



AWAKE IN THE BLACK

CREW CREATION GUIDE

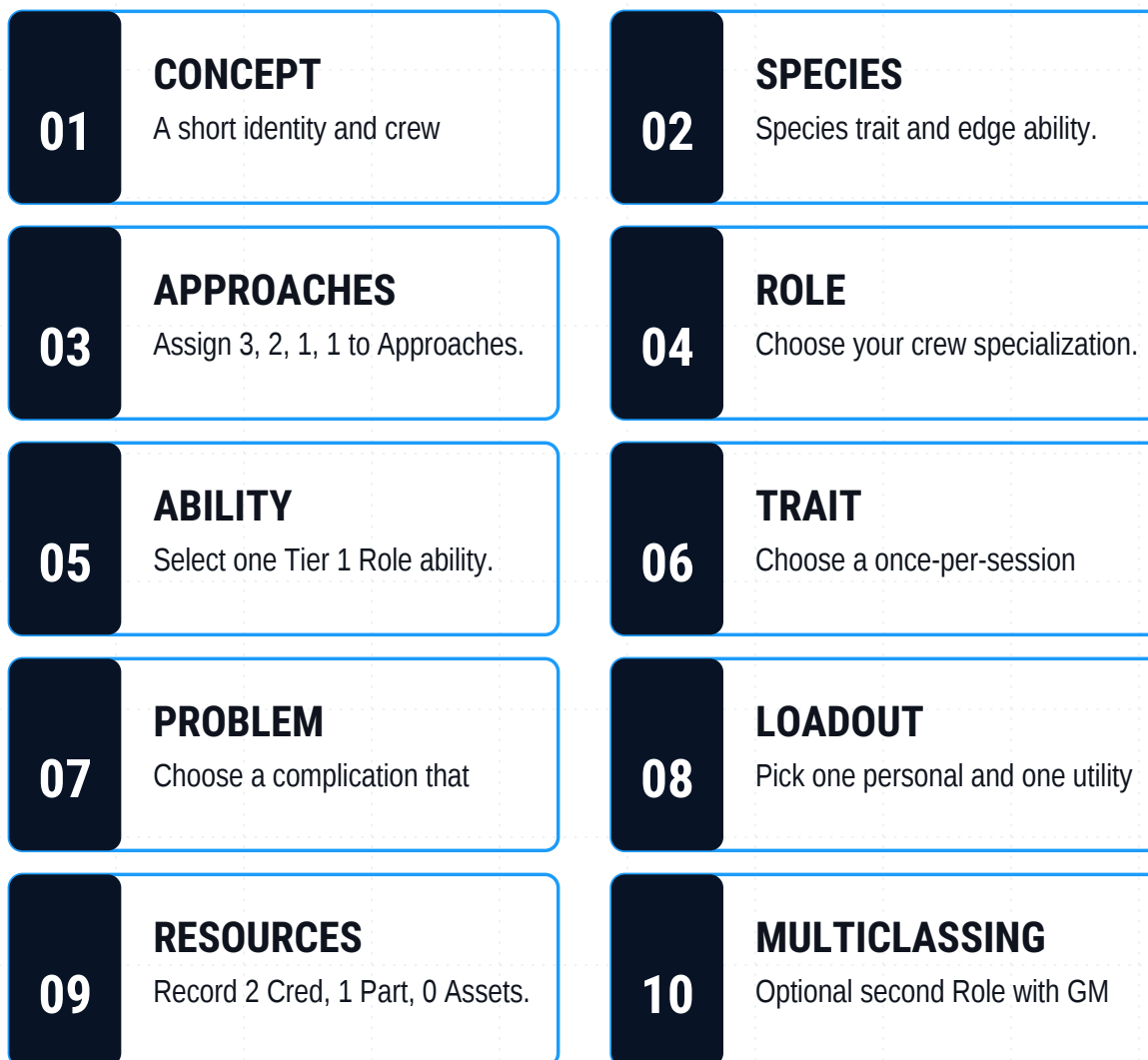
Created by Brandon Sligh

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CREATE A CHARACTER IN 10 MINUTES

Use this page as the fast-start path.

CHARACTER CREATION FLOW



BEFORE YOU BUILD

Fast characters first; depth through play.

Build fast. Choose the option that makes the clearest crew member, not the option that seems mathematically strongest.

A finished starting character needs a concept, species, Approach spread, Role, Tier 1 ability, Trait, Problem, loadout, and starting resources.

The goal is not to finish a complete biography. The goal is to create a person who can make hard choices with the rest of the crew immediately.

STEP 01 // CONCEPT

A concept is a table-useful anchor.

Write one focused sentence that explains who you are and why you are useful to the crew.

// Former military pilot turned smuggler.

// Quiet infiltrator with a criminal past.

// Scrap-deck mechanic obsessed with machines.

// Smooth-talking broker buried in debt.

A strong concept should suggest how you act under pressure, what trouble follows you, and why the crew keeps you around.

SPECIES QUICK CHOICE

Choose concept first; optimization second.

HUMANS

Passive: Adaptive Instinct

Reroll a single die once per session, whether from the Success or Failure

Edge: Push Through

Ignore one Strain from a roll, but immediately gain one Strain afterward.

DROIDS

Passive: Machine Precision

Gain +1 Success Die on Logic-based rolls. Droids track System Stress

Edge: System Override

Automatically succeed at a simple technical task, but gain one Systems Strain equivalent.

VELARI

Passive: Field Awareness

Remove one Failure Die from detection or navigation rolls.

Edge: Pulse Sense

Detect hidden signals, ships, or anomalies; the GM reveals one hidden element in the scene.

DRATH

Passive: Built to Endure

Reduce incoming Physical Strain by one, to a minimum of zero.

Edge: Unstoppable

Ignore all penalties from Physical Strain for one action, then gain additional strain afterward.

MYRR

Passive: Emotional Read

Gain +1 Success Die on social insight or deception detection.

Edge: Neural Sync

Transfer one Advantage to an ally roll at the cost of one Mental Strain.

APPROACHES

How your character acts under pressure.

STARTING DISTRIBUTION

3

Primary strength

Assign once at creation.

2

Reliable method

Assign once at creation.

1

Limited method

Assign once at creation.

1

Limited method

Assign once at creation.

FORCE

Direct, aggressive, overpowering action. Use it to break, push, intimidate, endure, or force a system to respond.

FINESSE

Precision, timing, subtlety, and control. Use it to sneak, pilot, bypass, avoid danger, or make delicate moves.

LOGIC

Analysis, technical knowledge, diagnosis, and structured problem-solving. Use it to repair, hack, plan, identify weaknesses, or read systems.

PRESENCE

Social influence, emotional control, negotiation, deception, authority, and reading motives.

STEP 04 // CHOOSE A ROLE

Specialization, not restriction.

Your Role defines your primary specialization within the crew and grants access to a Skill Tree. Roles do not limit what you can attempt. A Pilot can negotiate. A Face can shoot. An Engineer can lie. The Role defines what you are best at and what kind of problems you reshape. After choosing a Role, select one Tier 1 ability from that Role as your Starting Ability.

ROLE QUICK CHOICES

Pick the job you want to be good at.

DRIFTER

IDENTITY

Improvises when plans collapse. Best when the crew is off-balance.

TIER 1 STARTING ABILITIES

Make It Work: treat any Approach as 1 higher once per scene. Lucky Break: convert 1 Strain into Success; no Advantage. Off-Script: +1 die outside expected role. Scavenged Know-How: attempt actions without proper tools; consequences still apply.

ENGINEER

IDENTITY

Keeps the ship alive when systems should already be failing.

TIER 1 STARTING ABILITIES

Patch Kit: clear 1 Ship Strain once per scene. System Familiarity: +1 die on own ship systems. Quick Reroute: convert Strain to Advantage. Jury Access: use damaged systems without penalty.

ROLE QUICK CHOICES

Pick the job you want to be good at.

FACE

IDENTITY

Uses leverage, trust, deception, and social timing to shape outcomes.

TIER 1 STARTING ABILITIES

Read the Room: ask the GM about an NPC intent. Silver Tongue: +1 die on first impressions. Shift the Tone: convert Strain into Advantage. Friendly Angle: reduce the first social complication.

PILOT

IDENTITY

Controls movement, escape, speed, and dangerous routes under pressure.

TIER 1 STARTING ABILITIES

Evasive Maneuvers: +1 die when avoiding damage or danger. Steady Hand: ignore minor piloting complications. Push the Engines: +1 die on movement; adds Heat. Situational Awareness: reduce first movement-related penalty.

ROLE QUICK CHOICES

Pick the job you want to be good at.

GUNNER

IDENTITY

Uses controlled violence when avoidance is no longer possible.

TIER 1 STARTING ABILITIES

Target Lock: +1 die when attacking a marked target. Controlled Burst: reduce collateral or secondary consequences. Suppressive Fire: convert Success into Advantage to control space. Weapons Familiarity: ignore minor penalties with ship weapons.

NAVIGATOR

IDENTITY

Reads routes, patterns, signals, and threats before others see them.

TIER 1 STARTING ABILITIES

Scan Ahead: ask the GM about an upcoming threat or condition. Route Mapping: +1 die on travel or navigation. Signal Read: detect hidden signals or anomalies. Safe Passage: reduce first travel-related complication.

ROLE QUICK CHOICES

Pick the job you want to be good at.

OPERATOR

IDENTITY

Solves problems quietly through stealth, access, and clean execution.

TIER 1 STARTING ABILITIES

Silent Movement: +1 die when moving undetected. Close Access: ignore minor barriers like locks or basic security. Clean Strike: convert 1 Advantage into a silent takedown or neutralization. Shadow Presence: remain unnoticed unless directly observed or engaged.

SMUGGLER

IDENTITY

Moves people, cargo, and secrets through systems that want control.

TIER 1 STARTING ABILITIES

Hidden Compartments: conceal items from standard inspections unless specifically searched. Low Profile: +1 die avoiding scrutiny. Mislabel Cargo: convert 1 Advantage into false identification or documentation. Routine Run: treat common transport as low-risk unless escalated.

ROLE QUICK CHOICES

Pick the job you want to be good at.

SCAVENGER

IDENTITY

Finds value in wreckage, damage, salvage, and abandoned systems.

TIER 1 STARTING ABILITIES

Scrap Sense: identify valuable parts or materials. Quick Salvage: +1 die extracting resources under pressure. Break It Down: convert 1 Advantage into Parts or materials. Nothing Wasted: always recover minimal resources from any wreck or failure.

TRADER

IDENTITY

Turns survival into value through markets, deals, and contacts.

TIER 1 STARTING ABILITIES

Appraisal: determine true value of goods, assets, or opportunities. Market Sense: +1 die when buying, selling, or negotiating value. Trade Margin: convert 1 Advantage into increased profit or favorable terms. Established Contact: access a known buyer or seller in most populated areas.

ROLE QUICK CHOICES

Pick the job you want to be good at.

MEDIC

IDENTITY

Keeps the crew functional through injury, fear, and collapse.

TIER 1 STARTING ABILITIES

Field Stabilization: reduce 1 Physical or Mental Strain for an ally once per scene. Triage: +1 die treating injuries under pressure. Pain Management: convert 1 Strain into Advantage for the target. Basic Kit: treat injuries without proper facilities; consequences still apply.

TECH

IDENTITY

Controls systems, networks, sensors, locks, and digital environments.

TIER 1 STARTING ABILITIES

System Access: interface with most digital systems without specialized equipment. Data Read: ask the GM one question about a system, network, or digital environment. Exploit Weakness: +1 die targeting a known vulnerability. Signal Mask: convert 1 Strain into reduced detection or traceability.

TRAIT

Your once-per-session edge.

Choose one Trait that represents a defining strength. Once per session, when your Trait clearly applies, you gain +1 Success Die on a roll.

A good Trait is broad enough to matter but narrow enough that it does not apply constantly. The GM has final approval.

Examples: Cool Under Pressure, Former Naval Cadet, Streetwise, Machine Whisperer, Deadeye, Debt-Hardened, Station-Born, Smooth Liar.

PROBLEM

The complication that follows you.

Every character takes a Problem. A Problem is a source of tension, risk, or complication that gives the GM something concrete to pressure.

If your Problem meaningfully complicates the session, you gain +1 XP at the end of play.

Examples: Owes money to a syndicate, wanted in multiple systems, reckless under pressure, cannot resist a mystery, keeps protecting someone who causes trouble.

LOADOUT

Start practical, not rich.

Choose one Personal Item and one Utility Item.

A Personal Item is iconic to the character: sidearm, blade, toolkit, data slate, old uniform patch, lucky charm, or worn flight helmet.

A Utility Item solves problems: med patch, repair kit, scanner, climbing gear, breaching tool, comms relay, fake credentials, or emergency oxygen mask.

Equipment is primarily narrative unless a specific rule says otherwise.

STARTING RESOURCES

Thin margins are the point.

Start with 2 Cred, 1 Part, and 0 Assets.

Cred pays for transactions and services. Parts repair and modify equipment or ship systems.

Assets are temporary advantages gained during play.

These values are intentionally limited. You start with enough to survive, not enough to be comfortable.

STEP 10 // OPTIONAL MULTICLASSING

Use only when it makes the character clearer.

For additional flexibility, the GM may allow optional multiclassing at creation.

By spending one starting experience point, you may gain a Tier 1 ability from a second Role. You may have a maximum of two Roles at creation.

New players should skip this option until they understand the system. A clear single Role is usually better for the first session.

WHY ARE YOU ON THIS SHIP?

A crew is more useful than isolated backstories.

Before play begins, each player should answer one crew-link question.

// Who on the crew saved you or cost you something?

// What debt, job, mistake, or promise keeps you aboard?

// What do you know about the ship that others ignore?

// What line will you cross if survival requires it?

The answers do not need to be long. They only need to give the GM and the other players pressure points for play.

CREW LINK

SHIP CREATION SNAPSHOT

The ship should already feel like trouble.

The ship is your home, tool, shelter, liability, and record of bad decisions.

At minimum, decide the ship name, what kind of ship it is, what it used to do, what is broken, who wants it, and why the crew cannot easily replace it.

Ship creation can be finished in the full Player Handbook or Core Rulebook, but this snapshot is enough to start play.

CHARACTER WORKSHEET

Use this as a scratch page before building in Canva or on a character sheet.

CONCEPT

SPECIES

APPROACHES

Force ____ Finesse ____ Logic ____ Presence ____

ROLE

STARTING ABILITY

TRAIT

PROBLEM

LOADOUT

Personal Item _____ Utility Item _____

RESOURCES

2 Cred 1 Part 0 Assets

OPTIONAL MULTICLAS

WORKSHEET

PLAYER QUICK REFERENCE

ROLLS

- // 1. Describe what you do in the fiction.
- // 2. Choose Force, Finesse, Logic, or Presence.
- // 3. Roll Success Dice and Failure Dice together.
- // 4. Success Dice: 4-6 are Successes; 1-3 are Advantage.
- // 5. Failure Dice: 4-6 are Failures; 1-3 are Strain.
- // 6. You succeed only if Successes exceed Failures.

PUSH

- // Before rolling, you may Push for +2 Success Dice.
- // A Push automatically creates 1 Strain after the roll.
- // The GM also introduces a complication into the scene.
- // Bonus dice from abilities and effects cannot exceed +2 beyond your base Approach.

CHARACTER CREATION

- // Concept, Species, Approaches, Role, Ability, Trait, Problem, Loadout, Resources, Optional Multiclassing.
- // Approaches begin as 3, 2, 1, 1.
- // Start with one Tier 1 ability from your Role.
- // Start with 2 Cred, 1 Part, and 0 Assets.

TABLE PRINCIPLES

- // The fiction comes first.
- // Success is rarely clean.
- // Failure should still move the story.
- // The ship matters; damage and decisions carry forward.