



## ELOCUTIONIST



It was definitely human once, at least based on how it was screaming, but it was thin, with bits of it twisted and discoloured, covered in small, scurrying shapes.

Its face was the most human part of it remaining, except for the two black and hollow spaces where its eyes once were. From which now poured an endless stream of scuttling legs and fangs. The mouth was full of them too, but I could see, as they grasped desperately at Greg, it was trying to say, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Tell her I'm sorry." But words were not what tumbled from those lips.

—MAG 123: "Web Development"

When investigating people's experiences with the supernatural and the weird, sometimes the most difficult aspect is just getting them to talk about it. You have a way with people, and you can get them to open up to you. Your keen perceptions even tell you what they won't say aloud. You also know how to use words to get what you want. You are the spokesperson of the investigation—from generating cover stories to fast-talking your way past someone being an obstacle, you are the secret weapon. And to top it all off, you're good for boosting your allies' morale and encouraging their actions. You're good to have around.

**Individual Role:** Elocutionists are smart and charismatic. They like people and, more important, they understand them. This helps elocutionists get others to do what needs to be done.

**Group Role:** The Elocutionist is often the spokesperson of the group, serving as the one who speaks for all and negotiates with others. Combat and action are not an Elocutionist's strong suits, so other characters sometimes have to defend them in times of danger.

**Societal Role:** An Elocutionist can be anyone who's good with people. They're often team leaders in a business, or even political or religious leaders. It's worth mentioning, however, that many come from a background of con artistry and crime.

**Advanced Elocutionists:** Higher-tier Elocutionists use their abilities to manipulate groups of people as well as aid and nurture their friends. They can talk their way out of danger and even use their words as weapons.

**Supernatural Elocutionists:** Elocutionists with special abilities can use them to compel people to reveal information or flee, or even to control them. Such abilities are marked with .

## ELOCUTIONIST STAT POOLS

Stat	Pool Starting Value
Might	8
Speed	9
Intellect	11

The player has 6 additional points to assign to the stat Pools as they wish.

## FIRST-TIER ELOCUTIONIST

First-tier Elocutionists have the following abilities:

**Effort:** Your Effort is 1.

**Fit:** You have a Might Edge of 0, a Speed Edge of 0, and an Intellect Edge of 1.

**People Skills:** You are trained in two people-related skills in which you are not already trained. Choose two of the following: deception, discerning motive, intimidation, persuasion, or performance. Enabler.

**Cypher Use:** You can have two cyphers at a time.



**Weapons:** You're practiced with light and medium weapons and suffer no penalty when using them. You have an inability to use heavy weapons. Enabler.

**Locution Abilities:** You're good with words. Good with people. You're charming, persuasive, and clever. Choose two of the abilities listed below. You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise.

**Connected:** You know people who get things done—not just respected people in positions of authority, but also a variety of online hackers and regular street criminals. These people are not necessarily your friends and might not be trustworthy, but they owe you a favor. You and the GM should work out the details of your contacts. Enabler.

**De-Stress (1 Intellect point):** While resting or relaxing with allies for an hour, you and they lose 1 more point of Stress than normal. Enabler.

**Encouragement (1 Intellect point):** While you maintain this ability through ongoing inspiring oration, your allies within short range ease one of the following task types (your choice): defense tasks, attack tasks, or tasks related to any skill that you are trained or specialized in. Action.

**Enthrall (1 Intellect point):** While talking, you grab and keep another creature's attention, even if the creature can't understand you. For as long as you do nothing but speak (you can't even move), the other creature takes no actions other than to defend itself, even over multiple rounds. If the creature is attacked, the effect ends. Action.

**Inner Defense:** Life's trials have toughened you and made you hard to read. You are trained in any task to resist another creature's attempt to discern your true feelings, beliefs, or plans. You are likewise trained in resisting torture, telepathic intrusion, and mind control. Enabler.

**Knowledge Skills:** You are trained in two skills in which you are not already trained. Choose two areas of knowledge such as history, geography, psychology, and so on. You can select this ability multiple times. Each time you select it, you must choose two different skills. Enabler.

**Secret Agendas (1 Intellect point):** When speaking with at least two different NPCs for at least a minute, you pick up on subtle cues to determine one of two things (you choose):

- The relationship between the NPCs (including their actual feelings about each other, at least generally).
- If there are at least three NPCs, you pick the odd one out. You determine which of the group is least like the others.

For example, if talking to a married couple secretly on the verge of divorce, you can pick up on subtle indications of resentment or concealed hostility. If you're interacting with a group of people but one of them secretly works for *The Web*, you can pick up on something odd about them (but not specific details). Enabler.

*The Web, page 176*

**Understanding (1 Intellect point):** You observe or study a creature or object. Your next interaction with that creature or object gains one asset. Action.

**Verbal Disguise (1 Intellect point):** You can mimic the voice and speech patterns of a person you have heard speak before, allowing you to make one significant statement. If the person you are speaking to sees you, they will not fall for the deception, so this ability is likely best used over the telephone, in the dark, or with a heavy physical disguise. You can continue to use this ability, but the cost is 1 Intellect point for each important statement you make. This ability doesn't make you any more persuasive—it merely disguises who is speaking. If the GM rules that you've said something the listener simply cannot believe the mimicked speaker would say, you immediately fail; if you've said more than one thing, the listener knows that none of it has come from the mimicked speaker. Enabler.

## SECOND-TIER ELOCUTIONIST

Choose two of the locution abilities listed below (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise. You can also replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.

 **Agitate (2 Intellect points):** You shout at a target you can see and who can easily hear you, and on a successful Intellect-based roll, they move an immediate distance in any direction you wish (because they're startled, they heed a fake warning, or they're otherwise unconsciously induced to do so). Action.

 **Cold Reading (2 Intellect points):** When you spend at least five minutes talking to a person, you can ask the GM one question about that person and get an answer. Alternatively, you can forgo the question and simply ease all tasks involving interaction with the person for 24 hours. You cannot use this more than one time per person per 24 hours. Action to initiate; five minutes to complete.

 **Defuse (1 Intellect point):** During the course of an investigation, your questions sometimes elicit an angry or even violent response. Through dissembling, verbal distraction, calming words, or similar evasion, you prevent a person from attacking anyone or anything for one round, and your next interaction with them is eased. Action.

 **Disincentivize (1 Intellect point):** With some demoralizing words, you hinder all actions attempted by any number of targets within short range who can understand you. You choose which targets are affected. Affected targets' actions are hindered for one round. Action.

 **Gather Intelligence (2 Intellect points):** While within or near a large group of people, you can ask around about any topic you choose and come away with useful information. You can ask a specific question, or you can simply

obtain general facts. You also get a good idea of the general layout of the location involved, note the presence of all major sites, and perhaps even notice obscure details. For example, not only do you find out if anyone in the neighborhood has seen the missing boy, but you also get a working knowledge of the layout of the neighborhood, note all the good hiding places, and realize that everyone seems to be leery of one old house. Action to initiate; about an hour to complete.

 **Inspire Aggression (2 Intellect points):** Your words twist the mind of a character within short range who is able to understand you, unlocking their more primitive instincts. As a result, they gain an asset on their Might-based attack rolls for one minute. Action.

 **Inspiring Ease:** Through stories, songs, art, or other forms of entertainment, you inspire your friends. After spending 24 hours with you, once per day each of your friends can ease one task of their choice. This benefit is ongoing while you remain in the friend's company. It ends if you leave, but it resumes if you return to the friend's company within 24 hours. If you leave the friend's company for more than 24 hours, you must spend another 24 hours together to reactivate the benefit. Enabler.

 **Quick Wits:** When performing a task that would normally require spending points from your Intellect Pool, you can spend points from your Speed Pool instead. Enabler.

 **Skill With Defense:** Choose one type of defense task in which you are not already trained: Might, Speed, or Intellect. You are trained in defense tasks of that type. Enabler.

### THIRD-TIER ELOCUTIONIST

Third-tier Elocutionists have the following abilities:

**Expert Cypher Use:** You can have three cyphers at a time.

**Locution Abilities:** Choose two of the abilities listed below (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise. You can also replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.

**Blend In (4 Intellect points):** For the next minute, you blend in—creatures still see you, but they attach no importance to your presence. While blending in, you are specialized in stealth and Speed defense tasks. This effect ends if you do something to reveal your presence or position—attacking, using an ability, moving a large object, and so on. If this occurs, you can regain the remaining period of effect by taking an action to focus on seeming innocuous and as if you belong. Action to initiate or reinitiate.

**Communication (2 Intellect points):** You can convey a basic concept to a creature that normally can't speak or understand speech. The creature can also give you a very basic answer to a simple question. Action.

**Grand Deception (3 Intellect points):** You convince an intelligent creature that can understand you and isn't hostile of something that is wildly and obviously untrue. Action.

**Mind Games (3 Intellect points):** You use lies and trickery, mockery, and perhaps even hateful, obscene language against a foe that can understand you. If successful, the foe is stunned for one round and cannot act, and it is dazed in the following round, during which time its tasks are hindered. Action.

**Oratory (4 Intellect points):** When speaking with a group of intelligent creatures that can understand you and aren't hostile, you convince them to take one reasonable action in the next round. A reasonable action should not put the creatures or their allies in obvious danger or be wildly out of character. Action.

**Seen Some . . . Stuff:** You reduce the Stress you suffer from mental shock or despair by 1. You still suffer Stress from physical injury normally. Enabler.

**Slip of the Tongue (3 Intellect points):** In a conversation with an NPC, you use verbal trickery to get them to reveal an important piece of information that they were attempting to conceal. You can try to determine the topic of the information, but ultimately the GM determines what the NPC actually says. Action.

**Surveillance:** All tasks involving monitoring, watching, or tailing a person or place are eased. This includes setting up cameras, microphones, or other equipment. Enabler.

**Irresistible Question (3 Intellect points and 3 Stress):** You ask a question of one creature within a short distance. If you make a successful Intellect roll, they are compelled to answer the question as truthfully and completely as they can. Enabler.

### FOURTH-TIER ELOCUTIONIST

Choose two of the locution abilities listed below (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise. You can also replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.

**Anticipate Attack (4 Intellect points):** You can sense when and how creatures attacking you will make their attacks. Your Speed defense rolls are eased for one minute. Action.

 **Cover Story (4 Intellect points):** After studying (either up close or from afar) a group, organization, or individual for at least five minutes, you come up with a cover story—an elaborate lie—that the group or individual in question is very likely to believe. If you or anyone else uses the cover story, any deception, persuasion, disguise, or similar task related to the cover story is eased. This benefit lasts until the cover story is irrefutably proven false (which might never happen). Action to initiate.

 **Heightened Skills:** You are trained in two tasks of your choosing (other than attacks or defense). If you choose a task you're already trained in, you instead become specialized in that task. You can't choose a task you're already specialized in. Enabler.

 **Look for the Tell (4 Intellect points):** After spending at least one minute with a person in conversation, you know when they are lying for the next minute. Action to initiate.

 **Scarred and Hardened:** You reduce the Stress you suffer from physical injury by 1. You still suffer Stress from mental shock or despair normally. Enabler.

 **Skill With Attacks:** Choose one type of attack in which you are not already trained: light bashing, light bladed, light ranged, medium bashing, medium bladed, medium ranged, heavy bashing, heavy bladed, or heavy ranged. You are trained in attacks using that type of weapon. You can select this ability multiple times. Each time you select it, you must choose a different type of attack. Enabler.

 **Spur Effort (5 Intellect points):** Choose an ally within immediate range. If that character applies Effort to a task on their next turn, they get a free level of Effort on that task. Enabler.

 **Stress (5 Intellect points):** Your terrifying, insidious words impose 3 points of Stress (4 points of damage on NPCs) on up to five people you choose that can hear and understand you within short range. Make separate attack rolls against each creature. Action.

 **Understanding Why (4 Intellect points):** If you succeed at a discerning motive task, you fully understand a person's motives and the root causes for why they do what they do. You may not get details, but you get a fair bit of general insight. You might, for example, ascertain that a murderer has a deep-seated insecurity, or that the person helping them owed them a huge debt. Action.

  **Terrorize (4 Might points and 3 Stress):** A creature that can understand you within a short distance suffers 3 points of Stress (4 points of damage to an NPC) and spends their next action fleeing from you as quickly as they can. They will not approach you for an hour afterward unless threatened. Action.

## FIFTH-TIER ELOCUTIONIST

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Fifth-tier Elocutionists have the following abilities:

**Adroit Cypher Use:** You can have four cyphers at a time.

**Locution Abilities:** Choose two of the abilities listed below (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise. You can also replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.

 **Performance (4 Intellect points):** You let your voice become your instrument. For one hour, you speak with absolute clarity and smoothness, using any manner of tones, vocal ranges, and accents. You can even perfectly imitate the voices of whomever you choose. Anyone hearing you is impressed and positively predisposed to you. For 24 hours, you gain an asset on any interaction task involving them. Action to initiate.

 **Shrug It Off:** You ignore the negative effects of your first Stress level. Enabler.

 **Soft Speech (5 Intellect points):** You convince someone to confide in you in a very short amount of time. They see you not only as a friend but as a trusted confidant. After just one minute of conversation, you need make no further rolls to get the person to tell you literally anything. Enabler.

 **Stimulate (6 Intellect points):** Your words encourage a creature you touch who can understand you. The next action they take is eased by three steps. Action.

 **Think Your Way Out:** You can use points from your Intellect Pool rather than your Might Pool or Speed Pool on any noncombat action. Enabler.

  **Control (5 Intellect points and 3 Stress):** You control the actions of a creature within a short distance who can understand you. This lasts for ten minutes or until they are out of range. If you compel them to do something they would never normally do, you must roll again to maintain your effect. Action.

#### SIXTH-TIER ELOCUTIONIST

Choose two of the locution abilities listed below (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise. You can also replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.



*Discerning motive, page 16*

*Persuasion, page 17*

*De-Stress, page 45*

*Connected, page 45*

*Like an Avatar, page 110*

*Observer effect, page 110*

*Smart, page 25*

*Descriptors, page 19*

*Eidetic, page 25*

*Deception, page 16*

*Focus, page 58*

*Moves Like a Cat, page 75*

*Gymnastics, page 17*

*Character Arcs, page 141*

*Fall From Grace, page 149*

*Leitner, page 267*

### **Inspiring Success (6 Intellect points):**

When you learn this ability, choose one of the following with your group: Might tasks, Speed tasks, or Intellect tasks. When you apply a level of Effort on a task related to that stat and you succeed on your roll, choose another character within short range. On their next turn, that character has an asset on the next task they attempt using that stat. Enabler.

### **Mastery With Defense:** Choose one

type of defense task in which you are trained: Might, Speed, or Intellect. You are specialized in defense tasks of that type. You can select this ability up to three times. Each time you select it, you must choose a different type of defense task. Enabler.

### **Soothing Words (6 Intellect points):** A

creature that you speak with for at least ten minutes loses all of their accumulated Stress. Action to initiate.

### **True Communication (6 Intellect**

**points):** You establish a bond with one person or creature so uncanny that you can make yourself understood even if you don't share a language. Further, you can communicate on just one sensory level if that's all you have (if they can just see you but not hear you, or hear you but not see you) without any loss of understanding. Once this bond is established, it never goes away. You can bond with only one person or creature at a time. Action.

### **Condemn (6 Intellect points and**

**3 Stress):** Drawing upon dark forces, you relegate one person to a future of endless despair by telling them something truly horrifying about themselves (true or not) that they henceforth believe deep in their core. They lose their next action, and all their actions afterward are hindered by two steps. Most people thus affected flee if possible. Action.

### **ELOCUTIONIST EXAMPLE**

Freya wants to create an Elocutionist for the campaign. She puts 3 of her additional stat points into her Intellect Pool and 3 into her Speed Pool; her stat Pools are now Might 8, Speed 12, and Intellect 14. As a first-tier character, her Effort is 1, her Might Edge and Speed Edge are 0, and her Intellect Edge is 1. She's smart and charismatic but not particularly tough.

Freya can pick two People Skills; she decides on *discerning motive* and *persuasion*, thinking they are the most likely to get the whole truth from NPCs she talks with.

She can also select two more type abilities and starts with *De-Stress* because she knows situations are likely to be taxing for her and her fellows. Next, she picks *Connected* because she likes the idea of already having links in the world.

A first-tier Elocutionist can have two cyphers at once, and the GM starts her with *like an Avatar*, which allows her to treat one action roll as a natural 20, and *observer effect*, allowing her to find something she might have otherwise missed while investigating.

Freya's character carries a small knife hidden in her bag in case of trouble. As a light weapon, it inflicts 2 points of damage, but attacks with it are eased.

She chooses *Smart* for her descriptor because who wouldn't want to be smart? The descriptor increases her Intellect Pool to 18. It also suggests *Eidetic* as an extra ability she can opt for (instead of an extra skill), which eases tasks requiring careful memory. She takes it, as well as the suggested inability in *deception*.

For her *focus*, Freya chooses *Moves Like a Cat*, granting her a final Speed Pool of 18 and training in *gymnastics*. In the end, she's graceful and quick, charismatic, and hardier than she initially thought. She's ready to investigate scary things.

For her *character arc*, Freya chooses *Fall From Grace*. She decides she is becoming obsessed with a *Leitner* that's been in her family for generations, and her character is fascinated by its secrets.