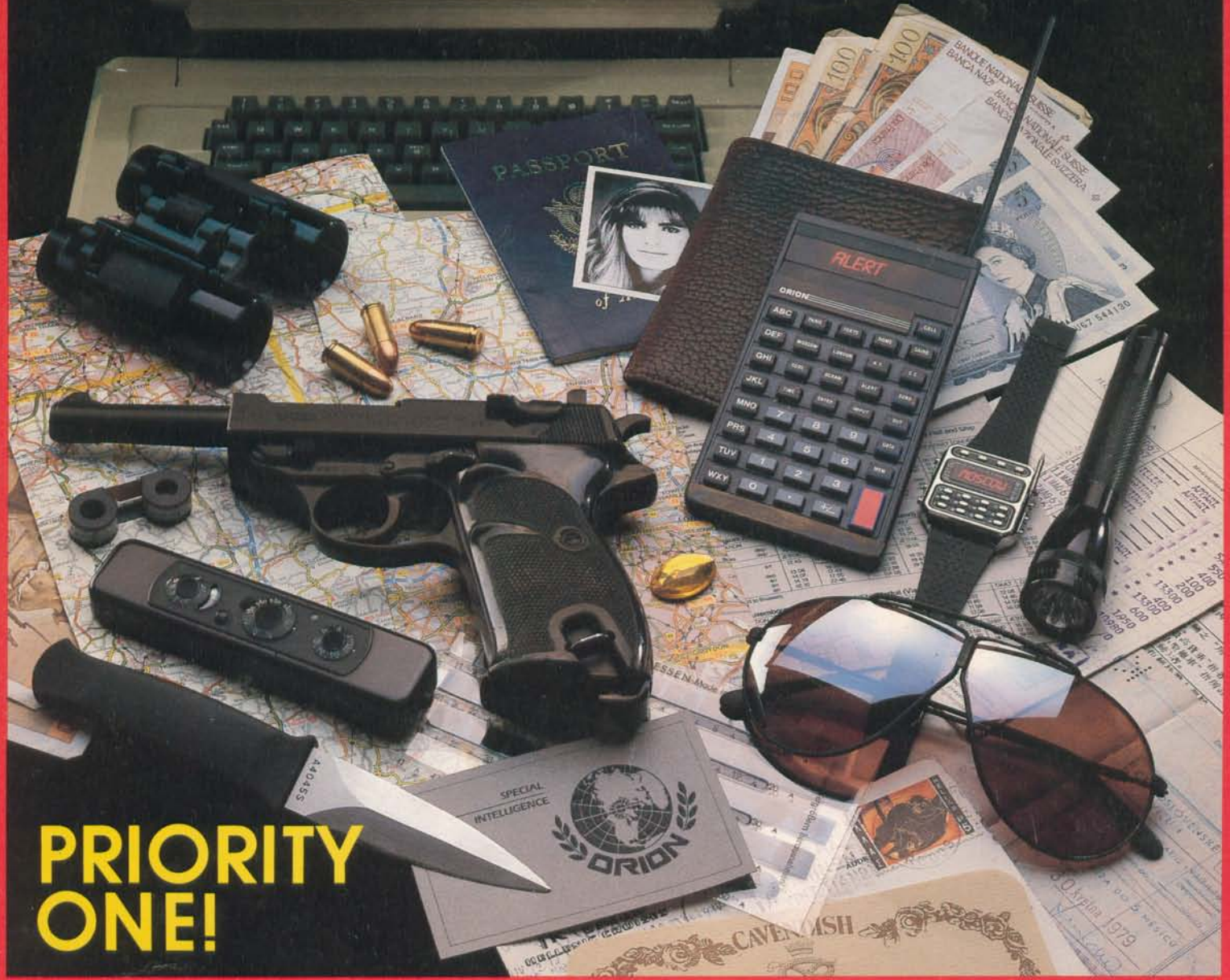


TOP SECRET//SI

PLAYERS GUIDE

Contains initial orientation data—
Read this first!



PRIORITY ONE!





Player's Guide

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Introduction



There's a war going on. It isn't the kind of war most of us are familiar with, but it's a war nonetheless.

This isn't a war fought by armies, or tanks, or planes, or ships; it's a war fought by shadowy figures who walk the same streets we do, eat the same food, wear the same clothes. Your neighbor may be one of the combatants, or your teacher, or your best friend. Unless you're one of them, you'll never know.

And what is this war about? Is it Americans fighting Soviets for reasons understood only by politicians? Is it a war between capitalists and socialists? Is it a war for land and natural resources? Yes to all of these . . . and no.

This shadow war is a war of good versus evil.

You're about to enter this shadow world, become one of the combatants in this war, learn what's really going on. You'll enter this world not for fame and glory — you won't be able to tell anyone of your glorious victories (or occasional failures) — you'll enter this world because you must, because evil must be stopped, because if you don't do it, no one will.

Welcome to the top secret world of international espionage!

The world you have chosen to enter is a dangerous one, crawling with terrorists, revolutionaries, assassins, spies, and counter-spies. In the **Top Secret/S.I.**™ game, you will take the role of a secret agent, a commando, or some other type of adventurer, and embark on a series of perilous missions, missions in which the fate of the world may hang in the balance.

Roleplaying

Top Secret/S.I.™ is a roleplaying game. If you are not familiar with such games, keep reading. Experienced roleplayers may want to skip to the section entitled, "Dice," on page 3.

Rules: A roleplaying game is, in many ways, a sophisticated version of the childhood game of make-believe. If you ever played cops-and-robbers (or cowboys and indians, or army), you remember the arguments about who shot whom, or how

quickly you could reach cover before you got blasted by some bad guy, or how much damage a hand grenade did to a bunker, and so on.

One of the main differences between roleplaying games and childhood games is that the rules answer all these questions, and more: The rules tell you how to race a car down a winding mountain road, how to bug an enemy agent's telephone, how to interrogate prisoners — in fact, the rules cover any exciting situations you can devise!

Acting: Another significant difference between roleplaying and make-believe is that you don't have to run all over the place to play. Generally, players sit around a table, but any arrangement where everyone has a place to roll some dice and players can talk to one another will work. Players talk through their roles as various characters in a story — a story in which all the action takes place in the players' imaginations.

The Administrator: One person involved in a roleplaying game keeps the story moving and resolves any rules questions that come up. In some games this player is called the referee, the game-master, the judge, or the Dungeon Master. In the *Top Secret/S.I.*TM game, he or she is called the Administrator.

The Administrator (sometimes shortened to Admin) sets the scene for the other players, telling them what their characters see and hear in any situation and, when necessary, telling them what skills they will need to accomplish what they want to do. The Administrator establishes the setting in which characters adventure. Whether using an adventure of his or her own creation or a published "module," the Admin keeps the game moving by revealing the plot as players gather clues about what's going on.

The Administrator's task is a challenging and rewarding one. It is addressed in more detail in the Administrators Guide included with this set. If you are just starting a *Top Secret/S.I.*TM game, your group should select one player to be the Admin.

The Object of the Game: There is one other crucial difference between roleplaying games and

ordinary games — in a roleplaying game, you don't play to win. As a player, your object is, of course, to have fun. But the character whose role you play has objectives, too: stopping a terrorist hijacking, rescuing a kidnapped scientist, infiltrating an enemy stronghold, finding a murderer, or whatever else the Admin dreams up. You "win" *Top Secret/S.I.*TM games by working with your fellow players to achieve the goals of a particular adventure, and by achieving the personal objectives you establish for your character.

Dice

The *Top Secret/S.I.*TM game uses several kinds of dice. In addition to the ordinary six-sided dice (abbreviated "d6") found in most boardgames, you'll need four-sided dice ("d4"), eight-sided dice ("d8"), and ten-sided dice ("d10"). If the rules instruct you to roll 4d6, this means roll 4 six-sided dice and add the resulting numbers together. If you're told to roll 2d4 + 1, roll 2 four-sided dice, add the resulting numbers, and add one to the total. Similarly, if you're told to roll 2d4-1, roll 2 four-sided dice, add the resulting numbers and *subtract* one from the total.

At various points in a game, you will make a "percentile roll" (abbreviated "d%"). This is done by rolling 2 ten-sided dice. One die is designated as the tens digit, and the other as the ones digit. Instead of adding the two numbers rolled, you read them one after the other, with the first number being the tens digit and the second the ones. This yields a result from 0 to 99.

Thus, a roll of 7 followed by a roll of 5 would be read as 75 (not 12); a roll of 5 followed by a roll of 7 would be read as a 57. A 0 followed by a 9 would be read as 09, or simply 9; a 9 followed by a 0 would be read as 90. **Double zeroes (00) equal 0, not 100 as in many other roleplaying games.**

Another type of die-roll, used only when you're creating your character, is the "d60" roll. This involves rolling a d6 and a d10 one after the other. The d6 result is read as the tens digit and the d10

as the ones. Thus, a 2 (on the d6) and a 9 (on the d10) equals 29; a 5 on the d6 and a 2 on the d10 equals 52. The d60 roll yields a result from 10 to 69.

Character Types

There are two types of characters in the *Top Secret/S.I.*™ game. Characters controlled by players are called Player Characters (or PCs, for short). During the course of a game, the PCs will meet and interact with all sorts of people: shopkeepers, busboys, enemy agents, master criminals, and so on. These characters, created and played by the Administrator, are called Non-Player Characters (or NPCs).

In the chapters that follow, you'll learn how to create a player character (or non-player character, if you're an Administrator). You can create any kind of character you want — from a suave, sophisticated professional agent, to an absent-minded professor who wouldn't know a gun from a baseball bat, to a college freshman caught up in things he doesn't understand.

Your Character Dossier: A unique, fleshed-out human being is pretty complicated; keeping track of your character's strengths and weaknesses, advantages and disadvantages, skills, quirks, money, weapons, equipment, and background can be tough. To make things easier, we've included several "character dossiers" in which you can record everything of importance about your character.

Reality Rules

Once you've created a character, recorded his or her vital statistics in a character dossier, and familiarized yourself with the rules of the game, you'll be ready to play, but first, a final word about those rules. As you read through the chapters which follow, you will find a number of rules set off from the rest of the text like this:

These are called "reality rules." Their use can make your game seem much more realistic, but they take a little longer to learn, add some complexity to the game, and may slow the action down some.

Reality rules are always optional. You can use some of the reality rules and ignore the others; you can use them all; you can use none of them. The Administrator has the final say about which reality rules will be used and which won't.

Beginning roleplayers are probably better off playing without the reality rules, and even experienced players may want to learn the basic rules before adding the more complex variants.

Learning the Top Secret/S.I.™ Game

This box contains a lot of material: a 96-page Players Guide, a 64-page Administrators Guide, a 32-page Equipment Book, a 32-page Settings & Scenarios Book, a map sheet, and several dice.

First, open the Equipment Inventory and the Settings & Scenarios Book to the center spread, loosen the staples, and pull out the character dossiers bound there.

The second thing to do is to read this book — the Players Guide — from start to finish. Don't worry about memorizing everything, just read it through. Everybody who wants to play in a should read the Players Guide (or have the rules in this book explained to them).

Next, select one player to be the Administrator. This player (and *only* this player) should read the Administrators Guide and the Settings & Scenarios Book. Once the Admin has a good grasp of the rules and the introductory adventure, everyone can begin creating characters and buying equipment from the Equipment Inventory.

Once everyone has a fully-equipped character, it's time to start playing!

1. Character Generation



Your *Top Secret/S.I.*™ alter ego is created by rolling dice to determine his or her Attributes; choosing Advantages and Disadvantages; determining his or her background and personality; and choosing his or her skills. This process is called “character generation.”

Character Attributes

Attributes are your character's basic abilities — the ones he or she was born with. These are determined by die rolls at the start of the character generation process.

The five primary attributes are: STRENGTH (STR), INTELLIGENCE (INT), REFLEXES (REF), WILLPOWER (WIL) and CONSTITUTION (CON).

STRENGTH is a measure of physical power. Characters with high STR can lift more weight and throw harder punches than characters with low strength.

INTELLIGENCE rates a character's ability to learn and understand things. The ease with which your character can acquire an education, learn to speak foreign languages, and solve complicated problems depends on his or her INT attribute. INT is also used as a measure of your character's senses — in the *Top Secret/S.I.*™ game, a character with a high INT score has a better chance of hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, or feeling things than one with a low INT.

REFLEXES measures overall quickness and agility. The REF score determines the chance of evading a falling object, the ability to throw a knife accurately, and so on.

WILLPOWER is a measure of a character's determination and strength of purpose. It includes the ability to withstand temptation, in all its many forms, as well as to resist torture, the pangs of conscience, or other mental stress.

CONSTITUTION measures how much damage your character can withstand from bullets, punches, accidents, poison, and other injuries. The higher your character's CON, the better the chances he or she will stay alive.

Determining Your Character's Attributes

Attributes are determined by a "d60 + 10" roll: Make a d60 roll — roll 1d6, followed by 1d10, reading the d6 as the tens digit and the d10 as the ones digit — yielding a result between 10 and 69. Then, add 10 to the number rolled. The end result of a d60 + 10 roll is a number between 20 and 79. The higher the number, the better you are in a particular attribute.

Roll separately for each attribute, writing the results of your d60 + 10 rolls in your character dossier. Now, add all five numbers together. If the total of your five d60 + 10 rolls is *less* than 275, subtract the total from 275. Then, distribute the difference among your five attributes as you see fit. The only restriction is that no attribute can be raised higher than 70. (Even 70 is nearly superhuman!)

For example, say your d60 + 10 rolls resulted in a 53 (STR), a 27 (INT), a 65 (REF), a 39 (WIL), and a 38 (CON), for a total of 222. This is less than 275 so you subtract 222 from 275, to determine how many extra points you can use to increase your character's attributes. In this case, $275 - 222 = 53$ — you have 53 points to divide among your attributes.

You might look at your STR score of 53 and say, "Hey, that's pretty good — I'll spend 17 points and bump it up to a 70 and have a strongman." Your INT could use some help, so you spend another 20 points there, increasing your character's INT score to 47. REF and WIL look okay, so you leave them alone. Finally, you spend your remaining 16 points on CON, increasing that score to 54, so your character has a better chance of surviving.

Your final attribute scores, as recorded in your character folder, look like this:

STR: 70 INT: 47 REF: 65 WIL: 39 CON: 54

Note that it is possible to *roll* an attribute score as high as 79, but you can't *raise* an attribute score higher than 70 when you create your character.

Once your character's STR, INT, REF, and WIL

scores have been set, they remain with you through the rest of the character generation process (and, in all likelihood, through several adventures). The CON score can be increased by taking the Toughness advantage (see page 19). Your other attribute scores can be increased by spending Fame & Fortune points. The Administrator will give you these points for completing missions and roleplaying effectively (page 90).

Customized Attribute Generation

*Using the optional procedures below, you can generate your character's attributes without depending entirely on dice. The Administrator will determine whether you can use either of these procedures in creating your **Top Secret/S.I.**™ character.*

Assigned Die rolls: *The first optional attribute generation system allows you to assign each of your five d60 + 10 rolls to the Attribute of your choice. In this way, you can decide for yourself where your character will be gifted and where he or she will be weak.*

Using the same numbers from the example above, you could end up with a very different character. The rolls resulted in a 53, a 27, a 38, a 39, and a 65. Instead of assigning the numbers in the order rolled, you can now assign them as you wish. Want a strong character? Assign the 65 roll to STR. Want a character who's strong and can take a lot of damage? Assign the 65 to STR and the 53 to CON. And so on, until all the rolls have been assigned.

Point Generated Attributes: *The second optional attribute generation system gives you complete control over your character's basic abilities. Simply take 275 points and divide them among your character's attributes. The only restriction is that you can't give your character an attribute score higher than 70 or lower than 20.*

Your Administrator will decide whether you can use either of these optional attribute generation systems. And you must decide which system you will use before you make your d60 + 10 rolls!

Secondary Attributes

In addition to his or her primary attributes, your character has some innate abilities *determined* by those attributes. For example, how fast you can move is a product of your strength and overall quickness. In game terms, movement is determined by STR and REF. Similarly, your manual dexterity or coordination, factors which become important in driving or bomb-disposal, depend on your REF and INT ratings.

Those abilities which depend on two *primary* attributes are called *secondary* attributes. Your character has two of them: Movement (abbreviated MOV) and Dexterity (abbreviated DEX).

Your Movement (MOV) score is the average of your REF and STR ratings, rounding fractions up.

Your Dexterity (DEX) score is the average of your REF and INT ratings, also rounded up.

All rules that apply to primary attributes apply to secondary attributes as well.

Attribute Checks

In the *Top Secret/S.I.*™ game you do things by making *attribute checks*. If the success or failure of a task depends on your character's strength, the Admin will tell you to make a STR check; if the task depends on your character's strength of will, however, you'll make a WIL check; and so on.

An attribute check is made by rolling d% (two ten-sided dice, read one after the other), and comparing the resulting number to your attribute score in the appropriate area. The Administrator decides what attribute is appropriate. If you roll your attribute score or lower, your character succeeds; if you roll higher than your attribute score, your character fails.

The Administrator may make your roll easier (by

giving you a bonus of 5, 10 or more to add to your attributes before you roll the dice), or harder (giving you a penalty), depending upon what's going on in the game. This is called "modifying" the die roll. Certain advantages, disadvantages, and skill also modify attribute checks — check specific advantage, disadvantage, and skill descriptions for more information. Finally, some situations call for $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ attribute checks. This means you halve or quarter the appropriate attribute before rolling the dice (*round up*).

NOTE: Some modifiers cause you to multiply or divide your attribute scores; others cause you to add or subtract from them. If you ever have to do *both* (and chances are such situations will arise), divide and/or multiply *before* you add or subtract.

Here's an example of how attribute checks work: Sebastian Cord, a top Orion Foundation agent, is searching for a kidnapped scientist. He's discovered the kidnappers' hideout and now finds himself in a corridor with several doors, all locked. He thinks the scientist is behind one of the doors, but which one?

The Sebastian Cord player tells the Administrator he wants to listen at the first door. The Administrator, knowing that the scientist is behind that door, says "Go ahead and make a $\frac{1}{2}$ INT check — the doors are pretty thick." The Sebastian player checks his character sheet and sees that his character's INT score is 47. Half of that is 24. The player rolls two ten-sided dice, getting a 2 and a 1. That's 21 — just barely lower than $\frac{1}{2}$ INT. Sebastian hears the scientist's semi-coherent mumbings behind the door!

If the Sebastian player then wanted to break the door down, he would have to make a STR check. But the Administrator says, "That's a pretty hefty door, so you'll have to subtract 10 from Strength before you roll." The STR score on the character sheet is a whopping 70, so even after subtracting 10, the player still breaks the door down on a d% roll of 60 or less — not bad! Unfortunately, the player in this example rolls an 87, not good enough to break down the door . . . and the noise may have attracted some guards, to boot!

Attribute checks are only necessary when your character attempts to perform a task under extraordinary circumstances, or when there's some risk involved. If Sebastian Cord wanted to cross a street, he could do so without making an attribute check — just assume he has the common sense to look both ways and wait for a break in traffic before he crosses.

If, however, Sebastian Cord was in hot pursuit of an enemy agent who just crossed the street, and he wanted to dart into heavy traffic to keep his target in sight, the Administrator would call for a REF check. If the roll was less than or equal to Sebastian's REF score, he would make it across the street unscathed; if the roll was higher, the Administrator might decide that Sebastian fell down or suffered some other misfortune as a result.

Note also that under certain circumstances the Admin may make secret attribute checks for the players.

Bad and Lucky Breaks

No matter how skilled your character is, sooner or later, luck — good and bad — will come into play: Sebastian Cord is pursuing an enemy agent through the streets of Paris when, suddenly, a little old lady emerges from a grocery store, blocking the agent's path and allowing Sebastian to catch up. Or Sebastian might be involved in a deadly gun battle when his gun jams. These are the breaks of the game.

In game terms, we'd call the little old lady a Lucky Break and the jammed gun a Bad Break. Any time you make an attribute check for your character, there's a chance you'll benefit from a Lucky Break or suffer from a Bad Break. A roll of 00, 01, 02, 03, or 04 results in a Lucky Break—the Administrator will tell you just what happened, but it will be something good. An 01-04 means something slightly beneficial happened; a 00 means something astonishingly good happened.

But a roll of 95, 96, 97, 98, or 99 means your char-

acter suffers a Bad Break. On a 95-98, the character suffers a minor misfortune — a gun jams, or hands slip on a car's steering wheel, causing a momentary loss of control. A 99 means something terrible happened — the shell that caused a gun to jam bent the firing pin, or a tire blew, allowing an enemy agent to escape.

Character Background

Several fundamental aspects of your character aren't determined by die rolls. Factors like height, weight, hair color, race or nationality and the like can't really be quantified. They do help you visualize your character better, however, and that makes for better roleplaying. You can choose these for yourself (though, as always, the Administrator has the final say — if your Admin doesn't want any blond-haired, blue-eyed Japanese secret agents, you can't have one).

Sex: Choose whether your character is male or female. Unless some very unusual circumstances prevail in your campaign, you will probably be limited to these two common choices.

Race or Nationality: Your character can be any race or nationality you want. The choice you make may affect play, however, depending upon an adventure's setting; for example, an Afro-American character might have a tough time travelling incognito in Japan, while an Englishman might stick out like a sore thumb in Zimbabwe.

Once you've selected a race or nationality, it's probably enough to say, "I'm Japanese," or "I'm a Black African," or "I'm Caucasian-American." On the other hand, you may want to create a detailed genealogy for your character. For example, here's Sebastian Cord's story:

"My maternal grandparents came over from Germany in the late 1800s, while my father's family has been here since the Mayflower. Somewhere in there, one of my great-grandparents married a Cherokee Indian. I also picked up a little Italian

blood somewhere.”

Note that nationality need not be the place of your character's birth. In game terms, it may be more important to know what country your character calls home: What is his or her citizenship? What kind of passport does he or she carry? And so on.

Native Language: Your character is fluent in one language. Decide which language that is, bearing in mind your character's race and nationality. If it is important to your conception of your character that he or she know more than one language, select the Bilingual Background advantage (page 16), or learn several languages when you buy your character's skills.

General Appearance: Your character's height, weight, eye color, hair color, hairstyle, clothing styles, makeup choices, and the like are up to you, but your choices should be consistent with his or her race and/or nationality. The Admin is the final arbiter of what is and isn't consistent with your background — if the Admin says your six-foot tall, blond-haired, blue-eyed, female Japanese agent is okay, go ahead and play her.

Decisions you make regarding your character's personal appearance can't be used in lieu of the Attractive Appearance advantage (page 16) or the Unattractive Appearance disadvantage (page 26) — if you want your character to be stunningly beautiful or shockingly ugly you have to spend points on the appropriate advantage or disadvantage.

Handedness: Decide whether your character is right or left-handed. If you choose to be right-handed, the Admin will assess a -30 penalty to all attribute checks when you try to do things with your left hand. If you choose to be left-handed, you will suffer a similar penalty when using your right hand. The Ambidexterity advantage (page 15) allows you to use both hands equally.

Age: Your character can start out at any age between 21 and 39 — few spy agencies recruit minors or senior citizens. During the course of an extended campaign, your character may age, but you'll have to survive many dangerous missions

before you can collect Social Security!

Older Characters: You can choose to be older than 39 at the outset, beginning with more skills than your younger compatriots, but you must pay the price.

As characters grow older, they gain skill points, but suffer losses to MOV, STR, and CON. In addition, older characters acquire extra disadvantages as they age. Consult the chart below to determine attribute losses and extra disadvantages resulting from character-aging.

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

AGE	SKILL PT+	ATT LOSSES	DISADS*
21-39	0	0	0
40-49	3 General 2 Other	MOV -10	1
50-64	4 General 3 Other	MOV -20 STR -10	3
65+	4 General 3 Other	MOV -30 STR -30 CON -20	5

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

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

NAME: Now that you know who your character is, give him or her a name. The name should be appropriate for the race/nationality you chose, but any name will do as long as you can justify it to the Administrator.

Psychological Profile

You already know where your character came from, what language he or she speaks, how old he or she is, and many other things. But you still may have no idea what kind of person your character is. This optional procedure will help you figure that out.

If you decide to generate a Psychological Profile for your character, you can do so at any point in the character creation process: You can do it even before you generate your character's attributes, or wait until after you've selected skills (about which, more below).

A Psychological Profile simply describes your character's attitudes toward other people and toward life in general. Below, you will find a list of words — Cruelty, Loyalty, Passion, Piety, Sanity, and Selfishness. Each describes an emotion, attitude, or personality trait. All characters are rated in these areas by assigning one of the descriptive words below to each trait:

No	Low	Some	High	Total
----	-----	------	------	-------

In other words, if your character is completely insane (and you're willing to roleplay that way), mark off the "No" box next to the word Sanity in your character dossier. If your character is somewhat cruel, but not very, mark off the "Low" box next to the word "Cruelty," and so on until you've rated your character in each area. We've included some blank lines in the character dossier so you can think up traits of your own.

Cruelty measures how cruel your character is. A High or Total here might mean your character is likely to use torture during Interrogation attempts, or that your character likes to kick puppies, and so on. A No or Low score means your character doesn't have a cruel bone in his or her body.

Loyalty measures your character's devotion to a person, organization, or country. A High or Total here might mean you value a friendship more than life itself, or that you consider national security of

utmost importance. A No or Low score means your character can turn on friends or organizations in the blink of an eye.

Passion measures intense interests. A High or Total here might mean your character attacks projects with great intensity, never doing anything halfway. A No or Low score indicates that your character is more laid back, less obsessive about things.

Piety is a measure of religious conviction. A High or Total here means your character is devoutly religious. A No or Low score means your character cares little for religious matters — he or she may even be anti-religious.

Sanity measures how good a grasp of reality your character has. A High or Total in this area means your character is down-to-earth, rational, and well-adjusted. A No or Low score indicates that your character is off the deep end in some way of your own choosing.

Selfishness is a measure of how self-centered your character is. This can manifest itself in an over-inflated ego, or in a lack of willingness to share possessions (or information). A High or Total means your character is egocentric or selfish. A No or Low score means he or she tends to be generous and open.

You can be as general or as specific as you want — if you want to say your character is just a Passionate sort, give him or her a High or Total Passion rating. If, on the other hand, you feel your character is only Passionately interested in baseball, or justice, or something else, feel free to specify Passion scores for each of those interests, and just for those interests.

The Psychological Profile has no real game effect — You will never have to make Psychological Profile checks, rolling against your emotional scores.

The object of the Psychological Profile is to turn your character from a set of numbers into a fully-fleshed out human being. It is designed to help you visualize and roleplay your character. You can do anything with the key words we've provided (or new words of your own devising) that helps fulfill this goal.

But once you determine that your character is Passionate or Pious or anything else, roleplay him or her that way — the Administrator can take Fame & Fortune points away from you if you consistently ignore your Psychological Profile.

Tags

A “tag” is a vivid trait of some kind that becomes apparent to anyone meeting the character. Select one or two from the list, or make up your own, for each PC. Mentioning these tags or acting them out will make these characters much more lifelike and memorable.

Suggested Tags

Bossy/Rude
 Apologetic/Meek
 Gum/Tobacco Chewing
 Gaze, Shifty/Staring Repeated Gesture (hand through air, scratch nose, etc.)
 Laugh (unusual)
 Distinctive Style (punk, disco)
 Unusual Walk
 Chain Smoking
 Depressed/Morose
 Angry/Frustrated
 Sexy/Flirtatious
 Ever-present Pet/Companion
 Nervous/Fidgety
 Prejudiced
 Unusual Breathing (wheezing, rapid)
 Drinking
 Ever-present Possession (cane, monocle, ring)

If you want your PC to have tags, write your selections (or new tags of your own creation) on the blank lines in the Psychological Profile section of the character dossier. Like other aspects of the profile, tags have no game effect — they’re strictly role-playing aids.

Voice

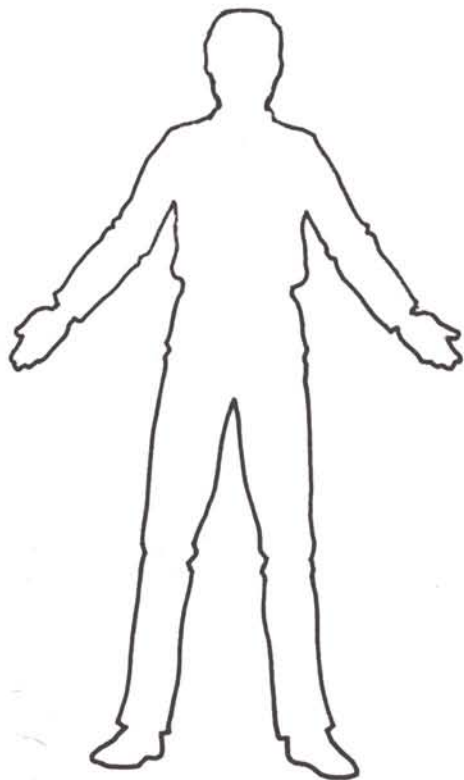
How characters sound can determine how other characters react to them. A character’s voice can embellish or even define his or her personality.

Accents are a simple and effective means of depicting a PC. They reinforce characters’ nationality, which can often be important.

Many accents are relatively easy to mimic. Watching movies in which actors speak with accents can enhance your skill at mimicking vocal styles.

Pitch and Tone are factors you can vary from time to time to reflect the diversity of PCs. Altering your voice slightly when playing a PC will help other players visualize your character.

Distinctive Speech Traits, such as a nasal tone or lisp, can also be used to make a PC memorable in the minds of other players.



2. Advantages and Disadvantages



You've already determined your character's attributes — those abilities with which we are all born. Advantages and disadvantages are different: They are characteristics we *don't* all possess. These are special abilities which differentiate one person or character from others. As the names imply, advantages usually help characters, while disadvantages usually hinder them.

Beginning characters have one Advantage and one Disadvantage. Ignore the point costs of the various advantages and disadvantages the higher come into play when you use the Reality Rule, below. Until you decide to use the Reality Rule, select whichever advantage and disadvantage appeal to you.

Certain advantages and disadvantages cancel each other out. For example, a character could not take "Acute Vision" as an advantage and "Impaired Vision" as a Disadvantage. Likewise, you can't give your character both the Attractive Appearance advantage and the Unattractive Appearance disadvantage. These cases will be obvious, and the Administrator's common sense is all that is required to make a judgement.

Multiple Advantages and Disadvantages: All advantages and disadvantages aren't created equal. Some offer greater benefits, or prove more troublesome, than others. Each advantage and disadvantage is assigned a point cost the higher the number, the greater the advantage or the worse the disadvantage. A one point advantage may come in handy; a four point advantage might save your life. Likewise, a one point disadvantage is a bother; a four point one is a serious handicap.

Point costs for the various advantages and disadvantages are listed below. If you see more than one number next to an advantage or disadvantage you can select how many points you want to spend on that characteristic — the more points you spend, the more significant the effect of the advantage or disadvantage.

Beginning characters can take up to six points of advantages, but you are never required to take any. Once you decide to take advantages, you must take at least as many points of disadvantages. You can always take extra disadvantages if you want.

For example, Sebastian Cord was born with good

looks — not extraordinary, but good. He used his good looks to ease his way into high society, where he learned how to behave in just about any social situation. Early in life, he discovered that he had the ability to sense danger. This talent didn't make him immune to danger, but on several occasions, it saved his life.

In game terms, we would say that Sebastian has the Attractive Appearance advantage (but just for 1 point — remember he's not that good looking!). He also has the Social Graces (2 points) and Sixth Sense (3 points) advantages. In all, Sebastian Cord has six points of advantages. This means he has to take at least six points of disadvantages.

For all his advantages over ordinary folks, Sebastian Cord isn't perfect: He was born with a mole on his cheek, a not unattractive feature, but one that makes him instantly recognizable.

He also developed quite an ego, though not enough of one to impair his ability to get along in society. Still, his ego has led to some rather quirky behavior: Early in his career as a secret agent, he began leaving playing cards at the scenes of his clandestine operations as a mark that he'd been there.



Sebastian also grew to love gambling (missions in Monte Carlo will do that). But he sometimes gambled more than he should have, and now has half the casino owners in Monte Carlo, Las Vegas, and elsewhere on his tail, which, of course, means organized crime is on his tail. Overall, a bad situation

for Sebastian Cord.

In game terms, we'd say Sebastian Cord has the Unmistakeable Feature disadvantage (1 point), the Ego Signature disadvantage (2 points), the Gambling disadvantage (2 points), and the Enemy disadvantage (2 points). This gives him a total of seven points of disadvantages — one more than he has in advantages, which is just fine.

ADVANTAGES

Name	Points
Acting Ability	2
Acute Hearing	2
Acute Smell	1
Acute Taste	1
Acute Touch	1
Acute Vision	2
Ambidexterity	2
Animal Friendship	1
Artistic Ability	2
Athletic Ability	1,2
Attractive Appearance	1,2,3
Bilingual Background	2
Double-jointed	3
Empathy	2
Eye-hand Coordination	3
Fearlessness	2
Good Balance	2
Internal Compass	1
Language Ability	2
Light Sleeper	2
Mechanical Aptitude	3
Musical Ability	1
Night Vision	2
Obscure Knowledge	3
Observation	3
Peripheral Vision	2
Photographic Memory	6
Presence	3
Sensuality	2
Sixth Sense	1,2,3
Stamina	2
Toughness	1,2,3,4
Wealth	2,3,4

DISADVANTAGES

Name	Points
Addiction	2,4
Allergies	1,2,3
Clumsiness	2
Color Blind	1
Cowardice	4
Deep Sleeper	2
Dependent	2,3,4
Ego Signature	2
Enemy	1,2,4
Gambling	2
Greed	3
Hearing Impairment	2,3,4
Illiteracy	2
Lechery	2
Moral Qualms	2
Night Blindness	2
Overweight	1,2,3
Phobias	(1)2(3)
Short-winded	3
Traumatic Flashbacks	2,4
Unattractive Appearance	1,2,3
Uncouth	2
Unmistakable Feature	1
Vision Impairment	2,6

Creating Advantages and Disadvantages: You are not limited to the advantages and disadvantages listed above. If you think of a characteristic you'd like your character to have, one that isn't on the list, suggest it to the Administrator. If the Admin allows it, you can use it just as you would one from the list. The Administrator will assign it a point cost, and work out the exact game effects. Write the costs and effects down immediately, so you have an accurate record.

The Advantages

Acting Ability (2 points)

Your character possesses a natural ability to take on the mannerisms of others.

Characters with this advantage purchase the zero

level of Acting, Disguise, Mimicry, or Social Chameleon skills in the same way as characters without the advantage. However, each subsequent skill level purchased gets them +10 to their roll versus +5 for ordinary characters.

For example, a character with this advantage would spend 3 points to get Disguise at level 0, just like anyone else. This means characters get a full INT roll to don a disguise and observers get a full INT check to see through it. Ordinarily, subsequent Disguise skill levels would lower an observer's chances of penetrating a disguise by 5%.

Characters with the Acting advantage, however, get +10% to their rolls for each level of Disguise skill and observers must subtract 10% from their INT scores to detect the disguise.

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

Acute Hearing (2 points)

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

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

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

Acute Smell (1 point)

Characters with this ability are allowed to make an INT check at +20 any time an olfactory clue might linger in the air.

They can detect the presence of unusual gasses or the recent passage of animals. (A Lucky Break may even reveal the number and kinds of animals!) Characters with Acute Smell can even rec-

ognize specific types of cologne or perfume.

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

Acute Taste (1 point)

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

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

Acute Touch (1 point)

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

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

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

Acute Vision (2 points)

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

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

Ambidexterity (2 points)

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

Animal Friendship (1 point)

Characters with this advantage get along well

with animals, and can often coax them to obey commands — or at least be friendly.

In a non-combat situation (when, for example, Sebastian Cord's fellow agent, Ling, awakens to find herself in a lion's cage), you will be allowed an INT check. If the check is successful, the animals will not attack the character unless provoked.

In a combat situation (e.g., when guard dogs lunge at Ling as she skulks about the villain's manor grounds), you can make a 1/2 INT check. Success means the animals do not attack.

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

Artistic Ability (2 points)

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

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

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

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

Athletic Ability (1, 2 points)

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

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

Attractive Appearance (1, 2, 3 points)

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

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

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

For example, if Sebastian Cord, with his Attractive Appearance (1), wanted to seduce a female enemy agent with a WIL of 72, she would have to roll a 62 or less or fall into his arms. If he had 3 points in Attractive appearance, the enemy agent would have to roll a 42 or less!

Bilingual Background (2 points)

Characters with this advantage were raised in an environment in which more than one language was used on a regular basis. In addition to being fluent in one language, like all characters, characters from a bilingual background get a zero level skill in a second language of the player's choice — free! The bilingual character can speak the second language free, but must spend skill points in order to learn to read or write.

Double-jointed (3 points)

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

For example, Sebastian Cord (who isn't double-jointed) and Ling (who is) are bound with rope and left alone for an hour, the Administrator would allow the Sebastian player a $\frac{1}{2}$ REF check to slip free. The double-jointed Ling would make the same check at her full REF score.

If Sebastian Cord were confined in a straitjacket, he would have no chance to escape at all, but Ling could still roll at $\frac{1}{2}$ REF.

Empathy (2 points)

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

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

Eye-Hand Coordination (3 points)

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

Fearlessness (2 points)

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

Good Balance (2 points)

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

Internal Compass (1 point)

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

Language Ability (2 points)

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

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

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

For more about Language skills, see pages 59-60.

Light Sleeper (2 points)

The slightest disturbance awakens the light sleeper. Normal characters operate at half-efficiency for two turns after waking up. Characters with the

Light Sleeper advantage are instantly alert, and can perform normal actions on the turn after they awaken.

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

Mechanical/Technical Aptitude (3 points)

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

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

Musical Ability (1 point)

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

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

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

Night Vision (2 points)

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

Characters with Night Vision ignore all darkness modifiers.

In non-combat situations, where observation is limited by poor illumination, the Administrator may also give characters with this advantage a little more detail than anyone else. ("You can barely see a shadowy figure, in the alcove near the door," for example, when other characters can't see a thing.)

Obscure Knowledge (3 points)

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

Even if a character with this advantage has no way of knowing a fact, the Admin will make a $\frac{1}{2}$ INT check to see if he or she knows! ("Oh, yeah, that strange symbol is the sign of a cult of death-worshippers that flourished in the eastern USA during the 1800s.")

The information gained through the use of this advantage will generally be trivial. Obscure Knowledge can't tell characters how to *do* things; it only governs whether or not characters can call up a specific, isolated, fact. ("Oh, yeah, I remember how to fly the Space Shuttle" is not allowed!)

Observation (3 points)

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

For example, a character with this advantage might not be able to remember every word of an article in yesterday's newspaper, or a conversation described by a friend. The character *would* probably remember anything about an office searched the day before, or an enemy agent spotted on the street.

If the player remembers a particular fact (and the

character could have learned the fact through direct observation), the character remembers too. If the player doesn't remember something, he or she can ask the Admin to check and see if the character remembers anyway. The Admin rolls an INT check for the character. A successful check means the observed fact is remembered.

In answer to the question, "Was there anything noteworthy about the agent I spotted earlier this week?" the answer might be, "Yes, he had a large mole on his cheek and he walked with a slight limp."

In answer to the question, "Has anything changed since I searched this office yesterday?" the answer might be, "Well, you see lipstick on the coffee cup — that wasn't there yesterday . . . you smell perfume. That's new . . . and the ledger has been moved from the left side of the desk to the right."

Peripheral Vision (2 points)

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

Photographic Memory (6 points)

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

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

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

Presence (3 points)

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

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

Sensuality (2 points)

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



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

Appearance advantage also results in a -5 modifier. A character with a WIL of 42, trying to resist a sensual character with Presence (-5) and 3 points of Attractive Appearance (-15) would have to roll a 22 or less to resist becoming enamored.

Sixth Sense (1, 2, or 3 points)

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

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

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

Stamina (2 points)

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

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

More on stamina and endurance can be found on page 66.

Toughness (1, 2, 3, or 4 points)

Characters with this advantage have a higher tolerance to pain than most people and are less

susceptible to broken bones.

Each character's body is divided into ten areas, each of which can take a certain amount of damage before becoming useless. Character's with the Toughness advantage get bonuses which allow them to take more damage in each body area than other characters:

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

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

Wealth (2, 3, or 4 points)

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

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

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

Points	Family Status	Holdings	Allowance
2	well-to-do	house	10,000
3	millionaire	houses business	50,000
4	dynasty	estates businesses airplane yacht	100,000

Disadvantages

Addiction (2, 4 points)

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

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

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

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

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

Characters with a 4 point addiction have all attribute and skill scores lowered to $\frac{1}{2}$ normal when they're not under the effects of the drug. In addition, when the character has none of the drug in question, no task, no mission, no obligation can be put ahead of acquiring some.

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

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

Allergies (1, 2, 3 points)

Characters with allergies suffer adverse physical reactions whenever they come in contact with whatever substance they are allergic to. How your character reacts to allergins is up to you — sneezing, breaking out in hives, running nose, and/or difficulty breathing are all appropriate. Just tell the Admin your character's physical response.

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

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

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

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

2 Points: Characters with 2-point allergies have a more serious problem. They must make a WIL check every minute they're exposed to the substance to which they are allergic. If a check fails, all attributes and skills are reduced to 1/2 normal. These return to normal at a rate of 10 points per minute, once the character is no longer exposed.

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

3 Points: Characters with 3-point allergies must make a WIL check every minute they are exposed

to the substance to which they are allergic. If a check fails, all attributes and skills are reduced to 5 until they are no longer exposed. These return to normal at a rate of 5 points per minute once the character is no longer exposed.

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

Clumsiness (2 points)

The character with this disadvantage is liable to drop things or trip at the most awkward moments. At the Administrator's discretion (but no more than once or twice per gaming session), the player makes a REF check. Success means nothing happened; failure means the character fumbled whatever he or she was holding, or tripped and fell down, perhaps knocking over some fragile object.

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



Color-blind (1 point)

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

Cowardice (4 points)

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

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

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

Deep Sleeper (2 points)

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

Any time a normal character would be allowed a full INT check to awaken, the character with the Deep Sleeper disadvantage must make a $\frac{1}{2}$ INT check to wake up. If a normal character has to make a $\frac{1}{2}$ INT check to wake up, the deep sleeper must roll a $\frac{1}{4}$ INT check.

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

Dependent (2, 3, or 4 points)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ego Signature (2 points)

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

Enemy (1, 2, or 4 points)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4 Points: This is a very serious enemy — a powerful individual or large organization. This enemy

wants the PC dead, and has the power to bring a careless agent to a quick end.

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

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

For example, a piano being hoisted to a third story apartment falls, as the cable from which it is suspended snaps — the PC just happens to be walking beneath. An accident? The PC may never know, but the Administrator does — the piano movers were hired by the PC's enemy and the snapped cable was no accident!

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

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

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

Gambling (2 points)

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

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

the other hand, might result in a -20 to the PC's WIL score.

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

Greed (3 points)

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

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

Hearing Impairment (2, 3, or 4 points)

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

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

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

Characters with a 4-point Hearing Impairment disadvantage are completely deaf. Hearing aids won't help them. They don't get to make any checks involving sound. In order to understand what others are saying they must have the Lip

Reading skill (a handy skill for characters with any level of Hearing Impairment). Sign language skill is also handy.

Illiteracy (2 points)

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

The Illiteracy disadvantage makes learning Education skills more difficult — the zero level of skill costs no more than for literate characters, but each subsequent level gives illiterate characters a 2% increase in proficiency, rather than 5%.

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

Lechery (2 points)

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

For example, a male agent subject to lechery encounters a female enemy agent (Attractive Appearance 3). In order to resist the temptation to make a pass at her, he must make a WIL - 30 check (10 points off his WIL score for every point the "target" has in Attractive Appearance). If the enemy agent had three points in *Unattractive Appearance*, the lecherous character would add 30 to his WIL before rolling.

Moral Qualms (2 points)

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

telling lies or torturing prisoners.

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

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

Night Blindness (2 points)

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

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

Phobias (1, 2, or 3 points)

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

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

You can add a point to the worth of a basic, 2-point phobia by saying it's a very severe one. (One-point phobias can't be increased this way.) For example,

a basic 2-point fear of heights would come into play when a character has to follow a fleeing agent up a mountain, or onto a window ledge fifty stories up. However, if this character was so afraid of heights he or she couldn't stand on a chair to change a light bulb, the phobia would be worth 3 points!

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

Short-winded (3 points)

A character with this disadvantage suffers shortness of breath during periods of physical activity. In game terms, the character's endurance is half the standard time for all physical activities, including hand-to-hand combat, swimming, running, skiing, etc. See page 65 for more about Endurance.

Traumatic Flashbacks (2 or 4 points)

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

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

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

how your character responds.

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

If the check fails, the character suffers a serious flashback, and remains frozen for 1d6 turns. When the appropriate number of turns passes, make another WIL check. Again, success means the character is fine on the *next* turn; failure means he or she is frozen for another 2d6 turns. Continue making WIL checks until your character snaps out of the flashback, or dies.

Unattractive Appearance (1, 2, or 3 points)

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

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

Uncouth (2 points)

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

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

Unmistakable Feature (1 point)

The character with this disadvantage can be easily

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

Vision Impairment (2 or 6 points)

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

2-Points: The character requires glasses or contact lenses to see effectively. Without corrective measures, the character's attributes are reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ normal on any attribute or skill check where vision is important.

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

The Administrator will tell you which activities involve vision and require $\frac{1}{2}$ skill checks.

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

3. Careers and Skills

TOP SECRET/5.1™
Game



By now, you've determined a lot about your character: You know how strong, smart, quick, determined, and durable he or she is; you know how he or she looks; you know his or her name and nationality; you have some idea of his or her strengths and weaknesses. Still, your character is not quite ready to go adventuring.

Before embarking on their first mission, players must determine what their characters did before becoming secret agents and what skills they acquired.

Career Packages

To get you started thinking about your character's pre-spy life, we've provided five different character backgrounds, called "Career Packages." These will help you determine what sort of person your character was before entering the world of international espionage — A student? a teacher? a farmer? a wealthy jet-setter? a police officer? an actor? an assembly-line worker?

Think about what sort of character you want to play, then, from the list below, select the career package that allows you to create that character:

Military: soldier, officer, sailor, mercenary, guerrilla, SWAT-team member, etc.

Professional: doctor, lawyer, politician, teacher, engineer, reporter, clergyman, etc.

Worker: factory worker, mechanic, technician, farmer, welder, policeman, etc.

Entertainer: singer, musician, athlete, circus acrobat, magician, etc.

Other: If the character you want to create doesn't fit into any of the background packages listed above, select the Other background. Using this catch-all category, you can create jet-setters, shepherds, debutantes, juvenile delinquents, monks, criminals, and anything else.

Each of the Career Packages is treated in detail below. The package descriptions contain the following information:

Starting Savings

This is the formula you'll use to determine how much money your character has in the bank at the beginning of the game.

Players who choose the Other background determine their starting savings by rolling 1d10 and multiplying the result by \$100 (unless, of course, they selected the Wealth advantage, or the Administrator decides they ought to have more money).

Careers and Skill

You'll learn everything you need to know about skills, how you acquire them, and how they are used in the next chapter. In order to pick the background best suited to your needs, however, you need to know something about skill points and skill categories now.

Skill Points

Skill points are used to buy skills and increase your character's level of ability with those skills. Some skills cost as little as a single point to buy; others cost as much as 5 points! The number of skill points required to improve in a skill varies, too. Each character starts with 30 skill points, enough to buy lots of skills (if you don't want to be too proficient in their use) or a few skills (in which you can be quite proficient).

The Career Package you choose determines how you spend 22 of your 30 skill points. The remaining eight are called "spare time" points. They represent skills characters picked up when in their spare time, when they weren't pursuing their primary goals.

Skill Categories

Skills are broken down into six categories —

Mechanical, Combat, Specialty, General, Education, and Language skills. The career package you choose determines how many of each type of skill your character has.

Mechanical skills include tool use and technical skills or crafts such as carpentry, welding, electronics, plumbing, etc.

Combat skills include hand-to-hand fighting ability, and the training necessary in order to use weapons of all sorts — from crossbows to guided missiles.

Specialty skills are criminal- or covert operations-oriented — safecracking, lockpicking, disguise, and so on. The value of these skills to secret agents is obvious.

General skills are common to all sorts of people — swimming, skiing, driving, horseback riding, etc. These skills are often used in recreational situations, but the *Top Secret/S.I.*™ character's life might depend them.

Education skills are those generally acquired in school — book learning. In this category, you'll find skills whose primary function is to provide information, rather than perform feats of daring. You'll also find a few skills which allow you to do things which can only be learned through intensive study and training — surgery, for instance.

Language skills are those which allow characters to speak, read, and understand languages other than their own. Every character selects a native language early in the character creation process, and is assumed to speak, read, and write it perfectly. Some characters, by virtue of the Bilingual Background advantage, may know more than one language at the outset, but any character can buy proficiency in extra languages by spending points on Language skills.

Mandatory Skill Table

The table below tells how many skill points your character must spend in each skill category, based on the career package you selected. To read the table, find the career package you've chosen for

your character. Then read down the column to determine how many points you must spend in each skill category.

MANDATORY SKILL TABLE

Skill Cat.	Character Career				
	Milit	Prof	Work	Entr	Other*
Mechanical	0	0	10	2	X
Combat	10	0	6	2	X
Specialty	6	0	0	0	X
Education	0	10	0	4	X
General	6	6	6	10	X
Language	0	6	0	4	X

*The Other career allows you to decide for yourself how many skills your character has in each of the skill categories, but you can't spend more than 30 skill points and you can't put more than eight points in any one category. (For more about skill categories and skill points, see below.)

The **Mandatory Skills** listing for each package repeats the information found in the Mandatory Skills Table. A zero (0) means you don't *have* to spend any points, though you *may* spend any of your eight spare time points in any skill class.

The **Starting Savings** listed in each category is the amount of money your character has saved over the years prior to the start of the campaign. The Wealth advantage gives characters extra money, over and above their rolled starting savings.

The **Level of Achievement** in each category represents the *most* a beginning character can achieve in his or her field. Characters can always begin at *lower* levels of achievement than those described, if you want. Characters who begin at age 40 or older may have reached higher levels of achievement, if the Admin approves.

The **Other Information** section of the package description tells you anything else you need to know about the package.

Military Career

Mandatory Skills: Mechanical — 0; Combat — 10; Specialty — 6; Education — 0; General — 6; Language — 0.

Starting Savings:

\$2,000 — \$12,000 (roll 2d6 × \$1,000)

Level of Achievement: Characters with a military background have served in the armed forces of their native country. A character can be any rank his or her age will allow: Ranks below captain are open to characters of all ages; a captain must be at least 25 years old; a major, at least 35; a colonel, at least 40; and a general, at least 45. Don't forget to take into account age modifications to attributes, advantages, and disadvantages for characters over 39 (see page 9).



Other Information: Military characters maintain contact with their branch of the service through reserve or National Guard duty. The Administrator should determine how much this affects characters' everyday lives. Players who say their characters defected from one country to another, or whose characters deserted from the armed forces may have acquired a powerful enemy (see the Enemy disadvantage, page 23).

Professional Career

Mandatory Skills: Mechanical — 0; Combat — 0; Specialty — 0; Education — 10; General — 6; Language — 6.

Starting Savings:

\$100 — \$1,000 for students ($1d10 \times \$1,000$) \$2,000 — \$20,000 for others ($2d10 \times \$1,000$)

Add $1d6 \times \$1,000$ for each degree earned beyond Bachelor's.

Level of Achievement: The character has attended college, earning at least a Bachelor's Degree. The character may have attended more than one college, in more than one country. In game terms, players must buy at least one college degree when determining their characters' skills (see Education skills, pages 55-59), and may buy additional degrees, if they choose.



Other Information: This package includes all professions which require extensive education and training. The list runs the gamut from doctors to lawyers to stockbrokers, with lots of stops in between. Characters can specialize as much as players want ("My character is a neurosurgeon specializing in right brain/left brain research") or stick with a general description ("My character's a nurse").

Characters who buy enough skills to get a job in their chosen field (a judgement made by the Administrator) may use that job as a cover. Holding a day-to-day job just gets in the way of a spy's real work, however, so most characters will have minor positions with minor firms (usually firms controlled by the agency for which the character works).

Worker Career

Mandatory Skills: Mechanical — 10; Combat — 6; Specialty — 0; Education — 0; General — 6; Language — 0.

Starting Savings:

\$2,000 — \$12,000 ($2d6 \times \$1,000$)

Level of Achievement: This background package is for characters whose pre-spy lives saw them holding jobs for which little formal education was necessary — assembly line workers, tailors, barbers, and the like. Generally, characters of this sort have learned a single trade. They have honed a single set of skills to a high level of proficiency. Though sometimes lacking in formal schooling, these characters are rich in experience.



Other Information: Characters with this background may have had experience in a variety of jobs before settling on their specialty. In this case, a character may have an even wider base of skills than normal. In cases like this, use the Other background category described below.

Entertainer Career

Mandatory Skills: Mechanical — 2; Combat — 2; Specialty — 0; Education — 4; General — 10; Language — 4.

Starting Savings:

Characters without appropriate advantages (see below):

\$100 — \$1,000 (1d10 × \$100)

Characters with appropriate advantages and skills (see below):

\$2,000 - \$20,000 (2d10 × \$1,000)

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



Any character with one (or more) of these advantages and a skill level of 50 or better in the appropriate skill(s) can assume a fair degree of fame in his or her chosen field. In addition, characters with appropriate advantages and skills make more money than those without talent, and roll $2d10 \times \$1,000$ to determine Starting Savings, rather than the $1d10 \times \$100$ non-talented characters get.

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

Any character can claim to be an entertainer or performer when creating a cover identity. If pressed, however, only those with talent can convince people they're really what they claim to be. The Administrator may modify reaction rolls accordingly.

Other Career

Mandatory Skills: None. This is a design-your-own character background. No more than 30 skill points can be spent, and no more than eight of those points can be put in any one skill category. Beyond that, anything goes.

Starting Savings: This will vary from character to character. The Admin will determine your character's starting savings.

Level of Achievement: Given the wide range of character types that might fall into this category, it's impossible to give hard and fast rules. Wealthy characters, those who led lives of leisure before becoming spies, probably had a lot of time on their hands. The same is true (though for very different reasons) for the poor person who, for whatever reason may never have held a job for long. These characters are assumed to have dabbled in many fields, but mastered none. Determining levels of achievement for other kinds of characters is left to players and Administrators.

Other Information: Though just about any character-type could fit in the "Other" category, the wealthy dilettante and the poor streetwise punk who grows up to become a criminal (turned good guy spy) are two of the most likely.

4. Skills



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

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

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

Attributes and Skills

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

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

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

Skill Points

High attribute scores give your character a head

start in learning skills, but in order to get really good, you have to study. Study and training are represented by skill points.

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

Skill Levels

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

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

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

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

Skill Checks

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

If your character needs to use a DEX-based skill (to make a forgery, for example), you would have

to roll his or her DEX score or less on percentile dice to succeed. If the number you roll is less than or equal to the appropriate attribute score, your character used the skill successfully and accomplished whatever it was he or she set out to do. If you rolled higher than the character's attribute score, the character failed.

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

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

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

Specialization: Most skills give your character the ability to perform a wide variety of related actions, or the ability to use several similar objects or weapons. The Driving/Automobile skill, for example, allows characters to drive just about anything with four wheels, an engine, and a steering wheel; the Pistol skill allows the use of any firearm fired with one hand; the History/Political Science skill gives a broad background in all periods of history, and a general knowledge of all political systems.

But some drivers have favorite cars, ones they enjoy driving more than others, ones they are better at driving than others; some agents have favorite pistols, ones they practice with constantly, and with which they are more accurate than they are with others; and some historians are experts in American History, while others study Ancient Greece. These drivers, agents, and historians are specialists in their fields.

Your character can specialize, too. All you have to

do is buy the appropriate skill at first level or higher and describe your character's specialization. For example, you could buy Driving/Auto and say your character specializes in driving Aston Martins; or you could buy the Pistol skill, and say your character specializes in the use of the Walther PPK; or you could buy the History/Political Science skill and say your character specializes in the history of British/Russian relations between 1960 and 1965.

You can specialize in any skill, in any skill category. Simply decide how your character specializes, work with the Admin to determine the limits of that specialty, and buy the appropriate skill at first level or higher.

In game terms, specializing gives you an additional +10 to your character's skill you use the object or weapon, or perform the action in which your character specializes. Characters can still use other objects or weapons and perform other actions allowed by the skill, but their skill is at -20 any time they venture outside the area of specialization.

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

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

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

Prerequisite Skill Levels: *Your character must have at least as high a level in a prerequisite skill as in the more advanced skill that depends upon it. For example, a character with Basic Mechanic 3 couldn't have Aircraft Mechanic 4 or 5.*

If a prerequisite skill can only be bought at zero level, and can't be improved, you can have as high a level as you want (and can afford) in any skill which depends upon it.

Performing Tasks Without the Necessary Skill

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

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

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

For example, say Sebastian has to forge a document, but doesn't have the Forgery skill. He can still give it a shot, using 1/4 of his DEX of 56 — he'll have to roll a 14 or less in order to make a successful copy.

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

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

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

Getting Advice on Skills: Sebastian has just completed a mission, and is flying home in a single-engine prop plane, when the engine cuts out and, making matters worse, the pilot suffers a heart attack. What's an agent to do?

Sebastian doesn't have any experience as a pilot, but he knows how to use a radio, so he gets on the horn: "Mayday . . . Mayday . . . I'm in trouble up here!" A voice crackles back, "Relax, Mac, I'll talk you down!" Moments later, Sebastian is back on terra firma, thanks to an assist from an able air traffic controller.

At various times, characters will be forced to do things they've never tried before. They can, as we've seen, make default rolls, but what about situations where success or failure spell life and death for the characters involved? You don't want to be piloting a plane, defusing bombs, or shutting down nuclear reactors without some expert assistance.

When a character can contact an expert — by phone, through written instructions, or any other method players can think of — the player can make a skill check at 1/2 the appropriate attribute score, even if the skill has a prerequisite or allows no default use.

Skill Tables

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

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

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

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

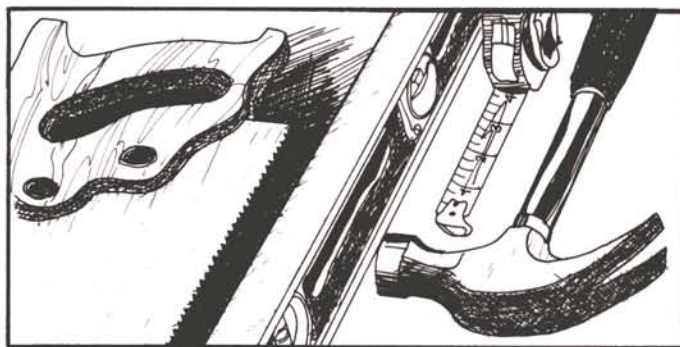
Intelligence check.

COST is the number of skill points you must spend to acquire levels of proficiency with a skill. Three numbers, separated by slashes, are included for each skill. The first is the cost of acquiring a skill at zero level; the second is the cost of levels one through three; the third is the cost of levels four and five. In cases where the slash is followed by the letter "N," the skill cannot be raised beyond zero level.

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

Mechanical Skills

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



Mechanical skills allow characters to build, repair, and in some cases operate machines. Skill checks may be modified up or down, depending upon the difficulty of the repair or construction job, the degree to which the mechanic must improvise parts and materials, and the time available for the

task. Repairing a car in the middle of a South American rain forest means a skill check at -10 or -20; repairing the same car in a fully-equipped garage, over the course of weeks, allows a skill check at +20 or more.

1. Basic Tool Use

ATT: MOV COST: 1/N PRE: —

The character with this skill is versed in the use of hammers, saws, wrenches, screwdrivers, and other common hand tools. The character can also use power tools: power saws, drills, sanders, chain-saws, etc.

In general, no skill check is required in order to use a tool. If a player wants to use a tool to do something unusual or extremely difficult, however, the Admin may require a skill check.

2. Carpentry

ATT: DEX COST: 2/1/2 PRE: 1

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

3. Metalworking

ATT: DEX COST: 4/2/4 PRE: —

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

4. Construction

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

Characters with this skill are versed in the creation of simple buildings and other structures. Given a reasonable amount of time, and the proper materials, they can build a structure by making a skill check.

If a project is rushed, or the character is forced to improvise materials, the Admin should make the check more difficult. In either case, a failed check doesn't mean the structure isn't built, just that some structural weakness exists.

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

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

5. Basic Mechanic

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

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

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

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

6. Aircraft Mechanic

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

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

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

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

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

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

7. Electronics

ATT: INT COST: 4/2/4 PRE: —

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

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

Characters with this skill aren't trained in the use

of electronic equipment, but the knowledge of how such equipment work allows a 1/2 skill check to operate almost any electronic device.

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

8. Computer Technician

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

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

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

9. Nuclear Technician

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

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

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

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

Combat Skills

#	Skill	ATT	COST	PRE
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RANGED WEAPONS SKILLS

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

CLOSE-COMBAT SKILLS

21	Basic Melee	1/2STR or 1/2DEX	1/N	—
22	Club/Ax/Blackjack	STR	1/2/4	21
23	Knife	DEX or STR	1/3/6	21
24	Fencing	DEX	3/4/8	21
25	Sword	MOV	2/4/8	21
26	Spear/Staff	MOV	1/3/6	21

CLOSE-COMBAT FIGHTING STYLES

27	Boxing*	STR	2/3/6	21
28	Oriental Martial Arts*	MOV	3/4/8	21
29	Wrestling*	MOV	3/3/6	21



1. Blowgun

ATT: MOV COST: 1/3/6 PRE: —

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

Damage done by blowguns is determined largely by the lung power of the blower and the length of the blowgun. For simplicity's sake, however, assume a blunt shot does 1 point of damage (no die roll). Darts do 1d4-1 basic damage. If you're using drugged or poisoned darts, roll normal 1d4-1 damage and then consult the poison rules on page 8-9 of the Administrators Guide.

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

2. Knife Throwing

ATT: MOV COST: 2/3/6 PRE: —

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

3. Spear Throwing

ATT: MOV COST: 2/3/6 PRE: —

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

4. Slingshot

ATT: MOV COST: 1/3/6 PRE: —

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

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

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

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

5. Bow and Arrow

ATT: DEX COST: 2/3/6 PRE: —

In addition to being skilled in the use of the bow and arrow, characters with this skill can restring a broken bow. In a pinch, they can build a bow from scratch. A bow built during a character's free-time can be as good as a professionally-made one. A bow built in the field or in poor conditions can't be as good: A $\frac{1}{2}$ DEX check is required to hit

a target, but damage is unaffected — 1d4 for a small bow, 1d6 for a large one.

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

6. Crossbow

ATT: DEX COST: 2/3/6 PRE: —

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

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

7. Basic Firearms

ATT: $\frac{1}{2}$ DEX COST: 1/N PRE: —

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

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

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

8. Pistol

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

Characters with the Pistol skill have a good understanding of the use and maintenance of pistols. Characters with a first level Pistol skill can fire any pistol at their full DEX level. Each additional level of skill adds 5% to DEX when firing a pistol. Additional skill levels also gives characters

a better chance to hit a particular body location or difficult target (see "Effects of Skill on Hit Location," page 68).

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

9. Rifle

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

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

10. Submachine Gun

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

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

11. Shotgun

ATT: DEX COST: 2/3/6 PRE: —

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

12. Hand Grenade

ATT: DEX COST: 1/2/4 PRE: —

This is a basic throwing skill. Characters with the Hand Grenade skill can arm and throw grenades of all sorts. For an explanation of grenade use, see pages 78-79.

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

the Demolitions skill (page 43) or a Chemistry background (page 58).

13. Basic Heavy Weapons

ATT: $\frac{1}{2}$ DEX COST: 2/N PRE: 7

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

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

14. Machine Gun

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

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

15. Recoilless Rifle

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

This skill allows characters to use and maintain recoilless rifles — guns which fire cannon shells — in the same way the Machine Gun skill allows characters to use and maintain machine guns.

16. Rocket Launcher

ATT: MOV COST: 3/4/8 PRE: 13

Characters with this skill can use bazookas, LAWS (Light Anti-Tank Weapons), and other shoulder-fired small rocket launchers. On a MOV roll, the character can hit a target. Broken weapons can be repaired on a $\frac{1}{2}$ skill roll, unless the Admin determines a weapon is too far gone to be fixed.

17. Mortar

ATT: INT COST: 3/4/8 PRE: 13

Characters with this skill know how to use and repair mortars — small, relatively lightweight artillery pieces. See the Heavy Weapons rules on pages 78-79.

18. Tank Gun

ATT: INT COST: 4/4/8 PRE: 13

Characters with this skill can use turret-mounted weapons, most commonly in tanks, but also in some Armored Personnel Carriers.

19. Artillery

ATT: INT COST: 5/5/10 PRE: 13

Characters with this skill can use artillery pieces ranging from small, vehicle-drawn or mounted guns to fixed position guns. They can even use naval guns, if necessary.

20. Missile

ATT: INT COST: 5/5/10 PRE: 13

This skill allows characters to fire heavy missiles from mobile or fixed positions. A character with this skill might even be able to arm or disarm a nuclear missile in a weapons silo. (A Lucky Break

will figure a missile's computerized arming code.

21. Basic Melee

ATT: $\frac{1}{2}$ STR or $\frac{1}{2}$ DEX COST: 1/N PRE: —

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

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

22. Club/Ax/Blackjack

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

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

23. Knife

ATT: STR or DEX COST: 1/3/6 PRE: 21

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

The Knife skill does *not* give characters the ability to throw knives. For that you need the Knife Throwing skill (page 38).

24. Fencing

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

This skill gives characters the ability to use foils,

sabres, and rapiers with greater skill than other characters. Fencers get a +10 to their skill level any time they use one of these weapons.

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

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

25. Sword

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

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

26. Spear/Staff

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

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

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

27. Boxing

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

Characters with this skill are trained in the art of fisticuffs. They are better able to block blows — and deliver them — than untrained fighters. Characters with this ability get several special attacks, described in detail on pages 76-78.

28. Oriental Martial Arts

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

Characters with this skill are trained in a variety of martial techniques which set them apart from ordinary fighters. They have several special holds, attacks, and defenses which set them apart from ordinary fighters. The special abilities of martial artists are described in detail on pages 76-78.

29. Wrestling

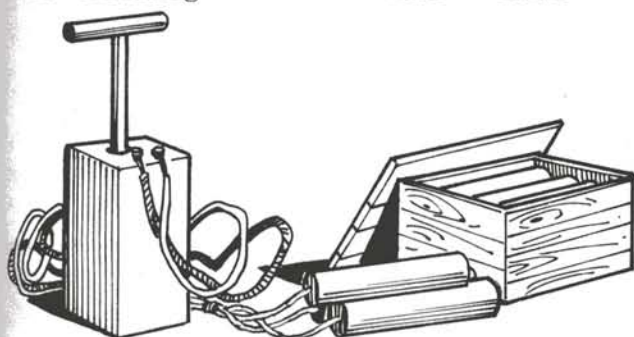
ATT: MOV COST: 3/3/6 PRE: 21

Characters with this skill are trained in the art of grappling and subduing their foe. They have several holds and other special attacks at their disposal. These are described in detail on pages 76-78.

Specialty Skills

#	Skill	ATT	COST	PRE
1	Ballistics*	INT	3/3/6	—
2	Concealment	INT	2/2/4	—
3	Cryptography	INT	2/4/8	—
4	Demolitions*	DEX	4/2/4	—
5	Disguise	INT	3/3/6	—
6	Fingerprinting	INT	3/3/6	—
7	Forgery	DEX	4/4/8	—
8	Interrogation	WIL	1/2/4	—

9 Lockpicking*	DEX	4/3/6	—
10 Pickpocket	REF	4/3/6	—
11 Safecracking*	1/2INT	5/4/8	—
12 Shadowing	WIL	2/2/4	—
13 Stealth	MOV	2/2/4	—
14 Surveillance	INT	2/2/4	—
15 Survival	WIL	1/2/4	—
16 Tracking	INT	2/2/4	—



1. Ballistics

ATT: INT COST: 3/3/6 PRE: —

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

2. Concealment

ATT: INT COST: 2/2/4 PRE: —

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

A successful skill check means a character or object is hidden; and anyone attempting to spot the hidden character or object must make an INT check to do so. A failed Concealment check means the character or object isn't hidden well. A second attempt to hide the character or object may be made, but a failed second roll means there isn't

sufficient cover, and no further Concealment attempts can be made until the character moves to a new location.

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

Concealment defaults to 1/2 INT.

3. Cryptography

ATT: INT COST: 2/4/8 PRE: —

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

4. Demolitions

ATT: DEX COST: 4/2/4 PRE: —

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

5. Disguise

ATT: INT COST: 3/3/6 PRE: —

This is the ability some characters have to obscure their appearance. Given time, makeup, and appro-

priate costumes, characters with the Disguise skill can make themselves look like someone else. A successful skill check means the disguise is good enough to satisfy the character. Whether it will hold up under NPC examination is another story.

Whenever the Admin deems it appropriate, NPCs will be given the opportunity to see through the disguise by making a $\frac{1}{2}$ INT check. A successful check means the NPC sees through the disguise. A failed check means the disguise held up.

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

6. Fingerprinting

ATT: INT **COST: 3/3/6** **PRE: —**

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

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

7. Forgery

ATT: DEX **COST: 4/4/8** **PRE: —**

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

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

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

8. Interrogation

ATT: WIL **COST: 1/2/4** **PRE: —**

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

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

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

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

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

If the WIL check fails, the victim gives one specific answer to one specific question and immedi-

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

A successful 1/2 WIL check at any point in the process described above starts the interrogation process over, with a 1d6 roll to determine how much time passes, an interrogation check, and a full WIL check.

The Administrator can disallow questions (or answers) which will ruin an adventure or campaign. The Admin may modify your Interrogation roll, or the victim's WIL check.

9. Lockpicking

ATT: DEX COST: 4/3/6 PRE: —

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

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

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

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

10. Pickpocket

ATT: REF COST: 4/3/6 PRE: —

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

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

11. Safecracking

ATT: 1/2 INT COST: 5/4/8 PRE: —

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

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

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

12. Shadowing

ATT: WIL **COST: 2/2/4** **PRE: —**

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

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

Shadowing defaults to $\frac{1}{2}$ WIL.

13. Stealth

ATT: MOV **COST: 2/2/4** **PRE: —**

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

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

14. Surveillance

ATT: INT **COST: 2/2/4** **PRE: —**

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

install, and monitor such equipment, as necessary.

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

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

15. Survival

ATT: WIL **COST: 1/2/4** **PRE: —**

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

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

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

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

16. Tracking

ATT: INT COST: 2/2/4 PRE: —

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

This is the hunter's skill — the ability to detect the past presence of a person, animal, or vehicle. Characters following a person, animal, or vehicle at close range must make Shadowing skill checks, rather than Tracking checks.

General Skills

#	SKILL	ATT	COST	PRE
1	Acting	INT	2/3/6	—
2	Animal Training	WIL	2/2/4	—
3	Climbing	MOV	2/3/6	—
4	Driving/Automobile	DEX	1/3/6	—
5	Driving/Truck	DEX	1/3/6	4
6	Driving/Motorcycle	DEX	1/3/6	—
7	Driving/Off-Road-Vehicle	1/2/4	4	—
8	Driving/Snowmobile	DEX	1/2/4	—
9	Driving/Boat	DEX	1/2/4	—

10	Driving/Heavy Machinery	DEX	3/3/6	5
11	Driving/Tank	DEX	5/3/6	10
12	Fine Arts	DEX	1/3/6	—
13	First Aid	INT	2/3/6	—
14	Fishing	INT	1/2/4	—
15	Horsemanship	MOV	2/3/6	—
16	Hypnosis*	WIL	5/3/6	—
17	Lip Reading	INT	3/3/6	—
18	Mimicry	INT	4/2/4	—
19	Musical Instrument	INT	1/3/6	—
20	Navigation	INT	4/2/4	—
21	Parachuting	MOV	2/3/6	—
22	Photography	INT	1/3/6	—
23	Piloting/1-engine	DEX	3/4/8	—
24	Piloting/Multi-engine	DEX	4/5/10	23
25	Piloting/Helicopter	DEX	3/4/8	23
26	Piloting/Large Helicopter	DEX	4/5/10	25
27	Piloting/Jet	DEX	5/5/10	23
28	Piloting/Multi-engine Jet	DEX	5/5/10	27
29	Piloting/Space Shuttle	DEX	5/5/10	28
30	Radio Operator	INT	1/1/2	—
31	Sailing	DEX	1/2/4	—
32	Scuba Diving	INT	1/2/4	39
33	Sign Language	INT	4/2/4	—
34	Skiing	MOV	2/3/6	—
35	Sleight of Hand	REF	4/3/6	—
36	Social Chameleon	INT	1/2/4	—
37	Speed Reading*	INT	3/4/8	—
38	Stage Magic*	DEX	5/5/10	35
39	Swimming	MOV	1/3/6	—
40	Throwing	DEX	1/2/4	—
41	Ventriloquism*	INT	4/4/8	—



1. Acting

ATT: INT **COST: 2/3/6** **PRE: —**

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

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

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

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

2. Animal Training

ATT: WIL **COST: 2/2/4** **PRE: —**

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

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

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

Under ordinary circumstances, an animal will perform any feat it has been trained to do: No skill

check is necessary. If, however, the trainer wants the animal to do something against its basic nature (asking a horse to step on someone on the ground, for example), the Admin may require a skill check.

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

3. Climbing

ATT: MOV **COST: 2/3/6** **PRE: —**

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

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

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

The Climbing skill defaults to 1/2 MOV.

Driving Skills

		ATT	COST	PREQ
4.	Driving/Automobile	DEX	1/3/6	—
5.	Driving/Truck	DEX	1/3/6	4
6.	Driving/Motorcycle	DEX	1/3/6	—
7.	Driving/Off-Road Vehicle	DEX	1/2/4	4
8.	Driving/Snowmobile	DEX	1/2/4	—

9. Driving/Boat	DEX	1/2/4	—
10. Driving/Heavy Machinery	DEX	3/3/6	5
11. Driving/Tank	DEX	5/3/6	10

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

Driving skills allow characters to start and control a single vehicle-type. Under normal conditions, characters with the appropriate Driving skill can operate a vehicle without making skill checks. Only when characters must respond to sudden danger or attempt hazardous maneuvers will they be required to make Driving checks. Failed checks can have a variety of results, from a stalled engine to a fiery explosion — see pages 80-87 for further details.

All Driving skills default to 1/2 DEX.

12. Fine Arts

ATT: DEX COST: 1/3/6 PRE: —

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

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

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

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

13. First Aid

ATT: INT COST: 2/3/6 PRE: —

Characters with First Aid skill can tend their own wounds, and the wounds of others. They can also deal with the effects of CON loss (page 70). When dealing with wound or bruise damage, a successful check means the wounded character recovers one hit point in the tended area. A Lucky Break means *two* hit points have been restored, but an area can never end up with more hit points than it had originally.

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

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

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

14. Fishing

ATT: INT COST: 1/2/4 PRE: —

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

This skill also gives characters the ability to tie

flies, make their own rods (when appropriate materials are available), or improvise fishing equipment. No skill check is necessary to improvise or build fishing equipment.

The Fishing skill defaults to $\frac{1}{2}$ INT.

15. Horsemanship

ATT: MOV COST: 2/3/6 PRE: —

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

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

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

Characters using this skill by default must make $\frac{1}{2}$ MOV checks to mount a horse, as well as to ride at, or stop from, anything faster than a trot.

16. Hypnosis

ATT: WIL COST: 5/3/6 PRE: —

This is the ability to hypnotize a subject. A successful skill check is all that is necessary to hypnotize a willing subject. To hypnotize an *unwilling* subject, the hypnotist must first make a successful skill check. The victim then gets a WIL check *minus* 5% for each level of Hypnosis skill the hyp-

notist has. A successful WIL check means the victim doesn't succumb. A failed WIL check puts the victim under.

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

17. Lip Reading

ATT: INT COST: 3/3/6 PRE: —

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

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

18. Mimicry

ATT: INT COST: 4/2/4 PRE: —

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

Characters with special knowledge about the animal or person get a $\frac{1}{2}$ INT check to detect the fakery. For example, a hunter could make a $\frac{1}{2}$ INT check to see through a bird call.

19. Music

ATT: INT COST: 1/3/6 PRE: —

Characters with this skill can read music and have a working knowledge of music history. They may, at the player's discretion, sing or play one musical instrument of their choice. Any level of

skill will allow characters to play adequately — no die roll is necessary.

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

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

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

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

20. Navigation

ATT: INT **COST: 4/2/4** **PRE: —**

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

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

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

21. Parachuting

ATT: MOV **COST: 2/3/6** **PRE: —**

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

A successful check means a successful landing, wherever the player wants his or her character to land; a failed check means a successful landing somewhere else. (The Admin decides where the character lands.) A Bad Break of 95 - 98 means a very bad landing, and the character takes 1d8 damage to one leg, determined by the Admin. A roll of 99 means the chute failed to open! This would be a good time for players to spend a Luck Point (see pages 89-90).

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

Once in mid-air, unskilled characters must make a MOV check to open their chutes. A successful check means a successful chute opening; a failed check means the character is still fumbling around trying to get it open. Characters can continue trying to open a chute until they succeed or hit the ground. Rate of fall is the same for characters as for planes — see the Piloting skill description for more details.

In order to land successfully, unskilled characters must make $\frac{1}{2}$ MOV checks, or suffer 1d8 damage to one leg. (The Admin decides which one.)

22. Photography

ATT: INT **COST: 1/3/6** **PRE: —**

A character with this skill has learned to operate still cameras or movie/video cameras. Characters

with this ability can use all kinds of still cameras — from 35mm single lens reflex to instant photo to miniature spy cameras. They are also familiar with the use of video and motion picture equipment of all sorts — from 8mm to CinemaScope, from home video cameras to sophisticated video equipment found only in major production studios.

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

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

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

Photography defaults to 1/2 INT.

Piloting Skills

	ATT	COST	PRE
23. Piloting/1-engine	DEX	3/4/8	—
24. Piloting/Multi-engine	DEX	4/5/10	23
25. Piloting/Helicopter	DEX	3/4/8	23
26. Piloting/Large Copter	DEX	4/5/10	25
27. Piloting/Jet	DEX	5/5/10	23
28. Piloting/Multi-engine Jet	DEX	5/5/10	27
29. Piloting/Space Shuttle	DEX	5/5/10	28

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

Under normal conditions, no skill check is required to take off, land, or pilot a plane or copter in the air. However, when attempting to pilot a craft in poor weather, or under unusual circum-

stances (while being fired upon by an enemy plane, landing without wheels down, etc.) a skill check must be made to avoid losing control.

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

30. Radio Operator

ATT: INT COST: 1/1/2 PRE: —

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

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

Radio Operator defaults to 1/2 INT.

31. Sailing

ATT: DEX COST: 1/2/4 PRE: —

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

Rough seas or a need for speed will call for skill checks, with failure meaning the boat coasts to a stop or goes in the wrong direction. A Bad Break results in the boat capsizing. STR checks, modified

by circumstances (high seas, gunfire, etc.) will right a small boat. Large boats sink at a rate determined by the Administrator.

Sailing defaults to $\frac{1}{2}$ DEX.

32. Scuba Diving

ATT: INT **COST: 1/2/4** **PRE: 39**

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

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

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

33. Sign Language

ATT: INT **COST: 4/2/4** **PRE: —**

This is the ability to communicate through hand

gestures. Characters who can see another individual using sign language, and can be seen in return, can converse as quickly and fluently as they could in normal conversation — under ordinary circumstances, no skill checks are necessary.

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

34. Skiing

ATT: MOV **COST: 2/3/6** **PRE: —**

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

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

35. Sleight of Hand

ATT: REF **COST: 4/3/6** **PRE: —**

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

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

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

36. Social Chameleon

ATT: INT **COST:** 1/2/4 **PRE:** —

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

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

The Social Chameleon skill defaults to 1/2 INT.

37. Speed Reading

ATT: INT **COST:** 3/4/8 **PRE:** —

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

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

38. Stage Magic

ATT: DEX **COST:** 5/5/10 **PRE:** 35

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

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

39. Swimming

ATT: MOV **COST:** 1/3/6 **PRE:** —

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

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

Three failed skill checks in a row mean the character suffers the effects described in the Drowning section of the Administrators Guide (pages 7-8).

Swimming defaults to 1/2 MOV.

40. Throwing

ATT: DEX **COST:** 1/2/4 **PRE:** —

This is identical to the Hand Grenade skill. See page 40.

41. Ventriloquism

ATT: INT **COST:** 4/4/8 **PRE:** —

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

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

Education Skills

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

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

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

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

Courses of Study vs. Skills: Below, you will find a list of skills. Each skill is a *course of study*, however, rather than an individual skill. The History/Political Science skill, for example, gives your character training in American History, European History, Ancient History, and so on, as well as in Principles of Democracy, Principles of Capitalism, and so on. Ability in each of these specific areas is included in the History/Political Science skill.

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

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

What Education Skill Checks Can Tell You:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Education Skill List*

#	SKILL	ATT	COST	PRE
LIBERAL ARTS SKILLS				
1	Basic Liberal Arts	1/2INT	2/N	—
2	Anthro/Psych/Soc	INT	1/2/4	1
3	Business/Economics	INT	1/2/4	1
4	History/PoliSci	INT	1/2/4	1
5	Lit/Journalism	INT	1/2/4	1
6	Philosophy/Religion	INT	1/2/4	1
SCIENCE SKILLS				
7	Basic Science	1/2INT	2/N	—
8	Astronomy/Math/ Physics	INT	2/3/6	7
9	Biology/Botany/ Zoology	INT	2/3/6	7
10	Chemistry	INT	2/3/6	7
11	Engineer/Civ/Elec/ Mech	INT	2/3/6	7
ADVANCED DEGREES				
12	Law	INT	2/3/6	4
13	Medicine	INT	2/4/8	9
14	Surgeon	DEX	3/5/10	13

* Note: None of the Education skills have defaults.



1. Basic Liberal Arts

ATT: 1/2 INT COST: 2/N PRE: —

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

Characters with the Basic Liberal Arts skill can draw on a limited knowledge of *all* the fields in the liberal arts category on the chart above. A successful 1/2 INT check allows them to recall specific facts related to these fields.

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

2. Anthropology/ Psychology/Sociology

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

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

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

3. Business/Economics

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

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

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

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

4. History/Political Science

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

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

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

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

5. Literature/Journalism

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

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

In addition, the skill gives characters a familiarity with the history of literature. A successful skill check can identify the author of a novel or non-fiction book (if the author is well-enough known); it can place a written work within a particular

tradition ("Oh, that play is one of a series of dramas written by a contemporary of Shakespeare"); it can provide clues about the writing and publication of a book or article.

6. Philosophy/Religion

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

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

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

7. Basic Science

ATT: 1/2 INT COST: 2/N PRE: —

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

Characters with the Basic Science skill can draw on a limited knowledge of *all* the fields in the Scientific category on the chart above. A successful 1/2 INT check allows them to recall specific facts related to these fields.

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

8. Astronomy/ Math/Physics

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

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

9. Biology/ Botany/Zoology

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

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

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

10. Chemistry

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

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

11. Engineering

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

Engineers come in three varieties — Mechanical, Electrical, and Civil. This skill gives characters a background in all three, but specialization (page 33) is recommended. With this skill comes the ability to design complex mechanical devices (Mechanical Engineers), complex electrical devices, up to and including computers and radar equipment (Electrical Engineers), as well as dams, airfields, and other large structures (Civil Engineers).

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

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

12. Law

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

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

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

13. Medicine

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

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

Buying this skill allows characters to make a skill check to heal one point of damage, just like characters with the First Aid skill (page 49).

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

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

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

14. Surgeon

ATT: DEX COST: 3/5/10 PRE: 13

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

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

This skill can be used in another way, however: If surgical equipment is available, a successful skill check will restore as many points of damage as the character has levels of Surgeon skill *plus one*

more to any one body area — no die roll is required. Thus, a character with Surgeon 3 restores four points of damage. Each point restored takes *two hours*. A failed skill check does one point of damage.

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

Language Skills



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

In addition to their native tongue (or tongues), characters can learn to read, write, and speak a number of languages equal to 10% of their INT score, rounded. Thus, a character with 51 INT could learn a maximum of 5.1 languages, rounded up to 6. (Sign language does not count as a foreign language.)

The Bilingual Background advantage (page 16) gives characters a "free" zero level skill in a second tongue. This second language doesn't count against the maximum number of languages a character can learn.

Costs of Foreign Language Skills: All languages are assumed to be equally hard to learn — the zero level of skill in a foreign language costs 4 points.

The first, second, third, and fourth levels of expertise cost 2 points each. The fifth level costs 4 points.

Each language your character learns, up to his or her maximum, must be purchased separately, as a separate language skill.

Effects of Level on Language Skill: In most respects, language skills work like other skills — each level of expertise gives a plus 5% modifier to your INT check whenever you try to speak a foreign language.

No skill check is required when all speakers in a conversation are fluent in the language. If one or more characters involved in a conversation isn't fluent, however, the character with the lowest language score must make a language skill check. A successful check means communication was successful. If the check fails, the communication is unsuccessful. If two non-native speakers attempt to communicate *both* must make successful skill checks or no communication takes place.

In addition to this standard skill procedure, Language skills allow characters to do more than just communicate — they can attempt to hide or imitate an accent.

Zero level language skills give you a basic familiarity with a language. Your conversation will be halting; reading and writing will be slow, but you can communicate, as described above. At zero level, it is impossible to conceal your foreign accent.

First level language skills allow you to speak, read, and write as quickly as a native. A $\frac{1}{4}$ skill check allows you to conceal your accent for a few sentences at a time.

Second and Third level skills are like first level ones, but you can conceal your accent on a $\frac{1}{2}$ skill roll, and sustain it for an entire conversation.

Fourth level skills are like first level ones, but you can conceal your accent with a full skill check, and can sustain it as long as you like.

Fifth level language skill means that you can use the language like a native, reading and writing effortlessly, and speaking with no detectable foreign accent. At this level, no skill check is

required to speak with a native speaker and, when non-natives try to communicate with you, you are considered a native yourself.

Partial Language Knowledge: The basic Language skill rules assume that characters spent time studying languages before the campaign began. This reality rule allows characters to learn languages over time, getting better as time passes.

Characters can spend one, two, three, or four skill points on each language they want to learn. Spending four points gives a character a zero level skill. Spending one, two, or three points gives a character some familiarity with a language, but not enough to communicate easily.

Spending one point allows a character to make a $\frac{1}{4}$ INT check to communicate in a given language. Spending two points allows a character to make a $\frac{1}{2}$ INT check to communicate. Spending three points allows a character to make a full INT check to communicate.

This sounds like a good deal — and it is — but there's a catch: Characters with one, two, or three points in a language must make a skill check for each sentence they read, write, or speak. And the speaker's accent can't be disguised; listeners will recognize the accent of a foreign speaker.

5. Playing The Game

TOP SECRET/S.I.
Game



This chapter summarizes how actions (such as movement and combat) are resolved in the *Top Secret/S.I.*™ game. More detailed information can be found in the Administrator's book. Only the player running the game should read the Administrator's book, however.

Remember that the Administrator can modify or overrule any of the procedures described below. The Admin is always the final arbiter of rules questions, decisions, and procedures. The Administrator's word is final!

Time In the *Top Secret/S.I.*™ Game

The passage of time in the game can be very precise, or very flexible, depending upon what's going on. A cross-country plane trip might take hours of time in the real world, but a moment or two of game time — the Administrator might simply say, "Okay, your plane takes off in New York and

lands a couple of hours later in Los Angeles. You get a terrible meal but, aside from that, nothing much happens on the flight. What do you do now?"

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

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

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

Actions

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

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

Attack (Ranged): Characters select this option if they want to fire a gun, bow, crossbow, or speargun. It is also used when, throwing a spear, knife, or hand-grenade. Characters making a ranged attack must specify if their gun is braced (p. 72), if they're firing a burst (p. 72-73), or if they're making a called shot (p. 73).

Attack (Close-Combat): This option allows characters to punch, stab, or strike another character up to five feet away. Characters must describe the attack they're making, and announce if they're using a special fighting style (pp. 77-79).

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

Watch: This option allows characters to watch other characters, to wait and see what they do. Characters selecting the Watch option get a +5 modifier to their Initiative roll (p.63) on the *next turn*. Characters can't do anything on the turn they Watch — no movement, combat, or other activities allowed.

This option also allows a character to take a prepared shot (p. 74) Finally, this option can be used to keep a foe or prisoner "covered" (i.e., to keep a weapon ready, and an eye on, the other character).

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

Combined Actions

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

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

For example, say you want your character to dash across the street while spraying machine gun fire at a fleeing car. The street is thirty-five feet across, so your Machine-gun skill check would be at -40.

Characters in moving vehicles need not take the Move and Fight option to fight on the go — they do, however, have to take the Special Actions and Fighting option below.

Special Actions and Fighting: Characters can always fight and perform a special action as long as no skill check is required for the action. For example, a character can shoot a gun and drive a car at the same time without any trouble (other than some to-hit penalties for being in a moving vehicle — see page 74).

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

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

The Administrator decides whether a given action can be performed while fighting. Once he or she

says you can combine the actions you want, you must make a $1\frac{1}{2}$ skill check for each action in order to succeed.

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

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

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

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

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

Initiative

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

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

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

The player with the highest roll wins initiative. The winning player has the option of acting first, or waiting and letting other players go first. The player with the second highest roll goes second (or may wait for other players with lower rolls to go first), and so on. If two or more players roll the same number, their characters are assumed to act simultaneously.

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

For example, Orion Foundation agents Sebastian and Ling are fighting three thugs, one of whom watched during the previous turn. Sebastian rolls a 9, and Ling a 3, for initiative. The referee rolls a 4. First, Sebastian and the thug who watched would act simultaneously; the other thugs would act next; Ling would go last.

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

There is one other situation in which initiative rolls are unnecessary: When an armed fighter in close-combat battles an unarmed fighter, the armed combatant always wins initiative. For more about this special situation, see page 76.

Modifying Initiative Rolls

In addition to the +5 modifier for taking the Watch option, the initiative roll made by each player may be modified as follows:

- + Weapon Speed Bonus, if any
- +10% of the character's DEX
- -1 per Essential Wound

Weapon Speed Bonus, listed on the Weapons Chart, measures how quickly and easily a weapon can be readied for use each turn. Add a weapon's speed bonus to your initiative roll any time your character uses that weapon.

Dexterity is, among other things, a measure of how quickly your character can react to circumstances. Add 10% of your DEX score (rounding up in all cases), to all initiative rolls. Under most circumstances, NPCs will only act as quickly as the slowest among them — when figuring this bonus, the Admin will take the NPC with the lowest DEX, figure 10% of that character's score (rounded up), and add the resulting number to the NPC initiative roll.

Essential Wounds are those to an area which must be used to perform whatever action a character wants to attempt in a turn. If a player wants a character to run, wounds to the legs are "essential wounds"; if a player wants a character to throw a punch, wounds to the arm and hand are essential wounds. The Admin determines which wounds are to essential areas. Add up all essential wounds and subtract the total from your initiative roll.

Surprise

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

These characters have been surprised.

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

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

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

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

Modifying Surprise Rolls

If the potentially surprising situation occurs in front of the characters, players make a full INT check; if it occurs to the side, they make a 1/2 INT check; if it occurs behind or from above, they make a 1/4 INT check.

It is possible for some characters involved in a situation to be surprised, while others aren't. It is also possible for both sides in a situation to be surprised. (In this case, surprise has no game effect — each side's surprise cancels out the other.)

Movement

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

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

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

Props: The ADVENTURE FOLD-UP™ figures included in the game box can be used to represent the PCs, NPCs, and vehicles involved in your adventures. Lead miniatures, available at most hobby shops, and toy cars available at any toy store, can also be used.

Lifelike miniatures, used in combination with the map included in the game box, can add some visual excitement to your games.

Game Scale: All weapon ranges, character movement rates, and vehicle speeds are given in real-world terms: How many *feet* can a character run in a turn? How many *feet* can a gun shoot with any degree of accuracy? How many *miles* can a vehicle move in an hour?

If you want to show the action on a map or tabletop, you can: Just say 1 inch on the tabletop equals 10 feet of space in the game world. Converting real-world measurements into the inches required by the *Top Secret/S.I.*™ game scale is simple. A character who can run 60 feet in a two second turn moves 6 inches in game scale; a gun which is at medium range at 250 feet is at medium range in the game if the firer is within 25 inches of the target on the playing surface.

This conversion to game scale can become a problem when the action gets moving at high speed — in a car chase, for example. Later in this chapter, you'll find a chart converting miles per hour into inches in game scale. Looking at that chart, you'll notice that a car travelling 60 miles per hour moves about 180 feet every two seconds! That means it moves 18 inches in game scale. Few of us have a table big enough to handle that much movement for more than a turn or two.

When dealing with vehicles, you may want to shift the focus from the actual distance moved to the relative distance between the vehicles. In other words, if one vehicle moves 60 mph (18 inches) and a trailing vehicle moves 80 mph (24 inches), you have a choice: Move both vehicles the full amount to which their speed entitles them; or simply leave the slower-moving vehicle where it is and move the faster-moving one ahead 6 inches — the difference between the speeds of the two vehicles.

Movement Speeds

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

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



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

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

Endurance

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

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

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

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

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

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

Encumbrance

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

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

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

6. Combat

TOP SECRET/S.I.



In the best of all possible worlds, combat would be unnecessary — every mission would go perfectly, and your character would never need to throw a punch or fire a gun.

This isn't the best of all possible worlds.

Which means your character will have to learn to fight — with fists, with feet, with guns, even with teeth, if necessary.

In the *Top Secret/S.I.*™ game, characters fight by making skill checks against their combat skills. A successful check means a blow (or shot, or bite) lands, and the target takes damage. Take enough damage, and your character dies.

During character creation, you probably bought at least one combat skill. You may have several. In general, combat skills are used the same way other skills are used: If you make a successful skill check, you've used the skill successfully. In other words, a blow aimed at a foe lands and does damage; a failed roll means your blow missed.

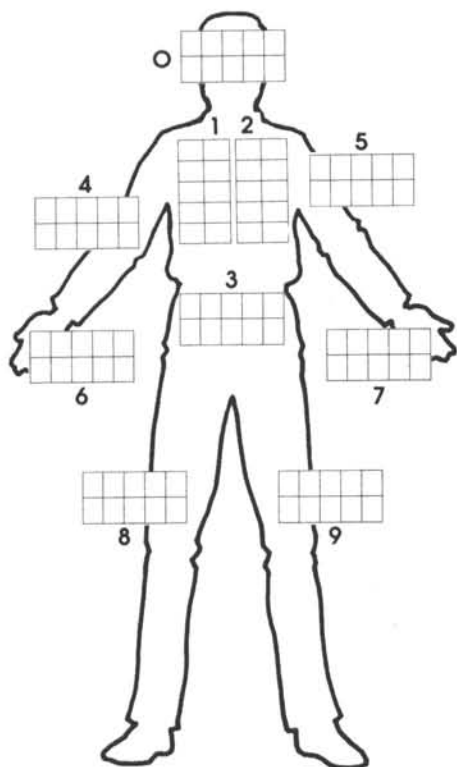
In addition to telling you whether or not you hit, however, a combat skill check tells you *where* you

hit your enemy. In close-combat, your skill check roll even determines how much damage you do!

Fighting Hand-to-Hand

When you roll percentile dice in hand-to-hand combat to see if an attack succeeds, look first to see if the number you roll is less than or equal to your skill level. If it isn't, you missed. If it is, you hit. Look at the die you selected as your tens digit — that number tells you the amount of damage your attack did. Now look at the die you selected as the ones digit — that number tells you *where* you hit.

Hit Location: The diagram below shows a human body with the numbers 0 through 9 on it. Each major body part has a number. The number on your ones digit corresponds to one of the numbered areas on the diagram. Match the ones digit of your roll with a body area on the diagram and that's where your blow landed.



For example, Orion Foundation agent Ling has a Basic Melee score of 67. To land an effective punch, she'd need to roll a 67 or less. On a roll of 67, she'd do six points of damage (reading the tens digit to determine damage) to area 7 (reading the ones digit to determine location). Looking at the body-part diagram, you find that area 7 is the left hand. A roll of 67 means Ling does 6 points of damage to the foe's left hand.

On a roll of 21, she would have done 2 points of damage to the right-hand side of the chest; a 40 would do 4 points of damage to the head, and so on.

One final word about hit locations: Every once in a while, the Admin will have to apply common sense to make sure blows and shots hit in logical places. An attacker who hits area 3 (the abdomen) from behind lands a blow to the small of the back, not the stomach; a sharpshooter firing from a target's left might roll a hit to the right leg, but chances are the shot would hit the left leg — the one closest to the attacker. These are strictly judgement calls, and the final word on hit locations belongs to the Administrator.

Fighting With Weapons

The system used to determine whether your character hits with a weapon is the same as that described for hand-to-hand combat described above. The difference between armed and unarmed combat is that weapons generally do more damage than fists, and *may* do different kinds of damage. In the game, all weapons fall into one of two categories: Blunt Weapons and Penetrating Weapons.

Blunt weapons: These are things like brass knuckles, clubs, chair legs, the flats of swords, etc.). Blunt weapons have no cutting edge or penetrating tips, meaning they do only "bruise" damage (see pages 69-70). Note that it is possible to attack with the flat of a bladed weapon, doing blunt-weapon damage.

To determine how much damage you do with a blunt weapon, make a skill check. Determine where you hit (the ones digit), but ignore the damage die (the tens digit); roll the die or dice indicated on the Weapons Chart for the weapon you're using. The amount rolled is subtracted from your target's total in the area you hit.

For example, say Ling has trailed Web agent Sergei Ulyanov to a sporting good store being used as a front for Web operations. The cornered Ulyanov pulls a knife, so Ling reaches for the nearest available weapon — a baseball bat. She swings the bat and lands a solid blow with a roll of 59.

Area 9 on the hit location diagram (the area indicated by the ones roll) is the left leg. The rolled damage of 5 is ignored. Checking the Weapons List, the Ling player sees that the billy club does 1d6 damage. That's close enough to a bat to suit the Admin, so the player rolls one six-sided die, coming up with a 6! Ling does 6 points of bruise damage to Ulyanov's left leg, and he falls!

Penetrating weapons: This category includes all

edged and pointed weapons (swords, knives, spears, etc.), and most ranged weapons (crossbow, firearms of all kinds, etc.). These are weapons designed to break the victim's skin, doing damage to internal organs. Determine hit location as you would for a blunt weapon, check the Weapons Chart to see what kind of damage die to roll for the weapon you're using, and see how much damage your blow does. A successful hit from a penetrating weapon does "wound" damage, not bruise damage. (For more about wound and bruise damage, see pages 69-70.)

Close Combat Weapon Modifiers: Weapons do more damage than bare hands. They also make it easier to hit an opponent by increasing a character's reach. In the *Top Secret/S.I.*™ game, this is represented by a weapon's Close Combat Value (CCV). The CCV is a number added to a character's chance to attack or defend with a weapon. A character with a sword skill of 67 would add the CCV of a sword (15) to his or her base chance to hit, for a total of 82. Any roll of 82 or less would mean a successful attack or defense.

Effects of Skill on Hit Location

If you're skilled with a weapon (or as a hand-to-hand fighter) you don't have to rely on the luck of the dice to determine where you hit your foes. Skilled fighters can aim their blows — the more skilled they are, the more control they have over where they hit.

To aim a blow, first make a skill check against the appropriate combat skill. If you hit, determine the number of the body area you hit, but don't figure your damage just yet. First, decide if you want to bump your attack. When you bump a blow or shot, you "move" it from the randomly-rolled hit location to one of your choosing.

You can bump a blow a number of body areas equal to your character's skill level. If your character has a level 4 Pistol skill, you can bump any successful shot up or down 4 numbered areas.

So, a hit to area 3 (the abdomen) could be bumped to area 2 (left chest), area 1 (right chest), or even area 0 (the head), or it could be bumped to area 4 (right arm), 5 (left arm), 6 (right hand), or 7 (left hand). A character with a first level skill can bump a shot or blow one area; one with a second level skill can bump two areas; and so on.

Taking Damage

Now you know how to determine how much damage your character does and where he or she does it. How much can you take?

Each of a character's body areas can take damage equal to 10% of his or her CON score (rounding fractions up). This is represented in "damage boxes" on your character sheet. Each body area on the diagram shows 10 damage boxes. If your character has fewer than ten, black out any extras; if your character has more than 10 damage boxes, draw in extra ones.

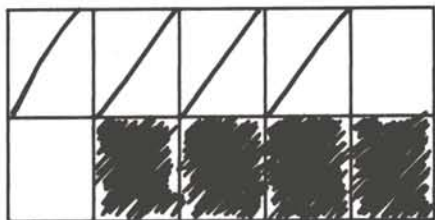
As your character takes damage, you will fill in these damage boxes. The more filled-in boxes characters have, the worse off they are.

There are three types of damage in the *Top Secret/S.I.*™ game: bruise damage, wound damage, and CON damage. Bruise damage is less serious and heals more quickly than wound damage. Bruise damage is likely to knock characters unconscious, where wound damage is likely to maim or kill them. CON damage can knock characters unconscious or kill them, but its effects tend to be more gradual than those of bruise or wound damage.

Bruise Damage

All blunt weapons, and all hand-to-hand attacks do bruise damage. When you take damage in a hand-to-hand or blunt weapon attack, make a hash mark — a single diagonal line — through as many damage boxes as you took points of bruise damage. If an opponent punches you in the abdomen (area 3) and does 4 points of damage, make

hashes through four of the damage boxes in your character's abdomen, as shown below:



If all damage boxes in a hand, arm, or leg are "hashed," (in other words, if your character takes as many points of bruise damage as he or she has damage boxes in a body area), the character automatically loses the use of that body part until at least one point of damage has been healed. Note, however, that even a character whose legs have been rendered useless by bruise damage can still crawl (at a maximum rate of 5 feet per turn).

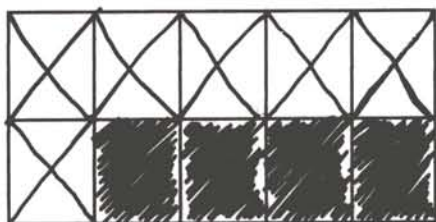
If all damage boxes in the head, chest, or abdomen are hashed by bruise damage, you must make a CON check or fall unconscious for 1d8 minutes.

If all of the damage boxes in an area are filled with bruise damage, and you take further bruise damage to that area, the "extra" damage is treated as wound damage (see below).

Wound Damage

All penetrating weapons do wound damage. When your character is hit by gunfire, or an arrow, or a thrown-knife, make an "X" through as many damage boxes as he or she took points of wound damage.

If your character takes a gunshot to the right arm that does 6 hits, mark an "X" through six of the damage boxes on your character's right arm.

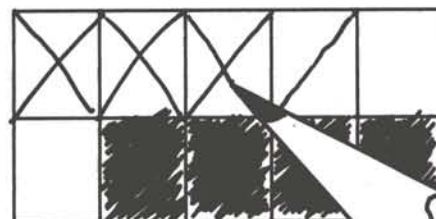


If all damage boxes in the hands, arms, and legs are crossed out due to wound damage, the damaged body part is useless, and may have to be amputated. A character whose legs have been rendered useless by wound damage can still crawl at a maximum of 5 feet per turn.

If all damage boxes in the head, chest, or abdomen are filled by wound damage, your character is dead.

Wound damage supersedes bruise damage. In other words, say your character has taken 2 hits of bruise damage to the right hand. Your character sheet shows bruise lines in two of the damage boxes in the right hand. A little later in an adventure, the character gets shot in the same hand, taking 4 hits of damage.

When recording this on your character sheet, turn the 2 slashes indicating bruises into "X's," indicating wounds. Then put X's in two additional boxes, for a total of four wounds.



Excess Damage: Arms, hands, and legs can continue to take damage even after all damage boxes are filled. ("Ouch! You just took another bullet in that broken arm!") This extra damage is subtracted **permanently** from a character's CON score.

Damage greater than three times the number of damage boxes in a leg, arm, or hand, destroys the affected body part. Any further damage is ignored, but each minute thereafter, you lose one point of CON **permanently** until a successful First Aid check stops the flow of blood. For more about CON loss, see page 71.

Constitution Damage

Poison, cold, and other factors do damage to the whole body, not to specific body parts. Damage from sources which affect the whole body result in the loss of CON points.

If your character's CON ever reaches $\frac{1}{2}$ its full level, you must make a $\frac{1}{2}$ CON check, or your character falls unconscious. A successful $\frac{1}{2}$ CON check means the character remains alert, but all attributes and skills are halved. If CON reaches $\frac{1}{4}$ its normal score, you must make a $\frac{1}{4}$ CON check. If this succeeds, the character remains awake and can act, but all attributes and skills are at $\frac{1}{4}$ normal. Failure means the character falls unconscious. If CON ever reaches zero (or less) your character dies.

Unconscious characters remain that way until they can make a CON check at their current CON level. Only one check can be made per minute (30 turns). For example, Sebastian (CON 54) takes 28 points of CON damage, for a new total of 26. That's less than half his starting score, so the Sebastian player makes a CON check. A 55 is rolled — one more than Sebastian's CON score, so the character remains unconscious. A minute later, the Admin allows Sebastian another CON check. This time the roll is a 23, well below the 54 needed. Sebastian returns to consciousness with all his scores and abilities at full level, ready for action once again.

Critical Hits

Any roll of doubles (00, 11, 22, 33, 44, etc) that is good enough to hit is a critical hit — this immediately destroys whatever body part was hit. A critical hit to areas 0, 1, 2, or 3 kills instantly, unless the victim is willing to spend a Luck Point (see pages 90-91). A critical hit to areas 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 knocks the victim out (though, again, a Luck Point can prevent unconsciousness).

Special Ranged Weapon Rules

Firing a gun, or any other missile weapon, is a bit more complicated than simply picking up the gun and pulling the trigger. Several factors may affect the accuracy of a shot: range, time spent aiming, the stance of the shooter.

All of these, and more, increase or decrease the shooter's chance of hitting the target. In the *Top Secret/S.I.*™ game, these variables are factored into the skill check through die roll modifiers.

But the first questions that must be asked before an agent fires a ranged weapon are these: Is the weapon loaded, drawn, and ready for action?

Loading

The amount of time it takes to load a gun varies from weapon to weapon. To check the reload time for a particular gun, check the Reload Time column on the Weapon Table.



This is the number of turns required to insert a clip, or load individual bullets, into a gun. This assumes that the ammunition is within easy reach. If you have to run across the room to get your bullets, loading will, obviously, take longer

(and you deserve anything you get!).

Fast Reloading: *Players who make a successful skill check (with the weapon being used) can load a fresh clip (or a single round) in just one turn. A failed skill check means the character fumbles the clip or bullet, and must begin loading again on the next turn, taking the amount of time listed on the Weapons Table in the Equipment Inventory.*

Drawing

Secret agents don't generally walk around with weapons at the ready — that tends to blow their covers. This means you'll probably have to spend a turn getting a weapon from a pocket, holster, purse, scabbard, or other hiding place.

Characters ordinarily draw weapons on one turn and attack on the next. The only way to speed this process — drawing and attacking on the *same* turn — is to use the Combined Action option. This allows you to draw and attack on the same turn, but the attack is at $\frac{1}{2}$ skill level.

Ranged Weapons: Options and Modifiers

Once a loaded weapon is drawn, your character is ready to begin firing. This is where the die roll modifiers mentioned above come into play. This is also where you choose special options which may give you a better chance to hit, if you're willing to make yourself more vulnerable (by exposing yourself, or spending time setting up a shot). Alternatively, you may want to make yourself a less attractive target, by dodging and weaving, for example. The Special Options and Modifiers list below covers the options peculiar to ranged combat.

There are two types of modifier — those that add or subtract from the character's skill level, and those that halve or quarter the skill level. **Always figure halving or quartering modifiers before adding and subtracting modifiers.** All modi-

fiers listed below, both positive and negative, are cumulative.

For example, Sebastian (Pistol skill 72) wants to leap from an alleyway (-25 medium movement modifier) while firing at Ulyanov, who is at point blank range ($+30$ modifier). His orders are to take Ulyanov alive, however, so he makes a called shot, trying to hit Ulyanov in the leg ($\frac{1}{2}$ Pistol skill check required).

The first thing the Sebastian player does is divide his pistol skill in half (the called shot modifier). Half of 72 is 36. To this 36, he subtracts 25 (for movement) for a total of 11. To this 11, he adds 30 (for being at point blank range), for a total of 41. To pull off this heroic feat, Sebastian will need to roll a 41 or less on percentile dice.

If the total modifiers give a character a final skill level less than zero, only a Lucky Break will hit. Similarly, a Bad Break means failure even if the total modifiers give a character a final skill level greater than 100.

Braced Shots: Propping a gun or other ranged weapon on a steady surface — a wall, a tripod, a rock, or whatever else happens to be handy — can make aiming much easier. Bracing your weapon is worth a $+10$ modifier to your skill check when you fire.

Bursts: Weapons that fire bursts can spray several bullets with a single squeeze of the trigger.

A *Short Burst* expends 8 bullets from a weapon's magazine. The character firing the burst gets a $+5$ to his or her skill. If the check is successful, add 1 to the damage roll as well.

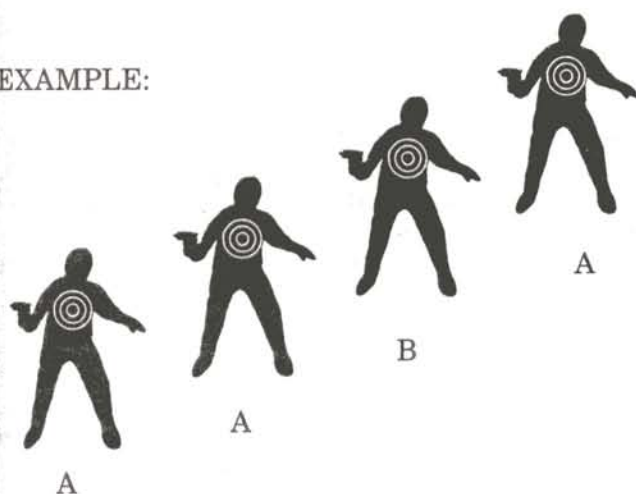
An *Extended Burst* expends 16 bullets. The character firing the extended burst gets a $+10$ to his or her skill when firing. If the check is successful, add 2 to the damage roll as well.

If a magazine contains more than one bullet, but not enough for a burst, the character can still empty the magazine and fire a short burst (with 2-8 bullets) or extended burst (with 9-16 bullets). A character can only fire a burst with less than the required number of rounds if that burst empties the magazine.

Bursts and Multiple Targets: A weapon firing a burst or an extended burst can be used against several targets in a single attack. Short bursts can fire at targets within a 45 degree arc. Extended bursts can fire at targets within a 90 degree arc.

A character cannot selectively avoid targets between the chosen flanks of his burst. The burst can be smaller than 45 (or 90) degrees, however.

EXAMPLE:



If four characters (3 A's and a B) are grouped as indicated, Sebastian could *not* fire a burst at all three A's, but not B. He *could* declare a burst attack against the two A's to the left, however.

Called Shots: There will be times when you need to hit a particular target, and don't want to take your chances with the roll of the dice — you need to shoot out the getaway car's tires . . . you want to knock the gun out of an enemy agent's hand without doing any damage . . . your shot must sever a rope. This is the time for a called shot.

Called shots are those directed at a small, specified target area. If the target is 3" or more across, the shooter must make a $\frac{1}{2}$ skill check. The shot to blow a getaway car's tire, or knock a gun out of a foe's hand, would fall into this category.

If the target is less than 3" in diameter, the shooter must make a $\frac{1}{4}$ skill check. The shot designed to sever a rope falls into this category.

Characters using shotguns or firing bursts can't call their shots.

Cover: Cover affects weapon accuracy in two ways. First, it can make a target harder to see; second, it can stop bullets from hitting some or all of a target. There are two types of cover in the *Top Secret/S.I.*™ game — Soft Cover and Hard Cover.

Soft Cover makes a target difficult to see, but is not "bulletproof." Underbrush, dressing screens, wooden walls and doors, empty metal oil drums, even car doors are considered to be soft cover.

If soft cover conceals less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of a target, no soft cover modifier applies. If half of a target is concealed by soft cover, the attacker's skill check is made at $\frac{1}{2}$ the normal amount. If most of a target is concealed, the attack is made at $\frac{1}{4}$ the full skill level. The Admin decides how much of a target is concealed, and how the skill check is modified.

Soft Cover and "Bumping": If you're using the *Reality Rule* allowing characters to bump their shots as many body areas as they have levels of weapon skill, bear this in mind: You can't bump a shot into a body area you can't see. However, you can bump from an area behind soft cover to one that is exposed.

Hard Cover may or may not conceal a target, and it never results in a die roll modifier, though it may make a target impossible to hit. Hard cover actually prevents projectiles (bullets, arrows, and so on) from striking a target. Boulders provide hard cover, as do brick or stone structures, bullet-proof vests, shields, helmets, and any other materials the Admin deems able to stop a projectile.

Hard cover can protect a target completely: It just isn't possible for an attacker with a handgun to hit a target completely hidden from view behind a rock. Hard cover can also protect specific parts of a target. Hits against protected areas are assumed to hit the cover.

Thus, a character kneeling behind a brick wall and firing a rifle over the top would expose his or her head (area 0), right arm (area 4), and both hands (areas 6 and 7). All other areas would be both concealed and completely protected by the wall. Hits to protected areas ricochet harmlessly

off the wall. Attacks against exposed areas are made normally — they can be rolled randomly, or “called”; you can even bump shots from concealed areas to exposed ones.

Handedness: A right-handed shooter is going to be a lot less accurate when forced to fire left-handed. A shooter with only one hand free is going to have a difficult time with a weapon requiring two hands. This is reflected in the Handedness modifiers below.

Firing With One Hand: All rifles, assault weapons, carbines, submachine guns, and heavy weapons require two hands. All *non-sawed-off* shotguns are two-handed weapons as well. Using any of these weapons with just one hand results in a -20 modifier to the skill check.

Firing With the “Wrong” Hand: Most people are better with one hand than with the other. During character creation, you determined whether your character is right- or left-handed. If your character ever has to do anything (firing a gun, picking a lock, whatever) with the other hand, he or she suffers a -30 modifier to the skill check.

Movement: The accuracy of a ranged weapon attack decreases if either the attacker or the target is moving. There are three movement modifiers, depending upon how fast the parties involved are moving:

Slow movement gives a modifier of -10 to a ranged weapon attack. Pedestrians are moving slowly (for the purposes of this die roll modifier) if they are crawling, walking, or swimming at any speed up to a fast walk. For vehicles, slow movement is any speed less than 10 mph.

Medium movement gives a modifier of -25 to a ranged weapon attack. Agents on foot move at medium speed when they are running (using their MOV score to figure their movement, rather than taking the 5 feet or ten feet per turn for walking). For vehicles, medium movement is anything between 10 and 35 MPH.

Fast movement gives a modifier of -40 to any ranged weapon attack. Agents who duck and weave or run at top speed (using their entire MOV score) qualify for the fast movement modifier. For

vehicles, fast movement is anything above 35 miles per hour.

If both the attacker and the target are moving, add the two appropriate movement modifiers unless the two characters are moving directly *toward* each other, or directly *away* from each other; in that case, apply just a -10 to the attacker’s skill check.

Prepared Shots: These are carefully-aimed attacks with ranged weapons. Taking the time to aim gives the attacker a +5 to his or her skill check when firing.

Characters making a prepared shot must take the “watch” action on the turn prior to the prepared shot — they are considered to be aiming, and nothing else. On the following turn, they fire — they can’t take more than one shot, nor can they move or perform any other action on that turn.

Range: Checking the Weapon Table (pages 3-6 of the Equipment Inventory) under “Range,” you’ll find three numbers. The first of these is the maximum distance a weapon is considered to be at short range; the second is the maximum distance the weapon is considered to be at medium range; the third is the maximum distance a weapon is considered to be at long range.

For example, checking the range column for a 9mm Uzi submachine gun, you find the numbers 60/90/270. If your character is armed with an Uzi, then, any shot at a target within 60 feet is at short range. A target between 61 and 90 feet is at medium range, and a target between 91 and 270 feet away is at long range. Other weapons will have different range numbers.

Point blank range is not listed for each weapon. A target is considered to be at point blank range if the distance from the attacker to the target (in feet) is 10% or less of the attacker’s skill or default level with the weapon being used (rounded up). Thus, a character with a 72% chance to use a pistol successfully is at point blank range if a target is within 8 feet. A character with a 29% chance with the same pistol must be within 3 feet of the target to be at point blank range.

The effect of range is simple: Any attack at point-

blank range gives you a +30 to your skill check when you fire a weapon; an attack at short range is at +10; one at medium range doesn't affect your skill check — you just roll normally; one at long range is at -40. As you can see, accurate weapons make for better marksmen!

Rapid Fire: A character using rapid fire can fire two shots in a turn instead of just one. Shots can be against different targets. Both shots suffer a -30 die roll modifier.

Characters using bolt-action firearms, or archaic weapons cannot use rapid fire, nor can characters firing bursts (see pp. 72-73).

Shotguns: Characters using shotguns get a +10 to their skill whenever they check to see if they hit. Shotguns fire pellets, which scatter and cover a larger area than a single bullet (or spray of bullets) can.

Sawed-off Shotguns: A shotgun barrel can be sawed off, creating a short and very deadly weapon of very limited range. A sawed off shotgun receives a +20, instead of a +10, on attack rolls. However, each range category for a sawed off shotgun is reduced to 1/2 the listed distance. Thus a normal shotgun with ranges of 100/250/500 would be treated as 50/125/250.

Shotgun Damage Bonuses: Against targets at Short Range, characters armed with shotguns add 2 to their damage rolls. At Medium Range shotguns do only the amount of damage rolled. At Long Range, shotgun damage is halved (round up) with a minimum of 1 point, and critical hits don't do any special damage.

Shotgun Slugs: It is also possible to fire a single slug from a shotgun. When loaded with slugs, shotguns don't give the firer any to-hit modifiers or damage bonuses.

Silencers: Two varieties of silencer are available. The most effective, a cylinder 12" long, creates a noise below the level of a whisper. However, this silencer halves the short and medium range categories for the weapon on which it is mounted, and Long Range shots are not possible.

The second variety of silencer allows a little more

sound to escape — the sound of a shot is audible within 20'. Anyone making an INT check can hear the shot up to 40' away. Use of this silencer halves the distance at which a weapon is at short, medium, and long range.

Silencers can only be used on automatic and self-loading pistols, or non-automatic rifles.

Telescopic Sights: Telescopic sights increase the accuracy of rifles, but locating and sighting in on a target takes longer.

A scope provides a +25 modifier to a character's skill with a rifle, but only if the user has spent *two turns* sighting in on the target. The player selects the Prepared Shot option for two turns and fires on the third.

Note that the shooter does not get the +10 Prepared Shot modifier when using a scope: The aiming time is taken into account in the Scope modifier.

SPECIAL OPTIONS AND MODIFIERS TABLE

Here, in table form, are all the special options and die roll modifiers applicable in ranged combat:

BRACED SHOT		+10
BURSTS	Short	+5
	Extended	+10
CALLED SHOT		1/2 or 1/4 Att
COVER, Soft		1/2 or 1/4 Att
HANDEDNESS	1-Hand	-20
	Wrong Hand	-30
MOVEMENT	Slow	-10
	Medium	-25
	Fast	-40
PREPARED SHOT		+5
RANGE	Point Blank	+30
	Short	+10
	Medium	0
	Long	-40

RAPID FIRE		-30
SHOTGUNS	Regular	+10
	Sawed-off	+20
SILENCERS	Halves Range categories	
TELESCOPIC SIGHTS		+25

* Applies only to rifles, assault rifles, carbines, submachine guns, non-sawed-off shotguns, and larger weapons.

Close-combat Options and Modifiers

Close-combat is possible whenever opponents are within 5' of one another. Once the decision has been made to enter close-combat, players use the combat procedures described earlier, but they have some new decisions to make and some new options from which to choose.

The first thing players must decide when they enter close-combat is what skills they will use to attack their foes. If your character has a ranged weapon ready, and another character engages him or her in close-combat, you can use a ranged weapon skill to squeeze off one shot, but on the next turn, you will have to begin using a close-combat skill.

Bare Hands Versus Weapons: An unarmed character fighting one with a close-combat weapon (a club or sword, for example) is at a significant disadvantage — *the armed fighter always wins initiative*. No initiative roll is necessary. Note that this applies only in cases where the opponent's weapon is larger than a character's hand — brass knuckles, 3" knife blades, and other small objects do not give a character any advantage over unarmed foes.

Defending: A character engaged in close-combat can elect to defend instead of attack. To defend, simply select the defend option at the beginning of the turn, when players announce what their char-

acters will do. You can defend against any one close-combat attack made against your character on that turn.

Attacks against defending characters are made normally. If the attack fails (i.e., the attacker rolls higher than his or her skill level), nothing happens. If the attacker rolls well enough to hit, however, the defending player makes a skill check to defend, using any close-combat skill you want. (If your character has no close-combat skills, you can use the default level of the close-combat skill of your choice.)

If the skill check succeeds, your character avoids or blocks the attack, taking no damage. If the check fails, the blow does normal damage to the rolled location.

Unarmed Defense Against Penetrating Weapons: *Unarmed fighters defend against enemies with penetrating weapons (swords, knives, etc.) by making close-combat skill checks. If the roll is $\frac{1}{2}$ the character's skill level or less, the blow is dodged. If the roll is between $\frac{1}{2}$ the character's skill level and his or her full skill level, the blow was blocked. A blocked blow does normal damage, but the defending player gets to choose where the blow landed.*

Armed Defense Against Weapon Attacks: If both attacker and defender have weapons (edged or not) any successful defense (i.e., any roll less than or equal to the combat skill being used in defense) is enough to prevent damage.

Grabbing Possessions: A character can grab an item held by another character by winning initiative and making a successful Brawling, Boxing, Wrestling, or Martial Arts attack.

A successful attack does no damage, but indicates that the item has been grabbed. When this occurs, both characters are assumed to have a grip on the item in question, unless one of the characters lets go of it voluntarily. The grab attempt takes one turn. On the next, each character can attempt to pull the item away from the other. This is done by rolling a STR check. Success means that the object has been pulled away from the other character. If both characters make their STR checks, they continue grappling for the object until the next turn.

At times, characters may struggle for control of an

item with a handle or grip. This would likely be true in the case of a struggle over a suitcase or a gun. When this happens, the character holding onto the handle or grip rolls a full STR check, the opponent a $\frac{1}{2}$ STR check.

Holds: There will be times when you'll want your character to grab and immobilize an opponent, rather than do damage. Holds allow you to do this.

To establish a hold, roll a Brawling, Boxing, Wrestling, or Martial Arts attack. If you succeed, and your foe doesn't defend, you put him or her into a hold. The body part you're holding is determined by the normal hit location system (pages 67-68), unless you "bump" the result to an area of your choice. The body part you grab takes no damage, but is immobilized.

If you grab a character's head, you can specify whether you've got him or her by the head itself, or the neck. The head will prevent the foe from seeing, but grabbing the throat may make a more effective threat — on each subsequent turn the foe spends in the hold, you can do 1 point of bruising damage by making a successful HTH attack. A character whose chest is in a hold has both arms immobilized.

A character in a hold can attack (at $\frac{1}{2}$ skill level) or try to break the hold (by defending and making a $\frac{1}{2}$ skill check). A successful defense means the character has broken the hold and can act normally on the next turn.

A prone character trying to break a hold must roll a defense attempt at $\frac{1}{4}$ skill level. If a character has an opponent in a hold, the next successful attack will drop the opponent to the ground.

Surprise: A character making a close-combat attack with surprise (see page 64) can choose where his or her blow lands. A successful skill check automatically strikes the selected area.

In addition, the attacker gets a +2 modifier to any damage the attack does.

Hand-to-Hand Fighting Styles

Characters with the Boxing, Martial Arts, or Wrestling skill are specialists, with several advantages over ordinary brawlers.

Special Techniques: The biggest advantage boxers, wrestlers, and martial artists have is that they can learn special fighting techniques which may do extra damage, allow more than one attack per turn, do wound damage with bare hands, and so on.

These techniques can be learned during character creation, or later in a campaign. They are special skills used and improved just as other skills unless otherwise noted.

If purchased during character creation, special techniques cost 2 skill points. (Of course, you must first buy Boxing, Wrestling, or Oriental Martial Arts.) If added later on in a campaign, special techniques cost 6 Fame & Fortune points. None of the special techniques can be used by default — you must buy them in order to use them.

Characters can have only as many techniques as they have levels of skill **until they reach 5th level**. A character with the first level of Boxing, Wrestling, or Oriental Martial Arts can add one technique; one who has achieved the second level can have two techniques, and so on. Once fifth level has been reached, characters can buy as many techniques as they want, and can afford.

Not all special techniques are available to specialists in all fighting styles. The Combat Techniques Chart below shows which techniques are available to boxers, which to wrestlers, and which to martial artists. Cross-reference your character's combat skill (boxing, wrestling, or martial artist) with the technique you want. If an "X" appears at the intersection of skill and technique, you can add that technique; if no "X" appears, you can't.

COMBAT TECHNIQUES CHART

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

Using Special Techniques: Each of these techniques is used by making a Boxing, Wrestling, or Oriental Martial Artist skill check at -20. (Subtract 20 from your skill level and roll less than or equal to the resulting number.) If the check succeeds, the technique is used successfully, and the

attack has the effect described below instead of inflicting normal damage.

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

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

Darkness modifiers are discussed in greater detail in the Administrators Guide, page 6. Ask your Admin for more details.

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

Hold: Any character can put another character into a hold (see page 77), but characters who know this technique get the added advantage of doing damage to the held character, if they choose.

In most respects, this technique uses the same



system for holds described on page 77, but if the holding player chooses, he or she can cause damage to the opponent. The same skill check (at -20) which puts the opponent in the hold also does 1d4 points of bruising damage or 1 point of wound damage (attacker's choice) to any part of the body. On subsequent turns, a skill check at full skill level does 1d4 bruising damage or 1 point of wound damage.

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

This technique also allows characters to Defend (using the normal HTH defense procedure on page 76) against attacks from thrown weapons, bows and arrows, or darts.

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

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

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

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

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

Stun: Characters using this technique can take

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

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

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

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

Heavy Weapons and Explosives

Explosions can be caused by hand grenades, demolition charges, and heavy weapons such as mortars or artillery. They do damage to all characters within a set distance from the center of the explosion. Up to twice that set distance, they do half damage.

The Explosives Table below tells you how much damage various explosives do. The chart has five columns: Explosive, Full, Half, Wounds, and Damage.

Explosive: This identifies the type of explosive you're dealing with.

Full: If any part of a character is this distance (or less) from the center of the explosion, the charac-

ter suffers full damage from the explosion.

Half: This is the range, in feet, at which an explosion causes half damage. The number of wounds the explosion causes is unchanged, but each wound does only half damage (rounded down).

Wds: This is the number of wounds *each character within range* suffers from the explosion. Roll 1d10 to determine what parts of the body are affected by each wound. Note that two or more wounds can strike the same area.

Dam: This column indicates the die roll used to determine hit points lost for *each wound*. Each roll is halved (rounded down), for characters who suffer only half damage.

EXPLOSIVES TABLE

EXPLOSIVE	FULL	HALF	WDS	DAM
Dynamite (1)	5'	6-10'	1d4	1d4
Dynamite (8)	10'	11-20'	1d6	1d8
Dynamite (32)	20'	21-40'	1d6	2d6
Hand Grenade	5'	6-10'	1d4	1d6
Howitzer	20'	21-40'	1d6	2d6
Missile	10'	11-20'	1d6	1d8
Mortar	8'	9-16'	1d4	1d8
Plastique (1g)	5'	6-10'	1d4	1d4
Tank Projectile	5'	6-10'	1d4	2d6

Using Explosives

In the *Top Secret/S.I.*™ game, there are three ways to use explosives: You can set them in a particular spot, primed to go off at a particular time; you can throw them, and hope you lob them where they'll do the most good; or you can fire them from heavy weapons.

Setting Explosives: If your character has the Demolitions skill (page 43), you simply tell the Admin the effect you hope to achieve with explosives. If the Admin approves, you make a skill check, and, if you succeed, achieve the desired effect. The skill check ensures that you know how much explosive to use, how to set a fuse to the desired length, and so on.

Throwing Explosives: Hand grenades, sticks of dynamite, and clumps of plastique can be thrown. To throw an explosive, select a target and make a Hand Grenade skill check (page 40). If you hit, you hit — determine damage using the Explosives Table above. If you miss, the Admin determines where the explosive lands.

Short range when throwing explosives is 10 feet; medium range is 40 feet, and long range is 120 feet. The Athletic Ability advantage adds 10 feet to each range category, as does the Physical Fitness skill.

Explosives are thrown when your turn to act comes up in the initiative sequence; their landing — and explosion — is the very first thing that happens on the next turn.

Firing Explosives: Certain weapons fire projectiles in a high arc, instead of by aiming directly at the target. This is called "indirect fire."

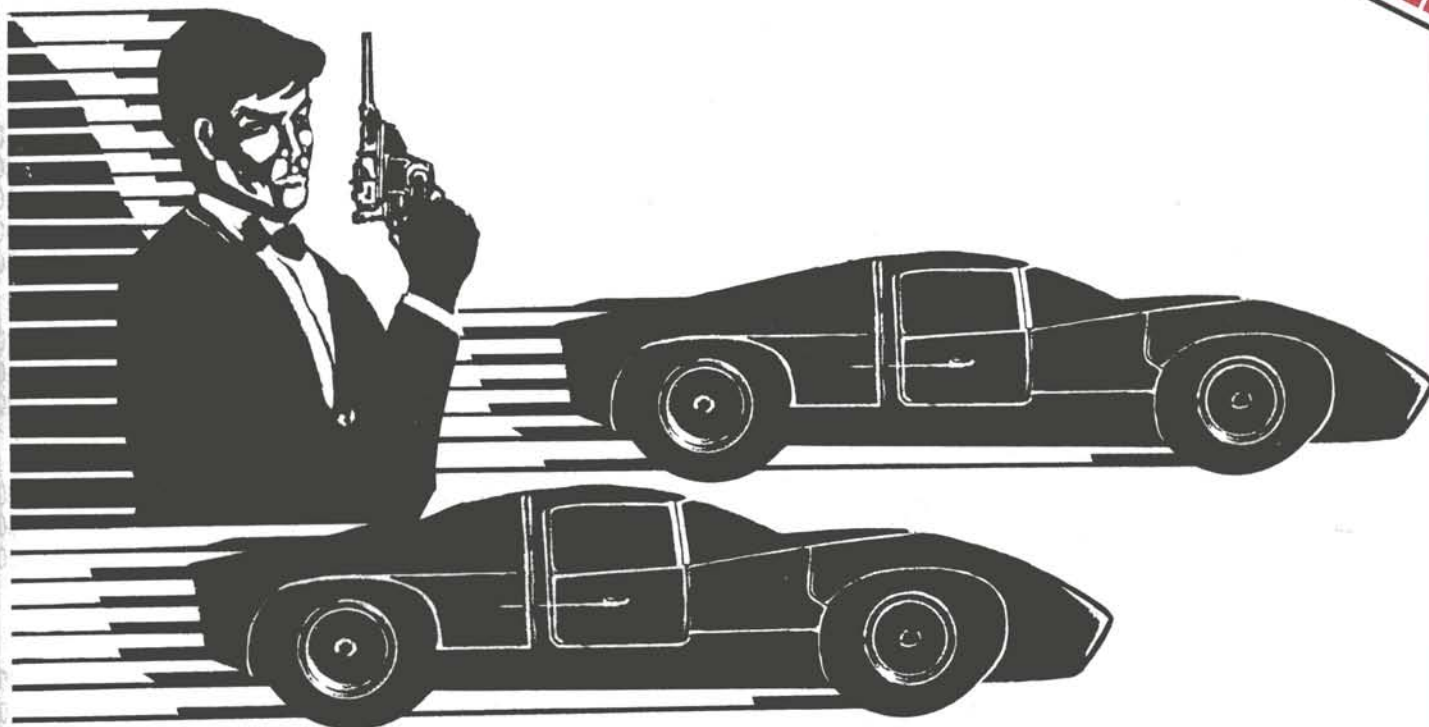
Mortars and artillery pieces are the most common indirect fire weapons. However, a thrown explosive lobbed at an unseen target also qualifies.

This is an inherently inaccurate firing (or throwing) method, so all indirect fire attacks are made at ½ skill level. Note that tank guns and missiles do not suffer the indirect fire penalty.



7. Vehicle Rules

TOP SECRET/S.I.



In a blur of steel and glass, Ulyanov's Porsche dashes from the alley into the broad avenue. Sebastian braces himself as Ling mashes the accelerator pedal to the floor, thrusting the black Maserati into traffic. The Porsche slides around a turn, heading the wrong way on a one-way street! Ling follows, weaving through the oncoming traffic, straining to catch up. Suddenly, sirens wail (the police take a dim view of this sort of activity) but the chase continues . . .

Chases can play an important part in any *Top Secret/S.I.*™ adventure. The chase, like driving in general, is a function of driver skill, road conditions, and the capabilities of the vehicle being driven. The section that follows tells you all you need to know about vehicles, drivers, high speed chases, special maneuvers, and the outcomes of accidents.

To drive a car or other vehicle, you must first get in, place the key in the ignition, and attempt to start the engine. (We recommend buckling your seat belt as well.) This process can take anywhere from two to four turns, depending upon the situation. The Admin decides precisely how long it takes.

A character with the key in the ignition of a vehicle can attempt to start it by making a Driving check (see below). If the check is successful, the vehicle starts immediately. If not, the character must check again the following turn, and the next, if necessary, until the vehicle starts.

Driving Checks

Once the car starts, you can hit the road (or the trail, if you're off-road). Anybody with the Driving skill can guide a vehicle under ordinary conditions without making a skill check. Characters who drive by default, however, must make a 1/2 DEX check every time they want the vehicle to change speed or direction.

For characters with the Driving skill, Driving checks are only necessary when a vehicle is pushed to its limits or the unexpected happens (a patch of ice on the road, or a pedestrian running out in front of the car, for example). Specifically, a Driving check is required under the following circumstances:

- 1) The driver of a vehicle takes damage from an opponent's attack.
- 2) An obstacle or curve is encountered and the vehicle is traveling too fast to negotiate the hazard automatically. A turn of 45 degrees or less requires a check if the vehicle is moving 50 mph or more.
A turn of 45 to 90 degrees requires a check at 25 mph or more. Turns of greater than 90 degrees are not possible unless you select one of the Special Maneuvers (see pages 84-85).
- 3) A tire blows out, or is shot out (page 87).
- 4) The vehicle is damaged by an attack that is not serious enough to call for a roll on the Crash Table (page 86).
- 5) The driver performs one of the Special Maneuvers.
- 6) The Admin decides your vehicle would have trouble in a situation which wouldn't upset another vehicle. For example, driving a Jeep through a ditch wouldn't be any trouble at all. Taking a Ferrari through the same ditch might give your character a -50 modifier to his or her driving check.

If a driving check succeeds, the driver keeps the car under control. If it fails, the vehicle begins to slip out of control and the driver must make another Driving check on the next turn — he or she can't do anything else that turn. If the second check succeeds, the driver regains control, but the vehicle loses $\frac{1}{4}$ of its speed. If the second check fails, the vehicle crashes (see pages 85-87).

Driving Check Modifiers

Driving checks may be modified by a variety of factors — notably road conditions, weather, the load the vehicle is carrying, and the performance capabilities of the vehicle being driven.

ROAD CONDITIONS

Driving Surface

Wet	-10
Gravel	-20
Dirt	-10
Mud	-30
Ice	-50

Slope Effects

Up	+10
Down	-10
Down/Steep (10% grade)	-30

PASSENGER OR CARGO LOAD

More than $\frac{1}{2}$ Capacity	-20
Driving 1-handed	-30
Checking Because of Blowout	-20

HANDLING RATING OF COMMON VEHICLES

Sports Car	+30
Compact Sedan	+10
Full-size Sedan	0
Pickup Truck	-10

For a more complete list of vehicles, see the Equipment Inventory.

Actual Speed Versus Safe Speed: When negotiating a corner, the driver subtracts the difference between his or her vehicle's speed and the safe turning speed from the driving check before rolling the dice. Here's how it works:

Ling whips her Maserati through a 90 degree turn at 60 mph. Since the safe turning speed is 25, she subtracts 25 from 60 (resulting in a 35), and then subtracts 35 from her Driving Skill for this check.

Here's an example of how the modifiers are used: Ling has a DEX of 61, and a 3rd level Driving/Auto skill (+10 mod). This gives her a base Driving check of 71. If she's driving a sports car (Handling Rating +30), she makes Driving Checks against an adjusted score of 101 (71 + 30 = 101). Remember, however, that a 95 or higher is a Bad Break, so she really needs a 94 or less to succeed. If she has to drive a pickup truck (Handling Rating -30), DRV checks would be made against an adjusted score of 61 (71 - 10 = 61).

Now, say the scene is a hilly, gravel road. Ling, driving a Maserati, is in hot pursuit of Ulyanov. Ulyanov throws his Porsche about with abandon. Ling follows closely. The road climbs and twists dramatically. Then, Ulyanov makes a sudden and unexpected swerve onto a hidden, downhill road. Ling is on a steeply graded (-30), gravel road (-20), driving a sports car (+30). To follow Ulyanov, she will have to roll a 51 or less (skill of 71, +30 for the car, -30 for the steep grade, -20 for the gravel = 51).

Vehicle Performance Ratings

In addition to the factors above, several aspects of a vehicle's performance must be taken into account during a chase. Given enough road, a car with a top speed of 125 will out-distance one capable of only 100 mph. A car capable of reducing its speed by 10 mph per turn may run into trouble where one capable of 20 mph reductions wouldn't.

The Vehicle Tables, pages 13-15 of the Equipment Inventory, rate each vehicle's performance in

several key areas: Maximum Speed, Acceleration, Braking, Handling, and Protection. Each of these ratings is described below, along with an explanation of the rating's effect on vehicle maneuvering.

Maximum Speed is the top speed of the vehicle, measured in miles per hour (mph).

Acceleration is the maximum number of mph the vehicle can add to its speed in a single turn. No driving check is required for acceleration up to half of a vehicle's acceleration rating. Acceleration greater than $\frac{1}{2}$ this rating requires a Driving Check.

If the check succeeds, the driver can accelerate at the vehicle's maximum rate up to the vehicle's maximum speed). No checks are required on subsequent turns *as long as the vehicle continues to accelerate.*

If the check fails, the vehicle accelerates at $\frac{1}{2}$ its maximum acceleration rate. The driver can make another Driving check to accelerate on subsequent turns until a successful roll allows maximum acceleration.

Speed and Acceleration Conversions: Vehicle top speeds and rates of acceleration translate easily into **Top Secret/S.I.**™ game scale, if you want to display movement on a map or table. The first column of the Conversion table below tells you



how fast the vehicle is moving in miles per hour. The second column translates this speed into feet per turn. The third column translates feet per turn into scale inches per turn. Use this last number to govern movement on your playing surface:

MPH	Feet/Turn	Inches/Turn
1	3'	.3
5	15'	1.5
10	30'	3
15	45'	4.5
20	60'	6
25	75'	7.5
30	90'	9
35	105'	10.5
40	120'	12
50	150'	15
60	180'	18
70	210'	21
80	240'	24
90	270'	27
100	300'	30
110	330'	33
120	360'	36
130	390'	39
140	420'	42
150	450'	45

Braking is the maximum number of mph a vehicle can subtract from its speed in a single turn before a Driving check is required. No check is required for deceleration up to and including the braking rating in mph.

A vehicle can be slowed by up to 10 mph greater than the braking rating if the driver makes a successful Driving check. Deceleration up to 20 mph greater than the braking rating is possible if the driver makes a $\frac{1}{2}$ Driving skill check. Deceleration between 10 and 20 mph more than a vehicle's braking rating causes damage to the tires which lowers the handling rating by 10. A failed braking check means the vehicle slows by only five mph that turn.

Handling is a rating of a vehicle's maneuverability and the ease with which it can be wrestled around corners. The handling rating is used as a modifier to a character's Driving skill. Simply add (or subtract) the vehicle's handling rating from

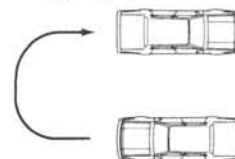
your Driving skill before making a Driving check.

Protection is a measure of the vehicle's ability to withstand attacks. Any characters who attack a vehicle (as opposed to its passengers) subtract the protection value of the vehicle from their combat skill level before making their skill checks.

Special Maneuvers

Characters with the Driving skill can attempt a variety of special maneuvers which will help them get away from pursuers or catch those they pursue. These maneuvers can be used by default, but their negative modifiers make default success unlikely.

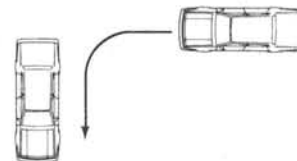
Bootleg/One-eighty (Modifier varies):



The driver wheels the vehicle through a 180-degree turn and can drive off in the opposite direction. The vehicle must be travelling at least 25 mph. The actual speed is subtracted from the driver's Driving skill.

The Bootleg takes two turns to complete: On the first turn, a successful check whips the car around so it's facing the way it had been coming moments earlier; on the second turn, the driver can begin moving back the way he or she came.

Braking Skid (-25 Modifier):

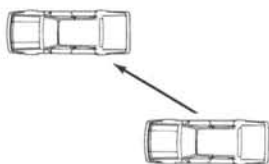


The driver whips around up to 90 degrees and comes to a complete halt in a single turn. This roll takes the place of the normal braking roll, with failure treated the same (see above).

Downshift (-15 Modifier): A vehicle can be shifted into a lower gear, doubling acceleration for 1-3 turns (player's choice) or adding 5 mph to maximum deceleration in a single turn.

This skill check takes the place of the regular check for acceleration or braking, but failure has the same result as a failed acceleration check (see page 83) or braking check (see page 84).

Swerve (-10 modifier):



The vehicle "side-steps" up to ten feet to right or left and continues in its original direction of travel without losing any speed. A failed check means the vehicle turns in the direction of the swerve. The driver gets a second Driving check to regain control. If this fails, go to the Crash Table, page 86.

Collisions

Crashes brought about by driver error, natural hazards, and poor road conditions are treated in the next section ("Crashing"). But there will come a time when an agent may want to *cause* a crash. This section tells you how to do just that.

Chicken: Two vehicles barrel toward each other at high speed. Unless one of the drivers chickens out and swerves, a head-on collision is assured.

An NPC challenged by an oncoming vehicle no more than 500' away must make a WIL check each turn until the driver of the on-coming car chickens out, or the two cars collide.

The chicken procedure applies only to NPCs — PCs can always make their own decisions about head-on collisions.

Ramming: The driver rams, pushes, or nudges another vehicle, a situation which requires the drivers of both vehicles to make Driving checks or

lose control.

Ramming is only possible under the following conditions:

1. Two vehicles are heading toward one another (a head-on).
2. Two vehicles are running side by side (a side-swipe).
3. One vehicle is closing in on another from the rear (a rear-ender).

If one of these conditions is met, a driver can ram. Both drivers make Driving skill checks, modified as follows: In ramming situations, bigger, tougher vehicles usually fare better than small, light ones. To reflect this, figure the difference between the protection ratings of the vehicles involved. The driver of the vehicle with the lowest protection rating then subtracts the result from his or her Driving skill for this check.

For example, Ling, in a sports car (protection rating 20), is sideswiped by Ulyanov in a delivery truck (protection rating 50). The difference between the two protection ratings is 30, so Ling suffers a -30 to her Driving skill.

A failed check means the vehicle goes out of control. On the next turn, the driver gets another check to bring it back under control. If this fails, consult the Crash Table. Note that it is quite possible for both vehicles involved in a ramming attempt to crash.

Crashing

When a vehicle goes out of control, roll 1d10 and consult the crash table below to see what happens. Note that the Admin can always assign minimum and maximum damage levels: Running into a building at high speed would mean at *least* a 3 or 4 result on the crash table; running into a dilapidated wooden barn might not do any damage at all.



CRASH TABLE

DIE ROLL

CRASH EFFECT

- 0** Vehicle spins to a halt. Engine continues to run.
If the vehicle wasn't moving, it takes cosmetic damage, but nothing serious.
- 1** Vehicle spins to a halt. Engine continues to run. Randomly-determined tire is flattened.
If the vehicle wasn't moving, it takes cosmetic damage and a tire is flattened.
- 2** Vehicle's engine stalls. The vehicle loses 10 mph per turn until a successful Driving check restarts it, or it rolls to a halt.
If the Vehicle wasn't moving, the engine is damaged. All Driving checks to start it are at $\frac{1}{4}$ Driving skill.
- 3** Engine or body is damaged. Acceleration and Top Speed ratings halved — if vehicle is moving faster than new top speed, vehicle loses 10 mph per turn until below.
- 4** Vehicle's engine stalls. The vehicle loses 10 mph per turn until a successful Driving check restarts it, or it rolls to a halt. Also, body or suspension is damaged so that Handling Rating is reduced by 30.

- If the Vehicle wasn't moving, the engine is damaged. All Driving checks to start it are at $\frac{1}{4}$ Driving skill. Also, Handling Rating is reduced by 30.
- 5** Engine and body take damage, halving Acceleration and Top Speed ratings — if traveling faster than new top speed, vehicle loses 10 mph per turn, until speed drops below. Each passenger takes 1d4-1 (0-3) wounds of 1d6 points each to random locations.
- 6** Same as 4, plus engine stalls. Won't restart until mechanic can repair (1d10 minutes and a successful skill check).
- 7** Same as 5, plus each character takes 1d4 wounds of 1d8 points each.
- 8** Car totally destroyed, plus each character suffers 1d6 wounds of 1d10 hp each. Random wound location.
- 9** Car totally destroyed, explodes into flames. Each passenger takes 1d6 wounds of 2d6 hp each. Random wound location.

Direction of Crash: An out-of-control vehicle will continue to travel in the direction it was traveling when the driver lost control. It can veer slightly, if

the Admin decides the situation warrants it (taking into account such factors as slope, traction, etc.)

The vehicle will continue traveling in the direction determined by the Admin, slowing by 10 mph per turn, until it rolls to a halt or runs into a hard object like a tree or wall).

High Speed Crashes: For every 10 mph over 100 mph, add 1 to the 1d10 crash table roll. Round up. (This rule also applies when the combined speeds of vehicles involved in a head-on collision equal or exceed 100 mph.)

Thus, a vehicle crashing at 101 mph adds one to the crash table roll. A vehicle crashing at 123 mph would suffer a +3 modifier to the crash table roll. If a vehicle moving 67 mph ran head-on into one going 46 mph, each would suffer a +2 modifier to the crash table roll ($67 + 46 = 113 = 13 \text{ mph over } 100 = +2 \text{ modifier}$).

Effects of Flat Tires: A flat tire causes immediate problems, beginning with a Driving check to determine if the driver loses control at the moment of the blowout.

Assuming the check is successful, and the driver retains control, a flat tire causes a -20 penalty to the vehicle's Handling Rating. Each flat tire beyond the first subtracts an additional -10.

Finally, a flat reduces a vehicle's top speed and acceleration ratings by $\frac{1}{2}$. If the vehicle has more than one flat tire, these ratings are reduced to $\frac{1}{4}$ normal.

Safety Equipment

Crash damage can be devastating, but there are ways to reduce its effect. The most common of these are crash helmets and seat belts. Agents may want to consider making helmets standard equipment, and seat belts are real lifesavers.

Crash Helmets: Characters wearing helmets suffer only $\frac{1}{2}$ the damage indicated on the Crash Table for every wound to the head (rounded up) resulting from a vehicle accident. They also provide hard

cover against all attacks to the head.

On the down side, helmets seriously impair peripheral vision. Characters wearing them make all attacks at -10 except for prepared shots. Prepared shots are made at full skill level.

Finally, helmets make you awfully conspicuous! Undercover agents may want to think twice about using them.

Seat Belts: Characters wearing seat belts and shoulder harnesses suffer fewer wounds in a crash than unbelted characters. When a crash table result calls for wounds, characters with seat belts subtract 3 from the number of wounds indicated. For example, a belted character who is supposed to suffer 1d6 wounds actually suffers $1d6-3$ wounds. It is possible for a seat belt and shoulder harness to prevent injury entirely, even in a terrible accident.

However, characters wearing seat belts can't fire at targets directly behind their vehicle. In addition, they suffer a -20 modifier when shooting at targets directly ahead of their vehicle (unless they're willing to fire through the windshield!) Attacks against targets to either side aren't affected (but don't forget about side-window glass!)

Vehicles in Combat

When characters shoot at vehicles, they must declare whether they're shooting at the vehicle itself, or at the passengers inside.

Targeting Passengers: If passengers are targeted, shots are modified normally for movement and range. Vehicles are treated as hard cover for those areas that protect the character with metal or heavy wood paneling. Characters screened by fabric (e.g., a convertible top), fiberglass (e.g., a motorboat hull), or sheet metal (e.g., the hull of a canoe) are considered to have soft cover.

Targeting Vehicles: Characters firing at vehicles rather than passengers must subtract the Protec-

tion Value of the target vehicle from their skill level before rolling the attack.

Effects of Hits on Moving Vehicles: A successful attack against a moving vehicle can have two types of effects:

1. Any successful attack requires a Driving Check, as if the driver had encountered an obstacle or hazard.
2. If an attack succeeds on a roll of "doubles," or on a Lucky Break, the driver of the vehicle must make an immediate check on the Crash Table.

Effects of Hits on Stationary Vehicles: A stationary vehicle hit by a ranged weapon attack, suffers a result from the Crash Table. The result is determined by reading the tens digit of the to-hit roll and checking that number on the Crash Table.

If Sebastian machine-guns a parked car to try and immobilize it, and hits with a roll of 47, the car suffers result number 4 from the Crash Table.

Bulletproofing: A character can have a vehicle modified to increase its protection value.

Bulletproofing adds 30 to the protection rating of a vehicle, but reduces acceleration to $\frac{1}{2}$ normal. Maximum speed is reduced by 20 mph.

Any vehicle can be bulletproofed, but the process costs $\frac{1}{4}$ the cost of the vehicle itself. Any mechanic with access to a shop can do the actual bullet

proofing, given a couple of weeks and proper materials.

Weapon Anti-Vehicle (AV) Ratings: Some weapons are more effective against vehicles than others. The list below describes those weapons which get positive modifiers when directed against vehicles:

Light Machine Gun	+10*
Heavy Machine Gun	+20*
Hand Grenade	+20
Dynamite/Plastique	+10/charge
Mortar	+25
Artillery Round	+50
Tank Gun Round	+70
Missile	+50

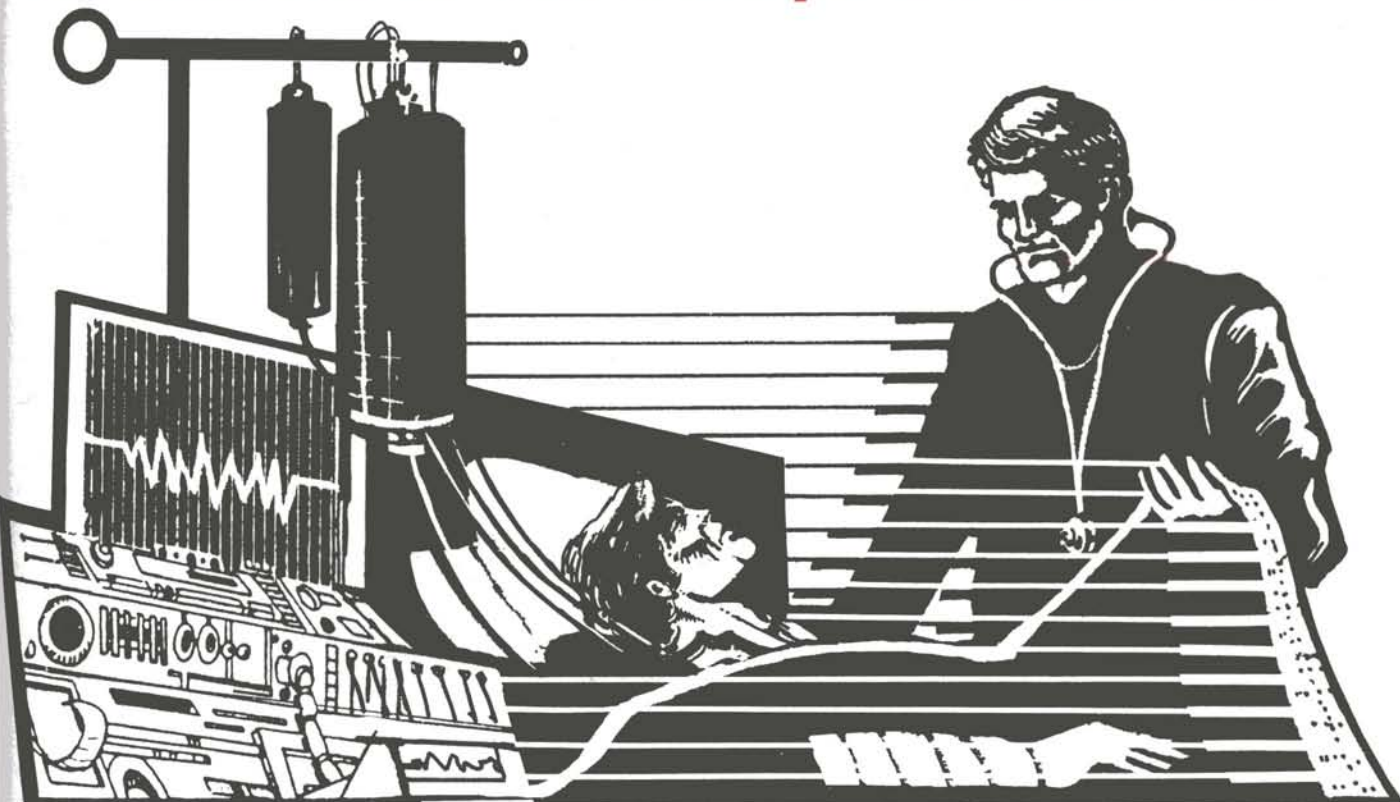
* These weapons can be mounted in twin, triple, or quadruple mounts. Each barrel beyond the first increases the weapon's AV rating by +5, and the damage inflicted per wound by +1.

Anti-vehicle modifiers are added to the attacker's skill level when using one of these weapons against a vehicular target, but this modifier only cancels out a vehicle's protection rating. If the anti-vehicular modifier is larger than the vehicle's protection rating, the excess is ignored.

For example, a tank gun (+70) used against a car (protection rating 45) would cancel out the 45 with 25 left over, but the extra 25 points are ignored.



8. Survival and Improvement



By now, you know how to create a character and how to take that character out adventuring. Much of what you've learned has been directed toward how your character can do damage to other characters.

Unfortunately, those other characters know as much about the subject as you do, and there's a very good chance that your character will be injured during an adventure. This section will tell you what to do when that happens, how you can avoid taking damage in really drastic situations, and, finally, what you can expect to get out of a successfully-completed mission.

Healing

The human body has remarkable recuperative powers, and characters will gradually recover hit points lost to damage. But for healing to take place, wounds must be cleaned and bandaged — at least minimally.

A First Aid skill check (or a $1\frac{1}{2}$ INT default check)

is sufficient to clean and bandage a damaged body area, restoring 1 damage box to each area tended and preventing further deterioration of a character's condition. Each area tended will recover an additional damage box after 24 hours have passed.

More significant healing takes time, and following this initial 24 hour period, a week must pass before characters recover another point in each wounded area. Wounds continue to heal at a rate of one point per week, per area, until they are completely healed or the character gets wounded in the same area again.

Characters with the Medicine skill (pages 58-59) or the Surgeon skill (page 59) can accelerate the rate of healing. See the descriptions of these skills for further information.

If a limb has been destroyed, the wound still requires the full period of time to heal. The healing process can't bring back destroyed limbs, however.

Tending Wounds

As explained above, a First Aid check (or default) is all that's required to tend a wound and restore 1 hit point to a wounded body part.

Each First Aid check takes 1d6 minutes spent beside the wounded character. The check must be made within 10 minutes of the time the character was wounded. If more than 10 minutes passes, the wounded character doesn't get a hit point back immediately, but must wait a week. After a week has passed, healing continues normally.

If either the patient or the character making the first aid check moves, the tending of a wound must begin again. Riding in vehicles does not prevent characters from tending wounds or having wounds tended.

A character can never have more than one First Aid skill check made for a specific wounded area, unless the area receives additional hit points of damage.

Excess Damage and Healing: *If you're using the Reality Rule which allows arms, hands, and legs to take damage even when they have no damage boxes left (page 70), remember that these extra points of damage must be healed before the character can use the damaged body part. The limb becomes functional only when it has at least one open damage box.*

Luck Points

There's a limit, of course, to the miracles medical science can perform. Characters can be seriously — even fatally — injured. A solid blow to the head; a grenade dropped in your lap; a critical hit at a critical time; any of these can spell the end of your favorite character.

Or can it?

The player characters are heroes, people with exceptional abilities and, on occasion, exceptional luck.

Situations that would mean certain death for most people are easily avoided by the heroic secret agent: An attacker slips and falls just as he's about to deliver a death blow; a grenade turns out to be a dud; the bullet aimed squarely at the agent's heart is stopped by a book in his coat pocket.

Face it — the secret agents of popular literature, movies, and even real life, get lucky a lot of the time.

In the *Top Secret/S.I.*™ game, this is reflected in the use of Luck Points.

Luck points have a single purpose: they negate disastrous occurrences that happen (or, more accurately, *almost* happen) to your character.

Receiving Luck Points

Every character has Luck Points — the number, determined by the Admin during character creation, will vary from character to character. As a rule, you will start play with at least 2 Luck Points, and perhaps a few more, but the exact number will remain the Admin's secret.

At various points during a *Top Secret/S.I.*™ campaign, usually as a reward for conspicuously heroic feats, the Admin may reward you with an additional Luck Point. The Admin may or may not tell you when you get extra Luck Points.

You can also gain a Luck Point every time you roll 00 on a Combat skill check. Tell the Admin any time this happens — whether you're attacking or defending — so he or she can record the point received by your character.

If you end an adventure with no Luck Points left, the Admin will tell you, so you can buy one using Fame & Fortune points (see below).

Using Luck Points

Characters can spend a Luck Point whenever an attack, accident, or trap threatens to kill or disable them. The use of Luck Points is always up to

the players. What a Luck Point does, however, is entirely up to the Admin.

For example, if your character is hit by a 00, your character is dead — shot right between the eyes. Here's where Luck Points come in.

You don't want your character to die, so you tell the Admin you want to spend a Luck Point. If you have any left (remember, only the Admin knows how lucky your character is . . .) the Admin might say the bullet merely grazed your skull, knocking you down for a turn, but inflicting only 1 point of damage.

Or take this example: You fail a series of Driving checks and your character's car careens out of control, into a tree, where it explodes into flames. Spend a Luck Point and the Admin might say you were thrown from the vehicle before it exploded, suffering only a few minor scrapes.

Luck Points are lifesavers, but remember to use them sparingly — only the Admin knows how many points you have at any time. If you count on Luck Points to get you out of every tough situation, the results could be disastrous.

Fame & Fortune Points

Now you've completed your mission. You're all healed-up. Completing a mission successfully is one of the most satisfying feelings in an agent's life. In a sense, completing a mission is its own reward, but there are other benefits to be derived, besides a sense of accomplishment.

Characters who complete missions will be awarded in more tangible ways as well: They will be awarded Fame & Fortune points.

At the end of a playing session, the Admin may give you a Fame & Fortune point for surviving, and a couple for roleplaying particularly well. These points can be saved, or they can be spent to improve skills or attributes. Finally, a character who has no Luck Points left can buy one (and only one) by spending a Fame & Fortune point.

Full details on character improvement are included in the Administrators Guide. Ask your Admin for details.



Appendix 1

Character Creation Summary

Make five d60 rolls, adding 10 to each roll. Write the first number you roll next to STR in your character folder; write the second number you roll next to REF; the third number you roll after INT; and so on.

Add the numbers you rolled. If the result is less than 275, subtract your total from 275 and distribute the difference among your five attributes. These are your primary attributes.

Figure your MOV and DEX scores. The MOV score is your STR plus your REF divided by two. The DEX score is your REF plus your INT divided by two (rounded up). These are your secondary attributes.

Determine your character's sex, nationality, hair color, eye color, general appearance, name, handedness, native language, and age.

REALITY RULE: If you want to really round out your character, determine his or her Psychological Profile, Rate your character's Loyalty, Sanity, Cruelty, Piety, Passion, and other key characteristics.

Select one Advantage and one Disadvantage. Note these on your character sheet. (Or use the Reality Rule and select up to 6 points of advantages and an equal or greater number of disadvantages.)

Select a background for your PC: You can choose a Military, Professional, Worker, or Entertainer background; or you can design your own. Use your imagination to fill in the details.

Choose your character's starting skills, spending the 30 character points given to all starting characters.

Purchase equipment from the lists provided. You can purchase as much as you want (and can afford) before the start of an adventure. After an adventure begins, equipment availability is determined by the Administrator.

Appendix 2

Skill Lists

Mechanical Skills

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

Combat Skills

#	Skill	ATT	COST	PRE
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RANGED WEAPONS SKILLS

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

CLOSE-COMBAT SKILLS

21	Basic Melee	1/2STR	1/N	—
		or		
		1/2DEX		
22	Club/Ax/Blackjack	STR	1/2/4	21
23	Knife	DEX	1/3/6	21
		or		
		STR		
24	Fencing	DEX	3/4/8	21
25	Sword	MOV	2/4/8	21
26	Spear/Staff	MOV	1/3/6	21

CLOSE-COMBAT FIGHTING STYLES

27	Boxing*	STR	2/3/6	21
28	Oriental Martial Arts*	MOV	3/4/8	21
29	Wrestling*	MOV	3/3/6	21

Specialty Skills

#	Skill	ATT	COST	PRE
1	Ballistics*	INT	3/3/6	—
2	Concealment	INT	2/2/4	—
3	Cryptography	INT	2/4/8	—
4	Demolitions*	DEX	4/2/4	—
5	Disguise	INT	3/3/6	—
6	Fingerprinting	INT	3/3/6	—
7	Forgery	DEX	4/4/8	—
8	Interrogation	WIL	1/2/4	—
9	Lockpicking*	DEX	4/3/6	—
10	Pickpocket	REF	4/3/6	—
11	Safecracking*	1/2INT	5/4/8	—
12	Shadowing	WIL	2/2/4	—
13	Stealth	MOV	2/2/4	—
14	Surveillance	INT	2/2/4	—
15	Survival	WIL	1/2/4	—
16	Tracking	INT	2/2/4	—

General Skills

#	SKILL	ATT	COST	PRE
1	Acting	INT	2/3/6	—
2	Animal Training	WIL	2/2/4	—
3	Climbing	MOV	2/3/6	—
4	Driving/Automobile	DEX	1/3/6	—
5	Driving/Truck	DEX	1/3/6	4
6	Driving/Motorcycle	DEX	1/3/6	—
7	Driving/Off-Road-Vehicle	1/2/4	4	—
8	Driving/Snowmobile	DEX	1/2/4	—
9	Driving/Boat	DEX	1/2/4	—
10	Driving/Heavy Machinery	DEX	3/3/6	5
11	Driving/Tank	DEX	5/3/6	10
12	Fine Arts	DEX	1/3/6	—
13	First Aid	INT	2/3/6	—
14	Fishing	INT	1/2/4	—
15	Horsemanship	MOV	2/3/6	—
16	Hypnosis*	WIL	5/3/6	—
17	Lip Reading	INT	3/3/6	—
18	Mimicry	INT	4/2/4	—
19	Musical Instrument	INT	1/3/6	—
20	Navigation	INT	4/2/4	—
21	Parachuting	MOV	2/3/6	—
22	Photography	INT	1/3/6	—
23	Piloting/1-engine	DEX	3/4/8	—
24	Piloting/Multi-engine	DEX	4/5/10	23
25	Piloting/Helicopter	DEX	3/4/8	23
26	Piloting/Large Helicopter	DEX	4/5/10	25
27	Piloting/Jet	DEX	5/5/10	23
28	Piloting/Multi-engine Jet	DEX	5/5/10	27
29	Piloting/Space Shuttle	DEX	5/5/10	28
30	Radio Operator	INT	1/1/2	—
31	Sailing	DEX	1/2/4	—
32	Scuba Diving	INT	1/2/4	39
33	Sign Language	INT	4/2/4	—
34	Skiing	MOV	2/3/6	—
35	Sleight of Hand	REF	4/3/6	—
36	Social Chameleon	INT	1/2/4	—

37	Speed Reading*	INT	3/4/8	—
38	Stage Magic*	DEX	5/5/10	35
39	Swimming	MOV	1/3/6	—
40	Throwing	DEX	1/2/4	—
41	Ventriloquism*	INT	4/4/8	—

Education Skill List *

#	SKILL	ATT	COST	PRE
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LIBERAL ARTS SKILLS

1	Basic Liberal Arts	1/2INT	2/N	—
2	Anthro/Psych/Soc	INT	1/2/4	1
3	Business/Economics	INT	1/2/4	1
4	History/PoliSci	INT	1/2/4	1
5	Lit/Journalism	INT	1/2/4	1
6	Philosophy/Religion	INT	1/2/4	1

SCIENCE SKILLS

7	Basic Science	1/2INT	2/N	—
8	Astronomy/Math/Physics	INT	2/3/6	7
9	Biology/Botany/Zoology	INT	2/3/6	7
10	Chemistry	INT	2/3/6	7
11	Engineer/Civ/Elec/Mech	INT	2/3/6	7

ADVANCED DEGREES

12	Law	INT	2/3/6	4
13	Medicine	INT	2/4/8	9
14	Surgeon	DEX	3/5/10	13

* Note: None of the Education skills have defaults.

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