SPECIAL ACTIVE SKILLS

The skill system in *Shadowrun* is not completely comprehensive, meaning that it is impossible for us to cover every skill imaginable. The skills listed here, however, should cover the vast majority of Active skills that any shadowrunning team may find necessary. Should a gamemaster deem that a new skill is called for and presently unaccounted for by the system, he can allow it in his game. This should be done rarely, however.

You must link any new skill allowed in your game with an appropriate attribute, and the gamemaster must decide if it should be grouped with existing skills in a skill group. Gamemasters should also take care not to include new Active skills for a single character or a single effect. A good skill should have at least two specializations and be open to all characters, should they want to use it.

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

Players can choose Knowledge skills from any of four categories: Street, Academic, Professional, and Interests. They are used primarily for legwork and character development. They occasionally provide information in the game, but have nowhere near the impact that Active skills do.

During character creation, each player is given a certain number of points with which to buy Knowledge skills. Afterward, new Knowledge skills must be purchased like any other skill.

CHOOSING KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

Knowledge Skills are the wild cards of *Shadowrun*. Various Knowledge skills are listed as examples below, but players and gamemasters should feel free to invent others that seem appropriate, useful or amusing, tailoring them to fit their campaigns. Knowledge skills can add levels of detail and familiarity to characters and situations, especially if the gamemaster and players work together.

Gamemasters should be cautious about allowing Knowledge skills that are too broad-based or too focused. Some skills can be so all-encompassing that they upset game balance, or so generic or narrow that their usefulness is limited. Choosing "Politics" as a Street Knowledge skill, for example, would probably be too broad. Political situations differ drastically from city to city and group to group, not to mention country to country. To allow this skill would give a character knowledge of political arenas that have little connection, such as Mafia politics, UCAS politics and Tir Tairngire Council politics. Any of those sub-categories, however, would make a well-balanced Knowledge skill—Mafia Politics, for example, would make an excellent Street Knowledge skill because it would provide the character with information on who's who and what's going down in the local Mafia hierarchy. (Note that Politics taken as an Academic Knowledge skill—an understanding of political theory and systems—would be fine and not too generic, though it may not be as useful in figuring out who's behind a local political scandal.)

Players should carefully think out their characters' Knowledge skills and determine why their character would have them. Knowledge skills may also help provide players with insight into their characters, perhaps fleshing out the character's background and history. For more info, see Using Knowledge Skills, p. 128.

Knowledge Skill Specializations

The same warning about choosing Knowledge skills that are too broad also applies to choosing specializations for Knowledge skills. Any specializations chosen should be a focused sub-category of the skill in question.

STREET KNOWLEDGE

Street skills cover the rumor mill, who's-who lists, and other useful factoids that come from "knowing people who know people." They are generally more concerned with "who" and "why" than "what" or "how." Street Knowledge Skills are usually the most useful as far as shadowrunning goes, in that the information is more real-time and generally shadow-relevant. It's still just information, though; how you use it is a different story altogether. All Street Knowledge skills are linked to Intuition.

STREET KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

Street Skill Examples	Specialization Examples
Seattle Street Gangs	Halloweeners, Ancients, Brain Eaters, 405 Hellhounds
UCAS Politics	Congressional, Presidential, by state, by lobby group, by political party
Ares Macrotechnology	Damien Knight, AresSpace, Ares Arms, Seattle Operations
Hong Kong Triads	Yellow Lotus, Red Dragons, Black Chrysanthemums
Security Companies	Lone Star, Knight Errant, Hard Corps, Seattle Sec Corps

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ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

Academic Skill Examples	Specialization Examples
History	By region (American, European, Asian, etc), by era (Ancient, Medieval, Modern)
Literature	By region, by period, by type (Sci-Fi, Poetry, Fiction, Romance)
Economics	Micro-economics, Macro-economics
Biology	Anatomy, Microbiology, Parazoology, Physiology
Chemistry	Industrial Chemicals, Inorganic Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Pharmaceuticals