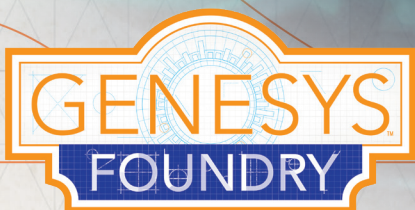# Gamemaster's Eclectic
TOOLBOX

GENESYS
FOUNDRY

THE
STORY
SPANNER
.NET

GAMEMASTER'S ECLECTIC TOOLBOX

BY

S.F. Rattan

COVER ART
Joyce Mauriera

Original art commissioned by Sine Nomine Publishing and released into the public domain by the same. Available on DriveThruRPG in the Godbound Art Pack.

SPECIAL THANKS TO
the Denizens of Star City,
the Lost Knight & his Apprentice,
the Rebels aboard *The Righteous*,
and the Crew of *The Maiden of Ilum*.

FEEDBACK
Shane Skinner
Sam Skinner

INSPIRATION
The Order 66 Podcast
D20 Radio & Community
Stars Without Number
Old School Essentials
Mini Six: Bare Bones Edition
Pip System Corebook

The Genesys Roleplaying Game is a collaborative, narrative game published by Fantasy Flight Games.

For information about the Genesys Roleplaying Game, free downloads, answers to rules questions, and more, visit **www.FantasyFlightGames.com**
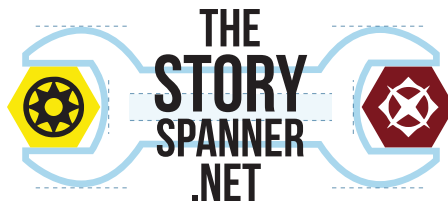
The Story Spanner is a fan written, unofficial blog about the Genesys Roleplaying Game.

For additional homebrew rules, adventure & setting modules, printable game aids, table advice, and more, visit **www.TheStorySpanner.net**

LICENSE & COPYRIGHT

PREFACE

In this book you'll find various houserules that have worked at my game table over the years playing the Genesys Roleplaying Game and its immediate predecessor from Fantasy Flight Games. These rules are battle tested in that I've revised them again and again until I can reach for them with confidence. As a gamemaster, I try to respond to the kind of fun my players want to have (and what's fun can vary widely from player to player). This book is the result of that process.

I've found the rules I include here in the ***Gamemaster's Eclectic Toolbox*** to be reliable tools for dealing with the situations they cover. *However, I don't reach for all the houserules in my toolbox at once, and you don't need to either.* Please take what works, leave what doesn't, and change what you prefer a different way.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INDEX OF TABLES

INTRODUCTION

USING THIS BOOK

This book is a toolbox. It is written for brevity. It is designed for quick reference. If you print this book double sided (please do for use at your game table!), you will find that big ideas fit either on a page or on two facing pages. If you open this book in your favorite PDF viewer, you will find bookmarks and links from one part of the document to another. If the text says, "See Chapter 5," then click that text and you'll jump directly to the right part of Chapter 5.

ROLLING REGULAR DICE

Genesys uses unqiue dice (along with a **d100**), but regular numbered gaming dice are still very useful tools for the gamemaster and these houserules occassionally call for such dice. Common dice notation is used throughout the text and is always in bold.

- **dX** means one X-sided die (e.g. a **d4** has 4 sides).
- **NdX** means roll N X-sided dice (e.g. **2d8** means roll two 8-sided dice). The text will tell you whether to sum the results or do something else.
- **NdX±K** means roll N X-sided dice, sum them up, then add or subtract K from the sum (e.g. **3d12–3** means roll three 12-sided dice, add them up, and then subtract 3 from the total).

WHY ECLECTIC

This book is eclectic. It draws from many schools of thought about roleplaying games. It breaks away from some of what has become conventional wisdom among Genesys players, gamemasters, and fans. It casually ignores the oft repeated, rather limiting advice, "don't bother trying that in this system." Instead of echoing mantras and dogmas such as, "maps and miniatures don't work well in this game," and, "random characters don't mix with point buy," In the games I run, I look for ways to do these sorts of unorthodox things following the patterns of Genesys... Or at least ways that don't produce nonsense results.

Why? Because some of the things you're told not to do in a narrative game can be quite fun. Because Genesys looks to me like a hybrid game with both narrative and traditional elements, and the potential to work for many (or multiple) gameplay styles. Most of all, *because a person who comes to our community excited about Genesys with a question about how to do something unusual and departs with the curt reply, "just don't bother with that," is a person we turned away needlessly.* I'd rather tell that person, "here's something that won't break the game, go knock yourself out!"

1. QUICK ADVERSARIES

Combat is and should be unpredictable. Some games employ convoluted systems for rating challenge, supposedly to help the gamemaster (who may first need to use a spreadsheet) decide what (or whom) the party is ready to fight against. Genesys does not chase fairness with petty arithmetic, and balancing an encounter is more art than science. Advise players coming from other systems that any combat lasting more than a round or two is dangerous and brutal. Remind players that retreat is always a valid option.

As a rule of thumb, compare the party's median base damage, soak, and wound threshold to the adversaries' complementary medians. Also compare the sizes of median combat skill pools. When fighting a larger group, the party should have a slight edge in most of those stats. If the enemy group is smaller, it should have a slight edge instead.

This chapter provides two methods for creating adversaries: checklists and clout ratings. Checklists allow you to quickly flesh out detailed adversaries during prep between game sessions. Clout ratings allow you to create adversaries completely on the fly during gameplay, starting with only one number.

THINGS TO KEEP NEARBY

When creating adversaries, keep the following references nearby to speed up the process:

- A summary list of common **weapons**, **armor**, and **gear** in your setting.
- A compilation of the **combat talents** and **social conflict talents** in your setting.
- The **character sheets** for each PC, or summaries with only the essential stats (**base damage, soak, wounds/strain**, and **initiative/combat/social** dice pools).

CHECKLISTS

Tables 1–1 through **1–3** provide quick templates and checklists. Follow the steps row-by-row to create adversaries. For the lines in each checklist denoted Weak/Average/Tough, don't just stick to one column; choose what is appropriate for your concept.

Arrays of characteristics and skill ranks are in brackets *[like this]*. Assign the given numbers to the characteristics or among the skills in any order. After completing the checklist, adjust and tweak anything that doesn't feel quite right.

TABLE 1–1: MINION TEMPLATE CHECKLIST

STEPS / STATS		WEAK	AVERAGE	TOUGH
1.	WOUND THRESHOLD	WT < 6	6–7	WT > 7
2.	SOAK VALUE	SV < 4	4–5	SV > 5
3.	BASE DAMAGE	D < 7	7–8	D > 8
4.	GROUP SIZE	1–2	3	G > 3
5.	CHARACTERISTICS	[3, 2, 2, 2, 2, 1] or [3, 3, 2, 2, 1, 1]		
6.	GROUP SKILLS	• 1 combat (or 2 if military) • 1–3 concept		
7.	WEAPON QUALITIES	Few to no qualities.		

TABLE 1–2: RIVAL TEMPLATE CHECKLIST

STEPS / STATS		WEAK	AVERAGE	TOUGH
1.	WOUND THRESHOLD	WT < 12	12–15	WT > 15
2.	SOAK VALUE	SV < 4	4–5	SV > 5
3.	BASE DAMAGE	D < 7	7–8	D > 8
4.	CHARACTERISTICS	[3, 3, 3, 2, 2, 1] or [4, 3, 2, 2, 2, 1]		
5.	SKILL RANKS	[2, 2, 2, 1] or [3, 2, 2, 1]		
6.	WEAPON QUALITIES	1 or 2 simple qualities can work.		
7.	TALENTS	Max 1 or 2; related to concept.		
8.	ADVERSARY RANKS	1 for combat, 2 rarely, 3 never.		

TABLE 1–3: NEMESIS TEMPLATE CHECKLIST

STEPS / STATS		WEAK	AVERAGE	TOUGH
1.	WOUND THRESHOLD	WT < 16	16–20	WT > 20
2.	SOAK VALUE	SV < 4	4–5	SV > 5
3.	BASE DAMAGE	D < 7	7–8	D > 8
4.	STRAIN THRESHOLD	ST < 12	12–14	ST > 14
5.	CHARACTERISTICS	[4, 4, 3, 3, 3, 2] or [5, 4, 3, 3, 2, 2]		
6.	SKILL RANKS	[3, 3, 2, 2, 2, 1] or [4, 3, 2, 2, 1, 1]		
7.	WEAPON QUALITIES	Multiple qualities, extra ranks.		
8.	TALENTS	2 or 3 to fit with concept.		
9.	ADVERSARY RANKS	1 minimum, 2 tough, 3 villain.		

CLOUT RATING

To create an adversary on-the-fly, simply choose a *clout rating* from 1 to 5. This rating is:

- The adversary's default characteristic rating.
- The adversary's most common dice pool size.
- The most common difficulty when players make a skill check against the adversary.
- The number you'll refer to most often when running the adversary during the game.

From there, apply a few of the descriptor tags listed in **Table 1–4** to raise or lower some of the adversary's characteristics from that default. These descriptors allow you to customize the adversary while at the same time giving you hints and guidance to help portray the character with distinct personality. Some descriptors affect multiple characteristics.

If necessary, set the adversary's wounds, soak, strain, and other features by referring to the common ranges on **Table 1–5**. Add these features during the session only when they are immediately necessary. Add them between sessions only if you expect them to become necessary in the next session. *The chief advantage of creating adversaries with a clout rating is the speed you gain and the information load you save by not making choices which don't matter in the game just yet.*

BREAK THE RULES

Player characters follow a strict set of rules: a pyramid restricts talents, Brawn defines soak, et cetera. *Absolutely none of your adversaries should bother following the rules for player characters. Creating adversaries as if they are PCs is unhelpful and unnecessarily tedious.* Give your adversaries the talents and stat ratings you believe appropriate, whether or not they would be allowed for a PC in the same context.

TABLE 1–5: COMMON STAT RANGES FOR ADVERSARIES

STATS / ADVERSARY		WEAK	AVERAGE	TOUGH
WOUND THRESH.	MINIONS	WT < 6	6–7	WT > 7
	RIVALS	WT < 12	12–15	WT > 15
	NEMESES	WT < 16	16–20	WT > 20
SOAK VALUE	ALL TYPES	SV < 4	4–5	SV > 5
BASE DAMAGE	ALL TYPES	D < 7	7–8	D > 8
STRAIN THRESH.	NEMESES	ST < 12	12–14	ST > 14
GROUP SIZE	MINION	1–2	3	G > 3
SKILLS	MINION, GROUP	1–3 general, 1–2 combat		
	RIVAL, RANKS	[2, 2, 2, 1] or [3, 2, 2, 1]		
	NEMESIS, RANKS	[3, 3, 2, 2, 2, 1] or [4, 3, 2, 2, 1, 1]		
ADVERSARY RANKS	RIVAL	1 for combat, 2 rarely, 3 never.		
	NEMESIS	1 minimum, 2 tough, 3 villain.		

NEW DESCRIPTOR TAGS

The descriptor tags for adversaries listed in **Table 1–4** aren't exhaustive. You should add new and original descriptors to your own adversaries. A good descriptor is not so narrow it would only apply to skills; it is broad enough to apply to one or more characteristics. Most importantly, writing the descriptor in your adversary's stat block should help remind you how to portray the character both in and out of combat.

TABLE 1–4: DESCRIPTOR TAGS BY CHARACTERISTIC

CHAR.	POSITIVE TAGS	NEGATIVE TAGS
BRAWN	Strong, Large, Athletic (AG +1)	Weak, Small, Out-of-Shape (AG -1), Emaciated
AGILITY	Nimble, Graceful, Balanced, Atheltic (BR +1)	Clumsy, Bumbling, Out-of-Shape (AG -1)
INTELLECT	Smart, Genius (+2), Thorough (WP +1), Learned, Clever (CU +1), Savant (PR -1)	Dumb, Simple-Minded (-2), Foolish (CU -1), Inattentive (CU -1)
CUNNING	Shrewd, Clever (IN +1), Insightful, Nosy (PR -1), Inquisitive, Sociopath (PS +1), Creative	Naïve, Foolish (IN -1), Gullible, Honest, Reverent, Perfectionist (WP +1), Loyal, Inattentive (IN -1)
WILLPOWER	Courageous, Dependable, Industrious, Stubborn (PS -1), Perfectionist (CU -1), Thorough (IN +1)	Cowardly, Ill Tempered, Lazy, Impulsive, Distractable, Scatterbrained
PRESENCE	Manganimous, Bombastic, Gregarious, Compassionate, Self-Confident, Hansome, Humble, Charismatic, Sociopath (CU +1)	Shy, Vain, Arrogant, Awkward, Bossy, Ugly, Argumentative, Stubborn (WP +1), Nosy (CU +1), Self-Conscious, Savant (IN +1)

CLOUT RATING METHOD EXAMPLE: REVENANT KNIGHT

A party of adventurers have run afoul of an evil sorceress. They killed her retinue of defenders in their approach to her tower, though the woman herself escaped in a flash of smoke. Days later, the sorceress returns to her tower and places a curse on the adventurers who beat her: she raises from death one of the bewitched knights who defended her and gives him only one command, "do not rest until you find and kill the adventurers who attacked me."

Rather than call a break in the game session to write up an adversary, the gamemaster simply decides to go with a clout rating of 3, and teases the party with brief sightings of the undead knight on their adventures. After that session, the GM names the character "Revenant Knight" and gives it two descriptor tags: Singular Purpose and Unnatural Determination. After a few more sessions, the GM needs to give the knight some ranks in Perception to find the hiding party members. Once the adventurers have resolved to face the knight, the GM adds a weapon based on the Greatsword (Core Rulebook, p.144), some ranks in the Melee, appropriate soak, and wound/strain thresholds.

At no point did the Revenant Knight have more stats attached than it needed.

NOTATION & ABBREVIATIONS

A. **Clout Rating**: write this number larger and circle it. As you add descriptor tags, put those characteristics above and below the clout rating so you can find them more quickly.

B. **Descriptor Tags**: include these immediately below the adversary's name, along with their effects on the characteristics.

C. **Derived Statistics**: add these in a line below the descriptors tags. Leave room to track wounds and strain with tally marks.

D. **Skill Ranks**: add these with the resulting dice pools, writing ⬡ as "Ø" and ◇ as "O". Double crossing the "O" for an upgrade (◇ to ⬡) can read as a handwritten ⊗, which may also be present in a talent's description.

E. **Weapons**: underline each weapon and include its attack pool. Abbreviate damage/critical as D4/C2, or D+4/C2 for Melee/Brawl weapons.

F. **Talents**: shorten these descriptions to only essential effects. Circle the Adversary talent in the upper right corner of the card.

Handwritten index card:

Revenant Knight [Nemesis] Adversary ②

Singular Purpose (CU -1, IN -1, PS -2) — **B**
Unnatural Determination (WP +2)

⑤ WP

⟨3⟩ **A**

SK / 4   WT / 12 ||| ST / 20 卌 | — **C**

② IN
CU

Perception 3 ØOO
Melee 4 ØØØO
Brawl 1 ØOO
Coercion 3 ØØØØO

Unholy Sword
Melee ØØØO
D+4 /C2 Engaged
Defensive 1, Pierce 2,
Unwieldy 3, Burn 2 — **E**

① PS

D

2. RUNNING COMBAT

MAPS & MINIATURES

When running combat on a grid or map, *units* given in **Table 2–1** are grid squares or hexagons. They may also be inches on a map or scenic model without a grid. *Tokens* in these rules refer to the characters' physical representations on a map or grid. Tokens are often miniatures, cardboard chits, or other game pieces.

TABLE 2–1: FIXED RANGE BANDS FOR GRIDS & MAPS

RANGE	FIXED DISTANCES		UNITS (U)	ATTACK
ENGAGED	≤ 5ft	≤ 1.5m	≤ 1u	Varies
SHORT	5–30ft	1.5–9m	1–6u	◆
MEDIUM	30–120ft	9–36m	6–24u	◆◆
LONG	120–600ft	36–180m	24–120u	◆◆◆
EXTREME	600–8000ft	180–2400m	≥ 120u	◆◆◆◆

MOVEMENT

A character may use a maneuver to move up to 6 units.

Once per round while spending a maneuver to move, she may also perform a *Dash Incidental* and suffer 3 strain to move farther: up to 2 × Agility in units.

Adjacent squares or distances of less than a unit (i.e. inch) between tokens are considered engaged range. A character doesn't need to spend a maneuver engaging another character, provided her movement finishes at engaged range. However, she must spend a maneuver to disengage from any character with whom she closes to engaged range during her movement.

ACTIONS & MANEUVERS

A character may take his action part way through the movement of a maneuver on the grid (e.g. move 4u, then take an action, then move up to 2u farther). If a player has moved less than the distance allowed by a maneuver and then takes a different maneuver, he may still use the first maneuver's remaining distance.

DIFFICULT TERRAIN

Reduce the distance per maneuver (normally 6u) by a fixed amount based on the kind of terrain. A bog might reduce the distance per maneuver to 4u while thick jungle might reduce it to 2u.

For the Dash Incidental, allow only extra units of movement up to Agility or don't allow it at all.

Moving through particularly difficult terrain may even require an Athletics or Coordination check.

BLAST RADIUS

When triggered, Blast has a radius of 2u. A player may spend further ⋏⋏ enhancing Blast (beyond the initial activation). Add 1u to the radius per extra ⋏⋏ spent.

RANGED WEAPONS

A ranged weapon is effective up to the edge of its listed range band. For every additional 3u, increase the difficulty once. A distance which would increase the difficulty beyond **Formidable (◆◆◆◆◆)** becomes an **Impossible** task (Core Rulebook, page 18).

LINE OF SIGHT

Per the rules as written, cover causes a user to "gain" a ranged defense (not stacking) while concealment adds ■ to certain combat and skill checks. On a grid or map, instead allow any partial obstruction to add ■ to incoming ranged attacks based on line of sight (as determined by the gamemaster).

TABLE 2–2: COVER AND LINE OF SIGHT FOR GRIDS & MAPS

■	RELATIVE LINE OF SIGHT
+1	**Partially obstructed**: best line of sight to the target's center (the rest is obstructed from view).
+1	**Mostly obstructed**: best line of sight to the target's edge (stacks with partially obstructed).
+1	The target hasn't attacked from or left cover in this round, and commits to not doing so.

MINION GROUPS

To move minions as a group, pick one minion as a leader and maneuver that token following the range bands in **Table 2-1**. Then freely place all the other tokens from the group within a short range of the leader's new position without precisely measuring each individual minion's overall movement distance.

For minions to stay in a group, they must remain within a short range of each other at all times. Minions forced farther than 6u away from the nearest grouped minion automatically leave the group and assume their own initiative slots at the end of the turn order. A minion group may spend 1 maneuver to regroup 1 separated minion token back into short range of the group or 2 maneuvers to regroup all its separated tokens back into short range.

TABLETOP TIPS & TRICKS

When running combat with miniatures, things will inevitable slow down a little bit. However, when you use a few tricks and shortcuts to reduce or offload extra bookkeeping and keep things running smoothly, the slowdown will become barely noticeable.

COUNTING WOUNDS

Use physical counters to track the wounds by placing them next to the appropriate miniatures as damage is dealt. Fantasy Flight sells Red Gaming Tokens that work well, but any small tokens or chits will do. Small, stackable poker chips or chips numbered 1/5/10 work particularly well. If you can't find numbered chips, even loose pocket change can help to track wounds!
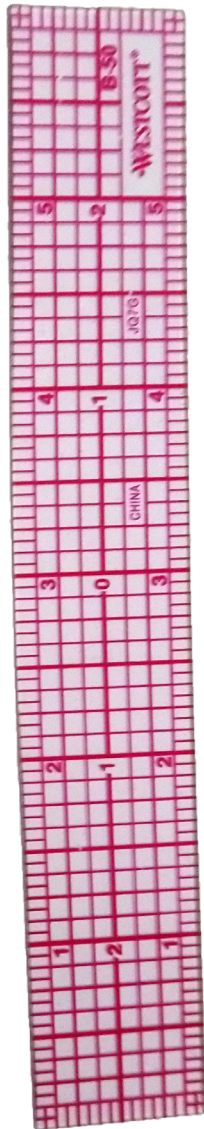
FAST MEASUREMENTS

For gridless maps, a tape measure or 12in ruler are serviceable, but characters mostly move in blocks of 6 units (short range). If you translate units directly to inches (to match the scale of most tabletop miniatures) either purchase a 6 inch ruler or cut out a 6 inch piece of thick cardstock to serve as a quick range ruler.

TRACKING INITIATIVE

Each round in combat, place tokens out next to each miniature that has taken its turn so you don't have to remember which characters and adversaries have acted and which haven't. Any tokens will do (so long as they're not the same ones you use for wounds) and Fantasy Flight Supply has tokens in many colors.

SPACE AT THE TABLE

A square of 36×36 units (or circle with 36 units diameter) allows for long range in every direction. Many dining room tables are large enough to set that space aside for miniatures and still have room for character sheets and dice. However, players' personal possessions will likely expand to fill available space at the table and, if you have enough room, it may be wise to dedicate a separate table to maps and miniatures.

CALLED SHOTS

When a player wants to target a specific body part, this rule replaces the official rule (Core Rulebook, p.98).

To make a called shot, take the Aim maneuver without adding ▣ and declare the targeted limb. If the attack succeeds and you trigger a critical injury, before rolling on the Critical Injury Result table (Core Rulebook, p.115) you may spend further ⋀ increasing the range of a Crippled result on the d100 roll: the roll must only fall within **5 × extra ⋀ spent** of the 96–100 slot for Crippled on the critical injury table. If the roll falls within that range, the Crippled Injury is triggered on the body part you initially declared.

Even if the critical injury roll falls outside that range, it still inflicts an injury with the roll's result.
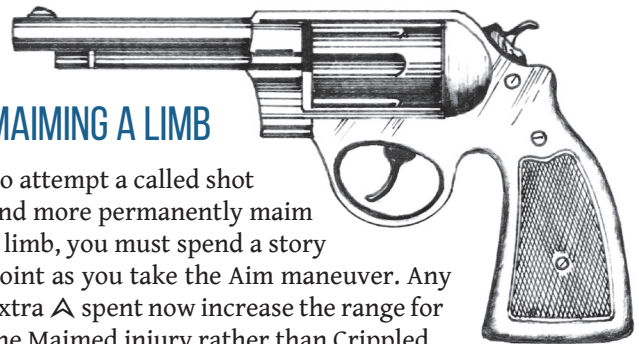
MAIMING A LIMB

To attempt a called shot and more permanently maim a limb, you must spend a story point as you take the Aim maneuver. Any extra ⋀ spent now increase the range for the Maimed injury rather than Crippled.

LETHAL TRAUMA

The Genesys rules as written allow for character death only after rolling particularly high (131+) on the Critical Injury Result table (Core Rulebook, p.115). To play a more lethal game, make the following adjustments.

CRITICAL CONDITION

While a character's wounds exceed the threshold, she is is in *critical condition*. This condition represents the body having sustained so much trauma that almost any meaningful exertion could induce a critical injury and, therefore, potential character death.

A character in critical condition isn't incapacitated but, each time she takes an action or voluntarily suffers strain, she must roll a d100. If the roll is at or below her currently suffered wounds, she immediately suffers another critical injury with that d100 roll plus additions for other critical injuries already suffered.

Once a character's excess wounds (those suffered above the threshold) are healed, she stabilizes and is no longer in critical condition.

Optionally, a character in critical condition must also add her suffered wounds to critical injury rolls (stacking with other additions to the d100 roll).

INITIATIVE

CUSTOM ADVERSARY CARDS

When running a combat encounter with large numbers of adversaries on one or both sides, using custom cards for adversaries helps manage the initiative order and keep track of who has acted in a round. In particular, flipping over these cards as each adversary acts means you don't have to remember who has and hasn't acted and who may use the remaining unused initiative slots.
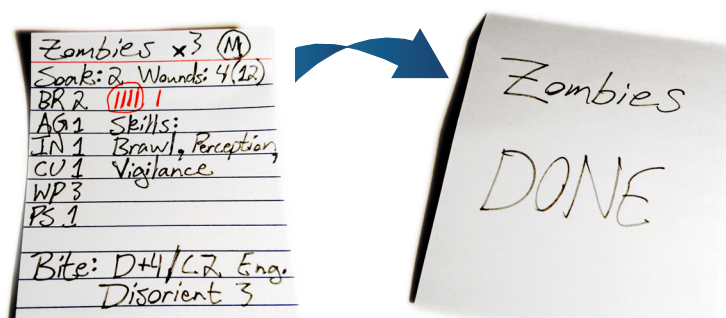
In large fights with friendly NPCs, speed up combat by giving the party direct control of their NPC allies and handing those adversary cards to the players. Doing so also grants the players more tactical control.

For more about making custom adversary cards, see the example in **Chapter 1: Quick Adversaries**.

HOLDING A TURN

Open initiative slots mean that holding a turn (waiting for a trigger) is less necessary in Genesys than in other systems. However, if a player wants to hold a turn, have the player (on his turn) specify an action, maneuver, and trigger for his character. A character may not take more than 1 action and 1 maneuver after holding. For each turn the character holds, he suffers 1 strain.

If the trigger is met before the end of the round, the character may immediately complete his specified action and/or maneuver. Otherwise, the character may complete his specified action and/or maneuver after any other turn, suffering 2 additional strain.

If the character is still holding at the end of the round, he may act (without suffering extra strain).

If the specified action is a combat check, the player must also specify a target for his character's attack.

MANY SIDES IN CONFLICT

When more than two sides are in combat, use those sides to group up initiative slots into factions instead of splitting them between PCs and NPCs. Players always choose where they fall within a tie over any NPCs and the gamemaster resolves all other initiative check ties.

QUICK ADVERSARY INITIATIVE

Before particularly large combat encounters rolling initiative for all the adversaries and sorting those adversaries in with the players results can take quite a while. To speed up initiative during large, expansive combats, roll a **d4-1** (i.e. treat a roll of four as zero) three times: once for the minions, once for the rivals, and once for the nemeses. The result of each **d4-1** roll is the number of ✵ every adversary of that type has for the purpose of determining initiative order.

A minion group with more than 3 minions adds ✖ to its initiative result per extra minion. A rival or nemesis adds ✵ equal to its ranks in the Adversary talent (if any) to its initiative result.

Friendly adversaries use the same **d4-1** rolls as hostile adversaries to generate initiative results, but win ties against those adversaries.

No adversaries generate ⋀ on initiative checks. When a player character ties ✵ with a block of adversaries, her initiative slot starts after all of the adversaries but may jump ahead of one tied adversary per ⋀ the player generated on her initiative roll.

MORALE

Feeling brazenly confident or suddenly losing hope can turn the tide of a battle. Players will likely have a sense of their own characters' morale and when it's time to turn and flee. However, you probably aren't as attached to your adversaries as the players are to their characters. Deciding when an adversary should turn tail and run isn't necessarily obvious.

Only use morale checks for adversaries. When fight-or-flight is a character decision it should always belong to the player. If there are more than 2 or 3 adversaries, consider using Quick Morale instead.

FEAR AND MORALE

Morale is similar to fear, but they aren't the same. To understand the difference, consider that *the opposite of confidence isn't fear, it's hopelessness*. A fear check may have subtle effects, but a morale check primarily answers: should an adversary retreat right now?

However, if an adversary has penalties imposed by a fear check (either ■ or ♤), those penalties still apply to any morale check the adversary makes.

MAKING MORALE CHECKS

An adversary might have to check for morale at any time, but 4 events should often trigger morale checks:

- Suffering more than ½ wound or strain threshold.
- Suffering a **Hard (◆◆◆)** critical injury.
- Seeing enemies arrive and/or allies retreat.
- Seeing an ally fall incapacitated or dead.

As these events don't always happen on an adversary's turn, morale checks are Out-of-Turn Incidentals.

Use **Discipline** to make morale checks. Refer to **Table 2–3** to set the difficulty: each factor adds ◆ and potentially upgrades a number of ◆ to ⬢.

TABLE 2–3: MORALE CHECK DIFFICULTY FACTORS

	FACTOR DESCRIPTION
+◆	Adversary has suffered **above half of either its wound or strain thresholds**. If above half of both wounds and strain, upgrade the difficulty.
+◆	Adversary has a **critical injury**. Upgrade the difficulty once for each additional injury.
+◆	Adversary is **outnumbered**. If outnumbered by 2-to-1 or more, also upgrade the difficulty.
+◆	An ally is **incapacitated**. Upgrade the difficulty once for each additional incapacitated ally.

A minion group must be completely incapacitated to trigger a morale check or to contribute to morale difficulty as the last factor in **Table 2-3**.

SPENDING RESULTS

When a morale check succeeds, the adversary stands its ground and is determined to fight on. If the morale check fails, the adversary's nerve to continue has been broken and it must immediately retreat.

Spend further dice results as in **Table 2–4**. Note that, because you should be resolving morale checks quickly, ⋀ and ♤ should only contribute to ☐ and ■ in future morale checks (or recover/inflict strain).

TABLE 2–4: SPENDING ⋀, ⊛, ♤, & ⊗ ON MORALE CHECKS

RESULT	EFFECTS
⋀/♤	Add ☐/■ to this adversary's next morale check. Use this option at most twice.
⋀⋀ /♤♤	Add ☐/■ to the nearest ally's (within a short range) next morale check. Use this option at most once per eligible ally.
⊛	The adversary skips its next morale check. Each extra ⊛ allows an ally within short range to skip its next morale check.
⊗	Each ally in a short range must make a moral check with the difficulty upgraded once. Multiple ⊗ may cause allies to retreat in a wave of panic without morale checks.

LEADERSHIP CHECKS

A player character or nemesis may choose to make a **Leadership check** to rally retreating allies. If those retreating allies outnumber the enemy, the check is **Average (◆◆)**. If the sides are evenly matched or the allies are outnumbered, the check is **Hard (◆◆◆)**.

One retreating ally per ✷ rejoins the encounter in the next round. Per ⋀, one retreating ally may make a **Hard (◆◆◆) morale check** to rejoin the encounter in the next round. On a successful check a ⊛ may allow all retreating allies to rejoin in the next round; on a failed check it may allow each retreating ally to make a **Hard (◆◆◆) morale check** to rejoin instead.

QUICK MORALE

Full morale checks work well in small scale combat, but can slow down larger encounters. If you need to make morale checks quickly, use a d10: the adversary must roll at or below a target number (**5 + Willpower**) to pass a quick morale check. If it has ranks in either **Discipline** or **Cool**, add 1 to the target. For each relevant factor in **Table 2-3**, subtract 1 from the target.

You can roll many d10s at once for a group of adversaries. Set the target number with the median Willpower from those adversaries and pick who retreats based on how many rolls succeeded (or use different colored d10s for each adversary).

3. SKILL CHECKS & RESULTS

INTERPRETING RESULTS

For many skill checks, common questions arise about which kinds of results should have what effects. The quick and easy answer is that it's always contextual and that context almost always has to do with player intent for his character.

The single most useful rule of thumb to remember is that *extra* ☼ *amplify the intent of a skill check while* ⋀ *provide ancillary bonuses.* It is therefore important for you to understand not just what your players are directing their characters to do, by why they want their characters to do those things.

IN-GAME TIME

When a character intends to complete a task quickly, extra ☼ reduce the time taken on the task, while ⋀ may improve the quality of what the task produces. On the other hand, when a character intends to complete a task well, extra ☼ improve the quality of the task's product and ⋀ may reduce the time taken.

On the other hand, if a character is attempting an extreme rush job because of some impending deadline or danger, it may be appropriate to upgrade the difficulty of the check, as shoddy work completed in a hurry may have consequences that could result in ⊗.

FLAT RESULTS

A flat result is a rolled dice pool in which all results have been cancelled: a bland failure with no narrative guidance. Suffer 2 strain and add ■ to re-roll such a pool. As ✪ and ⊗ do not cancel completely, pools with those results cannot be re-rolled. Flat results also can't be re-rolled during combat, spellcasting, or hacking.

Instead of adding ■, you could require spending a story point in addition to the strain cost for a re-roll.
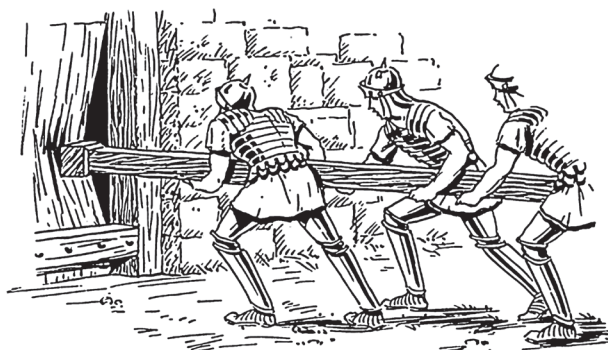
BEWARE THE BLUE WAVE

Genesys RPG's predecessor limited the number of ■ which players could pass each other in combat on a table in each core rulebook (Spending ⋀ and ✪ in Combat). It did so by describing strain recovery as the only option to select more than once, implicitly limiting the other options on the table to a single activation per turn. *The Genesys developers have removed this implicit limitation,* noting that different settings and gamemaster customization may make multiple activations of many options on the equivalent Genesys table (Core Rulebook, p.104) appropriate.

However, allowing the players to spend unlimited ⋀ to pass accumulating ■ to the next player can break the game. In the author's first game using the Genesys expressive dice, nobody noticed this limitation and players named the resulting phenomenon "the blue wave:" each player would spend most or all ⋀ earned on passing many ■ to the next friendly character. These ■ would accumulate and grow as initiative went around the table, rendering all other parts of the dice pool meaningless and irrelevant.

As a remedy, *allow each player taking a turn to pass at most* ■ ■: spend ⋀ to pass the first to the next friendly character and spend ⋀⋀ to pass the second to a chosen character.

GROUP SKILL CHECKS

The Genesys core rules provide for both skilled and unskilled assistance, which allow one or two characters to assist a primary character in making a skill check to perform a task. However, the rules mostly don't discuss situations in which all the characters are making the same check. If all the players make the same check at once, each player will need to cancel two sets of symbols and then read the results to you, who must in turn interpret the negative results and approve the players' uses of positive results. As the party grows, having all the players make the same check for their characters and running through those checks per the rules as written can seriously slow down the game.

One solution is to have a single player make the relevant skill check for the whole group with whatever skilled or unskilled assistance can reasonably apply. But this solution excludes most of the party from the active part of a scene. It also has pernicious longer term effects. Once a character has the highest ranks in

Perception or Stealth, for example, other players may begin to ignore those skills for their own characters because, most of the time, the character with the highest ranks will end up rolling the check for the whole group. That state of affairs can be as frustrating as having all the players make the same skill check and slowing down the game.

Most group skill checks in dramatic circumstances can make use of the rules for *Skill Challenges* later in this chapter. Perception and Vigilance, however, are often rolled as one-off checks by each member of the party in circumstances that fall somewhere on the spectrum between highly dramatic and largely dull.

PERCEPTION (SIMPLE CHECKS)

Skill checks using Perception to find things are prone to overuse. Similar checks or tests are common in other game systems that use single rolls and target numbers and you may be used to doing things that way. With the Genesys dice, however, gamemasters and players may end up wracking their brains for ways to use the narrative dice results in situations as simple and relatively undramatic as searching a room. *Rethinking how to handle searching and investigating can really improve your game's flow and rhythm.*

All other things being equal, treat Perception checks as **Simple (—)**. If characters are searching or investigating an area and no danger is present, they will eventually find most of what is worth finding. Instead of setting a higher difficulty for Perception checks, set target numbers of ☼ for specific things or information that the players may find. For **Simple (—) Perception checks**, most interesting findings shouldn't require more than ☼☼☼☼ to uncover, giving you four levels of tiered access to information.

Table 3-1: Cumulative ☼ on Simple (—) Checks lists rounded probabilities for generating at least some number of ☼ for common dice pools. Use it as a guide to determine how many ☼ you should require from **Simple (—) Perception checks** to reveal different pieces of concealed or hidden information in a scene.

TABLE 3–1: CUMULATIVE ☼ ON SIMPLE (—) CHECKS

DICE POOL	ODDS OF "AT LEAST" THIS MANY ☼			
	1	2	3	4
◆	50.0%	12.5%	—	—
◆◆	75.0%	37.5%	10.9%	1.6%
◆◆◆	87.5%	59.4%	28.9%	9.6%
◆◆◆◆	93.7%	75.0%	47.7%	23.1%
◆◆◆◆◆	96.9%	85.2%	63.7%	38.8%

Other factors may increase a Perception check's difficulty. If something or someone actively opposes an attempt to search or investigate, add an appropriate number of ◆ to the check: they may come from the stats of a character in the area who obstructs the search, from a magic spell which has created an illusion, or from another source. If environmental conditions hinder the attempt, add ■. Something very dangerous might be in the area the party is searching. A paranoid cultist might leave a poisonous blue ringed octopus in a desk drawer as a defense against potential snoopers and interlopers. In such circumstances, add a single ⬡ to the check or upgrade one ◆ to ⬡, and trigger the blue ringed octopus on ⊗.

VIGILANCE (CONCEALED DIFFICULTY)

As the party members go about the town purchasing supplies for their next adventure, an assassin creeps ever closer, tailing them and looking for an opportunity to strike. Who among the party will notice the danger, if any do at all? You can answer this question with Vigilance, and you can answer it both quickly and dramatically by concealing the difficulty.

The assassin would normally roll a **Stealth check**, so use his Stealth pool to set the difficulty, as with an Opposed Check (Core Rulebook, p.25). Roll that part of the pool behind a screen or otherwise obscured from the players. Then have the endangered characters each roll a **Vigilance check** against the results you have behind the screen, but haven't shown to the players.

You know from the ✕ you rolled how many ☼ the characters will need to notice the assassin before he strikes and the players don't need to cancel any symbols. If they get a fair number of ☼, but not enough to notice the danger, the players should be on edge. They know something is up, but they don't know what.

There are even a few non-group check scenarios which can benefit from concealing the difficulty. In particular, consider hiding the negative dice and their results during tense social scenarios such as, "did the adversary believe my character's lie?" or, "was that adversary lying to us just now?" In these situations, reveal only ⟳ and ⊗ from the concealed negative dice and leave players to speculate about potential ✕.

TECHNIQUE FOR CALL & RESPONSE

When all the players make skill checks at once and call out their results as they cancel symbols, it can be hard to tell who is saying what in the cacophony of overlapping voices. When everybody is making a skill check, tell the party you will ask for their results in order of successes: starting with anyone who failed the check (✕), then players with only ☼, then those with ☼☼, and so on. You can also ask players to keep their hands up as you count up ☼ results until they each hit their number of ☼ generated.

Why ask players for ☼ in ascending order? You won't know who generated the most ☼ ahead of time, so starting low and working your way up allows you to stop just as you reach the last player at the table.

REMIXING SKILLS

Where appropriate, the gamemaster may tell a player to recombine skills and characteristics to alter the dice pool before a roll. Usually, this remixing represents a unique or creative use of a skill that a player describes. For example, a character might roll Coercion with the Brawn characteristic rather than the normal Willpower because she pushed another character up against the wall as an act of intimidation. However, players should not directly ask to use their skills with alternate characteristics. They should describe what their characters are doing or trying to do (and how they are going about the attempt).

When recombining characteristics and skills, watch out for any talents that grant specific unusual combinations: either replace those talents in your setting or note to players that such remixes are only allowed with the talents. *Skills and characteristics should generally not be remixed in combat.*

TACIT KNOWLEDGE

Making a skill check with Intellect rather than the skill's normally paired characteristic represents a character's tacit knowledge about that skill (e.g. making a Drive check with Intellect to identify the model and make of a car). Use a tacit knowledge check only if there is no applicable Knowledge skill or other relevant skill in the setting.
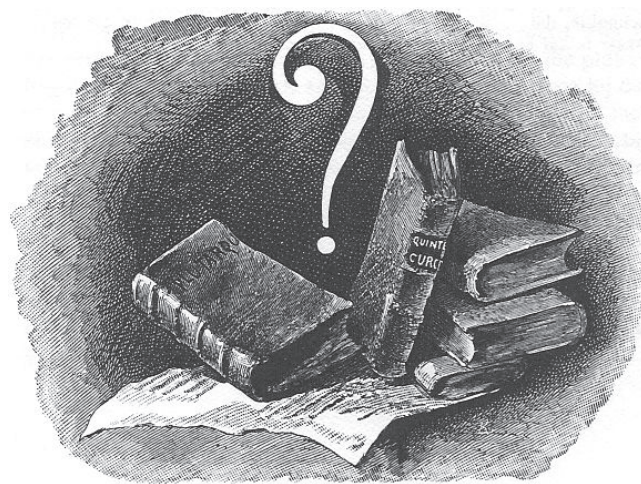
FLASHBACKS AND MEMORY

Sometimes, a player may have reason to ask something along the lines of, "my character was here before, does he remember anything relevant to the situation at hand?" If you don't have any firm idea, ask the player to build a dice pool out of Intellect and Willpower, rather than combining a characteristic and skill. Set the difficulty based on how long ago the character might have formed the memory and how often he may have interacted with the place or person.

After cancelling results, ✹ and ⋀ may result in useful memories which help the party to solve the current encounter, while ✗ and ⌂ may result in the character misremembering something in the past. ⊛ may allow the player to play out a brief flashback with the gamemaster as a scene and gain as much information as possible to help the party in the present. ⊗ may result in a traumatic flashback, inflicting strain and making it difficult for the character to provide the party with useful feedback in the present time.

RESULT THRESHOLDS

A result threshold is a target number of specific results the gamemaster sets to trigger some dramatic event in the game world. Dice results accumulate across multiple dice checks, building up to that threshold, and then trigger an effect or event after exceeding it.

✹ might accumulate across multiple checks toward a threshold as characters complete quests and jobs for residents of a village, slowly winning favor with the locals. Once the accumulated ✹ exceed the threshold, the townsfolk might put on a festival in the party's honor or offer them a home in the town. On the other hand, ⌂ gradually generated in a small hamlet may build toward a threshold of rumors, whipping villagers into a frenzied mob against the party.

⊗ might accumulate across checks made by a party of thieves committing crimes, building toward the town watch's greater awareness of the transgressions. Exceeding such a negative threshold might result in the local lord putting out a bounty on the party or a sheriff gathering a posse to hunt them down.

> ### KEEP THE BOOKKEEPING MANAGEABLE
>
> Tracking many different needless things is cumbersome and slows down gameplay. Too many result thresholds can easily run away from a gamemaster and bog down the campaign if not used judiciously. As a rule of thumb, limit their use to (at most) a single or half page of descriptive, memorable event phrases and tally marks. Limiting the number of result thresholds active at any one time forces the gamemaster to *consider which possible events will make the game world feel most alive if and when they happen.*

SKILL CHALLENGES

A skill challenge is when the player characters make a series of skill checks, accumulating ☼ from each check toward a threshold at which point the challenge succeeds for the party. This might sound like the *Result Thresholds* described previously (and you could look at a skill challenge as a particular kind of result threshold). But where a result threshold is like a timer accumulating results across multiple, sometimes-unrelated checks and long stretches of in-game time, *a skill challenge is a series of checks during a single ongoing encounter to achieve a greater objective in a shorter, more immediate timespan.*

As a band of thieves accumulate ⊗/✗/♺ across their various escapades and those results slowly build toward local authorities taking action against the brigands, use a result threshold in the background. When that same band of thieves plan a specific heist and you are preparing that heist as an encounter, use a skill challenge instead.

THRESHOLD & FUSE

Each skill challenge has a *threshold* and a *fuse*. The threshold is the number of ☼ the characters must generate to pass the challenge. The fuse is the number of failed checks allowed before the challenge ends in failure. A high number of failed checks allowed is a long fuse. A low number allowed is a short fuse.

A short fuse is much less predictable than a long fuse. The more you roll dice over and over, the more the net results tend toward what is probabilistically expected. A skill challenge with a short fuse can succeed (or fail!) quite suddenly and unexpectedly, while a longer fuse will be less affected by the sheer luck of one or two outlying dice rolls. Keep that distinction in mind as you write your own skill challenges.

PRESSURE RATINGS

Every paired threshold and fuse can be related to a *pressure rating*. These ratios (☼ per failed check) approximate how much pressure a skill challenge puts on the characters. Requiring only ☼☼ per failed check is a Normal skill challenge, while ☼☼☼☼☼ or more per failed check is a Desparate skill challenge.

TABLE 3–2: SKILL CHALLENGE PRESSURE RATINGS

RATING	RATIO
RELAXED	☼ required per failed check
NORMAL	☼☼ required per failed check
TENSE	☼☼☼ required per failed check
URGENT	☼☼☼☼ required per failed check
DESPERATE	☼☼☼☼☼+ required per failed check

The pressure ratings are useful because they allow you to quickly gauge both extended and brief skill challenges. A skill challenge with threshold 6 and fuse 3 is normal. So is a challenge with threshold 20 and fuse 10. Both ultimately require ☼☼ per failed check. But the former might end in one or two skill checks and the latter will be much more drawn out.

Your challenges don't need to match the given pressure ratings exactly. The five descriptors are merely signposts to communicate how nerve wracking a skill challenge is likely to be. A skill challenge with threshold 7 and fuse 3 might still be Normal, but a challenge with threshold 8 and fuse 3 may be Tense.

DIFFICULTY

Difficulty for skill checks made as part of a challenge should range from **Easy (◆)** to **Hard (◆◆◆)** most of the time. Because the objective is to accumulate ☼ across multiple skill checks, those lower difficulties give characters a more realistic shot at generating multiple ☼ in each successive skill check. Regularly setting higher difficulties will make it disproportionately harder to accumulate enough ☼ to succeed overall, although an occasionally **Daunting (◆◆◆◆)** or **Formidable (◆◆◆◆◆)** check can add to the stakes.

RELATIVE DIFFICULTY

Consider the player character dice pools when setting the difficulties for checks in a skill challenge. Most of the time, the players should be rolling at least as many positive dice (⬠, ◆, ▢) as negative dice (⬢, ◆, ■). Some of the time, the players should be rolling more positive than negative dice. Only very occasionally during a skill challenge should players have to roll more negative than positive dice. The drama and excitement in a skill challenge doesn't come from low odds of success on a single skill check; instead, tension builds as it becomes more and more (or less and less) likely that ☼ will add up to the threshold before the fuse of failed checks runs out.

BASELINE DIFFICULTY

Based on your knowledge of the player characters' skill pools, it may be appropriate to set a baseline difficulty for the whole skill challenge. For example, unless a particular character action is much harder or easier, the baseline difficulty for all checks in your skill challenge might be **Average (◆◆)**. As you become more experienced running skill challenges, a baseline difficulty may become less necessary or helpful.

UPGRADING DIFFICULTY (⬢)

Use difficulty upgrades sparingly: only when you spend a story point or there is a specific potential disaster which ought to trigger on ⊗. Without also upgrading the positive dice, ⬢ instead of ◆ noticeably reduce the number of ☼ a skill check is likely to generate.

Bank Heist (Skill Challenge)

Threshold 15 / Fuse 6

*: ~~IIIII~~ I

Related Skills

Hazard Track   Stealth, Computers, Mechanics, Skullduggery

(Fuse)
- Computer Lockout (Computers +2 difficulty)
- Laser Alarm Tripped (All +2 difficulty)
- Guards Noticed Something (Difficulty upgrade)
- New Safe Installed (Mechanics +1 difficulty)
- Dogs on Patrol (+2 Setback Dice)
- Police Called (Roll all Challenge Dice.)
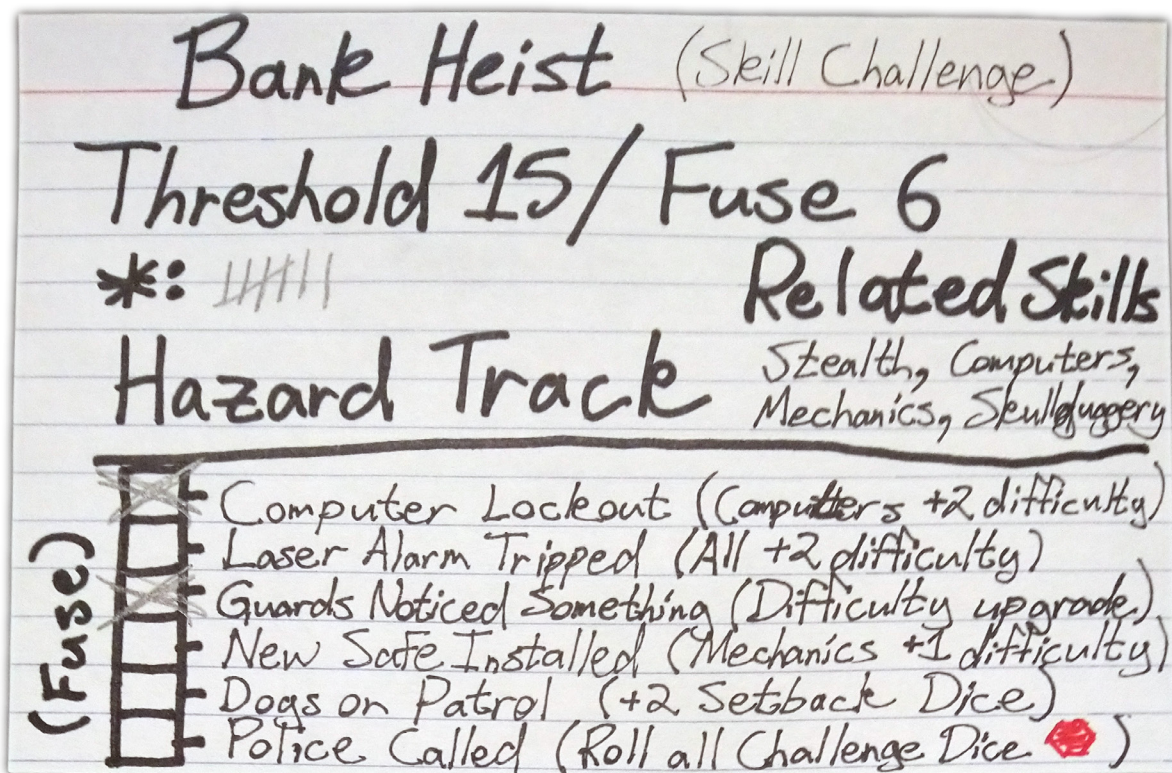
PREPARING THE CHALLENGE

BOOSTS ( ) AND SETBACKS ( )

Boost and setback dice are very effective tools to help you adjust a skill challenge during play. When players are having more trouble with a skill challenge than you expected, adding ☐ for environmentally or narratively justified reasons can softly bump up the ☼ generated per check. Players spending their characters' ⋀ to pass ☐ to another character can allow the party to help cover each others' weak spots as they come up during the challenge. In contrast to the warning, "Beware the Blue Wave," at the beginning of this chapter, which mostly applies to combat encounters, allowing players to pass along multiple ☐ (within reason) can work well during a skill challenge, especially when that challenge is much harder for the characters than you expected.

You should be more careful adding ■ to checks during a skill challenge. Nudging down the likely number of ☼ generated and increasing the odds of a failed check aren't things you'll want to do often, especially when you're still running your first few skill challenges. On the other hand, adding ■ allows the Knack for It talent (Core Rulebook, p.73) to shine.

RELATED SKILLS

When you plan out a skill challenge, don't set up an unflexible sequence of specific skill checks. Instead, plan out the broad narrative scenario and a few potential difficulties (e.g. a bank's security systems and some patrolling guards). Then choose 4 to 6 related skills that make sense for characters to use solving the challenge. If characters use those skills, default to the baseline difficulty or lower the difficulty you've set for a specific obstacle by 1.

HAZARD TRACKS

A hazard track is your checklist of things that could go wrong during a skill challenge (and the effects those failures might have on future skill checks in the challenge). You can also think of a hazard track as a visual representation of the fuse with some narrative hints for when events in the challenge start to go awry. Take the idea of a skill challenge for a bank heist (threshold 15, fuse 6) and look at the example above.

The hazard track a column of boxes equal in length to the fuse; fill them in or check them off as the characters fail skill checks and apply the negative effects you've listed next to the boxes. You can check off the items on the hazard track in any order as skill checks fail, picking the most applicable effects of failure or even choosing not to apply an effect if it doesn't make sense in the scene's narrative context.

TABLE 3–3: SPENDING ⚔, ⊗, ⟁, AND ⬥ IN SKILL CHALLENGES

RESULT	EFFECTS
⚔	Add ▢ to the next allied active character's check (if in combat).
⚔⚔	Add ▢ to any allied character's next check, including that of the active character.
⊗	On ✷, double the number of ✷ generated by the check and counted toward the threshold. On ✕, do not count this failed check against the fuse.
⊗⊗	If another check has already failed, extend the fuse by 1 (cancelling that failed check's effect on the fuse).
⟁⟁	Add ■ to a player character's next check. Use this option at most once per check.
⬥	On ✕, count this check twice against the fuse. Use this option at most once per check. On ✷, reduce the number of ✷ generated by the check by the number of ⟁ present, to a minimum of ✷.

RUNNING THE CHALLENGE

Beyond telling players that they are in a skill challenge, it's up to you to decide how much information to give them about that challenge. Revealing or withholding various details about a skill challenge can enhance different table moods you may wish to set.

- Revealing the threshold but not the fuse can create a sense of uncertainty. Doing the opposite, revealing the fuse but not the threshold, can inculcate a feeling of impending doom.

- If the party knows the five pressure ratings, revealing only the pressure rating and not the threshold or fuse can effect a combination of doom and uncertainty or, for the lower pressure ratings, a potentially false sense of confidence.

- Explicitly stating the baseline difficulty or related skills can give the challenge a more mechanical, gamey feel. Not revealing either factor forces the players to discover which skills help the most.

The mise-en-scène of your skill challenges can be as detailed and realistic or as general and impressionistic as you want. For the bank heist example on the previous page, you don't need any more than the notecard to run the challenge, but you could prepare as much as a map of the bank with difficulties listed for specific checks and locations. The spectrum of detail in preparing the challenge is more about how much you enjoy that preparation than it is about game balance.

END CONDITIONS

If a skill challenge ends before the narrative description at the table has actually resolved the encounter, consider using montages in either victory or defeat. If the party wins the skill challenge, give the players an opportunity to just describe how the skill challenge resolves successfully, without having to roll more dice. If the party loses the skill challenge, tell the players that events have begun to cascade beyond their control and begin to describe a montage of that defeat, offering players skill checks only to lessen the consequences until the encounter is resolved.

OPTIONAL RULES

ALTERNATING SKILLS

If your skill challenge has a uniform difficulty and no fixed skill checks as a part of an encounter, a player choosing his character's best applicable skill to roll again and again can turn things into a grind. To spice things up, require that each player alternate skills used to make checks during the challenge: *no skill may be used by the same player twice in a row.*

CHALLENGE ROUNDS

To soften the impending doom of repeated failed checks, divide a skill challenge into rounds as in social and combat encounters. Each character may act once in each round, either in any order as in social encounters or in a rolled initiative order as in combat encounters (the latter when hostile characters are present who could generate NPC slots to act against the party).

Even if the fuse expires because of failed checks, the remaining characters to act may still attempt to reach the challenge threshold before the end of the current round. If they do, the skill challenge succeeds, but with major complications for the party.

CONSTANT RATE TIMERS

Rather than limiting the challenge to a fuse of failed checks, you may limit it to a set number of skill checks, whether successful or failed. You may also limit a challenge to a set number of rounds if using the *Challenge Rounds* optional rule. Either of these options will add a lot of pressure to the skill challenge.

INTEGRATING COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

A skill challenge may happen simultaneously to a combat encounter. In such a case, players must decide each turn whether their characters will contribute to defeating the adversaries or advancing the skill challenge toward its threshold. When a skill challenge is combined with combat, it can be appropriate to entirely remove the fuse. After all, the adversaries are already putting pressure on the party. At a minimum, failed combat checks should not affect the fuse.

4. EXPERIENCE & GROWTH

AWARDS PER SESSION

At the end of a session, award experience to the party in some or all of the following categories. Consider how often the group meets, how long the sessions are, what is appropriate to the setting, and what pace of advancement the players and gamemaster expect.

BASELINE EXPERIENCE

Every session each member of the party should receive some baseline experience. The exact amount depends on the expected pace of advancement in **Table 4–1**.

TABLE 4–1: PACE OF ADVANCEMENT

PACE	BASELINE EXPERIENCE
Gradual	**5XP** per **4 hours** of focused gameplay, rounded to the nearest 4 hour block.
Standard	**5XP** per **2 hours** of focused gameplay rounded to the nearest 2 hour block.
Heroic	**5XP** per **1 hour** of focused gameplay rounded to the nearest hour.

COMBAT PARTICIPATION

5XP per combat on a per character basis, as not every character joins every combat. Award an additional **5XP** per nemesis defeated, bearing in mind that 'defeated' isn't always synonymous with 'killed.' Note that this kind of award may not be appropriate for all settings because it incentivises fighting to solve problems.

GRIEVOUS WOUNDS

5XP to a character who exceeds his wound threshold during the session. Use this option at most once per session and in-game day. Meaning: a character cannot earn this experience again if she has done so already either this session or this in-game day.

HEALING FROM INJURIES

When a character's critical injury is fully healed, award **5XP × the injury's severity rating**.

NARRATIVE PROGRESS

5XP when the party (or character) achieves a goal. For major goals, award **10XP** or **15XP** based on the ambitiousness, challenge, and importance of the goal.

MILESTONE AWARDS

Per session awards of experience work well for an open ended or "forever" campaign with game nights held regularly: weekly or fortnightly. However, for games which meet monthly, even less often, or meet only irregularly, awarding large amounts of experience at narrative milestones may be more appropriate. Define these milestones based on roughly what you want the party to be able to purchase by the end of the campaign, referring to **Table 4–2** for those long term bulk costs.

TABLE 4–2: BULK EXPERIENCE COSTS REFRENCE

ACHIEVEMENT	COST
All 5 ranks in a career skill.	75XP
All 5 ranks in a non-career skill.	100XP
First tier 5 talent on the talent pyramid.	175XP
Each additional tier 5 talent.	75XP

PLANNING AHEAD

Even in a game with per session experience awards, some foresight can help with choosing how to spread out those awards. Doing a bit of arithmetic (**future game sessions × hours per session × 5 ÷ pace**) can quickly tell you how much experience characters are likely to earn over some length of time. In the formula above, pace refers to the number of hours it takes to earn 5XP in **Table 4–1**. Compare your results with the bulk costs on **Table 4–2** to get a sense of what players can buy with their experience points over the course of future expected game sessions. Keep in mind that while there are approximately 52 weeks in a year, even a weekly game group can miss as many as a third (or 17) of those weeks.

HIGH EXPERIENCE PLAY

Most of this author's campaigns played with the Genesys Roleplaying Game or its predecessor have lasted no longer than 800 or 900XP. Vanishingly few campaigns last to 2000XP. While Genesys characters don't ever become fully insulated from danger and death, they do become unwieldy to play somewhere between 1000 and 2500XP: they possess too many different talents and abilities to easily remember. Consider that buying as many talents as possible out of the core rulebook (limited by 24 tier 1 talents) costs 1600XP.

Other setting books add on more talents, but there is eventually a point at which characters become frustratingly complicated to play.

If your campaign lasts to that point, consider developing narrative ways to spend XP on the world around the characters: building a base of operations for the party, investing in the growth of factions, acquiring loyal followers and retainers, and even investing experience into those secondary characters (rather than investing into the player characters).

TRACKING EXPERIENCE

For some of these rules, especially troupe style play, it is beneficial for both players and the gamemaster to track experience awards and purchases made with that XP. The Unofficial Genesys Character Sheet provides just such an XP Register on page 4, but you can just as easily use notebook paper, graph paper, or even a simple spreadsheet to follow the example of **Table 4–3** (similar to a check register).

TABLE 4–3: SAMPLE XP REGISTER

DESCRIPTION	CREDIT	DEBIT	NET XP
Character Creation XP	110		110
Increase Intellect to 3		30	80
Increase Intellect to 4		40	40
Increase Agility to 3		30	10
Rank 1 in a Career skill		5	5
Tier 1 Talent		5	0
Session 1 XP Award	25		25
Tier 1 Talent		5	20
Rank 2 in a Career Skill		10	10
Tier 2 Talent		10	0

In the example above, 'credit' refers to awards which increase the net XP and 'debit' refers to player purchases which decrease the net XP. To see how much XP has been awarded to a player over the whole campaign, just add up the items in the credit column.

You might see keeping track of XP as onerous bookkeeping, but it allows the gamemaster (and especially gamemasters new to Genesys) to acquire a sense of how characters grow and expand over time. In addition, when playing and playtesting homebrew modules for Genesys, having each player keep an XP register for his character allows precise and quick rebuilding of characters should some ability or abilities from the homebrew module need adjustment.

TROUPE STYLE PLAY

In some campaigns, especially those with a military theme or those in which characters face frequent lethal danger, each player may control a troup of several characters rather than just one. Juggling the presence of that many characters is a task unto itself. In a military campaign or a campaign featuring a ship and its large crew, the mission requirements each session can naturally dictate which player characters take prominence that day.

CHARACTER CREATION

In order to finish character creation in a reasonable amount of time, players should create 2 starting characters at most (especially when they are new to Genesys). If the campaign requires a larger party and even more characters per player, you should prepare and provide the players with pregenerated characters. All characters created at the beginning of a campaign should start with the same amount of XP.
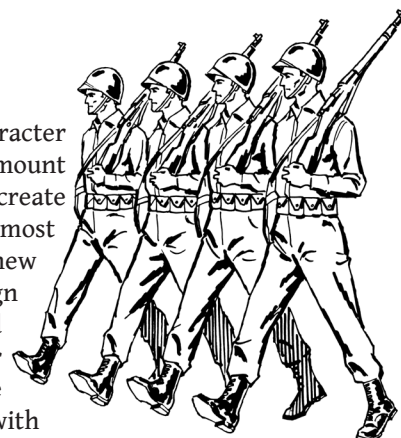
DISTRIBUTING EXPERIENCE

Troupe style play often coincides with long campaigns, which are often a better fit for per session XP awards. *Award the session's baseline experience to each player*, and *award experience for specific deeds and accomplishments to the appropriate characters*. Let the player choose which of her characters on whom to spend the baseline experience, though recommend that she do so based on which among those characters participated more prominently in the session.

For particularly large troups of characters per player, it is appropriate to raise the baseline experience within your chosen pace of advancement. Rather than **5XP** per time block as in **Table 4–1**, use **(troup – 1) × 5XP** per time block instead, where troup is the number of characters controlled per character and time block is the number of hours listed for your chosen pace.

JOINING THE TROUPE

When a player creates another character to join the party in the course of a campaign, follow the standard character creation rules. After character creation, award the new character bonus XP equal to three quarters of the XP earned in gameplay by that player's highest XP character. Do this for each new character the player creates.

5. DESIGNING NEW TALENTS

When adding talents to your setting, there are important balance and design considerations. This chapter includes detailed guidelines for balancing and creating new talents in the form of specific design patterns observed in Genesys, its official setting supplements, and its predecessor. See also **Chapter 6: Eclectic Talents** and **Chapter 7: Developing Careers** for specific talents developed based on the methods and advice in this chapter.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

CHOOSING A TIER

Many things factor into choosing the right tier for a talent. The core rulebook provides some guidance spread across several pages (p.194–196). Those bits of information are condensed in **Table 5–1** alongside information extrapolated from the talents themselves. Note that the bolded items on this table are those taken from the core rulebooks, and all other items are extrapolated from the talents themselves, both in the core rulebook and in its setting supplements.

Ultimately, picking a tier for a talent comes down to the preferred feel of gameplay. Treat **Table 5–1** as a starting point, not as a binding set of rules.

ADJUSTING THE TIER

Adding a cost or narrowing its scope can move a talent down one tier. On the other hand, removing a cost or widening its scope can move a talent up one tier.

RANKED TALENTS

Ranked talents may begin at any tier, but choose a starting tier based on how many ranks you want your players to be able to purchase. The rules-as-written are ambiguous on the subject of additional rank purchases once a ranked talent has reached tier 5. Dedication (Core Rulebook, p.81) implies that you may purchase it multiple times. On the other hand, allowing unlimited purchases of Defensive, Durable, Enduring, Grit, or Toughened will eventually break the game's balance. Decide with your group on a per talent basis how many ranks are allowed, or use one of the following two methods for a softer limit.

One way to limit repeat tier 5 purchases is to increase each successive rank of a tier 5 talent's cost by 5XP. The first time you buy a ranked talent at tier 5, it costs 25XP; the second time, it costs 30XP; and so on.

Another way to limit the stacking of ranks for a talent at tier 5 (or whose ranks have brought it up to tier 5) is to require alternation: no ranked tier 5 talent may be purchased twice in a row.

AVOID ADDING HIGHER TIERS

Why not add more and higher tiers for talents? Talents are capped at tier 5 for the same reason the characteristics are capped at 5: *neither rolling more dice nor higher tier talents add much to the core gameplay, and both make the game itself harder to manage.* You can find many examples of talents up to tier 5 in all the official Genesys books, along with more examples from the community. Even if you're completely new to Genesys, you can acquire a good sense of how to balance talents from the materials that already exist.

When drawing from well balanced examples, higher tiers than 5 will likely always be uncharted territory. For ranked talents (as discussed), the rules as written implicitly allow for repeated purchases of more ranks at tier 5. Unless you have a compelling reason, it's probably best to stick to the 5 tiers.

TABLE 5–1: COMMON TALENT FEATURES BY DEFAULT TIER

TIER	COMMON TALENT FEATURES
1	• **Removes some ■ from a skill check**. • **Doesn't alter the action economy much**. • **Simple ranked and defensive talents**. • Adds ■ to a specific check targeting you. • Adds ▧ in one case and ■ in another case.
2	• **Ranked defensive options (maneuvers)**. • **Simple combat options (removes penalties)**. • **Minor bonuses to allies (i.e. △ or ▢)**. • Adds a couple new career skills. • Adds a specific kind of spell effect for free.
3	• **Upgrades enemy difficulty (esp. in combat)**. • **Grants extra maneuvers to allies**. • **Minimum tier for rerolling skill checks**. • Allows spending ✧ generated by opponents. • Replaces required △ with a strain cost.
4	• **Alters the action economy significantly**. • **Breaks a part of the game (within limits)**. • **Grants extra (specific) actions to allies**. • **Allows multiple checks during one turn**. • Activates without cost/risk (i.e. strain or ✧).
5	• **Similar talents to those in tier 4**. • **Decreases difficulty at minimal cost**. • **Should only be purchased occasionally**. • Ignores an imposed condition temporarily. • Gives a significant edge in combat.

AVOID ENCROACHING SKILLS

The Genesys Core Rulebook makes it clear that talents allow characters to break the standard rules of the game in specific ways, often by enhancing skill checks or by penalizing the skill checks of other characters. However, a tremendously important point is left implicit in that text: *if characters ought to be able to attempt something with a skill check, don't restrict the chance to try that thing by making it exclusive to a talent.*

For example, characters should always be able to scale a steep cliff or wall. The check may be **Formidable (◆◆◆◆◆)** or even **Impossible**, but it should always remain possible for any character to try by making a common skill check. A talent might add ☐ to or remove ■ from checks to climb a cliff face. It might reduce the difficulty. It might even say that characters don't need to make checks to climb at all if they have ranks in Athletics equal to the check's difficulty. But a talent should never say, "only with this talent may your character attempt to scale steep cliffs."

Applying this principle requires some judgement. There are specialized tasks (e.g. hacking a computer or using magic) which, depending on the setting, may require a talent to perform. But, most of the time, the skill system is robust and shouldn't be encroached by fencing in common activities behind talent purchases.

FREEFORM NARRATIVE EFFECTS

It is harder to categorize talents with more narrative effects in ways that make their appropriate tier obvious. The most detailed compectly narrative talent in the core rules is Animal Companion listed at tier 3 (Core Rulebook, p.77). When creating a new talent with a principally narrative or freeform effect, consider whether your effect is more or less potent than the description of Animal Companion and whether yours is broader or narrower in the scope of its effect. Choose a tier for your new narrative talent on that basis.

TALENT PATTERNS

A design pattern is a semi-abstract and reusable description. It is more specific than a category and more general than a blueprint or algorithm. In the case of Genesys RPG talents (and to some extent its predecessor), a design pattern is an observed mechanic or set of mechanics that occurs again and again with slight variations in detail. You can use the talent patterns in this chapter to develop your own talents in alignment with game's official talents in style and form without breaking balance. Talents following these patterns will also appear familiar to veteran players. Their interactions with other game mechanics can be inferred from how the talents from which the patterns derive already interact with those mechanics.

ASSOCIATED AND DISSOCIATED TALENTS

"An associated mechanic is one which has a connection to the game world. A dissociated mechanic is one which is disconnected from the game world."
-*Justin Alexander (a.k.a. The Alexandrian)*

Though the core rulebook only divides talents into those with mechanical and narrative effects, it is possible to think of talents as divided into those with associated and dissociated effects (whether those effects are more narrative or mechanical). Talents which a character could describe or have some understanding of inside the game world are associated talents. Talents which a character could not describe or comprehend at all within the game world are dissociated talents.

The Genesys RPG mostly uses dissociated mechanics in order to incentivise reenactment of literary, narrative, dramatic, and genre-based tropes. *There is nothing wrong with bending the game world's internal logic and consistency to conform to our expectations of drama and plot, but doing so can make the game predictable and even boring.* For parties that prefer more game world associated mechanics, there is nothing wrong with avoiding, removing, and replacing talents more concerned with following dramatic/narrative structure or imitating well worn tropes. It's also important to remember that associated and dissociated mechanics exist on a spectrum; no one talent is completely one or the other.

ALTERNATIVES FOR TIME LIMITED TALENTS

The most pervasive kind of dissociated talents are those which characters may only activate once per encounter or once per session. Not only do characters have no in-game understanding of why these limits exist, the limits themselves are wildly inconsistent. Each gamemaster may have a different sense of when an encounter ends. Different game groups have different session lengths, and the same session length may cover a different amount of in-game time each week.

Talents with a per encounter time limit may instead require either a high and unchanging strain cost to activate or a strain cost that increases with each activation of the talent until the character completes a natural rest.

Talents with a per session time limit may instead require a fractional strain cost to activate, most often simply half the character's strain threshold. By making the strain cost fractional, it becomes constant relative to any character's strain threshold, just a per session time limit is constant relative to any character.

Each pattern is presented as an abstracted talent: the pattern's name, a default tier, a default activation, and whether or not the pattern is typically ranked. The first paragraph describes the pattern's primary effect(s). An optional second paragraph may describe secondary or less obvious implications.

Patterns also may include a list of **twists**: common variations on the pattern and how those variations might shift the tier from the pattern's default. These twists are sorted and labeled ↑ when they might increase the tier, ↓ when they might decrease the tier, or ≈ when they may or may not change the tier. Depending on context, adding even a single twist may increase or decrease a talent's tier more than once.

PATTERN LIST

NEW CAREER SKILLS

Tier 2. Passive.

Talents following the *New Career Skills* pattern simply grant 2 more career skills, allowing you to purchase ranks in those skills without paying the 5XP per rank penalty. These talents are usually thematic. Only 1 of the new career skills should be a combat or magic skill.

A single talent (or houserule) allowing you to pick your own extra career skills would obviate the need for multiple talents following this pattern. On the other hand, specifying groups of career skills added by talents can help inform players about the setting and the roles in the setting that characters might have.

TABLE 5–2: TWISTS FOR NEW CAREER SKILLS

TIER	OPTIONAL TWISTS
↑	• Both career skills are combat or magic skills. • Add a separate positive narrative effect.
≈	• Choose 1 career skill from several options. • Add 1 extra Knowledge skill. • Grant a favor from a faction once per session.
↓	• Grant only 1 career skill. • Grant only knowledge skills as career skills.

EXAMPLE TALENTS

- **Core Rulebook:**
  Basic Military Training (p.76).
- **Realms of Terrinoth:**
  Templar (p.87), Bard (p.87), Adventurer (p.87), Hunter (p.88), Runic Lore (p.89), Well Traveled (p.89).
- **Shadow of the Beanstalk:**
  Corporate Drone (p.44), Disenfrancisto (p.45), Former Professor (p.45), Union Member (p.45), Worlds War Vet (p.47), Years on the Force (p.47).

MAGIC ACTION SPECIALIZATION

Tier 2. Active (Incidental).

Talents following the *Magic Action Specialization* pattern allow you to add a specific effect to a specific magic action without increasing the difficulty. In recompense, you can never add another specific effect to the same magic action. These talents are often mirrored pairs

EXAMPLE TALENTS

- **Realms of Terrinoth:**
  Chill of Nordros (p.88), Favor of the Fae (p.88), Dominion of the Dimora (p.88), Flames of Kellos (p.88).

RANKED EFFECT AMPLIFIER

Tier 1. Activation Varies. Ranked.

Talents following the *Ranked Effect Amplifier* pattern allow you to to increase a specific mechanical effect for a specific application of a skill check. This increase happens a number of times equal to ranks in the talent. The mechanical effect the talent increases may be narrative or mechanical, but most obvious mechanical effects are covered by talents in the Core Rulebook. The 'increase' may actually be a 'decrease' if the effect increased by the talent is a reduction (e.g. Parry). In that case, the effect of reducing damage is amplified.

Sometimes, a talent following this pattern may effectively reduce the difficulty of a check (e.g. Know Somebody). In these cases, the talent should be limited to once per session and be Active (Incidental).

When a talent following this pattern has a strain cost, that strain cost should be constant. For varied strain cost, use the *Ranked Strain Engine* pattern instead.

TABLE 5–3: TWISTS FOR RANKED EFFECT AMPLIFIER

TIER	OPTIONAL TWISTS
↑	• Add a separate positive secondary effect. • A secondary effect is amplified by skill ranks.
≈	• A secondary effect requires some skill ranks. • Decrease rather than increase an effect.
↓	• Add a separate negative secondary effect. • Primary effect requires some skill ranks.

EXAMPLE TALENTS

- **Core Rulebook:**
  Durable (p.73), Know Somebody (p.74), Parry (p.74), Surgeon (p.74), Painkiller Specialization (p.79).
- **Realms of Terrinoth:**
  Apothecary (p.84), Exploit (p.88)
- **Shadow of the Beanstalk:**
  Custom Rig (p.44), Resourceful Mechanic (p.45)

RANKED ADVANTAGE ENGINE

Tier 2. Active (Incidental). Ranked.

Talents following the *Ranked Advantage Engine* pattern allow your character to spend [advantage][advantage] to upgrade the ability of a subsequent skill check a number of times equal to ranks in the talent. Typically, this effect applies to no more than 2 or 3 skills, or only to a specific context (e.g. Social Encounters).

TABLE 5–4: TWISTS FOR RANKED ADVANTAGE ENGINE

TIER	OPTIONAL TWISTS
↑	• Some of the skills are combat or magic skills. • Upgrade a foe's difficulty instead .
≈	• Upgrade another character's ability instead.
↓	• All of the skills are knowledge skills. • Require [advantage][advantage][advantage] to activate.

EXAMPLE TALENTS
- **Shadow of the Beanstalk:**
  Bad Cop (p.47), Good Cop (p.48)

RANKED STRAIN ENGINE

Tier 1. Active (Incidental). Ranked.

Talents following the *Ranked Strain Engine* pattern allow your character to suffer strain up to ranks in the talent to add an equal number of [advantage] to several particular skill checks. Typically, this effect applies to no more than 2 or 3 skills, or only to a specific context (e.g. Initiative).

TABLE 5–5: TWISTS FOR RANKED STRAIN ENGINE

TIER	OPTIONAL TWISTS
↑	• Suffer only 1 strain to activate the effect. • Add [success] instead of instead of adding [advantage]. • Upgrade foe's difficulty instead of adding [advantage].
≈	• Effect affects an engaged ally instead of self. • Add [threat] or remove [advantage] from foe's check instead.
↓	• Effect applies to 2 or fewer skills. • Suffer wounds instead of strain. • Cancel [threat] instead of adding [advantage].

EXAMPLE TALENTS
- **Core Rulebook:**
  Proper Upbringing (p.74), Rapid Reaction (p.74), Defensive Stance (p.75), Side Step (p.77), Dodge (p.78)
- **Realms of Terrinoth:**
  Blood Sacrifice (p.87), Body Guard (p.90).
- **Shadow of the Beanstalk:**
  Customer Service Experience (p.45), Combat Medicine (p.48), Body Guard (p.49).

RANKED TRIUMPH ENGINE

Tier 3. Passive. Ranked.

Talents following the *Ranked Triumph Engine* pattern allow you to spend a [triumph] on a particular skill check to generate a number of [success] equal to ranks in the talent (in addition to a triumph's normally concomitant [success]).

The chosen skill for the talent should never be a combat skill that would result in increased damage. It also probably shouldn't be a magic skill. The talent also shouldn't generate [advantage] instead of [success]. Per the rules as written, [triumph] can already activate an effect requiring any number of [advantage] (Core Rulebook, p.12).

If you use the rules in this book for **Skill Challenges**, this pattern can greatly aid the player characters.

TABLE 5–6: TWISTS FOR RANKED TRIUMPH ENGINE

TIER	OPTIONAL TWISTS
↑	• Primary effect applies to a magic skill. • Add [failure] to an engaged foe's next check instead.
≈	• Remove [failure] rather than adding [success]. • Add [success] to engaged ally's next check instead.
↓	• Primary effect applies to knowledge skill(s). • Limit use to once per session.

> ## USING SKILL RANKS IN TALENTS
>
> When a talent has a primary effect defined by its ranks (or when it is unranked), you may want to give it a secondary effect that is also variable. Allowing each ranked purchase to enhance either this or that effect can be difficult to keep track of. After all, which effect did you spend the rank on when you purchased it 4 sessions ago?
>
> Instead, you may use skill ranks to vary the intensity of a talent's effect (or secondary effect), especially when the skill relates to the talent.
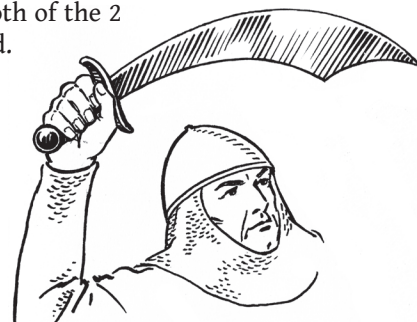
SKILL REMIX

Tier 1. Active (Incidental).

Talents following the *Skill Remix* pattern allow you to make checks for 2 specific skills with a specified characteristic (rather than the normal characteristics paired with those skills). Both of the 2 skills may be combat related.

EXAMPLE TALENTS
- **Realms of Terrinoth:**
  Finesse (p.84),
  Precision (p.84).

6. ECLECTIC TALENTS

DASH TALENTS

If your campaign uses the rules for *Maps & Miniatures* in **Chapter 2: Running Combat** extensively, it may be appropriate to restrict the *Dash Incidental* by making it a series of talents. Locking it into a talent is only appropriate if most to all of your combats use a map and miniatures. Otherwise, the players are likely to see these talents as an XP sinkhole of limited utility.

DASH

Tier 1. Active (Incidental).

Once per round during your turn while spending a maneuver to move, you may perform a *Dash Incidental*, suffering 3 strain to move up to 2u × Agility farther.

DASH (IMPROVED)

Tier 3. Active (Out-of-Turn Incidental).

When you would be able to perform an out-of-turn maneuver to move, you may also perform a *Dash Incidental*. You may still only dash once per round.

DASH (SUPREME)

Tier 5. Passive.

Performing a *Dash Incidental* only costs 1 strain.

> ### DESIGN FOR COMPATIBILITY
>
> Even if your campaign often uses maps and miniatures, most others likely do not. When you develop Genesys content, adding mechanics that expect a map or grid can limit its compatibility with other modules and therefore its audience.
>
> The Maps & Miniatures rules in this book shadow the rules-as-written as closely as possible. Weapons don't need ranges in feet. Explosives don't each need a blast radius. Characters can't use 2 maneuvers to move to a long range, even dashing with an Agility of 5. Those rules were written, tested, and revised for use with other Foundry content without modification, even if that content doesn't account for maps or grids.
>
> Your own mechanics and modules should follow the same principle: preserve compatibility and *don't write rules that require gamemasters to adapt or modify other Genesys content* for use with maps and miniatures in your modules.

REVISED TALENTS

These revised versions of high tier talents allow a bit more flexibility and character customization in the long run of an ongoing campaign. They restore some of the extra power characters could acquire in the predecessor to the Genesys Roleplaying Game.

DEDICATION

Tier 5. Passive. Ranked.

Each rank of Dedication purchased increases one of your character's characteristics once. This talent can't increase a characteristic above 5. You may purchase up to 8 ranks of Dedication and increase each characteristic at most twice. As tier 5 slots become available, you must alternate purchases of Dedication with other tier 5 talents.

NATURALLY GIFTED

Tier 4. Active (Incidental). Ranked.

When you purchase this talent, choose 2 skills. Once per session, you may reroll either of these skills.

For each additional rank of Naturally Gifted, select 1 additional skill with which to use this talent. You may still only make a single reroll per session.

You may not use both Naturally Gifted and Skilled Mastery at once on the same skill check. This talent replaces the Natural talent (Core Rulebook, p.79).

SKILLED MASTERY

Tier 4. Active (Incidental). Ranked.

When you purchase this talent for your character, select 1 skill. Once per round, your character may suffer 2 strain to decrease the difficulty of his next check using that skill by 1 to a minimum of **Easy (♦)**. Each time your character uses this talent during an encounter, the strain cost increases by 1.

For each additional rank of Skilled Mastery, select 1 additional skill with which to use this talent. Only one of the skills you select for Skilled Mastery (initally or for later ranked purchases) may be a combat skill. Likewise, only one of the skills you select for Skilled Mastery may be a magic skill.

You may not use both Skilled Mastery and Naturally Gifted at once on the same skill check. This talent replaces the Master talent (Core Rulebook, p.81).

7. DEVELOPING CAREERS

In the Genesys Core Rulebook, careers are merely lists of favored skills. The Android and Terrinoth setting books also offer some starting gear packages for their careers. Even taken together, these tidbits approach neither the depth nor the breadth of careers in Genesys Roleplaying Game's predecessor. Its careers organized talents into specialization trees which were only available to characters who had bought into the parent career and its specialization.

Specialization trees allow players to customize their characters extensively while also providing enough material for players to keep spending XP in longer campaigns. On the other hand, the trees themselves are time consuming to format, even using sophisticated software. They are also difficult to balance and iterate upon. In addition, many players value the open-endedness of the talent pyramid: specialization trees are effectively rails, even if those rails branch off in a few places. Though Fantasy Flight have added official guidance for creating specialization trees (Expanded Player's Guide, p.102), this chapter presents a simpler method for designing original career-based talents while preserving the talent pyramid and core rulebook's talent pool.

CAREER TALENTS

For each career in your setting, define 3 distinct conceptual roles (e.g. healer, survivalist, fighter, defender, trickster) and create talents for those roles. **Table 7–1** provides an example of concepts for what could be either a police detective or private eye career.

TABLE 7–1: EXAMPLE CONCEPTS FOR CAREER TALENTS

TIER	CONCEPT A	CONCEPT B	CONCEPT C
1	5 Talents related to **Crime Scene Investigation** (1 per tier)	5 Talents related to **Interrogating a Suspect**. (1 per tier)	5 Talents related to **Enforcing the Law**. (1 per tier)
2			
3			
4			
5			

Three talents per tier (and therefore 5 per concept) are completely sufficient. It may be tempting to create more than the resulting 15 talents per career. After all, the predecessor to Genesys had 20 talents per specialization, 6 specializations per career, and more than 18 different careers. Even with some duplication between careers, that is a mind boggling plethora of talents to write, playtest, and balance against each other. It took a large team of writers the better part

of a decade to grow the game to that size. Stick with 15 talents per career to start. Only add more talents if it becomes necessary over the course of a campaign.

Some careers you create may need only 2 concepts, or may not end up with talents evenly balanced among concepts. Use the example in **Table 7–1** as a starting point, adjusting and replacing talents until the career's overall role in the setting feels right. However, do try to keep the talents balanced at 3 per tier; if some careers have more high tier or low tier talents than others, they will be much harder to balance.

A ranked talent can be purchased multiple times, but its presence in a career doesn't mean that career should have fewer other talents. Buying a ranked talent still represents a trade-off and doing so means it will take longer to acquire the career's other talents.

NUMBER OF CAREERS

If careers you design make use of concept-grouped talents as described in this section, 4 to 6 careers will do. If your setting has more careers than 6, consider giving each career only 2 talents per tier (10 total per career).

CROSS-CAREER TALENT PURCHASES

Allow players to purchase talents from other careers at one tier higher (XP cost and pyramid slot) than normally listed. The increased cost and tier allow players to continue building characters in an open ended way while reserving each career's tier 5 talents as unique flourishes for characters committed to that career from the beginning of the campaign.

AVOID TALENT DUPLICATION

Do not duplicate talents from the core rulebook as career talents. Leave those core game talents in a common group open to characters of any career. Note that with only 15 talents per career, players must purchase a substantial number of talents from the common group in the core rulebook for their characters to acquire all three tier 5 career talents.

It may be appropriate, however, to create an Improved or Supreme version of a core rulebook talent for a specific career in your setting.

Also, do not duplicate talents from one career in other careers. Because players can purchase talents from any career for their characters, duplicate placement of talents is unnecessary. Each new talent should live in exactly one place in your setting supplement. If a talent could belong in any of two or more careers, pick the career for which it is best suited and invent other talents for the other careers.

DETECTIVE CAREER

This section expands on the Detective Career implied in **Table 7–1**. Interspersed with the talents and career description are advice for preparing and presenting your own original careers using the same method.

MYSTERY SOLVERS
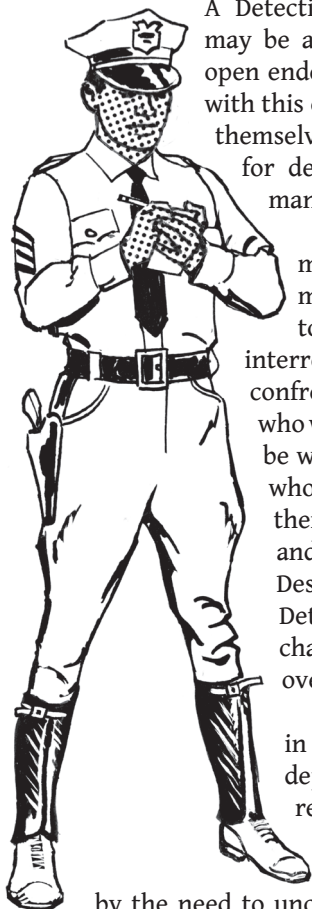
A Detective investigates mysteries, which may be as specific as a crime scene or as open ended as a missing person. Characters with this career may work for the police, for themselves, or merely possess a natural gift for deducing and finding truth amidst many unknowns and deceptions.

In the course of solving mysteries, Detective characters most often investigate a scene to gather evidence, question or interrogate other characters, and confront (sometimes violently) those who would hide the truth. Detectives can be weary of the world, especially those whose work solving crimes exposes them again and again to the darkest and most vile human behaviors. Despite their reputed cynicism, many Detectives push doggedly forward, chasing down every lead and turning over every stone.

What motivates this persistence in the face of uncertainty and human depravity? Some Detectives can't resist a good puzzle. Others may have some unresolved mystery in their own past, driven forward by the need to uncover just what happened to them or someone they cared for. The rare Detective has remained dedicated to the principles of law and justice.

DESCRIBE THE CAREER

Indirectly work your career's concepts into its prose description. Consider referencing relevant Motivations (Core Rulebook, p.46) and how they apply to the career.

CAREER SKILLS

A Detective starts with **Brawl**, **Coercion**, **Negotiation**, **Perception**, **Ranged (Light)**, **Streetwise**, **Vigilance**, and an appropriate **Knowledge** skill from the setting as career skills. Before spending experience during character creation, a Detective may choose four of these career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

ORGANIZE THE TALENTS

Sort the talents by tier, alphabetically within each tier. If you have space, include an overview of all the talents in a table (names only) near the beginning of the career's section in your setting book. If at all possible, contain the career description and its talents to two facing pages in your document. Doing so makes it easier for players to glance over each career quickly.

TIER 1 DETECTIVE TALENTS

ARRESTING STRIKE
Tier 1. Active (Action).

When you purchase this talent, choose a combat skill. Your character may make an arresting strike action, using a weapon with that skill to make an attack with a **Coercion check** rather than the normal skill. On a hit, immobilize the target for one round, adding a round per extra ✿✿, instead of dealing any damage or activating any of the weapon's qualities.

CAREFUL HAND
Tier 1. Passive.

Whenever your character gathers or handles evidence, ♻ cannot be used to damage or contaminate that evidence, though the GM may still do so with ⬦.

CYNICAL
Tier 1. Active (Out-of-Turn Incidental). Ranked.

Your character may suffer strain up to his ranks in Cynical to remove an equal number of ⋀ from another character's social check.

TIER 2 DETECTIVE TALENTS

BODY GUARD
Tier 2. Active (Maneuver). Ranked.

Your character has the Body Guard talent from Shadow of the Beanstalk (p.49) and Realms of Terrinoth (p.90). For Detectives, this talent is tier 2 rather than tier 3.

FAVORED DEMEANOR
Tier 2. Active (Incidental). Ranked.

When you purchase this talent, choose either the Bad Cop (p.47) or Good Cop (p.48) talent from the Shadow of the Beanstalk supplement (but not both). Your character has that chosen talent and may purchase additional ranks of it.

FORENSIC EXPERTISE
Tier 2. Passive.

Each time your character makes a **Perception check** to investigate a piece of evidence, she may combine her ranks in Perception with her ranks in the Detective's **Knowledge** career skill to build the pool, rather than with Cunning.

TIER 3 DETECTIVE TALENTS

CONNECT THE DOTS
Tier 3. Passive. Ranked.

When making a skill check to investigate a scene for evidence, your character may spend ⊛ to add a number of ☼ to the check equal to ranks in Connect the Dots. Your character may only do so once per check.

KEEP IT QUIET
Tier 3. Active (Action).

Once per encounter, your character make a **Skullduggery check** to prevent adversaries present in the scene from noticing the importance of a piece of evidence. The check's difficulty is equal to half the number of adversaries present, rounded up. This talent doesn't necessarily involve hiding the evidence.

QUID PRO QUO
Tier 3. Active (Out-of-Turn Incidental).

Once per encounter after an adversary has spoken, your character may spend a Story Point to recognize something that adversary wants badly enough to give some ground. Add ☼☼△△△ to your character's next social check against that adversary.

TIER 4 DETECTIVE TALENTS

TRUSTY SIDEARM
Tier 4. Passive.

When you purchase this talent for your character, choose a one-handed weapon your character has used for at least 3 sessions or from the start of the campaign. For that weapon, choose one of the following bonuses: increase base damage by 1, add △ to checks with the weapon, or remove ⚀⚀ from checks with the weapon.

If the weapon is lost or destroyed, you may choose another weapon your character has used for at least 3 sessions and apply one of the above effects. Your character may only have 1 trusty sidearm at a time.

A one-handed weapon typically uses Melee (Light), Ranged (Light), or Brawl.

KEEP IT QUIET (IMPROVED)
Tier 4. Active (Maneuver). *Requires* **Keep It Quiet.**

When your character activates Keep it Quiet, he may do so as a maneuver, suffering strain equal to 2 plus the adversaries present instead of a **Skullduggery check.**

SKEPTICAL
Tier 4. Passive.

When targeted by a Deception checks, your character automatically adds ✕ to the check. Your character may instead suffer 2 strain to add ✕ equal to his ranks in Vigilance to the check.

TIER 5 DETECTIVE TALENTS

Only a career Detective may purchase these talents.

I'VE SEEN IT ALL
Tier 5. Active (Encounter).

Once per session before an investigation begins, your character may spend a Story Point to play out a flashback with the gamemaster. As you both describe the scene, the gamemaster will describe you gathering similar kinds of evidence to what lies ahead in the investigation that is about to begin.

Make a series of **Hard (◆◆◆) Cunning checks** where appropriate during the flashback, upgrading the difficulty of each successive check once. Your character may bank any ☼ generated in the flashback to add to checks he will make during the investigation in the present, but the flashback abruptly ends on ⊗.

READ THE ROOM
Tier 5. Active (Maneuver).

Once per encounter as a manevuer, your character may suffer 1 strain per adversary, up to the number of adversaries in a short range. For each adversary you choose up to the strain suffered, the GM must tell you how much more strain that adversary can suffer.

SOMETHING'S AMISS
Tier 5. Active (Incidental).

As an investigative encounter is about to end, your character may spend a Story Point. If there are any clues left behind, the GM must indicate that something is amiss, though she needn't reveal specific clues.

> ### FINAL BALANCE CONSIDERATION
>
> In addition to official guidance and the material in **Chapter 5,** consider that each career talent will be 1 tier higher for most characters interested in it. It may be prudent to place career talents 1 tier lower than you would place them otherwise.

8. LANGUAGES IN THE GAME

In many campaigns, rules about languages (even these) will only slow down play. However, multiple languages and attempts to communicate or translate between them can play a prominent dramatic role in the right game setting. Investigating a murder may yield a witness who doesn't speak the same language as the player characters. A character may have to pass as a native speaker of another language during an espionage mission. The walls of an ancient tomb or temple may have hieroglyphs or pictograms no longer used by the game world's inhabitants at all.

These rules cover using multiple languages in character creation and gameplay. A character should never need skill checks just to use her native language; these rules therefore apply primarily to communicating in foreign languages and to learning new languages over the course of a campaign.

Some languages are inherently harder for non-native speakers to master and use than others. For each language in your setting, set an inherent difficulty for all non-native language users speaking or listening in a way that would require a skill check.

LITERACY

The ability to read, write, and translate a language. **Table 8–1** provides guidance for decreasing difficulty of skill checks for written activities as a character becomes more proficient in the language. Most checks related to reading and writing should be made with an appropriate **Knowledge** skill in the relevant setting.

Reading, writing, and translating are not often inherently dramatic tasks. Call for skill checks only when time constraints are present or when a mistranslation could have dire consequences.

LANGUAGE CHECKS

FLUENCY

The ability to speak and understand others speaking a language. **Table 8–1** provides guidance for modifying skill checks based on a character's proficiency using a language. Speaking a foreign language may involve a number of different skills: any of the five social skills (**Charm**, **Coercion**, **Deception**, **Leadership**, and **Negotiation**) as well as **Streetwise**. Understanding a foreign language when someone else uses it involves either **Perception** or **Vigilance**.
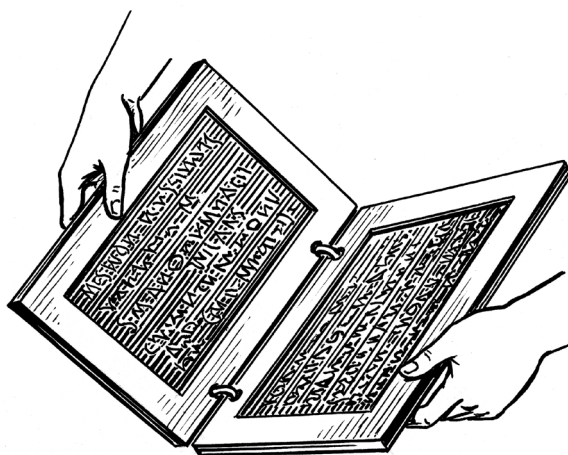
TABLE 8–1: LEVELS OF LANGUAGE UNDERSTANDING

LEVEL	FLUENCY	LITERACY
NONE	The character can't speak this language or understand it when spoken by others, though they may have studied its written form.	**Formidable (◆◆◆◆◆)** check to decipher text in this language. If unfamiliar with its alphabet or symbols, the check is **Impossible (◆◆◆◆◆)**.
LIMITED	Add ■ and upgrade the difficulty of checks made trying to understand or speak speak more than a few words or a simple sentence of this language.	**Daunting (◆◆◆◆)** check to decipher or compose text in this language. Writing and translating take twice the normal amount of time.
BASIC	Add ■ to checks made trying to understand or speak more than a simple conversation in this language (e.g. directions, ordering food, etc).	**Hard (◆◆◆)** check to read or compose text in this language. Writing and translating take half again the normal amount of time.
GOOD	The character may speak and understand this language without making checks.	**Average (◆◆)** , **Easy (◆)**, **Simple (–)**, or even no check to read or write text in this language.
NATIVE	No penalties to speaking, understanding, reading, or writing this language. Native fluency and literacy are only available to characters raised speaking and hearing this language.	

NEW CHARACTERS

After spending character creation experience points, a player may compare his character's starting Intellect with **Table 8–2** to determine spoken fluency and literacy in the character's native language. Note that the table's effects are cumulative: a higher Intellect includes the benefits of each lower Intellect table row.

At the end of session zero, you may find it prudent to grant the player characters any **Basic** or **Good** language fluencies they will need to communicate with other characters in the party. Doing so prevents many frustrating breakdowns of party coordination.

TABLE 8–2: LANGUAGES BY STARTING INTELLECT

INT	LANGUAGES UNDERSTOOD
1	**Native** spoken fluency in one's mother tongue.
2	**Native** literacy in one's mother tongue.
3	Add ⬛ to the extra languages check (below).
4	Add another ⬛ to the extra languages check.
5	Upgrade ability of the extra languages check.

EXTRA LANGUAGES CHECK

At the end of character creation, a player may make an **Average (◆◆) Knowledge** check with a knowledge skill from the setting to add additional languages.

TABLE 8–3: SPENDING EXTRA LANGUAGES CHECK RESULTS

RESULT	EFFECTS
☼	Gain **Basic** fluency or literacy in a language.
☼☼	Increase both the fluency and literacy of a learned language once (e.g. **Basic** to **Good**).
✕⋀	Gain either **Limited** fluency or literacy in a language. Use this option at most twice.
⋀⋀	Increase either the fluency or literacy of a learned language once (e.g. **Basic** to **Good**).
⋂⋂	Lower either the fluency or literacy of a learned language once (minimum **Limited**).
✱	On ☼, add a language at **Native** fluency and literacy. On ✕, add it at **Basic** level instead.

LOW LITERACY SETTINGS

Some settings, especially dark ages and low fantasy, have lower rates of literacy than modern or futuristic settings. For those settings, use the **Table 8–4**.

The foreign languages check at the end of character creation is **Hard (◆◆◆)** rather than **Average (◆◆)**, but still spend results as described on **Table 8–3**.

TABLE 8–4: LANGUAGES IN LOW LITERACY SETTINGS

INT	LANGUAGES UNDERSTOOD
1	**Native** spoken fluency in one's mother tongue.
2	**Limited** literacy of one's mother tongue.
3	**Basic** literacy of one's mother tongue.
4	**Native** literacy of one's mother tongue.
5	Add ⬛⬛ to the extra languages check.

LEARNING LANGUAGES

Handle learning a language as a *result threshold* (**Chapter 3: Skill Checks & Results**). Based on the language's inherent difficulty for non-native speakers, **Table 8–5** sets out ☼ thresholds for gaining and improving fluency/literacy. Feel free to adjust these thresholds for languages in your setting.

Recall that checks for literacy have decreasing difficulties as the non-native learner becomes more competent. Those difficulies are separate from the inherent difficulty of using a language aloud (which doesn't change). **Tables 8–5 and 8–6** refer to the latter.

TABLE 8–5: LANGUAGE LEARNING THRESHOLDS BY DIFFICULTY

INHERENT DIFFICULTY OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE	LEARNING THRESHOLDS		
	LIMITED	BASIC	GOOD
EASY (◆)	5 ☼	10 ☼	30 ☼
AVERAGE (◆◆)	10 ☼	20 ☼	40 ☼
HARD (◆◆◆)	15 ☼	30 ☼	90 ☼
DAUNTING (◆◆◆◆)	20 ☼	40 ☼	100 ☼
FORMIDABLE (◆◆◆◆◆)	25 ☼	50 ☼	150 ☼

In addition, characters must spend significant amounts of in-game time learning a language. You don't need to manage spending that time explicitly. Doing so is more a chore than it is exciting. Instead, simply require the amounts of in-game time given in **Table 8–6** to pass before a character may gain or increase fluency and literacy, assuming that the character's downtime is spent practicing the language.

TABLE 8–6: MINIMUM TIME COMMITMENT LEARNING LANGUAGES

INHERENT DIFFICULTY OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE	TIME COMMITMENT		
	LIMITED	BASIC	GOOD
EASY (◆)	50 hrs	100 hrs	150 hrs
AVERAGE (◆◆)	75 hrs	125 hrs	200 hrs
HARD (◆◆◆)	100 hrs	200 hrs	300 hrs
DAUNTING (◆◆◆◆)	125 hrs	250 hrs	400 hrs
FORMIDABLE (◆◆◆◆◆)	200 hrs	400 hrs	600 hrs

9. MISCELLANEOUS RULES

GEAR & EQUIPMENT

CLARIFYING "TOOLS FOR THE JOB"

The rules as written define the right tool for the job (Core Rulebook, p.93) as either a piece of gear necessary to complete a task or as a piece of gear that aids in performing a task (granting one or more ⬜). Which option any given author intends is left to context, which works well often enough, but writing out many short paragraphs to specify which sort of 'right tool for the job' is meant for every piece of equipment in a setting's gear list can become tedious.

Instead of writing out sentences or paragraphs for many pieces of gear, use 'Tool' or 'Tool for the Job' as an item quality. When gear is required to even attempt a task, use **Tool (Required): [task]**. In the other case, use **Tool (⬜): [task]** or **Tool (Boost): [task]** for gear that merely aids a task. You can even specify multiple ⬜ in parenthesis for particularly powerful equipment.

Where [task] is listed in brackets, write down a quick word or phrase describing the task. A computer is likely to be **Tool (Required): hacking**, whereas a magic wand or wizard's staff might instead only be **Tool (⬜): spellcasting**. While hacking without a computer of some kind is impossible, some settings may allow use of magic without wands or staffs (the implements only enhancing the magic's potency).


WEAR & TEAR & REPAIR

In some settings, gear may degrade with ongoing use. These rules replace the Item Maintenance rules (Core Rulebook, p.89). They are also more granular than the newer Scavenged Items and Armor rules (Expanded Player's Guide, p.34) and work well when characters carry only a few items. These rules work best if players track each item on its own index card.

STRAIN ON EQUIPMENT

Like characters and vehicles, all gear can suffer strain. When a character uses an item as a part of a skill check, the GM may spend a number of ♲ from the check to inflict an equal amount of strain on the item, up to the check's difficulty. On an **Average (◆◆) check** the GM could, for example, spend up to ♲♲ to inflict strain on the item. Track strain with tally marks next to the piece of gear on an index card or the character sheet.

If an item has suffered any strain, add ⬛ to checks using the item. Increase the difficulty of checks using an item once per 20 strain suffered, rounding down (a minimum of zero increases for the first 20 strain).
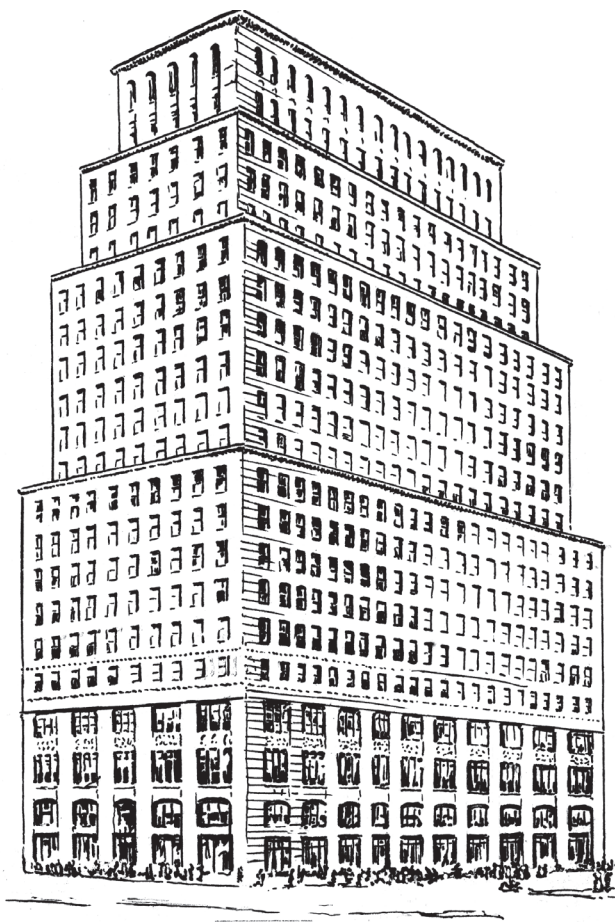
CRITICAL BREAKS

Whenever a character generates ⬢ using an item, the GM may have the player roll a d100. Each extra ⬢ on the same check may subtract 10 from the d100 roll. If the roll is at or below an item's accumulated strain, the item suffers a critical break. In the narrative, suffering a critical break means some part of the item has weakened but the item isn't broken yet. However, once an item accumulates more critical breaks than twice its encumbrance rating, it is completely broken and unusable until repaired.

Additionally, upgrade the difficulty of checks to use an item once per critical break.

REPAIR & MAINTENANCE

Strain on equipment does not recover naturally, but is also not difficult to repair. Make a **Simple (–) Mechanics check** to remove strain from a single piece of gear. Each ☼ removes 10 strain and adds a half hour to the time taken by the check. Each ⋀ reduces time taken by 15 minutes. Narratively, reducing an item's strain can be as simple as cleaning it.

A critical break must be repaired with a separate **Mechanics check**. This check's difficulty is equal to the number of critical breaks the item currently has (a maximum of **Impossible (◆◆◆◆◆)** for 6 breaks). The time taken by the check is equal to a half hour multiplied by the current number of critical breaks. As with strain, each ⋀ reduces the time by 15 minutes.

MEDICAL CARE (ONGOING)

When a character is under round-the-clock medical care, he (or medical personnel) may make Medicine or Resilience checks to recover from critical injuries more often, waiting only a number of days equal to an injury's severity before trying to heal that injury.

The definition of round-the-clock medical care depends on setting, but may include time spent: in a hospital or advanced medical facility, in the temple of a healing deity, immersed in a font of holy water, or suspended in a medical recovery stasis. In any case, *the recovering character may undertake no other activity while benefitting from round-the-clock medical care.*

The increased speed of injury recovery implies a setting with medical science and knowledge beyond our own in the present day. The facility providing the ongoing care may also charge for services rendered.

SPENDING STORY POINTS

Story points have both mechanical and narrative uses throughout the Genesys RPG along with its official and community setting supplements. The core rulebook provides some guidance for spending story points on narrative effects, but this section includes some additional caveats and guidelines.
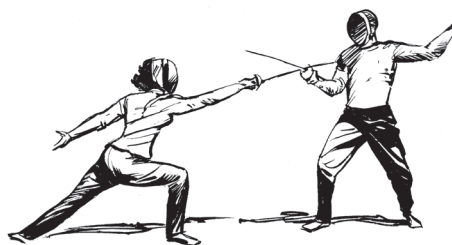
NARRATIVE RULE OF THUMB

The default mechanical effect of spending a story point is to upgrade the ability of a check (⬡ to ◈), *not to automatically succeed on a check.* When spending story points for narrative effects, use that example as a rule of thumb: the narrative effect introduced by a story point shouldn't completely sidestep or neutralize the central problem or obstacle in a scene. It may, however, give the party a new tool to try solving the problem at hand or increase the odds of success for a plan the party has already put into action.

AVOID ENCROACHING TALENTS

Some talents allow a player to achieve a specific narrative effect. If the setting you are using has such talents, story points shouldn't be used for the same effect. If story points are allowed to encroach talents, players are likely to either not buy those talents or feel that XP already spent on those talents was wasted.

EXHAUSTION

The core rules set a natural rest as the requirement for healing 1 wound and recovering all suffered strain (Core Rulebook, p.116–117). If you need a more specific rule of thumb than 'full night,' the length of which may vary among settings or between worlds in a setting, almost all characters should dedicate at least 8 hours to resting and relaxing with at least 5 or 6 of those hours spent sleeping (though not necessarily all at once).

If a character doesn't complete a full night's rest in the course of a day (or approximately 24 hours), he must make a **Hard (◆◆◆) Resilience check** at the beginning of the next day or 24 hour period. Upgrade the check's difficulty once per consecutive full night's rest missed or forgone. The character suffers strain for each ⟳ and lowers his strain threshold once per ✕ from the check. The player should to mark each ✕ as an "X" in the strain threshold on the character sheet to note how much the threshold is presently reduced. The only way to fully restore a strain threshold lowered by exhaustion is to complete a natural rest.

⊗ generated by the **Resilience check** may result in the character falling immediately asleep. Alternatively, the game master may bank the ⊗ and spend a story point later in the in-game day to have the character fall asleep at an inopportune or inconvenient moment.

On the third day without sleep, ⟳ may instead result in auditory or even visual hallucinations.

RANDOM CHARACTERS

Many players may react negatively to the idea of random character generation in a game so often described as narrative. However, random generation encourages *playing to discover one's character*, which can be just as rewarding as playing to portray a pre-imagined character.

STEP 1: CHARACTERISTICS

Start with each characteristic set to 1. Then roll **6d6** and consult **Table 9–1: Random Characteristic Rolls**. For each **d6** roll that matches a characteristic in the table, increase that characteristic once. Reroll any dice that would increase a characteristic above 4. If a character still has 3 or more characteristics with a value of 1, she may reroll or shift the **d6** results one at a time until only 2 characteristics have a value of 1.

For slightly more powerful starting characters, roll **7d6** or **8d6** instead. You might also allow a single characteristic to reach a value of 5.

TABLE 9–1: RANDOM CHARACTERISTIC ROLLS

CHARACTERISTIC	MATCH TO	ROLLS	INITIAL	FINAL
BRAWN	⚀	⚀	1	2
AGILITY	⚁	⚁	1	2
INTELLECT	⚂	⚂ ⚂	1	3
CUNNING	⚃	⚃	1	2
WILLPOWER	⚄		1	1
PRESENCE	⚅	⚅	1	2

You can perform this step on the character sheet itself. Lay out **6d6** on top of each characteristic's spot on the character sheet in ascending order (shown below). Then roll another **6d6** and place those rolls in groups with the dice already on the page, performing the rerolls and adjustments described above if necessary. The number of dice in each group are the final values.
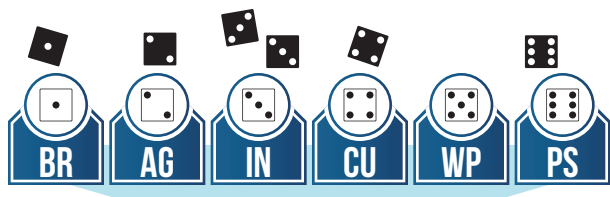
STEP 2: DERIVED TRAITS

Soak is still equal to Brawn. Starting wound and strain thresholds are rolled as follows:

- **Wound Threshold:** 5 + Brawn + **2d4**
- **Strain Threshold:** 5 + Willpower + **2d4**

STEP 3: ARCHETYPE ABILITIES

If an official setting has archetypes with abilities or you have a list of similar abilities for your setting, players may choose one among those abilities. It may be tempting to have players roll for an ability as well but, given that Steps 1 and 2 are already random, doing so can result in frustrating or nonsensical combinations. It's better to let the players choose here.

STEP 4: CAREER & INITIAL SKILLS

Choose a career from the game's setting based on the characteristics you rolled in Step 1. Most Genesys careers list 8 career skills per career in alphabetical order. Put the skills for your career in a numbered list and roll **4d8** to assign ranks to those skills (just like you rolled **6d6** to increase characteristics in Step 1). For each of the **4d8** that rolls a 5, for example, add a free rank to the 5th career skill in your career's list. If any skill has more than 2 ranks, reroll the **d8** results one at a time until no skill has more than 2 ranks.

If your setting has a different number of career skills per career and/or a different number of free ranks allowed in its character creation rules, adjust the number and kind of dice you roll accordingly. For example, if a setting has six career skills per career and three free ranks, roll **3d6** instead of **4d8**.

STEP 5: INVEST EXPERIENCE POINTS

For each of characteristic with a final value of 1, receive 10XP to spend normally. You still can't use this character creation XP raise a skill beyond 2 ranks. You also can't use it to increase the value of a characteristic.

STEP 6: DETERMINE MOTIVATION

Complete Step 6 of character creation per the rules as written (Core Rulebook, p.46). Tables to roll for each of the four motivations are already provided.

STEP 7: GEAR, APPEARANCE, PERSONALITY

Complete Step 7 of character creation per the rules as written (Core Rulebook, p.51) or as described in your game's setting supplement or by your gamemaster.

TENFOLD TABLES

When populating your setting with characters and small events or mini-encounters, it can be difficult to find the sweet spot of preparation work. Prepare too much and you've wasted a ton of time. Prepare too little and you'll probably be able to improvise your way through the session, but pure improvisation isn't always reliable. Most of us have a finite amount of focus at any one time and gamemasters are almost always juggling many concerns at the table.

Writing a few random tables of events can ease the cognitive load by offloading your ideas onto the table; you'll no longer have to come up with as many ideas on the spot and you can bank the ideas that come to you at inopportune moments away from the game table, rather than forgetting them come game day.

Tenfold tables are a quick way to bring a location to life. While a table of 50 or 100 random things can be impressive, it's a long slog to come up with that many interesting things. On the other hand, *coming up with ten interesting things is less challenging.* And that's all a tenfold table really is: ten interesting things. While the party is at that table's location:

1. Pick a percent chance that something unexpected might befall the player characters.
2. Roll a **d100** (using a **d10** for the tens place and another **d10** for the ones place).
3. If the result is equal to or less than the percent chance you picked, use either **d10** result from the roll to choose an event on the table to trigger.

Tenfold tables afford the gamemaster a nice mix of both surprise and choice. If the option suggested by one **d10** doesn't make sense or is otherwise unhelpful, it's likely the the other **d10** option is better. Ultimately, you (not the table) are in charge of what happens.

LENGTH OF ENTRIES

It's important to remember that a random table has to be usable in the midst of gameplay when other things are happening quickly. Each item on a table should be at most a single sentence, or just enough information to jog your memory and set your improvisational creativity loose in a new direction. You won't have time to read an artfully crafted paragraph when there are players in front of you who want to *do something.*

STRUCTURAL PATTERNS

DANGER GRADIENT
Lower numbered events on the table with worse potential outcomes for the party and higher numbered events with better outcomes (or the reverse).

EMBEDDED VARIATION
A secondary set of details determined by the other (unused) **d10** roll. For example, **Table 9–2** below has an entry (line 6) for an itinerant merchant and options for the merchant's wares embedded in the line.

TICKING CLOCK
A table with 24 items. Start with the current in-game hour (e.g. 13 for 1pm) and add your chosen **d10** roll to determine which event triggers. If you go beyond 24, loop back to the start of the table. This pattern allows different kinds of events based on the time of day.

REPLACE ROLLED EVENTS

As a tenfold table represents a specific location, it is prudent to replace rolled events (which have happened in the game) during your prep work between sessions. Periodic small updates keep the table fresh during long campaigns without having to rewrite it all at once.

TABLE 9–2: EXAMPLE TENFOLD TABLE

D10	THE TIPSY MOUNTAIN GOAT, A ROUGH AND TUMBLE FRONTIER TAVERN AND INN
1	A patron wants to fight the party member with the highest Brawn. **Hard (◆◆◆) Charm check** to avoid.
2	The bartender scowls irritably at the party as they enter. Add ⚄ to social checks made against the bartender.
3	A local drunk vomits on the party member with the lowest Vigilance, who suffers 1 strain.
4	All the taverns rooms are full. Safe rest for the night means bunking with unknown other travelers.
5	A shady figure in the corner has a job he thinks the party can help with. The other **d10** result is the job. **1**: a ruse leading to an ambush. **2–5**: rescue a lost traveler. **6–9**: slay a monster. **10**: kill another patron.
6	An itinerant merchant is selling out of a wagon in front of the tavern. The other **d10** result is what's for sale. **1–4**: survival gear and preserved foodstuffs. **5–7**: weapons. **8–9**: tchotchkes. **10**: magic items and implements.
7	Trade and travel have slowed down. Rooms only cost a fraction of normal price (based on the other **d10**).
8	A local drunk buys the party a round of drinks. Each character recovers 1 strain.
9	The bartender smiles at the party as they enter. Add △ to social checks made against the bartender.
10	A friend or ally of one of the player characters happens to be in the tavern when the party arrives.