

SHADOW GAMES

PLAYER INTRODUCTION AND CHARACTER DESIGN

CHARACTER CREATION AT A GLANCE

1) Concept:

What do you see your character being in this fictional futuristic world? A great martial artist, a secret agent, a gang thug, ex-special forces, or anything else that would fit in the technothriller genre? Some ideas you can look to come from movies such as Elektra, Patriot Games, The Peacemaker, Hackers, Bulletproof Monk, James Bond 007, Running Scared, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, Kill Bill Vol. I and II, Mission Impossible I, II, and III, Swordfish, Lord of War, and television shows such as Alias, John Doe, The Unit, CSI, 24, and Leverage.

The following are some basic concepts for you to look into, which are related to the media listed above, and which I use to build teams in my gaming group(s); although you're not bound specifically to any specialized concept, the following list concerns the general needs of each cell within a regional office of BlackEagle/BlackEagle (B/E), or for most other covert operations and/or investigations teams. All operatives are required to take B/E Entry Training and Bottom Line Skills, so make sure you reserve 275 of your Education Points for those two packages. All operatives are also required to take one of the following three (World Education, Basic Education, or Advanced Education). Each outline/description following lists any minimum requirements necessary to fill out that position on the team. You may want to save as many as 715 for packages.

Leader – The leader of a group actually takes two positions within the cell, one of the following descriptions as well as being the team leader. The leader of a cell is normally appointed by the senior cell leader, aka the office manager of the regional B/E office the player-characters work in, and generally is at least a Veteran 1, with an average of 12 – 19 operations under their belt. The leader is required to take the Leadership/NCO Academy (requires Army or Marine Basic, Federal Law Enforcement, or a high Sensibility attr.) package, and is required to take one of the following two packages as well: Covert Entry or Surveillance Training.

Investigator – The name says it all; your character has a penchant for finding clues and solving crimes and puzzles. You will be required to choose between one or more of the following four packages: Federal Law Enforcement(requires Advanced Education), Government Agent(Advanced Education), Intelligence Analyst (Advanced Education and high Int. and Sen. attr.), or Investigator.

Hacker/Computer Expert – You absolutely love computer systems and, in general, are able to manipulate data within operating systems and through the GenNet and Internet as so few others are able to, while gaining information about the other side necessary to help stop or subdue them. Obviously, you would be required to take Hacker.

Pilot/Driver – You are the wheel and/or wing man/woman of your group, able to fly and/or drive almost anything with wheels or wings. Since most people are already able to

drive, you are required to take the Flight School package, and choose from one of the following three packages for specialized training in maneuvering and the ability to defend yourself when you're not in a vehicle: Gangbanger, Personal Security/Bodyguard, or Jury-Rigger(requires Mechanic).

Demolitions – All that is required for you to take this template is Demolitions(requires Army or Marine Basic, or BETC, and high Coordination attr.).

Field Medic – When your friends get shot up, you are the one they call "Doc", and you can patch them up and get them ready for evac, whether on foot or by transport. You are required to take Field Medic training, even if you're a Medical Doctor; after all, being a Field Medic is far different than being a Doctor.

Analyst – The Investigator, above, is able to find data and interpret the clues to find their next step in whatever investigation they're performing. The Analyst, alternately, is able to go far deeper into the information, concentrating within the data, to find far-reaching circumstances and possible consequences as more and more data is uncovered. This data can, literally, be of any type, and the Analyst and Investigator actually work hand-in-hand to enhance one another's skills. The Analyst is required to have Intelligence of 45 or higher, and is required to take Intelligence Analyst(requires Advanced Education and high Sensibility).

Ghost – This individual is a master of covert operations, able to get into and out of most difficult places, or areas where high activity precludes many covert situations, in order to best serve as an excellent backup for their team and perform sniper operations, to watch the back of the team as it moves into position for an incursion and/or assault. Unforeseen events happen all the time, and the Ghost is there to ensure these problems do not get out of hand, and without breaking the silence of the team. The Ghost is not required all the time, but their highly specialized training allows them to operate in the team also as a normal member. Ghosts are required to take Covert Entry training, are not allowed to be the cell leader, and also must select one of the following packages: Military Academy, Army Basic, or Marine Basic **AND** must also select one of the following: Surveillance, Special Operations, or Special Forces. This is an EXPENSIVE character, and NOT a requirement for any team to have.

Many of the missions your characters will perform in will involve covert operations and investigations, cover identities, and questionable -if not outright illegal- activity in general. In a lot of cases gunplay and wet work will be directly involved. Although there are many other templates you can use to help build your character, and you're also able to simply build your character from scratch, this method of character generation will allow players to begin with slightly more powerful characters.

2) Generate Characteristics:

Attributes are generated using a three-step process, explained below. It is an unusual and relatively unique means of determining your character's strengths and weaknesses, and does not conform to Millennium's End v1.0 or v2.0 standards. Again, this process is developed to aid you in building a slightly more rounded and powerful character to begin your game with.

Allocate Points – Allocate 20 points between your ten primary attributes, placing at least 1(one) and no more than 4(four) in any single attribute. These are Intelligence, Sensibility, Agility, Coordination, Constitution, Strength, Personality, Appearance, Bravado and Willpower; for definitions of these, please refer to the Millennium's End v2.0 main book by Chameleon Eclectic. Make sure you write lightly, or use scratch paper.

Generate Base Attributes – Each point you just allocated to your primary attributes represents how many ten-sided dice you need to roll for that attribute. Re-roll all 1s.

Once you're done making each attribute roll, double that number and record it; again, write lightly.

Modify for Character Sex – Finally, the number you've just generated for each attribute will be modified based on your character's sex. Women are generally considered more strong-willed and personable, while men are considered to be stronger and more capable of facing dire situations. Once you have modified your attribute for sex, you've generated the final number for attributes and may record the total for each attribute normally.

Attributes by Sex Table

<u>Attribute</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Intelligence	20	20
Sensibility	25	25
Agility	30	30
Coordination	20	20
Constitution	30	30
Strength	30	25
Personality	20	25
Appearance	20	25
Bravado	25	20
Willpower	30	30

NOTE: Don't worry, a total in the mid-30's to mid-60's is average. Anything below 30 should be raised to 30, based on natural rolls and totals, and anything above 69 should be noted as being remarkable.

3) Character Information:

There are several important pieces of information you need to record for your character; these are derived characteristics that are important to determine to know how your character will fare in the game.

Age – Decide how old your character is. Your character must be at least 18 at the start of the game, plus one year for each year of Advanced Education you intend to purchase for your character; see section C, below. Keep in mind that Advanced Education may mean military service, college, university, technical school, and/or vocational training. For each year over the age of 30 you wish your character to be, reduce your Agility by 1. For each year over the age of 40, also reduce their Constitution by 1.

Beginning Cash – Determine the base cash available to your character. You need money for education, gear, and other possessions. Education is VERY important to aid you in determining your character's total skill points available to be spent on skill packages and general skills you see your character having or desire them to have, to make them who you want your character to be. Money is determined by using the following formulas:

$$\text{d10s to Roll} = (\text{Age} - 17)$$
$$(\text{Rolled d10s}) \times 500 = \text{Starting Money}$$

Advanced Education – Select how many years of Advanced Education you would like your character to have. Two years is the equivalent of an Associates Degree, four years a Bachelors, eight years a Masters, and ten years a Doctorate. This Advanced Education is not necessarily college or university based, but may be military or street based as well. For example, if you are only 22 years of age, you may only have a maximum of four years of advanced education. Advanced Education is NOT required, and you will still have many skill points to spend on your character's packages when it comes time to do so, although not nearly as many as, perhaps, you might like.

year of advanced education you desire your character to have from the money you calculated in Beginning Cash, above. Please be mindful that you will also need to purchase equipment, perhaps a vehicle, and any personal weapons and body armor your character owns, out of that same money.

Choose Height and Determine Weight – How tall, in feet and inches, do you want your character to be? Once you've decided this, find your height in the left-most column of the following chart.

Each year of advanced education costs \$2,500. Realistically, by today's standards, it's more like \$4,000 per year, but the \$2,500 is considered a generous enough payment in school loans annually. So, subtract \$2,500 per

Next, average your Constitution, Strength, and Agility attributes together and cross-reference the total with your character's Height to obtain your character's weight, shown in both pounds and kilograms. If either or both your Height or attributes average fall in between any of

the benchmarks in the table, below, you are welcome to determine whether you wish to go with the lower or higher weight number. You may even mix and match, going

higher or lower on *Height*, and then the opposite on attributes average. The following table is used to aid you in determining your character's weight:

Height – Weight Table

Height (cm / ft in)	Average of character's Constitution, Strength, and Agility Attributes						
	35 or less	43 - 51	52 - 59	60 - 67	68 - 76	77 - 84	85 or more
155 / 5' 1"	52 / 115	59 / 129	65 / 144	72 / 158	78 / 172	85 / 186	91 / 200
160 / 5' 3"	55 / 120	61 / 135	68 / 149	75 / 164	81 / 178	88 / 193	94 / 207
165 / 5' 5"	57 / 126	65 / 142	72 / 159	80 / 175	87 / 191	94 / 207	101 / 223
170 / 5' 7"	60 / 133	69 / 151	76 / 168	85 / 186	93 / 204	100 / 221	109 / 239
175 / 5' 9"	64 / 141	73 / 160	81 / 179	90 / 198	99 / 217	107 / 236	116 / 255
180 / 5' 11"	67 / 148	77 / 169	86 / 189	95 / 210	105 / 230	114 / 251	123 / 271
185 / 6' 1"	71 / 156	81 / 178	91 / 200	101 / 222	111 / 244	120 / 265	130 / 287
190 / 6' 3"	75 / 164	85 / 186	95 / 208	105 / 230	115 / 252	124 / 273	134 / 295

Handedness – Roll percent dice to determine your *Dominant Hand*: 90 or less is right handed, 91 – 99 is a south paw (left handed), and 00 is ambidextrous.

4) Secondary Attributes:

The following are characteristics derived from your primary attributes, and they are important for determining your character's resilience, awareness, and speed, as well as their *Mass Factor*, which is used to determine how your character handles the damage they will take. Calculate any skill values you have for the following:

Secondary Attribute Increases

Certain skills allow for primary and secondary attribute increases for your character as you build the skills, and these are calculated during character generation and throughout playing the game so your character will improve over time. Note that primary attributes are not increased by any purchasable means, though they can be improved by the following skills.

NATURAL SKILLS

Perception: Add ½ of this skill's level to the Perception secondary attribute.

PHYSICAL SKILLS

Athletics

Bodybuilding: Add 1/3 of this skill's level to the Strength primary attribute and recalculate Damage Rating and Physical Talent Base.

Gymnastics: Add 1/3 of this skill's level to the Agility primary attribute and recalculate Base Speed and Physical and Reflexive Talent Bases.

Kata: Add 1/10 of this skill's level to the Base Speed secondary attribute.

Run: For every three (3) points of this skill's level, modify your character's Endurance secondary attribute AS THOUGH your Constitution attribute were raised by one point. Constitution does not change, only Endurance AS THOUGH it had.

Secondary Attributes Table

Attribute Level	Perception (Sensibility)	Base Speed (Agility)	Endurance (Constitution)	Recovery (Willpower)	Damage Rating (Strength)
26 – 30	26	11	6	4	3
31 – 35	29	12	7	5	3
36 – 40	32	13	8	6	4
41 – 45	35	14	9	7	4
46 – 50	38	15	10	8	5
51 – 55	41	16	11	9	5
56 – 60	44	17	12	10	5
61 – 65	47	17	12	11	6
66 – 70	50	18	13	12	6
71 – 75	53	18	13	13	7
76 – 80	56	19	14	14	7
81 – 85	59	19	14	15	8

Mass Factor Table

Mass (kg)	Mass Factor
52 or less	1.4
53 – 62	1.3
63 – 72	1.2
73 – 82	1.1
83 – 93	1.0
94 – 103	0.9
104 – 113	0.8
114 - 123	0.7
124 or more	0.6

5) Talent Bases:

Your characteristics are not only used to help determine secondary attributes and characteristics, but also aid in how you use your skills, giving a natural bonus based on the category each skill falls under. The categories, and the formula for how you figure out each talent base, are listed below:

Talent Base Table

Talent Category	Formula for Talent Base
Academic	(INT + WIL) / 20
Creative	(SEN + COR) / 20
Domestic/Technical	(SEN + COR + CON) / 30
Medical	(INT + SEN + COR) / 30
Natural	(SEN) / 10
Physical	(AGL + STR + CON + WIL) / 40
Reflexive	(AGL + SEN) / 20
Scientific	(INT) / 10
Social	(PER + BRA) / 20

6) Skills(and Skill Packages):

Defining what your character knows and has experience with is the second most time consuming part of character generation in Millennium's End, the first being the purchase of gear, licenses, weapons, a vehicle, and a lifestyle for your character. You have a concept for your character from Step 1, above, and now it's time to put some substance to the background of your concept. Like Characteristic Generation from step 2, this is a three-part process, although you MAY not need to use all three parts.

Before we get to those parts, however, it would be helpful for you to understand how you purchase new skills, and upgrade skills you already have, with new points received from new packages. Yes, one skill package may share several skills with another package, or several packages, you've already taken; fortunately, this game deals easily with that possibility.

First, primary skills (in Bold) during initial character generation are not allowed to go above a level of 55, initially, and secondary skills (under each Bold heading) may not go above 25, also only for initial generation, and may never go above one-half (1/2) of the primary skill it falls under, at any time during the game and/or campaign you're playing in. That said, the number of points one is required to spend to increase a skill level is based on the range of levels the skill falls into at present. While a skill falls within a particular level range, the cost to increase the skill level for that skill by one point is read, and spent, based on that range. Once a skill falls into the next higher range, the cost to raise the skill one point also increases.

Skill packages are found in the main rulebook or separate files found on the internet.

Skill Cost by Range Table

Level Range/To Buy...	Skill Point Cost
Levels 1 through 25	1 pt. Each
Levels 26 through 40	2 pts. Each
Levels 41 through 55	3 pts. Each

Now, onto building skills for your character...

Calculate Available Skill Points – Compute your character's skill points in accordance with the following formula:

$$\text{PART 1 (World Experience)} = [(\text{Chosen Age}) \times (\text{Strength} + \text{Personality} + \text{Bravado}/3)]$$

+

$$\text{PART 2 (Formal Education)} = [(\text{Years of Higher Education}) \times (\text{Intelligence} + \text{Sensibility} + \text{Willpower}/3)]$$

NOTE: The formula, above, is different than that found in the Millennium's End 1st and 2nd Edition rulebooks; it is designed to lend as much credence to life experience as to education, making both halves of the formula equally important, rather than placing more weight on a player's Advanced Education, while virtually ignoring life experience, as the original formula does. Also, I feel a character's Skill Points should be determined more by their attributes than static numbers. This new formula also allows for a wider spread of experience between

those with less life experience and, hence, Advanced Education, and those fresh in the world. The original formula was:

$$[(\text{Years of Higher Education}) \times (2 \times \text{Intelligence})] + [(\text{Chosen Age} \times 15) + 300]$$

Purchasing Skill Packages – Next, you should look into purchasing skill packages; this is not required, if you want to build your character's skills completely from scratch. However, the packages give you more bang for the skill points you calculated in the above section and are easier to help build skills necessary to play the game more effectively.

First, however, it is important that you understand there are some basic packages you **MUST** buy for your character to enter the game and play effectively. It is important for you to hold back 345 points initially. First, your character will have had an education of some sort, even if they grew up on the street (*World Education*), and so you are required to choose between *World Education* (190), *Basic Education* (100), and/or *Advanced Education* (170). You may take *Basic Education* and either *World Education* OR *Advanced Education* with it, but not both. Next, you are required to take the *Bottom Line Skills* (135) and the *BlackEagle Entry Training Course* (120). Finally, if you have chosen one of the Concept types listed in section 1,

you will need to take whatever training that concept requires you to take.

Spend Remaining Skill Points – Any remaining skill points may be spent in accordance with your character's skill levels, as defined at the beginning of this section, to complete development of leftover skills you would like for your character to have more of.

Once you have completed determining the level of each skill, which is recorded on the second from right column of lines in each column of skills on your character sheet, add that level to the Talent Base you calculated for each Talent Category in section 5, above, and record the total in the left-most column of lines in each column of skills on your character sheet for Primary Skills. Secondary Skills, those beneath each bold primary skill, add the Roll for the Primary Skill to the Level of each Secondary Skill, which is then recorded in the Roll column. Remember, Secondary Skills are enhancements to Primary Skills.

7) Possessions:

Here's the longest part. You have money left after you chose the number of years of Advanced Education your character would have, with which you may purchase equipment. There are price and statistic lists in the following places:

- Ultramodern Firearms
- The Logistics and Procurement Catalogue
- Millennium's End 2nd Edition Rulebook (pgs. 176 – 194)
- The Millennium's End 1999 Datasource (pgs. 25 – 31; especially for vehicles)
- Millennium's End 1st Edition Rulebook (pgs. 23 – 29)

The lists in these resources are neither exhaustive nor complete, although there are enough items and options to fill out a thousand characters without becoming bored. Should you need more equipment than those in the listed resources, you should look into catalogs, even on the internet, and game statistics for the item can be generated through percentage modifications and cross-referencing with other games that may contain them.

Some of the more basic items you should concentrate on for your character include, but are not limited to:

- Some kind of communication gear
- At least one main weapon and one holdout weapon
- Some light armor, such as a Kevlar Vest or Ballistic Vest
- Equipment specific to your role in the team/cell
- Any additional equipment you believe will be necessary to the successful completion of your job in the cell or for the game

- A vehicle of some type; discounted/used vehicles are possible, although they may also be problem-ridden. I would recommend GMs allow Players to own some sort of transportation, even if they haven't purchased it outright, as it will be on a monthly payment schedule. An alternate rule is to use an appropriate combination of Personality, Bravado, Appearance, and any Diplomacy (Lying and Coercion) the character may possess, in accordance with your preferences. A character with high stats and skills may have been able to schmooze their way into a much better vehicle, whether or not they could afford it, while someone with moderate stats is stuck in the \$15,000 to \$30,000 range, and someone with dreadful stats and skills may be driving an absolute clunker. When the Player begins your game, the car may be in any state of payment or non-payment that fits your setting.

When you purchase items that have both a Street Value and an L&P Value, you buy this initial equipment on the L&P Value. If only the Street Value is listed, that is what you reference to purchase the piece of equipment. During character generation **ONLY** may you purchase equipment with any availability value, though it may still be subject to GameMaster limitations. Because the resources listed above are large, some very basic equipment should be purchased immediately, but you should also be allowed a period between gaming sessions to go through each of the resources and list the equipment you wish to purchase. However, for each resource you need to make a list on scratch paper with all of the relevant statistics you can find so the GM can approve, or not, your purchase.

8) Enjoy the Game:

Now that you've gone through the initial issues of generating a character, all of the remaining calculations are, in general, up to the GM, though you may be asked for help from time-to-time. Get your brain prepared for investigations and tactics, friends, because you'll need it to get through these games.