

GURPS®

Fourth Edition

POWER-UPS™ 3

TALENTS



Written by **SEAN PUNCH**

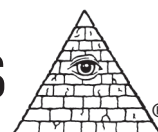
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INTRODUCTION

An important game concept introduced when **GURPS** evolved from Third Edition to Fourth Edition was *Talents* (see pp. B89-91). A Talent is an aptitude for a set of closely related skills; it effectively increases a character's attribute scores where those skills are concerned. Unlike raising DX, IQ, HT, Will, or Per directly – which would improve his abilities in an all-around sense – buying a Talent makes him a “natural” at a collection of tasks that are on some level linked.

Thus, Talents are above all else characterization aids. They help explain why a hero went into his chosen profession or sideline, or adopted a particular lifestyle or outlook. Moreover, the fact that Talents outnumber attributes and secondary characteristics means that buying one affords an adventurer better odds of standing out among his peers than would, say, improving DX or IQ.

In support of this goal, the basic rules for Talents explain how to create *new* ones – and **GURPS** writers have been hard at work doing exactly that. The 10 examples in the **Basic Set** are now merely a drop in the bucket! **GURPS Power-Ups 3: Talents** collects *all* of the Talents published so far, clarifies how they work, and introduces several optional rules related to them. Even the GM who doesn't allow any Talent in this catalog should find the worked examples and added detail valuable when designing his own.

PUBLICATION HISTORY

Power-Ups 3: Talents contains *every* Talent published for **GURPS** as of July 2011, including those in the **Basic Set**;

each entry gives its original source. This work strives to be complete, listing even Talents that are nearly identical, and expanding on the original text as needed to clarify, generalize, or address errata. It also offers some *new* Talents – mainly out-takes from early drafts and previews of works in progress. This list isn't meant to stem the flow; future **GURPS** projects will bring even more Talents!

The only deliberate omission is *power* Talents (see p. B255 and **GURPS Powers**). While these are related to the traits defined on pp. B89-91 in the sense that both grant bonuses to success rolls (whence the similarity in name), they aren't identical. Power Talents affect the use of advantages, not skills.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean “Dr. Kromm” Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985, ended up the **GURPS** Line Editor in 1995, and has engineered rules for almost every **GURPS** product since. He developed, edited, or wrote dozens of **GURPS Third Edition** projects between 1995 and 2002. In 2004, he produced the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition** with David Pulver. Since then, he has created **GURPS Powers** (with Phil Masters), **GURPS Martial Arts** (with Peter Dell'Orto), and the **GURPS Action, GURPS Dungeon Fantasy, and GURPS Power-Ups** series . . . and the list keeps growing. Sean has been a gamer since 1979. His non-gaming interests include cinema, cooking, and wine. He lives in Montréal, Québec with his wife, Bonnie, and their two cats, Banshee and Zephyra.

About GURPS

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Bibliographies. Many of our books have extensive bibliographies, and we're putting them online – with links to let you buy the resources that interest you! Go to each book's web page and look for the “Bibliography” link.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all **GURPS** releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

CHAPTER ONE

TALENTS

First, let's review how Talents work, in a little more detail than the **Basic Set** offers.

Benefits of Talent

A Talent come in *levels*, and grants three benefits:

1. A bonus of +1 per level with all of the skills listed under it. This effectively raises attribute scores for the purpose of *those skills only*. It applies no matter what attribute the skill is used with. Even default use enjoys this benefit (for more thoughts on defaults, see *Defaults and Talents*, below) – although if you *only* want to boost defaults, it's cheaper to buy Jack of All Trades (p. 11) or the Dabbler perk (**GURPS Power-Ups 2**, p. 16).

2. A bonus of +1 per level on all reaction rolls made by anyone in a position to notice the Talent, *if he would be impressed by such aptitude* (GM's decision). This applies only after demonstrating the Talent – normally by using the affected skills. The GM may opt to replace this element; see *Alternative Benefits* (pp. 18-19) for details.

3. A reduction of 10% per level in the time needed to learn the affected skills in play, regardless of *how* they're learned; e.g., Animal Friend 2 enables you to acquire animal-related skills in 80% of the usual time. This never affects the skills' *point cost*.

Defaults and Talents

When skills that enjoy Talent bonuses are used in default calculations, always do the math and determine the point costs *without* the Talent level, and then add the Talent bonus at the end. The Talent only adds to the skills listed for it – never to skills that default to those skills, unless they're noted under the Talent as well (in which case, adding Talent as the final step ensures that it isn't counted twice).

Example: Hamid has IQ 12, Artificer 2, and Electronics Repair/TL8 (Sensors) (A) IQ+5 [12]-17. This skill level includes the +2 for Talent. If he decides to learn Electronics Repair/TL8 (Surveillance) from its Sensors default, first he subtracts Talent from his Sensors level, giving him IQ+3 level (15); then he applies the -4 default penalty, which yields IQ-1 level (11); and finally he improves his new skill from there. If he invests 1 point, he raises Surveillance to IQ level (12). Only at the end does he add his Talent bonus, giving him IQ+2 level (14).

If Hamid wants to learn Electronics Operation/TL8 (Sensors), which defaults to Electronics Repair/TL8 (Sensors) at -5, Artificer is of no help, as Electronics Operation isn't one of its skills! He doesn't start with his modified Electronics Repair skill of 17, apply the -5, and improve his new skill from 12. Rather, his default level is his unmodified Electronics Repair skill of 15, -5. That's just 10, which is too low to save him any points.

Limits on Talent Level

The standard limit on Talent is four levels. However, Talents *can* overlap to give skill bonuses in excess of +4. If you possess two levels in each of three Talents that influence Singing, then you get +6 to Singing, even though you could get only +4 from any one of those Talents. Reaction and learning-speed bonuses can't exceed those for four levels of Talent, though.

For exceptions to these rules, see *Extended Talents* (pp. 21-22)

Cost of Talent

A Talent's cost depends on the size of the group of skills affected:

Small (6 or fewer related skills): *5 points/level*.

Medium (7 to 12 related skills): *10 points/level*.

Large (13 or more related skills*): *15 points/level*.

* There's no hard upper limit, but a Talent that benefits 18+ skills is probably *too* broad.

If a Talent affects a skill that has multiple specialties, treat all of its specialties as *one* skill for the purpose of calculating cost. However, many Talents benefit only *some* specialties – those that suit the Talent! There's no discount for this, and a

Talent never improves specialties that fall outside its area; subtract Talent before finding your default skill with specialties it doesn't cover, and don't add it back at the end. For additional important notes on skill counts, see *Counting Your Blessings* (p. 5).

No Talent should encompass wildcard skills (p. B175). Wildcards are an *alternative* to Talents. Both share the goal of using a single trait to improve many related skills at once. Including such a skill in a Talent would be superfluous and possibly unbalanced.

A Talent's skill list is fixed when the Talent is created. However, the GM might make exceptions for new skills he invents or allows from later **GURPS** supplements. If so, then for simplicity's sake, cost per level doesn't change.

The GM who feels that broad cost bands are unfair should check out the optional but more complex alternative of *Smooth Talent Cost* (p. 25).

Racial Talents

As explained on p. B452, a Talent may be restricted to members of a particular race.

This means that the affected skills qualify as “closely related” only in the context of that race’s neurology, physiology, or evolutionary niche – or perhaps its *dramatic* role. Such Talents sometimes suit closely related races, but ask the GM before buying one for a PC of another race.

Player-Created Talents

The GM doesn’t *have* to permit players to create Talents, and even if he does, he has the final say on which such creations are allowed in his campaign. The player must state the aptitude in plain language – “a gift for sports,” “a mind for taking things apart,” “fast hands,” etc. – and propose the affected

skills and the people influenced by the reaction bonus. The GM may add skills that he feels are fitting or remove ones that seem doubtful, possibly altering the cost per level. He can also adjust cost by fiat; for instance, he might price a Talent that benefits the five most useful skills in his campaign at 10 points/level instead of 5 points/level. Finally, he has the right to reject a proposed Talent that doesn’t seem like a believable inborn knack given the character’s race and the campaign’s realism level, genre, etc.; he should *definitely* do so for one that’s nothing but a way to save points on skills whose only relationship is “skills I plan to learn” (although that’s sometimes acceptable when using *Talents as Training*, p. 25).

Counting Your Blessings

Any skill that gets its own heading in the **Basic Set** – even just a pointer (as for Airshipman on p. B174, Axe/Mace on p. B179, and Captivate on p. B183) – counts as *one* skill when applying *Cost of Talent* (p. 4) and *Smooth Talent Cost* (p. 25). There are wrinkles, though:

Specialties: If a skill has specialties (pp. B169-170), then no matter how many there are or how many the Talent affects (one, some, all), it counts as *one* skill. Specialties are easy to distinguish – they don’t get their own headings, but are instead discussed under a master heading that’s marked with a dagger (†). Details typically follow the words “you *must* specialize.” While Talents mostly prescribe required specialties, all this is equally valid for any *optional* specialties specified.

Expert Skills, Hobby Skills, and Sports: Expert Skills (pp. B193-194) overlap so much with other skills, and Hobby Skills (p. B200) and Sports (p. B222) have such limited game utility, that each of these classes is considered a single skill with specialties.

Grouped Skills: Some skills have brief headings without description and are actually described beneath a collective heading; see *Grouped Skills* (p. B169). Examples include Acrobatics (p. B174), Crewman (p. B185), Entrallment (pp. B191-192), Environment Suit (p. B192), Melee

Weapon (pp. B208-209), and Professional Skill (p. B215). These usually count as *separate* skills. An exception is when a Talent affects several of these but few PCs will learn more than one. In that case, treat them as *one* skill; e.g., the way Superior Equilibrioception (p. 16) handles Acrobatics, Aerobatics, and Aquabatics.

Either/Or Skills: Where different skills fill the same role in different campaigns, and won’t normally coexist, a Talent may list them on an “either/or” basis, counting them as *one* skill; e.g., Psientist (p. 15) and its handling of Expert Skill (Psionics) and Hidden Lore (Psionics).

Qualified Bonuses: If a skill only *sometimes* enjoys the Talent’s bonus, treat the bonus as an alternative benefit (pp. 18-19), not as one of the Talent’s skills; this is how Street-Smart (p. 16) handles Tracking in cities (Tracking is primarily a wilderness skill!), and how Seafarer (p. 14) treats Carousing and Streetwise in ports (most territories have more interior than coast). However, if the condition is merely a reminder to use appropriate tools or methods, then the skill counts. For instance, Forced Entry is a full skill for Mr. Smash (p. 13), because a “swung two-handed weapon” – like the classic crowbar – is standard (but the Intimidation bonus is conditional, as weapons often aren’t handy in social situations).

THE TALENTS

These are listed in alphabetical order, irrespective of source and type. Two symbols indicate special cases:

- * – The Talent bears special GM scrutiny. It might bend the rules, be so genre-specific that it doesn’t suit all campaigns, or aid supernatural or cinematic skills that aren’t permitted in every setting.
- † – The Talent is racial. See *Racial Talents* (pp. 4-5) for details. Such Talents implicitly bear the previous mark, too; the GM must decide what races appear in the campaign and rule on who (if anyone) may possess Talents for races other than their own.

In addition to name, point cost, skills affected, and reaction bonus, each entry gives the following details:

Alternative Benefit: Proposed replacement for the reaction bonus if using *Alternative Benefits* (pp. 18-19). This doesn’t apply *unless* that optional rule is in effect, and is *instead of* (not *as well as*) a reaction bonus. Where “and/or” appears, the GM decides whether one or both benefits pertain in his campaign.

Alternative Cost: The point cost if using *Smooth Talent Cost* (p. 25) instead of standard pricing.

Source: The place where the Talent was first published, for readers seeking additional context. New Talents lack this information.

Notes: Comments on or conditions that apply to the Talent.

Academic

5 points/level

Public Speaking, Research, Speed-Reading, Teaching, and Writing.

Reaction Bonus: Students and teachers.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to any roll that notes a bonus for Eidetic Memory (p. B51), including the recall roll for Speed-Reading.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Alien Friend

5 points/level

Diplomacy, Expert Skill (Xenology), and all specialties of Anthropology, History, and Psychology that pertain to *alien* cultures and races.

Reaction Bonus: Aliens.

Alternative Benefit: None. This Talent represents an innate curiosity, respect, or *je ne sais quoi* that's best handled as a general reaction bonus from aliens.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Space**.

Allure

5 points/level

Dancing, Erotic Art, Makeup, Sex Appeal, and Singing.

Reaction Bonus: Anyone attracted to your specific combination of race and sex; people who might employ you as an actress, courtesan, or model.

Alternative Benefit: None. Allure grants a mix of grace and ideal features that affects those who find your "type" appealing – not unlike specialized Appearance. The reaction bonus is fitting.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Sources: **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11** and **GURPS Fantasy**.

Animal Friend

5 points/level

Animal Handling, Falconry, Packing, Riding, Teamster, and Veterinary.

Reaction Bonus: All ordinary animals.

Alternative Benefit: None. Some individuals' body language, scent, or whatever is clearly more appealing to animals, and a reaction bonus models this ideally.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Basic Set**.

Notes: Compare Beastmaster.

Antiquary

5 points/level

Architecture, Connoisseur, Heraldry, History, Literature, and Research.

Reaction Bonus: Devotees of the old and beautiful.

Alternative Benefit: -1/level less-severe penalties from *Time* (p. B176) when dealing with old stuff, and/or from *Tech-Level*

Modifiers (p. B168) when dealing with sciences of a *lower* TL (e.g., Antiquary 3 lets someone with Chemistry/TL8 use Chemistry/TL4 at -4 instead of -7).

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Horror**.

Artificer

10 points/level

Armoury, Carpentry, Electrician, Electronics Repair, Engineer, Machinist, Masonry, Mechanic, and Smith.

Reaction Bonus: Anyone for whom you do work.

Alternative Benefit: Success with an *appropriate* skill listed for this Talent lets you improvise equipment for other skills that's good enough to cut -1/level from the penalty for being improvised (p. B345). When rolling on the *Enigmatic Device Table* (pp. B478-479) or making any similar unskilled roll to figure out tech, apply +1/level instead.

Alternative Cost: 9 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Basic Set**.

Bard

5 points/level

Heraldry, Literature, Musical Influence, Poetry, Public Speaking, and Singing.

Reaction Bonus: Audiences and fellow bards.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to the first Influence roll (p. B359) of any kind made on an audience member (or several of them as a group) after a *successful* performance.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Sources: **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11** (as "Bard-Lore") and **GURPS Fantasy**.

Beastmaster*

10 points/level

Animal Handling, Disguise (Animals), Falconry, Flight, Hidden Lore (Lycanthropes), Mimicry (Animal Sounds and Bird Calls), Mount, Naturalist, Packing, Riding, Teamster, and Veterinary.

Reaction Bonus: All animals, however extraordinary.

Alternative Benefit: None. As noted for Animal Friend, a reaction bonus from animals is an entirely appropriate benefit for such a Talent.

Alternative Cost: 12 points/level.

Notes: This enhanced version of Animal Friend adds skills allowing a deeper grasp of and even impersonating beasts, and tacks on Flight and Mount for those who can *become* animals. It's intended for fantasy druids and heroes with similar abilities.

Born Entertainer

5 points/level

Acting, Dancing, Performance, Public Speaking, Singing, and Stage Combat.

Reaction Bonus: Crowds – they love you!

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to the first Influence roll (p. B359) of any kind made on an audience member (or several of them as a group) after a *successful* performance.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Born Sailor

See *Nautical Talents* (pp. 13-14).

Born Soldier

See *Military Talents* (pp. 12-13).

Born Spacer

5 points/level

Aerobatics, Free Fall, Navigation (Space), Piloting (any spacecraft), Spacer, and Vacc Suit.

Reaction Bonus: Professional spacers.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to ST to figure Move when pushing off in zero gravity (p. B350), and/or -1/level less-severe penalties from *Familiarity* (p. B169) when dealing with unfamiliar spacecraft systems of any kind.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Source: *Transhuman Space: Changing Times*.

Born Tactician

See *Military Talents* (pp. 12-13).

Born to Be Wired*

See *Computer Talents* (pp. 8-9).

The Force is strong with this one.

– Darth Vader,
in *Star Wars IV:
A New Hope*

Born War-Leader

See *Military Talents* (pp. 12-13).

Business Acumen

10 points/level

Accounting, Administration, Economics, Finance, Gambling, Market Analysis, Merchant, and Propaganda.

Reaction Bonus: Anyone with whom you do business.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to all rolls to find hirelings or jobs (pp. B517-518), and/or to Will rolls to resist others' attempts to use Influence skills to scam money.

Alternative Cost: 8 points/level.

Source: *GURPS Basic Set*.

Chi-Related Talents*

Several published Talents aid exotic skills customarily explained as stemming from control of *chi*, *ki*, *prana*, or another mystical force within the body. In theory, they could all coexist; in practice, that would get confusing. The GM should choose just the one or two that best suit the campaign.

Chi Talent*

15 points/level

Autohypnosis, Blind Fighting, Body Control, Breaking Blow, Breath Control, Esoteric Medicine, Flying Leap, Immovable Stance, Invisibility Art, Kiai, Light Walk, Mental Strength, Mind Block, Parry Missile Weapons, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets, Push, Throwing Art, and Zen Archery.

Reaction Bonus and Alternative Benefit: None. This broad Talent needs no help to be useful!

Alternative Cost: 20 points/level. While high, this *might* be fair given that the skills span IQ, DX, HT, Will, and Per.

Source: *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1*.

Notes: This all-inclusive Talent is meant for campaigns where there are many exotic skills – including several classes of spells. It's intended to be balanced against the likes of Magery and Power Investiture. In settings where the *only* remarkable skills are those listed above, other chi-related Talents work better, as they allow stronger differentiation between characters.

Forceful Chi*

15 points/level

Breaking Blow, Erotic Art, Flying Leap, Hypnotic Hands, Hypnotism, Invisibility Art, Kiai, Power Blow, Precognitive Parry, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets, Push, Throwing Art, and Zen Archery.

Reaction Bonus: Honorable opponents, those who practice “hard” or “external” martial-arts styles (including potential students and masters), and lovers (past or present).

Alternative Benefit: +1/level on rolls to be heard (compare Penetrating Voice, p. B101), and to Intimidation attempts made after using one of the affected skills.

Alternative Cost: 14 points/level.

Source: *GURPS Martial Arts*.

Inner Balance*

15 points/level

Autohypnosis, Blind Fighting, Body Control, Body Language, Body Sense, Breath Control, Dreaming, Immovable Stance, Light Walk, Lizard Climb, Meditation, Mental Strength, Mind Block, and Sensitivity.

Reaction Bonus: Pacifists, ascetics, and those who practice “soft” or “internal” martial-arts styles.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to resist ordinary sickness (colds, seasickness, etc., but not magical plagues, disease curses, and the like).

Alternative Cost: 14 points/level.

Source: *GURPS Martial Arts*.

Ninja Talent*

5 points/level

Blind Fighting, Hypnotism, Invisibility Art, Light Walk, and Mental Strength.

Reaction Bonus and Alternative Benefit: None. As Ninja Talent cheaply improves five powerful skills, there's no compelling reason to make it even better.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 12*.

Notes: In *Dungeon Fantasy 12*, this Talent is priced at 10 points/level because it comes bundled with a power Talent that would cost 5 points/level on its own.

Strong Chi*

5 points/level

Breaking Blow, Flying Leap, Power Blow, Pressure Points, and Pressure Secrets.

Reaction Bonus: Other martial artists, especially potential masters or students.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level on rolls to be heard (compare Penetrating Voice, p. B101), and to Intimidation attempts made after using one of the affected skills.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Action 3.**

Notes: Strong Chi is a stripped-down version of Forceful Chi intended for campaigns where the only superhuman abilities are *flashy* martial-arts skills. If the GM allows both Talents, martial artists can have one or the other – never both.

Chi Talent*

See *Chi-Related Talents* (pp. 7-8).

Circuit Sense

5 points/level

Electrician, Electronics Operation, Electronics Repair, and Engineer (Electrical and Electronics).

Reaction Bonus: Anyone for whom you use your skills.

Alternative Benefit: -1/level less-severe penalties from *Familiarity* (p. B169) – which can run to -10 in certain cases (see p. B189) – when using any skill to operate unfamiliar gear that runs on electricity.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Action 1.**

*There is no substitute
for talent. Industry and all
its virtues are of no avail.
– Aldous Huxley*

Close to Heaven*

5 points/level

Exorcism, Meditation, Religious Ritual, and Theology, and *theurgic* specialties of Ritual Magic and Symbol Drawing.

Reaction Bonus: Any fellow “religious professional.”

Alternative Benefit: A roll at IQ-4, +1/level of Close to Heaven, to notice religious omens, blessed items, and so forth.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Sources: **GURPS Banestorm**, **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11**, and **GURPS Monster Hunters 1.**

Notes: Not every campaign features ritual theurgy (divine magic). Even in those that do, it's up to the GM whether such rites use Ritual Magic and Symbol Drawing – and if so, which specialties.

Close to Hell*

5 points/level

Exorcism, Hidden Lore (Demons), Occultism, Psychology (Demons), Religious Ritual, and Theology.

Reaction Bonus: Demons!

Alternative Benefit: None. A reaction bonus from demons is rare and interesting enough to be worthy in its own right. It probably reflects something in the soul . . .

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11.**

Notes: In campaigns with ritual demonology, this Talent may also benefit the relevant specialties of Ritual Magic and Symbol Drawing, raising cost to 10 points/level.

Close to the Earth*

5 points/level

Hidden Lore (Elementals, Faeries, and Nature Spirits), Naturalist, Religious Ritual, Theology, and Weather Sense.

Reaction Bonus: Anybody who greatly respects or worships nature, including druids and faeries.

Alternative Benefit: A roll at IQ-4, +1/level of Close to the Earth, to sense disturbances at work in nature – from weather-control spells to mutant insects.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11.**

Notes: This Talent is aimed at nature-worshipping druids and shamans in fantasy settings.

Clown

10 points/level

Acrobatics, Dancing, Fire Eating, Hobby Skill (Juggling), Makeup, Mimicry, Performance, Singing, Sleight of Hand, and Ventriloquism.

Reaction Bonus: Audiences, circus performers, vaudevillians, and fellow fools.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to the first Influence roll (p. B359) of any kind made on an audience member (or several of them as a group) after a *successful* performance.

Alternative Cost: 10 points/level.

Computer Talents

Four very similar Talents give bonuses to computer-related skills. If these coexist in a campaign, the GM should consider making each character choose just one.

Born to Be Wired*

5 points/level

Computer Hacking, Computer Operation, Computer Programming, Cryptography, Electronics Repair (Computers), and Expert Skill (Computer Security).

Reaction Bonus: Hackers; people buying stock in your dot-com.

Alternative Benefit: -1/level less-severe penalties from *Familiarity* (p. B169) for unfamiliar computer equipment, and/or success at Computer Hacking or Computer Programming lets you improvise code that removes -1/level from the penalty for not having proper software for a task that requires it (p. B345).

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Sources: **GURPS Action 1** and **GURPS Monster Hunters 4**.

Computer Wizard

5 points/level

Computer Operation, Computer Programming, Electronics Operation (Communications and Media), Electronics Repair (Computers), Expert Skill (Computer Security), and Psychology (AI).

Reaction Bonus: Computer professionals and AIs.

Alternative Benefit: As for Born to Be Wired (above).

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Source: **Transhuman Space: Changing Times**.

Cyberneticist*

5 points/level

Computer Hacking, Computer Operation, Computer Programming, Computer Programming (AI), and Electronics Repair (Computers).

Reaction Bonus: Other computer professionals, AI systems, and robots.

Alternative Benefit: None. A reaction bonus from AIs and robots is interesting and useful – perhaps indicating a mind that thinks more like these entities than like a meat brain!

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Space**.

Evil Computer Talent†

5 points/level

Computer Hacking, Computer Operation, Computer Programming, Cryptography, Expert Skill (Computer Security), and Research.

Reaction Bonus and Alternative Benefit: None.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Horror**.

Notes: This is a “racial” Talent for evil computers.

Computer Wizard

See *Computer Talents* (pp. 8-9).

Craftiness

5 points/level

Acting, Camouflage, Disguise, Holdout, Shadowing, and Stealth.

Reaction Bonus: None, since the entire point is not letting people know you’re a sneaky weasel!

Alternative Benefit: On the other hand, it wouldn’t be unbalanced to have Craftiness help the talented one second-guess *other* sneaks by giving +1/level in Contests against the above skills.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Sources: **GURPS Action 1**, **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11**, **GURPS Monster Hunters 1**, and **GURPS Psis**.

Cultural Chameleon

5 points/level

Anthropology, Diplomacy, Gesture, Linguistics, Psychology, and Sociology.

Reaction Bonus: People from outside your culture, when met in their *own* lands.

Alternative Benefit: None. Like Alien Friend (p. 6), the high concept here is innate curiosity or respect; thus, a general reaction bonus from foreigners encountered at home is rather fitting.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.



Cunning Folk

10 points/level

Animal Handling, Fortune-Telling, Herb Lore, Naturalist, Occultism, Poisons, Veterinary, and Weather Sense.

Reaction Bonus: Local peasantry, clients, and acolytes.

Alternative Benefit: A roll at IQ-4, +1/level of Cunning Folk, to notice anything odd – curses, blights, faeries in the basement, etc. – that happens to animals, crops, or people in an area where you’ve lived for at least (6 - Cunning Folk level) months.

Alternative Cost: 8 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Horror**.

Cyberneticist*

See *Computer Talents* (pp. 8-9).

Devotion

5 points/level

Autohypnosis, Exorcism, Meditation, and Religious Ritual.

Reaction Bonus: Members of your faith, and those sympathetic to it.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level on Will rolls to resist “evil influences” from adversaries of your faith – be these Influence skills intended to tempt or demoralize you, or genuine supernatural curses.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Sources: **GURPS Fantasy** and **GURPS Horror**.

Driver's Reflexes

5 points/level

Boating, Driving, Piloting, and Submarine.

Reaction Bonus: Passengers; gamblers betting on you at the Grand Prix.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level on Per rolls to notice dangers in the path of your ride: running children, oncoming vehicles, landmines . . .

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Sources: **GURPS Action 1** and **GURPS Monster Hunters 4**.

Dungeon Artificer*

5 points/level

Alchemy, Armoury, Engineer (Gadgets), Fast-Draw (Gadget), Scrounging, and Traps.

Reaction Bonus: Potential buyers of your creations.

Alternative Benefit: Success with an *appropriate* skill listed for this Talent lets you scrounge or improvise equipment for other skills that's good enough to cut -1/level from the penalty for being improvised (p. B345). Apply +1/level or -1/level, whichever would be more beneficial, to rolls to avoid ill effects from mysterious artifacts when examining them.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 4**.

Elder Gift†

5 points/level

Alchemy, Hidden Lore, Occultism, and Thaumatology.

Reaction Bonus: Elder Things (a.k.a. Things Man Was Not Meant To Know).

Alternative Benefit: None. If the Things saw fit to gift you with knowledge, then they probably really do like you. Or to be precise, they consider you *useful*. Either way, that's a reaction bonus.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 3**.

Notes: This racial Talent for dark ones and elder-spawn *might* also suit humans who serve the Things.

Empath

5 points/level

Body Language, Detect Lies, Diplomacy, Fortune-Telling, and Psychology.

Reaction Bonus: None, but the alternative benefit *always* applies.

Alternative Benefit: You can use the special IQ roll described for Empathy (p. B51), but in this case, the roll is at IQ-4, +1/level of Empath.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: Pyramid #3/21: Cyberpunk.

Notes: This Talent was originally intended to replace Sensitive and Empathy. If used alongside those advantages, it *still* adds to the IQ roll for them.

Evil Computer Talent†

See *Computer Talents* (pp. 8-9).

Explorer

5 points/level

Area Knowledge, Cartography, Geography, Mathematics (Surveying), and Navigation.

Reaction Bonus: Fellow explorers; anybody funding an exploratory voyage.

Alternative Benefit: -1/level less-severe total penalties from *Distance* and *Area Class* (both p. B176) on any skill to which these apply.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Forceful Chi*

See *Chi-Related Talents* (pp. 7-8).

Forest Guardian†

5 points/level

Bow, Camouflage, Fast-Draw (Arrow), Stealth, and Survival (Woodlands).

Reaction Bonus: Druids, faeries, and bunnies.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to rolls made to notice intruders, traps, etc. in any woodland area where you've lived for at least (6 - Forest Guardian level) months.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 3**.

Notes: This is a racial Talent for (stereotyped fantasy) elves.

Gifted Artist

5 points/level

Artist, Jeweler, Leatherworking, Photography, and Sewing.

Reaction Bonus: Anyone buying or critiquing your work.

Alternative Benefit: None. Flair *does* matter more than technical proficiency to those who seek actual art, and a reaction bonus is the best way to represent this.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Basic Set**.

Goodwife

5 points/level

Cooking, Diagnosis, Gardening, Housekeeping, and Sewing.

Reaction Bonus: People for whom you keep house, prospective spouses, and other housewives.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to all *default* rolls (as for Jack of All Trades, p. 11) made *in your home* to keep it clean, safe, and in good repair – from Carpentry to secure a loose floorboard to Axe/Mace to swing a skillet at a housebreaker.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Fantasy**.

Green Thumb

5 points/level

Biology, Farming, Gardening, Herb Lore, and Naturalist.

Reaction Bonus: Gardeners and sentient plants.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to rolls (usually against HT) made by plants in your care to survive disease, drought, etc.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Basic Set**.

Halfling Marksmanship†

5 points/level

Bow, Sling, Throwing, and Thrown Weapon (Dart, Knife, and Stick).

Reaction Bonus: Archers and other ranged weapon users (and, in **Dungeon Fantasy**, mobsters).

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to all *default* rolls (as for Jack of All Trades, box) for Armoury, Connoisseur, Merchant, etc. to maintain your weapons of the affected types, evaluate found ones, or get good deals on those you buy or sell.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Sources: **GURPS Banestorm** (as “Halfling Ranged Weapon Talent”) and **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 3**.

Notes: This is a racial Talent for halflings.

Healer

10 points/level

Diagnosis, Esoteric Medicine, First Aid, Pharmacy, Physician, Physiology, Psychology, Surgery, and Veterinary.

Reaction Bonus: Patients, both past and present.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to HT rolls made by your patient to recover from one specific complaint *if* you treat him full-time for that problem, to the exclusion of other patients and ailments.

Alternative Cost: 9 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Basic Set**.

Notes: In modern settings, the GM may want to add Electronics Operation (Medical) and/or Expert Skill (Epidemiology).

Hot Pilot

5 points/level

Gunner, Navigation (Air and Space), and Piloting.

Reaction Bonus: Other pilots.

Alternative Benefit: -1/level less-severe penalties from *Familiarity* (p. B169) when dealing with unfamiliar systems installed in any kind in a vehicle for which you know Piloting.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Space**.

Impersonator

5 points/level

Acting, Body Language, Disguise, Mimicry, Savoir-Faire, and Streetwise.

Reaction Bonus: None! The whole point is that you *don't* stand out.

Alternative Benefit: Still, it might be fair to let the Talent help detect *other* copycats by giving the impersonator +1/level in Contests against the above skills.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Inner Balance*

See *Chi-Related Talents* (pp. 7-8).

Intuitive Admiral

See *Military Talents* (pp. 12-13).

Jack of All Trades*

10 points/level

This Talent is singled out for special treatment because it breaks most of the rules for Talents. It affects *all* skills you don't actually know but that permit a DX, IQ, HT, Will, or Per default. Whenever you attempt such a default roll, add Jack of All Trades to your effective level.

Reaction Bonus and Alternative Benefit: None.

Source: **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11**.

Notes: You may purchase at most *three* levels of this Talent – not four. While it boosts defaults, it doesn't make *learning* skills any cheaper or faster. Its point cost wasn't calculated using *Cost of Talent* (p. 4) or *Smooth Talent Cost* (p. 25), but from conditional attribute bonuses: DX +1 to +3 (Only for defaults, -80%) [4/level]; IQ +1 to +3 (Only for defaults, -80%) [4/level]; HT +1 to +3 (Only for defaults, -80%) [2/level]. As the IQ increase raises Will and Per, it affects skills based on those scores, too.

Intuitive Statesman

10 points/level

Administration, Current Affairs (Headline News, People, and Politics), Diplomacy, Economics, Expert Skill (Political Science), Law, Leadership, Politics, Propaganda, and Public Speaking.

Reaction Bonus: Political parties seeking candidates; anyone who put you in power (campaign contributors, voters, etc.).

Alternative Benefit: +1/level on any Influence roll made with the specific goal of being chosen over another person for a favorable job or posting – or to cover up (not correct or retry!) a failure with one of the Talent's skills.

Alternative Cost: 10 points/level.

Mariner

See *Nautical Talents* (pp. 13-14).

Master Builder

5 points/level

Architecture, Carpentry, Engineer, Forced Entry, and Masonry.

Reaction Bonus: Workmen on your projects; prospective employers.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level on rolls to avoid common workplace disasters (Dodge rolls against falling masonry, DX rolls not to step on protruding nails, etc.), even when these things are exploited as deliberate traps.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Fantasy**.

Mathematical Ability

10 points/level

Accounting, Astronomy, Cryptography, Engineer, Finance, Market Analysis, Mathematics, and Physics.

Reaction Bonus: Engineers and scientists.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level in Contests against Influence skills, Gambling, Merchant, Strategy, etc. used to deceive you about *numbers* – be these counts, odds, or dimensions. This always aids Observation vs. visual deceptions (e.g., shuffling around troops to make them hard to count) and Detect Lies vs. verbal ones (e.g., covering up embezzlement with bafflelegab).

Alternative Cost: 8 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Basic Set**.



Memetics*

10 points/level

Brainwashing, Diplomacy, Expert Skill (Memetics), Fast-Talk, Interrogation, Leadership, Merchant, Politics, Propaganda, Psychology, Sociology, and Teaching.

Reaction Bonus: Anyone else trained in memetics who can observe you using it (but note that some uses of these skills will be too subtle to observe!).

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to *resist* Brainwashing, Fast-Talk, and Propaganda. The GM may even extend this to Enthralment skills (pp. B191-192) and Musical Influence (pp. B210-211).

Alternative Cost: 12 points/level.

Source: **Transhuman Space: Changing Times**.

Notes: The assumption in **Changing Times** is that the brain is amenable to being “hacked” via external messages, but Memetics could just as easily represent an intuitive, practical grasp of psychology.

Mesmerist*

10 points/level

Autohypnosis, Brainwashing, Captivate, Gesture, Hypnotism, Intimidation, Musical Influence, Persuade, Suggest, and Sway Emotions.

Reaction Bonus: The foolish and weak-minded.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to *resist* any of the affected skills.

Alternative Cost: 10 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Horror**.

Military Talents

Several overlapping Talents intended for military personnel have been published. The GM should consider limiting each character to just one of these.

Born Soldier

5 points/level

Leadership, Savoir-Faire (Military), Scrounging, Soldier, and Tactics.

Reaction Bonus: Other soldiers.

Alternative Benefit: -1/level to the odds of *impersonal* battlefield disasters affecting you. For instance, if your chance of stepping on a landmine or being blown to bits by a random artillery shell is 8 or less on 3d, Born Soldier 2 reduces this to 6 or less.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Sources: **GURPS Martial Arts: Fairbairn Close Combat Systems** and **GURPS SEALs in Vietnam**.

Born Tactician

10 points/level

Expert Skill (Military Science), History (Military), Intelligence Analysis, Leadership, Savoir-Faire (Military), Soldier, Strategy, and Tactics.

Reaction Bonus: Anyone you serve with or command.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to your side's roll for initiative (see *Partial Surprise*, p. B393), provided that you are the leader.

Alternative Cost: 8 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Traveller: Interstellar Wars**.

Born War-Leader

5 points/level

Intelligence Analysis, Leadership, Savoir-Faire (Military), Strategy, and Tactics.

Reaction Bonus: Military officers, tribal war-leaders, soldiers, and other professional warriors.

Alternative Benefit: As for Born Tactician (above).

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Sources: **GURPS Banestorm**, **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1**, and **GURPS Monster Hunters 1**.

Intuitive Admiral

10 points/level

Expert Skill (Military Science), History (Military), Intelligence Analysis, Leadership, Savoir-Faire (Military), Shiphandling (Spaceship and Starship), Spacer, and Strategy (Space).

Reaction Bonus: Anyone you serve with or command.

Alternative Benefit: As for Born Tactician (p. 12).

Alternative Cost: 8 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Traveller: Interstellar Wars.**

Notes: This Talent assumes a *space* admiral. A Talent for a *sea* admiral would change the Shiphandling specialties to Ship and Submarine, and replace Spacer with Seamanship and Submariner. If the setting features both, differentiate them as Intuitive Admiral (Sea) and Intuitive Admiral (Space).

Mr. Smash

5 points/level

Polearm, Two-Handed Axe/Mace, Two-Handed Flail, and Two-Handed Sword – and Forced Entry rolls made with swung two-handed weapons.

Reaction Bonus: None, but the alternative benefit *always* applies.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to Intimidation rolls when somebody is at your mercy and it would be trivial to splatter him using a suitable weapon.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11.**

Musical Ability

5 points/level

Group Performance (Conducting), Musical Composition, Musical Influence, Musical Instrument, and Singing.

Reaction Bonus: Anyone listening to or critiquing your work.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to the first Influence roll (p. B359) of any kind made on an audience member (or several of them as a group) after a *successful* performance.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Basic Set.**

Natural Athlete

10 points/level

Bicycling, Breath Control, Hiking, Jumping, Lifting, Running, Skating, Skiing, Sports, Swimming, and Throwing.

Reaction Bonus: Sports fans, coaches, and recruiters.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to HT rolls to avoid or recover from injuries incurred as a direct result of failure with the affected skills (including failed extra effort).

Alternative Cost: 11 points/level.

Natural Copper

10 points/level

Body Language, Criminology, Detect Lies, Intelligence Analysis, Interrogation, Observation, Savoir-Faire (Police), Search, Shadowing, and Streetwise.

Reaction Bonus: Policemen and private investigators.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to casual Per rolls to notice clues when no skill would apply, and to all rolls to use Intuition (p. B63).

Alternative Cost: 10 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Martial Arts: Fairbairn Close Combat Systems.**

Natural Diver

5 points/level

Aquabatics, Diving Suit, Scuba, Submarine (Free-Flooding Sub), and Swimming.

Reaction Bonus: Expert divers and aquatic beings.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to HT for the purposes of finding breath-holding time (pp. B351-352) and rolling to avoid the bends (p. B435), nitrogen narcosis, etc.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **Transhuman Space: Changing Times.**

Natural Scientist

10 points/level

Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Expert Skill (Hydrology and Natural Philosophy), Geology, Mathematics (Applied, Statistics, and Surveying), Metallurgy, Meteorology, Paleontology, Physics, and Physiology.

Reaction Bonus: Other scientists and anybody impressed by “smart people.”

Alternative Benefit: -1/level less-severe total penalties from *Tech-Level Modifiers* (p. B168) and *Familiarity* (p. B169) to employ new gear or concepts *after* successfully examining them with one of the skills above for at least an hour.

Alternative Cost: 11 points/level.

Nautical Talents

Three published Talents have a nautical theme. The GM probably shouldn't permit a character to have more than one of these. Intuitive Admiral (pp. 12-13) could be considered yet another example, but it's sufficiently different in focus that allowing it to accompany one of these Talents would be reasonable.

Born Sailor

5 points/level

Boating, Knot-Tying, Meteorology (or Weather Sense), Navigation (Sea), Seamanship, and Shiphandling.

Reaction Bonus: All sailors.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to HT rolls to avoid seasickness (p. B436), and/or -1/level less-severe penalties from *Familiarity* (p. B169) when dealing with unfamiliar systems of any kind installed in a boat or a ship covered by the Talent's skills.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Sources: **GURPS Martial Arts: Fairbairn Close Combat Systems**, **GURPS SEALs in Vietnam**, and **GURPS Supporting Cast: Age of Sail Pirate Crew.**

Mariner

10 points/level

Boating, Freight Handling, Knot-Tying, Meteorology (or Weather Sense), Navigation (Sea), Seamanship, and Shiphandling.

Reaction Bonus: Seafarers.

Alternative Benefit: As for Born Sailor (above).

Alternative Cost: 7 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Fantasy.**

Notes: The only difference between this and Born Sailor is the addition of Freight Handling. The GM may wish to include further skills to make it a better deal, or add Freight Handling and/or Shiphandling to Seafarer (below) and not use Mariner at all.

Seafarer

10 points/level

Boating, Fishing, Knot-Tying, Meteorology (or Weather Sense), Navigation (Sea), Seamanship, Survival (Island/Beach), Swimming, and Thrown Weapon (Harpoon).

Reaction Bonus: Sailors, pirates, and aquatic races sympathetic to sea travel.

Alternative Benefit: As for Born Sailor (above) – along with +1/level to Carousing and Streetwise rolls made in port towns.

Alternative Cost: 9 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11.**

Ninja Talent*

See *Chi-Related Talents* (pp. 7-8).

Same, But Different

Must Talents avoid overlap at all costs? No! Talents can be as nuanced as character concepts. Published Talents often bear strong similarities; see *Chi-Related Talents* (pp. 7-8), *Computer Talents* (pp. 8-9), *Military Talents* (pp. 12-13), and *Nautical Talents* (pp. 13-14). Where multiple Talents differ minimally – perhaps only in name – the GM ought to treat them as the *same* Talent, either limiting each PC to just one of them or using only one of them in the campaign. Nobody should be permitted to skirt limits on Talent level by exploiting this sort of similarity! But if one Talent is racial and one isn't, or if overlapping Talents bestow reaction bonuses with distinct groups or offer extremely different alternative benefits, the GM may allow them to coexist in the campaign and perhaps on character sheets.

Occultist*

10 points/level

Alchemy, Anthropology, Archaeology, Exorcism, Hidden Lore, History, Linguistics, Literature, Occultism, Research, Ritual Magic, and Thaumatology.

Reaction Bonus: Students of the arcane, gullible college students, and monster-hunters.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to Fright Checks caused by supernatural beings and effects, and by reading sanity-destroying tomes (because you know what to expect).

Alternative Cost: 12 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Horror.**

Outdoorsman

10 points/level

Camouflage, Fishing, Mimicry, Naturalist, Navigation, Survival, and Tracking.

Reaction Bonus: Explorers, nature lovers, and the like.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to HT rolls to avoid harm resulting directly from failure with the affected skills – your shabby

lean-to affords *some* shelter, you realize the berries are poisonous in time to avoid eating *lots*, etc.

Alternative Cost: 7 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Basic Set.**

Notes: At the GM's option, Weather Sense (but *not* high-tech Meteorology) also benefits from this Talent.

Parapsychologist*

5 points/level

Electronics Operation (Medical, Psychotronics, and Scientific), Expert Skill (Psionics), Hypnotism, Occultism, Physics (Paraphysics), and Psychology.

Reaction Bonus: Psis and true believers.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to resist the supernatural abilities of any ghost, psi, etc. you've already *successfully* examined using skills this Talent affects. The GM decides what time and equipment such preparation demands.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Sources: **GURPS Monster Hunters 1** and **GURPS Psis.**

Pickaxe Penchant†

5 points/level

Axe/Mace, Forced Entry, Prospecting, Thrown Weapon (Axe/Mace), and Two-Handed Axe/Mace.

Reaction Bonus: Miners.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to Will for extra effort when digging (p. B357), HT to avoid injury resulting from failure at such efforts, and all rolls to avoid disasters in the mines (e.g., Dodge or DX rolls to avoid being buried alive).

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 3.**

Notes: This is a racial Talent for (hack-and-slash fantasy) dwarves.

Poet

5 points/level

Connoisseur (Literature), Literature, Poetry, Public Speaking, and Writing.

Reaction Bonus: Readers and listeners of your work; literati.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to the first Influence roll (p. B359) of any kind made on an audience member (or several of them as a group) after a *successful* performance.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Horror.**

Pop Culture Maven

5 points/level

Connoisseur (Virtual Reality Arts), Current Affairs (People, Popular Culture, and Sports), and Expert Skill (Memetics).

Reaction Bonus: Obsessive pop culture devotees.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level on any Carousing or Influence roll made with the specific goal of proving that you are one of the "cool" people.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: *Transhuman Space: Changing Times*.

Notes: The above skill list is *Transhuman Space*-specific. A generic Talent might omit the Expert Skill but encompass any Connoisseur, Current Affairs, or Hobby Skill specialty that concerns recent art or entertainment trends.

Psionist*

5 points/level

Hypnotism, Meditation, Mental Strength, Mind Block, and Psychology, and *either* Expert Skill (Psionics) or Hidden Lore (Psionics) – whichever represents general knowledge of psi in the campaign.

Reaction Bonus: Psis.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to self-control rolls for mental disadvantages (natural or induced) if you make a *successful* Meditation, Mental Strength, or Mind Block roll first. Doing this too often is still bad roleplaying (see *Self-Control Rolls*, p. B121); this simply makes such attempts easier when it's vital to try.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 14**.

Notes: This Talent is for the classic iron-willed psi or yogi with control over his own mind; a better grasp of psi is a side effect, not the goal.

Sage

10 points/level

Archaeology, Expert Skill, Geography, Heraldry, Hidden Lore, History, Law, Literature, Occultism, Philosophy, Research, and Theology.

Reaction Bonus: Scholars, students, and people who consult you.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to all IQ-based default rolls (as for Jack of All Trades, p. 11) made to recall general knowledge that falls outside your skills – *not* for practical feats.

Alternative Cost: 12 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Fantasy**.

Seafarer

See *Nautical Talents* (pp. 13-14).

Smooth Operator

15 points/level

Acting, Carousing, Detect Lies, Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, Intimidation, Leadership, Panhandling, Politics, Public Speaking, Savoir-Faire, Sex Appeal, and Streetwise.

Reaction Bonus: Con artists, politicians, salesmen, etc. – but only if you aren't trying to manipulate *them*.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to *resist* any of the affected skills.

Alternative Cost: 13 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Basic Set**.

Social Scientist

10 points/level

Anthropology, Archaeology, Criminology, Economics, Expert Skill (Political Science), Geography, History, Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, and Theology (Comparative).

Reaction Bonus: Social and political thinkers, theorists, and activists.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to Acting, Disguise, and Fast-Talk rolls made for the purpose of passing yourself off as a member of a political or religious group other than your own.

Alternative Cost: 11 points/level.

*Luck is only important insofar
as getting the chance to sell
yourself at the right moment.
After that, you've got to have
talent and know how to use it.*

– Frank Sinatra

Spirit-Talker*

5 points/level

Exorcism, Fortune-Telling (Augury and Dream Interpretation), Hidden Lore (Spirits), Meditation, Occultism, and Theology.

Reaction Bonus: Spirits.

Alternative Benefit: None. Arguably, this isn't a knack for spirit-related skills but a gift for getting along with spirits, which just happens to help those skills. Thus, a reaction bonus is apropos.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11**.

Stalker

5 points/level

Camouflage, Hiking, Navigation (Land), Stealth, and Tracking.

Reaction Bonus: Hunters, trackers, etc.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to Per rolls to keep track of a specific quarry you've *already* spotted using other skills.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Sources: **GURPS Martial Arts: Fairbairn Close Combat Systems** and **GURPS SEALs in Vietnam**.

Strangler†

5 points/level

Brawling, Stealth, Tracking, and Wrestling.

Reaction Bonus: None. The whole point is sneaking up on and throttling your prey!

Alternative Benefit: If four skills seem a little thin, it would be fair to allow +1/level to Per rolls to notice other people sneaking up to within arm's reach.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1**.

Notes: This is a racial Talent for throttlers – big, ogre-like monsters who strangle people.

Street-Smart

5 points/level

Merchant, Panhandling, Scrounging, Shadowing, Streetwise, and Urban Survival.

Reaction Bonus: Shady characters in town.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to rolls to spot inner-city dangers (e.g., muggers stalking you) and street scams in an urban setting, and to Tracking rolls made in built-up areas.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11.**

Notes: Compare Street Smarts (below).

Street Smarts

10 points/level

Area Knowledge (City), Current Affairs (City), Law (City), Merchant, Panhandling, Scrounging, Shadowing, Streetwise, and Urban Survival.

Reaction Bonus: Other street operators.

Alternative Benefit: As for Street-Smart (above).

Alternative Cost: 9 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Thaumatology: Urban Magics.**

Notes: This is an enhanced version of Street-Smart. For Area Knowledge, Current Affairs, and Law, the bonus only applies for cities you've lived in or studied specifically and extensively. When you live in a new city, the bonus begins to apply after months equal to (6 - Street Smarts level).

Strong Chi*

See *Chi-Related Talents* (pp. 7-8).

Super-Spy*

15 points/level

Acting, Current Affairs (Politics), Detect Lies, Disguise, Escape, Fast-Talk, Holdout, Interrogation, Observation, Pick-pocket, Search, Shadowing, Sleight of Hand, Stealth, and Tracking.

Reaction Bonus: All members of the character's organization below his Rank, as well as enemy agents of roughly equal Rank who are aware of his identity.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to effective Rank in the organization for the purpose of security clearance and requesting aid, gear, etc. (but *not* for giving orders or collecting pay) – an instinctively subtle operator is *trusted* more with equipment and information.

Alternative Cost: 15 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Lair of the Fat Man.**

Superior Equilibrioception

5 points/level

Acrobatics (including Aerobatics and Aquabatics), Body Sense, Climbing, Free Fall, and Parachuting.

Reaction Bonus: Acrobats, skydivers, and commandos who slide down ropes.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to any DX roll to keep your feet that would benefit from Perfect Balance (p. B74).

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Notes: Acrobatics, Aerobatics, and Aquabatics are treated as one skill because few characters will ever benefit from all three.

Survivor

5 points/level

First Aid, Knot-Tying, Naturalist, Scrounging, and Survival.

Reaction Bonus: Boy Scouts, campers, and survivalists.

Alternative Benefit: Success with Scrounging improvises simple equipment for other skills that removes -1/level from the penalty for being improvised (p. B345). This means a branch used as a club with Broadsword, a first-aid kit used with Surgery to remove a tick, etc. – *not* turning a soda can into a radar dish. For that, get Gadgeteer!

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Talker

5 points/level

Detect Lies, Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, Psychology, and Savoir-Faire.

Reaction Bonus: Investigators and anybody hiring you to investigate.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to resist *verbal* Influence roll attempts.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Mysteries.**

Thanatologist*

5 points/level

Exorcism, Expert Skill (Thanatology), Occultism, Professional Skill (Mortician), Religious Ritual, and Theology.

Reaction Bonus: Death-worshippers and sapient undead you *don't* try to exorcize or banish.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to Fright Checks caused by the undead and by ordinary dead bodies, however foul and decayed.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Tough Guy

5 points/level

Fast-Talk, Forced Entry, Intimidation, Shadowing, and Streetwise.

Reaction Bonus: Most police officers and detectives, bouncers, gangsters, and street thugs.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to *resist* Interrogation and Intimidation, and to Fright Checks resulting from encountering murder victims, bloody torture scenes, etc.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Mysteries.**

Trivia Sponge

5 points/level

All specialties of Area Knowledge, Current Affairs, Games, and Hobby Skill.

Reaction Bonus: Anybody who cares about trivia – cab drivers, game-show hosts, geeks, etc.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to any roll that notes a bonus for Eidetic Memory (p. B51), including the recall roll for Speed-Reading.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Truth-Seeker

5 points/level

Detect Lies, Expert Skill (Conspiracy Theory), Hidden Lore (Conspiracies), Intelligence Analysis, Interrogation, and Research.

Reaction Bonus: Anyone who is Curious or harbors Delusions about conspiracies.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level in Contests against attempts to perpetrate a cover-up. This aids Vision vs. Filch or Sleight of Hand if someone tries to hide or swap documents on you, Hearing vs. Electronics Operation to hear voices deliberately hidden in static, etc.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Unseelie Talent†

5 points/level

Skills: Camouflage, Disguise, Scrounging, Stealth, Survival (Swampland), and Urban Survival.

Reaction Bonus and Alternative Benefit: None.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Horror**.

Notes: This is a racial Talent for the Unseelie.

Whiz Kid

5 points/level

Chemistry, Criminology, Diagnosis, Forensics, Psychology, and Research.

Reaction Bonus: Crime-lab employers and detectives.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to Per rolls to notice clues when no specific skill applies.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Mysteries**.

Notes: Outside of a **Mysteries** campaign, consider giving this Talent a less ambiguous name, like “Forensics Whiz.”

Widget-Worker†

5 points/level

Armoury (Missile Weapons), Forced Entry, Lockpicking, Scrounging, and Traps.

Reaction Bonus: Those who benefit directly from your skills.

Alternative Benefit: Success with an *appropriate* skill listed for this Talent lets you scrounge or improvise equipment for other skills that’s good enough to cut -1/level from the penalty for being improvised (p. B345). Apply +1/level or -1/level, whichever would be more beneficial, to rolls to avoid harm from mundane mechanisms you tamper with.

Alternative Cost: 5 points/level.

Source: **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 3**.

Notes: While this is a racial Talent for gnomes, it’s probably fine as a general Talent for larger-than-life low-tech tinkers.

Are Talents Realistic?

Yes and no.

Nature plays a role in what any of us can do. We’re not all equally fast, strong, healthy, and good-looking. “Smart” is more complex, but anyone who has taught knows that some pupils learn faster than others – and we’ve all met dummies! “Gifted in one particular area” is trickier still, but neuroscience has determined that structure and electrical activity vary from brain to brain, and has correlated these variations with task performance.

Nurture, too, has its place. Regardless of gifts (general or specific), study and practice can make you better at tasks. Every civilization has recognized this fact and supported it with some of oral tradition, apprenticeship, drill, and schooling. Today, education and experience constitute the basis of most hiring; you’d need *remarkable* talent to edge out someone better-trained.

Character traits in RPGs routinely mix the two. For instance, DX and IQ might be raw potential distinct from skills, but both increase from birth to adulthood (see *Children*, p. B20) and affect most skill defaults, reflecting general learning. Conversely, skills aren’t necessarily learned; high Running skill *might* suggest physical training, but PCs without track-and-field experience can select it as a natural propensity – or buy it with earned points for reasons of dramatic necessity. Talents fare no worse than anything else in

this regard. The stance that Talents represent the aptitudes of gifted people in the real world while skills are learned is no less defensible than similar assertions about DX vs. combat skills, Absolute Direction vs. Navigation skill, and so on.

Moreover, divisions between capabilities in RPGs veer from remarkably fine (e.g., Filch, Pickpocket, and Sleight of Hand skills for swiping things) to incredibly coarse (e.g., Biology and Physics have phenomenal depth, and IQ encompasses “creativity, intuition, memory, perception, reason, sanity, and willpower”). This arbitrary partitioning serves game balance, not realism; a game will seem broken if improving a small number of abilities makes you an adventuring demigod while some brainy background competence burns through your character-creation currency. Here, too, Talents are no shakier than anything else. For instance, in reality, music and math are related, and math works equally well for physics and finance, so Business Acumen, Mathematical Ability, and Musical Ability are a little tangled – but no more so than skills or attributes.

In short, game traits correspond only approximately to anything measurable or testable in reality, and Talents are in this boat with everything else. It’s fair to say that Talents reflect the *spirit* of reality (some people are more gifted than others in narrow areas), and to cut them some slack because they serve a valuable dramatic purpose in the game.

CHAPTER TWO

OPTIONAL RULES

The GM who plans to use Talents extensively in his campaign might want to modify the rules governing them to achieve a perfect fit. Adjusting numbers (such as levels and costs) is straightforward, but more intricate options can alter the fundamental nature of Talents. Players take note: *No rule here is in effect unless the GM says it is!*

ALTERNATIVE BENEFITS

A Talent's reaction bonus stems from the assumption that observers who understand what the affected skills entail (usually because they've studied those skills or witnessed others using them often enough to appreciate the challenges) find it aesthetically pleasing to see those capabilities used in an instinctive way. This is unrelated to skill level. A master can show off more than a beginner, regardless of Talent – but at *any* level, a talented person has a higher proportion of aptitude (Talent) to practice (points in skills). Thus, the feats of someone who's a "natural" look inspired rather than studied; they exhibit more flair.

Some gamers may argue that for many skills (e.g., Acrobatics), showing off *is* more impressive than showing aptitude, and that someone with a remarkable score in the controlling attribute (DX, for Acrobatics) should appear to be no less of a "natural" than a person with high Talent. Thus, they might question giving a reaction bonus to talented individuals but not to masters and the broadly gifted. And maybe they have a point! But Talent is priced assuming a reaction bonus, so simply removing this would be unfair.

Replacing that bonus is another matter, though. The goal here is to give an edge to people whose grasp of the affected skills is intuitive – for instance, so that the difference between IQ 11 with Animal Friend 3 and straight IQ 14 is "animals like you" vs. "smart, which helps you figure out animals (and people, plants, machines, taxes, Sudoku, etc.)." Suggested alternatives include:

- A bonus to use suitable Influence skills (p. B359) in situations where these would benefit from a show of Talent. Thus, under specific circumstances – normally, "after successfully using one of the Talent's skills" – the Talent aids a few skills that *aren't* on its list, producing effects similar to but less extreme than a reaction bonus.

- A bonus to follow-up rolls triggered by applying the Talent's skills. For example, a Talent that covers Running might add to basic HT rolls to avoid crippling due to critical failure

at extra effort with that skill, while one that covers Speed-Reading could help IQ rolls to recall what was read.

- A bonus to default rolls – much as for Jack of All Trades (p. 11) – when using one of the Talent's skills regularly pulls in another skill that the Talent *doesn't* encompass.

- A bonus to rolls related to the Talent's theme but for which there are *no* skills. For instance, if a Talent's premise is "good with gadgets," it may help rolls on the *Enigmatic Device Table* (pp. B478-479), while if the Talent's concept is "finding clues," it's fair and realistic to add it to Per rolls to notice things for which none of its skills are optimized. If the roll in question isn't made *by* the character but *against* him, the Talent should give it a penalty instead.

- A bonus in Contests *against* skills the Talent covers, when these are pitted against the talented individual. This is only valid if some of those skills occasionally precipitate Contests; e.g., Influence skills fit, as they're resisted by Will, but Forced Entry doesn't, because it only works on inanimate objects. Boosted resistance to diametrically opposed skills is also fitting.

- A bonus to rolls to use conceptually related advantages. Here, the skill Talent acts somewhat like a power Talent, but enhances a mundane advantage instead of one that's part of a power.

- A bonus similar to one of the above for *somebody else*, if the Talent is a "selfless" one such as Healer.

- An offset against penalties, especially those under *Equipment Modifiers* (p. B345), *Familiarity* (p. B169), *Geographical and Temporal Scope* (p. B176), and *Tech-Level Modifiers* (p. B168). This is fairest when it benefits skills *other* than the ones the Talent aids, after the Talent's skills have been used to set up those tasks, because improving the Talent's skills *and* removing penalties to them amounts to double-counting. This isn't a prohibition – just a caution.

- Access to a feat that the untalented can't attempt – in the spirit of the Per roll for Danger Sense (p. B47), or the IQ roll for Empathy (p. B51) or Intuition (p. B63). The target number should start at attribute-4 and receive a bonus equal to Talent, so that someone with the standard maximum of four levels is trying a straight attribute roll.

Alternative benefits shouldn't be needlessly general; impose whatever restrictions seem necessary to preserve the Talent's theme and flavor. The resulting effects ought to be roughly in line with situational attribute bonuses such as Acute Senses (p. B35), Fearlessness (p. B55), and Hard to Subdue (p. B59). But this is art, not science. The more expensive the Talent, the more substantial its benefits can be without becoming unbalanced.

A Talent that encompasses skills that are only rarely useful may *need* a meaty bonus to be attractive, while one benefiting skills that come up constantly will be popular even *without* extras.

On that last point, “no extra benefit” *is* fair in some cases. If a Talent already aids so many valuable skills that you were contemplating raising its cost, then removing *further* bonuses might offer an alternative means of balancing it. And if a Talent is a gift for subtlety that doesn’t grant reaction bonuses in the first place (in theory, others aren’t even supposed to notice it), then there’s nothing to replace!

Occasionally, a reaction bonus *is* the best way to represent what a Talent does, other than improve skills. A Talent may represent a gift that a particular group can sense even in the unskilled – an intuitive sense of respect or propriety, pheromones, a mark on the soul, whatever. It’s entirely reasonable for a *few* Talents to give reaction bonuses, even if most don’t.

The possibilities discussed above aren’t exhaustive. See Chapter 1 for many worked examples, and to appreciate one further upside to alternative benefits: Sometimes, they help distinguish between Talents that are nigh on identical in all but name.

ANTI-TALENTS

The existence of Talents raises the question of disadvantages that penalize groups of related skills. Superficially, such “Anti-Talents” might seem like a fairly straightforward matter: Put a minus sign on the cost of a Talent, turn its bonuses into penalties, and call it a day. However, it isn’t quite that easy . . .

As explained under *Brand-New Problems* (p. B166), bonuses and penalties to skills aren’t priced symmetrically. There are dozens of examples of this in the **Basic Set** alone; compare, say, High Manual Dexterity (p. B59) to Ham-Fisted (p. B138), or the cost of skills (p. B170) to that of Incompetence (p. B164). This reflects the reality that players – all but

the most fanatical roleplayers, anyway – select skills for which their characters have an aptitude, while ignoring those at which their alter-egos are hopeless. Ineptitude at even a large group of skills amounts to free points for someone who would never use those skills!

In order to use the “opposite sign” pricing prescribed on p. B166 and in *Racial Skill Bonuses and Penalties* (p. B452), Anti-Talents must give penalties to sufficiently large groups of *key* skills that they’ll be noticed. Since only the GM knows for sure what skills are going to matter in his campaign, the following trait is intended for GMs creating new disadvantages for their campaigns. Players are welcome to *propose* Anti-Talents, but the GM’s word is final.

Anti-Talent

Variable

You’re naturally *inept* at an important adventuring activity that can be defined by a set of closely related skills. Anti-Talents come in levels, and have several drawbacks:

1. You have a penalty of -1 per level to success rolls associated with the activity the Anti-Talent covers. This effectively lowers your attribute scores for the purpose of the pursuit in question, and always affects any specific skills that the GM lists for the Anti-Talent. The GM may apply it to *other* skill rolls, too, where their purpose overlaps the endeavor that the Anti-Talent penalizes.

2. You can never learn any of the skills specifically listed for your Anti-Talent, no matter *how* you attempt to learn them. You’re forced to function at default with these skills, and this is *still* subject to the penalty above. Even magical skill transference and cybernetic skill implants will somehow fail, thwarted by your brain’s wiring. (The GM may let you buy off your Anti-Talent with earned points in a campaign where it’s actually possible to get your brain rewired!)

Alternating Alternatives

In a gaming group that’s open to even more complexity than what *Alternative Benefits* (pp. 18-19) entails, the GM might decide that while every level of a Talent grants the customary skill bonus and learning-time reduction, the Talent’s other extras *vary* from level to level. Levels could alternate between bestowing a reaction bonus and something else, two different alternatives (several Talents in Chapter 1 propose either/or options), or even three or more bonuses. The GM should set this pattern ahead of time.

For instance, to reserve specialized benefits for the most talented individuals, have levels 1 and 2 grant the usual +1 and +2 to reactions, while levels 3 and 4 give +1 and +2 to something else. To keep the reaction bonus but tone it down and associate it with the *truly* gifted, do just the opposite, offering +1 and +2 to reactions at levels 3 and 4, and some other boon at levels 1 and 2. Yet another possibility is to alternate on the basis of even- and odd-numbered levels. When using *Extended Talents* (pp. 21-22), there may be enough levels to use one of these patterns to

reach +3, +4, or +5 with each of two benefits – or to cycle three or four bonuses!

More radically still, each level could give its own benefit. This would quickly get *very* fussy, of course. The GM who wants many effects associated with a Talent might find the option below simpler than any of those above.

Talent Perks

The GM may want to specify a uniform benefit (reaction bonus or alternative) per level for each Talent, as when *Alternating Alternatives* isn’t in effect, but to sell other edges as perks (pp. B100-101) reserved for people with the Talent, allowing them to add depth to their gift for a price. Each +1 in benefits is its own perk, and talented individuals can buy one such “Talent perk” per Talent level. This doesn’t imply that it’s possible to “sell off” a Talent’s benefits piecemeal – regardless of whether Talent perks are available to *add* benefits, players can’t *omit* benefits to save points!

3. You receive -1 per level on all reaction rolls made by anyone in a position to notice your Anti-Talent, if he would regard your ineptitude as worthy of derision, or as a sign of weakness or inferiority (GM's judgment). The GM may instead select some of the effects under *Alternative Benefits* (pp. 18-19) and reverse these to turn them into shortcomings. The GM may even assess a reaction penalty *and* one or more additional drawbacks, if that's what seems necessary to balance the trait.

You may take at most four levels of a given Anti-Talent. However, overlapping Anti-Talents *can* give penalties – to both success rolls and reaction rolls – in excess of -4. The GM has the right to forbid Anti-Talents that cover activities that would be irrelevant to a given character, or that are unlikely to matter in the campaign.

Cost of Anti-Talent

The GM sets the point value of an Anti-Talent to reflect the scope of the adventuring activities it impacts. He may opt to associate Anti-Talents with specific numbers of skills – as for Talent (p. 4) – if he feels that *all* of those skills are likely to be significant to the PC and in the campaign.

Small (An occasional adventuring activity, or 6 or fewer related skills): -5 points/level.

Medium (A common adventuring activity, or 7 to 12 related skills): -10 points/level.

Large (A very common adventuring activity, or 13 or more related skills): -15 points/level.

A skill that offers multiple specialties is considered to be *one* skill for the purpose of counting skills. You cannot have an Anti-Talent in a single specialty; if you're inept with Guns, for instance, then you're inept with *all* guns.

Examples of Anti-Talents

The following Anti-Talents should be balanced in most campaigns. The notes on point cost in each case *aren't* a firm calculation, but a check on whether the assigned price is reasonable in light of the drawbacks.

Animal Foe

-5 points/level

All rolls to interact with animals – including Animal Handling, Falconry, Packing, Riding, Teamster, and Veterinary.

Reaction Penalty: All animals, all the time.

Additional Drawbacks: -1/level on all rolls to *evaluate* animals, too – Merchant rolls to buy horses, Observation rolls to distinguish trained guard dogs from pet mutts, etc.

Notes: Four levels of this trait are roughly equal to Incompetence with six skills [-6], plus Frightens Animals [-10]. That would make the fair value about -4 points/level, but the additional drawback seems like it's worth -1 point/level.

Couch Potato

-10 points/level

All rolls for athletics other than combat skills, including Acrobatics, Bicycling, Climbing, Hiking, Jumping, Lifting, Running, Skating, Skiing, Sports, Swimming, and Throwing.

Reaction Penalty: Athletes, fitness nuts, and anyone with higher HT than you.

Additional Drawbacks: -1/level to HT rolls to avoid or recover from injuries incurred as a direct consequence of physical feats (as opposed to injuries sustained in car wrecks, lab explosions, combat, etc.).

Notes: Four levels of this trait, for -40 points, are fairly close to Incompetence with 12 skills [-12], Reputation -4 with a large class of people [-10], and Susceptible 4 to a "Very Common" health threat (even for non-adventurers!) [-16]. That's -38 points, or -9.5 points/level. Given the open-ended skill list, rounding to -10 points/level is close enough.

Mind Like a Sieve

-5 points/level

All IQ rolls the GM requires to recall trivia, as well as Area Knowledge, Connoisseur, Current Affairs, Expert Skills, Hidden Lore, and Hobby Skills.

Reaction Penalty: Anybody who values knowledge.

Additional Drawbacks: -1/level to any roll that notes a bonus for Eidetic Memory (p. B51).

Notes: Four levels of this trait are approximately equal to Incompetence with six skills [-6] and Reputation -4 with a large class of people [-10], and already good for -4 points/level. Pricing a penalty to recall rolls at -1 point/level feels reasonable, so -5 points/level flies.



Misfit

-15 points/level

All social rolls, including Acting, Administration, Carousing, Connoisseur, Detect Lies, Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, Gambling, Gesture, Intimidation, Leadership, Merchant, Politics, Propaganda, Public Speaking, Savoir-Faire, Sex Appeal, Streetwise, and Teaching.

Reaction Penalty: Anyone you try to impress.

Additional Drawbacks: -1/level to *resist* all Influence skills and social manipulation.

Notes: Low Empathy [-20] gives -3 to a comparable list of skills, so we'll think in threes. For an adventurer, -3 on reactions from "anyone you try to impress" is Reputation -3 with almost everyone [-10]. A penalty to resist manipulation can be *lethal*; it's worth at least -5 points/level. At -45 points for -3 to all of these things, that's -15 points/level.

Noncombatant

-15 points/level

All combat rolls, including all combat skills. Base active defenses on your penalized defaults – don't penalize them directly. This *doesn't* affect your Dodge score. You may learn Combat Art/Sport skills (p. B184), but these suffer your Noncombatant penalty in toe-to-toe tournaments and don't give you default combat skills at Combat Art/Sport-3.

Reaction Penalty: Anyone who would react poorly to Cowardice (p. B129).

Notes: Given what adventurers do, this disadvantage needs no additional drawbacks. It's the epitome of the "Large" Anti-Talent.

Unsubtle

-5 points/level

All rolls for slyness and concealment, including Camouflage, Disguise, Holdout, Shadowing, Smuggling, and Stealth.

Reaction Penalty: Thieves, spies, and anyone who catches you in the act (which will be often, because you're *not subtle*).

Additional Drawbacks: +1/level to others' rolls to notice, remember, and/or identify you, even when you aren't trying to be sneaky.

Notes: This follows the same general pattern noted for Mind Like a Sieve (p. 20).

*Are you attempting
stealth? Is this what stealth
looks like to you? You're
on camera, by the way . . .*
– Mr. Shank, in
*The Secret Armory
of General Knox*

EXTENDED TALENTS

The **Basic Set** limits heroes to four levels of any given Talent. This cutoff was arrived at by viewing the reaction bonus as similar to that from a Reputation, and subjecting it to the same upper bound: +4. However, the foremost game-mechanical role of Talents is to aid skills, and in that sense they aren't unlike limited attributes. Especially in a campaign where the GM is using *Alternative Benefits* (pp. 18-19) and not reaction bonuses, if attributes are capped at 20 (see p. B14), then "Why not 10 levels of Talent?" is a fair challenge.

The short answer is, "Go ahead!" Published **GURPS** supplements allow PCs to have more than four levels of Talent; e.g., *Dungeon Fantasy 11* suggests six. To best match the upper limit to a given campaign, though, it's useful to examine each benefit of Talent on its own terms:

Learning-Time Reductions: Even Magery – which is open-ended and supernatural – posts a limit of "60% of the usual time" (p. B235), or -40%. Going down to -50% would double learning speed; that's comparable to *Intensive Training* (p. B293), which is tolerable enough if the GM keeps a close eye on it. However, if a PC can acquire a point in 80 hours or less (-60% or lower), then rules-lawyers will exploit this mercilessly to improve skills "for free" almost weekly. It's fairest to say that teaching, reading, practice, etc. take some basic, irreducible time, and stop at -40% or -50%.

Reaction Bonuses: Most traits that grant +1/level to reactions stop at four levels; these include Appearance (mortals are restricted to Very Handsome/Beautiful, averaging the +4 described for Androgynous), Reputation, and Social Regard. This is because reaction bonuses are cumulative and reaction results higher than 19 aren't defined (see p. B561). Capping bonuses at +4 from a given source is one of the game's simple controls on this. Still, Very Handsome/Beautiful gives +6 to reaction rolls made by those attracted to the good-looking person's sex, so such a bonus *might* be fine if the group affected is at most half the population.

Skill Bonuses: Skills face arbitrarily high penalties – unfavorable circumstances can pile up -5, -10, -15, or worse on a success roll. Bonuses to offset these penalties are therefore intrinsically balanced. If the GM caps DX, IQ, HT, Will, and Per, though, then Talent should face comparable bounds. The standard human limit for such scores is 20; that is, +10 relative to the average of 10.

Setting Limits

When setting the campaign's maximum Talent level, the GM must decide what limit he wants to place on each benefit, which of the three is his highest priority, and whether breaking the symmetry between them is compatible with his sense of fair play and/or aesthetic preferences. This leads to several options, summarized on the *Talent Limits Table* (p. 22):

Lockstep: If the GM believes that all three effects must advance together for Talent to justify its point cost, then he should use the original limit of *four* levels – or five, if he can live with +5 to reaction rolls and -50% to learning time.

Learning Cap: If the GM is comfortable with capping reaction bonuses – or just isn't using them (most likely because of *Alternative Benefits*, pp. 18-19) – but insists on all skill-related effects tracking each other, then *five* levels of Talent work best. This gives +5 to skills and -50% to learning time, but merely +4 or +5 to reactions (if used).

Reaction Cap: If the GM is using reaction bonuses and regards those as the critical limit on Talents, but can live with +6 from "people impressed by this Talent" because that's generally smaller than "those attracted to your sex," then *six* levels of Talent can work. This gives +6 to skills and reactions, but just -40% or -50% to learning time, depending on what the GM feels comfortable with.

Skill Cap: If the GM is willing to cap everything *but* skill bonuses, then he can safely permit up to *10* levels of Talent, for +10 to skills – but still just -40% or -50% to learning time and +4 to +6 to reactions. Pushing past even +10 to skills in a narrow area *might* be fine; e.g., if the GM limits Per to 20 but also allows Acute Hearing 4, for +14 to Hearing relative to the human norm of 10, then he may accept Musical Ability 14!

Effects on Pricing

The GM should avoid the temptation to discount the point cost of Talent levels past the fourth when these grant only

Talent Limits Table

Talent Level	Skill Bonus	Reaction Bonus	Learning Time
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Lockstep

1	+1	+1	-10%
2	+2	+2	-20%
3	+3	+3	-30%
4	+4	+4	-40%
5*	+5	+5	-50%

Learning Cap

1	+1	+1	-10%
2	+2	+2	-20%
3	+3	+3	-30%
4	+4	+4	-40%
5	+5	+4 or +5*	-50%

Reaction Cap

1	+1	+1	-10%
2	+2	+2	-20%
3	+3	+3	-30%
4	+4	+4	-40%
5	+5	+5	-40% or -50%*
6	+6	+6	-40% or -50%*

Skill Cap

1	+1	+1	-10%
2	+2	+2	-20%
3	+3	+3	-30%
4	+4	+4	-40%
5	+5	+4 or +5*	-40% or -50%*
6	+6	+4, +5, or +6*	-40% or -50%*
7	+7	+4, +5, or +6*	-40% or -50%*
8	+8	+4, +5, or +6*	-40% or -50%*
9	+9	+4, +5, or +6*	-40% or -50%*
10	+10	+4, +5, or +6*	-40% or -50%*
+1*	+1	no further effect	no further effect

Staggered

1	+1	+1	-5%
2	+2	+1	-10%
3	+3	+2	-15%
4	+4	+2	-20%
5	+5	+3	-25%
6	+6	+3	-30%
7	+7	+4	-35%
8	+8	+4	-40%
9*	+9	+5	-45%
10*	+10	+5	-50%

* The GM decides on the maximum level (for Talent) or allowed bonus (for other entries).

some of the customary benefits (e.g., Talent 5 that gives +5 to skills but just +4 to reactions and -40% to learning time). Such markdowns lead to players giving PCs unsuitable Talents simply because the bargain is too good to pass up. If the GM wants to weight lower levels of Talent less heavily, so that each level buys roughly equal benefits, then the fairest way to do so is to pick maximum skill, reaction, and learning effects that divide evenly by the levels available, and then spread them out over the entire range. Doing this with eight or 10 levels of Talent mutes reaction effects for all but *extremely* talented individuals, which is yet another way of addressing the objection that *Alternative Benefits* (pp. 18-19) exists to combat. The “Staggered” scheme on the *Talent Limits Table* illustrates the most straightforward example.

Extended Alternative Benefits

Most of the substitute abilities under *Alternative Benefits* (pp. 18-19) don’t scream out for special caps. The GM should allow them to track skill bonuses up to whatever maximum Talent level he allows. If they seem unusually powerful, though, they might be subject to the limit on reaction bonuses instead – or kept to modest levels by invoking *Alternating Alternatives* (p. 19).

LEARNING TALENTS

The *Basic Set* uses words like “natural,” “inborn,” and “gift” to describe Talents, implying that Talents are innate. Scientific research bears this out at least somewhat; the brains of certain people *do* appear to be wired for music, math, etc. Racial Talents (p. B452) might be similar – it isn’t difficult to imagine that, say, certain apex predators have a knack for stalking – and may even reflect *physiological* adaptations to groups of related tasks. The point is that as written, Talents aren’t acquired.

To preserve the dramatic niche of PCs who start out with Talents, it’s fairest to rule that the untalented *can’t* “learn” Talents through means less radical than ultra-tech brain implants or powerful supernatural intervention – or unless *Talents as Training* (p. 25) applies. If anybody could come along and buy Natural Copper and Business Acumen in play, then players who allocated starting points to these things instead of buying truly inborn traits like High Pain Threshold and Voice would be penalized for their sacrifice. Perhaps worse, the cachet of strong character concepts like “natural detective” or “born businessman” would evaporate. Much as Magery and Power Investiture *define* who gets to be a spell-slinging wizard or a miracle-working cleric, mundane Talents should more-or-less permanently separate heroes who are cut out for a vocation from those who aren’t.

Those Who Have, Get

By definition, though, those who *are* talented have a gift for learning the things their Talent covers. Thus, it’s fair to permit PCs who get a foot in the door by purchasing at least one level of Talent to use earned points to improve that Talent later on, subject to the usual limits. Perhaps they’re realizing their *full* gifts!

Combat Talents

The **Basic Set** cautions against permitting Ninja Talent and Weapon Talent, which some gamers read as a ban on Talents benefiting combat skills. There's no such prohibition, though! Ninja Talent is singled out not because it might help combat skills, but because ninja training is extremely broad; outside of a silly or cinematic campaign, it's implausible that anyone would be gifted at *everything* involved (but see *Talents as Training*, pp. 25-26, and note that there's a Ninja Talent of sorts on p. 7). Weapon Talent is likewise flagged because it covers *too much* – in the typical action-adventure campaign, it would usurp DX. A balanced combat Talent meets three criteria:

1. It encompasses a small number of combat skills – probably fewer than five, discounting individual specialties. For example, Hot Pilot (p. 11) and Seafarer (p. 14) have one combat skill apiece; Strangler (p. 15) affects two; Pickaxe Penchant (p. 14), three; and Halfling Marksmanship (p. 11) and Mr. Smash (p. 13), four each.
2. The affected combat skills are closely related in the motions or thinking involved, making the Talent a credible aptitude. Mr. Smash benefits two-handed swings, for instance, while Halfling Marksmanship helps one predict the arc of light, low-speed projectiles. Combat skills that default to one another are often related.

3. It includes noncombat skills that fit the concept; e.g., Mr. Smash aids Forced Entry because it's about *smashing things*. "Diluting" combat skills with noncombat ones is an entirely reasonable way to increase a Talent's cost enough that players select it to aid characterization, not to save points.

Broad combat Talents are questionable and open to abuse. In particular, skills related only because they involve violence and are often learned together – like those in a fighting style from **GURPS Martial Arts** or the template for a warrior archetype – form a poor basis for a Talent, as they're linked only by the whims of a teacher or a job. For outright dissimilar skills like Gunner, Knife, and Polearm, Talent *definitely* isn't believable. Such things occasionally work as Job Training (pp. 25-26), or as "racial" Talents (pp. 4-5) programmed into golems or robots, but not as aptitudes.

The GM should fight the urge to forbid combat Talents that do meet the listed criteria, though. Even in an action-adventure story, *combat isn't everything* – and no player bent on "gaming the system" will buy Talent for 5-15 points/level if he can raise his PC's favorite violent skill for 4 points/level!

(Maybe heroes without Talent should be able to realize *their* gifts later on, too, but they didn't pay for the privilege.) And this fits with the way the game works: Most characters have to study each skill in a related set separately, or raise the underlying attribute; "naturals" can improve all of those skills more cheaply. Think of the option to improve existing Talent as an extension of the learning-time reduction for the Talent's skills.

To witness this in action, see **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy**. That series often assumes that everyone who follows a particular profession or belongs to a certain race starts with a low level of some key Talent, which they may improve later. Outsiders simply don't have the option.

Building on a Foundation

Dungeon Fantasy also reserves a few Talents for heroes with particular backgrounds. In most cases, these can be earned in play by individuals who initially lack them but who share traits common to some profession or race. This suggests two further options:

Prerequisites: Some Talents may have other traits – advantages, racial templates, etc. – as prerequisites. Even *character* templates for suitable vocations can fill this role, in a campaign where such are mandatory. Anybody who satisfies the qualifications listed for such a Talent may purchase it with earned points, regardless of whether he entered play with it. Those who lack these requirements cannot buy the Talent, even during character creation.

Enablers: A related approach is to designate certain advantages as opening the door to specific Talent purchases later on. These aren't prerequisites for *possession* of those Talents;

the Talents in question are available to everyone at character creation. Instead, they are prerequisites for *buying the Talent in play*. The option to do so becomes a side benefit of some related advantage.

Associating these kinds of traits with Talents is trivial for racial Talents. For the rest, it's ultimately up to the GM, but here are some suggestions, intended chiefly as enablers but potentially useful as prerequisites if the GM wants to limit access to certain Talents:

Talent	Trait(s)
Academic	Eidetic Memory (p. B51)
Alien Friend	Xeno-Adaptability (p. B46)
Allure	Appearance* (p. B21), Fashion Sense (p. B21), or Voice (p. B97)
Animal Friend	Animal Empathy (p. B40) or Speak with Animals (p. B87)
Antiquary	five technological skills (p. B168) from a lower TL, or Racial Memory (p. B78)
Artificer	Gadgeteer (p. B56) or Versatile (p. B96)
Bard	Charisma* (p. B41), Rapier Wit (p. B79), or Voice (p. B97)
Beastmaster	Animal Empathy (p. B40) or Speak with Animals (p. B87)
Born Entertainer	Appearance* (p. B21), Charisma* (p. B41), or Voice (p. B97)
Born Sailor	Absolute Direction (p. B34)
Born Soldier	Combat Reflexes (p. B43) or Danger Sense (p. B47)

<i>Talent</i>	<i>Trait(s)</i>
Born Spacer	3D Spatial Sense (p. B34) or Improved G-Tolerance (p. B60)
Born Tactician	Charisma* (p. B41)
Born to Be Wired	Intuitive Mathematician (p. B66)
Born War-Leader	Charisma* (p. B41)
Business Acumen	Lightning Calculator (p. B66) or Luck (p. B66)
Chi Talent	Trained by a Master (p. B93) or Weapon Master (p. B99)
Circuit Sense	Gadgeteer (p. B56) or Versatile (p. B96)
Close to Heaven	Blessed (p. B40), Power Investiture* (p. B77), or True Faith (p. B94)
Close to Hell	Power Investiture* (p. B77) or Spirit Empathy (p. B88)
Close to the Earth	Animal Empathy (p. B40) or Plant Empathy (p. B75)
Clown	Pitiable (p. B22), Rapier Wit (p. B79), or Voice (p. B97)
Computer Wizard	Intuitive Mathematician (p. B66)
Craftiness	Honest Face (p. B101), plus Night Vision* (p. B71) or Silence* (p. B85)
Cultural Chameleon	Cultural Adaptability (p. B46) or Language Talent (p. B65)
Cunning Folk	Empathy (p. B51) or Oracle (p. B72)
Cyberneticist	Intuitive Mathematician (p. B66)
Devotion	Blessed (p. B40) or True Faith (p. B94)
Driver's Reflexes	Absolute Timing (p. B35) or Daredevil (p. B47)
Dungeon Artificer	Gadgeteer (p. B56) or Versatile (p. B96)
Empath	Empathy (p. B51)
Explorer	Absolute Direction (p. B34)
Forceful Chi	Trained by a Master (p. B93) or Weapon Master (p. B99)
Gifted Artist	Versatile (p. B96)
Goodwife	Common Sense (p. B43)
Green Thumb	Plant Empathy (p. B75) or Speak with Plants (p. B87)
Healer	Empathy (p. B51)
Hot Pilot	3D Spatial Sense (p. B34) or Daredevil (p. B47)
Impersonator	Empathy (p. B51), Mimicry (p. B68), or Voice (p. B97)
Inner Balance	Trained by a Master (p. B93) or Weapon Master (p. B99)
Intuitive Admiral	Charisma* (p. B41)
Intuitive Statesman	Charisma* (p. B41), suitable Destiny (p. B48), or Voice (p. B97)
Jack of All Trades	Serendipity* (p. B83), Versatile (p. B96), or Wild Talent* (p. B99)
Mariner	Absolute Direction (p. B34)
Master Builder	Gadgeteer (p. B56) or Versatile (p. B96)
Mathematical Ability	Lightning Calculator (p. B66)
Memetics	Charisma* (p. B41) or Voice (p. B97)
Mesmerist	Charisma* (p. B41) or Voice (p. B97)

<i>Talent</i>	<i>Trait(s)</i>
Mr. Smash	Arm ST* (p. B40) or Striking ST* (p. B88)
Musical Ability	Acute Hearing* (p. B35), Discriminatory Hearing (p. B49), or Voice (p. B97)
Natural Athlete	Fit (p. B55), High Pain Threshold (p. B59), or Rapid Healing (p. B79)
Natural Copper	Intuition (p. B63)
Natural Diver	3D Spatial Sense (p. B34)
Natural Scientist	Single-Minded (p. B85)
Ninja Talent	Trained by a Master (p. B93) or Weapon Master (p. B99)
Occultist	Channeling (p. B41), Magery* (p. B66), or Medium (p. B68)
Outdoorsman	Absolute Direction (p. B34)
Parapsychologist	Channeling (p. B41), Medium (p. B68), or Spirit Empathy (p. B88)
Poet	Rapier Wit (p. B79) or Voice (p. B97)
Pop Culture Maven	Fashion Sense (p. B21)
Psientist	Indomitable (p. B60) or Mind Shield* (p. B70)
Sage	Eidetic Memory (p. B51)
Seafarer	Absolute Direction (p. B34)
Smooth Operator	Appearance* (p. B21), Charisma* (p. B41), or Voice (p. B97)
Social Scientist	Social Chameleon (p. B86)
Spirit-Talker	Channeling (p. B41), Medium (p. B68), or Spirit Empathy (p. B88)
Stalker	two or more Acute Senses* (p. B35)
Street-Smart	Danger Sense (p. B47)
Street Smarts	Danger Sense (p. B47)
Strong Chi	Trained by a Master (p. B93) or Weapon Master (p. B99)
Super-Spy	Versatile (p. B96)
Superior	Perfect Balance (p. B74)
Equilibrioception	
Survivor	two or more Acute Senses* (p. B35)
Talker	Charisma* (p. B41) or Voice (p. B97)
Thanatologist	Channeling (p. B41) or Medium (p. B68)
Tough Guy	Fearlessness* (p. B55), Indomitable (p. B60), or Unfazeable (p. B95)
Trivia Sponge	Eidetic Memory (p. B51)
Truth-Seeker	Illuminated (p. B60) or Intuition (p. B63)
Whiz Kid	Intuition (p. B63)

* The GM may opt to allow no more levels of added Talent than levels in the trait(s).

This list offers only a *few* exotic and supernatural advantages – mostly inexpensive ones – as examples of what might fit. There are too many possibilities to enumerate them all! If somebody has a superhuman ability that extends beyond any mundane advantage suggested for a Talent (e.g., Mind Reading where Empathy would do, or Detect for the item or group of people to which the Talent pertains), then it makes sense to allow the Talent.

The GM doesn't *have* to make prerequisites and enablers fixed properties like point costs, skill lists, alternative abilities, etc. If a Talent suggests a character concept, then he might permit it to anyone who has spent at least as many points on advantages related to that concept as a level of the Talent would cost. He could even handle such assessments entirely on a roleplaying basis; e.g., a priest played as being devout may get permission to purchase Devotion (pp. 9-10), or receive a level of that Talent *instead* of earned points.

SMOOTH TALENT COST

Using broad skill-count bands to price Talents is arbitrary but affords several advantages. Most important, it enables gamers who dislike complexity to avoid the need to deal with exact skill counts and with point costs that aren't easily remembered multiples of five. More subtly, neat size categories are valuable for descriptive purposes. It's handy to be able to say, for instance, "Choose any 10-point Talent" on a template, and convenient to qualify optional rules or house rules with straightforward riders such as "Only Small Talents can be learned in play" or "These additional benefits apply to Large Talents."

However, not everybody likes the way that adding one skill to a group of six or 12 bumps up cost by 5 points/level, while doubling three skills to six or adding five skills to seven has no effect. This can seem a little unfair, leading to "solutions" like every Talent with fewer than 13 skills covering exactly six or 12 skills – even when this means adding skills that don't fit well, or weakening a strong concept to *force* them to fit. In addition, there are untidy end effects. At the low end, the 2 points/level for single-skill bonuses (pp. B118, B452) doesn't dovetail neatly with the cost of Talent for two to six skills. At the high end, "13 or more" is open to abuse in the shape of Talents that benefit dozens of skills.

For a simple fix that addresses all of these concerns, use the following alternative pricing scheme:

Talent costs 1 point/level per skill affected, with a minimum cost of 5 points/level.

This produces a decent match to the prices in the *Basic Set*. Talents that cover two to six skills average $(5 + 5 + 5 + 5 + 6)/5 = 5.2$ points/level; rounded to the nearest integer, that's 5 points/level and the same price as a "Small" Talent. Those that cover seven to 12 skills average 9.5 points/level, which rounds to 10 points/level, like a "Medium" Talent. And reading "13 or more" as "13 to 17" provides a perfect match to the 15 points/level for a "Large" Talent.

The minimum cost is an arbitrary cutoff that makes five-skill Talents more attractive than anything smaller. This is necessary

to avoid the oddity of a Talent for two to four skills being a better deal per level than a single skill. While *all* Talents are cheaper than individual skill improvements, a per-level cost less than or equal to that of just *one* skill would mean that anyone buying a skill covered by such a Talent would select the Talent instead of a higher skill level – even if it didn't fit the character concept. The temptation doesn't vanish at 5 points/level, but at least it's no worse than that of raising Will or Per instead of a skill based on one of those scores.

The upper end merits discussion, too. While 15 points/level is a fair deal for a Talent that covers many skills spread out over at least two of DX, IQ, and HT, it would be a rip-off for a Talent covering just HT-based skills; obviously, raising HT for 10 points/level would be better. By the same token, a Talent that hits 20 points/level will look second-rate if it mostly serves as limited DX or IQ. Indeed, these attributes are so valuable that few players would select *any* Talent over a level of either. Thus, it's best to cap Talents at the 17 skills hinted at above when using this optional rule.

For the sake of convenience, all of the Talents in Chapter 1 offer alternative point costs worked out under this scheme.

TALENTS AS TRAINING

While *Learning Talents* (pp. 22-25) explores the possibility of improving an innate gift, the mechanics of Talents lend themselves well to a radically different take on learning. Some groups of skills are related not in a profound way by neurology or epistemology – or even by game concepts such as defaults and controlling attributes – but by the fact that they're regularly taught and used together. Students study common situations applicable to all of those skills, and that training makes it easier for them to apply the skills . . . just as a Talent for those skills would!

This kind of thing is always learnable in play, although it often requires hundreds or thousands of hours of intensive training. Such a fundamental difference necessitates a few special rules, summed up under the following new advantage.

Job Training

Variable

You've received the intensive training necessary to do a demanding job. To be eligible for this advantage, the position must be extremely specific: "U.S. Army Special Forces Weapons Specialist" or "Imperial Navy Engineer" would qualify; "soldier" or "engineer" (or even "U.S. soldier" or "starship engineer") would not. Moreover, the role has to be defined by a character template, and you must meet all of the template's requirements to be entitled to Job Training.

I'm Gunnery Sergeant Hartman, your senior drill instructor. From now on you will speak only when spoken to, and the first and the last word out of your filthy sewers will be "Sir." Do you maggots understand that?

*– Gunnery Sergeant Hartman, in **Full Metal Jacket***

As long as you continue to work full-time at the specified position (see *Maintaining Job Training*, below, for what that entails), you enjoy +1 per level of Job Training on every skill on your occupational template other than those that the GM has designated “color” or “background.” You can have at most four levels of Job Training at a given job. No ordinary human could manage this for multiple jobs, but the GM is welcome to make exceptions for heroes with Altered Time Rate, Doesn’t Sleep, Duplication, etc.

Cost of Job Training

Each level of Job Training costs 1 point per *two* template skills it affects, rounded *up*.

Example: For a template with 24 skills, Job Training costs 12 points/level. Each level gives +1 to all 24 skills. A PC built on that template could buy up to Job Training 4 [48], gaining +4 to its skills.

Acquiring Job Training

If you learn Job Training in play, you do so at exactly the same speed as individual skills – that is, at 200 hours/point, modified for the type of training (see pp. B292-293). To qualify for Job Training 1, you must first spend at least one point on each of the skills it covers. In some cases, you won’t receive any further training in those areas – *all* your added expertise will come from Job Training. In other cases, you may receive little Job Training and be expected to learn your skills the hard way.

Maintaining Job Training

Job Training relies on daily skill use and regular updates. You must work at your job for a significant portion of each day; this is up to the GM, but eight hours a day is a *bare minimum*. Even when you’re not working, this kind of job almost always requires you to be on call 24/7. Moreover, you must be subject to drills, exams, and refresher courses *at least* monthly.

Should it be impossible for you to meet these requirements – due to prolonged leave, adventuring, disciplinary action, retirement, etc. – you’ll soon lose your edge, dropping a level of Job Training per six months off the job. Points spent on lost Job Training are *gone*. If you have the opportunity to retrain at a future date, though, you’ll earn back the advantage at *double* the usual learning speed until you’ve reached your former level.

Drawbacks of Job Training

Job Training is inexpensive next to Talent, but has several significant drawbacks:

1. As already explained, learning and maintaining Job Training imposes harsh job requirements. There’s a real risk of

loss for adventurers who can’t make “adventuring” the same thing as “working.”

2. The skill bonus only benefits skills you *know* – never defaults. Since you must put a point in each skill in the first place, this isn’t a huge drawback, but it *does* affect skills outside the template that default to ones in it.

3. Job Training only teaches the subset of each skill necessary to do your job. Should you encounter an unfamiliar

situation or piece of gear, you lose your bonus in addition to suffering the standard unfamiliarity penalty (see *Familiarity*, p. B169). The GM may also deny the bonus for *tasks* that wouldn’t be a believable part of your training. In effect, the bonus is always qualified; see *Counting Your Blessings* (p. 5).

4. Those with Job Training have a recognizable way of doing things. Whenever you benefit from its bonus, anyone trying to track you down by examining your handiwork receives the *same* bonus on all rolls against information-gathering skills (Criminology, Intelligence Analysis, Observation, Search, etc.) to find clues or proof. In a sense, Job Training includes a Trademark disadvantage (p. B159).

Social Ramifications

Like Talent, Job Training gives a limited reaction bonus. When dealing with someone in your organization or a closely allied one (GM’s decision) while on the job,

if you have a higher level of Job Training, then add the *difference* in level to his reactions. While Job Training is usually military, this bonus isn’t limited to armed services; in any workplace, someone who puts in long hours, holds extra certifications, and is known to possess the latest expertise will enjoy some leeway on professional matters.

At the GM’s option, a minimum level of Job Training may be required to hold certain levels of Rank available on your template, or to qualify for certain lenses. If so, then you must maintain this level of Job Training in order to keep the applicable Rank and/or privileges (p. B30). Should you fall below that level, you *also* lose any associated social benefits. You get these back at no special cost if you restore your Job Training to its former level.

Conversely, Job Training need not be freely purchasable at character creation or in play. It’s possible that only those of a certain Rank can avail themselves of the lavish instruction implied. In that case, losing Rank has no *immediate* effect but will deny you future refreshers and updates; thus, as implied by *Maintaining Job Training* (above), six months after you lose your Rank, your Job Training will start to decay until it reaches the level allowed for your lower Rank. If you manage to restore your old Rank, you can earn back your lost Job Training at double speed.



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*Let the path be
 open to talent.*

– Napoleon
 Bonaparte

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