

Eros System Core Rules

A Multi-Genre RPG System



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Eros System: Core Rules

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This book is dedicated to Barbara Ellen and Jeanne Kercher, the women who taught me that I could accomplish what I wanted to in this life.

Thanks to the Iwata family and the crew at Atelier Third in Tokyo, for showing me a rollicking good time at the Tokyo Tabletop RPG convention (twice)

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Eros System: Core Rules

WHAT IS EROS SYSTEM: CORE RULES?

This is the core ruleset for the Eros RPG system. The rules contained in this book are the basis for any number of games that can be played using this 2d6 game mechanic. Specific background, rules, equipment, and other content for each game is released in a separate supplement.

Why is it called the “Eros System”?

It's named after the flagship game setting using this game system: Eros 433, a science fiction setting named after an actual asteroid, fictionally turned into an interstellar colony ship. It's not primarily intended for mature content...but you could go there if you really want to write your own supplement for it.

What's so special about this system?

TL,DR: Fast basic game mechanic, complex character creation, crunchy combat rules

The basic game mechanic is simple, covers almost all dice rolls made in game, and only requires standard six-sided dice. At the same time, it has enough complexity to develop complicated characters.

Combat complexity in the system finds the middle ground between being bogged down in number crunching using endless tables and being so quick and abstract that it isn't really very descriptive.

There are several combat rule variants to choose from to suit your group's preferred style of play, balancing speed of combat resolution with the “feel” of descriptive combat mechanics.

Who is this game's intended audience?

This is primarily intended as a game for experienced RPG players,

preferably players who are reasonable people who want to work together to tell an interesting story and have a good time. Like most games, it doesn't work well when the players treat each other and/or the GM (Game Moderator) as antagonists. It also doesn't work when the GM is a power-hungry jerk. If the people you are playing with are toxic and hateful...consider finding nicer people to spend your time with. Please.

Players who enjoy detailed character creation are most likely to enjoy this system. Plan on spending at least one full gaming session to build characters before launching the story. For convention play, pregenerated characters are a must.

Can you use this game with brand-new-to-the-hobby green horns? Yes. We successfully did that in playtesting multiple times. They told us they had a good time. They came back to play again.

That said, this game is mostly written for the gamer who has played at least a few different RPGs before, and has a handle on the basic concepts of character roleplaying, simple arithmetic, and how to behave at the gaming table without committing crimes against nature.

“Life is too short to spend any of it listening to assholes spew their verbal diarrhea in your direction.”

—“Sunborder,” 21st century philosopher

What do I need to play?

At a minimum, pencil, paper, two six-sided dice (d6's), and a setting book from Landry Game Studio or homebrewed by your GM. Fancy game aids are fun too (minis, 3d-printed terrain & tiles, special dice, etc.).

Character Creation

You're the best of the best, the cream of the crop, the elite. So what exactly can you do so well? How did you learn how to do that? Is there anything you can't do? Why not? How much native talent were you born with, and how much of those special things you do so well is the result of blood, sweat, and tears?

Character creation is where you figure all of these things out and put it down on paper. All characters will have a history, a job description, a personality, a group of other characters to work with, and some motivation for joining up, all of which should be reflected in the following stats.

All characters have attributes, skills, backgrounds and gear. Attributes are a basic description of how much raw ability a character has. Skills are a measure of how much training, practice or innate knack a character has in a particular area of expertise. Backgrounds are a catch-all category of points of interest for a character like rank, special allies, extra resources, access to social networks, special talents or challenges, etc. Gear is the equipment you have been issued, plus anything you can make yourself, steal from the enemy, requisition through channels, buy normally, or (heaven forbid) acquire on the black market.

Character Creation Summary

1. **Concept:** Figure out who your character is, where they're from, why they joined up, what kind of job(s) they have, what their basic personality type is, what kind of group they work with, and what makes them special enough to be involved in this kind of adventure [page 5].
2. **Assign attribute points:** Roll 1d6+1 each (except for supernatural attributes) or assign points from a pool (usually 45). Attributes should be between 2 and 7 [page 7].
3. **Assign skill points:** Assign points from a pool (usually 45). Don't forget your native skills and basic training [page 9]. Make sure to include the Native Skills that every character receives.
4. **Talents & Challenges:** Touch up your character with special talents or challenges. If they don't balance each other out, the remaining points add to or subtract from your customization points [page 15].
5. **Choose special backgrounds:** Assign points to backgrounds (usually 10). Don't forget to write down a few details about these backgrounds on the character sheet [page 25].
6. **Gear:** Buy gear with RP ("Resource points" or "Requisition points," depending on the flavor of your game) (usually 15 plus extra RP from backgrounds). Don't forget your free basic equipment. Also, don't forget any special gear or vehicles assigned to your character by the GM [see setting book].
7. **Customization Points:** You get 10 free customization points; see the Customization Table on the next page.
8. **You're done.** Draw a character sketch, have the GM look it over, and grab some snacks.

Customization Table

Attribute	2
Skill, Background, Initiative	1
Fortune	4
2 HP & 2 Stun (you get both)	1
5 Requisition Points	1

FIFTEEN QUESTIONS

A character is more than just a collection of numbers on a page. By deciding a few of the big questions ahead of time, you can round out your character with some unifying concept, or add a few contrary personality quirks and/or background events. While not covering everything, these next few questions are a good place to start. Some sample answers are provided for when you just can't decide.

"So, tell me about yourself, beautiful."

—PFC (reserve) Danica Stern, After more than a few drinks

1. Why did you join up?

Q: So why did you decide to leave your old life and join up?

A: Adventure, following a boyfriend, scientific discovery, escaping poverty, escaping a shady past, a need to test oneself, manifest destiny, boredom.

"Well, I hand-load my own ammo and sew stuffed animals. I'm particularly proud of a skunk I just finished."

—PFC (reserve) Jin "Tackleberry" Kwan, After previously consuming a lot more than a few drinks

2. What did you do before?

Q: What did you do before you signed up?

A: Student, orbital miner, prostitute, scientific researcher, mechanic, mercenary, school teacher, insurance salesman, beautician, plumber.

3. Why did they pick you?

Q: So what made you good enough to convince someone to let you join?

A: You slept with your whole selection committee, brains, special skills, psychic powers, luck, mistaken identity, friends in high places, fame, artistic talent, raw potential, a special "knack."

4. What do you want?

Q: So what exactly do you want out of life, or at least the next five minutes?

A: Sex, money, fame, respect, true love, knowledge, safety, revenge, to forget your past, beer, guns (lots of guns), children, immortality, a red velvet dress, to visit every star in the sky, perfection, companionship, time to yourself.

5. What is the worst thing you've ever done?

Q: So, what's the worst thing you've ever done? (Would you do it again? Are you ashamed or proud of it? Does anyone know about it? Why'd you do it, anyway?)

A: Murder, stealing a candy bar, screwing someone who was obviously dead-drunk, making your mother cry, breaking a Ming vase, blasphemy, cheating on your girlfriend, rolling cigarettes out of pages from a Qur'an.

6. What is your philosophy?

Q: So, what exactly makes your character tick? How can you sum up your character's beliefs about life, the universe, and everything, in one or two sentences, without sounding like a bad bumper sticker (if you can)?

A: "Life sucks, then you die", "42", "She who dies with the best looking corpse wins", "You can't take it with you, so enjoy it now", "It is better to copulate than never", "It's the journey that's important, not the

destination”, “Kill them all, and let the morgue sort them out.”

7. So, what are you like?

Q: How do you act around other people? How would a friend describe you to a blind date? What makes you memorable?

A: “Wallflower with a sudden temper”, “Life of the (one-man) party”, “Oblivious to people, great with machines”, “Superficial and shallow, but incredibly friendly”, “A bit dorky, but lots of fun to be around when he’s drunk.”

8. What do you look like?

Q: So, what exactly do people see when they look in your direction?

A: “Tall, dark, and beat around the head with a bat made of frozen ugly”, “Blonde, chubby, but with a face that launched at least a dozen ships”, “Unkempt, swarthy, and squat, but otherwise ruggedly handsome.”

9: What are you proud of?

Q: So what have you done in your life that’s worth bragging about (whether you’re the bragging type or not)?

A: A perfect score on the preliminary selection exam, second place in a third grade spelling bee, running a triathlon without collapsing, your children, bowling a perfect 300, winning an international archery contest.

10: How do you act in a stressful situation?

Q: So, when things get tough, how well do you handle it? How do you cope when it gets to be too much?

A: “Goes to pieces, but chocolate cures everything”, “Nothing fazes her, but she always gets the shakes five minutes later”, “Goes completely aggro, but after some healthy exercise (or brawling), can get himself under control.”

11: What bugs you?

Q: What irritates you, scares you, makes you uncomfortable? Why? How do you react?

A: “Hates snakes, but a little kerosene and a match solves that easily enough”, “Annoyed by public displays of affection, so can’t resist the urge to make rude comments”, “Terrified of large bodies of water, must get drunk/sedated or freak out.”

12: What was the most memorable experience in your training?

Q: So, what part of training left the greatest mark on your psyche (or body)?

A: Working out, learning to play the marimba, military discipline, drunken group sex, emergency ejection during her first solo flight, losing his girlfriend to a training accident, having to eat live spiders during a magical ritual, seeing Earth from orbit for the first time, getting a formal education for the first time, shaving her head.

13: How do you like to spend your free time?

Q: So what do you usually do when you get off watch?

A: Watch movies, read books, get laid, get drunk, work out, study, bake cupcakes, knit sweaters, study scraps of old spellbooks, write music, play darts, write (sub-vogon-quality) poetry, go to dance parties, hand-load ammunition, perform stand-up comedy.

14: What do you think about non-humans and the paranormal?

Q: So, how do you feel about aliens, magic, psychics, and all that other fantasy crap?

A: “Nuke them till they glow, then hit them with heavy artillery”, “The biggest discovery in the history of mankind! Intelligent ET life!”

“So, I wonder...are humans and elves genetically compatible?”, “Clearly, their existence proves the existence of a divine architect, sole creator of the universe. You can see that can’t you?”, “Ooh, you mean we can actually act out that tentacle porn fetish I’ve had since childhood? Awesome!”

15: what are your politics?

Q: So, what form of government best fits your character’s beliefs?

A: Rational anarchism, small-scale communism, pure democracy, technocracy, libertarianism, magocracy, social conservatism, robocracy, minarchism.



PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

Eros System games use 9 primary attributes. Each attribute represents how much raw physical or mental ability a character has in some basic human trait. Primary attributes are bought with attribute points (Usually 45, but ask your GM how many) or rolled 1d6+1 for each attribute. Player character attributes should never start below 2 (they would never be make it into their group) or above 7 (or there is no room for character improvement, not to mention the game balance issues) except in special cases. The first five attributes are considered physical, and the last four mental. Attributes are usually combined with a skill and 2d6 vs a Difficulty Rating (DR) to determine success or failure. Sometimes attributes must be rolled by themselves without benefit of a skill (This reflects situations where skill is unimportant, not when a character doesn’t have a skill that they should be using for that test). In this case, double the attribute for the purpose of that check only. For example: [[Brawn x 2] + 2d6] to lift a car.

So, Just How Good Are You?

Human player character starting attributes range from 2 to 7. Compare that to the table below to get a feel for how that stacks up against the world at large.

1	Feeble	Child/Invalid
2	Everyday	Office Worker
3	Competent	Security Guard
4	Professional	Street Thug/Cop
5	Master	Black Belt
6	Doctor	Senior Black Belt
7	Genius	Kung Fu Master
8	Olympic	Jackie Chan
9	Augmented	Cyber-Ninja
10	Savant	Miyamoto Musashi
11	Superhuman	Master Li Mu Bai
12	Reality-Bending	Morpheus

Vitality

How much physical punishment the character can absorb, whether it be HP

damage or Stun, as well as the ability to perform feats of endurance and fight off disease or toxins.

Brawn

The character's effective strength, whether it be from sheer size, telekinetic boosting, bulging muscles, magical rituals, bio-cybernetic modifications, or superb muscle tone. You can carry [Brawn x 7] kg without penalty. Each multiple above this value inflicts a -1 penalty to Agility, Coordination, and Speed.

Agility

Balance, footing, and fluidity of motion. Gross motor skills like dodging or tumbling.

Coordination

Hand-eye coordination, aiming, typing, juggling, and other fine motor skills.

Speed Table				
Speed	Walk	Run	S. Jump	R. Jump
1	3 m	12 m	1 m	2 m
2	4 m	14 m	1.25 m	2.67 m
3	5 m	16 m	1.5 m	3.33 m
4	6 m	18 m	1.75 m	4 m
5	7 m	20 m	2 m	4.67 m
6	8 m	22 m	2.25 m	5.33 m
7	9 m	24 m	2.5 m	6 m
8	10 m	26 m	2.75 m	6.67 m
9	11 m	28 m	3 m	7.33 m
10	12 m	30 m	3.25 m	8 m

Speed

How fast the character can travel under their own power: Running, swimming, or climbing. Walk = [Speed + 2] m/turn. Run = [[Speed x 2] + 10] m/turn. Standing Jump = [[Speed x 0.25] + 0.75] m. Running Jump = [[Speed x [2/3]] + [4/3]] m. To avoid burdensome calculations, see the Speed Table. Non-humans such as dwarves or cat people may have different movement rates for a given speed attribute.

Brains

The character's cognitive abilities including memory, reasoning, mathematics, pattern recognition, and other purely mental skills.

Charisma

Ability to interact socially with others. Speaking, singing, reading emotions, seducing, composing popular literature, intimidating, or otherwise bending others to your will.

Grit

Guts, willpower, focus, tenacity, and mental resilience. Also used to resist many supernatural attacks.

Geek

Ability to deal with technology on more than a surface level. Car geeks, ham radio geeks, programming geeks, and engineering geeks all make good use of this attribute.

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

In addition to the 9 primary attributes, there are a few other stats that need to be kept track of. They are calculated from some combination of the primary attributes.

Initiative

How fast the character reacts to the unexpected, and how little they hesitate to act at the critical moment. A function of both physical and mental quickness. Initiative rolls [Init + 2d6] determine turn order in combat. Initiative equals [(Brains + Grit + Coordination + Agility) / 2].

Fortune

How much the universe favors the character. Base fortune is one. Fortune points may be spent to avoid disasters or achieve the unlikely or impossible. For everyday questions of a character's overall luckiness, roll [(Fortune x 2) + 2d6]. Only PCs and major NPCs have Fortune.

Hit Points

A measure of how much trauma damage the character can take before collapsing or dying. When you reach zero current hit points, you are incapacitated and bleeding to death. Characters lose hit points when stabbed, shot, burned, crushed, beat repeatedly (or with clubs), poisoned, or suffocated for long periods of time. Hit points heal very slowly. Equals $[[\text{Grit} \times 2] + [\text{Vitality} \times 3]]$.

Stun

A measure of how much stunning damage the character can take before collapsing into a gibbering heap or falling unconscious. Characters lose stun when tasered, punched, supernaturally attacked, drugged, suffocated for short periods, flash-banged, or are too close to explosions. Stun heals fairly quickly. Equals $[[\text{Vitality} \times 2] + [\text{Grit} \times 3]]$.

SKILLS

Skills are bought with a pool of points just like attributes. Unlike attributes, skills are never rolled for. Most player characters will start with 45 skill points to spend as they see fit. Character also have Native Skills, a smaller number of free skill points in basic everyday skills any competent person in society must have. Furthermore, each character gains an additional 10-15 points from a skill package related to their professional training and experience. This sounds like a lot, but remember that heroes are supposed to be all-around competent, not merely uber-killing machines. Character starting skills range from 0 to 7. Each skill is linked to an attribute. For most skill rolls, add the skill to its linked attribute and add 2d6. Sometimes the skill must use another attribute for a specific task. For example: Breaking bricks might use $[[\text{Brawn} + \text{Martial Arts}] + 2d6]$ instead of $[[\text{Coordination} + \text{Martial Arts}] + 2d6]$.

Sample Native Skills (Terran Colonial)

Computers	1
Expert (Choose One)	2
Native Language	$[\text{Brains} / 2] + 5$
Notice	2
Pilot Groundcraft	1
Schooling	2

Sample Professional Skill Package (Terran Colonial)

Athletics	2
Brawl or Martial Art	2
Dodge	2
Expert (Colonial Outposts)	1
First Aid	1
Longarms	2
Research	1
Survival	1
Zero-G	1

Skill Specialization

Characters can purchase specializations with for skills by spending 1 skill point. This gives them a +2 bonus to all skill tests using that specialization. For example, the skill Interrogation (Legal) +4 would cost 5 skill points and give a +4 bonus to general Interrogation rolls, but a +6 bonus to Interrogation rolls involving depositions, witness cross examination, and the like.

“Forget about being the best. Forget about being lucky. You’d better be the best and lucky, or we can’t use you.”

- Major Jack “Sparrow” Exeter, Commander, VF-22 “The Long Riders” (Welcome speech at flight combat tryouts)

Specializations may be purchased with experience for the same cost as improving the general skill (1 x new skill rating). When advancing skills that already have a specialization, treat the skill as one level higher for the purpose of cost. For example: A character with Brawl +3 wants to buy the specialization (Folding Chair) in

order to live out their professional wrestling fantasies, they would spend 4 experience and end up with Brawl (Folding Chair) +3. They would have a +3 bonus to Brawl tests in general, but a +5 bonus when beating people over the head with a folding chair. If the character later wanted to improve the Brawl skill, they would have to spend 5 experience to improve the skill to Brawl (Folding Chair) +4 [Desired rating 4 + 1 = 5 experience].

Skill List by Attribute

Brawn Skills

Brawl, Climbing

Agility Skills

Acrobatics, Athletics, Dodge, Martial Art, Melee Weapons, Riding, Stealth, Throwing Weapons, Zero-G

Coordination Skills

Archery, Bracer Weapons, Escape Artist, Gunnery, Heavy Weapons, Longarms, Pilot Aerospace, Pilot Groundcraft, Pilot Heavy Vehicles, Pilot Mech, Sidearms, Sleight of Hand

Brains Skills

Animal Training, Astrogation, Business, Camouflage, Criminology, Cryptography, Expert, Intelligence, Language, Medicine, Navigation, Notice, Pilot Large Craft, Profession, Research, Schooling, Science, Strategy, Survival, Tactics, Tracking, Trailing

Charisma Skills

Acting, Bribery, Bureaucracy, Commerce, Disguise, Instruction, Interrogation, Intimidation, Leadership, Oratory, Performance, Persuasion, Seduction, Street Smarts, Style

Grit Skills

Centering

Geek Skills

Computers, Demolition, Electronic Warfare, Electronics, First Aid, Gambling, Lock Picking, Photography, Repair (Advanced), Repair (Basic), Repair (Weapons), Security Systems

Skill Descriptions

A human being should be able to change a diaper, plan an invasion, butcher a hog, conn a ship, design a building, write a sonnet, balance accounts, build a wall, set a bone, comfort the dying, take orders, give orders, cooperate, act alone, solve equations, analyze a new problem, pitch manure, program a computer, cook a tasty meal, fight efficiently, die gallantly. Specialization is for insects.

Robert A. Heinlein, 20th Century Philosopher

Acrobatics (Agil)

Tumbling, backflips, tightrope, trapeze, etc. Can be used at 1/2 skill in place of dodge.

Acting (Cha)

Professional acting ability, either method-acting or stage-acting. Can be used for impersonation or to defeat Notice skill in a crowd.

Animal Training (Brains)

Ability to train, command, calm, enrage, trick, or otherwise interact with domesticated or wild animals.

Archery (Coor)

Use of short bows, longbows, recurve bows, compound bows, and man-portable crossbows, but not ballista. Includes both ancient and modern styles.

Astrogation (Brains)

Orbital, interplanetary, and interstellar navigation. Includes basic sensor reading skills necessary for navigation.

Athletics (Agil)

Basic athletic skills, including swimming, jumping, running, throwing, etc. Can be used at 1/2 Skill in place of climbing.

Bracer Weapons (Coor)

Use of bracer ranged weapons, including darts, laser, etc.

Brawl (Brawn)

Generic hand to hand skill equivalent to street fighting, bar brawling, etc. Simple improvised weapons also included (barstool, chair, bottle, pipe, club).

Bribery (Cha)

Knowing who can be bribed, and how to go about doing it without paying too much or insulting the other party.

Bureaucracy (Cha)

Knowing how to cut through the crap with stuffed shirts all across the quadrant, as well as how to run your own bureaucracy.

Business (Brains)

Knowledge of accounting, logistics, personnel management, economic theory, marketing, business law, etc.

Camouflage (Brains)

The skill of hiding things from others, and finding things that are hidden. Includes camouflage, concealed weapons, hidden safes, etc.

Centering (Grit)

Meditation, ignoring distractions while performing a skill or task, or using psychic powers.

Climbing (Brawn)

Advanced climbing skills, using ropes & expedition style equipment (or

bare-handed). Also includes knowledge of common high-altitude dangers.

Computers (Geek)

Programming and operation of computers.

Criminology (Brains)

Crime scene investigation, criminal profiling, evidence handling, research methods, etc.

Cryptography (Brains)

Code-breaking and code-making. Often useful for linguists and genetics research.

Demolition (Geek)

Manufacture, preparation, use, and disposal of explosives and detonators. Also covers simple mechanical booby traps.

Disguise (Cha)

Preparation and use of disguises for theatrical or covert purposes. Includes wardrobe, makeup, prosthesis, and induced modifications to posture/body language.

Dodge (Agil)

Getting out of the way when someone tries to (or accidentally may) shoot, kick, grab, stab, run over, or otherwise injure you physically.

Electronic Warfare (Geek)

Use of jamming equipment, jamming countermeasures, direction finding, directed EMP weapons, etc.

Electronics (Geek)

Construction, use and repair of basic and advanced electronic devices and equipment.

Escape Artist (Coor)

Covers escape artist techniques as well as certain forms of yoga and stage performance.

Expert (Brain)

Expertise in a specific field of specialized knowledge. Can include social sciences, history, philosophy, culture, trivia, or other knowledge skillset.

First Aid (Geek)

Life-saving techniques for use in the field. Minimal knowledge of medicines and long term treatment.

"Hold still, or this might hurt."

-Capt. Elaine Vasquez, MD, FACS (Rendering first aid in the field)

Gambling (Geek)

Use of skill in non-athletic games where skill is a factor. Also covers cheating.

Gunnery (Coor)

Use of vehicle weapons, including beam and projectile weapons, as well as missiles.

Heavy Weapons (Coor)

Use of man-portable or crew-served weapons such as rockets, cannons, beam guns, grenade launchers, heavy machineguns, railguns, etc.

Instruction (Cha)

Ability to effectively teach others skills or information.

Intelligence (Brains)

Gathering, evaluation, and summary of information for military, government, or corporate use. Used by spies and soldiers alike.

Interrogation (Cha)

Can be brute force interrogation, or subtle questioning. Combined with other skills, covers truth serums and lie detectors.

Intimidation (Cha)

Convincing people to do what you want them to using the threat of force, blackmail, or other coercion.

Language (Brains)

Ability to speak and read a foreign language. Level 5 is considered native.



Leadership (Cha)

Ability to inspire, organize, and earn the loyalty of those under your command.

Lock Picking (Geek)

Ability to defeat locks of all types and technology levels (up to your own society's technology level), and repair same.

Longarms (Coor)

Use of rifles, carbines, submachineguns, light machineguns, shotguns, energy rifles, and other shoulder-fired weapons.

Martial Art (Agil)

Hand to hand skill using some formalized system of fighting such as boxing, kung fu, capoeira, etc. Some melee damage can be treated as HP damage instead of Stun.

"This one's definitely going to hurt."

-Capt. Elaine Vasquez, MD, FACS (Rendering first aid in the field)

Medicine (Brains)

Knowledge of medicines, disease, anatomy, surgery, and other advanced medical treatment.

Melee weapons (Agil)

Use of blunt and edged hand to hand weapons.

Navigation (Brains)

Use of landmarks, maps, compass, sextant, stars, dead reckoning, and advanced technology aids to determine location and stay on course.

Notice (Brains)

Ability to sense emotions, spot clues, avoid ambush, detect lies, find the needle in the haystack, etc.

Oratory (Cha)

Ability to speak in public effectively.

Performance (Cha)

Ability in a specific performance skill such as dance, musical instruments, singing, improv comedy, auctioneering, mime, etc.

Persuasion (Cha)

Convincing people to do what you want them to without threatening them.

Photography (Geek)

Use of photographic, video, and holography equipment, as well as editing software.

Pilot Aerospace (Coor)

Piloting of tech-level appropriate atmospheric and small orbital craft such as shuttles, fighters, light dropships, etc. Also covers attack rolls for fixed weapons in a dogfight.

"Me? Nervous? Of course. Only a fool wouldn't be."

-Cadet Ahmed Robinson (Attending confession at the Miramar chapel before soloing in a trans-atmospheric fighter)

Pilot Ground Craft (Coor)

Piloting of tech-level appropriate automobiles, wagons, chariots, bikes, ATVs, and hovercraft.

Pilot Heavy Vehicles (Coor)

Piloting of tech-level appropriate tanks, construction equipment, farming equipment, heavy trucks, hover-barges, etc.

Pilot Mech (Coor)

Piloting of mechs, both humanoid and others. Also covers hand to hand and melee attacks using mechs.

Pilot Large Craft (Brains)

Piloting of a specific type of tech-level appropriate large craft, such as oil tankers, galleons, heavy dropships, cruisers, cargo ships, giant habitats, etc.

Profession (Brains)

Ability to perform competently in a given profession such as baker, insurance agent, masseuse, etc. Not a substitute for other skills, but encompasses procedures, background knowledge, and basic technique.

Repair (Advanced) (Geek)

As basic mechanics, but for large craft, mechs, starships, auto-factories, and other similar equipment.

Repair (Basic) (Geek)

Ability to repair, maintain, and even build basic machinery, buildings, vehicles, and other equipment.

Repair (Weapons) (Geek)

Ability to design, build, maintain, repair, modify, and accessorize man-portable weaponry.

Research (Brains)

Knowledge of library research, databases, record-keeping, experimental methods, academic publishing, public data sources, etc.

"Just relax and think about something else. This will be over in a second...Hey, you enjoyed that, didn't you? Well, bite your lip again honey, cause here it comes again."

-Lieutenant Anna Hicks (Flirting with a fellow colonist while taking blood samples for research.)

Riding (Agil)

Ability to ride and knowledge of basic care of a specific animal type (horses, ostrich, camel, elephant, etc).

Schooling (Brain)

General knowledge, over-all educational level, trivia, current events, exposure to the world outside your own neighborhood.

"You have got to see these geological formations! I found these hematite and snowflake obsidian samples in the same strata. It's the weirdest mineral grouping I've ever seen!"

-PFC (reserve) Danica Stern (Returning from Arcadia survey mission #31b)

Science (Brains)

Knowledge of theory and application in a particular field of science. Also functions as a general science skill at 1/3 value.

Security Systems (Geek)

Ability to build, maintain, repair, use, and circumvent all types of security and surveillance systems. Also covers security procedures & theory.

Seduction (Cha)

Ability to manipulate others into romantic relationships, friendships, one night stands, etc.

Sensors (Geek)

Ability to use and perform basic maintenance on common types of sensors and communications equipment.

Sidearms (Coor)

Use of pistols, revolvers, and energy pistols.

Sleight of Hand (Coor)

Covers stage magic as well as pick-pocketing, palming, misdirection, etc.

Stealth (Agil)

Ability to hide yourself from sight and to move silently. Also applies to vehicles you pilot.

Strategy (Brains)

Knowledge of large-scale military, economic, or political maneuvering, including logistics.

Street Smarts (Cha)

Knowledge of how to act in shady parts of town or with shady people. Also covers knowing where to find shady places and people.

Style (Cha)

Ability to groom and dress yourself for maximum effect.

Survival (Brains)

Knowledge of how to survive in the wilderness with minimal or no equipment. Includes finding food and water, hunting, making shelter, etc.

Tactics (Brains)

Knowledge of small-scale military maneuver and fire.

Throwing weapons

while grenades, rocks, cue balls, frisbees, beer bottles, dishes, frying pans, bowling pins, and other relatively simple or improvised objects can be thrown using the Athletics skill, the Throwing weapons skill covers all of that, as well as objects that require more specialized technique like atlatl, boomerangs, hatchets, javelins, spikes, shuriken, throwing knives, wushu darts, etc...

Tracking (Brains)

Ability to follow and interpret a trail without visual or sensor contact with the quarry. Also includes covering your tracks.

Trailing (Brains)

Following others in crowded environments without their knowing it. Also spotting a shadow and shaking them off your trail.

Zero-G (Agil)

Ability to maneuver or perform athletics in a microgravity environment. In melee combat, use the lower of either the combat or zero-g skill. Also covers the operation of space suits.

TALENTS & CHALLENGES

Even everyday people often have a knack for things or a character flaw of some sort. This is even more pronounced among those exceptional few who lead a life as some kind of hero. Add to that the intensity of the kind of training that they must endure, and the end result is an unusually high incidence of special talents and personal challenges.

Player characters can choose talents and challenges (sometimes called "traits") to help round out their characters. Game effects are usually minor (and sometimes even identical to other talents/challenges), but provide excellent role-playing opportunities. The worst challenges are usually the result of a traumatic experience during training or afterwards. Characters can develop talents or challenges at any time, as a result of story events (and sometimes by spending experience points). GMs are encouraged to set a hard cap on the number of talents and challenges characters may start the game with.

Talents & Challenges are grouped by type and each has a strength or severity rating equivalent to the number of points it costs/gives for character creation or improvement.

Cosmic**Lucky (+4)**

The universe loves you. The character can “spend” one point of fortune per game session without actually paying any fortune points.

Psychic Sensitive (+2)

The non-psychic character automatically senses the use of psychic or magical powers within a [Brains x 5] meter radius.

**Most Likely To Die with Their Boots On (+3)**

Character has an unusual tendency to have the right tool at the right time. The character frequently misplaces minor things like fuel cells,

screwdrivers, spare sidearm ammo, duct tape, healing potions, etc., only to “remember” them nearby at a critical moment. Character can spend a fortune point to “remember” or “find” something more significant like a sidearm, grenade, software chip, tech-scanner, etc.

Bad Luck (-4)

The universe hates you. All uses of fortune for the character cost an additional fortune point, and any fortune rolls are at +3 difficulty.

Bizarre Nexus (-1 to -4)

wierdos lurk around every corner, and in this character’s case, truth is definitely stranger than fiction. Your commanding officer wears Hawaiian shirts and lederhosen. Cockroaches steal your toothbrush every night at 20:37. Every time you open field rations, it’s always chili mac. The more points the character has in bizarre nexus, the more often the bizarre touches their life, and the stranger it is.

Center of Strife (-1 to -4)

Enemies lurk around every corner and the character always seems to find herself in the middle of bar brawls, vindictive love triangles, and backstabbing office politics. The more points the character has in center of strife, the worse the strife is, and the more often it happens.

Mental**Brave (+1)**

The character may or may not be cool, calm, and collected, but they can face danger without breaking ranks. Character gets +3 to all tests to resist fear. Character may still be just as panicked as the next guy, but can get the job done.

Bump of Direction (+1)

The character intuitively knows which direction they are facing in relation to compass points, up and down, and any landmarks they are familiar with. Character also gets +2 to all Navigation tests.

Concentration (+2)

The character has a greater than usual ability to ignore distractions and focus on the task at hand. Character suffers only half wound penalties (round penalties down), and gains +1 to Centering tests.

Eidetic Memory (+3)

The character remembers anything they have seen, heard, or otherwise sensed with perfect clarity. Character can increase any skill requiring lots of memorization for half cost (GM discretion).

Grease Monkey/Master Smith (+1)

The character has an outstanding ability to fix things. Gains +1 on all tests to repair (but not build or design) anything.

Knack (Skill) (+1)

The character can do something unusual with one of their skills. Character can fire from the hip, stop bleeding without bandages, find water with a dowsing rod, track by smell (when combined with keen sense talent) or otherwise get results in an unorthodox way.

Light Sleeper (+1)

The character can wake almost instantly at the first sign of danger; bright-eyed, bushy-tailed, and without the fatigue and irritability of most light sleepers. Can make a Notice test at -2 penalty to detect nearby threats while sleeping. Without this talent, characters are at -6 to Notice tests while sleeping.

Lightning Calculator (+2)

The character has extraordinary ability with mathematics and spatial concepts. They can instantly perform complex maths, either intuitively, or those they have studied, and can estimate distance, area, and volume of complex shapes with computer-like accuracy. Gains +2 to all tests involving complex mathematics without computer support (Replaces the bonus given by computer systems). Extremely useful when your PDU is damaged. Magical systems that rely heavily on mathematics (ritual sorcery, glyph enchanting, or numeromancy for example) also gain this bonus.

Perfect Time (+1)

The character is more accurate than the average digital clock. Equivalent to a lab-quality clock, timer, and stopwatch. Time zones, shipboard clocks, and planets with longer or shorter days don't faze the character.

Personal Code (+2)

The character has a personal code that they live by, and it is not lip service. It could be Bushido, chivalry, strict Catholicism, or the Hippocratic oath. Any attempt to force the character to violate that code is at +3 difficulty or gives the character a +3 bonus to resist. Examples might be resisting torture, psychic attacks, seduction, fear in combat, etc.

Piercing Gaze (+2)

The character's glance can un-nerve even the hardest soul. Substitute Grit for Charisma in any test involving face-to-face leadership, intimidation, interrogation, detecting lies, etc. If Charisma is higher than Grit, gain a +2 bonus.

Polyglot (+3)

The character is extremely good at learning new languages. Gains +2 to Expert: Linguistics tests and +1 to

Cryptography tests. Improves language skills for half cost (round cost down), in less than half the time. The character receives a number of free skill points to spend on languages equal to their skill rating in their native language.

Sixth Sense (+4)

The character always seems to know when trouble is brewing, and acts first. Even in a stand-up fight, they know which way to jump. Rolls an extra die for initiative and discards the lowest die roll.

Unshakable Cool (+4)

Nothing fazes the character. Social grace or a bubbling personality aren't as important as how you handle yourself when it's on the line. Character can ignore fear, distractions (other than pain), and stress. Can substitute Grit for Charisma in Seduction, Persuasion, Performance, Style and Bribery tests.

Vehicle Zen/Horse whisperer (+3)

The character is one with their vehicle or mount. Piloting, riding or driving is as natural as walking, and she can make it do things hardly anyone else can. Gains +1 to all Pilot, Riding, or Driving tests for one vehicle skill, and gains the benefit of the Sixth Sense talent while using that Pilot skill only.

Will to Live (+2)

The character is either too mean to die, or has something truly worth living for. Catastrophic injury, incurable disease, starvation, and dangling off cliffs are not going to stop the character. Gains +2 to any test to survive a death-defying situation where force of will could make a difference. Character doesn't die from wounds until they reach six times their Vitality in negative HP, instead of three.

Addiction (-1 to -7)

The character is addicted to some substance or activity. Addictions are rated in terms of danger, scarcity, and severity of the character's addiction. Caffeine, for example, is safe, plentiful, and usually only mildly or somewhat addictive. Addictions refer to the addiction chart for details and examples.

Addiction Table			
	Danger	Scarcity	Severity
+0	Trivial Caffeine	Everyday Caffeine	Mild Alcohol
+1	Serious Alcohol	Uncommon Marijuana	Addicted Caffeine
+2	Deadly Heroin	Rare Heroin	Junkie Heroin
All addictions start with a base value of 1. For example, moderate addiction to caffeine (1+0+0+1) = 2 points			

Amnesia (-4)

The character suffers from some form of amnesia, from coldsleep, injury, or other cause. Cannot remember their past at all, other than what they can learn from their personal record and friends/family. Has a general sense of their own skills and abilities.

Attention Deficit (-2)

The character has developed a distinct lack of concentration. Must make a Grit test (difficulty based on the level of distractions available) to perform extended activities. If successful, character is still at -1 to that extended test.

Clueless (-4)

Character is oblivious to just about everything. Is subject to -2 penalty for all Notice, Gambling, Sensors and social skill tests (or any check that requires attention to detail).

Compulsive (-1 to -5)

The character exhibits extremely compulsive behavior under certain

circumstances. 1 point base value, and 0-2 points each for danger and frequency. Common triggers (responding to every email immediately) are worse than uncommon or rare triggers, and deadly compulsions (spitting on any cop you meet) are worse than serious or trivial ones. Character can make a Grit test [13] to avoid the compulsion for a very short time or spend a fortune point for one full scene.

Computer Illiterate (-4)

Either the character was hit on the head, or had some skill so useful that their employer didn't care about the fact that the character can barely use computer-based equipment at all. Email is torture for this character. Character gains -4 to any test requiring the use of a computer interface, and cannot increase their Computer skill beyond 1. Obviously this challenge is not available in any game setting where computer literacy is not widespread.

"How do I feel? How do I fucking feel? I just had a thirteen ton carnivore splatter my bunk-mate's intestines all over my face this morning! How the fuck do you think I feel?"

-PFC (reserve) Elph "Sticky" Champlain (Post-debriefing therapy session that earned him his nickname)

Flashbacks (-2)

Something traumatic has happened to the character, and now they occasionally re-live that experience during their waking hours. During any stressful situation (up to once per game session), the GM can require the character to make a Grit test [13] or enter a flashback and become incapacitated for 2d6x10 seconds or until someone snaps them out of it.

Greedy (-2)

The character has a tendency to hoard valuables and take more than their fair share when possible, perhaps even stealing from others. Word gets

around, so the character is often at -1 to most social skill tests. The urge can be temporarily avoided similar to a compulsion.

Grudge-Holder (-2)

The character just can't let things go. She remembers every last perceived offense anyone has ever committed against them, and is actively seeking payback of one sort or another. This challenge confers no rules penalty. The trouble it causes is its own "reward." Can be temporarily avoided similar to a compulsion.

Impulsive (-2)

The character tends to jump into things without thinking, researching, or otherwise checking things out. Must make a Grit test [15 if alone, 12 in the presence of allies] to avoid blindly jumping into the thick of things.

Intolerance (-2)

The character is incredibly intolerant of something. It could be tobacco smoke, stupid people, or loud children. In the presence of the "trigger", the character will usually become abusive, rude, thoughtless, or otherwise unpleasant to be around (-2 to most social skill tests). Can be temporarily avoided similar to a compulsion.

Kleptomaniac (-2 or -4)

The character just can't help themselves when it comes to helping themselves to other people's belongings. The two point version of this challenge compels the character to steal when they aren't likely to get caught or face immediate physical harm. Characters with the four point version had better have good sleight of hand skills or be ready to face the music.

Lack of Affect (-2)

Nothing seems to outwardly affect the character, for good or for ill. The creepiness factor tends to put people off, giving a -1 to Seduction, Persuasion, Bribery, and Leadership tests. Character may have violent emotional outbursts under prolonged, extreme stress.

Motor Mouth (-2)

The character just cannot shut up without being told to. All extended social interactions (short social interactions are not penalized) are at -1, and character is at -2 to resisting interrogation of any kind.

Pacifist (-2)

Violence never solves anything... well, not in any worthwhile way... or at least, it's a last resort. The character intensely dislikes violence, and may even be a bona-fide, true pacifist, rejecting violence altogether. Either way, the character must make a Grit test to willfully inflict harm upon another intelligent being, with a DR of the GM's choosing, based upon the level of violence, real or imagined threat, and the character's emotional state. Pacifists do gain a +2 bonus to resist urges or psychological compulsions to commit violent acts against intelligent beings or cute, cuddly animals.

Panic Attacks (-3)

The character is subject to frequent panic attacks in high-stress situations. When surprised or threatened, the character must make a Grit test with a DR of the GM's choosing, based on the intensity of the stress, or run away, cower, freeze, start screaming, or otherwise fall apart, as well as suffer a -3 to all actions (except screaming, fleeing, etc.).

Phobia (-1 to -7)

The character is irrationally and deathly afraid of something. Phobias are treated much like addictions, with the intensity of the phobia, scarcity of the phobia trigger, and likely result of a failed grit check determining the point value of the phobia.

Speech Disorder (-2)

The character has a stutter, split palate, or mild form of aphasia. Conversation can be difficult to understand, and gets worse in stressful situations. Character gets -2 to all language skills when speaking. Listening, reading and writing skill is unaffected. Character is also -1 to social skills at the GM's discretion (especially Seduction).

Under-Sexed (-2)

The character is what the polite might call horny, and those less polite would slap repeatedly with any convenient heavy object. The character must make a Grit test with a DR equal to twice the Charisma of any person they are likely to be even a little bit attracted to, or the character will make a "suggestion" to them. The more the Grit test is failed by, the cruder the suggestion is likely to be. The character is always free to choose to fail the Grit test or act cruder than the Grit test indicates. Characters with this challenge do not necessarily suffer social penalties. Combining this challenge with a high Seduction skill might very well gain the character a reputation as a smooth ladies man or femme fatale. In certain situations, however, a character's reputation can sometimes give them a -1 on social tests.

Physical**Ambidextrous (+2)**

The character can perform one-handed tasks with either hand with equal

ease. No penalties for off-hand use apply. Using a weapon simultaneously in each hand still gives two-weapon penalties, but no off-hand penalty.

Catlike Balance (+2)

The character rarely gets knocked down or falls. Heights don't faze them, and they always seem to land on, or roll to, their feet. The character reduces by 2 all penalties for tests involving knockdown, coming back to their feet after being knocked down, or while performing feats of death-defying dexterity (tightrope walking, etc).



High Pain Tolerance (+3)

No pain, no gain. The character feels pain, but can ignore some of its effects. Reduce all wound penalties by two. The character also gets +3 to resist interrogations involving torture.

Iron Hide (+3)

The character is extremely difficult to injure, through sheer muscle mass,

dense bones, rolls of fat, rocks in their skull, or a combination of the above. They just shrug off minor bumps, scrapes, and cuts. More dangerous injuries still don't affect the character as badly as they might others. Reduce all damage done to the character by 2 (on a hit by hit basis for combat, or turn by turn for fire, cold exposure, radiation, etc.).

Sharp Sense (+1 to +3)

The character possesses an unusually sharp sense of sight, hearing, touch, or taste/smell. Sharp vision and hearing cost three points, and give a +1 to most Notice or other tests involving that sense (other than attack tests). Sharp sense of taste/smell costs two points and gives a +1 to Notice tests at close range, where smell might be a factor (detecting some poisons, noticing unwashed enemy soldiers, etc.). Since taste and smell are closely linked they count as one sense for the purposes of this talent. Sharp sense of touch costs one point, though is of limited value. It would be useful in complete darkness, for the blind, or in certain tactile skills like massage, sculpting, etc. Also useful for detecting the direction and strength of wind, or pressure leaks in orbital habitats. Gives +1 for all skill tests involving touch, at GM's discretion.

Attribute Damage (-2)

The character has one (or more!) attributes that have deteriorated for one reason or another. It may be an effect of cold-sleep, lack of exercise, a head injury, large-area burns, inhaling toxic chemicals, or other mishap, but the attribute in question is at -1 for all purposes except experience used to raise it (the cost to raise it is as if it was undamaged). At GM discretion, this challenge may be assigned during game play to represent the consequences of a severe mishap, and may also be removed by paying xp and roleplaying.

This challenge is excellent for representing characters getting soft and flabby during extended down-time. This challenge can be taken multiple times, even for the same attribute, in which case, the effects stack.

Blind (-1 to -10)

Blindness is a catch-all category describing all types of vision problems, from being partially color-blind or mild near-sightedness (-1) to being a completely blind, with no hope of a technological or medical cure (-10). Blindness ratings are from 1 to 8, and any form of blindness which cannot be artificially compensated for is worth an additional two points. Characters suffer a penalty to any test relying heavily on vision (especially Notice and attack tests) equal to their blindness rating. Characters with complete blindness automatically fail at any test requiring vision. Characters with blindness can compensate for up to 4 points of this challenge by using glasses, contacts, visors, implants, or other technological devices (which all have their own drawbacks). Without their technological aid, they suffer the normal penalties. Some forms of blindness are situational only (night blindness, sensitivity to glare), and are worth one point less than normal, but the penalties only apply during that specific situation.

Deaf (-1 to -6)

Deafness is similar to blindness in game terms. Deafness ratings range from -1 to -5. Deafness which cannot be compensated for is worth one point more. Technological aids can offset up to 3 points of deafness. Characters with deafness subtract twice the deafness rating from any test relying a great deal on hearing. Characters with complete deafness automatically fail at any test requiring hearing.

Deep Sleeper (-1)

The character sleeps deeply, and is difficult to wake. They may also snore loudly. Attempts to wake the character may require shouting at the top of the lungs, pushing them out of bed, water in the face, or similar efforts, if they have not slept the normal amount or are unusually tired. The character suffers -2 to all Notice tests to wake up from loud noises or other signs of danger. On the other hand, noisy parties next door are unlikely to interrupt the character's sleep. Alternately, the character may have a version of this where they may be waked normally, but is at -1 to all tests until their morning caffeine, breakfast, meditation, etc., or until at least an hour has passed, the first three rounds of combat, or similar "wake up" event.

Disfigured (-2)

The character has suffered some horrible cosmetic disfigurement. Stigmata from psychic attack, plasma burns on the face, milky-white/sightless eyes, shriveled limbs, etc. In extreme cases, it should be combined with other challenges like attribute damage, missing limbs, or similar. The character is -1 to all social tests other than Intimidation or Interrogation with people that only casually know or dislike the character. People tend to alternatively stare at, and become un-nerved by the character's presence. In certain circumstances, the character may actually get a +1 or better bonus to Street Smarts or Intimidation tests from fearsomeness, reputation, or "street cred."

Low Pain Tolerance (-3)

Even the tiniest scratch or bump causes the character to freak out. Either they feel a greater than normal amount of pain, or the normal amount of pain is psychologically traumatizing to them. Add +1 to all wound penalties.

Mute (-3 or -5)

The character is partially or completely unable to talk. This may be the result of damage to the larynx, severe aphasia, a psychological disorder, or similar cause. Three point versions of this challenge require the character to make a Grit test with a DR assigned by the GM to speak at all. Characters who are completely mute cannot speak at all. Use of a PDU or other technological aid can allow communication at a reduced speed. Technological aids allow the use of social skills, but at a -4 penalty. A successful Grit test for those partially mute allows the use of social skills at a -3 penalty. This challenge is best suited for NPCs, as it can severely limit the use of dialogue by PCs. With GM approval, and good roleplaying, however, it can make for an interesting PC.

Space Sickness (-2)

While just about everyone gets a queasy stomach from time to time in low-G environments, the character just can't seem to adjust to free fall or very-low-G. All actions are at -2 while in free fall, and -1 in low-G. On first entering free fall or low-G, or after meals, a Grit test (DR 14 for free fall, DR 12 for low-G) is required to avoid vomiting. Drugs can reduce the penalties by 1, and the Grit test by 5, but are dangerous to use for more than a few days at a time. While potentially very dangerous for extended orbital trips, the wide use of artificial gravity and high-boost ships minimize the danger. This challenge can only be selected in games where there is a reasonable chance the character may end up in orbit.

Social**Blessed by the Blarney Stone (+2)**

The character has a gift for used car salesmanship. Greasing the wheels of the red tape machine and selling people things they don't need at

high prices, without quite lying to them, come as second nature to the character. +1 to Bribery, Bureaucracy, Commerce, Persuasion, and Street Smarts. Characters with this talent, however, are much more likely to end up with the Bad Reputation challenge than other characters if they abuse this talent, and either way, people tend to want the character to get involved in shady deals on a regular basis, sometimes insistent people.

Center of Attention (+2)

The character always seems to be the focus of everyone in the room, the life of every party, and the person most likely to get all the glory (or blame). Character gains +1 to Oratory, Persuasion, Seduction, and Style. On the other hand, the character's chances of blending into a crowd, or passing nonchalantly down a corridor are about zero. Stealth and Disguise tests for blending into crowds are at -1.

Good Reputation (+3)

The character has a good reputation, deserved or not. People tend to trust, believe in, and be loyal to the character. +1 to Instruction, Leadership, Persuasion, and Street Smarts. The character also gains +1 to the Fame background. Good reputation can backfire sometimes when people expect you to do more than you are really capable of.

Bad Reputation (-3)

The character has a bad reputation, deserved or not. People tend to distrust, lack faith in, and show poor loyalty to the character. -1 to Instruction, Leadership, Persuasion, and Street Smarts. The character also gains a -1 penalty to the Fame background. It is possible to get negative Fame in this case, which has negative effects on the character's social opportunities, to say the least. Bad Reputation can sometimes

work in the character's favor when the character rises above people's low expectations, surprising them.

Caretaker (-1 to -7)

The character has someone that depends on them for their livelihood and/or daily needs. Dependents that inconvenience caretakers more are worth more points than dependents that aren't much hassle. Capability refers to the dependent's ability to care for themselves, both on a daily basis, and in emergencies. Frequency refers to how often the character must actively do something to care for their dependent. If the character has a co-caretaker, reduce the frequency points accordingly. Care level represents how much time, effort, or resources the character must spend, on average, each time they give care. See the Caretaker Table for examples. If something bad happens to the character's dependent, they must replace the challenge points with other challenges, or pay it off with experience immediately. Social and mental challenges are probably most appropriate.

Caretaker Table			
	Capability	Frequency	Care Level
+0	Competent Retired Parent	Monthly Parolee	Light Advice
+1	Ineffective Kid Brother	Weekly Teenager	Moderate Housework
+2	Helpless Infant	Everyday Infant	Heavy Personal Care
All caretaker challenges start with a base value of 1. For example, a relative with an advanced case of ALS and no other responsible caretaker would be helpless and require daily heavy care (1+2+2+2) = 7 points for this challenge.			

Embarrassing Secret (-2)

The character has done or been involved with something (or someone) that if widely known would result in either the Bad Reputation or Favors Owed challenges, but nobody important

knows yet. The GM should make the character work hard to keep things under wraps by bringing it up as a plot point every few game sessions.

Favors Owed (-1 per favor)

The character owes someone else a favor per the favors background. This challenge can be taken multiple times representing multiple debts, one big one, or a combination. The GM should randomly determine when the favor is called due (or use it as a plot point). The favor should cost the character something or entail a great risk. This is one of the few challenges that can be gotten rid of without spending experience points. When the favor is taken care of, it is considered paid in full, so the GM had best make the character work for it or give up something really worth it. It's also worth noting that if a character welves on a favor, they can gain one of many other challenges in place of it (including physical challenges if they send in thugs to "collect").

Horrible Secret (-4)

The character has done or been involved with something/someone that if widely known would get the character shoved out an airlock, thrown in prison, sent on repeated suicide missions, spit on by practically everyone they met, busted down to private, or public humiliation so severe they are likely to cut out their own intestines. The GM should make the character work hard to either stay out of the spotlight or prove their innocence, etc. Unless it is the driving element of a story arc, however, the GM should probably bring this up less frequently than embarrassing secret, to prevent it taking over the plot.

Social Misfit (-3)

The character just doesn't fit in. Maybe they constantly pick their nose and eat it in public, growl at

women and small children, or have a creepy personal aura. People tend to avoid the character from the get go. All social interactions except Intimidation/Interrogation tests are at -1. Character pays double for the Social Network background.

BACKGROUNDS

Despite having upended their lives and embarked on some kind of harebrained adventure, most characters have pieced together a new support network. The crucible of their professional training and time spent in their new role have helped them forge new alliances, gain status in their new life, and, in some cases, they've even managed to bring someone/something particularly useful with them.

Backgrounds represent the social network, status, and privileges the character has access to in their new life. Each is rated on a scale of 1 to 10, just like attributes and skills. In VERY rare cases, some NPCs might have backgrounds that go higher than 10, but PCs shouldn't. Backgrounds are bought at character creation, but can be increased with experience and roleplaying. Backgrounds can also be lost through roleplaying or at the GM's discretion.

Augmentation

Augmentations are genetic, cybernetic, magical, or otherwise super-human improvements over the standard human experience. Each game setting will have its own list of augmentations.

Backup

Backup refers to a group of NPCs who the character can call in for support (combat or otherwise). For each point spent on the backup background, the character gains one NPC ally they can call upon. The Backup background also function as Contacts, adding half its rating. Each backup character is considered a minor contact.

Backup characters are generally a little less powerful than starting PCs, and should never be a show stealer. Furthermore, they are not always sitting around waiting to jump to the character's aid at a moment's notice. Even backup in a military unit is likely to have someone on the sick list, on detached duty with another unit, or performing some other critical task. Availability is at the GM's discretion, but as a general rule, any given backup NPC is available on a roll of 5 or better on 2d6.

Equipment

The character has access to some piece of non-standard equipment. The nature of the equipment may be as simple as cosmetic "personalizing", or as extreme as major magical or alien artifacts. Equipment gained through this background does not cost RP. See table for examples.

Cost	Equipment Examples
0	Normal Gear
1	Distinctive Gear (personalized)
2	Custom Gear (+1 bonus)
3	Prototype/Enchanted Gear (+2 bonus)
4	Alien/Magical Gear (+3 bonus)
5	Custom Vehicle
6	Prototype/Enchanted Vehicle
7	Alien/Magical Vehicle or Custom Mecha
8	Protototype/Enchanted Mecha
9	Alien/Magical Mecha
10	Alien/Magical Super-Artifact

Fame

Fame represents how well the character is known among the community where they live. This influences the chance of having fans, getting a good seat in at a restaurant, or otherwise manipulating people in non-sinister ways. Characters can make a fame check [Fame + 2d6] with a base DR of 14 to be noticed, which most of the time will give the character a small bonus to social skills. The GM can, at their option, choose to roll for

the character when they do not want to be recognized (tailing a suspect, sneaking past the paparazzi, etc...). "success" in this case may blow the character's cover.

Cost	Fame Examples
0	You are a regular schmuck.
1	You stand out in your unit or workplace.
2	You are well-known in a neighborhood or small town.
3	You are well-known in a small region or large city.
4	You are widely known in your profession.
5	You are frequently recognized in public.
6	You are recognized almost everywhere.
7	Half the people in your homeland know of you.
8	Everyone in your homeland knows your name and face.
9	Everyone in your homeland knows all about you.
10	You're famous far and wide outside your homeland.

Cost	Favor Examples
0	NPC "don't owe you nothin!"
1	NPC will get you free tickets.
2	NPC will get you season tickets.
3	NPC will give you a job.
4	NPC will give you a cushy job.
5	NPC will lie to the cops for you.
6	NPC will buy you a new car.
7	NPC will buy you a new house.
8	NPC will cover up a murder for you.
9	NPC will go to prison for you.
10	NPC will take a bullet for you.

Favor

Big people in big places owe you a favor on a one-time or limited basis. The more points, the bigger the favor, or the more often it can be called in. A character can have more than one favor background, representing multiple people that owe them. For every extra point spent on this

background, double the number of times that it can be called in. For example, spending 2 extra points on the favor would allow the favor to be called in 4 times instead of once. You can also ask for a number of lesser favors instead of one big one. Over time, this may lower the effective rating of that particular favor background. It's not important to spend lots of time tracking favors, as long as the GM approves. See the table for examples of what an NPC might do for the character at a certain level of favor.

Cost	Rank	Marine	Fleet
0	E2	Private, PFC	Airman
1	E3	Lance Corporal	Airman FC
2	E4	Corporal	Senior Airman
3	E5	Sergeant	Petty Officer
3	E6	Staff Sergeant	Petty Officer FC
4	E7	Gunnery Sergeant	Chief PO
4	E8	First Sergeant	Senior CPO
4	E9	Master Sergeant	Master CPO
5	O1	2nd Lieutenant	Ensign
6	O2	1st Lieutenant	Lietenant JG
7	O3	Captain	Lieutenant
8	O4	Major	Lt Commander
9	O5	Lt Colonel	Commander
10	O6	Colonel	Captain
11	O7	Brigadier Gen	Commodore
12	O8	Major General	Rear Admiral
13	O9	Lt General	Vice Admiral
14	O10	General	Admiral
**	O11	Commandant	Fleet Admiral

Rank

rank determines the character's rank in a military, corporation, or similar organization. Characters belonging to such an organization without this background are considered the lowest non-recruit enlisted rank in their service, or un-ranked independents. Characters receive basic pay equal to $[[\text{Rank} / 2] + 3]$ per month beyond basic needs. See the rank chart for examples of various military ranks (as used by the Eros 433 colonial military).

while PC's may only spend up to 10 points in the rank background, there are far more than 10 ranks. Extremely high ranks (those above 10 points) are reserved for NPCs. Some senior enlisted ranks are lumped together under the same cost, in which case, the character is assumed to start at the lowest rank in that rank category and promotion is a matter of roleplaying, rather than game mechanics.

Requisition

Requisition represents bonus pay, proceeds from an independent day job (or moonlighting), a trust fund and/or the ability to beg, borrow, steal, or otherwise scrounge for equipment or supplies, either through legitimate channels or on the black market. This can also represent black market activities. The character gains extra RP every month and extra RP at character creation, per the chart.

Cost	Requisition
0	Basic pay and no talent for scrounging
1	2 RP/month + 2 starting RP
2	3 RP/month + 3 starting RP
3	4 RP/month + 4 starting RP
4	6 RP/month + 6 starting RP
5	8 RP/month + 8 starting RP
6	10 RP/month + 10 starting RP
7	12 RP/month + 12 starting RP
8	14 RP/month + 14 starting RP
9	18 RP/month + 18 starting RP
10	22 RP/month + 22 starting RP

Security Clearance

The security clearance background determines how much your character "needs to know" as a matter of course. Obviously, if the character becomes an essential part of some secret mission, they will be sworn to secrecy, etc. This background, however, measures the type of information the character can access on an everyday basis, or at least without too many questions being asked.

Having this background means that the character has undergone long and involved background investigations, magical or psychic interrogation, loyalty tests, and/or psych reviews, in addition to having a legitimate reason for having a security clearance. Usually the character must also have Rank in the organization in which they have a security clearance. Once a character holds a clearance, they are relatively immune to casual suspicion regarding sensitive information, and can access non-public databases, libraries, and intelligence analysis. For every 2 points of Security Clearance, the character gets a +1 bonus to skill tests to find sensitive information, provided that the proper type of database or library is available. This bonus can be cumulative with any bonuses from the Social Network background.

Clearances are usually held by intelligence specialists, senior officers, communications technicians, research staff, spies, colonial administrators, law enforcement, and others who work regularly with sensitive information.

Cost	Security Clearance Examples
0	Basic Background Check or None
1	Routine Clearance
2	Administrative Clearance
3	Confidential
4	Secret
5	Top Secret
6	Umbra
7	Compartmentalized
8	Code-Word
9	Special Access Program
10	Unlimited

Social Network

Social network refers to the network of friends and acquaintances (other than the other PCs or immediate supervisors) that a character can rely upon to provide information or services without having to go through channels. Most people have extensive

social networks, but characters have likely been uprooted, and most find themselves associating mostly with their own team, unit, or work detail.

Many times it's not just what you know, but who you know that counts when you are trying to cut the red tape and just get things done. People in the network, referred to as "contacts", while not buddy-buddy with the character, are more or less favorably inclined to help the character out in small ways, as long as it doesn't get too one-sided. Contacts should be regularly treated to home-cooked meals, thank you cards, tickets to concerts, etc., in order to keep them happy.

For each point spent on the social network background the character gains four contact points. Major contacts (friends) cost 2 points, and minor ones (acquaintances) cost 1. Major contacts should be given a short description of their own. Minor contacts should be given at least a name and notation of how they might be useful (job, skill, hobby, position, etc.).

Contacts can also help characters find information via the rumor mill. For every 2 points of Social Network, the character gets a +1 bonus to skill tests to find information available through the rumor mill.

As characters earn or lose contacts, this background rating may change. Divide the character's total contact points by 4 and round down to calculate their social network rating.

Teacher

Someone who can teach you the finer points of several skills, or help you hone an attribute or two, depending on their profession and the GM's discretion (not necessarily the character's profession). While all characters have nominal access to standard training resources one way or another, the Teacher background

represents a true master, both in their given field, and in the art of instruction. Their methods may or may not be orthodox, but they are effective. Teachers also function as a well-connected contact, giving a +1 bonus to relevant information gathering attempts, regardless of their level.

Cost	# Skills	Teacher
0	–	On Your Own
1	1/5	Busy Friend
2	1/6	Accessible Friend
3	2/6	Skilled Friend
4	2/7	Mentor
5	3/7	Personal Trainer
6	3/8	"Real" Teacher
7	4/8	Award-winning Teacher
8	4/9	Teacher of the Year
9	5/9	Guru
10	5/10	Savant

Teachers, as a rule, will not help out characters on routine or trivial matters. They don't have the time to waste, nor would it help the student learn to have everything done for them, denying them experience.

Teachers certainly do not take over for the student when the going gets tough. They are either occupied by other matters, or somehow disabled/unable to work at their full capacity (in disguise, sworn an oath of non-interference, etc.). They can, however, give specific advice about a given problem, call in favors on behalf of the character, access restricted information, or otherwise aid in the character's efforts. This is in addition to the reduced cost of increasing skills and attributes under a relevant instructor.

Any given teacher can also reduce the experience cost for any skill critical to their profession, or any attribute central to those skills, at the GM's discretion. Refer to the chart for the number of skills (and skill level) the teacher can provide

that experience discount. Teachers of level 1-5 can help increase one attribute, and teachers of level 6-10 can help increase two. Teachers can help characters increase an attribute up to 10, regardless of the teacher's attributes or level. They can assist skill increases up to $(1/2 \text{ level} + 5)$. If the character wants to improve the skill beyond that, they pay the regular cost. The teacher may have other skills or exceptional attributes, but these are the ones that they are skilled in teaching others to improve.

EXPERIENCE

Characters gain experience points as a result of what they do and see in the course of adventures, story arcs, or even important scenes. These points can be spent to represent what they learn through gameplay and any personal training in their off-time. Experience should be awarded at the end of each gaming session and at the end of each story arc.

“Good judgement is the result of experience. Experience is the result of bad judgement.”

Master L.G. Francis, 21st Century Philosopher

When awarding experience, it's important to note that people can learn a lot from their failures as well as their successes. Points should be awarded more for characters trying something new, rather than just when they pull off something cool (though they can get experience for that too). After an average gaming session, players should probably walk away with somewhere between three and eight experience points, depending on the length of the gaming session, your style of play, and how many new things the characters tried. Basing experience point awards on novelty rather than just success encourages players to do more interesting things with their characters, which increases the chance of fulfilling the ultimate goal: Having fun.

Costs to improve aspects of the character can be found on the Experience Table. Multiply the desired rating or level by the multiplier to determine experience cost. If players want to improve characters beyond the normal human maximum of 10, they need to have both a pretty good justification for it, and also a hefty amount of experience points to spend on it. Simply extrapolate from the chart, then double that cost.

Some GMs will require that characters spend time training and/or practicing to improve their abilities. Of course, that training has its own experience point awards.

If characters train with a mentor or another character with the instruction skill, the character improving themselves gets a discount on the experience cost to improve the skill, attribute, or (occasionally) trait. Treat the experience cost as being one step less (example: a desired attribute rating of 6 would only cost 15 experience instead of 18). The teacher must spend roughly one third to one half the time teaching as the student does learning or practicing.

Experience Table	
Skill	x1
Background	x2
Attribute	x3
Trait	x5

FORTUNE

Fortune is a measure of how much the universe favors the character. Only player characters and major NPCs have fortune. Faceless storm troopers and even expendable allies are not favored: If they were, they would be the stars of the show, and not the extras.

Since the characters are the stars of the story, they can get away with things that your typical “average

“joe” wouldn’t even attempt. It’s sort of like having the cockiness of adolescence, but actually having the luck and chutzpa to back it up. Depending on how cinematic you want your game to be, GMs can let players buy obscene amounts of the Fortune attribute. The more ridiculously difficult things you want your characters to get away with, the higher the GM should let them improve it. If you prefer a more believable story, keep the Fortune attribute relatively low.

There are three primary ways to use Fortune. For everyday questions of overall luck, simply roll $[[\text{Fortune} \times 2] + 2d6]$. This would cover things like deciding who gets a better hand in a small-stakes poker game, whether a package of field rations is an edible variety or an inedible brick of sticky goo, or the like. For higher-stakes situations, however, characters can use Fortune points to improve their chances or even degree of success.

If characters are willing to temporarily reduce their Fortune attribute (spend Fortune), they can do one of several things: Re-roll one or both dice on a test already made before the result is determined (only possible if not a snake-eyes), negate the effect of a snake-eyes roll, or buy an extra 1d6 to add to any test (max of one extra die per test). Fortune spent this way regenerates at the end of the game

session, the end of a story arc, and/or (if you want a slightly more cinematic result), every time the character wakes up after a night’s sleep.

Characters can also permanently reduce their Fortune attribute (burn Fortune) to get a more spectacular result. This could be a bit of instant luck, AKA “something cool”, like having the grenade that lands at your feet turn out to be a dud or have a slow fuse (throw it back!), or finding a large deposit of a rare resource like molybdenum or gold.

If characters are in dire need of success, and it’s not numerically impossible (The DR of the test is possible to beat with a roll of double sixes and a five), they can burn Fortune for an automatic success. If it is possible to achieve noteworthy or outstanding success on a maximum roll, then characters can burn additional Fortune to make that a reality as well.

Note that permanently burned Fortune can be improved based on the newer (cheaper) attribute rating.

Characters with supernatural powers can spend Fortune to help pay the cost of their powers if their reserves are too low. If they need a lot of power points to use that power, they can burn Fortune to refill their current supernatural score (Psi, Mana, Numina, etc.) at a 1 to 10 ratio.

Rule Systems

The most basic game mechanic in the Eros System is the “test.” The player rolls 2d6, then adds other values—usually a combination of attribute, skill, and/or modifier(s)—to come up with a total score for that test. The test result is compared with a difficulty rating (DR). If the test equals or exceeds the DR, the test is successful. The DR represents the relative difficulty of the task the character is trying to accomplish, whether it’s resisting torture, persuading a bouncer to let them in a club, or avoiding the wandering hands of a drunk. There are many sorts of tests to represent “real world” challenges.

TYPES OF TESTS

Skill Tests

Skill tests are probably the most common type of test. An attribute (usually the one linked to the skill), a skill, and any modifier(s) are added to the dice roll. Often a character will not have an appropriate skill for the task at hand. In this case, they may roll the base attribute (not subject to doubling, see below). The GM may even assign a penalty for not having the skill, especially if the character has no similar skills or the skill in question is highly technical. For example, someone with the Longarm skill probably can use a sidearm with minimal penalty, even if only using the basic attribute, since many of the principles of using the two skills are the same. Someone with no firearm skills, however, is going to be a lot more clueless, even if they have good hand-eye coordination.

Attribute Tests

Attribute tests are a measure of the character’s raw, unskilled ability. In this case, the character adds twice the relevant attribute to the dice roll, plus any applicable modifier(s). This keeps the DR comparable to

most skill tests. In this kind of test, skill isn’t as important as the character’s basic capabilities (lifting large objects, resisting disease, taking an IQ test, etc.).

Initiative Tests

Initiative tests are used to determine the order that actions are taken in fast-paced situations like a car chase, sports competition, combat, or the like. All the participants roll [Initiative + 2d6]. Actions are taken by characters in order from highest to lowest.

Optional Multiple-Turn Initiative

Certain psychic powers, cybernetic implants, magic items, xeno abilities, and the like can allow characters to take multiple actions during a combat round. In this case, simply allow the character or entity to take additional actions on their turn without invoking the multiple action penalties to any tests involved. In such a case, a firearm or other high technology weapon still cannot exceed its maximum rate of fire for the turn. This ability is rare, but allows computer controlled or augmented systems, critters, and supernaturally-enhanced beings to be significantly more powerful.

Knowledge Tests

A specific type of skill test—knowledge tests—may allow a character to know relevant “trivia,” but they also represent a basic familiarity with a given subject. With an appropriate database, the character can find information much more quickly than an outsider could, and would be able to draw better conclusions. To know a specific piece of “trivia,” the character makes a standard skill test against a DR set by the GM. Expert, Science, or Profession skills give a bonus to the Research skill test equal to $\lceil \frac{[\text{knowledge skill}]}{3} \rceil$ when searching databases.

“Hey, sarge, what’s with the antiques? I mean, they’re cute and all, but why are we playing around with knife throwing and gunpowder when we could be nuking and zapping the bejeezus out of the little green centaurians? Why all the fuss over making sure we know how to use these toys? We’re not starrng in a period historical holo on stupid ways people got themselves killed in the 20th century.”

–Pfc Gabriel “Gator” Shanks (Basic training lecture on proper maintenance of the CR-6 Carbine, New Everglades, Florida)

Opposed Tests

Many tests are opposed tests. This kind of test pits one or more characters or devices against each other. In general, if the device can make skill rolls of its own (robots, computers, etc.), it may be able to make opposed tests. Both characters make the appropriate skill or attribute test, and the highest total wins. Opposed tests are most common in combat situations. Ties go to the attacker or the initiator of the test. If a player character initiates an opposed test against an NPC, it’s usually fastest to just assume the NPC rolled an 8 on the die, turning it into a standard test with a set DR. It also makes the players feel like they have more agency in the game.

“Shanks, shut the hell up and re-assemble your weapon. This isn’t a goddamn political debate. If your weapon isn’t ready to fire in 30 seconds, I will rip off your useless hands and feed them to the fracking gators.”

–Sgt Gary “Beanie” Waters

Social Tests

A specific type of skill test, social tests pit the character’s personality against that of other characters. The character using the social skill rolls a standard skill test against the target’s $[[\text{Grit} \times 2] + 2d6]$. The higher total wins. Note, this only need be done when the target is actively resisting the social skill use (Interrogation, Seduction, etc.). When the target is uninterested, or when using the social skill against a

group, it is sometimes convenient to simply roll against a DR at the GM’s discretion. Characters can voluntarily “fall for” a social skill if they choose. Players always retain the final say in their character’s reaction to social tests. Note that the effects of alcohol or other drugs can seriously effect a character’s resistance to social skills. For NPCs, assume a role of 8, just as any other opposed test.

“Shanks, you figure that maybe someone might want to live on that real estate later, which you were so anxious to nuke this morning? Do you think that maybe the egghead types might want to dissect and study a few of those xenos you are so keen to vaporize with a nice laser cannon or pulp with a railgun? Or, if lord forbid there actually are little green men, that we might have to go down, put a bullet in their brain, or whatever passes for one, so that we can rescue any survivors up close and personal? Also, heaven forbid we actually get along with them! Do the rest of you lemur-brains get me? I hope you’ve been listening, because this little philosophical circle-jerk is over. It’s time for a nice little 5k run before dinner. Now, ladies, FALL IN!”

–Sgt Gary “Beanie” Waters (Later that same day)

Extended Tests

Extended tests represent activities that take place over long periods of time, like major repairs, seduction of a difficult subject, research on the nature of the universe, etc. The standard attribute or skill test applies, but each successful test contributes Extended Test Points [ETP] towards a set number of ETP required to complete a task. Base ETP gained from a successful test is one, and every point over the DR can be used to give additional ETP. The GM sets how often the character can roll to add to the ETP total. For example, canvassing a neighborhood for clues in a murder investigation might require 20 ETP to find all four major clues the GM has planned. The GM decides that each check takes five minutes. For every 5 ETP earned, the characters discover a new clue. If the characters roll well, it might only take them five or ten minutes to find out what they need to

know. If they consistently roll badly, it might take them hours!

Degrees of Success & Failure

Most of the time, a roll that equals or beats a DR or opposing character wins, while one that is lower loses. In high stress situations like combat or competition, characters sometimes succeed much more than necessary, producing incredible results, or fail in equally spectacular ways. Any time a character rolls 5 or more over the DR or opposed roll, they do something noteworthy (half armor vs an attack, cut 25% off repair time, +50% damage etc.). A roll of 10 more than necessary is considered an outstanding success (ignore armor, cut 50% off repair time, +100% damage, etc.). Rolling 5 or more less than the DR is an embarrassing failure (hit a valuable object near the target, add 25% repair time, etc.). A roll of 10 or more less than necessary is considered an abject failure (hit a friendly target, drop weapon, hit self, add 50% repair time, etc.).

Snake Eyes & Double Sixes

When the dice come up snake eyes or box cars (double sixes), roll an additional 1d6-1. Add the result to double sixes (+0 to +5) or subtract from snake eyes (-0 to -5). This represents the occasional bit of good or bad luck, momentary genius or brain fart, etc. Note that it is possible to actually roll a negative score in

this case. This can be important when determining abject failure with a low DR. Custom Eros System Crit Dice are available from thegamecrafter.com



Automatic Success

Especially for simple, everyday tasks, it would be repetitive and pointless to make characters roll for certain actions. Whenever a character attempts a task well within their capabilities (a roll of 5 or better will succeed) under routine conditions, they should only have to roll if it is significant to the plot. In other words, you don't have to roll an Athletics test every time you get on the stair stepper at the gym. Of course, trying to carry a wounded comrade up a flight of stairs while under enemy fire is never "routine," and requires an Athletics test, no matter what kind of shape you're in. Combat is never considered a "routine condition."

Rounding

Unless otherwise specified in the rules, always round down the result of any calculation.

Health and Healing

HP, STUN & SD

Most living things and man-sized objects can take a fair amount of damage before being killed or destroyed. Larger creatures and objects—like a giant redwood or a starship—can withstand damage that would turn an unprotected human into

reddish paste. When objects or living things take damage, it is dealt out on one of three tiers: Tiny targets like a data disk, cockroach, or a carrot are automatically destroyed if they are hit by a man-sized weapon or larger. Don't bother rolling damage. It's toast.

Small or man-sized targets generally have HP. An “average” person has around 10 HP, and even the toughest unmodified human would have no more than 50 HP. HP damage represents immediate incapacitation, not so much the effects of long term bleeding, etc. At 0 HP, objects are no longer usable for their intended purpose, though may not be completely destroyed. Living creatures at 0 HP are usually unconscious or totally incapacitated (may be awake, but they aren’t doing much besides screaming, bleeding, or whimpering). When a character reaches negative HP equal to their [Vitality x 3], they are considered dead.

Stun measures minor physical and mental stress, like the effects of fatigue, drugs, minor fist fights, or being hit with a taser. At 0 stun, a living creature is senseless or unconscious. Whenever a creature takes HP or SD damage, they receive a like amount of temporary stun. Depending on a creature’s max HP/SD and stun, this may mean that they are unconscious but still have positive HP or SD. Likewise, at 0 HP or SD, they may still be conscious (positive stun), but incapable of any significant physical action. Basically, the character is incapacitated when HP are less than or equal to 0, and unconscious when stun is less than or equal to zero.

Creatures or objects significantly larger or tougher than people do not have HP—they have SD instead. When creatures or objects are reduced to 0 or negative SD, the effects are the same as for 0 or negative HP. 1 SD equals about 50 HP.

MAN VS. GINORMOUS MACHINE

In order for man-sized weapons to damage anything with an SD rating, the weapon must do 10 HP of damage from a single round/strike (after overcoming armor). Each 5 HP translates as 0.2 SD damage done (round down any extra

HP left over). To overcome 1 SD of armor, the man-scale weapon must do 50 HP per point of armor. Depending on the damage rolled, some rounds may damage the target, and some may not. Precisely where the round hits, and at what angle, will vary the damage done from round to round, so the actual damage rolled should be compared to the target’s armor and SD ratings, not the potential damage or averages. Repeated strikes from man-sized plasma weaponry or similar effects, may reduce the armor rating of a vehicle, at the GM’s discretion. In short, infantry can sometimes damage vehicles or other massive targets.

On the other hand, vehicle-scale weapons almost always shred any infantry they can hit. Characters or HP rated equipment that are directly hit by weapons dealing SD take the full damage (SD x 50 HP). This usually results in a smoking crater or a big red smear. Characters who suffer a near miss from SD rated weapons take only 5 HP per 1 SD, and may actually live. What exactly constitutes a direct hit or near miss from vehicle weapons is covered in the combat section of this rulebook.

SOURCES OF DAMAGE

In addition to combat damage, characters and equipment can take damage from fire, falling, hard radiation, suffocation, exhaustion, vehicle crashes, poisoning, industrial accidents, and any number of other sources. These types of damage are entirely at the GM’s discretion, but below are some rules of thumb:

Exhaustion

After 16 hours, 1d6 stun per 2 hours without sleep. Can be offset by caffeine or other stimulants.

Falling

1d6 HP per 2 meters fallen after the first. Armor does not reduce this damage. Soft landing surfaces may

reduce this damage.

Fire

Depends on size, but 3 seconds in a campfire is about 1 HP, and being immersed in burning napalm is roughly 1d6 SD.

Poison/drugs

Two servings of alcohol on an empty stomach is about 1d6 stun (a six pack will floor most non-drinkers). One pellet of Rat poison is about 1d6 HP. 50 milliliters of liquid plumbing solution is 4d6 HP. One bite of ingested tetrodotoxin (puffer fish) is 1d6 SD. Poisons usually have an immediate effect within a few rounds, and a longer-term effect in a few minutes or hours. Exact onset times depend on the poison in question.

Radiation

“Soft” radiation (from a neutron bomb, for example) typically either kills the victim outright ($[Vitality + Grit]$ test vs a DR assigned by the GM) or creates a long lasting stun/nausea effect (2d6 stun, heals at a rate of 2 per day). Hard radiation (from a conventional nuke, stellar storm, reactor leak, etc.) can have any number of effects including temporary nausea, blindness, severe cancer, burns, immune system failure, death from radiation sickness, and the like. Treat it as doing 1d6 HP per day for as many days as the GM feels is appropriate for the length of exposure to the radiation. Even after the damage heals, the character may have permanent penalties to attributes or experience other long term complications, especially cancers, unless they get adequate medical attention (at a major colonial clinic equipped with a radiation treatment station, psychic surgery, magical healing, or a genuine miracle)

Natural Healing

Assuming relatively sanitary conditions, bare minimum first aid, and decent nutrition, a normal person

regains about 1 HP per day. Major wounds like broken bones, damage to vital organs, or any injuries bad enough to reduce a character to negative HP (or SD) require medical attention to heal properly. Such injuries will likely get worse if not treated (infection being the most likely problem). Without medical care, any character with these types of injuries will heal only 1 HP or SD per two days of full bed rest, and must make a vitality test every day for infection $[DR 4 + \text{half their current number of HP/SD below max}]$. If their wounds are left untreated, they will eventually bleed out or succumb to infection (at the GM's discretion).

Stun damage almost never requires medical care. Stun is regained at the rate of $[[Grit + Vitality] / 4]$ per waking hour or $[Grit + Vitality]$ per hour of sleep. Minor bruising or cuts do not actually heal in this time, but the debilitating effects of those injuries will no longer affect the character.

Unnatural Healing

Advanced medical care, numinous intervention, ritual sorcery, or psychic powers can improve greatly upon natural healing. A trained paramedic with proper equipment can stabilize a patient reduced to below 0 HP or SD with a successful skill roll $[DR 10 + \text{half the number of HP below 0}]$. Such characters are no longer susceptible to further damage from bleeding. A character that has been reduced to “dead” can be saved by emergency care administered within a few minutes of death. The emergency technician must stabilize them before brain death occurs. This requires a successful skill check $[DR 15 + \text{half the number of HP below 0}]$.

with full medical care in a well-stocked clinic, a character can regain about $[[Vitality + Grit] / 2]$ HP per day. Unfortunately, not all medical facilities are well-stocked enough to give characters this benefit

for minor injuries or routine care. This kind of care is usually reserved for the first few days of treating life-threatening injuries.

Psychic, magical, or numinous healing is usually fast, efficient, and in limited supply. Unfortunately for most players, it is almost always expensive and has a long wait time unless they can do it themselves.

Wound Penalties

It is inevitable that characters, villains, nameless thugs, supporting NPCs, and the like will get wounded in the course of things. When a character is injured they receive penalties to most skill and attribute tests. When a character has between 90% and 99% of their HP or stun remaining, they suffer a -2 penalty to all tests (except fortune tests). Between 50% and 89%, they receive a -4 penalty. Between 1% and 49%, it becomes a -6 penalty. If a character drops below 1%, if they are even still conscious and capable of any actions (on drugs,

in a homicidal rage, make a fortune or grit test with a massive DR), they are at a -8 penalty. It is a good idea to calculate these values ahead of time. When determining the cut-off values, round down. If the character has both Stun and HP damage, use whichever penalty is worse.

Extras

Some NPCs just aren't made as tough as the rest of us. When you want some mindless storm-troopers or allied cannon-fodder, be sure to use the "rule of seven": Any NPC that is only there to make the fight look harder than it actually is meant to be has just 7 HP & stun. This means that a solid hit with any decent weapon will usually drop them. They go down quick, but they can still be a threat to player characters in large groups. This doesn't mean that all storm-troopers are wimps. It's just the ones that attack in massed hordes, or the sentries that need a quick Hollywood style killing.

Combat

Let's face it: A lot of the time playing RPGs involves one or more characters trying to pound the skulls of other characters or NPCs into red-and-grey paste. This rule set allows for fairly fast combat resolution, while preserving at least a semblance of believability (note that we do not use the term "realism").

COMBAT TIME & TAKING TURNS

During combat, time is usually measured in three second rounds. This doesn't sound very long, but in combat this is generally long enough to figure out what's going on, and do something about it, like dodge behind cover, sprint a few meters, throw a punch or three, or power up a gun

turret. The GM can either have players roll Initiative once for an entire encounter, or have them roll every round. It's usually much faster to simply roll once for each encounter. The characters take turns from highest initiative roll to lowest.

If new characters or NPCs come onto the scene or otherwise become involved in the initiative chain, have them roll Initiative and join in on their turn. It is usually helpful to keep track of initiative using a spreadsheet, whiteboard or 3x5 cards. As characters hold their actions, they can be easily re-inserted into the initiative chain on the whiteboard or by slipping a card into place.

In general, if a character holds their action anticipating a specific

event (holding their sniper rifle on a doorway they expect an enemy to enter), they can take their action before or during another person's action, at which point they are re-inserted back into the initiative chain just before that character. If they simply hold their action, they can choose to act after any other character, and are placed back into the initiative chain just after that character.



What Can You Do In One Round?

Usually you can take one or two actions on your turn. Doing more than one thing generally means that both will suffer a little bit, but most people can do two things at once, at least passably well. These actions are generally split up into one of three categories, and rated as standard or

difficult. The three categories are move, mental, and combat actions. Move actions cover things like walking, running, jumping, or climbing. Mental actions might include sizing up a battlefield (notice or sensors check), manually entering a command into a PDU or computer terminal, or attempting to decipher part of a data readout in an alien language (an extended test). Combat actions involve dodging, reloading, drawing a weapon, firing, piloting, or smashing in someone's face.

Standard actions can be combined with minimal penalties (firing a weapon while moving a short distance, or accessing your phone while dodging gunfire), usually no more than -1 to each task. If players wish to combine a difficult action with a standard action, they should be penalized accordingly (say, -4 or -5 to both tasks). Some people can fire a handgun while at a dead run. Some can even do it well, but most can't do it at all. Combining difficult actions together is high-impossible. Unless the character has some ability that makes this even remotely possible they should receive a truly harsh penalty to both actions (maybe -8 or 10). Long-range sniping while swimming is pretty much out of the picture. GM's are encouraged to use common sense. For the most part, people will either take 1 difficult action, or 1 or 2 standard actions.

In a few specific cases, combining actions can actually prove beneficial. Deliberately dodging enemy fire is much easier if you are on the run than when sitting still. Knocking down an opponent is easier with a running start. The GM should use their discretion in such cases.

In general, even if you are holding two weapons or tools, you can only use one at a time. In cases where characters attempt to use two weapons at the same time, whether ranged weapons or melee, consider each weapon attack as a separate action,

and thus, each is penalized. The off-hand also gets a -2 penalty (whether dual-wielding or not). If a character uses two melee weapons and

only strikes with one, consider that one action, and they gain a +2 bonus to any Melee tests that round (for offense or defense).

Personal Combat

The vast majority of combat characters are likely to see is going to be up close and personal. It will basically fall into one of two categories: Melee combat or ranged combat. Both work much the same way, but there are a few simple differences.

Damage is rolled on damage dice, then subtracting any armor. Weapons with an AP rating ignore that much armor.

MELEE COMBAT

Melee combat consists of striking with body parts, striking with hand-held weapons, grappling, or throwing opponents. Attackers and defenders make opposed tests. Attackers generally use Brawl, Martial Arts, or Melee weapons skill. Defenders can use any of the above skills or the Dodge skill (using the Melee weapons skill requires the character have a weapon in hand, even for defense). If the attacker succeeds, they deal damage. If the defender succeeds, they avoid taking damage. If the defender beats the attacker by five or more, they may deal damage to their attacker.

Melee Damage Table	
Brawn + Skill	Unarmed Damage
Brawn	Add to Weapon Damage
0-4	1d6
5-8	2d6
9-12	3d6
13-16	4d6
17-20	5d6

Unarmed damage is typically Stun damage, based on the Melee Damage Table. If the attacker has Martial Arts skill, then they may choose to

inflict 1d6 damage as HP or Stun for every 4 points they have in the skill (round up). The rest of the damage dice are Stun. Unarmed attacks against a helpless opponent (restrained, unconscious, etc.) may convert up to an additional 2d6 of the damage to HP, at the attacker's option. Melee weapons deal HP damage based on the table above, plus the weapon's base damage, and all of it is considered HP damage (with a few rare exceptions like saps and rubber hoses). Soft armors give half protection against unarmed or blunt melee weapon attacks. Hard armors protect normally against this damage. Soft armor doesn't protect against grappling damage. Hard armors give half protection against grappling damage.

If grappling, the attacker may choose to not deal damage the first round, instead establishing a hold. On subsequent rounds they may elect to deal damage by choking, joint locks, or close-quarters strikes, or to concentrate on maintaining the hold. Concentrating on the hold gives a +2 bonus to maintain the hold. Defenders against a grapple who beat the attacker by five or more points may either deal damage normally, or trap their attacker in a hold instead.

Certain weapons can be used in a grapple. Knives, daggers, batons, garrote, nunchucks, or even handguns can be used as effectively as pure strength in creating a submission "hold." Blades and firearms deal three extra dice of damage if used on a target already in a hold since they don't need the momentum of a lunge or swing to deal damage (This is what happens in game terms when the villain

has a gun to your boyfriend's head).

Throwing is a modified form of grapple where the attacker (or defender) chooses not to establish a hold, but to instead immediately trip or bodily throw their opponent around. If the target is thrown to the ground, the attack does half grappling damage. If thrown into a nearby object (wall, furniture, etc.), then full grappling damage is done. The victim can typically be thrown up to 1 meter per step on the Melee Damage Table, at the attacker's discretion. If the attacker had significant momentum, add to the distance thrown and damage dealt at the GM's discretion.

If a character is already in melee combat range of an enemy and the enemy attempts to make a ranged attack against them, the defender may use an appropriate melee combat skill instead of Dodge to oppose the attack roll, in which case, if they beat the attacker by five or more points, they may counterattack normally.

Attempting to disarm an opponent in melee can be done in one of three ways. A character can make a standard striking attack against the weapon. This attack must be a called shot to the arm(s). If successful, a retention test is made: a standard melee attack test vs [Grit + Brawn + 2d6]. Defenders holding a two-handed weapon get a +5 bonus on this test. If the attacker wins, the defender is disarmed.

Alternately, the attacker can attack the defender's arm(s) holding the weapon. This is also a called shot to the arm, at an additional -2 penalty. On a successful hit, normal damage is done. Even if no damage gets through the defender's armor, a retention test must be made: a standard melee attack test vs [[Grit x 2] + 2d6]. The defender gets a +2 bonus to this test. The attacker gets a bonus equal to the damage that penetrated the armor.

Finally, the attacker can attempt to grapple the weapon away from the defender. Make a standard grapple test. If successful, the attacker now has a hold on the defender's weapon, and a retention test is made using both character's appropriate melee combat skills. If the attacker wins, they gain control of the weapon or can cause the defender to drop it. If the defender wins they retain control of the weapon and may break the grapple at their option.

RANGED COMBAT

Ranged combat involves any combat taking place at a range beyond two or three meters, using either projectiles or directed energy weapons. Ranged combat also uses opposed tests. Attackers use the appropriate ranged combat skill and defenders use Dodge, Zero-G, or Pilot skills, as appropriate. Stationary targets are a base DR of 10 to hit.

Generally, there are three ways to attack in personal ranged combat: Targeted fire, autofire, and suppressing fire.

Targeted Fire

Characters firing personal weapons in single shot or semi-auto mode can fire up to the weapon's maximum rate of fire or their [[Coor + weapon skill] / 2], whichever is lower, as targeted fire (a difficult action) Apply a -1 penalty for every two shots fired in that action to all shots. Firing a single shot is a standard action, even if the weapons max ROF is one. The only exception is aimed fire, which is a difficult action, but gives a +2 bonus to hit. Recoil doesn't penalize individual shots, instead, it reduces the single shot/semi-auto ROF of the weapon (and is already factored in). Each shot should be rolled for separately. Having several pairs of dice in different colors (two blue, two red, etc.) can be helpful to speed up this process.

GM's Note on Autofire

GMs should use caution when planning combat encounters since autofire weapons in the hands of skilled users can be devastating to lightly armored targets. On the other hand, autofire and suppressing fire eat up ammunition extremely quickly. If the players constantly use autofire to mow down important villains, be sure to keep throwing more enemies at them until they get low on ammo, or give the player a dose of their own medicine. Players beware: Abuse the autofire rules at your own risk.

Autofire

Autofire is a long burst of bullets or directed energy at a single target. Autofire weapons can be fired up to their maximum ROF, but only some of those shots are going to be useful for hitting the target. Recoil, roiling air heated by a laser, target movement, and other battlefield conditions will cause many of those shots to miss, even with the most skilled gunner. A skilled firer can make the most use of those shots, but clumsiness just wastes ammo.

For every two shots fired, add +1 to hit (to a maximum of the user's weapon skill). For most weapons, at short range every 2 points over the target's dodge roll means one additional hit. At medium range, every 3 extra points is an extra hit, and at long range, 4 per extra hit. Lasers and buckshot gain additional hits for each point over the target's dodge roll at short range. Lasers and buckshot make extra hits with 2 or 3 extra points over the target's dodge roll at medium and long range, respectively. Resolve each hit normally against the target's armor. You can assume that most or all rounds hit the center of mass, rolling for none, half, or each round, at the GM's option. For plasma weapons, reduce the armor's defense rating after all shots in an action have been resolved. The armor is still reduced for each hit, but it takes time for the plasma to eat through the armor. Characters may spend 1 (or 2) fortune to see if 1d6 rounds gain the benefits of a noteworthy (or outstanding) success for autofire attacks. Otherwise, all

rounds do normal damage vs full armor.

Suppressing Fire

Suppressing fire is sprayed at an area to hit multiple targets or keep heads down. It's also appropriate to use suppressing fire when ranged attacks are used in blindfire situations. Even a single shot can be considered suppressing fire. The attacker specifies a cone of fire they will fire into from a 1 meter wide line up to 90 degrees (as small as a 1 meter window or as wide as a 30 meter wide ridge). Suppressing fire is always a difficult action unless it's only a single shot.

Anyone in or moving into that cone until the character's next action is subject to attack. At the point they enter (or are in) the cone of fire, divide the number of rounds fired by the width of the cone (at the point they enter) in meters (round off). The defender is threatened by that many rounds. If the result is less than 1, treat it as a zero. Make an autofire attack against the defender with an attack test of $[4 + 2d6]$. The attacker gets the standard autofire bonus for every two rounds that threaten the target, up to their weapon skill rating. If lots of targets are threatened, remember that the number of total hits can't exceed the number of shots fired (unless the targets are so flimsy that rounds can pass clean through).

Suppression is usually not very effective in taking down targets. Its primary use is to convince people to keep their heads down. As such, NPCs moving into a suppressed area require a Grit test with a DC determined by the GM. The DR should take into account the defender's armor, motivation, and the density of fire.

RANGE

Ranged attacks usually are made at short range, medium range, or long range. Short range attacks take

no penalty to accuracy or damage. Attacks at medium and long suffer -2 or -4 to accuracy, and in some cases, damage reductions. Long range is not the maximum distance the weapon can fire, but anything beyond long range seriously reduces accuracy and damage. Accuracy penalties beyond long range start at -8, and most weapons inflict half the damage done at long range. In no case is there a chance in hell of hitting a target at any distance greater than twice the long range.

Range Effects Table			
Range Penalties: Accuracy			
Short	Medium	Long	Extreme
N/A	-2	-4	-8
Range Penalties: Damage			
Short	Medium	Long	Extreme
N/A	N/A	N/A	x 0.5
Range Effect: Max Buckshot Hits			
Short	Medium	Long	Extreme
N/A	-3d6	-6d6	-8d6
Range Penalties: Laser Damage			
Short	Medium	Long	Extreme
N/A	N/A	-1d6	[x 0.5] -1d6

Shotguns

Shotguns are truly fearsome weapons at close or medium range. Loaded with slugs, they can out-penetrate most rifles, and they make a much larger hole. However, they can be accurate only out to about a hundred meters.

Loaded with buckshot, they become a portable short-range meat grinder against unarmored targets. Useless against heavy armor, buckshot pretty much shreds flesh and bone at short range. While it still needs to be aimed, the dense pattern usually allows multiple hits. When fired rapidly, it's pretty easy to suppress a small area or turn anything in it into hamburger.

Slug attacks are resolved as normal ranged attacks. Buckshot attacks are treated as a mini autofire attack for

each shell fired. Since the pattern of pellets spreads widely at longer ranges, the maximum number of hits is reduced. Each hit deals 1d6 HP damage.

Short range buckshot attacks will strike one target location, medium range attacks will strike two neighboring locations (multiple hits at same location possible), and long range attacks will strike up to three random ones (multiple hits also possible with some weapons). Divide the number of pellets between the locations, with any leftover pellets assigned randomly. Apply armor to each pellet. The maximum number of pellets that can hit a given target are determined by range (all 9 pellets at short range, up to 6 at medium, and 3 at long).

Birdshot used in shotguns is effective against very small animals, but rarely does anything to stop a determined attacker. At ranges of 2 meters or less, treat birdshot as a short range buckshot attack. Outside of 2 meters, it does 1d6 HP total, and does not penetrate armor of any sort. Outside of medium range, it does no damage.

This is a vast oversimplification of shotgun ballistics, but two basic rules stand: For anything bigger than a housecat, use buckshot or slugs, but if the shotgun is shoved into the enemy's gut when the trigger is pulled, it probably won't matter what kind of shell is in the gun.

Laser Weapons

Man portable laser weapons can be fired either in short pulses or in long "bursts." Pulses are considered single shots or targeted fire. Long bursts are the equivalent of autofire. Some lasers are set to fire multiple pulses on a single trigger pull. Treat each as a short autofire burst similar to a buckshot attack, but each hit deals normal damage for that weapon.

Smoke & Lasers: Heavy Smoke Table

Damage	Weapon Size Category				
	1	2	3	4	5
-1d6	5m	20m	45m	80m	125m
-2d6	10m	40m	90m	160m	250m
-3d6	15m	60m	120m	240m	375m
-4d6	20m	80m	180m	320m	500m
-5d6	25m	100m	225m	400m	625m
-6d6	30m	120m	270m	480m	750m
-7d6	35m	140m	315m	560m	875m
-8d6	40m	160m	360m	640m	1,000m
-9d6	45m	180m	405m	720m	1,125m
-10d6	50m	200m	450m	800m	1,250m

Smoke & Lasers: Light Smoke Table

Damage	Weapon Size Category				
	1	2	3	4	5
-1d6	10m	40m	90m	160m	250m
-2d6	20m	80m	180m	320m	500m
-3d6	30m	120m	270m	480m	750m
-4d6	40m	160m	360m	640m	1,000m
-5d6	50m	200m	450m	800m	1,250m
-6d6	60m	240m	540m	960m	1,500m
-7d6	70m	280m	630m	1,120m	1,750m
-8d6	80m	320m	720m	1,280m	2,000m
-9d6	90m	360m	810m	1,440m	2,250m
-10d6	100m	400m	900m	1,600m	2,500m

Lasers are nearly silent, and often not visible to the naked eye, though targeting lasers and the effects of a non-visible laser on the air around it are frequently visible. Lasers also tend to set things on fire rather easily. In a standard atmosphere, the damage is reduced one die at long range. At extreme range, halve the damage, then subtract another die. Thin or thick smoke further reduces the damage. The same is generally true for vehicle scale lasers as well, though the distance before damage is reduced is scaled up. Lasers that hit highly reflective surfaces can blind nearby viewers.

For every $((\text{Size Category}^2) \times 5)\text{m}$ of smoke a laser passes through, reduce the damage by one die. For every $((\text{Size Category}^2) \times 10)\text{m}$ of thin smoke

a laser passes through, reduce the damage by one die.

Plasma Weapons

Whatever their specific technology, plasma weapons fire a burst, bolt, or blob of superheated matter at relatively slow velocities. Their poor range and accuracy are made up for by two things: Their ability to rapidly eat away armor and the horrific burn wounds they make. Plasma weapons are the perfect horror weapon, much like 20th century flamethrowers, but considerably more accurate. Plasma weapons are about the only man-portable weapon more likely to set something on fire than a laser.

Plasma Armor Damage Table

	HP Armor	SD Armor
(x)d6 HP	-3	N/A
(x)d6 SD	-5	-1
(x)d6x5 SD	Destroyed	-2
(x)d6x10 SD	Destroyed	-4

Tasers & Subdual Weapons

Tasers, shock rods, and similar devices deliver modulated bursts of electricity that disorient long after the initial shock. Tasers ignore soft armor. After being hit with a taser, the victim loses their next action in the initiative chain. In addition they take the listed stun damage for the weapon. These weapons do carry a risk of doing serious injury if used repeatedly on a subject in ill health.

Some blunt melee weapons can be used to inflict stun damage rather than lethal damage. If the attacker is willing to take a -2 to their attack test, they may opt to do stun damage instead of lethal damage with that weapon. This applies to any blunt melee weapon that does not rely on a whip-like strike to do damage (clubs, staffs, tonfa, and the like are fine, but nunchuka and flails are right out). A few weapons (saps, rubber hoses, flexible rubber batons) deal stun damage without the -2 penalty to

the attack test. Of course, repeated strikes can still kill a target: It just takes a little bit longer.

Knockback

Hollywood notwithstanding, getting hit with a non-explosive projectile or energy weapon does not knock people across the room. If it did, the person firing the weapon would go flying in the opposite direction. Explosions and melee strikes with blunt weapons or body parts do deliver enough blunt force to knock their targets backwards.

The reason that people fall over backwards when shot is a combination of Hollywood conditioning (they think they're supposed to fall down when shot, so they mostly do) and rapid loss of blood pressure causing weakness or loss of consciousness. Even a full torso hit with a shotgun isn't going to blast someone through a window unless they were already running that way in the first place.

In game terms, melee attacks and explosives can knock characters around at the GM's discretion. Assume that any "falling" damage is part of the damage suffered in the original attack, unless the target lands on something truly dangerous, like a vat of acid or a pit full of spikes. At most, a ranged or bladed attack on a stationary target will knock them back 1 meter as they fall or stagger, at the GM's discretion. Ranged attacks on moving characters may divert their course about 1 meter or cause them to stumble and lose their footing.

Hit Locations & Called Shots

There are four ways to handle hit locations. The first is simplest: Don't use them. It's the fastest, but also the least descriptive. All shots are considered to hit the torso or all armor locations are assumed to protect just as well as torso armor. Generally, use this rule only with critters.

Alternately, you can assume that all shots hit somewhere in the torso unless called (or 90%, or whatever). Called shots have a -2 to hit for small targets (arm, leg, head), -3 for tiny ones (hand, foot, CNS [Central Nervous System]), or -6 for miniscule ones (finger, eye, acorn).

Also fun is to give the player a choice: Allow called shots, but on a standard attack roll, the attacker can choose between a torso hit or a random hit location. This saves a little time and gives the players a choice. This was the default rule in play testing.

Finally, you can roll all shots randomly, with the above penalties for called shots. This tends to be the slowest method.

Damage dealt on a called shot or to a non-torso hit location is altered by adding or subtracting a damage modifier after taking into account armor. If any damage got through, add or subtract the modifier from the total damage as appropriate. Arms take -6 damage, but injuries to arms can seriously affect most combat rolls. Leg wounds are more serious, with large blood vessels and heavy bones, so they take only -3 damage, but will slow down the character's movement and interfere with melee combat. Head (skull) hits must penetrate the thick bone to deal serious damage, and though messy, usually don't immediately stop a target, so they also take -3 damage, though they may blind them with blood on a frontal shot. Central nervous system hits (CNS) are devastating, and do +6 damage, additionally, the target may be stunned for one round at GM discretion.

Going Up Against The Heavies

For the most part, infantry attacking mechs, dragons, sentient psychic glaciers, or armored vehicles is a particularly stupid form of suicide. Absent an ambush, heavy fire support, or an already damaged target, small infantry units can't expect to do

much against front-line combat mecha or their equivalent, even with crew-served heavy weapons.

For those rare occasions when a GM is feeling sadistic or it's important to a story goal, these rules cover damage from vehicle-sized weapons (SC 2-4) to man-sized targets (SC 1). Much like autofire, GM's should be extremely careful introducing vehicles into personal combat. There's a reason that armor jocks refer to dismounted infantry as "crunchies."

Any character who takes a direct hit from vehicle weapons or melee attacks from giant creatures is most likely instantly vaporized, burnt to a cinder, turned into hamburger, or otherwise converted into red and black paste. Characters who are within 5m of a vehicle-sized (SC 2-4) weapon impact take 5 HP of damage per SD, to

the torso (or randomly rolled location at GM's discretion). Characters still benefit from armor. Any exposed character within 2m is considered to take the full 50 HP per 1 SD damage (and is probably vaporized). Any vehicle weapon with a blast radius does full damage within the blast radius. Cover still provides full armor bonuses to infantry inside a blast radius. Any infantry battling vehicles equipped with artillery are likely to be shredded if they do not take cover. Vehicle weapons rated as armor piercing (AP), do full damage to infantry only on a direct hit, and quarter damage within 2m

Any character even remotely near a hit from a starship class weapon (SC 5+) or larger is toast, regardless of the weapon type. The amount of energy involved will vaporize any human-scale victim nearby.

Vehicle (and Kaiju) Combat

When a few hundred tons of worth of mechs, fighter-bombers, kaiju, tanks, dragons, and who-knows-what kind of alien vehicles clash, the result is usually a battlefield strewn with wrecked piles of twisted scrap and slag. The best way to make sure it isn't your ride that's laying in a half-melted heap is to know how to use your mech or ship to best effect. This chapter covers vehicle-on-vehicle combat.

Most vehicle combat uses similar rules to personal combat. The greatest difference is the scale at which vehicle combat occurs. Personal combat takes place within a few hundred meters or less. Vehicle combat can take place on a battlefield up to a few hundred kilometers across, and at speeds that make detailed tabletop maps next to useless. For this reason, most vehicle combat isn't resolved on a hex map. It just wouldn't be worth the effort to do it properly.

A quick sketch on the tabletop is probably a much better alternative. The exceptions to this are when using exclusively slow-moving land vehicles like tanks and mechs.

VEHICLE DAMAGE

Most vehicles have SD rather than HP. They are much larger, tougher, and heavier than humans or other small animals. When vehicles take damage, they must be repaired by skilled support teams. This takes time, tools, spare parts, and a significant power source. As a rule of thumb, if a vehicle has taken damage equal to or greater than half of its maximum SD, it cannot be repaired in the field, and needs an overhaul at a repair facility. Field repairs on this sort of damage will simply prevent things from getting worse. If a vehicle is reduced to 0 SD or less, it is considered disabled, and may or may not be salvageable, depending on the

salvage team's resources and skill level. Field repairs can get the vehicle moving over short distances, with limited maneuverability, at best. If the vehicle is reduced to negative SD equal to its maximum SD, it is completely destroyed, useful only as scrap.

Megafauna, dragons, kaiju, and the like heal normally. They are incapacitated when their SD is equal to 0. They are rendered unconscious when their stun is reduced to 0. However, inflicting stun damage on large creatures requires stun weapons of a commensurate scale, magic, psychic powers, etc.

PILOTS & PASSENGERS

Pilots and passengers are quite likely to be injured in any vehicle that takes a significant amount of damage. In general, any vehicle that is reduced to negative SD equal to its maximum SD is completely destroyed, including anyone unlucky enough to still be in it. So it goes. Pilots and passengers in any vehicle that takes damage sufficient to penetrate its armor may also take damage from the attack, or a secondary effect (a blown power conduit, fuel tank explosion, etc.). Depending on the size of the defender's vehicle, this can be handled a number of ways. For smaller craft (SC 2: pickup trucks, jeeps, etc.), it's about a 2/6 chance of injury. Determine the victim randomly, or (if feeling vindictive) have each character check separately. For each SD the vehicle takes over its armor rating, apply 2d6 HP damage, which may be reduced by character armor.

For larger vehicles (SC 3: mecha, heavy trucks, aerofighters) it's closer to a 1/6 chance. Determine who gets hit as above, but the vehicle's greater size and mass protects the occupants better: For each full 2 SD the vehicle takes over its armor rating, apply 1d6 HP damage.

For larger craft (SC 4+) it becomes more of a cinematic effect. The GM should have characters make a 1/6 check for damage when it serves the storyline or adds tension. The GM should generally assign anywhere from 2d6 to 8d6 damage in this situation.

Remember that damage to pilots and passengers is meant to be a cinematic effect, not a meat-grinder the players go through every game session.

VEHICLE MELEE

with the exception of humanoid mecha, the only type of melee combat available to most vehicles consists of trampling infantry or ramming other vehicles. When deliberately hitting infantry with anything more than a motorcycle or light truck, the infantry is likely a red smear on the ground. Make a Pilot test as a melee attack against the target (don't forget the size category penalty!), and anything other than a miss or a tie results in squishy noises. If the defender wins, they manage to dodge. On a tie, the target takes a glancing blow, equal to 3d6 HP plus 3d6 for every size category the vehicle is larger than the target, and the target gets only half benefit from armor.

In the case of ramming other vehicles, use common sense. In general, the more heavily armored vehicle, or the heavier vehicle if similarly armored, takes about half the damage that the target does, assuming they are in the same size category. If one vehicle has a size advantage, the larger one takes minimal damage, and the smaller one is generally ruined (exception: On a noteworthy or outstanding success, both can be ruined by a well-placed suicide attack). Since this is (hopefully) not an everyday occurrence, lengthy calculations of size and weight are unnecessary.

Mecha with dedicated melee weapons use the Pilot Mecha skill for attack tests. Defending mecha or vehicles use

the appropriate piloting skill for defense. Any hit deals the weapon's normal damage and is resolved as any other attack. Melee attacks by humanoid mecha using arms or legs for punching, kicking, and the like are just as likely to damage the attacker as the defender unless specifically designed for this purpose. Treat these as ramming attacks. It's generally not a very good idea, except as a last resort. The only exceptions to this are stomping attacks against much smaller vehicles and infantry. Treat these as ramming attacks, but they do not damage the attacker: Mecha feet are designed to take a lot of abuse.

VEHICLE RANGED COMBAT

Most combat between vehicles is ranged combat. Attackers use Gunnery (or occasionally, piloting) skills in opposed tests with the defender's piloting skill. Weapon Accuracy and/or vehicle Maneuver ratings improve (or hinder) the attacker's Gunnery tests, while Maneuver ratings modify the defender's piloting tests.

In vehicle combat, there are three basic types of ranged attacks: Direct fire (cannons, lasers, & railguns), indirect fire (artillery, orbital bombardment, carpet bombing), and smart-missile fire.

Direct Fire

Direct fire is straightforward: The attacker fires one or more weapons at a target within line of sight, up to that weapon's maximum rate of fire as a standard action. Note that some weapons can be fired together at the same target as a standard action (any weapon labeled dual, triple, or quad fire). Roll once for each group of weapons, rather than for each weapon. Treat this as an autofire attack. If the linked weapons are autofire weapons already, simply increase the attack bonus and potential number of hits. If pilots wish to fire multiple types of weapons, those are considered

separate actions, and the standard penalties apply. If a pilot wishes to fire an "aimed shot," they can fire only a single shot from one weapon as a complex action with a +2 bonus.

Indirect Fire

Indirect fire is more complicated. This involves firing weapons at targets that are not in line of sight. Attackers choose a specific location at which they are aiming, rather than a specific target, then make their attack roll. The GM rolls 2d6 and consults the scatter table to determine how far the actual strike hits from the point of aim. When using artillery, napalm, or other area effect weapons, the inherent inaccuracy of non-line-of-sight attacks is less of a problem. There are three types of indirect fire: Blind fire, directed fire, and designated fire.

Blind Fire

Blind fire is any fire directed towards an enemy for whom you only have a vague idea of their location. It's the equivalent of spraying a machinegun burst blindly around a corner. Blind fire gives a -8 penalty to hit, and is centered on a location chosen by the attacker based solely on their intuition.

Directed Fire

Directed fire means firing at a target that has been pointed out to you by another friendly through shouted instructions, a detailed radio message, or tactical computer systems, giving you a better idea where the enemy is. Directed fire has only a -4 penalty to hit.

Designated Fire

Designated fire refers to firing at a positively identified enemy target using targeting information from a skilled forward observer or active targeting system (laser, microwave, etc.). If a forward observer can give

accurate enough tactical computer data or train a laser/microwave designator on a target and hold it there until the indirect fire hits, the indirect fire takes no attack penalty. The forward observer must make a Tactics test (DR 15) to use the tactical computer system, or ranged combat test (DR 15, using the appropriate ranged combat skill for the size and type of designator—usually Longarms). If the observer's test fails, treat the attack as directed fire.

Scatter Table	
2d6 Roll	(Hex size based on weapon SC)
2 or less	Vulnerable location
3	Torso/hull
4	Same hex
5	Random adjacent hex
6-8	Random hex 2 hexes away
9	Random hex 3 hexes away
10	Random hex 4 hexes away
11	Completely off-target
12 or more	Hit nearby friendly or other disastrous result
Roll 2d6. For each point above the DR achieved on the attack test, subtract one point from the scatter test. Compare the result to the Scatter Table to determine how far from the target the attack actually hits. Determine direction using scatter dice, a spinner, or by spinning a pencil on the table.	

Smart-Missile Fire

Smart-missile fire refers to a special use of smart weapons. Most of the time, missiles are used for direct fire or indirect fire. In deep space or submarine environments, however, missiles, torpedoes, and similar weapons can be launched at low speeds with minimal energy signatures. This allows them to close with their targets without being easily detected. This type of attack is much slower than typical missile attacks, and is useless for targets that are moving rapidly away from an attacker. At the last moment, or upon detection, the weapon will go to full speed and make an attack on the target. Treat this attack as a standard ranged combat attack. The missile is fired by a human

operator (usually), and therefore is reliant upon their judgment and skill at the time of firing, despite the missile's computer control systems (which give large accuracy bonuses).

An added bonus of smart-missile fire is that the missile doesn't have to travel in a straight line to reach its target, or the attacker can maneuver clear of the firing point after launching. In the hide and seek of orbital and submarine combat, this is a marked advantage. If the defender fires back in the direction the missile came from, the attacker will likely be somewhere else. This type of fire is usually reserved for an initial ambush, sometimes with follow-on direct fire timed to hit simultaneously from another direction.

Range

The complex fire control systems in most vehicles are significantly more reliable than human operators firing personal weapons when it comes to long range fire. Vehicle weapons are rated with a standard range and a maximum range. Any target within the standard range can be attacked with no range penalty. Targets up to the maximum range can be engaged with only a -2 penalty. Up to twice the maximum effective range, however, attacks suffer a -6 penalty and those that do not have a warhead will do reduced damage outside max range. For smart-missile fire, multiply the max range by 10, and double that for extreme range.

Range in airless environments or microgravity can vary for weapons that rely on projectiles rather than directed energy. Missiles, railguns, ion weapons, and plasma weapons are accurate an additional 50% distance in airless environments or microgravity, and 100% if both apply. Lasers and other directed energy weapons gain a 100% range benefit only for airless environments, since gravity does little or nothing to alter their effective range.

Railguns

Railguns, normally mounted on vehicles, use electromagnets to fire steel-jacketed shells at high speeds. Some shells rely on kinetic energy to damage their targets. Others rely on explosives, incendiaries, or other payloads. They require tremendous amounts of electrical power to function and produce enormous recoil. Ammunition is heavy and bulky, though not nearly as much as traditional chemically powered shells. The relatively slow rate of fire and powerful down-range effects mitigate this limitation.

Railguns can sometimes fire specialty ammunition, depending on the size of the weapon and/or design. AP ammunition cuts through armor by way of an ultra-dense penetrating tip and high velocity. HE/Fragmentation ammunition frequently does area-effect damage through explosives tipped warheads, with or without shrapnel. Plasma, napalm, and/or other incendiary ammunition does fire/heat damage over an area, and usually ignites anything flammable nearby. Other more exotic ammunition can be used to put out fires, deploy flares (with or without parachutes), or other similar tasks.

Directed Ion Weapons

Ion cannons are typically a type of railgun that fire highly charged slugs of titanium alloy steel housing an "ion core" (a reactive material that discharges a limited EMP burst on impact) at speeds slower than most railguns. In addition to the kinetic energy of the impact, the effect on unshielded electronics and house-sized critters is equivalent to being hit with a taser. Furthermore, Ion shells typically cut through force fields as if they weren't even there, ignoring them completely. A final advantage is that only half of the damage is actually structural. The rest is electrical overload. This means that most of the time, vehicles (especially starships) can be disabled without

permanently disabling them. The target's crew tends to be (literally) in a state of shock as well.

The major disadvantage to these weapons is that the electrical disruption that they produce limits their rate of fire and reduces velocity (and thus, range). Even so, they are extremely popular weapons with pirates and paramilitary-type law enforcement.

In some settings ion weapons fire directed bursts of ionized particles as directed energy weapons. This is merely flavor text. The game effects are identical.

Lasers

Most weapon-grade lasers are non-visible-light weapons, though they still run the risk of permanently blinding both the user, and any bystanders, with reflected laser light. The lasers themselves do not create a great deal of noise or visible beams, but the ionization of the air they travel through can cause a whistling sound and a visible roiling of the air. Additionally, if they strike highly reflective surfaces, they can blind nearby onlookers. The power output of various models range from hold-out pistols to starship-grade cannons. Lasers produce no recoil, and do not require ammunition. They do, however, require more maintenance than most other weapon systems, and power requirements are considerable. Lasers cannot be fired indefinitely, as they need coolant replacement, but most laser weapons will run out of power long before they need servicing. For a given combat, or even a short campaign, this is unlikely to be a problem.

Lasers cause damage by burning, cutting, and melting, though if powerful enough they can produce explosions directly as solids and liquids instantly become gasses (think of that starship as a gigantic popcorn kernel). If the target contains fuel, explosives, or ammunition, they are

also likely to go up. This type of secondary damage is generally factored into the damage rating of the laser weapon, but be sure to play up the cinematic effects on vulnerable targets.

The biggest drawback to laser weapons, however, is their reduced range and power in atmospheres, particularly when firing through fog, clouds, smoke, haze, or other atmospheric pollutants. See the personal combat section's description of lasers for more details on these effects.

Plasma Weapons

Plasma weapons fire blobs of super-heated matter contained in a relatively fragile magnetic "bottle." They have relatively short range and poor accuracy. On the other hand, they eat through armor rapidly and produce horrific wounds. They cause damage by virtue of their extreme heat, which is enough to quite literally vaporize any solid or liquid they strike. Like lasers, plasma weapons are very likely to set things on fire.

Tread Heads, Trash Haulers, & Fast Movers

For most games, multiple vehicle combat is not going to be part of a regular game session. GMs are encouraged to treat the following rules as optional if they want a simplified vehicle combat system. Just use the standard vehicles as-is, and use common sense for most situations. For those who want to add a level of "realism" or "believability," the following rule set is designed to simulate a combined air-ground battle between ground units, slow-moving aircraft, and fast-movers.

TREAD HEADS

Ground units, be they infantry, horse cavalry, personal vehicles, or armored combat mechs, have limited speed and mobility compared to any type of aircraft. Their only real advantage is the ability to shelter behind terrain, in bunkers, or similar places of refuge that offer concealment or cover. Ground units cannot change altitude, but can stay stationary or move very slowly (road speed).

TRASH HAULERS

Trash haulers are slow-moving aircraft usually meant for hauling cargo or passengers, ground support gunships,

helicopters, drones, or flying creatures like dragons. A fast-mover that is deliberately flying low and slow also falls into this category temporarily. This flight profile is also useful for flying search patterns, search and destroy missions, and close air support for friendly ground units. Some trash haulers can reach high altitudes, but any trash hauler can get high enough up into the air to avoid "Terrain Masking" (TM) flight. Trash haulers that can hover can stay stationary or fly at speeds up to slow. Trash haulers that don't have hovering ability must move at very slow or slow speeds.

FAST MOVERS

Fast movers are exactly what the name implies. They can fly high and fast, and are usually either combat aircraft, or can double as combat aircraft when need be. Fast movers can fly a terrain masking flight profile or at high altitude. If they have hovering ability they can remain stationary or fly at speeds up to fast. If they do not have hovering capability, they can fly at any speed up to fast. Some can actually reach escape speed, but this is useless in most combat situations.

VEHICLE SPEED IN COMBAT

For any vehicle combat occurring on or near a planetary surface, there is no real need to track exact speeds and distances for each vehicle. Basically, any vehicle can choose to move at any one of four speeds, up to its maximum: Stationary, very slow (road speed), slow (hauling trash), or fast (hauling ass). It isn't necessary to figure out exactly how fast, only how fast relative to other vehicles. This isn't so much about determining distance traveled as it is about how hard it is to detect or hit a fast-moving object, and who is able to outrun the other in a pursuit.

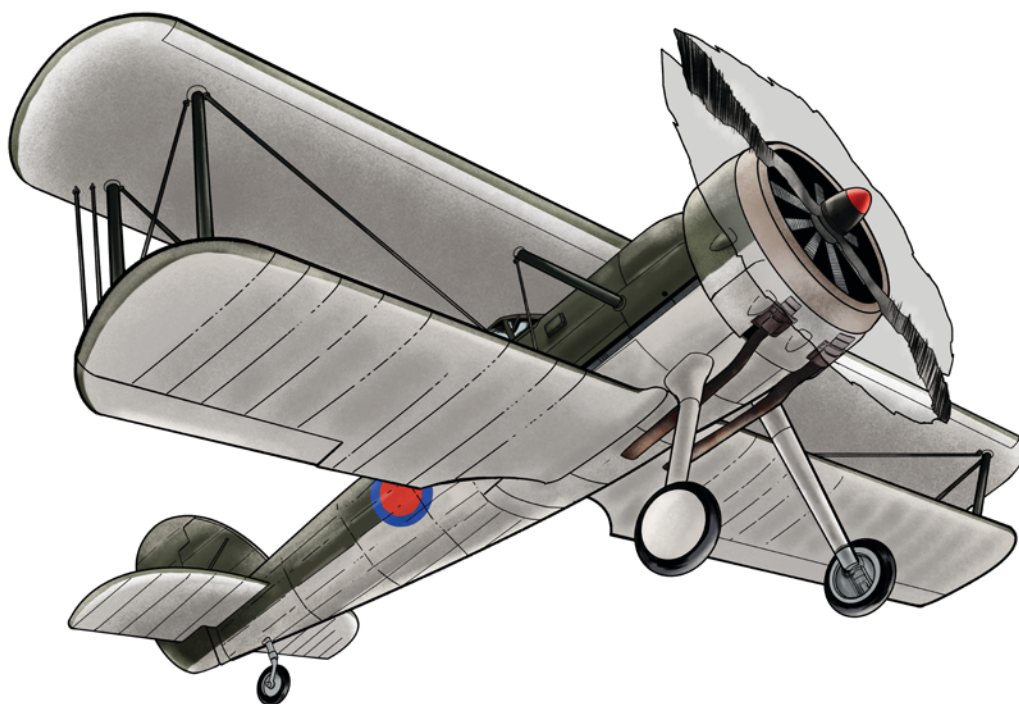
The faster a vehicle is moving (relative to the attacker), the harder it is to hit. For each step of speed difference between the attacker and target, the attacker gets a -2 penalty (It doesn't matter which is moving faster. Strafing a stationary target at high speed is pretty darn tough to do). Speed does make it easier to spot

a target, however. For each speed step the target is moving, the searcher gets a +2 bonus. If the speeds are matched there is a minimum -1 to hit a moving target. If exact distances are required, take the vehicle's current or max speed in kph and divide by 1.2 to get the distance traveled in meters in a 3 second combat turn.

In orbital combat simply compare the max Gs the vehicle can accelerate. This is a vast oversimplification, but unless you enjoy orbital mechanics, we suggest you "wing it."

FLIGHT RULES

Depending on what flight profile a trash hauler or fast mover is using at any given time, it can make it more vulnerable to certain types of attacks, or make it harder to hit. It can also affect its ability to strike at its enemies. The basic choices any pilot must make are altitude, speed, and attack profile.



High Altitude

High altitude exposes pilots to detection from the ground, but also improves their ability to detect targets below them. In this case, both the fixed ground sensors and high altitude pilot get +2 to Sensors tests against each other. Sensors tests against vehicles flying at low altitude, however, do not get this bonus. From high altitude, pilots can swoop down on either low flying aircraft or ground targets. Swoop attacks involve a change in altitude of the attacker from high to low altitude.

Terrain Masking/Low Altitude/N.O.E.

Nap Of the Earth flight involves skimming over and around (sometimes even under) terrain features like hills, large trees, bridges, skyscrapers and other obstacles. This is best done at low speeds for obvious reasons. This exposes the aircraft to short range ground fire, but only ground units that are very close will have line of sight to attack the aircraft. High-flying aircraft and ground targets alike have a hard time spotting the vehicle in the ground clutter. On the other hand, their ability to detect other targets is also severely limited. NOE flying allows sudden strafing attacks on ground targets if flying fast, or hide and seek style attacks if stationary or at low speed, popping up briefly over terrain features to fire at an enemy, then dodging back into cover. NOE is necessary for any kind of stealth between aircraft flying in an atmosphere while using active sensors.

ATTACK PROFILES

Vehicle pilots and large creatures, whether they are driving, running, flying, or even conning a ship in deep space or on/under an ocean, can choose one of several attack/defense postures: swooping attacks, dogfighting, sniping, jinking, hiding, or extending.

Swooping

Swooping is only possible while attacking from above and from greater speed. This is essentially a strafing attack which ends up with the attacker back at their old altitude and moving one speed category slower (takes one full turn to return to previous speed), or down low, but going up to one speed category faster and not able to come around and attack again next turn. If the pilot is the one pulling the trigger, his piloting test is considered the attack test. If a secondary gunner is firing, they must make a separate Gunnery test.

Dogfighting

Dogfighting covers any kind of close fighting where vehicles are maneuvering around each other to try and get a better shot. Weapons with a fixed firing arc require a successful piloting test (opposed by the target's piloting test) to bring them into position. As in a swooping attack, the attacker's piloting test is considered the attack test unless there is a secondary gunner. Dogfighting is inherently difficult, so all attack tests (pilot or secondary gunner) are at -2. If two vehicles choose to dogfight each other, they are considered part of a "furball" and will remain relatively stationary on the battlefield, drifting a "short" distance each turn.

Sniping

Sniping refers to any vehicle attacks made from a distance without closing on the target or making radical changes to speed & altitude. There are no penalties or bonuses for sniping.

Jinking

Jinking entails swerving, rapidly changing speed & direction in a random or seemingly random way to make yourself a more difficult target. You forgo any attacks by the pilot (although secondary gunners with a rear or side arc can fire with the standard -2 penalty against any chasers). On the other hand, you

receive a bonus to your piloting tests to avoid attacks equal to [piloting skill / 2, rounded up]. This is in addition to the -2 attack penalty any attackers receive if you are jinking versus their dogfighting attempt. In this scenario, the defender will determine the general direction the fight will drift, though at only up to about 1/4 of max speed for the defender's vehicle.

Hiding

If you are being shot at, but not engaged in a dogfight by your attacker, you can attempt to hide behind cover (asteroids, hills, enemy cargo ships, etc.). This requires an opposed piloting test. Your location is not unknown until you make a second successful test in a row, but you may have concealment or cover from attacks.

Extending

Extending is an attempt to get out of range of an enemy's weapons or to get to distant cover or concealment. Flying, running, sailing, or driving in more or less a straight line at max acceleration makes you relatively easy to hit (+2 to hit), but if you have sufficient speed, you may be able to get behind cover or out of range before the enemy can fire. If exact distances are required, divide the vehicles' speeds by 1.2 to find out how far they can travel in meters in a 3 second combat turn and then compare them. The extending rules can also be used to get closer to an enemy target instead of further away (fighters screaming in at max throttle to get into missile range of an enemy ground installation or battle cruiser), but it's a pretty dangerous affair if they are shooting back. This is generally referred to as "closing with a target."

Other Rules

SIZE CATEGORIES

All creatures and equipment are rated for size category. Otherwise it would be necessary to identify exact dimensions for every single article of equipment, round of ammunition, creature, etc. in the game. Size categories can range as much as 50-200% from the "standard" base size.

In combat, each category you move down on the table provides a -3 penalty to hit, and each category you move up provides a +3 bonus to hit. With excessively large weapons, however, a direct hit is not needed. Treat any non-area effect weapon two or more levels greater than the target as having a blast radius big enough to do half damage on a near miss (misses by 4 or less). In cases of man-sized targets being damaged by vehicular weapons, see "Going Up Against The

Heavies" earlier in this chapter. Area effect weapons function normally and do full damage. Smaller weapons have a greater chance of hitting, but their limited range and damage ratings make them relatively ineffective, barring "thermal exhaust ports" or other cinematic weak points (nukes notwithstanding).

Examples: A star cruiser attacking a rat would be -15 to hit with its main guns, and -9 to hit with anti-mecha weapons...(though the blast effect would likely fry the rat anyways). A rifleman attacking a large fishing trawler is almost certain to hit at +9, but his rounds aren't going to do more than bounce off the hull (if he aims for the window glass on the bridge, that's a SC 1 target, and he gets no bonus!).

Some weapons are meant to attack targets of a size category different

than their own. Hold-out pistols and spike daggers are size category 0, but are meant to be used on size category 1 creatures (humans). A star-cruiser (SC 5) may have point defense weapons designed to target fighter jets or anti-ship missiles (SC 3). These are designed to attack targets of different sizes without penalty. All weapons have a base size, and a range of target sizes that can be attacked without penalty (or bonus). Anything smaller than the minimum size suffers the normal penalty for each category smaller than the minimum. Anything larger than the maximum size gets the standard bonus.

Examples:

CR-6 Hunter [Acc+2/Rng100-200-400m/Dam 5d6/ROF6-30/SC0,1] A human-scale carbine meant to be used against

human-scale targets.

L13 Burst Laser Array [Acc+3/Rng400-1,000m/Dam 1d6SD/SC2,1-3] A mech-scale weapon designed for use against a broad range of targets, from infantry and anti-mech missiles to heavy artillery mechs.

IRL-135 Rocket Launcher [Acc+3/Rng100-400-1,600/Dam 3d6SD/SC1,2-3] A man-portable weapon designed for use against vehicles and mechs.

Most weapons are considered one size category smaller than the person or vehicle that uses it. Exceptions are the occasional missile or napalm tank that is as large as (or larger!) than the launcher itself. Ammunition is generally one size category smaller than the weapon that uses it, unless it is in a bulk container.

Size Categories Table

Size	Hex Size	Biological Examples	Mechanical Examples	Natural Examples
0	N/A	Rat, meerkat, toucan, barrel cactus	Hold-out pistol, rifle, fork, pocket camera, flashlight	Medium rock, rabbit-hole, puddle
1	2 m	Human, large dog, small horse, pine tree	Refrigerator, android, toilet, bicycle	Large rock, foxhole, small stream
2	5 m	Rhinoceros, grizzly bear	Power loader, quad bike, humvee, scout helicopter, mainframe computer	Small boulder, large stream
3	25 m	Blue whale, copse of trees, giant redwood, T-Rex, mammoth	Tank, mech, PT boat, jet fighter, bulldozer, cargo truck	Large boulder, small pond
4	100 m	Pod of blue whales, small forest	Heavy dropship, corvette (ship, not car), cargo module, fishing trawler	Large mound, small hill, large pond
5	500 m	Forest, horde of locust	Freighter, starcruiser	Medium hill, small lake
6	50 km	Continental ecosystem	Death Star	Mountain, small sea, large asteroid
7	20,000 km	Planetary biome	Artificial planet	Large continent, medium planet

TECH LEVELS

Tech levels represent the overall technology level of a culture, individual, piece of gear, or vehicle. Each game setting will have its own range of standard technology available.

Characters also have a tech level. This represents the level of tech that they are comfortable using, based on their upbringing and experience. Skill rolls to interact with higher level technology invoke an appropriate penalty, especially if attempting to repair more advanced tech.

In general, characters are comfortable using and dealing with simple items from tech levels lower than their own. However, unless they make a study of ancient tech, they likely won't be any good at building or repairing more complex items from a lower tech level (How many modern people know how to operate and fix a matchlock firearm?).

Note that there may be differences in tech levels between cultures, factions, and even individuals within the same game setting. Technological advantages are often closely guarded secrets hoarded by armies and government agencies paranoid that their enemies will discover them.

Tech Level Table		
TL	Description	Examples
0	Stone age	Club, rock, wooden spear, basket weaving, fire, wheel
1	Metal age	Axe, gladius, knife, shortbow, minting, paved streets, water mill
2	Medieval	Longbow, longsword, wind mill, concrete
3	Renaissance	Crossbow, rapier, flintlock, printing press,
4	Steam age	Musket, cap revolver, steam engine, steam ship, trains
5	Industrial	Cartridge ammunition, electrical lighting, assembly line
6	Modern	Machinegun, tank, drone, chainsaw, personal computer, smartphone
7	Cyberpunk	Crew-served laser weapon, smartgun, monomolecular whip, crude AI
8	Spacepunk	Battlmechs, laser carbine, power armor, FTL travel, functional AI
9	Space opera	Antimatter torpedo, disruptor pistol, teleportation
10	Ur civilization	Death star, disintegration ray, matter conversion, astro-forming



Sample Melee Weapons

Weapon	Acc	Damage	AP	Range	Conceal	Mass	SC	TL
Club	+0	2d6	-0	2	C	2	0,1	0
Combat Knife	+0	2d6	-0	1	J	0.5	0,1	1
Dagger	+1	1d6	-3	1	P	0.3	0,1	2
Dao (Chinese Broadsword)	+1	3d6	-0	2	N/A	2	0,1	2
Fire Axe	+0	4d6	-0	2	N/A	3	0,1	1
Katana	+1	4d6	-0	2	N/A	2	0,1	2
Nunchaku	+1	2d6	-0	2	C	0.75	0,1	1
Rapier	+2	3d6	-3	2	N/A	1	0,1	2
Sap	+0	2d6 Stun	-0	1	P	1	0,1	1
Spear (Broad Head)	+1	3d6	-0	3	N/A	3	1,1	1

Sample Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Acc	Damage	AP	ROF	Ammo	Ammo Type	Range	Conceal	Mass	SC
Pocket Revolver	+0	2d6	-0	3	5 (cy)	.38 Special	10-20-50	P	0.49	0,1
Service Pistol	+0	3d6	-0	5	16+1	10x25mm	10-25-50	J	1.6	0,1
Pump Shotgun (Buck)	+3/+4	9/6/3d6	-0	3	7+1	18.5x70mm	15-30-60	N/A	4	0,1
Pump Shotgun (Slug)	+1/+2	9d6	-5	3	7+1	18.5x70mm	15-30-60	N/A	4	0,1
Automatic Carbine	+1	5d6	-4	6/42	30+1	5.56x45mm	100-200-500	N/A	3.9	0,1
Marksman Rifle	+1/+3	6d6	-5	5	20+1	7.62x51mm	100-400-1,000	N/A	5	0,1
Anti-Material Rifle	+1/+3	10d6	-10	2	10+1	12.7x99mm	100-400-1,000	N/A	14	1,1
Plasma Pistol	+0	4d6*	-0*	3	18	DCPC-P1	10-20-30	J	2	0,1
Plasma Rifle	+1	4d6*	-0*	3	128	DCPC-R1	30-60-180	C	3	0,1
Gauss Rifle	+1/+3	10d6	-10	1	32	8mm HE Dart	100-600-1,800	N/A	6	0,1

* Plasma weapons damage armor after all hits in that action are resolved. Subtract 3 from the armor's rating for each hit.

Sample Armor

Armor	Torso	Arms	Legs	Head	CNS	Agility	Notice	Mass	TL
Chainmail*	12s	12s	12s	12s		-3		20	2
Helmet (Kevlar)				20h	(10h)		-1	1.5	6
Helmet (Spacesuit)				20h	16h		-2	2	7
Kevlar Vest**	18s							2.5	6
Leather Armor	6s	4s	4s					4	1
Plate Carrier	30h							4.5	6
Spacesuit (Combat)	20h	15s	15s			-2		10	7
Spacesuit (Light)	12s	10s	10s			-1		7	7

* Treat attacks against chainmail by firearms, projectile weapons such as arrows, and any melee weapon with an AP rating as having an additional -6 AP value.

** Treat attacks against kevlar vests by any melee weapon with an AP rating as having an additional -9 AP value.

Eros System Core Rules

a multi-genre RPG system

*This is the core ruleset for the **Eros RPG System**. Originally created along with **Eros 433**, a science fiction game about exploring inexplicably Earth-like planets in the Alpha Centauri system, it is designed from the ground up to work well with most game genres without having to change the core game mechanic. Each setting sourcebook contains a campaign setting, genre-specific equipment, and any necessary supernatural power rules. Simply grab one (or write your own!), then get playing!*

Protect your home planet from giant inter-dimensional sea creatures, using humanity's latest and greatest mecha.

Evade capture by mercenary rentacops while you use your magical training to pull off a heist, redistributing the robber-baron's stolen wealth.

Explore other star systems and negotiate fraught alliances with psychic star-worshipping humans on the run from religious persecution on their home world.

Use your cover story as cadets training off-world for service in the To1 Ko Chet Terran Militia to unearth the confederation's true intentions toward Earth, and find allies amongst the stars to help you do something about it.

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