

CHARACTERS

Player characters (PCs) are defined by a set of numbers that represent things like their natural attractiveness and their skill level at breaking codes. Aside from a name, you will need to figure out your characteristics, skills, areas of expertise, and physical attributes.

During play you will also need to keep track of a few more numbers that represent things such as spy gadgets and injury level. You don't need to worry about those right now.

CHARACTERISTICS

Every "good" character, including the PCs, has four characteristics called Composure, Aptitude, Perception, and Charm. Evil characters controlled by the GM also have four characteristics but depending on the kind of threat they represent their characteristics can be quite different.

Composure (COM). Your Composure is how well you act under pressure. You will use your Composure whenever the stakes are especially high. Scaling the outside of a tall building, defusing a bomb, or being in an argument are examples of actions that rely on Composure to succeed.

Aptitude (APT). Your Aptitude is your ability to unravel problems and utilize your mind and

body to overcome them. Analyzing forensic evidence, winning a hand of blackjack, or diving to recover a sunken transmitter all use Aptitude.

Perception (PER). A good spy is always observant. Your Perception is your ability to notice details that others miss. Photography, scanning a room, and questioning a prisoner all require Perception.

Charm (CHA). Your Charm represents attractiveness, wit, and personality. Charm is invaluable if you want to persuade, lie, or romance your way to your goals.

Generating Your Characteristics

New secret agents start with a combined total of 10 points divided among their characteristics. Distribute them however you like among Composure, Aptitude, Perception, and Charm. The only rule is that you must put at least one point into each characteristic.

SKILLS

Skills are the activities you are especially good at. You don't need a skill to be able to do something; you only need a skill to do something *well*. For example, any agent can put on SCUBA gear and

swim out of the villain's underwater lair while being chased by SCUBA-wearing thugs, using nothing more than their Aptitude and Composure to get them through. But an agent who has the Diving skill is going to get through that situation more successfully, and with fewer complications, than an agent without it.

Unlike characteristics, you can improve your skills over time. As you complete missions you will earn experience points (XP) that you can use to raise your skills.

See the next chapter for the master list of skills, descriptions of each one, and their associated characteristics. New agents have 20 XP to spend on skills. Note that to reach each new skill level requires that same number of XP. For example, to go from skill level 2 to level 3 requires you to spend 3 XP.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

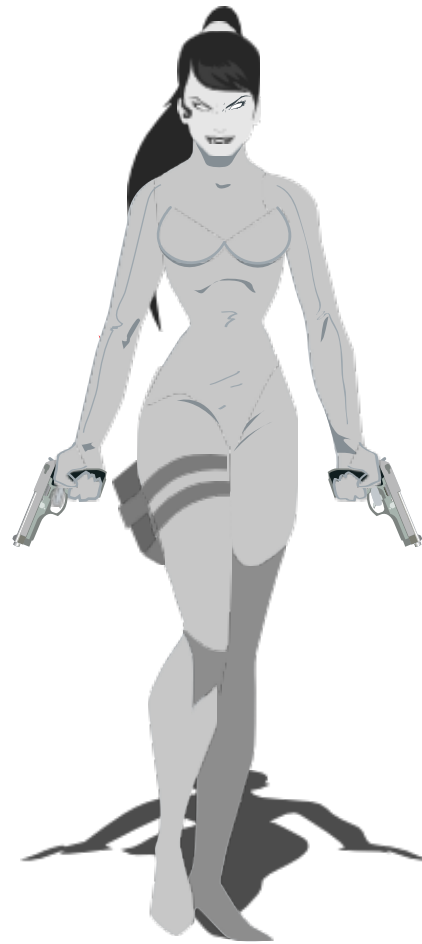
Secret agents are more than just handy with a pistol. Their ability to acquire and analyze information is at least as valuable as skill at arms. Your character's areas of expertise represent what they are really good at—fields of knowledge that you have studied and mastered.

Areas of expertise have two main uses:

1. When you use a skill, it is greatly enhanced if it falls within one of your areas of expertise.
2. You can automatically know things within that field, and create narrative truths from that knowledge. For example, if one of your areas of expertise is Fine Arts, you can use that background to declare the value of a

painting. You don't need to petition the GM or roll on a table—you're the expert.

Choose any three areas of expertise from the following list. If you want, you can embellish your choices by describing the adventures and careers that led you to acquiring your knowledge.



Biology. Knowledge of plants, animals, and biochemistry. Able to perform and comprehend studies and experiments. Familiarity with labs and lab equipment.

- Blackjack.** Understanding of and ability to play the game.
- Business.** Familiarity with business affairs. Well-versed in current business news. Able to interpret corporate reports, finance books, and office files.
- Chemistry.** Knowledge of the equipment and procedures of a chemistry lab. Able to identify chemicals by sight, smell, and reactivity. Can accurately predict chemical reactions.
- Chess.** Understanding of and ability to play the game.
- Computers.** (In the default setting, computers are extremely rare outside of major institutions.) Understand the functions of computers, how to program them, and how to interpret the results of computer programs.
- Cricket.** Understanding of and ability to play the game.
- Engineering.** Versed in physics, materials, and the workings of machines both large and small.
- Fine arts.** Having extensive knowledge of paintings, sculpture, and literature. Able to accurately determine the value, creator, and ownership history of any piece of art.
- Football (Soccer).** Understanding of and ability to play the game.
- Forensics.** Ability to piece together a historical record based on evidence at a scene. Includes some areas of chemistry and biology, as well as a thorough understanding of ballistics.
- Golf.** Understanding of and ability to play the game.
- Law.** Knowledge of domestic and international law, enforcement agencies, and legal principles.
- Jewelry.** Ability to identify the craftsmanship of jewelry of all kinds, and to spot fakes instantly. Can accurately determine the value of any piece of jewelry.
- Military science.** Familiarity with the heraldry, ranks, and equipment used by all of the world's militaries. Includes knowledge of military traditions and regulations.
- Poker.** Understanding of and ability to play the game.
- Politics.** Familiarity with current politics, governing bodies, elections, and rivalries. Able to predict political outcomes and impacts with some degree of certainty.
- Rare collectibles.** Knowledge of collectibles like coins, furniture, firearms, ancient weapons, artifacts, and curios. Can list major world collectors and collections (for example, the British Museum), and know which items go in which collections.
- Skiing.** Able to ski on snow, either cross-country or downhill.
- Tennis.** Understanding of and ability to play the game.
- Toxicology.** Can identify poisons by smell. Knowledge of the effects of poisons, the symptoms of their ingestion, and their most effective antidotes.

World history. Extensive knowledge of history, covering all world areas. Can accurately identify the historical period of any art, literature, language, or custom.

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

Although your Charm characteristic governs how likeable you are, it doesn't actually represent raw physical attractiveness. You can choose exactly how attractive your character is by selecting from the chart below. There are ups and downs to being good-looking. The more plain your character is, the fewer obstacles they will have going unnoticed in a crowd or wearing a disguise. In addition, an agent who isn't recognized has a lower chance of having their own motivations and personal relationships turned against them. On the other hand, very beautiful characters find it easy to bend others to their will.

Attractiveness	Fame
Normal	0
Good-looking	1
Attractive	2
Striking	3

The attractiveness chart lists a number called Fame. This is your agent's reputation and recognizability. Your Fame starts at zero and may go up with time, depending on how your missions go. If you choose a level of attractiveness that has a Fame score, you start with that level of Fame.

You also need to select your character's height and weight. For height, choose from Normal, Short, or Tall. For weight choose from Normal, Heavy, or Thin.

As with high levels of attractiveness, having an exceptional build may make it harder (or easier!)

to mimic certain people or to disappear into a crowd. These attributes don't necessarily make your character more recognizable, but they may be tagged by the GM during play if you take them.

You can also feel free to include as much additional detail as you like about your character's physical appearance, such as usual style of dress, haircut, or accessories like wristwatches and earrings.

PISTOL

Finally, select your agent's favored handgun. See the Equipment section for more information on the handguns available and their different strengths and weaknesses.