



THE  
MINISTRY  
OF EXTRAMUNDANE AFFAIRS

The Rules

v1.5.1

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*You are a newly recruited field agent employed by the Ministry of Extramundane Affairs:  
the government department responsible for policing Great Britain's shadow society of  
paranormal inhabitants.*

*Unfortunately for you the year is 1941, and there's a war on.*

*In his obsession with the arcane, Himmler has re-founded the Thule Society: a fanatical cult  
willing to use any and all supernatural means to undermine the enemies of the Thousand  
Year Reich. This is stretching the MoEA to breaking point.*

*So far as the public is concerned the threat of invasion has passed now the Wehrmacht have  
turned their attention on Russia, but your war continues, and it is fought with desperate  
secrecy; if the truth should become known, widespread terror would surely follow.*



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# INTRODUCTION

In The Ministry of Extramundane Affairs roleplaying game, you play an agent recently recruited by the secret government department responsible for policing Great Britain's paranormal inhabitants. Under normal circumstances you'd have years of training with experienced operatives. Unfortunately for you, the year is 1941. Mr Hitler is looking hungrily at His Majesty's Blighty and the Ministry is stretched a tad more than the norm, so you're just going to have to learn on the job. Good luck!

## Steady on old chap, what's a roleplaying game?

Roleplaying is collaborative, improvised storytelling. It's like playing one of the viewpoint characters in a live radio play. It's called a game because you'll use rules and dice to add chance, suspense and structure to the story—a story which you will be imagining in your mind's eye throughout. In reality, you will be sitting around a table with your friends munching biscuits. Or cake. Or ~~fresh vegetables~~ chocolate. Or booze.

## Common terms in roleplaying games

If you've never played a roleplaying game (RPG for short), we should probably define some common terms before we continue.

One of the players at the table is the Storyteller, or Gamesmaster, or **GM**. Whilst all the other players portray one of the tale's protagonists, the GM narrates the story. The GM also portrays all the minor characters and antagonists, and will act as a referee when there is an action scene. When you see the term **Player Character** or just **PC** in these rules, it refers specifically to one of the protagonists played by you and your friends. Characters portrayed by the GM may be referred to as **NPCs**, which stands for **non-player character**.

The elements of the story that involve a degree of chance, such as an action scene or a test of a character's knowledge or skills are resolved using ten-sided dice (**D10** for short). **In this game, rolling low is always good, and rolling high is always bad.** You may occasionally be asked to roll a **D5**. Just roll a **D10** and divide your score by 2, rounding up.

## What do I need to play?

The player organising the game should ensure everyone has a character sheet, at least one but preferably 3 or 4 ten-sided dice

(**D10**), a pencil, and some counters to use as Fortune Tokens (explained later). For any action scenes, it will also be helpful to have some summary sheets printed out. They're available at [twobeardgames.com](http://twobeardgames.com).

## What's in this book?

This book contains chapters on [creating a character](#), and [playing the game](#). Guidance for the GM, and a background section describing the world of Ministry, plus a little of the historical context for those unfamiliar with 1940s Britain, are available in separate files, also on [twobeardgames.com](http://twobeardgames.com).

## What do I do next, my good man?

### If you're a player

If you're one of the players, then turn the page to begin creating your agent. Once you've done so you might want to read the chapter on playing the game. The background document, available separately from [twobeardgames.com](http://twobeardgames.com), could arguably be said to contain spoilers for anyone who isn't the GM, since you'll learn more than your newly recruited agent would probably know, but that's for you to decide.

### If you're the Storyteller/GM

If you're the GM, then you pretty much need to read everything! Your players may want to discuss their character ideas with you (particularly if that character has a deep, dark secret that you can abuse for the good of the narrative). You'll definitely want to feel confident(ish) with the rules if you want the first session to have a good pace, and the separate GM and background documents will hopefully provide you with plenty of inspiration for your party's escapades.

Once you've read everything, you'll need to do the following:

- Decide how much [starting XP](#) to give your players.
- Decide on the story you wish to tell and the antagonists the players will face after delving into the [document for GMs](#).
- Help any players needing assistance with character creation.
- Have a lovely cup of tea and mime twirling your moustache (regardless of your gender).

### Blue-outlined boxes

Purely narrative information on the setting and the people within it.

### Black-outlined boxes

Commentary, advice & optional rules.

### Red-outlined boxes

Warnings.



# The rules: a brief primer

It's helpful to have a rough idea of how the game works before moving on to [Character Creation](#). Everything mentioned in this section is explored fully in the [rules](#).

Whenever your character wishes to do something challenging, you will be asked to roll a ten-sided dice (D10 for short) and roll equal to or under one of the [basic stats](#) on your character sheet to succeed. The stat the GM tells you to roll against will vary depending on the situation. If you're trying to **shoot someone**, you'll use your Ranged stat, whereas if you're trying to spot a strange creature lurking *in the woods*, you'll use your *Awareness*.

Most characters have areas of more specific expertise, and this is where your [skills](#) can come in. **Your skills** are listed on your character sheet in the three columns right below *your stats*. *If you have any skills relevant to a test you have to make*, you can pick the best of those skills as a bonus to your stat.

Some scenes—particularly fight scenes—require more rules. This is because multiple characters are trying to act in opposition to each other, so there is a question of who does what first. When such a scene commences, each character gets a [turn](#) consisting of two actions chosen from a list. The GM will work through all the characters in the scene, starting with whoever has the highest Reflex stat. Once everyone's acted, you start a new round of turns, and continue until the action is over.

## **Example: stats combining with skills**

*Alice is playing as Agent Jane Smith. She is trailing a suspect in a busy street, and momentarily loses sight of them. To find the suspect amidst the crowd, she must pass an Awareness test.*

*Ms Smith's Awareness stat is 4, but she also has 2 skill points in investigative journalism which, Alice argues, are relevant here since she's had several years' experience of following elusive businessmen around London. As a result she will pass the test on a roll of 6 or less (4+2=6). Alice rolls a 6, thus finding the suspect again, and so the pursuit is back on.*

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## How does Ministry compare to other RPGs?

### **The setting: almost no prior knowledge needed**

Set in a paranormal version of 1941, gameplay in Ministry usually provides an equal parts mixture of action, investigation and horror. An advantage of Ministry's setting is that it's set in the real world with fantastical elements laid over the top, so anyone with a basic idea of what life was like in the first half of the 20th Century, and specifically Britain during the Second World War, already knows everything they need to. As your character is about to learn, there's just one slight difference: every fairy tale, myth, and horror story have rather more truth to them than the public realise.

### **The rules: learn the basics fast, then find tactical depth**

All RPGs have to strike a balance between detail and abstraction. Ministry is more streamlined than some well-known RPGs, but in places where we think it benefits the story or gameplay we've added some crunch. In combat, for instance, the rules reward doing things that work in real life, such as pinning people with suppressive fire. It's intended to be quick to pick up and intuitive to learn, whilst still having some depths to master over time. Once you've got the hang of things, action scenes should be comparatively fast paced.

### **Combat's a risky business**

Action in the monster-filled world of Ministry is fun but intentionally lethal. Combat will be as frightening as it is exhilarating, largely because the players are not equipped with slabs of plot armour, unlike in many other RPGs. Indeed, there are no hit points in Ministry. If you get shot it is probably going to result in a serious injury, although rest assured it's perfectly possible for a character to survive to the story's end if they are careful. Or lucky. Or both.

### **Few restrictions and no character classes**

Ministry is free of the restrictions on character creation that are a staple of many RPGs. There are no character classes or careers; you are free to create your character exactly as you envisage, be they a jack of all trades or a dedicated specialist.

## Why bother with rules at all?

If you're a new player, you might find yourself wondering why it's necessary to have any rules. Surely, you just say what your character does, and then it happens! Why legislate?

There are several benefits to having a set of rules, foremost of which is dramatic tension. Not knowing the outcome of a dice roll can make a scene far more exciting. Another benefit is that rules give the players leverage. They allow you know what effect your actions will have, and make informed decisions.

They also help you avoid a classic pitfall of collaborative storytelling: that it's easy to forget how difficult and physically demanding things are when you're sitting around a table with your mouth full of biscuits. Difficult tasks will be reflected by more unlikely dice rolls, and as you become familiar with the game's mechanics, you'll get better and better at weighing the odds - much like a government agent would in reality.



# CHARACTER CREATION

## Your Character Sheet

As you make your way through this chapter, you'll want to have your character sheet to hand, and fill it out as you go. You can download and print this sheet from:

<https://www.twobeargames.com/game-downloads>

There is both a PDF version, and also a fillable Excel version which does all the maths for you. Even if you intend to have a printed sheet eventually, you may find it convenient to use the digital version during character creation while you're still playing around with your stats and skills.

## Spending Experience Points (XP)

Soon you'll be choosing your character's *stats*, *skills* and *abilities*, all of which are explained in the coming pages. You buy these with 'experience points' (XP for short). You will also be choosing an Oddness—your defining ability—but unless stated otherwise your Oddness costs no XP.

### Starting XP

It is assumed your agent will start as a new recruit with 200XP. If the GM wishes to run a story about more experienced agents, they can of course increase this number.

### How much to spend?

When creating a new character, the standard approach is to spend roughly two thirds of your points on your *basic stats*, then the remainder on *skills*, although this will vary considerably depending on the sort of character you're envisaging - feel free to experiment! You might also want to take one or two *abilities*, although these are quite specialised; indeed, many characters might not have any *abilities* at all.

### How much XP do stats and skills cost?

- Raising a stat to the next rank costs two times the rank it's being raised to.
- Raising a skill to the next rank costs the same as the rank it's being raised to.

### Improving stats

Stat level:	1	2	3	4	5
XP cost of buying this individual level:	2	4	6	8	10
Total XP spent to get to this level:	2	6	12	20	30

### Improving skills

Skill level:	1	2	3	4	5
XP cost of buying this individual level:	1	2	3	4	5
Total XP spent to get to this level:	1	3	6	10	15



# Your Oddness

It is well understood that anyone suitable for service in the field division of the Ministry is going to be, at a minimum, a little odd. Many if not most Ministry agents were sought out and recruited specifically because they possess strange abilities that will be useful for policing the extramundane world, and having been recruited, are then given the training needed to make them effective field agents. At least, that's how it works in peacetime.

## The player's first step

Your first port of call during character creation is to pick an Oddness for your character. It is assumed that your Oddness will be the seed from which the rest of your character concept sprouts, but you can always come back to this section later if you wish.

Most of these Oddnesses come with unique rules. If you're taking your first pass at the book, and don't know the rules all that well, don't worry about them for now - just pick a concept you like the sound of!

## Does everyone know I'm weird?

Players should feel free to keep their Oddness a secret from other players - if they want a dark, shameful secret for example; only they and the storyteller need know. Of course, most characters will positively revel in their Oddness!

## Can I have multiple Oddnesses?

If you like! Having one Oddness costs nothing, and each *additional* Oddness costs 20XP. It is assumed that most characters will just have the one, as these abilities are quite rare in the general population; having two would be a rare person indeed.

## Can I develop a touch of oddness later on?

Anything's possible. By default, it's assumed that your Oddness is something innate to you, and you've always had it - hence choosing it during character creation. Certainly Oddnesses are

not things which can be taught or learned; one either has them or one does not. If you want to develop a new Oddness during the story, perhaps because you've been exposed to something strange or some other bizarre occurrence, then discuss your idea with your GM and pay the 20XP to gain the new Oddness.

## Special rules? Gadzooks!

Many Oddnesses come with their own special rules. Don't worry too much about these rules if you're taking your first pass at character creation - the important thing is to pick an Oddness that excites you!

## Upgrade your Oddness with Skill points

Some Oddnesses are an innate ability, but others require a stat test to activate. If you have one of these Oddnesses, you can spend XP to gain Skill points in them. Just write the name of your Oddness in one of the Skill boxes in your character sheet and purchase Skill points in it. These points will make any Stat tests you make with this Oddness easier.

## Being Downright Odd

The most extreme Oddnesses are in their own little corner at the end of this section, and are covered in depth at the end of the book. They are more complex, require a greater XP investment, and greater mastery of the game's rules to get the most out of them. As such they are recommended for experienced players who really want something to sink their teeth into.

## Inventing your own Oddness

It should be noted that the Oddnesses in this book are not an exhaustive list but rather a guide. Players and storytellers are encouraged to create an appropriate Oddness if they wish. Making up your own rules for a bespoke Oddness might be more tricky if this is your first time playing the game, so make sure you discuss any such rules at length with your GM, or maybe note down the concept and use it for another character later on.



## ODDNESSES

### Apportation

KEY STAT: SORCERY

*In humans, the ability to teleport is vanishingly rare—practically non-existent—but a very small number of humans have teleportation's lesser cousin Apportation: the ability to teleport nearby objects from their resting place into your hand.*

Pass a Sorcery test to teleport any small object you can see into your open palm. Increases in distance and mass make things much harder; a small, light object such as a tennis ball within a metre would be easy. A brick would be harder, conferring a -1 penalty to your Sorcery, and an ingot would be -3. For every extra metre of distance, your Sorcery suffers a further -1 penalty, so apporting an ingot from four metres away would involve a -6 penalty. This is effectively a spell; see the section on [casting and miscasting spells](#) in the Downright Odd chapter.

### Astral Projection

KEY STATS: SORCERY AND PHYSIQUE

*You have the ability to separate your spirit from your body and move through the world as an invisible ghost. Such freedom, however, comes with terrible risks...*

Your spirit can leave your body at will. Since your body is not breathing, you can only maintain projection for a number of actions equal to your Physique + Cardio, after which your body starts to shut down. You must return to your body within this time; if not, you wake up having suffered an injury to the body for each turn you were absent.

Certain individuals and creatures, particularly those with [The Sight](#), will be able to see you. Some esoteric wards and weapons may even be able to trap or harm your spirit form. If attacked in spirit form by someone who can perceive you, then you defend yourself using your normal stats except that you treat your Sorcery as your Physique stat. Since you are not corporeal, mundane weapons will have no effect on you. If your body is moved or harmed while you are out of it, you will be none the wiser while in spirit form (unless you're watching/hearing it happen!). As a non-corporeal entity, you can move through solid objects at will. Walls, bare rock, anything. While inside solid objects you won't be able to see anything, and any hearing-based Awareness tests suffer a -4 modifier.

### Aura Reading

KEY STAT: AWARENESS

*Most people can get a "vibe" from people. To you, those "vibes" are the weakest understanding of a person's aura. With a little concentration, a person's feelings and maybe even their truthfulness is clear to you. Most perceive auras as colours although others might hear musical tones or even smells. Regardless, it is significantly easier for you to determine another person's mood.*

A successful Awareness test can be used to read a person's primary emotion for a number of minutes equal to your margin of success. A stunning success will also mean you're aware whenever they're lying.

### Clairvoyance/Remote Viewing

KEY STAT: SORCERY

*Through crystal balls, mirrors or other methods you can peer upon far off places and, by glimpsing a few seconds of moving image, glean a fleeting impression of what is going on there. Only the most powerful Clairvoyants, their brains enhanced with drugs and magical talismans, can peer from country to country. Most struggle to see beyond the building they are in.*

To perform a remote viewing, pick a subject, be it a person or a place. However you like to perform your ritual, it will take 15 minutes. At the end of that time, take a Sorcery test, suffering a -1 penalty for every full mile of distance to the target. A dreadful failure will trigger a miscast - see the section on [casting and miscasting spells](#) in the Arcane chapter.

- For viewing a place, having previously been to the location you are trying to view provides a +1 bonus, as does possessing a token from that area (e.g. a chip of brickwork).
- For viewing a person, having previously touched the person you are trying to view provides a +1 bonus, as does possessing a token from that person (e.g. a strand of hair).
- Note that if the target area is protected by magical means, such as a ritual circle, wards, or whatever else, then this may confer further penalties.



## Levitation

KEY STAT: SORCERY

*You have an innate ability with a very specific form of Evocation: Levitation. You can slowly and with considerable effort raise yourself off the ground and hold yourself there. Those with the gift of levitation have also been known to break a fall with it, or at least to lessen the impact.*

To start levitating you must pass a Sorcery test. If successful, you can raise yourself up to your height in a single turn. This casting lasts until the end of your next turn, and must be recast at the start of every turn if you wish to maintain it. If you no longer wish to maintain it, or if you fail to recast it, you drop rapidly but safely to the ground and continue with your turn as normal. A dreadful failure on the Sorcery test will trigger a miscast - see the section on [casting and miscasting spells](#) in the Arcane chapter.

- You can increase your height each turn on another successful casting but each casting is cumulative for the purposes of maintaining the spell (three times your height will reduce your Sorcery by 3 for example). Unfortunately this ability only provides an upward force; if you wish to move laterally, you'll have to pull yourself along on something.
- You can also use levitation to break a fall. Take a Sorcery test if/when you fall from a height, and if successful, you land safely. Again, a dreadful failure on this Sorcery test will trigger a miscast.
- If you attempt to levitate while carrying an object as heavy as a person, the difficulty of the Sorcery test is increased by 3. If the person is particularly heavy or particularly light, the GM may decide to modify this penalty.

## Medium

KEY STAT: SORCERY

*You have the ability to call spirits to you and ask them three simple questions. Most Mediums use the séance model of contacting the spirit world, receiving knocks for yes or no, whilst others use a Ouija-style board. Without knowing the name of the spirit you are simply calling any available.*

*There is a way to gain more information than the traditional three questions from the séance: voluntary possession. You can invite the spirit in. Once it's in, however, the spirit may be a little... reluctant to leave.*

A successful Sorcery test is required to attract a spirit. You can ask three questions, to which the GM will answer yes or no (the manner in which they say 'yes' or 'no' will depend on your séance style - it might be knocking on the table, using a Ouija board, or something else). If you wish to ask more open questions, you can allow a spirit to possess you. To maintain the possession you must pass a Sorcery test each turn with a +2 modifier. Should you fail, the spirit flees and a miscast is triggered (see the miscast table on page 60). If you are not following a turn sequence, take the Sorcery test every 10 seconds.

Spirits can be reluctant to leave a body once they've possessed someone. If you roll a natural 10 for any of your Sorcery tests while possessed, you no longer have to test to maintain the séance. Instead, you may test your Sorcery at -2 every 10 seconds to excise it!

## Night Vision

*An ability to see in the dark can be granted in a number of ways. You might have strange, otherworldly eyes you often conceal behind tinted glasses, or perhaps you are somehow capable of echolocation. This ability can be a by-product of unusual heritage, and Ministry will want to know if you were born with this ability, or if you acquired it somehow.*

Unless in a strange environment with *absolutely* no light, you can see clearly.

## Only Somewhat Odd

*In the Ministry, being only a bit weird is rather odd in itself! This character has no supernatural abilities, heritage or appearance. Of course, this being the Ministry, a normal human must be quite exceptional to have been recruited.*

If you take *only* this one Oddness during character creation you gain an extra 20XP. Otherwise, this Oddness has no effect. There are the number of reasons a 'Norm' or 'Norma' might have come to the attention of the Ministry, and you should wrap this into your backstory. Here are some examples to get you going:

- **Famous Forebears:** Unbeknownst to you, someone in your ancestry was a big deal in the supernatural law enforcement world, and the Ministry have secretly been keeping tabs on your family ever since. They seem to think you have potential to fill the shoes of your ancestor.
- **Stared into the Abyss:** you had a close encounter with the supernatural and managed to retain your wits. Where most would run, you grimly turned and fought. This should probably be reflected by making Courage one of your higher stats! And what was it you encountered? Whatever it was would probably have been the cause of your recruitment.



## Psychometry/Retrocognition

### KEY STAT: AWARENESS

*Psychometric individuals have the ability to sense elements of an object's history from touch. This usually takes the form of a few swift images or sensations. Characters with psychometry tend to wear gloves and long clothing at all times as even casual contact with objects can set off unwelcome and disorientating visions. This ability rarely works with people; the mass and mess of experience that a person carries with them at all times is too muddled for psychometrics, although a person steeped in a very dark deed or nature may trigger a psychometric response.*

*Through expanding their focus with deep meditation and concentration, a psychometric character can attempt a phenomenon called Retrocognition: peering backwards through time in a particular place. Be aware that once seen, particularly as clearly as psychometric visions can be, a thing cannot be easily unseen...*

Pass an Awareness test while touching an object to witness a few swift images or sensations hinting at its history. The more you pass by, the more detail you will glean.

Alternatively, if you have hours to spare, you can attempt Retrocognition. By entering a meditative state, you can peer backwards through time at the place you're sitting in. Typically you will witness the most emotionally intense events that occurred in the place's history. This will take a number of hours equal to your base Awareness stat, minus your margin of success. You can only roll for each place once - either you can read a place, or you can't.

## Precognition

### KEY STAT: REFLEXES

*Often referred to as a 'sixth sense,' precognition is a split-second flash of warning of impending danger.*

Precognition rules: before ranged or melee-based stealth attacks are resolved on you or a target within arm's reach of you, the GM will ask you to take a Reflex test. If passed, you may either evade or shove another character aside, conferring a -2 penalty for that attack to hit. Additionally, at the start of a Round, you can take a Reflex test, adding any skill points in Combat Awareness (or similar). If passed, you may take one of your two actions at any point before or after anyone else's actions. If you pass the test, you do not have to declare when you will take the action - just say so at the opportune moment. Your second action can be taken when it's your turn as normal.

## Shapechanger

### KEY STAT: PHYSIQUE

*You are human in mind, but not in body: a mannequin-looking creature with precious little in the way of pigment or definition. Only blank white eyes, a slit mouth and nostrils can be seen in the face. No-one is sure how natural shapechangers came about and it is rare that they survive their early life; superstition, fear or revulsion tended to lead to their deaths. Those that live, though, soon learn they have the ability to adjust their appearance across the spectrum of the human genome, altering hair length, skin colour, and even bone length to some degree.*

*By the time you reached adulthood, you had learned that by ingesting the genetic material of another person, most commonly their hair or blood, you can assume their appearance. Research is ongoing as to whether this strange ability offers some hint as to how shapeshifters come into being, but the key point is that a well-trained shapeshifter has obvious uses when it comes to infiltration, and so you've found yourself being scooped up by the Ministry.*

Given approximately one minute you are able to change shape, either from neutral to a person, or from one person to another. To change into a specific person, you must ingest some of their genetic material. Hair or blood is fine for this purpose. This works automatically - no stat test needed! To change to another person, simply ingest some of their material instead. The process is not autonomic; if you accidentally ingest genetic material, you won't involuntarily start changing.

Beware: when you fall asleep, your appearance will revert to its natural blank state over the course of a minute. When you wake, you can reassume the appearance of the last person whose genetic material you consumed. If you become intoxicated, you need to pass a Physique test to retain your shape accurately. You can take skill points in Shapechanging to make such tests easier.

Note that assuming someone's appearance really is skin deep; your stats, skills and abilities are unaffected. You won't know what they know, and assuming their shape doesn't give you their speech patterns or body language. You are not becoming that person, you are merely changing your shape and pigment. Rather like an octopus, but hopefully with better diction.



## The Sight

*You see what is actually there rather than filling the world with comforting shadows. Those afflicted with The Sight can see through glamours and illusions, often making them seem mad. They can genuinely see the brownies in the house, the faeries in the garden and the gremlins dismantling that plane.*

The Sight works automatically, and ignores the effect of any spell, glamour or other effect that magically alters or conceals something's true appearance. The GM may well entertain themselves sending secret descriptions to characters with the Sight detailing what new horror they're witnessing.

Those with the Sight are otherwise affected by magic just like anyone else, so have no innate defence against spell effects such as an Evocationist using Photon Deflection (which literally changes where the Photons are travelling, rather than creating an illusion).

The ability to see through glamours will, on occasion, mean that for this character, entities they encounter may meet the criteria for being *Monstrous* as defined in the section covering [Monstrous Beings](#).

## Water Breathing

*Whether it's something strange in your ancestry, or the result of bizarre experimentation, you are able to extract oxygen from water as easily as breathing air. During character creation, you should decide how this ability works for your character. Do you have to flood your lungs? Do you have to somehow regurgitate all the water when you get back in the air? Do you have gills between your ribs? And were you born with them, or has someone done something unnatural to you?*

You can breathe in fresh and saltwater. If the water is full of problematic chemicals (crude oil, for instance) then you'll have just as grand a time as any other marine life would.

## DOWNRIGHT ODD

*Individuals blessed/cursed with these more extreme Oddnesses are rare indeed, so whilst it's possible to have multiple Oddnesses, **you can only ever have one Oddness from this section**. They are **significantly more complex** than the others, and are designed for seasoned players who want something extra to sink their teeth into. They are powerful, but require a significant investment in ancillary skills and abilities to get the most out of them.*

### Divine Instrument

KEY STATS: INFLUENCE AND COURAGE

*Being an instrument of the Divine is more than just adhering to the tenets of your chosen religion. Your faith is such that your patron deity seems to work through you, allowing you to perform miracles. This might allow you to remain calm in horrifying situations, to inspire others, and to repel the unholy. It might also leave you with something of a messiah complex, and a tendency to pick up admiring followers whether you want them or not.*

Being a divine instrument allows you to acquire a range of bizarre abilities, outlined in their own [appendix on Divine Instruments](#). Should you ever do something contrary to the ethos of your patron deity, you immediately lose all of the associated abilities. If you want to get them back, you'll have to earn them over time!

### Evocationist

KEY STAT: SORCERY

*For as long as you can remember, strange phenomena have manifested around you. Your drink sometimes became refreshingly cool under the summer sun, and on several occasions people have claimed you gave them an electric shock. This is all because you are a latent evocationist, an individual with the ability to manipulate your environment via some as-yet unexplained interaction between your nervous system and the world around you. Until you are trained, such bizarre occurrences will continue whether you want them to or not.*

If you wish to begin the game as a trained evocationist, turn to the section on [the Arcane](#), where all the rules and upgrades you need are discussed in detail.

### Neuromancer

KEY STAT: SORCERY

*You may have had odd moments throughout your early life: instances of astonishing intuition, or perhaps a singular talent for hide and seek. You may have an uncanny knack for spotting a lie, and people have sometimes blurted out quite personal information when you've asked them how they are. You are the cause of these phenomena because you are a nascent neuromancer, and such occurrences will continue until you can find someone to train you.*

If you wish to begin the game as a trained neuromancer with the ability to manipulate the minds of others, you will already have spent some time at one of the Ministry's facilities. Turn to [the Arcane section](#), where all the rules and upgrades you need are discussed in detail.



# Character Concept

This is your characterisation at its most basic level. If you can boil your character down to a few key elements, portraying them gets a lot easier! Since most memorable protagonists are both brilliant and flawed, it can be helpful to think of your character concept as containing three bits of information: their role, their best quality, and their worst flaw.

The character concept would usually be one of the first things you come up with, but weirdly, it might be the last; sometimes

you have to get to know a character by writing their background to get a sense of their key traits.

Your answers to the three elements of your concept should only be one or two words. The role sums up their main area of expertise, and the quality and flaw should both be something psychological. Some examples are given below:

## Macbeth

Role: warrior

Quality: brave

Flaw: power hungry

## King Lear

Role: monarch

Quality: generous

Flaw: naïve, vain

## Iago

Role: soldier

Quality: silver-tongued

Flaw: jealous

## Agent Tom Blackwell

Role: academic

Quality: inquisitive

Flaw: egotistical

## Agent Agatha Hamilton

Role: all-rounder

Quality: decisive

Flaw: narrow-minded

## Agent Harriet Smythe

Role: hunter

Quality: unflappable

Flaw: overly competitive

## Examples of Qualities

Altruistic  
Assertive  
Authentic  
Brave  
Cheerful  
Confident  
Congenial  
Considerate

Courteous  
Decisive  
Disciplined  
Earnest  
Easygoing  
Empathetic  
Energetic  
Ethical

Forgiving  
Generous  
Helpful  
Honest  
Honourable  
Humble  
Humorous  
Idealistic

Inquisitive  
Meticulous  
Modest  
Nonchalant  
Open-minded  
Optimistic  
Outgoing  
Polite

Pragmatic  
Responsible  
Romantic  
Serious  
Shrewd  
Suave  
Thorough  
Trusting

## Examples of Flaws

Anxious  
Arrogant  
Boastful  
Blunt  
Conformist  
Cynical  
Depressed  
Dishonest

Envious  
Gloomy  
Hard-hearted  
Insecure  
Immature  
Impatient  
Indecisive  
Jealous

Lazy  
Materialistic  
Naïve  
Narrow-minded  
Opinionated  
Overly ambitious  
Overly competitive  
Paranoid

Pretentious  
Rash  
Rebellious  
Restless  
Selfish  
Self-righteous  
Short-tempered  
Shy

Stern  
Submissive  
Suspicious  
Tactless  
Uninquisitive  
Unreliable  
Vain  
Vengeful

## Examples of Roles

Academic, all-rounder, detective, hunter, doctor, soldier, spy.

See the [pre-built character archetypes](#) for more specific examples.



# Character Background

It's time to add meat to the bones of your character concept. There are a few parts to this section: first, some basic details, and then some slightly more involved questions designed to prompt some solid ideas about the character's past.

You can scribble your answers to these questions anywhere - some of the character sheets available for this game provide space, whereas some people might prefer to scrawl or type their answers on an entirely unrelated piece of paper which they then hide from their fellow gamers (presumably to conceal their character's sordid past, or perhaps because they're just shy about their writing!).

It's entirely up to you as to how long you wish to spend on this section; some players will thump out character concepts like bombs falling out of a brand new Avro Lancaster, whilst others enjoy spending days mulling over all the little details that bring a character to life.

## A note on class

The Ministry will employ sterling chaps and accomplished womenfolk from any walk of life. The major value of your class is the ability to fit into that strata of society. Just as a former miner would have trouble "faking it" undercover at the Reform Club, Sir Cuthbert will have difficulty imitating the cultural touchstones of a working man's club in Woking.

## The question of gender, ethnicity & sexuality

Modern British society still has improvements to make when it comes to gender, ethnicity and sexuality, and things were considerably worse in the 1940s. Whilst we assume that the people running the Ministry are looking for such niche skills that they don't care about these things, there is a question of how to approach such issues with regards to the wider in-game world. It is up to you as a group of players to decide if you wish to be historically accurate or not; there are arguments in favour of both approaches.

## The basics

- Name
- Former profession(s)
- Date of birth
- Nationality
- Education (primary/secondary/higher)
- Class

## The details

1. **Looks.** Describe your character's physical appearance - their face, their build, their ethnicity, how healthy they are, and the extent to which they might be considered physically attractive.
2. **Childhood.** Where did they grow up, and what was it like?
3. **Demeanour.** How do they behave? How do they speak?
4. **Family life.** Describe their family - where are they? What is their relationship like?
5. **Romance.** Do they have a significant other? If so, who are they? Do they have any children?
6. **Recruitment.** How did they come to the MoEA's attention? Why were they invited to join?
7. **High and low points.** What has been their greatest achievement to date? And their greatest failure?
8. **Secrets.** What is their secret shame? Is it a secret they're keeping for someone else's benefit?
9. **Insecurities.** What makes them defensive? What are they self-conscious about, and is it just in their imagination?
10. **Responses.** What makes them happy? Excited? Angry? Embarrassed? Scared? Note: the question of fear is an important one, and it's best to make your answer more specific than something like 'a fear of failure.' Answers might include phobias, insecurities, or something relating to a past trauma.
11. **Beliefs.** Are they religious? What do they believe in? Who would they vote for in a general election?
12. **Perceptions.** How do others perceive the character? How does the character think they are perceived? And finally, how would they like to be perceived?



# Basic Stats

Your character sheet has a stat line on it. Here's an example:

RANGED	MELEE	REFLEXES	SORCERY	PHYSIQUE	KNOWLEDGE	INFLUENCE	AWARENESS	COURAGE
4	2	3	0	4	3	5	4	2

## WHAT EACH STAT REPRESENTS

**Ranged** is a character's aptitude with ranged weapons. This will often be combined with your skill points in the firearm you're using.

**Melee** is a term for hand-to-hand combat, and thus a character's Melee stat is a measure of their talent for fisticuffs, fencing, and that sort of thing. Like Ranged, this is often modified by your skill with a particular weapon.

**Reflexes** are the speed of your reactions. It's generally used to avoid danger, and determines when you get a turn in action scenes.

**Sorcery** is a character's ability to project or resist magic. For most people, this stat will be 0.

**Physique** is used when performing physically demanding tasks like climbing, carrying a fallen comrade, fighting in hand-to-hand combat, or surviving a serious injury. This will most often be combined with physical skills like your cardiovascular health or your strength training.

**Knowledge** represents a character's general knowledge and education (but not necessarily their intelligence; it is assumed that a character's level of intelligence is mostly revealed by your portrayal of them).

**Influence** measures a character's persuasiveness. Given the nature of the Ministry's work, this will often be used when you're working undercover and lying about who you are, or equally when you're trying to convince someone that they just saw a perfectly normal weather balloon.

**Awareness** is your ability to see, hear or otherwise perceive things around you. You might use it to spot someone in a crowd, spot a face in a distant window, hear footsteps behind you, or spot something out of place at a crime scene.

**Courage** is a character's ability to ignore perfectly sensible survival instincts. It is therefore the stat of choice for those who want to do something other than cowering behind cover in gunfights and running away when they see a monster.

## WHAT ARE STATS?

Stats are a way of expressing a character's aptitude in general areas when *under stress*. Having 5 points in a Stat indicates an exceptionally talented person (Knowledge 5 would mean having a 50% chance of knowing absolutely anything). Conversely, someone with 1 point is comically rubbish. Most characters are somewhere in between! Here is what each Stat level represents:

Stat level 1:	Uncommonly useless
Stat level 2:	Untalented
Stat level 3:	Average
Stat level 4:	Talented or widely experienced
Stat level 5:	Jack of pretty much every trade

Of course, having a knowledge stat of 1 doesn't mean someone will struggle to remember their own name - stats are only tested when something is challenging, or has to be done quickly!

### Why do they only go up to 5?

Stats are only half the picture. Skills are the other half, and are added to your Stats to make a total out of 10.

### How high should my Stats be?

That depends on the sort of person you are. The more points you spend on Stats, the more of a generalist you are. The more points you spend on Skills, the more of a specialist you are.

### A word of warning on taking low Stats

It's wise to avoid having any Stats at a 1 or a 2 unless you want them to be a specific area of weakness, as low stats are very hard to overcome in play.

The only exception to this is Sorcery, which for most people will be 0 unless they are somehow sensitive to magic.

Of course you may want your character to start off being rubbish in a particular area and for them to improve over time. That's absolutely fine, assuming that you're happy for your character to be a liability in certain contexts! After all, from a narrative perspective, some of the most interesting things happen when characters fail.



## YOUR STARTING STATS

You can spend as much of your starting XP on your stats as you like; about two thirds is a good rule of thumb. There are several ways of doing this, as described on this page. Remember, raising a stat to the next level costs double that in XP, as explained in the earlier section on [Spending Experience Points](#).

### Option 1: total freedom

Download the digital character sheet from [www.twobeardgames.com](http://www.twobeardgames.com) and adjust your Stats until you're happy.

### Option 2: use a stat array

This option is ideal if you're keeping things simple, so long as your character meets the following criteria:

- You only have one Oddness
- You *aren't* Downright Odd
- Your Oddness doesn't rely on the Sorcery stat
- You don't want to start out with any Abilities

If your character doesn't meet those criteria, we recommend using Method 1 as it's far more flexible! If you *do* meet those criteria, then you can spend 132XP and then assign each of the following numbers to a stat of your choice. The 0 is for your Sorcery stat; you probably don't want to automatically fail any rolls in the other areas!

0, 2, 3, 3, 3, 4, 4, 4, 5

### Option 3: use a pre-built character archetype

These are provided [at the end of the character creation chapter](#). They can be used either as a starting point for your character, or as a way to get playing as quickly as possible without actually using one of the premade characters.

### Upgrading your stats later on

You can use unspent XP to upgrade your stats at any time during, before or after a session. You are trusted to do so at a time that feels appropriate to the narrative - maybe you just aced a roll, and fancy bumping that stat up; maybe you just did some in-fiction training.



# Skills

Now that you've sorted your basic stats, it's time to breathe a little more life into your character sheet. This is where skills come in. These are specific areas where your character knows more than other people, and reading a character's list of skills could probably tell you why they're on the Ministry's payroll.

Examples of skills are provided overleaf; this page explains how to acquire and use them.

## How do they work?

When the GM asks you to take a [stat test](#), you can use one of your skills as a bonus to your stat if it's contextually relevant. Skills provide a bonus of up to 5 which is applied before any modifiers to your roll.

Any skill can be combined with any stat if it makes sense, so you might use your skill in Rifles to improve your accuracy when making a Ranged test with a rifle, or with your Melee stat when using its bayonet, or in combination with your Knowledge to gauge whether someone else is in range, or in combination with your Influence to intimidate someone while wielding said weapon.

## How many skills can I have?

You can pick any number of skills in any combination.

## What do the skill levels represent?

Skill level 1 represents someone with enough basic training to have some aptitude in the field; the sort of person who's had a few days' first aid training. If they built it up to level 4, they would have become an extremely reliable paramedic (assuming they've got a somewhat serviceable Knowledge stat, that is!). Level 5 in an academic subject would represent an expert at the forefront of their field.

## Making up your own skills

If the skills list in this book doesn't contain something you think your character would know about, you are encouraged to make it up! Some judgement is required here. It's best to discuss this with your GM, and if you can't decide, you can always just stick with the skills listed in this book.

## YOUR STARTING SKILLS

You can spend as much of your starting XP on skills as you like. About a third is a good rule of thumb during creation. There are several ways to buy skills during character creation, depending on how deep you want to go:

### Option 1: total freedom

Download the digital character sheet from [www.twobeardgames.com](http://www.twobeardgames.com) and adjust your Stats until you're happy.

### Option 2: use a skill array

This option is ideal if you're keeping things simpler but would still like some flexibility. This method is best suited to characters who meet the following criteria:

- You only have one Oddness
- You *aren't* Downright Odd
- You don't want to start out with any Abilities

If you *do* meet those criteria, then you can spend 68XP and then assign the numbers below to any 13 skills chosen from the list on the following pages. Combined with the 132XP stat array, this comes to exactly 200XP - perfect for a new agent.

1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3, 3, 4, 4, 4

### Option 3: use a pre-built character archetype

These are provided [at the end of the character creation chapter](#). They can be used either as a starting point for your character, or as a way to get playing as quickly as possible without actually using one of the premade characters.

## UPGRADING YOUR SKILLS LATER ON

You can use unspent XP to upgrade your skills at any time during, before or after a session. You are trusted to do so at a time that feels appropriate to the narrative - maybe you just aced a roll, and fancy bumping that stat up; maybe you just did some in-fiction training.



## MR PILGRIM'S TOP SKILL PICKS

Any skill marked in red is likely to see frequent use in most stories due to its outstanding utility for secret agents, or the way it's called out in the rules. That doesn't mean you have to take it to be a good character - having some vulnerabilities makes for more interesting stories - but you should at the least know that you have specifically chosen to create a character who will be disadvantaged in a particular area.

## EXAMPLES OF COMBAT SKILLS

### Weapon skills

Being skilled in a type of weaponry improves your chances of passing Ranged and/or Melee tests, and also makes you better at deducing what weapons were used to commit particular crimes. Looking like you know how to handle a weapon might also be used to intimidate or reassure people with your Influence.

- Machine guns
- Pistols
- Rifles
- Other ranged weapon ( )
- Knives
- Submachine guns
- Swords
- Unarmed combat
- Other melee weapon ( )

### Explosives

This skill determines your accuracy with grenades, and can also be used to set traps, make bombs, or set demolition charges.

### Combat awareness

You know to check your corners and observe what's going on around you even in chaotic situations. Used in combination with your Reflexes to help determine whether you get a turn before other characters, and with your Awareness to detect your foes.

### Combat discipline

A veteran stays calm and keep a stiff upper lip. You know when to take cover, and when to move. Among other things, used with Courage to avoid getting pinned down by gunfire, or to face down intimidating entities.

### Officer Training

This is most commonly used with your Knowledge or Awareness stats to recall which tactics might be appropriate in certain combat situations, or to show an understanding of the logistics, politics and manoeuvres involved in grand strategy. You might also use it when trying to recall the more obscure customs of His Majesty's various armed forces.

## EXAMPLES OF INFILTRATION & ESPIONAGE SKILLS

### Concealment

Used with Knowledge and/or Awareness to know how to hide people and objects from easy visual detection. Can also be used to detect hidden traps and foes.

### Forge official documents

Use with Knowledge to take the time to create official-looking forgeries - and to spot a fake.

### Locksmith

Use with Awareness to listen and feel your way with a pick through the tumblers of a lock.

### Mimic handwriting

Create and detect false handwriting using your Knowledge and Awareness stats.

### Cryptography

The production of and breaking of codes and ciphers using your Knowledge.

### Sleight of hand

Delicate and dextrous hand movements (e.g. magic tricks or pickpocketing). Used with your Reflexes.

### Spycraft

Brush passes, dead drops, spotting a tail, invisible ink. Known as 'tradecraft' by pros, and generally reliant on your Knowledge or Awareness.

### Silent movement

Shift your weight carefully and use your Awareness to avoid stepping on anything that might make a sound.



## EXAMPLES OF INVESTIGATION SKILLS

### Archaeology & antiquities

Use your Knowledge to distinguish between fakes and genuine artefacts, and distinguish between typical cultural output and altogether stranger items.

### Forensics

Often used with your Knowledge and Awareness to find and examine clues in crime scenes.

### Interrogation

Use Influence, Courage and Knowledge to resist and carry out interrogations.

### Library Science

This is used with your Knowledge to quickly find information in an archive, significantly speeding up investigations into the mundane and extramundane alike.

### Criminology

Often used in conjunction with Knowledge to understand the psychology and methods behind criminal activity.

### Linguist

You have studied the way in which languages are constructed. Given time you can identify the root elements of an unfamiliar language - faster if there is a Rosetta Stone-style primer - and begin to translate it by combining this with your Knowledge stat.

### Local knowledge (city/county)

You have good knowledge of the culture and geography of a city or county, of the sort that can only be gained by living somewhere for at least five years. Successful Influence tests may help you pass for local (if you aren't already), and Knowledge will help you remember the best ways to get around.

## EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL SKILLS

*Advisory note: these skills are extremely contextual and may not be appropriate for all interactions. Bark at the staff in a bank as though you were on the parade ground and you will be seen as, at best, rude.*

### Deception

Often used with your Influence and Awareness to maintain your cover story, spot when someone else is lying to you, and to hoodwink people.

### International Diplomacy

Used with Knowledge to recall international protocols, and with Influence to smooth-talk foreign dignitaries.

### Kinaesthetics

Sometimes called body language, can glean clues about a person's emotional state or intent from stance. Can also broadcast false signals of your own.

### Lip Reading

Use this with your Knowledge or Awareness stats to read someone's lips, either close up or at a distance.

### Negotiation

This provides a bonus to your Influence when attempting to negotiate, be it the high stakes of a hostage situation or the low stakes of haggling for a tagine in Casablanca.

### Power of Command

Found in schoolteachers, military officers and the like. Used with Influence to give orders that you expect to be obeyed.

### Oratory

Used with Influence to deliver rousing speeches to bring a crowd over to your side, or perhaps to temporarily improve their Courage.

### Speak Language ( )

Most commonly used with Knowledge to understand and speak a language. Might also be used with Influence if trying to pass for local. You can take this skill multiple times to add more languages.

### Streetwise

Use in conjunction with your Influence to blend in with the less legal end of society by showing the right combination of respect and self-assuredness. Alternatively, use with your Awareness to pick out dodgy individuals from a crowd, or with Knowledge to track down the movers and shakers.



## EXAMPLES OF PRACTICAL SKILLS

### Animal handling

A lot goes into knowing how to manage another living creature. Physique, Knowledge, Awareness, Courage and Reflexes might all be used at certain points to calm, subdue, or otherwise interact with an animal.

### Artisan ( )

Generally used with Knowledge or Awareness to create something to a respectable standard. Might also involve Physique to keep working for long stretches of time. Includes such talents as blacksmithing, pottery, carpentry, and so on.

### Driving

This could be used with any of your intellect stats depending on the context, be it fast driving, basic repair, or knowing the performance limits of your vehicle.

### Escapology

Often used with Physique, Awareness and Reflexes to surprise and confound your captors.

### Navigation

Generally used with Knowledge or Awareness, depending on the context.

### Piloting

This could be used with any of your intellect stats depending on the context, be it risky manoeuvres, basic repair, or knowing the performance limits of your aircraft.

### Riding (horse/motorbike/other)

Various stats, but particularly your Physique, Awareness and Reflexes will be needed to get the most out of your mount, particularly if they have a mind of their own.

### Bushcraft

Follow trails, find safe food in the wild and improvise shelter using your Knowledge and Awareness.

### Electrical engineering

You are proficient in the wiring of houses and devices; can follow the course of that wiring and identify/repair/cause faults using your Knowledge.

### Gunsmith

You Know how to maintain, repair and even fabricate firearms and ammunition.

### Mechanical engineering

You have the Knowledge to build, repair or break mechanical devices, engines, etc.

### Performance ( )

Choose any performance art (singing, acting, comedy, etc) and use it to Influence your audience.

### Pharmaceuticals

You Know how to follow formulae to manufacture drugs precisely and safely.

### Seamanship

You have the Knowledge and Awareness needed for boat handling in addition to ropework and similar skills.

## EXAMPLES OF ATHLETIC SKILLS

### Rock climbing

Use this with your Physique when climbing, or your Knowledge when securing rappelling lines, tying complex knots, and other technical details.

### Sport ( )

Depending on the sport, this could be used as a flavourful substitute for either Cardiovascular Fitness or Strength Training, but not both. Can also, of course, be used to compete in said sport.

### Cardiovascular fitness

Used with your Physique to both push yourself physically and to resist passing out through blood loss.

### Strength training

Used with Physique to both exert more physical force (including in hand-to-hand combat) and to resist non-lethal damage.



## EXAMPLES OF MEDICAL SKILLS

### Psychiatry

Be it understanding the impact of the extramundane on normal people, or knowing how to help distressed individuals, you will generally use this skill in conjunction with your Influence, Awareness and Knowledge.

### Surgery

You might use this with your Knowledge to not only perform surgical procedures yourself, but to understand and investigate procedures that have been carried out by other people.

### Veterinary medicine

This skill is a broad one that can be used in a number of ways: to provide medical aid to animals, to diagnose and identify something unusual about a creature. Complimentary skills include animal handling.

### First aid

Use Awareness to diagnose injuries, and Knowledge to staunch bleeding and stabilise an injured person to get them to better help. Your Influence will also help when calming distressed patients.

### General medicine

Treat and recognise diseases and chronic conditions, generally using your Knowledge and Awareness, but also sometimes your Influence when calming distressed patients.

### Pathology

Through careful examination of bodies, you can discern causes of death. Generally used with Knowledge and Awareness, extremely useful when examining bodies with unusual causes of death.

## EXAMPLES OF ARCANE SKILLS

*It is a rare character that takes any arcane skills during character creation - these are more likely things agents pick up during their time with the Ministry. However, if it's appropriate to your character's backstory, nothing is stopping you.*

### Arcane lore

Used with your Knowledge to recognise and understand the trappings, signs and equipment associated with forbidden rituals, as well as the capabilities of Neuromancers, Evocationists, and the history of these areas. Could also be used with Influence to convince someone you know what you're talking about.

### Arcane defence

Used with Sorcery and sometimes Influence to resist the effects of hostile magics cast against you, most commonly Neuromancy.

### Cryptozoology

The study of mythical and fantastical beasts. Use with Knowledge to recognise extramundane creatures, with Influence to calm it (if it would be amenable to such) and with Awareness to track it.

### Demonology

The study of demons and possessions. Can be used with Knowledge to recognise particular demons, and the myths associated with them. Could also be used with Influence to resist (or parlay with) said entity.

### Mythology

The study of myth and legend. Use with your Knowledge to see if the extremely weird thing in front of you chimes with tales told in ancient stories and folklore.

### Parapsychology

The study of psychic phenomena, psychics, and other niches like astral projection and any other miscellaneous mental ability that doesn't fit into the big three (the big three being Neuromancy, Evocation, and ritualism). Generally used with Knowledge and Awareness to detect and identify people with extramundane abilities.

### Phantasmology

The study of spirit creatures, ghosts and hauntings. Used with Knowledge, Awareness and sometimes Influence to identify, banish and entreat with such entities.

### Scripture (religion: \_\_\_\_\_)

The ability to recite a particular religion's scriptures from memory. Uses include repelling or, under sustained use, possibly banishing some non-corporeal entities such as demons (although the latter will also require genuine faith in said scripture to work!).



# Abilities

Abilities provide a bonus rule, giving your character something that most don't have. They are inherently very specialised and can be purchased both during character creation and afterwards. If you buy one, make sure you've got the skills needed to make best use of it!

## Acrobatic (15XP)

*Prerequisite: a Physique stat of at least 4.*

You can switch stance from prone to standing or vice/versa without using an action. This ability is immensely useful if you find yourself knocked to the ground during hand-to-hand combat, and if you've had to dive for cover during a firefight.

## British Army field signals (3XP)

You have learned the hand signals used by British infantrymen which enable them to communicate basic instructions to each other in complete silence. Bear in mind they're only of any use if the person you're signalling to also knows them!

## Double tap (15XP)

The character is trained to quickly follow up their initial shot (or to blaze away with two pistols at once). When you perform a shooting action, you can add one extra shot to the action. The extra shot is at -2 to hit and does not gain the benefit of any aiming prior to the shooting action.

## Expert climber (6XP)

A strong and nimble climber, this character can climb at a rate of two metres per action without having to take a Strength test.

- **Upgrade: daredevil climber (8XP).** This character has become an incredibly agile climber, willing to jump to handholds, run up short stretches of walls, and otherwise risk death in the pursuit of their goals. They may climb twice as fast as even an experienced rock climber if they pass a Physique test. If they fail the test, they will fall as normal.

## Pugilist (6XP)

*Prerequisite: a Melee stat of at least 4.*

You confer a -1 penalty to your enemies when they take a Physique test to resist damage from your unarmed attacks. If your combined Physique and Strength Training score is 10, the penalty is -2 instead.

## Renowned (5XP)

This ability can be taken multiple times, once for each type of renown your character has. It grants a +1 bonus to your Influence stat in situations where your renown would open doors for you. It *also* gives all other characters who operate in the same field a +1 bonus to recognise you, so it's something of a disadvantage when you're working undercover! Uses of renown include:

- **Academic prestige.** You are well known in your field, and a renowned (or perhaps infamous) author.
- **Socialite.** A noted raconteur and the darling of many Society parties, you've holidayed with the rich and powerful.
- **Retired senior officer (e.g. commodore).** You're well remembered in your service branch (choose from Police, British Army, Royal Navy or RAF).
- **Underworld connections.** You are "Known," a "Made Man." Your name is respected and feared in criminal circles.
- **Noble title.** You're knighted, or have a peerage.

## Slippery customer (6XP)

*Prerequisites: both your Melee & Reflex stats must be at least 4.*

When this character '**bravely backs away**' from a melee attack, they may circle 90° around their opponent rather than going backwards, so long as there is room to do so. This ability therefore enables you to try and escape a superior foe even when you've been backed up against a wall - which is usually the point where you'd be toast!

## Tactician (10XP)

Other agents in your team turn to you when they want someone to coordinate their efforts in a scrap. At the start of each **Round**, you can pick one teammate to have their turn immediately before or after yours, regardless of their Reflexes. This will allow those with slower Reflexes than you to act in unison, and for faster characters to get their full turn later in the Round rather than deferring and having a single reactive action.

- **Upgrade: Inspired Tactician (10XP).** You may now choose two teammates to go immediately before or after you.



## Pre-built Character Archetypes

This section details some pre-selected combinations of stats and skills to create quick archetypes. These can be used as-is, or to give you a starting point for your own character concept. You can take any one Oddness with any of these archetypes, but bear in mind that many Oddnesses make frequent use of a particular stat. You can swap any of these stats around for your own character, of course. Equally you could just start out with your character being less than amazing at their Oddness, and have them slowly improve over time. Please note **these archetypes are not suitable for Downright Odd characters.**

**Designer's note to the GM:** it might seem like this is a useful source of quick-build NPCs, but, these all offer player character levels of nuance; you'll generally be using a simplified stat line for NPCs, as shown in the GM document and the sample missions.

### The Soldier

Cost: 200XP

Ranged	Melee	Reflexes	Sorcery	Physique	Knowledge	Influence	Awareness	Courage
4	3	4	0	4	2	2	4	4

#### Skills

Combat awareness	3	Unarmed combat	3	Streetwise	2
Combat experience	2	Bayonets	2	First Aid	1
Rifles	3	Knives	1	Navigation	2
Pistols	3	Strength training	2	Small unit tactics	3
Grenades	2	Cardio	3	Military strategy	1
Submachine guns	2	Silent movement	3	Kinaesthetics	2
Machine guns	2	Concealment	3	Bushcraft	1

### The Spy

Cost: 200XP

Ranged	Melee	Reflexes	Sorcery	Physique	Knowledge	Influence	Awareness	Courage
3	3	4	0	3	4	4	4	4

#### Skills

Pistols	3	Language (French)	1	Locksmith	2
Knives	3	Language (German)	1	Silent movement	2
Unarmed combat	3	Language (Spanish)	1	Cryptography	1
Explosives	2	Language (Russian)	1	Sleight of hand	1
Interrogation	2	Diplomacy	1	Spycraft	2
Combat awareness	1	Lip Reading	1	Driving	1
Combat experience	1	Negotiation	1	Navigation	1
Cardiovascular fitness	2	Streetwise	1	First aid	1
Strength training	2	Kinaesthetics	1	Rock climbing	1
Deception	3	Concealment	2	Forge official documents	1

### The Underworld Enforcer

Cost: 200XP

Ranged	Melee	Reflexes	Sorcery	Physique	Knowledge	Influence	Awareness	Courage
2	4	3	0	5	1	3	4	4

#### Skills

Submachine guns	3	Unarmed combat	4	Streetwise	5
Pistols	4	Combat awareness	2	Kinaesthetics	3
Knives	3	Combat experience	1	Driving	3
Clubs	3	Criminology	3	Strength training	2



## The Extramundane Academic

Cost: 200XP

Ranged	Melee	Reflexes	Sorcery	Physique	Knowledge	Influence	Awareness	Courage
1	2	3	0	4	5	4	4	2

### Skills

Pistols	1	Archaeology & antiquities	3	Arcane lore	4
Unarmed combat	1	Research & archiving	3	Arcane Defence	1
Oratory	3	Language: Latin	3	Cryptozoology	3
Kinaesthetics	2	Language: Ancient Greek	2	Demonology	3
Cryptography	1	Language: Sanskrit	1	Parapsychology	3
Mythology	4	Linguist	3	Phantasmology	3

## The Detective

Cost: 200XP

Ranged	Melee	Reflexes	Sorcery	Physique	Knowledge	Influence	Awareness	Courage
2	3	4	0	3	4	3	5	3

### Skills

Combat awareness	2	Driving	2	Kinaesthetics	4
Combat experience	1	Navigation	2	Criminology	4
Unarmed combat	2	Streetwise	3	Interrogation	4
Pistols	3	Deception	3	Psychology	2
Strength training	2	Cardio	2	Forensics	3

## The Medic

Cost: 200XP

Ranged	Melee	Reflexes	Sorcery	Physique	Knowledge	Influence	Awareness	Courage
2	2	4	0	4	4	4	4	4

### Skills

Pistols	1	Cardiovascular fitness	2	First aid	5
Unarmed combat	1	Strength training	2	Surgery	4
Combat awareness	2	Psychiatry	1	General medicine	3
Combat experience	4	Lip reading	2	Pathology	2
Kinaesthetics	2	Driving	2	Pharmaceuticals	2

## The Socialite

Cost: 200XP

Ranged	Melee	Reflexes	Sorcery	Physique	Knowledge	Influence	Awareness	Courage
2	2	3	0	4	4	5	4	2

### Skills

Deception	4	Speak French	3	Driving	1
Kinaesthetics	4	Performance (singing)	2	Navigation	2
Lip reading	4	Performance (comedy)	2	Fine art	2
Negotiation	3	Seamanship	2	Cardio	2
Oratory	4	Horse riding	2	Strength training	1

**Abilities:** Renowned Socialite (+1 bonus to Influence and to be recognised when attending Society events).



## The Hitman

Cost: 200XP

Ranged	Melee	Reflexes	Sorcery	Physique	Knowledge	Influence	Awareness	Courage
4	4	4	0	3	2	2	4	2

Skills								
Pistols		4	Combat experience		1	Silent movement		3
Rifles		4	Criminology		3	Spycraft		3
Knives		4	Negotiation		3	Gunsmith		1
Unarmed combat		3	Streetwise		2	Climbing		1
Explosives		2	Kinaesthetics		2	Cardiovascular health		2
Combat awareness		3	Concealment		3	Strength training		2

## The Thief

Cost: 200XP

Ranged	Melee	Reflexes	Sorcery	Physique	Knowledge	Influence	Awareness	Courage
2	3	3	0	4	3	3	4	2

Skills								
Combat awareness		3	Streetwise		4	Sleight of hand		3
Forensics		1	Kinaesthetics		3	Climbing		3
Criminology		3	Concealment		3	Strength training		2
Deception		3	Locksmith		5	Cardiovascular fitness		3
Negotiation		4	Silent movement		4	Unarmed combat		2

## The Titled Explorer

Cost: 200XP

Ranged	Melee	Reflexes	Sorcery	Physique	Knowledge	Influence	Awareness	Courage
3	3	3	0	3	4	4	3	3

Skills								
Pistols		2	Diplomacy		2	Riding (camel)		1
Rifles		3	Negotiation		2	Riding (motorbike)		1
Knives		1	Speak language (Arabic)		1	Bushcraft		3
Swords		2	Speak language (Afrikaans)		1	Seamanship		1
Unarmed combat		2	Speak language (Hindustani)		1	Veterinary medicine		1
Combat awareness		2	Streetwise		2	First aid		2
Combat experience		2	Kinaesthetics		2	Rock climbing		2
Botany		2	Animal handling		1	Skiing		1
Anthropology		2	Driving		1	Cardiovascular health		3
Political History		1	Navigation		3	Strength training		2
Archaeology & Antiquities		1	Piloting		1	Mythology		1
Linguist		2	Riding (horse)		2	Arcane Lore		1

*The term 'explorer' is rather subjective here; anywhere said explorer is likely to "discover" will already be perfectly well known to the people who have been living there for millennia.*



## The Con Artist

Cost: 200XP

Ranged	Melee	Reflexes	Sorcery	Physique	Knowledge	Influence	Awareness	Courage
2	2	4	0	4	3	5	4	2

Skills								
Unarmed		3	Deception		5	Kinaesthetics		3
Archaeology & antiquities		3	Diplomacy		4	Forge official documents		2
Business		3	Negotiation		4	Mimic handwriting		1
Criminology		3	Streetwise		4	Sleight of hand		1

## The Civilian with a Secret

Cost: 200XP

Ranged	Melee	Reflexes	Sorcery	Physique	Knowledge	Influence	Awareness	Courage
3	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	3

Skills								
[Your Oddness]		4	Strength training		1	Navigation		2
Electrical engineering		5	Kinaesthetics		2	Scripture [choose religion]		1
Mechanical engineering		2	Deception		2	Football/cardio		4
Local knowledge [county]		3	Animal handling		2	Driving		2

*Designer's note: this archetype is ideal for anyone whose Oddness relies on the Sorcery stat. There is also a skill called [your Oddness] for you to use as a bonus to your Sorcery stat when using your Oddness.*

*You have a mighty 5 skill points in Electrical Engineering as a nod to your chosen trade, but if you'd prefer not to play a sparky then by all means change this to something else!*

## Sample Characters

You can find a selection of sample characters here:

<https://www.twobeargames.com/sample-characters>

These Google sheets can be accessed from any device, and will enable you to get playing straight away. Plus, it never hurts to get some decent examples! The character sheets have tabs optimised for PC/tablet screens, and also the same information presented in a format more comfortable for smartphone screens. Just check the Readme tab if you're unsure about anything!



# PLAYING THE GAME

## Starting a session

### The Essentials

At the start of a play session, after everyone's gathered about the table and finished complimenting each other's dashing threads, it's worth checking you have everything to hand. The players should all have their character sheets, a D10, a pencil, and possibly some notepaper.

### The sensible extras

It's also worth having at least one or two copies of the [action scene reference sheet & kit list](#) floating about in case the players get into a scrap, and if there are any spellcasters in the party, they should have either the Neuromancy spells in front of them, or the Evocation card deck as appropriate.

### Fortune tokens

At the start of each session, each player is given four tokens. During the game, a token can be discarded to modify one of your dice rolls by 1. You can spend multiple tokens on a roll, turning failures to successes, averting dreadful failures, or perhaps even achieving stunning success at a critical moment.

At the end of the session, any unspent tokens are lost. The purpose of these tokens is to grant players a certain amount of

immunity from particularly stupid or disappointing dice rolls. They may not be shared between players. If you are embarking upon a particularly lengthy session (perhaps a full day of derring-do) the GM might choose to increase the number of tokens.

### The story so far

If this is a session following on from an earlier one, tradition dictates that someone should assume a corny voice and say, "Previously, on *Ministry...*" thus precipitating the party to remind each other of the story's events so far.

### Roleplay styles

Once the GM has set the scene, the players are free to act. Of course, if this is the group's first game, it might not be entirely clear how to do that!

Your role as a player is to describe your character's actions and intentions. When they speak, you can do so in character, or simply describe the gist of what they're saying. It's also up to you whether you speak in the first person or the third person; whichever you pick it's more immersive if the players are consistent with each other.



# The Basics

## MODES OF PLAY: FREEFORM AND ACTION

During freeform play, the players simply say what they wish, when they wish. Dice will rarely be rolled, and few rules will be involved. Should the characters get into a [fight](#), or a [chase](#)—anything that involves physical actions and risk—then the GM will initiate a [Round](#) of turns, and the game will become more structured as long as the action lasts. That said, you only need to start a Round when characters are acting in *opposition* to each other for more than a couple of actions.

You will find that fight scenes in a roleplaying game are more slowly paced than they would be in a film, simply because you're making decisions and rolling dice. Think of it as a montage of dramatic slow-motion shots, with each turn representing up to five seconds.

## STAT TESTS

Whenever your character wishes to do something challenging (during both freeform and action scenes), you will be called upon by the GM to test one of your [stats](#). The stat the GM tells you to roll against will vary depending on the situation. If you're trying to shoot someone with a gun, you'll use your Ranged stat, whereas if you're trying to spot a strange creature lurking in the woods, you'll use your Awareness. To take a test, follow these steps:

1. The GM declares which stat you must test.
2. Add any bonuses and penalties to your stat to calculate your target score.
3. Roll equal to or under your target score on a D10 to pass.

Regardless of any contextually appropriate modifiers imposed by the rules or the GM, **rolling a 1 on the dice is *always* a success, and rolling a 10 is *always* a failure.**

### Your Margin of Success

Some rules use your margin of success when you pass a stat test. If you pass, your margin of success is your target score minus your dice roll, to a minimum of 1.

***Simple example:** Mad Mags the Librarian is testing her Knowledge to see if she remembers which author wrote a particular treatise. Her Knowledge is 5, and she rolls a 3. This means her margin of success is  $5 - 3 = 2$ .*

***Complex example:** Corporal Jenkins is trying to shoot a chap who's hiding in hard cover. Jenkins is a good shot, with a Ranged stat of 4. He's using a rifle, and has 5 skill points in rifles, meaning that ordinarily he'd need 9 or less to succeed - very easy! Unfortunately with his foe being in some tough cover, his target score suffers a -4 penalty, meaning he needs to roll 5 or less. He rolls a 2. This means his margin of success is  $5 - 2 = 3$ .*

## USING SKILLS

Most characters have areas of far more specific expertise, and this is where your [Skills](#) can come in. When the GM asks you to take a stat test, you can use one of your skills as a bonus to your stat if it's contextually relevant. Your skill bonus is applied before any modifiers to your roll.

*Designer's note: you'll need to apply some logic to your selection; having skill points in Haitian folklore won't make any difference to your Ranged stat when shooting a zombie, but it might be used in conjunction with your Knowledge at the start of the scene to remember that destroying the brain is a good idea, and it might also be used in conjunction with your Courage since you know how to deal with this particular threat, and so are more confident in this situation than someone who has no idea what a zombie is and why it's wondering around mumbling about brains.*



## STUNNING SUCCESSES & DREADFUL FAILURES

Having a margin of success or failure of 5 or more makes the effects of that roll quite spectacular. The consequences will vary according to context, and will largely be up to the players and GM to invent and agree upon, but in some cases there are specific rules for stunning and dreadful rolls, particularly where combat, magic and driving are concerned. Since you can't roll below 1 or over 10, rolling stunningly or dreadfully is often impossible.

*Example: Agatha is shooting a machine gun at her enemy. Good show, Agatha. She has a total ranged score of 6 (Ranged 4 + 2 skill points in machine guns). If she rolls a 1, it will be a stunning success because her margin of success is 5.*

*With her ranged score of 6, the worst margin of failure she can get on a D10 is 4 - unless there are any penalties to the roll, of course!*

## OPTIONAL RULE: NEAR MISSES AND MARGINAL SUCCESSES

- If you only just pass a stat test (i.e. rolling 6 when you needed 6 or less) then you pass the roll but incur an unforeseen disadvantage.
- If you fail a test by one (i.e. rolling 7 when you needed 6) you still fail the test, but incur an unforeseen advantage.

These advantages and disadvantages should be reasonably minor, and agreed upon by the GM. We have included them as an optional rule because they increase the faff factor, but can be flavoursome. They're probably at their best when used in a scene that won't require too many dice rolls.

## ADJUSTING THE DIFFICULTY

When asking the players to roll for a test or a task, the GM might decide that said endeavour is harder than usual, or perhaps laughably easy, and can apply a bonus or a penalty to your stat before you make it.

There will also be times when a penalty is mandated by the rules, such as shooting at a target who's hiding behind cover. This will always be mentioned in the relevant section.

## ASSISTING EACH OTHER WITH TESTS

The GM may agree that a certain test would be more easily accomplished with the assistance of another character. If you are assisting someone, you should describe what you're doing to help them!

You can only provide assistance if you're not already busy doing something else. When the character you are assisting takes a stat test related to the endeavour, they gain a bonus equal to half of your most relevant skill (rounding up).

It's possible to provide assistance during a round of actions, assuming you're physically close enough to make sense contextually. For each action you assist with, you sacrifice one of your own. Your assistance is considered to last for the duration of one of the recipient's actions. If your turn is before the test, and the test is subsequently not taken, you are still considered to have used the action. If the test is taken before your turn, you can sacrifice one or more of your actions preemptively.

**Example 1:** *Agent Dunhurst is attempting to deduce how worried he should be about some strange script etched into the beams of an old lady's attic. He's using his Knowledge stat (4) in conjunction with his skill in Linguistics (1) to try and identify it. Agent Glover offers some assistance with her impressive 5 skill points in Arcane Lore, since that might help deduce whether the script appears to have any extramundane purpose. Her 5 skill points are rounded down to 3, so Agent Dunhurst's target score is  $4+1+3=8$ , making his life considerably easier.*

**Example 2:** *Agent Fuutley-Ponklehue boosts his colleague's Awareness to help them spot something, by exclaiming "by Jove, the bally thing's perched on yonder crag!"*

**Example 3:** *Agent Wells acts as a spotter for Agent Rabindran while she snipes Thule operatives, helping her with Ranged and Awareness stats.*

**Example 4:** *Father Andrew offers encouragement to boost a colleague's Courage prior to getting shot at/being charged by a monster/asking that dashing young man from Team 9 out for tea and cake.*



# Social Interactions

*It is expected that most social interaction in Ministry will take place through direct in-character conversation between the Players' characters and the Storyteller's NPCs. However, there are situations where you may wish to gloss over a lengthy series of interactions or use a character's innate skills to gain insights that you as the player may not be able to. Sometimes a new player may not be able to be the quick-talking, gift-of-the-gab person that their character is. These rules and guidance facilitate that process.*

## Useful Stats and Skills

The obvious candidate for most social interaction is Influence. This measures how persuasive your character is in day-to-day conversation. However, there are other options worth considering: Awareness could allow you to spot that the character you are talking to keeps licking their lips as though dry-mouthed and nervous. Knowledge could allow you to examine the plausibility of what that character is saying based on your expertise. If your character is paralysed by social nervousness, even Courage could be needed to cause a fuss or confront an intimidating opponent!

As with all tests in Ministry, any relevant skill can be added to that stat to boost your chances. Some examples include:

- Influence + Streetwise to go through a crowded bar and find out if Nicky the Nose has been seen lately.
- Awareness + Deception or Kinaesthetics to spot a lie.
- Influence + Organic Chemistry to make up a convincing blathered explanation for why that squid man is actually a bad reaction to a chemical spill...

Obviously, we want most reactions to be in character. A dice roll should only be needed if you're doing something that's a bit of a stretch, outside your character's comfort zone, or because you're dealing with a particularly perceptive or suspicious NPC.

## Context Matters

It is vital in social interactions to use the right tool for the right job. It might be tempting to try to talk to everyone as though you were on a parade square because you have the skills to make it a better roll but it will alienate many people. Similarly, you may, through virtue of your massive strength training skill, think that your prodigious physique might make you god's gift to the opposite sex... until you run into someone who is quite put off by veiny slabs of muscle. Use the wrong approach and at your Storyteller's discretion that bonus may either be reduced, not apply, or even count against you as a penalty!

## Class

It is a sad fact that social class is baked into the fabric of Britain at a fundamental level in this era. In terms of rules, this only comes into effect if you are attempting to imitate someone outside your social strata, or if you are doing something contrary to the normal relationship between those strata. It will, for example, be significantly harder for someone with a broad regional accent to convince a room full of toffs to pay attention.

The variety of social scenes and contexts is so broad that we are disinclined to provide a pre-set rule to represent prejudice, not least of which because different characters will be more or less prejudiced. As a rough guide, however, the GM may inflict Influence penalties when the 'class' of your accent or clothing is different to the character you're speaking to.

## Opposed Rolls

If you are trying to convince a character of something particularly outlandish and/or opposed to their views on a subject, they can take an Influence roll, then you do the same, counting their margin of success as a penalty to your roll.

## AN EXAMPLE INTERACTION

*The players are nattering to a trawlerman on the wharf at Whitby. He's mending nets and puffing on a pipe. They are wanting information on the skipper of another fishing vessel, the Saucy Sue. Adam's character—Jack—is always quick with words and they decide he should take the lead:*

**Jack:** Morning skip! Lovely weather for it!

**Skipper:** Ayup, looks set fair *(continues mending nets)*

**Jack:** Listen, I was wondering, I'm new in town and need to take up a reserved occupation...

**Skipper** *(interrupts)*: No room on my boat.

**Jack:** No, no, I was just wondering if I could sound you out on some of the other skippers, see if there's anyone I shouldn't sail with?

**Skipper:** *(Grunts)*

**Jack** *(inventing furiously)*: Well, I've got a choice between the *Trade Winds*, the *Codfather*, the *Saucy Sue*, and the *Cathy's Catch*

**Adam to GM:** Can I use Awareness to see if I get a reaction on the *Saucy Sue*?

**GM:** Sure, go right for it. *(Adam passes comfortably)* Yep, there was a twitch on the *Saucy Sue*

**Jack:** Oh, is there a problem with the *Saucy Sue*?

**Skipper:** No, no problem at all.

**Adam:** Is he lying?

**GM:** What are you using for that?

**Adam:** Ummm, Awareness and Interrogation?

**GM:** I was thinking Deception, but Interrogation works too.

**Adam:** *(rolls, succeeds)* Passed!

**GM:** Yeah, you think he's lying...

**Jack:** Listen mate, I won't tell anyone, what's the issue? He threatening you or something?

**Skipper** *(nervously)*: No! No, nononoooo, nothing like that, oh no...

**Adam:** He lying?

**GM:** No roll needed, he's exactly as convincing as he sounded.



# Investigation

## ACTIVE INVESTIGATIONS

An Active Investigation is the term for when a player character is actively looking for evidence; they might be performing a search or conducting analysis, but in either event, use the rules below. If, alternatively, the GM wishes to determine if the players happen to spot something when they aren't actively looking, you should instead skip down to the section on Passive Investigations.

### 1: Set time limits [optional]

When performing an investigation, before making any dice rolls, the player must inform the GM if there is a limit to how long their character is willing to search for clues. This could be anything from "10 minutes" to "until I'm called away" or "until Mr Pilgrim phones back."

### 2: Determine investigation type

There are two types of investigation: Searches (using Awareness), and Analysis (using Knowledge). These are detailed in the sections below.

### 3: Take stat test (see sections below for examples & guidance on stats)

- **Success:** if there is any evidence that matches the sort of thing you're looking for, you have found it, and within the time limit you set. If there is no evidence, you can at least be said to have definitively ruled out that line of enquiry!
- **Stunning success:** as above, and additionally you find a second piece of evidence (if such evidence exists). Alternatively, if you set a time limit, you can instead happen to find the evidence in the first place you look.
- **Failure:** if you set a time limit, you fail to find any evidence within that time. If you did not set a limit, then your character searches exhaustively and simply believes the evidence cannot be found.
- **Dreadful failure:** you cannot find the evidence, and worse yet, you unwittingly change or move objects such that anyone else trying to find it will suffer a -3 penalty to their test to find it!

## Searches

An active search is the term for when a player character has arrived at a place where they believe there may be evidence to be found. In such instances, the player declares what sort of thing they're looking for - incriminating paperwork, signs of a fight, and so on - and takes an Awareness test.

Unless there are time constraints, players are of course free to search for multiple types of evidence, and furthermore multiple players can all take Awareness tests to look for the same thing (assuming there is space and time for them to do so).

### Examples of Searches:

- Forensics
- Crime scenes: signs of a fight? Signs of anything missing? Signs of imperfectly concealed damage?
- Having a bloody good rummage in someone's pockets.
- Examining a character's last known locations: are there tracks, recently disturbed objects, etc?

## Analysis

Some investigations consist of trawling through mountains of evidence that has already been gathered (such as a horrifying folder stuffed full of *the* most fascinating bank records). For investigations such as this - where it's less about spotting something and more about patient analysis - it's more appropriate to take a Knowledge test.

### Examples of Active Analysis:

- Autopsies/dissection
- Chemical analysis
- Forensic accountancy
- Mythological or historical research

## PASSIVE SEARCHES

A passive search is where the GM wants to find out if the characters spot something when they aren't specifically looking. The easiest method is for the GM to simply ask the players to test the appropriate stat (usually Awareness) and say what sort of skill might be appropriate. A classic would be to test Awareness + Combat Awareness to spot someone sneaking up on you.

Sometimes, however, the GM may not want to specify which if any skills are appropriate, as doing so would effectively be a spoiler should all the players fail their rolls. In such rare circumstances, it would be perfectly appropriate for the GM to ask to see the characters' skills list, and for the characters to just test against their Awareness. If the GM's feeling generous, s/he could always inform each player how much they've failed by and wait for the Fortune Tokens to come flying in.

### Which skill to use?

There is very deliberately no catch-all skill called 'Investigation.' Players are encouraged to be inventive with their skills, depending on the context. If the team are looking inside a mysteriously abandoned ambulance to look for anything out of place, then a trained paramedic (perhaps using the First Aid skill) would know what to look for better than a trained detective might. Agents are therefore encouraged to bring the breadth of their team's experience to bear.



# Interrogation

This section covers the various means by which the players and their adversaries might seek to extract information from each other. Contrary to some peoples' preconceptions, this does not generally involve physical force (see the callout box on the inadvisability of torture).

## Reality versus abstraction: speeding things up

Interrogations are complex endeavours that can take weeks of sustained work by highly trained people, rather than a group of potentially inebriated TTRPG enthusiasts. If the interrogation is going to be long or complex, it is generally expected that the interaction will be experienced more like a montage, with the players being in-character for some pivotal breakthrough moments, and with long stretches of work being abstracted via the application of dice rolls and/or summarised description from the GM.

In extremis, if the scene is unlikely to contain interesting plot developments or character moments, it could be resolved with an opposed check. If the player is the interrogator, they should take an Influence test with a penalty equal to half the subject's Courage. If either party has relevant skill points, those should be factored in. If the player is the subject of the interrogation, they should take a Courage check with a penalty equal to half the interrogator's Influence.

## Step One: Leverage

An interrogation is never going to get anywhere unless the interrogators know what their interviewee *wants*, and are believably in a position to supply that want. The *want* might be known before the interrogation begins, but if not, the interrogator will have to discover what it might be as the interrogation goes on.

The interviewee's *wants* will generally fall into three broad camps: (a) clemency, (b) help for a friend or relative, and finally (c) physical or financial reward. The leverage is, of course, worth nothing if the interrogator's ability to provide it is not believable.

## The Inadvisability of Torture

The Ministry frowns at the use of physical coercion in interrogation. One would like this to be out of a sense of moral duty or legal constraint, but sadly there are no such constraints. MI-19 maintains nine separate "cage" facilities across Britain for the interrogation of German POW's with not a little brutality. The infamous "London Cage" especially has a reputation for such practices. The reason for the Ministry's position is purely practical: torture rarely works.

Certainly there are occasions where the tortured party has the information you seek and gives it to you when coerced. But far more often, the subject either does not have the information or is not believed when they admit they don't know anything beyond what they've shared already. They will then desperately invent anything you might want to hear, impeding your investigation and preventing progress. It has been the finding of the Empire that torture, or the threat of torture, is more useful as a tool of cowing populations than for extracting information.

The other reason the Ministry frowns on torture is the corrosive influence it has on the torturer. Unless the individual is a sadistic sociopath the deliberate infliction of pain on another person is psychologically damaging and "injurious to the spirit." In the case of the sadist, the Ministry don't want them. In the case of the damaged, the Ministry can't rely on them. Either way, the practice harms the Ministry. This having been said, enemies don't always share the Ministry's qualms and there may be horrible, unfortunate occasions where you must decide whether to endure with your Physique and risk your health, or give up information that risks your team. Such instances, mercifully, should be rare, and your colleagues ought to be urgently rushing to your rescue.



## Step Two: choose your approach

### Trust Me, I'm on Your Side

This style of interrogation will generally begin with small talk to build a rapport and put the subject at ease. This can be combined with the good cop/bad cop routine to enhance the subject's willingness to work with the good cop.

The interrogator will further enhance the subject's trust in them by appearing to empathise and/or sympathise with the subject, and convince them that with this sympathy comes a desire to help the subject achieve their *want*. They may well say (truthfully or not) that the evidence is sufficient to convict the subject, but that if the subject can explain their thought process, or any mitigating circumstances, it might help their case.

#### Rolling dice

- Player characters must pass Influence tests whenever they lie to avoid giving off any tell-tale signs. If they fail, take an Influence test for the NPC to see if they spot the blunder.
- Players can also ask an NPC to take one Influence test to see if an NPC displayed any signs of fibbing during their latest statement. If the NPC fails, the player must pass an Influence test to detect any attempt to be untruthful. Of course, the best way to catch people in a lie is to dig into any contradictions in their story!

### You're in A Lot of Trouble

This approach consists of maximising the perceived consequences of the subject's actions, and the consequences of failing to cooperate. The subject may yet get their *want*, but only if they cooperate quickly to avoid the worst possible outcome for themselves. The interrogator will also maximise the alleged involvement of the subject in the events leading to their detention in the hopes that this will tempt the subject into providing further information that might make them seem more of a bystander.

#### Rolling dice

This uses the same rules as *Trust Me, I'm on Your Side*, but with a further clarification: if the threat being issued by the interrogator is either true, or they successfully trick the subject into believing it's true, then the subject must start using their Courage instead of their Influence when attempting to lie. However, if at any point they dreadfully fail a Courage test, then from that point on they will start lying by telling the interrogator whatever they think the interrogator wants to hear.

## Other Tools

### Environment

The use of familiar or unfamiliar environments can have a profound impact on the subject. If the interrogator is trying to appear sympathetic to the subject, then a familiar environment (such as the subject's home) provides a +1 bonus to the interrogator's Influence. Conversely, an unfamiliar environment provides a -1 penalty to the subject's Courage.

### Neuromancy

A master neuromancer may be able to make short work of an interrogation, but for most practitioners, it isn't that simple. As

per the normal rules for Neuromancy, the subject is likely to become aware of any brute force attempts to extract information from their minds, and can use their Influence stat to resist such endeavours.

Where Neuromancy is of great benefit in interrogations is in subtly manipulating the subject's mental state and lightly reading surface emotions to help guide the interrogator, and only attempting to brute force it in desperation, since failure would almost certainly put the subject in a hostile, terrified state.



# Stealth

Whether a character is trying to quietly sneak up on someone, move unseen through a crowd, or conceal themselves or an object, the format is the same as far as the rules go.

The person being stealthy tests their Awareness.

The target(s) also tests their Awareness, modified by the margin of success/failure in step one. If they pass, they become aware of the person moving stealthily.

e.g. Sandrine is trying to sneak up on a gestapo officer in a dark back alley. Unfortunately she fails her Awareness roll by three, nudging an empty bottle with her shoe. The gestapo officer thus gets a +3 bonus to his Awareness test.

## Inviting disaster

If the person attempting stealth dresses, acts or moves conspicuously, it doesn't matter how high their stats are; they are **automatically spotted**. This would include things like standing silhouetted in a tunnel entrance, wearing a British military uniform in Vichy France, or being dressed like a cabaret singer in Fulham high street at 10am.

## Common skills used in stealth

- **Moving unseen through a crowd** could use skills including, but not limited to, kinaesthetics, spycraft, and streetwise.
- **Concealing oneself or an object - and detecting concealed things** - uses the concealment skill, although if it's an explosive trap, the explosives skill would also work.
- **Sneaking up on someone quietly** uses the silent movement skill.
- **Detecting someone sneaking up on you** could use, but is not limited to, the combat awareness skill.

## Bonuses and penalties

As with any other roll, the GM can apply bonuses and penalties to any of the characters.

Reasons for penalties can include:

- If the person being stealthy is dressed imperfectly (for instance, wearing black rather than olive drab in the great outdoors).
- If the person being stealthy is injured and struggling not to vocalise their discomfort.
- Poor lighting.
- High levels of background noise.
- Particularly quiet environments, such as stalking through empty woods on a windless night.

Reasons for bonuses include:

- For concealment, preparation! Prepared concealment is always much more effective than hastily improvised efforts. If you can take the time to really prepare an area and/or outfit and have skill points in either concealment or disguise (as appropriate) then it's assumed you gain the maximum concentration bonus of +3 to your Awareness.
- Characters who are prone are significantly harder - and sometimes even impossible - to spot! This will usually confer *at least* a -1 penalty to see them, and possibly more, depending on the context.

## Stealth attacks

For stealth attacks within arm's reach, see the [melee section](#). If you attempt a [ranged attack](#) on a target that is not aware of you, they may not attempt to evade.



# Chase Scenes

A chase scene begins whenever a character makes a go of extricating themselves from peril via the time-honoured strategy of “cheesing it.” The pointers on this page will tell you how to handle the hijinks that follow. Obviously if someone is attempting to run from a motorcyclist on a flat plain then it isn’t so much a chase as a form of lobotomised optimism. These rules therefore cover those instances where there’s a real question as to whether someone might get away.

## CRUCIAL MOMENTS

When a chase begins, the quarry/quarries are said to be one or more “Moments” ahead of the pursuer(s). A Moment does not reflect a specific amount of time, but rather, a crucial point in the chase.

The quarry initiates the chase by choosing one of the Moments listed overleaf, after which the pursuer chooses one, and so on, until the chase is over.

## ENDING THE CHASE

The quarry loses the chase if their lead is reduced to 0 Moments. When this happens, the chase scene transitions into a combat scene in which the pursuer has the instigating action - see the [combat section](#). Any pursuers who were further behind will enter the scene in a number of rounds equal to the number of Moments they were behind.

The quarry wins the chase if their lead grows to 4 or more Moments ahead of all their pursuers, at which point their lead is too great to be overcome.

## CRASHING VEHICLES

Some Moments can cause a vehicle to crash. If this happens, the driver of a crashing vehicle gets one chance to mitigate the impending disaster with a Reflex + driving test.

- **Stunning success:** the vehicle comes to a halt, but is still roadworthy. If you are the quarry, and your opponent has not crashed, then you lose two moments. If you are the pursuer, and the quarry has not crashed, the quarry gains two moments.
- **Success:** the vehicle comes to a halt and is too damaged to continue, but none of the occupants are seriously injured. If you opponent didn’t crash, you have lost the chase.
- **Failure:** roll an injury for each occupant, determining hit locations as per shooting. If the occupants don’t have hit location charts, the GM will instead narrate what happens to them. If you opponent didn’t crash, you have lost the chase.
- **Dreadful failure:** the crash is spectacular. As the vehicle rolls, tumbles or otherwise wraps itself around a tree, the occupants all suffer D<sub>7</sub> injuries, determining hit locations as per shooting. If you opponent didn’t crash, you have lost the chase.

## MULTIPLE QUARRIES & MULTIPLE PURSUERS

If there are multiple quarries/pursuers, alternate which among the player characters gets to pick a Moment when it is their side’s turn. Obviously if the quarries are all in one vehicle, and the pursuers all in another, then they will all gain/lose moments at the same rate.

### Stick together!

Quarries and pursuers may wish to stick together when one of them fails a roll. In such instances, they gain/lose moments at the same rate as the slowest character.

### Don’t wait for me!

If characters don’t wish to stick together when one of their allies fumbles, this can result in the chase becoming more spread out as various characters race ahead.

If one of the quarries successfully manages to be 4 moments ahead of the lead pursuer, they can choose whether to wait for any allies lingering behind them, or can instead exit the chase and make good on their escape. Either way, they no longer need to roll dice or choose moments unless they decide to come back to help their colleagues.

If any quarries have their lead reduced to 0, the pursuers must choose whether to engage them in an action scene, or whether to ignore them and hurry onwards the quarries further ahead.

### Split up!

If there are multiple quarries, they may at the start of their turn choose to split up. The pursuers must immediately decide which quarries they will pursue; if this results in the pursuers also splitting up, the chase is resolved as multiple, unconnected chases from this point on.

If the players are the pursuers, the GM will count down from 5 for them to make this decision. If they do not make a decision in that time, they automatically lose the chase.

### Fancy a Simpler Chase?

If you’re not after a big set-piece chase, but rather a quick resolution, consider reducing the chase down to a single crucial stat test for pursuer and quarry. Whoever rolls the best margin of success, or the smallest margin of failure, is the winner! If it’s a chase on foot, use Physique + Cardio. If it’s a vehicle chase, use Reflexes + Driving. You get the idea.



## LIST OF MOMENTS

### Create obstacles (quarry on foot only)

The quarry pulls one or more objects into the pursuer's path in an effort to trip them up. Doing this at speed requires considerable strength; the quarry tests against their Physique + Strength Training. If they fail, there is no effect. If they fail dreadfully, their lead is reduced by 1. If they succeed, all pursuers must pass a Reflex test to navigate the obstacle without falling 1 moment behind. If the pursuers fail dreadfully, they must pass a Physique + Strength Training test to avoid injury.

The pursuers can choose not to take the initial Reflex test and navigate the obstacle more safely. If they do so, the quarry's lead increases by 1.

### Climb (quarry on foot only)

The character starts climbing a rock face, fire escape, or other vertical feature. Both sides test their Physique, adding their skill in Climbing. If one side fails and the other succeeds, or if one succeeds and the other succeeds stunningly, then the victor chooses to increase/decrease the quarry's lead by 1 Moment. Any character that fails dreadfully has fallen! They have lost the chase, and must resolve the [fall](#) as detailed in the movement section of the combat rules.

### Cunning Shortcut (pursuer only)

The pursuer attempts to deduce the quarry's direction of travel, and notices a shortcut. They must first pass an Awareness test, plus any skill points they have in navigation (or similarly appropriate skill). If they succeed, the quarry's lead is reduced by 1 Moment. If they fail, the quarry's lead is *increased* by 2; if they fail dreadfully, the quarry's lead is increased by 3!

### Disappear into the crowd (quarry only)

The quarry enters a busy thoroughfare and attempts to blend in, be it among pedestrians or other vehicles as appropriate. The pursuer(s) must pass an Awareness test to spot them. At the

GM's discretion the pursuer will gain a bonus to their test if the quarry's clothes or vehicle are unusual for the context. If the pursuer fails their roll, the quarry's lead increases by 1.

### Endurance (on foot/ridden animal only)

The chase enters a stretch of uncluttered ground, and becomes about who can keep up the pace for the longest. Both sides test their Physique + Cardio (use the Physique of your mount if you're on one!). If one side fails and the other succeeds, or if one succeeds and the other succeeds stunningly, then the victor chooses to increase/decrease the quarry's lead by 1 Moment.

### Magic Moment

You can use a special ability your character knows. You may not use any concentration actions prior to activating your ability. If this is an ability that would normally require an action to use, then your character will have to slow down to use it. Consequently, after this moment is resolved, a quarry using this Moment reduces their lead by 1, whereas a pursuer using this would increase the quarry's lead by 1, unless the moment has in some way caused the chase to end, or causes your target to slow even more than you did.

### High speed hazards (quarry only)

The quarry chooses to take their chances by attempting to navigate a complex environment at speed, be it an active factory on foot or a tight handbrake turn in a vehicle. Both sides test their Reflexes. If one side fails and the other succeeds, or if one succeeds and the other succeeds stunningly, then the victor chooses to increase/decrease the quarry's lead by 1 Moment. If one side succeeds stunningly and the other side fails, increase/decrease the lead by 2 instead.

- If on foot, dreadful failures will cause an injury, distributed as per a hit in Melee.
- If in a vehicle, dreadful failures will cause a crash.



## Shoot

Carry out one Shooting action against your opponent. Performing this action when on foot requires you to slow down a little to snap off the shot, and will increase/decrease the quarry's lead by 1. Such is the difficulty of shooting a weapon while firing from a moving vehicle that you suffer a -4 penalty to your Ranged stat in addition to any other penalties.

- If your target is a **ridden animal**, roll again. On a 1-4 you hit the rider, on a 6-10 you hit the mount. Resolve the hits as normal.
- If your target is in a **vehicle**, roll on the chart below if you pass your Ranged test. A stunning success enables you to choose the location. Failures have no effect. Dreadful failures may hit any bystanders that happen to be present. If the target is a motorbike, re-roll any hits to the windscreen or bodywork.

D10	Location	Consequence
1-3	Passenger	Distribute hit as normal. If there are multiple passengers, choose one at random.
4-6	Vehicle damaged; roll again.	1-3 engine damaged; the car loses power, and is now coasting. Unless the occupants can find a way to continue the chase on foot, the chase is over. 4-6 tyre punctured; all future driving tests suffer -2 penalty. 7-10 radiator or fuel leak; the car begins to overheat or run out of fuel. If the chase scene doesn't finish in the next 4 moments, the car will lose power.
7-8	Windscreen shattered	The bullet passes through the car's windscreen, shattering it. The driver will henceforth suffer a -2 penalty to their Awareness and Reflex stats. If you roll this result again, it has no effect.
9-10	Bodywork/windows	The bullet passes through the vehicle's bodywork or shatters one or more windows, causing only cosmetic damage. <i>Note: cars in the 1940s generally used safety glass, so the passengers are unlikely to be injured.</i>

## Ssshh! Wait for them to pass (quarry on foot only; must be 2 or more moments ahead)

The quarry rounds a corner and dives into the best hiding place they can see, then waits for their pursuers to pass them. If the quarry is a player character, they take a Reflex test and add any skill points in concealment (or similar) to hide themselves quickly. If instead the *pursuer* is a player character, then the pursuer takes an Awareness test and adds any skill points in concealment (or similar) to spot the hastily-chosen hiding spot. If the quarry is not spotted, the pursuer will pass them by, and the quarry's lead increases by 2 (effectively ending the chase!). However, if the quarry *is* spotted, then the chase is still ended... just not as they intended! Transition to an action scene in which the observant pursuer has the instigating action, followed by the quarry, then by all other characters in the scene.

## Vehicular jostling

A vehicular jostle occurs when one vehicle attempts to discombobulate another... by ramming it. It can only be attempted when there is only 1 Moment remaining. This is pretty much as dangerous for the ramming vehicle as it is for the victim; both quarry and pursuer take a Reflex test and add any skill points in driving/motorbike riding. If one party succeeds and the other fails, the "winner" gains/removes a Moment (per their preference). If anyone rolls a dreadful failure, they will crash.

## You run, I'll slow them down (multiple quarries only)

One or more of the quarries can choose to turn and face their pursuers so that another can get away. Transition to an action scene with the quarry/quarries having the instigating actions; if the pursuers have not resumed the chase at the end of the Opening Round, the quarry's lead is increased by 1. It increases by another 1 for each subsequent round in the action scene.



# Facing Monsters

The world contains an impossible variety of extramundane entities. This section covers a few rules that can become contextually appropriate when facing something from a child's nightmare.

## MONSTROUS BEINGS

The rules on this page frequently use the word *monstrous*. Characters, creatures and entities are *monstrous* if they meet at least one of the following criteria:

- They have a grisly or disturbing appearance.
- They are non-corporeal.
- They are known to be dangerously venomous.
- They are physically powerful enough to easily overcome a human. An angry bull, boar or bear would comfortably meet this criterion.

## Unusually Scary Things

For each of the above criteria met by an entity beyond the first, they confer a -1 penalty to any Courage tests they cause characters to take. The GM may choose to increase this penalty.

### Charging or being charged by *monstrous* entities

Any character wishing to **charge a monstrous entity** can only do so if they can first pass a Courage test at the start of their Charge action.

If they fail, they can choose to perform any other action so long as they don't move any closer to the entity. If they fail dreadfully, they must spend a Move action to move directly away from the entity, as much as is possible.

Any character **being charged by a monstrous entity** must take a Courage test. If failed, they may only attempt to Bravely Back Away in the ensuing [melee action](#).

A character who fails their Courage test and who starts their next turn within arm's reach of that entity can take another Courage test. If passed, they can act as normal. If failed, the only actions they can attempt are the Break Away action and Movement actions - all of which must be spent getting as far away from the entity as possible.

## The Ministry's Five Threat Assessment Levels

The Ministry's official threat assessment system rather blandly asks field agents to rate the dangerousness of extramundane threats from 1 to 5, with 5 being the most severe. As time has passed, these rough groupings have come to be known by less formal terms that agents can say in public without risk of upsetting the public.

### Extramundane Threat Level 1

*Colloquial term: "Lovely day for it."*

This covers mild threats that a lone agent or even an enterprising member of the public could handle, including Field Case 37/203, which involved a mildly enraged talking poodle.

### Extramundane Threat Level 2

*Colloquial term: "Pleasantly Brisk."*

This covers intermediate threats that could easily be handled by a team of inexperienced field agents, and covers the majority of case files, including Field Case 40/003 (the capture of a small BUF cell in Leeds).

### Extramundane Threat Level 3

*Colloquial term: "Future Anecdote."*

This covers threats that can be handled by a field team, but which constitute significant risk of injury or even death to one or more team members. Case files assigned threat level 3 tend to be assigned to more experienced teams, such as 40/012, in which Team 14 had to link up with elements of the French resistance movement to infiltrate a mansion in Vichy France.

### Extramundane Threat Level 4

*Colloquial term: "Strategically Inclement."*

This covers threats similar to Future Anecdotes, but where there are significant known unknowns. Cases like this are always given to experienced teams with a track record of adaptability. They can also involve multiple teams. Examples include 42/901, about which much is redacted beyond the fact that it happened in Egypt, and that three of the personnel involved did not return.

### Extramundane Threat Level 5

*Colloquial term: "A Spot of Bother."*

This covers threats which require multiple teams, or extensive weaponry, or both.

### Colloquial Threat Level 6: Sergeant Locke's brand new trousers

In theory there is no level 6, but this hasn't stopped the Ministry's field staff from suggesting that it ought to so as to describe situations in which the Ministry is completely incapable of handling the problem and has no real control.

Examples include 40/813, which involved some enchanted music boxes, the City of London Cemetery, something called a Flesh Golem, and the deployment of all available personnel in Chapter House, including a member of the cleaning staff. Multiple platoons of the British Army were also deployed, along with a Matilda tank. Of note was that Chapter House's usually unflappable veteran quartermaster, Sergeant Locke, was alleged to have said, "Sorry ma'am, it's just that I en't seen it rain meat like that since Ypres."



## PERFORMING EXORCISMS

Exorcisms can be used to banish non-corporeal entities such as spirits and demons. They are effective whether or not said entity is currently possessing a physical object, creature or person. Exorcisms can be performed by practitioners of any religious belief. Unfortunately this cannot be attempted by non-believers; it seems a strong belief in something greater than oneself is necessary to succeed, although the reasons for this remain obscure to extramundane scholars.

### Preparing for an Exorcism

In theory the only two things you need are yourself, and your holy text of choice. The standard agent kit list includes your choice of Bible, Quran or Torah, but this can be substituted for any other tome as preferred.

#### What if I don't have my book with me?

If you do not have a physical scripture to hand, you'll need to take a Knowledge test along with any skill points in your religion to see if you can remember a particular passage before you start. This doesn't cost an action, but it can only be attempted once until you next have the book in front of you - you either know your scripture, or you don't!

If you don't know the scripture, you can still go ahead with the exorcism by chanting a mantra, but you will suffer a -2 penalty to your Influence stat during any of the ensuing exorcism-related tests.

#### Other tools of the exorcist

- **A sigil.** Brandishing a symbol of your faith, such as a crucifix or prayer beads, increases your Influence and Courage stats by 1 after you have initiated the exorcism. If your sigil is a rare holy relic, such as a saint's bones or an artefact that belonged to a prominent religious figure, the bonus becomes +2 instead.
- **A circle.** Immobilising your target makes things much more likely to succeed! To inscribe a magic circle, see the next section of this chapter. The person creating and/or empowering the circle does not have to be the same as the person performing the exorcism itself.

### Initiating an Exorcism

Nominate one non-corporeal entity within Close Range (ten yards/metres). Use an action to take an Influence test, adding any skill points in your religion. Your character begins to recite scripture, imbuing each word with all the faith they can muster. A reminder: your character's faith must be genuine; simply having expertise in a religious doctrine will be insufficient.

- If you are **successful**, the exorcism has begun.
- If you **succeed stunningly**, the exorcism has begun and furthermore, your target suffers a -1 penalty to their Influence until this exorcism is over.

- If you **fail**, there is no effect.
- If you **fail dreadfully**, the target is empowered by your lack of conviction and gains a +1 bonus to their Influence for the rest of this scene.

### Resolving an Exorcism

Once an exorcism has begun, the exorcist temporarily gains access to a special *exorcism* action. If they do not perform this action on the target at least once during their turn, the exorcism is over. If they perform any action other than *move* or *exorcism* actions, or if they fail a Courage test or are injured during the exorcism, the exorcism is over.

#### Performing an Exorcism Action

You must be within Close Range (10 yards/metres) of your target to perform this action. You continue to recite scripture, forcing your target to take an Influence test. Once they have done so, you take an Influence test with a penalty equal to their margin of success.

- If you **succeed**, record your margin of success as a tally. If and when that tally equals the target's Influence stat (including any skill points they have in *arcane defence* or similar) then the target is banished. This tally might be completed in a single action, or over multiple exorcism actions.
- If you **fail** there is no effect, and the exorcism continues.
- If you **fail dreadfully**, the exorcism is over.

#### What happens to banished entities?

Banished entities are removed from play. Whether or not the entity is gone forever will depend on the entity in question; most extraplanar entities such as demons are returned to their realms, whereas most spirits will simply cease to exist.

#### How can entities evade banishment?

The traditional method is to attack or scare off the exorcist; fleeing is also a classic option, since the exorcist must stay so close. For this reason, a common tactic to prevent entities attacking or fleeing is to trap them in a magic circle.



## MAGIC CIRCLES

The Circle can be used by Ministry agents as a defensive measure when dealing with magic users and non-corporeal entities.

### Basic Circles

Inscribing a closed circle on the floor or ceiling and being within it provides a -1 penalty to cast any spell into or out of that circle.

It can be inscribed using any material that comes to hand; it could be a furrow dragged by a stick, it could be a trail of salt, it could be a hoop of iron, it could be traced in ink, paint or chalk. Ministry agents are issued with chalk for precisely this reason, as noted in the kit list.

#### Inscribing a perfect circle

If the player takes five minutes to inscribe the circle perfectly, perhaps using a length of string to ensure a consistent radius, the circle's penalty is increased by 1.

### Empowering Basic Circles

#### The Circle of Layman's Blood

This is almost always a desperate measure, but can be an effective one against lesser foes. Adding a drop of your own blood to a basic circle increases a basic circle's Sorcery penalty by 2. However, if the spell is successful despite this penalty, the forces unleashed within your body can be lethal. Take a Physique test to avoid an injury to the body.

If a non-corporeal or possessed entity wishes to leave or enter a blood-empowered circle, it must pit its will against the layman. The entity tests its Influence; if successful, the layman must test their Influence stat, using the entity's margin of success as a penalty. If the layman fails, the circle is broken, and the layman suffers an injury to the body.

#### The Circle of Arcane Warding

This is the most potent magic circle. Take a Sorcery test while touching the circle. If you have any skill points in Arcane Defence, this can be used to improve your Sorcery score. If successful, no spirits, demons, possessed individuals or magic may touch or cross the circle's boundary. If your Sorcery test is failed, nothing happens.

As long as the caster of an empowered circle of arcane warding remains within arm's reach of it, they can maintain the effect. While doing so, their Sorcery is reduced by 1. They can cancel the effect at any time. If the caster is charged, shot, fails a Courage test, or suffers an injury, the circle is broken.

### Breaking a Circle

Circles are broken as soon as any gap is created in the circle, or when a physical object is laid over any part of it. Agents are therefore advised to be cautious when choosing the location of their circle, lest they give entities plenty of ammunition they can use to break the circle. For example, if one is performing an exorcism on a possessed individual, it is common to restrain them to prevent them grabbing anything - be it their own clothing or a handful of earth - and throwing it at the boundary.

The magic circle is a tool as old as magic itself, and makes use of the tendency for energy to take the path of least resistance. Circles are the strongest defensive arrangements available, distributing force around their circumference and encouraging anything that doesn't strike it head on to glance off. In the case of magical energy, the circle causes it to slide off and flow around the perimeter. Circles are used so ubiquitously in magic and for so long that they were considered a proven concept in Assyrian writings on magic.



# Combat Rules

## PLAYING A ROUND

Most action scenes begin with a narrative action. A player kicks in a door; the enemy open fire from their prepared ambush; a player opens fire after they spot the thing with patchy fur lurking in the rafters, and so on. This **initiating action** forms the first turn of the first round, and everything else follows on using the priority order below:

### Opening Round

1. The initiating character takes the first turn, performing two of the actions described on page 39.
2. Any prepared characters take turns in Reflex order.\* Prepared characters might be those waiting in ambush who have been spotted and fired on during the initiating action, but who are ready to engage at a moment's notice.
3. All remaining characters take turns in Reflex order.\*

### Subsequent Rounds

1. All characters take their turns in Reflex order.\*
2. When all characters have acted during that round, the GM starts a new round.
3. When characters are no longer performing time-sensitive actions in opposition to each other, drop back to [freeform mode](#).

### \*Reflex order

The GM will call out each Reflex value, starting with the highest. **You can boost your Reflexes with skill points in Combat Awareness**, so the GM will count down from 10. When your Reflex value is called out, you can act. Alternatively, you can choose to defer your turn. You can then go before or after any single action for the rest of the round, even interrupting the middle of an NPC turn if you wish, but if you defer in this way you can only make a single action.

If you have the same Reflexes as another player, you'll need to agree on which of you goes first. If you have the same Reflexes as any NPCs in play, then use Awareness + Combat Awareness as a tiebreaker. If you're *still* tied, then you and the GM roll off. If your roll is lower than the GM's, you can go before the NPCs; otherwise, you'll have to wait until they're finished.

### Actions

During their turn, a character normally performs up to two of the actions described in the [action summary](#). These actions can be performed in any order, and you can perform the same action twice.

### NPC Groups

NPCs who are effectively identical to each other will frequently move in groups to speed up gameplay. NPCs working as a group must act at the same time, perform the same actions and head in the same direction. If they engage in any shooting or melee

actions, the GM will declare who their various attacks are aimed at before resolving any. If an NPC group is fired upon, successful hits will be distributed evenly among the group members visible to the firer, starting with the character closest to the shooter and working backwards.

A group can be any size; as long as each member of the group is within about three feet/one metre of another member of the group, they may still move as one. The major limitation on group size is the environment - if you're in a terraced house in the slums of Bethnal Green, it'd be virtually impossible for thirty people to be *able* to all head up the stairs, since there simply isn't room!

### How to win at violence

The combat rules presented here are designed to reward tactics that would work in real life, albeit with some concessions to fun. That's all well and good for people familiar with real-life strategies, but not everyone knows much about that, so here are a few tips for the uninitiated.

In **melee** combat, ganging up on people really helps your chances, as does engaging them in an environment where they don't have the space behind them to back away. A weapon with the *reach* attribute will also make a big difference, be it a bayonet or a billiards cue.

When it comes to **firefights**, if you're working as a team the classic strategy is to 'suppress and flank.' Every time someone is fired at by a ranged weapon they'll be tempted to hide in cover, so shooting at them with a rapid-firing weapon like a machine gun is more likely to pin them down. If one of you suppresses them by just firing as many bullets as possible in their general direction, this allows you to pin them in place while your friends rush around the sides and get easy shots (or a panicked surrender).

### Positioning

Given the imaginary nature of roleplay, it's impossible to be very precise about where, exactly, everything is. You can use a diagram or a bunch of miniatures to represent the action, although doing so reduces immersion for some players. Distances have been provided, particularly in the movement actions, but it's expected that players will say things along the lines of "I run around the south wall of the house," not "I run 6 and a half metres," since the other players probably won't know where you've ended up given such an abstract description.

The distances given are there to provide a rough guide for how far one might move in the length of time an action represents, and also for those rare moments where it actually matters precisely how close someone is to something they want. The decision of whether or not to sprint rather than run, for example, should generally be down to your character being terrified out of their mind, or desperate to catch up with someone, rather than the exact physical distances between the characters.



## ACTIONS

During your turn, you can perform two of the actions listed below. You can perform actions twice, and can perform the actions in any order. The turn's actions can be combined with speech; whatever you can say in five seconds is fair game.

<b>Movement actions</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Max. distance</b>
Move	Walking, jogging or even running; can be reduced in difficult terrain like dense woodland. Cannot be used to move into or out of arm's reach of enemies.	12'/4m
Sprint	Treat difficult ground as hazardous. Cannot be used to move into or out of arm's reach of enemies.	18'/6m
Charge	Use a normal move action to get into arm's reach, then execute a Fight action.	
Crawl	Prone characters only.	3'/1m
Change stance	Change from prone to standing, or vice versa.	
Climb	Optionally: climb double the distance and test your Physique. If failed, you fall.	3'/1m

<b>Shooting Actions</b>	<b>Description</b>
Shoot	Declare target; targets tests Reflexes to jump into adjacent cover and if successful confers -2 to hit. Take a Ranged test for each shot on your weapon's profile. Roll on target's injury table for each hit and resolve effects. If a target is hit but has no table, remove from play.
Aim	Aim at any enemy in sight. If your next action is a standard shooting action directed at them, you have a +2 bonus to your Ranged stat.
Reload	Your weapon's rules will specify the number of actions required to reload it.
Suppressive fire	Perform two shooting actions. All shots miss on anything but a 1. Not possible with weapons that require a <i>reload</i> action after each shot.

<b>Melee Actions</b>	<b>Description</b>
Fight	See the melee section for details on how to attack, grapple and sneak attack other characters.
Break away	Take a Melee/Reflex test at -1M/R for each heroic character in arm's reach. If passed, you break free of the combat in a direction of your choosing, ending up just out of arm's reach of your assailants. Alternatively, if prone in a melee, a successful Break Away allows you to stand up.

<b>Arcane Actions</b>	<b>Description</b>
Cast	Cast a spell as described in the <a href="#">Magic</a> section. In short: take a Sorcery test. The spell's description will tell you what penalties to your Sorcery are applicable. If you fail dreadfully, you must roll on the <a href="#">miscast table</a> .

<b>Other Actions</b>	<b>Description</b>
Interact/skill test	GM's discretion - may take multiple actions (see "tasks" in the Tests and Tasks section). May require a stat test. May be possible for other characters to assist.
Concentrate	Declare which upcoming Stat test you are concentrating on, then spend an action to reduce any penalties on that test by 1. Alternatively, concentrate for 2 actions to reduce the penalty by 3. This bonus is lost if your next action is something other than concentrating or taking the test, or if you are hit or otherwise forced to physically react to an attack.



## MOVEMENT ACTIONS

### Splitting movement actions

You can choose to split a standard movement action or crawling action either side of your other action, for example performing two thirds of a move action, opening a door, then performing the other third of the movement action.

### Difficult ground

Some terrain, such as rubble, moraine fields, deep snow, marshland, shallow rivers, et cetera, are difficult ground.

In general this should just factor into how you play the scene, and how tired the characters get, but if for any reason you need to be more specific: moving over such ground halves your speed, i.e. each metre of difficult ground counts as two.

### Traversing hazardous terrain

Moving across hazardous terrain (loose rocks, thin ice, rickety structures and so on) entails risk. Any character moving faster than walking pace over hazardous terrain must take a Reflex test. If you fail the test, you go prone and must pass a Physique test to avoid [injury](#).

Note that some terrain might be both difficult and hazardous.

### Jumping

Unlike a sporting environment in which the landing will be cushioned, and for which there is plenty of run up, jumping is in fact “a bit bloody difficult.”

- You can jump **upwards** half your own height.
- **Horizontally** you can jump your own height forwards. If you have an appropriate skill, such as Athletics, you can attempt a longer jump by taking a Physique test, covering a number of extra metres equal to half your margin of success, rounding up.
- You can **jump down** small drops (i.e. half your own height) without needing to take a stat test.
  - You can drop your own height, but must pass a Physique test to avoid injury. You can drop down *twice* your own height, but with a -2 penalty to your Physique.
  - Any height higher than this, without a padded landing, will constitute a fall.

### Falling

- **6m or less:** take one Physique test per metre fallen to avoid [injury](#). Each failure causes a separate injury, distributed as per shooting.
- From a height of **7-20 metres:** suffer D5 injuries, distributed as per shooting.
- **From a great height:** roll a D10. On anything but a 1, you are dead. If you do manage to roll a 1, you suffer D5 injuries, distributed as per shooting. Regardless of what injuries you subsequently roll, you are neither bleeding out nor dead.

### Prone characters

Being prone means the only movement action available to you is crawling or changing stance. It may also make it harder for you to see other characters, but does confer a number of benefits:

- Any character attempting to shoot you will suffer -1 to their Ranged stat unless they are within arm's reach.
- It's possible to move very quietly whilst prone, and you're much harder to spot. Refer to the section on [stealth](#) for more information on evading detection.
- It's much easier to aim two-handed ranged weapons when prone. Whilst you can only fire within a relatively small arc to the front (it's harder to turn and move about as quickly as when you're standing) you gain +1 to your Ranged stat.
- On the downside, you're very vulnerable to melee attacks. If charged, you must pass a Reflex test to get on your feet in time. If you're still prone for the fight, your Melee and Reflex scores are halved until the fight is over or you spend an action to get on your feet.

### Swimming

This is a surprisingly slow endeavour. The average swimmer can't even keep up with a decent walking pace, whilst Olympic-level swimmers can manage up to about 5mph. Whilst in water too deep to stand in, you cannot use two-handed weapons (and probably shouldn't be achieving much with one-handed weapons either!). If it is necessary to know the exact distance someone can swim per movement action, they are assumed to cover a number of metres equal to half their physique, rounding up. Whilst in the water, your ranged and melee stats are halved (again, rounding up).



## SHOOTING ACTIONS

### 1. Choose any one target that your character is aware of.

The target must be at least partially visible to your character and must be within range of your weapon.

### 2. The target reacts.

If the target is aware that they're about to be shot at, they may take a Reflex test to duck behind any cover they're next to. If passed, they confer a -2 penalty to the firer's Ranged stat. If they roll a stunning success, this penalty becomes -3. If they ducked into cover, they will only count as being in cover at the end of this shooting action.

If there is no cover available, the target can instead choose to throw themselves prone. If the target is at short range or further, this confers a -1 penalty to hit, or a -2 if they roll a stunning success.

### 3. Roll one Ranged test for each Shot on your weapon's profile.

Your Ranged stat could be modified by using an *aim* action or by the target being in cover (refer to the [cover section](#) for more details) and/or reacting, as described in (2). Regardless of all modifiers, you always hit on a 1, and miss on a 10. **If your gun fires multiple shots per action, roll them all simultaneously.**

### 4. Target is [injured](#) by each shot that hits; remove them from play unless they have an injury table on their character sheet, in which case, resolve the effects of the injury.

A successful hit with a firearm will always injure someone, if not kill them outright. Most NPCs are therefore taken out of a fight when hit. When an NPC without an [injury table](#) is injured by a player, the player may decide what happens (i.e. whether the shot was lethal or merely incapacitating). All player characters have injury tables, as will most monsters. Any determined or particularly tough NPCs will also have an injury table similar (if not identical) to the players. Note that some monsters may have special rules which allow them to survive certain projectiles.

If you get a **stunning success** when rolling to hit, you may choose one of the following two benefits:

- Choose which location you hit on the target's hit location table.
- Roll for the location as normal, but injure it twice.

### 5: Target takes pinning check

If the target is still conscious, and is in cover, they must take a Courage + Combat Experience test for each shot fired at them that wasn't a dreadful failure.

If they fail any, then during their next turn they cannot return fire or perform any other actions that would knowingly expose them to enemy fire.

### NPC groups and pinning checks

*If an NPC group is composed of individuals keen on fighting (as opposed to a group of terrified non-combatants fleeing for safety) it takes a lot more shots to pin them down! Use a dice or a tally to track how many shots the group take between their turns. The group take one collective pinning check each time the number of shots fired at them matches the number of characters in the group, at which point, the tally is reset.*

### Shooting into Melee

*Firing into the swirling chaos of hand-to-hand fighting where one of your friend's lives is at stake is reckless at best. But there may come a time when you are so confident, or the threat so immediate and mortal, that it is a risk worth taking.*

Shooting into a melee involving a friendly character is a rather risky proposition! When taking such a shot, apply these rules:

- A **stunning success** will hit your intended target as though it were a success in a normal shooting action.
- If you roll a normal **success**, roll again. On a 1-5 you hit your intended target; on a 6-10 you hit your ally!
- If you roll a **failure or dreadful failure**, you miss both your enemy and your ally.

### Ranged Weapon Attributes

*see weapons, overleaf*

**Blast (X):** Everyone within X meters suffers a hit to a random location.

**Devastating:** if injured by this weapon, the affected location suffers two injuries.

**Fire:** anyone hit by a flame weapon suffers D5 hits with randomly determined locations (roll all the locations simultaneously to save time!). No location on a character can be hit more than once by the shot, so discard any duplicates. Any combustible objects in the target area will also catch fire as described in the environmental hazards section.

**Fuse:** Characters can take a Reflex test to scramble out of the way before this weapon goes off, potentially forcing them from cover even if they would normally have to take a Courage check to do so.

**Heavy:** Heavy weapons are so big that its user must spend an *interact* action to set up their weapon before it can be fired at all, after which the weapon can fire anywhere within a 180° arc to the front so long as the character doesn't move. If they wish to turn the weapon to face the other direction, they will need to *interact* again to do so. As much as this is all very cumbersome, the spectacular firepower usually makes up for it.

- Heavy weapons are more effective when operated by a team. Each person operating a heavy weapon beyond the first reduces the number of actions needed to reload the weapon by 1. In some instances this might mean that a heavy weapon's reload stat becomes 0.

**Recoil:** Requires a combined Physique and Strength Training score of at least 7 to be fired when not set up for firing (bipod legs deployed, user prone).

**Reliable:** This weapon is mechanically reliable and will continue to fire in all but the worst conditions. Less reliable weapons are more vulnerable to fouling when exposed to dirt, mud and/or water.



## Ranged weapons

Name	Associated Skill	Shots	Range	Capacity	Reload	Attributes
Revolver	Pistols	1	Short	6	1	Reliable
Pistol	Pistols	1	Short	8	1	
Shotgun	Shotguns	2	Short	2	1	Reliable
Pump-action shotgun	Shotguns	1	Short	5	2	
Rifle	Rifles	1	Medium	10	1	
<i>Rifle option: add a scope. Increase range to Long, but suffer -1 to Ranged unless you perform an aim action first.</i>						
Submachine gun	SMGs	3	Short	20	1	
Light Machine Gun	Machine Guns	3	Medium	30	2	Recoil
Heavy Machine Gun	Machine Guns	5	Medium	250	4	Heavy
Grenade	Grenades	1	Close	1	n/a	Blast (5), fuse
Improvised Incendiary	Grenades	1	Close	1	n/a	Blast (1), fire
Thrown knife	Knives	1	Close	1	n/a	
Improvised thrown	n/a	1	Close	1	n/a	
Flamethrower	Flamethrowers	1	Close	2	6	Blast (1), fire
Anti-tank rifle	Rifles	1	Medium	1	2	Recoil, devastating

### Associated skill

Some weapons are sufficiently similar to each other that if you're adept with one, you'll be adept with another like it.

### Shots

This is the maximum number of shots fired per shooting action, so a submachine gun can fire up to 3 shots. It is assumed these shots are fired so quickly as to be effectively simultaneous, so you just roll that many dice at the same time.

### Range definitions

Range is rarely important during play, since most firefights in roleplay scenarios tend to happen within close or short range. The ranges given in the armoury fall into three loose brackets of short, medium and long. In all cases, it's assumed that the range bracket is descriptive of your weapon's maximum range, and firing outside that maximum is pointless; you will miss automatically.

- Close range: within 10 yards/metres.
- Short range: up to 40 yards/metres (that's less than half a football field).
- Medium range: up to 500 yards/metres. Shots fired at this range suffer a -2 penalty to hit.
- Long range: up to 850 yards/metres. This range bracket applies mainly to scoped rifles, and any shots fired at this range suffer a -3 penalty to hit.

### Capacity

This is the number of shots that can be fired before the gun needs to be reloaded.

### Reload

This is the number of actions it takes to reload the weapon. A weapon with a reload score of 0 takes no time to reload, and is therefore assumed to be loaded unless you've run out of ammunition.

#### To count bullets, or not to count bullets?

Your GM might well decide to ignore the *capacity* and *reload* rules entirely, since keeping track of ammo entails a measure of bookkeeping during an action scene. Ultimately you're balancing fuff against narrative tension of having to reload at a crucial moment.

One way of reducing the hassle of ammunition is to use a number of counters/coins equal to a full magazine, and discard them as you fire. This means no scribbling on scrap paper, and also provides a visual representation of how much ammo you have left.

### Attributes

Occasionally, ranged weapons will have special attributes. The rules for weapon attributes are given on the previous page.

### Quality

It is fair to say that not all guns are created equal and are not maintained equally. All of the listed weapons are considered of perfect condition. There may be times - especially with an older model - where the Storyteller might add some penalties. Perhaps the sights are off, inflicting penalties to ranged. Maybe the reloading mechanism uses old clunky stripper clips rather than magazines increasing the reload time. A really old example might even earn the *Heavy* attribute to represent the time priming percussion caps or pouring powder.



## MELEE ACTIONS

Pick a character within arm's reach and decide whether to **attack**, **restrain**, **knock down/tackle**, or **sneak attack**, then skip to the appropriate section below.

### Attack

1. Attacker and Defender both test their Melee Stat using the modifiers to the right. Whichever character passes by the most has struck the other.

- **Both characters fail:** If neither character passes their Melee test, the action is over and has no further effect; the characters either failed to commit to the attack, or the blows they landed were of no consequence.
- **Stunning successes:** if the player who got the best margin of success rolled a stunning success, they can choose which location they strike *or* cause two hits to the location they roll.
- **Ties:** if both characters pass by the same amount, they have struck each other simultaneously - a worryingly frequent occurrence in close combat! Proceed to step 2 as if both characters are the loser.
- **Non-combat option: Bravely Back Away!** If the Defender prefers, they can use choose to try and back off. If they do so, they can use either their Melee *or* their Reflexes. If they win the subsequent roll-off, then instead of striking the Attacker, they instead move directly away from them until they are no longer within arm's reach. Remember, when a character is not within arm's reach of any enemies, they are free to move as they please.

2. The loser must pass a Physique + Strength Training test to avoid **injury**. If they pass, the blow has no effect.

- **Weapons:** don't forget that most melee weapons make this test harder (or even impossible) to pass!

3. The victor rolls on the target's **injury chart**. Resolve the injury as described on the chart. If the loser doesn't have a hit location chart, the victor simply narrates what they do to them.

### Restrain

You and your target take a Melee test using the melee stat modifiers, then apply one of the results below. You must be unarmed.

#### You succeed, defender fails

If you have rope or handcuffs ready, the defender's wrists are now bound. If you don't, then neither you or the defender can act until either a) you let go, or b) they pass a Physique check, modified by the difference between your Physique stats (don't forget to include any relevant Skill bonuses!).

#### You fail, defender succeeds

You are hit by the defender's weapon. Take a Physique test to avoid injury!

#### You both succeed, and/or all other results

No effect.

### Melee Stat Modifiers

#### Skill

If you have Skill points in the weapon you're holding (or indeed some points in unarmed combat) don't forget to add it to your Melee Stat! Likewise, if you're backing away, you could add (for example) Unarmed or Combat Awareness.

#### Reach

If you are using a weapon with Reach when none of your opponents are, you gain +2 to your Melee stat, and they suffer -2 to theirs.

#### Prone

If you are prone, your Melee Stat and any positive modifiers to it are added together and then halved.

#### Outnumbered

Reduce your Melee Stat by 1 for each enemy beyond the first within arm's reach, to a maximum of -5.

### Knock down/tackle

You and your target take a Melee test using the modifiers above, then apply one of the results below. You must be unarmed.

#### You succeed stunningly, defender fails

Defender goes prone.

#### You succeed, defender fails

Both characters go prone.

#### Both succeed

Both characters go prone unless the defender passes a Physique check.

#### You fail/dreadfully

No effect/you go prone.

### Sneak attack

*Only possible if the target is unaware of you. See the section on **stealth**.*

Take a Melee test. If you fail, your target is now aware of you. If you pass, note the amount by which you succeeded and choose to either knock them out or assassinate them:

#### Knockout

*Note you must use Unarmed or a blunt weapon for this to work.*

The target takes a Physique test modified by your margin of success. If they fail, they are unconscious for D10 turns.

#### Assassinate

The target takes a Physique test reduced by your margin of success *and then* your weapon's Physique Modifier to avoid injury. If the target is injured, you may cause 2 levels of injury to a location of your choice.



## Niche Situations in Melee

### Multiple assailants

The following clarifications apply whenever there are three or more characters fighting within arm's reach of each other:

- Divide up the combatants into individual fights as evenly as possible. Multiple characters can attack one enemy, but if 2 fighters were attacking 3 foes, the fight would be split into 1vs1 and 1vs2.
- The maximum number of characters that can claim to be within arm's reach of one target is six.
- For every foe beyond the first, a target's melee score is reduced by 1, to a limit of -5.

Once all the characters participating in the Melee action have taken their Melee tests, anyone who passed by more than the lone combatant has struck a blow. If the lone combatant does better than multiple opponents, they may choose which one of them is hit. If they rolled a stunning success, they can choose to hit two of the people they beat instead of the normal bonus for a stunning success.

If a character is mobbed by four or more assailants, they are surrounded on all sides and therefore cannot choose to *bravely back away* during a melee action. They may attempt a *break away* action during their turn as normal.

### Fighting through cover

The rules assume that both participants are in a stand-up fight, but there are many circumstances where you may need to attack in close confines. Say for example stabbing with a bayonet through the window where your foe is hiding, or trying to strike someone in thick bushes. In these circumstances the terrain makes it hard to freely swing your weapons.

If either participant is considered in cover for the purposes of shooting then *both* participants apply the ranged penalty of the cover to their melee rules. In addition, if one of them wants to *Bravely Back Away* then that ranged penalty instead becomes a bonus to their test as the terrain will impede their opponent following up. The GM may reduce or even eliminate these penalties if the narrative of where you are in cover doesn't warrant it.

### Grappling for an object

On occasion, rather than your opponent being the primary target, you may need what they are holding in their hands. Perhaps they are holding the last ingredient to finish a ritual potion, the key to the cage where your team are locked, or maybe a weapon.

1. Initiate the grapple with a Melee test to grab the object. If you are successful, your opponent can take a Melee *or* Reflex test to avoid your attack. If they pass, or you fail, the action is over. If you are successful then you both have a grip on the held object.
2. Once both parties are holding the object, in their subsequent actions either party can either let go, or can attempt to gain sole control of the object. Both characters take a Physique + Strength Training test. Whoever gets the best margin of success gains sole possession of the object. If you both fail, you are both still holding the object. If you now have sole possession of the object *and* rolled a stunning success, you can take an immediate free action with that object - push a button, turn a key, stab with a knife etc.

### Getting charged by Monstrous characters

All characters must test their Courage whenever they're charged by a *Monstrous* character. If failed, they're too intimidated to fight back and must instead *bravely back away*.



## Melee Weapons of the 1940s

### Bayonet

When attached to the end of a rifle this weapon has **Reach**, meaning that it provides a +2 bonus to your Melee Stat, and a -2 penalty to the Melee Stat of anyone fighting you, unless their weapon also has Reach. Furthermore this weapon is **Lethal**, meaning that anyone hit by it automatically fails their Physique test to avoid injury.

### Brass Knuckles

Anyone taking the test to resist injury when hit by this weapon suffers a -1 penalty to their Physique.

### Club

Anyone taking the test to resist injury when hit by this weapon suffers a -3 penalty to their Physique.

### Knife

This weapon is Lethal, meaning that anyone hit by it automatically fails their Physique test to avoid injury.

### Sap/Blackjack

Anyone taking the test to resist injury when hit by this weapon suffers a -2 penalty to their Physique.

## Improvised Weapons

There may be times when an agent must grab whatever comes to hand and defend themselves with it, be it a rock, a pool cue, or something else. If the weapon is functionally identical to one of the weapons listed above, just use the rules for that weapon instead (for example, a bayonet is pretty much the same as a spear). If the above list lacks anything appropriate, use whichever of the following attributes would realistically apply to the bar stool/brick/fire poker in question.

- **Blunt:** anyone taking the test to resist injury when hit by this object suffers a -2 penalty to their Physique.
- **Devastating:** anyone injured by this object will suffer two injuries to any location that is hit.
- **Lethal:** anyone hit by this object automatically fails when testing their Physique to avoid injury.
- **Reach:** this lengthy object is good for fending people off. It provides a +2 bonus to your Melee Stat, and a -2 penalty to the Melee Stat of anyone fighting you, unless their weapon also has Reach.
- **Single use:** this object will clearly break as soon as you hit someone with it.
- **Unwieldy:** this object is heavy or awkwardly shaped, meaning that you suffer a -1 penalty to your Melee Stat while using this weapon.

### Examples of improvised weapons

The objects and tools below may not have been designed as weapons, but they'll do the job in a pinch.

- **Axe** (*fire axe, wood axe, etc*): lethal, devastating, unwieldy.
- **Bar stool:** reach, unwieldy.
- **Brick:** blunt, unwieldy.
- **Ming vase:** blunt, unwieldy, single use.
- **Palm-sized stone:** blunt.
- **Pool Cue:** blunt, reach.



# Injuries

## Regular Characters

**Most non-player characters fall under this category.** They are rendered insensible by pain or blood loss after being injured and are simply removed from play. Being ‘removed from play’ is a catch-all term for being injured, unconscious or dead. If they were taken out by a player, then said player is free to choose what state they’ve been left in. Otherwise, it’s up to the GM.

## Heroic Characters

This category includes **all player characters** and some NPCs. Their will to succeed is such that, when they are injured, their attacker rolls on the injury table on their character card and applies the result rather than simply removing them from play. For heroic humans, including all player characters, the injury table looks like this:

1. Roll D10 for location			2. Cross out box	3. apply effect	
Ranged	Melee	Location		1 <sup>st</sup> injury	2 <sup>nd</sup> injury
1	1	Head	[-] [-]	Go prone. Miss next turn. Pass an immediate Physique test or fall unconscious. Ranged, Melee, Reflexes, Sorcery & Awareness halved.	Unconscious. Pass Physique test to avoid death.
2-6	2-3	Body	[-] [-] [-] [-] [-]	Reduce your Physique by 1, then take a Physique test. If you fail, you are incapacitated and are bleeding out.	
7	4-5	L arm	[-] [-]	Ranged and Melee stats halved.	Incapacitated & bleeding out
8	6-8	R arm	[-] [-]	Ranged and Melee stats halved.	Incapacitated & bleeding out
9	9	L leg	[-] [-]	Go prone. All movement distances halved.	Incapacitated & bleeding out
10	10	R leg	[-] [-]	Go prone. All movement distances halved.	Incapacitated & bleeding out

### The first injury

The first injury in a location is serious, but not life threatening. It may mean a traumatic fleshwound, or a broken bone, rendering that location virtually useless for the scene. Bear in mind that an injury of this severity is enough to take most characters out of play, and that almost all trained soldiers would have been pulled out of the fight and seen to by a medic at this point. The reason the rule that allows you to carry on after sustaining such an injury is called ‘heroic’ is because doing so is to genuinely risk death should you be injured in the same location again.

### The second injury

The second injury is that unfortunate moment when a broken leg gets hit by a shotgun, or mauled by something large and toothy, and goes from being a clean, fixable-yet-painful break to a horribly mangled compound fracture with deep, fast-bleeding wounds, and with the exception of a head wound, will initiate **bleed-out**. If applied to a limb, it will also generally result in the loss of that limb, be it in the moment or later on in hospital.

### Incapacitated

Incapacitated characters are so badly injured that they are no longer capable of performing actions. It is up to the player as to whether their character is even capable of speech, whether they are conscious, and how well (if at all) they are coping with the pain. Short of some supernatural occurrence, they will need time in a hospital, Chapter House, or similar before they are capable of anything (see *getting to a hospital* below).

### Bleeding out

When a character is bleeding out, they automatically take their turn at the end of each round, and must take a Physique test (and may wish to use their Cardiovascular Health skill as a bonus!). If the test is failed, their Physique goes down by 1. If their base Physique stat reaches 0, they are dead. A stunning success on

their Physique roll allows them to skip the following turn’s test. They will continue to bleed out until someone staunches the bleeding (see *Medic!* below).

### Medic!

A character with some skill in either *treat injury* or *medicine (surgery)* will know how to slow the bleeding long enough to get the character to a place where surgery might be attempted to save their life. By performing an ‘interact’ action and passing a Knowledge test, the medic has ensured the victim now only needs to take a Physique test every fifteen minutes of narrative time rather than every turn. A stunning success means the test only needs to be taken every thirty minutes, and a dreadful failure results in the victim’s Physique going down by one.

### Unconscious characters

Unconsciousness tends to be mercifully brief (long term unconsciousness is indicative of serious concussion). As a result we allow a character who has lost consciousness to attempt to regain consciousness once per turn, starting the turn after their injury. They will always have the last turn of that round. To attempt to wake up, take a Physique test. If you succeed then you come to and can take one other action that turn. If you fail, you remain unconscious. A dreadful failure will leave you unconscious until the end of the combat or medical attention is given. No further attempts will work.

### Getting to a hospital/Chapter House

If a character is brought to a hospital or otherwise gains access to professional surgery and given a blood transfusion before their Physique reaches 0, they will survive, and their Physique will return to its original level. Once stable enough to be transferred to Chapter House, the unconventional methods used by the Ministry often allow seriously injured agents to return to the field in a matter of weeks rather than months, albeit sporting a new set of scars and/or prosthetics.



## Monstrous/other characters

Anything tougher or more bizarre than a human will have their own, unique injury table created by the GM or taken from a bestiary.

### Sample monstrous injury table: Black Shuck

*East Anglian folklore. Canine, dark fur, red eyes.*

1. Roll D10 for location			3. apply effect		
Ranged	Melee	Location	1 <sup>st</sup> injury	2 <sup>nd</sup> injury	3 <sup>rd</sup> injury
1-3	1-4	Head	Stunned: performs only one action during next activation.	Fangs are no longer lethal. Use normal unarmed rules.	May no longer attack, but may still move.
4-7	5-6	Body	Enraged: will charge towards the last character to injure its body.	Cowed: will attempt to flee the scene.	Dead.
8-10	7-10	Legs	Movement reduced by 25%.	Movement reduced by 50%, goes prone.	May only crawl.

As demonstrated by the mythic Black Shuck above, monsters do not have to follow the normal rules at all! It is assumed that the GM will keep the injury chart hidden, so that players will have to figure out the monster's weaknesses as they go. Black Shuck, for example, is surprisingly untroubled by head wounds.

## Player Character Death

A field officers' chances of enjoying a peaceful retirement are, regrettably, somewhat below average. Should your character be killed, you will of course need a new one. Follow the normal character creation process but with one exception: your XP will be equal to the other PCs in the team, rather than the starting amount for new recruits. As you will be playing a more experienced character, it's worth considering if you've been in the Ministry for a while and have lost your own team, or been reassigned due to a clash of personalities, or if you're just a very impressive person who's new to the Ministry. Remember you don't have to spend all your XP during character creation, so if you want to play an inexperienced character who learns quickly, go for it.



# Armour & Shields

## Civilian Light Armour

Increases Physique by 1 when resisting melee damage.

*Examples: Bomber jackets; motorcycle leathers; padded and/or leather helmets; theatre/film costume armour.*

## Light Armour

Increases Physique by 2 when resisting melee damage.

*Examples: Heavy, boiled leather armour; gambeson; butcher's chainmail; motorcycle helmet.*

## Medium Armour

Increases Physique by 3 when resisting normal melee damage. When hit by a lethal melee weapon, allows you to take a Physique test to resist the damage, but without the +3 bonus.

*Examples: Chainmail; modern steel helmets; brigandine-plated (e.g. samurai armour).*

## Heavy Armour

Makes you impervious to melee damage unless the attacker rolls a stunning success to hit you, or has a lethal weapon, in which case your armour and the weapon's lethality cancel each other out - resist damage using Physique + Strength Training as usual. Helmets halve Awareness. Grants ability to take an unmodified Physique test to resist damage from primitive ranged weapons, explosions and shrapnel, but offers no protection against bullets.

*Examples: Plate armour; combat engineer steel armour; fully enclosed steel helmets.*

## Modifying armour's effectiveness

If armour is in really poor condition (e.g. rusty, brittle, etc) then demote it by one to a lighter category. Conversely if it's in some way enchanted, it can be moved up to count as a heavier version.

## Shields

In the unlikely event that you find yourself carrying a shield, it inflicts a -2 penalty to your opponent(s) Melee stat during Fight actions. It will also get you a *lot* of attention if carried around in public.

**Designer's note:** *that's a very generic bonus for a hugely varied family of objects*

*It's true, shields are hugely varied, but in 1940s Britain they all have one thing in common: staggering rarity. For brevity's sake, this catch-all rule is here to cover that 'just in case' situation, and doesn't go into the (substantial) difference between a buckler and a tower shield.*

There is a good reason why armour had all but disappeared from the battlefields of the early twentieth century: it was almost no use whatsoever against modern bullets. Even the steel helmet introduced early in the First World War was designed to prevent damage from shrapnel and debris thrown up by explosions, not to prevent bullet wounds. While there were some semi-effective ballistic vests and heavy steel breastplates around, they were not commonplace due to either unbelievable cost or impractical weight. Only engineers and some medical personnel wore them routinely. It is, however, very effective at preventing harm from opponents armed with melee weapons, archaic ranged weapons, explosive damage etc.

Just be aware that you will attract a lot of attention walking down Doncaster high street in full plate.



# Terrain & Using Cover

Terrain has two broad effects. One is inflict a Ranged penalty on anyone firing through it. The other is to affect movement via several 'attributes.'

## Using cover

A character benefits from cover whenever they are at least partially hidden by the terrain between them and another character trying to shoot at them. There is a distinction between **taking cover** and merely being **obscured by terrain**, as detailed below.

**Taking cover** means that a character is assumed to be crouching or hiding so as to maximise that cover's effectiveness.

If a character is **taking cover and hiding**, they are out of sight, and therefore may not be shot at so long as the cover is between them and the shooter. Hiding characters behind cover may not shoot at anything on the other side of that cover, since they can't see them.

Being **obscured by terrain** means that there *happens* to be some terrain partially blocking the firer's shot, but that the target isn't actively taking cover, and as such the cover's rating is halved (rounding up). Being obscured will only generally happen when the target is unaware that they're about to get shot at and is in an **area** of relatively dense terrain, such as woodland. If someone survives the first shooting action against them, they are thereafter assumed to be taking cover.

## Terrain attributes

**Area terrain** obscures targets even if they're unaware of the shooter. If the target is unaware of their attacker, area terrain still confers half its ranged penalty (rounding down to the last complete integer).

**Buildings** are enclosed areas of terrain which may only be entered via the traditional means of a door, or the less traditional means of a window.

**Difficult ground** halves all movement distances. You may instead move at full speed, but must pass a Reflex test to avoid falling. If your Reflexes fail you, you go prone and take a Physique test. If failed, you are [injured](#). If you sprint over

difficult ground, you must pass two Reflex tests per action to avoid tripping.

**Hazardous terrain:** take a Reflex test to avoid [injury](#) when moving through hazardous terrain. If failed, go prone and take a Physique test. If failed, you are [injured](#).

**Impassable terrain** may not be crossed or climbed.

**Injuries:** when rolling the location of any injuries you sustain, use the [Melee location roll](#), not the ranged one.

**Obstacles:** pass a Reflex test when moving over an obstacle. If failed, one whole action must be used to clamber over. If you attempted and failed the Reflex test whilst sprinting, go prone and pass a Physique test to avoid [injury](#).

**Vertical terrain** must be climbed rather than moved over.

Terrain	Ranged penalty	Attributes
Waist-high foliage	1	Area
Boxes/crates	2	Obstacle
Sparse woodland	3	Area
Dense woodland	4	Difficult; area
Rubble		Difficult
Fence		Obstacle
Solid fence	1	Obstacle
Stone wall	3	Obstacle
Ruined building	4	Area, difficult
Building (firing from a window)	4	Building, vertical
Fortress walls	6	Impassable
Earthworks/deep ditch	6	
Marshland		Difficult
Frozen-over lake/river		Hazardous
Moraine field	2	Difficult
Lava flow		Impassable



# Toxins & Environmental Hazards

## Holding your breath

If you wish to hold your breath to avoid damage from smoke, gas, or to swim underwater, you can do so for a number of actions equal to your Physique (plus any points you have in Cardio or a similarly suitable skill). If you wish to conserve air, you can choose to perform only one action each turn.

Once that number of actions has passed, you'll need to pass a Physique test at the start of every action in which you wish to continue holding your breath. Should you fail, your reflexes overcome your willpower and you suck in a big lungful of whatever is out there, and are now unconscious (or semi-conscious at best). Unless given a source of breathable air, you will be dead in a number of turns equal to your Physique.

## Fire

Many flammable materials are actually surprisingly resistant to setting alight, particularly the natural fibres common in the 40s; without accelerant it needs quite an effort to get going. It is assumed that if a character's clothing is set alight, they will immediately beat out the flames, limiting the damage to being merely an uncomfortable burn and a sartorial downgrade.

If said fire is the result of being doused in an accelerant, such as burning fuel, or if a body part is pressed against a burning object, this will inflict an injury to that location as the heat is either intense enough to immediately cause an injurious burn, or the flames are harder to put out quickly.

Barring some niche circumstances, it's far more likely that the real trouble will come with having to hold your breath in smoky environments - see *holding your breath* above.

## Electricity

In the modern world we have advanced circuit breakers to protect us. In the 1940's we have ordinary fuse wire, and you'd better hope someone hasn't replaced it with fence wire "because it kept blowing." If you ground an electrical current either accidentally or as a result of an attack with a high enough amperage to kill rather than just hurt - typically household supply or above - take a Physique + Cardio test. The difficulty of the initial test depends on the strength of the current:

- Household supply: 0
- National Grid: -1
- Lightning Strike: -3

Failure will stop your heart. You will need CPR from someone with an appropriate medical skill within a minute of failing the test. The CPR test does not suffer from the modifiers listed above.

## Poisons, venoms, drugs and diseases

There are far too many of these to create a comprehensive set of rules. Instead, we use a common mechanic to resist poison/disease/drugs and allow the storyteller the freedom to interpret effects of failure according to the severity of the invading agent.

Needless to say, no amount of physical fitness will prevent drugs or poisons designed to work on humans from having their intended effects. Should someone ingest a lethal dose of cyanide, you won't be needing any dice. When there is a question of what might happen - be it surviving a morphine overdose or merely managing to avoid hurling up following alcoholic overindulgence - then a Physique test is used to avoid the worst.



# THE DOWNRIGHT ODD

## *- Evocation, Neuromancy, and Divine Instruments -*

This section of the rules explores those individuals classified by the Ministry as ‘Downright Odd.’ These Oddnesses are considerably more powerful than the other Oddnesses but require far greater investment of XP, and furthermore have much more involved rules. They are aimed at players—particularly experienced ones—who would like something to sink their teeth into.

Neuromancers and Evocationists would, in previous eras, have been known as wizards, sorcerers, or even witches. Divine Instruments, conversely, have generally been regarded as either saints or filthy heretics, depending on how good they were at politics. Of course there have always been charlatans; peddlers of phony tricks and deception. This chapter is not about those pretenders; if anything, the Ministry is quite happy with the continued existence of such clowns as they provide a useful cover for genuine mystics.

If you’re playing an evocationist or neuromancer, turn the page! If you’re playing a divine instrument, however, you may wish to skip ahead to [that section](#).

### **The Nature of Magic**

Magic is one of the collective terms used to describe a range of bizarre abilities, the mechanics of which remain unknown to science (mostly because the vast majority of modern gentlefolk take no stock in such ‘nonsense’). While the permutations of magic are many and varied, scholars of the extramundane often divide the practice of magic into three categories: evocation, neuromancy, and rituals.

These three forms of magic work very differently to each other, and are essentially unrelated areas of expertise. It is a rare individual who has any aptitude in two different branches of magic, never mind all three.

There are, however, some unifying factors. A certain strength of mind is paramount, and uncontrolled use of magical force can be extremely dangerous to both the caster and those nearby. Of great interest to arcane scholars is the fact that magical power summoned by one of the three branches appears to be able to exert an effect on the others. A ritualist, for example, is quite capable of dispelling the efforts of an evocationist given the appropriate knowledge and equipment, suggesting that all these abilities have a common source of power.



# Becoming a wizard

## 1) Select neuromancy or evocation as your oddness during character creation.

To be able to cast spells, one must be eligible. For evocation and neuromancy, you must have taken them as one of your oddnesses during character creation. You *could* stop at this point and gain powers and training as the story progresses. Just be aware that untrained neuromancers and evocationists may involuntarily start manifesting random dangerous effects when experiencing intense emotions. These random occurrences will cease once they've been trained - see the point below. Note that **merely being an evocationist/neuromancer gives you the magical senses described later in this chapter.**

### Untrained wizards in-game

If a wizard is untrained, then any time they fail a Courage test or roll a dreadful failure on any other stat, the intense emotions will trigger strange occurrences! Roll on the miscast table in this chapter, using your Sorcery stat as the miscast area.

Additionally, whenever an untrained wizard uses the cast action, they will always trigger a miscast (even if the spell was successfully cast).

Suffice to say the miscast table ranges from the extremely inconvenient to the utterly lethal, and so the Ministry strongly encourages agents to carry out step two of becoming a wizard: get some training, you bloody amateur!

## 2) Decide on a training method.

Training costs no XP, and the only rules effect is that you will no longer suffer the rules for being an untrained wizard. Training can occur in-game or during character creation, and could take a number of forms depending on your character's background. This bit is up to you, but for convenience, here are some examples:

- You were recently discovered by the Ministry after you manifested a miscast during a moment of high emotion. You were subsequently brought to Chapter House and trained by retired Ministry field agents; during this time you (or they) decided you ought to leave your old job and work as a field agent instead!
- You were trained at an educational institution that caters to the extramundane, such as Oberon College in Oxford, or Marlowe College in Cambridge.
- You are uncommonly disciplined, and since childhood have taught yourself how to control your emotions and the strange effects that come with them.
- You were diagnosed in childhood and had regular visits from a Ministry-registered mage. What this person was like and how you felt about them is up to you - they might have been strict and domineering, or kindly and supportive, or anywhere between.
- You never came to the attention of the Ministry but searched far and wide for people who might be able to explain your strange abilities, and eventually were pointed in the direction of a very strange old lady who seemed to know all sorts of things and kept all sorts of funny chemicals in her house.
- It runs in your family, and your parents were unsurprised when, as a baby, you unwittingly scrambled the cat's brain. Either because your family don't trust the Ministry, or because you didn't grow up in Britain, your parents took you to the cunning folk who know how to help such children.
- Browsing some old books in an archive you shouldn't have had access to, you found that - to your surprise - the books worked! You assumed anyone could do it until you tried to show a friend...

## 3) Purchase spells/effects for your discipline

Being trained has made you safe; now it's time to become dangerous! If you want to cast spells, you will have to learn them first. The costs of evocation effects and neuromancy spells are listed in those sections, along with their rules.



# Casting spells

Each of the three schools of magic have different requirements and methods for casting, and are detailed in their sections later in this chapter. There are some commonalities, though.

## All spells are cast by testing your Sorcery stat.

If you wish to use a spell during a [round](#) of actions, you will need to use a *cast* action to do so.

You can improve your chances of casting with **Skills**. If a particular skill is appropriate, this will be explained in the rules for the relevant spell.

**Stunning successes** often confer additional benefits. Where this is the case, the spell's rules will elaborate.

Rolling a **dreadful failure** when you cast means you must roll on the miscast table overleaf.

Your Sorcery stat might be modified by other contextual factors, such as concentration actions and casting difficulty (detailed below).

## Concentrating

You can reduce the difficulty of spells you are attempting by using the *concentrate* action described in the [actions summary](#).

## Casting difficulty

More impressive spells will inflict bigger penalties on your casting roll. The sum of these penalties are referred to as the spell's difficulty.

If the difficulty of the spell takes your Sorcery stat below 1 even after applying all bonuses (e.g. skill, concentration actions, etc), then you cannot make the casting attempt.

## Sustained spells

Spells which have this attribute remain in play until the caster chooses to end them, or the caster falls unconscious, or they are dispelled. The caster can choose to end them at any time, and can act as normal while sustaining it.

While the spell is in effect, it reduces the caster's Sorcery stat by the casting difficulty.

### Spell books: a wizard's best friend

It is strongly suggested that spellcasters have a cheat sheet/printout of the spells and effects they know, since they'll be making frequent use of them in-game. Evocationists might also find it helpful to write down their favourite combinations for quick reference (and are absolutely encouraged to give those combinations overblown names).



## MISCASTING

This is the table to roll on if you failed dreadfully when attempting to cast. Some results refer to a **Miscast Area**; this is centred on you, with a radius in metres equal to your margin of failure.

### *The Miscast table*

1. **Energetic misalignment:** for a second or so the temperature drops in the miscast area, everything is rimed with a thin film of frost, compasses spin, radios crackle and lights brighten momentarily.
2. **Poltergeist activity:** for a moment within the miscast area there is a sudden burst of energy, strange winds swirl, people are touched or prodded, objects shake or even fall from shelves and break, odd voices whisper. The effect is momentary, but enough to break concentration or distract.
3. **Static build-up:** your hair stands on end, and for a number of minutes equal to the difficulty of the spell, anything conductive you touch will shock you (and anyone else you touch) with a harmless but painful jolt.
4. **Entomological Summoning:** all insects and similar creepy crawlies within the miscast area are drawn to you. By your next turn you will have gathered a silent audience of bugs. They won't follow you, but will slowly disperse over the next few minutes.
5. **The rot:** milk sours and food spoils around you within the miscast area.
6. **Instinctual fear:** animals turn to face you, howling and acting distressed within 10 times the miscast area. For the next few hours, if you approach an animal that was present for the miscast it will shy away from you.
7. **Electromagnetic surge:** electronics fritz out within the miscast area and will need to be repaired, light bulbs glow brightly then shatter, anything that makes a noise will emit feedback screeching and then go dead.
8. **Obscured reflection:** all glass in the miscast area distorts and cracks. Note that anything under pressure or containing liquids is likely to have unfortunate consequences.
9. **Stigmata:** the caster develops a permanent small 'birthmark'. Roll for location as if for hand to hand combat.
10. **Serious Miscast:** something has gone horribly wrong. Roll again on the *serious miscast table*.

### *The Serious Miscast table*

1. **Physical feedback:** your misdirection of the spell means that the energy never quite leaves your body and leaves you crying blood, vomiting, and in convulsions. You are incapable of acting for a number of actions equal to the difficulty of the spell, after which the effects wear off.
2. **Banshee howl:** the energy of the spell is reformed into a deafening, formless howl. Anyone in a mile can hear it and within 5 times the miscast area it is loud enough to cause harm. Everyone in the area must pass a physique test or be deafened for a number of minutes equal to the difficulty of the spell.
3. **Explosive feedback:** the spell stalls as it leaves the body and builds its energy in a tiny point until exploding in a loud bang! The caster is thrown backwards D5 metres and goes prone, treating any collision as normal for damage.
4. **Malevolent spirits:** your spell awakens cruel and mischievous entities in the area who pour out to attack you. Everyone within the miscast area is effectively charged by a combatant with M5, R5, and reach 1 who will continue to attack in the caster's turn until they are dispersed. Any successful hit on a spirit will disperse it, but the disruption and potential injury is serious.
5. **K.O.** The energy of the spell fails to be directed properly and pours out of your mind in undirected and disruptive bursts that stun the nervous system. You and anyone touching you (unless they pass a physique test) are knocked out for a number of turns equal to the difficulty of the spell.
6. **Fire:** the energy of the spell spills out and has the chance to ignite all suitable objects in the miscast area. See environmental hazards for the effects of fire and the chances of spreading.
7. **Seismic shockwave:** the energy of the spell earths itself spectacularly in the ground setting off a violent earth tremor. Everyone in the miscast area must pass a physique test (modified by spell's difficulty) or be thrown to the ground. Structures are likely to suffer damage or even collapse depending on their condition, at the storyteller's discretion.
8. **Off-target:** Energy always wants to find the easiest path. You have failed to direct the spell properly and instead of affecting the intended target it affects the closest viable individual, friend or foe, instead. If there is no closer target it affects you instead.
9. **Cerebral aneurysm:** violent feedback from the spell lashes at your brain. Take a Physique test with a penalty equal to the spell's difficulty. If you fail, you suffer a head injury.
10. **You have attracted Its attention.** Treat the miscast as a "2" on the normal miscast table. Furthermore, something about you has attracted a malign intellect's attention. What that entity is, what its attention means, and when it will act is in the hands of your storyteller.



## Arcane Abilities

Just like other [Abilities](#), these arcane abilities can be bought with XP. The difference is that most of them are spells! They can be purchased by evocationists and neuromancers alike.

### DISPEL (10XP)

*Prerequisite: Evocationist/Neuromancer.*

This is a spell you can cast to immediately cancel any one *sustained* spell currently in play within [short range](#). You can use any skill points in Arcane Defence as a bonus to your Sorcery. Your casting difficulty is equal to the target spell's original casting difficulty.

### DISRUPT (10XP)

*Prerequisite: Evocationist/Neuromancer.*

This is a *sustained* spell you can use to throw one enemy spellcaster within [short range](#) off their game and make it harder for them to cast.

You can use any skill points in Arcane Defence as a bonus for the casting roll. If you succeed, the target's Sorcery is reduced by your margin of success while the spell remains in play.

For the purposes of sustaining and dispelling Disrupt, use your margin of success as the casting difficulty. When you successfully cast this spell, you can choose to voluntarily reduce your own margin of success (so as to reduce the burden on your own mind while *sustaining* it).

### DEFEND (10XP)

*Prerequisite: Evocationist/Neuromancer.*

This is a *sustained* spell you can use to shield other characters from enemy magic. By default it affects 1 character within arm's reach. The target(s) can use your margin of success as a bonus when taking stat tests caused by spells.

You can increase the casting difficulty by 1 for each additional character you affect. Targeting characters within close range also increases the difficulty by 1; going up to short range increases it by 2.

For the purposes of sustaining and dispelling Defend, use your margin of success as the casting difficulty. When you successfully cast this spell, you can choose to voluntarily reduce your own margin of success (so as to reduce the burden on your own mind while *sustaining* it).

### MAGICAL FOCUS (16XP)

*Prerequisite: Magical Training, see [Becoming a Wizard](#).*

You have extensively practised magic, honing your mind as a martial artist hones their muscles. When maintaining a spell cast in a previous round the sorcery penalty of the maintained spell is halved (rounding up). Note this only applies to maintaining the spell, not its initial casting.

- **Upgrade: Peerless Magical Focus (16XP)** Your ability to maintain spells is second to none. You control the skeins of magic as a talented magician spins a room full of plates. This ability *replaces* Magical Focus. When maintaining a spell cast in a previous round the sorcery penalty of the maintained spell is reduced to a quarter of its casting value, rounding up (e.g. a -5 penalty becomes -1, and a -6 penalty becomes -2). Note this only applies to maintaining the spell, not its initial casting.



## THE MAGICAL SENSES

### Who has magical senses?

All those who possess the Talent for magic share an ability to detect the magical fluxes and workings of other adepts. Thus, evocationists and neuromancers both have the two magical senses listed below without having to spend any XP. Characters who are *not* evocationists/neuromancers don't have the magical senses unless their Oddness specifies otherwise.

### How to use magical senses

Take a Sorcery test. You may concentrate to increase your chances of success. Unless specifically noted you will not cause miscasts when making use of your senses in this way. Remember that if you are currently maintaining a spell, your Sorcery will be reduced by the casting value of the spell.

### Taking Skill Points in magical senses

These senses can be trained like any other skill: you can gain a bonus to your Sorcery test by spending XP in the normal way on skill points in *Sense Magic* and/or *Telesthesia*.

### Sense Magic

A successful Sorcery test to *sense magic* can be used to gain any one of the following benefits:

- Detect passive energies bound in artefacts.
- Act as a sort of forensic spellcasting detecting whether magic was used in your current location.
- Determining if a spell is currently active. Be aware that if the caster is nearby, your attempts to feel out their efforts may be noticed.

Stunning successes may give you more details about the nature of the magic you detect. Dreadful failures may have story-based effects but will rarely be harmful in the manner of miscasts.

Your GM may impose penalties or bonuses to the roll depending on the situation. Maybe a skilled adept wishes to conceal a trap; maybe an artifact is radiating so much energy that it would be almost impossible to miss. The GM might also keep the modifier secret, so you *think* you can't detect any magic when in fact it's being concealed from you.

### Telesthesia

This is the art of magically determining someone's location by sensing the resonance of a sympathetic object, or *totem*. There is a hierarchy of worth in totems, determined by how permanently the totem was a part of the target. Bone is best but rather tricky to come by, after which it is blood, hair/fingernails, and finally any objects of great personal connection.

**If you can pass a Sorcery test while holding the totem, you get a bearing telling you which direction they're in.** You can only use a totem once (your own magical energies interfere with it) and concentration provides no benefits. The following modifiers apply:

- **Totem potency:** +1 for bone, 0 for blood, -3 for hair/nails, -5 for personal objects.
- **Target's protection:** apply a modifier if the target is shielded in some way. If the target is in an empowered circle or underwater, success is impossible.

If you roll a **dreadful failure** on your Sorcery test, you trigger a [miscast](#).

If you get a **stunning success**, you also know roughly how many miles away your quarry is.

### Finding objects personal to you

You can also get the direction of an object of great personal significance to yourself, perhaps something that was stolen from you, that you lost, or that you planted deliberately. This works just as described above, but where the totem potency is automatically a -3 penalty to your Sorcery test. Since *you* are the totem, you can try this multiple times. Just remember that concentration provides no benefits, you can trigger a miscast, and another wizard in possession of your object might be tracking you down in much the same way!



# Evocation

By focusing their mind and moving their body—particularly their hands—in a certain way, evocationists can manipulate their environment and bend physics to their will. The ability is referred to in arcane academic circles as molecular telekinesis, and what little research there is suggests there is some connection between the caster's nervous system and the particles around them. The recent breakthroughs in physics by Bohr and Heisenberg have given the Ministry's scientists hope that the mechanics of evocation may yet be understood, but for now the salient point is that its uses are many and varied, and is of great help when used in support of other Ministry agents.

## Taking skill points in evocation

You can take skill points in Evocation, and this will provide a Sorcery bonus to any attempts to cast an evocation spell.

## Don't let anyone immobilise you!

Evocationists need some freedom of movement to do what they do. If your hands, fingers and arms are unable to move freely for any reason, any attempt to cast will automatically count as a dreadful failure and trigger a miscast.

## New to evocation? Here's a summary!

Rather than having a fixed list of spells, evocationists 'form' spells each time they cast. They do this by choosing an area and evoking one or more effects in that area. There are ten effects in total. The more effects you add, and the bigger the target area, the harder your spell will be to cast.

Each of the ten effects can only be used once you've learned them. Each effect costs 8XP.

## FORMING EVOCATION SPELLS

Evocation uses the normal rules for [casting a sustained spell](#), with one important exception: each time you cast, you can change what the spell does. As such you must follow the two steps below to determine your casting difficulty.

### 1: Choose area

Evocation spells are cast on an area, affecting everyone and everything in that area. Unless the caster wishes otherwise, their spells never have any effect on themselves. By default, the area of effect has a diameter of one metre and will be within arm's reach of the caster; imagine having a metre-wide hoop and placing it on the ground in front of or around you. All characters within that area will be affected until they leave the area.

**Increase range:** by increasing your casting difficulty by 1, you can have spell's point of origin be anywhere within close range (that's 10 metres). Alternatively, by increasing the difficulty by 2, you can create the effect area anywhere within short range (40m or ½ a football pitch).

**Widen area:** by increasing your casting difficulty by 1, you can increase the radius of the affected area by 1 metre. You can do this as many times as you like (so for example you could increase your casting difficulty by 4 to get a radius of 4 metres).

### 2: Choose effect(s)

You can select as many effects as you wish from the list overleaf, and most of them can be stacked, although inverse effects will

cancel each other out. Where this is the case, an 'inverse' will be noted in the effect's description. For each effect beyond the first, increase the casting difficulty by 1.

**Optional subtlety:** since evocation is an aggressive form of magic, most of the effects listed below are described in terms of their combat effectiveness. That said, evocation can also be used to much more subtle effect (such as evoking a milder version of heatwave to keep warm in cold weather). This doesn't make the casting value any easier - being subtle is just as hard as being forceful - but does broaden the applications of evocation quite considerably.

**Learning effects:** an evocationist doesn't automatically know any effects. To add an effect to your arsenal, you can purchase it for 8XP. The more effects that you know, the more situations you'll be able to control.

**Casting when untrained:** as detailed at the start of this chapter, training costs no XP - it's more of a narrative choice. If you choose to play an untrained evocationist, you will trigger a miscast every time you cast a spell.

**Sustaining evocation spells:** your spells all have the *sustained* attribute as described in the section on casting spells. You cannot move the area of effect after casting; you must cast again if you want to affect a different area!



## EVOCATION EFFECTS

### Burden [inverse: featherload]

Everything in the target area becomes twice as heavy. People's movement rates are halved, and some objects may require Physique tests to pick up.

- **Stunning Success:** Objects in the target area feel dense as uranium. Characters within the affected area must pass Physique tests or fall prone under their own weight.

### Destabilise

You send ripples of force through solid objects caught within the area, temporarily weakening the bonds between their constituent molecules. Any characters within the area suffer a -25% penalty to their Physique when testing to avoid injury. Brittle objects become more brittle, malleable objects become more malleable, and so on.

- **Stunning Success:** Characters now suffer a -50% penalty to Physique when resisting injury, and if injured by firearms will suffer two levels of damage. Fast-moving machine parts have a 50% chance of warping and jamming.

### Featherload [inverse: burden]

Anything within the target area now weighs half as much.

Stunning success: Anything in the target area is weightless and will float for as long as the effect is maintained.

- **Combination: featherload & shockwave.** Any human-sized object simultaneously subjected to these two effects will be thrown a number of metres equal to the amount by which the caster passed their Sorcery test, and must then pass a Physique test to avoid injury upon landing. If they strike another character whilst in flight, that character must also take a Physique test with a +1 bonus to avoid injury.

### Bitter chill [inverse: heatwave]

The target area drops sharply in temperature, taking characters' breath away and costing them one of the two actions in their next turn. For each turn people spend within this area of effect, their Physique is temporarily reduced by 1 as hypothermia sets in at an unnatural pace. If their Physique reaches 0, they are dead.

- **Stunning Success:** You begin to freeze liquids in the affected area. First a thin skin but the longer the spell continues the more firmly frozen it becomes. As a rough guide, a litre of water would freeze solid after five consecutive turns.

*Note: characters wearing gear designed for arctic survival delay these effects by one turn, meaning that they will only suffer the effects if they are subjected to these effects for two turns in a row (unless they are already in an arctic environment).*

### Heatwave [inverse: bitter chill]

The air in the target area undergoes a rapid increase in temperature (up to around 55°C/130°F). Unless characters within pass a Physique check, they will drop or remove any items in contact with their skin that conduct heat efficiently, such as any items made of metal. If this effect is sustained for multiple minutes, consult the rules on hazardous environments for guidance.

- **Stunning Success:** You can focus the heat energy into a tiny point within the affected area. You may create a flame on something intended to be lit (match, candle, alcohol-soaked rag).
- **Combination: bitter chill.** If your target is currently affected by a spell with the 'bitter chill' effect when hit with heatwave, the pain is such that they will be incapacitated for their next turn, although the effects of both freeze and heatwave are then cancelled out.

### Howling wind

Localised wind whips up blinding dust and dirt. Anyone within the target area must pass a Reflex test to avoid being blinded for their next turn. If a character is wearing goggles or a gas mask, they ignore this effect.

- **Stunning Success:** The winds are so powerful that they will affect people's ability to aim straight; all shooting from inside the target area is conducted at -2 to Ranged.

### Jolt

A bolt of electricity flashes between your fingertips and any conductive objects in the target area, including people. Anyone affected must pass a Physique check to avoid missing their next turn. If they roll a dreadful failure, they have instead suffered an injury to the body as their heart struggles to cope.

- **Stunning success:** You can generate about a car battery's worth of sustained charge and can maintain it as long as the spell is maintained. You can use this to power electrical devices in the target area.

### Kinetic Shield

The target area generates a strong field that has a chance to deflect incoming projectiles, conferring a -2 Ranged penalty on any attempts to shoot into the target area. Shots within the target area are unaffected, as are shots leaving the target area.

- **Stunning Success:** Ranged penalty increased to -4.

### Photon Deflection

You distort the path of light around the target area, making it look like a bubble in a pane of glass. Anyone inside the area will be unable to see any light that does not originate from within it, and anyone outside the target area will be unable to see anything within it.

- **Stunning Success:** With greater finesse you can make the distortion permeable in one direction. Choose whether to be able to see into or out of the area.

### Shockwave

A wave of force ripples out from the centre of the target area. Anyone caught in the blast must pass a Physique or Reflex check to avoid being knocked down; objects smaller than people may be knocked over. If this power is sustained, no-one in the target area can move towards the epicentre without passing a Physique test with a -2 penalty.

- **Stunning Success:** the shockwave strikes with stunning force. Characters in the area who fail their Physique checks lose an action in the next turn while they shake it off.



# Neuromancy

## Starting out, and learning spells

A trained neuromancer is simply someone who has learned to prevent their mind accidentally exerting an unnatural influence over others. If exerting an unnatural influence over people is exactly what you *want* to be doing, then there are 5 spells in the discipline. Each one costs 5XP. If there are multiple options in the same spell then you unlock all of them for that 5XP cost.

## Improving spells

Each individual spell can be upgraded by taking skill points in it, which can then be used as a bonus to your Sorcery stat when casting them.

**Designer's note on spell costs:** 5XP is pretty cheap to start you off with a spell, but the real cost is those skill points you'll need to spend on each individual spell, and those can really add up!

## CASTING NEUROMANCY SPELLS

Neuromancy uses the normal rules for [casting spells](#), with the following additional points.

### Degrees of success

There are five spells to choose from, each with variable effects depending on the degree of success, from a partial success (the exact roll required), a success (anything better than the exact roll) right up to a stunning success. If there's no option for a partial success in a spell, then just use the rules for a success.

### Eligible targets

By default, neuromancy spells affect one target you can see within arm's reach.

### Casting difficulty

The casting difficulty is equal to the target's own Sorcery value. If the target is aware you are a Neuromancer and knows you're there, you must instead use their Sorcery *or* their Influence, whichever is higher.

- If they have any skill points in Arcane Defence, these are added to the casting difficulty as well.
- A character may choose to offer no resistance to your Neuromancy and thus cause no penalty to your roll with their innate Sorcery or Influence.

## Being a Neuromancer in the 1940s

One of the fastest ways to get questioned by the Ministry is for them to learn that you're a Neuromancer. The ability to alter people's perceptions, take their memories and read their thoughts is understandably feared by any who know of its existence. Indeed, the use of Neuromancy is strictly regulated under the 1905 Uncommon Powers Act, with wilful transgressions usually resulting in lifelong solitary confinement or even execution. There are very few circumstances where adjusting or controlling a person's mind will be done for legal reasons; unless of course, you do so in service of the Ministry.

By far and away the most common legal usage of this power is in therapeutic treatment: licensed Neuromantic practitioners act like psychiatrists and can use their powers to soothe the mind of their patients. Of course, such practices are closely monitored by the Ministry.

### Affecting multiple targets

If you wish to affect **multiple targets**, add their Sorcery values together (minimum of -1 per extra target) to establish the difficulty. You must be able to see and/or touch all your targets.

### Increase range

By increasing your casting penalty by 1, your targets can be anywhere you can see within close range (that's 10 metres). Alternatively, by increasing the penalty by 2, they can be anywhere you can see within short range (40m or ½ a football pitch).

### Sustaining neuromancy spells

*Sustained* neuromancy spells follow the usual [casting](#) rules, and furthermore they end as soon as you lose sight of one or more of the targets.

### Milder effects

You can always choose to employ a milder effect than the one you roll - there's no need to build a sandcastle in a chap's brain when you only wanted to convince him he's lost his house keys.



## NEUROMANCY SPELLS

### Illusion

*Sustained.* You trick the target's brain into seeing and/or hearing something, essentially creating a bespoke hallucination.

- **Partial success:** You make the target see or hear something. It might be changing the colour of a door, seeing a hole in a fence, hearing an owl, or a faint whisper from behind them - anything you like, as long as it's minor.
- **Success:** You alter the target's perception in a more marked way, perhaps rendering yourself invisible, or making them see or hear someone who isn't there.
- **Stunning Success:** The target perceives the world as you choose, and will have no idea that it's an illusion.

*Note: against a dreaming target you can attempt to adjust their dreams using Illusion. Doing so blind will result in a jarring disconnection unless very carefully handled. Combining Illusion with a sustained Mind Reading gets you much better results.*

### Emotional Manipulation

You take a step beyond the normal societal mechanisms of manipulating emotions and reach right into the brain to control those feelings directly.

- **Success:** You are able to either enhance or reduce the target's existing emotional state. So if a person is angry you can push them to fury or calm them to irritation. Your degree of success will be represented in the Storyteller's depiction of that character's emotional state.
- **Stunning Success:** You are able to suggest a new emotional state for the target. They have a flash of that emotion; it will be genuine but could be confusing to the target if it is completely out of context. Maintaining this new emotion is a sustained spell with a difficulty equal to the degree of success.

### Memory Block

You reach into a person's brain and disrupt the connections that allow memories to form.

- **Partial success:** the target forgets a number of hours equal to the roll of a D10. If a 10 is rolled, they forget a number of days equal to a D10. If a further 10 is rolled, they forget D5 weeks.
- **Success:** the target forgets a number of hours equal to your margin of success x2, starting with their most recent memories. You can choose to reduce your margin of success after you roll.
- **Stunning Success:** The target forgets a period from any point in their life, with a duration of anywhere from one second up to one month.

*Note: this power doesn't erase a memory, it prevents someone's recollection of it. If a neuromancer can cast Memory Loss with a stunning success, they can repair the damage done in the past.*

### Compel

This spell has two modes; choose one depending on your intentions and the context. **Persuasion** is a light touch and the target will normally be unaware of your use of magic. **Compel Action** will always let the target know that they are being controlled.

#### Persuasion

- **Success:** You project your will into your voice, giving you unnatural persuasiveness that could manifest as a seductive, charismatic or mesmeric quality. Your Influence is increased by the amount by which you passed for as long as you sustain the spell.
- A **stunning success** includes the benefits of a success and means the target will believe almost anything you say whilst the power is in effect, although highly outlandish or ridiculous statements may still need an Influence test to pass. Note that this includes suggestions of physical feelings like nausea or drowsiness.

*Note that by combining Persuasion with a maintained Emotional Manipulation can make it much easier to have a target believe you by putting them into the right emotional state to respond the way you want.*

#### Compel Action

- **Partial success:** The target gets a strong urge to perform one action, if they are inclined to do so and it makes sense then they might well perform this action, but are not compelled to.
- **Success:** the target follows your exact mental instructions for a number of actions equal to the amount by which you pass the test. You cannot instruct a person to perform actions that would cause them or those they care about harm.
- **Stunning success:** then you can either 'wear' the target for as long as you *sustain* the spell under the conditions above, *or*, you may force one action no matter how harmful. While wearing someone, your character enters a catatonic trance and can make no actions themselves.

*Note that if you wish to use Memory Manipulation to remove the memory of a Compel Action having taken place, you'll need a stunning success due to the potent nature of Compel.*



## Mind Reading

With Mind Reading you have a choice. You can *scan the surface* thoughts or go for a *deep dive*. Going deep is far more complete but the target is *always* aware you are in their head, and it has its own risks for the caster.

### Surface Scan

- **Partial success:** you get little more than a sense of the target's emotional state.
- **Success:** You gain the benefits of a flat pass and can hear the target's surface thoughts. Mostly this will be inner monologue. Combining this with questioning can be a powerful tool.
- **Stunning Success:** You gain the benefits of the previous two results and also a hint of the target's intentions for the immediate future.

### Go Deep

**Partial success:** Snapshots and fragmented images of the target's recent experiences flicker past your mind's eye.

**Success:** You gain an understanding of the target's most fundamental drives and ambitions. At this level of detail most neuromancers are risking identity leeching, where they momentarily relate to their target more than themselves. The target is now aware there's something very strange going on, and if they know about neuromancers, they know what you are.

**Stunning Success:** The target's mind almost feels like your own. Many of your own memories temporarily drop away from you as you wander through the target's mind as you will. Their formative moments, their regrets, triumphs and losses all rush past. You can know whatever you want about them. But their thoughts are not in neat orders. You need to "remember" the information using a Knowledge roll. You can add the amount by which you passed the spellcasting roll to your Knowledge. If you fail the knowledge test, you can use any number of actions to try again so long as you sustain the spell, but after each Knowledge roll, the target can take an Influence test which, if successful, ends the spell. When the spell ends, your own sense of self will be heavily eroded, and will take a few minutes to return to you. Any attempt to hurt the character you read will feel as though they are attacking you, and the GM may ask you to take contextually relevant tests to restrain yourself from defending your target or otherwise sympathising with them, no matter how you'd normally feel about the individual in question.

*Note: attempting to read the mind of multiple targets gets confusing quickly. If you successfully cast at multiple characters, you'll need to take a Knowledge test, adding any skill points in Mind Reading. If you fail, you still gain the information, but you don't know which thought belongs to which person. If you roll a dreadful failure, you know believe yourself to be the target for a number of hours equal to your margin of failure!*



## Divine Instruments

It has been noted by scholars of the extramundane that there have been miracle workers from many if not most of the world's religions. There are differing opinions as to what this might mean; some suggest it's about the act of having faith, other suggest that what we worship as gods are extraplanar entities who work through their mortal agents, and others suggest that there is only one objective truth, but that the world's religions are simply humanity's various attempts to distil it into a comprehensible narrative. Some argue that all of these things are true, while others are deeply offended by such suggestions.

The Ministry has no position on which religions are and aren't appropriate for its personnel, particularly since it might recruit agents from across the British Empire. All that matters is whether that person is effective in the field and, crucially, that their faith won't prevent them doing their duty.

### BECOMING A DIVINE INSTRUMENT

Divine Instruments are not merely people of faith. They are individuals in whom their patron deity - or something they *perceive* to be their patron deity - has always taken an interest. Divine Instruments don't technically have any power of their own; they are invoking the power of a higher being, allowing it to flow through them and out into the world.

Since their patron deity/"deity" probably doesn't perceive time as a linear phenomenon, they have always taken an interest in their instrument. As such, **you decide to be a Divine Instrument during character creation.** The Oddness in and of itself has no effect. What it does give you, however, is access to the special abilities listed in this section. These abilities can be bought for XP, and like all abilities, skills, and stats, they can be taken during character creation or any time thereafter. Remember that you can only be Downright Odd in one way - you can't combine this Oddness with Neuromancy or Evocation!

#### Your Patron

The one choice you must make during character creation is which major religion you are adhering to. The Ministry recruits from across the British Empire, and sometimes even its allies. It's therefore worth remembering that while the bulk of the

UK's population in the late 30s/early 40s are some form of Christian, over half of the Empire's population are Hindu. Behind them, around a quarter are Muslims, with Christianity accounting for less than a fifth. Other major religions, including Buddhism, Judaism and Sikhism, are of course also present.

If your character's religion is polytheistic, you will need to decide which god you are an instrument of. It's also worth noting that a deity might have multiple instruments; this Oddness is not necessarily encouraging you to go around with a messiah complex! The Ministry would be wary of dealing with individuals likely to cause religious upheaval, since it would only attract unwanted attention. You are here to selflessly further your patron's goals, rather than furthering your own ambitions!

#### Incorporating religious faith into a game: what could POSSIBLY go wrong?

When dealing with real religions there is potential for some awkward misjudgements. Whatever your own beliefs, it's worth checking that the other players are happy for you to such a character in-game.



## HERESY & REDEMPTION: LOSING AND REGAINING ACCESS TO YOUR POWERS

There's a downside to being a Divine Instrument: you must avoid angering your patron! This is not so much a rule as a storytelling prompt to the player to help ensure your portrayal of a Divine Instrument remains frightfully juicy.

The prompt is this: if at any point you do something or are complicit in something contrary to your dogma, your powers become unusable.

This places a fair degree of expectation on the player that they will be consistent with their character's beliefs; there are many approaches even to individual religions as to how strictly certain practices should be observed. Of course, once the character's

beliefs are well-established you can expect the GM to look for interesting conundrums to tempt you with!

Following your filthy, sinful failure to be everything your patron expects, you will of course have to earn back their support. This would normally mean your character either taking a day or two to meditate on their sins, or, if you really need to get those powers back *right now*, to permanently sacrifice something meaningful in a display of contrition, possibly even lopping off one of your own fingers or some other decision that will leave your fellow agents questioning your sanity. Naturally, different patrons and faiths will have their own approaches to redemption.

## ABILITIES FOR DIVINE INSTRUMENTS

### Purchasing & Enhancing your Abilities

The abilities listed below can be purchased at any time. They are generally activated with a stat test, most commonly your Influence, Sorcery or Courage. You can enhance these abilities by taking skill points in them.

#### Sanctify Artefacts (10XP)

Your faith is ritual in nature, allowing objects you bless to carry a portion of your patron's power. Blessing takes time; at least a quarter of an hour of preparation is needed to bless objects. You can bless a number of objects equal to your Influence stat. If you bless more than this, only the most recent objects will retain their power.

Objects typically include any of the following: a flask of water or oil, a weapon, a projectile, or a bandage. After preparation, a successful Influence test finishes the blessing. You can take skill points in *Sanctify Artefacts* to improve your effectiveness and increase the number of objects you can bless.

If demons or undead come into physical contact with a blessed object, they must pass an immediate Physique check to avoid injury. If you rolled a stunning success when blessing the object, any demons/undead which survive their Physique test are also rendered immobile for their next turn.

Blessed bandages or unguents provide a +1 Physique bonus to the person using them, and are assumed to immediately cure infections when making contact with a wound. If you rolled a stunning success when sanctifying the object, the bonus becomes +2.

Blessings fade after the first use of that object, whether on its intended target or not.

#### Holy Subjugation (5XP)

Take an Influence test at any point during your turn. This does not take an action, although you can improve your chances of

success with *concentrate* actions. You can only attempt to trigger this ability once per turn.

If successful, you inflict a penalty equal to your margin of success on the Influence of one demonic or undead entity within Close Range (roughly 10 yards/metres). This penalty remains until you use this ability on another entity, or you fail a Courage test, or the entity moves out of Close Range. This ability is particularly useful when attempting an [exorcism](#).

#### Preserve Life (5XP)

This power comes into effect in a very particular circumstance: when another character is bleeding out. Perform an *interact* action and take an Influence test while within arm's reach of the injured person. If you succeed, they automatically pass their next Physique+Cardio test when trying to prevent further blood loss, thus giving you more time to get them proper medical attention.

#### Doctrine of Self-Sacrifice (15XP)

You are able to give any number of your [Fortune Tokens](#) to another character at any time during play.

#### Divine Intervention (15XP)

You can use your [Fortune Tokens](#) to modify the dice rolls of non-player characters as well as your own.

#### Righteous Wrath (5XP)

Take a Courage test at any point during your turn. This does not take an action, although you can improve your chances of success with *concentrate* actions. You can only attempt to trigger this ability once per turn.

If successful, then the next time you cause an undead or demonic entity to take a Physique test, they suffer a penalty equal to your margin of success.



### **Calming presence** (10XP)

This Divine Instrument is a voice of calm in the tumult. This ability has two 'modes'. When in a normal scene, take an Influence test (adding any skill points you have in *calming presence*). The aura of calm you project diffuses any tension in the air with baffling effectiveness; anyone who can see or hear you must take an Influence test with their Influence reduced by your margin of success. If they fail the test, they are - perhaps to their own surprise - calmed by your presence. Note that you haven't changed their minds, but simply cooled their anger for the moment. This might be used to diffuse an argument, or perhaps to calm someone rendered insensible by grief so that you might ask them what's wrong, and so on.

When in an action scene, you can spend your turn offering unnaturally effective encouragement to your friends. This can be combined with movement actions, but you cannot perform any other actions in the turn in which you 'activate' this ability. Take a Courage test (adding any skill points you have in *calming presence*). Your margin of success confers a bonus to the Courage of any friendly characters who can see or hear you until the action is over, or until you fail a Courage test.

### **Magebane** (2XP)

Your patron guides you in the pursuit and persecution of individuals with magical abilities. You become able to purchase the arcane abilities *dispel*, *disrupt* and *defend* normally only available to neuromancers and evocationists. In addition, you gain the Magical Senses *telesthesia* and *sense magic*.



# GAINING EXPERIENCE

At the end of each play session, it's time for tea and medals all round! This part of the game is a discussion guided by the GM. It serves to summarise the session's events, assist with character development, and remind everyone what a tremendous job they've done. It *also* gives the players more XP to spend on improving their characters for the next session.

A session that lasts a single evening will usually result in each player gaining 5XP. If playing for a full day, then the sheer number of things the players do and learn may well result in gaining as much as 10XP.

## **Favourite Character Moments**

The GM indicates each player in turn, at which point they and the players recall a moment where their character did something absolutely typical (such as a fussy bureaucrat getting fussy about some paperwork). In particular, pay attention to moments when characters played to their defining quality or their defining flaw. Once you have done this, all the characters gain 1XP.

## **Character Development**

The GM indicates each player in turn, at which point that player describes how their character was affected by the session's events and how, if at all, that character has changed as a result. Note that they do not **have** to have changed; the act of describing how the character felt about the session's events is sufficient. Once you have done this, all the characters gain 1XP. If a character has changed sufficiently, their player may even wish to change their defining quality or flaw. This is a purely narrative decision and costs no XP.

## **Things We Have Learned**

The players reel off as many things as they can think of that the party has learned about the mission, the world, or NPCs, such as "we learned that vampires don't like sunlight." Note that there should be nothing here about the protagonists - that's already been covered in the development point! Once you have done this, all the characters gain 1XP. If the party has uncovered a huge amount of information, or has had multiple shocking revelations, it may be appropriate to award more than one point.

## **Player Agency**

The GM considers and describes the extent to which the players were the ones progressing the mission. This might mean they came up with cunning solutions to the problems they faced; it might mean the GM was constantly having to improvise as the players approached the mission in unexpected ways. Gaining the Player Agency point is as much about the players showing initiative as it is about the GM putting them in a situation than *enables* them to show that initiative. If that's what happened, then all the characters gain 1XP. If the players were particularly brilliant in the way they progressed (or even altered) the plot, then of course the GM may wish to reward this with bonus XP.

## **Moments of Glory and Disaster**

The players and the GM finish by recalling the session's standout moments. Trick shots, excellent one-liners, or even catastrophic fumbles that threw the team, paddle-less, into the thrashing headwaters of Effluent Creek. Rolling stunning successes or dreadful failures often contribute to or even cause this point, as might any moment that resulted in cries of "Bloody good show!" and/or other, less British displays of congratulatory merriment. So long as one or more such moments occurred, all the characters gain 1XP (whether or not their character was personally involved in said event). If there has been an unusually high number of such incidents, the GM may well award multiple points.