

Chapter Four: Skills

Table 4-1: Skills

Skill	Bbn	Brd	Clr	Drd	Ftr	Gld	Mk	Psn	Psw	Rgr	Rog	Wiz	Untrained	Ability
Animal Empathy	x	x	x	●	x	x	x	d	x	●	x	X	No	Cha
Appraise	•	●	•	•	•	•	•	d	•	•	●	•	Yes	Int
Autohypnosis ^P	x	x	x	x	x	x	●	d	●	x	x	x	No	Wis
Balance	•	●	•	•	•	●	●	d	●	•	●	•	Yes	Dex*
Bargain	•	●	•	•	•	•	•	d	•	•	●	•	Yes	Cha
Bluff	•	●	•	•	•	•	•	d	•	•	●	●	Yes	Cha
Climb	●	•	•	•	●	•	●	d	●	●	●	•	Yes	Str*
Concentration	•	•	●	●	•	•	●	●	●	•	•	●	Yes	Con
Craft(any)	•	●	•	•	•	•	•	d	•	●	●	•	No	Int
(alchemy)	•	●	•	•	•	•	•	d	•	•	•	●	No	Int
(poisonmaking)	•	●	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	No	Int
(spellweaving)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	●	No	Int
(trapmaking)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	d	•	●	●	•	No	Int
Decipher Script	x	●	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	●	x	No	Int
Diplomacy	•	●	•	•	•	•	•	d	•	•	●	•	Yes	Cha
Disable Device	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	d	•	•	●	•	No	Int
Disguise	•	●	•	•	•	•	•	d	•	•	●	●	Yes	Cha
Escape Artist	•	●	•	•	•	•	●	d	•	•	●	•	Yes	Dex*
Forgery	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	●	•	Yes	Int
Gather Info.	•	●	•	•	•	•	•	d	•	•	●	•	Yes	Cha
Handle Animal	●	•	•	●	●	•	•	•	•	●	•	•	No	Cha
Heal	•	•	●	●	•	•	•	•	•	●	•	•	Yes	Wis
Hide	•	●	•	●	•	•	●	•	•	●	●	●	Yes	Dex*
Innuendo	•	●	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	●	●	No	Wis
Intimidate	●	•	•	•	•	●	•	•	•	•	●	•	Yes	Cha
Intuit Direction	●	•	E	●	•	•	•	d	•	●	●	•	No	Wis
Jump	●	●	•	•	●	●	●	d	●	●	●	•	Yes	Str*
Knowledge (any)	•	●	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	●	No	Int
(arcana)	•	●	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	●	No	Int
(nature)	•	●	E	●	•	•	•	•	•	●	•	●	No	Int
(planes)	•	●	●	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	●	No	Int
(psionics)	•	●	•	•	•	•	•	●	•	•	•	●	No	Int
Language	•	●	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	No	Int
Listen	●	●	•	•	•	•	●	d	•	●	●	•	Yes	Wis
Move Silently	•	●	•	•	•	•	●	•	•	●	●	•	Yes	Dex*
Perform	•	●	•	•	•	•	•	d	•	•	●	•	Yes	Cha
Profession	●	●	●	•	●	•	•	•	•	•	●	•	No	Wis
Psicraft ^P	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	●	●	•	•	•	No	Int
Remote View ^P	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	d	•	x	x	x	No	Int
Read Lips	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	•	x	No	Int
Ride	●	•	•	•	●	•	•	d	•	●	•	•	Yes	Dex
Scry	x	x	●	●	x	x	x	x	x	X	x	●	No	Int
Search	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	d	•	●	●	•	Yes	Int
Sense Motive	•	●	•	•	•	•	•	d	•	•	●	•	Yes	Wis
Sleight of Hand	•	●	•	•	•	•	•	d	•	•	●	•	No	Dex*
Spellcraft	•	•	●	●	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	●	No	Int
Spot	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	d	•	●	●	•	Yes	Wis
Stabilize Self ^P	x	x	x	x	x	x	●	d	●	x	x	X	No	Con
Survival	●	•	•	●	•	•	•	•	•	●	•	•	Yes	Wis
Swim	●	●	E	●	•	•	●	d	●	●	●	•	Yes	Str*
Tumble	•	●	•	•	•	●	●	•	●	•	●	•	No	Dex*
Use Magic Dev.	x	●	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	●	x	No	Cha
Use Psionic Dev. ^P	x	●	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	●	x	No	Cha
Use Rope	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	d	•	●	●	•	Yes	Dex

- Class skill
- Cross-class skill
- x Barred skill

^P Skill described in the *Psionics Handbook*

* Armor check penalty applies

E Vary according to patron Element

d Vary according to primary discipline (See *Psionics Handbook*)

Acquiring Skill Ranks

The following tables details the skill points of each PC class of the DARK SUN setting and all class, cross-class and prohibited skills.

Table 4-2: Skill Points per Level

Class	1st Level Skill Points*	Higher Level Skill Points**
Barbarian	(4+Int modifier)x4	4+Int modifier
Bard	(6+Int modifier)x4	6+Int modifier
Cleric	(2+Int modifier)x4	2+Int modifier
Druid	(4+Int modifier)x4	4+Int modifier
Fighter	(2+Int modifier)x4	2+Int modifier
Gladiator	(2+Int modifier)x4	2+Int modifier
Monk	(4+Int modifier)x4	4+Int modifier
Psion	(2+Int modifier)x4	2+Int modifier
PsiWarrior	(2+Int modifier)x4	2+Int modifier
Ranger	(6+Int modifier)x4	6+Int modifier
Rogue	(8+Int modifier)x4	8+Int modifier
Wizard	(2+Int modifier)x4	2+Int modifier

* Human characters add 4 skill points to this value.

** Human characters add 1 skill point to this value.

Language skill

In DARK SUN, the Language skill becomes a full skill in which characters add ranks and can make checks. The more a character has ranks in a given language, the more he is likely to understand and be understood in that language.

At character creation, each character receives free ranks equal to her intelligence score to distribute in her automatic and bonus Language skills. (see Race and Languages p.4) The character may buy as many rank in a given Language as she desires (meaning that there is no maximum rank limit), though this is unique to that skill.

As a guideline, a capable speaker has around 4 ranks in a language skill, a native speaker has around 8, and a linguist can have 12 or more.

See the Language skill description for more details.

Knowledge skill

In DARK SUN, the Knowledge skill becomes is an integral part of play and receives a bit more attention than in standard D&D. As such, this skill and its mechanics will be detailed somewhat more in the following section.

At character creation, each character receives free skill points equal to her intelligence score to distribute among any Knowledge skill she wishes to develop. However, all Knowledge skills are considered cross-class skills at character creation (meaning that characters gain only half their Intelligence modifiers of free Knowledge skill ranks). Note that characters are still limited to the character level restriction regarding maximum skill ranks in the Knowledge skill.

See the Knowledge skill description for more details.

Skill Description

This section describes each addition, modification or omission of skills described in the *Player's Handbook* and *Psionics Handbook*. Unless otherwise noted, all skills are taken and used as in the *PHB* or the *PsiHB*.

Appraise (Int)

As *PHB*, except as follows:

Special: If you have 5 or more ranks in Appraise, you gain a +2 synergy bonus on Bargain checks. If you have 5 or more ranks in Bargain, you gain a +2 synergy bonus on Appraise checks.

Bargain (Cha)

You are good at haggling over the price of an item, convincing traders to give you a discount, or selling your wares for a better price.

Check: Bargain checks can be made for either simple or protracted barter.

Simple barter: Simple barter checks are made when attempting to buy or sell an item (or small group of items of the same nature) of a total value of less than 1gp. Bargain checks affect the NPC attitude of the target for buying or selling items. NPCs brought to friendly attitude allows you to increase or reduce the price by 10%, or have the target buy the merchandise at 50% cost if she has no use for it. NPCs brought to helpful attitude allows you to increase or reduce the price by 25%, or have the target buy the merchandise at cost if she has no use for it. A simple barter check requires 1 minute.

Protracted barter: In protracted barter, both of the participants try to lower or raise the price of an item or group of items of a total cost of more than 1 gp, or of a group of mixed items. You can make an opposed bargain check with the other participant of the exchange. If you succeed at your check, then you have initiated a protracted barter and adjusted the price by 5%. Once protracted barter has been initiated, you cannot avoid buying or selling the item once the price is determined, as the checks represent the time spent haggling over the price. For each 5 points by which you exceed the result of your opponent, you can adjust the price by another 5%. If you fail you check by 5 or more points, then you must buy the item at the given cost. Your opponent may choose to accept this price or proceed with the protracted barter by making an opposed Bargain check against you on her next action. Her Bargain check is resolved in the same way as yours. Once one of the participant accepts the price or fails her bargain by 5 or more points, the protracted barter session ends and the trade is concluded. This action requires 1 minute for each opposed checks made by either participants.

Special: Note that all Bargain cost adjustment are made according to the offered price. As such, Bargain checks are always made (or initiated) by the participant who is offered the price, and never by the person who offers the price (only in protracted barter can a participant hope to raise her given price)

If you have 5 or more ranks in Bargain, you gain a +2 synergy bonus on Appraise checks. If you have 5 or more ranks in Appraise, you gain a +2 synergy bonus on Bargain checks. If you have 5 or more ranks in Bluff, you gain a +2

synergy bonus on Bargain checks made to sell items. If you have 5 or more ranks in Sense Motive, you gain a +2 synergy bonus on Bargain checks made to buy items. If you have 5 or more ranks in Diplomacy, you gain a +2 synergy bonus on Bargain checks. These bonuses stack.

Elves get a +1 bonus to Bargain because they have a keen wit and a subtle tongue. However, note that relationships between most elves and other humanoids would be considered unfriendly on the NPC attitude chart.

Bluff (Cha)

As *PHB*, except as follows:

Check: Add *Somatic Concealment*.

Somatic Concealment: You can make a bluff attempt as part of casting a spell in an attempt to pass the somatic component of your spell as something else. If successful, an observer does not realise that the movements you made are part of the casting of a spell. Note however that you still have to perform the somatic component of your spell and that this check does not grant you the benefits of a Still Spell feat. This Bluff action is part of a standard action spell, but the casting time of a spell is increased to a full round action. This can also be attempted on a full round (or more) action spell, but the casting time of the spell is increased by one full round and observers benefit from a +5 bonus to their Sense Motive checks.

Special: If you have 5 or more ranks in Bluff, you gain a +2 synergy bonus on Bargain checks made to sell items.

Elves get a +1 bonus to Bluff because of their charming demeanor.

Craft (alchemy) (Int; Trained Only)

As Alchemy, except as follows:

Check: Attempts to identify a substance or a potion cost 1 cp per attempt (20 cp to take 20).

Special: If you have 5 or more ranks in Alchemy, you gain a +2 synergy bonus on Craft(poisonmaking) checks. Note that, as all athasian gnomes are dead (or undead), they do not receive a +2 bonus to alchemy tests.

Craft (Int)

As *PHB*, except as follows:

Though not exclusive, the list of Craft skills is extended to alchemy, armorkrafting, armorsmithing, basketweaving, bookbinding, blacksmithing, calligraphy, carpentry, cobbling, fletching, flintknapping, gemcutting, leatherworking, locksmithing, painting, poisonmaking, pottery, sculpture, shipmaking, stonemasonry, spellweaving, trapmaking, weaponcrafting, weaponsmithing or weaving.

Check: If you reside in a City-State, you can practice your trade and make enough money to survive, earning your check result in bits per week of dedicated work. (Untrained laborers earn an average of 5 bits per week)

To determine how much time it takes to make an item:

- Find the base price of the item (as if the item was substitute material). Double this base price if the item is made of metal. Multiply this base price by 100. This value will represent the time factor of the item.
- Find the DC listed here or have the DM set one.
- Make a Craft check. If it succeeds, multiply the check result by the DC. Compare the obtained value with the time factor of the item. If the value equals or exceeds the item's time factor, then the item is completed. If the value is below the time factor of the item, then it reflects the progress being made in the crafting of the item and is deducted from the time factor of the item. If the Craft check fails, no progress is made. One Craft check represents a day's work (8 hours).

To determine the cost of making an item:

- Pay one-third the item's price in raw materials.
- If you fail a Craft check by 5 or more points, you ruin half the raw materials and you have to pay half the original cost of the raw material to continue crafting the item.

Item	Craft
Alchemical items	Alchemy
Armor, shield (metal)	Armorsmithing
Armor, shield (other)	Armorkrafting
Bows, Arrows (no heads)	Fletching
Poison	Poisonmaking
Traps	Trapmaking
Weapons, weapon heads, hafts (metal)	Weaponsmithing
Weapons, weapon heads (obsidian or stone)	Flintknapping
Weapons, weapon heads, hafts (bone or wood)	Weaponcrafting

Spellweaving: On Athas, wizards learn to use other means to write down their arcane writings, such as special patterns on cloth, symbols or carvings on wood or bone, or even with special knotted ropes. Recording a spell in this fashion has no cost, but has a DC of 15 + the recorded spell's level and requires 2 hours for each level of the spell.

An observer needs to succeed at a Spellcraft check DC 15 to even realise that the pattern is arcane writing. The DC to decipher a spell written down in this fashion is increased to 25 + the spell's level.

Special: The DM may rule that if you have 5 or more ranks in an appropriate Craft skill, you may gain a +2 synergy bonus on another Craft check when crafting a relevant item. (For example, 5 ranks in leatherworking grant you a +2 synergy bonus on Craft(armorcrafting) when crafting a leather armor)

Also note that athasian dwarves do not gain a +2 bonus to Craft checks made when crafting stone or metal.

Rules for crafting poison and traps are detailed in *Song and Silence*.

Decipher Script (Int)

As *PHB*, except as follows:

Special: The use of this skill requires the Literacy Feat.

Also, the character gains a +2 synergy bonus to checks made to decipher a message in Draconic, Common or City-State languages if she has 5 ranks in any of these languages. These bonuses stack.

Diplomacy (Cha)

As *PHB*, except as follows:

Special: If you have 5 or more ranks in Diplomacy, you gain a +2 synergy bonus on Bargain checks.

Disable Device (Int; Trained Only)

As *PHB*, except as follows:

Disable Device also allows you to pick and open locks (there is no Open Lock skill). The DCs for each type of locks is the same as those described in the Open Lock skill of the *PHB*.

Disguise (Cha)

As *PHB*, except as follows:

Special: Note that some races of Athas (such as aarakocras, pterrans or thri-kreen) would have a hard time disguising as members of other races, and as such, the DM can warrant that such action is impossible.

Forgery (Int)

As *PHB*, except as follows:

Special: Note that this skill requires the Literacy feat and an appropriate Language skill test in order to work. The DC of the language test is equivalent to the vocabulary level of the written text.

Gather Information (Cha)

As *PHB*, except as follows:

Check: A check requires that you spend 2d4 bits to buy drinks and make friends. You can choose to spend 2d4 cp instead to offer small bribes as well, granting you a +2 circumstance bonus to your check. You can also choose to spend no money at all, but you receive a -2 circumstance penalty.

Handle Animal (Cha; Trained Only)

As *PHB*, except as follows:

Check: Mekillots, one of Athas's largest domesticated beasts, are especially hard to handle without the use of psionics. The DC for handling, pushing or training mekillots is raised by 5. You cannot rear a Mekillot.

Intimidate (Cha)

As *PHB*, except as follows:

Check: You make Intimidate checks to influence NPC reactions in the same manner you would make any charisma based check to influence NPC reactions. The following modifiers apply.

Condition	Check
Obviously more powerful than target	+2
Obviously less powerful than target	-2
Threat includes probable violence, injury	+2
Threat includes probable death	+5
Target is cannot defend itself against (held or restrained)	+5

Knowledge (Int)

As *PHB*, except as follows:

When choosing a Knowledge skill, characters must choose a topic of study. The more narrow the subject of knowledge of the character, the better chance she has of knowing something about it, but she will know less about other things.

Therefore, characters can take Knowledge skills in any of the fields of study, any of the categories of these fields of study, or any specific subject of lore. The list below provides examples of the most common fields of study, but is by no means exclusive. Also, many of the specific subjects could be found in other categories. Finally, Knowledge subjects could conceivably be even more narrow.

Field of study	Categories	Examples of specific subject
Arcana**	Arcane spells	Any one school, research and development
	Magic items	Any one type (weapons, rings, artifacts...)
	Magic traditions	Preservers, defilers, Veiled Alliance
Culture	Customs	Any one people
	Peoples	Draji, Urikites, any elven tribe
	Races	dwarves, elves, gith, halflings, kreen
Engeneering	Architecture	Bridges, Buildings, Fortifications
	Siege	Fortifications, Siege engines
Geography	Area	Ringling Mountains, Estuary of Forked tongue
	Terrain	Silt Sea, Obsidian plain, Sand wastes
	City-States	Gulg, Kurn, Nibenay, Guistenal
History	Ancient history*	A Sorcerer-King's ascension, founding of cities
	Myths	One old religion, Drajian cult, Elven tradition
	Any other category	Any subject
Nature	Any type of creature (animal, monstrous humanoid...)	Any specific creature
	Plants (plant type creature)	Any specific plant
	Spirits of the Land**	Powers and spells
Planes**	Elemental powers and spells	Any one element or paraelement
	Planetravel	Etheralness, spells, rituals
	Types	Inner planes, The Grey, the Astral plane

* Ancient history documents are very hard (and probably illegal) to get acces to.

** Unless the character is a spellcaster of the corresponding class, characters rarely get acces to this type of information. These are considered trained Knowledge skills.

Check: DC's for Knowledge checks scale from 5 (really easy question) to 30 or more. If a question falls into your specific field of study, it has a base DC of 5. However, if the question could be included in a more narrow category, then the DC is increased by 5. The more specific the question is, the higher the DC will be, as someone knowing only general principles are less likely to know very specific information. However, if one has Knowledge skill ranks in a specific subject, it does not give her any ability to answer a question which is not directly related to her area of Knowledge. Also, a very specific question might still have the DC increase for people who have specific knowledge.

For example, say someone who has a +5 skill bonus in Knowledge(culture) sees a gith and tries to identify it. Her DC would be of 15 (+5 for the races category, +5 for the Gith subject). If she had had a +5 skill bonus in Knowledge(gith), the DC would only have been 5. However, if that character had

to identify a Belgoi, she would not be able to use her Knowledge(gith) to do so. Finally, if the question was about the preferred hunting strategies of the gith, the question might have a DC of 10 for the character with knowledge(gith) and 20 for the character with Knowledge(culture) or even Knowledge(nature).

Special: Characters can always make untrained knowledge checks, except in some fields of study (see table).

Also, classes which grant a knowledge(any field of study) as a class skill can develop any category or specific subject of that field of study as a class skill.

Language (Int, Trained Only)

On Athas, isolation and xenophobia have created many important language barriers. As such, mastering different languages can be a hard and long process, but can very well be useful to get around in the Tyr Region and survive encounters with its diverse inhabitants.

As the Craft and Knowledge skills, Language is actually a group of different skills, each Language skill corresponding to a given language. A list of athasian languages is provided in the Race and Languages section (p.4).

Check: Getting a simple concept (affirmative or negative, stop or go, eat or drink, salutations, etc.) across to a person who cannot understand your language has a DC of 5, but adding any other concepts which cannot evidently exemplified by signs or movements has a DC of 10. Day-to-day conversations with complete but simple sentences have a DC of 15, while elaborate sentences or speeches with complicated vocabulary and accurate grammar can have DC of 20 or more.

You can make a Language check to get your message across to another person or to understand a received message, in either spoken or written form. The target also makes a Language check against the same DC to see if she understands the message. If one of the participants fails her Language check, she can only communicate or understand the concepts which are associated with a lower DC (as detailed before), which can result in a misunderstanding.

A character using a dialect of a language can use this dialect to communicate with those who speak another dialect of the same language, but at a -5 competence penalty. In the same context, trying to understand a text written in a different dialect of the same language incurs a -5 competence penalty.

Also, the Aarakocran, Kreen, Pterran and Ssuran languages confer a -5 competence penalty to members of other races who speak in that language. They may still understand those languages at no penalty.

Special: A character who is trained in a Language (at least one rank) may always take 10 on those checks. She may also take 20 when not stressed and able to spend more time explaining and getting her message across.

Characters with 5 ranks or more in Language(draconic) or in any language derived from the draconic language (any City-State and common) are granted a +2 synergy bonus when making a Language or Decipher Script check in any of these languages. These bonuses stack.

Also, characters need to have the appropriate Literacy feat in order to be able to read or write a message. Note that a character can write in any language she knows using any alphabet, though using unnatural combination results in a -2 circumstance penalty to checks made to write or read the message.

Characters who have the literacy feat but do not know a given alphabet may choose to buy skill rank in the appropriate language skill for that purpose. (This skill rank grants no bonus to the language skill itself)

Character with no ranks in a language can make untrained skill checks in any language, but only to communicate or understand basic concepts with a successful check against DC 10.

Finally, note that the Language skill is not limited in the number of ranks a character can acquire in a given language, no matter what level she is.

Open Locks (Dex)

In DARK SUN, this skill is integrated into the Disable Device skill.

Perform (Cha)

As *PHB*, except as follows:

Check: Money made by Perform checks are in cp instead of gp, in bits instead of sp, and in nothing instead of cp (which means a DC 10 check does not grant any money to a performer).

Special: Athasian bards cannot use the *countersong* ability.

On another note, a wizard casting in public places to entertain the masses will not provide the same entertainment as described in the Perform skill description...

Profession (Wis)

As *PHB*, except as follows:

Athasian professions might be different from the standard D&D professions, though the standard list can be used as well, as it is not exclusive.

Check: As the Craft skill, money earned with a Profession check equal your check result in bits for each week of dedicated work.

Also, each time the situation warrants it, you may make a Profession check against a DC of 15 in order to gain a +2 synergy bonus to any skills related to your profession for as long as you perform that task. For example, a character with Profession(guard) may make a Profession check when guarding a campsite. If successful, the character gains a +2 synergy bonus on all listen and spot checks made during her guarding duties.

You can take 10 on Profession checks when not pressed or otherwise stressed.

Special: Untrained laborers earn an average of 5 bits per week.

Survival (Wis)

As Wilderness Lore, except as follows:

Check: The different terrains of Athas do not allow characters to survive as easily in the wilderness. As such, the terrain influences the character's ability to forage. Note that foraging is impossible on the Obsidian Plain or the Silt Sea.

Also, Wilderness Lore can also be used by hunters to find prey. As the wildlife of Athas is considerably more dangerous than most other D&D setting, hunting is never a standard part of foraging. Instead, the character can make a hunting check against the DC set by the terrain. A success means that she has an encounter with one or more creatures of animal type, determined by the wilderness encounter table of the appropriate terrain type. The encounter distance rules apply (*DMG* p.61) to determine the distance at which the hunter or the prey become aware of each other. A hunting check requires up to 4 hours, or 1d4 hours when successful.

As such, the DCs for foraging (getting along in the wild) and for hunting are determined by terrain type.

Terrain	DC	Foraging added supplies
Forest, grassland, mud flat, savanna, swamp, verdant belt.	10	1 person / 2 points above DC
Mountain, scrub plain	15	1 person / 3 points above DC.
Boulder field, rocky badland, stony barren	20	1 person / 4 points above DC
Salt Flat, sandy waste	25	1 person / 5 points above DC
Obsidian Plain, Silt Sea	-	-

Retry: A hunting check cannot be retried for a given 4 hours period if failed, but the skill can be used any number of times each day, no matter if the checks are successful or not.

Special: A hunting character with the Track Feat receives a +2 competence bonus to Wilderness Lore checks for hunting. Additionally, the character can make a tracking check to be informed of the kind of creature she is hunting before the encounter actually takes place. If successful, she can choose not to hunt a particular prey (which might save the hunter from becoming the hunted).

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