MECHA ACES

Mecha Aces

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About Fudge:

Fudge is a role-playing game written by Steffan O'Sullivan, with extensive input from the Usenet community of rec. games.design. The basic rules of Fudge are available on the Internet at http://www.fudgerpg.com/. And in book form from Grey Ghost Games, P.O. Box 838, Randolph, MA 02368. They may be used with any gaming genre. While an individual work derived from Fudge may specify certain attributes and skills, many more are possible with Fudge. Every Game Master using Fudge is encouraged to add or ignore any character traits. Anybody who wishes to distribute such material for free may do so; merely include this:

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Mecha Aces, the FUDGE based RPG based on mecha anime from ComStar! In this book, you will read how to immerse yourself into the exciting and challenging world of mecha. What are mecha, you ask? This book considers mecha to be any man-made, mechanical vehicle. That means cars, trucks, boats, airplanes, and starships all fall under the jurisdiction of these rules. Most importantly, however, the term mecha refers to large mechanical humanoid vehicles used for war. This is where the bulk of mecha anime places its emphasis.

How will we 'immerse' ourselves, you ask? Well, take a large tub of water then... oops, wrong book, let's try again. In this book, you will learn how to play what is known as an RPG. That stands for Role Playing Game. In an RPG, the players act as characters in a story told by the GM, or Game Master. The point of the rules is that when two forces want to accomplish opposite goals, they can resolve the issue in an objective and logical matter (rather than simply arguing). The rules provided in this book are a great way to represent the serious action and zany antics of mecha anime.

What is mecha anime, you ask? Well, I was just getting to that. Anime is the term used to denote an animated feature that comes from Japan. There is a whole sub-culture in America devoted to this collection of works from half-way-round the world. To be considered a *mecha* anime, this book holds the anime to specific, all be it loose, criteria. First, the anime must contain some sort of mechanized technology. Be that in modern day form (cars, trucks, airplanes) or in futuristic form (fighting robots, huge spaceships). Second, this mechanization must have a proactive role in the story (the robots are used to fight a large scale war, the cars are used for racing, the spaceships are capable of battling one another, etc.). This rule setup may be a little hefty if you only wanted to apply it to the family car, which does nothing but tote the characters around unabated. These are the only two criteria to apply while determining when to use this book's rules: there exists mechanized technology, and it is used actively to further the story.

This book's rules apply FUDGE as its basic foundation. However, do not mistake this book as another of the myriad of simple campaign settings or sourcebooks for FUDGE. This book only uses FUDGE as its core foundation. The rules are then modified, expanded, and adapted to fluid and practical application for mecha anime. That means that you will see a lot of new and innovative features added on top of the FUDGE foundation that you will not see in any other rulebook. That is the true beauty of Mecha Aces. By taking tested and solid FUDGE rules and breaking new ground with them, Mecha Aces aspires to be the premier mecha RPG.
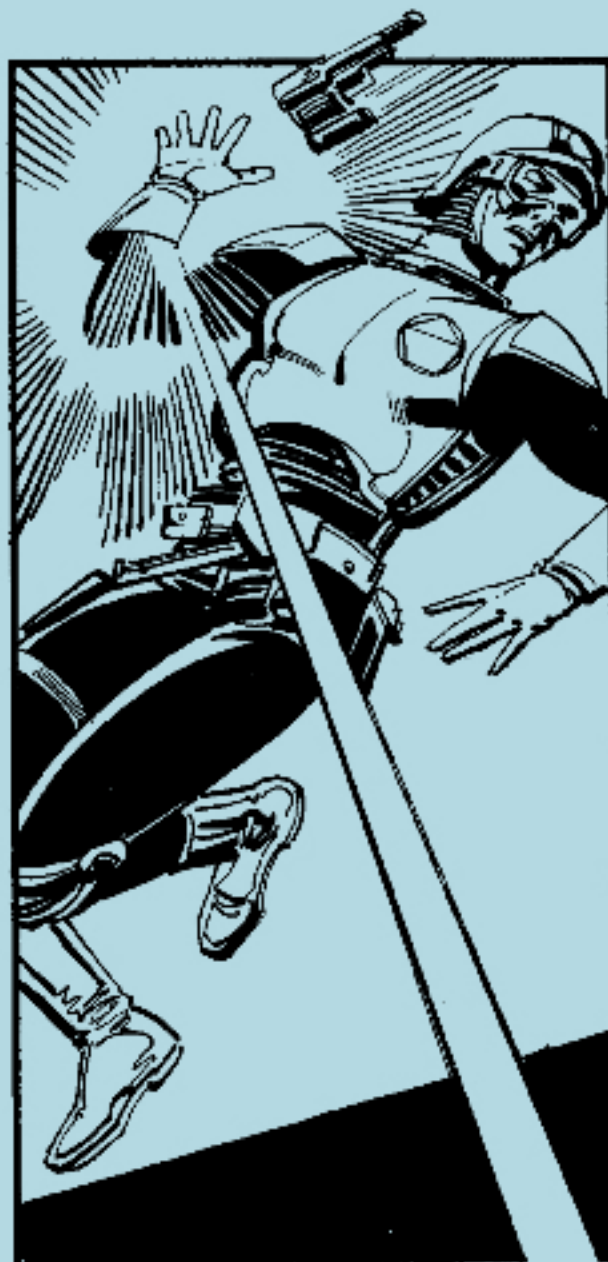
CHAPTER 0: MECHA ACES IN A NUTSHELL

Introduction

Mecha Aces applies the FUDGE rule-set to manage both human and mechanized interaction alike. To accommodate this, Mecha Aces uses generally normal human based rules, and then modifies them for use with mecha. We will now explore the various facets of this game, and provide a basic overlay for its main theme.

WHAT THIS BOOK CONTAINS, WHAT IT DOESN'T

This book contains all of the rules you will need to run a table-top role-playing game which emulates the plot elements found in mecha anime. This includes character and mecha conception, tips on running an effective game, and even special optional rules such as magic, psychic powers, and techniques. This book also contains four sample settings, so you can have an easier time jumping right into the worlds of mecha anime! There is a lot to explore in this book, and I hope you will enjoy every nut and bolt of Mecha Aces!!!

CHARACTERS

The player will run their own character, with is their role in the story. This requires the player to talk, act, and speak for their character; the player assumes that identity for the duration of the game. Characters in Mecha Aces are most commonly Mecha pilots. However, depending upon the application of the Mecha Aces rules, your character could be whatever their dreams aspire!

TRAITS

In FUDGE, a person is broken down into certain Traits. These Traits are: Attributes, Skills, Gifts, Faults, and Supernatural Powers. Two of these Traits, Attributes and Skills, have levels which describe the character's ability relative to other characters. These levels are:

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

Also, there are some derived values that will help define your character and assist in Action Resolution. We will examine each of these Traits briefly, so you can get a feel for the general structure of the game before continuing.

ATTRIBUTES

Each character has five Attributes. These represent the characters basic physical and mental capabilities compared to other characters. The five basic Attributes are Strength, Agility, Tech, Insight, and Will. Strength is a measure of the character's brute force and physical prowess. Agility is a measure of the character's speed, grace, and dexterity. Tech is a measure of the character's logical and analytical thinking skills. Insight is the character's natural creativity and ability to inflect to solve problems. Will is a measure of the character's tenacity, resolve, and mental toughness. Attributes have levels, as mentioned before. All of a character's Attributes start off at Fair; upon creation a character receives two free levels to boost their Attributes.

Skills

As the name would convey, a Skill is an ability learned over time. There are nearly 100 different Skills in Mecha Aces. Skills reflect your character's experience and learning before they entered the story. Skills are also developed, honed, and generally improved throughout the course of playing with that character. Unlike Attributes, a character does *not* start out as Fair in all of the Skills. Instead, each Skill starts off at some default level, usually Poor, and the character receives 45 points with which to specialize their Skills.

GIFTS

This Trait reflects the unique assets a character has acquired over their lives, or was simply born with. Gifts do not have levels, you simply have them or you don't. However, some Gifts may be purchased multiple times for a better and better effect. There are several Gifts available in the similarly named Gifts chapter. Each character receives two free Gifts at creation.

FAULTS

Everyone has their imperfections. This Trait accounts for that human fallibility. A Fault can reflect a physical shortcoming, mental drawback, or simply a bad situation you are in. Purchasing Faults gives your character more points with which to purchase other Traits.

MAGIC

Mecha Aces includes a Magic system. This system is optional; the game in no way requires the characters to wield apocalyptic magics of doom. Implementation of the Magic rules is up to GM's discretion. The Magic system includes four sample disciplines, complete with powers for your budding mage's spell list.

PSYCHIC POWERS

Much like the Magic system, the Psychic Power rules are entirely optional, and are up to GM's discretion to implement. Psychic Powers allow a character to develop powerful psionic abilities, and use those tiny corners of the human brain nobody seems to bother with. Psychic abilities are purchased as Skills, with the power of their abilities depending upon that Skill's level.

TECHNIQUES

Pilots often use practiced maneuvers on the foe. From an acrobatic jet fighter trick, to a deliberate and strategic

submarine maneuver, a pilot often finds the right stuff to defeat their enemy. As a Technique represents the pilot's basic talents, each Technique is linked to one of the pilot's Attributes. Thusly, a pilot can only have five Techniques. The construction and cost of Techniques is outlined in more detail in the aptly named Technique chapter.

WOUND LEVELS

This is a reflection of the physical damage a person can endure. This is split into levels, called Wound Levels, which reflect the characters current state of health. These are: Hurt, Very Hurt, Down, and Dead. The base amount of Wound points in each level is equal to Strength + Will + 10. The Hurt level has the base amount available to it. The Very Hurt has double the base amount. The Down level has triple the base amount. Finally, the Dead level has five times the base.

INTRODUCTION TO MECHA ANIME

The basic form of a mecha is a vehicle that takes on a humanoid shape. This vehicle can be large or small, heavy or light, as long as it looks vaguely humanoid. Often, mecha are operated by a single pilot, which sits in a cockpit somewhere in the mecha (often the chest or head). Mecha can be used for construction, manual labor, or even warfare.

Mecha are used in anime in various ways. First and foremost, mecha are generally the big, weapon ridden vehicles the characters trample around in. This has a place in both military settings or even in lighter anime where anybody may have a mecha available to them. When in shoujo anime, mecha are often the 'backdrop' in front of which character interaction and development takes place. What this means is that the mecha are only an interesting sidepiece to the actual story of romance, drama, and/or comedy. Mecha may kick butt and take names, but the point of shoujo is its compelling story, not its compelling body count. Mecha are usually considered to be technologically advanced. That is to say, mecha (at least bipedal war machines) are not existent in today's world. Mecha are usually found in a 'science fiction' type of anime. Despite this, any level of technological vehicle can be represented by Mecha Aces, by balancing the proper Gifts/Faults. In anime, mecha often co notate war, death, and destruction. This is not a necessary connection. Mecha can be utilized for their superior extension of the human body. While a coast guard member may not be able to swim up to a drowning person during a hurricane, their mecha may be able to brave the storm and use its large hand to rescue the unfortunate individual. Even smaller mecha can assist a situation non-violently. A person unable to move their legs from birth would greatly benefit from a small mecha that carries them, while retaining a humanoid enough shape to maneuver in a world built for bipeds. While applying Mecha Aces, be creative and flexible on how much the creation of mecha has benefited society.

As far as this RPG is concerned, the definition of mecha is infinitely flexible. By balancing Gifts, Faults, and Attributes, this RPG can generate nearly any form of machinery, vehicle or otherwise.

In several cases, mecha represented by Mecha Aces will be as mundane as cars, airplanes, or even robot butlers. The Mecha Aces system provides the flexibility to be used on anything mechanical from a tinkerer's pocket watch robot to a huge space station. For anime with various forms of magic or paranormal powers, Mecha Aces can keep pace with a set of optional Supernatural Power Gifts and Faults.

HOW DO I PILOT THIS THING, ANYWAY?!?!

Piloting a mecha is a difficult task. Much like riding a bike, piloting becomes easier with time, and it is a skill you never forget. Normal people, provided they have never seen a bicycle before, wouldn't know how to ride one right away. The same concepts apply to mecha piloting. Because Mecha Aces characters wouldn't be able to simply jump into a mecha and know what they are doing, a collection of Mecha Skills has been provided with Mecha Aces. Characters may purchase levels of Mecha Skills with skill points, as with any other skill. These skills cover the various facets of piloting a mecha, and are provided in the Skills chapter.

MECHA, AND ALL THEIR BITS AND PIECES

In Mecha Aces, the abilities and features of a mecha are explained by their Traits. Traits are qualitative representations that reflect the build and functionality of a mecha.

The first Trait we will deal with, Attributes, will explain the abilities of a mecha compared to other mecha of its size. There are five Attributes: Servo, Gyro, Comp, Build, and Maintenance. Each Attribute reflects the performance of that facet of the mecha's abilities. Attributes have a qualitative range, which exactly reflects its performance. That range is the same of that in Mecha Aces, being:

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

The numbers in parenthesis after the range indicate the bonus or penalty incurred to an Action Resolution check that uses that Attribute. All Attributes start as Fair, and are altered during Mecha Conception.

The next Trait we will deal with is called Gifts. Gifts are the special features a mecha has that set it apart from the standard bipedal vehicle. Gifts also help determine the exact physical form. The functionality granted from a Gift is beneficial. Several Gifts are provided in the Gifts Chapter, but any beneficial feature a mecha has can be considered a Gift. Feel free, with GM discretion, to consider any such feature as a Gift.

The final Trait we will deal with is called Faults. Faults (like Gifts) are special features built into a mecha that set it apart from the norm. However, a Fault's functionality is considered to be detrimental to the proper function of the mecha. In other words, while a Gift makes a mecha better, Faults make the mecha worse. Accepting Faults into a mecha's design yields more points with which to purchase

Gifts or Attribute points. As with Gifts, any feature on a mecha that is considered abnormally unhelpful can be considered a Fault. That is to say, any design flaw that other mecha wouldn't normally possess can be considered a Fault. Several Faults are provided in the Faults Chapter, but feel free, with GM discretion, to create a few Faults of your own.

SCALE

Scale reflects the difference in measure between the Traits of things of varying form. That is to say, characters and/or mecha of different sizes will have different scales, which means Action Resolution between them will be modified. Frame, which is a basic measure of a mecha's size, plays a dominant role in determining scale. Having levels in either the Too Small or Too Big Faults will affect it as well. Between Mecha Aces characters and mecha themselves, a few helpful conversions may be necessary. One point of damage to a mecha is equal to 20 points of damage to a Mecha Aces character. When contesting mecha, Mecha Aces characters are considered to have a scale of Small − 5. When contesting Mecha Aces characters, mecha are considered to have a scale of +10 for Small mecha, +15 for Medium mecha, and +20 for Large mecha.

DAMAGE LEVELS

To reflect how much damage a mecha can take, we can determine a mecha's Damage Levels. Each mecha has four Damage Levels. They are: normal, -1, -2, and down. Each damage level has a certain number of Damage Points it can take. That number is equal to: [(Build + Maintenance) *(min = 1)* * 10] + 20. The note of *(min = 1)* in the equation means that when a mecha's Build and Maintenance are added together, the total is considered to be one if the sum is negative or zero. This insures a mecha will have at least *some* Damage Points in each Damage Level.

CHAPTER 1: CHARACTER CREATION

Overview

This chapter explains how to create your character for Mecha Aces. Your character is the identity you assume during the game; it is the role you play in the story. Generally, characters in Mecha Aces are Mecha pilots of some type or another. In keeping with the spirit of shonen anime, your character should be a unique an interesting individual, exhibiting dramatic personality traits, and embodying the daring and finesse of a fine-tuned pilot. Next we will discuss what goes on in the head of a pilot, and some archetypical pilot personalities. These archetypical personalities are not a requirement by any means; they simply provide an example of what goes on in shonen anime.

STRONG AND SILENT

These pilots know that they have a job to do, and there is no need to really discuss it. Believing that actions speak louder than words, these pilots will surprise onlookers with their talents. Sometimes, these quiet pilots may secretly doubt themselves, so they keep their egos in check until they prove their worth. Once they are sure of their skill, however, they aren't apt to brag or gloat, they simply show up their opponents with quiet confidence. Tactically, these pilots often fare well in a large scale battle where they have time to think their actions through.

HOT HEAD

These pilots fly by the seat of their pants, and they like it that way. Often disregarding the rules and taking big risks, these pilots can get themselves into trouble with their superiors. It is alright, however, if a hot head didn't have what it takes to survive, their disregard for danger would've gotten them killed long ago. Hot headed pilots aren't afraid to brag or show off, because they usually have the skill to back up their claims. Their sheer confidence often makes them popular in romantic endeavors, but their inability to effectively think things through often leads to notoriously short relationships. Tactically, hot headed pilots fly by gut instinct, which often works for them. This kind of pilots fight best in a one-on-one battle, their focus, tenacity, and single mindedness make them vicious hunters. In a large scale battle, however, their disregard for authority and unwillingness to stop and think in a battle often spells trouble for these hot shot aces.

SQUARE CHIN

These pilots are standard, born and bred, upright, outstanding soldiers, through and through. They do what they do by the book, and it is hard to shake them from their orders. These pilots fit in well with authority figures, and their boot-licking will move them up through the ranks quickly. Although confident, successful, and strong, these pilots' biggest weakness may show itself through their obedience. These pilots often cannot tell the difference between a good order and a bad one. Their ability to be manipulated by their superiors can get them not only into ethical dilemmas, but may also cost them their necks. Tactically, these pilots make excellent squad leaders, and fare well in any sized battle, as long as there is a plan or strategy to follow. These pilots may have issues when trying to think on their feet.

CO-PILOT

These pilots fare best in some sort of support role, like a co-pilot or radar interception officer (RIO), rather than piloting solo. These pilots often shy away from the spotlight, often transferring the credit to someone with more pizzazz, like a Hot Head. It's not to say that these pilots are any less skilled than others, it is just that they prefer to use their skills to help others rather than rack up kills on their own. These pilots respond well to orders, but if they can gather the chutzpa, they will protest to the protest-able ones. Someone who is a natural co-pilot will be able to eventually get over their shyness, but can deal with it just fine if they have someone (like a Hot Head) to speak up for them. Often guilty of hero-worship, a co-pilot will bend over backwards to help others, especially someone they look up to. Tactically, these pilots make excellent wing-men, support units, or co-pilots. If they can muster the confidence, these pilots' true colors will shine through and they will make exemplary leaders.

RELUCTANT HERO

As their name suggests, these pilots are often the heroes of a story. However, they don't often wear their fate well; these pilots have uncanny skill but are unsure as to how to deal with it. Absolute aces on the battlefield, but these pilots require proper training to hone their great skills. Often, a Reluctant Hero will become overconfident, and try to take on too much at one time. Conversely, they could just as easily doubt themselves; this hesitation could lead them to their doom. Reluctant Heroes can be easily manipulated in their cockiness/doubt, so a proper mentor must keep them in line. Tactically, these pilots' lack of experience could get them into trouble in a large fight. However, their pure gut skill can get them through the stickiest of situations. Besides, how would a story fare if the hero dies?

LEADER FROM THE FRONT

Some leaders deal out orders, and then sit passively in a chair waiting for the outcome... but not this pilot! This pilot leads by example, and doesn't mind getting their hands dirty. These pilots feel that the best way to get the job done and inspire morale at the same time is to be right out there with the troops, fighting the good fight. These pilots, indicative of their leadership style, love piloting and their skill and success has *earned* them a command. These leaders take a big risk, fighting the front lines along with the common troops. They have no fear for such things, however, how can one expect them to sit idly by while their people fight? Tactically, these pilots make skilled and potent leaders, inspiring moral and racking up kills at the same time.

ROUGH NECK

Some say pilots are softer than a regular soldier, but tell that to this pilot, and you'd better have good insurance! These pilots are rough, hence their name, and don't take no bones about it. Often able to brave rough terrain, little sustenance, and rows of enemy forces with or without a Mecha, these pilots know how to fight, whatever the cost. These pilots scoff at the words 'impossible' and 'suicide mission'; their daring and mental strength will win them the day. Pilots of this type are not afraid to brag; they know they have the skill to back it up. Tactically, these pilots can adapt to several situations, and know how to act independently of command to survive. They make tough fighters, and will attack to the last. Rough Necks are brave, strong, and tenacious... do you want to tell them otherwise?

INDEPENDENT OPERATOR

Often a pilot comes from a structured military background, but some fortunate souls find themselves in possession of a Mecha (of some type or another). These pilots learn their Mecha inside and out, and are very possessive of their prize. These pilots, since they often lack a support and repair crew, will often pick up the Mecha Repair Skill for when their Mecha gets damaged. These pilots, if they ever end up in a structured military situation, often disregard orders and act on their own agenda. Tactically, these pilots will do what it takes to survive, and don't make very good team players. A large scale battle may frighten them, as they lack the experience and training for such situations. However, in a smaller battle with no teammates, these pilots may dominate simply through the pilot's familiarity and skill with their equipment.

MAKING YOUR ACE PILOT

Now that we have looked at different archetypical personalities, now it is time to think of the right one for your character. Do you want to use an archetype personality, or do you want to make one up on your own? Or perhaps, will you use bits of your own personality, or someone else's, to create your character. The choices are yours to make! Take a moment and think deeply about how you want your character to think, act, and feel about different situations. The more developed your character's personality is, the more fun it will be to play them! Also, having a back story, or history for your character can help you develop their personality. What effect on this pilot's life has their personal experience had? How have their attitudes changed over time? Who or what does your character care about? These questions and more can help 'flesh out' your character.

GM DISCUSSION

Now we will begin developing your character in terms of the Mecha Aces rules. Explain your character concept to your GM. They may have some input on how the setting they are running may have affected your character's life. Also, your GM can tell you what optional rules are being used in their game. Are Techniques utilized? How about Magic? If so, what disciplines? Are psychic characters allowed? Will your character start out in a certain situation? Do they have a predefined set of items? A budget to purchase them?

These questions and more can help you during the next few steps.

TRADING TRAITS

This process is common among all FUDGE games. Basically, each beginning character receives a certain number of points with which to develop their character. These points can be shifted around any way the player wishes, and may be transferred between different Traits of the character. A Trait is a FUDGE term which describes different physical, mental, and situational facets that distinguish your character as an individual. The process of trading Traits is central to character conception, and will determine your character's strengths and weaknesses in the game.

There are 5 Traits in FUDGE. They are Attributes, Skills, Gifts, Faults, and Supernatural Powers. In Mecha Aces, there are really 7: Attributes, Skills, Gifts, Faults, Techniques, Magic, and Psychic Powers. This is because Supernatural Powers are expanded and explained more consistently, to give more consistency to their use, at the same time allowing design flexibility. When Trading Traits in FUDGE, points travel between Traits in the following way:

> 1 fault = 2 attribute levels
> 1 fault = 6 skill levels
> 1 fault = 1 gift
> 1 attribute = 3 skill levels
> 1 gift = 2 attribute levels
> 1 gift = 6 skills

All Traits, with the exceptions of Gifts and Faults, have a level. This level describes the character's ability in the Trait relative to other characters. In the FUDGE system, levels are described by using words rather than numbers. These words allow for variance in ability, while keeping within intuitive and descriptive bounds. In other words, saying you are a 'level 23' pilot makes less sense than simply saying that you are a 'great' pilot. In FUDGE, there are 7 descriptive levels, which are:

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

Legendary (+4) is an extra level one step above Superb, and describes ability far superior than what would be normally considered the best of the best. This is a rather impossible standard, so please be frugal with Traits that could be described as Legendary. The numbers in parenthesis are a shortcut method of remembering each level's difference from Fair. These shortcuts come in handy during Action Resolution rolls, so they are written next to every level in this book.

ATTRIBUTES

Attributes describe physical and mental properties that all people possess. They help define a character's capabilities as a person, aside from any special training. The human Attributes in Mecha Aces are: Strength, Agility, Tech, Insight, and Will. Their meaning is described below:

Strength – Physical prowess. This attribute reflects the character's brute strength and toughness. Characters with high Strengths are able to lift heavy objects, throw punishing punches, and take the staunchest blows. Characters with low Strengths are feeble, poor fighters, and cannot take too much damage.

Agility – Speed and nimbleness. This attribute reflects the character's natural speed, grace, and mobility. Characters with high Agility make good dancers, fast runners, and skilled pickpockets. Characters with low Agility are slow, clumsy, and generally not mobile.

Tech – Logic and analytical thinking. This attribute reflects the character's ability to think abstractly about logical problems. Characters with high Tech are good at math, have a knack for technology, and are quick and efficient when solving a problem. Characters with low Tech are technologically illiterate, have poor math skills, and have trouble thinking logically.

Insight – Personal understanding and creativity. This attribute reflects the character's natural understanding of existence, ability to think abstractly, and imagination. Characters with high Insight are natural artists, have a deep understanding of themselves and others, and seem to be able to solve problems intuitively. Characters with low Insight are unimaginative, shallow individuals, who would be a bore to have a philosophy discussion with.

Will – Willpower and stamina. This attribute reflects the character's ability to stick with their tasks, in both the mental and physical sense. Characters with high Will are tenacious, possess inhuman staying power, and are unerring in their dedication. Characters with low Will are quick to give up, unable to run a marathon, and are easily manipulated.

All Attribute levels start out at Fair, which is saying that everyone starts out being average (not much of a stretch). Each character receives two free Attribute points to distribute at their leisure (one point raises an Attribute one level). An Attribute can be lowered to receive more points; lowering an Attribute one level yields one Attribute point. For example purposes, we will look at 'Tony the Ace', a character that will be constructed as we continue this chapter.

TONY THE ACE CHOOSES THE FOLLOWING ATTRIBUTE LEVELS:

> *Strength: Fair (+0)*
> *Agility: Good (+1)*
> *Tech: Good (+1)*
> *Insight: Fair (+0)*
> *Will: Fair (+0)*

SKILLS

A Skill is a concept that is learned over time, and has a real world manifestation. In other words, skills are the bits of knowledge we learn over time that we put to good use. In Mecha Aces, each character, like each person, has skills to use at their disposal. These skills range from knowing math, to piloting huge mecha, to playing musical instruments, even to effective shopping techniques. There are nearly 100 skills at every character's disposal! Each character starts out with 45 Skill points with which to purchase skills.

For every character, each skill has a level. This level describes the amount of knowledge or competency that character has attained in that area. Skill levels are improved with Skill Points, and have the standard level range (from Terrible to Superb, much like Attributes). Before a character ever spends any Skill Points, they are assumed to have some default level in each skill; this describes how the character would attempt the skill untrained. For most skills, the default level is Poor. The default level depends upon the difficulty of the skill. What is this difficulty, you ask? Well, not every skill is made equal. Some skills are easier to learn, and some skills are harder to learn. This difficulty (or lack thereof) is reflected by the number of points required to advance in skill level. There are 6 difficulty levels, but only 4 of them are used to purchase skills. The upper and lower extrema of the difficulty chart are used when the difficulty level is adjusted (this sometimes happens). Below is the skill difficulty chart, which is needed for purchasing skills. The default level for skills of the respective difficulties lies wherever the Skill Point cost is zero. If there is no 'zero cost' level, then the skill cannot be used without learning it first.

Level	Cake Walk	Easy	Most	Hard	Very Hard	Tough
Superb	3	4	5	6	7	8
Great	2	3	4	5	6	7
Good	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fair	0	1	2	3	4	5
Mediocre	-1	0	1	2	3	4
Poor	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Terrible	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2

Don't be too intimidated by those higher numbers, the cost listed is to purchase the skill *at that level*. Thusly, really only one skill point needs to be spent on each level.

In order to save our players some time in looking up all of the Skills they want to purchase in the Skills chapter, on the following page is a big list of all of the skills:

RENAISSANCE GROUP:
Acting
Literature
Musical Instrument
Painting
Rhythm
Sculpting
Sense of Tone
Singing
That Certain Something (VH)
Writing

KNOWLEDGE GROUP:
Biology
Chemistry
Culture (place)
Ecology
Foreign Language
History (when)
Mathematics
Medicine (VH)
Occultism
Physics
Research
Teaching (H)
Trivia (E)
Education (spc cost)

EVERYDAY GROUP:
Acrobatics
Animal Care
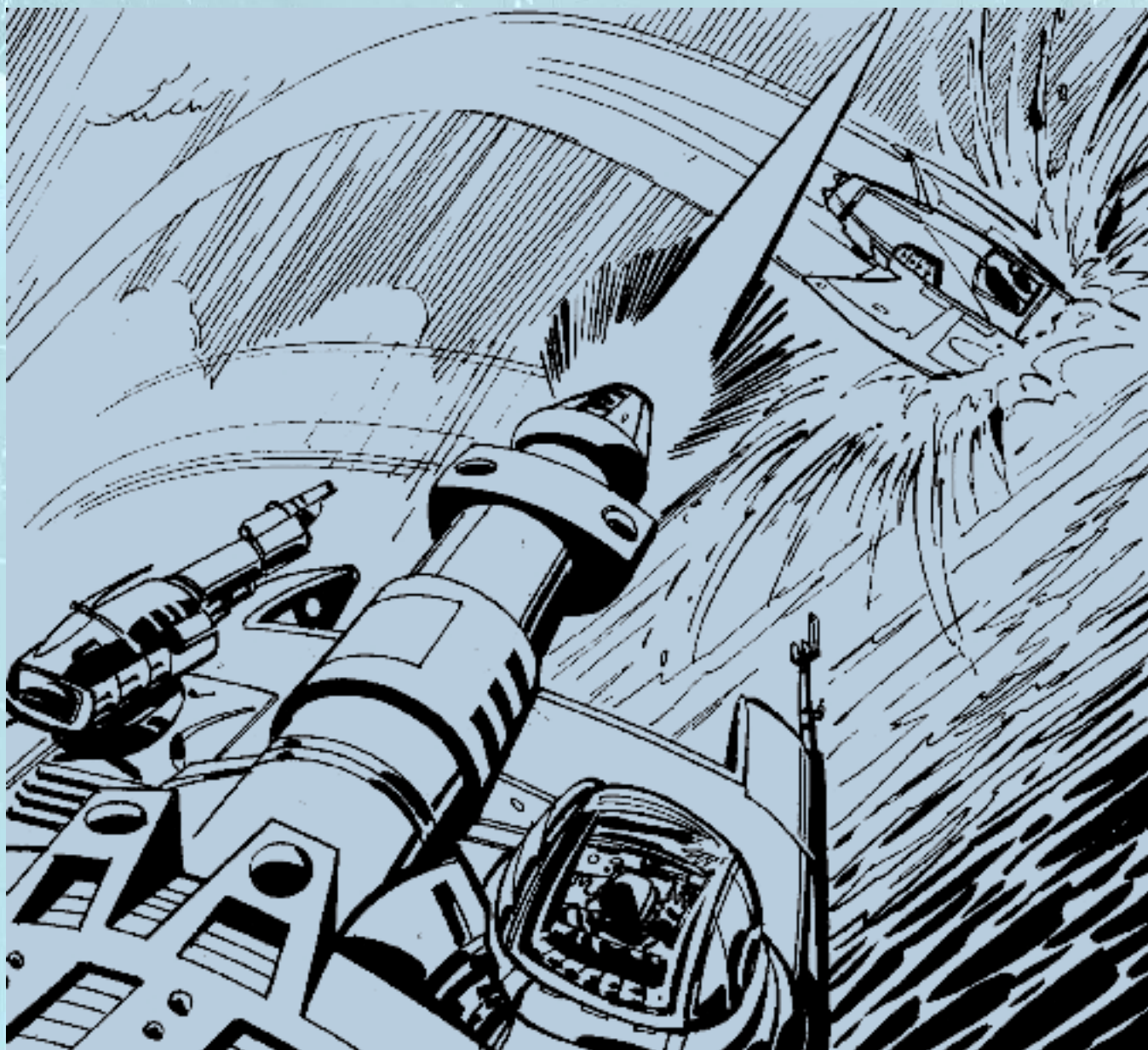
Cleaning
Climbing
Cooking
Fashion Sense
Finance
Game (name)
Gossip
Jumping
Oration/Adlibbing
Plant Care
Running
Shopping
Survival
Swimming

TECHNICAL GROUP:
Automobile Repair (H)
Computer Programming (H)
Computer Repair
Computer Use
Consumer Electronics Repair
Consumer Electronics Use (E)
Heavy Machinery Operation
Heavy Machinery Repair (H)
Maintenance
Mecha Repair (H)
Troubleshooting

SNEAKY GROUP:
Breaking and Entering
Forgery
Indoctrination
Lying
Perception
Poisons
Provocation
Security Systems
Seduction
Sleight of Hand
Stealth
Straight Face
Tracking

COMBAT GROUP:
Brawling
Dodge
Explosives
Guns (H)
Holding
Initiative
Martial Arts (discipline) (VH)
Martial Arts Weapon (weapon discipline) (VH)
Melee Weapon
Throwing
Thrown Weapons

Weapon Maintenance

MECHA GROUP:
Mecha Initiative (E)
Mecha Piloting
Mecha Maneuvering
Mecha Dodge
Mecha Melee Combat (H)
Mecha Ranged Combat (H)
Mecha Targeting
Mecha Extra Ranged Combat (VH)
Mecha Spatial Reasoning
Mecha Communications (E)
Mecha Teamwork (VH)
Use Mecha Ability (H)

SUPERNATURAL GROUP:
Alchemy (VH)
Arcane Folklore
Clairvoyance (VH)
Dogma/Ritual
Telekinesis (VH)
Kinesis (specify) (VH)
Magical Discipline (specify) (H)
Scrying (H)
Sense (H)
Spellcasting (VH)
Telepathy (VH)
Use (power)

Tony the Ace chooses the following skills:
Education: Fair (+0) (Assoc. Degree)
Mathematics: Good (+1)
Acting: Good (+1)
Singing: Fair (+0)
Trivia: Fair (+0)
Cooking: Fair (+0)
Running: Fair (+0)
Computer Programming: Good (+1)
Troubleshooting: Fair (+0)
Brawling: Fair (+0)
Dodge: Good (+1)
Initiative: Fair (+0)
Mecha Initiative: Fair (+0)
Mecha Piloting: Fair (+0)
Mecha Dodge: Fair (+0)
Mecha Melee Combat: Fair (+0)
Mecha Ranged Combat: Good (+1)
Mecha Communications: Fair (+0)

GIFTS
A Gift, in FUDGE terms, is something about a character that is unique or interesting. Gifts do not have levels; you simply have them or don't have them. Gifts often provide a potent bonus or ability. Because of this, a character only receives two Gift points upon character creation. Keep in mind that even though there are many sample Gifts

provided, a player and GM may agree that just about any unique or interesting thing about a character is a Gift. Creative GM's should feel free to experiment and invent new Gifts for their games. In case you don't want to leaf all the way to the Gifts chapter, below is a list of all of the default Gifts provided in Mecha Aces.

Endurance
Thick Skinned
Quick Reflexes
Great Balance
Sharp Sense (specify)
Ambidextrous
Mecha Basher (costs two Gift Points)
Hard to Kill
Sharp Wit
Clear Head
Focus
Clear Purpose
Natural Compass
Mecha Savvy
Natural Learner
Steel Trap Memory
Timing
Slick
Greater Destiny
Rank (specify)
Contact (specify)
Organization
Opportunity
Lucky
Item
Wealth
Base of Operations
Black Mail (who)
Magic (costs two Gift Points)
Psychic Ability (costs three Gift Points)
Technique (special cost)

Tony the Ace chooses the following Gifts:
Sharp Sense (hearing)
Timing (also yields Rhythm: Fair (+0) to his skill list)

FAULTS

Not everyone is perfect, and FUDGE adapts for that with the inclusion of Faults into its Traits. Faults are character flaws. They reflect the natural imperfections that people are born with or develop. Like Gifts, Faults do not have levels. Each Fault accepted onto a character yields points as per the Trading Traits chart (1 Fault = 1 Gift = 2 Attributes = 6 Skills). While Faults are entirely optional, it is important to concede some imperfection, if only to give your character some depth and development. In the same token, don't overload your character with Faults. Keep your character realistic, but don't let them trip over their own feet with too many Faults. Below is a List of all of the Faults in the Faults chapter, in case you don't want to look them up right now. Although there are several Faults in the Faults chapter, feel

free to be creative and invent your own imperfections.
Young/Old
Dull Sense (specify)
Pain Sensitive
Slow Reaction
Light Framed
Over/Under Weight
Clumsy
Gender Bender
Poor Memory
Quixotic
Absent Minded
Phobia (specify)
Psychosis (specify)
Addiction (specify)
Compulsion (specify)
Distractible (specify)
Over-Confident
Troubled
Cowardly
Shy
Not the Sharpest Tack
Mecha Illiterate
Computer Illiterate
Dependent (person)
Dependence (person)
Girl/Guy Magnet
Bad Luck
Poor
Promise (specify)
Obligated (organization)
Bureaucratic Burden
Owes (specify)
Hidden Secret (specify)

Tony the Ace chooses the following Faults:
Absent Minded
Phobia (Bees)
Compulsion (Cleaning)
Because of the extra points, Tony the Ace has made the following adjustments:
Great Balance
Sharp Wit
Computer Use: Great (+2)
Mecha Initiative: Good (+1)
Mecha Piloting: Good (+1)
Mecha Dodge: Great (+2)

DERIVED VALUES

Now that we have our Attributes, Skills, Gifts, and Faults selected, there are a few more things about your character that we must figure out. If your character has purchased the Technique, Magic, or Psychic Powers Gifts, first double check to make sure your GM is using those optional rules. If they are, follow the rules specific to the Gift to determine your Supernatural Powers. Next, we will look at the various

numeric quantities you'll need when you run into a tussle.

WOUNDS

Everyone has their physical limit; we can't all stay in the ring 20 rounds with a boxing heavyweight. In FUDGE, the ability to sustain physical damage is measured numerically, in the form of Wounds. Every time your character sustains damage, that damage is deducted from a Wound Level. Each character has four Wound Levels: Hurt, Very Hurt, Down, Dead. These four levels describe the physical condition of the character. To determine how many points of damage can be taken in each Wound Level, add your character's Strength and Will, then add that total to 10. This is the base wound amount. The Hurt level has the base wound amount available to it. The Very Hurt level has twice the base available. The Down level has triple the base. Finally, the Dead level has five times the base amount available to it.

TONY THE ACE'S WOUND LEVELS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Hurt: 10 / 10

Very Hurt: 20 / 20

Down: 30 / 30

Dead: 50 / 50

As the names of the Wound Levels suggest, there are consequences to taking damage. Once your Hurt level is expended, there is a -1 penalty to all actions you take. Also, once your Very Hurt level runs out, you take a -2 penalty to all actions taken. Once the Down level is expended, the character falls unconscious, unable to act. Finally, once the Dead level runs out of points, the character dies.

Strength	ODF
Superb	+12
Great	+10
Good	+8
Fair	+7
Mediocre	+6
Poor	+4
Terrible	+2

DAMAGE FACTORS

Strength	DDF
Superb	-8
Great	-7
Good	-6
Fair	-5
Mediocre	-4
Poor	-2
Terrible	0

In combat, people have a natural ability to deal out and take some punishment. In FUDGE, this is in the form or ODF and DDF. ODF means Offensive Damage Factor. This represents the character's natural ability to deal damage to a foe. This is a base amount for damage done in melee; in other words, it is the damage of an unarmed attack, and melee weapons add to this damage. DDF stands for Defensive Damage Factor. This is the character's natural

ability to insolate damage from attacks. A character's DDF is subtracted from all incoming damage. To determine the ODF and DDF values for a character, refer to the charts provided.

WRAP UP

Take a look at your character. What do they look like? Use imagery and colorful language to describe your character's appearance. You could even draw a picture of them, if you are artistically inclined.

Also, does your character have any items, or a personal budget to purchase them with? If so, prepare your item list so you'll have the right tools for the job!

GM REVIEW

Show your character to your GM, so they can make sure it is kosher with their setting. Also, feel free to explain your character's history to them; they may be able to work into the story in one way or another. Also, your GM can tell you what situation you are in at the beginning of the story, so you can jump right into the action! If you begin with a Mecha, your GM can give you its stats as well.

CHAPTER 2: SKILLS

Overview

This chapter describes the nearly 100 different skills available for a character in Mecha Aces. The Skills are broken down into groups for easy referencing, and every group has a description that discusses the general nature of all of the Skills in that group.

SKILLS

RENAISSANCE GROUP:

Art, Literature, Theater, and other creative activities all fall under the Renaissance Group. An interesting feature of this group is the That Certain Something skill. It provides a synergy bonus to all creative endeavors, as long as the character convinces the GM that the work is creative and interesting. This makes the player actually put creative energy into applying their skills. Below are all of the skills, and their descriptions. There are 10 skills in this group.

Acting

This skill allows the character to know how to memorize lines, get into character, and produce an overall believable performance. Other applications of this skill include trying to improvise a scene, or adlibbing, knowing how to move on stage without upstaging yourself or anyone else, or even knowing effective ways of projecting one's voice. This skill could also be used to try to impersonate another person convincingly.

Literature

Of the three schoolboy skills: Reading, Writing, and 'Rhythmetic, this skill allows 1 and 2 to gang up on 3. Having the Literature skill gives the character higher proficiency in finding grammatical and spelling errors, finding the main themes of a piece, and developing complex understandings of literature of all kinds. This skill is great for a book reviewer, editor, student, or any other person that needs to read things for their abstract meanings.

Musical Instrument – Playing a musical instrument with skill, technique, and passion is among the top of human creative achievements. This skill allows the character to slowly master a single instrument, although the skill may be purchased several times to allow for proficiency in additional instruments.

Painting

Placing brush to canvas may seem easy, but there is a great deal of knowledge behind a purposeful stroke. This skill allows the character to have knowledge in various forms of painting styles, paint types, medium types, matting techniques, and all other things related to being a skillful painter

Rhythm

People, in life, often underestimate the many uses of a good sense of rhythm. It allows people to view time independent of a clock, perform actions with more grace and speed, and even reach new heights in their kung fu. Knowing how to accurately 'tap out' the beat of a song is a subtle but useful skill.

Sculpting

Some make art by adding. They add color to a canvas, music to the air, or voices to the stage. Your brand of art is that of subtracting. By taking away just the right bits and pieces of something, this skill allows you to create among the world's greatest art pieces.

Sense of Tone

A very rare gift among humans is the ability to hear in perfect pitch. This means that any tone that enters this person's ear will register as a unique and distinguished tone. Even though some people are born with this uncanny ability, everyday people, through practice, can achieve similar resolutions of hearing. This skill allows the character to recognize and analyze various frequencies of sound.

Singing – Not everyone can be one of the Three Tenors, but anybody can be taught the basic concepts of putting a steady tone and rhythm to one's voice. Singing is a soothing and useful skill to have, whether or not your character is a pop idol.

THAT CERTAIN SOMETHING (VH)

This is the premier skill that drives artistic expression. This skill is not bound to any one form of creativity; rather it represents the character's latent abilities in personal expression and creativity. TCS can apply a synergy bonus to any other skill in this group. The bonus is only allowed when the player tells the GM how the expression they are working on is creative and expressive.

Writing

The ability to effectively communicate in writing is one of the things that separate humans from the animal kingdom. This skill allows the character to better understand the rules of their language, rhetoric, and effective techniques in writing.

KNOWLEDGE GROUP:

Gestalt knowledge on various subjects is important to the development of a strong intellectual character. The Knowledge group contains all skills which apply to remembering facts contained within various subjects, and skills used to gain more facts. Below are all of the skills in this group and their descriptions. There are 13 skills in this group.

Biology

Recognizing how and why various biological processes work is an important scientific skill. Biology deals with the science of life; from the highest level of human mechanics to the single celled metabolic process. Since Biology is closely linked to Chemistry, every Biology check receives synergy from the character's skill in Chemistry.

Chemistry

Analyzing and predicting chemical reactions and their components is a fundamental scientific skill. Chemistry deals with the analysis and interactions of any and every chemical reaction. Since Chemistry is closely linked to

Physics, all Chemistry checks receive a synergy bonus from Physics.

Culture (place)

This skill allows the character to know and recognize the various attributes and rituals of any culture. This skill may be purchased many times, each time specializing in a different culture.

Ecology

This skill deals with the many scientific facets of trees, wildlife, and environments. This is a valuable skill for a forest ranger, mountain man, or any other 'survivalist' character.

Foreign Language

The character can read and/or speak a language that is not the one of their native land. At the Mediocre level, the character has only a reading knowledge of the language, at higher levels, more speaking fluency is gained.

History (when)

The character has knowledge of the events of a decade (if within the last fifty years), a century (if in the last millennium), or a major time period (if earlier than that). Higher skill levels yield either more knowledge of the same period, or equivalent knowledge of another time period (within the same range as the first). *Example: Great History could apply to the 1940's, 50's, and 60's, or it could be the 1960's++ (denotes extra knowledge, 3 levels worth).*

Mathematics

Some say mathematics is the language of the gods. Regardless of whether you agree, this skill gives the character more skill in math. At the Poor level (initial), the character has basic geometry and algebra knowledge. At the Mediocre level, the character has mastered trigonometry. At the Fair level, the character has mastered pre-calculus level math. At the Good level, the character knows the basic calculus skills of differentiation and integration. At the Great level, the character understands several calculus concepts, including matrix mathematics. Finally, at the Superb level, the character has mastered most advanced calculus subjects; few math problems provide a challenge for the character.

Medicine (VH)

The ability to successfully understand and repair the functions of the human body is no easy task. This skill requires years of challenging and involved medical schooling. At the Mediocre level, the character qualifies as an Emergency Medical Technician. At the Fair level, the character qualifies as a Registered Nurse. At the Good level, the character qualifies as a General Practitioner. At the Great level, the character qualifies as a Doctor. Finally, at the Superb level, the character qualifies as a Surgeon.

Occultism

This skill gives the character knowledge in all forms of paranormal science, both mythical and practical. Although this knowledge may be looked down upon by more stringent factions of the scientific community, occultism has its place in the realm of human knowledge.

Physics – The nuts and bolts by which reality works. Key topics include kinetics, electrostatics, thermodynamics, quantum physics, and even String Theory. Understanding physics is like understanding every drop of paint in the Mona Lisa. While the painting itself has unspoken beauty, each individual drop is beautiful and important in and of itself, while still contributing to the whole. Because of physics' close relationship to mathematics, all Physics checks receive a synergy bonus from Mathematics.

Research

While having knowledge is important, being able to acquire more knowledge is and invaluable skill. Research allows the character to effectively use several channels of information to find out what they need to. Such channels include the public library, the internet, and encyclopedias. Checks are made depending upon the difficulty and obscurity of the knowledge the character is after.

Teaching (H)

While simply reading information only allows someone to learn 10% of it, teaching the same knowledge will allow someone to retain 90%! Passing on knowledge from one person to another is a valuable skill, both in the realm of human understanding and human survival. This skill allows one character to assist another character in grasping information. Thusly, the teacher may make a Teaching check against their student's current skill in any other Knowledge skill. If this check succeeds, the student may apply the teacher's Teaching skill as a synergy bonus to checks made with that skill. This synergy bonus doesn't apply forever; a "refresher course" may be needed every now and again.

Trivia (E)

having a grab bag of facts available can help out in a situation where one is at a loss for ideas. Trivia is a seemingly
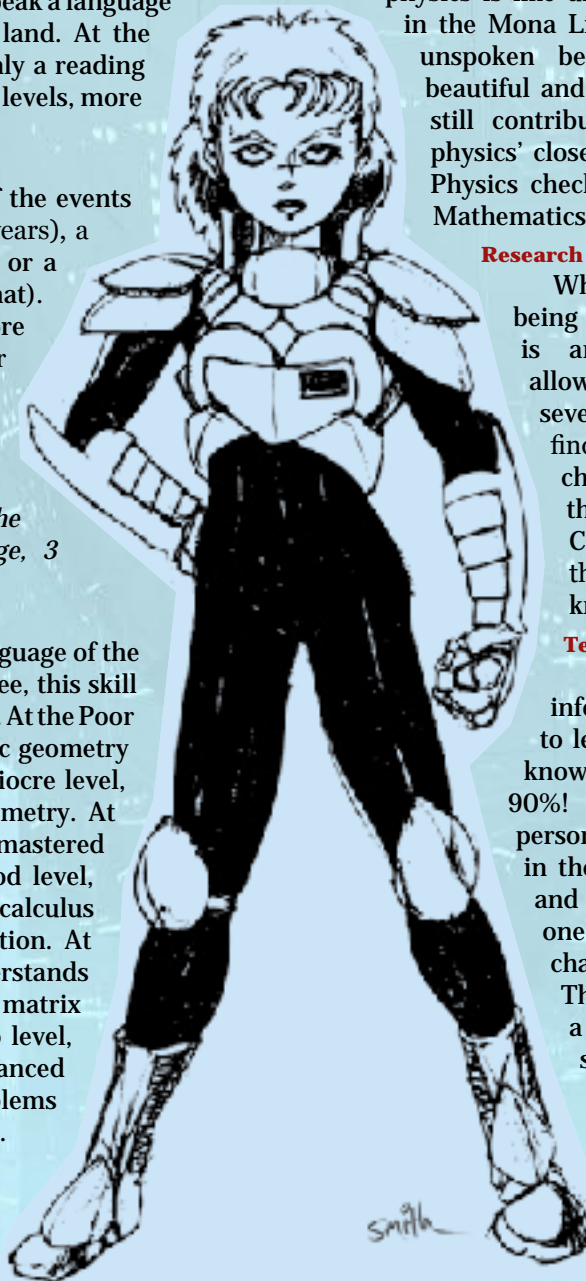
random collection of generally useless facts from all over the realm of human understanding. The Trivia skill may be used on its own to produce a random, useless fact in any situation. For a more practical use, the Trivia skill, with GM discretion, may apply a synergy bonus to any Knowledge skill in which the character has a Mediocre or lower level. The synergy bonus reflects that even though the character may not know a lot about that specific subject, they know enough general information to "fill in the blanks".

Education (special cost)

This skill allows the player to assume that their background of education has given them proficiency in several areas of knowledge. This skill effectively emulates other skills (in the Knowledge, Everyday, Technical and Renaissance Groups). Because of the wide spanning use of this skill, it costs twice as many skill points as normal, purchased on the Very Hard difficulty scale. The skills emulated by your education are Culture (local), History (national), Mathematics, Research, Computer Use, Oration/Adlibbing, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Writing, and Literature. Depending upon the level of Education, the character has attained a certain amount of formal schooling. The levels are outlined below:

Education Level	Degree/Proficiency Attained	Skill Point Cost
Terrible	Grade School or less	2
Poor	Junior High School	4
Mediocre	High School Diploma	6
Fair	Associate's Degree	8
Good	Bachelor's Degree	10
Great	Master's Degree	12
Superb	Doctorate's Degree	14

This skill's level may be substituted for any of the skills it emulates. Because most skills start at Poor, purchasing Education at a higher level than that is most prudent. Because of the specialized nature of many formal education programs (such as Magnet Schools, or choosing an academic major in college), other skills should be purchased to reflect such specialization. If a higher level of one of the emulated skills is to be purchased, the player may assume that it starts at your Education's level (as opposed to the default of Poor in most cases). This Skill may seem slightly expensive, but it is a huge savings in skill points because of all the skills Education emulates. Just remember, a formal education is a huge advantage in the real world, and should not be taken for granted.

EVERYDAY GROUP:

In the course of our daily lives, we apply the lessons of our childhood. Such lessons include tasks as mundane as washing dishes, and as exotic as surviving in the wilderness on your own. Depending upon an individual's upbringing, a character could have any number of flavorful skills hidden up their sleeve. There are 16 skills in this group.

Acrobatics

While people may not do double handsprings in everyday life, a certain degree of nimbleness is useful anytime. This is especially true in an anime setting, as your character may wish to dramatically stand on the top of a flagpole, or gracefully leap several stories downward without injury, or even something as outlandish as performing a complex gymnastic maneuver to catch a falling knick knack. The Acrobatics skill can be used in nearly any situation where gracefully and limber motion is a necessity. Skill checks with this skill often receive a synergy bonus from Agility.

Animal Care

Being able to properly feed and care for Fido and Spot is always a must. If your character has a pet, or other animal to care for, it is important to be able to properly feed, groom, exercise, clean, and otherwise care for them. Higher skill levels allow the character to act as an authority in larger scale animal care situations, such as running a dog kennel, horse barn, animal shelter, or any other facility for the care for animals.

Cleaning

The first thing you have to know to be a good cleaner: don't *ever* mix ammonia and bleach together. The second thing: dust bunnies may be cute, but they are your mortal enemy. Thirdly: never underestimate the power of a well wielded broom. Finally: if you