Skills

*Good morning. My name is Kath O'Malley. I've been asked to pass on a few little nuggets of information. With my powers, they should sink in. Just kidding! I wouldn't do that to you.*

*First, treat this world like it's Noah's Ark. Always travel in pairs. It doesn't matter what you have to do, always have someone keep an eye on you. If you need to pee or take a dump, the time for being shy is over. The last thing you want is some zombie attacking you with your literal pants down.*

*Second, remember, fire is your best friend in this apocalypse. It's the only treatment for zombie bites. Always have a way to make fire-hand sanitizer, rubbing alcohol, matches, a lighter, and some type of cloth. Then, be prepared to treat the burn. Keep a close watch on the bite victim. If you see signs of infection, you may have to make a tough call. But remember, you're in control. Act quickly and quietly. And if the worst happens and the victim turns into a super zombie, remember, you have the power to end it.*

*Third, zombies, for the most part, are stupid. They don't use tools. They can't open doors or windows. They can't get out of seat belts. They can't climb ladders. They tend to be slow and clumsy. All they want to do is feed. Single zombies are generally no threat. They should be taken out quietly. If you go in guns blazing, the sound will draw every zombie for miles. Zombies are attracted by sound and movement. If they see you move, they will follow you. Sound can be your friend. Car alarms, car radios, boom boxes, and anything that makes noise will attract zombies. Just make sure you aren't seen while setting off your noisemakers.*

*Then there are the super zombies. These zombies are apex predator-eating machines. They have no morality, and their intellects are intact. You want to avoid them at all costs. There is a rumor that super zombies can acquire more powers by eating other supers. If I am bitten and in danger of turning, please blow my head off. My powers are emotion control, mind control, and telepathy.  If I become a super zombie, I can easily fool the guards, walk right into camp, and discreetly start feeding on who I want to.*

*Fourth, dogs. Dogs are no longer man's best friend. They are territorial, travel in packs, and most haven't had their rabies shots. There is no cure for rabies, just a long, painful death.*

*Fifth, other survivors. You never know what to expect from other survivors. Mel Brooks wrote a song, "Hope for the Best. Expect the Worst". Other survivors are just as scared of you as you are of them. Some may offer trade. Some may be just barely getting by. Some may just be ready to shoot you and loot your corpse. Just be cautious.*

*You can almost always tell a building that has people. The windows will be boarded up on the first floor. The smallest window will have a big pile of garbage outside of it. People don't want to live in their own filth. Bodies may have been burned or possibly buried. If there are bodies in the street, check the position the body is in. You may figure out where other survivors are sniping from.*

*On scavenging. Don't kick in every door. Learn to pick locks. Also, make a little noise before going in. You may hear zombies stumbling around the place, even the clack, clack, clack of gnashing teeth. If a building has large glass doors or windows, and you must break them to get in, try to break the lower portions and crawl in. Zombies are too stupid to crawl in after you.*

*Always look for traps. Super zombies still have their intellects. Snares and tripwire may hurt or cripple you, but you're still fresh meat. Also, survivors will protect a stash. Some "Last Man on Earth" may have a whole series of booby traps protecting his place.*

*Always shop with a list. Just get the stuff you need and get home safely. Are there things you should always look out for? Absolutely. Multivitamins. Unless you live on a farm, your diet is canned crap. First aid supplies. Fire extinguishers. There is no 911 service. Ammunition. If you need personal items, bring someone with you. Don't be embarrassed if you need underwear or tampons.*

*Thanks for listening. Please come back alive and in one piece.*

In this chapter, we break down skills and how to use them to tell your stories. This list is detailed but not exhaustive. Detailing a system to encompass every possibility you and your fellow players can come up with would be a herculean task and, honestly, constrain your creativity. These rules are your basic guidelines, a framework to give you and the editor-in-chief what they need while hopefully giving you enough of an edge so as not to become Zombie Chow.

# Skills and Ability Scores

While skills are commonly linked to a particular Ability Score, which represents its most common use, you may use another Ability Score if the situation calls for it. For example, you may have used Charisma with Influence to calm down a frightened kid. Still, you may later opt to use your Intelligence with your Influence skill instead as you attempt to trip up a suspicious scavenger with leading questions.

Make the most of your opportunities and try to find ways to pair your best ability score with your skills; sometimes it’ll work, sometimes it won’t, but you stand a good chance of getting the Editor-in-Chief on your side if you have interesting ideas.

For instance, you can pair Intelligence with any skill when rolling to know things related to that skill.You may use Intelligence (Academics) to determine the programs of a former college, Intelligence (Melee) to determine what sports equipment makes the best weapons, or Intelligence (Medicine) to determine if any hospitals or clinics in the area may have supplies.

## Ability Checks and Skill Checks

An Ability Check tests your innate talent in an effort to overcome a challenge, while a Skill Check tests your proficiency with a particular skill. The Editor-In-Chief may call for either an Ability Check or a Skill Check when you or a creature under the Editor-In-Chief’s control attempts an action that has a chance of failure.

When an Ability Check is called for, the Editor-In-Chief decides which of the six abilities is relevant to the task at hand and the difficulty of the task. When a Skill Check is called for, the Editor-In-Chief commonly decides which Skill to use and which ability to combine it with. However, this combination is not set in stone; as mentioned above, you may always propose another pairing if you can justify its use.

For example, the Editor-In-Chief may require a Dexterity (Stealth) check to set up an ambush, dexterity being that skill’s primary ability score. But you may propose an alternate use of the skill. To assist your friends in hiding, you opt to survey the area for the most advantageous hiding spots, allowing you to use your Intelligence with your Stealth skill to give your allies Advantage on their skill checks.

Once an Ability or Skill check is called for, the Editor-In-Chief sets your target number or Difficulty Class (DC). The more difficult a task, the higher its DC. The Typical Difficulty Classes table shows the most common DCs. To make an Ability Check, roll a d20 and add the relevant ability modifier or your Ability Modifier + your Hero’s Rank for a Skill Check. As with other d20 rolls, apply bonuses and penalties and compare the total to the DC. If the total equals or exceeds the DC, the ability check succeeds. Otherwise, it’s a failure, and what that failure entails is up to the Editor-In-Chief.

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| **Table X-X  Typical Difficulty Classes** |
| **Difficulty Class (DC)** |
| Easy (10) |
| Routine (15) |
| Challenging (20) |
| Daunting (25) |
| Amazing (30) |
| Improbable (35) |
| Astounding (40) |

## <h2>Skill Training

The only school left after Z-Day hit is the School of Hard Knocks. And while you can attempt things you have never had any training in, having a solid foundation in certain skills can make all the difference. Anyone can sneak around (use of the Stealth skill) or even have read a book on Sociology (use of Academics). Someone without a firm grounding in Engineering (Robotics) wouldn’t know the first thing about building a robot. Below, we break down various levels of skill training: untrained, standard, focused

### <h3>Untrained

You may make untrained skill checks with any skill that allows untrained skill checks. In these cases, you make a skill check using the most appropriate Ability Score Bonus plus your Hero’s Rank with a disadvantage.

### <h3>Standard Skill Training:

You possess a standard level of training in a particular skill, representing a standard level of competency. In these cases, you make a skill check using the most appropriate Ability Score Bonus plus your Hero’s Rank.

### <h3>Focused:

You possess exceptional training in a particular skill. When making a skill check within a focused field of study or specialization, you make the check with advantage, using the most appropriate Ability Score Bonus plus your Hero’s Rank.

## <h2> Skill Check Modifiers

### <h3> Circumstances

There are times when the Editor-in-Chief may grant you Advantage or Disadvantage to your skill check when circumstances are in your favor or against it. For example, the Editor-in-Chief may grant you Advantage on a stealth check while slowly walking across a soft carpet. Disadvantage on that same skill check if the carpet is saturated with water, causing your steps to make squishing sounds. See Advantage/Disadvantage on pg. XX.

## Cooperation

You can combine your efforts on a single Ability or Skill Check with other Heroes when not in combat. The assisting hero or bystander may forgo any check of their own, granting you a +2 bonus on that skill check up to a maximum of +4 with two assistants.

## The Right Tools for the Job

Making an Action Skill Roll without the appropriate tools for the job imposes a -5 penalty to your skill check. However, at the Editor-in-Chief’s discretion, you may attempt to work with makeshift tools, lowering the penalty to -3. Lastly, there are times when the Editor-in-Chief may deem a task impossible without any tools.

## Passive Skill Use

Some individuals reach a level of proficiency with their skills where some tasks become second nature; a firearms expert can take apart and reassemble an AR-15 blindfolded. A master mechanic can listen to a running car and tell that it has a damaged engine mount.

Any skill you are trained in has a passive skill DC. Your Passive Skill Number for any trained skill equals 10 + Primary Ability Score Modifier + Hero’s Rank; this number can come into play in two ways.

***Trivial Tasks:*** If a skill check has a DC lower than the passive skill number, you automatically succeed in that skill check. Tasks with a significant cost of failure (like pulling yourself back onto the roof from a precipice) are never trivial tasks.

***Passive Skill Challenge:*** Sometimes, you may be required to roll a Skill Check, Attack Roll, or an Ability Check against another creature’s passive skill, DC.

For example, Let’s say you’re trying to hack into a former supervillain’s computer system, and that supervillain became zombie chow years ago. You’d perform a Skill Check against the former supervillain’s Technology skill’s passive skill DC.

## Skills in a Fight

Commonly, skills used in combat take an action, but sometimes you may be forced to perform a little faster than normal or, if you have nerves of steel, to take a few seconds to help guarantee success.

***Rush Jobs:*** Any time you are utilizing a non-combat skill in combat, you may reduce the time required to perform the skill to a bonus action by suffering Disadvantage on our Skill Check.   
  
***Just give me a few more seconds!***Alternatively, you may opt to take some extra time by using a Demanding action to make your skill check. You gain a +5 bonus to your Skill Check. But if you must remain stationary during your check, if you take any damage or are moved, you automatically fail your skill check.

## Social Encounters

The two most important skills in social situations are Empathy and Influence. Empathy is the ability to read another person’s emotional state or the attempt to convey meaning through expressions and gestures. Influence is the ability to convince someone to give you what you want or convince them that they want to help you.

Before any dice are rolled, the Editor-in-Chief is going to ask you what you intend to say and achieve. If you sound persuasive enough, that may be the end of it; you get what you’re asking for, and the struggle for survival continues. If the Editor-in-Chief feels that rolls are necessary, then they might assign the appropriate skills and any circumstantial modifiers (telling someone to run while pointing a glowing hand at them makes your argument more persuasive).

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| **Table X-X Complete Skills List:** Skills With \* Possess fields of study | |
| Academics\* | Medicine \* |
| Acrobatics \* | Occult\* |
| Animal Handling \* | Outdoorsman\* |
| Athletics \* | Prestidigitation\* |
| Basic Engineering | Perception |
| Basic Technology | Performance\* |
| Drive \* | Pilot \* |
| Empathy | Scavenge\* |
| Engineering \* | Science \* |
| Escapee Artist | Stealth |
| Influence \* | Technology \* |
| Investigation | Urban Survival \* |
| Larceny \* |  |
| Linguistics \* |  |
| Local Knowledge \* |  |

# Skill Descriptions

All skills list that skill’s **Primary Ability Score,** the most common Ability Score used with the skill. And whether the skill can be used **untrained** or not. In addition, some skills may have a list of specializations and focus.

**Fields of Study:** List of possible skill foci; learning a skill focus gives Advantage on all skill checks when performing a skill check involving your focus.

No list is meant to be exhaustive of all possible fields of study. The editor-in-chief and players should feel free to create fitting fields to round out their heroes.

Any time the rules call out a skill focus, it will be presented as *Skill (Field of Study you focused with)*

## Academics

**Primary Ability Score:** Intelligence

**Untrained:** Yes

**Fields of Study:** Any general field of academic study such as Psychology, Political Science, Sociology, Mathematics, and History.

You know much about scholarly pursuits such as anthropology, bureaucracy, government, history, and sociology. Some uses of sociology may be determining the power structure within a group of survivors. Your knowledge of geography may also be useful when using old roads to get from place to place or recalling the locations of government buildings and publicly known military installations.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Conduct Research**: An Easy (DC 10) skill check will allow you to conduct thorough research using libraries or digital databases, gathering useful information efficiently.
* **Recall Historical Facts**: This is a routine (DC 15) skill check to remember specific facts or details about historical events or scholarly topics, such as the key events of Z-Day or major political shifts.
* **Analyze Data**: This is a challenging (DC 20) skill check to evaluate data and make informed conclusions or predictions about current events or future trends in the survivor community.
* **Determine Power Structures**: Using Wisdom instead of Intelligence, a Routine (DC 15) skill check to assess and understand the power dynamics within a group of survivors, identifying key leaders and potential threats.

## Acrobatics

**Primary Ability Score:** Dexterity

**Untrained:** Yes

**Fields of Study:** Tumbling, Parkour (aka Free Running), Balance.

You can flip, dive, roll, tumble, and perform other acrobatic maneuvers. You can walk across tightropes and wires, reduce your falling damage, and tumble through obstacles and opponents.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Reduce Fall Damage**: An Easy (DC 10) Acrobatics (Dexterity) check to reduce your damage from a fall. Subtract the result of your roll (in feet) from the distance fallen before determining falling damage, rounded up to the nearest area. A fall reduced to 0 feet (or less) deals no damage. A focus on Parkour would apply to this check.
* **Tumble Past an Obstacle**: The Editor-in-Chief sets the Difficulty based on the size and nature of the obstacle. If you’re trying to bypass opponents, the DC is opposed by their Melee Attack roll or Empathy (Wisdom) roll.
* **Navigate Obstacles**: This is a challenging (DC 20) Acrobatics check that allows you to bypass physical obstacles or tight spaces gracefully.

## Animal Handling

**Primary Ability Score:** Wisdom

**Untrained:** Yes

**Fields of Study:** Riding, Animal Handling, Animal Training.

Animal Handling is a powerful skill in the world after Z-Day, as horses provide reliable means of transportation and dogs can be trained to sniff out zombies. Unfortunately, zombies have no problem slaying these creatures.

**Suggested Skill Use:**

* **Read Emotions**: This is an easy (DC 10) skill check to understand an animal's emotional state and intentions, such as whether a dog is aggressive or a horse is nervous.
* **Calm Animals**: Using Charisma instead of Wisdom, a Routine (DC 15) skill check to soothe or frighten animals. For this, use the Table X-XX Social Encounters Situational Modifiers and raise all DCs on that table by 5.
* **Train Animals**: This is a challenging (DC 20) skill check to teach animals basic commands or complex tricks. Most types of training require prolonged skill checks, which may take weeks (taking several out-of-frame activities).
* **Ride a Horse**: This is a routine (DC 15) skill check for riding a horse through difficult terrain or during a stressful situation, maintaining control and ensuring the animal’s safety.

## Athletics

**Primary Ability Score:** Strength

**Untrained:** Yes

**Fields of Study:** Climbing, Running, Jumping, Swimming, Feats of Strength.

You excel at physical feats of strength and endurance, and you are adept at maintaining a sustained level of activity.

**Suggested Skill uses:**

* **Climb Difficult Surfaces**: This is an easy (DC 10) skill check to climb a moderately challenging surface like a tree or a rough wall. The DC would be higher for extremely smooth or slippery surfaces.
* **Swim Through Rough Waters**: A Routine (DC 15) skill check to swim through rough or turbulent waters without being swept away.
* **Jump Long Distances**: A Challenging (DC 20) skill check to jump across wide gaps or reach high places. This might involve running jumps or standing leaps.
* **Endure Long-Distance Running**: Using Constitution instead of Strength, a Routine (DC 15) skill check to maintain a fast pace over a long distance without becoming exhausted.
* **Perform Feats of Strength**: A Challenging (DC 20) skill check to perform impressive feats of strength, such as lifting a heavy object, bending metal bars, or breaking through a barrier.

## Basic Engineering

**Primary Ability Score:** Intelligence

**Untrained:** yes, special

You can perform simple acts of engineering such as mounting a rifle on a vehicle, patching a hole in the gas tank, changing an engine belt, or even converting an alternator into a wind-powered battery charger.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Basic Maintenance/Repairs**: This is an easy (DC 10) skill check for simple repairs that take about 30 minutes, such as patching a small hole in a gas tank or changing an engine belt. Minor repairs (DC 15) might take an hour or two.
* **Improvised Fixes**: This is a routine (DC 15) skill check to create makeshift repairs using available materials, such as duct tape and scrap metal, to fix a broken axle.
* **Modify Equipment**: This is a challenging (DC 20) skill check to enhance or alter equipment for improved functionality, like mounting a rifle on a vehicle or converting an alternator into a wind-powered battery charger.
* **Specialized Tasks**: Attempting specialized tasks with a DC of 20 or greater (such as building an engine) imposes Disadvantage on your skill check even if you have a focus in this skill.
* **Resource Management**: Use wisdom instead of Intelligence, a Routine (DC 15) skill check, to efficiently manage and allocate engineering resources, ensuring minimal waste and optimal use of available materials.

## Basic Technology

**Primary Ability Score:** Intelligence

**Untrained:** Yes

You know how to use common electronic devices, log in and out of popular operating systems, use common communication systems, and use everyday electronics such as a GPS or tablet computer. While the internet and communication, in general, have been severely disrupted in the post-Z-Day world, there are still many instances where such knowledge is useful.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Basic Maintenance/Repairs**: This is an easy (DC 10) skill check for simple repairs that take about 30 minutes, such as fixing a loose wire or replacing a battery. Minor repairs (DC 15) might take an hour or two, like replacing a broken screen or soldering a circuit board.
* **Operate Devices**: This is an easy (DC 10) skill check for using common electronic devices and systems, such as logging into a computer, setting up a GPS, or operating a radio.
* **Advanced Operations**: This is a challenging (DC 20) skill check for hacking into systems or modifying basic technology, such as bypassing security on a locked computer or upgrading the software on a communication device.
* **Improvised Solutions**: Using Dexterity instead of Intelligence, a Routine (DC 15) skill check to quickly improvise a technological solution in a high-stress situation, like rigging a broken drone to function temporarily.
* **Specialized Tasks**: Attempting specialized tasks with a DC of 20 or greater (such as hacking a secure PC) imposes Disadvantage on your skill check even if you have a focus in this skill.

## Drive

**Primary Ability Score:** Dexterity

**Untrained:** Yes

**Fields of Study:** Automobiles, Motorcycle, Power Boat, Sailboat, Trucks.

This skill allows you to drive motorcycles, trucks, and boats. Most people are presumed to have a basic facility for driving. Being trained in this skill allows you to perform complex maneuvers and conduct regular maintenance.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Basic Driving**: Driving vehicles under normal conditions does not require a skill check.
* **Complex Maneuvers**: This is a routine (DC 15) skill check for performing stunts or driving in challenging conditions, such as evading obstacles, high-speed chases, or driving through difficult terrain.
* **Vehicle Maintenance**: This is a challenging (DC 20) skill check to conduct regular maintenance and minor repairs on vehicles, such as changing oil, fixing a flat tire, or tuning an engine.
* **Navigate in Adverse Conditions**: Use wisdom instead of Dexterity, a Routine (DC 15) skill check, to safely navigate a vehicle through adverse weather conditions or unfamiliar terrain.
* **Emergency Repairs**: This is a challenging (DC 20) skill check to perform emergency repairs on a vehicle to keep it running temporarily, such as patching a radiator leak or jury-rigging a broken fuel line.

## Empathy

**Primary Ability Score:** Wisdom

**Untrained:** Yes

Empathy is your ability to read another’s emotional state and mannerisms and, in general, notice when something is amiss. By no means is Empathy a science; it’s more about relying upon your intuition and developing insight into the motivations of others. Empathy is primarily used for social encounters where you are trying to get a “read” on someone.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Get a “Read” of Someone**: An Empathy (Wisdom) check against your opponent’s Influence (Charisma) if they are attempting to convey different intentions or Influence (Intelligence) if they are using a poker face.
* **Convey Emotions**: This is a challenging (DC 20) skill check that requires using gestures and expressions to communicate nonverbally, such as indicating danger or expressing trust without words.
* **Sense Motives**: This is a routine (DC 15) skill check to determine if someone is nervous, fearful, or otherwise emotionally compromised, which might indicate they are hiding something or under duress.
* **Detect Subtle Changes**: Using Intelligence instead of Wisdom, a Routine (DC 15) skill check to detect subtle changes in someone’s behavior or body language that might indicate stress, deceit, or other underlying emotions.
* **Understand Group Dynamics**: This is a challenging (DC 20) skill check to read the emotional atmosphere of a group, identifying underlying tensions, alliances, or conflicts.

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**Editor’s Note: What Empathy is and is not.**   
Empathy is not the ability to know either when someone is telling a lie or when someone is concealing something. This skill is not a truth-detector, nor is it a substitute for role-playing. It is intended solely to indicate another person's emotional state.  
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## Engineering

**Primary Ability Score:** Intelligence

**Untrained:** No

**Fields of Study:** Aeronautical Engineering, Automobile Mechanic, Cybernetics, Electrical Engineering, Metalworking, Mechanical Engineering, Robotics, Structural Engineering, and Weapons Engineering.

You can perform impressive acts of engineering, such as repairing an experimental plasma rifle or repairing a set of low-light optics. Complex and thorough repairs (such as rebuilding an engine) or building items from scratch (and scraps!) require prolonged skill checks.

If you are not trained in Basic Engineering, when you are making a skill check that includes some aspect of a specialization you are trained in, you do not suffer Disadvantage on your skill check.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Basic Maintenance/Repairs**: Simple repairs that take about 30 minutes and fall under your specialization do not require a skill check. Minor repairs that take an hour or two only require a successful Easy (DC 10) skill check.
* **Operate Devices**: Using common electronic devices and systems that fall under your specialization does not require a skill check.
* **Advanced Operations**: Hacking into systems or modifying advanced technology that falls under your specialization requires a successful Challenging (DC 20) skill check.
* **Complex Construction**: A Challenging (DC 20) skill check to build a complex device or machine from scratch using available materials and parts, such as constructing a makeshift generator or a custom weapon.
* **Structural Analysis**: Using Wisdom instead of Intelligence, a Challenging (DC 20) skill check to assess the integrity of a building or structure, determining weak points, potential hazards, and necessary repairs.

<Side Bar>   
If you are looking to create a hero who can create technological gadgets see the power ***Inventive Gadgetry.***

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## Escape Artist

**Primary Ability Score:** Dexterity

**Untrained:** Yes

You know the assorted tricks and techniques that allow you to escape bonds, such as handcuffs, ropes, shackles, and so on. You can also contort your body into tight-fitting and small spaces. This skill often involves various breathing exercises, dislocating your joints, tightening and relaxing specific muscles, and the like. It is also a purely physical skill, requiring no tools (although skill in Larceny and a hidden set of lock-picks is always useful). The Editor-in-Chief will determine the DC required to escape from a specific set of bonds.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Slip Bonds**: An Easy (DC 10) skill check to escape from handcuffs or zip ties. Escaping from a straitjacket requires a Challenging (DC 20) skill check.
* **Escape from a Grapple**: Use this skill in place of a Melee (Strength) check to escape from a grapple.
* **Contort Body**: A Routine (DC 15) skill check to fit through tight spaces or avoid physical constraints, such as squeezing through a narrow gap or slipping through a small window.
* **Hold Breath**: Using Constitution instead of Dexterity, a Routine (DC 15) skill check to hold your breath for extended periods, allowing you to endure underwater or in gas-filled environments longer than usual.
* **Avoid Traps**: A Challenging (DC 20) skill check to escape or avoid traps that rely on physical constraints, such as snares or nets.

## Influence

**Primary Ability Score:** Charisma

**Untrained:** Yes

**Fields of Study:** Diplomacy, Intimidation, Persuasion, Seduction.

This skill enables you to convince others to do what you want, whether through charm, debate, deceit, deliberation, intimidation, or negotiation. More generally, Influence is used to engender fear, respect, friendship, or even love. Most uses of Influence involve social encounters, where you use the skill against an opponent’s Empathy. In cases of debate, deliberation, or negotiation, your opponent may use her Influence against yours, as you are both looking for something.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Deescalate**: An Influence (Charisma) roll can be used against the Discipline of an opponent so that they pause and listen to what you have to say, with a Routine (DC 15) skill check.
* **Negotiations**: Influence can be used for bartering goods and services in a world without currency. This is a routine (DC 15) skill check that may help you get extra supplies, such as an extra magazine or some extra water. Survivors are protective and knowledgeable about their needs, so taking advantage of someone is challenging.
* **Intimidate**: Issue threats or displays of power to influence others. This typically involves a skill check against the target’s Discipline defense, with a Routine (DC 15) skill check.
* **Persuade**: Using Intelligence instead of Charisma, a Routine (DC 15) skill check to present logical arguments and evidence to convince someone of your point of view.
* **Build Rapport**: This is a challenging (DC 20) skill check to establish a strong emotional connection with an NPC, gaining their trust and possibly their assistance in future endeavors.

## Investigation

**Primary Ability Score:** Intelligence

**Untrained:** Yes

This skill is used when looking for clues and making deductions based on clues found. You might deduce the location of a hidden object, discern from the appearance of a wound what kind of weapon dealt it, or determine the weakest point in a tunnel that could cause it to collapse.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Search for Clues**: This is an easy (DC 10) to Routine (DC 15) skill check to find hidden or obscure evidence, such as locating a hidden compartment or finding bloodstains in an inconspicuous area.
* **Analyze Evidence**: This is an easy (DC 10) to Routine (DC 15) skill check to interpret clues and form conclusions, such as determining the type of weapon from a wound or the cause of damage to a structure.
* **Track Movements**: A Challenging (DC 20) skill check to follow trails or deduce the actions of others, such as tracking a person through a forest or piecing together a sequence of events from scattered clues.
* **Identify Patterns**: Using Wisdom instead of Intelligence, a Routine (DC 15) skill check to recognize patterns in seemingly unrelated clues or events, helping to predict future occurrences or uncover hidden motives.
* **Evaluate Structures**: This is a challenging (DC 20) skill check to determine the weakest point in a tunnel or building that could cause it to collapse, ensuring safe passage or planning a controlled demolition.

**Range Modifiers:** Heroes suffer a -1 penalty for all investigation skill checks for every area beyond the first. The Editor-in-Chief may apply further penalties for environmental conditions; such penalties should range between -1 and -5 for extreme conditions.

## Larceny

**Primary Ability Score:** Intelligence

**Untrained:** Yes

**Fields of Study:** Pick Pockets, Open Locks, Security Systems, and Disable Traps.

This skill involves many different forms of theft. While Larceny was used for profit before Z-Day, it is now primarily a tool for survival.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Disable Traps and Locks**: This is a routine (DC 15) skill check to disable traps, locks, and similar devices, including common electronic security locks (the Technology skill may also cover this). The DC of the task depends on the complexity or quality of the device in question. If the skill check fails by 5 or more, the device is triggered, setting off any associated security measures.
* **Pick Pockets**: A Larceny (Dexterity) skill check against the Passive Perception of all possible observers. If you are picking a pocket, your target gains a +5 bonus to their Passive Perception against your attempt unless they are particularly distracted. If you are being directly observed, your roll is opposed by the observers’ Perception (Wisdom), with your target gaining a +10 bonus to their roll. If you fail any of these rolls, you will likely be discovered as the thief.
* **Bypass Security Systems**: This is a challenging (DC 20) skill check for bypassing advanced security systems, such as alarm systems or biometric scanners, using tools and technical knowledge.
* **Conceal Items**: Using Dexterity instead of Intelligence, a Routine (DC 15) skill check to discreetly palm items or hide small objects on your person, avoiding detection by guards or other observers.
* **Create Diversions**: This is a routine (DC 15) skill check to create a distraction, such as triggering an alarm or causing a scene, to divert attention away from a theft or infiltration attempt.

## Linguistics

**Primary Ability Score:** Intelligence

**Untrained:** Yes

**Field of Study:** Cryptology

You start the game literate in your native language. If you are trained in this skill, you learn a number of additional languages equal to your Hero’s Rank. The Editor-in-Chief may also allow you to use this skill when attempting to understand another character using a similar language (e.g., Portuguese and Spanish). With a good roll, your hero may be able to get the gist of what someone is trying to say. As far as languages are concerned, a complete list has not been provided; use real-world languages.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Translate Languages**: This is a challenging (DC 20) skill check to understand and translate spoken or written foreign languages. It could involve reading an ancient text or interpreting spoken language.
* **Decipher Codes**: A Routine (DC 15) skill check to break ciphers and interpret coded messages, which could be useful for understanding secret communications or hidden information.
* **Write in Code**: A Challenging (DC 20) skill check to write messages in code, allowing you to leave messages for others in plain sight or mark a place as safe in a way that only those who know what to look for will understand.
* **Understand Similar Languages**: Using Wisdom instead of Intelligence, a Routine (DC 15) skill check to understand and communicate in a language similar to one you already know, grasping the basic meaning and context.
* **Create a New Cipher**: A Challenging (DC 20) skill check to create a new, unbreakable cipher that only a select few can understand, ensuring secure communication within your group.

## Local Knowledge

**Primary Ability Score:** Intelligence

**Untrained:** Yes, only if you are a local

**Fields of Study:** If the campaign is centralized in a specific city, you may choose a section of town (downtown), a particular aspect of the city (Subway System), or even a particular type of knowledge (you know where all the good restaurants were at).

Presuming that most Rotted Capes campaigns will center on a particular metropolitan area, you can use this skill to recall information about the area in which you are specialized, especially if your occupation before Z-Day revolved around knowing the city and its environment.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Know the Layout and Landmarks**: An Easy (DC 10) skill check to recall key locations and know the headquarters of a famous superhero organization in the city. A Challenging (DC 20) skill check might help you recall the location of a supervillain’s headquarters or Cold War-era bomb shelters.
* **Navigate a Subway System**: A Routine (DC 15) skill check to navigate a subway system or sewers if your city has one. Specialized knowledge might require a higher DC.
* **Identify Survivors**: This is a routine (DC 15) skill check to recognize individuals or groups within the local community, including understanding their affiliations or histories.
* **Recall Information**: A Routine (DC 15) skill check to recall facts about superheroes and supervillains that frequented the city before Z-Day and whether they survived, died, or became Super Z’s. A Challenging (DC 20) skill check might help you recall facts like where the heaviest concentrations of zombies can be found and/or the territory of particular Super Z’s.
* **Evaluate Safe Zones**: Use wisdom instead of Intelligence, a Routine (DC 15) skill check to evaluate areas for potential safe zones or enclaves based on your local knowledge and understanding of the terrain and resources.

## Medicine

**Primary Ability Score:** Intelligence

**Untrained:** Yes

**Fields of Study:** Cybernetics, Emergency Treatment (EMT), Genetics, Infectious diseases, Surgery, Veterinary medicine, Psychiatry.

You know how to stop bleeding, administer CPR, utilize emergency medical equipment, clean and bandage wounds, suture wounds, set broken bones, and so on. You can also diagnose and heal both injuries and ailments.

**Example Skill Uses:**

* **Help others recover from wounds and disease.** As a prolonged skill check, you can treat grievous wounds. At the end of every day, make a successful Daunting (DC 25) Intelligence (Medicine) skill check that permits your patient to ignore wound penalties when attempting to recover a wound. Otherwise, the cumulative penalties of such terrible injuries may speed his way into the afterlife.
* **Treat a disease or help your patient resist a slow-acting poison:** Replace the patient’s constitution saving throw with your skill check. If you score a critical success, your patient automatically succeeds on their saving throw.
* **Bring someone back from the brink of death:** Once a creature has been reduced to 0 wounds if you can reach them before the end of their next turn, you may perform a Demanding action and make a successful Daunting (DC 25) Intelligence (Medicine) skill check, if successful, your patient must make a successful Routine (DC 15) Constitution saving throw if successful your patient (see Table 2-4, pg. XX) regains 1 wound but does not recover any stamina. No one may benefit from this skill use more than once per day; if you spend a plot point, your patients automatically make their saving throw.
* If you are trained in Psychiatry, and your editor is using the optional psychosis rules, you may use an out-of-scene activity to treat someone suffering levels of psychosis see pg. XX.

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**Editor’s Note:   
Alternative skills in place of Medicine**There are times that an alternate skill may be used in place of Medicine; for example, Engineering/Robotics may be more helpful when treating an Android character. The Occult skill might be used to diagnose some mystical ailment. In these cases, use medical skill as a guide.

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## Occult

**Primary Ability Score: Intelligence**

**Untrained:** No

**Fields of Study:** Cults, Eldritch Horrors, Magical Spells, Magical History.

Some mysteries lie beyond science. While magic is a real, tangible power, it remains a mystery and, in many cases, simply an urban legend. This skill covers all aspects of magic and the occult, including but not limited to dimensional travel, cults, mystical rituals, and legendary magicians. This skill does not impart the ability to wield magic but rather serves as an academic study of the subject.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Identify Symbols**: This is an easy (DC 10) skill check to recognize and understand occult symbols, runes, or rituals, such as identifying a protective ward or a summoning circle.
* **Research Mysteries**: This is a routine (DC 15) skill check to investigate and uncover information about mystical phenomena, ancient lore, or supernatural events, such as finding references to a legendary magician or understanding the significance of a haunted location.
* **Analyze Magical Effects**: Using Wisdom instead of Intelligence, a Routine (DC 15) skill check to sense and understand the effects of a magical phenomenon, such as detecting lingering magical energy or understanding the nature of a magical trap.
* **Understand Cults**: This is a Routine (DC 15) skill check to gather information about secretive cults, their beliefs, practices, and notable figures, potentially identifying threats or allies within the supernatural community.

## Outdoorsman

**Primary Ability Score: Intelligence**

**Untrained:** Yes

**Fields of Study:** Hunting, Tracking, Navigation, Survival.

This skill covers all aspects of outdoor life, from horseback riding to basic survival. Outdoorsman is a critical skill when surviving in the wilderness. The Editor-in-Chief sets the Difficulty of navigation and tracking rolls based on the terrain, weather, and other conditions. You can also use this skill to gather resources, find clean water, and so on. With a successful Intelligence (Outdoorsman) skill check (DC set by the Editor-in-Chief), you may determine if any foraged food and water is safe to consume.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Forage Food**: This is an easy (DC 10) skill check to find edible plants, water, and other resources in the wilderness and ensure their safety for consumption.
* **Track Animals**: This is a routine (DC 15) skill check to follow animal tracks, determine their movements, or locate their habitats. This can also help in setting traps or planning hunts.
* **Build Shelter**: This is a challenging (DC 20) skill check to create a safe and durable shelter using natural materials and survival techniques, ensuring protection from the elements and wildlife.
* **Navigate Terrain**: Use wisdom instead of Intelligence, a Routine (DC 15) skill check to navigate unfamiliar or challenging terrain, ensuring you stay on course and avoid natural hazards.
* **Signal for Help**: A Routine (DC 15) skill check to create signals that can attract the attention of rescuers or other survivors using fire, mirrors, or other available materials.

## Prestidigitation

**Primary Ability Score:** Dexterity

**Untrained:** Yes

**Fields of Study:** Sleight of Hand, Object Manipulation, Misdirection, Showmanship,

You possess exceptional manual dexterity and sleight-of-hand skills, allowing you to perform intricate tricks, illusions, and manipulations. Prestidigitation encompasses a wide range of minor magical feats and trickery that often rely on quick hand movements and misdirection. Unlike other skills, prestidigitation skill checks are always made as an opposing roll against the observer's passive perception or an active perception skill check.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Sleight of Hand**: An opposed roll against the observer's passive perception to pickpockets, plant small objects on unsuspecting targets, or perform small-scale acts of theft with finesse and precision.
* **Object Manipulation**: An opposed roll against the observer's passive perception to flawlessly manipulate and handle small objects, such as cards, coins, or locks, with incredible precision.
* **Misdirection**: An opposed roll against the target's Willpower to excel at diverting attention and deceiving observers. By combining quick hand movements with verbal distractions and theatricality, you can draw attention away from your actual actions.
* **Showmanship**: An opposed roll against the observer's passive perception to captivate and entertain an audience with your magical displays and tricks, leaving a lasting impression.
* **Escape Detection**: Using Intelligence instead of Dexterity, an opposed roll against the observer's passive perception to subtly manipulate objects and perform tricks that avoid detection by even the most attentive audience members.

**Range Modifiers:** The effectiveness of Prestidigitation may be influenced by factors such as distance, lighting conditions, and the audience's perceptiveness. The Editor-in-Chief may apply appropriate modifiers to Prestidigitation skill checks to reflect these circumstances.

## Perception

**Primary Ability Score:** Wisdom

**Untrained:** Yes-

You are aware of your surroundings, and long practice has given you the ability to intuitively notice unusual things around you. Perception covers all of your senses. The specifics of exactly how you detect, find, or notice something, if they become important, are determined at the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief. This skill is also used to detect someone attempting to use the Stealth skill to pass undetected. This is handled with an opposed skill check or against the spotter’s passive Perception value if they are distracted or not paying particular attention.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Notice Details**: An Easy (DC 10) skill check to spot hidden or subtle details in your environment, such as concealed doors or minor changes in a room.
* **Listen Carefully**: This is a routine (DC 15) skill check to hear faint or distant sounds, useful for detecting approaching threats or overhearing secret conversations.
* **Detect Ambushes**: An opposed Perception (Wisdom) skill check against the Stealth (Dexterity) check of those attempting to set up an ambush or move undetected to identify potential threats or ambushes before they occur.
* **Identify Hidden Objects**: Use intelligence instead of Wisdom, a Routine (DC 15) skill check, to methodically search an area and identify hidden objects or clues that may be overlooked.
* **Sense Danger**: A Daunting (DC 25) skill check to intuitively sense immediate danger or recognize when something feels off, enhancing your ability to react quickly to sudden threats.

**Range Modifiers:** You suffer a -1 penalty to all Perception Action Skill Rolls for every area beyond the first. The Editor-in-Chief may apply further penalties for environmental conditions; such penalties should range between -1 and -5 for extreme conditions.

## Performance

**Primary Ability Score:** Charisma

**Untrained:** Yes

**Fields of Study:** Acting, Dancing, Singing, Mimicry, Electronic Music Production, or playing a specific musical instrument.

You can act, dance, sing, tell a good story, or play a musical instrument with skill. You know how to block out stage performances, read and write music, emote with feeling, simulate a wide range of emotions, and so on. However, this skill doesn’t let you lie in such a manner as to convince others of what you’re saying—that’s Influence (although any good actor probably trained in Influence as well). You can use Performance to ‘win over’ a hostile or suspicious crowd of bystanders. Resolve this by using the Social Encounter rules on page XX.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Entertain**: This is an easy (DC 10) skill check for captivating an audience with performance, such as singing, acting, or playing an instrument, ensuring they are entertained and engaged.
* **Impersonate**: A Routine (DC 15) skill check to mimic voices, behaviors, or appearances convincingly to deceive others, useful for impersonating a specific individual or character.
* **Compose**: This is a challenging (DC 20) skill check to create original music, scripts, or choreography, showcasing your creative talent and producing new works of art.
* **Stage a Performance**: Use intelligence instead of Charisma, a Routine (DC 15) skill check, to plan and organize a theatrical production or concert, ensuring all elements of the performance come together seamlessly.
* **Influence Through Art**: A Challenging (DC 20) skill check to use performance to subtly influence the emotions or opinions of an audience, laying the groundwork for future persuasion or manipulation attempts.

## Pilot

**Primary Ability Score:** Wisdom

**Untrained:** No

**Fields of Study:** Fixed Wing Aircraft, Lighter than Air, Helicopters, Ultra-lights, VTOL.

This skill allows you to fly aircraft, read the instrumentation, perform complex maneuvers, and conduct regular maintenance.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Basic Piloting**: Fly aircraft under normal conditions, ensuring safe takeoff, flight, and landing. This does not require any skill checks.
* **Complex Maneuvers**: A Routine (DC 15) to Challenging (DC 20) skill check to perform stunts, evasive actions, or navigate through challenging conditions such as storms, low visibility, or tight spaces.
* **Aircraft Maintenance**: A Challenging (DC 20) skill check to conduct regular maintenance and minor repairs on aircraft to ensure they remain operational, such as checking and repairing avionics or mechanical systems.
* **Emergency Procedures**: Using Dexterity instead of Wisdom, a Routine (DC 15) skill check to quickly execute emergency procedures, such as a forced landing or avoiding mid-air collisions.
* **Navigation**: A Routine (DC 15) skill check to plot and follow a course over long distances, taking into account weather conditions, fuel consumption, and terrain.

## Scavenge

**Primary Ability Score: Wisdom**

**Untrained:** Yes

**Fields of Study:** Appraising, Finding.

Scavenge is the ability to find useful items in a specific area. Generally, you must specify what you are looking for, with the editor-in-chief setting the DC to find such items based on the current circumstances. Typical circumstances include specificity (do you need something in particular or just something general like food), likelihood (are you looking for something normally found in the area), and time (how long you are searching for).

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Appraise Scrounged Items**: Determine if something else is needed to make a found item whole. This can sometimes be treated as a factor in the check’s Difficulty, but it may also be its separate skill check (DC 10 to 15).
* **Determine Safety of Foraged Food and Water**: This is a routine (DC 15) skill check to determine whether any foraged food or water is safe to consume using Intelligence (Scavenge).
* **Identify Hazards**: This is a challenging (DC 20) skill check to recognize potential dangers or traps in scavenged areas, ensuring safe exploration.
* **Locate Specific Items**: A Routine (DC 15) to Challenging (DC 20) skill check to find specific items in an area, such as medical supplies in a ruined hospital or mechanical parts in an abandoned factory.
* **Efficient Search**: Using Intelligence instead of Wisdom, a Routine (DC 15) skill check to methodically search an area, maximizing the number of useful items found in a shorter period of time.

**Alternative Skill Uses:** Other skills can take the place of Scavenge in a limited way, for example, **Intelligence (Pilot)**: Identify a compatible engine part in a scavenged vehicle or **Intelligence (Engineering)**: Safely remove a part from the vehicle in which it currently resides.

## Science

**Primary Ability Score:** Intelligence

**Untrained:** No

**Fields of Study:** Chemistry, Biology, or Physics, including military sciences such as Demolitions.

You know a great deal about the sciences. Of all the survivors, you’ve been head-scratching the most over what makes a zombie tick. In the post-Z-Day world, you’ve become a modern-day alchemist, concocting explosives out of old car batteries and making gas bombs to confuse zombies. Science roles also enable the hero to gain information about the natural world and draw conclusions based on it. As usual, the editor-in-chief sets the difficulty level for making a science skill check.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Analyze Chemical Compounds**: This is a routine (DC 15) skill check to identify and analyze chemical compounds, such as determining the contents of an unknown substance or creating homemade explosives.
* **Conduct Biological Research**: This is a routine (DC 15) to Challenging (DC 20) skill check for studying biological samples, such as understanding the pathology of a zombie infection or developing a basic antidote or treatment.
* **Perform Physics Experiments**: A Challenging (DC 20) skill check to perform experiments related to physics, such as calculating trajectories for projectiles or understanding the mechanics of a makeshift weapon.
* **Design and Build Devices**: Use Dexterity instead of Intelligence, a Challenging (DC 20) skill check, to design and build scientific devices, such as a gas bomb to confuse zombies or a makeshift power generator.
* **Demolitions Expertise**: A Routine (DC 15) skill check to safely handle and deploy explosives, ensuring they are used effectively and without unnecessary risk.

## Stealth

**Primary Ability Score:** Dexterity

**Untrained:** Yes

Stealth is your ability to hide and remain hidden, conceal objects (on someone, in an area, or other), or even hide an ally.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Hide or Move Silently**: Make a Stealth (Dexterity) check against either the Passive Perception of any possible observers or, in the case of active observers, the result of an opposed Perception (Wisdom) check. Concealment is required to hide, which might include bushes, thick fog, a wall, or a dark area. Moving while hiding reduces your maximum Pace by half.
* **Conceal Objects**: This is a routine (DC 15) skill check to conceal objects on someone, within an area, or on your person, ensuring they are not easily found by others.
* **Hide an Ally**: This is a challenging (DC 20) skill check to effectively hide an ally, ensuring they remain unseen by enemies or observers.
* **Blend into Crowds**: Using Charisma instead of Dexterity, a Routine (DC 15) skill check to blend into a crowd or busy environment, making it difficult for others to single you out or follow you.
* **Create Diversions**: This is a routine (DC 15) skill check to create a diversion, such as throwing a rock to make a noise or causing a minor disturbance, drawing attention away from your actual position.

## Technology

**Primary Ability Score:** Intelligence

**Untrained:** No

**Fields of Study:** Computer Repair, Computer Engineering, Computer Hacking, Computer Systems, Medical Technologies, Security Systems, Programming, Robotics, Radio Broadcasting.

Technology skills represent your ability to understand, operate, and repair various forms of technology, both pre-and post-Z-Day. This includes knowledge of electronic devices, software, and communication systems. Whether you're hacking a computer, repairing a GPS, or figuring out how to use advanced electronic gadgets, this skill is essential when dealing with the tech-heavy remnants of the old world.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Basic Operations**: This is an easy (DC 10) skill check for logging into systems, using everyday electronics, and performing routine maintenance, such as setting up a radio or calibrating a basic sensor.
* **Repairs and Modifications**: This is a routine (DC 15) skill check to fix broken devices or make minor enhancements, such as repairing a damaged GPS or upgrading a security camera.
* **Advanced Tasks**: This is a challenging (DC 20 or higher) skill check for hacking secured systems, creating custom software solutions, or repairing complex devices, such as bypassing the security of a high-tech facility or rebuilding a computer from salvaged parts.
* **Design Custom Solutions**: Use wisdom instead of Intelligence, a Routine (DC 15) skill check, to design practical and effective technological solutions to problems, such as creating an ad-hoc communication network or jury-rigging a power source.
* **Analyze Systems**: This is a routine (DC 15) skill check to analyze and understand the workings of an unfamiliar technological system, determining its purpose and how to operate or disable it.

## Urban Survival

**Primary Ability Score:** Intelligence

**Untrained:** Yes

**Fields of Study:** Hunting, Tracking, Navigation.

This skill covers all aspects of survival within the ruins of cities and developed municipalities. You know how to find fresh water, hide a fire, determine which building materials are safe to burn, and keep your bearings within the ruins of civilization.

**Suggested Skill Uses:**

* **Navigate Cities**: An Easy (DC 10) skill check to move through urban environments efficiently, finding safe paths and avoiding dangers, such as collapsed buildings or areas known to be patrolled by hostile groups.
* **Find Shelter**: A Routine (DC 15) skill check to locate safe and secure places to stay in the city, such as abandoned buildings or hidden basements that offer protection from the elements and threats.
* **Avoid Hazards**: This is a challenging (DC 20) skill check to identify and evade urban dangers, such as gangs, traps, or zombie-infested areas, ensuring your group stays safe while moving through the city.
* **Tracking**: An opposed skill check to track people within an urban setting, with the Editor-in-Chief setting the Difficulty based on the terrain, weather, and other conditions. This could involve following footprints, spotting signs of recent activity, or deducing likely routes of travel.
* **Resource Scavenging**: Use wisdom instead of Intelligence, a Routine (DC 15) skill check, to find vital resources such as food, water, and medical supplies in an urban environment, ensuring your group has what it needs to survive.