FUDGE

Freeform, Universal, Do-it-yourself Gaming Engine
A Free Role-playing Game (RPG).

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“Back Cover Blurb” and Introduction

FUDGE: Freeform Universal Do-it-yourself Gaming Engine

FUDGE is a unique role-playing game. The basic rules are for experienced Game Masters, but players can range from complete novice to experienced pro. FUDGE works with any genre. Sample characters from many genres are included.

FUDGE has some interesting aspects, including many new concepts in role-playing gaming:

- No fixed attributes. The GM chooses appropriate attributes depending on taste and genre played. Many sample attributes are included.
- FUDGE is a skill-driven system. Skills can also be defined by the GM, anywhere from finely defined individual skills to broadly defined skill groups. The choice is yours, even to mixing as you choose.
- Attributes and skills are word-based, making it easy to determine how good any given character is at anything. You’ll never hear players say, “I’m a level (or skill) 14 Fighter.” Instead, they’ll simply say, “I’m a Great swordsman!”
- Inborn gifts and faults can be created and described by individual players, being as brief or lengthy as the player desires. Many examples are provided to get you started.
- Due to the word-based system, any campaign world or adventure written in FUDGE can be translated painlessly to any other system — and vice versa. This makes FUDGE extremely useful as the “universal translator” of gaming systems.
- A simple action resolution system allows players to know how well they performed an individual action — in words. Rules for six-sided dice, percentile dice, and special FUDGE dice are included. FUDGE can also be run diceless, if desired.
- You can integrate other role-playing rules with FUDGE. If an existing game has a brilliant game mechanism in an otherwise lackluster set of rules, you can easily import the brilliance into FUDGE without bringing along the mediocrity. Do you like the way game X handles psi, game Y combat, and game Z sanity? Use them all freely with FUDGE.
- The GM is given options to help her customize FUDGE toward either a realistic campaign or an “epic” (or “legendary” or “cinematic”) campaign. Any genre can be played at any point between these opposing stances of realistic vs. legendary.
- The basic rules can be copied and given away legally. In fact, any publisher can publish FUDGE rules and add their own world backgrounds and adventures — see the Legal Notice for details.
- If you are thinking of designing your own home rules RPG, simply reading FUDGE can provide an excellent introduction to what you need to consider as a game designer.

FUDGE is specifically for people who want a good bedrock to build their own system on. It provides the building blocks you need to customize your own rules. If you haven’t found a commercial role-playing game that suits your needs exactly, then FUDGE may be what you're looking for. If you have created a great game setting (or translated one from fiction), but no other game system's rules seem to do it justice, perhaps FUDGE can help you.

The basic FUDGE rules contain no campaign world information (except for samples). Future releases from Grey Ghost Games will include campaign worlds, generic resource books, and adventures. Due to FUDGE's flexible universal nature, these will be usable with any game system.

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FUDGE — Freeform Universal Do-it-yourself Gaming Engine

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I would also like to thank, most warmly, Ann Dupuis of Grey Ghost Games for her strong support of FUDGE over the years. Not only has she urged me forward with the work when I got lazy, published FUDGE, promoted it, had FUDGE dice made, and paid my way to many conventions, she's managed to remain a good friend during this time. If you've ever tried to push a lazy, stubborn person into doing what they should be doing, you'll know this is a difficult and usually thankless task. I'd like to break precedent and actually thank her for it.

Groo the Wanderer (TM) is a trademark of Sergio Aragones, and use of the name in this product does not challenge the trademark status in any way.

About the Author

Steffan O'Sullivan is the author of GURPS Bestiary, GURPS Swashbucklers, GURPS Fantasy Bestiary and GURPS Bunnies & Burrows. He lives in New Hampshire, U.S.A., and has wide-ranging interests. He has formally studied history, pre-med, theater and transpersonal psychology.

Terminology and Format

To avoid confusion, "he, him," etc., are used to describe a player and PC, and "she, her," etc., are used to describe a Game Master and NPC.

FUDGE is divided into six Chapters, each of which is divided into Sections.

Chapter 1

Character Creation

This chapter contains all the information you'll need to create human characters, including character traits and trait levels, and some different ways to allocate them.

For non-human characters — or characters with supernormal abilities (magic, psionics, super powers, etc.) — you will also need to read Chapter 2, Supernormal Powers, before your characters will be complete.

1.1 Character Creation Terms

Trait anything that describes a character. A trait can be an attribute, skill, inherited gift, fault, supernormal power, or any other feature that describes a character. The GM is the ultimate authority on what is an attribute and what is a skill, gift, etc.

Level most traits are described by one of seven adjectives. These seven descriptive words represent *levels* a trait may be at. In addition, the Objective Character Creation method grants the player free levels, and demands he keep track of them. In this case, one level is required to raise a trait to the next better adjective.

Attribute any trait that *everyone* in the game world has, in some degree or other. See Section 1.3.1, Attributes, for a sample list of attributes. On a scale of Terrible ... Fair ... Superb, the average human will have an attribute at Fair.

Skill any trait that isn't an attribute, but can be improved through practice. The default for an unlisted skill is usually Poor, though that can vary up or down a little.

Gift any trait that isn't an attribute or skill, but is something positive for the character. Some GMs will define a certain trait as a gift, while others will define the same trait as an attribute. In general, if the trait doesn't easily fit the Terrible ... Fair ... Superb scale, it's probably a gift.

Fault any trait that limits a character's actions, or earns him a bad reaction from other people.

Supernormal Power although technically gifts, supernormal powers are treated separately in Chapter 2.

1.2 FUDGE Trait Levels

FUDGE uses ordinary words to describe various traits of a character. The following terms of a seven-level sequence are suggested (from best to worst):

Superb
Great
Good
Fair
Mediocre
Poor
Terrible

These levels should be written on each character sheet for easy reference.

A GM may alter this list in any way she desires, including expanding or shrinking it. For example, if Superb doesn't sound right to you, use Awesome — or even Way Cool. If the words Mediocre and Fair don't make sense to you, change them. These seven terms will be used in the rules, however, for clarity.

To remember the order, compare adjacent words. If, as a beginner, your eventual goal is to become an excellent game player, for example, ask yourself if you'd rather be called a Fair game player or a Mediocre game player.

There is an additional level that can be used in FUDGE, but is not listed above: Legendary, which is beyond Superb. Those with Legendary Strength, for example, are in the 99.9th percentile, and their names can be found in any book of world records.

IMPORTANT NOTE: not every GM will allow PCs to become Legendary. Even in games that *do* include the Legendary level, it is not recommended that any character be allowed to *start* the game as Legendary. Superb represents the 98th to 99.9th percentile of any given trait, which should be enough for any beginning PC. Of course, if a player character gets a bit overconfident, meeting an *NPC* Legendary swordswoman can be a grounding experience . . . .

If someone really *has* to begin play as a Legendary swordsman, strong man, etc., doing the GM's laundry for half a year or so (in advance) should be sufficient bribe to be allowed to start at that level. Of course, working towards Legendary makes a great campaign goal, and so PCs may rise to that height, given enough playing time and a generous GM.

1.3 Character Traits

Traits are divided into Attributes, Skills, Gifts, Faults and Supernormal Powers. Not every GM will have all five types of traits in her game. These traits are defined in Section 1.1, Character Creation Terms.

1.3.1 Attributes

Gamers often disagree on how many attributes a game should have. Some prefer few attributes, others many. Even those that agree on the number of attributes may disagree on the selection. While FUDGE discusses some attributes (Strength, Fatigue, Constitution, etc.) in later sections, none of these are mandatory. The only attribute the basic FUDGE rules assume is Damage Capacity, and even that is optional — see Section 4.5.2, Damage Capacity.

Here is a partial list of attributes in use by other games; select to your taste, or skip these altogether:

Body Agility, Aim, Appearance, Balance, Brawn, Build, Constitution, Coordination, Deftness, Dexterity, Endurance, Fatigue, Fitness, Health, Hit Points, Manual Dexterity, Muscle, Nimbleness, Quickness, Physical, Reflexes, Size, Smell, Speed, Stamina, Strength, Wound Resistance, Zip, and so on.

Mind Cunning, Education, Intelligence, Knowledge, Learning, Mechanical, Memory, Mental, Mental Strength, Perception, Reasoning, Smarts, Technical, Wit, and so on.

Soul Channeling, Charisma, Charm, Chutzpah, Common Sense, Coolness, Disposition, Drive, Ego, Empathy, Fate, Honor, Intuition, Luck, Magic Resistance, Magic Potential, Magical Ability, Power, Presence, Psyche, Sanity, Self Discipline, Social, Spiritual, Style, Will, Wisdom, and so on, and so on.

Other Rank, Status, Wealth.

Most games combine many of these attributes, while others treat some of them as gifts or even skills. In FUDGE, if you wish, you can even split these attributes into smaller ones: Lifting Strength, Carrying Strength, Damage-dealing Strength, etc.

At this point, the GM decides how many attributes she deems necessary — or she might leave it up to each player. (Commercial games range from one or two to over 20.) See Section 6.3, Character Examples, for some possibilities.

1.3.2 Skills

Skills are not related to attributes or their levels in FUDGE. Players are encouraged to design their characters logically — a character with a lot of Good physical skills should probably have better than average physical attributes, for example. On the other hand, FUDGE allows a player to create someone like Groo the Wanderer (TM), who is very clumsy yet extremely skilled with his swords.

The GM should then decide what level of skill depth she wants. Are skills broad categories such as “Social skills,” or moderately broad abilities, such as “Inspire People, Parley, and Market Savvy,” or are they specific abilities such as “Barter, Seduce, Repartee, Persuade, Fast-Talk, Bully, Grovel, Carouse, Flatter, Bribe,” etc.?

An attribute is, in some ways, a *very* broad skill group, and skills may be ignored altogether if desired.

Combat skills require special consideration. The broadest possible category is simply that: Combat Skills. A broad range breaks that down to Melee Weapons, Unarmed Combat, and Missile Weapons. A somewhat narrower approach would break down Melee Weapons into Close Combat Melee Weapons (knives, blackjacks, etc.), One-handed

Melee Weapons (one-handed swords, axes, maces, etc.) and Two-handed Melee Weapons (polearms, spears, battle-axes, two-handed swords, etc.). Or, for a precise list of skills, each group in parentheses could be listed as a separate skill; a character skilled at using a broadsword knows nothing about using a saber, for example.

Each choice has its merits. Broad skill groups that include many sub-skills make for an easy character sheet and fairly competent characters, while specific skills allow fine-tuning a character to a precise degree.

See Section 6.3, Character Examples, for an idea of how broadly or finely skills can be defined in a game.

The following brief list of skill examples is not in any way intended to be comprehensive or official. It is merely to help those not used to skill-based systems think of some skills for their characters. By all means, change the names, create new ones, compress or expand those listed, disallow some, etc. It is useful to print a sample skill list on a separate sheet for each player during character creation.

Animal Skills Animal Care, Animal Lore, Animal Training, Bee-keeping, Herding, Riding, Teamster, Veterinarian, etc.

Artistic skills Aesthetics, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Literary Arts, Performing Arts (music, theater, storytelling, jester, dance, etc., and such skills as Choreography, Composition, Costuming, etc.), Visual Arts (painting, drawing, sculpting, etc.), and so on.

Athletic skills Acrobatics, Aerial Acrobatics, Balance Skills, Boating, Climbing, Jumping, Pole-vaulting, Running, Swimming, Throwing, Various Sports, Zero-G Maneuvering, etc.

Combat skills Ambush, Demolitions, Dodge, Punmanship, Quick-Draw, Shield, Tactics, Throwing, numerous Weapon and Unarmed Combat skills.

Covert skills Acting, Breaking & Entering, Detect Traps, Deactivate Traps, Disguise, Forgery, Infiltrate, Intrigue, Lockpicking, Pickpocketing, Poisoning, Shadowing, Shady Contacts, Sleight of Hand, Stealth, etc.

Craft skills Armory, Basket Making, Bowyer/Fletcher, Carpenter, Cooking, Knots, Leatherworking, Masonry, Pottery, Smith, Tailor, Weaving — many others.

Dungeon-delving skills Avoid Traps, Fight, Find Secret Passages, Pick Locks, Move Quietly, Run, Tell Believable Whoppers.

Knowledge skills (a skill can represent knowledge of a subject as broad or narrow as the GM will allow) Alchemy, Alien Customs, Arcane Lore, Criminology, Cultures, Detective Fiction, Folklore, Geography, History, Literature, Occultism, Political Situations, Psychology, TV SitCom Episodes, Sciences (lots of these), etc.

Language skills Each individual language, Pantomime, Pick Up Languages, etc.

Manipulative skills Bamboozle, Bluff, Boot-licking, Bribery, Con, Exhort, Fast-talk, Flattery, Interrogate, Intimidate, Lying, Oratory, Persuade, Seduction, Street Gossip, etc.

Medical skills Anatomy, Antidotes, Diagnosis, Doctoring, First Aid, Herb Preparation, Medicine, Nursing, Surgery, etc.

Merchant skills Bargain, Barter, Business Sense, Evaluate Goods, Haggle, Innkeeping, Marketing, Salesmanship, Shopkeeping, etc.

Outdoor skills Camouflage, Camping, Fishing, Forage, Herb Lore, Hide Traces, Hunting, Mimic Animal Noises, Nature Lore, Navigation, Survival, Tracking, Wildcraft, Woodcraft, etc.

Professional skills Accounting, Begging, Bureaucracy, Farming, Gambling, Law, Photography, Seamanship — many others.

Social skills (Fellowship) Bar Etiquette, Camaraderie, Carouse, Choosing just the right gift, Control Libido, Flirting, Game Playing, Hold your liquor, Make Amusing Faces or Noises, Matrix Etiquette, Tall Tales, Uplift Spirits, Witty Insults, etc.

Social skills (Formal) Courtly Ways, Detect Lies, Diplomacy, Etiquette, Interviewing, Parley, Repartee, Rituals, Savoir-Faire, Servant, etc.

Spiritual skills Communing with nature, Fasting, Giving comfort, Listening deeply, Meditation, Patience, Theology, etc.

Supernormal Power skills Fortune Telling, Levitate, Spell Casting, Use Mind Control, Use Superpower, Use Telekinesis, etc.

Technical skills Computer Build/Repair, Computer Programming, Computer Use, Driving, Electronics, Engineer, Mechanic, Piloting, Repair Scoutship Systems, Research, Shiphandling, etc.

Urban skills Barroom Savvy, Street Etiquette, Streetwise, Urban Survival, etc.

1.3.3 Gifts

A gift is a positive trait that doesn't seem to fit the Terrible . . . Fair . . . Superb scale that attributes and skills fall into. However, this will vary from GM to GM: a photographic memory is a gift to one GM, while it is a Superb Memory attribute to another. Some GMs will define Charisma as an attribute, while others define it as a gift. To one Game Master, a character either has Night Vision or he doesn't; another will allow characters to take different levels of it. A Game Master may not even have gifts in her game at all.

Alternatively, gifts can come in levels, but the levels don't necessarily coincide with the levels used by other traits. For example, Status might be three- or four-tiered, or even nine-tiered instead of fitting into the seven levels of attributes and skills. Wealth might come only in five different levels — whatever each GM desires.

Supernormal powers, such as the ability to cast magic spells, fly, read minds, etc., are technically powerful gifts, but are handled separately in Chapter 2. Likewise, traits above the human norm, such as a super strong fantasy or alien race, are treated by definition as supernormal powers.

In general, if a gift isn't written on the character sheet, the character doesn't have it.

Some possible gifts include:

> *Absolute Direction; Always keeps his cool; Ambidextrous; Animal Empathy; Attractive; Beautiful speaking voice; Bonus to one aspect of an attribute; Combat Reflexes; Contacts in police force; Danger Sense; Extraordinary Speed; Healthy Constitution; Keen senses; Literate; Lucky; Many people owe him favors; Never disoriented in zero Gravity; Never forgets a name/face/whatever; Night Vision; Patron; Perfect Timing; Peripheral Vision; Quick Reflexes; Rank; Rapid Healing; Reputation as Hero; Scale; Sense of empathy; Single-minded — +1 to any lengthy task; Status; Strong Will; Tolerant; Tough Hide (-1 to damage) Wealth; etc.*

See also Section 6.3, Character Examples, for examples of different gifts. Many others are possible.

1.3.4 Faults

Faults are anything that makes life more difficult for a character. The primary faults are those that restrict a character's actions or earn him a bad reaction from chance-met NPCs. Various attitudes, neuroses and phobias are faults; so are physical disabilities and social stigmas. There are heroic faults, too: a code of honor and inability to tell a lie restrict your actions significantly, but are not signs of flawed personality.

Some sample faults:

> *Absent-Minded; Addiction; Ambitious; Amorous heartbreaker; Bloodlust; Blunt and tactless; Bravery indistinguishable from foolhardiness; Can't resist having the last word; Code of Ethics limits actions; Code of Honor; Compulsive Behavior; Coward; Curious; Finicky; Easily Distractible; Enemy; Fanatic patriot; Full of bluff and bluster and machismo; Garrulous; Getting old; Glutton; Goes Berserk if Wounded; Gossip; Greedy; Gullible; Humanitarian (helps the needy for no pay); Idealist — not grounded in reality; Indecisive; Intolerant; Jealous of Anyone Getting More Attention; Lazy; Loyal to Companions; Manic-Depressive; Melancholy; Multiple Personality; Must obey senior officers; Nosy; Obsession; Outlaw; Overconfident; Owes favors; Phobias; Poor; Practical Joker; Quick-Tempered; Quixotic; Self-defense Pacifist; Socially awkward; Soft-hearted; Stubborn; Quick to take offense; Unlucky; Vain; Violent when enraged; Vow; Worry Wart; Zealous behavior; etc.*

See also Section 6.3, Character Examples, for examples of different faults. Many others are possible.

1.3.5 Personality

A character's personality may be represented by one or more traits, or it can be written out as character background or description.

> *As an example of the first case, courage is an attribute, a gift or even a fault. As an attribute, Superb Courage or Terrible Courage has an obvious meaning.*

> *As a gift, obvious bravery gives the character a positive reaction from people he meets (assuming they see him being courageous, or have heard of his deeds, of course).*
>
> *However, both Very Courageous and Very Cowardly can be faults because they can limit a character's actions. A courageous character might not run away from a fight even if it were in his best interest, while a cowardly one would have a hard time staying in a fight even if he stood to gain by staying.*
>
> *Or a character's level of courage might not be a quantified trait at all, but something the player simply decides. "Moose is very brave," a player jots down, and that is that. It doesn't have to count as a high attribute, gift or fault.*

A player should ask the GM how she wants to handle specific personality traits. If the player describes his character in detail, the GM can easily decide which personality traits are attributes, gifts, or faults. However they are handled, most characters benefit by having their personalities fleshed out.

1.3.6 Fudge Points

Fudge Points are meta-game gifts that may be used to buy "luck" during a game — they let the *players* fudge a game result. These are "meta-game" gifts because they operate at the player-GM level, not character-character level. Not every GM will allow Fudge Points — those who prefer realistic games should probably not use them.

The GM sets the starting number of Fudge Points. The recommended range is from one to five. Unused Fudge Points are saved up for the next gaming session. Each player may get an additional number each gaming session. (This is also set by the GM, and may or may not equal the starting level.) Alternately, the GM may simply allow Experience Points (EP) to be traded for Fudge Points at a rate appropriate for the campaign: three EP = one Fudge Point, down to one EP = one Fudge Point.

Fudge Points can be used in many ways, depending on what level on the realistic-legendary scale the game is played at. Here are some suggested ways to use them — the GM can create her own uses, of course. A GM may allow as few or many of these options as she wishes — the players should ask her before assuming they can do something with Fudge Points.

- Spending a Fudge Point may accomplish an Unopposed action automatically and with panache — good for impressing members of the appropriate sex, and possibly avoiding injury in the case of dangerous actions. The GM may veto this use of Fudge Points for actions with a Difficulty Level of Beyond Superb. The GM may disallow this option for an Opposed action, such as combat.
- A player may spend one Fudge Point to alter a die roll one level, up or down as desired. The die roll can be either one the player makes, or one the GM makes that directly concerns the player's character.

- A player may spend one Fudge Point to declare that wounds aren't as bad as they first looked. This reduces the intensity of each wound by one or two levels (a Hurt result becomes a Scratch, for example, or even a Very Hurt becomes a Scratch). Or it can mean that any one wound (or more), regardless of level, is just a Scratch. This latter option may cost more than one Fudge point. The GM can restrict this to outside of combat time.
- A player may spend one (or more) Fudge Points to get an automatic +4 result, without having to roll the dice. This use *is* available in Opposed actions, if allowed.
- For appropriately legendary games, a GM-set number of Fudge Points can be spent to ensure a favorable coincidence. (This is always subject to GM veto, of course.) For example, if the PCs are in a maximum security prison, perhaps one of the guards turns out to be the cousin of one of the PCs — and lets them escape! Or the captain of the fishing boat rescuing the PCs turns out to be someone who owes a favor to one of them, and is willing to take them out of his way to help them out .... And so on. This option should cost a lot of Fudge Points, except in certain genres where bizarre coincidences are the norm.

1.4 Allocating Traits

Character creation in FUDGE assumes the players will *design* their characters, rather than leaving attributes and other traits to chance. The GM may allow randomly determined traits if she desires — a suggested method is given in Section 1.8, Random Character Creation.

There are no mandatory traits in FUDGE. The GM should inform the players which traits she expects to be most important, and the players may suggest others to the GM for her approval. The GM may even make a template, if desired — a collection of traits she deems important (with room for customization) — and let the players define the level of each trait. See Section 6.1.2, Templates.

When a character is created, the player should define as many character traits as he finds necessary — which may or may not coincide with a GM-determined list. If a player adds an attribute the GM deems unnecessary, the GM may treat that attribute as simply a *description* of the character. She may require a roll against a different attribute than the player has in mind, and the player must abide by her decision.

> *As an example, a certain GM decides she wants characters to have a general Dexterity attribute. A player takes Good Dexterity for his PC, but wants to show that the character is better at whole body dexterity than at manual dexterity. So he writes: Great Agility and Fair Manual Dexterity. However, the GM can ignore these distinctions, and simply require a Dexterity roll, since that is the trait she has chosen. (She can average the PC-chosen levels, or simply select one of them.) Of course, she can also allow him to roll on the attributes he has created.*

In FUDGE, a character with a trait at Fair will succeed at ordinary tasks 62% of the time — there is usually no need to create a superstar. In fact, Great is just that: great!

Superb should be reserved for the occasional trait in which your character is the best he's ever met.

Any trait that is not defined at character creation will be at a default level:

- For attributes: Fair.
- For most skills: Poor (easier skills are at Mediocre, while harder ones are at Terrible). A skill default means untrained, or close to it. However, it is possible to take a skill at Terrible (below the default level for most skills), which implies an ineptitude worse than untrained.
- For most gifts, supernormal powers and certain GM-defined skills: Non-Existent. (That is, the *default* is non-existent. The trait itself exists in *some* character, somewhere.)

Each player should expect the GM to modify his character after creation — it's the nature of the game. The GM should expect to review each character before play. It would, in fact, be best if the characters were made in the presence of the GM so she can answer questions during the process.

1.5 Subjective Character Creation

An easy way to create a character in FUDGE is simply to write down everything about the character that you feel is important. Any attribute or skill should be rated using one of the levels Terrible through Superb (see Section 1.2, FUDGE Trait Levels).

It may be easiest, though, if the GM supplies a template of attributes she'll be using. See Section 6.3, Character Examples, for template ideas.

The GM may also tell the player in advance that his character can be Superb in a certain number of attributes, Great in so many others, and Good in yet another group. For example, in an epic-style game with eight attributes, the GM allows one Superb attribute, two Greats, and three Goods. In a more realistic game, this is one Superb, one Great, and two Goods.

This can apply to skills, too: one Superb skill, two Great skills, and six Good skills is a respectable number for a realistic campaign, while two Superbs, three Greats, and ten Goods is quite generous, even in a highly cinematic game.

The GM may also simply limit the number of skills a character can take at character creation: 10, 15, or 20 are possible choices.

Gifts and faults can be restricted this way, also. For example, a GM allows a character to have two gifts, but he must take at least three faults. Taking another fault allows another gift, or another skill at Great, and so on.

These limitations help the player define the focus of the character a bit better: what is his best trait (what can he do best)?

A simple "two lower for one higher" trait-conversion mechanic can also be used. If the GM allows one Superb attribute, for example, the player may forego that and take two attributes at Great, instead. The converse may also be allowed: a player may swap two skills at Good to get one at Great.

Example: a player wants a Jack-of-all-trades character, and the GM has limits of one Superb skill, two Great skills and six Good skills. The player trades the one Superb skill limit for two Great skills: he can now take four skills at Great. However, he trades all four Great skills in order to have eight more Good skills. His character can now have 14 skills at Good, but none at any higher levels.

In the Subjective Character Creation system, it is easy to use both broad and narrow skill groups, as appropriate for the character. In these cases, a broad skill group is assumed to contain the phrase, "except as listed otherwise."

For example, a player wishes to play the science officer of a starship. He decides this character has spent so much time studying the sciences, that he's weak in most physical skills. So on his character sheet he could simply write:

Physical Skills: Poor

He also decides that his character's profession would take him out of the ship in vacuum quite a bit, to examine things. So he'd have to be somewhat skilled at zero-G maneuvering. So he then adds:

Zero-G Maneuvering: Good

Even though this is a physical skill, it is not at Poor because he specifically listed it as an exception to the broad category.

When the character write-up is done, the player and GM meet and discuss the character. If the GM feels the character is too potent for the campaign she has in mind, she may ask the player to reduce the character's power — see Section 1.9, Minimizing Abuse.

The GM may also need to suggest areas that she sees as being too weak — perhaps she has a game situation in mind that will test a trait the player didn't think of. Gentle hints, such as "Does he have any social skills?" can help the player through the weak spots. Of course, if there are multiple players, other PCs can compensate for an individual PC's weaknesses. In this case, the question to the whole group is then, "Does *anyone* have any social skills?"

Instead of the player writing up the character in terms of traits and levels, he can simply write out a prose description of his character. This requires the GM to translate everything into traits and appropriate levels, but that's not hard to do if the description is well written. This method actually produces some of the best characters.

An example:

GM: "I see you rate Captain Wallop's blaster skill highly, and also his piloting and gunnery, but I'm only allowing one Superb skill — which is he best at?"

Player: "Blaster!"

GM: "Okay, Superb Blaster. That would then be Great Piloting and Great Gunnery, all right? That leaves you with two more skills to be at Great, since I allow four to start out. Hmmm — I notice he successfully penetrated the *main Khothi hive and rescued the kidnapped ambassador — that sounds like a Great Ability to Move Quietly to me — is that accurate, or would you describe it as some other abilitya?"*

Player: "Uh, no — sorry, I didn't write that clearly enough. He disguised himself and pretended to be a Khothi worker."

GM: "Ah, I see. How about Great Disguise skill and Great Acting ability, then? And he must be Good at the Khothi language, right?"

And so on.

1.6 Objective Character Creation

For those who don't mind counting numbers a bit, the following method creates interesting and well-balanced characters.

In this system, all traits start at default level. The GM then allows a number of free levels the players may use to raise selected traits to higher levels. Players may then lower certain traits in order to raise others even further. Finally, a player may opt to trade some levels of one trait type (such as attributes) for another (skills, for example). The whole process insures that no single character will dominate every aspect of play.

1.6.1 Attributes

A GM using the Objective Character Creation system should decide how many attributes she deems necessary in the campaign. She can choose to leave it up to each player, if she wishes. Players then have a number of free attribute levels equal to half the number of attributes (round up). For example, if she selects four attributes, each player starts with two free levels he can use to raise his character's attributes.

For a more high-powered game, the GM may allow a number of free levels *equal to* the number of attributes chosen.

All attributes are considered to be Fair until the player raises or lowers them. The cost of raising or lowering an attribute is

+3	Superb
+2	Great
+1	Good
0	Fair
-1	Mediocre
-2	Poor
-3	Terrible

Example:

A player may raise his Strength attribute (which is Fair by default) to Good by spending one free attribute level. He could then spend another free level to raise Strength again to Great. This would exhaust his free levels if there were *only four attributes — but he would have one more if there were six attributes, and eight more free levels if there were 20 attributes.*

When the free attribute levels have been exhausted, an attribute can be raised further by lowering another attribute an equal amount. (See also Section 1.6.4, Trading Traits.) From the previous example, Strength can be raised one more level (to Superb) if the player lowers the character's Charm to Mediocre to compensate for the increase in Strength.

If the GM allows the players to choose their own attributes, she may simply tell them to take half as many free levels as attributes they choose. If a player chooses an attribute and leaves it at Fair, that attribute does *not* count towards the total of attributes which determines the amount of free levels. That is, a player cannot simply add twelve attributes, all at Fair, in order to get six more free levels to raise the others with. GM-mandated attributes left at Fair *do* count when determining the number of free levels, though.

As an interesting possibility for those who want attributes and skills to reflect each other accurately, do not let the players adjust attribute levels at all. Instead, they select only skill levels, gifts and faults for their characters. When the character is done, the GM can then determine what attribute levels make sense for the skill levels chosen, and discuss it with the player.

Example: a character is made with many combat and wilderness skills, but no social skills. He also has a smattering of intelligence skills. The GM decides that this character has Strength, Dexterity and Health of Great from spending a lot of time outdoors, practicing with weapons, etc. She will even let the player choose one to be at Superb, if desired. Perception is probably Good, since wilderness survival depends on it. Any social attribute is Mediocre at best — possibly even Poor — while Intelligence is Mediocre or Fair. If the player objects to the low Intelligence ranking, the GM can point out that the character hasn't spent much time in skills that hone Intelligence, and if he wants his character's IQ to be higher, he should adjust his skill list.

1.6.2 Skills

In the Objective Character Creation system, each player has a number of free skill levels with which to raise his skills. Suggested limits are:

- For Extremely Broad Skill Groups: 15 levels.
- For Moderately Broad Skill Groups: 30 levels.
- For Specific Skills: 40 to 60 levels.

Ask the GM for the allotted amount, which will give you a clue as to how precisely to define your skills. Of course, the GM may choose any number that suits her, such as 23, 42, or 74 .... See Section 6.3, Character Examples. Game Masters may devise their own skill lists to choose from — some possibilities are included in Section 1.3.2, Skills.

Most skills have a default value of Poor unless the player raises or lowers them — see Section 1.4, Allocating Traits.

Certain skills have a default of non-existent. These would include Languages, Karate, Nuclear Physics, or Knowledge of Aztec Rituals, which must be studied to be known at all. When a character studies such a skill (puts a level into it at character creation, or experience points later in the game), the level he gets it at depends on how hard it is to learn. Putting one level into learning the Spanish language, for example, would get it at Mediocre, since it's of average difficulty to learn. Nuclear Physics, on the other hand, might only be Poor or even Terrible with only one level put into it. It would take four levels just to get such a skill at Fair, for example.

For ease in character creation, use the following table:

	Easy	Most	Hard	VH
Terrible	-2	-1	0	1
Poor	-1	0	1	2
Mediocre	0	1	2	3
Fair	1	2	3	4
Good	2	3	4	5
Great	3	4	5	6
Superb	4	5	6	7

Easy Cost of GM-Determined Easy Skills

Most Cost of Average Skill

Hard Cost of GM-Determined Hard Skills

VH Cost of GM-Determined Very Hard Skills (usually related to Supernormal Powers)

Table 1.1: Cost of skills in Objective Character Creation

As in the Subjective Character Creation system, the GM may limit the number of Superb and Great skills each character may have *at character creation*. For a highly cinematic or super-powered game, no limit is necessary. For example, the GM sets a limit of one Superb skill, three or four Great skills, and eight or so Good skills. These limits can be exceeded through character development, of course. See Section 6.3, Character Examples.

Once the free levels are used up, a skill must be dropped one level (from the default Poor to Terrible) to raise another skill one level. (See also Section 1.6.4, Trading Traits.) All choices are subject to GM veto, of course.

It is possible to mix different breadths of skill groupings. A GM who has little interest in combat can simply choose Unarmed Combat, Melee Weapons and Ranged Weapons as the only three combat skills. But this does not stop her from using all the individual Social skills (and many more) listed as examples in Section 1.3.2, Skills. If this option is chosen, the broad groups cost double the levels of the narrower groups.

Mixing skill group sizes within the same areas is awkward in the Objective Character Creation system. For example, it is difficult to have a generic Thief Skills group and also have individual skills of lockpicking, pick-pocketing, palming, security-device dismantling, etc. If she *does* wish to do this, then the broad skill group *in this case* has a maximum limit of Good, and *triple* cost to raise — or more, if the GM so mandates.

If the GM is using broad groups, a player may raise a specific skill (such as Poker, for example, instead of general Gambling skill). A player would give his character a specific skill when the GM is using broad-based skill groups to fit a character concept. Do not expect the character to be equally adept with the other skills in the group. This would be true for Groo the Wanderer (TM), for instance, who would simply raise Sword skill, even if the GM is using the broad term Melee Weapons as a skill group. Groo would have, in fact, a Poor rating with all other Melee weapons, and this would accurately reflect the character.

1.6.3 Gifts & Faults

If the GM has gifts in her game, she may allow player characters to start with one or two free gifts — more for epic campaigns. Any further gifts taken must be balanced by taking on a fault, or by trading traits.

A player may gain extra trait levels by taking GM-approved faults at the following rate:

1 fault = 1 gift.
1 fault = 2 attribute levels.
1 fault = 6 skill levels.

However, the GM may rule that a particular fault is not serious enough to be worth two attribute levels, but may be worth one attribute level or three skill levels. On the other hand, severe faults may be worth more attribute levels.

1.6.4 Trading Traits

During character creation, free levels may be traded (in either direction) at the following rate:

1 attribute level = 3 skill levels.
1 gift = 6 skill levels.
1 gift = 2 attribute levels.

Fudge Points cannot be traded without GM permission. (If tradable, each Fudge Point should be equal to one or two gifts.)

So a player with three free attribute levels and 30 free skill levels may trade three of his skill levels to get another free attribute level, or six skill levels to get another free gift.

1.7 Uncommitted Traits

Whether the character is created subjectively or objectively, each character has some free uncommitted traits (perhaps two or three). At some point in the game, a player will realize that he forgot something about the character that should have been mentioned.

He may request to stop the action, and define a previously undefined trait, subject to the GM's approval. A sympathetic GM will allow this to happen even during combat time.

GM-set skill limits (such as one Superb, three Greats) are still in effect: if the character already has the maximum number of Superb skills allowed, he can't make an uncommitted trait a Superb skill.

See the sample character, Dolores Ramirez, Section 6.3.3.1.

1.8 Random Character Creation

Some players like to roll their attributes randomly. Here is one possible method to use in such cases. Alternate techniques can be easily designed.

Have the player roll 2d6 for each *attribute*. Use the following table to find the attribute level:

2	Terrible
4	Poor
3,5	Mediocre
6-8	Fair
9,11	Good
10	Great
12	Superb

The GM needs to decide if the player still gets the standard number of free levels or not. She may also restrict trading levels.

For *skills*, the results are read as:

2-5,12	Terrible
6-8	Poor
9-10	Mediocre
11	Fair

The player still gets the standard number of free *skill* levels, or the GM may allow only half the normal levels.

The GM can let the players choose their gifts and faults, or she may wish to make up separate tables of gifts and faults, and have the players roll once or twice on each. (Conflicting traits should be rerolled.) For example:

Roll	Gift	Fault
2	Nice Appearance	Poor Appearance
3	Tough Hide	Bruises Easily
4	Charismatic	Aura of Untrustworthiness
5	Keen Hearing	Hard of Hearing
6	Detects Lies Easily	Gullible
7	Melodious Voice	Stammers
8	...	...

And so on. The GM should customize and complete to her taste. Of course, she could set up a 3d6 table instead of a 2d6 table, or even use a 1d6 table listing general gift or fault areas (Social, Physical, Emotional, Mental, Wealth/Status, etc.) and then roll again on an appropriate second table. This would allow 36 equally likely choices.

1.9 Minimizing Abuse

Obviously, character creation in FUDGE can be abused. There are many ways to avoid this:

- The GM can require that the character take another fault or two to balance the power. ("Okay I'll allow you to have all that ... but you need a challenge. Take on another weakness: maybe some secret vice, or be unable to tell a believable lie, or anything that fits the character concept that I can use to test you now and then.")
- She can simply veto any trait (or raised/lowered combination) she feels is abusive. ("I see you raised Battle-Axe in exchange for lowering Needlepoint. Hmmm.") This allows the GM to customize the power level of a game. For high-powered games, allow most anything; for less cinematic campaigns, make them trade equally useful trait for trait.
- She can simply note the character weaknesses and introduce a situation into every adventure where at least one of them is significant to the mission. ("You'll be sent as an emissary to the Wanduzi tribe — they value fine Needlepoint work above all other skills, by the way ....")
- She can use the "disturbance in the force" technique of making sure that more powerful characters attract more serious problems. ("The bruiser enters the bar with a maniacal look in his eye. He scans the room for a few seconds, then begins to stare intently at you.")

Chapter 2

Supernormal Powers

If your game doesn't have any supernormal powers, you don't need to read Chapter 2 at all. Genres such as modern espionage, WWII French resistance, gunslingers of the Old West, or swashbuckling Musketeers are frequently played without supernormal powers. Feel free to skip ahead directly to Chapter 3, Action Resolution.

However, those who play in games with non-human races, magic, psi, superpowers, etc., will need to read this chapter before character creation is complete.

2.1 Supernormal Power Terms

Supernormal power that which is beyond the capability of human beings as we know them. Supernormal powers are treated as powerful gifts. Some may have associated skills (which are taken separately, using the normal skill rules).

Power a supernormal power.

Mana magical energy. Mana is an invisible substance that magicians can detect (or even create) and manipulate to alter matter, time and space.

Magic the art of influencing events through manipulation of mana, or through compelling beings from another dimension, or channeling power from some other source. Magic may be studied by humans, but it is inherent in some races, such as natives of Faerie.

Miracle magic performed by a deity. Miracles are often subtle. Holy persons can attempt to work miracles by invoking their deity. Some religions call any non- or semi-material being greater than human a deity. Others believe there is only one Deity, and that these other beings are simply angels, demons, djinni, efriti, etc. In the former belief, magical results wrought by these superhuman beings are miracles; in the latter belief, they are not miracles, but merely a display of more psychic power than humans are capable of.

Psi any power that involves mind over matter, time or space.

Superpower any supernormal power that is an inherent ability, whether because of mutation, exposure to radiation, a gift of space aliens, etc., or granted by a device, such as an alien-science belt. Examples of superpowers can be found in many comic books, and include super strength, the ability to fly, see through walls, cling to ceilings, become invisible, etc.

Cybernetic Enhancement any mechanical or electronic enhancement to a normal body that gives the character supernormal powers.

Non-human Races certain fantasy and science fiction races (actually species) have abilities beyond the human norm, such as being much stronger, or able to fly, etc. Most of these abilities could also be classified as Psi or Superpowers, so they are not treated separately, except for Mass and Strength. Androids and robots are considered races for rules purposes.

Scale characters may have certain attributes that are well beyond the human norm, one way or the other, but that need to be related to the human norm. Prime examples include Strength, Mass, and Speed. Such attributes are rated in *Scale*. Human Scale is 0. A race (or individual) of greater than human average strength, for example, would be Scale 1 Strength or more, while a race of lesser average strength than humans would be Scale -1 Strength or less. Individuals can then be of Fair strength, or Good strength, etc., relative to those of their own Scale.

Genetic Enhancement a genetic enhancement may or may not give a character supernormal powers. If it does, then it must be treated like any other supernormal power listed above.

2.2 Powers at Character Creation

Supernormal powers may or may not be available in a given game. They are not appropriate to all genres.

The best way to design a supernormal character is through close discussion with the GM. A player should describe what he wants the character to be able to do, and the GM will decide if that's within the limits she has in mind for the game. If not, she'll make suggestions about how to change the character to fit her campaign.

Supernormal powers are treated as powerful gifts, with availability set by the GM. The GM may decide that each player can take two Powers for free, for example, or five, or more. The player may make a case for further Powers, but may need to take faults to balance them.

Some Powers are so effective that they are worth more than other Powers. In the Objective Character Creation system, the GM may set the cost of a certain supernormal power equal to two or three "average" supernormal powers. In some cases, the GM may veto player suggestions outright: omniscience and omnipotence are good examples!

The GM may decide that supernormal powers may be pooled with other traits for trading purposes. In this case, one average Power is worth two gifts. For example, a player who wishes to play a magician in a fantasy setting will need to trade some skill, attribute, or gift levels to buy magical Powers.

Undefined Powers have a default of non-existent — that is, they do not have a default value of Fair, like attributes, or Poor, like skills. If a supernormal power is not defined for a character, he doesn't have it.

2.2.1 Powers Available

The GM needs to design the type, number allowed, and drawbacks of Powers in her game. Some examples:

Types of Powers a given campaign may allow magic, psi, superpowers, etc., or some combination of the above. The GM also needs to decide how finely a supernormal power is subdivided. Is ESP a generic Power, or is it split into separate Powers such as Precognition and Clairvoyance? Is magic subdivided into spells, or groups of spells (such as elemental magic) or simply the ability to break the laws of nature in any way that can be imagined? And so on.

Number of Powers allowed the GM may set the number of Powers allowed per character. The number may range from one to 20 — or even more. Multiple Powers per character are especially likely in a fantasy campaign where individual spells are separate Powers.

Drawbacks of Powers in some campaigns, using a Power may bear a penalty of have some drawback. Typical drawbacks include mental or physical fatigue, lengthy time requirements, unreliable or uncontrollable results, and undesirable side effects (such as loud noises, bad smells, and the like). Some Powers will only work under certain conditions or with certain materials, or are limited to a certain number of uses per day — or month. Others may be risky to the character, affecting physical or mental health. The GM may allow drawbacks to count as faults: a number of them can offset the cost of a Power in the Objective Character Creation system.

2.2.2 Associated Skills

If a Power logically requires a skill to use it efficiently, the skill must be bought separately. For example, the superpower Flight allows a character to fly, and usually no skill roll is needed. But the ability to make intricate maneuvers in close combat without slamming into a wall requires a roll against a Flying skill. (The GM may ignore this and simply say that no roll is needed for any flying maneuver with a Flight Power.)

Another common skill is Throwing: hurling balls of fire or bolts of energy at a foe. Or the GM might rule that being able to aim and accurately release such energy comes with the power for free: no roll needed, it automatically hits the target every time unless the target makes a Good Dodge roll (see Chapter 4, Combat, Wounds & Healing).

This can be especially true with magic: the ability to cast spells at all may be a gift, but to do it right is a skill, or even many different skills.

2.2.3 Combat Powers

If a supernormal power can be used to attack a foe, the GM must determine the strength of the Power for damage purposes — preferably during character creation. An offensive Power is usually handled as a propelled weapon, such as a gun, or as being equivalent to a certain melee weapon. This can just be expressed in terms of damage, though, such as

Ball of Fire, +6 damage, or large Claws, +3 damage. (See Section 4.5.4, Sample Wound Factors List.)

In the case of a magical or superhero attack, the more potent the attack, the greater the power required, or perhaps the greater the strain on the character who uses it. This can be a penalty to the skill level, greater fatigue, and/or some other disadvantage.

2.3 Non-humans

Some campaigns will have characters (or animals, monsters, etc.) with traits beyond the human norm. In particular, characters with Strength and Speed well above or below the human range are common in role-playing games. Examples include giants, superheroes, pixies, aliens, ogres, intelligent rabbits, robots, etc.

In FUDGE, Strength, Mass and Speed are rated by the GM in terms of *Scale* for different races. Most other traits that may be different for non-humans are handled with a *Racial Bonus or Penalty* rather than being on a different Scale — see Section 2.3.5. Of course, the GM may assign any trait she wishes in terms of Scale.

Humans are of Scale 0, unless some other race is the game-world norm. (E.g., if all the PCs are playing pixies or giants. In these cases, the PCs' race is Scale 0, and humans would be a different Scale.) Non-human races can have a positive or negative number for Scale, depending on whether they are stronger (or bigger or faster) or weaker (or smaller or slower) than humans.

2.3.1 Strength and Mass

The word Scale used alone always means Strength/Mass Scale in FUDGE — any other Scale, such as Speed, or Strength without Mass, will be defined as such.

Each level of Strength (from Terrible to Superb) is defined to be 1.5 times stronger than the previous level. A character with Good Strength is thus 1.5 times as strong as a character with Fair Strength. Note that this progression is not necessarily true for any other attribute. There is a wider range of strength in humans than dexterity, for example: Superb Dexterity is only about twice as good as Fair Dexterity.

Strength Scale increases in the same way: a Scale 1, Fair Strength individual is 1.5 times stronger than a Scale 0, Fair Strength individual. This holds for each increase in Scale: a Scale 10 Superb Strength creature is 1.5 times stronger than a Scale 9 Superb Strength creature, for example.

At this point, it is tempting to say that a Scale 1 Fair Strength is equal to a Scale 0 Good Strength. This is true for Strength, but not for Mass. Scale really measures Mass, or Density, and Strength just goes along for the ride.

In FUDGE, Mass has a specific meaning: how wounds affect a character. (This may or may not coincide with the scientific definition of Mass.) It takes more human-powered hits to weaken a giant than a human, for example. She may not really be a healthy giant, but her sheer bulk means that human-sized sword strokes don't do as much damage relative to her as they would to a human — unless they hit a vital spot, of course. Likewise, a pixie can be healthy and robust, but not survive a single kick from a human. The difference is Mass, and the strength related to it.

A Scale 1 Fair Strength fighter has an advantage over a Scale 0 Good Strength fighter, even though their Strengths are equal. The Scale 1 fighter is less affected by the other's damage due to his mass. Therefore, do not blithely equate Scale 0 Good with Scale 1 Fair.

Of course, the GM may envision a less massive but harder to kill race than humans. This is best handled by a Racial Bonus (Section 2.3.5), either as a Toughness Gift (Tough Hide, or Density — either one would subtract from damage), or by a bonus to Damage Capacity.

The GM may decide that increased Mass does not necessarily mean of greater size — the race may be of denser material. Dwarves in northern European legend were derived from stone, and are hence denser than humans. Such a dwarf hits harder and shrugs off damage easier than most humans: he is Scale 1, though shorter than a human. (Of course, the GM should define dwarves' attributes and Scale to her own requirements.)

Normally, Strength and Mass are handled by a single Scale figure. That is, if a creature is said to be Scale 7, that means Scale 7 Mass and Scale 7 Strength. Strength can vary within each race just as it can for humans. You can have Scale 10 Superb Strength Giants and Scale 10 Terrible Strength Giants. Unlike Strength, though, it is not recommended that Mass vary much within a race. If you do allow Mass to vary for an individual, it should never be worse than Mediocre or better than Good. In fact, it is far better to call Good Mass a Gift, and Mediocre Mass a fault than treat it as an attribute.

The GM may choose to separate Strength Scale from Mass Scale. This would allow Pixies of Strength Scale -6 and Mass Scale -4, for example. However, combat between two Pixies would not work the same as combat between two humans. In this case, they would have a harder time hurting each other than humans would, since their Strength Scale (ability to give out damage) is lower than their Mass Scale (ability to take damage). This may actually be what she wants: a super-strong superhero who can dish out punishment but can't take it can be represented by Strength Scale 10, Mass Scale 2, for example.

See also Section 4.5.8, Non-human Scale in Combat.

2.3.2 Speed

Each level of Speed (from Terrible to Superb) is defined to be 1.2 times faster than the previous level. A character with Good Speed is thus 1.2 times as fast as a character with Fair Speed. This is *not* the same progression as for Strength.

Speed Scale increases in the same manner: a Scale 1, Fair Speed individual is 1.2 times faster than a Scale 0, Fair Speed individual. This holds for each increase in Scale: a Scale 10 Superb Speed animal is 1.2 times faster than a Scale 9 Superb Speed animal, for example.

Speed is not a necessary attribute, of course, and can be ignored entirely if desired. It is included primarily for creatures and vehicles significantly faster than humans. For comparison purposes, assume a Fair Speed human can run at about 10 mph (16 kph) over some distance, provided they are in shape, of course. Sprinting short distance is somewhat faster. This comes to about 15 yards (meters) per three-second combat round.

In a short race, you don't really have to roll the dice to see if someone of Superb Speed can beat someone of Good Speed — he can, and will, much more often than rolling the dice would indicate.

The Speed Scale rises too slowly for comparing such things as race cars or space ships to human movement. In these cases, either use a rough human Scale, or simply set the average space ship at Space Ship Speed Scale 0, and rate others relative to it. Thus, the average race car will be roughly human Scale 12 — or you can simply call it Race Car Scale 0, and compare other race cars to it. A Space Ship might be Human Scale 100, or Space Ship Scale 0.

2.3.3 Scale Correlations

The Game Master should refer to the following table when assigning a Scale to a race. This only has to be done *once*, at race creation.

First, the GM should decide how much stronger (or weaker or faster, etc.) the average member of race X is compared to the average human. For example, she decides that Ogres are three times stronger than humans, and pixies are eight times weaker (which equals 0.12 times as strong). She then needs to look up the closest numbers to these strength multipliers on the table below, and look in the corresponding Scale column to find the correct racial Strength/Mass Scales. In this example, Ogres are Scale 3 creatures, while Pixies are Scale -6. (You may envision Ogres and Pixies differently, of course.)

Scale	Multipliers		Scale	Multipliers	
	Strength	Speed		Strength	Speed
-11	0.01	0.13	5	7.5	2.5
-10	0.02	0.16	6	10	3
-9	0.03	0.2	7	15	3.5
-8	0.04	0.23	8	25	4
-7	0.06	0.28	9	40	5
-6	0.1	0.3	10	60	6
-5	0.15	0.4	11	90	7.5
-4	0.2	0.5	12	130	9
-3	0.3	0.6	13	200	11
-2	0.5	0.7	14	300	13
-1	0.7	0.8	15	450	15
0	1	1	16	650	18
1	1.5	1.2	17	1000	22
2	2.3	1.4	18	1500	27
3	3.5	1.7	19	2500	32
4	5	2	20	4000	38

Table 2.1: Scale correlations

The Strength/Mass Scale number is figured into damage in combat, and all weapons and armor are assumed to be of the same Scale as the wielder. (These numbers have been rounded to the nearest useful number. They are only roughly 1.5 times the previous number, but close enough for game purposes.)

> *Other examples: a GM reads in a Medieval text that a dragon is "as strong as 20 warriors." Looking at the table, 20 times the human norm is Scale 8. However, since the average* warrior *has Good strength, she chooses Scale 9 for the average dragon in her world. Of course, an individual dragon can still have Poor Strength compared to other dragons. This is simply listed as Strength Poor (-2), Scale 9.*
>
> *This same GM wants PC leprechauns to be available. While they are small, she decides their magic makes them a bit stronger than their size would otherwise indicate: Scale -4. So a Good Strength leprechaun is as strong as a Terrible Strength human in her world.*

The GM can also use this table to determine relative lifting strength or carrying capacity of characters or beasts if she wishes.

The GM may require a Strength roll to lift a given object. This will depend on the Scale of the character, of course. Thus, a leprechaun might need a Good Difficulty Level Strength roll to lift a rock that a human could lift without even a roll. (See Chapter 3, Action Resolution.)

2.3.4 Cost of Scale

If you are using the Objective Character Creation system, each step of increased Strength / Mass Scale for a player character should cost one attribute level *and* one gift. This is because each level of Scale includes +1 Strength and extra Mass, which is the equivalent of the Tough Hide gift. However, a generous GM may charge less.

In a superhero game, this gets very expensive, very quickly. An alternative method: let one supernormal power equal a certain Scale. For example, the GM allows one Power to equal Scale 4 (five times as strong as the average human). A character buys three Powers of super strength and has Scale 12 Strength. Another GM allows Scale 13 (200 times as strong as the average human) to equal one Power. Since a character with two Powers in super strength would have Scale 26 Strength (!), the GM decides to limit the amount of super strength available to one Power.

A character then raises or lowers his Strength attribute to show how he compares to the average super-strong superhero. Strength can then be raised to Scale 13 Good, for example, at the cost of one attribute level.

The GM may also allow separate Mass and Strength for superheroes (or even races). For example, the superhero mentioned in Section 2.3.1 with Strength Scale 10 and Mass Scale 2 would only have to pay for two gifts and ten attribute levels. Or, with a generous GM, a single supernormal power covers the entire cost.

Other supernormal powers may have levels. Examples include Telekinesis (increased power allows greater weight to be lifted), Telepathy (increased power equals greater range), Wind Control (increased power allows such things as a jet of wind, whirlwind, or tornado), etc.

In these cases, each level can be bought as a separate supernormal power, which is expensive. Or you could use the option given above for Scale: one supernormal power buys the supernormal ability at a middling power range, and a simple attribute (or even skill) level raises or lowers it from there.

For Scales below the human norm, each step of Mass Scale includes a fault equivalent to Easily Wounded, and the GM may allow this to be used to balance other traits like any other fault — see Section 1.6.4, Trading Traits.

2.3.5 Racial Bonuses and Penalties

There is rarely any need to use Scale for traits other than Strength, Mass and Speed. It's easy to imagine someone wanting to play a race that is slightly more intelligent than humans, but a race ten times smarter than the smartest human is so alien that it would be impossible to play. This is true for most traits — we just can't grasp such extreme differences from our world view.

Actually, there is a way to use intelligence in Scale: in a non-quantified manner. For example, when creating a dog character, you can list:

Intelligence: Great (Scale: Dog)

Since no one is able to quantify inter-species intelligence accurately, do not expect to use it comparatively. It gives an indication that, relative to other dogs, this dog has Great intelligence. The word "Scale" isn't necessary — "Great canine intelligence" works just as well.

The GM should usually use Racial Bonuses or Penalties for traits other than Strength, Mass and Speed. If the GM envisions halflings as being particularly hardy, she can give them a +1 bonus to Constitution: halfling Fair Constitution equals human Good Constitution. As another example, an alien race, Cludds, have a racial penalty of -1 to Intelligence.

It is best to use trait levels relative to humans on the character sheets, though you should put the racial-relative term in brackets. (Example: Grahkesh, Intelligence Poor [Cludd Fair].) However, *always* list Strength relative to the character's own race, with the Scale (if other than 0), so the Mass will be accurate. See the sample character, Brogo the Halfling (Section 6.3.1.1), for an example of both racial bonus and different Scale.

Racial bonuses and penalties can be used for any type of trait: attributes, skills, gifts, supernormal powers, or faults.

If using the Objective Character Creation system, each level of a Racial Bonus or Penalty is usually equal to one level of the specific trait raised or lowered normally. That is, if you are granting a +1 to Agility or +1 to Perception for a race, it should cost one attribute level. If a race has a bonus of a Perfect Sense of Direction, it should cost one gift. The innate ability to fly or cast magic spells should cost one supernormal power, etc.

If a race is at -1 to all Social skills, however, this should only be worth -1 skill level if you have a single skill called Social Skills. If you have many social individual social skills, it should be worth one fault. The converse is true for Bonuses that affect many skills: it should cost one or more gifts.

2.4 Legendary Heroes

Some genres allow human characters to develop beyond the realm of the humanly possible. Such campaigns eventually involve planes of existence beyond the mundane as the PCs require greater and greater challenges.

This style of gaming can be represented in FUDGE by Legendary Levels. Section 1.2, Levels, introduced the concept of Legendary traits as a goal for PCs to work toward. This section expands that concept infinitely.

If the GM and players prefer this type of gaming, *any* skill can be raised beyond Legendary. Instead of renaming each level, simply use a numbering system: Legendary 2nd Level Swordsman, Legendary 3rd Level Archer, etc. Attributes can also be raised, but (except for Strength) this is much rarer.

Each level of Legendary gives a +1 bonus to any action resolution. The character Hugh Quickfinger, for example, has a Longbow skill of Legendary 2nd Level. This gives him a total bonus of +5 (+3 for Superb, and +2 for two levels of Legendary). In any contest against a Fair Longbowman (+0), Hugh should easily triumph.

The Objective Character Development system, Section 5.2, lists suggested experience point costs for attaining these levels.

These levels do not automatically exist in any given game: these are strictly optional levels for specific, non-realistic genres.

2.5 Magic

If the Game Master wishes to include magic in the campaign, it may be easiest to translate whatever magic system she is familiar with into FUDGE. If she wishes to craft her own FUDGE magic rules, she should consider what she wants magic to be like in her game world.

Questions to ask include: What is the source of magic? Is it a natural process, such as mana manipulation? If it does use mana, does the mage create the mana, or is inherent in a locale? Or does the mage summon other-world entities to do his bidding? Or must the mage find a source of Power and channel it to his own ends? Or is the source of magic something altogether different?

Can anyone learn to work magic, or is it an inherent talent (that is, does it require a supernormal power)? Are there levels of Power available, and what would having more levels mean? Is a skill also required? Of course, even if a magician must have a Power to cast spells, there may also be magic items that anyone can use — these are common in tales and legends.

If beings are summoned, are they evil, good, neutral, confused? How do they feel about being commanded to work for the magician? Can they adversely affect the magician if he fails a spell roll? If Power is being channeled from an external source, is that source in the physical plane or astral? Is it from a living being, or contained in an inanimate object as inert energy, like a piece of coal before going into a fire?

What is the process of using magic? Does it involve memorized spells? Physical components? Meditation? Complex and time-consuming ritual? How long does it take to cast a spell? Can a spell be read out of a book? Improvised on the spot?

How reliable is magic? Are there any drawbacks? Any societal attitudes toward magicians? Is it common knowledge that magicians exist, or are they a secret cabal, whose doings are only whispered about in ever-changing rumors?

Once these issues have been resolved, and the degree of magic in the game decided on, the magic system can be created using FUDGE mechanics. A sample magic system, FUDGE Magic, is included in Chapter 7, The Addenda.

2.6 Miracles

FUDGE assumes miracles are powered by a deity. Some miracles may happen at the deity's instigation (GM whim, or deus ex machina for plot purposes), and some may be petitioned by characters.

Miracles may take place in a startling fashion or in a mundane way. In fact, many people believe that miracles occur daily, but we don't notice them because they appear as simple coincidences. The stranger walking down the road who just happens to have the tools you need to fix your wagon might indeed be just a coincidence, or it may have been divinely arranged that he chanced by at that time. If the tools were simply to appear by themselves, or the wagon fix itself, there would be little doubt that a miracle had occurred. This is neither good nor bad — the GM can choose either method of granting miracles, and need not feel bound to be consistent.

The GM must decide whether miracles can occur in her world, and whether they can be called by character petition. If the latter, then she has to make many other decisions. Can *any* character petition a particular deity? Does it matter if the character is actually a member of a religious order? How important is the character's behavior — would a deity help a member of a particular religious order even if he had been acting against the deity's goals? How certain is the miracle to occur? How soon will it become manifest? How broad and how specific can requests be? Are any Ritual or Supplication skills needed to petition a deity, or can anyone simply breathe a prayer for help?

The answers will vary from GM to GM — no "generic" system of miracles is possible. A sample miracle system, FUDGE Miracles, is included in Chapter 7, The Addenda.

2.7 Psi

Again, it is probably easiest for the GM to translate whatever psionics rules she knows to FUDGE. As a simple system, each psionic ability can be a separate supernormal power. The ability to read minds, or foresee the future, or telekinetically move an object, etc., each cost one supernormal power (two gifts). Just *how* powerful the psionic ability is depends on the level of psi the GM wants for the game world. Someone who can telekinetically lift a battleship is obviously more powerful than someone who can't lift anything heavier than a roulette ball — though the latter may make more money with his power, if he's highly skilled!

If the game world has more than one level of power available, then a character must spend multiple free power levels to get the higher levels. See also Section 2.3.4, Cost of Scale.

In general, higher levels of Psi Powers equal greater range, or the ability to affect larger or more subjects at once, or access to a greater number of related skills (a low Telepathy Power lets you send your thoughts to another, for example, but greater Power lets you read minds, send painful waves of energy, sense emotions, and possibly even control others). A higher level might also let you use less fatigue or have a lower risk of burnout, take less time in concentration to use, or allow more uses per day, or be used in a broader range of conditions (a low ESP Power can only be accessed in a darkened room, for example, while a high Power level can be used at any time), and so on.

The GM may also require skills to use these powers. Having the psionic ability to use telekinesis just allows you to pick an object up with your mental powers, and move it crudely about. Fine manipulation, such as picking a pocket, requires a successful roll against a telekinetic skill.

A sample psi system, FUDGE Psi, is included in Chapter 7, The Addenda.

2.8 Superpowers

If the campaign allows superpowers similar to those found in comic books, there will probably be a wide variety of powers available. How many an individual character can have depends on the power level of the campaign. A common treatment of superheroes involves faults related to Powers, which makes more Powers available to the character. For example, a super hero is able to fly, but only while intangible. The accompanying fault lowers the cost of the Power to that of a gift.

There are far too many powers to list in FUDGE — browsing through a comic store's wares will give you a good idea of what's available. As with psionics, each power costs one of the free supernormal powers available, and some can be taken in different levels. Potent ones cost two or more of the "average" superpowers.

Super strength is treated as a separate scale — see Section 2.3, Non-humans. Other superpowers that come in levels are discussed in Section 2.3.4, Cost of Scale.

2.9 Cybernetics

Artificial limbs, organs, implants and neural connections to computers are common in some science fiction settings. If these grant powers beyond the human norm, they must be bought with supernormal power levels if using the Objective Character Creation system, or with the GM's approval in any case.

If an implant grants a bonus to an attribute, it should cost as much as the attribute bonus, which is not necessarily as much as a supernormal power. Since an artificial implant may occasionally fail, however, the GM can give a slight cost break by also allowing a free skill level elsewhere on the character sheet.

Chapter 3

Action Resolution

This chapter covers how to determine whether or not a character succeeds at an attempted action. In the previous chapters, traits were defined in terms of levels: Superb, Great, Good, etc. This chapter explains how those levels affect a character's chances of success at an action, whether fighting a giant or tracking down a clue. Sometimes a Fair result is sufficient to complete a task, and sometimes a Good or better result is needed. The better your skill, the better your chances of getting these higher results.

3.1 Action Resolution Terms

Dice Various options for dice are given: players may use either three or four six-sided dice (3d6 or 4d6), or two ten-sided dice as percentile dice (d%), or four FUDGE dice (4dF), described in the text. It is also possible to play FUDGE diceless.

Unopposed Action some actions are *Unopposed*, as when a character is trying to perform an action which isn't influenced by anyone else. Examples include jumping a wide chasm, climbing a cliff, performing a chemistry experiment, etc. The player simply rolls the dice and reads the result.

Rolled Degree this refers to how well a character does at a particular task. If someone is Good at Climbing in general, but the die-roll shows a Great result on a particular attempt, then the rolled degree is Great.

Difficulty Level the GM will set a Difficulty Level when a character tries an Unopposed Action. Usually it will be Fair, but some tasks are easier or harder. Example: climbing an average vertical cliff face, even one with lots of handholds, is a fairly difficult obstacle (Fair Difficulty Level). For a very hard cliff, the GM may set the Difficulty Level at Great: the player must make a rolled degree of Great or higher to climb the cliff successfully.

Opposed Action actions are *Opposed* when other people (or animals, etc.) may have an effect on the outcome of the action. In this case, each contestant rolls a set of dice, and the results are compared to determine the outcome. Examples include combat, seduction attempts, haggling, tug-of-war, etc.

Relative Degree this refers to how well a character did compared to another participant in an Opposed Action. Unlike a rolled degree, relative degree is expressed as a number of levels. For example, if a PC gets a rolled degree result of Good in a fight, and his NPC foe gets a rolled degree result of Mediocre, he beat her by two levels — the relative degree is +2 from his perspective, -2 from hers.

Situational Roll the GM may occasionally want a die roll that is not based on a character's trait, but on the overall situation or outside circumstances. This Situational roll is simply a normal FUDGE die roll, but not based on any trait. That is, a result of 0 is a Fair result, +1 a Good result, -1 a Mediocre result, and so on. This is most commonly used with Reaction and damage rolls, but can be used elsewhere as needed. For example, the players ask the GM if there are any passersby on the street at the moment — they're worried about witnesses. The GM decides there are none if a Situational roll gives a Good or better result, and rolls the dice. (A close approximation to 50% is an even/odd result: an even result on 4dF occurs 50.6% of the time. Of course, 1d6 or a coin returns an exact 50% probability.)

Beyond Superb it is possible to achieve a level of rolled degree that is beyond Superb. Rolled degrees from Superb +1 to Superb +4 are possible. These levels are only reachable on rare occasions by human beings. No trait may be taken at (or raised to) a level beyond Superb (unless the GM is allowing a PC to be at Legendary, which is the same as Superb +1 — see Section 5.2, Objective Character Development). For example, the American baseball player Willie Mays was a Superb outfielder. His most famous catch, often shown on television, is a Superb +4 rolled degree. It isn't possible for a human to have that level of excellence as a routine skill level, however: even Willie was "just" a Superb outfielder, who could sometimes do even better. A GM may set a Difficulty Level beyond Superb for nearly impossible actions.

Below Terrible likewise, there are rolled degrees from Terrible -1 down to Terrible -4. No Difficulty Level should be set this low, however: anything requiring a Terrible Difficulty Level or worse should be automatic for most characters — no roll needed.

3.2 Rolling the Dice

There is no need to roll the dice when a character performs an action that is so easy as to be automatic. Likewise, an action so difficult that it has no chance to succeed requires no roll, either — it simply can't be done. Dice are used solely in the middle ground, where the outcome of an action is uncertain.

The GM is encouraged to keep die-rolling to a minimum. Do not make the players roll the dice when their characters do mundane things. There is no need to make a roll to see if someone can cook lunch properly, or pick an item from a shelf, or climb a ladder, etc. Don't even make them roll to climb a cliff unless it's a difficult cliff or the situation is stressful, such as a chase. (And possibly a Superb climber wouldn't need a roll for a difficult cliff. He should get up it automatically unless it's a *very* difficult cliff.)

For any action the player character wishes to perform, the Game Master must determine which trait is tested. (This will usually be a skill or an attribute.) If the action is Unopposed, the GM also determines the Difficulty Level — usually Fair. (See also Section 3.5, Opposed Actions.)

For running FUDGE Diceless, see the Addenda, Section 7.4.2.

3.2.1 Reading the Dice

Of the four dice techniques presented in FUDGE, this one is recommended. It gives results from -4 to +4 quickly and easily, without intruding into role-playing or requiring complex math or a table.

FUDGE dice are six-sided dice with two sides marked +1, two sides marked -1, and two sides marked 0. They are commercially available from Grey Ghost Games — see the Legal Notice for their address.

You can make your own FUDGE easily enough. Simply get four normal white d6s. Using a permanent marker, color two sides of each die green, two sides red, and leave the other two sides white. When the ink has dried, spray the dice lightly with clear matte finish to prevent the ink from staining your hands. You now have 4dF: the green sides = +1, the red sides = -1, and the white sides = 0.

(While you can try to play with normal d6s, reading:

$$\begin{aligned} 1{,}2 &= -1 \\ 3{,}4 &= 0 \\ 5{,}6 &= +1 \end{aligned}$$

this is not recommended. It takes too much effort, and intrudes into role-playing. 4dF is functionally equivalent to 4d3-8, but this is also not recommended for the same reason, even if you have d6s labelled 1-3 twice.)

To use FUDGE dice, simply roll four of them, and total the amount. Since a +1 and a -1 cancel each other, remove a +1 and -1 from the table, and the remaining two dice are easy to read no matter what they are. (Example: if you roll +1, +1, 0, -1, remove the -1 and one of the +1s, as together they equal 0. The remaining two dice, +1 and 0, are easily added to +1.) If there is no opposing pair of +1 and -1 dice, remove any 0s and the remaining dice are again easy to read.

The result of a die roll is a number between -4 and +4. At the top of the character sheet, there should be a simple chart of the attribute levels, such as:

Superb
Great
Good
Fair
Mediocre
Poor
Terrible

To determine the result of an action, simply put your finger on your trait level, then move it up (for plus results) or down (for minus results).

Example: Nathaniel, who has a Good Bow Skill, is shooting in an archery contest. The player rolls 4dF, using the procedure described above. If he rolls a 0, he gets a result equal to Nathaniel's skill: Good, in this case. If he rolls a +1, however, he gets a Great result, since Great is one level higher than his Good Archery skill. If he rolls a -3, unlucky Nathaniel has just made a Poor shot.

It is not always necessary to figure the exact rolled degree. If you only need to know whether or not a character succeeded at something, it is usually sufficient for the player simply to announce the appropriate trait level and the die roll result. The game goes much faster this way.

For example, a player wants his character, Captain Wallop of the Space Patrol, to fly between two asteroids that are fairly close together. The GM says this requires a Great Difficulty Level Piloting roll and asks the player to roll the dice. The player looks up Captain Wallop's Piloting skill, which is Great, and rolls a +2 result. He simply announces "Great +2" as the result. This answer is sufficient — the GM knows that Captain Wallop not only succeeded at the task, but didn't even come close to damaging his craft.

Of course, there are many times when you want to know exactly how well the character did, even if it's not a matter of being close. If the character is composing a poem, for example, and his Poetry skill is Fair, you will want to figure out what "Fair+2" means: he just wrote a Great poem! There are many other instances where degrees of success is more important than merely knowing success/failure.

3.2.2 Other Dice Techniques

For those who don't want to make or buy FUDGE dice, three different options are available:

4d6 this method requires 2d6 of one color (or size) and 2d6 of another color or size. First declare which two dice are the positive dice, and which two the negative, then roll all four dice. Do not add the dice in this system. Instead, remove from the table all but the lowest die (or dice, if more than one has the same lowest number showing). If the only dice left on the table are the same color, that is the result: a positive die with a "1" showing is a +1, for example. If there are still dice of both colors showing, the result is "0".

> *Examples (p = positive die, n = negative die): you roll p4, p3, n3, n3. The lowest number is a 3, so the p4 is removed, leaving p3, n3 and n3. Since there are both positive and negative dice remaining, the result is 0. On another roll, you get p1, p1, n2, n4. Remove the highest numbers, n2 and n4. This leaves only positive dice, so the result is +1, since a "1" is showing on a positive die, and there are no negative dice on the table.*

3d6 Roll 3 six-sided dice. Add the numbers and look up the results on the table below. This table is small enough to fit easily on a character sheet. Example: a roll of 3, 3, 6 is a sum of 12. Looking up 12 on the table yields a result of +1.

Rolled	3-4	5	6-7	8-9	10-11	12-13	14-15	16	17-18
Result	-4	-3	-2	-1	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4

d% roll two ten-sided dice, having first declared which will be the "tens" digit. Read the tens die and the ones die as a number from 1 to 100 (01 = 1, but 00 = 100), and consult the table below, which should be printed on the character sheet:

Rolled	1	2-6	7-18	19-38	39-62	63-82	83-94	95-99	00
Result	-4	-3	-2	-1	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4

Of course, the GM may customize this table as she wishes. These numbers were chosen to match 4dF, which the author feels is an ideal spread for FUDGE.

3.2.3 Success Rates

The following table is provided so that players can better evaluate their chances of success.

Chance of achieving	4dF or d%	3d6	4d6
+5 or better	-	-	0.2%
+4 or better	1%	2%	2%
+3 or better	6%	5%	7%
+2 or better	18%	16%	18%
+1 or better	38%	38%	39%
0 or better	62%	62%	61%
-1 or better	82%	84%	82%
-2 or better	94%	95%	93%
-3 or better	99%	98%	98%
-4 or better	100%	100%	99.8%
-5 or better	-	-	100%

Thus, if your trait is Fair, and the GM says you need a Good result or better to succeed, you need to roll +1 or better. You'll do this about two times out of five, on the average.

You'll notice that using 3d6 or 4d6 the results, while slightly different, are close enough for a game called FUDGE. The 4d6 results do allow +/-5, however, but this shouldn't be a problem since they occur so rarely. In fact, you could use 5dF to allow +/-5 if you wanted . . . .

3.3 Action Modifiers

There may be modifiers for any given action, which can affect the odds referred to in the preceding section. Modifiers temporarily improve or reduce a character's traits.

> *Examples: Joe, Good with a sword, is Hurt (-1 to all actions). He is thus only Fair with his sword until he's healed. Jill has Mediocre Lockpicking skills, but an exceptionally fine set of lock picks gives her a Fair Lockpicking skill while she's using them.*

If a character has a secondary trait that could contribute significantly to a task, the GM may allow a +1 bonus if the trait is Good or better.

> *Example: Verne is at the library, researching an obscure South American Indian ritual. He uses his Research skill of Good, but he also has a Good Anthropology skill. The GM decides this is significant enough to give Verne a Great Research skill for this occasion. If his Anthropology skill were Superb, the GM could simply let Verne use that instead of Research: you don't get to be Superb in Anthropology without having done a lot of research.*

Other conditions may grant a +/-1 to any trait. In FUDGE, +/-2 is a large modifier — +/-3 is the maximum that should ever be granted except under *extreme* conditions.

3.4 Unopposed Actions

For each Unopposed action, the GM sets a Difficulty Level (Fair is the most common) and announces which trait should be rolled against. If no Skill seems relevant, choose the most appropriate Attribute. If there is a relevant Skill, but the character is untrained in it (it's not listed on his character sheet), then use the default: usually Poor. If a high attribute could logically help an *untrained* skill, set the default at Mediocre.

> *For example, a character wishes to palm some coins without being observed. The GM says to use Sleight of Hand skill, but the character is untrained in Sleight of Hand. The player points out that the character's Dexterity attribute is Superb, so the GM allows a default of Mediocre Sleight of Hand for this attempt.*

The player then rolls against the character's trait level, and tries to match or surpass the Difficulty Level set by the GM. In cases where there are degrees of success, the better the roll, the better the character did; the worse the roll, the worse the character did.

In setting the Difficulty Level of a task, the GM should remember that Poor is the default for most skills. The average *trained* climber can climb a Fair cliff most of the time, but the average *untrained* climber will usually get a Poor result. In the example in Section 3.2 (Nathaniel shooting at an archery target), if the target is large and close, even a Mediocre archer could be expected to hit it: Mediocre Difficulty Level. If it were *much* smaller and farther away, perhaps only a Great archer could expect to hit it regularly: Great Difficulty Level. And so on.

Example of setting Difficulty Level: Two PCs (Mickey and Arnold) and an NPC guide (Parri) come to a cliff the guide tells them they have to climb. The GM announces this is a difficult, but not impossible, cliff: a Good Difficulty Level roll is required to scale it with no delays or complications. Checking the character sheets, they find that Parri's Climbing skill is Great and Mickey's is Good. Arnold's character sheet doesn't list Climbing, so his skill level is at default: Poor. Parri and Mickey decide to climb it, then lower a rope for Arnold.

Parri rolls a +1 result: a rolled degree of Superb. She gets up the cliff without difficulty, and much more quickly than expected. Mickey rolls a -1, however, for a rolled degree of Fair. Since this is one level lower than the Difficulty Level, he's having problems. Had Mickey done Poorly or even Mediocre, he would perhaps have fallen — or not even been able to start. Since his rolled degree is only slightly below the Difficulty Level, though, the GM simply rules he is stuck half way up, and can't figure out how to go on. Parri ties a rope to a tree at the top of the cliff, and lowers it for Mickey. The GM says it is now Difficulty Level: Poor to climb the cliff with the rope in place, and Mickey makes this easily on another roll.

Arnold would also need a Poor rolled degree to climb the cliff with the rope, but since his skill is Poor, they decide not to risk it. Mickey and Parri have Arnold loop the rope under his arms, and pull him up as he grabs handholds along the way in case they slip. No roll is needed in this case, unless they are suddenly attacked when Arnold is only half way up the cliff ....

(The whole situation was merely described as an example of setting Difficulty levels. In actual game play, the GM should describe the cliff, and ask the players how the characters intend to get up it. If they came up with the idea of Parri climbing the cliff and lowering a rope, no rolls would be needed at all — unless, possibly, time was a critical factor, or there were hidden difficulties the GM chose not to reveal because they couldn't have been perceived from the bottom of the cliff.)

Occasionally, the GM will roll in secret for the PC. There are times when even a failed roll would give the player knowledge he wouldn't otherwise have. These are usually information rolls. For example, if the GM asks the player to make a roll against Perception attribute (or Find Hidden Things skill), and the player fails, the character doesn't notice anything out of the ordinary. But the player now knows that there *is* something out of the ordinary that his character didn't notice .... Far better for the GM to make the roll in secret, and only mention it on a successful result.

3.5 Opposed Actions

To resolve an Opposed action between two characters, each side rolls two dice against the appropriate trait and announces the result. The traits rolled against are not necessarily the same.

For example, a seduction attempt would be rolled against a Seduction skill for the active participant (or possibly Appearance attribute) and against Will for the resisting participant. There may be modifiers: someone with a vow of chastity might get a bonus of +2 to his Will, while someone with a Lecherous fault would have a penalty — or not even try to resist.

The Game Master compares the rolled degrees to determine a relative degree.

For example, Lisa is trying to flimflam Joe into thinking she's from the FBI and rolls a Great result. This is not automatic success, however. If Joe also rolls a Great result on his trait to avoid being flimflammed (Knowledge of Police Procedure, Learning, Intelligence, etc. — whatever the GM decides is appropriate), then the relative degree is 0: the status quo is maintained. In this case, Joe remains unconvinced that Lisa is legitimate. If Joe rolled a Superb result, Lisa's Great result would have actually earned her a relative degree of -1: Joe is not going to be fooled this encounter, and will probably even have a bad reaction to Lisa.

The Opposed action mechanism can be used to resolve almost any conflict between two characters. Are two people both grabbing the same item at the same time? This is an Opposed action based on a Dexterity attribute — the winner gets the item. Is one character trying to shove another one down? Roll Strength vs. Strength (or Wrestling skill) to see who goes down. Someone trying to hide from a search party? Perception attribute (or Find Hidden skill) vs. Hide skill (or Camouflage, Stealth, etc.). Trying to out-drink a rival? Constitution vs. Constitution (or Drinking skill, Carousing, etc.). And so on.

Some Opposed actions have a minimum level needed for success. For example, an attempt to control a person's mind with a Telepathy skill might require at least a Fair result. If the telepath only gets a Mediocre result, it doesn't matter if the intended victim rolls a Poor resistance: the attempt fails. Most combat falls into this category — see Chapter 4.

For an example of Opposed actions involving more than two characters, see Section 4.3.4, Multiple Combatants in Melee.

An Opposed action can also be handled as an Unopposed action. When a PC is opposing an NPC, have only the player roll, and simply let the NPC's trait level be the Difficulty Level. This method assumes the NPC will always roll a 0. This emphasizes the PCs' performance, and reduces the possibility of an NPC's lucky roll deciding the game.

As a slight variation on the above, the GM rolls 1dF or 2dF when rolling for an NPC in an opposed action. This allows some variation in the NPC's ability, but still puts the emphasis on the PCs' actions.

For those without FUDGE dice, the GM can simply roll 1d6 for an NPC. On a result of 2-5, the NPC gets the listed trait level as a result. On a result of 1, the NPC did worse than her trait level; on a result of 6 the NPC did better than her trait level. Those who want to know precisely how much better or worse should roll a second d6:

1,2,3	= +/-1 (as appropriate)
4,5	= +/-2
6	= +/-3

3.6 Critical Results

Critical results are an optional FUDGE rule for GMs who like the idea. A natural rolled result of +4 can be considered a critical success — the character has done exceptionally well, and the GM may grant some special bonus to the action. Likewise, a natural result of -4 is a critical failure, and the character has done as poorly as he possibly can in the given situation.

Note that achieving +/-4 with die modifiers does not count as a critical result, though the character *has* done exceptionally well or poorly. When a natural critical result is rolled, the GM may ignore what the rolled degree would be, and treat it as an automatic beyond Superb or below Terrible result.

Optionally, if a character gets a rolled degree four or more levels better than the Difficulty Level, he has gotten a critical success. Likewise, four levels below a Difficulty Level is a critical failure.

A critical result in combat can mean many things: one fighter falls down, or drops his weapon, or is hurt extra badly, or is stunned for a round and can't even defend himself, or is temporarily blinded, or knocked out, etc. The GM should be creative, but not kill a character outright.

The GM may even wish to make a table, such as these sample melee critical results:

Roll 2d6:	
2	Blinded for the next combat round - no defense or offense!
3	Fall down: skill at -2 for one round.
4	Armor badly damaged - no armor value rest of fight!
5	Weapon finds chink in armor - do not subtract for armor.
6	Off balance - skill at -1 next turn.
7	Drop Weapon.
8	Weapon breaks, but still useful: -1 to damage.
9	...

And so on — finish and customize to your tastes.

This is an easy way to achieve a lot of detail without complicating FUDGE. Those with Internet access are invited to add any interesting critical results tables they create to the FUDGE sites.

3.7 NPC Reactions

Sometimes a non-player character has a set reaction to the PCs. Perhaps she's automatically their enemy, or perhaps the party has rescued her, and earned her gratitude. But there will be many NPCs that don't have a set reaction. When the PCs request information or aid, it might go smoothly or it might not go well at all. Negotiation with a stranger is always an unknown quantity to the players — it may be so for the GM, too.

When in doubt, the GM should secretly make a Situational roll. If the PC in question has a trait that can affect a stranger's reaction, this should grant a +/-1 (or more) to the result. Examples include Appearance (which could be an attribute, gift or fault), Charisma, Reputation, Status, and such habits as nose-picking or vulgar language. The Reaction roll can also be modified up or down by circumstances: bribes, suspicious or friendly nature of the NPC, proximity of the NPC's boss, observed PC behavior, etc.

The higher the Reaction roll result, the better the reaction. On a Fair result, for example, the NPC will be mildly helpful, but only if it's not too much effort. She won't be helpful at all on Mediocre or worse results, but will react well on a Good result or better.

> *Example: Nathaniel needs some information about the local duke, who he suspects is corrupt. He has observed that folks are reticent to talk about the duke to strangers. Nathaniel decides to approach a talkative vegetable seller at the open market. Nathaniel has an average appearance (no modifier), but is charismatic: +1 to any Reaction roll. He makes small talk for a while, then slowly brings the duke into the conversation. The GM decides this was done skillfully enough to warrant another +1 on the reaction roll. However, the situation is prickly: -2 in general to elicit* any *information about the sinister local ruler. This cancels Nathaniel's bonuses. The GM rolls in secret, and gets a Fair result. The old lady slips out a bit of useful information before realizing what she's just said. At that point she clams up, but Nathaniel casually changes the subject to the weather, dispelling her suspicions. He wanders off to try his luck elsewhere.*

Chapter 4

Combat

Unless one participant is unaware of an attack or decides to ignore it, combat is an Opposed action in FUDGE. The easiest way to handle combat in FUDGE is as a series of Opposed action. This can be done simply or with more complexity. The author of FUDGE uses simple and loose combat rules in order to get combat over with quickly and get back to more interesting role-playing. This chapter, largely optional, is for players who prefer combat options spelled out in detail.

Melee combat and Ranged combat are treated separately.

4.1 Combat Terms

Melee any combat that involves striking the opponent with a fist or hand-held weapon. Any attack from further away is a Ranged attack.

Story Element a distinct segment of the storyline in the game. In combat, the interval between story elements can be a practical place for a die roll.

Combat Round an indeterminate length of time set by the GM — around three seconds seems reasonable to some people, while that seems grossly short or absurdly long to others. A given GM's combat round may vary in length, depending on the situation. Generally, when each character involved has made an action, a given round is over.

Offensive damage factors those which contribute to damaging an opponent: Strength (if using a Strength-driven weapon), Scale, and deadliness of weapon.

Defensive damage factors those which contribute to reducing the severity of a received blow: Scale, armor, and possibly Damage Capacity.

Total damage factor (or simply damage factor) the attacker's offensive damage factor minus the defender's defensive damage factor.

4.2 Melee Combat

FUDGE gives three options available for handling the pacing of melee combat: moving from story element to story element, using simultaneous combat rounds, or alternating combat turns. An individual GM may devise others.

4.2.1 Story Elements

In the simplest combat system, the GM explains the situation in as much detail as is apparent, then asks the players to describe what their characters are doing. The more complete the description of their characters' actions, the better the GM know how to assess the situation. This can be important if she has something that won't be revealed until the middle of a battle. Die rolls, if any, are required by the GM for each *story element.*

A story element is the smallest unit of time in this type of combat resolution. The GM may break the battle down into several story elements, or treat the whole encounter as one element. This depends on the GM's style, the importance of the battle, the number of participants, whether or not there are unexpected surprises, etc. Each element should be a dramatic unit.

> *For example, the PCs are faced with a detachment of guards at the door while the evil mastermind is trying to activate the Doomsday machine at the back of the room. The fight with the guards might be one element while the confrontation with Dr. Doomsday could be a second. Another GM might treat the whole battle as one story element, while a third GM would treat each five-second segment separately. Whatever the number of elements, keep the battle description as word-oriented as possible.*

The GM may ask for a single die roll from a player occasionally, or require three rolls and take the *median* roll.

(The median is the middle value die roll, which may be the same as either the high or low die roll. For example, if the player rolls a Good, a Mediocre, and a Superb result, the median is Good, since it's the result in between Mediocre and Superb. But a result of Poor, Great, and Great gives a median die roll of Great. Using a median tends to soften the role of extreme luck. Some GMs use a median when a single die result represents many actions.)

Once the GM has decided which trait (or traits) each PC should use for this combat, she then gives them a modifier, ranging from -3 to +3. The most common modifier should be 0. The modifier is based partly on how well the PCs' plan would work, given what the GM knows of the NPCs, and partly on circumstances: fatigue, lighting, footing, surprise, weapon superiority, bravery or cowardice of NPCs, wounds, etc.

Here is a long example of story element style of combat:

> *Gunner, separated from the other PCs, surprises five members of a rival gang in a garage. The player announces that Gunner will shout and charge the rival mob, carrying his Tommy gun as if he's about to fire — they don't know it's irreparably jammed. He hopes to see them run away, hit the dirt, or freeze in fear. He'll then use his Tommy gun as club, starting at the left end of their line. He'll keep his current opponent in between him and the others as long as possible. He hopes to then roll up their line, one at a time, keeping the wall to his left side as he charges.*

The GM makes a Situational roll for the mob: Mediocre. The mob members don't recover quickly from their surprise, so she gives Gunner a +1 to his Brawling skill of Good for this plan. She also decides that one mobster will run away and the others won't draw their guns until Gunner has already engaged the first enemy. His Running skill is Great, so she gives him another +1, since he can cover ground quickly. Total modifier for Gunner is +2, bringing his Brawling skill to Superb for this combat. Since this is a fairly long action and she doesn't want a single unlucky roll to ruin Gunner's chances, she asks him for three Brawling skill rolls (at the +2 modifier), and to use the median roll.

Gunner rolls a Good, Superb, and Great result, in that order. The median roll is Great, and the GM decides this is good enough to have downed the first two mobsters, and describes the battle so far in entertaining detail. Now Gunner is facing the last two thugs, who finally have their pistols out and could probably plug him before he charges that far. The GM asks, "What does Gunner do now?"

Gunner hurls the Tommy gun into the face of one gunman while making a low diving tackle for the other, hoping to dodge under any bullets. The GM calls for a single roll against Brawling to cover this whole action: Gunner gets a Fair result. The GM rules that Gunner throws the Tommy gun well enough to distract one gunman, but not harm him. He does, however, manage to tackle and subdue his other foe, whose shots all go wild.

At this point, the GM rules that the mobster grazed by the thrown Tommy gun now steps over and points his pistol to Gunner's head while he's kneeling over the other mobster. Gunner wisely heeds the call to surrender and hopes his friends can rescue him ....

4.2.2 Simultaneous Combat Rounds

Those who like their combat broken down into discrete bits can use combat "rounds." In simultaneous action rounds, all offensive and defensive maneuvers happen at the same time. This is realistic: few real combats consist of fighters taking turns whacking at each other.

The GM determines which traits the combatants should roll against. This depends largely on which weapon they are using, which might simply be a fist. Weapon type also affects damage — see Section 4.5, Wounds.

Each combatant makes an Opposed action roll. On a relative degree of 0, the combat round is a stand-off — the fighters either circled each other looking for an opening, or exchanged blows on each other's shields, etc. — nobody is hurt.

A minimum result of Poor is needed to hit a (roughly) equal-sized opponent. That is, a human needs to score a Poor blow (and still win the Opposed action) in order to hit another human. If both opponents roll worse than Poor, the round is a standoff.

If one opponent is *significantly* bigger than the other (of a different Scale, at least), he needs a Mediocre or even Fair result to hit his smaller foe, while even a Terrible result will allow the small fighter to hit the larger. (Of course, such a blow must still *win* the

Opposed action.) Extremely small targets, such as a pixie, may require a Good or even a Great result. Examples include humans fighting giants, or very large or small animals.

If the result is a relative degree other than 0, and the minimum level needed to score a hit is achieved or surpassed, the winner checks to see if he hit hard enough to damage the loser. In general, the better the hit (the greater the relative degree), the greater the likelihood of damage.

If one combatant is unable to fight in a given round (possibly because he's unaware of the attacker, or because of a critical result in the previous round — see Section 3.6, Critical Results), the combat may become an Unopposed Action for the active fighter, usually with a Poor Difficulty Level. If a character can defend himself in some way, such as using a shield, it is still an Opposed Action, but the defending character cannot hurt the other character even if he wins the combat round.

Combat often takes more than one combat round. Characters are not limited to attacking each round — they may attempt to flee, negotiate, try a fancy acrobatic stunt, or any other appropriate action.

4.2.3 Alternating Combat Turns

Using alternating combat turns, each combat round consists of two actions: the fighter with the higher initiative attacks while the other defends, then the second combatant attacks while the first defends. With multiple characters involved in combat, the *side* with the initiative makes all their attacks, then the other side makes all their attacks. Or the GM may run the combat in initiative order, even if fighters from both sides are interspersed throughout the combat turn.

Gaining initiative is an Opposed action. If the characters don't have an Initiative attribute or skill — such as Reflexes or Speed — simply use Opposed Situational rolls. A gift such as Combat Reflexes can grant a +1 to initiative. Surprise may grant a bonus to the roll, or give automatic initiative. Initiative can be rolled once for each battle or once each round. Perhaps a character could trade skill for initiative: attack hastily (+1 to initiative that round) but be slightly off balance because of it (-1 to attack *and* defend that round).

Each attack is an Opposed Action: the attacker's Offensive skill (Sword, Melee Weapon, Martial Art, etc.) against a defender's Defensive skill (Shield, Parry, Dodge, Duck, etc.). This type of combat take longer than simultaneous rounds, but some players feel it gives a character more control over his own fate.

Using these rules, a Defensive parry skill may simply equal the weapon skill, or it may be a separate skill that must be bought independently of an Offensive skill. The GM must tell the players at character creation which method she is using — or allow them extra levels on the fly to adjust their defensive abilities.

Some weapons, such as an Axe, are poor parrying weapons. Players should ask the GM at character creation if a weapon may be used to parry and still be used to attack without penalty in the next turn — and give their characters decent Shield or Dodge skills to compensate for poor parrying weapons.

All-out offensive and defensive tactics can be used. A character forfeits his attack for a round if he chooses All-out defense, and is at -2 on his defense on his opponent's next turn if choosing All-out offense — or perhaps gets no defense at all!

The default defense for animals depends on their type: carnivores will usually have a Defense value one level less than their Offense, while this is reversed for most prey species.

4.3 Melee Combat Options

The various options listed below may be used with any melee system. This is not a comprehensive or "official" list of options. The GM should, in fact, consider these options merely as examples to stimulate her imagination. The GM may wish to import complex combat options from other games into FUDGE.

4.3.1 Melee Modifiers

Some situations call for one side or the other's trait level to be modified. Here are some examples:

- A fighter who is Hurt is at -1, while one who is Very Hurt is at -2.
- If one fighter has a positional advantage over the other, there may be a penalty (-1 or -2) to the fighter in the worse position. Examples include bad footing, lower elevation, light in his eyes, kneeling, etc.
- Subtract the value of a shield from the opponent's weapon skill. A small shield has a value of +1 in melee combat only, while a medium shield has a value of +1 in melee combat and +1 to defense against ranged attacks (if the shield material is impervious to the weapon). A large shield (+2 in all combat) is cumbersome to lug around. The larger the shield carried, the more the GM should assess penalties for things such as acrobatic and other fancy maneuvers. Shields can also be used offensively to push an opponent back, for example, or knock someone over.
- Compare combatants' weapon sizes and shields (see Section 4.5.4, Sample Wound Factors List). If one fighter's weapon + shield value is +2 (or more) greater than the other fighter's weapon + shield value, the fighter with the smaller weapon is at -1 to his combat skill. (Example: one fighter has a Two-handed sword: +4 to damage. His opponent has a knife and an average shield: +1 to damage, +1 for shield makes a total of +2. The knife wielder is at -1 to skill in this combat since his weapon modifier is -2 less than the sword fighter's.)
- Aiming at a specific small body part (such as an eye or hand) will require a minimum result of Good or Great to hit and also have a -1 to the trait level. If a result of Great is needed and the fighter only gets a Good result but still wins the Opposed action, he hits the other fighter — but not in the part aimed for.
- A fighter may have a magical blessing (+1 or more) or curse (-1 or worse).
- All-out offense, such as a berserk attack, grants a +1 to the combat skill (and an additional +1 for damage, if successful). However, if an all-out attacker *ties* or loses the Opposed action, the other fighter wins, and gets +2 to damage!

- An All-out defensive stance earns a +2 to the combat skill, but such a combatant cannot harm his foe except with a critical result.
- A successful All-out Defense and a successful Perception or Tactics roll produces a -1 penalty to the opponent on the *next* round. The fighter takes a few seconds to scope out the area and maneuvers to take advantage of any terrain or conditional irregularity. Similar combat subtleties are possible, and encouraged — taking a successful All-out defense one round can allow a player to try an acrobatics maneuver the next combat round without risk of being hit, for example.

4.3.2 Offensive/Defensive Tactics

This optional rule, used with simultaneous combat rounds, allows more tactical flavor to combat at a small expense of complexity. This option replaces the All-out attack and defense options listed above, and allows for both combatants to be injured in the same combat round.

Before each round, a fighter may choose to be in a normal posture, an offensive posture or defensive posture. An offensive or defensive stance increases combat skill in one aspect of combat (offense or defense), and decrease the same skill by an equal amount for the other aspect of combat.

There are five basic options:

+2 to Offense, -2 to Defense
+1 to Offense, -1 to Defense
Normal Offense and Defense
-1 to Offense, +1 to Defense
-2 to Offense, +2 to Defense

Each combat round, a player secretly chooses a combat stance by selecting two FUDGE dice and setting them to a result from +2 to -2, which represents an offensive modifier. (The defensive modifier shown above with the offensive modifier is automatically included.) Both sides simultaneously reveal their choices.

For those without FUDGE dice, choose one die placed as follows:

Die face:	Option:
1	-2 to offense
2	-1 to offense
3,4	Normal offense
5	+1 to offense
6	+2 to offense

Each fighter then makes a single Opposed action roll as normal. The result is applied to both offense and defense, however, and will thus have different results for offense and defense if anything other than a normal posture is chosen. The offensive rolled result of each fighter is then compared to the defense of the other fighter.

For example, a fighter with Good sword skill chooses +1 to offense and -1 to defense for a particular combat round: his offensive sword skill is Great this round, while his defensive sword skill is Fair. His opponent, a Great swordswoman, chooses normal posture. The swordswoman rolls a -1: a Good result for both her offense and defense. The first fighter rolls a 0 result: his offensive rolled result is Great, his defense is Fair.

His offense result of Great is compared with her Good defense: he wins by +1. However, her offense result of Good is simultaneously compared with his defense of Fair: she also wins the Opposed action by +1. Both sides check for damage, to see if they got through each other's armor — see Section 4.5, Wounds.

4.3.3 PCs vs. NPCs

If a PC is fighting an NPC the GM can treat combat as an Unopposed action by assuming the NPC will always get a result equal to her trait level. In this case, the PC will have to tie the NPC's trait level to have a stand-off round, and beat the NPC's trait in order to inflict damage. This option stresses the player characters' abilities by disallowing fluke rolls by NPCs.

4.3.4 Multiple Combatants in Melee

When more than one opponent attacks a single fighter, they have, at least, a positional advantage. To reflect this, the lone fighter is at -1 to his skill for each additional foe beyond the first. (For epic-style games, with a few heroes battling hordes of enemies, this penalty can be reduced, or the GM can simply give the hordes Poor skills and low Damage Capacity — which is not out of character for a horde.)

The lone fighter rolls once, and the result is compared with *each* of the opponents' rolled degrees, one after the other. The solo combatant has to defeat or tie *all* of the opponents in order to inflict a wound on one of them. If he beats all of his foes, he may hit the foe of his choice. If he ties his best opponent, he can only wound another whose result is at least two levels below his.

Example: Paco is facing three thugs, who have just rolled a Great, Good, and Mediocre result, respectively. Paco rolls a Great result, tying the best thug. He hits the thug who scored a Mediocre result (at least two levels below his result) and is not hit himself (he tied the best thug).

The lone fighter *takes* multiple wounds in a single round if two or more enemies hit him. Usually, he can inflict damage on only one foe in any given round — his choice of those he bested. It's also possible to allow a sweeping blow to damage more than one foe at a time. Of course, this slows a slash down: reduce damage done by 1 or 2 for each foe cut through.

A well-armored fighter facing weak opponents can simply concentrate on one foe and let the others try to get through his armor (that is, not defend himself at all against some of his attackers). In this case, the lone fighter can damage his chosen foe even if he is hit by other, ignored foes. This is historically accurate for knights wading through peasant levies, for example. There may or may not be a penalty for the lone fighter in this case.

There's a limit to the number of foes that can simultaneously attack a single opponent. Six is about the maximum under ideal conditions (such as wolves, or spear-wielders), while only three or four can attack if using weapons or martial arts that require a lot of maneuvering space. If the lone fighter is in a doorway, only one or two fighters can reach him.

When multiple NPCs beset a lone PC, the GM may wish to use the option in Section 4.3.3, PCs vs. NPCs. This will save a lot of die rolling.

Alternately, she may wish to roll only once for all the NPCs. The lone fighter is still at -1 per extra opponent. The GM rolls 2dF, and applies the result to each NPC. For example, if the GM gets a +1 result, each attacker scores a +1.

For those without FUDGE dice, the GM could simply use the 1d6 method discussed in Section 3.5, Opposed Actions.

> *Example: Three NPC pirates, complete with eye-patches, scars, earrings, sneers and generally bad attitudes, are attacking dashing PC hero Tucker. The pirates (whose names are Molly, Annie, and Maggie) are Fair, Good, and Mediocre, respectively, at combat skills. Tucker is a Superb swordsman, but is at -2 for having two extra fighters attacking him at once: his skill is Good for this combat. The GM wants to roll just once (applying the result to all three pirates) rather than rolling three times each combat round.*
>
> *Rolling 2dF, she gets a +1 on the first round. The pirates have just gotten Good, Great, and Fair results, respectively. If Tucker scores a Superb result, he could hit the pirate of his choice and remain unhit. On a Great result, Tucker would be unhit, and could land a blow on Maggie. On a Good result, he doesn't hit anyone, but Annie hits him. If Tucker rolls a Fair result, both Molly and Annie would hit him. The process is repeated each round.*

4.3.5 Hit Location

A light blow to an eye is very different from a light blow to an armored shoulder, or to a shield. Using a hit location system adds flavor to combat and the description of a character's equipment, wounds — and scars! Many games have a hit location system, and a GM can easily translate one she is familiar with to FUDGE. Or she can use the simple system given here.

The simplest system is not to worry about "called shots." Merely say the better the relative degree, the better the location of the blow. Winning a battle by +8 will allow the attacker to pierce an eye, if desired. Hopefully, the players will describe their actions in such detail that the GM will know how close they came to their objective merely by looking at the relative degree.

A more complicated system: an attacker can announce that he is aiming at a specific body location — this must be done *before* rolling to hit. The GM decides the minimum relative degree necessary for such a shot to succeed, usually ranging from 2 to 4, though extreme locations (such as an eyeball) are harder to hit. So if a player wishes his character to hit his opponent's weapon arm, the GM can respond, "You have to win by two to do so." If the player then does win by relative degree two or more, the weapon arm is hit, and the wound is specific to that arm.

If the attacker wins the combat round, but not by the minimum relative degree needed to hit the called target, the *defender* names which part of the body — or shield! — is hit. This will most likely be general body (if there is no shield), but it could be the off-hand,

which would carry a lesser combat penalty than a wound to the torso. The GM may have to fudge some here.

A damaged specific body part can be described as being Scratched (no real game effect), Hurt (a penalty to use, but the body part still functions), and Incapacitated. After battle is the time to decide if an Incapacitated body part can be healed, or is permanently Incapacitated.

A Hurt body part is generally at -1 to its normal use. A Hurt sword arm gives a -1 penalty to combat, for example, while a Hurt leg is -1 to any running, acrobatics, etc. A Hurt eye is -1 to vision, and so on.

To determine the exact level of the damage, the GM should consider how well the hit scored, as well as the Strength of the attacker and the weapon being used. Winning by the minimum relative degree necessary to hit the specific body part shouldn't make the victim Incapacitated unless the attacker is of a much larger Scale than the defender. On the other hand, an arm hit with a battle axe wielded by a large, berserk Viking has a good chance of being cut off even if the Viking just rolled exactly what he needed to hit the arm . . . .

As a guideline, if the attacker surpasses the relative degree necessary to hit the body part at all, the part is Scratched or Hurt, depending on Strength and weapon deadliness. If he surpasses it significantly, the part is Hurt or Incapacitated.

Species other than humans may have a different list of body parts to hit, and/or different difficulty modifiers.

4.3.6 Fancy Stuff

A lot of fancy maneuvers are possible in FUDGE combat. All require a bit of thought on the GM's part.

What if you want a Speed or Reflexes trait to affect how often you can strike in combat? How would you handle someone of Good Speed vs. someone of Fair Speed?

If someone has a Power that speeds him up beyond the human norm, you can simply have him attack every other round as if his opponent wasn't aware of the attack. That is, every other round, an Unopposed result of Poor or better hits the foe, with no chance to be hit back in return.

For more subtle differences, the GM may allow an Opposed action to determine if one fighter gets to land a blow first: after declaring their actions, each fighter makes a roll against a Speed trait. The winner of the Opposed action, if any, adds the difference to his weapon skill.

How about FUDGE's "graininess" getting in the way of interesting combat? That is, since there are only seven levels in FUDGE, a Good fighter will often meet another Good fighter, and it doesn't seem right that you can't meet someone who's just a *little* better or worse than you.

In this case, the GM can create new levels of combat skills (there's no point in using this option with other skills). These new levels require full experience points to reach, but function only as "half" levels, called "plus'levels. Thus, you can have:

Superb +
Superb
Great +
Great
Good +
Good

And so on. In any combat, someone with a "+" has the skill level listed before the "+", but gets a +1 every other round, starting with the second round.

> *So in a combat between Gus (skill Great) and Ivan (skill Good +), Gus would have the higher skill on on rounds one, three, five, etc. But on rounds two, four, six, etc., Ivan will roll as if he had a Great skill, thus being Gus's equal those rounds.*

What about swinging on chandeliers and other swashbuckling moves? Since role-playing games have more to do with movies than real life, this should be encouraged if the genre is at all cinematic.

In these cases, have the player describe his swashbuckling intentions as fully and dramatically as he can. The better the story, the better the bonus to the die roll — or no roll needed if the outcome is entertaining enough. You may then request a roll against Dexterity, or Acrobatics (or even Chutzpah!) and let that determine how well he accomplished his aim.

> *Maybe the swing on the chandelier came off great, but the landing on the banister was a little rough, so the slide down to slam the villain in the back was a tad off, and instead of knocking him out, you merely made him drop his weapon, but then fell on the floor yourself, and now he's mad, and maybe you should get up before he picks up his pistol, or you could try to yank the carpet while you're down there, right next to it, and he seems to standing on it a bit off-balance .... Whatever is fun!*

4.4 Ranged Combat

Ranged combat may or may not be an Opposed action.

If the target is unaware of the assault, the attacker makes an Unopposed action roll to see if he hits his target. The GM sets the Difficulty Level based on distance, lighting, cover, etc. Do not modify the attacker's skill for range, partial cover, or other circumstances — that's included in the Difficulty Level. Equipment such as a laser sighting scope can modify the attacker's skill, though.

If the defender is aware of the attack it is an Opposed action: the attacker's ranged weapon skill against the defender's defensive trait. (A Difficulty Level for range, lighting, etc., is still set by the GM, and is the minimum rolled degree needed to hit.) A defensive roll should be made against a Dodge skill, or Agility attribute, or something similar.

If the ranged weapon is thrown, there is no modifier to the defense roll. However, a propelled weapon, such as a bow, gun, or beam weapon, is much harder to avoid. In this case, reduce the defender's trait by -2 or -3. Obviously, the defender isn't trying to dodge a bullet, but dodging the presumed path of a bullet when an attacker points a gun at him.

Of course, the defender may decline to dodge, but shoot back instead. In this case, the action is Unopposed — making the Difficulty Level is all that is needed to hit. The GM may make such actions simultaneous.

> *Example: Nevada Slim and the El Paso Hombre are facing off in a showdown. Both are in the open, in the sunlight, so there's no lighting or cover difficulty. The range is obviously the same for both — the GM rules it's a Fair task to hit each other. Slim rolls a Poor result, and the Hombre a Mediocre result. The Hombre's bullet came closer to Nevada Slim than vice versa, but both missed since neither made the Difficulty Level.*
>
> *Another Example: Will Scarlet is shooting a longbow from the greenwood at Dicken, the Sheriff's man, who has a crossbow. Dicken knows Will is there, because the man next to him just keeled over with an arrow through his chest. Dicken is in the open, in good light, so only range is of any concern to Will Scarlet: the GM says even a Mediocre shot will hit since they are fairly close. The range for Dicken to hit Will is of course the same, but Will is partially hidden behind a log (cover), and just inside the foliage, so the lighting makes it hard to see him clearly. The GM decrees Dicken needs a Good roll to hit Will. Dicken rolls a Fair result, missing Will. Will rolls a Mediocre result, which hits Dicken, even though it wasn't as good a shot as Dicken's.*

In both examples, the fighters forfeited their Dodges in order to shoot simultaneously. Each combatant needed to make the appropriate Difficulty Level to hit. Under these conditions, it's possible for both combatants to succeed in the same combat round. Had Dicken's shot hit, Will and Dicken would have skewered each other.

Guns and similar weapons that do not rely on muscle power should be rated for damage at the beginning of the game. No detailed list is provided, but as a rough guideline: The average small hand gun might be of +2 to +3 Strength, while a derringer might be +1 or even +0. Powerful two-handed projectile weapons are at +5 and higher, while bazookas and other anti-tank weapons are at +10 and higher. Science fiction small weapons may do as much damage as a modern bazooka — but some are designed to capture people without injuring them.

Automatic weapons can be simulated roughly by allowing more bullets to hit with higher relative degrees. That is, blasting away with a weapon that fires 20 bullets in a combat round and hitting with relative degree +1 — a graze — means only one or two hit the target. If a relative degree +8 represents maximum amount of ammunition on target (whatever that may be for a given weapon), then hitting with a +4 means about half maximum hit the target, while +2 means only one quarter.

If there is no effective armor, simply add a big damage number if lots of bullets hit: this is going to Incapacitate anyone, at the very least. If armor is at all likely to slow down a bullet, you can't just add a bigger and bigger damage number if more bullets hit: the armor has a chance to slow down *each* bullet. In this case, rather than roll damage for each bullet, or have them all stopped, the GM needs to fudge some medium result: give a slight damage bonus if more projectiles hit the target.

4.5 Wounds

FUDGE offers various methods of tracking wounds, with many options. It is impossible to be 100% accurate when simulating damage to such an intricate mechanism as a living being. This is true even for detailed simulations — for an abstract role-playing game, it is hard to get close to reality at all.

Consequently, many GMs don't try to be very accurate, and want a simple system that works and lets the story flow. Others want as much accuracy as they can get. FUDGE presents a simple freeform system that works, and suggests some options to make it more mechanical, and encourages each GM to add as much detail as she is happy with.

4.5.1 Wound Levels

Combat damage to a character can be described as being at one of seven stages of severity. The stages are:

Undamaged no wounds at all. The character is not necessarily healthy — he may be sick, for example. But he doesn't have a combat wound that's recent enough to be bothering him.

Just A Scratch no real game effect, except to create tension. This may eventually lead to being Hurt if the character is hit again. This term comes from the famous movie line, "I'm okay, it's only a scratch." The actual wound itself may be a graze, bruise, cut, abrasion, etc., and the GM whose game is more serious in tone may choose to use one of these terms instead.

Hurt the character is wounded significantly, enough to slow him down: -1 to all traits which would logically be affected. A Hurt result in combat can also be called a Light Wound.

Very Hurt the character is seriously hurt, possibly stumbling: -2 to all traits which would logically be affected. A Very Hurt result can also be called a Severe Wound.

Incapacitated the character is so badly wounded as to be incapable of any actions, except possibly dragging himself a few feet every now and then or gasping out an important message. A lenient GM can allow an Incapacitated character to perform such elaborate actions as opening a door or grabbing a gem ....

Near Death the character is not only unconscious, he'll die in less than an hour — maybe a *lot* less — without medical help. No one recovers from Near Death on their own unless very lucky.

Dead he has no more use for his possessions, unless he belongs to a culture that believes he'll need them in the afterlife ....

The GM may expand or contract these stages.

For example, expand Hurt and Very Hurt to Light Wound, Moderate Wound and Severe Wound. In this case, a Severe Wound might be -3 to all actions — or the GM might leave it at -2, make Moderate Wound = -1, and make Light Wound something in between a Scratch and Moderate Wound. That is, maybe a Light Wound causes no penalty during combat (you don't notice such a slight wound in the heat of battle), but after combat the character will be at -1 to all skills until it's healed (such wounds can be annoying later).

The GM may allow a high Difficulty Level Willpower roll to reduce or even nullify penalties listed at Hurt, Very Hurt, and possibly Incapacitated. A gift of a High Pain Threshold will reduce the penalties by one level, while a fault of a Low Pain Threshold will increase penalties by one.

Some players delight in describing their characters' wounds in detail, even writing resulting scars into the character story.

Automatic Death: sometimes you don't have to roll the dice. Holding a knife to a helpless character's throat is a good example — no roll needed to kill such a character, but the killer's karma suffers.

4.5.2 Damage Capacity

In FUDGE, Damage Capacity determines how wounds affect a character. Damage Capacity may be called Hit Points, if desired. It may be tied to a character trait such as Constitution (or Hardiness, Fitness, Health, Body, Strength, etc.), or it may be a separate trait — see Section 6.3, Character Examples. It can also be treated as a gift/fault.

The GM decides how to handle the differing abilities of humans to take damage. It really does vary, but how much is open to debate.

As an extreme example, take the death of the Russian monk Rasputin, the adviser to Czarina Alexandra, in 1916. He was fed enough cyanide to kill three normal people, but showed no signs of it. He was then shot in the chest and pronounced dead by a physician. A minute later he opened his eyes and attacked his assassins! They shot him twice more, including in the head, and beat him severely with a knuckle-duster. He was again pronounced dead, tied in curtains and ropes, and tossed into a river. When his body was retrieved three days later, it was found he had freed an arm from his bindings before finally dying of drowning! Clearly, the man could soak up damage well beyond most peoples' abilities. He is not unique, however: there are many cases in history of people being hard to kill.

On the other hand, the phrase "glass jaw" is familiar to most English speakers, referring to those who are hurt from the slightest blow.

So there is undoubtedly some room for variation in damage capacity in characters.

If the GM is handling wounds in a freeform matter, make Damage Capacity an attribute and let players rate their characters in it like any other attribute. Or have a gift (Damage Resistant, perhaps) and a fault (Fragile, maybe), and let everyone without either the gift or the fault be normal in this regard. The GM can assess the character's ability to take damage based on that information and the situation at hand.

If the GM wants a more numerical approach to wound determination, it requires some forethought. If Damage Capacity is an attribute, the easiest way to rate it numerically in FUDGE is the standard:

+3 for Superb Damage Capacity
+2 for Great Damage Capacity
+1 for Good Damage Capacity
+0 for Fair Damage Capacity
-1 for Mediocre Damage Capacity
-2 for Poor Damage Capacity
-3 for Terrible Damage Capacity

However, since light metal armor, as listed in Section 4.5.4, Sample Wound Factors List, only grants a +2 to defense against being wounded, it is easily seen that a Great Damage Capacity is equal to light metal armor. Some GMs will find this absurd: a naked person of Great Damage Capacity can turn a sword as well as an armored person of Fair Damage Capacity. Others will remember Rasputin, and consider it within the bounds of reason — it could be part body size (vital organs harder to reach) and part healthiness (muscle tissue more resistant to being cut).

For simplicity, any equation-driven approach to wounds in FUDGE assumes the GM will use a Damage Capacity attribute, and it is rated from +3 to -3, as listed above. If you are not happy with this, please make the necessary mental substitution.

Here are some other possible ways to handle Damage Capacity numerically:

- Make Damage Capacity an attribute, as above, but instead of automatically granting a bonus, require a Damage Capacity die roll every time a character is hit for at least a Light Wound (Hurt result). On a result of:

  Great or better: reduce the severity of the wound by one. Mediocre to Good: no adjustment to the severity of the wound. Poor or worse: increase the severity of the wound by one.

  This adjustment can either be one wound *level*, or simply one damage point, as the GM sees fit.

  For certain types of damage — perhaps from a stun ray or a quarterstaff across the ribs — the GM can use the values from +3 to -3 without requiring a roll.

- Do not use a Damage Capacity attribute; instead allow the players to take a gift of Damage Resistant (reduces wound severity by one) or a fault of Fragile (increases wound severity by one). Again, this adjustment can be one wound level, or one damage point.

- Use a Damage Capacity attribute, as outlined as the first suggestion under Section 4.5.7, Recording Wounds. Each hit temporarily reduces your Damage Capacity attribute one or more levels.
- Use a Willpower attribute instead of Damage Capacity. GMs who believe that Rasputin was able to overcome so much damage because his will was focused on overcoming his enemies may use this method. Grant an adjustment to the wound level based on the result of a Willpower die roll. This can be temporary — until the battle is over — or actually have a permanent affect on reducing wound severity.

4.5.3 Wound Factors

When determining how wounded a character is when hit in combat, take into consideration all of the following factors:

- The relative degree the attack succeeded by — the better the hit, the greater likelihood of damage. Winning a combat round with a relative degree of +1 means you probably hit where the opponent is most heavily armored. Scoring a hit with a +3 finds a chink in the armor.
- The strength of the blow. For muscle-powered weapons, such as melee weapons, unarmed attacks, bows, slings, etc., this is determined by the attacker's Strength attribute: stronger folks tend to hit harder. The relative Scale modifier is also figured in here. For things like guns, beam weapons, etc., it is relative to the nature of the weapon: a .38 usually does more damage than a .22. The technological level of the weapon can be important.
- The deadliness of the attacker's weapon. Big weapons tend to do more damage than little weapons; sharp weapons rip tissue more than dull ones, but blunt weapons can cause concussive damage through armor thick enough to stop a sharp weapon. People trained in Karate tend to do more damage than those untrained in any martial art.
- The defender's armor. People wearing thicker armor, and more of it, tend to get hurt less than those wearing no armor. Armor can be finely differentiated, or simply said to be Light, Medium, or Heavy armor. Science fiction scenarios will have Extra-Heavy armor, and even further levels. Fantasy campaigns may include magic armor that offers even greater protection, sometimes specific against certain types of damage.
- The amount of damage the victim can soak up (Robustness, Damage Capacity, or Mass). Big, healthy guys can take more damage before collapsing than little, sickly guys. But it's your call if it's a big, sickly fighter against a little, healthy fellow.

4.5.4 Sample Wound Factors List

For those who prefer numerical values, here are some suggested numbers to attach to the factors listed in the previous section. These may be customized to taste, of course, and are only offered as a starting point. If used, they should be written down on the character sheet at character creation (probably with the weapons and armor), so as to be readily available during combat.

Offensive factors:

- For Character's Strength (muscle-powered weapons only):

  +3 for Superb Strength
  +2 for Great Strength
  +1 for Good Strength
  +0 for Fair Strength
  -1 for Mediocre Strength
  -2 for Poor Strength
  -3 for Terrible Strength

- For Attacker's Scale:

  Add the attacker's Strength Scale (see Section 4.5.8, Non-human Scale in Combat).

  Note: the attacker's Strength Scale is relevant only for muscle-powered weapons and for those projectile weapons scaled to the attacker's size, such as miniature bazookas or giant-sized handguns. A superhero of Scale 10 using an ordinary pistol would *not* figure his Scale into the Offensive Damage Modifier.

- For Weapon's Strength (Guns, Crossbows, Beam weapons, etc.,):

  +/- Strength of weapon (see Section 4.4, Ranged Combat).

- For Muscle-Powered Weapon:

  -1 for no weapon, not using a Martial Art skill.
  +0 for Martial Art skill, or for small weapons (blackjack, knife, brass knuckles, sling, thick boots if kicking, etc.).
  +1 for medium-weight one-handed weapons (billy club, machete, shortsword, epee, hatchet, rock, etc.).
  +2 for large one-handed weapons (broadsword, axe, large club, etc.), or for light two-handed weapons (spear, bow, etc.).
  +3 for most two-handed weapons (polearm, two-handed sword, battleaxe, etc.).
  +1 for sharpness (add to other weapon damage: knife becomes +1, shortsword +2, broadsword +3, greatsword +4, etc.).

  Note: For a less lethal game, subtract 1 from each type of weapon except sharpness. (This will lengthen combats.)

  Note: the value of a shield may be subtracted from the opponent's skill — see Section 4.3.1, Melee Modifiers.

  Optional note, as an example of the detail you can achieve in FUDGE: for heavy blunt metal weapons, such as maces and flails, halve any protection from the defender's armor, round down. The concussive damage from such weapons is slowed, but not totally stopped, by most armor. Example: if using a large mace (+2 weapon) against plate armor (+4 armor), the armor only counts as +2 armor.

Defensive factors:

- For Character's Damage Capacity Attribute:

  Note: this is optional — see Section 4.5.2, Damage Capacity, for a complete discussion.

  +3 for Superb Damage Capacity
  +2 for Great Damage Capacity
  +1 for Good Damage Capacity
  +0 for Fair Damage Capacity
  -1 for Mediocre Damage Capacity
  -2 for Poor Damage Capacity
  -3 for Terrible Damage Capacity

- For Armor:

  +1 for light, pliable non-metal armor.
  +2 for heavy, rigid non-metal armor
  +2 for light metal armor.
  +3 for medium metal armor.
  +4 for heavy metal armor.
  +5 or more for science fiction advanced armor.

  Note: magical armor may add anywhere from +1 to whatever the GM will allow to any given armor type above.

- For Defender's Mass Scale:

  Plus the defender's Mass Scale (see Section 4.5.8, Non-human Scale in Combat).

  (If the defender has Mass other than Fair, or a gift of Tough Hide, it should also be figured in.)

4.5.5 Determining Wound Level

A given blow will cause a certain level of wounding. In the simplest wound determination system, the GM assesses all of the Wound Factors (Section 4.5.3) and announces how bad the wound is. (In some cases, however, the PCs won't know the precise degree of damage. In those cases, the GM can simply say, "You think you wounded her, but she's still on her feet," or, "You don't notice any effect.")

As an example, the GM thinks to herself, "Okay, the fighter with Good Strength just scored a Great hit with a broadsword. The loser rolled a Fair combat roll, has Good Damage Capacity and heavy leather armor. Hmm — I'll say the Strength and Damage Capacity cancel each other, while the sharp sword should be able to penetrate the leather armor if the blow is good enough. A Great hit against a Fair defense is enough, but not really massive: I'd say the loser is Hurt." This result would then be announced to the loser of the combat round.

The GM can also use a Situational roll to help her. Roll the dice behind a GM screen, and let the result guide you. A roll of -1 to +1 isn't significant — no change from what you decided. But a roll of +3 or +4 adds a wound level or two to the damage.

See Section 4.5.7, Recording Wounds, for details on how to keep track of wounds received.

That system, while simple and satisfying to a certain type of GM, doesn't do much for those who prefer the system detailed in Section 4.5.4, Sample Wound Factors List. There's no point in figuring out the offensive and defensive factors if you don't do something with the numbers.

One system that uses the offensive and defensive factors requires finding the *total damage factor*. This is derived by adding up all the attacker's offensive factors and then subtracting all the defender's factors.

Example, Leroy vs. Theodora:

Leroy:
Good Strength (+1)
Scale 0
Broadsword (+2 for size, +1 for sharpness = +3 weapon).
Offensive damage factors = 1+0+3 = 4

Good Damage Capacity (+1)
Scale mail armor (+3)
Defensive damage factors = 1+0+3 = 4.

Theodora:
Superb Strength (+3)
Scale 0
Poleaxe (+4)
Offensive damage factors = 3+0+4 = 7

Fair Damage Capacity (+0)
Boiled leather armor (+2)
Defensive damage factors = 0+0+2 = 2.

Leroy's total damage factor against Theodora is 4-2 = 2.
Theodora's total damage factor against Leroy is 7-4 = 3.

Since Theodora's damage factor is larger, if she hits him, she'll do more damage to him than he would to her for an equally well-placed blow.

Once these numbers are determined, jot them down so you don't have to refigure them each combat round.

This system requires each character sheet to have a wound record track which looks like:

	1,2	3,4	5,6	7,8	9+
Wounds:	Scratch	Hurt	Very Hurt	Incapac.	Nr. Death

The numbers above the wound levels represent the amount of damage needed in a single blow to inflict the wound listed under the number. For example, a blow of three or four points Hurts the character, while a blow of five or six points inflicts a Very Hurt wound.

These numbers can be customized by the GM to fit her conception of how damage affects people. Raising the numbers makes it harder to wound someone, while lowering them makes combat more deadly.

Note that there is no number given for Dead. This is left up to the GM, and deliberately not included to prevent accidental PC death.

However, you can't simply use the damage factor you determined above — relative degree is also important.

A relative degree of +1 is treated as a *graze* — see Section 4.5.6, Grazing.

Otherwise, simply add the relative degree to the damage factor. (You may also wish to include a damage roll — see Section 4.6.1, Damage Die Roll.)

The result is a number that may or may not be a positive number. If it's 0 or less, no damage is scored.

If the number is positive, look up the result across the top of the wound levels, and figure the wound as described above. If Leroy hits Theodora with a relative degree of +2, he adds that to his damage potential of +2 to produce a damage number of four. Looking down, we see that a result of four is a Hurt result (Light Wound). Theodora is Hurt, and at -1 until she is healed.

For more detail, see Section 4.7, Combat and Wounding Example.

There are other ways to figure damage. A GM who believes the relative degree is more important than the damage factor would double it before adding it to the damage factor. The numbers above the wound levels should be adjusted in this case:

	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13+
Wounds:	Scratch	Hurt	Very Hurt	Incapac.	Nr. Death

This is a satisfying system that is recommended for those who don't mind doubling relative degree.

Others feel Strength is more important, and so on. A totally different wounding system is given in Section 4.6.3, Min-Mid-Max Die Roll. Many others have been proposed for FUDGE over the years, and it would be easy to import one from another game system. Use what you feel comfortable with.

4.5.6 Grazing

Any relative degree of +1 can do at most a GM-set Wound level (plus any Scale difference). It may do no damage at all, depending on the opponent's defensive factors: a fist hitting plate mail won't hurt the armored knight in the slightest — unless it's a giant's fist.

Sample graze severity table:

Damage Factor	Result
< 0	Undamaged
0-4	Scratch
5+	Hurt

A GM may or may not allow a damage die roll on a graze, even if using the die rolls for other hits. If allowed, a damage roll shouldn't change the result of a graze by more than one level.

Scale difference is a little trickier to figure, but it should be minimized for such a narrow victory: a giant's club could give a human a glancing blow that might inflict a Very Hurt result, but not necessarily Incapacitate.

On the other hand, a tiger biting a mouse with a relative degree of +1 grazes the mouse as a cow grazes grass . . . .

4.5.7 Recording Wounds

Once the final damage is determined, it is recorded on the wounded fighter's character sheet. Each individual wound is described as a Scratch, Hurt (Light Wound), etc., as introduced in Section 4.5.1, Wound Levels.

Use a Damage Capacity attribute as an easy way to record wounds. (In this case, Damage Capacity is not figured into determining wound severity.) Each hit that is greater than a Scratch reduces a character's Damage Capacity attribute one level — or more, if the GM deems the hit to be severe enough. (Scratches can accumulate as the GM desires — perhaps three Scratches equal one hit.)

When someone is reduced to Mediocre Damage Capacity, he is Hurt: -1 to all actions. When he is at Poor Damage Capacity, he is Very Hurt: -2 to all actions. When he drops to Terrible, he is at -3 to all actions — or Incapacitated, if a GM wishes to play it that way. Damage Capacity below Terrible is Incapacitated, at least — possibly worse.

(For characters of Mediocre or worse Damage Capacity, these levels only affect them when damaged. That is, an undamaged character of Mediocre Damage Capacity is *not* at -1 to all actions. However, if he takes even one hit, he drops to Poor Damage Capacity, and is at -2 to all actions.)

Healing in such a system cannot raise Damage Capacity above a character's undamaged level — that can only be raised through Character Development (Chapter 5).

A more detailed method requires a space on the character sheet to record wounds. This would look like:

	1,2	3,4	5,6	7,8	9+
Wounds:	Scratch	Hurt	Very Hurt	Incapac.	Nr. Death
	O O O	O	O	O	O

The numbers above the wound levels are discussed in Section 4.5.5, Determining Wound Level.

The boxes below the wound levels represent how many of each wound type a fighter can take.

When a wound is received, mark off the appropriate box.

Example: A character takes a Very Hurt result in the first round of combat. The character sheet would then look like:

	1,2	*3,4*	*5,6*	*7,8*	*9+*
Wounds:	*Scratch*	*Hurt*	*Very Hurt*	*Incapac.*	*Nr. Death*
	O O O	*O*	*X*	*O*	*O*

This character is at -2 to all skills since he's Very Hurt.

If he then received a Hurt result, he would check it off like so:

	1,2	*3,4*	*5,6*	*7,8*	*9+*
Wounds:	*Scratch*	*Hurt*	*Very Hurt*	*Incapac.*	*Nr. Death*
	O O O	*X*	*X*	*O*	*O*

This character is still at -2 to all skills. The Hurt result is not cumulative with the Very Hurt result; only the penalty for the highest recorded wound level counts.

If there is no open box for a given wound result, the character takes the next highest wound for which there *is* an open box.

If the character above, for example, takes another Hurt result, we see that there is no open box in either Hurt or Very Hurt, so we have to go to Incapacitated: the character is now incapacitated, and the sheet would look like:

	1,2	*3,4*	*5,6*	*7,8*	*9+*
Wounds:	*Scratch*	*Hurt*	*Very Hurt*	*Incapac.*	*Nr. Death*
	O O O	*X*	*X*	*H*	*O*

Note that an "H" is recorded under the Incapacitated label. The character is indeed Incapacitated — he can't fight any more — but for healing (and scarring) purposes, he has only received two Hurt wounds and one Very Hurt wound — never an Incapacitating wound in one blow. Since Incapacitating blows are harder to heal from, this is important.

As another example, a character that takes two Very Hurt results without taking any other hits is Incapacitated, since that is the next highest wound level.

Note that three boxes are provided under Scratch. This can be customized by each GM, of course. A Scratch wound will not make a fighter Hurt until he receives his fourth Scratch. Optionally, a Scratch will never raise a character's wound level beyond Very Hurt, no matter how many he takes. The GM should not to use this rule when the PCs fight a monster of huge Scale. Otherwise, they'd never be able to kill such a creature when the worst wound they can inflict is a Scratch.

The wound progression above makes for a fairly realistic campaign. For a more cinematic campaign (especially those without magic or science fiction healing), add an extra box for Scratch, Hurt, and possibly Very Hurt: lesser blows won't accumulate so quickly to hinder the character. A moderately cinematic character sheet looks like:

	1,2	3,4	5,6	7,8	9+
Wounds:	Scratch	Hurt	Very Hurt	Incapac.	Nr. Death
	O O O O	O O	O	O	O

It wouldn't be out of line, for an epic scale game, to add up to two more boxes to Hurt and Very Hurt.

Be warned that adding boxes can lengthen combat significantly.

Never add boxes for cannon-fodder NPCs, though you may wish to do so for major NPCs. In fact, NPC pawns don't even need the system above. A simple three-stage system of Undamaged, Hurt, Out of the Battle is good enough for most of them. Simply make a mark under an NPC's name for Hurt, and cross out the name for Out of the Battle.

4.5.8 Non-human Scale in Combat

The attacker's Strength Scale is added to his offensive damage factors, and the defender's Mass Scale is added to her defensive damage factors. If you have combat with beings weaker than humans, remember what you learned in school about adding and subtracting negative numbers . . . .

Armor and weapons affect the damage done normally, since they are scaled to the folks using them. Hits become Scratches, Hurt, etc., as usual — see Section 4.5.5, Determining Wound Level.

However, an extremely small character is not likely to be able to wound a large one in the numerical value wounding system. The GM may allow a point or two of damage to penetrate if the small character gets a critical success. Poison-tipped arrows and lances are also a possibility: the small character can aim for joints in the armor and merely has to break the skin to inject the poison.

Also, this system treats Mass Scale like armor, which isn't quite accurate. In reality, a small opponent may be slowly carving the larger fighter up, but each wound is too petty, relative to the large scale, to do much damage by itself. To reflect a lot of small wounds gradually inflicting a hit on a large-scale foe, allow a damage roll when Scale prevents a hit from doing any damage — that is, when Scale is the only difference between getting a Scratch and no damage at all. See Section 4.6.1, Damage Die Roll.

There are also "scale piercing" weapons, such as whale harpoons and elephant guns. These don't have massive damage numbers: instead, if they hit well, simply halve the Scale value, or ignore it all together. Of course, if such a weapon is used on a human, it would indeed have a massive damage modifier . . . .

> *Combat Examples: In the following examples, each fighter's Strength Scale equals his own Mass Scale, but not his opponent's. (E.g., Wilbur's Strength is Scale 0 and his Mass is Scale 0.) Also, it is assumed the GM is not using the optional damage roll, which could vary damage in all three combats discussed.*
>
> *First example: Wilbur, a human knight with a sword, is attacking a dragon.*
>
> *Wilbur's offensive damage factor is a respectable +6:*

Great Strength: +2
Two-handed sword: +4 (+3 for size, +1 for sharpness)
Scale: +0

The dragon's defensive damage factor is +8:
Fair Damage Capacity: +0
Tough hide: +2
Scale: +6

Wilbur's damage factor against the dragon is therefore 6-8 = -2.

If Wilbur hits the dragon with a relative degree of +3, he does 3-2 = one point of damage. Given his Strength, weapon, and the amount he won by, this would be a severe blow to a human, even one wearing armor. But this is no human opponent. Only one point get through the dragon's Scale and tough hide. The GM checks off a Scratch for the dragon, and the fight continues. Since there are three Scratch boxes for a major NPC, Wilbur will have to do this thrice more before he finally Hurts the dragon. He may need help, or have to go back for his magic sword.

Second example: Sheba, a human warrior, has just kicked McMurtree, a wee leprechaun.

Sheba's offensive damage factor = +1:
Fair Strength: +0
Unarmed Combat Skill, with thick boots: +1
Scale: +0

(Sheba's martial art skill normally earns her a +0 to damage, and boots normally earns a +0. The GM rules that using both together allows a +1, however.)

McMurtree's defensive damage factor is -3:
Light Leather Armor: +1
Fair Damage Capacity: +0
Scale: -4.

Sheba's damage factor against McMurtree is 1-(-3) = +4. (Subtracting a negative number means you add an equal but positive amount.)

If Sheba wins the first combat round with a relative degree of +2 she scores a total of 4+2 = six points. McMurtree's player looks up six on the wound table on his character sheet: Very Hurt — he's at -2 for the next combat round, and in grave danger if she hits again.

Third example: McMurtree's friend, Fionn, now swings his shillelagh (oak root club) at Sheba's knee.

Fionn's offensive damage factor is -1:
Good Strength: +1
Shillelagh: +2 (medium sized relative to Fionn, not sharp)
Scale: -4

Sheba's defensive damage factor is +2:
Heavy Leather Armor: +2
Scale: +0

Fionn's damage factor against Sheba is -1-2 = -3.

If Fionn wins by +3, a solid blow, he adds -3+3 = 0. Unfortunately for Fionn, she takes no damage from an excellently placed hit.

Fionn had better think of some other strategy, quickly. Fortunately for Fionn, he knows some magic, and if he can dodge just one kick from Sheba, she'll learn the hard way why it's best not to antagonize the Wee folk . . . .

4.6 Wound Options

This section introduces some of the simpler options for determining wounds. Many others are possible in FUDGE, and this list should not be considered official or exhaustive. They are included for possible use, but also to inspire the GM to create her own.

4.6.1 Damage Die Roll

Although the damage roll is optional, it is recommended if you are using numerical damage factors. This is because the damage factors are generally fixed for the entire fight, and things tend to get stagnant. It also allows a tiny fighter to have a chance against a larger foe — a satisfying result.

There are many possible ways to use a damage die roll.

One could roll a single FUDGE die for a result of -1, 0, or +1. This can be added to the damage factor, or, more broadly, to the actual wound level.

For example, if a fighter inflicts 4 points of damage, that is normally a Hurt result. If a +1 on 1dF is rolled, however, that can make the result +5 (if adding to the damage factor), which brings it up to Very Hurt result. However, a -1 wouldn't change the wound: it would lower the result to 3, which is still a Hurt result. But if the GM is using 1dF to alter the wound level*, then a -1 changes the result to a Scratch, since that's one wound level below Hurt.*

Instead of a separate damage roll, one could simply use the die rolls used to resolve the Opposed action. If the attacker wins with an even roll (-4, -2, 0, +2, +4), add one to his offensive factor. If he wins with an odd result (-3, -1, +1, +3), his offensive factor is unchanged. Do the same for the defender, except it affects his defensive factor. This system will help the defender 25% of the time, the attacker 25% of the time, and won't affect the damage results at all 50% of the time.

Example: the defender loses the combat round, but rolls his trait level exactly (die roll of 0): he adds one to his defensive damage factor. The attacker wins with a die roll of +3: his offensive damage factor is unchanged. The final damage number is reduced by one — the defender, although losing the round, managed to dodge left as the attacker thrust a bit to the right, perhaps. He may still be wounded, but he got his vital organs out of the way of the blow.

This system could also be applied to the wound *level* instead of the damage factor.

A more complicated system uses a Situational roll (result from -4 to +4, not based on any trait), and adds it to the calculated damage number (the number over the wound level), as found in Section 4.5.5, Determining Wound Level. Negative final damage is treated as 0 damage.

The GM may wish to apply some limitations to the damage roll, to restrict too wild a result.

For example:

- *If the calculated damage is positive, the damage roll cannot exceed the calculated damage. That is, if the calculated damage is +2, any damage roll of +3 or +4 is treated as +2, for a total of four points of damage.*
- *If the calculated damage is positive, the final damage cannot be less than +1.*
- *If the calculated damage is negative or 0, the final damage may be raised to a maximum of +1 by a damage roll.*

First Example: The calculated damage is found to be -2 due to armor and Scale. It would take a +3 or +4 die roll to inflict a wound on the defender in this case, and then only one point of calculated damage: a Scratch.

Second Example: The calculated damage is +2 (a Scratch). A damage roll of +2 to +4 results in final damage of four points, since calculated damage cannot be more than doubled by a damage roll. A damage roll of +1 results in final damage of three points, while a damage roll of 0 results in two points of final damage. Any negative die roll results in one point of final damage, since a positive calculated damage cannot be reduced below one by a damage roll.

For simplicity, of course, the GM can simply ignore the limitations, and allow the damage roll to be anywhere from -4 to +4, let the chips fall where they may . . . .

Many other damage die rolls are possible — these are only given as examples to the GM.

4.6.2 Stun, Knockout, and Pulling Punches

A player can announce that his character is trying to stun or knock his opponent out rather than damage her. Using the flat of a blade instead of the edge, for example, can accomplish this. Damage is figured normally, but any damage inflicted doesn't wound the opponent: it stuns her instead.

In this case, a Hurt result is called a "Stun" — a stunned character cannot attack or all-out defend, and is at -1 to defend *for one combat turn only.* However, the Stun result stays on the character sheet: that is, a second Stun result, even if delivered more than one combat round after the first, will cause the character to become Very Stunned. (Stun results heal like Scratches: *after* combat is over.)

A Very Hurt result in a stunning attack is called a Very Stunned result instead: no attacks and -2 to all actions for *two* combat rounds.

A result of Incapacitated or worse when going for stun damage results in a knockout. A knocked-out character doesn't need healing to recuperate to full health — just time. (Only a harsh GM would roll for the possibility of brain damage — this is fiction, not reality.)

The GM may simply decide that a successful Good blow (or better) to the head knocks someone out automatically. In an Opposed action, the Good blow would also have to win the combat, of course.

Likewise, a player may choose to have his character do reduced damage in any given attack. This is known as "pulling your punch," even if you are using a sword. This commonly occurs in duels of honor, where it is only necessary to draw "first blood" to win, and killing your opponent can get you charged with murder. A Scratch will win a "first blood" duel — it is not necessary to Hurt someone.

To pull your punch, simply announce the maximum wound level you will do if you are successful.

> *A fencer can say he is going for a Scratch, for example. In this case, even if he wins the Opposed action by +8, and adds in +3 for his sword, the worst he can do is nick his foe. He was just trying for a Scratch — but the Scratch is probably in the shape of the letter "Z" with such a result!*

4.6.3 Min-Mid-Max Die Roll

This system of wound determination does not pretend to be a realistic method, and can produce some wildly varying results. But it's quick, easy, and lots of fun, and so works well in a certain style of gaming.

This system requires 3d6 for a damage roll, even if using 4dF for action resolution.

Overview: roll 3d6 when a damage roll is called for. You will probably only read one of the dice, however: either the lowest value (Min), median value (Mid) or highest value (Max), depending on damage factor and relative degree. The greater the damage factor and/or relative degree, the greater the d6 you read for result.

If using the Min-Mid-Max system, use the wound track on the character sheet listed in Section 4.5.7, Recording Wounds:

	1,2	3,4	5,6	7,8	9+
Wounds:	Scratch	Hurt	Very Hurt	Incapac.	Nr. Death
	O O O	O	O	O	O

The offensive and defensive damage factors listed in Section 4.5.4, Sample Wound Factors List, are used. However, they are not added to the relative degree. Instead, simply derive the total damage factor as normal: (attacker's Strength + Scale + weapon) minus (defender's Damage Capacity + Scale + armor). Each player should jot down this number once it is known for the combat.

Before the game begins, the GM decides how important the damage factor and relative degree are in determining wound severity. The following table is recommended as a starting point; the GM can adjust it as she sees fit:

Damage Factor	Bonus	Rel. Degree
< 0	-1	-
0,1,2	0	2,3
3,4,5	+1	4,5
6+	+2	6+

A damage factor of three, for example, has a die-reading bonus of +1, while a relative degree of three has a die-reading bonus of 0. The GM may charge a -2 penalty if the damage factor is well below 0 (-5 or worse).

Since the graze rules are used unchanged with this system, there is no listing for relative degree less than two.

Add the bonus for damage factor with the bonus for relative degree to get a final bonus. Example: a character has a damage factor of +3 (bonus: +1) and a relative degree of +5 (bonus: +1). His total bonus for that round of combat is +2.

What do these bonuses represent?

A total "bonus" of less than 0 means no damage is possible — don't even roll the dice. Otherwise, locate the total bonus on the following table:

Total Bonus	Die to Read
0	Min (lowest die)
1	Mid (median die)
2	Max (highest die)
3	Add Max + Min
4	Add all three

The median is the value in the middle. This may be the same as the highest or lowest, as in a roll of 2, 4, 4: the Min = 2, the Mid = 4, and the Max = 4. A roll of triples means Min = Mid = Max. (Please read the median *value* — not necessarily the die that is physically between the other two on the table.)

Once you have determined which die to read, compare it with the numbers above the wound levels. With a roll of 1, 3, 5, for example, the Min die = 1 (a Scratch result), the Mid die = 3 (a Hurt result), and the Max die = 5 (a Very Hurt result). You would only read one of these results, however — not all three.

With three or more bonuses, add the appropriate dice as listed on the table. For results beyond nine, the GM is free to kill the recipient outright, or merely keep it as a Near Death result, as called for by the situation.

The tables are not meant to be intrusive, merely guidelines. The basic intent is to read the Mid if the attacker has *either* a decent damage factor *or* a decent relative degree;

to read the Min if he has neither; and to read the Max if he has both. All other values are derived from that simple idea. So the GM can ignore all the tables, and with that idea in mind, just fudge which die to read.

> *For example, a GM might say, "Whoa! You just hit him across the forehead as he backed into a bucket left by the hastily fleeing janitor. Nice shot — he topples over onto his back. For damage, roll 3d6 and read the Max!"*

This would have come out of a descriptive game, in which the players describe their characters' actions in great detail.

Example of the Min-Mid-Max system:

> *Valorous Rachel is fighting the villainous Archie. Both are Scale 0, so Scale won't be mentioned.*
>
> *Rachel:*
> *Quarterstaff: +2*
> *Strength Fair: +0*
> *Offensive damage factor: +2*
>
> *Light Leather Armor: +1*
> *Damage Capacity Good: +1*
> *Defensive damage factor: +2*
>
> *Archie:*
> *Greatsword: +4*
> *Strength Great: +2*
> *Offensive damage factor: +6*
>
> *Heavy Leather Armor: +2*
> *Damage Capacity Fair: +0*
> *Defensive damage factor: +2*
>
> *So Rachel's damage factor is 2-2 = 0. She gets no bonus.*
>
> *Archie's damage factor is 6-2 = 4. He gets +1 bonus, according to the table above.*
>
> *On the first round, Rachel wins by +2, whacking Archie across the ribs. Relative degree +2 doesn't get any bonus (and she has none from her damage factor), so Rachel will read the Min. She rolls 3d6 and gets lucky: a 3, 5, and 6. The Min is a 3: she Hurts Archie, who is now at -1 and checks off his Hurt box.*
>
> *On the second round, Archie manages to win with a graze: +1 relative degree. Do not even calculate a bonus in this case — use the graze rule unchanged from Section 4.5.6, Grazing. His damage factor is only four, so he scores a Scratch on Rachel.*

> *On the third round, Archie does very well: he wins by +4 as Rachel backs into a chair! He now gets two bonuses, one from his damage factor and one from his relative degree: he will read the Max die. But Archie's karma is in serious need of overhaul: he rolls a 1, 2, and 3. Rachel is only Hurt, and the GM checks off the Hurt box.*
>
> *Rachel all-out attacks in the following round, and with the +1 to hit she scores an awesome +6 over Archie! She gets two bonuses for such a high relative degree — she'll read the Max die —* and *gets +1 to the die roll for all-out attacking. (Note that this is +1 to the die result, not a +1 to the die-reading bonus.) The GM rolls a 1, 4, 6. She reads the Max and adds 1 for a total of seven. Reading the wound table on the character sheet, she sees that this is Incapacitated, and declares that Rachel's staff just smashed across the bridge of Archie's nose, probably doing serious damage, and at least knocking him out of this battle . . . .*

For a more epic game, where it's important to be able to Incapacitate in one blow, use the following wound track on the character sheet:

	1	2,3	4,5	6	7+
Wounds:	Scratch	Hurt	Very Hurt	Incapac.	Nr. Death
	O O O	O O	O O	O	O

The extra wound boxes are in keeping with an epic style game, but are optional.

4.6.4 PC Death

Sometimes the dice try to kill a PC. In most campaigns, PC death shouldn't occur through a bad die roll, but only if the character's actions were truly self-sacrificing — or stupid — enough to warrant death.

Three methods of preventing accidental PC death are presented. They may be used separately or together or not at all. These should not be used for run-of-the-mill NPCs, but could be used for major ones. The "automatic death" rule in Section 4.5.1, Wound Levels, takes precedence over these suggestions.

- A character cannot take more than three levels of wounds in one blow. For example, an unwounded character could be Scratched, Hurt, or Very Hurt in one blow, but any excess damage points beyond that would be lost. A Hurt character could go all the way to Near Death in one blow, but not be killed outright.
- A character cannot be rendered Near Death unless he began that combat round Incapacitated. This is simpler to keep track of than the first system, and assumes there is some great difference between a severe wound and mortal wound. There probably isn't, but the rule isn't intended to be realistic: it's to make the PCs more heroic than real life.
- A player may spend a Fudge Point (Section 1.3.6) to convert a deadly wound to a merely serious one.

4.6.5 Technological Levels as Scale

Technological differences between weapons and armor can be expressed as Scale if the GM desires. Instead of figuring exactly how much mega-damage a transvibrational subneural pulverizer does, the GM can simply say, "This is a weapon that is of the same technological level as the armor of the defender — therefore, it has the same effect on her as a modern pistol would on kevlar." However, if used against someone who is wearing kevlar, the transvibrational subneural pulverizer does lots and lots of damage — kevlar wasn't designed to stop this type of thing.

Basically, there isn't much difference between thrusting a sword through a naked man's kidney, or shooting him with a .38 through the kidney, or using a transvibrational subneural pulverizer on the kidney: naked people don't resist most weapons well. Plate armor stops the sword well, but won't slow down the .38 enough to help much — unless it can deflect it away from the kidney, that is. It probably won't help at all against the pulverizer, but it may: the GM will have to decide the effect of such a weapon on plate armor.

The concept of technological levels as Scale only comes into effect when weapons of one technological era are used against armor of another technological era. At that point, the GM can add an arbitrary Scale difference to the weapon — or armor, whichever is of the higher tech level. No attempt to quantify tech levels is made here. This section is merely food for thought.

4.7 Combat and Wounding Example

This example uses the numerical offensive and defensive factors in Section 4.5.4, Sample Wound Factors List. It also uses a damage die roll: the 4dF option, with the three limitations listed.

The two opponents are Medieval warriors, Snorri and Brynhild. The fight takes place in a barroom, which quickly empties of other occupants once weapons are drawn. No one noticed that the innkeeper's son had actually left much earlier than this, when the belligerent Snorri was merely exchanging insults with the proud Brynhild. Both fighters are human (Scale 0), so Scale is left out of the discussion.

Snorri:
Sword skill: Great
No shield

Strength: Good (+1)
Weapon: Magic Sword (+2 for size, +1 for Sharp, +1 for Magic = +4)
Offensive damage factor: +5

Damage Capacity: Good (+1)
Armor: Heavy Leather (+2)
Defensive damage factor: +3

Brynhild:
Axe skill: Good
Shield: Medium (-1 to foe's weapon skill)

Strength: Great (+2)
Weapon: Axe (+2 for size, +1 for Sharpness = +3)
Offensive damage factor: (+5)

Damage Capacity: Fair (+0)
Armor: Heavy Leather (+2)
Defensive damage factor: (+2)

Snorri's damage factor vs. Brynhild: 5-2 = +3
Brynhild's damage factor vs. Snorri: 5-3 = +2

Snorri's skill is reduced to Good for this combat by Brynhild's shield — see Section 4.3.1, Melee Modifiers.

In the first round, Snorri gets a Great result on his weapon skill (die roll = +1), and Brynhild gets a Fair result (die roll = -1). Snorri wins with a relative degree of +2. Snorri's damage factor of +3 is added in, bringing the damage to +5. Looking at the character sheet, a +5 result equals a Very Hurt wound — before rolling for damage.

The GM is requiring damage rolls, so Snorri's player rolls the dice: a -2 result, too bad. This brings the damage down to three. Since Brynhild is an NPC, the GM looks at the wound chart on her character sheet, and finds three: a Hurt Wound. The GM marks off the box under the word "Hurt," and the next round is fought. Brynhild is now at -1 for the rest of the combat.

In the second round, both combatants get Good results — a standoff. The GM describes it as a give-and-take of blows that are all parried or blocked as the fighters circle each other. Another five seconds have passed this round, the GM decrees.

In the third round, Snorri gets a Great result and Brynhild only a Good result — Snorri has hit again. Since the relative degree is +1, this is a graze. The GM does allow a damage die roll on a graze, but won't let it change the result by more than one level. Snorri's damage factor of +3 normally means a Scratch on a graze.

Snorri rolls a 0 for damage, so the GM marks off a Scratch box on Brynhild's character sheet.

In the fourth round, Snorri decides to finish off the Hurt Brynhild in one blow: he all-out attacks, which gives him a +1 modifier to his skill, and a +1 to damage if he wins. Brynhild had decided to try for a situational advantage, though: she's spending this round in all-out defense, hoping to spot some way to get an advantage over Snorri for the fifth round. Brynhild gets a +2 modifier to her skill this turn, but can't hurt Snorri if she wins. Snorri gets a Great result, even counting his +1 for all-out attacking, and Brynhild also gets a Great result. Snorri would ordinarily have lost the combat round (all-out attackers lose tie results), but Brynhild's all-out defense means she doesn't aim any blows at Snorri, just beats his attack down.

The GM requires a Good Perception roll from Brynhild in order to spot a situational advantage. Her Perception attribute is Great, so she easily makes it. She notices a drink on the floor, spilled earlier by a customer in full flight. Since she successfully defended that round, the GM rules she maneuvers Snorri into the slippery puddle for one round.

In the fifth round, the GM gives Snorri a -1 to skill this round (down to Fair) for bad footing. Snorri tries an ordinary attack, and Brynhild, wounded, desperate, and sensing this may be her only chance, now tries an all-out attack: +1 modifier to her skill, bringing her up to an effective skill of Good from her wounded Fair state. Brynhild rolls a Great result, and Snorri only gets a Good result: Brynhild wins this round by +1.

Since she was doing an all-out attack, she gets a bonus of +1 to damage. This does *affect a graze, so her normal Scratch result (for a graze) is increased to Hurt. She rolls a 0 on the damage roll, so Snorri is now Hurt: -1 until healed.*

The combat is interrupted at this point by the town guards, who had been alerted by the innkeeper's son. Snorri and Brynhild are hauled off to separate cells, probably only too glad to get out of what had become a potentially deadly duel ....

4.8 Healing

Wounds are healed through a medical skill or supernormal power.

A Scratch is too insignificant to require a roll on a healing skill (although it might require a kiss to make it better ...). Scratches are usually erased after a battle, provided the characters have five or ten minutes to attend to them. An individual GM may rule otherwise, of course: they may linger on for a day or two.

A Good result on a healing skill heals all wounds one level (Hurt to healed, Very Hurt to Hurt, etc.). (Scratches do not count as a level for healing purposes. That is, a Hurt wound that is healed one level is fully healed.) A Great result heals all wounds two levels, and a Superb result heals three levels.

Healing with realistic medical skills takes time: the success of the roll merely insures the wounds *will* heal, given enough rest. How long this takes depends on the technological level of the game setting, and is up to the GM. (A day per treated wound is extremely fast healing, but may be appropriate in an epic-style game. Likewise, one minute per magically healed wound is fast.) Whether or not strenuous activity before the healing period ends reopens a wound is also left up to the GM ....

Example: a character with three wounds (two Hurt results and one Very Hurt) is healed with a roll of Good. After the appropriate time, the two Hurt wounds will be fully healed, while the Very Hurt wound will now be a Hurt wound (and carries a -1 modifier as such).

Otherwise, wounds heal on their own at one wound level per week of rest — or longer, if the GM is being more realistic. That is, after a week of rest, an Incapacitated character becomes Very Hurt, etc. The GM may also require a successful roll against a Constitution attribute: Fair Difficulty Level for Hurt, Good Difficulty Level for Very Hurt, and Great Difficulty Level for Incapacitated. Failing this roll slows the healing process. Someone Near Death should take a long time to heal, even with magical or high tech healing.

Chapter 5

Character Development

After playing a bit, perhaps each session, a player will want the character to grow in abilities. At this point, a developing character can exceed the initial GM-set skill limits (such as one Superb, three Greats). There are two ways to handle character development, or "experience," as it's often called.

5.1 Subjective Character Development

When the player feels the character has accomplished enough to warrant improving in some trait (and he feels he's been roleplaying well), he petitions the GM for permission to raise it. A trait can only be raised one level at a time. A trait must be used more to raise it from Good to Great than Fair to Good, and so on. It should be easier to raise a Skill than an attribute.

Or the GM can simply award an improvement in a trait she feels deserves to be raised. In these cases, there is never a corresponding reduction of another trait - this is character development, not creation.

5.2 Objective Character Development

In the Objective Character Development system, the GM can award experience points (EP), which the player can trade in any way he wants at the following rates:

Raising a skill Refer to Table 5.1.

Raising an attribute Triple the cost for skills of the same level.

Adding a gift 6 EP (or more) + GM approval.

Adding a supernormal power 12 EP (or more) + GM approval.

A trait can only be raised one level at a time.

The GM may adjust these point levels as she sees fit and should require that the player may only raise traits that were used significantly during an adventure. If a long campaign is planned, these EP costs could be doubled to allow room for character growth. Defining skills narrowly will also ensure characters don't become too powerful too quickly.

From	To	Costs
Terrible	Poor	1 EP
Poor	Mediocre	1 EP
Mediocre	Fair	1 EP
Fair	Good	2 EP
Good	Great	4 EP
Great	Superb	8 EP
Superb	Legendary	16 EP + GM permission
Legendary	Legendary 2nd	30 EP + GM permission
Each add'l level of Legendary		50 EP + GM permission

Table 5.1: Cost of raising a skill

As a guideline, good roleplaying should be rewarded with one to three EP per gaming session, with an upper suggested limit of four EP for flawless roleplaying. Players may save EP as long as they wish.

Attribute levels may or may not affect EPs put into skills. For simplicity, you can ignore attribute levels entirely when raising skill levels. For greater realism, however, the GM can add a surcharge of +2 EP (or more) when a skill is raised *above* an appropriate attribute.

> Example: Violet the Herbalist has Good Intelligence. EP costs for raising Herb Lore skill are normal until she tries to raise it to Great, which is higher than her natural Intelligence. At that point, she must pay +2 EP beyond what the table calls for: six EP to raise Herb Lore to Great, and another ten EP to raise it to Superb.

This proposal is recommended only for character development - not for character creation. The GM should inform the players at character creation if this option is in force so they can plan their characters' attributes accordingly.

5.3 Development through Training

Improving skills through EP is not always realistic, to be honest. A gaming session might only cover a few hours of campaign time. Allowing a character to improve one or two different skills from Fair to Good in that time is far-fetched. But it's fun for the players, and psychologically satisfying, and so recommended.

As an alternative, or in addition to the methods described above, the GM may allow traits to be raised through appropriate amounts of training time. This would require finding a teacher (which would cost money) or taking an appropriate job (which may not be totally dedicated the skill you wish to learn, and so take longer). It's also possible to learn something on your own, but the GM should double the time required. If using the Objective Character Development system, the GM may (or may not) require that EPs be spent in this manner — that is, you can't spend EPs unless you also take the time to train.

The GM sets training time and costs, and difficulty of finding a teacher. The teacher has two skills that must be considered: Teaching skill, and the appropriate skill being taught. The player may need to roll the dice to see how diligently the character studied the skill. The die roll should be on an attribute such as Willpower, Drive, Zeal, Wisdom, Self Discipline, Self Motivation, Psyche, Intelligence, etc. If the player can give a valid reason why the character is extremely motivated to learn this skill, the GM may grant up to +2 to the trait tested. The GM may request a single die roll, or a roll per week, month, etc. If multiple rolls are called for, at least half of them should succeed to earn the skill improvement.

> Example: Billy Blaster, space cadet, is back at the Academy after his first tour of duty. He considers his Fair Laser Pistol skill to be substandard. He takes a six-week training course in Laser pistol use, taught by an instructor of Superb Laser skill and Great Teaching skill. (Since Billy has Gift: Employed by Space Patrol, this is free training for him.) The GM decides that Billy's player needs to make a Willpower roll for each two-week period to see how dedicated he is to studying. If at least two of the three rolls are Mediocre or better, Billy can raise his Laser pistol skill from Fair to Good, given the length of training and quality of the instructor. Had the training been shorter, or the instructor worse, he would have needed a preponderance of Fair or even Good rolls to have successfully raised his Laser pistol skill.

Remember that it is much easier to improve a skill from Poor to Mediocre than from Great to Superb. Require more time, or higher Difficulty Levels on the Will rolls to raise an already high skill.

Chapter 6

Tips and Examples

6.1 GM Tips and Conversion

Always remember the main point of the game is to have fun ....

The GM should translate at least one of her favorite characters into FUDGE from whatever system she is used to. This will give her a good idea of what traits to choose, and how many.

FUDGE is incredibly flexible, possibly more so than any system you've played before. Once you've translated a favorite character, fiddle with her a bit. Can you tweak her to be *exactly* what you want, possibly in ways your previous system wouldn't allow? What if you split that attribute into two or three effects — ah! See, she can be smart in some ways, but dumb in others; knowledgeable of some things, ignorant of others. Hmm — too many attributes? Make some of them gifts, then — that might be easier to deal with. And so on — have fun!

It is easy to create NPCs to challenge the player characters by counting levels. Figure roughly how many levels have been spent on combat skills by the average player character. This figure, put into combat skills in an NPC, should give a fair fight. For example, if the PCs are built on 40 skill levels and four free attribute levels, the average character might have ten levels in combat skills directly. In that case, a gang of thugs with ten levels each of combat skills and two attribute levels put into physical attributes should challenge the player characters pretty closely.

6.1.1 Conversion Hints

It is not practical to give guidelines for converting every game system to and from FUDGE. However, two systems of trait measurement are in widespread use: a 3–18 scale, and a percentile system. While these are not used uniformly (and there are many games that don't use either system), it is still useful to discuss translating between such systems and FUDGE.

Standard 3–18 scale traits are converted in Table 6.1. Percentile traits are converted roughly in Table 6.2.

FUDGE Level	3–18 Level
Superb	18+
Great	16–17
Good	13–15
Fair	9–12
Mediocre	6–8
Poor	4–5
Terrible	3 or less

Table 6.1: Standard 3–18 scale traits

FUDGE Level	Percentile Level
Superb	98–100
Great	91–97
Good	71–90
Fair	31–70
Mediocre	11–30
Poor	4–10
Terrible	1–3

Table 6.2: Percentile traits

6.1.2 Templates

A GM can create a character template for the players. This may help a player make his first FUDGE character, or allow players coming from a game with a character class system to feel at home. She should also allow custom-designed characters, though, for players who feel limited by character classes.

The "GM limits" and the list of attributes at the beginning of each sample character in Section 6.3 are templates. The GM can hand out character sheets with attributes and limits already printed on them. This can be accompanied by a copy of the list of sample skills in Section 1.3.2, Skills, and possibly the sample lists of gifts and faults in Sections 1.3.3 (Gifts), and 1.3.4 (Faults). The players can then create characters with a minimum of hassle.

For more detail, the GM can actually create templates of character "classes." As an example familiar to many gamers, the GM may have guidelines for players wishing to play a fantasy fighter character, or magician, or cleric, or thief, etc. The GM can set up minimum attribute standards for each character class, recommended gifts, and minimum skill levels.

Templates can be set up for any genre, not just fantasy. You may have guidelines for a typical scientist character, or policeman, or psychic phenomenon investigator, or King's Musketeer, etc.

See Sections 6.4.1, Ranger Template, and 6.4.2, Broad Class Templates, for examples.

A different type of template shows the player the native abilities and limitations of a fantasy or science fiction race. See the sample character Seihook (Section 6.3.4.2), for a science fiction race, and Section 6.4.3, Cercopes, for a fantasy race.

6.2 Character Sheet Example

A character sheet can be any scrap paper, of course. However, it's handy to include the Trait Level progression and GM starting limits, if any, such as one Superb skill, three Great skills, magic available, etc.

Fig 6.1 is a sample character sheet [delete any note in square brackets, such as this]. The character sheet header in Fig 6.2 may be helpful to players at character creation if using the Objective Character Creation system.

```
/---FUDGE Character Sheet--------\    Character Name:
|                           | EP |    Genre:
| +3 Superb                 | 8  |    Player:
| +2 Great                  | 4  |    Date Created:
| +1 Good                   | 2  |    Unspent EP:
| +0 Fair                   | 1  |    Fudge Points:
| -1 Mediocre               | 1  |    Starting Limits:
| -2 Poor ... Skill Default | 1  |
| -3 Terrible               | 1  |    Character Story \& Personality:
|--------------------------------|
| Most Gifts and some Skills are |
|  non-existent unless specified |
|  on the character sheet.       |
|--------------------------------|
| EP = Raising skills to that    |  [EP column and note should be
|   level with Experience Points |   left off if you don't use
\--------------------------------/   them of course.]

             1,2      3,4        5,6         7,8          9+
Wounds:     Scratch    Hurt    Very Hurt    Incapac.    Nr. Death
             O O O      O          O           O            O

----------------------------------------------------------------------
   Attributes:         |         Gifts:             |        Skills:
-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------
  [space as needed in each section - the GM can include some before
   printing, if desired - especially true for Attributes]
                       |                            |
Mass:                  |----------------------------|
-----------------------|         Faults:            |
    Equipment:         |----------------------------|
-----------------------|                            |
 [Could go on the back |                            |
  if space is a prob-  |----------------------------|
  lem.  Remember to    |   Supernormal Powers:      |
  list offensive and   |----------------------------|
  defensive damage     |                            |
  factors clearly.]    |       [if needed]          |
```

Figure 6.1: Character sheet sample

```
/----------------------------------\  Character Name:
|              Att | Sk | VH  | EP |  Genre:
| Superb ....  +3  |  5 |  7  | 8  |  Player:
| Great .....  +2  |  4 |  6  | 4  |  Date Created:
| Good ......  +1  |  3 |  5  | 2  |  Unspent EP:
| Fair ......   0  |  2 |  4  | 1  |  Fudge Points:
| Mediocre ..  -1  |  1 |  3  | 1  |  Starting Limits:
| Poor ......  -2  |  0 |  2  | 1  |
| Terrible ..  -3  | -1 |  1  | 1  |  Character Story & Personality:
|----------------------------------|
| Att = Attribute Costs            |
| Sk = Average Skill Costs         |
| VH = Very Hard Skill Costs       |
| EP = Raising skills with EPs     |
|----------------------------------|
| Trading Traits: 1 gift = 1 fault |
| 1 gift = 1 to 2 attribute levels |
| 1 attribute level = 3 skill lvls |
| 1 supernormal power = 2 gifts    |
\----------------------------------/
```

Figure 6.2: Character sheet header

6.3 Character Examples

The following characters are designed to different GM standards to show some of the many possibilities. Each character example includes the GM guidelines used. All but the last one are made with the Objective Character Creation system, though all are compatible with the Subjective Character Creation system, of course. Easy and hard skills are denoted as such. (In the Objective Character Creation system, it costs less to get an easy skill at a given level, and more for a hard skill.) Skills that have defaults of non-existent and cost one level just to get at Terrible are listed as: Telepathy (VH). These are usually skills that control Supernormal Powers.

The numbers in parentheses after trait levels are the Objective level costs, and are optional on any given character sheet (but make it easy to tally).

Some characters have a separate Damage Capacity attribute; others have Damage Capacity represented by some other attribute, such as Strength, Health, Body, Constitution, Physical, etc.

Most of the gifts and faults were chosen with an eye towards variety, for purposes of example. Of course, if you use these characters, feel free to change any of the traits.

6.3.1 Fantasy Characters

Brogo, Floranna, and Moose have some magic abilities, using the sample FUDGE Magic system found in the Addenda. Brogo is just a dabbler in magic, and Moose is only slightly better. Floranna is a full magician, however.

6.3.1.1 Brogo the Scout, Halfling

GM limits: 8 attributes (4 free levels); 50 free skill levels, w/maximum of 1 Superb, 3 Greats; 2 free gifts; magic available.

Note: spell-casting is equal to Coolness-2 in this game, with a maximum level of Fair — no Spell-casting skill need be bought. Also, Magic Potential isn't limited to a specific effect in this game: Brogo can try for any effect, except as limited by his fault. "Halfling" is defined under Brogo's faults.

Attributes: (4 free levels, 10 levels taken, balanced by 3 faults)	
Coolness: Good	(1)
Damage Capacity: Good	(1)
Dexterity: Great	(2)
Empathy: Good	(1)
Health: Good [Halfling Fair]	(0)
Intelligence: Good	(1)
Perception: Superb	(3)
Strength: Good, Scale -2	(1)
Skills: (50 free levels, 50 taken)	
Area Knowledge, large area (easy): Good	(2)
Bow: Good	(3)
Climbing: Good	(3)

Elvish Language (hard): Mediocre	(2)
Evaluate Goods: Fair	(2)
Farming (easy): Fair	(1)
Fellowship: Great	(4)
Find Secret Passages: Terrible	(-1)
First Aid: Good	(3)
Haggle: Good	(3)
Interrogation: Terrible	(-1)
Knowledge of Old Tales: Fair	(2)
Lockpicking: Terrible	(-1)
Mimic Animal Noises (hard): Great	(4)
Move Quietly: Superb	(5)
Orcish Language: Fair	(2)
Pickpocketing: Terrible	(-1)
Riding: Pony: Fair	(2)
Staff: Good	(3)
Storytelling: Good	(3)
Survival: Good	(3)
Tracking: Good	(3)
Wildcraft: Great	(4)

Gifts: (2 free gifts, 4 taken, balanced by faults)
- Absolute Direction
- Animal Empathy
- Lucky
- Night Vision

Supernormal Powers: (1 taken, balanced by 2 faults)
- Magic Potential, one level

Faults:
- Can only cast trivial spells
- Curious
- Glutton
- Humanitarian (helps the needy for no pay)
- Self-defense Pacifist
- Halfling (Scale -2, Racial Bonus to Health, counts as 2 faults)

6.3.1.2 Floranna, Elven Magician

GM limits: 2 attributes (1 free level); 50 free skill levels, w/maximum of 1 Superb, 3 Greats; 4 free gifts; magic available.

NOTE: There are two separate Spell-casting skills, and the GM allows them to be raised above Fair at a rate of 1 gift per skill level. It costs 4 levels to get "Spell Casting on Others" at Fair, then 6 more levels to get it at Good, since one gift = 6 skill levels.

Attributes: (1 free level, 1 taken)

Material: Mediocre	(-1)
Spiritual: Great	(2)

Skills: (50 free levels, 32 taken, the rest traded for 3 gifts)

Acrobatics/Athletics: Mediocre	(1)
Animal Skills: Good	(3)
Camaraderie: Mediocre	(1)
Combat Skills: Poor	(0)
Courtly Ways: Poor	(0)
Cultural Knowledge: Good	(3)
Doctoring: Great	(4)
Manipulate People: Poor	(0)
Move Quietly/Gracefully: Fair	(2)
Scientific Knowledge: Mediocre	(1)
Spell Casting on Others (VH): Good	(10)
Spell Casting on Self (VH): Fair	(4)
Thievery: Terrible	(-1)
Woodland Ways/Nature Lore: Great	(4)

Gifts: (4 free gifts, none taken)

Supernormal Powers: (6 taken, balanced by faults, reduced gifts, and reduced skill levels)

Elf: extended lifespan, animals (not monsters) react well to her,
Perception = +1 to Material attribute

Magic Potential, White Magic, Five levels

Faults:

Absent-Minded

Heart of gold — any halfway skillful liar can get sympathy & help

Idealist — not grounded in reality

Melancholy

Zealous behavior — tries to dissuade others from violence

6.3.1.3 Moose the Mage, Human Combat Magician

GM limits: 6 attributes (3 free levels); 30 free skill levels, w/maximum of 1 Superb, 3 Greats; 2 free gifts; magic available.

Note: Moose's Spell-casting skill costs double levels because of his low Intelligence attribute. It would also take double EP to raise.

Attributes: (3 free levels, 4 levels taken, balanced by a fault)

Charisma: Poor	(-2)
Dexterity: Great	(2)
Drive: Good	(1)
Health: Great	(2)
Intelligence: Mediocre	(-1)
Strength: Great	(2)

Skills: (30 free levels, 36 taken, balanced by a fault)

Armory: Good	(3)
Brawling: Great	(4)
Breaking and Entering: Terrible	(-1)
Climbing: Fair	(2)

Crafts: Fair	(2)
Flirtatious Skills: Terrible	(-1)
Knowledge of Old Tales: Terrible	(-1)
Merchant: Mediocre	(1)
Riding: Good	(3)
Shield: Great	(4)
Singing: Terrible	(-1)
Spell-Casting (VH): Mediocre	(6)
Stealth: Good	(3)
Storytelling: Terrible	(-1)
Sword: Superb	(5)
Tactics: Good	(3)
Throwing: Great	(4)
Woodcraft: Mediocre	(1)

Gifts: (2 free gifts, 2 taken)
  Combat Reflexes
  Affluent Wealth (good equipment)
Supernormal Powers: (2 taken, balanced by faults)
  Magic Potential, Combat spells, two levels
Faults:
  Blunt and tactless — doesn't mince words
  Fear of the Dark
  Full of bluff and bluster and machismo to hide inadequacy feelings (he'll never live up to the impossibly heroic image of his father)
  Quick-Tempered; no patience with fools or knaves
  Spell-casting skill costs double due to low IQ
  Vow: Destroy the brigand band that killed his father

6.3.1.4 Tarag Half-Ogre

GM limits: 3 attributes (3 free levels); 10 free skill levels, w/maximum of 1 Superb, 2 Greats; 3 free gifts; magic available. Half-Ogre is Scale 3.

Attributes: (3 free levels, 2 taken, 1 traded for 3 skill levels)

Body: Good, Scale 3	(1)
Mind: Mediocre [Half-Ogre Fair]	(0)
Psyche: Good	(1)

Skills: (10 free levels, 13 taken, balanced by low attributes)

Animal Skills: Fair	(2)
Artistic Skills: Terrible	(-1)
Balance Skills: Good	(3)
Medical Skills: Terrible	(-1)
Melee Weapons: Superb	(5)
Merchant Skills: Terrible	(-1)
Outdoor Skills: Good	(3)
Ranged Weapons: Good	(3)

Social Skills: Terrible	(-1)
Technical Skills: Terrible	(-1)
Thief Skills: Terrible	(-1)
Unarmed Combat: Good	(3)

Gifts: (3 free gifts, 3 taken)
Quick Reflexes
Peripheral Vision — no penalty facing two foes at once
Tough Hide (-1 to damage)
Supernormal Powers: (1.5 taken, balanced by faults)
Half-Ogre (Body Scale 3, Mind at -1)
Anti-Magic Aura — spells cast on her are at -1 (counts as only 1 gift because it also interferes with beneficial spells)
Faults:
Goes Berserk if Hurt — liable to attack friends
Gullible
Poor (not much equipment)

6.3.2 Historical Fiction Characters

6.3.2.1 Hakim al-Saari, Thief of Baghdad, 792 A.D.

GM limits: 4 attributes (2 free levels); 35 free skill levels, w/maximum of 1 Superb, 1 Great; 1 free gift; no supernormal powers available.

Attributes: (2 free levels, 4 taken, balanced by fault)

Brawn: Mediocre	(-1)
Cunning: Good	(1)
Deftness: Superb	(3)
Ego: Good	(1)

Skills: (35 free levels, 47 taken, balanced by 2 faults)

Acrobatics: Good	(3)
Assess Merchandise: Good	(3)
Begging: Fair	(2)
Climbing: Good	(3)
Disguise: Fair	(2)
Dodge: Good	(3)
Knife: Mediocre	(1)
Knowledge of Baghdad: Good	(3)
Lockpicking: Good	(3)
Lying: Good	(3)
Pick Pockets: Good	(3)
Quote the Koran and Arab proverbs: Mediocre	(1)
Running: Fair	(2)
Servant: Mediocre	(1)
Stealth: Superb	(5)
Storytelling: Fair	(2)

Urban Survival: Great (4)
Witty Insults: Good (3)
Gifts: (1 free gift, 3 taken, balanced by fault
Healthy Constitution (+1 to Brawn to recover from illness)
Keen senses (+1 to Cunning to notice something)
Many people owe him favors
Faults:
Can't resist having the last word
Greedy
Many people would love to turn him in to the authorities
Soft-hearted toward children
Boasts openly of his thieving abilities

6.3.2.2 Arian o Gwent, Welsh Archer, 1190

A Norman conqueror murdered Arian's family under the guise of a flag of truce. When Arian slew him in vengeance, she was outlawed from Wales. Escaping north, the embittered Arian is about to join Robin Hood's outlaw Saxon band and introduce into England a new Welsh invention, the longbow . . . .

GM limits: 6 attributes (4 free levels); 30 free skill levels, w/maximum of 1 Superb, 2 Great; 2 free gifts; no supernormal powers available; must take 2 faults: Outlaw & Loyal to Companions, which do not count as trading for other traits.

Attributes: (4 free levels, 4 taken)
Calmness: Mediocre (-1)
Constitution: Fair (0)
Dexterity: Great (2)
Reasoning: Good (1)
Senses: Great (2)
Strength: Fair (0)
Skills: (30 free levels, 36 taken, balanced by 1 fault)
Acrobatics: Good (3)
Archery: Superb (5)
Bowyer: Great (4)
Climbing: Good (3)
Disguise: Good (3)
Dodge: Good (3)
Fletcher: Good (3)
Move Quietly: Great (4)
Riding: Good (3)
Tactics: Fair (2)
Woodcraft: Good (3)
Gifts: (2 free gifts, 3 taken, balanced by fault)
Literate — in 1190, this is rare enough to be called a gift
Attractive
+3 Calmness while shooting a bow

Faults:
Outlaw
Loyal to Companions
Speaks English with a strong Welsh accent
Despises Normans — Fair Calmness roll to avoid acting rashly

6.3.2.3 Henri le Rouge, Musketeer of King Louis XIII, 1627

GM limits: since this is a cinematic campaign without magical or SF healing, the GM has set higher limits: 9 attributes (8 free levels); 60 free skill levels, w/maximum of 2 Superb, 5 Greats; 3 free gifts; no supernormal powers available.

Attributes: (8 free levels, 12 taken, balanced by faults)
Charm: Great (2)
Coolness: Superb (3)
Damage Capacity: Great (2)
Dexterity: Great (2)
Health: Good (1)
Perception: Fair (0)
Strength: Fair (0)
Will: Fair (0)
Wit: Great (2)
Skills: (60 free levels, 72 taken, balanced by 2 faults)
Acrobatics: Superb (5)
Acting: Good (3)
Boating: Terrible (-1)
Brawling: Good (3)
Carousing: Good (3)
Climbing: Great (4)
Disguise: Good (3)
Dodge: Good (3)
Engineer: Terrible (-1)
Fencing: Superb (5)
First Aid: Good (3)
Flirting: Good (3)
Knowledge of Europe: Mediocre (1)
Knowledge of France: Good (3)
Knowledge of Paris: Good (3)
Knowledge of Planet: Mediocre (1)
Lockpicking: Terrible (-1)
Main Gauche: Great (4)
Matchlock Musket: Good (3)
Mechanic: Terrible (-1)
Move Quietly: Good (3)
Political Knowledge: Fair (2)
Quick-Draw Sword (easy): Good (2)

Oratory: Mediocre	(1)
Repartee: Great	(4)
Riding: Great	(4)
Savoir-Faire: Good	(3)
Shadowing: Fair	(2)
Swimming: Terrible	(-1)
Tactics: Good	(3)
Wheellock Pistol: Good	(3)

Gifts: (3 free gifts, 5 taken, balanced by faults)
Combat Reflexes
Handsome
Patron: Captain of Musketeers
Rapid Healing
Status: Gentleman

Faults:
Code of Honor
Compulsive Carouser
Disgusted by Non-Gourmet Food
Extremely Loyal to Companions
Intolerant of Protestants
Thin-skinned — quick to take offense

6.3.2.4 Scruffy Sanders, Stagecoach Driver, 1870s, Western U.S.A.

GM limits: 5 attributes (3 free levels); 30 free skill levels, w/maximum of 1 Superb, 2 Great; 2 free gifts; no supernormal powers available; minimum 1 fault that doesn't count for trading. Scruffy traded his one Superb skill limit for two extra Greats, so he has four Great skills, and no Superb skills.

Attributes: (3 free levels, 3 taken)

Agility: Mediocre	(-1)
Health: Good	(1)
Perception: Good	(1)
Savvy: Great	(2)
Strength: Fair	(0)

Skills: (35 free levels, 53 taken, balanced by 3 faults)

Area Knowledge, Western States: Good	(3)
Bluffing: Great	(4)
Brawling: Fair	(2)
Concertina (Squeezebox): Good	(3)
Dodge: Good	(3)
First Aid: Good	(3)
Holds His Liquor: Good	(3)
Hunting: Good	(3)
Move Quietly: Good	(3)
Pistols: Fair	(2)

Riding: Good (3)
Shotgun: Great (4)
Singing: Good (3)
Stagecoach Mechanic: Good (3)
Tall Tales: Good (3)
Teamster: Great (4)
Witty Insults: Great (4)

Gifts: (2 free gifts, 2 taken)
Never forgets a face
Sense of empathy: gets a feel for people

Faults:
Garrulous
Addiction to disgusting habit: spitting chewing tobacco
Lazy — would "rather talk than do"
Getting old, and all that implies . . . .

6.3.3 Modern Characters

6.3.3.1 Dolores Ramirez, Journalist, 1990s

GM limits: 10 attributes (5 free levels); 50 free skill levels, w/maximum of 1 Superb, 4 Greats; 2 free gifts; limited Psi available.

NOTE: The player forgot an important skill for Dolores, and one a journalist would logically have: Research. This was noticed during a game, and the player petitioned the GM to add Research as an Uncommitted trait. The GM agreed, and [Research: Good] was added to Dolores' character sheet. Dolores already had 1 Superb and 4 Great skills, so this is the best she could start with it. This does not count against starting free levels — Uncommitted traits are extra.

Attributes: (5 free levels, 7 taken, balanced by fault)
Appearance: Good (1)
Constitution: Good (1)
Coolness: Good (1)
Damage Capacity: Good (1)
Dexterity: Fair (0)
Intelligence: Great (2)
Luck: Good (1)
Sanity: Great (2)
Strength: Poor (-2)
Will: Fair (0)

Skills: (50 free levels, 56 taken, balanced by fault)
Acrobatics: Fair (2)
Acting: Great (4)
Breaking & Entering: Good (3)
Climbing: Fair (2)
Computer Use: Good (3)

Criminology: Mediocre	(1)
Disguise: Great	(4)
Driving: Good	(3)
Interviewing: Great	(4)
Karate (hard): Fair	(3)
Mexican Cuisine: Mediocre	(1)
Move Quietly: Good	(3)
Occultism: Good	(3)
Photography: Good	(3)
Pistol: Good	(3)
Shadowing: Great	(4)
Shady Contacts: Good	(3)
Swimming: Fair	(2)
Writing: Superb	(5)

Gifts: (2 free Gifts, 4 taken, balanced by faults)
- Ambidextrous
- Beautiful speaking voice
- Danger Sense
- Never forget a name

Faults:
- Overconfident
- Ambitious
- Stubborn
- Vain

6.3.3.2 Sherman Foley, homeless person and scanner, modern day

By: Bernard Hsiung

GM limits: no specified attributes — free levels = half number of attributes taken; 50 free skill levels, w/maximum of 1 Superb, 4 Greats; 2 free gifts; semi-limited Psi.

NOTE: Sherman's player only chose 4 attributes when the GM gave free reign: Sherman has any unlisted attribute the GM considers essential at Fair.

Attributes: (4 attributes selected: 2 free levels, 2 taken)

Damage Capacity: Mediocre	(-1)
Health: Mediocre	(-1)
Perception: Great	(2)
Willpower: Great	(2)

Skills: (50 free levels, 44 taken, 6 used to balance 1 gift)

Area Knowledge, inner city (easy): Great	(3)
Area Knowledge, Earth: Mediocre	(1)
Begging: Fair	(2)
Climbing: Terrible	(-1)
Drinking: Good	(3)
Driving: Terrible	(-1)

Forage: Good	(3)
Knife: Mediocre	(1)
Knowledge, Phobias (hard): Good	(4)
Meditation: Good	(3)
Sewing: Mediocre	(1)
Stealth/Urban: Fair	(2)
Street Gossip: Good	(3)
Survival/Urban: Great	(4)
Use Mind Control (VH): Great	(6)
Use Telepathy (VH): Good	(5)
Use Telekinesis (VH): Good	(5)

Gifts: (2 free gifts, none taken)

Supernormal Powers: (3 taken, balanced by faults, reduced gifts, and reduced skills)

Mind Control
Telepath
Telekinetic

Faults:

Use of Psi Requires Immobile Concentration
Materially Poor
Unlucky

6.3.3.3 Dragonfly (James Stoddard), Secret Superhero

GM limits: 7 attributes (4 free levels); 50 free skill levels, w/maximum of 2 Superb, 6 Greats; 2 free gifts; 4 free Superpowers.

Attributes: (4 free levels, 8 taken, balanced by faults)

Damage Capacity: Fair	(0)
Dexterity: Great	(2)
Health: Good	(1)
Intelligence: Great	(2)
Intuition: Great	(2)
Speed: Good	(1)
Strength: Fair	(0)

Skills: (50 free levels, 56 taken, balanced by fault)

Acrobatics: Great	(4)
Acting: Good	(3)
Bureaucracy: Fair	(2)
Computer Use: Great	(4)
Control Superpower (Electron Flow) (VH): Superb	(7)
Control Superpower (Flight) (VH): Good	(5)
Criminology: Good	(3)
Disguise: Good	(3)
Dodge: Great	(4)
Driving: Good	(3)

Electronics Engineering, Computers (hard): Great	(5)
Japanese Language: Great	(4)
Judo (hard): Great	(5)
Singing: Terrible	(-1)
Stealth: Superb	(5)

Gifts: (2 free gifts, 3 taken, balanced by a fault)
  Perfect Timing
  Good Looking
  Tough Hide (-1 to damage)
Supernormal Powers: (4 free Superpowers, 4 taken)
  Control Inanimate Electronic Devices
  Shrink to 1" (25 mm) for up to an hour, 2 times/day (Scale = -10)
  Fly, only while 1" (25 mm) high
  Electrical Surge (Short-out Machines)
Faults:
  Ethically unable to use Powers to get out of massive debt
  Quixotic — always looking for wrongs to right
  Phobia of animals bigger than a collie
  Socially awkward (bit of a nerd)

6.3.4 Science Fiction Characters

6.3.4.1 Captain Wallop of the Space Patrol

This character is from a cinematic Space Opera campaign, so the limits are high. GM limits: 4 attributes (4 free levels); 50 free skill levels, w/maximum of 1 Superb, 3 Greats, 8 Goods; 2 free gifts; one free Supernormal power, subject to GM approval.

Attributes: (4 free levels, 6 taken, balanced by fault)	
Body: Good	(1)
Reason/Mechanical: Great	(2)
Perceive/React: Superb	(3)
Willpower: Fair	(0)
Skills: (50 Free levels, 56 taken, balanced by fault)	
Acrobatics: Good	(3)
Acting/Disguise: Great	(4)
Barroom Savvy: Good	(3)
Blaster: Superb	(5)
Computer Operation: Fair	(2)
Diplomacy: Good	(3)
Electronics: Good	(3)
Familiarity with Major Planetary Systems: Good	(3)
Gunnery: Great	(4)
Haggle: Fair	(2)
Hard Sciences: Fair	(2)
Mimicry: Mediocre	(1)

Navigation: Good (3)
Pick Up Languages: Fair (2)
Piloting: Great (4)
Repair Scoutship Systems: Good (3)
Stealth: Great (4)
Unarmed Combat: Fair (2)
Zero-G Maneuvering: Good (3)

Gifts: (2 free gifts, 4 taken, balanced by faults)
Handsome
Reputation as Hero
Never disoriented in zero Gravity
Rank of Captain in the Space Patrol

Supernormal Powers: (1 free Supernormal power, 1 taken)
Able to key in on one mind up to a mile (1.5 km) away and follow the trail on Good Situational roll or better every 15 minutes.

Faults:
Amorous heartbreaker — love 'em and leave 'em
Bravery indistinguishable from foolhardiness
Fanatic patriot
Must obey senior officers in the Space Patrol

6.3.4.2 Seihook — Alien from Aldebaran

The erlesti are a non-humanoid race from the star system Aldebaran. An erlest resembles a collection of animated twine and moss-covered rock of less than half human mass. It digests the moss through its "skin" — but to a human observer, the moss appears to be digesting the erlest. Erlesti can also use the "twine" pieces as straws to drink fluids — alcohol affects them as it does humans. While erlesti have nothing resembling hands, they have strong psi powers that enable them to manipulate their environment and even travel space.

Erlesti are friendly with humanity — "interesting auras," they say, "always interesting." In general, they are bewildered by red tape, dislike war, value their families above all things, and like comfort, but don't seek extreme wealth.

Their Damage Capacity is determined by their Size attribute (their small size and increased density balance out to the same Scale as humans); Perception is determined by Empathy Skill, which they say extends to inanimate objects, and refuse to use any other word to describe the ability. Psi attributes rate raw strength; psi skills fine manipulation of that strength. Erlesti are hermaphroditic (they exchange "twine" with each other to procreate), so Seihook is both male and female.

GM limits: 8 attributes (5 free levels); 40 free skill levels, w/maximum of 1 Superb, 3 Greats; 2 free gifts; Supernormal Powers count as attributes — no extra cost.

Attributes: (5 free levels, 7 taken, balanced by fault)
Empathy Power: Fair (0)
Levitation Power: Good (1)
Reasoning: Great (2)

Reaction: Fair	(0)
Size: Good (size of 4-year old human)	(1)
Telekinesis Power: Great	(2)
Telepathy Power: Good	(1)
Will: Fair	(0)

Skills: (40 Free levels, 40 taken)

Bar Etiquette: Fair	(2)
Barter: Great	(4)
Empathy Skill: Great	(4)
Folklore: Fair	(2)
Hard Sciences: Mediocre	(1)
History: Fair	(2)
Knowledge of Alien (incl. Human) Customs: Good	(3)
Levitate Other: Fair	(2)
Levitate Self: Superb	(5)
Medical Skills: Good	(3)
Psychology: Great	(4)
Telekinesis Skill: Good	(3)
Telepathy, Dampen Thoughts: Poor	(0)
Telepathy, Read Thoughts: Fair	(2)
Telepathy, Project Thoughts: Good	(3)

Gifts: (2 free gifts, 4 taken, balanced by faults)
Can't feel physical pain (no penalty for being Hurt or Very Hurt)
Animals do his bidding in simple, non-threatening matters on a Great Empathy *Power* roll or better
Tolerant of Appearances — Never disgusted by any alien form
Wealthy (for an Erlest)

Faults:
Practical Joker (for example, loves to "speak" in bad accents in thought projection)
Gossip
Coward — fears death

6.3.4.3 Screamer (Frederick Grant); Occupation: Decker

Cyberpunk character by: Stephan Szabo

GM limits: 7 attributes (3 free levels); 30 free skill levels, w/maximum of 1 Superb, 4 Greats; 2 free gifts; Cybernetic enhancements count as gifts, not supernormal powers.

Attributes: (3 free levels, 5 taken, balanced by fault)

Body: Good	(1)
Charisma: Poor	(-2)
Intelligence: Superb	(3)
Quickness: Good	(1)
Reaction: Great	(2)
Strength: Fair	(0)
Willpower: Fair	(0)

Skills: (30 Free levels, 30 taken)

Computer Build/Repair: Great	(4)
Computer Programming: Superb	(5)
Computer Theory: Great	(4)
Cycle: Fair	(2)
Electronics: Great	(4)
Firearms: Great	(4)
Matrix Etiquette: Good	(3)
Street Etiquette: Fair	(2)
Unarmed Combat: Fair	(2)

Gifts: (2 free gifts, 6 taken, balanced by faults)
Cybernetics, Datajack
Cybernetics, Can multitask cognitive processes
Cybernetics, Thermographic Vision
Cybernetics, Flash Compensation
Cybernetics, Telescopic Sight
Lucky

Faults:
Bloodlust
Doesn't care if he lives or dies
Manic/Depressive
Multiple Personality
Overconfident

6.3.5 Miscellaneous Characters

6.3.5.1 Fan Yin Wong, Ghost

Fan Yin is from a campaign where all the PCs are ghosts with low karma levels. She must do a number of good deeds before she can risk being reborn again, but her ability to influence the material world is limited.

GM limits: 12 attributes (6 free levels); 25 free skill levels, w/maximum 1 Superb, 2 Great; no free gifts, but 6 Supernormal Powers, with constraint on the number of uses per day; 2 personality faults required, do not count for trading purposes.

NOTE: the supernormal powers are described with "uses per day" and skill levels. The default skill level is Poor; it takes one gift to raise a supernormal power each level above Poor.

Attributes: (6 free levels, 4 taken, balance taken as 6 skills)

Appearance: Great	(2)
Charisma: Fair	(0)
Dexterity: Good	(1)
Fitness: Good	(1)
Mechanical Aptitude: Poor	(-2)
Mind: Fair	(0)
Perception: Superb	(3)

Reflexes: Good (1)
Sanity: Mediocre (-1)
Strength: Fair (0)
Will: Fair (0)
Wisdom: Mediocre (-1)

Skills: (25 free levels, 31 taken, balanced by attribute levels)
Accounting: Good (3)
Animal Care: Fair (2)
Area Knowledge (easy): Good (2)
Athletics: Poor (0)
Bargain: Good (3)
Computer Use: Fair (2)
Driving: Fair (2)
Folklore: Fair (2)
Knowledge of Detective Fiction: Great (4)
Lying: Fair (2)
Move Quietly: Mediocre (vs. other spirits) (1)
Outdoor Skills: Mediocre (2)
Sciences: Mediocre (1)
Women's Magazine Lore: Superb (5)

Gifts: (0 free gifts, 2 taken, balanced by faults)
"Green thumb" — knack for making plants healthy (even as a ghost!)
Single-minded — +1 to any lengthy task

Supernormal Powers: (6 free Supernormal Powers, 5 taken. 1 traded, plus 2 Faults taken, to raise these 4 levels)
Pass through Walls (6/day): Fair
Screech (temporarily paralyze multiple living people) (3/day): Mediocre
Affect Dreams (1/day): Poor
Control Vermin (3/day): Poor
Read Minds (4/day): Mediocre

Faults:
Fear of spiders (even as a ghost)
Worry Wart
Waffles — can't make decisions until forced to
Obsessed with regrets over missed opportunities

6.3.5.2 Cassandra Pine, Vampire Private Investigator

Modern vampire character by Deird'Re Brooks

GM limits: 10 Attributes (5 free levels), 60 free skill levels, w/maximum of 1 Superb, 4 Greats, 2 free gifts, 3 free supernatural powers.

Attributes: (5 free levels, 7 taken, balanced by fault)
Appearance: Fair (0)
Charisma: Fair (0)
Dexterity: Great (2)

Humanity: Mediocre	(-1)
Intelligence: Good	(1)
Perception & Alertness: Great	(2)
Stamina: Good	(1)
Strength: Fair (Scale 3)	(0)
Willpower: Good	(1)
Wits: Good	(1)

Skills: (60 free levels, 60 taken)

Animal Handling: Mediocre	(1)
Area Knowledge, home city (easy): Good	(2)
Athletics: Fair	(2)
Computer: Fair	(2)
Control Power: Mind Control (VH): Fair	(4)
Control Power: Psychometry (VH): Fair	(4)
Dodge: Good	(3)
Driving: Good	(3)
Electronic Security: Great	(4)
Firearms: Good	(3)
Intimidation: Good	(3)
Investigation: Superb	(5)
Knife: Fair	(2)
Language: Spanish: Mediocre	(1)
Law & Police Procedure (hard): Fair	(3)
Research: Great	(4)
Stealth: Good	(3)
Streetwise: Great	(4)
Subterfuge: Good	(3)
Tae Kwon Do (hard): Good	(4)

Gifts: (2 free gifts, 2 taken)
- Contacts in police force
- Night Vision

Supernormal Powers: (3 free Powers, 8 taken, balanced by faults)
- Extraordinary Speed
- Can change into Mist Form
- Mind Control
- Only immobilized by stake through heart
- Psychometry
- Regeneration
- Scale 3 (unobservable)
- Can change into Wolf Form

Faults:
- Burns heal slowly
- Low financial resources
- Mind control needs eye contact
- Must sleep most of the daylight hours

Violent when enraged
(NOTE: The following three faults count as 2 faults each)
Burned by Sun
Needs blood to live
Dangerous Secret — she's destroyed if it's revealed

6.3.5.3 Chicory, Bunny

Chicory is a character in a game where rabbits are the norm, and humans are giant monsters. The scale is therefore relative to rabbits.

GM limits: 6 attributes (3 free levels); 40 free skill levels, w/maximum 1 Superb, 3 Great; 2 gifts, 1 Supernormal Power.

Attributes: (3 free levels, 7 taken, balanced by faults)

Dexterity: Good	(1)
Health: Good	(1)
Perception: Superb	(3)
Smarts: Great	(2)
Speed: Good	(1)
Strength: Mediocre	(-1)

Skills: (40 free levels, 52 taken, balanced by faults)

Acrobatics: Terrible	(-1)
Area Knowledge: Good	(3)
Detect Traps: Great	(4)
Fighting: Good	(3)
Gambling: Good	(3)
Herb Lore (hard): Superb	(6)
Knowledge of Burrow Construction: Good	(3)
Knowledge of Humans (VH): Fair	(4)
Knowledge of Non-Rabbit Behavior: Good	(3)
Language: Bug: (hard) Fair	(3)
Language: Common Bird (hard): Good	(4)
Language: Mouse/Rat (hard): Great	(5)
Mechanical Skills: Terrible	(-1)
Mimic Non-Rabbit Sounds (hard): Fair	(3)
Move Quietly: Fair	(2)
Spring Traps: Fair	(2)
Storytelling: Fair	(2)
Tracking: Great	(4)

Gifts: (2 free gifts + 1 Supernormal Power; 4 gifts taken, balanced by not taking a Power.)
Unafraid of Loud Noises (unlike most rabbits)
Never Forgets a Scent
Strong Will
Night Vision

Faults:
Nosy

Compulsive Gambler
Phobia: Canines
Jealous of Anyone Getting More Attention

6.3.5.4 Squeegee Fizzle, Cartoon Chimp

Squeegee is a time- and space-hopping chimpanzee in a universe without physical laws as we know them. *Real* loose rules on this one, folks! There is no death in cartoons: get your characters to a Heal-O-Ray machine and they'll be fine.

GM limits: 3 Supernormal Powers allowed, at least 4 faults required; otherwise: no limits — take what you want, and we'll talk about it.

Attributes: (no limit; 7 levels taken, anything else at Fair)	
3-D Agility: Good	(1)
Cheek: Great	(2)
Imagination: Superb	(3)
Nose: Good	(1)
Notices Things: Great	(2)
Patience: Poor	(-2)
Resistance to Alien Stuff: Good	(1)
Willpower: Mediocre	(-1)
Skills: (no limit, 37 taken)	
Acrobatics: Good	(3)
Area Knowledge of the Known Universe: Good	(3)
Fruit Lore: Superb	(5)
History: Mediocre	(1)
Language, Most Alien: Fair	(2)
Make Silly Noises: Superb	(5)
Make the Sound of One Hand Clapping: Fair	(2)
Mechanical Skills: Terrible	(-1)
Move Quietly: Great	(4)
Pilot Space Ship: Mediocre	(1)
Recall of TV SitCom Episodes: Superb	(5)
Tell Believable Whoppers: Fair	(2)
Throw Things: Good	(3)
Tooth-and-Nail Fighting: Good	(3)
Zap-O-Stun Gun: Great	(4)

Gifts: (no limit, lots taken)
Always keeps his cool . . . well, usually
Never Forgets a Banana
Acrobatics skill is Superb for Swinging; no penalty to other skills while Swinging
Doesn't value Sanity highly
Supernormal Powers:
Quadridextrous
Never lost in space

Can think of a Devastating Comeback (stuns opponent five rounds), on a Superb or better Cheek (attribute) die roll

Faults:

Easily Distractible

Compulsive Liar

Will do anything for a banana

Enemy out to get him: Evil Scientist, Dr. Carnage

6.4 Class and Racial Template Examples

See also Section 6.3.4.2, Seihook, as an example of a science fiction racial template.

6.4.1 Ranger Template (Fantasy Character Class)

See Section refss:templates, Templates, for a discussion of character class templates. This is a *sample* template — the GM should customize to her own game, including adding or deleting attributes, gifts, skills, etc. The GM may allow a beginning character to be a ranger apprentice, rather than full ranger. An apprentice is one or two levels less than a full ranger in any given attribute or skill.

Ranger requirements:

Attributes:

Dexterity: Good or better

Intelligence: Fair or better

Perception: Good or better

Strength: Good or better

Gifts:

None mandatory. Recommended gifts include Animal Empathy, Absolute Direction, Combat Reflexes, Night Vision, other combat gifts.

Faults:

A ranger should not be the type of person who dislikes being alone. Some rangers work for the authorities, which might imply a Duty and / or a Vow of Obedience.

Skills:

Area Knowledge: Fair or better

Bow: Good or better

Climbing: Fair or better

Mimic Animal Sounds: Fair or better

Move Quietly: Good or better

Riding: Fair or better

Scouting (the skill of observing and remembering): Fair or better

Spear or Sword: Good or better

Survival: Good or better

Woods Lore: Good or better

6.4.2 Broad Class Templates

For a loose and easy game, the GM can assign each character class levels for the broad skill example groups in Section 1.3.2, Skills. This makes an ideal game for teaching role-playing to beginning players, or when playing with large numbers of players.

For example, the GM decides the players can be one of seven different character classes: Fighter, Ranger, Rogue, Magician, Cleric, Diplomat/Scholar, Jack of All Trades. Each of these characters can be defined as follows:

Beginning Fighter:
Physical Attributes: Great
Mental Attributes: Mediocre
Psyche Attributes: Poor

Animal Skills: Mediocre
Athletic skills: Great
Combat skills: Great
Outdoor skills: Fair
Social skills (Fellowship): Fair
All other skills: Poor

Beginning Ranger:
Physical Attributes: Good
Mental Attributes: Fair
Psyche Attributes: Poor

Animal Skills: Good
Athletic skills: Fair
Combat skills: Good
Covert skills: Fair
Craft skills: Fair
Outdoor skills: Great
All other skills: Poor

Beginning Rogue:

Physical Attributes: Fair
Mental Attributes: Good
Psyche Attributes: Poor

Athletic skills: Fair
Combat skills: Mediocre
Covert skills: Great
Manipulative skills: Great
Merchant skills: Fair
Social skills (Fellowship): Mediocre

Urban skills: Good
All other skills: Poor

Beginning Magician:
Physical Attributes: Poor
Mental Attributes: Good
Psyche Attributes: Fair

Craft skills: Mediocre
Knowledge skills: Fair
Spiritual skills: Fair
Supernormal Power skills: Great
All other skills: Poor

Gift: Supernormal Power

Beginning Cleric:

Physical Attributes: Poor
Mental Attributes: Fair
Psyche Attributes: Great

Animal Skills: Fair
Craft skills: Mediocre
Knowledge skills: Fair
Medical skills: Good
Social skills (Formal): Good
Spiritual skills: Great
Supernormal Power skills: Fair
All other skills: Poor

Gift: Divine Favor

Beginning Diplomat/Scholar:
Physical Attributes: Poor
Mental Attributes: Great
Psyche Attributes: Mediocre

Artistic skills: Mediocre
Knowledge skills: Great
Language skills: Good
Manipulative skills: Good
Medical skills: Fair
Social skills (Fellowship): Mediocre
Social skills (Formal): Great

Spiritual skills: Mediocre
Technical skills: Mediocre
All other skills: Poor

Beginning Jack of All Trades:
Physical Attributes: Fair
Mental Attributes: Fair
Psyche Attributes: Mediocre

Animal Skills: Mediocre
Artistic skills: Mediocre
Athletic skills: Mediocre
Combat skills: Fair
Covert skills: Mediocre
Craft skills: Mediocre
Knowledge skills: Mediocre
Manipulative skills: Mediocre
Merchant skills: Mediocre
Outdoor skills: Fair
Social skills (Fellowship): Good
Social skills (Formal): Mediocre
Spiritual skills: Mediocre
Technical skills: Mediocre
Urban skills: Fair

These character classes are merely examples for a simple fantasy game. The GM can change or ignore any that she wishes and create new character classes. She can also create classes for other genres, such as for a science fiction setting.

Each character class has unlisted Knowledge skills appropriate to its class. For example, a fighter has Good Knowledge of tactics, determining weapon quality, judging how well-trained an army is by observing it for a while, etc. Likewise, a rogue has Good Knowledge of types of locks, how many guards a wealthy merchant might have, the value of a given material for disguising oneself, etc.

Some skills listed in Section 1.3.2, Skills, as being under one heading fall under another in certain cases. For example, a rogue would be Great at climbing, even though Climbing is listed as an Athletic skill. In this case, it's a Covert skill. The ability to move quietly is listed as a Covert skill, but a fighter would be Fair at it, and a ranger Great.

Character development in this system is handled normally. The GM must decide at some point whether to continue to use broad skill groups or to break skills down into finer divisions. Each skill must be raised separately if the GM decides to break the broad groups into finer distinctions. If the GM likes keeping the skills together as groups, then raising an entire skill group level should cost more experience points than in a system with narrowly-defined skills — perhaps as much as ten times the cost.

6.4.3 Fantasy Race: Cercopes

Cercopes (or Kerkopes) were originally a pair of brothers in early Greek mythology. By the first century BC, however, mythological writers had expanded them into their own race. It is in this later definition that they are used here.

Cercopes (singular: cercop) are a small, apish race that love to play tricks and pranks on anyone they can. Born thieves, some of them even dared to steal Heracles' weapons! When he caught them and tied them to a pole for punishment, they amused him so with their jokes and banter that he let them go. Players should not attempt to play a cercop unless they have a roguish sense of humor.

Cercopes are small humanoids with ugly, apelike faces and a prehensile tail. A cercop stands about four feet high (120 cm), but generally stoops a bit. The face is not hairy, but both sexes tend to have long sideburns that often meet under the chin — this hair does not continue to grow, but stays the same length, as monkeys' hair does. The bodies have some scant hair on the back, and the tail is furred except for the final six inches (15 cm). Arms, legs and chests have no more hair than the average human male does, and they wear clothing — with a tail hole. Their feet resemble monkeys' feet, but they cannot manipulate things well with them. They are not fond of shoes, only wearing them when attempting to disguise themselves as another race. Cercopes stand upright most of the time, but lean forward to run, with the tail acting as a counterbalance. Their tails are strong enough to be used in combat and to aid in climbing. However, a cercop cannot do fine manipulation (such as pick a lock) with its tail. Cercopes speak their own language, and need to learn another to speak with the rest of the party.

The average cercop has a Mediocre Strength and Damage Capacity, but a Good Dexterity. Their intelligence runs the same range as humans. Cercopes have the racial gifts of Exceptional Balance (+2 to any action requiring balance, even in difficult situations), the Ability to Land on their Feet with no harm from twice the distance a human could, and Prehensile Tail. Their racial faults are Impulsiveness (act first, think later), Compulsive Jokers (practical and otherwise), Kleptomania, Unattractive Appearance to other races, and Bad Reputations as Thieves and Tricksters. They have a bonus of +1 to the following skills: Acrobatics, Move Quietly, Climbing and Fast Talk. They have a -1 penalty to use any weapon of Medium size or bigger.

The net result is that it counts as a fault to be a Cercop. Since anyone playing such a character actually gets some useful bonuses if playing a thief, the GM should be sure to enforce the faults — especially the Bad Reputation. NPCs will have a hard time trusting a cercop, usually with good reason.

This racial template gives a strong incentive to creating a thief character. However, it is possible to make a cercop warrior or even cleric if desired. Certain faults can be "bought off." That is, a character may have a gift of Not a Kleptomaniac — but it costs one gift, which would nullify the free fault level. However, the Unattractive Appearance and Bad Reputation cannot be bought off — these are inherent prejudices in others, not in one's self.

A cercop character could take a fault: No Tail — perhaps he lost it in battle. This would give extra levels to overcome the -1 penalty to all medium and large weapons if a character wished to be a warrior cercop, for example.

6.5 Animal & Creature Examples

Non-PC animals need not be built using level limits. Just define what traits are essential to the animal, and let it go at that. The Strength Scale refers to Section 2.3, Non-humans. Damage may include a "weapon deadliness" factor for teeth, claws, and, in some cases, body optimized for combat (usually carnivores).

Dog:
Perception: Great to Superb (Smell should be Scale: Dog)
Strength/Mass Scale: -7 to 0
Skills: Mediocre to Superb (tailor to specific training received; examples include attack, guard, guide, track, hunt, and tricks)
Melee Combat: Fair to Superb
Damage Capacity: Good to Great

Cat:
Agility: Great to Superb
Scale: -6 or -7
Skills: Survival, Hunting, Playing
Gifts: Night Vision, Nine Lives (e.g., each time a cat receives damage that would kill it in one blow, check off one life and don't count the damage. There are other ways to play this, of course, such as a Legendary Dodge ability.)
Faults: Independent-minded, Curious, Lazy, Vain
Damage Capacity: Fair to Superb

Horse:
Strength: Scale 3 Good to Great
Endurance: Good
Speed: Scale 4 Good to Great
Skills: Mediocre to Superb (tailor to specific training received; examples include riding, driving, racing, fighting, and various tricks)
Faults: Tailor to specific animal (Runaway, bites, kicks, etc.)
Damage Capacity: Mediocre to Good

Camel:
Strength: Scale 2 Good to Great
Endurance: Great to Superb
Speed: Scale 3 Mediocre to Good
Skills: Mediocre to Superb (tailor to specific training received; examples include riding, driving, packing)
Gifts: Desert Survival
Damage Capacity: Fair to Great

Elephant:
Strength: Scale 8 Good to Superb
Agility: Good to Superb

Skills: Mediocre to Superb (tailor to specific training received; examples include riding, hauling, stacking (logs etc.), tricks)
Gifts: Exceptional animal intelligence
Faults: Males subject to Musth (annual madness)
Damage Capacity: Good to Superb

Falcon:
Courage: Fair to Superb
Agility: Good to Superb
Speed: Scale 5 Fair to Great
Strength: Scale -6, Fair to Superb (Scale may be from -8 to -4 to reflect sizes from sparrow hawk to eagle)
Skills: Mediocre to Superb (tailor to specific training received; examples include manning (a measure of the degree of taming), hunting ground mammals, hunting birds, aerial acrobatics, trained to the lure, etc.)
Gifts: Flight
Damage Capacity: Fair to Good

Lion:
Perception: Great
Melee Combat: Great
Stalking: Great
Dodge: Fair
Strength: Scale 2 Fair to Great
Fault: Lazy
Damage Capacity: Fair to Superb

Grizzly Bear:
Perception: Good
Melee Combat: Good
Dodge: Fair
Strength: Scale 3 Fair to Great
Fault: Berserker
Damage Capacity: Fair to Great

Cobra:
Perception: Good
Melee Combat: Great
Dodge: Good
Supernormal Power: Poison, +4 damage bonus
Fault: Bad temper
Damage Capacity: Poor

Skunk:
Melee Combat: Poor

Ranged Combat: Good, short range
Dodge: Poor
Supernormal Power: Noxious Fluid (blinds, incapacitates, renders foul)
Damage Capacity: Terrible

Giant Spider:
Melee Combat: Good
Dodge: Poor
Supernormal Powers: Poison (paralyzes), Web (Good Difficulty Level Strength roll to break)
Damage Capacity: Good

Griffin:
Perception: Great
Melee Combat: Great
Dodge: Good
Supernormal Powers: Flight, Tough Hide (light armor)
Strength: Mediocre to Great, Scale 4
Damage Capacity: Good to Superb

Dragon (customize to taste):
Melee Combat: Good to Great
Ranged Combat: Good, short range
Dodge: Mediocre
Supernormal Powers: Fire Breath (+2 damage), Flight, Tough Hide (-1 to -3), Charm with Eyes, Magic Potential (some of them)
Fault: Greedy
Strength: Scale 3 to Scale 9, Fair to Great
Damage Capacity: Fair to Great

6.6 Equipment Examples

It's possible to define equipment in FUDGE character terms. This is probably unnecessary, but can be done if desired.

Equipment from any technological level, stone age to science fiction, can be detailed this way. A piece of equipment can be defined by as many FUDGE traits as are needed: attributes, skills, gifts or faults.

For example, an old, battered sword found in a damp dungeon has:

Attributes:
Sharpness: Terrible
Durability: Poor
Fault:
Looks Shabby.

Such a weapon is treated as a club for damage, rather than a sword (no Sharpness bonus). The GM may require a Situational roll every few combat rounds: the sword breaks on a Mediocre or worse result from parrying or being parried. And finally, some people will make fun of anyone carrying such a shoddy-looking weapon.

When the sword was new, however, it had:

Attributes:
  Sharpness: Good
  Sturdiness: Great
Gift:
  Beautifully Made

In that case, it would indeed merit the +1 for Sharpness (perhaps any Sharpness level of Mediocre to Good gets the +1 Sharpness bonus, while duller blades get no bonus, and better blades might get an *additional* +1 bonus). It also would never break under ordinary circumstances, and its appearance probably earns its owner a positive reaction from many people.

A bejewelled magic sword found in a dragon's hoard might have:

Attribute:
  Appearance: Superb (+3 to impress those who value wealth)
Gift:
  Troll-slaying (+3 to hit when fighting Trolls; such wounds will never heal)
Fault:
  Dedicated Purpose (it tries to control the wielder to hunt trolls)
Skill:
  Dominate Wielder: Fair (Opposed action against a Will attribute)

A different magic sword:

Supernormal Power:
  Flame Creation (+2 damage)
Skill:
  Flame Shooting: Great. Range: three yards (meters)
Fault:
  Flame Creation only works on a Good or better Situational roll

Of course, even if the flaming missile fails, it can still be used as a regular sword, so it's not exactly worthless in such cases.

As a final example, consider a science fiction double-seat fighter spaceship:

Attributes:
Acceleration: Great
Handling: Superb
Speed: Good (Scale 15)
Size: Fair (Scale 8)
Skills:
Navigation: Good
Targeting: Superb
Auto-pilot: Fair
Food Preparation: Poor
Entertainment: Mediocre
Gifts:
Turret-mounted Laser Rifles, above and below
Bucket Seats in the bridge
Hyperdrive
Can be used in an atmosphere or in deep space
Faults:
Non-standard parts (expensive to repair)
Unattractive exterior
Cramped sleeping quarters
Airlock squeaks annoyingly

Ordinary, every-day equipment should not be detailed out in this manner. There is no need to define a canteen, for example, as anything other than "metal, one quart (liter) capacity." Even for equipment that may have an impact on the game, such as weapons or thieves' tools, you do not need to have any more information than "+2 offensive damage factor" or "+1 to Pick Locks skill."

It's best to restrict defining equipment in FUDGE character terms to the truly extraordinary (such as magic items). Another use is when the equipment's powers may be used in an opposed action: in a car race, for instance, you need to know the relative speeds and handling capabilities of the vehicles as well as the skills of the drivers. A battle between spaceships is another good example.

Equipment with personality, such as sentient magic items or advanced robots, may be treated as full-fledged FUDGE characters if desired.

Chapter 7

Addenda

The Addenda consist of a variety of supplementary material for FUDGE.

Chapters 1 through 5 represent plain, vanilla FUDGE — here you can find and create fancier fare. If you pass FUDGE around, please add any customization to this chapter (quoting Section number and name, such as 1.33, Gifts), rather than change the original. Suggestions for a specific genre also go in the Addenda. Examples: a list of sample superpowers, or a list of guns and their damage.

Please include a date and credit (your name) for the change, and, if possible, notify Steffan O'Sullivan, the original author of FUDGE, via the Internet (to sos@oz.plymouth.edu) or via the Post Office (c/o Grey Ghost Games, P.O. Box 838, Randolph, MA 02368).

7.1 Sample Magic System: FUDGE Magic

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Date: November, 1992 to November, 1993
By: Steffan O'Sullivan
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Here is a sample magic system, based on the following premises mentioned in Section 2.5, Magic:

Who can cast Magicians only (supernormal power needed).

Levels of Power yes. There are two game effects: the greater the power, the easier it is to cast more powerful spells; and power levels act as a reserve in case of severe failure, which temporarily drains Power. Voluntarily draining a level of Power can also guarantee success for one spell.

Source of Power manipulation of local area mana.

Reliability Fair.

Time to cast spells depends on potency of spell (one minute to days). This can be speeded up by taking a penalty to the roll.

Spells improvised. Exact wording isn't important, so magic books tend to be collections of effects, not formulae.

Material Components none needed, but good use can give a +1 bonus to skill.

Drawbacks casting non-trivial spells is fatiguing; severe failure causes distress.

Societal constraints none — magic is rare, but not unheard of.

This system is based on the conviction that a *player* using magic should never be blase: there should always be some tension and excitement when a character casts a spell, or the magic has gone out of the game. Too often in a roleplaying game, the player running a magician uses tried-and-true spells so regularly that spell-casting becomes mundane. Since "mundane magic" seems a contradiction in terms, FUDGE Magic attempts to instill a little excitement into spell-casting.

There are many ways to achieve this. FUDGE Magic has chosen the following limitations:

- The mana available for a specific spell result gradually becomes depleted in a given area. That is, casting two fireballs in a row is harder than casting one fireball and one lightning blast, for example.
- Magic is an untamable force; there is a skill cap for casting spells.
- Magic is somewhat risky to use — there are penalties for severe failure.

Options are provided to alter these limitations for GMs who dislike them. In fact, Section 7.1.9.3, Spell-Casting Skill Alternatives, is essential for Faerie races and demigods, who have much more dependable magic powers than humans. (Unless the GM is generous, such characters would have to buy higher skill levels normally if using the Objective Character Creation system. Taking some faults to balance such Powers is in keeping with the nature of demigods and Faerie races.)

See Section 6.3.1 for sample characters using FUDGE Magic.

7.1.1 Magic Potential

Magic Potential is a Supernormal Power. (A suggested cost in the Objective Character Creation system is two gifts for each level of Magic Potential. This can be reduced in a magic-rich campaign.) A character with at least one level of Magic Potential (usually abbreviated to Potential, sometimes simply called Power) is referred to as a "magician" in these rules — substitute your favorite word. Only magicians may cast spells. (However, see Section 7.1.9.2, Magicians & Non-Magicians, for other options.) Magic Potential may be taken more than once, but each level counts as a separate supernormal power.

Each level of Magic Potential must be bought as a specialization. Specializations can be suggested by the player or set by the GM. (In the latter case, she should make a list of acceptable magic specializations.) The categories can be as broad or as narrow as the GM wishes — the broader the terms, the more powerful the magicians.

> *Examples of specialized Potential: Alter Inanimate Material, Augury, Combat Magic, Communication Magic, Defensive Magic, Elemental Magic, Flying Magic, Healing Magic, Illusion, Information-Gathering Magic, Mind Control, Necromancy, Only Affects Living Beings, Only Affects Sentient Beings, Only Affects Technological Items, Shapeshifting, White Magic (cannot harm anyone, even indirectly), etc.*

A character may have Power levels in more than one specialization, unless the GM disallows it for some reason. Certain disciplines may have societal constraints: in most cultures, studying Necromancy is offensive and probably illegal. Mind Control, Invisibility, Teleportation, Illusion Magic, etc., might all be limited to government-approved magicians, at best. It's even possible that such magicians will be outlaws. Anything that can be used easily to commit a crime (especially assassination or thievery) will be difficult, if not impossible, to learn openly in most cultures. If a given culture allows such magic openly, it is sure to have powerful defenses against being damaged by it.

Narrow specializations should probably cost less than one supernormal power: perhaps each specialized Potential is worth one gift.

In order to cast a spell of a given result, the magician *must* have at least +1 Potential specialized in that type of magic (on the character sheet, that is: he may be temporarily reduced to 0 Potential). Someone with +1 Potential: Combat Magic and +2 Potential: Information-Gathering Magic could not cast a spell to create food in the wilderness, for example.

Failing a spell miserably causes the temporary loss of a level of Magic Potential (see Section 7.1.5, Resolution). When this happens, the magician faints for at least one combat round. He needs a Good Constitution roll to wake up (roll each round). When he comes to, the magician may function normally, even attempting to cast the same spell again — *if* he hasn't dropped below 0 Potential.

If a magician has two or more types of Potential that are appropriate for the spell being cast, and a loss of Potential is called for, the GM decides which type of Potential is reduced. For example, a magician has one level of Combat Magic and two levels of Fire Magic, and fails miserably on a fireball spell. The GM could say that he has lost either his one level of Combat Magic or one of his Fire Magic levels, but not one of each.

If a magician drops to -1 Potential in *any* given specialty, he immediately falls into a coma, lasting anywhere from an hour to a day (GM's decision). When he wakes, he must roll against his Constitution: on a Mediocre or worse roll, he takes a point of damage. He checks Constitution again at the end of every day he is *active* — a failed result means another point of damage. These wounds *cannot* be healed until he recharges his Magic Potential back up to level 0.

A magician with 0 Potential may still cast spells; a magician at -1 Magic Potential, however, cannot attempt any magic spells that would involve that specialty. He *may* still cast spells of another specialty. For example, a magician who falls to -1 Encyclopedic Magic can no longer cast a spell that allows him to open his blank book and read a magically-appearing encyclopedia entry on a specified topic. But he *can* still cast spells using his Animal Empathy Magic, allowing him to call and converse with wild animals, provided that Potential is still 0 or greater. He must still make a Constitution check for every day he his active, however, to see if his -1 Encyclopedic Magic Potential is causing him wounds.

Magic Potential may be recharged *only* by resting for one week per level. (GMs may alter this time to taste, of course: resting for one day is sufficient for more epic campaigns.) For example, a magician falls to -1 Potential. Resting one week will bring him up to 0 Potential (and cure any wounds incurred by being active while at -1 Potential). A second week of rest will bring him up to +1 Potential.

No character may gain Magic Potential levels beyond his starting level except through Character Development — see Chapter 5.

7.1.2 Spells

When a magician wishes to cast a spell, he describes the result he has in mind. The GM assesses how powerful such an effect would be, based on how prevalent magic is in her campaign. In a low-magic campaign, even a simple spell such as levitating the jail keys to an imprisoned character would be taxing. In a high-magic campaign, however, that would be a trivial spell, and even shooting forth a flash of lightning from a fingertip wouldn't be out of the ordinary.

The potency of the spell can be modified by the magician's appropriate Power level. An "average" magician has three levels of appropriate Power when casting a given spell. (Modify this number up or down for harder or easier magic.) That is, a spell is more difficult for a magician with less than three levels of an appropriate Power. Likewise, a magician with four or more appropriate Power levels treats a spell as more trivial than it would be for an average magician.

"Appropriate" Power does not have to be all of the same specialization so long as each Power governs the spell in question. For example, a spell to make a sword fly up and attack a foe could be governed by Flying Magic, Combat Magic, and Control Inanimate Material. If a magician had one level of each of those types of magic, the spell would be of average potency for him.

A spell is then Trivial, Average, or Potent. (It may also be Very Trivial, or Very Potent, if the GM wishes. In fact, the players will undoubtedly propose truly awesome spells, which should be labelled as Extraordinarily Potent, or with some other impressive adjective.) The GM tells the player what the potency of a proposed spell is — any magician character would have a fairly good idea of a spell's potency.

The spell's potency determines the Difficulty level. A spell of average potency has a Fair Difficultly level, while a Potent spell has a Difficulty level of at least Good. Likewise, a Trivial spell has a Difficulty level of Mediocre or Poor.

The GM also decides the duration of the spell if it succeeds — seconds, minutes, hours, days, etc. The character may try to adjust this, subject to GM approval. For example, the magician can voluntarily take more fatigue or reduce the scope of the effect — or accept some other penalty — to lengthen the spell's duration. Rolling a higher relative degree can also mean the spell lasts longer. Some spells have permanent effects: healing (until wounded again), busting a hole in a wall (until repaired manually or by magic), teleporting to a distant place (until you come back), and so on. Of course, even these spell effects may be temporary in a given GM's world: healing only lasts a day and the wound reappears, or a hole in the wall fixes itself after a few minutes, or a teleported person automatically returns after an hour in the other location ....

The GM also needs to determine if there are any drawbacks to casting a spell. FUDGE Magic assumes that spells are tiring to cast, and a magician reduces his Fatigue attribute when casting. The more potent the spell, the more the fatigue. (Fatigue is regained by resting, of course. If Fatigue goes below Terrible, the character passes out. The GM may have separate Fatigue attribute, or base it on Endurance, Constitution, Strength, etc.)

A GM who dislikes the idea of keeping track of fatigue can change the drawback to something else. Perhaps a magician has a limited number of spells he can cast in a day (or in an hour). In this case, he may have a Spell Point attribute, which is drained by spell casting and regained simply by the passage of time. (A trivial spell won't drain any Spell Point levels, while an average spell drops a magician from Good Spell Points to Fair, for example, and more potent spells drain two or more levels at a time.) Draining spell points would not necessarily make the magician tired in this case, and Spell Points would regenerate whether the magician was resting or not — or they might only regenerate with sleep.

Or maybe each spell affects a magician's Sanity attribute, and he needs to convalesce to restore it. Or, equally entertaining, a spell might affect the sanity of anyone who *witnesses* magic! Reduced sanity can manifest in many amusing ways ....

7.1.3 Mana

Mana is an energy source capable of manipulating matter, time and space. It can be tapped only by those with Magic Potential.

The GM determines the availability and density of mana in a given game world, just as she does the average potency of a spell. Mana density can affect two things: how large an area is needed to fuel a given spell effect, and (optionally), how easy or hard it is to cast a spell.

When a spell of a particular effect is cast, the magician draws a specific type of mana to him to create the effect. The next time this same effect is desired, it will be harder to do: he has drained some of that mana type in the local area.

The size of the area is defined by the GM. For most fantasy worlds, assume it's about 50 yards or meters in diameter. In a low-level magic campaign, the area is the size of a town or even city. (This would give meaning to the old line, "This town ain't big enough for both of us" — dueling wizards!) On the other hand, a high-level magic campaign is so mana-rich that the magician can simply take a step or two and be in a new area. Note that the *area* governs which spells can be cast without penalty: if one magician casts a healing spell, a second magician will be at -1 to cast a healing spell in the same area within the next 24 hours. (Mana may recharge at a different rate in a given game world, of course.) Note also that a magician may be unaware of what spells were cast in an area before he arrived ....

In a mana-rich area, spells may also be easier to cast: +1 or +2 to skill level. Likewise, in a mana-poor area, spells can be harder to cast: -1 or more. The GM decides if this rule is in effect.

Mana is dispersed and weak in a world such as modern Earth. The average fantasy game world will have much stronger mana, and some high-magic campaigns will simply reek of mana. In any given world, it is possible to vary the amount of mana. Some lands may be mana-rich, while neighboring areas are mana-poor. Mana may flow in currents, or in tides with the phases of the moon. There may be "rogue" mana streams that change course and invade new areas, or a mana drought may afflict a given locale. Astrological alignments can affect mana, too — thus even here on mana-poor Earth there will be places and times of the year when cultists gather to call forth unseen powers ....

A PC magician would know the general mana level for at least his home area. He may or may not know whether it fluctuates periodically, or if far lands have different mana levels. In order to determine the mana level of the local area at a given time, a magician must cast a spell specifically to that end.

7.1.4 Skill

Spell-casting is a skill that must be learned. The default is Non-Existent, and, due to the element of uncertainty in FUDGE Magic (mentioned in Section 7.1, FUDGE Magic), the maximum base skill level is Fair. This cannot be raised permanently — but see Section 7.1.9.3, Spell-Casting Skill Alternatives.

One generic Spell-Casting skill is assumed, but the GM may require more if she breaks magic down into different types. It should cost one level just to get a Spell-Casting skill at Terrible.

Spell-casting skill may be modified (to a maximum of Great) by the following:

- Taking an average time to cast a spell: +0. (Note: the GM assesses the average time for any given spell proposed. Potent spells might take all day, or even longer, while Trivial ones might take one to five minutes.)
- Taking a long time to cast a spell carefully: +1. (Relative to each spell, of course. For a Trivial spell: taking a half an hour or more.)
- Casting a spell much more quickly than normal: -1. (For a Trivial spell: one combat round of concentration.)
- Using normal effort to cast a spell: +0.
- Using extra effort to cast a spell (more fatigue than normal, or counts as two spells cast if there is a limit per day, or reduces Sanity more than normal, etc.): +1 or +2.
- Using less effort than normal to cast a spell: -1 or more. (Reduced fatigue, or it only counts as half a spell against a daily limit, etc.)
- First spell-casting of a particular effect in a given area within 24 hours: +0. (See Section 7.1.3, Mana, for the size of an area.)
- Additional spell-castings of a particular effect in a given area within 24 hours: -1 per casting.
- For using authentic magic formulae: +1. (The Law of Contagion or the Law of Similarity, for example — see James Frazer's classic anthropological study, *The Golden Bough*. Both Laws require some physical component: a feather to cast a flight spell, a piece of the subject's hair to heal or hurt her, a drop of water that becomes a water jet, a stick that becomes a staff, a bearskin to change the magician into a bear, etc. Drafting the spell in poetical form earns an additional +1, if the GM is willing.)
- Multiple magicians casting a spell that they have *all* tried before: +1 (for two to X magicians) or +2 (for more than X magicians). (X is set by the GM, anywhere

from two to ten, or even more for low-magic campaigns. One magician is assumed to be the primary caster: roll only once against his skill.)

- Mana-rich area: +1 or +2 (optional).
- Normal mana area: +0
- Mana-poor area: -1 or more (optional).

Other modifiers may also apply, such as in a spell to search the mountains magically for someone you love (+1) or searching for someone you've never met (-1).

7.1.5 Resolution

Each spell is then resolved as an Unopposed action: the Difficulty level is dependent on the spell potency. Spells of average potency have a Difficulty level of Fair, while more trivial spells have difficultly levels of Mediocre or Poor. (No spell has a Difficulty level of Terrible — magic just doesn't work at that level.) More potent spells have Difficultly levels of Good to Superb, or even beyond Superb if a truly powerful effect is desired.

If the magician *surpasses* the Difficulty level, the spell occurs as he described it. The better the relative degree, the better the result. The magician suffers -1 (or more) to his Fatigue attribute *if* the GM deems the spell is fatiguing. (If the GM has chosen some other drawback, of course, apply that instead.)

Sometimes a skill roll is then needed to *do* something with the end result of a spell. For example, a fireball needs to be thrown accurately: use the Throwing Skill and Ranged Weapon rules in Chapter 4.

If the magician *equals* the Difficulty level, then a watered-down version of the spell occurs. Either it will have a short duration, or reduced potency, or there is a time lag before the spell takes effect, etc. There may be an unexpected side effect, though it won't be harmful to the magician. There is no penalty for the magician beyond a possible -1 or -2 to Fatigue, at worst.

If the magician rolls *below* the Difficulty level, however, he is adversely affected. The energy inherent in mana lashes out at the magician's psyche instead of being focused as desired. There may (or may not) be some visible magical effect, but it will *not* be the desired effect, and, if he rolled poorly enough, it may even be inimical to the magician's goals — or health ....

On a failed roll, the magician is stunned for one combat round (no actions or defense) and takes at least -1 Fatigue. A Terrible result always fails.

If he rolls a result of -4, the spell automatically fails (no matter what the resulting level) *and* he also temporarily drains one level of his Magic Potential — see Section 7.1.1, Magic Potential, for effects. (This is the "riskiness" of magic mentioned in Section 7.1, FUDGE Magic.)

Examples: Barney casts a spell, Create Pizza, of Average potency in a normal mana area and gets -3: a Terrible result. The spell fails and Barney is stunned for a combat round, but he does not *drain a level of Magic Potential because he did not roll a -4. Later, in a mana-rich area (+1 to cast), Barney takes a* *long time (+1) to cast Detect Food, a very Trivial spell (Poor result or better needed for success). He has temporarily raised his skill to Great, the maximum allowed. He rolls a -4 result, which is a Poor rolled result. Although the rolled degree is good enough to cast the spell, Barney still fails because he rolled a -4 result. Barney not only doesn't detect any food, he also exhausts one level of Magic Potential — ouch!*

7.1.6 Personal Magic Resistance

If the spell is one which attempts to Control another being — either mentally, physically or spiritually — Opposed action rolls are *also* called for. First, the magician casts the spell (as above); then he has to overcome the Personal Magic Resistance of the subject. Magic Resistance may be an attribute or gift (Willpower is a good choice, if there is no specific anti-magic trait), as the GM desires. Magic Resistance may even be a different attribute for different types of spells (a mental attribute for attempts to control the mind, etc.). This second roll is Opposed — the subject of the spell gets a chance to resist it, and so can influence the result.

If the GM is willing, the magician may use the result he just *rolled* as his skill level for the Opposed action. That is, if he rolled a Great result on the spell, he rolls the Opposed action as if his skill were Great. Otherwise, he uses the same level he rolled initially against.

"Control" can mean many things to different GMs. Personal Magic Resistance would resist an attempt to read someone's mind to one GM, but not to another. However, Magic Resistance does *not* resist any spell that calls or creates physical energy to lash out at another being. If the magician successfully creates lightning to blast the subject, it is not resisted by Personal Resistance; it is treated as a physical weapon.

7.1.7 Certain Spell-Casting

Sometimes a magician desperately needs a certain result. In this case, he may opt not to roll the dice at all, and simply drain one level of Magic Potential for a guaranteed success. He takes the usual penalties for losing a level of Potential — see Section 7.1.1, Magic Potential. This means he'll faint — be unconscious — after casting the spell, which limits the utility for certain spells. You can't control someone's mind when you are unconscious, for example . . . .

The GM may restrict this to Trivial spells, or non-Potent spells, or have no restrictions at all, beyond requiring the normal fatigue (or other) penalties. If the spell is one that could logically be resisted by the subject, however, the subject still gets a Resistance roll. In this case, the magician rolls as if his skill were Great.

7.1.8 Enchanting Items

Items may be permanently enchanted in this system. The magician works for a number of weeks or months (as required by the GM), depending on the number and potency of the spells desired, and the general availability of magic items in the campaign. At the end of *each* month (or week), the magician rolls against two skills: Spell-casting, and the appropriate Craft skill for the material being worked. The usual penalties apply on failing a spell roll. If he surpasses the Difficulty level on each roll, the spell is slowly being set into the item, one stage at a time. On a roll that only matches the Difficulty level, the work counts as only half a time period, but does progress the enchantment.

Obviously, a mana-rich area will attract magicians, especially enchanters.

7.1.9 FUDGE Magic Options

These options offer ways to make FUDGE Magic more sweeping, more reliable, less risky, and even make it available to non-magicians.

7.1.9.1 Generalized Magic Potential

Some GMs may want the players to have sweeping powers. In this case, each level of Magic Potential allows a character to try *any* magic effect desired. This is in keeping with certain fictional settings in which learning magic involves general principles rather than specific spell effects. This makes for a *very* free and open game, which may or may not be to your tastes.

This system still allows specializations. Simply use faults to limit a magician's ability to cast certain spells. See Section 6.3.1.1, Character Examples, Brogo the Scout.

7.1.9.2 Magicians & Non-Magicians

The GM may allow non-magicians to cast spells. In this case, it is risky, as there is no Magic Potential "cushion" — one severe failure is enough to devastate the character. Still, in an emergency, it may be worth the risk. Such a character would still need to have some Spell-casting skill, however. (But see Section 7.1.9.3, Spell-casting Skill Alternatives).

As a substitute for Magic Potential specialization, the GM looks over the character sheet (checking traits, personality, and character background) and decides if a proposed spell would be appropriate for the character. The character must have some aptitude in the proposed spell subject, or he may not cast such a spell. For example, a trained fighter with no knowledge of book learning or foreign languages could conceivably try a combat spell, but not a spell to translate a book written in an unknown script.

Of course, the same spell is of greater potency for a non-magician than for a magician. This probably means that a non-magician will only have a chance of casting a spell that a magician would consider trivial.

7.1.9.3 Spell-Casting Skill Alternatives

Since tastes differ, and FUDGE Magic tends to be undependable (see Section 7.1, FUDGE Magic), three options are provided for more reliable spell-casting:

- Use the basic FUDGE Magic system, but allow a magician to improve his chances of casting a spell beyond Fair. At a cost of one gift (or even supernormal power), this may be raised to Good. At a cost of *two more* gifts (or supernormal powers), casting skill may be raised from Good to Great, the maximum.

- GMs who want magic to be a *lot* more reliable can simply treat Spell-casting as any other skill. That is, it costs the usual skill costs to raise it to Good or even Great. Superb Spell-casting is not recommended for any but inherently magical races, even in high-level magic campaigns.
- Spell-Casting is equal to the Willpower attribute, or perhaps Willpower-2. (There may still be a ceiling of Great, Good, or even Fair for Spell-Casting, regardless of the level of Willpower.) This is especially appropriate for games in which non-magicians can cast spells — see Section 7.1.9.2, Magicians & Non-Magicians. This is a potent option because the player doesn't have to buy Spell-casting skill for his character.

7.1.9.4 Less Risky Spell-Casting

To make spell-casting less risky (not necessarily a good thing — see Section 7.1, FUDGE Magic), make it harder to drain a level of Potential.

Examples (apply as many or as few as desired):

- *A magician cannot deplete a level of Magic Potential if he is attempting a Trivial spell. That is, if he rolls a -4 on a Trivial spell, he fails the spellcasting, but doesn't lose a level of Magic Potential.*
- *A magician cannot exhaust a level of Magic Potential if he is attempting a Trivial or Average spell.*
- *A magician cannot deplete a level of Magic Potential if he takes enough time to get a +1 bonus for slow and careful spell-casting.*
- *A level of Magic Potential can only be depleted on a hurried spell-casting attempt that fails badly.*
- *A magician cannot drain a level of Magic Potential on the first spell cast each day, or when the moon is full, or if the mana level is low (not enough mana to backlash potently), etc.*

7.2 Sample Miracle System: FUDGE Miracles

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By: Steffan O'Sullivan
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Here is a sample miracle system (not generic), based on the following premises mentioned in Section 2.6, Miracles:

- Can miracles occur by petition: Yes.
- Who can petition: Anyone. Holy persons have an advantage. (A holy person is one with the supernormal power: Divine Favor, and whose behavior is in synch with the deity's goals — GM decision on how the player is roleplaying.) Religious Investiture — a social title that may or may not coincide with Divine Favor — is not required, and, in fact, does no good if behavior is inappropriate.
- Certainty of petitioned miracles: Mediocre.
- Broad or specific requests: Specific requests are more likely to be granted.

7.2.1 Divine Favor

Divine Favor is a supernormal power that can be taken more than once. Each time Divine Favor is taken, it is dedicated to a single deity. It is possible to have Divine Favor from more than one deity in a polytheistic world, or you can have multiple steps of Divine Favor from a single deity. Each step of Divine Favor counts as *two* supernormal powers (recommended).

Divine Favor can be temporarily lost if the character does not act in accordance with the deity's desires. Usually a period of atonement is required to regain Divine Favor. This may be instantaneous for a merciful deity, or it may take up to a month for stricter deities. All steps are lost and regained as a unit when this happens.

7.2.2 Petitioning a Miracle

A character may petition a miracle at any time. However, some deities do not like to be disturbed for trivial matters, and may ignore requests when it is obvious the character hasn't even tried to help himself.

In FUDGE Miracles, the petition should be fairly precisely worded. Rather than a simple, "Please help me," the character should focus the plea: "We are starving, please feed us," or, "My friend is dying, please heal him." A holy character can petition for any miraculous result desired, however — there is no established list of miracles.

Characters without Divine Favor have a Petitioning skill of Poor (or Mediocre in a more deity-active game). Those with one or more steps of Divine Favor have a Petitioning skill of Fair. Petitioning skill cannot be raised. (In a high-level deity-active campaign, Petitioning skill can be raised to Good at the cost of one supernormal power.) Petitioning skill *can* be modified, however — see the next section.

To resolve a petition, make an Unopposed action roll against Petitioning skill. Each step of Divine Favor grants the holy character one extra chance to roll the dice in a petition to his deity.

On a Fair or worse result, the roll is a failure. If the character has any steps of Divine Favor from the same deity, he may roll again for each step (this does not count as a separate petition). He can stop at any point — only the last result rolled counts. This means a character with two steps of Divine Favor can try one, two, or three rolls. If he gets Good, Fair, and Mediocre results, in that order, the result of the petition is Mediocre.

On a Fair or Mediocre result, the petition isn't answered by the deity, but the deity isn't annoyed by the petitioner. On Poor or worse result, however, the deity is angry with the character, and there will be a -1 on the next petition attempt. If the deity is evil, a miracle may actually occur, but not one the petitioner is likely to enjoy . . . .

On a Good or better result, the petition is granted. The better the rolled result, the better the answer to the prayer. For example, a Good result heals one wound or wound level, while a Superb result totally heals the character. A Good result could call a wolf to defend the petitioner, while three lions might answer a Superb result. And so on.

7.2.3 Modifiers to the Petitioning Skill Level

The GM decides if any modifiers are applicable. Suggested modifiers:

- The petitioner's behavior has been strictly in accordance with the deity's desires: +1
- The petitioner's behavior has not been in accordance with the deity's desires: -1 or more
- The petition will further the deity's desires: +1
- The petition goes against the deity's desires: -1 or more
- The petition involves the deity's sphere of influence: +1 (Calling for a fireball from a fire god, for example. This is not appropriate for a Supreme God, whose sphere encompasses all things.)
- The petition involves an element antagonistic to the deity: -1 or more (asking the Fire deity to use water, for example.)
- The petition is phrased too generally: -1 or more
- The petitioner has not tried to help himself first: -1 or more.
- The petition is too trivial to bother the deity with: -1 or more
- The petition is a simple, but important, request: +1, provided the petitioner has exhausted his own abilities to accomplish this task. (Example: requesting a piece of chalk, which is trifling, but simply cannot be found anywhere near the character. In this case, chalk would have to be essential to the character's state of body, mind or soul.)
- The last petition was a Poor or worse result: -1
- The deity feels the petitioner is calling for help too frequently: -1 or more (Optional — may be invoked by a GM annoyed at constant requests for miracles ....)

7.3 Sample Psionic System: FUDGE Psi

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Date: February, 1993 & December, 1993
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There are three types of Psi traits in this system: Powers, skills, and Psychic Reservoir. Only psionicists have Powers and the skills to activate them, but everyone has a Psychic Reservoir to resist psionic attacks.

7.3.1 Psionic Powers

The GM must decide how precisely to define Psi Powers. Since each Power must be bought separately, defining them broadly makes for more powerful characters.

The following chart shows some broad groups that include more narrowly defined Psi power groups listed with them. These in turn contain even more narrowly defined powers, which a GM may use as individual Powers if desired. This list may be regrouped, expanded, some powers disallowed, a narrowly defined group made into a broad group

Very Broad Groups	Mildly Broad Groups	Narrow Groups
Antipsi		Distort
		Nullify
		Resist
ESP	Astral Projection	
	Telesense	Clairaudience
		Clairvoyance
		Locate Object
		Locate Person
		Sense Aura
	Temporal Revelation	Postcognition
		Precognition
		Psychometry
Psychokinesis	Control Animate	Healing
		Levitation
		Metabolism Control
		Shapeshifting
	Control Inanimate	Force Shield
		Photokinesis
		Sonarkinesis
		Telekinesis
		Transmogrify Object
	Electrokinesis	Alter Electric Current
		Control Electrical Devices
		Cyberpsi
		Electric Blast
	Temperature Control	Cryokinesis
		Pyrokinesis
Telepathy	Empathy	Emotion Control
		Emotion Sensing
	Mind Shield	
	Mental Communication	Mind Reading
		Thought Sending
	Mental Control	Alter Memory
		Persuasion
		Prevent Clear Thinking
		Send Violent Energy
		Telehypnosis
	Vampirism	Borrow Skill
		Drain Psychic Reservoir
		Drain Health
		Drain Energy
Teleportation		Teleport Self
		Teleport Other
		Teleport Object
		Planar Travel
		Open Dimension Portal

Table 7.1: Sample psionic powers

that includes other powers, etc. The list is not intended to be comprehensive, but merely a sample.

The GM should let the players know what depth of Psi skills she is using. Each Power costs one Supernormal Power (two gifts).

Putting one level in a Power gets it at Terrible. Powers may then be raised at the cost of two *skill* levels per level, if using the Objective Character Creation system. For example, raising Telekinesis Power to Poor requires two skill levels, and raising it to Mediocre would cost two more skill levels.

If a GM envisions a psi-rich campaign, of course, the costs should be much cheaper. Allowing many free levels of Supernormal Powers is a good way to do this, but be cautious about trading them for mundane traits.

Power levels define range, quantity or size of subject affected, etc. — see Section 2.7, Psi. A Fair Power can do whatever the default average is for the campaign world.

Some tasks require a minimum Power level, as set by the GM. If the character has the Power, but not at the minimum level required, he may not attempt the action unless he uses Desperation Psionics (Section 7.3.5). If the psi has the appropriate Power at three or more levels above the minimum required, he is at +1 for that use.

No psionic ability can be used unless the character has the Power listed on his character sheet.

A character may take a *latent* psi Power at the cost of one gift. He can't use the Power (may not take any related psi skills), but later in the campaign he may spend EP equal to another gift to awaken the Power. He would then have to learn the skills to control the Power.

It is also possible to take some interesting faults that will limit the nature (and reduce the cost) of any Power. "Usable only in emergencies" is a common theme in fiction, for example.

7.3.2 Psionic Skills

You cannot attempt any psionic action unless you have the specific skill to control the Power in question. Each Power must have an accompanying skill of corresponding broadness or narrowness (Control Telekinesis, Use Telepathy, Read Minds, etc.).

The default for psionic skills is Non-existent. Raising a skill to Terrible costs one skill level, etc. Skills may be taken as high as Fair at the beginning of a game. (The GM may allow higher levels if the campaign is centered around psionic abilities.) They may be improved through normal character development, and new ones may be added if the GM is willing. The player should have a good story concerning awakening new skills, however.

7.3.3 Psychic Reservoir

Psychic Reservoir is a measure of raw psi power available. Like most attributes, Psychic Reservoir is at Fair for every character unless deliberately altered. The GM may set the default lower, and there may be a ceiling on how high Psychic Reservoir can be set.

Merely having a Psychic Reservoir attribute does not mean the character is capable of actively using psi. Other psionic Powers and skills are necessary to activate the Psychic

Reservoir.

A low Psychic Reservoir can negatively modify any active psi ability, while a high Reservoir can be tapped to increase your chances of success — see Section 7.3.6, Psi Modifiers Summary.

A psionicist taps his Psychic Reservoir when he uses a psychic skill. Ongoing use gradually drains a Reservoir, and short but heavy-duty use of a psi Power also drains a Reservoir, but normal brief use doesn't. However, a rolled degree of Terrible or worse on a psionic skill roll always lowers Psychic Reservoir a minimum of one level.

A psionicist can also attempt to drain his Psychic Reservoir deliberately. This may be done to gain a bonus to a psionic skill (see Section 7.3.4, Psionic Actions), or to a Power (see Section 7.3.5, Desperation Psionics).

There is no *immediate* penalty for dropping a level of Psychic Reservoir, as long as it remains Terrible or higher. However, your next use of psi may be affected: there is a negative modifier for using a Psychic skill when your Psychic Reservoir is below Fair.

If the Psychic Reservoir is drained to below Terrible, the character immediately loses consciousness. It requires a Good roll versus a Constitution attribute to regain consciousness, which may be attempted every combat round.

Even after regaining consciousness, a character with Psychic Reservoir below Terrible is in trouble. The GM may impose any type of affliction she desires on such a character until the Psychic Reservoir reaches at least Terrible. Suggested afflictions include mild insanity (hallucinations, delusions, paranoia, etc.), physical debility (drooling, shaking, twitching, etc.), attribute reductions, and negative modifiers for even non-psi actions.

A character can regain one level of his Psychic Reservoir for each week (or day, or whatever the GM sets) of rest, up to his current maximum level.

7.3.4 Psionic Actions

Two kinds of psionic action are possible, Opposed and Unopposed.

An Opposed action is a psionic attack upon an unwilling subject. The attacker rolls against his specific psionic skill, and defender rolls against a Willpower attribute to resist. (A defender may have an appropriate psi skill to use instead, such as Mind Shield.) An example of an Opposed action would be an attempt to create fear in someone.

Unopposed psionic actions usually target inanimate objects. An Unopposed action could be as simple as examining an object psychically, or as complex as opening a dimensional door at one's feet. Telekinetically hurling an object at a foe is an Unopposed action because the object, not the foe, is the subject of the psionic skill.

When a Psi wishes to use an ability, the player describes the result he wants to the GM. The GM then assigns a Difficulty level to the action. Even if a psi overcomes a defender's Willpower roll to resist, he must still roll the Difficulty level or higher to succeed at a task.

There may also be a minimum Power level needed in order to attempt an action. For example, telekinetically lifting a pencil might only require a Terrible Telekinesis Power, but lifting a large book might require a Mediocre Telekinesis Power, and lifting a car might require a Superb Telekinesis Power. If the psi's Power level is three or more above the minimum needed, he gets a +1 to his skill level.

> *Mentally lifting a pencil might only require a Terrible Power level, but manipulating it to sign one's name would probably require a Superb skill result. To accurately forge another person's signature would not only require a Superb Telekinesis skill result, but also a Fair or better Forgery skill result.*

The time required to activate a psionic ability depends on the potency of the desired effect and the Power level of the character. It is set by the GM. This can range from a single combat round to hours of concentration. The individual can also vary the time concentrating (which must be uninterrupted) to speed up the results or increase the chances of success — see Section 7.3.6, Psi Modifiers Summary.

The Psi now applies all modifiers and rolls against the Difficulty level using the appropriate skill. In an Opposed action, both parties involved make their rolls. On tie results, the status quo is maintained, whatever that may be.

At this point, a psi (or animate target of a psionic attack) may attempt to sacrifice one or more levels of Psychic Reservoir to augment his rolled result. That is, if a psi fails in an Unopposed action, he may stress himself in attempt to succeed. In an Opposed action, this can be considered two people locked in psionic combat, each struggling to boost their power a bit to overcome the other.

To augment a rolled result, a Psionicist rolls against the psionic skill he just used, with current modifiers still effective. If the result is Good, he may sacrifice one level of Psychic Reservoir to give him a +1 on the result of the skill attempt. On a result of Great, he may sacrifice one or two levels, gaining +1 for each level, and on a roll of Superb or better, he may sacrifice up to three levels of Psychic Reservoir. On a result of Fair, Mediocre or Poor, there is no effect: he may not sacrifice a level of Psychic Reservoir, but there is no penalty for having tried. On a result of Terrible or worse, however, he not only drains one level of Psychic Reservoir, he also *loses* one level of rolled result. This can intensify any negative consequences of having failed.

If one party of an Opposed action is successful in augmenting his rolled result, the other may then try to augment his. They may continue to trade sacrificing levels of Psychic Reservoir until one of them fails to change the result, or falls below Terrible Psychic Reservoir.

Someone defending with no psionic abilities rolls against Willpower-2 to augment his result.

Once augmenting — if any — is complete, the GM decides the duration of the effects — the better the roll, the better the results. Some effects will be permanent, such as Healing. Continuous concentration may be required to sustain other effects; this may slowly drain one's Psychic Reservoir.

Psionic abilities are sometimes dangerous to use. A rolled degree of Terrible or worse will usually result in the exact opposite of the desired outcome, or some other entertaining backfire. In addition, the psi loses one level of Psychic Reservoir, as outlined in Section 7.3.3. It may also have a gruesome result: brain hemorrhage, loss of sanity, or a similar outcome. A Terrible result on an Opposed psionic action can mean the loser is now psychically open to his opponent. Such an open channel to another's psyche means that if the winner has any psychic ability at all, he can automatically draw on the loser's Psychic Reservoir to power his own abilities. The GM should determine these effects based on the situation at hand.

7.3.5 Desperation Psionics

Ordinarily, if the minimum Power level of a proposed psionic action is higher than the character's Power level, the psionicist may not attempt the action at all. However, if one is desperate enough, he *can* try it — at a great price.

For each level of Psychic Reservoir voluntarily drained *before* the skill roll, a psionicist can increase his Power level by +1. Simply pushing the Power level up to match the minimum level needed is all it takes to try the skill — but he is at -2 to his skill for *each* level of Psychic Reservoir he drained for this attempt.

Unlike augmenting a rolled result (as described in the previous section), draining one level of Psychic Reservoir *before* the die roll is automatically successful.

This is obviously not for casual use: the risk of a Terrible outcome is much higher than normal, as well as the guaranteed drain on Psychic Reservoir. Nonetheless, if one were being attacked by the Spawn of The Other, a demon of tremendous power, one might try anything to survive.

7.3.6 Psi Modifiers Summary

Apply as many modifiers to the skill as are appropriate:

Psychic Reservoir Level:	Psionic Skill use at:
Mediocre	-1
Poor	-2
Terrible	-3
Below Terrible	Prohibited

- Skill augmented by draining Psychic Reservoir: +1 per level Terrible or worse result on skill augmenting attempt: -1
- Desperation attempts: -2 per level of Psychic Reservoir drained
- Power level is three or more greater than necessary for the task: +1
- Concentration time reduced by half: -1
- Concentration time doubled: +1

Certain drugs, devices, fields, star alignments, areas, etc., can also have modifiers. As a GM-chosen option, psionics may be blocked by metal — either all metal or just certain ones.

7.3.7 Psi Examples

Yardmower Man wants to mow the lawn psionically — he needs the practice. He currently has a Good Psychic Reservoir and an interesting assortment of psi Powers and skills. The GM decides that to move and control the yard mower is a Great Difficulty level task on

Telekinesis skill. It requires only Mediocre Telekinesis Power, however. Yardmower Man has a Good Telekinesis Power but only Fair Telekinesis skill. It may be tough to do it well, but he's willing to try it.

Yardmower Man declares he's going to spend twice as much time concentrating (+1) and is also under the influence of Batch-5, a psi-enhancing drug (+1). He rolls a -1 result, which means a Good Telekinesis effort due to his modifiers. He just missed the Difficulty level. Since his power is adequate to move the lawn mower, he still mows the lawn telekinetically, but doesn't do a very good job. In fact, it looks sloppy: there are thin strips of unmowed grass here and there, and he took out half of his daisy bed with one poorly aimed swipe.

Since this is a continued use, the GM decides that for each hour spent mowing he reduces his Psychic Reservoir by one level. It takes him two hours.

The next day, Yardmower Man decides the director of the local government psionic research facility should be Molecularly Rearranged. (He's always snooping around, and has been known to lock up psis in the past.) The GM rules that Molecularly Rearranging a human other than the Psi himself is a Superb Difficulty level task against the Shapeshift skill, and requires at least a Great Shapeshift Power. It is also a taxing thing to do: it will drain one level of Psychic Reservoir at the end of the action. It will be opposed by the director's Presence attribute, which is close as this campaign comes to willpower.

Fortunately for Yardmower man, he has the Shapeshift Power and skill both at Superb level. He also consumes a double dose of Batch-5, giving him a +2 in the Opposed action, but severely risking side effects. His Psychic Reservoir is down to Mediocre from activities the night before (-1 to skill). Yardmower man rolls a -1 Result. This is modified -1 for low Psychic Reservoir, and +2 for Batch-5, giving him a Superb Result.

The poor director has a Good Presence and Fair Psychic Reservoir. He gets lucky and rolls a Great Presence result trying to resist the psionic attack. But Great is not good enough (Yardmower man got a Superb result), so he tries to augment his result by sacrificing a level of Psychic Reservoir to fight the rearrangement of his molecules. His sacrifice roll (against Presence) is a Good Result, so he increases his result to Superb. He's still holding on, but just barely. Also, his Reservoir will be Mediocre after this round of psychic combat.

Yardmower Man, not to be outdone, attempts to sacrifice his own Psychic Reservoir. He started the combat with a Mediocre Psychic Reservoir and full of Batch-5, so he still applies the +1 overall modifier to his Superb Shapeshift skill on his augmentation roll. He easily achieves a Good Result, and he therefore augments *his* result to Superb+1. (After this round, his Reservoir will also drop another level.)

The director desperately tries to augment his result again, but rolls a Fair result: he's reached the limit of his ability to stave off defeat. Yardmower Man rearranges the director into a lovely bush, and stares blankly at the outcome. At this point, his Psychic Reservoir drops one more level, as required by the GM for such a taxing action.

Since he lost one level of Psychic Reservoir augmenting his skill, and another for the difficult Shapeshift action, Yardmower Man is now left with a Terrible Psychic Reservoir; he'd better not try anything this difficult for a while. Also, the GM demands a Good Difficulty level roll against Constitution to avoid any unpleasant side effects from the Batch-5 overdose. Yardmower Man gets a Mediocre result, missing by two levels. The

GM smiles at the player, and secretly jots down that the next time he uses Batch-5, he'll hallucinate that the director has returned to human form and is out to get him .... Yardmower Man may someday drain his Psychic Reservoir fighting someone that isn't there.

7.4 Alternate Rules

One of FUDGE's basic premises is that people have different tastes. Here are a collection of alternate rules sections for doing things slightly differently.

7.4.1 Alternate Section 1.4: Character Creation

`Date: December, 1992`
`By: Ed Heil`

Instead of creating characters before starting the game, create them as the game progresses.

The GM assigns a number of *skill* levels available to a PC during a session. This should be based on how finely the GM defines skills: about 10 to 15 for broad skill-group games, and maybe twice that for fine skill-group games. These may be traded at the regular rate of three skill levels = one attribute level, or six skill levels = one gift. Faults may also be taken, subject to GM approval.

The players start with most of the character sheets blank — simply write out a brief sentence or two describing the character in a general way. ("Jeb is a surly dwarf, a good fighter, who is out to make a name for himself as a mean customer — and pick up some loot on the way. He likes to talk tough, and doesn't care much for halflings.")

As the character is confronted with challenging situations, the player must decide the level of the trait in question.

> *For example, the PCs are confronted with a ruined castle to explore, and all the players state their characters are looking for hidden passageways. At this point, each player must set his PC's skill in finding hidden passageways (however the GM defines such a trait: Perception attribute, or Find Hidden skill, or Architecture skill, etc.). Those who are not yet willing to set such a trait must stop searching: if you use a trait, you must define it.*

Since setting an initial skill at Fair level uses up two skill levels, and setting it at Superb uses up five levels, one must carefully weigh spending levels on skills as they are used versus saving them for emergency situations.

As usual, attributes are considered Fair unless altered, and most skills default to Poor. Taking a trait at a level below the default adds to your available skill level pool, of course. However, you may only define a trait as it is used in a game situation.

Experience points are given out as usual, but EP awarded are reduced by any unused skill levels after each session. That is, if you have two levels left after the first session, and the GM awards you three EP, you only get one more level for the next session, since you already have two levels unused. EP, in this case, can be used either to raise existing skills, as discussed in Section 5.2, Objective Character Development, or they can be used to add new skills, as discussed in this section, above. It costs more EPs to raise an existing skill than it does to define a previously undefined skill in this on-the-fly system. EP should be slightly higher under this system than a regular character creation system, perhaps a range of up to ten per session.

7.4.2 Alternate Section 3.2: Diceless Action Resolution

`Date: May, 1995`
`By: Reimer Behrends, r_behren@informatik.uni-kl.de`

This section handles ways of resolving conflicts without resorting to the use of dice. There are reasons to do away with dice: some people find dice mechanics too intrusive for play; others may want to get rid of randomness altogether.

However, diceless action resolution is ill-suited to simulation-based gaming, despite the fact that the game can (and should) feel just as real as one with dice. Also, diceless resolution is usually more demanding of the GM than rolling dice to select an outcome. Even more so as there is no hard-and-fast rule for resolving conflicts without dice; instead, some creativity is required of the GM to fill in certain blanks.

7.4.2.1 Basics

The basic idea behind diceless action resolution is simple: the GM decides upon an appropriate outcome, based on player input and the situation at hand. The details of this, however, can be more complicated.

The idea is to use cause and effect to convey the feeling that whatever happens to the characters is not due to whim, but occurs because of the logic of the situation and the relevant history of everyone involved. It is important that any event (with exceptions, of course) appears to a be a logical effect of the preceding events. There is usually not a single event that is *the* outcome. The GM has to choose between several possible outcomes — which may vary wildly in terms of success and failure.

Consequently, the two most important parts in resolving an action are the reasons for a particular outcome and the consequences of that outcome.

Reasons are numerous. Foremost among reasons for success and/or failure is of course effective skill. However, a game where a sufficiently skilled character always wins and an incompetent character always fails would be quite boring due to its predictability. So we have to diversify these results, but in a way that doesn't feel artificial.

We do this by accounting for other factors besides effective skill. These factors can involve the environment (slipping in a puddle), equipment (a gun that jams at a critical moment), time constraints (defusing a bomb before it goes off), NPC actions (a character stepping in the way), etc. The idea is not to account for all possible factors, just to find one or two reasons that make the outcome seem logical.

Detailed description is essential to diceless action resolution. Description not only of the environment, but also of the characters. Noting that a character has a Great fencing skill may often suffice, but it is better to add some details (ideally through a character history). Describe style, weaknesses, and strengths, even though they may normally not show up on the character sheet. The same is true for the description of important actions.

Sometimes a character's perception (or lack thereof) may result in failure to notice why something happened. If, for instance, the floor suddenly gives way beneath him, he may not be certain as to what caused this to happen: did he step on a trap, or was there an outside agent involved? In this case, the GM will hide some or all of the reasons.

In addition to reasons, we have to consider consequences: what impact does a particular outcome have on the situation as a whole? The more serious the outcome, the more the reasons for it happening need to be convincing.

As an extreme example, death of player characters should only occur with ample forewarning of the risks or with really compelling reasons. Of course, jumping off a skyscraper will most likely render a character dead the instant he hits the ground. This is acceptable, because the players understand the logic of the situation. But slipping on a wet rock while crossing a stream — which can be ascribed to just plain bad luck — shouldn't kill a character outright. While it's true that slipping on a wet rock probably happens more often than jumping off a building, the GM needs to be careful in deciding the consequences of such an action.

There are many possible results for typical actions. So, lacking clear ideas as to which one is most appropriate — maybe even torn between clear success and catastrophic failure — how can this selection be narrowed down?

There are a few ways to approach the problem, and it is a good idea to reach an agreement with the group before play commences as to what factors will be used. The following list is far from complete, but gives some possibilities:

Realism A master archer will hit the target most of the time. But sometimes even he will fail, or even have a streak of bad luck. This is important for maintaining a feeling of realism in the long run. It should also be noted that realism is relative to genre. Chandelier-swinging is likely to succeed in a swashbuckling romp, while it is at best a risky endeavour in a gritty game.

Drama Sometimes certain outcomes are dramatically more appropriate than others. This unfortunately depends to a great degree upon individual gaming style and can only be handled briefly here.

Characterization Sometimes, a character's success or failure at a particular task can help to reinforce or develop his character story.

Theme By assigning a certain "theme" to each scene in the game as it is encountered, actions can be resolved in a way that emphasizes that theme. An example:

> *[The theme is "Combat is dangerous"]*
>
> *GM: "Suddenly, you hear a rustling in the underbrush, and then, out of it, a boar emerges, charging at you."*
>
> *Player: "I'm not armed! I'll jump for the branch of the oak next to me and pull myself up to safety."*
>
> *[While the avoidance of a fight supports the theme, "Combat is dangerous," there are other possibilities that emphasize it better.]*

> *GM: "You get hold of the branch, but as you start to pull yourself up, you hear a loud CRACK, and all of a sudden the ground rushes upwards to meet you."*
>
> *[The situation is now much more dangerous. However, with a bit of luck and the help of the other characters in the group it is still possible to handle it without killing the PC.]*

All of the above factors are meta-game issues. This is intentional. These factors contribute towards an interesting game, and one of the points of roleplaying is to have an interesting game. Besides, we are already using the in-game factors as cause and effect to convey a natural flow of events so we have to resort to the meta-level here.

It may look as though there is a lot of arbitrariness on the part of the GM. This is correct to some extent. Some individual decisions will be arbitrary. In the long run it should balance out, especially if the players possess even the slightest creativity. Note also that the GM should *always* respect player input. If something is going to fail that should normally work, failure should still reflect player input. (For instance, the example above with the breaking branch, where the character technically succeeds, but the branch does not cooperate).

7.4.2.2 Balance Of Power

There is no need to encumber the GM with all the decisions. The easiest way to hand some power back to the players is to give them a (limited) voice in the decision making process. For this purpose we employ Fudge Points (see Section 1.3.6).

By spending one Fudge Point, the player (instead of the GM) can decide the outcome of an action his character is involved in, provided the action is possible and not abusive to the game. (Blowing up an entire building with a cup of gunpowder is implausible, and possibly abusive to the plot). If the action is far beyond the normal skill of the character (given the circumstances), the GM may require expenditure of two or three Fudge Points instead.

Notice that using Fudge Points also gives the GM more leeway; she need no longer worry too much whether letting a character fail is too harsh, as it is within the power of the player to help his character if need be.

7.4.2.3 Combat

Diceless combat is action resolution with two added complications: the high risk of character death and a considerable amount of action that needs to be synchronized.

The synchronization part is fairly easy: as in resolution with dice, you can divide the entire combat in rounds of appropriate duration, cycling through all participating characters each round, or use story elements as suggested in Section 4.2.1.

Character death is trickier because players dislike losing their characters due to bad luck (be it because of an unlucky die roll or GM whim). The key here is to "post warning signs" before dangerous situations occur. These warnings should be subtle, such as the maniacal gleam in the opponent's eyes just before she launches a wild flurry of attacks. (Hopefully the player will say his character is on the defense, or announces some trick to counter a charge.) A description of the blood dripping from a character's wrist should warn the player that there may be a slippery puddle on the floor. In other words, prepare reasons for outcomes in advance and — most important — announce them to the players.

If the players maintain some maneuvering space for their characters after such warnings, that should be sufficient to prevent PC death — though not necessarily PC failure.

Character death — and any other drastic result — is usually due to a *series* of failures, each pushing the character a step further towards the edge — but always with opportunity to find a more favourable course of action in between. Unfortunately, in some situations this entire series of failures takes no longer than a few seconds.

The details of combat interaction are now fairly easy to handle, as they are an extension of normal diceless resolution. However, particular care should be taken to describe actions fully, especially in melee combat. The statement "I attack the pirate" is infinitely less informative than saying, "I assault the pirate with all I have, even if that means taking a blow or two myself. But I have to get out of here, and that means getting by her and at least wounding her so she can't follow quickly."

The object is to give the GM enough data to work with, such as:

> *"I'm going to feint towards the left, and if she goes for it, I'll try to use the opening created to end this business quickly."*

Or:

> *"Now that she's wounded, I'll play it safe, trying to wear her down."*

Statements like these help the GM deciding how combat should be resolved much more than a simple, "I attack her."

The key here is to be creative. Everything is possible, so everything should be considered, from a simple rugby tackle to complex tactical maneuvering.

Bloodshed is an unfortunate but largely unavoidable side effect of combat. Wounds are also important because they may become major factors in the future course of the combat. Thus, wounds must be described and their effects detailed. For example:

> *"The ball of fire explodes in the centre of the room. You feel a wave of searing heat washing over you, burning your clothes away and scorching your skin. The heat gradually abates, but you still cannot see anything, as the incredible brightness that hurts your eyes is only slowly receding."*

The player should gather from this that his character is temporarily blinded, in severe pain, needing medical attention, in a state of dishabille, and in grave danger if enemies are approaching.

(This is of course appropriate for a high fantasy game. In a more realistic game, the character is probably charred and dead.)

Another example, this time a sniper's bullet hitting the character's arm:

> *"Something very hot and painful pierces your left arm. It also jerks you around abruptly, making it hard to maintain balance. Worse, your arm feels totally numb and is probably fairly useless right now. The good news is that they (whoever they are) apparently missed your heart by a few inches."*

And so on. There is no need to be too graphic in describing wounds, though. More important is the description of how the wound affects the character.

7.4.2.4 Summing Up

FUDGE is ideally suited to diceless action resolution since it's already simple and word-based. This can set the tone for the amount of description necessary for a diceless game to succeed. Once players and GM get used to diceless FUDGE, they'll find themselves describing their characters and actions in ways they never thought of before — and the game can be richer and more entertaining for it.

7.4.3 Alternate Section 3.2: Rolling the Dice

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Date: January, 1993
By: Andy Skinner
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As a simple variation on any dice technique, allow players who roll a +4 result to roll again. If the result is positive, add it in to the +4 already rolled. If the result is negative or 0, ignore the second roll. This allows a small chance of results up to +8, which can be lifesaving in a dire situation.

Only a pitiless GM would balance this by requiring additional rolls to see how miserably a person can do on a -4 result, however.

7.4.4 Alternate Section 4.3.6, Heroic Evasion

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Date: February, 1995
By: Peter Bonney & Steffan O'Sullivan
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If a PC is hit, he may reduce the effect of the hit by *one* wound level by throwing himself heroically out of the way of (at least part of) the blow. However, this heroic evasion will put the fighter at a temporary disadvantage: -2 on the next combat round in addition to any other penalties that may be accrued. This penalty disappears in subsequent rounds, as the hero is able to recover his equilibrium after a brief flurry of wild parrying. This may be repeated, but there is an additional -1 for every turn in succession that this is used.

> *For example, D'Artagnan would be hit by Milady for a Light Wound (Hurt result). He heroically evades, taking only a Scratch, but is at -2 on the following round. In this round, he would be Very Hurt, but again he heroically evades, taking instead a Hurt result. The next round he is at -4: -2 for evading this round, an additional -1 for evading two rounds in a row, and -1 for being Hurt. If he can avoid having to evade on the next round, he'll only be at -1 for being Hurt. Good luck D'Artagnan!*

If the penalty for an heroic evasion drops a fighter's skill level to below Terrible, he may still take the evasion. But he automatically collapses: his weapon drops from his nerveless fingers and his throat is helplessly exposed to the enemy for an instant death blow if the foe is so minded. A plea for mercy may accompany such an evasion, but the opponent isn't necessarily bound to honor such a plea.

Heroic Evasion can be used for major NPCs, too, of course.

7.4.5 Alternate Section 4.5.7, Recording Wounds

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Date: December, 1992
By: Bernard Hsiung
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Ordinary playing cards can be used to keep track of wounds. Give a player one face-down card when his character is Hurt, and another face-down card when his character is Very Hurt. He gets rid of them when the character is healed. Face-up cards represent fatigue — the character is reeling from exhaustion. He gets rid of those by resting. (A character becomes fatigued by physical or mental activity, work, stress, etc. Casting spells, using psi powers, etc., may or may not count as fatiguing mental activity.)

Each card the character has represents a -1 to traits that would logically be affected until the third, which represents incapacitation.

The cards may also describe hit location, if desired: a black card is the torso, while a red card means an extremity. The lower the red card, the lower the extremity; the higher the red card, the higher the wound on the body.