

Terra Incognita: Ancient Mysteries



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Revision:

1.3

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1 Introduction

Terra Incognita: Ancient Mysteries (TI:AM or TIAM) is a mystery solving and monster hunting campaign set in the Victorian era. Adventures will range from wild swinging on the chandelier romps to grisly monster hunts. If you imagine a stew of low-tech pulp, Indiana Jones, and Cthulhu you have an idea of what I am brewing.

The game will be run using the *Terra Incognita* (TI) book from Gray Ghost Press. *Terra Incognita* is based on the *Fudge* role-playing system. *Fudge* is fast, flexible, and light. I think it is a great choice for the type of campaign that I want to run. Another nice thing about using *Fudge* is that it is free. See the Data Handling section on where you can get a copy. That said you will need a copy of the *Terra Incognita* book to create your character as you will need to look at the skill set which is defined.

All of the pictures in this document are lovingly copied from other artists who own the copyrights. I am only using them as a source of inspiration (i.e. for solely personal use). I will remove any images on request. ☺

For details on abbreviations and terms that will be used in this document please refer to Appendix #1.

When you see a "©" in front of a sentence it means that there is an explanation in terms of a popular movie, TV show, or book. For example...

© *Laser Swords are like Light Sabers in Star Wars except that they have charges.*

Some rocks are better left unturned...

1.1 Data Handling

The background information for the game will be collected in this document which will be under revision control. A summary of the updates will be documented in the revision table at the end of the document (see Appendix #2). The document will be provided to the players in PDF format. I am compiling the document using Adobe Acrobat Distiller 8.0 but Adobe Acrobat Reader 6.0 or above should be able to read and print the information just fine. I will post new versions of this document on both the Hero HQ web site and Geoff's Games.

Geoff's Games will be used to handle all email traffic as well as to coordinate next game times and locations. If you ever have a question about when the next session will be run refer to Geoff's Games in the left sidebar. Note that I plan to run the game if at least 3 players (i.e. 4 people total counting me) can make it to the session. The game will be locked at a maximum of 6 players. (Note that Geoff's Games is a private site which requires a username and password to enter.)

TI is based on a universal role-playing game system known as *Fudge*. One nice thing is that *Fudge* is free. If you want to download a copy head over to Grey Ghost Press. A link to the site is provided below. If you want to buy the TI book head over to Noble Knight Games. The last time I checked they have several in stock at *less* than the normal cover price.

Here is a table of the important web sites which will be referenced by this document and important to TI:AM players.

Site Name	URL
Geoff's Games	http://www.geoffsgames.com
Grey Ghost Press – Fudge Site	http://www.fudgerpg.com/fudge.html
Kingbeast's Lair	http://www.usandacat.com/thelair
Noble Knight Games	http://www.nobleknight.com
Terra Incognita	http://www.nagsociety.com

Site Name	URL
Terra Incognita: Ancient Mysteries	http://www.usandacat.com/tiam

1.2 Mood

TI:AM sessions will be full of adventure and suspense. Occasionally when monsters rear their ugly tentacles a bit of horror will be introduced. In these situations I expect players to take part in the mood without corrupting the session itself. In other words, please don't make jokes when a beast appears. This is a request that will greatly enhance our sessions. Note that I will try to warn everyone when a horror session is coming.

1.3 Dangerousness

My intent is that adventures will be dangerous but not often fatal. PC death will NOT be the norm. If for example a character acts in a heroic fashion in a way that saves the party then dies that result would be "accepted".

1.4 Personal Plot Versus Party Plot

Almost every plot in TI:AM will be driven by an RFA (Request For Action). Thus personal plots will be VERY rare. Expect them to be less common than most campaigns that I run.

1.5 Serial Versus Episodic

Most adventures will be episodic. Recurring villains and PC interactions may run from one story to another but for the most part each adventure will be standalone.

1.6 How Many Session Will This Campaign Run?

I'm guessing that this campaign will run for around 15 to 20 sessions. At our current run rate this is about 2 years of actual time.

2 History

This section covers the history of the campaign that will be important to the PC.

2.1 I Am Not A Historian

I need to make a major disclaimer. I am not even remotely a historian of Victorian times. This means there are likely to be issues with historical events, people, places, and technology. My plan is to do my best during a session then correct it afterwards if there are inconsistencies.

2.2 Fictional History

The National Archaeological, Geographic, and Submarine Society (NAGS) has its own history. Here are some important dates in NAGS history. (These are slightly modified from those that appear in the main TI book.)

2.2.1 1850 to 1859

On December 31st a strange event happened in the American West. Three people of diverse backgrounds investigated the incident and would later form the NAGS. These people included Rebekah Winslow, an American schoolteacher, Captain Jack Efland, a bored English gentleman, and Grey Cloud, a Zuni boy. After the encounter the eclectic group realized that their combined talent was what led them to succeed. These three formed the core of the current NAGS.

In 1851 the first NAGS campus was formed at Caedmon College at Oxford by the trio. The current base commander is Professor Ravi Singh, a world renowned scholar of history. The Oxford NAGS base is a center of scholarly research.

The second NAGS campus was established on Antarctica in 1852. It is a center of polar and magnetic field research. The Mt Erebus base commander is a matriarch known as Lena Asgirdottier. This campus focuses on natural phenomenon.

The South American campus was opened in 1856 by Esperanca Costa, a Brazilian sociologist and South American native expert. The base serves as a center for those studying ancient societies.

The first long distance NAGS submarine, the NSS Murmur, is deployed in 1857. Captain Strickland is proud of his ship and is always busy on various Nag ops.

2.2.2 1860 to 1869

In 1865 rogue Gadgeteer Alfred Nobel creates dynamite. He argues that it is too important and goes public with his discovery. He later atones by creating the Nobel Prize.

The NSS Murmur makes contact with an ancient kraken in 1867. A year later, the NSS Murmur, now captained by Jose Maria Rodriguez discovers a clue to ancient Atlantis. An underwater earthquake halts their progress.

2.2.3 1870 to 1879

In 1870 Jules Verne declines membership but continues to write Nag exploits as fiction.

Nag Thomas Watson accidentally reveals his telephone technology to Alexander Graham Bell in 1874. Watson acts quickly to hide other NAGS technology from Bell.

In 1876 gadgeteers devise punched card storage media which becomes the de facto standard for the organization. Nags in the New York area start collecting fingerprint data and storing it on punched cards.

2.2.4 1880 to 1889

In 1880 New York Nags open a new campus on Roosevelt Island. The New York campus is run by the infamous hack, Nellie Bly. Journalists, investigators, and writers find Roosevelt Island to be their haven.

In 1881 the first Australian campus opens in Melbourne. It is run by Willem and Martha Van Turborg, a couple of enterprising Dutch immigrants. The Australian campus is a home for new technologies in all engineering and scientific disciplines.

Nikola Tesla is discretely hired by the NAGS to work on a particle canon. In 1887 a prototype is created but abandoned.

In 1888 the Oxford campus investigates the Ripper murders. They do not catch the killer and regret that they were not able to act quickly enough.

2.2.5 1890 to 1893

In 1891 Jared Cokes creates false historical documents that lead Nags on several unfruitful chases. When his elaborate hoaxes are revealed Jared is recruited by the NAGS and becomes an expert on debunking. Jared now resides in San Francisco.

In the spring of 1893 a new submarine is christened, the NSS Aeolus. On its maiden voyage near Oslo the sub discovers the kraken first found by the NSS Murmur! Crew member Gadgeteer Nanak Geer is pulled under the surface but is miraculously returned unharmed. After returning to port Nanak Geer vanishes. The captain of the NSS Aeolus, Colonel Bertram Gunter, does not know his current whereabouts.

The PCs start their adventures in the summer of 1893 at the Oxford campus.

2.3 *Fictional Characters*

Fictional Victorian characters may exist in this campaign world. Expect to meet people like Captain Nemo or Sherlock Holmes!

2.4 Recent History

The campaign starts in the summer of 1893. Here is a chart with some recent history. These are taken from the [Hyper History](#) project online. Please go to that site to view these in detail.

Latin America	Inca revolt	Independence struggle	US/Mexican W.	Mexican Revolution	Cuban Rev.	Falkl'd War
North America	UNITED STATES • Canada est. New Deal Korea Viet- 9/11 War W.of Mexican Civil Span/US Deal Korea nam Gulf Iraq Indep. 1812 War War (Map) War WW I WW II War W. War W.					
Russia	Poland part of Russia Napoleonic Wars Napoleon in Moscow Crimean War R/Turk. War Revol. Civil W. USSR WW II Russia Afghan W.					
Europe	French evolution (Map) Napoleonic Wars Industrial Revolution Victorian Age Franco-German War Depression 3rd Reich WW I (Map) ww Cold War EU Europ. Union Balkan W.					
Middle East	Russ. Wars Greek Indep. War Crimean War Russ/Turk. War Suez Canal Engl. occup. Turkish Republic Iraq Israel Egypt Napoleon in Egypt Persia (cap. Teheran) Iran Egypt independent Isl. Rep.					
1800 1900 ▶ U.N. 2000						
India	Sikh State (Map) Hindu Reform Sepoy Mutiny Maratha Wars BRITISH RULE Civil Disobedience Campaigns Sri Lanka INDIA Pakistan Bangladesh					
China	Treaty of Nanking Korea Korea Japanese Korea divided Opium War Taiping Rebellion Boxer Revolt REPUBLIC CHINA Peoples Rep. Cult. Rev. Japan W. Korea W.					
Japan	Edo = Tokyo Reopening of ports Meiji Reform Russo-Jap. War WW II JAPAN					
Africa	Cape Town Brit. Colonization Africa's African States regain Independence French War in Algeria Boer War					
Oceania	Commonwealth of Australia established					

2.5 Current Events

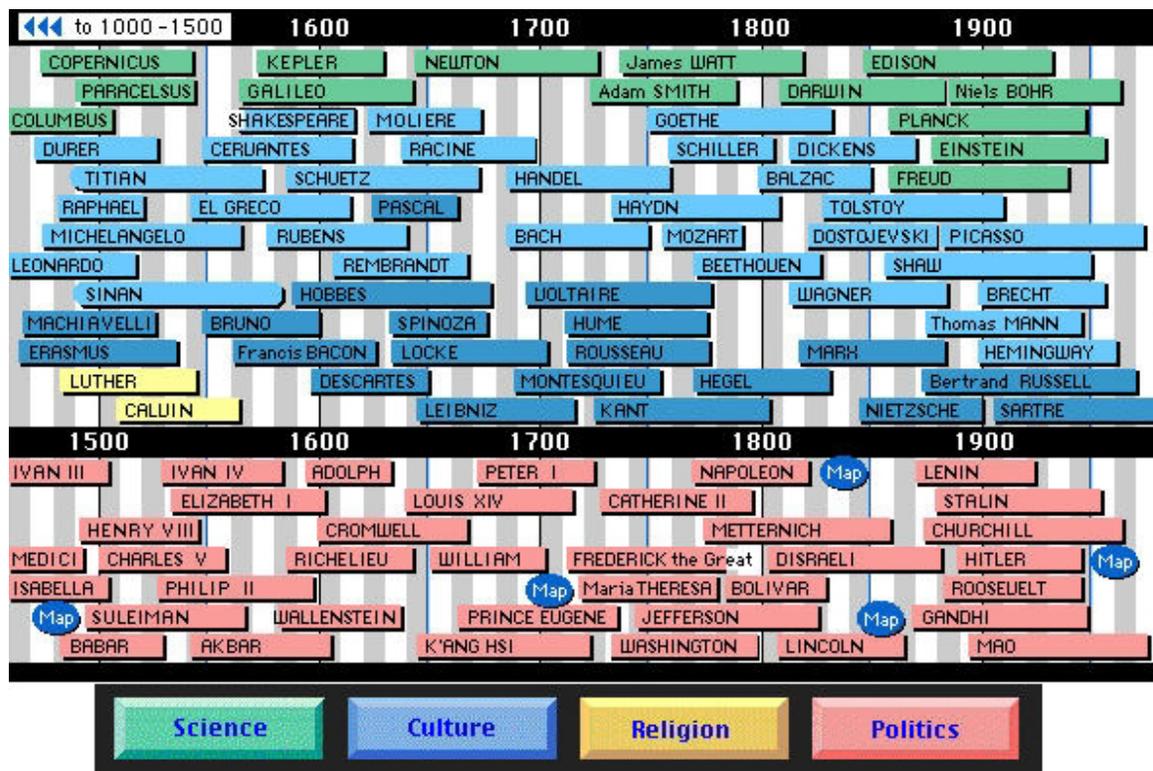
I will try and post some major events from the last several years so folks have a rough idea of what is happening during this era.

1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896
Beginnings of wireless telegraphy	First automatic telephone switchboard	Fridtjof Nansen begins his North Pole expedition	Sven Hedlin explores Tibet	C. Gillette invents the safety razor	William Ramsey discovers helium
W.L. Judson invents clothing zipper (US)	J. Elster and Geitler experiment with photo cells	Karl Benz builds a four-wheel car	Louis Lumiere invents the cinematograph	Marconi invents radio telegraphy	A. H. Becquerel discovers radioactivity
Discovery of Pithecanthropus erectus in Java	Tchaikovsky: 'The Nutcracker'	Henry Ford builds his first car	Sibelius composes 'Finlandia'	Wilhelm Röntgen discovers x-rays	First modern Olympic Games (Athens)
Conan Doyle: 'The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes'	Toulouse-Lautrec: Music hall posters	Rudolf Diesel patents his 'diesel' engine	R. Kipling: 'The Jungle Book'	Tchaikovsky: 'Swan Lake' ballet	Five Nobel Prizes established
Selma Lagerlöf: 'Gösta Berling'	Monet paints the Rouen Cathedral	Verdi: 'Falstaff'	Benjamin Kidd: 'Social Revolution'	Sienkiewicz writes: 'Quo Vadis'	Puccini: 'La Bohème' opera
Gauguin settles in Tahiti	Emil Zola writes: 'La Débacle'	'Art Nouveau' appears in Europe	Dreyfus arrested on treason charges	H. G. Wells: 'The Time Machine'	Chekhov: 'The Sea Gull'
Papal encyclical on the condition of the working classes	Gerhardt Hauptmann: 'The Weavers'	World Exhibition in Chicago	Sun Yat-sen forms Revive China Society	Thomas Masaryk: 'The Czech Question'	Theodore Herzl: 'The Jewish State'
Famine in Russia	Gladstone becomes Prime Minister of Great Britain	Panama Canal trial in Paris	Sino-Japanese War China loses Formosa & Port Arthur to Japan		Beginning of Klondike gold rush
Franco-Russ. entente	Prince Ito becomes Premier of Japan	French protectorate over Laos	Japanese troops in Korea	Cuban revolution, inspired by the poet Jose Martí, against Spanish rule.	
Pan-Germany League founded		Zulu revolt in S' Africa suppressed	Abyssinian-Italian War Italy defeated; sues for peace; and withdraws from Abyssinia.		

Science
Culture
Religion
Politics

2.6 Important People

Here are some people which were important during this time in history.



Science
Culture
Religion
Politics

3 Campaign Rule Settings

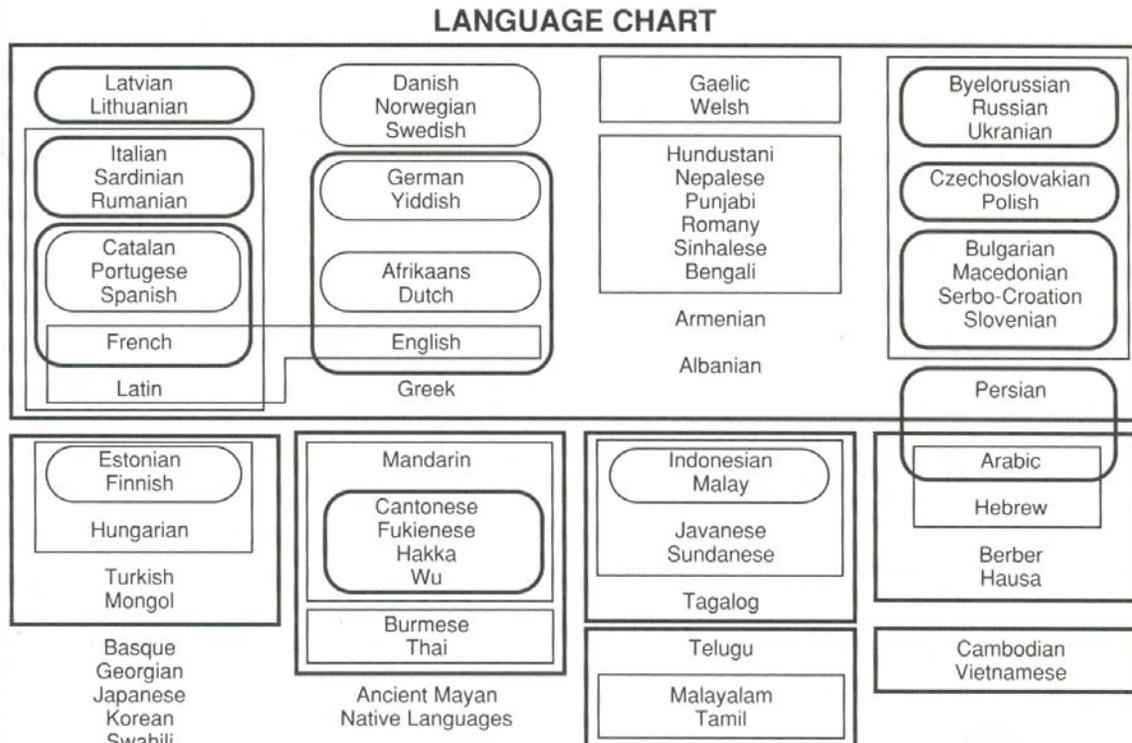
This section contains rules used by the campaign.

3.1 Victorian Settings Where Applicable

When possible use the Victorian set of rules in the *Terra Incognita* rulebook. This refers to the price chart, skill definitions, etc.

3.2 Language Skill Change

The *Terra Incognita* rulebook handles languages in a very light fashion. We will be using the Hero Games language familiarity chart to add some depth to the Language skill. As mentioned elsewhere in this document every character gets their native speaking language at Fair level at no point cost. This chart will show how related languages are understood and how they may be improved.



Languages have a familiarity that is determined by the chart above. This chart below explains the various box types and the familiarity gained. If the resulting level is less than Terrible there is not understanding gained. For example, Abdul has Spanish (Fair). This means Abdul has Portugese and Catalan at Poor for no point cost (i.e. 2 levels lower). Abdul would have French at Terrible (i.e. 3 levels lower). He would not have Latin at all as it is Terrible – 1 (i.e. 4 levels lower). If Abdul wants to buy French it would costs 1 less point.

Box Type	Familiarity	Cost Benefit
Thin Box With Round Corners	2 Levels Lower	½ cost to learn (round down, minimum cost is 1 pt)
Thick Box With Round Corners	3 Levels Lower	1 pt cheaper (minimum cost is 1 pt)
Thin Box With Square Corners	4 Levels Lower	None
Thick Box With Square Corners	5 Levels Lower	None
None	None	None

3.3 Adding Streetwise Skill

The current skills list does not list Streetwise. I really think this is an oversight as Etiquette is listed. We will add Streetwise for this campaign.

3.4 Tongues Talent Clarification

The Tongues talent is defined in very loose terms in the rulebook. Instead we will use this guideline to further define how the talent functions.

The Tongues talent gives the user a pool of 4 skill points that can be allocated to a given language if they are immersed in it for a given amount of time. The distribution of the points is up to the discretion of the player with GM approval. This chart reflects how many points the player may spend on the language based on their time exposed to it.

Exposure	Skill Points
Very Short (Hour)	1
Short (Day)	2
Medium (Week)	3
Long (Month)	4

Here is how it works in practice. Pierre, a native French speaker who has Tongues, wanted to speak Swahili. After an hour he may spend 1 point to get a Terrible ranking. The following week Pierre travels to China and wants to speak Mandarin. After an hour he may spend 1 point, leaving him 2 pool points, to speak Mandarin at a Terrible ranking. If Pierre stays longer he may increase the points he spends on the language.

These points do NOT remain on the character indefinitely unless the character buys the language with experience points. Tongues does not reduce the experience cost of buying languages.

3.5 Clarified Healing Rules

We are going to use the following table for the damage track and healing. This healing time assumes no medical attention. The rest of the rules for healing work as detailed in the *Terra Incognita* book.

Wounds				
1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9+
Scratch	Hurt	Very Hurt	Incap	~Dead
None	-1	-2	KO'd	Dying
□□□	□	□	□	□
Break	1 Hour	1 Day	1 Week	6 Months

3.6 Meta Gaming Rule For Fudge Points

I heard about a meta game rule used in Primetime Adventures that I want to “lovingly borrow” for this campaign. This section describes how this will work in *Fudge*.

Normally Fudge Points can be spent for in game effects as well as for experience gains. In TI:AM the Fudge Point statistic will be split in two. One statistic will be for Fudge Points and the other will be for Experience Points.

Experience Points are awarded at the end of an adventure. They can be spent between adventures (i.e. not between sessions) to advance the character. The advancement process will be exactly as defined in the *Terra Incognita* rulebook. Experience Points cannot be spent for in game effects. Starting PC have 0 Experience Points.

Fudge Points can be spent for in game effects as defined in the *Terra Incognita* rulebook. Fudge Points are awarded by the players during a session. For each session two gold coins (i.e. actually Mexican Pesos) will be placed on the table (i.e. in the “pot”). During a session when a player does something the other players deem as “quite excellent” they may award that character with a gold coin. Each character can have at most one gold coin. Each coin is worth a Fudge Point! Fudge Points awarded in this fashion can be used during

the session or banked at the end of the session. If a PC who is awarded a gold coin uses it in a session in which it was rewarded it returns to the pot where it can then be handed out again. At the end of the session all coins are returned from the players and the Fudge Points earned are recorded on the character sheet. Starting PC have 3 Fudge Points.

4 Character Creation Information

This section should have most of the information needed for players to create their characters. If there are any questions please ask.

4.1 *What Does It Mean To Be A Nag?*

Not everyone can be a Nag. Here are some traits that set Nags apart from the rest of us.

4.1.1 Dedication

Nags are experts in their field of expertise. If they were not experts they would not have been found and recruited.

4.1.2 Discretion

Nags do not attract attention to themselves, their operation, or the organization.

4.1.3 Poise

Nags stand firm in the face of the unknown. Whatever the world has to throw the Nags can return the volley.

4.1.4 Survivalist

Simply put, the Nags have to be able to stay alive under impossible situations.



Figure 1 – English Nobleman And Companions

4.2 What Type Of Characters Will Work

Characters will be world hopping heroes that are being assembled by the NAGS to work as part of an elite investigative team. A character with a slight tinge of gray is fine but the character must be willing to stay with the team. Loner PCs will not work in this campaign.

Some types of skill sets that will be useful include:

- Archaeologist / Historian / Occultist
- Breaking and Entering
- Combat
- Mechanic / Gadgeteer
- Outdoorsman / Scout / Navigator
- People Person
- Researcher / Investigator

4.3 No Stepping On Toes

Characters should not step on one another. The skills of one person can overlap with another but there should not be so much overlap that the two characters are nearly copies. The goal is to make sure everyone has an area where their character can shine.

4.4 Why Was He Recruited?

Each player should have a reason why they were pulled into the NAGS. It could involve a body of research or a chance encounter with an existing member. As each character is somehow extraordinary this is an important part of the campaign.

4.5 Geographic Areas

The PC will be based at the Oxford campus but they will travel to many other areas of the globe. Experiencing different regions of the world is key to the *Terra Incognita* setting and to the feel that I want to achieve. Some areas that I know will be visited by the PC include (these are in alpha order):

- **Africa** – At least 2 adventures. Again I have a couple of great supplements that I want to use.
- **Egypt** – At least 2 or 3 adventures. I have some really great supplements and books related to the exploration of Egypt that I want to utilize.
- **Israel/Jordon** – Probably 1 adventure. There is a good published adventure set in Israel/Jordon that I want to try.
- **London** – At least 1 long adventure...maybe more. The first adventure is set in London.
- **South America** – Potentially 1 adventure. I have a book and saw a documentary that I would like to explore.

4.6 Culture And Languages

As I mention above the characters will be traveling all around the globe. To this end I think it would be fun to have a culturally diverse group of PC. Please consider the above areas plus any others that you are interested in exploring. Note that all of this traveling means that language skills might be required by PC or NPC. I do NOT expect the PC to have all of the major languages covered but I do expect every PC to know some English.

Starting characters have a ranking of Fair in their native speaking language at no point cost (see below). This can be raised by paying 1 point per level increase. Please also note the change to how languages will be handled in the campaign rules section.

4.7 Objective Character Creation – 32 Skill Points

Attributes are purchased exactly as defined in the TI rulebook. All attributes start with a rank of Fair. Two attributes may be spent to increase these ranks. An attribute may also be lowered to raise a different attribute. See the trading table below for details.

We will NOT be using the 5 point Fudge system as defined in the TI book when creating characters.

Instead we will use the typical character creation system defined in the standard *Fudge* rules with 32 points to spend on skills. With this system skill costs are based on the following chart:

Cost In Skill Points	
Mediocre	1
Fair	2
Good	3
Great	4
Superb	5

A starting character can have at most one skill at Superb and two skills at Great. Initially a skill may NOT be dropped to Terrible to raise another skill as presented in the *Fudge* rulebook.

4.8 Initial Gifts And Faults

Initial characters have two Gifts and two Faults. An additional Fault may NOT be taken during character creation as defined in the TI rulebook.

4.9 Trading During Character Creation

During character creation a player may trade attributes, gifts, and faults using the following table. Note that these are the ONLY trades which will be allowed.

Player May Trade	For	Notes
1 Gift	1 less Fault	Essentially this means the character starts with 1 Gift and 1 Fault (i.e. not 2 Gifts and 2 Faults).
1 Gift	6 Skill Points	This means the character would have 2 Faults, 1 Gift, and 6 more points to spend on skills.
1 Gift	2 Attribute Points	This means the character would have 2 Faults, 1 Gift, and 2 more points to spend on attributes.
2 Attribute Points	1 Gift or 1 less Fault	This means the character would have 2 less points to spend on attributes and either 1 more Gift or 1 less Fault.
1 Attribute Point	1 Attribute Point	This means the character can remove a rank from one attribute and add it to a different attribute.
1 Attribute Point	3 Skill Points	This means the character would have only 1 point to spend on attributes and have 3 more points to spend on skills.
3 Skill Points	1 Attribute Point	This means the character would only have 3 less points to spend on skills and an extra point to spend on attributes.
6 Skill Points	1 Gift or 1 less Fault	This means the character would have 6 less points to spend on skills and either 1 more Gift or 1 less Fault.

4.10 Gadgets And Gear

Victorians have a distinct love of gadgets. The more eccentric the device the better. The problem is that often these devices are not too reliable. We will be using the gadget rules as presented in the main TI book. Each character will start with one GM approved useful gadget. If a player decides to play a gadgeteer they can start with a second device but it must be less useful and more fanciful. Here are some examples of useful devices:

- Cane with hidden dart gun.
- Retracting knife that extends from a boot.
- Binoculars that look like car goggles.
- A wax cylinder sound recording device. Great for reporters!
- A punched card data recorder.
- A strong parasol that can act as a make shift parachute.

Some devices that are considered more fanciful and less useful include:

- A robotic traveling tea set.
- A thermos to keep your beverage hot.
- Glasses that tint in bright sunlight.
- A hat with a mechanical appendage that holds a lit cigarette or cigar.

Other more mundane gear such as clothing, survival equipment, food, etc will be provided by the society on request. Typically this type of gear is provided by the closest campus. To internal personnel these gadgets are referred to as "Nag Tech".



Figure 2 – Fixing The “Infernal Device”

5 Appendix #1 – Abbreviations / Glossary

Abbrv	Expanded Term	Definition
<i>Fudge</i>	Freeform Universal Do-It-Yourself Game Engine	Role-playing game system created by Steffan O’Sullivan and published by Grey Ghost Press.
NAGS, Nag, and Nags	National Archæological, Geographic, and Submarine Society	Name of the organization where the PC belong. The term “NAGS” refers to the organization. The abbreviation “Nag” or “Nags” is used by the characters to refer to members of their organization. For example, “Alert the Nags that there is an RFA.”
RFA	Request For Action	Requests For Action are official dispatches from the NAGS that provide the mission briefing for the PC. The term “RFA” is commonly used by Nags in the field.
TI	<i>Terra Incognita</i>	Role-playing game created by Scott Larson. Note that the term will also be used to refer to this campaign.
TI:AM or TIAM	Terra Incognita: Ancient Mysteries	This campaign.

6 Appendix #2 – Revision History

This section contains a revision history for this document.

Revision	Date	Description
0.1	07/24/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First draft revision.
0.2	07/31/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second draft revision. Lots of additions.
0.3	08/01/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added “true” historical data.
0.4	08/06/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed major typo. • Added section on why the character was recruited. • Added detail to several sections.

Revision	Date	Description
0.5	08/07/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added details to the fictional history section. • Rearranged several parts of the document so it flowed better.
0.6	08/08/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added section on gadgets and gear. • Added section on what makes a Nag special.
1.0	08/09/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaned up the document in many areas. Prep for conversion to PDF.
1.1	08/27/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed to point based skill system instead of “5 point” Fudge. • Added Gifts and Faults section. • Added chart for trading during character creation.
1.2	08/28/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added clarification on native language. • Added information on buying attributes to the character creation section. • Clarified the trading table. • Updated the document based on “A Concise Guide To Terra Incognita Style”.
1.3	12/11/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made changes to how the Language skill works. This includes use of the Hero Games language chart. • Added Streetwise. • Clarified how the Tongues talent will work. • Added clarification on healing wounds.