

NEW SKILLS FOR POWERS & PERILS

by
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Characters are defined by their attributes and knowledge. The somatic talents and disabilities of a Character are an essential part of his total being. Education serves to define both the state of development that the Character's talents are in and the type of person that that Character has become. This given, it is important to have as large and varied a selection of skills as possible. The greater the choice available, the better able the Player will be to create a Character that is real and compelling. In my mind, this is the essential goal in Character Generation regardless of the game you are in. A great deal of the enjoyment to be found in role-playing is in taking this "new being" of your creation and, through the game, defining and expanding his or her place in the cosmos that you are in. That is role-playing.

The skills presented in this article expand the educational base of **Powers & Perils**. By doing so, it will enhance your ability to design unique characters. The skills are presented in alphabetical order below. I hope you find them to be of value.

ACROBAT

Maximum Level - $(D + A + E) / 15$

Cost to Learn - 40 **Cost Per Level** - NEL squared

This is a new entertainment skill. If a Character is a Dancer, reduce the Cost to Learn Acrobatics to 20. On the Entertainment table Acrobats use the same line as Dancers. If a Character is both an Acrobat and a Dancer, subtract 1 per Acrobat EL/5 (rounded up) from his success roll as a Dancer and add one to the number of coins earned performing.

In addition to performing, acrobatic training affects other abilities. The following advantages are gained:

- A) Increase DCV by EL/5 (rounded down).
- B) Increase Dodge Value by EL/3 (rounded down).
- C) An Acrobat's Climbing Factor is increased by ONE whether he is a trained climber or not. This applies for all aspects of Climbing including falls.
- D) Acrobats add their EL to all uses of Deftness, and all Dexterity or Agility based saving throws, where precise body placement is important.

ARCHITECT

Maximum EL - $(I + W + Em) / 2$ or 80

Cost to Learn - 150 **Cost Per Level** - 8

Player Architects must specify whether the Character is a MILITARY or CIVILIAN architect. Both specialties allow him to design structures, create simple machines and engines and detect weaknesses or points of easy access in structures. Military architects use the skill at full value for military buildings and design. When either uses his skill in the other's area, his EL applies at 1/2 value (rounded down). The cost to learn the other specialty, once the first is known, is 75 expertise points. The starting EL in the second field may not exceed the Current EL in the first specialty.

OPTIONAL

A second architect type, using the factors above, is the Naval Architect. This specialist learns to design and analyze the structure of ships. Within this specialty, the Referee should require specialization as either a military or civilian naval architect. This has the advantages stated above except it applies to shipping and facilities with a maritime function, i.e. wharves, piers, warehouses, quays, etc.

BLACKSMITH

Maximum Level - S+W or 80

Cost to Learn - 10 **Cost Per Level** - 5

A Blacksmith is skilled in simple iron working, i.e. making and repairing common iron items. He has no skill with weapons or armor and gains no advantage in analyzing these items. He can make rough approximations of iron quality, workmanship, etc. for iron items he examines. (If Armorers wish to be Blacksmiths, they must buy this skill in addition to their skill as Armorers.)

BOWYER

Maximum Level - $(I + W + D) / 2$ or 80

Cost to Learn - 45 **Cost Per Level** - 7

Skill in making bows. As for Armorer except the skill applies for bows. The time necessary to make a bow is 10 days for a Bow, 20 for a Longbow and 40 for a Composite Bow. The EL, divided by 10 and rounded down, is subtracted from the number of days required. (For Crossbows, the skill costs 60 expertise points. The time to make crossbows is Light 12 days, Heavy 16 days, Arbalest 24 days and Repeating Crossbow, if possible in the area, 60 days.) All times are based on the availability of the materials necessary, in the proper condition for their use. Where this is not the case the Referee may increase the time required by up to a factor of 20, i.e. up to 20 times the listed time.

NOTE - If the Character is an Elven Bowyer he only makes Elven Bows. The time to do so, as specified above, is 90 days. (If he has to make or collect the necessary material himself it could take five years to finish the bow.)

BREWER

Maximum Level - I + Em or 80

Cost to Learn - 10 **Cost Per Level** - 3

As for Vintner (see below) except the skill applies for beer, ale and other brewed beverages. At EL61 and up, the Brewer has enough skill to make Peska if he has a formula for it.

CARPENTER

Maximum Level - $(W + D) + StB \times 5$ or 80

Cost to Learn - 10 **Cost Per Level** - 5

Per time that the Cost to Learn is paid, choose one of the following specialties: 1) Marine Carpenter, 2) Woodworker or 3) Builder. Each specialty costs the full Cost to Learn. The cost to learn all three forms of Carpentry is 30 expertise points.

A Marine Carpenter can make naval implements, judge the quality of vessels and, given a known design and the materials, construct small vessels for carrying less than ten people in coastal or riverine waters. He may not build ocean-going or larger vessels without the services of a Naval Architect.

Woodworkers are skilled in making common items, i.e. barrels, furniture, etc. They can analyze the quality of various woods for durability, usefulness, etc. (Possibly quite important if you need to break down a door.) If the woodworker is also an artist, or has art knowledge, he can create exceptional pieces that could be worth a great deal.

NOTE - It is up to the Referee to handle the possible monetary gain from using this scale. In general, the most anyone would pay for an item made by a woodworker equals EL divided by 5, rounded down, in Copper Coins. If the character is also an artist the coin type is Silver and the formula is $(Woodwork\ EL + Artist\ EL) / 10$, rounded down.

A Builder is skilled in raising wooden buildings. He can analyze the features of these buildings. He may not build structures more complex than a peasant house unless he has a building plan or the services of an architect.

NOTE - This skill can give the character advantages in spotting traps, strange features in buildings, secret doors, etc. It is also used to rig passable structures to shelter the party from the elements when they are in the wild.

CLOTHIER

Maximum Level – (W+D+Em)/2 or 80

Cost to Learn – 10 Cost Per Level – 4

There are three types of clothiers, i.e. cloth workers, that Players may choose from. They are 1) Weaver, 2) Tailor and 3) Designer. The first two are purchased at the cost above. To be a designer, the Character must be a Weaver and a Tailor and pay 20 expertise points for a starting level as a Designer.

Weavers weave cloth, rugs, etc. They can judge the quality of woven cloth. Tailors can make garments, if cloth and a basic pattern are available. They can also determine the quality of the workmanship of clothing. Designers have all the skills of Weavers and Tailors. They are capable of creating unique designs and can tell, from cut and style, where a particular garment is from (given experience in clothing styles of that area).

EROTICIST

Maximum Level – (W+Em+A+Ap)/20

Cost to Learn – 70 Cost Per Level – NEL squared

An Eroticist is a specialist in bringing pleasure to others. This skill is used, like Rhetoric, to convince others to do something the Eroticist desires. Though the name of the skill has sexual connotations, skill in that area is only part of this skill. The Eroticist is a personal companion, skilled entertainer and trained to find out what a person needs to relax and then provide it. A fully trained Eroticist is a consummate entertainer, a perfect companion and something of a physical therapist.

As part of this skill, the Eroticist gains the following advantages:

- A) Knowledge of natural materials and drugs that bring pleasure or ease pain. (Starting Level as Herbalist with knowledge restricted to the areas above only.)
- B) A Starting Level in Rhetoric.

GAMBLING MADE EASY

The rules below are used to simulate a night of gambling for one or more players. Where the gaming is especially intense, the Referee may require the people involved to participate in up to three passes using these rules. When this should apply is left to the Referee's discretion.

THE WAGER

The Referee determines, based on the place and individuals involved, what coin type is being played for. When the game is player initiated, they can set the stake by convincing their would be pigeon to play at that level. Once the coin type is set it remains at that level for the entire game UNLESS the situation changes it.

THE GAME

The basic game requires each participant to roll 3D10. It can be played in simple or complex forms. The gambling modifiers listed above are added to the roll of 3D10 to determine the number of coins won or lost.

SIMPLE

In this game the high roller wins the amount of his roll after all modifiers have been added. Each loser pays an equal share of these winnings. Fractions from division are dropped and paid by the participant with the lowest roll. Trained Gamblers may use their EL x 10 on D100 (If the winner is a Gambler his EL x 3 is subtracted from this chance). Success reduces their loss by 50%, rounded down. Partial Success reduces it by ONE coin. Failure has no effect. Any savings is subtracted from the winner's winnings.

COMPLEX

In this form of the game each roll is compared to every other roll to determine who wins. In this way there can be more than one winner and loser. The basic procedure is as above except each person pays the difference between his roll and any higher roll AND collects the difference between his roll and any lower roll. See the example below to see how this works.

C) May learn Dancer, Singer and any Musician skill at 1/2 the normal Cost to Learn. (If skills are not learned at the same time that Erotic training is taken this advantage is lost.)

D) May use EL/5, rounded up, to give soothing massages for injured persons. The effect increases both StB and CB for healing by the number determined plus ONE. If the Eroticist does not have the oils and balms used with massages, reduce the effect by 50% rounded down.

FLETCHER

Maximum Level – W + D or 80

Cost to Learn – 10 Cost of Level – 4

Skill in making arrows. This skill operates, for arrows and quarrels, as specified for the Armorer. The time to make an arrow is 1 day. (If the materials are available. If not he must acquire the metal points and feathers and make the shaft and nock.)

GAMBLER

Maximum Level – (W + D + E + Em)/20

Cost to Learn – 60 Per EL Increase – NEL x 5

Gamblers are skilled in games of chance and sleight of hand tricks. They get a Starting Level in Deftness as part of this skill. They also have the following advantages:

- A) With a successful Deftness roll, adding his Gambler EL to his Deftness, he can cheat while Gambling. Successful cheats add EL x 3 to their gambling roll. If the Deftness roll is a Partial Success the Gambler adds his EL to the roll. If it is a failure he adds nothing.
- B) Without cheating, a Gambler may add his EL to his Gambling roll, reflecting his familiarity with the sport and a learned ability to figure the odds.
- C) Gamblers have an increased chance of spotting cheaters and may roll Em + (Gambler EL x 5) to spot another professional while gambling.
- D) Gamblers can make and use devices that give the benefits of (A) above without requiring a Deftness roll to cheat, i.e. marked cards, loaded dice, etc.

EXAMPLE

	PLAYER					
PLAYER	1(42)	2(28)	3(20)	4(16)	5(8)	TOTAL
1(42)	XXXX	+14	+22	+26	+34	+96
2(28)	-14	XXXX	+8	+12	+20	+26
3(20)	-22	-8	XXXX	+4	+12	-14
4(16)	-26	-12	-4	XXXX	+8	-34
5(8)	-34	-20	-12	-8	XXXX	-74

This might change if Player 1 or 2 got caught cheating, especially if the stake is gold and player 4 or 5 do the catching.

NOTE – Cutting losses may be attempted here also. Success reduces the coin loss by EL x 2. Partial Success reduces it by the EL. Failure has no effect. Losses cut are divided evenly between all winners. In the case above, if Player 3 is an EL5 Gambler who succeeds in reducing his loss he loses 4 coins. Player 1 and 2 win 91 and 21 respectively.

DETECTING A CHEATER

The basic factor for catching someone cheating is determined by adding City Survival + Gambling. From this factor, subtract the EL of the Gambler you are trying to catch. This is the net factor that you work with in catching him.

If the cheater made his Deftness roll the chance to catch him equals the Net Factor. If the result is a Partial Success it is the Net Factor x 2. If he fails the chance equals the Net Factor x 4.

If the person trying to catch a cheat is a Gambler his EL as a Gambler, times the multiplier used on the Net Factor above, is added to the chance after the cheater's EL has been subtracted.

EXAMPLE

Evad the Deft (EL11) is playing three pigeons and a stranger. He decides to cheat. His opponents are City Survival 3, 6, 12 and 8. The Stranger is an EL7 Gambler. Evad has a partial success on Deftness. The first player can't catch him. The second player has a 1% chance. The third player has a 13% chance. The Stranger has a 33% chance.

MASON

Maximum Level—S + St or 80

Cost to Learn—10 **Cost Per Level**—5

A skilled stone-worker. Masons must choose between 1) Stonelayer, 2) Stonecutter and 3) Brick Mason. Each time that the skill is purchased, one of these skills can be gained. Stonelayers know how stones are put in place in building. Stonecutters can cut and shape blocks of building stone and other crude stone artifacts. Brick masons know how to make bricks and mortar and lay them in place. Stone-layers and Brick masons can analyze structural features of stone or brick buildings that apply to their skill, i.e. notice strange textures or material, pick up anomalies in the building that might conceal a door, trap, etc. Stone-cutters can analyze the shape of the building's stones to get a clue about hidden structural features.

MERCHANT

Maximum Level—W + E or 80

Cost to Learn—45 **Cost Per Level**—5

Merchant characters are skilled bargainers, experts in the sale and analysis of a specific commodity and excellent traders. As part of this skill, the Character receives a Starting Level in Rhetoric and Read and Write (a foreign tongue he speaks if he can already write his own).

Characters must select a precise category of goods that they can buy and sell. His EL + 20 is used in analyzing the quality and value of this commodity. His unmodified EL may be used with related commodities. His EL/2 can be used for items made with related methods or materials. (If the merchant sells some type of animal, this chance can be used with other animals, i.e. a horse merchant looking at a mule gets this chance, looking at a dog, bird or lizard he does not.)

EXAMPLE

You are a merchant. As a person, you are interested in weapons. You choose to specialize in Heavy Swords. You have EL + 20 chance looking at any Heavy Sword, EL chance with all Swords and Daggers and EL/2 with any other bladed weapons (including those made by another race).

In another case, the player likes horses. He wants to choose horses as his specialty. He can't. He must select a specific class of horse, i.e. riding, war or draft. He gets EL + 20 for that type, EL for all other Horses and EL/2 for all other Equines (Mules, Burros, Sri Eponi, etc).

NOTE—For an additional 20 expertise points, the player may select HUMANS as his commodity. In this case, he gains a Starting Level as an Executioner as well and is a Slaver.

POTTER

Maximum Level—(D + W + Em)/2 or 80

Cost to Learn—10 **Cost Per Level**—4

The Character is skilled with ceramics. The skill may be used to make ceramic items or analyze the value of Ceramics as specified for Artists in Powers & Perils.

SCRIBE

Maximum Level—D + Em or 80

Cost to Learn—30 **Cost of Level**—4

Characters must know how to read and write before they learn this skill. Scribes are skilled copyists and calligraphers. Once the basic skill is gained in their native writing form, they gain it for the unique styles of other cultures at a cost of 15 expertise points per culture. A scribe can tell, from the writing style used, what culture a writer is from (if they know that style, if not they know he isn't from the local area). In addition, because of the beauty of his writing, his documents, when intended to influence the reader, carry more weight. Add his EL/5, rounded up, to the Influence Chance of the person who originated the message. (The Influence chance can never be more than doubled in this way.)

SCHOLAR

Maximum Level—(I + W + Em/2 or 80

Cost to Learn—100 **Cost Per Level**—6

Scholars have a developed mastery of a specific field of knowledge. All Scholars receive their Maximum Level in Reading and Writing any two languages OR any one archaic

language and a Starting Level in one Scholar specialty of their choice. The languages chosen must bear a logical relationship to the Scholarly specialty chosen by the player. After the Cost to Learn specified above is paid, and the first specialty is gained, the Character can gain a Starting Level in a related specialty at a cost of 25 expertise points and any other specialty at a cost of 50 expertise points.

EXAMPLE

The scholars specialty is art, i.e. paintings. He can gain sculpting for 25 expertise points. It will cost him 60 to become a historian.

The ability of the Scholar allows him to recognize items from within his area of interest and, with successful analysis, to determine their approximate age, value, area of origin and significance. Players must be PRECISE in defining their specialty such that it covers a specific type of item or knowledge. Some basic specialties that can be used are:

SPECIALTY AREA	DEFINITION REQUIRED		
	1	2	3
History	YES	NO	YES
Metaphysics	NO	YES	NO
Art	NO	YES	NO
Architecture	NO	YES	YES
Theology	YES	NO	NO
Mathematics	NO	YES	NO
Geology	YES	YES	NO
Geography	YES	YES	NO
Linguistics	YES	NO	YES
Medicine	NO	YES	NO
Another Race	YES	YES	YES
Astrology	NO	YES	NO
Antique Coins	YES	NO	YES
Clothing	NO	NO	YES
Myths and Legends	YES	NO	YES

EXPLANATION

YES indicates that factor should be defined for the specialty selected. **NO** means that it need not be (but you may wish to do so anyway). The definition of factors 1, 2 and 3 are as specified below:

- 1) The physical area, nation or group the scholar studies.
- 2) The specific type of item or specialty within the class that is studied.
- 3) A general historical epoch the scholar concentrates on.

EXAMPLE

The player wants to be an Art Scholar. He must define the specialty studied. He chooses Sculpture (He could have chosen Painting, Ceramics, Mosaic Art, etc). Though it is not necessary, he also defines his primary interest as being the sculpture of the E'lici 10th Dynasty to flesh out his skill.

With the appropriate factors defined, the scholar will have a precise specialty that can be used in play. His EL is his chance of analyzing that area. Half his EL, rounded up, is his chance for dealing with closely related areas.

IMPORTANT—This skill **REQUIRES** the player to logically define the skill he wants to have. The Referee will set the level of definition required. A scholar specialty should never be taken without such forethought and analysis. No Scholar skill gives the character any talent in making or fashioning the item studied or any advantage in the use of any other skill, i.e. an art scholar is not an artist, though he can be if he acquires the appropriate skill.

SERVANT

Maximum Level—(St + I + Em)/2 or 80

Cost to Learn—10 **Cost Per Level**—3

The Servant professions, each acquired separately, are House Servant, Cook, Barber, Gardener, etc. (Servants such as maids, butlers, waitresses, etc. are House Servants.) House servants are skilled in dealing with people, general cleaning and (EL40 and up) managing house affairs. Cooks are trained in the culinary arts. They gain some advantage in detecting unusual undertastes, such as a poison. Barbers are trained

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in personal hygiene maintenance. Their knowledge, in most civilized lands, includes knowledge of cosmetics as well as common hair-styles. Gardeners are skilled in caring for plants and in landscaping.

NOTE—If you wish to create other service professions, assign the basic skills logically. The basic factors should be as specified above. For all of these skills, the practices and items they are fluent with are those that are native to their culture. The full Cost to Learn must be paid to gain the skill for the practices of any other culture. Until it is paid, use the existing EL at ½ value. Afterwards, the existing EL may be used at its full value.

SMUGGLER

Maximum Level—(D + W + E)/2 or 80

Cost to Learn—120 **Cost Per Level**—8

Smugglers are skilled in concealing items to prevent them from being found. In addition to the basic skill, Smugglers have a starting level in the Merchant specialty of their choice and a starting level as an Actor (Actor only. To gain the other skills that go with it, the Actor skill must be bought. If it is, the Smuggler gets a maximum level as an actor and a starting level in Disguise and Rhetoric.)

Smugglers gain the following advantages in play:

A) They can detect items, passages or devices hidden by others.

B) They can hide items with a reduced chance that others can detect them, given available space and a way to do it. (To hide an item perfectly the smuggler must specify how he is hiding the item, roll success AND have enough time to hide it as specified.) The Referee may modify a Searcher's success chance based on how well the item is hidden, the roll and how much of the necessary time the Smuggler actually had to hide the item.

C) They add their EL/5, rounded up, to anyone's roll to find them if they try to hide or try to avoid an encounter.

In A + B above the Smuggler uses his EL as his chance. When the person trying to detect hidden items is also a trained smuggler, the smuggler may subtract his EL/2, rounded up, from that Smuggler's roll to find the item.

TANNER

Maximum Level—St + W or 80

Cost to Learn—10 **Cost Per Level**—5

Skill in working leather, tanning and fashioning leather items. If the Tanner's EL is greater than 40 he is capable of making serviceable Leather Armor. He can analyze common leather items and tell leather from other like materials, i.e. he knows which is leather though he may not know what the items that aren't are made of.

TEAMSTER

Maximum Level—St + W or 80

Cost to Learn—10 **Cost Per Level**—3

Skill in driving wagons and carts, carrying for animal harnesses and, if twice the normal cost is paid, taking care of draft animals. The Teamster can analyze the quality of a wagon, cart or harnesses. He can also tell how good a team is, i.e. the quality of the animals, how well-trained they are in working together, etc. If he learns to care for animals, his Healing EL for common draft animals (horses and oxen) equals his EL as a Teamster divided by 20 and rounded up.

VINTNER

Maximum Level—I + Em or 80

Cost to Learn—15 **Cost Per Level**—4

The character is skilled in making wine and analyzing the quality of wines. The EL is used to determine his chance of success in this analysis. The quality of wine that he makes is based on his EL as follows:

EL	QUALITY	EL	QUALITY
1-20	Poor	51-70	Fine
21-60	Good	71-80	Exceptional

(The quality yielded above is, of course, dependent on the availability of the proper equipment, aging time and materials. No one can make exceptional wine from junk grapes.)

NOTE—In making any item the time stated is for making that item and doing nothing else. If some other action is taken, double the time required to make the item, i.e. per day doing something else as well you get ½ days progress on the item.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

It is possible to utilize some of the abilities gained from certain skills without fully mastering that skill. For our purposes, this is called General Knowledge. It indicates that the Character has not sought to, or yet been able to, master a given skill but he has learned certain things to his benefit.

Persons who gain General Knowledge in a skill determine the costs, benefits and restrictions below:

RESTRICTIONS

- 1) Not allowed for any Combat skill.
- 2) Not allowed for any skill with a cost to learn less than 20.
- 3) Skill gained is subject to referee interpretation.
- 4) General Knowledge of this kind may not be gained in Survival or Language skills. It is only applicable towards skills that have multiple applications or benefits.

COST

The cost for General Knowledge with a given skill is ½ of the Cost to Learn that skill completely, rounded up. Where it is gained in play, the time to learn is as for any other training.

BENEFITS

The character is able to use ONE specific attribute of the skill as if he had full training. He may not use any other attribute of the skill in any way. The Starting and Maximum EL's for the knowledge gained are as normal for the skill. The Cost to Increase EL is ½ that specified for the skill, rounded up.

EXAMPLE

Merda Redoris apprenticed to a Jeweler before he ran off to become a soldier. He did not master the art, but he learned how to analyze the value of gems. He has EL43 in Analyzing Gems. He knows none of the other skills associated with the trade.

Wal-Azabar's father was once an entertainer and acrobat. When he returned to the desert, he decided to teach his sons ways to position themselves in defense. Wal-Azabar has EL6 Acrobat only usable for DCV increase.

FURTHER EDUCATION

If the person with General Knowledge decides to study further, the expertise allocated to gaining General Knowledge can be applied towards the cost to gain that skill. However, no expertise gained from using the General Knowledge may be applied to further studies in the skill. They are only applicable to the Character's use of his General Knowledge.

EXAMPLE

Junal the Binder has EL65 in repairing weapons with his Armorer General Knowledge. He decides to become a real armorer. His cost to get the General Knowledge is his starting point for progressing. The expertise he has gained in repairing weapons is ignored in this. Second, with his attributes Junal's starting level is 40. He has EL65 in repairing weapons still and EL40 in all other skills of an Armorer.

How the Referee chooses to use this rule is at his discretion. Its purpose is to give Referees and Players the ability to flesh out character personas as reasonably as possible. It also adds a new layer of realism to the game. It is reasonable to assume that people who deal often with a given set of circumstances or a certain class of thing pick up some knowledge relevant to those dealings. It is not completely reasonable to assume that every such person will, or can, master the skill or skills necessary to possess all of that knowledge. This rule allows you to simulate this fact using the Powers & Perils rules system. Properly used it should increase your ability to create characters that are complete individuals. I hope you find it of use.