So You Want To Start Jumpchain

I. Intro

You heard about Jumpchains; maybe from a forum post somewhere, maybe from a CYOA thread. You want to make a Jumpchain, either as a participant or as a creator of the Jumps themselves. You don't know how, and you might not even know what one really is. Rather than research dozens if not hundreds of Jumps and forum posts and other scattered artifacts, this document is intended as a simple cheat-sheet for the general form of most Jumpchains. Note that this is not the hard rules for making them; Jumpchains have no real hard rules, just generally-adopted assumptions that define what a Jumpchain mostly looks like/is. Experiment, read around, and follow what you think works best for your ideas. For a jumping on point, however, read on.

Some basic information about Jumpchains; a Jumpchain is a series of documents, each one focused on a specific world or setting, typically from a piece of media (though Generic Jumps do exist that cover a wider concept, like Cooking or Comedy). An individual is called upon by a powerful patron (often referred to as a Benefactor) to traverse these for their own amusement. A singular Jumpchain document covering a given world/setting is known as a Jump, and the person doing so is called a Jumper. Jumpers usually have ten years to, at minimum, survive in that setting with a bank of 1000 points, a set of advantages they can purchase for points, disadvantages taken for flavor and/or more points, and some if not all of the things they gained beforehand. When the time is up or the objective completed (if mutually exclusive), the Jumper gets a pat on the back and one of three choices; to go Home, which will send them back to where and when they left from originally as if no time had passed but with all their purchased advantages in-tact, to Stay in the world of that Jump and make that their new home forever, or to Jump once more, in which case they pick a new Jump to begin and take their advantages with them. The series of Jumps that a character embarks on is called their Jumpchain, or Chain for short. As a rule of thumb, dying in a normal Jump will have the same effect as if they picked Home, just happening then and there rather than in 10 years' time.

Jumpchain documents break down into one of three categories; Jumps, Gauntlets, and Supplements. This will focus on Jumps but a brief (essential) note on Supplements. Supplements augment the general meta **around** the Jumper in some way. They're the rarest of all three, and only a handful are treated as Always Involved. These are the Body Mod Supplement & the Warehouse Supplement. Body Mod is a **permanent** underlying set of things your Jumper will always have even if literally everything else is stripped away. Warehouse is the de-facto term for a structure where the Jumper stores whatever comes with them from their Jumps and can **usually** be accessed during the Jump itself by some means. Almost every Jump assumes one or both of these to be in use, or an equivalent replacement Supplement, such is their ubiquity. If you intend to either create or use Jumps, it is advised you track these two supplements down and read through them yourself.

Because Jumpers are hopping from reality to reality, their own state (Body Mod aside) is often in flux. A story about salarymen won't have a spot for a 15 year old Jumper, nor would one about high school students likely have a place for a 40-year-old. Often, Jumpers either at the start or before picking anything have to roll to determine their starting age (e.g., 1d8+20) and inherit whatever gender they were in the prior Jump, though this can be controlled (both age and gender) for a flat 50 CP at the start of most Jumps. Note that these are **starting** ages; barring some unique facet or power, Jumpers will age normally during their time in a Jump.

The rudimentary structure of most Jumps is as follows, with those marked with an * being ones

that don't appear in all Jumps but appear often enough to bear mentioning here:

Intro (here's the basic info, you're here for ten years, etc)
Age + Gender info (if not provided uniquely for each Origin)
+1000 CP (Character Points; the currency used to purchase things for use here and to take with post-Jump. May be named something else to better fit the Jump in question)
*Location (where you start out/originate from)
Origins (class, race, etc)
Perks (Personal or very large things that change the fundamental nature, skills, and/or abilities of the Jumper. Categories: General, Origin-based)
Items (Physical non-sentient things that the Jumper gains normal use of. Categories: General, Origin-based)
Companions (Friends, allies, comrades, loved ones. Categories: Import/Make Original, Canon, Unique, Origin-based)
Drawbacks (penalties that stick with the Jumper for the duration in exchange for more CP)
*Scenarios (radical shifts in the scope of the Jump in exchange for unique boons)
Home/Stay/Jump

II. Location

Location is simple; a randomized chart, usually something like roll 1d8, with 8 being a free choice and 1-7 being specific locations in that setting. What you pick can either define where your character was born, raised, and/or lived before this moment. In the case of a Drop-In Origin (see below), this is just where the Jumper first appears with whatever they do or do not have to their name. This can be different sections of the same city, different cities in a given world, different countries in a world-spanning adventure, or even different worlds in an intergalactic epic. If the entire Jump takes place with a focus on a very specific narrow area, like a single town focused on a single school, this section will likely not appear.

III. Origins

Origins are the fundamental building blocks of a Jumper's time in a given Jump. They represent who, in the context of the work, the Jumper has assumed the role of. Origins always have at least one free option, while more powerful or naturally advantaged Origins may cost points. For example, in a supernatural Jump, being a Human might be free while being a Vampire might cost 100 CP. Typicaly there will be at least one labeled Drop-In option (or a note saying any Origin can be treated as a Drop-In). This is the 'meta' option often, lacking history or foundation in the world, and allowing abilities that are more in the spirit of the Jump or that of a mysterious wanderer (which, in fairness, a Jumper technically is) than the actual roles of characters in the media.

Typically, the number of Origins is limited within their given grouping (archetypes, job class, races, how they ended up here, etc), and rarely is more than two groups of Origins listed, with only a single group given for more straight-forward Jumps. As an example, you might have a Dungeons and Dragons Jump that has two sets of Origins; Character Class and Race, just like if you made a character in the game itself. All Origins aside from Drop-In come with pluses and minuses in terms of free memories and insertion into the overall world, and often the better your role/automatic advantages are, the more CP it would cost to get. As a general rule, if everything the Origins get is roughly balanced, then it's better to keep the CP costs closer to equal, if not 100% equal or even 100% free across the board.

If the Origins differ wildly, then rather than a flat age roll to start, age rolls may be attached to each of them. If so, often, there is no option to pay CP to define the result. In some cases, there may be no range; everyone of Origin X must be 15 because that's how it works in setting, so if you pick Origin X, you show up as a 15 year old.

IV. Perks & Items

Perks and Items are grouped together to explain here because there are at the core of every Jump, and are what the majority if not all of a Jumper's points will be spent on. Perks are What You Do; they're powers, training, special skills or abilities. Ninja training? Pay for the Perk, and the Jumper has it. Flight and super strength? Pay for it, they have it. A killer smile and the ability to always be understood regardless of language barriers? Points, paid, done.

Items, conversely, are What You Have. These are physical items, ranging from as small as a thumbtack to as large as a galaxy. Everything from a car that never runs out of gas to a talking sword that glows blue in the presence of Santa Claus is covered under Items.

Perks & Items have costs never totaling less than 25 each, normally appearing in 100/200/300 etc denominations. These are then broken up into two categories under each; Generic, and Origin-based. Origin-based entries usually have the following disclaimer; you get the 100 CP entry for your Origin(s) free, and a discount (50%) off any others that match the Origin(s).

A Perk or Item that an Origin gets for free should, inevitably, be a *defining feature* of that Origin. You picked the Pilot option in an Evangelion Jump? Better be 100 CP to be able to pilot Evas, then. These typically exist as Perk or Item options to represent the ability for the Jumper or their Companions to obtain these even if their Origins don't match. You might be a Rogue in a fantasy setting, but maybe you really want that Basic Spellcasting perk the Wizard gets; pony up 100 CP and it's yours. Items are much the same; any given for free should be the bare minimum to do what that Origin asks of you in a very general sense. Maybe Rogues get free daggers and lock picks, or Eva pilots get a free Plugsuit with matching sync headpieces.

The biggest ticket entries in this group are, often, BIG. Either a power or canonical item (or copy of it) with so much raw power that they'd be worth a Jumper taking that Origin just for the discount on getting it. But these can involve some very interesting things as well, such as: a castle with servants; a haunted castle with ghost servants; a private island that may or may not be a secret evil lair; a nice house; the services of a retinue of armed robots; a steampunk airship; and so on. Things like this often come in the 400-600-800 CP ranges, and (in the case of large structures in particular) often have disclaimers attached like 'After this Jump you can attach this to your Warehouse and/or have the equivalent show up in future Jumps for your use'. Rarely does a power-granting Perk or powerful personal Item need such a disclaimer, unless it operates differently or has some unique recharge factor to it. If you paid CP for it, the rule typically goes, that thing is yours for the long haul.

One shot or otherwise 'limited quantity' Perks and Items typically do have a unique disclaimer, however, about their refresh rate. As said before, you pay CP, you assume you'll 'always' have it. But something as powerful as 'come back from the dead' or 'summon 1000 mounted knights' has to have some limiting factor, and that's usually defined as 'Can be used once every ten years OR once per Jump, whichever comes first'. So you can use that free life to save your ass from a dragon's flames in a fantasy Jump, but until you move on to the next one it's now spent, so best mind his next breath, friend.

Some Perks and Items, however, **should** be universal both in their desire and/or their rarity. These could include a rare bloodline not covered by an Origin, or something as absurdly universal as having a Stand in a JoJo's Bizarre Adventure Jump. This is where the General category is used. General typically is placed first, before all Origin entries for Perks or Items. This is because they are universal, fundamental, and under most circumstances come with no discounts at all. As a result, unless you've got a hell of a reason for it, when creating a General section keep the prices low, or else folks will just ignore it wholesale.

Lastly, on rare occasions, someone might feel that anyone going to a Jump would need or should have something, no matter what they pick or did before. In this case, it's fine to throw a Free entry or two into General for Perks or Items. Try to keep them small, though; something like making it so everyone Jumping into a fighting game setting has decent cardio and the rudamentary ability to throw a punch wouldn't be so bad, but giving everyone Jumping into a Star Wars Jump their own personal Star Destroyer for free is almost certainly overkill.

V. Companions

Companions are a unique case, in that they are by their nature alive (or equivalent) and capable of free thought to some degree. If it's an android that will just follow orders blindly and couldn't give you its thoughts on a TV show, it's probably an Item. If it's a creature you summon briefly to wreck face but won't join you in the green room after for a drink, it's probably a Perk. If it's someone who will have your back in a fight, help you move into a new house, rib you for that time you fell in a swimming pool, get you in trouble by starting shit with a group of strangers, and/or share a kiss with you under the light of the full moon, then it is probably a Companion.

Companion options are typically fairly general, with most Jumps pairing it down to two options at most; either Import/Create which will grab a prior Companion or make a new one appropriate to the setting, or Canon Companion which lets you pick someone from **this** setting who was in the original media, albeit with a caveat that you'll have to convince them to join you on your multiversal adventures if you pick the latter.

Import/Create usually provides *something* to the Companion(s) select, with semi-scaling costs of something like '50 CP for one, 200 CP for a group of 8'. The reason why a 'group of 8' would be so cheap is two-fold. One, 8 is the (original, somewhat outdated) cap for importable Companions. Two, often after a number of Jumps, the story is more an ensemble piece than just the adventures of one Jumper vs. endless worlds. Limiting the cast lower than 8 (or higher, really) would hamper that. Import/Create often comes with a line like 'Choose an Origin and up to 200/300 CP worth of Perks/Items for each Companion', allowing the Companions to gain power and evolve like the Jumper without allowing them to go **too** crazy. If an exception has to be made to prevent them from doing something crazy like buying their own ninja village, mention it here. A rarely mentioned but common sentiment is that Companions can't buy Companions, since that's the kind of Day 0 infinite combo that breaks the whole exercise. If you feel it has to be mentioned, mention it here. This won't preclude them from, for example, taking a perk that gives them some bodyguards if the *bodyguards* don't count as Companions. But for this reason, some authors will write that a group of allies granted by a Perk take up a Companion slot or otherwise count as a Companion either now or after this Jump. tl;dr, you can import or create non-canon folks and give them a boost so they can join in the fun both now and in future.

Canon Companions are different, in that this umbrella term often applies to anyone within that setting who actually existed in the pages/episodes/??? of the core media. Taking this assures you'll meet them, and on friendly terms at that, though where the interactions go from there is on the Jumper. With the aforementioned caveat that they have to say yes to joining you when it's time to go, this encompasses anyone **not** specifically called out otherwise (see below). Doing a Star Wars Jump and want to convince Boba Fett to join you? Figure out how, pay the price (usually 100-200 CP), do a good job getting to know them and befriend them, and when the adventure concludes convince them and they'll return with you to your Warehouse/Housing/Benefactor's home, and can come with you on future adventures with armor, weapons, and skill in-tact. Yes, this can get exceptionally fanficcy exceptionally fast, but that's essentially the name of the game.

Exceptions to the rule of two above, however, can come in the form of Big Names, Unique characters that break the general formula enough to merit being treated differently. Maybe you took a Powerpuff Girls Jump and want to get them to come with. That's a lot higher on the totem pole than, say, recruiting Fuzzy Lumpkins, so the cost is typically higher. Coupled with that cost, however, may be certain advantages. Maybe they all get the full series of Powerpuff Perks, maybe they all come as one group plus the Professor (who, c'mon, he's not going to let them go gallivant around the Multiverse without him there to supervise), or maybe both. The cost will usually reflect this (expect to pay 200+ when a normal Canon Companion would cost 100), but when a Big Name is involved, expect there to be a 50/50 chance of a 50% off discount for a specific Origin, especially if there's one for each Origin. That said, some Jumps just shrug and assume all is fair game under Canon Companions alone.

Losing a Companion (or Perk or Item) that you paid CP for normally only removes it from play for this Jump, if even that (numerous items will say you get a fresh stock of them weekly if the items are something low-power like food or guns and ammo). If not mentioned, it is usually assumed that a dead Companion, broken/stolen Item, or negated Perk will be awaiting the Jumper once this Jump concludes, and in all cases will be there for them once they end their Chain.

Just as authors often keep character sheets for their Jumper, most will keep sheets for the Jumper's Companions, as in both cases their growing list of advantages can require book-keeping even after a single jump, let alone several.

VI. Drawbacks & Scenarios

A Drawback front-loads you with CP in exchange for something that complicates the entire stay in some fashion. This can be anything from a code of ethics to a permanent injury to being hunted by a powerful faction. It could restrict access to the Warehouse, or prevent you from using any Perks or other boons outside this Jump and your Body Mod. This can also include certain objectives, like turning the villains into good guys or preventing a canonical war. It can also **enforce** canon, preventing you from changing something or anything from the core media. The more dangerous or troublesome this would be for a Jumper on a ten year stay, the more it is worth. A minor shifting to let the Jumper experience a slightly alternate version of the media (e.g., film to comic, anime to manga)? 0 (these are typically called 'toggles'). A social problem so endemic to the original media that it's rarer for someone **not** to have it? +100. Extra enemies in a setting where you'd be fighting anyway? Probably +100-200 points at best. The big bads all trigger their plans simultaneously within a year of your arrival and you have to Not Die as they all gun for you? Probably worth a lot.

One major rule when it comes to Drawbacks is that in a fight between Perk and Drawback, Drawback wins. If your Jumper has a Perk that says 'You are immune to all diseases', but you take a

Drawback that says every two months you have a killer head cold... every two months, the Jumper has a killer head cold. This does not mean a Drawback cannot be overcome if you find a logical way to do so, it just prevents you from using your powers for free points. For example, if a Drawback says 'This person hears about you and wants to kill you!' the Jumper can defeat them, avoid them, turn them over to the police, or figure out how to calm them the heck down and befriend them. So long as the Drawback doesn't rule out alternative solutions, there are as many as you can think up.

Drawbacks either have a cap (i.e., can take up to +600 CP worth of combined Drawbacks) or if not, mention that there is no cap. They may also have Drawbacks that ignore the cap, a common facet in Jumps that have an Origin or Scenario that requires a given Drawback, or one where the Drawback is so amazing and so intense it *has* to not count. Even given this, rarely if ever should a Drawback give more than 600 CP, with 500 being the normal capstone for a single Drawback and Drawback Caps being between 600-800.

Rarely, a Drawback comes with a special boon if taken and completed. This is more-so the realm of the Scenario which will be covered below. However, if it would not completely change a Jump but would still be uniquely tough (e.g., attempting redeem a team of bad guys in-between anything else you were doing, or running a successful (if disaster-prone) hotel for the duration of your Jump), it can fall here.

A Scenario can be superficially similar to a Drawback, but few grant CP. Typically, a Scenario will ask the Jumper to Do A Thing in the setting before their time runs out. This could vary from 'Complete a special kind of mini-game found in the source material at the highest professional level' to 'Rebuild this destroyed town', or 'Convince the bad guys to stop being such massive jerks'. This may entail taking on specific Drawbacks, or require specific Perks to access. Most will have a caveat saying failure does not fail the Jump as a whole, but a few more extreme ones will. So why take the risk? Because of the rewards. Behind a Scenario's completion can lie unique Perks, Items, and/or Companions that cannot be obtained elsewhere in the Jump, or can offer them free of charge if they are. A Scenario is a way to both jumpstart creativity for story writing and incentivize certain kinds of stories and adventures. For the hardest Scenarios, the Jump's author might even place the biggest prizes.

Note, not all Jumps have Scenarios. All Jumps have Drawbacks.

VII. Home/Stay/Jump

Finally, with all said and done, ten years reached or ending requirement achieved, the Jumper reaches the conclusion. All Drawbacks are removed, negative aspects of Perks and Items may be removed (depending on if any exist and how generous the Jump's author is), and the Jumper gets to keep all the rest they paid for or otherwise earned. The Jumper can go Home (return to their world of origin), Stay here, or Jump to the next link in the Chain (i.e., the next Jump document their author picks to go to). Simple enough, but like most elements of the Jumpchain, spell it out. As Stan Lee once said, 'Every comic is someone's first comic'.

VIII. Gauntlets

Lastly, one should discuss Gauntlets. Gauntlets are like Jumps, but evil. They're hard, cruel, painful on multiple levels, or just an overall slog. Why do them, then? Often, there's a lot of carrots on the line, but we'll get there when we get there.

The basic structure remains the same as a Jump except for a few 'minor' exceptions. First, death or an equivalent failure does not end the Chain, it just sends the Jumper on to the next Jump. If this doesn't ring alarm bells right away, then this might; Gauntlets almost always start the Jumper with +0 CP and strips them of everything except their Body Mod for the duration. Were you a golden god with a mecha army to match? Now you're down to roots and stems with a tough climb ahead. Most won't even allow someone to Import Companions, but if they do, said Companions are equally stripped of all advantages for the duration.

Gauntlets do not follow the ten-year-rule by default; rather, most if not all have very specific end goals in mind. Save the princesses, climb the mountain, defeat the end boss, break the time loop, etc. In fact, if anything, they might have a time *limit*, stating that if the Jumper can't get it done in a year or so, they fail and move on.

What entices a Jumper to go through this, to be in rough seas without a paddle, to have to take Drawbacks to earn *anything* in this deadly place? Well, usually, the Perks, Items, and Companions are very enticing. They might be powerful, or rare, or just so unique that a Jumper will never find them elsewhere. Another thing that might entice a Jumper? Picking a piece of media for the gauntlet where Things Went So Wrong. Somewhere where a given person or people suffered unfairly, and the chance to right that wrong and potentially give that person a second chance either in this world or as a Companion would be a big pull. If handled correctly, a Jumper normally afraid of horror will put themselves through the worst of it just to offer a hand to someone who in their canonical outing was never offered one.

Gauntlets are rare, at least compared to Jumps. But if inspiration hits for one, they can be downright legendary. Just remember, they have to be *tough*. Failure has to be a realistic possibility. Strip them bare, force them to confront nightmares and dire challenges, and *earn* every CP out of them, and you're doing it right. That goes both for making a Gauntlet and Jumping it; if a Jumper has no problems with a Gauntlet, something probably went wrong on one or both sides.

A final note, some Gauntlets include a +1000 CP Drawback that negates the Gauntlet nature of the Jump and makes it a normal Jump; no limits, access to Warehouse and all Perks, etc. Most often, this is done to allow a Jumper to enjoy wrecking face across what would otherwise be a traumatic setting, but this also is usually paired with removing access to some end-of-Gauntlet prize. Thus, a dilemma; suffer the Gauntlet and get a chance at something amazing, or go full power and miss whatever special thing(s) could have been theirs.

IX. Conclusion

Jumps are what the two halves of the coin make of them; the authors who write them, and the players/authors who take their Jumpers through them. With rare exception, the former should lean towards freedom for the latter. Provide, Scenarios and Drawbacks somewhat excluded, room for the Jumper's story. Maybe they want to follow things to the letter, maybe they want to derail the story completely, or maybe they just want to see what there was to discover beyond the frame of the original tale's protagonists. Whatever the case, the more passion the initial author puts in, the better. Know the material, revel in the positives and negatives, have enough sense of humor to see how both could be utilized, and then put it out into the world. With little more needed than a document/pdf, maybe a header image, and some measure of spellcheck, you can provide others with hours and hours of imaginative entertainment and storytelling. And that is something pretty awesome.

And for the Jumpers and their authors? Enjoy. As much or as little as you want to. Several forums exist to support Jumpchain fans, as well as Discord servers. Read up Jumps based on your favorite properties. Make short or not-so-short stories following a Jumper's career. Post builds and discuss what your Jumper would do in this situation or that one. It's a fun and imaginative hobby. The only thing I'd advise is, where possible, give the authors of the Jumps feedback. The hobby is small enough that an author, if active, will probably see said feedback, and it's nice to hear both the good and the bad.