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**Character Creation:**

Outline:

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**Overview**

During character creation you take an abstract concept about what kind of individual you would like to embody and turn it into a set of statistics to help determine the outcomes of your choices in an uncertain world.

There are five attributes that describe your character. Each has influence over certain key elements and statistics of your character.

**Mental**

Intellect (Madness)

Will (Willpower)

**Physical**

Finesse (Initiative)

Strength (Damage)

Endurance (Health)

**Mental**

**Intellect** is a measure not only of your book smarts and education but also your curiosity and raw desire for knowledge beyond the mundane. This attribute covers a wide number of fields, from knowledge in Chemistry or Bioengineering to Psychology and Sociology. Intellect also determines your ability to remember facts and events.

Sadly, Intellect carries the unseen burden of **Madness**. Whether this manifests as a level of minor Obsessive Compulsive Disorder or all the way to full blown Psychosis is largely determined by the force of your intellect, and how much Willpower you have to keep these tendencies under control. When you achieve 3 points of Intellect, your character manifests a ‘Minor Madness’, an anomaly of personality that most others find odd or disquieting. For every 5 additional Intellect points you gain, you manifest a new ‘Minor Madness’. When you achieve 5 points of Intellect your character manifests a ‘Major Madness’. The form the madness takes is purely up to the player, so long as it represents a major impediment to the character’s ability to function (Read more on Madness later). For every 5 more points of Intellect the character gains, they also manifest a new ‘Major Madness’. See the chart below

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Intellect Points | Madness |
| 1 | None |
| 2 | None |
| 3 | **Minor** |
| 4 | None |
| 5 | **Major** |
| 8 | **Minor** |
| 10 | **Major** |

**Will** is a measure of your force of personality and internal discipline. Will is used in all social contexts, as a way of reading interpersonal cues and using these flashes of inspiration to charm, intimidate or convince others to your advantage. Will also determines your ability to create great works of art and music, as a physical expression of your internal qualia.

Importantly, Will also determines your **Willpower** stat which enables you to persevere through challenges to your sense of self, both external and internal. This is especially important for those with high Intellects struggling with the curse of madness. While high Willpower does not prevent you from gaining new madnesses, it helps you control their expression, especially during the delicate process of invention. During Schema and Crafting skill challenges, Willpower counterbalances the detriments of Madness. This can also be used to curb the Madness of others during group crafting rolls, which is why it always pays to have a competent Servitor on call.

**Finesse** is a general measure of how graceful, dextrous and quick your character is. A character with a high Finesse attribute may be able to walk a tightrope, fire a gun and dodge a sword, perhaps even all at the same time! The Finesse attribute also determines a character’s bonus to **Initiative**. Initiative helps a character act quickly during combat, a crucial skill for staying alive when the bullets start flying.

**Strength** represents a character’s raw physical prowess. This attribute is important for any character aiming to be on the front lines of combat, dealing a high level of melee damage. The Strength score directly influences a character’s **Damage** output in melee combat, and helps them to wield larger and larger weapons, such as the Gravmaul or a Steam-powered Battle Gauntlet. It also improves the character’s aptitude for physical feats such as swimming, running and climbing.

**Endurance** determines your character’s resilience to physical harm and their ability to persevere through hardships that would leave others unconscious or dead. A high Endurance attribute improves a character’s **Health**, a measure of their ability to survive bodily damage. This attribute is also necessary for resisting poison, radioactive exposure, and the effects of substance abuse.

**Base Statistics**

Determine the attribute layout that nature has provided before mad science says “Hold my beer”. Roll 1d10 and consult the following chart. Higher values represent stronger affinity for a trait, while lower values indicate deficiencies in that area. For example, a roll of 10 gives a completely average distribution, while a roll of 1 results in a polarized character. Assign each value to any of the 5 attributes such that each trait gets one number.

*Example: Doc Daring has rolled a 4 on a d10 while determining his base statistics. This means that he must assign a 1,2,3,4 and 5 to his attributes. Doc decides he’d like to be quick on the draw with a 5 in Finesse and clever enough to back up his trigger finger with a 4 in Intellect. The player decides that Doc is a little sickly though, and puts the 1 into Endurance and the 2 in Strength. The player also decides that Doc has a way with words and puts the final 3 into Will, completing Doc Daring’s base statistics.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Roll | Attribute Layout |
| 1 | 1/2/2/4/6 |
| 2 | 2/2/2/3/6 |
| 3 | 1/2/2/5/5 |
| 4 | 1/2/3/4/5 |
| 5 | 2/2/2/4/5 |
| 6 | 2/2/3/3/5 |
| 7 | 1/3/3/4/4 |
| 8 | 2/2/3/4/4 |
| 9 | 2/3/3/3/4 |
| 10 | 3/3/3/3/3 |

**Origin**

What kind of being are you? Are you a brain in a jar hooked up to a freshly milled mechanical body? A lab cloned servitor specially bred to serve your ghoulish mad scientist master? A hyper-intelligent chimpanzee determined to make your name as the emperor of hominids? The following are options that further customize the flavor and strengths of your character.

**Note**: No attribute may be improved beyond 6 at the outset of character creation.

*Example: Doc Daring’s player decides that Doc is a Synth, which automatically increases Doc’s Finesse score from the original 5 up to 6 -- the highest it can go at character creation. The player also decides to increase Doc’s Endurance to make him less fragile. Applying the flexible +2 bonus rounds Doc out with a total of 3 Endurance.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Origin | Strengths |
| Human | Add +2 to one attribute  Add +1 to one attribute |
| Mech | Add +2 to one attribute Add +1 to Endurance |
| Synth | Add +2 to one attribute Add +1 to Finesse |
| Kindled | Add +2 to one attribute Add +1 to Intellect |
| Servitor | Add +2 to one attribute  Add +1 to Will |

**Humans** are a highly varied, if somewhat egotistical, bunch of bipedal apes. They come in many shapes, colors and sizes, as well as a range of genders and sexual orientations. They can best be described as ‘squishy’ when confronted with any object travelling in excess of several hundred KPS. Yet somehow these self-absorbed hominids have expanded across the world and established themselves as the apex predators in every environment. That was, until mad science smacked them back down.

**Mechs** are becoming increasingly common sights, though few understand the complexities of their creation and maintenance. Given the computational and engineering hurdles of replicating a human brain, most Mechs have a biological brain as their control center, sending neural impulses to mechanical synapses to control their metal bodies. Each mech is different, a testament to the individual tastes of their creator, though many follow a bipedal form in homage to their human creators. Given the strength of their bodies, they have an innate resilience, but otherwise may be tailored to any specification.

**Synths** are artificially created biologic organisms, otherwise known as Synthetics. Their creation is a closely guarded secret, and any in the public eye are generally looked upon with emotions ranging from scorn to fear. Though their manufactured musculature and peripheral nervous system gives them improved speed, they are in most respects difficult to discern from humans, subject to the same strengths and flaws of character. While most synths are designed to look human to improve their disguise capabilities, some may have been crafted with other aesthetics in mind.

**Kindled** are a rare breed of animals blessed with keen intelligence, often as a result of blatant tampering from members of the scientific community. At least a few members of most major mammalian species have been experimented upon or wandered into quantum field experiments at the wrong moment and accidentally gained sentience. Their bodies often change slightly to reflect their new need for opposable manipulators and semi-upright locomotion. While they usually possess intelligence greater than the average human, their bodies and interests result in a high degree of variability.

**Servitors** are a class of organic being somewhere in between humans and synths. Their ancestry is a mixture of genetic tinkering and psychological conditioning to make them perfect minions and servants to powerful inventors in need of a pair of steadier hands. After all, when good help is hard to find, you might as well build your own. Servitors are perfect foils to their masters, often predicting their needs as if by magic and using their rock solid common sense to curb their Source away from the brink of madness. Of course, not all Servitors fit the genetic mold and have struck off on their own to become adventurers or Sources in their own right.

**Nationality**

Next, roll for your country of origin. Some of the country’s society or science has rubbed off on you, in some cases despite best efforts. Gain a +1 bonus to one of the skills associated with that culture. An example of 5 countries and their specialties are outlined in the table below.

*Example: Doc’s player decides that the character was grown in a lab in Touraine and therefore learned a bit about surgery during his childhood. Doc adds a +1 Surgery Skill to the character sheet.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Country** | **National Pride** |
| Victoriana | Textiles, Engineering, Automata |
| Allumania | Clockwork, Chemistry, Optics |
| Tenkoku | Botany, Farming, Handling |
| Touraine | Biology, Surgery, Genetics |
| Valdheim | Power Generation, Metallurgy, Mining |

**Skills**

**Upbringing**

Next, there is the matter of your progenitors and rearing. Usually, those who raise you are known as “parents,” but that is only a suggestion. Some of your progenitors’ work, hobbies or knowledge has been passed on to you. Make a case as to what skill from your youth stuck with you and receive a +1 bonus to it.

*Example: Doc Daring’s player decides that Doc was a lab grown Synth created specially for a theater troupe to help them with their acts and provide a little added defense. Doc therefore grew up amongst entertainers and carnies, and the player decides that he gains a +1 Acrobatics skill.*

[list of parent’s professions]

At last, there is the matter of your own interests. Whether your brain was plugged into a Valdheim combat mech, or you decided to follow your mafioso parents into a life of crime or you discovered within yourself a Source of invention and madness, your life experiences have molded your abilities. For each attribute you gain a number of skill ranks equal to the number of points you have in the attribute. Spend these attribute skill points solely on skills associated with that attribute. This includes the additional attribute points gained from the choice of Origin, for a total of 18 ranks (15 from starting attribute distribution and 3 from the Origin attribute points).

Finally, each character has had some opportunity to gain new skills of interest, explore hobbies, and hone their physical prowess. These individual preferences take the form of 10 additional skill ranks. You may distribute these amongst any skills.

The only hard and fast rule of the skill selection process is that the *number of skill ranks may never exceed the number in the parent attribute*. For example, a character with a strength of 2 may not have a Climbing skill of 3 until that character improves their baseline strength score.

*Example: Doc’s player has a 6 Finesse and 6 skill points to distribute into Finesse skills. Doc’s life of adventuring and entertaining with the Touraine has given him another 1 in Acrobatics (for a total of 2 including the 1 rank from his upbringing). He also puts a 2 in Small Arms, making him something of a pistolier. Last, the player puts a 1 in each Evasion, Sleight of Hand and Stealth. Next, Doc has a 5 in Intellect and distributes 1 skill point into Engineering, Biology, Firearms and Artillery, Mechanical Weapons and History. Then the player puts a 1 into Art (Performance), Perception, and Charm because of Doc’s 3 Will points. Doc also has a 3 Endurance and puts a 1 in Armor Use (Light), Resistance, and Survival. Finally, Doc has 2 Strength and gets 1 point in Athletics, Climb.   
 The player then has 10 flexible skill points to distribute. adding +1 point to Lockpicking, Acrobatics, Engineering, Charm, Climb, Weapon Specialty (Thrown Weapons). Doc also gets a +2 in Deceive and Evasion. Because Doc only has a 2 Strength, the player cannot increase Doc’s Climb skill any more during character creation.*

**Perks and Quirks**

Most people are more than just a collection numbers and skills (yes, even the mechs). Therefore, at character creation a player should select one perk and one quirk to help flesh out their personality. Some examples and their effects are below. Additional perks and quirks can be created and used with Game Master approval. Once chosen, these cannot be reversed.

*Example: Doc is Adroit but Flaky. The player chooses an extra Up Die on Stealth and Sleight of Hand. Because of his Flakiness, Doc will get one Down Die on Chemistry and Pilot (Land).*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Perk | Effect | Quirk | Effect |
| Amiable | 1 Up Die on two social skills | Antagonistic | 1 Down Die on two social skills |
| Brilliant | 1 Up Die on two crafting skills | Bullish | 1 Down Die on two crafting skills |
| Adroit | 1 Up Die on two expertise skills | Clumsy | 1 Down Die on two expertise skills |
| Eccentric | 1 Up Die on one social and one crafting skill | Erratic | 1 Down Die on one social and one crafting skill |
| Sage | 1 Up Die on one social and one expertise skill | Malicious | 1 Down Die on one social and one expertise skill |
| Clever | 1 Up Die on one crafting and one expertise skill | Flaky | 1 Down Die on one crafting and one expertise skill |

**Equipment**

**Skills**

**Intellect (Insanity)**

There are three classes of science intellect skills, **Applied**, **Hard** and **Social**. Those under the heading of **Applied Science**, strictly speaking, should be called “applied” biology, genetics, engineering etc. as they are the technical skills known by machinists and lab techs that allow them to actually build creations. Only **Applied Science** can be used as the primary skill when **Crafting. Hard Science** is what you typically think of when you hear the word science. Note that there are no general biology or chemistry skills and neither physics nor mathematics are as broad as you think. The **Hard Sciences** are skills of focused interest. Only **Hard Science** can be used as the primary skill in the **Schema** stage of creation. The **Social Sciences** are most of the soft sciences. While a niche interest in this game, there are still the occasional mad social scientists.

**Applied Science**

Biology

Biomechanics

Chemistry

Electricity[[1]](#footnote-0)

Engineering

Genetics

Materials Science

**Hard Science**

Acoustics

Aeronautical Engineering

Animalia

Artificial Intelligence

Augmentation

Automata

Biological Armor

Biological Power

Biological Senses

Biological Weapons

Chemical Receptors

Chemical Weaponry

Clockwork

Synthetica -- creation of synthetic organisms aka‘synths’

Deconstruction

Electrical Power

Electrical Weaponry

Explosives

Firearms and Artillery

Fuel

Geology

Herbology

Mechanical Armor

Mechanical Power - creation of engines and power sources tuned for automata

Mechanical Weapons -

Metallurgy (thanks ma!)

Medicine

Monera (Unicellular Organizations)

Naval Engineering -- building boats, submarines,

Neuroscience

Optics

Pharmaceuticals

Plantae & Fungi

Prosthetics

Structural Engineering

Surgery

Symbiotics

Vehicular Engineering

Virology

**Social Science**

Anthropology

Bureaucracy

Cartography

Child Rearing

Economics

Geography

History

Law

Linguistics

Philosophy

Political Science

Psychology

Religion

Sociology

**Will (Willpower)**

**Art**

**Culinary**

**Dance**

**Forgery --** ability to create fake documents, passports or signatures that appear genuine

**Music**

**Painting**

**Performance**

**Poetry**

**Weaving**

**Writing**

**Perception** -- a character’s ability to see the unseen, hear the unheard, and general pick up on things no one else notices.

**Social**

**Barter**

**Charm**

**Convince**

**Deceive**

**Intimidate**

**Leadership**

**Scrutiny**

**Endurance (Health)**

**Armor Use --** the capability to use armor and shields in an effective manor for self defense

**Light** -- knowledge of items such as bucklers, leather armor and snakeskin weave

**Heavy** -- ability to use items such as tower shields, plate armor and tyrannoceramite

**Labor** -- the ability to tough out long hours of work at tasks such as farming or stone quarrying

**Mining** -- skill at navigating caves, locating ore veins, and shoring up tunnels

**Resistance** -- a character’s strength in the face of conditions like poisoning or extreme heat

**Survival** -- ability to stay alive in wilderness settings, foraging food and water, and creating basic shelter

**Finesse (Initiative)**

**Acrobatics** -- skill and grace at tumbling, rolling and balancing

**Attack** --

**Melee Technique**

**Piercing**

**Slashing**

**Bludgeoning**

**Lashes** -- Including whips, chains, tails, tentacles and bladed scarves

**Unarmed** -- Fists, claws, bites, gores, wing attacks, trample and slams

**Ranged Technique**

**Bows**

**Small Arms** -- pistols, uzis and flechette guns

**Long Arms** -- rifles, carbines and shotguns

**Artillery** -- heavy guns, machine guns, mortars, launchers

**Evasion** -- a character’s ability to dodge attacks and evade harm during combat

**Lockpicking** -- the ability to open locked objects quickly and efficiently

**Pilot** -- the requisite technical skills needed to drive, steer or command different kinds of vessels, even under fire

**Air** -- Vehicles including planes, blimps, zeppelins, gliders

**Land** -- Vehicles including cars, walkers, treaded tanks, and speeders

**Sea** -- Vehicles ranging from small and large boats to submarines

**Subterranean** -- Vehicles for navigating the ground such as the MechaMole

**Sleight of Hand** -- the ability to conceal small objects, perform card tricks and pick pockets without notice

**Stealth** -- the character’s competence at going unheard and unseen when necessary

**Strength (Determines Max Load)**

**Athletics** -- ability to run, jump and be physically active.

**Climb** -- the ability to scale walls and

**Weapon Specialty--**

**Light Weapons** -- The ability to wield light weapons of all types such as short swords

**Heavy Weapons** -- the ability to wield heavy weapons of all types such as war mauls

**Thrown Weapon** -- Proficiency with hurled weapons such as throwing daggers or axes

**Swim** -- ability to swim strongly under normal and adverse conditions

**Core Mechanics**

The world runs on cause and effect. Attacks destroy targets, social rebukes cause uproar and of course building an unstoppable death machine increases your pool of terrified minions.

Whenever a character (and yes, character is a loose description for some) attempts an action for which there are consequences of failure, a challenge is required. A challenge is defined by a Cause roll and an Effect Roll using d10 dice and the skills and modifiers available in the situation.

**Cause**

When a hero swings a steam-powered battle carrot at a rampaging death bunny or a burglar attempts to infiltrate the lair of a heterochromatic wyrm there is some chance that they will fail. In this case, a Cause roll is required. This roll represents the chance that the wyrm wakes up at the wrong moment, the burglar sneezes accidentally, or the bunny flinches at the sight of the giant carrot leaving it open to attack. Of course, the martial skill of the hero, the clandestine expertise of the rogue and the terrain conditions in each scenario all factor in to the Cause roll as well, allowing for the skill of each character to overcome the vagaries of chance.

Broadly, when a Cause roll is called for by the Game Master, the player in question and the game master consider the situation to determine what modifiers alter the character’s ability to succeed at the challenge. In the above example, the hero’s raw strength and her prowess with two-handed weapons is pitted against the rabbit’s ability to dodge and the uncertain terrain of the battle arena.

These situational modifiers are known as Up Dice and Down Dice. Up Dice increase the odds of gaining an advantage during the Cause Roll, while Down Dice incur penalties. When a challenge is begun, the character starts with one Straight Die, representing their base chance of success or failure at the whims of fate. From there, the character’s aptitude or weakness at this type of challenge is weighed against other situational modifiers.

In the example, the hero might be very competent, giving her a total of 3 Up Dice, while the rabbit may only be slightly dodgy and the terrain only mildly hazardous for a total of 2 Down Dice. The two Down Dice cancel out two of the Up Dice, leaving a net 1 Up Die to modify the base Straight Die. Therefore, the hero’s player would roll 2 dice and take the better result for her attack. Had the numbers been reversed, the hero’s player would roll 2 dice and be stuck with the lower result. If the Up and Down Dice are equal they cancel out, leaving the player to roll a single, unmodified d10 representing a situation in which there is no clear advantage or penalty for the attack.

The following table generally describes the outcomes of a Cause Roll on a d10.

Note: what about 5-6 Down Die, 7-8 no modifier, 9-10 Up Die

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Die Result** | **Outcome** |
| **1: Critical Failure** | **Action Unsuccessful**  **Do not make an Effect Roll**  **Penalty Effect** |
| **2-4: Failure** | **Action Unsuccessful**  **Do not make an Effect Roll** |
| **5-7: Weak Success** | **Make an Effect Roll** |
| **8-9: Potent Success** | **Make an Effect Roll**  **Add 1 Up Die to Effect Roll** |
| **10: Critical Success** | **Make an Effect Roll**  **Add 1 Up Die to Effect Roll**  **Beneficial Effect** |

**Effect**

Once a Cause has proven successful by a player, roll on the Cause Table and Effect Roll is called for. The Effect Roll determines how successful the character’s action was. In the ongoing example, the hero has swung her mighty battle carrot with 1 Up Die modifying the Straight Die in her Cause Roll. The player rolls two d10s (the Straight Die and 1 Up Die) and gets a 2 and a 9. Because she had an overall Up modifier on the roll, she chooses the 9 -- according to the Cause Table a potent success! This means she has hit the death bunny, but now the Effect Roll will determine whether her strike was a mortal blow or merely a graze.

The Effect Roll is simpler than the Cause Roll. Under most circumstances the only modifier applied to the Effect Roll is from the preceding Cause Roll. In the example, the Potent Success gives the hero 1 Up Die on her Effect Roll. Therefore she rolls two dice and takes the better result.

After determining situational modifiers the player then rolls a number of d10s for the Effect Roll and consults the Effect Table above.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Roll** | **Outcome** |
| **1-4** | **Weak** |
| **5-8** | **Moderate** |
| **9-10** | **Potent** |

To finish the example, the hero rolls two dice thanks to her 1 Up Die from the preceding Cause Roll. The result is a 4 and a 6. She picks the better of the two and consults the Effect Chart. In this case she has scored a Moderate Outcome - a strong blow to the bunny with her battle carrot!

**Challenge Types**

There are 4 types of challenges: Combat, Social, Expertise and Crafting. Each of these types of challenges uses the core mechanics of Cause and Effect Rolls as described above but modifies them slightly as noted in the following sections.

**Crafting Challenges**

Overview

Creation is the primary mechanic by which characters advance throughout the game, building better bodies and fancier weapons. Creation is typically both modular and cooperative, as most creations are a sum of parts made by a team. This is not to say a sword or clock cannot be made in one go by one person, only that the typical clockwork soldier requires **automata** to make the **body**, **mechanical power** to make the **core**, and **artificial intelligence** to make the **mind**.

Schema, Crafting and Madness

There are two Cause/Effect stages to creation. The first, **Schema**, covers designing the blueprints, genetic code, surgical procedure or other method to make the creation. During the Schema (Cause) roll, the inventor’s mind has a chance of giving way to flights of fancy and adding new design ‘aesthetics’. These changes are added during the **Schema Madness** (Effect) roll.

Second, the **Crafting** stage includes the actual manufacturing, assembly and stitching together that will result in a novel machination of flesh, blood and/or steel. This step can be affected by the success (or lack thereof) from the original Schema phase. Finally, there is the **Crafting Madness** (Effect) roll in which the engineers may take it upon themselves to add “improvements” to the final product above and beyond the paltry blueprints from which they started.

In some cases, a crafter may stumble upon an intact schema dug up in an ancient crypt or pulled from the ashes of the laboratory down the street. In this instance, they may skip the initial Schema and Madness stage and proceed directly to crafting their own diabolical interpretation of the designs. Of course, if they don’t read them carefully or botch the interpretation, they may be surprised by the results...

Conversely, a busy Source may not have all the time or materials necessary to craft *every* invention that comes to mind. A Source can go through the steps of diagramming an idea with the Schema and Madness rolls but then opt to leave the project unbuilt. Later, when time permits, sufficient numbers of minions have been mustered and the grad students have been recaptured, a Crafting stage can be attempted.

**Schema (Cause)**

Determine roll modifier: Add 1d10 per Intellect point of the Primary crafter. Subtract 1d10 per tier of the target. Add or subtract any additional circumstantial modifiers.

**Skill Primary Secondary Secondary vs. TN**

**Total = 1 x Skill + ½ x Skill + ½ x Skill vs. TN**

The primary skill bonus is the full skill rank of the primary schemer and must be a **Hard Science** skill. The secondary skill bonus is either half a related skill bonus of the primary schemer or a half of the same or a related skill bonus of an assistant schemer. The tertiary skill bonus cannot come from the primary schemer’s skillset; it must be half the bonus of an associated skill of either an assistant schemer, research materials, or a creation being reverse engineered.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Roll | 1 | 2-4 | 5-7 | 8-9 | 10 |
| Outcome | Disastrous | Failed | Successful | Potent | Brilliant |
|  |  | No schema invented | Success  Roll for Madness | Roll for Madness with 1 up die | Roll for Madness with 1 up die  Add 1 trait |

**Crafting**

Determine roll modifier: Add 1d10 per 10 Intellect points of the Primary. Subtract 1d10 per tier of the target. Add or subtract any additional circumstantial modifiers.

**Skill Primary Secondary Secondary vs. TN**

**Total = 1 x Skill + ½ x Skill + ½ x Skill vs. TN**

The primary skill bonus is the full skill rank of the primary schemer and must be an **Applied Science** skill. The secondary skill bonus is either half a related skill bonus of the primary schemer or a half of the same or a related skill bonus of an assistant schemer. The tertiary skill bonus cannot come from the primary schemer’s skillset; it must be half the bonus of an associated skill of either an assistant schemer, research materials, or a creation being reverse engineered.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Roll | 1 | 2-4 | 5-7 | 8-9 | 10 |
| Outcome | Disastrous | Weak | Moderate | Potent |  |
|  | Total Failure | -½ Tier, -1 Negative Trait | Success | +½ Tier, +1 Positive Trait |  |

**Madness**

Now comes the fun part. Pool the intellect dice minus the will dice of everyone involved in the schema and crafting steps. Roll on the following table.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Roll | 1 | 2-4 | 5-8 | 9-10 |
|  | Bloody Stupid Johnson | Caught up in the moment | Sane! Mostly. | Completely Sane |
| Outcome | What else could have been made with the materials | 1-2 Major “Improvements” | 1-2 minor adjustments | Exactly as expected |

**Hard Science Disciplines and associated subskills**

**Biology**,

Animalia, Augmentation, Biological Armor, Biological Power, Biological Senses, Biological Weapons, Constructs, Medicine, Monera, Neuroscience, Plantae & Fungi, Prosthetics, Psychology, Surgery, Symbiotics, Virology

**Biomechanics**

Automata, Biological Armor and Weapons, Construct, Prosthetics

**Chemistry**

Chemical Receptors, Chemical Weaponry, Explosives, Fuel, Herbology, Medicine, Pharmaceuticals.

**Electricity**

Artificial Intelligence, Electrical Power, Electrical Weaponry.

**Engineering**,

Aeronautical Engineering, Automata, Clockwork, Engines, Firearms and Artillery, Mechanical Armor, Naval Engineering, Prosthetics, Structural Engineering, Vehicular Engineering.

**Genetics**

Animalia, Biological Armor, Power and Weapons, Constructs, Medicine, Monera, Pharmaceuticals, Plantae & Fungi

**Material Science**

Aeronautical Engineering, Chemical Weaponry, Engines, Explosives, Fuel, Mechanical Armor, Naval Engineering, Structural Engineering, Vehicular Engineering

**Mathematics**

**Physics**

**Suggested Linked Science Skills**

Acoustics, **Acoustics, Physics**

Aeronautical Engineering, **Architecture, Engineering**

Animalia, **Animalia, Biology**

Artificial Intelligence, **Electricity, Intelligence**

Astronomy & Astrophysics, **Physics**

Augmentation, **Biology, Medicine, Surgery**

Automata, **Clockwork, Engineering, Intelligence**

Biological Armor, **Armor** **Animalia\*, Biology, Monera\***, **Plantae & Fungi\***

Biological Power, **Animalia\*, Biology, Monera\***, **Plantae & Fungi\*, Power**

Biological Senses, **Acoustics\*, Animalia\*, Biology, Chemical Receptors\*, Optics\*, Plantae & Fungi\***

Biological Weapons, **Animalia\*, Biology, Monera\***, **Plantae & Fungi\*, Weaponry**

Chemical Receptors, **Biological Senses\*, Chemistry**

Chemical Weaponry, **Chemistry, Weaponry**

Clockwork, **Clockwork, Engineering**

Constructs, **Animalia, Surgery\*, Biology, Medicine, Intelligence**

Deconstruction

Electrical Power, **Electricity, Power**

Electrical Weaponry, **Electricity, Weaponry**

Engines, **Engineering, Power**

Explosives, **Chemistry, Weaponry**

Firearms and Artillery, **Clockwork, Engineering, Weaponry**

Fuel, **Chemistry, Power**

Geology, **Physics**

Herbology, **Chemistry, Medicine**

Mechanical Armor, **Armor,** **Engineering**

Medicine, **Biology, Chemistry, Medicine**

Monera, **Biology, Monera**

Naval Engineering, **Architecture, Engineering**

Neuroscience, **Biology, Intelligence**

Optics, **Optics, Physics**

Pharmaceuticals, **Chemistry, Medicine**

Plantae & Fungi, **Biology, Plantae & Fungi**

Prosthetics, **Animalia, Biology, Clockwork, Engineering**

Psychology, **Biology, Intelligence**

Structural Engineering, **Architecture, Engineering**

Surgery, **Biology, Medicine, Surgery**

Symbiotics, **Animalia, Biology, Monera**, **Plantae & Fungi**

Vehicular Engineering, **Architecture, Engineering**

Virology, **Biology, Medicine, Monera, Weaponry\***

**Combat Challenges**

Attack Phase

During this phase, the attacker compare their **finesse** and finesse related skill dice to the defender’s **finesse** and finesse related skill dice.

Calculate Attack Dice

**Size + Finesse + Weapon Skill + Situational = Attack**

Calculate Defense Dice

**Size + Finesse + Evasion = Defense**

Roll Total Attack Dice

Outcome

1-3 Miss

4-6 Minus Roll

7-9 Push Roll

10 Crit

Damage

During this phase the attacker has successfully hit the defender. They must now determine the strength and impact of that hit. In this phase, compare the attacker’s strength and strength related skill dice against the defender’s endurance and armor dice.

Calculate Damage Dice

**Strength + Weapon Skill + Weapon Tier + Attack Result + Situational = Damage**

Calculate Armor Dice

**Endurance + Armor Use + Armor Tier = Armor**

Roll Total Damage Dice

Outcome

1-4 Weak Damage Profile

5-7 Moderate Damage Profile

8-10 Potent Damage Profile

Combat Tactics

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tactic** |  |
| Charge | **(-) Defense, (+) Damage** |
| Flanking (2) | **(+) Attack** |
| Surrounded (3+) | **(+)(+) Attack** |
| Enfilade | **(-) Ranged Defense** |
| Surprised | **(-)(-) Defense** |
| Studied | **(+) Attack** |
| Off Balance | **(-) Defense** |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Condition | **Biologics** | **Mechanics** |
| Pain (X) | **Roll Willpower**  **(-X) Attack, Defense, Skills** | **N/A** |
| Terror (X) | **Roll Willpower**  **(-X) Attack, Defense, Skills** | **N/A** |
| Confused (X) | **(-X) Attack, Defense, Skills** | **N/A** |
| Malfunctioning (X) | **N/A** | **(-X) Attack, Defense, Skills** |
| Exhausted (X) | **(-X) Attack, Defense, Skills** | **N/A** |
| Drained Fuel | **N/A** | **(-X) Attack, Defense, Skills** |
| Sickened (X) | **(-X) Attack, Defense, Skills** | **N/A** |
| Overheat (X) | **N/A** | **X Damage/Turn** |
| Impaired Senses (X) | **(-X) Attack, Defense, Senses** | **(-X) Attack, Defense, Senses** |
| Poisoned (X) | **X Damage/Turn** | **N/A** |
| Contaminated (X) | **N/A** | **(-X) Attack, Defense, Skills** |
| Drowsy (X) | **(-X) Attack, Defense, Skills** | **N/A** |
| Cold Engine (X) | **N/A** | **(-X) Attack, Defense, Skills** |
| Helpless |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Combat Maneuvers |  |
| Bullrush |  |
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**Expertise Challenges**

The general rules for expertise challenges: Sum Attribute, skill and miscellaneous dice vs twice the challenge tier difficulty in down dice. Most expertise challenges are not completed in one try. Many have multiple elements, or multiple angles of approach

There are two main types of challenges: opposed, and static. An opposed skill would be sneaking past a mech’s sensor’s, where the rogue’s stealth skill would be pitted against the mech’s perception. A static challenge would be running five kilometers in heavy armor, pitting the marathoner vs a static challenge calculated from the terrain and the bulk of the armor carried. Some challenges blur the lines. They are opposed but the challenger and the challenged occur at different times. An example would be a jeweler appraising a counterfeit necklace. First the forger crafts a tier X counterfeit object in a static challenge setting the difficulty of the task, then much later the jeweler attempts to identify the counterfeit in another static challenge against the forger’s set difficulty.

Acrobatics (Finesse)

1. Doing a backflip: Challenge 4
2. Walking on a tightrope: Challenge 6
3. Rolling out of a twenty foot fall: Challenge 8
4. Performing a drop assassination: Challenge 10
5. Maintaining balance on a dirigible in a gale: Challenge 16

Manipulate Device (Finesse)

1. Picking a tier 2 lock: Challenge 4
2. Disarming a tier 4 trap: Challenge 8
3. Overheating a tier 5 engine: Challenge 10
4. Inflict a critical injury against a dangerous mech by exploiting a loose gasket: Challenge 14

Piloting (Finesse)

Air

Land

Subterranean

Nautical

Sleight of Hand (Finesse)

1. Picking a pocket

Stealth (Finesse)

1. Blending into a large crowd: Challenge 2
2. Sneaking past a guard: Challenge 6
3. Hiding from a Tier 5 Eyebot: Challenge 10
4. Disappearing from enemies in combat: Challenge 16

Athletics (Strength)

1. Running a fast mile: Challenge 2
2. Lifting a heavy object: Challenge 6
3. Running a full marathon: Challenge 10
4. Carrying a heavy load while running a long distance: Challenge 14

Climb (Strength)

1. A short wall with many handholds: Challenge 4
2. A tower with few handholds: Challenge 8
3. A moving, greasy garbage mech: Challenge 8
4. A rampaging Great Blue Porcupine: Challenge 14

Swim (Strength)

1. Swimming 100 feet in calm water: Challenge 2
2. Swimming across a choppy channel: Challenge 6
3. Swimming a Devil Guppy infested lake: Challenge 10
4. Rescuing a drowning mecha in a typhoon: Challenge 18

Art (Willpower)

Fogery (Willpower)

1. Creating a false ticket to a fair: Challenge 2
2. Faking a police report: Challenge 8
3. Creating a false passport to Valdheim: Challenge 12
4. Forging a king’s signature and royal seal: Challenge 16

Perception (Willpower)

1. Spotting a far off gyrocoptor on a sunny day: Challenge 2
2. Hearing a thief disappear down an out-of-sight alley: Challenge 8
3. Identifying a miniscule piece of evidence at a crime scene: Challenge 10
4. Spotting a member of the Tenkoku Shadow Corps: Challenge 16

Labor (Endurance)

1. Moving rocks for an hour: Challenge 4
2. Digging a trench all day: Challenge 6
3. Agreeing with your significant other about something they’re clearly wrong about: Challenge 12
4. Laboring to build a pyramid in the desert under harsh conditions: Challenge 14

Mining (Endurance)

1. Recognizing a load bearing beam: Challenge 4
2. Recognizing a lode bearing seam: Challenge 6
3. Creating a structurally sound shaft support: Challenge 8
4. Performing the high temperature, high pressure Blassius Method of salt extraction without killing anyone: Challenge 16

Survival (Endurance)

1. Starting a fire without flint or tinder: Challenge 4
2. Finding water in a desert: Challenge 8
3. Differentiating between the rare white dragon bush, which makes a tea so delicious it’s heartbreaking and the white jade bush, which is poisonous: Challenge 12
4. Properly warming a Blue Billed Anti-lope suffering from hypothermia: Challenge 14

**Social Challenges**

Social Challenges are in many ways like warfare. Brutal, cruel grueling. *Source* is different from other role playing systems, in that social duels are almost always opposed.

Calculate Attack Dice

**Willpower + Social Skill + Situational = Attack**

Calculate Defense Dice

**Willpower + Social Skill + Evasion = Defense**

Roll Total Attack Dice

Outcome

1-3 Miss

4-6 Minus Roll

7-9 Push Roll

10 Crit

Sum Attribute, skill and miscellaneous dice

twice the challenge tier difficulty in down dice. Most expertise challenges are not completed in one try. Many have multiple elements, or multiple angles of approach

There are two main types of challenges: opposed, and static. An opposed skill would be sneaking past a mech’s sensor’s, where the rogue’s stealth skill would be pitted against the mech’s perception. A static challenge would be running five kilometers in heavy armor, pitting the marathoner vs a static challenge calculated from the terrain and the bulk of the armor carried. Some challenges blur the lines. They are opposed but the challenger and the challenged occur at different times. An example would be a jeweler appraising a counterfeit necklace. First the forger crafts a tier X counterfeit object in a static challenge setting the difficulty of the task, then much later the jeweler attempts to identify the counterfeit in another static challenge against the forger’s set difficulty.

Barter

Charm

Convince

Deceive

Intimidate

Leadership

Scrutiny

**Character Advancement**

In a world where squishy, dumb apes can replace their squishy bits with machinery, or at least with biological bits that are less squishy, improving your attributes and skills is not only within the realm of possibility but expected. Every attribute, skill and body part can be improved or honed to create a stronger, smarter, deadlier crackpot.

At the end of each game session the players and the DM should take a few minutes to reflect on the actions and adventures of all the characters. First, each character is awarded a number of Marks based on the length of the game session in real time. Marks should be awarded for active and productive game playing hours (not for the hour spent ordering pizza and making Holy Grail references). Depending on the speed at which players and DM agree that they want characters to advance, the following table is a suggestion for how many Marks should be awarded for real time play.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Slow Game Progression | Moderate Game Progression | Fast Game Progression |
| 1 Mark/45 minutes | 1 Mark/1 hour | 1 Mark/ 1.5 hours |

*Example: After 4 hours of solid play, the game session comes to an end. The players have agreed on a Moderate speed of game progression, so each character is awarded 4 EXP.*

**Skill Advancement:**

Next they should discuss which skills were particularly useful to each character, either because they were completely novel to that character, succeeded in a new way, or failed spectacularly at a critical moment. Players must then spend their EXP immediately on improving their ratings in some or all of the skills which they practiced in during the game session. The amount of experience points that must be spent to achieve each skill rank is described in the Character Advancement Table. EXP spent on a skill are applied immediately so that the player will get the benefit of the new skill rank next game session. At this time, the DM may choose to cap the number of EXP points a player can spend on certain skills (reflecting that a character may have only spent a few minutes on picking a lock and therefore can only have learned a small amount of lock picking).

Higher skill ranks require a greater amount of EXP, so players will often have to spend multiple play sessions to improve a moderate skill rank to a higher skill rank. In this case, mark down the number of EXP towards the next skill level as a reminder of how far the character has come in practicing towards the next rank. Thus, in order to take a skill all the way from 0 Ranks to Rank 10 would take a cumulative 110 EXP. This can be supplemented in certain ways, including paid training and hybrid training and crafting (described below).

*Example: At the end of a game session Lady Natsinet Senai has earned 4 experience points and distinguished herself by making a trick pistol shot, improving the internal workings of a Doom Clock, and failing spectacularly to hide from a bunch of marauding Rhinothopters. The DM allows her to spend her EXP on Stealth, Clockwork, and Small Arms skills. Since she only made one shot with her pistol, the DM decides that she can only spend 2 EXP towards her Small Arms skill. Lady Natsinet has 0 ranks in Stealth and decides that she would like to be more sneaky in case of future Rhinothopters. She spends 2 EXP and achieves Rank 1 in Stealth, giving her an additional Up Die on future stealth rolls. To improve it further, she would have to spend another 4 EXP on her Stealth skill.*

*She also decides that she wishes to improve her Clockwork. Her Clockwork skill is already a 4, and last session she already allocated 3 EXP toward the next rank. She spends her final 2 EXP from this session to add to her existing total in her Clockwork skill. She still has Rank 4 Clockwork, but now with 5 EXP towards her goal of Rank 6 Clockwork and 5 to go according to the Character Advancement Table. She has now spent all of the EXP she earned this session and the DM handles the next player’s character.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Rank | Cost (Gaskets) | Time (Weeks) | Cost (EXP) |
| I | 100 | 2 | 4 |
| II | 400 | 4 | 6 |
| III | 900 | 9 | 8 |
| IV | 1,600 | 16 | 12 |
| V | 2,500 | 25 | 16 |
| VI | 3,600 | 36 | 20 |
| VII | 4,900 | 49 | 26 |
| VIII | 6,400 | 64 | 32 |
| IX | 8,100 | 81 | 38 |
| X | 10,000 | 100 | 44 |

**Attributes Advancement:**

Attributes can be improved in a number of ways, primarily by crafting or buying new body parts, augments or gene therapies. Any individual can also maximize their own physical and mental prowess through rigorous conditioning and old fashioned hard work. Improving an attribute to the next level in this fashion requires the amount of time shown in weeks on the Character Advancement Table (but not the cost). An attribute can only be trained to Rank 5 in this fashion (representing the limits of your basic mortal body). During this time the character must remain predominantly engaged in their physical or mental training. If the character decides to overlap this practice time with other activities (such as adventuring or crafting) then the amount of time it requires to achieve the next level of the attribute is doubled. Keep in mind that during this time, the character still needs to pay for lodging, food and other upkeep expenses.

*Example: Sir Trochlea “Modesto” Worthington wishes to improve his Strength Attribute from a mediocre 2 to a more worthy 3. In order to attain rank 3, he must spend 9 weeks working diligently at improving his physical fitness. During this time he goes on runs, lifts weights, eats well and does all manner of other disturbingly “healthy” practices. At the end of this time, the DM allows Sir Trochlea to improve his Strength to 3. If he wanted to further improve himself to a 4 Strength he would need an additional 16 weeks! He decides to move on to other activities.*

Due to the length of in-game time it can take to improve one’s character to maximum levels of fitness, intelligence and willpower, players may also wish to skip the elbow grease and simply graft on an extra set of gorilla arms or inject themselves with neuromodulatory enhancement serum to skyrocket their attribute scores.

Purchasing

1. Anything beyond cursory research into electricity is banned by the Guilds. Which I realize to you people is the exact same as a gold plated invitation but when black masked assassins drop in through the skylights of your ‘secret’ laboratory and firebomb the place at least you can’t say I didn’t warn you. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)