

# ICONS

SUPERPOWERED ROLEPLAYING

## ORIGINS



Kenson • Houser

AD INFINITUM  
  
ADVENTURES



# ICONS ORIGINS

## A Sourcebook for Icons Superpowered Roleplaying



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# INTRODUCTION



Heroes are the focus of **ICONS Superpowered Roleplaying** and the **Assembled Edition** of the game looks to get new superheroes into the players hands and fighting the forces of evil as quickly and easily as possible. One of the original concepts for **ICONS** was to focus on putting together a hero with just a few random die rolls and some player imagination, and then get playing, and experience showed that rolling up heroes at the game table often led players to come up with ideas they would not have without some prompting from the dice and random chance.

Still, roleplaying gamers like options, and many want to be able to implement specific ideas for superhero characters in their gaming. **ICONS Origins** looks to expand the range of hero creation options for the game beyond just random rolling and the optional point-spending system in the **Assembled Edition**. It offers both an even faster option—pre-generated heroic archetypes—as well as more involved options, including more detailed point-spending and character modeling.



# HERO CREATION OPTIONS

**Icons Origins** provides four different means of creating heroes:

## 1. RANDOM GENERATION

This is the default options provided in **Icons Superpowered Roleplaying**: Randomly generate a hero quickly using the set of tables provided in the **Hero Creation** chapter of the book. Random hero generation has the advantages of being quick and easy and it can often inspire players to come up with interesting descriptions and backgrounds to detail their new heroes, explaining some unusual combination of powers or abilities. It's a particularly good choice for players who are indecisive or don't have a particular idea of the sort of hero they want to play.

## 2. ARCHETYPES

**Origins** offers a set of heroic archetypes, covering the major types of heroes found in the superhero genre, from which players can choose. Each archetype is laid out as a suitable starting **Icons** hero, and offers a selection of variations and options for players who want to customize them. Archetypes fit into fairly classic molds and are the fastest and easiest hero creation option: Just pick one and you're good to go! On the other hand, archetypes have a limited range of options, and some players don't want a hero fits into a particular mold.

## 3. BY THE NUMBERS

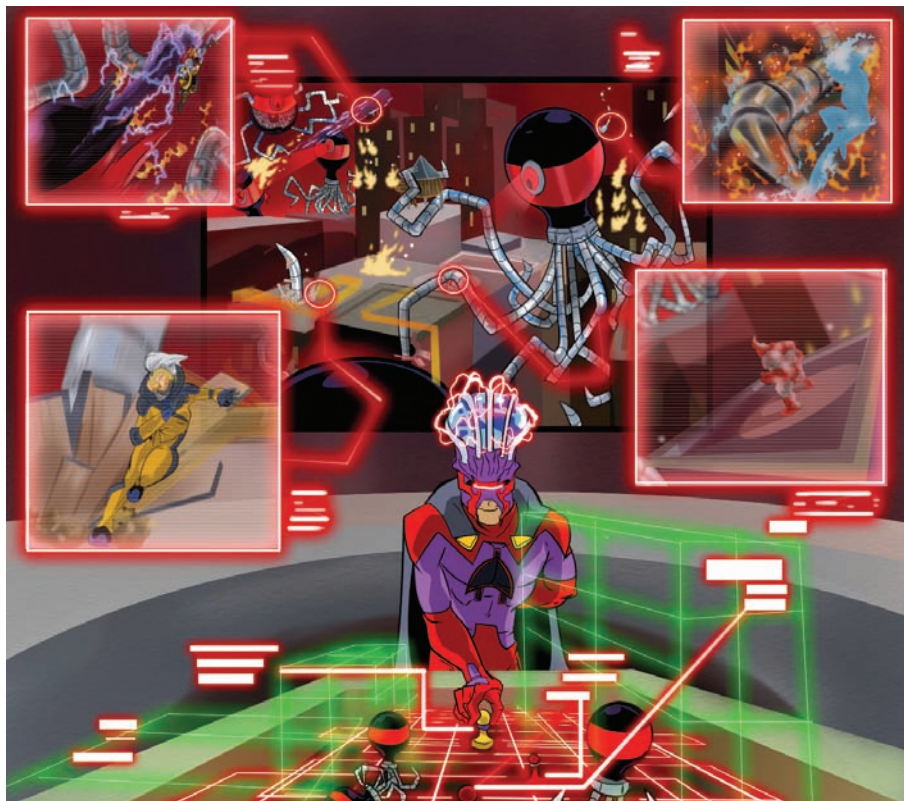
This option, introduced in **Icons Superpowered Roleplaying**, gives players a "budget" of points to spend and lets them "shop" for whatever abilities they want for their heroes, limited only by the rules and the resources they're given. This approach is more flexible and individually customized than either of the previous two, since players pick exactly what they want for the heroes, but it's also more involved, since they have to keep track of what every individual ability costs and how all of the numbers add up. The Game Master also has to do the work of checking the players' calculations, and making sure they "show their work."

## 4. CHARACTER MODELING

The most flexible hero creation option is for players to simply come up with a concept of the hero they'd like to play and assign whatever abilities that character should have to fit the concept. This approach requires mature, objective players able to restrain themselves from giving their characters abilities out of proportion with their concept, and a Game Master willing to exercise a firm hand in terms of both reviewing and approving said characters to ensure they fit into the overall game.



# HERO ARCHETYPES



One of the things the random hero creation system of **ICONS** was designed to do is provide a springboard for the players' imaginations, offering a random collection of powers and abilities, and challenging the player to come up with a concept and a theme to incorporate them—with some tools for “fine-tuning” that process. It has allowed **ICONS** players to roll-up heroes they might not have thought to create entirely on their own.

Still even rolling up a hero can take some time and sometimes you just want to *play* and get to the good stuff. So this chapter offers a range of pre-made **ICONS** hero archetypes, with all of the abilities laid out and ready to play. Just come up with a name and a description for your hero, maybe pick from one or two simple customization options, and you're good to go!



# THE BATTLESUIT

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	INCREDIBLE	7
INTELLECT	GOOD	5
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	AVERAGE	3

STAMINA 10

DETERMINATION 2

## SPECIALTIES

Military or Technology

## POSSIBLE QUALITIES

Choose three or create your own:

Cutting Edge Technology

Depends on the Suit

Heart of Steel

I Can Handle This

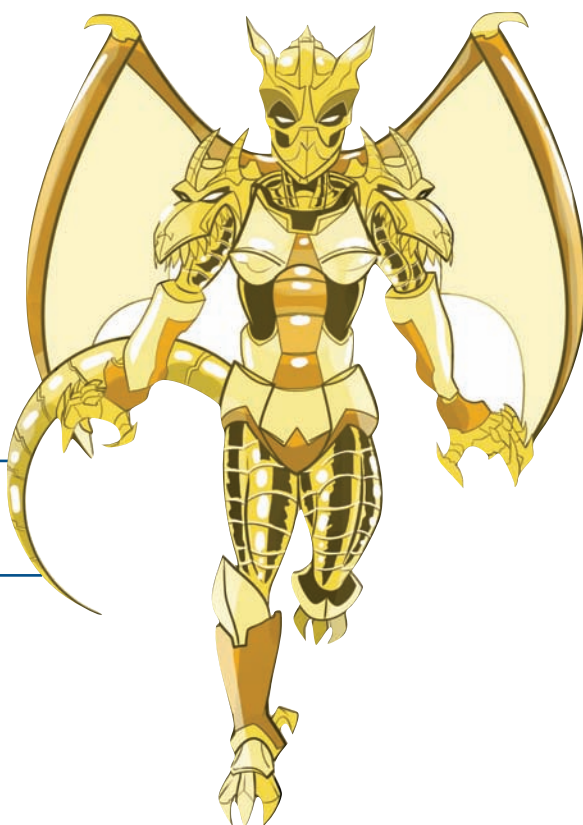
It's Not the Suit, But Who's Inside

Maverick

Pushing These Systems to the Limit

Strength of Iron

True Mettle



## POWERS

**Battlesuit:** All of the Battlesuit's powers come from a suit of powered armor, a device granting Incredible (7) Blast (choose blasting or shooting damage), Damage Resistance, Flight, and Strength Increase as a secondary power (Average (3) Strength without the armor) as well as Average (3) Life Support (Breathing, Pressure, and Vacuum).



## DESCRIPTION

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Some heroes are made and not born or, at least, their powers are. The Battlesuit is a latter-day knight in shining armor, decked out in a suit that provides superhuman powers and abilities. In some cases, the Battlesuit is the designer who has created the suit, either with the notion of becoming a hero or taking it on in order to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands. In other cases, the Battlesuit inherits and is given the suit to become its wearer and pilot. Some Battlesuits remain beholden to whoever actually owns the suit, while others are independent.

Battlesuits may compensate for physical challenges their wearers have, from providing vital life support like a mobile iron lung to enhancing or replacing disabled limbs or senses, suitable for the “Depends on the Suit” quality or something similar to cause trouble for the hero. Even without these challenges, Battlesuit heroes may feel they have something to prove because their powers are not as “real” as those of other heroes, which can cause trouble itself.

## VARIATIONS

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The following are some common variations on the Battlesuit archetype. You can choose one, roll a die, or create up your own. In addition to these, a common Battlesuit variation is to choose or roll another offensive power to replace the suit’s Blast, building a theme off of that.

1. **Brilliant Battlesuit:** Reduce Awareness by one and increase Intellect by one to Great (6).
2. **Force Field Battlesuit:** Replace the Damage Resistance power with Force Field; the suit’s other powers may be based off of the force field as well.
3. **Magical Battlesuit:** Rather than technological, the battlesuit is magical in nature. Substitute the Occult specialty for Technology as an option.
4. **Mecha Battlesuit:** The battlesuit provides Incredible (7) Growth due to its size rather than Damage Resistance or Strength Increase, and has Full Life Support.
5. **Stealth Battlesuit:** Rather than Strength Increase, the battlesuit provides Incredible (7) Invisibility.
6. **Underwater Battlesuit:** Replace Flight with an Incredible (7) Aquatic power.

# THE CONSTRUCT

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	AMAZING	8
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5

STAMINA 13

DETERMINATION 3

## SPECIALTIES

Choose or roll one

## POSSIBLE QUALITIES

Choose three or create your own:

Distant and Unemotional  
Doesn't Understand People  
Longs for Humanity  
Human on the Inside  
"I was made for this."  
Made to Be Superior  
Obviously (or Secretly) Non-Human

## POWERS

**Solid Form:** The inhuman Construct is made from some non-living solid material, providing an Amazing (8) Alternate Form with corresponding Strength and Damage Resistance. The Construct also has Total Life Support and a Weak (1) form of Immortality: Not being truly "alive," it can be "killed" and incapacitated but also repaired and restored from "death." Unlike other Alternate Forms, the Construct cannot transform into normal flesh and blood—it has the extra of remaining permanently in this alternate form.

Choose or roll one other Amazing (8) power.





## DESCRIPTION

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The key concept of the Construct is that it is not human, not even truly “alive” in the biological sense. Still, the Construct is intelligent, self-aware, and capable of making its own choices, one of which is to use its unique abilities to help others.

Constructs often face a struggle with their inhuman nature and a desire to understand humanity and perhaps be “more human.” At the same time, people are often afraid of the Construct, or do not attribute it the same consideration or rights they would offer human beings.

A Construct’s Alternate Form has a built-in extra similar to Instant, reflecting that the power is always active and cannot be turned off or taken away, which is a net benefit for the character. The various challenges of not being a living creature can show up as trouble for the Construct in play.

## VARIATIONS

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The following are some common variations on the Construct archetype. You can choose one, roll a die, or create your own:

1. **The Android:** The Android is the most human-looking Construct, and can pass for human in most cases. An Android may have Great (6) Intellect, five additional specialties, and an extra level of Determination in place of the additional Great (6) power.
2. **The Elemental:** The Construct is a being of primal elemental power, either a “living embodiment” of an element, or a machine with some power over an element. It may have a different Alternate Form: Energy for Fire, Fluid for Water, and Gaseous for Air, Solid for Earth, Wood, and such, and its additional power is Elemental Control of its type.
3. **The Giant:** The Giant Construct has Amazing (8) Growth rather than Alternate Form.
4. **The Golem:** The Golem is a magical or mystical construct, traditionally a humanoid statue of clay brought to pseudo-life, although it could be made of other materials.
5. **The Robot:** Unlike the Android, the Robot is clearly a Construct. Its additional power is most likely an offensive weapons system or a movement system.
6. **The Undead:** The Construct was a living being but is now reanimated by mad science or occult forces, possibly even multiple living beings patched together to form a new creature. Energy Drain or Regeneration are common extra powers for Undead Constructs.

# THE CRIMEFIGHTER

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	GOOD	5
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	GOOD	5
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5

STAMINA 9

DETERMINATION 5

## SPECIALTIES

Athletics  
Intimidation  
Investigation Expert  
Martial Arts Expert  
Stealth  
Plus choose one

## POSSIBLE QUALITIES

Choose three or create your own:

Independently Wealthy  
Intrepid Investigator  
Justice for All  
Masked Mystery  
Outside the Law  
Scourge of the Underworld  
Tragic History

## POWERS

**Gadgets:** The Crimefighter has access to Good (5) Gadgets with the Instant extra, able to access any gadget without preparation. These gadgets often have a theme fitting the Crimefighter's style.





## DESCRIPTION

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Crimefighters are noteworthy for rarely having powers of their own, but instead relying on their attributes, specialties, Determination, and a handful of gadgets to fight crime and the forces of evil. They may be driven by a thirst for justice (or vengeance), the thrill of adventure, or a need to prove something, reflected in the hero's qualities.

Keep in mind the value of a Crimefighter's extra Determination; in addition to improved effort and stunts, it also serves for defense with either improved effort in defensive actions or the opportunity to recover in the midst of a fight. It's also a resource for insight and retcons to turn situations to the Crimefighter's advantage. Crimefighters often lead complicated lives—and have a lot of enemies—for the trouble that quickly replenishes their Determination Points in play.

## VARIATIONS

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The following are some common variations on the Crimefighter archetype. You can choose one, roll a die, or create your own:

1. **The Duplicator:** Replace the Gadgets power with Good (5) Duplication with one extra.
2. **The Gimmick:** Replace the Gadgets power with one randomly rolled or chosen power at the same level with one extra or 10 points in total value in powers. This power may be inborn or a device; reverse the usual chances if determining this randomly, with the power being inherent on a roll of 4 or less on 2d6, a device otherwise.
3. **The Night-Fighter:** Remove one Specialty. Replace Gadgets with an Good (5) Darkness Control device with a Level Duration and Weak (1) Super-Senses (Infravision), possibly through a device as well.
4. **The Night-Glider:** Replace the Instant extra of Gadgets with the Arsenal extra for a permanent Flight device. Similar replacements can create Crimefighters with other “signature” gadgets.
5. **The Sentinel:** Replace Gadgets with a Fair (4) Swinging device, Average (3) Danger Sense and Average (3) Super-Senses; choose three or take the default set of Extended Hearing or Vision, Spatial Sense, and Tracking Sense.
6. **The Vigilante:** Replace a level of Martial Arts specialty with a level of Guns specialty. Replace Gadgets with Good (5) damage guns (Blast devices) and a Good (5) level motorcycle for transportation.

# THE ENERGY CONTROLLER

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5

STAMINA 8

DETERMINATION 2

## SPECIALTIES

Choose one, Athletics and Power (Energy Control) are common

## POSSIBLE QUALITIES

Choose three or create your own:

All the Power at My Command

Barely Contained

Daring

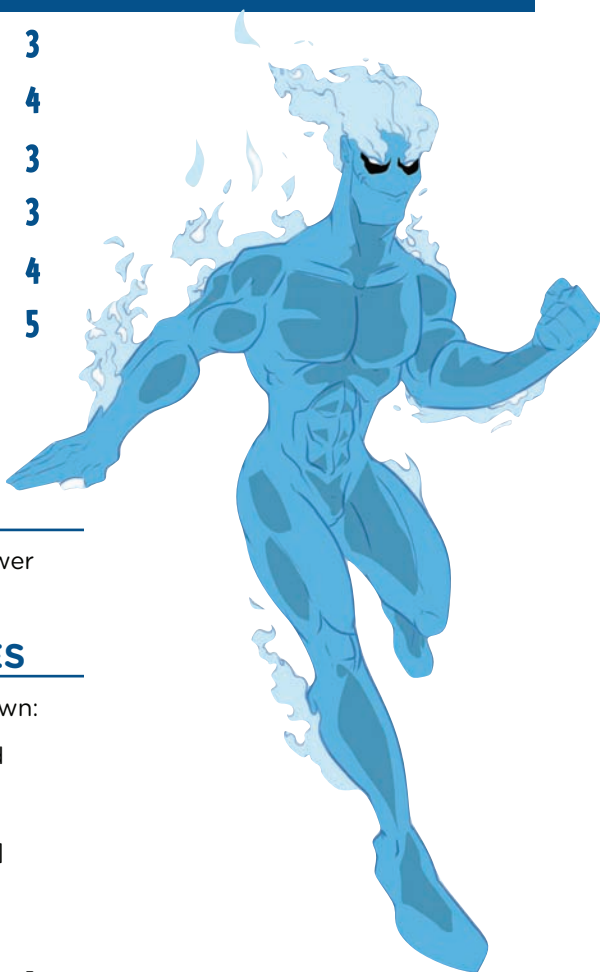
Embodiment of [Energy Type]

“Energetic” Personality

Fearless

Forceful

Master/Mistress of [Energy Type]



## POWERS

**Energy Control:** The Energy Controller wields an Energy Control power at Incredible (7) level with the Force Field and Flight extras, plus one secondary power chosen from: Aura, Binding, Dazzle, Force Constructs, Resistance (to Energy Type), Stunning, or Telekinesis.

Choose a type of energy: Cold, Darkness, Electrical, Force, Gravity, Light, Magnetic, Radiation, Sonic, or Vibration.



## DESCRIPTION

---

A classic hero type projects and controls a type of energy, able to use it for offensive blasts, defensive protective shields or armor, and for propulsion to soar through the air, blasting at foes from a distance. The Energy Controller has a near-ideal balance of offense, defense, and movement and makes a valuable member of a team.

The “Energetic” Personality quality may be dictated by the character’s associated energy: cold, electric, hot-headed, magnetic, sense of gravitas, and so forth, or choose an opposite trait for contrast, such as the hot-headed cold-controller, or the quiet and shy sonic controller.

Energy Controllers are good at using their power for a variety of stunts involving fine control over that energy. See the individual energy control power descriptions in **Great Power** for examples.

## VARIATIONS

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The following are some common variations on the Energy Controller archetype. You can choose one, roll a die, or create your own:

1. **The Control Device:** The character’s Energy Control power comes from a device, such as a ring, scepter, staff, suit, wand, or wristbands.
2. **The Element Controller:** Rather than an Energy Control power, choose an Element Control power: Air, Earth, Fire, Plant, Water, or Weather. Replace the Telekinesis option on the secondary powers list with Blast (since Telekinesis is part of the Element Control power).
3. **The Energy Absorber:** Instead of Energy Control, the hero has Absorption for a similar type of energy with the Blast and Healing extras and one of the same secondary powers listed for Energy Control.
4. **The Energy Blaster:** Increase Prowess, Strength, Coordination, and Stamina by 1. Make specialties Expert Energy Control plus one other. Increase Energy Control to Amazing (8) and replace extras with the Burst extra.
5. **The Energy Form:** Rather than just controlling energy, you *become* it. Instead of Energy Control, the character has Alternate Form (Energy) with the Instant and Energy Control extras and a choice of one of the secondary powers listed for Energy Control.
6. **The Energy Jumper:** Replace the Flight extra with Teleportation, suitable for a hero who “jumps” through an energy field to travel instantly from place to place rather than flying.

# THE GADGETEER

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	GOOD	5
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	INCREDIBLE	7
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5

STAMINA 8

DETERMINATION 4

## SPECIALTIES

Gadgets  
Technology  
Plus choose or roll two others

## POSSIBLE QUALITIES

Choose three or create your own:

A Way With Technology  
Brilliant  
"Don't worry, this'll work."  
Eureka!  
Obsessive  
Problem-Solver  
Quick-Thinker  
"I know what I'm doing!"  
Up to the Challenge



## POWERS

**Gadgets:** The Gadgeteer has access to Incredible (7) Gadgets, linked to Intellect level, and with either the Instant extra and one Arsenal gadget or two Arsenal gadgets.



## DESCRIPTION

---

“Where do they get all of those marvelous toys?” Many Gadgeteers make them themselves, using brilliant technical skills or insights into technology and engineering far beyond most people. Others come by them in different ways, from finding them to buying or stealing them. The key point is that Gadgeteers have a variety of devices to draw upon, given the opportunity to use them.

Gadgeteers are also smart and know how to apply their Intellect to solve problems beyond just the technical. Often, their heroism is as much about pitting their Intellect against their foes as it is their incredible gadgets, and many Gadgeteers prefer to solve problems and overcome their foes without resorting to violence, if they can.

Keep in mind that Gadgeteers can use their Determination Points to automatically produce a particular gadget with their powers, especially when it is most needed.

## VARIATIONS

---

The following are some common variations on the Gadgeteer archetype. You can choose one, roll a die, or create your own:

1. **The Arsenal:** Change Prowess to Good (5), Coordination to Great (6), and Intellect to Fair (4), replace the limit on Gadgets with One Type (Weapons).
2. **The Artificer:** Change Technology specialty to Occult and make all Gadgets magical or mystically themed devices rather than technology.
3. **The Collector:** The Collector doesn’t make gadgets so much as acquires them, sometimes without the permission of their owners. Change Intellect and Awareness levels to Good (5), choose Sleight of Hand or Stealth as an additional specialty. Remove the limit on Gadgets and give it the Instant extra.
4. **The Mad Scientist:** Choose Science as one of the character’s other specialties and make all Gadgets various inventions the Mad Scientist builds or kit-bashes together as-needed.
5. **The Technopath:** A Technopath has an innate sense for communicating with technology, replace one of the extra options on Gadgets with Incredible (7) Interface or Machine Control power.
6. **The Toybox:** Change Prowess to Fair (4) and Intellect to Great (6), choose Athletics as one of the character’s additional specialties and make all Gadgets toy-themed.

# THE MARTIAL ARTIST

PROWESS	<b>GREAT</b>	<b>6</b>
COORDINATION	<b>GREAT</b>	<b>6</b>
STRENGTH	<b>FAIR</b>	<b>4</b>
INTELLECT	<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>3</b>
AWARENESS	<b>FAIR</b>	<b>4</b>
WILLPOWER	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>5</b>

**STAMINA** 11

**DETERMINATION** 3

## SPECIALTIES

Athletics Expert  
Martial Arts Master  
Plus chose one other

## POSSIBLE QUALITIES

Choose three or create your own:

Arduous Training and Testing  
Awakened Chi  
Chosen Champion  
Peaceful Warrior  
Secrets of the Martial Arts  
Soul of an Artist  
Trained by a Great Master  
Untapped Potential

## POWERS

**Chi Power:** Average (3) ability to increase any one of Coordination, Strength, or Willpower by three levels for as long as the Martial Artist concentrates. When concentration lapses, the increased ability is lowered by three levels for three pages. The Martial Artist can also focus chi to provide Average (3) self-only Healing.





## DESCRIPTION

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Heroes tend to do a lot of fighting, and that is what the Martial Artist does best. They train intensely, often for a lifetime, to become living weapons. In the process, they learn to master their own *chi*, or vital life force, channelling it to enhance their already formidable abilities.

Spending as much time as they do in practice and training, Martial Artists can sometimes be a bit naive or tunnel-visioned when it comes to the world outside of their chosen discipline. They may be ivory-tower monastics or hard-bitten professionals, but either way personal relationships tend not to be their strong suit.

Martial Artists take full advantage of the rules under **Evading** in the **Taking Action** chapter of **ICONS**, notably hitting attackers when their evasion results in a massive failure on the attack test. This allows Martial Artists to take on hordes of lesser opponents and win.

## VARIATIONS

---

The following are some common variations on the Martial Artist archetype. You can choose one, roll a die, or create your own:

1. **The Assassin:** Replace Chi Power with a Great (6) lethal Affliction “death touch” technique and a Good (5) weapon. Heroic former assassins might choose to have their Affliction power be a “nerve pinch” that only renders targets unconscious.
2. **The Avatar:** Remove the extra specialty. Replace Chi Power with one of the following at Great (6) level with one extra of your choice: Alternate Form, Air Control, Earth Control, Fire Control, Invisibility, Plant Control, Spinning, or Water Control
3. **The Awakened:** Replace Chi Power with Incredible (7) Danger Sense and Fair (4) Super-Senses. Use Circular Vision, Direction Sense, Spatial Sense, and Tracking Sense or choose four.
4. **The Ninja:** Replace Chi Power with Poor (2) Wall-Crawling, a Fair (4) slashing Strike sword, and Average (3) shooting Blast shuriken. Add Stealth Expert to specialties.
5. **The Secret Agent:** Replace Chi Power with a Good (5) shooting Blast device like a gun and a Fair (4) Swinging device. Add Deception and Stealth to specialties.
6. **The Young Dragon:** Replace Chi Power with an Incredible (7) Strike power that surrounds the hero’s fists in a nimbus of energy and Poor (2) Healing usable on both self and others.

# THE MENTALIST

<b>PROWESS</b>	<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>COORDINATION</b>	<b>FAIR</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>STRENGTH</b>	<b>POOR</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>INTELLECT</b>	<b>FAIR</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>AWARENESS</b>	<b>FAIR</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>WILLPOWER</b>	<b>GREAT</b>	<b>6</b>

**STAMINA** 10

**DETERMINATION** 3

## SPECIALTIES

Mental Resistance, Power, or choose or roll one

## POSSIBLE QUALITIES

Choose three or create your own:

Brains Over Brawn  
 Evolutionary Leap  
 Intensive Training  
 I Know What You're Thinking  
 Let Me Concentrate  
 Matchless Mind  
 Mind Over Matter  
 Psychic Secrets  
 Sensitive

## POWERS

**Telepathy:** The Mentalist has Incredible (7) Telepathy with two of the following extras: Mental Blast, Mind Control, Mind Probe, Mind Shield, Psychic Weapon, or Super-Senses (Telelocation).





## DESCRIPTION

---

The Mentalist wields the unlocked powers of the mind, often meaning they aren't particularly imposing physically. Indeed, some Mentalists have qualities involving physical trouble they face and overcome with their superior mental abilities. The more common those troubles are, the more the Mentalist earns Determination Points in play.

Mentalists often undergo intense training to unlock or master their abilities. If they are natural psychic talents, their powers may initially be uncontrolled and in need of discipline for them to master it. If they developed powers on their own, it may have taken years of study, practice, and focused discipline to achieve. This experience, and the Mentalist's own experience of other minds, may make them a bit distant when it comes to interacting with other people.

Note that some of the Mentalist power sets—including the Telepathy default—are a bit lacking in defense, forcing the hero to rely on just a Fair Coordination and the aid of teammates. If you prefer a bit more defense, make one of the hero's power extras Defensive, providing an Incredible (7) ability to defend against attacks. For a telepath or empath this might be instinctively sensing an opponent's intentions, for a precognitive, flashes of insight a few seconds into the future.

## VARIATIONS

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The following are some common variations on the Mentalist archetype. You can choose one, roll a die, or create your own:

1. **The Empath:** Replace Telepathy with Emotion Control and the Emotion Detection and Mental Blast extras.
2. **The Illusionist:** Replace Telepathy with Illusion and the Invisibility and Programmed extras.
3. **The Possessor:** Replace Telepathy with Mind Control and the Merge and Possession extras.
4. **The Psionic:** Replace the Telepathy extras with Incredible (7) Telekinesis and one extra for either power.
5. **The Precognitive:** Replace Telepathy with Precognition and the Danger Sense extra. Increase Prowess and Coordination to Good (5), Strength to Average (3), and Awareness to Great (6). Add an additional specialty.
6. **The Telekinetic:** Replace Telepathy with Telekinesis and two of the following extras: Blast, Fight, or Force Field.

# THE MIMIC

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	GOOD	5
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5

STAMINA 8

DETERMINATION 4

## SPECIALTIES

Choose or roll three

## POSSIBLE QUALITIES

Choose three or create your own:

Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better

I Can Do That

I Know You Are, Now So Am I

Imitation Is the Sincerest Flattery

Nothing Without You

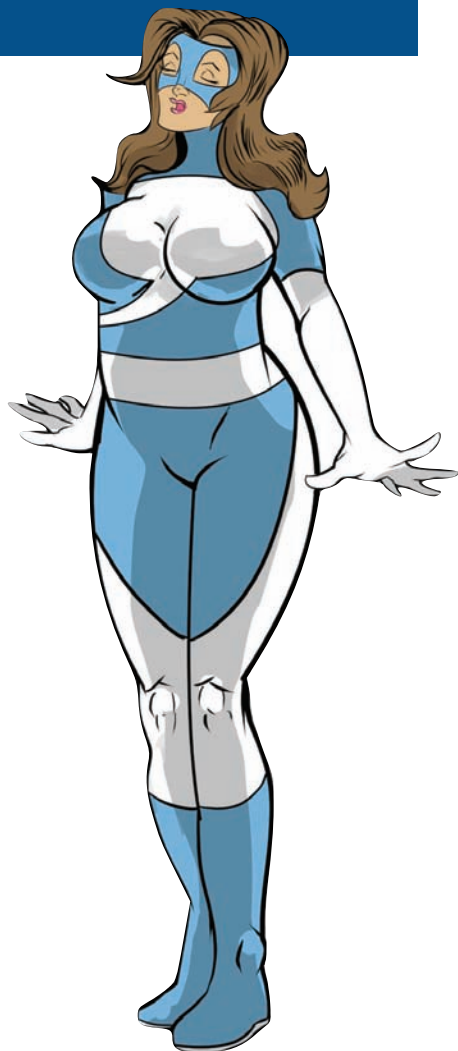
Seen That One Before

Tabula Rasa ("Blank Slate")

Trying to Be Better

Who Am I?

You Are What You Eat



## POWERS

**Power Mimicry:** The Mimic has Amazing (8) Power Mimicry with the Visual extra, able to mimic the powers of any target within visual range they can see up to their power level. Alternately, replace the Visual extra with the ability to copy the powers of two subjects at once, but having to touch them in order to do so.

## DESCRIPTION

---

The Mimic is a hero dependent on others, because without other people to copy, they wouldn't have any powers. Mimics may not even discover their power until they come into contact with other people with powers, unless the Power Mimicry is something they achieved deliberately.

In a team, the standard Mimic archetype makes an effective “backup” or substitute for any other team member, able to take on their powers and role, at least so far as power-set is concerned. Just how much the individual heroes like their teammate copying them is a matter for roleplaying, and the possible trouble that might raise.

Speaking of trouble, a Mimic's powers often have unforeseen side-effects and are great opportunities for the GM to create trouble for the hero ranging from unexpectedly picking up personality traits or weaknesses from a subject to accidentally draining subjects of their powers, memories, life-force, or even all of the above! Along with unexpected power effects, Mimics often suffer from an identity crisis: Who are they without their powers and without others to imitate?

A Mimic's Determination is useful for performing stunts with their duplicated powers, possibly using them in ways their original owner never tried!

## VARIATIONS

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The following are some common variations on the Mimic archetype. You can choose one, roll a die, or create your own:

1. **The Animal Mimic:** Replace Power Mimicry with Animal Mimicry and the Extra Animal extra.
2. **The Form Mimic:** Replace the Visual extra of Power Mimicry with the Transformation extra (assuming the form of the subject you're mimicking).
3. **The Material Mimic:** Replace Power Mimicry with Material Mimicry with the Instant extra.
4. **The Plant Mimic:** Replace Power Mimicry with Plant Mimicry with the Instant extra.
5. **The Power Thief:** Replace the Visual extra of Power Mimicry with the Power Theft extra.
6. **The Skill Mimic:** Add the Specialty Duplication extra and Specialties Only limit to the character's Power Mimicry.



# THE MYSTIC

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	GOOD	5
WILLPOWER	INCREDIBLE	7

STAMINA 10

DETERMINATION 3

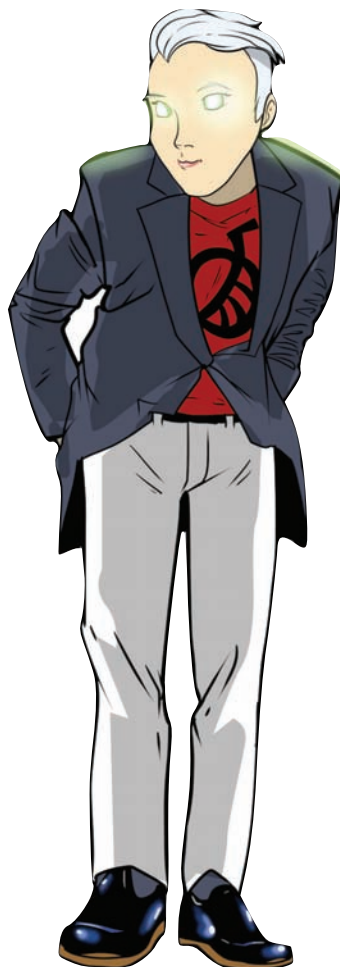
## SPECIALTIES

Occult Expert  
Plus choose one

## POSSIBLE QUALITIES

Choose three or create your own:

A Simple Spell  
Chosen by Destiny  
“Curse me for a novice!”  
“I recall from my studies...”  
Magic Has Its Price  
Master of Magic  
Mysterious  
Not Meant for Mortal Minds  
Vessel of Power



## POWERS

**Magic:** The Mystic wields Incredible (7) Magic, able to cast a variety of spells. Choose one of the following spells for Mastery, usable without any preparation or test required: Blast, Flight, Force Field, Stunning, Telekinesis, or Teleportation.

**Mystic Awareness:** The Mystic has a Poor (2) Detect Magic power.

## DESCRIPTION

---

Magic is real, and the Mystic wields its power: spell, enchantments, charms, entreaties to otherworldly beings and more. The exact trapping of the Mystic's power may vary (see **Variations**) but the essentials are the same: Mystics have a lot of flexibility, but they operate under some limitations, most notably the need for time and some freedom of movement to work their spells.

Some Mystics train long and hard to develop their powers while others have inborn talent or potential, making them “chosen ones.” Often, it is a combination of the two. Because there's training involved, a Mystic's teacher and fellow students can be important supporting characters. Where did you Mystic learn Magic? What happened during that time?

Likewise, because Mystic is a vocation, Mystics are often dedicated to certain principles, either learned from their teachers or adopted after they have rejected their teachings—such as with Mystics who started out learning infernal or corrupt magic, but turned their powers to good. It is often a Mystic's duty to safeguard the mundane world and ordinary mortals from supernatural forces.

## VARIATIONS

---

The following are some common variations on the Mystic archetype. You can choose one, roll a die, or create your own:

1. **The Druid:** You wield the ancient power of the Celtic Druids. Choose an Element Control power as your Mastery spell.
2. **The Infernal:** Your magic is infernal or demonic in nature. Choose Energy Drain or Fire Control (Hellfire Control if you have **ICONS A to Z**, see “**D**” is for Demons) or Servant as your Mastery spell.
3. **The Priest:** You are a priest of a divinity or religion. Choose Healing, Light Control, or another power suitable to your chosen faith as your Mastery spell. Replace your Occult specialty with Theology.
4. **The Shaman:** You are a worker with spirits. Choose Animal Mimicry, Animation, or Servant as your Mastery spell.
5. **The Voodooist:** You are a priest of the Voodoo religion. Choose Ability Boost, Affliction, or Mind Control as your Mastery spell.
6. **The Witch:** You might or might not go for all of the trappings of broomstick, cauldron, wand, and black cat, but you wield the power of witchcraft. Choose Affliction, Illusion, or Transforming Ray as your Mastery spell.

# THE PARAGON

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	FANTASTIC	9
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	FAIR	4

STAMINA 13

DETERMINATION 2

## SPECIALTIES

Choose one

## POSSIBLE QUALITIES

Choose three or create your own:

Faster, Stronger, More Powerful  
 Keeping the World Safe  
 Like a God on Earth  
 Mild-Mannered Secret Identity  
 Nothing Can Harm Me  
 Paragon of Power  
 "This is a job only I can handle!"  
 Unearthly Visitor



## POWERS

**Damage Resistance:** Amazing (8). The Paragon is virtually invulnerable to harm, particularly from most common weapons.

**Flight:** Incredible (7). The Paragon can fly through the air, as fast as a jet plane.

Plus choose or roll one more Average (3) power or three additional Specialties and an additional level of Determination. See **Variations**.



## DESCRIPTION

There are heroes who are powerful and then there are those who are *power*, paragons of strength, stamina, speed, and—fortunately for the world—virtue and responsibility. The Paragon is a kind of heroic ideal on many levels.

Because of their great power, Paragons tend to also feel a corresponding responsibility. They may not owe the world anything, but they choose use their powers and abilities in the service of the greater good. One of the Paragon's greatest powers is not just fantastic strength or amazing invulnerability, but the power to inspire hope and greatness in others, usually a quality of the Paragon's true nature.

Although powerful, Paragons often have a human or vulnerable side, both in terms of having or wanting an ordinary-seeming identity with a “normal” life, and sometimes a particular Achilles' heel as trouble caused by one of their qualities, able to harm them or deprive them of their powers.

## VARIATIONS

The following are some common variations on the Paragon archetype. You can choose one, roll a die, or make up your own:

1. **The Aware Paragon:** Make the Paragon's third power an Average (3) level of Super-Senses, for awareness beyond that of most people, possibly including things like Infrared or X-Ray Vision.
2. **The Immortal Paragon:** Make the Paragon's third power an Average (3) level of Immortality, or add even more levels for a higher power game. Good for Paragons who are ageless, immortal deities or aliens, or legacies who have been around for generations.
3. **The Immune Paragon:** Make the Paragon's third power Average (3) Life Support, for immunity to mere mortal concerns like breathing, eating, sleeping, or the like.
4. **The Leaping Paragon:** Replace the Flight power with Leaping of the same level, sufficient to leap “tall buildings in a single bound!”
5. **The Supreme Paragon:** Drop the third power and increase the Paragon's Strength, Damage Resistance, Flight, and Determination by one level each.
6. **The Warrior Paragon:** Lower Damage Resistance to Fair (4) and Flight to Good (5) and make the Paragon's third power a Fantastic (9) Strike weapon. Apply Specialty to wielding that weapon.

# THE POWERHOUSE

PROWESS	GOOD	5
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	FANTASTIC	9
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	AVERAGE	3

STAMINA 12

DETERMINATION 3

## SPECIALTIES

Choose one

## POSSIBLE QUALITIES

Choose three or create your own:

Immovable Object  
 It's a Fragile World  
 "It's time to fight!"  
 Not As Dumb As I Look  
 Puny Alter-ego  
 Stronger Than I Look  
 Strongest There Is  
 Tough As They Come  
 Unstoppable Force

## POWERS

**Damage Resistance:** Amazing (8). The Powerhouse is high-invulnerable to harm.

**Leaping:** Great (6). The Powerhouse can leap over a dozen city blocks or clear tall buildings in a single bound.

Plus roll or choose one other power at Fair (4) level or see **Variations**.



## DESCRIPTION

---

The Powerhouse is straightforward muscle power and sheer toughness, a “tank” hero who can dish out and take a lot of damage, and exert a fantastic amount of strength: hurling buses, lifting buildings, and bashing through barriers.

That same tremendous strength may cause trouble for the Powerhouse, leaving them feeling like the world around them is made of tissue paper and eggshells. Powerhouses often feel isolated or develop great care in dealing with their surroundings and the often fragile people in them. Some Powerhouses are truly inhuman, and that adds to their isolation and desire to understand humanity. Some may perceive an inhuman-looking Powerhouse as a threat to public safety, a monster to be corralled (or even destroyed) rather than a hero, until they are shown otherwise.

## VARIATIONS

---

The following are some common variations on the Powerhouse archetype. You can choose one, roll a die, or create your own:

1. **The Block:** A Powerhouse who turns into some tough, solid material like stone or steel. Drop Strength to Fair (4). Replace Damage Resistance with Fantastic (9) Alternate (Solid) Form. Choose four of: a +1 increase to Coordination, Intellect, Awareness, or Willpower, or a level of a specialty.
2. **The Giant:** Drop Strength to Fair (4). Replace Damage Resistance with Fantastic (9) Growth. Choose four of: a +1 increase to Coordination, Intellect, Awareness, or Willpower, or a level of a specialty.
3. **The Revenant:** An undead Powerhouse who can't be killed. Drop Strength to Amazing (8), Damage Resistance to Incredible (7), and remove Leaping. Add Supreme (10) Life Support and Poor (2) Immortality.
4. **The Skilled Powerhouse:** Choose or roll four additional specialties for the Powerhouse and increase Determination level by one.
5. **The Smart Powerhouse:** Increase Intellect to Great (6), add an additional specialty, and increase Determination level by one. Consider taking the “Not As Dumb As I Look” quality.
6. **The Supreme Powerhouse:** Drop the third power and increase the Powerhouse's Strength, Damage Resistance, and Determination by one level each. Increase Leaping by two levels.



# THE SHAPESHIFTER

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5

STAMINA 8

DETERMINATION 3

## SPECIALTIES

Choose or roll one

## POSSIBLE QUALITIES

Choose three or create your own:

A Thousand Forms  
 Able to Fit In  
 Appearances Can Be Deceiving  
 Change to Suit the Situation  
 Flexible  
 I Can Be Anything  
 Natural Form  
 Some Things Never Change  
 Stretching to the Limits  
 Who Am I?

## POWERS

**Transformation:** The Shapeshifter has Incredible (7) powers of Transformation into Animals, Humanoids or Objects, requiring only a page of preparation to transform. Alternately, drop one of the Extra Types and add the Instant extra instead.



## DESCRIPTION

---

The Shapeshifter is whatever they need to be, able to change form to suit the situation or challenge. The standard Transformation power given for the archetype is broad, able to assume basically any form, taking on its abilities as well, limited only by the time it takes to switch forms.

The Shapeshifter might have a “default” shape, particular if they were once an ordinary human being, or they might be formless or without a fixed or normal form, such as an alien protoplasmic being or a fey creature of constantly shifting “chaos energy”. The Shapeshifter’s true nature may suggest other qualities, along with the advantages and trouble that can come with them.

## VARIATIONS

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The following are some common variations on the Shapeshifter archetype. You can choose one, roll a die, or create your own:

1. **The Animal Shifter:** Replace the Humanoids and Objects Extra Types of Transformation with the Instant extra. Increase Transformation level to Amazing (8), Prowess to Good (5), Awareness to Good (5), Determination to 4, and add three more specialties.
2. **The Disguise Shifter:** Replace the Animals and Objects Extra Types of Transformation with the Instant extra. Increase Transformation level to Amazing (8), Prowess to Good (5), Intellect to Fair (4), Determination to 4, and add three more specialties.
3. **The Material Shifter:** Replace Transformation with Amazing (8) Material Mimicry with the Visual and Rangeless extras so you do not have to touch a material to copy it, and the One Type limit of only being able to copy materials, not energy. Increase Prowess to Good (5), Awareness to Good (5), Determination to 4, and add three more specialties.
4. **The Mechanical Shifter:** Replace the Animals and Humanoids Extra Types of Transformation with the Instant extra. Increase Transformation level to Amazing (8), Prowess to Good (5), Intellect to Fair (4), Determination to 4, and add three more specialties.
5. **The Shrinking Shifter:** Replace Transformation with Amazing (8) Shrinking with one extra of your choice. Increase Prowess and Awareness to Good (5), Determination to 4, and add three more specialties.
6. **The Stretching Shifter:** Replace Transformation with Incredible (7) Stretching with Damage Resistance and one other extra of your choice.

# THE SPEEDSTER

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	GOOD	5
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	AVERAGE	3

STAMINA 6

DETERMINATION 2

## SPECIALTIES

Choose one

## POSSIBLE QUALITIES

Choose three or create your own:

Everywhere at Once

Fast Friends

The Fastest Person Alive

The Hand is Quicker Than the Eye

In the Blink of an Eye

In the Nick of Time

Let's Go!

Oh, Look Here!

Quick to Act, Slow to Change

Quick-Thinking



## POWERS

**Super-Speed:** The Speedster has Incredible (7) Super-Speed with the Defending extra. Plus choose one of the following additional extras: Air Control, Fast Attack, Phasing, Regeneration, Surface Speed, or Vibration Control.



## DESCRIPTION

---

The Speedster is *fast*, able to race at the speed of sound and move in the blink of an eye. Speedsters can both get around quickly and accomplish things fast, such as evacuating a building or endangered area, or taking on a group of foes at once. Super-Speed is often an excellent power for helping with disasters and covering a lot of ground in a rescue panel (see **“R” is for “Rescue”** in **ICONS A to Z**). That said, Speedsters are also fairly normal other than their great speed: They rely much more on not getting hit and often have to come up with ways to exploit their speed for attacks against tougher-than-human foes.

Super-Speed does not necessarily come with super-patience, and some Speedsters are short-tempered and prone to acting before they think. A Speedster’s ability to accomplish things quickly can also lead to a tendency to try and be everywhere at once. These and other sorts of trouble Speedsters find themselves in can provide Determination Points to fuel a wide range of stunts with Super-Speed.

## VARIATIONS

---

The following are some common variations on the Speedster archetype. You can choose one, roll a die, or create your own:

1. **The Ricochet:** Replace Super-Speed with Fantastic (9) Damage Resistance and an extra that damage causes the hero to bounce like an equivalent level of Leaping. Increase Willpower to Fair (4), Determination to 3, and choose two additional specialties.
2. **The Rider:** Replace Super-Speed with an Incredible (7) level vehicle with two extras (see **Vehicles** in the **Powers** chapter of **ICONS** and the **Devices** chapter of **Great Power**).
3. **The Rocket:** Replace Super-Speed with Incredible (7) Flight with the Defending extra and an Incredible (7) Force Field.
4. **The Teleporter:** Replace Super-Speed with Incredible (7) Teleport with the Defensive and Passengers extras.
5. **The Time Controller:** Replace Super-Speed with Incredible (7) Time Control with the Super-Speed and Defending options, plus one additional extra of your choice.
6. **The Torpedo:** Replace Super-Speed with Incredible (7) Aquatic with the Enhanced extra, plus one additional extra of your choice.

# THE WARRIOR

PROWESS	INCREDIBLE	7
COORDINATION	GOOD	5
STRENGTH	GREAT	6
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5

STAMINA 11

DETERMINATION 2

## SPECIALTIES

Athletics  
Military  
Plus choose or roll one other

## POSSIBLE QUALITIES

Choose three or create your own:

Champion/Chosen of...  
Exiled/Lost Nobility of...  
Never-ending Battle  
"This is my destiny"  
Warrior's Code of Honor

## POWERS

**Leaping:** The Warrior's strength and athletic skill combine for Poor (2) Leaping, enough to cross a city block or wide chasm.

**Toughness:** The Warrior has Average (3) Damage Resistance limited to Bashing and Blasting attacks.

Plus roll or choose an additional Incredible (7) power or weapon.



## DESCRIPTION

---

The Warrior shares some things in common with the Martial Artist, the Paragon, the Powerhouse, and the Weapon Master, but is a unique archetype different from all of the others in various ways. The Warrior has a mixture of combat skills, physical abilities, superhuman powers, and a fierce fighting spirit.

In spite of the name, the Warrior does not have to be in favor of war. In fact, many Warrior heroes have trained and mastered their skills in hopes of preventing—or at least minimizing—conflicts, and experienced Warriors are often tired of endless battle, but still called to do their duty. Warriors tend to be a bit time-lost, subscribing to an antique personal code of honor. A Warrior may literally be from another time or from another civilization, such as a sunken city, hidden island, secret mountain aerie, or lost land (see “**L**” is for “**Lost Worlds**” in **ICONS A to Z** for some ideas).

Although the Warrior is heavily focused on combat, they have some limitations, particularly limited Damage Resistance, and have to rely on their great Prowess and athletic ability to dodge and parry attacks. A warrior with a suitable weapon or shield might also block slashing and shooting attacks as described under **Blocking** in the **Taking Action** chapter of **ICONS**.

## VARIATIONS

---

The following are some common variations on the Warrior archetype. You can choose one, roll a die, or create your own:

1. **The Aquatic Warrior:** Choose Incredible (7) Aquatic for the third power. Optionally replace Leaping with Poor (2) Super-Senses or Telepathy.
2. **The Elemental Warrior:** Choose an Incredible (7) Element Control power as the third power.
3. **The Knightly Warrior:** Replace Toughness with Fair (4) Damage Resistance armor and choose a Great (6) slashing Strike weapon.
4. **The Mythic Warrior:** Increase Strength and Stamina by 1 each. Change level of additional power or weapon to Great (6).
5. **The Weapon Warrior:** Choose an Incredible (7) offensive power weapon for the third power, particularly a Blast or Strike power.
6. **The Winged Warrior:** Replace Leaping with Great (6) Wings and choose Average (3) Super-Senses for the third power.



# THE WEAPON-MASTER

PROWESS	GOOD	5
COORDINATION	GOOD	5
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5

STAMINA 10

DETERMINATION 4

## SPECIALTIES

Athletics Expert  
 Weapon Master (choose one)  
 Plus choose or roll two others

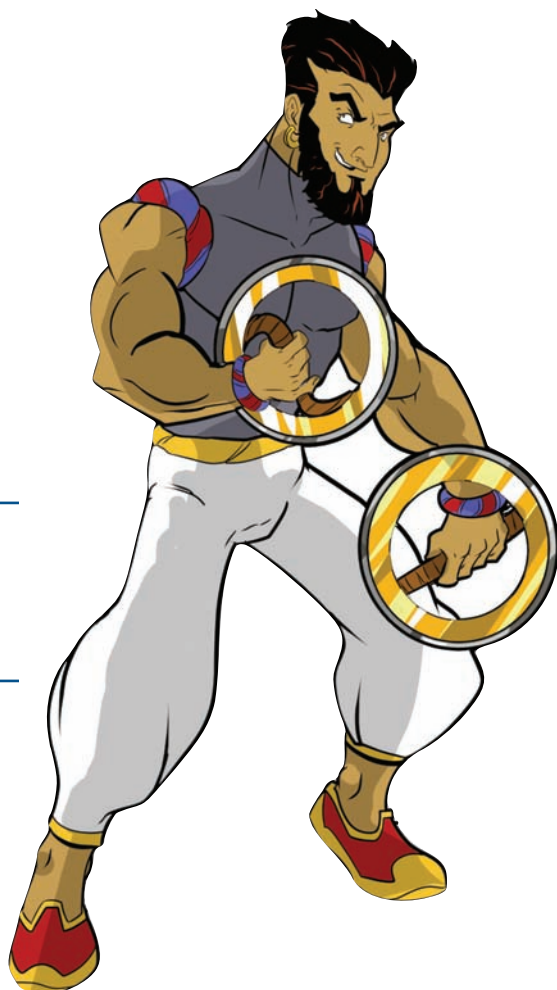
## POSSIBLE QUALITIES

Choose three or create your own:

Everything Is A Battle  
 Former Member of...  
 Intensive Training  
 Intensely Focused  
 Living Weapon  
 Loner  
 Master of [Chosen Weapon]  
 Renegade  
 Shadowy Past  
 Wielder of [Signature Weapon]  
 World's Greatest...

## POWERS

**Weapon:** The Weapon Master wields a Great (6) weapon of some type, based on the variation chosen (see **Variations**).



## DESCRIPTION

---

The Weapon Master is focused around skill with a particular weapon or type of weapon. While some amount of talent is involved, most Weapon Masters train long and hard to achieve their level of skill, and that training may come with some baggage, ranging from years with a circus, in a secret cult, or alone on a deserted island, to old mentors, fellow students, or enemies encountered along the way.

Some Weapon Masters have a specific or “signature” weapon, such as an ancient magic sword, haunted six-shooter, or infernal whip, while for others the weapons are merely tools for getting the job done and it is their wielder’s skill that matters the most. Either way, Weapon Masters tend to be competitive—after all, there are few able to operate at their level, so when you want to prove you’re the best, you seek out the best ... and beat them one-on-one.

## VARIATIONS

---

The following are some common variations on the Weapon-Master archetype. You can choose one, roll a die, or create your own:

1. **The Archer:** You are a master of the bow—long, short, crossbow, whatever you choose. Your Weapon power is Gadgets with the One Type limit (arrows only) and the Arsenal (Blast) and Instant extras.
2. **The Arsenal:** Why limit yourself to just *one* weapon? Increase Prowess to Amazing (8), remove the Weapon Master specialty, and lower Determination to 3. Your Weapon power is Gadgets with the One Type limit (weapons only) and the Arsenal (Blast and Strike) extras.
3. **The Gunfighter:** You are a master of firearms, like the gunslingers of old. Your Weapon power is a shooting Blast with the Secondary Effect extra for when you wield a pair of guns at the same time.
4. **The Sword-Master:** You are a master of the sword. Your Weapon power is a slashing Strike attack with one extra of your choice, or roll or choose an additional Great (6) power.
5. **The Thrower:** You are amazingly skilled in throwing things as weapons. Your Weapon power is a Blast with the Extra Type extra, depending on whether you throw something blunt (blasting) or sharp (shooting).
6. **The Whip-Wielder:** You have mastered the bullwhip so your Weapon power is a Great (6) Binding with the Swinging extra. You can also use your whip to inflict your Good (5) Strength damage over close distance.

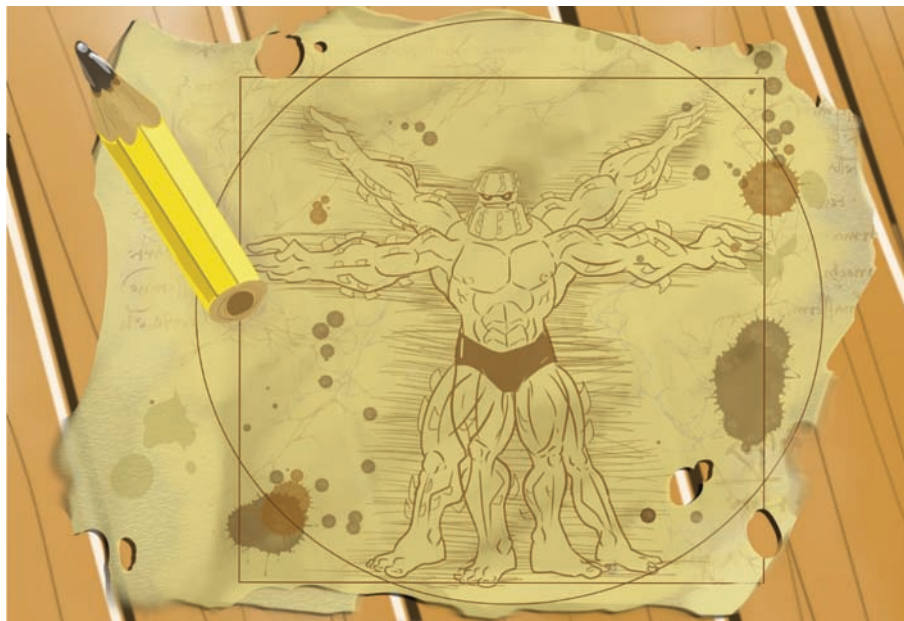
# RUNNING THE NUMBERS

For those using the **Heroes by the Numbers** approach to hero creation (see the next chapter) note that all of the archetypes in this chapter are based on the default value of 45 points. Here's how the archetypes add up:

- **Battlesuit: Abilities 19 + Specialties 1 + Powers 25 = 45.** The Battlesuit has the oddity of Strength as a secondary power, so its Strength is accounted for under its powers and not abilities.
- **Construct: Abilities 27 + Specialties 1 + Powers 17 = 45.** The Construct's Alternate Form groups its essential abilities together as one rather than having to take them all separately.
- **Crimefighter: Abilities 27 + Specialties 8 + Powers 10 = 45.** The Crimefighter is something of a jack-of-all-trades: Fairly good at most things with a lot of specialties and flexibility from Gadgets.
- **Energy Controller: Abilities 22 + Specialties 1 + Powers 22 = 45.** Tacking a secondary power onto Energy Control adds some flexibility at low cost.
- **Gadgeteer: Abilities 27 + Specialties 4 + Powers 14 = 45.** Note the Gadgeteer's Determination has been kept fairly high for quick Gadgets.
- **Martial Artist: Abilities 28 + Specialties 6 + Powers 11 = 45.** The Chi power is level 3 with two extras (Extended and Healing) plus two secondary powers, allowing Chi to boost one of three abilities at a time.
- **Mentalist: Abilities 23 + Specialties 1 + Powers 21 = 45**
- **Mimic: Abilities 26 + Specialties 3 + Powers 16 = 45**
- **Mystic: Abilities 26 + Specialties 3 + Powers 16 = 45**
- **Paragon: Abilities 26 + Specialties 1 + Powers 18 = 45**
- **Powerhouse: Abilities 26 + Specialties 1 + Powers 18 = 45**
- **Shapeshifter: Abilities 23 + Specialties 1 + Powers 21 = 45**
- **Speedster: Abilities 23 + Specialties 1 + Powers 21 = 45.** The Speedster's Defending extra makes up for a Good, but otherwise unremarkable, Coordination level.
- **Warrior: Abilities 30 + Specialties 3 + Powers 12 = 45**
- **Weapon Master: Abilities 26 + Specialties 7 + Powers 12 = 45.** The Weapon Master's Great (6) Weapon power is assumed to have one extra, as shown in the Variations.



# HEROES BY THE NUMBERS



The **Assembled Edition** of **ICONS** presents a quick-and-dirty point-spending system for building heroes for players who are entirely averse to the game's standard system of creating heroes through random die rolls (or an equivalent random-generation system like the Icons Assembler software). This chapter offers a more detailed and refined version of the point-based hero design system from the **Assembled Edition** for players who prefer a more numerically balanced approach to design.

Note, this system remains optional and it is entirely up to the Game Master, in consultation with the group as a whole, to decide which hero creation method or methods to use for the game. There's little reason why the random generation system and the one presented here can't co-exist with archetypes and even character modeling, so long as the players understand the heroes created between them will not necessarily be one hundred percent "balanced" relative to each other, as is often the case in the comics themselves.

# STEP 1: POINT TOTAL

Players in the Heroes by the Numbers approach spend from a budget of Creation Points (CP) to build their heroes.

Therefore, the first thing to determine is how many points players have to spend. The default is 45 CP for a starting hero, which tends to create heroes around the capabilities of those rolled randomly using the default **ICONS** rules, but the Game Master should feel free to modify the players' Creation Point budget for a series with more or less powerful heroes, or to put different restrictions on how and where those points may be spent, such as no more than 20 or 30 CP spent on attributes, for example.

## ORIGIN

The **Heroes by the Numbers** approach to character creation doesn't use the Origins from **ICONS**. Players are free to come up with whatever explanation for the origin of their hero's powers and abilities they wish, but there are no origin modifiers to abilities, as that is all handled with point-spending.

Ability	Creation Point Cost
Attribute	1 CP per level
Power	1 CP per level
Power Extra	1 CP per level of the base power
Power Limit	0 CP (see p. 84 of <b>ICONS</b> )
Specialty	1 CP per level (up to 3)
Knack (Optional)	0 CP (costs 1 Determination each)

# STEP 2: ATTRIBUTES

Assign Creation Points to each of the six attributes—Prowess, Coordination, Strength, Intellect, Awareness, and Willpower—with each point giving that ability 1 level. A minimum of 1 point must be assigned to each attribute (that is, each must have a level of at least Weak) and only one ability (attribute or power level) can be greater than 8 during hero creation, unless the Game Master chooses to modify this limit.



## STEP 3: POWERS

Assign Creation Points to levels in any powers you want the hero to have. Heroes are not required to have any powers, although even hero types who rely primarily on their attributes and specialties will often have at least one or two devices.

### DEVICES

Some of a hero's powers may reside in objects rather than being inherent. See **Devices** in the **Powers** chapter of **ICONS** for details. Choose whether or not any of the hero's powers come from devices, or use the random method of rolling 2d6: On a 4 or less, the power comes from a device rather than being innate.

### EXTRAS AND LIMITS

Applying an extra to a power costs CP equal to the power's level. Adding a limit to a power has one of the usual benefits given in the **Limits** section of the **Powers** chapter of **ICONS**, with the addition that a limit used to add an extra to a power means the extra costs no additional CP in addition to costing no Determination.

**Example:** *While designing a hero, a player spends 7 CP to give the hero an Incredible (7) level Interface power. The player decides to add the Cyberspace extra, which would normally cost another 7 CP, but also adds the Close Range limit, requiring the character touch the affected computer or network port. The limit cancels the additional CP and Determination cost of the extra.*

### OPTION: SECONDARY POWERS

Since there's a somewhat lesser benefit to having multiple powers of the same type, the GM may wish to apply this option:

Adding a secondary power of the same type (Movement, Offensive, etc.) to an existing power as an extra costs only 1 CP but grants the power at the full level of the base power. This is at the Game Master's discretion, and can be disallowed if the two powers are beneficial to the hero at the same time, as may be the case with some Defensive or Sensory powers, for example.

The Secondary Powers option tends to allow for more flexible heroes with different capabilities (multiple attacks, for example) without a significant increase in cost.



## STEP 4: SPECIALTIES

Assign Creation Points to levels in specialties, if the hero has any. Generally, most heroes have at least one basic specialty reflecting the hero's profession or past experience, while some heroes rely heavily on specialties.

Note that specialties are not limited in terms of how many heroes can have or at what levels (unless the GM says otherwise), nor do specialties count towards ability levels when figuring Determination level (see **Step 7**), so while an attribute of Incredible (7) or higher reduces Determination level by 1, a hero with a Great (6) attribute and a master-level specialty (an effective level of 9) does not reduce Determination.

Master-level specialties also qualify heroes to perform stunts involving that specialty. See **Stunts** in **The Basics** chapter of **Icons** for details, as well as the **Specialties** chapter of this book, particularly the **Specialties & Stunts** option.

The Game Master should decide in advance of this step if any of the various options for specialties given in the **Specialties** chapter of this book apply.

## STEP 5: KNACKS

**Optional.** If using the options from the **Knacks** chapter of his book (or **Icons A to Z**), players may reduce their heroes' Determination level to acquire knacks on a 1-to-1 basis, one level of Determination per knack. The GM can also assign a number of free knacks to each character, which do not reduce Determination level, or institute some knacks as genre rules, if desired. See the **Knacks** chapter for details. If not using knacks, you can skip this step.

## STEP 6: DESCRIPTION

Essentially the same as **Phase 5** from **Icons**: Come up with a description of your hero including things like place of origin, background, heritage, and so forth. How did the hero acquire powers, and what elements of the hero's background offer motivations, qualities, and challenges for the hero in the present?

Players looking for inspiration may wish to use the **Background Generator** chapter in this book, rolling or choosing options to put together the hero's description. Also consider the hero's appearance: physique, build, hair and eye color, hairstyle, costume, mannerisms, and so forth, and seek out visual resources that describe your hero and might help other players visualize what they look like.

## STEP 7: QUALITIES

Choose three qualities for your hero. You can use the outline from **Phase 6** in the **Hero Creation** chapter of **ICONS** as a guideline, along with the details of **Qualities** in **The Basics** chapter. Look at the examples in the **Hero Archetypes** chapter of this book for ideas and inspiration. The “**Q**” is for “**Qualities**” chapter of **ICONS A to Z** may also be helpful in coming up with some qualities.

Finish up this step by calculating your hero’s Determination and Stamina using the guidelines given in **Phase 6** in the **Hero Creation** chapter of **ICONS**.

## STEP 8: REVIEW & APPROVAL

Finally, hand your completed hero off to the Game Master for review and approval. The GM should double-check your Creation Point calculations to ensure they’re correct in addition to the various other considerations in the **Game Master Approval** section of the **Hero Creation** chapter of **ICONS**.

## EXAMPLE: SAGUARO

Let’s look at the Mighty Saguaro from the **Assembled Edition** of **ICONS** and see how he comes out by the numbers:

### ATTRIBUTES

Saguaro’s attributes are 3, 3, 9, 2, 3, and 6, which add up to a total of 26. Note that Saguaro’s Fantastic (9) Strength is his one allowed ability greater than Amazing (8) as detailed in **Step 2**.

### POWERS

Saguaro has a Fair (4) Aura (his sharp spines), Good (5) Leaping, and Poor (2) Life Support. Those levels add up to a total of 11.

### SPECIALTIES

Finally, Saguaro has two specialties, Athletics and Wrestling, for 1 CP each. This series isn’t using Knacks, and they don’t cost CP anyway, so that’s everything.

Added together, the Crusading Cactus comes to a total of 39 Creation Points. If working on the default starting amount of 45, Saguaro’s player would have an additional 6 points to spend. Maybe in this version a Great (6) level of Damage Resistance would not go amiss.

# EXAMPLE: SEKHMET

Now let's take a look at Sekhmet from the **Assembled Edition** and see how she adds up by the numbers:

## ATTRIBUTES

Sekhmet's attributes are 6, 6, 6, 4, 4, and 6, for a total of 32 CP.

## POWERS

Sekhmet has Good (5) Leaping, Great (6) Slashing with an extra (Affects Incorporeal), and Good (5) Super-Senses. That's a total of 22 Creation Points.

## SPECIALTIES

Sekhmet has an Expert level in Archeology for another 2 CP. That makes her total a hefty 56 Creation Points all together! In the standard 45-point series, Sekhmet's player would need to look at trimming back some things, perhaps removing her Affects Incorporeal extra and making it an occasional stunt at first and slightly lowering some of her attributes to bring her total in-line.

## ATTRIBUTE "VALUE" IN BY THE NUMBERS

The by the numbers approach takes a lot of liberties with the relative value of different abilities, especially powers. Everything is basically 1 point per level, but clearly some powers are more "valuable" (or at least "cost effective"). The same could be said of some attributes. A more comprehensive system would assign each ability a properly scaled and weighted point value. That kind of system is beyond the scope of this book, however, and in **ICONS** it's largely left up to the GM to ensure players don't put together heroes unsuitable for the game.

One decent use of the by the numbers approach is to set a "floor" for heroes created using other methods in your game, particularly random generation. If the hero's total abilities add up to less than 45, give the player additional CP to spend to bring the hero up to that value. This is a more detailed version of the "hopeless attributes" rule from **ICONS**.



# CHARACTER MODELING



While random hero generation is quick and often inspirational, and building heroes by the numbers allows for a degree of precision and balance, sometimes the best option for creating heroes in **ICONS** is to just do it: Make up whatever abilities the character should have to fit your vision, using some existing characters and benchmarks—and possibly guidance from the Game Master—to make it all work.

Essentially, character modeling follows the same steps given previously in the **Heroes by the Numbers** chapter, except you start with **Step 2: Attributes** and, instead of having a “budget” of points to keep track of and add up, you simply select whatever abilities you feel the character needs to fit your concept. Players should be careful to avoid needlessly inflating their character’s abilities, taking a careful look at both the **Benchmarks** table in **ICONS** as well as the **Ability Benchmarks** tables in this chapter and honestly assessing where their heroes should be rated. The Game Master should likewise exercise a firm hand in scaling things back, if necessary, to ensure the heroes are reasonably balanced and will work in the overall series.

## PROWESS BENCHMARKS

Level	Benchmark
1	No real ability as a fighter.
2	No real training in fighting or close combat
3	Minimal training or some natural talent for fighting
4	Basic training, such as for police and security
5	Formal training, such as for elite soldiers and security
6	Peak training, among the best close combat fighters
7	A master of the martial arts or close combat
8	One of the greatest fighters in a nation or region
9	One of the greatest fighters in the world
10	One of the greatest fighters in history

## COORDINATION BENCHMARKS

Level	Benchmark
1	Slow or otherwise physically limited
2	A bit clumsy, inaccurate, or slow
3	Average coordination and reaction time
4	A fair amount of grace or accuracy
5	A good amount of training or talent in movement or accuracy
6	World-class agility, speed, grace, and accuracy
7	Incredible grace and speed verging on superhuman
8	Amazing reaction time and accuracy, clearly superhuman
9	Such fantastic coordination you almost never miss
10	Near-perfect coordination and accuracy

# STRENGTH BENCHMARKS

Level	Benchmark
1	Weak; you can lift a few pounds or tear cardboard
2	Poor; you can lift a child or tear a sheet of plastic
3	Average; you can lift a heavy sack or break sheet rock
4	Fair; you can lift another person or bend aluminum
5	Good; you can lift a motorcycle or damage concrete
6	Great; you can lift a small car or break stone
7	Incredible; you can lift a bus and bend solid iron
8	Amazing; you can lift a jet or train and bend steel
9	Fantastic; you can lift a building and damage super-materials.
10	Supreme; you can lift a mountain and bend or break almost anything

# INTELLECT BENCHMARKS

Level	Benchmark
1	Simple, able to handle basic language and concepts.
2	Below average, a bit slow on the uptake
3	Average ability to learn, remember, and reason
4	You're bright and know a bit more than most
5	You're smart, an expert compared to most people
6	You're a great intellect, knowledgeable in many areas
7	Your incredible brilliance can expand the bounds of existing knowledge or technology
8	You're amazing enough to invent entire new technologies or branches of science
9	Your fantastic intellect is rarely matched
10	Supreme intellect, you practically know everything.



# AWARENESS BENCHMARKS

Level	Benchmark
1	Largely unaware or impaired in noticing things
2	Distracted and likely to overlook things
3	An average level of awareness
4	A fair amount of intuition or an eye for detail
5	Given to strong hunches and noticing things many miss
6	Great abilities of observation and intuition
7	Incredible awareness, verging on superhuman
8	An amazing awareness of one's surroundings
9	Fantastic awareness that can't be passed off as normal
10	A supreme awareness, nothing escapes your notice

# WILLPOWER BENCHMARKS

Level	Benchmark
1	Weak willed, easily swayed or influenced
2	Uncertain and likely to hesitate when confronted
3	An average force of personality and strength of will
4	A fair measure of resistance or stubbornness
5	A good, strong, and determined personality
6	Great strength of will and confidence, possibly trained
7	Incredible willpower, able to shrug off average things
8	An amazingly strong mind and personality
9	A fantastic level of confidence, focus, and willpower
10	Supreme, virtually indomitable, will and a palpable presence

# EXAMPLE: MODELING LUGH

Let's assume we're modeling the hero Lugh, "The Lord of Light," from the **Assembled Edition** of **ICONS** as a new character using this method. We start from having a clear idea of what the character is like: A young god from the Celtic Tuatha de Dannan pantheon. Let's get started putting together his abilities.

## ATTRIBUTES

Since Lugh is a god, at least some of his attributes are going to be super-human.

**Prowess:** Lugh is a warrior-hero, someone with considerable Prowess. How would we describe it? "Great" comes to mind and, looking at the **Prowess Benchmarks** table, the description of "among the best close combat fighters" seems to fit. Lugh isn't necessarily the greatest warrior ever and he's still comparatively young (for a god). We also know that the spear is his "signature" weapon, so it's probably a good idea to leave a little "elbow room" for him to be better in that area.

**Coordination:** Not a major priority for Lugh. It's hardly noteworthy, other than to know that he's likely better than average (being a god and all). That's pretty much the definition of the Fair level, so we give him that.

**Strength:** Lugh, like all of the Tuatha, is super-strong, but *how* strong? Well, again he's young, and we envision him as not as tremendously strong as some of the Tuatha. Looking at the **Strength Benchmarks** table, we see Incredible Strength can lift a bus, while Amazing Strength can lift a jet or a train. Lugh doesn't seem Amazingly strong, so let's go with Incredible.

**Intellect:** Lugh's certainly not Weak in this attribute, but neither is he notable, apart from his skills. Therefore since there's really no difference either way, we'll call him Average.

**Awareness:** His warrior training and his insight makes Lugh seem a bit above Average in this area so, like his Coordination, we'll say his Awareness is Fair.

**Willpower:** Lugh is determined, having had a challenging upbringing and overcoming obstacles to get where he is. At the same time, he's still young and occasionally a bit hot-headed, so Great Willpower may be overstating it. Let's knock it back a level and call his Willpower Good, still one of his highest abilities.

## POWERS

So, for powers, we know Lugh is a deity which means, among other things, he's immortal, right? But does he have the Immortality power? One of his prime abilities in myth is that he is the *lldannach*, the "master of all skills," which is how he first gains admittance to the Tuatha Court of Tara. We also know that he wields a magic spear called Luin and has the Cloak of Colors given to him by Mannannan Mac Lir, his mentor. Lastly, we can figure that, as a god, Lugh is probably fairly tough.

Let's tackle Lugh's magic devices first. They're fairly easy. The Cloak of Colors lets Lugh blend into the background to virtually disappear. That's just the Invisibility power with the Blending limit. Since it's not something Lugh uses a lot or is one of his primary powers, we'll give it a Fair level. It's useful, but not overly so.

Luin, the Spear of Light, is a bit more involved. Obviously, as a spear, it's a slashing Strike device. Given Lugh's Strength and other abilities, and that this is his main weapon, we decide to give it an Amazing level as befits a godlike device. Lugh can unleash blasts of light from the spear, which is a Blast extra, and he can use Luin to deflect attacks, giving it the Defending extra.

As to Lugh's godlike toughness, we don't want him to be completely bulletproof, since he still uses Luin to defend himself, but we don't want the average person to be much of a threat to him, either. Looking things over, that suggests Average (3) Damage Resistance is enough.

"Master of All Skills" seems to be a specialties thing, so we'll hold off on that for the moment. That leaves his godlike immortality. However, we know that the Tuatha can die according to mythology, as there are specific magical means of resurrecting the dead. So it doesn't sound like Lugh should have the Immortality power. Instead, let's make him ageless and immune to some mortal concerns. Looking things over, a Supreme level of Resistance to Aging and Disease covers things nicely; Lugh can be centuries or even thousands of years old while still be a "young" god and he doesn't have to worry about his body giving out the way mere mortals do.

Looking things over, the only thing that stands out to us that Lugh doesn't exactly have a way of getting around quickly. He doesn't fly or teleport according to mythology. We consider something like giving him a flying horse or other steed, or maybe a flying chariot, but ... no, that seems too complicated. However, given his Incredible Strength, it's not unreasonable that Lugh can jump really far, and super-human athletic ability is something he's known for, so we give him Incredible Leaping, enough to jump miles in a single bound!



## PROSE POWER DESCRIPTIONS

**Icons** books like **Adversaries**, and the **Hero Archetypes** section in this book, make use of prose descriptions of a character's powers, making use of the adjectives of the abilities on the scale and adding some sense of what the character's powers are like beyond just their mechanics. While you can use this approach regardless of hero creation method, it's particularly well suited to character modeling, since you don't have to "account" for the hero's powers in any way.

## SPECIALTIES

Now it's on to specialties. As we noted, one of Lugh's prime mythological qualities (oh, note that for future reference) is that he's the "master of all skills." But what does that mean, practically? "Master" implies that he has all of the skills at Master level, although "all" technically means only the skills known to the Tuatha de Danann. It's absurd to think an ancient Celtic god is a Master of Science or Technology, for example!

Even still, that's a *lot* of specialties at a very high level! Do we really want to go through and list all of the possible specialties Lugh might have? It seems kind of excessive.

Thinking about it, maybe his "Ildannach" ability really is more of a power. Given that, we look for things that can improve a hero's attributes, which points right to the Ability Increase power. Hey, there's even already a limit that affects only specialties! (And, hey, Lugh's picture is right there next to it in **Great Power**, but we're going to overlook that.) Looking over the specialty lists, we decide that Lugh has an Ability Increase to Incredible level with all Coordination and Intellect specialties, but *only* the ones known to the Tuatha. So, again, he knows Art, Law, and Occult related to Tuathan culture, but not the modern world, and his power doesn't apply to things like Science or Technology beyond those known in ancient Ireland. Likewise, he has Incredible Athletics and Stealth, but not Driving anything beyond a cart and certainly not Piloting!

Given everything that's covered by this power, Lugh actually needs very few specialties at all. The only thing not completely covered is his skill with spears, since that's a Prowess specialty as well as Coordination (for throwing them). We give Lugh the Spears specialty, meaning his ability level with Luin is Incredible whether in close or ranged combat, which is simple and easy to remember.

## QUALITIES

We're getting things wrapped up. Now we need to choose three qualities for Lugh. Earlier we noted that his title "Ildannach, Master of Skills" sounded like a great quality. Likewise, his title "Lord of Light" sounds like one, too, something we could easily see under his name splashed across a comic book masthead. That's two already, we just need a third.

We could go with something relating to Lugh's mentor, his childhood upbringing, or his part-Fomorian heritage, as his grandfather (and one of his arch-enemies) is the dreaded Balor of the Eye. Something like "Divided Heritage" or "Foot in Two Worlds". Considering that Lugh obviously spends a lot of time on Earth away from home, we could make that *three* worlds. "Hero of Three Worlds" sounds evocative and has a lot of potential for both advantage and trouble from it, since it encapsulates a lot of Lugh's heritage and background.

We add up the young Lord of Light's Stamina (Strength 7 + Willpower 5 for 12 total) and note that he has a Determination level of 1 because of all of those powers and one attribute higher than Great. Lugh is most likely going to need the trouble his qualities can bring him in order to earn some extra Determination during play.

## APPROVAL

Then it's just handing our write-up over to the GM for review and approval. It all passes muster, except the Game Master notes that Lugh needs some means of getting from otherworldly dimension of the Tuatha de Dannan to Earth and back again. This could just be a plot device of some sort, but the GM suggests adding a Dimensional Travel extra to his spear, allowing Lugh to "cut" portals between the worlds when he needs to. One more extra isn't going to make any difference to his Determination, which is already at a minimum, and the GM feels like the power would be both beneficial and make a fairly minor difference in Lugh's effectiveness. Plus it has some fun story potential!

With that, the Incredible Lugh, the Lord of Light, is ready for his first adventures on Eiru (as his people call Earth).

# BACKGROUND GENERATOR



Hero creation in **ICONS** is primarily random die rolls because it allows players to quickly put together a set of abilities and because it can result in some novel combinations, inspiring player creativity in explaining, for example, why a hero is an Unearthly Aquatic with Healing powers or a Gimmick Dimension Traveler with Extra Body Parts.

The **Description** phase of hero creation is all in the hands of the player, and where a lot of these things can come together. Still, some players may want additional inspiration when it comes to their hero's background, in which case, feel free to make use of the optional tables in this chapter. These background elements don't directly affect the hero's abilities, but may help to inspire ideas for the **Qualities** phase of the hero-creation process.



# DEMOGRAPHICS

First, use the following tables to determine your hero's basic demographics, including gender, ethnicity, and age.

## GENDER

2d6 roll	Character is...
2	Androgynous or non-binary
3-7	Female
8-11	Male
12	Transgender or intersex

## ETHNICITY

2d6 roll	Character is...
2	Native American
3-4	African
6-7	Caucasian
8-9	Asian or Pacific Islander
10-11	Latino
12	Mixed-heritage: Roll multiple times on the table until you get the same result twice, then combine all rolled results.

## AGE

2d6 roll	Character is...
2-3	Young: age is $10 + 2d6$
4-5	Young adult: age is $15 + 2d6$
6-8	Adult: age is $20 + 2d6$
9-10	Mature: age is $30 + 2d6$
11	Middle-aged: age is $40 + 2d6$
12	Elder: age is $50 + 2d6$

## MANNER

2d6 roll	Character is...
2	Shy, quiet, or secretive
3	Rebellious and antisocial
4	Proud, aloof, or arrogant
5	Moody and headstrong
6-7	Friendly and outgoing
8	Serious and sober
9	Fun-loving and playful
10	Sneaky and underhanded
11	Detached and logical
12	Anxious, nervous, or jumpy

## WHO DO YOU VALUE?

2d6 roll	Character most values...
2	Child
3-4	Family member
5	Friend
6	Themselves
7	Romantic partner
8	Pet
9	Mentor or teacher
10	Public figure
11	Personal hero
12	Group or organization

## WHAT DO YOU VALUE?

2d6 roll	Character most values...
2	Wealth
3	Honor (or Reputation)
4	Knowledge
5	Honesty
6-7	Friendship
8	Home (or Family)
9	Love
10	Power
11	Fun
12	Vengeance

## ATTITUDE

2d6 roll	Character's general attitude is...
2	Every person is a unique and valuable individual
3	People are generally good, given the opportunity
4	No one really understands me
5	People need strong leadership and guidance
6-7	Neutral towards most people
8	Respect is earned, not given away
9	People are generally not to be trusted
10	No one will ever hurt me again
11	People are endless sources of wonder
12	People are terrible and few are worth anything

## CHILDHOOD

Use the following tables to determine the circumstances of your hero's birth and childhood. Note that Artificial and Unearthly origin heroes may or



may not have a birthplace or “childhood” as such. In some cases, these things may refer to where the character was created, summoned, or the like. and “family” may refer to the hero’s creator, inventor, or summoner. Otherwise, simply ignore these tables for that hero.

## BIRTHPLACE

Roll 1d6 to determine the character’s birthplace. Optionally, roll an additional d6 on this table to determine the environment where the character grew up (which may or may not be the same).

1d6 roll	The place where the character was born or raised was...
1-2	<b>Urban:</b> A city of environment of some size.
3-4	<b>Suburban:</b> A community in the outlying area of a city.
5-6	<b>Rural:</b> An isolated community or area well away from any cities.

## STATUS

2d6 roll	Character’s family was...
2-3	<b>Poor:</b> Barely getting by financially and materially.
4-6	<b>Middle Class:</b> Solid and stable, for the most part.
7-8	<b>Well-Off:</b> Able to afford a few luxuries.
9-10	<b>Wealthy:</b> Able to afford most common luxuries.
11-12	<b>Rich:</b> Wanting for nothing, but possibly also subject to a lot of public attention.

## TRAGEDY

Roll a die. On a 4-6, move on to **Past Experience**. On a 1-3, the character suffered some childhood tragedy. Roll 1d6: 1-4 = **One or more family members were...** 5-6 = **The character’s entire family was...**

First d6	Second d6	
1-3	1	betrayed by a loved one and lost everything.
	2	banished or exiled from home.
	3	murdered.
	4	targeted by a sinister organization.

First d6	Second d6	
	5	abducted or vanished without a trace.
	6	killed by a disaster, terrorist attack, or war.
4-6	1	convicted of a crime and (1d6): 1-4 = imprisoned; 5-6 = escaped and in hiding.
	2	isolated, living ignorant of the existence of other members of the family.
	3	killed by disease or toxicity.
	4	witness to a crime and placed in a protection program.
	5	displaced from home by a disaster or war.
	6	divided by an inter-family conflict.

## PAST EXPERIENCE

Once you've established all of the other things about your hero, roll 2d6, with a maximum result equal to the hero's age in years, minus 15. The result is the number of rolls to make on **Past Experience** tables.

You can use the background tables in this chapter to randomly come up with backgrounds for any friends, foes, and other background characters as well, if you wish. Doing so may also imply things about the character's sexual or romantic orientations, and building background story around the randomly-generated elements may inspire some interesting ideas.

1d6 roll	Past Experience
1-2	<b>Friends &amp; Foes</b>
3-4	<b>Something Good</b>
5-6	<b>Something Bad</b>

## FRIENDS & FOES

**Roll 1d6: 1-3 = gain a friend, 4-6 = gain a foe.** Both friends and foes might be incorporated into qualities, particularly relating to how you feel towards them, and can be activated for advantage or trouble based on your feelings and the nature of your relationship.

1d6 roll	Friend or foe is...
1	like a family member (sibling or parent) to you.
2	a current or former romantic interest.
3	a current or former colleague or co-worker.
4	a friend turned foe or a foe turned friend.
5	is powerfully influential or resourceful (or both).
6	is an entire organization or faction.

## SOMETHING GOOD

1d6 roll	Experience
1	<b>Connection:</b> You made a connection, contact, or earned a favor from somebody.
2	<b>Mentor:</b> You met someone willing to teach and mentor you.
3	<b>Opportunity:</b> You found a new opportunity, whether it was a new job, a new invention, or a new way of looking at things.
4	<b>Promotion:</b> You received a promotion or a general step-up in your career or recognition of your abilities.
5	<b>Renown:</b> You have a particular achievement or quality people remember and respect.
6	<b>Windfall:</b> You received some material or financial gains.

## SOMETHING BAD

1d6 roll	Experience
1	<b>Framed:</b> You were framed or falsely accused of something you didn't do.
2	<b>Illness:</b> You suffered a physical or mental illness, and may even suffer trouble from it still.
3	<b>Imprisoned:</b> You were abducted, held hostage, sent to prison, or otherwise held against your will for some reason.



1d6 roll	Experience
4	<b>Infamy:</b> Your reputation took a hit, justly or unjustly, and you might still be trying to live it down or have something to prove.
5	<b>Injured:</b> You suffered an injury, and may even have lasting trouble from it, such as a disability or disfigurement.
6	<b>Loss:</b> You suffered a personal loss, such as the death of a loved one, a serious financial setback, or personal tragedy.

## BACKGROUND AND QUALITIES

Naturally, elements of a hero's background generated on these tables can inspire or be incorporated into the qualities chosen for that hero, as the player sees fit. Not every background element needs to become a quality, or part of one, while some background elements may be qualities unto themselves, depending on how large they loom in the hero's life. So, for one hero, their attitude of "No one will ever hurt me again" may be an important quality, for another, it might just be a part of their "Loner" quality, or a footnote in the character's overall makeup.



# SPECIALTIES



The following are descriptions of **ICONS** specialties and their game benefits, expanding and refining the list from the **Assembled Edition** and including additions from **ICONS A to Z**. The GM is free to further modify this list, adding to or subtracting from it, as suits the game. This end of this chapter provides some additional options for modifying specialties in your **ICONS** game, including not using them at all, if you prefer.

Likewise, if you want a particular specialty for a hero that you don't see on this list, talk to your GM about it, using the guidelines for the benefits provided by the different levels of specialty to determine the effects of having that specialty. Make sure the new specialty is not overly broad compared to existing ones; remember that a specialty reflects only one element of an attribute. Some “skills” (such as mastery of all forms of combat) are better handled as higher levels in an attribute (like Prowess). See the **Miscellaneous Specialties** section at the end of this chapter for further guidelines.



## COMBAT SPECIALTIES AND DAMAGE

Combat specialties—Martial Arts, Weapons, and any with "Combat" in their name—add to combat tests like attack, dodge, and evasion involving that specialty. They do not, however, add to an attack's damage, other than improving the chances of a higher degree of success, and therefore a slamming, stunning, or killing outcome.

That said, combat specialties do make it easier for characters to use tactics: gaining advantage by taking some immediate trouble on their test. The most common is increased difficulty (which an expert level specialty counteracts) in exchange for push ability applied to the attack's damage or other effect level. Similar tactics may include increased difficulty with an attack test in exchange for improved effort on a defense test or vice versa, reflecting a more defensive or aggressive stance.

**Animal Handling:** You know how to interact, work with, and train animals. Add your specialty bonus to any tests to do these things.

**Aerial Combat:** You're skilled at fighting in the air; add your specialty bonus to your defensive combat tests while you are gliding or flying.

**Art:** This is a specialty group for various artistic and creative specialties; add your specialty bonus to the appropriate ability (typically Coordination or Awareness) when creating a work of art. Art specialties include: Drawing, Painting, Poetry, Sculpture, Writing, and other types of fine arts. Choose one when you take this specialty.

**Athletics:** Add your specialty bonus to tests for athletic actions like acrobatics, climbing, jumping, running swimming, and similar activities, including dodging (but not parrying) in combat. This generally includes riding mounts, unless the GM wants a separate Riding specialty in the game.

**Business:** Add your specialty bonus to tests involving business acumen or knowledge of the business world. Characters may have similar specialties related to other professions with specialized skills or knowledge, such as Politics. In some cases, the Game Master may treat Business as a specialty group with various specific business or professional specialties under it.

**Deception:** You're a skilled liar and prevaricator. Add your specialty bonus to tests to deceive or otherwise convince someone you are telling the truth.

**Drive:** Add your specialty bonus to tests involving operating surface vehicles of all sorts. This includes water vehicles, unless the GM wants a separate Sail specialty in the game.



**Espionage:** You know to obtain information and other resources covertly, often through less than legal means, and to guard against the same (counter-espionage). Add your specialty bonus to tests for spying, surveillance, covert operations, and similar situations.

**Insight:** You know what makes people tick. Add your specialty bonus to tests to learn about someone's thoughts, feelings, or motives, and to tests to resist interactions where knowing those things can help you, such as telling when someone is lying to you.

**Intimidation:** You know how to use threats to get what you want. Add your specialty bonus to tests to intimidate or frighten others.

**Investigation:** You're skilled at gathering and analyzing evidence, digging up information, tailing people, and finding lost people and items—in short, being a detective. Add your specialty bonus to these and related tests.

**Law:** You have an extensive background in the law and may even be a licensed attorney. Add your specialty bonus to tests involving knowing or practicing law.

**Leadership:** You are a skilled and recognized leader, able to inspire confidence and determination in those under your guidance. When you are the leader of a team, you can give your teammates additional Determination. Leadership is also a useful specialty for tactical maneuvers to learn, create, or activate qualities (see **Qualities** in **The Basics** chapter of **ICONS**). A team can only have one active leader at a time.

**Linguistics:** You're especially adept at learning and speaking other languages. Add your specialty bonus to your Intellect to determine the number of languages you speak. See **Languages** under **Interactions** in the **Taking Action** chapter of **ICONS** for details.

**Martial Arts:** You're capable in various forms of unarmed combat; add your specialty bonus to offensive and defensive unarmed combat tests other than wrestling (covered by the Wrestling specialty, following). The Martial Arts specialty covers all kinds of unarmed combat styles, from bare-knuckle brawling to Asian martial arts styles and military commando training.

**Medicine:** You're trained in providing health care; add your specialty bonus to a patient's ability level when determining how quickly they recover (see **Recovery** in the **Taking Action** chapter of **ICONS**).

**Mental Resistance:** You're skilled in resisting outside influences, including certain mental powers. Add your specialty bonus to Willpower for resisting such things. This is similar to, but not the same as, the Mental Resistance power and you can have both (see **Mental Resistance** in the **Powers** chapter of **ICONS** for details).

**Military:** You serve or served in a military or paramilitary; add your specialty bonus to your initiative (see **Initiative** in the **Taking Action** chapter of **ICONS**) and all tests dealing with military protocols, information, and tactics. At the Game Master's discretion, this specialty also covers things like handling heavy military weapons, such as artillery, unless the series calls for a separate specialty for that (likely part of the Weapons group).

**Occult:** You're knowledgeable about the occult and mystical; add your specialty bonus tests involving occult knowledge, research, or practice. Occult Master is useful for a broad range of stunts involving magical rituals. In settings featuring a lot of the mystical, the Game Master may wish to make this a specialty group, with distinct specialties for different occult traditions.

**Performance:** This specialty group involves the performing arts: Acting, Comedy, Dancing, Music, Singing, and so forth. Choose an art form and apply your specialty bonus to tests involving it. See **Performing** in the **Taking Action** chapter of **ICONS** for details.

**Persuasion:** You're good at making a convincing argument or getting people to come around to your way of thinking. Add your specialty bonus to tests to persuade or otherwise convince people to go along with you.

**Pilot:** Add your specialty bonus to tests involving operating air and space vehicles of all sorts.

**Politics:** You understand political structures and processes and how to get things done from elections and appointments to the passing of laws and governing of states and nations.

**Power:** This specialty group covers various powers (see the **Powers** chapter of **ICONS**) that require ability tests of different sorts, particularly offensive powers using Prowess and Coordination for attacks. Each power is a separate specialty: Blast, Fire Control, and so forth. Add your specialty bonus to ability tests for the power. This specialty does not increase power level or other effects of a power dependent on its level, but does apply to tests to perform stunts with the power (see **Stunts** in the **The Basics** chapter of **ICONS**).

**Psychology:** You're trained in mental health-care. Your specialty bonus applies to tests to evaluate someone else's mood or personality, notice outside mental influence, diagnose and treat mental illness, and so forth.

**Seduction:** You're skilled in the subtle art of seduction, using romance and flirtation to get what you want, even when the ultimate goal is neither romantic nor flirtatious.

**Science:** You're skilled in the sciences; add your specialty bonus to tests involving scientific knowledge, research, and invention. Science Master is

good for a wide range of stunts involving scientific formulae and invention. Some Game Masters may wish to make this a specialty group, with distinct specialties for individual sciences.

## DOING SCIENCE

**ICONS** naturally takes a “comic book” approach to specialties and areas of skill and knowledge, such as where a “scientist” can easily be equally adept with dimensional physics, entomology, biochemistry, robotics, and artificial intelligence, in spite of them all being radically different fields of study. The same is true of “tech stuff” even when dealing with a lot of different kinds of technology, or skills such as design versus engineering. Game Masters should feel free to make specialties that feel too broad for the series into specialty groups or to allow more focused specialties (see the following) for greater differentiation amongst characters, as best suits the game.

**Shields:** You’re skilled in wielding and using a shield (see **Shields** under **Devices** in the **Powers** chapter of **ICONS**). Add your specialty bonus to Prowess and Coordination tests to block or attack with a shield.

**Sleight of Hand:** You’re skilled in tricks of manual dexterity and add your specialty bonus to tests where such things would be useful, from magic tricks to picking pockets (or locks) or slipping out of bonds or restraints.

**Stealth:** Add your specialty bonus to tests to avoid being noticed or to otherwise move and act covertly.

**Technology:** Add your specialty bonus to tests involving creating, repairing, or working with technology and machines of all kinds. Technology Master is useful for all kinds of stunts involving inventions and devices. Some Game Masters may wish to make this a specialty group, with distinct specialties for particular technologies (Computers, Electronics, Mechanics, etc.).

**Underwater Combat:** You’re skilled at fighting under water; this specialty adds its bonus to your defensive combat tests while submerged. It is primarily useful to Aquatic characters (see the **Powers** chapter of **ICONS**).

**Weapons:** This specialty group involves the use of various kinds of weapons, both close and ranged weapons. Add your specialty bonus to tests to attack with weapons of the appropriate type. Weapons specialties include: Blades (all close slashing weapons), Bludgeons (all close bashing weapons), Bows (including crossbows), Guns (all other self-powered shooting weapons), and Throwing. Specific Weapons specialties may also exist for various types of unusual or exotic weapons at the GM’s discretion, examples include Aquatic Weapons (a catchall for nets, tridents, spears,



and other weapons associated with aquatic combat) and Ninja Weapons (a catchall for the ninja-to, shuriken, sai, and similar weapons wielded by Japanese ninja).

**Wrestling:** You're skilled in wrestling; add your specialty bonus to all wrestling and escaping tests (see those tests in the **Taking Action** chapter of **ICONS**).

## THE BEST THERE IS...

Comic book characters are often touted as “the best there is” or “world’s greatest” or some similar description of their expertise. What exactly makes an **Icons** character “the best” at something? It may simply be having a Master level specialty, coupled with a Good or Great ability, which makes for Amazing or Fantastic capability in that area, although even then there’s always a Supreme level.

For those looking for a boost, however, consider also taking a quality that works hand-in-hand with the specialty, such a “World-Renowned Scientist” or “Cold-Blooded Super-Spy”. When you *really* need to show who’s “the best there is” you can activate that quality for advantage. Trouble from being the best? Everyone knows it, and keeps seeking you out, either to get your help, or prove they’re better.

## MISCELLANEOUS SPECIALTIES

No list of specialties is going to cover every possible option, and players may want their heroes to specialize in some obscure skill or area of expertise for whatever reason. The Game Master is free to come up with a suitable name and description for a new specialty, or to ask the player to do so and approve it. A good guideline is to focus on either a profession or an area of knowledge or expertise. So, for example, while there’s no “Plumber” specialty, there’s nothing saying a character can’t have one.

In general, new miscellaneous specialties should be no broader than any existing specialties, and they otherwise follow the same guidelines: adding their level to the appropriate abilities for tests involving the specialty.

For some rarely-used specialties, players may want to consider them as either qualities, activated for advantage when relevant, or just background detail. So a hero who is a “Hard-Working Plumber” in his secret identity might have that as a quality, activating it as needed rather than creating a new specialty.

Whichever the case, if a player goes to the trouble of defining a miscellaneous specialty, the Game Master should consider finding ways to work it into the story at some point, given the player clearly thinks it is an important part of the hero. Think about ways the specialty could be important, and ask the player what sort of things they had in mind when choosing it.

## OPTION: FOCUSED SPECIALTIES

Specialties in **ICONS** are deliberately broad and cover a lot of ground. At the Game Master's discretion, characters can have a focused specialty, narrowing its field and gaining an effective +1 level with that specialty at no additional cost. So, rather than a basic specialty in Science, for example, a character might be a Chemistry Expert for the same cost of one level of specialty. Similarly, for two levels of specialty, rather than being a Technology Expert, a character could be a Master of Computer Hacking.

Also at the GM's discretion, a Master level focused specialty can grant the basic level (+1) bonus in the general specialty. It makes sense for a Computer Hacking Master to have at least basic understanding of other Technology, for example.

## OPTION: NO SPECIALTIES

There's no requirement to use specialties in **ICONS** at all, they simply add some extra detail to characters. For those groups where they're too much detail, they're easily ignored, using just abilities and qualities to define characters. Those who are particularly adept in many specialties simply have higher abilities overall; a brilliant scientist is likely to have a Great or better Intellect, and a world-class athlete a Great or better Strength or Coordination—or both. If specialties are not in use in the game, the Game Master may wish to allow each character to have one ability with a level of 7 or greater that does not reduce the character's Determination level to compensate. See **Phase 6 of Hero Creation** in **ICONS** for details.

## OPTION: QUALITIES AS SPECIALTIES

Rather than the standard lists of specialties given in this book or the **Assembled Edition** of **ICONS**, you can instead apply the leveled bonus of specialties to qualities, using them as a modifier to abilities. In this case, the rolled number of specialties during hero creation is treated as a number of extra levels to apply to the hero's qualities, with each quality having a basic, expert, and master level. Heroes start out with two basic qualities by default and may use their additional rolled levels to add levels to those to qualities or to acquire additional ones at basic level. In the Heroes by the Numbers approach, heroes start with two basic qualities and adding levels costs 1 point each.

Qualities have all of their usual uses described in **ICONS** and additionally add a specialty bonus when making tests related to that quality. This bonus does not require advantage or activation of the quality to use: It is always in effect in the appropriate circumstances. So, for example, a hero with the “Dark Detective” quality as expert level adds a +2 bonus to tests involving detection, investigation, or taking advantage of the “dark” element of the quality for intimidation or stealth. Players and Game Masters should collaborate as when it is appropriate for a quality to improve a test. If multiple qualities apply, use only the highest bonus.

Qualities may still be activated to gain advantage, including for improved effort and all of the other effects listed under **Advantage** in **The Basics** chapter of **ICONS**. This approach to qualities gives them extra breadth and utility, so the GM should carefully moderate them to ensure players do not abuse their potential with qualities like “Good at Everything” or “Always Wins” to apply a bonus to every possible test without the need for activation.

## OPTION: SPECIALTIES & STUNTS

In the **Assembled Edition** of **ICONS**, characters with a Master level in a specialty can use that specialty to perform ability stunts. This is intended to limit the availability of ability stunts to those with superhuman (level 7 or greater) attributes and a few “world-class” Master level “normal” characters. However, that does not have to be the case, and the Game Master can loosen the restrictions on specialties and stunts.

If simply having a specialty allows a character to perform stunts associated with it, that increases the value of specialties as opposed to just regular abilities under level 7. The specialty itself serves as a kind of quality to activate for advantage and performing a stunt. Similarly, the specialty threshold for stunts could be lowered to Expert level. Alternately, it can be the measure of the attribute level and the specialty bonus; if the total is 7 or greater, the same as the attribute requirement, then the character can perform stunts with that specialty. So a hero with a Fair (4) attribute and a Master specialty would have the same option for performing stunts as one with a Great (6) attribute and Basic level of a specialty.

Loosening the specialty requirement for stunts best suits games where heroes have relatively few or low-level powers, since it provides more options to “street-level” or “agent” heroes. Even in these types of games, take niche protection into consideration: Being an Expert or Master of a specialty should count for something, so if all characters can perform stunts without any level of specialty, it makes them less ... special.



# KNACKS



**Knacks** are a special type of trait for **Icons**, neither ability, specialty, nor power. A knack can have one of the following effects, chosen when the knack is created and acquired—substitution, bonus, power, or benefit:

- **Substitute** one ability level for another in relation to a specific kind of test or usage. Examples include swapping Strength for Willpower for intimidating ("My might is intimidating!") or Intellect for Coordination for Dodging ("Totally saw that one coming.").
- Provides a +2 **bonus** for a specific type of test in the form: "Because I [something unique about the character] I get a bonus when I [particular situation or test]." For example, "Because I once belonged to the criminal underworld, I get a bonus when I interact with criminals on their own terms."

- **Power** effect at a level equal to a "linked" ability that is the basis for the knack. Note that this does not count as the "Ability-Linked" limit for powers that feature it (see the **Great Power** sourcebook for details).
- Provides a declared **benefit** the player can bring into play based on a specific Specialty, reflecting the character's knowledge, experience, or resources. For example, "As a Business Expert, I know a lot of people in this field. One of them should be able to help us out." This follows the same guidelines as a retcon.

Each knack a character has costs 1 level of Determination. If you think that makes knacks sound a lot like the benefits of spending Determination Points, you're right: knacks are essentially permanent versions of a specific type of Determination spending, at the "cost" of a permanently "committed" point of Determination.

The key differences are that the player doesn't need to spend Determination to use a knack (other than the permanent point it costs to acquire) and therefore does not need to activate a Quality in order to use it. While players can use knacks an unlimited number of times during a game (unlike spending Determination) there are also likely to be adventures where the knack is of little or no use, where it might have been better to have that point of Determination available instead, so it's a trade-off.

Knacks add a level of detail and differentiation to characters, at a cost of added complexity and things to keep track of during play. Keep this in mind when you consider adding them to your **ICONS** game.

## KNACKS AND HERO CREATION

Players can add knacks to their heroes during hero creation at the cost of 1 level of Determination per knack. Heroes are not required to have any knacks, and they are all chosen by the player, rather than rolled randomly. If the Game Master wishes, players can be given a certain number of "free" knacks for their heroes during the hero creation phase, anywhere from one to three or more, which do not reduce Determination level, essentially the same as giving the players bonus levels of Determination that have to be "spent" on knacks.

## KNACKS AND QUALITIES

Of course, some knacks can also easily be qualities, activated for a variety of advantages: "Living Legend" might even be both a quality *and* a knack, the knack not costing Determination (or requiring activation) while calling upon the quality requires both.

Even if you don't use knacks per se in your **ICONS** game, they can give you and your players some additional ways of looking at activating qualities for

advantage to fill-in some of the details provided by other game systems, which the looser **ICONS** structure tends to leave out, putting such things in the players' hands to whip-up during play via Determination.

## KNACKS AS STUNTS

Since knacks are essentially permanent versions of advantages, you can also use the knack construction guidelines and sample knacks as a catalog of possible stunts for **ICONS** characters. Rather than spending a level of Determination to have a knack permanently, a player can spend a Determination Point in order to give a character a single use of a knack during play.

Similarly, players can note and outline different knacks appropriate for their heroes and, rather than spending the Determination levels necessary to have them as permanent traits, spend Determination Points in play as-needed to use those knacks, a “pay-to-play” approach like the other uses of Determination Points. Just be careful players don't create such giant catalogs of knacks that they can't keep track of them all and suffer from paralyzing indecision during game-play!

## OPTION: MEGA-STUNTS

In relation to knacks, **ICONS** Game Masters may wish to allow for the possibility of stunts including multiple instances of advantage (as outline under **Advantage** in the **Assembled Edition** of **ICONS**). In particular, multiple applications of the stunt advantage to add different extras to a power or multiple instances of an extra that can be applied more than once.

## SAMPLE KNACKS

The follow are a sample of the full range of possible knacks. You can create a fairly extensive list of knacks for use in your game, and feel free to allow players to come up with their own as desired, using the guidelines given previously.

**Always Armed:** Virtually no matter the conditions, you somehow always have a weapon you can use, either on you or close at hand.

**Ambidexterity:** You are equally coordinated with either hand (or all of your hands, if you have more than two) and ignore increased difficulty that might be associated with using an off-hand to accomplish a task.

**Animal Empathy:** Because of your strong connection with animals, you have a +2 bonus to tests to interact with them (see **“I is for Interaction”** in **ICONS A to Z** for additional ideas). This knack also works as a model for other types of empathy with other specific kinds of creatures, such as aliens, demons, plants, machines, spirits or ghosts, and so forth.



**Attractive:** Because you're good-looking and attractive, you have a +2 bonus to tests where your looks can influence the outcome.

**Beginner's Luck:** Because of beginner's luck, you have a +2 bonus to tests when you are attempting something you've never tried before (and do not have any specialty in).

**Blind Fighting:** Due to training or skill, you ignore the increased difficulty of fighting an opponent you cannot see (due to darkness, invisibility, or actual blindness).

**Bullet Time:** Your fighting skills and reflexes allow you to substitute your Prowess for Coordination for dodging reactions, allowing you to use Prowess to dodge ranged attacks.

**Calculated Accuracy:** Applying your intelligence to accuracy, you can substitute your Intellect for your Coordination or Prowess for a particular type of attack test.

**Calculated Damage:** Applying your intelligence to hitting just the right spot, you can substitute your Intellect for your Strength for damage with close combat attacks.

**Common Sense:** Whenever your hero is about to do something foolhardy or potentially hazardous, you have the benefit of the Game Master giving you a warning, usually in the form of "Are you *sure* you want to do that, because...?" Among other things, this allows an impulsive player to more easily play an aware and level-headed hero.

**Contacts:** You know people, often people who owe you or are willing to help out. In any new situation you may know someone who can help you out, if appropriate for your background, or if you can come up with a story for it.

**Cosmic Awareness:** Due to your connection to higher powers, you can substitute your Awareness level for your Intellect to determine if you know things of a cosmic nature. You might also have the separate benefit of occasionally being able to just know certain things based on your connection to the cosmos—this counts as two knacks if you can do both.

**Direction Sense:** You have an unerring sense of direction, and cannot get lost, so long as you have some means of knowing roughly where you are. You can always retrace your path back to where you came from as far as you are physically able to do so.

**Dreadful Presence:** Your dreadful presence, appearance, or manner gives you Emotion Control at a level equal to your Willpower with the Burst extra, but limited to causing fear.

**Escape Artist:** So long as you are unobserved and able to act, you can escape from any confinement.

**Favored Foe:** Because you have carefully studied a particular opponent, you gain a +2 bonus when making attack tests against that foe. This might include individual villains or a general type of bad guys like demons, Nazis, or robots.

**Gadgeteer:** Your inventive genius is such that you have the Gadgets power at a level equal to your Intellect, so long as you have access to sufficient parts, equipment, and resources to assemble various gadgets.

**Great Endurance:** Because of your great endurance, you get a +2 bonus to Strength tests to resist pain, fatigue, and otherwise carry on in the face of physical difficulties.

**Immunity:** Due to an extraordinary stamina, immune system, or training, you are immune to either ordinary diseases or toxins (choose one, take this knack twice for both).

**Instant Up:** Do to your training in agility and combat reflexes, you have the benefit of being able to get up from being knocked prone as a reaction rather than a move action once per page.

**Interpose:** Your protective reflexes are such that you have the benefit of being able to interpose yourself between an ally and an attack against that ally as a reaction rather than a move action once per page. The attack misses your ally and you become the new target of the attack, which is resolved against you normally.

**Living Legend:** You're incredibly well known and beloved, giving you the benefit of calling upon people for favors and generally getting favorable treatment.

**Longevity:** You are unusually long-lived, perhaps even ageless, and unaffected by concerns involving aging.

**Master Plan:** Because of your knack for planning ahead, you get a +2 bonus on tests where you have the opportunity to plan all of the circumstances in advance.

**Matchless Mind:** Your matchless mental discipline gives you Resistance to Mental Powers equal to your Intellect level.

**Master of Disguise:** Your skill with make-up, costuming, and acting techniques gives you the effects of the Transformation power at a level equal to your Performance or Stealth specialty (whichever is higher) for impersonating other people.

**Meditation:** By going into a meditative trance, you can substitute your Awareness or Willpower (whichever is higher) for a test of Intellect to figure out a puzzle or similar task.

**Mind Over Matter:** You use Willpower rather than Strength for tests of endurance, overcoming pain, and so forth.

**Occultist:** Your occult knowledge or talent is such that you have the Magic power at a level equal to your Intellect or Willpower (choose one when you take the knack) with the Ritualistic limit.

**Pass-by Strike:** You can strike physically and then move away from your target in the same action. If your target has a higher Awareness than both your Coordination and your movement power level (if any), they can attack you on their panel before you leave close distance.

**Penetrating Strike:** One of your attacks—usually your unarmed strike—can inflict a potential slam, stun, or kill outcome even if the attack inflicts no damage.

**Power Defense:** You know how to use a power to defend yourself in combat, substituting that power's level for dodging reactions. The power has to be one you actively use and you have to be capable of action in order to use it defensively.

**Precise Damage:** With your uncanny precision, you can substitute your Coordination for your Strength for damage with close combat attacks.

**Precise Strike:** With your uncanny precision, you can substitute your Coordination for your Prowess with close combat attack tests.

**Reflexive Block:** Your combat training allows you to block as a reaction, rather than taking your action to do so (see **Blocking** in the **Taking Action** chapter of **Icons**).

**Ricochet:** You can “bounce” a ranged attack off of one target or surface into another. This lets you attack two separate targets with one attack action. Roll the two attacks separately. You can also use your ricochet to bounce a weapon back to your hand after an attack, or to bounce an attack in such a way as to catch a target off-guard, effectively surprising them so they cannot react (see **Surprise** and **Reactions** in the **Taking Action** chapter of **Icons**).

**Size-Up:** You can tell with a glance and a perceiving interaction whether another character's effective level of Prowess or Coordination is higher, lower, or the same as your own.

**Speed of Thought:** You can use your Intellect or Awareness (choose one when you take this knack) in place of your Coordination for initiative tests.



**Stunning Slam:** You can strike your hands together, or strike the ground or floor, with sufficient force to inflict a Stunning attack equal to your Strength level against all targets within close distance of you, rolled against the targets' Strength.

**Stunning Strike:** Your mastery of vital pressure points allows you to make a close Stunning attack at a level equal to your Strength (or another ability, chosen when you take this knack).

**Super-Breath:** Your lung power is so great that you can exhale a powerful blast of air able to Slam targets within close distance of you and blow out fires or move small objects with a level or weight less than your Strength.

**Teamwork:** Because you are such an excellent team-player, you get a +2 bonus on all combined effort tests to assist someone else (see **Combined Effort** in **The Basics** chapter of **ICONS**).

**Total Recall:** You have the benefit of being able to exactly recall anything you have experienced, including details like memorizing entire written works or redrawing maps or diagrams from having seen them once.

**Tracker:** You have sufficiently sharp senses or skill to follow a subject's trail or tracks as if you had the Tracking Sense ability of Super-Senses.

**Trance:** You can go into a deep, coma-like trance, giving you the benefits of the Suspension extra of Time Control (see **Great Power**) for the rest of the chapter, or until you choose to end it.

**Trivia Buff:** If a question involving strange and obscure trivia comes up, you know the answer, if there is one, or where it can be found, at the least.

**Vanish:** Because you are so skilled at stealth, you can literally vanish any time no one is looking directly at you, you are able to move, and there is cover within your movement distance. This includes when others are momentarily distracted by something like a smoke bomb or a Dazzle attack. You can choose to reappear under the same conditions, or by giving away your hiding place.

**Wealth:** Because you have access to considerable financial and material resources, you have the benefit of being able to retcon some problems by throwing money at them. Things like travel or mundane goods, for example, are trivial for you. (See **"W" is for "Wealth"** in **ICONS A to Z** for expanded options.)

**Whirlwind Strike:** You can attack swiftly enough to hit every target within close distance with a single action, applying the Burst extra to your unarmed strikes or a particular close weapon attack (chosen when you take this knack).

# KNACKS AS GENRE RULES

You may wish to institute some knacks, not as special abilities, but as default rules in your **Icons** game, usable by all characters at all times at no cost. This can reflect a preferred play style or modifications to the rules to suit a particular genre. In these cases, the knack is no longer a character trait, and therefore does not cost Determination levels, or even Determination Points as a stunt, since anyone can use it at any time, just like any other rule.

Note that for some genre rules, a particular set of knacks may be available to all major characters in the setting, but not necessarily to *everyone*. Just because all of the heroes and villains of a Martial Arts Action setting get to use Bullet Time for free, for example, doesn't mean every senior citizen or person-on-the-street can do so—although that *would* make for an interesting setting!

## SAMPLE GENRE RULES

Here are a few examples of setting up genre rules using knacks:

**Globe-Trotting Adventurers:** All characters can use the Contacts and Wealth knacks because they don't generally need to worry about resources and always know various people who can help them out. In some settings, all characters may be able to use the Gadgeteer knack as well.

**Martial Arts Action:** All characters can use the Bullet Time, Mind Over Matter, Speed of Thought, and Stunning Strike knacks to represent their extensive martial arts training and ability.

**Mystic Monster Hunters:** All characters can use the Meditation and Mind Over Matter knacks to represent their mystical training or ability. In some settings, all characters may be able to use the Occultist knack as well.

**Street Vigilantes:** All characters can use the Always Armed, Dreadful Presence, and Skulker knacks because they are grim and feared vigilantes.

**Super-Spies:** All characters can use the Always Armed, Contacts, and Escape Artist knacks to represent their espionage training and background.

**Weird War:** All characters can use the Great Endurance and Interpose knacks to reflect their "grit" in overcoming the horrors of war and their ability to sacrifice for their comrades-in-arms.

# TEAM ROLES



The **Assembled Edition** of **ICONS** looks at **Team Creation** in terms of team origin, qualities, and resources, including team devices. **ICONS A to Z** looks at team benefits, qualities, and teamwork in action during the game. Another element of team building players may want to consider as they create their heroes is team role, which breaks down into two primary categories: power and personality.

## POWER ROLES

When working out heroes' powers and other abilities, consider what role those powers allow the hero to play within the larger team. This may affect choices of power substitution, extras, and the like, as well as choices when creating heroes by the numbers or through character models. The major power roles within a team are:

**Blaster:** The blaster is a ranged combat specialist, usually with some form of the Blast power, although it might involve other ranged offensive powers. A blaster's power can be an energy beam or specialty with a particular kind of weapon, from guns to bows.



**Controller:** The controller often possess some type of control power, but particularly has abilities able to affect an area or change the conditions of a conflict. Controllers are good at dealing with minions and often with handling disasters and other hazards.

**Fighter:** A fighter is the most capable in close combat, usually meaning a high Prowess level, possibly with various specialties like Martial Arts or Weapons, and close combat attacks. Fighters tend to favor Prowess and Coordination over sheer Strength and Stamina like tanks (following).

**Mentalist:** A mentalist focuses on mental powers, providing the team with an alternate avenue of attack and problem solving as well as potential defenses against the same from their adversaries. Some versions of the mentalist role focus on other “exotic” or unusual powers like Affliction or Stunning.

**Mover:** The mover is *fast* and able to get from place to place quickly, particularly on the relatively small space of a battlefield. Movers may have Super-Speed or they may teleport, leap, or fly—the key is they specialize in movement powers and getting around, and sometimes helping their teammates to do the same.

**Sensor:** A sensor specializes in sensory powers for gathering information useful to the team, ranging from Danger Sense to warn others, Postcognition to investigate, or Detect or Super-Senses to pick up on things others cannot even perceive.

**Sneak:** The sneak is best as going unnoticed, whether that is through a high level of Stealth or powers like Invisibility or Transformation. Sneaks make great scouts and spies, can infiltrate and sow confusion amongst enemies, and slip past them to make sneak attacks.

**Tank:** The tank is strong and tough, just like their namesake. Tanks are front-line fighters and usually have the Damage Resistance and Stamina to take hits that their teammates cannot. In addition to dishing out damage, their high Strength can be useful for tearing through barriers and overcoming obstacles.

**Wizard:** The wizard is the “do-everything” stunt specialist with highly flexible powers or abilities that offer a wide range of potential stunts. This includes things like Cosmic Power, Gadgets, and Magic, as well as a lot of control powers or Master level in a specialty like Occult or Technology.

A balance of power roles helps a team to better handle different situations and it puts the spotlight on different characters. Power roles aren't necessarily isolated and some characters might combine two or more of them, like a fighter/mover or a controller/wizard, and it can be helpful for teams to have extra “coverage” of some roles.

## PERSONALITY ROLES

Powers and tactics don't determine everything about a team. A lot of the team's character has to do with how the different members mesh together—or don't, in some cases. What are the heroes' different personalities, particularly in relationship to the other characters? These categories can influence, and be influenced by, the heroes' qualities and offer opportunities to activate those qualities in play.

**Leader:** The leader is as much a tactical role as it is a personality, and leaders range from reluctant to eager in terms of taking charge. Regardless, a leader-type has a real ability to lead and inspire others and direct and coordinate the team. Leaders tend to feel responsible, both for their teammates and the team's actions, and they often blame themselves when something goes wrong, shouldering the team's burdens. Heroes in this role should strongly consider the Leadership specialty.

**Loner:** A loner doesn't need a team, doesn't want to be on a team, and would prefer to do things on their own—or so they always say. Loners tend to have mysterious backgrounds, motivations, and even abilities they keep largely to themselves. They may also have some serious trouble, making the team their only home and haven. Loners may become close to their teammates eventually, but they tend to always mistrust strangers, or other people in general.

**Novice:** The novice is a newbie, often a recent addition to a group of characters with greater experience, individually or as a pre-existing team. Novices have energy, enthusiasm, and idealism, without a lot of understanding of the practical realities of things. They may be somewhat naive or prone to making rookie mistakes and in need of mentoring or guidance. Other teammates may feel protective of a novice, or that they need some "tough-love" lessons. For their part, novices can help remind more seasoned—and often more cynical—heroes of their ideals.

**Powerhouse:** The powerhouse is strongly bound up in their powers, which tend to be considerable and potentially dangerous. A powerhouse is possible "loose cannon" who is in the team to learn control or otherwise safeguard the world from themselves. Powerhouses often struggle with either fear of their abilities or the temptation to use them, casting aside all restraint.

**Sensitive:** The sensitive understands people and their feelings, and most often cares deeply about them as well. Sensitives tend to have a strong moral center and a desire to help more than anything else, and these things can sometimes create conflict with more pragmatic or ruthless teammates. Sensitives are prone to periods of introspection and dealing with their own and others' feelings. A rarer type of sensitive understands people, but

solely as a means of manipulating them, usually as a Sensitive/Loner or Sensitive/Thinker combination.

**Supporter:** The supporter is the character who is always reliably around to offer a helping hand, a sympathetic ear, and a thoughtful word to help keep the peace or resolve conflict, either internal or between teammates. Supporters tend to be kind, understanding, and patient when it comes to the foibles of their friends, family, and teammates. They're also usually fiercely protective of their team and more pragmatic than sensitives when push comes to shove.

**Swashbuckler:** The swashbuckler is out to have *fun* and to get noticed, to seize the spotlight and to answer the call to adventure. Swashbucklers tend to have an infectious *joie de vivre* and devil-may-care attitude, although some find them immature and annoying. Quick to act, swashbucklers get things done, but not always the *right* thing, and they're prone to hot-headedness and impulsiveness.

**Thinker:** The thinker is usually the team member with the highest Intellect, Awareness, or both, someone who is focused on problem-solving, picking up on details, and out-thinking or out-witting opponents rather than necessarily out-fighting or overpowering them. Thinkers can sometimes get lost in thought, or distracted by intellectual trivia, and some of them are a bit superior, even arrogant. Some thinkers are also leaders, while others are content to function as advisors, better as providing plans and information to more decisive leader-types.

As with power roles, personality roles are not mutually exclusive, and some characters may mix-and-match them within the context of a team. There's a definite difference between a loner/powerhouse and a loner/thinker, for example, or a sensitive/leader versus a swashbuckler/leader, to name a few. Likewise, a team does not have to feature all of these personality types, nor are players strictly limited to them, but overlap is something to consider, especially when you're looking at the potential of an entire team of thinkers, much less an entire "team" of loners, which might not last for very long!



# SUPPORTING CHARACTERS



The **Assembled Edition** of **ICONS** provides a selection of supporting character archetypes the Game Master can use as quick reference characters during play and while creating adventures. This section expands on that selection, as well as offering players some ready-made archetypes suitable for use with the Servant power.

Broadly speaking, if a supporting character has a key role in the series or setting, they should be at least Good (5) at whatever that is, possibly Great (6), including the benefit of specialties applied to their abilities. A combination of Fair (4) ability and an Expert specialty is common for these supporting characters, but other combos and ability levels are possible.

As detailed in **ICONS A to Z**, some supporting characters can be considered qualities of the heroes they support, or facets of an associated quality, such as a hero who is an “Agent of ARROW” having other agents as supporting characters, or a “Mild-Mannered Journalist” having fellow reporters, newspaper staff, and their editor or publisher as supporting characters. This can provide opportunities for both advantage and trouble.

# AGENT

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
3	3	3	3	3	3	6

**Specialties:** Guns, Martial Arts

**Devices:** Blaster Pistol (Blast 4)

**Qualities:** Loyal to the Agency, One of Many, Outfitted Agent

This represents the “stock” agent of an organization with little embellishment. More realistic agents may have regular firearms rather than a blaster, along with other mundane equipment. Activate the “Outfitted Agent” quality to retcon important equipment as needed. Activate “One of Many” to cause trouble for the heroes by having more agents suddenly appear as back-up.

Variations on the basic agent include:

- **Armored Agents** with 1-3 levels of Damage Resistance from body armor, making them a bit tougher.
- **Battlesuit Agents** with the physical abilities and powers of the **Battlesuit** archetype, making them equal to many superheroes. “Bargain basement” battlesuit agents have Good (5) or Great (6) rather than Incredible (7) battlesuit powers.
- **Infiltration Agents** add Stealth and possibly Deception specialties. Advanced infiltration agents might even have Transformation (Humanoids) to assume different appearances.
- **Powered Agents** with one or more powers, either innate or provided by devices, based on the theme of the organization. Some powered agents may have the Artificial origin, being constructs such as robots or undead.
- **Self-Destructing Agents** that dissolve, burst into flames, or even explode (like a Burst) when they are reduced to 0 Stamina or captured.
- **Squad Agents** under the command of an agent with one or more levels of the Leadership specialty, providing them with some benefits in terms of maneuvers and activating qualities via teamwork.

For more about agents and the organizations they work for, see “O” for for “Organizations” in the **ICONS A to Z** sourcebook.

## ASSISTANT

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
2	3	2	4	4	3	5

**Specialties:** Administration Expert

**Qualities:** Behind-the-Scenes, Organized, Reliable

The Assistant is the broadest general supporting character for a hero, the “girl-or-guy Friday” who handles all of the mundane affairs, letting the hero focus on the big picture. Some assistants combine other supporting roles with their own, including Medic, Operations, or Pilot, while others oversee and manage those supporting characters. Likewise, some assistants are domestic help, while others are strictly administrative and heroes shouldn’t expect them to serve tea or answer the doorbell—or do windows.

While these abilities work for the “standard” Assistant, some have a “Full of Surprises” or “Colorful History” quality, allowing them to display the occasional stunt or unusual retcon, or even just higher abilities (Prowess in particular) and related specialties.

## COMMANDER

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
4	3	3	4	4	4	7

**Specialties:** Guns, Leadership, plus either Law or Military

**Qualities:** Honorable, Responsible

The Commander is the leader, or sometimes field-leader, or an agency or organization made up of Agent characters or the like. Some Commanders are allies who value heroes, others are rigid and untrusting of “vigilantes.”

Commanders generally have access to whatever equipment or devices their troops or agents use, and possibly some additional things restricted to high-ranking officers.

- **Alien:** An Alien Commander may be an honorable foe or ground-leader of an invasion force, perhaps the commander of an alien vessel.
- **Criminal:** A Criminal Commander is a gang-boss or the leader of a group of criminal mercenaries with qualities like Professional or Ruthless instead of those listed.



- **Military:** A high-ranking military officer, typically a Military Expert or Master, in command of troops.
- **Police:** A Police Commander may be a precinct captain, commander of a special operations unit, or a hands-on Police Commissioner.
- **Super-Agency:** The leader of government law-enforcement Agents dealing with superheroes and villains. Really dynamic Super-Agency Commanders may have Great or even Incredible Prowess and Willpower, with commensurate specialties.

## CULTIST

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
3	3	3	2	3	2	5

**Specialties:** Occult

**Qualities:** Cult Member, Devoted Servant

Cultists are the rank-and-file followers of the kind of secretive, mystical cults serving otherworldly beings, cosmic entities, demons, devils, and so forth. Most Cultists tend to have Poor Willpower and Intellect, as reflected by their life choices, although some members of a cult are smarter and more dynamic, but driven by their own motives to serve.

Cults are often led by a more capable “adept” (or some other title). You can use the Commander abilities for such characters, also giving them Occult, perhaps even at Expert or Master level, in place of their third specialty. Some cult leaders have full-blown Magic power, often with the Ritualistic limit. See “**M** is for “**Magic**” in **ICONS A to Z** for some additional ideas.

## EXPERT

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
1	3	2	5	3	3	5

**Specialties:** At least one at Expert level, typically Business, Investigation, Law, Linguistics, Occult, Psychiatry, Science, or Technology

**Qualities:** Brilliant, Outstanding in Their Field, World-Renowned

The Expert is someone who Knows Things, and is primarily around to explain those things to the heroes. Expert supporting characters serve to fill in gaps in the heroes’ own specialties and knowledge: a scientific advisor for a hero with modest Intellect and no Science specialties, for example, or

a legal expert to advise heroes in dealing with the law, a business manager to handle a hero or team’s financial affairs, and so forth.

When making use of Experts to feed the heroes, and their players, information, Game Masters can choose to roll for the Expert’s appropriate specialty, or simply pass along whatever information would best advance the plot of the adventure.

## FLYING MOUNT

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
3	3	6	1	3	2	8

**Specialties:** Athletics Expert

**Powers:** Wings 4

**Qualities:** Faithful Steed, Winged Wonder

A great Servant or sidekick for heroes who need to get around in style, a flying mount is typically like the mythological Pegasus: A horse with feathered wings, allowing it to fly. Alternately, it might have the Flight power instead, able to simply “gallop on air” or soar under its own power. A flying unicorn also has a slashing Strike for its spiral horn. A medium-sized dragon mount, or similar type of flying creature, can use the same abilities, but may also have a Blast attack in the form of fiery breath or the projection of energy beams from its eyes or the like. Some flying mounts have Average—or even greater!—Intellect and the ability to speak and interact like other characters.

## GIZMO

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
2	3	3	4	3	3	6

**Specialties:** Technology Expert

**Powers:** Total Life Support

**Qualities:** Fixer-Upper, Little Robot

A Gizmo (or Gadget, Widget, or Whatnot) is a small robot sidekick. Some are humanoid and anthropomorphic, others look like trashcans on wheels, flying pods, or other utilitarian or fun shapes. Gizmos tend to be good at dealing with other machines, some may also have the Interface power. They’re also good as mobile Gadgets of a sort: Players can use advantage

to retcon the Gizmo having some useful tool or information, or to stunt it having a particular power.

## HENCHMAN

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
3	2	3	2	3	3	6

**Qualities:** Dime-a-Dozen, Get Them! You Fools

Henchmen (who may be women as well as men) are criminal hirelings or underlings, usually working for a super-villain of some sort. They tend to come in groups, and Game Masters may want to use the guidelines for **Agents & Combined Effort** from **Icons A to Z** for them: For every doubling of the number of henchmen, treat the group as a single character with a +1 bonus to their abilities, +2 for four henchmen, +3 for eight, and so on.

## JOURNALIST

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
2	3	2	4	5	3	5

**Specialties:** Journalism Expert

**Qualities:** Curious, Protects Sources, Seeks the Truth

A reporter or media personality, a Journalist supporting character is just as likely to be a blogger or vlogger (video blogger) these days as a print or television journalist. A Journalist who primarily appears on-camera may have a combination of higher Willpower and/or the Performance specialty. Journalist characters frequently follow their Curious and Seeks the Truth qualities, leading them to investigate stories of interest to the heroes, but also getting them into trouble.

## LIAISON

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
2	3	3	3	3	4	7

**Specialties:** Persuasion, plus at least one of Business, Law, Military, or Politics.

**Qualities:** Authority Figure, Connected



A go-between for the heroes and some official organization, usually a branch of the government or military, although some heroes might have liaisons with major corporations or other organizations. The Liaison's job is to communicate the organization's wishes to the heroes and sometimes to enforce them, depending on the nature of the relationship. A government Liaison, for example, might have the authority to grant or revoke security clearances, or even to force a hero team to disband or cease operations in a particular area. While Liaisons tend to be chosen for their social skills, their political connections may be more important, and their relationships with heroes might be friendly or adversarial, depending on the circumstances.

## MEDIC

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
2	4	3	4	4	4	7

**Specialties:** Medicine Expert

**Qualities:** Compassionate, On-Call, Unflappable

Heroes tend to get pretty banged up from time to time, to say nothing of dealing with all kinds of unusual medical conditions. A Medic is usually a licensed medical professional, such as a doctor or nurse, although might also be a field medic for an organization. This character helps heroes to recover and deal with medical trouble, particularly disabilities or ongoing challenges. Some Medics may even have the Healing power, but most simply use their skills and training.

## MOB

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
4	3	3	2	2	3	12*

**Qualities:** Driven, Unreasonable

A mob is a crowd of people, represented as a single set of game abilities for the purposes of the heroes interacting with them. In particular, a mob can take singular actions against anyone in its area, such as attacking an entire group of heroes at once, so long as they are within the mob's reach. Likewise, a mob's Stamina represents its overall cohesion rather than that of any individual member: If the heroes reduce the mob's Stamina to 0, it breaks up. The GM can vary the Stamina of a mob based on its overall size, even having the mob "recover" Stamina as additional people join it to replace those it has lost.

## OPERATIONS

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
2	3	2	5	3	3	5

**Specialties:** Technology Expert

**Qualities:** All-Access, In the Know, Online

The Operations or “Ops” character is superhero tech support. They are the supporting character working a monitor and keyboard while talking to the hero via a comm-link, looking up information, tracking resources, overriding security protocols, and so forth. An Ops character is a useful resource for the GM as well, offering a “mouthpiece” to communicate information to the heroes and someone who can sometimes *not* overcome a particular technical challenge, when the story calls for it.

In some settings, the role of Operations may even go to an advanced artificial intelligence (or “AI” for short), a sentient (or near-sentient) computer system, taking the “disembodied voice over the comm-link” to the next step by removing the human character at the other end altogether. An AI can be a reliable supporting character or a potential new hero or villain (or both), given time to evolve its abilities.

## PILOT

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
3	4	3	3	4	4	7

**Specialties:** Pilot Expert

**Qualities:** The Best Around, The Right Stuff

Heroes need to get to crisis spots quickly and those lacking fast movement powers or vehicles of their own might rely on a pilot. Such supporting characters tend to be daring, willing to fly headlong into danger, perhaps even a bit *too* willing at times. A pilot might just get the heroes from place to place, and be on-hand to extract them in a hurry, or might combine some of the functions of other supporting cast and accompany the heroes on their missions.

Take a look at the **Vehicles** sections of both the **Assembled Edition** and **Great Power** for examples of the various vehicles a pilot might use.

## PET

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
3	4	1	1	3	3	4

**Qualities:** Loyal, Well-Trained

Some heroes have small animals as companions, allies, even sidekicks. The abilities given here suit most small creatures, such as a cat, ferret, or medium-sized bird, to name a few. See the **Creatures** section of **ICONS** for a more detailed set of animal archetypes for specific creatures. Likewise, **“P” is for “Pets”** in **ICONS A to Z** offers more detail on the concept of pets as allies and supporting cast, as well as “super-pet” characters. Some common versions of a Pet character include:

- **Alien Blob:** A small protean creature (which may or may not be from another planet) with Good (5) Stretching powers. Some Blobs have full-fledged Transformation as well.
- **Raptor:** A bird of prey like an eagle, hawk, or owl, with Flight 3, claws for a Weak (2) slashing Strike, and Awareness 4.
- **Shoulder Dragon:** A miniature dragon, complete with bat-like wings for Weak (2) Flight, able to breathe a Good (5) Blast of flames.

## POLICE

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
4	3	3	3	3	3	6

**Specialties:** Criminology, Guns, Investigation

**Powers:** pistol (shooting damage 4), tonfa (bashing damage 4), handcuffs (material strength 6)

**Qualities:** Officer of the Law, Serve and Protect

In most superhero stories, the police tend to serve as a clean-up crew, showing up to cart the defeated villains off to prison, and occasionally helping out the heroes with information and support, but also becoming hostages for villains. Police often have a love-hate relationship with superhero vigilantes because of this. This character is a fairly typical beat-cop; detectives and officers with special training have different abilities. Use the **Commander** for a police captain or commissioner and the **Soldier** for a SWAT officer or other tactical specialist.



# ROBOT

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
3	3	5	2	2	3	8

**Powers:** Damage Resistance 2, Total Life Support

**Qualities:** Machine, Programmed

Lots of different kind of robots show up as supporting characters or particularly the servants or minions of villains. These abilities represent a fairly typical humanoid robot: stronger than a normal human and immune to most of the concerns of living beings, but with limited mental abilities and pre-set programming. You can customize in a number of ways:

- **Sensors:** Apply levels of Super-senses for whatever sensor devices the robot may have, including (but not limited to): Circular Vision, Communication, Direction Sense, Infrared Vision, and Tracking Sense.
- **Size:** Apply levels of Growth for bigger and more powerful robots, increasing Strength and Damage Resistance accordingly.
- **Weapons:** Robots can have various built-in weapons, giving them additional offensive powers, particularly Blast. See the **Offensive Devices** sections of both the **Assembled Edition** and **Great Power** for ideas.



# SOLDIER

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
4	3	4	3	3	3	7

**Specialties:** Guns, Martial Arts, Military

**Powers:** pistol (shooting damage 4) or rifle (shooting damage 5)

**Qualities:** Military Discipline, Sworn Duty

A professional soldier has a good amount of training and ability. These abilities reflect most professional enlisted soldiers; add appropriate specialties for specialists in different fields. Use the **Commander** for higher-ranking officers and leaders. Squads or larger groups of soldiers may have access to heavier military weapons and vehicles given in the **Devices** sections of the **Assembled Edition** and **Great Power**. Some variations include:

- **Alien Trooper:** Legions of humanoid alien soldiers, usually part of an invasion force. Alien Troopers might have more sophisticated weapons, usually Good or Great energy Blast devices, and perhaps even minor powers of their own, depending on their species.
- **Special Forces:** Special Forces, including elite military forces and security forces like SWAT teams, generally have an additional level of Coordination and Willpower and may have an additional level of Military specialty or a few additional specialties, including Athletics, Drive, Pilot, or Stealth.

# SNITCH

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
1	3	2	3	4	2	4

**Specialties:** Specialty

**Qualities:** That's All I Know, Word on the Street

A Snitch is an informant and source of information, usually one close to the source of the information, such as the criminal underworld. A Snitch's value is balanced between their ability to get sources of information to trust them, and their ability and willingness to share that information: Someone who is a known snitch isn't going to learn much, and might well be threatened or killed for it.

# SPIRIT

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
2	3	0	3	3	4	8

**Specialties:** Occult

**Powers:** Phasing 6 (Floating, Life Support, Constant)

**Qualities:** Set Apart, Spirit Entity

A Spirit is an incorporeal being, possibly a ghost, psychic projection, or some other supernatural creature like a faerie or nature spirit. A Spirit might be a supporting characters for a number of reasons, often because of some attachment to a particular hero or a duty or responsibility to a higher being, who may “assign” the spirit to a character. Like a Gizmo, a Spirit sometimes provides comic relief as well as some useful abilities, such as being able to scout through walls and other barriers. Some Spirits have additional specialties or powers, particularly Immortality, Invisibility, Magic, or Telekinesis, or additional Phasing extras. They rely heavily on their effective immunity to physical harm, fleeing from foes actually able to affect them.

# SWARM

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
3	4	0	0	3	0	5*

**Powers:** Gaseous Form 5

**Qualities:** Acts as One, Undifferentiated Mass

A Swarm is a mass of small creatures, from as tiny as insects to as large as small birds or rodents, like a swarm of crows, bats, or rats, for example. Individually, the creatures in the Swarm are too small to have much effect on anything—as reflected by some of their abilities being essentially zero. However, as a collective, the swarm can have some effect. In game terms, a swarm has Gaseous Form: able to fit through any space a single member of the Swarm can enter, and immune to physical attacks that don’t affect the swarm as a whole. The Swarm’s Stamina represents its cohesion rather than any individual creature: If reduced to 0, the Swarm breaks up.

Add other powers to reflect specific types of swarms, such as Weak (1) or Poor (2) slashing Strikes to represent stings, claws, or sharp teeth or beaks, and Flight 1-2 for flying insect swarms, 2-3 for flying swarms of larger creatures.



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