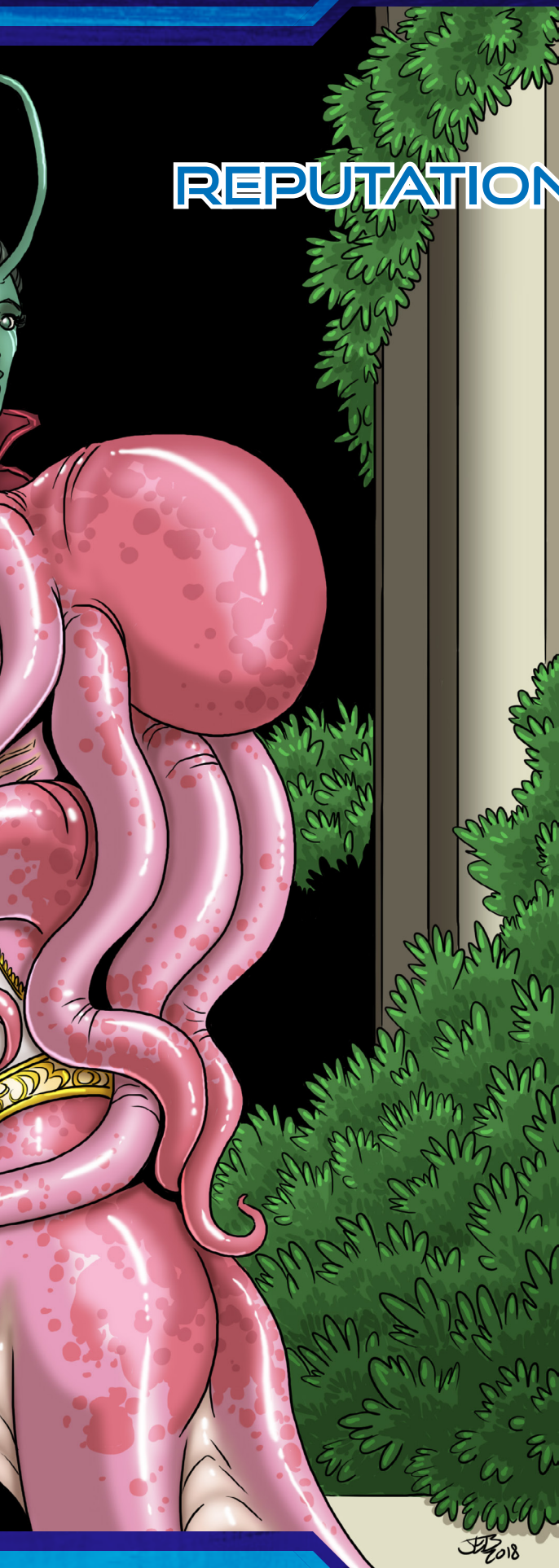
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Cameras buzzed around Yenzie and his crew as the cephlings in the audience murmured anxiously. The chatter silenced as the cephling queen gracefully swam to the stage. Yenzie fiddled with his ABD for a moment before remembering that one wrong move could dislodge the breather, likely leading to death by drowning. He decided to fiddle with his coat's buttons instead while a proclamation was read. Heroes... blah blah... rescued the queen... blah blah... eternal gratitude.

"Just get to the reward already!" Yenzie muttered to himself anxiously. A wave of pain shot up his tail, nearly making him jump. Whipping his head around, he saw Hansune, paw nails extended and frowning. The kitsune mouthed something that looked like, "Best behavior." Yenzie turned his face away from him so he could roll his eyes if he wanted to. But he didn't, because the queen had medals! And where there were medals...

Yenzie gave a cheesy smile to the nearest camera. "Be sure to get my good side!"



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REPUTATION

Even as countless worlds discover means of traveling through space at speeds faster than light, some basic mortal tendencies never change. Although names and titles evolve over time, now more than ever, pledging one's allegiance is crucial to success, be it to a government, a like-minded faction, or a corporation. The following subsystem allows your character to track their Reputation and Favor with the various organizations that your GM deems relevant to your campaign. You can't earn Reputation with individuals (that's what the Relationship rules on page 22 are for), but you can earn Reputation with groups like corporations, factions, governments, or churches. This system abbreviates all such groups as organizations, so whether you're wooing over a mega-conglomerate, the local temple to a well-known deity, or the citizens of a small town in a backwater star system, the Reputation system has you covered!

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following terms are important to the Reputation System.

Deed: An achievement of some kind that you accomplish for or against your organization. Deeds must always be appropriate challenges based on your character level and usually are multi-faceted, requiring multiple successful skill challenges, combats, or both. Completing an adventure or mission is likely an appropriate deed, but defeating a single combat probably isn't. Ultimately, the GM decides what actions are worthy enough to constitute a deed.

Fame: A measure of how well-liked you are by an organization. If you have at least 1 Fame, you're Famous within that organization. If you're Famous, you're generally on good or neutral terms with the people in the organization, and are considered an asset or an ally.

Infamy: A measure of how distrusted or loathed you are by an organization. If you have at least 1 Infamy, you're Infamous within that organization. If you're Infamous, you're generally on poor terms with the people in the organization, and are considered a liability or an enemy.

Organization: Any corporation, faction, government, or similar group of like-minded people can be an organization for this Reputation system. You can track your Reputation with as many organizations as your GM permits, though sometimes advancing the goals of one organization might provoke the ire of another one.

Reputation: A measure of the maximum amount of influence that you can leverage over a given organization. It is a combination of your personal magnetism, how well-known you are within an organization, and the deeds you perform for (or against) a specific organization. Your Reputation is either one of Fame or Infamy, depending upon your interactions with the organization.

Significant Organization: Not all organizations are crucial to your campaign; sometimes the shopkeeper your character woos is just a shopkeeper. Typically, an organization is considered a significant organization if it plays a large role in the campaign. GMs are encouraged to listen to their player's desires when determining whether an organization is significant, but this rule exists for those times where you just need to say, "No, you cannot earn Reputation with Little Sally's Doll Emporium," to keep the story focused and on-track.

ACCUMULATING REPUTATION

When you first encounter a significant organization, you gain Reputation with that organization based upon whether your deeds were helpful (Fame) or harmful (Infamy). Your starting Reputation with an organization is equal to your Charisma modifier. If you have the Icon theme, you also add 1/4 your total level to your starting Reputation. At the GM's decision, you may gain this theme bonus if your theme is appropriately linked to the organization. For instance, an ace pilot might receive this bonus for organizations related to piloting or racing, while an outlaw might receive this bonus for organizations related to thieving or pirating. Typically, if your first interactions with an organization help or support that organization, you become Famous with them. If your first interactions with an organization hinder or conflict with them, you become Infamous instead. Changes to your Charisma from ability drain, ability increases from character advancement, and personal augmentations alter your Reputation accordingly; all other alterations to your Charisma do not.

You primarily adjust your Reputation with an organization through the completion of deeds. For a list of sample deeds and the amount of Reputation they provide, see Table 2-1: Significant Deeds on page 20.

MODIFYING REPUTATION

Whenever you successfully perform a deed, your Reputation with relevant organizations increases or decreases as appropriate. This increase typically ranges from 1 (for minor deeds) to 5 (for legendary deeds). Adjustments to your Reputation from deeds are instantaneous and permanent; once wrought, they can only be furthered or undone by accomplishing more deeds. Deeds fall into three categories that determine how they affect your Reputation: negative deeds, neutral deeds, and positive deeds. Each classification of deed is described below. Note that a single deed can have different classifications for different organizations. For instance, freeing slaves might be a positive deed for an abolitionist group and a negative deed for a slaver company.

Positive Deed: A positive deed improves an organization's view or opinion of you, and often furthers the organization's goals or objectives. If you're Famous with the organization, it increases your Fame. If you're Infamous, it decreases your Infamy.



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Negative Deed: A negative deed worsens an organization's view or opinion of you, and often hinders the organization's goals or objectives. If you're Famous with the organization, it decreases your Fame. If you're Infamous, it increases your Infamy.

Affirming Deed: An affirming deed confirms an organization's existing views or opinions of you. If you're Famous with the organization, it increases your Fame. If you're Infamous, it increases your Infamy.

EFFECTS OF REPUTATION

As your Reputation increases, you gain rewards with organizations that you're Famous with and take penalties against those that you're Infamous with. Summaries for the effects of Fame are given in the Fame Rewards sidebar on this page, while summaries for the effects of Infamy are given in the Infamy Penalties sidebar on page 21.

You gain the rewards and penalties associated with your Reputation with each organization that you have Fame or Infamy with as soon as you reach the indicated Reputation threshold. The effects of Reputation are cumulative; for instance, once you have Fame 20 with an organization, you gain the rewards indicated under the Fame 20 and Fame 10 entries for that organization.

REPUTATION SHIFT

Your Reputation with an organization can change from Fame to Infamy (or vice versa). If your Fame is ever reduced to 0 by your deeds, subsequent negative deeds shift your Fame into Infamy, adding the appropriate amount of Infamy to your Reputation based on the deed. Likewise, if your Infamy is ever reduced to 0, subsequent negative deeds shift your Infamy into Fame, adding the appropriate amount of Fame to your Reputation based on the deed.

Sudden Shifting: At the GM's decision, some deeds might be so resounding or traitorous that they result in a rapid shift of the organization's opinion toward you. Should you perform such a deed, divide your current Fame or Infamy by 2 and use the result as your new Fame (if you were Infamous) or Infamy (if you were Famous) as appropriate. For instance, you have 30 Fame with an archaeological corporation before stealing an ancient artifact from them and fleeing, the GM might decide that this act is sufficient to shift your Reputation from Fame to Infamy. The GM takes your Fame and divides it by 2, leaving you with an Infamy of 15 ($30 \div 2$ is 15).

ACCUMULATING FAVOR

Whenever you perform a deed that earns you Fame with an organization, you also gain an equal amount of Favor with them. Favor is an expendable resource that you can use to gain benefits from an organization, such as services, starship improvements, and more. Spending favor usually requires significant downtime—at least 8 hours—in a settlement with at least 10,000 people or a major facility allied with the corporation or faction whose Favor you are spending. If you try to spend Favor in a settlement with fewer than 10,000 people that does not have a major facility allied with your corporation

FAME REWARDS

If you're Famous within a corporation or faction, you gain increased respect and admiration from your fellows as your Reputation grows higher. You gain the following benefits when interacting with members of your organization, provided you meet the minimum Fame requirements.

Fame 5: People within your corporation or faction know that you mean well enough, and treat you with a measure of respect. Anyone with an equal or lower rank than you within your corporation or faction has a starting attitude of friendly toward you unless they have a valid reason to feel otherwise.

Fame 10: Your dedication to your corporation or faction's goals is well-known, and others believe that you have the organization's best interests at heart. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to all Charisma-based checks and skill checks made to influence members of the organization with an Intelligence of 3 or higher.

Fame 20: Your influence has grown to the point where members of your corporation or faction offer you a discount on goods or services that the organization produces or can easily procure. Reduce the cost of all equipment with an item level that at least 2 levels lower than your total level by 10%. This benefit doesn't apply to items without an item level, such as computers or starships.

Fame 40: You are a crucial asset to your corporation or faction, and the organization dedicates some of their assets to ensure your health and wellbeing. Spellcasters within the organization will provide you with healing spells free of charge, although you must still pay for any expensive material components the spell requires. (Such as with *raise dead*.)

or faction, you can still spend your Favor, but costs for all services or boons are tripled. Favor doesn't "recharge" after you spend it; once you've spent your Favor, it is gone.

When spending Favor, all organizations are capable of providing the benefits, equipment, and services listed on Table 2-2: Favor Purchases. In addition to those listed, individual organizations may also be able to provide you with additional rewards depending upon the nature of the organization. For instance, a corporation built on genetic engineering might be able to augment your body with biotechnology as a Favor reward, while a faction dedicated to archeological pursuits might be able to provide you with special training in underground locations or when dealing with traps.

Losing Favor: Whenever you gain Infamy with an organization, you also lose an equal amount of Favor. You can't have less than 0 Favor with an organization, although if you have 0 Favor when you gain Infamy with an organization, the GM might require you to pay an extortion (see below).

Extortions: When you lose Favor with an organization, the GM might rule that your character might be forced to pay money to remain in the organization's good graces. This

TABLE 2-1: SIGNIFICANT DEEDS

Description of Deed	Reputation Effects
Negative Deeds	
Be convicted of a petty crime or offense against the organization.	1
Be convicted of a serious crime or offense against the organization.	2
Publicly flee from a combat or skill challenge while representing the organization.	2
Be convicted of a major crime or offense against the organization.	4
Publicly lose a combat or skill challenge while representing the organization.	4
Be convicted of an unforgivable crime or offense against the organization.	5
Violate the organization's laws, code of conduct, or a similar restriction upon your behavior. ¹	5
Positive Deeds	
Perform a minor service for the organization.	1
Perform a great service for the organization.	2
Perform a major service for the organization.	4
Perform an unimaginable service for the organization.	5
Affirming Deeds	
Acquire noteworthy treasure from a significant opponent. ²	+1
Acquire a valued asset for your organization.	+1
Be honored by a public figure that is respected by your organization.	+1
Complete a skill challenge without failing a single skill check while representing your organization.	+1
Craft an item with an item level that equals your level valued at a minimum of 40,000 credits.	+1 ³
Increase your Relationship score with a public figure respected by your organization to 31. ⁴	+1
Make a noteworthy historical, scientific, or magical discovery of interest to your organization.	+1
Own a legendary item or artifact. ⁵	+1
Return significant property that was lost or stolen from the organization. ⁶	+1
Sack a facility belonging to a known rival or competitor of the organization.	+1
Single-handedly defeat an opinion with a CR that exceeds your level while representing your organization.	+1
Win a combat or skill challenge with a CR of your party's average level + 3.	+1
Defeat a character who has previously defamed you in single combat.	+2
Publicly succeed on skill check with a DC equal to 20 + 1-1/2 times your level.	+2
Complete an adventure with a CR appropriate to your party's average level. ⁷	+4
Earn a formal title (doctor, lady, lord, and so on). ⁸	+4
Be appointed to a leadership role in a government. ⁹	+5
Defeat a rival who is also a significant opponent in battle.	+5

¹ If violating your code of conduct causes you to lose class features, feats, or similar abilities pertinent to your organization, double this penalty.

² This treasure must either be priceless to your organization, or worth a minimum of 1,000 credits \times 1-1/2 your level.

³ Increase the Reputation effect of this deed by +1 for each 40,000 credits of value beyond 40,000 that the item has.

⁴ The type of Reputation must correlate to the individual's standing with your organization—if the person is well-liked, it must be a Peer, Friendship, or Familial Relationship. If the person is disliked by your organization, it must be one of Animosity.

⁵ This improves to +2 for major artifacts. Double the Reputation effect if the legendary item or artifact is of significant interest to your organization.

⁶ If you steal the property and return it, you can gain this reward provided you aren't caught. If you are caught, it counts as a major crime or offense against the organization, and all previously gained Reputation effects earned from thieving are reversed. Attempting to steal and return property too often will likely result in increased suspicion regarding your actions at the GM's discretion.

⁷ An adventure is roughly as long as a single volume in an adventure path for the purpose of this reward.

⁸ You don't earn this reward for simply claiming you have a title; you need to publicly earn it and prove you have it, such as by completing the required years of schooling for a degree or by being given a title by a ruling monarch or government official. Titles bequeathed to you by the organization (essentially job promotions) count towards this reward.

⁹ This must be a significant leadership role, such as an advisor to a president or CEO. At the GM's discretion, you can gain this reward for ascending to such a position within the organization.



TABLE 2-2: FAVOR PURCHASES

Award	Cost*
+4 to any one skill check	1
Item worth 1,000 credits or less**	1
<i>Dispel magic</i>	1
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	1
<i>Make whole</i>	1
<i>Remove affliction</i> (CL 7th)	1
<i>Break enchantment</i>	2
<i>Greater dispel magic</i>	2
Item worth 3,000 credits or less**	2
<i>Restoration</i>	2
<i>Regenerate</i>	6
<i>Raise dead</i>	14
<i>Mnemonic editor</i> (mk varies)	4 × mk of the <i>mnemonic editor</i> purchased***

*All Fame costs increase by 3 when in star systems neighboring those your organization is active in, or by 5 in those where your organization has no influence.

** You cannot purchase magic or hybrid items with this reward. You can, however, purchase battery recharging, lodgings, professional services, and transportation with Favor, provided it's technological in nature.

*** Mk 1 = 4 Favor, mk 2 = 8 Favor, mk 3 = 12 Favor, mk 4 = 16 Favor

is known as an extortion, and can take the form of being ordered to return borrowed equipment or items, having property damaged or stolen, or a similar cost.

The price of an average extortion for one PC is equal to that character's level squared × the amount of Favor lost × 50 credits. A low extortion is priced at half this value, while a high extortion is up to four times this value.

PARTY REPUTATION

When you operate as a single entity with a group of specific individuals, you can establish a Party Reputation toward a specific organization if your actions and outlooks toward that organization are identical. For instance, if you and your fellows all menace the same thieves' guild, the GM might decide that your Reputation with that thieves' guild is shared across the party rather than on an individual basis.

When establishing a Party Reputation, your party uses the Charisma modifier of the person with the highest Charisma score to determine the party's starting Reputation with the organization. Usually, this individual is considered to be the party's figurehead or face. If any member of the party has the Icon theme, add 1/4 the party's average level to the starting Reputation. If the party has multiple Icons, add +1 to the party's starting Reputation for each Icon in the party beyond the first. In all other ways, your group's Party Reputation follows the same rules for individual Reputation as described above. Your group earns Fame or Infamy for significant deeds you accomplish (though if multiple party members contribute

INFAMY PENALTIES

If you're Infamous within a corporation or faction, you are loathed and detested by those within the organization as your Reputation grows higher. You gain the following penalties when interacting with members of your organization when your Infamy reaches the indicated threshold.

Infamy 5: Everyone knows that you don't stand with the corporation or faction, and others are wary of your words and intentions. You take a -2 penalty to all Charisma-based checks and skill checks made to influence members of the organization with an Intelligence of 3 or higher.

Infamy 10: Others' discontent for you has risen to the point where they no longer value your business. You count as being 5 levels lower for determining the highest item level of equipment you can procure from the corporation or faction, and the cost of all goods and services rendered by the corporation or faction increases by 10% for you and anyone who openly associated with you.

Infamy 20: Your disapproval within the corporation or faction has risen to the point where even lowly peons spit at your name. Anyone within your corporation or faction has a starting attitude of unfriendly toward you unless they have a valid reason to feel otherwise.

Infamy 40: You are loathed by the corporation or faction, and hindering you and your goals is a pleasure most high-ranking members savor. All high-ranking members within your corporation or faction have a starting attitude of hostile toward you. You may be completely unable to secure any type of good or service from the corporation or faction, or they might simply jack up the prices so high that it is effectively impossible to receive aid from them. Worse, they deliberately interfere with your plans whenever possible, whether by alerting authorities of your presence or simply by pulling strings to create petty inconveniences for you. They might even openly attack you depending on what you did to so thoroughly provoke their ire. Ultimately, the GM decides exactly how the corporation or faction acts when provided with the opportunity to slander you, their most hated foe.

to this deed, your party earns Fame or Infamy only once). Each member of the group gains all of the usual effects of Reputation, as shown on the Fame Rewards and Infamy Penalties sidebars, and if your group is Famous with the organization, each significant deed completed grants you Favor as normal. Note that all members of your party share this Favor rather than it being an individual currency for each member of the group.

At the GM's decision, your Party Reputation might be tracked separately from your own Reputation, meaning that you might have one Reputation level when interacting with the organization as a group and another Reputation level when interacting with the organization on your own. As a result, your party can be beloved by an organization while you individually are hated or vice versa.

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RELATIONSHIPS

As you interact with others, you inevitably begin to build relationships with those individuals. Whether creating allies or enemies, friends or lovers, your relationships grant you the opportunity to grow as a person as you learn new tricks and techniques through interpersonal communication. The following subsystem allows your character to track their Relationships with various NPCs that your GM deems relevant to your campaign. You can't grow a Relationship with groups or factions (that's what the Reputation rules on page 18 are for), and you can only grow a Relationship with a significant NPC that is aware of your actions. Just like an NPC doesn't need to be aware of you in order for your character to build an opinion of them, however, you don't need to be aware of an NPC to build a Relationship with them. Note that this system should not be used to measure the Relationship between two PCs; it is solely a measure for NPCs, and if the PCs want to develop a relationship with one another they should do so through roleplaying and mutual agreement.

GLOSSARY

The following terms are important to the Relationship System.

Animosity: One of the four categories of Relationships. An Animosity Relationship is usually a hostile relationship involving two characters who don't like each other.

Dysfunctional Relationship: A Relationship whose emotions are perverted from what a Healthy Relationship of its type ought to be. For instance, Healthy Familial Relationships are governed by emotions like love and trust, so a Dysfunctional Familial Relationship is a Familial Relationship governed by emotions like jealousy or paranoia.

Familial Relationship: One of the four categories of Relationships. A Familial Relationship is usually between people who consider themselves family, such as siblings or close friends.

Friendship Relationship: One of the four categories of Relationships. A Friendship Relationship is usually between people who consider themselves friends.

Healthy Relationship: A Relationship whose emotions are appropriate for what a Relationship of its type ought to be. Each type of Relationship (Animosity, Familial, Friendship, and Peer) lists which emotions are appropriate for that type in its example emotions entry.

Peer Relationship: One of the four categories of Relationships. A Peer Relationship is usually between people who know each other, but aren't very close.

Relationship Skill Unlocks: A reward that you gain for having a Relationship of 30 or higher with an NPC. You can have multiple relationship skill unlocks, but you can only benefit from a total number of relationship skill unlocks simultaneously equal to $1 + \text{your Charisma bonus (minimum 0)}$. The full list of skill unlocks begins on page 118, though the GM decides which boons each NPC provides. See page 133 for details regarding which relationship skill unlocks take precedence, as well as an optional rule that allows you more flexibility in choosing which relationship skill unlocks you benefit from.

RELATIONSHIP DESCRIPTIONS

Relationships can be defined using several key terms that describe the connection between the individuals, whether

or not the connection is healthy or dysfunctional, and which emotions govern the connection. Each category of relationship includes the following information in order.

Category: Every Relationship falls into one of four categories, which determine the general actions and opinions of the characters towards one another. The four Relationship categories are Animosity, Familial, Friendship, and Peer, and each category is described below.

Example Emotions: Most Relationships are defined by a minimum of two emotions, and each Relationship category notes common emotions associated with that type of Relationship. The GM works with the player of the PC in the Relationship to determine a set of emotions that both agree upon, and review these guiding emotions whenever the PC's Relationship Score with that individual changes.

Healthy and Dysfunctional: A Healthy Relationship is a Relationship where both character's actions match those of the Relationship, while a Dysfunctional Relationship is one where one or both character's actions don't match those of the Relationship. Each Relationship category notes what a Healthy and a Dysfunctional Relationship of that category's type looks like in practice.

ANIMOSITY

Hostile relationships come in many varieties, but all are defined by the stress that they cause those in the relationship. This stress can take many forms: anxiety, avoidance, and outright rage are the most common, but just as each relationship is unique, the symptoms of each hostile relationship are likewise unique. Like many relationship traits, continuity is the most important aspect of a hostile relationship; an argument every now and then or a good-natured sibling rivalry doesn't create a hostile relationship; frequent, unrelenting occurrences do.

Example Emotions: Anger, contempt, disgust, fear, hatred, and stress.

Healthy Animosity: Healthy animosity is characterized by appropriately managing the negative emotions associated with the Relationship.

Dysfunctional Animosity: Dysfunctional animosity



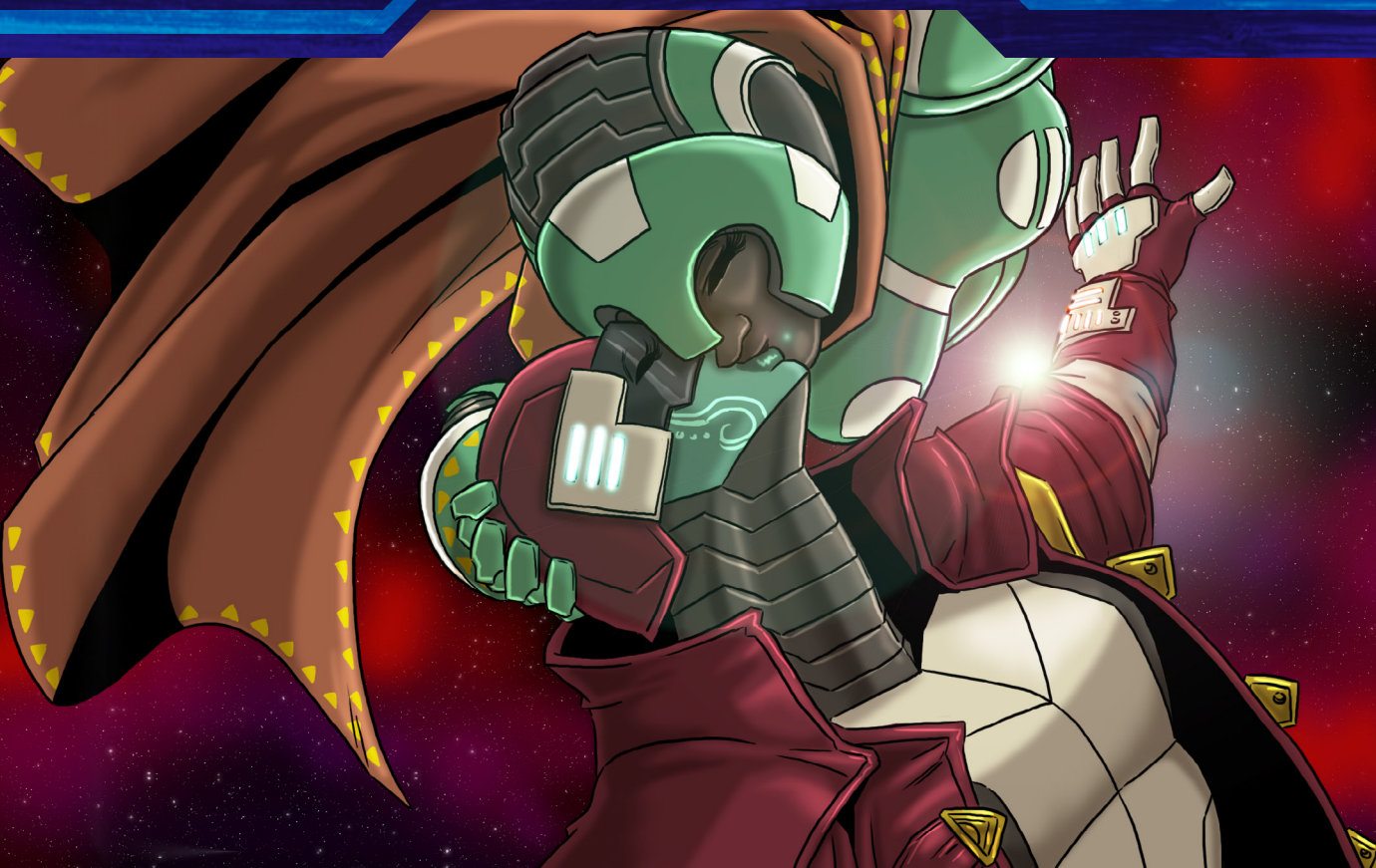
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is characterized by a failure to appropriately manage the relationship's core emotions. Typically, this happens with both individuals use avoidance or redirection strategies to ignore the problem, hoping that the animosity solves itself.

FAMILIAL

Of all the various types of relationships, familial ones are the most simplistic, yet they're also the most complicated. At its core, a familial relationship is simply a relationship between members of a closely knit group. Most familial relationships are based upon blood or marriage, but some familial relationships are between close friends who are "so close they're like siblings" or between members of a tribe or clan that are "like family."

Example Emotions: Affection, empathy, loyalty, pride, respect, and support.

Healthy Familial: Healthy familial relationships are characterized by commitment to one another via mutual empathy, loyalty, support, and trust.

Dysfunctional Familial: Dysfunctional familial relationships are characterized by a lack of empathy, loyalty, support, or trust between the members of the family and as a result, betrayal becomes commonplace.

FRIENDSHIP

Friendly relationships in many shapes, sizes, and varieties, but all have one thing in common: mutual affection. Friendships are defined by both individuals' mutual trust, respect, and admiration for one another.

Example Emotions: Affection, amusement, empathy,

loyalty, pride, respect, and support.

Healthy Friendship: A healthy friendship is characterized by mutual trust and affection.

Dysfunctional Friendship: A dysfunctional friendship is characterized by a lack of mutual affection. One individual provides all of the care and support for the other, who doesn't return those feelings.

PEER

Peer relationships consist of the vast majority of relationships that a person has because in many senses it is the broadest category, for any relationship between two individuals as a result of their interests, age, background, social status, or vocation; sometimes all of these, sometimes none. Effectively, peer relationships are made of common ties between individuals.

Example Emotions: Amusement, Loyalty, Pride, Respect.

Healthy Peer: A healthy peer relationship is characterized by a mutual respect regarding each individual's own beliefs, ideas, and values.

Dysfunctional Peer: A dysfunctional peer relationship is characterized by a lack of mutual respect toward each other's beliefs, ideas, and values or asymmetric power within the relationship. Oftentimes this means that one person in the relationship belittles the other's core values and beliefs while attempting to distill her own into the other person.

ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP

When you first encounter a significant NPC, you and your

RELATIONSHIP INTENSITY

The following scale indicates the intensity of your Relationship based upon the modified value you have earned.

No Relationship (5 or lower): When your Relationship Score is less than 5, you have no relationship with the NPC in question because neither you nor the NPC elicit a significant emotional response in the other.

Minor Relationship (6–11): When your Relationship Score with an NPC reaches 6, you create a relationship with that NPC. This relationship is either one of animosity, family, friendship, or of a peer. You and your GM also determine whether the relationship is healthy or dysfunctional and which emotion acts as the relationship's core emotion (see Describing Relationships). You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks against any NPC that you have a minor relationship with.

Strong Relationship (12–30): When your Relationship Score with an NPC reaches 12, the circumstance bonus to Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks that you gain against that NPC increases to +2.

In addition, when you make a Charisma check or a Charisma-based skill check against an NPC that you have a strong relationship with, you can choose to roll your check twice and take the higher result. Once you have used this ability on an NPC that you have a strong relationship with, you cannot use it again on them for 30 days.

Powerful Relationship (31+): When your Relationship Score with an NPC reaches 31, the bonus to Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks that you gain against that NPC increases to +4 and you can use your strong relationship ability to roll twice when making a Charisma check or a Charisma-based skill check twice per 30 days against NPCs that you possess a powerful relationship with instead of once per 30 days.

In addition, you also gain a bonus skill unlock relating to the nature of your Relationship with each NPC that you have a powerful Relationship with (see page 133).

GM work together to determine the Relationship's category, which emotions govern it, and whether the Relationship is Healthy or Dysfunctional. You start with a Relationship Score equal to your Charisma modifier with any new character you form a Relationship with, and typically most new Relationships are Peer Relationships.

GROWING A RELATIONSHIP

Changes to your Charisma from ability drain, ability increases from character advancement, and personal augmentations alter your Relationship Scores with each of your Relationships accordingly; all other alterations to your Charisma do not. You primarily adjust your Relationship with an individual through the completion of acts. Each type of act that you can use to adjust your Relationship Score is described below.

SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

Once every 5d4 days, you can participate in a social encounter with an NPC to attempt to adjust your Relationship Score with that character. First you describe what sort of activity you want to do with the NPC to the GM, or the GM describes one to you, if the NPC is initiating the encounter. At the end of the encounter, you attempt a skill check with a DC equal to $10 + 1\frac{1}{2}$ times your current Relationship Score with that NPC. You can use any skill you want to attempt this check, provided it relates to the activity you shared with the NPC in some manner and the GM approves of your choice.

If you have a Healthy Relationship with the individual, a successful check that relates to one of your Relationship's governing emotions increases your Relationship with that NPC by 1. If your skill check relates to a perversion of one of your Relationship's emotions, your Relationship decreases by 1 instead. If your skill check exceeds the DC by 10 or more, your Relationship increases or decreases (as appropriate) by 2 instead. If your check fails, there is no change.

If you have a Dysfunctional Relationship with the individual, a successful check that relates to a perversion of your Relationship's governing emotions increases your Relationship with that NPC by 1. If your skill check relates to one of one of your Relationship's emotions, your Relationship decreases by 1 instead. If your skill check exceeds the DC by 10 or more, your Relationship increases or decreases (as appropriate) by 2 instead. If your check fails, there is no change.

At the GM's decision, particularly thoughtful or twisted social encounter might award up to a +4 bonus to the skill check. Alternatively, a poorly timed remark or action might impart up to a -4 penalty to the skill check.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Events in a campaign can alter your Relationship Score with an NPC at the GM's decision, such as saving a friend from execution or humiliating a competitor in public. When your GM decides that such an event has occurred, they can ask you to make a skill check to increase or decrease your Relationship with the NPC, just as if you had spent at least 4 hours together working on a shared activity. This doesn't count against the usual number of skill checks that you're allowed to make every 30 days to influence your Relationship with the individual. If you succeed, the GM can increase the amount your Relationship improves or worsens by up to 5. Some special events are so significant, however, that they might automatically adjust your Relationship to a specific threshold or even cause your Relationship to change type (Dysfunctional or Healthy) or category (Animosity, Familial, Friendship, or Peer) at their decision.

EFFECTS OF RELATIONSHIPS

As the intensity of your relationship with an NPC increases (see the Relationship Intensity sidebar on this page), you gain rewards when interacting with that individual.



The effects of your Relationship's intensity are not cumulative. You gain the benefits described by the highest intensity level that your relationship with each NPC currently embodies when interacting with that NPC.

DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIPS

In addition to increasing and decreasing, your Relationships can change drastically as the emotions that govern them change and intensify as a result of your actions (or the actions of the NPC). Relationships do not change suddenly; when they do, it is the result of a continued, ongoing evolution, perversion, or addition of emotions that steadily come to govern the Relationship proper.

Whenever your Relationship with an NPC increases or decreases, there is a chance that your Relationship's category will change; this chance is equal to $5\% \times$ the total increase or decrease to your Relationship that has occurred since the last time your Relationship's category changed, if ever. If your Relationship changes category, it moves up one step if your Relationship's total growth is positive (it has increased) or down one step if your Relationship's total growth is negative (it has decreased). Table 2-3: Dynamic Relationships shows how different categories improve or worsen based upon this result. At the GM's decision, your Relationship might have its type (Dysfunctional or Healthy) improved or worsened instead of its category, based upon the interactions you've had with the NPC. If your Relationship's total chance to change exceeds 100%, it changes by two steps instead of just one.

TABLE 2-3: DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIPS

Starting Relationship	Positive Change	Negative Change
Relationship Category		
Familial	—	Friendship
Friendship	Familial	Peer
Peer	Friendship	Animosity
Animosity	Peer	—
Relationship Type		
Healthy	—	Dysfunctional
Dysfunctional	Healthy	—

The following describes how the different types of relationships improve or degrade when they change.

Animosity: When an Animosity Relationship improves, it typically refers to an improvement in overall attitude between the characters: burnt bridges are rebuilt, flames of love renewed, and friendships forged or restored.

Familial: When a Familial Relationship sours, it usually refers to a distancing between the characters. Spouses separate, siblings become estranged, and black sheep are disowned.

Friendship: When a Friendship Relationship sours, the change often refers to a growing distance between the characters. Friends who become peers lose touch while friends that develop an animosity become rivals or loathe one another. When a Friendship Relationship becomes a Familial Relationship, however, friends become as close as family, either literally or because they

have spent so much time together that they feel like family.

Peer: When a Peer Relationship improves, the change often refers to a betterment in the relationship between the characters. Peer Relationships that become Friendship Relationships are often a result of mutual trust and respect between the characters. Peer Relationships that become Animosity Relationships are usually the result of some irreconcilable clash of philosophy between the characters. Peer Relationships that become Familial Relationships are somewhat rare, though arranged marriages and similar events are the most common examples.

ROMANCE

Despite being one of the most socially celebrated of Relationships, romances follow all of the standard rules for Relationships, with the exception that all true romances have love as a guiding emotion. Romance can only occur between two consenting individuals; this means that even if love is a guiding emotion, a romance only occurs when both characters have romantic feelings for another. This typically requires that both characters confess romantic feelings for one another during a Relationship act (such as a social encounter or special event).

FAKING A RELATIONSHIP

You can use the Bluff skill to fake a relationship with an NPC. Fake Relationships follow all of the standard rules for Relationships except that you're required to use Bluff to adjust the Relationship. If the NPC ever discovers irrefutable proof that your relationship is fake or you confess the truth to them, their relationship category immediately changes to either animosity or peer (whichever the GM feels is more appropriate), and the relationship's type changes to dysfunctional.



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SECRET IDENTITIES

Although it's only nature to want your legend to grow as you become increasingly powerful, it may be that you end up not wanting the attention that life in the limelight brings, whether because you don't want your adventuring to interfere with your private life or because your antics could have serious repercussions to those closest to you. Whatever the case may be, creating a secret identity is a good solution to tackle the age-old problem of, "How can I get into mischief without getting caught?"

ESTABLISHING AN IDENTITY

Establishing a secret identity takes more than merely slapping on a costume and hiding your face—it takes time to establish the consistency and obfuscation needed to convince others that your secret identity and your true identity are different individuals. In addition, it's generally more difficult for higher-level characters to establish a secret identity because they're better established amongst governments and their people.

In order to establish a secret identity, you must succeed at a minimum of three successful Disguise checks with a DC equal to $15 + 1\frac{1}{2}$ times your character level across three separate adventures in which you masquerade in your secret identity before the public eye. This counts as using Disguise to change minor details about your appearance unless you wish for your secret identity to have more extreme differences from your true identity, such as being a different age, gender, or race. During these adventures, you must adopt the same or similar apparel (including clothing, iconic equipment, and some means of changing or obscuring your face) and your true identity cannot be revealed to the public eye or any that survive your deeds. Note that simply succeeding on a Perception check to pierce your disguise isn't enough to reveal your true identity; enough of your person must be revealed that someone is able to successfully recall knowledge about you with a Culture check.

Once you successfully establish your secret identity, you no longer need to attempt a Disguise check to assume your secret identity, and you may assume this identity in 5 minutes. Although this doesn't change the amount of time needed to change your appearance to that of your secret identity, the Perception DC to pierce your Disguise is always equal to $15 +$ your Disguise bonus, as if you had rolled a 15 on your Disguise check. You take all the usual penalties to your roll based on the details you must change to assume your secret identity, and onlookers who have seen you in your true identity and your secret identity and see both identities use similar abilities gain a +5 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to pierce your disguise, and should they succeed they discover the connection between both identities (see Compromising Your Identity below).

BENEFITS OF A SECRET IDENTITY

Whenever you assume a secret identity that you have successfully established (see above), your secret identity and your true identity are considered different people by the

masses. Skill checks to recall knowledge about one identity don't reveal information about the other unless the person attempting the check is aware of the connection between the two, such as if your secret identity is revealed to the world at large. In addition, any attempts to use scrying effects to locate you only work if you are currently assuming the identity that the person scrying on you is attempting to locate (or if the person scrying on you knows that the two identities are the same individual). Otherwise, the scrying spell or effect has no effect, revealing nothing but darkness, as if the target were invalid or did not exist.

COMPROMISING YOUR IDENTITY

Secrecy is paramount to maintaining a secret identity, and rumors fly quickly about something as exciting as clandestine adventurers. Beyond your adventuring party, you can typically trust one individual per class level with your secret identity—including enemies that learn your true identity, trusted cohorts, or loved ones—before your secret identity is compromised.

A comprised secret identity provides no protection against scrying effects, and anyone succeeding at a skill check to recall knowledge about you learns information about both your comprised secret identity and your true identity. You can restore your secret identity's anonymity by reducing the number of individuals who connect you with your secret identity, either by killing those who know, modifying their memories, or using clever trickery to reject that truth, subjected to GM approval. Note that your secret identity becoming compromised doesn't stop you from attempting to establish a new secret identity, although the Disguise check DC to do so increases by 5 for each compromised secret identity connected to you.

IDENTITIES AND LEADERSHIP

Once you have established a secret identity, you have a Leadership Score for both identities: one for your true identity and one for your secret identity. You can have separate cohorts and followers for each identity, but you cannot interact with your secret identity's cohorts and followers while in your true identity or vice versa. The exception is if your cohort or follower is aware of the connection between your identities; you can interact with such NPCs in both your secret identity and your true identity. However, a cohort or follower that



is aware of the connection between your secret identity and your true identity counts against the total number of cohorts or followers that both of your identities can have, rather than just one of them. If your secret identity is ever compromised, all of your cohorts and followers count against the total number of cohorts and followers that both of your identities can possess until you manage to restore your secret identity's anonymity (see above). Until you manage to do so, you will lose access to any excess cohorts and followers you have.

IDENTITIES AND REPUTATION

Once you have established a secret identity, you can have multiple Reputations (see page 18) with a single organization; one for your true identity and one for your secret identity. These Reputations can be of different types (Fame or Infamy). When interacting with the organization, you gain the associated rewards or penalties with that organization based upon your current identity. If your secret identity is ever compromised, your Reputation for both your secret identity and your true identity becomes equal to the lower of the two Reputations until you manage to restore your secret identity's anonymity (see above). Until you manage to do so, you will either have to work to improve your Reputation for that organization with both identities or suffer the consequences.

IDENTITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

Once you have established a secret identity, you can have multiple Relationships (see page 22) with a single NPC; one for your true identity and one for your secret identity. These Relationships can be of different types (Dysfunction or Healthy) and categories (Animosity, Familial, Friendship, or Peer). When interacting with the NPC, you gain the associated rewards or penalties with that NPC based upon your current identity. If your secret identity is ever compromised, your Relationship for both your secret identity and your true identity becomes equal to the lower of the two Relationships until you manage to restore your secret identity's anonymity (see above). Until you manage to do so, you will either have to work to improve your Relationship with that NPC with both identities or suffer the consequences.

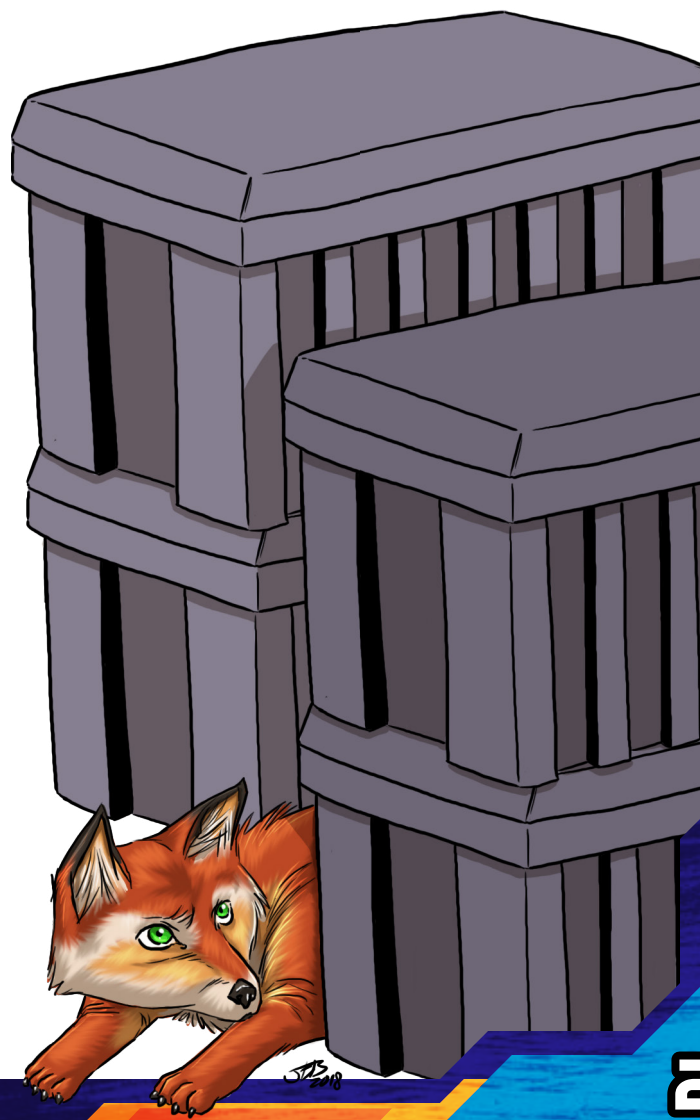
MULTIPLE SECRET IDENTITIES

You can have multiple secret identities simultaneously, though they become harder to establish and maintain the more you have. For each established or compromised secret identity you have, the DC of Disguise checks to establish a new secret identity increases by 5. If an onlooker who has seen you in two or more of your identities (any number of secret identities or your true identity) sees multiple identities using similar abilities, they gain a +5 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to pierce your disguise for every identity they've seen beyond the first. Should they succeed, the GM randomly determines which identities they connect from among those they've seen. If two secret identities are publicly connected,

skill checks to recall information about one of the secret identities reveals information about the other, and scrying attempts on either identity succeed if you are currently assuming either secret identity.

RETIRING A SECRET IDENTITY

You can retire a secret identity from use simply by refusing to use it. It takes 1d12 months for a secret identity to fall out of public knowledge, though this doesn't mean the secret identity never existed; skill checks to recall knowledge about the identity can still reveal information about them (and about their true identity, if the connection was publicly made). However, a retired secret identity no longer counts against the total number of secret identities you have for the purpose of determining Disguise check DCs to assume a new secret identity, though you gain none of the usual benefits for assuming a secret identity when you assume a retired identity. You can bring a secret identity out of retirement by succeeding at Disguise checks to reestablish it, as if it were a new secret identity. Likewise, someone wanting to be your protege can establish your old secret identity to bring it out of retirement, although when doing so the new individual gains the benefits for assuming the secret identity rather than you.



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“Hey you... monkey!” Yenzie huffed as he and Tess chased the vanara through the streets. A longtail by the looks of him, the golden-furred simian clutched a small datajack crystal in his tail with vital information that Yenzie and his crew needed to get paid. Yenzie was pretty sure that there was something about a vesk military offensive too, but only one of those two things was a priority for the ratfolk mechanic.

“Hope mouse man and bug-lady ain’t givin’ up,” the vanara chuckled from several yards away. “This one’s just getting warmed up!”

“We’re never going to catch him,” Ess huffed as she sprinted alongside Yenzie.

“Tell me something I don’t know!”

“Chosuy!” Yenzie never got the chance to question his companion; Chosuy darted from around a corner seconds later, immediately closing the gap between him and the vanara.

“Yeah, you show ’em!” Yenzie cheered as he slowed down. “Pump those freakish adolescent human legs o’ yours, kid!”

SKILL CHALLENGES

It takes more than a strong arm and an arsenal of spells and weapons to be an adventurer. Characters will often stumble upon challenging situations that cannot be solved quickly through combat, situations that require prolonged effort in order to solve. Such challenges always have a specific goal in mind and require dedication (and sometimes teamwork) in order to be overcome.

Skill challenges are a special type of noncombat encounter that require the use of player abilities (specifically skills) to accomplish objectives. Though often distinct from combat encounters, skill challenges can be interwoven with combat encounters to add variety and a sense of purpose or urgency to the combat. Like a creature, a skill challenge has a Challenge Rating that denotes its difficulty in comparison to the party's Average Party Level, and lists the amount of XP that the party receives should they defeat the encounter.

Note that not every obstacle that the PCs face that requires a skill check is a skill challenge. When an obstacle requires only a single skill check, such as an Acrobatics check to jump across a chasm or a Diplomacy check to adjust the attitude of an NPC, it is not a skill challenge. Furthermore, not all obstacles that require multiple skill checks are skill challenges. For instance, a character that fails a Reflex save against a pit trap and falls 10 feet down into the pit does not necessarily enter a skill challenge. (Though she might at the GM's decision, depending upon the hazards that await her at the pit's bottom.)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following terms are used throughout Chapter 3 when discussing how skill challenges work.

Accumulation: One of the four skill challenge clearance methods, this clearance method is designed for skill challenges that favor expertise over proficiency. During an accumulation skill challenge, a higher skill check result typically awards more progress than a lower skill check result.

Bias: During an influence challenge or a skill challenge with the audience special quality, a bias notes that characters gain bonuses or penalties to certain checks due to preconceived notions held by the influence challenge's target NPCs or the audience. Positive biases grant bonuses when incurred, while negative bonuses grant penalties instead.

Chase: One of the five types of skill challenges, wherein participants flee, race, or pursue their opposition to a specific location. Chases always use squares as their clearance method and include opposition.

Clear: Winning, beating, or defeating a skill challenge.

Clearance Method: A unified series of rules that describes how progress is earned during the skill challenge. There are four types of clearance methods described in this chapter, and each skill challenge utilizes one of them: accumulation, points, squares, or successes. Each clearance method has its own series of rules governing its use.

Contest: One of the five types of skill challenges, wherein participants attempt to out score their opposition by either scoring the most points or being the last participant with any points remaining at the end of the skill challenge. Contests always use points as their clearance method and include opposition.

Decisive Initiative: One of four initiative methods, wherein the PCs are the only participants and they simply choose the order in which they act instead of rolling initiative checks. If a skill challenge has no other participants, this is the assumed initiative method for the skill challenge.

Edge: During a verbal duel, an edge is a special advantage

that a participant can use to reroll a skill check to earn progress during that verbal duel. Edges often possess specific triggers and situations during which they can be used based on how they're earned. For example, an edge earned from seeding a bias towards a specific tactic into an audience can only be spent when you attempt to use that tactic's skills to earn progress.

Exchange: During a verbal duel, an exchange is a series of rounds spent debating something. One participant opens the exchange with a skill check to earn completion, then all participants go back and forth trying to outdo each other's result. If a participant fails to oppose their opposition during an exchange, they lose points.

General Skill Challenge: One of the five types of skill challenge, wherein participants simply attempt to clear the skill challenge. They're the most varied of the five types and have no rules or guidelines regarding what they can or cannot include.

Goal: A description of what the PCs are attempting to accomplish during the skill challenge. All skill challenges have a goal, and the GM should make the PCs aware of the goal if they aren't already.

Influence Challenge: One of the five types of skill challenges, wherein participants attempt to sway one or more target NPCs to influence their behavior. Influence challenges always use successes as their clearance method.

Initiative Method: A unified series of rounds that describes how characters determine their initiative count (the order they act in) during a skill challenge. There are four initiative methods: decisional, standard, and team.

Interval: A measure of how much time in the game world that a single skill challenge round represents. Skill challenges can have rounds that represent as little as 6 six seconds or as much as a full day of time, depending upon the skill challenge.

Opposition: One or more characters that your party competes with to win the skill challenge, used synonymously with "opponent" in the context of a skill challenge.

Participant: A character who is attempting to clear a skill



challenge, used synonymously with “character” in the context of a skill challenge.

Points: One of the four skill challenge clearance methods, this clearance method is designed for skill challenges that where participants earn progress when specific circumstances occur. During a points skill challenge, a successful skill check creates an opportunity to score points.

Progress: The medium by which characters’ attempts to clear a skill challenge is tracked. You earn progress by attempting skill checks with primary or secondary skills, and when you earn enough progress the skill challenge is cleared and you win. Each skill challenge’s progress is tracked using one of four methods: movement, points, progress, or successes.

Round: A measure of time wherein all characters participating in the skill challenge act in turn, based on their initiative results. Rounds work similarly in skill challenges as they do in combat, except that the amount of time a round represents in the game world varies based on the skill challenge’s interval (see above).

Scoring Event: In a contest, a scoring event is the conditions under which you score points. All contests use points as their clearance method, and making the scoring event happen is the primary way in which participants score points.

Skills, Primary: A skill that you can reliably use to earn progress during a skill challenge. Primary skills vary from skill challenge to skill challenge, but they’re typically skills that make sense as a tactic for clearing the encounter. For example, it makes sense to use Diplomacy to clear a diplomatic mission, or Athletics to clear an athletic competition; such skills would likely be classified as primary skills for those types of skill challenges as a result.

Skills, Secondary: A skill that you can use to earn progress during a skill challenge with a bit of justification to your GM. Any skill that isn’t called out as a primary skill is a secondary skill, and the GM has the final say on whether or not an individual skill is appropriate as a secondary skill during a skill challenge. Normally you can only use secondary skills to earn progress during a skill challenge if that skill challenge has a secondary skills entry in its stat block, but the GM is free to allow characters to use secondary skills whenever it makes sense to do so. Secondary skills typically have a higher skill DC than primary skills because they represent unorthodox approaches to clearing the skill challenge, however the GM is also free to set a secondary skill DC to whatever they prefer, as determined by the character’s use of the skill and any accompanying roleplaying they perform.

Skill Challenge: A special encounter wherein characters use skills rather than attack rolls or spells as their primary means of defeating the encounter. Skill challenges can take nearly any form imagination, from racing to capture a wanted criminal to pig wrestling. Skill challenges are categorized by the means by which progress towards completing the challenge is measured: accumulation, movement, points, or successes.

Special Qualities (SQ): A special rule that the skill challenge possesses that modifies how the challenge is cleared.

Squares: One of the four skill challenge clearance methods,

this clearance method is designed for skill challenges that involve participants traveling a specific distance or two a specific location. During a squares skill challenge, participants earn progress simply for moving, and typically attempt skill checks to avoid obstacles.

Standard Initiative: One of four initiative methods, wherein participants roll for initiative as they would during combat, with the exception that they can add any one ability modifier associated with one of the skill challenge’s primary score to their initiative check result instead of just Dexterity.

Square Count: During a skill challenge that uses squares as its accumulation, this is the number of squares that you’ve earned advanced as progress. This metric is largely used for the purpose of when participants encounter obstacles.

Successes: One of the four skill challenge clearance methods, this clearance method is designed for skill challenges where a success is a success, regardless of how fancy it is. During a success skill challenge, participants simply need to earn a specific number of successes to clear the skill challenge.

Sway: In an influence challenge, this means earning enough successes to get a target NPC to do what you want. Swaying one or more target NPCs is always directly related to the goal of an influence challenge.

Tactic: During a verbal duel, a tactic is a debating strategy that you assigning your primary skills to. You can only assign one primary skill to one tactic, and your choice causes to interact with your opponent’s attempts to earn progress, making it easier or harder based on the tactics used.

Target NPC: A Nonplayable Character who must be swayed in order to clear an influence challenge.

Team Possession Initiative: One of four initiative methods, wherein participants are grouped into teams that claim possession over the initiative count. While a team possesses the initiative count, members from that team act in order from highest initiative result to lowest initiative result until they lose possession of the initiative count.

Team Rotation Initiative: One of four initiative methods, wherein participants are grouped into teams and participants with the highest initiative result on their team act first, followed by participants with the second-highest initiative result on their team, and so on. Each “sets” of participants act in initiative order.

Verbal Duel: One of the five types of skill challenges, wherein participants attempt to debate a topic either in front of an audience or alone. Contests always use points as their clearance method and include opposition.

Verbal Duelist: An NPC who acts as the opposition during a verbal duel.

Zone: In contests and influence challenges, a zone is an abstraction for an area in a skill challenge. Places like outfield and infield for a contest, or ballroom and restroom for an influence challenge, can both be zones. You typically use actions to move from zone to zone—contests inform you how to move from zone to zone in their description, while influence challenges typically use the switch objective action.

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HOW SKILL CHALLENGES WORK

Like combat, skill challenges are cyclical and skill challenges follow many of the same steps, procedures, and rules as combat. After initial steps that begin a skill challenge, participants act in turn through a regular cycle of rounds until the skill challenge is cleared. Regardless of how it plays out, skill challenges follow this sequence.

- 1. Determining Awareness:** The GM establishes whether any participant is surprised when the skill challenge starts. Normally all participants are aware of the start of the skill challenge unless the skill challenge has the surprise start special quality, in which case the PCs attempt a Perception check against a challenging skill check DC (see Table 3-4: Skill Challenge DCs by CR on page 100, or the surprise start special quality on page 55) or against an opposed Stealth check attempted by their opposition (see page 60).
- 2. Determining Initiative Order:** The GM and players determine the order in which participants will act. If any opposition is present, participants roll for initiative as described under the Initiative section (see below). If no opposition is present in the skill challenge the GM can allow the PCs to decide amongst themselves which order to act in each round without needing to attempt initiative checks to hasten play.
- 3. Surprise Round:** If some but not all of the characters are surprised, the skill challenge begins with a surprise round, during which only characters who aren't surprised can act and their choice of actions is limited, as described in Chapter 8 of the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*. After the surprise round, characters who were unaware determine their initiative and are inserted into the initiative order by the GM based on their initiative counts.
- 4. First Normal Skill Challenge Round:** All characters act according to initiative order. The full suite of options is available to the combatants when they act.
- 5. Continuing the Skill Challenge:** After all characters have had a turn, the next normal skill challenge round begins and characters again act in the initiative order determined for the skill challenge. This step repeats until the skill challenge is cleared. If a new character enters the skill challenge, they determine their initiative and are inserted into the established initiative order as described under Step 3.

BEGINNING AND ENDING A SKILL CHALLENGE

As with combat, the GM determines when a skill challenge begins, often by simply informing the players that they've started a skill challenge, although sometimes they may do so by asking for a Perception check if some PCs could be caught unaware by the skill challenge's beginning. If the GM needs the players to roll for initiative, they do so when the GM informs them that the skill challenge has begun. Skill challenges typically last until they've been cleared or until no participants can attempt skill checks to earn progress, such as if they've all been rendered helpless or unconscious or are dead. When the

skill challenge has been cleared, the skill challenge ends and initiative no longer dictates when characters can act.

INITIATIVE

When a skill challenge begins, all participants determine their initiative so they can determine when they act during the skill challenge. If an initiative method requires you to make an initiative check to determine your initiative count, you roll 1d20 and add your highest ability modifier from among those associated with the skill challenge's primary skills, plus any other bonuses to initiative that you possess (such as the operative's edge class feature or the Improved Initiative feat). For example, if a skill challenge lists Athletics, Acrobatics, Bluff, or Stealth as their primary skills, all participants would be allowed to add their highest ability modifier from among Strength, Dexterity, or Charisma to their initiative check to their d20 result.

There are four different ways of determining initiative based on the kind of skill challenge that participants are acting in—decisional, standard, team possession, and team rotation. These initiative methods are described below. Regardless of the type of initiative method used, no two combatants can act during the same initiative count

DECISIONAL INITIATIVE

During a skill challenge that uses the decisional initiative method, the PCs determine what order they'll act in amongst themselves. Once chosen, they can change their initiative count during the skill challenge using the delay action or keep the initiative count they've decided on.

Decisional initiative is used by default during any skill challenge that doesn't include hazards, haunts, opposition, or any other character or effect that requires an initiative count. In effect, you always use this method for determining initiative if the PCs are the only ones who act during the skill challenge.

Example: If Chosuy, Ess, Hansune, Nuvami, and Yenzie are participating in a skill challenge and there are no other participants or hazards that need to be inserted into the initiative count, they can choose amongst themselves what order they act in rather than roll for initiative.

STANDARD INITIATIVE

During a skill challenge that uses the standard initiative method, participants roll initiative checks and insert their results into the initiative count, acting in order from highest initiative to lowest initiative. This initiative method is identical to the method of determining the initiative count for combat (see Chapter 8 in the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*).

Example: If Chosuy, Ess, Hansune, Nuvami, and Yenzie are participating in a skill challenge that uses standard initiative, each character would roll an initiative check and insert themselves into the initiative count in order from highest result to lowest result. For example, if Chosuy rolls a 18, Ess rolls a 4, Hansune rolls an 11, and Yenzie rolls a 20, Yenzie would act first, followed by Chosuy, then Hansune, and finally Ess.



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TEAM POSSESSION INITIATIVE

During a skill challenge that uses the possession initiative method, participants are arranged into teams of 2 or more and each character rolls an initiative check to determine their initiative count. The teams are then assigned a number based on which team's player rolled the highest (team 1), then the second-highest (team 2), and so on.

At the start of the first round, team 1 starts with possession over the initiative count. Characters on team 1 act in sequential order from highest initiative to lowest initiative. When all contestants on team 1 have acted, the round ends and the next round begins, starting again with the character on team 1 with the highest initiative. Team 1 continues to act to the exclusion of all other teams for as long as they have possession of initiative. Skill challenges using this initiative method note how possession is transferred between teams.

Skill challenges using a possession initiative method note how possession is transferred between teams. Once possession transfers to a different team, that team acts to the exclusion of all others, starting with the participant on the team with the highest initiative, as described above. Typically, the last participant to act on each team is recorded when possession transfers, and the next time that team gains possession over the initiative count, they begin with the next player in the sequence, then proceeds as normal.

Example: If Chosuy, Ess, Hansune, and Yenzie are participating in a skill challenge where Chosuy and Ess are a team versus Hansune and Yenzie, all participants would start by rolling initiative checks normally. If Chosuy rolls a 16, Ess a 13, Hansune a 19, and Yenzie a 15, then Hansune and Yenzie's team would become team 1 while Chosuy and Ess's becomes team 2 because Hansune rolled highest. Team 1 would then act first in initiative order (Hansune, then Yenzie) and once Yenzie's turn ended, the round ends and the next round starts with Hansune. This continues until Chosuy and Ess manage to fulfill some requirement detailed in the skill challenge that transfers possession of the initiative count to their team, at which point Chosuy would act first followed by Ess. If Hansune and Yenzie manage to reclaim possession over the initiative count, the next round would start with whichever participant would have had the next turn before their team lost possession.

TEAM ROTATION INITIATIVE

During a skill challenge that uses the possession initiative method, participants are arranged into teams of 2 or more and each character rolls an initiative check to determine their initiative count. The participants are then grouped into sets based on whether their initiative check result was the highest result on their team, the second-highest on their team, and so on. Each round, participants in each set that had the highest initiative result on their respective teams act first, followed by the participants in each set that had the second-highest initiative result, then the third-highest, and so on. Characters within each set act in initiative order, so that within each set the character with the highest initiative result goes first,

the second-highest result goes second, and so on. When all participants from all sets have acted, the round ends and the next round starts with the participant with the highest initiative result from the first set.

Example: If Chosuy, Ess, Hansune, and Yenzie are participating in a skill challenge where Chosuy and Ess are a team versus Hansune and Yenzie, all participants would start by rolling initiative checks normally. If Chosuy rolls a 7, Ess a 21, Hansune a 24, and Yenzie a 23, then Hansune and Ess would be grouped into the first set and Chosuy and Yenzie would be grouped into the second set. Since Hansune's initiative check result is higher than Ess's, he would act before her in the first set while Yenzie would act before Chosuy in the second set, meaning that the final initiative order would be Hansune, then Ess, followed by Yenzie, and finally Chosuy.

SKILL CHALLENGE ROUND

The amount of time in the game world that is represented by one skill challenge round varies from skill challenge to skill challenge. Each skill challenge notes its interval, which is an indication of how much time passes during a single round during that skill challenge. Skill challenge rounds can take as little as 6 seconds (the same as combat) or as long as 1 day. Most skill challenges use one of the following units of time as their interval—6 seconds, 1 minute, 1 hour, 8 hours, or 1 day. Regardless of the skill challenge's interval, each time that a character acts in a round's normal order, it's call their turn.

Each round begins with the character with the highest initiative count (see below) and then proceeds to the remaining characters in order of their initiative. When a character's turn comes up in the initiative order, that character performs their entire round's worth of actions. For some exceptions, see Other Actions on page 38; for example, delaying can change your initiative count. Regardless, in a normal combat round on their turn, a character can perform either a full action or a handful of shorter actions (see Actions in Skill Challenges on page 36 for more details about which actions a character can take).

When the rules refer to a "full round", they usually mean a span of time from a particular initiative count in one round to the same initiative count in the next round. Effects that last a certain number of rounds ends just before the same initiative count on which they began. Thus, if a spell with a duration of 1 round is cast on initiative count 13, it ends just before initiative count 13 on the following round.

SURPRISE ROUNDS

Most skill challenges don't have surprise rounds because players are aware when they begin, but in some cases the GM might decide that a surprise round is appropriate. In this situation, use the rules for determining who is surprised at the start of a skill challenge in Chapter 8 of the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*, as if the skill challenge were a combat.

Surprised participants take the same penalties during a surprise round as surprised combatants do in combat.

SKILL CHALLENGE BASICS

This section presents the basic actions and information needed to participate in a skill challenge. A full glossary defining all terminology used in skill challenges appears starting on page 30, sample skill challenges appear on page 62, and in-depth guidelines for creating your own skill challenges appear on page 98.

SKILL CHALLENGES ARE ENCOUNTERS

One of the most important things to remember about skill challenges is that they're considered encounters in the same way that combat is an encounter. As a result, whenever a term is used during a skill challenge that has a definition in the Combat Basics section of Chapter 8 in the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*, you should generally use the definition provided in that section if no variant exists specifically for skill challenges. This includes terms like "attack roll" or "allies" as well as "saving throw", "challenge rating", and the like. Also, rules regarding how dice are rolled and rerolled and how values are multiplied are also used in skill challenges unless specifically mentioned otherwise.

For example, if a skill challenge asks you to attempt a saving throw, follow the same guidelines for doing so that are detailed in the Combat Basics section of Chapter 8 in the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*. As a general rule, if a skill challenge references a rule or mechanic that isn't specifically defined within Chapter 3 of the Advanced Skill Guide or cited as being from another source, it probably uses the same definition from the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*.

HOW DO I WIN A SKILL CHALLENGE?

The act of "winning" a skill challenge is referred to as "clearing" the skill challenge. You clear a skill challenge by earning a specific amount of progress, which is indicated in the skill challenge's stat block. The process by which you earn progress is known as the skill challenge's clearance method. For a full breakdown on how progress is earned, see Clearance Methods on page 40.

When PCs are participating in a skill challenge, they normally combine all progress that their party earns together to determine when they clear the skill challenge. For example, if Chosuy and Hansune are participating in a skill challenge that requires 7 successes to clear, then they clear the skill challenge when they've earned 7 total successes between the two of them. Skill challenges with the individual progress special quality require each participant to track their own progress separately to determine when they clear the skill challenge.

Earning progress to clear a skill challenge usually requires an action of some kind. The type of action needed to earn progress is listed under the Action entry in the skill challenge's stat block, and is largely determined by the skill challenge's clearance method. In most skill challenges, earning progress is a move action that requires a successful skill check with a primary skill.

SKILL CHECKS

For most skill challenges, you need to attempt a skill check in order to earn progress towards clearing a skill challenge. This follows the same rules for skill checks as detailed in Chapter 5 of the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*, except earning progress is essentially a universal skill task that is associated with all skills, similar to how Identify Creature and Recall Knowledge work. That having been said, skill check attempts to earn progress can also be classified as other skill tasks when using those skill tasks makes sense for the skill challenge, as determined by the GM.

For example, if Yenzie is attempting to use the Computers skill to hack into a database as part of a skill challenge, the GM can rule that Yenzie's attempt to earn progress counts both as a Computers check to earn progress and as a Computers check to gain root access to a computer terminal for the purpose of determining whether Yenzie gains a benefit from his class features or feats. While this decision is ultimately left to the GM, GMs are encouraged to exercise logical leniency when determining whether PCs gain bonuses from their class features and feats during skill challenges—to put another way, if it makes sense and doesn't break the encounter, generally allow it.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SKILLS

Each skill challenge has a primary skills entry that lists one or more skills that can be used during that skill challenge to earn progress, as well as the skill DC and relative difficulty of the check. This difficulty assumes that the participant attempting the skill has a level or CR that is equal to the skill challenge's CR. If a skill isn't specifically called out as a primary skill in the skill challenge's entry, it's a secondary skill unless the GM decides otherwise. Secondary skills typically have a skill DC that is 5 higher than the most difficult primary skill indicated by the skill challenge. For example, if the hardest primary skill has a challenging DC, then the DC for a secondary skill in that skill challenge is likely difficult.

Not all skill challenges allow the use of secondary skills. For example, skill challenges that use points as their clearance method often don't allow secondary skills, nor do skill challenges with the specific skills special quality (see page 54). The GM has final say over what skills are primary skills for a skill challenge and what skills are secondary skills, and can add or remove skills from either list at their discretion.

TYPES OF SKILL CHALLENGES

Skill challenges fall into several types based upon shared rules



used among them. The four types of skill challenges described in the *ADVANCED SKILL GUIDE* are: general skill challenges, chases, contests, influence challenges, and verbal duels. Each type of skill challenge is described briefly below, along with a brief description of any rules that define that type of skill challenge.

GENERAL SKILL CHALLENGES

A general skill challenge follows the basic rules for skill challenges, but has no unique or required rules regarding how it's run. They're essentially the "default" skill challenge—if you're not running a skill challenge that falls neatly into one of the other skill challenge categories, you're probably running a general skill challenge.

CHASES

A chase is a special kind of skill challenge where participants are attempting to reach a specific location before another group catches them, escapes, or beats them there. A summary of chases can be found below—for more information regarding chases, see page 70.

- » **Clearance Method:** All chases use squares as their clearance method. For more information about movement as a clearance method, see page 70.
- » **Opposition:** All verbal duels include one or more characters who serve as the opposition. The opposition is

the person or persons that you're chasing, fleeing from, or racing to the end of the skill challenge. For more information about opposition, see page 56.

CONTESTS

A contest is a special kind of skill challenge where participants are attempting to score more points than their opposition. A summary of contests can be found below—for more information regarding contests, see page 75.

- » **Clearance Method:** All contests use points as their clearance method, varying between casualties and accrument on a challenge-by-challenge basis. For more information about points as a clearance method, see page 44.
- » **Opposition:** All verbal duels include one or more characters who serve as the opposition. The opposition is essentially the person or persons you're competing or playing against. For more information about opposition, see page 56.

INFLUENCE CHALLENGES

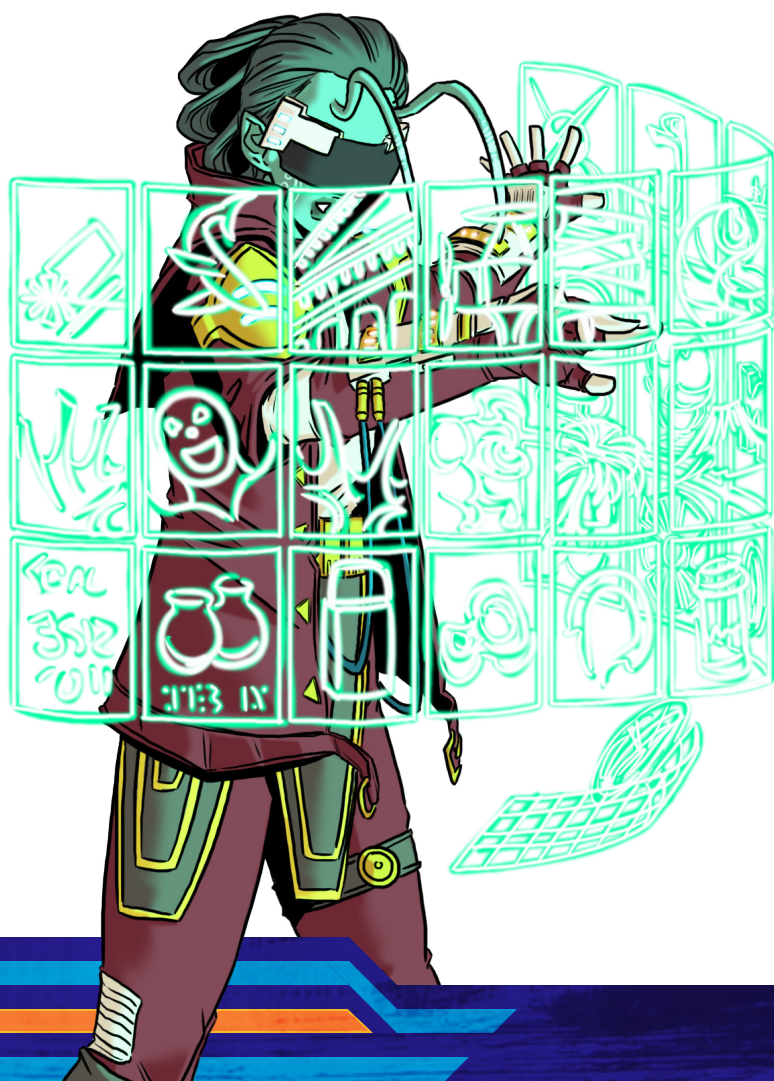
An influence challenge is a special kind of skill challenge where participants are attempting to sway the hearts and minds of specific characters, called Target NPCs. A summary of influence challenges can be found below—for more information regarding influence challenges, see page 86.

- » **Primary Skills:** Each target NPC includes their own list of primary skills that differ from target NPC to target NPC. This list is determined by the target NPC's interests.
- » **Secondary Skills:** Influence challenges always allow the use of secondary skills.
- » **Clearance Method:** All influence challenges use successes as their clearance method. For more information about points as a clearance method, see page 40.

VERBAL DUELS

A verbal duel is a special kind of skill challenge where participants participate in an organized debate of some kind, with or without an audience. A summary of verbal duels can be found below—for more information regarding verbal duels, see page 92.

- » **Primary Skills:** A verbal duel stat block doesn't list any primary skills because the skill challenge's primary skills differ for each participant. Before a verbal duel begins, characters choose which debate tactics they want to prepare for the verbal duel, and their debate tactics determine which skills are primary skill for that participant during the skill challenge.
- » **Clearance Method:** All verbal duels use point casualties as their clearance method. This means that all participants start with a number of points and lose points should they lose a debate. For more information about points as a clearance method, see page 40.
- » **Opposition:** All verbal duels include one or more characters who serve as the opposition. The opposition is essentially the person or persons you're debating against. For more information about opposition, see page 60.



SKILL CHALLENGE ACTIONS

This section presents the basic actions and information needed to participate in a skill challenge. A full glossary defining all terminology used in skill challenges appears starting on page 30, sample skill challenges appear on page 62, and in-depth guidelines for creating your own skill challenges appear on page 98. Actions that are associated with specific types of skill challenges, such as contests or chases, are noted here, but their full rules are found in specific sections devoted to those types of skill challenges, found later in this chapter.

ACTION TYPES

As in combat, an action's type essentially tells you how long the action takes to perform within the framework of the round's interval (see page 33). Skill challenges use the same five types of actions as in combat—standard actions, move actions, swift actions, full actions, and reactions.

In a normal round, you can perform one standard action, one move action, and one swift action, or you can instead perform one full action. You can also take one reaction each round. Some actions are classified as other actions, meaning they don't fall within this five-action paradigm.

STANDARD ACTIONS

A standard action is usually the main action you take each round. Below are examples of standard actions.

COUNTER SWAY (SUCCESSES)

During an influence challenge, you can attempt to counter the opposition's efforts to sway a target NPC. The full rules for countering sway can be found in the Influence Challenge section on page 86.

CREATE A DISADVANTAGE (SQUARES)

During a chase, you can attempt to create a disadvantage for the opposition as a standard action. The full rules for creating a disadvantage can be found in the Chase section on page 70.

GAIN AN ADVANTAGE (SQUARES)

During a skill challenge that uses squares as its clearance method, you can attempt to gain an advantage as a standard action by attempting a skill check using one of the skill challenge's primary skills against the listed DC. If you succeed on a skill check to gain an advantage, you immediately advance 1 square, plus 1 additional square for every 5 that your skill check's result exceeds the DC.

Skill checks attempted to gain an advantage count as skill checks to earn progress for all purposes and effects. If the skill challenge has the limited advantage special quality, you cannot advance more squares than the number indicated by that quality each round.

OBSCURE TRAIL (SQUARES)

During a chase, you can attempt to obscure your tracks, making it

more difficult for the opposition to follow you. The full rules for obscuring your trail can be found in the Chase section on page 71.

TRACK QUARRY (SQUARES)

During a chase, you can attempt to find and follow your quarry's tracks, allowing you to follow the footsteps of those that you're pursuing. The full rules for tracking quarry can be found in the Chase section on page 71.

MOVE ACTIONS

Move actions take less time and focus than standard actions, but are no less important during a skill challenge. Below are examples of move actions.

DISCOVER INFORMATION (ANY)

You can attempt to discover information about any skill challenge that you're participating in as a move action by attempting a skill check against a DC equal to $15 + 1\frac{1}{2} \times$ the skill challenge's CR. (This is equivalent to a challenging skill check for a skill challenge of that skill challenge's CR). The skills you can use to discover information about a skill challenge vary based upon the skill challenge's type, as follows:

- » **General Skill Challenges:** Perception, plus any additional skills determined relevant by the GM.
- » **Chase:** Perception, plus any additional skills determined relevant by the GM.
- » **Contest:** Any skill listed as a primary skill for that skill challenge, plus any Profession skill determined relevant by the GM.
- » **Influence Challenge:** Diplomacy or Sense Motive.
- » **Verbal Duel:** Sense Motive.

If you succeed at a skill check to discover information about a skill challenge, you learn one piece of information about the skill challenge of your choice, plus one additional piece of information for every 5 by which your skill check's result beats the DC. A PC who succeeds at this skill check chooses one of categories listed in the skill challenge's stat block (such as primary skills, interval, clearance method, and so on) and the GM provides one piece of information from the chosen category that is relevant to that PC. For instance, if Chosuy wants to know what primary skills he can use during a skill challenge after he succeeds at a skill check to discover information about the skill challenge, the GM might choose



to inform Chosuy that he can use the Piloting skill rather than Mysticism or Bluff because the GM knows that Chosuy has a good Piloting skill bonus and would be more likely to correctly determine when he could use a skill that he's good at.

You can freely share any information you discover with other participants, provided you are capable of conveying, receiving, and understanding this information.

SWAY THE AUDIENCE (POINTS)

During a skill challenge with the audience special quality (see page 50), you can attempt to sway the audience's opinions of you and your allies to help you succeed. In order to sway the audience, you must have successfully discovered at least one of the audience's biases using the discover information action (see above). As a move action, you attempt a Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check with a DC equal to 10 + 1-1/2 × the skill challenge's CR + the crowd's size modifier + the audience's attitude modifier. If you succeed, the audience's attitude towards you improves by one step, plus one additional step for every 5 by which your result exceeds this DC. If you fail, the audience's attitude towards you does not change. If you fail by 5 or more, the audience's attitude towards you worsens by one step, plus one additional step for every 5 by which your result failed by.

Alternatively, a successful check to adjust an audience's also attitude allows you to seed a bias into the audience if they have an attitude of indifferent or better towards you.

SWITCH OBJECTIVE (SUCCESSES)

During an influence challenge, you can attempt to move from your current location to the location of an ally or another objective that you've previously located. The full rules for switching objectives can be found in the Influence Challenge section on page 86.

ACTIONS IN SKILL CHALLENGES

Standard Actions	
Counter sway	Obscure trail
Create a disadvantage	Track quarry
Gain an advantage	
Move Actions	
Discover information	Switch objective
Seed the audience	
Full Actions	
Locate objective	Rest
Reactions	
Block	Fake out
Catch	
Other Actions	
Aid another	Ready an action
Bypass an obstacle	Set-up
Delay	Strike
Earn progress	Use a combat action
Pass	Use a special ability
Push self	

FULL ACTIONS

A full action requires your entire turn to complete. If you take a full action, you can't take your usual standard, move, and swift actions.

LOCATE OBJECTIVE (SUCCESSES)

During an influence challenge, you can attempt to locate a target NPC, uncover hidden secrets or information, or perform other objectives that need to be fulfilled during the skill challenge. The full rules for locating an objective can be found in the Influence Challenge section on page 86.

REST (SQUARES)

During a chase with an interval of 10 minutes or longer, you can spend time taking no other actions but to recover your energy. The full rules for resting can be found in the Chase section on page 70.

REACTIONS

A reaction is a special action you can take even if its not your turn, but only after a defined and concrete trigger. You can't use a reaction before the first time you act in combat. You can



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take only one reaction each round; you regain your reaction at the start of your turn.

Unless their descriptions state otherwise, purely defensive reactions interrupt the triggering action; resolve the reaction first, then continue resolving the triggering action. Otherwise, resolve the reaction immediately after the triggering action.

BLOCK (REACTION)

During a contest with the block special quality, you can attempt to intercept catches, passes, and serves, as well as defend target areas and prevent your opponents from scoring. The full rules for blocking can be found in the Contest section on page 76.

CATCH (REACTION)

During a contest with the catch special quality, you can attempt to catch objects that are passed to you using the pass action. The full rules for catching can be found in the Contest section on page 76.

FAKE OUT (REACTION)

During a contest with the fake out special quality, deceive opponents into making poorer plays. The full rules for faking out opponents can be found in the Contest section on page 76.

OTHER ACTIONS

The following actions do not use the five-action paradigm described above. These actions typically fall into one of two categories.

If an action lists “varied” in its title bar, the action can be utilized using multiple types of actions.

If an action lists “no action” in its title bar, it does not require an action to use but typically can only be used when a defined and concrete trigger occurs, similar to a reaction.

AID ANOTHER (VARIES)

You can attempt to help an ally earn progress or bypass an obstacle during a skill challenge. In order to assist an ally, you must succeed on a DC 10 skill check. If you’re helping an ally earn progress, you must use one of the skill challenge’s primary skills. If you’re helping an ally bypass an obstacle, you must use one of the listed skills that can be used to bypass that obstacle, as indicated in its entry. Attempting to aid an ally uses the same action required to earn progress or bypass the obstacle, as determined by the skill challenge you’re participating in.

If you succeed, your ally gains a +2 bonus to its next skill check made with any primary skill to earn progress or clear an obstacle. Multiple characters can aid the same ally, and these bonuses stack.

Secondary Skills: You can use a secondary skill to aid an ally only if you could use that skill to earn progress or bypass an obstacle during the skill challenge, as indicated by the skill challenge or the GM. The skill DC to aid an ally using a secondary skill is DC 15.

BYPASS AN OBSTACLE (NO ACTION)

During a skill challenge that uses squares as its clearance

method, you can attempt a skill check to bypass an obstacle that has a square count whose value is equal to your current square total or whose square count your square total equals or exceeds when you advance in squares to earn progress. Bypassing an obstacle requires no action—it is part of the action used to earn progress. Bypassing an obstacle requires a successful skill check with one of the skill challenge’s primary skills, as noted in the obstacle’s entry. If you succeed at your skill check, the obstacle doesn’t hinder your progress and you take no ill effect from the obstacle. If you fail your skill check, your square count stops at your current square count and you take the penalty noted by the obstacle. The full rules for obstacles can be found on page 56.

DELAY (NO ACTION)

You can delay taking an action during a skill challenge until other characters have taken their turns, functioning exactly as described in the Actions in Combat section of Chapter 8 in the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*.

EARN PROGRESS (VARIES)

You can attempt to earn progress once per turn during a skill challenge, progressing closer towards clearing it. The action used to earn progress during a skill challenge varies depending upon the skill challenge’s type and other factors. For more information on earning progress during skill challenges, see the Clearance Method section on page 40.

PASS (VARIES)

During a contest with the pass special quality, you can attempt to transfer your possession over an object to another participant who is on your team. Passing can be done as a full action or as a reaction. The full rules for passing can be found in the Contest section on page 76.

PUSH SELF (NO ACTION)

During a contest with the push self special quality, you can attempt to push yourself into gaining additional reactions to use throughout the round. The full rules for pushing yourself can be found in the Contest section on page 77.

READY AN ACTION (NO ACTION)

You can ready an action to occur when a certain trigger occurs, functioning exactly as described in the Actions in Combat section of Chapter 8 in the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*.

SET-UP (VARIES)

During a contest with the set-up special quality, you can take an object defined by the skill challenge’s scoring event attempt to set up a more effective attempt at scoring for a teammate. Set-up can be done as a full action or as a reaction. The full rules for setting up strikes can be found in the Contest section on page 77.

STRIKE (VARIES)

During a contest with the strike special quality, you can take



an object defined by the skill challenge's scoring event and attempt to use it to score points. Striking can be done as a full action or as a reaction. The full rules for striking can be found in the Contest section on page 77.

USE A COMBAT ACTION (VARIES)

You can generally use any action that you could use in combat during a skill challenge, assuming that the action represents a viable means to solve a problem as determined by the GM. This includes, but isn't limited to, actions like drawing a weapon, attacking, standing up from prone, or any other action described in the Actions in Combat section of Chapter 8 in the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*.

Using a combat action during a skill challenge requires the same type of action during a skill challenge as it would during combat. For example, using the attack action is normally a standard action during combat, so using the attack action during a skill challenge is also a standard action. Since skill challenges vary the amount of time that a round—and therefore an action—takes in the game world, this can sometimes mean that combat actions aren't particularly time-effective during a skill challenge. For example, if you use the attack action during a skill challenge with an interval of 8 hours, then you essentially took roughly 8 hours to attack once.

As a result, you should generally only concern yourself with using combat actions during a skill challenge with an interval of 6 seconds (the same as a combat encounter). For skill challenges with longer intervals, the GM should consider running a separate combat during the skill challenge and counting the total time spent in combat against the skill challenge normally. For example, if you're running a skill challenge with an interval of 1 minute and a combat starts, it might be a good idea to pause the skill challenge, conduct the combat as normal, and then count the rounds spent in combat as skill challenge rounds.

USE A SPECIAL ABILITY (VARIES)

You can generally use any special ability that you could use in combat during a skill challenge, assuming that the action represents a viable means to solve a problem as determined by the GM. This includes, but isn't limited to, casting spells, using class features, feats or racial traits, or activating items.

Using a special ability during a skill challenge requires the same type of action during a skill challenge as it would during combat. For example, casting *mirror image* is normally a standard action during combat, so casting *mirror image* during a skill challenge is also a standard action. Since skill challenges vary the amount of time that a round—and therefore an action—takes in the game world, this can sometimes mean that some special abilities aren't particularly time-effective during a skill challenge. As a general rule, you must be able to benefit from a special ability for a full skill challenge round in order to gain any benefit from its use during the skill challenge.

For example, if a 3rd-level technomancer casts *invisibility* on themselves during a skill challenge with an interval of 10 minutes, the spell provides no benefit on skill checks to

USING OUTLIER ABILITIES

In a skill challenge, an outlier ability is any class feature, feat, racial trait, spell, theme benefit, or similar ability that, while thematically appropriate, would mechanically disrupt the skill challenge if used as written. For example, it might be thematically appropriate for a high-level spellcaster to cast *teleport* during a skill challenge that uses movement as its clearance method, but as-written that spell would likely render the entire skill challenge obsolete. Likewise, *invisibility* is appropriate for skill challenges that use Stealth as a primary skill, but the bonus it provides is so great that it could allow the participant to automatically succeed at all Stealth checks during the encounter.

When a participant wishes to use an ability like this, consider using one of the following guidelines to help streamline the outlier ability while also preventing said ability from ruining the encounter. As a general rule, GMs should provide participants with whichever option provides the most benefit to the participant and the least disruption to the encounter.

- » **Bolster a Skill Check:** At the GM's decision, use of an outlier ability can provide up to a +8 enhancement bonus to skill checks to earn progress for its duration. For instance, a character using *life bubble* might gain a +8 enhancement bonus to Survival checks to bypass a relevant hazard.
- » **Use a Different Bonus:** At the GM's decision, use of an outlier ability can allow the participant to substitute a different level-dependent statistic (like base attack bonus or caster level) for their ranks in a specific skill to earn progress. For instance, a technomancer using *dimension door* to cross a chasm might be able to substitute their ranks in Athletics with their caster level, and their Strength modifier for their key spellcasting modifier (Intelligence).

earn progress because the spell's duration doesn't last the entire round (in this case, 10 minutes). In contrast, a 10th-level technomancer who casts *invisibility* on themselves gains the spell's benefit on their skill check during the same skill challenge for 1 round, while a 20th-level technomancer would receive the spell's benefit for 2 rounds.

Since this action cannot hope to account for every special ability that can or will ever exist, the GM should use some discretion when applying the effects of special abilities not specifically designed for skill challenges to those encounters. The Using Outlier Abilities sidebar (see above) offers plenty of suggestions aimed at helping GMs adjudicate player abilities in ways that are fun and fair for them but ultimately balanced and not game-breaking for the skill challenge. As a general rule, if the use of a special ability (such as a teleportation spell) would break or automatically clear a skill challenge, try to make sure that skill challenge has special qualities that explain why those tactics don't work, or invent some for yourself. Ultimately, the GM has the final say over what can and cannot work during a skill challenge.

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CLEARANCE METHODS

All skill challenges use one of four methods to track character's progress during the skill challenge. Those methods are accumulation, movement, points, and successes. Each clearance method adds a different feel and flair to a skill challenge, and a canny GM must be sure to carefully consider the four clearance methods when deciding how to build a skill challenge.

This section describes how clearance methods function in the context of skill challenges, and provides rules for using each clearance method to run fun, evocative skill challenges.

WHAT IS A CLEARANCE METHOD?

A skill challenge's clearance method is the system by which progress towards clearing that skill challenge is tracked. Each clearance method has unique mechanics that provide it with its own unique flavor and feel. Points-based skill challenges are best at mimicking the feel of contests and sports, while squares-based skill challenges are best at mimicking long treks to distance locations, or fast-paced jaunts across short distances.

Each of the four clearance methods is summarized briefly below and described in detail on the following pages.

ACCUMULATION

Skill challenges that require participants to amass something use accumulation as their clearance method. They work best when participants are building up towards a large end goal and when more skillful attempts yield larger results. For example, accumulation works well for tracking information that the PCs gather information from an old archive. As the PCs succeed at skill challenges to earn progress, they might pick up small bits of information at specific intervals that build into a larger answer that they've been searching for. PCs who are better at researching will ultimately help their party more than those who aren't.

Rules for using accumulation as a skill challenge's clearance method are described on page 42.

POINTS

Skill challenges that require that the PCs earn more successes than an opposing group use points as their clearance method. They work best when the PCs are required to outperform some other opposing character or group or when the skill challenge itself is literally scored by a panel or judge. For example, points work well for playing baseball. As the PCs successfully score runs on the opposition, they earn points and ultimately win the game if, after a number of innings have passed, they have more points than the opposition.

Rules for using points as a skill challenge's clearance method are described on page 44.

SQUARES

Skill challenges that require participants to move from one location to another use squares as their clearance method. They work best when the ultimate goal is to reach a certain location, and skill challenges using this clearance method

usually state how long of a distance each square earned represents—this can be as little as 5 feet or as much as 12 miles or more. For example, squares works well for racing to a forgotten ruin. As the PCs succeed at skill checks to earn squares, they physically move closer to their goal.

Rules for using squares as a skill challenge's clearance method are described on page 46.

SUCCESSES

Skill challenges that require participants to succeed at skill checks and nothing more use successes as their clearance method. They work best when it doesn't matter how good participants do at earning progress, a success is only ever a single success. For example, successes work well for cooking a meal. If a skill check represents cutting an onion, then it doesn't matter how much you succeed at your check by, the onion is cut either way.

Rules for using accumulation as a skill challenge's clearance method are described on page 48.

EARNING PROGRESS

The purpose of all clearance methods is to provide a unique set of rules that allow PCs to earn progress towards completing skill challenges in a manner that makes the scenario described by the skill challenge come alive. Earning progress typically requires an action (see Skill Challenge Actions on page 36), and once the total amount of progress you've earned equals the amount indicated by the skill challenge, you clear it.

In most skill challenges, the PCs work together to clear skill challenges. As a result, all progress earned by all members of the party is totaled together to determine when the entire group clears the skill challenge. If the skill challenge has the individual progress special quality, however, each participant must track their own progress separately from other participants. Although allies can use actions like aid another to help their fellows, ultimately each participant is responsible for clearing the skill challenge in order to succeed in this type of skill challenge.

LOSING PROGRESS

In some skill challenges (particularly those with the backlash or demerit special qualities), it is possible to lose progress that you've already earned. In some skill challenges, particularly



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those that use movement as their clearance method, reducing your progress can be a tactical decision that allows you to group up with allies or avoid an obstacle. Other times the GM might rule that participants lose progress as a consequence for actions that take place during or adjacent to the skill challenge. For example, if you launch an EMP in the middle of a computer database where you're researching, the GM might rule that you lose progress as a result of the computer's databanks being scrambled by the attack.

If an effect causes you to lose progress, simply subtract the lost progress from your total progress earned. Lost progress typically cannot be restored, but as long as you have time remaining you can usually earn more.

CLEARANCE DESCRIPTIONS

Descriptions of each of the four clearance methods are presented in a standard format in the order below. Each category of information found in the clearance method's description is explained and defined in the appropriate sections that follow (along with references for further information if necessary). The sample also includes either typical language found throughout this chapter regarding skill challenges or a summary of what the entry typically contains.

OVERVIEW

Each clearance method begins with a brief paragraph that provides an overview of the clearance method, how it works, and suggestions for what kinds of encounters are best handled by that clearance method.

EARNING PROGRESS

The first subsection detailed under each clearance method describes how progress is earned under that clearance method. This section also includes information like what action is used to earn the progress, how much progress is earned per action, and whether or not secondary skills can be used in that kind of skill challenge.

METHOD-SPECIFIC SECTIONS

Each clearance method includes a number of sections unique to that clearance method that describe additional rules that apply to that specific clearance method. Some clearance methods have several method-specific sections while others have none—ultimately the number of method-specific sections is determined by the complexity and nuance of the clearance method in general.

AUTOMATIC SUCCESSES

This section describes what happens when you roll a natural 20 on a skill check to earn progress during a skill challenge that uses the clearance method. Some clearance methods allow you to critically succeed, which is when you earn extra progress for rolling a natural 20, while others don't under normal circumstances.

AUTOMATIC FAILURES

This section describes what happens when you roll a natural 1 on a skill check to earn progress during a skill challenge that uses the clearance method.

CLEARING THE SKILL CHALLENGE

This section describes under what circumstances you've considered to have cleared a skill challenge that uses the clearance method.

SKILL CHALLENGE EXAMPLE

This section includes a brief script involving a crew of PCs who are participants in a skill challenge that uses the clearance method. All four examples use the same party of 2nd-level characters—Chosuy (N human soldier), Ess (N lashunta technomancer), Hansune (LN kitsune operative), Nuvani (NG human solarian), and Yenzie (CN ysoki mechanic).

SAMPLE SKILL CHALLENGE

The skill challenge described in sample script (see above) is provided for the GM in this section in full for reference, or for use if you found the scenario especially inspiring!



ACCUMULATION

In a skill challenge that uses accumulation as its clearance method, participants work their way towards a larger goal. This clearance method rewards skillful expertise over mere proficiency, meaning that you accumulate more progress for a skill check with a high result than you would for a low result.

ACCUMULATING PROGRESS

During a skill challenge that uses accumulation as its clearance method, you can attempt to accumulate progress as a move action using one of the skills listed as one of the skill challenge's primary skills. If either the skill challenge or your GM allows secondary skills to be used to accumulate progress, you can typically do so. If the skill challenge doesn't list a secondary skills DC, add 5 to the highest DC from among those listed as primary skills and use the result as the skill challenge's secondary skills DC.

Whenever you succeed at a skill check to accumulate progress during a skill challenge, you accumulate progress equal to $1d4 +$ the ability score modifier associated with the skill check you succeeded at. For example, you would use Dexterity if you succeeded at an Acrobatics check to accumulate progress, or Strength if you succeeded at an Athletics check to accumulate progress. For every 5 by which the result of your skill check exceeds the DC, add +1 to the amount of progress you earn.

On average you'll accumulate more progress when you succeed at a skill check with a skill that you're an expert at. For each of the following conditions you meet, improve the die that you roll to determine the amount of progress you accumulate by one step on the following progression: $d4 \rightarrow d6 \rightarrow d8 \rightarrow d10 \rightarrow d12$.

- » The skill is a class skill for you.
- » You have an insight bonus of +3 or higher on checks made with the skill, such as from Skill Focus.
- » You have at least 5 ranks in the skill.
- » You have at least 10 ranks in the skill.

ACCUMULATION THRESHOLDS

All skill challenges that use accumulation as their clearance method possess a number of thresholds equal to $3 + 1/3$ the skill challenge's CR (minimum 0). Each threshold is assigned a number representing the amount of progress that participants must accumulate to reach the threshold. The amount of progress associated with each threshold is typically spaced out as evenly as possible between 0 progress and the amount of progress that is needed to clear the skill challenge, with the final threshold being that final amount.

For example, a CR 2 skill challenge requires 22 progress and has a total of 3 thresholds, so those thresholds will typically occur at 7 progress, 14 progress, and 22 progress.

Accumulation thresholds usually describe something that happens when the participants reach that threshold. This could be a small description of something learned, or it could be an event that triggers upon reaching that point in the skill challenge. The events special quality (see page 53) allows GMs to assign such an event to an accumulation skill challenge.

AUTOMATIC SUCCESSES

When you attempt a skill check to accumulate progress and roll a natural 20 (the d20 comes up 20), your skill check automatically succeeds. If the total result of the skill check also meets or exceeds the skill challenge's DC, your attempt to accumulate progress is a critical success. You roll twice to determine the amount of progress you accumulate, add your usual bonuses to each based on the result of your check, and add both results together to determine the total amount of progress accumulated.

If the total result of the skill check doesn't meet the skill challenge's DC, your skill check still automatically succeeds, but the attempt isn't a critical success.

AUTOMATIC FAILURES

When you attempt a skill check to accumulate progress and roll a natural 1 (the d20 comes up 1), your skill check automatically fails.

CLEARING THE SKILL CHALLENGE

You clear a skill challenge that uses accumulation as its clearance method when you earn the amount of progress listed in the skill challenge's clearance entry.

ACCUMULATION SKILL CHALLENGE EXAMPLE

The following is an example script of how a skill challenge that uses accumulation as its clearance method is run. This example uses the Fix That Ship! skill challenge which is provided below.

The PCs have recently flown through an asteroid belt, and their starship's engines have been severely damaged. The PCs must repair their starship before they can continue on-course to meet with their employer on the planet Ulo.

GM: Alright, everyone! Roll for initiative.

Yenzie: Well, if the starship's broken then my Engineering should let me help repair it, right? I'll use Intelligence for my initiative check, and I rolled a 19. Awesome!

Chosuy: I'm...not so great at Engineering. Is there something I can do with my Strength?

GM: Intelligence will certainly work, Yenzie. Chosuy, the ship's engines need to be pushed back in place and have their dents bent out. Sure, you can use Strength!

Chosuy: Awesome! And I rolled a ... 7?!

Yenzie: Harsh. Looks like I'm up first. I'm going to try an Engineering check to see if I can repair any of the ship's functions. I rolled a 10 and add +11 to my check—21?

GM: A 21 is good, but your result isn't high enough to get you any additional bonuses, though. Roll me some progress!

Yenzie: I rolled a 5?! Nice. That means I accumulate 7 progress. (Yenzie has 2 ranks in Engineering and Engineering is a class skill for him. He doesn't have a +3 insight bonus to Engineering checks yet, so his progress die is d6. He adds his Intelligence bonus of +2. He rolls $1d6+2$ for his progress.)

GM: Well, for 7 progress you determine that several key



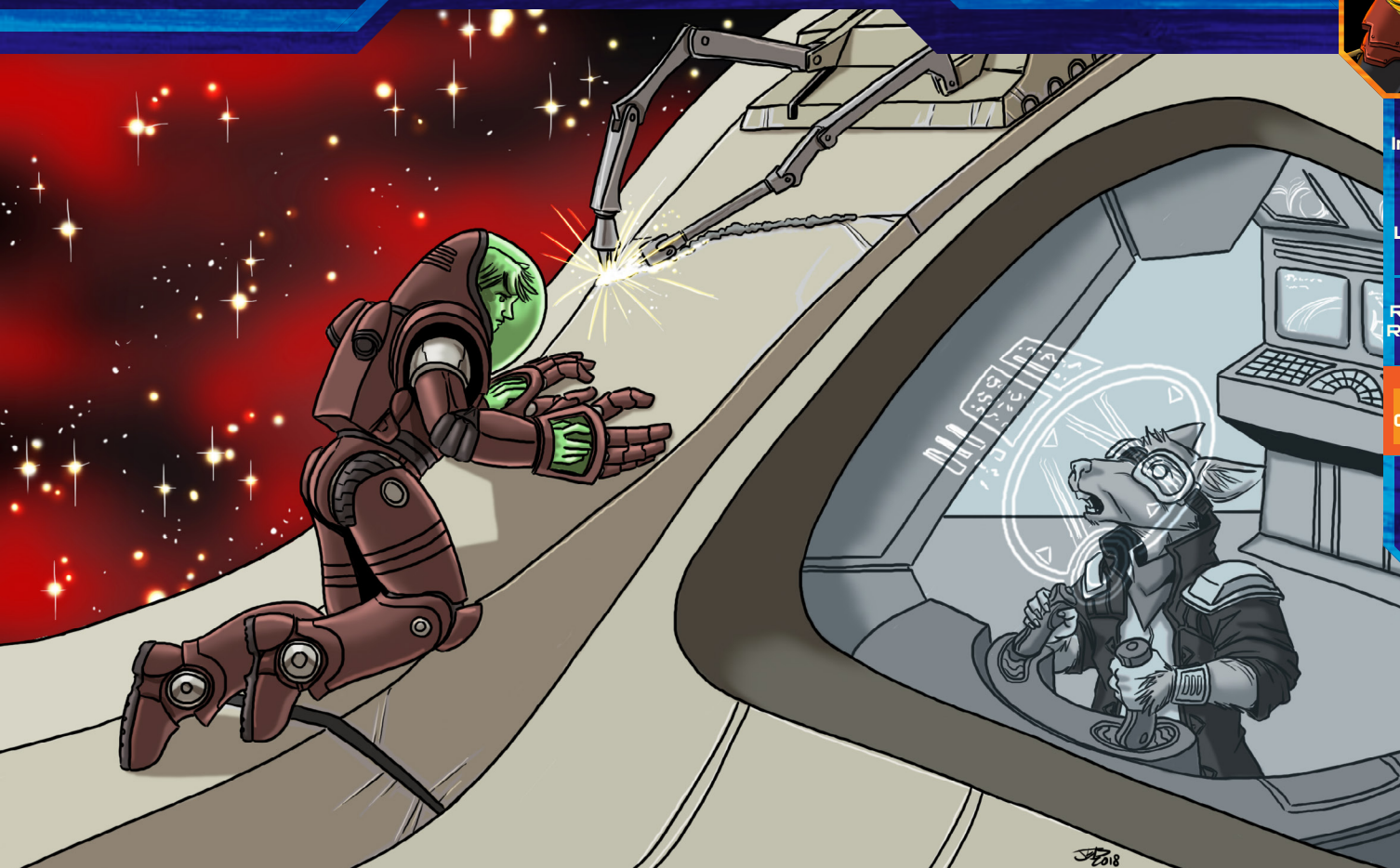
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panels are dented and must be forced back into place. This allows you guys to attempt Athletics checks to accumulate progress, but you need to strap on your armor and go outside of the ship into the vacuum of space to do so.

Chosuy: Athletics you say? Well, its my turn and I'd be delighted to try.... Aw yes! Natural 20!

GM: Awesome! And a 20 without your modifiers would be enough to succeed at this check, so its a critical hit. You said your Athletics bonus is +10, right? That would be enough for you to earn +2 extra progress.

Chosuy: I rolled a 7 and an 8! That means I accumulate 20 progress! (Chosuy has 2 ranks in Athletics and Athletics is a class skill for him. He also has Skill Focus (Athletics), so his progress die is d8. He adds his Strength bonus of +4. Since he critically succeeded, he rolls 2d8+12 for his progress.

GM: Wow, that brings your total progress to 27. The starship is fixed, and in only an hour!

SAMPLE SKILL CHALLENGE

The following skill challenge is used in the accumulation skill challenge example, above.

FIX THAT SHIP!

CR 2

XP 600

General skill challenge

Goal The PCs must repair severe hull damage to their starship while floating adrift in an asteroid field.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Engineering (challenging, DC 18), Perception (challenging, DC 18); **Secondary Skills** Difficult, DC 23

Interval 30 minutes

Time Pressure 8 hours

CLEARANCE

Progress 22

Benefit The PCs fix their starship, allowing them to leave the asteroid field unscathed.

Penalty The PCs fail to fix their starship before a massive asteroid buffets their starship. This makes them late to rendezvous with their employer and resulting in a 15% pay cut.

THRESHOLD

7 Progress Several key panels are dented and must be forced back into place. Add Athletics (average, DC 13) to the list of primary skills. Attempting this check requires the character to venture out into the void of space, necessitating the use of appropriate environmental protections.

14 Progress Once the panels are in place, they must be carefully welded onto the starship or be forcefully hammered back into their original shapes before they can fit properly into the hull.

22 Progress The starship is fixed, but the commotion has attracted a trio of blood space leeches. If any players are outside of the starship (likely because they attempted an Athletics check to accumulate progress),

POINTS

In a skill challenge that uses points as its clearance method, participants work to have the highest number of points possible or score a specific number of points. This clearance method is commonly used when you're attempting to best someone or something else, typically in contest skill challenges (see page 74).

SCORING POINTS

During a skill challenge that uses points as its clearance method, you can attempt to score points using one of the skills listed as one of the skill challenge's primary skills. The action to score points varies by skill challenge. If either the skill challenge or your GM allows secondary skills to be used to accumulate progress, you can typically do so. If the skill challenge doesn't list a secondary skills DC, add 5 to the highest DC from among those listed as primary skills and use the result as the skill challenge's secondary skills DC. Note that official contests (such as ones held as sanctioned events by professional leagues or circuits) usually treat the use of secondary skills as grounds for a demerit (see page 52).

Skill challenges that use points as their clearance method list a scoring event in their stat block that notes under what circumstances points are scored. Scoring events typically occur when you succeed at a relatively easy skill check, but your result is usually contested by an opposed skill check rolled by the opposition. If the opposition attempts a skill check to oppose yours, you don't score any points unless your result equals or exceeds both the result of the opposition's opposed skill check and the scoring event's DC.

TRACKING POINTS

There are two primary methods for tracking points during skill challenges that use points as their clearance method: accruelement and casualties. Both methods are described below.

Accruelement: In a skill challenge where participants accrue points, participants start with 0 points and gain points whenever they successfully attempt a skill check that scores points. Characters accrue points for succeeding at scoring events like landing an object into a target area (such as in badminton), moving from one target area to another (such as in baseball), or simply by beating an opponent at an opposed skill check. Each skill challenge that uses this point-tracking method notes the number of points scored in its scoring events entry.

Casualties: In a skill challenge where participants cause point casualties, participants start with a specific number of points noted in the skill challenge's scoring events entry and lose points whenever an opponent attempts a skill check to score points and succeeds. Characters cause point casualties for succeeding at scoring events like capturing objectives or pieces (such as in chess). Each skill challenge that uses this point-tracking method notes the number of points lost when each scoring event occurs in its scoring events entry.

AUTOMATIC SUCCESSES

When you attempt a skill check to score points and roll a natural 20 (the d20 comes up 20), your skill check

automatically succeeds. Skill checks attempted to score points do not critically succeed unless the skill challenge has critical score special quality (see page 52). If the skill challenge has this quality, it notes what happens when a participant scores a critical success next to that entry in its stat block.

AUTOMATIC FAILURES

When you attempt a skill check to score points and roll a natural 1 (the d20 comes up 1), your skill check automatically fails.

CLEARING THE SKILL CHALLENGE

How you clear a skill challenge that uses points as its clearance method is determined by its point-tracking method.

Accruelement: You clear a skill challenge that uses accruelement as its point-tracking method in one of two ways, as listed in the skill challenge's completion entry: you have the most points when the skill challenge's duration ends or you score a specific number of points before your opposition.

Casualties: You clear a skill challenge that uses casualties as its point-tracking method by being the last person (or team) to have at least 1 point remaining.

ACCUMULATION SKILL CHALLENGE EXAMPLE

The following is an example script of how a skill challenge that uses accumulation as its clearance method is run. This example uses the Poker skill challenge, which is provided below.

The PCs are relaxing after a hard-won mission, and have decided to play a game of poker together.

GM: Alright, everyone! Roll for initiative. You can add your Charisma or Wisdom bonus to your result. (Chosuy rolls a 6, Ess a 10, Hansune a 10, and Yenzie a 12).

GM: Okay, so first everyone starts with a number of points. Typically you bet credits, so if you're playing penny poker....

Hansune: Penny Poker? That's no fun! Let's make it interesting. GM, can we beat clothes?

GM: Clothes? Like, what you're wearing? Uh, I guess so. Let's see, we'll say you bet eight garments each, so everyone gets 8 points to start. First you all have to "go in" with a point, then roll me a skill check with Bluff, Sense Motive, or Profession (gambler). (Chosuy rolls a 4, modified to a 6, Hansune rolls a 12, modified to a 22, Ess rolls a 10, modified to a 14, and Yenzie rolls a 14, modified to a 6.) Okay, next each player goes around in initiative order and rolls me 1d6, plus another d6 for every 10 in your result. Then you choose one of your dice to keep secret and discard the rest.

Yenzie: I go first! I rolled a 14, so I get 2d6. (Yenzie rolls 2d6 and gets a '5' and a '3'. He keeps the '5' and discards the '3'.)

Hansune: I'm next. I rolled a 16, so I get 3d6, suckers! (Hansune rolls three results of '4', so he keeps one and discards the other.)

Ess: It's my turn. I rolled a 14 too, so I also get 2d6. (Ess rolls a '6' and a '1'. She keeps the '6' and discards the '1'.)

Hansune: I see that grin, Ess, how about a little wager? I'll up the ante—I bet my shirt AND my shoes on my hand. (Chosuy



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and Ess accept Hansune's wager, but cautious Yenzie forfeits).

GM: Okay, now we'll do this four more times, and the person with the highest total on their d6s will win all the points!

SAMPLE SKILL CHALLENGE

The following skill challenge is used in the points skill challenge example, above.

POKER

Contest (imperfect stochastic strategy)

Goal Teams compete to build the best five-card hand possible using two hidden cards and a set of five community cards. The contestant with the highest five-card hand wins the contest.

Teams Up to six of teams of one participant each

SKILLS

Primary Skills Bluff, Sense Motive, Profession (gambler)

Interval 5 minutes

CLEARANCE

Points 1 casualty; **Scoring Event** Upon winning a match, a participant takes 1 point from each other player and adds it to their point total.

SQ match (unlimited)

DESCRIPTION

Basics In poker, participants start with a number of points equal to the number of tokens they "go in" on. Tokens are purchased with wealth at an agreed upon rate; as little as 1 credit per token (penny poker) or as much as 1,000 credits per token (big monkey poker). Participants usually start with the same

number of points, but can purchase more between hands

Each game of poker lasts 6 rounds. Participants are dealt two cards each from a 52 card deck on the first round, and on subsequent rounds each player either draws another card or folds, losing the skill challenge. On the final round, participants reveal their hands and the participant with the highest-scoring hand wins.

Initial Play Each round for 5 rounds, a participant attempt a skill check to score points on their turn as a full action. Then, the participant rolls a number of d6s in secret equal to $1 + 1$ for every 10 by which their skill check's result exceeded DC 0. Once all d6s have been rolled, the participant banks the highest d6 and discards the rest, keeping their choice secret. On round 6, participants reveal all hidden dice. The participant whose hidden dice have the highest result win the match and takes 1 point from each other participant, adding them to their total. New matches typically continue until only one participant has 1 or more points remaining or until all other participants forfeit.

Play Reactions A participant can place an ante whenever they want as a reaction, betting any number of points from their point total when doing so. All points bet in this manner are placed into a community pot, and each participating opposition must equal or match the bet or automatically forfeit the match. A forfeiting participant effectively loses the match and any previously bet points, but does not lose any additional points during round 6. At the end of the match, the winning player gains 1 point for each player who hasn't forfeited, as well as all points in the pot.

SQUARES

In a skill challenge that uses squares as its clearance method, participants advance to a specific location in order to clear them, which is abstracted using squares as a unit of distance. This clearance method is commonly used during races and chases.

ADVANCING SQUARES

During a skill challenge that uses squares as its clearance method, you can advance a number of squares equal to your speed divided by 5 as a move action. Effects that modify your speed are applied before your speed is divided. You typically don't need to attempt a skill check to advance in squares; skill checks are attempted in a skill challenge that uses squares as its movement method in response to hazards and other skill challenge special qualities (see page 50).

Squares are an abstraction for the amount of distance that your character can move during a skill challenge round, based on the skill challenge's interval. Table 3-1: Square Distance lists the amount of distance represented by a square during skill challenges with common interval values.

Advancing Backwards: You can advance backwards whenever you use a move action to advance a number of squares by subtracting the desired number of squares from the total number of squares that you've advanced thus far.

Brisk Advancement: You can advance briskly as a full action, allowing you to advance a number of squares equal to three times your usual rate during the skill challenge. If you have the Run feat and are unarmored or wearing light armor, advancing briskly allows you to move four times your usual rate instead. While advancing briskly, you take a -4 penalty to skill checks attempted during the skill challenge.

TABLE 3-1: SQUARE DISTANCE

Skill Challenge Interval	Square Distance
6 seconds	5 feet
1 minute	50 feet
10 minutes	500 feet
1 hour	3,000 feet
8 hours	24,000 feet

BYPASSING OBSTACLES

Skill challenges that use squares as their clearance method are peppered with special events called obstacles—things that hinder or outright obstruct advancement. Bypassing an obstacle requires a successful skill check with one or more of the skill challenge's primary skill checks. If either the skill challenge or your GM allows secondary skills to be used to accumulate progress, you can typically do so. If the skill challenge doesn't list a secondary skills DC, add 5 to the highest DC from among those listed as primary skills and use the result as the skill challenge's secondary skills DC. Attempting to bypass an obstacle requires no action; you attempt the check as part of the action to advance squares if your total number of squares equals the obstacle's number. For example, if the obstacle lists "10 Squares", then you encounter the obstacle when your total number of squares equals 10.

If the obstacle's number is expressed as a range, then you encounter the obstacle when your total number of squares equals a number that falls within the range. For example, if the obstacle lists "4–10 Squares", then you encounter the obstacle when your total number of squares equals any number between 4 and 10.

If the obstacle's number has a plus sign (+) next to it, then you encounter the obstacle when your total number of squares equals the obstacle's number or higher. For example, if the obstacle lists "1+ Squares", then you encounter the obstacle when your total number of squares equals 1 or a number higher than 1.

Movement-based skill challenges have a number of obstacles based upon their CR (see Designing Skill Challenges on page 98), and obstacles are explained in-depth on page 56.

MOUNTS, STARSHIPS, AND VEHICLES

You can combine rules for mounts, starships, or vehicles with skill challenges that use squares as their clearance method. When doing so, you adjust the number of squares you advance during the skill challenge based upon how you're moving, as follows:

- » **Mount or Vehicle:** Use the mount or vehicle's speed in place of your speed to determine the number of squares advanced.
- » **Starship:** Use the starship's speed to determine the number of squares advanced.

Using a mount, starship, or vehicle in a skill challenge uses the same rules and requires the same skill checks (with the same actions) as described by the Piloting and Survival skills, as well as the individual rules for mounts, starships, and vehicles. Consequences for failing these skill checks (such as falling off of your mount if you fail at a Survival check to stay mounted) are also the same.

TARGETING CREATURES

When determining whether you can target other creatures during a skill challenge, use Table 3-1: Square Distance to determine the amount of distance represented by one square, then multiply that distance by the difference in squares between you and the target. For example, if the square distance is 50 feet and the target is 10 squares away, the target counts as being 500 feet away for all effects. If two creatures have the same square count, each creature chooses how close or how far away they are from one another on their turn, up to the maximum distance of 1 square during the skill challenge.

AUTOMATIC SUCCESSES

When you attempt a skill check to advance squares and roll a natural 20 (the d20 comes up 20), your skill check automatically succeeds. Skill checks attempted to advance squares do not critically succeed unless the skill challenge has critical score special quality (see page 52). If the skill challenge has this quality, it notes what happens when a participant scores a critical success next to that entry in its stat block. If you fail the check, you advance normally but your turn ends. Typically only one character can attempt to pilot or ride any given vehicle or mount or mount at a time.



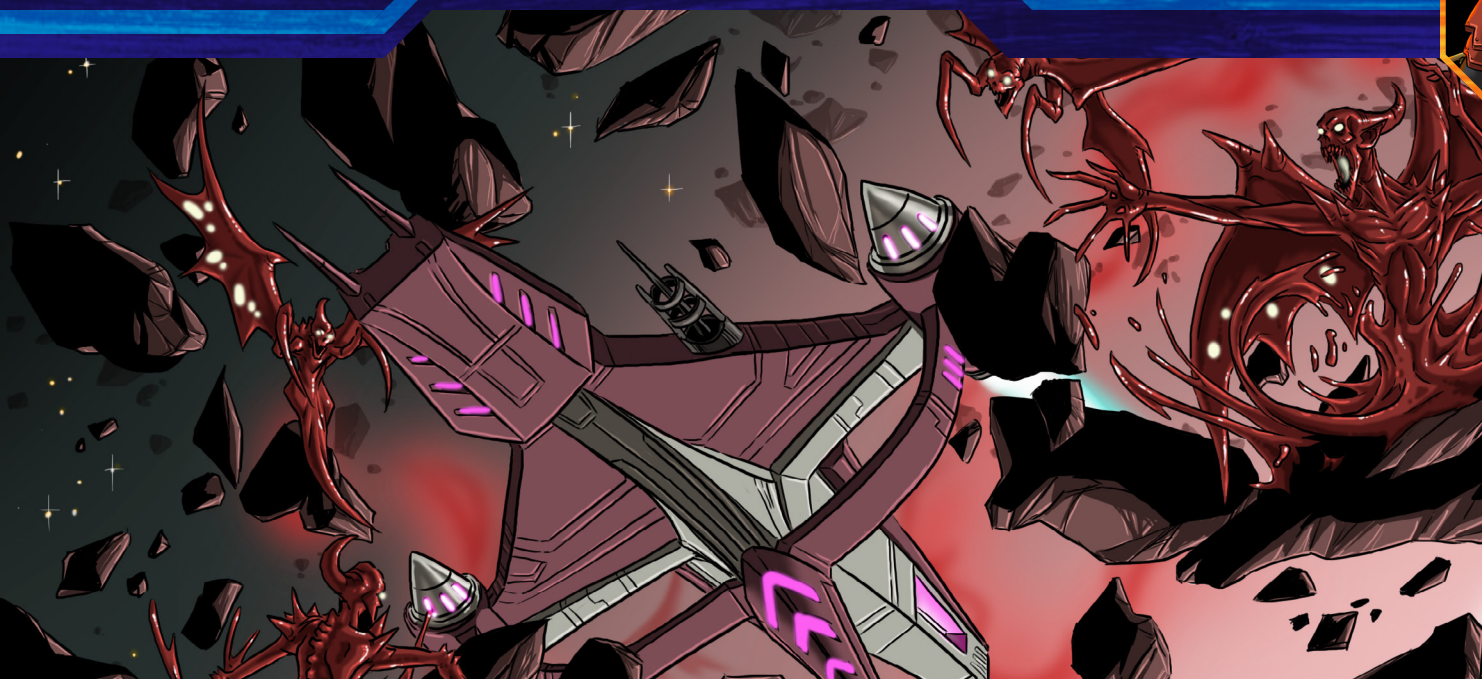
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AUTOMATIC FAILURES

When you attempt a skill check to advance squares and roll a natural 1 (the d20 comes up 1), your skill check automatically fails.

CLEARING THE SKILL CHALLENGE

You clear a skill challenge that uses squares as its clearance method when you advance the number of squares listed in the skill challenge's completion entry.

SQUARES SKILL CHALLENGE EXAMPLE

The following is an example script of how a skill challenge that uses squares as its clearance method is run. This example uses the Asteroid Field skill challenge, which is provided below.

The PCs have found themselves caught in an asteroid field while en route to an employer promising a big score. To make it to their appointment in time, the PCs must brave the asteroids.

GM: So, you've entered the asteroid field. Time to assume starship roles for this skill challenge! (Chosuy is the pilot, Ess is the science officer, Nuvami is the gunner, Hansune is the captain, and Yenzie is the engineer.)

Chosuy: Okay, our starship has a speed of 10 hexes, so I'm going to try and advance us 10 squares as a move action.

GM: Okay, but there are so many asteroids, I need someone to try a Computers check or a Piloting check to fly through this.

Chosuy: Okay, here it goes! (Chosuy rolls a Piloting check and rolls a 6, modified to a 17).

GM: Oh, so close, but you fail. An asteroid slams into your ship, dealing 22 Hull Point damage to your aft. (The GM rolls 5d8 damage for a failed check and rolls 22 points. They use a d4 to randomly select a quadrant and get aft).

Ess: Ah! We only have 10 points for our aft shields....

GM: Don't worry, I still have PLENTY of asteroids left, so attempt me another Piloting check!

Chosuy: Aw man? Can't we just sit here and wait it out?

GM: Not if you want to make it back in time to get paid.

Hansune: It's settled then, just fly better Chosuy!

SAMPLE SKILL CHALLENGE

The following skill challenge is used in the squares skill challenge example, above.

ASTEROID FIELD

CR 2

XP 600

General skill challenge

Goal The PCs must steer their way through an asteroid field.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Computers (difficult, DC 23), Piloting (challenging, DC 18); **Secondary Skills** Very difficult, DC 28

Interval six seconds

COMPLETION

Squares 100

SQ limited progress (1 participant, 0 assists)

Benefit If the PCs successfully steer their starship through the asteroid field, they suffer no damage to their starship and arrive at their destination on-schedule.

Penalty If the starship's Hull Points are reduced to 0, the starship breaks down and the PCs must spend 2d4 days jury-rigging repairs, causing them to arrive at their destination late.

OBSTACLES

1+ Square The asteroids are tightly-packed together and constantly moving. Colliding with an asteroid causes extensive damage to the starship.

Type hazard; Notice Perception (DC 0)

Bypass Skills Computers or Piloting

Effect The starship takes 5d8 Hull Point damage. This damage is depleted first from the starship's shields first, as if from an attack from a random quadrant.

SUCCESSSES

In a skill challenge that uses successes as its clearance method, participants need to succeed at a specific number of skill checks in order to clear them. This clearance method is commonly used during general skill challenges, as well as skill challenges that need to have simpler mechanics than those described by the accumulation, points, or squares completion method.

EARNING SUCCESSSES

During a skill challenge that uses successes as its clearance method, you can attempt to earn a success using one of the skills listed as one of the skill challenge's primary skills. The action to earn a success is a standard action unless noted otherwise in the skill challenge's entry. If either the skill challenge or your GM allows secondary skills to be used to earn successes, you can typically do so. If the skill challenge doesn't list a secondary skills DC, add 5 to the highest DC from among those listed as primary skills and use the result as the skill challenge's secondary skills DC.

Whenever you succeed at a skill check to earn successes during a skill challenge, you earn one success.

AUTOMATIC SUCCESSSES

When you attempt a skill check to earn a success and roll a natural 20 (the d20 comes up 20), your skill check automatically succeeds. If the total result of the skill check also meets or exceeds the skill challenge's DC, your attempt to earn a success is a critical success. You earn two successes towards clearing the skill challenge instead of one.

If the total result of the skill check doesn't meet the skill challenge's DC, your skill check still automatically succeeds, but the attempt isn't a critical success.

AUTOMATIC FAILURES

When you attempt a skill check to earn a success and roll a natural 1 (the d20 comes up 1), your skill check automatically fails.

CLEARING THE SKILL CHALLENGE

You clear a skill challenge that uses successes as its clearance method when you earn the total number of successes listed in the skill challenge's completion entry.

SUCCESSSES SKILL CHALLENGE EXAMPLE

The following is an example script of how a skill challenge that uses successes as its clearance method is run. This example uses the Building Bridges skill challenge, which is provided below.

The PCs are stranded on the wrong side of a dismantled space station. In order to return to their starship and escape, the PCs must construct a bridge that can carry them across the chasm.

GM: Alright, so there's plenty of scrap around you that you can use to construct your bridge. Remember, the environmental protection on your armor won't last forever, so the amount of time you have to fish this is limited.

Ess: Right. You said that I had calculated that we need to finish building this bridge in at least 8 hours, or our suits will run

out of energy and oxygen.

GM: That's correct. Why don't you make our first skill check, Ess? Since you're the one doing all of the calculations.

Ess: Right. Is building a bridge something you can do with Engineering?

GM: Normally I'd make you roll a discovery check, but I'm pretty sure that a trained engineer like yourself would know a thing or two about how bridges are built. You're absolutely right about that skill!

Ess: Okay, I'll attempt an Engineering check to build the bridge. (Ess rolls an Engineering check with a +8 bonus. She rolls a 4, for a total of 10. The GM notes that her result is failure, and marks one demerit for the party.)

GM: Ouch, maybe Yenzie should try that instead?

Yenzie: Why, I'd love to! After all, I am the mechanic. Let's get a nice frame put together before you try to build your techno-crane attachmenets or whatever. (Yenzie rolls an Engineering check with a +10 bonus. He rolls a 14, for a total of 24. The GM notes that his result is a success and marks it as such for the party.)

GM: That was pretty good. Who's next?

Hansune: I'm passable at Engineering, I guess I'll give it a go next. (Hansune rolls an Engineering check with a +6 bonus. He rolls a 11, for a total of 18. The GM notes that his result is a failure and makes it as such for the party.)

GM: Good attempt, good attempt. We still have Nuvami and Chosuy left. Who's ready?

Chosuy: I know enough about Engineering to be decent at repairing my gear, but I don't know if I'm good enough to help here. I'll give it a shot though. (Chosuy rolls an Engineering check with a +5 bonus. He rolls a natural 20, for a total of 25.) Alright! A nat 20!

GM: Awesome, a critical success even! (The GM notes two successes for the party, bringing the total to 3.) That's going to be hard to top, Nuvami.

Nuvami: I'm not sure I can, to be honest.

GM: Don't sound so glum! You could always use the discover information to try and learn something about the skill challenge.

Nuvami: Hm, could I use Perception to look around for anything helpful as my discover information action?

GM: Absolutely! (Nuvami rolls a Perception check with a +6 bonus. She rolls a 17, for a total of 23.) That's pretty good. You get one piece of information. What do you want to know?

Nuvami: Are there any other skills we could use to help make this bridge on time?

GM: Hm, well, Nuvami knows that she and Chosuy are both pretty strong. You think that you might be able to help by using your Athletics skill to pound some scrap into the right shapes for your team.

Nuvami: Huh. It's not glamorous, but I'll take it next round!

SAMPLE SKILL CHALLENGE

The following skill challenge is used in the successes skill challenge example, above.

BUILDING BRIDGES

CR 2

XP 600

General skill challenge

Goal The PCs must jury-rig a bridge in order to cross a dangerous chasm spanning a decrepit space station and return to their starship before their armor's life supporting functions fail.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Athletics (difficult, DC 23), Engineering (challenging, DC 18), Profession (any relevant) (average, DC 13), Survival (challenging, DC 18); **Secondary Skills** Very difficult, DC 28

Interval 2 hours

Time Pressure 8 hours (4 rounds)

CLEARANCE

Successes 7

SQ demerits 3.

Benefit The participants attempt to cross the bridge. The benefits of succeeding at the skill challenge are determined by the number of demerits earned.

0 Demerits The PCs cross the bridge without incident.

1 Demerit The bridge is wobbly and unstable. All participant must attempt a DC 11 Reflex saves. A participant who fails tumbles over the edge, but can attempt a DC 11 Reflex save as a reaction to catch an edge. Likewise, an ally can attempt to grab one falling ally as a reaction (this can allow multiple participants to create a chain of people dangling off the bridge). Pulling up an ally is a full action that requires a successful DC 18 Athletics check; failing by 10 or more causes the participant's grip on the ally to slip, sending them plummeting into the vacuum of space until they're rescued or die from environmental extremes.

2 Demerits As a success with 1 demerit, but add +2 to all save DCs.

3 Demerits As a failure with 0 demerits.

Penalty The participants attempt to cross the bridge. The consequences for failing at the skill challenge are determined by the number of demerits earned.

0 Demerits The bridge collapses as the participants are on it. Each participant must attempt a DC 13 Reflex save to scramble to the otherside of the chasm as the bridge falls apart. A participant who fails this check catches hold of part of the bridge as it shatters, ending up $2d4 \times 5$ feet away from the edge. Climbing up to safety requires a successful DC 13 Athletics checks. A participant who fails the check by 5 spends them plummeting into the vacuum of space until they're rescued or die from environmental extremes.

1 Demerit As a success with 0 demerits, but the Reflex save DC increases by 1 and the Athletics check DC by 5.

2 Demerits As a success with 0 demerits, but the Reflex save DC increases by 2 and the Athletics check DC by 10.

3 Demerits As a success with 0 demerits, but all participants' grip slips as if they had failed their Reflex saves. In addition, the Athletics check DC to climb to safety increases by 10.



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SPECIAL QUALITIES

In addition to the core rules that make up the skill challenge system, skill challenges can possess additional features that change how participants interact with the skill challenge. These features are known as special qualities. This section describes the various special qualities used throughout skill challenges. Special qualities pertaining to specific types of skill challenges are summarized briefly here, but are fully described within the section pertaining to their associated skill challenge rules set later in the chapter.

AUDIENCE

Most skill challenges are completed without observers, but sometimes an audience is present for your challenge, watching and commenting as you go about your business. If a skill challenge has an audience, it has an audience entry under the completion section of the skill challenge's stat block. A sample audience entry is presented below, and each aspect of this entry is explained in the subsections that follow.

Example: *Audience* Huge audience of LN vesk soldiers (5,000 attendees, +3); positive bias towards vesks, soldiers, and characters with a Strength of 14 or higher; negative bias towards nonvesks.

AUDIENCE SIZE CATEGORY

An audience's size determines the audience's size modifier, which determines how difficult the audience is to sway or seed, as well as the bonuses the audience provides to participants they like. Table 3-2: Audience Size notes the nine audience size categories, the minimum number of attendees within an audience of that size category, and the size modifier associated with an audience of that size category.

TABLE 3-2: AUDIENCE SIZE

Size Category	Attendees	Size Modifier
Fine	1	+0
Diminutive	5	+0
Tiny	25	+0
Small	125	+1
Medium	800	+2
Large	4,000	+3
Huge	20,000	+4
Gargantuan	100,000	+5
Colossal	500,000+	+6

AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS

All audiences note the general demographics of their attendees. This includes information like the age, alignment, background, gender, profession, or race. Most audiences don't list all of these categories in their demographics; if a category isn't present, then it's assumed that the audience is a diverse and well-distributed mix of persons for that category. For example, if an audience omits the age category, then it can be assumed that the audience is a mix of persons from various age groups with no strong predisposition towards a specific

age category, whereas an audience that notes "Adolescent" is comprised mostly of adolescents.

AUDIENCE ATTITUDE

Each audience begins a skill challenge with a specific attitude towards participants. Sometimes an audience's starting attitude differs for different participants based on that individual's Fame or Infamy, background, or similar factors. Audiences use the same categories of initial attitude that are described in the Diplomacy section of Chapter 5 in the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*—hostile, unfriendly, indifferent, friendly, and helpful. Audiences tend to shower participants they like with praise and support and shame or ridicule those they don't like. Participants that the audience is unfriendly or hostile towards take a penalty to all d20 rolls attempted during a skill challenge, while participants that the audience is friendly or helpful towards gain a morale bonus to all d20 rolls attempted during a skill challenge. The bonuses and penalties granted by an audience are determined by its size modifier, and are summarized on Table 3-3: Audience Size.

TABLE 3-3: AUDIENCE MODIFIERS

Size	Hostile	Unfriendly	Friendly	Helpful
Fine	+0	+0	+0	+0
Diminutive	+0	+0	+0	+0
Tiny	+0	+0	+0	+0
Small	-1	+0	+0	+1
Medium	-2	-1	+1	+2
Large	-3	-1	+1	+3
Huge	-4	-2	+2	+4
Gargantuan	-5	-2	+2	+5
Colossal	-6	-3	+3	+6

AUDIENCE BIASES

Audiences are prone to biases, and sometimes an audience will start a skill challenge with a specific bias. Biases can be positive (meaning that playing to the bias grants a participant a bonus to skill checks to earn completion) or negative (meaning that playing to the bias grants a participant a penalty). The bonuses or penalties associated with an audience's biases are noted in the audience's entry in the skill challenge's stat block, but they cannot exceed +4 or -4. For example, if an audience has a positive bias towards women with a +2 bonus, female characters attempting to earn progress gain a +2 morale bonus to skill checks to earn progress during the skill challenge.



SWAYING AN AUDIENCE

You can use the sway the audience action (see page 37) to attempt to improve the audience's attitude towards you. Alternatively, you can use this action to attempt to seed a bias into your audience. When you successfully seed a bias into an audience, you choose whether the bias is positive or negative and what the audience is biased against. You can't seed a bias based on demographics into your audience, but you can seed a bias based on an opponent's actions. For example, if you're racing a skittermancer while an audience is watching, you can't seed a bias against skittermanders into your audience, but you can seed the audience with a bias against the individual's gait or tactics.

Why Sway the Audience?: Improving an audience's attitude towards you will likely make it easier to attempt skill checks to earn completion, as an audience's ire quickly penalizes your skill checks. For this same reason, giving an audience a negative bias against your opposition makes it harder for them to succeed at skill checks, making it more likely that the audience turns on them. Along the same lines, giving an audience a positive bias towards your allies makes it easier for them to succeed at checks.

BACKLASH

Sometimes failing a skill check causes adverse conditions for a skill challenge participant, an occurrence known as a backlash. If a skill challenge has a backlash, it has a backlash entry under the skills section of the skill challenge's stat block.

When determining the effects of a backlash, use the following guidelines from Appendix 1 in *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE*. If a backlash allows a saving throw to negate or reduce its effects, its ability save DC is equal to that of an expert array NPC with a CR equal to the skill challenge's CR. Additional guidelines using the NPC arrays from *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE* are as follows.

- » **Attack Bonus:** If a backlash has an attack bonus, its attack bonus is equal to that of a combat array NPC with a CR equal to the skill challenge's CR.
- » **Damage:** If a backlash deals damage, the amount of damage it deals is equal to the melee weapon damage of a combatant array NPC with a CR with a bonus equal to $2\frac{1}{2} \times$ the skill challenge's CR to the weapon damage roll. (This bonus represents the backlash's ability modifier and weapon specialization bonus.)
- » **Hazards and Traps:** If a backlash produces the effects of a trap, it can produce the effects of any hazard or trap with a CR equal to the skill challenge's CR.
- » **Item:** If a backlash replicates the effects of an item, its item level is equal to the skill challenge's CR.
- » **Save DC:** If a backlash allows a saving throw to reduce or negate its effects, its save DC is equal to the ability DC of an expert array NPC with a CR equal to the skill challenge's CR.
- » **Spell:** If a backlash produces a spell effect, it can produce the effect of any spell that a mystic array NPC of the skill challenge's CR could cast. The spell's caster level and save DC is equal to the caster level and spell save DC of a spellcaster

SPECIAL QUALITIES IN SKILL CHALLENGES

Special Abilities

Audience	Limited advantage
Backlash	Limited progress
Block	Match
Catch	Multidirectional
Critical fumble	Pass
Critical score	Push self
Decipherable	Set-up
Demerits	Skill bonus
Dimension lock	Specific clearance
Dogpile	Specific skills
Events	Specific tactics
Failures allowed	Strike
Fake out	Surprise start
Hazard-like	Team
Individual progress	Time pressure
Initiative method	Trap-like
Language	Variable difficulty

array NPC with a CR equal to the skill challenge's CR.

- » **Other:** When determining a backlash with an effect other than that of a weapon, spell, or other item, reference class features available to a character of the skill challenge's CR or creature abilities available to creatures of the skill challenge's CR to determine what sort of effects are appropriate.

Example: *Backlash* You are injected with a random serum designed to rewrite your genetic code, transforming you into a skittermancer. Your race changes to skittermancer, as if you had died and been returned to life via the reincarnate spell (Fortitude DC 50 negates). If you are already a skittermancer, you take 1d6 Intelligence drain instead.

BLOCK

During a contest that includes this special quality, you can use the block special action (see page 76) to attempt to prevent an opponent from scoring. For more information regarding contests, see page 74.

CATCH

During a contest that includes this special quality, you can use the catch special action (see page 76) to attempt to prevent an opponent from scoring. For more information regarding contests, see page 74.

CRITICAL FUMBLE

In some skill challenges, an automatic miss is accompanied by a horrific blunder. If a skill challenge has a critical fumble, it has a critical fumble entry under the special qualities section of the skill challenge's stat block. Whenever a participant rolls a natural 1 (the d20 comes up 1) on a skill check to earn progress or bypass an obstacle during a skill challenge with the critical fumble special quality, they take a penalty in addition to their skill

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check automatically failing if the total result of the skill check is less than the skill check's DC. The penalty taken is determined by the skill challenge's clearance method, as follows.

- » **Accumulation:** You lose progress equal to 1/4 of the total amount of progress needed to clear the skill challenge. This cannot reduce your total progress earned to less than 0.
- » **Points:** You lose a number of points equal to 1/4 of the total amount of progress needed to clear the skill challenge. This can reduce you to 0 points, which may cause you to lose the skill challenge in a casualties-based skill challenge.
- » **Squares:** You advance backwards a number of squares equal to 1/4 of the total amount of progress needed to clear the skill challenge. This cannot reduce your total progress earned to less than 0.
- » **Successes:** You reduce the number of successes you have earned by 1/4 of the total number of successes needed to clear the skill challenge. This cannot reduce your total number of successes to less than 0.

Example: *SQ* critical fumble

CRITICAL SCORE

During a skill challenge that uses points or squares as its clearance method and includes this special quality, rolling a natural 20

causes you to score additional points or advance additional squares in addition to automatically succeeding at your skill check, as detailed in parenthesis next to the quality's entry.

Example: *SQ* critical score (advance 1 additional square)

DECIPHERABLE

In skill challenges with the language special quality, skilled linguists might be able to decipher required languages they can't read or speak. If a skill challenge's language is decipherable, it notes this in parenthesis next to the decipherable language's name. During such skill challenges, a participant who is trained in Culture can attempt a Culture check against the skill challenge's secondary skills DC as a standard action. If successful, the participant counts as being able to speak and read that language that is applicable to the skill challenge for 1d4+1 rounds, plus 1 additional round for every 5 by which their skill check's result exceeded the DC.

If the skill challenge also has the failures allowed special quality, failing this Culture check by 5 or more counts as a failure for the purpose of determining the number of skill checks that the participant is allowed to fail before they fails the skill challenge.

A skill challenge must have the language special quality to have this special quality. Skill challenges cannot have both the decipherable special quality and the specific skills special quality simultaneously.

Example: *Language Draconic* (Mysticism; read only, decipherable)

DEMERITS

In some skill challenges, the outcomes of clearing or failing the skill challenge is determined by the quality of participants' success or the severity of their failures. If a skill challenge tracks demerits, it notes the maximum number of demerits that participants can accrue in its special qualities entry. Whenever a participant fails a skill challenge with the demerits special quality, they gain 1 demerit. The skill challenge's benefit and failure entries note what how the outcome of the skill challenge changes based upon the number of demerits accrued and whether the skill challenge was cleared or failed.

Example: *SQ* demerits 3

DIMENSION LOCK

Some skill challenges take place in areas where teleportation magic doesn't work properly, preventing those spells from functioning. If a skill challenge has the dimension lock quality listed in its special qualities, any teleportation effects used by participants in the skill challenge automatically fail. At the GM's decision, creatures native to the region where the skill challenge takes place or that have had several months to acclimate to the dimension lock can ignore this quality.

Example: *SQ* dimension lock

DOGPILE

During a contest that includes this special quality, multiple





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characters can use the block special action (see page 76) to attempt to block a single attempt at scoring. For more information regarding contests, see page 74.

FAILURES ALLOWED

Some skill challenges only allow you to fail at attempts to earn progress so often before you automatically fail the entire skill challenge. If a skill challenge has a limited number of failures allowed, it has a failures allowed entry under the skills section of the skill challenge's stat block. The GM tracks each time a participant fails a skill check to earn progress or bypass an obstacle during a skill challenge with this special quality. Should the participants fail a number of skill checks to earn progress or bypass an obstacle equal to or greater than the value noted in the obstacle's failures allowed entry, they take the failure consequences noted by the skill challenge.

Most skill challenges with this element allow a number of failures equal to $2 + 1/3$ of the skill challenge's CR (minimum 3), though this number can be adjusted to suit the theme and needs of the skill challenge.

Example: *Failures Allowed 2*

FAKE OUT

During a contest that includes this special quality, participants can use the fake out special action (see page 76) to attempt to trick opponents into setting up poor plays. For more information regarding contests, see page 74.

EVENTS

During a skill challenge that uses accumulation as its clearance method, sometimes special events occur upon reaching a specific accumulation threshold. These events have an entry directly under the threshold they're associated with and list a mechanical effect that happens when the event is triggered. Use the guidelines for designing backlashes (see page 51) for designing events.

Unless specifically noted otherwise, an event only triggers once—the first time the accumulation threshold is reached—and cannot be avoided. Even if a participant earns enough accumulation to “jump over” the threshold (meaning that the starting total of progress is less than the accumulation threshold's value and the ending total exceeds this value), the accumulation threshold occurs—and must be resolved—before the skill challenge is cleared.

Example: *Event* A small syringe pokes out of the datapad you're referencing as you glance at this restricted material. As the serum within empties into your body, you begin to transform into a skittermander. Your race changes to skittermander, as if you had died and been returned to life via the reincarnate spell (Fortitude DC 50 negates). If you are already a skittermander, you take 1d6 Intelligence drain instead.

HAZARD-LIKE

Some skill challenges essentially function as large-scale encounters

against a massive environmental hazard. If a skill challenge has the hazard-like quality listed among its special qualities, the skill challenge and all effects produced by it count as an environmental hazard for all purposes and effects. In addition, all skill checks attempted to earn progress during the skill challenge count as Survival checks attempted to endure severe weather.

Example: *SQ* hazard-like

INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS

During most skill challenges, allied participants can pool their progress together to determine when their party clears the skill challenge. This isn't always the case, however. In some skill challenges, each participant's progress must be tracked separately so each participant is responsible for fully clearing the skill challenge themselves. If participants must individually clear a skill challenge, the skill challenge notes that progress is tracked individually in its special qualities entry.

If the skill challenge also has the demerits or failures allowed special qualities, participants also track demerits and failures separately.

Example: *SQ* individual progress

INITIATIVE METHOD

By default, the GM typically decides which initiative method to use during a skill challenge depending upon the skill challenge's type and whether or not any opposition is present. During a skill challenge that includes this special quality, the skill challenge's initiative count is determined using a specific initiative method, which is noted in parenthesis. For more information regarding the different initiative methods, see page 32.

Example: *SQ* initiative method (team-rotational)

LANGUAGE

Skill challenges with a language component involve oral or written comprehension—such as talking to people or reading ancient texts—participants might need to be able to speak or read a specific language in order to earn progress towards clearing the skill challenge. If a skill challenge has a language component, it has a language entry under the progress section of the skill challenge's stat block. A participant must be able to speak at least one language in the skill challenge's language entry in order to attempt skill challenges to earn progress during that skill challenge. (This doesn't affect other actions that require skill checks, such as aid another.)

If a language lists one or more skills next to it in parenthesis, then the limitations imposed by this special quality apply only to those skills. For example, if a skill challenge lists “Common or Elven (Diplomacy)” in its language entry, a participant could only use Diplomacy to earn progress if they know Common or Elven.

If you're under the effects of a spell that allows you to speak and understand a language (like *tongues*), you count as knowing it for the purpose of this special quality. If the words “comprehend only” appear in parenthesis next to a language, you need only be able to comprehend the language to attempt

the skill check, and spells like *comprehend languages* allow you to count as knowing the language for the purpose of this special quality. Effects that allow you to temporarily understand or comprehend a language (or both) only function if they last for at least 2 rounds, as described in the Use a Special Ability action of the Skill Challenge Actions section on page 38.

Example: *Language* Common (Bluff, Diplomacy), Draconic (Mysticism; read only)

LIMITED ADVANTAGE

During a skill challenge that uses squares as its clearance method, you can use the gain an advantage action (see page 36) to advance additional squares of movement during your turn. Sometimes, however, your ability to gain an advantage is limited. If a skill challenge has this special quality in its special quality entry, a participant cannot advance more squares than the number indicated by the quality using the gain an advantage action in a single round.

Example: *Language* limited advantage 2

LIMITED PROGRESS

During a skill challenge with this special quality, only a limited number of participants can attempt to earn progress each round. Likewise, participants attempting to earn progress can only benefit from a limited number of aid another actions during a skill challenge with this special quality. This special quality notes the number of participants who can attempt to earn progress for their party or team and assistants (characters using the aid another action to assist a participant attempting a skill check to earn progress) on each team who can assist participants attempting to earn progress in parenthesis next to the quality's name.

Example: *SQ* limited progress (1 participant, 0 assistants)

MATCH

During a contest that includes this special quality, participants must clear the skill challenge multiple times in order to win, as described on page 79. For more information regarding contests, see page 74.

MULTIDIRECTIONAL

During a verbal duel that includes this special quality, more than two independent duellists (or teams of duellists) are actively participating in the skill challenge, as described on page 96. For more information regarding verbal duels, see page 92.

PASS

During a contest that includes this special quality, participants can use the pass out special action (see page 76) to attempt to pass an object used to score points to another teammate. For more information regarding contests, see page 74.

PUSH SELF

During a contest that includes this special quality, you can use the push self special action (see page 77) to attempt to

gain additional reactions for use during the contest. For more information regarding contests, see page 74.

SET-UP

During a contest that includes this special quality, participants can use the set-up special action (see page 77) to attempt to help allies set up more effective attempts at scoring points. For more information regarding contests, see page 74.

SKILL BONUS

Sometimes circumstances surrounding a skill challenge make certain skills easier to use than others. If a skill challenge has a skill bonus, it notes one or more skills and a bonus ranging from +0 to +4 in its special qualities entry. Whenever you attempt a skill check to earn progress, gain an advantage, or bypass an obstacle during the skill challenge, you gain the indicated bonus as a circumstance bonus to your skill check. If the word "untrained" is listed next to the bonus, that skill can be used untrained during the skill challenge.

Example: *SQ* skill bonus (Mysticism +4, untrained).

SPECIFIC CLEARANCE

Most skill challenges allow PCs to attempt skill checks whichever skills they prefer. If a skill challenge has the specific clearance quality listed among its special qualities, however, a participant must succeed at a skill check to earn progress with at least one or more primary skills before the skill challenge can be cleared. This entry notes which skills must be used and the amount of progress that must be earned using those skills before the skill challenge can be cleared. Progress earned to satisfy this special quality still counts towards clearing the skill challenge as normal.

A skill challenge must use progress or successes as its clearance method in order to have this special quality.

Example: *SQ* specific clearance (Mysticism, 3 successes)

SPECIFIC SKILLS

Most skill challenges allow the use of secondary skills to earn progress, provided the GM approves of the skill's use. Some skill challenges don't allow secondary skills to be used, however—participants may only earn progress using primary skills. If a skill challenge has the specific skills quality listed among its special qualities, a participant cannot use secondary skills to earn progress during the skill challenge.

Example: *SQ* specific skills

SPECIFIC TACTICS

During a verbal duel that includes this special quality, participants who use the tactics (see page 93) included in parenthesis next to this quality take a -10 penalty to skill checks to earn progress with that tactic. For more information regarding verbal duels, see page 92.

STRIKE

During a contest that includes this special quality, participants



can use the strike special action (see page 77) to attempt to send a possessed object out of play to score points. For more information regarding contests, see page 74.

SURPRISE START

Most skill challenges only allow surprise rounds at the GM's determination—they occur circumstantially based on how the PCs approached the skill challenge as well as events leading up to it. During a skill challenge that has the surprise start quality listed among its special qualities, however, circumstances always require that participants attempt Perception checks to determine their awareness at the start of the skill challenge. This is likely because the skill challenge starts with an ambush or unexpected event (like a volcano erupting) or includes opposition that intend to get the drop on the participants.

The surprise start special quality notes a skill (including a DC and difficulty for that skill) that opposes the Perception checks of participants attempting to determine their awareness. This is usually a Bluff check, a Disguise check, a Stealth check, or a Survival check, but other skill checks can be used based upon the nature of the skill challenge. The difficulty for this check is determined by the skill challenge, and ranges from average to difficult.

Example: SQ surprise start (Stealth DC 25, difficult)

TEAM

Most skill challenges allow allied characters to work together, regardless of how big the group is. If a skill challenge has the team quality in its special qualities entry, however, participants must work together in teams featuring a specific number of characters. The number of teams participating in the skill challenge and the number of participants that must be on each team is noted. If the skill challenge requires the use of one of the team-based initiative methods (see page 32), the skill challenge's initiative method is noted separately in its special qualities entry (see the initiative method special quality on page 54).

Example: SQ team (two teams with two participants each)

TIME PRESSURE

Sometimes participants have a limited amount of time to clear a skill challenge before something happens. If a skill challenge has a time pressure, it has a time pressure entry under the skills section of the skill challenge's stat block. This entry lists the amount of time that participants have to complete the skill challenge before they automatically fail it in skill challenge rounds first, followed by game world time in parenthesis. Should the participants fail to clear the skill challenge in the listed amount of time, they take the failure consequences noted by the skill challenge.

When determining a time pressure for a skill challenge, remember that the ultimate goal is to create a limit that is tense but fun for the participants. As a result, a skill challenge's time pressure should always allow participants enough time to make at least 25% more skill checks than they would normally need to clear the skill challenge successfully. For example, if

a skill challenge that uses successes as its clearance method would normally need 4 successes to clear, the skill challenge's time pressure should provide participants with enough time to attempt to earn progress at least 5 times. To put another way, the PCs should be able to fail 1 in 5 attempts to earn progress and still be successful.

Example: Time Pressure 10 minutes (10 rounds)

TRAP-LIKE

Some skill challenges—especially those that represent mechanical devices—essentially function as large-scale encounters against a massive trap. If a skill challenge has the trap-like quality listed among its special qualities, the skill challenge and all effects produced by it count as a trap for all purposes and effects. For example, characters with a bonus to AC or saving throws against traps apply those benefits against attacks attempted by the skill challenge. In addition, all skill checks attempted to earn progress during the skill challenge count as skill checks attempted to disarm a trap.

Example: SQ trap-like

VARIABLE DIFFICULTY

Most skill challenges use set DCs that participants must equal or exceed with their skill checks in order to earn progress. Some skill challenges, however, have varying DCs that are rolled rather than static. If a skill challenge has the variable difficulty quality listed among its special qualities, the skill challenge rolls opposed skill checks against participant's attempts to earn progress rather than use static DCs. To determine a skill challenge's skill bonus, take the skill check DC for a skill check of the skill's difficulty (as determined by the skill challenge's CR and subtract 10). Whenever a participant attempts a skill challenge to earn completion, the GM rolls 1d20 and adds this bonus. The participant's skill check result must equal or exceed the GM's result to earn progress or bypass an obstacle.

For example, in a CR 2 skill challenge with the variable difficulty special quality, the GM would determine the skill bonus for a challenging skill (DC 18) and subtract 10, leaving a bonus of +8. Whenever a participant attempts a skill check to earn completion during the skill challenge, the GM would then roll 1d20+8 as an opposed skill check. If the participant's skill check equals or exceeds the GM's result, the participant succeeds at their skill check. If the participant's check doesn't equal or exceed the GM's result, their skill check fails.

Example: SQ variable difficulty



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OBSTACLES

Skill challenges that use squares as their clearance method—including chases—don't require skill checks to earn progress. Instead, the "skill" in such skill challenges is used to bypass obstacles that would otherwise prevent participants from earning progress. In many ways, obstacles work like miniature skill challenges, representing a specific hurdle that participants must clear before they can continue on with a skill challenge.

OBSTACLE BASICS

During a movement-based skill challenge, each obstacle is associated with a specific

- » Obstacles are encountered when a participant's total number of squares advanced is equal to the value indicated by the obstacle.
- » Once an obstacle has been encountered, participants must attempt a skill check to notice it. Success allows them to attempt to bypass it, while failure either penalizes their attempt or prevents them from trying to bypass the obstacle at all.
- » A participant who notices an obstacle can use the Bypass an Obstacle action (page 38) to attempt a skill check to bypass it.
- » If the participant succeeds, they bypass the obstacle and are not impeded by it. If the participant fails, they cannot advance in squares beyond the obstacle's square value and take any effects caused by the obstacle for failing.

ENCOUNTERING AN OBSTACLE

Most obstacles don't persist throughout the entire skill challenge. Instead, they're active at very specific points, acting more like checkpoints or landmarks than persistent threats. Each obstacle is labeled with a square count, a value that indicates when the obstacle is encountered during the skill challenge. Obstacles are listed sequentially by their square count in a skill challenge's obstacle entry in ascending order (smallest to largest). Effectively, the lower the obstacle's square count the sooner it is encountered during the skill challenge.

Obstacles can be encountered at any point during a skill challenge. When a participant's number of squares advanced is equal to the obstacle's count, they encounter the obstacle and must attempt a skill check to bypass it (see the Bypass an Obstacle action on page 38 for more information). If a participant's action to advance squares would cause them to "skip over" an obstacle, they immediately stop and encounter the obstacle unless the skill challenge says otherwise. For example, if Chosuy has advanced 6 squares and there is an obstacle at 8 squares, if he advances 6 more squares with his next action to earn progress he still must stop and attempt to bypass the obstacle.

OBSTACLES SPANNING MULTIPLE SQUARES

Most obstacles are confined to a single point at which they're encountered, while others span multiple squares throughout the skill challenge. Obstacles that occur multiple times during a skill challenge are signaled in the following ways.

- » **Multiple Squares:** If an obstacle's square count features multiple values that are separated by a comma, participants encounter different instances of that obstacle at all listed points. For example, an obstacle with a square count of 1, 3 would be encountered at square count 1 and again at square count 3. All occurrences of this obstacle are considered to be separate obstacles, so bypassing or affecting one instance doesn't affect future or previous instances.
- » **Range:** If an obstacle's square count features multiple values that are expressed as a range, participants encounter the obstacle at all square counts within the range. For example, an obstacle with a square count of 1–3 would be encountered at square count 1, square count 2, and square count 3. All occurrences of an obstacle expressed as a range are considered to be the same obstacle, but a successful skill check to bypass the obstacle only allows a participant to bypass that obstacle for 1 round.
- » **Plus Sign:** If an obstacle's square count features a single value followed by a plus sign (+), participants encounter the obstacle starting at the indicated square count and at all future squares advanced thereafter. For example, an obstacle with a square count of 3+ would be encountered starting at square count 3, and again at every square count thereafter. All occurrences of an obstacle expressed with a plus sign are considered to be the same obstacle, but a successful skill check to bypass the obstacle only allows a participant to bypass that obstacle for 1 round.

NOTICING AN OBSTACLE

Sometimes an obstacle's presence isn't apparent the first time that a participant encounters it. Mines could be buried in the ground throughout a minefield that the participants must cross, or an animal hiding in nearby undergrowth could pounce out, ready to attack. As a result, the first time that a participant encounters an obstacle, they must attempt a skill check to notice the obstacle. The skill used and its DC and difficulty is always indicated within the obstacle's entry in the skill challenge's stat block, with DCs and difficulties being drawn from Table 3-4: Skill Challenge DCs by CR. Particularly easy obstacles to notice have a notice DC of 0.

If a character attempts a skill check to notice an obstacle and succeeds, they can attempt a skill check to bypass the obstacle normally. If a character attempts a skill check to notice an obstacle and fails, they can still attempt to bypass



the obstacle, but they take a -4 penalty to all skill checks to do so and are flat-footed against all attacks used by the obstacle. If the character fails this skill check by 5 or more, they are unable to attempt to bypass the obstacle and count as having automatically failed their skill check to do so. For more information on bypassing obstacles, see below.

BYPASSING AN OBSTACLE

As soon as you encounter an obstacle (your squares advanced equals the obstacle's square count or you would otherwise "skip over" the obstacle's square count), you must immediately attempt a skill check to bypass the obstacle. This uses the Bypass an Obstacle action (see page 38), which doesn't require an action. Each obstacle lists primary and secondary skills that can be used to bypass it; if either the obstacle or your GM allows secondary skills to be used to bypass the obstacle, you can typically do so. If the obstacle doesn't list a secondary skills DC, add 5 to the highest DC from among those listed as primary skills and use the result as the obstacle's secondary skills DC.

If the participant's skill check succeeds, they bypass the obstacle and don't need to attempt to bypass the obstacle again. If the participant's skill check fails, their squares advanced is set to the obstacle's square count and any consequences for failing outlined by the obstacle's effects occur (see below).

OBSTACLE EFFECTS

In addition to preventing a participant from advancing squares, most obstacles have additional effects that occur whenever a skill check to bypass them fails. When determining the effects of an obstacle, use the following guidelines from Appendix 1 in *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE*. If an obstacle allows a saving throw to negate or reduce its effects, its ability save DC is equal to that of an expert array NPC with a CR equal to the skill challenge's CR. Additional guidelines using the NPC arrays from *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE* are as follows.

- » **Attack Bonus:** If an obstacle has an attack bonus, its attack bonus is equal to that of a combat array NPC with a CR equal to the skill challenge's CR.
- » **Damage:** If an obstacle deals damage, the amount of damage it deals is equal to the melee weapon damage of a combatant array NPC with a CR with a bonus equal to $2-1/2 \times$ the skill challenge's CR to the weapon damage roll. (This bonus represents the obstacle's ability modifier and weapon specialization bonus.)
- » **Hazards and Traps:** If an obstacle produces the effects of a trap, it can produce the effects of any hazard or trap with a CR equal to the skill challenge's CR.
- » **Item:** If an obstacle replicates the effects of an item, its item level is equal to the skill challenge's CR.
- » **Save DC:** If an obstacle allows a saving throw to reduce or negate its effects, its save DC is equal to the ability DC of an expert array NPC with a CR equal to the skill challenge's CR.
- » **Spell:** If an obstacle produces a spell effect, it can produce the effect of any spell that a mystic array NPC of the skill

challenge's CR could cast. The spell's caster level and save DC is equal to the caster level and spell save DC of a spellcaster array NPC with a CR equal to the skill challenge's CR.

- » **Other:** When determining an obstacle with an effect other than that of a weapon, spell, or other item, reference class features available to a character of the skill challenge's CR or creature abilities available to creatures of the skill challenge's CR to determine what sort of effects are appropriate.

OBSTACLE TYPE

All obstacles are categorized into one of three types depending upon common features and similarities—hazards, obstructions, and perils. These categories don't have specific rules attached to them, but GMs should consider an obstacle's type as a thematic distinction to keep in mind when designing their own obstacles.

HAZARDS

A hazard obstacle places a passive, hindering condition on a character who reaches its completion count. Environmental effects such as terrain or weather are often classified as hazards, and they commonly create areas of difficult terrain or impart negative conditions to characters.

OBSTRUCTIONS

An obstruction obstacle is a structure that actively prevents characters from advancing. Barricades, downed bridges, and destroyed buildings are often classified as obstructions, and they often make progress difficult.

PERILS

A peril obstacle actively attacks characters when they reach its completion count by making attack rolls or forcing characters to attempt saving throws to avoid its effects. Perils are often actively harmful to participants.

OBSTACLE SPECIAL QUALITIES

Like skill challenges, obstacles can have special qualities that define what the obstacle is and does. The following skill challenge special qualities (see page 50) can be used as obstacle special qualities, functioning exactly as they do during skill challenges: critical fumble, decipherable, demerits, dimension lock, hazard-like, language, skill bonus, specific skills, trap-like, and variable difficulty. For these special qualities, any references to skill checks to earn completion apply to skill checks to bypass an obstacle instead.

In addition, the following special qualities are unique to obstacles. Some require that the obstacle be of a specific type, and note so in their description.

COMPUTER-LIKE

Some obstacles are essentially large-scale encounters against a massive computer. If a skill challenge has the computer-like quality listed among its special qualities, the skill challenge and

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all effects produced by it count as a computer for all purposes and effects. In addition, all skill checks attempted to earn progress during the skill challenge count as either Computer checks or Engineering checks to disable a device for the purpose of determining any benefits you receive from your class features, feats, or items, as determined by the GM.

Example: *SQ* hazard-like

CREATURE

Some obstacles are real, living creatures rather than mere deterrents obfuscating the path forward. If an obstacle has this quality listed among its special qualities, it features the name and CR of a specific creature or creatures in parenthesis, as well as the source for that creature (such as *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE*). The combined CR of all creatures listed cannot exceed the skill challenge's CR. Obstacles with the creature special quality are always perils.

When encountered, the creature either joins the skill challenge's initiative count and continues harrying enemies by moving to a participant's square count and attacking them or remains stationary at the obstacle's square count. A creature that pursues participants is effectively no longer an obstacle, and includes the word "mobile" after its name in the obstacle's effects entry. A creature that remains stationary is still an obstacle and continues to attack any participant that enters its square count and fails to bypass it. Stationary creatures include the word "stationary" after their name in the obstacle's effects entry.

The PCs only receive XP from a creature obstacle if they stop, engage it combat, and defeat it. Otherwise the creature's XP reward is considered to be part of the XP reward for clearing the skill challenge.

Example: *SQ* creature (three CR 1/3 skittermander whelps, stationary)

DESTRUCTIBLE

Skill challenges are usually strong objects or dangerous situations that participants must outmaneuver rather than fight. Some obstacles, however, are entirely destroyable. An obstacle with this special quality is essentially an object that players can break rather than bypass. The obstacle notes the obstacle's hardness, Hit Points, and any immunities or vulnerabilities the obstacle has, using the guidelines below.

- » **Hardness:** A destructible obstacle's hardness is equal to $5 + 2 \times$ its CR.
- » **Hit Points:** A destructible obstacle has a number of Hit Points equal to $15 + 3 \times$ its CR. If the obstacle is CR 15 or higher, it gains 30 additional Hit Points.
- » **Immunities:** An obstacle with an immunity lists one or more types of damage that it is immune to. All obstacles are immune to nonlethal damage and to critical hits.
- » **Vulnerabilities:** An obstacle with a vulnerability lists one or more types of damage that deal double damage to the obstacle. At the GM's discretion, some items might automatically do double damage to an obstacle based on the item's purpose, such as a glass cutter against a glass obstacle

or a metal-cutting blade against a metallic obstacle.

A participant can use any combat action or special ability that deals damage to damage a destructible obstacle. When a destructible obstacle's Hit Points have been reduced to half, it gains the broken condition and takes a -4 penalty to attack rolls, skill checks, saving throw DCs, and skill check DCs. When the obstacle is destroyed, it no longer impedes participants and is effectively removed from the skill challenge.

Example: *SQ* destructible (hardness 14, 21 Hit Points, vulnerable to slashing damage)

INDIVIDUAL BYPASS

Most obstacles allow allied participants to work together to bypass an obstacle, treating the obstacle as having been bypassed when one party or team member bypasses it. This isn't always the case, however. Obstacles with this special quality require each participant to bypass them on their own.

If the skill challenge also has the demerits special qualities, participants also track demerits separately.

Example: *SQ* individual bypass

LIMITED BYPASS

Most obstacles allow allies to aid another on skill checks to bypass the obstacle. Sometimes this is impossible—a single participant can benefit from a limited number of assistants at a time. If the number of characters who can assist any one participant with the aid another action is limited, the obstacle notes the maximum number of characters that a single participant can accept aid from at a time in its special qualities entry. The number of aiding characters that any given participant can benefit from can be as low as 0 and is usually is 3 or less.

Example: *SQ* limited bypass 3

LIMITED OCCURRENCE

Most obstacles continue to impede participants for the entirety of the skill challenge until bypassed. Some, however, are only active for a limited number of attempts. If an obstacle has this quality listed among its special qualities, it can only be encountered for a number of times equal to the value following the quality. Once the obstacle has been encountered the listed number of times, it ceases functioning and is not encountered again for the rest of the skill challenge.

Example: *SQ* limited occurrence 5

UNAVOIDABLE

Most obstacles can be avoided with a successful skill check to bypass them, but others are virtually unavoidable. During a skill challenge with this special quality, a successful skill check to bypass the obstacle doesn't avoid all the obstacle's effects. A successful check always allows the participant to continue advancing in squares normally, but the obstacle's effects entry notes some kind of reduced effect that occurs regardless of the success. Note that if the obstacle allows a saving throw and a participant has an ability that allows them



to negate all of an effect's effects on a successful save (such as Improved Evasion), those effects apply to the obstacle normally (meaning that the participant takes no effect from the obstacle, even if it has this special quality).

Example: SQ unavoidable

OBSTACLE EXAMPLE

The following is an example script of how an obstacle is run during a skill challenge that uses squares as its clearance method is run. This example uses the obstacles described below under Sample Obstacle.

Hansune (LN kitsune operative 2) has found himself separated from his party. Having found mysterious tracks, he's decided to follow them to reunite with his missing comrades.

GM: Okay, you appear to be at an old battlefield. Tall grass covers stout hills that look similar to craters.

Hansune: Okay, I use a move action to advance squares. I move 40 ft. per round, so I can get 8 squares in.

GM: Not so fast, roll me a Perception check. (Hansune rolls a 4. With his +8 bonus, his total is a 12; much less than the hazard's DC 23). Okay, you stumble a bit into one of the craters and you hear a loud beeping sound. Roll me a Reflex save.

Hansune: Ah, shoot! (Hansune rolls a natural 1, automatically failing his saving throw.) Double shoot! What a way to go!

GM: Don't worry. You scramble to your feet, but the mine does most of the legwork for you as it blasts you into the air! You take 11 bludgeoning and fire damage and you're dazed for 2 rounds.

Hansune: Two rounds?! Well, at least it's only me here, I guess.

GM: Yeah, totally. For now.

Hansune: What?!

GM: I didn't say anything! Give me another Perception check. (Hansune rolls a 19, making his total a 27 with his +8 bonus). Oh, excellent! As you pick yourself off of the ground, you notice that this entire battlefield is laced with small mounds. You think there might be plenty more explosions in your future, Hansune....

SAMPLE OBSTACLE

The following is the excerpt of the obstacle used in the previous example. Is has been taken as an excerpt from its accompanying skill challenge for ease of comparison.

SPECIAL QUALITIES IN OBSTACLES

Special Abilities

Computer-like	Language
Creature	Limited bypass
Critical fumble	Limited occurrence
Decipherable	Skill bonus
Demerits	Specific skills
Destructible	Trap-like
Dimension lock	Unavoidable
Hazard-like	Variable difficulty
Individual bypass	

OBSTACLE

3+ Squares The field is littered with hidden mines that explode when disturbed.

Type peril; *Notice* Perception (difficult, DC 23), Survival (challenging, DC 18)

Bypass Skills Acrobatics (average, DC 13), Engineering (average, DC 13), Perception (difficult, DC 23), Stealth (challenging, DC 18)

SQ specific skills

Effect The mine explodes, dealing 1d6+8 B & F damage to the participant and knocks the participant prone (Reflex DC 13 reduces the damage by half and prevents the prone condition). If the participant fails by 5 or more, they're also dazed for 2 rounds.



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OPPOSITION

Oftentimes PCs will face stiff competition from other characters during a skill challenge. Rival treasure hunters might seek to claim a priceless artifact for the PCs can secure it or assassins might pursue the PCs across a space station. Such skill challenges are said to have opposition—NPCs who directly oppose the PC's goal in the skill challenge. Of course, the PCs likewise act as opposition to these NPCs—after all, they likely want to persevere against these foes. As a result, the term “opposition” is more synonymous with “opponent” than “enemy NPC” in a skill challenge.

This section describes opposition—how they're designed and run during a skill challenge.

WHEN DO I USE OPPOSITION?

The GM can implement opposition into any skill challenge during which the PCs will be competing against another group to complete the skill challenge first. Although skill challenges of any clearance method are appropriate choices for having opposition, chases (see page 70), contests (see page 74), and verbal duels (see page 92) require opposition, as these skill challenges are defined by head-to-head clashes against other characters. For other types of skill challenges, consider using opposition when:

- » You want to impose a natural, meaningful time limit on the PCs' participant in the skill challenge.
- » You want to raise the stakes for the skill challenge.
- » You want to introduce or reuse a villain in a setting where they're unlikely to be killed.
- » You want to roll some dice of your own during the skill challenge instead of relying on passive, static DCs.
- » You want a way to take a relatively easy skill challenge and make it a little (or a lot) harder.

DESIGNING THE OPPOSITION

Typically you'll design the opposition after you've designed or selected a skill challenge that you want to run. Designing opposition can be as simple as picking a few skill bonuses and assigning a character name to them or as complex as building an entire character using Appendix 1 in *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE*. The following section provides some information and insight on the process of designing opposition for your skill challenges.

ABRIDGED NPC STAT BLOCKS

The simplest way to design the opposition is to simply choose an NPC array that fits the character (see Appendix 1 in *Starfinder Alien Archive*), but skip every step for building that character except for choosing the character's skills. If you want, you can also fill out its special abilities with CR appropriate options that are relevant and meaningful to the skill challenge that you plan for the character to participate in. For example, if the NPC is going to be in a chase, giving them the Fleet feat as a special ability might make sense depending on the circumstances surrounding that character's involvement in the skill challenge.

If the opposition NPC has a particular race or class you want them to be, you can refer to the requirements listed for the associated creature subtype graft and class graft to help guide

your skill selection for the character. That having been said, if you have that many details about the character in mind, it might be best to simply design a full stat block for the character instead.

DESIGNING AN NPC

If you have a specific character in mind for your opposition, the creature creation rules found in Appendix 1 in *Starfinder Alien Archive* are simple and quick enough to use that it probably makes more sense for you to design a full stat block for your NPC, especially if the character is someone that the PCs can engage during the skill challenge or that you might use as an enemy during a future encounter. Drawing up NPCs with full stat blocks takes a little bit longer than simply lifting their stats from *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE*, but the end result is an NPC that can do more and participate more in the campaign and the extra bit of preparation might be worth it if your PCs have a tendency to solve problems with fists rather than skills.

DETERMINING CR

When you're designing the opposition, a general rule is to set the group's CR so it's the same as the skill challenge's CR. For example, if you are running a CR 4 skill challenge, then the opposition's CR should be CR 4 as well. This limit is for the combined CR of all characters present during the skill challenge—if you have an opposition consisting of a party of 4, the CR of the party should normally equal CR 4.

Sometimes it's more appropriate to have opposition that equal or outgun the PCs. When doing so, keep the CR of the skill challenge the same but increase the CR of the opposition by as much as +4. Should the PCs clear a skill challenge with such powerful opposition, their XP reward is equal to the XP they would have gained for beating the opposition, rather than the skill challenge. For example, if the PCs are participating in a CR 4 chase skill challenge in which they're fleeing from a party of four 4th-level vesk soldiers, the CR of the vesk soldiers' party would be equivalent to a CR 8 encounter, so the PCs would receive 4,800 XP for having beaten a CR 8 encounter instead of the 1,200 XP they would have normally gained for clearing a CR 4 skill challenge. Note that such high CR opposition is going to have much more competitive skill check bonuses, will be more likely to succeed at skill checks, and therefore be much more difficult to defeat.



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CHOOSING SKILLS FOR THE OPPOSITION

When designing your opposition, it's important to remember that they will either be at a numbers disadvantage (and therefore be able to attempt fewer skill checks to earn progress or aid their teammates each round) or a skill bonus disadvantage (and therefore be less likely to succeed at skill checks) compared to the PCs unless you're increasing the opposition's CR dramatically in relation to the skill challenge's CR. As a result, it's important that you make sure that each member of the opposition have a diverse array of useful skills that will allow them to meet the skill challenge head-on—if the opposition is unable to do so, they won't be very threatening to the PCs. Keep the following guidelines in mind as you choose skills for the opposition.

- » It's okay if a member of the opposition has all the skill challenge's primary skills as good skills, but give them no more than two primary skills as master skills.
- » No character should be entirely unable to attempt to earn progress or bypass obstacles during the skill challenge.
- » The opposition as a unit should be able to pass all of the skill challenge's skill checks by rolling a 15 or higher.
- » The opposition as a unit should be able to pass at least 25% (1 in 4) primary skill checks with a 10 or higher.
- » If a member has special abilities, it is okay to give them reasonably balanced and CR-appropriate abilities that will help them clear the skill challenge.

WORKING TOGETHER

Since skill challenges assume that allies work together to clear them barring special qualities like individual progress, oppositions consisting of multiple NPCs pool their progress together just as PCs do. Along the same lines, if a skill challenge has a special quality like individual progress, the various NPCs that make up the opposition track their progress separately, as normal.

Ultimately, the opposition is beholden to the same rules for participating in a skill challenge as the PCs unless noted otherwise or determined otherwise by the GM.

ATTACKING THE PCS

Oftentimes the opposition's objectives will put them at direct odds with the PCs, and fighting may ensue. If this occurs, you can start a combat encounter using the skill challenge's initiative count (or a new initiative count, if you were using an initiative method that is incompatible with combat). If the skill challenge's interval is 6 seconds, one combat round is equal to one skill challenge round. If the skill challenge's interval is longer than six seconds, keep track of the number of combat rounds that occurred and translate them into 6 second combat rounds, rounding up. For example, if a combat breaks out during a skill challenge with a 1-minute interval and the combat takes 5 rounds, it would have considered to have taken place over the course of one skill challenge round (5 rounds is 30 seconds, rounded up to the nearest skill challenge round).

SAMPLE SKILL CHALLENGES

This section provides an in-depth look at how skill challenge stat blocks are laid out and provides information and examples to make learning to read them easier. A number of prebuilt skill challenge are also included in this section, ranging in CR from CR 1 to CR 10 and above.

SKILL CHALLENGE STAT BLOCK FORMAT

Skill challenges are presented in a standard format, as shown in the sample skill challenge stat block. Each category of information found in the skill challenge stat block is explained and defined in the appropriate sections that follow the sample (along with references for further information). Not all skill challenges contain each boldface entry heading listed in the sample, but for purposes of completeness, all entry headings used in the various stat block entries are included. The sample also includes either typical language found in most skill challenge entries or a summary of what the entry typically contains.

SKILL CHALLENGE NAME

CR

XP Reward

Type of Skill Challenge

Goal A description of the goal the PCs are trying to complete.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Skill (difficulty, skill DC); **Secondary Skills** difficulty, DC

Interval 6 seconds, 1 minute, 10 minutes, 1 hour, or 1 day

Backlash The effect that occurs when a creature fails a skill check to earn progress.

Failures Allowed The number of failures allowed before the skill challenge is automatically failed

Language A list of languages required to earn progress during the skill challenge are listed here.

Time Pressure The amount of game world time that participants have to clear the skill challenge goes here. (The number of rounds participants have to clear the skill challenge goes here.)

CLEARANCE

Progress The amount of progress needed to clear the skill challenge goes here.

Audience Size alignment demographics (# of attendees, size modifier); positive biases; negative biases.

SQA list of special qualities that the skill challenge has goes here.

Benefit The beneficial outcome that the PCs gain for clearing the skill challenge goes here.

Penalty The penalty that the PCs take for failing to clear the skill challenge goes here.

OBSTACLE

Square Count A description of the obstacle goes here.

Type hazard, obstacle, peril; *Notice* Skill check (difficulty, DC)

Bypass Skills Skill check (difficulty, DC)

SQA list of special qualities that the obstacle has goes here.

Effect The effect that occurs when a creature fails to bypass the obstacle goes here.

THRESHOLD

Progress A description of what happens when the indicated amount of progress is earned is listed here, in order from lowest to highest. **Event** Any effects that occur when this threshold is reached go here.

SKILL CHALLENGE ELEMENTS

All skill challenges, regardless of clearance method, have the following elements: CR, type, goal, primary skills, secondary skills, frequency, Clearance, benefit, and penalty. Some skill challenges might also include optional elements, such as demerits or thresholds. These characteristics are described below and are presented in the order in which they appear on a skill challenge's stat block.

SKILL CHALLENGE NAME

The first line of every skill challenge stat block gives the name by which the skill challenge is commonly known. A skill challenge's name generally indicates what happens during the skill challenge or what the participants hope to accomplish.

CHALLENGE RATING AND XP

All skill challenges possess a Challenge Rating (CR) ranging from CR 1/3 to CR 25 and higher and grant the same XP reward as a creature of the skill challenge's CR. As with creatures, XP rewards gained from a skill challenge are divided by the number of PCs in the party and distributed evenly amongst them.

SKILL CHALLENGE TYPE

Beneath the skill challenge's XP reward is an entry listing the skill challenge's type. All skill challenges presented in the *ADVANCED SKILL GUIDE* belong to one of five categories: chase, contest, general skill challenge, influence challenge, or verbal duel. A skill challenge's type represents commonalities that these skill challenges have as well as similarities in how they're run and cleared.

Chase: A chase is a skill challenge that uses squares as its clearance method and features an opposition. Participants are either tracking quarry, fleeing from pursuers, or racing competition, based upon the themes of the skill challenge. Chases use the rules for running general skill challenges, as well as a unique set of rules that start on page 70.

Contest: A chase is a skill challenge that uses points as its



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clearance method and features an opposition. Participants are usually participating in some sort of game-like activity, although the stakes can range from zero to extremely high. Contests use the rules for running general skill challenges, as well as a unique set of rules that start on page 74.

General Skill Challenge: A general skill challenge is a skill challenge that doesn't have a specific list of rules they follow. They're essentially "miscellaneous" with few commonalities. General skill challenges use the rules found throughout this chapter, starting on page 30, but do not use the rules for more specific kinds of skill challenges, like contests or chases.

Influence Challenge: An influence challenge is a skill challenge that uses successes as its clearance method and features target NPCs, a mechanic unique to this type of skill challenge. During an influence challenge, you try to sway an NPC to do something for you. Influence challenges use the rules for running general skill challenges, as well as a unique set of rules that start on page 86.

Verbal Duel: A verbal duel is a skill challenge that uses points as its clearance method and features opposition and tactics, a mechanic unique to this type of skill challenge. During a verbal duel, you try to out debate an opponent. Verbal duels use the rules for running general skill challenges, as well as a unique set of rules that start on page 92.

GOAL

Beneath the skill challenge's type is a goal that describes what the skill challenge's participants are attempting to accomplish and why. A skill challenge's goal has no mechanical effect on the skill challenge, but it should reflect the skill challenge's clearance method, goal, benefit, and penalties.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SKILLS

The first line under the skills header lists which skills are primary skills for the skill challenge and their difficulty and DC, as well as the difficulty and DC of all secondary skill checks attempted to earn progress. For more information regarding primary and secondary skills, see page 34.

INTERVAL

The line after the primary skills line denotes the amount of time in the game world that 1 skill challenge round represents. This is noted in game time first, followed by skill challenge rounds afterwards.

BACKLASH

If the skill challenge has the backlash special quality, the next available line after the skill challenge's interval is dedicated to describing its backlash effect, an effect that happens when a skill check to earn Clearance fails. For more information on this special quality, see page &.

FAILURES ALLOWED

If the skill challenge has the failures allowed special quality, the next available line after the skill challenge's interval notes the

number of failed skill checks to earn Clearance that participants can accrue before automatically failing the skill challenge. For more information on this special quality, see page &.

LANGUAGES

If the skill challenge has the languages special quality, the next available line after the skill challenge's interval notes which languages must be known to attempt skill checks to earn Clearance and whether this restriction applies to some or all skills. For more information on this special quality, see page &.

TIME PRESSURE

If the skill challenge has the time pressure special quality, the next available line after the skill challenge's interval notes the amount of time that participants have to clear the skill challenge before it ends. This entry includes the amount of time participants have in the game world and in skill challenge rounds. For more information on this special quality, see page 55.

PROGRESS

The first line of a skill challenge's clearance section lists the skill challenge's clearance method (see page 40) and the amount of progress needed to clear the skill challenge. A skill challenge's clearance method represents how progress is earned and determines common traits between those kinds of skill challenges.

Accumulation: If the skill challenge uses accumulation as its clearance method, this entry notes how much progress must be accumulated to clear the skill challenge. For more information about this clearance method, see page 42.

Points: If the skill challenge uses points as its clearance method, this entry notes the skill challenge's scoring event(s), how many points are scored per scoring event, and whether those points are added to the participant's total or subtracted from an opponent's total as a casualty. For more information about this clearance method, see page 44.

Squares: Is the skill challenge uses squares as its clearance method, this entry notes how many squares participants must advance to clear the skill challenge. For more information about this clearance method, see page 46.

Successes: If the skill challenge uses successes as its clearance method, this entry notes how many successes participants must earn to clear the skill challenge. For more information about this clearance method, see page 48.

AUDIENCE

If the skill challenge has the audience special quality, the next available line after the skill challenge's clearance method is dedicated to its audience. The audience's size, alignment, demographics, number of attendees, size modifier, and biases are listed here in order. For more information on this special quality, see page 50.

SPECIAL QUALITIES (SQ)

If the skill challenge has any special qualities that aren't covered

in previous entries, they're listed on the next available line after the skill challenge's clearance method under the heading "SQ" in alphabetical order. For more information on special qualities, see page 50.

BENEFIT

After the skill challenge's progress entry and any other entries relating to special qualities that the skill challenge might have, the skill challenge lists the benefit that participants gain for clearing the skill challenge. A skill challenge's benefit is usually framed as if earned by the PCs, but this isn't a requirement for the entry. A benefit can be tangible (such as a monetary reward) or intangible (such as information required to continue their adventures).

If the skill challenge has the demerits special quality, this entry includes a demerits entry for each demerit that participants can earn and a description of what happens if the PCs succeed with the indicated number of demerits.

PENALTY

After the skill challenge's benefit line, the skill challenge lists the penalty that participants take for failing to clear the skill challenge. A skill challenge's penalty is usually framed as if it occurred to the PCs, but this isn't a requirement for the entry. A penalty can be tangible (such as gaining negative levels or ability drain) or intangible (such as losing an opportunity to meet with someone or go somewhere).

If the skill challenge has the demerits special quality, this entry includes a demerits entry for each demerit that participants can earn and a description of what happens if the PCs fail with the indicated number of demerits.

OBSTACLE

If the skill challenge uses squares as its clearance method, it has an obstacle section at the end of the skill challenge. Obstacles are listed in ascending order by square count, with obstacles that are encountered first listed first. Obstacles are detailed in-depth on page 56, and the following information about an obstacle is summarized in its entry.

Type: This entry lists the obstacle's type—hazard, obstacle, or peril. This classification is used as a means to describe similarities between skill challenges of the same type.

Notice: This is the skill check DC to notice the obstacle before it takes effect. Failing this skill check causes you to take penalties against the obstacle's effects.

Special Qualities (SQ): This entry lists any special qualities that the obstacle has. Like skill challenges, special qualities provide additional rules and information for running the obstacle.

Effect: This entry notes the effect that occurs if a participant fails their skill check to bypass the obstacle.

THRESHOLD

If the skill challenge uses accumulation as its clearance method,

it has a threshold section at the end of the skill challenge. Thresholds are listed in ascending order by the amount of progress needed to reach that threshold. Thresholds are detailed on page 42. If the threshold has any events (see page 53), they're listed immediately following that threshold.

SAMPLE SKILL CHALLENGES

The following skill challenges were created using the design guidelines found on page 98, and serve as examples for GMs looking to create their own skill challenges.

BABYSITTING

CR 1

XP 400

General skill challenge

Goal The PCs are watching the three children of two affluent patrons who are attending an annual gala. By ensuring the safety of the children, the PCs hope to earn a favor from the socialites.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Acrobatics (average, DC 11), Diplomacy (challenging, DC 16), Intimidate (average DC 11), Perception (challenging, DC 16), Profession (actor, artist, comedian, cook, musician, or vidgamer) (easy, DC 6), Sense Motive (difficult, DC 21), Sleight of Hand (average, DC 11).

Secondary Skills Difficult, DC 21

Interval 1 hour

Time Pressure 6 rounds

CLEARANCE

Successes 6

SQ demerits 3, limited progress (3 primary participants, 2 assistants per primary participant)

Benefit The PCs babysit the children. The benefits of succeeding at the skill challenge are determined by the number of demerits earned.

0 Demerits The night passes without incident. The PCs' patrons return from the gala delighted, gladly giving them the favor they requested. The encounter with the patrons counts as a positive special event for the purpose of determining their Relationship Score with the PCs (see page 24).

1 Demerit As a success with 0 demerits, but the patrons request 2d6 × 10 credits in exchange for the favor. If the PCs are unable or unwilling to pay, they offer to provide the favor in exchange for the completion of three tasks (one CR 1 encounter, one CR 2 encounter, and one CR 3 encounter). Each encounter can be either a combat or a skill challenge, at the GM's decision.

2 Demerits As a success with 1 demerit, but the patrons request 2d6 × 25 credits in exchange for the favor.

3 Demerits As a failure with 0 demerits.

Failure The PCs babysit the children. The consequences for failing at the skill challenge are determined by the number of demerits earned.

0 Demerit The nobles agree to fulfill the favor, but require 2d6 × 25 credits and the completion of three tasks (one CR 1 encounter, one CR 2 encounter, and one CR 3



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encounter). Each encounter can be either a combat or a skill challenge, at the GM's decision.

- 1 **Demerits** The patrons refuse to give the PCs any compensation for the babysitting assignment including money or favors. If the PCs threaten or harass them, they call the police.
- 2 **Demerits** As a failure with 1 demerit, and the encounter with the patrons counts as a negative special event for the purpose of determining their Relationship Score with the PCs (see page 24).
- 3 **Demerits** As a failure with 2 demerits, except the encounter counts as a major negative deed and the patrons call the police on the PCs.

MISSING TECHNOMANCER

CR 2

XP 600

General skill challenge

Goal The PCs must research the personal study of a missing town sage to search for clues regarding his disappearance.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Culture (average, DC 13), Perception (challenging, DC 18), Sense Motive (challenging, DC 18)

Secondary Skills Difficult, DC 23

Interval 8 hours

Languages Common (read only)

Time Pressure 7 days (21 rounds)

CLEARANCE

Progress 22

SQ limited progress (1 primary participant, any number of assistants).

Benefit The PCs can use the information gleaned from the technomancer's notes to determine where they have headed and follow him there.

Penalty If the PCs fail to discover where the technomancer has gone within a week's time, the sage has suffered a gruesome fate at the hands of the bandit leader—if he isn't dead, he is certainly unable to offer the PCs much assistance for a time, if ever.

THRESHOLD

7 Progress At low tide, a hidden entrance to underground caverns becomes visible beneath the city's docks. According to a number of urban legends, space pirates hid their booty in the caves.

14 Progress The florist in the town square is the local priest's illegitimate daughter. Given the priest's vow of chastity, if this knowledge became public, he could lose respect among the townsfolk and likely his position as the town's priest.

22 Progress The leader of the outlaws in a scrap yard outside town claims to be the deposed heir of a foreign despot, and wants to raise an army to take back his status and power. The technomancer's notes indicate that he was planning on seeking out this individual and using his records to prove the veracity of the claim.

POWERING THE COMPUTER

CR 3

XP 800

General skill challenge

Goal The PCs must reactivate a failed computer in order to defend a space station from an alien menace.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Athletics (average, DC 14), Computers (challenging, DC 19), Engineering (challenging, DC 19)

Interval 1 round

Time Pressure 1 minute (10 rounds)

CLEARANCE

Successes 7

Backlash Failing a skill check to earn a success by 5 or more triggers one of the computer's countermeasures, dealing 1d8+1 points of force damage and causes all participants to become stunned for 1 round. A DC 13 Will save negates the stunned condition, but not the damage.

SQ specific skills

Benefit The PCs reactivate the computer, granting the PCs the service of a CR 4 patrol-class security robot.

Penalty As the PCs begin to reactivate the computer, its power overloads, frying all security robots and threatening to harm the PCs. If the PCs fail to reactivate the computer after 1 minute, a blast of electricity wrecks the PCs. Each PC takes 2d8+3 points of electricity damage and falls unconscious for 1d4 rounds, then become stunned for 1d4 rounds. A successful Will save (DC 14) negates these conditions, but not the damage.

CROSSING THE BRIDGE

CR 4

XP 1,200

General skill challenge

Goal The PCs must make their way across the chasm's bridge without damaging the bridge's integrity or risk falling.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Acrobatics (average, DC 16)

Interval 1 round

CLEARANCE

Squares 48

Backlash Failure causes the bridge to take 1d4 points of damage, ignoring its hardness. The bridge has 20 hit points. If the bridge takes 10 points of damage, all squares on the bridge count as difficult terrain for the purpose of determining the number of squares that characters advance, and the DC of all skill checks made to bypass the bridge's obstacles increases by 2. If the bridge takes 20 points of damage, it is destroyed. Characters on the bridge when it is destroyed fall 80 feet to the bottom of the chasm (8d6 falling damage) unless they succeed on a DC 15 Reflex save to hang on to the splintering bridge. Characters with a Clearance count of 1 to 2 have their Clearance count set to 2 and can only advance backward, while characters with a Clearance count of 9 to 10 have their Clearance count set to 8 and can only advance forward. Characters with a Clearance count of 3 to 7 have a 50% chance to end up on either side.

Once the bridge is destroyed, Athletics (challenging, DC 21) replaces all other primary skills for the skill challenge's obstacles for characters hanging on to the bridge.

SQ individual progress, specific skills

Benefit If all PCs successfully cross the bridge, they can continue on their adventure unhindered.

Penalty If the bridge is destroyed, the PCs must reroute their course and attempt to find a new path across the chasm. They may need to spend additional time finding any party members who fell from the bridge.

OBSTACLES

1+ Square The bridge sways irregularly in the unchecked breeze, threatening to topple the PCs over.

Type hazard; *Notice* Survival (easy, DC 11)

Bypass Skills Acrobatics (challenging, DC 21)

SQ specific skills

Effect difficult terrain and target falls prone; DC 15 Reflex avoids the prone condition

24 Squares The bridge's planks are unstable, and threaten to give out under the PCs as they make their way across.

Type peril; *Notice* Engineering (easy, DC 11), Perception (average, DC 16), Profession (architect or general contractor) (easy, DC 16)

Bypass Skills Engineering (challenging, DC 21), Profession (architect or general contractor) (average, DC 16); *Secondary Skills* difficult, DC 26

SQ individual progress, trap-like

Effect 80-ft.-deep pit (8d6 damage); DC 15 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets at square count 16–24)

48 Squares The bridge's planks are unstable, and threaten to give out under the PCs as they make their way across.

Type peril; *Notice* Engineering (easy, DC 11), Perception (average, DC 16), Profession (architect or general contractor) (easy, DC 11)

Bypass Skills Engineering (challenging, DC 21), Profession (architect or general contractor) (average, DC 16); *Secondary Skills* difficult, DC 26

SQ individual progress, trap-like

Effect 80-ft.-deep pit (8d6 damage); DC 15 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets at square count 40–48)

A MEAL FIT FOR A DRAGON

CR 5

XP 1,600

Type General skill challenge

Goal The PCs must successfully cook a succulent meal for a dragon in order to gain his corporation's assistance.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Perception (difficult, DC 27), Profession (cook) (average, DC 17)

Secondary Skills Very difficult, DC 32

Interval 10 minutes

Time Pressure 2 hours (12 rounds)

CLEARANCE

Successes 8



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SQ demerits 3, limited progress (1 primary participant, any number of assistants)

Benefit The PCs cook a meal for the dragon. The benefits of succeeding at the skill challenge are determined by the number of demerits earned.

0 Demerits The dragon is delighted with the quality of his meal. His attitude towards the PCs is helpful and he will help them free of charge.

1 Demerits The dragon enjoys his meal. His attitude towards the PCs is friendly and he will help them for 2,500 credits.

2 Demerits The dragon finds his meal passable, though hardly anything to write home about. His attitude towards the PCs is indifferent and he will help them for 5,000 credits.

3 Demerits As a failure with 0 demerits.

Penalty The PCs cook a meal for the dragon. The penalties for failing at the skill challenge are determined by the number of demerits earned.

0 Demerits The dragon finds his meal revolting, and increases his price of service. His attitude towards the PCs is indifferent and he will help them for 5,500 credits.

1 Demerits The dragon is infuriated by the quality of his meal. His attitude towards the PCs is unfriendly and he refuses to help them.

2 Demerits As a failure with 1 demerit, except the dragon is insulted and infuriated. His attitude towards the PCs is hostile, and he orders his guards to slay them if they don't leave his sight immediately.

3 Demerits The dragon is convinced that the PCs tried to poison him. His attitude towards the PCs is hostile, and both he and his guards immediately attack the PCs until they're unconscious or they manage to escape his home.

CRACKING THE SPELL CACHE CR 6

XP 2,400

Type General skill challenge

Goal The PCs must search the workshop of a vanished technomancer in order to learn of any wards that the spellcaster might have placed upon her spell cache before she disappeared.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Culture (hard, DC 29), Mysticism (challenging, 24)

Interval 8 hours

Languages Common (read only)

CLEARANCE

Progress 30

SQ limited progress (1 primary participant, any number of assistants), skill bonus (Mysticism +4), specific skills

Benefit The PCs are able to bypass the spell cache's wards and defenses, allowing them to glean arcane knowledge from it and catch a rare glimpse at the vanished technomancer's musings and experiments.

Penalty If the PCs fail to discover the methods to bypass the technomancer's defenses, they must either find a way to remove the wards or risk opening the book and suffering its wards.

The spell cache has a mystic rune that, when triggered causes all creatures within 20 feet to fall asleep for 2d6 hours. Upon reawakening, those creatures are cursed with illiteracy, unable to read or write (as *bestow curse*, Will save DC 16, CL 6th).

THRESHOLD

5 Progress The technomancer's spellcache is warded with a unique *symbol* spell of her own design. She wanted anyone brazen enough to try and learn from her works to suffer greatly for their arrogance.

10 Progress After several failed experiences left her book singed and the sanctuary badly burned, the technomancer decided a more subtle approach was in order. She began devising a way to make sure that anyone who read from the spell cache without permission would be unable to read anything ever again.

15 Progress The technomancer devised a nefarious magical trap that caused the reader to fall asleep and upon awakening, lose the ability to read or write.

18 Progress The technomancer designed a bypass mechanic for her spellbook's trap so she wouldn't need to be bothered with constantly disarming and rearming the trap. The glyph does not

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trigger for anyone who opens the spell cache while wearing a signet ring with the technomancer's insignia upon it.

A PRESIDENTIAL AUDIENCE CR 7

XP 3,200

General skill challenge

Goal The PCs must convince the president's majordomo to hold an audience with them.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Bluff (challenging, DC 25), Culture (difficult, DC 30), Diplomacy (challenging, DC 25), Intimidate (challenging, DC 25), Profession (lawyer) (average, DC 20)

Secondary Skills Very difficult, DC 35

Interval 1 round

Time Pressure 1 minute (10 rounds)

CLEARANCE

Successes 5

Demerits 3

Benefit The PCs receive an audience with the president. The benefits of succeeding at the skill challenge are determined by the number of demerits earned.

0 *Demerits* The PCs receive their audience immediately, and

the president's starting attitude towards the PCs is friendly.

1 *Demerit* The PCs receive their audience immediately, and the president's starting attitude towards the PCs is indifferent.

2 *Demerits* The PCs receive their audience in 2d6 hours, and the president's starting attitude towards the PCs is indifferent.

0 *Demerits* As a failure with 0 demerits.

Penalty The PCs receive an audience with the president. The penalties for failing at the skill challenge are determined by the number of demerits earned.

0 *Demerits* The PCs receive their audience in 1d3 days, and the president's starting attitude towards the PCs is indifferent.

1 *Demerit* The PCs receive their audience in 2d4 days, and the president's starting attitude towards the PCs is unfriendly.

2 *Demerits* The PCs receive their audience in 3d4 days, and the president's starting attitude towards the PCs is unfriendly.

3 *Demerits* The PCs receive their audience in 4d4 days, and the president's starting attitude towards the PCs is hostile. While he does not order the use of lethal tactics on the PCs, he has them removed from his sight at the first hint of aggression or disrespect.

LIVING MAZE CR 8

XP 4,800

Type General skill challenge

Goal The PCs are trapped within a maze that is being manipulated by an otherworldly entity and must escape.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Mysticism (difficult, DC 32), Survival (challenging, DC 27)

Interval 10 minutes

CLEARANCE

Squares 60

Backlash Failing a skill check by 5 or more causes the PCs to lose 1d4 squares of movement as the maze twists and contorts around them, making them helplessly lost.

SQ advantage (3), dimension lock, limited progress (1 participant, 3 assistants), specific skills.

OBSTACLES

10 **Squares** The maze rips an interdimensional hole in itself to whisk the PCs back to the beginning of the maze.

Type peril; Notice Mysticism (average, DC 22), Perception (challenging, DC 27)

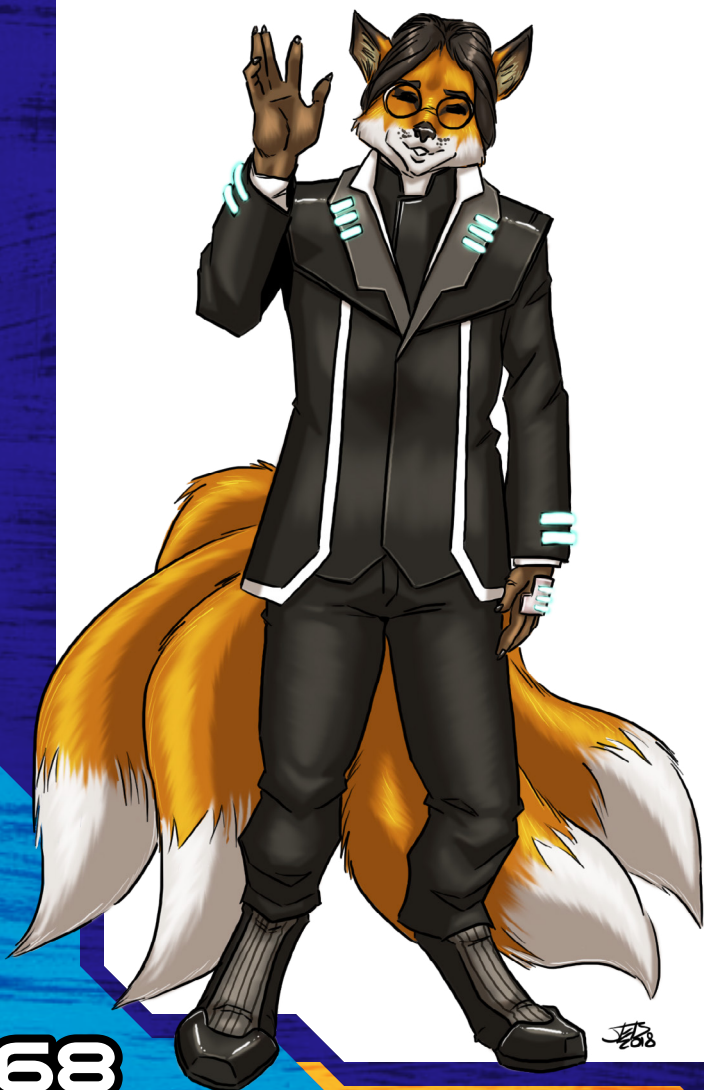
Bypass Skills Mysticism (challenging, DC 27), Perception (difficult, DC 32), Survival (difficult, DC 32); Secondary Skills very difficult, DC 37

SQ limited occurrence (1)

Effect Spell (*plane shift*, CL 12th); DC 18 Will avoids; multiple targets (all targets with a progress count of 10); participants that fail their saving throw have their square count reduced to 0.

25, 40 **Squares** The maze creates stone guardians to attempt to stop the PCs from advancing any further.

Type peril; Notice Mysticism (challenging, DC 27), Perception (average, DC 22), Survival (average, DC 22)





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SQ limited occurrence (1), unavoidable

Effect Creature (1 huge earth elemental, *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE*); The elemental pursues participants, automatically succeeding on all skill checks to bypass obstacles and gain advantage. It attempts to knock the participants unconscious so it can drag them back to square count 0.

- 60 Squares** The maze seals its exit with a massive stone wall.
Type obstruction; *Notice* Mysticism (easy, DC 17), Perception (easy, DC 17), Survival (easy, DC 17)
Bypass Skills Acrobatics (challenging, DC 27), Athletics (challenging, DC 27); *Secondary Skills* difficult, DC 32
SQ destructible (hardness 21, 39 Hit Points, vulnerable to effects damaging or targeting stone)
Effect Participants cannot clear the skill challenge until they bypass the obstacle or it is destroyed.

STAYING THE COURSE

CR 9

XP 6,400

Type General skill challenge

Goal The PCs must fight to keep their starship on-course during a deadly meteor storm.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Athletics (difficult, DC 33), Acrobatics (difficult, DC 33), Computers (challenging, DC 28), Engineering (challenging, DC 28), Piloting (average, DC 23)

Interval 10 minutes

CLEARANCE

Squares 60

SQ limited progress (1 participant, 0 assistants), specific skills, surprise start

Benefit The PCs weather the storm and can continue flying without impediment.

Penalty The PCs survive the storm, but their starship is battered or worse, based upon their success at the skill challenge's threshold intervals (see below).

THRESHOLDS

10+ Squares Asteroids bombard the ship, causing extreme turbulence within the ship

Type peril; *Notice* Perception (average, DC 23) or Computers (average, DC 23)

Bypass Skills Computers (challenging, DC 28), Diplomacy (DC 28), Piloting (challenging, DC 28)

SQ limited progress 1, specific skills

Effect All characters aboard the ship must succeed at a DC 18 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1 round. Characters who fail by 10 or more are nauseated for 1 round instead.

15+ Squares Magnetic disturbances cause the starship to violently lurch like a boat buffeted by relentless waves.

Type peril; *Notice* Physical Science (average, DC 23) or Computers (average, DC 23)

Bypass Skills Computers (challenging, DC 28), Diplomacy (DC 28), Physical Science (challenging, DC 28)

SQ limited progress 1, specific skills

Effect All characters aboard the ship must succeed at a DC

18 Reflex save or be dazed for 1 round. A character that is already dazed is also flung into a nearby wall, taking 2d10+17 bludgeoning damage.

45+ Squares The starship's course takes it directly into an asteroid field.

Type obstacle; *Notice* Perception (average, DC 23) or Computers (average, DC 23)

Bypass Skills Computers (challenging, DC 28), Diplomacy (DC 28), Piloting (challenging, DC 28)

SQ destructible (hardness 23, 42 Hit Points, damaged by starship weapons as if it were a starship)

Effect An asteroid strikes the ship, dealing 8d6 damage to the starship in a random quadrant and reducing the starship's speed by half for 1 round.

CRUSHING CEILING

CR 10

XP 9,600

General skill challenge

Goal The PCs must discover a way to escape the chamber before they are crushed by the room's slowly descending ceiling.

Setting A 20-foot by 20-foot sealed chamber with a 50-foot high ceiling. The walls, floor, and ceiling are 20-foot by 20-foot slabs of stone (hardness 8, 1,800 hp), and when the skill challenge begins the ceiling-slab begins descending towards the ground at a rate of 5 feet per round. The ceiling slab weighs 1.5 tons (3,000 pounds).

SKILLS

Primary Skills Engineering (challenging, DC 30), Perception (average, DC 25), Survival (difficult, DC 35);

Secondary Skills Very difficult, DC 40

Interval 1 round

Time Pressure 1 minute (10 rounds)

CLEARANCE

Successes 11

Backlash If a PC fails a skill check by 5 or more, reduce the skill challenge's time pressure by 1 cycle.

SQ descrutable (hardness 25, 45 Hit Points, immune to nonlethal damage and damage from archaic weapons, vulnerable to effects damaging or targeting stone), surprise start, trap-like

Benefit The PCs find a secret door that allows them to escape the room unharmed.

Penalty The slab begins crushing the PCs, attempting to grapple all creatures within the room as a full action. The slab has an attack bonus of +26 and a KAC of 29. If any creatures are pinned by the slab, they take 3d12+21 bludgeoning damage. If the slab rolls a natural 20 on its grapple attempt, this damage is doubled as if the slab had critically hit with a melee attack with the severe wound critical effect.

Creatures must continue to attempt skill checks to earn progress even after failing the skill challenge, and cannot escape from the room until they've succeeded at the number of skill checks. The room continues to crush the PCs in this method indiscriminately. As an object, the room cannot take attacks of opportunity against creatures in the room.

CHASES

Running down enemies or fleeing from powerful foes is a classic trope, whether one treks across hill and dale or darts between urban alleys and stalls. Chases are powerful transitional encounters that allow the GM an opportunity to create tension, provide exposition, and cause a relocation in scenery and setting. Despite similarities in names, chases work differently than vehicular chases (see Chapter 8 in the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*), and can be used to replace or supplant that ruleset as needed.

Chases are a specific type of movement-based skill challenge in which one or more groups of characters compete against the PCs as rivals or enemies. Chases follow the same rules as standard skill challenges (see page 30), but they have a slightly different list of elements and have additional special qualities not found in standard skill challenges. In addition, there are some special actions that are only applicable to chases. Unless otherwise noted, assume that chase challenges follow all of the standard rules associated with movement-based skill challenges, such as the sequence for which characters act during a cycle and how initiative is determined.

CHASE BASICS

The following rules cover basic information about chases and how they're run. Aside from the information detailed here, chases follow the same rules as general skill challenges across all previous pages.

- » All chases use squares as their clearance method. For more information regarding this clearance method, see page 46.
- » All chases feature opposition. For more information about opposition, see page 60.
- » Chases are categorized into one of two subtypes: pursuits and races. Pursuits are skill challenges in which one group (either the PCs or the NPCs) are attempting to catch the other before the fleeing group can clear the skill challenge. Races are skill challenges in which both groups (the PCs or the NPCs) complete to be the first group to clear the skill challenge.

SKILL CHALLENGE SUBTYPES

Each chase has one of the following subtypes. Like the skill challenge's type, this subtype further categorizes common features between different skill challenges.

PURSUIT

Pursuits feature one character (either the PCs or their opposition) fleeing from the other character, who is attempting to either capture or terminate them. Characters who are fleeing are called quarries, while characters who are tracking down the quarries are called pursuers.

In a pursuit, the pursuers and the quarry have different conditions that determine when they successfully complete the chase. The quarries follow the standard rules for movement-based skill challenges—they clear the chase when they have advanced the number of squares listed in the chase's clearance entry. Pursuers, however, have a different goal: they clear the skill challenge by incapacitating or killing all quarries before they can clear the skill challenge.

RACE

Races pit the PCs and their opposition against one another as they compete to be the first character to reach a specific location or complete an objective. All characters participating

in a race are called racers.

In a race, both sets of racers follow the standard rules for movement-based skill challenges—they clear the skill challenge when they have advanced the number of squares listed in the chase's clearance entry. The main difference between races and standard movement-based skill challenges is that only the first group of racers to advance the number of squares listed in the chase's entry clears the chase—any other groups still participating in the chase automatically fail the skill challenge, even if they eventually reach the requisite square count.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

In addition to the standard special actions that can be performed during any skill challenge (see page 36), you can use the following special action during a chase.

STANDARD ACTION

A standard action is usually the main action you take each round. Below are examples of standard actions.

CREATE A DISADVANTAGE (SQUARES)

During a chase, you can attempt to create a disadvantage for the opposition as a standard action. Creating a disadvantage follows this sequence:

1. You state how you wish to create a disadvantage, such as by pushing a stall cart into the middle of the road or by cutting the ropes of a rope bridge.
2. The GM provides you with a list of two or more rolls or checks that you can use to create the stated disadvantage. This can be an ability check, an attack roll, or a skill check. The GM specifies which abilities or skills are used to create the disadvantage, and may also limit what type of attack rolls you can use to create the disadvantage (such as melee attack roll or ranged attack roll).
3. If you still wish to create the disadvantage, you choose one of the options presented by the GM and spend your standard action creating the disadvantage by attempting the required roll or check.
4. If you succeed on your roll or check, you create a



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disadvantage. If you fail, you don't create a disadvantage. You might gain additional bonuses or penalties from succeeding exceptionally well or doing exceptionally poorly on your attempt to create a disadvantage, as described below.

The standard DC to create a disadvantage using an attack roll or skill check is equal to $15 + 1\frac{1}{2} \times$ the skill challenge's CR, while the standard DC to create a disadvantage using an ability check is $15 + \frac{1}{2}$ the skill challenge's CR. The GM can increase or decrease this DC by up to 5 to represent disadvantages that are easy to create and those that are more difficult to create. Whenever you succeed on a skill check to create a disadvantage, your disadvantage gains a square count equal to your current square count, your current square count +1, or your current square count -1 (your choice). If you place a disadvantage at a square count that you have not advanced to, you are subjected to that disadvantage yourself when you attempt to advance to that square count.

Disadvantages are created at the GM's discretion. The GM may rule that a given square count is ill-suited for a particular type of disadvantage, or that you cannot use the environment or resources at hand in order to create a meaningful disadvantage.

You create two different types of disadvantages—an augmentation or a hurdle. The types of disadvantages are described below.

Augmentation: An augmentation improves the difficulty of an existing obstacle (including a hurdle created by another character, see below) by increasing its bypass DC, improving its bonus to attack rolls, or increasing its save DC. You can only attempt to augment an obstacle if your square count is within 1 square of the obstacle's square count, and if you are aware of the obstacle. Your skill check to augment the obstacle also represents your attempts to bypass it yourself; if your ability check, attack roll, or skill check fails, you are immediately affected by the obstacle's effects as if you were in its square count and failed to bypass it.

If your check succeeds, you choose one of the following statistics: attack rolls, bypass DC, or save DC. You grant the obstacle a +2 bonus to the chosen statistic the next time any other character is attacked by the obstacle (if attack rolls are chosen), attempts to bypass the obstacle (if bypass DC is chosen), or attempts a saving throw against the obstacle's effects (if save DC is chosen). For every 5 by which your roll or check to create a disadvantage exceeds the DC, you either choose an additional statistic to receive this benefit, increase the number of attack rolls, bypass checks, or saving throws that a chosen bonus applies against by 1, or increase the bonus granted to a previously chosen bonus receives by +1 (maximum +4 to any one statistic).

Hurdle: A hurdle creates a physical obstruction that hinders characters from being able to advance past the disadvantage's square count. Hurdles act as obstacles (see Obstacles on page 60), except they use the result of the ability check, attack roll, or skill check that created them as their bypass DC. The GM determines what type of obstacle is created based upon your overall goals in creating the obstacle and how you went about creating it. Typically,

most characters create a hazard or an obstruction that is either a blockade obstacle or a difficult terrain obstacle—generally, these are the simplest obstacles to create using whatever improvised tools and materials are at hand. Casting a spell to create an obstacle results in either a magic obstacle or a spell obstacle, although some specific spells create other types of obstacles (such as *wall of iron* creating an obstruction obstacle).

You might be able to set up more elaborate obstacles, given GM permission, if you take multiple actions to do so.

OBSCURE TRAIL (SQUARES)

During a chase with the pursuit subtype, you can attempt to obscure your tracks if you are acting as a quarry. This makes it more difficult for the pursuers to follow you. You attempt a Stealth check and choose a square count. This square count must be either your current square count - the number of squares you advance when you attempt to earn progress, your current square count + the number of squares you advance when you attempt to earn progress, or any number between the two. For example, if you advance 6 squares when you attempt to earn progress and your current square count is 45, you can choose any square count between 39 or 51 to obscure.

When your pursuers reach the chosen square count or would normally pass over it, they immediately attempt a Survival check opposed by the result of your Stealth check, similar to an obstacle. If your pursuers succeed, they find your trail and continue normally. If your pursuers fail, they lose your trail and must successfully use the track quarry special action (see below) in order to advance beyond your Stealth check's square count.

If multiple participants acting as members of the same party or team attempt to obscure their trail on the same square count, the attempts do not stack. Use only the highest Stealth check result. If multiple pursuers are acting as a party or team at the same square count and one pursuer finds your trail, the others immediately find your trail as well.

TRACK QUARRY (SQUARES)

During a chase with the pursuit subtype, you can attempt to find and follow your quarry's tracks if you are acting as a pursuer, allowing you to follow the footsteps of your quarry. Whenever you lose your quarry's trail, you attempt a Survival check to follow tracks. If you have an ability that allows you to use a different skill to follow tracks, you may use it if it is applicable to the skill challenge.

If you succeed at your Survival check, you locate your quarry's trail and can continue attempting to advance squares to capture them as usual. If you fail, you cannot attempt to advance squares.

When determining the DC to follow tracks, your GM determines the DC using the rules presented in the Survival skill under Chapter 5 of the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK* unless your quarry used the obscure trail action (see above) to obscure their trail from you, in which case the DC is equal to the result of your quarry's Stealth check.

FastTracking: If you have at least 10 ranks in the Survival skill, you can attempt to follow tracks as a move action instead of a standard action. If you have a class feature, feat, or other ability that allows you to follow tracks in less time, use the action described by that ability instead, regardless of the number of ranks you have in Survival.

REST (SQUARES)

During a chase with an interval of 10 minutes or longer, you can spend time taking no other actions but to recover your energy. This action allows you to attempt a 10-minute rest to regain Stamina Points or an 8-hour rest during a skill challenge. When doing so, use the skill challenge's interval to convert the resting period's game time into skill challenge rounds as follows:

Interval	10-minute Rest	8-Hour Rest
1 minute	6 rounds	480 rounds
10 minutes	1 round	48 rounds
1 hour	1 round	8 rounds
1 day	—	1 round

When you rest during a chase, you elect to take no actions for the indicated number of rounds, just as if you were resting outside of an encounter. You cannot take strenuous actions of any sort while resting, which includes all skill challenge actions. You gain the same benefits from resting that you would gain outside of an encounter, based on the amount of time that you spend resting.

FORCED MARCH

During a chase, all participants can act for up to 8 hours each day without penalty. For every 8 hours of active participation that you make during a chase, you must rest for at least 8 hours (see below). You can circumvent this requirement by making a forced march. For each consecutive hour you participate in a chase without rest beyond 8 hours, you must attempt a Constitution check (DC 10, +2 per extra hour of participation). If the check fails, you take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. Taking nonlethal damage from a forced march causes you to become fatigued until you rest for at least 8 hours, while eliminating the nonlethal damage also eliminates the fatigue. If you are immune to nonlethal damage, you automatically succeed on Constitution checks made to take additional cycles during a chase.

CHASE STAT BLOCK FORMAT

Chases are presented in the same format as general skill challenges (see page 62).

SAMPLE SKILL CHALLENGES

The following skill challenges were created using the design guidelines found on page 98, and serve as examples for GMs looking to create their own skill challenges.

ESCAPE THE POLICE

CR 5

XP 1,600

Chase (short-distance pursuit)

Goal The PCs have been framed for stealing a valuable diamond from a local bank, and must escape from the police by vehicle if they're to clear their names.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Bluff (difficult, DC 27), Engineering (difficult, DC 27), Piloting (challenging, DC 22);

Secondary Skills Very difficult, DC 32

Interval 1 round

CLEARANCE

Squares 60

SQ advantage 3, limited progress (one participant, one assistant), surprise start, special (The PCs steal an urban cruiser as a getaway vehicle; use this vehicle's statistics during the skill challenge.)

Benefit The PCs manage to slip away from the police.

Penalty The PCs fail to escape the police and are taken custody. They must either succeed at an encounter (a CR 7 combat encounter against 3 patrol-class security robots, *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE*, or a CR 7 skill challenge to break out of prison or influence the chief officer of their innocence) or pay a bail of 10,000 credits.

OBSTACLES

1+ Square The police call for the immediate arrest of the PCs, and their frantic demeanor makes the city's inhabitants suspicious of their actions and intentions.

Type hazard; *Notice* Sense Motive (average, DC 17)

Bypass Skills Bluff (challenging, DC 22), Disguise (challenging, DC 22), Intimidate (challenging, DC 22), Piloting (challenging, DC 22); *Secondary Skills* Difficult, DC 27

SQ Language (Common, Bluff or Intimidate)

Effect difficult terrain; if the PCs fail their bypass check by 5 or more, the crowd recognizes them and prevents them from moving, causing the PCs to be unable to earn squares towards clearing the skill challenge for that cycle.

30 Squares The PCs drive into a dizzying maze of a downtown district, where crowded streets quickly blur together.

Type obstruction; *Notice* Survival (average, DC 17)

Bypass Skills Perception (difficult, DC 27), Piloting (difficult, DC 27), Survival (challenging, DC 22); *Secondary Skills* Very difficult, DC 32

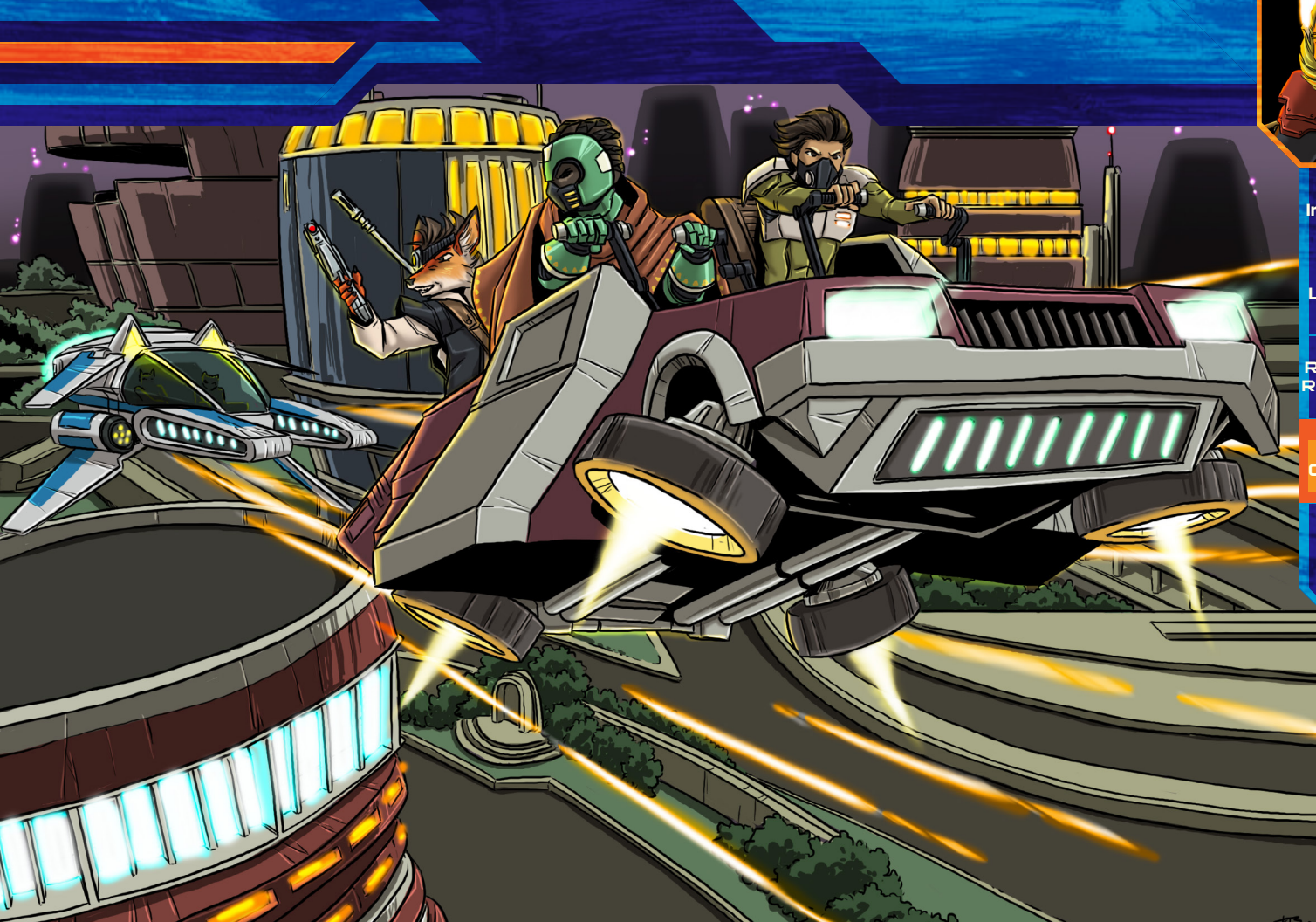
SQ destructible (hardness 15, 30 Hit Points), special (The police cannot destroy this objective. If this objective is destroyed, citizens immediately call for help with their comm units, allowing the police to immediately use the gain an advantage action as a reaction.)

Effect The vehicle's speed is reduced by half until the end of your next turn.

45 Squares The police have established a blockade to prevent their quarry from escaping.

Type obstruction; *Notice* Perception (average, DC 17)

Bypass Skills Bluff (difficult, DC 27), Piloting (difficult, DC



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27), Stealth (difficult, DC 27), Survival (difficult, DC 27); *Secondary Skills* Very difficult, DC 32
SQ destructible (hardness 15, 30 Hit Points).

Effect The quarry and their vehicle each take 1d6+10 damage from a battery of police gunfire. The urban cruiser is vulnerable to this damage, causing it to take half again as much damage from the collision (+50%). If this reduces the vehicle to 0 Hit Points, it is destroyed and participants can attempt Acrobatics checks instead of Piloting checks to clear this obstacle.

For every 5 points of damage a PC takes from this collision, they gain a wound as if they had been critically hit by a weapon with the wound special quality. A successful DC 15 Fortitude save negates this wound (attempt one save against each wound separately).

RACE UP THE MOUNTAIN

CR 5

XP 1,600

Chase (long-distance race)

Goal The PCs must race rival treasure hunters to the top of a mountain where a fountain of youth is rumored to be.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Athletics (challenging, DC 22), Survival (challenging, DC 22); **Secondary Skills** Difficult, DC 27

Interval 1 hour

CLEARANCE

Squares 60

SQ advantage 1, limited progress (1 participant, 3 assistants)

Benefit The PCs reach the tomb first, giving them the opportunity to raid its treasures before their rivals.

Penalty The PCs have reached the tomb too late, and will likely have to assault their foe's base of operations in order to find the treasure they seek.

OBSTACLES

3+ **Squares** The mountain quickly becomes steep and treacherous, sending careless souls tumbling down.

Type hazard; *Notice* Culture (challenging, DC 22), Physical Science (average, DC 17), or Survival (average, DC 17)

Bypass Skills Acrobatics (challenging, DC 22), Athletics (challenging, DC 22), Survival (difficult, DC 27); *Secondary Skills* Very difficult, DC 32

SQ backlash (The target takes 1d6 points of falling damage for each square of progress lost as a result of the effect), critical fumble (the participant rolls the number of squares fallen twice and combines both results together to determine the number of squares lost as a result of the effect.)

Effect The target tumbles back down the mountain towards the base, losing 1d4 squares + 1 for every 5 by which the skill check failed.

CONTESTS

From carnival amusements to international tournaments of strength and agility, many of life's greatest events revolve around humanity's need for competition. Contests often provide fun and interesting ways for characters to show off their skills outside of combat, but they just as easily can serve as major plot points that draw the PCs to certain locations or simple recreational rules for the PCs to kick back and relax after a long day of adventuring.

Contests are a specific type of skill challenge in which one or more characters compete against one another in a structured game whose rules are predetermined and often standardized. Contests follow the same rules for running them as standard skill challenges (see page 30) but they have a different list of elements and special qualities, many of which are not found in standard skill challenges. In addition, there are some special actions that are only applicable to contests. Unless otherwise noted, assume that contests follow all of the standard rules associated with skill challenges, such as the sequence for which characters act during a cycle and how initiative is determined.

CONTEST BASICS

The following rules cover basic information about contests and how they're run. Aside from the information detailed here, chases follow the same rules as general skill challenges across all previous pages.

- » All contests use points as their clearance method. For more information regarding clearance methods, see page 40.
- » All contests feature opposition. For more information about opposition, see page 60.
- » Chases are categorized into one of ten subtypes that describes how the contest is played: deterministic strategy, grapple, invasion, judgment, momentum, net/wall, recollection, striking/fielding, stochastic strategy, and target.

SKILL CHALLENGE SUBTYPES

Each contest has one of the following subtypes. Like the skill challenge's type, this subtype further categorizes common features between different skill challenges.

DETERMINISTIC STRATEGY CONTESTS

Games like catapult, chess, duplicate bridge, go, and mancala are deterministic strategy contests. In a deterministic contest, individuals or teams of individuals use strategy to calculate plays, and the game lacks random elements like dice rolls or shuffled cards. Instead, deterministic strategy games rely on planning skills, mastery of the game's rules, and foresight.

This contest subtype is further broken down by whether the contest uses unobservable elements, as follows:

- » **Imperfect:** In this type of deterministic strategy contest, one or more elements of the game are left unobservable to players, such as a participant being unable to view her opponent's position (as in catapult) or cards (as in bridge).
- » **Perfect:** In this type of deterministic strategy contest, all players can observe all elements of the game. Examples include chess and mancala, where all game pieces are visible at all times.

GRAPPLE CONTESTS

Any game where you actively use your body to attempt to

control or restrict another's movement, including all forms of wrestling, is a grapple contest. During a grapple contest, individuals or teams with equal numbers of participants use their physical strength and strategy to attempt to pin their opposition, scoring by whittling away at their opponent's stamina and will to continue.

INVASION CONTESTS

Games like basketball, football, handball, hockey, and rugby, are invasion contests. In an invasion contest, teams of equal players attack an opponent's territory in order to score points. Invasion contests are fast-paced and focus on teamwork, keeping possession of a scoring object, and defending.

JUDGEMENT CONTESTS

Events like hide and seek, ice skating, pie-making contests, singing competitions, and talent shows are judgment contests. In a judgement contest, individuals or teams of equal participants attempt to present their best work, be it a craft or a performance routine, to a panel of one or more judges, who grade them based upon the quality of their performance. Each judgment contest focuses on a specific topic and includes a number of judges ranging from one to four. Judges award points based upon the quality of each participant's performance. Judgment contests are slowly paced and often stressful, and they emphasize quality over mere success.

MOMENTUM CONTESTS

Games like dance offs, hopscotch, and skip rope are momentum contests. During a momentum contest, individuals or teams of equal participants move their bodies to a specific pattern or rhythm determined by the contest to score points. Momentum games are fast-paced and focus on precise control of the participant's body.

NET/WALL CONTESTS

Games like badminton, racquet ball, tennis, and volleyball are net/wall contests. During a net/wall contest, individuals or teams of



equal participants send an object towards a target area that the opponent is defending with the goal of making the object land in the target area. Net/wall contests always feature a structure (usually the titular net or wall) that divides the target area into scorable zones or that acts as a zone of transition between participants, and the game's strategy usually involves efficient scoring plays that make it difficult for the opponent to return the object.

RECOLLECTION CONTESTS

Events like memory and trivia are recollection contests. During a recollection contest, individuals or teams of equal participants attempt to remember or recall information to score points. Recollection games emphasize learning, information recall, and memorization.

This contest subtype is further broken down by whether participants are expected to recall newly learned information or previously learned information, as follows:

- » **Memory:** In this type of recollection contest, participants are shown a specific image or given a specific sequence, wait several moments, then are asked to recall the information given to them to score points.
- » **Trivia:** In this type of recollection contest, participants are asked a question, then must provide the correct response to score points. When a participant fails to answer correctly in a recollection contest, their opposition are often able to "steal" those questions in order to score additional points.

STRIKING/FIELDING CONTESTS

Games like baseball, cricket, foursquare, and softball are striking/fielding contests. During a striking/fielding contest, participants acting in equal teams strike an object before running to a target area. Participants attempt to prevent their opposition from scoring by retrieving the object and returning it to stop the play. Striking/fielding games are fast-paced and focus on accuracy, speed, and teamwork.

STOCHASTIC STRATEGY CONTESTS

Games like blackgammon, blackjack, mahjong, poker, and yatzy are stochastic strategy games. During a stochastic strategy contest, individuals or teams of participants create and adapt strategies to calculate plays based upon random elements, such as shuffled cards or rolled dice. As a result, stochastic games rely heavily on chance and probability, but they also reward high-level planning skills, mastery of the game, and foresight.

This contest subtype is further broken down by whether the contest uses unobservable elements, as follows:

- » **Imperfect:** In this type of stochastic strategy contest, one or more elements of the game are left unobservable to players, such as a participant being unable to view her opponent's cards (as in blackjack) or tiles (as in mahjong).
- » **Perfect:** In this type of stochastic strategy contest, all players can observe all elements of the game. Examples include blackgammon and yatzy, where all game pieces are visible at all times.

THE GOLDEN RULE OF CONTESTS

Of all the various rules and challenges presented within the *ADVANCED SKILL GUIDE*, contests are by and large the most difficult to run and create from scratch, if only because they focus more on the "feel" of gameplay than codified rules and processes. Whereas it's relatively easy to cobble together a standard skill challenge or even a chase with the rules provided, with contests GMs need to also worry about creating gameplay and atmosphere that is conducive to the activity that the contest represents. For instance, if you're going to run a skill challenge themed around soccer, then your skill challenge needs to be able to capture the feel of the ball being passed from player to player, avoiding defensive plays until the perfect moment to strike presents itself.

Because contests seek to emulate a specific activity, such as a sport or competition, as a general rule the GM should try to keep any rulings or decisions she makes in the spirit of whatever game or competition that she is running at the time. If she or other players at the table are familiar with the intricacies of the contest as it is experienced as a real activity, conflicts that arise should always be handled in a similar vein—how would the conflict be resolved if the sport or competition were actually happening in the real world? Be sure to use your best judgment and common sense should any such conflicts arise, and err towards the side of fun and consistency in your decision-making processes.

TARGET CONTESTS

Games like archery, bowling, curling, horseshoes, golf, and shuffleboard are target contests. During a target contest, individuals or teams of equal participants throw, slide, or strike an object with the goal of having the object land closest to or within a designated target to score points. Target games are methodical and precise, and focus on accuracy, execution, scoring, and sometimes blocking.

This contest subtype is further broken down by whether participants are allowed to block the opposition:

- » **Opposed:** In this type of target contest, participants are allowed to attempt to block their opposition to prevent them from scoring, as in curling and shuffleboard.
- » **Unopposed:** In this type of target contest, participants are not allowed to attempt to interfere with their opposition's attempts to score, as in archery, bowling, horseshoes, or golf.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

In addition to the standard special actions that can be performed during any skill challenge (see page 36), you can use the following special action during a contest if the contest has the indicated special quality.

REACTIONS

A reaction is a special action you can take even if it's not your

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turn, but only after a defined and concrete trigger. You can't use a reaction before the first time you act in combat. You can take only one reaction each round; you regain your reaction at the start of your turn.

Unless their descriptions state otherwise, purely defensive reactions interrupt the triggering action; resolve the reaction first, then continue resolving the triggering action. Otherwise, resolve the reaction immediately after the triggering action.

BLOCK (REACTION)

During a contest with the block special quality (see page 78), you can attempt to intercept catches, passes, and serves, as well as defend target areas and prevent your opponents from scoring. For example, in badminton, participants block to protect their zones from being scored upon by the opposition's strikes using the block special action.

Whenever your opposition attempts a skill check to earn progress, you can attempt to block that attempt by rolling an opposed skill check to earn progress as a reaction. The skill used to make the block is noted in the contest's stat block under the block special quality. If your skill check exceeds that of the character attempting to earn progress, the skill check is blocked and the opposition suffers some consequence, as noted in the contest's description. Some contests include rules for a partial block, which occurs when the blocker's opposed skill check fails by less than 5. Rules for partial blocks are noted in a "partial block" entry, under the skill challenge's special qualities.

Multiple characters cannot attempt to block the same skill check unless the skill challenge also has the dogpile special quality (see page 52). You cannot attempt to block an opposed skill check if you are not within range of the creature, object, or location being targeted by the skill check to earn progress.

For example, in baseball, a batter is always considered "in range" of the baseball when they are at bat because the pitcher directly throws the ball to their location in an attempt to strike them out. If the batter successfully blocks the ball, however, a character playing 2nd base couldn't attempt to block the ball if it spun towards outfield because that character isn't within the location being targeted by the baseball.

CATCH (REACTION)

During a contest with the catch special quality (see page 78), you can attempt to catch objects that are passed to you using the pass action or a skill check to earn progress (see below). Catches only occur between members of the same team—if you are intercepting an opponent's pass, you are using the block special action (see page 61). Attempting to catch a possessed object is a reaction.

Whenever you use the catch special action, you attempt a skill check to earn progress at the same DC as the DC made to pass the object to you. If you succeed, you catch the object and gain possession of it. If you fail, you miss the object and do not gain possession of it. In some skill challenges, failing to catch a pass has consequences for the participants who failed to pass

the ball, while in others the ball remains in its current zone, unpossessed. Any consequences incurred when a pass fails (either because of a failed skill check to pass or a failed skill check to catch) is noted in the skill challenge's description under its play rules.

FAKE OUT (REACTION)

During a contest with the fake out special quality, deceive opponents into making poorer plays. Whenever you use the fake out special action, you must declare which action you will actually take (such as to block, pass, or score), then attempt a skill check opposed by a Sense Motive check made by each member of the opposition who could normally react to your designated special action. Any member of the opposition whose Sense Motive equals or exceeds your skill check's result is not affected by the fake out, while members of the opposition who fail the check take a -4 penalty to skill checks made to oppose your stated action, such as with the block special action.

Using the fake out action is a reaction that is made in response to a skill check to earn progress or another reaction. If a character uses Bluff to perform a fake out, then any applicable bonuses that character has on checks made to feint in combat also apply on checks made to fake out the opposition. Unlike feinting, you don't take penalties for trying to fake out a nonhumanoid opponent or an opponent with animal intelligence. Bluff is generally used to fake out the opposition in most contests, but contests that involve running or flying can also use Acrobatics, while contests that involve climbing or swimming can use Athletics. Additionally, contests that involve objects that are used to score points (such as baseball) can also use Sleight of Hand.

OTHER ACTIONS

The following actions do not use the five-action paradigm described on page 36. These actions typically fall into one of two categories.

If an action lists "varied" in its title bar, the action can be utilized using multiple types of actions.

If an action lists "no action" in its title bar, it does not require an action to use but typically can only be used when a defined and concrete trigger occurs, similar to a reaction.

PASS (VARIES)

During a contest with the pass special quality, you can attempt to transfer your possession over an object to another participant who is on your team. For example, in baseball, characters in the outfield can pass the baseball to one another in order to tag out a batting player who is running from base to base. Passing can be done as a full action or as a reaction. If passing is done as a reaction, it is made in response to a skill check to earn progress or another reaction, usually the set-up or strike actions (see below).

When you attempt to pass an object to another participant, you designate a target to pass the object to and attempt a skill check



to earn progress. The skill used, as well as its DC, is indicated in the contest's stat block. If your skill check is successful, you pass the object to the designated target, who becomes the catcher and must immediately attempt to catch the passed object (see Catch above). If you fail your skill check to earn progress, the pass fails. If you check failed by 5 or more, you also lose possession of the object (see Object Possession below).

PUSH SELF (No ACTION)

During a contest with the push self special quality (see page 79), you can attempt to push yourself into gaining additional reactions to use throughout the round or improving your ability to earn progress. Using the push self special action doesn't require an action, but participants can only push themselves a number of times per round equal to 1 + their Constitution bonus (minimum 0).

When you attempt to push yourself beyond your limits, you attempt a Constitution check (DC 10, +1 for each previous time you have previously used the push self special action during the skill challenge). If your check is successful, you gain one of the following benefits of your choice from the following list:

- » Add a +1d6 circumstance bonus to any one skill check attempted to earn progress during the contest.
- » Gain one additional reaction during the round.

If you fail this check, you take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage that cannot be healed until you rest for at least 8 hours. For every 5 by which you fail this check, you take an additional 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. This damage cannot be reduced (such as by damage reduction) or redirected (such as by *shield other*) by any means. If you are immune to nonlethal damage or are able to ignore its effects, you cannot use the push self action during a contest.

Too much strain when pushing yourself can cause extreme physical and mental trauma. Whenever you fail a Constitution check to push yourself, you must attempt a saving throw with a DC equal to the total amount of nonlethal damage that you have taken from pushing yourself during the contest. The type of saving throw you attempt depends upon which skills are used to earn progress during the skill challenge. If a Charisma-, Intelligence-, or Wisdom-based check or skill is used, you must attempt a Will save. If a Constitution-, Dexterity-, or Strength-based check or skill check is used, or an attack roll is used, you attempt make a Fortitude save. If you fail this saving throw, you takes 1 point of ability damage to the ability score that the skill check to earn progress is based on, plus 1 additional point of ability damage for every 5 by which her skill check fails.

For instance, if Chosuy plays baseball, a contest that uses Athletics to earn progress, and he attempts to push himself for a reaction and fails by 5, he would take 2d6 points of nonlethal damage. Assuming he takes average damage (7 points), he would then need to make a DC 7 Fortitude save or take 1 point of Strength damage, plus 1 point for every 5 that his saving throw failed by.

SET-UP (VARIES)

During a contest with the set-up special quality (see page 79),

you can take an object defined by the skill challenge's scoring event attempt to set up a more effective attempt at scoring for a teammate. For example, in badminton, participants can set the shuttlecock high into the air so their teammates can swiftly deliver the shuttlecock to one of the opposition's zones before they can react. Set-up can be done as a full action or as a reaction. If used as a reaction, it is made in response to an attempt to earn progress or another reaction, usually the serve or pass actions.

When you use the set-up action, you attempt a skill check to earn progress. The skill used, as well as its DC, is indicated next to the set-up quality in parenthesis. If you fail your skill check to earn progress, the set fails and you lose possession of the object (see Object Possession below). If you succeed, the next ally who attempts a strike as a reaction to earn progress gains a +2 bonus to their skill check.

STRIKE (VARIES)

During a contest with the strike special quality (see page 79), you can take an object defined by the skill challenge's scoring event and attempt to use it to score points. This is often done by hitting, throwing, or kicking an object. For example, in baseball, the batter strikes the ball into the outfield, while in badminton players strike the shuttlecock into each other's target area to attempt to score points. Striking can be done as a full action or as a reaction. If striking is a reaction, it is made in response to an skill check to earn progress or another reaction, usually the block, pass, or serve actions.

When you use the strike action, you attempt a skill check to earn progress. The skill used, as well as its DC, is indicated in the contest's stat block next to the special quality's name. If your attempt is successful, the strike earns points as noted in the contest's clearance. Most skill challenges with the strike special quality also have the block special quality (see page 76), and as a result opponents often use their reactions to attempt to prevent a character from successfully striking and subsequently earning a point. If you fail your skill check to earn progress, the strike fails and you lose possession of the object (see Object Possession below).

CONTEST TERMINOLOGY

Contests use a number of specific key words to stand in for complicated gaming concepts, which are described here.

OBJECT POSSESSION

Many contests include an object that is used to score points, such as a shuttlecock in badminton or a baseball in baseball. Control of such objects are paramount, and contests that involve object possession often have special qualities like block, catch, fake out, pass, set-up, and strike. Most contests that involve object possession use team possession initiative as their initiative method, with the teams acting based upon which team has possession of the scoring object (see page 32).

In a game with object possession, a team is considered to have possession of the object if at least one participant

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FOULS

During many skill challenges, the GM might think it appropriate to penalize participants who are acting in illegal or unsportsmanlike manners. If the contest is being judged by a referee or a similar individual, they can award such participants with a foul. Some appropriate actions to award with fouls are:

- » Making illegal contact with another participant.
- » Spouting profanities at the referee.
- » Casting illegal spells or using illegal items (including augmentations) during the contest.

Although similar to the demerits special quality, fouls differ in that what constitutes a foul varies not only between skill challenge to skill challenge, but within specific instances of that skill challenge. While it might be appropriate to use gravity-defying equipment to score points in a game played between mechanically inclined friends, such use of assistive technology will likely incur a foul during a professional sporting event.

The GM decides what activities incur fouls at the start of the skill challenge, and participants usually agree to them beforehand. As a result, the PCs should likely know what kinds of actions will award them with fouls before they start the skill challenge. (That is, unless they're walking into a game blind or are being deliberately set up to fail.)

Generally, incurring a foul negates any current scoring event and sometimes allows that participant's opposition to score for free. Sometimes scoring a foul has the violating player removed from the game for anywhere from 1 round to the rest of the contest, as determined by the severity of their infringement. Particularly griveous violations might even cause the offending participants to instantly lose the match, as determined by the GM.

on that team is in direct contact with it; in most contests, this requires the participant to directly hold or wield the object. These objects often enter play using the serve special ability, and leave play using the strike special ability. When a possessed object successfully leaves play, points are accumulated or lost in favor of the person whose check caused the object to leave play. For instance, in badminton, a successful strike causes the shuttlecock to leave play, which accumulates points for that participant, while in chess, a successful strike causes a piece to be captured, which results in casualties to that participant's opposition.

In some games, such as baseball, losing possession of the scoring object doesn't automatically cause a team to gain or lose points. In these contests, possession of the scoring object can be reestablished as a reaction, provided that the character attempting to reestablished possession is in the same zone as the scoring object (see Zones below).

ZONES

Some contests, especially sports, are defined by how the participant interacts with the physical space where the contest

is being held. Rather than detail every square foot of the contest, important areas in a given contest are abstracted as zones. In contests that utilize zones, a zone represents a target location where play occurs during the contest. Participants occupy positions within one or more zones, and can typically move from zone to zone as a reaction. Depending on the game being played, participants occupy zones, target zones with strikes, and move from zone to zone to reach objectives. Each contest notes which zones it possesses and any specifics regarding those zones in its stat block.

SPECIAL QUALITIES

In addition to the standard special qualities detailed on page 50, contests have additional special qualities that pertain specifically to them. These special qualities are described below.

BLOCK

During a contest that includes this special quality, you can use the block special action (see page 76) to attempt to prevent an opponent from scoring. Normally you use the skill challenge's primary skills in order to block skill challenges, but some contests allow the use of different skills specifically for blocking. If this is the case, these skills are noted next to the special quality's name in parenthesis.

Example: *SQ* block (Acrobatics)

CATCH

During a contest that includes this special quality, you can use the catch special action (see page 76) to attempt to prevent an opponent from scoring. Normally you use the skill challenge's primary skills in order to catch objects during a skill challenge, but some contests allow the use of different skills specifically for catching. If this is the case, these skills are noted next to the special quality's name in parenthesis.

Example: *SQ* catch (Athletics)

DOGPILE

During a contest that includes this special quality, multiple characters can use the block special action (see page 75) to attempt to block a single attempt at scoring. A skill challenge must have the block special quality to have the dogpile special quality.

Example: *SQ* dogpile

FAKE OUT

During a contest that includes this special quality, participants can use the fake out special action (see page 76) to attempt to trick opponents into setting up poor plays. All skill challenges with this special quality allow Bluff checks to be attempted as part of the fake out action, even if Bluff isn't a primary skill for the skill challenge. In addition, some contests allow the use of different skills specifically for faking out the opposition. If this is the case, these skills are noted next to the special quality's name in parenthesis.

Example: *SQ* fake-out (Sleight of Hand)



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MATCH

During a contest that includes this special quality, participants must clear the skill challenge multiple times in order to win. In effect, participants must participate in the contest the number of times listed (which is always an odd number), and whomever wins the most number of contests also wins the match, clearing the skill challenge.

When determining a match's XP reward, the PCs earn an XP reward determined by the opposition's CR for each contest they win, plus one additional XP reward if they win the match. For example, if Chosuy plays a match of badminton and wins 2 contests of 3 against a CR 2 opposition, he gains 600 XP for winning the first contest, 600 XP for winning the second contest, and 600 XP for winning the third contest, for a total of 1,800 XP.

Example: SQ match 3

PASS

During a contest that includes this special quality, participants can use the pass out special action (see page 76) to attempt to pass an object used to score points to another teammate. Normally you use the skill challenge's primary skills in order to block skill challenges, but some contests allow the use of different skills specifically for passing. If this is the case, these skills are noted next to the special quality's name in parenthesis.

Example: SQ pass (Acrobatics)

PUSH SELF

During a contest that includes this special quality, you can use the push self special action (see page 77) to attempt to gain additional reactions for use during the contest.

Example: SQ push self

SET-UP

During a contest that includes this special quality, participants can use the set-up special action (see page 77) to attempt to help allies set up more effective attempts at scoring points. Normally you use the skill challenge's primary skills in order to block skill challenges, but some contests allow the use of different skills specifically for setting up strikes. If this is the case, these skills are noted next to the special quality's name in parenthesis.

Example: SQ set-up (Acrobatics)

STRIKE

During a contest that includes this special quality, participants can use the strike special action (see page 77) to attempt to send a possessed object out of play to score points. Normally you use the skill challenge's primary skills in order to block skill challenges, but some contests allow the use of different skills specifically for striking. If this is the case, these skills are noted next to the special quality's name in parenthesis.

Example: SQ strike (Acrobatics)

CHASE STAT BLOCK FORMAT

Chases are presented in the same format as general skill challenges (see page 62) with the following additions.

CHALLENGE RATING AND XP

Unlike most skill challenges, contests don't list a CR or an XP reward because the difficulty of the contest is wholly determined by the opposition. Effectively, all contests count as having CR 1/3, and if the opposition's CR is higher, all XP rewards gained from clearing the skill challenge use the opposition's CR instead (for more information, see the opposition section on page 60.)

ZONES

If the skill challenge occurs in physical space (such as most striking/fielding contests), its has a zone entry directly beneath its goal entry. This denotes the general dimensions of the location where the contest is being held, as well as any other features those areas possess. For more information about zones, see above.

FOUL

Usually the consequences for what happens when a participant commits a foul are determined by the GM, but some contests have long traditions with what to do with rule-breakers. Such skill challenges usually have a foul entry in the next available line following the contest's clearance method line,



which notes what happens when a participant commits a foul during that skill challenge. The GM is free to enforce stricter punishments for rule-breakers if they deem the punishment appropriate to the misconduct, however.

DESCRIPTION

The final section of each contest is a description of how the contest is played. This includes an entry for the contest's basics, how rounds progress, who attempts the skill check to earn progress, any special actions that can be used during the skill challenge, the different positions participants can play in and similar information.

SAMPLE SKILL CHALLENGES

The following skill challenges were created using the design guidelines found on page 98, and serve as examples for GMs looking to create their own skill challenges.

BADMINTON

Contest (target)

Goal Teams take turns serving a conical, feathered projectile called a shuttlecock. The first team to score 21 points wins the round, while the first team to win 3 rounds wins the contest.

Zones Four rectangular zones (two per team) each boarding a net that divides the court in half (one half per side).

SKILLS

Primary Skills Acrobatics, Athletics, Sleight of Hand

Interval 1 minute

CLEARANCE

Points 21 accumulated; **Scoring Event** Whenever a team fails a skill check to block, catch, pass, set, strike, or earn completion, their opposition scores 1 point.

Foul When a participant commits a foul, their opposition scores 1 point.

SQ block, catch, critical fumble, fake out, initiative quality (team possession), match 3, limited progress (one participant, no assistants), pass, set-up, specific skills, strike, team (two teams with one or two participants each)

DESCRIPTION

Basics In badminton, each team takes one side of a 20-foot by 44-foot court that is divided into two 20-foot by 22-foot sides by a net. In doubles, each team's participants occupies a single zone on their side, while in singles each participant occupies both zones. Teams take turns serving a shuttlecock from side to side while attempting to strike the shuttlecock into one of their opposition's zones to score points.

Possession Initiative Your team keeps possession over the initiative count until your opposition scores (typically because you or a participant on your team fails a skill check, as described under the skill challenge's scoring event).

BASEBALL

Contest (striking/fielding)

Goal Teams take turns hitting a ball that the opposition pitches

to them. If the ball is hit, batters runs from base to base while their opposition strikes to tag them with the baseball, striking them out. The team with the most points at the end of nine innings wins the contest.

Zones Eight zones, five "infield" and three "outfield." The infield zones connect together to make a diamond, with the fifth zone located at its center. The outfield zones boarder this diamond on two of its four sides.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Athletics

Interval 1 minute

Time Pressure 9 innings (1 round per team per inning)

CLEARANCE

Points highest accumulated; **Scoring Event** Whenever a participant manages to run from home plate to first plate, then from first plate to second plate, then second plate to third plate, and finally from third plate back to home plate, that participant's team scores 1 point. This doesn't need to occur in a single round.

SQ block, catch (Acrobatics), critical success (a home run occurs, effectively allowing you and each participant on your team that is occupying a base to return home unopposed, scoring 1 point for each participant that does so normally), dogpile, fake out (Acrobatics, Sleight of Hand), limited progress (one participant, no assistants), pass (Acrobatics), push self, strike, team (two teams with nine participants each)

DESCRIPTION

Basics In baseball, teams rotate between being the batting team and the field team. The batting team is always the team that possesses the initiative count. The field is a 400-foot zone from nose to base, with the "nose" being the home plate zone and the "base" being the three outfield zones. There is a 60-foot distance between each set of adjacent infield "base" zones, such as home to 1st and 3rd, 1st to home and 2nd, and so on. The field team must choose which zones each of their players occupy. Typically, one player occupies each zone (save home plate), while the remaining two players divide place themselves wherever they like.

Players have specific roles and actions they can fulfill during a baseball game, as described below. When your team has control of the initiative count, all players are batters. When the opposition has control of the initiative count, one player on your team is the pitcher and the rest are fielders.

Batter When it's your turn while your team possesses the initiative, you're the batter. You attempt a skill check to earn progress as a full action against an opposed Acrobatics, Athletics, or Sleight of Hand check attempted by the opposition's pitcher. If you succeed, the ball flies into a random zone (roll 1d8; 1: pitcher's mound; 2: 1st base; 3: 3rd base; 4: 2nd base; 5: right outfield; 6: left outfield; 7: center outfield; 8: home run) and you run to first base. If an opponent attempts to tag you, you can use the block reaction to dodge the tag. Once all opposition in your current zone have attempted to block you and missed, you



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reach 1st base and are safe. After reaching a base, you can choose to keep running to the next base or end your turn.

If you are on a base when another batter succeeds at a skill check to earn progress, you immediately attempt to run to the next base, following the rules outlined above. After 1st base you run to 2nd base, then to 3rd base, and finally to home plate. If you reach home plate without being tagged out, you score 1 point.

Fielder When your opposition controls the initiative count, most members on your team are fielders. When a new batter comes to bat, each fielder chooses one zone to cover (see basics). If the batter hits the ball to a zone you're in, you can use the block reaction to attempt to stop the batter, sending them out of play and giving the opposition an out if you succeed. You must be in a zone in order to pick up the ball if it lands in that zone, and you take a -4 penalty to skill checks attempted with the strike action if you're not in the same zone as a batter you're targeting. If you manage to hit a batter with the strike action, they cannot score points and the opposition gets an out. As a fielder, you can run from your current zone to a different zone as a reaction.

Pitcher When your opposition controls the initiative count, one player on your team must serve as pitcher. At the start of a batter's turn, you attempt an opposed Acrobatics, Athletics, or Sleight of Hand check against the opposition's Athletics check to earn progress, as described under the batter's entry. You can use the fake out reaction to try and penalize the batter's attempt to earn progress, and if the ball lands in center field you can use reactions to pass it to your teammates as if you were a fielder.

Possession Initiative Your team keeps possession over the initiative count until your team earns three outs, at which point your opposition gains control over the initiative count.

CATAPULT

Contest (imperfect deterministic strategy)

Goal Teams take turns attempting to locate the coordinates of model siege engines on the opposition's grid in order to "wreck" their models, removing them from play. The first participant to wreck all of her opponent's siege engines wins.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Profession (vidgamer)

Interval 1 minute

CLEARANCE

Points 7 casualties; **Scoring Event** Whenever a team's siege engine is wrecked, that team loses 1 point.

SQ initiative method (standard initiative), skill bonus (Profession [vidgamer] +0, untrained), teams (two teams with one participant each)

DESCRIPTION

Basic In catapult, each team takes one set of 12-inch by 12-inch game boards, a divider, 7 siege engine miniatures (2 canons, 2 ballistae, 2 light catapults, and 1 heavy catapult), grid paper, a pencil, and a small container of boulder tokens. One game

board is placed on the table, with the dividers placed between both teams' boards to prevent cheating. The other game board is held in a participant's hand and is used (along with the grid paper and pencil) to keep track of the participant's guesses. Teams take turns guessing the location of their opposition's siege engine miniatures on their game board; a successful guess is represented by a "hit," which is marked by a "boulder token" being placed on that siege engine's model. When a siege engine takes enough hits, it is "wrecked," at which point its owner removes it from play, losing points in the process.

Inflicting Casualties After attempting a skill check to earn progress, you roll d%. If the result of the d% is equal to or less than $5 \times$ the result of your skill check to earn completion, you hit one randomly determined siege engine (roll a second d% to determine which siege engine is hit; 01–20: heavy catapult; 21–50: light catapult; 51–75: ballistae; 76–98: canon; 99–100: participant's choice). If the opposition has multiple siege engines of that type remaining, determine randomly which is hit. The number of hits that each type of siege engine can take is as follows: canons (2 hits), ballistae (3 hits), light catapults (4 hits), and heavy catapults (6 hits). When a siege engine takes its maximum number of hits, it is destroyed and its owner loses 1 point.

When all of your siege engines of a specific type are destroyed, any further d% results of that siege engine when rolling to determine which of your siege engines is hit instead count as "participant's choice".

CHESS

Contest (perfect stochastic strategy)

Goal Teams take turns moving a set of 16 game pieces around a grid while trying to capture their opposition's king, a condition known as "checkmate." The first participant to capture her opponent's king wins.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Profession (vidgamer)

Scoring Period 1 minute

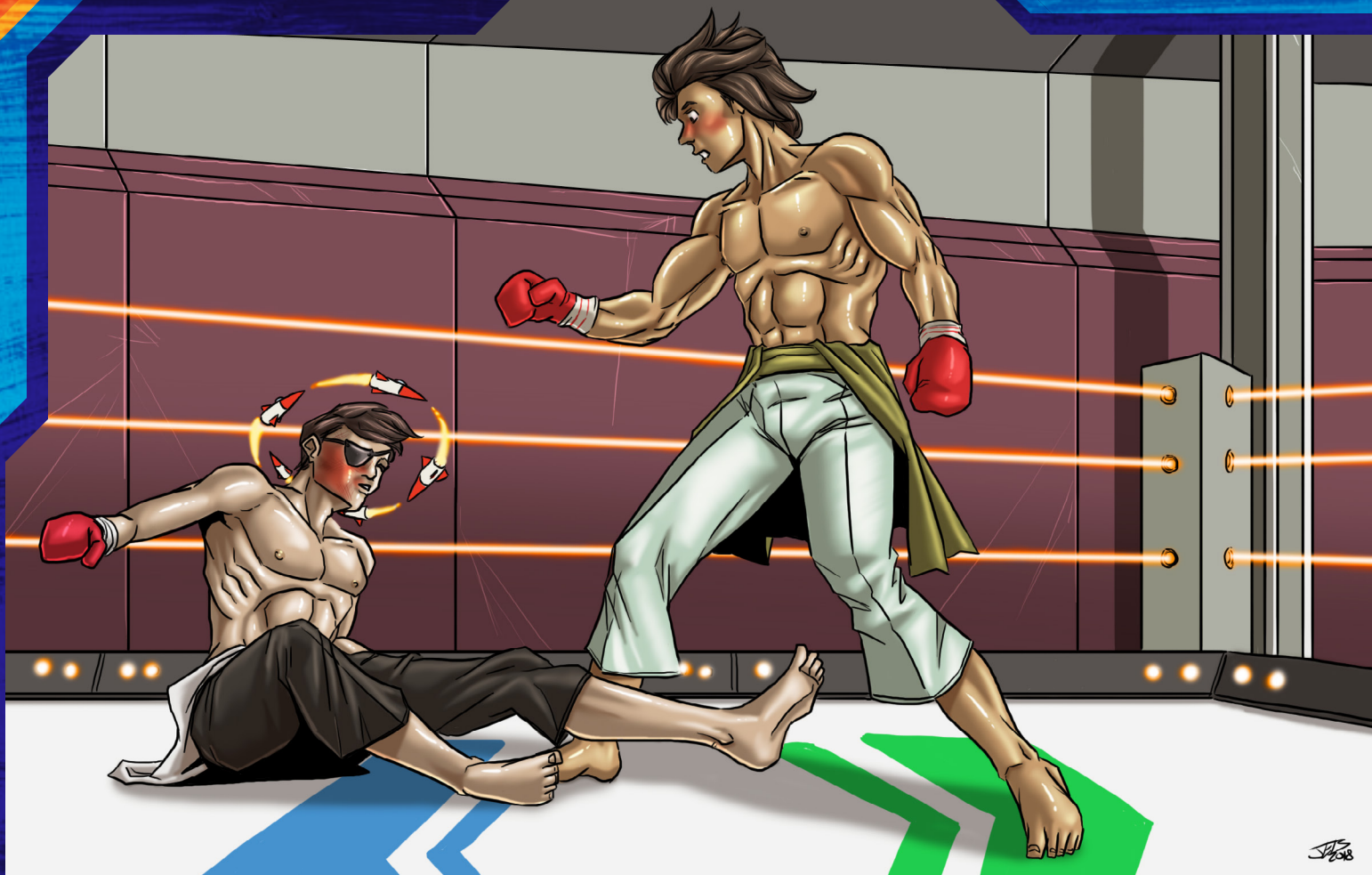
CLEARANCE

Points 39 casualties; **Scoring Event** Whenever one of a team's pieces is captured, the team loses points. The team loses 1 point when a pawn is captured, 3 points when a bishop or knight is captured, 5 points when a rook is captured, 9 points when the queen is captured, or 39 points when the king is captured.

SQ initiative method (standard initiative), skill bonus (Profession [vidgamer] +0, untrained), teams (two teams with one participant each)

DESCRIPTION

Basic In chess, each team takes one set of colored chess pieces consisting of 16 pawns, 2 bishops, 2 knights, 2 rooks, a queen, and a king. The pieces are lined up on opposing sides of the chess board, arranged with the bishops, knights, rooks, queen, and king on the backmost lines and two rows of pawns in front of them. Teams take turns moving their pieces across the chess board, capturing each other's pieces



as they go by placing their piece into the same square as their opponent's piece, at which point the piece's owner removes it from play, losing points in the process.

Inflicting Casualties Each participant attempts a skill check to earn completion as a full action. At the end of the round, both results are compared as if the participants had made opposed checks. The participant with the higher result captures one of their opposition's pieces, (roll d% to determine which piece is captured or placed into check; 01–64: pawn; 65–74: knight; 75–84: bishop; 85–90: rook; 95–99: queen; 100: king). If you capture all pieces of a given type, then that piece's chance changes to "king". Each time you capture a piece, your opposition loses points as shown in the skill challenge's scoring events entry.

Capturing the King Unlike most pieces, you must succeed at two skill checks to earn progress across two consecutive turns in order to capture the king. However, you if no other pieces remain then you automatically capture the king the next time you succeed at your skill check to earn progress.

First-Turn Advantage The participant playing with the white pieces always goes first in chess. As a result, this participant gains a +1 bonus to skill checks to earn progress during the first round of the skill challenge.

COOKING COMPETITION

Contest (judgment)

Goal Teams compete to impress one or more judges by creating the highest-quality meal possible. The team whose meal is judged as being the best wins.

Teams Any number of teams with an equal number of participants

Initiative Quality standard initiative

SKILLS

Primary Skills Culture, Diplomacy, Perception, Profession (cook), Sense Motive, Survival

Interval 10 minutes

Time Pressure 4 phases (1 or more rounds per phase, see each phase's entry)

CLEARANCE

Points highest accumulated; **Scoring Event** Whenever a team attempts a skill check to earn clearance, they score 1 point, plus 1 point for every 5 by which their skill check's result exceeds its DC.

SQ critical fumble (lose 4d6 points, minimum 0), initiative method (standard initiative), teams (any number of teams, each equal the same number of participants as allowed by the judges)

DESCRIPTION

Basics In a cooking competition, each team attempts to



craft a meal across four phases to attempt to appease one or more judges. Teams attempt to discover their judge's appetites, prepare their meal, and ultimately deliver the best culinary experience possible, scoring points based upon how successful they are in each phase.

Phases The skill challenge is divided into four phases: the selection phase, the preparation phase, the cooking phase, and the presentation phase. The players act in initiative order during each round of each phase, and once all rounds for a phase have passed, the next phase immediately begins. Each phase has its own entry below, and notes its time pressure in parenthesis next to its name.

Selection Phase (1 round) Participants choose which ingredients to use in their meal. Each participant attempts a skill check with one of the following skills as a full action, with the check's DC noted next to the skill's name: Life Science (DC 5), Perception (DC 10), Profession (cook) (DC 5), Survival (DC 10).

Preparation Phase (2 rounds) Participants prepare their ingredients before cooking them. Each participant attempts a skill check with one of the following skills as a full action, with the check's DC noted next to the skill's name: Life Science (DC 10), Profession (cook) (DC 10), Survival (DC 15).

Cooking Phase (3 rounds) Participants take their prepared ingredients and begin cooking and arranging them for eating. Each participant attempts a skill check with one of the following skills as a full action, with the check's DC noted next to the skill's name: Life Science (DC 10), Profession (cook) (DC 10), Survival (DC 15).

Presentation Phase (1 round) Participants arrange their meals on the plate and serve them to the judges. Each participant attempts a skill check with one of the following skills as a full action, with the check's DC noted next to the skill's name: Diplomacy (DC 20), Culture (DC 15), Profession (cook) (DC 15), Sense Motive (DC 15).

Enhance the Dish During the skill challenge, a participant can use a reactions to improve their performance during the skill challenge. A participant can use this reaction a total number of times during the skill challenge equal $1 + 1/4$ of the number of ranks they have in Profession (cook), but no more than once per phase. When the action is used, you attempt a skill check to earn progress against a DC 20. The skill you use is determined by the phase you use the reaction in. If you succeed, you earn 1 point plus 1 additional point for every 5 by which your skill check exceeds the DC.

Selection Phase You use Culture, Diplomacy, or Sense Motive to attempt to discern useful information about the judges' culinary palette.

Preparation Phase You use Life Science, Perception, or Survival to pick fresh, exotic ingredients for your meal.

Cooking Phase You use Life Science, Profession (cook), or Survival to spice up your meal.

Presentation Phase You use Bluff, Diplomacy, or Profession (orator) to sweet talk the judges.

HORSESHOES

Contest (target)

Goal Teams take turns throwing horseshoes at a peg that has been imbedded into the ground. The team that first scores 21 points wins.

Teams Two teams of singles or doubles

SKILLS

Primary Skills Acrobatics, Sleight of Hand

Interval 1 minute

CLEARANCE

Points 21 accumulated; **Scoring Event** At the end of each round, the team with the most ringers scores 3 points. If neither team had a ringer, then the team with the most leaners scores 2 points. If neither team had a ringer or a leaner, the team with the horseshoe that landed closest to the peg scores 1 point. If both teams are tied in all three criteria, neither team scores any points.

SQ critical success (the horseshoe is a ringer, as described below), initiative method (team rotation), teams (two teams with one or two participants each)

DESCRIPTION

Basics In horseshoes, each team takes turns throwing horseshoes at a peg that has been thrust into the ground. The teams stand 40 feet from their peg when throwing horseshoes at their target. Teams attempt to score the most points possible while denying points from their opposition.

On their turn, a participant attempts two DC 20 skills check to earn completion by throwing their horseshoe at the target. For each success, the participant rolls 1d8–2 to determine the horseshoe's distance from the leg in feet. If the result is 0 feet, the horseshoe leans up against the peg (a "leaner"). A critical success means that the horseshoe rings around the peg a "ringer".

SKOX WRESTLING

Contest (grapple)

Goal Teams compete to chase down and pin a greased-up skox in a muddy skox pen as fast as possible. The team that manages to pin the skox in the least amount of time wins.

Zones One 20-foot by 20-foot zone.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Athletics

Interval six seconds

Scoring Interval 10 rounds per participant

CLEARANCE

Points 1 accumulated; **Scoring Event** The team with the participant who pins the pig in the fewest number of rounds scores 1 point.

SQ critical fumble (the skox slips out of the participant's hands, causing it to lose the grappled condition), initiative quality (team rotation), teams (any number of teams with an equal number of participants, up to 4 each)

DESCRIPTION

Basics In skox wrestling, the teams take turns trying to catch

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and wrestle a skox in a muddy pen (this creature resembles a hairless boar with four tusks, an elephant-like trunk, and doglike paws). The skox uses the statistics for a combat array NPC with a CR that is equal to the current participant's CR + 1 (see Appendix 1 in *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE*), and has Acrobatics as a master skill.

The skox flails about in the pen during the challenge, so participants usually need to move up to it in order to apprehend it. In order to win the skill challenge, you must have successfully grappled or pinned the skox for 2 consecutive rounds.

Catching the Skox During your turn, you can attempt to catch the skox as a standard action. This is a skill check to earn progress, and the DC is equal to $10 + 1\frac{1}{2} \times$ the skox's CR. If you succeed, you grapple the skox as if you had successfully used the grapple combat maneuver. If you succeed by 5 or more, you pin the skox instead. In order to clear the skill challenge, you must successfully grapple the skox for two consecutive rounds or pin the skox. After all participants have made their attempts, the participant who cleared the skill challenge the fastest wins.

Combat Actions Because this contest's interval is six seconds, you can use combat actions during this combat. It's common for participants to use any grappling skill they possess during skox wrestling, but anything's fair game as long as you don't deal damage to the skox (though magic that doesn't bolster your grappling abilities is usually frowned upon).

The Skox At the start of your turn, the skox first attempts an Acrobatics check to escape the grapple (if grappled) as a standard action. If it doesn't have either condition, it can move $1d6 \times 5$ feet as a move action, and does so as often as possible to move away from the participant. The skox isn't affected by the difficult terrain created by the mud in the pen, and each time it moves at least 10 feet the mud it sprays up makes it difficult to see, causing creatures attempting to grapple it or attempt a skill check to earn progress to have a 20% miss chance with their action.

The Zone The skox pen where the skill challenge takes place is slick with mud. All squares within the pen are difficult terrain, and a PC moving more than half their speed must succeed at a DC 20 Acrobatics check or fall prone in the mud.

SKIP ROPE

Contest (momentum)

Goal Teams participate in multiple events that showcase their speed, power, and overall ability at skipping over a thin piece of rope or wire. The participant with the most points at the end of a phase wins that phase, and the participant with the most points overall wins the contest.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Acrobatics

Interval 1 minute

Time Pressure 4 events (10 rounds per event)

CLEARANCE

Points highest accumulated; **Scoring Event** Whenever a participant succeeds at a skill check to earn clearance, that team scores 1 point, plus 1 point for every 5 by which the result of the check exceeded the check's DC.

SQ backlash (participant's team loses 1 point), initiative method (team rotation), push self, teams (any number of teams with four participants each)

DESCRIPTION

Basic In skip rope, teams perform a number of tricks and acrobatic stunts that involve swinging a 10-foot long around their bodies so that it passes under their feet and over their heads. The team with the most points after all four events have concluded wins the contest.

Skipping Rope On each participant's turn, they jump into the swinging rope and attempt to skip over it as described above and attempt a DC 20 skill check to earn progress. If they succeed, they earn points based upon the result and can attempt another skill check to earn progress as a reaction or jump out of the rope, signaling the next participant's turn. A participant can use the push self action to make multiple attempts to earn progress during a single turn, if desired.

Doubles In a doubles event, two participants from the same team step into the rope at the same time. If either participant fail their skill check to earn progress, neither participant earns progress. This is a variant of the skip rope skill challenge, which is assumed to be singles only unless the GM rules otherwise.

Reactions When the participant uses the push self reaction during this skill challenge, she can choose a different benefit than those normally provided by the action. If the participant succeeds at their skill check, they can choose the following benefit instead of the standard benefits described on page 77.

- » If your next skill check to earn progress succeeds, you earn twice as many points as usual. If it succeeds by 10 or more, they earn three times as many points. If it succeeds by 20 or more, they earn four times as many points. This benefit can only be chosen if you used the push self action before attempting a skill check to earn progress this round.

TRIVIA

Contest (recollection)

Goal Teams participate in an event that showcases their ability to recall information about one or more topics. The participant with the most points at the end of a phase wins that phase, and the participant with the most points overall wins the contest.

SKILLS

Primary Skills You can use any skill that lists recall knowledge as a skill task to score, provided the skill can be used to recall information that is relevant to the posed question (see below).

Interval 1 minute

Time Pressure 25 questions per team

CLEARANCE



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Points highest accumulated; **Scoring Event** Whenever a team succeeds at a skill check to earn progress, that team scores 1 point.

SQ initiative method (standard initiative; see below), limited progress (one participant, any number of assistants), teams (any number of teams with an equal number of participants each).

DESCRIPTION

Basic In trivia, teams take turns answering questions about a variety of topics ranging from historical events and local trivia to complex questions regarding science, philosophy, and magical studies. Participants act as a team, with all participants acting simultaneously in order to increase their team's chances at success. Answering questions correctly causes teams to score points, and the team with the most points after all questions have been asked wins the contest.

Questions On each team's turn, the team is given a trivia question. Some trivia contests use specific topics, and therefore only one skill is ever used. In others, the topic is random from question to question, and must be determined randomly by the GM (roll 1d6 and use the following result, rerolling any results of a 6; 1: Culture, 2: Life Science, 3: Mysticism, 4: Physical Science, or 5: Profession [any one]).

One participant on the team attempts a skill check

to earn progress as a full action, with any other able participants attempting to use the aid another action to assist them if desired. If the participant fails, other teams can attempt to steal the question as a reaction. (If multiple teams attempt to steal, they roll opposed initiative checks and the team with the highest result answers the question.) A team that steals the question can attempt their own skill check to earn progress, and scores points as if the question were given to them if they succeed.

Determining Question DC Each time a question is posed, use Table 3-4: Skill Challenge DCs by CR to determine the question's skill check DC. Use the team's Average Party Level as the skill challenge's CR for this purpose, and roll randomly to determine the skill check's difficulty (roll 1d6: 1: very difficult, 2: difficult, 3: challenging, 4: average, 5: easy, 6: easy DC – 5, minimum 0).

Recalling Knowledge Whenever a team is posed a question, they determine amongst themselves who will attempt a skill check to earn progress to recall the information, while other team members who are able to assist use the aid another action to do so. Traditionally, one participant on each team is selected to be team captain, and only the team captain is allowed to deliver the answer to the judges. (This role has no mechanical effect on the skill challenge, however.)

INFLUENCE CHALLENGES

Some of the most important encounters that adventures face are battles of wits and words, during which they must convince great kings to take action or gently ease secret information from guarded lips. Influence challenges are powerful transitional encounters that allow the GM an opportunity to provide exposition, create tension, and potentially introduce or reacquaint the PCs with friend and foe alike.

Influence challenges are a specific type of success-based skill challenge in which one or more characters attempt to earn the favor of other characters to meet some greater objective, such as learning a secret or gaining support in a war effort. Influence challenges follow the same rules for running them as standard skill challenges starting on page 30, but they consist of several different stat blocks, have a significantly different list of elements, and have additional special qualities not found in standard skill challenges. In addition, there are special actions that only apply to influence challenges. Unless otherwise noted, assume that influence challenges follow all of the standard rules associated with skill challenges with the same completion method (progress- or success-based), such as the sequence for which characters act during a cycle and how initiative is determined.

INFLUENCE CHALLENGE BASICS

The following rules cover basic information about influence challenges and how they're run. Aside from the information detailed here, influence challenges follow the same rules as general skill challenges across all previous pages.

- » All influence challenges use successes as their clearance method. For more information regarding clearance methods, see page 40.
- » All influence challenges feature target NPCs that must be swayed in order to clear the skill challenge. During an influence challenge, you choose a target NPC and attempt a skill check to earn progress with them. When you earn a specific number of successes against that target NPC, as detailed in their target NPC stat block, your sway over them increases. For more information about sway and target NPCs, see below.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

In addition to the standard special actions that can be performed during any skill challenge (see page 36), you can use the following special action during an influence challenge if the influence challenge has the indicated special quality.

STANDARD ACTIONS

A standard action is usually the main action you take each round. Below are examples of standard actions.

COUNTER SWAY (SUCCESSES)

During an influence challenge with opposition, you can attempt to counter the opposition's efforts to sway a target NPC. This functions exactly like attempting a skill check to earn clearance, except a successful influence check allows the character to reduce the total number of successes that the opposition has earned towards swaying the target instead of gaining successes themselves. A participant gains a +2 bonus to skill checks to counter sway if they have minor sway over the target, +4 if they have moderate sway, or +6 if they have major sway.

If, after successfully using the counter sway action, your

opposition would have less than 0 successes towards the next sway level, their sway decreases by one level, with a total number of successes equal to one success fewer than number needed to advance to the next sway level. For example, if a target NPC needs 4 successes to advance their sway level and Nuvami uses the counter sway action to reduce their opposition's number of successes to less than 0, the opposition's sway level decreases by one step and they count as having 3 successes to advance to the next sway level.

Any effects or bonuses that apply to skill checks to earn progress during the influence challenge also apply to skill checks to counter sway. Bluff is always treated as one of the target NPC's primary skills for the purpose of countering sway, but any biases, strengths, or weaknesses the target NPC has apply normally to your Bluff check to counter sway.

SWITCH OBJECTIVE (SUCCESSES)

During an influence challenge, you can attempt to move from your current location to the location of an ally or another objective that you've previously located. When doing so, you choose one objective that you've successfully located using the locate objective action and switch from your current objective to the chosen objective. If you haven't previously located an objective, you must first use the locate objective action to switch to that objective.

For the purpose of this action, an objective is any creature, object, or location relevant to clearing the skill challenge, as determined by the GM. Any allies actively working with you to clear the skill challenge count as objectives for the purpose of this action, though you don't need to use the locate objective action to locate your allies.

You can also use this action to simply mill about the location where the skill challenge is taking place, moving from room to room, area to area, or zone to zone as you like. When doing so, there's no guarantee that you'll meet anyone of note in whichever place you visit, but you can use the discovery action (see page 36) to check at your leisure.



FULL ACTIONS

A full action requires your entire turn to complete. If you take a full action, you can't take your usual standard, move, and swift actions.

LOCATE OBJECTIVE (SUCCESSSES)

During an influence challenge, you can attempt to locate a target NPC, uncover hidden secrets or information, or perform other objectives that need to be fulfilled during the skill challenge. When you use this action, you choose one target NPC or similar objective that you need to interact with and attempt a skill check. The skill used and the difficulty of the check are noted in the skill challenge's stat block under the discovery entry, using the skill challenge's CR to determine the difficulty. If you succeed at a skill check to discover an objective, you can automatically pass this information on to all allies within the same zone in the skill challenge as you.

When you use the locate objective action to search for a target, you automatically switch from your current objective to that objective, as if you had used the switch objective action (see above). Once you know where an objective is, you don't need to attempt new skill checks to find it again. You automatically count as having succeeded at a skill check to identify the locations of each member of your party or team, making it easy to keep in touch with them.

At the GM's decision, you might not realize that a certain creature, object, or location is an objective until you've managed to successfully sway other target NPCs or fulfill other requirements first. For instance, you might not realize that a 10 year-old prince is a witness in a royal murder until you successfully sway his servant into revealing that he was the only real witness at the crime scene.

INFLUENCE TERMINOLOGY

Influence challenges use a number of specific key words to stand in for complicated gaming concepts, which are described here.

SWAY

During an influence challenge, the skill challenge's goal is directly tied to swaying one or more target NPCs (see below) to perform a special favor or service or some kind. In longer-term social engagements, the PCs may need to succeed at multiple influence challenges to build towards larger goals.

Participants in an influence challenge begin with no sway over each target NPC unless that target NPC's stat block specifically notes otherwise. When a participant earns a specific number of successes, as noted in the target NPC's stat block, their level of sway over the target NPC improves. Clearing an influence challenge usually requires participants to reach a specific level of sway with one or more target NPCs, as noted in the influence challenge's stat block.

Like most types of progress, both successes and the sway that results from them is normally shared amongst participants in the same party or on the same team as long as those participants clearly identify themselves as partners or compatriots. If a

target NPC has the individual progress special quality, successes and sway is not shared between party or team members, and characters can use disguises to keep their successes and sway separate from party and team members if they want to. (In such cases, the target NPC attempts a Perception check to notice that the participant is wearing a disguise as normal.)

The different levels of sway and the target NPC's demeanor towards a participant at that level of sway are described below.

No Sway: The NPC treats the character as a stranger with the character's fame or infamy (if any). If the NPC speaks of the character, it is often off-hand or in passing, and the NPC places her own plans above the character's own.

Minor Sway: The NPC might perform small favors for the character that do not involve a significant expenditure of resources. The NPC speaks favorably about the character to others, and the NPC does not interfere in the character's plans unless they conflict with her goals.

Moderate Sway: The NPC might perform favors for the character that require some of her own resources or are time-consuming, as long as they do not threaten the NPC's overall interests. The NPC actively seeks to convince people to work with the character, and if the NPC's plans conflict with the character's goals, the NPC tries to work with the character to find a mutually acceptable resolution to the conflict.

Major Sway: The NPC assists the character with tasks that pose a significant risk to her position or status, and depending on the circumstances, may risk her safety for the character. The NPC advocates for the character, even when doing so is unpopular, and she undermines the character's enemies. The NPC concedes a personal goal in order to allow the character to move forward with one of their plans, as long as the character provides a suitable alternative.

TARGET NPC

A target NPC is a character that participants must sway in order to clear the skill challenge. Target NPCs have their own stat block during a skill challenge that summarizes their attitudes, personality, skill bonuses, and other important information about the character. Where applicable, target NPCs should be built using Appendix 1 in *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE*, as NPCs of their CR.

ZONES

Influence challenges typically occur in a specific location that is comprised of one or more zones. An influence challenge's stat block lists only the most relevant zones for that skill challenge, but GMs are free to invent additional zones based upon reasonable requests by the players. For example, if the influence challenge takes place at a fancy gala in a target NPC's home, it's safe to assume that gala has a restroom even if the skill challenge doesn't specifically call it out, so if the PCs want to investigate the rest room as part of the skill challenge GMs should feel free to add that area as a new zone as long as it makes sense for the participants to go there.

As in contests, an influence challenge's zones are abstract

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areas that allow the skill challenge to summarize the location's features rather than detail every square foot of it. Both target NPCs and participants can mill about these zones at their leisure using the the switch objective action, and navigating these zones is a key part of participating in an influence challenge.

CHASE STAT BLOCK FORMAT

Chases are presented in the same format as general skill challenges (see page 62) with the following additions.

TIME PRESSURE

Unlike other skill challenges, where time pressure is a special quality (see page 55), nearly all influence challenges use time pressure to represent the limited amount of time that social engagements typically take place in. Most skill challenges list skill challenges in terms of phases—a phase is a collection of influence challenge rounds that represent some common event. This entry notes the number of phases in the skill challenge and how long each phase lasts in game world time, then translates the length of one phase into 1 or more skill challenge rounds.

SWAY

The sway entry of an influence challenge replaces the clearance method entry of a standard skill challenge. It details how many target NPCs must be swayed to clear the skill challenge, the names and CRs of those NPCs, and what level of sway must be reached with each target NPC. The characters are described using their name, alignment, class (if relevant), and CR only—more information about each character is defined in their target NPC stat block (see page 89).

EVENTS

All influence challenges have an events section and their end, which describes any special actions or scenarios that occur during the skill challenge. Events are listed in alphabetical order and can include information about the skill challenge like information discovered during the skill challenge, events that occur during the skill challenge, and other complications that can (and often will) arise during the skill challenge.

SAMPLE SKILL CHALLENGES

The following skill challenges were created using the design guidelines found on page 98, and serve as examples for GMs looking to create their own skill challenges.

HAVING A BLAST

CR 9

6,400 XP

Influence challenge

Goal The PCs must sneak into Tozok's lavish estate and steal the launch codes to a system-ending super weapon. One participant must keep the vesk and his companions distracted while the others find and steal the launch codes.

SKILLS

Interval 20 minutes

Time Pressure 5 phases of 1 hour (3 rounds each)

CLEARANCE

Sway The PCs must successfully sway 3 target NPCs from the following list: Al-vid Kavar (LE kasatha mystic, CR 9), Gurp (NE skittermander operative, CR 9), Tozok (LE vesk envoy, CR 9), Wraz (NE vesk soldier, CR 9).

SQ individual progress

Benefit The PCs are able to steal the launch codes, defanging the vesk threat to the Xa-Osoro System.

Penalty The PCs' plan is discovered, causing them to enter a combat encounter with Tozok's guards, as described in the events section. Tozok orders his guards to take the PCs alive for interrogation, stripping them of their equipment and throwing them into a hidden brig located under his estate.

EVENTS

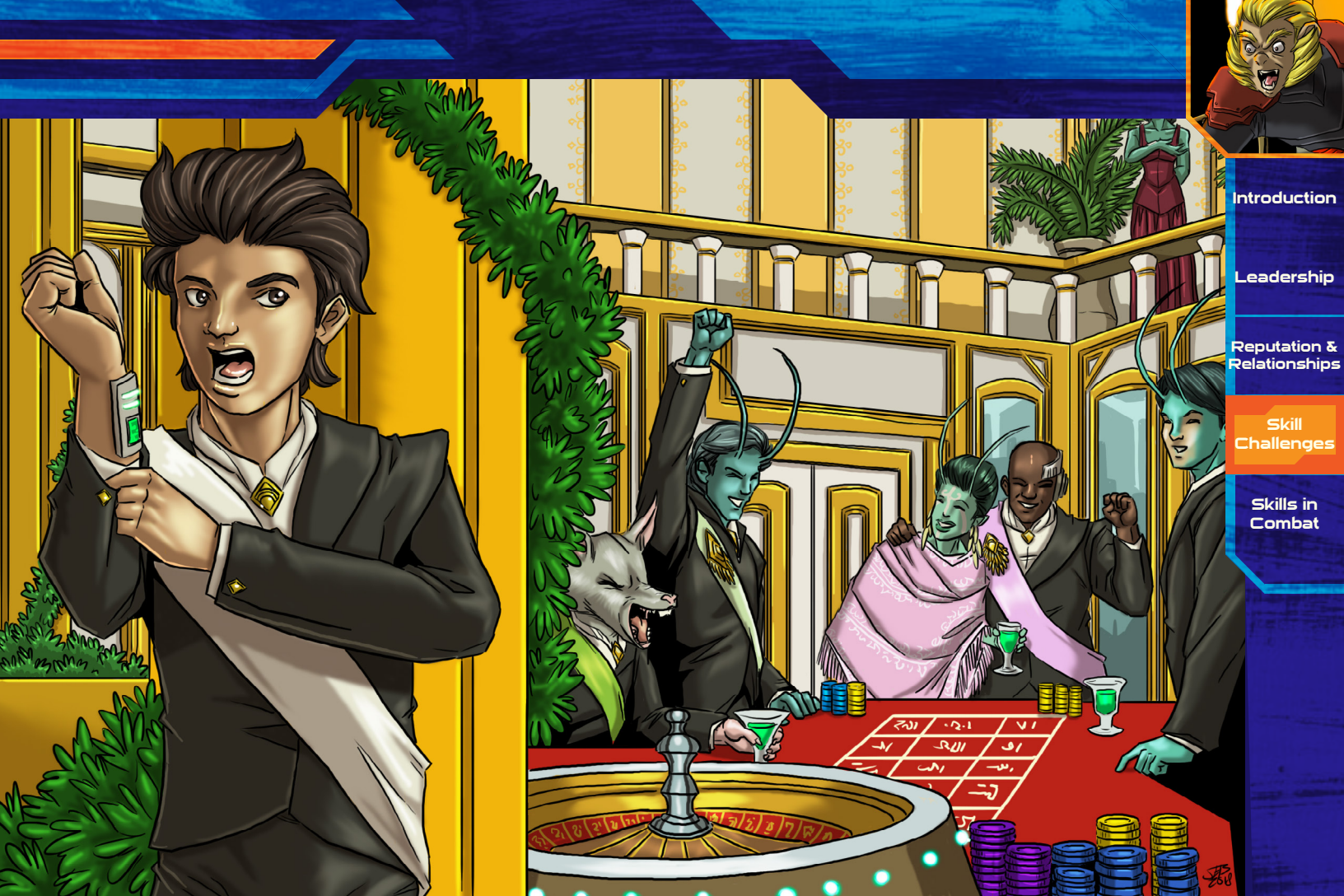
Clues Once the PCs earn at least minor sway with Tozok or one of his minions, a PC can use Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate to attempt to force a clue from them. This is considered a skill each to earn progress, and each NPC's biases, strengths, and weaknesses apply normally. This is a difficult skill check (DC 33) if the PC has minor sway with the NPC, challenging (DC 28) if they have moderate sway, or average (DC 23) if they have major sway. The PCs successfully locate the location of the launch codes if they manage to succeed at a total of 4 of these skill checks as a group.

Tozok's Suspicions At the end of any round that one or more PCs attempted a skill check to learn the location of the launch codes, Tozok attempts a DC 28 Sense Motive check with a +23 bonus. He takes a –2 penalty to this check if any PC has minor sway with him, –4 if any PC has moderate sway, or –6 if any PC has major sway.

The first time Tozok succeeds at this Sense Motive check, he commands his guards to be on the lookout for troublemakers, increasing the DC of all skill checks to look for clues (see above) by 5. The second time he succeeds, he places the guards on high alert and attempts this Sense Motive check at the end of each round, even if no PC attempted to locate the location of the launch codes that round. The third time he succeeds, he realizes the PCs' plot and immediately has them rounded up and nonlethally incapacitated for interrogation. This is a CR 12 combat encounter including Al-vid Kavar, Gurp, Tozok, Wraz, and four CR 5 vesk NPCs of the GM's choice. The PC with the highest sway over Tozok is attacked first.

TARGET NPC STAT BLOCK FORMAT

Target NPCs are presented in a standard format, as shown in the sample target NPC stat block. Each category of information found in the target NPC stat block is explained and defined in the appropriate sections that follow the sample (along with references for further information). Not all target NPCs contain each boldface entry heading listed in the sample, but for purposes of completeness, all entry headings used in the various stat block entries are included. The sample also



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includes either typical language found in most skill challenge entries or a summary of what the entry typically contains.

TARGET NPC NAME

CR

XP Reward

Alignment gender age race class

Appearance A description of the target NPC's physical appearance goes here.

Recognize Skill (difficulty, skill DC), followed by some attribute that is recognizable about the target NPC using the skill.

Goals A description of the character's goals as they pertain to the influence challenge goes here.

Skills A list of the target NPC's skills and their bonus in each skill is noted here; Saves the target NPC's saving throw bonuses are noted here; Other any class features, feats, or other abilities relevant to the skill challenge are noted here.

SKILLS

Primary Skills Skill (difficulty, skill DC) each skill includes a description explaining why it can be used to influence the target NPC; **Secondary Skills** difficulty, DC

Biases Any positive or negative biases that the target NPC has are noted here, as well as the skill bonus or penalty incurred for playing to that bias.

Strengths The target NPCs' strengths are noted here, as well as

a description of why the listed tactic doesn't work on them.

Weaknesses The target NPC's weaknesses are noted here, as well as a description of why the listed tactic works especially well on them.

CLEARANCE

Successes The number of successes needed to increase the participant's sway level over the target NPC is listed here..

Audience Size alignment demographics (# of attendees, size modifier); positive biases; negative biases.

SQA A list of special qualities that the target NPC has goes here.

Benefit Any bonuses that participants gain for reaching a specific level of sway during the influence challenge are noted here

Penalty Any penalties that participants take for failing their skill checks to sway the target NPC during the influence challenge are noted here.

TARGET NPC ELEMENTS

All target NPCs have the following elements: Name, challenge rating and XP reward, vital statistics, appearance, recognize, background, skills and saves, primary and secondary skills, biases, strengths, weaknesses, successes, benefit, penalty, and favors. These characteristics are described below and are presented in the order in which they appear on a target NPC stat block.

NAME

The first line of every target NPC is the character's name. This can also be the character's alias, if their true identity isn't known to the PCs.

CHALLENGE RATING AND XP

All target NPCs possess a Challenge Rating (CR) ranging from CR 1/3 to CR 25 and grant the same XP reward as a creature of the skill challenge's CR if the PCs manage to earn enough successes to increase their sway level with the target NPC to the level indicated in the influence challenge's stat block. As with creatures, XP rewards gained from a skill challenge are divided by the number of PCs in the party and distributed evenly amongst them.

VITAL STATISTICS

The first line after the target's XP reward lists the NPC's alignment, gender, age, race, and class in order. If the character doesn't have one of those entries, they can be omitted. (Note that in the case of gender, the entry should always list what the gender that the target NPC identifies as. If they don't identify with any gender, use "agendered" or "nonbinary" based on the individual's preferences).

APPEARANCE

The second line of the target NPC's stat block after the XP reward is a brief description of what the character looks like, including all information summarized in the target NPC's vital statistics entry, as well as their clothing and other items or articles they have on their person.

RECOGNIZE

The fourth line following the XP reward notes a bit of extra information that participants might know about the target NPC. When a participant first encounters the target NPC or uses the discover information action, they can attempt the skill check indicated here to learn an additional bit of information about the target NPC.

BACKGROUND

The fifth entry following the target NPC's XP reward describes a brief bit of the character's background, including important events in their life. This isn't necessarily intended to be information that PCs discover; instead, it helps inform the GM's roleplaying of the target NPC during the skill challenge.

GOALS

The sixth line following the target NPC's XP reward summarizes what they hope to accomplish during the skill challenge.

SKILLS, SAVES, AND ABILITIES

The sixth entry following the target NPC's XP reward lists the character's skill bonuses (as determined by its array), as well as its saving throw bonuses and any special abilities they have that are relevant to a social encounter, such as an envoy's expertise class feature.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SKILLS

The first line under the skills header lists which skills are primary skills for the skill challenge and their difficulty and DC, as well as the difficulty and DC of all secondary skill checks attempted to earn progress. For more information regarding primary and secondary skills, see page 34.

BIASES

The second line under the skills header notes any biases the target NPC has. Biases can be positive (meaning that playing to the bias grants a participant a bonus to skill checks to earn completion) or negative (meaning that playing to the bias grants a participant a penalty). The bonuses or penalties associated with an audience's biases are noted in the audience's entry in the skill challenge's stat block, but they cannot exceed +4 or -4. For example, if an audience has a positive bias towards women with a +2 bonus, female characters attempting to earn progress gain a +2 morale bonus to skill checks to earn progress during the skill challenge.

STRENGTHS

The line immediately following the target NPC's biases notes their strengths—tactics that are difficult to sway the target NPC with. For example, a target NPC with little patience for flattery may think less favorably of someone who showers her with compliments. A character who incorporates a target NPC's strength into an influence check made to sway them through roleplaying or circumstance takes a -4 penalty to the check. Knowledge of a target NPC's strengths can also be used as a powerful tool for sabotaging the opposition's attempt to gain influence over a target NPC, as described under the counter influence special action on page 78.

WEAKNESSES

The line after the target NPC's strengths notes their weaknesses—tactics that are particularly effective at influencing them such as a deep-seated secret or insecurity, a hobby that the target NPC could talk about for days on end, or a type of flattery or interaction that quickly arouses the trust and sway of the target NPC. A character who incorporates a target NPC's strength into an influence check made to sway them through roleplaying or circumstance gains a cumulative +2 bonus to the check for each weakness she incorporates.

SUCCESSES

The first line under the clearance section notes the number of successes that participants need to increase their sway level with the target NPC.

BENEFIT

The second line under the clearance section notes any special benefits that characters gain for reaching specific levels of sway with the target NPC. This includes tangible rewards, like credits or equipment, and intangible rewards, like information.



PENALTY

The third line under the clearance section notes what happens when a participant fails a skill check to sway the target NPC.

FAVORS

The fourth and final line under the clearance section notes a specific kind of action that PCs can take to gain successes with the target NPC without needing to attempt any skill checks (or at the very least, attempt skill checks at a greatly reduced DC, usually of easy difficulty).

SAMPLE TARGET NPC

The following target NPC is designed to be used in conjunction with the sample influence challenge stat block on page 88.

Tozok

CR 9

6,400 XP

LE male Young Adult vesk envoy (target NPC)

Appearance The armor and clothing of this imposing vesk are littered with dozens of military medals and honors, ranging from active combat to diplomatic services. Dark, finely woven clothing strain beneath his rippling bicep and lithe frame, and his piercing blue eyes have a predatory glint.

Recognize Culture (easy, DC 23) to recognize as a sergeant in the vesk military.

Background Tozok enlisted in the vesk military as a young adolescent. While his aim was true and he had a decent sword arm, Tozok's superiors quickly identified the young man's natural charisma and imposing wordplay, and quickly had him reassigned as a marshaller for their forces. After a decade of service, Tozok was promoted to the rank of sergeant and reassigned to the Xa-Osoro System, where he acts as an ambassador and overseer of what many fear will become his empire's staging ground for an invasion of the Radiant Imperium. Tozok is homosexual and seeking a partner after a messy breakup with his previous boyfriend in the wake of Tozok's stationing in the Radiant Imperium.

Goals Tozok considers himself on easy street—his people will praise him for successfully convincing the Radiant Emperor to permit him Vesk-71, a small moon orbiting the planet Ulo which is secretly to serve as the vesk staging ground for their war of conquest against the people of Xa-Osoro. He sees his gala as a celebration of his greatness, and wishes to take a potential partner as his first "conquest" in the system.

Skills Culture +18, Diplomacy +23, Intimidate +23, Perception +18, Profession (soldier) +23, Sense Motive +23; **Saves** Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +12; **Other** envoy improvisations (get'em, hurry, improved hurry), expertise talent (menacing gaze; +22 to Intimidate checks instead of +23).

SKILLS

Primary Skills Acrobatics (average, DC 23; Tozok has a soft spot for liteness, and opens up around those who have such a physique), Athletics (challenging, DC 28; as an active soldier, Tozok respects athletes but holds them

to high standards), Bluff (difficult, DC 32; while lying to Tozok is certainly an option, he is perceptive and cunning), Culture (challenging, DC 28; Tozok considers himself cultured, and is impressed by those who show him similar airs), Diplomacy (challenging, DC 28; Tozok is a diplomat and can be reasoned with), Profession (soldier) (easy, DC 18; Tozok is an active soldier and respects other skilled soldiers); **Secondary Skills** very difficult, DC 37

Biases Tozok believes that all other races are inferior to vesk. Nonvesks who assert their equality or superiority to vesks take a -4 penalty to checks to influence Tozok; this increases to -8 if the individual specifically implies that they are superior to Tozok himself.

Strengths Tozok is skilled at menacing and bullying his adversaries, and it is extremely difficult to do the same to him. A PC who threatens Tozok takes a -4 penalty to their check; if they fail to sway him while taking this penalty, that character becomes cowed, gaining the shaken condition whenever they attempt to attack, influence, or target Tozok. This penalty lasts for the entirety of the skill challenge and for 1d12 hours afterward.

Weaknesses Tozok has a fondness for lithe humanoid with "just the right amount" of muscle definition. A Medium humanoid PC with a total Strength and Dexterity modifier of at least +8, with both modifiers being at least +1 and their Dexterity modifier being at least 2 higher than their Strength modifier, gains a +5 bonus to checks to influence Tozok. If such a PC also conducts themselves in a clingy, submissive manner toward Tozok, this bonus increases to +10.

CLEARANCE

Successes 4

Benefit Whenever a character whose total Strength and Dexterity modifiers allow them to qualify for Tozok's weakness succeeds on a skill check to sway him, Tozok takes a penalty to Sense Motive checks to notice the PCs' snooping (see the Scene Stat Block's event entry). This penalty is -2 if the character has no sway with Tozok, -4 if they have minor sway, -6 if they have moderate sway, or -10 if they have major sway. If multiple PCs successfully sway Tozok, this penalty doesn't stack; use the highest penalty from among all applicable PCs who successfully swayed him.

Penalty Any participant that fails a skill check to earn progress with Tozok loses one success towards swaying Tozok. If this reduces the participant's total successes to less than 0, Tozok's sway level with the participant is reduced by 1 and their total number of successes towards the next sway level becomes 3.

Favors Tozok is romantically starved, and a PC consists to a submissive romantic interaction of their choice with him gains 1 success towards swaying Tozok to the next sway level. A single participant may interact with Tozok in this manner this favor once during the skill challenge if they have minor sway with him or twice if they have major sway, but the act must be increasingly appealing to Tozok each time it is invoked.

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VERBAL DUELS

The art of debate is among the most important that a person can master, for being able to linguistically confuse and confound enemies gives one the edge in negotiations of all ilk, and ultimately helps secure an individual's interests. In many ways debates are like duels, battles of words rather than swords. In a verbal duel, a duelist's greatest weapons are facts, wordplay, and rhetorical flourishes that enable her to win arguments or sway the masses.

Verbal duels are a specific type of success-based skill challenge in which two characters face off in a contest of wit and wordplay to attempt to win a series of exchanges with an ever-increasing ante. Verbal duels follow similar rules for a standard success-based skill challenge, but they are largely based on the ever-changing conflict between the duelists rather than static difficulty classes. To this end, verbal duels have a significantly different action hierarchy, use different special actions, and have drastically different stat blocks. In addition, there are special actions that only apply to verbal duels. Unless otherwise noted, assume that verbal duels follow all of the standard rules associated with skill challenges with the same completion method (success-based).

VERBAL DUEL BASICS

The following rules cover basic information about verbal duels and how they're run. Aside from the information detailed here, verbal duels follow the same rules as general skill challenges across all previous pages.

- » All verbal duels use casualty-based points as their clearance method. For more information regarding clearance methods, see page 40.
- » All contests feature opposition. For more information about opposition, see page 60.
- » At the start of a verbal duel, characters assign their primary skills to different tactics that represent how the character argues their point of view. Certain tactics are advantageous against others, while some are ineffective under certain circumstances.
- » Verbal duels are fought in a series of exchanges, where participants attempt to out-perform each other's attempts to earn progress to reduce their opposition's points.
- » During a verbal duel, each participant starts with a number of points equal to half their total character level + their Charisma, Intelligence, and Wisdom modifiers. A character cannot have fewer than 1 point.
- » Unlike other skill challenges, all verbal duels have the same list of primary skills: Bluff, Culture, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Life Science, Mysticism, Physical Science, Profession, or Sense Motive. These skills are assigned to tactics, which modify the participant's attempts to earn progress.
- » Verbal duels do not allow the use of secondary skills, as if they had the specific skills special quality.

VERBAL DUEL TERMINOLOGY

Verbal duels use a number of specific key words to stand in for complicated gaming concepts, which are described here.

EDGE

An edge is a special advantage that a participant can spend in order to reroll a single skill check to earn progress during a verbal duel. The decision to use an edge is made after the participant attempts their skill check to earn progress, and

a die that already has been rerolled for any reason cannot be rerolled again by spending an edge.

You typically gain edges from circumstances surrounding the verbal duel, but sometimes edges come from special features and other character options. Most edges have conditions attached to them that define under what circumstances the edge can be used. Several circumstances that grant edges to characters participating in a verbal duel are detailed below. Note that you can only use each edge you have once per verbal duel; once use, the edge is expended.

Class Features, Feats, and Other Effects: Some abilities grant bonus edges that can be used during a verbal duel. Such effects note all (if any) conditions placed on those edges.

Ending the Exchange: Whenever an exchange ends, the exchange's winner earns 1 edge that they can use on whatever skill check to earn progress that they want.

Negative Biases: When you participate in a verbal duel with the audience special quality (see page 60), you gain 1 edge per bias that you can use whenever the audience has a negative bias against the last tactic your opposition used. For example, if Hansune is dueling Tozok and the audience has a negative bias against the rhetoric tactic, Hansune gains 1 edge that he can only use immediately after Tozok uses the rhetoric tactic.

Positive Biases: When you participate in a verbal duel with the audience special quality (see page 60), you gain 1 edge you can use whenever you attempt a skill to earn progress using a tactic that the audience has a positive bias towards. For example, if Hansune is dueling Tozok and the audience has a positive bias against the flattery tactic, Hansune gains 1 edge that he can only use to reroll a skill check he attempted when using the flattery tactic.

EXCHANGE

During a verbal duel, rounds are divided up based upon the topic that the participants are debating. A set of rounds in a verbal duel is known as an exchange. During the first exchange of the verbal duel, the participant with the highest initiative result determines which character begins the first verbal exchange. Thereafter, the winner of the previous exchange must start the next one. For example, if



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Hansune and Chosuy are participants in a verbal duel and Hansune wins initiative, he can nominate Chosuy as the opener for the first exchange. Should Chosuy lose that first exchange, Hansune would be required to open the second exchange. If Chosuy won the first exchange, however, he would be required to open the second one despite having already opened the first.

A participant opens an exchange by choosing one of their tactics and attempting a skill check to earn progress using a skill they assigned to that tactic. Then the opposing participant chooses one of their tactics and attempts a skill check to earn progress using a skill they assigned to their tactic. If the opposing participant's skill check result is less than the opener's skill check result, the opposing participant fails. If their skill check result is greater than or equal to the opener's skill check result, they succeed and the opener must then attempt a skill check to earn progress. Both participants continue back and forth in this manner, the skill DC climbing ever higher as both characters struggle to have the higher result.

Once a participant fails a skill check to earn progress, they lose the exchange. As part of losing the exchange, they lose a number of points equal to the total number of turns taken during the skill challenge. A participant whose total points can no longer participate in the skill challenge, as described under the casualties system under the points clearance method on page 44.

For example, if Chosuy and Hansune engage in a verbal duel and Chosuy opens with a skill check result of a 15, then Hansune's next attempt to earn progress would need to be equal to or higher than a 15. If his next attempt's result is a 17, then Chosuy would need to roll a 17 or higher on his next attempt to earn progress. If Chosuy rolls a 16, he fails and loses the exchange, losing 1 point for each turn taken including the current turn. As a result, Chosuy would lose 3 points—one for his opening turn, one for Hansune's turn, and one for his second turn.

A participant can choose to end an exchange rather than attempt a skill check to earn progress, effectively conceding to the opposition. A participant who chooses to end an exchange loses points as if they had failed a skill check to earn progress and their opponent gains 1 edge, but they can choose to open the next exchange instead of their opponent. In addition, either participant can concede a verbal duel at any point, automatically losing as if their total number of points had been reduced to 0.

TACTICS

Unlike other skill challenges, all verbal duels effectively have the same list of skills as primary skills and do not allow secondary skills to be used to earn progress, as if the skill challenge had the specific skills special quality (see page 54). A verbal duel's primary skills are: Bluff, Culture, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Life Science, Mysticism, Physical Science, Profession, or Sense Motive.

Before the verbal duel begins, each participant takes each primary skill that they have trained (meaning they have at least 1 skill rank invested into) and assign it to one tactic that lists the skill as an associated skill. For example, if Hansune is trained in Culture, he can assign the skill to allegory, credibility

challenge, or flattery among others. Note that each skill can only be assigned to one tactic at a time, so Hansune couldn't assign Culture to both allegory and flattery simultaneously.

The following entries describe various tactics and restrictions placed upon verbal duel tactics. Knowing and understanding them is often the key to a successful debate.

Last Tactic: It's considered awkward and in poor form to try and counter an opponent with the last tactic used against you. Whenever you attempt a skill check to earn progress using the same tactic as the last one your opponent attempted, you take a –2 penalty to your skill check to earn progress. For example if Hansune and Tozok are participating in a verbal duel and Tozok used the rhetoric tactic for his skill check to earn progress on the previous round, then Hansune would take a –2 penalty to his next skill check to earn progress if he used the rhetoric tactic immediately following Tozok's use.

Tactic Interactions: Many tactics interact in specific ways as noted in their interaction entry, causing some to be better-suited to following some tactics over others. For instance, it is harder to counter a logical argument with mockery, and most tactics have a hard time foiling a verbal trap set by baiting.

Tactics with special interactions feature an "interaction" entry that details that tactic's conflicts and synergies.

Repetition of Tactics: Using the same tactic over and over again is not an effective way to win an argument. You take a cumulative –2 penalty to all further skill checks to earn progress with any tactic that you previously used to win an exchange. For example, if Hansune and Tozok are in a duel and Tozok attempts a Culture check to use the allegory tactic and Hansune fails to equal or exceed Tozok's result on his next skill check to earn progress, Hansune would score points as normal but Tozok would take a –2 penalty to all skill checks to earn progress using the allegory tactic.

Skill Substitutions: If a character has a class feature or feat that allows them to substitute their skill bonus or skill ranks in a skill for their skill bonus or skill ranks in a skill that is associated with a tactic, she also substitutes her skill bonus or skill ranks for the purpose of determining which tactics she can assign and any edges she gains for doing so.

For example, if Nuvami gains a class feature that allows her to substitute her solarian level for her ranks in Bluff and Diplomacy, she could assign Bluff and Diplomacy to a tactic as if she had ranks in those skills, substituting her solarian level for her ranks in these skills as needed.

ALLEGORY

You use a fable or parable featuring an underlying message to frame the debate. While it is sometimes difficult to use allegory in the heat of an exchange, it makes a very effective opener.

Associated Skills: Culture, Mysticism, Profession (actor), Profession (orator).

Interaction: You take a –2 penalty your skill check to use allegory as a tactic unless you open the exchange with an allegory.

Special: If you use allegory to open an exchange, and your

opponent chooses to end the exchange rather than attempt to counter your allegory, you can increase the number of points that the opponent loses by 1 instead of gaining an edge.

BAITING

You hurl taunts and barbs, or level false dichotomies, goading your opponent into a trap. Baiting works best when the stakes are already high, since in that case backing down can be even more damaging than blundering into your trap.

Associated Skills: Bluff, Intimidate, Profession (comedian), Sense Motive.

Interaction: Your opposition takes a -2 penalty to their next skill check to earn progress unless they use the presence tactic.

Special: You cannot use this tactic to open an exchange. If your opponent ends the exchange rather than attempt a skill check to earn progress, you don't accumulate the usual penalties for using this tactic again after using it to win an exchange.

CREDIBILITY CHALLENGE

You insinuate that your opponent's arguments are invalid or desperate because of some aspect of that opponent's being, such as their personal failings, background, or bloodline.

Associated Skills: Culture, Intimidate, Profession (any).

Interaction: You take a -2 penalty to skill checks to earn progress if the last tactic your opponent used was presence. You gain a +2 bonus to skill checks to earn progress if the skill challenge has the audience special quality, and the audience is aware (or believes) that you outrank your opponent in some manner, such as from noble birth or other life circumstances. (For example, an honest trader might be deemed to have a higher social standing than a group of apparently homeless, wandering vagabonds.)

Special: Socialites usually have a positive bias towards the credibility challenge tactic, even when this tactic isn't seeded. If the audience has a positive bias towards credibility challenge, you earn 2 edges for this tactic rather than 1.

EMOTIONAL APPEAL

You make an argument appealing to the emotional desires of your opponent or audience. This tactic is particularly useful against an opponent with an advantage in status or knowledge; raising the emotional stakes can be rewarding, but it can also be dangerous.

Associated Skills: Bluff, Profession (orator), Sense Motive.

Interaction: You gain a +2 bonus to skill checks to earn progress if the last tactic your opponent used was either logic, presence, or rhetoric.

Special: If you succeed at a skill check to earn progress and your skill check wasn't the opener, whomever loses the exchange loses 1 additional point. This effect stacks if emotional appeal is used multiple times during the exchange.

FLATTERY

You ingratiate yourself to your opponent, causing them to either let down their guard or to gain some other advantage. While usually deceptive and manipulative, this tactic also covers the

actions of characters who are genuinely likeable and friendly.

Associated Skills: Bluff, Culture, Diplomacy.

Interaction: You take a -2 penalty to skill checks to earn progress if the last tactic your opposition used was mockery. You gain a +2 bonus to skill checks to earn progress if the last tactic your opposition used was counter presence.

Special: If you win an exchange with flattery, reduce the number of points your opponent loses by 2 (minimum 0) and gain an edge that you can use with any skill check during the verbal duel.

LOGIC

When you use logic, you present facts, figures, and expert testimony. While logic can still be used to mislead your adversary or the audience, unlike most other tactics, it still requires a strong understanding of the subject matter to do so.

Associated Skills: Any skill that can be used to recall pertinent knowledge. For example, you could use Profession (lawyer) in a verbal duel involving the law, judicial system, or any information that a typical lawyer would know.

Interaction: You gain a +2 bonus to skill checks to earn progress when you use logic as an opener to an exchange. You take a -2 penalty to skill checks to earn progress if the last tactic your opposition used was baiting, emotional appeal, mockery, red herring, or wit.

Special: When you win an exchange with logic, you gain 1 additional edge that you can only use with logic.

MOCKERY

You use personal attacks, mudslinging, or creative insults to belittle your opponent. Mockery works best when you capitalize on your opponent's use of an unpopular tactic.

Associated Skills: Bluff, Intimidate, Profession (comedian).

Interaction: You gain a +2 bonus to skill checks to earn progress if the last tactic your opposition used was logic or wit.

Special: You gain a +2 bonus to skill checks to earn progress if the skill challenge has the audience special quality and the audience had a negative bias against the last tactic your opponent used. If you win the exchange with mockery against a tactic that the audience has a negative bias against, your opposition loses 1 additional point.

You take a -2 penalty to skill checks to earn progress if the skill challenge has the audience special quality and the audience has a positive bias towards the last tactic your opponent used.

POLITE BEFUDDLEMENT

You pretend to be unclear about your opponent's points, encouraging him to explain further, provide examples, or otherwise become distracted from his main point. When he provides a poor example or contradictory explanation to your feigned ignorance, you pounce on his error in order to invalidate his position. Polite befuddlement is most effective when countering tactics based on structure or reason.

Associated Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Profession (comedian).

Interaction: You gain a +2 bonus to skill checks to earn



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progress if the last tactic your opposition used was allegory, logic, or rhetoric.

Special: You can't use polite befuddlement as an opener. As polite befuddlement relies on an impression of poor understanding or simple thinking, audiences rarely have a positive bias toward polite befuddlement.

PRESENCE

You make a show of confidence or authority, or you simply put on airs, and an opponent's claims slide off and bounce back against him, leaving you unscathed. This tactic works to deflect baiting and mockery but is less effective against other tricks.

Associated Skills: Culture, Intimidate.

Interaction: You gain a +2 bonus to skill checks to earn progress if the last tactic your opposition used was baiting or mockery. You take a -2 penalty to skill checks to earn progress if the last tactic your opposition used was allegory, emotional appeal, or red herring.

Special: If you win an exchange with presence, you regain 1 point that you had previously lost. This cannot bring your total number of points above your starting total.

PSYCHOLOGICAL MANIPULATION

This insidious tactic is used to carefully attack an opponent, rather than an opponent's argument. You subtly question your

opponent's memory and sanity, insisting that past events are not as your opponent remembers them or trivializing your opponent's position. Psychological manipulation is most effective when the opponent lacks witnesses to draw upon for support.

Associated Skills: Bluff, Intimidate, Profession (actor).

Special: You take a -2 penalty to skill checks to earn progress if the skill challenge doesn't have the audience special quality. When you win an exchange with psychological manipulation, your opponent is thrown off balance and loses 1 edge of their choice, if they have any.

RED HERRING

You use this tactic to distract your opponent or the audience from the heart of the debate, avoiding the danger of the current exchange. While a red herring can't be used as an opener, it can be used to quickly end an exchange that is getting too dangerous to continue.

Associated Skills: Bluff, Profession (orator).

Special: You cannot use red herring to open an exchange. Whenever you use the tactic, you can choose to gain a +4 bonus to skill checks to earn progress. If you do so and your skill check succeeds, the exchange automatically ends. No characters lose any points and the next change begins as if you had won the exchange.

RHETORIC

You use versatile debating tactics, applying advantageous

rhetorical devices to squash your opponent's arguments. Most of the verbal maneuvers included in this tactic are simple and forthright linguistic devices; deceptive debating gambits are often included as part of other tactics such as baiting, emotional appeal, mockery, or red herring. Rhetoric is a multipurpose tactic that lacks some of the dangers of other tactics, but doesn't offer any significant rewards either.

Associated Skills: Culture, Diplomacy, Profession (actor), Profession (orator).

Special: Since rhetoric involves subtle word choices that most audiences don't notice consciously, it is very rare for an audience to have a negative bias toward rhetoric.

SPURIOUS ARGUMENT

You refute an argument that is similar to, but subtly different than, your opponent's actual position. This allows you to exploit the difference to make your opponent's position seem erroneous or foolish. A spurious argument is particularly useful against nebulous emotional appeals, but crumbles beneath rigid logic that identifies the tactic's false distinctions.

Associated Skills: Bluff, Profession (actor), Profession (orator).

Interaction: You gain a +2 bonus to skill checks to earn progress if the last tactic your opposition used was allegory or emotional appeal. You take a -2 penalty to skill checks to earn progress if the last tactic your opposition used was logic.

Special: You can turn a well-crafted spurious argument against your opponent later. When you win an exchange with a spurious argument, you gain 1 edge that you can use only with mockery, red herring, or wit.

WIT

You use humor or cleverness to gain an advantage over your opponent, but the tactic can backfire if your jokes fall flat.

Associated Skills: Culture, Profession (comedian).

Special: Before attempting a skill check to earn completion, you can choose to gain a +2 bonus to the check. If you do so and fail, you immediately lose 1 poin. If you fail by 5 or more, you also take a -2 penalty to skill checks to earn completion using this tactic for the rest of the duel.

VERBAL DUELIST

A verbal duelist is a character that serves as opposition during a verbal duel. Verbal duelists have their own stat block during a verbal duel that summarizes their attitudes, personality, skill bonuses, and other important information about the character. Where applicable, target NPCs should be built using Appendix 1 in *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE*, as NPCs of their CR. For more information about opposition, see page 60.

SPECIAL QUALITIES

In addition to the standard special qualities detailed on page 50, verbal duels have additional special qualities that pertain specifically to them. These special qualities are described below.

MULTIDIRECTIONAL

During a verbal duel that includes this special quality, more than two independent duelists (or teams of duelists) are actively participating in the skill challenge. Multidirectional debates follow the same rules as standard verbal duels, except when a duelist opens a debate, she chooses one duelist to be the countering duelist, and the exchange continues between the two of them. When the exchange's winner is determined or the exchange ends, the winner must then start an exchange with a different duelist.

Example: *SQ* multidirectional

SPECIFIC TACTICS

During a verbal duel that includes this special quality, participants who use the tactics included in parenthesis next to this quality take a -10 penalty to skill checks to earn progress with that tactic. In addition, if the verbal duel has an audience, they always start with a negative bias against the listed tactics.

Example: *SQ* specific tactics (rhetoric, red herring)

VERBAL DUEL STAT BLOCK FORMAT

Verbal duels are presented in the same format as general skill challenges (see page 62). Unlike other skill challenge subtypes, verbal duels have no additional entries, but instead lack several entries that general skill challenges possess, as described below.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SKILLS

Because all verbal duels have the same list of primary skills and don't allow secondary skills, verbal duel stat blocks don't have a primary skills or secondary skills entry. For reference, the skills that count as primary skills in a verbal duel are: Bluff, Culture, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Life Science, Mysticism, Physical Science, Profession, or Sense Motive.

CLEARANCE METHOD

The number of points that a participant in a verbal duel starts with is equal to half their level + their Charisma, Intelligence, and Wisdom modifiers. As a result, the verbal duel stat block doesn't have an clearance method.

LAW AND ORDER IN THE COURT CR 9

XP 6,400

Verbal duel

Goal The PCs are attempting to prove a Tozok guilty of theft, manslaughter, and other crimes. Tozok is attempting to prove himself not guilty.

SKILLS

Interval 10 minutes

Time Pressure 60 minutes (6 rounds)

CLEARANCE

Audience Medium audience of N Adults (150 attendees, +1); positive bias towards the emotional appeal and flattery tactics

Benefit The criminal is found guilty, resulting in his imprisonment and ending his reign of terror on the city



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streets. For their services, the city's governor grants the PCs a stipend worth 40,000 credits.

Penalty Tozok is found not guilty, resulting in his release. He will be looking to settle the score with the PCs soon.

VERBAL DUELIST STAT BLOCK

All verbal duelists have the following elements: Name, challenge rating, vital statistics, appearance, background, skills and saves, primary and secondary skills, biases, strengths, weaknesses, successes, benefit, penalty, and favors. These characteristics are described below and are presented in the order in which they appear on a verbal duelist stat block.

NAME

The first line of every verbal duelist is the character's name. This can also be the character's alias, if their true identity isn't known.

CHALLENGE RATING

All verbal duelists possess a Challenge Rating (CR) ranging from CR 1/3 to CR 25. The XP reward that a character earns for defeating a verbal duelist in a verbal duel is noted in the verbal duel's stat block.

VITAL STATISTICS

The first line of the verbal duelist's stat block lists their alignment, gender, age, race, and class in order. If the character doesn't have one of those entries, they can be omitted. (Note that in the case of gender, the entry should always list what the gender that the verbal duelist identifies as. If they don't identify with any gender, use "agendered" or "nonbinary" based on the individual's preferences).

APPEARANCE

The second line of the verbal duelist's stat block after the XP reward is a brief description of what the character looks like, including all information summarized in the verbal duelist's vital statistics entry, as well as their clothing and other items or articles they have on their person.

BACKGROUND

The fifth entry following the verbal duelist's XP reward describes a brief bit of the character's background, including important events in their life. This isn't necessarily intended to be information that PCs discover; instead, it helps inform the GM's roleplaying of the verbal duelist during the skill challenge.

GOALS

The sixth line following the verbal duelist's XP reward summarizes what they hope to accomplish during the skill challenge.

SKILLS

The first entry under the verbal duelist's skills section lists the character's skill bonuses that are relevant to verbal duels.

ABILITY SCORE MODIFIERS

The second line under the verbal duelist's skills section lists the

verbal duelist's ability score modifiers, which are determined using an NPC array of the character's CR.

POINTS

The first line under the clearance section notes the number of points that the verbal duelist has at the start of the verbal duel. This total should be equal to half the verbal duelist's CR + their Charisma, Intelligence, and Wisdom modifiers.

TACTICS

The second line under the clearance section notes how the NPC typically assigns skills to their tactics.

SAMPLE VERBAL DUELIST

TOZOK

CR 9

LE male vesk envoy

Appearance Several heads taller than the average human, this reptilian humanoid wears tight clothing from expensive materials that are clearly designed to accentuate his bulging muscles. Several medals from the vesk military adorn his clothing, and a shiny belt buckle resembling a vesk hand crushing a planet is prominently displayed at his waist. Even restrained, the menace he emits is palpable.

Background After joining the armed forces at the tender age of 16, Tozok revelled in the action he saw as an infantryman, relishing the look of fear his enemies held as he and his fellows gunned down wave after wave of enemy. However, Tozok's superiors quickly realized the youth's value as a marshal, for he had a gift for mustering and rallying soldiers and a good head for tactics. By the time he was 20, Tozok had been promoted to the rank of sergeant and personally led small bands of soldiers into a successful campaign on a small world now called Vesk-47, which was seeded to him after a combination of blitzkrieg warfare and skilled diplomacy laced with intimidation tactics. For his efforts, Tozok had been placed in charge of Vesk-71, a small moon orbiting the planet Ulo in the Xa-Osoro system. Here Tozok has opened diplomatic relations with the Radiant Imperium while building vesk military presence in the region.

Goals Tozok wants nothing more than to dutifully serve his emperor, and currently his orders are to continue to amass troops and supplies on Vesk-71 in preparation for an eminent invasion of the Radiant Imperium. By the time the verbal duel occurs, Tozok has been apprehended by the PCs and is standing trial. Seeking to regain his freedom and continue his plans, Tozok uses all of his cunning and skill against his adversaries.

SKILLS

Skills Culture +18, Diplomacy +23, Intimidate +23, Perception +18, Profession (soldier) +23, Sense Motive +23.

COMPLETION

Successes 11

Tactics Tozok assigns Culture to rhetoric, Diplomacy to polite befuddlement, Intimidate to psychological manipulation, and Profession (soldier) to logic.

DESIGNING SKILL CHALLENGES

While this chapter is peppered with sample skill challenges that a savvy GM can use to run a plethora of fun, innovating skill-based encounters, the truth strength off this rules system is in its ability to be easily adapted to a variety of different circumstances that could arise in your home games. In doing so, the Advanced Skill Guide is less a book of regimented encounters for GMs to choose from and more a tome dedicated to guiding GMs into creating interesting, fun encounters of their own that test the wit and guile of PCs.

This section delves into much of the math surrounding skill challenges and their construction, providing an easy, step-by-step system for building your own skill challenge in no time at all. Follow the steps described in this section will allow you to build a fun, well-balanced skill challenge.

OVERVIEW

Designing skill challenges encompasses five steps, many of which don't take very long. Each step is briefly outlined below and detailed further in its section (on the page noted in parenthesis).

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: CONCEPT

Before you start designing your skill challenge, you should have a clear concept for it. Think about what sort of role it serves in your campaign's narrative—why do the PCs have to partake in your skill challenge? What happens if they succeed? What happens if they don't? How difficult should the skill challenge be for the PCs to complete? Is your concept best realized as a general skill challenge, a chase, a contest, an influence challenge, or a verbal duel? All of this information is important to have in mind when you're designing a skill challenge.

STEP 1: TYPE AND CLEARANCE METHOD (SEE BELOW)

Determine what type of skill challenge you're building and which of the four clearance methods your skill challenge will use, based on your concept.

STEP 2: PRIMARY SKILLS (PAGE 99)

Choose which skills are primary skills for your skill challenge, meaning which skills will always be able to be used to earn progress during your skill challenge. Remember to pick a good mix of high-frequency and low-frequency skills.

STEP 3: CR (PAGE 100)

Determine what the CR of your skill challenge is. Remember to keep your skill challenge's CR within a reasonable range of your player's Average Party Level—no less than APL -1 and no more than APL +3 is usually reasonable.

STEP 4: SKILL DCs (PAGE 100)

Use Table 3-4: Skill Challenge DCs by CR to determine the skill DCs of your primary skills, based on the CR you chose for your skill challenge during the previous step. Table 3-4: Skill Challenge DCs by CR is designed to help GMs with this step.

STEP 5: DETERMINE PROGRESS (PAGE 101)

Once you have your skill's DCs figured out, you need to decide

how much progress players need to accumulate before they clear your skill challenge. Table 3-4: Clearance, Obstacles, and Thresholds by CR has a list of suggested progress values to help GMs design balanced skill challenges.

STEP 6: OTHER CONSIDERATIONS (PAGE 102)

This section is a catch-all of general advice regarding other choices and decisions that GMs need to make when designing their skill challenges.

CONSIDERATIONS BY TYPE (PAGE 102)

This section ends with a number of additional considerations for GMs looking to design contests, influence challenges, and verbal duels, focusing specifically on those types of skill challenge's unique features.

STEP 1: DETERMINE TYPE AND CLEARANCE METHOD

The most important step to building a skill challenge is to determine what type of skill challenge you want to run and what clearance method you'll use. Typically, you should pick the type of skill challenge that best describes the "feel" that you're going for. Do you want to have your PCs race their rivals to an alien superweapon? A chase is likely the best choice for that. Would you rather your PCs have to schmooze and manipulate the superweapon's location out of an oligarch? An influence challenge is better for that. Of course, if none of the types of skill challenges fit what you have in mind, you can always build a general skill challenge.

A quick summary of the different types of skill challenges is described below.

CHASE

This skill challenge type has your players racing towards or away from something. You should pick this type of skill challenge if you want a high-stakes skill challenge where your PCs are actively testing their mettle against something. For more information on chases, see page 70.

CONTEST

This type of skill challenge excels at capturing the feeling of competition, especially as it pertains to gaming and sports. You



should pick this type of skill challenge if you want your players to take part in an organized recreational activity, like baseball or chess. For more information on contests, see page 74.

INFLUENCE CHALLENGE

This skill challenge has your players stepping onto a social scene to convince others to do something important for them. This type of skill challenge is great for encounters where brute force isn't the answer, as well as for capturing moments of espionage and political subterfuge. For more information on influence challenges, see page 86.

VERBAL DUELS

This type of skill challenge models the nuances of debate, and is especially useful for courtroom scenes, spirited debates, and addresses to organizations. Use it when you want your players to have to argue for something or battle with words rather than weapons or where the PCs' ideologies clash with those of someone else. For more information on influence challenges, see page 92.

GENERAL SKILL CHALLENGES

If none of the other types of skill challenge feels appropriate for your concept, you're likely going to want to design a general skill challenge. This type of skill challenge has no unified rules restricting what you can do with it, meaning that it is well-suited for a general type of challenge for your PCs.

When you design a general skill challenge, you need to pick what sort of clearance method you'll use because unlike the other skill challenge types, general skill challenges don't require that you use a specific method. Below is a brief list of suggestions to consider when picking your general skill challenge's clearance method.

- » **Accumulation:** Use this clearance method when you want your skill challenge to feel like it's building up to something, or when you want your players to earn more progress if they've invested in being experts in a specific set of skills. Accumulation works great as a way to track progress when researching forgotten lore, working towards clearing a collapsed passage, or charging a dying starship power core.
- » **Points:** Use this accommodation method when you want your skill challenge to feel like a game, or like the PCs' performance is being evaluated. Many players will end up saying that points feel "gamey", so use that to your advantage when you choose to use this clearance method. It works great for evaluations and tests, as well as any situation where the PCs would be graded.
- » **Squares:** Use this clearance method when you want your skill challenge to feel like the PCs are moving or going somewhere. It works great for crumbling bridges, treks up a mountainside, flights through asteroid fields, and similar skill challenges where the ultimate goal is to reach some destination.
- » **Successes:** Use this clearance method when you want a fast, easy skill challenge that lacks the specialized rulesets of

REWARDING INSPIRED ROLEPLAYING

When your players are participating in a skill challenge by actively getting into character and roleplaying their actions, it's appropriate to offer them rewards for going into depth about what their character says and does to attempt to earn completion. Remember that your players don't need to be professional baseball players or master debaters in order to gain this bonus—a little roleplaying goes a long way to adding to the power and tension of the scenes that skill challenges seek to establish while making victory all the sweeter (and defeat all the more biting).

Whenever a player offers a particularly inspired or heart-felt bit of roleplaying, the GM can reward up to a +2 modifier on her skill check to earn completion. If the player's roleplaying is brilliant, the GM might instead reward some other benefit, such as an edge during a verbal duel or an automatic increase in sway level during an influence challenge, as appropriate.

other clearance methods. It works great for skill challenges where a simple binary "yes/no" result is effective, as well as those to stop something from happening like disabling an active warhead.

STEP 2: DETERMINE PRIMARY SKILLS

The second step to designing a skill challenge is to pick your skill challenge's primary skills. All skill challenges have primary skills—a list of skills that participants can always use to earn progress during the skill challenge. When you start to compile your list of primary skills, make a list of skills that feel appropriate to whatever tasks you're asking the PCs to accomplish. Soaring through an asteroid field in a starship? Piloting is a good choice. Climbing a mountain? Athletics is a smart pick. Hacking into a computer mainframe? Of course you're going to want Computers! Make sure to keep your skill challenge's type and the feel you want for it in mind when you're designing your skill challenge. For example, physical skills like Acrobatics and Athletics make sense for chases, while social skills like Diplomacy and Bluff make sense for influence challenges. Don't forget that verbal duels specifically come with their primary skills prechosen—you don't need to pick anything.

As a general rule, you're going to want to make sure that you pick a good mix of common and uncommon skills for your skill challenge's primary skills. A common skill is a skill that PCs invest their skill ranks into with high frequency, while an uncommon skill is one they invest their skill ranks into with low frequency. You want some common skills so you can be sure that the PCs will be able to try and attempt checks during your skill challenge, but you also want some low-frequency skills so you can reward PCs who bothered to invest their skill ranks in otherwise unconventional purchases. Generally speaking, you want at least one high-frequency skill for every two low-frequency skills you use in your skill challenges.

Which skills are considered high-frequency skills and

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TABLE 3-4: SKILL CHALLENGE DCs BY CR

Base CR	Easy	Average	Challenging	Difficult	Very Difficult
1 or lower	6	11	16	21	26
2	8	13	18	23	28
3	9	14	19	24	29
4	11	16	21	26	31
5	12	17	22	27	32
6	14	19	24	29	34
7	15	20	25	30	35
8	17	22	27	32	37
9	18	23	28	33	38
10	20	25	30	35	40
11	21	26	31	36	41
12	23	28	33	38	43
13	24	29	34	39	44
14	26	31	36	41	46
15	27	32	37	42	47
16	29	34	39	44	49
17	30	35	40	45	50
18	32	37	42	47	52
19	33	38	43	48	53
20	35	40	45	50	55
21	36	41	46	51	56
22	38	43	48	53	58
23	39	44	49	54	59
24	41	46	51	56	61
25	42	47	52	57	62
26	44	49	54	59	64
27	45	50	55	60	65
28	47	52	57	62	67
29	48	53	58	63	68
30	50	55	60	65	70

which are low-frequency skills largely depends on the type of encounters you run as a GM and what types of skills your players value for their characters. However, the following list is a good place to start for most groups when considering which skills to pick for your skill challenge.

- » **High-Frequency:** Acrobatics, Bluff, Computers, Diplomacy, Engineering, Intimidate, Perception, Piloting, Stealth.
- » **Low-Frequency:** Athletics, Culture, Disguise, Life Science, Medicine, Mysticism, Physical Science, Profession, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand.

STEP 3: DETERMINE CR

After you've chosen the skill challenge's type and primary skills, you're ready to determine its CR. If your party's Average Party Level (APL) is equal to a skill challenge's CR, then the math is designed so that your players need to succeed at roughly 3 out of every 4 skill checks in order to succeed at the skill check, so it's usually a good idea to keep a skill challenge's CR around the party's APL. If you want to throw a harder skill challenge at your party, mathematically most groups can handle skill

challenges with a CR up to their party's APL + 3, but you're going to want to make sure that the skill challenge tests them in their best skills if they're going to stand a reasonable chance at clearing the skill challenge.

If you're designing a skill challenge that has opposition (like a chase or a contest), a target NPC (like an influence challenge), or a verbal duelist (like a verbal duel), you're going to want to keep their CR within this same range as well; the harder the opposition, the more difficult the skill challenge. Remember that unlike combat encounters, where NPCs inherently have a higher attack bonus and a lower Armor Class, most NPCs have high skill bonuses in several skills, so having opposition that that is more than 3 CR higher than the PC's APL quickly poses an insurmountable task for them.

STEP 4: PICK YOUR SKILLS' DCs

Choosing your skill challenge's CR allows you to determine the skill check DCs for your skill challenge's primary skills. When doing so, you should refer to the entry on Table 3-4: Skill Challenge DCs by CR and choose the DC associated with



TABLE 3-5: CLEARANCE, OBSTACLES, AND THRESHOLDS BY CR

CR	Accumulation	Squares	Successes	Obstacles & Thresholds
1 or lower	20	36	6	2
2	22	42	7	2
3	24	42	7	3
4	26	48	8	3
5	28	48	8	3
6	30	54	9	4
7	32	54	9	4
8	34	60	10	4
9	36	60	10	5
10	38	66	11	5
11	40	66	11	5
12	42	72	12	6
13	44	72	12	6
14	46	78	13	6
15	48	78	13	7
16	50	84	14	7
17	52	84	14	7
18	54	90	15	8
19	56	90	15	8
20	58	96	16	8
21	60	96	16	9
22	62	102	17	9
23	64	102	17	9
24	66	108	18	10
25	68	108	18	10
26	70	114	19	10
27	72	114	19	11
28	74	120	20	11
29	76	120	20	11
30	78	126	21	12

how difficult you want the skill check DC to be, based on its CR. For example, if you want a CR 9 skill challenge to have a difficult Acrobatics check, you'd refer to the CR 9 row and use the indicated DC for a difficult skill check (DC 33).

When you're choosing how difficult you want your skill DCs to be, keep in mind that CR is the primary driving force behind a skill challenge's difficulty, not the difficulty of the skill checks. The following are several helpful guidelines for determining skill check DCs for your skill challenges. These rules aren't set in stone and can be bent as needed, but the closer a skill challenge is to these guidelines, the fairer it will feel when run at the table.

- » 1 in every 6 skills should have an easy DC, and only if they're also low-frequency skills, as detailed under Step 2.
- » 1 in every 3 skills should have an average DC. If you have 6 or more skills, replace one average skill DC with an easy DC.
- » 1 in every 3 skills should have a challenging DC.
- » 1 in every 3 skills should have a difficult DC.
- » No primary skills should have a very difficult DC unless you're planning on giving your skill challenge the specific skills special quality.

STEP 5: DETERMINE PROGRESS

After you've chosen your primary skill DCs, you need to go and decide how much progress your participants need to accumulate in order to clear the skill challenge. Table 3-5: Clearance, Obstacles, and Thresholds by CR lists the minimum amount of accumulation, progress, or squares that participants should need to accumulate during a skill challenge of the indicated CR. These values are intended for a party of four PCs, so if you have additional PCs at the table and want your skill challenges to be longer, consider increasing the amount of progress, squares, or successes your party needs to accumulate to clear the skill challenge by +30% for every additional PC beyond 4 at the table. Likewise, if you have fewer than 4 PCs, you can reduce the amount of clearance needed by -30% per PC below 4.

Note that if your skill challenge has the limited progress special quality (see page 54), you might want to consider taking the values from Table 3-5 and dividing them by 3, then using the result as the amount of progress participants need to accumulate. While this isn't required when designing skill

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challenges with this special quality, using the unmodified values from Table 3-5 effectively requires each individual participant to earn four players' worth of progress during a single skill challenge. This can be a great idea for a skill challenge that you intend to take a while or that's important to your plot, but it can also stagnate if you don't include plenty of twists and turns along the way to keep the skill challenge interesting.

STEP 6: OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Once you've set the skill DCs of your primary skills, you're almost done! Now you just need to add the finishing touches, like choosing your skill challenge's special qualities, designing any NPCs that are used during the skill challenge, and designing elements like thresholds, obstacles, contest rules, and the like. Several important considerations to make during your skill challenge are described on the following pages.

DETERMINING SPECIAL QUALITIES

One of the most important considerations that you need to make for your skill challenge is whether or not it has any special qualities. Take some time flipping through the list starting on page 50 and consider whether the special rules described by each quality invoke any of the feelings you want to have during your skill challenge. There's no minimum or maximum to the number of special qualities you can apply to your skill challenge—they exist only to add the feeling and flavor you want to your skill challenge.

That being said, exercise some caution when you're picking special qualities, as combinations of certain special qualities can quickly result in a monotonous, nearly impossible to complete skill challenge. For example, if you give a skill challenge the specific skills special quality, you might want to hold off on also giving it the individual completion special quality unless you're absolutely sure that every member of your party has a way to participate in the skill challenge. After all, demanding that the entire party to attempt Survival checks using the specific skills special quality while also forcing the PCs to track their clearance separately from one another using the specific skills special quality is a quick way to make sure that your players loathe your encounter and potentially skill challenges in general.

DETERMINE OBSTACLES AND THRESHOLDS

If your skill challenge uses squares as its clearance method, you need to include obstacles in your skill challenge. Since advancing squares doesn't require a skill check, obstacles are the primary way you challenge your PCs. Obstacles are detailed in-depth on page 56, and Table 3-5: Clearance, Obstacles, and Thresholds by CR lists the minimum number of obstacles you should have in your skill challenge based on its CR.

When designing obstacles, it's good practice to remember that rolling more than two skill checks per round during a single skill challenge often feels cumbersome to both the players and the GMs, so it's advisable to make sure you don't have more than two skill checks per PC. For example, you don't

want to make a PC roll an Acrobatics check to keep balance, a Perception check to look for danger, and a Computers check to hack a computer all during the same turn—this starts to push against most PCs' suspension of disbelief regarding how many things they reasonably expect their character to be able to do during a single turn. Using the limited progress special quality, it's possible to throw multiple, different skill checks at your players each round and expect each player to solve a different problem, however. For example, if you tell your PCs that they need to collectively succeed at a Piloting check to pilot a starship and a Computers check to navigate through an asteroid field successfully and then tell them only one participant is able to attempt each check at a time, your players will likely buy into that scenario because it matches their expectations for division of labor.

Thresholds serve a similar purpose during an accumulation skill challenge, except where obstacles are the "meat and potatoes" of square-based skill challenges, thresholds are more like the frosting on the accumulation challenge cake. Thresholds are used primarily as a way to convey to the PCs how much progress they've accumulated thus far, as well as to give them an idea of how much further they need to go to clear the skill challenge. Use Table 3-5 to determine a good minimum number of Thresholds for your skill challenge to include, but feel free to include more if you believe the additional attention to deal will improve immersion for your PCs. If you choose to tie events to your thresholds, however, don't include more events than the number of thresholds identified on Table 3-5; including too many events will bog your skill challenge down at the expense of the feeling of advancement and progression that defines accumulation skill challenges.

DETERMINE THE OPPOSITION

If you're playing in a skill challenge that includes opposition (including a verbal duelist in a verbal duel), you'll want to design that character as part of Step 5 in the skill challenge creation process. Generally, creating opposition is the same as creating an NPC using Appendix 1 in *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE*, except the skill challenge's CR is what determines the CR of your opposition. Remember that if your opposition includes multiple characters, their combined CR should not exceed the skill challenge's CR. More information regarding the types of considerations you should make when designing opposition can be found in the Opposition section on page 60.

DESIGNING A CONTEST

There are a number of special considerations that you need to make if you're designing a contest as your skill challenge. Unlike other types of skill challenges, many of the steps regarding their creation don't follow the standard rules. For example, contests don't require that you pick the contest's skill DCs and they require plenty of in-depth rules designed to create the illusion of playing a game or sport without actually bogging down the PCs with the specifics of those activities.



As a result, designing a new contest is more about evoking the feel of a particular game or sport rather than picking skill DCs off of a table or assigning special qualities to a stat block.

The most important consideration when creating a new skill challenge is, “Does this feel like my players are participating in the game or sport described by the contest without having to actually be masters of that game or sport?” This is challenging to codify, as it requires the ability to distill a given activity to its essential components and translate that activity to the game’s quintessential medium—the d20. When considering how to best capture the “feel” of a contest by distilling it down to its most essential components, it is best to consider the dynamics of the game or sport itself—if you were watching real-life players participating in that activity, what would you see? What would be moving, who would be participating, what does the playing space look like, and how does it change as conditions within the contest grow and evolve? A contest’s mechanics should generally reflect these emotions and observations. For example, in the baseball skill challenge, the game starts out slow, with the pitcher determining the DC that the batter must meet in order to hit the ball, giving the sense of a pitcher throwing a ball to a batter over and over again, trying to trick him into striking out. But once the batter hits the ball, the contest erupts into a frenzy as players in the outfield try to tag out the hitter before they make it home. These considerations are what make contests into fun, memorable experiences.

When you’re designing a contest, consider whether or not your design is stronger for having changed the name of the contest from its real-world equivalent to something made up. Keeping the name the same can sometimes draw in PCs who are passionate about the sport or activity that the skill challenge is based around, such as a baseball player getting passionate about baseball. But sometimes that passion can get in the way of a contest’s fun, especially when a player’s technical knowledge of a contest clashes with the abstraction necessary to make the contest fun and engaging. For example, a baseball player might get frustrated that bad pitches don’t allow a batter to walk to 1st base in the baseball skill challenge. In such cases, renaming a contest to something evocatively similar but different enough to help such players separate the fictional game from the real game might be a useful tool in your toolbox. For example, calling baseball “diamond ball” and describing how players are allowed to use zero-G shoes to play the game might be enough of a science fantasy twist on the sport to help some players disassociate the contest with baseball enough that its lack of technical detail doesn’t bother them nearly as much.

WHEN TO USE A CONTEST?

As a GM, one of the more difficult decisions that you have to make when designing a contest is how often you’ll be using that contest. Are the players professional vidgamers who require rules for vidgame tournaments because you’ll be having them participate in those types of skill challenges frequently, or are the PCs participating in a one-off encounter because they need

to win a vidgame tournament in order to get close to someone they suspect is harming the talent in some way?

Generally speaking, the more “regular” the occurrence is, the more emphasis you’ll want to put on the important contests. For example, if the PCs are professional vidgamers, don’t make them play all 32 games in a single tournament as contests—that’s too much of the same content for your players, and it’s too much work for you as the GM to design all those opposition NPCs. Instead, try using a simple successes-based skill general skill challenge for lower-skill vidgamers, while saving the actual contests for the best of the best. In terms of sports, use a quick general skill challenge for placement games and save the actual contests for the semi-finals and finals.

If the contest happens infrequently, however, it’s probably okay to carry out the full contest each time it comes up. For example, if the PCs are only playing one baseball game every few levels, it’s fine to make them play a full baseball game if that sport is important to your game. Ultimately, the major consideration you want to make is, “How often in a relatively short period of time am I making the PCs play this skill challenge?” and stick to abridged contests for all but the most important matches if that answer is any more than one contest per character level.

DESIGNING INFLUENCE CHALLENGES

Influence challenges essentially run like standard progress- or success-based skill challenges, and as a result designing an influence challenge is similar to designing a standard skill challenge. When designing an influence challenge, you follow the same steps and guidelines as you would when designing a progress- or success-based standard skill challenge with several exceptions: you must design the target NPCs that will be present in the influence challenge and any events that will occur during the influence challenge, as well as how your target NPCs will react to them.

DETERMINE EVENTS

Events make your influence challenge feel alive and vibrant, though they aren’t required. These events can be festivities that have been planned in advance, or scripted encounters or events that happen during the course of the influence challenge. Whatever the case may be, forcing the PCs to adapt to ever-changing circumstances and complications makes for a more interesting and exciting event.

When choosing events that occur during an influence challenge, it can be helpful to design your target NPCs and opposition first, as well as define the setting of your skill challenge. Most events can be flavored to fit anywhere and many PCs enjoy a good surprise, but events are often more satisfying when they are a predictable surprise. In other words, events work best when the PCs don’t expect them, but they aren’t so random that they couldn’t have potentially predicted their occurrence. Furthermore, events should be driven by the NPCs that the PCs are interacting with (or who are capable of being interacted with). While it is perfectly acceptable for a dancing

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event to occur at the behest of some random party attendant, the start of an event is better used to draw attention to an NPC that the PCs have not engaged with yet, or to provide further information about an NPC that the PCs might have already met. For instance, the PCs might be able to figure out that they can sway a particular target NPC with Profession (dancer) if they see her ushering in a dancing phase at a gala even if they haven't successfully discovered that about her with a successful discovery check. Such occurrences encourage and ultimately reward your players for paying attention to the things that the target NPCs are saying and doing during the skill challenge.

The circumstances imposed by an event should be able to benefit or hinder the PCs, but never by so much that they make the influence challenge trivial or impossible while the event is happening. Offering the PCs a +2 bonus or a -2 penalty based upon conditions that arise during the event and how they react to them is appropriate. Likewise, events should last long enough that all players have some time to try and take advantage of them, but they shouldn't last so long that the players become comfortable with their presence. Allowing an event to last three to five rounds is often a fair range of time for the PCs to try and gain their bearings and take advantage of the situation.

DETERMINE TARGET NPCs

Target NPCs are essential to influence challenges, and designing them is as important as building the skill challenge stat block for a standard skill challenge. The number of target NPCs in an influence challenge varies, but it should correlate to the amount of time that your PCs have to complete the influence challenge. For instance, don't expect your PCs to fully sway one target NPC in two rounds, let alone a contingent of four or five target NPCs!

When you create a target NPC, the character's skills and saves should be generated in the same manner as a member of the opposition. Even if you intend for the NPC to be relatively low CR, such skill DCs also reflect circumstantial difficulty of engaging the NPC in the moment where they often have the upper hand. You should aim for creating a variety of unique individuals with interesting personality traits, appearances, and other quirks that help your PCs keep each target distinct in their minds. Including fun roleplaying quirks and ideas is also helpful, because part of the fun of influence challenges is getting to place the PCs into a situation where interacting with others is the best way to succeed.

Which choosing what skills your target NPCs respond best to, make sure to pick a variety of skills that include several different high-frequency and low-frequency skills. Provide plenty of opportunities for the target NPCs to respond well to tactics that the PCs might not have expected, and make sure that the "safe" options are somewhat challenging. For example, while Diplomacy is a great skill to use to try and win over a person's favor for obvious reasons, most target NPCs are going to expect a diplomatic approach, so they're somewhat steeled against it. Diplomacy often has a challenging or even difficult DC as a result, simply because it's common. On the

other hand, low-frequency skills often represent a mutual interest that a target NPC isn't expecting to be approached with, and connections between participants and the target NPC bloom quickly when the mutual interest is discovered. For example, a target NPC who is passionate about dance will likely have a Profession (dancer) DC that's average, possibly even easy, if they're extremely interested in dance.

DESIGNING VERBAL DUELS

Verbal duels essentially run like standard success-based skill challenges, but designing them is fundamentally different from designing other skill challenges. Unlike standard skill challenges, a verbal duel's difficulty is derived entirely from the interaction between the two participants—there is no need to calculate Difficulty Classes, choose primary or secondary skills, or even list what skills can and cannot be used in the verbal duel. Even with the presence or absence of an audience and over a half-dozen special qualities for GMs to choose from, nearly all verbal duels play similarly from duel to duel, making them one of the most simple skill challenges to build and run.

When designing a verbal duel, you begin by designing the opposition—the duelist or duelists who will actively duel against the PCs. Once the duelist or duelists have been designed, you design the scene where the verbal duel will take place by determining whether it will have an audience and the like. Once this is done, the verbal duel is ready for play.

DESIGNING VERBAL DUELISTS

Designing a verbal duelist is exactly the same as designing the opposition for any other skill challenge, with the exception that verbal duels always have the same list of primary skills: Bluff, Culture, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Life Science, Mysticism, Physical Science, Profession, or Sense Motive. This can be difficult considering how few good and master skills that most NPCs get compared to their PC counterparts, but if the PCs are engaging a verbal duelist in a verbal duel, chances are that the individual is trained and experienced in the arts of wordplay.

If you absolutely need to, feel free to give your NPC additional good skills in order to round out their list of tactics, but as a general rule an NPC with the combatant or spellcaster array shouldn't have more than 5 tactics, while an NPC with the expert array shouldn't have more than 8.

DESIGNING THE SKILL CHALLENGE

Once you have designed the NPCs that will participate in the verbal duel, the next step is to determine how the verbal duel will play out. Compared to other skill challenges, verbal duels are easy to design because most of the work put into a verbal duel is aesthetics—you must determine where the verbal duel will take place, what topic will be debated, and how much time the verbal duel takes.

Perhaps the most important part of designing a verbal duel is deciding whether or not an audience is present. The audience gives PCs who aren't participating in a verbal duel something to do—they can actively attempt to seed biases into the audience to



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grant benefits to their ally. If having an audience isn't appropriate for a verbal duel, consider giving the verbal duel the team special quality instead so multiple characters can participate. In some situations, it might be appropriate for a single PC to have a one-on-one showdown with an NPC in a verbal duel, perhaps against a personal rival or a major antagonist, but such scenes should always be kept to the minimum to avoid allowing one character to hog the spotlight for too long.

When considering which biases to give an audience at the start of a verbal duel (if any), it helps to keep in mind the political climate surrounding the duel in mind, as well as the topic being debated. For instance, if the topic being debated is one that the audience has a strong emotional connection to, they will likely have a bias for the emotional appeal tactic. Of course, they just as likely be swayed by logic involving the nature of coal mining, or challenges against the PC's credibility that their employer makes. Ultimately, GMs are encouraged to pick no more than three biases for their audience, as the primary purpose of the audience is to give PCs something to do, and having too many innate biases in the audience diminishes how effectively the PCs are able to interact with that audience.

COMBINING SKILL CHALLENGES

Just as you can combine multiple monsters together to create a larger, multifaceted combat encounter, you can combine multiple skill challenges together into a large noncombat encounter. When combining two or more skill challenges together, use the CR Equivalencies table in Chapter 11 of the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK* to determine the final CR of the encounter, treating each skill challenge as if it were a separate creature for this purpose. When combining skill challenges together, you can run each skill challenge concurrently or in a chain. When doing so, take the following considerations into account.

CONCURRENT SKILL CHALLENGES

It's important to decide whether your concurrent skill challenges happening at the same rate? This decision lends a very different feel of urgency to both encounters: for example, having a dancing competition (a contest) during a fancy party (an influence challenge) could turn the former into a way to sway target NPCs during the latter. On the other hand, attempt a bank heist (a general skill challenge) while a party member distracts the chief of staff with a commotion (a verbal duel) makes both skill challenges feel as if they're of equal importance. In both cases, one skill challenge is usually superseded by the other, as running two skill challenges at precisely the same time often feels unwieldy for the GM and confusing for players.

SKILL CHALLENGES DURING COMBAT

You can run a skill challenge as part of a combat encounter if you want to. To do so, you simply need to make sure that the skill challenge has an interval of 6 seconds (the same amount of game world time represented by a single round of combat). When you're running a skill challenge and a combat encounter

concurrently, it's important to make sure that the characters are attempting to meet some sort of skill-based goal, and that the goal is something that could reasonably be done during the combat round. For example, trying to run an influence challenge where the PCs are trying to impress the president of Okami is going to feel awkward if they're also trying to fight off robots while talking to the president. Such a situation screams conflict of interest, both in terms of the PCs' actions and the president's expectation that they deal with him while his life is in danger.

Instead, try to pick combat and skill challenge situations where one supports the other. For example, the PCs could be participating in a dancing competition where the dance is also a nonlethal fight against trained doshoko dancers, meaning that the PCs are expected to incorporate dance routines into their attacks. Another example could be a chase encounter where the PCs have to pin down a fleeing criminal while fending off their robotic drones.

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

When you're designing skill challenges that you intend to be run simultaneously with other skill challenges or with combats, it's important to remember to keep your design simple. If you expect your PCs to partake in complex tactical maneuverings while also using the highly technical skill challenge system, your players are probably going to want to throw the book at you. Asking too much of your players (and yourself) will take an otherwise brilliant encounter and make everyone loathe it, so keep it simple and more importantly, fun for everyone!





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CHARACTER OPTIONS



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Chosuy didn't hesitate. He tucked down his head like he'd done hundreds of times before and barrelled at one of the green men, ramming him hard in the chest. Before his enemy could regain his breath, muscle memory bid him to draw his pistol and fire, hitting the kithian square in the chest. His eyes bulged as his lungs emptied, eyes glazing over.

"Brother!" the kithian forcing Ess down to the ground exclaimed as he watched his fellow collapse. "I ... I believe these trespassers aim to kill us!"

"What was your first hint?" Ess snarled. As her opponent faltered, she quickly sprang into action, wrapping her legs around his head. "Was it the kid shouting, 'I'll kill you sonsa dirtbags' or my girlfriend's shriek?"

"It's not a shriek, it's a centuries-old Albanzian battlecry!" Nuvanni protested. She would have to give her mate another lecture on her people's traditional customs after she defeated her adversary. Again.

COMBAT MANEUVERS

Combat isn't simply strikes and blows—it is a delicate, skillful dance that requires concentration and precision. Many tactical movements and actions require not the trained eye of martial arts, but honed skill.

This section provides an alternate ruleset for combat maneuvers that replaces the combat maneuvers described in Chapter 8 of the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*, as well as the demoralize skill task of Intimidate, the feint skill task of Bluff, and the Antagonize feat. Rules for using this updated subsystem with *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE*'s NPC creation rules are also provided, as is a set of rules designed to allow you to use aspects of these new combat maneuver rules with the classic “attack roll versus KAC + 8” rules found in the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*.

MANEUVER DEFENSE

Your Maneuver Defense (MD) represents how hard it is for opponents to affect you with a combat maneuver. Your Maneuver Defense (MD) is the minimum skill check result that an opponent needs to succeed on a combat maneuver attempt and affect you with the combat maneuver. Maneuver Defense is divided into two categories: Mental Maneuver Defense (MMD) and Physical Maneuver Defense (PMD). Any reference to Maneuver Defense, including bonuses and penalties, applies to both MMD and PMD unless otherwise specified.

Your MMD and PMD are primarily determined by your base attack bonus plus your Strength modifier or Charisma modifier. Calculate your MMD and PMD using the following formula: $10 + \text{your level} + \text{half your base attack bonus} + \text{your Charisma modifier}$ (for your MMD) or your Strength modifier (for your PMD).

MENTAL MANEUVER DEFENSE

Your Mental Maneuver Defense (MMD) represents the defenses you have against combat maneuver attempts that influence or manipulate your mind or emotions. The results of combat maneuvers associated with Charisma-, Intelligence-, or Wisdom-based skills are typically compared to your Mental Maneuver Defense to determine if the combat maneuver succeeds.

PHYSICAL MANEUVER DEFENSE

Your Physical Maneuver Defense (PMD) represents the defenses you have against combat maneuver attempts that act upon your body. The results of combat maneuvers associated with Dexterity- or Strength-based skills are typically compared to your Physical Maneuver Defense to determine if your combat maneuver succeeds. However, skill checks attempted to perform a dirty trick are always compared to your Physical Maneuver Defense, regardless of what ability skill is associated with the skill used to attempt the maneuver.

COMBAT MANEUVER DESCRIPTIONS

The following combat maneuvers are listed alphabetically and include the following standardized features.

Name and Description: Following the name of each combat maneuver is a short description of what you can expect to accomplish with that maneuver if successful.

Action: This entry notes the action needed to perform the combat maneuver. If full attack is noted in a combat maneuver's action, you can use that combat maneuver in place of making one attack during the full attack. During a full attack, you take the same penalty to skill skills made to perform a combat maneuver that you would to an attack (–4 normally, or –6 if using the soldier's onslaught class feature or a similar ability). You can replace multiple attacks during a full attack with combat maneuver attempts.

Effect: This entry describes the rules for using a combat maneuver and what happens when you succeed. Unless noted otherwise, the target of your combat maneuver must be within your reach.

ANTAGONIZE

You use biting words and sneering gestures to incite an opponent into focusing their attention on you.

Action: 1 move action.

Associated Skill: Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, or Survival.

Effect: You choose Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, or Survival. Attempt a skill check with the chosen skill against your opponent's Mental Maneuver Defense and describe how you're using the chosen skill to antagonize the target. You can target any opponent within 30 feet with this combat maneuver. If you succeed, your opponent gains the antagonized condition (see page 112) for 1 round.

If your skill check's result is 5 or more higher than your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense, increase the duration of the antagonized condition by 1 round for every 5 that your result exceeds your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense by (1 round if 5 higher, 2 rounds if 10 higher, and so on).

Effect Descriptors: All antagonize attempts are sense-dependent (hearing, vision, or both), and the GM assigns additional descriptors to your attempt based upon your description. Emotion and language-dependent are common choices, but the GM should ultimately pick whatever descriptors are best suited to what your character does.

BULL RUSH

You rush into your opponent, throwing yourself at them in an attempt to push them back.



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Action: 1 full action.

Associated Skill: Athletics.

Effect: You move up to your speed in a straight line, as if you were running. If your movement would pass into the space of an opponent who is the same size as you or smaller and you still have movement remaining, you attempt an Athletics check against that opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense. If you succeed, you move into that opponent's space and your opponent moves 5 feet away from you in a straight line, so its space is still touching the same side of your space.

If your Athletics check's result is 5 or more higher than your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense, you continue your movement into your opponent's new space and your opponent moves an additional 5 feet away from you in a straight line, its space is still touching the same side of your space (5 feet of additional push if 5 higher, 10 feet if 10 higher, and so on). You don't have to continue your movement if you don't want to, and additional movement made in this manner cannot allow you to exceed your speed in total movement using this combat maneuver.

CRUSH

You use your body's strength and girth in an attempt to crush a smaller foe beneath you.

Action: 1 standard action.

Associated Skill: Athletics.

Effect: You choose one opponent that is one or more size categories smaller than you and attempt an Athletics check against that opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense. If you succeed, you deal damage to that opponent as if you had hit them with an unarmed strike (including all bonuses you would normally add to such an attack, like your Strength modifier and Weapon Specialization bonus). A crush combat maneuver counts as an attack that targets an area for the purpose of the swarm defenses universal creature rule.

If your Athletics check's result is 1 or more higher than your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense, add the difference between your check's result and your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense to the total damage that you deal with your crush combat maneuver.

DEMORALIZE

You can rattle your opponents with jaunts, jeers, and biting remarks, hindering their performance with fear.

Action: 1 standard action.

Associated Skill: Athletics or Intimidate.

Effect: You attempt an Athletics or Intimidate check against your opponent's Mental Maneuver Defense. You can target

any opponent within 30 feet with this combat maneuver. If you succeed, your opponent is shaken for 1 round.

If your skill check's result is 5 or more higher than your opponent's Mental Maneuver Defense, increase the duration of the shaken condition by 1 round for every 5 that your result exceeds your opponent's Mental Maneuver Defense by (1 round if 5 higher, 2 rounds if 10 higher, and so on).

DIRTY TRICK

You can prank your opponent, temporarily inflicting a debilitating effect upon them.

Action: 1 standard action.

Associated Skill: Any; see effect.

Effect: You choose a skill and one of the following conditions: blinded, deafened, entangled, off-target, or sickened. Attempt a skill check with the chosen skill against your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense and describe how you're using the chosen skill to inflict the chosen condition onto the target. If you succeed, your opponent gains the chosen condition for 1 round.

If your skill check's result is 5 or more higher than your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense, increase the duration of the chosen condition by 1 round for every 5 that your result exceeds your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense by (1 round if 5 higher, 2 rounds if 10 higher, and so on).

Removing the Condition: Your opponent can remove any condition that you've inflicted onto it with the dirty trick combat maneuver using 1 standard action.

DISARM

You can knock items and weapons out of your opponent's hands, forcing such items to fall to their feet.

Action: 1 standard action.

Associated Skill: Athletics or Sleight of Hand.

Effect: You attempt an Athletics or Sleight of Hand check against your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense. If you succeed, your opponent drops one item of your choice that they're holding in one or more of their hands into their space.

If your skill check's result is 5 or more higher than your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense, the dropped item falls into a space up to 5 feet away from your opponent for every 5 that your result exceeds your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense by in a direction of your choice (5 feet if 5 higher, 10 feet if 10 higher, and so on).

FEINT

You distract your opponents, exposing a weakness in their defenses that you can exploit.

Action: 1 move action.

Associated Skill: Bluff.

Effect: You attempt a Bluff check against your opponent's Mental Maneuver Defense. You can target any opponent within 30 feet with this combat maneuver. If you succeed, your opponent is flat-footed against the next attack that you make against it before the end of your next turn.

If your Bluff check's result is 5 or more higher than your opponent's Mental Maneuver Defense, increase the number of attacks that your opponent is flat-footed against by 1 for every 5 that your result exceeds your opponent's Mental Maneuver Defense by (1 additional attack if 5 higher, 2 additional attacks if 10 higher, and so on).

GRAPPLE

You latch onto your opponent and attempt to restrain them, using your body to make their movements difficult.

Action: 1 standard action.

Associated Skill: Athletics.

Effect: You attempt an Athletics check against your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense. If you have no free hands (a hand holding or wielding nothing) and do not possess the grab ability, your grapple attempt automatically fails. If you only have one free hand, you take a -4 penalty to your Athletics check to grapple. If you succeed, your opponent gains the grappled condition until the end of your next turn. If your opponent isn't adjacent to you when your check succeeds, they move into an adjacent open space (if no space is available, your grapple automatically fails). You can only grapple one opponent at a time.

If your skill check's result is 5 or more higher than your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense, you choose one of the following actions for every 5 that your result exceeds your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense by and perform it on your target as part of the grapple attempt (1 action if 5 higher, 2 actions if





10 higher, and so on). You can choose the same action multiple times.

- » **Damage:** You deal damage to the grappled opponent as if you had successfully hit them with your unarmed strike, a natural attack, or an attack made with armor spikes or a light or one-handed weapon you're wielding. This damage can be lethal or nonlethal (your choice).
- » **Move:** You move yourself and the grappled opponent up to half your speed. At the end of your movement, you can place the opponent into any square adjacent to you. If you attempt to place your foe into a space that is inherently hazardous to it, such as in a wall of fire or over a pit, the target receives a free attempt to escape your grapple with a +4 circumstance bonus (see escaping a grapple, below).
- » **Restrain:** Your opponent gains the pinned condition until the end of your next turn. Despite pinning your opponent, you still only have the grappled condition, but are treated as if you had a Dexterity modifier of -5. If your opponent is already pinned, you can attempt to restrain them instead by tying them up with cable or rope or using manacles or similar devices.

Escaping a Grapple: If you are being grappled or pinned, you can use the grapple combat maneuver to escape as a standard action, attempting a skill check against your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense. You can use Acrobatics to escape a grapple as if it were associated with this combat maneuver. If you use Acrobatics, a success frees you from the grapple or pin and you no longer have the grappled or pinned condition. If you use Athletics, a success allows you to start grappling your opponent in addition to freeing you from the grapple (see above).

Renewing or Releasing a Grapple: You can release a grapple whenever you want, even if it isn't your turn. Releasing a grapple removes the grappled or pinned condition from you and your opponent. You cannot release a grapple that you didn't start. Renewing a grapple simply refers to attempting a grapple combat maneuver against a foe that you successfully grappled during a previous turn. You gain a +5 circumstance bonus to skill checks made to renew a grapple.

REPOSITION

You forcibly move your opponent into a position that is more advantageous to you.

Action: 1 standard action.

Associated Skill: Acrobatics or Athletics.

Effect: You attempt an Acrobatics or Athletics check against your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense. If you succeed, your opponent moves 5 feet into a new space that is within your reach. Alternatively, you can move an adjacent opponent into your square and move yourself 5 feet away from your opponent in a straight line, so your space is still touching the same side of your opponent's space. You cannot use reposition to move an opponent into a square that is obviously harmful to it, such as moving a human into a pool of magma or an electric storm.

If your skill check's result is 5 or more higher than your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense, you can move your opponent 5 additional feet in either of the ways described above (5 feet of additional movement if 5 higher, 10 feet if 10 higher, and so on). You don't have to continue your movement if you don't want to.

SCALE

You can scale up massive enemies, providing you with an advantageous position from which to strike.

Action: 1 move action.

Associated Skill: Athletics.

Effect: Choose an adjacent opponent that is at least one size category larger than you. You make an Athletics check against your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense. If you succeed, you enter your opponent's space and move 5 feet up their body as if you had used a move action to climb a wall with a height equal to the opponent's space (5 feet for Small and Medium creatures, 10 feet for Large creatures, 15 feet for Huge creatures, 20 feet for Gargantuan creatures, or 30 feet for Colossal creatures). If you are at least halfway to the top of the creature, your opponent gains the flat-footed condition against your attacks and the off-target condition when attacking you.

If your opponent moves while you're scaling them, you can choose to move with them or stay in your space, effectively letting go of your opponent. Your opponent can attempt to shake you off as a standard action, requiring you to attempt a new Athletics check or fall off. If you let go of an opponent or are shaken off, you take falling damage based on the distance you fall.

If your Athletics check's result is 5 or more higher than your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense, you can scale an additional 5 feet up your opponent for every 5 that your result exceeds your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense by (additional feet if 5 higher, 10 feet if 10 higher, and so on). You cannot scale a greater distance than you could climb (half your speed or your climb speed).

STEAL

You attempt to swipe an item off of your opponent's person, taking what you want from them.

Action: 1 standard action.

Associated Skill: Sleight of Hand.

Effect: You attempt a Sleight of Hand check against your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense. If you have no free hands (a hand holding or wielding nothing), your steal attempt automatically fails. If you succeed, you choose one item weighing 1 bulk or less that is loosely attached to your opponent's body but not held nor hidden in a storage unit (such as an item tucked into a belt or worn around the neck, but not an item stowed in a backpack) and transfer that item from your opponent's person into one of your free hands.

If your Sleight of Hand check's result is 5 higher than your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense, increase the maximum

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NEW CONDITION

The *ADVANCED SKILL GUIDE* introduces the following new condition, which is usually gained when an opponent successfully uses the antagonize combat maneuver against you.

ANTAGONIZED

You've been goaded into focusing your attacks upon a specific enemy. You can only target the creature that antagonized you with hostile actions, and you do not threaten creatures other than the creature who antagonized you. A hostile action is defined as any attack or effect that causes direct harm to affected creatures in the form of damage, negative levels, or any condition that hinders or penalizes a creature. If you use an attack or ability that targets multiple creatures or targets an area, the creature who antagonized you must be the first target you choose or within the attack or ability's affected area.

If the effect that granted you the antagonized condition lasts for 2 or more rounds, you can attempt to reduce the effect of the antagonized condition after you've been antagonized for 1 round as a swift action. You attempt a Sense Motive check with a DC equal to the Mental Maneuver Defense of the creature who antagonized you. If you succeed on your check, you are no longer required to focus hostile actions upon the creature who antagonized you, but you still take a -2 penalty to attack rolls made against creatures other than the one who antagonized you for the rest of the condition's duration. The antagonized condition automatically ends if the creature who antagonized you gains the helpless condition (including any condition that acts as such, including the dead, dying, and unconscious conditions) or is otherwise unable to act in the encounter. The antagonized condition negates the decried condition, and vice versa.

bulk of items you can steal by 1 for every 5 that your result exceeds your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense (2 bulk if 5 higher, 3 bulk if 10 higher, and so on). In addition, if your Sleight of Hand check's result is at least 10 higher than your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense, you can choose two loosely attached items to steal or one item that is fastened to your opponent (such as a cloak, a sheathed weapon, or a pouch). If your Sleight of Hand check's result is at least 15 higher, you can choose two items fastened to your opponent or one item that is closely worn (such as a backpack, boots or gloves, articles of clothing, and most types of jewelry). If you chose to steal two items, their combined bulk cannot exceed the limit set by the result of your Sleight of Hand check.

TRIP

You sweep an enemy off their feet, knocking them off balance and making them easier to attack.

Action: 1 standard action.

Associated Skill: Acrobatics or Athletics.

Effect: You attempt a skill check against your opponent's Physical

Maneuver Defense. If you succeed, your opponent gains the prone condition. If your opponent is flying, swimming, levitating, or can't be knocked prone, they gain the off-kilter condition instead.

If your skill check's result is higher than your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense, your trip attempt's sudden blow can disorient your opponent. Your opponent attempts a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the difference between your skill check's result and your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense). If your opponent fails their saving throw, they gain the dazed condition for 1 round.

CONVERTING CREATURE ABILITIES

Whenever an ability involves one or more of the combat maneuvers described in this section (such as the grab or swallow whole universal creature rules), it may need to be converted to a skill check in order to work with this section. This applies to class features, creature rules, feats, and all kinds of equipment.

APPLIES AGAINST A COMBAT MANEUVER

Whenever an ability provides a bonus to the DC to demoralize or feint you, that bonus instead applies to your Mental Maneuver Defense. Likewise, whenever an ability provides a bonus to your KAC, that bonus instead applies to your Physical Maneuver Defense. This includes, but isn't limited to, class features, equipment, feats, and spells.

APPLIES TO A COMBAT MANEUVER

Whenever an ability provides you with a bonus to attack rolls to perform a combat maneuver (such as the Improved Maneuver feat or a skittermander's grappler racial trait), it instead applies to skill checks to perform that combat maneuver instead.

REQUIRES A HIT WITH A WEAPON

Whenever an ability requires a hit with a weapon (such as the grab universal creature rule), that ability functions as written. This means you make an attack roll and compare the result to the opponent's KAC + 8 to determine if the combat maneuver is successful.

TRIGGERED BY A SUCCESS

Whenever an ability is triggered by a successful combat maneuver (such as a marooned one's strangle ability), that ability functions exactly as written. If the ability references the successful attack roll used to succeed at the combat maneuver, refer to the successful skill check instead.

USING THESE RULES WITH NPCs

Since nonplayer characters aren't created in the same manner as player characters in the *STARFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME*, the formula shown on page 113 isn't appropriate for determining the Maneuver Defenses of nonplayer characters. Instead, of using this formula, you assign an NPC their Mental Maneuver Defense and Physical Maneuver during Step 1 of the NPC creation process outlined in Appendix 1 of *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE*. An NPC's Maneuver Defense is determined by their CR and their array, using the values shown on Table 4-1: Maneuver Defense By CR



TABLE 4-1: NPC MANEUVER DEFENSE BY CR

CR	Combatant		Expert		Mystic	
	MMD	PMD	MMD	PMD	MMD	PMD
1/3	15	17	15	16	15	15
1/2	15	17	15	16	15	15
1	16	18	16	17	16	16
2	18	20	18	19	18	18
3	19	21	19	20	19	19
4	21	23	21	22	21	21
5	22	24	22	23	22	22
6	24	25	24	24	24	23
7	25	26	25	25	25	24
8	27	27	27	26	27	25
9	28	29	28	28	28	27
10	30	30	30	29	30	28
11	31	31	31	30	31	29
12	33	33	33	32	33	31
13	34	34	34	33	34	32
14	36	35	36	34	36	33
15	37	36	37	35	37	34
16	39	37	39	36	39	35
17	40	38	40	37	40	36
18	42	39	42	38	42	37
19	43	40	43	39	43	38
20	45	42	45	41	45	40
21	46	43	46	42	46	41
22	48	45	48	44	48	43
23	49	46	49	45	49	44
24	51	48	51	47	51	46
25	52	49	52	28	52	47

For example, if you're creating a CR 9 creature who uses the combatant array, the creature's MMD is 28 and their PMD is 29.

OPTIONAL RULE: USING THE STANDARD STARFINDER RULES

Although the combat maneuvers as described in this section were designed to use their own system, the GM can choose to use these updated combat maneuver rules with the standard rules in the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*. When using the bull rush, crush, dirty trick, disarm, grapple, or trip combat maneuvers, you make a melee attack roll against the opponent's KAC + 8. When using the antagonize, demoralize, feint, or scale combat maneuvers, you attempt a skill check with the combat maneuver's associated skill against a DC equal to 10 + the opponent's total bonus in that skill or a DC equal to 15 + 1-1/2 × the opponent's CR, whichever is higher.

Using combat maneuvers in this manner prevents the need for introducing a new defensive mechanic to the game (Maneuver Defense), but it does take away from the combat utility of skills and makes it harder for classes like the envoy, mechanic, and operative to use combat maneuvers.

BEHIND THE SCREENS

When deciding whether or not to use this alternate combat maneuver system, keep in mind that when compared to the "KAC + 8 system of the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*, this system effectively reduces the +8 to a +4, making PCs more likely to succeed with combat maneuvers. For example, in the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*, you need an attack roll result of a 21 to hit a CR 1 combatant creature with a combat maneuver check. According to the combatant array table, a CR 1 creature should have KAC 13. Since 13 + 8 is 21, a PC would need to roll a 21 to affect an opponent with most combat maneuvers as opposed to the PMD 16 used in this alternate system. Since the chance of any single number being rolled on a d20 is 5%, a difference of 5 between these two values is equivalent to a 25% improvement. Of course, this works in reverse too—a CR 1 NPC built using *STARFINDER ALIEN ARCHIVE* would have a +10 bonus to its master skill checks as opposed to a +8 bonus to attack rolls, and a typical 1st-level PC in lashunta ringmail I would have AC 16 maximum as opposed to PMD 15 (assuming 1st-level and an ability modifier of +4). As a result, you should be aware that PCs get more of a benefit from this system than NPCs do.

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FEATS

Having skill isn't enough to ensure one's safety and competency in the world of the *STARFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME*. Characters must acquire or hone unique techniques, tricks, and latent powers if they're to have any true hope of success. The following feats augment or extrapolate on a character's ability to use skills. The feats described in this section follow all the standard rules for feats described in Chapter 6 of the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*, and belong to one of the feat categories described in that chapter. Note that any feat that refers to a combat maneuver or antagonizing, demoralizing, or feinting opponents is referring to the rules provided on page 108 unless specifically noted otherwise.

AGILE DEFENSES (COMBAT)

You can avoid your opponent's maneuvers with sheer agility.

Benefit: You can substitute your Dexterity modifier for your Strength modifier when calculating your Physical Maneuver Defense (see page 108).

Normal: Your Physical Maneuver Defense is equal to 10 + your level + half your base attack bonus + your Strength modifier.

AGILE FEINT

You can feint in combat simply by outmaneuvering opponents.

Prerequisites: Sleight of Hand 1 rank.

Benefit: You treat Sleight of Hand as if it were on the list of skills associated with the feint combat maneuver. In addition, you can use Sleight of Hand to pass secret messages as if you were using the Bluff skill, but since such attempts rely on subtle gestures and body language doing so is a senses-dependent (sight) effect. At the GM's decision, you may be limited in what secret messages you can pass using Sleight of Hand. Knowing some form of sign language could allow you to bypass such limitations at the expense of making this a language-dependent effect, provided the GM's discretion.

ANTAGONIZING DISPLAY (COMBAT)

You can agitate multiple enemies at once.

Prerequisites: Improved Combat Maneuver (antagonize), base attack bonus +5.

Benefit: You can unleash a bewildering tirade of insults and antagonizing remarks to all that can sense you. As a full action, you can attempt an antagonize combat maneuver against all foes within 30 feet.

ANTAGONIZING MANEUVER (COMBAT)

You antagonize opponents whom you successfully use combat maneuver against.

Prerequisites: Improved Combat Maneuver with the chosen combat maneuver, base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: Choose one combat maneuver other than antagonize. Whenever you succeed on a skill check to perform the chosen combat maneuver, you can attempt to antagonize the target of your previous combat maneuver as a reaction. If your previous combat maneuver attempt succeeded against multiple targets, choose one of them to antagonize with this ability.

BREAK GUARD (COMBAT)

You can use one of your weapons to occupy your opponent's defenses while attacking with another.

Prerequisites: Improved Combat Maneuver (disarm), Multi-Weapon Fighting.

Benefit: Whenever you're wielding two or more operative melee weapons and you succeed at a disarm attempt, you can make an attack against the disarmed opponent with one of your operative melee weapons at your highest attack bonus - 4 as a reaction.

BUT A SCRATCH (COMBAT)

You trick your opponent into thinking you've effortlessly shrugged off their deadliest attacks.

Prerequisites: Cha 13, Bluff 4 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever an opponent critically hits you with a melee or ranged weapon, you can attempt a Bluff check to mask the damage dealt to you by the attack as a reaction. The DC for this Bluff check is equal to 10 + your opponent's total Intimidate skill bonus, or $15 + 1\frac{1}{2} \times$ the opponent's CR, whichever is greater. You gain any bonuses that you would normally gain to a demoralize combat maneuver to this Bluff check. If you succeed, the target is shaken for 1 round as if you had succeeded at an Intimidate check to demoralize them. The duration increases by 1 round for every 5 by which the result of your check exceeds the DC.

If you have the Improved Combat Maneuver (antagonize) feat, you can cause your opponent to gain the antagonized condition instead of the shaken condition as if you had succeeded at a Bluff check to antagonize them. You gain any bonuses that you would normally gain to an antagonize combat maneuver to this Bluff check.

CANNY TUMBLE (COMBAT)

Your acrobatic prowess distracts your foes.

Prerequisites: Acrobatics 5 ranks, must have an insight bonus to Acrobatics checks of +3 from a class feature or feat.

Benefit: Whenever you use succeed at an Acrobatics check to tumble through an opponent's threatened area or space without provoking an attack of opportunity, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to your next attack roll made against that opponent with a melee or small arms weapon before the start of your next turn.



CARTWHEEL DODGE

You can utilize your reflexes to reposition yourself after dodging an enemy's attacks.

Prerequisites: Lightning Reflexes or evasion class feature, Acrobatics 11 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you succeed at a Reflex saving throw, you can move up to half your speed as a reaction. This movement provokes an attack of opportunity as normal.

CUTTING HUMILIATION

You know how to cut a foe deeply through humiliation, making it difficult for them to influence others.

Prerequisites: Improved Combat Maneuver (demoralize), base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: Whenever you attempt to use Intimidate to demoralize an opponent, you can choose to grant your target the humiliated condition (see the New Condition sidebar to the right) instead of the shaken condition. You must decide which condition to inflict upon your target before rolling your skill check, and if your attempt fails, you cannot attempt to humiliate any creature that witnessed your attempt for 24 hours. If your attempt fails by 10 or more, you gain the humiliated condition instead. Regardless of whether you humiliate your target or yourself, the duration of this effect lasts 1 additional hour for every 5 higher than the DC your skill check's result is (2 hours if 5 higher, 3 hours if 10 higher, and so on).

If you have at least one envoy talent that requires you to be able to add your expertise die to Intimidate checks (such as menacing gaze or ratling presence), whenever you attempt an Intimidate check to demoralize foes, you can forgo your expertise die to cause any target you successfully demoralize to gain both the humiliated and shaken conditions.

DECEPTIVE EXCHANGE

You trick an adversary into grabbing an object you hand them, even in the midst of combat.

Prerequisites: Improved Combat Maneuver (feint), base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: Whenever you succeed at a feint combat maneuver, you can trick your opponent into accepting a one-handed object with light bulk that you are holding instead of causing them to gain the flat-footed condition against your next attack. Your opponent must have hands or prehensile appendages capable of holding whatever object you offer it, and they must have at least one hand or appendage free to accept your item. This ability is a mind-affecting effect.

If you use this ability to hand your opponent a grenade, you can pull the pin as part of a successful feint attempt. If accepted, the grenade explodes in your opponent's hands at one grid intersection within its space or on one of its space's corners of your choice. If the grenade has a delayed fuse, it explodes after 1 or more rounds as determined by the fuse. Your opponent can attempt a Reflex save with a -2 penalty to avoid the grenade's effects.

REVISED OR REMOVED FEATS

Because the *ADVANCED SKILL GUIDE* introduces a massive reimagining of how combat maneuvers work (see page 98), the Improved Combat Maneuver feat must be partially revised in order to be functional with the new system. In addition, because antagonize is a combat maneuver that any character can use, the Antagonize feat found in Chapter 6 of the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK* is defunct in combination with this alternate system and should not be chosen as an option for PCs or NPCs. Characters who've taken Improved Combat Maneuver should replace it with the version described below, while characters who've taken Antagonize should replace that feat with a new feat (likely the Improved Maneuver feat that is described below).

IMPROVED MANEUVER (COMBAT)

You are particularly skilled with a specific combat maneuver.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: Choose one combat maneuver (antagonize, bull rush, crush, demoralize, dirty trick, disarm, feint, grapple, reposition, scale, steal, or trip). You gain a +4 bonus to checks attempted to resolve that combat maneuver.

Special: You can take Improved Combat Maneuver multiple times. The effects don't stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new combat maneuver.

NEW CONDITION

The *ADVANCED SKILL GUIDE* introduces the following new condition, which is currently associated with the Cutting Humiliation feat.

HUMILIATED

You've been deeply embarrassed or otherwise knocked off of your high horse, making it difficult to face other people. You take a -2 penalty to all Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks attempted against creatures who witnessed the action that caused you to gain the humiliated condition.

If the humiliated condition's duration is longer than 10 minutes, you can recover from this humiliation early by taking 10 minutes of inward reflection to compose yourself. While reflecting in this manner, you cannot spend Resolve Points to also regain Stamina Points.

DEFENSIVE COMBAT TRAINING (COMBAT)

You are better at defending yourself against combat maneuvers than your martial training would otherwise suggest.

Benefit: You substitute your total level for your base attack bonus when calculating your Mental Maneuver Defense and Physical Maneuver Defense.

Normal: Your Mental Maneuver Defense is equal to 10 + your level + half your base attack bonus + your Charisma modifier, and your Physical Maneuver Defense is equal to 10 + your level + half your base attack bonus + your Strength modifier.

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DISENGAGING FEINT (COMBAT)

You can feint to disengage from combat.

Prerequisites: Improved Combat Maneuver (feint), base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: Whenever you attempt a feint combat maneuver against an opponent, you can render the target of your feint combat maneuver unable to make attacks of opportunity against you for moving through the target's threatened area or space instead of causing them to gain the flat-footed condition against your next attack. This benefit lasts until the start of your next turn.

DISORIENTING MANEUVER

You can utilize erratic movements to disorient your enemies.

Prerequisites: Canny Tumble, Acrobatics 5 ranks, base attack bonus +1, must have an insight bonus of +3 or higher to Acrobatics checks from a class feature or feat.

Benefit: Whenever you succeed at an Acrobatics check to tumble through an opponent's threatened area or space without provoking an attack of opportunity, you can attempt a trip combat maneuver as a reaction. You can add a +1 circumstance bonus to any skill check to trip your opponent instead of the usual circumstance bonus gained from the Canny Tumble feat.

DREADFUL CARNAGE (COMBAT)

Slaying an enemy demoralizes your other nearby foes.

Prerequisites: Improved Combat Maneuver (demoralize), base attack bonus +11.

Benefit: Whenever you reduce an enemy to 0 Hit Points, you can attempt a demoralize combat maneuver against all enemies within 30 feet as a reaction. Roll your skill check once and apply the result to the Mental Maneuver Defense of all opponents that have line of sight to you. Enemies that do not have line of sight to you are unaffected by this ability.

FAKE OUT (COMBAT)

You quickly feint opponents by forgoing one of your attacks.

Prerequisites: Improved Combat Maneuver (feint), base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: Whenever you use the full attack action, you can replace any number of attacks with a feint combat maneuver against any opponent who you could normally attempt to feint. You take the same penalty to your feint attempt that you do to attack rolls that you make during the full attack action.

Normal: Feinting in combat is a move action.

FORCEFUL TAKEDOWN (COMBAT)

When you bring your opponents down, you make it hurt.

Prerequisites: Improved Combat Maneuver (trip), base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: Whenever you succeed at a trip combat maneuver, you deal falling damage to the tripped creature equal to your Strength modifier (minimum 0). If the result of your trip attempt was higher than your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense, add the difference between your skill check result

and your opponent's Physical Maneuver Defense to the damage done by this ability.

HAZARDOUS REPOSITIONING (COMBAT)

You exhibit such control of the battlefield that you can position your enemies where you wish, regardless of danger.

Prerequisites: Improved Combat Maneuver (reposition), base attack bonus +7.

Benefit: When you succeed at a reposition combat maneuver, you can move your target into areas that are obviously harmful, such as a pit or a pool of acid. Moving an opponent into an obviously harmful completion counts as 2 squares for the purpose of determining the total distance that you can move an opponent with a reposition combat maneuver.

INCITE PARANOIA (COMBAT)

You can disrupt an opponent's focus so it can no longer support their allies in battle.

Prerequisites: Improved Combat Maneuver (feint), base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: Whenever you succeed at a feint combat maneuver and the result of your skill check is 5 or more higher than your opponent's Mental Maneuver Defense, your opponent no longer counts as an ally for the purpose of providing flanking, and it cannot provide other creatures with bonuses from the aid another, covering fire, or harrying fire actions. This effect lasts until the beginning of your next turn.

OVERWHELMING RUSH (COMBAT)

When you shove your enemies around the battlefield, it causes them to lose their balance.

Prerequisites: Improved Combat Maneuver (bull rush), Improved Combat Maneuver (trip), base attack bonus +11.

Benefit: When you succeed at a bull rush combat maneuver and move your target at least 15 feet, you can attempt a trip combat maneuver against the target at a -4 penalty as a reaction.

PLANT EVIDENCE

You can quietly slip incriminating items into your foes' pockets.

Prerequisites: Improved Combat Maneuver (steal) or must have an insight bonus to Sleight of Hand checks of +3 from a class feature or feat.

Benefit: Whenever you succeed at a steal combat maneuver attempt, instead of taking an item from your opponent you can stow one item weighing 1 bulk or less onto your opponent's person. This does not force the creature to wear, wield, or otherwise use the item; you simply stow it among their possessions. The creature attempts an opposed Perception check after you stow the item on their person. If they succeed, they realize the item has been planted on them. If they fail, they are unaware that the item has been planted on them. You cannot use this ability to plant items on a target that lacks clothing, armor, a tack and harness, or some other equivalent accoutrements in which you can hide the item.



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PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFENSE

You have trained your mind against the perils of combat and resist mental combat maneuvers with ease.

Benefit: Choose Intelligence or Wisdom. You can substitute your ability modifier in the chosen ability score for your Charisma modifier when calculating your Mental Maneuver Defense (see page 108).

Normal: Your Mental Maneuver Defense is equal to 10 + your level + half your base attack bonus + your Charisma modifier.

QUIET DEATH (COMBAT)

You have learned to dispatch your enemies with the silence and grace of an accomplished assassin.

Prerequisites: Stealth 10 ranks, must have an insight bonus to Sleight of Hand checks of +3 from a class feature or feat.

Benefit: When you ambush an enemy or enemies that are unaware of your presence, you can attempt a Stealth check with a -5 penalty. The result indicates the Perception DC to hear your attacks (rather than the normal DC of 0 to hear pitched combat) until an opponent's first action, when the DC returns to 0. Other enemies present can still see the attack; Quiet Death only prevents the sounds of battle from alerting further enemies.

RUNNING TACKLE (COMBAT)

When you bring your opponents down, you make it hurt.

Prerequisites: Improved Combat Maneuver (grapple), base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: When you use the charge action, you can attempt a grapple combat maneuver at the end of your check instead of a melee attack. Apply the penalty to attack rolls for charging to the result of your skill check to perform a grapple combat maneuver. If you have an ability that allows you to ignore this penalty, it applies when using this feat.

Normal: A grapple combat maneuver is a standard action.

SWAP PLACES (COMBAT)

You are skilled at changing places with your ally during a chaotic melee.

Prerequisite: Acrobatics 3 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you are adjacent to an ally, you can swap positions with them. When doing so, you move into your ally's square while, at the same time, your ally moves into your previous space. Using this ability is a move action, and your ally must use a reaction to move into your previous space or your move action to swap positions fails. You cannot use this ability if your ally is more than one size category larger or smaller than you. Any movement made by you or your ally as part of this feat provokes

attacks of opportunity as normal unless both you and your ally have Swap Places, in which case movement made using this feat does not provoke an attack of opportunity for you or your ally.

TRICK RIDING (COMBAT)

You make riding your mount look like an art form.

Prerequisite: Survival 5 ranks.

Benefit: You can use the Survival skill to ride a creature even if it has no saddle, and without taking any sort of penalties that you would normally take for riding a creature without a saddle. In addition, you automatically succeed on all Survival checks to ride a creature with a DC of 15 or lower. This increases to DC 20 or lower if you have 10 ranks in Survival, DC 25 if you have 15 ranks, and DC 30 if you have 20 ranks.

UNLOCK SKILL

Through practice, experimentation, or good fortune, you have unlocked unique uses for your skills.

Benefit: You gain two skill unlocks (see page 118). You must meet the prerequisites of the skill unlocks.

Special: You can gain Unlock Skill multiple times.

WEAPON GRAB (COMBAT)

You snatch an opponent's weapon right out of their hands.

Prerequisites: Improved Combat Maneuver (disarm), base attack bonus +11.

Benefit: Whenever you succeed at a disarm combat maneuver against an opponent, instead of knocking their weapon to the ground you place their weapon in one of your free hands, provided you have at least one free hand to hold it. If you have enough free hands available to wield the disarmed weapon, you can attempt to attack your opponent with their own weapon with a -4 penalty to the attack roll as a reaction.



SKILL UNLOCKS

With enough training, most characters can become experts at a task or respected authorities in their areas of expertise. Skill unlocks represent the personal tricks that you have picked up in the course of your adventures. Either providing you benefits in challenging situations or allowing you to use your skills in unique way, skill unlocks grant benefits that set apart your character from other experts in your area. Your character gains skill unlocks by selecting archetypes, class features, or themes that grant skill unlocks, or by learning the Unlock Skill feat (see page 117).

Skill unlocks belong to one or more categories below, based upon which rules subsystems they interact with. These categories are detailed below. Note that each skill lock lists its type next to its name. A skill unlock that doesn't list any types next to its name is a general skill unlock, as described below.

General: These skill unlocks apply in a variety of situations and generally allow you to use a skill in a new way.

Challenge: These skill unlocks provide you with benefits when you participate in a skill challenge (see Chapter 3). Some apply to all skill challenges, while others apply only when you participate in a certain kind of skill challenge.

Leadership: These skill unlocks enhance your ability to lead your cohorts and followers. To learn a leadership skill unlock, you must have a Leadership Score of at least 1.

Relationship: These skill unlocks affect your relationships with NPCs.

Reputation: These skill unlocks affect your standing with organizations, including any cohorts and followers you might have who belong to such organizations. Many reputation skill unlocks list a minimum Fame or Infamy level that you must meet in order to gain their benefits, and their effects apply to all organizations that you possess this minimum Fame or Infamy score with unless specifically mentioned otherwise. You lose the benefit of such skill unlocks if your reputation changes so you no longer meet the minimum requirements, and they apply their effects in situations that involve specific organizations or in areas where those organizations are active. At your GM's decision, the benefits of your reputation skill unlocks might apply to other groups or individuals or in other circumstances.

Secret Identity: These skill unlocks grant you benefits that improve your ability to maintain a secret identity. You must have an established secret identity (see page 26) to learn these skill unlocks.

ACCOMPLISHED CLIMBER

You scramble over surfaces as if you were born to climb.

Prerequisites: Athletics 5 ranks.

Benefit: You gain a natural climb speed equal to your base speed on surfaces with a Climb DC of 20 or lower, and of 10 feet on all other surfaces. If you already have a climb speed, your climb speed increases by 10 feet instead.

AGILE CLIMBER

You nimbly clamber up most surfaces.

Prerequisites: Athletics 5 ranks.

Benefit: You add the higher of your Dexterity modifier or your Strength to Athletics checks to climb, and are no longer flat-footed when climbing. If you add your Dexterity modifier to Athletics checks to climb, Athletics counts as a Dexterity-based skill for climbing only.

ALOOF (LEADERSHIP)

Your followers are attracted to your mysterious reputation.

Prerequisites: Fame 20.

Benefit: If you have a reputation for being aloof (see page 7), you gain a +1 bonus to your Leadership Score instead of the usual -1 penalty.

Normal: You take a -1 penalty to your Leadership Score if you possess a reputation for being aloof or unapproachable.

ANY GUISE (SECRET IDENTITY)

You can create disguises that precisely mimic the appearance and mannerisms of specific individuals.

Prerequisites: Everyman, Many Guises, Disguise 17 ranks.

Benefit: When establishing a mundane identity of a specific individual using the Everyman skill unlock, your mundane identity can be that of any individual, regardless of their Fame or Infamy. This otherwise functions as detailed by the Many Guises skill unlock. In addition, any effect designed to locate the specific individual associated with your mundane identity automatically finds you if the actual individual couldn't normally be located by that effect, such as by being dead or protected from divinations designed to locate the individual.

AREA OF RENOWN (REPUTATION)

Your reputation has spread throughout a broad region.

Prerequisites: Fame 1 or Infamy 1.

Benefit: You can establish an area where you and your exploits are well-known by spending 1 week in the area. This area must be an inhabited region encompassing no more than 200 million square miles or 10 billion individuals. You can take whatever actions you like during this time, provided at least some of your actions actively contribute to your Fame or Infamy. After 1 week, your exploits reduce the DC to gather information about you by 10, and any individual that's lived



within your area of renown for at least 1 week can identify your name with a successful DC 10 Culture check or recognize you out of context (such as from your appearance along) with a successful DC 20 Culture check. At the GM's decision, this recognition can grant you additional benefits. For example, if you're looking for a generic good or service (such as a doctor to treat a specific disease or a specific brand of alcohol), you can almost always find one within your area of renown whose attitude starts as friendly or helpful to you; this takes 2d4 hours.

Once you establish a region as being part of your area of renown, it remains as such until you spend 1 week distancing yourself from that area, at which point your notoriety quickly fades. You can have a total number of areas of renown established simultaneously up to your Fame or Infamy. Once you've reached this limit, you must either increase your Fame or Infamy or distance yourself from a currently established area of renown before you can add any new regions to your area of renown.

Special: If you have any secret identities established, you choose which one of your identities (your true identity or one of secret identities) is famous in each of your areas of renown.

ARTISAN

Your craftsmanship skills are second to none.

Prerequisites: Engineering 1 rank, Life Science 1 rank, Mysticism 1 rank, or Profession 1 rank.

Benefit: Items that you create are of superior or artistic quality, allowing them to be sold for additional profit. You can sell any item that you craft for 50% of the item's price. For every 5 by which your result is higher than the DC, you can sell that item for 25% more (75% if 5 higher, 100% if 10 higher, and so on). You typically cannot earn more than one encounter's worth of credits using this skill unlock per level unless the GM says otherwise, as it is difficult to find patrons willing to purchase goods from freelance artisans.

BLOOD KIN (RELATIONSHIP)

You have strong relationships with your family members.

Benefit: When determining your Relationship Score with NPCs who are blood relatives of yours, your relationship's intensity is considered one step higher than indicated by your Relationship Score. This benefit may entitle you to rewards associated with your relationship with those NPCs, such as the +1 morale bonus to Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks from having a minor relationship, or the ability to roll twice on Charisma checks attempted against those NPCs from having a strong relationship.

BOLTHOLES (REPUTATION)

You know a few safe places to lay low in your area of renown.

Prerequisites: Area of Renown.

Benefit: Whenever you establish an area of renown, you can also establish one safe house within that area where you and your allies can lay low. This safe house is typically 200 square feet in size (the size of a small studio apartment), plus

OPTIONAL RULE: GRANTING FREE SKILL UNLOCKS TO PLAYERS

While the skill unlock system is designed so players looking to gain additional functionality from their skills may do so with nominal investment, your GM may wish for certain skill unlocks to be more readily available in the campaign in order to emphasize a specific style of gameplay. In this situation, the GM can award any number of skill unlocks they wish to each PC for free. This is especially helpful if some skill unlocks are crucial to the feel of the campaign and the GM doesn't want to force PCs into investing in those options. If the GM wishes to grant players free skill unlocks, below are some suggestions regarding how to provide these benefits to the PCs.

Achievement: The GM can provide one skill unlock to a PC whenever they accomplish something for which the skill unlock feels like a fitting reward. For example, if a PC spends a lot of time successfully disguising themselves as mundane individuals, the GM might award that PC the Many Guises skill unlock as a free skill unlock. At the GM's decision, the PC might not need to meet a skill unlock's prerequisites to gain it in this manner, provided the skill unlock works mechanically without its prerequisites.

Background: The GM can provide free skill unlocks to each PC at 1st level. A PC can typically have up to two skill unlocks at 1st level without significantly affecting their power.

Progression: The GM can provide one free skill unlock to each PC at 2nd level and every 2 levels thereafter. Of the three options presented, this provides the most free power to the PCs.

an additional 200 square feet for every 5 Fame that you possess. Alternatively, if you or one of your cohorts or followers owns property within your area of renown, you can establish that property as your safe house regardless of its size.

Within your safe house, you and your allies are fed, clothed, and provided basic medical attention from an NPC with a total bonus in the Medicine skill equal to 1/5 of your Fame. Likewise, you can rest, craft or repair your gear, make repairs to and upgrade your starship (provided you have a dedicated space within your safe house to hide it), and purchase or sell items with an item level up to 1/5 your Fame. You can accomplish these tasks without arousing any attention or suspicion provided that you avoid the public eye.

If you or one of your allies performs an action that thrusts the public eye upon you or that can be traced by a corporate or governmental entity, that character must attempt a Bluff, Disguise, or Stealth check with a DC equal to 10 + that character's Fame. If they succeed, their action goes unnoticed. If they fail, you and your allies lose the benefits of your safe house within the area of renown where that action occurred. To regain a safe house in that area of renown, you must either spend 1 week scouting and establishing a new safe house at least 12 miles away from the previous one or wait 2d12 weeks for the heat to die down.

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TABLE 4-2: SKILL UNLOCKS

Skill Unlock	Prerequisites	Benefit
Accomplished Climber	Athletics 5 ranks	Gain a climb speed or enhance your existing climb speed.
Agile Climber	Athletics 5 ranks	Use your Dexterity when using Athletics to climb.
Artisan	Engineering 1 rank, Life Science 1 rank, or Mysticism 1 rank	You can sell items you craft for additional profit.
Case the Joint	—	You can scope out an area to gain benefits later.
Cold Read	Sense Motive 4 ranks	You can intuit private information about a character from nothing more than a glance.
Eavesdropper	Perception 3 ranks, Sense Motive 3 ranks	You gain bonuses to hear the details of a conversation and are unlikely to glean false information when doing so.
Familiar Manifestation	Mysticism 3 ranks	You automatically succeed at Mysticism checks to identify spells that you know.
First Contact	Culture 1 rank	NPCs who've never seen a member of your species before have a higher starting attitude than normal.
Heroic Leap	Athletics 3 ranks	You always have a running start when jumping.
Innuendo	Bluff 3 ranks	You automatically pass secret messages, and those attempting to discern the message take a –5 penalty.
Lone Wolf	No skill unlocks that require a minimum number of cohorts or followers	You gain a bonus to certain untrained skill checks with certain skills, provided you don't have any cohorts or followers.
Maverick Pilot	Piloting 6 ranks	You can attempt Piloting checks with a penalty while acting in the engineer or science officer role in a starship combat, and can use Piloting to repair starships.
Multilingual	Int 13, Culture 1 rank	You learn 1 additional language for every rank in the Culture skill that you have.
Nimble Feet	Acrobatics 5 ranks	You reduce the penalty to Acrobatics checks to tumble at full speed by half, and you can avoid becoming flat-footed while balancing.
Obscured Mind	Bluff 7 ranks, Mysticism 7 ranks	You can use Bluff to trick those casting divination effects on you into receiving no or wrong information.
Overcome Hindrances	Acrobatics 7 ranks	You can use Acrobatics to escape from effects that paralyze or stagger you.
Patch Up	Medicine 5 ranks	Your successful Medicine checks to treat deadly wounds heal additional Hit Points.
Potent Treatment	Medicine 9 ranks	Your successful Medicine checks to treat diseases, drugs, and poisons grant additional bonuses.
Quick Disabler	Engineering 5 ranks	You take half as much time using the Engineering skill to disable devices.
Quick Pidgin	Culture 6 ranks	You can form a quick language that allows basic communications with one individual.
Quick Sneak	Stealth 10 ranks	You take half the usual penalty when making Stealth checks to hide while moving at full speed or after creating a diversion.
Reactive Disabler	Engineering 10 ranks, Mysticism 10 ranks	You can attempt to delay a triggered trap from going off for a short amount of time.
Renowned for Constitution	Con 13	Use your Constitution instead of your Charisma to your Leadership Score.
Renowned for Dexterity	Dex 13	Use your Dexterity instead of your Charisma to your Leadership Score.
Renowned for Intelligence	Int 13	Use your Intelligence instead of your Charisma to your Leadership Score.
Renowned for Strength	Str 13	Use your Strength instead of your Charisma to your Leadership Score.



TABLE 4-2: SKILL UNLOCKS (CONT.)

Skill Unlock	Prerequisites	Benefit
Renowned for Wisdom	Wis 13	Use your Wisdom instead of your Charisma to your Leadership Score.
Research Maven	10 ranks in the chosen skill	You can research in half the time.
Skill Training	—	Gain an additional class skill.
Smooth Talker	Diplomacy 1 rank	You can boost others' opinions of your allies, and you can keep yourself on others' good side easier.
Sociable	Cha 13, Diplomacy 3 ranks	You can cause others to have a complete change of heart about you in a short time.
Soft Landing	Acrobatics 1 rank	You can use Acrobatics to reduce falling damage done to you even if the fall was unexpected.
Swift Hunter	Survival 5 ranks	You can use Survival to gather limited information about something you're tracking, and can track faster.
Threatening Impression	Intimidate 5 ranks	Attitude changes from bullying others last longer.
Weathered Survivor	Survival 5 ranks	Creatures you protect from severe weather using the Survival skill take half as much Hit Point damage.
Well-Informed Naturalist	Engineering 1 rank, Life Science 1 rank, or Mysticism 1 rank	You learn additional information about creatures that you successfully identify.
Xenoscholar's Disguise	Disguise 1 rank, Life Science 1 rank	You can use Disguise to change your appearance a number of different species without penalty.
Challenge		
Challenge Ingenuity	—	You can attempt skill checks untrained with a luck bonus during a skill challenge.
Deductive Discovery	Computers 1 rank or Sense Motive 1 rank	You can make a free discovery check during an influence challenge at the start of each round.
Duelist's Edge	—	You gain an additional edge during a verbal duel.
Need for Speed	Piloting 3 ranks	You reduce the Piloting penalties associated with some vehicles during a vehicle chase.
Push Through	Con 13	You push through nonlethal damage from overexerting yourself during a contest.
Rivalry	—	You can designate a rival at the start of a skill challenge that you strive to thwart.
Schmoozer	Cha 13, Diplomacy 5 ranks	Diplomacy checks made to sway target NPCs are easier for you after you've discovered their interests.
Leadership Skill Unlocks		
Aloof	Fame 20	Being aloof doesn't hinder your Leadership Score.
Compelling Leader	—	Cohorts and followers gain a bonus to Will saves against mind-affecting effects when close by.
Improved Renown	Character level 8th	Add 4 to your Leadership Score to determine the number of cohorts and followers you can recruit.
Inspirational	—	You followers roll additional dice when performing freelance work for you and take the highest result.
Leader in Your Field	Fame 20, Profession 5 ranks	You gain a bonus to your Leadership Skill based on your ranks in a Profession skill, and earn more credits when using that skill to earn a living.
Squad Leader	Leadership Score 10	Gain a +5 bonus to use the aid another, covering fire, and harrying fire actions on cohorts and followers.
Wicked	Infamy 20, any evil alignment	Being cruel doesn't hinder your Leadership Score.
Zealous	Fame 20	Your cohorts or followers' deaths don't hinder your Leadership Score.
Relationship Skill Unlocks		
Blood Kin	—	Your Relationship Score counts as being one intensity step higher with blood relatives.

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TABLE 4-2: SKILL UNLOCKS (CONT.)

Skill Unlock	Prerequisite	Benefit
Devotion	—	You can devote yourself to an NPC to gain skill bonuses while trying to improve your relationship with them.
Helpful Turn	—	Actions that assist your allies in combat grant better bonuses to those that you have good relations with.
Impacting	—	Your attempts to increase your Relationship Score with NPCs are more effective.
Violent Animosity	—	You gain a bonus to damage rolls against foes that you have an animosity relationship with, based on the relationship's intensity.
Reputation Skill Unlocks		
Area of Renown	Fame 1 or Infamy 1.	You establish an area where you're well-known.
Boltholes	Area of Renown.	You can establish safe houses within your areas of renown.
Conceal Allies	Dex 13, Area of Renown, Stealth 5 ranks.	You can spend a Resolve Point to help your allies hide from onlookers temporarily.
Deputy	Area of Renown, Fame 25.	You gain the ability to arrest, attack, and detain others within your Area of Renown provided you have probable cause.
Discreet Inquiries	Area of Renown.	You can make Diplomacy checks to gather information in half the time, and the DC for others to gather information about your activities increases by 4.
Expanded Influence	Area of Renown.	You can have as many areas of renown as you wish.
Gossip Collector	Area of Renown.	You can use Diplomacy to recall information about your areas of renown.
Hometown Hero	Area of Renown or Fame 20.	You can change the attitudes of people affiliated with your areas of renown or organizations quickly.
Instant Recognition	Area of Renown, Fame 20.	You can establish an area of renown faster, and can establish areas of temporary renown.
Expert	5 ranks in the chosen skill, Fame 20 or Infamy 20.	Your ranks in the chosen skill grant you a bonus to your Leadership Score.
Initiated	Fame 20 with the chosen organization.	You gain an official rank within an organization, along with relevant skills and status befitting your rank.
Obscurity	Cannot have Fame or Infamy of 10 or more.	You are unremarkable socially, and can move around within frequently visited areas without arousing suspicion.
Secret Identity Skill Unlocks		
Many Guises	Disguise 5 ranks	You can establish mundane identities.
Everyman	Many Guises, Disguise 11 ranks	Your mundane identities can be of any individual whose Fame or Infamy is no greater than yours, and effects that locate this individual have a 50% chance of finding you instead.
Any Guise	Everyman, Many Guises, Disguise 17 ranks.	Mundane identities you establish can be of any individual, and attempts to locate that individual are always locate you instead.
Innocuous Mien	Bluff 3 ranks, Disguise 3 ranks.	Add 5 to the Disguise DC to pierce your secret identity.
Quick Change	Disguise 7 ranks.	You can assume mundane or secret identities faster.
Seamless Guise	Bluff 1 rank, Disguise 1 rank.	Gain a +5 bonus against skill checks that could compromise your mundane or secret identities.
Secret Shapechanger	Disguise 3 ranks, change shape racial trait, shapechanger subtype.	Your shapechanging is less likely to be noticed by effects that detect shapechanging.
Subjective Truth	Bluff 1 rank, Disguise 1 rank.	You can use Bluff to lie at a penalty to fool or overcome effects that force the truth from you.
Transformation Sequence	Disguise 1 rank, ability to cast spells or spell-like abilities or change shape racial trait.	You can use loud, flashy magic to change between identities in half the time.



CASE THE JOINT

You can learn important facts about a location and use them to your advantage.

Benefit: You can study a location in order to scope out features that you can later use to your advantage. To study a location, you must be able to observe it either in person or through a live video feed for at least 10 minutes. After doing so, you can attempt a skill check with one of the following skills: Computers, Engineering, or Physical Science. The DC for this check is equal to $10 + 1\frac{1}{2} \times$ the CR of the creature with the highest CR within the location. If you succeed, you can reroll any one attack roll, initiative check, or skill check while within the cased location. This reroll must be used within 1 week of your skill check. If you wait longer than 1 week, the situation will have changed too much for your intel to be of any use.

If the result of your skill check is at least 10 higher than this DC, you gain an additional reroll for every 10 higher that the result of your skill check is.

CHALLENGE INGENUITY (CHALLENGE)

You're able to succeed at using skills you've never studied against all calculated odds.

Benefit: Whenever you're a participant in a skill challenge, you can attempt any skill check to earn progress untrained. Whenever you attempt a skill check to earn progress untrained, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to add a luck bonus to the result of your skill check equal to $2 +$ half your level.

COLD READ

You can intuit personal information from others with a glance.

Prerequisites: Sense Motive 4 ranks.

Benefit: As a full action, you can attempt a Sense Motive check to perform a cold reading on a target within 30 feet that you have line of sight to. The DC for this check is equal to $15 + 1\frac{1}{2} \times$ the target's level or CR + the target's Wisdom modifier. If you succeed, you learn one of the following pieces of information of your choice: age category, alignment, class†, feats†, home world, gender, native language, race and ethnicity, racial traits†, religion, sexual orientation, or total bonus in one skill†. For items marked with a dagger (†), if the target has more than one of these features, each one counts as one piece of information. If the result of your Sense Motive check is 5 or more higher than the DC, you learn one additional piece of information for every 5 higher that your skill check is than the DC.

If your target is trained in Bluff, there is a chance that you might receive incorrect information when you use this ability. This chance is equal to $5\% \times$ the difference between your target's total Bluff bonus and your total Sense Motive bonus (minimum 0%).

COMPELLING LEADER (LEADERSHIP)

Your hold on your associates is stronger than normal.

Benefit: Your cohorts and followers gain a +1 morale

bonus to Will saving throws against mind-affecting effects whenever they are within 30 feet and have line of sight to you. Whenever you attempt a Diplomacy check to make a request of one of your cohorts or followers, you gain a +4 circumstance bonus to your check.

CONCEAL ALLIES (REPUTATION)

You can mask your allies movements while within your turf.

Prerequisites: Dex 13, Area of Renown, Stealth 6 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you're within one of your areas of renown, you can help your allies avoid detection. Whenever you attempt a Stealth check to hide while within your area of renown, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to choose a number of allies within 100 feet of you that you are aware of, up to a total number of allies equal to your Dexterity bonus (minimum 1). You take a -1 penalty to your Stealth check for each ally chosen. If your allies attempt a Stealth check to hide at any point before the start of your next turn, they can use your Stealth check result in place of their own Stealth check if, after their Stealth check is rolled, your result proves to be higher. To benefit from this ability, your ally must remain within 100 feet of you and you must be aware of the ally's presence.



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DEDUCTIVE DISCOVERY (CHALLENGE)

You quickly learn important facts and information about others by observing their behavior or scanning social media.

Prerequisites: Computers 1 rank or Sense Motive 1 rank.

Benefit: Whenever you're a participant in an influence challenge, you can use the discover information action at the start of each round, requiring no action. You don't need to be actively engaging with a target NPC in order to use this ability to discover new information about it. In addition, you can use Computers to attempt discovery checks instead of Sense Motive, provided you have access to a computer and the target NPC actively uses social media.

DEPUTY (REPUTATION)

Others trust you to take the law into your own hands from time to time, provided you aren't excessively cruel or violent.

Prerequisites: Area of Renown, Fame 25.

Benefit: Within your area of renown, you have limited rights of martial law. This allows you to arrest, attack, or detain creatures or confiscate their belongs, provided their Fame with the authorities who preside over your area of renown's region is equal to or less than your Fame or they have any amount of Infamy with those authorities. You must have probable cause in order to exercise these rights, and abusing martial law counts as a negative deed with a reputation effect of 4.

At the GM's decision, some NPCs may be above your authority to apprehend regardless of your Fame, such as most oligarchs and high-ranking government officials. Additionally, abusing your powers of martial law may include harsher consequences than a loss of reputation as determined by the GM.

DEVOTION (RELATIONSHIP)

You are an exceptionally devoted friend or lover.

Benefit: Whenever you succeed at a skill check to increase your Relationship Score with an NPC, you can devote yourself to that NPC in addition to the usual benefits for a success. You gain a morale bonus to all skill checks made to improve your Relationship Score with NPCs to whom you are devoted. This bonus is equal to 4 + 1 for each step on the relationship intensity scale (see page 24) that you are for each NPC to whom you have a relationship intensity of minor or higher.

You can be devoted to a number of NPCs simultaneously equal to 1 + your Charisma bonus (minimum 1). You can withhold your devotion from an NPC that you've previously devoted yourself to whenever you want. Doing so allows you to devote yourself to a different NPC, but causes your relationship with the previous NPC to become dysfunctional.

DISCREET INQUIRIES (REPUTATION)

You gather information quickly and without leaving a trail.

Prerequisites: Area of Renown.

Benefit: Within your area of renown, you can attempt Diplomacy checks to gather information in half the time—roll 1d4 normally and reduce the result by half; a result of 1

hour is reduced to 30 minutes. In addition, the DC for other creatures to gather the same information that you gathered is increased by 4 for the next 1d4 days. Multiple uses of this skill unlock don't stack this DC increase.

DUELIST'S EDGE (CHALLENGE)

You can prove your point with fierce resolve.

Benefit: You gain one additional edge whenever you participate in a verbal duel.

Starting at 6th level, you can spend 1 Resolve Point at the start of a cycle during a verbal duel in order to gain 1 edge that must be used before the start of the next cycle. You can spend a total number of Resolve Points per verbal duel equal to your key ability score modifier (minimum 1).

EAVESDROPPER

You're good at prying your nose into other people's business.

Prerequisites: Perception 3 ranks, Sense Motive 3 ranks.

Benefit: You gain a +2 morale bonus to Perception checks to hear the details of a conversation and to Sense Motive checks to discern a secret message. In addition, you don't infer false information from a failed Sense Motive check to discern a secret message unless you fail the check by 10 or more.

Normal: You might discern false information from a secret message if you fail the check by 5 or more.

EVERYMAN (SECRET IDENTITY)

You can easily disguise yourself as specific individuals, as long as they are not too well-known.

Prerequisites: Many Guises, Disguise 11 ranks.

Benefit: When establishing a mundane identity using the Many Guises skill unlock, your mundane identity can be that of any specific individual with Fame or Infamy of 10 or less instead of a generic member of a given race. While assuming such an identity, any effect designed to locate that individual has a 50% chance of finding you instead, and divination spells and abilities used on you give results as if you were the actual individual.

EXPANDED INFLUENCE (REPUTATION)

Word of your deeds has spread far, expanding the vastness of your influence.

Prerequisites: Area of Renown, Fame 10 or Infamy 10.

Benefit: There is no limit to the number of areas of renown that you can have with the Area of Renown skill unlock.

Normal: You can have a total number of areas of renown equal to your Fame or Infamy.

EXPERT (REPUTATION)

Your studious reputation has made you a leading authority in a specific area of skill.

Prerequisites: 5 ranks in the chosen skill, Fame 20 or Infamy 20.

Benefit: Choose one skill. You gain a +1 bonus to your Leadership Score and Reputation for every 5 ranks that you



have in that skill. This bonus counts as a neutral deed for the purpose of determining whether it adds to Fame or Infamy.

FAMILIAR MANIFESTATION

You easily recognize spells that you know.

Prerequisites: Mysticism 3 ranks.

Benefit: You automatically succeed on Mysticism checks to identify any spell or spell-like ability that you can cast.

FIRST CONTACT

You know how to make a good first impression on new races and assuage their fears of the unknown.

Prerequisites: Culture 1 rank.

Benefit: Whenever you encounter an NPC with an Intelligence of 3 or higher that has never before encountered a member of your race, that creature's starting attitude toward you improves to indifferent unless it has a reason to be unfriendly or hostile toward you or would have a higher starting attitude, as determined by the GM.

GOSSIP COLLECTOR (REPUTATION)

You sit at the center of a web of gossip, granting you quick access to valuable information.

Prerequisites: Area of Renown.

Benefit: Whenever you're within an area of renown, you can use Diplomacy to recall information about any gossip or rumors currently circulating within your immediate area. You can't recall information that you have no chance of hearing within your current area of renown, nor can you recall information that isn't available with your current area of renown, even if it would be available within a different area of renown that you've established.

HELPFUL TURN (RELATIONSHIP)

Your motivation to help others is magnified when it is your friends that need the extra help.

Benefit: Whenever you use the aid another, covering fire, or harrying fire action to assist an ally with whom you have a healthy familial or friendship relationship, you gain a +1 bonus to any attack roll or skill check to provide assistance to NPCs with whom you have a strong relationship. This bonus increases to +2 to provide assistance to NPCs with whom you have a powerful relationship.

HEROIC LEAP

You quickly spring into attack when you want to jump.

Prerequisites: Athletics 3 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you attempt an Athletics check to jump, you are always considered to have a running start when calculating your Athletics check DC.

HOMETOWN HERO (REPUTATION)

You are beloved by members of a particular settlement or organization and your arrival is met with joy.

Prerequisites: Area of Renown or Fame 20.

Benefit: Whenever you interact with someone living within one of your areas of renown or who is a member of an organization that you have at least Fame 20 with, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks to change that individual's attitude or make requests of that individual. This bonus doesn't apply against individuals with good reason to distrust or dislike you, nor does it apply against NPCs with a starting attitude of unfriendly or hostile.

IMPACTING (RELATIONSHIP)

Whether good or bad, you leave a deep impression on others.

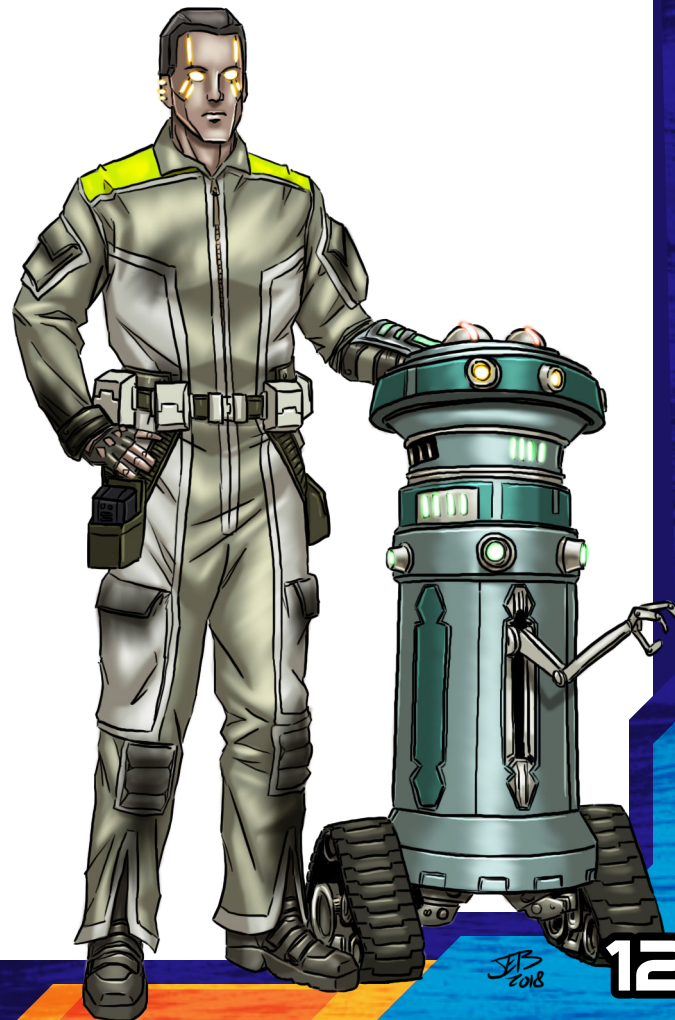
Benefit: Whenever you succeed at a skill check to improve your Relationship Score with an NPC and your skill check's result is 5 or more higher than the DC, your Relationship Score with that NPC increases by an additional +1 for every 5 higher your skill check's result is than this DC (+1 if 5 higher, +2 if 10 higher, and so on). This bonus stacks with any additional increase to your Relationship Score with the NPC for partaking in a particularly thoughtful or twisted social encounter prior to making the check (see page 24).

IMPROVED RENOWN (LEADERSHIP)

You are able to recruit more followers and cohorts.

Prerequisites: Character level 8th.

Benefit: Add 4 to your Leadership score for the purpose of



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determining your maximum cohort level and the number of followers that you can recruit.

Special: If you are using the party leadership alternate rules and multiple characters in your party have this skill unlock, the total bonus to your party Leadership Score is equal to $4 + 1$ for every additional PC that has this skill unlock beyond the first.

INITIATED (REPUTATION)

You have been initiated into a prestigious organization of some kind. Your rank may be actual or honorary depending upon the circumstances in which you are inducted.

Prerequisites: Fame 20 with the chosen organization.

Benefit: You gain an official rank (either actual or honorary) within the chosen organization. You gain one of the following benefits, as determined by the GM:

- » One skill that is associated with the chosen organization is added to your list of class skills. If that skill is already a class skill, you gain a +1 bonus to checks with that skill instead.
- » You gain proficiency with one specific type of weapon or armor that is associated with the chosen organization. This proficiency applies to all models of the chosen weapon or armor.

In addition, you can make small requests of any member of your organization whose Fame with the organization is less than yours. These requests are generally restricted to any small chore or task that require the expenditure of 500 credits or less and little to no obvious safety concerns unless the GM decides otherwise. Organization members can decline your requests, but may suffer a consequence at the hands of your higher-ups for doing so at the GM's decision. Requests that require an organization to give you their money or valuables automatically fail unless determined otherwise by the GM.

Special: You can gain Initiation multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time it is selected, choose a different organization that you have Fame 30 with to apply its benefits to. Your GM can rule that it is impossible for you to be initiated into any two organizations simultaneously thanks to any number of circumstances, such as rivalries or conflicting ideologies.

INNOCUOUS MIEN (SECRET IDENTITY)

You are skilled at compartmentalizing your identities.

Prerequisites: Bluff 3 ranks, Disguise 3 ranks.

Benefit: Add 5 to the DC of Perception checks to pierce your secret identity's disguise.

INNUENDO

You have learned to pass secret messages more efficiently.

Prerequisites: Bluff 3 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you attempt a Bluff check to pass a secret message, you automatically pass the message to its intended target regardless of the result of your Bluff check. In addition, any creature that isn't your ally takes a -5 penalty to Sense Motive checks to discern your secret message.

INSPIRATIONAL (LEADERSHIP)

You inspire your cohorts and followers into working harder.

Benefit: Whenever one of your followers or cohorts performs freelance work for you, they roll twice on their skill check and use the higher result. For every 25 Fame or 25 Infamy that you possess, your cohort or follower rolls an additional time and uses the highest result, up to a maximum of five times if you have Fame 100 or Infamy 100.

INSTANT RECOGNITION (REPUTATION)

Your renown allows you to quickly find new contacts.

Prerequisites: Area of Renown, Fame 20.

Benefit: You can establish an area of renown in 1d6 days. In addition, you can establish an area of temporary renown in any one inhabited region that isn't already one of your areas of renown. An area of temporary renown functions identically to a true area of renown except as follows.

- » An area of temporary renown doesn't count against the total number of areas of renown that you can establish.
- » You can establish a new area of temporary renown when you already have a previous one established. Doing so immediately distances you from your previous area of temporary renown.
- » You automatically distance yourself from an area of temporary renown if you are away from that area for more than 1d6 consecutive days.

Normal: Establishing an area of renown takes 1 week.

LEADER IN YOUR FIELD (LEADERSHIP)

You are renowned for your skill in a particular craft.

Prerequisites: Fame 20, Profession 5 ranks.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus to your Leadership Score and either your Fame or Infamy. If you have 10 or more ranks in at least one Profession skill, this bonus increases by 1 for every 5 ranks beyond 5 that you possess in that Profession skill.

In addition, you earn twice as many credits whenever you use a Profession skill to earn a living if you have at least 5 ranks invested into that skill. This multiplier increases by 1 for every 5 ranks beyond 5 that you possess in each Profession skill (three times as many if you have at least 10 ranks, four times as many if you have at least 15 ranks, and so on).

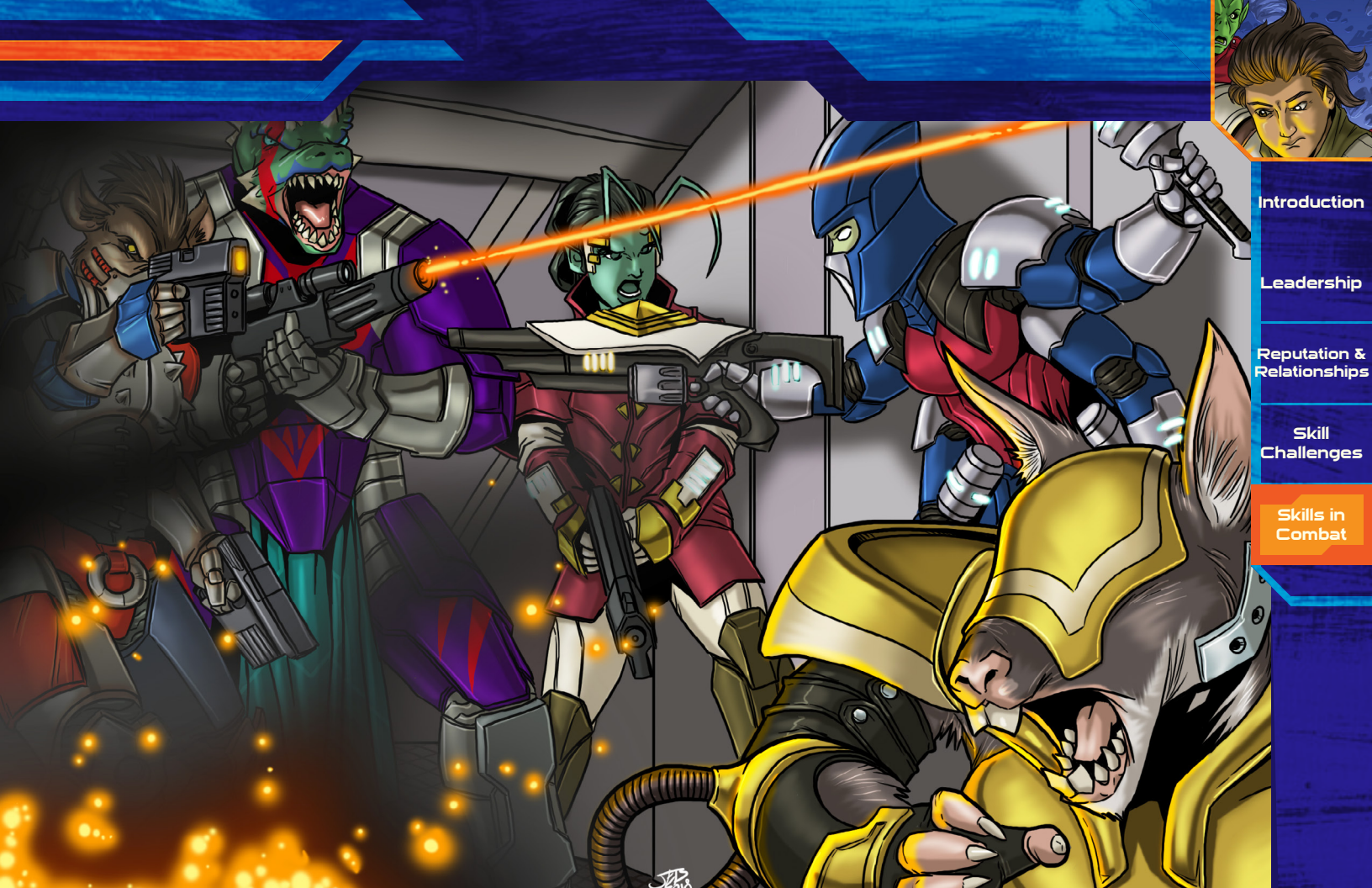
Special: You lose the benefit of this skill unlock for a Profession skill if the total number of skill ranks that you've invested into that skill is less than your level.

LONE WOLF

You are more than capable of getting by on your own.

Prerequisites: No skill unlocks that require a minimum number of cohorts or followers.

Benefit: You can attempt all Acrobatics, Athletics, Life Science, Perception, Physical Science, Sense Motive, and Survival checks untrained. Whenever you attempt a skill check with any of these skills untrained, you gain a bonus to your check's result equal to $3 + 1/2$ your level (minimum 0).



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Special: You lose these benefits if you recruit any cohorts, followers, or similar NPCs.

MANY GUISES (SECRET IDENTITY)

You can take on any number of mundane guises.

Prerequisites: Disguise 5 ranks.

Benefit: You gain the ability to establish mundane identities in addition to secret identities. Establishing and assuming a mundane identity is identical to establishing and assuming a secret identity and provides the same benefits—the only difference is that a mundane identity is that of a generic member of a race of your choosing and cannot resemble a specific individual. The number of mundane identities that you've established does not affect the Disguise DC to establish a secret identity, and the Disguise DC to establish a mundane identity is not modified by the number of mundane identities or secret identities that you possess. In addition, checks to recall knowledge about you while you're assuming a mundane disguise only reveal generic information about the culture, profession, and race associated with your mundane identity.

MAVERICK PILOT

You know at least a little bit about handling every role on a starship, and you can sub in for certain tasks in a pinch.

Prerequisites: Piloting 6 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you are occupying the engineer or science officer role during a starship combat and your total number of skill ranks in that role's associated skill (Engineering for engineer or Computers for science officer) is less than your total number of ranks in the Piloting skill, you can attempt Piloting checks with a -4 penalty to perform engineer actions or science officer actions instead of attempting checks with those roles' associated skills. In addition, you can make Piloting checks with a -4 penalty to repair vehicles, starships, or any item associated with either.

MULTILINGUAL

You are able to speak many languages.

Prerequisites: Int 13, Culture 1 rank.

Benefit: For each skill rank in the Culture skill that you have (and whenever you invest a new skill rank into the Culture skill), you learn 1 additional language.

Special: You can learn this skill unlock multiple times.

Normal: You learn 1 language for each skill rank in Culture that you have.

NEED FOR SPEED (CHALLENGE)

You easily handle vehicles at speeds that would send lesser pilots spinning out of control, and can have better performance under pressure than usual.

Prerequisites: Piloting 3 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you pilot a vehicle that imposes a penalty to Piloting checks to its pilot (such as a goblin junkcycle), reduce that penalty by 1 (minimum 0). Additionally, whenever you use the double maneuver action during a vehicle chase, reduce the penalty to Piloting checks for each action by 1.

NIMBLE FEET

You move quickly to avoid attacks and keep your balance.

Prerequisites: Acrobatics 5 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you attempt an Acrobatics check to move at full speed while tumbling, you take only a –5 penalty. In addition, you are not flat-footed when attempting an Acrobatics check to balance with a DC less than $5 +$ your total ranks in the Acrobatics skill.

Normal: You take a –10 penalty to Acrobatics checks to tumble while moving at full speed.

OBSCURED MIND

You can hide your deceptions from magical discernment.

Prerequisites: Bluff 7 ranks, Mysticism 7 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you succeed at a saving throw against a divination spell, a spell-like ability, or a supernatural ability you can attempt a Bluff check with a DC equal to $20 + 1\text{--}1/2 \times$ the CR or level of the source of the effect. If you succeed, you provide the effect with no information, as if you did not exist. If you succeed by 5 or more, you can instead provide incorrect information of your choosing.

OBSCURITY (REPUTATION)

You aren't well-known, allowing you to act with discretion.

Prerequisites: Cannot have Fame or Infamy of 10 or more.

Benefit: You can establish an area where you and your exploits are known, but you're generally seen as an ordinary individual by spending 1 week in the area. This area must be an inhabited region encompassing no more than 200 million square miles or 10 billion individuals. You can take whatever actions you like during this time, provided you take no actions that cause you to gain Fame or Infamy above Fame 9 or Infamy 9. After 1 week, your exploits allow you





to choose one identity (your true identity, a secret identity, or a mundane identity if you have the Many Guises skill unlock). As long as your Fame or Infamy for the chosen identity is less than Fame 9 or Infamy 10, you don't need to attempt Disguise checks to appear as the chosen identity within your area of obscurity as long as you take no actions that could be considered blatantly unusual or unexpected of an ordinary citizen.

Once you establish a region as being part of your area of obscurity, it remains as such until your Fame or Infamy rises to Fame 10 or Infamy 10, at which point you've garnered enough public attention that you can no longer claim to be an obscure individual. You can have as many areas of obscurity as you want, but you cannot establish an area of obscurity in a region where you have a Fame or Infamy of 10 or more.

Special: If you have any secret identities established, you choose which one of your identities (your true identity or one of secret identities) is famous in each of your areas of obscurity.

This skill unlock counts as Area of Renown for the purpose of meeting skill unlock prerequisites. You cannot learn both

Area of Renown and Obscurity, and if you learn Obscurity, you cannot learn skill unlocks that involve being famous, as determined by the GM.

OVERCOME HINDRANCES

Your mind is a slippery as your body, and even magic has a difficult time slowing you.

Prerequisites: Acrobatics 7 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you have the paralyzed or staggered condition, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to attempt an Acrobatics check to escape with a DC equal to 20 + twice the CR or level of the creature or effect that caused you to gain the paralyzed or staggered condition. If you succeed, the condition immediately ends. Escaping the staggered condition in this manner is a standard action, while escaping the paralyzed condition is a purely mental full action.

PATCH UP

Your medical skills allow your patients to recover much faster.

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Prerequisites: Medicine 5 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you succeed at a Medicine check to treat deadly wounds, increase the number of Hit Points that the target heals to 2 per level or CR of the creature being treated.

POTENT TREATMENT

You practice the most effective methods for relieving infections and other ailments.

Prerequisites: Medicine 9 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you use the Medicine skill to treat a disease, drug, or poison and the result of your Medicine check is higher than the DC by 5 or more, add +2 to the bonus provided by a successful check for every 5 higher that your check's result exceeds the DC (+6 total if 5 higher, +8 if 10 higher, and so on).

PUSH THROUGH (CHALLENGE)

You continue on where other contestants falter.

Prerequisites: Con 13.

Benefit: Whenever you're a participant in a contest and you use the push self action, you only take nonlethal damage if you fail your Constitution check by 10 or more. In addition, you gain a +4 enhancement bonus to saving throws to avoid taking ability damage from using the push self special action.

Normal: You take nonlethal damage whenever you use the push self special action during a contest skill challenge and fail your check by 5 or more.

QUICK CHANGE (SECRET IDENTITY)

You shift between multiple identities with ease.

Prerequisites: Disguise 7 ranks.

Benefit: You can change from your true identity to a secret identity (or from a secret identity to another secret identity) as a full action. This benefit also applies to any mundane identities you've established using the Many Guises skill unlock. If, after using this skill unlock to quickly change your identity, you encounter any creatures who are familiar with your previous identity and the current one, you must attempt a Disguise check opposed by the creature's Perception. If you fail, the creature sees through your hastily donned disguise, realizing both identities are the same individual and compromising all recognized identities. You can spend 1 additional full action adjusting your appearance and persona to negate the need for this check.

QUICK DISABLER

You effortlessly pick locks and sabotaging simple devices.

Prerequisites: Engineering 5 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you use Engineering to disable a device, you reduce the number of rounds it takes to disable the device by half (1d4 rounds for most devices, or a standard action for simple devices and most locks).

QUICK PIDGIN

You can communicate basic concepts to most creatures.

Prerequisites: Culture 6 ranks.

Benefit: You can use the Culture skill to formulate a simple pidgin language that allows basic communication with a creature who understands 1 or more languages, but does not share a common language with you. Using the Culture skill to pidgin a language takes 10 minutes, during which you converse with a creature that you are unable to speak a common language with. After 10 minutes has passed, you make a DC 25 Culture check. If you succeed, you and that creature can use your pidgin language to communicate basic concepts of up to 5 words to one another as a full action for the next hour. If the result of your Culture check is at least 5 higher than the DC, add 5 words to the total amount of information you and the creature can communicate to one another with each full action for every 5 higher that your check's result is than this DC (5 words if 5 higher, 10 words if 10 higher, and so on).

You can only speak one pidgin language at a time, and only with the one specific creature. If you have the xenoseeker theme, this ability grants you a +5 bonus to use the quick pidgin theme benefit instead..

QUICK SNEAK

You can move stealthily while moving quickly.

Prerequisites: Stealth 10 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you use the Stealth skill to hide while moving at full speed or after using Bluff to create a diversion, you take a -5 penalty to your Stealth check.

Normal: You take a -10 penalty to Stealth checks to hide while moving at full speed or after using Bluff to create a diversion.

REACTIVE DISABLER

You spring into action when a trap is triggered.

Prerequisites: Engineering 10 ranks, Mysticism 10 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever a trap is triggered and you are either targeted by the trap or included within the area affected by it, you can attempt an Engineering or Mysticism check to disable the trap as a reaction. Use whichever skill is appropriate to the trap's type (magical or technological). If the result of your check is equal to the trap's disable device DC, the trap's effects are delayed for 1 round. If the result of your check is 10 higher than this DC, the trap is disabled instead.

RENOWNED FOR CONSTITUTION

You possess a reputation for being indomitability tenacious.

Prerequisites: Con 13.

Benefit: You may use your Constitution modifier in place of your Charisma modifier when determining your Leadership Score, the benefits of your Leadership skill unlocks, and your base Relationship Score and Reputation.

RENOWNED FOR DEXTERITY

You possess a reputation for having peerless grace and balance.

Prerequisites: Dex 13.

Benefit: You may substitute your Dexterity modifier for



your Charisma modifier when determining your Leadership Score, Relationship Score, Reputation, and all benefits derived from any of these statistics.

RENOWNED FOR INTELLIGENCE

You possess a reputation incredible acuity.

Prerequisites: Int 13.

Benefit: You may substitute your Intelligence modifier for your Charisma modifier when determining your Leadership Score, Relationship Score, Reputation, and all benefits derived from any of these statistics.

RENOWNED FOR STRENGTH

You possess a reputation for having an amazing physique.

Prerequisites: Str 13.

Benefit: You may substitute your Strength modifier for your Charisma modifier when determining your Leadership Score, Relationship Score, Reputation, and all benefits derived from any of these statistics.

RENOWNED FOR WISDOM

You possess a reputation for being world wise and aware.

Prerequisites: Wis 13.

Benefit: You may substitute your Wisdom modifier for your Charisma modifier when determining your Leadership Score, Relationship Score, Reputation, and all benefits derived from any of these statistics.

RESEARCH MAVEN

You research much faster than most.

Prerequisites: 10 ranks in the chosen skill.

Benefit: Choose one of the following skills: Computers, Culture, Life Science, Mysticism, Physical Science, or Profession (any one). Whenever you take 20 on a skill check with the chosen skill to recall information, you may do so in half the time (1 minute). In addition, you can spend 1 Resolve Point before rolling a skill check to research information with the chosen skill to roll twice and use the higher result.

RIVALRY (CHALLENGE)

You measure your self-worth against the actions of others, striving always to be better than those around you.

Benefit: Whenever you are a participant in a skill challenge that includes one or more opposition, choose one opposition character at the start of the contest before you roll your initiative check to be your rival for the contest. Once chosen, this cannot be changed until the contest ends. Each time your rival earns progress during the skill challenge, you gain a +2 morale bonus to all skill checks that you attempt during the skill challenge if you can see your rival when they earn progress.

SCHMOOZER (CHALLENGE)

You find it easy to get others to open up to you once you know their interests.

Prerequisites: Cha 13, Diplomacy 5 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you're participating in an influence challenge, the DC of any Diplomacy check to sway a target NPC is always equal to the DC of the easiest skill that you've discovered with a successful discovery check. For example, if Diplomacy is normally a hard skill with a DC of 27 but you've discovered that Athletics is an average skill with a DC of 17, the DC of your Diplomacy checks to sway that target NPC is 17.

SEAMLESS GUISE (SECRET IDENTITY)

Your dual identities allow you to easily fool onlookers.

Prerequisites: Bluff 1 rank, Disguise 1 rank.

Benefit: Whenever an opponent attempts a Perception to pierce your disguise or a Sense Motive check to discern if you are lying, you gain a +5 circumstance bonus to your opposed Bluff or Disguise check if one or more of your mundane or secret identities would become compromised if you failed the check.

SECRET SHAPECHANGING (SECRET IDENTITY)

Your shapechanging is a form of secret identity in and of itself.

Prerequisites: Disguise 3 ranks, change shape racial trait, shapechanger subtype.

Benefit: Whenever you use your change shape racial trait, you count as having assumed an established secret identity for the purpose of determining the benefits you gain from assuming a secret identity.

SKILL TRAINING

You've practiced the use of a specific skill.

Benefit: Choose one skill. You gain that skill as a class skill. If you already have the chosen skill as a class skill, you gain a +1 bonus to checks with that skill instead. This untyped bonus doesn't stack with the untyped bonus from your theme or additional selections of the Skill Training skill unlock.

Special: You can learn this skill unlock multiple times.

SMOOTH TALKER

You can smooth over others' impressions of you and your allies.

Prerequisites: Diplomacy 1 rank.

Benefit: Whenever you attempt a Diplomacy check to change a creature's attitude and succeed by 5 or more, you can spend 10 minutes improving the creature's attitude toward one of your allies by one attitude category instead of toward you. A failed Diplomacy check only worsens a creature's attitude toward you if you fail your check by 10 or more.

Normal: When using Diplomacy, your target's attitude toward you worsens by one attitude category if you fail your check by 5 or more.

SOCIABLE

You make fast friends.

Prerequisites: Cha 13, Diplomacy 3 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you attempt a Diplomacy check to

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change a creature's attitude towards you, reduce the DC modifier for an unfriendly creature to +2 and the DC modifier for a hostile creature to +5.

Normal: You add +5 to the Diplomacy DC to change a creature's attitude if they're unfriendly, or +10 if they're hostile.

SOFT LANDING

You easily avoid falling damage.

Prerequisites: Acrobatics 1 rank.

Benefit: Whenever you unintentionally fall 10 or more feet, you can attempt a DC 20 Acrobatics check as a reaction. If you succeed, you treat the distance you fell as being 10 feet fewer (minimum 0 feet). If your Acrobatics check result is 5 or more higher than the DC, you treat the distance you fell as being an additional 10 feet fewer for every 5 that your result exceeded the DC (20 feet if 5 higher, 30 feet if 10 higher, and so on).

SQUAD LEADER (LEADERSHIP)

You are extremely skilled at coordinating small groups.

Prerequisites: Leadership Score 10.

Benefit: You gain a +5 circumstance bonus to attack rolls and skill checks to use the aid another, covering fire, and harrying fire actions when your target is one of your cohorts or followers. This ability provides no benefit in conjunction with any ability that allows you to use one of these actions to affect multiple targets (such as the Suppressive Fire feat), even if one or all of them are your cohorts or followers.

SUBJECTIVE TRUTH (SECRET IDENTITY)

Your dual identities allow you to fool others easily and defeat magic that detects lies

Prerequisites: Bluff 1 rank, Disguise 1 rank.

Benefit: You can lie while targeted or within the area of an effect that normally detects lies or prohibits you from lying, but you take a -10 penalty to Bluff checks to lie under such conditions. If you succeed at your check, you either fool the effect (in case of an effect that detects lies) or overcome the effect (in the case of an effect that would prevent you from lying). The GM might attempt these Bluff checks for you in secret at their discretion.

SWIFT HUNTER

You're skilled at finding your marks in a hurry.

Prerequisites: Survival 5 ranks.

Benefit: You can attempt Survival checks to gather information about a specific creature.

This functions like using Diplomacy to gather information, except the DC is always equal to 15 + the character's CR or level unless you have

blindsense (scent) and are familiar with that individual's scent. When gathering information in this way, you are limited to information about physical actions the creature took that left some sort of imprint on the environment, such as climbing a tree or gathering herbs. Additionally, when you use Survival to follow tracks while moving at full speed or twice your normal speed, you reduce the penalty that you take by 5 (minimum 0).

THREATENING IMPRESSION

Your threats linger in your allies' minds far longer than usual.

Prerequisites: Intimidate 5 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you succeed at an Intimidate check to bully a creature, the change in your opponent's attitude lasts for 1d6 hours.

Normal: Any attitude changes from bullying a creature lasts 1d6 × 10 minutes.

TRANSFORMATION SEQUENCE (SECRET IDENTITY)

You use magic to quickly swap between identities.

Prerequisites: Disguise 1 rank, ability to cast spells or spell-like abilities or change shape ability.

Benefit: You can switch between your true identity and any mundane or secret identity you have established in 5 rounds. If you have the Quick Change skill unlock, you may switch





between identities as a standard action instead. Use of this skill unlock is accompanied by loud sounds or music, brilliant colorful energies, and swift motions. As a result, onlookers can attempt a DC 0 Perception check to notice the spectacle, although success doesn't compromise your identity; it simply causes them to become aware of your presence.

VIOLENT ANIMOSITY (RELATIONSHIP)

You can make fearsome attacks against enemies that you have entered a hostile relationship with.

Benefit: When you attack an NPC that you have a strong animosity relationship with, you gain a +1 morale bonus to attack rolls and weapon damage rolls against that NPC. This bonus increases to +2 against NPCs that you have a powerful animosity relationship with.

WEATHERED SURVIVOR

You are easily able to deal with uncomfortable and dangerous weather conditions.

Prerequisites: Survival 5 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you succeed at a Survival check to endure severe weather, you and any allies that you would otherwise grant a Fortitude save bonus to are immune to all damage caused by weather effects for 24 hours. This doesn't apply to ability damage or drain, nor does it apply to other effects caused by weather (such as asphyxiation or radiation).

WELL-INFORMED NATURALIST

You know more than usual about creatures that you identify.

Prerequisites: Engineering 1 rank, Life Science 1 rank, or Mysticism 1 rank.

Benefit: Whenever you succeed at a skill check to identify a creature, you gain two pieces of information. If the result of your skill check is 5 or more higher than the result, you gain an additional two pieces of information for every 5 higher that your skill check is than the check's DC.

Normal: You gain one piece of information when you successfully identify a creature, plus one additional piece of information for every 5 higher than your skill check's result is than the check's DC.

WICKED (LEADERSHIP, REPUTATION)

Your cohorts and followers are miscreants who delight in your villainess and cruelty.

Prerequisites: Infamy 20, any evil alignment.

Benefit: If you have a reputation for being needlessly cruel (see page 7), you gain a +1 bonus to your Leadership Score instead of the usual -1 penalty. You cannot recruit good creatures as cohorts or followers.

Normal: You take a -1 penalty to your Leadership Score if you possess a reputation for being needlessly cruel.

XENOSCHOLAR'S DISGUISE

Your knowledge of other species allows you to easily disguise

CHOOSING SKILL UNLOCKS AS RELATIONSHIP REWARDS

When you increase your relationship's intensity with an NPC to powerful, you gain a bonus skill unlock to represent the culmination of your experience with that individual. Even if your relationship's intensity worsens with that NPC with time, you retain this bonus skill unlock as a memento of the experiences you had with the individual.

The number of bonus skill unlocks that you can benefit from simultaneously is limited to 1 + your Charisma bonus (minimum 0). Skill unlocks gained from relationships with higher Relationship Scores take priority over those gained from relationships with lower Relationship Scores. For example, if you have two powerful relationships (one at 40 and the other at 65) and a maximum of 1 bonus skill unlock, you would gain the benefit of the skill unlock earned from the relationship that you have a Relationship Score of 65 with.

ALTERNATE RULE: ADAPTIVE UNLOCKS

Instead of using the default method for determining which powerful relationships you benefit from, you can instead grant the player an ability that functions like the Adaptive Fighting feat. When using this alternate rule, all skill unlocks earned from gaining a powerful relationship with an NPC are placed into a pool that the PC can draw from. The PC gains any three of these skill unlocks of their choice by default, and once per day as a move action the PC can exchange one of their active skill unlocks for one that they aren't currently benefiting from. In effect, the PC exchanges one skill unlock they've earned from having a powerful relationship for another one.

yourself as a plethora of alien creatures without arousing suspicion from onlookers.

Prerequisites: Disguise 1 rank, Life Science 1 rank.

Benefit: Choose a number of specific species of creatures that can be identified by the Life Science skill (like human or elf) equal to your total ranks in the Disguise skill. Whenever you make a Disguise check to change your appearance, you can change your appearance to that of any species that you selected with this skill unlock with half the usual penalty for changing your race or creature type, as determined by the GM.

ZEALOUS (LEADERSHIP)

Your followers are attracted to zeal, willingly following you into the abyss.

Prerequisites: Fame 20.

Benefit: Whenever one of your cohorts or followers dies, your Leadership Score is not penalized if you caused their deaths.

Normal: You take a -2 penalty to your Leadership Score to deal with and recruit cohorts for each cohort whose death you've caused, and a -1 penalty to deal with and recruit followers for each follower whose death you've caused.

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ADDITIONAL OPTIONS

Characters of every class possess unique abilities and quirks depending on the types of skills that they need to hone and perfect. The options found within this section allow characters to combine the various archetypes, classes, and themes from the *Starfinder* RPG with the new skill systems found within the *Advanced Skill Guide*, such as the Leadership and Reputation rules, skill challenges, the new combat maneuver system, and more.

NEW ENVOY IMPROVISATIONS

The following envoy improvisations are available to envoys who meet their prerequisites. Note that some of the following envoy improvisations are reprints from the *Starfinder Core Rulebook* that have been adjusted to use the new defensive statistics found on page 108 for convenience.

2ND-LEVEL

You must be at least 2nd level to choose the following envoy improvisations.

CLEVER FEINT (Ex)

As a standard action, you can fake out an enemy within 60 feet, making it open to your attacks. Attempt a Bluff check against your opponent's Mental Maneuver Defense. If you fail, your enemy is flat-footed against your attacks until the end of your next turn. If you succeed, your enemy is flat-footed against your attacks and your allies' attacks until the end of your next turn.

At 6th level, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to treat a failed Bluff check for clever feint as if it were a success.

DISPIRITING TAUNT (Ex)

As a standard action, you can taunt an enemy within 60 feet. Attempt an Intimidate check against the opponent's Mental Maneuver Defense. If you fail, that enemy is off-target until the end of your next turn. If you succeed, that enemy is instead shaken until the end of your next turn. This is an emotion and fear effect.

At 6th level, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to treat a failed Intimidate check for dispiriting taunt as if it were a success.

REDIRECT AGGRESSION (Ex)

As a standard action, you can redirect the aggression of an enemy within 60 feet toward yourself or a willing ally who is also within 60 feet of the enemy. Attempt a Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check (your choice) against the opponent's Mental Maneuver Defense. If you fail, that enemy gains the off-target condition on all attacks made against creatures other than the creature you chose (yourself or one of your allies). If you succeed, that enemy is instead antagonized (see page 112) until the end of your next turn, treating the creature you chose as its antagonist.

At 6th level, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to treat a failed check for dispiriting taunt as if it were a success.

4TH-LEVEL

You must be at least 4th level to choose the following envoy improvisation.

QUICK REDIRECTION (Ex)

You can use redirect aggression as a move action instead of a standard action. You must have the redirect aggression envoy improvisation to choose this improvisation.

NEW EXPERTISE TALENT

The following expertise talent is available to envoys who meet its prerequisites.

MANEUVER EXPERTISE (Ex; See Text)

Whenever you attempt a combat maneuver with a skill that you have chosen with the expertise class feature, you treat all results of a 1 or 2 on your expertise die as a result of 3 when attempting skill checks to perform combat maneuvers. If you have the Improved Combat Maneuver feat with the combat maneuver that you are attempting, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to roll your skill check twice and use the higher result.

NEW MECHANIC TRICK

The following mechanic tricks are available to mechanics who meet their prerequisites.

2ND-LEVEL

You must be at least 2nd level to choose the following mechanic tricks.

MECHANICAL UNDERMINING (Ex)

You can attempt Engineering checks to perform the following combat maneuvers against opponents wearing armor or technological items: bull rush, crush, dirty trick, disarm, feint, reposition, scale, steal (technological items only), or trip.

TRAP SPOTTER (Ex)

When you come within 10 feet of a trap, you can immediately attempt a Perception check to notice the trap, which should be made in secret by the GM. In addition, you add the insight bonus from your bypass class feature to Perception skill checks to notice traps. If you have the visual data processor mechanic trick, you gain a +2 enhancement bonus to Perception checks to notice traps instead.



NEW OPERATIVE EXPLOITS

The following operative exploits are available to operatives who meet their prerequisites.

2ND-LEVEL

You must be at least 2nd level to choose the following operative exploit.

ADAPTIVE UNLOCK

Select three skill unlocks that you do not have but whose prerequisites you meet. You cannot choose a reputation skill unlock with this ability. Once per day as a move action, you can gain the benefit of one of these skill unlocks for 24 hours, or until you rest for 8 hours. Each time you gain a level, you can replace one of these three selected skill unlocks with a different feat that you don't have but meet the prerequisites for.

10TH-LEVEL

You must be at least 10th level to choose the following operative exploit.

DEBILITATING MANEUVER (Ex)

For your debilitating trick, you can make a combat maneuver attempt against your target. You must meet that combat maneuver's positioning requirements, if any.

NEW OPERATIVE SPECIALIZATION

The following operative specialization is available to all operatives.

COMBATANT

You are especially trained for battle, able to use your skills to gain the upper hand during any confrontation.

- » **Associated Skills:** Athletics and Intimidate. You can attempt an Athletics check with a +4 bonus to make a trick attack by physically overpowering your opponent.
- » **Specialization Exploit:** Debilitating maneuver.
- » **Resolved Combatant (Ex):** Whenever you attempt a combat maneuver, you can spend 1 Resolve Point before rolling your skill check to roll twice and use the higher result. If both results are high enough to beat your opponent's Maneuver Defense, you gain a +5 circumstance bonus to the result of your check to determine the effects of your combat maneuver.

NEW SOLDIER FIGHTING STYLE

The following fighting style is available to all fighters.

LUCHADORE

The luchadore fighting style focuses on restricting an enemy's movements using wrestling techniques. You learn to effectively pummel an opponent into submission while mitigating their ability to counterattack you.

Grappler (Ex): At 1st level, you gain Improved Combat Maneuver (grapple) as a bonus feat. In addition, you gain a +3

insight bonus to Athletics checks to perform a grapple combat maneuver and to your Physical Maneuver Defense against grapple attempts. This bonus increases by +1 at 11th level and every 4 levels thereafter.

Chokehold (Ex) At 5th level, whenever you successfully renew a grapple combat maneuver against a pinned creature, you can place that opponent into a chokehold. While in a chokehold, the grappled creature must hold its breath or suffocate (see Suffocation and Drowning in Chapter 11 of the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*). Ending or escaping the grapple also ends the suffocation effect, but it does not restore any Hit Points lost from suffocation. While in a chokehold, the grappled creature cannot use any actions or abilities that require breathing or speaking, such as language-dependent abilities or combat banter. A creature in a chokehold can cast spells, but takes a -4 penalty to their AC against attacks of opportunity provoked from casting a spell.

Grabbing Strike (Ex) At 9th level, whenever you hit an opponent with a melee attack using an unarmed strike or a battle glove, you can make an Athletics check with a -4 penalty to attempt a grapple combat maneuver attempt against that opponent as a reaction.

Inescapable Grasp (Ex) At 13th level, whenever your opponent attempts an Acrobatics check to escape your grapple or attempts a grapple combat maneuver attempt against you, you can spend 1 Resolve Point as a reaction to add your Strength modifier (minimum 0) to your Physical Maneuver Defense against all grapple attempts made against you until the start of your next turn.

Pinning Knockout (Ex) At 17th level, whenever you deal unarmed strike damage (or battle glove damage) to a creature you successfully grappled within the past round, you deal double damage as if you had critically hit your opponent. If you spend 1 Resolve Point as part of dealing this damage, you can also apply the critical effect of your unarmed strikes or battle gloves to the grappled opponent.

NEW SOLDIER GEAR BOOST

The following gear boosts are available to soldiers who meet their prerequisites.

SKILLFUL COMBAT (EX)

Choose one of the following skills: Acrobatics, Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Piloting, Sleight of Hand, or any soldier class skill. You add the chosen skill to your list of soldier class skills if it isn't one already, and you gain a +3 insight bonus to skill checks attempted with the chosen skill whenever you're wearing armor. If you have Skill Focus with the chosen skill, this gear boost increases the insight bonus from Skill Focus by +1 at 11th level and every 4 levels thereafter instead.

You can choose this gear boost multiple times.

TACTICAL COMBAT (EX)

Whenever you're wearing armor, you gain a +2 insight bonus to all skill checks attempted to perform a combat maneuver. This bonus increases by 1 at 7th level and every 4 levels thereafter.

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CONTENDER THEME

You are a competitive athlete or gamer—someone who regularly participates in professional competitions to hear the adulation of fans, sip the sweet nectar of victory, and earn more credits than a single person could ever hope to spend in a lifetime. Although few contenders ever truly make it, you consider yourself a winner first and foremost, even when you aren't in the area or on the field. You might be a baseball player, a professional vidgamer, an iceskater, a member of a debate team, or something even more outlandish or esoteric. Whatever your game, you play to win.

To some extent, the type of competition that you partake in serves as an extension and reflection of your personality. You likely became involved in your sport because you find it enjoyable; it's a way to blow off steam or feel some measure of pride in yourself. Whether you're an active player or looking for your first big break, a retired legend or a disgraced up-and-comer, your passion for your game still burns brightly, and part of you knows that you'll never truly stop loving your game.

THEME KNOWLEDGE; 1ST

Choose a type of competition or competitive sport. This can be an athletic sport, an e-sport, or some other kind of competition such as chess with the GM's approval. You are a celebrated figure in a professional circuit for this type of competition, and your experience traveling from event to event has exposed you to countless cultures, and you recognize many kinds of sports and have honed skills related to your preferred competition. Reduce the DC of Culture checks to recall knowledge about professional competitions and sports, tactics, and celebrations by 5. Choose Profession or one skill related to your chosen type of competition, subject to the GM's decision, such as Athletics for wrestling or Sense Motive for poker. That skill is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to skill checks with that skill. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to the ability score associated with your chosen skill at character creation.

FAMOUS CONTENDER; 6TH

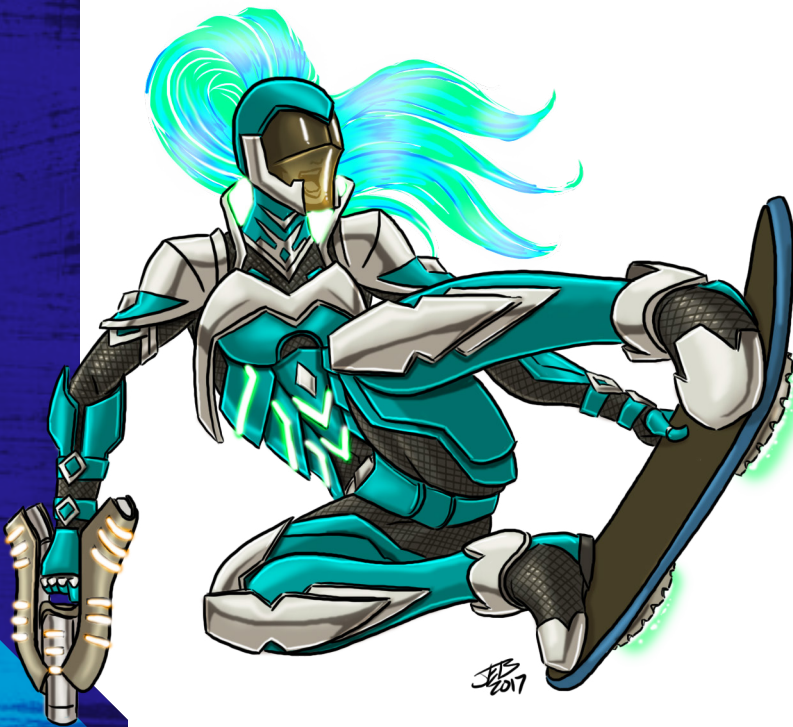
You have developed a considerable fandom that loves you for your arena prowess. You're famous enough that others require only a DC 15 Culture check to recognize your name and a DC 25 Culture check to recognize you out of context by appearance alone. In addition, you gain one bonus skill unlock. This skill unlock must be of the skill challenge type and you must meet the skill unlock's prerequisites.

COMPETITIVE SPIRIT; 12TH LEVEL

You gain the Rivalry skill unlock, even if you don't meet that skill lock's prerequisites. Whenever you are participating in a contest skill challenge of your chosen type of competition or competitive sport, you can spend 1 Resolve Point at the start of each round to change which opponent is designated as your rival or increase the total bonus that you gain from the Rivalry skill unlock until the start of your next turn.

CROWD FAVORITE; 18TH LEVEL

The first time each day that you roll a natural 20 on a skill check during a skill challenge that you are a participant in or successfully complete a skill challenge, you regain 1 Resolve Point. If an audience of 20 or more creatures witnesses your victory, you instead regain 2 Resolve Points.





SCION THEME

You are a member of a large organization, be it a tech firm, a sales corporation, or a government agency. You're a relative nobody in the organization initially, an unremarkable cog in the unspeakably complicated machine of your organization's day to day activities. Despite this, you're devoted to your work and are aiming high, hoping to one day grace the highest echelons of your organization's hierarchy. You know that life's bound to throw many obstacles your way, but that doesn't deter you from your ultimate goals.

The organization that you choose with this theme can serve any purpose you wish, but the most common ones are corporations and government agencies—generally speaking, the priest theme is more appropriate for characters wishing to join a clergy, and other themes cover more specific niches like cults or corporate agents. The scion theme is best suited for characters looking to gain reputation and climb the corporate ladder.

THEME KNOWLEDGE; 1ST-LEVEL

Choose one organization. This can be a corporation, a government, or any similarly large, influential group of individuals. You are a low-ranking member of the chosen organization, and are well-acquainted with the organizational dynamics and interpersonal politics of your organization. Reduce the DC of Culture and applicable Profession checks to recall knowledge about your organization by 5. Diplomacy is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Diplomacy checks. This theme counts as the icon theme for the purpose of determining any bonuses that you gain to your Reputation, but only to the Reputation you have with the chosen organization. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Charisma at character creation.

INITIATION; 6TH LEVEL

Whenever you perform a neutral or positive deed for your chosen organization, increase the adjustment to your Reputation for performing the deed by 1. Additionally, you gain the Initiated skill unlock with your chosen organization, even if you don't meet the skill unlock's prerequisites. If you already have this skill unlock you may choose a different skill unlock whose prerequisites you meet.

BIGWIG; 12TH LEVEL

Your status in your chosen organization improves further, granting you additional benefits while within areas affiliated with your organization. This ability functions as the Area of Renown skill unlock, except its effects apply to any region owned or managed by your organization, or where your organization has a positive reputation. This ability counts as

the Area of Renown skill unlock for the purpose of meeting skill unlock prerequisites, as well as for the purpose of determining how other skill unlocks affect you. If you already have the Area of Renown skill unlock or later gain it, you add all regions owned or managed by your organization and all regions where your organization has a positive reputation to your areas of renowned as bonus areas.

ACKNOWLEDGED SCION (18TH LEVEL)

You have gained substantial acclaim within your organization, filling you with renewed purpose and zeal. Up to twice per day, when you interact with a member of your organization who is not a cohort, follower, or PC for at least 10 minutes, you recover 1 Resolve Point.



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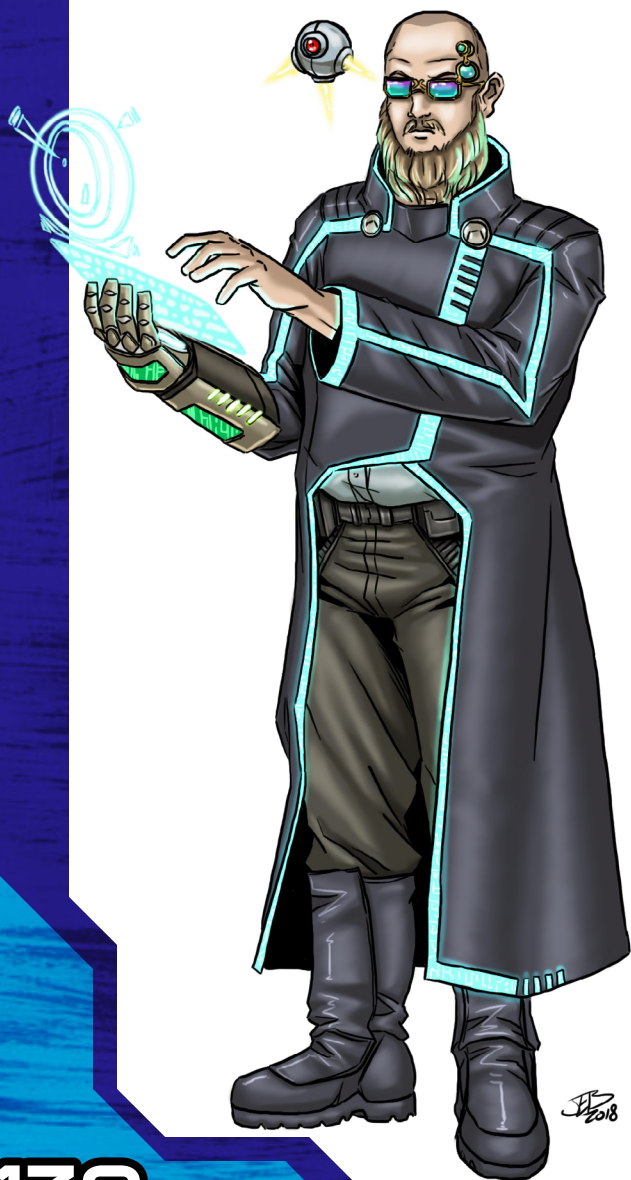
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FIXER ARCHETYPE

You have a very particular set of skills that have been honed to help those who can afford your services “fix” problems. You may be a dilettante with a wide variety of skills, or you might be specialized in a single problem-solving repertoire. Although you may operate within the boundaries of the law, the term “fixer” carries with it the connotation of illicit activity, and most fixers work removing incriminating evidence from crime scenes or reducing fallout from a criminal act using a combination of bribes and social or economic pressure. Fixers pursuing more legal avenues of work include lawyers, private investigators, or political advisors. Whatever jobs you undertake and whomever you do them for, you have an established pedigree of professionalism that keeps clients returning to your doorstep.



Fixers seldom become famous by the very nature of their profession. Having one's self in the limelight draws unwanted attention to the fixer and their career choices, attention that usually impedes the fixer's ability to establish and retain clientele. It isn't entirely uncommon for professional fixers to establish secret identities and aliases as part of their lines of work as a result. This affords them the ability to lead relatively normal lives while also devoting themselves entirely to their work. Of course, not all fixers shun the public eye. One particularly famous exception from the Xa-Osoro System is a human man by the name of Jerome Alfonze Maviyok, a particularly skilled hacker with a dilettante's interest in law, law enforcement, and forensics. Under the pseudonym JAMZ, Jerome was notorious for working with a number of gangs and mafia organizations throughout the system, where his knowledge allowed him to foil and confound the Radiant Imperium's greatest detectives. That is, until he crossed paths with a renowned detective by the name of Kida Ichihara. Detective Ichihara not only managed to unmask and apprehend JAMZ, but also got him to agree to oust a half dozen mafia leaders for their crimes in exchange for a pardon. Today, Jerome is free, but under close police surveillance not only because of his past, but as a form of protection against vindictive mobs.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

The fixer grants alternate class features at 2nd, 4th, 6th, 9th, 12th, and 18th levels.

FIX PUBLICITY (EX); 2ND-LEVEL

You gain the Smooth Talker and Sociable skill unlocks as bonus skill unlocks at 2nd level, even if you don't meet their prerequisites. For each of these skill unlocks that you already have, you may choose a different skill unlock whose prerequisites you meet. In addition, Culture is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you applied the fixer archetype to, you instead gain a +1 bonus to your Culture checks.

METHODS OF PROBLEM SOLVING; 4TH-, 6TH-, 9TH-, 12TH-, AND 18TH-LEVEL

Starting at 4th level, whenever you gain an alternate class feature, you can instead gain Unlock Skill as a bonus feat. The first time you gain this bonus feat, one of your skill unlocks must be Area of Renown if you don't already have it. Whenever you gain a level, you can also choose to replace one of the skill unlocks you have already learned with a different skill unlock. The skill unlock you replace can't be one that was used as a prerequisite for another skill unlock or other ability. You can change only one skill unlock at any given level, and you must choose whether or not to swap the skill unlock at the time you gain the new level.

VIGILANTE ARCHETYPE

Although meddling in the affairs of alien creatures has its dangers, some of the most real danger that a resident of the Radiant Imperium or any starfaring society can face stems from above, specifically the eyes of oligarchs, governmental authorities and other powerful people seeking to protect their claim to the highest echelons of the cosmos's riches. Potential threats to such individuals are quickly dispatched—sometimes through violence and other times through extortion or worse. In order to attain true freedom from such individuals, one must be able to cast aside their everyday identity like a mask, embracing the siren call of a secret identity, a second life. The most skilled individuals who maintain such separate persons and use them to fight or obfuscate themselves from authorities are usually branded as vigilantes, individuals who maneuver through society by day and stalk the streets at by night. In doing so, a vigilante is able to deal with oligarchs or influential individuals within their dens without arousing suspicion, only to turn upon them when polite chatter and persuasions fail.

Not everyone with a secret identity is a vigilante. Most use secret identities to simply avoid notice, but a vigilante utilizes their alter ego specifically to gain notoriety with the hopes of gaining renown sufficient to spread their legacy into every shadow where their enemies lurk, ever afraid of who might be lurking in the shadows alongside them. Most vigilantes are envoys, operatives, and soldiers, although rare members of other classes might don their own masks for different reasons—some to hide their association with illicit activities and others simply to keep their various assets separate and in check.

In the Xa-Osoro System, vigilante justice was the only justice that the average citizen of the Radiant Imperium saw following the government's collapse in the wake of the Nova Age. Vigilantes were crucial in keeping the peace and protecting the common person from being completely enslaved by corporate interests. One particularly famous instance involves a starship construction company from Tor called the Vice Air and Space Exploration Group (VASEG), which was a major economic power following the Radiant Imperium's collapse. VASEG was infamous for wrapping its workers in inhumane working conditions until the vigilante known as General Union appeared. According to urban legend, General Union was a kitsune soldier in the Radiant Imperium who was stationed at Tor at the start of the Nova Age. With no government to fight for, he turned to the shipyards for work, assuming human form by day and fighting for workers rights in his true form by night. General Union's calculated strikes and sabotage caused so much damage over several years that VASEG collapsed, and with its fall rose the Xa-Osoro System's longest-lasting worker's union, which named itself in the kitsune's honor. General Union's true identity was never discovered, and some kitsune claim that the old soldier is still alive today, having ascended into a kyubi from his altruism and willingness to protect the common worker.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

The vigilante grants alternate class features at 2nd, 4th, 6th, 9th, 12th, and 18th levels.

DUEL IDENTITY (EX); 2ND-LEVEL

For every character level you have (and whenever you gain a new level), you gain a free skill rank that must be invested into the Disguise skill. This does not allow you to exceed the maximum number of skill ranks in a single skill, and if you already have 1 or more skill ranks in Disguise, you may invest any leftover skills you wish as you would skill ranks gained from your class. Additionally, you establish a free secret identity at 2nd level that functions as described on page 26, except you don't need to succeed on any Disguise checks to establish the secret identity. Finally, you gain Skill Focus (Disguise) as a bonus feat.

IDENTITY SKILL UNLOCK; 4TH-, 6TH-, 9TH-, 12TH-, AND 18TH-LEVEL

Starting at 4th level, whenever you gain an alternate class feature, you can instead gain Unlock Skill as a bonus feat (see page 117). The first time you gain this bonus feat, one of your skill unlocks must be Area of Renown if you don't already have it. Additionally, each time you gain Unlock Skill in place of an alternate class feature, one of your new skill unlocks must belong to the secret identity category.



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ACCUMULATION

One of the four skill challenge clearance methods, this clearance method is designed for skill challenges that favor expertise over proficiency. During an accumulation skill challenge, a higher skill check result typically awards more progress than a lower skill check result.

BIAS

During an influence challenge or a skill challenge with the audience special quality, a bias notes that characters gain bonuses or penalties to certain checks due to preconceived notions held by the influence challenge's target NPCs or the audience. Positive biases grant bonuses when incurred, while negative bonuses grant penalties instead.

CHASE

One of the five types of skill challenges, wherein participants flee, race, or pursue their opposition to a specific location. Chases always use squares as their clearance method and include opposition.

CLEAR

Winning, beating, or defeating a skill challenge.

Clearance Method: A unified series of rules that describes how progress is earned during the skill challenge. There are four types of clearance methods described in this chapter, and each skill challenge utilizes one of them: accumulation, points, squares, or successes. Each clearance method has its own series of rules governing its use.

COHORT

A full character whose allegiance is to their leader. Cohorts have greater functionality than followers, but you are allotted fewer cohorts.

COHORT MODIFIERS

A number of special circumstances that modify your Leadership Score for the purpose of determining the highest level of cohort that you can recruit as well as your maximum cohort level.

CONTEST

One of the five types of skill challenges, wherein participants attempt to out score their opposition by either scoring the most points or being the last participant with any points remaining at the end of the skill challenge. Contests always use points as their clearance method and include opposition.

DECISIVE INITIATIVE

One of four initiative methods, wherein the PCs are the only

participants and they simply choose the order in which they act instead of rolling initiative checks. If a skill challenge has no other participants, this is the assumed initiative method for the skill challenge.

DEED

An achievement of some kind that you accomplish for or against your organization. Deeds must always be appropriate challenges based on your character level and usually are multi-faceted, requiring multiple successful skill challenges, combats, or both. Completing an adventure or mission is likely an appropriate deed, but defeating a single combat probably isn't. Ultimately, the GM decides what actions are worthy enough to constitute a deed.

DYSFUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIP

A Relationship whose emotions are perverted from what a Healthy Relationship of its type ought to be. For instance, Healthy Familial Relationships are governed by emotions like love and trust, so a Dysfunctional Familial Relationship is a Familial Relationship governed by emotions like jealousy or paranoia.

EDGE

During a verbal duel, an edge is a special advantage that a participant can use to reroll a skill check to earn progress during that verbal duel. Edges often possess specific triggers and situations during which they can be used based on how they're earned. For example, an edge earned from seeding a bias towards a specific tactic into an audience can only be spent when you attempt to use that tactic's skills to earn progress.

EXCHANGE

During a verbal duel, an exchange is a series of rounds spent debating something. One participant opens the exchange with a skill check to earn completion, then all participants go back and forth trying to outdo each other's result. If a participant fails to oppose their opposition during an exchange, they lose points.

FAME

A measure of how well-liked you are by an organization. If you have at least 1 Fame, you're Famous within that organization. If you're Famous, you're generally on good or neutral terms with the people in the organization, and are considered an asset or an ally.

FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIP

One of the four categories of Relationships. A Familial Relationship is usually between people who consider themselves family, such as siblings or close friends.



FOLLOWER

An abridged character who provides rudimentary services to their leader. Followers have fewer uses than cohorts and are typically only able to provide professional services, but you are allotted many more followers than you are cohorts.

FRIENDSHIP RELATIONSHIP

One of the four categories of Relationships. A Friendship Relationship is usually between people who consider themselves friends.

FOLLOWER SLOT

A unit for measuring the total number of followers you can recruit based upon your Leadership Score and the follower's CR. You can recruit up to one follower per follower slot you have access to, based upon your Leadership Score. A follower's CR is equal to its slot's CR.

FOLLOWER MODIFIERS

A number of special circumstances that modify your Leadership Score for the purpose of determining the maximum number of followers that you can recruit.

GENERAL SKILL CHALLENGE

One of the five types of skill challenge, wherein participants simply attempt to clear the skill challenge. They're the most varied of the five types and have no rules or guidelines regarding what they can or cannot include.

GOAL

A description of what the PCs are attempting to accomplish during the skill challenge. All skill challenges have a goal, and the GM should make the PCs aware of the goal if they aren't already.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

A Relationship whose emotions are appropriate for what a Relationship of its type ought to be. Each type of Relationship (Animosity, Familial, Friendship, and Peer) lists which emotions are appropriate for that type in its example emotions entry.

INFAMY

A measure of how distrusted or loathed you are by an organization. If you have at least 1 Infamy, you're Infamous within that organization. If you're Infamous, you're generally on poor terms with the people in the organization, and are considered a liability or an enemy.

INFLUENCE CHALLENGE

One of the five types of skill challenges, wherein participants attempt to sway one or more target NPCs to influence their behavior. Influence challenges always use successes as their clearance method.

INITIATIVE METHOD

A unified series of rounds that describes how characters determine their initiative count (the order they act in) during a skill challenge. There are four initiative methods: decisional, standard, and team.

INTERVAL

A measure of how much time in the game world that a single skill challenge round represents. Skill challenges can have rounds that represent as little as 6 six seconds or as much as a full day of time, depending upon the skill challenge.

LEADERSHIP CHECK

A check attempted when you are required to see how you handle yourself as a leader, or how your subordinates react to your commands. When attempting a Leadership check, roll 1d20 and add your total level + your Charisma modifier. If your GM says one or more of your Leadership modifiers (see below) are applicable to the check, add them to your check result as well. A Leadership check always counts as either a Diplomacy check to change a creature's attitude or an Intimidate check to bully, and is modified accordingly.

LEADERSHIP MODIFIERS

Bonuses and penalties that you add to your Leadership Score based on your leadership style and the kinds of actions you take as a leader. The GM decides which Leadership Modifiers you qualify for, if any. Leadership Modifiers are granted based on long-standing trends with your behavior rather than singular occurrences. Once you gain a Leadership Modifier, it typically takes a significant, prolonged effort to remove it (minimum 60 days), although at the GM's discretion, a single significant event might cause your Leadership Modifiers to immediately change.

LEADERSHIP SCORE (LS)

A rating indicating your effectiveness as a leader. Your Leadership Score determines the total number of cohorts and followers that you can recruit, and is sometimes used for other purposes and effects.

MAXIMUM COHORT LEVEL

If your GM allows you to obtain multiple cohorts, the combined character levels of all cohorts that you possess cannot exceed this value, which is determined by your Leadership Score.

MAXIMUM LEVEL ATTRACTED

The highest level of cohort that you can recruit, determined by your Leadership Score. You cannot recruit a new cohort with a character level that exceeds this value.

OPPOSITION

One or more characters that your party competes with to win the skill challenge, used synonymously with "opponent" in the context of a skill challenge.

ORGANIZATION

Any corporation, faction, government, or similar group of like-minded people can be an organization for this Reputation system. You can track your Reputation with as many organizations as your GM permits, though sometimes advancing the goals of one

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organization might provoke the ire of another one.

PARTICIPANT

A character who is attempting to clear a skill challenge, used synonymously with “character” in the context of a skill challenge.

PEER RELATIONSHIP

One of the four categories of Relationships. A Peer Relationship is usually between people who know each other, but aren’t very close.

POINTS

One of the four skill challenge clearance methods, this clearance method is designed for skill challenges that where participants earn progress when specific circumstances occur. During a points challenge, a successful skill check creates an opportunity to score points.

PROGRESS

The medium by which characters’ attempts to clear a skill challenge is tracked. You earn progress by attempting skill checks with primary or secondary skills, and when you earn enough progress the skill challenge is cleared and you win. Each skill challenge’s progress is tracked using one of four methods: movement, points, progress, or successes.

RELATIONSHIP SKILL UNLOCKS

A reward that you gain for having a Relationship of 30 or higher with an NPC. You can have multiple relationship skill unlocks, but you can only benefit from a total number of relationship skill unlocks simultaneously equal to 1 + your Charisma bonus (minimum 0). The full list of skill unlocks begins on page 108, though the GM decides which boons each NPC provides. See page 123 for details regarding which relationship skill unlocks take precedence, as well as an optional rule that allows you more flexibility in choosing which relationship skill unlocks you benefit from.

REPUTATION

A measure of the maximum amount of influence that you can leverage over a given organization. It is a combination of your personal magnetism, how well-known you are within an organization, and the deeds you perform for (or against) a specific organization. Your Reputation is either one of Fame or Infamy, depending upon your interactions with the organization.

ROUND

A measure of time wherein all characters participating in the skill challenge act in turn, based on their initiative results. Rounds work similarly in skill challenges as they do in combat, except that the amount of time a round represents in the game world varies based on the skill challenge’s interval (see above).

SCORING EVENT

In a contest, a scoring event is the conditions under which you

score points. All contests use points as their clearance method, and making the scoring event happen is the primary way in which participants score points.

SECRET IDENTITY

A secret identity is a persona that you cultivate that allows you to protect your true identity from discovery. Secret identities are useful for preventing your friends and family from being affected by your adventures, as well as for allowing you to live a relatively peaceful life when you want to.

SIGNIFICANT ORGANIZATION

An organization that plays a large role in the campaign, as determined by the GM. GMs are encouraged to listen to their player’s desires when determining whether an organization is significant.

SKILLS, PRIMARY

A skill that you can reliably use to earn progress during a skill challenge. Primary skills vary from skill challenge to skill challenge, but they’re typically skills that make sense as a tactic for clearing the encounter. For example, it makes sense to use Diplomacy to clear a diplomatic mission, or Athletics to clear an athletic competition; such skills would likely be classified as primary skills for those types of skill challenges as a result.

SKILLS, SECONDARY

A skill that you can use to earn progress during a skill challenge with a bit of justification to your GM. Any skill that isn’t called out as a primary skill is a secondary skill, and the GM has the final say on whether or not an individual skill is appropriate as a secondary skill during a skill challenge. Normally you can only use secondary skills to earn progress during a skill challenge if that skill challenge has a secondary skills entry in its stat block, but the GM is free to allow characters to use secondary skills whenever it makes sense to do so. Secondary skills typically have a higher skill DC than primary skills because they represent unorthodox approaches to clearing the skill challenge, however the GM is also free to set a secondary skill DC to whatever they prefer, as determined by the character’s use of the skill and any accompanying roleplaying they perform.

SKILL CHALLENGE

A special encounter wherein characters use skills rather than attack rolls or spells as their primary means of defeating the encounter. Skill challenges can take nearly any form imagination, from racing to capture a wanted criminal to pig wrestling. Skill challenges are categorized by the means by which progress towards completing the challenge is measured: accumulation, movement, points, or successes.

SKILL UNLOCK

A special ability that characters can gain that improve their use of skills. Skill unlocks can be gained as class features, through the Unlock Skill feat, from theme benefits, and even as part of

an archetype's alternate class features.

SPECIAL QUALITIES (SQ)

A special rule that the skill challenge possesses that modifies how the challenge is cleared.

SQUARES

One of the four skill challenge clearance methods, this clearance method is designed for skill challenges that involve participants traveling a specific distance or two a specific location. During a squares skill challenge, participants earn progress simply for moving, and typically attempt skill checks to avoid obstacles.

STANDARD INITIATIVE

One of four initiative methods, wherein participants roll for initiative as they would during combat, with the exception that they can add any one ability modifier associated with one of the skill challenge's primary score to their initiative check result instead of just Dexterity.

SQUARE COUNT

During a skill challenge that uses squares as its accumulation, this is the number of squares that you've earned advanced as progress. This metric is largely used for the purpose of when participants encounter obstacles.

SUCCESSSES

One of the four skill challenge clearance methods, this clearance method is designed for skill challenges where a success is a success, regardless of how fancy it is. During a success skill challenge, participants simply need to earn a specific number of successes to clear the skill challenge.

SWAY

In an influence challenge, this means earning enough successes to get a target NPC to do what you want. Swaying one or more target NPCs is always directly related to the goal of an influence challenge.

TACTIC

During a verbal duel, a tactic is a debating strategy that you assigning your primary skills to. You can only assign one primary skill to one tactic, and your choice causes to interact with your opponent's attempts to earn progress, making it easier or harder based on the tactics used.

TARGET NPC

A Nonplayable Character who must be swayed in order to clear an influence challenge.

TEAM POSSESSION INITIATIVE

One of four initiative methods, wherein participants are grouped into teams that claim possession over the initiative count. While a team possesses the initiative count, members

from that team act in order from highest initiative result to lowest initiative result until they lose possession of the initiative count.

TEAM ROTATION INITIATIVE

One of four initiative methods, wherein participants are grouped into teams and participants with the highest initiative result on their team act first, followed by participants with the second-highest initiative result on their team, and so on. Each "sets" of participants act in initiative order.

VERBAL DUEL

One of the five types of skill challenges, wherein participants attempt to debate a topic either in front of an audience or alone. Contests always use points as their clearance method and include opposition.

VERBAL DUELIST

An NPC who acts as the opposition during a verbal duel.

ZONE

In contests and influence challenges, a zone is an abstraction for an area in a skill challenge. Places like outfield and infield for a contest, or ballroom and restroom for an influence challenge, can both be zones. You typically use actions to move from zone to zone—contests inform you how to move from zone to zone in their description, while influence challenges typically use the switch objective action.



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