
CHARACTER CREATION

Overview

So *what is a character?* How much do we need to know about the protagonist of a story to make them interesting? And, more importantly than that, do comparative or statistical tools actually help that character *become* interesting? Or does interesting have nothing to do with a stat array? Let's find out.

This section of the game will cover:

- ◆ attributes, the building blocks
- ◆ skills, the central pillar
- ◆ background, the story *before*
- ◆ connections, the ties that bind
- ◆ talents, which set one apart

With these five elements, any imaginable character can be played in the game. There's no rolling for hit points or spending hours trawling through sub-class options, or learning even more rules to work out what it is your character does well.

Here, it should be obvious; each *thing* has a name that is fairly obvious.

Character creation is a remarkably simple process involving five steps, most of which can be completed very quickly.

STEP 1 • ATTRIBUTES

Allocate the following array of modifiers to your character's **attributes**, in any order you please:

+0, +1, +1, +2, +2, +3

The maximum bonus that any statistic can ever have is **+5**. Any advance, benefit, or effect which attempts to push the modifier beyond +5 is essentially wasted.

A character's statistics are the foundation of their overall character. Think about the type of character you wish to portray, and where their various talents and weaknesses may lie.

SOCIAL RANK

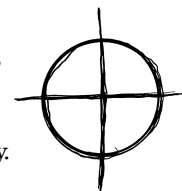
By default, a character's social **rank** is **I**. However, particular **backgrounds** may alter this **rank**. *Note that if a payer character outranks another character (player or NPC), they gain **advantage** on social checks; or likewise suffers **disadvantage** if they target outranks them.*

Note that this might not apply in the **Wilds**, or in circumstances where the usual hierarchies of authority or status do not apply. A social **rank** is appropriate to the **culture** to which it applies. Neither nobility, nor destitution, in one region necessarily applies to the next.

Stress: Blood & Poise

Characters will suffer **stress** throughout their lives, and this is represented by two **4-segment clocks**, called **blood** and **poise**.

When characters suffer each type of **stress**, they mark off one segment of the relevant clock. When they are filled, a character becomes **bloodied**, or **panicked**, respectively.



Blood represents, physical harm, endurance, and exhaustion. **Poise**, on the other hand, represents willpower, concentration, social anxiety or insecurity.

When a character is skirmishing or falls from height or otherwise takes physical **harm**, they tick one section of the **blood clock**. When they make a social faux pas, are terrified by a situation, or are otherwise shocked in some way, they tick one section of the **poise clock**.

When all four **blood** sections are ticked, the character is considered **bloodied**, which means they are in really bad shape, and can very easily be injured or even killed. When all four **poise** sections are ticked, the character is considered **panicked**, and is usually frightened or otherwise stressed out, and just with **blood** can easily be injured or taken out.

STEP 2 • BACKGROUND

Choose a **background** for your character: where did they come from, and who were they before they began adventuring? The full list is available later in the document (see **APPENDIX II**). Backgrounds will provide you with a number of skills to choose from, each of which becomes **trained**.

The backgrounds are:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| ◆ Acolyte | ◆ Noble |
| ◆ Charlatan | ◆ Outlander |
| ◆ Criminal | ◆ Sage |
| ◆ Entertainer | ◆ Sailor |
| ◆ Folk Hero | ◆ Soldier |
| ◆ Guild Artisan | ◆ Urchin |
| ◆ Hermit | |

Be sure to **read your background** to get a sense of it, as well as to see which **skills** you may get to choose.

STEP 3 • CONNECTIONS

Answer three of the following questions:

- ◆ who is the person in the Party that *you trust* the most?
- ◆ who in the Party *has cause* not to trust or like you?
- ◆ who do you need to *ask serious forgiveness* from? What did you do that needs forgiving?
- ◆ why are you *the best*, or *worst*, dressed person in the group? If you aren't the best, who is?
- ◆ who in the Party would you *lay down your life* to save?
- ◆ what cause do you follow that is *so important* that you would sacrifice the lives of the people you care about to see it through?
- ◆ which member of the Party do you know you *can't take* in a fight? Does that impress you or frighten you?
- ◆ who in the Party have you travelled to *at least three* different settlements with? Did you have to drag them along, or did they drag you?
- ◆ who do *you think* is the strongest, the best looking, or the smartest, in the Party?

- ◆ who in the Party do you owe money to? How much is it? Why do you always hesitate to pay off the debt, or why are they refusing to let you pay them back?
- ◆ why are you estranged from your family, and is it possible you can reconcile with them?

If you mentioned someone in the Party, they start with **+1 DESTINY**. If anyone mentioned you, then you start with **+1 DESTINY**. If you choose the same person twice or more, they still *only* get +1, but if you mention multiple people they *each* get +1.

You may consider developing a **BOND** with one of the characters you mentioned in your questions. Ask them about it.

Bonds

Characters may develop a number of **BONDS** equal to their **+WIS**. Two player characters may decide to share a **BOND**; both must agree and share a slot to do so. Any character may develop a **BOND** with a non-player character of their choice; this simply becomes a narrative fact unless the GM has a specific reason to question it, at which point it may become necessary to develop the potential **BOND** over time.

Characters who share a **BOND**:

- ◆ are always considered **ALLIES**
- ◆ gain **advantage** when making **tests** to influence or interact with one another
- ◆ add **+2** when **assisting**
- ◆ suffer **2-poise** when either flees or is **taken out**
- ◆ become grief-stricken and **panicked** for the rest of a session if one or the other dies

A **BOND** is powerful and usually permanent. However, especially if it is between two player characters, discuss with the GM any reasons for removing a **BOND** and, if it makes sense, it takes place between sessions. It should be dramatic no matter what, and the reason why two characters have severed their **BOND** should be an ongoing motif for the characters involved.

If a character selects an *item* to **BOND** with, it means they **cannot permanently lose** that item. Even if they sacrifice it as part of a consequence, or if it is stolen, or otherwise taken from them, it always *still exists*; they will just need to find and recover it.

Finally:

- ◆ choose a **talent** from the list and
- ◆ make any one **trained** skill **expert**

STEP 4 • FINAL TOUCHES

Character Appearance

Describe your character and what they look like, maybe draw a picture of them. Perhaps think of an idiosyncrasy or visual flair which makes your particular character stand out.

Now you know who they are, where they've come from, and what kind of relationship they have with other members of the Party.

Skill Boost

Now choose any **two** skills to become *trained*. Or, instead of becoming *trained* in a skill, increase a *trained* skill to *expert*, in whatever combination you please. You could even make *one* completely new skill *expert*, rather than increasing two others.

Special Ability

All characters have the capacity to use a special ability. Usually, these are adopted from a background or a talent. When you use your special ability, tick the box, and then it's used.

When you next *rest*, you can un-tick the box and therefore use the ability again. If you have multiple special abilities, each of them will tick the box, so choose carefully.

What about Gear?

Characters don't begin with any specific equipment. Instead, your character chooses a *weight* to carry, and that determines the armament you carry (or don't).

The three categories are:

- ◆ **Civilian**, which is basic clothes and perhaps some small weapon like a knife. You don't gain any specific benefit from this, but you look like a regular person. You can jump, climb, and swim as normal.
- ◆ **Light**, which is armed and armoured, but in leather gear, probably with a sword or shortsword, perhaps a spear. Nothing too formidable but you look like you're ready for action. Light gear does **+1-harm** and you gain **one** check-box for *armour*. Tests requiring agility are **+1-TIER**.
- ◆ **Heavy**, which makes you look like a soldier; most people will react accordingly. You can wield any weapon you like, such as a hammer or pole arm or

a broadsword. Heavy gear does **+2-harm** and you gain **two** check-boxes for *armour*. Tests requiring agility are **+2-TIER**.

Just as with a *special ability*, each use of *armour* ticks the box; it cannot be used until it is repaired during a *rest*, when you tend to your armour. Using *armour* negates one incoming injury in battle, no matter the specific value of that *harm* (so it could soak **4-harm** from a monster, but not from a fall).

Choose a piece of gear to carry. Describe it in a few words, such as *climbing gear*, or *herbs & spices for cooking*, or *a signet ring*. When you make a test and this item could convincingly affect the outcome, add **+2** to your roll.

CHARACTER • ADVANCES

The precise system for character advancement is left to the GM. They may decide you get an advance once per session, or when you achieve milestones of some sort. Perhaps your character needs to suggest a goal, and when they achieve it, they gain an advance.

When you do gain an advance, the system is very simple. You can:

- ◆ choose a **talent** from the list
- ◆ make an **untrained skill trained**
- ◆ make a **trained skill expert**
- ◆ increase one **attribute** by **+1** (to a maximum of **+5**)

That's it. Each of these abilities is similar in overall effectiveness, depending on how you play your character.

Attributes might seem the most effective, but they only affect four skills by one point. They are a more general choice

Skills are very potent, and each step from trained to expert increases that particular skill by +3 (that's what reducing the tier is equivalent to), so they are very strong but only in a niche area.

Talents can be very powerful, but are usually limited to particular circumstances. But, they usually allow you to do something most other characters cannot do.

So pick as you please. Design your character the way that suits them best. There are really no "right" or "wrong" ways to go about it. Don't bother trying to "min-max" because it's ineffective; you'll need to use all sorts of skills in this game, and combat is only a small part of it.