

Story Trigger Cribsheet

Story Triggers are sets of Elements (*secret, reveal, lever, effect*) that help shape play and introduce large-scale storyline changes. Players and the GM create, alter and activate Elements through the use of *Themes* (for players) and *Complications* (for the GM).

Story Triggers are opportunities for players to wrestle for screen time by bringing their character's Core Value(s) into focus. Note that while players can create beneficial Story Triggers, the GM can later alter them (through spending Complications) into something detrimental.

Themes vs. Complications

The players use their **Themes** to *create, alter* and *activate* Trigger Elements. *Creating* and *altering* requires a Theme rank equal to the Element's rank, while *activating* does not – the player need only replicate the mundane method(s) by which the element would otherwise be activated (see below). Since a Theme can achieve rank 5 via additional Twists, only players can alter and activate rank 5 Elements.

The GM uses the players' **Complications** to *alter* and *activate* Trigger Elements. The Complication level *must* be at least equal to the Element's rank to *alter* and *activate*. Since Complications are never ranked higher than 4, this is the maximum Element rank the GM can alter or activate. The GM can *create* a new Trigger Element of any rank at any time without using a Complication.

Trigger Elements

Every Trigger is comprised of four *Elements*. Triggers and their elements should be used to determine the arc of play from session to session. The GM may elect to keep individual Elements a secret.

Secret

The underlying secret fact of the upcoming *Effect*, tied to the *Reveal* when it is created. The secret should describe an impending crisis in terms of its scope (below).

Reveal

Must be activated for the character to discover both the *Secret* and the *Lever*. Described in terms of mundane character-level background, skill set or event: 3-5 options are appropriate. Rank indicates difficulty in carrying out any given option.

Lever

A single event that must take place to execute the final *Effect*. Described in terms of the event's scope (below).

Effect

The game-fiction result of pulling the *Lever*, extrapolated from the impending crisis of the initial *Secret*. The Effect's rating describes its scope. Effects always alter something about the established setting material

Element Ranks and Scope

First attempt to codify the scope of each element.

1: Personal (extends to a single character)

2: Local (extends to a defined group/Society in a defined area)

3: Regional (extends to a defined group/Society across a major area, or a locale in the Infosphere)

4: Planetary (extends to everyone or all Society members on a single planet, or the planetary Infosphere)

5: Civilization (extends to an entire Civilization, the entire Infosphere, an entire alien race, a Society throughout space)

Creating and Altering Elements

Each Trigger Element should be tied thematically both to a Core Value and a Theme (for player-created and -altered Elements).

Players: Via Theme

The player spends one or more Twists to use a Theme to *create* or *alter* an Element. The Element's rank is the Theme rank required to *create* or *alter* it. Secret + Reveal are created together with a single expenditure.

GM: Create at will, or Alter via Complication

The GM can *create* an Element of any rank at any time.

The GM uses a Complication to *alter* a trigger element. The rank of the element is the level of the Complication required to *alter* it. Spending a Complication this way means the character does not suffer the usual instantaneous ill effect.

Activating (Reveal and Lever)

Triggers must have all four elements visible to players before the Lever can be thrown.

Players: Mundane activation

The character has the correct background or skill set.

Players: Theme activation

Use a Theme to replicate or match a mundane activation (anything except Plot Immunity).

GM: Complication

If a Complication level equals a Reveal or Lever's rank, the GM can elect to use it to activate it. This bypasses the need for the "right approach" (i.e. mundane activation, or replicating a mundane activation via Theme). This is entirely at the GM's discretion, and is the *only* way the GM can activate a Reveal or Lever.

Spending a Complication this way means the character does not suffer the usual instantaneous ill effect.