TRANSFORMERS
The Roleplaying Game

What's a Roleplaying Game?

This is the obligatory introduction that explains what roleplaying games (RPGs) are to the uninitiated. If you're already familiar with RPGs, feel free to skip this page (unless you happen to enjoy dissertations). However, if you're new to this gaming thing, it's a good idea to read this so the rest of this stuff will make sense.

Roleplaying (RP) is pretending. That's it in a nutshell. Beyond all the rules and dice, roleplaying is someone pretending to be someone or something else. If you ever ran around as a kid and pretended to be a Transformer, G.I Joe, super hero, cowboy or whatever, you've roleplayed. In a roleplaying game, the players assume the role of characters in an imaginary setting. The game master (known as the Controller in this game) develops this imaginary world and everyone and everything in it – except the player characters, which players create and control. The Controller sets the stage, upon which players act out the roles of their characters. Together, the player characters tell stories and create legends.

Why Play This?

The same may be asked of any hobby or pastime – we do it because it's fun. Sometimes it's nice to get away from the humdrum of everyday life, and be a hero, a brooding vigilante, or (what we're doing here) a Transformer. Roleplaying lets us do that. We transcend mundane limitations and flex our imaginations in ways that other forms of entertainment don't allow.

Most forms of entertainment aren't very interactive. When we go to the theater or watch TV, we let others tell us stories and give us information. However, we can't meaningfully interact with the characters on the screen (use of psychoactives aside). Video games aren't much better: We can only control the characters in predetermined ways. Most of the time this involves killing, and that's about it. In those games where you can do other things, like talk to game characters or solve puzzles, all this is coded into the game; you can't enter your own dialogue or alter the way the game interacts with you. (Multiplayer games are no exception to this rule – when you chat on World of Warcraft or use teamspeak on Halo Reach, you're interacting with other people and are still confined to acting in the game through limited rules.) Books and written stories engage the imagination more than TV or computer games, but still they aren't dynamic. They provide setting, plot, characters and so on, and we use our minds to visualize them. But you have no control over the story or what the characters; all this is determined by the author. Though good stories draw you in and allow you to experience the setting through the characters, you can't act through them. All these forms of entertainment are *passive consumption*.

But when you roleplay you're an *active* part of the story. As an Autobot you can attempt to make peace with the Decepticons instead of making pieces of them, play Starscream and successfully wrestle leadership away from Megatron, play Grimlock as the cunning and brutal warlord he was meant to be (and not the annoying dumbass from the cartoon), even make up your own Transformer. The possibilities here are endless. I've always wanted to be able to tell my own stories with the **Transformers**, to know what it's like to be a robot, transform into a jet or explore Cybertron. This game allows me to do that, and I hope it inspires you other fans as well.

There are rules to consider when playing this game (discussed below), but even within these rules you have almost limitless freedom. The Controller creates the world and allows players to develop and explore this imaginary universe through their characters. Together, she and the players create episodes as they interact with the game world and play off one another. This hobby, I feel, is more conducive to creativity and imagination than any other form of entertainment. But I admit my bias.

Also, roleplaying game is a social medium. It involves at least two people (a Controller and a player, though three to five players is ideal in my experience), and requires that the participants interact with each other. Other than roleplaying, the participants talk, joke, cultivate friendships outside the game, and consume copious qualities of junk food. Anything that encourages positive social interaction is, in my mind, A Good Thing.

What's Up With All These Rules and Dice?

That's a fair question. It all boils down to fairness.

Remember when you used to play-pretend as a child, either with toys or acting out the game yourself? You had lots of fun when everyone played fair. But of course, not everyone did. So let's say you were pretending to be Megatron. Didn't it suck when you aimed your fusion cannon at Cliffjumper and blasted him to bits, but he absolutely refused to fall down and play dead? And then he'd shoot at you and claim he hit you, when you know he missed by a mile! And remember when he would do unfair stuff, like drop mountains on your head and teleport, even though Cliffjumper couldn't do that? It's right there in the tech specs! (Or maybe you were the brat playing Cliffjumper.) But the point is, everyone got mad and went home.

Truth is, we really aren't much better at resolving conflicts than we were as little kids. Without some sort of system in place to resolve conflicts and dramatic situations, game sessions can degenerate into "Did not! Did too!"

arguments. This is where game rules and dice come into play. Rules put limitations on characters, and define what they can and can't do – people can't make up powers on the spot and ruin everything. Dice are used to determine the results of actions that have a probability of failure, and the rolls are based on the capabilities of the character (unlike arbitrary methods such as coin tosses or rock-paper-scissors). Characters have advantages and disadvantages, depending on their stats: The bigger and stronger your character the more punishment he can dish out and shrug off, while smart characters learn faster and solve problems. Game mechanics and dice rolls simulate character aptitudes, how hard a particular task is, and how much damage a particular weapon does. They also help players visualize their characters; so instead of a character being this nebulous being that can potentially do anything or nothing, a one with set strengths and weaknesses becomes more real and personalized.

Though rules are important, it's more important to understand that rules aren't the game itself – unlike board games, poker, chess or other such games, in which the game is defined by its rules. Most of the time you spend playing **Transformers** is narration, and character sheets and dice don't come into play. You're the one that breathes life into your character. Your character isn't a Mass of 4, or his gun that does such-and-such damage, or even what he turns into. He has a name, a personality, a history, and an existence separate from the numbers on the character sheet. There are no rules to govern characterization, what your Transformer says and does and grows. This depends solely on you.

Aren't Gamers Geeks?

Probably. And you're a fan of **Transformers** because you're overly concerned about social status and fitting into the mainstream, right?

I mean, honestly, **Transformers** fandom ranges pretty well into geekdom as it is. Roleplaying games suffer even more of a social stigma; admit you play D&D publicly and listen for the snickers. When you combine the two (like what I'm doing here), you're likely exponentially decreasing the chance someone of the opposite sex will ever talk to you. People you pass on the street, they will *know* you play this game, and they'll point and laugh.

Have fun!

Character Creation

Players have build points – build, for short – with which to buy attributes, forms and assets for their robots. Attributes cost 1 build each – so an Intellect of 5 costs 5 build. Skills are bought separately with skill points, equal to [Intellect x 3]. 30 build reflects an "average" Cybertronian that's been on Earth for a short time, relatively inexperienced but competent. You GMs can hand out fewer build points or more, depending on the game you want to run.

Attributes

Attributes are the core qualities of your Transformer, the foundation upon which other traits are built. They measure how big, fast and intelligent you are. A robot can get by without assets, other forms or even skills, but can't exist without attributes. The "average" attribute rating is 4-5; lower than that represents lower than the Cybertronian average, while higher ratings represent a superior specimen.

Non-Transformers: Fleshlings have a Mass of 1 (and never more than that), with averages in Intellect and Mobility from 3-4. (See pg. 37 for more rules for humans.) Vehicles, machines, buildings and the like have Mass (if they're big enough to have a rating). They lack Intellect except in the cases of intelligent computers, sentient craft and the like. Immobile structures lack Mobility.

Intellect

This measures your reasoning and logic processing. All Transformers have supercomputers for brains, able to perform astounding mathematical feats, calculate trajectories and comprehend technical readouts, but not all of them *think* that well (such as Scorponok and Mudflap).

Initial Skills: You get a number of points to distribute among skills equal to [Intellect x 3].

Learning Skills and Improving Intellect: You gain one third your Intellect (rounded down) in skill points each session; this means your Intellect must be at least 3 for you to be able to learn. Rules for skill improvement are on the next page. Skill points can also be used to "upgrade" Intellect: Spending 10 skill points improves that attribute by 1. This costs no Energon nor takes any appreciable time, and reflects learning on by your character. This option applies to no other attribute or trait.

Linked Skills: Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Computer, Communications, Engineering, Knowledge, Language, Material Science, Navigation, Persuasion, Physics, Scan.

Mass

Mass is how big and powerful you are. It determines your strength, durability, and ability to lift and haul loads. More than any other attribute, it determines your overall effectiveness in a fight. But while being as big as a semi truck can be useful, it caps Mobility and reduces Energon efficiency.

Close Combat Damage (Mass ÷ 2): Half your Mass (rounded up) is how much base damage you do in close combat. (The Melee Attack asset increases this.)

Structure ([Mass x 5] + 5): Structure determines how much punishment you can take. When you suffer any damage, it's taken to your Structure. Structure is equal to [Mass x 5] + 5. Cybertronians have autorepair systems, which allow "healing": Each Energon spent restores a point of Structure. Robots don't heal without Energon.

Weight: You can lift or haul anything with a Mass equal to or less than your own Mass; anything above that requires you make a Mass test. As far as raw weight goes, you can lift or haul roughly [Mass x 2] in tons.

Mass	Movie Character*	Example	Mass	Movie Character*	Example
0	Frenzy, Wheelie	gun, cat, child	6	Ironhide	Humvee, large SUV
1	"Pretender"	human, scooter	7	Starscream	jet aircraft
2	Arcee, Ravage	motorcycle, golf cart	8	Blackout, Optimus	semi truck
3	Skids, Mudflap	small car	9	Megatron, Jetfire	semi plus trailer
4	Bumblebee, Jazz	medium/large car	12	Demolishor	CK2500 Truss Crane
5	Ratchet	van, pickup, SUV	15	"Gestalt" Devastator	cargo ship

* These character examples use the Bay movies' characters as references, and Transformers from other series may vary. Further, Controllers may opt to use different Mass scales for certain series (such as Beast Wars); see page 43 for more on this.

Mobility

This attribute covers speed, agility and maneuverability. It allows you to dodge fire, move quickly, perform stunts, and to strike accurately and often. However, Mobility can be no higher than [12 - Mass] (minimum rating of 1); being really big can slow you down. (Large robots can offset low Mobility with good skill ratings and assets.)

Linked Skills: Athletics, Close Combat, Drive, Evasion, Initiative, Pilot, Stealth, Targeting, Transform.

Energon

All Cybertronians have Energon, provided by internal fusion reactors that regenerate Energon and provide power. Energon points allow you to activate certain assets and to heal damage. The bigger you are (i.e., the more Mass you have) the more power you can hold and the harder it is to affect with you EMP attacks, knockdown attacks and the like. But big Transformers need more Energon and recover it slowly.

Robots can freely trade Energon between them and can tap friendly Energon batteries, but they can't steal Energon from one another without the Siphon asset.

Spending Energon: Up to 3 Energon points may be spent per phase; Energon Surge allows you to exceed this rate. Spending Energon is a reflexive action.

Energon Capacity (10 + Mass): The maximum number of Energon points you can contain at a time is [10 + Mass]. (The Reserves asset can increase this.)

Energon Recovery (15 - Mass): You recover [15 - Mass] in Energon per day, minimum of 1 per day. Certain assets, like Flight and Stealth Tech, tax your energy reserves and so reduce your Energon Recovery. Energon doesn't recover in combat or while traveling at more than a leisurely pace: Bumblebee can't recover Energon while speeding down the highway, but does if he's just cruising. (The Energon Regeneration asset hastens Energon recovery.)

Energon Save (Mass): Energon Saves must be made to resist attacks that specifically target your Energon reserves or systems. The save bonus is equal to your Mass. (The Energon Shielding asset improves this.)

Energon Starvation: If your current Energon reserve is less than your Mass, you don't have the power to function nominally. For every point of Energon less than Mass you have, you suffer a Mobility penalty of 1, to a minimum Mobility rating of 1. (So if you're Mass 6 and have only 3 Energon, you suffer a -3 penalty to Mobility.) You can't use any assets with Energon costs or that negatively impact Energon Recovery (including EMP Attack and Flight). Finally, you can't perform multiple actions. You can ignore these penalties for a single phase by spending a point of Energon, but this only exacerbates the problem on following phases. Starvation effects subside once you recover the necessary Energon. (The Efficiency asset mitigates Energon Starvation.)

Powering Down: Sometimes you may want shut down your systems, which is like entering "sleep mode" for a PC. This can be useful for passing long periods of inactivity, and for going unnoticed; it's more difficult to detect you if you're not actively using Energon (see Energy Signatures, pg. 30). Powering down is a form of voluntary Energon starvation; your Mobility becomes 1 and you can't perform multiple actions. It takes less than a phase (six seconds) to enter the low energy mode, but powering back up takes a number of phases equal to half your Mass (round up); spending a point of Energon will power you back up immediately however.

Mass	Structure	Close Damage	Mobility Cap	Energon Capacity	Energon Recovery
*Mass Reference Table*					
0	5	1	12	10	15/day
1	10	1	11	11	14/day
2	15	1	10	12	13/day
3	20	2	9	13	12/day
4	25	2	8	14	11/day
5	30	3	7	15	10/day
6	35	3	6	16	9/day
7	40	4	5	17	8/day
8	45	4	4	18	7/day
9	50	5	3	19	6/day
10	55	5	2	20	5/day
11	60	6	1	21	4/day
12	65	6	1	22	3/day
13	70	7	1	23	2/day
14	75	7	1	24	1/day
15	80	8	1	25	1/day

Skills

Skills are learned abilities, as opposed to inherent qualities or built-in assets. Cybertronians learn very much as humans do, through practice and experience. If you're smart (read: high Intellect), you learn skills more readily. Science skills are particularly valuable, as they allow Transformers to research assets and upgrade themselves over the course of the game.

Linked Attributes: All skill tests are either Intellect or Mobility tests, with the skill in question added to the test. So learning a new language requires an [Intellect + Linguistics test]. The attribute that's listed with a skill reflects the most common use of that skill. However, alternative uses are possible; examining a weapon for quality would fall under Intellect rather than Mobility, and would use an [Intellect + Targeting test]. Expertly handling a dangerous concoction might fall under [Mobility + Chemistry]. And threatening someone with sheer bulk may call for [Mass + Persuasion], probably the only time Mass would be used in a test. But the default attribute listed for a skill will probably be used for most tests that come up.

Character Creation: You have [Intellect x 3] in skill points to spend on skills at character creation.

Learning Skills: At the end of every game session you gain one third your Intellect (round down) in points to spend on improving skills you actively used during gameplay; each skill point spent adds 1 to a skill. The Controller must approve skill gains, and a skill can only increase by one rating point at a time. Skill points need not be spent when gained; they can be held in reserve until you want to spend them.

Astronomy [Intellect]: Covers knowledge of stars and celestial phenomena and space travel. When in outer space, this skill stands in for Navigation.

Athletics [Mobility]: Climbing, jumping and other feats in robot form. See Physical Feats, pg. 31.

Biology [Intellect]: A rare discipline among Transformers, his skill is the study of (what passes for) life on Earth. Rather than focusing on abstracts like human behavior, the skill focuses on the body and biological processes.

Chemistry [Intellect]: An area of study that covers a wide range of sciences, including petrochemicals-to-Energon conversion and the creation of acids.

Close Combat [Mobility]: Your test bonus when attacking with blades, claws, wrecking balls and other non-ranged weapons. Your base unarmed damage is equal to half your Mass (rounded up).

Computer [Intellect]: Your ability to operate, understand and hack computer systems, both human and Cybertronian. This includes everything from simple PCs and cell phones to defense systems and weather satellites. This specifically does *not* include the ability to hack the minds of Cybertronians or other sentient machines; that requires the Cyonics asset (pg. 13).

Communications [Intellect]: Your ability to send, receive and interpret communications; a Cybertronian's broadcast/reception range is about 100 miles. You can freely access your faction's subspace carrier waves; Autobots and Decepticons each have their own frequencies. You can also access all radio frequencies, digital transmissions, and other human communication mediums. (See the Transmission assets.)

Drive [Mobility, or special]: Your "driving" skill in your land vehicle form; any form of stunt or trick driving requires tests. Drive covers water travel as well. This skill may also be used to pilot other craft as well. You may use Drive in place of Evasion ([10 + Mobility + Drive]) to determine your Defense while in land/water vehicle form.

Engineering [Intellect]: This valuable skill allows you to modify and upgrade technological devices, both Cybertronian and Terran. You can upgrade or repair yourself and other robots, or adapt Earth technologies to fit your needs. This also measures your ability to repair yourself, other robots, or mechanical devices; see Structure, pg. 33.

Evasion (special): This skill isn't used in tests, but modifies a target. [10 + Mobility + Evasion] is your Defense, the target for attacks made against you. Any attack test that exceeds the Defense total hits. The Drive or Pilot skill ratings may be used instead of Evasion while in appropriate modes.

Initiative [Mobility]: How fast you react to danger. See the combat section (pg. 35) for more on Initiative.

Knowledge [Intellect]: This is your understanding of a particular field of study; each knowledge discipline is taken as a separate skill. Examples: Human Culture, Cybertronian History, Military Tactics.

Language [Intellect]: Your ability to learn new languages. All Transformers know Cybertronian, but a robot with this skill also knows either one human language or Prime (player's choice). Learning a new language requires exposure to it (at least a day) and an extended test; see pg. 28 for rules on extended tests. Speaking, reading or writing a language requires no test once it's learned.

Material Sciences [Intellect]: The study of matter, including the ability to alter its properties. The creation of alloys, polymers and superconductors fall under this science.

Navigation [Intellect]: Your ability to get where you need to go, using landmarks, GPS and magnetic senses.

Persuasion [Intellect]: This is your ability to influence, deceive, interrogate and manipulate others. It also reflects one's political ability, allowing you to curry influence and favors from others within your faction.

Pilot [Mobility, or special]: This is your ability to fly and perform aerial maneuvers, either while flying or controlling a flying vehicle. Pilot is also used for space travel. Acrobatic flying, avoiding structures and other craft and the similar feats require Pilot tests. You may substitute Pilot for Evasion ([10 + Mobility + Pilot]) to determine your Defense in aerial vehicle form.

Physics [Intellect]: This is the study of energy, molecular properties and the fundamental laws of the universe. One popular application is nuclear theory, including fusion and fission, and their conversions to Energon. However, quantum physics, space travel, gravity and other disciplines also fall under physics.

Stealth [Mobility]: Your ability to move unseen, hide and avoid notice. This doesn't thwart scans and other such sophisticated forms of detection, but it's good for getting around optical and audio sensors.

Scan [Intellect]: Your ability to examine and process your surroundings. You can use Scan to analyze and instantly understand Earth machines, electronics and structures (see Terran Technology, pg. 34). Cybertronian tech can also be scanned, but is harder to figure out (requiring high targets and/or success levels). When scanning another Transformer, he'll know you're scanning him if your Scan success level fails to exceed his Intellect. See rules for energy signatures, pg. 30.

Targeting [Mobility]: This skill reflects your accuracy with ranged weapons, from plasma rifles and machine guns to tank cannons and grenades. Heavily favored by many Transformers.

Transform [Mobility]: Use requires an alternate form. Most transformations can be made with no test at all (and are either basic or full actions, depending on Mass), but tests are required to shift quickly while fighting or moving, and during other stressful situations. Also, for every point in Transform, you may have one form beyond your primary (robot) form. (Improving Transform doesn't award new forms, it simply gives you the potential to attain them.) See rules for Transforming, pg. 34.

FORMS

All characters have a robot form (obviously). This form often resembles a standard "humanoid" robot, with the compliment of two arms, two legs, a torso and a head. But you may have wheels or treads for legs (*ala* Arcee and Demolishor), cannons for arms, or some other weird configuration. Or you might resemble an animal, like Scorponok or Ravage. Want to play a mechanical velociraptor that turns into a dune buggy? Go nuts. Have fun describing your robot, even the process by which you folds into different shapes.

Similarly, alternate forms are left to your imagination. For practical reasons, at least one Terran form would be a good choice for utility and blending in. A vehicle is the obvious default choice, but many others are possible. This includes alternate robot forms which resemble creatures (like the classic Dinobots or Insecticons), which don't blend in well at all but are often intimidating and great for combat. The most powerful forms aren't necessarily the best choices: While an F-22 Raptor is an awesome form, it's certainly not unobtrusive.

Alternate forms must be appropriate for your Mass*. A motorcycle isn't a good choice for a Mass 5 robot, nor is a battleship. Mass-matching needn't be precise, as Mass and *apparent* Mass aren't always the same: A robot can fold down a little and become more compact, or "inflate" into a large form with hollow spaces hidden within. But actual Mass remains consistent, so a Size 4 robot that transforms into a Humvee will look like the real deal but will be lighter than a real vehicle of that type.

* For games in which Transformers can shrink and expand as they transform, like in the cartoon and comic books, see the Mass Shift asset on pg. 20.

Building the Form

Assets: Alternate forms normally have the same attributes as your robot form (Mass and Intellect always remain constant), they but don't have its assets. Exceptions are noted for assets that offer partial benefits to other forms (like Reinforcement or Temper) or assets that apply to all forms (like Efficiency and Sealed System).

All forms (whether picked up during character creation or in play) have one free asset, appropriate to its configuration. Choose from the following list: Acceleration 2, Acceleration 1 (Off-Road), Reinforcement 2, Nautics 2, Flight 2, and Flight 1 (VTOL). Additional assets for that form must be gained via upgrades or build points.

Unless stated otherwise, assets must be bought per form, and an asset's benefits only apply to that form. For example, you can buy Acceleration for your car form, but you don't go that fast as a robot unless you purchase that asset for it as well. Exceptions to this rule exist, and are noted under those assets.

Package Discount: An asset you have for one form can be built into an alternate form at half the normal upgrade success cost (rounded up), up to the original asset rating.

Sideswipe has Acceleration 4 in his car form. Acceleration 2 for robot form would only cost him 5 upgrade success levels (not 10), and Acceleration 4 would only cost 10 success.

Form Restrictions: Special restrictions can be bought for a form to reduce its total build (B) or asset upgrade (U) cost, to a minimum of 0 (basically, a free form). Examples include reduced Mobility (-1B/-5U per point reduced, maximum -2 penalty or rating of 1), no land movement (-1B/-5U), immobile (-3B/-15U), and unearthly form (-1B/-5U).

Character Creation: If you have a rating of at least 1 in the Transform skill, you get one alternate form for free at character generation (in addition to robot form). There's a build cost of 1 for every additional form picked up during character creation, but you can't have more extra forms than your rating in Transform; see pg. 6 for more on the Transform skill. These forms get the free asset, as described above.

Learning New Forms: You can pick up additional forms during gameplay if your Transform skill permits; you can't have more additional forms than your rating in Transform. Learning a new form requires a successful Scan test on a machine or structure of roughly equal Mass. If this succeeds, you must spend Energon points equal to your Mass to "lock" the form into your structure. Once you learn a form, you can transform into it normally. The new form automatically comes with a free asset, as described above.

Cosmetic Changes: Mere superficial changes to a form (changing your color, design or model) can be done with 1 Energon and a Transform test (target 12). An example is the quick shiny upgrade Bumblebee pulled in the first *Transformers* movie. Under no circumstances will this give you an asset or any mechanical advantage.

Sample Forms

The sample forms below include the appropriate assets, the total build point costs for character creation, and the total upgrade costs for gaining the form in-play; the bonus asset for the form isn't included in these costs. However, extra forms during character creation (beyond the free one) cost an extra build point, which isn't factored into the costs below.

Form	Build	Upgrade	Assets
Basic car, pickup, semi	0	0	Acceleration 2
Sports car, race motorcycle	2	10	Acceleration 4
Jeep, SUV, dirt bike	1	5	Acceleration 2 (Off-Road)
Fire truck	3	15	Acceleration 3, Dispenser 2 (Compartmental Tank) (water, fire suppressants)
M1 Abrams (tank)	7	35	Acceleration 2 (Off-Road), Ballistic Attack 3 (turret), Missile Attack 2 (Salvo) (mini-missiles), *-2 Mobility*, Reinforcement 2
Excavator	3	15	Acceleration 1 (Off-Road), Excavate 2, Melee Attack 2 (shovel), Reinforcement, *-2 Mobility*
Civilian helicopter	1	5	Flight 3 (VTOL), *no land movement (-1)*
F-22 Raptor (fighter jet)	35	35	Flight 4 (Supersonic Flight 2), Lock, Missile Attack 3
Space shuttle	7	35	Flight 4 (Supersonic Flight 2, Escape Velocity), Temper 3 (for reentry)
Speedboat	2	10	Nautics 2 (Boost), Sealed Systems
Robotic wolf or tiger	6	30	Acceleration 2 (Off-Road), Hop 2, Melee Attack 2 (claw/bite), *unearthly (-1)*
Robotic beetle	4	20	Flight 1 (VTOL), Melee Attack 1 (pincers), Reinforcement, *unearthly (-1)*
Realistic elephant or bear	3	15	Acceleration 1 (Off-Road), Biograft, Melee Attack 1 (e. tusks or b. claw/bite)
Laser cannon, plasma rifle	3	15	Energy Attack 5 (Area Attack, Scope), *immobile (-3), unearthly (-1)*
Drink machine	0	0	Kinetic Weapon 2 (Scope) (drink cans), *immobile (-3)*

Assets

Assets reflect the special capabilities of Cybertronians. They aren't learned like skills or inherent like attributes; they reflect hardware and software specific to the character. Not everyone has heavy armor plating, or a powerful plasma cannon, or internal radar. Assets offer characters distinct advantages, and means by which they can be distinct. Ironhide's tough armor, Skywarp's teleportation, Optimus Primal's biological gorilla form, Blackout's energy attack at the SOCCENT Air Base, even flight and driving speed – all these are assets.

These assets aren't the only ones. This list is pretty long, but it's not exhaustive, and it doesn't reflect all the powers seen in toy tech specs, cartoons and other media. Feel free to come up with your own assets, using what's here as guidelines; if it needs to be said, all homebrewed creations have to be approved by the Controller.

Examples of assets are offered in this font, using both existing Transformers and made-up ones. Characters from multiple continuities are used, which can get confusing, as there are multiple versions of many characters floating around out there. So the following tags denote which continuity from which a given character hails: G1 = Generation One; LA = the live action movies; BW = Beast Wars. Robots with the additional tag HB are homebrews, meaning they are author creations and don't exist in any continuity.

Character Creation: During character creation you buy assets with build points. An asset costs its rating in build, or 2 build for closed assets. At least a third of your build points (10 out of 30 for the average build) should be invested in assets. No asset can start with a rating higher than 5. See character creation, pg. 4.

Asset Effects: Assets are listed with their game effects. Some offer passive effects, requiring no tests or activation and are continually active; examples include Temper (adds to Resistance) and Reserves (increases Energon capacity). Other assets are active, which means you must a conscious decision to use them; you may have to spend Energon, and/or make tests, to use them. Each asset is written with the rules for its use. While you're limited by your rating, you can always opt to dial down your effect: If you have Munitions 3, you can create a land mine that's less damaging; but to create a more powerful one, you need to upgrade Munitions.

The asset descriptions are brief and cover normal use and conditions. Pages could be devoted to covering alternate uses for assets, special circumstances and the like, and it still not come close to being airtight. What happens when you use an energy weapon underwater? (Fire would probably be extinguished, while electricity could have a radius effect.) What kind of VTOL flight can be used in outer space? A Controller will have to adjudicate asset effects, even during standard use of those powers; better to keep asset descriptions open-ended, and not tie hands with lots of special case rules.

Rated and Closed Assets: Most assets have ratings (like attributes and skills), which reflects the advantage they offer: EMP Attack 5 is more potent than EMP Attack 1, for instance.

<u>Caps:</u> All assets have caps, and can't be improved beyond this rating. No asset may exceed 10. Some assets have lower caps; many of such cases are limited by Mass (since smaller Transformers have less space for components, generators and the like), while other assets just have flat caps. Assets with special rules for caps will list them; if no cap is specifically listed, it's 10. (The 10 cap doesn't apply to Cybertronian craft, bases or certain NPCs.)

<u>Distribution:</u> Some assets have an asset rating that must be divided between different qualities; you'll see this setup with weapons particularly, but several other powers as well. For example, Energy Attack creates an attack with the base effect damage 1, range 100 yards; if you have Energy Attack 3, you can have the following possible combinations, depending how you choose to divvy up your asset rating: Damage 4, range 100 yds; dam 3, 200 yds; dam 2, 300 yds; dam 1, 400 yds. You can't change this up; once you choose a particular asset division, it's set from then on (Mode Conversion notwithstanding). Examples of asset point distributions are given under some assets.

Closed assets have no rating at all, and offer a flat benefit that can't be upgraded; these are tagged: **©**

Subassets: Under some assets are subassets, which modify the base asset in some way. For example, under Transmission there is Code, Duplication, Intercept, Jam and Satellite Link. Each subasset has an upgrade success requirement of 5; they usually don't have ratings of their own, and use the rating of the base asset where applicable. They don't increase the rating of the asset, but are purchased separately.

Forms: Assets must be bought per form unless stated otherwise, and their benefits apply only to that form. Efficiency, Energon Regeneration, Energon Shielding, Reserves, Sealed Systems, and Low Signature are exceptions, and function for all forms. Reinforcement and Temper for one form offer reduced values to other forms.

Energon Cost: Some assets cost Energon points to use. These are tagged **(#E)**, with # denoting the Energon you must spend to use the asset; so **(2E)** means a cost of 2 Energon. **(*E)** indicates that a variable number of Energon points are spent to use the asset, as described in the asset. Energon expenditure in itself is reflexive and can always be done at any time, within your ability to spend Energon in a phase of course. If for some reason you can't cover the entire Energon cost of an asset, you can pay its cost over two or more phases; the asset takes effect on the phase you finish paying its Energon cost.

Reduced Energon Recovery: Assets in **crimson** reduce your permanent Energon Recovery. A character can never have an Energon Recovery of less than 1 per day; if purchasing an asset would reduce that value to 0 or below, you can't take it. (*Hint:* invest in Efficiency.)

Upgrades: All assets are gained and improved through upgrades, they don't advance on their own. The skill tag tells you what skill is used in when upgrading that asset. See upgrades, pg. 34.

Research: The Controller decides what assets are available at character creation, appropriate to the game she wants to run. But some assets require advanced technology and scientific advancement, and may not be available until successfully researched; the Controller decides the success level needed. Once that's happened, that asset can be built into you or another Transformer normally. See Research, pg. 32.

Limitation: You can lower the build or upgrade cost of an asset by accepting a limitation on it, so that it only functions under certain circumstances or has a narrower range of effect. Examples: Only being able to use Augment when powered by sunlight; Acceleration suffers off-road penalties unless on rails or ice; accepting an Energon cost is attached to an asset that doesn't normally cost Energon. The limitation's details are worked out between you and the Controller; some might not make sense or are silly (being unable to fire a weapon unless death metal is playing), so Controllers have the final say on what goes. A limitation reduces the upgrade cost of the asset in question by 5 build or 1 build; a 10 upgrade/2 build reduction is possible for severe limitations.

Devices (Externalized Assets): Assets are usually built into you, and this is the default assumption for a given asset. But some assets are external, taking the form of an item or tool one carries around. Examples include a machine gun not built into its owner, a detachable jet pack or toolkit. These externalized assets are known as devices. Some assets may be ineligible as devices, such as Reinforcement or Cyonics. The Controller should decide on a case-by-case basis what assets make sense as devices. You can denote an asset as a device, and define what form it takes (a gun, melee weapon, sensor unit, etc.). Devices are easier to build than other assets; reduce upgrade costs by 5 (to a minimum of 5), or build cost by 1 (min. of 1). They're considered Integrated with you as dormant parties, per the Integrate asset, as long as you remain in contact with the item. But a device can be dropped, lost or taken away – at which point you lose the asset unless you find a way to get the thing back. And it's quite possible to have your very own device used against you if it's taken away.

Quick Asset List

Acceleration
Boost, Hover, Off-Road, Sudden Acceleration
Advanced Repair
Alacrity
Augment
Ballistic Attack
Armor Piercing, Autofire, Explosive Ammunition, Mode Conversion, Scattershot, Scope
Binary Symbiote
Biograft ©
Cyonics ©
Biocyonics, Reprogram, Scramble, Telecyonics
Dispenser
Compartmental Tank, Mode Conversion, Splatter, Spray
Division ©
Efficiency
EMP Attack
Energon Regeneration
Energon Surge
Energy Attack
Area Attack, Energy Spray, Graze, Mode Conversion, Penetration, Persistent Damage, Scope, Stun
Enhanced Sensors
Energon Sensitivity, Energy and Force Analysis, Enhanced Audio Detection, Enhanced Chemical Sensors, Enhanced Optics, Enhanced Tactile Sensors
Excavate
Flight
Escape Velocity, Supersonic Flight, VTOL
Gestalt ©
Hologram
Hologram Echo
Hop
Integrate ©

Internal Catalyst
Lock ©
Low Signature
Magnetism
Mass Shift ©
Melee Attack
Armor Piercing, Energy Attack, Grapple, Knockback, Reach, Rend
Missile
Armor Piercing, Guided Missile, Heat-Seekers, Mode Conversion, Multitargeting, Penetration, Scope, Salvo
Munition
Burrowing, Fragmentation, Penetration, Proximity, Scatter, Shaped Charge
Nautics
Amphibious, Boost, Submersible
Quake
Radar
Radiating Blast
Reinforcement
Reserves
Sealed Systems ©
Shielding
Siphon
Improved Siphon
Sonar
Sonic Attack
Blanket Attack, Silent Doom
Surge Protection
Temper
Toolkit ©
Transmission
Code, Duplication, Intercept, Jam, Satellite Link
Warp
Weight Reduction ©

Asset Descriptions

A brief description of the powers Transformers have.

Cap: The asset's maximum rating; no asset rating may exceed 10, even if the listed cap is higher.

© = Closed asset.

(*E) = denotes the Energon cost for that asset, with * denoting the number.

Assets in **crimson** reduce your Energon recovery by 1.

Numbers in **steel gray** is the total success level needed to successfully research the asset.

Acceleration

Engineering

You have a maximum ground speed of [Acceleration x 30] mph. Stunt driving and other maneuvers in your vehicle form require Drive tests, while doing the same in robot mode (including "beast" forms) calls for Athletics tests. Test targets depend on what you're trying to do and how fast you're going, with more outrageous stunts and/or greater speeds increasing the target. Mobility is reduced by 2 while off-road or on rough surfaces (like ruined pavement) in vehicle forms; robot mode doesn't suffer this restriction.

• **Boost (1E):** While at top speed, you can spend a point of Energon to increase your speed by 60 mph. This lasts only three phases, and your Mobility is reduced by 1 during this time (to a minimum Mobility of 1).

• **Hover:** Requires Off-Road. You hover on jets of compressed air, just a few feet off the ground, and can travel at half normal speed over any sort of terrain and water.

• **Off-Road:** You suffer no Mobility penalty when traveling off-road and on rough surfaces, and you have no fear of blowouts, damaged feet or similar damage from such travel. (Your robot form enjoys the benefits of this subasset, even if you don't have the Acceleration asset.)

• **Sudden Acceleration:** Normally it takes one phase per point of Mass for one to attain maximum speed, but you can reach top speed in one third this time (round down, minimum of one phase).

Bluestreak (G1) is well-known for his propensity for speed, and rules the highways in his Subaru Impreza form; he can hit 100+ mph in just seconds. Acceleration 7: 210 mph; Sudden Acceleration.

Brawl (LA) doesn't care so much about speed, he just wants to get from Point A to Point B with as few things obstructing his progress as possible. Acceleration 2: 60 mph; Off-Road.

Timber (HB) prefers to get around in his wolf form, loping through the Terran wilderness in search of Decepticons. He assumes his Toyota Tacoma form on the open road. Wolf form Acceleration 2: 60 mph; automatically gains benefits of Off-Road, as this is his robot form. Truck mode: Acceleration 3: 90 mph; Off-Road (purchased).

Advanced Repair

Engineering

You can repair yourself and other Transformers more easily. First, you can spend a number of Energon up to your Advanced Repair rating per phase for purposes of repairs, and this isn't counted toward the 3 Energon you can normally spend per phase. Second, you can spend Energon to repair other robots if you're in physical contact with them, by effectively activating their autorepair systems for them. Finally, your Advanced Repair rating adds to all Structural diagnostic and repair-related tests, and each repair test can be made every five minutes (instead of the standard fifteen). See Structure, pg. 33.

Alacrity

Cap 2; (1E); Engineering

When activated, this asset gives you a +2 Mobility bonus per point of Alacrity; you may take Alacrity twice (but no more) for a +4 Mobility bonus. This effect costs 1 Energon point, and lasts five phases; spending additional Energon extends the boost's duration. Alacrity can potentially increase Mobility rating beyond your Mass cap, albeit temporarily. Activating Alacrity is reflexive.

Augment

Cap 2; (1E); Engineering

You can temporarily amplify your strength, letting you inflict more damage in close combat and lift heavier loads. You gain a +2 Mass bonus per point of Augment for these purposes only; you may take this asset twice (but no more) for an effective +4 bonus to Mass. This effect costs 1 Energon point and lasts five phases; spending Energon extends the duration of the boost. Note that this doesn't affect your actual Mass (you don't become magically bigger), nor does it affect Mobility, Structure or Energon stats. Activating Augment is reflexive.

Ballistic Attack

Taken per weapon or attack mode; Engineering

Ballistic weapons include bullets, shells, launched blades, rail guns and other physical projectiles. They have the advantage of energy-efficiency and superior range, though many opponents and objects are resistant to kinetic damage. Base effect: Kinetic damage 2, range 300 yds. Your rating in this asset is divided between base damage (+1 per point invested) and range (+150 yds. per point invested). Extra attack success adds to damage. Transformers create projectiles from their own bodies as needed, and so ammo usually isn't an issue unless autofire is used (see subasset below).

Ballistic attacks are basic actions unless stated otherwise, and follow the normal rules for attacks.

• **Armor Piercing:** Your ballistic attack ignores 2 points of Armor; this effect doesn't add to damage.

• **Autofire:** You can choose to fire hails of projectiles instead of single shots, increasing your chance to hit enemies while sacrificing precision. You can attack one target or tight cluster of them, or spray a wide area. When attacking foes, add a +3 bonus to your attack test, but only half your success (rounded down) is counted toward damage. When spraying a wide area, add +3 to your attack test and compare result to the Defense ratings of all in that area (friends and foes alike) to determine who is hit, but the attack success doesn't affect damage – those hit only suffer base damage. Only three autofire attacks can be made before it depletes your ammunition entirely, but a point of Structure can be spent to "refill" your ammo (as you create more projectiles from your body). Autofire attacks are full actions.

• **Explosive Ammunition:** Half the damage done by the attack is kinetic, the other half energy (rounding favors kinetic); energy damage is subject to reduction by Resistance, but not Armor.

• **Mode Conversion:** You can switch the settings of your weapon to gain range at the cost of damage or vice-versa: You can re-invest up to half your Ballistic Attack asset rating (rounded up) among damage and range. (So if you have Ballistic Attack 4, you can swap two points of range for damage.) This requires a basic action and a point of Energon. A weapon always returns to its base settings after combat.

• **Scattershot:** You can attack foes in a small (50 yard-wide) cone; your range is reduced to 50 yds (and this can't be improved), but you gain a +2 bonus to your attack tests.

• **Scope:** Aimed shots gain an additional +2 attack test bonus. Aimed shots are full actions.

Scorponok (LA) doesn't say much. When he does express himself, it's through his claw-mounted chain guns; in this medium he is a poet, composing sonnets and haiku that bring tears to the eyes of sadists everywhere. Ballistic Attack 6: damage 6, range 450 yards; Autofire, Scattershot.

Mirage (G1) has decided he prefers killing enemies without having to endanger himself or face them. To this end Wheeljack created a powerful rifle for him that can be quickly converted from sniper to assault settings. Ballistic Attack 5: damage 3, range 900 yards; Armor Piercing, Mode Conversion (damage 6, range 600 yds.)

Binary Symbiote

©; Biology; requires Integrate

You're binary-bonded with a cybernetically enhanced human or humanoid, which grants potent advantages. (Robotic symbiote-type relations are covered by Gestalt rules.) To have a symbiote, you need the Integrate asset, as the human combines with you and at the very least has her brain hooked into your CPU. Reflecting your combined brainpower and reaction time, you gain a +1 bonus to all Intellect and Mobility tests while connected with your binary symbiote; this Mobility bonus isn't subject to Mass caps. You can substitute your symbiote's skill ratings for your own when appropriate, if they're superior to your own. Multiple action penalties are reduced by half – it's easier to split your attention when you have more than one mind at work. And finally, you can potentially gain the advantage of your partner's assets.

The symbiote only offers these enhancements when physically connected to you. She may transform into a body part (like your head, auxiliary engine or internal component) or a device. Or she could remain safely inside you while hooked up with wires, perhaps helping pilot you in your vehicle form. She might even transform into a weapon or other device, but it must be attached to you in some way. This means you can't gain the advantages offered by the binary symbiote unless she's present, hooked into you and (this is important) cooperating – which is usually a safe assumption, but if you mistreat or don't appreciate your fleshling partners you can find her rebelling at the most inopportune times…

See pg. 37 for more on cyborg characters and humans in general.

Researching Cyborg Symbiote only requires 10 success levels if your faction has already researched Biograft and you have access to the data.

Highbrow (G1) is a Headmaster. He has Gort as a symbiote partner, who transforms into Highbrow's head in robot mode. Gort offers Highbrow the Alacrity and Lock assets, as well as his superior Targeting skill.

Tired of not being able to hit anything, but too obstinate to train his firearms skills, Triggerhappy (G1) has the conniving Blowpipe as a cyborg symbiote. Blowpipe transforms into the Targetmaster's compressed air cannon and gives him Ballistic Attack 2 (on top of the upgrades the Decepticon has invested in that weapon).

Biograft
Cap 5; Biology

Considered bizarre by Transformers and humans alike, Biograft combines Cybertronian technology with biological life to create a hybrid being! Generally, this asset involves living tissue being grafted over parts of the body while circuitry and internal components remain intact, though bone and other tissues might be used for some parts. Your Biograft rating determines the degree of integration between your mechanical and biological parts and how much of your body is organic, open to your (and the Controller's) interpretations. Biograft's advantages include being better able to pass for a living creature, assuming your form and mass are appropriate – if you're Mass 5, you won't pass for human, though a whale or elephant form is possible (and a dinosaur form, but at that point you're not fooling anybody). Your biological parts are more durable than natural tissue (so your Structure is normal), but still more vulnerable to damage than metal or other materials and tissue requires special nutrients to maintain. On the plus side, living organic tissue foils Energon signature diction and reading and is naturally resistant to Energon attacks: Treat half rating in Biograft (rounded up) as Low Profile and Surge Protection. And biological components heal naturally without Energon expenditure, at a rate of 1 Structure per day.

Researching Biograft only requires 10 success levels if your faction has already researched Cyborg Symbiote and you have access to that data.

Terrorsaur (BW) has an especially potent biomechanical beast form, a pteranodon, letting him spy on and attack Maximals from the skies.

The Autobot Seaspray (G1) wants to explore the depths of the ocean more than the limitations of his watercraft would allow. So Seaspray has become a Pretender, and chose a killer whale as his Pretender shell; the biological grafts and subsystems are grafted onto Seaspray's shell component instead of his main body. (See the Division asset.) On top of being unobtrusive, it's useful for scouting the sea and ocean floor.

Camouflage
©; Material Science

You can change the color, degree of reflectivity and even texture of your exoskeleton; this could be a physical change, or you might have fiberoptics in your armor that bend photons around you and manipulate how light bounces off you. You can perform cosmetic changes to your appearance (as described under forms) at no Energon cost, though you must still make a Transform test (12). Further, by spending a full action and making a Transform test (15), you can make your armor appearance and temperature match your environment; this affects all wavelengths of light, and you gain a +5 bonus to Stealth tests to hide. You must remain still to gain this bonus, as movement spoils the effect and makes you visible again. This doesn't hide your Energon signature or muffle any sounds you make.

Cyonics
©; Computer; requires Intellect 5, Computer 3

The Cyonics asset gives you the ability to read the CPUs (brains) of other Cybertronians, though you can't affect your subject or alter their data with the basic power. You must be attached to the subject through data cables, so enemies must be restrained somehow. Cyonics requires an extended Computer test and a full action. The base target is 15, plus the subject's Intellect if he attempts to resist your efforts (which he will do unless he trusts you a lot). The required success level is based on what you're trying to do: Reading data the subject is actively processing (basically, his surface thoughts) requires a success level of 5. Analyzing the stored and/or application data from his CPU programs (useful for reading memories, or determining the assets he has) requires 10 success levels. Delving deeper – detecting and analyzing hidden programs, looking into core subproccesses, and the like – is difficult, and requires 15 success levels.

• **Biocyonics:** Requires Biology 3. Come to find out, the thoughts and directives of humans are electrical impulses that emanate from a mass of gelatinous meat they call a "brain." Disgusting to be sure, but you understand those signals well enough to read and possibly manipulate them. The Biocyonics asset allows you to employ Cyonic assets on humans, though Biology replaces Computer for requirements and tests. (To memory-wipe a human enemy sympathizer through Reprogram, you must have Biology 5, and you use extended Biology tests instead of Computer.) Researching Biocyonics only requires 5 success levels if your faction has already researched Biograft or Cyborg Symbiote and you have access to the data.

• **Reprogram:** Requires Intellect 7, Computer 5. This allows you to actually alter the data in a subject's CPU, which is difficult (target 20 + victim's Intellect and requiring a lots of success levels) but is potentially devastating. This insidious asset is fairly open-ended: You can wipe data, including memories (success 15 per bloc of info), reprogram

personality and motives (success 20), introduce hidden programs *ala* The Manchurian Candidate (success 15), damage the data associated with programs (deleting points in certain "non-physical" assets) (success 10 per point), activate the "pain" receptors in your subject (thus allowing torture), introduce viral programs (success 10) and the like. However, you can also use Reprogram to undo others' reprogramming (negating their success levels by the ones you attain), a beneficial use of this abusive power; if your subject cooperates with your efforts, your test target is 20 and his Intellect isn't added to the target.

• ***Scramble*** **(1E)***:* Requires Telecyonics. You're able to overload the CPU of an enemy within your Telecyonic range with blasts of corruptive data and reboot commands, forcing him to shut down even in mid-battle. Your Computer test is [20 + victim's Intellect], and this is a full action; if your test succeeds, your foe powers down (see Energon rules, pg. 5) and must power up to function nominally. This trick is particularly useful against foes that fly or that are really big.

• ***Telecyonics:*** Requires Communications 5. You're able to use Cyonics on a subject at short range (Intellect x 5 yards).

Dispenser

Taken per weapon or attack mode; Chemistry

This type of device squirts liquids, with a variety of effects depending on the chemical. Powerful acids, bases and other corrosives make potent weapons, though dispensers have applications beyond direct damage. Regardless of the chemicals used, all dispensers work on similar principles. Base effect: Range 50 yds, delivers up to two doses per use, capacity [Mass + 5] doses. Asset rating is split between range (+25 yds. per point invested), the doses delivered per use (+1 dose per point invested), and the asset's capacity (+3 doses per point invested). Attack success doesn't increase the damage or effect, it just puts the liquid where you want it – the overall effect depends on the doses delivered.

Dispenser attacks are usually basic actions (unless stated otherwise) and follow the normal rules for attacks.

• ***Compartmental Tank:*** You can store different chemicals and deliver which one or ones you want to at any given time, even mixtures.

• ***Mode Conversion:*** You can switch your dispenser settings to gain range at the cost of dosage or vice-versa: You can re-invest up to half your Dispenser asset rating (rounded up) among dose and range. (So if you have Dispenser 4, you can swap two points of range for dose.) This requires a basic action and a point of Energon. A dispenser always returns to its base settings after combat or other situation.

• ***Splatter:*** You can opt to attack a small area within range with liquid chemicals or mist instead of firing single shots, practically guaranteeing a hit against everyone there but diffusing the effect. The area is a sphere 10 yards per dose delivered. Everyone (including friendlies) in the area is hit; no attack test is needed. Those hit suffer half the chemical's damage or other effect (subject to Controller adjudication). Splatter attacks are full actions.

• ***Spray:*** You can attack foes in a small (10 yard-wide) cone; your range is reduced by half, but you gain a +2 bonus to your attack tests. Further, your attack hits even when it misses: If you fail an attack test by 3 or less (for instance, if your foe has a Defense of 17 and your attack test result is 14, 15 or 16), you inflict half the base damage of the weapon (rounded down). This last asset effect only does damage on near-misses, direct hits do normal damage.

The Autobot Inferno (G1) uses the latest in fire-fighting technology, as fires are annoying common in human cities and wherever Decepticons happen to be. Dispenser 5: dose 4, range 100 yards, capacity 15 (8 + Mass 7); Compartmental Tank, Splatter and Spray. Inferno normally deploys water, fire retardants and coolants.

Far more concerned with destruction than preservation, the Predacon Inferno (BW) has a new acid blaster – kinda like a Supersoaker from hell. Dispenser 4: dose 4, range 125, capacity 9 (5 + Mass 4). In theory, less malignant chemicals could be delivered through the acid rifle. Knowing Inferno, that's unlikely.

Chemistry 101

Here is brief list of broad chemical types that can be applied through the Chemical Dispenser asset. The effect described is for a direct "squirt" attack; the effects will have to be altered to account for spray or splatter attacks. Creative players and Controllers are free to think up more insidious chemicals.

Corrosive: Corrosives include caustics like acids or highly ionized salts, rapid oxidizers, liquid nitrogen, even radical catalytics and sprays that cause metal to crystallize. These compounds work in different ways, but function by compromising the integrity of any materials they contact. While they cause little damage on their own, their primary effect is to weaken the target's chassis, making it easier for other attacks to damage him. Each dose of corrosive reduces Armor and Resistance by 1, and inflicts 2 points of Structure damage. Once both Armor and Resistance are reduced to 0, further corrosive doses cause 4 points of direct damage per dose. (Spray and splatter deliveries cause only half these effects, but often affect multiple enemies and cover more of the victim.) Some substances are resistant to certain types of compounds – synthetic parts don't rust, while anyone built for oceanic adventure won't be as affected by high-pH salts. Controllers and players can adjudicate special cases as they crop up.

> Propellant: A flammable liquid, usually sprayed as it's ignited – a flamethrower, basically. Each flaming dose does two points of energy (fire) damage on the first phase, and half that (rounded up) per phase for three phases (Reduced by Resistance); spray and splatter attacks inflict 1 Structure per dose to all in the area, and 1 per phase thereafter. Of course, you can choose not to ignite the propellant and leave the possibility as an open threat...
>
> Lubricant: This creates pools of oil, or perhaps fast-freezing ice slicks. The idea is to make your enemy fall, slide out of control or otherwise foul up. On each phase he remains within the lubricant, the victim must make an Athletics test to remain on his feet or a Drive test to retain control while driving. One dose blasted directly on the ground creates a small slick that sets a target of 15 for these tests; each additional dose increases the target by 5. Splatter and spray attacks spread the lubricant thinner and so reduce the target by 5 (so it's easier for those in contact to maintain control), but they affect a much greater area.
>
> Suppressant: This sort of chemical suppresses something, as you might imagine; usually fire, but electricity and radiation are other possibilities. The chemical reduces energy damage of the targeted type by 4 points per dose, or 2 points per dose for sprays and splatters; this is cumulative. The energy damage or effect must be ongoing to be targeted for suppressants; once a plasma cannon blast has taken off one's arm, it's too late to try and counter it. This sort of chemical is best used for putting out fires, clearing an area of radiation, and so forth.

Division

©; Engineering; requires Mass 3, Intellect 5, Transform.

You can break down into two autonomous modules, both under your control. Essentially, this asset gives you an extra mode, with the ability to access that mode and one other mode simultaneously. You can choose to divide or not divide when you assume the form in question, though this may be unfeasible for some configurations (in which case appropriate limitations can be taken to reduce the Division asset's cost). The additional "Division mode" must be attached to an existing mode, and is only accessible when you assume that form; you can purchase Division more than once, applying it to another form each time. For instance, having a robot module for your vehicle mode allows you to transform from a bigger robot into a smaller one plus a vehicle; picking up Division again allows you to apply it to your base robot mode, in effect letting you divide into two smaller robots.

When you divide, you have full control over both modules. Only the primary one houses your CPU (brain). You can suffer the loss of the secondary module, but not the primary one, and transforming to other modes may prove problematic until the secondary module is repaired, recovered or replaced (depending on your configuration). You act as multiple characters during this time, and each module functions on its own – the actions of one module doesn't affect the other, and multiple action penalties don't apply to actions modules take individually (but a module that performs multiple actions in a phase follows normal rules for that). Modules can never travel further from one another than your communications range; anything that affects communications can affect the link between you and your components (for example, shutting down communications between modules renders the secondary one inert). Dividing is a basic action, like a standard transformation. When both modules act especially skillfully in tandem, the Controller may award a small situational bonus to a test or Defense.

Both modules retain your Mobility, and the secondary module has your Intellect and skill ratings. Your [Mass +1] is divided between the modules (since Mass doesn't scale linearly). Assets are purchased for the module as if it was an additional form, and normal rules apply, like as package discounts; the package discount rule does apply. Assets that normally affect all forms, like Sealed Systems, apply to both modules. The Energon capacity, saves and starvation tolerance of the modules reflect their Mass, though Energon recovery uses the larger base Mass. Energon points are divided between the modules as you wish when you transform, within their capacity.

Modules can transform, if forms are purchased for them. Remember that the secondary module itself counts as a form, and so an alternate mode for either it or the main form counts as a third form; a second mode for both modules count as four forms total; and so on.

Division decreases your Energon recovery by 1 permanently.

Optimus Prime (G1) has named his secondary component Roller, which spends most of its time deactivated. The little guy has proven useful on several occasions as a spy or distraction. Roller is Mass 1, and has Acceleration 2 (Off-Road); Optimus can attach his laser rifle to the Roller module, but it doesn't come with its own weapons.

The Decepticon Splitscreen (HB) splits into a light helicopter (the primary module) and a motorcycle; he must divide when he converts, so this is taken as a limitation. Splitscreen distributes six points (Mass 5 + 1), between the copter (4) cycle (2). Each module has its own assets (Flight 3 + VTOL for the copter, Acceleration 3 for the bike), but his Low Signature asset applies to both.

Seaspray (G1) has become a Pretender with an orca whale as his shell. This (and any Pretender) is handled as a combination of the Division and Biograft assets. The combined techno-organic shell and robot is the base form, which splits into the primary robot component and whale shell; Seaspray's main module transforms into a watercraft.

Efficiency

Physics

Each point invested in this asset reduces your effective Mass for purposes of Energon starvation, though this asset can only grant you a minimum effective Mass equal to half your actual Mass (round up). Efficiency applies to all forms.

EMP Attack

Taken per weapon or attack mode; (1E); Physics

EMP (electromagnetic pulse) attacks don't inflict Structure damage, but temporarily disable Transformers and other machines. Base effect: Range 100 yds, resist target 15. Rating points are split between range (+50 yds. per point invested) and the resist target for Energon Saves (+1 per point invested). A robot hit by this attack must make an Energon Save against the resist target: A successful save means there's no effect; a failed save means the target is rendered inactive for the duration of the phase and must make an Energon Save each successive phase (same target) to reactivate. Earth electronics suffer a -5 penalty to saves, and shut down until manually rebooted or repaired; some sensitive items may even be destroyed. Each extra Energon point pumped into an EMP attack increases the resist target by 1, to a maximum of +5.

EMP attacks are basic actions unless stated otherwise, and follow the normal rules for attacks.

Starscream's (G1) null ray is one of an array of attacks in his arsenal, and he often uses it to debilitate particularly tough enemies before missile and cluster bomb strikes. EMP Attack 8: range 300 yds, save target 19.

Energon Regeneration

Cap 5; Physics

Each point invested increases your daily Energon recovery by 1. This asset can be used to offset reduced Energon recovery imposed by other assets (such as Division, Flight and Warp). Efficiency applies to all forms.

Energon Surge

Cap 3; Physics

Transformers can normally only spend 3 Energon per phase. Your rating in this asset adds to the number of Energon points you can spend per phase.

Energy Attack

Taken per weapon or attack mode; Physics

Energy damage covers a huge range of energy-based effects: Superheated fire, plasma, electricity, lasers, radiation and similar attacks. (Kinetic energy is specifically not included in this.) Energy weapons aren't as accurate as ballistics weapons at long range and are less energy-efficient, but fewer things are protected against that sort of damage – all Transformers, however, have some inherent Resistance. Base effect: Damage 2, range 200 yds. Rating is divided between base energy damage (+1 per point invested) and range (+100 yds. per point invested). Each point of Energon spent toward an energy weapon attack (per attack) increases damage by 2, up to its base damage. Attack success adds to damage.

Some targets may be more or less resistant to certain forms of energy. Lead is especially resistant to microwave and x-rays, while much of a laser's heat energy will bounce off a reflective surface. Controllers can call cases like these as they come up.

Energy attacks are basic actions unless stated otherwise, and follow the normal rules for attacks.

• **Area Attack (1E):** You can opt to attack a small area within range (and all in it) instead of firing single shots, practically guaranteeing a hit against enemies but diffusing the weapon's damage potential. The area is a sphere [base damage x 5] yards across. Everyone in the area is hit (friendlies too) and suffer half base damage of the weapon (rounded up). Area attacks are full actions.

• **Energy Spray:** You can attack foes in a small (10 yard-wide) cone; your range is reduced by half, but you gain a +2 bonus to your attack tests.

• **Graze:** Your attack hits even when it misses. If you fail an attack test by 3 or less (for instance, if your foe has a Defense of 17 and your attack test result is 14, 15 or 16), you inflict half the base damage of the weapon (rounded down). This asset has no effect on an opponent when the attack actually hits.

• **Mode Conversion:** You can switch the settings of your weapon to gain range at the cost of damage or vice-versa: You can re-invest up to half your Energy Attack asset rating (round up) among damage and range. (So if you have Energy Attack 4, you can swap two points of range for damage.) This requires a basic action and a point of Energon. A weapon always returns to its base settings after combat.

• **Penetration:** Your energy attack ignores 2 points of Resistance; this doesn't add to damage.

• **Persistent Damage:** Your energy attack continues burning, shocking or otherwise damaging your foe for three phases after the initial shot successfully hits; the enemy takes only the base damage of the weapon, reduced by Resistance.

• **Scope:** Aimed shots gain an additional +2 attack test bonus. Aimed shots are full actions.

• **Stun:** You add a number of points of "phantom damage" to your attacks equal to half their base damage (round down) – this isn't actual Structure damage, and it's only counted toward Dysfunction or shutdown. If your adjusted energy damage (actual damage plus the bonus for this asset) exceeds the victim's [Mass + 5] *or* half his current Structure, a Dysfunction save is forced; if the adjusted damage brings the victim to zero Structure or below, he shuts down. If the damage you cause isn't sufficient to cause either result, this asset has no effect at all. In no case is the stun damage you do recorded as Structure damage; it disappears immediately.

Few fires are hot enough to bother Transformers. But Slag (G1) breathes fire that hot, able to melt metal and fuse components. Energy Attack 5: damage 7, range 200 yards; Energy Spray, Penetration, Persistent Damage.

A standard issue laser rifle (G1): Energy Attack 4: damage 4, range 400 yards; Scope.

Enhanced Sensors
Engineering

This asset suite expands and refines the already impressive sensory abilities of Cybertronians. A rating in the core Enhanced Sensors asset has no effect in itself, but instead determines the bonuses offered by subassets. See Sensory Powers, pg. 33, for more on basic Transformer senses.

• **Energon Sensitivity:** You gain your Enhanced Sensors rating as a bonus to all Scan tests to detect and interpret Energon signatures. Further, your detection range is increased by 50 yards for every point you have in Enhanced Sensors. (See Energy Signatures, pg. 30.)

• **Enhanced Energy and Force Analysis:** You have a greatly augmented sensitivity to non-Energon energies, weak forces and strong forces. You can detect and precisely measure magnetism, gravity, electricity, light levels, heat energy, microwave radiation and kinetic force. Enhanced Sensors adds Scan tests relating to these, diagnostic Physics tests, and to Navigation tests on planets with magnetic poles (including Earth and Cybertron). You can detect radio and subspace transmissions, but interpreting or affecting them falls under the Transmission suite.

• **Enhanced Audio Detection:** Your hearing is phenomenal, and you're able to hear into the deep infrasonic and highest ultrasonic range. You gain Enhanced Sensors rating as a bonus to all Scan tests involving sound. You can use echolocation to navigate, which reduces penalties for blindness by [Enhanced Sensors x2]; at rating 3, you can operate blind without penalties except for long ranged combat.

• **Enhanced Chemical Sensors:** An uncommon but useful subasset, it allows you to detect, analyze and interpret chemicals, from fuel and smoke to organic compounds. This includes senses like smell and taste, giving you a bloodhound-like ability to track odors and detect impurities in any substance. Your Enhanced Sensors adds to any Scan tests related to this, as well to diagnostic Chemistry and Biology rolls.

• **Enhanced Optics:** You have great visual range and acuity, and can perceive and process all wavelengths of light. Enhanced Sensors is added to all purely optical Scan tests. Also, with an Enhanced Sensors rating of 1 your visual range is 50 miles (instead of 25); each point beyond this doubles your sensing range again (100 miles at rating 2, 200 miles at rating 3, 400 at rating 4, etc.). You're also able to see microscopic details, scaling with your Enhanced Sensors rating.

• **Enhanced Tactile Sensors:** Your sense of touch is far more acute than that of other Transformers. Refined surface receptors grant you possess superhuman sensitivity to pressure, temperature, texture and touch. Further, you're able to expertly read the vibrations in any material or surface, and even locate others based on the vibrations they make where they step or move on the ground, as well as determine size, form, speed and the like; all related tests gain your Improved Sensor rating as a bonus. This advantage makes it next to impossible to surprise you. It also allows you to effectively fight blind against ground opponents: Penalties associated with blindness are reduced by [Enhanced Sensors x2], and a rating of 3 or more lets you fight without penalties whatsoever as long as your foes are on the ground and moving around.

Excavate
Engineering

You're designed for digging. You're can dig holes and tunnels very quickly (able to displace an amount of dirt equal to [Mass + Athletics + Excavate] in a minute); this is a basic action. If your Mass is 4 or lower and your Mobility is at least 6, you can burrow under the earth at a rate equal to [Mobility + Excavate] mph – when combined with Stealth, this is great for surprise attacks and infiltrating enemy facilities. These figures assume average soil density; rocky earth or pavement reduces excavation, while loose sand allows digging to go faster.

FLIGHT

Engineering

You can fly at a speed of [Mobility x 50] mph. Aerial maneuvers in aircraft form uses the Pilot skill, while flying in robot form uses Athletics. Having the Flight asset reduces Energon Recovery by 1; this doesn't scale with Flight rating, and is a one-time penalty. Taking off without a runway requires a Flight test (target [10 + Mass]) and is a full action; using a runway takes a number of phases equal to your Mass for takeoff, but the effort counts as a basic action on those phases and so allows other actions to be performed.

• **Escape Velocity (3E):** Requires Supersonic Flight 2. You can attain the speed and thrust necessary to leave the Earth's gravity, though this costs 3 Energon per trip.

• **Supersonic Flight ((1E), cap 3):** Requires Flight 4. You can fly at MACH 1 (the speed of sound) in an atmosphere. This subasset can be taken multiple times, with a speed increase of MACH 1 each time. Your speed in a vacuum is increased by a factor of 10. It costs 1 Energon per use of supersonic flight; this speed lasts for an hour, or one day in outer space.

• **VTOL:** The VTOL (Vertical Landing/Takeoff) asset allows you to take off and land vertically without a Flight test and as a basic action, and grants you superior aerial agility: Add a +1 bonus to Defense while airborne.

Blades (G1) isn't that fast in helicopter mode, but he's more focused on maneuverability and chopping his foes to alloyed ribbons, anyway. Flight 2: 100 mph, VTOL.

Starscream (LA) transforms into an F-22 Raptor, and is built for raw speed. Flight 8: 350 mph; Supersonic Flight 2; Escape Velocity.

GESTALT

©; (*E), Engineering; requires Integrate

Gestalt technology allows several Transformers to merge. A popular use of this asset is forming a large and powerful robot, though it can as easily allow two or more Cybertronians to combine into a large vehicle, weapons platform or a structure, or for a smaller robot to attach to a larger one. The following rules are complex, and Controllers may need to fudge or tweak them for the sake of logic or simplicity. Each member of the gestalt must have this asset and the Integrate asset.

Mass doesn't scale linearly, so to determine the gestalt's final Mass, use the Mass of the largest component Transformer as a base and add half the Mass of the other robots. Anything above Mass 12 defaults to 12. Average the Mobility and Intellect ratings of the component robots (though Mass may cap Mobility). (All these averages and divisions are rounded down.) The gestalt has access to the skills of its component robots, but the only skills that come into play relate directly to its function: A giant warbot would have Close Combat, Evasion, Initiative and Targeting; meanwhile, a gestalt space shuttle would have Navigation, Pilot, and possibly Targeting. These are the averages of the component robots' skill ratings (remember to factor in zeros), round down. For purposes of Energon starvation, a gestalt has current Energon equal to the sum of its component parts; other than this, the great machine has no Energon stats of its own.

A gestalt is a separate form, one composed of several robots, and assets are purchased for it as such. The simplest way to do this is to pool each player's upgrade test success levels toward building the gestalt (and everyone should chip in) and then spend from that pool. Normally, the only assets available are ones someone in the gestalt group has; so if no one has EMP Attack, then the gestalt can't get it. However, Controllers may make exceptions here – Quake is easy to justify for a big robot, for instance, even if no one has that asset. Package discounts apply; use the most favorable rating in the group for determining asset costs and caps (the highest Reinforcement, best weapon, etc.) Gestalts should have assets appropriate to their configurations and functions: War gestalts typically have big weapons, Reinforcement, Radiating Blast and the like; huge vehicles should have Acceleration and related subassets and Reinforcement; aircraft will possess Flight (possibly supersonic) and likely Radar. All the players should have some input into the giant, with helpful oversight from the Controller. Certain assets aren't applicable to or appropriate for gestalts; these include Efficiency, Energon Regeneration, Biograft, Division and Low Signature; any asset that doesn't fit the concept can be red-lined by the Controller.

Gestalts are expensive and not deployed wastefully. A number of Energon equal to half the total Mass of the gestalt (rounded up) must be spent to form it; this cost is met by component robots as players choose. This cost must be paid each twelve hours the gestalt form is retained. If this cost isn't spent, the gestalt can't be maintained and quickly collapses. Note that component robots do *not* recover Energon while part of the gestalt.

Gestalts in play: The amalgamated robot doesn't have a mind or identity of its own, but a rudimentary form of intelligence and collective memory. The averaged Intellect and skill ratings of its sum parts are used when tests are necessary. The gestalt's decision-making ability is a compromise of the minds that form it – every choice is made by committee. At the beginning of each phase, all players write down (or text) their "votes" for what the gestalt should do next, and give them to the Controller. The Controller tallies the votes, and the gestalt acts on the wishes of the majority. So if most of the group wants to fire at an enemy, then that's what the big guy does. Sometimes different

directions can be given to no bad end (attacking while backing up is doable), but ties that involve conflicting directives means the gestalt does nothing or acts at random. At no point during the time the gestalt is formed should players discuss battle strategy or confirm votes; they can only vote and witness the results, but can't metagame their gestalt into effectiveness. This is the essential weakness of gestalt robots: The internal conflicts of its team members can compromise its effectiveness. It would serve a group well to have a game plan and learn to work intuitively as a team before they go a-merging.

Hologram
Physics

You can project simple holograms, usually the image of a human passenger, within or on you. A low Hologram rating allows you to create static illusions that can pass cursory inspection but not close examination; higher ratings indicate increasingly convincing images, complete with realistic movement, and even the ability to project illusions a short distance from you. Your Hologram rating can be added to Intellect tests, like a skill, when you're attempting to create a particularly intricate ruse; your test result is opposed by viewers' Scan tests. These images have no substance, and can't be felt; any scans of a hologram will reveal its illusionary nature. Creating and maintaining static holograms is reflexive, while having one walk around and do stuff requires a basic action.

• **Hologram Echo:** Your holograms give off an energy signature and register as "there" to detection Scans and other sensors (though you can choose not to imbue your holograms with this advantage). This won't fool close scrutiny; Scan tests to examine the reading will read the hologram as of an inconclusive type or (if a success of 3+ is attained) as a hollow energy matrix.

Hop
Cap = 5; Engineering

You may have superbly designed legs that allow astounding leaps, a vehicle design that allows short glides, or maybe a rocket booster that can launch you for distance. For every point invested in this asset, add 10 to relevant multipliers; see Leaping and Ramping, pg. 31. Also, you're built for landings, so subtract twice your rating in Hop from landing damage after hopping; if you manage to land properly (on your wheels, feet, etc.) you can apply this damage reduction to incidental fall damage as well.

Integrate
©; Engineering

Transformers can link to others with this asset; offers no benefit unless one or more parties are powered down, only one linked party can be active at any time, and Integrate can't be used with Cybertronians that don't also have that asset. You can choose be either active or inactive when connecting with other Cybertronians. Integrate typically sees use when one Transformer carries a smaller passenger inside or on him; the small guy is typically activated and "popped out" when needed: "Laserbeak, Eject!" is a classic example, another is Blackout releasing Scorponok at the Qatar air base in the first movie. (See Passengers and Cargo, pg. 31.)

Communication between participants is possible, but inactive characters can't perform other actions until activated, which they can do at will (they follow the rules for reactivating from starvation mode, see Energon). However, the active party can activate a dormant ally at will, and can opt to power them up immediately if he spends 1 Energon on their behalf (instead of their having to power up themselves). Finally, inactive Transformers passively gain the benefits of the active one's assets, if the user desires, if the asset is a personal effect and applicable to the dormant robot. The Controller is the final arbiter of what assets apply or don't.

Both Soundwave and Laserbeak (G1) have Integrate. While Laserbeak is within Soundwave, he doesn't gain the benefits of Soundwave's concussive cannon or Augment (since he's inactive and can't perform any sort of actions). However, the avian robot does gain Soundwave's Surge Protection.

Internal Catalyst
Physics

If resource conversions have been successfully researched and you can access that data, you can perform conversions within your own body. (See Resource Conversion, pg. 33.) You can convert Resource points to Energon points, at the ratio allowed by your level of energy research. You gain your Internal Catalyst rating as a bonus to all tests for converting resources internally; each attempt takes about six hours. You can store resources inside of you without harm, which is necessary if you want to convert it internally. Resource points count toward Energon capacity and are considered "dead space" – if you're Mass 7, have 5 Energon and 6 Resources, you're in Energon starvation until you convert those Resource points.

Lock

©; Engineering

Requires a ranged weapon. A successful Scan test allows you to lock onto an enemy within sensor range (including Enhanced Sensors, Enhanced Optics, Radar and Sonar). Once locked on, you can fire at that enemy with no range penalties, as long as it's within maximum weapon range (x5 basic range). Targets will be alerted by internal sensors that you have a lock on them, and can choose to break the lock by confounding your sensors; this requires a Drive or Pilot test (25).

Low Signature

Cap 5; Physics

Low Signature diffuses your Energon signature, making it more difficult to detect or read you. Its rating is added to the targets of Energon signature Scan tests directed at you or that target the area you're in, including Enhanced Sensors and Radar. You can drop the effects of Low Signature temporarily to allow friendly scans.

Magnetism

Physics

You can create and negate magnetic fields, allowing you to manipulate iron, most forms of steel and other magnetic metals (nickel and cobalt). You can lift and levitate things with this asset alone, or use it to augment your own lifting ability by creating magnetic fields under what you're lifting. Base effect: Mass 2 (which is a measure of how much material you can lift or affect, and doesn't affect your actual Mass), Mobility (a measure of how skillfully you can control items), range 10 yards. The asset's rating is divided between strength of the magnetic field you can create or suppress (+2 Mass per point invested), Mobility (+1 per point invested), and the range of the effect (+10 yards per point invested).

There are numerous applications of Magnetism. You can lift or toss things with it, obviously. Launching a cloud of steel ingots or a one-ton car chassis also can inflict considerable damage: Make a Targeting test against the target's Defense, using the Mobility granted by this asset (rather than your true Mobility), with the base damage of the attack equal to the Mass of material you're tossing (and attack success levels roll into more damage). Levitation through Magnetism is possible, assuming you generate a field strong enough to support your Mass (see below), with this asset's Mobility replacing your own during liftoff. You can even rip magnetic materials apart – this costs Energon and is considered inefficient, yet it can be devastating. Spend 1 Energon per attack: Your attack is automatically hits a single target within half normal range for Magnetism, and its Mass is inflicted as Structure damage (no attack test and so no extra damage from that); however, neither Armor nor Resistance protects against this damage. Magnetism doesn't affect Cybertronian CPUs, circuitry and media... so while Terran hard drives hate you, you can't memory wipe other Transformers by use of this asset.

Important note: Transformers' bodies are composed of almost entirely of metal (with the exceptions of the bioengineered and those that have replaced much of their bodies with synthetics), but most of those metals aren't affected by magnetism. As a rule of thumb, about a third of a given robot's Mass (rounded down) will be vulnerable to magnetic fields. This means you must exert about three times as much Mass via Magnetism as a Cybertronian's Mass to lift him (i.e., Magnetism 3 gives you the ability to lift 6 Mass of magnetic metal, or a Transformer of Mass 2 or lower). Earth vehicles and machinery have a much higher iron/magnetic steel ratio than this (about half to two thirds their Mass), and certain ferrous structures like scaffolding and train tracks are subject to the full force of Magnetism.

Windcharger (G1) has powerful ferro-cobalt magnets located in his arms and chest, which create powerful magnetic fields. Magnetism 7: Mass 8, Mobility 4, range 20 yards. He can control tons of ferrous metal or magnetic metal parts at a time, with some skill.

Mass Shift

©; 1E; Physics

This asset allows you to transform into a smaller or larger form by displacing your Mass into subspace or drawing from it to become larger. You can be as small as Mass 0, but you can never expand to a Mass more than two points higher than your true base Mass or 15 (whichever is higher).

Mass Shift is always assigned to a specific form that's not your base robot mode (it's not eligible for package deals), and must be brought separately if you have multiple alternate forms that have different Mass ratings. The Mass Shift asset associated with a form has a specific Mass it permits you to assume, and doesn't allow you to assume Mass ratings outside that. If you can assume a variety of sizes in an alternate form (like Megatron becoming a robot-sized gun or a human-sized gun), you must buy the Mass Shift asset separately for those different Mass ratings. You can opt not to shrink or expand when you transform (and save yourself a little Energon), but if you do choose to activate Mass Shift you can only become the assigned Mass.

When you transform into a form with Mass Shift, you temporarily adopt the Mass rating of that form. Your Armor, Structure, weight, Mobility caps and other traits reliant on Mass are prone to change. (This means those in diminutive forms are quite vulnerable to damage.) However, your Energon capacity and traits remain the same as your core form, and don't change. Mass Shift permanently reduces your Energon recovery by 1, and costs 1 Energon whenever you activate that asset; changing back to your "normal-sized" robot form doesn't cost an Energon point. Damage done in one form transfers as a rough percentage to others, if you're at half Structure in one form you'll be at half Structure in all your forms.

(*Game designer's commentary:* I was reluctant to add Mass Shift to the list. While it's not "imbalanced" it is a fairly fantastic effect, more appropriate for the cartoon and comic physics than the continuity presented in the Bay movies or a realistic setting. But it's more important that your game vision be realized than mine, and it's easier for you to pare down the list than have to write house rules to add what I didn't. Controllers are free to categorically disallow this asset if they're trying to enforce a certain feel or degree of realism in their games.)

Shockwave (G1) (Mass 8) has found himself on Earth, and his Mass 1 Decepticon-sized plasma blaster form won't cut it here. He chooses an unobtrusive form that offers mobility; a Mass 4 purple Mazda RX-8. (Sweet!) He has the Mass Shift asset twice, once for his gun form and once for his car form. He can't choose to be Mass 4 in gun mode, or a Mass 1 car; those forms' sizes are already "locked." Shockwave could choose to not activate his Mass Shift asset and assume a Mass 8 version of either form, though a car that big isn't fooling anyone. His Mass remains 8 for Energon purposes, no matter how big he is.

Melee Attack
Taken per weapon or attack mode; Material Science

Add your rating in this asset to your [Mass ÷ 2] when determining the base kinetic damage you inflict to opponents in close combat; extra success adds to damage. Melee weapons include swords, bladed chains, huge claws and pneumatic pistons.

Weapon attacks are usually basic actions (unless stated otherwise) and follow the normal rules for attacks.

• **Armor Piercing:** Your attack ignores 2 points of Armor; however, this effect doesn't add to damage.

• **Energy Attack:** Your weapon or implement heats up, carries an electrical current or otherwise delivers energy damage. Half the damage done is kinetic, the other half energy (rounding favors kinetic); energy damage is subject to reduction by Resistance, but not Armor.

• **Grapple:** You gain a +3 bonus to all grapple tests with this weapon.

• **Knockback:** When performing the knockback maneuver, your foe's Mass is considered 1 lower.

• **Reach:** You have a long weapon, such as razor chains or a polearm, and can strike enemies before they close on you. When engaged in close combat with a foe, you gain a +3 initiative bonus. Reach doesn't help you against opponents wielding ranged weapons.

• **Rend:** If your attack test indicates you inflict [3 + victim's Mass] in damage or more, you can instead reduce your damage by 5 and rip away one point of Armor from your foe instead. The victim loses that Armor value until repaired. Someone with no remaining Armor can't be targeted by this effect. Armor damage can be repaired with Energon like normal damage. This attack is a full action.

Timber (HB) has diamond-tipped bladed chains that he uses to entrap his Decepticon foes and then rip them to screaming pieces. Melee Attack 4: damage 6 (Mass 4); Grapple, Reach, Rend.

Rumble (G1) has pneumatic piston-driven piledrivers installed in his arms. His close combat strategy is to run up and punch enemies to scrap; little finesse, but potent effect. Melee attack 4: damage 5 (Mass 2); Knockback.

Missile
Taken per weapon or attack mode; (1E); Engineering

Missiles, personal rockets and grenade launchers are popular. They cause significant damage and have superior range. But they lack the finesse other ranged weapons do – you can hit foes, but not always control exactly where. Base effect: Damage 3, range 2000 yds. Missile rating is divided between damage (+2 per point invested) and range (+1000 yds. per point invested). Half the damage done by missiles is energy damage, the other half kinetic (rounding favors energy); kinetic damage is subject to Armor reduction, while energy is reduced by Resistance. Only half your attack success (round down) adds to missile damage. Missiles have a damage radius equal to [base damage x 5 yards], reduced for distance. Each missile takes 1 Energon and several minutes to create; thus, it's wise for missiles to be stockpiled ahead of time for use.

Weapon attacks are usually basic actions (unless stated otherwise) and follow the normal rules for attacks.

• **Armor Piercing:** Your missiles ignore 2 points of Armor; this effect doesn't add to damage.

• **Guided Missile:** Requires Lock. Once locked onto a target with Lock, you can fire missiles at it with no range penalties as long as it's within sensor range. Range is now considered equal to sensor range.

• **Heat Seekers:** The missile automatically treats the nearest significant heat source as if you had used Lock on that target; Cybertronians normally don't give off the sort of heat that attracts these missiles, but they will if they use thrusters, fire energy weapons or produce a lot of friction.

• **Mode Conversion:** You can reprogram your missiles to gain range at the cost of damage or vice-versa: You can re-invest up to half your Missile asset rating (rounded up) among damage and range. (So if you have Missile 4, you can swap two points of range for damage.) This requires a basic action and a point of Energon. A missile always returns to its base settings if not fired after being reprogrammed.

• **Multitargeting:** You can launch missiles at multiple foes within your line of fire. Resolve each attack separately with a -1 penalty to your attack tests; this counts as one full action. Multitargeting can't be used with Lock, Guided Missile or Scope.

• **Penetration:** Your missiles ignore 2 points of Resistance; however, this effect doesn't add to damage.

• **Scope:** Aimed shots gain an additional +2 attack test bonus. Aimed shots count as full actions.

• **Salvo:** You can unload several missiles at once at a single foe or group of adjacent ones, increasing your chance to hit enemies. When attacking a target or tight cluster of them, add a +1 bonus to your attack test for each missile fired and to damage – overlapping blasts are hard to avoid and can inflict substantial injury; the maximum attack/damage bonus you can gain is +5. This is a great way to create massive damage, but mind the Energon expense of missile replacement. This is a full action.

Ironhide's (LA) stinger missiles don't do as much damage as some of his other armaments, but are accurate and difficult to avoid. Missile 4: damage 7, 3000 yds.; Multitargeting, Salvo.

Skywarp (G1) is less in-your-face than some other Transformers, and enjoys delivering his explosive-tipped guided missiles at long range… then getting the blazes out of there if his enemies counterattack. Missile 5: damage 5, range 6000 yds; Guided Missile, Penetration.

MUNITION
Taken per type of munition; (1E); Engineering

Munitions are explosive devices that detonate when triggered. This trigger can be pressure, impact, time, remote detonation, even light level. You choose what the device's triggers when you set it, which you can calibrate precisely with an Engineering test (18) – for instance, a pressure trigger can be set to ignore anything under or over a certain weight. When the trigger occurs, the munition explodes. Land mines are one example of explosives, as are those used in demolitions. Explosive munitions can be set on the ground, attached to a surface, placed in the water, and so on. Another is bombs, dropped from above. Characters that see set explosives can simply choose not to get near them; however, a Mobility test (using Drive or Pilot if appropriate) may be necessary to avoid munitions (like dodging a mine while speeding on the surface of the water), with the target set by the Controller. Base effect: Energy damage 4, with rating adding +2 damage per point invested. The explosive's blast radius is its [base damage x 5] in yards, and damage is reduced for distance (the Controller scales damage down proportionally for distant targets). Only the munition's base damage is done when it explodes; when attack tests are made, success levels don't add to damage. Each explosive device requires 1 Energon and several minutes to create.

Hiding munitions requires several minutes and that you (the creator) make an Intellect + Stealth test. Others must make a Scan test against your test result to detect the device; failing this test doesn't in itself trigger the munition, but (for example) someone walking over a mine because they didn't see it would certainly be bad for him.

Using an explosive as a grenade requires you attack with it: This is a Targeting test, and you can throw it [Mass x 50] yards. Dropping them requires the same test, with a target based on elevation: Use Defense for moving targets, and 15 for a house-sized target, at an elevation of 500 ft – add 1 to the target for each 100 ft. increase in elevation. A failed test may still hit somewhat, if the explosive lands close enough to catch the target in the blast radius; this is up to the Controller. The trigger is typically impact.

• **Burrowing:** The munition can hide itself by digging into the ground or structure onto which it's placed. This adds a +3 bonus to Intellect + Stealth tests to hide it.

• **Fragmentation:** The munition damages foes with shrapnel, tiny blades or other objects. Half the damage done is energy, the other half kinetic (rounding favors energy); kinetic damage is subject to reduction by Armor, but not Resistance.

• **Penetration:** Your explosive ignores 2 points of Resistance; however, this effect doesn't add to damage.

• **Proximity:** Your munition has detection proximity equal to its blast radius; when it detects something within that range, it explodes. It has a Scan test bonus equal to your Scan (but it has no actual Intellect or Scan of its own). Proximity-activated explosive munitions can be programmed to ignore you, "friendlies" or non-combatants.

• **Scatter:** The blast radius is [base damage x 10] yards, with damage reduced for distance.

• **Shaped Charge:** You can create charges that apply their energy in a precise way, rather than exploding out and causing massive damage; these have small blast radiuses, if any. Shaped charges are typically used against doors, structures and the like instead of offensively.

Starscream (G1) drops cluster bombs in jet mode, carpet-bombing an area before he descends to finish off his foes. Munition 6: damage 6, blast area 60 yards; Scatter.

Bonecrusher (LA) prefers to be there when his enemies explode into flames, but enjoys leaving behind mines for both humans and Autobots. Munition 4: damage 10, blast radius 50 yards; Burrowing, Fragmentation.

NAUTICS

Engineering

Unlike most Transformers, you don't sink like a stone in water. You can travel on the surface of water at a speed of [Acceleration x 30] mph. Stunts and other maneuvers in your watercraft form require Drive tests, while doing the same in robot mode (including "beast" forms) calls for Athletics tests. Test targets depend on what you're trying to do and how fast you're going, with more outrageous stunts and/or greater speeds increasing the target. Watercraft Mobility on land is 0; robot modes that have the Nautics asset don't suffer this restriction.

• **Amphibious:** You either hover on jets of compressed air, or have retractable wheels; you can travel at half normal speed over any sort of land terrain.

• **Boost (1E):** While at top speed, you can spend a point of Energon to increase your speed by 60 mph. This lasts only three phases, and your Mobility is reduced by 1 during this time (to a minimum Mobility of 1).

• **Submersible:** You can travel at normal speed underwater. (The Sealed Systems asset is strongly recommended.)

Cybershark (BW) is one of just a few oceanic Maximals, and is well-adapted to an aquatic environment in both forms. Robot mode: Nautics 1, 30 mph; Submersible. Hammerhead shark: Nautics 2, 60 mph; Submersible.

QUAKE

(2E); Physics

You can create localized seismic disturbances as concussive force radiates from you. No attack test, as all characters and structures in the area are affected, friend and foe alike; this is a full action. Base effect: Your Mass in kinetic damage, affected area is a circle [Mass x 10] yards wide. Asset rating is divided between damage (+1 per point invested) and range (+10 yds. per point invested). Further, all in the area must make a Mass test (target 15 + damage inflicted) to remain standing; a failed test indicates a fall, inflicting their own Mass in damage. You, of course, don't risk falling from your own quake attack.

The Rumble (G1) Special, coming to a location near you! Quake 7, damage 5 (Mass 2), area 40 yd. radius.

RADAR

Physics

Your radar system broadcasts radio waves and interprets the echo, allowing you to detect all moving objects within a radius or cone. This requires a Scan test. The range is 50 miles of airspace (or open water) per point of rating, though this range is greatly reduced close to the ground. The data gained is based on the Scan success level attained; a success of 1 reveals the positions and altitudes of targets, while greater success can determine air speed, trajectory and even shape. Radar signatures allow use of Lock. Using and maintaining radar are basic actions.

RADIATING BLAST

(2E); Physics (5)

You can release an energy wave that spreads out from you, inflicting energy damage to ground-bound individuals and structures. No attack test is necessary, as anyone and anything in the area is hit – including allies. Base effect: 2 energy damage, 50 yd. circle). Rating is divided between damage (+2 per point invested) and range (+50 yds. per point invested). Each point of extra Energon spent when making a Radiating Blast attack increases damage by 2, up to its base damage. Radiating Blast attacks are full actions.

REINFORCEMENT

Cap = Mass; Material Science

This asset increases your natural Armor value (characters of Mass 1-3 have an inherent Armor rating of 1, and those of Mass 4 or more have Armor 2). Your inherent Armor doesn't count towards your maximum rating in this asset. Armor rating subtracts from most kinetic damage (with the possible exception of falls), but not energy damage. As with other assets, Reinforcement is purchased for a specific form, but half its value (rounded down) is applied to other forms. Reinforcement can never exceed your Mass rating.

Reserves

Cap 5; Physics

Each point in this asset increases your Energon capacity by 2; this benefit applies to all your forms, not individually to each form.

Sealed Systems

©; Engineering

You suffer no ill effects from prolonged exposure to vacuums or immersion in water. This asset applies to all forms.

Shielding

Cap 5; (*E), Physics

You can create a force field immediately around your body, which protects you and all within it from all forms of incoming damage. Only damage from sources outside of your force field is reduced; things within your force field inflict damage normally. Activating and maintaining a shield counts as basic actions and costs 1 Energon. Base effect: 2 is subtracted from damage, force field radiates up to 10 yards from your body. Rating points are divided between increasing the amount of damage reduced by the shield (-2 per point invested) and expanding the maximum area protected by the shield (10 more yards from you). Each Energon point spent beyond the initial cost increasing the damage reduction by 2 or the range by 10 yards, up to -6/+60; this asset's effects persist for one minute but may be activated consecutively. Having Shielding reduces your Energon Recovery by one permanently.

Trailbreaker's (G1) force field taxes his already strained Energon reserves, so he doesn't use it often, but it's saved his alloyed hide (and that of his friends) on more than one occasion. Shield 5: Damage reduction: -8, shield radiates 30 yards from his body.

Siphon

Cap 5; Physics

This attack requires physical contact with a victim (usually necessitating a close attack), after which point drain Energon from your foe; this is a basic action. Base effect: Drain 1 Energon per phase, Energon save target 15. Asset rating is split between the number of Energon points you can drain per attack (equal to points invested) and the resist target for enemy Energon saves (points invested increase save target by +1). A robot targeted by Siphon must make an Energon save against the resist target; a successful save means he keeps all his Energon, while a failed Energon save means you steal Energon from him. Energon in excess of your Energon capacity bleeds off immediately, but even so you can continue sucking the life out of your enemy if you just wanna get punitive with it. Siphon reduces your Energon recovery by 1.

• **Improved Siphon:** You can use siphon to drain any sort of resource, from gasoline to electricity.

Ratbat (G1) is a sneaky little bastard, more devious than Soundwave and greedier than Octane, and prefers to drain Energon directly from helpless or preoccupied Autobots. This strengthens him at the same time it weakens the opposition. Siphon 5: drain 3 points per turn, Energon save target 18.

Sonar

Physics

Sonar is similar to radar, but uses sound instead of radio waves, and so is also effective in water and below the ground. However, it's completely ineffective in a vacuum. You can make a Scan test to detect all objects (or voids) within a radius or cone; the range is 25 miles underwater, five miles in the air, and one mile underground; these scan ranges scale with asset rating (Sonar 2 = 50 miles underwater, Sonar 3 = 75 miles, etc.). The information gained is based on your Scan success level; a success of 1 reveals the positions of targets and objects, while greater success can determine speed, trajectory and shape. Sonar signatures allow use of Lock. Using and maintaining Sonar are basic actions.

Sonic Attack

(1E); Physics

You create a sonic blast in a cone in front of you, like a sonic boom or thunderclap but much more powerful. No attack test is required, as it impacts all characters and structures in the area of effect, friend and foe alike. It shatters glass and rattles structures, bursts human eardrums, can damage or disrupt audio sensors, and even damage less sturdy Transformers. Base effect: 1 point of kinetic damage, affected area is a cone a quarter mile long and one quarter that wide at the base (a little more than 100 yds), with the damage being reduced by half (round down) at the last half of the range. The asset rating is divided between damage (+1 per point invested) and range (another quarter mile per point invested, with a proportionally expanding base). Do note that obstructions will diffuse or stop sound

waves, depending on their density; the range of the sonic attack isn't absolute, simply the maximum range of effect. So a sonic attack aimed at nearby buildings would shatter windows and maybe even crack the mortar, but won't simply pass through unimpeded to the other side.

Sonic damage that gets through Armor will blow out audio sensors, though these can be restored through autorepair in a minute or so; someone aware the attack is coming can avoid this effect by shielding their sensors. Sonic Attacks can be heard for many miles beyond the area of effect.

Sonic Attacks are effective underwater, but not in a vacuum.

• *Blanket Effect* **(2E/3E)***:* Your sonic attack creates a 180 degree area of effect instead of a cone; this is either a 90 degree wedge (which costs 2 Energon) or a 180 degree hemisphere (3 Energon). Everything in that area is fully affected by the sonic attack.

• *Silent Doom* **(1E)***:* By spending an extra Energon you can emit a single sonic attack in either high ultrasonic or low infrasonic ranges (choose one when taking this subasset). The sound is higher or lower than the human range, but it still can be heard by Transformers; due to the unusual frequencies of the attack Armor is reduced by 2 against this attack. This means you can damage or kill people using a sound they can't even hear. Yay.

Thundercracker's (G1) low-frequency sonic booms aren't as precise or deadly as his wing-mounted missiles, but he's good at stunning the opposition for immediate follow-up attacks; his sonic attack is powerful enough to cause fatal internal hemorrhaging in exposed fleshlings, stun smaller Autobots and damage sensitive equipment. Sonic Attack 6: damage 4 (2 beyond half-mile), range one mile; Blanket Effect.

Surge Protection
Cap 5; Physics

Asset rating adds to your Energon saves to avoid the effects of assets like EMP Attack and Siphon, as well as to dysfunction saves. Further, you may spend 1 Energon to increase your save bonus further by +3; this is a reflective action, and the save bonus lasts for one phase. This asset functions for all forms.

Temper
Cap = Mass; Material Science

This asset improves your natural Resistance rating; robots of Mass 1-3 have an inherent Resistance rating of 1, while those of Mass 4 or more have Resistance 2. Your inherent Resistance doesn't count towards your maximum rating in this asset. Resistance subtracts from energy damage, including fire, plasma and lasers, but not from kinetic damage. As with most assets, the benefits granted by Temper applies to a specific form, but half your Temper value (round down) is applied to your other forms. Temper can never exceed your Mass rating.

Toolkit
©; Engineering

You're possessed of specialized equipment that offers a +3 bonus to specific skill tests related to a discipline or theme, assuming those tools can be actively employed. This is a fairly open-ended asset, and is left largely in the hands of the Controller.

Examples: Ratchet's (LA) toolkit includes sensors to diagnose Cybertronians and laser scalpels and sealants to repair them, and he gains the +3 asset bonus to Engineering tests related to this; however, the bonus wouldn't apply to Engineering research for a new weapon or for upgrading an asset. Another is the Constructicon Mixmaster's (G1) chemical engineering kit, which adds a +3 bonus to Chemistry or Material Science tests to create new chemical compounds or substances, though other upgrades or operations don't gain the bonus. Other possible toolkits might offer bonuses to materials salvage, chemical engineering, Energon signature detection, infiltration and the like. In all cases the focus should be narrow and not offer the same range of effects as a skill does, nor offer any benefits that a skill test wouldn't.

Transmission
Physics; requires Communications 3, Computer 1

Transmission increases your broadcast and reception range, granting 10,000 miles per rating point (Transmission 2 = 20,000 mile range); further, spending 1 Energon allows the transmission and reception message across a potentially infinite distance for up to five minutes, though this requires you concentrate on the effect for the entire time (which is a full action). You can also serve as a relay station, keeping members of your faction within your broadcast range in communication with one another (even if this exceeds their personal communications ranges).

• *Code:* You can transmit secret communiques to one or more Cybertronians with a Communications test vs. target 18; coded transmissions aren't broadcast on the faction carrier, and only the intended recipient(s) can receive them (unless the message is hacked via Intercept). This is a full action.

• ***Duplication:*** You can copy another's signal if you've made a successful Scan test to read it (target 20), allowing you to send false messages with a Communications test (target 25). You can imitate either friends or foes, though you have to first successfully use Intercept to do the latter. This is a full action.

• ***Intercept:*** You can listen in on the opposing faction's subspace carrier or messages sent as coded transmissions (Communications test against target 25). This is a full action.

• ***Jam:*** You can stop all enemy communications in the immediate area (Intellect + Communication x 10 miles), communications can't get in or out (Communications test against target 20 for opposing faction, 12 for humans). This is a full action.

• ***Satellite Link:*** If a friendly or controlled satellite is within communications range, you can link to it with a Communications test. You can borrow its "senses" and eavesdrop on its transmissions; this requires a test against 20, or 15 if a physical link can be managed. (Satellites can be hacked, and be made "friendly," through use of the Computer skill.) Establishing the link is a full action, though maintaining it for up to 24 hours is passive.

Soundwave (LA) is the Decepticon communications master, and he keeps his fellows in contact with one another – making him incredibly valuable. However, he very well knows that, and he's able to extort pretty much what he wants from them. Transmission 9 (90,000 mile range); Code, Duplication, Intercept, Jam, Satellite Link.

Warp

(*E); Physics

This powerful asset allows teleportation by creating wormholes in space/time via which you can travel. You cease to be in one place, and within seconds (the next phase) you reappear. This requires an [Intellect + Warp] test. See where you're warping is suggested (which gives you a target of 15), or you should at least be familiar with the area (target 20); areas seen through Enhanced Optics or satellite links count as line of sight. Blind jumps can be made, but are *not* recommended, as it's very possible to hop into an object or terrain feature and destroy oneself instantly. Even when popping into areas with which you're familiar, it's not a bad idea to peek ahead anyway, just in case someone or something is now where you want to be. There's no range for Warp; if you can see or remember it, you can hop there. A test that exceeds 10 allows a successful warp, even if it doesn't exceed the desired target… you end up *somewhere*, ideally close to where you wanted to be, with the margin of error depending on how far below the target you roll and how far you're warping. A near-success for an area you can see might put you within a few miles of your destination, while a test result of 11 for a blind hop from Cuba to Sri Lanka… well, best of luck! Warp is very draining; it reduces Energon recovery by 1 permanently, and it costs Energon equal to half your Mass (rounded up) whenever attempted, successfully or not. Warping is a full action.

Weight Reduction

©; Material Science

You replace metal armor and parts with hard plastics, polymers or other substances, reducing your weight while losing none of your resilience or power. This asset follows special rules. It requires materials (namely that with which you're replacing your metal parts), and the Energon cost is [Mass x 10]. Once Weight Reduction is taken, your effective Mass is decreased by 1 for purposes of Mobility caps, Energon recovery and Energon starvation. Otherwise you're considered your true Mass (including Structure, close combat damage, weight tolerance and Energon capacity and saves). Your effective Mass can't be reduced to less than half your true Mass (rounded up).

If you take Weight Reduction a second time, you must research it all over again. This counts as a new asset, not an upgrade. You can't research Weight Reduction more than twice.

Ultra Magnus (G1) is great warrior, but his huge size (Mass 9) slows him down and is inefficient; that caught up with him in a bad way when the quicker and more mobile Wildrider and Dead End scrapped him in a recent fight. Wheeljack and Ratchet have decided to apply polymer science to Magnus while rebuilding him, swapping out heavy alloy parts for molded composite aerogels and carbon nanotube plates. Once the repairs are completed, Ultra Magnus emerges five tons lighter. He's Mass 9, but his Mobility cap is 4 (up from 3), enters Energon starvation at 7 Energon, and recovers 7 Energon per day (instead of 6). However, Magnus retains the Structure (50), close combat damage (4), lifting power (Mass 9), Energon capacity (19) and Energon save bonus (+9) of a Mass 9 robot.

Later, Ultra Magnus undergoes the process again, enjoying the greater agility and efficiency his previous upgrade offered him. Magnus remains Mass 9, of course, but functions at 7 for Mobility (capped at 5), Energon starvation (at 7 Energon points), and Energon recovery (8 per day). The Autobot can never get any lighter than this, he's lighter and more efficient and not complaining at all.

Systems

Under most circumstances, your Transformer can do what he wants. Driving, walking, talking and the like happen when you say so. No need for game mechanics or die rolls. Most of the time spent playing Transformers will involve this sort of activity, and the systems presented in this chapter will take a back seat to roleplaying.

However, when you're trying to do something that has a chance of failing, trying to act during a stressful situation (such as combat), or when action is involved, mechanics are used to resolve the situation. Rules and die rolls help determine what you can do and the consequences of your actions.

Dice: All you need to play is a single twenty-sided die (1d20). Whenever a test roll is called for, you roll this.

In almost all cases, numeric modifiers are added to tests (more on this later). Simply add the adjustments to the total rolled on the dice. So, a test with a +6 adjustment means your die is rolled and 6 is added to the result. It's always better to roll high. Certain special case rolls may be called for which don't follow this format or aren't tests; these exceptions are explained when they come up.

Rounding: Unless stated otherwise, fractional values are rounded down: If 5 is halved, it becomes 2. But fractions added together may become whole numbers: 3.5 counts as 3, but 3.5 x 2 = 7. When in doubt, the Controller calls how something is rounded.

Tests

The *test* is the foundation of the system, allowing you (the player or Controller) to perform actions and determine a character's success or failure, and degree thereof. *Passive actions* (most of what one does in his day-to-day existence) don't require tests: such things include walking, talking, driving and most other activities. However, *tests* have a chance of failure, no matter how adept you are: these include attacks, transforming during combat, putting together a demolished ally, and detecting ambushes. In such circumstances, a test is made to determine success or failure of an attempt, and (if you succeed) to determine how successful you are. Even passive actions may become tests in certain circumstances; driving on a road is difficult for anyone to screw up, but driving along a narrow ledge would require a test to determine if the you fall.

A test is made by rolling a die (1d20) and applying relevant adjustments to the result of the dice roll. This final result is compared to a target number, and if the result equals or exceeds the target, you succeed. This basic rule is further refined below, but if you understand this basic concept then you understand the game's basics well enough to play.

Adjustments

Adjustments modify the result on the die roll. They apply specifically to you and reflect your capabilities; circumstances that assist or hinder an attempt (like rain, distractions or darkness) adjust the target and not the test.

A positive adjustment (one that adds to a test) is known as a bonus. Bonuses are noted with plus (**+**) sign. A negative one (one that subtracts from a test) is a penalty, and is noted with a minus sign (**-**). So a +5 bonus adds 5 to the die roll, and a -2 subtracts 2 from the roll. When both a bonus and a penalty apply to the same test, they cancel each other with the remainder being the final adjustment: A +5 and a -2 end up as a +3 bonus.

Most tests use an attribute (almost always Intellect or Mobility) plus a skill as adjustments. Figuring out some aspect of fleshling society uses Intellect + Human Culture, while kicking someone is Dexterity + Close Combat. Most tests follow this format. When there's no applicable skill, use the attribute alone and adds no skill. It's very unusual for more than one attribute or skill to add to a test; when in doubt about which trait applies in a given roll, apply the most favorable.

Targets

Targets determine how hard it is to do something. The higher the target is, the more difficult the attempt is, and (as you might guess) the lower the target the easier. The default target for a test is 15; when a specific target isn't listed or given by the Controller, 15 is the target. When a specific target applies to a test, it will often be listed in parentheses. For instance, "Pilot test (18)" means you test against target 18. Specified targets include Defense, and that target is used unless there's a good reason that wouldn't be the case.

A target 15 of indicates an attempt of "average" difficulty, with a reasonable chance of success or failure for the "average" Transformer. A target of 12 is an easy task, while (9) is elementary. (Below this, why bother testing?) Target 18 is a harder than average task, while (21) is difficult; targets can climb higher than this, with those of (30) or more indicating truly epic tasks worthy of the greatest Cybertronian heroes.

Conflicting Targets: Sometimes different targets apply to a roll. In this case, go with the highest target. Any factors that would increase the lower target may apply to the higher one, at the Controller's discretion.

Test Results

When making a test, compare the result to the target. A result under the target indicates a failure; the attempt doesn't succeed. If the test equals or beats the target, your attempt succeeds.

Failure: A failure means the attempt doesn't succeed: The attack misses, the asset doesn't function, or the research attempt fails. If an asset-related test fails, any Energon spent to activate the asset is still lost. Failure can entail whatever is appropriate for the situation. A failed attack test with a firearm means you don't hit but can try again (assuming you're not junked), while a failed Drive on a narrow mountain road probably means you fly off the edge and you get no do-over. A failed research attempt means progress on that asset or discipline has stalled, but you can usually do more research later.

A failure doesn't have to be spectacular or disastrous... unless you roll 1 or you attain a modified test result of 15 or more under the target (for example, a result of 3 or below vs. target 18). In these cases, a *fumble* occurs. Fumbles are bad failures, and are likely to inconvenience or harm you in some way: You drop your weapon, sideswipe a bride trestle and suffer structure damage, or draw an erroneous conclusion while researching a fission reactor. Fumbles won't kill or permanently impair you (in most cases anyway), but they should be dramatic and memorable, even amusing. Of course, in certain situations a simple failure can have the same effect as a fumble, or even have fatal consequences… such as failing to hang onto a cliff face and plummeting hundreds of feet.

Success: Few tests are hit-or-miss, simple success or failure. In most cases, the better you roll the better you do. The amount by which your test result exceeds the target is known as *success level*, *success* for short. The higher the success, the more successful you are. So a success of 2 is a moderate success, and success 4 is a notable one. Tasks often have guidelines for adjudicating success: success adds to damage for attack tests, determines asset effects, and so forth. In cases where rules for success aren't given, Controllers can adjudicate the results of the test, with the rule of thumb that the greater the success the better.

A success of 0 is when you meet the target number but don't exceed it. Your attempt is successful, but you skirt by, perform sub-par, or succeed but with a hitch. You may have to test again to confirm success; a success 0 Athletics attempt means you hang onto the cliff's edge but make no headway, and must try to climb again. If success 0 means there would be no effect at all, then it defaults to success 1. The exceptions to the success-0 rule are contested tests, as all ties go to the defender.

A *critical* occurs when your test succeeds by 10 or more, and is an exceptional degree of success. Often no special rules are needed – attaining such a great number of successes is its own benefit. But in certain cases you gain an additional effect, either one described in the specific rule or awarded off the cuff by the Controller.

Special Tests

Opposed Tests: When you actively resist or oppose what other characters are doing (like wrestling or racing), everyone involved make tests and the results are compared. This is a *contested test*.

If any character fails, he fails while those characters that attain successes succeed.

If all characters fail, none succeed... unless one character is attempting to avoid an effect, in which case you (the defender) win by default.

If two or more characters attain a success result, things get interesting. The one with the highest success wins, but his final success level is reduced by the opposing character's; when three or more characters compete, only the character with the second highest success affects the winner's success. So the victor succeeds, but less than he would have had not the other characters been working against him. All ties go to the defender, or the contenders' efforts cancel out.

Ravage (G1) wants to sneak past Ironhide. His Stealth test success is 6, while the Autobot's Scan success is 4. The feline Decepticon succeeds, attaining a net success of 2 – turning a possible critical into a minor success. So Ironhide remains unaware of Ravage's presence for the time being.

Extended Tests: Some tasks can't be resolved in a single test, and take time and concerted effort. This includes research, building structures, fabricating and hacking enemy Transformer databases. The Controller must decide how many success levels must be garnered before a task is complete; a simple test may require five to ten success levels, while truly daunting ones might require twenty or more. You make multiple tests, and the success level you attain on each test is added to the total from previous tests. Once the required number of success levels is acquired, the effort is successful. If the required success levels aren't attained, the task is either incomplete or a failure (determined by the nature of the task and the Controller's judgment). Controllers must decide how long each task roll takes; time can be measured in phases, minutes, hours, days or even longer increments. You might have the time to make as many tests as you need to achieve the proper success levels, though if you're working against a deadline you won't have that luxury.

Failed tests add no success levels to the task roll, and inflict a -1 penalty to the next test; the penalties from multiple failures cumulate, making the task harder and harder as you're continually frustrated. However, the next successful test negates that penalty. A fumble, however, reduces the number of success levels rolled so far by half; all

subsequent task rolls for the project suffer a -1 penalty (cumulative with any penalties for failures), and any further fumbles ruin the project altogether, forcing you to start over from scratch.

Cooperative Effort: Sometimes working with others can accomplish things more easily than you can by yourself – for instance, information gathering, research and when building things. If the Controller decides that more than one character can work on a project, he may allow them to make extended rolls and pool their successes, as per the rules for extended rolls. Of course, when too many are working on a project, they can get in each others' way and actually hinder progress – as they say, too many engineers spoil the Energon.

Secret Tests: You normally make your own tests, especially when your character is aware of the situation and/or success or failure is obvious. You knows if you attack and miss, fail to clear the chasm while stunt driving or whatever. But there are times your character won't be aware of certain threats, information, hidden clues or whatever. And for suspense purposes the Controller may not want you to know a test is necessary: Once she asks you to make a Scan test, for instance, you might assume there's probably something to be seen or heard. (And a Controller can call for "fakeout tests" only so much before aggravating the players and slowing down the game.)

So the Controller can opt to make secret tests for your character when appropriate, and report the results. (You shouldn't even be aware when she does this.) This are normally done for Intellect tests and related skills. Scan tests are a good example of this; the Controller won't mention a failed test, but she'll let you know if you see the clue, hear movement, etc. If she wants to offer you a clue but not just hand it to you, she may makes a secret Intellect test for you and offer information based on the success of the test.

Of course, clever player that you are, you might assume something is up whenever the Controller starts rolling dice out of the blue. But between the tests she makes in the process of being the narrator, as well as a few false rolls here and there to keep players guessing, secret rolls can be made without giving too much away.

Routine Tasks: Sometimes you can succeed on a test without even having to roll. Someone unfamiliar with computer espionage may not be able to hack very easily, but an expert hacker like Frenzy can do this as a matter of course. While the wannabe hacker can't rely on success all the time, Frenzy breezes through except under the most extreme circumstances (like hacking a highly encrypted Autobot database under a deadline).

If your adjustments for a test (including applicable skill levels, situational modifiers, etc.) exceeds the test's [target -5], you can opt not to roll and assume you automatically succeed on the task. You're treated as if you had achieved a success level of 1; if you want a greater level of success you need to roll for it. Under no circumstances can opposed tests be made routine.

ACTIONS

There are three different types of actions you can take: Basic, full and reflexive. Note that this level of detail is only important during dramatic scenes; during passive scenes actions are just actions.

Basic Action: Basic actions require both intent and effort. These include transforming, attacks, drawing a weapon, active driving or flying, running and using most active assets. Multiple basic actions may be made in a phase (roughly six seconds); see the multiple action rules, below. Most tests in the game are basic actions, though some passive effects (those requiring no tests) fall into this category. Unless specifically stated otherwise, a given action is considered a basic action. A basic action follows normal initiative rules, meaning you can do them when it's your turn in the initiative countdown.

Full Action: A full action follows the rules for a basic action, except that it requires an entire phase to do it. Full actions can never be multiple actions, and basic actions can't be attempted in any phase during which a full action has taken place. Full actions include firing missile salvoes, aimed shots, the full defense option, and activating certain demanding assets like Quake or Warp. One reflexive action may be made in a phase along with a full action.

Reflexive: A reflexive takes no effort and can be done with minimal concentration. This includes saying (or shouting) something brief, dropping an item, making a Scan test, walking, hovering in place or cruising on a stretch of straight road. Reflexives may or may not involve tests, but usually don't. You can perform a single reflexive action per phase when your initiative comes up, or maintain a reflexive effect from the previous phase at the beginning of your phase. Each reflexive action beyond the first one in a phase is treated as a basic action (and follows multiple action rules); this rule doesn't apply to Energon expenditure or ending an asset effect. Spending Energon, stopping an action and dropping an asset effect you activated previously are always reflexive actions, and don't count toward your single free reflexive per phase; you can do these as many times as you need to in a phase, whenever you choose.

Multiple Actions: It's assumed that most characters perform one basic or full action per phase. But you may want to do more than one thing in a phase, like transform into a truck and ram an enemy or fire your gun twice. This is possible, though it reduces your chance of success: Every action past the first on imposes a cumulative -2 penalty to *every test* you make that phase: -2 for two actions, -4 for three actions, and to a maximum of -6 for four actions. No more than four actions can be attempted in a phase, and multiple actions must be announced before the character acts that phase. Note that multiple actions may only be done with basic actions (including extra reflexives), not full actions.

DRAMATIC SYSTEMS

Now that we have grasp of how the basic system works, let's see specific ways it's applied in the game. Both players and Controllers should familiarize themselves with this section, as the following rules cover situations that will probably come up often in **Transformers** games.

CALCULATION

In the "brain" of each Cybertronian robot is a processor far beyond Earth's most powerful supercomputers. You can solve any sort of mathematical problem, from basic addition to strings of quantum physic formulae, in less than a second. Note that this doesn't translate to actual intelligence or reasoning ability, which is covered by Intellect; sentience, consciousness and emotions take up an enormous amount of a Cybertronian CPU's processing power. This is why mere fleshlings are intellectually on par with robots – the latter can't devote all their brainpower to outthinking people on *every* level!

COMMUNICATION

All Transformers have a subspace broadcast/reception range of about 100 miles. You can freely access your faction's subspace carrier waves; Autobots and Decepticons each have their own frequencies. You can access all radio frequencies, digital transmissions, and other human communication mediums, and human encryption or carrier messages are very simple for your advanced computerized brain to crack (Computer test vs. 12, or 15 for the high-security stuff). The Transmission asset and its subassets offer more advanced communication capabilities (pg. 25).

ENERGY SIGNATURES

Each Transformer and functioning Cybertronian device gives off an Energon signature. This harmless radiation is a side effect of the Energon they consume and employ, and is as unavoidable as a person emitting carbon dioxide and body heat. These signatures can be detected by those that look for them. They vary between types of technological devices (so a Transformer registers as something different than a generator or plasma rifle), and even individual Cybertronians – though that latter distinction is fine, and only someone with sensitive sensors can tell Starscream's emissions from Skywarp's.

Both Transformers and other technology are referred to as mechanisms, devices and the like in this section. Yeah, your character is something more than a generator (just like you're something more than a tree), but ultimately they're all mechanical devices and are covered equally by the energy signature rules.

Detecting and Interpreting Signatures: You can make a Scan test to detect Energon signatures within normal sensor range, which is a 100-yard radius from you. One test is allowed every minute, which is a basic action. The base target is 20. As you might assume, big things are easier to detect than small ones: Subtract mechanisms' Mass from your base target to detect them. Further, if a subject is actively spending Energon the target to detect him is reduced by 3. It's possible to detect some things in sensor range and not others, based on the results of your test. Devices that are completely inactive, like those with no power supplies or very damaged, won't show up on scans.

Other than just detecting things of Cybertronian origin, your sensors can also interpret Energon signatures and offer information about what you're reading. (Of course, you have to know something is there to read it.). This requires a Scan test (18) on a single target. The data you garner depends on your success. A basic success tells you the item's basic nature and function (useful for telling if something is a robot in disguise, among other things). Success 3 gives you more detailed info, such as how efficiently the device processes Energon, the presence and general extent of Structure damage, and details on its function (what sort of energy rifle you're looking at). A success of 5 gives you the precise signature of the subject, its Energon "fingerprint"; henceforth you'll recognize that particular Transformer or item whenever you pick it up on a detection Scan.

The Enhanced Sensors asset Energon Sensitivity (pg. 17) improves these capabilities.

Avoiding Detection: It's possible to foil sensor detection and reading attempts, though you must power down your systems and reduce your Energon emissions. You enter a voluntary form of Energon starvation, with your Mobility reduced to 1. However, you increase scan targets against you by 3. See the Energon section, pg., 5 for more on Energon, powering down and related matters.

FALLING

When giant robots fall, they hit hard. You suffer your Mass in Structure damage every 100 feet fallen (round distances *up* to the nearest 100), with the final damage reduced by Armor; terminal velocity is reached after about 1000 feet, so maximum fall damage is [Mass x 10]. A Mobility + Athletics test (target [15 + Mass]) allows you to reduce fall damage by the success attained.

Hacking

Hacking is either a piece of cake or difficult, depending on what you're trying to hack. Human computers and databases are easy. Augmented by your Cybertronian capabilities, you're able to find any information you want instantly, and break into pretty much any account or database regardless of encryption and alter or corrupt the data; a successful Computer test (target 8-10) will usually get you what you want. Extremely high-end encryption (like U.S. Government) might slow you down, but your Computer tests will never rise above 15 and a success level of 5 is all you need.

Cybertronian technology is considerably more difficult to crack, be it a database or a confiscated missile launcher's targeting software. The target is usually around 20 (and is rarely less), as anything encrypted is designed to keep snoops like you out. You're programmed with passwords and access codes to your faction's databases, though the opposition's toys are always well-defended. However, you may lack security clearance for certain data within your own faction, while some things may be "friendly" but aren't public access; a good example are an ally's devices or personal journal logs. In this case, you're treated as an unauthorized user and you must hack it if you want to access it. The success level you must accrue while hacking depends on what you want to do and to what extent; just getting a bit of data might be 5 success levels, while reprogramming a computer to lock out former friendlies and to only recognize you should require a success of at least 15. ("Hey Prime, why is Teletran 1 firing at us?!") This applies to basic computers and devices, which anyone with access to a terminal can attempt to hack; however, you can't hack other Transformers or sentient machines without the Cyonics asset (pg. 13).

Heat and Cold

As a Cybertronian, you're pretty well immune to all but the most extreme conditions. Only fires of 2000 degrees Fahrenheit or more have a chance of scratching you, while the freezing cold of Antarctic nights, vacuums, the deep sea and even radioactive wastelands are no problem. You might suffer effects from prolonged exposure to such hazardous environments and elements if you don't have Sealed Systems, however, ranging from dysfunctions to actual Structure damage.

Passengers and Cargo

A Transformer can carry an amount equal to half his Mass (rounded up) with no maneuverability reduction; this can be cargo, robot or human passengers, attachments or whatever. So it doesn't slow Autobots down to have humans sitting behind the wheel, for example, while Optimus is fine dragging a trailer behind him. However, Mass in excess of this limit reduces Mobility by half (round up), and loads equal to your Mass reduce Mobility to 1. Excessive loads also likely add to your own Mass. You can't carry or haul anything that exceeds your Mass.

Physical Feats

While technically a physical activity, Transformations are covered on pg. 34.

Climbing: You can make an Athletic test to climb slowly, at about half walking speed. The target of the test is based on the grade, and how hard and smooth the surface is. A cliff at a 45-degree angle would be target 15 to scale, while a vertical ascent up the side of a building is target 20. A surface too hard for you to dig into easily (like a steel wall) would increase the target by at least 5.

Leaping or Ramping: You can make a running jump in robot mode, or ramp off something while in a surface vehicle form, a distance equal your [Mass + Acceleration x 10]; this is your base jump increment. (If you don't have Acceleration in your current form, and/or you're making a standing jump, then just use Mass.) Trying to jump further than this requires an Athletics or Drive test (the skill determined by your form) (target = [15 + Mass]), with [success level x 10] being added to your base jump increment. However, this is risky, because if this test fails you only cover half your base increment and probably land poorly. Even successful leaps and stunts will probably result in some amount of Structure damage, though only a few points (hard landings inflict half the damage of a fall of the same distance, rounded down). The Hop asset increases the above x 10 multipliers by a factor of 10 each time it's taken, and reduces damage from controlled leaps, ramps or falls by twice its rating.

Autobot Timber (HB) has Mass 4, Mobility 6 and Athletics 4; he also has Acceleration 2 in wolf form. He can make a 60-ft. ([Mass 4 + Acceleration 2] x 10) running leap without having to roll. If he wants to exceed this, he can attempt an Athletics test (+10 bonus vs. target 19 [15 + Mass 4]), multiply the success level by 10 and add it to 60' to get his final distance. If Timber upgrades to Hop 2, the relevant multipliers become 30' – his base jump increment becomes 180', a standing jump is 120', and the success level of his Athletics test is multiplied by 30. Further, 4 Structure (Hop x 2) is subtracted from landing damage, as well as other falls if he manages to land on his feet.

Flight: If you have the Flight upgrade for one or more forms, you can fly. Movement in the air takes place in three dimensions, allowing for a variety of strategies and positions and granting a huge advantage over land-bound opponents. It's also a great way to travel, as one can fly around or over obstructions. For dogfights, the relative maneuverability of aircraft forms might become relevant. Those with the VTOL flight asset can turn on a dime and

have excellent agility, though must move slowly to gain the advantage. Those without VTOL flight ability must spend an entire phase to make a 180-degree turn; this is a full action, though a basic action can be spent turning if the turn is done in two phases. Turning while traveling at supersonic speeds is even more difficult, and it takes several phases to turn around.

Land Movement: This isn't a strategic wargame or dungeon crawl where emphasis is placed on positioning, troop movement and the like, so exactly how far you can move on foot in a phase is usually unimportant. Rule of thumb: During an encounter or situation, everyone should be wherever it's dramatically convenient. This is inexact but has the advantage of being quick and play-friendly. For players and Controllers that want to track movement more precisely, assume your Transformer walks a number of feet per phase equal to [Mass + Athletics] x 10 and can run five times that speed. Running can be maintained indefinitely, but vehicle forms are a much better way to travel.

If you want to move more than a few steps during combat, treat this as a basic action – meaning you must perform multiple actions if you want to perform another basic action (with a limit of one other action).

Swimming: Swimming follows the rules for flight, except that it's underwater. Unless you have some sort of rocket propulsion or you're in a buoyant form (like a boat), you must make a [Mobility + Athletics] test (15) to stay afloat. It's a good idea to have sealed systems, as prolonged exposure can cause assets to short out (and force a dysfunction save).

RESEARCH

Research is important, as it allows Transformers to make technological progress. Evolution doesn't happen naturally for them, they must evolve themselves and build their innovations into their bodies and circuitry. Research is devoted to a specific discipline, usually scientific, toward a specific advancement: For example, researching the Warp asset, or increasing solar energy to Energon conversion efficiency. There's no "general" research that produces useful results.

Research involves an extended skill test; other characters with that skill can participate in the research (per cooperative test rules on pg. 29). Once you attain the needed success level, the desired advancement is successfully researched: Warp becomes available for building into yourself or others, solar energy produces more Energon than before, and so on. Generally, each roll represents a week of research (cooperative efforts are tracked simultaneously; two Transformers each rolling once represents one week, not two); Controllers are free to alter units of time.

The skills that support research, and the sort of things they can offer, follow below. Listed in parentheses is the recommended success level needed to "unlock" the advancement; Controllers are free to adjust this number up or down, or to use that as a benchmark for similar innovations. Note that subassets always use the success requirement of the core asset, and the core asset must be learned first; Advanced Division would take 15 to unlock, just like Division did when you researched it before.

Biology: Resources: Bio-energy (20). Though an unpopular discipline with Cybertronians, Biology has some remarkably useful applications. It dovetails nicely with Chemistry and Material Science in creating new chemical compounds and organic materials, and Engineering for cybernetic organisms. It's also possible, but difficult, to draw Energon from biological processes.

Chemistry: *Resources:* fossil fuels (10), natural gas (10). Chemistry is popular for Transformers that want to convert oil, gasoline and other petrochemical into usable Energon. It's also the means by which they create acids, bases, chemistry reagents and the like.

Computer: Computer research can be used to check databases, create programming languages, rewrite code and improve AI.

Engineering: The science most widely practiced by Transformers, Engineering has medical and automotive purposes beyond the obvious tech angle. Constant research is being done in to refine and advance themselves, but progress is rare; Transformers long ago reached a technological plateau of sorts, not halting advancement but slowing it considerably. Perhaps innovations uncovered on Earth can jump-start Cybertronian evolution…

Knowledge: Don't underestimate how useful knowing stuff can be. Sure, it's unlikely new technologies or assets will come from delving into academic disciplines, but by no means does that mean it's a waste of time. For example, certain Transformers (I won't name names here) don't bother learning about humans at all – their cultures, political divisions, motivations or anything else – and are ultimately giving the advantage to those that do. Dedicated students of Cybertronian history and warfare become great generals and leader, while those that don't bother end up as grunts. Politics, ecology, even human religion can yield useful information and any may hold the key to scoring a decisive advantage on Terra and beyond.

Material Science: Research in this area creates innovative metals and alloys, with superconductivity, magnetism and other properties. However, even more promising is the array of synthetic materials Transformers have found on Earth: Ceramics, polymers, plastics and other substances unavailable on Cybertron, offering qualities the robots value at a fraction of the weight.

Physics: *Resources:* electricity (10), fission (10), solar power (10). A diverse school of study, physics research covers everything from plasma energy and solar energy to nuclear theory and Energon, even the alteration of space/time. Subspace communication was built on the foundation of this science, along with recent breakthroughs such as short-range teleports.

Resource Conversion

Petroleum products and other energy resources can't be processed by Transformers, but can be converted to Energon if research is devoted to the task. The conversion ratio of resources to Energon is very inefficient at first, and the process must be further researched to attain a better conversion ratio.

Each potential source of energy is rated in Resource points. It takes a certain number of Resource points to equal one point of Energon; the base Resource value of the resource (when conversion is first researched) varies, and depends on the resource. Each successive one-point improvement of this ratio (7 Resource points to 1 Energon, 6 to 1, etc.) requires a benchmark research. The ideal ratio is a 1-for-1 conversion, but the ratio can never be improved past this.

How much of a given resource (in gallons, weight, volts, etc.) equals a point of resource is completely open-ended, and is decided by the Controller.

The research skills, and the resources they apply to, follow below. See the Research rules, directly above.

Biology: bio-energy (10/1).

Chemistry: petroleum and other fossil fuels (7/1), natural gas and propane (7/1), hydrogen (4/1).

Physics: nuclear fission (5/1), electricity (6/1), solar energy (7/1)

Sensory Powers

Transformers are physically very powerful, but some of their most potent advantages come from their sensory capabilities, which are in almost all cases superior to those of human beings and allows them to perceive things no person can. What follows is a description of the sensory abilities most Cybertronians have, though some have senses beyond these (see Enhanced Sensors). All Transformers have the option to reduce their sensitivity at will, preventing light blindness, feeling pain at amputations, or damage from loud noises.

Energon-related senses are covered under Energon Signatures, pg. 30.

Audio: You experience the full range of human hearing, plus can hear well into the infrasonic and ultrasonic ranges; your sensitivity extends from the low frequencies just below an elephant's hearing to the high pitches of dog hearing, and all in between. You're about as good at hearing light sounds as a human, though not any better.

Chemical/Olfactory: You're both a little better and a little worse than fleshlings when it comes to smell. You have an enhanced ability to detect inorganic chemicals, electricity, ozone, smoke, petrochemicals and other fuels, and energy discharges. However, you're scent-blind to organic compounds outside of petroleum.

Energy and Forces: You can detect non-Energon energy forms, and determine gravity and orientation. You can sense magnetism, gravity, electricity, heat, and radiation, and measure them accurately. Transformers use their sensitivity to magnetism to travel on Earth and Cybertron (which also has magnetic poles); see the Navigate skill.

Optical: Your visual range is 25 miles, and you retain full clarity of detail for all but the final five miles or so. Vision extends into the infrared and ultraviolet wavelengths, and you're able to see the full range of color, though humans have a slightly superior ability to distinguish between hue and shades. Optical technology makes optimal use of available light, allowing you to see in near total darkness. Blindness is rarely an issue for you, considering this sensory package (and most Transformers are equipped with lights anyway). However, damage to your optic sensors or other circumstances might blind you, causing you to suffer a -5 penalty to all rolls requiring sight. Further, all basic actions become full actions.

Tactile: This is one area where humans have a distinct advantage. Your tough exoskeleton is composed of alloys and other materials that provide great protection, but it doesn't offer much sensitivity. You can feel significant changes in pressure and temperatures but little beyond that. You immediately register any Structure damage, and that data can be interpreted as "pain" in a Cybertronian context; however, you have the option to dial the sensation down so that it's only an alert in the back of your consciousness processors. This makes you very resistant to torture and discomfort. But the feel of a breeze, the touch of silk, the warmth of a human touch are all lost to you. (At least you can turn into a badass tank or something, though, right?)

Structure

Structure is an abstraction that measures how structurally sound (or "healthy") something is; Structure is applied universally, from Transformers and their equipment to brick building and fleshlings. When something takes damage, that damage is subtracted from its Structure; the more Structure taken away, the more dilapidated and damaged the object appears (and bloody, if the object in question is a human). The bigger something it is, the more damage it can take – and dish out, if it's in a position to do so; Structure is equal to [Mass x 5] +5 (or [Mass +1] x 5).

However, special rules apply for Structure as it applies to characters (like you).

Repairing Damage: You and your equipment don't heal damage naturally over time, but instead must be actively repaired. Lucky, then, that you can infuse your nanotech autorepair mechanisms with Energon, which knit the damage. It cost one point of Energon to restore one point of Structure; you can recover up to your maximum Structure this way. (No amount of Energon will allow you to "pump" Structure above its normal maximum.)

Manual repair is less effective and takes longer, but is less Energon-consuming. You must spend at least fifteen minutes on the attempt and make an Engineering test (20) and at least fifteen minutes; half the success level in structure is restored to whatever or whoever you're fixing. A failure actually inflicts a point of structure damage as you inadvertently foul stuff up, while a fumble probably inflicts more damage and forces a technological subject to dysfunction (no save allowed). Only one test is allowed every 15 minutes, and each successive repair attempt on the same subject in the same day increases the target by 3.

Biologicals: Humans and other organic life only have half the Structure their Mass would normally indicate. "Repairing" humans is very hard unless you have the right skill (Biology); if so, a successful test will only restore a single point of Structure to the patient (or 2, if you attain a success level of 10 or more). Humans that lose all their structure are dead, and can't be fixed. Sucks to be them.

Terran Technology

Humans really are pretty primitive. You're able to immediately gasp the details of anything they've created with a simple Scan test (target 10). You can memorize every function and capability of a human machine, for instance (which you do before you try to mimic that form), as well as memorize building layouts or determine what a given object is made from. This allows you to immediately operate pretty much any electronic or mechanical device you come across, or destroy it – since you gain intimate knowledge of its vulnerabilities as well.

Human computers and databases are easy to hack. Augmented by your Cybertronian capabilities, you're able to find any information you want instantly, and break into pretty much any account or database regardless of encryption and alter or corrupt the data; a successful Computer test (target 8-10) will usually get you what you want. Extremely high-end encryption (like U.S. Government) might slow you down, but your Computer tests will never rise above 15 and a success level of 5 is all you need.

Time

When tracking time becomes important, remember that phases are about six seconds long, give or take a second or two; there will be ten phases per minute. All Transformers have quantum chronometers that can measure time to within one hundred thousandth of a second.

Transforming

The ability to shapeshift is the defining quality of Transformers, what defines them in the minds of us fans – and what makes them so effective. Rules for other forms are covered on page 7. These rules cover transforming itself, something that applies universally regardless of what one turns into.

Most transformations don't require any sort of test; you simply will yourself to do it. However, converting during stressful situations (while fighting, flying, driving, performing stunts and so on) requires a Transform test. The target is [10 + Mass]; transforming requires some effort, and bigger Transformers have a lot more moving parts and components to shift. A failed transform test means you're still in mid-shift (and can perform no actions) until the end of the phase, and it's assumed you finish your conversion by the time your initiative rolls around on the next phase. Transforming is a full action, though a success level of 10 or more allows you change as a basic action. You can spend a point of Energon to perform a near-instant shift as a basic action instead of making a Transform test.

Upgrades & Improvements

Like biological organisms, Transformers evolve, improving over time in response to environment, conflict and other pressures. But Cybertronians must actively build their advances into themselves. This provides them with a much accelerated development compared to us mere organisms. Instead of gaining a desired characteristic over thousands of generations or getting stronger by strenuously working out over months, a Cybertronian can improve himself or even unlock entirely new capabilities in the span of weeks. However, this takes effort and specialized knowledge, and it never happens on its own. A robot that "works out" won't gain Mass or Mobility, and can't spontaneously learn to fly or become better armored.

To reflect this, you must perform upgrades to improve your hardware and assets. It takes time and Energon to rearrange components, rewire processors and the like. One upgrade test is allowed every three days (about two attempts per week), and a player can only upgrade a number of times in a month equal to her Intellect; any upgrade attempts beyond this bear no fruit. (Even mechanical bodies and computerized brains need rest, you know.) Some or all the Energon costs for upgrades can be met from other sources, such as the Energon reserves on base or ship, even

other Transformers. However, robots that freeload excessively aren't regarded well, especially in slim times – and among Decepticons this can be dangerous. There will usually be policies in place restricting how much Energon one can take from faction reserves in a certain time period.

Improving Attributes: Attributes are expensive and difficult to improve: You must attain 10 success levels on an extended Engineering upgrade test to increase an attribute by 1. In many cases you must also have spare parts, components, memory chips and the like to add to your body. Energon points equal to the new attribute rating must be spent each *day* spent upgrading (even on days upgrade tests can't be made). As stated under Mobility, this trait can't be improved beyond your Mass cap.

(A player can use skill points can be to "upgrade" his character's Intellect. Each 10 skill points spent adds 1 to that attribute; this costs no Energon nor takes any appreciable time. This option applies to no other attribute, and reflects the character learning to think better rather than an actual physical upgrade.)

Ultra Magnus (G1) is powerful but not as fast as he could be, and wants to improve his Mobility (which is 3). He performs the Engineering tests himself, and over the course of four tests (about twelve days) he attains the necessary 10 success levels. This cost him 4 Energon per day, or 48 points total. He emerges a quicker robot, ready to take the fight to the Decepticons.

Unlocking and Upgrading Assets: Each asset has a science skill associated with it, which is used in tests to unlock or upgrade that asset. Test targets are usually 18. The player must attain 10 success levels to unlock a new asset (one that he doesn't have at all); the asset is gained at a rating of 1, or just gains it outright if it's a closed asset (in which case no rating applies). Improving an existing asset by 1 requires 5 success levels, but only up to a rating of 5; for ratings 6 and above, it requires 10 success levels per point. An asset can never be improved beyond 10; further, some assets . Remember, an asset a Transformer has in one form can be incorporated into another form at half the normal upgrade success cost (rounded up), up to the original asset rating. Energon points equal to the new asset rating must be spent each day spent upgrading (as with attribute upgrades, this Energon must be spent even on days no tests can be made).

Upgrading Others: Transformers can upgrade each another. To upgrade someone else you must spend the normal time (three days) and effort associated with upgrades, and make the necessary tests. The Energon costs can be paid by you or your subject, or split between you. This takes three days and counts toward the maximum number of upgrade tests you can attempt per month, so means helping out your brother reduces the potential improvements you can perform on yourself. Autobots generally don't mind helping each other out with upgrades (though they don't like being used), but with Decepticons this is almost always a *quid pro quo* arrangement.

Cooperative Upgrades: Tests can be done cooperatively on the same upgrade, making the effort easier and producing quicker results; only one robot can benefit from cooperative upgrades at a time, though characters can take turns upgrading one another with cooperative efforts. No more than three Transformers can participate in this group effort per upgrade. The time intervals between tests, per-month upgrade limits and other rules are the same as individual upgrade attempts. The Energon cost can be paid by any participant or split between them.

Soundwave (G1) decides to pick up Sonic Attack. Not only is the asset appropriate to his moniker, it's an effective attack when facing multiple opponents by himself – something that's been happening with increasing frequency. He and Buzzsaw (one of the few allies Soundwave hasn't back-stabbed) work together on the upgrades. Gaining Sonic Attack at 1 would take just 10 success levels, but Soundwave wants to increase its effectiveness and upgrades to level 3. All told, this asset upgrade takes a success of 20, lots of Energon and a full three weeks to complete. Lucky for Soundwave that he and Buzzsaw have the spare time to perform the upgrades…

Learning Skills: When a character uses a skill in a way that significantly impacts gameplay, make a note of it; the test doesn't have to be successful, necessarily, but it must be an attempt to constructively use the skill during the course of the game. At the end of every game session the player gains one third the robot's Intellect (round down) in points to spend on improving one of those skills; each skill point spent adds 1 to its rating. A skill can only improve by one rating point at a time. Like upgrades, skill points need not be spent when gained; they can be held in reserve until the player wants to spend them.

COMBAT

In fights, things are rarely orderly. It's probably impossible to model realistic combat in a game format (and too much realism isn't fun anyway). However, this game offers a simple and dynamic approximation of that chaos.

COMBAT PROGRESSION

1. Initiative is determined at the beginning of combat; this result is retained for the rest of the fight.

2. Characters act in order of initiative, making attacks or taking other actions. Successful attacks typically inflict damage, with attack success adding to the base damage of the weapon or attack form. Armor, Resistance and other applicable values subtract from the damage taken. Damage is recorded, and/or other attack effects are noted. A

character that loses all his Structure can no longer act. If a Transformer suffers more damage than [5 + Mass] or half his current Structure, or is hit with a particularly successful EMP attack, a dysfunction save must be made.

3. Once all characters have taken their actions in a phase, a new phase begins, with characters acting in order of initiative.

Initiative

Initiative tests determine what order in which you act during combat or dramatic situations. All those involved in a fight make Initiative tests (using the Initiative skill) at the beginning of combat. No target applies to Initiative tests; instead the total result of the test is used as the value. The Transformer with the highest result goes first in the phase, performing his action(s). Then the one with the next highest Initiative result goes next, and so on, with characters acting in descending order of current pools until the one with the lowest Initiative test has gone. Initiative tests are made at the beginning of combat, not at the beginning of each phase; on subsequent phases of the fight combatants keep their original Initiative results.

Delay: You can opt to go later in a phase than your Initiative would indicate, letting you act tactically, but your base Initiative drops by 1 on later phases each time you do this. You can't use delayed actions to interrupt others' actions or act on a specific trigger; that requires a held action.

Held Action: A variation on the delay rules, you can choose to *hold* an action until it's triggered by another action or circumstance. At the beginning of the phase, you announce the trigger event: "I'm attacked," "Optimus transforms," or "The enemy retreats." Your action isn't taken until just as or just before the trigger event occurs. Held actions can be used to interrupt other's actions or act right when the specified even occurs, unlike delayed actions. However, if the specified trigger event doesn't happen, you can't perform that held action and it's wasted. Another's held action can't be used as a trigger for your own.

Attacks and Other Actions

You act in combat in order of Initiative, as described above. Usually (but not always) this is some form of attack, such as firing your gun or swinging at a close enemy. Attacks are made against the victim's Defense, a set target number for attacks.

Types of Attacks: There are a variety of standard attacks a Transformer can perform. Here are the tests you need to make for a certain attack. Assets that assault other Transformers may use different rules; these special cases follow the rules given under the asset.

Ranged Attack (firearm, missiles, grenades): Mobility + Targeting.

Close Attack (punches, swords, uprooted lamppost): Mobility + Close Combat. Close attacks performed while in vehicle mode may use the appropriate "control" skill (Drive or Pilot) in place of Close Combat, if the substitute skill is higher.

Defense: You Defense value is your ability to evade attacks; except in special cases like area effect attacks (which are noted), attacks always use Defense as the target when making attacks against you. Your Defense value is equal to [10 + Mobility + Evasion]. As with close attacks, you can opt to substitute Drive or Pilot in place of Evasion when determining your Defense value.

Note that Defense implies you're maneuvering around, ducking and weaving and otherwise is trying to avoid being hit. If you're hindered so he can't move freely – flanked, pushed into a corner, or fighting while your leg is mangled – you act at half Defense. If you're completely immobilized you have no Defense at all. (This doesn't mean all attacks directed at you are automatic hits, but targets to hit you will be quite low.

Full Defense: You can opt to forgo all other action in the interests of preserving your chassis. You take a full action to add 5 to your Defense for the entirety of that phase. This is a full action: You can't take basic actions during that phase, nor may you opt to perform a full defense action in any phase which you've taken a basic action.

Damage and Other Effects

Unless stated otherwise, a successful attack test adds its success to the base damage done by that attack. For instance, a success of 3 made with an attack with a base damage of 5 inflicts 8 damage, up to 10 points above the base damage of the attack. This amount (minus Armor, Resistance and/or other applicable values or adjustments) is subtracted from the victim's Structure; for all purposes, including determining dysfunction, damage always takes into account reduction from Armor, Resistance and other sources.

Ironhide (LA) is Mass 6 and has Armor 6. A kinetic attack that inflicts 13 damage only inflicts 7 Structure to him after Armor, and so won't force a dysfunction save. But an 18 damage attack could cause a dysfunction, since it does 12 damage after Armor which exceeds his [Mass +5] (11).

Armor: This value subtracts directly from kinetic damage, such as bullets, titanium claws and blunt impact. A damage result of less than 0 (zero) means the attack bounces off the victim's armor plating and does no damage at all. Armor doesn't protect against energy damage or EMP attacks.

Resistance: This value functions like armor, except that it is subtracted from energy damage instead of kinetic damage. Energy damage includes fire, lasers, electricity, plasma and even extreme cold. Resistance doesn't reduce kinetic damage, and doesn't protect against EMP attacks (which assault circuitry and don't affect Structure).

Dysfunction: Transformers are sturdier than Terran machinery, but not invulnerable. Like any mechanism, if you take enough abuse you'll break down or perform poorly. When you suffer your [Mass + 5] in Structure damage *or* lose half or more of your current Structure in a single attack (adjusted damage), you must make a Dysfunction save: This is an Intellect test (15), and the Surge Protection asset adds its rating to the save; no skill applies to this roll. A successful save indicates you continue functioning normally, while a failed save means something goes wrong. Dysfunction can take many forms, and the Controller is free to adjudicate the specifics based on circumstance and what's dramatically appropriate. If he'd rather determine randomly, he can roll 1d20 on the table below:

1-2	Rendered inoperable for several phases; has a 25% chance (15 or better on d20 roll) to reactivate.
3-4	All Transform tests suffer a -5 penalty for duration of combat; any Transform test result under 5 indicates character is form-locked and can't transform at all.
5-6	An internal short circuit inflicts one point of Structure damage each phase; spending a point of Energon will repair the short and arrest the damage, but otherwise short damage is taken for duration of combat.
7-8	Reactor suffers a hiccup, and the Transformer can't access his Energon for duration of combat. This means certain assets become inaccessible, and repairing damage is impossible.
9-10	Reactor leak: 1 Energon is lost per phase for duration of combat, to a minimum of 1.
11-12	Partial reactor explosion: Half current Energon (rounded down) is lost immediately, with the Cybertronian and all within 25' of him taking the expelled Energon in damage!
13-14	A type of sensors (i.e., sight, hearing, touch, energy sensitivity) is offline for duration of fight.
15-16	Communications are down for duration of combat.
17-18	A weapon or other asset activates and deactivates at random for the rest of the combat; the asset has a 50-50 chance of activating or not, and the character (or player) has no control over this.
19-20	Leg, axle or equilibrium damage; Mobility is halved (round up) for duration of combat.

Human Characters

Humans can (and should) play important roles in **Transformers** games, but are inadequately represented by the rules presented. The problem is one of scale. Attributes are meant to measure Cybertronian capabilities, as this game features such characters. The Mass differences between a weight lifter and an elderly woman, for example, are moot to a ten-ton robot. Any system that would allow realistic quantification of human abilities requires a far finer statistical scale, little of which would be used in most **Transformers** games.

This doesn't mean humans can't be portrayed. In fact, people inevitably appear as allies and antagonists in most series. All humans default to Mass 1, and their Structure is halved (round up, which comes out to 3), while unarmed damage has a base damage of 0: Flesh and bone are weak against metal. Humans have no assets or Energon traits. Obviously, there's no realistic way for fleshlings to trade blows with big robots and not get smeared; while not necessarily helpless, people should probably stay out of the way when the serious fights start. Human Intellect and Mobility average around 3-4, but can go as high as 10, and generally function for humans like they do for robots.

Humans have skills too, though they apply differently. Someone with Drive 4 can drive a car well, but unlike a robot with that skill, she requires a vehicle to drive. Fleshlings aren't familiar with Cybertronian technology (unless there's a *very* good justification for them to be), and can't apply their skills in that regard: An engineer can apply her Engineering skill to Earth machines, but wouldn't make heads or tails of an Energon processor. Scan permits only basic perception, like sight and smell. Controllers should use common sense to determine what people can and can't do, using real-life capabilities as a guideline.

Character Creation: 12 points to spread between human characters' Intellect and Mobility, and skill points equal to [Intellect x 2] to distribute among appropriate skills. Mass, of course, is stuck at 1.

Improvement: Humans can't upgrade themselves or be upgraded (unless cybernetics are brought into play, which is a whole other ball of wax). However, they can learn and train. They gain one third Intellect (round down) in skill points per episode, like Cybertronians. They can use these points to increase skill and Intellect, but (unlike robots) can also improve Mobility with skill points.

Vehicles: When controlling a vehicle or craft of some sort, a human retains her Intellect and skills, but uses the machine's Mobility, Mass and assets. (This is also true of robots piloting craft.) Machines level the playing field somewhat: a souped-up car, news copter, military vehicle or other machine offers players the possibility of playing humans in **Transformers** games, *ala* that Witwicky kid.

Equipment: Humans can gain benefits from tools. One wielding a big melee weapon, like a sledgehammer, could do up to a base 3 damage with it. Human firearms are rarely up to the task of taking on Transformers, but LAW

rockets and grenades sting a good bit more. Heavy-duty body armor (like full SWAT gear with riot shield or military grade protection) provides a single point of Armor and Resistance, but that's it.

Cyborg Characters

A cyborg is a human or other humanoid augmented by Cybertronian components fully integrated into her body. Cyborgs conform to the rules for humans (including character creation) except as follows. A cybernetically augmented organism is more durable than normal fleshlings: Structure and close damage aren't halved, and are equal to that of a Mass 1 robot. Basic cyborgs can have up to two points of assets, appropriate for what they are. They don't process Energon, so can't have assets that relate to Energon (like Efficiency or Reserves), cost Energon points (like EMP Attack or Quake) or reduce Energon recovery (like Flight or Magnetism). They can't transform or make radical alterations to their bodies (so Gestalt or Weight Reduction are out). And finally, some things just don't make sense for Cyborgs to have: Biograft is just redundant, for example. The Controller is free to nay-say anything that doesn't fit, since in all likelihood he'll be the one creating and playing the cyborg (though they have potential as PCs).

Binary Symbiotes

Binary symbiotes are cyborgs are binary-bound to a Transformer partner; see the Binary Symbiote asset, pg. 12. The cyborg is a separate character from the host robot, created and played by the Controller, which conforms to the rules for cyborgs except as follows. All symbiotes have the Integrate asset, as well as two points of assets. However, the range of assets the cyborg can possess is greatly expanded, as her assets are "donated" to the host robot rather than used on her behalf. The particular way the binary symbiote integrates with her Transformer partner usually offers clues to the assets she offers: One that becomes or combines with a weapon will likely offer Ballistic Attack, Energy Attack or the like; while a symbiote that hooks into the engine might offer Efficiency, Energon Surge or Augment; the classic "Headmaster" style cyborg might offer Enhanced Sensors, Alacrity or Lock. Some donated assets don't make sense for symbiotes, like Reinforcement or Weight Reduction; as always, the Controller is free to accept input but has the final say on what a symbiote can offer.

It's important to remember that binary symbiotes are individuals with their own motivations, feelings and desires. They don't exist as mere extensions of the Cybertronian. Attempts to get around "the problem of free will" with brainwashing, frontal lobotomies and death threats lead to far less effective symbiotes. Interaction between the cyborg and her host Transformer can actually make gameplay more interesting – especially if the partners influence one another's personalities and perspectives. The Transformer character should always be the dominant partner; the controller shouldn't use cyborgs to compete with players for control over their characters. But simply dismissing the symbiote altogether does the game an equal disservice.

Animals

Animals won't play a very big role in most games (except for those based on the Beast Wars series). If a Controller wants to stat out critters for his games, though, it's easy enough to do so. Like hominids, most animals can't compete with robots – even the meanest dog is no opposition for robots wielding plasma grenades! But animals like elephants, rhinoceroses, whales and other massive animals can present a challenge for a lone robot. Such creatures have Mass ratings appropriate to the force they can bring to bear; however, Structure and unarmed damage are halved (though bull elephant tusks or rhino horns should inflict full damage). Mobility reflects the animal's natural speed and agility, though this attribute is typically low in creatures big enough to threaten Cybertronians. Intellect is never higher than 1 or 2. Limited assets are possible (with a rating no more than 2), like Acceleration to represent high running speeds, or Melee Attack for horns. Animals will rarely have skills beyond Athletics, Close Combat, Evasion and Scan (non-electronic senses only).

Controller Chapter

This chapter deals with information pertinent to Controllers, the person running the game; while the rest of this netbook is written for player consumption, what follows is addressed to the Controller. Nothing here is off limits to player eyes, but most of it's not going to be that useful to you unless you plan to run games of your own.

Running Games

Running a game is a special responsibility. As a Controller, you need a good grasp of the game rules, imagination, and the ability to convey the characters and setting. Improvisation, good memory and acting skills are also valuable qualities. You have more power than any other participant in the game, but that must be tempered with respect for both the players and your episode's integrity. There are countless ways for a game session or an entire series to go sideways, and there isn't any one set formula for running a successful game – that varies from group to group. With no clear instructions on what to do right, it might seem easier to just hand off the Controller title to someone else and not deal with it. (And you're right, that *is* easier.) But when you do run a game and it all comes together… then it's all worth all the trouble and you're be hungry to run again. More effort yields greater rewards, after all.

So what follows is a description of game basics, and suggestions on what typically works and what doesn't. It's not a set of commandments, with Shalls and Shall Nots, or a dissertation on high-minded game theory. This is practical advice that's (hopefully) directly applicable to your games. This advice is like any other, of course, and you can take it or leave it. But as a Controller you should at least read this chapter, even if you're an old hand at running games – who knows, you might find something useful in all this.

Game Format

Session: The foundation of a game is the session, where you and the players gather around to actually play the game. Sessions typically last for a few hours, though they can be much shorter or go all night and into the wee hours. This depends on how much time, energy and caffeine (human Energon) is invested into the game.

Episode: An episode is a small story arc, similar to an episode of an animated series. An episode has a plot and a conclusion. It may last a single session or encompass two or three sessions (but rarely more than this). Once one episode is concluded, the next one starts (usually when the game group meets again). Episodes may or may not be linked to form a story; see below for more on this. Skill points are awarded at the end of each episode.

Kayla runs an episode called "Hound's Rescue," in which that Autobot has been captured by Decepticons and the player characters are tasked with his rescue. Once Hound is rescued, or the PCs fail in their attempt, that episode is concluded.

Story: A story is a grouping of sequential episodes that follow a longer plotline; think a miniseries, movie or book chapter. Stories are more difficult to resolve than a single episode, but they will likely offer greater rewards for the PCs, like a free upgrade handed out by superiors or a promotion. It can also reflect a period of personal growth or change for one or more PCs.

In "Hound's Rescue" the PCs fail to rescue poor Hound despite their best efforts, and as a result his CPU was hacked by Soundwave. Kayla decides to base the next episode ("Saboteurs") on that consequence, with a Decepticons strike force using Hound's access codes to sabotage the Ark, attack Autobots and generally cause havoc. The PCs of course must help put a stop to this. Once "Saboteurs" concludes, "No Man Left Behind!" details the PCs' renewed efforts to rescue Hound before he's destroyed… or worse. The three episodes are connected and form a story.

Series: A series is the sum total of all the episodes and stories told around a particular group of players and their characters; for example, the entire run of Beast Wars as a game would be considered a series. A series may be short or long, and will chronicle the growth, changes, victories and defeats of the PCs and their allies over a span of time. A series can span years or decades of game time, representing a year or more of real-life play as the players extensively develop their characters. Other series might be short by design and/or be "canceled" prematurely so the group move can onto the next game. This depends entirely on your group's gaming preferences.

Downtime: This is time spent outside active play; characters will spend most of their lives in downtime. The time between episodes is downtime, and short periods of downtime can pass within episodes. During downtime, Transformers shut down, perform repairs and upgrades, research, or do whatever they want as long as it shouldn't require active play. Characters that have hobbies or interests can pursue them; Jazz might just park outside clubs to observe human culture and listen to music, while Tarantulas hunts and preys on animals. Downtime can lasts hours or months. When downtime occurs, you summarize the effects (and make or allow relevant tests).

Whenever a dramatic event requires direct participation from the PCs, downtime is interrupted and active play begins; you shouldn't announce to the players, "Oh by the way, some humans snuck into your undersea base and now you're all captured." Nor should you permit players to announce, "Since last session, I defeated Lugnut and took his guns." You should always give players and NPCs a chance to react to pivotal situations that directly impact them.

Part of being a good Controller is managing downtime. Too little downtime, and nobody has time to rest or do anything not related to active play; this unfairly slows down their advancement through upgrades. Too much downtime, and characters have huge stretches in which they do nothing or just upgrade themselves until they're walking gunships. Neither option is realistic; characters should be neither harried nor complacent. A downtime balance that permits limited upgrades paced by active play is ideal. One to two weeks is a good "average" downtime period, with shorter or longer periods when appropriate.

Non-Player Characters (NPCs)

Players only get to control their characters, but you get all the rest. Every other Transformer, human and whatever else is out there is yours to command. Lucky you, huh? Yes, this is great, but it's also a big responsibility. You need to keep track of the personalities, motivations, and growth of cast characters, and be able to create extras on the spot. Further, you have to reign in the urge to do too much with your NPCs; they may well be very interesting, and you have to care about your NPCs on some level to do justice by them. But don't forget that the PCs should always take center stage, even if they're not the primary characters in the canon series. While Bumblebee is the golden boy in the cartoon (so to speak), unless a player is controlling that character he shouldn't hog the spotlight in any series you run.

Cast: The cast are important characters, at least in respect to the game. Most of the PCs' interaction will be with cast characters. All Transformers that aren't PCs are cast, except for drones and the like. Humans that feature in the series are cast too. The cast have names, well-defined personalities and motivations, and will grow and evolve during the series.

Within the cast category, a further distinction is made between *main cast* and *supporting cast*. Main cast interact more frequently with the PCs and are spotlighted fairly often. In a G1 series, this will almost always include Optimus Prime, Megatron, Bumblebee, Starscream and other high-profile characters. Supporting cast may not be any less important in an objective sense, but appear less in the series narrative. Seaspray, Huffer, Frenzy, the Stunticons and a slew of other robots had cameos and episodes in the G1 series, but otherwise blended into the background. Of course, your own choices of main and supporting cast might be different. You might choose to spotlight Transformers largely overlooked or not included in official continuity series, and regulate Bumblebee, the Dinobots and other robots to supporting cast. The distinction is a necessary one; unless the cast is very small, you can't equally spotlight everyone. But the distinction isn't absolute. There should be times supporting cast will be active in the narrative, and main cast will take a break from the stage.

NPC Creation: There really are no rules for making NPCs. They can be as powerful or as weak as you need them to be. In fact, some disparity between NPCs, and between they and PCs, is pretty much guaranteed. Don't worry about "game balance" or being fair here; the faction and team leaders, lieutenants, and other experienced robots will be flat-out better than beginner characters, while humans will never be as powerful as Transformers. This doesn't mean more powerful robots are more important in the game narrative, or that humans are dismissible. But Optimus Prime is the Autobot leader for a reason, because he's trained and upgraded for a long time to be the best. This principle applies to the opposition as well as allies, which means if fresh-from-character creation Autobot heroes try to take on Megatron they *will be spanked*. Resist the temptation to make everyone needlessly powerful, or giving a favorite NPC an advantage he shouldn't have just to keep him around; you don't have to follow the rules, but you shouldn't be gratuitous about it.

NPCs can have assets and capabilities not included in the list, from the outset or spontaneously developed as a plot device (like that G1 episode where Megatron "borrowed" all the Decepticons' powers to duel Optimus). In short, as extensions of you, NPCs don't have to follow the rules. But you shouldn't abuse this privilege. Most NPCs should conform to the rules the PCs follow, be they more or less experienced than the PCs, with the special-case exceptions being only trotted out when dramatically appropriate.

Growth: NPC growth can be handled in several ways. The first is to hand out skill points each episode and track upgrades and research by the normal rules; effectively, each member of the cast is treated as a player character controlled by you. This is realistic and fair to the NPCs, but works better for small casts; the amount of bookkeeping this entails can be daunting if you have a lot of NPCs. Another option is to wing it, adding points or assets as you feel they're needed; while simpler, it might cause NPCs to either lag behind PCs or shoot ahead of them, depending on how much you improve them and how central they are to the story. Again, don't let your hands be bound by the rules here, but at least honor them unless there's a good reason not to; if the PCs' nemeses grow exponentially more powerful each time they meet and outpace the PCs, the players will probably (rightly) take exception to that.

Extras: Extras serve the same purpose in this game as they do in movies and TV shows: As animate scenery. They're minor NPCs, which don't have stats or often even names. Your average guy on the street is an extra, as is the security guard outside the garage, the soldiers you face, and 99.99% of life on earth. Transformers are rarely extras in most series, but they can be – for example, soulless attack drones and minions on Cybertron are extras. Extras are usually "on screen" for a short time and forgotten, or are set up to be knocked down in fights. They rarely present

serious opposition to the PCs, but this isn't always the case; nameless soldiers in a tank or an attack jet drone can be as dangerous as cast NPCs.

Extras may not be fleshed out, but aren't without value. Like other NPCs, they have lives, motivations and feelings, even if those things are never expressed. Brawn might never know the names of all the people that perished when Laserbeak blew up that bus, but that doesn't mean their lives are insignificant to him or that even won't impact the series in a significant way. (Of course, Laserbeak probably doesn't care.)

And extras can be promoted to full cast, if they appear frequently and grow to occupy a place in the game. A detective might report suspicious (possible Decepticon) activity to Prowl. Same with the street thug that tries to steal Breakdown in an episode, not knowing he was an alien robot! If permitted to live, he might become a contact or even a friend of the Stunticon, and the two may hang out during "off time." A Cybertronian requisitions officer can become a valuable ally for either side.

Game Styles & Themes

Scripted vs. Freeform: There are two styles of games that describe the Controller's and player's control of the plot and narrative: Scripted and freeform. The plot hook method is a compromise.

Scripted games follow a predetermined storyline. Predacons are destabilizing the Energon fields in Maximal territories, and the PCs must respond; Autobot meddlers are trying to liberate captured power stations; mysterious Transformers of unknown alliance have landed on another continent, and the the PCs are sent to investigate. Scripted games have the advantage of structure and a defined resolution, though offer the players less freedom than freeform games. But scripted games rarely work out exactly as predicted, even when they go well. It's an old gaming maxim that no game session survives its players intact, since it's hard to predict what PCs will do or how the dice will fall. You shouldn't be controlling, and expect players to lock step with your meticulously planned plots while giving them no freedom to make their own decisions. They're active participants in the game, you're better off writing fan fiction featuring your stories than forcing the PCs to conform to your vision. So if the PCs find an ingenious resolution to the dilemma you didn't expect (like tunneling into the power plant instead of fighting their way through the Aerialbots), that's your bad, not theirs – don't punish them by arbitrarily denying them that course of action, or have Autobots waiting for them with the declaration, "They expected you to do that!" Reward their ingenuity, and be more on the ball next time you design a conflict.

Freeform games have no structure or established plot; you give initiative to the players, and they do what they want. This is less work on you, the Controller, and offers players a lot of freedom. These games are often a lot of fun for everyone, and the players can direct the narrative in ways you can't predict; it can be a challenge to keep up with them when they pull stuff way out of left field. This gives PCs the opportunity to explore the setting in a way relevant to them while reducing your workload. However, this lack of structure can lead a sense of purposelessness, and the players may not have any idea what to do with their Transformers. It's also fertile ground for intra-player conflict, as they may fly to the four winds to attend their own concerns and not remain a cohesive group (which will increase your efforts as a Controller, as you either must shift the spotlight skillfully to not leave anyone feeling left out or find some way to leverage them back together). More than a story or two in the freeform style also isn't very realistic (and we all know how important realism is in a universe of giant robot contortionists); the factions plan, do things and make moves, and Transformer goldbricks that don't contribute to the cause won't be tolerated for long.

So the ideal game falls somewhere between these two extremes, taking the benefits of both styles while (hopefully) avoiding the worst. A basic compromise is scripting a basic plot for your series and running some structured games, especially for the first few episodes of a series -- getting the ball rolling, so to speak. Throwing in freeform episodes let players stretch their legs and events can alter the elements of the series' plot. The ratio of structure to freeform in a series will vary based on group preferences. A more advanced tactic is the *plot hook method*, in which multiple "teaser" plots are offered to the players. They can explore possible Decepticon activity in Utah, go help the Aerialbots free the power station from tunneling saboteurs, or work covertly with Grimlock to undermine Optimus Prime's authority. The PCs have the option of following whatever plot hooks interest them or fit their abilities. This provides the advantage of structure with the freedom to let PCs do more what they want. The plot hook style also allows a more complex (read: interesting) plot than other games; just as PCs will act decisively in the furtherance of one plot hook, paths not chosen have consequences as well. Had the PCs chosen to help the Aerialbots instead of poking about Utah, perhaps the flyboys wouldn't have been scrapped… but then no one would have discovered the Insecticons out in the Salt Flats until it was too late to foil their plot.

Series Styles & Continuities

There's no One True **Transformers** Continuity, as there's so many out there and everyone has their personal favorite. There have been no less than seven animated series devoted to the **Transformers** aired here in the U.S. alone (more ran in Japan), and several different comics set in different time periods. And let's not forget the latest live action/CGI movies that came out recently.

So working off just those, you have a huge range of possibilities. Purists beware: You may base your game setting on your favorite **Transformers** storyline, but it *will* change by dint of player participation. The only way to avoid this is to tightly restrict what players can do and say based on what the cartoon/movie/comics writers wrote before you... which misses the point of gaming entirely. As a Controller, you have a lot of freedom. *Use it*. You determine when and where the game is set. You decide who the cast is, their capabilities, and what they do. You determine what will happen. You're creating a new continuity, a universe of your own creation, whenever you start a **Transformers** series… the possibilities are endless. So don't feel confined by what's come before, use those visions as inspiration to help tell your own stories, and to give your players the freedom to tell their own.

GENERATION 1 & 2 TRANSFORMERS

Generation 1 (G1) is the classic **Transformers** that started it all. The closely linked but distinct cartoon and comics settings influenced my game design quite a bit; I leaned toward the Marvel Comics series more as I wrote, as I felt it was somewhat grittier and had stronger characterizations than the animated series. (Generation 2 is technically a separate and parallel continuity, but is a largely derivative rehash of the classic and has much in common with its predecessor.)

It wouldn't be difficult at all to model that sort of continuity with this game, as all the assets one would need are here. This game system "out of the box" arguably most closely fits G1 games. For authenticity's sake, you might want to leave out the ability for Cybertronians to gain new forms or make it harder to do so, as the G1 robots apparently didn't have that ability.

MICHAEL BAY'S (LIVE ACTION) TRANSFORMERS

Of all the Transformers properties, I've been most influenced by Bay's vision (notably the first movie) as I've written this game, reflected in the "gritty" semi-realistic treatment of the robots and their capabilities. The three movies present a stripped-down version of the **Transformers**, a foundation upon which more can be built. It's a good place to start for a beginning Controller, or one bringing people new to Transformers into the game; fewer characters and less backstory will get them into the game quicker.

Of course Bay's continuity has a lot of campaign potential in itself. Michael took a cartoony concept and at times hokey (sorry, G1 fans), and he made it into something dramatic and compelling. These aren't the Technicolor titans we used to know. Even the Autobots look badass, and the Decepticons are terrifying. And like the movies did or not, you gotta admit the special effects are *awesome*. The movies bought many new fans into **Transformers**, many of whom were adults that weren't interested in the cartoon. Probably as many teens and kids came into our extended fan club were inspired by the movie too.

To make the game system better model the "reality" of the **Transformers** movies, I recommend you remove some of the more fantastic assets like Mass Shift, Biograft and Binary Symbiote. The movies heavily favor ballistic weapons and had little in the way of plasma cannons, lasers and the like. To approximate this you might want to increase build and upgrade costs for EMP Attack, Energy Attack, Radiating Blast and similar assets, and/or attach greater Energon expense to them.

BEAST WARS

This series, which is apparently a time-spanning continuation of the G1 continuity, deviates pretty radically from traditional depictions of Transformers: The robots transform into biomechanical animals as a protection from the dangerous Energon in the environment. These rules can model Beast Wars games easily with just a few tweaks. The Biograft asset will be used extensively. The robot mode is always stronger than the animal form, and the animal form will have a limited range of assets. Most beast assets are related to basic animals: Acceleration, Flight (VTOL for insects), Enhanced Sensors related to animal senses, Nautics, and Melee Attack 1 for truly powerful animal forms (like a rhinoceros, moose or dinosaur); other assets must be approved by the Controller and should fit the beast in question. Robot mode assets will likewise be modest (no space flight), but include weaponry, flight and the like.

Energon Overload: Transformers are unable to maintain robot mode for long, as the rich Energon deposits present on the planet can short out and can even damage them. A fairly simple way to model this follows. Beside the name of each robot involved in the conflict, record the number of phases that the robots remain in robot mode (starting on the phase they change), counting up by 1 each phase; this count is cumulative, not consecutive, so converting to animal form and then back again doesn't "reset" the count. At the end of each phase roll a die, using the result for everyone; this is the overload test. If the overload result equals or exceeds a Transformer's phase count, he can maintain his robot form. If the die results falls under a robot's phase count, however, he suffers Energon overload and must assume animal form as soon as his turn comes up the following phase. If he doesn't or can't transform for some reason, the robot suffers 3 points of Structure damage (Resistance does *not* reduce this) and must make a dysfunction save immediately (target 15); this happens each phase he remains in robot form. Accumulated

phase counts bleed off by 1 point each hour (so it takes three hours to recover from three phases spent in robot mode). There's no way for a player to influence his phase count, or swing the overload test in his favor – other than being being sparing with their use of robot mode.

Phase One: Waspinator sees Rhinox in the jungle, and in his great wisdom decides to jump the Maximal. He assumes robot mode and fires at Rhinox, who retains beast mode and runs for cover. Rhinox's phase count stays at zero, while Waspinator's phase count is 1. The Controller rolls a 5 on his overload test; no overload occurs (as it beats Waspinator's phase count).

Phase Two: Waspinator chases Rhinox through the thick foliage, cursing as his shots go wild. Phase counts: R0, W2; overload test 14.

Phase Three: Cornered at a rock wall, Rhinox decides to make his stand. He assumes robot mode while Waspinator closes on him. Phase counts: R1, W3; overload test 17.

Phase Four: Rhinox throws a rock, forcing Waspinator to dodge. The Maximal grins as the insectile robot mocks him, as hitting him wasn't Rhinox's intent... Phase count: R2, W4; overload test 3.

Phase Five: Waspinator almost falls to the ground, writhing as the accumulated Energon attacks his body; he shifts to wasp mode while Rhinox laughs and fires his chainguns, grazing Waspinator. Rhinox's phase count is 3; overload test 11.

Phase Five: Rhinox briefly considers pursuing the now-fleeing Predacon, but doesn't want to test his luck. He shifts back to rhinoceros mode and heads back to base.

Once Transmetal technology is introduced, Energon overload is no longer a concern. At this point you can pretty much do what you want as far as beast forms go and not have to worry about limited robot form durations. (And it's certainly not out of line to house-rule that little development out, if you want to retain the flavor of "classic" Beast Wars.)

While the Mass chart might be sufficient for Beast Wars games, it doesn't offer much range; Maximals and Predacons are animal-sized (Mass 0 to 4), considerably smaller than "classic" Transformers. Controllers can use the Mass scale below instead of the default one on the table on pg. 4. Rules for Mass don't change – a Mass of 5 is still has the appropriate Mobility caps and Energon traits. But the scale is changed to fit Beast Wars games, allowing for a greater range of Mass ratings for characters.

Mass	Sample Animal	Mass	Sample Animal
0	rat, insect	4	lion, stag, tiger, grizzly bear
1	house cat, cobra	5	buffalo, crocodile, rhinoceros
2	badger, bobcat, jackrabbit	6	elephant, T-Rex, orca
3	human, wolf, black bear, jaguar	7	whale shark

BEAST MACHINES

This series follows Beast Wars, with the Maximals having returned to Cybertron. The Maximals are techno-organic, effectively mechanical but yet somehow not; Maximal transformations are tied to discipline and meditative focus. The Vehicons are vehicles (obviously), mostly non-sentient drones and led by Megatron, who attempts to destroy anything organic on Cybertron. Megatron spends most of his time hooked into a control center via a cocoon of cables, except when he loses control and transforms into a techno-organic dragon… this, despite the fact he wants to destroy everything organic…

Anyway. The series pretty much lost me after the first several episodes, though I tried to follow it, and I admit my memory of it is rusty. My instinct is to say pretty much anything goes as far as forms and assets go, but I can't really say what's appropriate or not. If you like the series, you can puzzle out what fits better than I can.

Transformers: Armada, Energon, Cybertron & Animated

These series are like Transformers (somewhat), with a dash of Mighty Morphin Power Rangers and a lot of Pokemon. There are these kids that run around with the Autobots and ride inside 'em and are in constant need of rescue and are part of Team Autobot. In one or more of these series there's also something called Mini-Cons, tiny robotic power sources. Apparently you gotta catch 'em all, or something.

I saw a few episodes of Armada, and I confess I didn't even try to follow it. Maybe the follow-up series were better than Armada, but by that point I gave up. I'm certain you can adapt these rules to play games from these series if you want, and I hope you can. I'm trying hard not to rip on your shows, especially since you're being nice enough to read and maybe play my game. I really am.

It's just… Pokeformers? Elementary kids as main characters instead of supporting cast? Did we need any of this, really?

Beyond Continuity

There are many options for **Transformers** games that don't fit neatly (or even loosely) into established cartoon, comics or movie series. Here are a few ideas that might inspire you.

Mix 'n Match: One possibility is to adopt elements from multiple continuities, allowing you to create a setting that mixes the best of what you like and is familiar enough that you don't have to start from scratch. Do you like the live-action movie, but prefer the Volkswagen-style Bumblebee that can actually speak and classic Devastator? Do it. Just make sure the storyline is consistent for your world.

Fleshling Games: One option is to have people play human characters, either normal or cybernetically enhanced. This is a very challenging type of game, because Transformers are much more powerful individually than humans. The humans must rely on teamwork, tools like weapons and vehicles, solid strategy and the like to succeed against Cybertronians. They can be military forces fighting any and all Transformers, human allies working with the Autobots, or mercenaries and/or collaborators working with the Decepticons.

TRANSFORMERS: THE HIDDEN
(An alternate continuity)

The Transformers came to Earth and continued their ancient feud; the Decepticons exploited the planet's resources and inhabitants while the Autobots tried to stop them. At first they adopted vehicle and weapon forms to blend in, and started upping the ante on the arms race that has defined Cybertronian conflict for millennia... developing ever deadlier weapons and employing powerful alternate forms. (Nothing new to **Transformers** fans, here.)

But in this world, a fearful and outraged humanity has declared war on both Decepticons and the Autobots that would defend them. And they're far from helpless: Recent technological advances from the military-industrial complex Blackrock Aerospace (innovations actually adapted from stolen Cybertronian technology) now allow humans to effectively detect and deal with these alien threats. The plates and/or registration numbers of any suspicious vehicles or machines can be instantly scanned into an international registry. Discrepancies are flagged, and a strike force of specially trained and heavily armed soldiers, augmented vehicles and aircraft can be mobilized to deal with confirmed threats quickly. These Blackrock-sponsored paramilitary teams are referred to as Circuit Breakers, hailed as heroes by most Terrans. Their arsenal includes Energon detection devices, cyborgs, human-piloted exoskeletal suits and energy weapons. Particularly sensitive installations are protected by Energon fields that quickly short out Cybertronian technology. Earth has become dangerous for Transformers, and the human pogrom threatened to wipe out all Cybertronians; the constant battles wasted resources, and destroyed heroes and villains alike. Even travel became too much of a risk. Transformer attacks steadily tapered off, and sightings became rarer and rarer, until the giant robots were a thing of the past (aside from unreliable sightings here and there). The Circuit Breakers' victory against the aliens was hailed as a victory for Earth, and Blackrock Aerospace solidified its influence over the United States, the UK, Japan, China and much of the First World.

But if Transformers are good at anything, it's adaptation.

Rebirth: Due to advances they've made in biomechanical engineering, Transformers now walk unseen among us and stalk the wilderness as beasts. Hiding within bio-engineered shells or having tissue grafted into their bodies, the Cybertronian race has evolved and taken their battle to Earth's shadows. No longer are victories decided by greater firepower or raw might… the hulking juggernauts of the past have been replaced by smaller and more cunning robots. The war has become one of stealth, espionage and subtlety, where success depends on being able to remain hidden from humanity. Away from the eyes of man, the Autobots and Decepticons continue their fight; the facades of flesh fold back as Transformers unleash their true forms and destructive power. But after they must again hide their machine bodies and Energon signatures beneath organic exteriors. Both factions struggle in secret to develop some advancement or strategy that will allow their side to prevail.

And of course, so are the humans that intend to wipe out the Transformers; Blackrock Aerospace and the world's governments know they're still here and hiding, masquerading as human beings and other living creatures. But they're only able to fight those careless enough to get caught, and Transformers are tough foes: They fight back hard and then melt back into the shadows. (Autobots don't take human lives, however, while Decepticons have little qualms doing so.) Despite their attempts at information control, Blackrock Aerospace and the world's governments aren't the only ones that know about the Transformers. The Autobots have human allies that help protect and hide them, such as the Witwicky family. The Decepticons don't like humans, but have learned that allying with terrorist groups and other unscrupulous entities is sometimes beneficial.

Evolution: As biomechanical advances are made, and Transformer components and organic life become more integrated… what exactly are the Autobots and Decepticons becoming? Are they still Transformers, or are they something else now? Do these hybrids represent an entirely new step in the evolution of their race – and that of humanity?

Rules: A Transformers: the Hidden series will obviously make heavy use of the Biograft asset, since the characters will have to convincingly masquerade as people or animals, and living tissue hides Energon signatures. Tissue may be incorporated directly into characters' bodies to simulate Beast Wars-style characters. Biograft can be combined with Division to create "Pretender" shells; treat the secondary component as a human or animal shell, and apply biological parts to it instead of (or in addition to) the body. Cyborgs are often encountered as antagonists (see pg. 38), but Transformers might well employ allied cyborgs, including Binary Symbiotes.

Many military bases, government buildings and other sensitive areas house machines that generate wide fields that damage exposed Cybertronian technology, though bio-fields interfere with this effect; mechanically, this is the same the Energon overload effect as described under Beast Wars. (This is a double-edged sword, however, as this effect also interferes with the appropriated tech Blackrock employs, limiting Circuit Breaker response to Transformer incursions.)

Depending on how gritty you want to run a series, you can include Mass Shift so robot forms are larger than the biological facades – a human Pretender shell opens, and out pops a 30-ft. robot. However, keeping the robots size-proportional to the creatures they mimic stretches disbelief less, justifies their being able to stay hidden, and makes well-equipped humans viable opponents. If using this last option, you may want to use the scaled down Mass chart presented under Beast Wars.

Character Improvement

Learning Skills: When a character uses a skill in a way that significantly impacts gameplay, make a note of it; the test needn't be successful, but it must be an attempt to constructively use the skill during the course of the game. At the end of every game session the player gains half the robot's Intellect (round up) in points to spend on improving one of those skills; each skill point spent adds 1 to its rating. Only those skills that you noted can be improved, and a skill can only improve by one rating point at a time. Like upgrades, skill points need not be spent when gained; they can be held in reserve until the player wants to spend them.

TRANSFORMERS

Name: **Faction:** **Function:**

Quote:

ATTRIBUTES

Intellect: _____

Mass: _____

Mobility: _____

ENERGON _____

Energon Capacity: _____

Energon Recovery: _____

Energon Save: _____

SKILLS

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FORMS

Robot Form _____

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ASSETS

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Combat

	Defense	Armor	Speed

Robot Form

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Dysfunction/Status Effects: _____

Current Values

Energon	_____
Initiative	_____
Structure	_____

Attack/Weapon

Form	Test	Damage	Range	Other Info

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Information

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Character Sketch