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»N.E.W. IS

Bounty hunters tracking down outlaws hiding in the trader towns on the fringes of civilization...

A starship exploring unknown worlds on the frontier of known space, going where nobody has been before...

A galactic civil war as entire star systems rebel against the Navy...

Smugglers and pirates operating below the radar, moving contraband from system to system...

The hunt for ancient secrets of the universe and the meaning behind the mysterious signal coming from the Outer Reaches...

A perpetual war against the machines which have risen up against their creators...

A great generational ark trying to find Earth, home to 100,000 men, women, and children...

Military grunts operating at ground zero fighting a bitter war in the mud and the dirt against an implacable enemy...

Detectives investigating a murder in a far-future solar system on a trail which will take them from Mars to Jupiter's moons...

Agents infiltrating a criminal organization, going undercover to take down a galactic crime boss...

Protectors of the innocent on the outer frontiers, righting wrongs and hunting down wrongdoers...

Traders just trying to make a buck as they build up their starship and claw their way up the economic ladder...

Outlaws on the run from the authorities, wrongly accused for a crime they didn't commit, surviving as best they can...

Members of an order of galactic peacekeepers, policing the galaxy and investigating crimes...

Hunters of exotic alien species and creatures for sale, transport, or extermination...

The emergence of a new species from a newly discovered wormhole that leads to the Andromeda Galaxy...

»Introduction



»WELCOME TO N.E.W!

N.E.W. is a roleplaying game set in a sci-fi future. Players take on the roles of starfaring adventurers and play through scenarios presented to them by a Game Master (GM). The GM creates the universe, the places, the people and aliens who populate that universe, and the adventures that the player characters (PCs) will encounter.

N.E.W. is set an indeterminate time in the future. Faster-than-light travel, aliens, gates to other galaxies, and pistols of - amongst others - the laser, phaser, blaster, sonic, and disruptor variety all exist, but the setting itself is up to you.

In N.E.W. you'll create a character (or, in some cases, three characters which form a pool from which mission teams are drawn) and adventure in the far future with characters created by other players. Your characters might be bounty hunters, starship officers, soldiers, mercenaries, explorers, or scientists. They could be human, or they could be one of a number of other alien species; indeed, you might be playing an android! Each player creates his or her own player character, decides on a personality, abilities, and attributes, and plays that character through numerous adventures.

N.E.W. allows you to explore a seemingly haunted derelict space station, defend a frontier town on a far-off planet from alien invaders, explore new frontiers, seek lost artifacts from ancient civilizations, or smuggle spices from system to system.

"Anything today, Doc?" Libbie Hamilton looked up at the young technician's question - the same question he'd asked her every one of the 212 days they'd been stationed on this lonely outpost.

She shook her head wearily. "Nope, nothing today, Reggie. Maybe tomorrow."

Reggie grinned, and handed her a cup of steaming coffee. Glancing up at the dark sky, he gestured through the window towards the pinprick of light that was the sun, over three billion miles away, almost indistinguishable

from the thousands of other stars clearly visible from Pluto's surface.

"Hard to believe that's the sun, isn't it?", he asked. "This is the furthest I've been from it. Never left the solar system, y'know."

"Well, if you're lucky, maybe you'll get stationed on Proxima Centauri next. I hear they're actually building a hotel there."

The great dish of the listening post's radio telescope blocked half the sky, vastly larger than the small, metallic building which housed the research team. Regulations strictly prohibited them from venturing outside unless the equipment needed maintenance or repairs, but most people stationed there eventually donned an environmental suit and slipped out for a look around.

The faint, monotonous tone of the Signal could be heard from the computer bank in the corner of the room. The Signal. The same signal that had been broadcasting for over half a century, originating from the depths of space and time, at the very limits of the observable universe. In all that time, it hadn't changed, it hadn't varied, and it hadn't stopped.

"Next shipment from Ganymede is due in four days. I asked them for hot chocolate; I can't take any more of this Navy-issue coffee. It tastes like mud."

Libbie grinned. "It is mud. It's organically fabricated in those new hydroponic facilities."

Reggie chuckled. "My shift's over. Arian should be out soon to replace me. Roger and Shiera have a card game going in the dorm. I think I'll..."

He froze. His face went white. Libbie looked at him, startled.

"What's up, Reg? It's just a card game. Nothing to..."

She followed his gaze. The computer in the corner. The Signal.

The Signal had just changed.

» WHAT YOU NEED

To play *N.E.W.* each player will need the following:

- ▶ A selection of six-sided dice (referred to as “d6s”).
- ▶ A character sheet (you can photocopy the one in this book or download one from the internet; at worst, a sheet of scrap paper will do).
- ▶ If the GM is using battlemaps to display combat positioning, a small miniature, token, or figurine to represent your character. You can find these in most game stores, but pennies or chess pieces will do in an emergency.
- ▶ If you are the GM, you will need a copy of this book and some kind of scenario or adventure. You can devise one of your own, or purchase a pre-written one.

» HOW TO PLAY

This book provides you with the core rules of play. It tells you how to create characters, adjudicate challenges and combat, and more.

During a game of *N.E.W.*, the GM will describe the environment and events of the game world, and the players will describe what their characters do within that scenario in a collaborative story-telling manner. Often the success of an action is not guaranteed, at which point you will use your dice to determine the outcome. Some tasks will be more difficult than others, and some characters will be better at certain types of activity than others.

As your character adventures throughout the galaxy, he or she will earn or find money and equipment, and will gain experience points which can be spent to improve his or her capabilities by purchasing new careers. These experience points (XP) are awarded to the players by the GM when they complete storylines or overcome challenges and enemies.



» EXAMPLE OF PLAY

James, Leonard, Walter, and Nichelle are playing in an adventure being run by Grace. They play the characters Sasha, Dr. TikTok, Ashonnn, and Talik, a ragtag group of spacefaring adventurers. The team has just docked a shuttle at a space station which was supposed to be open for business, but which did not respond to any hails.

James (playing Sasha): I carefully dock the shuttle on one of the outer docking pylons. I roll... (rolls some dice)... 14. Is that OK?

Grace (the GM): Yep, it's a fairly routine maneuver. The docking clamps attach with a shudder, and there is a faint hiss as the airlocks synchronize.

Leonard (playing Dr. TikTok): Before we open that airlock, I use my hand scanner to see if any life forms lurk behind it.

Grace: Great! Roll your LOGIC check, but deduct one die because you're scanning through a duranium door.

Leonard (playing Dr. TikTok): (sighs, and rolls the the dice). 9. That's not very good!

Grace (the GM): Sorry. You can't get a reading. I guess the duranium is interfering with your scanner. You'll just have to find out the old-fashioned way!

Walter (playing Ashonn): I pull out my laser sword and activate it, and then move to the airlock door. Is everyone ready?

Everyone else, talking simultaneously: Yep, I have my disruptor pistol drawn and ready... I ready my phaser rifle.... I pull out my blaster.

Grace (the GM): You all take position around the door. You're opening it, Ashonn?

Walter (playing Ashonn): Yes, I hit the control panel.

Grace (the GM): The airlock door slides open with a hiss. Beyond you can see darkness, lit occasionally by flickering lights which occasionally illuminate a duranium door at the end of a corridor. There's a strange smell in the air, and your eyes sting. No sound, except for the occasional beeping of a control panel.

Leonard (playing Dr. TikTok): Hmmm. OK, another scan with my hand scanner. I roll... 13 this time. What's up with the atmosphere?

Grace (the GM): That roll is good enough. The atmosphere is slightly acidic. Not enough to harm you, but enough to be a little uncomfortable. Your readings indicate that something has compromised the atmospheric control systems.

Nichelle (playing Talik): I think some stealth is in order. I make my way silently down the corridor. Do I need to make a check?

Grace (the GM): Yes, an AGILITY check, please. You can add your *stealth* skill.

Nichelle (playing Talik): OK, I roll... 16. I move as quietly as I can along the way. Does anything happen?

Grace (the GM): That's a great roll. Talik, the Felan burglar, nimbly covers the length of the corridor without making a sound. You reach the door.

Nichelle (playing Talik): Can I open it?

Grace (the GM): You hit the control panel but it flashes red; somebody has clearly locked it from the other side.

Nichelle (playing Talik): I guess this is where I earn my keep as a burglar! I want to hack the lock and open the door.

Grace (the GM): Sure. Make a LOGIC check. You have *thievery* as a skill; you can add that.

Nichelle (playing Talik): Ugh. I'm much better at AGILITY stuff than LOGIC. I have 2d6 from my LOGIC, 1d6 from my *thievery*, and I get a bonus 1d6 from one of my burglar exploits, so that's 4d6. Here goes... hacking the lock... I get 14.

Grace (the GM): It was a *Challenging [13]* check. The door slides open! On the other side you can see what is clearly a cargo area for docked ships. Metal crates and barrels are everywhere, as are ladders, cables, and other utilities. The lights here, like in the corridor, flicker. All is quiet; there is none of the bustling activity you would normally expect.

Leonard (playing Dr. TikTok): I don't like the look of this. I'm still scanning! Rolling... 12.

Nichelle (playing Talik): Can I see or hear anything unusual? I'll make an INT check... 14.

Grace (the GM): Talik spots what appears to be a dismembered body amongst a pile of junk some 40 feet away, hidden in shadows. TikTok, your scan turns something up - you are not alone! You register two life forms in the room, both of alien origin.

James (playing Sasha): Whoah! Bodies? Aliens? This is getting bad very, very fast. I'm going into overwatch. If any alien critters show their face, they're getting blaster fire right where the sun don't shine!

Nichelle (playing Talik): I try to get more info from my scan. I roll 14 again. What type of creature are we talking here?

Grace (the GM): The scan results indicate that there are two xenomorphic aliens in the room, both on the ceiling, and moving towards the now-open doorway.

Nichelle (playing Talik): I'm in the doorway. Can I see them?

Grace (the GM): Make another INT check, Talik.

Nichelle (playing Talik): 15. That should be enough!

Grace (the GM): Unfortunately, no. Whatever is there, you can't see them.

James (playing Sasha): I have a really bad feeling about this....

» ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book is the main rulebook for *N.E.W. The Roleplaying Game*. Using just this book, you can run a complete science fiction roleplaying campaign. It describes how to create characters, adjudicate the game, run combat, and design settings and adventures. The book is divided into four main sections.

I: Future Careers. The first section of the book deals with character creation. It takes you through the process of generating new player characters from start to finish, including attributes, species, careers, and more. It also includes information on psionics.

II: Future Equipment. This section of the book contains equipment, weapons, armor, drugs, cybernetics, and vehicles, that your characters can find or purchase.

III: Future Core. This is followed by a section which describes how to run a game of *N.E.W.* It covers the core game mechanics, including attribute checks and countdown pools, and the combat rules, along with details on the environment, objects, and movement.

IV: Space. The section on space covers astronomical information, space travel, and starship operations and combat.

V: Building a Universe. The final section of the book contains rules and guidelines for designing your own setting, species, careers, star systems, planets, monsters, and more. It is a GM's toolkit for campaign and adventure design. It also includes a selection of aliens and enemies for use in the game.

» RULE ZERO

The GM is the final arbiter of what happens in the game. If a rule needs to be interpreted, it is the GM who decides how to resolve it. At times, the GM may need to create new rules, or alter existing rules. In other words, the rules in this book should be viewed as guidelines, and should not interfere with or be a hindrance to your game-playing.

The ultimate goal of this game - like any game - is to enjoy it and have fun. There is no right or wrong way to play *N.E.W.* If you're all enjoying yourselves, you're playing it correctly.

» THE SETTING

N.E.W. is set in a far-future sci-fi universe in the same way that other games are set in a medieval fantasy universe. That universe might be our own universe, or it might be a fictional one of your own devising. It might be small in scale, encompassing only a single solar system as the Russians and Chinese battle for control of Jupiter's moons, or it might encompass a whole galaxy or more with myriad alien races and interstellar civilizations. Here are some examples of settings:



- The solar system has been explored, and colonies exist on the Moon and Mars. Outposts on Europa and other moons of Jupiter conduct vital research. Faster-than-light travel is not possible, and if there are any alien civilizations out there, we'll never meet them. Instead, we squabble for resources in an increasingly small solar system.
- The great ark ship *Colossus* has been traveling for 80 years, three generations of crew and passengers. With a population of nearly 100,000 souls, this massive flying city fled Earth in search of something new.
- Man's reach has extended across most of the known galaxy in a huge galactic confederation. Most alien species have come under its sphere of influence, either willingly or not. The inner and outer frontiers of mankind's civilization feature outpost worlds and trader towns where

live those who wonder - has humanity itself become the bad guy in its ever-expanding quest for control?

- When a natural wormhole was discovered to the Small Magellanic Cloud, one of the Milky Way's orbiting dwarf galaxies, it was the start of something new. Now, dozens of galaxies are connected by great warp gates, conduits which allow trade and conflict alike. Great civilizations realize their insignificance in the vast void - and somewhere out there, beyond the edges of observable space, something ancient and malevolent exists.

» WHAT'S O.L.D. IS N.E.W.

O.L.D. is a companion roleplaying game of medieval fantasy. It is 100% compatible with *N.E.W.*; if you want a wizard to appear on a starship and start casting spells, or a starship's

away-team to materialize in a dragon's lair and start firing laser rifles, you'll find that the two work together perfectly.

Similarly, *N.O.W.* is a game of 80s-style action and supervehicles. It contains rules for martial arts, talking cars, and supersoldiers.

All three of these games are fully compatible with each other while designed to be complete independent games. Look for the *O.L.D.* and *N.O.W.* roleplaying games from EN Publishing.

» A BRIEF GLOSSARY

This is a short introduction to some of the terms you'll encounter throughout this book.

Attributes. Attributes represent a range of core measurable facets of your character in numerical form. These attributes are STRENGTH, AGILITY, ENDURANCE, INTUITION, LOGIC, WILLPOWER, CHARISMA, and LUCK plus a couple of optional attributes which depend on the campaign model. The higher an attribute, the more your character exemplifies that attribute.

Attribute Check. Most activities in the game are based around an attribute check. This is a test whereby one of your attributes determines how many dice you get to roll to accomplish a task such as shooting at a bandit or lifting a heavy object.

Away Team. When the players play members of a large crew, each creates multiple characters. Away teams are formed from the collective character pool. These are sometimes known as Task Forces, or troupe-style play.

Benchmark. The difficulty of a task is described by its benchmark. This is a descriptive word and numerical value which an attribute check attempts to roll over.

Career. A career is a temporary building block which helps form your character's development. Characters take careers for periods of time during character generation as the process works its way through his life in what is known as a "life-path" system. Each career affects his attributes and skills. For example, a few years spent working as a bartender on a galactic liner might enhance a character's social skills. At any given time, a character will have a current career.

Countdown Pool. A countdown pool is a special sort of dice pool used to add suspense when racing against an unknown clock. It involves periodically rolling a dice pool and removing any dice which show a certain value, until the pool is empty.

d6. A "d6" is a regular six-sided dice. *N.E.W.* is based around pools of dice in which you roll a number of dice, add up the total, and compare it to a target number known as a *difficulty benchmark*. Multiple dice which are rolled and added together are expressed as xd6 - for example, 3d6 means "roll three dice and add them together", while "5d6+2" means "roll five dice and add them together, then add two to the total".

d66. When the rules ask you to roll a d66, you should roll 2d6 but read them a little differently. Instead of adding them together, you read the first as "tens" and the second as "units" - for example, if you roll a 3 and a 2, you read that as 32. Rolling a 1 and a 6 gives you 16. This way of rolling dice is mainly used by the GM when rolling on random tables.

Descriptor. At the top of the character sheet you will see an area known as the "descriptor". The descriptor presents a number of fundamental things about your character in the form of a single summarizing sentence.

Dice Pool. A dice pool is the handful of dice you roll when making an attribute check. It can be formed in various ways (adding dice granted by your attributes, skills, or equipment) and is limited in size by your grade.

Die Bonus/Penalty. If something indicates that it grants or inflicts a die bonus or penalty (usually in the format "a +2d6 bonus") it refers to additional dice which can be added to (or which must be removed from) your dice pool when you make an attribute check.

Experience Points. Characters earn Experience Points by accomplishing tasks, defeating enemies, and completing adventures. These Experience Points (or XP) can be spent on character improvements.

Exploits. Exploits are individual abilities or benefits. There are different types of exploit - species exploits, career exploits, attribute exploits, age exploits, and universal exploits.

Exploits include things like an android's immunity to mental attacks, a navy brat's familiarity with military vehicles, or the ability to perform a deadly strike.

Game Master (GM). The GM is the referee of the game. She describes the universe to the players, and controls the actions of NPCs and monsters.

Grade. Your character's grade is simply the total number of career grades you have taken. A starting character is usually Grade 5. Your grade is important because it determines the maximum sized dice pool you can form when making attribute checks.

Non Player Character (NPC). An NPC is a character which is not played by one of the players. Instead, all NPCs are played by the GM.

Skills. Skills are smaller, concentrated packets of interest, expertise, or training. They include things like cooking, pistols, wrestling, poetry, piloting, engineering, and more. Your character will pick up new skills throughout his career. The skill list is open-ended and unlimited; a skill kicks in at any time your character performs an activity related to it.

Species. Your character is one of a number of available alien species (including human). He might be a fierce Spartan, a diminutive Borian, or a serene Venetian.

» SETTING THE TONE

N.E.W. is designed to fit a wide range of science-fiction styles, from grand space operas to gritty hard sci-fi. Whatever your favorite sci-fi show or novel, you should find that you can easily play it with *N.E.W.*

Later in this book, you'll find an entire chapter which discusses the creation of your own setting with rules and guidelines for designing star systems, worlds, species, monsters, and more.



» CHARACTER CREATION

Each player in *N.E.W.* plays a character - a human soldier, a Spartan bounty hunter, a Felan burglar, a Borian engineer, an Android doctor, or one of many other possible options. You can choose from a variety of species and careers to build the character you want to play.

This section of the rulebook tells you how to create a player character. It includes information on attributes, skills, careers, exploits, and equipment. By working through this chapter, you will be able to easily create a fully playable character ready for play in a *N.E.W.* campaign. All you need is a character sheet, a pencil, and a copy of this rulebook.

Good luck! We're all counting on you.

» ABOUT THIS CHAPTER

This chapter on character creation includes the following information. A character, in its basic form, is simply a collection of three types of element: **attributes** (which define core capabilities), **skills** (which define areas of special competence or knowledge) and **exploits** (which are special abilities and

traits). The rest of the elements listed below, such as careers, age, species, and so on, are simply choices which determine your attributes, skills, and exploits.

- » An overall walkthrough of the character creation process.
- » Details about the character's descriptor and grade.
- » Information about attributes, what they mean, and how they are used.
- » A list of over 150 example skills.
- » A choice of 7 character species, along with their descriptions and abilities.
- » Over 60 distinct careers which your character may adopt.
- » Universal exploits, which are distinct abilities which can be acquired by any character.
- » Details on how to calculate a number of derived statistics.
- » Nearly 40 traits.
- » Information on character age.
- » Over 30 psionic exploits.

All of these elements are building blocks which contribute towards your character. Although it sounds like a lot, creating a character is actually a very simple process - you'll simply choose a species, five careers, a couple of items like exploits and traits, and then buy equipment for your character. When you're used to the process, a character shouldn't take more than a few minutes to create.

» CHARACTER CREATION WALKTHROUGH

Follow these steps to create a character.

- 1 Note your starting attributes (**3 for each attribute**, except for PSI and REP which start at 0).
- 2 Choose a species.
 - 2.1 Apply species attribute adjustments.
 - 2.2 Note your SIZE.
 - 2.3 Choose **three** species skills.
 - 2.4 Note **all** the listed species exploits.
- 3 Choose a homeworld type, apply attribute adjustments, and note any bonus skills.
- 4 Choose a *hook*, and note it in your descriptor.
 - 4.1 Choose one attribute related to that hook; this is called your *hook attribute*.
- 5 Choose **five** careers. Start with an **origin**, and then select **four** further careers. For each career grade, do the following:
 - 5.1 Apply all of the listed attribute adjustments. Note that you may optionally substitute either one of your species attributes or your hook attribute for one of the listed attributes.
 - 5.2 Choose two of the listed skills and advance each by one point. Note that characters may optionally always select a defensive skill instead of a listed skill.
 - 5.3 Choose one new career exploit from the list shown or choose one universal exploit.

If the characters are members of a large crew or other organisation, each player will need three characters. See the rules on Away Teams & Task Forces on page 49.

5.4 Roll for the years spent at that career grade and increase your age (your age starts at zero).

- 6 Select *aim* or *feint* (free universal exploits) plus **one** other universal exploit of your choice for which you qualify.
- 7 Choose **one** trait based on your highest or lowest attribute and note that in your descriptor.
- 8 Determine your age and apply any age exploits.
- 9 Calculate your derived statistics.
- 10 Spend money to equip your character with armor, weapons, and equipment.

» TOTAL CHECKLIST

When you have finished, you will have chosen:

5 career exploits.

10 skill ranks from your careers plus 3 from your species and 1 for your homeworld, making 14 in total.

20 attribute points from your careers, plus the 24 you started with, adjusted by species.

2 universal exploits, including either *aim* or *feint*.

1 possible age exploit, a trait, and a hook.

» DESCRIPTOR

At the top of each character sheet is a *descriptor*. This is a short introductory character summary. Each player should read their full descriptor to the rest of the group before beginning play. For example, Dr. TikTok's reads:

an erudite android medic who is fascinated by religion

The descriptor is made up of the following elements, some of which are not always used.

a[n] [age] [trait] [species] [career] who [hook].

Trait. The *trait* is the name of a special ability or quality defined by a character's lowest or highest attribute (see section on *traits*, later).

Age. The *age* entry is only used if the character is younger than adult or older than middle-aged. You may choose any synonyms for young and old (adolescent, youthful, aged, mature, etc.); age can give you a free exploit (see the section on *age*, later).

Career. The *career* entry can be one of two choices. It can be the character's current career, or it can be the character's longest-serving career. If the longest-serving career is not the current career, it should be prefixed with "ex-" (for example, an ex-cop or an ex-marine).

Hook. The *hook* is a broad background/skill/interest chosen by the player. It can be anything, but it's designed to round out the character with personality, interests, or hobbies. For example, a player might choose "...who enjoys hard liquor" or "... has a taste for romance" or even "...who collects insects as a hobby".

The hook is chosen early in the character creation process. It complements career and skill choices as a lifelong background aspect to the character, unconnected to specific vocations and training.

The hook works as a broad skill. Any time you make an attribute check, you can use the hook to gain a +1d6 bonus, but *only if you are not using a skill already*. The GM should be generous in allowing this; the hook should provide a frequent reminder of a character's background.

What you can't do with the hook is gain a combat bonus to attack or damage. Hooks like "...who enjoys target shooting" or "... who likes boxing" can sometimes be slipped in by players as sneaky combat bonuses, but sadly they do not work like that. The boxing hook might help recall a past champion or identify a winner's belt, but it won't assist a character in throwing a punch.

The hook has one other effect, which occurs during character creation only. The player should assign one attribute to be loosely linked to the hook; for example, if the hook is a physical activity, he might choose **STRENGTH**. This is called his *hook attribute*. Whenever advancing attribute scores through a career choice, the hook attribute may be chosen *instead* of one of the listed career attributes.



Example Descriptors

- ▶ Dr. TikTok is an erudite Android medic who is fascinated by religion
- ▶ Gorrat is an illiterate Ogron marine who loves sports
- ▶ Sasha is a reckless Human smuggler who enjoys gambling
- ▶ Talik is an ambidextrous Felan burglar who plays classical music
- ▶ Holmes is an alcoholic Human psychic who collects insects
- ▶ Ashonn is a young, disfigured Venetian star knight who believes in fairytales

Each player should read their character's descriptor aloud to the other players before play begins.

» ATTRIBUTES

Player characters are defined by a set of attributes. Attributes are a selection of values which help describe a character. They measure things like strength, agility, and intelligence; somebody with a higher STRENGTH attribute is stronger than somebody with a lower one. The primary attributes in *N.E.W.* are STRENGTH, AGILITY, ENDURANCE, WILLPOWER, INTUITION, LOGIC, CHARISMA, and LUCK. There are also two secondary attributes called REPUTATION and PSIONICS.

There is no upper limit to an attribute. The human species is used as a benchmark for "average", with a score of with 4 in each physical, mental, and personal attribute being roughly average for a civilian adult human. An attribute of 12 typically represents performance exhibited by record-holding human athletes or scientific geniuses. Einstein and Sherlock Holmes exhibit a score of 12 in their LOGIC attributes, while Adolph Hitler and Rasputin have scores of 11 or 12 in CHARISMA, although player characters and NPCs in *N.E.W.* sometimes exceed these values.

Monsters, too, are described in terms of attributes. A mighty tyrannosaurus rex might have a STRENGTH attribute of 20. Non-human species have different averages and norms to humans; this is represented by their different starting attributes.

Attributes will change during character creation, and then later through character advancement, as your character embarks on new careers. A stint in the military might make you a bit tougher, increasing your ENDURANCE attribute, while years spent as a con-man might increase your CHARISMA. The attributes are described in more detail below.

Attributes sometimes combine to create derived statistics - for example, the physical attributes can affect a character's MELEE and RANGED DEFENSE score, and the mental attributes affect a character's MENTAL DEFENSE score. Other attributes are used to determine how fast your character can run, how much he can carry, how far he can jump, or how much damage he can take.

Attributes & Dice Pools

The actual attribute scores are only used during character creation and advancement. During play, you will use your attributes' associated **dice pools**. There is more detail on this later, but dice pools are groups of dice which you roll when your character attempts a task; the more dice you roll, the higher you'll likely score. Your attributes determine how many dice you can roll. The total that you roll is compared to a difficulty benchmark; if you roll equal to or higher than that benchmark, your character succeeds at the task. A benchmark looks something like: *Challenging [13] AGI* check. This means that you roll your dice pool, and if you roll 13 or more, your character succeeds. There is much more information on difficulty benchmarks and attribute checks in the section on adjudicating the game.

Attributes grant dice to these dice pools in a granular, expanding scale, meaning that each new dice is harder to obtain - for example, an AGILITY of 7 means that your AGILITY dice pool is 3d6, while an AGILITY of 10 lets you roll 4d6.

Skills (covered a little later in this book) use the same expanding scale, granting more dice to your dice pool. So a skill rank of 3 in *pistols* gives you 2d6. You would add that to the 3d6 you got for your AGILITY score of 7 when taking a shot at a hostile alien, meaning that you get to roll 5d6 in total.

Attribute & Skill Scale

1-2	3-5	6-9	10-14	15-20	21-27	28-35
1d6	2d6	3d6	4d6	5d6	6d6	7d6

You can also gain dice for high quality equipment. For example, an exceptional quality item gives you another 2d6 to add to your dice pool. Equipment is dealt with in detail elsewhere.

» STRENGTH (STR)

STRENGTH measures physical power, might, and brawn. It is used to determine carrying capacity, some melee attacks, and melee damage. If you want to break a door down, your GM may ask you for a STR check.

» AGILITY (AGI)

AGILITY measures dexterity and reflexes. It is also used to determine ranged attacks and some melee attacks. You might use your AGI to perform a fancy shuttle maneuver or to land safely after a nasty fall.

» ENDURANCE (END)

ENDURANCE is a measure of healthiness, constitution, and hardiness. It, along with WIL, is used to determine your overall HEALTH score. An END check might also be used to resist the effects of poison or disease.

» INTUITION (INT)

INTUITION measures common sense, perception, empathy, and natural instinct. It is used to tell when someone is lying, spot something, or sense impending danger. Some might refer to it as “EQ” or “emotional intelligence”. Animals often have high INT attributes, especially those with keen senses.

» LOGIC (LOG)

LOGIC is a mixture of reasoning, knowledge, and education. While IQ isn’t a great measure of intelligence, $60 + (\text{LOG} \times 10)$ gives an approximate IQ in the mid-ranges. You would make a LOG check to operate a complex electronic device, apply first-aid, or recall specific knowledge

» WILLPOWER (WIL)

WILLPOWER is strength of mind and power of concentration. Along with END, it determines your overall HEALTH, and is part of your MENTAL DEFENSE.

» CHARISMA (CHA)

CHARISMA is a combination of physical attractiveness, personal magnetism, and force of personality. It is the attribute used when interacting with others, whether leading them, negotiating with them, or deceiving them. While physical appearance is part of the CHA score, it is a minor part at best (especially in a universe full of aliens with differing standards of beauty); far more important are personality and presence.

» LUCK (LUC)

LUCK is an unpredictable force, and some people are naturally luckier than others. Your LUCK dice pool forms a resource of dice which can be added at will to other dice pools on order to improve your chances, or which can be spent on other special actions. That resource replenishes itself every day.

» REPUTATION (REP)

REPUTATION is a measure of fame, respect, influence, social standing, and credit rating. You can make a REP check to get a loan or see if somebody has heard of you. Your REP also partly determines your starting money.

» PSIONICS (PSI)

PSIONICS (PSI) measures the psionic potential of a character. It is used for mental and telepathic attacks and abilities. Not all settings will use the PSI attribute.

What Attribute Scores Mean

Though the following terms are not used in the game in any meaningful way, they can help you to envisage what your

Dice Pool	STRENGTH	AGILITY	LOGIC	REPUTATION	Attribute
1d6	Weak	Clumsy	Low	Unknown	1-2
2d6	Average	Average	Average	Town or village	3-5
3d6	Strong	Adroit	Gifted	Planet	6-9
4d6	Powerful	Agile	Genius	System	10-14
5d6	Mighty	Remarkable	Extraordinary genius	Sector	15-20
6d6	Superhuman	Superhuman	Supra-genius	Galaxy	21-27

character's attribute scores actually mean. The table above can be used as a quick tool to understanding your character's attributes as viewed from a human perspective (although a T-Rex might not consider a human with 12 STR to be powerful!) It doesn't include all the attributes, but the ones it does include should give you a reasonable perspective on the overall scale.

» GRADE

Your grade is equal to the total number of career grades you have taken, and the largest dice pool you can form during play is defined by your grade. A starting character

with 5 career grades is **grade 5**, and has a maximum pool size of **5d6**. Some NPCs, civilians, or weak monsters may be lower than grade 5, and their maximum dice pool is equal to their grade.

For example (this will be explained in more detail later), Krakov has 9 AGI, 4 ranks in swords, and an exceptional electro-katana. That would normally give him a dice pool of 7d6 (3d6 for his attribute, 2d6 for his swords skill, and 2d6 for his exceptional weapon). However, he is only grade 7, which gives him a maximum dice pool of 6d6. In effect, some of his dice are wasted until he can gain some experience.

Maximum Dice Pools

5d6	6d6	7d6	8d6	9d6	10d6	11d6	12d6
Grade 5	Grade 6-7	Grade 8-10	Grade 11-14	Grade 15-19	Grade 20-25	Grade 26-32	Grade 33-40

Starting Grade

A typical character begins at **grade 5**, which includes an origin and four career grades. However, the GM may wish to start the game at a different grade.

Starting characters at **grade 1** will be young, with only an origin. They will be below average in terms of competency, but have limitless scope to grow. Alternatively, starting at **grade 2** can give characters an origin and the start of a career. A new cadet or a teenaged moisture farmer longing for adventure might fit this approach.

A character's maximum dice pool cannot be reduced to lower than 3d6, no matter how low their grade, though an NPC's or monster's dice pool can. A grade 4 character has a maximum dice pool of 4d6, and a

grade 3 or lower character has a maximum dice pool of 3d6.

Starting characters at **grade 10** will be highly competent, experienced professionals. These characters know what they're doing, and they're good at it. They've likely already maxed out one entire career - perhaps they could be ex-military or reformed criminals. A grade 10 character has a maximum dice pool of 7d6.

The GM can set any starting grade. You may find you enjoy certain styles of game over others, and the starting grade can be a major factor in this. It is recommended, however, that all players begin with characters of the same grade so that none overshadow the others.



»SKILLS

Skills represent things your character is good at. Skills are picked up as a character progresses through his life, and reflect training and background. Some are academic skills, such as the sciences; others are physical skills like *running* or *climbing*. Still others may reflect social skills like *intimidation*, technical skills like *engineering*, or activities like *piloting* and *zero-g*.

A skill is not required to attempt a task. Having ranks in a skill indicates that you have particular training in that subject; however, even if you have no ranks in *piloting*, you can still try to land a damaged shuttlecraft, and having no ranks in *pistols* does not prevent you from taking a shot at an attacking alien.

The skill list is open-ended. This means that ANYTHING can be a skill; it doesn't have to be on the list below. You might wish to choose *flower arranging*, *origami*, or *interior decorating*. The list below is simply a list of examples; feel free to add to it.

A skill forms part of a dice pool. When making an attribute check, you may add skill dice to your attribute dice (you may also add equipment dice) to form a dice pool which is rolled against a target difficulty benchmark.

> Academic Skills

examples: literature, accounting, law, history, linguistics, art, theology, philosophy, politics, economics, geography, journalism

> Artistic Skills

examples: painting, sculpting, calligraphy, pottery, poetry, film-making, photography, printmaking, modelling

> Combat Skills

examples: tactics, reactions, brawling, wrestling, boxing, martial arts, pistols, rifles, heavy weapons, swords, polearms, clubs, knives, axes, light armor, medium armor, heavy armor, powered armor

> Crafting Skills

examples: carpentry, cooking, blacksmith, basket-weaving, stone-masonry

> Developmental Skills

examples: perception, insight, concentration, meditation, bravery, resistance, hardy, ambidexterity

> Gaming Skills

examples: chess, checkers, dominoes, draughts, poker, blackjack, backgammon, pool, darts, gambling

> Miscellaneous Hobby Skills

examples: brewing, fishing, gardening, hunting, riddles, sewing, ornithology

> Physical Skills

examples: climbing, swimming, jumping, carrying, running, acrobatics, zero-g, high-g, throwing

> Performance Skills

examples: acting, singing, musical instrument, dancing, mime, magic, storytelling, comedy, fortune-telling, juggling, ventriloquism

> Psionic Skills

examples: biopsionics, clairsentience, clairvoyance, ergokinesis, metapsionics, telekinesis, telepathy, teleportation

> Scientific Skills

examples: physics, astrophysics, astronomy, chemistry, ecology, oceanography, geology, meteorology, biology, zoology, botany, mathematics, archaeology, criminology, psychology, sociology, medicine, genetics, nanotechnology, xenology, climatology

> Sporting Skills

examples: football, tennis, volleyball, cricket, baseball, basketball, rugby, bowling, dodgeball, badminton, squash, table tennis, sailing

> Subterfuge Skills

examples: cryptology, appraisal, disguise, stealth, thievery, escape artist, bribery, forgery, interrogation

> Social Skills

examples: intimidate, flirtation, carousing, negotiating, bluffing, leadership, linguistics, counselling, teaching

> Technical Skills

examples: computers, engineering, demolitions/explosives, electronics

> Trivia Skills

examples: movies, rock 'n roll, historical period, celebrities, astrology, theater

> Vehicle Skills

examples: piloting, riding, driving, sailing, gunnery, navigation, astrogation

> Outdoor Skills

examples: survival, animal handling, tracking, farming, mining

> Other Skills

examples: bureaucracy, hypnotism, local knowledge



Skill Notation

Sometimes entire categories of skills are referred to in this rulebook instead of single skills. When this happens, the category is noted in square brackets in order to avoid confusion. For example, an entry which says *[outdoor]* refers to the entire list of *survival*, *animal handling*, *tracking*, *farming*, *mining*, and any others. In these instances, it is also appropriate to choose new skills of your own devising, as long as they fall within the category's overall topic - if a career tells you you may choose a *[vehicle]* skill, you can choose any of the listed examples, or you might decide instead on *ballooning* or *submarining*.

When noting a skill, you do not need to indicate categories or placeholder titles. You simply note "*chess*" rather than "*gaming (chess)*"; similarly, you simply note "*pistols*" or "*nunchukus*" rather than "*ranged weapon (pistols)*" or "*melee weapon (nunchaku)*".

Computers includes use of scanners and starship sensor/comms systems.

Navigation refers to land and sea-based travel. The space-based equivalent is *astrogation*.

Local knowledge is a catch-all term; the skill should actually be the name of a place, typically a planet.

Weapons. In combat, unarmed fighting, and weapon skills all add to relevant AGI, INT, or STR attack checks. Melee weapons include categories of weapon type (*swords*, *axes*, *clubs*, *knives*, etc.); ranged weapons similarly include weapon types, such as *bows*, *pistols*, *rifles*, or *heavy weapons*. **Gunnery** refers to vehicle or ship-mounted weapons. Unarmed combat types include (but are not limited to) *boxing*, *wrestling*, *brawling*, and *martial arts*.

Armor. Armor is divided into light, medium, heavy, and powered armor. You can still wear armor in which you have no skill ranks, but - as with all equipment - you need skill ranks to benefit fully from higher quality armor.



Skill Levels

Skills are used to form dice pools in the same way that attributes are. They use the same scale as attributes to derive the size of the dice pool.

As a general rule, 1 skill rank is *proficient*, 3 is considered *skilled*, and is roughly equal to a bachelor's degree; 6 is an *expert*, and is roughly equal to a doctorate; 10 is regarded as *mastery*; and 15 makes you an *authority* on that subject. These ranks correspond to derived dice pools of 1d6, 2d6, 3d6, 4d6, and 5d6.

Einstein had a score of 15 (5d6) in *physics*. Miyamoto Musashi had a score of 15 (5d6) in *swords*. Characters with skills that high are extremely rare.

Skill Ranks	Skill Level	Dice Pool
1	Proficient	1d6
3	Skilled	2d6
6	Expert	3d6
10	Mastery	4d6
15	Authority	5d6



»SPECIES

Your character is likely nothing like you. In fact, your character may be a completely different species to you. There are a number of alien species to choose from; they all have different starting attributes representing typical members of their species. Some alien species may be fast, or strong, while others might be intelligent or psionically gifted. Each species is different.

Start by choosing a species and sex for your character. Your species will determine your starting attributes, which are the attributes of a small child of that species (human adult average is 4 in each attribute). Your gender does not affect your attributes or skills at all. Humans provide the simplest, most straightforward playing experience.

Once you have selected your species, record your starting attributes, and choose three from the list of available skills. Each species also has natural exploits (such as the Venetian's bonus telepathic power or the Android's immunity to mental attacks).

This rulebook presents seven basic species (Humans, Ogrons, Venetians, Borians, Androids, Spartans, and Felan), although many more may be available from other sources. These species are a simple, “generic” set, designed to suit a multitude of campaign settings in the same way that elves, dwarves, and halflings are often generic to fantasy games. Any given setting may well have an entirely different set of alien species, especially if it's set in a popular sci-fi universe, and GMs are encouraged to create their own.

A Note About Gender & Ethnicity

Gender has no effect on your character and should be treated as a purely descriptive element. Some alien races (though not those above) may have entirely different genders, or no gender at all. You should feel free to select from the entire range of gender-identification and sexuality, though these things will likely not form a major part of the game.

Species Attribute Bonuses

Every species is different, and part of this difference is highlighted by their different starting attributes. Ogrons are strong, and Venetians are clever, while Humans are known for their luck.

	STR	AGI	END	INT	LOG	WIL	CHA	LUC	PSI
Human*								+2	
Borian			+1	+1			+1		
Ogron	+2		+2						
Felan		+2		+1			+1	+1	
Spartan	+1	+1	+1						
Android	+2				+2			-	-
Venetian		+1			+2			-2	+3

**+2 to one other attribute and +1 to a third attribute*

All of your attributes start at 3, except for PSI and REP which both start at 0. Your choice of species modifies those attributes in the form of bonuses and some (rare) penalties.

Attributes which grant a species bonus also serve another important function. The starting bonus to your attributes isn't overwhelming. However, later in the character creation process, whenever you take a career grade, you may substitute one of the listed attribute

Alternatively, you may substitute your hook attribute in place of one of the listed attributes.

You cannot increase an attribute twice during a single career grade advancement; if substituting a species or hook attribute for another would mean that an attribute was being improved more than once, you cannot make the substitution.



Humans

There's a reasonably strong chance that you, the reader, are human. Humans are an adaptive and expansionist species, with a tendency towards colonization and innovation - they are as varied as the many planets from which they hail. Centuries on different worlds has resulted in a diverse species - some colonies on high gravity worlds grew into planets of strong men and women, while other planets attuned their populations over many years in other ways.

Human adventurers are extremely varied, from military officers to engineers, to priests, to criminals.

Statistics

Size: Medium

Attributes: LUC +2, add 2 to one other attribute, and add 1 to a third attribute

Skill choices: *Sport, climbing, swimming, running, [crafting], [trivia], [gaming], [scientific], engineering.*

Exploits

Varied. Human boast more variation within their species than most. Add 2 to one other attribute, and add 1 to a third attribute (noted above).

Explorers. Driven by an inquisitive, exploratory nature, Humans gain a number of XP equal to their grade every time they set foot on a planet new to them.

Ogrons

Ogrons stand 7' tall. Towering masses of muscle, accompanied by green skin and bestial tusks, they so much resemble the ogres of fairytale and lore than humankind named them after the mythical creatures. Ogrons have a reputation for stupidity. While it's certainly true that most of humankind outstrips the Ogon species in terms of intelligence and education, Ogrons aren't quite as stupid as many expect - they, as a species, do manage to operate and build starships, after all.

Ogon adventurers tend to be mercenaries and soldiers.

Typical names (male and female): Lúrbag, Lugog, Gorrat, Ugbug, Bolglúk, Maudush, Radhur, Ugdush, Grishog.

Statistics

Size: Large

Attributes: STR+2, END +2

Skill choices: *Carrying, hardy, bravery, intimidate.*

Exploits

Dull-witted. Although slow-witted, Ogon minds are hard to penetrate. They gain a +4 bonus to MENTAL DEFENSE.

Smelly. No matter what they do, Ogrons smell bad. They take a permanent -1d6 penalty to any attempts at stealth.

Brawny. Ogrons increase their carrying capacity by 50%.

Stronger with age. Unlike most species, Ogrons can continue to increase their STR attribute into old age. Ancient Ogrons are often incredibly strong.

Venetians

Venetians are a slim, hairless species, standing at roughly the same height as humans. They tend towards the ascetic, and, indeed, have a society which highly favors the monastic orders to which so many belong. The Venetian style of self-discipline and avoidance of indulgence gives the species a somewhat aloof demeanor which can be off-putting.

Many of the Venetian monastic orders, of which there are thousands, focus on the martial arts and self-discipline. For this reason, Venetians - while being pacifistic in nature - are often very skilled combatants.

