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SHADY GULCH

ROLEPLAYING IN THE OLD WEST

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Written and Designed by Brett M. Bernstein

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WELCOME TO SHADY GULCH



This game requires a minimum of two players and two six-sided dice. A group of four to five mature players and four or more dice is recommended. Each player will also require a pencil and a character record sheet (*see back of book* ►). This book includes all the rules required for play, although a familiarity with roleplaying is helpful.

ROLEPLAYING

The goal of each player is to act out his or her character's personality, abilities, and even fears. It is the same as performing in a play except that each player picks his own lines; a form of improvisation. The characters are the most important element of play and develop through the course of the game.

One player must be the gamemaster, who acts as referee and narrator. His job is also to project the proper atmosphere, advance the plot, and assume the role of all

characters in the game which are not controlled by the other players.

The outcome of complicated tasks and special situations are governed by a set rules and some six-sided dice as described in the next chapter.

Remember, this is a game. Its sole purpose is to entertain through interactive storytelling. If you would like more information on roleplaying or gamemastering check out:

- [HTTP://ROLEPLAYGAMES.ABOUT.COM](http://roleplaygames.about.com)
- [HTTP://WWW.ROLEPLAYINGTIPS.COM.](http://www.roleplayingtips.com)

THE OLD WEST

The *Old West* is both an era and a place. It is used to describe the western territories of the United States when exploration and colonization was popular—approximately 1885. Many came not only from the

American east coast, but also foreign lands such as Europe and Asia.

SLANG

It wouldn't be the old west without the proper slang. Players are encouraged to use these words and phrases to help get into the spirit of the game.

ace in the hole: a gun hidden on one's person
among the willows: avoiding the law
back trail: a recently covered trail
bar dog: a bartender
batch: a man who keeps house without a wife
belly up: dead
big house: the home of a ranch owner or cow boss
blind trail: a trail with few markings
broke: a horse that has been tamed
bronc breaker: a cowboy that breaks (tames) wild horses
bug juice: whiskey or other alcoholic beverage
bushwhack: to ambush or shoot someone in the back
cat wagon: a wagon carrying prostitutes
chuck wagon: a wagon used for food storage and preparation
cold trail: an old trail which cannot be followed
cookie duster: mustache
cow boss: the foreman of a ranch
cow poke: cowboy
cow puncher: cowboy
dogfight: a fist fight
drive: to move cattle from one place to another
dude: an individual from the east coast or wearing east coast style clothing
duffer: someone who is useless
fag: to get out of an area quickly
freak: a worker who complains or is unwilling to perform his duties
granger: a farmer
greenhorn: an inexperienced individual, especially one

who is easily deceived

grit: bravery or composure

gunny: a hired killer or thug

gunsel: a person with limited knowledge of livestock and cowboy ways

gunshy: cowardly

hole up: to remain indoors during poor weather

hoosegow: a jail

horning in: intruding on one's territory or meddling in one's affairs

jigger boss: second in command to the cow boss, often ropes the cowboy's horses for the day

john henry: a cowboy's signature

lawdog: a sheriff

lead chucker: a pistol

long rider: an outlaw

lunger: a person who suffers from tuberculosis

manstopper: a gun

mess wagon: see *chuck wagon*

old timer: an old person or someone who has lived in a single place for a long time

on the dodge: running from the law

on the drift: looking for a job

on the prod: looking for trouble

out coyote: to outsmart someone

picking daisies: being thrown from a horse

pistol whip: to beat someone with the barrel of a gun

plant: to bury someone

powder burning contest: a gunfight

put on the feed bag: to eat

redeye: whiskey

roostered: intoxicated

rosin jaw: hired help who does mechanical, irrigating, and feeding chores

rustler: a horse or cattle thief

saddle gun: a rifle

scattergun: a shotgun

shading: resting, often out of the sun

six gun: a revolver

six shooter: a revolver

tenderfoot: an inexperienced individual, especially one who is unfamiliar with outdoor life

unshucked: naked

unshucked gun: a pistol which is out of its holster

wire: a telegraph message or the act of sending a telegraph message



THE TOWN OF SHADY GULCH

You will not find Shady Gulch on a map. It does not exist. It has purposely been made to be a generic old west town so that the gamemaster can build it up with the characters' help.

The town is located in a dry, dusty area with little water in the immediate vicinity. It was originally built near a gold mine which has subsequently closed. Fortunately, other mines of various ores were discovered nearby and the town began to boom. Many travelers arrive to work the mines and even venture forth to discover their own.

The gamemaster is encouraged to flesh out the personality of Shady Gulch to best fit his players' roleplaying style. Maps may be made for increased detail and realism. The buildings and businesses listed below are common sights in the *Old West*.

Town Hall

Most of the important decisions for Shady Gulch are made in the town hall. It is a meeting place for both public officials and those who take an interest in town politics and development. The town hall should be located at the city's center or in another prominent location.

Saloon

Every western town has a saloon for its weary citizens to relax, carouse, play cards, and of course, drink alcohol. Saloons always have bartenders and more often than not, attractive barmaids.

General Store

A variety of goods can be purchased from general stores, including canned foods, firearms, clothing, small tools, and sometimes fresh eggs and milk.

Telegraph Office

The quickest way to send messages to other towns (both western and eastern) is the telegraph. Some locations can also *wire* money.

Bank

Banks are often the safest place to keep your money, although bank robberies do occur. Banks offer a good rate of interest for cash stored in their vaults. They are also a prime source for loans. It is unlikely to see more than one bank in a small town like Shady Gulch, but better security and better interest rates could prove to be good competition.

Hotel

Hotels are invaluable to transients such as touring performers and travelers. Pricier hotels can also show off one's status.

Barber Shop

Small towns are likely to have one barber shop that everyone uses. They are inexpensive, friendly, and always a source for surprise encounters and gossip.

Livery

The livery is a stable turned business. It will not only provide shelter and food for your horse, but also rent or even sell horses to those in need.

Blacksmith

The town blacksmith is responsible for shoeing horses and forging metal tools and pulleys. He is a valuable asset to the town and probably works in a stable-like building.

Butcher

Hunters sell their catches to the butchers in town, who in turn provide cuts of meat to local residents and restaurants.

Theatre

The center of entertainment for the town, theatres offer a place for professional performers to display their talents.

Jail

The local jail is small and consists of two cells. Its function is primarily that of a drunk tank and temporary confinement. Criminals awaiting trial must be transported to a larger city in order to face the magistrate.

Railway Depot

Shady Gulch is built near the railroad so that it can receive a steady stream of necessary supplies. Florida oranges are the single largest commodity to be transported by the railroad. Riding trains is the quickest way to reach distant cities and especially travelling coast to coast.

Homestead

Some families purchase land and settle there to raise crops and become self sufficient. Most homesteads are small and bring in enough cash from vegetables and livestock to support the family. Large tracts of land can provide a king's ransom when mines and lumber mills are present.

Brothel

It is up to the city council and sheriff to run ladies of the night out of town. If they should decide not to, the town most likely has a brothel or a set of rooms dedicated for that purpose in a saloon or hotel. If brothels are declared illegal in town, one has probably been built outside of the city limits.

Opium Den

Addicts will pay any amount to get high and opium dens exploit their dependencies. Opium dens are not illegal, but they are frowned upon by the Church and those of strong moral fiber.

Schoolhouse

Teachers may or may not have dedicated buildings for their services. Schoolhouses are likely to be old, decrepit buildings that are no longer in use. Space could also be rented in a meeting hall or hotel.

Graveyard

People die all the time in the *Old West* and they all need to be buried somewhere. Graveyards can be located beside Churches, empty fields, and even on the side of a mountain.

Cabin

Cabins are built by homesteaders and loners who choose to live outside of the city limits.

Corral

Corrals are fenced in areas used to confine livestock. They are prominent on the outskirts of the city and on ranches, but are not a typical part of large homesteads, where the animals run free.

Newspaper

Even a small town has a local paper. It may not employ the most talented reporters, but can be useful for printing wanted posters, announcements, and official documents.

FOREIGNERS

Many immigrants head west in search of a better life. Chinese, Europeans, Jews, Africans; they all have different cultures, religions, and or appearances from the American born inhabitants. They are viewed as second class citizens even once naturalized. Players may wish to use foreigners as characters for a more personalized roleplaying experience or to add spice to a story.

NATIVES

The Old West (and America in general) was originally the native land of numerous Indian tribes until the U.S. government slowly forced them even further west. Many tribes are now extinct and others have been assimilated into the white man's culture. Tribesmen in Shady Gulch will most likely be discriminated against and even feared. In a region where very few people can be trusted, the Indians must prove themselves even more so than anyone else in order to be treated with the slightest respect. Few people can welcome them with no strings attached. And yes, there are vindictive tribes awaiting their chance to take back their land. Will they strike?

MAJOR EVENTS IN THE OLD WEST

- 1843 One thousand pioneers begin a two thousand mile journey along the Oregon trail. They set off with over one hundred wagons and thousands of cattle. They eventually settle in Oregon and thousands more join them in subsequent years.
- 1845 Texas accepts a plan of annexation to the U.S. and angers Mexico. President James K. Polk orders troops to the Texas-Mexican border while simultaneously offering Mexico compensation for the loss of Texas. Mexico rejects the deal and sets the stage for war.
- 1848 Gold is discovered in California. Word spreads and results in the California Gold Rush.
The U.S. signs a treaty with Mexico and assumes control of Texas, California, and New Mexico.
- 1849 *Forty-niners* create new trails and flock to California. They pioneer new towns and a new way of life. Tens of thousands of people travel to these towns from every corner of the world to *strike it rich*.
- 1851 The U.S. signs a treaty with over eight native tribes. Regions are designated as tribal lands and they are to be compensated by the government in exchange for ceasing attacks on migrants. The treaty is violated by both sides through no fault of the negotiators.
- 1852 Uncle Tom's Cabin is published and expands the debate on slavery.
- 1853 Indians continue to be persecuted, enslaved, and murdered.
- 1859 Gold is discovered in Colorado and a new gold rush is born. Silver is also discovered in Nevada, increasing the size of Virginia City.
- 1860 This year marks the first mail delivery by the Pony Express.
Abraham Lincoln is elected president. His pledge to oppose the spread of slavery causes unrest in the south.
- 1861 Confederate forces take arms against the union, unleashing the Civil War.
The transcontinental telegraph line is completed, rendering the Pony Express unnecessary.
- 1863 The Emancipation Proclamation is issued by President Lincoln.
- 1865 The Confederacy surrenders to the Union, ending the Civil War.
- 1867 The U.S. signs yet another treaty with Indian tribes in order to remove potential obstacles from the expanding territories. Unfair conditions for the tribes lead to war.
- 1869 The transcontinental railroad is completed when the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads are connected in Utah.
- 1873 Buffalo all but vanish after hunters destroy their numbers.
- 1874 Barbed wire is introduced to the west and is used primarily on farms and ranches.
- 1881 Billy the Kid is shot and killed by Sheriff Pat Garrett after being accused of more than twenty one murders.
Wyatt Earp and his brothers kill the Clantons in a gunfight at the O.K. Corral.
- 1882 The outlaw Jesse James is shot and killed.

BASIC RULES

"The wild and woolly west"

EDITORIAL, THE [BOSTON] HERALD



This game requires at least two six-sided dice in order to play. Although one set of two is sufficient, you may want to provide additional dice for each player.

These dice are always rolled in pairs taking the sum of the two. This sum is called the *dice total*. Some special abilities or actions may also call for a number of *bonus dice* or *penalty dice* to be rolled with the pair. The two lowest dice are added together when using *bonus dice*, while the two highest are added together when using *penalty dice*. *Bonus dice* and *penalty dice* cancel each other out. *Penalty dice* are represented as **-1** and *bonus dice* as **+1**, with the actual number of dice in the circle.

➡ EXAMPLE

Billy Joe is attempting a task which calls for 1 penalty die (-1) and 3 bonus dice (+3). One of the bonus dice is canceled out by the penalty die, leaving 2 bonus dice (+2). Billy Joe now rolls a total of 4 dice (the 2 original dice plus the 2 bonus dice). He rolls a 2, 4, 6, and 5. Because he is using bonus dice, Billy Joe takes the sum of the two lowest dice which are the 2 and the 4, making a dice total of 6.

BASIC TASK ROLLS

1. **Compute Skill Total (trait + skill)**
2. **Roll Dice and Compute Dice Total**
3. **Determine Success**

dice total must be less than or equal to skill total

During the course of a gaming session, you will want to accomplish tasks. Rolls of the dice are used to determine if these tasks succeed. Task rolls provide a balanced system which reflects a character's skill and ability levels. The more skilled a character is, the higher his chance of success will be.

A character accomplishes a basic task when his *dice total* is less than or equal to his *skill total*. The *skill total* is equal to the sum of the appropriate skill rating and its corresponding trait (*see next chapter* ➡).

ADVANCED TASK ROLLS

1. **Compute Skill Total (trait + skill)**
2. **Roll Dice and Compute Dice Total**
3. **Compute Margin (skill total - dice total)**
4. **Determine Degree of Success**

cross reference the margin with the difficulty of the task on the success table

Advanced task rolls add realism by utilizing varying levels of difficulty assigned by the gamemaster. Varying degrees of success are also determined by the outcome of the roll.

DIFFICULTIES

Difficulties make it easy for the gamemaster to determine when and how to roll for tasks. They also affect the outcome of a task.

SIMPLE tasks do not require a roll unless the gamemaster wishes to know the character's degree of success, or if the task is contested by another character. Simple tasks represent trivial labors that usually require little or no training. We generally take them for granted.

EASY tasks, also do not require rolls unless contested or a specific degree of success is required. Easy tasks are mundane, every day labors that require very little skill.

AVERAGE tasks always require rolls and represent innocuous actions that must rely on training and experience. They also require some thought or effort.

CHALLENGING tasks are slightly more difficult than average ones and require some effort and/or thought. They are usually harmless and require the *dice total* to be less than the *skill total* by at least one to be successful.

HARD tasks typically require above average skill and represent some action unfamiliar to a character. They can also be fairly dangerous and require the *dice total* to be less than the *skill total* by at least four to be successful.

IMPOSSIBLE tasks cover all dangerous or improbable situations. Characters attempting such actions are either very brave or very stupid. They require the *dice total* to be less than the *skill total* by at least six to be successful.

Task difficulties may be increased or decreased by a character's actions or his environment. Difficulties may not be reduced less than *simple* or increased greater than *impossible*. An increase in difficulty is represented as **1** and a decrease in difficulty as **1**, with the actual number of difficulty levels changed in the arrow.

OUTCOME

To determine how successful a task is we must first compute the difference between the *skill total* and the *dice total* ($skill\ total - dice\ total$). This value is called the *margin*.

Once we know the margin, consult the *success table*. Compare the *margin* on the left of the table with the difficulty at the top. The *degree of success* describes the outcome of the task. Keep in mind that not all rolls require this level of detail and simply succeeding at a roll may be enough.

There are seven possible outcomes:

CRITICAL FAILURE represents a horrible mishap or backfire. This could be missing an opponent and accidentally shooting a friend or a chase down a flight of stairs resulting in a serious fall.

FAILURE represents a failed attempt at a task. Unlike critical failures, it does not necessarily indicate a harmful outcome.

POOR SUCCESS represents a grazing hit when fighting or a wagon repair which may only last a few hours. It does not guarantee that the result will last.

AVERAGE SUCCESS represents a typical outcome. This could be a gun shot to the chest or a forged document which looks real under standard inspection.

GOOD SUCCESS represents a better than average outcome. This could be landing on one's feet when jumping a great distance or designing a pulley system which lifts a heavier load than anticipated.

EXCELLENT SUCCESS represents an outcome far beyond the intentions of a character. This could be a physical feat such as a flip which lands the character directly behind an opponent or a dance performance which receives a standing ovation.

CRITICAL SUCCESS represents a miraculous outcome. This could be incapacitating an opponent with one punch or convincing an enemy of your good intentions.

There are two special situations which cause the success table to be ignored. If the two dice used for the *dice total* are both ones (*snake eyes*), the task is a *critical success*. And, if the two dice used for the *dice total* are both sixes (*box cars*), the task is a *failure* (but not a critical failure).

UNTRAINED TASK ROLLS

All skills can be attempted without prior training unless otherwise noted. Such rolls are considered

MARGIN = SKILL TOTAL - DICE TOTAL		DIFFICULTY					
		SIMPLE	EASY	AVERAGE	CHALLENGING	HARD	IMPOSSIBLE
MARGIN	LESS THAN -6	FAILURE	FAILURE	FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE
	-6 TO -1	FAILURE	FAILURE	FAILURE	FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE
	0	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	POOR	FAILURE	FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE
	1 TO 3	GOOD	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	POOR	FAILURE	FAILURE
	4 TO 5	GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	POOR	FAILURE
	6 TO 7	EXCELLENT	GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	POOR
	8 TO 9	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	POOR
	10 TO 11	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	AVERAGE
	12 TO 13	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE
	MORE THAN 14	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	EXCELLENT	GOOD
RANGE		P.B.	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG	EXTREME	
CONTESTED SUCCESS		POOR	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	CRITICAL SUC.	

untrained tasks. In these cases the *skill total* would be equal to the associated trait only. This type of task roll would also be used in situations where a single trait would govern the outcome.

➔ EXAMPLE

Billy Joe is attempting to remember what time Mary Lou told him to meet her. Billy Joe rolls two dice. If the sum of the dice are less than or equal to his reasoning rating (trait only) then he succeeds. This sort of roll would be extremely difficult. But, then again if the person playing Billy Joe could remember the time, he wouldn't have to roll.

CONTESTED TASK ROLLS

There will be situations that place two people at odds with each other in some sort of struggle. To resolve this

conflict, both parties make task rolls and the character with the highest *margin* wins the struggle. If neither roll actually is successful, both parties fail.

Some skills allow an effect to be contested by rolling against a difficulty level which is determined by the original task's *degree of success*. The difficulty of these situations is noted on the *success table*. Contested rolls use the same trait and skill as the original task, unless otherwise noted.

➔ EXAMPLE

Billy Joe is attempting to discover if his orders (forged by Jimmy Cowhide) from the U.S. Cavalry are genuine. Jimmy's forgery roll resulted in a good success. This means that Billy Joe must succeed at a Challenging task in order to determine the document's authenticity (or lack of).

CHARACTERS

"It has been my experience that folks who have no vices have very few virtues."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN



VIRTUES

People generally live by a code of behavior. This game refers to these codes as virtues. Their purpose is to keep the character in check by providing morals and a sense of duty. All characters except outlaws must have at least one virtue.

The following virtues are available:

Lawful

The character has sworn an oath to himself to uphold the law. He detests all forms of injustice and would never stoop to committing any criminal act. The character would also turn a friend who has broken the law over to the authorities, although the *loyal* virtue (if possessed by the character) would cloud the issue.

Gentlemanly

The character believes in the code of the gentleman. He would never mistreat a woman or child and deals with others in a fair and honest manner.

Compassionate

The character is extremely caring and will help anyone in need through direct involvement. He can, however, recognize the difference between being needy and being lazy.

Charitable

The character is not above giving handouts to charities and vagrants. It may be due to his generosity or perhaps it is because of a deeper issue — improving his image, for example.

Loyal

Once the character has formed a bond with someone, he will remain loyal for life. He would never turn a friend over to the law or betray his trust unless thoroughly convinced that it is in his friend's best interest.

Pious

The character's faith is unshakable. He is empowered by his beliefs and would never break his faith's code or commandments which should be outlined before play.

Tolerant

Revenge is not in the character's vocabulary. He would sooner forgive a wrong than avenge it. The character lacks prejudice against any man, whether Indian, foreigner, or murderer.

VICES

We all have bad habits and the characters in this game are no exception. Vices define a character by describing his psychological dependencies and uncontrollable desires. All characters must have at least one vice.

The following vices are available:

Alcohol

The character is an alcoholic. He is tempted to consume the devils' drink whenever it is present or whenever he is stressed (opposing a virtue, for example).

Opium

The character is addicted to either liquid opium (laudanum) or the smoked variety and is tempted whenever it is present or whenever he is stressed. Laudanum addicts will also be tempted whenever they have headaches.

Lust

The power of attraction is very powerful and causes the character to seek out beautiful members of the opposite sex. He will attempt to seduce and befriend them.

Greed

No amount of money is enough. The character will stop at nothing to gain more. He may employ confidence scams, sell phony tonics, or even steal in order to appease his greed.

Zeal

There's nothing wrong with going to church or saying a prayer, but the character with this vice feels the need every time he sins or is under stress. He will also attempt to convert *non-believers*.

Excitement

The character is a thrill seeker and is always looking for some new adventure to join. He is not the sort of person to stay at home or perform a tedious job. He will most likely join posses, expeditions, or even commit robberies in order to calm his desire for excitement.

Gambling

The character cannot resist the temptation to bet. It could be a game of cards or dice, or even trivia. It doesn't matter because the urge to gamble is always there and can manifest differently depending on the situation.

Superstitious

Some people get caught up in wives' tales and legends. Superstitious characters must perform obscure rituals in specific situations (throwing salt over the shoulder, for example) and do not permit themselves to partake of certain activities (walking under a ladder, for example). The gamemaster can either create the basis of the superstition before play or the player can make it up as he goes along and be held to it for future events.

Sadism

The character is evil at heart and takes great pleasure from inflicting pain on others. He is likely to mistreat animals and children, and is compelled to act this way when in a position to do so.

PRIMARY TRAITS

Every character possesses traits which describe his potential and talent. Primary traits are used to compute skill totals and range from zero to six. Characters cannot start the game with a primary trait higher than five.

Ratings for primary traits signify the following:

- 0 *below average*
- 1 *low average*
- 2 *average*
- 3 *high average*
- 4 *noteworthy*
- 5 *gifted*
- 6 *legendary*

STRENGTH determines a character's size and muscle mass. It also affects how much physical damage a character can bestow. Untrained strength rolls are used for:

- *lifting and carrying heavy objects*
- *breaking things*
- *pushing and pulling things*

DEXTERITY represents a character's hand-eye

coordination and grace. It also affects how well a character can fire a gun, climb a rope, or perform a dance. Untrained dexterity rolls are used for:

- *delicate hand maneuvers*

PERCEPTION indicates how well the character notices little details or is able to communicate them to others. Untrained perception rolls are used for:

- *the senses (hearing, sight, taste, smell, and touch)*
- *noticing something*
- *communicating through hand gestures or code words*

REASONING gauges how well a character can analyze information. It is the driving force behind skills that require study. Untrained reasoning rolls are used for:

- *basic mathematics*
- *rational thought*
- *logical deduction*

WILLPOWER constitutes a character's control over his mental and physical facilities. It allows him to press on in the face of danger, attempt a task with confidence, or even control his emotions. Untrained willpower rolls are used for:

- *resisting the effects of illness*
- *resisting feelings of fear, rage, or passion*
- *resisting vices*

SECONDARY TRAITS

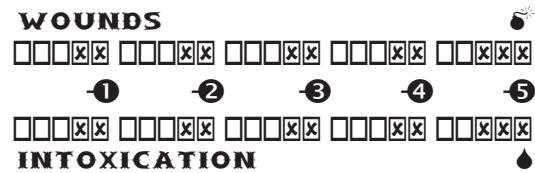
REACTION measures a character's nerves, reflexes, and general speed. It is equal to twelve minus dexterity and perception.

STAMINA measures a character's physical health and resistance to injury and illness. It is equal to the sum of the character's strength and willpower multiplied by two. Stamina is subdivided into *wounds* (represented by the symbol ☹️) and *intoxication* (represented by the symbol 🍷). Wounds indicate physical injury such as lacerations and blunt trauma, while intoxication measures the amount of alcohol or opium in a character's system.

Locate the stamina section on the character sheet. Starting from the right, fill in one blank box from each group (of stamina boxes) until the total number of filled boxes is equal to twenty-five minus the stamina rating. The remaining unfilled boxes should equal the character's stamina rating. Do this for both wounds and intoxication.

➡ EXAMPLE

Pat has a strength of 4 and willpower of 3. His stamina would be 14 ($4+3=7$; $7 \times 2=14$). His wound and intoxication boxes on the character sheet would look like this:



As Pat takes damage, he checks off the blank boxes starting at the left. Once one block is completely checked off, he then continues on the next.

REPUTATION measures how well a character is known and how popular he is. Those familiar with the character may decide to either help or hurt him. Since most residents of Shady Gulch know each other, this only applies to newcomers and folks outside of the town. Characters begin play with a reputation of zero.

📖 SECONDARY TRAIT RATINGS

- Reaction** = 12 - dexterity - perception
- Stamina** = (strength + willpower) x 2
- Reputation** = 0

SKILLS

Skills represent knowledge and experience gained through study and practice. Skills may not be raised higher than double its related trait and characters cannot start the game with a skill higher than ten.

Skill ratings signify the following:

- 0 *untrained*
- 1 *passing knowledge*
- 2 *undertrained*
- 3 *basic knowledge*
- 4 *working knowledge*
- 5 *solid ability*
- 6 *highly trained*
- 7 *elite*
- 8 *expert*
- 9 *leader in field*
- 10 *master*
- 11 *legendary*
- 12 *legendary*

STRENGTH BASED SKILLS

Brawling

Brawling covers the ability to punch, kick, grapple, and throw.

DEXTERITY BASED SKILLS

Athletics

Athletics covers gymnastics, sports, climbing, swimming, and running.

Archery

The bow is an archaic weapon used primarily for hunting by those without access to firearms—typically Indians.

Firearms

A firearm is any pistol or rifle which propels a bullet (or ball) through the detonation of gunpowder.

Horsemanship

This is the knowledge of riding horses and other beasts of burden as well as driving carriages and wagons. Controlling a horse under stressful situations or performing stunts are hard rolls (*see Special Rules* ▣▣).

Knife Fighting

The use of a knife in a fight is considered an art by some and barbaric by others. Nevertheless, it takes skill.

Lariat

This ability permits a character to use a lariat (lasso) or whip to ensnare other characters or animals.

Legerdemain

This is the thief's skill of choice. Legerdemain allows a character to pick pockets, perform sleight of hand and general pilfering.

Perception can be used to contest the success of this skill.

Stealth

This is the ability to sneak around without being seen or heard.

Perception can be used to contest the success of this skill.

Sword Fighting

Although swords are not commonly found in the west, they are still used by United States Cavalry officers. This skill also includes the use of machetes.

PERCEPTION BASED SKILLS

Commodities

This skill allows a character to appraise gems, gold, jewelry, and other items of value.

Disguise

This skill covers impersonation and the art of changing one's appearance.

Reasoning can be used to contest the success of this skill.

Gambling

The character can play most games of chance and has the unnerving ability to deduce the odds of winning in a given situation. This skill doesn't just cover the rules of the game, but also the ability to bluff.

Performance

This is the art of oration, singing, and stage performances. A successful speech can increase morale before a fight and other stressful situations. A task roll must be made for each member of the audience. If successful, the audience member receives +1 on his next composure roll.

Tracking

Tracks and other signs of disturbance in the wild can lead a character to his target. This skill gives a character the knowledge to do so. In addition, the character can prevent himself from becoming the target by covering his tracks and staying out of sight.

REASONING BASED SKILLS

Reasoning based skills may not be attempted unskilled.

Academics

This is the general knowledge of science, math, and history. Characters with this skill have been well educated.

Blacksmithing

Blacksmithing is the art of forging iron into horseshoes, tools, and other useful objects.

Business

Characters with this skill are knowledgeable in the fields of accounting, investing, inventory management, and value assessment.

Forgery

This is the ability to create fake documents and seals. This ability only works with languages that the character can read and write.

Reasoning + forgery can be used to contest the success of this skill.

Instrument

This is the ability to play a musical instrument such as the harmonica, piano, or drums. A separate skill must be purchased for each distinct instrument.

Lock Picking

Characters with this skill are able to open locks without the use of a key. Picking locks in the dark is a hard roll.

Masonry

This skill combines the art of carpentry, stone cutting, and the construction of buildings and similar structures.

Medicine

This is the knowledge of healing and treatment. This skill can be used to assist characters that are recovering from wounds. Successful rolls allow the character's patient to recover extra Stamina points when healing or prevent a character from dying (*see Special Rules* ►►).

Read/Write

Not everyone can read in the Old West. This skill determines a character's ability to read and write his native language. Additional languages must be purchased separately. This skill is necessary to create works of literature such as poetry, articles, and novels (*see Special Rules* ►►).

Seamanship

Characters with this skill can navigate the seas, rivers, and lakes. They are also familiar with the mechanics and logistics required to handle a boat.

This skill requires a rating of 5 or higher for travelling the high seas.

Speak Language

All characters begin play with their native language at level five. Immigrants who do not come from English-speaking countries must purchase a second *speak language* skill in order to be able to communicate with the citizens of Shady Gulch.

Western Lore

Western Lore is the knowledge of the celebrities, towns, and legends of the Old West.

WILLPOWER BASED SKILLS

Composure

The ability to remain calm in the face of danger or temptation is a valuable asset, especially in a fight. Composure is added to willpower for morale and vice checks (*see Special Rules* ►►).

Drinking

Characters that possess this skill may attempt to cancel out the effects of alcohol in their systems. When a task roll which receives an intoxication penalty is made, the character makes a willpower + drinking roll. If successful, he can ignore the intoxication penalty until he consumes another pint (*see Special Rules* ►►).

CREATING CHARACTERS

Characters in this game are not simply numbers on paper. They are intended to take on a life of their own. Although players control the actions of their characters in the game, the story often hinges on their backgrounds and motives.

Every character should have a past and a purpose. These are entirely up to the player to describe and should fit within the story line. The character's concept should also be appropriate to his abilities.

Before proceeding, you should have already developed a picture in your mind of what your character is like. Is he strong? Is he artistic? Is he a fighter? Is he in a

Cowboys

"Of you're riding ahead of the herd, take a look back every now and then to make sure it's still there."

VIRTUES

Loyal

VICES

any two

SKILLS

Firearms

Horsemanship

Lariat

Composure

Western Lore

EQUIPMENT

cowboy gear

camping gear

revolver

horse

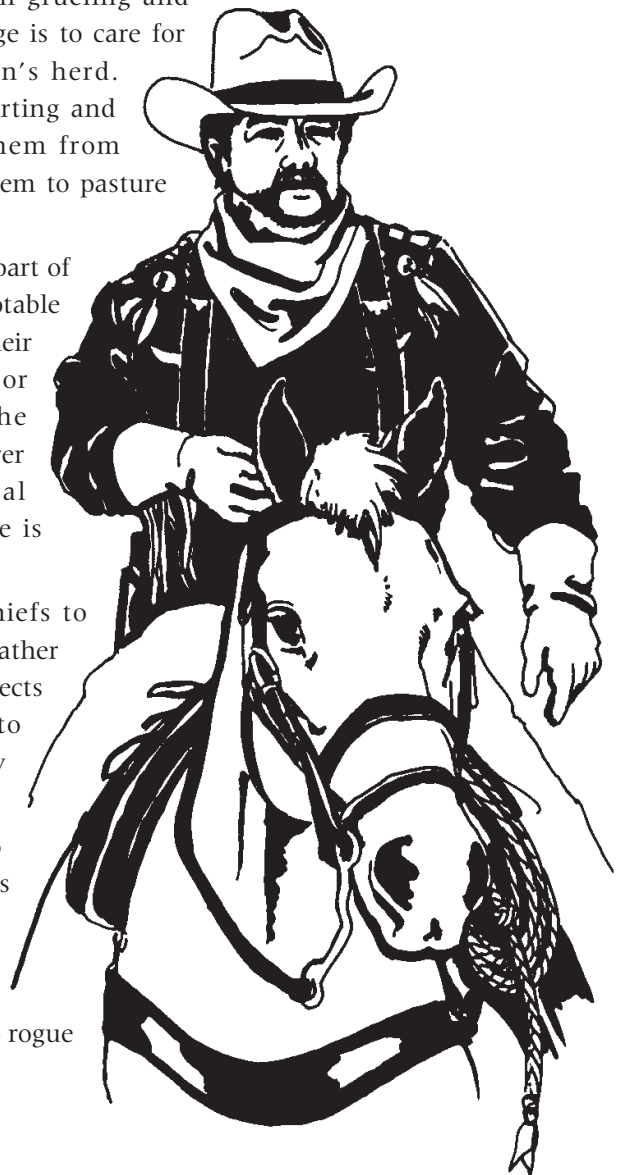
lariat

The life of a cowboy is both grueling and tedious. Their general charge is to care for and protect a cattle baron's herd. Specific responsibilities include sorting and branding the cattle, guarding them from rustlers and wolves, and driving them to pasture or a delivery point when sold.

Since the law cannot reach every part of the wilderness, it is generally acceptable for cowboys to take matters into their own hands while on their ranch or driving the herd through the wilderness. No magistrate would ever allow a cowboy to commit illegal activities, but remember, evidence is hard to come by in the wild.

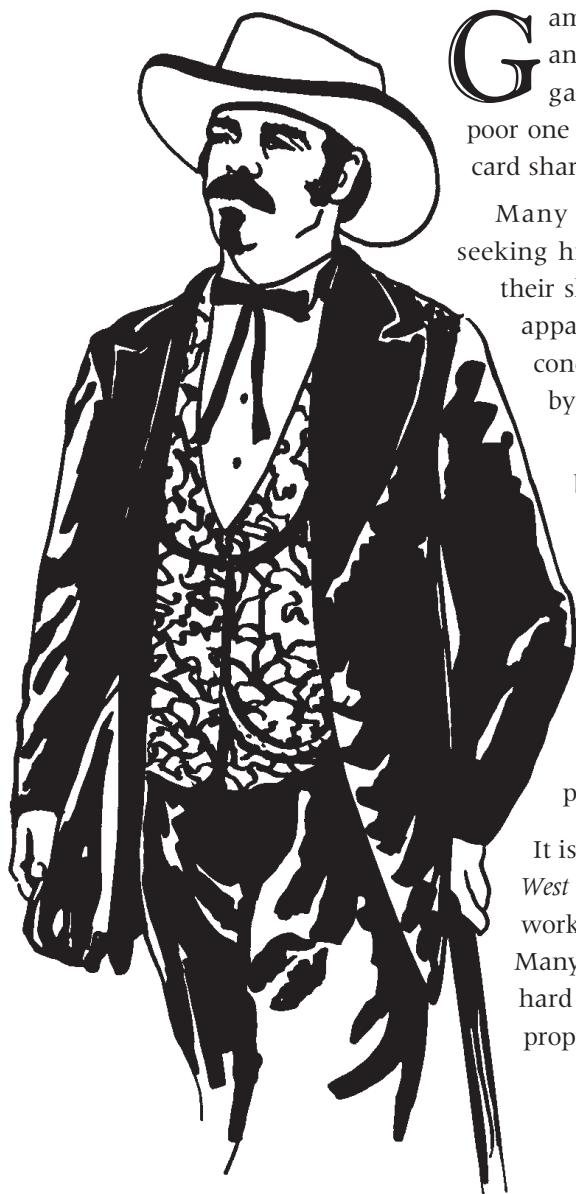
Cowboys commonly wear kerchiefs to protect their faces from dust and leather chaps to protect their legs from insects and brush. Lariats are also tied to their saddles in order to rope stray cattle.

Chances are, you will be able to find rough and tough cowboys hanging out in a saloon after a hard day's work. Many form brotherly social structures which can act as unions, but others are perverted into rogue gangs.



Gamblers

"Trust everyone in the game, but always cut the cards."



Gamblers make a living by winning at poker and other games of chance and cunning. A gambler without good intuition is a very poor one indeed. He is often the target of ruthless card sharks.

Many gamblers travel from town to town, seeking high stakes games and moving on when their skills are mistaken for cheating. Some are appalled at the thought of stooping to such conduct, while others can only play the game by *evening* the odds.

It is not unusual for card players to become cross when they lose land titles or large sums of cash. Murder often follows and is the most common demise of gamblers.

Gambling is frowned upon by the church and high society. Fortunately, the west is very open to not only gambling, but also drinking and prostitution.

It is rare to find an elderly gambler in the *Old West* as they eventually find a new line of work and indulge their vice as hobby only. Many settle down with families or invest their hard earned winnings in business deals and property.

VIRTUES

any one

VICES

Gambling

Greed

SKILLS

Legerdemain

Gambling

Performance

Drinking

Western Lore

EQUIPMENT

betting cash

banked cash

revolver

playing cards

Homesteaders

"There's nothing more important than providing for your own family."

VIRTUES

Compassionate

VICES

any one

SKILLS

Athletics

Firearms

Horsemanship

Tracking

Masonry

EQUIPMENT

land

livestock

revolver or shotgun

horse

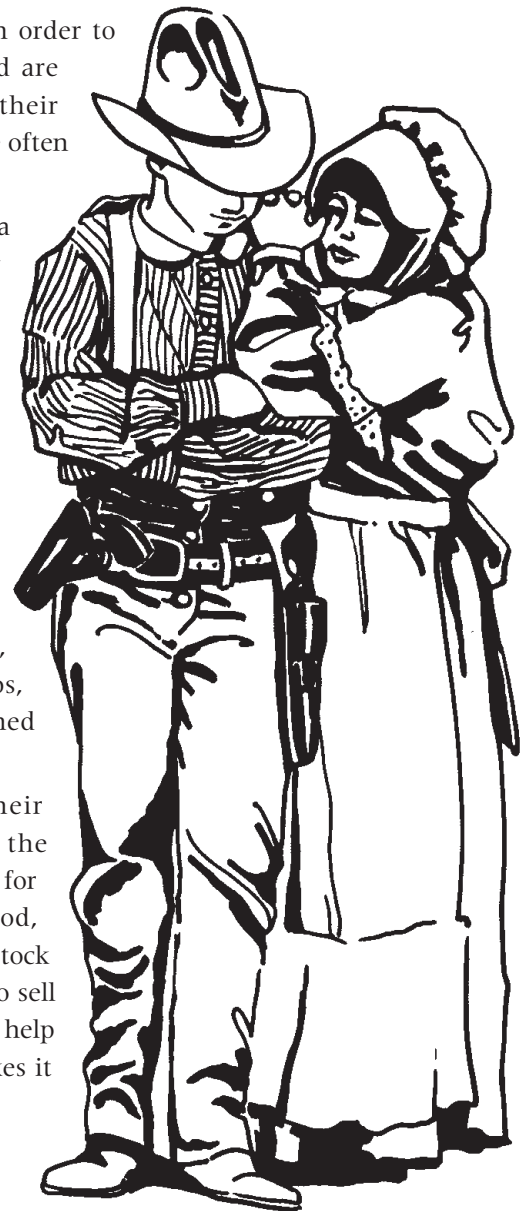
dog

Those that move to the Old West in order to raise families and live off the land are called homesteaders. They build their own homes and raise crops, cattle, and more often than not, children.

Homesteaders are very proud and desire a better way of life for their loved ones. They have strong ties with their neighbors and will band together for mutual protection. Homesteader families share chores on their farm or ranch and mainly travel to town in order to conduct business and purchase goods.

Men are expected to perform hunting, plowing, cattle herding, gathering firewood, building, and protecting duties. Women and children can be found cooking, milking cows, gathering and planting crops, and cleaning. These chores are not assigned from sexist attitudes, but out of necessity.

It is important for families to pull their weight, otherwise they may not survive the freezing winter months when food is scarce for both man and animal. If they have no food, they must eat their livestock. Once the livestock is gone, they have no food and no animals to sell for food. Neighbors are more than happy to help during the warmer months, but winter makes it necessary to worry about their own survival.



Scholar

"It is the duty of every man, woman, and child to understand the world in which they live."

Not everyone has the money or the will to go to school. It is especially rare for westerners to have received higher education. Most educated folk in the Old West migrate from the East Coast, having attended universities reserved for the upper classes. Ironically, they often lack the common knowledge required for survival in the Old West.

There are many types of educated folk. Some become scientists, philosophers, or politicians. The focus of scholars in this game, however, is that of writers, doctors, and teachers. The gamemaster may create skill packages for other types of scholars if he desires to do so.

WRITERS

Writers are very good at expressing opinions and imagery through the written word. The most common type of writer in the *Old West* is the journalist. He probably works for the local paper or maybe even one from a larger city. Authors write a variety of books including biographies, autobiographies, history, and fiction. Characters may also choose to be poets or playwrights.

Virtues: any one

Equipment: books, journal

DOCTORS

Doctors strive to improve a patient's health. They typically run a general practice from their home and make house calls whenever medical emergencies arise. Although possible, it is unheard of to have more than one doctor in a small town like Shady Gulch.

Virtues: compassionate

Equipment: medical books and gear

TEACHERS

Teachers love to educate the young. It is a good feeling to shape the minds of the future. Teachers may work for the Church or the town directly. On occasion, teachers take it upon themselves to set up a school and charge families a modest fee for their services.

Classes do not exist as separate grades. Students are mostly lumped together in one class, forced to listen to what they have already learned from previous years.

Virtues: compassionate or charitable

Equipment: school books, teaching aids

VIRTUES

see sub-group

VICES

any one

WRITER SKILLS

Academics

Read/Write native language

DOCTOR SKILLS

Academics

Medicine

Read/Write

TEACHER SKILLS

Academics

Read/Write

EQUIPMENT

see sub-group

Tradesmen

"It's either an honest day's or rob a bank."

VIRTUES

any one

VICES

any one

HUNTER SKILLS

Firearms

Stealth

Tracking

PERFORMER SKILLS

Disguise

Performance

Instrument

BLACKSMITH SKILLS

Blacksmithing

Masonry

Commodities

EQUIPMENT

see sub-group

Some people do what they are good at in order to earn a living. These are the people that often receive little credit for their contributions, but keep society moving forward. They have little money and probably own or rent a small cottage. Tradesmen seldom have title to their own business and rely on a businessman to pay their salaries.

HUNTERS

Someone has to find food for the working townfolk and hunters do just that. They spend all day in the wild, tracking down rabbits and other wild animals, which they then sell to the local butcher or market. They may even catch fish in the local waters.

Equipment: rifle, knife, dog

PERFORMERS

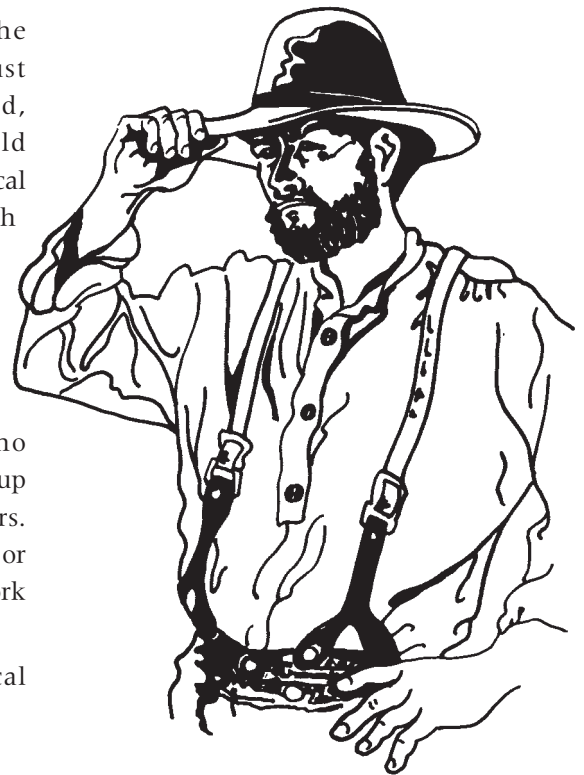
Someone has to entertain and who better than performers. They are made up of actors, acrobats, musicians, and singers. Performers can either be part of a troupe or work independently. Some go on to work larger crowds in the bigger cities.

Equipment: special outfits, musical instrument

BLACKSMITHS

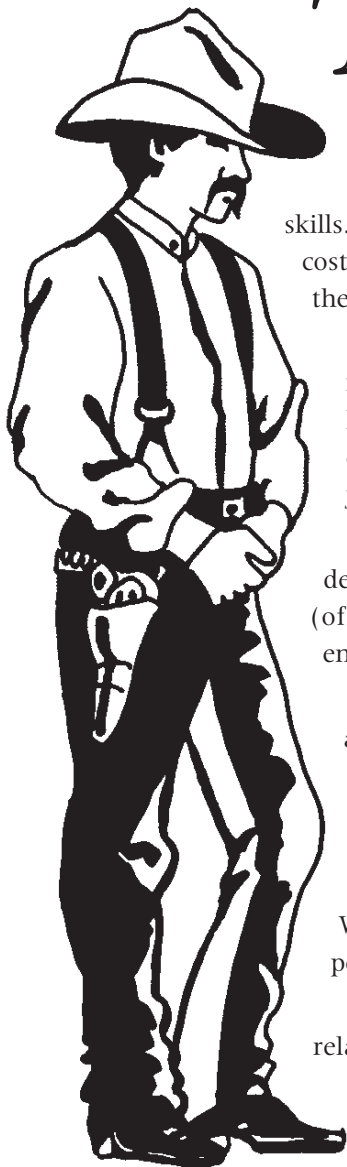
The metal workers of the *Old West*, blacksmiths forge horseshoes and wagon parts, and are reputed to be able to fix just about anything. Some blacksmiths are also trained in masonry or commodities, offering their design services for hotels, jails, and even watches and jewelry.

Equipment: tools, raw metal, bellows



Lawmen

"Rob a bank and ya' go to jail. Steal a horse, and I'll shoot ya' just to teach ya' a lesson."



There comes a time in every honest man's life when he decides to act against the abundance of crime. Lawmen are the epitome of this condition. They defend the people in their town out of a sense of duty to them.

Most lawmen are experienced gunfighters and horsemen, giving them an advantage over criminals lacking those skills. They believe that the law is sacred and must be upheld at all costs, even at the expense of certain personal freedoms—most of them.

Corruption is not uncommon, but this sort of lawman will not last long in a close knit community without a gang of loyal conspirators. It is also popular for lawmen to act outside of the law in order to bring a dangerous criminal to justice.

Towns elect or appoint one sheriff, who in turn, appoints deputies to assist him. Marshals are appointed by the courts (often in big cities) to transport prisoners, assist local law enforcement, and enforce state-wide laws where applicable.

Although sheriffs cannot create laws, they have the authority to submit local ordinances to the town council which can then be voted on, passed into law, and enforced by the sheriff. Unfortunately, public intimidation can affect a sheriff's actions. Lynch mobs will hang someone in the heat of the moment and no conclusive proof is required. Weaker sheriffs often cave when faced with a mob of angry people.

Marshals are part of a larger bureaucracy and have no direct relationship with legislators within their sphere of authority.

Instead, marshals are issued commissions by judges and city officials to serve a particular duty.

VIRTUES

Lawful

VICES

any one

SKILLS

Brawling

Firearms

Horsemanship

Tracking

Composure

Western Lore

EQUIPMENT

revolver

shotgun

badge

Outlaws

*“Hand over your purses and no one will get hurt
...ain't you a pretty lil' thing?”*

VIRTUES

none

VICES

Greed or Sadism

SKILLS

Brawling

Firearms

Horsemanship

Knife Fighting

Legerdemain

Stealth

Disguise

Lock Picking

EQUIPMENT

revolver

jewelry & cash

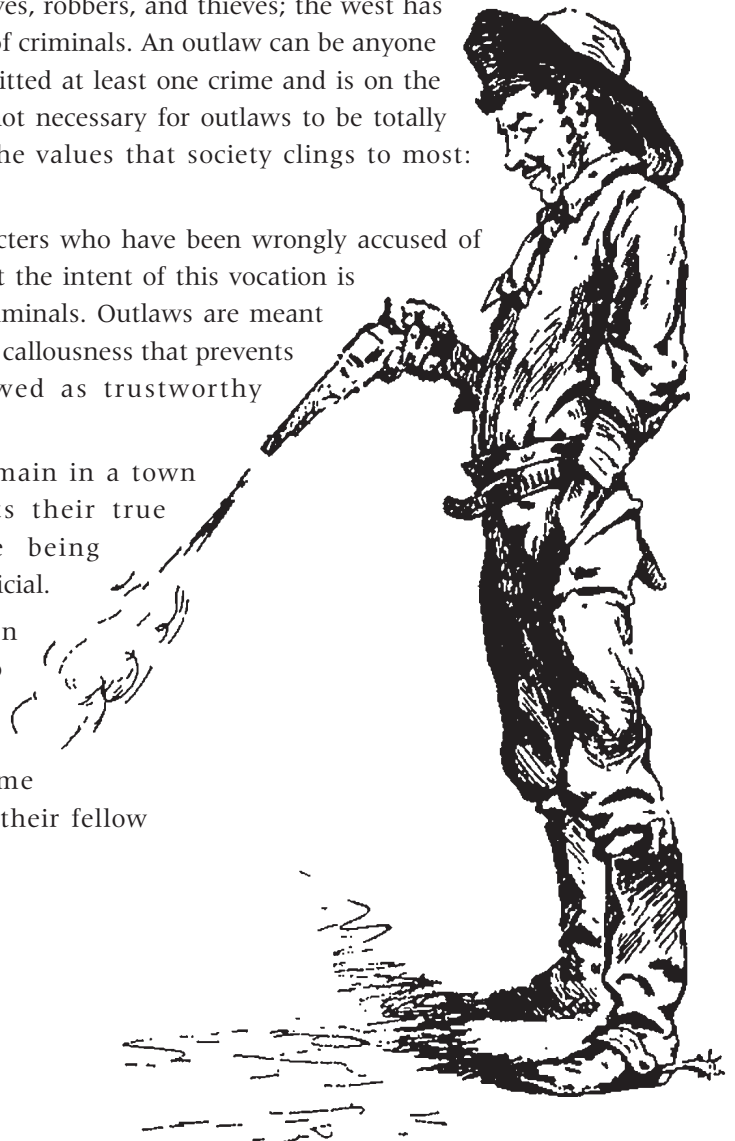
fancy clothes

Murderers, fugitives, robbers, and thieves; the west has an abundance of criminals. An outlaw can be anyone who has committed at least one crime and is on the run from the law. It is not necessary for outlaws to be totally evil, but they do lack the values that society clings to most: honesty and morality.

It is possible for characters who have been wrongly accused of crimes to be outlaws, but the intent of this vocation is to represent only true criminals. Outlaws are meant to display some degree of callousness that prevents them from being viewed as trustworthy members of society.

Outlaws can only remain in a town while no one suspects their true identity or they are being protected by a corrupt official.

Outlaws may also join cowboy gangs in order to be around others of like mind. It is unlikely that they will share the same bonds of friendship as their fellow gang members, however.



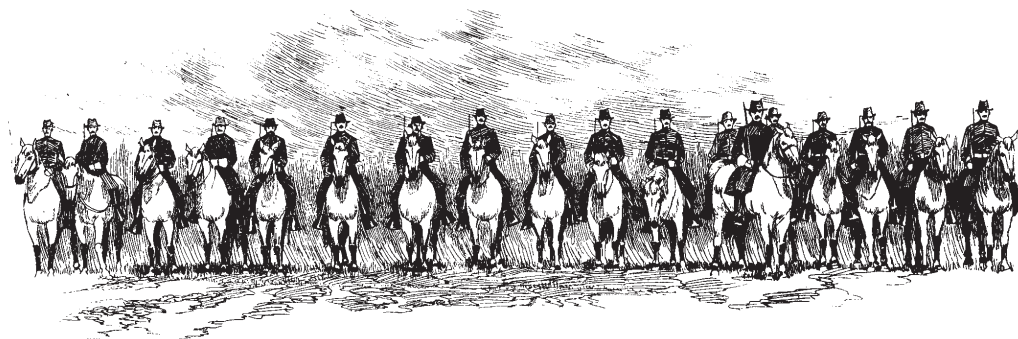
Soldiers

"We beat the South. Now we have to go back to fightin' Indians."

The defenders of freedom and the American way. Soldiers go off to fight wherever their country needs them. Young, uneducated men make good infantry, while the schooled and often upper classes command. Most are patriotic and competent, some are simply looking for the chance to kill something.

Soldiering is hard work, especially in the conditions of the *Old West*. Don't expect to see waterproof boots or powerful weapons. Many contract chronic health problems and blisters. The infantry is issued with rifles and their commanders—revolvers and sabres. If you're lucky enough to get into the cavalry, you may even be issued a horse.

Soldiers are always part of some sort of unit which may be passing through town or present for special duties. Lone soldiers indicate special operations, desertion, or authorized leave. The gamemaster must always decide on the character's rank, although the player is certainly free to suggest one.



VIRTUES

Loyal

VICES

Excitement

SKILLS

Brawling

Firearms

Horsemanship

Sword Fighting

Composure

EQUIPMENT

weapons (by rank)

uniform

Businessmen

Of the rent's not in my hands by noon, you'd best be gone by Monday."

VIRTUES

Gentlemanly or Tolerant

VICES

Greed

SKILLS

Performance

Business

Western Lore

EQUIPMENT

lots of cash

lots of property

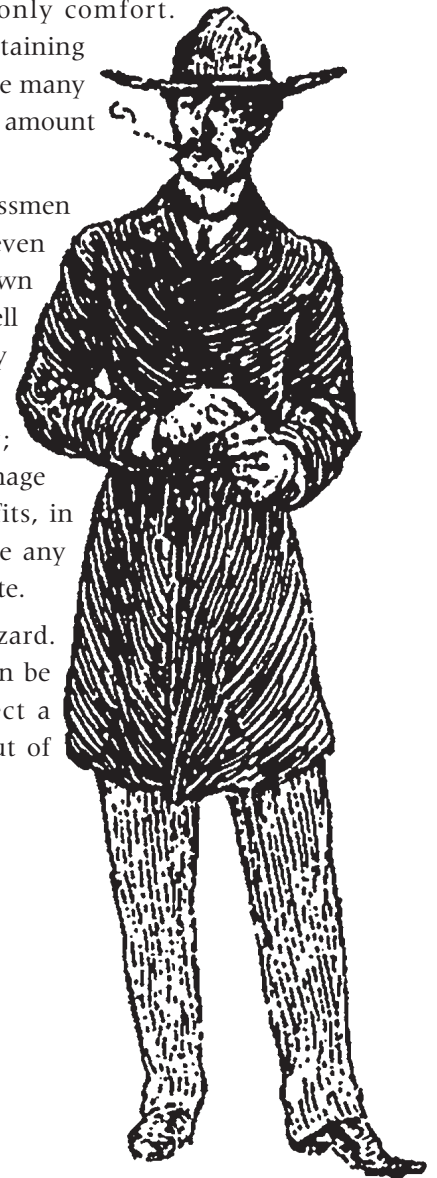
fancy clothes

To some the feeling of wealth is their only comfort. Running a business is one method for obtaining wealth and can be pretty lucrative. There are many legitimate businessmen, but there are also an equal amount (if not more) of crooked ones.

The nature of a business can vary greatly; businessmen can earn their income from saloons, mines, or even cattle. It is common for businessmen to either own large estates or live in luxurious hotels. They are well respected by townsfolk and are sought after by people in need of jobs.

Most businessmen are cold and calculating; necessary traits when closing deals. Their public image is only important when it relates directly to profits, in which case they can turn on the charm and make any deal more enticing than being seduced by a prostitute.

Enemies and rivals can be an occupational hazard. Deals gone sour and acts bordering on criminal can be good sources. The courts may be able to correct a businessman's wrongs, but slick behavior and out of court settlements can solve most disputes.



Drifters

"I'm on my way to California. Any work goin' 'round here."

VIRTUES

any one

VICES

any one

SKILLS

Horsemanship

Drinking or Gambling

Speak Language

CHOOSE ONE:

Academics

Blacksmithing

Masonry

Forgery

Seamanship

EQUIPMENT

determined by the gamemaster

Drifters never seem to be able to settle in one place. They are also unlikely to share long-lasting relationships and make few friends. Drifters are essentially tourists, moving from one town to another and taking odd jobs to pay for expenses such as transportation and accommodations.

It is unlikely that a drifter will be present in more than one story, moving on when the adventure ends. Drifters are ideal for players who wish to join a story in progress.



SPECIAL RULES

"He who hesitates is a damned fool."

MAE WEST



VIRTUES

A character may perform actions which oppose his virtues, but the character must attempt a willpower + composure roll each time. If the character fails the roll, he is overwhelmed with guilt and all perception and composure rolls receive **2** until he gets a full night's sleep.

VICES

Whenever a character is faced with one of his vices (whiskey or a card game, for example), he must succeed at a willpower + composure roll in order to resist the temptation. If the character fails the roll, all subsequent rolls to resist while partaking of the vice receive **2** until he succeeds. In other words, once you get started it's very hard to stop. Other characters can intervene to remove the temptation from sight, however.

➔ EXAMPLE

*James wanders into a bar looking for a friend and the bartender offers him a drink. He has the alcohol vice and is required to make a willpower roll. Assuming the roll fails, James accepts the offer and enjoys his whiskey. Now that he's fallen off the wagon, James must make another willpower roll in order to resist having a second drink. This time he receives **2** on the roll. If this roll is successful, further temptation does not warrant the penalty dice. If it is a failure, however, the next roll also receives **2**.*

GETTING NOTICED

Being recognized by people is half the battle of striking it rich in the west. Reputation rolls can be made by anyone who has contact with the character in order to recognize him. Reasoning + western lore is used as the skill total for these rolls. Reputation ranges from zero (0)

to twenty (20) and may modify the roll with penalty or bonus dice.

TARGET'S REPUTATION	REPUTATION MODIFIER
0-5	-1
6-10	0
11-15	+1
16-20	+2

Characters may also be branded with poor or notorious reputations when they act cowardly or bizarre:

- *cowering behind cover and being seen by many people*
- *refusing to accept a challenge*
- *committing a sadistic act*
- *betraying friends or family*
- *welshing on a bet*
- *cheating or stealing*
- *failing to pay back a debt*

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

During the course of the game, characters are given the opportunity to increase their knowledge and abilities by spending experience points which are awarded by the gamemaster.

After Each Episode

Experience points awarded after each episode may only be used to increase an existing skill's rating if it was used in the episode and in a manner suggesting that the character learned something from the experience. Skills may only be increased by one point per episode. Skills that are part of the character's vocation cost less than those which are not.

NEW SKILL RATING	NON-VOCATION COST	VOCATION COST
2	6	3
3	8	4
4	10	6
5	12	8
6	16	10
7	20	14
8	24	18
9	28	22
10	32	26
11	36	30
12	40	34

After Each Story

Points accumulated at the end of a story may be used to increase trait, skill, and reputation ratings in addition to learning new skills.

Traits are only improved when the character dedicates himself to intense training and only one trait may be raised after each story. Do not forget to change the rating of any computed traits that are calculated using the raised trait.

NEW TRAIT RATING	COST
1	5
2	10
3	15
4	20
5	25
6	30

The expenditure of experience points required for raising existing skills is the same as for after each episode. New skills may be learned by undergoing schooling or training by a professional at the cost of five points of experience for vocation skills and ten for non-vocation skills. New skills begin with a rating of one.

Reputation may be increased at the end of a story if the character's actions warrant it. This is entirely up to the gamemaster and each increase in reputation costs four points of experience.

WOUNDS

Each time a character is injured he must check off a number of wounds (☠) on his character sheet starting on the left side. He receives -1 on all rolls for each complete block of wound points sustained. The character will eventually die when all his wounds points are checked off.

➡ EXAMPLE

Pat, who has a stamina of 14, has just been shot and receives 4☠. He checks off 4 boxes of wounds on his characters sheet. Since his first wound box is completely filled, he now receives -1 on all task rolls.

ALCOHOL

Alcohol (whiskey, beer, etc.) has the potential to hamper skill use. Each time a character consumes a pint of alcohol, he must check off one intoxication point (1♦). He receives -1 on all rolls for each complete block of intoxication points sustained. The character will eventually pass out when all his intoxication points are checked off. Each complete block of intoxication points cancels out -1 received from wounds.

➔ EXAMPLE

Pat, who has a stamina of 14, has just consumed his third pint of whiskey in order to numb his pain from the gunshot. He has now checked off a total of 3 boxes of intoxication on his characters sheet. Since his first intoxication box is completely filled in, he now receives -1 on all task rolls, but ignores the -1 received from wounds.

☠
 ♦

Intoxication points may be restored at the end of an episode by expending experience, provided it ended with the character resting. One point of intoxication may be removed for each point of experience expended.

OPIUM

Opium functions the same as alcohol, except that 1♦ is gained for each few inhalations. Opium can also cause serious hallucinations and the gamemaster is free to invent some pretty twisted ones. Opium also acts as a powerful sedative and pain reliever. It can be found in liquid form as laudanum which is a medicinal drug.

All forms of opium are very addictive and characters partaking of it on more than one occasion gain the opium vice.

COMPOSURE

There are times when even the most disciplined lose their nerve. Composure is both a skill and a condition. When characters remain composed, they may attempt

tasks normally. Characters who have lost their composure, however, will either receive a penalty on the task or act in cowardice.

Composure rolls (willpower + composure) must be made each time a character is faced with a dangerous situation. Alcohol and opium affect a composure roll by adding +1 for each complete block of intoxication points sustained.

Some examples and their difficulties are:

- Character is surprised; average
- Character encounters wild animal; average
- Character is outnumbered by the enemy; challenging
- Character sees family or friend killed; challenging
- Character is betrayed by a close friend or family member; hard
- Character is tortured; impossible

The roll is also modified when facing a character with a reputation rating over ten.

TARGET'S REPUTATION	REPUTATION MODIFIER
11-15 (IS KNOWN TO BE DANGEROUS)	-1
16-20 (IS KNOWN TO BE DANGEROUS)	-2
11-15 (IS KNOWN TO BE A COWARD)	+1
16-20 (IS KNOWN TO BE A COWARD)	+2

The outcome is determined as follows:

Critical Failure

The character runs away and may be branded a coward if anyone is around to witness him.

Failure

The character backs down from attempting a dangerous task. He may try to talk his way out of it in order to save his reputation.

Poor Success

The character may attempt the task, but receives -1.

All Other Successes

The character may attempt the task normally.

RECOVERY

Intoxication points are recovered at a rate equal to the character's willpower rating per hour if he consumes enough water and food. If he doesn't, recovery is halved (rounding down).

Wound points are recovered at a rate equal to the character's willpower rating per week. Individuals with the Medicine skill may attempt to make a hard roll in order to revive a character who has lost all wound points. Once revived, the character is then unconscious and may heal normally. There is no way to revive a character once a failed Medicine roll is made.

Medicine rolls can also be used to help a character heal more quickly. The affects are determined by the degree of success as listed below.

DEGREE OF MEDICINE SUCCESS	WOUND MODIFIER
CRITICAL FAILURE	CHARACTER RECEIVES 2☹
GOOD SUCCESS	CHARACTER HEALS +1☹
EXCELLENT SUCCESS	CHARACTER HEALS +1☹
CRITICAL SUCCESS	CHARACTER HEALS +2☹

If a character was wounded by an opponent who achieved a critical success on his roll or was revived from near-death, there is a chance that his injuries will not heal properly. The outcome is determined at the end of a story by rolling one die and consulting the table below. All affected traits may be raised back to their original values through experience.

1	SMALL SCAR
2-3	DISFIGURING SCAR
4	MUSCLE ATROPHY <i>The character's Strength or Dexterity rating is reduced by one. Do not forget to change the character's Stamina or Reaction rating, respectively.</i>
5	DAMAGED VISION <i>The character's Perception rating is permanently reduced by one. Do not forget to change the character's Reaction rating.</i>
6	HEAD INJURY <i>The character's Reasoning rating is permanently reduced by one.</i>

HORSES

Horses are an important part of any western and Shady Gulch is no exception. These animals can be trained to be ridden or to pull wagons. Snakes, point blank gun shots, and other hazards can often frighten a horse and cause it to panic. A successful horsemanship + dexterity roll is required to steady the horse. If the horse does not have a saddle, the roll receives -2. Failure indicates that the rider has been thrown from the horse (possibly receiving wounds) or that the horse has run off uncontrollably. A critical failure indicates that the horse has run away in fear with the character trapped in the reins and dragged (*see Determining Damage in the next chapter*).

All horsemanship rolls for untame horses receive -2. Horses can only be tamed by spending twenty (20) experience points. Once tamed, they can also be trained to respond to single word commands or single gesture actions such as *approaching the character when whistling* or *kicking his hind legs when hearing the work kick*. Characters must spend ten (10) experience points to train a horse to obey each command or action.

ATHLETICS

Climbing

The wilderness is a difficult place to traverse. The athletics skill helps a character climb trees, cliffs, and rocky surfaces. Steep surfaces are hard or impossible rolls without climbing gear. A critical failure indicates that the character has fallen.

Swimming

Characters can hold their breath for a number of turns equal to their willpower rating times two, minus one. Characters who are skilled in athletics are able to hold their breath longer than normal as determined by the degree of success.

DEGREE OF SWIMMING SUCCESS	TIME MODIFIER
CRITICAL FAILURE	-2 TURNS
AVERAGE SUCCESS	+1 TURN
GOOD SUCCESS	+2 TURNS
EXCELLENT SUCCESS	+3 TURNS
CRITICAL SUCCESS	+5 TURNS

WRITING

Characters skilled in writing can use their knowledge to create works of literature. Short pieces can be written during a single episode, but longer works can take many episodes or even the entire story.

The chart below details the writing times involved for specific pieces of literature. The gamemaster must use his judgement to determine the actual time required.

TYPE OF LITERATURE	TIME REQUIRED
SINGLE POEM	HALF DAY
NEWSPAPER ARTICLE	1 DAY
COLLECTION OF POETRY	1 EPISODE
BIOGRAPHY / AUTOBIOGRAPHY	1 STORY
HISTORY BOOK	2 STORIES
NOVEL	1-3 STORIES

The degree of success determines the quality and

acceptance of the literature. Greater success improves the author's reputation and that of his subject if the piece was a biography. The difficulty of the roll may be reduced by **1** for each ten (10) experience points expended.

DEGREE OF WRITING SUCCESS

CRITICAL FAILURE	KNOWN FOR TERRIBLE WRITING
GOOD SUCCESS	0 / +1*
EXCELLENT SUCCESS	+1 / +2*
CRITICAL SUCCESS	+3 / +4*

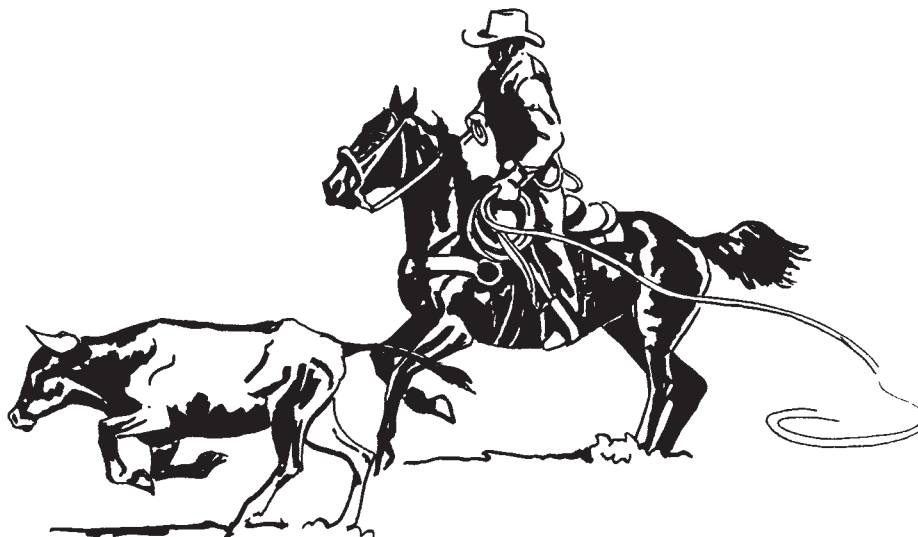
* FOR AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

AUTHOR'S REPUTATION MODIFIER

DEGREE OF WRITING SUCCESS

CRITICAL FAILURE	BAD REPUTATION
GOOD SUCCESS	+1
EXCELLENT SUCCESS	+2
CRITICAL SUCCESS	+4

BIOGRAPHY SUBJECT'S REPUTATION MODIFIER



FIGHTIN'

"Fast is fine, but accuracy is everything."

WYATT EARP



When a fight occurs, characters perform actions in blocks of time called *turns*. Generally, one action may be performed per turn. The game *turn* is an abstract measurement of time and the actual length is determined by the gamemaster, but each *turn* can vary from five to fifteen seconds. Turns are used to help regulate the game by providing a structured system that allows actions and events to occur in a dynamic and simple manner.

FIGHT OVERVIEW

Fights in this game is broken down into steps. First, all characters involved in the exchange declare their actions for the turn. They can attack, defend, use a special skill, or simply move or run away.

Once actions are declared, the gamemaster must determine the order in which characters may act. This is

called the *reaction order*. The characters may then proceed to attack or use abilities in this order.

Each attack works like a skill task, consulting the success table to determine damage inflicted. Damage is then subtracted from the character's *stamina*. If a character receives an amount of damage equal to or greater than his *stamina*, he falls unconscious. Any further successful attacks directed at the character will kill him.

Once this process is completed, the other character(s) finish their actions, and then it repeats until all parties have ceased hostilities.

DECLARATION OF ACTIONS

Each character that is present in the combat exchange must inform the gamemaster of his actions. These actions may be: *attack*, *defend*, *use skill*, *move*, *reload*, or *aim*. Players need not know what the others have planned.

Each character then rolls two dice and adds his reaction rating. This sum is called the *reaction total* and is compared to the other players' rolls. The roll is also modified by injuries, intoxication, and other factors (*see below*).

CIRCUMSTANCES	REACTION MODIFIER
WEARING 'METAL ARMOR'	-1
KNOCKED DOWN	-1
SURPRISED OPPONENT	+2
HOLDING MANY ITEMS	-1
HOLDING BULKY ITEMS	-1
INJURED	-1 TO -5
INTOXICATED	-1 TO -5

The players act in order from lowest to highest. If two or more characters get the same *reaction total* the character with the highest Perception rating goes first. If they have the same Perception rating then the highest dexterity goes first.

All actions are affected by other characters' preceding actions in the same turn because they do not occur simultaneously. A character suffers a penalty on his actions if he has received enough injuries to do so before acting in a turn. Likewise, if a character was incapacitated before he gets to act, his action is forfeit.

Declared actions can affect the way a turn plays out as follows:

Attack

The character must complete his attack.

Defend

The character must defend his position or wait in readiness. He may use the action to block, parry, or dodge an attack which then becomes a contested task against the defending character's degree of success.

Weapons may be used to block all weapon and unarmed attacks, while only non-weapon attacks may be blocked by an unarmed character. The character may perform another action at the end of the turn if he has not been attacked.

➡ EXAMPLE

Jacob is attempting to block Mad Dog's Punch. The outcome of Jacob's roll is a good success. Mad Dog's difficulty for the punch would therefore be challenging plus any other situational modifiers.

Use Skill

The character must attempt a skill task.

Move

The character must attempt to move or run to a specific area, duck, jump, or dive. Ranged Attacks may also be attempted while moving, but with **-2** on the task roll, and they do not receive aiming modifiers.

Reload

The character must reload his firearm or bow.

Aim

The character must attempt to aim his ranged weapon attack giving him **+1** on the next turn. Being struck by an attack, causes a character's aim to be interrupted and he loses the use of the aiming *bonus dice*.

BASIC FIGHT ROLLS

There are different combinations of traits and skills used to make attack rolls. These are referred to as the *attack total*. There are also combinations used to make defense rolls. The base difficulty for all rolls is average unless otherwise noted.

Strength + Brawling Attack

This is used for punch, kick, grapple, broken bottle, club, and rifle butt attacks.

Dexterity + Knife Fighting Attack

This is used to attack an opponent by slashing or stabbing him with a knife.

Dexterity + Sword Fighting Attack

This is used for sword attacks.

Dexterity + Firearms Attack

This is used for pistol and rifle attacks. The difficulty of these rolls is based on range. See *Ranged Weapons* later in this section ➡.

Dexterity + Archery Attack

This is used for bow and arrow attacks. The difficulty of these rolls is based on range. See *Ranged Weapons* later in this section ➡.

Dexterity + Lariat Attack

This is used for lasso and whip attacks. The target must be more than five feet away from the character in order to use a whip but may not be farther than its length (six to ten feet).

Dexterity + Athletics Attack

This is used for all thrown weapons such as rocks, knives, and spears. Slingshots also fall into this category. The difficulty of the attack roll is based on range. See *Ranged Weapons* later in this section ➡.

Strength + Brawling Defense

This is used to block punches and kicks.

Dexterity + Brawling Defense

This is used to parry punches, kicks, and grapples. Melee attacks can also be parried, but the difficulty is challenging.

Dexterity + Sword Fighting Defense

This is used to parry sword attacks.

Dexterity + Athletics Defense

This is used to dodge thrown weapons. Ranged weapons can also be dodged, but the difficulty is impossible.



RANGED WEAPONS

Since ranged weapons are shot from a distance, their difficulty to hit is determined by the range to target as noted on the Success Table. Specific weapon ranges are noted below. Each range value includes distances from the previous range plus one up to the number listed. Ranges from closest to farthest are: point blank (☉_{PB}), short (☉_S), medium (☉_M), long (☉_L), and extreme (☉_E).

	☉ _{PB}	☉ _S	☉ _M	☉ _L	☉ _E
THROWN OBJECT	5 M	10 M	15 M	20 M	30 M +
BOW	10 M	25 M	50 M	75 M	100 M +
DERRINGER	5 M	10 M	15 M	20 M	25 M +
REVOLVER	5 M	10 M	25 M	40 M	75 M +
RIFLE	5 M	10 M	30 M	50 M	100 M +
SHOTGUN	5 M	10 M	20 M	35 M	75 M +

AMMUNITION USE

Firearms use ammunition and are capable of a limited number of shots. Each time one of these weapons is fired, one round is expended. Reloading a weapon takes an entire turn if the gamemaster wishes to maintain an accurate count of ammunition use.

WEAPON	SHOTS
DERRINGER	2
REVOLVER	6
RIFLE	12-16
SHOTGUN	1-2

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Various factors can effect the outcome of an attack. They can be environmental or situational in nature. The gamemaster is free to add bonus/penalty dice or change the difficulty of the roll in order to simulate special actions and situations. A few examples are listed below.

Target Moving

Ranged attacks targeting moving characters receive **1**.

Cover

Characters may take cover behind walls, boulders, and other obstructions for protection against ranged attacks. Characters shooting at targets taking cover receive **1** or **2**, depending on the quality of cover. Characters that are completely hidden from view may not be targeted.

Partial Light

Characters receive **1** on all combat actions attempted in partial light. Any attempt to attack in total darkness has a difficulty of impossible and only if the gamemaster even permits the attempt.

Aiming Ranged Weapons

Ranged weapons such as guns and bows can be made more accurate by spending time aiming them. If the character spends one turn aiming his weapon at a target he can add **+1** to the attack roll. Weapons fitted with scopes, such as rifles, can be used to hit distant targets with better accuracy. The difficulty of the attack is **1** at ☉_M, ☉_L, and ☉_E when at least one turn is spent aiming at the target. The gamemaster may also add bonus dice to the roll for larger than normal targets or penalty dice for smaller targets.

Surprised Opponent

If a character is caught off guard he may only declare the *defer* or *move* actions and the attacker receives +2 on his attack. Surprise may occur if his opponent jumps out in front of him or quickly readies a weapon and attacks. If a character is surprised from behind, he loses his action for that turn.

In/Under Water

Characters may fight while submerged in water. Combat situations that occur completely under water give the character -2, unless he has the athletics skill; in that case he only receives -1.

If the attacking character is not fully submerged, but is at least waist deep in water then he receives -1.

On the Ground

When a character is knocked down, he receives -2 on all brawling combat rolls.

Injury

Characters receive -1 for each group of *wound* blocks completely checked off. This is applied to **all rolls** (see *special rules* ►).

Intoxication

Characters receive -1 for each group of *intoxication* blocks completely checked off. This is applied to **all rolls** (see *special rules* ►).

ADVANCED FIGHT ROLLS

Characters may also perform advanced actions in a fight which are particularly difficult or require special training.

Mounted Attacks

Characterd may attack an opponent with swords or clubs while on horseback. The skill used for the attack is the lower of horsemanship or brawling/sword fighting. If the character does not have the horsemanship skill, he must make the roll using the trait only (untrained).

lower of the two, he must use that for the skill total, which is 10 (dexterity of 4 + horsemanship of 6).

Mounted Ranged Attacks

Characters may attack an opponent with a firearm, bow and arrow, lariat, or thrown weapon while riding a horse or driving a wagon. The skill used for the attack is the lower of horsemanship or thrown weapons/archery/firearms. If the character does not have the horsemanship skill, he must make the roll using the trait only (untrained). The difficulty is 1 while walking and galloping and 2 while running.

Russian Roulette

The game of Russian Roulette involves a revolver with a single bullet loaded being held against one's own head and pulling the trigger. If there was a full round of bullets in the cylinder, the character would be dead. Since there is only one, the character is hit (and dies) on a roll of six (6) on one die. *Stupid!*

Lasso

The difficulty for using a lasso or whip to trip or catch a target is 1.

Trampling

The difficulty for mounted characters to attempt to trample an opponent with their horse is 1.

Quickdraw

A character may attempt to draw his weapon and attack with it the same turn. The difficulty of the roll is 1. Breaking a bottle and attacking an opponent in the same turn is also considered a quickdraw attack. This is also used for reloading a bow and using it the same turn.

Second Weapon

Two weapons may be used in fights at the same time. Each weapon must be rolled for separately and the difficulty of each roll is 1.

Second Attack

Two attacks may be attempted at the same target. Each attack must be rolled for separately and the difficulty of each roll is 1.

Second Target

Two attacks may be attempted at different targets.

► EXAMPLE

Sid is attempting to slash his opponent with his cavalry sabre while riding past him on a horse. His horsemanship rating is 6 and his sword fighting rating is 8. Since his horsemanship rating is the

Each attack must be rolled for separately. The difficulty of the first roll is **1** and the difficulty of the second is **2**.

Called Strikes

Characters may aim for specific body parts while attacking. The difficulty of the attack roll is **1** for brawling and sword fighting attacks, and **2** for all other attacks. Successful called strikes to the hand causes the target to drop his weapon. Strikes to the head can prove fatal for firearms if the gamemaster decides to play God, and he has every right to do so.

Trick Shots

The gamemaster is free to adjust the difficulty of any special stunt such as attempting to shoot a hole in a coin. Obviously, the difficulty for this sort of action would be impossible.

ARMOR PROTECTION

Although it is possible to strap a slab of metal on a character's chest, the weight would be very restrictive, therefore he receives **-2** on all dexterity related rolls. Characters shooting at targets wearing "metal armor" receive **-2** on the attack roll.

DETERMINING DAMAGE

Damage is determined by referencing the *degree of success* with the type of weapon or attack used.

	<i>poor</i>	<i>average</i>	<i>good</i>	<i>excellent</i>	<i>critical success</i>
UNARMED	1d6	2d6	2d6	3d6	5d6
ROCK/BOTTLE	1d6	2d6	3d6	4d6	6d6
KNIFE	1d6	2d6	3d6	6d6	8d6
ARROW	1d6	2d6	4d6	6d6	8d6
CLUB	1d6	2d6	4d6	6d6	10d6
AXE	1d6	2d6	4d6	8d6	10d6
SWORD	1d6	3d6	4d6	8d6	10d6
DERRINGER	1d6	3d6	4d6	8d6	10d6
REVOLVER	2d6	3d6	5d6	8d6	10d6
RIFLE	2d6	4d6	6d6	10d6	12d6
SHOTGUN	1d6	3d6	7d6	12d6	15d6

Each type of weapon or strike has a different damage value for each type of success. This damage reduces the

character's current Stamina and the player checks off a number of wound boxes on his character sheet from left to right equal to the damage.

If a character receives damage equal to or greater than his willpower rating in one attack, he stumbles backward and falls to the ground. He may not stand up until next turn. While down, the character receives **-2** on all combat rolls.

Fire

Characters on fire lose a number of *wound* points equal to the roll of one die, until the fire is extinguished. Characters in enclosed areas lose must roll an additional die due to smoke inhalation.

Asphyxiation

Characters that are immersed in water longer than they can normally hold their breath, receive **1d6** per turn. Characters who are being choked are not in a position to hold their breath, so they receive **2d6** per turn.

➡ EXAMPLE

Pat is attempting to swim past his rivals who are on the shore. He can hold his breath for 9 turns (willpower of 5 x2, -1). He has already been holding his breath for 10 turns, so he receives 1d6 this turn and 1d6 for each turn after that he remains under water.

Falls

Characters take damage equal to the roll of one die per eight foot drop if he has fallen more than six feet. For example, if a character falls 24 feet, he takes damage equal to the roll of three dice.

➡ EXAMPLE

Sid has fallen 7 feet down a well. Since he has fallen more than 6 feet, he rolls one die. The result is a 2. This means that he receives 2d6. If he had fallen 16 feet, he would need to roll 2 dice because the distance is equal to 2 eight-foot drops.

Characters falling into a body of water suffer damage

equal to the roll of one die per eight foot drop if he has fallen more than sixteen feet.

Being Dragged

Once ensnared by a lariat, the target may be dragged from horseback, causing an amount of wounds equal to the roll of one die per turn. Characters wearing thicker than normal clothing can ignore 1♣.

Horse Trampling

The number of wounds is equal to double the amount of a normal brawling attack.

Attacking Horses

In order to maintain simplicity, heavy bludgeoning or ranged weapons used on horses or other beasts of burden are considered a knock down if the success is good or better. Critical successes will kill the animal in a single shot. If a character is riding the horse, he receives damage equal to the roll of one die when the horse goes down. If a horse that is part of a group pulling a wagon is hit, the rest of the horses will not stop, although they will be slowed down, having to drag the injured one.



BEHIND THE SCENES

"Never interfere with anythin' that ain't botherin' ya' none."



THE GAMEMASTER

One person controls both the pace and tone of the game. He is called the gamemaster and his job is to act as referee, storyteller, and guardian angel.

Refereeing

As a referee, the gamemaster must know the rules. It is unlikely that anyone will remember every single rule, but the gamemaster should make sure that he understands the basic rules foundation, combat, and dice rolls that will be used most often.

Players will undoubtedly raise questions during the course of play and it is the gamemaster's job to answer them. No one wants to sit around waiting for him to find

the answer. The longer it takes, the more distracted the players will be. If it takes more than a few minutes to find the answer, make an educated guess. After all, the gamemaster is the referee and can make any call he sees fit (as long as it's fair).

It is inevitable for players to not accept decisions made by the gamemaster. It is perfectly acceptable to hear them out, but at the end of the day the gamemaster is law. Hostility and sulking can interfere with the enjoyment and pace of the game and should be quashed at the first onset. Try to appease players not enjoying themselves, but not at the expense of the others.

Favoring one player over another is another way to make the game less enjoyable to some players. Although, these situations are encountered accidentally, a good gamemaster tries his best to ensure that he is fair to all players. This also means that all players should be given chances to interact with the world and even become heroes.

There is always at least one player in a group who finds loopholes in the rules and uses that knowledge to create an extremely powerful character. This has the potential to unbalance play for the others. A simple fix is to keep him challenged with other tasks such as puzzles and mysteries. Make him think. And if the character defeats every villain or obstacle put before him, make a new, more powerful one just for him.

Storytelling

As a storyteller, the gamemaster is responsible for creating the plot, setting, and cast of characters. He is also charged with propelling the story forward.

A good plot will keep the players guessing. It should be well thought out and planned. No one can predict every decision made by the players. Because of this, many of the roads travelled will need to be improvised by the gamemaster. As long as a basic storyline has been prepared, any divergence can be made into an interesting addition. Movies, books, and television can all be good sources for stories and plots.

Powerful outlaws and corrupt lawmen can make the ultimate villains in a story. This forces all of the characters to pull together for a common goal. Any back story will do, but a more interesting villain will make for a more interesting story.

Supporting characters are also an important factor in any roleplaying game. They are friends, family, enemies, and unnamed extras.

Drama is yet another important factor in storytelling. The gamemaster should impart all the gritty details to the characters by using the mood of the setting. If the characters are tracking down a killer in a dark, wooded area, describe what they glimpse out of the corner of their eye, the hoots of an owl, or even how they might be feeling.

When describing what a supporting characters says, do it with feeling. Act it out and make the players really experience it.

Acting as Guardian Angel

The gamemaster must also watch over his players without sacrificing the enjoyment of the game. He is the characters' guardian angel and inner voice. There will always be times when players act foolishly or inappropriately. This is a sign for good gamemasters to either question their actions or subtly and fairly punish them.

Players should always be free to have their characters act in any manner they see fit, but just like the real world, actions always have consequences. When a person commits acts that go against their nature, they are viewed in a whole new light. Relationships may be strained and their reputation may either be blemished or elevated.

TIME AND TRAVEL

In order to maintain ease of play this game utilizes four abstract measurements for time. They are turns, scenes, episodes, and stories.

Turns

Turns are primarily used for combat and contested actions. As previously mentioned, a turn represents a period of time from five to fifteen seconds. It is an approximation to ensure that players may respond in an entertaining manner rather than a purely realistic one.

Scenes

Scenes are even more abstract than turns. They do not represent an actual range of time. Instead, scenes encompass an entire exchange of dialog or events in one particular location. Their purpose is to allow a quicker passage of time, which in turn permits the game to run more smoothly, ignoring tedious events.

Episodes

Each time a group gets together to play, they are participating in an episode. Although it is not a measure of time, the term is used as a reference point and a break to award experience to the players.

Stories

Stories do not technically measure time. They represent whatever period of time it takes to complete the story. Characters always gain experience at the conclusion of a story. Think of it as an entire season of a television program.

Travel Time

Travelling between scenes is always automatic unless a major story concept must be introduced. The gamemaster may decide how long the journey actually takes and how tired the characters may be once it is completed. After all, travelling in the Old West can be both dangerous and tedious.

Characters may travel by foot, horse, cart, wagon, train, or boat. Travel between distant cities is likely to take weeks if not months, although trains can greatly shorten times. Getting lost is always possible and makes for good subplots.

STORY IDEAS

The following ideas are common to western stories. The gamemaster can use them to design his own episodes or stories.

The Posse

Someone has committed a serious crime and is on the run from the law. Members of the characters' community are forming a posse in order to bring the fugitive to justice. This could be the start of a long story which takes the group deep into the wilderness or a hunt which jumps from town to town.

Crooked Sheriff

A new sheriff has been appointed to Shady Gulch. At first he was quite friendly and helpful, but now he has shown his true face and is corrupt and evil. He has deputized many of his friends and the townsfolk are no match in a gunfight. The characters must bring evidence of the sheriff's villainy to the nearest magistrate and hope that they can convince him to sign a warrant for the sheriff's arrest. They will also need the help of some marshals. If the characters decide to take decisive action, it may result in bloodshed.

The Lynch Mob

A crime has been committed and the town is ready to hang the person they feel is responsible. The characters may receive clues which lead them to believe that the man is innocent. Those who are compassionate and lawful can not stand for the death of an innocent and must protect him from the unruly crowd and prove his innocence. Ironically, the man may truly be guilty.

Cowboy Justice

Someone close to one or more of the characters has been hurt or killed by someone wealthy or in a position of authority in the town. The law refuses to get involved because of a lack of evidence. The characters are forced to take matters into their own hands and must deal with the problem in a discreet manner so that the law never finds out. It is also possible for the group to uncover evidence, but that is largely a futile path.

Gang Town

A gang has made Shady Gulch its home. They are always there and always causing trouble. The sheriff is too afraid to deal with them and may even be on their

payroll. It is up to the characters to band together and drive the bullies out of town.

Swindled

One of the characters, his friend, or family has been cheated by a big businessman. This could involve the loss of property or a considerable sum of money. The group must find a legitimate way to get the money or property back. If they stoop to criminal means, they will probably be arrested.

The Wrong Man

One of the characters has been wrongfully accused of a crime and is being held in the town jail. He will eventually be transported to the nearest city with a magistrate to stand trial. The evidence against him is very incriminating and the characters must find a way to clear his name. They can also attempt to break him out of jail, but that would result in the organization of a posse against all of them.

Loud Neighbors

A homesteader's neighbor is causing him considerable grief. Gunshots can be heard at all times of the night and they are always throwing parties. What's an honest, hard working family man to do?

Cattle Drive

A group of cowboys are driving their employer's cattle to pasture or are moving them to a train depot to be transported back east for the slaughterhouse. This is a long and tiring journey. Many cattle are bound to wander off and need to be reunited with the herd. Wolves are also a deadly threat to stray cattle.

Haunted Homestead

Something strange is going on around a character's homestead. He is hearing eerie noises and seeing ghostly lights. His cattle are disappearing only to be found on the other side of his fence. Wolves are no longer seen trying to sneak a meal on his property. Who's playing games and why?

The Card Shark

There's always a bigger fish in the pond of gamblers. One of the characters loses a lot of money to a shark. The character once chalked it up to luck, but now he now suspects that the man was cheating. Making false accusation can be deadly so he does a bit of snooping to

find out about his past. What does he find?

Rustlers

Rustlers are out to steal cattle from the homesteaders and cattle barons nearby the town. They are quiet and slick. Who can stop them?

Vengeance

A long time ago, one of the characters was wronged. He may have done time in jail, was betrayed by an old friend or lover, or his reputation was horribly scarred. This person responsible has returned to town, possibly to apologize, but probably accidentally. The character must take revenge for what the person has done to him.

Foreclosure

One of the character's is in debt and has put his homestead or cabin up as collateral for a loan. Because, he was unable to pay back the loan, the bank (or loan shark) has decided to repossess. The characters must come up with a large sum of cash by Friday at noon in order to save his property.

Train/Coach Robbery

The characters decide to rob a train or wagon coach carrying wealthy businessmen and their families. Has the group turned to a life of crime or have they turned into Robin Hood and his men? Is there more to the story or are they being led astray by their gamemaster?

Kidnapped

A character, friend, or family member is being held for ransom. The group must find him before it's too late. Even if they pay the ransom, the hostage will probably not be released.

The Jail Break

A dangerous killer has broken out of the town jail. He may just try to escape capture, but he will more than likely try to silence witnesses and those who led to his capture. The characters may be deputized to help bring him to justice before he reaches Mexico or commits another murder.

Bounty

A bounty has been offered for the capture of one or more of the characters. People will come from all over to capture them and collect their reward. The characters must flee town or hold off their adversaries.

Bounty Hunters

The characters have been paid or offered a bounty to track down and capture a criminal or wild animals terrorizing the town and nearby homesteads.

SUBPLOTS

Subplots may be used to add more realism or substance to a character and story. The gamemaster should suggest one or more subplots to a player during character creation in order to help flesh his character out. Subplots can be created at any time and need not be fully explored in a single story. The ones listed below are merely examples.

The Temptress

A beautiful woman has entered one of the character's lives. She has become quite close and will potentially marry him. But does she have ulterior motives? Is she after his money or out to split up his group of friends? And what happens when she tries to seduce a friend? Of course, she could also be genuinely interested in the character.

Friends and Family

The character has a spouse and children, or even a close personal friend. They might require his protection and are a constant source of worry for the character.

Personal Debt

The character is in debt to someone and is always trying to raise cash to pay him back.

You Saved My Life

The character has saved someone's life. The person has decided to tag along with the character and pay him back for his kindness. A more interesting twist would be for the person to be Chinese or Indian.

Rivalry

The character holds a grudge against a supporting character controlled by the gamemaster. He may be a neighbor, town citizen, or even a relative. The supporting character may surface from time to time, but is not a major personality.

Duty

The character is sworn to fulfill some duty. It may be a promise made to a friend or an order given by a superior.

It does not need to be carried out, but a sense of guilt will always be there. If the person whose owed the duty finds out that the character does not fulfill it, he may become violent or act against him in some other manner.

The Plot

The character is secretly working towards the death or humiliation of another character. This may be out of vengeance, duty, or even some petty reason like jealousy.

Mystery

The character does not like unsolved mysteries and may stay behind the other characters in order to solve one. He may also recruit some or all of the other characters to help him, taking them away from their legitimate duties.

Romance

The character has become attracted to another character and attempts to remain close by. This may either annoy or please the other person.

The Challenge

Someone has challenged the character to a fight. The character may decline the challenge and suffer from a notorious reputation, or accept and be required to travel a distance to reach his opponent.

Tenderfoot

The character is not only new in town, but also new to the west. He is unsure of etiquette and probably has little skill to cope with this dangerous environment. He must befriend others to help him find accommodations and work.

FIGHTIN' AND TEAMWORK

While violence is often a part of the Old West, it is not the solution to all problems. The gamemasters should always allow for non-violent resolutions to stories in addition to exciting shoot-outs.

Puzzles and mysteries allow non-combat oriented characters to participate in adventures as equals with trained fighters. Some vocations focus on academics and trades which should also play a big part in adventures.

All characters should have a part to play and work as a team, although a little antagonism or subterfuge can increase the entertainment factor. Lively group dynamics

make for interesting gaming experiences.

DRAMATIC EVENTS

A good way to add drama to high stakes tasks is to use critical failures and successes. The gamemaster has the option to make up his own outcomes or use any of the samples listed below.

Critical Success: Attacks

- *The opponent suffers from a knockdown and must make a composure roll.*
- *The opponent is dazed and may not attack next turn. The character receives +1 on the next attack.*
- *The character breaks his opponent's weapon.*
- *The opponent drops his weapon.*
- *A Called Strike to the head kills his opponent.*
- *The opponent must make a composure roll not to flee combat.*
- *The character cuts off his opponents arm or leg. The opponent is effectively out of combat.*

Critical Failure: Attacks

- *The character strains his arm in the attack and receives -1 on all subsequent attacks or task rolls using that arm.*
- *The character hits or shoots himself with his weapon and takes damage.*
- *The character breaks his own weapon.*
- *The character leaves himself wide open in the attack giving his opponent +1 on an attack directed at the character next turn.*
- *The character falls into his opponents weapon taking damage.*
- *The character misses his opponent but unintentionally strikes a friend.*
- *The character drops his weapon.*
- *The character's weapon flies off into the distance.*
- *The character loses his balance and suffers from a knockdown.*

Critical Failure: Business

- *The character makes an extremely bad contract and loses a great deal of money or causes others in his trust to lose a great deal of money.*

Critical Failure: Medicine

- *The character kills his patient.*

Critical Failure: Drinking

- *The character has had more alcohol than he thought and becomes intoxicated to the point where he passes out.*

Critical Failure: Gambling

- *The character loses all his money or he may even owe someone a lot of money.*

Critical Failure: Lock Picking

- *The character breaks his tools in the lock or ruins the lock so that it may not be opened even with the key.*

Critical Failure: Horsemanship

- *The character falls off his horse taking damage.*

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

During the course of the game, characters are given the opportunity to increase their knowledge and abilities.

After Each Episode

After each episode, the gamemaster should reward characters with experience points. Several factors determine the amount of points issued. Some examples are: good roleplaying, critically succeeding at tasks, or acting heroically.

REASON	AWARD
SUCCEEDING AT A HARD TASK	1
SUCCEEDING AT AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK	2
ROLLING A CRITICAL SUCCESS	1
GOOD ROLEPLAYING	1
ROLEPLAYING ONE'S WAY OUT OF A VIOLENT SITUATION	1
WIN A DUEL	1
UNCOVER A DASTARDLY PLOT	1

After Each Story

Like episodes, a character is awarded experience points after the completion of an entire story.

REASON	AWARD
ACT OF HEROISM	1
ACT OF SACRIFICE	1
CREATIVITY	2
SUCCESSFULLY RESIST A VICE	1
STAY TRUE TO A VIRTUE	1
ACCOMPLISH STORY GOALS (IF ANY)	2

SAMPLE CHARACTERS

The following characters can be used by players or as extras for the gamemaster.

Austin DiVole

Austin was raised back east by wealthy parents. He grew tired of the stuffy upper class life and made his way west. After wandering aimlessly for months, he finally settled in Shady Gulch and began to write for the local paper with the hope of becoming a big city reporter. Austin is well tempered and extremely bright. Unfortunately, he has become addicted to Laudanum after having it prescribed for injuries sustained by a nasty fall.

Cobalt 'Coby' Johnson

Coby, as he likes to be called, is employed by Big Joe Wilkins to protect his herd. Coby was raised in the west and is an excellent horseman. Polite and composed, Coby performs his duties without question. His predisposition to gambling and adventure is evident by the risks he takes both physically and monetarily.

Silas McHugh

Silas is a cunning businessman. He owns several mines and is a silent partner in a local saloon. While he lacks the proper etiquette to blend in with the upper classes, Silas is always polite and has many friends—that is until he cons them out of their life savings in some illegal get rich scheme.

Russell Fallenhorse

Russell was raised by the Indian tribe native to the land around Shady Gulch. Russell has turned to the white man's game of poker as a way to survive. He has all but turned his back on his tribe and has assimilated pretty well into the new *culture* of Shady Gulch.

Theodore 'Mad Dog' Kelsey

Mad Dog is wanted by marshals further west. He has come to Shady Gulch in order to lie low for a while. Mad Dog is a cruel man with little control over his vices. He tries to appear educated, but the illusion is shattered as soon as he opens his mouth. Mad Dog is unusually popular with the ladies. Of course, that probably has something to do with the fact that he pays them.

ROLEPLAYING IN THE OLD WEST

NAME: <i>Theodore 'Mad Dog' Kelsey</i>		REPUTATION:	
VOCATION: <i>Outlaw</i>		□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □	
		① ② ③ ④	

DEXTERITY 5	PERCEPTION 3	REASONING 2	STRENGTH 2	WILLPOWER 3
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DEXTERITY BASED SKILLS Athletics _____ Archery _____ Firearms _____ Horsemanship _____ Knife Fighting 10 Lariat 6 Legerdemain _____ Stealth _____ Sword Fighting _____ PERCEPTION BASED SKILLS Commodities _____ Disguise _____ Gambling _____ Performance _____ Tracking _____	REASONING BASED SKILLS Academics _____ Blacksmithing _____ Business _____ Forgery _____ Instrument « » _____ Instrument « » _____ Lock Picking _____ Masonry _____ Medicine _____ Read/Write « » _____ Read/Write « » _____ Seamanship _____ Speak « » _____ Speak « » _____ Western Lore _____	STRENGTH BASED SKILLS Brawling 4 WILLPOWER BASED SKILLS Composure _____ Drinking 3 VIRTUES _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ VICES SADISM LUST ALCOHOL
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REACTION 4	WOUNDS □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ INTOXICATION	(enough + willpower) x 2 STAMINA 10
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EQUIPMENT - - HOLDINGS

CASH FOR THE LADIES _____

FANCY CLOTHES _____

REVOLVER _____

DERRINGER _____

NAME:		REPUTATION:	
VOCATION:		□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □	
		① ② ③ ④	

DEXTERITY	PERCEPTION	REASONING	STRENGTH	WILLPOWER
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DEXTERITY BASED SKILLS Athletics _____ Archery _____ Firearms _____ Horsemanship _____ Knife Fighting _____ Lariat _____ Legerdemain _____ Stealth _____ Sword Fighting _____ PERCEPTION BASED SKILLS Commodities _____ Disguise _____ Gambling _____ Performance _____ Tracking _____	REASONING BASED SKILLS Academics _____ Blacksmithing _____ Business _____ Forgery _____ Instrument « » _____ Instrument « » _____ Lock Picking _____ Masonry _____ Medicine _____ Read/Write « » _____ Read/Write « » _____ Seamanship _____ Speak « » _____ Speak « » _____ Western Lore _____	STRENGTH BASED SKILLS Brawling _____ WILLPOWER BASED SKILLS Composure _____ Drinking _____ VIRTUES _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ VICES _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
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REACTION	WOUNDS □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ INTOXICATION	(enough + willpower) x 2 STAMINA
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EQUIPMENT - - HOLDINGS

These blank mini-sheets are for use with supporting characters and extras.

NAME:		REPUTATION:	
VOCATION:		□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □	
		① ② ③ ④	

DEXTERITY	PERCEPTION	REASONING	STRENGTH	WILLPOWER
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DEXTERITY BASED SKILLS Athletics _____ Archery _____ Firearms _____ Horsemanship _____ Knife Fighting _____ Lariat _____ Legerdemain _____ Stealth _____ Sword Fighting _____ PERCEPTION BASED SKILLS Commodities _____ Disguise _____ Gambling _____ Performance _____ Tracking _____	REASONING BASED SKILLS Academics _____ Blacksmithing _____ Business _____ Forgery _____ Instrument « » _____ Instrument « » _____ Lock Picking _____ Masonry _____ Medicine _____ Read/Write « » _____ Read/Write « » _____ Seamanship _____ Speak « » _____ Speak « » _____ Western Lore _____	STRENGTH BASED SKILLS Brawling _____ WILLPOWER BASED SKILLS Composure _____ Drinking _____ VIRTUES _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ VICES _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
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REACTION	WOUNDS □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ INTOXICATION	(enough + willpower) x 2 STAMINA
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EQUIPMENT - - HOLDINGS

NAME:		REPUTATION:	
VOCATION:		□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □	
		① ② ③ ④	

DEXTERITY	PERCEPTION	REASONING	STRENGTH	WILLPOWER
-----------	------------	-----------	----------	-----------

DEXTERITY BASED SKILLS Athletics _____ Archery _____ Firearms _____ Horsemanship _____ Knife Fighting _____ Lariat _____ Legerdemain _____ Stealth _____ Sword Fighting _____ PERCEPTION BASED SKILLS Commodities _____ Disguise _____ Gambling _____ Performance _____ Tracking _____	REASONING BASED SKILLS Academics _____ Blacksmithing _____ Business _____ Forgery _____ Instrument « » _____ Instrument « » _____ Lock Picking _____ Masonry _____ Medicine _____ Read/Write « » _____ Read/Write « » _____ Seamanship _____ Speak « » _____ Speak « » _____ Western Lore _____	STRENGTH BASED SKILLS Brawling _____ WILLPOWER BASED SKILLS Composure _____ Drinking _____ VIRTUES _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ VICES _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
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REACTION	WOUNDS □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ INTOXICATION	(enough + willpower) x 2 STAMINA
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EQUIPMENT - - HOLDINGS

MARGIN = SKILL TOTAL - DICE TOTAL		DIFFICULTY					
		SIMPLE	EASY	AVERAGE	CHALLENGING	HARD	IMPOSSIBLE
MARGIN	LESS THAN -6	FAILURE	FAILURE	FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE
	-6 TO -1	FAILURE	FAILURE	FAILURE	FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE
	0	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	POOR	FAILURE	FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE
	1 TO 3	GOOD	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	POOR	FAILURE	FAILURE
	4 TO 5	GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	POOR	FAILURE
	6 TO 7	EXCELLENT	GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	POOR
	8 TO 9	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	POOR
	10 TO 11	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	AVERAGE
	12 TO 13	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE
	MORE THAN 14	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	EXCELLENT	GOOD
RANGE		P.B.	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG	EXTREME	
CONTESTED SUCCESS		POOR	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	CRITICAL SUC.	

BASIC TASK ROLLS

1. *Compute Skill Total*
trait + skill
2. *Compute Dice Total*
3. *Determine Success*
dice total must be less than or equal to skill total

ADVANCED TASK ROLLS

1. *Compute Skill Total*
trait + skill
2. *Compute Dice Total*
3. *Compute Margin*
dice total - skill total
4. *Determine Success*
cross reference margin with difficulty

COMBAT PROCEDURES

1. *Declare Intent*
attack, defend, use skill, move, reload, aim
2. *Determine Initiative*
dice roll + reaction
3. *Determine Success*
margin = dice total - skill total
4. *Determine Damage*
compare degree of success with weapon/attack damage ratings

SHADY GULCH



REACTION MODIFIERS

wearing 'metal armor'	-2
knocked down	-1
surprised opponent	+2
holding many items	-1
holding bulky items	-1
injured	-1 to -5
intoxicated	-1 to -5

FIGHTIN' ATTACKS

STRENGTH+BRAWLING	punches, kicks
DEXTERITY+KNIFE FIGHTING	knives
DEXTERITY+SWORD FIGHTING	sabres, machetes
DEXTERITY+FIREARMS	guns
DEXTERITY+ARCHERY	bows
DEXTERITY+LARIAT	whips, lassos
DEXTERITY+ATHLETICS	thrown rocks, daggers

FIGHTIN' DEFENSES

STRENGTH+BRAWLING	blocks
DEXTERITY+BRAWLING	parries
DEXTERITY+SWORD FIGHTING	parries
DEXTERITY+ATHLETICS	dodges

ATTACK MODIFIERS

wearing 'metal armor' (dexterity)	-2
target wearing 'metal armor'	-2
target moving	-1
cover	-1 to -2
partial light	-1
aiming	+1
aiming with scope (M L E)	+1 -1
surprised opponent	+2
under water	-2
in waist deep water	-1
brawling while on the ground	-2
injured	-1 to -5
intoxicated	-1 to -5

DAMAGE CHARTS

	P	A	G	E	CS
unarmed	1♣	2♣	2♣	3♣	5♣
rock/bottle	1♣	2♣	3♣	4♣	6♣
knife	1♣	2♣	3♣	6♣	8♣
arrow	1♣	2♣	4♣	6♣	8♣
club	1♣	2♣	4♣	6♣	10♣
axe	1♣	2♣	4♣	8♣	10♣
sword	1♣	3♣	4♣	8♣	10♣
derringer	1♣	3♣	4♣	8♣	10♣
revolver	2♣	3♣	5♣	8♣	10♣
rifle	2♣	4♣	6♣	10♣	12♣
shotgun	1♣	3♣	7♣	12♣	15♣

EPISODE XP COSTS

SKILL RATING	NON-VOC. COST	VOCATION COST
2	6	3
3	8	4
4	10	6
5	12	8
6	16	10
7	20	14
8	24	18
9	28	22
10	32	26
11	36	30
12	40	34

reduce intoxication (per point)	1
taming a horse	20
training a horse	10

RANGES

	♣ _P	♣ _A	♣ _M	♣ _L	♣ _E
throwing	5M	10M	15M	20M	30M
bow	10M	25M	50M	75M	100M
derringer	5M	10M	15M	20M	25M
revolver	5M	10M	25M	40M	75M
rifle	5M	10M	30M	50M	100M
shotgun	5M	10M	20M	35M	75M

AMMO CAPACITIES

derringer	2
revolver	6
rifle	12-16
shotgun	1-2

STORY XP COSTS

TRAIT RATING	COST
1	5
2	10
3	15
4	20
5	25
6	30
new vocation skill	5
new non-vocation skill	10
increase reputation (per point)	4

SHADY GULCH

NAME:

REPUTATION:

VOCATION:

□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□
 -1 0 +1 +2

DEXTERITY

PERCEPTION

REASONING

STRENGTH

WILLPOWER

DEXTERITY BASED SKILLS

Athletics _____
 Archery _____
 Firearms _____
 Horsemanship _____
 Knife Fighting _____
 Lariat _____
 Legerdemain _____
 Stealth _____
 Sword Fighting _____

PERCEPTION BASED SKILLS

Commodities _____
 Disguise _____
 Gambling _____
 Performance _____
 Tracking _____

REASONING BASED SKILLS

Academics _____
 Blacksmithing _____
 Business _____
 Forgery _____
 Instrument « » _____
 Instrument « » _____
 Lock Picking _____
 Masonry _____
 Medicine _____
 Read/Write « » _____
 Read/Write « » _____
 Seamanship _____
 Speak « » _____
 Speak « » _____
 Western Lore _____

STRENGTH BASED SKILLS

Brawling _____

WILLPOWER BASED SKILLS

Composure _____
 Drinking _____

VIRTUES

.....

VICES

.....

12 - dexterity - perception

REACTION

WOUNDS

□□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□

 -1 -2 -3 -4 -5

□□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□

INTOXICATION

(strength + willpower) x 2

STAMINA

EQUIPMENT - - HOLDINGS

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