

WHAT HO. OLD CHUM!

Welcome to the expanded rules for **What Ho, World!** If you have any questions not covered by this guide, or have suggestions for other things to add, get in touch at ufopressrpg@gmail.com.

Setting and Tone

What Ho World is a storytelling game inspired by the genteel comedies set in the 1920s and 1930s - P. G. Wodehouse's Jeeves books, E. F. Benson's Mapp and Lucia books, Fred Astaire and Ginger Roger's musicals, and so on.

What Ho World is set in an England that never really was, floating hazily sometime between the 1920s and 1930s. The end of the Great War has brought newfound social mobility and allowed previously unthinkable behaviours to become almost commonplace. Respectable ladies from well-to-do families hike their dresses up and go dancing in jazz clubs with cab driver's sons, servants return from war with unlikely skills and a new skepticism towards their young charges, immigrants make their way from the fringes of the empire to its heart in search of their fortune. The spectre of fascism hangs only lightly over proceedings, only entertained by blowhards looking to make up for their own inadequacies.

In tone, games should be light and breezy - the worst that should happen is that someone behaves like a cad, that someone loses their inheritance, that somebody gets a bloody nose. Characters are caught up in their own obsessions and social worries, and disputes between them only rarely reach the stage of criminal activity. While they may be realistic for the time period, sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and other forms of discrimination aren't appropriate to the game. It's meant to be fun and airy, and the comfort of the players at the table is much more important than accuracy to a way of life that was largely fictional even when Wodehouse was writing his first Jeeves stories.

Basic Rules

What Ho World doesn't use dice, or any other random element. Instead, it works like a conversation. You'll describe your actions, other players will describe what their character does in response, and the conversation continues onward. Like any conversation you take turns to speak, but it's not like taking turns in chess - you can add on to someone else's suggestions, come up with ideas of your own, interject if things are going down a path you don't like and so on.

When someone's interacting with the environment or with characters that aren't owned by any particular player, someone needs to decide what happens. Normally that'll be someone not currently participating in the scene, or the group as a whole can decide.

Occasionally, the actions you describe your character taking will have particular importance to the story, and you'll use a move card to resolve it. These move cards are there to mediate the conversation, and give the story some structure - like pruning a topiary to get the most pleasing shape!

When you use a move card, start and end with the fiction: start by saying what your character's doing that activates the move, and after its mechanics have been resolved interpret its results to make sense in the current situation and flow back into the conversation.

Tokens

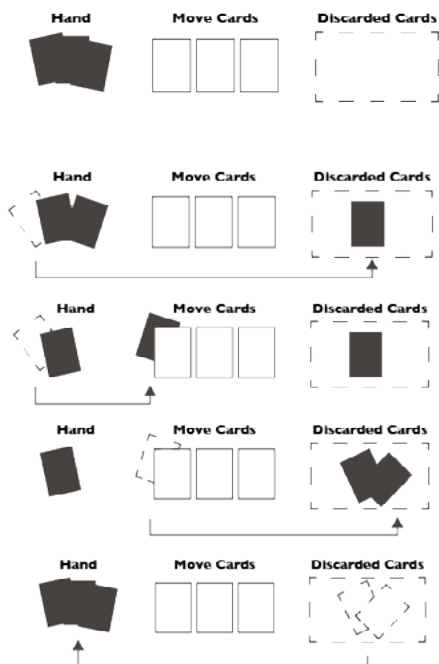
Tokens are the key force in What Ho, World! They come in five flavours:

- ♥ **Grace:** your ability to be inspiring, dignified and polite.
- ♣ **Knowhow:** your knowledge of trivia and arcane secrets.
- ♠ **Skulduggery:** your ability to be underhanded and sneaky.
- 📄 **Wits:** your ability to understand situations and act quickly.

These four basic token types are found on the back of character move cards. Each card has two different suits on its back, meaning that the card can be spent as either of those token types.

Finally, there are * **Excellence** tokens, found on the back of Asset/Goal cards. These can be used as any of the other types. You start with none, but each character deck has a Trouble Move they can use to get them.

Token Mechanics



Your personal play area has three important sections: your hand of token cards, your faceup move cards, and your discarded cards.

When you spend a token place it in your discard pile.

When a move tells you to bank a token, put it under the move card.

Banked cards are committed and are only spent in specific ways.

When you frame a scene you refresh your discarded cards, placing them back with your hand of free token cards.

How Moves Work

Moves are your special abilities - your ability to declare that something happens or place extra rules on what other players can say or do.

With a few exceptions each move card holds the following:

A trigger: The circumstances when the move comes into play, often including token costs. Once you've met activated one of your move cards, you must carry on and resolve the rest of it.

An effect: Something that happens when it's activated. This may have options for the triggering player or others to choose from, but its effects are guaranteed to happen unless some other move interferes.

Extras: Many moves will have some optional extra effect you can produce by spending tokens. These can alter the move's effects, add extra bonuses, or add extra limitations to other character's behaviour.

Here's an example move from The Gadabout:

Flout Convention

The Trigger: When you do something clearly against social mores...

The Effect: ...people will mutter and grouse but will take no direct action to stop you.

Optional Extras: ♥ Your actions are regarded as trendsetting instead of taboo.

♠ You turn the judgement of society on someone else as the true transgressor.

Who You Can Play

What Ho, World! offers five different character types to play as:

The Gadabout: A social butterfly at home in the galas and clubs of high society but utterly naive about anything else. They can handle most anything so long as nobody pins them down or pens them in.

The Servant: Where the Gadabout is mercurial the Servant is solid and dependable, always ready to offer sage advice, a bracing drink, or surprising skills from their time in the forces.

The Aged Relative: Their years have given the Aged Relative a healthy disregard for society's mores, as well as the status needed to get away with it. Eccentric, wily and surprisingly spry.

The Highbrow: Whether they're an artist, a priest or a scholar, the Highbrow has a license to ignore social conventions, think strange thoughts and create shocking works – so long as they don't go too far.

The Pillar of Society: The Pillar of Society is a key figure of the establishment – a judge, a major, or the chair of the local Women's Institute. Their word carries weight, and their judgement is feared by all.

Character Creation

Here's how to make a character:

1. Choose a character deck.
2. Choose two of your deck's move cards to start play with. Place them face-up in front of you.
3. Flip the other move cards facedown to use as your starting Tokens.
4. Take a basic move card. These abilities are always available to all characters.
5. You have a particular relationship with two characters: see your deck's relationship cards. Choose a player for each and tell them what it entails.
6. Decide on a style, personality and name for your character, using the suggestions in your deck if you like, and introduce them to the table.

Play Example:

Alice decides she wants to play a Servant adjusting back to civilian life after the war. She takes the Servant deck, and starts looking through its move cards. She picks two - Surprising Knowledge and Wise Advice - and places those in front of her. She flips the remaining three over, giving her three tokens: a ♥♠, a ♣♣, and a ♣♣. She takes a basic move card, and looks on its back to remind her of the Scene Framing and Goal Achievement rules.

For her Servant's positive relationship, she must pick an employer - the person she spends her working life serving. She chooses Cecily's Gadabout - they decide that she's only worked for her for a short while, and is still adjusting to the flighty, easy lives of the young nobility.

For her negative relationship, she must pick someone who often interferes with her duties. She decides it's Bernard's Pillar of Society, an elderly General - something about the Pillar's way of acting reminds her of bad memories during the war, throwing her off their routine.

Finally, she reads the 'Making Your Servant' card. For a name, she picks Mrs. Hughes. For a Personality, she decides on fussy; for style, she chooses 'smudged apron and calloused hands' - she sees Mrs. Hughes as a practical sort.

Gaining New Moves

Each character has a Trouble Move. These introduce or further a subplot specific to your character that piles adversity on them until everything somehow works out. Trouble Moves don't just complicate your character's life; they're also the only way of gaining new abilities. When you activate your Trouble Move you replace one of your token cards with a * token, flipping that character card faceup and placing it with your other character moves. From then on you can use that move along with your other ones.

Locations

Each Location has ideas for characters to play, and events that might happen there. Anyone who's not currently playing a main character can narrate the arrival of one of these minor characters, or declare that one of the listed events has begun to happen. The player who introduced them takes responsibility for deciding how character's moves affecting them are resolved.

You start with two locations on the table, and add more to the mix as part of Scene Framing. Keep track of them using the included cards, or writing them down on scraps of paper.

Assets and Goals

Each character will have two things they're hoping to achieve, and two unique assets to use to try and bring it about. As part of game setup, you'll draft two Asset/Goal cards. The remainder of the Asset/Goal cards should be flipped over to be used as * tokens. These aren't meant to be a limited resource - use beads, coins some other kind of marker to track them if you run out!

As you play and your character works towards your Goals, you'll bank * tokens on them. When Assets help you with this, an extra token is banked. When you think you've made enough progress, you cash in those * tokens in an all-or-nothing bid to complete the Goal.

Accomplishing a Goal

To achieve a Goal, frame your scene with the explicit aim of finishing it. Each other player suggests an impediment to achieving the Goal. For this scene, you may use the * tokens banked on the Goal.

At the end of the scene agree as a group whether the goal's been achieved. If so, flip over the Goal and gain it as a ✨ token. If not, discard it - you've missed your shot. Either way, discard all ✨ tokens banked on the goal.

If both of your Goals have been accomplished or failed, the game enters its epilogue; it's time to wind up the story. Go clockwise around the table. Each player narrates an epilogue for their character, wrapping up their Trouble Move sub-plot and Goals. Include a rise in status, good fortune or happy outcome for each met goal, and a public embarrassment, stroke of bad luck or fall from grace for each unmet or failed goal.

Don't make things too final - there's always room for another tale!

Play Example:

Alice has 3 tokens banked on her goal to reclaim an embarrassing photo left in a book donated to charity. As she frames a scene she decides it's time to try and retrieve it. The table confers: Bernard suggests an antiquarian has his sights set on the book, and Cecily decides a charity is having an event in the bookshop filling it with dignitaries. The scene begins, and Alice has 3 extra ✨ tokens to help her get the document.

At the end of the scene she's got the photo safely back. She flips over the Goal to its ✨ side and flips over a facedown character card, gaining an extra move to use.

Scene Framing

In **Wizards Aren't Gentlemen** you take it in turns to be the focus of a scene in the story you're telling. For that scene, they're the main character, and we care more about their story than about other character's. The game begins with focus on the Apprentice, or on the youngest player if they're not in play.

Each story starts in one of two Locations: the **London Townhouse** or the **Country Manor**. Put those location cards down in the centre of the table. The starting focus then frames the first scene.

- If you have no free ✨ tokens you may decide to use your Trouble Move. If not:
- Decide an aim for your character. This should be doable within a single scene and fit the game's tone.
- Refresh all tokens in your discard pile.
- Pick an established or new Location to set the scene in.
- Add extra details: scenery, player characters that are present, minor characters here for the scene and who's playing them, and any other details of interest.
- Start the scene!

After the scene's come to a close, pass scene framing on to the player clockwise from you.

In your first few scenes, remember to activate your Trouble Move. Using it gets you useful tokens, more abilities, and extra prompts for your story!

Scene Framing Example

It's Alice's turn to be the focus. First she refreshes the two token cards in her discard pile, taking them back into her hand.

Next, she decides that she wants to pursue her Goal of renovating her family home. She decides her Aim: get the current landlord to hand over the deed.

She and the other players fill out more details. Alice suggests the landlord himself as a important character to play. Cecily volunteers to play the landlord, and suggests that he's a stereotypical cigar-chomping slumlord, greedy and venal. Bernard says he'll play his Pillar of Society, here to lend some backbone to Albert's servant and try to make some money of his own. Finally, Delilah says she'll play the landlord's secretary, trying to do the best she can for the landlord's tenants without losing her job.

They work out a description of the landlord's office: a rented set of rooms in the heart of the city, far more luxurious than any of the houses the landlord rents out. The scene begins, with Alice narrating a car pulling up outside the landlord's office and Craig's Pillar and her Servant getting out...

Playing Scenes

Once play begins, everyone has a voice in triggering and resolving moves.

If you're the focus, pursue your aim while looking for chances to use your moves.

If you're playing your character, ask:

- What do I have that the focus needs?
- What do I want from them?
- How can I link their aim and my goals?

If you're playing a minor character, ask:

- What stock character traits would make this character entertaining?
- Can I give the focus a challenge, or a chance to shine?
- Is the scene dragging? Can I hurry it up?

The scene ends when the active player achieves their aim or their aim becomes impossible. If you've made progress towards a Goal using an Asset, bank a * token under it. The Asset doesn't need to be yours, but if it's someone else's Asset you'll need their permission or use your moves to get control over it. Scene ownership then passes clockwise, and a new scene is framed.

Play Example

The scene is as described in Scene Framing. Alice (a Servant) narrates her arrival at their landlord's office in the Heart of the City. Alice and Bernard (playing the Pillar) enter the office, and play through a brief conversation with Delilah (playing a secretary). She initially doesn't want to let them through, but Bernard scowls at her and uses his Steely Glare move: he spends a 🗡 token to force the secretary to either flee, do something for him or reveal a secret. Delilah reveals she's terrified the pair are government inspectors, as the landlord's been shirking his duties to repair his houses. Emboldened by this, Alice and Bernard push through to the landlord's office.

Cecily, playing the landlord, describes the office to them: heavy on oak furniture, paintings and liquor cabinets, low on paperwork or any other sign of industry. The landlord, starting out the window with cigar in hand, turns to them and demands to know what they're up to. The pair of characters settle into a good cop/bad cop routine; Bernard spends 🗡 to issue an Imperative that there's nothing worse than a greedy landlord, meaning that he'll hear if the landlord commits further misdeeds and that consequences will likely follow.

Alice, on the other hand, uses Wise Advice to propose a course of action to solve this problem: the landlord could simply sign over the troublesome properties (including her family home) to the Pillar of Society, in exchange for a part of the real estate owned by the Pillar.

They leave the office with a stack of deeds. Bernard sends a final glare back at the landlord as they go, and then hands Alice the deed to her family home as thanks for helping put this deal together.

*Alice advanced her goal with the use of Bernard's Asset - **Deeds to a significant parcel of real estate** - and so banks a * token on it. Bernard also advanced his goal of Getting Out of Debt (as he plans to sell the rest of the properties) and so banks a * token on his own goal.*

Scene framing is passed clockwise to Bernard, and a new scene begins...