

SHADOWS OF A DARKENED MOON

A Campaign Setting for Top Secret / S.I.

Welcome to the Shadows of a Darkened Moon Campaign. This is a setting designed for a modern espionage / investigation / occult-horror game that I will be running using the Top Secret / S.I. rules.

The world is our world, but there are inconsistencies that bother you. For one, there has been a dark shadow or veil over the moon for the past year or so, and you'd swear that it's getting darker. But you don't hear or see any mention of it on the network news or in the newspapers. The only comments have been on websites and blogs of the people who have noticed it. Some say it is a precursor to the coming apocalypse, or a sign of judgement day approaching. The tabloids and tabloid style websites have also been full of 'sightings' of things like boogie men and space men. A fellow in the Northeast Georgia Mountains swears on his blog that his girlfriend is a werewolf, but he still loves her, he just has to chain her up on the full moon.

Whatever is going on, you are one of those who are aware of it, and you wonder why the government hasn't taken notice of it yet. . . .

Or Have they?



Character Creation Summary:

Roll d60+10 (d6 as tens die / d10 as ones die [0 is zero] - add 10 to the total, generating a number between 20 and 79) Five Times Place resulting numbers as desired on the following attributes:

Strength • Intelligence • Reflexes • Willpower • Constitution

If the total is less than 275, add the difference to your attributes as desired, with a maximum of 79 on any one attribute.

Secondary Attributes

Movement = (Strength + Reflexes)/2 (round up)

Dexterity = (Reflexes + Intelligence)/2 (round up)

Determine your character's gender, nationality, description, name and general concept at this time.

A couple of good name generators can be found here:

<http://www.unled.net/>

<http://www.seventhsanctum.com/>

Fill out the Psychological Profile:

Rate each of the characteristics with a NO • LOW • SOME • HIGH • TOTAL result

The characteristics on the profile are:

Cruelty • Loyalty • Passion • Piety • Sanity • Selfishness

There are two blank spots as well, if you would like to add a personality tag of some sort for your character.

Choose up to 6 points of Advantages (Minimum of 1)

You must take Disadvantages that equal or exceed the total of your Advantages.

Characters in this setting will be drawn from all walks of life. If you wish to create an agent of some real-life agency, that is acceptable, but characters from 'normal' and 'mundane' careers will also be useful in this setting.

Character Age

You may play a character of just about any age. Use the guidelines listed below to create your character:

You can choose to play an older character if you so desire. They start the game with a few more skills than their younger compatriots, but they must pay the price.

As characters grow older, they gain skill points, but suffer losses to their physical attributes. In addition, older character acquire mandatory disadvantages that they must take as a result of advancing age.

The categories of the chart are AGE (how old your character is), SKILL PT+ (how many extra skill points your character gets, and the skill categories in which they must be spent), ATT LOSSES (how many points you must subtract from each attribute score at a given age), and DISADS (how many disadvantages you must give your character).

AGE	SKILL PT+	ATT LOSSES	DISADS*
21-39	0	0	0
40-49	6 General 4 Other	MOV -10	1
50-64	8 General 6 Other	MOV -20 STR -10	3
65+	8 General 6 Other CON -20	MOV -30 STR -30	5

* Select aging disadvantages from the following list: Short-windedness; Hearing Impairment; Night-Blindness; Dependents; Vision Impairment.

The Admin can add to (or subtract from) this list as he or she wishes. In addition, the Admin may allow you to "buy off" aging disadvantages by spending a Fame & Fortune point for each disadvantage you choose not to take.

Career Packages

There are five different character backgrounds, called "Career Packages." These will help you to determine what type of person your character is prior to the start of the game.

The Packages are:

Military: Soldier, Officer, Sailor, Mercenary, SWAT-Team, etc.

Professional: Doctor, Lawyer, Politician, Teacher, Engineer, Reporter, etc.

Worker: Factory Worker, Mechanic, Technician, Farmer, Welder, Police Officer, etc.

Entertainer: Singer, Musician, Athlete, Circus Performer, Stage Magician, etc.

Other: If what you want to create doesn't fit in any of the other backgrounds, choose this one.

Skill Categories:

Skills are broken down into six categories - Mechanical, Combat, General, Specialty, Education, and Language skills.

The career package chosen determines how many points for each skill your character has.

Mechanical skills include tool use and technical skills or crafts.

Combat skills include hand to hand fighting ability and the training necessary to use ranged weapons of all sorts.

Specialty skills are criminal or covert operations oriented.

General skills are common to all sorts of backgrounds.

Education skills are those generally learned in school.

Language skills are those which allow the character to speak, read and write in languages other than their own.

Mandatory skills

Each package has 44 skill points designated to certain categories in which they must be spent. This reflects the focus of your training to this point.

Each character also receives 16 additional skill points to place in any skill he or she desires, representing personal interests and hobbies.

Skill Category	Military	Professional	Worker	Entertainer	Other*
Mechanical	0	0	20	6	X
Combat	20	0	12	6	X
Specialty	12	0	0	0	X
Education	0	20	0	8	X
General	12	12	12	20	X
Language	0	12	0	4	X

*The "Other" Career: The player receives 44 points with which to purchase this character's skills, with no more than 16 being allowed in any one category.

Starting Equipment:

In addition to their savings, the character is assumed to have a home, a vehicle and reasonable personal belongings equitable to his or her status.

Military Career

Starting Savings: $3d6 \times \$1,000$

Level of Achievement: Characters with a military background have served in the armed forces of their native country. A character can have been of any rank his or her age will allow:

Ranks below Captain (O-3) or Sergeant (E-5) are available to characters of all ages; An O-3 or an E-5 must be at least 25 years old; an O-4 (Major in the Army) or E-7 (Platoon Sergeant) must be at least 35 years old; an O-5 (Colonel) or E-8 (Master Sergeant) at least 40, and any rank above that at least 45.

Don't forget to take into account age modifications to attributes, advantages and disadvantages for characters over 39.

Other Information: Military characters may maintain contact with their branch of the service through reserve or National Guard duty. If the character has defected or deserted from another country's armed forces, they must take that country as a powerful Enemy.

Professional Career

Starting Savings: $2d6 \times \$100$ for students; $3d10 \times \$1,000$ for others

Add $2d6 \times \$1000$ for each degree earned beyond bachelors

Level of Achievement: The character has attended college, earning at least a Bachelor's Degree.

The character may have attended more than one college, possibly in more than one country. In game terms the players must buy at least one college degree when determining skills (See Educational Skills) and may buy additional degrees if they so desire.

Other Information: This package includes all professions which require extensive education and training. The list runs the gamut from doctors to lawyers to stockbrokers, with plenty of stops in between. Characters can specialize if the players so desire, or stick with a general description.

Worker Career

Starting Savings: $3d6 \times \$1,000$

Level of Achievement: This background package is for characters who hold jobs that require less formal education than the 'professional' careers. Assembly line workers, tailors, barbers, police officers and the like. Generally the characters of this sort have learned a single trade. They have often honed a single set of skills to a high level of proficiency. Though sometimes lacking in formal education, these characters are rich in experience.

Other Information: Characters with this background may have had experience in a variety of jobs before settling on their specialty. In this case, the player may wish to use the "Other" career.

Entertainer Career

Starting Savings:

Characters without the appropriate advantages (See level of achievement, below): $2d6 \times \$100$

Characters with the appropriate advantages and skills (See level of achievement, below): $4d10 \times \$1,000$

Level of Achievement: This background package includes all creative or athletic endeavors. Level of achievement in these fields is determined by the amount of talent and skill a character possesses. Characters with the following advantages are assumed to have talent in their respective fields: Acting Ability, Artistic Ability, Athletic Ability, and Musical Ability.

Other Information: This package encompasses a broad range of professions - everything from actors, singers, clowns, artists to tennis players, stage magicians and professional wrestlers.

Any character can claim to be an entertainer or performer when creating a cover identity. If pressed, however, only those with talent can convince people that they are really what they claim to be.

"Other" Career

Starting Savings: Determined by the Admin

Mandatory Skills: None - The player receives 44 points with which to purchase this character's skills, with no more than 16 being allowed in any one category.

Level of Achievement: Determined by Admin and Player

Other Information: This category is for those who want a character that doesn't quite fit in any of the above categories.

SKILLS

Your character's natural attributes, advantages, and disadvantages help determine how successful a spy he or she is, but the skills you select may be of even greater importance.

Skills are learned abilities: Nobody is born with the ability to use a bow and arrow or take fingerprints. Some people are born with talents and abilities that make it easier for them to fire a bow and arrow or take fingerprints, but study and training are still required in order to be really good at this sort of thing. That's true in the real world and it's true in the Top Secret/S.I. game as well.

You decide which skills your character studies and how much studying he or she does. The selection of skills is determined by a character's background and your personal preferences. Your character's level of ability in the skills you choose is determined by the character's attributes and the number of skill points you spend on each skill.

Attributes and Skills

Every skill in the Top Secret/S.I. game is tied to a particular attribute. The higher a character's score in the appropriate attribute, the more skilled the character is likely to be.

Forgery, for example, requires a steady hand and a keen mind, so proficiency at forgery in the Top Secret/S.I. game is tied to DEX. A character with a high DEX score is likely to be good at forgery. (Forgery is a "DEX-based" skill.)

Animal Training pits the trainer's will against that of an animal, so success as an animal trainer depends on a character's WIL score. A character with a high WIL score is likely to be a good animal trainer. (Animal Training is a "WIL-based" skill.)

Skill Points

High Attribute scores give your character a head start in learning skills, but in order to get really good, you have to study. Study and training are represented by skill points.

Each skill costs a certain number of points to buy (the exact number varies from skill to skill). Some very simple skills, the ability to drive a car, for example, cost only one point to buy; other more complicated skills, like safecracking, cost five!

Skill Levels

When you buy a skill, your character gets it at a "zero level". This means, your character has a basic understanding of what the skill allows you to do.

Some skills are only available at the zero level. Once you purchase such a skill, you can never get any better at it. Check the individual skill descriptions carefully so you don't try to improve unimprovable skills!

Most skills can be improved, however; By spending extra skill points, you can buy additional levels of proficiency, up to the 5th level. The cost of added levels varies from skill to skill - check the Skill Table below, or the individual skill descriptions, to determine the cost of adding level to specific skills.

Each additional level you buy makes your character better at using a skill. Levels one through four represent rungs on the ladder of basic understanding of zero level, to the total mastery of fifth level. A fifth level skill, when combined with talent and the necessary advantages, places your character among the world's elite.

Skill Checks

In more concrete terms, when your character uses a zero level skill, you get to make a check against whatever attribute he skill is tied to.

If your character needs to use a DEX-based skill (to make a forgery, for example), you would have to roll his or her DEX score or less on percentile dice to succeed. If the number you roll is less than or equal to the appropriate score, your character used the skill successfully and accomplished whatever it was he or she set out to do. If you rolled higher than the character's attribute score, the character failed.

Note that some particularly difficult skills only allow you a 1/2 (or even 1/4) attribute check at zero level! Check individual skill descriptions to be sure.

Additional Skill Levels

Each skill level you add gives your character a +5 to the appropriate attribute score when you roll to see if he or she uses a skill successfully. Thus, a level 5 skill provides a +25% modifier to your attributes score when rolling to see if you use that skill successfully. (Zero level allows you to roll against your full attribute score; first level gives you a +5; second level gives you a +10; third level gives you a +15; fourth level gives you a +20; fifth level gives you a +25.)

Note that some particular easy skills give you a +10 for each additional level, so a level 5 skill provides a +50% modifier to your attribute score!

Prerequisites

A prerequisite is a skill you must have before you can acquire another, related skill.

For example, your character can't become an Aircraft Mechanic without some understanding of basic mechanics - if you want to buy the Aircraft Mechanic skill (at an initial cost of 5 skill points), you'll have to give your character the Basic Mechanic skill (4 points) first. In a sense, the Aircraft Mechanic skill costs 9 points.

Becoming an Aircraft Mechanic takes time and effort. Such expertise doesn't come cheap in the real world, and it doesn't come cheap in the game either!

Performing Tasks Without the Necessary Skill

After all this talk about skills, it may come as a surprise to find that your character can do a lot of things without buying the necessary skills!

In the real world, anybody can pick up a saw and have a fairly good chance of figuring out how to use it. Your boards may not be sawed as quickly or cleanly as a carpenter's, but you can use the saw. Similarly, you don't need to be an experienced marksman to pick up a rifle and shoot it. Odds are you won't hit what you aim at, but you can at least give it a shot.

This is reflected in the game by allowing players to make default rolls for their characters. Most skills default to 1/4 the appropriate attribute (rounded up).

Some particularly easy skills default to 1/2 the appropriate attribute. These will be indicated in the skill descriptions.

Characters attempting to use a skill by default will be required to make skill checks more often than characters who have the necessary skill. A character with Driving skill, for example, is only required to make a driving check when something unusual happens - a tire blows, a little old lady runs out in front of the car, and so on. An unskilled character might have to make a driving check just to see if he can get the car in the right gear. When, and how often, unskilled characters have to make skill checks is left to the Administrator.

Some skills are so specialized, or require such extensive training, they can't be used by default. These skills are marked on the Skill Tables with an asterisk.

Choose your character's starting skills, spending the character points given to all starting characters.

The specific skill in each of the skill categories are listed on the Skill Tables. The following pieces of information are presented for each skill:

(#) is the number of a skill. This is simply a convenient way to identify each skill on the table. The primary function of skill numbers is to identify prerequisite skills. If you see a number in the "Prerequisite" column of a particular skill on the Skill Table, find the skill with that number. The numbered skill must be bought before the other.

SKILL is the name of the skill. An asterisk (*) after a skill name means the skill can't be used by default.

ATT is the Attribute you roll against when using this skill. To use a skill which has "INT" in the ATT column, for example, you would make an Intelligence check.

COST is the number of skill points you must spend to acquire level of proficiency with a skill. Three numbers, separated by slashes, are included for each skill. The first is the cost of acquiring a skill at zero level; the second is the cost of levels one through three; the third is the cost of levels four and five. In

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 cases where the slash is followed by an "N", the skill cannot be raised beyond zero level.

PRE is short for "prerequisite". You must buy the numbered skill before buying the more advanced skill.

Mechanical Skills

#	SKILL	ATT	COST	PRE
1	Basic Tool Use	MOV	1/N	-
2	Carpentry	DEX	2/1/2	1
3	Metalworking	DEX	4/2/4	1
4	Construction	DEX	4/2/4	2 or 3
5	Basic Mechanic	DEX	4/2/4	1
6	Aircraft Mechanic	DEX	5/3/6	5
7	Electronics*	INT	4/2/4	-
8	Computer Technician*	INT	5/3/6	7
9	Nuclear Technician*	INT	5/3/6	7

1. Basic Tool Use

ATT: MOV COSTS: 1/N PRE: -

The character with this skill is versed in the use of hammers, saws, wrenches, screwdrivers, and other common handtools. The Character can also use power tools: power saws, drills, sanders, chainsaws, etc. In general, no skill check is required in order to use a tool. If a player wants to use a tool to do something unusual or extremely difficult, however, the Admin may require a skill check.

2. Carpentry

ATT: DEX COSTS: 2/1/2 PRE: 1

Characters with this skill can use wood and woodworking tools. A successful skill check (or series of checks, if the job is complicated) allows a character to build any item that might reasonably be made of wood. This skill does not impart the knowledge of structures necessary to build structures more complex than a lean-to or small boat. For more complex structures, characters must use the Construction skill.

3. Metalworking

ATT: DEX COSTS: 4/2/4 PRE: -

Characters with this skill can use metals and metalworking tools. A successful skill check (or a series of checks, if the job is complicated) allows a metal worker to solder, paint, shape, and construct items made of sheet metal, rods, and beams. Given time and the proper materials, characters with the Metalworking skill can even make a crude metal weapon.

4. Construction

ATT: DEX COSTS: 4/2/4 PRE: 2 or 3

Characters with this skill are versed in the creation of simple buildings and other structures. Given a reasonable amount of time, and the proper materials, they can build a structure by making a skill check. If a project is rushed, or the character is forced to improvise materials, the Admin should make the check more difficult. In either case, a failed check doesn't mean the structure isn't built, just that some

structural weakness exists.

Characters with the construction skill can also spot flaws in buildings constructed by others if they make a successful skill check.

The Construction skill does not allow characters to design complex or special structures like nuclear power plants, hydroelectric dams, or radar installations. For structures of that level of complexity, an Engineering skill is required.

5. Basic Mechanic

ATT: DEX COSTS: 4/2/4 PRE: 1

Characters with this skill are able to repair mechanical devices. They can fix most simple machines, up to and including automobiles and other internal combustion powered vehicles. They have some understanding of electronics, but anything more complicated than a car's ignition system will throw them for a loop and require a very hard check. Anything which is primarily electronic in nature (a transistor radio, for example) must be repaired by a character with the Electronics skill.

Very simple repairs (performing a tune-up on a car, for example) can be made without a skill check. More serious repairs, or repairs made under poor conditions, require a check. A failed check means the machine won't work. The mechanic can continue trying to repair the device, if he or she wants to take the time.

Characters with the Basic Mechanic skill can also figure out how simple machinery works, if they make a successful skill check.

6. Aircraft Mechanic

ATT: DEX COSTS: 5/3/6 PRE: 5

The character with this skill can repair airplanes and helicopters of all sorts, but the skill check to make necessary repairs is modified depending upon the type of aircraft being repaired.

For simple piston-engine aircraft (anything up to a DC-3, or a P-51 Mustang, for example) there is no modifier- the skill check is made at full skill level.

Helicopters are a little more complicated, and skill checks involving them are made at -15.

Jets are more complicated still, and a -30 modifier is applied to all such skill checks.

Space shuttles and other spacecraft (of terrestrial origin) are ridiculously complicated, and a -60 modifier is applied to all such skill checks. (Of course, even a successful skill check won't make up for a lack of appropriate materials and spare parts, so the chances of fixing a broken space shuttle are slim!)

7. Electronics

ATT: INT COSTS: 4/2/4 PRE: -

A successful skill roll, enough time, and the proper equipment allows characters with the Electronics skill to build or repair most kinds of electric equipment - everything from transistor radios to X-ray machines to sophisticated NORAD radar units.

The more complicated the device, the more difficult the roll: Repairing a transistor radio would require a full skill check; repairing a huge radar installation might require a skill check minus 60%!

Characters with this skill aren't trained in the use of electronic equipment, but the knowledge of how such equipment works allows a 1/2 skill check to operate almost any electric device.

Characters with the Electronics skill are not trained to work on computers or nuclear devices, and can't use them by making 1/2 skill checks - these are covered by the Computer Technician and Nuclear Technician skills, below.

8. Computer Technician

ATT: INT COSTS: 5/3/6 PRE: 7

Given time and equipment, characters with this skill can modify, build, and repair computer equipment, including terminals, printers, modems, disc drives, and other components.

This skill also gives the character the ability to program or use a computer.

9. Nuclear Technician

ATT: INT COSTS: 5/3/6 PRE: 7

A character with this skill is familiar with the uses and dangers of nuclear power. The character can operate a nuclear reactor, arm or disarm a nuclear device, and make repairs to these items.

Characters with the Nuclear Technician skill can analyze the design of a nuclear reactor or power plant at zero level, but not until reaching fifth level can they design one themselves.

Given the proper materials, a character with the Nuclear Technician skill can build an atomic bomb.

Combat Skills

Ranged Weapons Skills

#	Skill	ATT	COST	PRE
1	Blowgun	MOV	1/3/6	-
2	Knife Throwing	MOV	2/3/6	-
3	Spear Throwing	MOV	2/3/6	-
4	Slingshot	MOV	1/3/6	-
5	Bow and Arrow	DEX	2/3/6	-
6	Crossbow	DEX	2/3/6	-
7	Basic Firearms	1/2 DEX	1/N	-
8	Pistol	DEX	2/3/6	7
8a	Off-hand firing	DEX	2/2/-	7
9	Rifle	DEX	2/3/6	7
9a	Sniper Rifle	DEX	2/4/6	9
10	Submachine Gun	DEX	2/3/6	7
11	Shotgun	DEX	2/3/6	7
12	Hand Grenade	DEX	1/2/4	-
12a	Grenade Launcher	DEX	1/2/4	7
13	Basic Heavy Weapons	1/2 DEX	2/N	7
14	Machine Gun	DEX	2/3/6	13
15	Recoilless Rifle	DEX	3/4/8	13
16	Rocket Launcher	MOV	3/4/8	13
17	Mortar	INT	3/4/8	13
18	Tank Gun*	INT	4/4/8	13
19	Artillery*	INT	5/5/10	13
20	Missile*	INT	5/5/10	13

Close-Combat Skills

#	Skill	ATT	COST	PRE
21	Basic Melee	1/2 STR or 1/2 DEX	1/N	-
22	Club/Ax/Blackjack	STR	1/2/4	21
23	Knife	DEX or STR	1/3/6	21
23a	Silent Kill	INT	1/N	23
24	Fencing	DEX	3/4/8	21
25	Sword	MOV	2/4/8	21
26	Spear/Staff	MOV	1/3/6	21

Close-Combat Fighting Styles

#	Skill	ATT	COST	PRE
27	Boxing*	STR	2/3/6	21
28	Oriental Martial Arts*	MOV	3/4/8	21
29	Wrestling*	MOV	3/3/6	21

Close-Combat Techniques

Technique	Boxing	Wrestling	Martial Arts
Attack/Defend	X	-	X
Blindfighting	X	X	X
Drop	-	X	X
Hold	-	X	X
Instant Defense	-	-	X
Instant Stand	-	X	X
Knock Down	X	X	X
Leap	-	X	X
Multi-Attacks	X	-	X
Multi-Defense	X	X	X
Stun	-	-	X
Surprise Action	-	-	X
Throw	-	X	X
Vital Areas	X	-	X

1. Blowgun

ATT: MOV COSTS: 1/3/6 PRE: -

Characters with this skill can use blowguns. The blowgun can be loaded with darts (poisoned or not) or blunt ammunition (anything from a lead ball to a dried pea).

Damage done by blowguns is determined largely by the lung power and the length of the blowgun. For simplicity's sake, however, assume a blunt shot does 1 point of damage (no die roll). Darts do 1d4-1 basic damage. If you're using drugged or poisoned darts, roll normal 1d4-1 damage and then consult the poison rules of the Administrators Guide.

Characters with the Blowgun skill can make blowguns from scratch, assuming they can find the necessary materials (mainly a straight, hollow branch or piece of tubing).

2. Knife Throwing

ATT: MOV COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: -

Character with the Knife Throwing skill are practiced in the art of throwing knives. If perfectly balanced throwing knives are used, the character rolls against MOV. A character with this skill who has only ordinary knives must make a 1/2 MOV roll to hit a target. All ranged weapon modifiers apply.

3. Spear Throwing

ATT: MOV COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: -

This skill allows characters to throw spears. A perfectly balanced spear, designed for throwing, allows a roll against MOV. An ordinary spear requires a 1/2 MOV roll. All ranged weapon modifiers apply.

4. Slingshot

ATT: MOV COSTS: 1/3/6 PRE: -

A child's weapon it may be, but loaded with lead shot or a decent size stone, the slingshot can be quite accurate, completely silent, and utterly devastating.

A successful skill check, taking into account ranged weapon modifiers, allows the shooter to hit a target.

Slingshots come in a variety of sizes and levels of sophistication. For game purposes, assume all slingshots do 1,2, or 3 points of damage, depending upon the size of the shot fired - a 1" stone or lead ball does 1 point, a 2" shot does 2 points, and a 3" shot does 3 points. No die roll is necessary in determining damage.

Characters with this skill can make their own slingshots, given time and the proper materials (a knife and a forked branch). Alternatively, they can improvise, using a tie or strip of cloth as a sling.

5. Bow and Arrow

ATT: DEX COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: -

In addition to being skilled in the use of the bow and arrow, characters with this skill can restring a broken bow. In a pinch, they can build a bow from scratch. A bow built during a character's free-time can be as good as a professionally-made one. A bow built in the field or in poor conditions can't be as good. A 1/2 DEX check is required to hit a target, but damage is unaffected - 1d4 for a small bow, 1d6 for a large one.

A successful skill check, taking into account ranged weapons modifiers, allows the shooter to hit a target.

6. Crossbow

ATT: DEX COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: -

This skill allows characters to use any crossbow - from the most archaic, to the most modern. IN addition, they can restring a broken bow.

A successful skill check, taking into account ranged weapon modifiers, allow the shooter to hit a target. A small crossbow can do 1d4 damage, a large one, 1d6.

7. Basic Firearms

ATT: 1/2 DEX COSTS: 1/N PRE: -

This skill gives characters a basic understanding of how firearms work, allowing them to use almost any skill (and thus weapon) in the Firearms category at 1/2 DEX. Characters with Basic Firearms can't use the Artillery, Tank Gun, or Missile skills - these must be learned separately.

The Basic Firearms skill does not allow characters to repair broken or jammed weapons.

The Basic Firearm skill can't be improved beyond first level.

8. Pistol

ATT: DEX COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: 7

Characters with the Pistol skill have a good understanding of the use and maintenance of pistols.

Characters with a first level Pistol skill can fire any pistol at their full DEX level. Each additional level of skill adds 5% to DEX when firing a pistol. Additional skill levels also gives characters a better chance to hit a particular body location or difficult target (see "Effects of Skill on Hit Location").

Jammed pistols can be unjammed on a 1/2 DEX roll, and broken weapons can be repaired on a 1/4 DEX roll (though the Admin always has the option of saying a weapon is too far gone to be repaired, or will require a great deal of time to fix).

8a. Off-hand Firing

ATT: DEX COSTS: 2/2/- PRE: 7

When characters fire with their "wrong" hand, they normally suffer a -30 penalty. Each level of Off-Hand Firing skill the character has reduces this penalty by 10 points. Thus, a character with level 3 Off-hand Firing suffers no penalty when shooting with his "wrong" hand. The skill cannot be raised above level three.

9. Rifle

ATT: DEX COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: 7

As for Pistol, but the character can use and repair any rifle - bolt-action, automatic, or carbine.

9a. Sniper Rifle

ATT: DEX COSTS: 2/4/6 PRE: 9

Sniper rifles are more than just standard-issue rifles. They are carefully weighed, zeroed-in, and adjusted to the user. For a character to gain the full benefits of a sniper rifle, he must have the appropriate training. With this training, he can zero-in and adjust sights of his weapon. Once adjusted, the character gains a +10 bonus per level instead of the normal +5 adjustment on his chance to hit. The bonus only applies to sniper rifles and only to a sniper rifle personally adjusted by the firing character.

10. Submachine Gun

ATT: DEX COSTS: 3/4/8 PRE: 7

As for Pistol, but the character can use and repair any submachine gun.

11. Shotgun

ATT: DEX COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: -

As for Pistol, but the character can use and repair any shotgun.

12. Hand Grenade

ATT: DEX COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: -

This is a basic throwing skill. Characters with the Hand Grenade skill can arm and throw grenades of all sorts.

Characters with this skill can also hurl other objects with a high degree of accuracy - anything from a baseball to a molotov cocktail. This skill doesn't give a character the knowledge to concoct a homemade bomb, however: For that you need the Demolitions skill or a Chemistry background.

12a. Grenade Launcher

ATT: DEX COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: 7

This skill allows the character full use with any type of grenade launcher or rifle grenade, from the under-barrel M203, and the single-shot M79 to any of the latest exotic 40mm multiple-shot weapons. Those without the skill can still fire such weapons using the Basic Firearms default value.

13. Basic Heavy Weapons

ATT: 1/2 DEX COSTS: 2/N PRE: 7

The character with this skill has a basic understanding of how to operate heavy weaponry. It includes tripod and vehicle-mounted weapons, heavy machine guns, recoilless rifles, bazookas, mortars, and portable anti-tank and anti-aircraft rocket launchers. This skill also provides some knowledge of ammunition types (e.g., high explosive and armor piercing), as well as range-finder and indirect fire techniques.

Characters with this skill can use the Machine Gun, Recoilless Rifle, Rocket Launcher, and Mortar skills at 1/2 DEX level. It does not allow characters to use Artillery, Missile, or Tank Gun skills - these must be bought separately. It also doesn't allow characters to unjam or repair jammed or broken weapons.

14. Machine Gun

ATT: DEX COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: 13

This skill allows characters to use tripod and vehicle-mounted machine guns. Jammed machine guns can be unjammed on a 1/2 DEX roll. A broken machine gun can be repaired on a 1/4 DEX roll, unless the Admin decides the weapon is too badly damaged.

15. Recoilless Rifle

ATT: DEX COSTS: 3/4/8 PRE: 13

Although recoilless rifles are falling out of favor in the armed forces throughout the world, characters occasionally still need this skill. A character is only skilled in the use of specific models. For each level of skill, the character receives training in a named type of recoilless rifle (Carl Gustav, etc.). The character uses his full DEX when firing these weapons. When firing an unfamiliar model, the character fires at 1/2 DEX, but adds 5 points per skill level to his normal chance to hit. A character can only service and maintain a recoilless rifle with this he is familiar.

16. Rocket Launcher

ATT: DEX COSTS: 3/4/8 PRE: 13

This category include RPG (rocket propelled grenades), LAW, SA-7, and other unguided or self guided missiles. Every level of skill allows the character to be fully capable with one specific weapon system. This is normally the one used by the service in which the character trained. An SAS veteran would know how to use a Blowpipe, a SEAL could handle a LAW, a Spetznaz an SA-7, etc. Other rocket launchers are fired at 1/2 DEX (although the character is still allowed to add his bonus for skill level).

17. Mortar

ATT: DEX COSTS: 3/4/8 PRE: 13

While the principles of mortar operation are the same from nation to nation, the actual hardware for ranging, fire control, fusing, and rounds varies greatly. Thus, at level 1 skill, a character can handle those mortars used by his service at normal chances to hit. For every two levels of skill beyond the first, the character can learn to use the mortars of another nationality. When attempting to use the mortars other than those for which a character is trained, the chance to hit is 1/2 INT with no adjustment for skill levels. Thus, an American Delta Force veteran with level 1 skill could fire standard US mortars without particular difficulty, but would find himself at a serious disadvantage dealing with a piece of equipment from a Warsaw Pact country. At level 3, he could add these mortars to his knowledge, having studied their operation and equipment. A character can only attempt to repair those mortars with which he is familiar.

18. Tank Gun

ATT: DEX COSTS: 4/4/8 PRE: 13

While tank guns may look the same on the outside, they are hardly alike in the turret. Thus, each level of skill allows the character knowledge to operate a particular tank's gun. The character can attempt to fire other tank's guns, but does so at 1/2 INT. Minor maintenance can be performed for any tank gun, but repairs require mechanical knowledge.

19. Artillery

ATT: DEX COSTS: 5/5/10 PRE: 13

Like mortars, the basic principles of artillery are much the same throughout the world. However, the exact mechanics of artillery pieces vary from nation to nation. At level 1, the character has the basic

skills to handle those pieces used by his nation. Therefore, the character can add one other nation for every two levels. If the character tries to use an unfamiliar artillery piece, he does so at 1/2 INT.

20. Missile

ATT: DEX COSTS: 5/5/10 PRE: 13

In addition to vehicle-mounted and installation based missiles, this category include those which are manually guided, such as wire-guided missiles. For each level of skill, the Character can learn to operate one missile system. Even for characters with the skill, there are no defaults to operate unfamiliar systems.

21. Basic Melee

ATT: 1/2 STR or 1/2 DEX COSTS: 1/N PRE: -

This skill is for characters who want to be able to fight at close-quarters. It allows the use of nearly all skills in the Close-Combat category at 1/2 DEX or 1/2 STR (player's choice).

Basic Melee does not give characters the ability to use the Boxing, Wrestling, or Martial Arts skills, or any of the special holds and throws possible with these skills. Boxing, Wrestling, and Martial Arts must be learned separately.

22. Club/Ax/Blackjack

ATT: STR COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: 21

This skill allows characters to use a club, ax, a pick, a nightstick, a chair-leg, a baseball bat, or a blackjack (anything from a sock stuffed with coins to a professionally made flexible rubber club).

23. Knife

ATT: DEX COSTS: 3/4/8 PRE: 21

Characters with this skill know how to fight with knives of all sorts - everything from pocket knives to stilettos to bowie knives. It also allows fighting with improvised weapons like broken bottles or shards of glass, which can be used most effectively with knife-fighting techniques.

The knife skill does not give characters the ability to throw knives. For that you need the Knife Throwing skill.

23a. Silent Kill

ATT: INT COSTS: 1/N PRE: 23

This skill allows a character to attempt a single, quiet attack with a knife. In situations where noise might be a factor, an INT check is made when the character attacks. If the attack roll and the Silent Kill skill check are successful, the character does not make enough noise to attract immediate attention during the attack (though damage still needs to be rolled). If the Silent Kill skill check failed, the attack was not quieter than the situation warranted. (The sentry may have fallen against the wall and dropped his rifle.) If the attack fails, the amount of noise created is up to the Administrator as part of the NPC's reaction. The Silent Kill skill does not improve the chances of a hit or increase damage done in an attack - it only offers a chance of silence and secrecy.

24. Fencing

ATT: DEX COSTS: 3/4/8 PRE: 21

This skill give characters the ability to use foils, sabres, and rapiers with greater skill than other characters. Fencers get a +10 to their skill level any time they use on of these weapons.

Ordinarily, the fencer does normal damage for the weapon he or she is using. But, the fencer also gets a special attack - disarm. Characters who call for a disarm and make their skill check, do no damage, but the opponent's weapon may be ripped from his or her hand! A disarm can be countered by a successful STR check. If the foe's STR check fails, the fencer rolls a normal damage die to determine how many feet the weapon is flung by the force of the disarming blow.

If you fencer doesn't have a foil, sabre, or rapier, you're out of luck - the Fencing skill depends on the balance and design of the weapons listed above. Treat this like the normal sword skill.

25. Sword

ATT: MOV COSTS: 2/4/8 PRE: 21

This is the ability to use any bladed weapon larger than a knife. This includes, but is not limited to, shortswords, long swords, two-handed swords, bastard swords, and so on. If no sword is available, characters with this skill can use table legs or any similarly-shaped object, but damage done with such an improvised weapon is bruising damage, not wound damage.

26. Spear/Staff

ATT: MOV COSTS: 1/3/6 PRE: 21

Characters with this skill can fight with any pole weapon, balanced or unbalanced, edged or blunt. This skill allows the use of spears, tridents, pole-axes, halberds, javelins, staffs and even rifles with attached bayonets.

The Spear/Staff skill does not allow characters to throw spears. For that you need the Spear Throwing skill.

27. Boxing

ATT: STR COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: 21

Characters with this skill are trained in the art of fisticuffs. They are better able to block blows - and deliver them - than untrained fighters. Characters with this ability get several special attacks, described in the combat technique chart.

28. Oriental Martial Arts

ATT: MOV COSTS: 3/4/8 PRE: 21

Characters with this skill are trained in a variety of martial techniques which set them apart from ordinary fighters. They have several special holds, attacks, and defenses which set them apart from ordinary fighters. These special abilities of martial arts are described in the combat technique chart.

29. Wrestling

ATT: MOV COSTS: 3/3/6 PRE: 21

Character with this skill are trained in the art of grappling and subduing their foe. They have several holds and other special attacks at their disposal. These are described in the combat technique chart.

Close-Combat Techniques

Attack/Defend: The Character can make one attack and one defend against one attack on the same turn.

Blindsight: This is the ability to fight (and perform other vision-related tasks) in total darkness. The character's skill levels are only halved in the dark, instead of 1/4 skill level.

Drop: This attack causes victims to open one hand and drop something they are holding. A skill check which succeeds on a roll of 1/4 skill level or less causes both of the target's hands to open. Anything held in either hand is dropped.

Hold: Any character can put another character into a hold, but characters who know this technique get the added advantage of doing damage to the held character, if they choose.

In most respects, this technique uses the same system for holds as described before, but if the holding player chooses, he or she can cause damage to the opponent. The same skill check (at -20) which puts the opponent in the hold also does 1d4 points of bruising damage or 1 point of wound damage (attacker's choice) to any part of the body. On subsequent turns, a skill check at full skill level does 1d4 bruising damage or 1 point of wound damage.

Instant Defense: Characters with this ability are harder to surprise than others - when surprised, they can Defend (though they can't attack).

Instant Stand: Characters who are knocked to the ground, or are lying prone can stand and move without penalty in a single turn.

Knock Down: Successful use of this technique knocks opponents to the ground directly in front of your character.

Leap: Characters who know this technique can leap 10% of their MOV rating into the air, and cover twice that distance horizontally. This can be part of a MOV or part of an attack. Thus, they can engage and attack characters much farther than 5' away in hand to hand combat.

Multiple Attacks: Characters with this technique can make a number of attacks equal to their level of skill in the technique, as long as all opponents are within 5'. They can direct their attacks against a single foe, or spread them out among many. The first attack is at -20 (the modifier for using the special technique); the second attack is at -30; the third at -40, and so on.

Multiple Defense: Characters with this technique can defend against as many attacks as they have levels of skill in that technique, as long as all attackers are within 5'. The first attack is at -20 (the modifier for using the special technique); the second attack is at -30; the third at -40, and so on.

Stun: Characters using this technique can take their victims out of the action almost immediately. A successful skill check at -20 does normal damage and stuns the victim slightly - the victim loses one action (on this turn if he or she hasn't already acted; on the next if he or she has). If the check is less than or equal to the skill minus 40, the foes is immediately knocked unconscious.

Surprise Action: Characters with this technique can act so quickly or make such a distracting noise (or both) that all foes within 10' are taken by surprise, even in the middle of a fight! A successful check (at -20) allows the martial artist to make a surprise attack against any character within 10 feet.

Throw: A character must have a victim in a hold before using this technique. A successful skill check (at -20) allows the character with this technique to throw the held character 1d8 feet in any direction. Unless the victim falls onto something soft, he or she suffers 1d6 of bruising damage to a randomly determined location.

Vital Areas: A successful attack (at -20) does 2 points of wound or bruise damage to the area of the player's choice.

Specialty Skills

#	Skill	ATT	COST	PRE
1	Ballistics*	INT	3/3/6	-
2	Concealment	INT	2/2/4	-
3	Cryptography	INT	2/4/8	-
4	Demolitions*	DEX	4/2/4	-
4a	Atomic Demolitions	1/2 INT	4/6/8	4
	Munitions*			
4b	Adv Demolitions*	DEX	4/N	4
4c	Booby Traps	INT	2/4/6	4
5	Disguise	INT	3/3/6	-
6	Fingerprinting	INT	3/3/6	-
7	Forgery	DEX	4/4/8	-
8	Interrogation	WIL	1/2/4	-
9	Lockpicking*	DEX	4/3/6	-
10	Pickpocket	REF	4/3/6	-
11	Safecracking*	1/2 INT	5/4/8	-
12	Shadowing	WIL	2/2/4	-
13	Stealth	MOV	2/2/4	-
14	Surveillance	INT	2/2/4	-
15	Survival	WIL	1/2/4	-
15a	Arctic			
15b	Jungle			
15c	Desert			
15d	Temperate			
15e	Bush			
16	Tracking	INT	2/2/4	-
16a	Counter-tracking	INT	2/N	15
17	Cartography	INT	2/N	-
18	Forward Observer	INT	1/2/4	-
19	Radar*	INT	3/4/6	-
20	Sonar*	INT	3/4/6	-
21	STANO	INT	1/2/4	-

1. Ballistics

ATT: INT COSTS: 3/3/6 PRE: -

This skill allows your character to analyze the distinctive patterns left on a bullet when it is fired. A successful INT check allows a character with the Ballistics skill to determine whether or not a bullet was fired from a given gun, provided the gun is available for testing. If the character does not have the use of a laboratory, however, a 1/2 INT check is required to use the skill successfully.

2. Concealment

ATT: INT COSTS: 2/2/4 PRE: -

This is the ability to hide oneself and to camouflage other characters or objects.

A successful skill check means a character or object is hidden, and anyone attempting to spot the hidden character or object must make an INT check to do so. A failed Concealment check means the character or object isn't hidden well. A second attempt to hide the character or object may be made, but a failed second roll means there isn't sufficient cover, and no further Concealment attempts can be made until the character moves to a new location.

Concealment checks, and attempts to spot hidden characters and objects, may be modified by circumstances: An attempt to hide in the middle of an open field, for example, would be at -20 or more; there just isn't anyplace to hide! The Acute Vision advantage gives characters a bonus to their attempts to spot hidden characters and objects.

Concealment defaults to 1/2 INT.

3. Cryptography

ATT: INT COSTS: 2/4/8 PRE: -

This is the ability to make and break codes. A skill check is always required in order to encode or decode a message. Each level of skill the encoder has results in -5% modifier of the roll of anyone trying to break the code.

4. Demolitions

ATT: DEX COSTS: 4/2/4 PRE: -

This is the ability to place, detonate and defuse explosives. Characters with the Demolitions skill can judge the amount of explosive required, as well as where to place it. After all charges and fuses have been placed, an INT check is rolled for each one. Success means the explosives went off as desired. Failure means something went wrong, and the explosives didn't go off. A bad break, however, means too much explosive was used, and the destruction is far greater than anticipated.

4a. Atomic Demolitions Munitions

ATT: 1/2 INT COSTS: 4/6/8 PRE: 4

Atomic demolitions munitions (also called ADM), is a highly specialized and rare skill. Characters with this skill can attempt to place ADM devices (although the Administrator is advised NEVER to allow Player Characters access to these devices) or, more likely, disarm such devices.

4b. Advanced Demolitions

ATT: DEX COSTS: 4/N PRE: 4

The one-level skill allows those already trained in demolitions to construct ribbon, saddle, diamond, and ear-muff charges. These are hard to make and place, but use half the explosive normally required for the same job. Using advanced demolitions requires a DEX check, unmodified for demolition skill.

4c. Booby Traps

ATT: INT COSTS: 2/4/6 PRE: -

Characters with this skill can attempt to build and place explosive devices - Claymore mines, grenade traps, and simple bombs, primarily. The character also has the chance to defuse or circumvent such devices if they are noticed. Unlike demolitions, these devices cannot be placed to intentionally destroy buildings or bridges, to fell trees, crater runways, or perform other functions normally associated with demolitions. Instead, such devices can be used to cause physical damage. The check is made when the device is set. A failed check indicates the device fails or is noticed and avoided. A Bad Break may result in the premature explosion of the device, possibly even while the character is planting it.

5. Disguise

ATT: INT COSTS: 3/3/6 PRE: -

This is the ability some characters have to obscure their appearance. Given time, makeup, and appropriate costumes, characters with the Disguise skill can make themselves look like someone else. A successful skill check means the disguise is good enough to satisfy the characters. Whether it will hold up under NPC examination is another story.

Whenever the Admin deems it appropriate, NPC's will be given the opportunity to see through the disguise by making a 1/2 INT check. A successful check means the NPC sees through the disguise. A failed check means the disguise held up.

Several modifiers come into play when using the Disguise skill: Add 5% to the Disguise check for each level of Disguise skill the character has. Characters with both Disguise and Acting Ability advantage add 10% to their roll (if they have 2 points of Acting Ability), or 20% (if they have 4 points of Acting Ability).

6. Fingerprinting

ATT: INT COSTS: 3/3/6 PRE: -

Characters with this skill can find, lift, record, and interpret fingerprints, identifying people by this distinctive characteristic. Two conditions must be met before this skill can come into play: There must be fingerprints left at the scene of a crime or covert operation, and the character must have the equipment necessary to find, lift, and record prints.

If both conditions are met, a successful skill check allows a character to lift prints from any smooth, clean surface (metal, plastic, or glass). A successful 1/2 skill check will even locate prints on surfaces like wood, cardboard, or glossy paper. The Admin will determine whether or not a surface can hold a print.

7. Forgery

ATT: DEX COSTS: 4/4/8 PRE: -

Characters with this skill can copy signatures and documents, given the proper materials and time. A successful skill check means the forgery is good.

Characters attempting to detect the forgery make an INT check, subtracting 5% from their INT score for each level of skill the forger has. A successful check means the forgery has been spotted. A failed check means it passed inspection.

A character using this skill by default may be able to make a copy that will stand up under cursory examination, but any careful observation will reveal the fakery - no INT check is required.

8. Interrogation

ATT: WIL COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: -

This skill allows characters to extract information from unwilling subjects. (Characters who want to talk are free to do so at any time.)

When NPCs question PCs, the interrogator must first decide whether to try physical or psychological interrogation techniques.

Physical interrogation techniques do damage to the victim. How long characters hold out against pain and damage is up to players. Players unwilling to let their characters suffer damage can spill their guts, revealing as much or as little they want; players whose characters can take lots of damage (or who figure the Admin won't off them) can remain silent until the interrogator gives up or they take so much damage they pass out.

Physical interrogation techniques can take as little as a single 2-second turn (a bullet through the hand), or as long as several days (Chinese water torture).

When NPCs use psychological techniques on PCs - and any time PCs question NPCs - the interrogator first rolls 1d6. The number rolled is the number of hours the questioning takes. Then, the interrogator makes an Interrogation check. If the check succeeds, the victim gets a WIL check. If the WIL check succeeds, the victim remains silent.

If the WIL check fails, the victim gives one specific answer to one specific question and immediately makes a 1/2 WIL check. If the 1/2 WIL check fails, the interrogator can ask another question; the victim answers and makes another 1/2 WIL check. The victim keeps answering questions in this way until he or she makes a 1/2 WIL check.

A successful 1/2 WIL check at any point in the process described above starts the interrogation process over, with a 1d6 roll to determine how much time passes, an interrogation check, and a full WIL check. The Administrator can disallow questions (or answers) which will ruin an adventure or campaign. The Admin may modify your Interrogation roll, or the victim's WIL check.

9. Lockpicking

ATT: DEX COSTS: 4/3/6 PRE: -

Characters with this skill can open keyed and combination locks without the proper key or combination, simply by making a successful Lockpicking check.

Attempts to open combination locks are always at full skill level. Attempts to open keyed locks can be made at full skill level if the character has the proper tools - a set of lockpicks, or even a couple of bobby pins. Without those tools, a 1/2 skill check must be made in order to pick the lock.

The amount of time required to open a lock varies. Even if you have the key or know the combination, the attempt takes 2d4 turns. Without the key or combination, a character must fiddle with a lock for 2d10 turns before making a lockpicking check.

If the first check fails, the character may spend the appropriate number of turns fiddling with the lock and then try another skill check. The character can keep on trying until the lock opens or a Bad Break is rolled. A Bad Break means the lock is jammed, or is simply too tough for the character to pick.

10. Pickpocket

ATT: REF COSTS: 4/3/6 PRE: -

Characters with this skill can divest others of their wallets, guns, or anything else carried in pockets, purses, or packs. A successful skill check means the pickpocket gets his or her hands on the desired object or in the desired pocket, purse, or pack; it doesn't mean the attempt was successful.

In most cases, the target of a pickpocketing attempt gets an INT check to catch the thief in the act. (If the pickpocket rolled a Lucky Break, the attempt succeeds, and the victim doesn't get an INT check.) A failed INT check means the pickpocket gets away with the loot, and the victim won't know until later what he or she has lost. A successful INT check means the pickpocketing attempt has been detected.

11. Safecracking

ATT: 1/2 INT COSTS: 5/4/8 PRE: -

This skill allows character to open a safe by means other than picking the lock or figuring out the combination. This is highly specialized craft, involving knowledge of locks as well as some background in demolitions.

A successful Safecracking roll will tell a character whether or not fiddling with the lock will open it and, if the lock is too tough, where to drill into the safe to open it, where to plant explosives to open it without destroying the contents, and so on.

Assuming the necessary materials are on hand (hacksaws, files, explosives, drills, etc.), a second Safecracking roll will open the safe. If the second roll fails, another check can be made every 1d10 minutes until the safe opens or the character rolls a Bad Break (which means the safe is just too tough!).

12. Shadowing

ATT: WIL COSTS: 2/2/4 PRE: -

The character can follow another through urban settings. The quarry gets a 1/2 INT check to determine whether or not he or she is being followed.

If the quarry spots and attempts to elude the shadower, a second skill check allows the shadower to stay on the trail. Of course, even if the second shadowing check fails, the player can guess where the quarry went - perhaps the shadowing character will get lucky.

Shadowing defaults to 1/2 WIL.

13. Stealth

ATT: MOV COSTS: 2/2/4 PRE: -

Characters with this skill are adept at moving quietly and remaining out of sight. A successful skill check means the stealthy character is moving quietly or is well-hidden. In order to detect the character's presence, others must make 1/2 INT checks. A failed check means the character doesn't move silently, or isn't particularly well-hidden, and can be detected on a full INT check.

Any attempt to move silently may be modified under unusual circumstances: For example, walking on dried leaves or over gravel is -5% to the stealthy character's skill level. Similarly, an attempt to hide in the middle of an open field would be made at -20% or more - there just isn't any place to hide! The Administrator will modify Stealth rolls as necessary.

14. Surveillance

ATT: INT COSTS: 2/2/4 PRE: -

Characters with this skill are capable of observing others at a distance, using a variety of electronic tools, including wiretaps, directional microphones, and hidden cameras. The character can design, install and monitor such equipment as necessary.

Surveillance devices can be hidden in a location, or placed for maximum effect simply by making a skill check. Characters who suspect they are being observed electronically can detect surveillance devices by making a Surveillance check of their own, if they have the skill, or by making a 1/2 INT check. This check may be modified if the surveillance device is hidden. The specifics of such modifiers are left to the Administrator's discretion.

A player who wants to design a piece of surveillance equipment must decide what the device will do. If the Admin feels such a device could work, the player can acquire the necessary materials, spend an amount of time determined by the Admin, and make a 1/2 skill check. A successful check means the device works; a failed check means the device doesn't work. After 1d6 days of tinkering, the player can make another 1/2 skill check, continuing this process until the device works, or the player rolls a Bad Break, meaning the device can't be made to work under any circumstances.

15. Survival

ATT: WIL COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: -

This is not a single skill, but a group of related skills, each of which gives characters the ability to survive in a particular environment. The environments available are: Arctic, Desert, Jungle, and Temperate. Knowledge of how to survive in each of these environments must be purchased as a separate skill.

Characters with a survival skill understand the forces of nature operating in the selected area(s). They know how to equip expeditions in the chosen environment(s), and are able to find food and water there (assuming any is available).

A skill check will answer a single question the player may have about surviving in the selected area. ("Where would I find water here?"; "Could we survive a day's march in the bitter cold?"; or whatever else is appropriate.)

Making the roll does not mean characters automatically find water or survive an Arctic outing. Actually putting information to use may take skill or attribute checks (e.g., digging for water by making STR checks). At the very least, characters should expect to roleplay situations based on knowledge gained from Survival checks (imagine trying to find heavy clothing in the middle of the frozen tundra...).

Bush terrain includes such areas as Southern Africa, the Argentine pampas, the Brazilian highlands, the dry farmlands of Central America, and the scrub country of northern India.

16. Tracking

ATT: INT COSTS: 2/2/4 PRE: -

This is the ability to spot, interpret, and follow sport. Characters with this skill can follow the trail of anything that has left any indicators of its passage. Characters who make successful skill checks (or 1/2 skill checks, if the trail is very faint), can follow the trail for 1d6 hours (or until they find their quarry) before another check is required. Additional Tracking checks may be required if the quarry crosses water or any other surface which will obscure a trail.

This is the hunter's skill - the ability to detect the past presence of a person, animal, or vehicle.

Characters following a person, animal, or vehicle at close range must make Shadowing skill checks, rather than Tracking checks.

16. Counter-tracking

ATT: INT COSTS: 2/N PRE: 16

Counter-tracking teaches the character the best method to avoid leaving a trail others might follow. When used, counter-tracking reduces the chance of any tracker following the character's trail (and any with him) to 1/2 the normal chance. Although the skill does not require any special equipment or procedures, it does slow the movement of everyone in the group by 1/2 their normal rate.

17. Cartography

ATT: INT COSTS: 2/N PRE: -

This skill gives the character the ability to prepare clear and understandable field maps based on his own reconnaissance. The character's score in this skill is used to determine his accuracy in fine detail (the precise location of grid coordinates for example) and the overall clarity of his map (i.e., how well others are able to interpret his map). A U.S. Navy SEAL recons a beach and inshore areas to prepare a sketch map of the shoreline, principle landmarks, and enemy positions. He has a 68 in Cartography. On returning to the support ship, his sketch map is used to prepare naval gunfire plan for the operation. In general, his map has a 68% chance of being reasonably on target when the naval batteries begin to fire. Hopefully, the fire support isn't targeted too close to team operations, because there is 32% chance the fire support will land off target.

18. Forward Observer

ATT: INT COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: -

Characters with this skill are trained in spotting targets and adjusting fire for artillery of all types. Provided they are in contact with the firing battery or its fire control, a forward observer can attempt to adjust friendly fire. For each round of fire, the forward observer can report and adjust the fire coordinates (by making a successful INT check). Each round of fire that is successfully adjusted increases the accuracy of the artillery by fire by 5 up to the limit of the forward observer's level. If an INT check is failed, the artillery has fired off-target, and all bonuses gained from the forward observer are lost and the process must begin again.

A forward observer can also attempt to call friendly fire on a position if he is able to observe that target point. A skill check must be made to successfully relay the target coordinates. Once fire has arrived, the FO can attempt to adjust it normally.

19. Radar

ATT: INT COSTS: 3/4/6 PRE: -

The character with this skill is skilled in using radar equipment and in reading radar screens. The character is trained in the radar of his service and can use it at normal skill levels. When attempting to operate equipment of another nation, skill checks are at 1/2 INT. To interpret the signals on a radar screen, a normal skill check must be made. The source of the equipment has no effects on this check.

20. Sonar

ATT: INT COSTS: 3/4/6 PRE: -

This skill functions identically to radar. The differences lie not with the operator but the equipment. The sonar operator is skilled in analyzing sound patterns and shapes. This skill also applies to small hand-held sonar units used on underwater missions.

21. STANO

ATT: INT COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: -

STANO (surveillance, target acquisition, and night observation) allows the character to operate and use a wide variety of specialized observation equipment. This includes range-finders, thermal imagers, night vision goggles, image intensifiers, shotgun mikes, radar detectors, and UGS (unattended ground sensors). Some devices, such as UGS, require careful placement, and a skill check must be made when deploying these. Images and sounds seen or heard through other devices are often different from what normal sensed detect, so operators must be skilled at interpreting what they receive. The operator must make a skill check to discern obscured or concealed targets viewed through imaging equipment or

understand sounds picked up by listening devices. Unskilled characters can attempt to use these devices at 1/2 INT.

EDUCATION SKILLS

Liberal Arts Skills

#	Skill	ATT	COST	PRE
1	Basic Liberal Arts	1/2 INT	2/N	-
2	Anthro/Psych/Soc	INT	1/2/4	1
3	Business/Economics	INT	1/2/4	1
4	History/PoliSci	INT	1/2/4	1
5	Lit/Journalism	INT	1/2/4	1
6	Philosophy/Religion	INT	1/2/4	1

Science Skills

#	Skill	ATT	COST	PRE
7	Basic Science	INT	2/N	-
8	Astrology/Math/Physics	INT	2/3/6	7
9	Biology/Botany/Zoology	INT	2/3/6	7
10	Chemistry	INT	2/3/6	7
11	Engineer/Civ/Elec/Mech	INT	2/3/6	7

Advanced Degrees

#	Skill	ATT	COST	PRE
12	Law	INT	2/3/6	4
13	Medicine	INT	2/4/8	9
14	Surgeon	INT	3/5/10	13

The education skills are a little different from most other Top Secret/S.I. skills: Instead of allowing characters to do things, they allow characters to know things. A successful skill check reveals facts about a person, place, or thing. It may suggest a course of action. It doesn't actually make anything happen; that is a matter of roleplaying and using other, more active skills.

Who's Got Education?: All characters in the Top Secret/S.I. game have some education: they all know how to read, for example (except, of course, characters with the Illiteracy disadvantage); they are all assumed to have a high school education (unless you decide your character is a high-school drop-out).

If you decide you want your character to have something more than a high school education, you must spend skill points on the skills described below.

Free Skills: Characters are assumed to learn the basic skills needed for library or archival research when they purchase any Education skill at zero level. A trip to the library to do research yields results on a successful Education skill check, assuming the information the character wants is available there - a decision the Admin must make before the check is made.

Course of Study vs Skills: Below, you will find a list of skills. Each skill is a course of study, however,

rather than an individual skill. The History Political Science skill, for example, gives your character training in American History, European History, Ancient History, and so on, as well as in Principles of Democracy, Principles of Capitalism, and so on. Ability in each of these specific areas is included in the History/Political Science skill.

Creating Your Own Educational Skills: If you want your character to have an ability that isn't listed below, first see if your new ability can fall under any of the "course of study" skills provided. If so, clear the new ability you want with the Administrator and incorporate it into the appropriate skill.

If an ability can't be squeezed into one of the skills below, tell the Admin what you want your Education skill to do. He or she will decide whether it belongs in Liberal Arts, in the Sciences, or in the Advanced Degrees, determine whether any other skills (prerequisites) are necessary and finally, assign the course of study a cost.

What Education Skill Checks Can Tell You: This is pretty much left up to the Admin. In the skill descriptions below, we've provided some examples of what each Educational skill can do, but we can't list every possible answer of fact these skills can provide. The effects of Education skill checks described below are merely guidelines for players and Administrators.

When To Use Education Skill Checks: Education skills are designed to fill in the gaps in a player's knowledge. If a player knows a pertinent piece of information, no skill check is necessary to see if his or her character knows. For example, if a player knows that Tunisia became a republic in 1957, his or her character knows this as well - no History skill check is necessary.

On the other hand, no skill check can provide information a character couldn't have. For example, if your campaign is set in 1956, no check can tell a character Tunisia became a republic in 1957!

Study Time: Skill points spent on Education skills represents time spent studying, both in class and at home. Each point is equivalent of three months of study (for Liberal Arts skills) or six months of study (for Science skills and Advanced Degrees).

If you buy Education skills when creating your character, assume the study-time was spent before the campaign started. Later, however, when you go to improve your skills by spending Fame & Fortune points, you must spend time in school before increasing your skill levels.

This doesn't mean your character has to be a full-time student (not much fun in that!). Once class, a couple hours a week, will be enough to satisfy any university. This does limit the amount of globe-hopping your character can do, but being a student may provide you with a good cover story.

Liberal Arts

1. Basic Liberal Arts

ATT: 1/2 INT COSTS: 2/N PRE: -

This skill gives characters a broad-base of knowledge, but no particular specialty. It is the equivalent of a freshman year in college - exposure to a lot of different subjects, mastery of none.

Characters with the Basic Liberal Arts skill can draw on a limited knowledge of all fields in the liberal

arts category listed below. A successful 1/2 INT check allows them to recall specific facts related to these fields.

As always, the Admin determines whether a fact falls into a Liberal Arts field, and whether a character's limited background might have exposed him or her to that fact.

2. Anthro/Psych/Soc

ATT: INT COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: 1

These fields involve the study of man. A successful skill check might give characters insight into appropriate behavior in an exotic culture; it might give them insight into the emotional state of an NPC being interrogated, making the interrogation easier; it might reveal that a particular race, sex, or religion is oppressed in a strange culture, a fact which might come in handy when PCs wind up there.

Anything related to personality, insanity, social structures, family life, culture, and the like falls into the Anthropology/Psychology/Sociology skill.

3. Business/Economics

ATT: INT COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: 1

This skill allows characters to keep and evaluate business records, analyze business practices, and track trends in world economics.

It gives characters an understanding of stocks and bonds, commodities trading, tax systems, trade restrictions, union operation, currency values, and so on.

A successful skill check reveals shoddy or illegal bookkeeping practices, or tells characters which stocks to buy and which to sell. Anything relating to business and economics might be revealed by a successful skill check.

4. History/PoliSci

ATT: INT COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: 1

Characters with this skill have a broad knowledge of history and understanding of the various forms of government in use around the world.

A skill check may reveal how old leaders of the past dealt with situations the characters face; it might reveal the location of a lost city or a building torn down years ago; it might reveal the names of politicians who founded a political movement.

In addition, this skill provides a general understanding of political processes. A skill check might reveal the proper procedure to follow when dealing with foreign governments and politicians; it might tell characters how to get elected to office; it might tell characters what to do once elected.

5. Lit/Journalism

ATT: INT COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: 1

This ability encompasses all forms of written communication. A successful skill check allows characters to write anything from a letter to a novel, from an advertisement to a newspaper article.

In addition, this skill gives characters a familiarity with the history of literature. A successful skill

check can identify the author of a novel or nonfiction book (if the author is well-enough known); it can place a written work within a particular tradition (“Oh, that play is one of a series of dramas written by a contemporary of Shakespeare”); it can provide clues about the writing and publication of a book or article.

6. Philosophy/Religion

ATT: INT COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: 1

This skill provides information about the religions of the world - their history, creeds, and practices. It also gives characters background in the works of the world’s philosophers - thinkers who turn their attention to questions of man’s place in the universe, the meaning of reality, and other equally weighty subjects.

A skill check can reveal the significance of a religious ritual; the place of a religious leader in the history of his or her religion; the basic beliefs of a religious group. It can also place an individual or group in the context of a large philosophical movement (“Oh yes, he’s a believer in the ideas of the philosopher, Nietzsche”).

Science Skills

7. Basic Science

ATT: 1/2 INT COSTS: 2/N PRE: -

This skill gives characters a broad-base of scientific knowledge, but no particular specialty. It is the equivalent of a freshman year in college - exposure to the many branches of science, mastery of none.

Characters with the Basic Science skill can draw on a limited knowledge of all the fields of the Science Skills list. A successful 1/2 INT check allows them to recall specific facts related to these fields.

As always, the Administrator determines whether a fact falls into a scientific field, and whether a character’s limited background might have exposed him or her to that fact.

8. Astronomy/Math/Physics

ATT: INT COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: 7

This skill gives characters an understanding of the worlds of math and matter. A successful skill check can tell when the next total eclipse of the sun will take place; it will reveal how a nuclear device works (though not how to build or deactivate one); it will solve the most complicated mathematical problem.

9. Biology/Botany/Zoology

ATT: INT COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: 7

This skill gives characters an understanding of how humans, animals, plants, and other living organisms operate. The skill applies equally to organisms still found in Nature and those long extinct.

A successful skill check can identify plants; determine if an animal is native to a given environment; predict whether people can survive in a given environment; provide some clues about dinosaur mating habits; etc.

10. Chemistry

ATT: INT COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: 7

This skill gives characters an understanding of the chemical processes at work in our world. A successful skill can reveal the chemical composition of a mysterious liquid found in a villain's lab; or it can allow characters to create chemical compounds - anything from mind-altering drugs to high explosives.

11. Engineer/Civ/Elec/Mech

ATT: INT COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: 7

Engineers come in these varieties - Mechanical, Electrical, and Civil. This skill gives characters a background in all three, but specialization is recommended. With this skill comes the ability to design complex mechanical devices (Mechanical Engineers), complex electrical devices, up to and including computers and radar equipment (Electrical Engineers), as well as dams, airfields, and other large structures (Civil Engineers).

A successful skill check will, in addition to allowing the design of complex devices, allow characters to build those devices - within reason. One character can't build a dam alone; that requires the work of many men and women with the appropriate Mechanical skills, supervised by an engineer.

A successful skill check also allows characters to spot flaws and weak spots in the designs of others. This can be valuable when deciding where to place explosives for maximum effect, or how best to circumvent a sophisticated surveillance system.

Advanced Degrees

12. Law

ATT: INT COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: 4

This skill gives players a basic understanding of corporate law, international law, criminal law, tax law, and so on. It qualifies characters to act as courtroom attorneys, should the need arise. It gives them the ability to draft and interpret contracts and other legal documents.

A successful skill check can tell characters whether they are about to break any laws (and identify laws they may have already broken!); it will allow characters to spot loopholes in legal documents, or write them into documents they draft.

13. Medicine

ATT: INT COSTS: 2/4/8 PRE: 9

This skill gives characters practical knowledge of the way the human body works and how it can be cured of disease and nursed back to health after injury.

Buying this skill allows characters to make a skill check to heal on point of damage, just like characters with the First Aid skill.

The Medicine skill allows more significant healing, however, if characters are willing to spend more time in the healing process: Assuming the proper drugs, diagnostic equipment, syringes and the like are available, a successful skill check allows characters with the Medicine skill to heal 1d4 points of damage. Each point of healing takes on hour. A failed skill check does one point of damage.

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As with the First Aid skill, Medicine can't give a damaged body part more hit points than it had originally.

This skill also allows characters to act as dentists, pharmacologists, eye doctors, veterinarians, or whatever other kind of doctor they want. Specialization is recommended here, however.

14. Surgeon

ATT: DEX COSTS: 3/5/10 PRE: 1

This skill gives characters the ability to repair serious wounds and perform operations of all kinds.

Characters with this skill have the option of making a skill check to restore a single point of damage, just like characters with the First Aid skill, or making a skill check to restore 1d4 points of damage at a rate of one point per hour, like characters with Medicine skill.

This skill can be used in another way, however: If surgical equipment is available, a successful skill check will restore as many points of damage as the character has levels of Surgeon skill plus one more to any one body area - no die roll es required. Thus, a character with Surgeon 3 restores four points of damage. Each point restored takes two hours.

Surgery can't give a body part more hit points than it started out with.

General Skills

#	Skill	ATT	COST	PRE
1	Acting	INT	2/3/6	-
2	Animal Training	WIL	2/2/4	-
2a	Animal Handling	WIL	1/2/3	-
3	Climbing	MOV	2/3/6	-
3a	Rappelling	MOV	1/2/4	-
4	Driving Automobile	DEX	1/3/6	-
5	Driving Truck	DEX	1/3/6	4
6	Driving Motorcycle	DEX	1/3/6	-
7	Driving Off-Road-Vehicle	DEX	1/2/4	4
8	Driving Snowmobile	DEX	1/2/4	-
9	Driving Boat	DEX	1/2/4	-
9a	Small Craft Handling	DEX	1/1/2	-
10	Driving Heavy Machinery	DEX	3/3/6	5
11	Driving Tank	DEX	5/3/6	10
12	Fine Arts	DEX	1/2/6	-
13	First Aid	INT	2/3/6	-
14	Fishing	INT	1/2/4	-
15	Horsemanship	MOV	2/3/6	-
16	Hypnosis*	WIL	5/3/6	-
17	Lip Reading	INT	3/3/6	-
18	Mimicry	INT	4/2/4	-
19	Musical Instrument	INT	1/3/6	-
20	Navigation	INT	4/2/4	-
20a	Orienteering	INT	1/2/4	-
21	Parachuting	MOV	2/3/6	-
21a	HALO	MOV	1/N	21
21b	Rough Terrain Jumping	MOV	1/N	21
22	Photography	INT	1/3/6	-
22a	Photoanalysis	INT	1/2/4	-
23	Pilot 1-engine	DEX	3/4/8	-
23a	Instrument Flying	INT	2/3/8	23
23b	NAP of Earth Flying	DEX	3/4/6	23
24	Pilot Multi-engine	DEX	4/5/10	23
25	Pilot Helicopter	DEX	3/4/8	23
25a	Piloting/Gunship	DEX	4/5/10	25
25b	NOE Flying/Helicopter	DEX	2/3/6	25
26	Pilot Large Helicopter	DEX	4/5/10	25
27	Pilot Jet	DEX	5/5/10	23
28	Pilot Multi-engine Jet	DEX	5/5/10	27
29	Pilot Space Shuttle	DEX	5/5/10	28
30	Radio Operator	INT	1/1/2	-
31	Sailing	DEX	1/2/4	-
32	Scuba Diving	INT	1/2/4	-
32a	EMERSON	INT	1/2/4	32
33	Sign Language	INT	4/2/4	-
34	Skiing	MOV	2/3/6	-
35	Sleight of Hand	REF	4/3/6	-
36	Social Chameleon	INT	1/2/4	-
37	Speed Racing*	INT	3/4/8	-
38	Stage Magic*	DEX	5/5/10	35
39	Swimming	MOV	1/3/6	-
40	Throwing	DEX	1/2/4	-
41	Ventriloquism*	INT	4/4/8	-
42	Area Knowledge	INT	2/2/4	-
43	Contacts*	---	4/n	-
44	STABO	DEX	1/N	-

1. Acting

ATT: INT COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: -

Characters with this skill can perform roles, both on-stage and off. They can pretend to feel emotions they don't really feel - sadness, fear, confidence, joy, and so on. They can appear to believe certain facts, or think a certain way, even if they believe nothing of the kind.

A successful skill check will convince most people, most of the time. NPCs (or PCs, for that matter) who are suspicious or on their guard, must make INT checks to see through the charade.

When combined with the Disguise skill, the Acting skill allows characters to impersonate another person. When these skills are used together, each level of Disguise skill gives a +5 modifier to the Acting check.

Only characters with both the Acting Ability advantage and the Acting skill can pass themselves off as professional actors.

2. Animal Training

ATT: WIL COSTS: 2/2/4 PRE: -

This skill gives characters the ability to train animals to perform at their command.

A successful skill check must be made for each action or command the trainer wants the animal to learn. The amount of time required to teach each command varies with the complexity of the command and the intelligence of the animal.

It takes only a few days to teach a dog to sit; the same dog might require months to learn to attack an armed man on sight. Getting a cat to do the same things would take considerably longer. Getting a snake to do anything at all would probably require a Lucky Break! The Admin determines whether an animal can be trained to perform a particular feat and how long the training lasts.

Under ordinary circumstances, an animal will perform any feat it has been trained to do: No skill check is necessary. If, however, the trainer wants the animal to do something against its basic nature (asking a horse to step on someone on the ground, for example), the Admin may require a skill check.

The Animal Friendship advantage gives characters a +10 modifier to all Animal Training checks.

2a. Animal Handling

ATT: WIL COSTS: 1/2/3 PRE: -

With this skill, the character is trained in the care and handling of animals, particularly dogs and used for specialized purposes (guard dogs, bloodhounds, and attack dogs). The character cannot train animals, but can groom, feed and care for them, even performing minor veterinary tasks. The character is familiar with all commands the animal knows and can get the animal to perform feats against its basic nature (as per the Animal Training skill). Characters with Animal Handling skill receive a +5 modifier per skill level for attacking, subduing, or avoiding enemy guard dogs. Those characters with the Animal Friendship advantage gain a +10 modifier to all Animal Handling skill checks.

3. Climbing

ATT: MOV COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: -

Anybody can climb a mountain - if there are paths to the top. Anybody can climb a rock - if the rock isn't too steep. Under most circumstances, no skill check is required. This is the ability to climb mountains when the paths give out and to climb sheer rock faces or brick walls, using ropes, pitons, and other climbing tools.

When the going gets tough, the Administrator will ask for Climbing checks. Generally, a single skill check will take characters to the top of any rock or wall. However, each extraordinary hazard or unusual challenge requires an additional check.

Climbing a mountain might involve several hazards and several skill checks. A 10 or 15 foot wall poses a single challenge, requiring just a single check. The time spent climbing varies with the difficulty of the climb as well as the distance. The Administrator determines how much time passes during a Climbing check.

The climbing skill defaults to 1/2 MOV.

3a. Rappelling

ATT: MOV COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: -

This skill, a subset of Climbing, teaches the character only a small portion of the general Climbing skill, that of rappelling. (Characters with the Climbing skill are skilled in Rappelling and wouldn't need this skill.) This is mainly useful for descending from helicopters and building assaults. Once taught, the skill is not particularly difficult under normal circumstances, so skill checks are only made when difficult feats are tried. These include forced entry into a building, or descending through thick ground cover.

Driving Skills

Driving isn't a single skill, but a group of skills, each one of which allows characters to drive a different kind of vehicle. There is one skill for driving automobiles, and another for driving trucks; one for driving boats, and another for operating tanks; and so on. Each Driving skill must be purchased separately.

4. Driving Automobile

ATT: DEX COSTS: 1/3/6 PRE: -

The Driving Automobile skill allows characters to start and control an automobile. Under normal conditions, characters with the Driving Automobile skill can operate a vehicle without making skill checks. Only when characters must respond to sudden danger or attempt hazardous maneuvers will they be required to make Driving Automobile skill checks. Failed checks can have a variety of results, from a stalled engine to a fiery explosion - see the vehicle rules for more details.

The Driving Automobile skill defaults 1/2 DEX.

5. Driving Truck

ATT: DEX COSTS: 1/3/6 PRE: -

The Driving Truck skill allows characters to start and control a Truck. Under normal conditions, characters with the Driving Truck skill can operate a vehicle without making skill checks. Only when characters must respond to sudden danger or attempt hazardous maneuvers will they be required to make

Driving Truck skill checks. Failed checks can have a variety of results, from a stalled engine to a fiery explosion - see the vehicle rules for more details.

The Driving Truck skill defaults 1/2 DEX.

6. Driving Motorcycle

ATT: DEX COSTS: 1/3/6 PRE: -

The Driving Motorcycle skill allows characters to start and control a motorcycle. Under normal conditions, characters with the Driving Motorcycle skill can operate a vehicle without making skill checks. Only when characters must respond to sudden danger or attempt hazardous maneuvers will they be required to make Driving Motorcycle skill checks. Failed checks can have a variety of results, from a stalled engine to a fiery explosion - see the vehicle rules for more details.

The Driving Motorcycle skill defaults 1/2 DEX.

7. Driving Off-Road Vehicle

ATT: DEX COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: -

The Driving Off-Road Vehicle skill allows characters to start and control an off-road vehicle. Under normal conditions, characters with the Driving Off-Road Vehicle skill can operate a vehicle without making skill checks. Only when characters must respond to sudden danger or attempt hazardous maneuvers will they be required to make Driving Off-Road Vehicle skill checks. Failed checks can have a variety of results, from a stalled engine to a fiery explosion - see the vehicle rules for more details.

The Driving Off-Road Vehicle skill defaults 1/2 DEX.

8. Driving Snowmobile

ATT: DEX COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: -

The Driving Snowmobile skill allows characters to start and control a snowmobile. Under normal conditions, characters with the Driving Snowmobile skill can operate a vehicle without making skill checks. Only when characters must respond to sudden danger or attempt hazardous maneuvers will they be required to make Driving Snowmobile skill checks. Failed checks can have a variety of results, from a stalled engine to a fiery explosion - see the vehicle rules for more details.

The Driving Snowmobile skill defaults 1/2 DEX.

9. Driving Boat

ATT: DEX COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: -

The Driving Boat skill allows characters to start and control a boat. Under normal conditions, characters with the Driving Boat skill can operate a vehicle without making skill checks. Only when characters must respond to sudden danger or attempt hazardous maneuvers will they be required to make Driving Boat skill checks. Failed checks can have a variety of results, from a stalled engine to a fiery explosion - see the vehicle rules for more details.

The Driving Boat skill defaults 1/2 DEX.

9a. Small Craft Handling

ATT: DEX COSTS: 1/1/2 PRE: -

While Driving/Boat allows a character to operate most types of motorized water vehicles, and Sailing allows a character to use wind-powered craft, Small Craft Handling gives the character the skills needed to use small muscle-powered boats. These include inflatable rafts, canoes, collapsible kayaks, rowboats, punts, and small landing or river crossing boats. Rapids, rough seas, darkness, rugged landing sites, and the need for speed or silence require skill checks. The character can also attempt to make small field repairs, although a skill check is required.

10. Driving Heavy Machinery

ATT: DEX COSTS: 3/3/6 PRE: -

The Driving Heavy Machinery skill allows characters to start and control heavy machinery. Under normal conditions, characters with the Driving Heavy Machinery skill can operate a vehicle without making skill checks. Only when characters must respond to sudden danger or attempt hazardous maneuvers will they be required to make Driving Heavy Machinery skill checks. Failed checks can have a variety of results, from a stalled engine to a fiery explosion - see the vehicle rules for more details.

The Driving Heavy Machinery skill defaults 1/2 DEX.

11. Driving Tank

ATT: DEX COSTS: 5/3/6 PRE: -

The Driving Tank skill allows characters to start and control a tank. Under normal conditions, characters with the Driving Tank skill can operate a tank without making skill checks. Only when characters must respond to sudden danger or attempt hazardous maneuvers will they be required to make Driving Tank skill checks. Failed checks can have a variety of results, from a stalled engine to a fiery explosion - see the vehicle rules for more details.

With the wide variety of MBTs, IFVs, and APCs in the world, a character cannot expect to be fully functional in the handling of them all. Therefore, for each skill level the character has attained, he can handle all armored vehicles with a particular chassis type. The character can still attempt to drive unfamiliar vehicles, but suffers a -20 penalty when attempting to do so.

12. Fine Arts

ATT: DEX COSTS: 1/3/6 PRE: -

This skill allows characters to create visually striking pictures, painting, or sculptures. No skill check is required to produce a rough but recognizable representation of a person, place, or thing, but the quality of a polished piece of work depends on a successful skill check.

This skill also gives characters the ability to make accurate maps - to any scale, showing distances accurate enough for nearly any purpose. Again, no skill check is required to make a rough map, but a successful skill check is necessary in order to produce a good map.

Finally, this skill gives characters a working knowledge of art history. A successful skill check allows characters to identify works as belonging to a specific period or movement, or as the work of a particular artist.

A character with both the Artistic Ability advantage and the Fine Arts skill is good enough to pass a

13. First Aid

ATT: INT COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: -

Characters with First Aid skill can tend their own wounds, and the wounds of others. They can also deal with the effects of CON loss. When dealing with wound or bruise damage, a successful check means the wounded character recovers one hit point in the tended area. A Lucky Break means two hit points have been restored, but an area can never end up with more hit points than it originally had.

First Aid must be applied within ten minutes of the time a wound occurs in order to have any effect.

There is no limit to the number of wounds which can be tended, but only one skill check can be made each turn, and each wound can be treated only once.

When dealing with CON loss, a successful First Aid check results in the immediate restoration of 1d10 points of CON (2d10 on a Lucky Break). A failed check has no effect. Any First Aid check, successful or not, allows an unconscious character to make an immediate check against his or her current CON. If a character's CON is zero or less, no amount of first aid will do any good - the character is dead.

14. Fishing

ATT: INT COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: -

This is the ability to catch fish using a rod and reel (or hook and line, or whatever similar apparatus is available). A successful skill check will yield a catch of 1d6 fish per hour, assuming there are fish to be caught.

This skill also give characters the ability to tie flies, make their own rods (when appropriate materials are available), or imporvise fishing equipment. No skill check is necessary to improvise or build fishing equipment.

The Fishing skill defaults to 1/2 INT.

15. Horsemanship

ATT: MOV COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: -

This skill lets a character harness, saddle, bridle, and ride horses and other riding animals like camels and mules. Normal functions of riding, including mountain, directing the horse, and controlling its speed between a stop and a full-speed gallop, can be performed without skill checks.

Special maneuvers, such as jumping a 4' or higher barrier, urging the horse into a rapid stream, or stopping its flight if it panics, call for a skill check. A failed check means the rider has lost control of the mount, and it refuses to perform the desired action. A Bad Break means the rider falls, taking 1d4 damage to a randomly determined body part.

A rider whose horse refuses to perform an action can make a second skill check on a subsequent turn. A successful check means the horse does what the rider wants. Any failed second check results in the rider falling and taking 1d4 points of damage to a random body part.

Characters using this skill by default must make 1/2 MOV checks to mount a horse, as well as to ride at,

16. Hypnosis

ATT: WIL COSTS: 5/3/6 PRE: -

This is the ability to hypnotize a subject. A successful skill check is all that is necessary to hypnotize a willing subject. To hypnotize an unwilling subject, the hypnotist must first make a successful skill check. The victim then gets a WIL check minus 5% for each level of Hypnosis skill the hypnotist has. A successful WIL check means the victim doesn't succumb. A failed WIL check puts the victim under.

Hypnotized characters will do anything the hypnotist tells them to do assuming they are physically capable of performing the task and it doesn't violate their personal beliefs.

17. Lip Reading

ATT: INT COSTS: 3/3/6 PRE: -

This is the ability to understand what people are saying even if you can't hear them, by interpreting the movement of their lips.

Assuming characters understand the language being spoken, and can clearly see the mouth of the speaker, a skill check will allow them to understand approximately one sentence (the exact amount of information conveyed per skill check is up to the Admin).

18. Mimicry

ATT: INT COSTS: 4/2/4 PRE: -

This skill gives characters the ability to imitate any sound they have heard. They can mimic animal calls, and people's voices so well that other characters may not be able to tell the sound is faked.

Characters with special knowledge about the animal or person get 1/2 INT check to determine the fakery. For example, a hunter could make a 1/2 INT check to see through a bird call.

19. Musical Instrument

ATT: INT COSTS: 1/3/6 PRE: -

Characters with this skill can read music and have a working knowledge of music history. They may, at the player's discretion, sing or play one musical instrument of their choice. Any level of skill will allow characters to play adequately - no dieroll is necessary.

A skill check is required in order to impress a knowledgeable listener, play a difficult passage, or identify a piece as the work of a particular composer.

Characters with this skill and the Musical Ability advantage can pass themselves off as professional musicians.

Buying this skill for one specific instrument gives your character some ability with all similar instruments. Thus, a character who plays the trumpet can also play other brass instruments. In order to play a bugle (or a trombone, or some other brass instrument), you would have to make a 1/2 skill check.

This skill can be purchased more than once, if you want your character to sing and play an instrument, or you want a character who plays more than one instrument.

20. Navigation

ATT: INT COSTS: 4/2/4 PRE: -

Anyone can read a road map (assuming they can read at all). Anyone can follow directions and spot landmarks in a given location. This is the ability to find one's way in the world when maps and landmarks aren't available and there's no one around to give directions.

Characters with this skill can determine where they are, and how to get where they're going by the sun or stars. They can also use the compass, sextant, and other navigational tools. A successful skill check determines the character's current position and allows the character to plot a course for a given position.

A successful skill check also allows characters to make accurate (though not particularly attractive) maps.

20a. Orienteering

ATT: INT COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: -

This skill teaches the character basics of land navigation - how to use a map and compass, read standard military maps, understand the difference between true north, magnetic north, and grid north, calculate the grid-magnetic angle, sight on landmarks, self-location by resection, determine compass course, and use grid coordinates. Given an accurate map compass, and straight edge, the character can determine his approximate location, evaluate unseen terrain (based on contour lines), plot the best course of movement, and derive the grid coordinates and approximate range of an unknown point (useful to FOs for calling in fire). Each of these abilities requires a skill check to succeed. If the character fails the check, he is unable to make a proper determination without more information (another landmark to sight on, closer observation of the terrain, or a new bearing point). On a Bad Break, the character may discover his map is hopelessly wrong or take his sightings and reach an entirely wrong conclusion. The administrator should secretly make most skill checks, especially if the character is trying to determine his current location.

21. Parachuting

ATT: MOV COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: -

A character with the Parachuting skill can jump from an airplane and open his or her parachute. Jumping out of a plane is easy (if you know what you're doing). Landing is a little more difficult. Characters must make Parachuting checks when they land.

A successful check means a successful landing, wherever the player wants his or her character to land; a failed check means a successful landing somewhere else. (The Admin decides where the character lands.) A Bad Break of 95 - 98 means a very bad landing, and the character takes 1d8 damage to one leg, determined by the Admin. A roll of 99 means the chute failed to open! This would be a good time for players to spend a Luck Point.

Characters without Parachuting skill must make a WIL check to jump from an airplane (unless they are pushed!). A failed check means the character couldn't jump, and must continue making WIL checks until he or she does (or the plane leaves the drop zone or crashes).

Once in mid-air, unskilled characters must make a MOV check to open their chutes. A successful check means a successful chute opening; a failed check means the character is still fumbling around trying to

get it open. Characters can continue trying to open a chute until they succeed or hit the ground. Rate of fall is the same for characters as for planes - see the Piloting skill description for more details.

In order to land successfully, unskilled characters must make 1/2 MOV checks, or suffer 1d8 damage to one leg. (The Admin decides which one.) Back

21a. HALO

ATT: MOV COSTS: 1/N PRE: 21

This skill gives trained parachutists the ability to perform HALO (high altitude low opening) jumps with normal chance of injury. Characters without this ability have a significantly increased chance of injury when attempting HALO jumps.

20b. Rough Terrain Jumping

ATT: MOV COSTS: 1/N PRE: 21

Rough terrain (or RT) Jumping, also known as “tree jumping”, is used when operatives must be inserted by parachute into an area that does not have a suitable DZ (drop zone). Basically, the goal of RT jumps is for the parachutist to intentionally foul his chute in the branches of trees. Once snagged in the branches, the character can descend by rope to the ground. Clearly, this is a dangerous way to parachute, even for skilled parachutists. Unskilled characters can attempt RT jumps, with a near-certain chance of injury.

22. Photography

ATT: INT COSTS: 1/3/6 PRE: -

A character with this skill has learned to operate still cameras or movie/video cameras. Characters with this ability can use all kinds of still cameras - from 35mm single lens reflex to instant photo to miniature spy cameras. They are also familiar with the use of video and motion picture equipment of all sorts - from 8mm to CinemaScope, from home video cameras to sophisticated video equipment found only in major production studios.

Note that videotapes and movies can only be viewed when proper projection or replay facilities are available. Still photos can be viewed at any time, once they are developed.

Taking pictures under normal conditions is simple, and no skill check is required. Developing film is more difficult, given proper equipment.

A successful skill check is required when a character tries to take photos under difficult conditions, or set a camera up to take remote pictures, and so on.

Photography defaults to 1/2 INT.

22a. Photo Analysis

ATT: INT COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: -

Characters with this skill are trained in reading and interpreting reconnaissance photographs, particularly aerial and satellite photographs. Things a good analyst can learn include camp layouts, ground features, approximate numbers and locations of personnel, weapons, and equipment present, and possible identifications of rank or identity. Large details (buildings, vehicles) can be identified by a normal skill check. Small details require a 1/2 INT skill check. Characters without the skill can make out large

Piloting Skills

This isn't a single skill, but a group of skills - one for each major type of airplane and helicopter. Characters who want to be pilots must buy the skill separately for each type of aircraft they want to be able to pilot.

What happens when a pilot loses control varies according to circumstances. If control is lost while landing, a crash is likely. The severity of such a crash is determined by the Administrator. If control is lost in mid-air, the pilot must make a skill check to regain control. Failure means the aircraft falls 1000 feet; then another check is allowed. If this fails, the craft falls 2000 feet before another check can be made, then 4000 feet, then 8000 feet, and so on. Of course, if the craft hits the ground before the pilot can bring it under control, it crashes.

23. Piloting 1-Engine

ATT: DEX COSTS: 3/4/8 PRE: -

Under normal conditions, no skill check is required to take off, land or pilot a 1-engine plane. However, when attempting to pilot a craft in poor weather, or under unusual circumstances (while being fired upon by an enemy plane, landing without wheels down, etc.) a skill check must be made to avoid losing control.

23a. Instrument Flying

ATT: DEX COSTS: 2/N PRE: 23

When a pilot cannot see landmarks on the ground either because of weather or night, he is forced to fly blind, relying on his instruments for his position and altitude. This is a dangerous way to travel and requires an Instrument Flying skill check. The other risk of blind flying is knowing where you are. Characters with Instrument Flying can fly to chart locations with accuracy, provided they make a successful skill check. This skill is particularly useful for pilots carrying troops to a DZ at night.

23b. Nap of Earth Flying

ATT: DEX COSTS: 2/3/8 PRE: 23

Nap of earth (or NOE) flying is flying extremely close to the ground, 200' or less usually, using the natural terrain to cover an approach from both radar and visual observation. Due to ground turbulence, it is an especially difficult type of flying. Pilots without this skill must make skill checks at 1/2 DEX. Pilots with NOE Flying make their checks at normal NOE score. Of course, if a pilot loses control while NOE flying, he is almost certain to hit the ground before he recovers.

24. Piloting Multi-Engine

ATT: DEX COSTS: 4/5/10 PRE: -

Under normal conditions, no skill check is required to take off, land or pilot a multi-engine plane. However, when attempting to pilot a craft in poor weather, or under unusual circumstances (while being fired upon by an enemy plane, landing without wheels down, etc.) a skill check must be made to avoid losing control.

25. Piloting Helicopter

ATT: DEX COSTS: 3/4/8 PRE: -

Under normal conditions, no skill check is required to take off, land or pilot a helicopter. However, when

attempting to pilot a craft in poor weather, or under unusual circumstances (while being fired upon by an enemy plane, landing without wheels down, etc.) a skill check must be made to avoid losing control.

25a. Piloting Gunship

ATT: DEX COSTS: 4/5/10 PRE: 25

This piloting skill allows a character to handle a standard helicopter gunship, including its weapons systems and targeting equipment. The skill only allows the character full familiarity with one particular model (a cobra or hind, for example) per level of expertise. When flying an unfamiliar model, the character can pilot normally, but has only half his normal skill to operate the on-board weapons systems.

25b. NOE Flying/Helicopter

ATT: DEX COSTS: 2/3/8 PRE: 25

This skill is identical to 23b - NOE Flying/Airplane - except it applies to helicopter flight, an aircraft better suited to this type of flying.

26. Piloting Large Helicopter

ATT: DEX COSTS: 4/5/10 PRE: -

Under normal conditions, no skill check is required to take off, land or pilot a large helicopter. However, when attempting to pilot a craft in poor weather, or under unusual circumstances (while being fired upon by an enemy plane, landing without wheels down, etc.) a skill check must be made to avoid losing control.

27. Piloting Jet

ATT: DEX COSTS: 5/5/10 PRE: -

Under normal conditions, no skill check is required to take off, land or pilot a jet. However, when attempting to pilot a craft in poor weather, or under unusual circumstances (while being fired upon by an enemy plane, landing without wheels down, etc.) a skill check must be made to avoid losing control.

28. Piloting Multi-Engine Jet

ATT: DEX COSTS: 5/5/10 PRE: -

Under normal conditions, no skill check is required to take off, land or pilot a multi-engine jet. However, when attempting to pilot a craft in poor weather, or under unusual circumstances (while being fired upon by an enemy plane, landing without wheels down, etc.) a skill check must be made to avoid losing control.

29. Piloting Space Shuttle

ATT: DEX COSTS: 5/5/10 PRE: -

Under normal conditions, no skill check is required to take off, land or pilot a space shuttle. However, when attempting to pilot a craft in poor weather, or under unusual circumstances (while being fired upon by an enemy plane, landing without wheels down, etc.) a skill check must be made to avoid losing control.

30. Radio Operator

ATT: INT COSTS: 1/1/2 PRE: -

This skill allows character to use shortwave radios, direction finding equipment, and radar equipment. Under ordinary conditions, communication is automatic - no skill check is required. If conditions such as bad weather or enemy counter measures interfere with reception, characters must make a skill check

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to use radio equipment successfully.

The Admin may modify the roll under exceptionally poor conditions - extreme range, for example, or trying to send a signal while an enemy tries to jam it would require a -10% modifier (or worse!).

Radio Operator defaults to 1/2 INT.

31. Sailing

ATT: DEX COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: -

This is the ability to pilot sailboats. Under ordinary conditions - calm seas and no place to go in a hurry - no skill check is necessary.

Rough seas or a need for speed will call for skill checks, with failure meaning the boat coasts to a stop or goes in the wrong direction. A Bad Break results in the boat capsizing. STR checks, modified by circumstances (high seas, gunfire, etc.) will right a small boat. Large boats sink at a rate determined by the Administrator.

Sailing defaults to 1/2 DEX.

32. Scuba Diving

ATT: INT COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: 39

This skill allows a character to maintain and use Scuba gear (Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus). The character can dive to depths of 100 feet without skill checks. To dive between 100 and 150 feet, a skill check is required every minute. A failed check means the character loses 1d6 CON points. Between 150 and 200 feet a 1/2 skill check is required every minute. At this depth, a failed check costs 2d6 CON points. From 200 to 250 feet, anything but a Lucky Break causes a 3d6 CON point loss, and skill checks must be made every minute.

Under normal conditions, scuba-diving characters move up to 10% of their MOV scores each turn. They can move up to 20% of their MOV scores by making difficult checks. To speed up between 0 and 100 feet, make a full Scuba Diving check; between 100 and 150 feet, make a 1/2 skill check; at greater depths, make a 1/4 skill check. Failure means you suffer the effects described above.

When characters without the Scuba Diving skill attempt to use scuba equipment, the Admin rolls 1/2 INT checks for them. A successful check means they get the equipment on properly and it works fine. A failed check means characters find themselves underwater with malfunctioning scuba gear. When and how badly the equipment malfunctions is up to the Administrator. Characters using this skill by default can never dive deeper than 100 feet.

32a. EMERSON

ATT: INT COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: 32

EMERSON is a self-contained diving unit which completely recycles the gas used. Because of this, it has its own hazards and dangers in addition to those associated with normal SCUBA gear. Characters only have to make skill checks in critical or unusual diving situations. Characters without EMERSON skill must make a default check to even use this diving gear.

33. Sign Language

ATT: INT COSTS: 4/2/4 PRE: -

This is the ability to communicate through hand gestures. Characters who can see another individual using sign language, and can be seen in return, can converse as quickly and fluently as they sound in normal conversation - under ordinary conditions, no skill checks are necessary.

Under adverse conditions, skill checks must be made by all parties involved in a sign language conversation. A failed check by either signer or "listener" means the message came across garbled.

34. Skiing

ATT: MOV COSTS: 2/3/6 PRE: -

Characters with the Skiing skill are versed in the art of downhill (Alpine) and cross-country (Nordic) skiing. Downhill, they can move up to three times their MOV scores in feet per turn. Normal hazards can be negotiated without making skill checks.

If an exceptional challenge (a jump, a sharp turn, or a gun battle on skis, for example) or a need for exceptional speed presents itself, the character must make a skill check or fall. A Bad Break indicates that the character was injured by the fall. Make a normal d% roll to determine amount of damage and location.

35. Sleight of Hand

ATT: REF COSTS: 4/3/6 PRE: -

This is the ability to perform close-up magic - palming coins, stacking decks of cards, performing simple tricks with scarves, rings, and other small objects. A successful skill check is required for each trick a character attempts.

A successful skill check also allows characters to tell when another character is using sleight of hand.

Finally, a successful skill check allows characters to rig card games, substitute weighted dice for legitimate ones, and so on. They can also, of course, tell if a game is rigged against them.

36. Social Chameleon

ATT: INT COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: -

This is the ability to behave properly in all social situations - dining in a high class Parisian restaurant, entertaining in the wilds of Africa, negotiating the streets of New York, and so on. Characters with this skill need not make skill checks when socializing in the culture of their origin.

In foreign cultures, characters must make a skill check in social situations to avoid making a faux pas.

The Social Chameleon skill defaults to 1/2 INT.

37. Speed Reading

ATT: INT COSTS: 3/4/8 PRE: -

This is the ability to race through printed material in far less time than non-speed readers. Normal readers take a minute to read a page of normal text; a speed reader can read and retain material at a rate of a page every two-second turn.

Characters can't speed read highly technical material, or foreign language texts. This skill also can't be used to commit material to Photographic Memory by characters with that advantage.

38. Stage Magic

ATT: DEX COSTS: 5/5/10 PRE: 35

This is the ability to perform large-scale illusions - making elephants disappear, causing tables to rise into the air, sawing people in half, and so on.

A successful skill check means a character has seen a trick performed or read how it works, knows how the illusion is created, and can, given enough time and the proper equipment, recreate it.

39. Swimming

ATT: MOV COSTS: 1/3/6 PRE: -

This is the ability to stay afloat and move through water without drowning. Under normal conditions, at speeds up to 10% of a character's MOV score, no skill check is required.

Characters who want to put on a burst of speed in the water (moving 20% of their MOV score in a single turn) must make skill checks, as must characters who fall into a body of water, or find themselves in a stormy sea. The Administrator determines when Swimming checks are required in order to stay afloat.

Swimming defaults to 1/2 MOV.

40. Throwing

ATT: DEX COSTS: 1/2/4 PRE: -

This is a basic throwing skill. Characters with the Hand Grenade skill can arm and throw grenades of all sorts.

Characters with this skill can also hurl other objects with a high degree of accuracy - anything from a baseball to a molotov cocktail. This skill doesn't give a character the knowledge to concoct a homemade bomb, however: For that you need the Demolitions skill or a Chemistry background

41. Ventriloquism

ATT: INT COSTS: 4/4/8 PRE: -

A successful skill check allows characters with this skill to throw their voices, making sounds appear to originate from someone or something as much as 10 feet away. A failed check means the ventriloquism attempt didn't work - anybody listening knows where the sound came from.

Even a successful ventriloquism check isn't fool proof: Suspicious listeners get a 1/2 INT check to see if they detect the deceit.

42. Area Knowledge

ATT: INT COSTS: 2/2/4 PRE: -

This skill allows a character to have detailed knowledge of a city, region, state, province, or country. The player must state specifically the area and scale covered when the skill is chosen. At the city level, the character knows the locations of stores, bars, and public offices, along with local law and power groups. For a region, the character knows the geography, general character of towns, military bases, significant laws, local customs, and major factions. At the national scale, the character is familiar with the politics

and factions within the country, the organizational structure of the military and police, the operating procedures of the government, the background history, and the general geography of principal features. Although most of this information is recalled automatically, the Administrator can require a skill check for particularly detailed bits of information. This skill can be purchased more than once for several places or a for a single place at different scales.

For example, a mercenary is well-briefed on the current situation in Chad. He has no trouble remembering the names and locations of the principal towns. If asked, he can give a pretty thorough rundown of the different warring factions and their goals and even has a good idea of who currently controls what parts of the country. However, knowing exactly who holds the what small town or the name of the minister of finance would force him to make a skill check.

43. Contact

ATT: Special COSTS: 4/N PRE: -

This “skill” allows characters to obtain additional Contacts as per the contact advantage. Each contact purchased with skill points functions as if it were a two-point Contact advantage. Each Contact obtained with skill points must be specifically named at the time the points are spent. The Administrator can limit the power of a Contact.

42. STABO

ATT: DEX COSTS: 4/N PRE: -

STABO (stabilized tactical airborne body operations) skill trains characters in this specialized method of helicopter extraction. When attempting to use a STABO rig, a skill check must be made. Failure indicates that the character has fallen from the rig, quite possibly suffering injury.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

These skills allow characters to communicate in languages other than their own. All characters are assumed to have a 5th level skill in his or her native language. Learning other languages is simply a matter of spending skill points and buying levels of expertise.

In addition to their native tongue (or tongues), characters can read, write and speak a number of Languages equal to 10% of their INT score, rounded up. (Sign language does not count towards the maximum number of foreign languages.)

The Bilingual Background advantage gives the characters a “free” zero level skill in a second language. This second language does not count against the maximum number of languages the character can learn.

Costs of Foreign Language Skills.

All languages are assumed to be equally hard to learn - the zero level of the skill costs 4 points. The first, second, third and fourth levels cost 2 points each. The fifth level costs 4 points.

Effects of Level on Language skill

In most respects, language skills work like other skills - your level of expertise gives you a plus 5% modifier to your INT check when you try to speak a foreign language.

No skill check is required if all the speakers are fluent.

In addition to standard skill procedure, Language Skills allow characters to do more than just communicate - they may attempt to hide or imitate an accent.

Zero Level: Basic familiarity. Impossible to conceal accent.

First Level: Speak, read and write as quickly as a native. A 1/4 skill check will allow you to conceal your accent for a few sentences at a time.

Second and Third Level: Conceal on 1/2 skill and sustain it for an entire conversation.

Fourth Level: Conceal with full skill check for as long as desired.

Fifth Level: Use the language like a native, and may speak with no detectable foreign accent and can automatically assume regional accents appropriate to the language. At this level, no skill check is needed at all.

ADVANTAGES

Acting Ability (2 points)

Your character possesses a natural ability to take on mannerisms of others. Characters with this advantage purchase the zero level of Acting, mimicry, or Social Chameleon skills in the same way as characters without the advantage. However, each subsequent skill level purchased gets them +10 to their roll versus +5 for ordinary characters.

Characters with the Acting Ability advantage can work as professional actors, making this a good cover occupation-work out the details with the Administrator. Without this advantage, characters can't pass as professionals.

Acute Hearing (2 points)

Your character has exceptionally keen hearing. Any time the Administrator decides players have to make INT rolls to see if their characters hear something, you get a +10 bonus to your INT score.

In cases where noise would be inaudible to most characters, the Administrator may allow you an INT check to determine if your character hears anything.

In situations where speech is muffled by distance or barriers, the character with Acute Hearing can make an INT check to determine if he or she can understand what is being said.

Acute Smell (1 point)

Characters with this ability are allowed to make an INT check at +20 any time an olfactory clue might linger in the air. They can detect the presence of unusual gasses or the recent passage of animals. (A Lucky Break may even reveal the number and kinds of animals!) Characters with Acute Smell can even recognize specific types of cologne or perfume.

Note that certain gasses are truly odorless, and can't be detected even by the most sensitive nostrils.

Acute Taste (1 point)

The ability allows the character to detect any unusual additives, flavor agents, even poisons in food or drink.

Characters with this advantage gets a +20 to INT checks involving the taste buds (to detect a poisoned drink, for example). In addition, the character can become a culinary expert or judge of fine wines with a little practice.

Acute Touch (1 point)

Characters with this advantage have exceptional feeling in their skin, particularly their fingertips.

Acute Touch grants a character a +10 to all attribute checks when using Demolitions Skill, performing Surgery, or doing any other type of activity where deft fingers are extremely important.

Lockpickers and safecrackers open locks and safes in half the time a person without this advantage would take.

Acute Vision (2 points)

Characters with this advantage can see far better than people with 20/20 vision, and can make out fine details which would normally be invisible to the naked eye.

This advantage gives you a +20 to INT checks involving vision (recognizing things at a great distance, for example or picking out faded engravings or markings on objects held in hand). Back

Ambidexterity (2 points)

Characters with this advantage aren't right or left handed, but can use both hands equally well. They don't suffer the -30 penalty for using the "wrong hand" to perform any action, including combat actions.

Animal Friendship (1 point)

Characters with this advantage get along well with animals, and can often coax them to obey commands-or at least be friendly.

In a non-combat situation (when, for example, if an agent awoke to find themselves in a lion's cage), you would be allowed an

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INT check. If the check is successful, the animals will not attack the character unless provoked.

In a combat situation (e.g., when guard dogs attack you as you are breaking into someone's lair), you make a 1/2 INT check. Success means the animals do not attack.

Characters with this advantage purchase the zero level of Animal Training skill at the normal cost, but each subsequent level purchased gives them +10 to their roll instead of the +5 other characters get.

Artistic Ability (2 points)

Characters with this advantage are naturally talented in the visual arts. They purchase the zero level of Forgery, Fine Arts, or Photography skill in the same way as characters without the advantage. However, each subsequent skill level purchased gets them +10 to their roll versus +5 for ordinary characters.

For Example, a character with this advantage would spend 1 point to get Photography at level 0, just like anyone else. This allows the character to make a Photography check at his or her full INT level.

Once familiar with the basic tools of photography, however, this character progresses much more rapidly than others. Spending 3 more points would net the ordinary character a first level ability (allowing an INT +5 roll); the character with Artistic Ability spends the same three points, but gets twice the benefit from them, getting a +10 to his or her INT for every level of skill purchased.

Characters with Artistic Ability advantage can work as professional artists, making this a good cover occupation - work out the details with the Administrator. Without this advantage, characters can't pass as professionals.

Athletic Ability (1,2 points)

A character with athletic ability has natural talent in jumping, running, throwing, and swimming. This translates into a modifier to your character's MOV score. If you spend one point on this advantage, add 10 to your character's MOV score; 2 points earns a +20 modifier.

In addition, a character with 2 points of Athletic Ability is skilled enough to work as a professional athlete in the sport of your choice. This can be a good cover.

Attractive Appearance (1,2,3 points)

A character with one point of Attractive Appearance gets a +1 bonus to any NPC reaction roll (Administrator's Guide, page 26) in which appearance is deemed important by the Administrator; a character with 2-point advantage gets a +2 bonus; a character with a 3 point advantage gets +3.

Situations in which appearance may be important include, but not limited to, interacting with the opposite sex, social or public gatherings, and professions such as modeling, acting, or sales.

Any time your character tries to seduce another, the target of the seduction must reduce his or her WIL by 10 points for every point you spent on the Attractive Appearance advantage.

Bilingual Background (2 points)

Characters with this advantage were raised in an environment in which more than one language was used on a regular basis. In addition to being fluent in one language, like all characters, characters from a bilingual background get a 1st level skill in a second language of the player's choice-free! The bilingual character can speak, read, and write the second language as good as his natural language.

Blandness (3 points)

This character can blend into most crowds with ease. He or she is very 'normal' and very 'unremarkable' in appearance. This character cannot take any advantages or disadvantages related to appearance or memorable features if this advantage is taken. It will take most people a 1/4 INT check to even remember this character being around.

Contacts (2,3, or 4 points)

Contacts are people or organizations that the character can call upon for assistance. All contacts must be fleshed out prior to the start of play, they cannot be left "generic."

A 2 point contact is a small, local organization or an individual with limited abilities and influence.

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a 3 point contact has more regional scope, and better abilities or resources available to him.

a 4 point contact is more wide-reaching and powerful, like the head of a government or corporation, with many resources and abilities available.

Double-jointed (3 points)

The character's limbs and fingers can bend in unnatural ways, allowing the character to wriggle out of confining situations that would hopelessly entangle others. In situations where normal characters make a REF check to escape, the double-jointed character doesn't have to roll at all - he or she simply slips loose. In a situation where normal characters wouldn't be allowed to roll at all, the double-jointed character can still roll at 1/2 REF!

Empathy (2 points)

A character with this advantage has an innate understanding of emotions of others. The character can make a judgement about an NPC's feelings based on very few clues. The NPC must be watched for a minute or so. At the end of the time, characters with the Empathy advantage can roll a 1/2 INT check to determine if they can detect the strongest emotion present in the NPC.

This advantage also gives characters some ability to separate truth from falsehood: If the player rolling an Empathy check gets a Lucky Break, the character will be able to determine if whether or not the speaker is lying; otherwise, the character will have to guess whether or not the NPC speaks the truth.

Eye-Hand Coordination (3 points)

A character with this advantage receives a +10 modifier to all DEX checks involving the interaction of visual and physical skills. This modifier applies to all forms of combat (except blind fighting), as well as checks to throw or catch an object, arrest a fall, and drive a vehicle.

Fearlessness (2 points)

Characters with this advantage don't give in to fear. Unlike ordinary people, they are never required to make a WIL check in the face of a frightening situation. This does not mean the character must be foolhardy and overconfident, however. It simply means the character will never lose his or her cool in the face of danger.

Good Balance (2 points)

Your character has an exceptional sense of balance. Any time the Administrator determines that your character might fall (through a trapdoor, off a ledge, etc), you will be allowed to make a REF check. If the check is successful, the character catches him- or herself and doesn't fall.

Internal Compass (1 point)

Characters with an Internal Compass can almost always tell which way is North (and therefore which is South, East, and West). If they have any clues at all - the sun, moon, or stars are visible, for example - no die roll is necessary. Even if there are no clues at all, a successful INT check means they know which direction is North.

Language Ability (2 points)

Characters with this advantage learn languages easily. There is no limit to the number of languages these characters can learn and, when they do learn a language, they learn it well.

The zero level of skill still costs four points, and still gets the player an INT check to communicate in a particular language. However, once characters with this advantage get the basics - alphabet, grammar, and the like - they progress at a faster rate than characters without this advantage.

For each level added, the character with Language Ability adds 10 per level to his or her Language checks rather than the +5 less-talented characters get.

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Light Sleeper (2 points)

The slightest disturbance awakens the light sleeper. Normal characters operate at half-efficiency for two turns after waking up. Characters with the Light Sleeper advantage are instantly alert, and can perform normal actions on the turn after they awaken.

Any time a normal character is allowed a full INT check to awaken, the character with the Light Sleeper advantage wakes up automatically. If a normal character has to make a 1/2 INT check to wake up, the light sleeper gets a full INT check. Even in situations where the normal character has no chance of waking up, the Light Sleeper gets a 1/2 INT check.

Mechanical/Technical Aptitude (3 points)

Characters with this advantage have a natural affinity for machinery, and learn Mechanical and Technical skills more easily than characters without the Mechanical/Technical Aptitude advantage.

The first level skill purchased by Mech/Tech characters gets the Mechanical or Technical skill selected at attribute level - the same as characters without this advantage. However, subsequent skill levels purchased get Mech/Tech characters +10 to their attribute roll, rather than the +5 other characters get.

Musical Ability (1 point)

The character with this advantage has natural musical ability, and can learn to sing or play an instrument more easily than most people.

Characters with this advantage purchase the first level of any musical skill in the same way as characters without this advantage. However, all subsequent skill level purchased get the character with this advantage +10 to their roll versus the +5 for ordinary characters.

Characters with the Musical Ability advantage have the extra touch of genius that will allow them to work as professional musicians. This can make excellent cover.

Night Vision (2 points)

This character has eyes that adapt exceptionally well to darkness. The character can see in illumination ranging from twilight to near total darkness more effectively than anyone without this proficiency. (No one can see in total darkness).

Characters with Night Vision ignore all darkness modifiers.

In non-combat situations, where observation is limited to poor illumination, the Administrator may also give characters with this advantage a little more detail than anyone else.

Obscure Knowledge (3 points)

This is the advantage all trivia buffs have. Characters with Obscure Knowledge have a chance to pull the most remote or obscure facts from the dim recesses of their brains. If a character's background or education makes it likely that he or she would know a particular fact (a judgment made by the Administrator), the player gets an INT check to see if the character knows it.

Even if a character with this advantage has no way of knowing a fact, the Admin will make a 1/2 INT check to see if he or she knows!

The information gained through the use of this advantage will generally be trivial. Obscure Knowledge can't tell characters how to do things; it only governs whether or not characters can call up a specific, isolated, fact.

Observation (3 points)

The Observation advantage allows characters to note and remember anything they see, hear, or smell with their eyes, ears, and nose. It applies only to first-hand experiences, and not to anything characters learn second-hand (for that you need the Photographic Memory advantage).

Peripheral Vision (2 points)

Characters with this advantage have an exceptionally wide field of vision. They always see occurrences to the side (where most characters must make an INT check to see successfully), and can make an INT check to see if they detect occurrences to the right- or left-rear.

Photographic Memory (6 points)

This potent and expensive advantage give characters all the benefits of the Observation advantage plus total recall of anything read, seen, or heard. First-hand, second-hand, it doesn't matter - characters with photographic memories have perfect recall. There is no time limit on memories; they last forever.

If the player knows a particular fact, the character knows it as well. If the player doesn't know something and the character could reasonably be expected to know it the Admin will tell the player.

Whether a character could reasonably be expected to know something is up to the Admin. Since this is such a powerful advantage, Admin's are encouraged to be selective about what they reveal to characters with photographic memories.

Presence (3 points)

This advantage gives characters a physical and vocal manner so striking it draws the attention of NPCs. It also makes non-hostile NPCs more likely to respond favorably to the positions and suggestions of characters with this advantage. (Player characters always get to make up their own minds.)

Neutral or friendly listeners must make WIL checks to determine if they favor positions or follow suggestions. Failure means they go along with whatever the character with Presence wants them to do (assuming this doesn't lead to certain and immediate death!). Hostile listeners who fail WIL checks must spend a turn considering what the character with Presence said, and can't act on that turn.

Sensuality (2 points)

Characters with this advantage are extremely attractive to the opposite sex. When these characters attempt to distract, seduce, or flirt with a character of the opposite sex, the "target" character must make a WIL check, or become completely enamored of the sensual character. (This doesn't mean that the seduced character becomes the slave of the seducer - just that the seduced character will do anything short of endangering lives or the success of the mission to satisfy his or her desires.)

The seduction WIL check can be modified by two other advantages: If the sensual character has the Presence advantage, the target's WIL is dropped by 5. Each point a character has in the Attractive Appearance advantage also results in a -5 modifier.

Sixth Sense (1,2,3 points)

Characters with this advantage have an uncanny ability to sense danger. The advantage comes into effect when the player asks to use it. ("Do I sense anything unusual here?") It can be used as many times per gaming session as you have points in the advantage. (A 1 point Sixth Sense can only be used once; a two point advantage can be used twice; and a three point advantage can be used three times.)

When the player asks, the Administrator provides vague, but helpful, information about the nature or location of danger, if any. If there is no danger, the Admin reveals that.

The Admin can, at any time, and at his or her option, make secret INT checks for characters with the Sixth Sense advantage, to see if they sense unexpected danger. A successful roll means the character senses something (and the Admin hints that danger looms). If the check fails, the character doesn't suspect anything. This does not count against the player's uses of the advantage.

Stamina (2 points)

Characters with this advantage can exert themselves for twice as long as normal characters - up to twice their CON in minutes in light exercise, and up to twice their CON in turns in heavy exercise.

Characters with the Stamina advantage also recover more quickly than their less gifted counterparts - recovering from light or heavy exercise takes just two minutes for characters with Stamina, rather than 5 minutes for other characters.

Subculture and Jargon (1 point)

Characters with this advantage can choose a particular subculture of society to have knowledge of. The character with this advantage specifies the subculture with which he or she is familiar, and can make an INT check at any time to recall information concerning them. They also know bits of the subculture's particular jargon and can use it when conversing with members of that subculture.

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Toughness (1,2,3,4 points)

Characters with this advantage have a higher tolerance for pain than most people and are less susceptible to broken bones. Each character's body is divided into ten areas, each which can take a certain amount of damage before becoming useless. Characters with the Toughness advantage get bonuses which allow them to take more damage in each body area than other characters.

Each point spent on Toughness gives characters one extra point of damage per body area.

This advantage has no effect on CON - it gives characters more damage boxes, but that doesn't mean they can run farther or withstand the effects of poison better than ordinary characters.

Wealth (2,3,4 points)

A player can spend 2,3, or 4 points on this advantage, each representing a different degree of wealth. The actual effect of wealth in the game is determined by the Admin.

The varying degrees of wealth are displayed on the chart below. "Points" is the number of points spent on the advantage; "Family Status" is a general indication of the character's background; "Holdings" gives an indication of property owned by the character's family (though not necessarily by the character as an individual). "Allowances" is the character's annual allowance in dollars.

Details of the character's background, implications of Family Status, access to family Holdings, and delivery of allowance (all at once, twelve equal payments, etc.) should be worked out by the player and the Administrator.

Points	Family Status	Holdings	Allowance
2	Well-to-do	Large House	25,000
3	Millionaire	Houses/Business	100,000
4	Dynasty	Estates Businesses Airplane Yacht	250,000

DISADVANTAGES

Absent-Mindedness (3 points)

This character has a bad habit of forgetting where he or she puts things. Ever so often (at least once or twice a session) the Admin should make a secret roll against 1/2 the character's INT. If the roll fails, the character will misplace a random item. The Admin should encourage the player to roleplay this disadvantage to the maximum, even forgetting where he or she put weapons and ammo upon occasion!

Addiction (2,4 points)

A two-point addiction can be one of two things: an addiction to caffeine or nicotine, or a "controlled" addiction to alcohol.

A four point addiction can mean an addiction to heroin or another narcotic, or dependence on cocaine or some other substance. It can also mean the character is uncontrollably addicted to alcohol.

2 Point: A character addicted to caffeine or nicotine requires the substance in order to operate at full efficiency. If the character has not had a recent dose of the drug - 3 hours for caffeine, one hour for nicotine - all of the character's attributes and skills are lowered by 5 points. If twice this time is allowed to elapse, attributes and skills suffer an additional 10 point penalty. No further losses are suffered, regardless of how much time passes. Attributes and skills return to normal as soon as the character gratifies the addiction by consuming any amount of the desired substance. No losses are suffered while the character sleeps.

Characters with a controlled (2 point) addiction to alcohol are presumed to be "on the wagon". If they ever touch alcohol, they must make a 1/2 WIL check, or suffer the effects of an uncontrolled alcohol addiction.

4 Point: A character addicted to cocaine or heroin suffers a very serious handicap, for the acquisition of the drug becomes the most important aspect of the character's life! Think carefully before you choose this disadvantage!

Characters with an uncontrolled (4 point) addiction to alcohol will drink whenever and wherever they have the chance, suffering the effects of intoxication as described in the Administrator's guide.

NOTE: The inclusion of this disadvantage in the game is intended to present players with realistic roleplaying problems - We do not recommend or sanction the use of any of these substances!

Allergies (1,2,3 points)

Characters with allergies suffer adverse physical reactions whenever they come in contact with whatever substance they are allergic to. How your character reacts to allergens is up to you - sneezing, breaking out in hives, running nose, and/or difficulty breathing are all appropriate. Just tell the Admin your character's physical response at the time that you chose this disadvantage. Once you chose this disadvantage you must tell the Admin how you will react and then there is no changing it. The Admin has the final say as always in this matter.

Allergies can be quite serious. Just how serious they are is determined by the number of points you take.

Players can take as many allergies as they want - thus, a character could have several minor (1-point) allergies, or a couple of 1-point allergies and a single serious (3-point) allergy, or any other combination.

Characters can be allergic to just about anything, though the Administrator shouldn't allow allergies to really be unusual substances. (You shouldn't be allowed to select an allergy to penguins, for example, unless penguins are fairly common in your campaign.) Typically (and appropriate) allergens include fur, smoke, wool, wheat, and alcohol.

1 Point: A 1 point allergy is little more than an inconvenience. Characters with 1-point allergies suffer whatever physical effect they decided upon for as long as they are exposed and for 1d10 minutes afterward.

2 Points: Characters with 2-point allergies have a more serious problem. They must make a WIL check every minute they are exposed to the substance to which they are allergic. If a check fails, all attributes and skills are reduced to 1/2 normal. These

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return to normal at a rate of 10 points per minute, once the character is no longer exposed.

An allergy shot once a week can reduce a 2-point allergy to a 1-point allergy.

3 Points: Characters with 3-point allergies must make a WIL check every minute they are exposed to the substance to which they are allergic. If a check fails, all attributes and skills are reduced to 5 until they are no longer exposed. These return to normal at a rate of 5 points per minute once the character is no longer exposed.

An allergy shot once a week can reduce a 3-point allergy to a 2-point allergy.

Clumsiness (2 points)

The character with this disadvantage is liable to drop things or trip at the most awkward moments. At the Administrator's discretion (but not more than once or twice per gaming session), the player makes a REF check. Success means nothing happened; failure means the character fumbled whatever he or she was holding, or tripped and fell down, perhaps knocking over some fragile object.

Note that it is possible to have a REF or DEX of 79 and still be clumsy - your character simply loses his or her concentration at times, or suffers from dizzy spells...

Color-blind (1 point)

This disadvantage prevents characters from determining differences in colors, particularly reds, green, and browns. For simplicity, assume that a color-blind character sees everything in black, white, and gray.

Cowardice (4 points)

Characters with this disadvantage must make a WIL check during the first turn on any life-threatening encounter. Success means the character functions normally throughout the encounter. Failure means the Character's innate cowardice has taken over.

If cover is available, the character must head for it immediately. If no cover is available, the character freezes in place or runs in panic (player's option).

After three turns, the player makes a second WIL check. Success means the character has conquered his or her fear, and can take whatever action the player wants. Failure means the character must run in panic at full speed for another three turns, at which point another WIL check is made. This continues until the danger is past or the player makes a successful WIL roll.

Curiosity (1 point)

This character suffers from an insatiable curiosity about things that are going on around him. Although this can be a good trait for an agent, this character has "too much of a good thing." If faced with an unknown situation, such as an unopened door, an unsearched desk, etc., then the player must make a WIL roll. On a successful roll, the player can choose to ignore the distraction if they so desire. On a failed roll, the character will be compelled to "see what's in there."

Deep Sleeper (2 points)

Characters with this disadvantage sleep through disturbances that would awaken most others. When they do awaken, several seconds must pass before they reach full efficiency. Normal characters suffer a 50% decrees in all attributes and skill levels for two turns (4 seconds) after waking up, and can act normally on the third. Characters with the Deep Sleep disadvantage have all attributes and skills halved for four turns (8 seconds), and can't perform normal actions until the fifth turn after they awaken.

Any time a normal character would be allowed a full INT check to awaken, the character with the Deep Sleep disadvantage must make a 1/2 INT check to wake up. If a normal character must make a 1/2 INT check to wake up, the deep sleeper must roll a 1/4 INT check.

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If the first INT check is not successful, the deep sleeper gets another chance on each subsequent turn, until the disturbance ends, the sleeper is killed, or the sleeper wakes up. The Character's second INT check is made a +10; the next, if necessary, is made at +20, the third at +30, and so on.

Dependent (2,3,4 points)

A dependent is a non-player character who depends on a player character for support and at times, food and shelter. Players can spend 2,3, or 4 points for this disadvantage. The more points spent, the more often the PC will have to deal with the dependent, and more involved such dealings will be, as described below:

2 Points: The dependent is a physically able person from 10-50 years old, capable of taking care of him- or herself in ordinary circumstances. A 2-point dependent may or may not live with the PC. But, should anything happen to the dependent character, the PC must go to his or her aid as soon as possible.

3 Points: The dependent lives with the PC, and can take care of him- or herself for a few hours or, at most, a day. Young children, fall into this category, as do invalids, and the very elderly. This is someone the PC cares about, but can leave in the cares of others (trusted others) if the need arises.

A loved one who doesn't need constant care and attention can also qualify as a 3-point dependent if the character lavishes such attention on the dependent anyway. Should anything happen to the dependent the PC must go to his or her aid immediately, even if this puts a mission at risk.

4 Points: The dependent is someone the PC cares about deeply, someone who requires constant care (a baby, for example, or a loved one with a serious physical handicap). The PC won't leave the dependent alone, or with others, unless the situation absolutely demands it, and then only for a day or two.

The exact nature of these dependents and their relationships with the PCs should be determined by the player and approved by the Administrator player. Player choices should be honored unless they seriously affect the campaign.

The Administrator, having approved the idea behind the dependent, will determine the NPC's attributes. The Administrator also plays a role of the dependent. Dependents are individuals, just like your character, and while they'll usually do what you want them to, there are no guarantees!

If a dependent dies, the Admin may require the player to take another disadvantage of equal point value. This is entirely up to the Admin.

Ego Signature (2 points)

Characters with this disadvantage cannot perform an anonymous professional act. They are compelled by ego to leave some identifying mark at the scene of their covert activities. These marks can be special ammunition (silver bullets), a monogrammed handkerchief, a cryptic message, initials carved in a piece of furniture, or anything the player wants (subject, of course, to the Administrator's approval).

Enemy (1,2,4 points)

This disadvantage gives a PC a murderous enemy who might show up at any time, in any place. The cost of the enemy varies with the enemy's power and how often he or she shows up.

1 Point: This is a fairly innocuous enemy, an individual who doesn't like the PC and will work against him with whatever resources he or she has.

A 1-point enemy might be a newspaperman who wants to expose an agent's covert operations and see the agent behind bars, or a rival in another espionage organization who wants to discredit the PC's agency.

1-point enemies show up no more than once per adventure and need not show up at all. It's up to the Administrator.

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2 points: This is a more serious enemy - an individual or small organization. This enemy wants the PC out of action ... permanently.

A 2-point enemy might be a highly skilled enemy agent or assassin whose efforts have been thwarted once too often by the PC. It might be a motorcycle gang the PC infiltrated and sent up the river at the end of the mission.

Two-point enemies show up at least once per adventure. Where, when, and how is up to the Administrator.

4 Points: This is a very dangerous and serious enemy - a powerful individual or large organization. This enemy wants the PC dead, and has the power to bring a careless agent to a quick end.

The CIA, the KGB, a wealthy man bent on world domination - these would all qualify as 4-point enemies. Four-point enemies are people or organizations capable of sending assassins in waves. A 4-point enemy can also work against the PC in more insidious ways - by aiding his or her foes.

The details are left to the Administrator, but a 4-point enemy will show up at least once per adventure, and may show up once per gaming session, though not always in ways which are readily apparent to the player.

Note that an attack by a character's enemy might turn into a major campaign even lasting many gaming sessions!

Players determine the nature of their characters' enemies. The Administrator fills in the details and plays the role of the enemy or enemy's hirelings.

If an enemy dies (or is otherwise eliminated), the Admin may require the player to take another disadvantage of equal or greater point value. This is entirely at the Admin's discretion.

Gambling (2 points)

Characters with this disadvantage have a weakness for games of chance, and may not be able to control themselves when opportunities to gamble arise. If the character is tempted (walking past a slot machine in an airport or spending the night in a hotel/casino, for example), the player must roll a WIL check to avoid giving in to the temptation.

The Administrator may modify the WIL check, depending upon circumstances. A character in the midst of an important business, for example, might get a +10 to his or her WIL score. Very bad odds might result in a +20 to WIL; very good odds, on the other hand, might result in a -20 to the PC's WIL score.

Once characters with the gambling disadvantage begin gambling, they must continue to do so until they make a 1/2 WIL check, or run out of money. This check can be made once every half hour of game time (unless the money runs out first!).

Greed (3 points)

Greedy characters have an almost uncontrollable desire to get something (usually money or power). The player determines what his or her character is greedy for. Then, whenever the character is presented with the opportunity to satisfy his or her desire, the player rolls a WIL check. Success means the player can decide whether greed takes over or not; failure means the character is compelled to go after whatever he or she is greedy for.

Characters are not compelled to break the law in pursuit of their goals, but they won't hesitate to put friends or the success of a mission at risk.

Hearing Impairment (2,3,4 points)

A character can spend 2 points for Hearing Impairment disadvantage and have a correctable hearing problem. Characters with a 2-point Hearing Impairment need hearing aids in order to function more or less normally.

Even with the hearing aid, characters with this disadvantage hear only half as well as people with normal hearing. Any check involving sound - a check to see if noises awaken sleeping PCs, or to see if gunshots alert them of danger, for example - must be made at 1/2 the level of characters with normal hearing.

Without a hearing aid, character with 2-point disadvantage are treated like characters with a 4-point Hearing Impairment, described below. Characters with 2-point Hearing Impairment disadvantage have no trouble communicating verbally with their companions.

Characters with 4-point Hearing Impairment disadvantage are completely deaf. Hearing aids won't help them. They don't get to make any checks involving sound. In order to understand what others are saying they must have the Lip Reading skill (a handy skill for characters without any level of Hearing Impairment). Sign language skill is also handy.

Illiteracy (2 points)

Characters with the Illiteracy disadvantage can't read or write. They can only learn to read and write by "buying off" this disadvantage, taking others of equal or greater value.

The Illiteracy disadvantage makes learning Education skills more difficult - the zero level of skill costs more than for literate characters, but each subsequent level gives literate characters a 2% increase in proficiency, rather than 5%.

Illiterate characters have the same trouble learning Language skills, but in addition to learning slowly, characters with the Illiteracy disadvantage can never learn to read or write in a foreign language (unless they buy off this disadvantage as described above).

Lechery (2 points)

Characters with this disadvantage suffer the effects outlined for "Greed" when confronted with temptation from the opposite sex. The character must make a successful WIL check, or be compelled to try to "pick up" the other character. The lecherous character adds 10 to his or her WIL score for each point of Unattractive Appearance the other character has and subtracts 10 for every point of Attractive Appearance.

Moral Qualms (2 points)

Characters with this disadvantage have deeply held beliefs that prevent them from performing certain actions. One character might have a qualm about shooting an enemy in the back, or from ambush; another might have qualms about telling lies or torturing prisoners.

Players may select any moral qualm (or qualms) they want, subject to the approval of the Administrator, but qualms which never come into play shouldn't be allowed. Even, "I can't eat beef because it is against my character's religion," is a judgment call, though it might be allowed if it helps a player get a better handle on his or her character.

In game terms, characters can't do anything they have qualms about unless the life of another, or the success of the mission, is at stake. When lives or missions are threatened, players with the Moral Qualms disadvantage can make a WIL check to see if they can overcome their qualms.

Night Blindness (2 points)

Characters with this disadvantage suffer the effects of darkness during conditions of twilight, and when darkness falls, they are effectively blind. All vision related attribute and skill checks are at 1/2 normal level.

At night or in near total darkness, all vision related attribute and skill checks are at 1/4 normal level. The Administrator determines which checks are "vision-related".

Phobias (1,2,3 points)

Characters who select the Phobias disadvantage are intensely afraid of a specific kind of thing or condition: enclosed places, cats, heights, and so on. Characters can be afraid of anything, though objects or conditions which never come up in play should not be allowed. You can select as many phobias as you want.

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Basic phobias cost 2 points, but a fear of something rare or unusual is only worth 1 point. For example, the fear of cats is a 2-point disadvantage; the fear of black cats is worth only 1; the fear of your neighbor's cat (and no others) wouldn't be worth any points at all.

You can add a point to the worth of a basic, 2-point phobia by saying it's a very severe one. (One-point phobias can't be increased this way.) For example a basic 2-point fear of heights would come into play when a character has to follow a fleeing agent up a mountain, or onto a window ledge fifty stories up. However, if this character was so afraid of heights he or she couldn't stand on a chair to change a light bulb, the phobia would be worth 3-points!

A player whose character is confronted with the object of phobia must roll a WIL check or the character will refuse to face the object. The player can choose whether the character freezes or leaves the area immediately. A character who freezes can make a WIL check every round (no modifiers) to try to overcome fear. A character who leaves the area returns to normal as soon as he or she is out of sight of the feared object or condition.

Short-winded (3 points)

A character with this disadvantage suffers shortness of breath during periods of physical activity. In game terms, the character's endurance is half the standard time for all physical activities, including hand-to-hand combat, swimming, running, skiing, etc.

Traumatic Flashbacks (2,4 points)

Characters with this disadvantage suffer from painful and vivid memories of some horrible experience they went through earlier in life. Players create the traumatic event, consistent with the character's background (and subject to approval by the Administrator). The description of the event need not be shared with other players.

At least once per gaming session (for a 4-point disadvantage) or once per adventure (for a 2-point disadvantage) the character should encounter a situation reminiscent of the traumatizing incident. A character who was traumatized when he was hit by a car could suffer a flashback any time he crosses a street. A character traumatized by a rare occurrence, such as being struck by lightning could suffer a flashback any time he or she hears thunder or even when the lights are turned on in a pitch-black room!

The Administrator will tell you when your character suffers a flashback. Make a WIL check to see how your character responds.

If you roll successfully, your character is shaken for a single turn, and can't do anything on that turn. After a single turn passes, however, the character is fine and can go back to what he or she was doing before the flashback.

If the check fails, the character suffers a serious flashback, and remains frozen for 1d6 turns. When the appropriate number of turns passes, make another WIL check. Again, success means the character is fine on the next turn; failure means he or she is frozen for another 1d6 turns. Continue making WIL checks until your character snaps out of the flashback, or dies.

Unattractive Appearance (1,2,3 points)

Something about the character is visually offensive to others. Specify how your character is unattractive before play begins.

In game terms, this is the opposite of the Attractive Appearance advantage. Thus, a penalty of 10, 20, or 30 applies to reaction rolls toward the character made by NPCs, depending upon whether 1,2, or 3 points was allocated to the disadvantage.

Uncouth (2 points)

This character is at a loss in any situation involving social interaction. Any time characters with this disadvantage meet someone for the first time, dine in an unfamiliar setting, or take part in any kind of negotiations, they must roll an INT check. Success means the encounter goes well; failure means the character has committed some terrible social blunder. When this happens, the Administrator make a reaction roll, subtracting 20 from the roll, increasing the likelihood that the reaction will be negative.

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The actual effect of a negative reaction to an uncouth character can range from the player (and any companions) being kicked out of a restaurant to the break-off of delicate hostage negotiations. Again, the Administrator will determine what happens.

Unmistakable Feature (1 point)

The character with this disadvantage can be easily identified because of a scar, birthmark, distinctive hairstyle, tattoo, or the like. The feature could also be a hulking posture or a unique walk. Whatever the nature, it must be something that is visible to onlookers and isn't easily concealed.

Vision Impairment (2,6 points)

Moderate (2-point) vision impairment is no big deal. Serious (6-point) vision impairment may prevent characters from taking part in many missions.

2-Points: The character requires glasses or contacts to see effectively. Without corrective measures, the character's attributes are reduced to 1/2 normal on any attribute or skill check where vision is important.

For example, if your character wanted to read a newspaper without his or her glasses, the Admin would require a 1/2 INT check before telling you what's in the paper. A player whose character had to drive a car without glasses would have to make a 1/2 Driving skill check any time skill is required.

The Administrator will tell you which activities involve vision and require 1/2 skill checks.

6-Points: The character is blind. This is, as you might expect, a very serious handicap. The Administrator has the final say about whether to allow blind characters into a campaign. If the Administrator says no blind characters, find another disadvantage. The Administrator Guide contains guidelines for blind characters.

Playing The Game

Now that you have a character, lets take a look at actually being able to use your character and deploy him/her to the utmost of their potential. There are a few rules and guidelines that you will need to follow. However, as always, the administrator has the authority to overwrite, change, or modify any rule that he/she feels the need to.

Time in the TopSecret/S.I. Game

The passage of time in the game can be very precise, or very flexible, depending upon what's going on. A cross-country plane trip might take hours of time in the real world, but a moment or two of game time - the Administrator might simply say, "Okay, your plane takes off in New York and lands a couple hours later in Los Angeles. You get a terrible meal but, aside from that, nothing much happens on the flight. What do you want to do now?"

The Admin will compress time in this way any time the action isn't crucial to the story or the completion of a mission. Any time anything important happens - combat, chases, skill checks, and so on, the passage of time in the game changes.

Once your characters are involved in combat, or chases, or any situation requiring skill checks, the game is played in a series of two second turns. During each turn, players say what they want their characters to do - any action (or actions) a real person might reasonably perform in two seconds.

Saying what all the characters are going to do, and resolving all the actions may take players several minutes, but for the characters only two seconds will have passed. Once each character has acted, the game moves on to the next two second turn.

Actions

During a turn, players can choose to have their characters perform one of these seven actions:

Move: This option allows characters to move either under their own power or in a vehicle. Characters moving under their own power can move up to their MOV score in feet each turn. The maximum move of characters in vehicles is determined by the vehicle's speed.

Attack (Ranged): Characters select this option if they want to fire a gun, bow, crossbow, or speargun. It is also used when, throwing a spear, knife, or hand-grenade. Characters making a ranged attack must specify if their gun is braced (described later on), if they're firing a burst (also described later on), or if they are making a called shot (yes, this too is explained later on).

Attack (Close-Combat): This option allows characters to punch, stab, or strike another character up to five feet away. Characters must describe the attack they're making, and announce if they're using a special fighting style.

Defend (Close-Combat): This option gives characters the opportunity to dodge or block an opponent's close combat attack, preventing the blow from landing.

Watch: This option allows characters to watch other characters, to wait and see what they do. Characters selecting the Watch option get a +5 modifier to their Initiative roll (described later) on the next turn. Characters can't do anything on the turn they Watch - no movement, combat, or other activities allowed.

This option also allows a character to take a prepared shot. Finally, this option can be used to keep a foe or prisoner "covered" (i.e. to keep a weapon ready, and an eye on, the other character).

Special Action: This option allows characters to do anything not covered by the options above. Any time you want your character to make a skill check that doesn't involve combat or movement, select this option, then specify what you want to do and what skill you'll use to do it.

Combined Actions

Ordinarily, characters can only select one of the options above per turn. Selecting the Combined Action option allows characters to do two things in a singel turn. There's a price to pay for doing two things at once, however - each of the combinations described below carries a negative dieroll modifier.

Move and Attack/Defend: Characters can fire a weapon once, make one HTH attack, or defend against a single hand to hand attack and still move up to their full MOV allowance. However, every 10' (or fraction thereof) they move results in a -10 modifier to the combat skill check.

Special Actions and Fighting: Characters can always fight and perform a special action as long as no skill check is required for the action. For example, a character can shoot a gun and drive a car at the same time without any trouble (other than some to-hit penalties for being in a moving vehicle).

As a general rule, characters cannot attempt skill checks on any turn in which they are involved in a fight. In most cases, if a character must make a skill check while fighting, both actions automatically fail.

Likewise all rules, however, this one was meant to be broken. Certian Special Actions can be performed while fighting. For example, it's quite possible to drive and fire a pistol in a given turn. Similarly, a character can cling to a sheer rock face (by making a climbing check) and still kick at a foe clinging to the rock below.

The Administrator decides whether a given action can be performed while fighting. Once he or she says you can combine the actions you want, you must make 1/2 skill check for each action in order to succeed.

Special Actions and Moving: In general, special actions cannot be combined with movement. In some cases, however, movement is a required part of a special action. (For example, it is not possible to make a Climbing check without moving - using the skill implies that the character is moving.) In cases where movement is required, action and movement can be combined without any trouble.

Some skills are impossible to use while moving. For example, it just isn't possible to crack a safe while crossing a street - the safe isn't going anywhere, so the safecracker must stand still, too!

Still other actions may be performed while moving. There's nothing to say a character can't pick another's pocket while both walk down a street. As always, the Admin must judge whether a skill can be used "on the run".

Once the Admin okays a Special Action/Movement combination, subtract ten from your character's skill level for every 10 feet (or fraction) the character moves during the turn. The light-fingered character who wants to pick another's pocket while moving 21 feet subtracts 30 from his or her Pickpocketing skill before making a skill check.

Attack and Defend: Characters in hand to hand combat can opt to take one attack and one defense in a single turn. Their skill levels are halved for both attempts, however.

Initiative

The order in which characters act is determined by an Initiative roll at the start of each turn. Players roll individually for their characters. The Administrator rolls once for all NPCs involved.

First, players declare what their characters will do that turn, selecting one of the options described above. The order isn't important at this point.

Once all the players have declared what their characters will do, everyone rolls 1d10.

The player with the highest roll wins initiative. The winning player has the option of acting first, or waiting and letting other players go first. The player with the second highest roll goes second (or may wait for other players with lower rolls to go

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first), and so on. If two or more players roll the same number, their characters are assumed to act simultaneously.

All NPCs act at the same time (wherever the Admin's initiative roll falls in the sequence), except those who selected the Watch option on the previous turn. NPCs who Watched act as if they had rolled the referee's initiative roll plus five.

All players must make initiative rolls each turn except those whose characters are undetected by the enemies. If the Admin decides the opponents have no idea of your character's whereabouts, you can act at any point in a turn. Once you act, your character is considered detected, and you must begin making initiative rolls on the next turn.

There is no other situation in which initiative rolls are unnecessary: When an armed fighter in close-combat battles an unarmed fighter, the armed combatant always wins initiative.

Surprise

The final factor affecting when, and how, your character can act is surprise. A character attacked from an ambush may take a while to figure out what's going on and how to respond; an agent who runs into an arch-foe on the street may be so taken aback he or she can't do anything for a moment, allowing the villain to escape.

These characters have been surprised.

Surprised characters can do nothing for one turn - they don't roll for initiative, they can't begin any actions, they can't make any skill checks to continue actions begun on an earlier turn.

The opposing characters (the ones who surprised them) take on "free" turn, to do whatever they can in a single turn. After they've acted, the next turn begins, with both sides declaring what they'll do on roll for initiative.

The Admin determines whether or not there is a chance a situation will surprise PCs or NPCs. Once this has been decided, the surprised characters must make INT checks to see if they are, in fact, surprised.

A successful check means characters aren't surprised, and can act normally; a failed check means they are surprised, and freeze for a turn.

Movement

The Top Secret/S.I. game is a game of imagination - you don't need a board or playing pieces at all. The Administrator can make up the distances between the characters, and estimate how far characters move in a turn.

Instead of figuring precisely how far apart two characters are, or exactly how far they move in a turn, the Administrator might say: "These guys are at medium range. This one's at short. You're behind a rock, right? Okay, you can move from the rock to a tree 40 feet away."

A game like this moves quit quickly, but players may find it easier to visualize the events of the game if their characters are presented by miniature figures on a map or even on a bare surface like a floor or table-top.

Movement Speeds

Walking speed for all characters is 5 feet per two-second turn (a leisurely pace), or ten feet per turn (a fast walk or slow trot). Players must specify how quickly their characters are walking at the beginning of each turn.

Running speed varies depending upon each character's Movement Rating (MOV). The MOV rating, determined early in the character creation process is an average of a character's DEX and STR Attribute scores. This score is the number of feet per turn a character can run at top speed.

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Going from a standstill to top speed takes time, however. A character who is stationary or walking on one turn can move up to 1/2 his or her MOV score in feet on the next. One turn after that the character can move at any speed up to his or her full MOV score in feet. Thus, moving from a standstill to a top speed run takes at least two turns.

Lying Down and Standing Up: Characters can fall prone at the end of their movement, no matter how far or how fast they moved that turn. Getting up from a prone position takes one full turn, however - no movement is allowed on that turn.

Endurance

As in real life, the Top Secret/S.I. character can't run at top speed forever - after a while, even the toughest agent has to rest. How long can your character run (or keep up any other form of rigorous physical activity) is determined by his or her Constitution (CON) score, and the required level of exertion.

For game purposes, there are two levels of physical exertion: Light Exercise and Heavy Exercise. Running at up to 1/2 MOV is considered light exercise. Running at top speed is heavy exercise.

Light exercise also includes such activities as walking, swimming easily, bicycling, or performing physical labor such as construction work or mechanical work. Heavy exercise includes activities like Close-Combat, climbing sheer surfaces, bicycling or swimming at top speed, or trying to push a stuck vehicle out of the mud.

Characters can keep up light exercise for a number of minutes equal to their CON Attribute Rating. After this many minutes have passed, character must rest for 5 minutes, or all Attribute Ratings are reduced by 1/2 for the next hour. After resting, characters can return to the activity for another amount of time equal to the character's CON in minutes. After that time has passed, characters must rest for 30 minutes or all attribute ratings are reduced by 1/2 until they get eight hours of sleep.

Heavy exercise can be performed for a number of turns equal to their CON rating. The effects of over-exertion are identical to those for light exercise; they just occur sooner.

If heavy and light exercise are mixed, the endurance of a character can be determined by figuring each <>turn of heavy exercise, and each minute of light exercise, as a lost CON point. (Remember that 30 turns equal a minute.) The remaining CON points indicate how much endurance the character has left. Note that CON points are not actually lost by exercise - this is simply a means of judging a character's stamina.

Encumbrance Movement rates and endurance can be affected by the amount of weight a character carries. Characters can lift and walk with a maximum number of pounds equal to their STR score without making a STR check. Carrying more than 1/2 this amount, reduces the MOV score by 1/2 until the amount of weight carried is lessened. (Note that this has no effect on walking speed, since that isn't determined by the MOV score.)

Carrying more than half the maximum allowable weight has another effect as well: All DEX checks involving balancing and jumping are made at 1/2 normal. The Administrator determines which checks are affected.

A successful STR check allows characters to carry weights up to twice their STR in pounds. A new check must be made each turn. A failed check means the weight must be dropped, and it can't be picked up again until the character rests for five minutes. A 1/2 STR check allows weights up to three times a character's STR. A lucky break is needed to lift weight greater than 4 times a character's STR.