



Basic Rules Set:

Character Creation
Ability Checks
Combat Resolution

Weapons & Armor
Social Interaction
Character Development

A game by **Jeff Dee**, creator of Villains and Vigilantes™

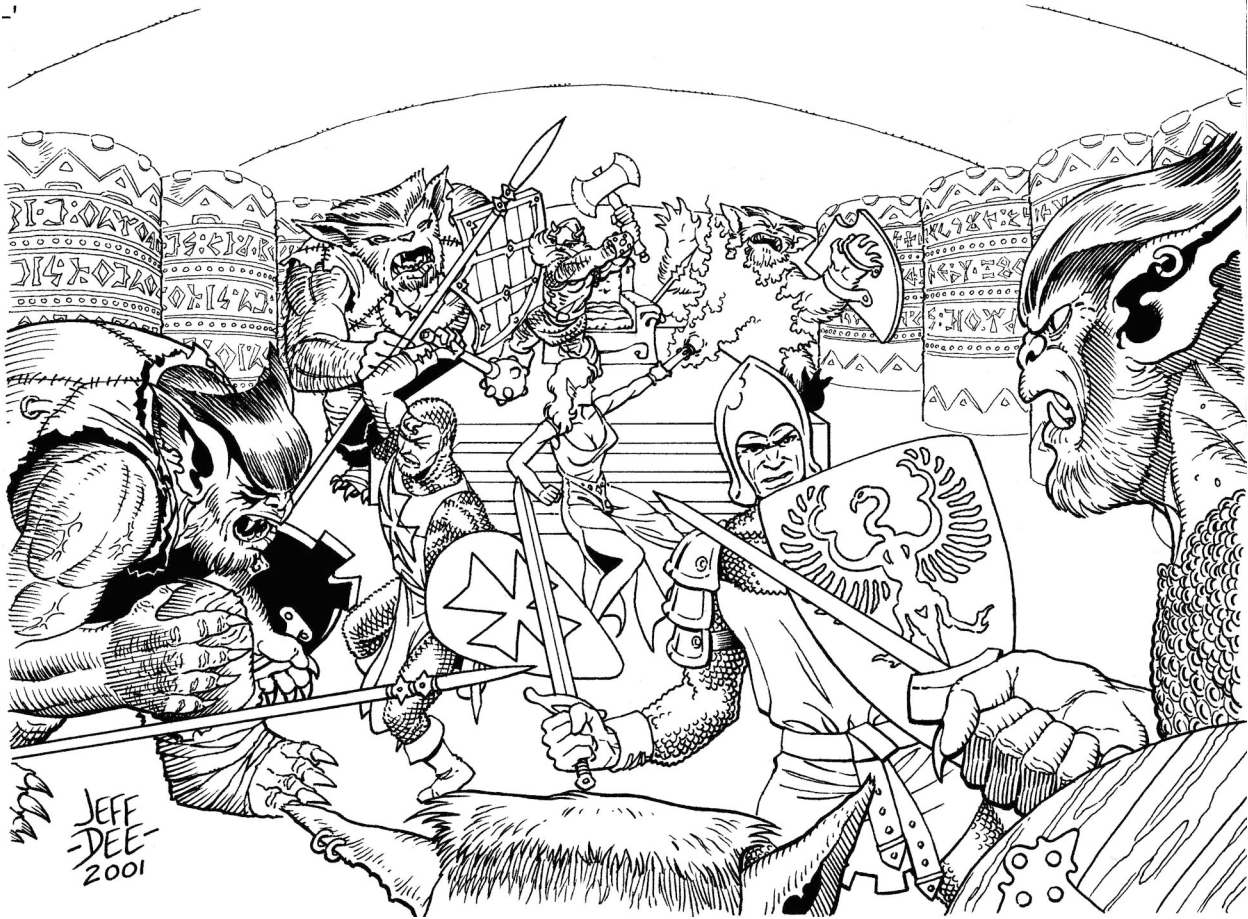


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1.0 Introduction

Pocket Universe™ is a set of role-playing game rules which can be used for a wide range of settings and genres. This book presents the basic rules, including a large enough sample of skills, abilities, and equipment to begin playing in an ancient through modern setting. Upcoming campaign books and rules expansions will add more options to these core rules.

1.1 What is a Role-Playing Game?

What is a Role-Playing Game?

“Bang, I got you, you’re dead!”

“No I’m not, you missed me.”

As kids we have all played, in one form or another, a game in which this conversation probably took place. Cops and Robbers, Cowboys and Indians, Army games and the like are all very basic forms of “role-playing” games. But just as we have gone on to more mature pursuits as adults, those of us who still enjoy the mental stimulation of games which use the power of our imaginations have



moved on to more complex versions of Cops and Robbers. In other words, when the cop shoots at the robber, we know not only if he hit the felon but exactly how much he hurt him.

In a role-playing game the players assume the roles of characters in a play that has not been totally scripted. The action is controlled by a “Gamemaster” (referred to as the GM) who describes the setting, controls all important characters not played by one of the players (called non-player characters or “NPCs” as well as all the “bad guys”, creatures and common folk in the setting. The GM describes to the players what they see, hear, and the actions of NPC and creatures and/or monsters. The players then let the GM know how they will respond and what actions they will take.

Role-Playing games (RPGs) provide an underlying set of rules and guidelines which allows the results of players’ actions to be known in a consistent manner. These rules show how characters measure what they can and cannot do, how they go about taking turns describing their actions, and what results come about due to their actions. The character’s chance of being successful at what he or she is trying to do is determined by the capabilities of the character but is also influenced by chance. The random aspect of any given situation is simulated by using dice which are rolled to generate an outcome based on a character’s ability and skill as well as his experience.

As a character participates in more and more adventures and conflicts he is given the opportunity to increase his skill levels as well as learn new talents. This ability to “grow” is one of the unique aspects that set RPGs apart from other types of games. Watching your character grow and become more powerful, well equipped, rich and famous make RPGs a fun and rewarding experience.

Welcome to the world of role-playing games!

1.2 Equipment Needed

Each player needs a pencil, eraser, and scrap paper. The GM should keep a notebook for information that is secret from the players.

Pocket Universetm requires 10-sided dice, ideally two for each player. When rolling a 10-sided die you should always read it as roll from 1-10, not 0-9. The rules also call for rolls of 2d10: roll two 10-sided dice and add the results together for a total of 2 to 20.



2.0 Character Generation

Each player needs to create their own character to play. GMs need to create lots of characters. This section of the rules explains how.

2.1 Attributes

Each character has four Attributes which define their basic abilities:

Physique (PHYS): Represents physical strength, fitness and health.

Deftness (DEFT): A rating of manual dexterity, speed, reaction time, and agility.

Intellect (INTL): This attribute measures intelligence, intuition, and education.

Willpower (WILL): Stands for personality and appearance, as well as fortitude, empathy, and resistance to mental assault.

All four attributes start at 8. Player characters get 10 points to add to that. No Attribute may have more than 4 points added to it. 10 is the average attribute score for a typical adult human.

2.2 Personal Traits

Personal Traits represent unique strengths and weaknesses. Each Personal Trait has a point value. A character may take up to 5 points worth

of Advantages, but they must take an equal number of points worth of Disadvantages. Some Advantages and Disadvantages may be taken more than once, either in different forms or for a cumulative effect. Simply count the point value once for each time the trait is taken.

Characters may gain or lose Advantages or Disadvantages due to game events.

The GM may create new Personal Traits as needed for their game setting. Refer to the existing Traits for guidance on setting the point values of new Traits.

2.21 Disadvantages

Attribute -1 (2):

The character loses one point from an Attribute. This Disadvantage may only be taken once per Attribute.

Distinctive (1):

The character is tattooed, scarred, famous, etc. and has trouble passing anonymously without a disguise.

Enemy (1-2):

The character is hounded by a personal enemy who wishes them ill. For 1 point, the enemy is either a) no more powerful than the character but very mobile and liable to turn up anywhere, or b) much more powerful than the character (either personally or politically) but limited to a particular geographic region. For 2 points, the enemy is both mobile and more powerful than the character.



Killing an enemy tends to either generate a new enemy (angered by the slaying of the first), or other new Disadvantages.

Far-Sighted (2):

The character has poor short-range perception and suffers a penalty of -1 on all physical Actions NOT performed at range. This Disadvantage may only be taken once.

Gigantism (2):

The character is 50% taller than the normal height for their race, has difficulty negotiating small spaces, and suffers a -1 penalty on any checks where great size is a drawback (including Defense: see 2.5). Gigantism may only be taken once.

One-Eyed / Nearsighted (1):

The character has very poor depth perception. Apply a penalty of -2 on all physical Actions the character performs at range. This Disadvantage may only be taken once.

One-Handed (1):
The character has lost a hand or arm,

and cannot use any weapons or equipment 2-handed.

Outcast (1):

The character is an 'outsider' - a foreigner, half-breed, heretic, illegitimate child, or some other sort of "undesirable". This results in the character facing a degree of prejudice in most social situations.

Phobia (1):

The character has an irrational fear of something, which must be specified when this Disadvantage is taken. Examples include: water, heights, closed spaces, darkness, etc. Whenever

the stimulus is encountered the character must treat it with the utmost fear and aversion. They must flee in terror unless they make a successful WILL check. If the thing they fear is very common (women, open spaces, etc.) the GM may give the character 2 points for this Disadvantage.

Poor (1):

The character's starting cash is decreased,



depending on how many points are taken:

1 point = \$250

2 points = \$75

3 points = \$15

4 points = \$0

See 3.1.

Poor Reflexes (1):

A character with poor reflexes suffers a -1 level penalty on their Initiative rolls (see 2.33). For example, a 2/4/6 initiative would be reduced to 2/3/4. This Disadvantage may be taken up to three times.

Quirk (1):

The character has a strong personality trait which often affects their behavior. Examples include: heavy drinker, promiscuous, kind-hearted, vain, greedy, single-minded, vengeful, etc.

Slow (1):

The character's Move is decreased by one. This may be taken any number of times, but Move may not go below 0. Slowness might result from being overweight, having a physical disability, or just being lazy. See 2.34.

Unattractive (1):

The character suffers a -1 penalty on any rolls where personal appearance is a factor. Unattractive may be taken any number of times.

Uneducated (1):

The character has received less than the usual amount of education. Each time this Disadvantage is taken, the character gets 3 fewer starting experience points (see 2.4). This Disadvantage may be taken multiple times, but a character's starting experience may not be reduced below 0.

2.22 Advantages

Acute Reflexes (1):

The character receives a +1 level modifier on their Initiative rolls (see 2.33). For example, a 2/3/4 initiative would become 2/4/6. Acute Reflexes may be taken any number of times.

Acute Vision (1):

The character can ignore 1 point of skill penalty from range (see 5.32). Acute Vision may be taken any number of times.

Ambidextrous (1):

A character with this Advantage can use either hand equally well, without any penalty for off-handed Actions. See 5.81.

Attractive (1):

The character gets a +1 bonus on rolls where personal appearance is a factor. Attractive may be taken any number of times.

Attribute +1 (2):

The character may add +1 to any one Attribute, even if the new score exceeds 12. This Advantage may only be taken once per Attribute.

Connected (1):

Each time this Advantage is taken, the character receives 3 additional points with which to purchase Contacts. *Contacts are explained in Section 2.6.*

Lackey (2):

The character has a subservient companion (a henchman, squire, slave, kid brother, etc.). The Lackey is controlled by the player whose character it belongs to.



Lackeys are constructed like any other character, but only gets 8 points to add to Attributes. They may only take up to 3 points of Advantages and Disadvantages, and they may not take a Lackey as an Advantage nor be wealthier than the main character. Lackeys do not get Contacts, and earn only 1 EP per game session (see 6.3).

Night Vision (1):

The character can ignore 1 point of skill penalty from darkness. Night Vision may be taken up to four times.

Running (1):

The character's Move is increased by 1. Running may be taken any number of times. See 2.34.

Small (2):

The character is 1/2 the normal height for their race, is able to negotiate small spaces, and gets a +1 bonus to any checks where small size is an advantage (including Defense: see 2.5). This Advantage may only be taken once.

Stipend (1):

The character has a regular monthly income from an inheritance, trust fund, investment, or business. For 1 point, the character receives \$250 per month. For 2 points, the character receives \$1000 per month. For 3 points, the character receives \$2250 per month. For 4 points, the character receives \$4000 per month. The character receives their first payment 1 game month after the game begins.

Toughness (1):

This gives the character the equivalent of +1/+1 natural armor, which is cumulative with any other armor worn.

See 5.4. Toughness may only be taken once.

Trained / Educated (1):

The character has undergone extensive training. Each time this Advantage is taken, the character gets 3 extra Experience Points (see 2.4). This Advantage may be taken any number of times.

Wealth (1):

The character's starting cash is increased, depending on how many points are taken:

1 point = \$1000
 2 points = \$3000
 3 points = \$12,000
 4 points = \$60,000.
 See 3.1.

2.3 Other Characteristics

Characters' other statistics are determined from the scores in their Attributes, using the table below:

Score:	Modifier:	Value:	Roll:
2	-8	1	0/0/0
3	-7	1	0/0/0
4	-6	2	0/0/0
5	-5	3	0/0/0
6	-4	4	0/0/1
7	-3	5	0/1/1
8	-2	6	1/1/1
9	-1	8	1/1/2
10	0	10	1/2/3
11	+1	13	2/3/4
12	+2	17	2/4/6
13	+3	22	3/5/7



Score:	Modifier:	Value:	Roll:
14	+4	29	4/6/8
15	+5	37	5/7/9
16	+6	48	6/8/10

the order in which characters can act each turn. See 5.2.

2.31 Hit Points

Each character has a number of hit points equal to the number in the Value column for their PHYS Attribute. For example, a character with a 9 PHYS has 8 hit points. Hit points are used to keep track of the extent of a character's physical injuries. See 5.4.

2.32 Unarmed Damage

INTL: 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
EPs: 5 6 8 10 13 16 19

To determine a character's unarmed damage range, use the numbers in the Roll column for their PHYS score. For example, a character with a 12 PHYS does 2/4/6 damage with their bare hands. See 5.4.

2.33 Initiative

A character's initiative range is found by consulting the Roll column for the character's DEFT score. For example, a character with an 11 DEFT has a 2/3/4 initiative roll. Initiative regulates

2.34 Move

A character's Move rate equals 6 plus the number listed in the Modifier column for their DEFT Attribute. For example, a character with an 8 DEFT has a Move of only 4. See 5.24.

2.4 Skills

A new character's INTL Attribute determines the number of starting EPs or "Experience Points" they may spend on their initial skills.

All of a character's starting EPs must be spent during character generation. Characters can attempt to use skills they haven't purchased with EPs, but unskilled attempts suffer a difficulty penalty.

B a s i c proficiency in any skill costs 1 EP. This gives the character a score in that skill equal to their score in the Attribute the skill is based on. For example, a character



with an 11 DEFT can buy a skill of 11 in Acrobatics for 1 EP. A character's skill score can be improved by spending more EPs on that skill. Consult the table below:

Skill Score:	Cost:	Total Cost:
Attribute +0	1	1
Attribute +1	2	3
Attribute +2	* 3	6
Attribute +3	4	10
etc. +1	+ Cost	

**Beginning characters may not add more than +2 to any individual skill.*

For example, a character with a 10 DEFT can buy a Dodge skill of 12 for 6 EPs. It will cost that character 4 more EPs to improve their Dodge skill to 13 later in the game.

2.41 Languages

Characters speak their native language fluently for free. They must spend EPs for the ability to read, or to speak foreign languages.

It costs 1 EP for broken, halting ability in a language. For 2 EPs a character speaks with a distinct accent and trouble with nuances. For 3 EPs a character can speak a language fluently.

Literacy in any language the character speaks costs 1 EP. Characters from literate cultures get literacy in their native language for free.

2.42 Skill List

Some of the most basic skills are listed here, along with the Attribute they are

based on and the penalty for unskilled attempts. Rules for making skill checks are found in section 4.0.

Skill:	Attribute:	Penalty:
Acrobatics	DEFT	-4
Appraise Value	INTL	-1
Charm	WILL	-1
Climbing	DEFT	-1
Convince	WILL	-1
Craft*	DEFT	-4
Disguise	INTL	-4
Dodge	DEFT	-1
Grapple	DEFT	-1
Insight	WILL	-1
Intimidation	WILL	-1
Kick	DEFT	-1
Listen	INTL	-1
Lockpicking	DEFT	-4
Medicine	INTL	-4
Melee*	DEFT	-1
Missile*	DEFT	-1
Negotiate	INTL	-1
Pickpocket	DEFT	-4
Profession*	INTL	-1/-4
Punch	DEFT	-1
Scholar*	INTL	-4
Search	INTL	-1
Seduce	WILL	-1
Shield	DEFT	-1
Sleight of Hand	DEFT	-4
Stealth	DEFT	-1
Survival*	DEFT	-1
Swim	DEFT	-1
Tactics*	INTL	-1/-4
Throw Weapon*	DEFT	-4
Tracking	INTL	-4

**Choose a specialization. Characters can have multiple specializations by buying the same skill multiple times. Refer to the skill descriptions below for available specializations.*



The GM may create new skills as needed for their game setting. Skills are always based on DEFT, INTL, or WILL. Refer to the existing skills for guidance on creating new skills.

2.43 Skill Descriptions

Acrobatics (DEFT/-4):

You may perform flips, cartwheels, tightrope walks, and so on. Roll with a difficulty modifier set by the GM. Acrobatic maneuvers take at least 1 space of movement to perform. If you spend an Action doing acrobatic flips, you may use this skill for Defense for one combat round. See 2.51.

Appraise Value (INTL/-1):

This skill is used to guess the base purchase price of an item. See 3.11. Appraisal takes at least one full turn. The GM rolls secretly, applying difficulty modifiers to reflect how common or unique the item is. For each point the roll is missed by, the price assessment will be off by +/- 5%. On a fumble, double the degree of error. On a critical success, the character gains extra insight into the item's background, enabling them to sell it to a collector for twice the normal base purchase price.

Charm (WILL/-1):

This skill is used to make others like you. It has no direct effect on whether the other character believes what you tell them, or is romantically attracted. Charm has no minimum time requirement.

Charm attempts are opposed by the other character's WILL. On a critical success, the character becomes an acquaintance (see 2.6). On a normal

success, the character will stop and chat amiably. On a normal failure, the character remains uninterested. On a critical failure, the character becomes deeply offended and possibly hostile.

Climbing (DEFT/-1):

This is the ability to find hand-holds and toe-holds, and to select good routes. It also implies some experience with climbing equipment. Difficulty modifiers and the time required for each skill roll depend on the surface being climbed. On a critical failure, the character falls. On a regular failure, the character can find no way to continue. On a regular success, the character proceeds slowly. On a critical success, the character proceeds quickly.

Convince (WILL/-1):

This skill is used to get others to believe that you mean what you say. Convince has no minimum time requirement.

Convince attempts are opposed by the other character's Insight skill. On a critical success, the character buys the story hook, line, and sinker. On a normal success, nothing in your body language or wording leads them to suspect that you're lying. On a normal failure, the character remains unconvinced. On a critical failure, the character becomes convinced that you're lying (even if you're not).

Craft (DEFT/-4):

This skill is a catch-all for various crafts. Specify the craft you want: carpentry, pottery, black-smithing, spinning & dying, weaving, knitting, tailoring, tanning & skinning, knots, etc. The time requirement



and difficulty modifier for each task varies.

Disguise (INTL/-4):

This skill uses costuming and cosmetics to make characters look like someone else. Each disguise attempt takes at least 1 turn.

On a normal success or failure, the costume gets a positive or negative modifier equal to the number of points by which you made or missed your roll. On a critical success, double the positive score. On a fumble, there's a dreadful accident the costume gets irreparably ruined.

Characters roll their INTL to resist being taken in by the disguise, subtracting the disguise's modifier. If they make their roll, they see through the disguise. Each character gets to roll this once the moment they first see the disguise, and again each time they spend an Action carefully examining the disguised character.

Dodge (DEFT/-1):

This skill can be used for both Melee Defense and Missile Defense (see section 2.6, Defense Values).

Grapple (DEFT/-1):

This skill improves a character's ability to grab and pin opponents in combat. See 5.82. Grapple skill may be used for Melee Defense against other grapple attempts.

Insight (WILL/-1):

This skill is used to get a sense of someone's motives or truthfulness by noting their body language, tone of voice, and manner of speech. There is no minimum time requirement.

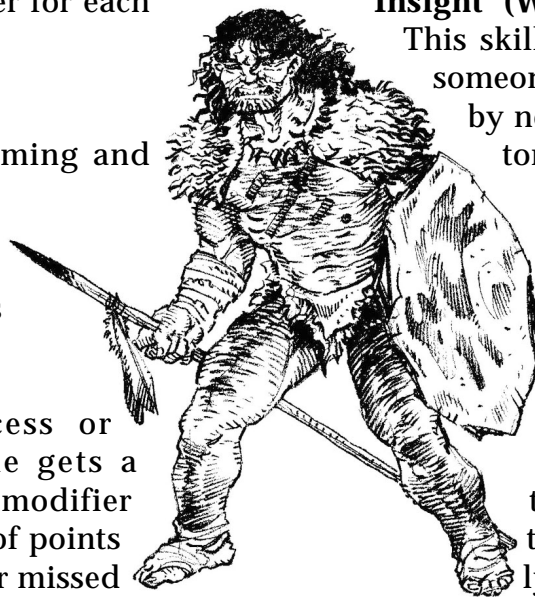
The GM rolls for you secretly, opposed by the subject's Convince skill.

On a normal success you're told that you suspect they're lying if they are lying, or that you suspect they're telling the truth if they're telling the truth. On a critical success, you're told you're quite certain of it. On a normal failure, you're told you think the person is being truthful if they're lying, or lying if they're telling the truth. On a fumble, you're told that you're certain they're lying if they're really telling the truth, and vice-versa.

Intimidation (WILL/-1):

This skill is used to get others to take your threats more seriously than the immediate evidence warrants. There is no minimum time requirement.

Intimidation attempts are opposed by the other character's Insight skill. On a critical success, the character flees (or surrenders to you if escape is impossible). On a normal success, they believe that you can make good on your threat but they remain free to choose how they will react to that belief. On a normal failure, they ignore your blustering and form their opinion of your threat based only on the available evidence. On a



critical failure, they become angry.

Evidence supporting your threats does NOT result in a positive modifier. Evidence against your threats may result in a negative modifier, however.

Kick (DEFT/-1):

This skill improves a character's ability to kick opponents in combat. Kicks gain a bonus of +1 to the character's unarmed melee damage level, and a +1 bonus to their chances of hitting. Kicking skill may be used for Melee Defense (see 2.51).

Listen (INTL/-1):

This perception skill is used to detect subtle sounds, or subtle details about obvious sounds. See 4.6.

Lockpicking (DEFT/-4):

This skill is used to open locks without a proper key. Each attempt to pick a lock takes a full turn.

Make a skill roll at a difficulty penalty based on the complexity of the lock. A fumble causes you to abort (your pick breaks off in the lock, or you find that you need specialized tools, etc.). A failure sets off any alarms or traps attached to the lock, but you may try to pick the lock again at a further +1 difficulty penalty.

This skill can also be used to design locks of your own. A character's Lockpicking skill -10 is used as the difficulty modifier against picking locks designed in this manner.

Medicine (INTL/-4):

You can provide medical attention to the sick and injured. Each attempt takes 1 minute. Make a skill roll to bind a bleeding wound, preventing further loss of hit points due to blood loss.

This skill may also be used to heal injuries. A successful Medical check heals 1 hit point. Each patient may only heal one extra hit point per day through medical care, in addition to normal healing.

Any critically successful Medicine skill roll heals an extra point of damage, while a fumbled roll inflicts a damage point. See section 5.41 for additional rules regarding physical injuries.

Melee (DEFT/-1):

This skill improves a character's ability with a melee weapon. Select a specialization: axe, blade, bludgeon, flail, staff, spear, whip, etc. This skill can be used for Melee Defense (see section 2.51). Complete combat rules can be found in chapter 5.

Missile (DEFT/-1):

This skill improves a character's ability to hit with a missile weapon. Select a specialization: bow, crossbow, sling, pistol, rifle, etc. This skill cannot be used defensively. Complete combat rules can be found in chapter 5.

Negotiate (INTL/-1):

This skill is used for haggling and debate. Each attempt takes about a minute. See 3.11.



Start with a 50/50 deal, or the average market value of an item. Make a skill roll opposed by your opponent's Negotiate skill. For each point you make your roll by, the deal shifts 5% in your favor. On a failed roll, you must take your opponent's offer or leave it. On a critical success, halve or double the deal in your favor. On a critical failure, the opponent becomes disgruntled and breaks off the negotiations.

Pickpocket (DEFT/-4):

This skill enables a character to interact with items in another character's possession without their realizing it. This doesn't include Sleight-of-hand. This skill takes an Action to use.

Roll to take something from the victim (or slip something into their pocket, etc.), opposed by the victim's INTL. You must also overcome the INTL of any bystanders facing your direction. If someone is paying special attention, increase the difficulty penalty by 2.

Profession (INTL/-1/-4):

This skill grants a character practical knowledge about the way a particular business or profession is conducted. Specify a single profession: barber, farmer, architect, lawyer, etc. Time requirement varies. Skill rolls are made for any professional task. The GM will set the difficulty of any task you attempt. Time requirement varies. Unskilled attempts suffer a penalty of -1 or -4, depending on how complex the task is.

Punch (DEFT/-1):

This skill improves a character's ability to punch opponents in combat. Punches gain a bonus of +2 to their chances of

hitting. Punching skill may be used for Melee Defense (see 2.51).

Scholar (INTL/-4):

The character is versed in some an esoteric body of knowledge. Select a specialization: geography, folklore, history, mathematics, heraldry, religious lore, herbal lore, etc. This skill takes no time to use. Roll vs. a difficulty set by the GM to answer any question within your field of knowledge.

Search (INTL/-1):

The character is skilled at hiding themselves and other things, and at locating anything hidden. This skill can be used for perception: see 4.6. The time requirement to hide something varies.

Record your success margin when you hide something; that becomes a difficulty penalty for others who try to find it. The GM may impose modifiers depending on the size of the thing to be hidden, the available hiding places, etc.

Seduce (WILL/-1):

The character is skilled at arousing amorous feelings in others. Seduction won't elicit trust, or even friendship. It only makes other characters desire the seducer. Seduction attempts take several minutes.

Seduction won't work on people who aren't attracted to your race and gender. The roll is opposed by the target's WILL. On a critical fumble the other character is shocked, frightened, angered, or otherwise upset. On a normal failure they're simply not interested. On a normal success the other character is sexually attracted. On a critical success



they're immediately and deeply enamored.

Shield (DEFT/-1):

This skill can be used for Melee and Missile defense (see 2.5), as long as the character is wielding a shield. For complete rules on shield parrying see section 3.41.

Sleight of Hand (DEFT/-4):

This skill represents expertise at misdirecting onlookers, enabling a character to make items in their hands seem to appear, disappear, or change. This does not include the Pickpocket skill. Sleight of Hand takes an Action.

Sleight of Hand is opposed by the subject's INTL. If they pay careful attention, apply an additional difficulty penalty of +2.

Stealth (DEFT/-1):

This skill enables a character to move without attracting attention. Stealth takes no time, but a sneaking character can only move $\frac{1}{2}$ of their normal Move rate (rounded down).

The number of points by which a character makes their Stealth roll becomes the difficulty on another's perception roll (see 4.6) to notice them. The GM may impose modifiers to the Stealth roll depending on the availability of cover, background noise, etc.

Survival (INTL/-1):

This is the ability to locate food and shelter in the wild. Select a specialization when this skill is purchased: plains, forest, mountain, desert, arctic, urban, etc. Roll vs. a

difficulty set by the GM for each survival task you attempt. Time requirement varies.

Swim (DEFT/-1):

This skill enables a character to swim at a rate equal to their Swim skill -9 game inches (minimum 0"). Swimming takes no time, other than any movement used.

Make skill rolls to perform dives or difficult maneuvers in the water. A character who hasn't spent any EPs on this skill must make a skill roll every turn just to keep treading water.

Tactics (INTL/-1/-4):

This skill enables a character to lead troops in combat. Select a specialization: plains, forest, mountain, desert, arctic, urban, etc. Tactics takes no time to use.

The GM evaluates your roll and offers appropriately insightful suggestions as to the strategic significance of terrain features, probable enemy strategies, etc. Tactics rolls suffer a -4 penalty if you have no Tactics skill at all, or only a -1 penalty if you have Tactics skill for a different terrain type.

Throw Weapon (DEFT/-4):

This skill enables a character to throw a melee weapon effectively. Select a specialization: axes, blades, flails, bludgeons, spears, etc. This skill cannot be used defensively. Full combat rules are found in Chapter 5.

Tracking (INTL/-4):

This skill enables a character to follow the trail left by another person or creature. Each tracking attempt takes a full turn.



Roll vs. a difficulty set by the GM (fresh snow: +4, mud or sand: +2, dirt or grass: 0, rocky or baked earth: -2, clean floor: -4, water: -8). Each attempt takes a full Move & Action. Difficulty may be modified by time passage, weather, traffic, etc. You can also use Tracking skill to oppose others who attempt to track you.

2.5 Defense Values

These numbers indicate how difficult it is to hit a character in combat. See 5.31.

2.51 Melee Defense

Characters may use their currently active Melee, Punch, Kick, Dodge, or Shield skill (including a shield's Parry Modifier) for Melee Defense. Remember to include the unskilled penalty if the character is unskilled, and any other modifiers which apply. Subtract 10 from the modified skill score to find the character's Melee Defense.

Example: Artos has a 10 DEFT, a 12 blades skill, a skill of 11 with shields, and he is unskilled at dodging. His shield gives him a +2 bonus. If he parries a melee attack with his sword, his melee defense is 2. If he blocks with his shield, his melee defense is 3. If he dodges, his melee defense is -1.

2.52 Missile Defense

A character's Missile Defense is determined in the same way as Melee Defense, but only Dodge and Shield skills may be used.

2.6 Contacts

Contacts are NPCs that characters may go to for information, business deals, or other types of assistance. The number of contact points a character gets depends on their WILL Attribute:

WILL:	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Contact Pts:	5	6	8	10	13	16	19

All contact points must be spent during character generation; they may not be saved.

Each contact has a point cost representing their power and influence. This cost is set by the GM, using the following table as a guide:

Contact:	Cost:
A "Nobody"	1
Average Citizen	3
Locally Influential	5
Local Authority	7
Regional Authority	9
National Authority	11
National Leader	13

For the base point cost, the Contact is an Acquaintance. Acquaintances will do small favors, offer special business deals, loan small sums of money, and so on - but will not actively aid the characters. They will answer questions when they know the answers, except when doing so would put them in peril.

Characters may pool their points to purchase contacts, which they then share in common. Each character must contribute at least 1 point to the shared Contact, and the total points spent must equal the base cost



of that Contact. If some characters contribute more toward the base cost of acquiring a shared Contact, the Contact will give them preferential treatment.

For 2 extra points, the Contact is a Friend or Relative who may loan the character large sums of money, give them small sums or gifts, or even be willing to assist the character personally if necessary. They will answer questions if they know the answer even when it is dangerous to do so. When sharing the cost of a Contact, each contributing character must individually pay the extra cost of making the shared Contact their personal Friend or Relative.

An “insider” is a Contact who holds a subservient position in the household or inner circle of another Contact, or even a whole group of Contacts. An insider for a single other

Contact costs 4 points less. An insider for a whole group of Contacts costs 2 point less. For example, the King’s Coachman (an insider for the King, a National Leader) would cost 9 points. Insiders have no real power of their own, but can pass on rumors and gossip about their masters.

Players must specify the name, sex, age, and location of each of their Contacts. Additional details such as physical appearance, marital status, behavioral quirks, and so on are also useful. The GM may wish to prepare a list of pre-made contacts for the players to choose from when starting a new game.

Once play has begun, new characters who come into the game may buy new Contacts, or may pay at least 1 point to “buy into” an established Contact.

Again, the cost of making an established Contact a Friend or Relative must be paid on top of that.

Repeated interaction may improve a Contact. For example, if the King’s Coachman starts as an acquaintance, wining and dining him may make him a personal friend. An Acquaintance could even be married off to a Relative, making that Acquaintance into a Relative too. These possibilities are all subject to GM control.



3.0 Equipment

This section lists sample statistics and prices for common types of weapons and armor. The GM may set the prices for any other equipment that's available in their game setting.

3.1 Starting Money

Characters begin with \$500 and a full suit of plain clothing. Dollars are only used here as a convenience. The GM may convert these prices to silver pieces, credits, or whatever medium of exchange is appropriate for their game setting.

3.11 Bargaining

Prices are negotiable. The Negotiate skill can be used to haggle. "Used" or sub-standard gear sells for about half of the listed price.

3.2 Melee Weapons

Melee weapons enhance characters' fighting abilities. Weapons are grouped according to their melee skill specialization. The tables below list each weapon's cost, its bonus to the character's roll to hit, its damage roll, and the minimum PHYS required to wield it in one hand. If a weapon is wielded 2-handed, reduce its PHYS requirement by 2. If the character's PHYS is too low, subtract one point from their effective weapon skill per point by which they fall short.

Axes	Cost	Hit	Dmg	PHYS
Hatchet	\$35	+1	2/4/6	8
Light Axe	\$70	+1	3/5/7	9
Wood Axe	\$95	0	4/6/8	10
Battleaxe	\$160	0	5/7/9	11
War Axe	\$215	-1	6/8/10	12
Great Axe	\$330	-1	6/9/12	13

Blades	Cost	Hit	Dmg	PHYS
Long Knife	\$25	+3	1/2/3	5
Foil	\$35	+4	1/2/3	7
Short Sword	\$70	+1	3/5/7	7
Cutlass	\$95	+2	3/5/7	9
Sword	\$125	+1	4/6/8	10
Longsword	\$195	+1	5/7/9	11
Bastard Swd	\$255	0	6/8/10	12
Greatsword	\$375	0	6/9/12	13

Bludgeons	Cost	Hit	Dmg	PHYS
Baton	\$20	+5	0/1/1	5
Club	\$20	+4	1/1/2	7
Mace	\$45	+3	2/3/4	9
Morningstar	\$55	+2	2/4/6	10
Warhammer	\$95	+2	3/5/7	11
Battle Mace	\$195	+1	5/7/9	13

Flails	Cost	Hit	Dmg	PHYS
Light Flail	\$55	+2	2/4/6	7
Flail	\$125	+1	4/6/8	9
Heavy Flail	\$255	0	6/8/10	11
War Flail	\$480	-1	7/10/13	13

Staves	Cost	Hit	Dmg	PHYS
Staff	\$20	+4	1/2/3	9
Quarterstaff	\$45	+3	2/4/6	11
Iron Staff	\$95	+2	4/6/8	13

Staves always require 2 hands. You may still reduce



their PHYS requirement by 2 when two hands are used.

Spears Cost Hit Dmg PHYS

Javelin	\$25	+3	1/2/3	7
Short Spear	\$55	+2	2/4/6	9
Pitchfork	\$125	-2	6/8/10	11
Spear	\$160	0	5/7/9	12
Trident	\$215	-1	6/8/10	12
Pike	\$330	-1	6/9/12	14

Whips Cost Hit Dmg PHYS

Whip	\$15	+4	1/1/1	7
Cat o'9 Tails	\$20	+2	1/2/3	8
Bullwhip	\$30	+2	2/3/4	9

Whips cannot be used 2-handed.



3.21 Thrown Weapons

Melee weapons can be thrown 3", plus the character's PHYS, minus the weapon's PHYS requirement. For a 50% increase in purchase price, you may buy

a version of a weapon that has been specially balanced for throwing. Unbalanced weapons suffer a penalty of -2 to hit when thrown.

Staves and whips cannot be balanced for throwing.

3.3 Missile Weapons

Missile weapons enable characters to attack at a distance. The tables below list each missile weapon's cost, its bonus to the character's roll to hit, its damage roll, range in movement spaces, and the PHYS required to wield it. If the character's PHYS is too low, subtract one point from their effective skill per point by which they fall short. Crossbows take an extra Action to reload per point of insufficient PHYS, instead of reducing the wielder's roll to hit. All missile weapons suffer a penalty of -2 to hit when fired at hostile opponents at point blank range. Wielding a missile weapon in two hands does not reduce its PHYS requirement.

Slings Cost Hit Dmg Range PHYS

Light	\$5	+1	1/1/2	18	7
Medium	\$15	0	2/3/4	24	9
Heavy	\$65	-1	3/5/7	30	11

Slings can be used 1-handed.

Bows Cost Hit Dmg Range PHYS

Short	\$70	+1	2/4/6	18	8
Medium	\$125	+1	3/5/7	24	9
Long	\$255	0	5/7/9	30	11

Bows require 2 hands to use.



Xbows Cost Hit Dmg Range PHYS

Light	\$335	+2	5/7/9	30	9
Medium	\$580	+1	6/9/12	36	11
Heavy	\$940	0	8/11/14	42	13

Crossbows take an Action to re-load after every shot. They can be fired one-handed, but require 2 hands to reload.

Pistols Cost Hit Dmg Range PHYS

Light	\$50	0	3/5/7	30	5
Medium	\$75	0	4/6/8	36	7
Heavy	\$100	-1	5/7/9	42	9

Rifles Cost Hit Dmg Range PHYS

Light	\$100	+1	4/6/8	54	7
Medium	\$150	+1	5/7/9	60	9
Heavy	\$250	0	6/9/12	66	11

Rifles require 2 hands to use.

3.31 Ammunition

Missile weapons need ammunition. Each primitive projectile can be recovered at the end of a battle on a successful Search skill roll if time is taken to retrieve them. The costs for ammunition are as follows:

Ammo Type:	Cost:
Sling Stones	\$5 per 20
Arrows & Quarrels	\$5 per 3
Bullets	\$50 per 20

Sling stones are free if the character has spare time to collect them.

3.4 Armor

Armor softens the impact of attacks in battle. See 5.4. The table below lists the available armor types, their costs, DEFT

limits, and the amount of protection they provide against Physical and Energy damage. The DEFT limit is the maximum DEFT a character may use while wearing that armor. Adjust the character's movement rate, initiative, and DEFT-based skills while wearing armor that restricts their DEFT score.

Armor Cost Phys/Enrg DEFT

Leather	\$75	2/1	13
Studded	\$100	3/2	12
Scale/Chain	\$400	4/3	11
Full Plate	\$1200	6/4	9

3.41 Shields

Shields add a Parry bonus to the character's melee defense when they use their Shield skill. See 2.51. If the attack misses, the attacker makes their damage roll and compares it to the shield's Hits. If it exceeds the shield's Hits, the excess damage is taken both by the defender and by the shield's Hits. The defender gets their armor protection against any damage which penetrates their shield. As shields lose hits they become weaker and eventually break altogether when their Hits drop to 0.

Shields require one free hand, and have a PHYS requirement. The character suffers a -1 penalty to their Shield skill per point by which their PHYS falls below this requirement.



Shield Cost Parry Hits PHYS

Small	\$100	+1	6	8
Medium	\$200	+2	9	10
Large	\$400	+3	12	12

3.42 Helmets

Helmets primarily protect characters against knockout attempts (see section 5.61). Larger, heavier helmets add a slight bonus to the character's overall armor protection.

Helmet Cost Phys/Eng Bonus

Cloth Cap	\$10	1/0	0/0
Leather Cap	\$20	2/1	0/0
Chain Coif	\$40	4/3	+1/0
Metal Cap	\$60	5/3	+1/+1
Full Helm*	\$100	6/4	+2/+1

** Full Helms limit the wearer's hearing and field of vision. A character wearing a Full Helm suffers a penalty of -1 on all rolls requiring sight or sound perception.*



4.0 Skill & Attribute Checks

To successfully use an Attribute or skill, a character must roll equal to or less than his score on 2d10. This target number may be modified by the GM to reflect task difficulty and conditions. Consult the table below.:

Difficulty:	Modifier:	Difficulty:	Modifier:
Impossible	-8	Easy	+2
Formidable	-6	Very Easy	+4
Challenging	-4	Simple	+6
Difficult	-2	Very Simple	+8

Any roll of 20 always fails regardless of the final adjusted target number.

4.1 Equipment Modifier

In combat, apply the Hit modifier given for the weapon being used. In other cases the GM may apply a modifier to reflect the quality of the equipment used.

4.2 Opposed Rolls

If a skill or Attribute check is opposed by another character, apply a Difficulty modifier derived from the Attribute or skill that the opponent is using to resist. Subtract 10 from the opponent's skill or Attribute score to find the difficulty modifier. Apply an unskilled penalty (usually -1 or -4) if the opponent is resisting with a skill they haven't learned.

4.3 Critical Rolls

A critical result occurs when doubles are rolled on a skill or Attribute check. Doubles indicate a Critical Success if the

roll was a success. Doubles indicate a Critical Failure or "Fumble" if the roll was a failure. The GM should award characters who roll Critical Successes with extra good results, and penalize characters who roll Critical Failures with extra poor results.

4.4 Taking Extra Time

If a character takes lots of extra time to perform an Action, they gain a bonus to their chances of success. Only a single skill check needs to be made. However, the chances for a Critical Failure to occur rise as well:

Time	Bonus	Critical Failure
minutes	+1	any failed roll of 18+
hours	+2	any failed roll of 16+
days	+3	any failed roll of 14+
weeks	+4	any failed roll of 12+
months	+5	any failed roll of 10+
years	+6	any failed roll of 8+

4.5 Interaction Skills

Personal interaction skills are used to change the attitudes of NPCs. Interaction skill checks are opposed by the NPC's INTL or WILL.

Player characters can be the targets of character interaction skill checks, but the results of these checks should only be used as a guide for the GM when informing the player of what their character's impressions are. Player character behavior is never directly dictated by character interaction checks.



4.6 Perception

Characters roll for perception using skills like Listen or Search, or using their INTL with a -1 penalty if they lack of an appropriate skill. The GM should allow one free perception check per turn (using the character's best applicable skill) to detect anything that is noticeable but not obvious. A character may make an additional Perception check each turn at the cost of an Action. This simulates pausing and actively looking around.

Example: "I run around the corner and look - do I see the thief? The GM rolls and responds, "You don't see him". If the player says "He's got to be there - I look again" then he gets another roll, but that will cost him his Action.

Perception difficulty is based on circumstances such as wind direction (for scent), light conditions (for vision), etc. with modifiers for range, the size of the thing being perceived, and other variables. Perception may also be opposed by an opponent's DEFT or Stealth skill if they are what you're trying to perceive.

4.61 Darkness

Darkness yields a difficulty penalty (section 4.0). The penalty ranges from -2 for dim lighting to -8 for pitch blackness (only if what you're trying to do requires vision, of course).

4.7 Falling

When a character falls onto a hard surface they suffer 1 point of damage

per movement space (2 meters) fallen. Large creatures take an extra point of damage per space of fall per two points of PHYS over 10. Conscious characters can avoid some of this damage by making a DEFT roll, at a penalty of -1 per movement space fallen. Skills such as Acrobatics or Swim can be substituted for DEFT in some situations. A successful roll negates 1 point of falling damage, plus one more point of damage per point by which the roll was made.

Reduce the total amount of damage taken and the roll to avoid damage if a character falls onto a soft surface:

Surface Type: Modifier:

Rock	0
Packed Earth	0
Sand	-1
Straw	-2
Mud	-4
Water	-8

Example: Tharsh the cat-burglar has slipped on a loose tile, and is falling from a rooftop. He has a 12 DEFT, the fall is 4 spaces (8 meters), and he's going to land on some hay bales (resulting in a modifier of -2). Tharsh must roll 10 or less on 2d10 to avoid taking 2 points of damage.

Characters may suffer extra damage if they fall onto sharp objects. The character's DEFT roll has no effect on additional damage from spikes. Armor counts against damage from spikes, but not against normal falling damage.



4.8 Material Strength

Material strength is armor that an object gets by virtue of the material it's made out of. See 5.4. When characters try to damage physical objects, consult the following table:

Material:	Strength:	Material:	Strength:
paper	0	gold, lead	14
cloth, dirt	2	marble	16
soft wood	4	silver	18
hard wood	6	iron	22
brick	8	platinum	24
mortar	10	steel	26
granite	12	titanium	30

An attack which inflicts 1 point of damage against a physical object makes 1 foot wide hole about 6 inches deep (about the thickness of a typical wall). Double the width or depth of the hole each time the damage doubles.

If a character declares Desperation (see 5.72), and fails to penetrate a target object's material strength, the character suffers 1 point of damage - or, if they were using a weapon on the object, the weapon breaks.





5.0 Combat

Combat follows the same basic procedure as Skill and Attribute Checks, with additional rules for the specific demands of combat.

5.1 Scale

Combat is resolved using miniature figures on a scale map to track the locations of the character and creatures involved. One movement space (1" if 25-30mm figures are used) represents two real-life meters. One combat round represents six seconds of real time.

5.2 Initiative

Each participant rolls for initiative at the start of every new combat round, noting the result. Roll 1d10. On a roll of 1-2, use the character's first (lowest) initiative number. On a roll of 3-8, use the character's middle initiative number. On a roll of 9-10, use the last (highest) number.

The GM finds the highest initiative number rolled, and counts down from there. When a character's number is called, they may take their turn. Ties are won by the character with the lowest DEFT; dice off if DEFT is also tied.



Instead of taking their turn when called, characters may Hold. A Held turn may be taken at any later point, even if it interrupts another character's turn in the middle. If 2 characters try to take their Held turns simultaneously, the one who's been Holding longest goes first. Only 1 turn can be held by a character at a time. No new Initiative is rolled for that character until after the Held turn is expended.

A character's turn consists of a movement phase and an Action phase. These can be taken in either order, but may not be split or mixed or individually Held.

5.21 Actions

An Action is any task that is too complex or too critical to be treated as simple movement. Pickpocketing, attacking, arguing, and searching are all examples of Actions. Actions usually require a skill or attribute check to determine their degree of success. Normally, characters only perform one Action per turn.

5.22 Multiple Actions

A character may attempt to perform multiple Actions simultaneously, with a penalty. The die rolls for each of the simultaneous Actions suffer a penalty of -2 for each extra Action. For example, a character firing three shots simultaneously makes each of the 3 skill rolls at a penalty of -4.

If an Action that doesn't normally require a check is part of a multiple Action, give that Action a base roll of

15- and then apply the multiple Action penalty.

5.23 Extended Actions

Tasks that will take longer than a movement or Action phase to complete uses up both; the character is preoccupied and unable to perform any movement or any other Actions while involved in such a task. Section 4.4 lists difficulty modifiers for voluntarily taking extra time.

5.24 Movement

The distance that a character can move in one turn is indicated by their Move rate (or swim rate, etc.). Movement cannot be stockpiled for use in later turns. The GM may deduct Move points for other time-consuming activities such as opening doors. Any combination of actual movement and simple tasks may be performed, in any order, up to the limits of one's Move rate. The GM may charge more than 1 space of movement per space of travel through difficult terrain.

5.25 Zones of Control

Each character has a "zone of control" within 1 movement space of their position. If an opponent attempts to pass through this zone, the character may try to block them. The opponent must then make a Dodge skill check, minus the character's Melee Defense. If the check is successful, the opponent may proceed. If not, their movement ends for that turn.





5.3 Rolling to Hit

Attacking takes an Action. Make a skill check using the character's skill with the weapon they're using. Apply all the normal skill check modifiers where applicable, plus the modifiers described in the following sections. If the roll to hit succeeds, the attack hits the target.

5.31 Melee & Missile Defense

A character's Melee Defense is subtracted from an opponent's chances of hitting that character in melee combat. A character's Missile Defense is subtracted from an opponent's chances of hitting that character in missile combat.

5.32 Range Modifiers

Missile attacks (as well as any other skill check where range is a factor) involve

additional difficulty due to distance. A difficulty modifier for range must be applied:

Spaces: Modifier: Spaces: Modifier:

2-4	0	17-32	-3
5-8	-1	33-64	-4
9-16	-2	x2	-1 more

5.33 Cover

If there is a partial barrier between the attacker and the defender, and the roll to hit was successful, roll 1d10 to see if the cover obstructs the attack.

If the cover obstructs the attack, roll damage and use the Material Strength rules to see if the attack penetrates the obstruction's armor. If it does, then the obstruction and the target both takes the number of points which penetrate.

An attacker may accept a penalty to aim at an exposed part of the target's body, avoiding the cover:

Cover Type: Obstructed: To Hit Penalty:

Light	1-3	-2
Medium	1-5	-3
Heavy	1-7	-4

5.34 Surprised & Immobile Opponents

Opponents who don't know they're in danger (or who are immobilized) don't get to apply their Defenses against attacks. The attacker also gets a bonus of +2 to hit if the target is mobile but off guard, prone, or off balance, or +4 if the target is completely immobile.



5.35 Combat Critical Tables

If a Critical Success or Critical Failure occur during an attack, roll on the following table to determine the results. If the result is inappropriate, switch to the Critical listed in the Default column:

d10: Default: Critical Success:

1	2	Target's armor is damaged, losing -1/-1 protection before the attack damage is applied.
2	7	Attacker gets an extra Action after this one, with no further multiple Action penalty.
3	5	Target falls down, taking a full turn to get up again.
4	8	Target gets only 1/2 normal armor protection (round down) vs. this attack.
5	-	Target takes its own PHYS roll in damage. Its armor counts against that damage.
6	3	Target drops something.
7	-	Free Head Shot (see 5.61)
8	-	Attack scores high damage.
9	-	GM's option.
10	-	Roll twice & combine.

d10: Default: Critical Failure:

1	2	Wrong target. Gm chooses one near the original. Roll to hit them, base 10- to hit.
2	1	Target gets a free roll to hit.
3	5	Attacker falls down, taking a full turn to get back up.
4	6	Weapon jammed, taking a full turn to unjam.
5	-	Attacker takes its own PHYS roll in damage. Its armor counts against that damage.
6	3	Attacker drops something.
7	4	Weapon stuck. Roll damage. You must roll that amount or higher on your PHYS roll to free the weapon. It takes a full move to try.
8	3	Attacker's armor is damaged, losing -1/-1 protection.
9	-	GM's option.
10	-	Roll twice & combine.



5.4 Damage & Armor

When an attack hits, the attacker must make a damage roll for their weapon (or Unarmed Damage if unarmed: see 2.32). Roll 1d10. On a roll of 1-2, use the attack's first (lowest) damage number. On a roll of 3-8, use the attack's middle damage number. On a roll of 9-10, use the last (highest) damage number.

Armor worn by the target may reduce the amount of damage taken.

If the target's armor protection is at least twice as high as the damage roll, it stops the damage completely.

If the target's armor protection is less than half of the damage roll, deduct the armor value from the damage inflicted.

If neither of those conditions apply, the target suffers 1/2 of the damage roll (round up).

Remember that armor has separate protection values vs. Physical and Energy attacks; use the one that applies.

Any damage that penetrates the target's armor is deducted from their Hit Points.

5.41 Unconsciousness & Death

Any character or creature which sustains over half of its remaining hit points in damage from a single attack falls unconscious.

An unconscious character rolls 2d10 once per round. If they roll their remaining hits or less, they wake up. The wakeup roll is made during the unconscious character's initiative. A

character who wakes up may Act and/or Move immediately. Unconscious characters get an extra roll to wake up with a bonus of +2 each time another character spends an Action trying to awaken them.

A character whose total remaining hit points fall below zero is dying. A dying character loses an additional hit point per minute from blood loss. Bleeding can be stopped by a successful Medicine skill roll (consult the Medicine skill description). When a character's hit points drop to a negative amount in excess of their original Hits, the character is dead.

5.42 Healing

Characters heal 1 hit point per day of rest. A "day of rest" means a full day without any strenuous activity.

Medical skill checks may be made to attempt to heal hits at a faster rate. Consult the Medicine skill description.

5.5 Morale

NPCs who are losing in combat may flee. The GM should make a WILL check at the start of any NPC's turn when things look bad for them. This can be modified by fanaticism, desperation, their leader's WILL, how bad things look, etc. If the roll fails, the NPC flees.

5.6 Called Shots

Attackers can make called shots to achieve results beyond merely inflicting damage.



5.61 Knockout

A character may attempt to knock out a target in one shot by hitting them over the head with a blunt object or the blunt of a weapon. There is a penalty of -3 to hit. Knockout attempts only inflict damage equal to the attacker's PHYS roll (+1 level if using a hard, heavy object like a weapon, rock, table, etc.). Only helmets, toughness, and natural armor protect against knockout attempts. If a knockout attack hits and causes damage, the target must roll their PHYS +2 or less on 2d10 (-1 per point of damage inflicted by the Knockout attempt) to stay conscious. Unconscious character may roll to wake up again (see 5.41).

Head shots with missile weapons (or using the edge of a melee weapon) do DOUBLE damage (AFTER armor), but do not force the target to roll to remain conscious.

5.62 Disarm

An attack to disarm suffers a penalty of -2 to hit, and inflicts no damage. If successful, the target must roll their PHYS or less (minus the attacker's PHYS modifier) on 2d10, or else they drop the object specified by the attacker.

5.63 Avoid Armor

Attackers may attempt to strike around their target's armor. There is a penalty of -1 to hit per point of armor the target wears (physical armor when making a physical attack, or energy armor when making an energy attack). If the target isn't wearing a helmet, you can avoid

their armor completely by attacking their exposed head at a penalty of -3. If the attack hits, the attacker inflicts their normal damage but the target receives no armor protection.

5.64 Attacking Equipment

An attacker may strike at things their target carries or wears. The penalty to hit is -1 for large, obvious equipment (armored suits, clothing, etc.), up to -4 for very small items (rings, belt buckles, etc.).

5.65 Death Blow

An attacker may attempt to slay their opponent instantly by scoring a hit on a vital organ. The difficulty penalty is -8. If the death blow hits and inflicts any damage past the target's armor, the target must roll their PHYS or less on 2d10 at a penalty of -1 per point of damage inflicted. If the roll fails, the target dies instantly. If the roll succeeds, the target is left bleeding 1 hit point per combat round until they either die or are healed (see 5.41). NPCs should only use death blows in pivotal, plot-critical duels.

5.7 Combat Stance

Characters can adopt a more defensive or aggressive stance in combat.

5.71 Defensive Fighting

A character may use their Action to adopt a "Defensive Stance" instead of making an attack. Defensive characters receive a bonus of +2 to their Defense values. This



bonus lasts until the character takes their next turn.

5.72 Desperation

Characters can double their movement rate and gain a +2 bonus to their PHYS for purposes of physical strength (and +2 weapon damage levels) by accepting a -2 penalty on all skill checks and defense values until they take their next turn. Desperation can only be declared when you take your turn, but it doesn't take any extra time. Desperation can be used to simulate berserk rage, sprinting, adrenaline, and so on.

5.8 Other Fighting Styles

Unusual fighting techniques require special modifications to the basic combat rules.

5.81 Two Weapon Combat

Characters may carry two 1-handed weapons, one in either hand. The two weapons may both be used to attack, at a penalty of -1 to hit with each. Attacks beyond this incur the normal multiple Action penalties. A weapon in the "off hand" (i.e., the weapon in the left hand if the character is right-handed) suffers an additional -1 penalty to hit, and the PHYS requirement of the off-hand weapon is increased by two points.

5.82 Grappling

The attacker rolls to hit using the Grapple skill. On a successful hit, the attacker gets the defender in a hold. A grapple inflicts no damage, but if the



Grapple roll is successful then the victim is completely immobilized (see 5.34).

A grappler may "squeeze" to deal their PHYS roll in damage to their victim. Squeezing takes a full turn.

The defender may either attempt to break free or counter-grapple on their own Action. To break free, the defender rolls their PHYS roll. The attacker rolls their PHYS roll to resist their escape. If the defender rolls higher than the attacker, they escape the grapple.

A successful counter-grapple enables them to attack back, and renders their attacker immobile as well.

A Grapple may be attempted at a penalty of -3 to hit to put their target in a hold where they can do nothing but attempt to escape.



6.0 Game Master

This section offers special advice for GMs.

6.1 Game Balance

Unlike in many other RPGs, in Pocket Universetm every single attribute and skill point represents a very significant increase in ability. As a result, GMs must be especially cautious about confronting their PCs with opponents who outclass them by more than a point or two in combat related abilities.

6.2 Creatures

Non-sentient creatures have a Perception (PERC) Attribute instead of INTL. PERC is a limited form of INTL which is mainly used for sensory abilities. PERC can be used as INTL at a penalty of -4.

Here is an example of the way creature statistics are presented in Pocket Universetm:

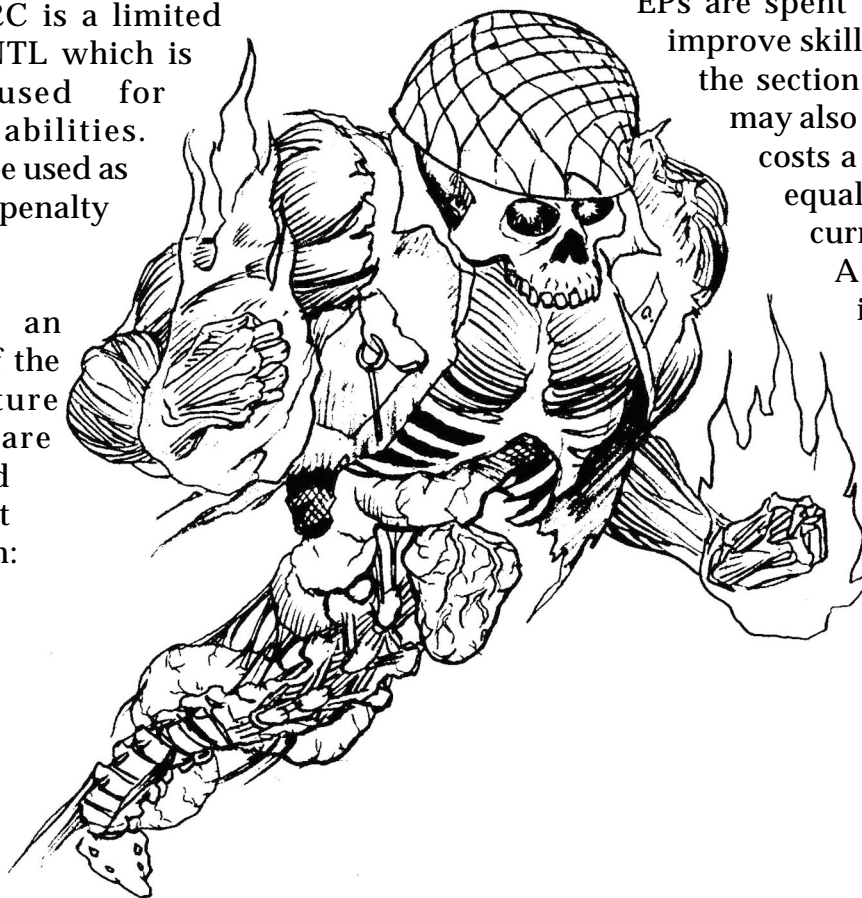
Crocodile

PHYS: 11 Hits: 13
DEFT: 10 Bite: 3/5/7
PERC: 10 Initiative: 1/2/3
WILL: 11 Move: 4
Armor: Scaly hide, 3/2
Skills: Bite 12-, Dodge 11-
Melee: 1 Missile: 1

6.3 Experience Advancement

At the end of each game session, the GM awards the participating PCs with experience points (EPs). EP awards can range from 1 to 3 EPs per session, depending on how well the players roleplayed and how heroic their characters were.

EPs are spent to purchase or improve skills as outlined in the section 2.4. Attributes may also be improved. It costs a number of EPs equal to a character's current score in an Attribute to increase that Attribute by 1 point. When an Attribute increases, any skills based on it increase automatically.



7.0 Appendix

7.1 Online Resources

Errata, expansion rules, and other resources can be found on the web at the following URL:

www.io.com/unigames/pu

Email rules questions, complaints, and suggestions to unigames@io.com.

7.2 Credits

Design, Layout & Illustration: Jeff Dee and Jeff Jones

Initial Concept & Additional Design:
'Manda



Player: _____

Character Name: _____

Age: _____ Sex: _____

PHYS: _____ Hits:

Move: _____

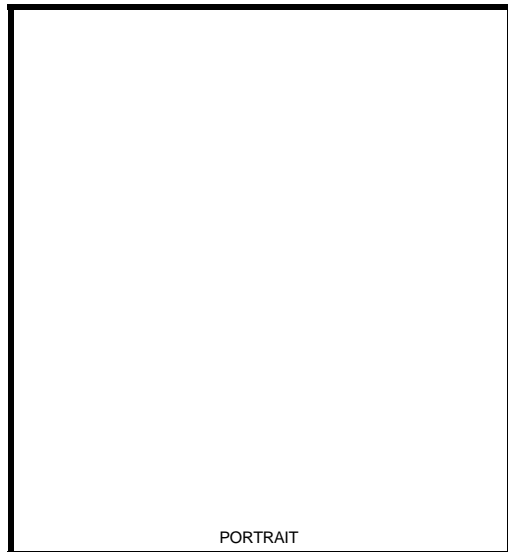
DEFT: _____ Armored DEFT: _____ Initiative: ¹⁻² / ³⁻⁸ / ⁹⁻¹⁰ :

INTL: _____ EPs: Starting: _____ Spent: _____ Unspent: _____

WILL: _____ Appearance: _____ Contact Points: _____

Personal Traits: _____

Contacts: _____



EPs:	Skill Name:	Base:	Plus:	Skill:
_____	_____	_____	+	_____ = _____
_____	_____	_____	+	_____ = _____
_____	_____	_____	+	_____ = _____
_____	_____	_____	+	_____ = _____
_____	_____	_____	+	_____ = _____
_____	_____	_____	+	_____ = _____
_____	_____	_____	+	_____ = _____
_____	_____	_____	+	_____ = _____
_____	_____	_____	+	_____ = _____
_____	_____	_____	+	_____ = _____
_____	_____	_____	+	_____ = _____
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_____	_____	_____	+	_____ = _____
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_____	_____	_____	+	_____ = _____
_____	_____	_____	+	_____ = _____
_____	_____	_____	+	_____ = _____
_____	_____	_____	+	_____ = _____

Money: _____

Equipment: _____

Weapon:	Skill:	Hit:	Total:	Range:	Damage:
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	¹⁻² / ³⁻⁸ / ⁹⁻¹⁰
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	¹⁻² / ³⁻⁸ / ⁹⁻¹⁰
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	¹⁻² / ³⁻⁸ / ⁹⁻¹⁰
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	¹⁻² / ³⁻⁸ / ⁹⁻¹⁰
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	¹⁻² / ³⁻⁸ / ⁹⁻¹⁰

Defenses: Skill Name: Skill: Modifiers: Total:

Melee: _____ -10= _____

Missile: _____ -10= _____

Shield: _____ + ^{Modifier} Hits:

Worn Armor: _____ ^{DEFT Limit} / ^{Physical} / ^{Energy}

Natural Armor: _____ + / +

Helmet: _____ ^{Physical} / ^{Energy} + / +

Total Armor: _____ /