# Variant V: Solomoriah's Realms

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## Table of Contents

**Introduction**

Variant V is the result of over ten years of study and design. It is a Role-Playing Game system with simplicity and efficiency built right in.

I have been designing RPG systems almost as long as I have been a gamemaster. (Haven't we all?) There are definite stages of development I went through to get to the game system you are reading now.

**Variant I** never saw the light of day. It was an **AD&D**-like system with a totally reworked (i.e. unworkable) magic system.

**Variant II: The Realms of Wonder** was used in my Anderia campaign. An uneasy marriage of **Villains & Vigilantes** style combat and **Lords of Creation** skills, it worked only because the players wanted it to.

**Variant II.5** was a true minimalist's game system. Together with a copy of Dave Arneson's **First Fantasy Campaign** set, it was used for a single game session.

**Variant III: The Realms of Fantasy** was a departure from the previous systems. It rather strongly resembled Marvel Super-Heros, but was designed for traditional fantasy worlds. An early version of Nevermore used these rules.

**Variant IV: The Realms of Adventure** most strongly resembled **SwordBearer**. Like the latter, Variant IV was much too complicated. It was engineered for a return to the Anderia campaign, and was actually used for several sessions.

So now I am up to **Variant V: Solomoriah's Realms**. Although many of the systems will seem familiar, it is really not based on ANY other game. I hope you enjoy it.

## Step 1: Generate Attributes

Each character has five attribute ranks (see **Attributes**, below). When creating a player character, each player can spend up to 15 points. This means any player character can have one ability each of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5; or other combinations are also possible. Characters may not have more than one attribute of Rank 1, however.

Optional Rule: The player rolls 1d10 five times, reading the ranks from Table 1, below; the resulting rank numbers may be arranged by the player as desired.

### Table 1: Attribute Generation

| Roll | Result |
|------|--------|
| 1 | Rank 1 |
| 2-3 | Rank 2 |
| 4-7 | Rank 3 |
| 8-9 | Rank 4 |
| 10 | Rank 5 |

## Step 2: Skill Selection

Initial characters have one skill slot per year of age over 14. (For example, one at 15, two at 16, etc.) This number may be increased by accepting a Disadvantage (see **Skills**). Any skill may be selected, provided the character has enough skill slots to spend. Note that the Peculiar Abilities category of skills may ONLY be selected from during initial generation, not later in the game.

## Step 3: Fill In The Blanks

Remaining spaces on the character record should be filled in now. All character descriptive information must be approved by the Gamemaster.

Each character has a number of Hit Points equal to the sum of Strength, Agility and 2 times Endurance (from 4 to 20). See **Effects of Being Hit**, below, for an explanation of Hit Points.

Each character begins the game with a number of Hero Points equal to the sum of Reason and Charm (from 2 to 10). See **Hero Points**, below, for an explanation of Hero Points.

All characters have Lift and Carry limits.  The Lift limit is the maximum amount the character may normally lift to his or her chest level.  This value is 50 pounds per point of Strength.  The Carry limit is the maximum amount the character may carry without being slowed down; this limit is 15 pounds per point of Strength.  Attempting to carry more than this results in ½ movement.

## Attributes

Variant V characters have five attributes, as noted above.  They are described below.

Agility:  This attribute represents dexterity and hand-eye coordination.  It is used in missile combat.

Strength:  Raw, brute physical power.  Determines brawling damage, as well as which melee weapons may be used and their damage.  Also determines lifting and carrying limits.

Endurance:  This attribute indicates the character's general state of health, as well as resistance to poison and disease, and his or her rate of recovery from injury.

Reason:  Intelligence, memory, learning and creating ability.

Charm:  A combination of personality and appearance which may affect reactions to the character.

## Critical Time

When in combat, or performing time-critical actions, the game shifts to Critical Time scale.  In this time scale, actions are resolved in rounds.  One round is about 5 seconds, but may be assumed to vary slightly from time to time.

## Surprise

Whenever it is possible that characters are surprised, each character who might be surprised must make a Surprise roll to avoid it.  Two basic situations exist.

First, two or more characters suddenly see each other.  For example, a character might open a door, only to come face-to-face with an enemy.  In this case, characters on both sides must roll Agility rolls of Fair or better, or be unable to act for one round.

Second, one group of characters may be laying in ambush for another group.  In this case, if the ambushers are concealed the victims must roll to notice them or be surprised as above. (See the appropriate concealment skills to determine the roll needed).  If the ambushers are simply waiting in a room unconcealed, so that it is similar to the face-to-face example above, the victims need to make Agility rolls of Fair or better.  The ambushers do not need to roll if they are prepared for the victims.

Attacks against a surprised opponent are at +5.

## Covered

When all members of one side in a potential combat is surprised, and some or all of the opposing side are not, the surprised side may be **covered**.  To be covered, all members of the "victim" side must be surprised.  The other side must have at least as many unsurprised members as the victim side has total, and all the unsurprised attackers must have usable weapons at the ready.  A weapon is usable in this context if it is a sharp or blunt weapon and the attacker is within close combat range, or if it is a missile weapon or firearm and the attacker is within 5 paces.  Finally, the attacking side must refrain from attacking to allow the victims to recover from surprise.

The covered characters (the victims) will immediately realize they are covered.  Attacks against covered characters are at +5, just as if they were still surprised.  The attacker will normally attempt to control the situation at this point, instructing the victims to lay down their weapons, restraining them, etc.  In this situation, the attackers are effectively holding their initiative (see below).

To escape from being covered, the victims must distract the attackers, getting them to lower their guard.

In some circumstances, a smaller number of attackers may control a larger number of victims; in this case, only some of the victims are "covered" but they may not know exactly which of them is at a disadvantage.  This also works when the victims care more about each other than themselves (such as a husband and wife being mugged by a thug with a knife; only one of them could be attacked, but each would worry about the other).

## Initiative

Each round, every character who may act rolls 1d10 and adds his or her Agility rank to the result (except if a natural 1 is rolled).  Characters act in descending order of Initiative number.  Action is simultaneous on the same Initiative number, so two characters can possibly shoot each other.

Each round the GameMaster will count off Initiative numbers, from 15 down.  Players are responsible for calling out their actions when their "number is up."  A player with a high number may wait until a lower number, but may not "hold" actions from one round to another.

## Combat Actions Possible

The following standard actions are allowed:

> Aim
> Attack
> Dodge
> Move one pace per point of Endurance (Walk)
> Move two paces per point of Endurance (Run)
> Move three paces per point of Endurance (Sprint)

The following combination actions are allowed:

> Walk and Attack
> Walk and Dodge
> Run and Dodge
> Dodge and Attack*

\* Dodge and Attack may only be used when the character has lost the initiative, or has held his or her action until after the opponent has attacked.

In special circumstances, exceptions to the above may be made.


## Rolling for Actions

All action rolls will have result levels assigned to them. The number needed for each result level is as follows:

> Poor        10+
> Fair        15+
> Good        20+
> Very Good   25+

To make a roll, the character rolls 1d20 and adds his or her Attribute Rank in the required attribute, as well as any bonus for Skill. He or she then tells the GameMaster the highest result level that the roll equalled or exceeded. For non-combat actions, the GameMaster will have already determined the minimum result for success. The result level of an attack roll determines how much damage is done; see **Effects of Being Hit**, below.

A natural 20 on the die roll will always result in at least a Fair result.

When attacking with a weapon, the applicable attribute is Agility. For example, a character using a Sword rolls a natural 19, and adds his Agility Rank (4) and Sword Skill (2) to the result. The total is then 25, which is high enough to make a Very Good roll. The damage done is 3 times normal.

## Attack Modifiers

Many different situations may affect a character's combat roll.  Some common ones are listed below:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 50% Cover | -2 | Dusk | -1 |
| 75% Cover | -4 | Night | -3 |
| 90% Cover | -6 | Dark | -5 |
| 50% Concealed | -1 | Punchy | -5 |
| 75% Concealed | -2 | From Behind | +2 |
| 90% Concealed | -3 | Aiming | +5 |
| Victim Surprised | +5 | Long Range | -5 |

## Aiming

By spending an entire round carefully aiming, a character may gain a +5 to hit (as listed above).  This only applies to ranged weapons.  If the character aiming takes any damage, the attempt is spoiled.

## Dodging

To Dodge, the character must make no actions (except movement) during the round.  A Dodging character rolls 1d20 + Agility against any attack, with results as below:

| | |
|---|---|
| Poor or Fail | No Effect |
| Fair or Good | Result Reduced One Level |
| Very Good | Result Reduced Two Levels |

## Range

When shooting or throwing a weapon, roll the attack normally if within the range given for the weapon.  Ranges up to 2 times further result in a -5 penalty on the attack die.

## Effects of Being Hit  (Damage)

There are two kinds of damage in Variant V:  Stunning and Killing.  Killing damage, naturally, can result in the character's death.  Stunning damage tends to knock characters unconscious.  Weapon listings on the Weapons table include which type of damage is done.

When an attack does Killing damage to a character, the number is deducted from the character's Current Hit Points. If the number of Current Hit Points ever reaches 0, the character must roll 1d20 + Endurance on the Kill? column (see table below). If the result is Kill, the character begins losing Endurance ranks, one per round. At Rank 0, the character is dead. If treated by a doctor or a character skilled at first aid, the victim may roll again, at the current Endurance Rank. As long as treatment continues and the character still has Endurance Ranks, the victim may roll once per round. As soon as a Fair or better result is obtained, the character stops losing Endurance Ranks and is unconscious 1d20 rounds.

Stun Points are totalled separately. If the Stun total ever equals or exceeds the Current Hit Points, the character must roll 1d20 + Endurance on the Stun? column. A Remains Awake result does NOT change the character's Stun total; it only allows the character to remain conscious. Each time such a character takes more Stunning or Killing damage, he or she must roll vs. Stun again.

| Result | Stun? | Kill? |
|---|---|---|
| Fail | Unconscious 1d20 rounds | Immediate Kill |
| Poor | Unconscious 1d10 rounds | Kill in 1d20 rounds, unless treated |
| Fair | Unconscious 1d6 rounds | Unconscious 1d20 rounds |
| Good | Remains awake | Unconscious 1d6 rounds |
| Very Good | Remains awake | Remains awake |

Any time an unconscious character awakens, he or she has at least 1 Current Hit Point. Time spent unconscious does not affect the character's Stun total.

A conscious character who has Stun Points equal to or greater than Current Hit Points is Punchy. Punchy characters must roll vs. Stun any time they attempt to run, and they have a penalty to hit of -5.

Whenever a character's Current Hit Points is equal to or less than the character's Endurance, the character is Impaired. Impaired characters take one stun point each time they perform any strenuous action (Attacking in close combat, Dodging, Running, etc.) Also, Impaired characters can not Sprint at all.

Each weapon listed in the Weapons chart has a given Damage rank number. This rank number is the number of points of damage that weapon does on a Fair hit. It is affected as follows for higher results:

| | |
|---|---|
| Poor | ½ x Rank |
| Fair | 1 x Rank |
| Good | 2 x Rank |
| Very Good | 3 x Rank |

For unarmed combat, the Strength of the attacker determines the rank of damage done. This is normally Stun damage.

## Armor

Armor worn by a character will have a Rank. This Armor Rank reduces damage from attacks against the character. For example, a character wearing 3 point armor takes a 5 point hit. He or she actually only takes 2 points.

If the armor rank is equal to or greater than the damage rank, the character still takes 1 point of Stun.

On a Very Good attack against an armored character, the armor is reduced one rank (after damage is applied). This reduction represents damage to the armor, which may be repaired.

## Hero Points

All player characters have Hero Points, which they may use to influence the result of a die roll. Before making any roll, the player may optionally declare intent to spend a given number of Hero Points on the roll. The Hero Points spent are added directly to the 1d20 rolled. Even if the natural die roll would succeed without expending points, the declared points must be spent.

## Recovery

Characters heal 1 point of Killing damage every day, provided that normal sleep is possible. Characters who choose full bedrest regain Hit Points twice a day. Stun points are deducted at a rate of Endurance Rank per hour.

Lost Endurance Ranks recover at a rate of 1 per week. This rate may be doubled if the character is receiving regular hospital-equivalent medical care.

Note that the characters Maximum Hit Points are reduced appropriately when Endurance Ranks are lost (and are regained as the Endurance Ranks are recovered). Current Hit Points may never exceed Maximum Hit Points.

## Melee Weapons

| Weapon | Damage | Type |
|---|---|---|
| Blackjack, Club, Brass Knuckles | Strength + 1 | Stun |
| Razor | Strength - 1 | Kill |
| Knife, Dagger, Hand Axe | Strength | Kill |
| Mace, Hammer, Metal Bar | Strength | Kill |
| Sword, Spear, Axe | Strength + 1 | Kill |
| Whip | Strength | Stun |
| Chain | Strength | Kill |

## Missile Weapons

| Weapon | Range | ROF | Damage | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Long Bow | 300' | 1 | 4 | Kill |
| Short Bow | 200' | 1 | 3 | Kill |
| Crossbow | 200' | 1/3 | 4 | Kill |
| Rock, Thrown | Strength x 5' | 1 | Strength | Stun |
| Hand Axe | Strength x 5' | 1 | Strength | Kill |
| Spear | Strength x 10' | 1 | Strength + 1 | Kill |

### Falling Damage

Characters who suffer falls take 1d6 points of damage per 10' fallen.  The distribution of this damage is based on an Endurance roll, as follows:

**Falling Damage Table**

| Endurance Roll | Damage Distribution |
|---|---|
| Fail | 100% Kill, 0% Stun |
| Poor | 75% Kill, 25% Stun |
| Fair | 50% Kill, 50% Stun |
| Good | 25% Kill, 75% Stun |
| Very Good | 0% Kill, 100% Stun |

The Endurance roll suffers a penalty of -1 per 10' fallen after the first 10' (-0 at 10', -1 at 20', -2 at 30', etc.)

**Skills**

Skills define what a character knows or can do.  Each beginning character is given a number of "slots" to fill with skills.  Some skills require more than one slot (as shown below).

Later in the game, characters may gain new skills by saving and using excess Hero Points (see Advancement in the next section).

There are two major varieties of skills:  **Ranked** and **Non-Ranked**.  Ranked skills may be purchased up to five times, giving a Skill Rank of 1 the first time, and adding one each additional time.  **Non-Ranked** skills generally may be purchased only once, and do not have a specific Skill Rank.

Sometimes a character may need to use a particular skill which he or she does not have (this is especially likely with Knowledge skills).  The GM may rule that another skill the character has is "related" so that the player may roll at -2 on the die (regardless of the rank of the related skill).  This does NOT mean that the related skill is ALWAYS related to the skill in question, but rather only for that roll.

If the character has no related skills, the GameMaster may allow the roll to be made with a **non-proficiency penalty** of -5 on the die.  Alternately, he or she may rule the roll impossible.


**Disadvantages**

Characters may accept a Disadvantage during initial creation.  A Disadvantage gained at the beginning of the game adds one or two slots to the new character's initial slot allocation.  Disadvantages may also be gained later in the game (due to serious injury, etc.) without giving the character any benefits; likewise, an existing Disadvantage may be able to be "bought off" and removed at the GM's discretion.  Multiple disadvantages may only be taken with the GameMaster's approval.

Distinctive Appearance (+1 slot)
    The character has a feature or features (such as a scar) that makes him or her easily recognizable.  This disadvantage applies a -5 penalty on disguise attempts.

Needs Glasses (+1 slot)
    The character must have glasses to see.  This includes astigmatism and nearsightedness, but not farsightedness; farsighted characters are not considered disadvantaged in combat situations.  Not having his or her glasses on applies a -5 penalty to all actions by such a character requiring vision.

Phobia (+1 slot)

The character has a fear (heights, snakes, etc.) which is likely to affect him or her during some adventures.  When confronted with the feared creature or situation, the character has to make a Good reason roll or flee (as described under the Fear peculiar ability).  Combat Sense does not affect this Fear roll.

Physical Limitation (+2 slots)

The character has a limitation such as a lame leg, missing arm or eye, etc. which will affect the character in most adventures.  In some cases, an item (such as a cane) will be required for the character to adventure at all.

Reputation (+1 slot)

The character has such a noteworthy reputation that he or she may be feared or hated by some people as soon as they identify the character.  This may be a good reputation, causing criminals to hate or fear the character, or a bad reputation, affecting law-abiding citizens.


## Peculiar Abilities

Peculiar Abilities may only be gained during initial creation of the character, except under extremely rare conditions as defined by the GM.  No player character may have more than one peculiar ability.  The GameMaster may disallow any or all peculiar abilities in a given campaign.

Combat Sense (2 slots)

A character with Combat Sense cannot be attacked with a "from behind" bonus, as he or she is effective at defending from any angle or position.  The character can still be surprised, but gains +1 on surprise rolls.  A character with Combat Sense gains +5 on rolls vs. the Fear ability (see below).

Fear (2 slots)

The character has an ability that allows him or her to cause fear in other characters.  When this ability is used, a roll vs. Charm is made.  The target characters must make Reason rolls with result levels higher than the Fear result, or flee.  If fleeing is not possible, the targets may fight, but at -5 on all rolls.

Mind Reading (3 slots)

The character can sometimes read the thoughts or feelings of other characters.  A Reason roll of Good or Very Good is required, and at least a minute must be spent focusing on the target.  Even with a Very Good result, the information gained may be unclear or incomplete.

Night Vision (1 slot)

The character can see better than normal in darkness; dusk is treated as daylight, night as dusk, and dark as night.

Photographic Memory (1 slot)

The character can memorize whole pages at the rate of one per minute, retaining the memory for at least a week.

Physical Toughness (2 slots)

The character never takes a penalty for being Punchy.

Second Sight (2 slots)

The character gains +5 on rolls to detect disguised, concealed characters or items, or other things which may be detected by sight. If occult items or effects appear in the campaign, Second Sight may allow them to be identified or recognized.

Speed Reading (1 slot)

The character may read for content at 3 times the rate allowed for normal characters.


## Combat Skills

Automatic Weapons (Ranked, 1 slot)

Characters with this skill gain the Skill Rank as a bonus to hit using submachine guns, machine pistols, or any other portable automatic weapon.

Basic Combat (Non-Ranked, 1 slot)

A character with this skill never has a non-proficiency penalty with any weapon.

Block (Ranked, 1 slot)

The Block skill permits the character to attempt to block (stop) any hand-to-hand attack. After the attack is rolled, the character blocking must roll vs. this Skill (modified by Agility). If the result value is lower that the attacker's result value, the attack has normal effects. If the attacker's and defender's result values are equal, the defender takes ½ normal damage. If the defender's result value is better than the attacker's, the attack is fully blocked (and causes no damage).

This maneuver may be combined with a hand-to-hand attack, but both the Block and the Attack will be at -5 on the roll.

Blunt Weapons (Ranked, 1 slot)

This skill gives the Skill Rank as a bonus to hit using blunt weapons such as clubs, hammers, staves, etc.

Brawling (Ranked, 1 slot)

This skill gives the character the Skill Rank as a bonus to hit when punching.

Bows (Ranked, 1 slot)

This skill gives the character the Skill Rank as a bonus to hit using any sort of long or short bow.

Catch (Ranked, 1 slot)

This skill permits the character to try to catch missiles shot or thrown at him or her.  The result needed varies depending on the type of missile:  Thrown objects require Fair, while arrows and crossbow bolts require Good.  Bullets require Very Good.  If the rolled result value equals the necessary result value, and the object caught is an edged, spiked, or otherwise dangerous object to hold, the catcher takes normal damage.  If the rolled result exceeds the necessary result, the object is caught without harming the catcher (unless it is impossible to hold the item without being injured).

Thus, a Very Good roll is needed to catch an arrow without being injured.  Bullets cannot be caught without harming the catcher.

The catcher may throw the item immediately (in the same action) at -5 to hit.

Dodge (Ranked, 1 slot)

This skill adds it's rank to the Dodge maneuver in the main rules.

Kick (Ranked, 1 slot)

The character may kick without a non-proficiency penalty.  Kicking attacks do Strength  + 1 damage.  Kicks may be combined with Walk or Run movement, at the end of the move only.  They may not follow defensive moves such as Dodge or Block (in the same round).

Killing Strike (Non-Ranked, 2 slots)

A character with this skill may choose to do Killing damage instead of Stunning damage when performing an unarmed (Fist or Kick) attack.  The Rank of the damage is reduced by -1 when a Killing Strike is made; for example, a Fist attack normally does damage equal to Strength in Stun points.  A Fist Killing Strike does Strength - 1 points of Killing damage.

Pistols (Ranked, 1 slot)

Characters with this skill gain the Skill Rank as a bonus to hit using any type of pistol.

Reflexes (Ranked, 2 slots)

This skill allows the character to choose from two optional combat bonuses.  The Reflexes rank may be added to the Initiative die roll (in addition to the Agility score); in this case, the maximum roll is still 15.  Or, the character may attempt to make multiple attacks.  In this case, the player must roll vs. the Reflexes skill.  A Fail result allows the character one attack at -5; Poor or Fair results allow two attacks at -5; Good or Very Good allow two attacks at no penalty.  When multiple attacks are made, normally two different weapons or unarmed modes are used; for instance, the character might shoot two pistols, or attack one opponent with a sword and punch another.  If the same weapon or unarmed mode is used twice in a row, an additional penalty of -5 is applied to the second attack.  The first attack is made on the character's initiative number, and the second no sooner than that number minus 3.

Rifles (Ranked, 1 slot)
    Characters with this skill gain the Skill Rank as a bonus to hit using any type of rifle.

Sharp Weapons (Ranked, 1 slot)
    This skill gives the Skill Rank as a bonus to hit using any edged melee weapon, such as swords, knives, axes, etc.

Specialist (Non-Ranked, 1 slot)
    This skill gives the character +1 Rank using any single, specified melee weapon.  The skill may be taken more than once, for a different weapon each time.  It may also be combined with the regular skill for the weapon; for example, a Sword Specialist with the Sharp Weapons skill at Rank 3 has a total Rank using the Sword of 4.

Throw (Ranked, 1 slot)
    The character may attempt to Throw another character.  Being Thrown results in the victim taking damage equal to the attacker's Strength in Stun points, and the victim is prone.  The victim may take no further action that round, and automatically loses the initiative the next round **if** he or she chooses to get up.
    The attacker must have adequate Strength to perform the Throw, but does not necessarily have to be able to lift the victim.  The Throw maneuver may not be combined with any movement, but may follow a Dodge or Block maneuver **if** the Dodge or Block is fully successful (the thrower is not damaged at all).  This **must** be declared as a compound action!

Thrown Weapons (Ranked, 1 slot)
    This skill gives the character the Skill Rank as a bonus throwing any type of weapon which is designed for throwing.


**Agility Skills**

Agility skills are primarily based on the Agility score.

Animal Riding (Ranked, 1 slot)
    The character can ride one specific type of animal (horse, camel, elephant, etc.)  The type of animal must be specified when the skill is taken; to learn to ride more than one type, the skill must be taken once for each type.

Climbing (Ranked, 1 slot)
    The character can climb trees, walls, etc.  This skill also includes rappeling.  The GameMaster will determine the difficulty level of any climb.  Generally, failure indicates the character has fallen at the halfway point of the climb.  The GameMaster may break long climbs up into several smaller ones of 100' or less each.

Drive Automobile (Ranked, 1 slot)
    This skill permits the user to drive most common cars and small trucks.

Drive Heavy Truck (Ranked, 1 slot, prerequisite:  Drive Automobile)
    The character may drive most large trucks.

Lockpicking (Ranked, 1 slot)
    Given an appropriate lockpick, the character may try to open normal keyed locks.  Using an "impromptu" lockpick (hairpin, etc.) applies a -5 penalty to the roll.

Pick Pockets (Ranked, 1 slot)
    The character can lift items from other character's pockets, purses, etc.  To pick a pocket, the character makes a Skill roll (Agility rank + Pick Pocket rank + 1d20).  On a Failure the item was not taken; on a Poor or better, it was.  The victim must make a Reason roll of a <u>higher</u> result level to notice the theft attempt.

Pilot Airplane (Ranked, 1 slot)
    The character can pilot any type of aircraft.

Ride Motorcycle (Ranked, 1 slot)
    The character knows how to operate a motorcycle, including two-wheeled and three-wheeled models as well as motorcycles with sidecars.

Sailing (Ranked, 1 slot)
    Allows the character to sail and/or command any type of ship or sailboat.  Large ships may require a crew, but crew members do not have to have Sailing skill so long as the captain does.  Unskilled crew members may slow the ship, however.

Skiing (Ranked, 1 slot)
    The character knows how to ski, both downhill and cross-country.

Sleight of Hand (Ranked, 1 slot)
    This skill allows the character to palm items, fooling the eye in various ways.  The chance of success is figured just like the Pick Pockets skill.

Stealth (Ranked, 1 slot)
    When hiding or attempting to move silently, a character must make a Stealth roll.  Other characters attempting to detect the hiding character must make a Reason roll of <u>higher</u> result level than the Stealth result to succeed.

Swimming (Non-Ranked, 1 slot)

The character knows how to swim.  Agility rolls are required to swim in difficult situations, and Endurance rolls may also be required for long periods swimming.

<u>Tightrope Walking</u> (Ranked, 1 slot)

The character can walk tightropes.  This skill works similar to Climbing, in that long distances may be broken up into shorter walks of 50' or less.  Difficulty is Poor for wooden beams, Fair for thick ropes, and Good for wires or thin lines.

**Reason Skills**

A Reason skill normally represents "book learning" and/or study of a subject.

<u>Conceal</u> (Ranked, 1 slot)

This skill permits a character to hide himself or herself, another willing character, or an object.  The player rolls a quality level for this skill.  To detect the hidden character or item, a Reason roll of <u>higher</u> result level is needed.  (Very Good will always find the item, however).

<u>Cryptology</u> (Ranked, 1 slot)

A cryptologist can crack codes.  Individual code methods have various levels of difficulty to crack; the GameMaster will determine this.  Cracking a coded message takes at least one hour, and sometimes much more than that.

<u>Explosives</u> (Ranked, 1 slot)

The character knows how to identify, handle, and use common explosive materials and devices.  Preparing an explosive device takes an hour (on the average).  One roll must be made at the Poor result level or better when preparing the device, or an accident occurs.  When the device is detonated, another roll is made to check the effectiveness of the device.  The effectiveness is read from the damage table, just as if an attack was being made.

<u>Electrician</u> (Ranked, 1 slot)

An electrician can build or repair electrical and electronic devices.  Time to use this skill is figured as given under Mechanic skill.  Non-standard devices may not be invented with this skill.

<u>Engineering</u> (Ranked, 1 slot)

An engineer can design devices, vehicles, and/or buildings.  The plans created by the engineer may be used by an electrician, a mechanic, or other skilled technician to construct the item.  An engineer cannot design items above the current technical level without the assistance of an appropriate scientist.

<u>First Aid</u> (Ranked, 1 slot)

This skill allows the character to treat wounds (from attack or accident). Once per character per battle, 1 to 4 points of Current Hit Points may be restored. The First Aid roll is made, and 1 point is restored for a Poor result, 2 for Fair, 3 for Good, or 4 for Very Good. Five minutes are required for First Aid use on a single character.

Forgery (Ranked, 1 slot)

Given a sample to study, the character may forge documents. When the document is forged, the forger rolls a quality level. To detect a forgery, the character inspecting the forged document must make a Reason roll of higher than the quality level of the document.

Language (Ranked, 1 slot)

For each foreign language a character wishes to learn, he or she must purchase the Language skill. Ranks of a language are applied as follows: 1 point allows very basic conversation; 2 points give fluency. At 4 points, the character has no accent, and at 5 points he or she may attempt to imitate dialects. All characters begin the game with their native language at the same rank as their Reason.

Law (Ranked, 2 slots)

The character has detailed knowledge of the laws of his or her native country, or of international law. Like languages, Law must be taken once for each country it is to apply to (international law being treated as a separate country). To be an effective trial lawyer, other skills (such as Fast Talk/Oratory) may be needed as well.

Literacy (Non-Ranked, 1 slot)

Literacy must be purchased once for each language the character wishes to be literate in. Literacy is a modifier to the language skill it is purchased for. To purchase literacy in a language, the character must already have at least one point in that language.

Mechanic (Ranked, 1 slot)

The character knows how to repair most common internal combustion engines, as well as other parts of cars, trucks, airplanes, motorcycles, etc. Given the tools and parts, any repair can be accomplished. Time to repair a vehicle will be determined by the GameMaster. On a Good result, the mechanic reduces the time to ½; Very Good reduces time to ¼. A Poor result doubles time required (indicating that the mechanic has made a mistake).

Medical (Ranked, 2 slots)

The character is a doctor. He or she can apply First Aid (as given above). If a character with First Aid becomes a doctor, that character can purchase Medical levels for 1 slot until the Medical skill equals the First Aid skill (at which point the First Aid skill is removed). A doctor can also diagnose and treat diseases and poisoning, given the correct medicines.

<u>Meditation</u> (Ranked, 2 slots)

    The character may enter a meditative state similar to sleep.  To do this, the character should be in a quiet and comfortable place.  A roll of Fair is required; if the roll is less than Fair, the character may not try again for at least an hour.  The roll suffers a penalty of -5 if the character is seriously injured (Current Hit Points less than ¼ Maximum Hit Points) or Punchy (-10 if both).  If the area is not quiet and comfortable, another -5 is applied.

    In the meditative state, the character recovers Stun Points at twice the normal rate (Endurance every 30 minutes).  The meditation may last up to the character's Reason Rank in hours, or may be terminated at any time.  If the meditating character is disturbed, he or she wakes up in one round.

<u>Navigation</u> (Ranked, 1 slot)

    The character may attempt to determine his or her location by celestial navigation.  The stars must be visible, and a sextant is normally used.  Without a sextant, the roll is made at -5.  A result of Poor gives the location accurate to about 1000 miles; Fair, 500 miles; Good, 100 miles; Very Good, 50 miles.

<u>Photography</u> (Ranked, 1 slot)

    The character knows how to take pictures, and develop them.  Any character may use a camera, but a photographer will get better results.  Taking pictures does not normally require a Skill check, but one may be made to get better results.  (If no Skill check is made, the quality level of the picture is automatically Fair).  A Skill check is required when developing the picture.  The quality of the final result will be the lower of the two quality levels (taking and developing).  Unskilled Photographers normally take Poor pictures.

<u>Safecracking</u> (Ranked, 1 slot)

    To open a safe without the combination, Safecracking skill is used.  The difficulty of opening a safe will be determined by the GameMaster.  Time required is usually about 5 minutes.

<u>Scientist</u> (Ranked, 2 slots)

    The character has scientific knowledge of one field of science.  The player must choose the scientific field when the skill is selected.  Scientist skill may be purchased for more than one field of science.  Applicable fields include (but are not limited to) Physics, Biology, Electronics, Psychology, Astronomy, Anthropology, Archaeology, and Chemistry.

    Given the reference books and laboratory equipment (as required for the field), the character may conduct research, including inventing new devices or technologies.  An Engineer, Mechanic, or Electrician may be required to assist in the creation of new devices.  (The Scientist can, of course, take these other skills himself).

<u>Skydiving</u> (Non-Ranked, 1 slot)

The character knows how to pack and use parachutes.  A skydiver can assist non-skydivers in making parachute jumps.  A non-skydiver who makes a jump must roll an Agility check of Fair or better upon landing, or suffer 1d10 Stun points.

Surveying (Ranked, 1 slot)

This skill is used when the character wishes to locate a specific geographic location.  A map, transit, and directions are required.  This skill is also used when laying out building sites.

Survival (Ranked, 1 slot)

The character knows how to live off the land, surviving with minimal supplies in hostile terrain.  Survival rolls must be made daily; failure indicates the character has failed to find food and/or water for that day.  A Good result gives two days food and water; a Very Good result gives two days food and at least a weeks' water.


**Charm Skills**

These skills are largely affected by the Charm ability rank.

Disguise (Ranked, 1 slot)

This skill permits the character to attempt to disguise himself or herself.  The GameMaster will determine the exact difficulty of the roll.  In general, a Poor roll will permit the character to conceal his or her identity.  Fair allows an apparent gender or race change.  At Good result level, the character can change both gender and race.  A Very Good result is required to duplicate another person's appearance.

Etiquette (Ranked, 1 slot)

The character knows how to behave in social situations.  The result level of this roll (which usually needs to be made only once) indicates how the character is perceived by others.  Failure on the roll indicates a major mistake.

Fast Talk/Oratory (Ranked, 1 slot)

This skill is used to convince other characters (NPC's) that the idea(s) of the speaker are correct.  The difficulty of this roll will be determined by the GameMaster.  In general, a Poor roll will convince an NPC to do something he or she might do anyway.  A Fair roll will convince the NPC to purchase something the player is selling, if it isn't too expensive. A Good roll will convince the NPC to purchase the item whether it is expensive or not, and a Very Good roll will convince the NPC of something totally against his or her beliefs. This effect may not last long, however, so the Fast Talker should be prepared.

Streetwise (Ranked, 1 slot)

Etiquette for the underworld.  This skill allows the character to interact with unsavory individuals, appearing to be one.  Rolls are made as for Etiquette, above.

## Improving Skills

At the end of each adventure, the GameMaster will award Hero Points to each character according to his or her actions.  Normally, from one to ten such points will be awarded.  Guidlines are given below:

| | |
|---|---|
| Success at the Goal of the Adventure | 1 |
| Exceptional Success | 2 |
| Rescued an NPC (per each) | 1 |
| Captured/Defeated a Common Criminal | 1 |
| Defeated a Major Enemy | *highest rank* |
| Fulfilled a Motivation (per each) | 1 |

Players may define motivations for their characters during character creation.  Normally, no more than two motivations may be declared, and the GameMaster may disallow any he or she does not like.

Whenever a Major Enemy is defeated, each player involved in the defeat gets the Enemy's highest ability rank in Hero Points.  However, for any given adventure, each character gets points for only one Major Enemy defeated (generally the highest ranked).

No more than 3 common criminals and 3 rescued persons may be counted per player character for a single adventure.

In order to improve skills, characters spend Hero Points to purchase Skill Slots.  1 Skill Slot costs 10 Hero Points.  Skill slots may only be purchased and spent between adventures.  Some skills, especially Reason skills, require extensive training to acquire; the GameMaster will decide which may be learned and which may not. (For example, learning First Aid is easy, but Medical skill takes years of training.)