FREEBOOTERS

Original Edition Rules
Rules for Fantastic Pirate Adventures

FREEBOOTERS

Original Edition Rules
for Fantastic Sea Roving Games
in the Age of Pirates

by David Pulver & Thomas Denmark
Special thanks to E. Gary Gygax & Dave Arneson for opening Pandora's box.

FREEBOOTERS
FIRST EDITION

A Roleplaying Game of Sea Rovers in the Age of Pirates compatible with the Original Fantasy RPG and similar systems.

NightOwlWorkshop.com

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

What if the first RPG was inspired by epic tales of the buccaneers and pirates of the Caribbean? Instead of slogging their way through gloomy dungeons, freebooters hoist the Jolly Roger and seek plunder and adventure on the high seas!

FREEBOOTERS is a pirate-themed retro-clone intended to be compatible with the original fantasy RPG, Raiders, Guardians, Colonial Troopers, Warriors of the Red Planet and others. The rules presented can be used as a complete game or a companion to fantasy games using the same overall system. This book is a resource for Referees to pick and choose from!

Starting the Game

The first step in playing the game is to create a character. This is a simple matter of rolling some dice to determine your character's strength and other basic attributes, picking a character class, using your game money to buy some equipment, and then playing.

If you're the Referee, you've got a bit more preparation to do—that's covered later in a section especially for the Referee.

The Dice

Freebooters uses several different kinds of dice, and we abbreviate them according to how many sides they have. So, the four-sided die is called a d4, and if we're telling you to roll 3 of them, we say to roll 3d4. The six-sided die is a d6, the eight-sided die is a d8, the ten-sided die is a d10, the twelve-sided die is a d12, and the twenty-sided die is a d20. There is no die with 100 sides—what you do to roll a d100 is to roll two ten-sided dice, treating the first roll as the "tens" and the second roll as the "ones." So, if you were to roll a 7 and then a 3, that would mean a 73. A roll of 0 and 0 means a result of "100."

Attribute Scores

The attribute scores are numbers which represent the strength, intelligence, wisdom, dexterity, constitution, and charisma of the character.

The standard way to create attribute scores is to roll 3d6 in the order listed above. Once those rolls have been made, it is often obvious which type of character best fits the stats, but a player always has the option to play any character class desired. This basic method urges the player to allow the dice to choose what kind of character is played.

For those players who have no faith at all in their dice luck, they may use one of the following pre-rolled sets, assigning the numbers to whichever attribute seems proper for the type of character they want to play:

Hero: 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16

The Hero has very good stats in two attributes, average to high average in three, and one that is not quite up to the average, portraying the "fatal flaw" that accompanies the story of every hero.

Generalist: 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14

The Generalist has a couple of slightly above average abilities, but is at least average in everything. In theory he can be competent as any sort of character.

Specialist: 6, 9, 12, 14, 16, 18

The Specialist is the best there is at what he does, hence the 18 Attribute in something. He also has Heroic level Attributes in two Attributes, high average in a fourth, but two of his Attributes range from low average to poor. This portrays his total concentration on his specialty to the detriment of a fully rounded skill set.

THE ATTRIBUTES

Strength

A high strength gives a character bonuses when attacking with a melee weapon, and lets him carry more weight. Strength is the prime attribute for Sea Rovers.
- Sea Rovers use their Strength Bonus to gain a percent bonus on earned Experience Points (XP).
- Combatants use their Strength Bonus to modify their Basic Hit Bonus (BHB) number with hand-held (melee) weapons.
- Combatants use their Strength Bonus to modify their "damage" result with hand-held (melee) weapons.

Intelligence

Intelligence represents IQ, reasoning, memory, and the ability to solve puzzles or understand difficult concepts. Use the character's Intelligence Bonus to learn additional languages. You gain one extra language for every point above 10.
- Find the Weakness: Characters use their Intelligence Bonus in ship-to-ship combat (i.e. target suffers a loss on his Armor Class (AC) against the character's attack).

Wisdom

Wisdom determines a character's insight, perception, and good judgment.
- Seafaring Strategy: Sea Rovers use their Wisdom Bonus to gain a bonus to hit in ship-to-ship combat.
- Navigation: Sea Rovers and Strikers add Wisdom Bonus to any attempts to navigate or avoid getting lost

Dexterity

Dexterity is a combination of coordination and quickness. A high dexterity score gives your character bonuses when attacking with a ranged weapon. It is the Prime requisite for Striker characters.
- Use the Dexterity Bonus to modify the character's BHB number with ranged weapons.
- Strikers use their Dexterity Bonus to gain a percent bonus on XP earned.
- Characters use their Dexterity Bonus to modify AC.

Constitution

Constitution is the health and endurance of the character. A high constitution gives a character extra hit points. Constitution is the prime requisite for Musketeer characters.
- The Constitution Bonus adds hit points on each hit die.
- Musketeers use their Constitution Bonus to gain a percent bonus on XP earned
- The Referee may call for Constitution rolls of a ST + Constitution Bonus when the character is facing possible suffocation or exhaustion.

Charisma

A highly charismatic character has a better chance to talk his way out of trouble, and can lead more special followers than characters with a low charisma. Charisma is the prime requisite for Bokor characters.
- Bokors use their Charisma Bonus to gain a percent bonus on Experience Points (XP) earned.
- Use the character's Charisma to ascertain the number of loyal NPC hirelings available and to modify the loyalty of NPC hirelings (see Hirelings).

UNIVERSAL ATTRIBUTE BONUS

Each attribute has the potential to modify what the character can do. Table below, Universal Attribute Bonus (or just "Bonus") gives some numbers to consider:

Universal Attribute Bonus Table

Attribute Roll	Description	Bonus
3	Pathetic	-3 (or -15%)
4-5	Poor	-2 (or -10%
6-8	Below Average	-1 (-05%)
9–12	Average	–
13-15	Above Average	+1 (or +5%)
16-17	Excellent	+2 (or +10%)
18	Superior	+3 (or +15%)

CHARACTER CLASSES

Freebooters choose one of three classes: Sea Rover, Musketeer, and Striker. Each of these is described in detail below. In addition, an optional class is the Bokor (Voodoo sorcerer) for those who wish to add magic to the historical Caribbean milieu.

Reading Character Class Tables

Level: Refers to the levels of experience of the character.

XP: This is the number of Experience Points (XP) needed to advance to this level.

BHB: This is the "Base Hit Bonus" added to the attack roll. (See Combat)

HD: This is the number of Hit Dice at that level. Characters roll their new HD each time they advance a level to obtain an addition to their number of hit points.

ST: This is the Saving Throw number for the character. It is used to determine the success of the use of an ability appropriate to the character class. Some classes have additions or even subtractions to these numbers in particular cases. These modifiers are described in the individual Class Descriptions, below.

Saving Throw is also used when trying to avoid something terrible. This number is modified by the appropriate Ability modifier depending on the type of terrible event.

Attribute Modifiers versus Terrible Events

Strength	Crushing Events, Disarm Events, Knockback Events
Intelligence	Memory Events, Puzzle Events,
Wisdom	Perception Events, Deception Events, Mental Attack
Constitution	Death, Deprivation, Disease, Endurance, Poison,
Dexterity	Evasion Events, Balance & Coordination Events, Speed Events
Charisma	Ego Events, Emotion Events, Fast Talk Events

Attribute Test

While Freebooters does not utilize specific skills, promoting the aesthetic that player action trumps random rolls, there may be times when the Referee prefers some sort of die check be made to determine whether or not a character is successful attempting a particular action. In these cases, the Referee determines which of the character's abilities is most relevant to the task being attempted. If two or more are relevant, the highest ability may be used at the Referee's discretion.

For instance, the player wants to see if his character can leap over a pit. The Referee determines Strength is the relevant ability. Or, the player may attempt to disable a doomsday device with a ticking clock. The Referee then determines the player may utilize either Dexterity or Intelligence to make the attempt.

It should be stressed that this system is only intended to resolve the most unlikely resolutions; Referees are encouraged to allow automatic success when reasonable or when the player adequately describes the steps he or she takes to accomplish the desired objective.

At no time should a player be called on for an Attribute Test unless the Referee is ready for the character to either succeed or fail. And ready for failure should not be limited to "you're dead."

The player rolls a d20, using the attribute modifier to increase (or in some cases decrease) the d20 roll. The Referee may also add or subtract situational modifiers. If the final result is equal to or higher than the character's Attribute Test, which is the same as his Saving Throw (ST), the test succeeds.

SEA ROVER

This is a sailor who is also a fierce fighter. He or she is the most common type of freebooter to be found in the Caribbean: a buccaneer, pirate, privateer, navy man, smuggler, or even a merchant. Often the sea rover switches between these different roles depending on the way the wind blows. Sea rovers have often traveled the world and visited many different lands and ports, but are most comfortable with a deck under their feet.

Favorite Weapon: Choose a favorite weapon at character creation. Cutlass, Flintlock Pistol, Boarding Axe, or Musket are good options if you aren't sure! (See the various weapon tables in the Equipment section.) Receive a +1 bonus to-hit and damage with that weapon, above any other bonuses they receive. Receive a second such weapon at level 5, and a third at level 10.

Unstoppable: If a Sea Rover is 4th level or higher he gains this ability. If he incapacitates a foe (reduces them to zero or fewer HP) with a successful attack (other than an area attack) he receives an immediate free attack against another enemy within reach (or range). Because firearms of the era are single shot weapons that take several seconds to reload, a gun can't be used to attack more than once per round. However, if a character has multiple primed and loaded pistols on his person (e.g., one his in other hand, a few tucked into his sash or belt, etc.) he can use each one.

Strategy: add Wisdom bonus in ship-to-ship battles.

Navigation: add Wisdom bonus to any attempts to navigate or avoid being lost at sea.

| LEVEL	XP	HD (D8)	BHB	ST	LEVEL BONUS
1	0	1	+1	14	Favorite Weapon
2	2,000	2	+2	13	-
3	4,000	3	+3	12	Language
4	8,000	4	+4	11	Unstoppable
5	16,000	5	+5	10	Favorite Weapon
6	32,000	6	+6	9	-
7	64,000	7	+7	8	Language
8	125,000	8	+8	7	-
9	250,000	9	+9	6	
10	500,000	10	+10	5	Favorite Weapon

MUSKETEER

Some of the most famous freebooters – such as Henry Morgan – were not primarily seaman at all, but were instead professional soldiers or adventurers. They couldn't sail worth a damn, but their battle experience shone when fighting ashore, whether in a tavern brawl in Port Royal or a bloody raid on a Spanish fortress. A musketeer is a landsman with a military background, someone with professional experience in violence. They may have fought in any of the many wars around the world during the period, such as the War of the Spanish Succession.

Favorite Weapon: Musketeers should choose a single weapon, either ranged or melee, at character creation; rapier, small sword, or musket are good options if you aren't sure. Receive a +1 bonus to-hit and damage with that weapon, above any other bonuses they receive. They receive a second such weapon at level 5, and a third at level 10. Bonus may be applied to the same weapon.

Unstoppable: As per Sea Rover, but only applies if fighting with a light, agile blade, such as a rapier or small sword.

Level	XP	HD (d10)	BHB	ST	Level Bonus
1	0	1	+1	14	Favorite Weapon
2	2,500	2	+2	13	Unstoppable
3	5,000	3	+3	12	-
4	10,000	4	+4	11	-
5	20,000	5	+5	10	Favorite Weapon
6	40,000	6	+6	9	-
7	80,000	7	+7	8	-
8	160,000	8	+8	7	-
9	320,000	9	+9	6	-
10	640,000	10	+10	5	Favorite Weapon
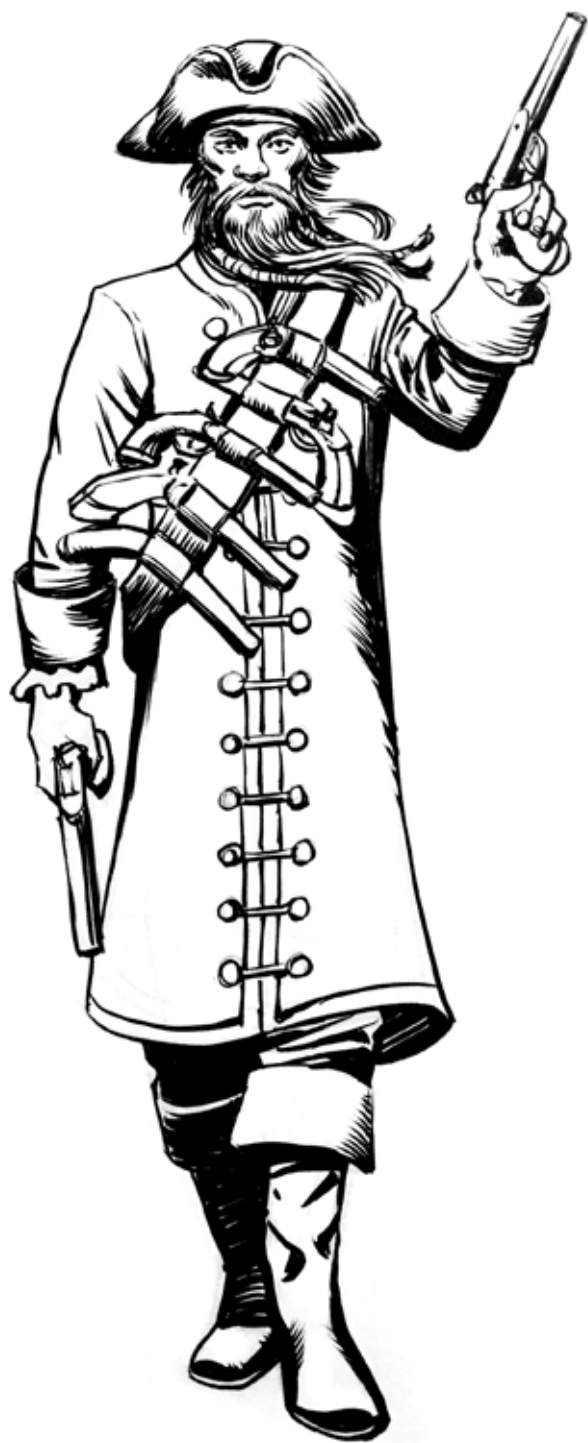
STRIKER

Skilled hunters and trackers from the Darien (Panama region) or Miskito Indians ("the Miskito Kingdom" around present day Hondorus and Nicaragua) were employed by freebooters as auxiliaries, guides, and fishers (called "strikers"). Local Miskito chiefs or kings often allied with the English traders and privateers to fight the Spanish, acquired European muskets, and assisted and inter-married with escaped black slaves.

Stealth: a striker can move quietly and subtly and cannot be detected unless an opponent is actively looking for them. In that case make an opposed attribute check.

Surprise: Strikers are masters of the ambush and at higher levels are able to surprise their foes more often than others. They successfully surprise their opponents with great ability as they increase in level, adding their surprise bonus to initiative checks.

Backstab: The striker must catch an opponent unaware of her presence, either taking his opponent by surprise or strike after successfully using the stealth ability. She will receive an attack bonus of +4 and will multiply all damage by 2.

Hold Breath: The striker can hold her breath for an unusually long period of time. This allows her to swim under enemy ships and sabotage them, or hide in bodies of water until a threat passes by. One minute plus an additional minute per level after 1st.

Navigation: add Wisdom bonus to any attempts to navigate or avoid being lost at sea in coastal areas.

Level	XP	HD (d8)	BHB	ST	Surprise
1	0	1	+1	14	+1
2	2,100	2	+2	13	+1
3	4,200	3	+3	12	+2
4	8,400	4	+4	11	+2
5	16,800	5	+5	10	+3
6	33,600	6	+6	9	+3
7	67,200	7	+7	8	+4
8	134,400	8	+8	7	+4
9	268,800	9	+9	6	+5
10	537,600	10	+10	5	+5

FREEBOOTER ORIGINS

Backgrounds: Characters at creation should define their Backgrounds, or what it is they did before becoming freebooters. This may be a part of the world they were raised in or traveled in extensively, or a noteworthy job or position they held, or a body of knowledge they've become expert in.

The Referee may have some input in this – see the guidelines given under Starting Out and Organizing a Crew. If not, the following note and table may be of use.

Age: Choose any age for the character from teenager to elderly. However, while there were a few old salts and plenty of younger people, the average age is 25-28.

Nationality: The Caribbean is a melting pot. The highest proportion of freebooters operating in the Caribbean were of English ancestry, but other ethnicities are possible. Feel free to roll on the table or choose:

1D20	Freebooter Nationality Table
01-06	English
07-09	Colonial American (usually English ancestry)
10-13	Black African (escaped slave or "Maroon")
14	Mixed blood (Creole, e.g., French/African)
15-16	Scottish, Welsh, or Irish
17-18	French
19	Caribbean Indian
20	Dutch, Jewish, Spanish, or other.

The English, French, Spanish, Dutch were the major colonial powers. North America was still under English dominion, but the American colonies had their own distinct character. Scots, Welsh, and Irish were often indentured servants, ex-soldiers, or poor colonists. The French and Dutch were rival colonial powers to England and Spain, but both had plenty of privateers, as well as serving in mixed pirate or buccaneer crews. Spaniards were usually considered the enemy of most freebooters, but some captured Spanish crewmen joined up. There were

A few freebooters - such as captains of privateer ships or professional soldiers taking up a buccaneer's life - came from the middle or upper class. However, the majority were lower class seaman from the lower classes. It was common for European countries to ship male and female convicts, rebels, or heretics to the Caribbean to work as indentured servants. Escaping this to join a pirate crew and perhaps go from rags to riches appealed to many.

A far worse lot was that of the Black African slaves (some newly arrived from Africa, others born into bondage) who were half or more of the population of many Caribbean islands. Black freebooters were usually slaves who had escaped from plantations or, volunteers who joined after slave ships were captured. Some freebooters still treated their African shipmates as inferiors and employing them as servants or cooks, but many other crews were fully integrated. These black pirates were feared as men who had nothing to lose, for even if they escaped the noose they could still be recaptured and enslaved again.

Caribbean Indian freebooters were often discriminated against as mere savages, but could also be found employed on freebooter ships as "strikers" - men who were valued for their skills at spear fishing at sea, and for hunting and tracking when ashore.

Women: The majority of freebooters are men, and many pirate crews had strict rules against taking women (or boys) aboard. However, it was also common for merchant and even navy vessels to have seafaring wives or girlfriends aboard ship, and accounts exist of them not just serving as cooks, nurses, or servants but also serving the guns during sea battles. Women are also known to have occasionally successfully disguised themselves as men to serve as soldiers. History records two full-fledged female pirates in the Caribbean: Anne Bonney and Mary Reade (who also served as a soldier) and others may have existed who kept a lower profile. Female freebooters are thus rare but not unknown; there's no reason they can't be PCs.

Why People Became Freebooters

To get rich, mostly. Seafarers joined buccaneers or privateers during wartime because this offered the potential for more wealth and freedom than on a merchant or navy ship, with considerably better treatment, especially for common seamen. When peace broke out, if they hadn't made their fortune, they faced unemployment. Many ex-privateers proved reluctant to give up their lucrative freebooting life, and so turned pirate instead! Others, especially pirates, were conscripted into the trade. Ship crews (and sometimes their passengers) whose vessel was captured were typically given the choice of being killed (or, if the freebooters were generous, marooned in a leaky boat or on a deserted island) or joining the pirate crew. Quite understandably, many accepted the offer! This helped ensure freebooters had enough men to replace their losses and crew captured ships. Of course, when freebooters captured ships that were transporting indentured convicts or slaves, these might also join if offered their freedom.

LANGUAGES

Characters at creation speak only their native language and any one additional language (see the note on Language). They may add extra languages via taking skills. Characters may understand basic concepts (and make themselves understood) in languages they don't speak by rolling their Intelligence or lower on a d20; GMs may award bonuses to this roll for sufficiently entertaining roleplaying! "Basic" concepts should be reserved to the likes of, "drop your weapons," "I give up," or perhaps even "Which way to the tavern?", though of course there is no guarantee the targets of such questions will want to answer them.

SAMPLE CHARACTER BUILD

Sarah is designing a new character for a Freebooters campaign. The Referee decides to use a straight 3d6 roll for Attribute scores, but allows the players to sort them in any order to best suit the class they want to play. Sarah rolls her dice and gets: 9, 12, 10, 8, 11 and 14. Talking to the other players, Sarah decides she'd most like to play a sea rover. Picturing an impetuous young pirate with a habit of swinging limberly from rigging and chandeliers, she arranges her stats like so:
STR: 9
DEX: 14 (+1)
CON: 10
INT: 11
WIS: 8
CHA: 12

She then notes the other features of her chosen class. Sea rovers use a d8 for HD, so she notes that he starts with the maximum of 8 HP. Her BHB is +0 and his ST is 13. She starts the game with one Skill. She decides that his initial Skill will be Navigation.

For languages she decides he will speak English and Spanish.

She rolls starting wealth and gets 700 pesos.

Lastly, she settles on her character's name and background: his name is Peter Black, and he was a young apprentice who press-ganged to serve aboard a small Royal Navy warship at the age of 17. He took to the sea and fought in a number of battles against the Spanish and French, becoming a skilled swordsman and navigator. However, his last captain was a depraved martinet. After an innocent friend was nearly flogged to death, Black joined several other crew members in leading a successful mutiny. Unable to return to England, he became a pirate!

EQUIPMENT AND STARTING COIN

Unless the Referee wishes to limit starting gear (e.g., a "shipwrecked on a deserted island" scenario) characters begin their freebooter careers with 20-120 pesos (2d6 x 10).

Name: _____

Nationality: _____

	Score	**Mod**
Strength:	_____	_____
Dexterity:	_____	_____
Constitution:	_____	_____
Intelligence:	_____	_____
Wisdom:	_____	_____
Charisma:	_____	_____

Class: _____
Level: _____
XP: _____
Save: _____

Max. HP: _____
Current HP: _____
Armor Class: _____
Attack Bonus: _____

Abilities

Background

Weapons	**+Hit**	**Dmg**

Other Gear

Wealth

Languages

Characters may use their money to buy a variety of equipment whenever they're in a civilized port with merchants, or can barter with other freebooters.

Coin from various nations flowed in the Caribbean but the most common coins were Spanish, (as the Spaniards minted silver locally) The most common coin is their one-ounce silver "piece of eight" or peso (worth eight reals, or silver pennies). Some common coins and their weight and value are shown below. Merchants would always weigh coins...

Coin	Origin	Material	Weight	Pesos
Pieces of eight (peso)	Spanish	silver	16 per lb.	1 peso
Real (silver penny)	Spanish	silver	128 per lb.	1/8 peso
Doubloon	Spanish	gold	20 per lb.	4 pesos

English crowns are similar to pesos; English shillings are similar to reals.
If using price lists from other fantastical RPG 4 silver peso = 1 gold piece.

MELEE WEAPONS

This list is by no means exhaustive. It represents the most common melee weapons historically found in the period. Referees may incorporate more weapons from other sources that are appropriate to his or her campaign.

Weapon	Damage	Weight (lb.)	Cost (pesos)
Boarding Axe	1d6*	4	4
Tomahawk	1d4+1	1	2
Club or Belaying Pin	1d6-1	2	1
Dagger**	1d4	0.5	2
Fist, Kick, etc.	1d3	-	-
Cutlass or Saber	1d8	2	5
Broadsword or Claymore	1d8*	3	10
Machete	1d6	2	2
Rapier or Small Sword	1d6	1	4
Pike or Halberd	1d8*	8	5
Boat hook	1d6	1	1
Whip	1d4***	0.5	1

* +1 damage if weapon is used two-handed. Pikes and halberds let a second line attack but are
-2 to hit if used below decks in a ship or in confined spaces indoors

** Easily concealable (up sleeve, in pocket, etc).
*** Target hit must make a Dexterity save or suffer -2 penalty to AC for one round
A hook on the end of a hand also works like a boat hook! Boarding axes, machetes can chop through trees, thick vines, or wooden doors, etc. that would ruin a sword.

Ranged Weapons

Common ranged weapons are flintlock pistols, muskets, and shotgun-like blunderbusses. They require loading powder, primer, and a heavy lead pistol or musket ball (or load of balls or scrap for a blunderbuss). All are noisy and smoky; if the powder is allowed to get wet, guns may not fire (50% chance). Also use are throwing knives, bows, etc. used by natives or when silent kills are needed. All are available for free men for personal use (slaves aren't permitted to buy or own anything other than a knife or axe) but walking around a "civilized" town heavily armed with musket, blunderbuss or boarding pike will attract the local militia's attention. Old matchlock muskets are often used by local militia, natives, farmers, escaped slaves, etc. They require an awkward match fuse, are slow to load, and don't work at all in wet weather.

Note: Ranged weapons can be used at medium range (double listed range) at -1 to hit or a long range (triple listed range) at -2 to hit. Aiming for one interrupted round, adds +2 to hit.

Throwing Weapons and Bows Table

Weapon	Damage	RoF*	Range (feet)	Weight (lb.)	cost (pesos)
Tomahawk*	1d4+1	1	10	2	2
Throwing Knife*	1d4	1	10	1/2	2
Bow (native)	1d6	1	60	2	5
Spear or Harpoon	1d8	1	15	4	2
Arrow, 10	–	–	–	1	1

* Concealable under coat.

Ranged Weapons (Firearms) Table

Weapon	Dmg	RoF*	Cap	Range (feet)	Weight (lb)	Cost (pesos)
Flintlock Pistol*	1d8	1 per round	1 shot	20	2	20
Old Matchlock Musket	1d10	1 per 2 rounds	1	80	10	10
Musketoon (short barrel)	1d10	1 per round	1 shot	100	8	20
Pocket pistol	1d6	1 per round	1 shot	10	1	15
Musket	1d10	1 per round	1 shot	150	10	25
Blunderbuss**	3d4	1 per round	1 shot	40**	6	20

* Concealable under long coat. Pocket pistol can be hidden in vest, dress, or large pocket
** The spread of shot is 5' wide. Therefore, one shot can attack several targets if they are lined up accordingly. However, at beyond the first 20 ft, targets get to make a save (DEX mod applies) for half damage

The butts of pistols, muskets or a blunderbuss may be used to strike in melee for 1d4-1 (pistol or crossbow) or 1d6-1 (any musket or blunderbuss) damage.

Grenades and Stink Pots

The early hand grenade, or "grenado" - basically a clay pot or iron sphere filled with gunpowder with a length of lit fuse - was introduced during the late 17th century, and was a popular siege and naval boarding weapon. (The term "grenadier" came about for elite assault troops of the era who risked their tricky use.) Many freebooters used them recklessly, heedless of the danger, sometimes rely on grenades nearly as often as they did muskets and cutlasses!

It takes a full round and both hands to prepare a grenade, so the user can only attack every other round (one round to ready and light the fuse, and another round to throw it).

Rather than an attack roll, the attacker makes a Dexterity ST to light the fuse and throw the weapon into the right general area. On a failed roll, it misses and overshoots by 1d4 x 10% of the range in a random direction; anyone in the radius gets a Dexterity saving throw to avoid damage as above. On a roll of 1, the attacker dropped or short-fused it and it goes off in his hand, affecting himself and anyone nearby. Otherwise, the grenade successfully lands next to the target. Anyone within the 10 ft. radius near the target then gets a dexterity saving throw. If there's no cover,

success means they take half damage; if there's cover within a few feet (or they opt to leap overboard or the like) a successful ST means they take no damage at all.

Stink-Pots: These were similar to grenades but were filled with foul substances that gave off malodorous fumes. No effect if used outdoors during a strong wind , but otherwise anyone who is within the 10 ft. area of effect takes no damage but instead is choking and nauseated (-1 to attacks or ST rolls for 3 rounds) and loses their sense of smell for 1d4 hours. In a confined space such as below decks or in a room the penalty is -2 instead and additionally a victim must roll a Constitution ST (vs. poison) to either flee or spend 1d3 rounds retching.

Someone with Master Gunner skill can improvise stink-pots or grenades at half cost given an hour's time per pot or bomb and appropriate raw ingredients (gunpowder, pots, etc.).

Weapon	Dmg	RoF	Cap	Range (feet)	Weight (lb)	Cost (Peso)
Grenade	2d6 (10 ft. radius)	1/2	1	20	1.5	10
Stink-Pot	special	1/2	1	20	1.5	5

SHIP'S WEAPONS

These weapons are mounted on vessels or fortresses. Swivel guns are designed to be attached to a rail or post. Cannon are mounted on wheeled carriages; these rules simplify things as bigger cannon are slower firing. The crew are the minimum required to reload the gun (and for cannon, haul it back into position after it recoils); one man is needed to fire it once loaded.

Heavy Weapon Table

Weapon	Dmg	RoF	Crew	Cap	Range (feet)	Weight (lbs.)	Cost (Peso)
Swivel Gun	1d12	1	2	1	300	200	60
Ship's Cannon	1d20	1	4	1	600	2,000	100
Long-Barrel Cannon	1d20	1	6	1	800	4,000	150

ARMOR

Freebooters and other sea rovers rarely wear armor; it's too hot! The disadvantages of doing so are standing out as being unusual in social circumstances, becoming overheated due to the warm climate, and finding it difficult or impossible

to swim. Armor is most often used by soldiers serving in garrisons or warships, but is rare even then, though Spanish soldiers and some buccaneers in the early period sometimes wear a breastplate and helmet.

Heat: Referees may discourage wearing armor by requiring a Con ST each hour of working or after any fight. Apply the Heat modifiers. Failure means lose 1 hp due to dehydration or heat exhaustion. This doesn't apply when (rarely) it's not hot or humid. Also on hot days the Referee can apply the heat penalty to movement speeds and attack rolls.

Armor Table

Armor	AC	Cost (peso)	Heat
Back-and-Breast armor	15	50	-2
Helmet	+1	5	-1
Leather jacket	11	5	-1

* Concealable under a coat.
** Anyone wearing back-and-breast armor who falls into deep water will drown even if they can swim unless they can struggle free in time - which is difficult! Doing so requires a Dexterity ST. A leather jacket or helmet both give a -2 to any Swimming ST but don't drown you.
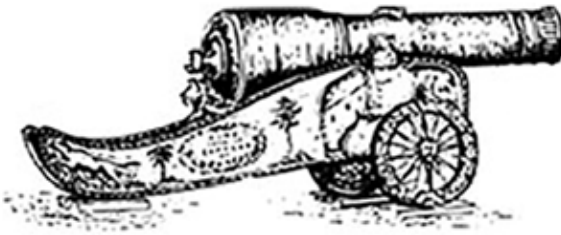
TOOLS & PERSONAL EFFECTS

Item	Cost (Pesos)
Book	2
Iron nails, four dozen	1
Logbook	8
Medicinal leeches, one bottle	1
Navigator's instruments	50
Pocket Watch	10
Shipwright's tools	32
Surgeon's tools	100
Telescope	80
Tobacco, per pound	1
Medicine, Dose (+4 to resist serious disease)	200
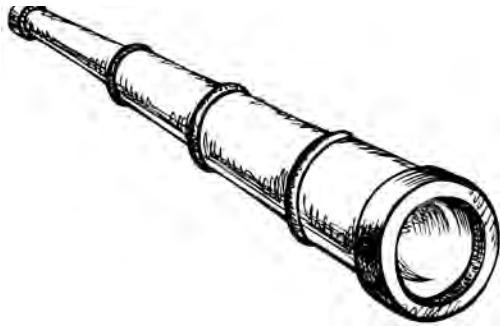
CLOTHING

Item	Cost (Pesos)
Belt, leather	1
Boots	8
Large hat (for pirate captain or gentleman)	10
Gentleman's clothing	100
Lady's clothingt150	
Fancy wig	50
Cheap clothing	1
Sailor's cap	1/2
Sailor's clothing	4
Shoes, fancy	3
Shoes, simple	2
Shoes, women's	2
Ordinary Clothing, men's	20
Ordinary clothing, women's	30

Gentleman's Clothing: Shirt, breeches, waistcoat, and cravat of the finest silk or brocade; large hat; boots or shoes.

Lady's Clothing: Skirt, bodice, overskirt, and stockings all made of the finest silk; hat; shoes.

Ordinary Woman's Clothing: Bodice, skirt, overskirt, and stockings (cotton or linen); shoes.

Ordinary Man's Clothing: Shirt, breeches, waistcoat and cravat of cotton or linen; cap; shoes.

Poor Clothing: Shirt and breeches or simple dress made of wool or cotton, often barefoot.

Sailor's outfit: Tough jacket and breeches, barefoot or boots.

DRINK, FOOD AND RENT

Item	Cost (Pesos)
Fine meal	4
Good meal	1
Simple meal	1/8
Pig	6
Chicken	1
Cow	32
Day's lodging, simple	1/4
Day's lodging, fine	2
Day's lodging, good	1
Rum, gallon	4
Wine, fine, per bottle	5
Wine, cheap, per bottle	1/2
Brandy, barrel 45 poe	

MISCELLANEOUS GOODS AND SERVICES

Item	Cost (Pesos)
Cheap whore	1/hour
Expensive courtesan	10/visit
Parakeets, one dozen	2
Parrot, talking	5 dbl

LEVELS AND EXPERIENCE POINTS

As characters continue their adventures, they become progressively better at their various abilities, or learn new ones. This is represented in the game by advancing levels. Adventurers advance in levels by the accumulation of "experience points" (xp). These are awarded for achieving goals, accumulating treasure, and defeating foes.

Achieving Goals: Characters should gain approximately 100xp/level for achieving minor goals that do not have a monetary reward, such saving a damsel in distress or humiliating a hated rival. For major goals, such as breaking into a

Spanish fortress and rescuing captives from the Inquisition the reward should be greater, around 500-1000xp/level.

Defeating Foes: A opponent who is killed, captured, or forced to surrender, should be worth 100 xp per HD. Half the amount should be awarded for successfully driving off or thwarting an opponent's designs. Referees must decide how to fairly allocate the xp, either dividing them equally among all of the characters involved in the encounter, or awarding a larger portion to the characters who did the most damage, made the killing shot, or were otherwise more directly responsible for the victory.

Accumulating Treasure: Plunder is the primary goal of most freebooters! Characters should gain 1 xp for every 100 pieces of eight they accumulate in an adventurous, piratical, or cunning fashion.

In order to get experience points for treasure, it has to not just be found, but taken back to civilization. Experience points for treasure should be based on the share received (see Freebooter Agreements). Thus, if a freebooter is part of a crew of 120 pirates who captures plunder worth 450,000 pieces of eight, and the agreement grants him two shares, or 1/60 of the loot, then the would get 450,000/60 = 7,500 pesos and earn 75 xp.

Optional Rule: Wine, Women and Song: Freebooters were notorious for spending most of their ill-gotten loot in carousing. To encourage this the referee can opt to give an extra 1 xp bonus for every 100 pieces of eight actually expended on creative debauchery (rather than using it for gear, savings, giving it to the church, burying it, etc).!
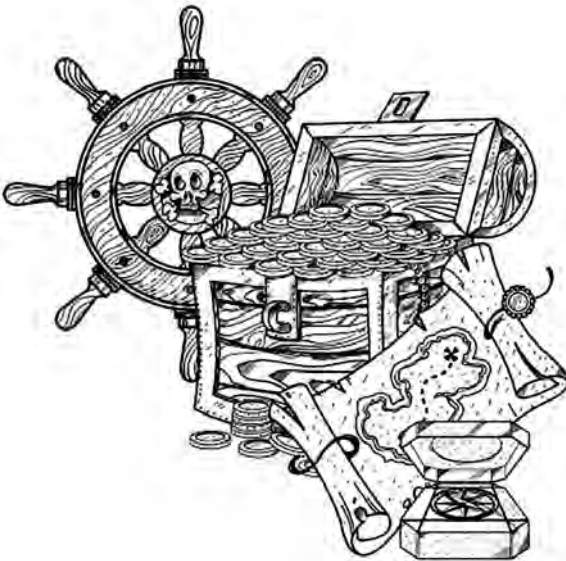
REFEREE'S SECTION

RULE NUMBER ONE

The most important rule is that the Referee always has the right to modify the rules. In fact, it's encouraged. There are gaps in the rules—holes we did not fill on purpose because much of the fun of "old school" gaming is being able to make rules up as you need them. These can be as simple as "grab some dice, roll them, and tell me the number" or as complex as devising your own home-brew charts to cover the smallest of details. Along the way we'll be making suggestions, explanations, and giving ideas; feel free to use them or discard them as you like. This is your game, after all.

TIME

Time in Freebooters is measured in normal terms of hours, days, weeks, and so on. During adventures, time is measured in special increments of turns and rounds. Turns are typically 10 minutes long, and a round is typically one minute long. Combat is most often measured in terms of rounds, and exploration most often in terms of turns.

MOVEMENT AND ENCUMBRANCE

Unencumbered characters typically move at a rate of 120' per turn when exploring an area, which takes into account searching, mapping, and moving cautiously. Characters can move 10 times that distance in close quarters by running with no regard for danger, obstacles, and stealth. Characters (again, unencumbered) may run up to 1 mile in 1 turn if outdoors and in favorable terrain (road, meadow, etc.). During combat, an unencumbered character can move (and move only) up to 120' in one round, or move up to 30' and perform some other action, such as fighting. Characters are considered unencumbered if they are carrying 35 pounds or less (modified by their Strength.)

Moderately encumbered characters, or those who are wearing bulky armor or carrying between 36 and 70 lbs. of equipment and treasure (modified for exceptional Strength) suffer a penalized movement rate of 90'. Encumbered characters, or those carrying 71-105 lbs. (again, modified by Strength) of equipment and treasure, suffer a penalized movement rate of just 60'. Heavily encumbered characters (carrying more than 105 lbs. plus or minus Strength modifiers) may move only 30', and may not run at all.

REST

Characters must rest at least one turn for every six turns (one hour) of exploration, or suffer a -1 penalty to all attacks, damage, and Save throws due to exhaustion.

LIGHT

Unless stated otherwise, all indoor areas explored by the characters should be considered dark, with no range of visibility. Carrying torches, lamps, and other devices will provide illumination as follows:

Item	Range	Lit Duration
Candle	10'	2 hours
Flashlight	20'	12 hours
Lamp, oil	40'	8 hours
Lighter	10'	1 turn
Torch	30'	1 hour

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Falling

Characters take 1d6 points of damage for each 10 feet they fall. They can make a Save throw versus falls to sustain only half damage.

Drowning and Suffocating

Characters can hold their breath for a number of rounds equal to their Constitution. After that, they take 1d6 HP per additional round.

Poison

Poisons commonly encountered in Freebooters include animal venoms (such as snake and spider bites), vegetable toxins (often used to coat poison needles or similar devices on traps), and essentially "magical" poisons such as clouds of poisonous gas. Generally, when a player character ingests or inhales the poison, or it otherwise enters his or her bloodstream, he or she must roll a Save throw against poison (sometimes with a modifier—up to +2 for a relatively weak toxin, down to -4 for a particularly lethal one). If the Save throw is failed, the character dies.

In practice death from such cases is not instantaneous, although the character is typically incapacitated immediately. There is time for medical assistance (antivenins or antitoxins, etc.) to the character, if this is done reasonably soon (say, within about 15 minutes depending on the strength of the venom or toxin involved).

DOORS

Most doors encountered will be closed. Some of these may be locked, while others may be stuck due to age or deliberate sabotage. Doors that are stuck closed may be opened on a roll of 6+ on a d6. Add character's Strength bonus to the roll.

Obviously some doors, usually because of stronger materials or special construction, will never be forced despite the Strength of the characters, and special means must be undertaken to open them (explosives, finding the key, etc.).

Some doors will be hidden or concealed, and are commonly termed "secret doors". Characters who are actively searching for secret doors may locate them on a roll of 6+ on a d6. Add character's Wisdom bonus to the roll.

Characters may attempt to hear what is happening on the other side of a door; again, this is ordinarily successful with a roll of 6+ on a d6. Add any character class abilities or modifiers due to gadgets. For example you may add +1 because the character is using a cup to focus the sound to her ear.

HIRELINGS AND SPECIALISTS

Characters often find it helpful to employ assistants (Hirelings) to help them on their adventurers, or specialists to assist them with particular matters in between adventures. The number of Hirelings a character may employ at any one time is based on the following chart:

Charisma	Number of Hirelings
3	0
4-5	2
6-8	3
9-12	5
13-15	7
16-17	9
18+	11

Retainers may be exceptional NPCs with class levels, or may be "0 level" normal humans. Exceptional NPCs are usually generated just like player characters, whereas "0 level" retainers (such as porters, torchbearers, and soldiers) are assumed to have average ability scores, 1d6 hit points, and Save roll as 1st level Fighting Men.

If the Referee advises a player that individuals are available for hire, the player must negotiate a salary with each potential Hireling, and offer any equipment appropriate for the job. Once terms are met, the Referee either rules on the acceptance of employment, or may roll on the following table, modified by the hiring character's Basic Ability Modifier (Charisma):

Roll 2d6	Reaction
2 or less	Refusal, no re-negotiation
3-5	Refusal
6-8	Further negotiation required
9-11	Offer accepted
12+	Accepted, high loyalty

Hirelings with classes gain experience along with their employer. Typically this is 20% of the player's share, divided equally among all leveled hirelings. "0 level" hirelings do not ordinarily earn or accumulate experience.

Specialists are generally hired to perform a specific, non-adventuring task, such as deciphering a treasure map or repairing a musket. Some common specialists and their cost in pesos are as follows:

Native Guide: $1/day
Skilled Guide: $2/day
Translator: $25/day
Native Bearer: $5/day
Cook: $5/day
Digger/Excavator: $2/day
Bodyguard/Soldier: varies widely, but 0-level natives are usually $4/day.

COMBAT

Combat occurs when enemies face off with harmful intent, be it characters vs. villains, characters vs. monsters, or character vs. characters! Combat can include groups fighting against groups, and groups fighting individuals. Combat includes fighting with weapons, teeth, claws, fists, devices, Gadgets, and even mental powers or spells! The standard combat sequence for Freebooters is as follows:

Combat Sequence

1. Surprise is determined, and any surprise round resolved.
2. Initiative is rolled.
3. The side that wins initiative acts first, in the following order:
   a) Ranged weapons, spells, and devices are resolved.
   b) Any movement occurs
   c) Melee attacks are resolved.
4. The side that lost initiative acts, in the above order.
5. Any morale issues are resolved.
6. Go back to step two: Repeat until one side is destroyed, flees, or surrenders.

INITIATIVE

Each party rolls 1d6, usually the Referee rolling for the "enemies" and a chosen player rolling for the "heroes". The side with the highest result goes first. If the roll is a tie, the Referee judges whether a reroll is necessary or if both sides will act simultaneously in the standard order.

MELEE

A melee attack is an attack with a hand-held weapon such as a sword, spear, or dagger. A character's strength bonuses "to-hit" and damage are added to melee attacks. Two combatants within five feet of each other are considered to be "in melee."

MISSILES

Missile attacks are attacks with ranged weapons such as guns, crossbows, or thrown knives. A character's dexterity bonus for missile attacks is added to the "to-hit" roll when the character is using missile weapons. When using missiles to fire into melee, it is not possible to choose which opponent (or friend!) will receive the brunt of the attack.

DAMAGE AND HEALING

Each time someone or something is successfully attacked, the damage incurred is subtracted from its total hit points. Once a creature's hit points reach "0" it is considered dead (or sometimes incapacitated or unconscious, at the Referee's discretion). If a player's character reaches "0" or fewer hit points, 1d6 is rolled – the result is how many rounds the character has to receive some sort of medical aid before expiring!

A character who spends one round tending a dying character may bind the character's wounds, leaving him or her stable, though unconscious for a number of hours equal to the stricken character's d6 roll.

Damage may be "healed" after any combat with 1 turn of rest and first aid. The amount healed is 1d4 hit points – this amount cannot exceed the amount of damage incurred in the combat immediately preceding the rest, and will not heal damage incurred in earlier combats.

A character able to get eight hours of rest "in the rough" heals 1d3 points of damage after the rest. Characters able to get 24 hours of rest in a comfortable location (home, an inn, etc.) will recover 1d3 points plus 1 hit point per character level. A full week of full rest heals all hit point damage.

NONLETHAL COMBAT

Players or Referees may declare that certain types of combat (usually unarmed) are nonlethal. Damage suffered in this mode is temporary, and is healed back entirely in one hour. Characters reduced to 0 or fewer HP by nonlethal combat are merely knocked unconscious, not dead. See Appendix 3 for optional additional rules for grappling.

MORALE

If one party or creature is being overwhelmingly dominated, a morale check may be necessary to determine whether that party or creature will stay and fight or attempt to flee. Typically morale is determined to have broken with a percentile roll of 50% or less, modified by whatever the Referee feels appropriate (for instance, a cowardly spy or a mistreated hireling may suffer a 25% penalty to the morale check). Note that unintelligent creatures, or obsessed zealots as the case may be, will usually fight until death, with no morale check needed.

COVER

An opponent may be using cover to shoot from or hide behind. This will give an attacker a negative modifier to the roll, from -1 to -5 on their "to-hit" check, determined by the Referee.

VEHICLES IN COMBAT

Sometimes the action will revolve around vehicles – chasing or being chased, or simply shooting at or from moving carriages and so on. Rules for vehicle chases can be complicated and potentially slow the game down, so we believe the best option is to take note of exactly what the PCs are doing, the relative speeds of the vehicles involved and any other factors (for example, are they on a straight open road, are they on a mountain pass with hairpin bends, are they in heavy traffic, etc.) Then allow characters a DEX-based test. A successful roll could indicate that the carriage the PCs are in will get away from/catch up with the enemy. Or, you might want to keep the chase going and require a combination of successful rolls. It is important to note that a failed Save doesn't necessarily mean the characters have crashed their carriage. It could mean the enemy has caught up/got away, a broken wheel, cause damage to the carriage's HP from a cliff face (say d6 per 5 mph) or even horses being hit. A combination of failed STs is likely to result in a crash though.

Firing weapons from speeding carriage could garner a "to hit" penalty, of between -1 to -4 or so, at the Referee's discretion.

COMBAT CHARTS

A roll of 20 is always a hit. A roll of 1 is always a miss. (This applies to both Ascending and Descending AC systems)

Ascending AC

This is the default combat system used in Freebooters. In this system the AC of the defender is a target number that the attacker is attempting to get by rolling 1d20 and adding their modifiers. If the number total is equal to or higher than the AC then a hit is scored and damage is rolled. Otherwise it misses.

Descending AC

When descending AC is used, roll to-hit with a d20, add any applicable bonuses, and check the target number by level or HD and Armor Class. If the total is equal-to or higher than the target number, a hit is indicated.

AC	+9	+8	+7	+6	+5	+4	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9
to hit*	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28

*number needed to hit includes all bonuses and adjustments.

Target Number 0 (alternate method)

Target number to hit can also be calculated using a formula called TN0 which is the minimum roll needed on a 20-sided die to hit Armor Class 0. Your TN0 score is 20 minus your Bonus to Hit. Lower TN0 and lower AC is better. They can go into the negatives.

To figure out the target number to hit use attacker's TN0 minus the defender's AC equals what you need to roll on a 20-sided dice to hit the defender.

For example, if the defender has AC 0 and attacker's TN0 is 10 then the formula is 10 - 0 = 10.

Another example, attacker's TN0 is 15 and the defender's AC is -2. 15 - (-2) = 17. Attacker needs to roll a 17 or better to hit.

TARGET NUMBER 0

Level	Mercenary	Fortune Hunter	Occultist	Academic/ Scientist	Monster
<1					20
1	19	20	20	20	19
2	18	19	19	19	18
3	17	19	19	19	17
4	16	18	18	18	16
5	15	17	18	18	15
6	14	17	17	17	14
7	13	16	17	17	13
8	12	15	16	16	12
9	11	14	16	16	11
10	10	13	15	15	10

ADVANCED GRAPPLING RULES

Freebooters often get into wrestling matches. Instead of treating wrestling as an unarmed combat attack that inflicts hit point damage these advanced rules can be used.

A grapple is a melee attack like any other. Roll 1d20, with usual strength Basic Attribute Modifier. If you hit, you grappled your opponent. Grappling attacks may be substituted for any appropriate attack one-for-one. Unstoppable (if applicable) may be used.

After hitting simply roll damage . . . but all grappling damage is tallied in "Control Points" (CP), not actual hit points lost. Control Point damage is recovered immediately once the attacker lets go (whether willingly or not), not at the usual healing rate.

Humans and humanoids do 1d6 CP, plus or minus the usual Strength modifier. For monsters, a grappling attack does the same damage as the base attack being used.

The effects suffered when grappled depend on how many CP have been inflicted on you relative to your HP.

Grappling Effect Table

Control point Inflicted	To Hit Penalty	Damage Penalty	AC Penalty	Move
Up to half defender's hit points	-4	-2 damage	Two levels worse	Half
Up to defender's hit points	-8	Half damage	Four levels worse	None
Exceeds defender's hit points	Can't attack	Pinned and helpless	None	

After the Grapple

Once you've grabbed a foe, you can develop or discard the grapple.

Attacking: You can attack to try to get more CP. Roll to hit normally. If you succeed, roll for CP and add them to the current total. Grappling is cumulative. You can also attack normally with a weapon at no penalty, unless grappled back!

Counter-Grappling: You can always grab a foe back! Attack normally and if you hit, roll for CP: though both the to-hit and damage roll may be penalized due to the grapple on n you! You may apply rolled CP to either put CP on your opponent, or reduce the CP your opponent has on you. If the latter, any excess applies as CP to your opponent.

Injury: You can attempt to convert your CP to damage. Roll to hit normally for grappling. Instead of inflicting more CP, you may convert your CP to damage: 2 CP turn into 1 HP of "real" damage. However, once you use them for damage, they're gone.

Let Go: You can always Let Go as a free action on your turn. You don't need to hold on.

Throw: If you amassed at least half your foe's HP in CP, you may spend CP to attempt to throw them to the ground. First "spend" accumulated CP equal to half

the foe's hit points (round up) to attempt the move. Then roll to hit normally, using the new AC penalty, not the old one. If successful, your foe is stunned for 1d4 turns and takes 1d4 + Strength modifier damage.

Grab Item: If you amassed more CP than 1/2 the wielder's current HP, you can try to grab it. Roll to hit vs. the foe's armor class as usual. If you succeed, you take it.

If the super has a Mental Attack it can be given a different attack mode such as Aura, Bolt, Continuous, Sword (or other melee weapon), or Touch.

A crew of freebooters needs places to go! As you sit down to plot out some adventurers, here are some broad concepts for Referees to keep in mind before we start getting specific.

THE DAY OF THE BUCCANEER AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF PIRACY

Spain was the first European nation to make a serious effort to explore and colonize the area of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean. In the 1500s and 1600s it establishes major colonies in places such as Panama and Cuba, and laid claim to all the islands of the Caribbean. However, war and rivalry with other European powers - chiefly England, France, and Holland - weakened Spain's position. During the 1600s the need to fight wars in Europe left Spain's colonies and the fleets of ships that carried the riches of the New World back to Spain vulnerable to attack.

Buccaneers were originally homeless European frontiersmen who settled in and around Haiti. They started out squatting on territory claimed by the Spanish, hunted pigs and smoked their meat (hence their name, related to barbecue) and also looted the occasional Spanish shipwreck. The Spaniards were annoyed at these pests and sent troops to clear them out. The buccaneers retaliated by sailing out in their canoes and capturing Spanish ships, and set up bases of which the first was the island of Tortuga off the coast of Hispaniola, becoming known as the "Brethren of the Coast." Filibuster or Freebooter was another name, first used to distinguish French from English buccaneers, later used generically. Buccaneering soon received semi-official tolerance from the French and English governments, while colonial merchants flocked to buy their plundered goods. As their fame spread, the original buccaneers numbers were swelled by newly-arrived soldiers of fortune from Europe.

A force of English soldiers and buccaneers force captured Jamaica establishing Port Royal which soon became known as the buccaneer capital and the "wickedest city on Earth." Some buccaneers used single vessels for their raids. Others were able to organize squadrons of ships transporting small armies of several hundred men to perform major amphibious attacks, such as Henry Morgan's successful sacking of the city of Panama in 1671. Throughout the late 17th century the Spanish, French, Dutch, and English fought small campaigns over the region, often using buccaneers and local militias; numerous coastal towns and forts across were looted, and control of many Caribbean islands changed hands with the fortunes of war. As more ships and seaports were raided, the Spanish were forced to build ever stronger fortifications and ship in many more soldiers, and launch their own counter attacks to try and regain their position.

The "age of the buccaneer" ended around 1680 and 1700: peace was signed between England and Spain. Then a powerful earthquake devastated Port Royal; while it was rebuilt to a degree, it was never again the same free-wheeling haven that it was in the 1680s. Some sailed off to look for trouble in more distant oceans away from spoilsport navies notably off Africa, where Madagascar for a time between a major pirate stronghold. However, there was still some opportunity for plunder at sea. England was still at war - no longer with Spain, but first with the Dutch and then with the French. From the 1680s a bold ship captain could still apply for a Letter of Marque that granted his vessel the legal authority to attack enemy shipping and/or ports, provided he gave the local governor a fair share of the plunder. Because they had legal standing, privateer ship "start ups" were even funded by investors such as wealthy merchants. A privateer's commission usually lasted for 1-2 years, or until peace was declared.

Unfortunately for the privateers, that's what happened: around 1700 word arrived that France and England had made peace; there wasn't any fighting involving the Dutch or Spanish either. Suddenly many privateers and soldiers in the Caribbean were out of legitimate work. Some of them retired - but others chose to continue to make a living at sea by violence, only this time without distinguishing whose ships or ports they attacked! They became pirates, ushering the "golden age of piracy" that lasted from 1700 to 1730. Their numbers were swollen by captives who chose to join them and individuals who were drawn to piracy by sheer greed or a desire for adventure. This was the era of legends like Blackbeard and Bartholomew Roberts - pirates whose only flag was the skull and bones Jolly Roger, and whose sole allegiance was to themselves!

A pirate is any sea-going raider without the legitimacy of a letter of marque (a privateer) or the benefit of semi-official tolerance (which the French and English gave their buccaneers and freebooters as long they fought Spain). In theory, the pirate was an outlaw everywhere, facing a trial and hanging if caught. However, several colonies in the Caribbean and along the coast of North America (especially New Providence in the Bahamas) were eager for the black market plunder and money

that successful pirates could bring to their weak economies. Their governors were willing to look the other way as long as the pirates engaged in bloodshed at some distance from their shores. As long as the pirate was cautious, he could make deals with corrupt merchants and pay off officials with a share of the plunder. However, piracy was always a precarious existence: no pirate could know when the local governor might be replaced by a more honest man, or send soldiers to arrest him as he was drinking in a tavern. And there was always the risk of being cornered by a pirate-hunting warship from the Royal Navy or its French or Spanish counterparts. In the late 1720s economic and social pressures (such as merchants complaining about the high insurance rates caused by piracy) slowly forced colonial governors to clamp down on pirates. With nowhere safe to sell plunder or repair their ships, the remaining pirates either retired rich, dangled from a hangman's noose, or - like Blackbeard - died in battle on a blood-stained deck. By 1730 the Golden Age of Piracy in the Caribbean was over.

Buccaneer Tactics

In a typical buccaneer raid on a Spanish Main or island town began with a scouting party being infiltrated in small boats to spy out the defenses (a good job for PCs!). Then, if they didn't have the ships and cannon to battle a fort, the buccaneers anchored down the coast, come ashore in boats, march cross-country, and attack from the land side, often on a Sunday or holy festival when gates were open and many troops were off-duty. The goal was to swiftly surprise and overrun the garrison, take the fort, and round up civilians to lock them in a church or public building while the town could be was sacked. Captives might be tortured to reveal the location of hidden valuables, and occasionally buccaneers murdered, raped, and burned, but just as often they'd demand cooperation in finding the town's best valuables as ransom to avoid this. After a few days of looting they'd sail off before any reinforcements or warships arrived.

SHIPS AND THE SEA

This is the great age of sail. If a freebooter doesn't have a sailing vessel, he'll do his best to steal one! That's how the buccaneers started out: they began by filling little longboats with men and making daring raids to "level up" over time and take first sloops and then larger and larger ships.

Smaller vessels like sloops are "fore and aft rigged" with one or two masts and triangular sails, like a modern sailboat. Larger brigs or ships are "square rigged" with two or more masts and multiple rectangular sails one above the other, giving enough area of sail to propel a larger vessel but requiring more crew to handle. Square-rigged ships also can't sail as closely to the wind, reducing maneuverability.

Crew Positions: Referees and players who are sea rovers should have some understanding of how a sailing ship is manned.

On warships, the captain is an absolute monarch. Under him are one or more lieutenants who take turns standing watch on the quarterdeck and supervising other officers. Midshipmen are young apprentices and trainee officers. Quartermasters are helmsman and navigators. The ship's bosun is an officer who handles discipline including the hated floggings. Specialist officers are called "idlers" as they don't stand deck watches: the cook, gunner (maintains cannon and other firearms), carpenter (repairs hull and masts), sail maker (repairs sails), and surgeon. All officers have a few Mates (petty officers) assisting them. Under the eye of the bosun's mates the mass of ordinary seamen work in the ship's rigging, scrub the decks, crew the guns, and perform heavy labor like raising anchor or launching boats. Large ships may have a clerk, captain's steward, musicians, even a chaplain. The crew will fight with cutlasses and pistols, but big ships carry additional marines or soldiers.

Merchant ships are similar to navy vessels, but with smaller crews (as they don't carry nearly as many guns) and fewer officers, and cabin boys instead of midshipmen. The captain, or master, may be the owner; there's often a purser aboard to look after passengers and cargo.

Some privateers are run by a captain, just like warships, but buccaneer and pirate vessels are more democratic. Crews are just as big but freebooters are often deserters, mutineers, or pressed men and hate the brutal discipline of naval and merchant ships. They will own the ship as common property they all have shares in, and consider all crew to be equal in worth, with the only ranks worthy of mention being an elected captain and quartermaster, positions that are filled by popular vote before the start of each cruise! Pirate ships may recognize individual expertise and have positions such as cook, gunner, carpenter, navigator ("sea artist"), or surgeon, and will occasionally agree to award these extra shares if they're highly skilled.

A pirate or buccaneer captain is merely a respected battle commander whose authority must only be obeyed absolutely in an operational situation such as a sea battle or raid. Otherwise the captain must lead through consensus and charisma. The other key officer on a freebooter ship is the quartermaster. Unlike a navy ship, he's no mere helmsman, but is second in command, responsible for the day to day running of the ship and the welfare of the entire crew. Before the ship sets out he's responsible for its loading and taking on proper supplies. During a voyage, the quartermaster is supposed to be the crew's advocate, keeping their well-being and health in mind, and bringing their concerns to the captain to stave off any upset or mutiny. In battle, the captain decides on tactics or leads the crew into battle, but the quartermaster will often command the guns, have the helm, or lead any special parties, and takes over if the captain falls. Afterward, the quartermaster is in charge of counting of the plunder and fairly dividing the spoils. Some quartermasters are trusted comrades of their captain, but others are rivals who happened to lose the vote but got the second position thanks to their own supporters.

Pirates and buccaneers also usually appointed a boatswain (to carry out quartermaster's orders and in charge of the sailing rig), master gunner, a navigator

or sailing master (if he wasn't captain or quartermaster), a cook (often disabled), and if they were lucky, a surgeon and some musicians. Crews took turns manning guns, rigging, boarding parties, and other duties.

Typical Pirate Code (Articles of Agreement)

Pirates owned their ships in common. Before each cruise they voted on captain and quartermaster, who then appointed any other officers (e.g., master gunner, cook, and a boatswain (Bosun) They'd also hash out written agreements and sign them before embarking. A typical set of agreements:

The captain and the quartermaster shall each receive two shares of a prize, the master gunner and boatswain, one and one half shares, all other officers one and one quarter, and everyone else ("private gentlemen of fortune") one share each.

- Every man shall have an equal vote and equal title to fresh provisions or liquors seized
- Anyone who cheats or steals treasure beyond their shall be marooned (often with nose or ears slit: -2 Cha.)
- No gambling while aboard
- No lights after dark
- Keep your weapons clean and ready for action
- No boys or women aboard on pain of death
- Deserting in battle is punished by death or marooning at the crew's vote
- No fighting aboard; any quarrel is to be left until shore and resolved by a dual
- Duels are sword, pistol, or musket. A typical pirate duel: at the quartermaster's command, each man being back to back, shall turn and fire immediately without aiming; if both miss their aim they shall take to their cutlasses, and victor is he or draws first blood
- No talk about breaking up until everyone has at least 1,000 pieces of eight!
- Insurance: Anyone crippled in the fight gets 800 pieces of eight; lesser injuries are rewarded proportionately.

Vessel Descriptions

The term "ship" was often reserved for full sized vessels with masts; the flute, frigate, and galleon are examples of ships. A boat was something small enough to haul aboard another vessel. In between were sloops, schooners, brigantines.

Brigantine: A medium-sized, fast two-masted general-purpose sailing vessel with one square rigged mast and one triangular mast. Commonly used as a warship, pirate ship, guardship, slaver, and merchant.

Flute: A wide, slow, flat-bottomed three-masted square-rigged ship often used by merchants due to its big cargo capacity, though sometimes used by pirates and navies.

Frigate: A three-masted square-rigged warship, decks reinforced to carry many cannon. This is a "fifth rate" or "sixth rate" vessel. (Much larger - 1st to 4th

rate - warships were reserved for major fleet actions rather than colonial pirate hunting.) Primarily used by navies.

Galleon: Big four-masted square-rigged ships mainly used by the Spanish and Portuguese.

Explanation of Ship Statistics

Tons: The total cargo capacity in tons of burden. This is a measure of volume (roughly 100 cubic feet, which is also how much a ton of typical cargo or plunder takes up). If a ship is loaded at 3/4 or more capacity, it's encumbered: half speed, x1.5 draft, and -1 to Handling. In parenthesis is the usual cargo capacity of a merchant ship after subtracting the men required to sail her, man the usual number of guns, and 30 days/man of provisions. This is typical of merchant ships and is a good indication of how many tons of plunder pirates can take from her!

Price: In pesos (pieces of eight). Most freebooters steal it, though/

AC: This is the Armor Class of the ship, taking into account its size, speed, and hull armor.

HD: This is Hit Dice, a rough measure of how big and powerful a ship is.

HP: This is the number of hit points it takes to disable it, leaving it immobile, harmless, and reduces its AC to 9 [10], but may still be salvaged and repaired. If reduced fully negative it can sink. Sailing vessels also have rigging Hp equal to half hp. For instance, if a 40' sloop takes 100 points damage, it is drifting and helpless, AC 9 [10]. If drops to -100 hp it sinks.

Crew: The first number is the minimum crew to sail the vessel. This doesn't count manning the guns, boarding parties, etc. (One man is needed per swivel and six men minimum per cannon.) Most merchants add enough extra crew to man the usual guns; warships and pirates add more! The second number is the crew required to sail the ship and man the "usual guns" (typical of merchants). The third number is the typical crew of a warship or pirate with maximum guns.

Guns: This is the usual number of guns/maximum number. Merchantmen often have the usual number (to carry extra cargo); warships (and successful freebooters) often have the maximum.

A ship can attack with up to half (round up) its guns. Each allows one attack doing 1d20 damage for cannon or 1d12 for a swivel gun. If a vessel has multiple guns it can make one attack per die per target, although to save time it is best to organize the broadside. For example, suppose a brig with 10 cannon. It can attack with up to half, for a 5d20 broadside. If the brig were being attacked by buccaneers in six longboats it could focus its full 5d20 barrage against one of the longboats, or target five of the six each with a 1d20 barrage each, or some other combination adding up to 5d20. However, all of these cannon require crew (see below) and a ship must have at least two men per d12 swivel gun or six men per 1d20 cannon in addition to the crew required to sail the vessel. If it has insufficient crew it can't use its full broadside

Draft: The minimum depth of water the ship can operate or anchor in without running aground.

Speed: Maximum speed in knots (nautical miles per hour). Rowing or paddling can only be sustained for a couple of hours before tiring, and only in good weather. Sailing is constant assuming a favorable wind. To get speed in feet per round multiply by 100.

Sailing craft give two speeds: maximum speed given the best winds, and the average sailing speed. If a vessel is filled to 2/3 or more her tonnage it travels at only half-speed. If you are using miniatures or counters on a hex sheet or "battle-mat" to visualize your ship combats, simply divide the ship's speed by hex or square scale to determine how many squares or hexes it can move each round. E.g., if using 100 ft. squares a sloop can move 11 squares/round.

Handle: A bonus for maneuverability to ST made when sailing or rowing the vessel. Second number applies in heavy seas or storms, where smaller vessels suffer.
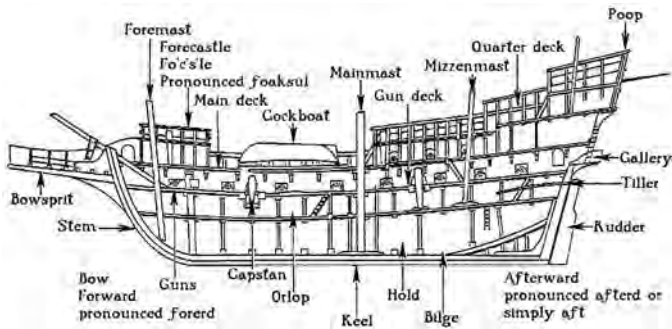
CANOE (25')
Tons: 2.5
Price: 40
Speed: 4/6*
Crew: 4
AC: 6 (14)
HD: 2
Hp: 20
Draft: 1'
Handle: +1 (-2)
Guns: 0

* rowing rather than sailing.

Big canoes rowed or paddled by 15-25 men were popular with buccaneers and natives alike, but they had to take ships by boarding since they weren't strong enough to mount guns.

BOAT (12')
Tons: 1 (-)
Price: 50
Speed: 3/5*
Crew: 1
AC: 6 (14)
HD: 2
Hp: 20
Draft: 2'
Handle: 0 (-2)
Guns: 0
* rowing rather than sailing.

   Most ships carried an open boat. Sturdier than a canoe, it had oars, some had a single sail. Not sturdy enough to hold any kind of cannon.

SLOOP, SMALL (40')
Tons: 50 (39)
Price: 1000
Speed: 8/10
Crew: 4/20/52
AC: 6 (14)
HD: 10
Hp: 100
Draft: 5'
Handle: +1 (0)
Guns: 4/12

   A small, fast, rakish vessel with a single fore-and-aft rigged mast; favored by freebooters and smugglers, but also used as local guard ships (hired by coastal towns to battle pirates). The best were "Bermuda sloops" built out of red cedar.

LONGBOAT (20')
Tons: 3 (-)
Price: 80
Speed: 4/6**
Crew: 2/4
AC: 6 (14)
HD: 3
Hp: 30
Draft: 3'
Handle: +1 (-2)
Guns: 0/1**

** May also sail at -1 knots speed. May only carry swivel guns (d12), not cannon (d20).

Most ships either carried an open longboat or towed one behind them. Sturdier than a canoe, it could be equipped with its own swivel gun and had a single sail as well as oars.

SLOOP, LARGE (60')
Tons: 100 (83)
Price: 2000
Speed: 8/10
Crew: 6/30/86
AC: 5 (15)
HD: 20
Hp: 200
Draft: 6'
Handle: +2 (0)
Guns: 6/20

A small, fast, rakish vessel with a single fore-and-aft rigged mast; favored by freebooters and smugglers, but also used as local guard ships (hired by coastal towns to battle pirates). The best were "Bermuda sloops" built out of red cedar.

SCHOONER (75')
Tons: 60 (52)
Price: 2000
Speed: 8/11
Crew: 9/21/57
AC: 5 (15)
HD: 12
Hp: 120
Draft: 5'
Handle: +1(0)
Guns: 4/12

A slender, swift shallow-draft ship with two masts rigged fore-and-aft.

BRIGANTINE (80')
Tons: 200 (180)
Price: 4000
Speed: 5/7
Crew: 16/40/136
AC: 5 (15)
HD: 15
Hp: 300
Draft: 8'
Handle: +1 (+1)
Guns: 6/30

A medium-sized, fast two-masted general-purpose sailing vessel with one square rigged mast and one triangular mast. Commonly used as a warship, pirate ship, guardship, slaver, and merchant.

FRIGATE (100')')
Tons: 250 (219)
Price: 6000
Speed: 6/8
Crew: 20/60/180
AC: 5 (15)
HD: 25
Hp: 400
Draft: 15'
Handle: 0 (+1)
Guns: 10/40

A three-masted square-rigged warship, decks reinforced to carry many cannon. This is a "fifth rate" or "sixth rate" vessel. (Much larger - 1st to 4th rate - warships were reserved for major fleet actions rather than colonial pirate hunting.) Primarily used by navies.

FLUTE (100')
Tons: 300 (281)
Price: 5000
Speed: 5/7
Crew: 22/36/84
AC: 5 (15)
HD: 25
Hp: 250
Draft: 10'
Handle: 0 (+1)
Guns: 6/18

A wide, slow, flat-bottomed three-masted square-rigged ship often used by merchants due to its big cargo capacity, though sometimes used by pirates and navies.

GALLEON (125')
Tons: 500 (462)
Price: 12000
Speed: 5/7
Crew: 24/72/264
AC: 5 (15)
HD: 60
Hp: 600
Draft: 18'
Handle: -1 (+1)
Guns: 12/60
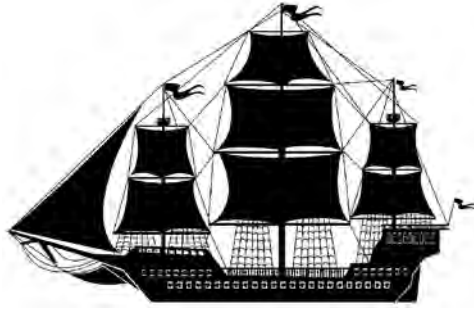
Big four-masted square-rigged ships mainly used by the Spanish and Portuguese.

Fitting Out a Ship

Unlike modern ships, age of sail vessels were multi-purpose. Merchant ships often had strengthened decks and gun ports for cannon; in some instances, there could be little different between a pirate ship and a merchant save how many men and cannon were loaded aboard.

As such, vessels need to be fitted out before their voyage. Cannon, men, and provisions all take up part of the vehicle's tonnage; anything left is free for cargo or plunder. Deciding on the right balance is a major duty of the ship's quartermaster. Carry too many and you won't have enough room for treasure, too little and you'll be short of something

A single man can load or unload a ton per hour. It takes twice as long to do this if not in a proper harbor and gear must be unloaded onto boats rather than onto wharfs and docks.

Load	Tons	Notes
Each man (for boats or canoe)	0.1	
Each man (for bigger vessels)	0.2	Also includes sea chest and bed roll or hammock, etc.
Swivel Gun	0.2	A small cannon mounted on the ship's rail (d12 attack)
Cannon	1	A full-sized ship's gun and its carriage (d20 attack)
Each slave (for bigger vessels)	0.1	Packed like sardines; 1% cumulative chance of death each week at sea! Also use for poorly-treated prisoners in bilges.
Cargo	1	A ton of general trade goods or plunder
Cattle or Horses	1 each	A horse, cow, steer, or several pigs
Provisions, per man-day	0.005	A day's rations for one man
Provisions, per 30 man-days	0.15	See above. Provisions include a mix of fresh food, dried food like salt pork, and barrels of rum, grog, and water
Boat (carried aboard)	varies	takes up 2 x the boat's tonnage. A vessel can also tow a boat behind it that is 10% or less of its tonnage at -1 knot to speed.

Example: A small pirate sloop has a 50 tons capacity, but can be loaded with up to 40 tons before being slowed down. The freebooters are planning a lengthy cruise. The sloop needs a minimum of six men to sail. They load it with 50 men (10 tons), 10 cannon (10 tons; takes 40 crew to man), 60 days food and drink per man (60 x 50 men x 0.005 = 15 tons), a 12' boat (2 tons) and 1 ton of cargo (trade goods, spares, etc.) totaling 38 tons. It has 12 tons free for loot!

SHIP COMBAT

Sea battles are an iconic element of pirate adventure! These rules offer a quick, simple system to resolve ship versus ship combat, and may also be used to resolve battles between ships and characters or even ships and sea monsters.

The Referee is encouraged to take the abilities of the crew into consideration when adjudicating these battles. For instance, a player may offer sound strategy when commanding his ship against an enemy's, or utilize his skills to gain an edge in the fight. If the Referee so rules, initiative rolls between individual ships may be adjusted by the commanding officer's Intelligence modifier, if any.

Ships (a term which can also be taken to refer to boats) are given Hit Points, so they are susceptible to damage from attacks like hand grenades, sea monsters, etc. Ships are handled in much the same way as monsters, each has hit dice, an armor class, hit points, and so on.

When ships come together in combat, initiative is rolled for normally. However, each ship is considered its own side, and rolls initiative individually. This roll applies to the entire crew aboard.

When it's a vessel's turn to act, they may fire a broadside using half their ship's gun (round up) upon one or more foes.

A vessel that has a higher initiative score is assumed to have won the favorable position for striking from, for example having the weather gauge or crossing their opponent's T (attacking the front or rear of a ship with their full broadside of cannons) and a vessel with a lower initiative is considered to be at a disadvantage, and so suffers a -4 to-hit penalty when attacking a vessel of higher initiative for the rest of the round.

Moreover, in naval combat once a ship has the initiative it often retains it, thanks to the position relative to the wind. Any ship that beat every foe's initiative rolls last round has such an advantage and gets a +1 on their next round's initiative roll.

Initiative is re-rolled each round.

Combat Steps:

1. Roll initiative (opposing d6 checks, highest wins). A fort (see below) or vessel with no hp or rigging left or one that has is engaged in a boarding action always lose initiative.
2. Each vessel or fort attacks in order of highest to lowest initiative. If attacking a vessel or fort with a higher initiative the attack is -4 to-hit.
3. Vessels may attempt boarding under certain circumstances (see below). If so, interrupt the naval battle to resolve the fight using the normal combat system. See below for guidelines.
4. Incapacitated ships (0 Hit Points) begin to drift out of the battle area, or start sinking.
5. If the fighting continue, go back to Step One.

*On a tie, don't re-roll. Assume both sides can attack simultaneously at no penalty.

If player characters or NPCs are involved in the ship-versus-ship combat, they take their turn on their initiative as normal, but don't suffer any penalties to-hit like the ship does.

SPECIAL RULES

These additional rules add some "age of sail" flavor.

The Weather Gauge: The referee may decide that even before a battle begins, one side or the other starts with a +1 initiative bonus due to favorable winds. In fact, this will often be set by simple geography, as the winds in the Caribbean are fairly predictable. Usually the pursuing ship (typically the freebooters, if they're chasing down prey) will gain this advantage to start with for the simple reason that it's hard to catch a foe if the wind is unfavorable.

Running Away: At the start of any round before initiative is rolled, a captain may announce that his ship is trying to run away (flee) instead of maneuvering aggressively for a broadside. This is only possible if his ship is of equal or faster speed to that of his foes.

This is not possible if a ship has been grappled. A fleeing ship has an extra +1 on the initiative roll if faster than its opponents, or -1 if slower.

If a fleeing ship wins initiative, any attacks against it are made at -6 instead of the usual -4, but its own attacks are also made at -6! If it wins initiative **two rounds in a row**, it escapes the fight. If it is faster, it gets clean away. If equal speed, the other ship may pursue, and perhaps may catch up in several hours depending on circumstances, weather, and seamanship.

Damage Effects and Loss of Guns and Men: As a ship (or fort) takes damage, its cannon are smashed and gun crews injured or killed, reducing its fighting effectiveness. To represent this, when rolling damage assume any time a natural "20" is rolled from the DAMAGE of ship's guns one cannon (or swivel gun if no cannon) is destroyed and four men are killed. If no cannon are being carried, a 20 means one man aboard is killed.

If a ship's hit points are reduced to zero, it starts to sink. It is crippled and will always lose initiative. It will take a number of rounds equal to its original hp minus the amount of hp below zero to sink. (For instance, a ship with 200 hp that is reduced to -120 HP will sink in 80 rounds).

Targeting the Rigging: Freebooters would load their cannon with chain shot or grapeshot and target the rigging (masts, spars, sails, ropes, etc.) as an alternative to blasting cannon balls into the hull. Blowing away a ship's masts and sails kept it reasonably intact and ensured its treasure wouldn't be blown up! However, the rigging is harder to hit (there's a lot of open space) so attacks are at an extra -4.

A ship has a SEPARATE rigging hit point total equal to half the ship's actual hit points. If the rigging is reduced to half hit points or less, the ship is 1/2 speed and -1 to initiative. It the rigging is reduced to zero the ship is crippled, drifts helplessly,

and always loses initiative (unless the other ship is crippled too). Once rigging is reduced to 0 hp, attacks on it have no further effect.

A ship that has lost its rigging can be towed by other vessels. Rigging damage is easier to fix than damage to the hull (most ships have spares): repairs are hourly rather than daily.

Since sailors are working in the rigging also assume one man is killed any time a 20 is rolled for damage.

Boarding Actions: On the **third** or subsequent rounds of combat, vessel are assumed to have maneuvered close enough that any ship that has a higher Initiative roll than a foe can opt to close and boarding. (If fighting a fort, this means landing ashore). This means the two vessels are grappled together and boarding parties may exchange gunfire and swing across using lines or leap aboard to fight it out on the two ship's open decks (see **Fighting Big Battles**, below). Often merchants will surrender immediately if a freebooter vessel with a larger crew close for boarding.

Example of Combat

The party's large pirate sloop, Black Star, is armed with 20 guns (half of which can attack, giving it a 10d20 broadside). The lookout spots a merchantman on the horizon and the pirate ship gradually overhauls her. The pirates order the merchant vessel (the Minerva, a large sloop like themselves, but only with her six usual guns" rather than the maximum the pirate ship has) to surrender, and when it refuses, they raise the jolly roger and attack!

There are three players (the captain, the quartermaster, and two other freebooters acting as master gunner and boatswain). To give everyone something to do in the fight, the players decide the captain will make initiative rolls and the other two characters will divide firing the ship's 10d20 broadside between them (so each rolls 5d20 for their ship's gun attacks).

As Black Star is faster, it overtakes the Minerva and initiative is rolled. The Black Star's captain (a PC) has Int 13, so +1 is added to his d6 initiative roll. The pirate ship gets a total of 4 (with the modifier). The Referee controlling the Minerva rolls a 2, losing initiative.

The two freebooters commanding the guns announce they are firing into the Minerva's rigging in hopes of quickly crippling the merchantman without sinking it (they want it as a prize). They each roll to hit, the first missing (his broadside falls short) and the second a hit. He rolls 5d20 and inflicts 54 damage (including one 20, killing a crewman in the rigging), leaving Minerva with 46 hit points left before its rigging is crippled. The referee describes the damage colorfully "your chain-shot blasts gaping holes in her sails, and spars fall crushing several seamen beneath it."

Nonetheless, the Minerva gamely fires back. It only has six guns so it gets a 3d20 broadside; the merchant crew aren't aiming for the rigging but have a -4 for losing initiative. Despite this they get lucky and hit anyway inflicting 33 points of damage to the party's ship, leaving it with only 167 Hp. Also, they rolled one 20, so four pirates are killed when their cannon blows up and the broadside goes from 10d20 to

9d20. Initiative is rolled again - and both sides tie! Minerva fires a volley but misses (the Referee only rolled a 4), its broadside falling short. But both of the PCs (one commanding a short 4d20 broadside and one commanding a 5d20 broadside) score hits this time, inflicting 31 and 44 damage respectively! The unfortunate merchantman's rigging is reduced to -29 hp, effectively shredding it. Next round is the third round and if the pirates win initiative – which they automatically will do now that the rigging is destroyed – they can attempting boarding. Since his ship is now unable to maneuver, the Referee decides the Minerva raises the white flag, surrendering to the pirates, who board unopposed.

Coastal Forts

The approaches to harbors and coastal towns were routinely defended by forts, and many freebooters spent as much time attacking these strongholds as they did raiding ships, since a fort needed to be defeated before a vessel could safely sail up, disgorge raiders, and sack the town! A small fort might have timber walls and towers and be assembled by a group of freebooters to protect a favored rendezvous. These often used strong timbers salvaged from a shipwreck, if there weren't suitable trees on the island. Or, it could be a full-sized stone fortress that took years to build and the efforts of professional architect and thousands of laborers. The Spanish, in particular, built potent fortresses to defend the harbors and approaches to major coastal cities like Havana or Panama. Fortresses have cannon emplacements – a large fortress might have as many guns as a full-sized man of war, and of course, a fortress can't sink.

Fighting a gun battle with a fortress is like fighting a ship, except the fort can't move. For a major fortress, the Referee should break the fort down into several bastions, each with their own gun batteries. If a wooden fort or a bastion of a stone fort are reduced to 0 hp, it is badly damaged and its guns silenced. If hp are fully negative, the fortress or bastion is reduced to rubble and its defenders inside are killed. However, a fortress can't maneuver and is an easy target compared to a vessel at sea: it always loses initiative (unless fighting a vessel that lost its rigging).

The guns of a fortress often faced toward the sea, covering the approaches to the harbor and the town gate. As cannon are heavy it could take hours to drag them to face in a different direction. A surprise attack from the landward side could often be decisive! Although forts had garrisons of infantry and cavalry, a daring band of freebooters could send a small party to stealthily infiltrate the fortress and either destroy ("spike") the guns or blow their magazine, opening the way for the pirate vessels to make a landing and bombard the town into submission (or capture any treasure ships at anchor). Since the seaward approach is covered, raiders seeking the fort's "back door" might covertly make landfall by boat at some distance along the coast from the fort, perhaps under cover of darkness. Forts were often built on hilltops or cliff side to give them a good field of fire. Raiding parties might have to trek through rough terrain (dodging any patrols or pickets) or scale the cliffs to reach the guns they hope to sabotage.

Timber Fort: This is a wooden stockade with simple palisade walls and watch towers, a wooden gate, and a few ship's cannon placed in. It is useful for fending off attacks by natives or a pirate sloop, but not much use against a big warship or a fleet.

Bastion: These statistics represent the reinforced gun emplacements (facing toward the sea) of a large stone fortress defending a major town or port. A small fort will have at least two bastions; a huge fortress like those protecting major Spanish ports has three or more.

Fort Type	Men	AC	HD	Hp	Guns
Timber Fort	30-300	5 (15)	12	120	1d8
Bastion	10-100 each	2 (18)	20	200	2d4+1

Fighting Big Battles

Freebooters often get into tavern brawls, duels, or sneak attacks with a few party members, but boarding actions, assaults on coastal towns, or ambushes of Spanish mule trains can easily involve scores or hundreds of men on each side! Ambitious referees can play out an entire fight or even use tabletop miniature rule system (several of which exist for OSR games) but a quicker but still fun way to fight a big battle is to "scale it down." Just play out the part of the fight the player characters will see, using only one-fifth to one-tenth of each side's combatants (include all the PCs and any major NPCs or villains). Since the overall ratio of fighters is the same, have the greater outcome reflect the smaller conflict. Thus, if 120 buccaneers attack a galleon with 170 Spaniards aboard, scale it down to 12 pirates (including the party) vs. 17 Spaniards. If the PCs win a desperate fight but lose eight men, then that means 80 pirates were killed. If the Spanish surrender after their captain and 12 men were cut down, it means 130 of them were slain and 40 are captives. Incidentally, the Referee should always keep morale in mind during a fight: it's common to take captives for ransom, interrogation, or slavery. A quick rule of thumb for Referees who don't want to bother with morale checks is that most NPCs will retreat (if they can; not possible aboard ship!) or surrender (if the enemy gives quarter) after they've lost a greater proportion of men then the enemy **and** either their leader or half of their total force are dead.

Dirty Tricks to Get Close to Prey: False flags; disguising the vessel as a merchant, e.g., by covering gun ports with canvas; adding fake cargo on deck; carrying female passengers (or pirates disguised as women) on deck. Some merchants reversed this, painting extra fake gun ports to scare off freebooters!

Disease

In the Caribbean half of all sailors deaths were from disease, chiefly dysentery, scurvy, typhus, smallpox, and tuberculosis. Ships had poor air below decks and often bad food. One reason pirates drank so much rum is that it was safer than water!

Disease is not fun for players, so Referees should reserve it for use as a plot point, e.g., encountering a drifting slave ship many of whose occupants have succumbed, or an island with derelict native villages wiped out by a smallpox outbreak. If the PC's ship is becalmed at sea for a few days and running low on supplies, or the characters are imprisoned or besieged within a fort, tension could increase if the NPCs start falling ill and a threat of mutiny... Should the Referee want to game out diseases, the simplest approach is to allow Constitution ST to avoid getting sick. If a character falls ill the effects depend on whether it's a mild or serious illness:

Mild Illness: Suffer a -2 to Strength and Dexterity for 2d6 days. Adjust the length of the illness by Constitution BAP. Taking rest halves the time; successful medical treatment halves the penalty; however, if it's contagious, the caregiver needs a Constitution ST to avoid catching it as well.

Serious Illness: As above, but mid-way through the illness roll a Constitution ST to get better (at +2 if under treatment by a caregiver; at -4 if not resting at all). Any failure means the illness reaches a critical stage: lose 1d4 hp, and repeat the next day. Success means recovery in 1d6 days.

Maiming (optional rule): What's a pirate without a peg leg or an eye patch? If a significant character would otherwise be killed through violence the Referee can optionally allow a Con ST and if they succeed they recover but with a significant disability. Examples of this include one hand (replaced with a hook (-3 Dexterity but can strike as per boat hook), a Peg Leg (1/2 speed, -2 Dexterity, can't climb or use acrobatics); One Eye (-1 Dexterity; double penalties for medium or long range, and attacks from one side as being backstabs from behind due to loss of peripheral vision). The referee can also apply these penalties to NPCs who has suffered similar disabilities!

THE SPANISH MAIN AND THE CARIBBEAN

While pirates could rove across the world, the center of freebooting activity was the region known as the Spanish Main and the Caribbean Islands around it.

Throughout this era the Kingdom of Spain is the major colonial power with colonies that date back to the 1500s. The Spanish colonies are called "New Spain" and are ruled by the Viceroy of New Spain, a minister appointed by the King of Spain whose capital is Mexico City. New Spain includes Mexico, most of Central America, the northern coast of South America, much of North America as far east as Florida, the Spanish West Indies that include the Philippines and the Spanish West Indies in the Caribbean. These include Cuba, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Montserrat, Guadalupe and the Lesser Antilles, the Cayman Islands, Trinidad, and the Bay Islands. In the early 1600s, Spain's rival European powers – the Dutch, English, and French – all began laying claim to parts of the Caribbean. Since the bigger islands and the mainland were taken, they settled islands the Spanish considered too small or poor to colonize, starting with the Lesser Antilles, and from

these bases began attacking ships and taking other islands such as Jamaica and parts of Hispaniola (present day Haiti and Dominican Republic.

The goal of the Spanish was primarily to transport the riches of America back to Spain and protect their colonies. They usually fought against freebooters. However, in addition to the Spanish galleons and warships under the Viceroy of New Spain, Spain also founded the Guarda del Costa ("coast guard") funded by local ports and merchants. The captains of the Guarda del Costa operated smaller ships (sloops, brigs, etc.) to drive off or hunt freebooters but would also occasionally engage in privateering vs. English, Dutch or French merchant ships they encountered that were too near Spanish possessions.

The Spanish Main: This collectively refers to Spain's mainland coastal territories on the shores of the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico. This included Florida, the western shore of the Gulf of Mexico (now Texas and Mexico), Central America and the north coast of South America. The most important region for freebooters was the Caribbean coastline including the major ports of Porto Bello on Panama, Cartagena , and Veracruz It was from here that gold, silver, gems, hardwoods, spices, and other riches arrived (reaching the ports by mule or llama train) and was loaded on the treasure fleets that would sail out of the Caribbean and back to Spain.

The Spanish Treasure Fleets: Twice a year great fleets of galleons cross the Atlantic between Spain and New Spain to deliver supplies and personnel, and bring back the riches of the New World. Freebooters salivate at the thought of capturing these ships, but the Spanish don't make it easy. The ships are protected by the Spanish navy (a mix of royal ships and armed merchants).

Fleets leave the port of Seville in Spain, transporting European goods desired in the New World and new colonists, merchants, administrators, and soldiers. The fleet sails down the African coast, stop at the Canary Islands for provisions, and then make the weeks-long Atlantic crossing to the Caribbean, where it splits in two. The New Spain fleet, called the flota, then sails to Veracruz in Mexico. Upon arriving at Vera Cruz it was loaded with Mexican silver, and also with imports from China (such as porcelain and silk) brought overland by mule train from Acapulco on the Pacific side. The Tierra Firme fleet, or galeones, sails to Porto Bello to pick up the silver produced in Peru and to Cartagena, a fortified port (in present day Venezuela) on the north coast of South America to take on gold and emeralds from Columbia and pearls from the island of Margarita. Both fleets take several weeks to get ready. Once they are fully loaded, they sail through the Caribbean to rendezvous together at the port of Havana, Cuba. The voyage to Cuba is when they are vulnerable to attack by freebooters. Once they reach Havana, they take on extra supplies and goods, and will then journey together as a single fleet back to Spain.

Each annual treasure fleet is made up of 10d6 merchant ships and 4d6 galleons - the exact number varies from year to year depending on the present economic situation in the colonies and Europe. The smaller merchant ships carry the ordinary goods such as sugar, lumber, textiles, and tobacco. The well-armed galleons carry extra soldiers and valuable goods such as silver, gold, gems, pearls, spices, and fine Chinese silk and porcelain.

The fleets are too strong for anything short of a major force to successfully attack (which the Dutch navy managed once in 1628). However, as the two fleet sail to Cuba, bad weather or poor navigation can result in individual ships being blown off course, lost, or even wrecked. It is these stragglers or wrecks that freebooters prey upon. Once in a while a major storm will scatter a significant number of ships, and hunting season is open! (Historically, unusually bad storms struck the treasure fleet in 1622, 1715, and 1733.)

Timeline of Caribbean Piracy

1492: Columbus arrives in Bahamas.
1510: First Spanish colonies
1520: Cortes conquers the
1665-73: Anglo-Dutch Wars.
1665: English conquer Jamaica and found Port Royal.
1670: Treaty between England and Spain end
1671: Henry Morgan leads buccaneer raid against Spanish, sacking Panama
1672-78: French-Dutch Wars
1689: England allies with Spain and Holland vs. France
1692: Port Royal destroyed by earthquake
1696: French buccaneers raid Cartagena
1697: Treaty outlaws buccaneering
1701: War of Spanish Succession. It becomes legal to attack Spain again..
1713: War of Spanish Succession ends. Ex-privateers turn pirate, with Nassau in New Providence (Bahamas) as the main base.
1718: Governor Woodes Rogers takes over New Providence, begins crack down on pirates. Death of Blackbeard.
1730: Most Caribbean stamped out.

CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

This section describes the major islands of the Caribbean or "West Indies" However, the region includes hundreds of tiny islands with few or no inhabitants, often poorly charted and nameless during this era. The Referee should feel free to make up additional small islands as needed!

Larger islands and the coast are dense tropical rainforest mixed with mountains. In dense jungle, thick vines can block movement unless hacked through with machetes; without a trail or following a river bed, it can take hours to travel a single mile. Small, sandy islands like the Bahamas have light vegetation and palms. Notable animal life are monkeys, tree frogs, apes, sloths, lizards, snakes and a huge variety of colorful birds, and vast clouds of mosquitoes and gnats. Wild pigs and chickens are common on many islands, thanks to deliberate importation. Sea turtles are a staple island foodstuff as are manatees, fish, and the occasional whale.
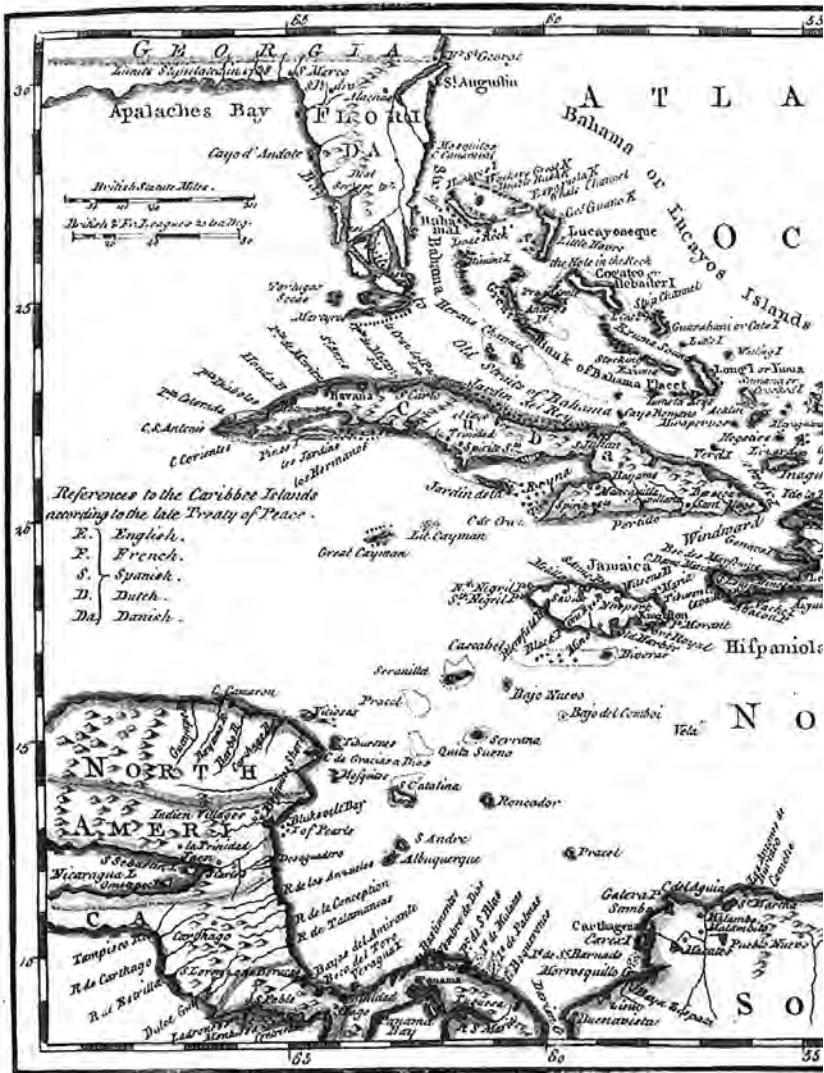
It's warm in fall and spring and sweltering hot and humid the rest of the time. The Caribbean has a steady wind (20-30 mph) that blows from the northeast.

Hurricane Season: This runs from August to October. Individual hurricanes begin with a peculiar yellow sky that grows gradually darker as the clouds thicken, then heavy lashing rains, and finally the powerful winds and giant waves as the storm approaches.

Anguilla: A flat island with a mix of light woods and farmland. It was settled by the English in 1650 and then taken over by Irish in 1688. It is an English possession, run by the Lieutenant Governor of the English Lesser Antilles. Population is 700-900 (15% white, 85% black).

Antigua: A barren volcanic island encircled by reefs, but its strategic location makes it a valuable base. It was colonized by England in 1632 and is the seat of the governor of the Lesser Antilles.

Aruba: A flat, dry island strewn with large boulders. A mix of native Arawak Indians and Dutch colonists (settled in 1634). Dutch freebooters and other buccaneers are welcome in its port. It is under the authority of the Dutch West India Company.

Barbados: A flat coral island that is a successful English colony with its own governor. Population is about 75,000 (82% African slaves, 5% English, 3% other (Jews, Scots). It has a tropical rain forest mixed with rugged hills. The island economy

is dominated by sugarcane plantations and is also noted for its good rum. The towns of Bridgeporte (capital) and Speightstown have strong fortresses. The northern island is more rugged.

Barbuda: This flat coral island is covered with dense woods. Its only town is Codrington (pop. 400), named for the wealthy English family that dominates the island.

The Bahamas: These consist of over 700 islands, cays, and islets in the Atlantic Ocean; north of Cuba and Hispaniola, including the island of New Providence. The Spanish did not colonize them, but shipped the natives off to slavery in Hispaniola (who died from diseases there). The islands were resettled by the English between 1648 and 1670; after 1670 the English crown rented the islands to the Carolinas (in North America), but their control is tenuous. A few hundred families live there, most on New Providence around Charles Town (aka Nassau). As the Bahamas are adjacent the major sailing routes between Europe and the Caribbean, shipwrecks are common. Salvaging these wrecks ("wrecking") is lucrative, but the owners often object... When the Spanish raid the islands to stop the wreckers, the Bahaman colonists began sponsoring privateers to attack the Spanish, becoming a notorious haven for privateers and pirates; at times the number of freebooters outnumbers the permanent settler population. By the 1700s the Bahamans held a "pirate republic" at Nassau (the largest town) dominated by sea rovers, with the governors looking the other way in exchange for a share of plunder. Besides wrecking and freebooting, the islanders support themselves with fishing (sea turtles, whales, and seals), logwood cutting, and sugarcane farming.

English control of the Bahamas is challenged: they're raided by Spanish corsairs (many settlers stay for only a short time due to the risks involved). The Spanish sack and burn the settlements in 1684 (they're resettled in 1686 by English colonists from Jamaica, and reinforced by privateers who turn the islands into a privateer base. A French-Spanish expedition briefly retakes Charles Town in 1703 and 1706. Following that government ceases to exist, leaving control to the privateers; they continue on as pirates after peace breaks out. In the 1700s infamous pirates (including Blackbeard) are based in the Bahamas.

Bermuda: This low-lying coral island has some a mix of scrub vegetation and forest. Settled in 1612, the island is devoted to sugarcane plantations owned by English settlers and worked by African and Indian slaves. It is self-governing under the Governor of Bermuda. The governor may support privateers who cruise against the French.

Bonaire: This flat low-lying island is famous for its parrots and other birds. A Dutch corporate colony, whose economy is a center for the African slave trade. Slave ships from Africa regularly arrive at Bonaire (protected by Fort Oranje). There is thriving local slave market for Dutch, French and English buyers.

Cayman Islands: Nominally ruled by the English from Jamaica, but often mainly used by pirates. Noted for its sea turtles and crocodiles.

Cozumel: Still under Mayan control (under Kingdom of Mexico).

Cuba: This is a major Spanish colony with a population of 80,000 (50% white, 40% black, 2% native) The economy is dominated by shipbuilding, tobacco, sugar, mining, and farming. The capital is Havana; the second town is Trinidad (on south coast) with five smaller towns. Cuba's north coast has many rocks and reefs making sailing very treacherous for those who aren't familiar with it (the Great Bahama Bank). Three-quarters of Cuba is good agricultural land, especially known for tobacco cultivation, but the remainder is rugged forested mountains. It was colonized by Spain in 1511. Most of the original three million natives were dead by the mid 1500s; the Spaniards imported African slaves to replace them to work in the fields and mines; their occasional uprisings are brutally suppressed and some runaways join freebooter crews.

Havana, with a superb natural harbor, is one of the busiest ports in the New World. It is the gateway to Europe thanks to its location at the entrance of the Gulf of Mexico beside the Gulf Stream current ships follow across the Atlantic. Ships from across the New World visit Cuba to deliver their goods, which the annual Spanish fleet brings to Spain. (The treasure ships headed for Spain assemble in Havana Bay. Ships arrived from May through August, waiting for the best weather conditions, and together, the fleet departed Havana for Spain by September.)

Cuba is periodically raided by English, Dutch, and French freebooters, but after 1597, the Spanish complete a massive fortress, the Castillo del Morro, which protects Havana's port from attack. The Spanish authorities on Cuba are worried about Tobacco smuggling: the crop is only allowed to be sold to Spain, and selling to foreigners is punishable by death!

Curacao: Dutch-ruled, a major slave trading and merchant market at the town of Amsterdam. The harbor is well fortified.

Dominica: Controlled by Carib natives who dwell in the dense forest and mountains.

Grenada: The southernmost of the Windward Isles of the Lesser Antilles, it is mountainous with very varied terrain (crater lakes, forests, mangrove swamps, beaches and coral reefs). The 800 inhabitants are 30% French, 70% Black. The town is Port St. Louis (fortified harbor). It's a major producer of spices and tobacco. Two islands north of Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique, are uninhabited.

Grenadines: An archipelago of tiny islands populated by fierce Carib natives and occasional freebooters.

Guadeloupe: A major French possession, this is two islands (one volcanic) separated by a narrow channel spanned by a bridge. It has 11,000 people (35% White, 65% Black) and sugar coffee plantations; the capital is Basse-Terre protected by Fort Lous Delsgres. It's often attacked by English who want to take control of the rich plantations. Nearby south of Guadeloupe is a smaller island named Marie-Galante which has a few French settlers, and four tiny isles known as Les Saintes which are occupied by a few Caribs. A few uninhabited islands can also be found to the north, east and west of Guadeloupe.

Hispaniola: Since 1697, Hispaniola (modern Haiti and Dominican Republic) has been divided into St. Domingue (French) on the Western side and Santo Domingo (Spanish) on the Eastern side.

St. Domingue (modern Haiti) is the major French colony on the western side of the island of Hispaniola, conquered from the Spanish by French buccaneers. It has extensive sugar plantations and a population is 70,000 (3% native Arawak, 70% black slaves, 27% white). It is a major locus of Voodoo.

Under Spanish rule as the "Kingdom of Santo Domingo," this is the eastern two-thirds of Hispaniola, and a major center of Spanish power. The capital is Santo Domingo. It boasts sugar plantations and farms, and 9,000 people (45% Spanish, 22% black slaves, 33% Arawak natives).

Jamaica: This fertile sunny island was conquered from the Spanish by English soldiers and Buccaneers, and became a major English possession. In the late 17th century it has 23,000 people (15% European, 85% Slaves) and extensive sugar and coffee plantations. It was conquered from the Spanish. Through much of the era the capital is Port Royal.

Port Royal is a town on the southern coast of Jamaica, first colonized Spain but captured by the English in 1655. It has an excellent natural harbor became a major haven for pirates and buccaneers, who also protected it from the Spanish and made its merchants rich. It was largely devastated in a 1692 earthquake (which killed 5,000). In its heyday it was filled with brothels and taverns, as well as excellent gun shops, and for a time was the busiest and liveliest port in the Caribbean, trading not just in stolen goods but also slaves, sugar, and wood. It was also home to many religious minorities such as Jews, Quakers, and Puritans.

Margarita: A small Spanish-ruled island off the coast of the Spanish Main. It is famous for its rich pearl-bearing oyster beds and inhabited by Spaniards, black slaves and Guaqueri Indians (some of whom still fight the Spanish).

Martinique: The northernmost of the Windward Islands, with an active volcano (Mount Pelée). It is ruled by France, with a population of 30,000 (23% free whites, 77% black slaves working the plantations). Major town is are Fort-de-France (defended by Fort Saint-Louis); St. Pierre (defended by Fort Saint-Pierre)

Montserrat: An English colony on a volcanic island, fertile soil for sugar plantations, and black sand beeches. Unusual for its Irish exiles (many of which hate the English). Population is 5,000 (30% Irish, 5% English sugar planters, 65% black slaves) and large frogs. Well defended with several coastal fortresses.

Nevis: An English colony on a pleasant volcanic island, but it suffers from frequent hurricanes and raids by the French, Spanish and Dutch. It has sugar and tobacco plantations and population of 8,000 (60% black slaves, 35% English, 5% Jewish).

Porto Rico: This green island is a major Spanish agricultural colony with a population of 35,000 (80% Spanish, 10% black slaves, 10% Arawak natives). It is often attacked by the English and French, the coastline has been heavily fortified.

Saba: A small, nominally Dutch-ruled island, its 200 inhabitants are mixed Irish, Scottish, English, and Dutch, the economy dependent on fishing and piracy. Its settlements are Trent Bay and the Bottoms.

St. Christopher ("St. Kitts"): This island is disputed territory split between English and French rule, with a population of 7,500 (67% black slaves, 20% English, 13% French). It has sugar plantations and logging, and is known for its green monkeys.

St. Lucia: Claimed by the French but mostly inhabited by Carib islanders who fiercely resist their attempts at settlement.

St. Martin: The north is ruled by the French, the south by the Dutch. Mostly agriculture and fishing. Nearby St- Barthelemy island has a few French colonists.

St. Vincent: Inhabited by aggressive Carib natives and escaped black slaves (Cimaroons).

Turks Islands: Tiny islands on the southern Bahamas, nominally ruled by the Spanish (from Santo Domingo) but lawless. Some cotton plantations and many pirates!

Tabago: A disputed island fought over by just about everyone, which often leaves it under the control of pirates, tough Carib natives, and smugglers.

Tortuga: This small rocky island off the coast of Hispaniola was claimed by Spanish, French, English, and Dutch who all alternated capturing and settling it. From 1640 through 1680 (periodically interrupted by various invasions and attempts at suppression) it was the most notorious base for French and English buccaneers who raided Spanish shipping as the "Brethren of the Coast" and also by some out-and-out pirates who struck everyone. The population ranged from 100-1,000 buccaneers, outcasts and pirates, plus various remnants of the different attempts to settle the island. Two other islands off the Hispaniolan coast, Ile à Vache and Saona, held smaller numbers of French buccaneers.

Trinidad: This island was a small Spanish colony with a population of 2,500 (80% native, 16% black slaves, 4% Spanish). The main towns is José de Oruña; the natives dislike Spanish rule.

Virgin Islands: This archipelago of 100 islands has a mixed population of 2,000 (90% black slaves, 10% European).

THE SPANISH MAIN

The mainland is dominated by the Spanish, but freebooters may wish to raid (or visit) Spanish settlements or venture into interior in search of treasure. Notable locations of interest:

Acapulco: This fortified Spanish port on the west coast of Mexico is a hub of the South Seas (Pacific) trade. Each year, Spain's Manila galleons – a treasure fleet – depart from Acapulco loaded with Mexican silver and other trade goods sailing to Manila in the Philippines. It returns a few months later laden with cargo from China and other Far East ports such as porcelain, silk, and spices. From Acapulco,

these goods are carried by mule train to Veracruz on the Atlantic side, and loaded aboard the Caribbean treasure fleet for shipment to Spain. Thus, "Spanish" treasures can also include plunder from China!

Belize: This stretch of Central American coast is covered in swamps and mountainous jungle. Although claimed by Spain, the trees are famous for their valuable wood, and after 1660 attracts foreign adventurers who establish illicit logging settlements. The most important such settlement is St. George's Cay, a small port in an inlet established by English buccaneers and logwood cutters. Trading ships stop there to buy logs to ship to England. Every so often, the Spanish make an effort to raid the settlement or capture the ships.

Portobello: A wealthy, well-fortified Spanish silver-exporting port on the isthmus of Panama, which was nevertheless attacked and looted by buccaneers a couple of times (notably the raid led by Henry Morgan, whose men indulged in a two-week orgy of violence and plunder in 1668).

Cartagena de Indias: A major port city (pop. 14,000) on the north coast of Columbia in South America. Each year, the Tierra Firma fleet stops off at Cartagena, where they are loaded with treasure bound for Spain. In the days before the fleet arrives and while it is still in port, the city's warehouses may be full of treasure (see The Treasure Fleets). The excellent harbor is guarded by the naval base and powerful fortress of San Fipe de Barajas, but on a number of occasions strong buccaneer raids have managed to overcome the defenders and plunder the city. Cartagena is also a headquarters of the Spanish Inquisition. Freebooters captured by the Spanish and taken here may be tortured, and if spared execution, kept imprisoned in the city's dungeons.

Veracruz: Located on the Gulf of Mexico, this is the most important port in the Spanish Main, linking the coast with the mainland. Gold and silver from the interior flow into the port; it has impressive public buildings, a wealthy aristocracy and the richest merchants in the New World. To protect this wealth, it is very heavily defended (the major fort is Fort San Juan de Ulua, on an island covering the harbor) and is also the home port of New Spain's naval force, the Barlovento Armada and a large military garrison. Despite this it is still subject to occasional pirate raids!

PIRATE ADVENTURES

Most Freebooters sail the shipping lanes until their lookout spots a sail. They chase down their prey and attack! Interesting variations on this include:
- their prey doesn't have much loot aboard, but knows where to find it.
- their prey is a pirate hunter pretending to be a merchant.
- their prey contains slaves or indentured servants

Here are some alternative adventure ideas:

Spying and Gathering Information: A good freebooters need information. This can come from tavern gossip in Port Royal or Nassau or Tortuga, but it helps if you know the right people: merchants, smugglers, etc.

Sacking Ports and Towns: The most successful freebooters realized that it was easier to attack targets that couldn't sail away! Towns on Caribbean islands, the Mexican coast, Spanish Main, or even the American colonies were all possible targets. Attacking a town offers a good chance for a small party of PCs to separate from a larger crew . They can infiltrate the town (either by stealth or openly but in disguise) in order to open the gates, sabotage the guns of its fortress, rescue prisoners, count the defenders, or just determine what wealth is present.

Prisoners: Freebooters taken prisoner by the authorities may face torture or hanging, but can often count on being held prisoner for a few weeks before a trial is scheduled. PCs may need to break themselves or their shipmates out of prison, or alternatively they could be recruited to rescue another captive (the beautiful daughter of a rich merchant or governor, perhaps) Or maybe an NPC freebooter has crucial information (such as half a treasure map, the location of a shipwreck, or the route of a Spanish mule train), but he's currently in prison somewhere, and as a preliminary to the adventure, they need to break him out.

Careening: The wooden hulls of sea vessels need maintenance every couple of months. This requires putting the vessel up on shore - "careening" - and spending several days scraping the hull clean away the hull and performing repairs. Privateers who are legal can do this in a trusted port, but pirates will often need to set up camp on an isolated island and hope that no pirate hunters or hostile natives attack while the ship is laid up and helpless.

Smugglers: The Spanish and English are notorious for strictly regulating who their colonists can trade with to keep them dependent and ensure wealth flows back to the mother country. Colonists who want cheaper goods or better deals will be happy to negotiate with smugglers or freebooters to carry cotton, sugar, logwood, and tobacco in exchange for a cut of the profits, or buy smuggled manufactured goods or pirate plunder. Another commodity is information. Spanish smugglers from places like Cuba might be willing to provide information on possible targets (mule trains, galleons, garrisons of ports, etc.) in exchange for goods.

Supernatural Elements: Pirate adventures can involve the supernatural or the uncanny: encounters with sea monsters, Voodoo cults, ghost ships, haunted or cursed treasures, or ghosts or zombies guarding treasure. Referees can always

enliven a pirate adventure with a bit of dungeon crawling: rumors of an island or coastal region with a hidden native temple or lost city filled with gold or other artifacts, but protected by superstitious cannibals and a monster or monsters who is more than just a legend, who might range from flesh-eating mermaids, to huge snakes, were sharks, ghosts or even giant spiders or apes.

Mule Trains: In the winter months heavy loads of Spanish goods and treasure make their way up through the jungles of Panama toward the ports. They're carried on mule back, escorted by Spanish cavalry. Freebooters who don't want to risk attacking Spanish fleets may instead dare the hostile Indians and jungle hazards in the hopes of intercepting a mule train.

ENCOUNTERS

NAVAL OR FREEBOOTER OFFICER
Armor Class: 10
Hit Dice: 1
Attacks: weapon – cutlass and flintlock pistol
Special: may have favorite weapon (usually pistol) bonus
Save: 12
Move: 120′

A captain or senior officer on warship, pirate, or privateer. (Spanish and French usually substitute rapier for cutlass.) Freebooters often face Spanish warships. With the end of the buccaneering era (c. 1700) England and other European nations also add their navies to the struggle to suppress piracy. A warship's men are a captain, officers and mates equipped as above, ordinary sailors see below and a contingent of soldiers or marines (2nd level Musketeers led by a 3rd level lieutenant) with both muskets plus swords or cutlasses.

TYPICAL FREEBOOTER OR NAVAL SAILORS
Armor Class: 10
Hit Dice: 1
Attacks: weapon – cutlass and either musket or flintlock pistol
Special: 1 in 10 have grenades or stink pots or blunderbuss
Save: 13
Move: 120′

Veteran buccaneers, pirates, privateers, or experienced naval crew. Some buccaneers may be Musketeers instead.

TYPICAL SEA ROVER
Armor Class: 10
Hit Dice: 1 (2 if captain)
Attacks: weapon – half boarding axe, half cutlass; half also flintlock pistol
Special: average morale
Save: 14
Move: 120′

The ordinary crew of merchantman or a local coastal guard vessel, or green pirates. A merchant captain might be L2 Sea Rover, usually with a pistol and cutlass.

TYPICAL MERCHANT SHIP CAPTAIN
Armor Class: 10
Hit Dice: 2
Attacks: weapon – flintlock pistol; cutlass or rapier
Special: will often fight to death
Save: 13

Move: 120'

    Captain of a merchant ship or local coast guard vessel. Often a bit long in the tooth, but high morale (owns his own ship and doesn't want to lose it).

LOCAL MILITIA
Armor Class: 10
Hit Dice: 1
Attacks: weapon – 50% old matchlock musket, 50% pike; small sword
Special: poor morale
Save: 14
Move: 120'

    These are locally raised units of English, French, Spanish, Portuguese or Dutch soldiers who protect the various colonial settlements against freebooters and each other. They usually have a few professional soldiers (see below) as leaders and the rest are local militia (or ex-Freebooters).

SOLDIER
Armor Class: 10
Hit Dice: 2
Attacks: musket, small sword (sometimes broadsword if Scots/Irish)
Special: good morale
Save: 13
Move: 120'

    Professional well-drilled European musketeers or leaders of militia.

ARMY OFFICER (OR LANDSMAN BUCCANEER OFFICER)
Armor Class: 10
Hit Dice: 3
Attacks: weapon – rapier and flintlock pistol
Special: May have favorite weapon" (rapier) bonus (and horse, if on land)
Save: 11
Move: 120' (180' if mounted)

    Leader of professional troops or veteran buccaneers. Also use this for colonial gentlemen.

ARMY OFFICER (OR LANDSMAN BUCCANEER OFFICER)
Armor Class: 10
Hit Dice: 3
Attacks: weapon – rapier and flintlock pistol
Special: May have favorite weapon" (rapier) bonus (and horse, if on land)
Save: 11
Move: 120' (180' if mounted)

    Leader of professional troops or veteran buccaneers. Also use this for colonial gentlemen.

CARIB NATIVES
Armor Class: 10
Hit Dice: 2
Attacks: weapon – bow and knife or spear or tomahawk
Special: Arrows may be poisoned (weak: save vs. Con +3 or paralyzed, save again an hour later if not treated or die)
Save: 13
Move: 120' (180' if mounted)

Fierce islanders also encountered in canoes. Cannibals!

NATIVE STRIKER OR ESCAPED SLAVE
Armor Class: 10
Hit Dice: 3
Attacks: weapon – old matchlock musket, spear, knife or bow
Special: None
Save: 12
Move: 120'

Skilled hunters and trackers from the Darien (Panama region) or Miskito Indians ("the Miskito Kingdom" around present day Hondorus and Nicaragua) were employed by freebooters as auxiliaries, guides, and fishers (called "strikers"). Local Miskito chiefs or kings often allied with the English traders and privateers to fight the Spanish, acquired European muskets, and assisted and inter-married with escaped black slaves.

SPANISH LANCERO
Armor Class: 10
Hit Dice: 3
Attacks: Cavalry saber, flintlock pistols
Special: Mounted on horse; d12 charge with lance for first attack
Save: 13
Move: 120' (240 on horse)

Spanish mounted cavalry patrolled around larger towns and escorted treasure-laden mule trains on the mainland.

Animals

Unlike traditional fantasy RPG's there are no fantastical dragons, or enchanting fairy tail creatures to populate the world. Still, the New World was a dangerous place filled with animals of all kinds that could be a threat to a roving band of ne'er do wells searching for treasure.

This section is excerpted from the excellent Monster Compendium that is a collected work of many authors producing "OSR" (old-school rules) content. Permission to use granted by the Open Game License.

ALLIGATOR, NORMAL

Some normal alligators are man-eaters; all are dangerous and can conceal themselves well.

Normal Alligator: HD 3; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 bite (1d6); Move 9 (Swim 12); Save 14; CL/XP 3/60; Special: None.

BARRACUDA

Barracudas are fast, shark-like fish. They are smaller than most sharks, but hunt in groups.

Barracuda: HD 1; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 bite (1d8); Move (swim 24); Save 17; CL/XP 1/15; Special: None.

BEAR, BLACK

If a black bear hits with both claws, it hugs for an additional 1d8 hit points of damage. Can be found throughout Florida.

Black Bear: HD 4+1; AC 7[12]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), 1 bite (1d6); Move 9; Save 13; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Hug.

BOAR, WILD

Boars continue to attack for two rounds after they are actually killed before they drop dead. These stats might also be used for your "blue tusken-hogs of the Ymar Plains," or whatever is appropriate for your campaign.

Wild Boar: HD 3+3; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 gore (3d4); Move 15; Save 14; CL/XP 4/120; Special: continue attacks 2 rounds after death.

CATTLE

Cattle include oxen and cows. Bulls inflict 1d8 points of damage instead of 1d6.

Cow/Ox: HD 3; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 gore (1d6); Move 18; Save 14; CL/XP 3/60; Special: None.

CENTIPEDE, GIANT

Small (Lethal): Giant lethal centipedes of the small size inflict a lethal bite with a +4 saving throw, but inflict no damage if the saving throw is successful.

Giant Centipede (small, lethal): HD 1d2hp; AC 9[10]; Atk 1 bite (0 + poison); Move 13; Save 18; CL/XP 2/30; Special: poison bite (+4 save or die).

Small (Non-Lethal): The non-lethal variety has larger pincers but its poison is not lethal (though it is deadly). Failing a saving throw (at +4) against the poison of the non-lethal variety causes 1d4 rounds of crippling pain (the victim is helpless, as if asleep). Additionally, the limb (roll 1d4) is temporarily crippled (treat as a disease) for 2d4 days. A crippled leg reduces movement by 50%; a crippled shield arm cannot use weapon or shield; a crippled sword arm can only attack at −4. A second bite on a leg reduces movement to one quarter normal, and a third bite to the legs reduces movement to 1ft per minute (prone, dragging oneself by the arms).

Giant Centipede (small, non-lethal): HD 1d2hp; AC 9[10]; Atk 1 bite (0 + poison); Move 13; Save 18; CL/XP 1/15; Special: non-lethal poison bite (+4 save).

COYOTE

Small, dog-like scavengers, coyotes present no significant threat to a well-armed human.

Coyote: HD 1d4hp; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 bite (1d2); Move 14; Save 18; CL/XP A/15; Special: None.

DOG, GUARD OR WAR

These are large, trained dogs. Normal dogs would have hit dice 1 or lower, and inflict no more than 1d3 points of damage.

Guard Dog: HD 2; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 bite (1d6); Move 14; Save 16; CL/XP 2/30; Special: None.

EEL, GIANT

These statistics are for giant eels about ten feet in length. Larger eels would have correspondingly greater hit dice. The electric shock generated by a giant electric eel would cause 3d6 points of damage in the surrounding water, with no saving throw. See also, "Lampreys," which are also eels.

Giant Electric Eel: HD 2; AC 8[11]; Atk 1 bite (1d3); Move 0 (Swim 9); Save 16; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Electric shock.

Giant Moray Eel: HD 4; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 bite (2d6); Move 0 (Swim 9); Save 13; CL/XP 4/120; Special: None.

HORSES:

Riding Horse: HD 2; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 bite (1d2); Move 18; Save 16; CL/XP 2/30; Special: None

War Horse: HD 3; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 bite (1d2), 2 hooves (1d3); Move 18; Save 15; CL/XP 3/60; Special: None.

KRAKEN

Kraken are gigantic squid-like monsters of malign, genius-level intelligence, residing in the black depths of the oceans. When kraken strike with their tentacles, they may wrap their prey and constrict them each round for an automatic 2d6 damage, also making the victim defenseless against the kraken's bite. Ships may be constricted in the same way, typically requiring 18 tentacle-rounds to crush the vessel sufficiently to pull below to the kraken's expansive undersea lair. Tentacles may be targeted individually and severed. They each have AC 6[13] and 16 hit points, which are not considered part of the kraken's hit point total. Kraken retreat by jetting backwards, at which point they may release a poisonous 80ft x 80ft x 120ft ink cloud. For a total of four rounds, anyone within the cloud will suffer 1d4 points of damage. It is rumored that kraken possess unnatural powers to control

weather and to create false lights in order to ambush or mislead sailors. This is, of course, superstitious nonsense.

Kraken: HD 20; AC 0[19]; Atk 6 tentacles (2d6), bite (3d6); Move (Swim 3) (Jet 21); Save 3; CL/XP 24/5600; Special: Ink cloud, constriction

LAMPREY, GIANT

Giant lampreys are slow-moving eels with a toothy, sphincter-like mouth. Once the monster scores a hit, it fastens to the victim and drains blood automatically each round thereafter until the victim is dead. Normal lampreys aren't really dangerous enough to merit a separate entry.

Giant Lamprey: HD 4; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 bite (1d6); Move (Swim 9); Save 13; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Sucks blood.

LEECH, GIANT

Giant leeches are about one and a half feet long per hit die. After they score a hit, they drain blood automatically at one hit point per hit die of the creature. These are nasty creatures to find inhabiting the murky, muddy waters of a swamp.

Giant Leech (1HD): HD 1; AC 9[10]; Atk 1 bite (1d4); Move 3; Save 17; CL/XP 2/30; Special: Sucks blood (1hp/round).

LEOPARD

Leopards are small, roaring great cats, standing about 2ft tall at the shoulder. They are not quite as fast as the other great cats, but they are stealthy hunters.

Leopard: HD 3; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), 1 bite (1d6); Move 16; Save 14; CL/XP 4/120; Special: None.

LIZARD, GIANT (REGULAR)

Giant lizards (as described here) are about 4ft tall at the shoulder (not quite large enough to ride). Larger specimens could certainly be found – perhaps they continue to grow throughout their long lives, leading to giant lizards of close to saurian dimensions.

Giant Lizard: HD 3; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 bite (1d8); Move 12; Save 14; CL/XP 3/60; Special: None.

RAT, GIANT

Giant rats are often found in alleyways and filthy ship decks, some are nearly the size of a cat. The bite of some (1 in 20) giant rats causes disease. A saving throw is allowed. The effects of the disease are decided by the GM.

Giant Rat: HD 1d4hp; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 bite (1d3); Move 12; Save 18; CL/XP A/5; Special: 5% are diseased.

RAY, STING

Sting rays are very difficult to see on the ocean floor. They have a poison sting which they use to defend themselves when danger comes near. Sting ray poison

causes paralysis (3d6 turns) and also inflicts 3d6 points of damage. A successful saving throw avoids all effects from the poison.

Sting Ray: HD 1d6hp; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 sting (1d3 + poison); Move (Swim 10); Save 17; CL/XP 3/60; Special: non-lethal poison.

SHARK

When there is blood in the water (say, 6hp worth), more sharks will come to investigate (about 1d6 sharks of any size). All sharks will be attacking madly, and each time a shark attacks there is actually a 1 in 6 chance that it will target another shark instead of a human. Smaller sharks would have 1HD per foot of length.

Small Shark (3HD): HD 3; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 bite (1d4+1); Move 0 (Swim 24); Save 14; CL/XP 3/60; Special: Feeding frenzy.

Small Shark (4HD): HD 4; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 bite (1d4+1); Move 0 (Swim 24); Save 13; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Feeding frenzy.

Medium Shark (5HD): HD 5; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 bite (1d6+2); Move 0 (Swim 24); Save 12; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Feeding frenzy.

Medium Shark (6HD): HD 6; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 bite (1d6+2); Move 0 (Swim 24); Save 11; CL/XP 6/400; Special: Feeding frenzy.

Large Shark (7HD): HD 7; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 bite (1d8+4); Move 0 (Swim 24); Save 9; CL/XP 7/600; Special: Feeding frenzy.

Large Shark (8HD): HD 8; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 bite (1d8+4); Move 0 (Swim 24); Save 8; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Feeding frenzy.

Giant Shark: HD 13; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 bite (1d10+8); Move 0 (Swim 18); Save 3; CL/XP 13/2300; Special: Feeding frenzy.

SNAKE

Normal snakes are not particularly dangerous, with these exceptions. Vipers are highly poisonous, and about a foot or two in length. Their poison is lethal, but the saving throw is at a bonus of +2. Boa constrictors are not poisonous, but if they hit, they do automatic damage from constriction thereafter.

Viper: HD 1d6hp; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 bite (1hp + poison); Move 18; Save 18; CL/XP 2/30; Special: Lethal poison (+2 save).

Boa Constrictor: HD 2; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 constriction (1d3); Move 12; Save 16; CL/XP 2/30; Special: Constriction.

SPIDER, POISONOUS

Poisonous spiders are aggressive hunters.

Poisonous Spider: HD 1hp; AC 10[9]; Atk 1 bite (1hp + poison); Move 9; Save 17; CL/XP 3/60; Special: lethal poison (+2 saving throw)

SQUID, GIANT

Giant squid are one of the more feared sort of sea monster; they can sink small vessels and occasionally try to pick prey off the decks even of large ships. These creatures are often mistaken for a true kraken, but they are not intelligent.

The squid's tentacles constrict for 1d8+1 points of damage after the first hit, and they are used to pull food to the creature's deadly beak, which it keeps below the water. When a tentacle hits, roll 1d6: 1= both arms pinned, 2= right arm pinned, 3= left arm pinned, 4-6= arms are not pinned. A giant squid's tentacles can take 10hp of damage before being severed, but attacking tentacles does not affect the squid's actual hit point total – only attacks to the body and head affect the squid's true hit points.

Giant Squid: HD 12; AC 7[12] head and tentacles; 3[16] body; Atk 8 tentacles (1d8+1), 1 beak (5d4); Move 0 (Swim 20); Save 3; CL/XP 14/2600; Special: Constrict

TOAD, POISONOUS

Poisonous toads bite with lethal poison, and their skin is also poisonous to the touch. They are about the size of a man's fist, and can attack at the end of a hop. These toads can sometimes be brightly colored in vibrant reds and greens.

Poisonous Toad: HD 1hp; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 bite (1 point + poison); Move 6 (Hop 30ft); Save 16; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Poison skin and bite

TURTLE, GIANT SEA

Giant sea turtles do not hunt humans, but they are aggressive in their territory, and are large enough to capsize small ships (15 foot diameter shell). Obviously, the size and hit dice of individual specimens will vary; these stats are for an average adult turtle.

Giant Sea Turtle: HD 15; AC 3[16] shell, 5[14] head/flippers; Atk 1 bite (4d6); Move 3 (Swim 12); Save 3; CL/XP 15/2900; Special: None.

TURTLE, GIANT SNAPPING

Giant snapping turtles are massive, having a shell with the same diameter in feet as the creature's hit dice. Their incredibly thick shells make them almost invulnerable to attacks that are not targeted at the head or limbs.

Giant Snapping Turtle (8HD): HD 8; AC 2[17] shell, 5[14] head/limbs; Atk 1 bite (4d6); Move 4 (Swim 9); Save 8; CL/XP 8/800; Special: None.

WHALE, KILLER

Killer whales might be found as the allies of any intelligent underwater species, chaotic or lawful, good or evil. Some killer whales are as intelligent as humans, others are not.

Killer Whale: HD 12; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 bite (3d10); Move (Swim 24); Save 3; CL/XP 12/2000; Special: None.

WHALE, SPERM

Sperm whales can swallow small ships whole, and automatically swallow whole any human-sized prey they hit with an attack. Blows from their tails destroy boats

and might also destroy ships, or damage them terribly. Some sperm whales are intelligent (and often malevolent).

Sperm Whale: HD 36; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 bite (4d10), 1 tail (4d10); Move (Swim 18); Save 3; CL/XP 37/7400; Special: Swallow whole.

SOME FAMOUS PIRATE SHIPS AND THEIR CAPTAINS

Adventure Galley (William Kidd)
Fancy (Henry Every)*
Flying Dragon (Christopher "Billy One-Hand" Condent)*
Happy Delivery (George Lowther)*
Kingston (John "Calico Jack" Rackman** with Ann Bonney and Mary Reade)
Pearl (Edward England)
Queen Anne's Revenge (Edward "Blackbeard" Teech)*
Ranger (Charles Vane; later Calico Jack)*
Royal Fortune (Bartholomew "The Great Pirate" Roberts)*

* Those marked with an asterisk cruised or hid out in the Caribbean for at least part of their careers (others operating off Africa, the Red Sea, South Seas, or Indian Ocean).
** Noted for popularizing the classic "Skull, Crossbones and Crossed Cutlasses" Jolly Roger and having two female pirates among the crew: ex-soldier Mary Reade and his lover Anne Bonny.
*** Kidd started out as a pirate hunter but bungled the assignment and was forced to turn to piracy; he's the only pirate known to history to have actually buried treasure!

RANDOM GENERATION TABLES

Occasionally a Referee may be temporarily out of inspiration for the next session, or need to put together an adventure on short notice. The following random tables should help inspire basic plots and ideas.

D20 Possible Adversaries or Patrons

1. Spanish don (aristocrat or soldier)
2. Spanish governor
3. Plantation owner (owns lots of slaves; maybe wants more...)
4. Colonial governor (corrupt and greedy)
5. Colonial governor (too honest: hates freebooters!)
6. Rival freebooter
7. The enemy within (a rival or would-be mutineer in your own crew)
8. Royal Navy captain (obsessed with pirate hunting?)
9. Spanish Navy captain
10. The Spanish Inquisition
11. Voodoo cultists (perhaps plotting a slave revolt?)
12. Bokor (a sinister voodoo sorcerer, maybe working for someone else)
13. Slaver
14. Femme fatale (beautiful daughter of the governor?)
15. Aristocratic privateer (thinks he's better than common pirates or buccaneers)
16. Disguise foreign spy (e.g., French, Dutch, or Spanish in an English colony)
17. Old rival from your past (or wicked relative)
18. English or French military commander
19. Smuggler ("trading by stealth")
20. Roll twice (they're in league!)

D100   Random Sea Encounters

1	1d4 canoes - possibly Carib cannibals...
2	Local fishermen in longboat (good for rumors)
3	Longboat holding survivors of a freebooter attack or shipwreck
4	Many sea birds circling in distance; roll again if following birds
5-6	Warship or Coast Guard - Spanish Navy
7	Warship - Dutch or French Navies (1-3 Dutch, 4-6 French)
8	Warship - English (Royal Navy)
9	Pirate ship (no national allegiance)
10	Privateer or Buccaneer (English)*
11	Privateer or Filibuster (French or Dutch)*
12	Small Convoy - (1d6 merchantmen plus 1 warship)
13	French merchantman.
14	Dutch merchantman
15	English merchantman
16	Colonial American merchantman
17-18	Spanish merchantman
19	Debris or shipwreck, 50% chance of survivors clinging to it or swimming away
20	Unusual encounter (giant squid, floating sea chest, ghost..)

* From 1700-1730, treat as pirate.

D8   Random Merchant

1	Small Sloop
2	Large Sloop
3	Schooner
4-5	Brigantine
6-7	Flute
8	Slaver (usually a flute or brig)
9	Smuggler (re-roll with 1d4 for size)
10	It's a trick: guard ship or privateer or pirate disguised as merchant

It has the "usual" number of guns and just enough crew to sail the vessel and man these guns.

Random Pirate or Privateer

D8	Type
1	1d4 Canoes or Longboats
2-3	Small Sloop
4	Large sloop
5-6	Brigantine
7	Flute
8	Squadron: roll twice

It has the maximum number of guns and enough crew to sail and man them.

Random Warship

D6/D8	Type
1-2	Large Sloop
3-4	Brigantine
5-6	Frigate
7-8	Galleon

Roll 1d8 if Spanish warship, or 1d6 for other nationalities. Spanish sloops are likely to be Guard Ships rather than actual navy.

Warships usually have their maximum number of guns and enough crew to man all guns and sail the ship, plus an extra 10% as marines.

Plunder Value

1% chance per 100 tons that a ship has major treasure (gold, silver, pearls, etc.), e.g., a 500 ton galleon has a 50% chance, but a 200 ton merchant has only a 20% chance.

Typical value is 1d100 pesos per ton of cargo capacity. Multiply by 10 for major treasure.

Usually a 1% chance of additional hidden treasures (e.g., personal jewelry) that may be pried out by interrogation.

D20   **Random Valuables Table**

1   Gold

2   Silver

3   Pearls

4   Rare hardwood

5   Chinese Porcelain

6   Emeralds (or other jewels)

7   Silks

8   Tobacco

9   Sugar

10   Spices

11   Indigo dye

12   Cocoa

13   Cotton

14   Hardwoods

15   Furs

16   Jewelry

17   Charts, books, logbooks, maps, business records

18   Gunpowder

19   Rum, wine, or other liquor

20   Medical supplies (e.g., vs. smallpox)

Random Spanish Name Table

d12	Male	Female	Patronyms	Bynames
1	Juan	Maria	Sanchez	de Aquilar
2	Juan	Maria	Ruiz	de Avila
3	Francisco	Catalina	Rodriguez	de Torres
4	Pedro	Isabel	Lopez	de Medina
5	Diego	Ana	Garcia	de Herrera
6	Alonso	Juana	Hernandez	de Leon
7	Hernando	Francisca	Gonzalez	de Castillo
8	Christobal	Beatriz	Perez	de Ribera
9	Antonio	Ines	Diaz	de Espinosa
10	Rodrigo	Leonor	Gutierrez	de Montoya
11	Gonzalo	Elvira	Gomez	de Castro
12	Luis	Teresa	Martinez	

Combine a first name with a patronym and/or locative e.g., Diego Perez; Diego de Torres; Diego Perez de Torres

D10 Multinational Curses and Oaths

1	Mort dieu! (God's death!) (French))
2	Speckled-shirt dogs!
3	Scurvy dog!
4	Go to the Devil!
5	God damn ye!
6	Hijos de puta! (Sons of Whores (Spanish.)
7	Perros Ingles (English dogs!) (Spanish)
8	Cornudos (Cuckolds!) (Spanish.)
9	Ladrones! (Thieves! Used by Spaniards to refer to all pirates) (Spanish)
10	You Dog!

Random "Deserted Island" Features (roll 1d4 times)

D20   Possible Feature

1.   Tribe of fierce cannibal Carib Indians
2.   Tribe of Arawak Indians
3.   Secret colony of escaped slaves ("Cimaroons")
4.   Smuggler or logwood cutter base
5.   Buccaneer or pirate fort (old and deserted)
6.   Small, new-built French, Spanish, Dutch, or English fort (with garrison)
7.   Another rival freebooter's ship careening on the beach
8.   Castaway (could be anyone...)
9.   Buried treasure, or a clue to same
10. Wreck of a long-lost ship
11. Deadly wild life (e.g., deadly poisonous snakes, savage wild boar, etc.)
12. No fresh water at all
13. Old ruins (ruined Spanish church or fort, Mayan temple, failed European colony, etc.)
14. Treacherous hidden rocks, shoals, or coral reef
15. Shark-infested waters or poisonous vegetation
16. Excellent timber or rare woods
17. Storm or battle-damaged ship being repaired
18. Ship anchored in the bay - but why?
19. Unusually dense vegetation, quicksand, smoking volcano...
20. Strange feature (monster, weird landmark, ghost, etc.)

Plot Complications

d12	Result
1	Somebody from a PC's past returns – a relative, old enemy, former love, etc.
2	Natural disaster of some sort: terrible storm, earthquake, volcano?
3	Rival freebooters
4	A beautiful woman
5	Naval forces (English, French, Dutch, Spanish, etc.)
6	The PCs are betrayed by someone they trusted
7	The PCs are helped by someone they thought was an enemy
8	Voodoo magic
9	Spanish plot (involving a governor, admiral, the Spanish Inquisition, etc.)
10	Corrupt authorities (trying to steal treasure or in the pay of other freebooters)
11	A stowaway (perhaps a kid)
12	Outbreak of disease or spoiled food

NAUTICAL LINGO

Abaft - Toward the stern (rear) of the ship.

Abeam - Toward the side.

Armada - A Spanish fleet

Armada del Mar Oceano - Spanish Royal Navy

Armadilla - A Spanish squadron or (as used by buccaneers) any warship

Barrel - 31.5 gallons (or 225 lbs of beef).

Belay - To fasten a rope; to stop any action ("Belay it")

Belaying pins - Pins on deck used to secure rigging (if removed, usable as clubs).

Bilge - The lowest part of a hold, filled with foul water.

Bow - The front of the ship.

Bowsprit - Angled pole at the bow holding a small sail.

Draft - Distance between ship's lowest part (keel) and the waterline.

Fathom: 6 feet of depth

Fore - Toward the bow.

Forecastle - The raised foremost deck.

Foremast - The mast closest to the bow.

Gun Ports - Port holes that cannon protrude out of. Shuttered to keep out the sea when not in use

Hold - The cargo area between the bottom of the ship and the lowest deck.

Larboard (Port) - The left side of the ship, if facing the bow.

Lee - The side (of a ship, island, etc.) that's sheltered from the wind.

Mainmast - The mast in the center of a three-masted ship.

Mainsail - The The largest, lowest sail on the mainmast

Mizzenmast - The mast closest to the stern if two or three masts.

Orlop - The lowest deck, just above the hold.

Pilots - Those with intimate knowledge of a particular area's waters, shoals, hidden reefs, etc.

Port -The left side of the ship if facing toward her bow (or a sea port).

Quarterdeck - The deck just fore of the poop, where the quarters are. Also used as command area.

Ratlines - The "rungs" on the shrouds that sailors climb when in rigging.

Reef - To reduce the area of a sail when the wind picks up.

Shrouds - The rigging that stabilizes a mast.

Starboard - The right side of the ship, if facing the bow.

Tack - To sail close to the direction the wind is blowing from.

Topsail - The second largest sail on the mainmast.

Topgallant Sail - The third largest sail on the mainmast.

Trim - To adjust the sails when the wind condition changes.

Tunn - 252 gallons (about a ton of wine.)

Weather side - The side of a ship that wind is coming from.

Watch - The half (or third) of the crew on duty usually for a four-hour shift.

Yard - A pole crossing a mast, from which a sail is attached.

Yardarm - Either end of the yard

APPENDIX N: INSPIRATIONAL REFERENCE

Books:

Captain Blood (Rafael Sabitini, 1922).
On Stranger Tides (Tim Powers, 1987).
Treasure Island (Robert Louis Stevenson, 1883).
Pirate Latitudes (Michael Crichton, 2009).
The Sea Rover's Practice (Bennerson Little, 2007).
The Buccaneers of America (Alexander Exquemelin, 1678, trans. Brown, A., New York 1969).
A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates (Captain Charles A Johnson, London, 1724)
Konstam, Angus, Pirates 1660–1730, Osprey Elite 67 (Oxford, 1998)
Konstam, Angus, Buccaneers 1620–1700, Osprey Elite 69 (Oxford, 2000)

Films:

Captain Blood (Michael Curtiz, 1935)
The Sea Hawk (Michael Curtiz, 1940)
Treasure Island (Byron Haskin, 1950; many other adaptations of Treasure Island exist).
Cutthroat Island (Renny Harlin, 1995)
Pirates of the Carribean: The Curse of the Black Pearl (2003) and sequels.

Television:

Black Sails (2014-16); a particularly excellent dramatization of the genre.
Crossbones (2014)

Tabletop Games:

Campaign Classics: Pirates (Gorham Palmer; Iron Crown Enterprises, 1990).
GURPS Swashbucklers (Steffan O'Sullivan; Steve Jackson Games, 1989).
Pirates of the Spanish Main (Paul Wade-Williams; Studio 2 Publishing, 2007)
Skull & Bones (Laura D. Hanson, T.S. Luiart, Gareth-Michael Skarka, Ian Sturrock; Green Ronin, 2003).

APPENDIX: VOODOO MAGIC

The Age of Piracy is at the dawn of the age of reason and the age of organized religion; magic is far less powerful than it was in the ancient world or in most fantasy settings. It has mostly stopped working in Europe, but in the new world there is enough untapped magical energy and powerful spirits around for it to still function, albeit Spells and rituals are harder to perform and last for shorter durations. Still, Voodoo is potent enough that significant effects can be produced by a skilled magician. Optionally, perhaps these spells can also be cast by non-Voodoo believers who have applied European magical traditions such as witchcraft or ceremonial magic to their dealings with the spirits.

Voodoo (or Vodun) is derived from West African religious beliefs. Slave owners forbade blacks to practice their traditional religion and often forcibly baptized them as Catholics. However, native religious rites were still performed in secret, and over time these merged with overt Catholicism to form Voodoo, a hybrid underground religion. Voodoo centers on belief in the loa, families of divine spirits who serve a distant creator. The loa were African tribal gods, but their characteristics and worship was merged with the forms of Catholic saints. Practitioners form a "societe" centered on a hounfort where rituals are led by a priest (hougan) or priestess (mambo). Rites involve making offerings to the loa (e.g., sacrifices of grain, rum, objects, and sometimes small animals) to "feed" them, and calling upon them to manifest and intervene for aid or good fortune. During these rituals, a loa may possess, or mount, a worshipper (making him a "horse" of the loa). The horse may go into convulsions, speak in tongues, and exhibit similar bizarre behavior; the priest or priestess will identify which loa has possessed the horse and will provide him or with appropriate dress and ritual items, and then directly communicate with the loa to ask for advice or magical assistance for their congregation's needs.

Casting of benign, neutral, love, or healing spells often call upon benevolent "old world" (African) Rada Loa, e.g., Papa Legba, Loko, Erzulie Freda, Dhamballa, and Ayida-Weddo. Casting curses, battle spells, or more brazen effects calls upon the hot-tempered, aggressive "new world" (Caribbean) Petro Loa, such as Kalfu ("Mate Carrefour" master of crossroads), Ezili Dantor, Grande Bois, and Marinette. Spells involving death magic and the soul require calling upon the loud, rude, and sinister Ghede Loa such as Baron Samedi or Mamam Brigette.

Establish Societe (10th): At tenth level, a bokor may found a cult that draws 4d6 initiates (they will be 1d4 levels, half of them freebooters, half bokor). They are very loyal. (never checking morale).

Variant: Witches and Warlocks

These follow western occult traditions but have come to the new world to take advantage of the powerful spirits that exist here. Use the same rules as Bokor. They have the advantage of not being African Slaves (avoiding rampant prejudice) but the disadvantage that they are unfamiliar with the local spirits and thus must have

copious magical books (books of shadows, grimoires) and complex rituals (takes twice as long to prepare spells).

BOKOR

The character is a Voodoo sorcerer who relies on the Loa, a pantheon of powerful divine spirits, to perform magic. While a voodoo priest (hougan) or priestesses (mambo) serves the Loa and look after the religious interests of their congregations (in much the same way as do Christian clergy), the bokor are those individuals who use Voodoo magically, for personal gain - they "serve the loa with both hands" doing both good and evil. It is bokor who create zombies and magical talismans, cast terrifying spells, and who are the sorts of individuals who associate with pirates and freebooters! The majority of bokor will be black African-Americans or Africans who are either slaves or (as likely with their powers) escaped slaves. Bokor are feared and among those freebooters who know of their abilities, highly respected. Their relationships with mainstream Voodoo worshipers is ambiguous.

Rituals: The first number is the number of lesser 1st-level rituals that can be used daily. The second number is 2nd-level rituals. The third number is the 3rd-level rituals usable each day.

Level	XP	HD (d6)	BHB	ST	Rituals	Level Bonus
1	0	1	+0	13	1/	-
2	2,500	2	+1	12	2/	-
3	5,000	3	+2	11	2/	Skill
4	10,000	4	+2	10	2/1	-
5	20,000	5	+3	9	2/1	Skill
6	40,000	6	+3	8	2/2	-
7	80,000	7	+4	7	2/2	Skill
8	160,000	8	+4	6	3/2	-
9	320,000	9	+5	5	3/2	Skill
10	600,000	10	+6	4	3/2/1	-

Spells: May use magic. See Voodoo Magic appendix.
XP Bonus for Charisma: Voodoo priests interact with spiritual beings, many of which are more personable than more distant western gods. Thus, Charisma is the

most important ability. This class bonus is in addition to the XP Bonus all characters get by having a high charisma score.

Spell Casting

For a bokor, preparing spells requires gathering specialized components, exhausting ritual preparations, invoking the appropriate spirits, and preparing a drogue (charm or fetish) or potion that hold the magic ready for use. A character can have a number of charms of this sort ready in any given day as shown on the Rituals column for his character class. It takes one round to actually cast a drogue, drink a potion, or otherwise use such a ready charm. (Some require the target must drink the potion or accept the charm.) It takes about eight hours of ritual preparation to prepare another array of spells (or optionally, 1 hour per level of spell).

FIRST LEVEL SPELLS

BLESS WEAPON
Range: 30 ft.
Duration: 1 hour.

The caster draws symbols on a weapon (a gun, cannon, blade, etc.) or binds the fetish onto it giving it a +1 to hit and damage. If level 8 or higher, the bonus increases to +2. For ranged weapons this can be applied to the missile doubling the bonus for only one attack.

BLESS (CURSE)
Range: 10 ft..
Duration: 1 hour (6 turns)

This spell grants its recipient a +1 to attack and saving throws (and improves morale, if not a player character). The recipient cannot already be in combat when the spell is cast.

Curse is similar to Bless except it imparts a -1. As with Bless, the recipient cannot already be in combat when the spell is cast.

CHARM ANIMAL
Range: 60 ft.
Duration: 1 hour

Turns an animal into a servant. For monsters of fewer than 3 HD, up to 3d6 can be affected.

DARKVISION
Range: Touch.
Duration: 1 day

The recipient of the spell can see in total darkness for the length of the spell's duration out to a distance of 60 ft.

DETECT SPIRITS
Range: 10 ft per caster level.
Duration: 1 hour

Caster can perceive invisible creatures and objects. More importantly, this spell allows him to see ghosts and magical spirits, including loa who are possessing someone as a "horse."

CURE WOUNDS
Range: Touch.
Duration: Immediate

This spell cures 1d4+1 hit points of damage.

KNOCK
Range: 60 ft.
Duration: Immediate
    This spell unlocks and unbars all doors, gates, and portals within its range, including those held or locked by normal magic.

LOCATE OBJECT
Range: 1 mile/level.
Duration: 1 round/level
    This spell gives the caster the correct direction (as the crow flies) toward an object the casters specifies with a description. The object cannot be something the caster has never seen, although the spell can detect an object in a general class of items known to the caster: stairs, gold, etc.

DETECT SPIRITS
Range: 10 ft per caster level.
Duration: 1 hour
    Caster can perceive invisible creatures and objects. More importantly, this spell allows him to see ghosts and magical spirits, including loa who are possessing someone as a "horse."

HOLD PORTAL
Range: 30 ft.
Duration: 2d6 turns.
    This spell holds a door or gate fast in its current position for the spell's duration (or until dispelled). Creatures with magic resistance can shatter the spell without much effort.

LOCATE OBJECT
Range: 1 mile/level.
Duration: 1 min./level
    Gives the caster the correct direction (as the crow flies) toward an object the caster specifies with a description. The object cannot be something the caster has never seen, although the spell can detect an object in a general class of items known to the caster: stairs, rum, gold, etc.

NEUTRALIZE POISON
Range: 10 ft.
Duration: Immediate
    This is an amulet or potion that counteracts poison, but does not bring a poisoned corpse back to life.

PROTECTIVE SPELL
Range: 30 ft.

Duration: 1 turn/level

This can be cast on an amulet or other small charm that is worn by the caster or given to another person. It give a +2 to AC vs. ranged attacks and +1 vs. melee attacks.

PURIFICATION
Range: 10 ft.
Duration: Immediate

Enough food and water for up to a dozen people is made pure, removing spoilage and poisons. Very useful at sea!

REPAIR OBJECT
Range: Touch.
Duration: Immediate.

Fixes a small object that is broken or restores 1d6 hp/level to a ship or other large object.

SPEAK LANGUAGES
Range: touch.
Duration: 1 turn/level

This spell allows the caster or recipient to read or speak any language for the duration.

SPEAK WITH ANIMALS
Range: 30 ft.
Duration: 1 hour

The caster can speak with normal fish or animals within range. The animals will assist him, and they will not attack him or his party (unless he's got something particularly offensive to say). Aggressive critters like sharks may drive a bargain, though ("give me that guy to eat and I'll spare you...")

SPEAK WITH PLANTS
Range: 30 ft.
Duration: 1 hour

The caster can speak to and understand the replies of plants. Plants will obey his commands as far as they are able (e.g. twisting or bending aside to ease his far as they are able (e.g. twisting or bending aside to ease his passage, pointing toward water, etc.). This spell also allows movement through woods, rainforest or jungle as if through clear terrain for its duration!

SPIRIT PROTECTION
Range: touch.
Duration: 6 hours

Creates an amulet or fetish that protects the user or person it is given to giving +3 to save vs. magical spells. Also any zombie is -3 to attack the wearer.

SPIRIT SERVANT
Range: 120 ft.
Duration: 1 round/level

The caster can move objects using mental power alone. The amount of weight he can lift and move is 2 pounds per level - not much, but enough to escape if tied up, levitate a key through a barred cell door, or raise up a pistol from behind someone's back!

SECOND LEVEL SPELLS

CONFUSION
Range: 60 ft. Affects 15 ft. radius.
Duration: 2 rounds/level

This spell conjures up petro loa who take temporary control of people, animals, or monsters in the area of effect, making them act randomly. Roll 2d6 to determine each creature's behavior. A saving throw is made for each person in the area of effect.

Confusion Reaction

Roll	Reaction
2–5	Attack the caster and his allies
6–8	Stand baffled and inactive
9–12	Attack each other

DETONATION
Range: 240 ft.
Duration: Until fired

This curses a firearm or cannon so that the next time it is loaded and fired, it will catastrophically misfire and explode. The curse is invisible so that the target will not be aware of it unless Detect Magic is used. This wrecks the gun. In addition, a pistol-sized gun does 1d4 damage and a musket-sized gun does 1d6 damage to its shooter, a swivel gun does 1d8 damage to all within 3 ft. of it, while a cannon bursts like a grenade going off!

HOLD PERSON
Range: 20 ft.
Duration: 30 min.

The caster can target 1d4 persons (saving throw applies) or may instead target a single creature who must make their save at a -2 penalty. They are paralyzed until any attack is made aganist them or the duration expires.

CONTROL FIRES
Range: 10 ft/level
Duration: 1 round/level

For the duration of the spell, the caster can affect any flames or fires in a 10 ft. per level radius. The major effect is that he can selectively prevent fuses, flints, etc. from sparking, thus preventing guns, cannon, or grenades from going off. He can also put out fires, or make a small spark ignite a blaze. He cannot create flame out of nothing.

FOG CLOUD
Range: 100 ft Effect: 150 ft. radius.
Duration: 1 turn/level

A bank of fog billows out from the point you designate. The fog obscures all sight, beyond 5 feet. A creature within 5 feet is -4 to be hit. Creatures farther away can't be attacked. A moderate wind (11+ mph) disperses the fog in 4 rounds; a strong wind (21+ mph) disperses the fog in 1 round. No effect underwater or indoors!

CURE WOUNDS II
Range: Touch
Duration: Immediate

Cures 2d6+3 hit points of damage.

ILLUSION
Range: 240 ft
Duration: 8 hours or until touched

This spell creates a realistic illusion in a place or over a person. The illusion must be created when no one but the caster is looking at it! After that, however, it appears real. It affects sight, smell, and hearing but must be fairly static (no walking, talking, or fighting). It disappears when it is touched and can't do damage, but, e.g., stepping on an illusionary bridge over a crevasse can kill from the fall.

INSECT PLAGUE
Range: 480 ft
Duration: 1 turn/level.

This spell only works outdoors. A storm of insects gathers, and goes wherever the caster directs. The cloud is approximately 400 sq ft (20 ft by 20 ft, with roughly corresponding height). Any normal man or animal of 2 HD or fewer that is exposed to the cloud of insects flees in terror (no saving throw). Higher HD suffer -2 on their attacks while in the cloud. No effect underwater or on the seas beyond sight of land.

LOVE CHARM
Range: 20 ft.
Duration: Until dispelled

This spell affects humans. If the spell succeeds (saving throw allowed), the unfortunate creature falls in love with the caster, or with another person that the caster names.

PROTECTION FROM SPIRITS
Range: 30 ft. (10 ft. radius).
Duration: 1 turn/level

Creates a magical field of spiritual protection around a particular area marked on the ground or deck. Anyone possessed by a loa, or any other spirit, suffers a -3 penalty to-hit the caster, and the caster gains +3 on all saving throws vs. any voodoo magic. Also any zombi cannot cross the boundary.

REMOVE CURSE
Range: 10 ft.
Duration: Immediate

This spell removes one curse from a person or object. Certain voodoo spells. In addition, Remove Curse will immediately drive a loa out of the subject, ending possession.

SENSE THOUGHTS
Range: 60 ft.
Duration: 1 minute

The caster can detect the thoughts and emotions of other beings. The spell cannot penetrate more than two feet of stone, and is blocked by even a thin sheet of lead.

SPIRIT POSSESSION
Range: 5 ft.
Duration: 1 turn/level

This ritual can be cast upon a believer (who does not get a ST) or anyone else (who does). The spell calls forth a particular Loa who possesses the subject, making them their "horse" for the duration indicated. The bokor will identify the particular loa who, after some antics and accepting appropriate offerings (good food, rum, etc.), may answer questions of interest to the bokor, generally the loa answers questions related to its sphere. (e.g., summon Baron Samedi to ask if someone is alive or dead, or how they passed, or Legba to ask about justice, or the way into or out of something). Answers are brief (yes, no, etc.) or couched in riddles, sarcasm, etc. Loa don't like being constantly pestered so the same loa should not be contacted more than once per week.

STICK TO SNAKE
Range: 120 ft.

Duration: 1 hour

Turn one normal stick into a snake, having a 50% chance of being venomous. The snake follows his command, but turns back into a stick after the spell end or if killed.

TRANSFER DISEASE
Range: Touch.
Duration: Immediate

This spell allows the caster to transfer a disease from one being to another living being (at least mouse size). Usually it is used to transfer a person's sickness to a handy rodent, dog, gull, pig, or chicken, but can also be used to curse another person by transferring one's own illness. If so, the victim gets a saving throw and if they resist no transfer occurs.

WATER BREATHING
Range: 30 ft.
Duration: 2 hours

This spell grants the ability to breathe underwater and avoid drowning for its duration.

THIRD LEVEL SPELLS

DEATH SPELL
Range: 10 miles/level.
Duration: Permanent

The user must make a doll or similar image of the person which includes something from the victim (such as clothing they wore, a lock of hair, some blood). Each day the caster may spend an hour ritually tormenting the doll in some way (sticking pins in it, burning it with matches, cutting it, etc.) and the victim suffers pain and loses 1d6 hp. The caster can torment the doll each day until the victim is dead or he decides to stop; he can keep the doll and black mail the victim, restarting torment later... If a doll is severely damaged in a way that would be fatal to living being (burned, dismembered, hung, etc.) the victim suffers pain and takes 3d6 damage immediately but the spell ends. A Remove Curse cast on the doll eliminate its malign effect; it can be harmlessly destroyed.

PROTECTION FROM NORMAL MISSILES
Range: 30 ft.
Duration: 1 turn/level

The recipient becomes invulnerable small missiles (gun shots, thrown weapons, grenade fragments, and arrows, but NOT against cannon ball or swivel gun rounds).

CALL LIGHTNING

Range: 240 ft.
Duration: Instantaneous

During an existing thunder storm, the caster can call down a bolt of lightning from the heavens to strike any exposed target (person, ship, building, etc) within 240 feet.. The lightning bolt does 1d12 points of damage per level of the caster (half with a successful saving throw).

CONTROL WEATHER

Range: 10 mile radius.
Duration: 1 hour/level

The caster can summon or stop rainfall, create unusually high or low temperatures, summon or disperse a storm, alter wind strength dramatically, or call up clouds. Catastrophic effects (e.g., a hurricane out of season) or utterly unnatural effects (e.g., snow or sandstorms in the Caribbean) are impossible. However, the caster can manipulate the path of an existing hurricane to hit or miss a particular island or coastal region.

PLANT GROWTH

Range: 120 ft
Duration: Permanent until dispelled

Up to 10,000 sq ft of ground (e.g., 100 x 100 ft., or a 1,000 x 10 ft. strip) can be affected by this spell; undergrowth in the area suddenly grows into an impassable forest of thorns and vines. The caster can decide the shape of the area to be enchanted but it must be continuous and its longest dimension may not be more than 10 x its shortest dimension.

RAISE DEAD

Range: 5 ft.
Duration: Permanent

Raise Dead allows the voodoo priest to raise a corpse from the dead, provided it has not been dead too long and is relatively intact (not decapitated, ashes, crushed, etc.). If the target is in their grave, they will claw their way out. The normal time limit is 4 days, but for every caster Level higher than 8th, the time limit extends another 4 days. However, a victim who is raised is restored as a zombi: while their body is strong, their coordination, mind and personality are weakened: Dexterity, Intelligence, Charisma, and Wisdom are all halved! Thus, using the Voodoo Raise Dead spell is as much a curse as a blessing, and many are not grateful for it.

SOUL JAR

Range: Touch.
Duration: See Below

This spell prepares a small object, such as a doll or amulet, which contains some part of the caster's body (e.g., a drop of blood or lock of hair). Should the caster

die, his soul will transfer to the object . Should anyone pick up the object, the caster may attempt to possess them: if they fail to save, their soul goes into the object and he takes over their body (gaining their Strength, Dexterity; average other ability scores; he retains his level; re-roll hp). Someone trapped in a jar can only make one such attempt per person per day.

ZOMBIE
Range: 0 (subject must drink potion)
Duration: 3 days / permanent

This spell creates a potion. Upon drinking it (willingly or otherwise) the drinker, if he fails a Constitution ST, falls into a deathlike trance for 3 days in which he does not eat or drink or need much air. Often he is mistakenly buried. After the trance ends the subject's will is suppressed and the bokor can force the zombie to obey him as an abject slave. This spell transforms a victim into a voodoo zombie - a living puppet of the caster. A zombie feels little pain so their Constitution is increased by +5. However, they are slow, dull, and lacking in personality: Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma are halved. The effects last until a Remove Curse ritual is successfully performed.

Loa Descriptions

Brief descriptions of the major loa are given below. The first name is the name used by Voodoo practitioners; the term in parenthesis is that used by Santeria practitioners.

Legba (Eleggua): Legba is the loa of the crossroads, guardian of the home, and the intermediary between man and spirit. He is depicted and his spirit appears as an old man leaning on a cane.

Damballa and his wife Ayida-Wedo are the divine snakes, creator and progenitor gods who are associated with prosperity, knowledge, luck, fresh water, and trees and other growing things.

Erzulie is the loa associated with love, beauty, and lust, but also has a negative Petro aspect associated with savage vengeance and spite. Her spirit appears as a beautiful, sensuous woman or bitter hag; her horses radiate sexuality and is prone to lecherous behavior

Obatala stands for peace and purity, and a clear and untroubled mind. His spirit appears as a man dressed in white. Mounts strive to avoid violence and maintain serenity.

Chango, or Shango, he is the loa of thunder, lightning, fire, volcanoes, and gunpowder. A horse of Chango has a short temper and is easily moved by anger or lust, and gains a booming voice. They often like to play tricks with fire, smoke tobacco, or exhibit mild pyromania.

Ogun is a spirit of metal and warfare. Ogun is associated with vigor and resistance to disease. His spiritual aspect is that of a warrior, impetuous, aggressive, and prone to acting without thinking.

Ochosi is the god of hunting, gathering, and healing, his spirit manifesting as that of a mighty hunter. His horses seem unnaturally keen and alert, and are most comfortable outdoors.

Baron Samedi and (his two similar associated spirits, e.g., Baron Cemetary) is a spirit of the dead, dressed in black with a tall hat and a white or skull-like face. A mount of Baron Samedi often makes trouble, lies, steals, and uses profanity; they smell of the grave and know things about the dead.
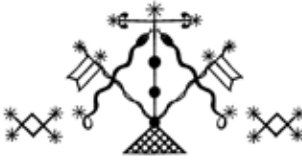
APPENDIX: SKILLS

While Freebooters does not utilize specific skills, promoting the aesthetic that player action trumps random rolls, some Referees and players may prefer some sort of die check be made to determine whether or not a character is successful attempting a particular action. In these cases, the Referee can utilize this skill system to augment the basic rules.

Skills represent the various areas of expertise and are broadly defined, representing a wide range of studies and possible uses. When the Referee determines that a Skill might be useful in a given situation, the player should roll a D20 and compare the result to their Skill plus whatever Attribute modifier applies (which is listed for each Skill.) If they meet or exceed that number, they succeed at the task.

Easy: 10 (generally should be automatic success)
Difficult: 15
Hard: 20
Very Hard: 25

Many conflicts will not involve a specific skill, and in those cases Referees should feel free to call for a simple Ability check, at the same Skill level and including Ability bonuses or minuses. For example, jumping over a pit might call for a Strength check or, depending on the circumstances, perhaps a Dexterity check. Again, remember to modify the roll by the character's ability modifier if they have one.

Referees are encouraged to allow automatic success in areas reflected by a character's skill list when reasonable, or when the player adequately describes the steps he or she takes to accomplish the desired objective. In some cases more than one skill can be appropriate to a given situation.

Skill Checks should be reserved for the most dramatic points in a story; there's no need to call for checks when characters are not under pressure or in dangerous situations. At no time should a player be called on for a Skill Check unless the Referee is ready for the character to either succeed or fail. And ready for failure should not be limited to "you're dead."

Acrobatic (DEX): The character's swashbuckling fighting style improves his or her Armor Class by two. This only applies in a situation where the character is unarmored, not encumbered and free to move about to take advantage of terrain, furniture, etc. to perform swashbuckling feats.

Climbing (STR): This skill allows the user to climb twice as fast as an ordinary person (normally a person can climb a steep incline or wall at about half their standard move rate). It also allows the character to only take one-half of the ordinary damage from falls, and to know how to climb trees or up cliffs (with proper gear) or scamper up and down rigging twice as quickly as usual. Several islands in the Caribbean are mountainous and forts are built atop cliffs facing the sea. The character has skill in using pitons, harnesses, and other climbing gear to scale cliff

faces (at 10 ft./minute) that ordinary people would believe impossible, and can then let down ropes or harnesses to allow unskilled individuals to climb up also.

Cooking (INT): A skilled cook can improve morale or impress people: in fact, a very successful feast or beach barbecue (something Buccaneers were known for) may win over a rival crew or native tribe, attract recruits for your ship . A skilled cook may also be able to stretch provisions by 10% over the usual duration (this may require a Intelligence ST).

Driving (DEX): This skill is used to avoid dangerous or unusual obstacles when driving a carriage, cart, or wagon. Also, success allows the driver to win any races against other drivers (interesting NPC opponents may themselves get Skill Throws, of course.)

Empathy (CHA): This is the skill of determining what other people are thinking or feeling. Use this ability to add +2 to Charisma checks or saves by themselves or fellow players.

Gambling (WIS): Using this skill, characters can generally come out ahead in any games of chance that involve any skill at all- cards, dice, sports betting, etc. In most cases, this requires opposed checks against other bettors; entering into such competitions without this skill is usually hazardous to the pocketbook!

Hide (DEX): Anyone can hide from people looking for them if they have time and plausible places to hide in. With this skill, a freebooter can quickly find cover in an instant.

Jungle Fighter (WIS): The character has experience in tropical rain forest and may move through the jungle at double speed, or lead followers at 1.5 times speed. Given a distraction or flanking maneuver he may do x3 damage with a backstab.

Language: Each time this skill is taken allows fluency in one additional language. No roll is required. Freebooters usually speak Dutch, English, French, and/or Spanish. Depending on their backgrounds, some freebooters may also be fluent in one of the Caribbean creole languages used by the diverse African slave population (which drew from various West African languages and French or Spanish), Portuguese, another European language, or one of the several indigenous Arawak or Carib languages spoken by Caribbean native islanders.

Medic (INT): This skill allows the character to provide emergency battlefield medical care. Using it allows the character to heal back 1d4 hit points of damage after an injury to another character, once per injury.

Pickpocket (DEX): Some freebooters are former convicts or criminals who were sent into servitude. This skill lets freebooters palm or remove small items from targets without being noticed. It also represents small feats of sleight-of-hand, such as magic tricks.

Master Gunner (INT): This covers how to keep cannon and other firearms and their ammunition in good repair, as well as knowledge of gunpowder, grenades, stink-pots and explosives, and how to dismantle or destroy forts, guns, and other edifices. While anyone can use gunpowder to make a large kaboom, this skill is required for any sort of controlled use to collapse a tunnel, repair or blow up a cannon, etc., without damage to anything else around. It is learned by both musketeers (if they served in the artillery) and freebooters. In ship combat, if a ship has one or more gunners to supervise, all swivel guns and cannons get a +1 to hit.

Musician (CHA): The character can play one or more musical instruments such as drums, fiddle, trumpet, etc. Musicians are valued aboard ships for entertainment (often getting an extra quarter share); pirates use discordant music and dance ("vaporing") to raise morale and terrify their victims.

Quick Reflexes (DEX): Characters with this skill give a +1 Bonus to their side when rolling initiative. Only one such bonus can be added per "side."

Riding (DEX): This skill is required to avoid unusual obstacles or injury while riding a horse (or other riding animal). It also allows the rider to win races against other mounted opponents, or enter opposed ST contests with skilled NPCs.

Sailing (DEX): This is basic skill to act as a common sailor, or to serve as a boatswain or bosun's mate. All freebooters have it free. A sailor can steer a ship under direction, row or sail a boat, and work the rigging, and load and fire cannon. All freebooters get this for free, but it is available as a general skill for Musketeers or Bokor to take.

Soldiering (INT): This skill represents basic daily duties of a career military man. It allows the user to repair weapons, understand and use basic military tactics, and impress fellow soldiers with knowledge of militaria or by telling old war stories. The Referee may also allow a ST to know details of coastal forts (e.g., a secret passage or a weakness in their defenses). More importantly in any fight on land, if the leader has Soldiering their side gets a +1 Initiative.

Sneak (DEX): Using this skill, a freebooter can move from one area to another without being noticed. Penalties may be applied for difficult circumstances, including moving other people or large objects, or moving through areas with obstacles or noisy environments.

Surgeon (INT): This skill represents the entire science of human health. It allows the character to diagnose disease, perform field surgery or amputations, or set a broken bone. A character can use this skill to heal back 1d6 hit points of damage after an injury to another character, once per injury. Successful use of this skill to treat someone with a disease halves the time and adds +2 to ST to recover.

Survival (WIS): This is familiarity with living off the land in the Caribbean. Roll this skill to avoid getting lost in trackless wilderness, to find food, water or shelter, to fish (e.g., for turtles), and to track a person or animal, or to obscure tracks and evade pursuit. This skill is commonly held by native islanders. The Referee may give a +1 to AC and +1 to hit vs. normal animals.

Appraise (INT): Sea Rovers using this skill can quickly assess the value of plunder including unusual items, divide the loot fairly, determine which pieces will most appeal to collectors, and determine if they are getting a good deal when purchasing supplies or negotiating with locals. Useful for a pirate quartermaster or merchant!

Backstab (DEX): With this skill a cunning Sea Rover can sneak up on unwitting opponents and attack them from behind, getting a +4 "to-hit" bonus and doing double damage with a melee weapon. The opponent must be unaware of the Sea Rover (for example, by a successful use of the Sneak skill below) and must have a definable "back."

Carpentry (INT): This skill allows a character to serve as Carpenter aboard a ship. Carpentry can be used to repair wooden ships hulls and rigging, build timber forts, make furniture or boats, etc. This allows repairing 1 hp of damage to a vessel (or wooden fort) per day. The character can also lead others who don't have the skill. For every five unskilled men working under him repair one extra 1 hp/day. (Rigging can be repaired every hour rather than every day.)

Disguise (CHA or WIS): This skill allows Sea Rovers to disguise themselves as other people. Successful rolls allow the character to pass as a general example of a type of person or one with a specific job - an honest merchant, an aristocrat, or a Spanish priest, for example, or even the opposite sex. (It helps if appropriate props, such as clothing, are available, but Disguise includes the ability to adopt appropriate attitudes, mannerisms, and accents.)

Interrogation (CHA): Skilled in prying out information via tricks, threats, or torture; if successful foe may get a CHA saving throw to resist.

Naval Warfare (INT): Skill in commanding men or vessels at sea. This works like soldiering but apply to vessels and men at sea.

Navigation (INT): This skill is required to use navigational instruments, find one's position at sea, and navigate past dangerous shoals and reefs. By careful maneuvering it allows winning chases against other boats or ships; attempt opposed STs if called for. A skilled navigator is called a "sea artist" and is highly valued, and often second or third in command.

Swimming (CON): This skill allows the user to avoid drowning in difficult circumstances. Also allows character to win races against other swimmers, or to hold their breath underwater for up to one full minute. Not all freebooters can swim!

BOKOR SKILLS

These skills are only available to the Bokor character class.

Ancient Lore (INT): With this skill, the character can know facts or theories about matters most people consider to be mythical or magical, including the nature of the loa, other native spirits, monsters, magic items, and systems of magic.

Fortune Telling (WIS): This skill covers various means of predicting the future, generally by consulting the spirits, interpreting omens, or reading cards. As a general rule use of this skill should be restricted to quiet times out of combat and require the physical items that apply to the method chosen. Referees should take care to make sure that successful use of this skill gives vague but generally useful advice about the future, but generally not specific facts.

Herbal Remedies (INT): This is the skill of nontraditional medicines and healing arts. Use this skill to heal back 1d6 hit points of damage after an injury to another character, once per injury.

Sixth Sense (WIS): People with this skill are very difficult to surprise, as they can frequently tell when hidden dangers are present. This skill frequently is appropriate for the Referee to roll, rather than the player, to maintain a sense of mystery about whether one's forebodings are indeed correct.

OPEN GAME CONTENT

Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of the Open Game License Version 1.0a (OGL).

This entire work is designated as Open Game Content under the OGL, with the exception of the trademarks "Freebooters," and "Night Owl Workshop," and with the exception of all artwork. These trademarks, and the Trade Dress of this work (font, layout, style of artwork, etc.) are reserved as Product Identity.

OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a

What if the first RPG was inspired by epic tales of the buccaneers and pirates of the Caribbean? Instead of slogging their way through gloomy dungeons, freebooters hoist the Jolly Roger and seek plunder and adventure on the high seas!

FREEBOOTERS is a pirate-themed retro-clone intended to be compatible with the original fantasy RPG, Raiders, Guardians, Colonial Troopers, Warriors of the Red Planet and others. The rules presented can be used as a complete game or a companion to fantasy games using the same overall system. This book is a resource for Referees to pick and choose from!

A Complete Roleplaying Game!
- 4 Character classes: Sea Rover, Musketeer, & Striker
- The optional voodoo wielding Bokor class
- Ship-to-Ship Combat
- Caribbean map for cutthroat adventures on the high seas!

ORIGINAL EDITION
COMPATIBLE

Freebooters
Compatible

NIGHT OWL
WORKSHOP