

**GURPS**<sup>®</sup>

Fourth Edition

# **ACTION**<sup>™</sup> **4**

# **SPECIALISTS**<sup>™</sup>



Written by **SEAN PUNCH**

Illustrated by **TOPPER HELMERS** and **DAN SMITH**

**GURPS** System Design ■ **STEVE JACKSON**

**GURPS** Line Editor ■ **SEAN PUNCH**

Assistant **GURPS** Line Editor ■ **JASON "PK" LEVINE**

**GURPS** Project Manager ■ **STEVEN MARSH**

Production Artist and Indexer ■ **NIKOLA VRTIS**

**GURPS** FAQ Maintainer ■

**VICKY "MOLOKH" KOLENKO**

Chief Executive Officer ■ **PHILIP REED**

Chief Operating Officer ■ **SAMUEL MITSCHKE**

Managing Editor ■ **MIRANDA HORNER**

Marketing Director ■ **BRIAN ENGARD**

Director of Sales ■ **ROSS JEPSON**

Page Design ■ **PHIL REED** and **JUSTIN DE WITT**

Art Direction and Prepress Checker ■ **NIKOLA VRTIS**

*Reviewers:* Jason "PK" Levine and Steven Marsh

**GURPS**, *Pyramid*, Warehouse 23, the all-seeing pyramid, *Action*, *Specialists*, and the names of all products published by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated are trademarks or registered trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated, or used under license.

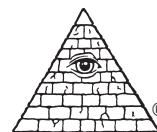
**GURPS Action 4: Specialists** is copyright © 2015 by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. All rights reserved.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this material via the Internet or via any other means without the permission of the publisher is illegal, and punishable by law. Please purchase only authorized electronic editions, and do not participate in or encourage the electronic piracy of copyrighted materials. Your support of the author's rights is appreciated.

**STEVE JACKSON GAMES**

Stock #37-0331

Version 1.0 – October 2015



# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION . . . . .</b>	<b>3</b>
Recommended Books . . . . .	3
Publication History . . . . .	3
About the Author . . . . .	3
<b>1. YOU GOTTA START SOMEWHERE. . . . .</b>	<b>4</b>
THE BASIC ACTION TEMPLATE . . . . .	4
Basic Action Template (BAT) . . . . .	4
Power Levels . . . . .	5
The Slush Fund. . . . .	6
THE NEEDS OF THE MANY . . . . .	7
We Have Standards . . . . .	7
NPCs . . . . .	8
The Call of Duty . . . . .	8
Duly Empowered . . . . .	9
Bats? . . . . .	9
<b>2. A VERY PARTICULAR SET OF SKILLS. . . . .</b>	<b>10</b>
SKILL SETS. . . . .	10
Doubling Up . . . . .	11
Advantage Bonuses . . . . .	15
Skill Sets as Suggestions . . . . .	19
New Perks . . . . .	23
POWER-UPS . . . . .	24
Packages as Level-Ups. . . . .	26
<b>3. SPIT AND POLISH . . . . .</b>	<b>28</b>
TYING UP LOOSE ENDS . . . . .	28
Lovably Eccentric . . . . .	28
By the Book . . . . .	28
Specialist Campaigns . . . . .	29

Trading Up . . . . .	30
<i>In the Hole?</i> . . . . .	31

*“Brilliant plan,  
totally professional.  
Must be a specialist.”*  
*“This guy is good.”*  
– *The Specialist*

SPENDING THE SLUSH FUND. . . . .	31
From Good to Great. . . . .	31
Generalists . . . . .	32
New Advantage: Jack of All Trades . . . . .	32
Everybody Comes from Somewhere. . . . .	32
Bits and Pieces . . . . .	33
Compatibility? . . . . .	34
<b>INDEX. . . . .</b>	<b>35</b>

## ABOUT GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of **GURPS** players. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! We can also be reached by e-mail: [info@sjgames.com](mailto:info@sjgames.com). Resources include:

*New supplements and adventures.* **GURPS** continues to grow – see what’s new at [gurps.sjgames.com](http://gurps.sjgames.com).

*Warehouse 23.* Our online store offers **GURPS** adventures, play aids, and support in PDF form . . . digital copies of our books, plus exclusive material available only on Warehouse 23! Just head over to [warehouse23.com](http://warehouse23.com).

*Pyramid* ([pyramid.sjgames.com](http://pyramid.sjgames.com)). Our monthly PDF magazine includes new rules and articles for **GURPS**, systemless locations, adventures, and much more. Look for each themed issue from Warehouse 23!

*Internet.* Visit us on the World Wide Web at [sjgames.com](http://sjgames.com) for errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. To discuss **GURPS** with our staff and your fellow gamers, visit our forums at [forums.sjgames.com](http://forums.sjgames.com). The web page for **GURPS Action 4: Specialists** can be found at [gurps.sjgames.com/action4](http://gurps.sjgames.com/action4).

*Bibliographies.* Many of our books have extensive bibliographies, and we’re putting them online – with links to let you buy the resources that interest you! Go to each book’s web page and look for the “Bibliography” link.

*Errata.* Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all **GURPS** releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

# INTRODUCTION

**GURPS Action 1: Heroes** and **Action 3: Furious Fists** assume that heroes spring into existence as 250-point tough gals and guys, fully optimized for one of a small number of classic action-movie roles. Those supplements let players whip up capable, appropriate characters *quickly*: pick a template, choose from the modest lists of options it offers, and add a few quirks. Then it's time to leap into action, confident that all the necessary boots are filled!

But just as with boots, one size doesn't fit all. There are many situations where the speedy approach is a little too coarse-grained:

- When a player desires a hero more individualized than **Heroes** and **Furious Fists** allow – often one that falls between two templates – but doesn't want to wade through the entire **Basic Set** or risk omitting important abilities.

- When a player is inspired by a favorite fictional character who breaks the mold (as so many action heroes do!).

- When a player – particularly a late joiner – wants to carve out a niche by stopping specific gaps in a team's abilities.

- When the GM wants a power level different from 250 points, such as in an “origins” campaign about neophyte heroes, or in a one-on-one game that pits a high-budget action star against the world.

- When action heroes need lower-powered NPC sidekicks . . . or enemies!

These are the challenges **GURPS Action 4: Specialists** rises to meet. Its approach to character creation occupies the middle ground between the open-ended continuum of the **Basic Set**

and the broad strokes of the rest of the **Action** series, guiding the process and keeping it focused on what matters to the genre – the tasks described in **GURPS Action 2: Exploits** – without forcing narrow roles on anyone. The wide variety of “modules” available can accommodate the most complicated backgrounds, while the final cleanup process ensures that the resulting heroes remain competitive.

As a bonus, **Specialists** makes minimal assumptions about power level and keeps the most cinematic abilities modular, so even gamers creating modern-day heroes for more-or-less realistic campaigns can use it as a shortcut. Just remember that **Action** glosses over academic pursuits, plausible economics, romance, and anything else that would get in the way of car chases and explosions. In a game where such details

matter, be sure to save part of your Slush Fund (p. 6) for the necessary skills and social traits!

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

**GURPS Action 4: Specialists** refers to traits and templates from **GURPS Action 1: Heroes** and **GURPS Action 3: Furious Fists**. Those supplements aren't required but would definitely prove useful.

## PUBLICATION HISTORY

This is the first edition of **GURPS Action 4: Specialists**. However, several perks in Chapter 2 were summarized from **GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks**, while the Buddy Bond, Dabbler, and Jack of All Trades traits in Chapter 3 come from the *Pyramid* #3/53: *Action* article “Buddies and Loners.”



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean “Dr. Kromm” Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985, ended up the **GURPS** Line Editor in 1995, and has engineered rules for almost every **GURPS** product since. He developed, edited, or wrote dozens of **GURPS** *Third Edition* projects between 1995 and 2002. In 2004, he produced the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition** with David Pulver. Since then, he has created **GURPS Powers** (with Phil Masters), **GURPS Martial Arts** (with Peter Dell’Orto), **GURPS Zombies**, and the **GURPS Action, GURPS Dungeon Fantasy**, and **GURPS Power-Ups** series . . . among many other things. Sean has been a gamer since 1979. His big non-gaming interests are mixology and Argentine tango. He lives in Montréal, Québec with his wife, Bonnie, and their cat, Zephyra.

# CHAPTER ONE

# YOU GOTTA START SOMEWHERE

No two action heroes are the same, but it's reasonable to assume that all start out at least somewhat competent, receive *some* training in useful skills, and have a "trademark" trait or three. As well, they must obey the same rules as other **GURPS Action** characters – *Specialists* is about customization, not cheating! To ensure that these conditions are met, work through the following checklist:

1. Start with *The Basic Action Template* (below) – the BAT – and exercise the customization options offered there. For now, leave your Slush Fund (p. 6) alone!
2. Go to Chapter 2 and add modules from *Skill Sets* (pp. 10-24) and *Power-Ups* (pp. 24-27) until you reach the campaign power level (see *Power Levels*, p. 5).
3. Flip to *Lovably Eccentric* (p. 28), take up to five quirks, and add the extra points they grant to your Slush Fund.
4. Following *By the Book* (pp. 28-30), adjust the results so far to get legal trait levels, which can add points to or take points out of the Slush Fund.
5. Optionally, optimize skills and attributes as explained in *Trading Up* (pp. 30-31). Any points saved go into your Slush Fund.
6. Spend your remaining Slush Fund to improve attributes, secondary characteristics, and existing advantage and skill levels (*From Good to Great*, pp. 31-32) – and optionally, to buy background traits (*Everybody Comes from Somewhere*, pp. 32-33) and *Bits and Pieces* (pp. 33-34). If your Slush Fund is negative (that's possible!), see *In the Hole?* (p. 31).

This might seem like a lot of work at first, but once you've done it a few times, it will be a *lot* faster than poring over the *Basic Set*.

## THE BASIC ACTION TEMPLATE

Not all action heroes are created equal – that's one of the core concepts of *Specialists* – but in terms of *Power Level* (p. B487), none should be anything less than "heroic." The following template is where *all* characters created with this system begin. Among other things, it offers average to above-average attributes (particularly DX), the Luck found on every 250-point *Action* template, and a complete set of everyman skills (*Heroes*, p. 22).

and know the basics of unarmed combat. You're also a child of the modern age, familiar with digital technology.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [40]; IQ 11 [20]; HT 11 [10].

**Secondary Characteristics:** Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 11 [0]; Per 11 [0]; FP 11 [0]; Basic Speed 6.00 [5]; Basic Move 6 [0].

### BASIC ACTION TEMPLATE (BAT)

100 points

You're quick and resourceful, and have a distinct edge – brains, remarkable reflexes, keen senses, physical conditioning, or something less tangible – that makes you a choice recruit for *somebody's* legitimate force or service, shadowy agency, or criminal crew. As a person of action, you can drive and shoot,

*Maya: I was recruited out  
of high school.*

*CIA Director: And do you  
know why we did that?*

*– Zero Dark Thirty*



## No Section 8s

Psychiatric standards, common in real life, are lax in action fiction. Evidence abounds – consider “Howling Mad” Murdock of *The A-Team*. Still, the worst problems can be *no fun*, whether for the player of the afflicted PC (who has to gibber through cool scenes) or everyone else (“There goes

Captain Crazy, hogging the spotlight and ruining our plans . . . *again*.”).

Consequently, the GM might outlaw some or all of reduced IQ, Will, and Per, as well as Alcoholism, Berserk, Chronic Depression, Cowardice, Flashbacks, Kleptomania, On the Edge, Paranoia, and Short Attention Span. Traits that inhibit essential tactics – e.g., Pacifism (Reluctant Killer) or Vow (Never use guns) for a soldier – should definitely be forbidden. It’s advisable to cap Compulsive Behaviors, Delusions, Obsessions, Odious Personal Habits, and Phobias at -5 points apiece, too.

As with physical disadvantages, *really* crippling traits aren’t recommended for **Action** in general or elite operators in particular. These include Addiction, anything that stalls or prevents action (especially Confused, Indecisive, and Slave Mentality), major cognitive disorders (Cannot Learn, Dyslexia, Innumerate, and Non-Iconographic), and exclusively *villainous* traits (Megalomania and Sadism) except when actually creating a villain.

## NPCs

The rules in *Specialists* address the player who’s designing a PC. However, the system works for NPCs and was designed to support that option as well. A few classes of NPCs are worth mentioning.

### Sidekicks

*Suitable Advantages* (*Heroes*, pp. 17-18) lists Allies (pp. B36-38) but offers no details. The modular nature of *Specialists* makes Allies easy!

1. Decide whether the Ally is built on 50% or 75% of the PC’s points, and thus is worth 2 or 3 points before multiplying for frequency of appearance. (Specialists with 25% of the PC’s points won’t work in anything less than a 500-point game, while 100% and 150% ones are no longer suitable sidekicks.) That’s 125 or 187 points in a standard 250-point **Action** campaign.

2. Spend the first 100 points on the BAT. The GM – *not* the player – selects the associated advantages and disadvantages! In a standard campaign, 25 or 87 points will remain.

3. Buy as many skill sets from Chapter 2 as the remaining points can afford. In a 250-point game, that’s one or three. The player selects the packages but not any options within.

4. Put any leftover points into the Slush Fund. That’s where the residual 12 points of a 187-point Ally end up.

5. Customize. The GM select quirks, adjusts advantage and skill levels, and optimizes (if desired). The player gets to spend any remaining Slush Fund.

Any hero may pay for such an Ally using the points his template sets aside for advantages. This is a good way to plug gaps in the team’s lineup.

### Extras

In a campaign that uses *Pulling Rank* (*Heroes*, pp. 24-25), various nameless helpers can appear on a successful Assistance Roll. The GM can quickly create supporting cast – gunmen, pilots, etc. – by starting with the BAT, adding a single relevant skill set, and spending the Slush Fund to improve key abilities. Ignore customization like quirks and optimization for one-dimensional NPCs who show up for just long enough to do their job.

### Enemies

Bad guys (*Exploits*, pp. 45-46) more capable than mooks can also use these rules. Handle “mook leaders” like extras: one skill set and nothing fancy. Create “named henchmen” and competent bosses like PCs. The main differences are that bad guys gravitate toward disadvantages off the Antisocial, Checkered Past, Crazy, Extremist, Obsessed, Vice-Prone, and Violent lists; can have villainous disadvantages forbidden to PCs, like Megalomania and Sadism; and may ignore *The Needs of the Many* (pp. 7-9) unless they belong to organized rival groups.

## THE CALL OF DUTY

On the other hand, a few disadvantages are *appropriate* for those who serve. The GM might make some of these mandatory and count them against the -50 points in the BAT; if many physical and mental traits are prohibited, this can help PCs hit the disadvantage load the BAT assumes. Alternatively, the GM can add them *on top*, balancing them with the advantages under *Duty Empowered* (p. 9) or an equal number of positive points in the Slush Fund.

There are two main choices:

**Duty:** Police and soldiers in active service – and officers of all but the most shadowy intelligence and security agencies – have a Duty. Even mobsters might be bound to their boss! Frequency is typically 12 or less [-10], but may be just 9 or less [-5] for deep-cover agents or high-level crooks with lots of autonomy, or 15 or less [-15] for commandos, or for *cinematic* cops or security officers who are on duty whenever they’re on screen. The Duty is Extremely Hazardous (add -5 points) in a violent campaign where villains are gunning for the heroes almost all the time – a common situation in **Action**.

**Sense of Duty:** Requiring Sense of Duty (Team) [-5] is a simple way to ensure that the PCs operate as a cohesive unit. To make this more carrot than stick, the GM is advised to allow it *on top of* the -50 points in the BAT, contributing five points to the Slush Fund. In a military or national-security themed campaign, Sense of Duty (Nation) [-10] might be mandatory, and *include* Sense of Duty (Team) in any unit tasked with the nation’s best interests.

## Martial-Arts Master

You're a cinematic master of the martial arts. This power-up comes in three distinct flavors, which are rarely combined. In all cases, you may use your Slush Fund to acquire more of the listed advantages (which often cost more than the points allocated here!) or any cinematic martial-arts perk, skill, or technique for which you have the prerequisites; see *Furious Fists*, pp. 13-19 for details. You also don't need Special Exercises perks, as Trained by a Master or Weapon Master covers that ground – put those points back in your Slush Fund.

### Master (Armed)

50 points

*Prerequisite:* Obsolete Weapons.

You're an expert with muscle-powered weaponry of some kind.

**Advantages:** Weapon Master (Weapon of choice) [20].  
● Another 30 points in Arm ST 1-2 [5/level], Enhanced Dodge 1-2 [15/level], Enhanced Parry 1-3 (One melee weapon) [5/level], Extra Attack 1 [25], Striking ST 1-2 [5/level], Strong Chi 1-4 [5/level], or Weapon Bond [1/weapon], or expand Weapon Master to Weapon Master (Two weapons) [25] for 5 points or Weapon Master (Small class of weapons) [30] for 10 points.

*Permitted Cinematic Perks:* Focused Fury.

*Permitted Cinematic Skills:* Blind Fighting (Per/VH), Flying Leap (IQ/H), Kiai (HT/H), Power Blow (Will/H), Pressure Points (IQ/H), and Throwing Art (DX/H).

*Permitted Cinematic Techniques:* Roll with Blow.

### Master (Ninja)

50 points

*Prerequisite:* Obsolete Weapons or Silent Killing.

You're a master of shadows and obscure ethnic weapons.

**Advantages:** Weapon Master (Ninja Weapons) [35].  
● Another 15 points in Enhanced Parry 1-3 (One melee weapon) [5/level] or (All) [10/level], Extra Attack 1 [25], Perfect Balance [15], Striking ST 1-5 (Assassination, -60%) [2/level], Strong Chi 1-4 [5/level], or Zeroed (Ninja) [10].

*Permitted Cinematic Perks:* High-Heeled Heroine and High-Heeled Hurt.

*Permitted Cinematic Skills:* Blind Fighting (Per/VH), Flying Leap (IQ/H), Light Walk (DX/H), Power Blow (Will/H), Pressure Points (IQ/H), and Throwing Art (DX/H).

*Permitted Cinematic Techniques:* Disappear and Roll with Blow.

### Master (Unarmed)

50 points

*Prerequisite:* Unarmed Combat.

Your martial art is all about fists, feet, and twisting people like pretzels.

**Advantages:** Trained by a Master [30]. ● Another 20 points in Arm ST 1-2 [5/level], Blunt Claws [3], DR 1-2 (Limited, Crushing, -40%) [3/level], Enhanced Parry 1-3 (Bare Hands) [5/level], Extra Attack 1 [25], Lifting ST 1-2 [3/level], Striker (Crushing; Shin, -20%) [4], Striking ST 1-2 [5/level], or Strong Chi 1-4 [5/level].

*Permitted Cinematic Perks:* Focused Fury, High-Heeled Heroine, High-Heeled Hurt, and Iron Hands.

*Permitted Cinematic Skills:* Breaking Blow (IQ/H), Flying Leap (IQ/H), Immovable Stance (DX/H), Kiai (HT/H), Power Blow (Will/H), Pressure Points (IQ/H), Pressure Secrets (IQ/VH), and Push (DX/H).

*Permitted Cinematic Techniques:* Flying Jump Kick, Lethal Kick, Lethal Strike, Piledriver, and Roll with Blow.

## PACKAGES AS LEVEL-UPS

Skill sets and power-ups don't *have* to be used with the BAT or reserved for starting characters! Here are two other possibilities:

*Templates Plus.* If the GM likes the templates in *Heroes* and *Furious Fists* but wants to start the campaign above 250 points, a simple way to do so is to have the players build heroes on templates and then add skill sets and power-ups to hit the desired power level. As the occasional awkward overlap is likely, *By the Book* (pp. 28-30) applies, subject to a special condition: any trait "rounded up" must be paid for by taking points from *something else in the package* so that the character stays on budget. The GM may permit *Trading Up* (pp. 30-31) at the end. Spend any points left over after all this as if they were a Slush Fund (*Spending the Slush Fund*, pp. 31-34).

*Experienced Heroes.* However the heroes were designed initially, they'll earn character points after each mission or session. If they save up enough for a skill set or a power-up, they can buy it provided that they can justify this in story terms. Action fiction often stars cinematic agents, cops, and soldiers who receive lavish training; at worst, going back to school might require an Assistance Roll. Such training can even *replace* unspent points as an adventure's reward, foreshadowing the next plot with what would be a montage in the movies. Either way, simply add the traits to the character – and if that results in illegal levels, redistribute points *within* the package to correct that. If that's possible only by going over or under budget, go low and leave the PC some unspent points.

In both cases, it's crucial to avoid niche invasion. For instance, if using templates, a crew that includes a cleaner and a demolition man from *Heroes* shouldn't have access to the Cleaning and Demolitions skill sets, because that territory has been claimed. Similarly, if a group of PCs built using *Specialists* already has three doses of Sniper School, it would be best to say the school rejects trainees from the team because *other* squads have a greater need (unless the campaign is all about snipers!). Of course, some packages are general enough not to be a problem; e.g., Academics, Extra Life, Goon, Just That Good, Physical Training, Super Luck, and Survivor.

## Perk Limits

Ignore the limits that some other **GURPS** supplements place on total number of perks – action heroes can have as many as they can afford! Most perks are one-off deals; each instance after the first adds a point to the Slush Fund. There are two exceptions:

*Perks Requiring Specialization:* You can take these more than once with *different* specialties.

*Leveled Perks:* Add the levels together. There's a maximum of *two* levels for Huge Weapons, *three* for Dirty Fighting. Put excess points in the Slush Fund.

## Advantage Limits

Quite a few advantages are one-off deals. Put the point cost of any duplicates in the Slush Fund. Examples likely to be seen in **Action** are Absolute Timing, Ambidexterity, Catfall, Combat Reflexes, Cultural Adaptability, Danger Sense, Daredevil, Fashion Sense, Gunslinger, High Pain Threshold, Intuition, Language Talent, Perfect Balance, Peripheral Vision, Pitiable, Rapier Wit, Trained by a Master, Voice, Weapon Master, and Zeroed.

Many other advantages come in numbered levels. These add, but there's a maximum in certain cases: *one* level for Extra Attack; *two* for Arm ST, Breath-Holding, Damage Resistance (Limited, Crushing), Lifting ST, and Striking ST; *three* for any given Enhanced Defense or Higher Purpose, and for Gizmos for non-Gadgeteers; *four* for High Manual Dexterity, Rank (for starting PCs), Reputation, Social Regard, and Talent (e.g., Artificer, Born to be Wired, Business Acumen, Craftiness, Driver's Reflexes, Healer, Mathematical Ability, Outdoorsman, Smooth Operator, or Strong Chi); *five* for Striking ST (Assassination); and *nine* for Night Vision. Levels past these maxima increase the Slush Fund instead.

Some special cases:

*I Am Not a Number!* Advantage levels may have names instead of numbers. Two instances of Absolute Direction become 3D Spatial Sense, and two of Eidetic Memory become Photographic Memory. Excess points go in the Slush Fund.

*Highly Irregular:* Several advantages have 5- and 15-point levels only: Fit/Very Fit, Flexibility/Double-Jointed, Rapid Healing/Very Rapid Healing, and Sensitive/Empathy. Three or more instances of the first add up to the second, but two require a choice: Take five points out of the Slush Fund to upgrade, or settle for the lower level and move five points into the Slush Fund. Do something similar for Appearance (allowed levels are Attractive [4], Handsome/Beautiful [12], and Very Handsome/Very Beautiful [16]), Luck (levels are Luck [15], Extraordinary Luck [30], and Ridiculous Luck [60]), and Resistant to Disease (two instances of (+3) [3] add up to (+8) [5] and put a point in the Slush Fund).

*Cultural Differences:* Those who have Cultural Adaptability and specific Cultural Familiarities should remove the latter and put the points in their Slush Fund. Anyone who has one or more extra Cultural Familiarities may opt to replace these with Cultural Adaptability [10] by paying the cost difference out of their Slush Fund.

## SPECIALIST CAMPAIGNS

**Specialists** falls partway between template-based and freeform character design. For the players, "follow instructions, create heroes" still applies – only the instructions change. Being less prescriptive than the rest of **Action**, however, **Specialists** asks the GM to make more decisions. Here's a quick summary:

*Templates, Too?* The GM may require *everybody* to use **Specialists** or permit templates from **Heroes** and **Furious Fists** as well. In the latter case, be sure to read *Compatibility?* (p. 34).

*Power!* As *Power Levels* (p. 5) discusses, the starting budget needn't be 250 points – although if templates are allowed as well, that's the *minimum*, and going higher forces the issue of "leveling-up" templates (*Packages as Level-Ups*, p. 26).

*Regulation BATs.* The BAT (pp. 4-7) isn't fixed. The GM may adjust it to reflect recruitment standards or mandatory traits, which might include entire skill sets; see *The Needs of the Many* (pp. 7-9). In a non-**Action** campaign, some traits may be unsuitable, as the footnotes explain.

*On Message.* Not every package in Chapter 2 fits all campaigns. The GM should discard anything that won't be useful or doesn't suit the intended protagonists (e.g., Criminal Past for security agents subject to background checks). The GM might want to outlaw most or all power-ups (pp. 24-27) in a non-**Action** game.

*Special Specialists.* The GM is free to define *additional* skill sets, optional or mandatory. For instance, an **Action** campaign that will go into space may require everyone to take an "Astronaut" skill set that offers Improved G-Tolerance, Free Fall, Spacer, Vacc Suit, and spaceship-related Piloting skills.

*Caps, Limits, Maxima.* The GM should review *By the Book* (pp. 28-30) and set the ceilings on trait levels – especially attributes and advantages. In particular, while Talent is normally capped at four levels, **GURPS Power-Ups 3: Talents** supports up to 10 levels, and the GM may prefer that.

*Renaissance (Gun)men.* Lots of points isn't the only way for PCs to cover lots of ground. *Generalists* (p. 32) offers alternatives. The Dabbler perk (p. 33) and Jack of All Trades advantage (p. 32) *always* require GM permission.

*Social Problems.* The GM must decide how Contact Groups, Rank, Wealth, and the like will work before anybody buys them – review *Duly Empowered* (p. 9) and *A Man of Wealth and Taste* (pp. 33-34).

*Veto!* Some players won't just run with **Specialists** – they'll put it in a fast car and hit the NOS. At a minimum, the GM needs to review character sheets and negotiate custom Higher Purpose advantages (*I Take My Job Seriously*, p. 34). It's even better to work through the design process with each player.

*NPCs.* The GM decides whether to allow Allies, and at what power levels; see *Sidekicks* (p. 8). If they're allowed, designing them is mainly the GM's job. The GM *could* even reserve **Specialists** for NPCs while PCs use templates!



# INDEX

- 3D Spatial Sense advantage, *bonus from*, 15.  
Absolute Direction advantage, *bonus from*, 30; *trading up*, 29.  
Academics skill set, 10.  
Advantages, *adding social*, 33-34; *bonuses to skills*, 15, 30; *Higher Purpose*, 34; *limits*, 29-30; *new*, 32, 34; *optimal*, 30; *potential mandatory*, 9; *trading up*, 29-30 *see also* *Perks*.  
Airborne School skill set, 11.  
Allies advantage, *GM decisions*, 29; *sidekick*, 8.  
Amphibious Operations skill set, 11.  
Appearance advantage, *allowed levels*, 29; *bonus from*, 15.  
Area Security skill set, 11.  
Armory skill set, 11.  
Attributes, *caps*, 28; *optimal*, 30.  
Basic Action Template (BAT), 4-7; *alternate starting*, 9; *alternate power levels*, 5; *buying traits on*, 31; *potential mandatory traits*, 8-9; *replacement physical traits*, 7; *unsuitable traits*, 7-8; *see also* *Skill Sets*, *Slush Fund*.  
Bon Vivant skill set, 11.  
Booby Traps skill set, 11.  
Buddy Bond advantage, 34.  
Bugging skill set, 11-12.  
Bushwhacker skill set, 12.  
Businessperson skill set, 12.  
Car Thief skill set, 12.  
Cat power-up, 24.  
Character creation, *attribute caps*, 28; *backgrounds*, 32-33; *Basic Action Template*, 4-7; *buying optional traits*, 32; *buying traits on the BAT*, 31; *buying up traits on character sheets*, 32; *checking trait levels*, 28-30; *checklist*, 4; *choosing perks*, 33; *choosing quirks*, 28; *compatibility*, 34; *designing NPCs*, 8; *generalists*, 32; *GM decisions*, 7-9, 29; *higher power level*, 26; *leveling up*, 26; *negative-total options*, 31; *non-Action campaign decisions*, 7, 10, 24, 29; *optimizing traits*, 30-31; *potential mandatory traits*, 8-9; *power levels*, 5, 26; *secondary characteristic caps*, 28; *sidelines*, 33; *skill sets*, 10-24; *social advantages*, 33-34; *spending the Slush Fund*, 31-34; *trait limits*, 28-30; *unsuitable traits*, 7-8; *see also* *Advantages*, *Attributes*, *Basic Action Template*, *Disadvantages*, *Perks*, *Skill Sets*, *Skills*, *Slush Fund*.  
Cheaper Gear perk, 23.  
Chemical Safety skill set, 12.  
Civilian Crewman (sailor) skill set, 21.  
Civilian Pilot skill set, 16.  
Cleaning skill set, 12.  
Climber skill set, 12.  
Close-Quarters Battle skill set, 12-13.  
Combat Reflexes advantage, *bonus from*, 30.  
Command skill set, 13.  
Communications skill set, 13.  
Computer Intrusion skill set, 13.  
Computer Operation skill, *swapping*, 33.  
Conspiracies skill set, 13.  
Construction skill set, 13.  
Contact Group advantage, 9, 33; *optimizing*, 30.  
Contacts advantage, *optimizing*, 30.  
Countersurveillance skill set, 13-14.  
Cowboy skill set, 14.  
Criminal Past skill set, 14.  
Cultural Adaptability advantage, *converting to*, 29.  
Cultural Familiarity advantage, *optimizing*, 29.  
Dabbler perk, 33.  
Demolitions skill set, 14.  
Desert Training skill set, 14.  
Detective Work skill set, 14.  
Disadvantages, *choosing quirks*, 28; *potential mandatory*, 8-9; *suitable enemy*, 28; *unsuitable mental*, 8; *unsuitable physical*, 7.  
Disease Control skill set, 14.  
Doctor skill set, 18.  
Driving skill, *swapping*, 33; *optimizing*, 31.  
Duty disadvantage, 8.  
Eidetic Memory advantage, *trading up*, 30.  
Electronic Surveillance skill set, 14.  
Electronics skill set, 15.  
Empathy advantage, *allowed levels*, 29; *bonus from*, 30.  
Enemies, *designing*, 8.  
Equipment Bond perk, 23.  
Escape and Evasion skill set, 15.  
Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) skill set, 15.  
Explosives skill, *optimizing*, 31.  
Extra Life power-up, 24.  
Extras (NPCs), *designing*, 8.  
Fearlessness advantage, *trading up*, 30.  
Femme Fatale skill set, 15.  
Fireman skill set, 15-16.  
Fixer skill set, 15.  
Flexibility advantage, *allowed levels*, 29; *bonus from*, 30.  
Flight School skill sets, 16.  
Forensics skill set, 16.  
Forest Training skill set, 16.  
Gadgeteer power-ups, 25.  
Goon skill set, 16.  
Gunner skill, *optimizing*, 31.  
Guns skill, *optimizing*, 31.  
Gunslinger power-up, 25.  
**GURPS Action**, 3-5, 7, 8, 12, 13, 16-21, 23-25, 27-34; **Action 1: Heroes**, 3-5, 7-12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 23, 25-27, 29-31, 33, 34; **Action 2: Exploits**, 3, 8, 13, 17, 18, 20-22, 24, 25, 27, 34; **Action 3: Furious Fists**, 3, 10, 19, 23, 26, 27, 29, 30, 33, 34; **Basic Set**, 4; **Power-Ups 2: Perks**, 3, 23, 33; **Power-Ups 3: Talents**, 29; **Power-Ups 6: Quirks**, 28.  
H4xx0r power-up, 25.  
Heavy Weapons skill set, 16.  
Higher Purpose advantage, 34; *examples*, 34.  
Hostile Extraction skill set, 16.  
Huge Weapons perk, 23.  
Illicit Entry skill set, 17.  
Impersonation skill set, 17.  
Infantry Training skill set, 17.  
Intelligence skill set, 17.  
Interrogation skill set, 17.  
Jack of All Trades advantage, 32.  
Journalism skill set, 17.  
Jungle Training skill set, 16.  
Just That Good power-up, 25.  
Language trait, *optimizing*, 30.  
Language Talent advantage, *converting to*, 30.  
Law enforcement officers, *potential mandatory traits*, 7-9.  
Law Enforcement skill set, 17-18.  
Lenses, BAT-equivalent, *see* *Skill Sets*.  
Linguist skill set, 18.  
Local Expert skill set, 18.  
Luck advantage, *allowed levels*, 29.  
Martial Arts skill sets, 23.  
Martial-Arts Master power-ups, 26.  
Master (Armed) power-up, 26.  
Master (Ninja) power-up, 26.  
Master (Unarmed) power-up, 26.  
Mastermind skill set, 18.  
Medic skill set, 18.  
Medicine skill sets, 18.  
Military Crewman (sailor) skill set, 21.  
Military Pilot skill set, 16.

*So what I heard downstairs there is that they got a guy, some Swede, real badass, supposedly a "specialist" and they're bringing him over. Now he ain't coming cheap.*

*– Serna, in **Smokin' Aces***



Mountain Training skill set, 18.  
 Naval Training perk, 23.  
 Negotiator skill set, 18.  
 NPCs, *designing*, 8; *GM decisions*, 29.  
 Nuclear Disposal skill set, 19.  
 Obsolete Weapons skill set, 19.  
 Old Salt perk, 23.  
 Parkour skill set, 19.  
 Perfect Balance advantage, *bonus from*, 15.  
 Perks, *buying*, 33; *limits*, 29; *new*, 23, 33.  
 Personal Security skill set, 19.  
 Physical Training skill set, 19-20.  
 Pilot skill sets, 16.  
 Piloting skill, *optimizing*, 31.  
 Pistolero skill set, 20.  
 Power levels, *alternate*, 5; *higher*, 26.  
 Power-ups, 24; *as level-ups*, 26; *doubling up*, 11.  
 Precautions perk, 23.  
 Psy-Ops skill set, 20.  
 Pyramid #3/53: *Action*, 3; *see also GURPS*.  
 Quirks, choosing, 28.  
 Rank advantage, 9, 33-34.  
 Recon skill set, 20.  
 Records Falsification skill set, 20.  
 Repairman skill set, 20.  
 Researcher skill set, 20.  
 Resistance skill set, 21.  
 Robust Hearing perk, 23.  
 Robust Vision perk, 23.  
 Sabotage skill set, 21.  
 Safecracking skill set, 21.  
 Sailor skill sets, 21.  
 Sartorial Integrity perk, 23.  
 Scientist skill set, 21.  
 Secondary characteristics, caps, 28.  
 Security Systems skill set, 21.  
 Self-Defense skill set, 23.  
 Sense of Duty Disadvantage, 8.  
 Sensitive advantage, *allowed levels*, 29; *bonus from*, 30.  
 Sidekicks, *designing*, 5, 8; *GM permission*, 29; *power level*, 5.  
 Silent Killing skill set, 21.  
 Skill sets, 10-24; *as level-ups*, 26; *as origin inspiration*, 10; *as suggestions*, 19; *cost*, 10; *doubling up*, 11; *explained*, 10; *sideline*, 33; *see also Basic Action Template, Slush Fund*.  
 Skills, *background*, 32-33; *bonuses from advantages*, 15, 30; *optimal*, 31; *round levels*, 30; *sideline*, 33; *swapping*, 33; *Talents replacing*, 30-31.  
 Slush Fund, *explained*, 6; *Higher Purpose and*, 34; *perks and*, 33; *quirks and*, 28; *social advantages, and*, 33-34; *spending*, 31; *See also Basic Action Template, Skill Sets*.  
 Sniper School skill set, 22.  
 Social Engineering skill set, 22.  
 Soldering-Gun Slinger, 25.  
 Soldiers, *potential mandatory traits*, 7-9.  
 Special Agent power-up, 27.  
 Special Exercises perk, 23.  
 Spin Doctor skill set, 22.  
 Super Luck power-up, 27.  
 Sure-Footed perk, 23.  
 Surveillance skill set, 22.  
 Survival skill set, 22.  
 Survivor power-up, 27.  
 Tactical Driving skill set, 22.  
 Talents, *optimal*, 30-31; *replacing skills with*, 30-31.  
 Techniques, *maximum levels*, 30; *optimal*, 30, 31.  
 Templates, *see Basic Action Template*.  
 Theft skill set, 22.  
 Toxicology skill set, 22.  
 Traceur power-up, 27.  
 Tradecraft skill set, 23.  
 Transporter power-up, 27.  
 Ultimate Repairman power-up, 25.  
 Unarmed Combat skill set, 23.  
 Undercover skill set, 23.  
 Underwater Operations skill set, 23.  
 Upside-Down perk, 23.  
 Urban Assault skill set, 24.  
 Voice advantage, *bonus from*, 15.  
 Winter Operations skill set, 24.

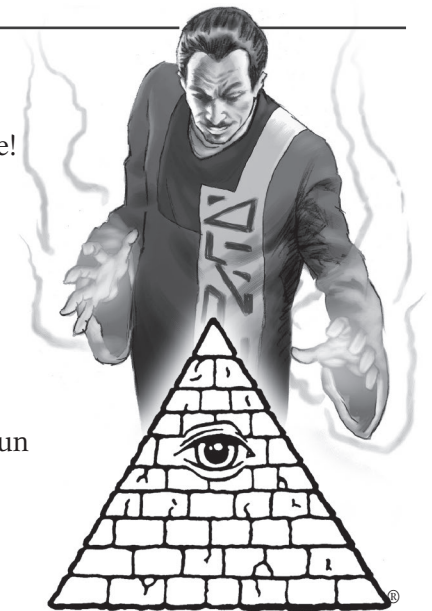
---

## STUCK FOR AN ADVENTURE? NO PROBLEM.

Warehouse 23 sells high-quality game adventures and supplements in print and PDF formats.

---

- Free downloadable adventures for *GURPS*, *In Nomine*, and *Traveller*!
- Fun gaming accessories – shot glasses, shirts, specialty six-siders, and more!
- PDFs from Atlas Games, Amarillo Design Bureau, Pelgrane Press, Goodman Games, and many others – plus gems from the up-and-comers.
- Original material for *Transhuman Space* and new *GURPS* supplements from Kenneth Hite, Phil Masters, David Pulver, Sean Punch, and William Stoddard!
- Fully searchable files of *GURPS Fourth Edition* supplements.
- Digital editions of out-of-print classics, from *Orcslayer* and the complete run of *ADQ* to *GURPS China* and *GURPS Ice Age*.
- Buy board games and roleplaying PDFs in the same order! Download digital purchases again whenever you need to.



**STEVE JACKSON GAMES**  
**warehouse23.com**