

Creating a Character

The creation of a character in *Yags* is entirely under the control of the player – there are no random rolls which affect how good a character is, or what skills or background they have.

The game system allows any sort of character that might be found in the *Babylon 5* universe, from a Centauri diplomat to a warrior caste Minbari or human freighter captain. There are no ‘character classes’, though some pre-made templates are provided to give ideas on what is possible.

Steps to Generating a Character

The Character Concept

The first thing to do is to decide what sort of character is wanted – a *concept* for the character – who they are, what they do, and where they come from. The GM may want to give some guidelines on this, such as character’s coming from a particular place, or having a certain profession.

Attributes

Attributes are the core capabilities of the character, and measure how strong, fast, intelligent or charismatic the character is. If above average attributes are chosen, then they are considered to be an *advantage*, which is described later.

Race

Choose one of the races listed if desired. A race may be considered to be an *advantage* or a *disadvantage*.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Choose any advantages or disadvantages which fit the character concept. The character can have at most twenty points of advantages, of which some may have been spent on attributes or race.

Skills

The last game mechanic to sort out are the skills of the character. There are three steps to this process, ranging from childhood, through adolescence up to adulthood. The age of the character affects how many skills the character has.

Attributes

The eight attributes listed in the *Introduction* make up the core definition of a character within the rules. All skills, and therefore any action the character attempts, are based on one of the attributes.

Strength

The strength of a character is a measure of their physical toughness and ability to hurt, break and lift things.

Health

A character’s health is a measure of their physical endurance, fitness and general ability to cope with fatigue and physical pain.

Agility

Agility is how quick and agile a character is when performing acrobatic and athletic feats.

Dexterity

The dexterity of a character defines their hand-eye coordination, sleight-of-hand, and skill with melee and ranged weapons.

Perception

Perception is a measure of a character’s senses. Perceptive characters notice things that others will miss, making it a useful attribute for hunters, scouts and thieves. It is also used with social skills to

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Attribute	Cost	Attribute	Cost	Attribute	Cost
1	-12	13	+1	25	+28
2	-10	14	+2	26	+32
3	-9	15	+3	27	+36
4	-8	16	+4	28	+40
5	-7	17	+6	29	+45
6	-6	18	+8	30	+50
7	-5	19	+10	31	+55
8	-4	20	+12	32	+60
9	-3	21	+15	33	+70
10	-2	22	+18	34	+80
11	-1	23	+21	35	+90
12	0	24	+24	36	+100

detect emotions and lies in other people.

Intelligence

A character's intelligence is their reasoning, common sense, memory and intuition. It is not their knowledge, since this comes from skills, but an intelligent character will be able to better use what they know by applying it to new situations.

Charisma

How charismatic a character is defines how others will relate to them. A very charismatic character will find others helpful, friendly, and generally well disposed towards them.

Will

A character's will is their strength of mind, general stubbornness and sense of purpose. A strong willed person will know what they want, and who they are. They will be in control of their actions, not often allowing animal passions to get in the way.

Determine Attribute Scores

Each of the eight attributes defaults to a value of 12, and if the player desires, they can remain that way.

Such a combination will give a balanced character, but they will not particularly excel at anything.

The majority of attributes for common folk will range from 8 to 16, with values outside this range being uncommon, and pretty obvious to those around (someone with a strength of 20 will be large and well muscled, while a person with a strength of 3 will be weak and sickly, barely able to stand).

If, as will generally be the case, the player does not want a character perfectly average in all respects, then attributes can be bought up and down. Raising an attribute costs points, and lowering one will free off points. The cost to raise and lower attributes are as per the table at the top of the page.

High attributes can cost more than the points gained by lowering another attribute the same amount, so exceptional attributes will be expensive.

If the final cost of all attributes balances to zero, then they are considered to be neither an advantage nor a disadvantage, otherwise the cost is considered to be an advantage (if positive) or disadvantage (if negative) of the same value.

Further Modifiers

Some advantages and disadvantages given later will modify attributes. These apply after the costs here have been worked out. Likewise, modifiers for race or gender apply after the costs have been determined.

The exception to this is that a score of one is the absolute minimum for a character. If further modifiers bring the attribute to below one, then the original attribute must be raised (recalculating the resulting point cost) so that this does not occur.

Non-human Races

By default, a character is assumed to be human. Non-human characters may get various bonuses or penalties, which may be considered an 'advantage' or 'disadvantage'.

The following list is not an exhaustive list of the races available in the *Babylon 5* universe, but it covers the major races. Descriptions of the races are not given – it is assumed the reader is already familiar enough with the setting,

Any attribute modifiers, or advantages and disadvantages listed for a race are included in the point cost for the race. They must be taken, but do not have to be paid for separately.

Centauri

There are no modifiers for being a Centauri. They are similar enough to humans to be generated using the normal options.

Drazi (-4)

Drazi are a warlike and aggressive race, preferring physical strength over other ways of settling disputes. They have -2 to intelligence and will.

Minbari (+2)

Minbari characters gain +4 to health, and +2 to will. They must also take the *Minbari code of honour* disadvantage (described later). They will probably have a hatred of humans, though this can be bought normally. Minbari characters should specify whether they are Warrior, Religious or Worker caste.

Narn (+2)

Narns have +4 to strength, as well as a hatred (+3) of Centauri.

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Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages are things that give a character an edge over others in the world. Each type of advantage has a point cost, and a character can take up to twenty points worth of advantages, though can take less if desired.

The majority of people within the world will have significantly less than twenty points, maybe only three or four for your typical shopkeeper.

Disadvantages work against a character, and have a negative cost. The total value of advantages and disadvantages taken must total zero or less. There is no reason that a character cannot take more disadvantages than they have advantages. Such a character will be worse off than 'balanced' characters, but sometimes, certain combinations of disadvantages can be fun to play.

Generic Advantages

These cover options which can be either advantages or disadvantages (such as status or wealth), but which don't make sense to split into two categories.

Status

Your status governs how well respected and known you are. High status does not necessarily mean wealth. You may earn lots of money, but you may be paying off debts, bribes or blackmails. As such, wealth must be bought separately. However, status does affect the lifestyle you are used to.

Most people will be 'ordinary'. They live in a small house or flat, have a job which doesn't grant them much authority, and aren't particularly well known outside their circle of friends and co-workers.

Status	Cost
Homeless.	-4
Poor.	-2
Ordinary.	0
Corporate suit.	+2
Minor media.	+4
Major media/Corporate head.	+6
Famous star/Senator.	+8

A corporate head or senator would have a lot of contacts and friends within their line of work who will be willing to do things for them, but it works both ways as well. Such a person will also have huge responsibilities.

Starting Wealth

The amount of money a character has available for purchasing equipment is based on their wealth level. It is probably, but not necessarily, related to the annual income of the character, but may be savings for a poorly paid character, or someone who for some reason starts with a lot of resources.

Starting Wealth	Cost
Very poor - 500 Cr	-6
Poor - 2,000 Cr	-3
Average - 5,000 Cr	0
Wealthy - 15,000 Cr	+3
Rich - 50,000 Cr	+6
Very rich - 250,000 Cr	+10
Filthy rich - 1,000,000 Cr	+15

It is also possible for a highly paid character to start with little wealth. If the campaign starts with the characters far from any resources, then it may be permissible for a rich businessman to start with no 'paid for' wealth.

Appearance

Unless this advantage is taken, then it is assumed

that the character is of average physical appearance (zero). Such characters will generally not stand out in a crowd.

To have a character that has above average beauty, is an advantage. A character which is ugly on the other hand, is considered to be at a disadvantage.

Cost	Appearance	Bonus
+8	Very beautiful. You will be noticed by everyone.	+8 (4)
+4	Beautiful, and obviously so, even without making an attempt.	+4 (3)
+2	Good looking. Slightly above average, but not obviously so.	+2
—	Normal appearance. Nothing out of the ordinary.	+0
-2	Rather plain.	-2
-4	Noticeably ugly.	-4
-8	Very ugly, and it will be difficult to hide the fact.	-8

Cost of a non-average appearance are given in the table above, together with the bonus applied to reaction rolls, and charisma skills. Bonuses given in parenthesis apply to people who aren't sexually attracted to you (normally those of the same sex).

Exceptional Training

You had an exceptionally active life, and learnt far more than your peers. For every point of advantage, you may start the game with eight extra points of skills (explained later). These points could come from a military academy, university or just from living in a rough neighbourhood where you had to grow up fast to survive.

Such points may be spent during the character's adulthood, and do not add to the character's age.

Common Advantages

The following advantages are open to anyone

(subject to GM veto). Advantages marked with a '†' symbol are passions, and have three costs, representing passions of level +3, +4 or +5.

Advantages which give bonuses to ability rolls (such as *acute hearing*) do just that, i.e. they are not multiplied by skill level.

Absolute direction (+2): You have an uncanny sense of direction, and generally have a very good idea about which direction you are facing.

Absolute timing (+1): The character has an accurate sense of time, and excepting being knocked unconscious, drugged etc, can always know how much time has elapsed. If character also has light sleeper, he can wake up at a preset time.

Acute hearing (+2): Gives you a +5 bonus to all sense rolls to hear sounds.

Acute taste and smell (+1): Gives you a +5 bonus to all sense rolls to smell or taste things.

Acute vision (+2): Gives you a +5 bonus to all sense rolls to see things.

Alternate identity (+3): You have a cast iron fake identity which you can use where necessary. The identity does not give any special authority or privileges, but is the identity of a normal person of your race. Multiple identities can be had by buying this advantage several times.

Ambidextrous (+4): Can use both hands with equal skill. If you ever have to use a single weapon in your off-hand, you don't suffer any penalty. It does not affect the *two weapons* fighting style.

Beautiful voice (+3): You have a voice that most people find attractive and trustworthy. You gain +5 on all charisma skills where you can use your voice, and a +10 to skills which rely greatly on the sound of your voice – e.g. singing or reading poetry.

Brave (+1/+2/+4)†: You are brave and heroic,

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having a passion of *brave* at either +3, +4 or +5. A high passion means that you are fearless, and will not hesitate to go into danger. A similar passion to this is *heroic*, which is the same cost, but can be subtly different.

Combat reflexes (+5): If you are taken by surprise, you can react with surprising speed. If you make an agility × brawling roll of 20+, you can still act if surprised, but your action is not entirely under your control. This means that you could possibly shoot a friend.

Cultural flexibility (+2): You are unusually tolerant of other cultures, religions and social groups, as well as being quick in picking up on local customs. You suffer no penalties to any social skills when dealing with foreign people.

Danger sense (+6): You have a knack of sensing danger before it rears its ugly head. You have a *hard* childhood skill, *danger sense*, which when used with perception, allows you to sense general danger on a roll of 20+. Specifics (when, where, how bad) only become known on rolls of 30 or higher.

Double jointed (+2): You get a +5 bonus in applicable situations, such as escaping from restraints, or squeezing through narrow places.

Empathy (+4): You have an almost unnatural ability to relate to other people, allowing you to see through others attempts to deceive you, but also making you more susceptible. You gain a +5 bonus to your folk ken ability. When others use charm or seduction attempts against you though, and they mean it (e.g. they really do need your help, or really do like you), then they receive it as a bonus (their enthusiasm infects you).

Hard to kill (+1/level, maximum +5): You gain a +2 bonus to rolls to stay alive (though not conscious) per level of this advantage.

Hardy Convalescence (+3): You get a +10 bonus to all healing rolls.

High pain threshold (+5): You only gain half the normal penalties from being injured (round down).

Inspirational (+5): You can infect others with your enthusiasm and emotions, rallying them to a cause, or into some course of action. If you succeed on a charm or leadership roll (which depends on circumstance) against their will × guile, then they gain half your bonus for a given passion.

Legal enforcement powers (+2/+4/+6): You have the authority to enforce the law according to one government. The cost of the advantage depends on what rights you have to abuse the rights of others in the pursuit of justice. At +2, you need warrants for most things, at +4 you have the freedom to detain and search people given sufficient evidence, and to also possibly carry a firearm. At +6, you don't need much evidence before doing anything. Earth Force security would be +4. Private investigator would be +2. Night watch (2260 - 2261) would be +6.

Light sleeper (+4): You are easily woken by noise. This can be a disadvantage, but it can also save your life. You cannot combine this advantage with *versatile sleeper*.

Linguist (+3): All language skills are considered to be one level easier to learn, though easy languages (if there are any!) are unaffected. Languages learnt during childhood (which are always considered to be 'easy') are unaffected.

Lithe (+2): You are small of frame, but quick and agile. You gain +3 to both agility and dexterity, but you do not have a *hurt* body level, or *winded* fatigue level.

Luck (+1): You have one point of luck, though you may take this advantage as many times as you can afford to. Each point of luck can be used once, after which it is lost permanently. When used, it can modify any ability or damage roll, to either being a fumble, or to being a roll of double '10'. The latter allows a roll up (so effectively gives +20 to the roll). A single character can spend one point of luck

on any single roll, but multiple characters may combine to give multiple bonuses.

Military rank (+2/+4/+6): You are an officer in a military service. This gives you contacts and limited authority, but much of it is limited to military matters (which will rarely coincide with what you do in your own time). +2 gives you command of a small starship or a few dozen men. +4 gives a capital ship or a few hundred men, while +6 gives command of a small fleet, or many thousands of men. Your superiors will not look lightly on you misusing your resources for personal use.

Need little sleep (+5): Can survive on half as much sleep as normal people.

Night vision (+4): You are very good at seeing in the dark, and only suffer half the normal penalties for performing actions in poor light. In total darkness, you still cannot see a thing though.

Resistant to Disease (+1): You have a strong immune system, gaining a +10 bonus to your Health to resist the effects of disease.

Serendipity (+2/+5/+10): You are incredibly lucky, and life tends to be easy for you. How easy depends on the level of this advantage.

Situational Awareness (+5): You have a keen sense of where you are, and probably more importantly, where everyone else is. This is especially useful under combat conditions, where you get no penalties to *alertness* or other perception skills to know what is happening around you.

Telepath (+1 to +12): You have telepathic ability, the exact degree of which depends on the cost of this advantage. A typical commercial telepath would have a +5 advantage, having a telepathic power of 5. A power of 10 or higher is rare.

Unfazed (+2/+4/+8)†: The unexpected, and unusual, do not bother you. Whether it is stumbling

across a pile of disfigured corpses, or a bolt of lightning splitting a tree next to you, you don't even flinch.

Versatile sleeper (+2): You can sleep anywhere, under almost any circumstance. This often means you can get the equivalent of a full night's rest during the day. You cannot combine this with the *light sleeper* advantage.

Zeroed (+2): There are no records detailing your existence. Neither the military, police or other government bodies have knowledge of your existence. This means of course that you have no ID such as passport, credit cards or anything, which may also be a hindrance.

Common Disadvantages

These disadvantages are open to anyone. As for advantages, a '†' denotes a passion.

Absent Minded (-3): You have a tendency to forget the minor things in life, such as locking the front door, packing food for a journey or people's names. Role play it.

Big mouth (-4): You have a habit of saying the wrong thing at the worst possible time. You suffer an extra +6 fumble chance to any charisma skills.

Can't sing (-1): You are very bad at the performing arts, being a very bad singer, dancer and poet. Add +6 to your fumble chance for such skills.

Cloistered upbringing (-3/-8): You were brought up with little or no contact with the outside world, either as part of a religious organisation, through choice, or locked away in a prison. For the low cost version, you have been around a small group of people, and have had chance to study outside knowledge (in a monastery for instance). You can have no social talents about 25%, and no practical knowledge of the outside world (e.g. You could have a high galaxy lore, because you've read books on the subject, but you've never actually seen an

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alien, or another world). The high cost version of the disadvantage means you can start with no social skills, and no knowledge of the outside world.

Clueless (-2): Any skill for which you have not invested any character points in you are particularly bad at. You suffer a +5 to the fumble chance of such skills.

Code of honour (-2/-5/-10): You have a code of honour which you follow at all times. There are three point costs for a *code of honour*. Examples are:

Gang members code of honour (-2): Always avenge an insult, your friend's foe is your own, never attack a fellow gang member except in a fair duel.

Mercenaries code of honour (-5): Remain loyal to your patron, never sell out or double cross them. Perform the job you have been paid to do, no more and no less. Remain loyal to your group.

Minbari code of honour (-5): Never lie, except to save the honour of another. Never kill another Minbari. This disadvantage is restricted to Minbari. All Minbari must take it.

Trader's code of honour (-5): Always deal honestly with your clients and partners. Never knowingly sell inferior or broken goods without the buyer's knowledge. Keep your promises and deal fairly.

Chivalric code of honour (-10): This is very rare, though not unheard of, belonging to a much nobler age. You must be generous, hospitable and valorous. You must protect those weaker than yourself. You must accept any challenge to arms from those of equal or greater rank. Even in war, sides must be equal against noble and chivalric foes.

Combat paralysis (-4): You are not good at reacting to combat or other dangerous situations. You spend the first round of any combat dithering about what to do.

Coward (-2/-4/-8)†: You are a yellow blooded coward. If something looks dangerous, you'll go the other way. You may well betray your friends and allies rather than suffer pain or humiliation. Your intentions may be good, but when it comes to the crunch, you're the pathetic quivering heap in the corner. Take a passion of coward, at a level of -3, -4 or -5.

Cruel (-1/-3/-5)†: You enjoy seeing pain and suffering inflicted on others, and often go out of your way to torment others yourself. You probably have a bad reputation as well among those that know of you.

Dark secret (-2/-5): You have a secret in your past which is best left hidden. If someone were to find it out, or to make it public, your life could become quite complicated. This is a -2 disadvantage if the secret would be annoying if let out, or -5 if it would be a serious risk to your health (you were a member of some particularly reviled cult for instance).

Death wish (-4/-8/-15)†: At first glance, some might call you brave. Those that know you though realise though that you are merely foolhardy, and seem to have some unconscious desire to end your life. You are fearless, and never shun danger, indeed you embrace it with suicidal passion. You cannot have a brave or coward passion. You must make a will check (with death wish working against you) to choose anything less than the most dangerous option.

Driving goal (-3/-6/-12)†: You have a mission in your life, which will not be easy to accomplish. At higher levels, your desire to see your goal to completion consumes your thoughts and actions on a daily basis.

Easily fatigued (-2): You suffer double the normal penalties from being fatigued.

Easily Forgotten (-3): You have an uninspiring personality, to the point of being utterly forgettable. People will tend to forget about you even a few

minutes after meeting you, and they won't have any desire to get to know you. You cannot have a passion greater than ± 3 , your appearance must be between +1 and -1, and your charisma cannot be higher than 20. To some characters, this can actually be an big advantage.

Egotist (-1/-3/-5)†: You're a self centred, selfish bastard. You think that you're the centre of the universe. You can't understand why you should stick your neck out for anyone else. Most people will just get fed up with you, aim to cut you down to size, just to teach you a lesson.

Fanaticism (-4/-8/-15)†: You're a fanatic, either to a person or to a cause. You gain a passion of level +3 to +5, though anything above +3 will generally bring you into continual conflict with anyone who doesn't believe in your cause the same way that you do. If you have a passion of +5 in fanaticism, then all others are enemies of the cause. Fanaticism is always directed at something (e.g. a particular religion, a particular person), and you cannot be fanatic in more than one unrelated causes.

Favours (-2): You owe favours to a person, who will call them in at some point. Repaying the favours should not be a great hardship, but ignoring them will gain you a bad reputation (and possibly an enemy).

Illiterate (-2): You may not start the game with any reading skills – this includes being able to read computer screens! The skill rating you normally start with in reading is lost.

Intolerant (-2/-4/-6)†: You are intolerant of anyone who is different to you. Whether it's because of their skin colour, accent, background or clothes, if they don't conform to what you consider to be normal, then you'll go out of your way to ignore, be rude to, or even openly violent towards that person.

Fat (-4): You are greatly overweight. You cannot have an appearance better than 'good looking', and may suffer up to a -10 penalty on rolls in physical

tasks (such as climbing/ contortions etc).

Gullible (-5): You are often easily persuaded by others, even when what you're being told is blatantly untrue. You suffer a +8 fumble chance to your *folk ken* and *bargain* skills, plus anything else the GM deems suitable. You are naturally trusting of other people.

Hatred (-2/-4/-8)†: You have a strong dislike towards a particular group. You will not want to cooperate or act reasonably around such people. Generally, you probably just want to see such people dead.

Heavy sleeper (-2): You suffer -10 to all rolls to wake up.

Honesty (-4): You don't like to break the law. You can lie, as long as it doesn't involve breaking the law.

Impulsive (-2/-4/-8)†: You're not the sort of person to sit around talking about things – you just want to get up and do something. Generally you act first, and think later.

Innumerate (-2): You are unable to count above ten, and even then you need to do lots of work on your fingers. Numbers above three are about all you can cope with easily. Anything higher than this is merely 'lots'.

Invalid (-3): You gain a -10 penalty to all healing rolls.

Lame (-4): You are lame in one leg. You can walk at more or less the same speed as other people, but when running, you move at half (running) speed.

Love (-2/-4/-8)†: You hold a person, object or event in the highest regard. With the extremes of this disadvantage, you want to spend all your time pursuing the object of your passion. It could be the love of a woman, of hunting, of a particular weapon, of your family, or anything which might

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generate a great deal of devotion.

Low gravity upbringing (-5): You were raised on a world with a much lower gravity than is generally considered normal. You have -3 to strength, and loose one fatigue level.

Low pain threshold (-4): You suffer double the normal penalties for being wounded. Any difficulties to resist torture and overcome pain are increased by 50%.

Loyalty (-3/-6/-12)†: You are loyal to a cause, group or person. You will never betray them, and will do your best to aid them whenever possible.

Mania (-4): You have no sense of proportion, being unable to distinguish between what is important and what isn't. When doing anything, you'll tend to fixate on a particular problem, and devote your entire energy into solving that one single problem, regardless of how important it is to the whole. You are full of boundless energy, enthusiasm and cheerfulness, but cannot channel that energy usefully.

Meddler (-2): You like poking your nose in where it doesn't belong, getting involved in everyone's day to day affairs, and basically trying to run their lives for them. Most people will resent this, and when you do give real aid to people, it may not be given the credit it deserves.

Non-combatant (-5): You don't like fighting, and definitely don't like the idea of killing people. You aren't necessarily a pacifist, but are either too squeamish, cowardly, or civilised to take part in a fight yourself. You can learn combat skills (though it is very bad roleplaying to use them regularly), but if you ever use them in a real combat (i.e. With intent to harm or kill, rather than say, an archery contest) you suffer a +5 fumble chance.

No sense of direction (-3): You have this remarkable ability to get lost all the time. You suffer a +8 fumble chance for any skills involved with

finding your way around.

No sense of humour (-2): You have no sense of humour, and often assume that everyone else is as serious as you are about things.

Noticeable mark (-1/-3): You have a strange and obvious mark on your body. This is a -1 disadvantage if it isn't normally visible, -3 otherwise.

Overconfidence (-1/-3/-5)†: You are unable to accurately take into account your own weaknesses. You could be proud and boastful (maybe an egotist as well), or just the sort of person who quietly wanders into danger getting himself (and possibly others) killed.

Oversensitive (-2): You are overly sensitive about some subject matter, and tend to react to it more strongly than you normally would. For example, you may dislike being insulted, or seeing the weak being oppressed.

Paranoid (-2/-4/-6)†: They are out to get you. You're not sure exactly who they are, but they're everywhere, and possibly even everyone. Anything that goes wrong in your life is part of a carefully orchestrated plan to ruin your life. Trust no one, because there is no-one that you can trust. Paranoia is something that can only be role played. Everyone else just thinks you're crazy. Or at least they say they do – they're probably part of the plot...

Personal hatred (-1/-2/-4)†: You have a strong hatred of a particular person. The difference between this and the *hatred* disadvantage is that the latter is directed at a group of people.

Phobia (-1/-2/-3)†: Those with a phobia have an unreasonable fear about something. You must make a will check in order to overcome that fear (you get no bonuses from being brave, or even from a death-wish), modified by the strength of your passion. An uncommon phobia (such as a fear of spiders, enclosed spaces, deep water, heights) is the

listed cost. Common phobias are double cost (such as music, loud noises, death, blood), and very common phobias are triple cost (the opposite sex, the open air, strangers, daylight, darkness).

Poor memory (-2): You have a poor memory for one thing, be it names, faces or places. You must make an intelligence roll of 20+ in order to remember something of this subject. You may only take this once, and only if your intelligence is ten or lower.

Sexually tantalising (-2): You seem to attract members of a compatible sex. For anyone else this would be a good thing, except that in your case it is always the people whom you *don't* want to attract which are attracted to you. You must have a positive appearance in order to take this disadvantage.

Short attention span (-3): You cannot keep your mind on something for very long, before getting bored and mentally wandering off track. This can make you extremely unreliable for any task involving patiently waiting.

Shy (-2): Around strangers, or in large crowds, you suffer up to a +8 fumble chance, depending on the size of the crowd. You may start to stammer, or simply try to hide.

Simple minded (-3): You tend to have difficulty concentrating on more than one thing at a time, and unless people give you very clear instructions, even that can be difficult at times. An intelligence roll of 20+ is needed to remember complicated instructions., and 15+ to keep your mind on the task in hand. You can only take this disadvantage if your intelligence is 8 or lower.

Terrible liar (-3): You understand the concept of not telling the truth, but when you try to do it, you often end up failing miserably, either because of your body language, or just because you blurt out the wrong thing without thinking. Suffer a +8 fumble chance for the *guile* skill.

Unlucky (-2/-5/-10): The opposite of serendipity. If something can go wrong, it will.

Violent (-3/-5/-8)†: You are prone to resorting to physical violence far more often than is generally considered polite. If insulted, prevented from doing what you want, or even if someone looks at you funny, you can get angry, and start a fight.

Voracious appetite (-2): You need to eat twice as much as everyone else. This is not the same as being greedy, since you really do need to eat this much to stay alive.

Weakness (-1/-2/-4)†: You have a weakness for something, be it alcohol, money or women. Whenever tempted, you must make a will check to resist. Difficulty is generally in the range of 25 to 40. Cost of disadvantage depends on the level of the passion (the listed cost above), and its acceptability

An *acceptable* weakness (the listed cost) might be for wealth or alcohol.

A frowned upon or dangerous weakness (double the listed cost) might be sex, some drugs, gambling etc.

An *unacceptable* weakness (triple the listed cost) would be one which you probably want to keep hidden, such as highly illegal drugs, sadism, deviant sexual behaviour etc.

Youth (-3/-6/-9/-12): You start the game younger than the normal base of 16. For each year younger than this, it is a -3 disadvantage, and you start with 8 less experience for adolescent skills. The youngest you may start is 12 years old, in which case you may only have childhood skills. As well as lacking skills, people will treat you as a young upstart, and not take you seriously.

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Allies and Enemies

Characters may have relationships with individual NPCs or NPC groups of either a beneficial or not so beneficial nature.

Power of Ally/Enemy	Cost
Small corporation. Anything up to a hundred ordinary people, or maybe one or two extra-ordinary people.	± 2
Large corporation. A large group of people with a lot of resources to call upon, but which is mostly constrained by the law.	± 4
Government. A governmental organisation (such as PsiCorps) which is above the law, or any large powerful group which is basically free to do as it pleases.	± 8
Interest in Character	Cost
Rarely aids/hinders. Isn't that interested in the character, and only helps or turns up on a 16+.	× ½
Often. Will often help the character when asked, or turns up semi-regularly. Roll of 14+.	× 1
Very often. On a roll of 12+ ally will aid the character when asked, or an enemy will turn up in an scenario.	× 2
Limitations (allies only)	
Code of conduct. Ally has a tight code of conduct which the character must follow if they wish to continue receiving support.	× ½
Severe Penalties. Ally will turn very nasty if the character ever leaves their employ, or breaks their rules. An example would be the PsiCorps.	× ½

The table shows the costs for allies and enemies. Some examples would be:

Psi Corps (+4; governmental, very often, tight code

and severe penalties). As a member of the Psi Corps, a character can expect a lot of aid and will have access to many resources, but upsetting the Corps is a very bad idea.

Psi Corps (-8; governmental). The Corps makes for a powerful enemy, especially for rogues.

An'loshok (+1; large corporation, rare, tight code). The *rangers* of the Minbari do not have the reputation or resources they'll have in ten years. Outside of Minbar, they are stretched to their limit to help any of their members.

Thieves guild (+1; large corporation, rare, severe). The *thieves guild* is a secret, semi-organised group of criminals found across known space. Where they operate, they expect a cut of any profits made by their members, and they don't tolerate independent operatives.

Thieves guild (-2; large corporation, rare). Anyone who has double crossed the guild, or refused to pay it its tithe will need to keep their eyes open, and their back to a wall. Lack of organised communication between different cells means that the guild won't be coming after offenders too often.

Skills

Skills are those abilities which a character develops throughout their life, and tend to change a lot more regularly than attributes do.

How good a character is at a skill is rated as a percentage, in steps of 25%. A skill of 100% is acceptable for someone wanting to make a living with the skill. Higher skills are possible.

Skill development for a character occurs across three broad stages of the character's pre-game life – childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Generation of character skills must be done in chronological order of these three.

Childhood

Over a period roughly equivalent to their first twelve years, a character learns the basic skills needed for life. These skills are split into three categories – talents, basic skills and knowledges.

Talents

Talents are skills which the majority of people have at least some skill at, and even people with only 0% skill are capable of trying to use such skills without further penalty. The talents are:

Alertness	Leadership
Athletics	Sleight
Brawling	Stamina
Charm	Stealth
Folk ken	Throw
Guile	

Each of these skills defaults to a starting value of 50%. Any one can be raised by 25% as long as another is dropped by 25%. None of these talents can be raised above 100% during childhood, and none can be dropped to below 0%, however 0% represents an abnormal lack of skill.

Basic Skills

As well as talents, there are a number of **basic skills** which a character can learn during childhood. These all default to 0%, but can be raised by dropping some of the character's talents. Dropping a talent by 25%, will raise a basic skill by 25%. No basic skill can be raised to more than 50% during childhood, however.

The basic skills are:

Animal ken	Etiquette
Bard	First aid
Bargain	Riding
Carousing	Streetwise
Driving	Swim

Knowledges

A character will start with a reasonable knowledge of the world they live in – though their 'world' may well be limited to a single village. This knowledge can be made up of many skills, but the most common are:

- Computer Operation
- General Knowledge
- Read own language
- Speak own language
- Mathematics
- Science

The above knowledges all begin at 100%. Further knowledges can be purchased by dropping talents, but at a rate of one for two – dropping a talent by 25%, increases a knowledge by 50%. No knowledge may be raised above 100%. Knowledges can also be dropped in order to raise talents and basic skills.

A character can learn any knowledge skill that the player can convince the GM is appropriate. Some suggested possible knowledges are:

- Culture lore
- Read/write language
- Speak language
- World lore (other than homeworld)

Adolescence

After the character's childhood skills have been decided upon, the next step is to decide the next four years of the character's life – from the age of 13 to 16. Generally, these years will be spent in school, learning more basic skills, and continuing development of those skills learnt during childhood. After childhood, *all* skill advancement follows a different system, which makes it harder to develop high skills than it is low skills. Further, skills are rated according to how difficult they are to learn.

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Skill Cost and Advancement

The following table shows the cost to develop a skill from 0%, to a given level, depending on whether the skill is *easy*, *average* or *hard* to learn.

Level	Easy	Average	Hard
0%	0	0	0
25%	1	2	4
50%	2	4	8
75%	4	8	16
100%	8	16	32
125%	16	32	48
150%	32	48	64
175%	48	64	80
200%	64	80	96
225%	80	96	112
250%	96	112	128

During adolescence, a character has 64 points to spend on skills, though no single skill can be raised above 100%.

It is assumed (and suggested) that these points are spent on skills which are central to the character's profession, rather than on padding out general skills learnt in childhood. Character's whose profession relies on skills learnt in childhood will have a slightly easier job of things.

The pre-generated characters given later give skills generally associated with given professions, and can be used as a guide for choosing sensible skill combinations. A full list of skills, together with their descriptions is given at the end of this section, but for a brief list of commonly available skills and their difficulties, see the character sheet.

Adulthood

At the age of 16, a character is assumed to be an adult, and can enter play. Many players may well feel that their characters aren't quite suited to the

big outdoors quite yet, and will want to develop them further. For every year of extra development a character has before they enter play, another 4 points may be spent on skills.

Characters may begin at any age the player wants above 16, but characters which start above 35 years of age will have to make aging rolls before the game begins (so could possibly die).

It is suggested that characters are no more than 35 years old, for simple reasons of play balance.

Descriptions of Skills

Talents

The following skills are all *talents*, and are purchased at the initial part of character development. For most people, they will all start at a level of 50%.

Alertness (Av): A measure of general aptitude at noticing things going on around you. Alertness checks are made to notice ambushes, hear noises, or notice unusual events. Generally used with perception.

Athletics (Av): Gymnastic and acrobatic feats are covered by this skill, including climbing, running, jumping and keeping balance.

Bard (Hd): Singing, telling stories, writing poems and other forms of communication designed for entertainment. It also covers knowledge of songs, poetry, and playing musical instruments.

Bargain (Av): Covers a multitude of skills involved with trading, including bartering, and having some clue as to the value of goods.

Brawling (Av): A general purpose combat skill covering dodging, punching and wrestling. This is covered in more detail in the combat section.

Charm (Av): Your ability to be nice to people, or at

least make them think that you are. Calming people down, inciting them to riot, or simply trying to impress them would use this skill.

Etiquette (Ea): Knowledge of manners and behaviour amongst high social classes.

Folk ken (Hd): This skill is often rolled against another person's *guile* ability, and covers seeing through lies, detecting emotions, and generally reading between the lines of what someone is telling you.

Guile (Av): The ability to lie convincingly, either through words, or body actions.

Leadership (Av): The skill of getting people to work together as a team, under your direction. Useful for anything from organising a party, to an army preparing for battle.

Sleight (Av): Sleight of hand, from fiddling items on a market stall, to picking someone's pockets. Can also be used for anything which requires a great deal of fine dexterity.

Stamina (Hd): General endurance, ability to resist fatigue and pain, and to stay conscious when seriously injured.

Stealth (Av): Moving quietly, hiding, and generally not being seen or heard.

Throw (Av): Throwing things at distance with a reasonable degree of accuracy.

Basic Knowledges

Area lore (Ea): Detailed knowledge of a local area, about the size of a single country.

Computer Operation (Ea): Knowledge of being able to use a computer to retrieve information, run programs, and even to write new ones – ultra tech interfaces mean knowledge of what you're trying to get the computer to do, is more important than

getting it to it.

Culture lore (Av): Knowledge of another culture, including basic psychology, politics, religion and how to get along with them.

Galaxy lore (Ea): Knowledge of the whereabouts of worlds and other places of interest throughout known space. A little bit of knowledge on the major planets will also be known.

General Knowledge (Ea): Covers everything a typical person would know about their environment, including knowledge of their homeworld, social figures, culture and religions to their own culture's perceptions on other well known races and worlds. It is basically a combined culture lore and world lore for the character's own homeworld and culture.

Mathematics (Av): An understanding of maths, starting with basic algebra, going up to matrices, quadratic equations, vectors, calculus and statistical methods. Simple arithmetic is covered by raw intelligence.

Read/write language (Av): The ability to read and write a language. As for read/write own, it covers an alphabet. Some possible languages are Minbari (average), Old Minbari (average), Narn (average), Centauri (average), Drazi (average).

Read/Write own (Ea): The ability to read and write your own language. The skill actually covers the alphabet used, not the spoken word, so an English person would also be able to read French and German for instance, as long as they can speak those languages, without needing extra read/write skills.

Science (Av): A broad based understanding of science and scientific principles. It is not a suitable replacement for *physics*, *biology*, *chemistry* or other more specialised scientific skills, but can be used to know the core theories of those subjects.

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Speak language (*): The skill of speaking another language. The most common languages are Anglic (average), Narn (average), Centauri (average), Minbari (there are three main Minbari languages, and all are hard for non-Minbari, or average for Minbari), Drazi (average).

Speak own (Ea): The ability to speak your own language. This defaults to 100%.

World lore (Av): Detailed knowledge of a world other than the character's homeworld.

Basic skills

Basic skills are those which can't be bought as childhood skills, but which can be used normally if they are not known (i.e. the character has a skill of only 0%). These skills can also be learnt during the childhood phase of character generation.

Animal ken (Av): Being able to train, control, and befriend animals. It does not give skill with riding animals, or driving a cart, but does give knowledge of how to upkeep riding animals.

Burglary (Av): The skill of being able to break into places. Includes both the practical (often dexterity based) with the theoretical (intelligence or perception based). The latter allows knowledge of where sensors, guards and so on would most likely be, and the best route to circumvent them. For someone in a high tech culture, the skill includes knowledge of electronic sensors, and *basic* ways to foil them.

Carousing (Av): The ability to pick up gossip, meet people and generally get information out of them at social functions.

Drive (Ea): The ability to drive a particular type of land vehicle, such as a car or a lorry. Different classes of vehicles use different skills. This isn't a basic skill, since public transport, or computer controlled private transport, has become the norm in most cultures.

First aid (Ea): Care and treatment of wounds to the extent of stopping bleeding, and preventing infection.

Free fall (Av): The equivalent of *athletics* in zero gravity environments.

Riding (Av): The ability to ride a particular type of animal. A different skill is needed for different types of animals (horses and ponies would be the same skill, a griffon another skill).

Streetwise (Av): Knowledge of how to make contacts in the criminal underworld, how to get on 'in the street', and knowledge of how such people think.

Swimming (Av): The ability to move in water without drowning or panicking. Basically, a waterborne version of the *athletics* skill.

Professional Skills

These skills generally have to be learnt before they can be attempted. Any skill marked with an *, cannot be used at all unless at least one skill point has been put in it.

Some skills (such as *electronics*, *biology*, *physics*) are 'parent' skills, and have several sub-topics which are separate skills in themselves. Such skills are underlined, and their sub-topics are listed after them indented.

The parent skill gives a broad understanding of the basics required for all the topics it covers. The electronics skill for instance will give knowledge of how to wire two circuits together. The communications skill is needed to know what those circuit boards do, and what effect wiring them together will have (assuming they are part of a communications system). Two skill rolls will be needed, one for each skill.

Archaeology (Av*): The study of dead cultures. More specifically, this skill provides knowledge of

how to excavate a site, where to look for possible sites of buried buildings or cities. It also allows educated guesses at what items or ruins found were used for. It does not provide knowledge of specific ancient cultures, only the knowledge to uncover and research them.

Astrogration (Hd*): Covers navigating hyperspace, from plotting a course, to knowing what to do when contact with a hyperspace beacon is lost. This is not required for use of jump gates, though may be useful for plotting short cuts across established routes.

Biology (Ea*): A broad knowledge of organic biology. The biology of most life forms are similar enough to be included in this skill, as long as they are carbon based. Other types of life require a different set of skills.

Genetics (Av*): Knowledge of genetics.

Chemistry (Ea*): A broad knowledge of chemistry.

Computer Hacking (Hd*): This is the skill of getting computers to do what they're not supposed to. It includes optimising programs, re-configuring low level operating system functions, and 'cracking' into secure systems. To some extent, it also covers 'programming', but high tech interfaces and fifth generation languages have more or less done away with that.

Criminology (Av): The study of crime and being able to figure out what a criminal was thinking, and why.

Demolition (Av): Knowing how to blow things up efficiently and safely, though the last is always optional. Gives knowledge of explosives, how to make them, and how to use them.

Electronics (Ea*): Basic knowledge of how electrical systems work, how to wire components together, how to safely handle large electric currents and that sort of thing. It is a parent skill to

the following sub-topics:

Communications (Av): How to design and build communication systems. Also gives knowledge of how to use communication systems, in which case the *electronics* skill isn't needed.

Computers (Av): How to build and design computer systems.

Holographics (Av): How to build, design and repair holographic projectors, recorders and other related technology.

Medical (Av): Building and repairing medical machines, such as diagnostic and life support equipment.

Radar (Av): How to build, design, repair and use radar based sensor systems.

Security (Av): How to build, design and break security systems.

Engineering (Ea*): This covers a broad knowledge of construction engineering, including such tasks as mining, building bridges or buildings, properties of materials and so on.

Buildings (Av*): Ground based building construction.

Mining (Av*): Safely digging mines or other subterranean constructions.

Spacecraft (Av*): Construction and repair of space craft hulls.

Weaponry (Av): Construction of large mechanical weapons, such as ancient siege weapons, cannons and artillery.

Gunnery (Av): The ability to use large ship mounted weapons. It is used with intelligence rather than dexterity, since it relies more on second

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guessing the target's movements rather than accuracy in shooting (the latter of which is handled by computers).

Intelligence Analysis (Av): Being able to understand and make decisions based on (normally military) intelligence data.

Mechanics (Ea*): Being able to build and repair mechanical devices, such as engines. Gives basic knowledge of how machines work,

Clockwork (Ea*): Clockwork mechanisms.

Combustion engine (Av*): Building and repairing petrol driven engines.

Jet engines (Av*): Building, designing and repairing jet engines.

Jump physics (Hd*): Building and repairing hyperspace jump drives.

Nuclear fission (Av*): Knowledge of fission systems, including bombs, space drives and power plants. This is the same as the physics skill of the same name.

Nuclear fusion (Av*): Knowledge of plasma drives and fusion reactors and fusion bombs. This is the same as the *physics* skill of the same name.

Robotics (Av*): Building automated robots. Does not include the skill needed to program them.

Medicine (Hd*): Advanced medical knowledge. Reduces recovery times when people are recovering from wounds. There is one skill for each race.

Physics (Ea*): Broad knowledge of basic physics, including basic atomic theory, motion, thermodynamics and optics.

Jump physics (Hd*): Same as the mechanics skill of the same name.

Nuclear fission (Av*): Same as the mechanics skill of the same name.

Nuclear fusion (Av*): Same as the mechanics skill of the same name.

Relativity (Av*): Knowledge of relativity and relativistic effects.

Quantum physics (Av*): Knowledge of the quantum world, including sub-atomic particles and quantum probability.

Pilot plane (Av): The ability to fly a plane.

Pilot space craft (Av): The ability to fly a space craft. A separate skill is needed for fighters, shuttles, small ships (30 dtons to 500 dtons), medium ships (to 2000 dtons) and large ships. A skill with a ship of one size category, can be used for ships of a different category, at a -3 penalty for each size category different.

Poisons (Av): Knowledge of poisons, and how to use them.

Tactics (Av): Knowledge of tactics and strategy for planning, and fighting battles with large numbers of people. There are tactic skills for each type of warfare – *infantry, armoured, air, sea* and *space*.

Tracking (Av): The ability to find, identify and follow tracks left by animals and people. To follow a single person across soft terrain is *moderate* difficulty. Muddy terrain, or a large number of people or creatures makes it easier. An opposed tracking roll can be used to hide tracks.

Research (Ea): Being able to find useful information in a sea of not so useful information quickly and efficiently.

Survival (Av): Knowledge of how to get by in the

wilderness, from finding food, trapping animals, and moving at speed across country. There is one survival skill for each type of terrain (woodlands, plains, mountains, arctic, swamp etc).

Weapon skills: Any one of a number of different skills used to handle weapons. See the combat section for details of what are available. The two important skills are pistol and rifle, which cover most of the hand weapons commonly in use in the Babylon 5 universe.

Xenoarchaeology (Av): A broad knowledge of ancient cultures and races, as well as experience with some of the weirder cultures. It does not give knowledge of how to excavate sites - for that, the basic archaeology skill is needed.