Criminology/TL

IQ/Average

Defaults: IQ-5 or Psychology-4.

This is the study of crime and the criminal mind. A successful skill roll allows you to find and interpret clues, guess how criminals might behave, etc. Though this skill does not actually default to Streetwise, the GM might allow a Streetwise roll *instead* in certain situations – especially to predict or outguess a criminal.

Modifiers: -3 for Low Empathy (p. 142).

Crossbow

DX/Easy

Default: DX-4.

This is the ability to use all types of crossbows, including the pistol crossbow, prodd (which fires pellets or stones), repeating crossbow, and high-tech compound crossbow.

Cryptography/TL

IQ/Hard

Default: Mathematics (Cryptology)-5.

This is the ability to create and defeat encryption systems, codes, and ciphers. It is of use in wartime, espionage, and even business dealings. It covers all the techniques of your TL, which can range from unsophisticated substitution ciphers to state-of-the-art tactical encryption schemes.

Knowledge of a *specific* system, code, or cipher depends on your Security Clearance (p. 82) and allegiances (national, administrative, or both). In many settings, some level of Security Clearance is a prerequisite to learning this skill *at all.*

Treat an attempt to break an unknown code as a Quick Contest of Cryptography skill between the code-breaker and code-maker. The code-breaker must *win* to break the code. Repeated attempts are possible, but each attempt takes a day. The code-maker rolls only once, when he first creates the code.

Those with Cryptography skill may take an *optional* specialty (p. 169) in making or breaking codes. (The code-breaking specialty is often called "cryptanalysis.")

Cryptography normally has *no* IQ default, with two exceptions. Anyone can devise a trivial code or cipher by making an IQ-5 roll. This won't stall a professional for long, of course. Likewise, anyone can make an IQ-5 roll to attempt to break such a trivial code (but *not* a code devised by someone with Cryptography skill), using the Quick Contest system described above.

Modifiers: Mathematical Ability (p. 90). A computer with appropriate software gives a bonus (provided you know Computer Operation skill): +1 for a home computer, +2 for a mini-computer, +3 or +4 for a mainframe, and +5 or more for a supercomputer.

The *code-breaker* is at +5 if he has a sample of the code with translation, and -5 if the message to be decoded is shorter than 25 words. The *code-maker* receives a bonus for the time taken to create the code: consult the *Size and Speed/Range Table* (p. 550), look up the time in days in the Range/Speed column (substituting "days" for "yards"), and use the corresponding bonus.

Current Affairs/TL†

IQ/Easy

Defaults: IQ-4 or Research-4.

This is the ability to assimilate *quickly* whatever qualifies as "news" in your world, and to recall it as needed.

You *must* specialize in one of the following areas:

Business: Exchange rates, investment performance, etc.

Headline News: Usually *bad* news, such as assassinations, plagues, and wars.

High Culture: Information on galleries, operas, symphonies, and so forth.

People: The names of and gossip on celebrities, heads of state, and the like.

Politics: Election results, international treaties, etc.

Popular Culture: Hit songs, cool fashions, and hot products, among other things.

Regional: News of all kinds for a specific region (pick one). This is the definitive "town crier" skill at low TLs.

Science & Technology: New discoveries and inventions.

Sports: Scores for recent matches, names of star athletes, etc.

Travel: Where the "beautiful people" are going this year, and how much it all costs.

These specialties default to one another at -4. It is hard to bone up on one kind of news without learning about all the others!

On a successful Current Affairs roll, the GM will inform you of any news within your specialty that pertains to the current adventure (possibly including clues, on a good roll) or give you a small skill bonus (e.g., a success on Current Affairs (Sports) might give +1 to Gambling skill when betting on a boxing match).