

► 2. Chapter Two: Character design

2.1 Introduction

Before sitting down to actually roleplay, players will have to create their characters. The characters can be almost any type of person that fits the background of the campaign. The process outlined in the following pages assumes characters above the average, but still far from the level of the elites. This can be adjusted to better accommodate the style intended for the game, be it gritty or cinematic.

The characters are going to be the conduit through which the players interact with the game world. They will, as mentioned in section 1.1, be the heroes of the story that will be told through playing the game. The characters can be pure or flawed, and their motivations may differ, but it doesn't matter as long as they are interesting to control and watch. And remember, all characters can grow further through experience, adding new abilities and contacts.

In order to keep the basic character generation rules as clear and concise as possible, a number of advanced options (such as Special Abilities, which are “super” Perks, and alien race design rules) have been placed in Chapter Six. They follow the same point spending rules, but their use is restricted to certain types of campaigns — the Gamemaster and players should confer together to see what will be allowed.

The important thing to remember is that there is no right or wrong way to do things, as long as the point-spending rules are respected. The player is in complete charge of the design decisions — no one is forced to purchase a certain Skill, unless they are required for the campaign (a game about a squadron of fighter pilots will obviously need characters who can pilot planes). Examine each choice closely, remembering that all characters have potential strong points.

Chapter Two:
Character design

ACTION: HEAVY GEAR



2.1 Attributes

The basic abilities, knowledge and weaknesses of a character are defined by their Attributes. These largely represent the characteristics a character was born with, or acquired in their formative years. These range from physical Attributes, such as Agility and Fitness, to mental proficiencies such as Willpower and Knowledge. The ten basic Attributes represent a character's natural proficiencies and potential. A character with high Fitness will tend to be a better athlete, one with high Influence will gravitate to leadership positions, and so on.

Attributes can be improved through hard work, but it is very tough and time-consuming. They can be lowered, but usually this is the result of awful wounds or advanced age that will likely retire the character from an active adventuring life. Attributes, unlike Skills and other abilities, thus vary little throughout much of a campaign (see //Character Improvement//, section 2.7).

2.1.1 Descriptions

The following texts describes the ten basic Attributes and their use in the game. Along with each description, a table giving a real world equivalent for different ratings is listed. Attribute levels are based on an average human person in their young adulthood; some creatures or aliens may have much more widely dispersed Attribute ranges. The human average range is -3 to +3, with Build the sole exception.

Agility (AGI)

Agility is the character's hand-eye coordination, nimbleness, and reflexes. This Attribute is best suited to action-oriented characters such as pilots, bodyguards and pickpockets, all of which are likely to have high Agility ratings.

2. Chapter Two: Character Design

Agility (AGI)

AGI rating	Equivalent
+3	Olympic gymnast
+2	Agile
+1	Well-coordinated
0	Average Person
-1	Awkward
-2	Clumsy
-3	Suffers from a crippling disease

Appearance (APP)

Appearance rates the physical attractiveness of the character. This can modify how other people react to him: many heroic characters have a high Appearance rating in order to impress those they come in contact with. Note that Appearance applies solely between members of the same race.

Chapter Two:
Character design

Appearance (APP)

APP rating	Equivalent
+3	World-class models
+2	Beautiful
+1	Attractive, Cute
0	Average Person
-1	Plain
-2	Homely
-3	Physically revolting

ACTION: HEAVY GEAR



► 2. Chapter Two: Character design

• Build (BLD)

Build is a rating of the character's size and body frame. It does not represent the character's physical might — that's what the Strength Secondary Attribute is for — but the actual body size and mass. This is most apparent in the archetypal couch potato who is very large (high Build), but can barely lift the remote to change the channel.

Build (BLD)

BLD rating	Equivalent
+5	180-249.9 kg
+4	140-179.9 kg
+3	115-139.9 kg
+2	95-114.9 kg
+1	80-94.9 kg
0	70-79.9 kg
-1	60-69.9 kg
-2	50-59.9 kg
-3	40-49.9 kg
-4	25-39.9 kg
-5	10-24.9 kg

• Creativity (CRE)

Creativity is a measure of the character's ability to use his mind in innovative ways. It is also a measure of the character's ability to think on his feet. This Attribute is useful for most characters who are likely to be thrust into unfamiliar situations, and for leaders who have to make many decisions while on the run.

Creativity (CRE)

CRE rating	Equivalent
+3	Great artists and tacticians
+2	Bright
+1	Witty
0	Average Person
-1	Slow
-2	Dumb
-3	Mentally Disabled

• Fitness (FIT)

Fitness rates the character's general flexibility, nimbleness, balance, coordination, cardiovascular endurance and muscle tone. While Build measures raw size, Fitness measures how well maintained the character's body is. Illness can temporarily reduce this Attribute, as can other hardships (such as an substandard air supply and starvation).

Fitness (FIT)

FIT rating	Equivalent
+3	Olympic athlete
+2	Professional athlete
+1	College jock
0	Average Person
-1	Out of shape
-2	Shrimp
-3	Gets winded after a few steps

• Influence (INF)

Influence measures the character's charm, wit and persuasiveness. A high Influence rating is a must for any charismatic leader. It is also useful for those who desire to spend lots of time in corporate or social settings, or characters who need to get past security in more subtle ways.

Influence (INF)

INF rating	Equivalent
+3	Charismatic leader or professional con artist
+2	Believable
+1	Likable
0	Average Person
-1	Timid
-2	Annoying
-3	Either obnoxious or socially inept

► 2. Chapter Two: Character Design

• Knowledge (KNO)

Knowledge is the character's ability to learn and recall information, and also takes into account the number of years of education the character has successfully completed. Scientists and "brainiac" characters typically have high Knowledge ratings.

Knowledge (KNO)

KNO rating	Equivalent
+3	Eminent Scholar
+2	Well-educated
+1	Knowledgeable
0	Average Person
-1	Doesn't read much
-2	Poor education
-3	Learning disability, or just dense

• Perception (PER)

Perception is a measure of the character's attentiveness to detail and overall alertness. It is crucial for action heroes, since the enemy who cannot be seen cannot be dealt with. Perception is especially important for scouts and investigators, who need to pay attention to obscure details and find things hidden from view.

Perception (PER)

PER rating	Equivalent
+3	Amazingly sharp senses
+2	Quick
+1	Fast
0	Average Person
-1	Slow
-2	Absent-minded
-3	Unaware of his surroundings

• Psyche (PSY)

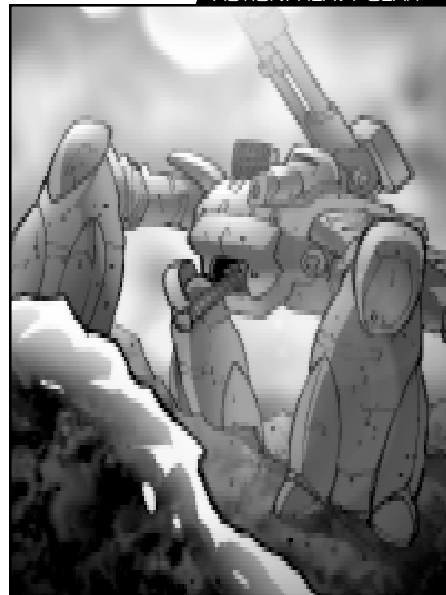
Psyche is an abstract measure of the character's karma, happiness, sensitivity and love of life.

It also reflects the empathy of the character and how "in tune" he is with his own emotions and those of others, as well as his innate luck. Psyche is an abstract concept which is best reflected by extremes; someone with a low psyche seems to have a black cloud over his head all the time, and people will "intuitively" avoid him. A person with a high Psyche is empathic towards the feelings of others and tends to be easily trusted.

Psyche (PSY)

PSY rating	Equivalent
+3	Unusually spry and sane
+2	Very happy
+1	Happy
0	Average Person
-1	Unhappy
-2	Troubled
-3	Unstable

ACTION: HEAVY GEAR



► 2. Chapter Two: Character design

• Willpower (WIL)

Willpower is a rating of the character's self-discipline, determination, and pain threshold. Unlike Psyche, Willpower does not imply a love of life; it does however reflect the character's ability to deny death using sheer strength of will. Headstrong and arrogant characters are good candidates for a high WIL, as are shocktroopers who want to be able to take a bullet.

Willpower (WIL)

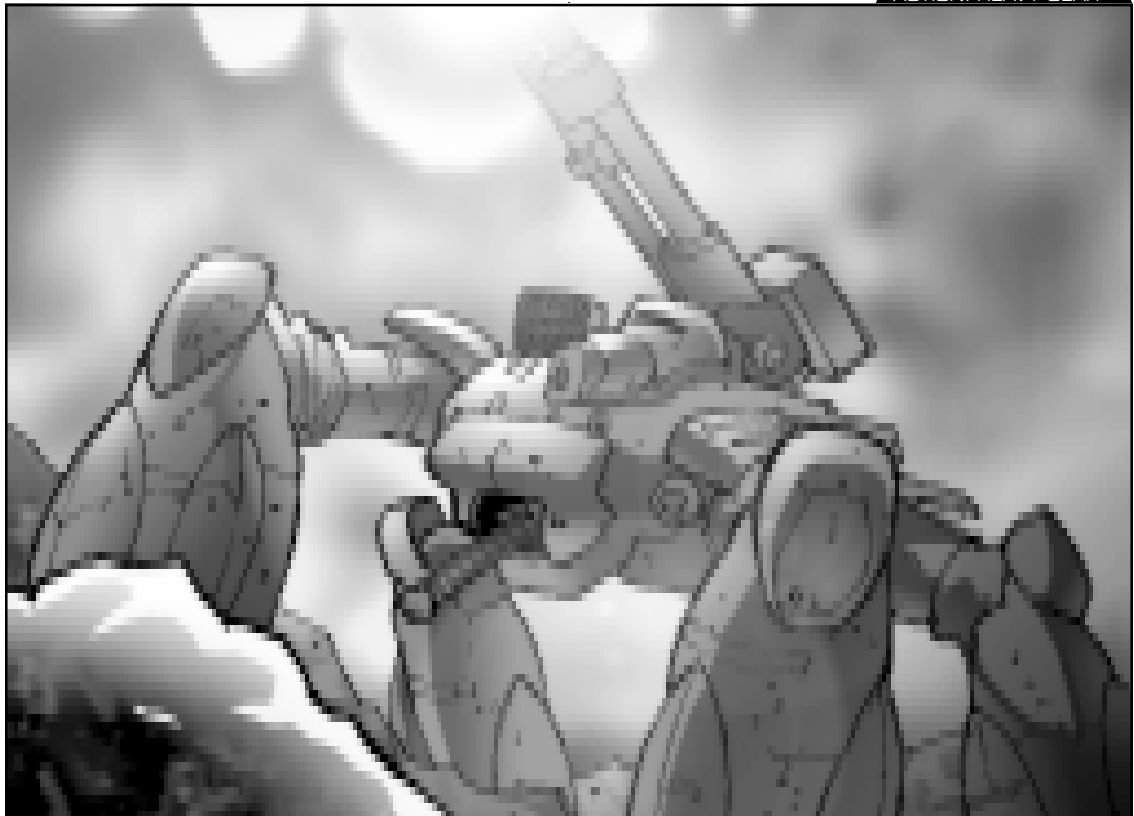
WIL rating	Equivalent
+3	Endure weeks of torture without cracking
+2	Strong willed
+1	Willful
0	Average Person
-1	Easily swayed
-2	Weak resolve
-3	Cannot stay on a diet longer than five minutes

• 2.1.2 Picking Attributes

Players purchase Attributes to flesh out the rough mental image of their character. A certain number of Character Points (CPs) are available to purchase Attributes. The cost in CPs of an Attribute rating is listed in the *Attribute Costs* table. Purchasing very low stats "gives back" some CPs. A rating must be purchased in all ten Attributes. None are truly more important than the others, and all have their usefulness. If any CPs are left over, each point becomes one Emergency Die (see *Emergency Dice*, page XX) or a Skill Point, at the player's choice.

Joe Average, the man on the street, has only 10 CPs available. This is just enough to purchase 0 (normal, average Attributes) in all Attributes. Player Characters are heroes, so they receive a few more points, depending on the style of play of the campaign chosen by the GM (see //Campaign Style//, p XX.).

ACTION: HEAVY GEAR



Though normal humans cannot have Attributes above +3 or below -3, the cost table can be extended further to accommodate creatures and alien beings. The point cost is equal to the Attribute plus one, squared (thus, +4 would cost 5^2 , or 25 points). For negative Attribute, the cost is the rebate in points (thus, -4 would cost -3^2 , giving back nine points).

[[Quick Start:]] For rapid generation of a player character in a standard Adventurous-level Silhouette game, the character starts with one +2, four +1's, and five +0's, placed in the ten basic Attributes as desired. This accounts for exactly 30 CPs.

Design Notes: Simplifying Attributes

Ten Attributes were chosen to reflect as many facets of a character as possible. Some players prefer to deal with far fewer characteristics, however, in order to spend less time worrying about the mechanical aspects of the game, and more time on the plot. Luckily, this is possible by simply averaging Attributes (rounding toward zero) that govern similar areas. Some detail is lost, but game speed is increased.

[[Six-Stats:]] essentially, a d20 conversion. See the OGL Conversion appendix.

[[Five-Stats:]] Alertness (AGI — PER), Body (BUI — FIT), Intelligence (KNO — CRE), Charisma (APP — INF), Mind (WIL — PSY). Strength tests use Body, Health tests use Mind; Stamina is $(5 \times (\text{Body} - \text{Mind})) \times 25$. Divide starting CPs in half.

Three-Stats: Body (AGI—BUI—FIT), Mind (CRE—KNO—PER), Spirit (APP—INF—WIL). PSY is not used, except if magic or other special powers are required. Strength tests use Body, Health tests use Spirit; Stamina is $(5 \times (\text{Body} - \text{Spirit})) \times 25$. Divide starting CPs by three.

► 2. Chapter Two: Character Design

Character Points

	Joe Average	Player	Major NPC
Gritty Game	10	20	30
Adventurous Game	10	30	50
Cinematic Game	10	50	70

Attribute Costs

Attribute Rating	Character Point Cost
+3	16
+2	9
+1	4
0	1
-1	0
-2	+1*
-3	+4*

* These values are added to available CPs instead of being subtracted.

Hooks & Tips: Gritty or Cinematic?

The Character Point table provides listed point costs for various game styles. These are covered in greater length in section XXX. Basically, the more heroic the game, the more powerful the characters have to be to face its challenges.

► 2. Chapter Two: Character design

2.2 Skills

While a character's Attributes define his potential, his Skills define his actual abilities. This section details all the basic Skills available; Core Player Handbooks may add more as necessary to cover the requirements of their individual campaign worlds. Note that some Skills have a pre-modern version (for use in fantasy settings, for example).

Gamemasters should feel free to invent new Skills if they are absolutely required in their campaign. A new Skill should not be too general nor too specific — *//Shooting//* is an example of something too general, as it might allow any sort of ranged weapon to be used, while *//Identification of Martian Flatworm Subspecies//* is definitely too specific.

Skills are used in Skill Tests, where a number of six-sided dice equal to the Skill level is rolled and the highest number picked. Modifiers are then added to the result, including situation and Attribute modifiers. The latter will vary according to the task at hand:

[[Agility-based Skill Tests:]] These are situations which require a high degree of hand-eye coordination and quick reaction times, as well as those which require precisely controlled movements of the body.

[[Appearance-Based Skill Tests:]] By using a Skill to accentuate their attractiveness, a person can modify what other people's reactions will be, or use their attractiveness to boost the result of a Skill.

[[Build-based Skill Tests:]] Most of the tasks which are related to Build are innate, not learned, thus there are few times a Skill test will be called for this Attribute.

[[Creativity-based Skill Tests:]] These are situations that involve an individual's ability to think up new solutions to a problem. An artist tries to find new ways to entertain his audience; a lost person tries to make the best he can with what he has at his immediate disposal; a commander tries to find a new way to achieve

his mission objectives. All of these show the ingenuity of an individual under at least somewhat stressful conditions.

[[Fitness-based Skill Tests:]] These are situations that place high physical stresses upon the body. Pushing one's body to the edge has long been a fascination of Humankind.

[[Influence-based Skill Tests:]] The natural desires of people to try and get the most in return for their work have manifested themselves through communications of various types for ages. The ability to convince another person of one's ideals without the use of force is now far preferred to violence by many cultures.

[[Knowledge-based Skill Tests:]] These situations call as much on long study and past experience as they do on natural aptitude.

[[Perception-based Skill Tests:]] These tests rely on a character's awareness of his surroundings, including both actions and objects. These take into account sight, sound and possibly other senses such as smell or a "sixth sense."

[[Willpower-based Skill Tests:]] These are generally Opposed Skill tests between two people, to see who will crack first. These tests are also used when focus on a task is important.

[[Psyche-based Skill Tests:]] The rather ethereal quality of the Psyche Attribute is reflected in its tests, with the ability to pick up on the body language, eye movements, and other subtle signals which people send. What information this type of test imparts is even more at the whim of the GM than other types of tests, and players should not rely on it as a lie detector.

► 2. Chapter Two: Character Design

• 2.2.1 Skill Levels

Players should now choose Skills for their characters with their stock of Character Points. The //Skill Costs// tables list the Skill point costs for both Level and Complexity. Starting Skill Levels and Cpx are generally low, but can be improved through experience.

Skill Points Available

	Joe Average	PC	Major NPC
Gritty Game	20	40	60
Adventurous Game	20	50	80
Cinematic Game	20	70	120

Skill Level Costs

Skill Level	Cost
1	1
2	4
3	9
4	16
5	25
6	36
7	49
8	64
9	81
10	100
Specialization (each)	5

Skill Complexity Costs

Skill Complexity	Cost
1	Free
2	4
3	9
4	16
5	25

• 2.2.2 Skill Complexity

Complexity was first explained in section 1.2.2, and represents the breadth of knowledge. All Skills begin with a free Complexity of 1. Additional levels can be purchased at a cost in Skill Points (see //Skill Complexity Costs// table). A Higher Complexity allows the character to use higher technology or more versatile tools with his Skill, and also provide him with additional breadth of knowledge that will make completing a task easier. Complexity is noted as a second number after a slash, such as "2/4" for a Skill level of 2 with a Complexity of 4.

Unless specifically noted in their description, all Attributes and Skill tests, equipment and weapons are Complexity 1.

2.2.3 Skill Specialization

A character may obtain a Skill Specialization at a cost of 5 Skill Points. A Specialization gives the character a +1 modifier to his Skill test totals under certain conditions. For example, a soldier could have a Small Arms specialization in "rifles," and thus add one to every roll made while using a rifle. A scientist could have a Physical Sciences specialization in nuclear physics, and gain the +1 whenever a relevant roll is called for. The Skills section later in this chapter includes suggested Specializations, but the Gamemaster and players can add more should they wish.

A character may purchase multiple different Specializations in the same Skill, but no more than one Specialization (i.e. +1 bonus, maximum) can be applied on a single die roll. Players may be tempted to focus their characters at excelling in a few Skills by purchasing specializations and high levels in three or four Skills. Quite often, the advantages of this are more than offset by the inflexibility of the character, which will surface whenever the Gamemaster thrusts him into unfamiliar situations.

► 2. Chapter Two: Character design

Specializations are usually noted either as a footnote to the Skill entry or right after it, in parenthesis.

• 2.2.4 Skill Description List

Skills description have several entries. The //Attributes// entry shows which Attributes are used for which tasks; note that this is not an exhaustive list, and the Gamemaster may call on other Attributes depending on the nature of the test at hand. The //Specializations// entry lists a few suggestions for Skill Specializations. The next entry lists some professions that normally have some training in the Skill. The final entry is a short, plain-English description.

Some Skills are noted with a (Specific) after their name. These Skills cover a wide field of related abilities that rely on the same basic knowledge. When buying one such Skill, a specific field of expertise must be specified, but the character can also use the Skill for situations that fall under the general header, albeit with a penalty. It is possible to buy multiple instances of the Skill to cover multiple fields, if desired (for example, a scientist with multiple doctorates could have Natural Sciences (Physics) and Natural Sciences (Maths), to avoid taking a penalty and boost them to high levels).

In cinematic games (see section 7.3), where characters tend to be expert at everything, the above requirements are waved. The professor with Natural Sciences is equally adept at maths, physics and chemistry.

Design Notes: Hey, Where's Skill 'X'?

A number of Skills were folded together in the Silhouette revision. Many of them, such as Acrobatics and First Aids, are now expressed as additional Complexity of another Skill. (If converting an old character, take the folded Skill's level and apply it as a free bonus to the Cpx of the new Skill.) Skills that are not used often in a typical action game, such as the various art- and science-related Skills, were likewise merged together to free up points and allow well-rounded characters that are useful outside the lab or workshop.

Chapter Two:
Character design

• Animal Handling

Attributes: INF (training), KNO (basic care)

Specializations: Specific Animal, Herding, Performing Tricks

Often Possessed By: Farmers, Ranchers, Circus Performers

The Animal Handling Skill measures the ability of a character to care for and train various animal species. The Skill includes knowledge of the animal's preferred foods and daily habits, reproductive cycle and the basic signs of disease. Natural Sciences (Life) is needed to actually treat diseased animals, however.

• Archery

Attributes: AGI (firing), PER (spotting targets)

Specializations: Longbow, Compound Bow, Crossbow, Sling

Often Possessed By: Athletes, Hunters, Primitives

The Archery Skill allows the character to effectively use primitive missile weapons such as longbows, slings or crossbows. This is the primary ranged weapon Skill in historical and fantasy genres. In settings featuring firearms, this Skill might still be used for sport and

historical events, but rarely for actual combat. Specialized arrowheads/projectiles can be used to make the weapons more versatile.

• Athletics

Attributes: AGI (grabbing items), FIT (physical activities), KNO (evaluating moves)

Specializations: Running, Football, Volleyball, Break Fall, Climbing, Swimming

Often Possessed By: Athletes, Sports Enthusiasts, Soldiers

Athletics represents the character's ability to engage in sporting and physical activities of all kinds. It includes the necessary Skills and knowledge of the rules and regulations along with the physical training required by athletic activities. Athletics is also used for running, and climbing up and down a steep (more than 60 degrees) incline. See //Movement//, section 3.2, for more.

A high Cpx in this Skill represents the ability to perform tumbling, balancing, or gymnastics. In some game genres, Acrobatics can be used in combat instead of Defense (see Chapter 7) — the ability to vault over a group of guards in an escape, tumble under a hail of bullets from an opponent's gun or leap between buildings to catch an antagonist are all highly desirable.

• Business

Attributes: INF (dealing with people), KNO (techniques)

Specializations: Finance, Management, Foreign Trade, Accounting, Economics

Often Possessed By: Businesspeople, Bankers, Accountants

Business is the ability to manage the affairs of a corporation or a nation. This could include anything from compiling product feasibility reports to the creation of marketing campaigns to promoting a product, whatever that product may be. A small number of Player Characters

► 2. Chapter Two: Character Design

are likely to take this Skill based upon their background. They may find it useful in a political campaign, but in a more action-oriented one, its utility may be limited.

• Combat Sense

Attributes: PER (applications), KNO (techniques)

Specializations: Urban, Jungle, Marsh, Night-time, Ambushes

Often Possessed By: Soldiers, Police, Criminals, Warzone Residents

A character with Combat Sense has trained to be aware of dangerous situations, such as firefights. Combat Sense is used primarily to detect ambushes and for initiative purposes. This Skill is useful to the majority of characters that will take part in a high-adventure campaign, but characters in a political campaign will probably not need it.

A high Complexity in this Skill represents the character's expertise in small-unit tactics (a prime example is the positioning of troops while they are engaged with enemy forces). The Skill is useful to commanders of units of all sizes, and is one of the most important to soldiers who wish to rise in the ranks. See section 6.3 for advanced use of this Skill.

▼ Chapter Two:
Character design



► 2. Chapter Two: Character design

• **Craft (Specific)**

Attributes: varies, but usually CRE or KNO

Specializations: Commercial, Specific sub-category of the Craft

Often Possessed By: Artisans, Metalsmiths

The Craft Skill covers the ability to produce useful and artistic creations with one's hands. A specific craft must be chosen: it can include such things as cooking, grooming, jewelry, metalwork, woodcraft, weaving, etc. The market for fine items makes it lucrative to know one of these crafts (though only at high levels), and the ability to recognize the value of such crafts is in demand from many interested parties.

Grooming, a character's ability to improve the physical appearance of a person through the judicious use of clothing and grooming, is a special craft. The Margin of Success of a Grooming Skill test vs. 5 (fumbles are ignored) is added to the character's Appearance Attribute.

• **Defense**

Attributes: AGI (diving for cover or dodging), PER (spotting defensive positions)

Specializations: Unarmed Attacks, Melee Attacks, Ranged Attacks

Often Possessed By: Soldiers, Police, Criminals, Convenience Store Clerks

The Defense Skill is a measure of how good the character is at avoiding incoming attacks, whether by making the best use of available cover (be it a lamp-post, a concrete wall, or another character) or actually dodging hand-to-hand or melee blows. Most player characters have this Skill to some degree.

• **Demolition/Traps**

Attributes: CRE (charge placements), KNO (techniques, chemistry)

Specializations: Mining, Military, Construction

Often Possessed By: Military and Industrial Specialists, Terrorists

Demolition is the Skill concerned with setting and detonating explosive charges in such a way as to maximize damage done to the target, and either maximize or minimize the collateral damage caused by the explosion. The Skill encompasses the ability to deactivate these same charges. It also includes the knowledge required to produce various types of explosives from raw materials. The pre-modern version of this Skill allows one to set traps and disarm them.

• **Disguise**

Attributes: CRE (putting on), PER (spotting), KNO (techniques)

Specializations: Specific Disguise, Theatrical Special Effects, Vehicules, Buildings

Often Possessed By: Actors, Undercover Agents, Special Effects Specialists, Rebels

The Disguise Skill covers the physical aspects of changing the appearance of a person or item, including proper use of makeup, masks, and clothing. An old beggar who sits on the corner can hear things that all the surveillance gear in the world could not. Actual impersonation or mimicry of a specific person or type of person also require the Performance Arts (Theatrics) Skill, however.

The Skill also allows the user to hide or blend into his environnement, to set ambushes or to dissimulate himself from his ennemies. He can also disguise constructs, such as bunkers and vehicles, from visual detection: apply the MoS of the Disguise effort to the Threshold of any test to spot the concealed item or person.

► 2. Chapter Two: Character Design

• Etiquette (Specific)

Attributes: INF (interaction with people), PER (spotting //faux-pas//)

Specializations: Military, Business, Aristocratic, Bureaucracy

Often Possessed By: Sophisticates, Military Officers, Businessmen

Etiquette reflects the character's familiarity with proper methods of social interaction within formalized settings, such as military ceremonies, upper class gatherings or business meetings. Many politically-inclined characters will possess this Skill, regardless of their social standing. If a character attempts to use his Skill to interact in a related but unfamiliar milieu, a -2 penalty is imposed on the test.

• Forgery (Specific)

Attributes: CRE (creating), PER (spotting), KNO (techniques)

Specializations: Electronic, Written, Art, Counterfeiting

Often Possessed By: Criminals, Spies, Police Experts

The Forgery Skill is the character's ability to accurately duplicate a variety of objects, such as official documents, works of art, money, and handwriting. It also encompasses the ability to recognize a forgery as such, and give an opinion as to the origin of the forgery based on the style and materials used in creating it. If a character attempts to use his Skill to work in a related but unfamiliar field, a -2 penalty is imposed on the test.

• Gambling

Attributes: PER (applications), KNO (techniques), CRE (cheating), PSY (raw luck)

Specializations: Specific Game, Cheating, Bookkeeping

Often Possessed By: Gamblers, Bookies, Suburban Husbands

Gambling represents the character's knowledge of the rules of games of chance. It further allows the character to estimate odds, cheat at most games (if required) and place bets on events. This Skill is one of the old standbys for many types of characters.

• Gunnery (Specific)

Attributes: PER (applications), KNO (techniques)

Specializations: Vehicle Model, Projectile Weapons, Missiles, Energy Weapons

Often Possessed By: Combat Pilots, Combat Gunners

Gunnery Skill is required to fire any non-portable weapons, such as those mounted on vehicles or installations. The specific areas of knowledge are: Mecha, Ground, Naval, Air and Space. If a character attempts to use his Skill to fire weapons on a vehicle type other than one with which he is familiar, a -2 penalty is imposed on the test.

► Chapter Two:
Character design

ACTION: HEAVY GEAR



► 2. Chapter Two: Character design

• Hand-to-hand

Attributes: AGI (disarming), FIT (combat and blocking blows), KNO (evaluating moves)

Specializations: Striking, Grappling, Tripping, Throwing

Often Possessed By: Boxers, Martial Artists, Police, Soldiers

The Hand-to-hand Skill measures the proficiency of a character in close-range combat using unarmed fighting techniques. A high Complexity rating in Hand-to-hand implies that the character is using some form of martial art, such as karate or boxing. Almost all military personnel receive basic training in this Skill, and many other individuals and professions find it necessary to learn some of the techniques involved.

• Heavy Weapons

Attributes: PER (using weapons), KNO (maintenance)

Specializations: Mortars, Grenade Launchers, Missiles

Often Possessed By: Soldiers, Police, Criminals

The Heavy Weapons Skill is a measure of the character's proficiency with man-portable support weapons such as mortars, grenade launchers and missiles. The Skill includes basic knowledge of the maintenance procedures. This Skill is known almost exclusively in military and para-military circles and is seldom shown to those not sanctioned to use them by the authorities. The pre-modern version of the Skill lets characters build and operate catapults, trebuchets and similar weapons.

• Information Warfare

Attributes: INF (communicating), CRE (use, codebreaking), KNO (techniques, maintenance)

Specializations: Sensors, ECM, Underwater Sensors, Comm Jamming

Often Possessed By: Combat Pilots, Sensor Op Specialists, Explorers

Information Warfare is a catch-all Skill that covers the myriad aspects of sensor operations, electronic counter-measures (ECM), and electronic counter-counter-measures (ECCM). This Skill is used for detection tests, electronic jamming, and other similar activities. It is required both to operate and effectively counter communications devices. It is also used in the design and breaking of codes used for communications between two parties.

• Interrogation

Attributes: APP (flirt), BUI (physical intimidation), INF (wits), WIL (domination)

Specializations: Casual Questioning, Torture, Specific Type of Informant

Often Possessed By: Police Officers, Intelligence Experts

Interrogation measures a character's ability to extract information from an unwilling informant. Although such exchange can be roleplayed, Gamemasters can use Opposed Action Tests with informants rolling either WIL or Interrogation, whichever is higher. A MoS of 4 or more indicates that the informant may not even realize he has revealed something of note.

► 2. Chapter Two: Character Design

• Investigation

Attributes: PER (applications), KNO (techniques)

Specializations: Searching, Surveillance, Forensics

Often Possessed By: Police, Private Detectives, Spies

The Investigation Skill allows the character to collect information on people, places and events. This information can be gathered by any means not covered by the Streetwise or Computer Skills. Player Characters may want to have this Skill to one degree or another since it allows them to uncover facts about their antagonists which might otherwise remain hidden.

• Language (Specific)

Attributes: CRE (applications), KNO (grammar and vocabulary)

Specializations: Specific Dialect, Specific Jargon

Often Possessed By: Travelers, Diplomats, Scholars

This is the ability to communicate and be literate in a language other than the character's native tongue. Each foreign language must be learned as an individual Skill. All characters are assumed to have level two (standard) or three (if they are highly educated — KNO +1 or higher) in their native tongue at no cost. Some languages will not be available to all characters; players should check with their GMs about which languages their character can learn.

When using social Skills in a foreign language, characters are limited to their level in that language. (For example, if the character has Russian at level 1 and Negotiation at 5, and tries to bribe a Kremlin guard to let him pass, he can only use Negotiation at level 1).

• Leadership

Attributes: INF (leading people), PER (evaluating morale and skills)

Specializations: Military, Political, Business, Cult

Often Possessed By: Military Officers and NCOs, Politicians, Businesspeople

Leadership is the capacity to lead others, either by example or through inspiration. Any group which will see combat on a tactical scale will dearly need someone to guide its actions; entering battle without a well-defined leader only increases the chaos the group will experience. See section 6.3 for advanced use of this Skill.

• Medicine

Attributes: CRE (applications), KNO (techniques), INF (dealing with patients)

Specializations: Combat, Aquatic, Sports, Neurology, Forensics, Surgery, Toxicology

Often Possessed By: Soldiers, Lifeguards, Trainers, Paramedics, Physicians

Medicine is the ability to diagnose and treat various pathological conditions, such as dangerous traumas, diseases and infections. The lowest levels (2/2 and below) are effectively First Aid: the ability to stabilize wounded peoples' conditions so that they can be transported to more effective treatment. A higher Medicine Skill is required for any long term medical treatment such as aiding in recovery from disease, and for any type of serious internal surgery. A specialization // must// be chosen before a character can go above Level or Complexity 3.

► 2. Chapter Two: Character design

• **Melee**

Attributes: AGI (striking targets), FIT (blocking melee weapons), KNO (evaluating moves)

Specializations: Knives, Clubs, Fencing

Often Possessed By: Soldiers, Police, Criminals, Martial Artists

The Melee Skill reflects how good a character is at attacking and/or defending with close-combat weapons, such as knives, cudgels or swords. This type of weapon use is probably the most widespread of all since it involves relatively little training and mostly inexpensive weapons, yet increases the amount of damage dramatically.

• **Natural Sciences (Specific)**

Attributes: CRE (applications), KNO (techniques)

Specializations: Various Fields of Study

Often Possessed By: Professors, Students, Researchers, Designers

Natural Sciences is a catch-all Skill that includes any of the “hard” sciences dealing with the universe: earth (geology, meteorology, etc.), life (biology, virology, etc.) and physical (mathematics, physics, chemistry, etc.) sciences.

A specialization //must// be chosen before a character can go above Level or Complexity 3 in this Skill. If a character attempts to use his Skill in a field other than one with which he is familiar, a -2 penalty is imposed on the test.

Navigation (Specific)

Attributes: CRE (applications), KNO (techniques)

Specializations: Night-time, Map and Compass, Star Position, Terrain Type

Often Possessed By: Campers, Explorers, Pilots, Soldiers, Survivalists

Navigation represents the character’s proficiency in the various techniques used to track one’s positions and movements. The specific areas of knowledge are: Sea, Land, Air, Space. If a character attempts to use his Skill to navigate in a terrain other than one with which he is familiar, a -2 penalty is imposed on the test.

• **Negotiation**

Attributes: INF (interaction), BUI (intimidation), PER (evaluating progress), KNO (techniques)

Specializations: Specific Commodity, Specific Culture, Barter

Often Possessed By: Traders, Smugglers, Business people, Ambassadors

Negotiation measures a character’s ability to influence the final decision in bargaining, or the price in a transactions (be it for cash, credit or barter). This is always an opposed Skill roll, with the MoS x 5% as the maximum discount possible when currency is involved. A Player’s roleplaying should always be weighed as powerfully as the die roll, and the specific circumstances of the deal should be kept in mind. There are many situations in which prices or positions are firmly fixed, and cannot be affected by haggling in any way.

► 2. Chapter Two: Character Design

• Notice

Attributes: PER (applications), KNO (observation techniques), PSY (human perception)

Specializations: Specific Sense, Night-time, Forward Observing, Tracking

Often Possessed By: Researchers, Soldiers, Police, Investigators

Notice is the ability to perceive details that may be otherwise overlooked in haste. This includes finding a clue hidden in a crime-scene, spotting a face among the crowd, reading the fine print on a legal document, and many others. At higher levels, a careful observer may use the Skill to empathize with the person he is observing and can sometimes make prudent assumptions about the inner workings of the target. The pre-modern specialization of this Skill is Tracking, which can also be used for hunting.

• Parachuting/Jet Pack

Attributes: AGI (release timing), FIT (freefall maneuvers), KNO (packing, evaluating equipment)

Specializations: High-Altitude, High-Wind, Night-Time

Often Possessed By: Skydivers, Paratroopers, Pilots

The Parachuting/Jet Pack Skill allows the character to use and control a parachute or similar personal flight device, such as a hang-glider, jet pack or grav belt. It also includes the ability to prepare and pack parachutes, make minor repairs to equipment, and estimate wind speed and evaluate weather patterns that might affect the drop or flight.

• Performance Art (Specific)

Attributes: CRE (creative process), FIT (art involving body), INF (acting), KNO (techniques)

Specializations: improvised, performance, genre, tragedy, comedy

Often Possessed By: Sophisticates, Professionals, Youth

This is a catch-all Skill for performance art: a specific art must be chosen. Each art is a separate field under the same Skill (theatrics/acting, dance, music, mime). The Skill covers all aspects of live or recorded performance. This includes the ability to produce, direct, act or otherwise work in these media. If a character attempts to use his Skill to do a performance in a related but unfamiliar field, a -2 penalty is imposed on the test.

The Threshold of Art tests is chosen by the player — this is the quality aimed for by the object or representation. A low Threshold indicates that the artist plans to do something correct, nothing more, while a high Threshold means the artist aims to create a masterpiece. Performance Arts (Theatrics) also allows an actor to impersonate someone else through the use of disguise, voice and mannerism mimicry, provided that the impersonator knows enough about the subject to make the act convincing.

▼ Chapter Two:
Character design



► 2. Chapter Two: Character design

• Pilot (Specific)

Attributes: AGI (control), PER (grabbing items, for mecha), KNO (using onboard systems)

Specializations: Vehicle Model

Often Possessed By: Combat Crew, Joe Average, etc.

The Pilot Skill is the ability to control the movements of a vehicle. Although most modern characters are assumed to have a license and drive competently (unless from a fantasy background, which use Riding instead), to take a Skill in this is unusual except for characters who use such vehicles often.

There are five areas of knowledge: Mecha (for humanoid or limbed vehicles), Ground (for wheeled and tracked vehicles), Naval (for boats and subs), Air (ballons, aircraft) and Space. If a character attempts to use his Skill to control a vehicle type other than one with which he is familiar, a -2 penalty is imposed on the test.

• Riding

Attributes: AGI (controlling animals), FIT (riding stunts), KNO (animal care)

Specializations: Specific Animal, Racing, Dressage

Often Possessed By: Equestrian Athletes, Ranchers

The Riding Skill measures the character's ability to control a riding animal (which have their own Riding modifiers, depending on their training — see section 6.2). It is used if any difficult type of maneuver is wanted from the mount. The Skill also includes a basic ability to care for the animal. Characters from fantasy background are assumed to be able to ride competently (modern and future characters use Pilot: Ground instead).

• Seduction

Attributes: APP (first impression), INF (seduction), KNO (techniques)

Specializations: Specific Sex, Eye Contact, Specific Seduction Style

Often Possessed By: Con Artists, Fashion Models, Gigolos, Prostitutes

Seduction measures a character's ability to sway others by the judicious use of looks and sex-appeal. The Skill includes an understanding of what people find attractive and the ability to adapt to different preferences. It is possible to get any desired information from a seductee before any serious things occur, but beware: sometimes, the roles of the people involved reverse, and the seducer may become the seductee.

• Sleight-of-Hand

Attributes: AGI (grabbing items), PER (spotting/evaluating moves)

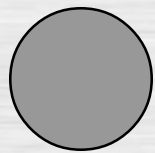
Specializations: Pickpocket, "Magic" Tricks, Shoplifting

Often Possessed By: Petty Criminals, Stage Magicians, Spies

The Sleight-of-hand Skill is a measure of how good the character is at the subtle hand movements required by activities like pickpocketing or stage magic. Abilities such as palming and concealing small objects upon one's person are covered by this Skill.

ACTION: HEAVY GEAR





► 2. Chapter Two: Character Design

• Small Arms

Attributes: AGI (combat), KNO (maintenance)

Specializations: Pistols, Rifles, SMGs

Often Possessed By: Soldiers, Police, Criminals, Hunters

The Small Arms Skill is a measure of the character's proficiency with man-portable firearms such as pistols, rifles, and submachine guns. The Skill includes basic knowledge of the maintenance procedures. This is another popular weapon-related Skill, and many small arms are available in most modern and future settings (though at various levels of legality).

• Social Sciences (Specific)

Attributes: CRE (applications), KNO (techniques), INF (dealing with people)

Specializations: Various Fields of Study

Often Possessed By: Professors, Students, Researchers

Social Sciences is a catch-all Skill that includes any of the "humanities" sciences dealing with people and societies: anthropology, history, law, linguistics, literature, sociology, political science, philosophy, or psychology (the latter being high-Level/Cpx in Social Sciences).

A specialization //must// be chosen before a character can go above Level or Complexity 3 in this Skill. If a character attempts to use his Skill in a field other than one with which he is familiar, a -2 penalty is imposed on the test.

• Stealth

Attributes: AGI (move silently), CRE (hide), PER (spotting), KNO (evaluating moves)

Specializations: Urban, Indoors, Jungle, Woodlands, Nighttime, Desert, Winter

Often Possessed By: Thieves, Spies, Soldiers, Police, Commandos, Hunters

The Stealth Skill is the character's ability to move about undetected, be it by human observers or by electronic surveillance devices. It also represents a character's proficiency at using make-up, special clothing, and netting to conceal himself or other objects by matching the texture and color scheme of the thing which is to be hidden to that of the surrounding terrain.

• Streetwise

Attributes: INF (interaction with people), PER (spotting opportunities), KNO (contacts)

Specializations: Gangs, Organized Crime, Homeless, Prostitutes, Getting Item (Specify)

Often Possessed By: Urban Residents, Gang Members, Criminals

Streetwise is a catch-all Skill for interacting with the "shadier" elements of society and includes basic knowledge of the underground of a city the character is familiar with. Obtaining illicit drugs, purchasing illegal firearms or just finding out what is going on through non-standard channels, are all activities which Streetwise encompasses.

• Survival (Specific)

Attributes: CRE (creating), PER (spotting), KNO (techniques)

Specializations: Jungle, Desert, Winter, Urban, Foraging, Shelter

Often Possessed By: Soldiers, Campers, Survivalists

The Survival Skill allows the character to survive in hostile environments, such as jungles or deserts. Survival includes hunting, foraging, and obtaining shelter and water (space survival, being very different, is covered in the Zero-G Skill). Most military character will receive this Skill from their basic training, and many others will pick it up due to its versatility. If a character attempts to use his Skill to survive in an unfamiliar terrain, a -2 penalty is imposed on the test.

► 2. Chapter Two: Character design

• Teaching

Attributes: CRE (teaching), KNO (techniques)

Specializations: Any other skill

Often Possessed By: Professors, Combat Instructors

Teaching is the Skill of transmitting knowledge and expertise to others in a clear and coherent fashion. It is a Skill which few Player Characters who are not from an instructional background possess, since most PCs spend their lives learning Skills necessary for their chosen profession and are generally ready to retire by the time they are interested in passing their knowledge along. See section 2.7 for advanced use of this Skill.

• Technical Sciences (Specific)

Attributes: CRE (applications), KNO (techniques)

Specializations: Various Fields of Study

Often Possessed By: Professors, Students, Researchers, Designers

Technical Sciences is a catch-all Skill that includes any of the sciences dealing with the technical abilities required to operate, repair, maintain and create any equipment of the specified type not covered elsewhere in the Skill descriptions. This includes computer (system use, maintenance, programming, system admin, neural nets), electronics (electronic devices, security systems, lasers) and mechanics (all mechanical and structural devices — automotive, industrial, locks, hydraulics).

A specialization //must// be chosen before a character can go above Level or Complexity 3 in this Skill. If a character attempts to use his Skill in a field other than one with which he is familiar, a -1 penalty is imposed on the test.

• Tinker

Attributes: CRE (creating), PER (spotting opportunities), KNO (techniques)

Specializations: Vehicles, Weapons, Appliances, Computers

Often Possessed By: Inventors, Technicians, Hobbyists

The Tinker Skill allows a character to build or modify machinery under time constraints (jury-rig a temporary repair), poor conditions (lack of proper tools) or to modify equipment in novel and desperate ways (install a car engine to power a boat). Items built or modified using this Skill, rather than the proper Technical Skill(s), will only last as long as needed, and then fall apart; if used by anyone else, they also fall apart. A new Tinker test against the creation Threshold must be made whenever the item is pushed or takes damage; if failed, the item suffers a malfunction that requires one full-round action to fix. If Fumbled, the item falls apart.

• Throwing

Attributes: AGI (striking targets), KNO (evaluating distances)

Specializations: Knives, Javelins, Balls, Grenades, Darts

Often Possessed By: Soldiers, Game Players, Athletes

The Throwing Skill is the ability to accurately throw an object at a target. It is the Skill used when throwing grenades and other offensive weapons. The sports and activities which use this Skill are too numerous and varied to mention.

► 2. Chapter Two: Character Design

• Trivia/Lore (Specific)

Attributes: varies, but usually KNO

Specializations: Specific sub-category of the Trivia/Lore category

Often Possessed By: Gamers, Fans, Socialites

The Trivia (Lore, for pre-modern settings) Skill covers the ability to recall knowledge on a very specific topic. A field of knowledge must be chosen: it can include such things as games, medieval history, cars, etc. A successful Skill test produces a bit of obscure yet useful information relevant to the situation at hand.

• Visual Art (Specific)

Attributes: CRE (creative process), KNO (techniques)

Specializations: improvised, performance, genre, tragedy, comedy

Often Possessed By: Sophisticates, Professionals, Youth

This is a catch-all Skill for visual art: a specific art must be chosen. Each art is a separate field under the same Skill (painting, drawing, sculpting, pottery). If a character attempts to use his Skill to do a performance in a related but unfamiliar field, a -2 penalty is imposed on the test.

The Threshold of Art tests is chosen by the player — this is the quality aimed for by the object or representation. A low Threshold indicates that the artist plans to do something correct, nothing more, while a high Threshold means the artist aims to create a masterpiece.

• Zero-G

Attributes: FIT (moving about), KNO (evaluating moves, suit procedures)

Specializations: Rapid Movements, Delicate Movements, Melee, Ranged Combat

Often Possessed By: Anyone living in space

Zero-G reflects the ability of the character to move about and perform actions in weightless or micro-gravity (under 0.1 g) environments. The Skill includes basic knowledge of vacuum suit procedures; in an emergency, a person with this Skill can instruct another individual in the rudimentary use of the suit. It also includes how to work an airlock, patch a hole or use an emergency evacuation pod.

For combat in weightless or micro-gravity (under 0.1 g) environments, the lowest Skill level of either Zero-G or the usual combat Skill (Hand-to-Hand, Melee, Throwing, Archery or Small Arms) is used. The changes in balance, momentum and a host of other details will turn a deadly warrior into a slowly drifting corpse without proper training.

► Chapter Two:
Character design

Hooks & Tips: Favored Item

When initially purchasing a Skill, a related item (be it a reference book, weapon, vehicle, etc.) can be chosen. It is then known as the character's "Favored Item," and only one favored item is allowed per Skill (it may not be changed later, either). When using a favored item, the character may ignore the bad side of any Fumbles rolled and treat the roll as a result of one. If the item is lost or destroyed in the course of an adventure, one experience point (XP) can buy a replacement for future sessions.

► 2. Chapter Two: Character design

2.3 Secondary Attributes

Secondary Attributes are labeled that way because they are not selected like the basic Attributes, but rather are derived on the latter (and, in some cases, Skill levels). They represent facets of the character's physical and mental abilities. Unlike the basic Attributes, the Secondary Attributes can and do vary over the course of the game to reflect additional Skills gained, or injuries suffered.

The character's Secondary Traits, Wound Thresholds, and System Shock are calculated using the following formulas. Although the formulas appear involved, most of them are simply an averaging of two or three Attributes. Some Traits have minimum values, meaning this is the lowest value they can have regardless of Attributes and skills.

Chapter Two:
Character design

Calculating Secondary Attributes

Strength =	$(\text{Build} + \text{Fitness}) / 2$, round towards zero
------------	--

Health =	$(\text{Fitness} + \text{Psyche} + \text{Willpower}) / 3$, round off
----------	---

Stamina =	$(5 \times (\text{Build} + \text{Health})) + 25$, minimum 1
-----------	--

Unarmed Damage =	$3 + \text{Strength} + \text{Build} + \text{Hand-to-Hand Skill level}$, minimum 1
------------------	--

Armed Damage =	$3 + \text{Strength} + \text{Build} + \text{Melee Skill level}$, minimum 1
----------------	---

Flesh Wound Threshold =	$\text{Stamina} / 2$, round up
-------------------------	---------------------------------

Deep Wound Threshold =	Stamina
------------------------	---------

Instant Death Threshold =	Stamina x 2
---------------------------	-------------

System Shock =	$5 + \text{Health}$, minimum 1
----------------	---------------------------------

2.3.1 Descriptions

The following texts describes the five Secondary Attributes and their use in the game. Along with each description, a table giving a real world equivalent for different ratings is listed. Attribute levels are based on an average human person in their young adulthood; some creatures or aliens will have more widely dispersed Secondary Attribute ranges.

• Strength (STR)

Strength is a measure of a character's raw physical power and brute strength; it is a zero-average rating. Strength is the average of Build and Fitness, rounded towards zero. Cross-indexing with the Build mass table (section 2.1.1) shows the maximum weight that can be deadlifted and carried a few paces — the lowest weight value in the corresponding entry is used. Thus, a character with a +2 Strength can heft around 95 kg and stagger for a few steps before running into difficulty. A mass equal to half the deadlift capacity can be held above the head, and a mass double the deadlift capacity can be dragged along.

Strength (STR)

STR rating	Equivalent
+3	Weightlifter
+2	Professional wrestler
+1	College jock
0	Average Person
-1	Out of shape
-2	Shrimp
-3	Weakling

► 2. Chapter Two: Character Design

Hooks & Tips: Pushing One's Strength

Characters may attempt to push their Strength beyond its normal limits. This lasts only for the STR test. Strength can be pushed by up to +2 for characters with STR 0 or higher, and by +1 for characters with STR below 0. Characters risk physical injury when doing this: make a Health Attribute test vs. a Threshold of 4 for an additional +1 Strength, or a Threshold of 6 for +2. Failing this roll results in a Light Wound for the character (torn ligaments, strains, back pain, etc.); Fumbling it will result in a Deep Wound (slipped disk, ripped muscle, etc.). Characters may push their strength as often as they like, but each additional push per day (before a full night of sleep) incurs additional risk of injury: add +2 (cumulative) to the base Threshold.

Health (HEA)

Health rates a character's resistance to illness, toxins, and physiological shock; it is a zero-average rating. Health is the average of Fitness, Psyche, and Willpower, rounded to the nearest whole number. People who never seem to get sick and those who can drink large quantities of potables have a high Health rating.

Health (HEA)

HEA rating	Equivalent
+3	Never gets a cold
+2	Great health
+1	Good health
0	Average Person
-1	Weak health
-2	Poor health
-3	Perpetually ill

ACTION: HEAVY GEAR



► 2. Chapter Two: Character design

• Stamina (STA)

Stamina is a rating of how much sheer physical punishment a character's body can tolerate. Unlike many other Attributes, Stamina is *not* a zero-average rating: it is equal to five times the total of Build and Health, plus 25. No character may have a Stamina lower than 1 (if lower, round up to one). While a high Stamina will decrease the chances of injury, it is still quite easy for a character to be wounded by gunfire or other deadly weapons. Stamina will be used to work out the Wound Thresholds, which determine when and if a character gets hurt (see sections 2.3.3 and 3.5).

Stamina (STA)

STA rating	Equivalent
10	Frail old grandmother, child
15	Young teenager
20	Weak adult
25	Average individual
30	Fitness enthusiast
40	Professional athlete
50	Professional boxer

• Unarmed Damage (UD)

Unarmed damage is the Damage Multiplier of any unarmed (Hand-to-hand Skill) attacks performed by the character. It is *not* a zero-average rating: Unarmed Damage is equal to three plus the total of Hand-to-hand Skill level, Strength and Build. The minimum Unarmed Damage rating is 1. This damage is on the Personal Scale, not the Vehicle Scale (see section X.X.X.). The Damage Multiplier is a reflection of both how much force a character can put behind a punch, and how well the character can place the blow.

Unarmed Damage (UD)

UD rating	Equivalent
1	Small Child
3	Average adult
5	Brawler
8	Martial artist

• Armed Damage (AD)

Armed Damage is the base Damage Multiplier of any of the character's armed attacks (Melee Skill). It is *not* a zero-average rating: Armed Damage is equal to three plus the total of Melee Skill level, Strength, and Build. The minimum Armed Damage rating is 1. The Damage Multiplier of a melee weapon is equal to the character's Armed Damage rating and the weapon's own base DM. This damage is on the Personal Scale, not the Vehicle Scale (see section X.X.X.).

Armed Damage (AD)

AD rating	Equivalent
1	Small Child
3	Average adult
5	Street Thug
8	Skilled swordsman

Design Notes: Damage Multipliers

Most game rules include provision on injuries and damage, and Silhouette is no different. In order to speed up gameplay and avoid multiple dice rolls for hitting, damaging and guarding against damage, all this is done in one fell swoop. The Margin of Success of a hit is multiplied by the Damage Multiplier of the attack to yield the total damage; armor and other protections will be factored into the Stamina ratings, which are used to determine wounds. Speed of resolution, always!

► 2. Chapter Two: Character Design

• 2.3.2 Injury List

Physical Status represents the level of resistance to physical wounds. There are three types of injuries. Flesh Wounds are nasty but not crippling wounds; Deep Wounds are immediately life-threatening injuries; Instant Death requires no further explanation.

Each level of injury has an associated wounding Threshold. Wound Thresholds are the amount of damage an attack must cause to produce a certain type of wound. An attack produces the type of injury whose Wound Threshold is equal to or under the amount of damage inflicted by the attack; only the most severe of the possible results is applied. For example, if an attack does 40 points of damage to an average individual (whose Wound Thresholds are Flesh Wound = 13, Deep Wound = 25, Instant Death = 50), the attack victim suffers a Deep Wound (40 is greater than the Deep Wound score “25” but is less than the Instant Death score “50”).

The Wound Threshold of Flesh Wounds is equal to half of the character's Stamina (round up). The Wound Threshold of Deep Wounds is equal to the character's Stamina. The Wound Threshold of instant death is twice the character's Stamina. Personal armor, if any is worn, adds its Armor Points to //each// Wound Threshold individually when the character is under physical attack; the modified Wound Threshold should be noted in parentheses after the original Wound Threshold.

Action penalties are negative modifiers to all actions that reflect the pain and distraction induced by wounds. A character is penalized -1 to [[all]] actions per Flesh Wound and -2 to [[all]] actions per Deep Wound. For example, a character with two Flesh Wounds and one Deep Wound would have a -4 penalty to all actions: -2 from the Flesh Wounds, and another -2 from the single Deep Wound.

The final column of the injury list is used to note how many of each type of injury a character has sustained, and possibly what they are (see section 3.5).



ACTION: HEAVY GEAR

▼ Chapter Two:
Character design

• 2.3.3 System Shock Rating

The System Shock rating is a measure of how many injuries a character can take before going into shock and dying. If the total of System Shock and a character's wound-induced action penalties equals zero or less, the character goes into shock (see //Injuries//, section 3.5). System shock is equal to five plus the character's Health. System Shock cannot be lower than one.

System Shock is shown on the character sheet as a row of boxes — unused boxes are simply crossed out. As wounds are taken, boxes can be crossed out according to action penalties, representing the damage. See //Injuries//, section 3.5, for more details on bruises, wounds and their game effects.

► 2. Chapter Two: Character design

2.4 Perks and Flaws

In order to keep the dice rolling and the bookkeeping to a minimum, the Silhouette system uses a fairly small range of numbers to describe the basic capabilities and skills of an individual. This can lead to characters that are fairly similar, especially if they are in the same general line of work. To help create unique characters with their own capabilities, Character Perks and Flaws (and Special Abilities, for some worlds — see Chapter Six) are used to provide additional details.

Each Perk costs a certain amount of Skill Points (SPs) and each Flaw “gives back” a certain number of SPs. These are the same Skill Points that are given to purchase Skills, so a character with more Flaws than Perks can gain additional Skills or Skill Levels, while a character with more Perks will start with fewer Skills. Perks and Flaws can be acquired later on during the game, as well (see //Experience//, section 2.7).

There is no strict limit to the number of Perks and Flaws a character can have. In order to prevent excess, we recommend not exceeding 12 points of Flaws (20 in a Cinematic game). Gamemasters have final approval and should make their decision according to two criteria: whether the Perks and Flaws fit the character concept, and whether they fit the campaign concept. The first criterion prevents blind pilots; the second prevents multimillionaires in a campaign about pioneers scrounging for resources (for example).

Gamemasters can also choose to remove some Perks and Flaws from the selection altogether. For example, those who believe in letting Players define their character's psychology without concern for points can eliminate all personality-related Flaws.

Likewise, Gamemasters should also not impose unfair costs for Perks. If the campaign concept calls for everyone to have military rank, be police officers, or be political leaders, then the Players need not pay for the relevant Perks. Gamemasters may have them pay for elevated rank or especially good reputations, but the campaign “base line” should be free.

Design Notes: Previous Versions

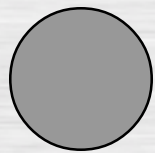
If you're a veteran Silhouette player, you'll no doubt notice that some of the Perks and Flaws have changed. This is mostly for play balance. We've also removed the “Innate/Acquired” note, because it brought an additional complexity with little benefits.

Hooks & Tips: Min-Maxing

Perks and Flaws are intended to give players a variety of options to define their character. Unfortunately, the variety of options, each with a cost or benefit, drives some to make the most of the system, purchasing a ludicrous number of Perks and Flaws to get extra Skills and special abilities. The number of blind, one-armed combat monsters wanted by the law and saddled with a large disabled family to care for is legion in the halls of roleplaying history.

Solutions to this problem include limiting the number or gravity of Flaws and Perks. You can tell Players they can get only one Perk and one Flaw, forcing them to take only that which is really important for their character //concept/

► 2. Chapter Two: Character Design



▼ Chapter Two:
Character design

• 2.4.1 Perks

Perks are natural characteristics, aptitudes or social benefits that often prove useful to the character. Like all things in life, however, many Perks are not universally beneficial. Some Perks (usually social ones) have potential downsides that are listed along with them. Gamemasters and Players should keep these downsides in mind, but they should not outweigh the benefits of the Perk.

• Accelerated Healing

Thanks to some natural vigor, the character heals faster than other people. The normal healing rules are used (see section 3.5), but the character needs only three-quarters of the required time. Accelerated Healing has no downside.

Cost = 4

• Acute Senses (Specific)

[[Hearing:]] The character has excellent hearing and tends to notice faint or high-pitched sounds more readily than other people. He gets a +1 modifier for Notice checks based on hearing. The downside is that sudden loud noises (like a nearby explosion) can momentarily deafen a character.

[[Sight:]] The character has sharp eyes and tends to notice faraway or small items more readily than other people. He gets a +1 modifier for Notice checks based on vision. The downside is that sudden bright lights (stepping out of a dim area into sunlight) can momentarily blind a character.

[[Smell/Taste:]] The character has a sharp nose or palate and can readily identify odors and tastes. He gets a +1 modifier for Notice checks based on smell or taste.

Cost = 2 each

• Ambidextrous

The character can use either hand for tasks requiring manual dexterity without the "Using Off Hand" penalty, though he may not attack twice per action. Ambidextrous has no downside.

Cost = 1

• Animal Companion

The character has a faithful pet, steed or other animal companion. This animal is both well trained and emotionally bonded to the character, meaning it will stay by his side other than (perhaps) the occasional romp through the neighborhood. The downside of an Animal Companion is responsibility: pets must be fed, walked and housed. Cost depends on the animal's size (1 for a small pet, like a ferret, 2 for a medium one, like a dog, 4 for a large one, like a gorilla) and intelligence (1 if untrainable, 2 if capable of obeying basic commands, 4 if trained and intelligent).

Cost = 1-8 depending on the usefulness of the animal.

• Animal Kinship

The character has a "touch" with animals, both wild and domestic. Domesticated animals will respond well to training and instructions, granting the character a +1 to all Animal Handling or Riding Skill tests. Wild animals are less likely to attack the character and may respond to some basic commands once the character makes a basic connection with the beast (specific are left to the Gamemaster).

Cost = 1 for modern settings, 5 for fantasy and historical ones

► 2. Chapter Two: Character design

• **Authority**

The character represents the authorities. He could be a policeman, a secret agent, a Military Police agent, etc. The effect of this Perk depends largely on the circumstances — policemen have no extra authority outside their jurisdiction. The potential downside of Authority is responsibility: the character will likely be subject to a code of conduct, have to report for duty or follow orders.

Cost = 3

• **Common Sense**

The character always considers the outcomes of his actions first. The Gamemaster gives the player a warning when the character is about to do something foolish, even if there is no indication of danger. The GM does not have to give any details. Common sense has no downside.

Cost = 4

• **Connections**

The character has one or more useful connections. These can be close allies who would be willing to help the character no matter what, or more casual acquaintances who are especially useful. This Perk does not cover casual, personal relationships (such as a lover, friends and neighbors) unless they are particularly useful or dedicated.

[[Allies]] are connections who are willing and able to help the character, even in dire circumstances, without asking for much in return (at least not immediately). Examples include a brother who is also a police sergeant or a friend in the military.

[[Contacts]] are connections who will not necessarily go out of their way to help the character without promise of recompense. They generally provide useful information or equipment, but will not come to the rescue at their own risk. Typical contacts include a snitch within a criminal cartel, a smuggler or a forger.

The potential downside of Connections is reciprocity. Contacts will expect either to be paid in cash or by being owed favors. Allies are less demanding, but are likely to call for help when they need it. Turning down an allies call for help is a sure way to //lose// that ally.

Cost = between 3 and 7 points per ally (depending on how loyal, powerful and accessible they are) and 1 and 5 points per contact (depending on how resourceful or well-placed they are).

• **Double Jointed**

The character's entire body can contort and flex in seemingly impossible angles. This is significantly more than her just being able to bend her fingers back. The character can fit into spaces half the size of what regular people can, as well as being able to easily slip out of restraints unless special precautions are taken (+1 to escape tests).

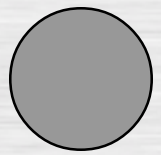
Cost = 3

• **Fake Identity**

The character has more than one identity. Going beyond the odd forged passport, he has a complete, fully-detailed life on the side, with separate dwelling, job and identification papers. People attempting to track the cover identity back to the character will find it very difficult to do. The potential downside of Fake Identity is maintenance. The character needs to spend time and money keeping his alter ego current, doing such things as making bank transactions, subscribing to newspapers or even making appearances as that person.

Cost = 3 per Fake Identity

► 2. Chapter Two: Character Design



▼ Chapter Two:
Character design

• Famous

The character is famous. He can be a well-known artist or a political figure. In certain situations, famous will work for the character — people will readily help him or provide access to restricted areas. Fame's potential downside is lack of anonymity. The character may be recognized wherever he goes (Notice vs. a Threshold equal to (8 - cost of Perk)), and may be watched by the press and other interested parties. This can make subtlety or stealth very difficult.

Cost = between 1 (local actor) and 7 (world famous) points, depending on the degree of fame.

• Favor

Someone important or a powerful group owes the character one or more favors. This debt is real and known by both the character and the indebted party and is likely to be honored, all things being equal. The character may call in this debt when convenient, although story elements may limit his opportunity to do so. The downside of a Favor is resentment: if the character is not careful, the indebted party may feel he is being taken advantage of.

Cost = Use the following table as a guideline.

Debt Cost

Financial Debts	Debts of Honor	Point Cost
20,000 credits	key favor	1
50,000 credits	multiple favors	2
75,000 credits	major boon	3
150,000 credits	multiple boons	4
500,000 credits	life boon	5

• Immunity

The character is immune to one, and only one, specific drug, poison or disease (that shows up in the setting). This Perk can be acquired because it is possible to build an immunity to toxins or diseases. Immunity only has a downside if it is a beneficial drug the character is immune to.

Cost = 1

• Influence

The character is either a recognized authority or carries significant prestige in a certain social, geopolitical or professional sphere. Although this is not a guarantee that the character will get his way all the time, his opinion will be listened to (+1 to INF tests for each 2 points of Perk), and he can find others to support him if need be. Typical areas of influence include: a city, the military, big business, the media and a government. Influence's downside is notoriety: others in the same field may seek the character out or target him.

Cost = 2-6 depending on the scope and power of the influence.

• Intuition

The character gets uncanny hunches and bursts of inspiration, and the Gamemaster can allow the player to make CRE rolls whenever he thinks the character might get one, even if there are no obvious clues present. Fumbled CRE rolls for Intuition result in extremely poor guesses, and are Intuition's only downside.

Cost = 4

► 2. Chapter Two: Character design

• **Light Sleeper**

The character sleeps lightly and awakens at the slightest noise. He cannot be surprised when sleeping and always gets a normal defense roll. Light Sleeper has no downside, other than that it may be difficult to get a good night's sleep in a noisy environment.

Cost = 5

• **Longevity**

The character's lifespan is longer than that of a normal person's — he will effectively always look and feel like someone half of his age. Longevity's only downside is the envy of others and outliving relatives, friends and loved-ones.

Cost = 3

• **Lucky**

The character is exceptionally lucky. Once per session, the Player may elect to reroll a Fumble. Alternatively, he can choose to switch the modifier of a single die roll once per session, /after// the test has been made — for example, turning a -3 into a +3. Lucky has no downside.

Cost = 10

• **Machine-Touch**

The character is exceptionally good with machines and seems to understand them. Any task to repair machinery and devices is considered to be Complexity 1, regardless of the device. Machine-Touch has no downside.

Cost = 5

• **Perfect Pitch**

The character always knows if something is in tune and gains a +1 bonus to any musical or sound-related task.

Cost = 5

• **Photographic Memory**

The character has an excellent memory. Whenever a Knowledge roll is made to recall information previously seen, heard or read, the rating of the Perk is added to the dice roll. The downside is that traumatic events can also be recalled: a character with the Flashback flaw will have a threshold of 5 instead of 4.

Cost = 2 per rating, up to +3

• **Property**

The character owns a substantial and useful piece of property. This could include a one-of-a-kind weapon, a nightclub, a ship, or a mansion used as a headquarters. This Perk should only be used for key story props and settings — the owner of a lavish cruise boat should have this Perk, but an accountant with a condo and car does not need it. The downside of property is upkeep: ships, dwellings and clubs must be maintained and staffed, and items can be stolen or confiscated.

1 or 2 point objects are small items: a bleeding-edge high-powered computer for a hacker, or a tricked-out rifle for a hitman. Higher costs are for bigger items: 3 (small vehicle) to 6 (nightclub, etc.) to 9 (large estate).

Cost = 1 to 9, depending on the property

• **Quick Learner**

The character learns quite rapidly and can gain extra benefit from tutors who try and impart their knowledge upon them. Quick Learners subtract one from the number of months of tutelage required to learn a Skill from a tutor, although the minimum remains ones week. Those teaching a Quick Learner also get a +1 bonus to their Teaching Skill test to reduce XP cost of a Skill increase. Quick Learner has no downside.

Cost = 2

• Radiation Resistance

The character is exceptionally resistant to radiation poisoning. When making Health checks for status, he gets a +1 modifier to his dice roll. Radiation Resistance has no downside.

Cost = 2

• Rank

The character is a recognized member of a powerful military, paramilitary or civilian organization. This station will give him authority in certain circles as well as access to resources, contacts and equipment.

[[Military Rank]] indicates membership in an organized military force with authority from a nation. [[Paramilitary Rank]] indicates membership in a force that wields armed might and is organized along military lines, but does not serve as the main defense force of a nation (such as police or militia). Para-military forces may or may not operate with government authority. [[Civilian Rank]] indicates membership in an organized and powerful non-military organization, such as a powerful zaibatsu, a government department or an organized crime family. Civilian Rank is categorized according to generic stations and should be purchased only if membership confers a real benefit. Note that military rank has a fixed cost, but civilian and paramilitary rank is provided with a cost range depending on the power and influence of the group.

The potential downside of Rank is responsibility. Members of the military or other powerful groups have to follow codes of conduct, abide by regulations and follow orders from superiors.

► 2. Chapter Two: Character Design

Rank Costs

Rank	Military	PM/Civilian
Enlisted/Member	2	0-2
Junior Nco/Veteran Member	4	2-4
Senior Nco/Lieutenant	6	4-6
Junior Officer/Assistant-Director	8	6-8
Senior Officer/Director	10	8-10
General Officer/Senior Director	12	10-12

• Sense of Direction

The character seems to have a compass in his head. He always knows where he is located and never seems to get lost. In space, characters with the 3D Sense of Direction can always figure their orientation in relation to a spacecraft, station or nearest celestial body. Sense of Direction has no downside.

Cost = 2 for 2D, 5 for 3D

• Sense of Time

The character always knows what time it is and always know how much time has passed from any one event to another.

Cost = 2

• Strong Immune System

Characters with a Strong Immune System are especially resistant to disease and the effects of drugs. These characters get a +1 to Health tests made against the contagion and virulence of diseases, as well as the Potency of a drug or toxin (see //Disease//, section 6.3). A Strong Immune System has no inherent downside other than the fact that the character will also resist //beneficial// drugs, such as analgesics.

Cost = 3

► 2. Chapter Two: Character design

• Subordinates

The character has one or more faithful servants. These subordinates are professionally bound to serve the character in a well-defined way, but do so above and beyond the call of duty. The Player and Gamemaster should develop the conditions of servitude as well as the identities of all subordinates; they need not be fully started out, but core competences should be determined. Typical subordinates include: menservants, bodyguards, and executive assistants. The downside of Subordinates is responsibility: they must often be paid and they may legitimately ask for assistance from time to time.

Cost = 1 per Subordinate's 5 Character Points
//or// Skill Points

• Thick-Skinned

The character has a high pain threshold, allowing him to resist injuries that would put lesser people out of commission. Thick-skinned characters add five points to their Stamina and recalculate their damage thresholds accordingly. Thick-Skinned has no downside.

Cost = 5



• Wealthy

The character has money. Lots of it. Exactly how much depends on the characteristic's rating. The rating is multiplied by 10,000 to know how many credits the character can get within the hour, provided he is within communication range of a financial institution (any light speed delays, if proper for the campaign, are added to the hour). Each use of Wealth temporarily reduces the rating by one for a full week, and further uses will continue to reduce the rating and "reset the clock" for recuperating wealth. For example a character with level 3 Wealth draws 30,000 credits on Monday, so his Wealth is reduced to 2. The next Thursday he withdraws another 20,000 credits (his new maximum). This means his Wealth is considered 1 until the following Thursday, when it climbs to 2. It will return to level 3 the Thursday after that. Optionally, characters can have non-renewable Wealth that indicates a fixed amount of cash that isn't making money for itself. The Wealth reduction from spending in this case is permanent.

The potential downside of Wealth is responsibility. The wealthy must maintain their fortunes, taking at least some interest in their holdings. Tax audits and lawsuits may also be targeted at wealthy characters.

Cost = 3 points per rating (1 point per rating if non-renewable).

• 2.4.2 Flaws

Flaws are hindrances that get in the way of the character's life. Some of them are little more than quirks that make social interactions a little more difficult. Flaws can be removed later on during the campaign through good roleplaying and a liberal amount of Experience Points. Like the downside of Perks, some Flaws have potential upsides, small benefits that come with a hindrance. These upsides should never outweigh the penalties of the Flaw.

► 2. Chapter Two: Character Design

Getting rid of a Flaw during play is possible, but requires two things. First, the Player must spend an amount of Experience Points equal to three times the number of points that the Flaw gives. Secondly, the Flaw must be eliminated through roleplaying (e.g. a Wanted character must defeat or otherwise dissuade his hunters, a Deaf character must undergo corrective surgery). If a Flaw is resolved through roleplaying but XPs are not spent, the Gamemaster can replace the Flaw with another one, or by another occurrence of the same one. In the previous example, the character that has defeated his pursuers might be hunted by another group or end up picking up a Nemesis.

• **Addiction**

The character is psychologically or physically addicted to something. It might be drugs, it might be adrenaline, it might even be sex, but he needs regular doses of it. The character is considered either *//dependent//* or *//addicted//* to a drug. Characters “addicted” to an activity (sex, danger, etc.) are considered *//dependent//* on that activity, with a Dependence Rating of 5. For more details see *//Addiction//*, section 6.3. Note that a character can be both *//addicted//* and *//dependent//* on the same drug. Addiction has no upside.

This Flaw also covers any kind of physical or mental deficiency (such as ulcers, heart condition, severe depression or paranoid schizophrenia) that must be controlled through regular use of medication. Failure to take regular doses can lead to symptoms similar (in terms of game modifiers) to an addict going through withdrawal. The player and Gamemaster can decide whether this version of the Flaw is permanent or if it can eventually be cured.

Cost = Addiction or Dependence Value / 3 (as appropriate, round up).

• **Age**

The character is either unusually young or old, which may impose limits on his freedom of movement and on how seriously others take his opinions. Young characters are considered to be teenagers (13-16 years for humans) or younger, and will have a great deal of trouble being taken seriously by adults, may have to attend school and may not be able to get into adult establishments like bars. Old characters are considered senior citizens (65+ for humans), may also have problems with respect and may have health problems. The potential upside of Age is attitudes: juvenile misbehavior may be forgiven, and older characters may benefit from some respect from the young.

Young characters may have a maximum BLD and KNO of 0 and may not have any Skills beyond Level or Cpx 3. Old characters may have a maximum AGI and FIT of 0.

Cost = -4 (young), -2 (old)

• **Amnesiac**

The character has no recollection of his life up to a few days or weeks ago. This Flaw should be severely monitored by the Gamemaster, because it can easily play havoc with a campaign. The potential upside of Amnesia is unknown allies or even Skills (which can be paid out of the XPs given for the session). Some friends from the character's past life may be willing to help them, although some enemies may well be close behind.

Cost = -4

• **Animal Antipathy**

Something about the character is disturbing to animals, both domestic and wild. Domesticated animals are less likely to respond to commands or stay clam in his presence and he suffers a -1 penalty to Animal handling and Riding tests. Wild animals are more likely to attack the character and, even if they don't attack, will respond aggressively to his presence. Animal

► 2. Chapter Two: Character design

Antipathy has no upside; characters with this Flaw may have one Animal Companion (for some reason, the Antipathy does not work against that one particular animal).

Cost = -2

• **Bad Luck**

The character is constantly plagued by bad luck. Once per game, an opponent may reroll a Fumble. Alternatively, the Gamemaster can choose to switch the result of a die roll — for example, turning a +3 into a -3. The Gamemaster, however, may not use this to kill the character outright, only to make his life miserable. Bad Luck has no upside.

Cost = -5

• **Beliefs**

The character strongly believes something that is generally not accepted and can expose him to ridicule in the mainstream: asteroids are hollow and contain alien artifacts, there are ghost ships sailing in uncharted oceans, etc. This belief could even be dangerous, leading the character to take huge risks, such as heading out for a “hollow asteroid ship” with no supplies.

Cost = -1 to -3 depending on the nature of the belief.

• **Bloodlust**

The character is either inherently mean and vicious or suffers from a lack of control in combat due to desensitization or dehumanizing training. When in battle, he will attempt to kill his opponent by any means possible. He'll never accept surrender, nor will he surrender or retreat permanently himself. When prisoners must be taken, they live only as long as they are useful to the character. Characters suffering from Bloodlust who wish to overcome their deadly instincts must pass a PSY test against a Threshold of 5. Bloodlust has no upside.

Cost = -4

• **Code of Honor**

The character lives by a code of honor. The Player and Gamemaster should define this code in terms of how stringent it is and how seriously the character takes it. Note that “honor” can mean many things to many people, so it may take some time to decide exactly what this code entails. A Code of Honor's potential upside is respect: characters who behave in a consistently honorable manner — especially when it puts them at a disadvantage — may gain the trust and admiration of other honorable people.

Cost = -1 to -4 depending on depth of the code.

• **Criminal Background**

At some point in his past, the character committed a criminal act. He may have done some prison time or gotten away free, but the incident continues to haunt him in some way. This could entail a criminal record making it hard to get a job or respect or “old friends” continuously appearing in awkward situations. Criminal Background's potential upside is contacts: at times these “old friends” can be somewhat useful.

Cost = -1 to -2 depending on the severity of the crime

• **Curse**

The character is under a curse. Whether it is real or imagined is to be determined by the Gamemaster along with the Player. Regardless, however, it should affect the character in tangible ways. This characteristic is more akin to a tragic destiny than to a supernatural “hex.” The Player should choose one particular aspect of the character's life (love life, job, friendships, finances, etc.) that continuously refuses to “work out.” Curse cannot be tied to any Skill tests.

Cost = -2 to -6, depending on gravity

► 2. Chapter Two: Character Design

Dependent Cost

CP/SP* total	Cost
20/30	-1
10/30	-2
10/20	-3
5/10	-4
*Character Points/Skill Points	

• Debt

The character owes someone a substantial debt, which can include money but also debts of honor or patronage. The person to whom the character is indebted may be tolerant or demanding, but the debt is a recurrent drain on the character's time or resources. The potential upside of a debt is a contact: the person who the character owes may be able to be of some help occasionally, although it usually means ending up further in debt.

Cost = Use the following table as a guideline.

Debt Cost

Financial Debts	Debts of Honor	Point Cost
20,000 credits	key favor	-1
50,000 credits	multiple favors	-2
75,000 credits	major boon	-3
150,000 credits	multiple boons	-4
500,000 credits	life boon	-5

• Destitute

The character does not have much money and has no secure source of income. Characters who obtain such a source during play will find forgotten debts catching up with them until they pay off this Flaw in XPs. Poor characters cannot afford anything except the basics without passing Streetwise Tests or making arrangements through roleplaying. Poverty has no upside.

Cost = -2

► Chapter Two:
Character design

• Dedicated

The character is dedicated to a certain cause. He will follow its ideals whenever possible. The more extreme form of this characteristic is fanaticism. Dedication's potential upsides are contacts and respect. Others dedicated to the same cause (or who respect the cause) may be willing to help a truly dedicated character, although they may also expect such help themselves.

Cost = -1 to -3 depending on the demands of the dedication.

• Dependent

The character must take care of someone: an adopted child, a relative, etc. This responsibility includes care, protection and friendship and should be quite demanding on the character's schedule. A Dependent's potential upside is aid: the other character may be helpful in certain situations.

Cost = use the following table.

• Flashbacks

The character has sudden flashbacks of his past, especially in stressful situations. The Player and Gamemaster should define just what these flashbacks are and what trauma they stem from. Specific triggers for the flashbacks can also be chosen. Characters experiencing flashbacks must make a WIL or PSY test against a Threshold of 4 to act. Flashbacks have no upside.

Cost = -2

ACTION: HEAVY GEAR



► 2. Chapter Two: Character design

• **Goal**

The character has a powerful, all consuming goal to which he is dedicated to the point of obsession. The Player and Gamemaster should define this goal, making sure that it is largely unattainable, giving the character a strong motivation throughout the campaign. This is mostly a roleplaying Flaw, but Gamemasters may request WIL tests if a character wishes to avoid doing something that would help in the goal (such as letting a bad guy go free to help a friend). The potential upside of a Goal is determination: the character may have an easier time resisting temptation because he is so focused.

Cost = -3

• **Heavy Sleeper**

The character sleeps like a brick and is very hard to awaken, and has a tendency to oversleep. Heavy Sleepers must make PER or Notice tests with a -3 penalty to see if they awake in a dangerous situation. Heavy Sleeper has no upside.

Cost = -2

• **Infamous**

The character has a bad reputation. This reputation may or may not be deserved, but it sticks to the character like the proverbial bad penny. Infamy can denote unpleasant reputations (e.g. a notorious cheat) or something more terrifying (e.g. an underworld assassin). Infamy's potential upside is fear: those with terrible reputations may be intimidating.

Cost = -1 to -4 depending on the severity and expanse of the infamy.

• **Insomniac**

The character cannot get to sleep or is plagued by constant nightmares. He is constantly tired (if using the Fatigue rules, add an additional -

1 per night of sleep missed). Optionally, the Gamemaster may impose a -1 penalty for actions that require endurance and prolonged concentration. Insomnia has no upside.

Cost = -1

• **Lame**

The character has a medical problem in one or both legs. This condition may be temporary, the result of an accident for example, or it may be permanent, if the character cannot have his legs fixed for any number of reasons. The character suffers a -1 modifier to movement-related Skill checks, and cannot perform activities that require jogging or faster movement. Being Lame has no upside.

Cost = -6 if permanent, -2 if removable.

• **Liar**

The character generally does not tell the truth. Whenever he speaks, he will lie if it is practical or gets him off the hook. A more serious version of this is the full-blown mythomaniac, who cannot tell the truth and keeps inventing stories about himself and the people around him. Being a Liar has no upside.

Cost = -1, -5 if mythomaniac

• **Mechanical Inaptitude**

The character is "all thumbs" when it comes to mechanical or electronic devices. Any task to use or repair machinery and devices is considered to be Complexity 3, regardless of the device. Mechanical Ineptitude has no upside.

Cost = -5

• **Motion Sickness**

The character gets sick and nauseous when exposed to feelings of movement, such as when riding in a car or floating in free fall. Whenever the character finds himself in such

an environment, he gets a penalty equal to the rating of this Flaw to all tests. There is no upside to Motion Sickness.

Cost = -1 per R

• **Nemesis**

The character has a long-time enemy or rival. Whenever they meet, they engage in contest of wit or plain combat. If the character gets rid of his Nemesis, another one will pop up to replace him until the point cost is paid (a vengeful lover? younger sibling?). The Player and Gamemaster should cooperate to create the Nemesis and determine how the rivalry began. Nemesis' potential upside is allies: then enemy of your enemy may be your friend.

Cost = -1 per Nemesis' 10 Character Points or Skill Points

• **Obligation**

The character is under some kind of obligation. He may have a steady job and be required to show up on schedule, or he can have to obey certain persons. The Player and the Gamemaster should cooperate to define the scope of the obligations and the reasons why the character is under orders. Note that characters who have the Authority or Rank Perks cannot purchase Obligation tied to the same employment that confers these benefits — the obligations are just part of the territory. They can, however, have other Obligations. Obligations have a potential upside in contacts: superiors and fellow employees can occasionally be of help.

Cost = -1 to -3 depending on severity and frequency of the Obligation.

• **One-Armed**

The character is missing an arm. This condition may be temporary, the result of an accident for example, or it may be permanent, if the character cannot have it replaced for any number of reasons. The character suffers a -1

► **2. Chapter Two: Character Design**

modifier to any manipulation-related Skill checks, and cannot perform activities that require both hands. One-Armed has no upside.

Cost = -2, -5 if permanent

• **Paranoid**

The character believes that some people are in league to cause him harm. Anything bad that comes to him is automatically the result of this conspiracy. Anyone refusing to believe in said conspiracy is automatically part of it and probably out to get the character — or so he thinks. Paranoia has no upside.

Cost = -3

• **Phobia**

The character has an unreasonable fear of something. It might be a certain item, a situation, a color, or an animal. //Mild Phobias/ / mean that the character suffers a -1 action penalty when in the presence of the object of his phobia, due to nervousness and distraction. //Severe Phobias// mean that the character must pass a WIL roll against a Threshold of 4 to function at all in the presence of the object and even then suffers a -1 action penalty. Phobias have no upside. Gamemasters can adjust the cost of the Perk to -1/-3 for uncommon objects of Phobia (water in a desert campaign, for example).

Cost = -2 for Mild Phobia, -4 for Severe Phobia.

• **Poor Senses (Specific)**

[[Hearing:]] The character has especially poor hearing (although he is not deaf). He has trouble distinguishing sounds that are faint or muffled. The character suffers a -1 penalty to all Notice tests related to hearing.

[[Sight:]] The character has especially poor eyesight (although he is not blind). He has trouble noticing details until they are literally right in front of him. The character suffers a -1 penalty to all Notice tests related to vision.

► 2. Chapter Two: Character design

[[Smell/Taste:]] The character has especially poor taste or odorat. He has trouble noticing odors or tastes until they are very strong. The character suffers a -1 penalty to all Notice tests related to smell or taste. This has no upside, though the character can eat really bad food.

[[Blind/Deaf:]] It is possible the character cannot hear or see at all. This condition may be temporary, the result of an accident for example, or it may be permanent, if the character cannot have his eyes or ears replaced for any number of reasons. The character suffers a -2 modifier to his Notice checks, and cannot perform activities that require hearing (if Deaf) or sight (if Blind).

Cost = -2 each, -8 if permanently blind or deaf (-2 if can be negated by a device)

• Quirk

A quirk is a small personality flaw or habit that poses only minor limitations on actions. Quirks are intended as roleplaying aids to reward Players for giving their characters some life. This should not be abused, however, so Players receive extra Skill Points only for their first two Quirks. Common Quirks are listed below, but gamemasters and Players should feel free to add others as long as they are not severely limiting on the character. Note that Quirks can include good habits (such as always giving to charity or taking in strangers) as long as they are mildly limiting on the character. At the Gamemaster's discretion, characters who wish to suppress their Quirk temporarily (e.g. cowards who must run into danger) may have to pass a WIL test against a Threshold of 5. Quirks have no upsides.

Common Quirks include: afraid of heights, can't swim, cowardice, cruelty, curiosity, gluttony, greed, intolerance, lacking a sense of humor, laziness, miserly compulsion, overconfidence, pacifism, pride, selfishness, squeamishness, stubbornness, vengeance fixations, and miscellaneous good or bad habits.

Cost = -1 per Quirk (max. -2)

• Radiation Vulnerability

The character is exceptionally vulnerable to radiation poisoning. When making Health checks for status, he gets a -1 modifier to his dice roll. Radiation Vulnerability has no upside.

Cost = -2

• Secret

The character has a dark secret in his past. The Player and Gamemaster should decide on the nature of the secret, but there should always be a good reason why this element must be kept hidden. It could be a criminal past (Criminal Background represents a //known// criminal past), a past indiscretion, a current illicit affair, or any number of other damaging information. If the secret is revealed and the Player does not pay the XP to remove it, then another level to the secret, or a different secret altogether must be chosen. Secrets have no upsides.

Cost = -2 to -3 depending on the gravity of the secret.

• Sick

The character has a serious ailment that impairs him in some way. The Player and Gamemaster should define the illness and its symptoms. An important (if medically inaccurate) distinction is between degenerative and chronic diseases. Degenerative diseases (such as cancer) will only get worse if untreated, while chronic disease are stable but debilitating. There is no upside to Sickness.

Cost = -1 to -7 depending on how severe, fatal and debilitating the disease is.

• Slow Healing

The character heals more slowly than other people. The normal healing rules are used (see page XX of the rulebook), but the character needs 50% more time to heal. Slow Healing has no upside.

Cost = -4

► 2. Chapter Two: Character Design

• **Slow Learner**

The character has a hard time learning in a structured or academic environment. He still benefits from teachers, but less than most. A Slow Learner must add one to the number of months required to learn a Skill with a tutor (the time can still be reduced to one week by skilled teachers, however). Those teaching Slow Learners also suffer a -1 penalty to their Teaching Skill test to reduce XP cost. Slow Learner has no upside.

Cost = -2

• **Social Stigma**

The character is part of a social group that has a bad reputation. People will shun him and, in the more extreme case, try to harm him. The Gamemaster and Player should cooperate to define the stigmatized group and the nature of the stigma. To eliminate this Flaw, the character must spend appropriate XPs, but also either prove he is no longer a part of the group or somehow end the stigma toward the group. Stigma's potential upside is contacts: other members of the stigmatized group may be willing to cooperate for mutual benefit.

Cost = -1 to -3 depending on the severity of the stigma.

• **Split Personality**

The character has two or more personalities. They are usually different aspects of the same person, though only one is in control at any time. What triggers the switch from one personality to the other is highly variable and depends on the individual. In general, stress is the most common trigger. Each personality has its own set of mental Attributes (CRE, INF, KNO, WIL, PSY) and its own Perks and Flaws. Ideally, all personalities should have the same point cost, but the Gamemaster may diverge from this in specific cases. Player and Gamemaster should cooperate to create all the identities.

Cost = -7

• **Thin-skinned**

The character has a low pain threshold, putting him out of commission on even the lightest injuries. Thin-skinned characters subtract five points from their Stamina and recalculate their Damage Thresholds accordingly. Thin-Skinned has no upside.

Cost = -4

• **Wanted**

Somebody is currently chasing the character. Whether or not this is justified, the character will have to face relentless, often-armed pursuers that appear at the worst time (Gamemaster's choice). The Player and the Gamemaster should cooperate to define the hunters and the reason for the hunt. Wanted usually indicates a group hunting the character or an individual doing so for professional reasons — a personal enemy is covered by the Nemesis Flaw. Especially masochistic Players can combine Wanted and Nemesis. Wanted's potential upside is allies: others hunted by the same group may be helpful while on the lamb.

Cost = -1 to -5 depending on the power of the hunter and the frequency of appearance.

• **Weak Immune System**

Characters with a Weak Immune System are especially vulnerable to disease and the effects of drugs. These characters get a -1 penalty to Health tests made against the contagion and virulence of diseases, as well as the Potency of a drug or toxin (see // Disease//, section 6.3). A Weak Immune System has no inherent upside other than the fact that the character will also be less resistant to //beneficial// drugs such as analgesics.

Cost = -3