

Knowledge skills represent what your character knows. Such knowledge can come from education, hobbies or experience. These skills flesh out your character's background and help add a personal touch to the character.

Language skills represent the languages your character knows.

PURCHASING ACTIVE SKILLS

Your character starts with a rating of 0 in all skills. Rating 0 doesn't mean that your character is ignorant or clueless, only that he has the same amount of training (or lack thereof) as anyone else. If a character has a skill at a rating greater than zero, then he knows more than the average person on the street. (See the Skill Ratings Table on pp. 108–109 for more information.)

Raising a skill costs 4 BP per rating point. Skills can only be improved to a maximum rating of 6.

The maximum skill rating for starting characters is either one skill at Rating 6 (with the rest at Rating 4 or less) or two skills at Rating 5 (with the rest at Rating 4 or less). Your character cannot start with both one Rating 6 skill and two Rating 5 skills.

Restricted Skills

Only magically active characters can use the Assensing skill—meaning characters with the Magician or Mystic Adept qualities (p. 79), or characters with both the Adept quality (p. 77) and Astral Perception power (p. 187).

Likewise, if your character does not have the Magician or Mystic Adept qualities, you cannot purchase skills in the Sorcery and Conjuring skill groups. You can, however, purchase them as Knowledge skills; see *Knowledge Skills*, p. 127.

Skill Groups

Skill groups are groups of related skills collected in a larger category. For example, the Firearms skill group includes the Longarms, Pistols, and Automatics skills. A skill group allows a character broad proficiency rather than specific expertise, and may appeal to players who wish to portray their characters in broader strokes. See *Skill Groups*, p. 106.

To acquire a skill group for your character, you must pay 10 BP per level of expertise you wish to acquire. (Since skill groups contain three or four skills together, this is actually cheaper than purchasing each skill individually.) Starting characters may raise purchased skill groups to a maximum rating of 4.

Specializations

Skills are general—your character can shoot any pistol with the Pistol skill, or drive any car with the Pilot Ground Craft skill. If you want your character to have a signature ability, something he is better at than everyone else, you can give him a *specialization*.

For example, a character with the Pistols skill can choose to specialize in Revolvers, which means he's a crack shot at using revolvers, but not quite as good while firing semi-automatics. If your character has a specialization, he adds 2 extra dice to the skill test whenever the specialization applies (see *Specializations*, p. 109).

Specializations only cost 2 BP. You can only acquire specializations to skills you currently possess. Characters may only have one specialization per skill. Characters may not purchase specializations for skill groups.

With their attributes set, Michelle and Brian look at skills. We'll look at Active skills for now, going to Knowledge and Language skills later.

Since Michelle and Brian are building their characters from scratch, they will have to decide for themselves which skills their characters have. In keeping with the well-rounded theme, Michelle decides that her street witch is a general practitioner, equally skilled in all aspects of magic use. She decides to pick up both the Sorcery skill group and the Conjuring skill group at Rating 3.

That takes care of the "witch" part of street witch; now Michelle looks at her character's street smarts. First, she ought to have some street cred; Michelle acquires Etiquette at Rating 3 and decides to specialize in Street Etiquette. Also, the streets are pretty rough, so she ought to be able to hold her own in a fight. To that end, Michelle gets Pistols 1, Dodge 2, and Unarmed Combat 1. To round out her character, Michelle adds Perception 3 and First Aid 2.

The BP cost for these skills add up as follows:

<i>Sorcery 3</i>	<i>30 BP</i>
<i>Conjuring 3</i>	<i>30 BP</i>
<i>Etiquette 3</i>	<i>12 BP</i>
<i>(Street specialization)</i>	<i>2 BP</i>
<i>Pistols 1</i>	<i>4 BP</i>
<i>Dodge 2</i>	<i>8 BP</i>
<i>Unarmed Combat 1</i>	<i>4 BP</i>
<i>Perception 3</i>	<i>12 BP</i>
<i>First Aid 2</i>	<i>8 BP</i>
TOTAL	110 BP (355 BP total)

Now it's Brian's turn. Since he wants his character to be a weapons specialist in more than just name, he wants to be the best shooter possible. Brian opts to acquire skills individually, since skill groups are limited to a maximum rating of 4 for starting characters. He can only have one skill at Rating 6, so he decides to put those points in Pistols.

With the top spot filled, all the remaining skills must be Rating 4 or lower. Brian takes Dodge 4 (a good shooter should know how to get out of the way), Longarms 3, Heavy Weapons 2, Automatics 4, and Thrown Weapons 2 (useful for throwing grenades). Brian also decides to get Negotiation 2 (a hired gun ought to know how to negotiate a contract), Perception 4 (to find his targets before they find him), Infiltration 2, and Armorer 2 (a good weapon specialist takes care of his tools). Brian also gets Etiquette 1 with a specialization in Military to establish part of his background.

The BP cost for these skills add up as follows:

<i>Pistols 6</i>	<i>24 BP</i>
<i>Automatics 4</i>	<i>16 BP</i>
<i>Dodge 4</i>	<i>16 BP</i>
<i>Longarms 3</i>	<i>12 BP</i>
<i>Heavy Weapons 2</i>	<i>8 BP</i>