# 3.2 Advancement

This chapter describes how the abilities of player characters improve over time as the story and the game itself progress. While it’s true that accumulation of influence, wealth and powerful weapons also factors into a character’s overall power, they are things external to the character itself and are not the topic here.

The Unit of Progress:

This game has no concept of “milestones” whereupon all of the character’s abilities are improved at once. Instead, characters advance organically, getting better only at things they often do and practice.

For each of the key areas where a character may improve - Attributes, Skills and Specializations - progress is tracked separately by counting points which represent the character’s path of learning. From this point onward, we will refer to these points as “PROGs”.

The basic idea is the same across the board: Earn enough PROGs for a specific thing and then your character becomes permanently better at that thing.

Skill Advancement:

Advancing Skills is more pronounced and generally more important than other areas of improvement, so the supporting mechanics are accordingly more complicated than for the others.

For Skills and Skills alone, PROGs come in three flavours. All of them are gained the same way, by completing Skill Tests (no matter if successful or not), but a different PROG is gained based on how difficult the test was for the testing character.

Test Difficulties:

A single test, by difficulty, can be either Routine, Difficult or Challenging. Which one of the three, exactly, we find out by comparing the tester’s Skill Exponent and the DC of the test on the following table.

Why is PROG written in all-caps? Well, it just seems appropriate that way.

### Skill Test Difficulty Table:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill** **Exponent** | **Minimal DC** | |
| **For diff. PROG** | **For chal. PROG** |
| 0 | - | - |
| 1 | 1\* | 2 |
| 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 2 | 4 |
| 5 | 3 | 5 |
| 6 | 3 | 5 |
| 7, 8 | 4 | 6 |
| 9 | 4 | 6 |
| 10 | 5 | 7 |
| 11, 12 | 5 | 8 |
| 13 | 6 | 8 |
| 14 | 6 | 9 |
| 15, 16 | 7 | 9 |
| 17 | 7 | 10 |
| 18, 19 | 8 | 10 |
| 20 | 8 | 11 |
| 21, 22 | 9 | 11 |
| 23 | 9 | 11 |
| 24, 25 | 10 | 12 |
| 26, 27 | 10 | 12 |
| 28, 29 | 11 | 13 |
| 30, 31 | 11 | 13 |
| 32, 33 | 12 | 14 |
| 34, 35 | 12 | 14 |

**\*Note:** For an DC 1 test with Skill Exponent 1, the rolling player may choose whether the test is routine or difficult.

**Note:** The same information from the table above can be found in the Master Skill Table on page XX.

When determining the difficulty of a test, take into account the total Skill Exponent the character is using, including bonuses and penalties coming from external factors. Then, if the DC of the test is high enough for it to be a challenging test, a challenging PROG is gained. Failing that, if it’s high enough to be a difficult test, a difficult PROG is gained. Otherwise, the character gains a routine PROG for the skill he just tested.

### Test Difficulty and Circumstance Modifiers:

When doing a Skill Test with a non-zero Circumstance Modifier, add that modifier to the total Skill Exponent for the purposes of determining the difficulty of a Skill Test only.

### Test Difficulty and RotE:

The difficulty table was made with the assumption that the testing character will be using the Rule of the Ellipse to its fullest potential. If he is unable to do so, that obviously makes the test harder, so adjust accordingly:

* If he can use only one level of RotE, increase the DC of the test by 1 (only for purposes of determining its difficulty).
* If he cannot use RotE at all, increase the DC of the test by 2 (only for purposes of determining its difficulty).

### Test Difficulty and Automatic Successes:

Each Automatic Success reduces the DC of the test by 1 (only for purposes of determining its difficulty).

How Many PROGs?

The table below shows how many PROGs of each kind are needed to advance a Skill to the next rank. These numbers are dependent on the current Rank of that Skill.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Current Rank | Routine | Difficult | | Challenging | |
| 0 | - | Special | | Special | |
| 1 | 1 | (1 | or | | 1) |
| 2 | 2 | (2 | or | | 1) |
| 3 | 3 | (2 | and | | 1) |
| 4 | 4 | (2 | and | | 2) |
| 5 | 5 | (3 | and | | 2) |
| 6 | 6 | (4 | and | | 2) |
| 7 | 7 | (4 | and | | 3) |
| 8 | 8 | (5 | and | | 3) |
| 9 | 9 | (6 | and | | 3) |
| 10 | 10 | (6 | and | | 4) |
| 11 | 11 | (7 | and | | 4) |
| 12 | - | - | | - | |

### Gaining Ranks:

Once a character has gained enough PROGs to advance one of his Skills, it goes up a Rank immediately, no matter the situation. All extra PROGs are discarded – no carry-overs.

### Gaining the First Rank:

To go from being untrained (0 ranks) to being a novice (1 rank), a character needs to earn a total of 4 PROGs which can be either Difficult or Challenging, in any combination.

### Can PROGs of higher difficulty be substituted as PROGs of lower difficulty?

No.

Series of Tests = One PROG:

Occasionally, we have situations in the game where players are testing the same Skill over and over again—martial and social conflict being the prime examples. In any instance where a Skill is tested multiple times to determine the outcome, only one PROG is earned toward advancement. Do not note a PROG for every punch thrown.

If the skill is tested against multiple different DCs, the player is free to choose any one of them for purposes of noting the PROG.

Exceptions:

No PROGs are gained for Knowledge tests, nor for tests made to Aid another character.

When testing Perception, gain PROGs only when successful.

Training:

Skills can also slowly be improved by training in spare time (see page XX).

Advancing Attributes:

Characters’ Attributes progress similarly to Skills – gain PROGs, and once you have enough, they go up by 1 (meaning their base values go up by 1).

Unlike with Skills, there are no different grades of PROGs for Attributes, and they are gained when a Skill for which that Attribute is the PGA is advanced to Rank 4 or higher.

The number of PROGs needed to advance an Attribute is the current base value of that Attribute, or 4, whichever is higher.

Advancing Specializations:

Specializations, like Attributes, are advanced by collecting a single kind of PROG. Only three PROGs are needed for a Specialization to go up by 1, but remember that its Rank cannot exceed its parent Skill’s Rank.

You can only work on improving a number of Specializations equal to your effective Intelligence score at any given time. At any point, you may “drop” a Specialization you’re working on to start improving another one, losing all the PROGs you collected for the dropped one.

A PROG for a Specialization is gained when you gain a Difficult or Challenging PROG for its parent Skill by doing something directly related to the Specialization in question.

For example, if you’re working on the Halberd Specialization (under the Melee (Armed) Skill), a Skill Test made to attack or defend with a halberd also nets one PROG towards advancing the Halberd Specialization, unless it’s a Routine test, of course.

Specializations can also be improved by practicing during downtime (see page XX).

Gaining XP and Levelling Up:

Characters level up when they gain enough Experience Points (XP). Experience Points are essentially PROGs, reskinned with a more traditional name for tracking a player character’s progress towards levelling up.

Experience Points are also gained by advancing Skills – when a Skill is upgraded to a new rank, that yields a number of XP equal to the new rank of the Skill. A character also gains 1 XP upon advancing one of their Specializations.

The amount of XP needed to level up is equal to:

(1 + [current level]) × 5

**Note:** Excess XP can be carried over.

When a character levels up, his or her player gets a sense of pride and accomplishment and also gets to choose a new Perk for said character. Thus gaining a new level doesn’t make a character radically more powerful in and of itself – levels are more what you’d call a measure of the overall competency and power of the character, and gaining Perks is just a little bonus on the side.

**GM Note:** Because this system is reversed to most other games, in a sense that XP and levelling up doesn’t lead to better Skills but the other way round, the GM must **never** award players with free XP.