

PIRATES

OF THE

Spanish Main



SWASHBUCKLING ROLEPLAYING IN THE AGE OF PIRACY



Gulf of Mexico

Florida

Vera Cruz

Campeche

Yucatan Peninsula

Cuzumel Is.

Havana

Cuba

Isle of Pines

Cayman Islands

New Spain

Ambergris Cay

Turneffe Is.

Honduras

Mosquito Coast

Old Providence

Islas del Maiz

Portobello

Pacific Ocean

South Sea



PIRATES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

SWASHBUCKLING ROLEPLAYING IN THE AGE OF SAIL

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Atlantic Ocean



1 Square = 30 Miles

Wast There!

What ye holds in your hands
be the last will and testament of

NATHANIEL RIVERS
CAPTAIN OF THE PERDITION and Scourge of the Antilles

Here, at the end of my life, I thinks of my
shipmates. All dead now, but as fine a body of
cutthroats ever to sail the Main 'neath the Jolly Roger.
With none to survive me and more riches than a
man can hope to spend, I make the following bequest.

All of which I die possessed I leave to any
as smart enough to find it!

Dead men tell no tales, they say, but here's a
tale from beyond the grave. To claim a share
of my plunder, follow the clues to find the place it's
buried. My old shipmate Hawkins holds the
clues you seek.

Any as lay's claim to it shall get a share.

As God is my witness

Nathaniel Rivers

GETTING STARTED

Welcome to the *Pirates of the Spanish Main* Roleplaying Game, or *Pirates RPG* for short. This book blends the high seas adventure of WizKids' *Pirates of the Spanish Main* Constructible Strategy Game (CSG) with the Origins award winning *Savage Worlds* roleplaying rules system.

Whether you're a fan of the *Pirates CSG* who wants to explore the Caribbean in more detail and maybe play out some of the daring deeds of Genny Gallows and Jack Hawkins, a roleplayer looking for something new and exciting, or just a fan of swashbuckling stories in general, we've got something here for you.

If you're checking out this book, we assume you know a little bit about roleplaying games. If not, go to page 10 and read "An Introduction to Roleplaying."

So, why did *Savage Worlds* win a prestigious gaming award? We're glad you asked!

First, *Savage Worlds* was designed to be super-easy for the Game Master to write adventures, create new villains or creatures, and run epic tales. We've made the rules as streamlined as possible and kept the bookkeeping to a minimum so the GM can concentrate on the action without having to worry constantly about the rules. You won't have to lug around a half-dozen core rulebooks to play the game; you'll find everything you need to explore the *Pirates* universe right here.

Second, *Savage Worlds* works as a miniatures game as well as a roleplaying game. That means you can fight out your heroes' epic battles for the Spanish Main right on the table-top!

Whether it's a lone hero against an English officer, or several dozen Redcoats raiding a pirate base, you can play out the battles quickly and with a single set of rules.

Even better, your party won't have to fight alone! Nonplayer characters are simple to use and easy to keep track of, so the *players* control their own allies, leaving the GM free to concentrate on their foes.

Rather than confuse the issue with talk of *Savage Worlds* rules system and the *Pirates CSG* background, we're going to refer to this rule system simply as the *Pirates RPG*. It blends the best of system and world into a single fast, furious, fun game.

Anyway, there's lots more to tell you about, so let's get to it!

Getting Started

Here's what you need to get started!

A Couple of Friends

In a roleplaying game, one person serves as the Game Master (or GM) and everyone else makes player characters. These are the heroes of the epic tale you're about to tell. CSG's don't usually need a GM, but in the *Pirates RPG*, he's the storyteller and rules arbitrator.

If you're the Game Master, you'll find it's an easy game to run. The *Pirates RPG* is designed to cut down on bookkeeping, allow you to make exciting adventures in minutes, and to run high-action combat in exciting locales, both on land and at sea.

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If you're a player, you're in for a treat as well. The *Pirates RPG* lets you make just about any type of swashbuckling character you can imagine, and on average you'll get to "level up" and improve your skills or get an awesome new ability about every other adventure! You'll find "Edges" for characters specializing in leadership, social situations, mastery of a ship, and of course furious sword-clashing, fist-flying, swashbuckling combat!

Dice

The *Pirates RPG* uses all 6 traditional gaming dice: 4-sided, 6-sided, 8-sided, 10-sided, 12-sided, and occasionally 20-sided dice. All of these are available from your favorite local gaming store, or online directly from us.

Like most roleplaying games, we abbreviate the different dice as d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20. If you see something like 2d6, that means to roll two six-sided dice and add them up.

Players really need only one set of these dice, though a spare d6 can be handy. The GM might want a couple of sets so she can roll attacks for several villains at once.

Cards

The *Pirates RPG* uses a standard deck of 54 playing cards with both Jokers left in. The cards are used for initiative in combat to help keep things moving fast and furious. You'll even find an official set of *Savage Worlds* cards where you found this book!

Figures and Battle Mats

Figures of some sort are very useful for running the *Pirates RPG*. Metal miniatures are available from several manufacturers, and cheaper full-color cardstock heroes and villains can be found as well. In these rules, we assume you're using 28mm figures—the standard "large size" hobby gaming miniature. Ranges for weapons, movement, and everything else is figured for this size figure on the table-top. If you're using larger or

smaller figures, you may want to adjust your ranges to make things a little more realistic for your chosen scale.

No game carrying the word "pirates" in the title would be complete without ship combat, and for that you'll need miniatures. Guess what, you can use all your *Pirates CSG* models to help run epic naval battles using the quick and easy *Pirates RPG* rules. The RPG rules differ from those of the CSG, but we've kept all the features of the ships and worked them into these rules. We've included a few sample ships you may recognize from the CSG on pages 116 to 118 to get you started, along with rules on how to make your own sailing ships.

It's essential to have some kind of gaming surface as well, either a terrain board or a Chessex Battle Mat™.

We recommend the latter. That way the GM can draw out the tactical situation with water-soluble markers so that everyone can see what's going on and make the most of their surroundings.

Mapping out a battle like this can really help everyone understand where their characters are, where their allies are, and what terrain features they might be able to make use of for cover or clever tricks and maneuvers.

A Little Imagination

As you're already reading this book, you're probably like millions of other gamers in the world. You've got a brilliant imagination just bubbling with ideas and fantastic stories of what happens in the *Pirates* universe outside of ship combat.

These rules help you explore the wonders of the *Pirates* universe with a quick and easy game system that everyone—even your most casual gamer friends—can play and enjoy. Wargamers, roleplayers, and munchkins alike should find everything they're looking for right here in one simple set of rules.

That's all the basic setup—now it's time to read a little on the universe, and then play the game!

Quick Overview

Whether you're new to the *Pirates CSG* or an old hand, you might be wondering what this game is about. Well, here's a very quick overview that will help set the scene.

It's Not the CSG

Although the *Pirates RPG* is set firmly in the *Pirates CSG* universe, shares the same background, uses the same types of ships, and has the same personalities, the RPG is a separate game.

In the CSG, you get to fight the naval battles, but here, you also get to leave your ship and explore the Spanish Main.

The biggest difference between the CSG and RPG is ship combat. This book has a new system for fighting naval battles which ties in with the rest of the rules in this book, so your characters get to make the important die rolls and directly affect the outcome of the battle.

If you've invested in the CSG, you can use your CSG ships to represent your ships in the RPG. Even the reefs, Sargasso Sea, fog banks, and islands can be used.

You might have a few doubts about using a new system for ship fights, but believe us, it's easy to pick up and it'll be worth the effort when *your* character fires the cannon that sinks your enemy!

It's Not Just About Pirates

Really, it's not. The *Pirates RPG* is set in an age of swashbuckling heroes, dandy courtiers, dashing officers, devious spies, agile fencing masters, rough privateers, hardy explorers, attractive governor's daughters, and cunning merchants.

Hanging out at the governor's ball may not sound all that much fun, but there's plenty of intrigue happening in the Spanish Main, duels to be fought to the death over the right to dance with a beautiful lady, and plenty of action to be had when the guards realize your dashing hero is actually stealing all of the governor's silverware!



The best group will probably be those able to mix with the scum of the Earth and the upper echelons of society, to talk their way out of trouble but with the ability to resort to weapons when the talking fails, and to crew a ship so they can explore the Spanish Main and all it has to offer.

Where, Not When

The *Pirates RPG* is set in the waters, and on the islands, of the Caribbean, but it isn't an historically accurate game. We've taken certain liberties with history (and maybe even a few with geography), as does the *Pirates CSG*, to make this an exciting place in which to adventure.

Likewise, the famous pirates of Earth's history, not to mention explorers, governors, admirals, and such like, don't exist here. They're replaced with the personalities from the *Pirates CSG*, whose names may be similar, but who have their own stories.

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Which CSG Sets?

Some of you may already know the CSG background and own the various sets. This book ties in to the characters and events of the *Pirates of the Spanish Main*, and *Pirates of the Crimson Coast* packs.

This means you don't get to play American heroes just yet, except as English colonials, and you can't play Barbary pirates. We'll be expanding the game to cover the *Revolution*, *Barbary Coast*, and other *Pirates* sets in future sourcebooks.

Heroes & Villains

While you can play pirate characters in the *Pirates RPG*, you don't get to play blood-thirsty murderers or truly evil villains. Why? Because that isn't fun, and you'll just end up getting blown to bits by the French, Spanish, or English.



So how can you play a pirate and not be a villain? By playing a rogue, that's how. A rogue skirts the edge of villainy, probably plunders ships, and insults ladies, but he doesn't murder the crew or loot towns. That's the job of real villains, and they're all controlled by the GM.

Whether your character is a hero or a rogue is covered by a game mechanic called Fame. The higher your Fame, the more renowned a hero you are. Should you opt for playing a rogue, your negative Fame, or Infamy, will determine how low you have sunk.

Swashbuckling Action

The *Pirates RPG* harkens back to the swashbuckling movies. Okay, you might not be old enough to remember them, but they crop up on TV every now and then.

Pirates is about swashbuckling action, death traps, and cliffhangers. It's about daring heroes willing to risk life and limb to do what's right, about standing up to adversity (or hiding behind a crate and just blasting at adversity with your musket, if you're cautious!). And—given that this is a pirate game—it's about exciting combat between ships.

Where many roleplaying games favor lengthy investigations, or long journeys broken by random encounters, adventures in the *Pirates RPG* are fast-paced, with no room even to draw breath, and random encounters only happen when the GM wants to add even more action to the game.

Rapier Sharp Wit

Despite being set against the backdrop of a political and military conflict, this game still has humor.

We're not talking slapstick humor here. Think instead of witty quips, larger-than-life stereotypes (such as the dandy courtier who squeals like a girl when a sword is drawn), and such like.

By all means crack a joke during the game, but don't let it get out of hand. *Pirates* is designed to be fun, but it's not supposed to be a comedy RPG.

Intrigue & Politics

The three main European powers in the region are seeking domination, preferably without having to wage a full-blown war on the far side of the world. Spies, secret agents, double agents, and *agents provocateur* work their artful mischief in the noble courts and administrative centers of the Caribbean.

Little Magic

Some other pirate games introduce magic as something characters can use. There is a small amount of the supernatural in this book, but it's limited. These are very superstitious times, though, and common folk still believe in the existence of magic; just don't expect to pick up guns that fire fireballs or quaff potions of invisibility. That's a different game.

A Friendly Guide

We know some of you might be new to roleplaying games, the *Pirates* universe, or maybe even both, so we've drafted in some extra help.

Throughout the book you'll see a friendly face in the roguish form of Jack Hawkins. Of course, he is a pirate, but who better to guide you through this buccaneering world? He knows how to swash and buckle with the best of them, and at heart he's more rogue than villain. Check out the sidebar for a quick biography on this notorious pirate.

Throughout the book, whenever you see Jack's head in a sidebar, there's something there you should read. It might be an example of a rule, or just some tips and hints about the *Pirates* universe. We also use Jack's head to mark the major characters in the Spanish Main. We call these individuals Wild Cards, and they are special in lots of ways. We'll go into it all in detail soon, but for now just remember that Jack's head marks something important.

So without further ado, it's time to get started and create the character whose daring escapades you're going to follow. Read on, shipmate—swashbuckling adventure awaits!



There are more lurid stories about Jack Hawkins' adventures than seem possible given his age. He has taken more treasure and ships than any other pirate in the Caribbean, yet he is always broke and looking for a new ship. He courts only the most beautiful—and deadly—women, though his declarations of undying love seem to pass about as quickly as a Caribbean storm! As a result, he has more than his fair share of love-hate relationships, with the most definite emphasis on "hate." Though Jack has a girl in every port, most of them are looking for some kind of payback for a past insult!

*All through the book, Jack's comments focus on some aspect of the rules or a hint or tip to remember during play. These should help you get the most out of your *Pirates* games.*

*The *Savage Worlds* system on which the *Pirates* RPG is based is very easy to learn as you play. The best thing you can do is get started with your character and pick up the rules you need as you go along.*

*If you are planning to be a GM and run *Pirates* adventures for your group you'll have to do a bit more reading first. You'll need to know the rules a little better and describe the action to your players. We've given you a whole lot more information on how to run *Pirates* games, and in fact, you've got a whole section of this book devoted solely to that purpose. If you're a player, steer clear of the GMs' section, unless your GM says you can read it. You'll find lots of the tricks of the GM trade there along with rules for making adventures, some background to the Spanish Main and a host of fearsome adversaries with which to challenge your heroes.*



PIRATES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

An Introduction to Roleplaying

So you're curious about this whole roleplaying thing but haven't got to try it yet. Or maybe a friend dragged you over to the game table telling you how much you're going to like gaming if you'll just give it a chance.

But what's it all about? Easy. Roleplaying is all the best parts of your favorite fiction and movies, but you don't just sit back and watch—you take part in the action, or rather, your character does. Most of the time, you play a character from another world or another time. In this particular game, you get to play swashbuckling heroes out to make their fame and fortune. You can be an officer in the English Navy, a French merchant, a Spanish fencing instructor, or pretty much anything else your imagination can cook up.

You and a few other friends become the “player characters” (sometimes called PCs, but we usually call them heroes), the protagonists of the adventure you're about to experience. Think of it as ad lib acting where each person plays the role of some fantastic character. But instead of following a script, the game system provides a set of rules to determine whether your hero hits his foe or swipes at empty air, or whether or not your heroes fight off the marauding pirates who were destroying the village.

Another of your friends becomes the Game Master (GM). He concocts the plot, creates the villains, and directs the action. He also plays the roles of the non-player characters (we call them NPCs or extras)—the blackmarket contacts, villainous soldiers, or other minor characters your hero may meet during his epic journey.

The dice and game rules help you all to tell the tale. They also add an extra element of randomness to the game so that no one—not even the Game Master—knows precisely what's going to happen next. A lucky attack roll might kill the pirate chief in one shot. A bad one might mean a character falls at the feet of his terrible foe. In actuality, you and your friends sit around and talk out your actions. There's no “live action” to the game—it's all a mental exercise in creativity.

Here's a short example. Simon is playing Captain Jack Hawkins, a daring swashbuckling pirate captain, and Maggie is playing Genny Gallows, a rival captain and sometimes friend of Jack.

We join the action as the Game Master briefly sets the scene.

Game Master: The map you won from Pedro Garcia, the Spanish pirate, is rumored to show the location of the Dragon's Eye.

Simon: Sounds promising. Do I know anything about the Eye?

GM: Make a Common Knowledge roll. Since you've researched about buried treasure in the past, you've probably come across references before, so I'll give you a +2 to your roll.

Simon: Woohoo! 12!

GM: Actually, yes. You remember reading a description of it. It's a large stone ornately carved to resemble a reptilian eye. Whoever bears the eye, it was said, cannot be harmed by disease, aging, or even weapons. While that sounds a bit far-fetched to you, you've seen enough in your previous adventures to know that stranger things have proven true.

Simon: Hmm. I'll hit the books at the church library and see if I can find out more. Genny, why don't you talk to some of your pirate contacts and see if they know anything?

Maggie: Okay. What do I do?

GETTING STARTED

GM: Make a Streetwise roll.

Maggie: I rolled 2. Oh! And plus 4 for my Charisma because I'm Very Attractive. That's a more respectable total of 6.

GM: Great! You spend most of the day talking to fellow pirates, especially those who served on ships operating along the Spanish Main. You don't gain any new information, but you do verify everything Jack found out.

Simon: Okay. How about me? Anything else? I got an 11 on my Investigation roll!

GM: Hey! That's great! Yes. You find an old journal by a Spanish explorer. He claims the Dragon's Eye rests in an ancient temple deep in the heart of the jungle, which corresponds to what your map says. A tribe of crocodile-worshippers once lived there and protected it. The journal is over a decade old, however, and the explorer has long since gone missing, so there's no way to find out anything else.

Now the tale moves to a small town on the Spanish Main. Jack and Genny are planning on hiring a small skiff to get them up river but wind up in a scuffle with a rowdy group of pirates. The rules used in the fight below may not make much sense to you until you've skimmed the rules, but give a good idea how these things play out for those who have never gamed before.

GM: You're at the docks of this little town. A quick glance reveals a number of unsavory types hanging about. One small group of them seems to be ogling Genny and are making their way over. The largest of the group, a big fellow with dirty clothes and greasy black hair walks straight up to Genny.

GM (as Pirate #1): "Hey lady, you lookin' for a big strong man to help you with that cargo?"

Maggie: "No thanks. I think we've got it."

GM: The thug looks over at Jack and smiles. "Let Manuel help you. That little fella's liable to hurt himself. You need a real man, wench." He reaches out to grab Genny's arm.

Simon: I'll step up between them. "There's no need for that, my friend." I'll make that an Intimidate. Dang. I rolled a 5.

GM: (Rolls for the thug.) Seven. He isn't impressed and pulls Genny closer.

Maggie: The hell he does. I knee him in the groin.

GM: Okay. That's a called shot. Make a Fighting roll at -2.

Maggie: No problem—I got a 7!

GM: That'll do it! The thug's Parry was a 5, so you nailed him! Roll your Strength for damage, and add +2 for that rather unladylike shot to his groin.

Maggie: Ha! 12!

GM: Well! His Toughness is just a 6, so he drops like a rock. He's out of this fight. His mates grab Manuel by the arm and haul him off to the local tavern. Here Maggie—have a benny for settling this without getting into a major fight. Nice job!

Later that night, the pirates watch Jack and Genny depart. They slip onto their own ship and give chase to get some payback for Manuel's wounded pride. What happens next is completely up to the players and the GM!

PIRATES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

Yo Ho Ho! — Pirate Lingo

Account: The act of piracy. A pirate is said to be, “On the Account.”

Aft: The rear (stern) of a ship.

Amidships: The ship’s center.

Ballast: Weight placed in the lower middle of a ship to help keep it steady in water.

Belay: An order to halt an activity.

Bilge: The broadest part of the hold at the bottom of a ship. Pumps are often placed here to evacuate water from leaky vessels.

Bow: The front of a ship.

Bowsprit: The beam that extends out from the front of the ship.

Buccaneer: Originally a term for those who cooked meat with “barbecues” (called “boucans”), given to European settlers of the Caribbean by Arawak Indians. Eventually, pirates of the Caribbean region became known as buccaneers.

Bulwark: The “rim” of the ship that runs around the top of the upper deck.

Capstan: A large wheel around which is wound the anchor chain.

Careen: Beaching a ship so barnacles and marine pests, such as worms, can be removed.

Corsairs: Privateers operating in the Mediterranean. Most were French or Turkish, though the Knights of Malta were also notorious for attacking Moslem ships (and vice versa), and thus became known as corsairs as well.

Crow’s Nest: A lookout “basket” high atop the main mast.

Davy Jones Locker: Davy Jones is believed to be an evil sea spirit. His locker is the sea bed, where drowned sailors rest.

Forecastle: The raised platform at the front of the ship designed to provide a high fighting platform during close quarters.

Hold: The large space in the center of the ship used for storing cargo.

Hornswaggled: To cheat.

Keel: The central bottom beam that forms the “spine” of a wooden ship.

Knot: A measurement of ship’s speed. One knot is equal to one nautical mile an hour.

Main (Yard): The crossbeam from which a ship’s main sail hangs.

Marooning: The act of deliberately leaving a person on a deserted island. Victims were usually given a pistol and a single shot so they could end their misery quickly.

Mast: One of the towering poles upon which the ship’s sails hang. The large one in the central is the mainmast, the rear-most is the mizzen.

Native: A person born in the Caribbean. Usually these are Indians, though some second generation Europeans are beginning to use the term for themselves.

Poop Deck: The rear raised area of a ship designed to provide an elevated fighting platform during boarding actions or close combat. Also called the sterncastle.

Port: The left-hand side of a ship as it faces forward.

Privateer: Officially, privateers were captains given official (royal) “letters of marque” to attack nations currently at war with the home government. Many privateers exploited their commission and attacked whatever targets they could find, exploiting loopholes or outright lying to capture foreign prize ships.

Prize Ship: A captured ship. A ship loaded with treasure could provide booty for entire crews to retire for life—but amazingly most squandered their ill-gotten gains on wine and women in only a few short weeks.

Rigging: The various ropes used to operate and secure the various sails and masts.

Run a Shot Across the Bow: Order to fire a warning shot, but not to strike the enemy.

Spanish Main: The “Spanish Main” refers to parts of Central and South America, from upper Mexico to lower Peru, conquered by the Conquistadors. Spanish ships of the Main were often rich prizes for pirates—loaded with gold stolen from the Aztecs and Mayans.

Spritsail: A small sail sometimes attached to the bowsprit.

Starboard: The right-hand side of a ship as it faces forward.

Stem: The thin forward area of the ship that parts the water before it.

Sterncastle: See Poop Deck.

Striking the Colors: Lowering of a flag.

Walk the Plank: Making a bound prisoner walk off the edge of the ship. Not used historically, but a staple of pirate fiction.

Whipstaff: A long stick used to steer before the addition of captain’s wheels.

Yard: A pole from which sails are hung.

CHARACTERS

Making heroes for the *Pirates RPG* is easy. Perhaps the hardest part is figuring out what kind of character to play. Once you do that, actually filling out your character sheet is a breeze. Below are a number of common character types inhabiting the Spanish Main. The list here is just a place to start. If you can think of a character type you want to play, feel free to add to this list.

Common Folk: Not every great hero has to start as a pirate or naval officer. Some are ordinary men and women, carpenters, seamstresses, or craftsmen, who are caught up in extraordinary events. These souls are perhaps the greatest of all heroes, for they do not look for adventure, fame, or wealth, but deal with the dangers of the Caribbean out of necessity or to protect their friends and family.

Duelist: Duels are common in this era, and a skilled duelist can make a fortune hiring his blade out to nobles of lesser skill.

Escaped Slave: The colonial powers still transport many slaves to the Caribbean to work on the plantations and in the mines. Life is very hard, and more than a few escape to seek a better life elsewhere.

Explorer: The New World is aptly named. Many explorers are known to be roaming the lands, mapping hitherto unknown regions and searching for new wonders.

Hunter: The lands and islands of the Spanish Main are ripe with game—some of which is more than capable of fighting back. Hunters explore the jungles and mountains in search of meat to sell in towns and villages. Some are solitary souls armed only with a

single musket and a brace of pistols. Others lead hired skimmers to butcher and rapidly transport the meat back to civilization.

Marine: Marines fight from the decks of ships. They are well-trained in fighting and shooting, and the best have long muskets and metal armor, which they don whenever trouble looms.

Merchant: The economics of the New World are still developing. Merchants travel the seas attempting to discover new markets. They help establish company trade routes, negotiate prices, and ensure goods head where they're needed.

Missionary: Most Europeans consider the natives of the Spanish Main to be godless savages. The missionary is dedicated to enlightening the natives, and teaching them the ways of civilization. It can be a very hazardous occupation.

Native: The Spanish Main was inhabited long before Columbus discovered the New World. Considered to be savages by the European powers, the natives know their islands like the backs of their hands, and have proven resourceful opponents when pushed too far.

Noble: The lure of new land and wealth has brought many nobles to the New World. Some are here to buy land and expand their assets, others simply to enjoy the life away from court.

Officer: National navies appoint officers to run their crews. They are either given their commission due to their wealth or birth, or more rarely earned their position "through the ranks."

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Pilot: Also known as helmsmen, pilots are skilled mariners, able to steer ships through reefs and storms alike. Pilots keep detailed secret journals, known as “rutters,” which contain notes about their routes and they jealously guard them from prying eyes.

Pirate: True pirates are thieves looking to get rich off the hard-earned fortunes of others. Most are able seamen of course, but aren’t necessarily good fighters. Pirates rarely attack crews who can fight back, preferring to prey on the weak for easy plunder instead.

Privateer: Those who plunder foreign shipping with official commissions from the European powers are called privateers. Theirs is a dangerous job, for foreign nations see them as pirates and hunt them relentlessly. Privateers walk a fine line, as governments frequently sign new treaties that make their

activities illegal. In times of peace, privateers often turn to piracy and are then dealt with mercilessly by their former employers.

Sailor: Not every sailor is a treacherous cutthroat. Some are honest seaman who simply prefer the roll of the ocean to work on land.

Sea Rover: These weapon masters are mercenaries who specialize in fighting aboard ships. They hire out their cutlass for a share of any treasure, and rarely care whether their employers are honest merchants or scurvy pirates.

Soldier: The European powers came to the Caribbean to gain new riches, and exploit the region’s many natural resources. The obstacles to that wealth—the natives—have to be removed by force and the new-found colonies protected from old enemies. The common soldier lives an uncomfortable, dangerous, and inglorious life.

Spy: The intrigues of the Spanish Main rival, and in many cases, exceed those of European courts. Suspicion and mistrust is rife, both between the great powers and within major households. With great power comes a degree of paranoia, and nobles never know who can be trusted, and who is plotting against them. The services of spies are in great demand.

Surgeon: Surgeons perform the bloody but necessary work of patching together the wounded. Medicine is still a developing science, and skilled and knowledgeable surgeons are few and far between. On board ship, these dedicated souls are usually given extra shares or higher salaries for their valuable work.

Treasure Hunter: Rumors of vast treasure hoards—such as that of the fabled city of El Dorado—are common. Those who gain some clue to their location—or better yet a map—search the Spanish Main relentlessly for these treasures.

Whaler: Many men hunt whales for their oil, flesh, and blubber. The work is dirty and dangerous, but it pays well.

Making Characters

Creating daring heroes or dastardly villains for the *Pirates RPG* couldn't be easier. The only thing you need is a copy of the character sheet found at the back of this book or on our website, www.peginc.com. Once you've got your sheet, follow these steps to make your hero.

Note that you'll occasionally see a reference to your hero's "Rank." The Ranks are Novice, Seasoned, Veteran, Heroic, and Legendary. This section assumes you're starting as a "Novice."

If the GM wants to start your group at a higher Rank, see page 74.

1) Race

All characters in *Pirates* are humans, but you can choose to be of any nationality you like. The English, Spanish, and French are the major players in the region, but there's nothing stopping you being Dutch, American (still British colonists at this time), a native Indian, or even an African former slave.

Your character begins the game with a free Edge. He has to meet certain requirements for the Edge, however (see page 29).

2) Traits

Characters are defined by attributes and skills, collectively called "Traits," and both work in exactly the same way. Attributes and skills are ranked by die types, from a d4 to a d12, with d6 being the average for adult humans.

We'll tell you exactly how to use them in just a bit, but for now, just remember that higher is better!

Attributes

Let's start making your hero by defining his attributes. Every character starts with a d4 in each attribute, and has 5 points with which to raise any or all of them. Raising a d4 to a d6, for example, costs 1 point. You're free to spend these points however you want with one exception: no attribute may be raised above a d12.

Here's some more information on your attributes and what they are used for during the game.

- **Agility** is your hero's nimbleness, quickness, and dexterity.

- **Smarts** is a measure of how well your character knows his world and culture, how well he thinks on his feet, and his mental agility. See the section about Common Knowledge on page 22 for another use of the Smarts attribute.

- **Spirit** is the spiritual side of your hero, reflecting his inner wisdom and willpower. Spirit is very important as it helps your character recover from being rattled when injured.

- **Strength** is raw physical power and general fitness. Strength is also used to figure out your warrior's damage in hand-to-hand combat.

- **Vigor** represents endurance, resistance to disease, poison, or toxins, and how much pain and physical damage a hero can shake off.

Skills

Skills are learned abilities such as shooting, fighting, scientific knowledge, professional know-how, and so on. You'll find a complete list on page 47. These are very broad skills that cover all related aspects. Shooting, for example, covers all types of handguns, ship weapons, and other ranged weapons; you don't need a different skill for each.

You have 15 points to distribute among your skills. Each die type costs 1 point as long as the skill is equal to or less than the attribute it's linked to (listed beside the skill in parentheses). If you exceed the attribute, the cost becomes 2 points per die type.

As with attributes, no skill may be increased above d12.

Example: Fighting is linked to Agility. A character with a d8 Agility can buy Fighting for one point per die type to d8. Buying a d10 costs 2 points, and a d12 costs another 2 points.

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Derived Statistics

Your character sheet contains a few other statistics you need to fill in.

Pace is how fast your character moves in a standard combat round. Humans can walk 6" in a round and can move an additional 1d6" if they run (see page 78). Write "6" on your character sheet beside the word Pace. Edges and Hindrances can modify this number. Note that this is 6" on the table-top—every inch there represents 2 yards in the "real world."

Parry is equal to 2 plus half your hero's Fighting (just 2 if a character does not have the Fighting skill), plus any bonuses for certain weapons. This is the number an opponent needs to roll in order to hit your hero in hand-to-hand combat. Like other derived stats, your Parry can be modified by Edges and Hindrances.

Charisma is a measure of your character's appearance, manner, and general likability. It's 0 unless you have Edges or Hindrances that modify it. Your Charisma is added to Persuasion and Streetwise rolls, and is used by the Game Master to figure out how the nonplayer characters of the world react to your hero.

Toughness is your character's damage threshold. Anything over this causes him to be rattled or worse. Toughness is 2 plus half your hero's Vigor, plus Armor (use the armor worn on his torso), plus any Hindrances or Edges that modify Toughness.

Example: John "The Patch" Gibbs' Charisma is +0. His Pace is 6 just like everyone else. He has a d8 Fighting, so that gives him a Parry of 6. His Vigor is a d6 and he doesn't wear any armor, so that's a Toughness score of 5.

Languages

Since the *Pirates RPG* is about fun, most characters speak several languages at the start of the game. This cuts out any tedious problems with communication between all the various nationalities, yet still allows the GM to use language as a barrier. A treasure map, for instance, may be written in Latin or Greek.

Your hero knows a number of languages equal to half his Smarts die. Your hero must use up one language buying his native tongue. Any permanent increase in your Smarts during play also gains you additional languages.

List all your known languages on your character sheet; you are able to speak, read and write each language you know (no roll is needed to communicate). Illiterate heroes (those who take the Illiterate Edge) can still speak multiple languages, but they can't read or write any of them.

Languages: Aztec, Carib Indian, Creole* (divided up into Dutch, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish), Dutch, English, French, Greek, Latin, Mayan, Portuguese, and Spanish.

* Rather than list dozens of individual native Indian dialects, Creole is used to describe any language spoken by natives living under the dominion of a European power. Thus, the natives of every French island speak Creole French, while all native inhabitants of a Spanish colony speak Creole Spanish.

3) *Edges & Hindrances*

Great heroes are far more than simply a collection of skills and attributes. It's their individual gifts, special talents, and tragic flaws that truly make them the unique and interesting characters they are.

Characters can take special abilities (called Edges) by balancing them out with character flaws (called Hindrances). You'll find a full list of Edges and Hindrances, and what they do in the game, starting on page 23.

During character generation, you can ignore the Rank requirement of Edges (except Legendary Edges—these are very special and are reserved for characters who reach such a high Rank). You still need to meet all the other requirements, however. Once the game begins, you can't buy an Edge unless you've reached the required Rank.

You can choose one Major Hindrance and up to two Minor Hindrances for your hero. A Major Hindrance is worth 2 points, and a Minor Hindrance is worth 1 point.

For 2 points you can:

- Raise an attribute by one die type.
- Choose an Edge.

For 1 point you can:

- Gain another skill point.
- Gain an additional 500 pieces of eight.

4) Fame

In the world of the *Pirates RPG* fame plays an important part. Whether he's an officer trying to rise through the ranks, or a scurvy pirate looking to make his mark in history, a character needs to *be* somebody.

Consequently, all characters have a Fame number, which reflects a hero's class as well as his or her standing within society. To start with, your hero has a Fame of zero, which can be modified by Edges and Hindrances, and by the hero's actions during the game.

A positive Fame score indicates the hero is becoming well-known or respected in society and his station in life is improving. A negative score shows he is regarded as something of a rogue or ruffian. If he stoops too low, he will be reviled instead of respected.

For more on how Fame works in the game, see page 91.

5) Gear

Next you need to purchase equipment. A list of gear can be found in the next chapter. Unless you've chosen Edges or Hindrances that change this, the standard starting amount is 500 pieces of eight. You'll notice that, for convenience, we use the dollar sign (\$) to represent pieces of eight.

Encumbrance: A character can carry five times his Strength die type in pounds without incurring any penalties. This is called his "Load Limit." A character with a Strength of d8, for example, can comfortably carry 40 pounds. (Ignore your hero's normal clothes when figuring weight.)

Carrying too much weight inflicts a -1 penalty for every additional multiple of your Load Limit. The penalty applies to all Agility and Strength rolls, as well as skills linked to either of those two attributes.

Example: A hero with a d8 Strength has a Load Limit of 40 pounds. He can carry 41-80 pounds at a -1 penalty to his Strength, Agility, and related skill rolls. He could carry 81-120 pounds at -2, or 121-160 pounds at -3.

Characters cannot regularly carry weight that inflicts a penalty of more than -3. They may be able to lift greater weights (up to a -4 penalty) for a few short steps at the discretion of the GM, however.

6) Background Details

Before starting the game, finish your hero by filling in any history or background you care to. Ask yourself why your character is where she is, how she got there, and what her goals are.

Of course, you can just start playing and fill in these details as they become important, but a fully fleshed-out background helps your GM to create exciting swashbuckling tales, and the more detail you put into the background, the more your GM will have to work with.



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Skills

Below is a list of skills available in the *Pirates RPG*. These skills are broad in scope—you don't need different Fighting skills to use a cutlass, knife, or your bare hands. Nor do you need different Boating skills for each type of common ship.

We've made the skills as simple and comprehensive as possible so that you can get on with the game instead of keeping track of a shopping list of skills.

Skill List

Boating (Agility)

Characters with this skill can handle most any boat, from rowboats to galleons. They generally know how to complete most common tasks associated with their vessels as well (such as nautical navigation, tying knots, or sail repairs).

Rules for using ships on the tabletop can be found on page 128.

Climbing (Strength)

This is the skill characters use to ascend walls, trees, or cliff-sides. No roll is usually needed to ascend ladders, ropes, or trees with lots of limbs unless the GM feels there's a good reason for it (when being chased, under fire, or wounded, for example).

Characters attempting to ascend a difficult surface must make a Climbing roll every 10" (20 yards). The skill roll is modified by the conditions below. During combat, heroes ascend at half their Strength per round if using ropes or with decent hand- or foot-holds.

See the Falling rules on page 99 should a character suffer a mishap.

Climbing Modifiers

Situation	Modifier
Climbing equipment	+2
Scarce or thin handholds ...	-2
Wet surface	-2

Driving (Agility)

Driving allows your hero to drive wagons and carriages.

Fighting (Agility)

Fighting covers all hand-to-hand (melee) attacks. The number you need to roll to hit an opponent is his Parry (2 plus half his Fighting).

Gambling (Smarts)

Gambling is the art of playing the odds to make a little extra cash. Here's a quick way to simulate about a half-hour of gambling without having to roll for every single toss of the dice or hand of cards.

First have everyone agree on the stakes. Five pieces of eight is recommended for a typical game. Now have everyone taking part in the game make a Gambling roll. The lowest total pays the highest total the difference times the stake. The next lowest pays the second highest the difference times the stake, and so on. If there's an odd man left in the middle, he breaks even.

Cheating: A character who cheats adds +2 to his roll. The GM may raise or lower this modifier depending on the particulars of the game or the method of cheating. If the player ever rolls a 1 on his skill die (regardless of his Wild Die), he's caught. The consequences of this depend on the company he's keeping, but are usually quite harsh.

Guts (Spirit)

Guts reflects a hero's bravery. Characters are often called on to make Guts checks when they witness grisly scenes or encounter particularly horrific events. The GM should see page 100 for the effects of failure.

Healing (Smarts)

Healing is the art of stopping wounds and treating existing injuries. See page 90 for specific information.

Intimidation (Spirit)

Intimidation involves frightening a foe with sheer force of will, veiled or overt threats, or sometimes just really big guns. This requires an opposed roll between the character's Intimidation and his opponent's Spirit. See Tests of Will on page 88 for the game effects of a successful Intimidation.

Investigation (Smarts)

A character skilled in Investigation knows how to make good use of libraries and other written sources of information. To get information from people rather than books, use the Streetwise skill.

Knowledge (Smarts)

Knowledge is a catch-all skill that must have a focus of some sort, such as Knowledge (The Spanish Main) or Knowledge (Science), for example.

The player can choose the focus of his character's knowledge, which should reflect his background and education. A ship's carpenter, for example, should have the Knowledge (Carpentry) skill. A character can take the Knowledge skill multiple times with different focuses to reflect different areas of a character's expertise or interests, so perhaps the carpenter would have Knowledge (Ship Design) too.

General focuses such as Science are acceptable, and such characters would know a little about the body or about plants, for example, but the GM should give a bonus to a character who has a more relevant focus, such as Knowledge (Anatomy) or Knowledge (Botany). For more on specific knowledge skills as compared to Common Knowledge, see page 22.

Some suggested Knowledge focuses are: Area Knowledge, Battle (used during Mass Battles, see page 102), Craft (one specific craft), History, Language, Law, Medicine (though actually caring for someone who is recovering from injury requires the Healing skill), Metallurgy, Science, or Tactics.

Lockpicking (Agility)

Lockpicking is the ability to bypass locks. This skill is also be used to disarm the catches and triggers on traps, unless a more relevant skill seems appropriate for a particular trap.

Lockpicking also covers picking pockets and palming small items.

Notice (Smarts)

Notice is a hero's general alertness and ability to search for items or clues. This covers hearing rolls, detecting ambushes, spotting hidden weapons, and even scrutinizing other characters to see if they're lying, frightened, and so on.

Persuasion (Spirit)

Persuasion is the ability to talk or trick others into doing what you want. Nonplayer characters begin with one of five attitudes: Hostile, Uncooperative, Neutral, Friendly, or Helpful. A successful Persuasion roll improves the NPC's attitude one step, or two with a raise. Failure, on the other hand, decreases the character's attitude by a step, or two if a 1 is rolled on the Persuasion die (regardless of the Wild Die).

Persuasion rolls are always modified by a character's Charisma.

The GM has more detailed information on nonplayer characters and their reactions on page 188.

Repair (Smarts)

Repair is the ability to fix damaged locks, weapons, and even ships. Characters suffer a -2 penalty to their rolls if they don't have access to basic tools.

Riding (Agility)

Riding allows you to mount, control, and ride any riding animal in the *Pirates RPG*. Players should note that mounted characters use the lowest of their Fighting or Riding skills when fighting from horseback.



Shooting (Agility)

Shooting covers all attempts to hit a target with a ranged weapon such as a pistol, musket, or even cannon. The basic Target Number to hit is 4 as usual, though there are a number of important modifiers such as range that frequently come into play (see page 80).

Stealth (Agility)

Stealth is the ability to both hide and move quietly. In many *Pirates* adventures, knowing exactly when your hero has been spotted and when he's not can be critical.

Here are detailed rules for how to sneak up on foes and infiltrate enemy lines.

Start the process by figuring out if the "guards" your heroes are sneaking up on are "active" or "inactive."

Inactive guards: aren't paying particularly close attention to their surroundings. The group need only score a standard success on their individual Stealth rolls to avoid being seen. Failing a Stealth roll in the presence of inactive guards makes them active.

Active guards: make opposed Notice rolls against the sneaking characters' Stealth skills. Failing a roll against active guards means the sneaking character is spotted.

The Last Step: Sneaking to within 5" of a foe (usually to get close enough for a melee attack) requires an opposed Stealth roll versus the target's Notice, whether the guard is active or inactive.

Movement Rate: Outside of combat, each Stealth roll covers moving up to five times the character's Pace. In combat, the Stealth roll covers only a single round of movement.

Stealth for Groups: Out of combat, make only one Stealth roll for each like group of characters (a group roll—see page 73). Use the lowest movement rate to determine how much ground is covered as well. The observers also make a group roll to Notice their foes.

Once a combat breaks down into rounds, Stealth and Notice rolls are made on an individual basis.

Apply the following modifiers to all Stealth rolls.

Stealth Modifiers

Situation	Modifier
Crawling	+2
Running	-2
Dim light.....	+1
Darkness.....	+2
Pitch darkness.....	+4
Light cover.....	+1
Medium cover.....	+2
Heavy cover	+4

Streetwise (Smarts)

Streetwise characters are able to gather information from the street, taverns, or other contacts through bribes, carousing, or threats. Finding written information in libraries, journals, and diaries is covered by the Investigation skill.

Streetwise is always modified by a hero's Charisma modifier.

Survival (Smarts)

Survival allows a character to find food, water, or shelter in hostile environments.

A character may only make one roll per day. A successful roll finds sustenance for one person, a raise on the roll finds food and water for five adults. Large beasts, such as horses, count as two adults. Children and others with small appetites count as half.

Those who benefit from the roll do not have to make Fatigue rolls that day for food, water, or shelter.

Swimming (Agility)

In a pirate setting, you can bet there'll be times where your hero ends up in the water. Swimming determines if a character floats or sinks, as well as how fast he can move. A character's Pace is half his Swimming skill in inches per turn in normal water (round up). Choppy water counts as difficult terrain and halves this rate. Heroes may not "run" while swimming for extra movement.

Should it become important, characters can hold their breath for 5 x their Vigor in seconds, or half that if they weren't prepared.

See page 97 for rules on drowning.

Taunt (Smarts)

Taunt is a test of will attack against a person's pride through ridicule, cruel jokes, or one-upmanship. This is an opposed roll against the target's Smarts. See Test of Wills on page 88 for the game effects.

Throwing (Agility)

Throwing governs all sorts of thrown weapons, from hand grenades to knives and makeshift spears. Throwing works just like the Shooting skill, and uses all the same modifiers (see page 80).

Tracking (Smarts)

Tracking allows a character to follow the tracks of one or more individuals over land, in any type of terrain. Each roll generally covers following the tracks for one mile, but the GM may adjust this dramatically for more specific or small scale searches. Apply the modifiers below to each roll.

Tracking Modifiers

Situation	Modifier
Tracking a group of 5+	+2
Recent snow	+4
Mud	+2
Dusty area.....	+1
Raining.....	-4
Tracking in poor light.....	-2
Tracks are over a day old.....	-2
Target hid tracks	-2

Common Knowledge

Instead of forcing characters to have dozens of “background” skills they rarely need, we use the concept of “Common Knowledge.” Your hero knows the basic history of his race, common etiquette, how to get around geographically, and who the major players in his locality are. This is called “Common Knowledge,” and is covered by your hero’s Smarts attribute.

If a character’s background suggests he should know something about a subject, modify his roll by +2 or more. If the subject is foreign to a character (again, using the character’s background, skills, Edges, and Hindrances to guide you here), modify the roll by –2 or more. Everyone else breaks even and gets no modifier.

For instance, a noble can use Common Knowledge when he is dealing with matters of etiquette. He doesn’t need a Knowledge (Etiquette) skill. If he was dealing with nobles of his own country, he might get a +2 bonus. When dealing with foreign nobility, he might get a –2 penalty to a Common Knowledge roll because the rules of etiquette are different. Anytime an adventure asks for a Common Knowledge roll, the GM should ask for Smarts rolls and subjectively, and on the fly, grant bonuses or subtract penalties to account for each character’s particular background.

Here’s an example. Let’s say an adventure reads: “Any character who makes a Common Knowledge roll detects that the pirate ship seems somehow unnatural.” A pirate knows more about ships than a soldier, so give the pirate a +2 to her roll. A merchant who has spent some time at sea has about average knowledge, so no bonus is granted. A soldier, who has spent most of his life on dry land, won’t be able to tell unless there are obvious signs, and so gets a –2.

If it becomes important to know how well a character performs a common task, the GM can ask for whatever roll is appropriate. Knowing how to do a dance, for example, is a Common Knowledge roll. If it becomes important to see how well a character performs the dance, the GM might ask for an Agility roll (with no bonuses or penalties).

In short, if a character could reasonably know something about a topic because of his background, let him use Common Knowledge. You can always give bonuses and penalties if you’re unsure exactly how much he might know.

Specific Knowledges

Sometimes a character might want more detailed or specific knowledge. This is to be encouraged and adds a whole new level of depth to the character’s information. In the example above, a pirate with Knowledge (Carpentry) not only knows the ship design hasn’t been seen in over a century, but might just know which nation built her.

Knowledge of a particular region is also handy. For example, locals might know the swamps of Tortuga are home to vicious crocodiles. Someone with a specific knowledge of that area can make a roll to see if he knows a safe route through the swamps, or the specific area the creatures’ call home. So specific knowledge skills provide a greater insight than Common Knowledge rolls to reflect a more thorough understanding of the topic.

One last time so there’s no mistakes, A Common Knowledge roll means “make a Smarts roll and add or subtract any subjective modifiers for the character’s background.”

Hindrances

Hindrances are character flaws and physical handicaps that occasionally make life a little tougher for your hero. Some Hindrances are subjective (such as Overconfident). They're there to help you roleplay your character, and might even net you more bennies (see page 73).

A character may take one Major Hindrance and up to two Minor Hindrances. You're free to take more if you think they fit your character description, but you don't get additional points for them.

Allergy (Minor or Major)

Your character suffers an aversion to a common condition or substance, such as cheese, pollen, dust, etc. Exposure to that substance (generally within 1" of it) inflicts a -2 penalty to all your hero's Trait rolls for the Minor version, and -4 for the Major version.

All Thumbs (Minor)

Some people just aren't good with intricate devices. Characters with this drawback suffer a -2 penalty to the Repair skill at all times. In addition, when a hero uses a mechanical device (including pistols), a roll of 1 on his skill die (regardless of his Wild Die) means the device is broken. The damage usually requires a Repair roll at -2 and 1d6 hours to fix.

Anemic (Minor)

Your hero is particularly susceptible to sickness, disease, environmental effects, and fatigue. He suffers a -2 to all Vigor rolls made to resist Fatigue checks, poison, disease, and the like. See page 96 for a description of Fatigue.

Arrogant (Major)

Your hero doesn't think he's the best—he knows he is. Whatever it is—sailing, fighting, running—there is no one who can touch his skills and he flaunts it every chance he gets.

Winning just isn't enough for your hero. He must completely dominate his opponent. Anytime there is even a shadow of a doubt as to who is the better, he must humiliate his opponent and prove he can snatch victory any time he wishes. He is the kind of man who disarms an opponent in a duel just so he can pick the sword up and hand it back with a smirk.

Arrogant heroes always look for the "master" in battle, attacking lesser minions only if they get in the way.

Bad Eyes (Minor)

Your hero's eyes just aren't what they used to be. With glasses, there's no penalty. Should he lose his glasses (generally a 50% chance when he's wounded), he suffers a -2 penalty to any Trait roll made to shoot or Notice something more than 5" (10 yards) distant.

Bad Luck (Major)

Your hero is a little less lucky than most. He gets one less benny per game session than normal. A character cannot have both Bad Luck and Good Luck.

Big Mouth (Minor)

Loose lips sink ships, the saying goes. Your hero's could drown an armada.

Your character can't keep a secret very well. He reveals plans and gives away things best kept among friends, usually at the worst possible times.

Blind (Major)

Your hero is completely without sight. He suffers a -6 to all physical tasks that require vision—which is most everything, and -2 to most social tasks as he can't "read" those he's interacting with as well as others.

On the plus side, Blind characters gain their choice of a free Edge to compensate for this particularly deadly Hindrance.

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Branded (Major)

The character was caught committing acts of piracy at some point in the past. He escaped the noose but received a brand on his face labeling him a pirate.

His Fame is modified by -5 . Any vessel he is on that is boarded by privateers or naval troops is thoroughly searched and the cargo manifest scrutinized. If the character is caught committing an act of piracy he is summarily executed.

Cautious (Minor)

Some folks gather too much intelligence. This character personifies over-cautiousness. He never makes rash decisions and likes to plot things out in detail long before any action is taken.

Clueless (Major)

Your hero isn't as aware of his world as most others. He suffers -2 to Common Knowledge rolls, and is frequently an embarrassment to his companions.

Cocky (Minor)

Some heroes, and villains, just don't know when to brag and when to act. Your character suffers from this affliction.

The hero's first round in any combat *must* be spent announcing how great he is, or pronouncing the doom of those who oppose him. If for some reason your hero must act instead, it costs him a benny.

A villain with this Hindrance never delivers a finishing blow to a foe. Instead, he leaves them to die, or orders his minions to finish them while he stalks off well out of earshot. Inevitably, these foes survive their wounds, escape the minions, and so on.

Code of Honor (Major)

Honor is very important to your character. He keeps his word, won't abuse or kill his prisoners, and generally tries to operate within his society's particular notion of proper gentlemanly or ladylike behavior.

Curious (Major)

It killed the cat, and it might kill your hero as well. Curious characters are easily dragged into any adventure. They have to check out everything and always want to know what's behind a potential mystery.

Death Wish (Minor)

Having a death wish doesn't mean your hero is suicidal—but he does want to die *after* completing some important goal. Maybe he wants revenge for the murder of his family, or maybe he's dying from disease and wants to go out in a blaze of glory.

He won't throw his life away for no reason, but when there's a chance to complete his goal, he'll do anything—and take any risk—to achieve it.

This Hindrance is usually Minor unless the goal is relatively easily fulfilled (very rare).

Delusional (Minor or Major)

Your hero believes something that is considered quite strange by everyone else. Minor Delusions are mostly harmless or the

hero generally keeps it to himself (he thinks animals can talk, the character is irresistible to the opposite sex, and so on).

With a Major Delusion, the hero frequently expresses his view on the situation and it can occasionally lead to danger (he believes that the English government is run by Spaniards, that he can breathe underwater, and such like).

Dependent (Major)

Your hero has some person to whom he is completely devoted, and will do anything to protect. This may be his wife or younger brother, one of his children, or even a pet or follower.

The hero's dependent is a Novice Rank character, and while plucky and brave, just isn't up to par with English Redcoats, or any other soldiers. For whatever reason, this doesn't stop the dependent getting involved. He or she constantly requires saving, reveals secrets, or otherwise causes your hero no end of trouble.

If the Dependent ever dies, your hero is heartbroken and grief-stricken for the rest of the campaign. He receives only one benny at the beginning of each game session (but Luck and other bonuses apply normally). Relief comes only after ultimate revenge. He cannot simply slay the minion who murdered his girl, he must kill the minion's boss as well and then only after making them pay. Only after this is the benny restriction lifted and the Hindrance "bought off."

Elderly (Major)

Your hero is getting on in years, but he's not quite ready to hang up his eye patch. His Pace is reduced by 1, and his Strength and Vigor drop a die type to a minimum of d4, and cannot be raised thereafter.

On the plus side, the wisdom of his years grants the hero 5 extra skill points that may be used for any skills linked to Smarts.

Enemy (Minor or Major)

Someone out there hates your hero and wants him dead. The value of the Hindrance depends on how powerful the enemy is and how often he might show up. A Minor Enemy might be a lone English captain out for vengeance. A Major Enemy might be Almirante Del Nero (or someone of equal power) with a special loathing for your hero.

If the enemy is one day defeated, the GM should gradually work in a replacement, or the hero may choose to buy off the Hindrance by sacrificing a leveling opportunity.

Garrulous (Minor)

Your hero is particularly loose with his plunder, sometimes spending the equivalent of a year's pay in a single week of drunken debauchery. The cost for carousing is doubled! See page 130 for a complete description.

Glass Jaw (Minor)

Your hero has a glass jaw and can't take a solid hit. He suffers a -2 penalty to Soak rolls.

Greedy (Minor)

Your miserly hero measures his worth in treasure. He argues bitterly over any loot acquired during play.

Habit (Minor)

Your character has an annoying and constant habit of some sort. Maybe insists on keeping a filthy parrot on his shoulder, says "Arr!" in every sentence, or keeps tobacco dry behind his eye patch. A Habit irritates those around but isn't dangerous. Your character suffers a -1 Charisma.

Hard of Hearing (Minor or Major)

Characters who have lost some or all of their hearing have this disadvantage. As a Minor Hindrance, it subtracts 2 from all Notice rolls made to hear, including waking up due to loud noises. A Major Hindrance

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means the character is deaf. She cannot hear and automatically fails all Notice rolls that depend on hearing.

Heroic (Major)

Your hero never says no to a person in need. She doesn't have to be happy about it, but she always comes to the rescue of those she feels can't help themselves. She's the first one to run into a burning building, usually agrees to hunt pirates for little or no pay, and is generally a pushover for a sob story.

The heroic character has +2 Fame.

Illiterate (Minor)

For one reason or another, your hero cannot read or write. Once he reaches Seasoned Rank, the hero may buy off the Hindrance by spending a leveling opportunity.

Jingoistic (Minor or Major)

The character dislikes people from other cultures and believes his own culture to be far superior—a jingoistic Englishman, for example, dislikes Frenchmen and Spaniards as much as he does the Welsh, Scottish, or Irish. He cannot help belittling other cultures at every opportunity. A character taking the

Minor version has -2 Charisma among other cultures. The penalty increases to -4 for the Major Hindrance.

In both cases, the character may not use Command Edges with "foreigners" unless he has worked with them for at least one week.

Lame (Major)

A past wound has nearly crippled your hero. His basic Pace is reduced by 2 and he rolls only a d4 for running rolls. A character's Pace may never be reduced below 1.

Landlubber (Minor)

Not everyone in the Spanish Main is a sailor. For some, the workings of a ship are incomprehensible. The character cannot buy Boating with his starting skill points. Although he can learn it through advancements, the character never quite grasps the basics and always receives a -2 penalty to all Boating rolls.

Loyal (Minor)

Your character may not be heroic, but he'd give his life for his friends. This character can never leave a man behind if there's any chance at all he could help.

Mean (Minor)

The hero is ill-tempered and disagreeable. No one really likes him, and he has trouble doing anything kind for anyone else. He must be paid for his troubles and doesn't even accept awards graciously. Your hero suffers -2 to his Charisma.

Obese (Minor)

Particularly large people often have great difficulty in dangerous physical situations. Those who carry their weight well have the Brawny Edge (see page 30). Those who don't handle it very well are Obese. A character cannot be both Brawny and Obese. An Obese hero adds 1 to his Toughness, but his Pace is decreased by 1 and his running die is a d4.

Obese characters may also have difficulty finding armor or clothing that fits, fitting into tight spaces, or even exploring the cramped holds of ships.

One Arm (Major)

Whether by birth or battle, your hero has lost an arm. Fortunately, his other arm is (now) his “good” one, so he doesn’t suffer any off-hand penalty. Tasks that require two hands, such as climbing or rowing, suffer a –4 modifier.

One Eye (Major)

Your hero has had an eye gouged out by some nefarious villain in his past. If he doesn’t wear a patch or buy a glass replacement (typically at least \$500), he suffers –1 to his Charisma for the grotesque wound.

He suffers –2 to any Trait rolls that require depth perception, such as Shooting or Throwing, jumping from one mast to another, and so on.

One Leg (Major)

With a peg or crutch, One Leg acts exactly like the *Lame Hindrance*, reducing Pace by 2 and running rolls are now a d4. Without a peg or other support, the character’s Pace is 2 and he can never run. He also suffers –2 to Traits that require mobility, such as Climbing and Fighting.

A character with one leg also suffers a –2 penalty to his Swimming skill (and Pace).

Outsider (Minor)

In a society made up of only a few types of people, your hero isn’t one of them. A Frenchman on an English warship and a native of Mexico living among Europeans are both outsiders. People are also likely to raise prices on the Outsider, ignore pleas for help, and generally treat him as if he’s of a lower class than the rest of their society.

In addition to the roleplaying effects above, your hero’s Charisma suffers a –2 modifier and his Fame is halved (round down) among all but his own people.

Overconfident (Major)

There’s nothing out there your hero can’t defeat. At least that’s what he thinks. He believes he can do most anything and never wants to retreat from a challenge. He’s not suicidal, but he certainly takes on more than common sense dictates.

Pacifist (Minor or Major)

Your hero absolutely despises violence. Minor pacifism means he only fights when given no other choice, and never allows the killing of prisoners or any other defenseless victims.

Major Pacifists won’t kill living creatures under *any* circumstances. They may defend themselves, but they won’t do anything to permanently harm sentient, living creatures. A Major Pacifist might fight with nonlethal methods, such as with his fists. These heroes only do so when they’re obviously directly threatened, however.

Phobia (Minor or Major)

Phobias are overwhelming and irrational fears that stay with a hero for the rest of his life. Whenever a character is in the presence of his phobia, he subtracts 2 from all his Trait tests as a *Minor Hindrance*, and 4 if the fear is a *Major Phobia*.

Phobias shouldn’t be too obvious—most everyone should be afraid of bloodthirsty pirates, for example, so it’s not a phobia—it’s common sense. Instead, the phobia usually centers on some random element the mind focused on during whatever encounter caused such a fright. Remember, phobias are *irrational* fears.

Poverty (Minor)

It’s said a fool and his money are soon parted. Your hero is that fool. He starts with half the usual money and just can’t seem to hang onto funds acquired during play. In general, the character should halve his total funds every week or so.

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Quirk (Minor)

Your hero has some minor foible that is usually humorous, but can occasionally cause him trouble. A noble may start reciting his ancestral line to anyone who asks who he is, a missionary may refuse to deal with people who carry weapons, or a duelist may try to carve his initials in his foe's clothing.

Seasick (Major)

Suffering from seasickness is a serious problem in the *Pirates RPG*. The character must make a Vigor check each time he boards a ship. On a success, the character manages to control his sickness. With a failure he suffers a -2 penalty to all trait rolls until he spends an hour on dry land.

Woe betide the character when caught in a storm! He must make a Vigor roll at the start of each round until the storm abates or his sickness kicks in. He still rolls if he's already suffering seasickness—a second failed Vigor roll increases the penalty to -4.

Small (Major)

Your character is either very skinny, very short, or both. Subtract 1 from your hero's Toughness for his reduced stature.

Stubborn (Minor)

Your hero always wants his way and never admits he's wrong. Even when it's painfully obvious he's made a mistake, he still tries to justify it with half-truths and convoluted rationalizations.

Trouble Magnet (Minor or Major)

Things never run smoothly for this hero, no matter how hard he tries. At least once per session, the GM should have trouble wander across the hero's path. This might be someone who recognizes him while he's trying to infiltrate an English fort, some enemy reinforcements joining a battle, or a terrible storm heading straight for his ship.

The intensity of the trouble depends on whether the character has the Minor or Major version. Be warned though, having multiple heroes with this Hindrance *does* result in multiple troublesome effects.

Ugly (Minor)

Your hero hit more than a few ugly sticks on his way down the tree of life. His Charisma is lowered by 2, and he is generally shunned by members of the opposite sex.

Vengeful (Minor or Major)

Your character always attempts to right a wrong he feels was done to him. If this is a Minor Hindrance, he usually seeks vengeance legally. If this is a Major Hindrance, he'll stop at nothing to see it done.

Vow (Minor or Major)

The character has a vow of some sort. Whether it's Major or Minor depends on the Vow itself. Some may have Vows to particular groups or causes, to serve the Crown, to rid the Spanish Main of the French, and so on. The danger in fulfilling the Vow and how often it might come into play determines the level of the Hindrance.

Whatever the Vow, it's only a Hindrance if it actually comes into play from time to time and causes the character some discomfort.

Wanted (Minor or Major)

Your hero has committed a crime in his past and will be arrested if discovered by the authorities.

The level of the Hindrance depends on how serious the crime was. A sailor wanted for not paying his gambling debts has a Minor Hindrance, as does someone wanted for more serious crimes well away from the main campaign area (where the risk of capture is greatly diminished). Being accused of murder on the other hand, or being branded a traitor is a Major Hindrance.

A hero with the Minor version has -5 Fame and a bounty on his head of 1d4 x \$100. Those with the Major version have -10 Fame and a bounty of 1d6 x \$1000.

Yellow (Major)

Not everyone can be a steely-eyed swash-buckler with icewater in his veins. Your hero is squeamish at the sight of blood and gore and terrified of coming to harm. He suffers a -2 to all of his Guts checks.

Young (Major)

Children are sometimes forced to go on dangerous adventures through unfortunate circumstances. Think carefully before choosing this Hindrance, for your character starts at a significant disadvantage.

Young heroes are generally just 8-10 years old. They have only 3 points to adjust their attributes and 10 skill points. On the plus side, youths like these have a fair amount of luck. They draw one extra benny at the beginning of each game session.

If the character should live long enough to mature, the Hindrance doesn't have to be bought off, he's already paid the price for the Hindrance by starting at a disadvantage. He stops getting the extra benny when he reaches 16 years of age however.

Edges

Below is a list of the Edges available in the *Pirates RPG*. The Edges are grouped by type to help during character creation. Unless an Edge description specifically says otherwise, it may only be selected once.

Each Edge is followed by a list of requirements, which include a minimum Rank and any Traits or other Edges the character must have to choose the Edge.

Rank: The Edge's Rank is the lowest Rank at which it becomes available to characters. A Novice character can't buy a Seasoned Edge, for instance. A character may always choose an Edge of a Rank lower than his.

During character generation, you can ignore the Rank requirement of Edges (except Legendary Edges—these are reserved for the most famous or infamous heroes of the Spanish Main). You still need to meet the other requirements, however.

Improved Edges: Some Edges also have improved effects if you purchase additional "levels" in them, such as Attractive and Very Attractive, or Rich and Filthy Rich.

To take an Improved Edge, you must have all previous versions. You must choose Rich before taking Filthy Rich, for example.

A alphabetical listing of all the Edges, together with a summary of their effects and requirements can be found on page 49.

Background Edges

These Edges are hereditary and background advantages that may usually be purchased only during character creation.

If a player has a good reason for picking up a Background Edge during play, he should talk it over with the GM. If the GM agrees it makes sense, the character may choose the Edge when leveling just like any other.

A hero might choose the Attractive Edge, for example, by cleaning herself up, getting the latest European fashions, or by generally paying more attention to her looks.

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Alertness

Requirements: Novice

Not much gets by your hero. He's very observant and perceptive, and adds +2 to his Notice rolls to hear, see, or otherwise sense the world around him.

Ambidextrous

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+

Your hero is as deft with his left hand as he is with his right. He may ignore the -2 penalty for using his off-hand.

Attractive

Requirements: Novice, Vigor d6+

Your hero or heroine is very handsome or beautiful and turns heads at every port. His or her Charisma is increased by +2.

Very Attractive

Requirements: Novice, Attractive

Your character is drop-dead gorgeous and should expect to attract a lot of attention from the opposite sex (though not all of it will be welcomed). His or her Charisma is increased by an additional +2.



Brawny

Requirements: Novice, Strength and Vigor d6+

Your hero is very large or perhaps just very fit. Either way, his bulk resists damage better than most. Add +1 to his Toughness.

In addition, your hero can carry more than most proportional to his Strength. He can carry 8 times his Strength in pounds without penalty instead of the usual 5 times his Strength.

Captain

Requirements: Novice, Boating d8+, Command

The character has a sloop he can call his own. It may have been purchased, inherited, or stolen. The character is responsible for the upkeep of the ship, hiring crew, and paying their wages.

If the ship's cannons fire on the captain's action (by either the gunners or the captain going on Hold), the gunners can ignore the Unstable Platform penalty (see page 134) as the captain chooses the moment to fire.

In case you're wondering why this is a Background Edge, it's because acquiring a ship in play shouldn't be a case of taking an Edge. You can earn one through heroic deeds, or maybe steal one the English navy "don't need," but you can't just get one free. Instead we give you the opportunity to start the game with a small ship and work from there.

Naval officers receive a ship to command as part of the Officer Edge, so don't need to take this Edge, unless they want to gain the above benefit for their gunners, in which case they have a private sloop as well as a Navy vessel.

Fast Healer

Requirements: Novice, Vigor d8+

Your hero heals quickly. He may add +2 to his Vigor rolls when checking for natural healing (see page 91).

Good (or Bad) Reputation

Requirements: Veteran

Whether the character is branded a hero or villain, he has earned a reputation across the Spanish Main. Choose whether this is a good or bad reputation. The character gains 5 Fame for a good reputation and loses 5 if he has a bad reputation. More information on the effects of Fame can be found on page 91.

Luck

Requirements: Novice

This character seems to be blessed by fate. He gains 1 extra benny at the beginning of each game session, allowing him to succeed at important tasks more often than most, and survive incredible dangers.

Great Luck

Requirements: Novice, Luck

This hero always seems to come out on top. The player gains 2 extra bennies instead of 1 for his luck at the start of each session.

Noble

Requirements: Novice

Those born of noble blood have many perks in life, but often have just as many responsibilities. As well as representing true nobles, this Edge also serves for rich plantation owners and senior administrators in the colonial enclaves.

Nobles have high Fame in their societies, are entitled to special treatment from their foes, so they have the Rich Edge, and get +5 Fame (including the bonus from the Rich Edge). This gives the hero several Edges for the price of one, but the responsibilities that come with being a noble more than offset the additional perks.

Nobles often have troops under their control, as well as land, a family home, and other assets. All of this must be determined by the GM, and balanced by the grave responsibilities the character faces.

As an example, a character might be the deputy governor of a small island with a company of musketeers, a small fort, and even a ship. However, he also has an entire island to help manage: criminals to judge, justice to mete out, and jealous rivals who covet his position and constantly plot against him, both here in the New World and back in Europe at court.

Quick

Requirements: Novice

Your character was born with lightning-fast reflexes and a cool head. Whenever you are dealt a 5 or lower in combat, you may discard and draw again until you get a card higher than 5. Level Headed characters draw their additional card and take the best *before* using their Quick Edge.

Rich

Requirements: Novice

Whether your hero was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, earned it through hard work, or found it in a chest full of booty, he's got more money than most others.

Rich heroes start with three times the normal starting funds. If a regular income is appropriate (such as a merchant or noble living off his lands), the hero receives an annual salary of \$5,000.

The hero receives +2 or -2 Fame, depending how he acquired his fortune.

Filthy Rich

Requirements: Novice, Rich or Noble

This character is very wealthy. He has five times the starting funds and, if appropriate, a yearly income of around \$25,000.

Wealthier characters should have a very complete background as well. This needs to be worked out with the GM, and comes with many more assets as well as onerous responsibilities, just like the Noble Edge.

The hero receives +3 or -3 Fame, depending how he earns his money.

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Combat Edges

These Edges are designed to help your hero do one simple thing—defeat his foes in mortal combat.

Bilge Rat

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d8+

Scuttling around in the bowels of the ship doesn't suit every sailor, but this character has learned to adjust to the cramped conditions below deck.

The character no longer suffers the -2 penalty for fighting below decks (see page 83) when using a weapon longer than 6" so long as it has no Reach value. If the weapon has a Reach value the -2 penalty applies as normal.

Improved Bilge Rat

Requirements: Seasoned, Bilge Rat

The character can use any weapon below decks without incurring the -2 penalty for fighting in cramped conditions.

Block

Requirements: Seasoned, Fighting d8+

Heroes who engage in frequent hand-to-hand combat are far more skilled in personal defense than most others. They've learned not only how to attack, but how to block their opponent's blows as well. A hero with this Edge adds +1 to his Parry.

Improved Block

Requirements: Veteran, Block

As above, but the character adds +2 to his Parry instead of +1.

Cannoneer

Requirements: Seasoned, Shooting d10+

Being able to take out enemy ships with a well aimed shot takes training and a good eye. The hero has both.

In ship combat, the character may modify his roll on the Critical Hit Table by 1 point either way, as he chooses. He does this after rolling the dice for the Critical Hit.

Close Fighting

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d8+

This Edge is for skilled knife-fighters, who pride themselves on defeating their foes up close and personal.

Close fighters move inside most weapons' reach, adding a bonus to the fighter's Parry equal to an enemy weapon's Reach +1 for that particular foe. No bonus is granted if the foe is unarmed or using a knife or other small weapon.

Example: A mean pirate with Close Fighting battles a Spaniard with a cutlass (Reach 0). The pirate gains +1 Parry.

Improved Close Fighting

Requirements: Novice, Close Fighting

Close fighters train to go for vital areas and weak spots for quick and lethal kills. The attacker adds a bonus to his Fighting roll equal to his enemy's Reach +1.

Combat Reflexes

Requirements: Seasoned

A character with this Edge recovers quickly from shock and trauma. He adds +2 to his Spirit roll when attempting to recover from being Shaken.

Dirty Fighter

Requirements: Seasoned

There is no honor among thieves, and the Caribbean has more than its fair share of scurvy dogs. Those with this Edge will do anything to win a fight.

This scoundrel is particularly deceitful in combat and good at tricks. He adds +2 to all Trick maneuver rolls.

Really Dirty Fighter

Requirements: Seasoned, Dirty Fighter

The knave is extremely skilled in tactical deceit. By describing the trick and spending a benny, he may automatically get the drop on any single opponent.

Dodge

Requirements: Seasoned, Agility d8+

Heroes in the *Pirates RPG* are often crafty types who know how to get out of harm's way. This Edge allows a character to use movement and concealment to make them harder to hit. Unless this hero is the victim of a surprise attack, attackers must subtract 1 from their Shooting or Throwing rolls.

If this hero attempts to evade area effect attacks, he may add +1 to his Agility roll as well (when circumstances allow).

Improved Dodge

Requirements: Veteran, Dodge

As above but attackers subtract 2 from their attack rolls, and the character adds +2 to evade area effect weapons when allowed.

Entangle

Requirements: Seasoned, Fighting d8+

An entangle is a mix of a disarm and a grapple that leaves the foe disadvantaged but allows the attacker to continue fighting.

The character makes a Disarm attack, but if he succeeds he has entangled his foe's weapon arm rather than disarming him. He may have wrapped the arm in a cloak, or simply locked his opponent's elbow against his body using his arm.

The foe counts as an Unarmed Defender (unless he has two weapons) and cannot withdraw from combat. The attacking hero may continue to use a one-handed weapon against his foe.

On his action, the foe may try to escape the entanglement as per breaking a grapple (see page 83).



Firepot Specialist

Requirements: Novice, Shooting d8+

This hero is skilled at targeting a firepot where it has the best chance of starting a fire.

If this hero hits with a firepot, the target catches fire on a 4-6 instead of a 5-6. If the attack causes one or more wounds, the chance increases to 3-6.

First Strike

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+

Some heroes are truly fearsome in combat. Their quick reactions and combinations of lightning fast blows make it hazardous for an enemy to approach.

Once per turn the character gets one free Fighting attack against a single enemy who moves adjacent to him. This automatically interrupts the opponent's action, and does not cost the hero his action if he is on Hold or has not yet acted this round.

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Improved First Strike

Requirements: Heroic, First Strike

As above but the hero may make one free attack against each and every foe who moves adjacent to him.

Fleche

Requirements: Veteran, Agility d8+, Fighting d8+

From the French for “arrow”, a fleche is a running attack, which begins with a leap, followed by the attack, and ends with the attacker running past his opponent, all in a single movement.

If the character moves at least 2” before making an attack against an adjacent foe, he may attack and “withdraw from combat” without his foe, or other adjacent opponents, receiving a free attack.

All movement after the attack must be in the same direction as the movement before the attack (the character must move in a straight line).

Note that the attacker is still subject to First Strike attacks from foes he moves adjacent to.

Fleet-Footed

Requirements: Novice, Agility d6+

The hero is incredibly fast. His Pace is increased by +2 and he rolls a d10 instead of a d6 when running.

Florentine

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d8+

A character trained to fight “Florentine” is a master at wielding two weapons at once. He adds +1 to his Fighting rolls against an opponent with a single weapon and no shield. In addition, opponents must subtract 1 from any “gang up” bonuses they would normally get against the hero as his flashing blades parry their blows (see page 83).

Wall of Steel

Requirements: Veteran, Florentine, Notice d8+

Sometimes a character finds himself outnumbered in a fight. Fortunately, this hero has the perception and agility to handle multiple foes. Opponents gain no “gang up” bonus against the hero.

Frenzy

Requirements: Seasoned; Fighting d10+

Frenzied fighters make fast and furious melee attacks, sacrificing finesse for raw speed. This allows them to make an extra Fighting attack per round at a -2 penalty to all Fighting rolls. Both attacks must be taken at the same time though they may target any two foes adjacent to the hero (Wild Cards roll two Fighting dice and one Wild Die). The -2 penalty is subtracted from both attacks.

A character armed with two weapons still only makes one extra attack from Frenzy.

Improved Frenzy

Requirements: Veteran, Frenzy

As above but the character may ignore the -2 Frenzy penalty.

Grit

Requirements: Heroic, Wild Card, Iron Jaw

When lesser men fall by the wayside, this hero just keeps soldiering on, and on.

When the character takes enough wounds to make him Incapacitated, he may make a free Soak roll. Should the roll fail, the character may still spend a benny to make a soak roll as normal. If a character suffers multiple wounds in the same round that take him to Incapacitated, he may make multiple free Soak rolls.

Example: Jack Hawkins already has 2 wounds, when two Redcoats shoot him, inflicting 2 and 3 wounds respectively. Jack may make two free Soak rolls, one against each attack.

Improvisational Fighter

Requirements: Seasoned, Smarts d6+

Heroes often find themselves fighting with pieces of equipment or furnishings not designed for combat. A character with this Edge has a knack for using such improvised weapons, and does not suffer the usual -1 attack penalty when wielding them. For more on improvised weapons, see page 55.

Iron Jaw

Requirements: Novice, Vigor d8+

The hero can take a hit like he was made of oak. He gets +2 to Soak rolls.

Level Headed

Requirements: Seasoned, Smarts d8+

Fighters who can keep their cool when everyone else is running for cover are deadly customers in combat. A hero with this Edge draws an additional action card in combat and acts on the best of the draw.

Improved Level Headed

Requirements: Seasoned, Level Headed

As above but the hero draws 2 additional cards.

Lunge

Requirements: Novice, Fighting d8+

A lunge allows a swordsman to extend the reach of his weapon. The character gains +1 Reach to his weapon. He may not use this Edge with First Strike, Frenzy, or Sweep.

Marksman

Requirements: Seasoned

The hero excels at taking controlled, measured shots. If he does not move in a turn, he may fire as if he took the aim maneuver (see page 80).

Marksman may never be used with a rate of fire greater than 1.

Nerves of Steel

Requirements: Wild Card, Novice, Vigor d8+

Your hero has learned to fight on through the most intense pain. He may ignore 1 point of wound penalties.

Improved Nerves of Steel

Requirements: Novice, Nerves of Steel

As above, but the hero may ignore 2 points of wound penalties.

Quick Draw

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+

Getting to your weapon first can mean the difference between life and death. This Edge allows a hero to draw a weapon and ignore the usual -2 to his attack that round. If the hero must make an Agility roll to draw a weapon (see page 79), he adds +2 to the roll.

Ramming Speed!

Requirements: Seasoned, Boating d8+

When all else fails, a ship can be used as a weapon. The character receives a +2 bonus to perform a Ram maneuver if captaining the vessel. In addition, the ship takes only half damage from ramming attacks it delivers or one-quarter if the ship is fitted with a ram (see page 120).

Riposte

Requirements: Seasoned, First Strike, Fighting d8+

A riposte is a combination of a parry followed by a quick attack. Once per round, the character receives a free Fighting attack against one foe within reach of his weapon who failed a Fighting attack against him. This attack is made at -2.

A riposte must be a straight attack (so no Disarm, Wild Attack, or other such maneuvers) and may not be combined with Frenzy or Sweep. It may be used with the Defend maneuver (but not Full Defense).

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Improved Riposte

Requirements: Veteran, Riposte

As above, except the character may make a free attack with no penalty. All Edge and maneuver restrictions still apply, however.

Spot Weakness

Requirements: Seasoned, Fencing Academy, Smarts d8+, Fighting d8+, Notice d6+

No fencer, whether one taught at the finest European academy or one who developed his art on the mean streets of Tortuga, is flawless. Everyone has a weakness, and this character has the training necessary to spot, and exploit his opponent's shortcomings.

If an enemy making a Fighting attack against your character rolls a 1 on his Fighting die (regardless of the result of any Wild Die), your hero receives +1 to Fighting rolls against that foe for the rest of the combat. If an opponent rolls a 1 on his Fighting die but hits using his Wild Die, your character still spots the flaw.

You only get the bonus once, no matter how many 1s are rolled.

Steady Hands

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+

Your hero ignores the "unstable platform" penalty for using "fine" physical skills from the backs of animals, on rolling decks, or while riding in moving vehicles (see page 86 for details).

Sweep

Requirements: Novice, Strength d8+, Fighting d8+

Sweep allows a character to make a single Fighting attack at a -2 penalty and apply it against all adjacent targets. Resolve each damage roll separately. Allies are affected by such attacks as well, so heroes must be careful when they use this powerful Edge.

A character may not use Sweep in the same action she uses Frenzy.

Improved Sweep

Requirements: Veteran, Sweep

As above but the hero may ignore the -2 penalty.

Trademark Weapon

Requirements: Novice, Fighting or Shooting of d10+

The hero knows one unique weapon (Cortes' jeweled sword, for instance, "Ol' Bess" the musket, or Captain Kidd's flintlock) like the back of his hand. When using that specific weapon, the character adds +1 to his Fighting, Shooting, or Throwing skill rolls.

A hero can take this Edge multiple times, applying it to a different weapon each time. If a Trademark Weapon is lost, the hero can replace it, but the benefit of the Edge doesn't kick in for two game weeks.

Improved Trademark Weapon

Requirements: Veteran, Trademark Weapon

As above but the bonus when using the weapon increases to +2.



Two-Fisted

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+

This hero isn't ambidextrous—he's simply learned to fight with two weapons at once.

When attacking with a weapon in each hand, the character still rolls each attack separately and still suffers a penalty to the weapon in his off-hand, but ignores the multi-action penalty.

Leadership Edges

The *Pirates RPG* allows you to easily handle large numbers of troops, and at times you may be called upon to lead them.

Leadership Edges allow characters to make better use of these allies in battle, making them more effective, reliable, or durable. These Edges apply only to subordinate Extras within 5" (those within the leader's command radius are "in command").

Leadership Edges are not cumulative from multiple commanders. Troops cannot benefit from two leaders with the Command Edge, for example. They could benefit from two different Edges, such as Command and Fervor, if possessed by two different leaders.

Wild Card characters are never affected by Leadership Edges—they're far too independent-minded to be driven by others.

Board 'Em!

Requirements: Novice, Command, Throwing d8+

The character is a master at judging when to launch grapples against enemy vessels. When he leads the boarding party group Throwing rolls to grapple an enemy vessel receive a +4 bonus.

Command

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d6+

Command is the ability to give clear instructions to surrounding allies and enforce your hero's will upon them. This makes your character's allies more willing to fight on despite their wounds, and so adds +1 to their Spirit rolls to recover from being Shaken.

Command Presence

Requirements: Novice, Command

A booming voice, effective commands, natural charisma, or simple training result in a much more effective combat element. At the center of that element is the officer in command.

A hero with this Edge has a command radius of 10" instead of the usual 5".

Fervor

Requirements: Veteran, Spirit d8+, Command

A simple phrase uttered by a great leader can sometimes have momentous results. A leader with this ability can inspire his men to bloody fervor by yelling a motto, slogan, or other inspirational words.

Those in command add +1 to their damage rolls after a successful Fighting attack.

Gifted Leader

Requirements: Veteran, Command

Command comes easy to this hero and his followers respect him. He looks after his men and teaches them to look after each other. The result is a well-disciplined and effective force that works well as a unit.

Extras making group rolls while under this leader's command roll d8 as the Wild Die instead of d6.

Hold the Line!

Requirements: Seasoned, Smarts d8+, Command

Using this Edge, the hero inspires the men under his command to stand their ground no matter the odds. The troops add +1 to their Toughness.

Inspire

Requirements: Seasoned, Command

Leaders with exceptional reputations and experience in battle inspire the soldiers around them.

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They add +2 to the Spirit rolls when recovering from being Shaken (this already includes the original +1 bonus for the Command Edge).

This greatly improves the chances of men recovering from light wounds or poor morale that might normally take them out of the action.

Master & Commander

Requirements: Seasoned, Smarts d8, Boating d10, Intimidation d8, Command

The leader must be sole Captain of the vessel when this Edge is used. Crews who serve under these skilled leaders add +2 to their Boating rolls.

Natural Leader

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d8+, Command

This Edge signifies a special link between a leader and his men. With it, he may share his bennies with any troops under his command. The character also gains one extra benny per session if his troops will be on hand (GM's call).



Professional Edges

Professional Edges are special abilities that reflect many years of practicing a particular trade.

These Edges help you create a character who is far more competent in his chosen field than most others—far more than just having a d12 in that occupation's skills.

These Edges represent years of training, so their Requirements are quite high. Players may buy Professional Edges after character creation, but should usually lead up to it in-game by practicing the affected trade during downtime or in between adventures. The time spent acquiring one of these abilities is up to the Game Master, but it makes the game much more believable if a little time is spent training before choosing the Edge.

Note that characters don't have to be serving personnel just because they take a military edge. So a Spanish navigator might once have been an officer, but now work as a pirate or privateer.

Stacking: Bonuses to the same Trait from different Professional Edges do not stack. If you make a hero with both the Boarder and the Thief Edges, for example, he gains +2 to his Climbing skill—not +4.

Acrobat

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Strength d6+

Those who have formal training in the acrobatic arts or are naturally agile may take this Edge. It adds +2 to all Agility rolls made to perform acrobatic maneuvers (including Trick maneuvers), and also adds +1 to a character's Parry as long as he has no encumbrance penalty.

Example: Genny Gallows wants to leap over a French officer and attempt to interrupt the enemy soldier who's about to shoot her first mate in the back. If Genny had the Acrobat Edge, she'd add +2 to her Agility roll to leap over the officer, but not to the opposed Agility test to try to interrupt the soldier's action.

Boarder

Requirements: Novice, Boating d6+, Climbing d8+, Throwing d8+

Many captains instill courage in their men by offering additional rewards to the first man to board an enemy vessel. Few survive to claim their prize. Through skill and luck this hero has survived dozens of boarding actions and lives for the adrenaline rush.

All Climbing and Throwing rolls involving ropes are made at +2. If he is the first to board an enemy vessel he receives a benny.

Explorer

Requirements: Novice, Vigor d6+, Survival d8+

There are two extremes of climate, and this character has survived them both. He gains a +2 bonus to Survival rolls. In addition, the overland movement rate (see page 102) of this character and a number of accompanying people equal to his Survival die type is treated as being one level better (so Hard becomes Average, for example) to a minimum of Easy.

Fencing Academy

Requirements: Special

Fencing is not a sport during this era, but a combat art. This character has graduated from one of the numerous fencing schools run by the colonial powers.

See page 107 for details of academies, their requirements and benefits.

Guardian

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d6+, Notice d6+

This character may be a bodyguard or just devoted to an individual. In either case he can jump in front of attacks intended for another. A guardian must take an action each time he selects a new person to guard.

As long as the guardian stays within 1" of the chosen person, any attack aimed at that person is automatically rolled against the guardian instead. The character receives a benny each time he suffers a wound from

such an attack during an encounter. If the guardian soaks the wound, he doesn't get the benny.

Gunsmith

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+, Repair d8+

Gunsmiths not only make and repair firearms and cannons—they also manufacture powder bombs, grenades, and pistol shot. The character receives a +2 bonus when creating weapons (page 53).

Helmsman

Requirements: Novice, Boating d8+

Experienced helmsmen know how to squeeze every last knot of speed out of a ship and are worth their weight in plunder.

A hero with this the Edge adds +2 to the Top Speed and +1 to the Travel Speed of a ship he's steering.



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Jack-of-All-Trades

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d10+

Whether from experience, an expensive education, or intuitive perception, your hero has a knack for picking up skills.

Any time he makes an unskilled roll for a Smarts-based skill, he may do so at d4 instead of the usual d4-2.

Lookout

Requirements: Novice, Notice d8+

Lookouts have learned to watch the signs and trust their instincts when navigating the Caribbean.

During a chase or when sailing through a nautical hazard, such as a reef, you gain a +2 bonus to Boating rolls due to your eagle eyes. Lookouts also gain +2 to Notice rolls made to avoid surprise in tactical situations.

Musketeer

Requirements: Novice, Shooting d8+, may not have the All Thumbs Hindrance

Some heroes have a natural affinity with firearms, or have trained for years to load quickly even while under fire.

Characters with this Edge can reload a firearm in a single action. They may walk while reloading, but may not run. The Edge does not apply to cannon, only to personal arms.

Oarsman

Requirements: Novice, Boating d6+

Experienced oarsmen know how to use tempo and training to get the best out of a group of rowers.

A hero with this Edge can coax a team of oarsmen to add +1 to a ship's Top Speed and Travel speed when powered by oars. This is the maximum bonus regardless of how many characters with the Edge are aboard. This Edge does stack with the bonus from the Helmsman Edge, however.

Officer

Requirements: Novice or higher, Smarts d6+, must be male

Whether the character is in the navy or army, he's a leader of men. The character begins as an Midshipman or Subaltern (depending whether he's in the navy or army).

This Edge can be taken more than once, but after character generation the player must have GM approval. Each time the Edge is taken, the character is promoted one rank and gains the appropriate benefit. Characters who rise in ranks retain all previous benefits from this Edge as well unless a higher rank supersedes them.

Officers receive command of soldiers or a ship, depending on their service. The troop numbers represent soldiers the character can use in adventures. If called to battle, the GM should multiply these numbers by 10 or more, as appropriate. Of course, whether or not these resources are available for private adventures is up to the GM.

As well as the game benefits, officers get invited to social functions, which gives them the chance to mingle with young heiresses and get noticed by superiors. Of course officers are at the mercy of their superiors, and are obliged to follow orders.



Ranks are listed as navy/army. Character Ranks in parenthesis are the minimum Rank the character must have to hold the military position.

Midshipman/Subaltern (Novice): The officer receives +2 Fame and +2 on rolls to Intimidate men of lower rank but has no command duties.

Lieutenant/Lieutenant (Novice): The officer gains +2 to Knowledge (Battle) rolls made at sea or on land, as appropriate to his service. He gains +5 Fame. The character commands either a sloop or 10 men.

Commander/Captain (Seasoned): The officer rolls a d8 Wild Die for Knowledge (Battle) rolls at sea or on land, as appropriate to his service. He also gains +5 Fame. The character commands either a sloop or 25 men.

Captain/Colonel (Veteran): The officer rolls a d10 Wild Die for Knowledge (Battle) rolls at sea or on land, as appropriate to his service. He also gains +10 Fame. The hero commands either a galleon or 50 men.

Admiral/General (Heroic): The character receives the Noble Edge and +10 additional Fame. If he already has the Edge, he gains +15 Fame instead. The character commands either a man-o'-war or 100 men.

Pilot

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+

Pilots are those special mariners who feel more comfortable behind the wheel of a ship than on their own two feet.

Pilots add +2 to Boating rolls when steering a ship. In addition, they may also spend bennies to make soak rolls for any ship they control. This is a Boating roll at -2 (which negates their usual +2). Each success and raise negates a wound and any critical hit that would have resulted from it.

Rope Monkey

Requirements: Seasoned, Agility d8+, Climbing d10+

Rope Monkeys are those sailors who may as well have been born in the rigging. They always seem to know just the right rope to



cut or pull to swing to some other part of the ship and can ride the lines down to avoid an otherwise nasty fall.

Rope Monkey has two functions. The first is to allow a character on the exterior of the ship to move to any other exposed part of the ship by swinging from the rigging. This counts as the character's movement and requires a Climbing roll. If successful, he moves to any other external area of the ship. He may not move any further this action, even by "running."

With a raise, he can move and gains momentary surprise on any foes, adding +2 to any Fighting attacks and damage rolls for the round. This can also be combined with a Trick maneuver.

Rope Monkeys may also use this ability in forests. In that case, the Climbing roll is made at -2 and the character may reposition himself within 2d6".

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A foe who wants to take his free attack at a Rope Monkey swinging out of melee must subtract 2 from his roll. The same applies to characters with First Strike—they suffer a -2 penalty to their Fighting roll.

Finally, Rope Monkeys may also make a Climbing roll any time they fall from a ship's rigging (if they are still conscious). Success means they take half the usual falling damage by grabbing onto ropes as they tumble. With a raise, the sailor manages to slide down a rope and suffers no damage.

Scholar

Requirements: Novice, d8+ in affected skills

Learned professors, devoted students, and amateur enthusiasts spend months of their lives studying particular fields. They become experts in these fields, and rarely fail to answer questions in their particular area of expertise.

Pick any two Knowledge skills in which you have a d8 or better. Add +2 to your total whenever these skills are used. Yes, those who study military history have a natural edge when commanding troops in mass battles—a +2 to a Knowledge (Battle) roll can mean the difference between a famous victory and a crushing defeat.

Shipwright

Requirements: Novice, Boating d6+, Repair d8+

The character may use his knowledge of carpentry to repair damage to a ship without taking it to a dry dock. Repairing each wound requires a successful Repair roll, takes 1d4 days. It also requires timber to the value of five times the ship's base Toughness, and a small crew of willing hands to carry out the labor. With a failure the time is wasted, though the materials may be reused. Critical wounds require a successful Repair (-2) roll and take 1d6 days to fix. Critical repairs cannot be made at sea—the ship must be beached as with careening (see page 129).

Thief

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Climb d6+, Lockpick d6+, Stealth d8+

Thieves specialize in deceit, treachery, and acrobatics. They are nimble practitioners of the less-than-honest arts, but they can be invaluable where traps must be detected, walls must be climbed, and locks must be picked.

Thieves add +2 to Climbing, Lockpicking, and Stealth rolls. The bonus to Stealth does not apply when the hero is in a wilderness environment—only in urban areas.

Treasure Hound

Requirements: Novice, Luck

Some scalwags are just luckier than others when it comes to finding treasure. If there's a single Treasure Hound in a party, the GM increases the value of Booty generated from the Booty Table by 25%. Even better, the chance of finding a relic is increased by 10% as well!

Multiple Treasure Hounds have no additional effect.

Social Edges

Getting people to do what you want is a critical skill in the *Pirates RPG*. These Edges help your hero do just that.

Charismatic

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d8+

Your hero has an easy charm and can work easily with others, even those who might be opposed to him or his efforts. This adds +2 to his Charisma.

Common Bond

Requirements: Wild Card, Novice, Spirit d8+

This Edge signifies a special link between close companions—such as a typical group of characters. It doesn't matter whether or not the characters get along perfectly or not, they've just formed a close and common bond during their epic adventures.

A character with this Edge may freely give his bennies to any other Wild Card he can communicate with. This represents the character giving his verbal or spiritual support to the ally. The player should say what his character is doing to give the support. The gesture could be as complex as a rousing speech, or as simple as a knowing nod.

Connections

Requirements: Novice

Whether it's a government, a group of cut-throat pirates, the Catholic Church, or some other organization, your heroine knows someone on the inside—someone who is willing to lend a hand on occasion (usually once per game session).

To use a character's Connection requires that she first get in touch with one of her contacts. This requires a Streetwise roll. Failure means the particular contact wasn't available, had left on a sea voyage, or they were otherwise tied up.

Once in contact, the hero must make a Persuasion roll. The GM should feel free to modify both the Persuasion roll and any results based on the circumstances.

A failure indicates the hero's contacts couldn't come through this time, or perhaps weren't persuaded their help was necessary.

On a success, the contact might share information, but won't do anything too risky to help.

On a raise, the contact is willing to leak sensitive information, but stops short of outright betrayal.

Two or more raises means the heroine has pushed the right buttons and can count on serious help. The Connection will risk dire consequences for the heroine. If she needs financial assistance, the contact may provide a little more than he's comfortable with. If the heroine asks for muscle, the contact delivers either one expert (a gunsmith, helmsman, scholar, etc.) or five average fighter-types for the contact's organization (a pirate boss sends five thugs, the army sends five soldiers).

A character may take this Edge more than once. Each time it is taken, it must be applied to a different group.

Dual Identity

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d6+

The hero has a secret identity in addition to his public persona. A character might, for instance, be Don Raphael de Castille at court, but may secretly be the hooded pirate El Diablo.

The hero has two Fame scores, one for each identity. Both begin at zero. If you take an Edge or Hindrance that affects Fame, apply it to only one of his identities. Each identity may take the same Hindrance or Edge, but you have to take these separately.

Fame won or lost in one identity does not affect the other score. So, if El Diablo lost 5 Fame for an act of piracy, Don Raphael's Fame would be unaltered.

Should the secret identity be discovered and made public, the hero's Fame drops to whichever identity has the lowest rating. He also loses the secret identity.

A hero may only have one secret identity at a time, though he may develop another secret identity (taking this Edge again) after one has been discovered.

Frugal

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+

Your sailor is uncommonly tight with his purse. The total price for carousing is halved. He also adds +2 to his Smarts rolls to avoid getting drunk.

A hero cannot be Garrulous *and* Frugal.

Seducer

Requirements: Novice, Attractive

The hero or heroine (or more usually, villain) knows how to stymie or distract the opposite sex by using his or her charms.

The character may use Persuasion as a Test of Will, against members of the opposite sex, pitting their looks and charm against a foe's Smarts. The character adds her Charisma bonus to the roll as normal.

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Strong Willed

Requirements: Novice, Intimidate d6+, Taunt d6+

Characters with strong willpower use their voice, steely stares, or quick wits to unnerve their opponents.

This Edge adds +2 to a character's Taunt and Intimidation rolls, as well as his Spirit and Smarts rolls when resisting Tests of Will attacks.

Weird Edges

Weird Edges are somewhat unusual or "supernatural," like having a sixth sense.

Danger Sense

Requirements: Novice

Your hero can sense when something bad is about to happen. Anytime he's about to be the victim of an unexpected attack, ambush, or other nasty surprise, he gets a Notice roll at -2 just before the attack or event occurs.

If successful, the character senses that something is about to happen and may take appropriate action against it. This means the hero is on Hold for the first round of a combat.

Healer

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d8+

A character with this Edge adds +2 to all Healing rolls, whether natural or in the aftermath of battle.

Up to five companions traveling with a Healer add the bonus to their natural healing rolls as well.

Hero

Requirements: Veteran, Wild Card

Heroes can pull off stunts lesser men can only dream of. Once per session, when you spend a benny, you may add the reroll total to your previous roll.

Example: Genny takes aim at a Spanish ship bearing down on her own vessel. She rolls her Shooting die

and gets a measly 3. She spends her benny and rolls a 5. Adding this to her previous roll gives an 8—a raise!

Storm Chaser

Requirements: Novice, Boating d8+

When the wind and weather is at its worst this character is at his best, seeming to read the storm like he would a book. Such heroes are respected for their skill but feared for their love of a good storm.

The character receives +2 to all Boating rolls made during a storm. In addition, the character may draw two cards each round during a storm and keep the best card. If the character has the Wind Sense Edge as well he draws three cards total.

Wind Sense

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+, Boating d8+

The character has an almost supernatural knowledge of air and wind. He can sense changes in the weather and wind direction long before they actually happen.

If the character is steering a ship he gains +2 to Boating rolls during chases, using his knowledge of the winds to outrun or catch his enemies. In addition, the character may draw two cards each round during a storm and keep the best. If the character has the Storm Chaser Edge as well he draws three cards in total.

Wild Card Edges

The following Edges work only when the character is dealt a Joker during combat. The Edge's effects are in addition to the usual effects of being dealt a Joker.

Dead Shot

Requirements: Wild Card, Seasoned, Shooting or Throwing d10+

The hero doubles his total damage when making a successful Shooting or Throwing attack this round.

Mighty Blow

Requirements: Wild Card, Seasoned, Fighting d10+

The character doubles his total damage when making a successful Fighting attack this round.

Legendary Edges

The Edges listed below are out of the regular order because few heroes get to this level.

Academy Founder

Requirements: Legendary, Fame 40+, any two Knowledge skills d8+, Fighting d12+

The hero, whether or not he has been formally trained at an academy, has founded his own fencing academy.

The player and GM should work together to create the academy's style, using the existing academies and the character's Edges as a guide. The GM has the final word on what benefits can or can't be granted. Naturally, the character gains these benefits himself, as well as the academy secret.

The character gains the Rich Edge, or Filthy Rich Edge if he has Rich already. The hero unfortunately also has to put up with useless or arrogant students, making sure his academy remains adequately funded, and having to attend endless social engagements, as well as gaining at least one rival who wishes to see him fail and isn't above utilizing dirty tricks. The hero immediately gains the Enemy (Minor—Rival Academy) Hindrance, and the foe is always trying to bring the hero down.

Governor

Requirements: Legendary, cannot be wanted for any crime by the nation that made him Governor

Your hero has, by fair means or foul, acquired the control of an island. He has the power to levy taxes, pass statutes, and style himself Governor of the island. Of course, he also has to see that the money (or at least some of it) gets to its rightful owner, and that the health and welfare of the populace is maintained. He may also find himself the target of jealousy and hatred from foreign powers and domestic competitors, but such is life for the rich and powerful.

The character has +2 Persuasion (if his Fame is positive) or Intimidation (if his Fame is negative) with regard to his subjects. He also gains the benefits of the Filthy Rich Edge.

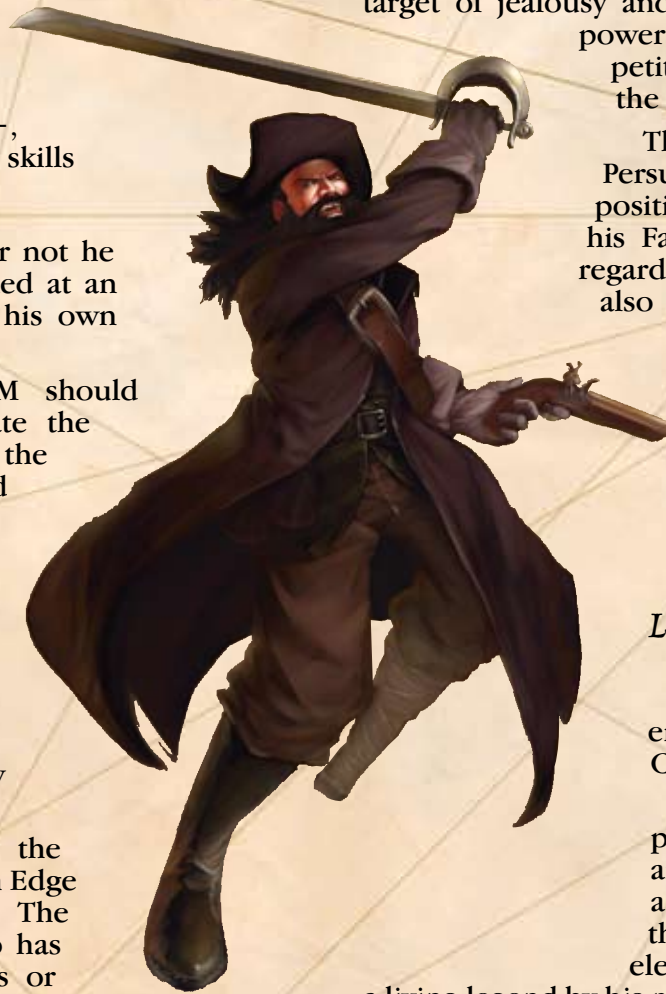
If he's already Filthy Rich, double all the cash values. Fame bonuses and penalties are doubled for being a public figure.

Living Legend

Requirement: Legendary, Fame 80+, Command

Whether a ruthless pirate chief, a brave and noble admiral, or a dashing swordsman, the character has been elevated to the status of a living legend by his men. The hero adds his Charisma modifier to his command radius.

The number of Followers the hero attracts doubles immediately as men (and women) flock to bask in his glory. When the hero reaches 90 Fame, he may either take two Novice Sidekicks or a single Veteran Sidekick. Fame bonuses and penalties are doubled, as tales of the hero's deeds are exaggerated.



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If the character's Fame ever drops below 80, he loses the bonuses to his command radius, but keeps his Followers (and Sidekick, if any), though they become disgruntled employees. He regains the bonuses and his minions' confidence when his Fame climbs back above 80.

Multiple Academies

Requirements: Wild Card, Legendary

The hero may join an additional academy each time he takes this Edge. He does not need to make a Persuasion roll to join, but must meet all other requirements as normal.

Although a character may belong to multiple academies, he may only use the benefits from one academy in a round.

Example: a character who belongs to both the Academia Nacional Espanola and the Academy of the Sea can either cause an extra die damage when using a slashing weapon or Str+d6 damage if he uses a knife. He cannot use both bonuses in the same round, even if he slashes with a knife.

Professional

Requirements: Legendary, d12 in affected Trait

The hero has become an expert at a particular Trait. His Trait becomes d12+1. This Edge may be selected more than once, but it may not be applied to the same Trait twice.

Expert

Requirements: Legendary, Professional in affected Trait

As above, but the Trait increases to d12+2.

Master

Requirements: Wild Card, Legendary, Expert in affected Trait

The character's Wild Die increases to a d10 when rolling a particular Trait of his choice. This Edge may be chosen multiple times, though it may only affect a particular Trait once.

Tough as Nails

Requirements: Legendary

Your hero is a grizzled veteran, capable of taking everything the world has to throw at him. Increase his Toughness by +1.

Improved Tough as Nails

Requirements: Legendary, Tough as Nails

This character's ability to resist injury is known throughout the Spanish Main, and all but the meanest buccaneers just keep out of his way. Increase your hero's Toughness by another +1.

Weapon Master

Requirements: Legendary, Fighting d12

Your character's skill with all kinds of weapons is renowned far and wide. Increase your hero's Parry by +1.

Master of Arms

Requirements: Legendary, Weapon Master

Whether it's a blade or a blunderbuss, this character can effectively defend himself with any weapon. Increase your hero's Parry by another +1.

Unique Style

Requirements: Wild Card, Legendary, Multiple Academies

The character has learned the arts of two or more academies and has created his own style. He may combine the bonuses from two or more schools.

Example: a character is a member of the Royal Fencing Academy and the Old School. When he performs a Defend maneuver while remaining stationary and armed with a longsword and buckler, he gains the +1 Parry from the Royal Fencing Academy and +1 Parry from the Old School, for a +2 bonus in total.

Character Creation Summary

1) Race

- Choose your hero's nationality. You get a free Edge (for which you must meet all the requirements).

2) Traits

- Your hero starts with a d4 in each attribute, and has 5 points with which to raise them. Raising an attribute a die type costs 1 point.

- You have 15 points for skills.
- Each die type in a skill costs 1 point up to the linked attribute. Going over the linked attribute costs 2 points per level.
- Charisma is equal to the total bonuses or penalties given by Edges and Hindrances.
 - Pace is 6".
 - Parry is equal to 2 plus half Fighting.
 - Toughness is equal to 2 plus half Vigor. Go ahead and add the bonus granted by the armor worn on your torso to this value as well for speed's sake, but remember it may not count if attacks target other parts of the body.

3) Edges & Hindrances

- You gain additional points for taking up to one Major Hindrance and two Minor Hindrances.

During character generation you can ignore the Rank requirements on all Edges (except Legendary Edges).

For 2 points you can:

- Gain another attribute point.
- Choose an Edge.

For 1 point you can:

- Gain another skill point.
- Increase starting funds by \$500.

4) Gear

- Start with \$500.

5) Background Details

- Fill in any other background details you care to add.

Skills Summary

Skill	Linked Attribute
Boating	Agility
Climbing	Strength
Driving	Agility
Fighting.....	Agility
Gambling.....	Smarts
Guts	Spirit
Healing	Smarts
Intimidation.....	Spirit
Investigation.....	Smarts
Knowledge.....	Smarts
Lockpicking	Agility
Notice	Smarts
Persuasion	Spirit
Repair	Smarts
Riding	Agility
Shooting	Agility
Stealth.....	Agility
Streetwise	Smarts
Survival	Smarts
Swimming.....	Agility
Taunt.....	Smarts
Throwing.....	Agility
Tracking.....	Smarts

Load Limits

A character's load limit is equal to 5 x his Strength.

Every multiple of the load limit after the first subtracts 1 from a character's:

- Agility and all linked skills
- Strength and all linked skills

Leveling

- Gain a new Edge
- Increase a skill*
- Increase 2 skills**
- Increase one attribute***
- Add a new skill at d4

* Equal to or greater than linked attribute

** Less than its linked attribute

*** Only once per Rank.

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Hindrances Summary

Hindrance	Type	Effects
Allergy	Minor/Major	-2 or -4 to Trait rolls when exposed to allergen
All Thumbs	Minor	-2 Repair; Roll of 1 on a mechanical or electronic device causes malfunction
Anemic	Minor	-2 Vigor to resist sickness, disease, poison or environment
Arrogant	Major	Must humiliate opponent, always look to challenge the 'leader'
Bad Eyes	Minor	-2 to attack or notice something more than 5" distant
Bad Luck	Major	One less benny per session
Big Mouth	Minor	Unable to keep a secret, blabs at the worst time
Blind	Major	-6 to all actions that rely on vision, -2 on social rolls, gain additional Edge
Branded	Minor	-2 Charisma among non-pirates; -2 Fame
Cautious	Minor	Character is over-cautious
Clueless	Major	-2 to most Common Knowledge rolls
Cocky	Minor	The character must spend his first action bragging or lose a benny
Code of Honor	Major	The character keeps his word and acts like a gentleman
Curious	Major	Character wants to know about everything
Death Wish	Minor	Hero wants to die after completing some task
Delusional	Minor/Major	Character suffers from grave delusions
Dependent	Major	See text
Elderly	Major	Pace -1, -1 to Strength & Vigor die types; +5 skill points for Smarts skills.
Enemy	Minor/Major	The character has a recurring nemesis of some sort
Garrulous	Minor	Carousing costs are doubled
Glass Jaw	Minor	-2 to Soak rolls
Greedy	Minor	The character is obsessed with wealth
Habit	Minor	A Minor Habit is simply annoying (Charisma -1)
Hard of Hearing	Minor/Major	-2 to Notice sounds; automatic failure if completely deaf
Heroic	Major	The character is a true hero and always helps those in need; +2 Fame
Illiterate	Minor	The character cannot read or write
Jingoistic	Minor/Major	-2 or -4 to Charisma when dealing with other races and cultures
Lame	Major	-2 Pace and running die is a d4
Landlubber	Minor	Cannot buy Boating with starting skills; -2 to all Boating rolls
Loyal	Minor	The hero tries to never betray or disappoint his friends
Mean	Minor	The character suffers -2 to his Charisma for his ill-temper and surliness
Obese	Minor	+1 Toughness, -1 Pace, d4 running die
One Arm	Major	-4 to tasks requiring two arms
One Eye	Major	-1 Charisma, -2 to rolls requiring depth perception
One Leg	Major	Pace -2, d4 running die, -2 to rolls requiring mobility, -2 to Swimming skill
Outsider	Minor	-2 Charisma, treated badly by those of the more dominant society
Overconfident	Major	The hero believes he can do anything
Pacifist	Minor/Major	The character fights only in self-defense as a Minor Hindrance, and won't fight living creatures under any circumstance as a major Hindrance
Phobia	Minor/Major	-2 or -4 to Trait tests when near the phobia
Poverty	Minor	Half starting funds, general inability to hang onto future income
Quirk	Minor	The character has some minor but persistent foible, such as bragging, elitism, or the pursuit of fame
Seasick	Major	Hero makes a Vigor roll each time he boards a ship or suffer a -2 penalty
Small	Major	-1 Toughness
Stubborn	Minor	Hero always wants his way
Trouble Magnet	Minor/Major	Nothing goes right for the hero
Ugly	Minor	-2 Charisma due to the character's less-than-average appearance
Vengeful	Minor/Major	Character holds a grudge, will kill to settle the score as a Major Hindrance
Vow	Minor/Major	The hero has a pledge to himself, a group, a deity, or a religion
Wanted	Minor/Major	The character is a criminal of some sort
Yellow	Major	The character is cowardly and suffers -2 to his Guts rolls
Young	Major	3 points for Attributes (instead of 5); 10 skill points (instead of 15), +1 benny per session

Edges Summary

Edge	Requirements	Effects
Academy Founder	L, Know (Any 2) d8, Fighting d12	See notes
Acrobat	N, A d8, St d6	+2 to nimbleness-based Agility rolls; +1 Parry if unencumbered
Alertness*	N	+2 Notice
Ambidextrous*	N, A d8	Ignore -2 penalty for using off-hand
Attractive*	N, V d6	Charisma +2
Very Attractive*	N, Attractive	Charisma +4
Bilge Rat	N, Ag d8, Fighting d8	No -2 penalty below decks with weapon with Reach of 0
Improved Bilge Rat	S, Bilge Rat	No penalty when fighting below decks
Block	S, Fighting d8	Parry +1
Improved Block	V, Block	Parry +2
Board 'Em	N, Command, Throw d8	+4 to group Throwing rolls when boarding
Boarder	N, Boating d6, Climb d8, Throw d8	+2 to Climbing and Throwing with ropes; earns a benny if first to board enemy vessel
Brawny*	N, St d6, V d6	Toughness +1; load limit is 8 x Str instead of 5 x Str
Cannoneer	S, Shoot d10	Modify Critical Hit table by one point
Captain*	N, Boating d8, Command	Start with a ship; gunners can ignore Unstable Platform penalty if acting on the captain's action
Charismatic	N, Sp d8	Charisma +2
Close Fighting	N, Ag d8, Fighting d8	Bonus to Parry equal to opponent's Reach +1
Improved Close Fighting	N, Close Fighting	Bonus to Fighting equal to opponent's Reach +1
Combat Reflexes	S	+2 to recover from being Shaken
Command	N, Sm d6	+1 to troops recovering from being Shaken within 5"
Command Presence	N, Command	Double command radius to 10"
Common Bond	WC, N, Sp d8	May give bennies to allies in communication
Connections	N	Call upon powerful friends with Persuasion roll
Danger Sense	N	Notice at -2 to detect surprise attacks/danger
Dead Shot	WC, S, Shoot/Throw d10	Double ranged damage when dealt Joker
Dirty Fighter	S	+2 to Tricks
Really Dirty Fighter	S, Dirty Fighter	Can spend benny to get the Drop
Dodge	S, A d8	-1 to be hit with ranged attacks
Improved Dodge	V, Dodge	-2 to be hit with ranged attacks
Dual Identity	N	Character has alter-ego, and two Fame scores
Entangle	S, Fight d8	The character can trap his foe's weapon arm, leaving him as an Unarmed Defender and unable to retreat from combat.
Explorer	N, Vi d6, Survival d8	+2 to survival rolls and increase rate of overland movement
Fast Healer*	N, V d8	+2 to natural healing rolls
Fencing Academy	See notes	See notes
Fervor	V, Sp d8, Command	+1 melee damage to troops in command
Firepot Specialist	N, Shooting d8+	Firepots ignite enemy ships on 4-6, or 3-6 if the hit inflicts a wound
First Strike	N, A d8	May attack one foe who moves adjacent
Improved First Strike	H, First Strike	May attack every foe who moves adjacent
Fleche	V, Ag d8, Fighting d8	See text
Fleet-Footed	N, A d6	+2 Pace, d10 running die instead of d6
Florentine	N, A d8, Fighting d8	+1 vs. foes with single weapon and no shield, ignore 1 point of gang up bonus
Frenzy	S, Fighting d10	1 extra Fighting attack at -2
Improved Frenzy	V, Frenzy	As above but no penalty
Frugal	N, Sm d6	+2 to Smarts to avoid getting drunk
Gifted Leader	V, Command	Extras under the hero's command roll d8 Wild Die for Group rolls
Good/Bad Reputation	N	Character gains or loses 5 Fame
Governor	L, Cannot be Wanted	See notes
Grit	V, WC, Iron Jaw	May make a free soak roll to avoid being Incapacitated
Guardian	N, Ag d6, Fighting d6	Attacks against a chosen adjacent ally target the character instead.
Gunsmith	N, Sm d8, Repair d8	If the character is wounded by the attack, gain one benny
Healer	N, Sp d8	+2 when making grenades, powder bombs, guns or shot
Helmsman	N, Boating d8+	+2 Healing
Hero	V, WC	+2 Top Speed, +1 Travel Speed to a ship the helmsman steers
		May spend a benny to reroll and add the result to the previous roll

*Background Edges—must be chosen during character creation.

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Edge	Requirements	Effects
Hold the Line!	S, Sm d8, Command	Troops have +1 Toughness
Improvisational Fighter	S, Sm d6	Suffers no penalties for using Improvised weapons
Inspire	S, Command	+1 to Spirit rolls of all troops in command
Iron Jaw	N, Vi d8	+2 to Soak rolls
Jack-of-all-Trades	N, Sm d10	No -2 for unskilled Smarts based attempts
Level Headed	S, Sm d8	Act on best of two cards in combat
Improved Level Headed	S, Level Headed	Act on best of three cards in combat
Living Legend	L, Command	See notes
Lookout	N, Notice d8	+2 Notice in tactical situations and +2 to Boating in chases or to avoid maritime hazards
Luck*	N	+1 benny per session
Great Luck*	N, Luck	+2 bennies per session
Lunge	N, Fight d8	Can extend melee weapon Reach by 1"
Marksman	S	Character gets the Aim maneuver (+2 Shooting) if he does not move
Master & Commander	S, See notes	Crews gain +2 to Boating rolls
Mighty Blow	WC, S, Fighting d10	Double melee damage when dealt Joker
Multiple Academies	WC, L	May join one academy each time he takes this Edge
Musketeer	N, Shoot d8, no All Thumbs	Reload blackpowder weapon in 1 action
Natural Leader	N, Sp d8, Command	Leader may give bennies to troops in command
Nerves of Steel	N, WC, V d8	Ignore 1 point of wound penalties
Improved Nerves of Steel	N, Nerves of Steel	Ignore 2 points of wound penalties
Noble*	N	Rich; +5 Fame; Character is a noble, born with status, wealth, and responsibility
Oarsman	N, Boating d6+	Add +1 Top Speed and +1 Travel Speed to a ship powered by oars
Officer	N, Sm d6	Take command of a ship or unit of soldiers (see notes)
Pilot	N, Ag d8	+2 to Boating; can make Soak roll for ship
Professional	L, d12 in Trait	Trait becomes d12+1
Expert	L, Prof. in Trait	Trait becomes d12+2
Master	L, WC, Expert in Trait	Wild Die is d10 for one Trait
Quick*	N	Discard draw of 5 or less for new card
Quick Draw	N, A d8	May draw weapon as a free action
Ramming Speed	S, Boating d8	+2 to perform Ram; ship takes half damage
Rich*	N	3x starting funds, \$5K annual salary; +/-2 Fame
Filthy Rich*	N, Noble Birth or Rich	5x starting funds, \$25K annual salary; +/-3 Fame
Riposte	S, First Strike, Fight d8	Once per round you may make a Fighting attack at -2 against a foe who misses you in melee
Improved Riposte	V, Riposte	As above, but with no penalty.
Rope Monkey	S, Ag d8, Climb d10	See notes
Scholar	N, d8 in affected skills	+2 to two different Knowledge skills
Seducer	N, Attractive, Persuade d8	Can use Persuasion to make Tests of Will
Shipwright	N, Boating d6, Repair d8	Can repair ships' wounds
Spot Weakness	See notes	When a foe rolls a 1 on his Fighting die against you, you get +1 to Fighting rolls against him
Steady Hands	N, A d8	Ignore unstable platform penalty for mounts or vehicles
Storm Chaser	N, Boating d8	+2 to Boating rolls in storm; draws extra card
Strong Willed	N, Intimidation d6, Taunt d6	+2 Intimidation and Taunt, +2 to resist
Sweep	N, St d8, Fighting d8	Attack all adjacent foes at -2
Improved Sweep	V, Sweep	As above but with no penalty
Thief	N, A d8, Climb d6, Lockpick d6, Stealth d8	+2 Climb, Lockpick, Stealth, or to disarm traps
Tough as Nails	L	Toughness +1
Improved Tough as Nails	L, Tough as Nails	Toughness +2
Trademark Weapon	N, Fighting or Shooting d10	+1 Fighting or Shooting with one particular weapon
Imp. Trademark Weapon	V, Trademark Weapon	+2 Fighting or Shooting with one particular weapon
Treasure Hound	N, Luck	Increase value of Booty by 25%; chance of finding a special item increased by 10%
Two-Fisted	N, A d8	May attack with a weapon in each hand without multi-action penalty
Unique Style	WC, L, Multiple Academies	The hero can combine bonuses from multiple schools
Wall of Steel	V, Florentine, Notice d8	Foes get no Gang Up bonus against you
Weapon Master	L, Fighting d12	Parry +1
Master of Arms	L, Weapon Master	Parry +2
Wind Sense	N, Sm d8, Boating d8	+2 Boating during chases; draws extra card in storm

*Background Edges—must be chosen during character creation.

GEAR

This chapter lists the equipment common to the *Pirates* universe, including the many weapons used by pirates and the lucrative cargoes they seek.

The following notes and descriptions explain some of the entries on the weapon and equipment lists.

AP (Armor Piercing): The weapon ignores this many points of Armor. A weapon with an AP value of 4, for instance, ignores 4 points of Armor. Excess AP is simply lost.

Armor: This is the amount of Armor provided by the equipment, which is added to the wearer's Toughness when the covered location is hit in combat. A character who wears multiple layers of armor only gains the highest bonus—they do not stack. Note that unless an attacker states otherwise before the attack roll, hits are always directed at the victim's torso.

Cost: The listed value is the typical amount a character might expect to pay, though actual costs vary throughout the ports of the Spanish Main. All values are listed in pieces of eight (though we use the dollar sign for simplicity).

Damage: Damage is listed in terms of dice. Ranged weapons have fixed damage (such as 2d6). Melee weapons have damage based on the wielder's Strength die plus another die, as listed under individual weapon entries. A dagger, for instance, inflicts Str+1d4 damage. We'll discuss damage later on.

Heavy Weapon: The weapon can affect vehicles or other devices with Heavy Armor.

HE (High Explosive): High explosive weapons use a burst template, the size of which is noted in the weapon or ammunition's notes. See the rules for Area of Effect attacks on page 80.

Minimum Strength: Some weapons list a minimum Strength to use. With melee weapons, a character with a lower Strength can use the weapon, but there are penalties. First, your weapon die can't be any higher than your Strength die. So if your scrawny kid (d4 Str) picks up a sword (d8), he rolls 2d4 damage, not d4+d8.

Second, if your Strength die isn't at least equal to the weapon die, you don't get any of the weapon's inherent bonuses, such as +1 Parry or Reach (if there are any).

For ranged weapons, there's a -1 penalty to your Shooting roll per die your Strength is lower than the requirement. This is ignored if the weapon can be braced on a bipod or other support.

Parry +X: The weapon adds the listed bonus to the character's Parry score when used. A character using two weapons with a Parry bonus only gains a benefit from the highest value.

Range: This lists the weapon's Short, Medium, and Long range. Ranges are listed in inches so that you can use a ruler to move, shoot, and fight on the table-top with miniatures. Each inch is equal to 2 yards in the real world, so that 5" is really 10 yards, or 30 feet.

Weapon ranges are "effective" ranges for the table-top. If you need to know the real world range of a weapon (for battles that don't take

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place on the table-top, for instance), multiply each range bracket by 2.5. A cannon with a Long range of 300, for example, has a “real world” Long range of 750”, or 1500 yards.

Rate of Fire: This is the maximum number of shots that may be taken by this weapon per action. Unless a weapon says otherwise, the user can fire any number of shots up to the weapon’s Rate of Fire.

Reach: Weapons with “reach” allow their user to make Fighting attacks at the listed range. A reach of 1”, for example, allows a character to strike a target 1” distant. Those weapons without a reach value can only strike targets at arm’s length (adjacent on the tabletop).

Reach can be very important when fighting from horseback and *against* mounted foes (see Setting Weapons on page 87), and when fighting below decks on a ship.

Currency

The standard currency of the Main is silver and gold coins. Although each nation mints its own coins, we’re more interested in having fun than calculating exchange rates. For convenience, all currency is either silver pieces of eight or gold doubloons, and mix them freely. Eight silvers equal one gold coin.

All prices are given in pieces of eight. The dollar sign (“\$”) is used as a convenient symbol for pieces of eight when we talk about money.

The standard pay for a sailor is 50 pieces of eight a month. This is actually more than is historically accurate, but it gives characters a reason to work for an honest living.

Selling Goods

Adventurers often come into a fair amount of booty and cargo. Gems and jewelry are easy enough to sell or trade, but unloading more mundane items such as swords, muskets, and even ships can be a bit more tricky. One or two items can sometimes be sold at near full-price if the right buyer can be found, but no merchant pays full price for such items.

A Streetwise roll in any town allows a seller to unload all of his mundane booty or cargo for a quarter its normal value. A raise finds a buyer who will take it all for half the list price. This roll may only be attempted once per week.

Selling Ships

Finding a buyer for a captured ship requires a Streetwise roll. Success means a buyer is found who will pay 25% of the ship’s list price. A raise finds a buyer who will pay 50%. This roll may be attempted once per week per port.

Subtract 25% of that total for each wound the ship has suffered that has not been repaired.



Players are well-advised to keep a savvy trader in their crew so they can sell the many goods they're likely to come across during their adventures.

Trading

Heroes in the *Pirates RPG* are probably more concerned about buried treasure or saving their country from scandal than they are making money. However, sometimes characters need a little extra cash or acquire a cargo they need to sell on. These simple rules allow the heroes to engage in trading without bogging the game down in details.

Buyers and sellers don't get the option of haggling as a separate action. Once the die is rolled, the characters must accept the sale and purchase price, even if they make a loss on the transaction. Having a high Streetwise die and good Charisma bonus is a vital asset in matters of trade.

Buying: Purchasing cargo costs a base \$500 per space. A total of $2d6+3$ spaces worth of cargo (called a consignment) are available each day in any port. The buyer makes a Streetwise roll once per consignment.

Each success and raise on the roll reduces the cost per space by \$100 to a minimum of \$100. A failure results in no price change. A roll of 1 on the Streetwise die (regardless of the result of any Wild Die) increases the price by \$100. Rolling a critical failure results in a \$200 increase in price per space.

Selling: Each cargo space of goods brings in a base \$500 per space. Make a Streetwise roll once per consignment. Each success and raise on the roll ups the price by \$100 to a maximum of \$700. A failure results in no price change. A roll of 1 on the Streetwise die (regardless of Wild Die) lowers the price by \$100. A critical failure results in a \$200 decrease in price per space.

Ports buy $2d6+3$ cargo spaces per day. Goods cannot be resold at the same port from which they were purchased.

The Armory

Gunsmiths are adept at manufacturing weapons and ammunition. These rules do not allow characters to make cannons but they can rearm themselves without access to a town.

Unless stated otherwise the character requires raw materials equal to half the cost of the finished item, a set of gunsmith's tools, and a source of heat to work any metal needed to create any of these weapons. Working without tools imposes a -2 penalty on a gunsmith's rolls. The GM has the final word on whether the necessary components can be found.

Firearms

Firearms require specialist parts, such as the barrel, lock and trigger mechanism. These can be purchased together, or salvaged from damaged weapons (at no cost).

Without a proper workshop the gunsmith can only cobble together a makeshift weapon—good for emergencies but not to be relied upon for extended use.

With a successful Repair roll a gunsmith can manufacture a makeshift firearm in three hours. A failure means the gun is inaccurate (-1 to Shooting rolls), while a critical failure ruins the lock and trigger. Regardless of how well the gun is made, a roll of 1 on a Shooting die causes it to malfunction beyond repair.

Grenade

Grenades can be thrown or fired (from a grenade launcher). A hero wishing to create a grenade needs 1 pound of metal (usually iron or brass), 10 shots of powder, and a small length of fuse.

Crafting the case requires one hour and a successful Repair roll at -2 . On a success the casing is constructed correctly. Failure means the casing fails to set properly—damage is reduced to $2d6$ in a Small Burst Template. A critical failure ruins the casing and the gunsmith needs a new batch of metal.

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The fuse can be set to any delay with a Smarts roll. Failure means the bomb goes off 10-40% earlier or later than expected.

Pistol Shot

Shot is made by pouring molten metal—usually lead because of its low melting temperature—into a mold. After the metal has cooled the mold is opened and the shot filed smooth. Twelve shots can be made every 30 minutes. Producing a batch of shot requires a successful Smarts roll. Failure means the shot is poorly formed and using it imposes a -1 penalty to Shooting rolls. A critical failure ruins the entire batch.

Powder Bomb

Gunpowder can also be used to make a low-powered explosive. A standard bomb requires 10 rounds of shot and powder.

Creating a single powder bomb requires a successful Repair roll and 30 minutes work. No tools or heat source are required. The user bundles the shot and powder into a leather sack, pot, or other container, then sets a small fuse into it. The fuse is set as with grenades, above.

Bigger Bombs: A cask of gunpowder causes 5d6 damage in a Large Burst Template. If additional bombs are rigged to explode at the same time, roll their damage separately.

Selected Gear Notes

Below are some notes on some of the equipment listed in this chapter.

Armor Notes

The invention of blackpowder weapons has made armor all but redundant, though some types still exist. The wearing of plate armor in public is frowned upon unless the wearer has a legal right, such as a Spanish soldier. Characters who wear heavy armor can expect to be stopped and questioned by the town guard on a frequent basis.

Armor & Water

Armor is particularly dangerous at sea and will drag the unwary to the depths. Any armor bonus is subtracted from all of the wearer's Swimming rolls. This is in addition to any penalties from the armor's weight.

Even leather armor is quite hazardous as its weight doubles when soaking wet.

Donning Armor

Ship marines sometimes leave their armor stowed, donning it only when battle looms. Leather armor typically takes 1d6 minutes to properly fit. Chain takes 2d6 minutes. Plate mail requires 2d6 x 5 minutes to properly attach.

Discarding Armor

Discarding armor requires a number of rounds equal to twice the armor's bonus. Discarding plate mail, for example, takes six full rounds.

Adventurers who fall into deep water must make a Swimming roll minus the armor's bonus at the end of the last round to remove the armor or keep trying until successful.

Steel Helmets

These are conquistador-style helmets of triangular shape with wide rims to ward off blows. They are now usually worn only by Spanish soldiers.

Hand Weapons

Gaff

A gaff works just like a hook (see below), but requires two hands to use and has a Reach of 1.

Hook

Hooks are very useful aboard ships for hauling fish and cargo. Those who lose a hand in combat or to slipped rigging sometimes mount hooks as well. Naturally, many sailors have learned to fight with them. Hooks have several benefits in combat.

First, a character with a hook never counts as unarmed during close combat (he can parry with it).

Second, hooks are designed to stay in, so characters who hit with a raise can leave the hook “set” in their foe. Hooked foes suffer a –2 penalty to their Parry, Agility, and Agility-based skills while hooked. Ignore one point of penalty per Size difference, however—so a beast of Size +2 or more ignores the penalty when hooked by an average sized foe.

An opponent who wants to get off the hook must make an opposed Agility roll. Success allows him to rip free, but failure causes him to become Shaken.

Improvised Weapons

Heroes often find themselves fighting with objects that aren’t intended for use as weapons. Torches, vases, chairs, tankards, bottles, tools, and other mundane items are frequently pressed into combat. Using such improvised weapons causes the wielder to suffer a –1 Fighting or Throwing penalty, as well as –1 to Parry. The GM is the final judge of an improvised weapon’s effectiveness.

Marlinespike

Named after its function of separating marlines—double-stranded tarred ropes—the marlinespike has a rounded blade in a wooden grip. The sturdy blade and rounded point allow it to penetrate thick ropes.

It is a tool rather than a weapon but very popular with would-be mutineers, who can carry one openly without arousing suspicion. The wielder suffers a –1 to Fighting rolls when using a marlinespike in combat.

Blackpowder Weapons

The firearms used on the Spanish Main are typically flintlocks, so for game purposes all firearms work the same way.

Moisture: Water is the worst enemy of gunpowder. Any time powder gets wet, roll 1d6 per shot. On a roll of 4-6 for damp conditions (drizzling rain, wading through a deep



For simplicity, we treat all blackpowder weapons in the Pirates RPG as flintlocks—the most common firing mechanism of the era. If you choose, however, you can save a little loot by purchasing a cheaper version—the matchlock.

A matchlock, as the name implies, uses a match (a short piece of slow-burning fuse) to ignite the gunpowder in the priming pan. Although flintlocks were invented in the early 17th century, matchlocks are cheap to produce and are still used throughout the period.

Matchlocks have three main drawbacks when compared to their more advanced cousins. First, the match must be kept lit so the gun is ready to fire. These glowing fuses are visible at night (halve Darkness penalties to attack the holder).

Second, the match must be kept dry. In wet weather, the match goes out on a roll of 1 on a d8 unless precautions are taken to keep the match dry. During torrential rain, such as a tropical storm, this rises to 1 on a d6. Check every hour. Submersion in water automatically soaks the match. A wet match is ruined and must be replaced.

What’s more, being of old design, they are somewhat heavy and unwieldy, with long barrels. Double the usual weight for any matchlock weapon. The rifled musket is quite a new invention and so is not available as a matchlock weapon.

Their only redeeming feature is they are cheap. A matchlock weapon costs just half the price of a flintlock equivalent. It otherwise uses the same stats for advanced blackpowder weapons.

If you want to build your own matchlock weapon, their simple design means you can build one for 25% of the regular weapon cost and in only two hours, making them easier and quicker to produce in difficult situations or with limited tools.



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stream), the shot is ruined. If the powder was soaked (heavy rain, swimming), each shot is ruined on a d6 roll of 2-6.

Overcharging: Both muskets and pistols may be “overcharged,” meaning the user puts an extra charge of powder in the shot. This adds an extra die of the same type to the weapon’s damage, but risks bursting the barrel. A roll of 1 on the character’s attack die (regardless of the Wild Die for Wild Cards) means it has burst the barrel of the weapon and ruined it permanently.

In addition to ruining the weapon, the blast causes 3d6 damage to the user.

Blunderbuss

These heavy guns have trumpet-shaped barrels that scatter shots in a deadly cone.

A blunderbuss must be loaded with three shots at once to gain its full effect—otherwise its statistics are the same as a pistol. When fully loaded, the blunderbuss fires a spread

of shot, and so does more damage at close range where the spread is less and more of the shot hits the target. Farther away, the shot spreads more and causes less damage. Because of the increased chance of hitting someone due to the spread, the blunderbuss adds +2 to its user’s Shooting roll.

A blunderbuss does 1d6 damage at Long range, 2d6 at Medium range, and 3d6 at Short range. However, the weapon cannot be overcharged—they rely more on the spread of their shot than the power of the blast.

Grenade

Grenades comprise a charge of gunpowder encased in a metal shell, which fragments on detonation. They cause damage to everything within a Medium Burst Template.

Grenade Launcher

Grenade launchers were employed by the military as early as the 18th century. They resemble blunderbusses with an enlarged barrel and fire grenades. Each grenade explodes in a Medium Burst Template. A failed Shooting roll causes the grenade to deviate (see page 80).

Muskatoon

A muskatoon is a short-barreled musket. Less accurate than its full-length cousin, it was designed for close range fighting, such as during boarding actions. The muskatoon requires two hands to use, is fired like a musket, and cannot be used in close combat (except as a club).

Pocket Pistols

Pocket pistols, and the slightly larger overcoat pistols, are small, easily concealed firearms. The lock mechanism is located centrally to allow them to be drawn quickly but prevents accurate sighting along the barrel (and makes them more expensive to produce).

A character using a pocket pistol cannot use the Aim maneuver—even those with the Marksman Edge receive no bonus.

Turn-Out Pistols

These pistols are an early form of breech-loading firearms. Rather than shoving powder, wadding, and shot down the barrel, the firer unscrews the barrel and inserts the shot and powder directly into the firing chamber. This allows him to dispense with wadding and ramrod. In addition, the barrel is rifled for accuracy without affecting loading time.

Two-Barreled Pistol

The two-barreled pistol has two barrels and locks but only a single trigger. Pulling the trigger back halfway discharges the first barrel—further pressure fires the second.

Although this weapon doubles the wielder's firepower it takes twice as long to reload compared with a single barreled pistol.

Both barrels may be discharged as a single action simply by squeezing the trigger hard. When double-fired both barrels must be aimed at the same target—roll two Shooting dice but only a single Wild Die.

Volley Gun

Volley guns are firearms with several barrels strapped together and rigged to fire all at once. Volley gun technology is in its infancy, but these weapons are still deadly. With six barrels set at different angles to help spread the shot, and a single trigger, this version of the volley gun is an all-or-nothing weapon. It takes so long to reload that, once fired, it is usually discarded until after the combat.

The firer places a Cone Template and makes a single Shooting roll. Every aware opponent beneath the template must beat the Shooting total with an Agility test or suffer 2d8 damage.

Miscellaneous Goods

Certain goods are listed with a "+" after their price. For these items, quality improves the more a character spends. For instance, a standard \$5 cutlery set is wooden. If he wants pewter or silver, the character can pay more. How much more is up to the GM.



Animals: Stats for animals can be found in the Bestiary at the back of this book.

Candle: A candle provides clear light in a 2" radius for two hours. A candle blows out if the character holding it runs or is exposed to a strong wind.

Carriage: Every noble needs a carriage to avoid having to walk through the filthy streets. **Acc/Top Speed:** Acc. is half animal's Pace. Top Speed is animal's Pace + running; **Toughness:** 10(2); **Crew:** 1+6; **Notes:** See horse statistics on page 231.

Climbing Gear: This consists of a small pick, a small hammer, and spikes to drive into rock. It does not include rope.

Clocks: Clocks have been in use for some centuries, but at present, only pendulum clocks are available. These are designed to sit on mantelpieces, not be carried by gentleman. Pocket watches do exist, have only an hour hand, and are notoriously poor at keeping accurate time. They cost the same as a pendulum clock but weigh just 1 pound.

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A pirate with a red bandana and a hammer in his mouth, looking at a scroll titled "Share List". The scroll lists various crew members and their shares.

Share List	
Captain Black	2 shares
Swint	1 share
Quincy	1/4 share
Port Hook	1/4 share
Lumpo	1 share
Crane	1 share
Thorn	1 share
Acid	1 share
Suff	1 share
Drake	1 share
Jeary	1 share
Gun Jones	1 share
Red Tom	1 share
Hawk	1 share
Wade	1 share
James Flint	1 share
Calico	1 share
Bloody Jim	1 share
Jim	1 share
Hershey	1 share
Holter	1 share
Hips	1 share

Dice, Weighted: This seemingly ordinary pair of dice is weighted. The user gets an additional +1 Gambling whenever he cheats at dice games (see page 18).

Flask: A flask holds one pint of liquid. It has a waterproof cork stopper.

Grapple Gun: These grenade launchers are modified to fire a grappling hook and line to a distance of around 25" (50 yards).

When used during boarding maneuvers, a boarding roll may be attempted when the ships are within 1" of each other (or within one card of each other for the Chase rules). A Shooting roll is required in place of the usual Throwing roll, however.

Grappling Hook and Line: A grappling hook is attached to a light line of variable length but usually no more than 15 yards in length). The user throws the hook just as if he were attacking a target. It has a range of 3/6/12. If it "hits," the hook has set and can hold up to 200 pounds of weight.

Gunsmith's Tools: Creating weapons, pistols or shot without these tools gives the gunsmith a -2 penalty (see page 53).

Hammer, Pick, or Shovel: Very handy for mending things and burying treasure. Hammers can be used in combat as a small improvised weapons. Picks and shovels are medium improvised weapons.

Lantern: A lantern provides light in a 4" radius for three hours per pint of oil. There is a 50% chance the lantern breaks if dropped, and a 1 in 6 chance it sets combustibles alight. (See page 99).

Lantern, Bullseye: A bullseye lantern acts as a regular lantern, but also has a shuttered reflective hood that can focus light through a small opening. When used in this way, it provides a cone of light equal to the Cone Template. There is a 50% chance the lantern breaks if dropped, as above.

Leather Satchel: Satchels are large enough to hold two large books (or anything else of similar size).

Letter of Marque: A license giving a captain legal permission to commit acts of piracy against enemies of whichever state issues the letter. See page 70 for more details.

Lockpicks: A hero trying to pick a lock without these tools suffers a -2 penalty to his roll.

Manacles: Prisoners can be shackled at the wrists or ankles (or both). Leg shackles reduce the prisoner's Pace to 2, while wrist manacles prevent him using his hands. Both have Toughness 12.

Map: The Spanish Main is a very large geographic area and contains many shoals and reefs. Any sailor attempting to navigate without a map is asking for trouble. Some maps also contain hidden clues to guide those who decipher them to some booty or hidden treasure.

If the players buy a map, give them a copy of the map at the front of the book. You can download copies from our website, too.

Medicine Chest: Diseases are commonplace on crowded ships. A medicine chest contains 10 doses of various powders and tonics for treating sickness (but not injuries). A surgeon using a chest has a +2 bonus to

Healing rolls to treat diseases. Each use of the chest consumes 1d4 units of medicine. Restocking the chest costs \$100 per unit of medicine. Use the Trading rules (page 53) to determine the number of units available in a town

Oil (1 pint): Besides providing light when used in lanterns, oil can also be used as a weapon. This is most commonly done by putting oil in a ceramic flask with a lit fuse. The flask is then thrown at the target where it breaks and the fuse sets the oil alight. Lighting a fuse requires 1d6 rounds with flint and steel (1 round with open flame), so it's best to light the fuse before a fight starts (a fuse stays alight for 10 minutes).

When thrown, the flask's range is 3/6/12. Anything it hits is set alight on a d6 roll of 5-6, causing 1d10 damage per round. The fire spreads as usual (see page 99).

Rope (10 yards): The rope can safely handle a weight of up to 300 pounds without worry. For every 50 pounds over that, roll 1d6

every minute or whenever the rope suffers a sudden stress. On a 6, the rope breaks under the strain.

Scroll Case: Used to carry maps and other important documents, scroll cases are made of leather and can be made watertight by sealing the ends with pitch (available free on any ship).

Soap: What scurvy pirate needs soap? Well, aside from helping you scrub the decks, soap could be used as part of an Agility Trick by sliding it under someone's foot.

Torch (1 hour): A torch provides clear light in a 4" radius. Properly prepared torches last for one hour. Temporary torches can be made with some wood, rags, and 1 pint of oil for every 10 torches. These last half as long, however.

Waterskin: A waterskin holds 2 quarts of liquid and weighs 5 pounds when full.

Writing Equipment: The basic price covers a quill and a pot of ink. At higher costs, one gets multiple quills of better quality, several pots of ink (including different colors), and sticks of sealing wax.



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Armor

Type	Armor	Weight*	Cost	Notes
Personal				
Leather	+1	6	50	Covers torso, arms, legs
Plate corselet	+3	20	400	Covers torso
Plate greaves (legs)	+3	10	200	Covers legs
Plate vambraces (arms)	+3	10	200	Covers arms
Steel Helmet	+3	4	75	50% chance of protecting against head shot
Shields				
Small Shield (Buckler)	—	8	25	Parry +1

*This is effective weight when worn. Most armor weighs quite a bit more when carried rather than worn.

Blackpowder Weapons

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	Cost	Weight	Min Str	Notes
Grenade launcher	10/20/40	As grenade	1	600	14	d6	2 full actions to reload; See notes
Musket	10/20/40	2d8	1	300	15	d6	2 full actions to reload
Musketoen	5/10/20	2d8	1	200	8	d6	2 full actions to reload
Rifled Musket	15/30/60	2d8	1	300	8	d6	AP 2; 3 full actions to reload
Blunderbuss	10/20/40	1-3d6*	1	300	12	—	d6 2 full actions to reload
Flintlock Pistol	5/10/20	2d6+1	1	150	3	—	2 full actions to reload
Grenade	3/6/9**	3d6	—	50	1	—	See notes
Pocket Pistol	2/4/6	2d6-1	1	250	2	—	2 full actions to reload; See notes
Powder Bomb	2/4/8**	2d6	—	20	1	—	See notes
Turn-Out Pistol	10/20/40	2d6+1	1	250	3	—	2 full actions to reload; See notes
Two-Barrel Pistol	5/10/20	2d6+1	1/2	200	5	d6	2 full actions to reload per barrel; See notes
Volley Gun	Cone	2d8	1	350	12	d8	2 full actions to reload per barrel

*A blunderbuss does 1d6 at Long range, 2d6 at Medium range, and 3d6 at Close range.

** Thrown range.

Ammunition

Ammo	Weight	Cost	Notes
Arrow*	1/5	1/2	
Quarrel*	1/5	1/5	AP 2 (standard crossbow bolt)
Shot (w/powder)	1/10	1	For black powder weapons
Sling stone	1/10	1/20	Stones can also be found for free with a Notice roll and 1d10 minutes searching, depending on terrain

*Outdoors, arrows and quarrels are recovered on a d6 roll of 4-6 (50% chance). Underground or indoors, the chance is reduced to a roll of 5-6 on 1d6 to reflect the increased chance of breakage.

Hand Weapons

Type	Damage	Weight	Cost	Min Str	Notes
Axes and Mauls					
Axe	Str+d6	2	50	d6	
Boarding Axe	Str+d8	10	100	d8	
Great Axe	Str+d10	15	250	d10	AP 1; Parry -1; requires 2 hands
Maul	Str+d8	20	250	d10	AP 2 vs rigid armor (plate); Parry -1; requires 2 hands
Blades					
Bayonet	Str+d4	1	25	—	+1 Reach, Parry +1, and requires 2 hands when used with musket
Dagger	Str+d4	1	25	—	
Great sword	Str+d10	12	250	d10	Parry -1; requires 2 hands
Hook	Str+d4	—	20	—	See notes
Long sword	Str+d8	8	200	d6	Includes scimitars
Marlinespike	Str+d4	1	10	—	-1 Fighting; AP 1
Rapier	Str+d4	3	150	—	Parry +1
Short Sword	Str+d6	4	50	—	Includes sabers and cutlasses
Blunt Weapons					
Club/Belaying Pin	Str+d4	1	5	—	
Brass Knuckles	Str+d4	1	20	—	
Pole Arms					
Gaff	Str+d4	6	10	d6	Reach 1; requires 2 hands; See notes
Halberd	Str+d8	15	300	d8	Reach 1; requires 2 hands
Harpoon	Str+d6	10	100	d8	Reach 1; requires 2 hands
Staff	Str+d4	8	5	—	Parry +1; Reach 1; requires 2 hands
Spear	Str+d6	5	25	d6	Parry +1; Reach 1; requires 2 hands

Ranged Weapons

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	Cost	Weight	Min Str	Notes
Axe, throwing	3/6/12	Str+d6	1	50	2	—	
Bow	12/24/48	2d6	1	200	3	d6	
Crossbow	15/30/60	2d6	1	300	10	d6	AP 2; 1 action to reload
Harpoon	3/6/12	Str+d10	1	100	10	d8	
Knife/Dagger	3/6/12	Str+d4	1	25	1	—	
Sling	4/8/16	Str+d4	1	1	1	—	
Spear	3/6/12	Str+d6	1	25	5	d6	

Improvised Weapons

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	Cost	Weight	Str	Notes
Small	3/6/12	Str+d4	1	—	1	—	-1 attack & Parry
Medium	2/4/8	Str+d6	1	—	3	d6	-1 attack & Parry
Large	—	Str+d8	1	—	6	d8	-1 attack & Parry; requires 2 hands

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Miscellaneous Goods

Item	Cost	Weight	Item	Cost	Weight
Bedroll	25	4	Animals, Trained		
Blanket	10	4	Dog, guard	150+	—
Book (blank, 50 pages)	8	2	Dog, hunting	100+	—
Candle (2" radius)	1	1	Hawk	400+	—
Carriage	500		Horse	300+	—
Climbing gear	45	6	Riding gear	75+	—
Clock (pendulum)	500	10	Item	Cost	Weight
Compass	100	1	Clothing		
Cutlery	5+	1	Normal clothing	20	—
Dice	2+	1	Formal clothing	200	—
Dice, weighted	50+	1	Food		
Flask (ceramic)	5	1	Provisions (ship's rations/day)	1	1
Flint and steel	3	1	Cheap meal	5	1
Grapple gun	500	14	Good meal (restaurant)	15+	—
Grappling hook	10	2	Trail rations (keeps 1 week)	10	5
Gunsmith's tools	200	5	Drink		
Hammer	10	1	Cheap stuff, bottle (grog)	1	1
Lantern (4" radius)	25	3	Good stuff, bottle (wine)	10	1
Lantern, Bullseye	50	3	Women (or Men)		
Leather satchel (waterproof)	10	2	Cheap Date	20	—
Letter of Marque	1500	—	Upscale wench	50+	—
Lockpicks	200	1	Wages* (per month, plus room and board)		
Manacles	15	2	Admiral/General	500	—
Map of the Main	100	1	Captain/Colonel	400	—
Medicine chest	1200	10	Commander/Captain	300	—
Oil (for lantern; 1 pint)	2	1	Lieutenant	200	—
Pick or shovel	10	6	Midshipman/Subaltern	75	—
Quiver (20 arrows or bolts)	5	2	Quartermaster	150	—
Rope (10 yards)	5	15	Navigator/Pilot	150	—
Sail Cloth	5/yard	3	Sailing Master	100	—
Scroll case	4	1	Bosun	100	—
Soap	1	1/5	Master of Guns	100	—
Spyglass	250	2	Carpenter	100	—
Torch (1 hour, 4" radius)	1	1	Mate	75	—
Waterskin (empty)	1	1	Surgeon	100	—
Whistle	2	—	Sailor/Marine/Soldier	50	—
Whetstone	5	1			
Writing equipment	20+	1			

* Non-pirate crews. Pirates receive shares instead of wages.

THE AGE OF PIRACY

The action in the *Pirates RPG* takes place in the Caribbean, but it isn't tied to a particular year. The Pirates universe is an alternate look at our own world, and is one where pirates roam the seas in greater numbers than they ever did in real life.

However, the game is loosely set in the late 17th century or early 18th century. In order to help you color your games, this chapter takes a look at what life is like in this era.

Slavery

The blight of slavery still exists in the *Pirates RPG*, but the practice is on its last legs. For the most part, slaves are no longer shipped to the Caribbean from western Africa, and all three major powers have signed a treaty to treat slavers with the same justice as they do pirates.

Most of the slaves in the Caribbean have been freed, though many still work as unpaid laborers. Those who do earn a wage are often paid only half that of their European counterparts. On a few plantations, former slaves now act as supervisors and managers, and are treated with respect by their former masters. Enlightenment is slowly dawning over the Caribbean.

Of course, some plantation and mine owners (typically the ones the heroes will encounter as villains) have been reluctant to give up their source of free labor. While they haven't purchased any new slaves, neither have they freed their existing ones.

For those with the right contacts, there is another source of free labor available. Prisoners in this era have virtually no rights, and corrupt prisoner governors sell convicts to mine and plantation owners, and sometimes the navy, lining their pockets with the blood of those they are supposed to be watching over. Most of the prisoners are listed as dead in the prison ledgers, and the bodies listed as being cremated due to disease. This usually keeps nosy relatives from digging too deep.

Among the common folk of the Caribbean, racism is on the decline. A freeman is a freeman, regardless of the color of his skin or his place or birth. However, the European rulers are slow to break old habits, and they prefer that bureaucrats and military officers be of European stock.

In game terms, unless you want to play a naval officer or noble, skin color makes no difference.

Sexism

Women in the *Pirates RPG* have more opportunities than historical women of the era, but that doesn't make them the equivalent of men. For the most part, lower class women are expected to have a craft, while noblewomen are expected to avoid manual labor and look their best at all times.

Of course, this doesn't include female player characters. These independent souls may turn to piracy to escape a humdrum life or be employed as spies. Some lead double lives, following a conventional role by day, but leading a secret life as an adventurer

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by night. A few have gone even further and have become full-time scholars or explorers, though they are usually treated as being slightly “odd.” A player character who wants to play a non-conformist female role might take the Outsider Edge to show they have stepped outside society’s accepted limits.

Sexism does still exist, though, and females cannot join the military or the priesthood. Other than that, the doors are pretty much open.

Science

The world is changing. During the Middle Ages, superstition and dogma ruled. As the Renaissance began to flourish, science and superstition clashed. Fortunately, science won the day (for the most part), and rationalism and observation are now used by scientists to help explain the world around them.

Navigation

Navigation is not yet an exact science, and skilled navigators are few and far between. Indeed, the methods used by navigators to

plot courses is an almost mystical art to the common sailors, and navigators are called “artists” in respect of their skill.

Knowledge of latitude (how far north or south a vessel is) has been known for many centuries, and navigators still use a sextant for this purpose, using the sun at noon as a reference point.

Longitude, however, is a matter of guesswork. The ship’s chronometer, an accurate non-pendulum clock that enables sailors to set the time at their departure point and check it at local noon to get a difference between ship and local time, is still decades away.

To measure longitude sailors use a knotted rope attached to a log to measure speed. A navigator usually maneuvers the ship until it is on the same latitude as his destination, and sets a course directly east or west. Log readings are taken at set times during the day, and the captain records the readings in a journal (which is where the term “ship’s log” comes from). He then plots the ship’s estimated movement on his charts to give him a rough longitude.

The method is inaccurate, but it’s all they have to work with. Unfortunately, although sailors know of the Atlantic trade winds, details of the ocean currents still remain a mystery. Mistakes can be disastrous, and many ships have run aground on reefs because their calculations were inaccurate.

The compass has been in use for several centuries, but only serves to give direction. As such, it is a navigational aid, but forms only part of a navigator’s tools.

When a ship nears land, the crew lower a lead weight on a knotted rope, measuring the depth of the water. Weights are usually coated with wax and collect samples of the ocean floor. (This is a pre-Roman invention.) A skilled navigator would know the different types of sand or small rocks off the coast of major ports, and could use these to help get a bearing.



Medicine

Medical science in this era is, in truth, not a true science. Qualified men of medicine out in the Caribbean are as rare as skilled navigators, and in most cases, any person with an education, (whether as a physician or not), could set themselves up as a doctor. Doctors with no qualifications, regardless of their skill, are known as “quacks.”

Before we look at treatments, let's take a brief look at the two types of doctors practising at the time. The first are the physicians. Physicians treat wealthy clients, and are often part of a noble's household staff.

The alchemists of the Renaissance have been replaced with apothecaries, who are the second type of doctor at this time. Also known as apothecary-surgeons, they perform basic operations, blood letting (which is still very popular), and dispense drugs from a shop. In modern parlance, they are general practitioners.

Apothecaries speak a pseudo-scientific language when referring to drugs and the phrase “to speak like an apothecary” means to talk nonsense.

Most of the problems of this era stem from a lack of understanding about the human body. Galen, an ancient Greek and the founder of medicine, published the first treatise on anatomy, but he used the body of a pig to formulate his work due to a ban on cutting open human corpses. As anyone today might guess, there's rather a big difference between a pig and a human.

Books on human anatomy do exist, and have done so for over a century, but the Catholic Church has banned them. Only the Protestant countries (mainly Britain and the Netherlands) make any use of these works, and then the reader has to have a knowledge of Latin.

Knowledge of the circulatory system has been known for almost two centuries, but where blood comes from or how one can replace it remains a mystery. Even the stethoscope, now the most basic of medical instruments, does not exist.

The first microscope was built only a century ago, and while doctors are able to study blood samples, there's no defined treatise on what they're looking for. Knowledge of bacteria and viruses is scant, and so doctors have difficulty treating the true causes of disease.

Perhaps the most barbaric practise, by today's standards, is amputation. Without modern antibiotics, infection is a very common problem, especially given the humidity of the Caribbean. The only way to treat an infected limb, or one which has suffered intensive damage, is to remove it.

Most often, the limb is sawn off, then cauterized, either with pitch or a hot blade. Anesthetic hasn't been invented, by the way.

Toothache, a medical condition which has always plagued mankind, can sometimes be treated with drugs, but most often is requires the tooth to be pulled. Remember, there's no anesthetic.

The drugs of this era tend to be left-overs from the Renaissance (mercury is common in many medicines), though some progress is being made on drugs which actually treat the cause rather than the symptoms.

General Science

Despite myths about our ancestors believing in a flat Earth, people have known since the time of the ancient Greeks that the Earth is round. Copernicus' view of the solar system, which has the Sun at the center, is now accepted fact, though it was only 100 years ago that Kepler reinterpreted the movement of the planets as ellipses, rather than circles.

Spyglasses have been in use since the 16th century, though it is only recently that reflecting telescopes have been invented for studying the planets and stars in greater detail. Newton's study of optics has allowed for the creation of spectacles, though the lenses are crude and the ability to accurately determine the degree of short- or long-sightedness in a person is not a science. People who wear glasses are called “glass eyed.”

Newton's laws of motion are known (if not widely understood) outside the scientific community. Likewise, calculus is now a

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mathematical principal, as is trigonometry (which is used by navigators), logarithms, the decimal point, and algebra.

Magnetism and electricity have been studied, though it will be another century before electricity is first used to any great effect. Suggestions have even been made that the Earth has its own magnetic field.

Scientists have invented an air pump, which has proven useful in deep mines. Vacuum and pressure are both understood, though they will not see much use until the invention of efficient steam engines. Primitive steam engines do exist, but they waste 99% of the heat from the fuel and so are extremely inefficient.

Machines capable of performing basic mathematical functions have been invented, but are far from being everyday items. Even a machine to throw silk has been invented. The Industrial Revolution is still decades away, but the first tentative steps have been taken.

Knowledge of the plant and animal kingdoms is becoming a true science. Scientists have used microscopes to minutely study plants, and a reclassification of the plant and animals kingdoms is underway.

The idea of scientific study and recording results, especially using mathematics, is giving science a rational foundation on which to challenge superstition and dogma, which are both matters of faith rather than proof. Still, the Church is hostile to any science which seeks to prove the existence of God.

Everyday Life

Let's take a brief look at life in general during this period. Most of the information won't affect game play, but it can be used as window dressing.

Clothing

The standard garb for males consists of stockings, knee breeches, a waistcoat (with or without sleeves), and a long coat known as a frock coat. Capes are more common than cloaks. Shoes often sport buckles, though these are usually only for show. Hats, typically tricorne, are common. Boots are worn by all social classes, though gentleman do so only when riding.

Woman have more choice of clothing, and skirts, dresses, bodices (English and French), short gowns, and cloaks are all popular items. Naturally different jobs or social classes require a woman to wear certain styles of clothing. Women of higher class tend to wear court shoes, whereas the lower classes wear simple canvas shoes.

As well as cotton and wool, clothing can be made from velvet, silk, and taffeta, though naturally these materials tend to raise the price of garments dramatically.

Pirates, and indeed regular sailors, wear a different style of clothing to landlubbers. Many wear short jackets with a shirt underneath, though in warmer weather they dispense with the jackets. Few sailors strip to the waist, however, as the fearsome sun of

the Caribbean can quickly lead to sunburn or heat stroke. For that reason, most mariners wear headgear, though fashions range from simple woollen caps to headscarfs to the ubiquitous tricorne hat.

Trousers are longer than knee breeches, and have flared bottoms. Many sailors coat their trousers with a layer of tar to make them waterproof.

Although sailors own a pair of shoes for shore leave, they rarely wear them at sea. Decks are often slippery, and bare feet offer more grip than shoes.

Many captains dress like their wealthier merchant cousins or as landlubbers, even when at sea. Indeed, it is not unusual for pirates to steal fine clothing from captives, either to wear in port or, in some cases, to wear at sea.

Food

Let's start with drink. Water (known in slang as "dog's soup"), while plentiful, has never been a drink of choice. Pollution and water-borne diseases make drinking water a dangerous business. Fortunately, there's a common substitute available—alcohol. The fermenting or distillation of alcohol kills the majority of diseases and parasites, and so alcohol is extremely common at every table.

For the wealthy, there is good wine, brandy (French) or sherry (Spanish). Different types of wine exist for different meals, and thus a noble may have a breakfast wine to start the day, this being of lower alcohol content, and move onto more intoxicating drinks later in the day.

The lower classes tend to drink beer, which is also available in varying strengths, milk (mainly goat's milk), or rum, which is made from molasses and is very common in the Caribbean islands. Grog is a mixture of rum and water. Gin exists, but is mainly drunk in Europe, and has yet to become the tippie of choice.

For those who prefer non-alcoholic drinks, there is tea (which is expensive as it has to be imported from India) or coffee. The events of the Boston Tea Party are still decades away.



On ships, alcohol is strictly rationed and most sailors have to make do with water. Unfortunately, water goes stale very quickly, and after a few weeks at sea, it is generally unpalatable. Luckily, it's free (and usually pure) from any island stream.

Food dishes vary enormously from region to region. Meats include fish, turtle, goat, wild or domesticated pig, chicken, and other birds. Spices are used in varying quantities to flavor the meat, though salt remains an expensive luxury.

Naturally, bread is a staple part of the diet, as is cheese. Vegetables and fruit, such as peppers, chillies, beans, peas, potatoes, garlic, pumpkins, oranges, watermelon, bananas, pineapple, and coconuts are commonplace across society.

Sailors are less fortunate, and are usually given dried meat, hard tack, and cheese. To start with, a ship may have eggs or fruit, but these spoil quickly and are among the first

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things eaten on a voyage. Scurvy, a disease caused by Vitamin C deficiency, is commonplace on long voyages. Sailors take every opportunity they can to forage for fresh water and food, and turtles or wild pig are very popular.

Although sugar is a cash crop throughout the Caribbean, it remains expensive and is rarely eaten by commoners, who use honey to provide sweetness. For the history buffs, sugar isn't native to the region, and was first imported by Columbus.

Buildings

Buildings are either made of stone or wood (or a mixture of both). Stone buildings tend to be reserved for wealthier patrons, such as nobles or merchants, government or religious agencies, or for security establishments, such as forts or prisons, and sometimes warehouses.

Most settlements are made up of wooden structures built close together. Although fire is a constant risk, many of the Caribbean islands are rugged, with building land at a premium, or the available land is better used on plantations, forcing towns to be crowded affairs.

The number of rooms varies considerably. A commoner's house may have only a few rooms to house a large family, with rooms changing function based on the time of day. A craftsman's house usually has the lower floor converted to a workshop and shop, with the family living on the upper floor.

A noble's house, on the other hand, likely has rooms dedicated to a specific function, such as a dining room, library, solarium, or ballroom. There may be as many as a dozen guest bedrooms as well. When not in use, the rooms remain empty. A wealthy gentleman's house may even have a fountain, an ornate garden, and perhaps even a hedge maze.

Likewise, furnishings range from rough locally made cheap furniture to masterpieces imported from Europe.

Religion

The European powers are divided between Catholics and Protestants (of which several branches exist), with the French, Portuguese, and Spanish representing Catholicism, and the Dutch and English being Protestant.

Several religious wars have swept through Europe over the last century, and both sides are now firmly entrenched in their faith.

Of course, these aren't the only religions in existence in Europe. Although Jews once worshipped openly in Spain, they were forced to convert to Christianity or leave two centuries ago. Those who remained and refused to convert were persecuted by the Inquisition.

Although some Jews fled to the Caribbean for safety, the Inquisition has not forgotten them. Inquisitors still prowl the streets of the Spanish colonies, looking for Jews, and other heretics, to burn at the stake.

Islam has spread throughout Spain and the Balkans as a result of the Moorish and Ottoman Empires, though there are few practitioners in the Caribbean. The Barbary Corsairs will be covered in a future *Pirates* sourcebook.

Warfare

Despite the carnage and mayhem it causes, warfare remains common.

Flintlock weapons are the standard firearms of this period, and primitive rifling has been introduced to increase accuracy and range. Blackpowder weapons must be loaded to a set pattern, with ball and powder being separate items. The invention of cartridges is a long way off.

Grenades exist, but they are not efficient weapons. It will be another half century before Lt. Henry Shrapnel invents a cannon round designed to explode over the enemy, showering them with musket balls. This will eventually replace the canister round.

Gunsmiths have sufficient knowledge of ballistics to create mortars, which allow rounds to be fired over fortifications. They are little use at sea, however, and without an effective explosive round to fire, they are used predominantly for siege warfare.

Honor

The concept of honor is not a new one in this era, but it permeates the whole of society.

Gentry consider their peers to be only as good as their word, and a verbal contract is considered as binding as a written one. Insults are carefully worded to be back-handed compliments (such as, "My, isn't it wonderful what you can do with last year's fashions."), as directly insulting a person is seen as not only crude, but a stain on their honor. Among males, a duel is the usual method of resolving disputes of honor.

The lower classes have their own code of honor, though it isn't so formal. Insults are thrown with masterful use of crude language, and a fist fight seen as the best way of resolving problems. More violent methods are used, of course, but they're rarely done in a sporting manner.

Commoners can insult the gentry without risking a duel. Any noble who challenged a commoner over a matter of honor would be a laughing stock among his peers. Much better to hire some thugs to beat the commoner to

a pulp or trash his business as payback. For a member of the gentry to insult a commoner is seen merely to be telling the truth. After all, many commoners do smell and live like pigs.

However, thieves steal from gentry before the middle classes, and the middle classes before their own class. Betraying someone to the authorities is a big taboo, and if someone causes trouble in their neighborhood, locals prefer to hire local toughs to deal with it.

The Pirate Code

Even pirates, to most the scum of the planet, have a pirate's code. Every ship has its own code, known as the Articles. Though not legally binding in the truest sense of the word, pirates often have to swear on a Bible to uphold the Articles. These rules serve to avoid disputes between crew mates and ensure the ship runs smoothly, so breaking them is severely punished.

Pirate or Privateer?

If you really want to play a pure pirates game, you might want to consider becoming privateers. What's the difference?



P O S T

PIRATES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

A pirate serves only his crew. Although he agrees to follow the Articles, he is a freeman with a voice in how the ship is run. Pirates hold no loyalty to any nation or banner. All ships are fair targets, though a small few may avoid or deliberately attack ships of a certain nation for personal reasons.

Privateers are pirates whose actions have been sanctioned by a nation and who carry a letter of marque as proof. This license essentially allows the captain to commit acts of piracy against nations not allied to the issuing country.

Letters of marque are actually issued to prevent open warfare. Privateers are not considered to be warships belonging to the issuing nation, and thus are not provoking war by attacking enemy ships. Since all the major powers issue letters of marque, more or less everyone is generally happy with the situation.

While the bearer of a letter of marque is immune to prosecution as a pirate if caught, they can still be tried for murder and other crimes committed against ships' crews. What's more, letters of marque do not give license to raid settlements either, only enemy shipping.

Likewise, attacks against allied shipping are considered acts of piracy. Privateer captains tread dangerous ground when attacking a

merchantman. Many merchants swap their flags when sailing through territorial waters to show the local navy they mean no harm. Merchants may also choose to hire escorts of a different nation, and will also fly that nation's flag instead of their own. Regardless of the flag it flies, though, attacking an allied merchantman is an act of piracy.

In addition to allowing nations to continue their wars without risking their own men and ships, letters of marque are also a money-spinner. In addition to paying a flat fee for the letter, the privateers must pay 50% of all their spoils to the issuing nation. Failure to do so quickly results in the letter being withdrawn and the privateer declared a pirate. In case you're wondering, it is not unusual for a spy to "accidentally" let slip to an enemy nation that a privateer has had his license revoked. If the privateer has caused the enemy nation trouble, he may find himself a wanted man.

From a gaming point of view, playing a privateer allows the players to conduct acts of piracy and still be heroes, at least among their allied nation. Privateers can be rewarded with noble titles or land grants, and famous privateers often get invited to important social functions by the local bigwigs.



GAME RULES

Now that you know how to make a hero for the *Pirates RPG* and know something about the background, it's time to learn how to actually play the game. Don't worry—it's not hard! You'll be ready to go in no time!

Wild Cards & Extras

Your hero (a player character), and unique villains are collectively called "Wild Cards." These beings have a little better chance at doing things, are a little tougher to put down, and are generally more detailed than common guards, minions, or lackeys—who are collectively called "Extras."

Wild Cards are noted with the picture of Jack Hawkins (hey, who better to represent the tough guys) by their name, like this:

Jack Hawkins

Besides your own characters, it's up to the Game Master to decide which NPCs are Wild Cards. An English Redcoat probably isn't a Wild Card, but Lieutenant Marcus Smith, a veteran of several wars and an important character in your campaign, certainly would be. You'll see the difference between Wild Cards and Extras as you continue to read, but for later reference, the differences are:

- Wild Cards can suffer multiple wounds.
- Wild Cards always roll a Wild Die along with their Trait die when making trait tests and take the better of the two.

Trait Tests

Trait tests form the core of the *Pirates RPG* and let you know whether you succeed or fail when you attempt a task.

To use an attribute (like Agility or Vigor) or skill (like Tracking or Fighting), simply roll the die assigned to it. If the result is a 4 or better (the "Target Number" or TN), you're successful!

Modifiers

Circumstances modify your die roll, such as shooting at something at long range or finding a well-hidden clue. Some things, such as ranged attacks, have standard modifiers. It's up to the GM to determine any modifiers for more subjective tasks, such as spotting an ambush or eavesdropping on a conversation through a door.

In general, an easy task, such as finding tracks in the mud, is made at +2. A difficult task, such as finding tracks by torchlight, is made at -2. A very difficult task, such as finding tracks in a rainstorm, is made at -4.

The Wild Die

Extras roll a single die as described above. But Wild Cards roll an extra d6 and take the best result of their normal die or the "Wild Die" when making skill or attribute rolls. Wild Dice are rolled just like the Trait die, are subject to the same modifiers, and can Ace as well (see below).

PIRATES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

The downside is that snake-eyes (that's double 1s) on one of these rolls is a critical failure of some sort. The GM gets to make up something rotten to befall your character. That's the price Fate charges for making someone a hero.

Unskilled Attempts

If a hero doesn't have a skill for an action he's attempting, he rolls 1d4 and subtracts 2 from the total. Wild Card characters still get their Wild Die for these rolls (though they subtract the -2 unskilled penalty from that result too if they choose to use it). The GM may occasionally decide that a character has no chance at a particular skill if he has no training in it—such as performing surgery or navigating a ship.

Aces

All Trait tests and damage rolls in the *Pirates RPG* are “open-ended.” That means that when you roll the highest possible number on a die (a 6 on a d6, an 8 on a d8, and so on), you get to roll that die again and add it to the total.

This is called an “Ace.” Any modifiers to the die roll should be tacked on after adding up an Aced roll.

Example: Jack Hawkins is fighting a group of English soldiers. He has d10 Shooting and rolls an Ace (a 10), and so rolls again. He gets another 10, then rolls again and gets a 3. His total is $(10+10+3=)$ 23!

Opposed Rolls

Sometimes rolls are “opposed” by an opponent. If two characters are wrestling for control of a valuable artifact, for example, they both make Strength rolls and compare results.

When this happens, the acting character gets his Trait total first. If he wants to spend bennies (see the next page), he does so now. When he's satisfied with his total, his foe gets to roll. The highest total wins. In a tie, the two enemies struggle on with no clear victor.

Raises

Sometimes it's important to know just how successful a Trait test was. Every 4 points over what you need for success is called a “raise.” If your hero needs a 4 to Shoot an opponent and rolls an 11, he hits with one raise (and would have two raises with a roll of 12). Figure raises after you've adjusted for any modifiers.

Cooperative Rolls

Sometimes heroes may want to cooperate and help a friend complete some kind of urgent task. If two or more characters want to perform a task together (and the GM decides it's possible for them to do so), the lead character makes his roll and adds +1 for every success and raise his companions achieved on their



own rolls. This has a normal maximum of +4 for all tasks except those of Strength, which have no maximum.

Example: Genny and Jack are exploring an old temple, and want to try to push a stone door open as a team. The GM decides that's reasonable. Jack is the lead character and makes his Strength roll. Genny makes a roll as well and gets a raise. She adds +2 to Jack's total.

Group Rolls

When you want to make a noncombat Trait roll for a group of Extras you don't have to roll it one character at a time, instead roll one Trait die as usual along with a Wild Die (see page 71 for details). Take the best of the two as always and treat this as the group's total. This way you get a nice average without having to make Notice rolls for every NPC who approaches the ambush, or watch one goofball ruin a stealthy approach for his 49 companions.

Bennies

Every now and then the dice may betray you. That's why the *Pirates RPG* gives you, the player, a little control over your hero's fate.

Every player starts each game session with three "bennies," (unless he's taken Edges or Hindrances that alter the number). Bennies are gaming stones or other tokens that signify a little bit of good luck or fate.

The Game Master may also give you more bennies for great roleplaying, overcoming major obstacles, or even entertaining everyone with an outlandish action, side-splitting in-game joke, or other memorable act. (Tips for GMs on awarding bennies can be found on page 186.)

You can spend your bennies to reroll any Trait test. When you give up a benny to do this, make the entire roll from scratch—so if you're making two attacks with Frenzy and don't like the results, pick up the two dice and your Wild Die and roll again. You can

keep spending bennies and rerolling as long as you like, and take the best of your attempts. If you roll a 5, for example, and a benny gets you a 4, keep the original 5 instead. Using a benny should always be advantageous to your character.

Bennies cannot be used for rolls on tables, damage rolls, or any other roll that isn't a Trait roll.

Bennies can also net your hero additional Experience Points at the end of a session. See page 74 for details. If you haven't used them all by the end of a session, the remaining bennies are lost.

Soak Rolls

Finally, bennies can also be used to save your hero's bacon from deadly attacks. Choose carefully where you spend them! See page 89 for complete information on how to make Soak rolls.

Game Master Bennies

Game Masters get bennies too. At the start of each session, the GM gets one benny for each player character. He may use these for any of his villains throughout the course of the night.

Each of the GM's Wild Cards also gets two bennies per game session. They can use these or any of the bennies in the "common" pool to save their evil skins, but they can't share their own bennies with other nonplayer characters. As with heroes, bennies are not saved between sessions.

Example: A small French outpost is led by a vile officer (a Wild Card). Genny and Jack are the only player characters, so the GM gets two bennies for the French officer, plus two more for the pair of player characters.

The officer can use any of the bennies, but his fanatical soldiers, servants, and other minions can only use the two from the common pool.

PIRATES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

Advancements

At the end of each game session (usually 4-6 hours of gaming), the GM awards 1 to 3 Experience Points to everyone in the group.

Here's a quick look at how many Experience Points should be awarded per adventure.

Experience Awards

Award Situation

- 1 The group accomplished very little or had a very short session.
- 2 The group had more successes than failures.
- 3 The group succeeded greatly, and their adventure had a significant impact on the overall story.

Bennies

At the end of each game session, roll 1d6 for each benny you have left. Each roll of 5 or 6 gives your hero an extra Experience Point.

Ranks

As a character gains more Experience Points, he goes up in "Rank." This is a rough measure of how powerful the hero is.

As characters progress in experience, new Ranks allow access to more powerful Edges.

Experience and Ranks

Experience Points	Rank
1-19	Novice
20-39	Seasoned
40-59	Veteran
60-79	Heroic
80+	Legendary

Leveling Up

Every 5 Experience Points accumulated grants a hero an Advance. An Advance lets a character do one of the following:

- Gain a new Edge.
 - Increase a skill that is equal to or greater than its linked attribute by one die type.
 - Increase two skills by one die type each that are lower than the linked attributes.
 - Buy a new skill at d4.
 - Increase one attribute by a die type.*
- * You may only choose this option once per rank. No Trait may be raised above a d12 (but see the Professional and Expert Legendary Edges). Heroes of Legendary Rank may raise an attribute every other Advance.

Starting With Experience

If the Game Master lets you make a character who has already earned some experience, simply make a character as usual and then take a number of Advances to reach the allowed Rank. A Veteran character, for example, has 40 Experience Points, so you would make a normal character and grant her eight Advances.

Additional goods, equipment, or other assets must be determined by the Game Master. As a quick rule of thumb, a character's starting funds double with each Rank after Novice.

Replacement Characters: If a player's character dies (or is retired), his new hero begins play with half the Experience Points his former hero had (round down). If a hero died with 17 Experience Points, for example, his replacement enters play with 8 points.

Legendary Characters

Legendary characters are major forces in the world, and often have political power and influence as well as a host of Edges to defeat those who oppose them.

Once a hero reaches Legendary status, the rules for Advancement change a bit. The character now Advances every time he accumulates 10 Experience Points instead of 5, but a number of new Edges open up to him as well. "Legendary Edges" allow heroes to become major players in the Spanish Main.

Legendary characters may also choose to improve an attribute every other Advance.

Combat

Heroes must often face violent foes. Here's how to resolve fights in the *Pirates RPG*.

Time

When a fight breaks out, game time breaks down into rounds of six seconds each. Ten rounds, then, is one minute.

The Battlefield

In combat with more than a few opponents, the Game Master should make a quick map of the terrain on some sort of erasable surface. Chessex® makes great Battle Mats™ already marked off with 1" squares or hexes (visit them at www.chessex.com). You can then place miniatures on the map to show exactly where everyone is during the fight.

The terrain can be sketched out quickly and easily with an erasable marker to make sure everyone understands the tactical situation. You can also use miniatures terrain or a plain tabletop with a ruler. The more detailed you get, the more likely everyone is to make use of their surroundings and do more than just say "I attack."

Distance

Movement, weapon ranges, and the like are listed in inches to help when playing with miniatures. In the "real world," each inch is equal to 2 yards.

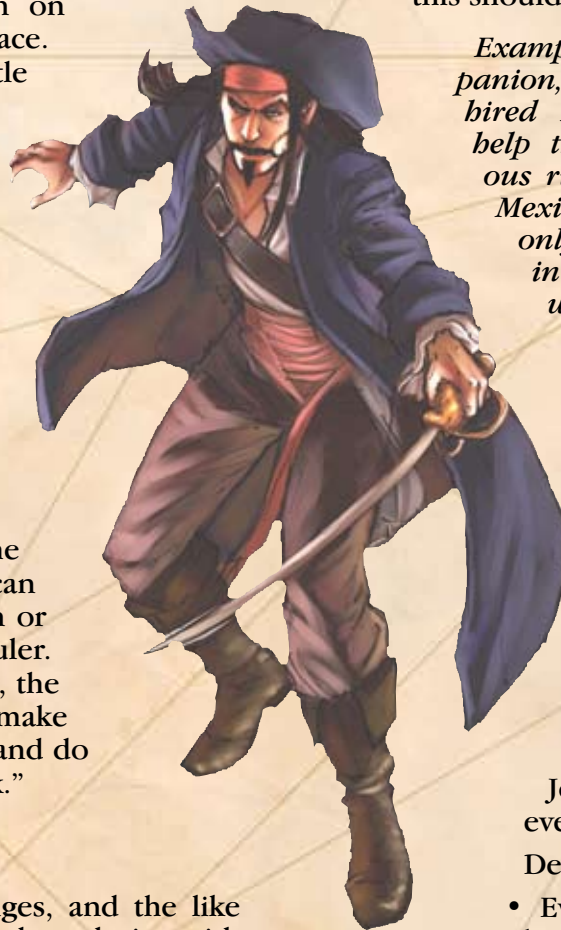
If the GM needs a different scale to accommodate a larger battle, simply divide weapon and movement ranges as needed.

Allies

In combat, allied NPCs are divided up among all the players to control. This is a very important part of the *Pirates RPG* because the setting features allied bands of skilled soldiers, fellow pirates, or loyal retainers, and the game is designed to handle them quickly and easily. It's also designed for the *players* to control them—not the Game Master.

It doesn't matter whether or not the *characters* control the allies, only that the players do. This keeps everyone involved in the action, even if his hero is out of the fight, and makes running large combats much easier and more fun for everyone. Of course the GM can always take charge of NPCs when the need arises, but with good, mature roleplayers, this should rarely be necessary.

Example: Jack and his companion, Genny Gallows, have hired 12 native bearers to help them explore mysterious ruins in the jungles of Mexico. The sexist guides only follow Jack's orders in the game world, but when battle comes, the two players share control of the NPCs.



Initiative

The action in *Pirates* is fast and furious. To help the GM keep track of who goes in what order and add a little randomness, we use a single deck of playing cards with both Jokers left in to determine everyone's initiative.

Deal in characters as follows:

- Every Wild Card is dealt a single card. Any allies under that player's control act on his initiative card as well.
- Each group of Game Master characters, such as all French soldiers, all Bermudan wild dogs, and so on, share a card.

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Exactly which nonplayer character groups get their own cards is up to the GM. If he wants to break his 30 pirates into 5 groups of 6, that's fine. Your goal is to do whatever makes running the battle as quick and easy as possible. Generally, Wild Cards and other unique characters get their own card.

Example: Jack, Genny, and 12 hired guides are crossing a dark river when they're swarmed by frenzied piranha. A mysterious Indian stands in the shadows, seemingly directing the attack.

Jack, Genny, and the Indian each get their own card, as do the piranhas. Half the guides act on Jack's card and half on Genny's.

Shuffle

Shuffle the deck after any round in which a Joker was dealt (see below).

The Countdown

Once the cards are dealt, the Game Master starts the round by counting down from the Ace to the Deuce, with each group resolving its actions when its card comes up.

Ties: Ties are resolved by suit order: Spades are first, then Hearts, Diamonds, and Clubs (reverse alphabetical order).

The Joker Is Wild!

What happens if you're dealt a Joker? Glad you asked. Jokers act as "wild cards." You can go whenever you want in the round, even

interrupting another character's action if you want! In addition, you add +2 to all Trait tests this round, and +2 to damage totals as well!

Hold

A hero may choose to wait and see what happens by taking a Hold action. He may then go later in the round if he chooses. A Held action lasts until it's used. If a character has a Held card when a new round starts, he's not dealt in and starts the round on Hold.

Interrupting Actions: If a character on Hold wants to interrupt an action, he and the opponent make opposed Agility rolls. Whoever rolls highest goes first. In the rare case of a tie, the actions are simultaneous.

Example: Jack is on Hold when a vicious looking pirate emerges from the lower deck of the ship. The two roll Agility and Jack wins. He can shoot the pirate before the seadog attacks.

Surprise

Combat often starts before everyone involved is prepared. An ambush, a sudden double-cross, or a trap might all give one side in a fight an edge over the other.

When this happens, the side that started the fight is not dealt cards, but begins the fight on Hold. Victims of the surprise attack must make Notice rolls. Those who make it are dealt in as usual. Those who fail get no card in the first round of combat.

Example: Jack and Genny are creeping through a fort when they're spotted by two soldiers guards hiding in a doorway. The guards wait until the two are within striking range to spring their attack.

The two guards are on Hold and get to attack immediately. If Jack and Genny make their Notice rolls they're dealt in normally. If not, they have to wait until the next round to act.

Standoff!

Occasionally, you might run into a situation where everyone is effectively on Hold. Maybe you're in the middle of a tense negotiation when one person goes for his sword. In these situations, everyone should roll their Agility since they are all on Hold and act in order of highest to lowest (ties are simultaneous). Deal everyone in as normal on the next round.

Actions

Characters perform one or more "actions" when their card comes up each round. A character can perform one regular action—attacking, running, and so on—without penalty.

Multiple Actions

Characters may also attempt to perform multiple actions in a single round, such as intimidating someone while blasting away with a musket, running and fighting, attacking with a weapon in each hand, and so on. A hero can't fire more than his weapon's rate of fire in a round, however, nor may he make more than one Fighting attack with the same weapon.

In essence, a hero may not perform the same action twice in a round. The actions are assumed to take place almost simultaneously, so a character couldn't make two simultaneous Intimidation rolls or use the same sword to attack twice. He could make a Fighting and a Shooting attack if he had a gun in one hand and a knife in the other, however, and could even issue a Taunt at the same time. He could only make two Fighting attacks if he had a knife in each hand, however (or had the Frenzy Edge).

When your card comes up each round, tell the GM what you want your character to do. The GM will then be able to tell you how many actions you're hero is trying to perform. Be warned, though—the more you try to pull off in a single round, the more likely you are to fail at *everything!*

PIRATES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

Each additional action a character attempts in a round subtracts 2 from all the hero's rolls. If an adventurer wants to fire a gun with one hand and slice at an adjacent foe with the other, for instance, he subtracts 2 from both rolls. If he also wanted to make a test of wills against someone at the same time, he subtracts 4 from all his rolls.

Wild Cards get to roll their Wild Die on each action as usual.

Example: Backed into a corner, Jack tries to shoot one guard and intimidate another. Both his Shooting and Intimidation totals suffer a -2 penalty because he took two actions instead of one.

Free Actions

Some minor actions are "free" and don't inflict multi-action penalties. Speaking a short sentence or two, moving up to the character's Pace (see Movement, below), falling prone, resisting opposed rolls, or dropping an item, are all examples of free actions.

One Wild Die Per Action

When Wild Cards roll multiple dice for a single action, such as when firing a gun with a Rate of Fire of 2 or more, they still roll only one Wild Die. A pirate with the Frenzy Edge, for example, rolls two Fighting dice and one Wild Die. He can use the Wild Die's total to replace either of his Fighting dice if he chooses.

The Wild Die must either replace one of the regular dice or be ignored—it never adds another action or attack to the roll.

Example: Jack Hawkins draws his cutlass and attacks two French sailors using the Frenzy Edge. His Fighting is d12. He rolls two d12s for Edge plus his Wild Die.

Even if all the dice indicate success, he still only gets 2 hits—the Wild Die doesn't add an extra attack.

Movement

Most humans can move up to their Pace (usually 6") in a round. This is considered a "free action." Other types of movement are covered below:

Crawling: A character may crawl 2" per turn. This counts as being prone when being fired upon.

Crouching: A character may move while crouching at half Pace. He may run while crouched (halve his total Pace after rolling for running). Ranged attacks against him suffer a -1 penalty.

Going Prone: A character may fall prone at any time during his action. While prone, the hero usually benefits from Medium Cover (see page 82).

Getting up costs 2" of movement. When the lead is flying, smart characters move, shoot, and then get prone behind cover before their action is over, forcing attackers to go on Hold to get a clear shot at them.

Difficult Ground: Difficult ground such as mud, steep hills, shallow water, or snow, slows characters down. Count each inch of difficult ground as two inches for purposes of movement.

Jumping: A hero can jump 1" horizontally from a standing start, or up to 2" with a "run and go." A successful Strength roll grants the jumping character one additional inch of distance.

Running

A character may run an additional 1d6" during his turn if he wishes. This extra d6 is called the character's running die. Characters suffer a -2 penalty (the standard multi-action penalty) to all other actions made while they are running.

Group Running Rolls: When rolling for a group of nonplayer characters, villains, or monsters, the GM or controlling player makes a single running roll. The whole group doesn't actually *have to* run—it's just a convenient way to save a little time in the heat of battle.

Combat Actions

Characters can perform a multitude of actions when their card comes up in combat. The most common actions are making tests of wills or attacking with the Fighting or Shooting skill. These are all covered on the following pages.

Simpler actions such as readying an item, drawing a gun, or other quick tasks usually take one action. More complex actions, such as lighting a torch, digging through a pack to find a small item, and so on, might require a random number of rounds—say 1d6 rounds. The Game Master has the final say on how long these actions actually take.

Readying Weapons

Drawing a weapon usually takes an entire round, but a character can do it faster if she wants. This is an action, however, and so inflicts the standard multi-action penalty of -2 to the character's attack roll.

Drawing two weapons at once, drawing a weapon from a difficult location (such as an ankle holster or inside a coat), or drawing and readying a large or unwieldy weapon (a musket or polearm, for instance), follows the same procedure as outlined above but requires an Agility roll.

Example: Jack's in trouble again, and draws his pistol to fire at the guards approaching him. Jack doesn't want to take a full round to draw his weapon, so he takes the -2 penalty to his Shooting roll instead.

If Jack wanted to draw his pistol and a knife, he could do so, but he'd have to make an Agility roll at -2 first. If he managed to do so, he'd also suffer the -2 penalty to his Fighting or Shooting roll, whichever weapon he used.



Attacks

The heart of the *Pirates RPG* is fast, furious combat. Here's everything you need to know to decimate your foes and keep your hero alive.

Fighting

A character may make one Fighting attack per round. The Target Number to hit is equal to the opponent's Parry score (2 plus half his Fighting die type; that's a 2 if the character has no Fighting skill!).

Bonus Damage: If your attack hits with a raise, add +1d6 to your damage total as well! This d6 may Ace just like any other damage roll.

Example: Genny slices at a boa constrictor with her cutlass and hits with a raise. She rolls her weapon's damage of Strength die + 1d6. Then she adds +1d6 to the total for her raise.

PIRATES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

Shooting & Throwing

The Shooting skill covers everything from pistols to cannons. Throwing covers those weapons propelled by hand. The base TN to hit something at Short range is 4 as usual. Shots at Medium range subtract 2 from the Shooting roll, and shots at Long range subtract 4 from the roll.

Bonus Damage: As with Fighting attacks, if you hit your target with a raise, add +1d6 to the damage total. This roll may Ace just like any other damage roll.

Range Modifiers

Range	Modifier
Short	—
Medium	-2
Long	-4

Rate of Fire

The Rate of Fire is how many Shooting dice the character rolls when firing the weapon. Two-barrel pistols, for example, have a Rate of Fire of 2, and therefore let the player roll up to 2 Shooting dice at once, though only at a single target.

Wild Cards roll one Wild Die as usual with the Shooting roll, and can use it in place of one of the Shooting dice if they choose.

Special Rules

Below are a number of rules for special maneuvers characters might perform during combat.

Aim

A character who spends a full round aiming (no movement allowed) may add +2 to his Shooting roll in the following round versus whatever he aimed at (a person, vehicle, etc). Aiming for multiple rounds has no additional effect.

Area Effect Attacks

Grenades and other attacks that cover a large area are “area effect attacks.” The three most common size attacks have been made into Small, Medium, and Large Burst Templates, found on pages 252 and 253.

To attack with an area effect weapon, the player places the template on the table (or picks where he wants the center of the blast to be) and makes a Shooting or Throwing roll as usual. If the attack is successful, the blast is centered where desired. Everything under (or partially under) the template is affected.

Failure means the blast deviates. Just how far depends on whether it was thrown or launched, and what range bracket the target was in (Short, Medium, or Long). Roll 1d6” for thrown weapons (such as grenades) and 1d10” for fired projectiles. Multiply by 1 for Short range, 2 for Medium, and 3 for Long.

Next roll a d12 and read it like a clock facing to determine the direction the missile deviates. A weapon can never deviate more than half the distance to the original target. That keeps the deviation rules from making things go behind you.

Cover: Targets who are prone or behind cover still get some protection from area-effect attacks. In these cases, the modifier they would normally receive against ranged attacks acts as that many points of Armor instead. A character behind heavy cover, like a stone wall, negates four points of damage from a blast if he’s caught within it.

Diving for Cover: Thrown weapons with a blast effect (such as grenades) allow potential targets a chance to move out of the area of effect. Give targets who saw the danger coming an Agility roll at -2 to jump out of the way and avoid the damage. If successful, move the character just outside the template (his choice exactly where).

Breaking Things

Occasionally a character may want to break something, such as a weapon, a lock, or a door. Use the Toughness values below for these kinds of objects. Use these rules for

solid objects. Larger objects with many components (such as carriages) take multiple hits as per the ship rules on page 134.

Most anything can be broken given enough time and effort, so use this system only when attempting to break things in a hurry (such as during combat rounds).

The Parry of an inanimate object is **2**. The catch is that damage rolls against them don't add the bonus from raises on the attack roll, nor Aces (even on Strength rolls in melee). Unlike a person or even a vehicle, an attack cannot hit a "vital" area on a lock or a door and thus do more damage. If an attack can't do enough damage to destroy an object, it can't destroy it (at least not quickly). This keeps characters from shattering doors with a feather and a lucky Strength roll.

If the damage roll equals or exceeds the object's Toughness, it's broken, bent, shattered, or otherwise ruined. The GM decides the exact effects—such as whether a good strike opens a hole in a door or knocks it off its hinges.

See the Obstacles section on page 84 to attack *through* objects.

Damage Types: After the type of Object and its Toughness is the type of damage that can affect the object. Swords do cutting or piercing damage, spears are piercing weapons, and so on. Musket balls are considered piercing weapons.

The type of damage is important for objects because shooting a single bullet through a door, for instance, may penetrate it, but won't destroy it. Only a blunt or cutting attack is likely to destroy a door in one shot.

Object Toughness

Object	Toughness	Damage Type
Light Door	8	B, C
Heavy Door	10	B, C
Iron Door	15	B, C
Lock	8	B, P
Manacles	12	B, C, P
Knife, Sword	10	B, C
Rope	4	C, P

B=Blunt, C=Cutting, P=Piercing



Called Shots

All successful attacks hit the target's torso, unless an attacker specifies otherwise before the attack roll is made. Use the following modifiers and effects when a character wishes to use a Called Shot to target a specific location:

Limb (-2): An attack to a limb causes no additional damage but may ignore armor or have some other special effect (see the Disarm maneuver).

Head or Vitals (-4): The attacker gains +4 damage from a successful attack to these critical areas. The target must actually have vital areas, and the attacker must know where they are to gain this advantage.

Small Target (-4): Attacks against small targets such as the lock on a door or a giant squid's beak are made at -4. The effect of success depends on the situation—the door might spring open, the squid may release its prey, etc. If the GM has no particular effect in mind, it adds +4 damage just like a shot to the head or vitals.

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Cover



Light (-1)



Medium (-2)



Heavy (-4)

Illumination

Dim (-1)



Dark (-2)

Tiny Target (-6): Particularly small or narrow targets, such as a spy hole in a door, carry a -6 modifier. The effects of a hit depend on the target. In the case of the spy hole, the blow ignores the armor of the door and inflicts +4 damage because it's a head shot to whoever is looking through it (as above).

Cover

Light Cover: Characters subtract 1 from their attack rolls if half or less of their target is obscured.

Medium Cover: The penalty is increased to -2 if more than half of the target is hidden from view. This is the usual penalty when attacking a prone character (see Prone).

Heavy Cover: The penalty is -4 if only a small part of the target is visible (prone beside a tree, behind a high wall, or peeking around the corner of a building, for instance).

Attacking through a very tight opening that provides near total cover, such as a spy hole in a door, subtracts 6 from enemy attack rolls.

Darkness

Dim: Twilight, light fog, night with a full moon, and so on subtract 1 from a fighter's attack rolls.

Dark: In darkness with some ambient light (stars, partial moon) inflicts a -2 penalty, and targets aren't visible beyond 10".

Pitch Darkness: Targets aren't visible at all in pitch blackness, but if a character knows roughly where a victim is (he can hear him, target is in a confined space, a glint of light shines off his sword or breastplate, and so on), he may be attacked at -4.

Defend

If a character's only regular action is to defend, his Parry is increased by +2 until his next action. The defender may move normally while performing this maneuver, but no running or other actions are allowed.

Disarm

A character can try to make a foe drop a weapon (or other object) with either a close combat or a ranged attack. To cause a disarm check, the attacker must first hit the opponent's arm (-2, see Called Shots). The target must then make a Strength roll. If the roll is less than the damage, he drops his weapon.

The attacker may choose to make this a nonlethal attack with a melee weapon (see page 84). Ranged attacks can be nonlethal if the attacker targets the weapon instead of the limb (generally -4 instead of -2).

The Drop

Sometimes an attacker is able to catch a foe off-guard and gets “the drop” on him. This usually happens at a distance of only a few feet, but other situations may occur (a musketeer high in the topsails, for instance).

Only the GM can determine when one character has obtained this kind of advantage over another. Usually it's when the victim is in the classic hostage pose, is completely unaware of the danger, or has been caught unarmed by an armed foe.

The attacker is considered on Hold and adds +4 to his attack and damage rolls should he decide to strike.

Fighting Below Decks

It's quite cramped below the decks of a ship where boxes, bottles, and kegs are stored in every nook and cranny and the ceiling forces a man to stoop.

When using any weapon longer than a knife, hook, or other short weapon (less than 6") below deck, or in other confined areas, the user's Fighting rolls are modified by -2.

Finishing Move

A completely helpless victim (bound, unconscious, etc.) may be dispatched with a lethal weapon of some sort as an action. This is automatic unless the GM decides there's a special situation, such as a particularly tough or naturally armored victim, a chance for escape, and so on.

Generally, the killer must dispatch his foe up close and personal, but the Game Master may occasionally allow finishing moves to be performed at range.

This is one of the few ways a hero can die, and it takes a truly vile villain to commit such an act. Even Governor Lynch prefers to keep pirates alive (at least for a while) so he can subject them to a little torture.

Firing Into Melee

Occasionally heroes have to fire into the middle of hand-to-hand fights. The trouble is that even though we might see figures

standing perfectly still on the battle mat, in “reality,” they're circling each other, wrestling back and forth, and moving erratically.

For that reason, firing into a tangle of people, such as a melee, is quite dangerous. Use the Innocent Bystander rules when this occurs (see below).

Full Defense

In addition to the usual Defend option, a character can go for a full defensive action. He makes a Fighting roll and uses the result as his Parry until his next action. This is a trait test, so he gets to roll his Wild Die as well. And, of course, the dice can Ace, and you can also choose to use bennies on the roll if you want to.

Note that the character's Parry never gets worse as a result of the roll. If the roll is lower than the hero's Parry score, he keeps that instead (but gains no bonus from the full defense).

A hero using the full defense maneuver cannot move at all, however. He's doing everything he can to fend off whatever is attacking him. If you want to escape from combat as well, use the defend maneuver instead.

Ganging Up

Ganging up on a foe allows attackers to flank, exploit openings, and generally harass their outnumbered opponent.

Each additional adjacent attacker adds +1 to all the attackers' Fighting rolls, up to a maximum of +4. If three guards attack a single hero, for example, each of the three guards gets a +2 bonus to their Fighting rolls.

Grappling

Sometimes it's best to restrain an enemy rather than beat him to a bloody pulp. That's where grappling comes in.

Grappling is a regular Fighting roll, and is a non-damaging attack. If the attacker wins, he's entangled his foe. With a raise, his foe is also Shaken.

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Once entangled, the defender may attempt to break free on his next action. Both the defender and attacker pick either their Strength or Agility and then each makes an opposed roll. If successful, the defender is free but the attempt consumes his action. If he does so with a raise, he's free and may act normally. Failure means he is still entangled. Instead of breaking free the defender may attempt a different action but at a -4 penalty.

After grappling a foe, the attacker may attempt to damage his victim on subsequent rounds by making an opposed roll as above. On a success he does his Strength in damage (gaining the extra d6 for a raise as normal).

Innocent Bystanders

When an attacker misses a Shooting or Throwing roll, it may sometimes be important to see if any other targets in the line of fire were hit. The GM should only use this rule when it's dramatically appropriate—not for every missed shot in a volley of lead.

Each miss that comes up a 1 on the Shooting die indicates a random adjacent character was hit. Horses and other animals are possible targets when firing on mounted characters as well.

It's sometimes easier to hit an adjacent victim than the original target using this quick system. That may not be entirely realistic, but it's fast and simple, it makes large groups of people vulnerable to missile fire, and best of all, increases the drama of firing at opponents locked in melee with the attacker's allies.

Nonlethal Damage

A character who wants to beat someone up without killing them can choose to do nonlethal damage. This usually requires the attacker use only his fists or a blunt weapon of some sort. Edged weapons may be used if they have a flat side, but this subtracts -1 from the attacker's Fighting rolls.

Extras who would be Incapacitated by a nonlethal attack are simply knocked out for 1d6 hours. If a Wild Card becomes Incapacitated from a nonlethal attack, he is knocked out for 1d6 hours as well.

Nonlethal wounds are otherwise treated exactly as lethal wounds.

This means it's much easier to render an Extra unconscious than a Wild Card. This is intentional, as true heroes can take multiple punches before going down for the count, but most ordinary folk go out with one or two good punches.

Example: Genny is whacked on the back of the head by an English officer, who plans on interrogating her later. The villain gets lucky and does 4 wounds to our heroine. Because he was doing nonlethal damage, Genny is simply knocked out for 1d6 hours instead of taking serious damage (wounds).

Obstacles

Sometimes characters have sufficient power to attack their foes *through* obstacles. (See the Breaking Things section on page 80 to actually destroy intervening obstacles.)

To attack a target through an object, first decide if the attack hits. If it misses, there's no additional effect other than a small hole in the intervening obstacle.

If the attack would have hit without the cover modifier, the round is on target but the obstacle acts as armor for the target behind it.

Below are the armor bonuses for some obstacles commonly used as cover. This is added directly to the target's Toughness, including any actual armor he's wearing in the affected location. Subtract the weapon's Armor Piercing value from the total protection offered—not from *both* the obstacle and armor actually worn by the target.

Obstacle Toughness

Armor	Obstacle
+1.....	Glass, leather
+2.....	Leaded glass window
+3.....	Interior wooden wall
+4.....	Thick wooden wall
+6.....	Plaster and wooden wall
+8.....	Brick wall
+10.....	Stone wall

Example: Jack blasts a Spanish soldier hiding behind a stone wall (Armor +10) with a cannon. The cannon ignores 4 points of Armor, so the wall only provides 6 points of protection.

Prone

Smart heroes lie down when lead starts flying. This gives them Medium Cover against most attacks. Attackers to the defender's side or within 3" ignore the modifier since the target is just as exposed to these characters as if he were standing.

A prone defender who is attacked in melee may automatically rise to defend himself if he desires. If he chooses to remain prone (or can't get up for some reason), his Parry is reduced by 2, and he must subtract 2 from his Fighting rolls.

Ranged Weapons in Close Combat

No ranged weapon larger than a pistol may be fired at adjacent foes engaged in melee. Larger weapons may still be used as clubs, however. Pistols can be fired in close combat, but since the defender is actively fighting back, the TN for the Shooting roll is his Parry rather than the standard TN of 4.

That means it's harder to hit someone who's wrestling with your character in melee than someone a few feet further who isn't actively struggling with your hero.

Touch Attack

An attacker who simply wants to touch a foe (usually to deliver a special effect of some kind—such as pricking an opponent's flesh with a poisoned pin) may add +2 to his Fighting roll.

Tricks

Heroes often attempt fancy maneuvers or clever tricks to distract their foes and set them up for deadly follow-up attacks. This might include throwing sand in an opponent's eyes, ducking between a tall foe's legs to stab him



There's much more to combat than just stabbing someone, especially in a swashbuckling game like this. We make it extremely simple to simulate all manner of swashbuckling moves with one simple mechanic—tricks. Here's some examples of typical swashbuckling tricks. Unless otherwise stated, these are agility tricks.

- * *Appel*: a sudden stamp of the foot to distract your opponent.
- * *Backflip*: using an obstacle, such as barrels, a cart, or even a wall, to help you flip over an opponent.
- * *Balesta*: a sudden hop forward, either as the prelude to an attack or to catch an opponent off guard.
- * *Beat*: slapping an opponent's blade out of the way to leave his body exposed.
- * *Bind*: encircling an opponent's blade with your own. Designed to prevent him from moving his blade while you slide yours forward along his.
- * *Blind*: this can be achieved by throwing sand or grog in a foe's face. Slashing his forehead so he bleeds into his eyes works as well (as a trick this does no damage and therefore doesn't require a called shot to the head).
- * *Corps a corps*: french for "body to body". This usually involves giving your opponent a shove to unbalance him.
- * *Flash (Smarts)*: a lady can distract a foe by flashing her cleavage or thigh. Only tends to work on men.
- * *Flick*: a sudden movement of the blade designed to distract a foe.
- * *Pulling the rug*: yanking a rug out from under a foe's feet.
- * *Who's that? (Smarts)*: the oldest trick in the book, but it still works.
- * *Z*: Carving your initial into a foe's clothing or cutting off his buttocks.



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in the back, and so on. Tricks do not include weapon feints—those are already “assumed” in a character’s Fighting and Parry scores.

To perform the trick, the player must first describe exactly what his character is doing. Next he makes an opposed Agility or Smarts roll against his foe. The GM must determine which is more appropriate based on the player’s description of the maneuver.

If the character is successful, his opponent is distracted and suffers -2 to his Parry until his next action. With a raise, the enemy is distracted and Shaken as well.

These penalties do not stack. Tricking a foe twice has no additional effect.

Example: Jack is backed into a corner by a very large and dangerous thug. Our hero pulls the oldest trick in the book. He says “Hi Genny!” and pretends to smile at someone behind his less-than-brilliant foe. He and the thug both make Smarts rolls,

and Jack wins with a raise. The thug swirls about, expecting an attack from behind, and is momentarily Shaken. The unfortunate goon also suffers -2 to his Parry until his next action, giving Jack time for a quick rabbit punch that just might put the big fellow down.

Two Weapons

A hero may attack with a weapon in each hand if he desires. This works just like any other multi-action, and inflicts a -2 penalty to each attack. (Note that the Two-Fisted Edge negates the multi-action penalty when attacking with two weapons.)

Unless your character is Ambidextrous, subtract another 2 points from the attack with the character’s off-hand.

Example: Jack is attacked by a pack of ravenous wild dogs. He has two knives, but isn’t Ambidextrous. The first attack roll suffers a -2 penalty (the multi-action penalty for using two weapons), and the second suffers a -4 penalty (two weapons plus the off-hand penalty). He makes his Fighting roll twice, and gets his Wild Die with each roll.

Unarmed Defender

If one character has a melee weapon and his foe doesn’t, the opponent is considered unarmed and is very likely in a world of hurt. Since he can only dodge and evade rather than parry, any armed attacker trying to hit him may add $+2$ to his Fighting roll.

Nearly all animals are considered armed due to natural weapons like claws and teeth.

Unstable Platform

A character attempting to fire a ranged attack from the back of a horse or other mount, a moving carriage, or other “unstable platform” suffers -2 to his Shooting roll.

Wild Attack

Sometimes a desperate hero may want to throw caution to the wind and attack with everything he's got. This is called a "wild attack," and can be devastating when used correctly. If used recklessly, it can quickly get even a veteran character slaughtered.

Performing a wild attack adds +2 to the character's Fighting attack and resulting damage roll, but his Parry is reduced by 2 until his next action.

Wild attacks can be used with multiple attacks, such as from the Frenzy or Sweep Edges, or with two weapons.

Withdrawing From Close Combat

Inevitably, your hero may decide discretion is the better part of valor. Whenever a character retreats from melee, all adjacent non-Shaken opponents get an immediate free attack (but only one—no Frenzy or other Edges apply unless they specifically say otherwise).

A character may take the Defend option (+2 Parry) while retreating from combat, but won't be able to perform other actions that round besides movement and will still suffer the free attack.

Mounted Combat

Mounted combat comes up quite often in swashbuckling games, as heroes make their escape from the clutches of their foe. Here are a few notes about how to handle these situations.

These rules refer to horses, but apply to mules, and other riding animals as well.

Movement

Mounts move on their rider's action card. Even though the animal may move, the rider may still Hold his action. If he's still on Hold on his action in the next round, move the horse on the rider's held card.

Falling

Anytime a character is Shaken or suffers a wound while on horseback he must make a Riding roll to stay horsed. If he fails, he falls. If the horse is moving, the rider suffers 2d6 damage (he sustains only 1d6 damage if the horse was still).

Firing on Mounted Targets

Shots directed at mounted characters use the Innocent Bystander rules (page 84) to see if the horse was hit. Of course, an attacker can always aim for the horse instead.

Fighting

Heroes who wish to fight from horseback must use the lowest of their Fighting or Riding skills. This makes it important for cavalymen to actually be able to ride well!

Characters who shoot while mounted suffer a -2 penalty to their Shooting rolls for firing from an unstable platform. The Steady Hands Edge negates this penalty.

Charging

A rider on a charging horse adds +4 to his damage roll with a successful Fighting attack. To be considered charging, the rider must have moved at least 6" or more in a relatively straight line towards his foe.

Trained Horses

Animals specifically noted as being trained to fight (such as warhorses) may attack any threat to their front during their riders' action. Untrained horses do not fight unless cornered.

Setting Weapons

A weapon with a Reach of 1 or greater can be "set" against a cavalry attack. To do so, the attacker must be on Hold when he is attacked by a charging mount (see above).

If so, he rolls to interrupt as usual, but each combatant adds +2 to his Agility roll for each point of his weapon's reach. The winner attacks first, and adds the +4 charge bonus to his damage; the loser gains no bonus.

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Wounded Mounts

When an animal is Shaken or wounded, it rears or bucks. A rider must make a Riding roll to stay mounted, or suffer the consequences of falling (see above). Mounts which aren't trained in fighting flee in a random direction when Shaken, taking their riders with them.

Tests of Will

Intimidate and Taunt allow a character to make a "test of wills" attack against an opponent. In combat situations, tests of will have objective effects, as seen below.

Tests In Combat

To make a test of wills, the character makes an opposed roll against his chosen target. The defender uses Smarts to resist Taunt, and Spirit to resist Intimidation.

The Game Master should modify both characters' rolls depending on the situation. Waving a gun in someone's face isn't polite, but it's definitely worth a +2 bonus to your Intimidation roll, for example (unless the target has an even bigger gun!).

A success means the attacker gets a +2 bonus to his next action against the defender during this combat. A raise on the roll gives the attacker the bonus and makes the defender Shaken as well.

This can be a great setup for an attack, a trick, or even a second test of wills if the first one didn't get a Shaken result.

Tests of Will

"Attack" Skill		Resisted By
Taunt	vs.	Smarts
Intimidation	vs.	Spirit

Example: Jack tries to Taunt a Spanish soldier by twirling his cutlass while giving a cocky smile. He rolls his Taunt and beats the soldiers's Smarts with a raise. The soldier is Shaken and Jack adds +2 to his next action.

Tests Out Of Combat

A successful Taunting or Intimidation has more subjective effects out of combat. An Intimidated foe might back down, or spill his guts about something the heroes want to know. An opponent who was humiliated with a really good Taunt might flee in shame—or he might be so infuriated he charges toward the hero and concentrates his attacks only on whoever made fun of him! This can be a really great way to distract a dangerous foe from a weaker ally.

Whatever the outcome, an attempted Taunt or Intimidate shifts the target's attitude one step towards Hostile (see page 188).

Tests of Will & Groups

A hero can only make a test of wills attack against a single foe. If that foe is the "leader" of a group, however, the rest of the crew is likely to follow his lead. So if the boss of a group of pirates is Intimidated and decides to back down, the pirates follow suit.

This is entirely subjective and depends on the situation, so the Game Master must make the call.

Damage

After a successful close combat or ranged hit, the attacker rolls damage.

Ranged weapons do fixed damage, as listed in the Gear section.

Hand weapons do damage equal to the attacker's Strength die plus a second die, which depends on the weapon (a sword, for instance, is a d8) and whether the wielder meets the minimum Strength requirement (see page 51). An unarmed combatant rolls only his Strength die.

Note that damage rolls of any sort are not considered Trait rolls (even ones using Strength), so Wild Cards don't get their Wild Dice and may not spend bennies on them. All damage rolls can Ace, however.

Bonus Damage

Well-placed attacks are more likely to hit vital areas, and so do more damage. If your hero gets a raise on his attack roll (regardless of how *many* raises), he adds +1d6 to the final total. This roll may Ace as usual!

Damage Effects

After hitting, your damage is compared to the opponent's Toughness. If the damage roll is less than the target's Toughness, the victim is beaten up a bit but there's no game effect. If the damage is equal to or higher than the victim's Toughness, he's Shaken (see below). Mark the victim with a counter of some sort to show its status (red gaming stones are perfect for this).

A raise on the damage roll means the victim is wounded. Extras are Incapacitated—they're injured badly enough to quit the fight, and may even be dead (see page 91, to find out for sure).

Wounds and Wild Cards

Each raise on a damage roll over a Wild Card's Toughness causes a wound. Wild Cards can take three wounds before they are Incapacitated (see page 90).

Each wound a Wild Card suffers causes a -1 cumulative penalty to his Pace (minimum of 1) and to all further Trait tests—up to the maximum of a hero's 3 wounds. A hero with 2 wounds, for example, suffers a -2 penalty to his Pace and any Trait tests.

If a hero suffers a wound and wasn't Shaken already, he's Shaken as well.

Timing

Characters sometimes take multiple hits on the same action card, such as when they're ganged up on by a group of bad guys. The game has been designed to let players roll all the attack dice at once to keep things fast and furious. Damage rolls, however, are resolved and applied one at a time. The attacker can decide what order to roll his damage in if it becomes an issue. This is especially useful when you're doing large skirmishes and are rolling handfuls of dice together.

The Soak Roll

A hero can choose to spend a benny to automatically eliminate a Shaken condition (see Shaken, below).

If the benny is spent immediately after taking one or more wounds from a single attack, you may make a Vigor roll as well. A success and each raise on the roll reduces the number of wounds suffered from that attack by 1. If the character is left with *any* wounds from the attack however, he's still Shaken as usual. Don't count the wound modifiers you're about to suffer when making this roll.

A character may only make one soak roll per attack. If a soak roll eliminates 2 of 3 wounds, for instance, a hero can't make another soak roll to eliminate the third wound. (The hero *could* spend a second benny to reroll the Vigor roll as usual, however.)

If a character suffers multiple hits on the same action card, he needs to spend bennies and make soak rolls after each result—before the next "set" of wounds is soaked.

Example: Jack gets attacked and hit twice in the same round by two English guards. The first attack makes him Shaken, and the second causes 2 wounds.

Jack takes the first result and is Shaken. He knows if he completely soaks the second, he won't be Shaken anyway. Now he spends a benny to make a Soak roll against the two wounds and gets a 5 on his Vigor roll. That negates one wound, but he remains Shaken.

He could now spend another benny to be unshaken, but can't negate the remaining wound.

Shaken

Shaken characters are rattled, distracted, or momentarily shocked by tests of will results, fear, and most commonly, damage.

Incapacitated

Characters who suffer 4 or more wounds are Incapacitated. It doesn't matter if the character is only just Incapacitated or takes 20 wounds, it still has the same effect.

Incapacitated characters fall unconscious for 1d6 days, during which time they can take no actions and are not dealt action cards in combat. A character who became Incapacitated due to wounds becomes Shaken if healed (through any means) but still has 3 wounds.

A second Healing roll may then be attempted to tend to any actual wounds the fallen hero has suffered (see below). Heroes Incapacitated by Fatigue must be treated for the specific cause of their stress in order to recover (see page 96).

Death

Heroes in the *Pirates RPG* do not generally die from their wounds. They may be out of action for a few days, captured by the villain and imprisoned, or left for dead on a desolate island, but they usually escape death.


Heroes usually only die as the result of a Finishing Move by a dastardly villain (see page 83), or the player's decision to undertake a suicidally heroic deed.

Healing

The Healing skill can be used to treat wounded characters after a battle.

Each attempt takes 10 minutes, and requires some basic supplies such as bandages and reasonably clean water. If these aren't available, the healer suffers a -2 penalty to his roll. The healer must also subtract the patient's wound levels from his skill roll. Incapacitated characters have 3 wounds, so subtract 3 from rolls to heal them.

A success removes one wound, and a raise removes two. Wounds must be treated within one hour of being received. Once an attempt to treat an injury has failed, it may not be attempted again—it must heal naturally (see page 91).



Being Shaken has several negative effects. First, Shaken characters may only move up to half their Pace and can perform no other actions (including running).

Also, if a Shaken character is Shaken again by a damaging attack (not by a Test of Wills, fear, suppression, or similar non-damaging effect), he suffers a wound instead.

When it is his turn to act, a Shaken character first attempts to recover by making a Spirit roll. Failure means he remains Shaken. With a success, the recovery check consumes the action but the character recovers and can remove his Shaken counter. With a raise, the character recovers instantly *and* may act normally.

Example: Genny flaunts a little cleavage at a thug (she Taunts him and gets a Shaken result). Jack takes advantage of the distraction to knock the man silly with his fist. He does just enough damage to get a Shaken result. Since the guard was already Shaken, he suffers a wound and drops.

Aftermath

After a battle, the players make Vigor rolls for all of their wounded allies (the GM may roll for wounded foes). With a success, that character is alive but Incapacitated (failure indicates death). With a raise, the wounds were only superficial and the character may function normally. This creates interesting choices for the players after battle as they must decide what to do with their wounded companions and living captives.

Walking Wounded: If it becomes important to know which Incapacitated characters can walk and which cannot, make a second Vigor roll for each. Those who make it are “walking wounded”—they may shamle slowly but still cannot fight or perform other useful actions.

Those who don't make the roll can be moved but risk aggravating their injuries. They must make another Vigor roll for each and every hour of movement. Should they fail, they begin to die. They may be stabilized with a Healing roll at -2, but any further movement will no doubt be fatal.

Natural Healing

Every five days, wounded or Incapacitated characters may make Vigor rolls. Wild Cards remove one wound level (or their Incapacitated status) with a success, or improve two steps with a raise. A critical failure on a natural healing roll increases a Wild Card's wound level by one. If the hero already has three wounds treat him as being Incapacitated. Extras recover from their Incapacitated status with a success and expire if they roll a 1 on their Vigor die.

Subtract wound penalties from these rolls as usual, as well as any Healing modifiers on the following table. These are cumulative, so rough traveling in intense cold with one wound is a total penalty of -5, for example.

Medical attention means that someone with the Healing skill is actively checking the patient's wounds, changing dressings, giving what medicines are available, and generally looking after the patient's well-being.

Healing Modifiers

Modifier	Condition
-2	Rough traveling
-2	No medical attention
-2	Poor environmental conditions, such as intense heat, or rain
+0	Basic Medical Attention (bandages)
+1	Good Medical Attention (physician)
+2	Expert Medical Attention (good hospital; these are extremely rare)

Fame & Infamy

Fame is of great importance in the *Pirates* world, as it separates the heroes and villains from the masses. To be a hero, one needs to be noticed.

Fame is a catch-all term, covering wealth, social standing, reputation, and anything else that gets a hero noticed by society at large. A hero's Fame reflects not only his position in society, but the esteem in which he is held, and his ability to affect those around him.

Your hero's Fame starts at zero, but can be affected by Edges and Hindrances as well as by his or her actions during the course of the game.

Fame or Infamy?

Fame can be positive or negative, depending on whether you wish to dabble in heroic or larcenous activities. Negative Fame is referred to as Infamy, and such a character is described as Infamous.

Of course, Infamous characters don't have to be bloodthirsty murderers. They may be a victim of circumstance, or a gentleman pirate whose activities are deplored by the powers that be. However, there is a fine line between gentleman piracy and outright villainy.

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A player character may gain Infamy, but if he drops below the threshold on the table on page 93, his character becomes a true villain. The player forfeits his character, who becomes an NPC under the GM's control.

Fame vs. Charisma

While Charisma is based on appearance and personality, it can also be modified by Fame. People are more likely to take notice of a famous person, regardless of his physical appearance or manners.

Fame vs. Rank

A hero's Rank is a measure of his experience, although it does incorporate a degree of fame. Rank is a by-product of earning Experience Points, which aren't always linked to heroic (or despicable) deeds. Sure, the hero may rescue the governor's daughter

and gains fame, but if he commits acts of torture in doing so, shouldn't he be punished as well?

Using Fame allows a character to shape his own destiny by deliberately performing heroic deeds. Even a character who doesn't earn many Experience Points can still become famous by getting himself noticed.

Do I Know You?

Famous characters are well-known, and even in an age without rapid communication, their description and deeds are common knowledge throughout the Spanish Main. To see if a character is recognized, either by accident or by bragging about himself, have the other person make a Smarts roll. There's a +1 bonus for every 10 points of Fame or Infamy a character has (rounded down).

Example: Jack Hawkins (with a Fame of -35) is walking through Cartagena when he bumps into a squad of Spanish soldiers. They make their Smarts roll, and add +3 for Jack's notoriety. Jack had better hope the guards haven't been reading the wanted posters recently.

Gaining Fame

Fame is measured with Fame Points, in exactly the same way experience is measured with Experience Points. Characters can rise to become famous heroes or infamous villains, or else they can slip into mediocrity.

Exactly what earns a character Fame, or reduces it in the case of Infamous characters, is up to the GM and should be based on a character's background. For instance, a noble will lose more Fame if found cheating at cards than a scurvy pirate. However, a few bonuses remain constant, as shown below.

Positive bonuses always make a character more Famous and move him upward from zero or negative totals. A character with -20 Fame who gets a +5 bonus moves to -15

Fame. Likewise, negative Fame modifiers lower the score. The same villain would move to -25 if he earned -5 Fame.

Fame or Infamy requires an action to be noticed and become common knowledge. Murdering someone in secret doesn't cost the character any Fame, but neither would secretly rescuing the governor earn him any.

Fame Event

- 1-3 For completing an adventure. This can be a positive or negative modifier, depending on the character's actions and the goal of the adventure.
- +X For taking certain Edges or Hindrances.

Using Fame

Being famous or infamous has its perks, as well as its drawbacks. A hero may use his Fame to influence other people, as shown on the Fame Benefits Table. The table entries are described below.

Fame Benefits Table

Fame	Benefit
-40	Character becomes a villainous NPC under the GM's control
-39 to -30	Reward
-29 to -20	Connection
-19 to -10	+1 to Intimidation and Streetwise rolls
-9 to +9	None. The character is unknown to the world at large.
10-19	+1 Charisma
20-29	Connection
30-39	Reward
40-49	Minor Enemy
50-59	+2 Charisma
60-69	Followers
70-79	Connection
80-89	Major Enemy
90-99	Sidekick
100	+4 Charisma

A character only benefits from the bonuses of Fame or Infamy—not both.

Example: Peg Leg Dave finally reaches 30 Fame. He now has +1 Charisma, a Connection, and a Reward. He doesn't gain the +1 Intimidation. Infamous characters have, however.

Charisma or Skill Bonuses

Famous characters, those with a positive Fame, increase their ability to get things done merely by asking, and so receive a bonus to Charisma. Charisma Bonuses are not cumulative. Infamous characters, on the other hand, get things done by making threats, and receive bonuses to Intimidation and Streetwise.

If your Fame (or Infamy) drops below a level where you gained a bonus to Charisma or to skills, you lose the bonuses. When your Fame rises again, you get them back.

Using your Fame against equally famous people rarely works. They're not beholden to you in the same way commoners are. Check the Fame of the character and his target. The character gains the appropriate bonus. However, if his opponent has a bonus to either Charisma or Intimidation, this acts as a penalty against the character.

NPCs should never make Persuasion rolls to convince a player character to do something. That should always be roleplayed.

Example: Count Leo de Plume (Fame 27), a player character, is trying to persuade the pirate Captain One-Eyed Hans (Fame -16) to work for him. Leo gets +1 Charisma for his Fame, but suffers -1 because Hans has an Intimidation bonus. Hans is not impressed by the Count's social position.

Had Leo been trying to persuade Captain LePlante (Fame 50) to assist him, he would actually suffer an overall -1 Charisma penalty.

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Connection

People like to be associated with the rich and famous. When a hero gains Connections, he must pick a specific group, as per the Edge of the same name. The Connection should be appropriate to the character's background. For instance, while a group of merchants may back a renowned privateer, they're unlikely to back a known pirate or smuggler.

Should the character's Fame ever drop below the level at which he gained the specific Connection, the Connection severs ties with the hero and he loses this benefit. If his Fame rises again, he may pick a new Connection (which can be the same group he previously lost). Alternately, a hero may trade a Fame Connection (not Infamy) for automatic membership in a fencing academy (see page 107).

Example: John "Nine Toes" Lewis increases his Infamy to -20, which gets him a Connection. Lewis picks a group of pirates as his Connection.

Later, Lewis' Fame drops to -18. As this is below the threshold for the Connection, the pirates abandon Lewis, claiming he has "gone soft."

With some hard buccaneering, Lewis gets his Fame back to -20. He could retake the Connections to represent his original pirate band, or he could take a new group. Were Lewis Famous, he could join an academy instead.

Enemy

This works as per the Hindrance of the same name. The GM should determine who the enemy is and what his grudge is against the character. It might be simple jealousy, or maybe the hero did something to upset his enemy on his climb to fame and fortune.

It doesn't matter if the hero's Fame drops below the level at which he gained his foe, his Enemy doesn't give up his vendetta.

Should the hero gain a Major Enemy while his Minor Enemy is still at large, the foe simply steps up his campaign against the character. Otherwise, the hero gains a new enemy.

Followers

Heroes often acquire dedicated servants, a devoted crew, or others who voluntarily follow the hero on his adventures.

Five followers join the hero's band. Any casualties are not automatically replaced. So long as the hero has the Fame necessary to gain this benefit, he may trade a Rank advancement opportunity to gain five more followers.

The followers must feed, and generally want a piece of whatever loot, treasure, or other rewards the hero acquires. Otherwise, they are completely dedicated to their idol and risk their lives for him under any normal conditions. In general, they won't knowingly throw their lives away, but those who have been with the hero for a few years might.

Followers don't automatically leave if a character's Fame drops, but they might begin to grumble, refuse orders, and eventually mutiny.

Followers generally come with only basic equipment depending on their particular background (pirates have a cutlass for example). The hero must purchase any additional equipment for his Followers himself.

Reward

The hero receives some sort of reward for his activities. A Famous hero might receive money from the governor, a small plot of land, a medal, a minor title, or maybe even his own ship. The GM should make sure this fits the character's backstory and deeds.

Sidekick

The hero gains a Novice Rank sidekick. The sidekick is a Wild Card, gains experience as usual, and has abilities that complement or mimic his hero's.

In general, the player controls his sidekick just like any other allied character. Of course, the sidekick may occasionally cause trouble (by getting captured, running into danger when he's not supposed to, etc.). The player should be prepared for his "Edge" to occasionally become a "Hindrance."

If the sidekick dies, the character may trade an advancement to replace him, so long as he has the necessary Fame, of course.

Situational Rules

We've placed the situational rules—rules for that don't come up every game—apart from the main section so that you can ignore them until you need them.

If this is your first time through the book, skim over the various headings so you know what's in here, then come back and check them out in detail if you plan to add such a situation to an adventure or when you need them.

Allies

Allies play a big part in the *Pirates RPG*. They serve as troops under your hero's command, loyal retainers, or pirates in search of loot.

Keeping up with allies in the *Pirates RPG* is quite simple. Just copy the Allies sheet on page 251 and fill in the blanks. There's a selection of useful allies fully statted out in the Encounters chapter at the back of the book.

We've given the GM some tips on using allies on page 186.

Allied Personalities

You can add a little flavor to your allies by rolling on the Personality Table. Jot down the keyword on the Allies sheet so that you and your Game Master can have a little insight into each particular ally's character.

For the most part, you should consider these general impressions with no particular game effect. What they can do is help both the players and the GM decide just how an ally might react in a given situation.

A player with a ship's captain character could look over his list and choose the "Observant" character to act as lookout while sailing through a fog bank. If he has to go with the "Lazy" ally's for some reason, there's a good chance the GM will rule he loses attention sometime during his watch. These little notes can add quite a bit of depth to your extras.

Allied Personalities

d20	Personality
1.....	Young
2.....	Cruel
3.....	Old
4.....	Happy
5.....	Experienced
6.....	Impetuous
7.....	Lazy
8.....	Sneaky
9.....	Bright
10.....	Dumb
11.....	Crude
12.....	Agile
13.....	Observant
14.....	Clueless
15.....	Mysterious
16.....	Creative
17.....	Artistic
18.....	Fearless
19.....	Cowardly
20.....	Heroic

Experience

Allies who take part in battle with their heroic employers gain experience as well—but not as quickly as player characters. Don't keep track of their experience points—just roll randomly to see if they've "leveled."

At the end of a game session in which the allies had a significant role (usually by taking part in combat), roll a d6 for each group of identical troops. On a roll of 5-6, the survivors level up just like player characters.

Ammo

Keeping track of ammo for all your NPC allies can be a real pain. Here's an easy and dramatic way to handle this problem.

The ammo level of each group of NPCs starts at Very High, High (the usual level), Low, or Out. A dot for each of these levels can be found on the Allies Record Sheet.

After each fight, the ammo drops a level (unless the GM feels the allies didn't really use much in that scene). In combat, if the allies are dealt a deuce, their ammo level drops one level *after* that round. This makes

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for dramatic situations and realistic logistical problems while eliminating a major book-keeping chore.

Fatigue

Heat, cold, hunger, thirst, lack of sleep, and drowning are all sources of “Fatigue,” a downward spiral that can lead to a character’s death if he doesn’t find a way to recover.

A character who falls victim to Fatigue passes through several “fatigue levels” before finally succumbing to them and passing on. These states, and how to recover from them, are described below.

Fatigued

The hero is tiring quickly. All of his Trait checks suffer a -1 modifier until the source of his fatigue is relieved (see the individual hazard descriptions).

Exhausted

The hero is fading fast and will collapse soon if help is not received. He suffers -2 to all his Trait rolls until the source of his fatigue is relieved.

Incapacitated

The character collapses and is near death. He may be able to whisper incoherently, but is otherwise inactive and unable to perform any actions. He can take no actions until he receives treatment for whatever caused the condition.

Death

The hero passes on. Whether or not a hero ever reaches this level of Fatigue is up to the GM. Freezing to death isn’t a particularly heroic way to die, but it does stop players abusing the “heroes can’t die” rule.

Multiple Hazards

A character only has one “Fatigue” track. Say a hero hasn’t eaten in days and finally becomes Fatigued. He later ventures out into a blizzard and has to roll against the cold. His Fatigue penalty counts against his Vigor roll as usual, but if failed, he becomes Exhausted. He doesn’t gain two *different* Fatigued results. A character without food or water in extreme heat or cold is in great danger of keeling over dead from exposure.

Example: Jack stays up all night on watch for trouble as their boat travels across the dark waters of the Spanish Main. He fails his Vigor roll for getting no sleep and is Fatigued. Later the next day, during a storm, he is swept overboard. He now must make a Swimming roll at -1 due to his Fatigue. He fails yet again and is now Exhausted even though the Fatigue came from two different sources.

Hazards

The following are the most common types of environmental hazards, with details on when a character must roll, any important



modifiers, and how one recovers from any effects he's suffered from it. The Game Master should use these hazards mostly for dramatic purposes.

A quick trip outside through a heatwave isn't worth keeping up with, but a long trek through the jungles of Mexico certainly is, especially if it heightens the drama and makes the characters think about things they might otherwise ignore, such as warm clothing, shelter, or eating their animals to stay alive.

Bumps and Bruises

Characters who suffer minor but troubling injuries, such as being dragged by a horse, thrown around a ship's hold in a storm, or stumbling down a slope, can suffer from Fatigue rather than suffering actual wounds.

The GM should usually allow a Vigor roll to avoid damage when suffering conditions like those described above. Those who fail gain a Fatigue level from multiple bumps and bruises.

The Game Master may occasionally allow sure-footed characters to make Agility rolls to avoid this damage instead.

Fatigue gained in this way can lead to Exhaustion, but not to being Incapacitated.

Recovery: Fatigue levels from bumps and bruises automatically improve one step 24 hours after the original injuries were suffered.

Example: Jack and Genny must race down a steep slope to escape the clutches of some angry Indian warriors. The Game Master decides that Jack and Genny trip and suffer bumps and bruises if they don't make Agility rolls. Genny succeeds, but Jack fails, and suffers -1 to all his activities for the next 24 hours.

Cold

Trudging through deep snow for hours on end, or facing biting, bitter winds, can dehydrate and fatigue a character as quickly as blazing deserts. Every four hours spent in weather below freezing (32°), a character must make a Vigor roll. Failure means the

victim gains a Fatigue level. Subtract 1 from the character's Vigor roll for every 20 degrees below freezing.

The standard roll assumes the character is wearing a warm shirt and cloak. If the victim has less substantial clothing, subtract 2 from the roll. Winter gear adds +4.

Recovery: Warmth and shelter from the elements allows a hero to recover a Fatigue level every 30 minutes.

Drowning

Water is deadly to those unprepared for it. Here are some standard water hazards and how often a hero must make a Swimming roll.

- A character with at least a d4 in Swimming does not have to roll when in calm water.
- In rough water, all characters must make a Swimming roll every minute.
- In white water, the character is swept into eddies and hydraulics and must roll every round.
- A hero forced to tread water for long periods without a buoyant object for support must roll once every hour.

Each failure adds a Fatigue level. A character becoming Incapacitated dies in a number of rounds equal to half his Vigor. If someone can get to the victim within five minutes of death, he can be resuscitated with a Healing roll at -4.

Subtract 2 from a hero's Swimming rolls if he is trying to hold something up, including another character, or has his hands or feet tied. This penalty rises to -4 if he has his hands *and* feet tied. Add 2 to the roll if he's holding something buoyant.

Recovery: Once a character is out of the water, he recovers one Fatigue level every five minutes.

Heat

Intense heat, typically that over 90 degrees Fahrenheit, can cause heat exhaustion and heat stroke, both of which are very dangerous. The actual danger is from dehydration, so well-supplied and conscientious characters can greatly improve their chances in extreme heat simply by carrying a good amount of water and drinking frequently.

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When the temperature reaches 90 degrees or more, the GM should pay attention to how much water characters are able to drink. If they are able to drink at least 4 quarts of water a day, they may be tired and sunburned, but are in no immediate danger.

If that amount of water isn't available (and it often isn't on long sea voyages), characters must make Vigor rolls every four hours. Subtract two from the roll if the hero has half the water he needs, and subtract 4 if he has less than half.

Also subtract 1 from the roll for each additional 5 degrees it is above 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

Add +1 if the hero stops all physical activity.

Add another +1 to the roll if the character can get into substantial shade.

Failure means the character gains one level of Fatigue.

An Incapacitated character suffers heat stroke, and may suffer brain damage. Make a second Vigor roll when the character becomes Incapacitated. If that roll is failed, the victim's Smarts and Strength decrease by one step permanently (to a minimum of d4).

Recovery: A victim who receives water recovers one Fatigue level every hour.

Hunger

Most people need approximately one pound of food every 24 hours. If sufficient sustenance isn't available, a character begins to suffer from severe hunger.

Starting the first day after the meal was missed, the character must make a Vigor roll. Subtract 2 if the hero has less than half the required amount. Failure means the poor wretch gains a Fatigue level.

After the first day, the character must roll for hunger every 12 hours, and thirst every 6 hours. On land, a successful Survival roll each day provides enough fresh food (and water) for one person per raise. At sea, dried food stores can prevent hunger, but can cause other problems. After three months without fresh food (particularly fruit), a character must make a Vigor roll each week or contract scurvy (see page 100).

Recovery: At least a pound of decent food (rather than weevil-infested ship's biscuits) lets a hero recover a Fatigue level each hour.

Sleep

Most people need a minimum of six hours sleep every 24 hours. Those who go without aren't likely to be at their best. A character who goes without sleep must make a Vigor roll at a cumulative -2 every 12 hours after that. A large amount of coffee, sugar, or other stimulant adds +2 to the roll.

Instead of dying, a character who suffers this much Fatigue due to lack of sleep simply falls unconscious for 4d10 hours.

Thirst

An average-sized man requires two quarts of water a day. This is doubled in both very dry conditions (such as a desert) or areas of high humidity (a jungle) as the hero perspires constantly and begins to dehydrate.

If enough fresh water isn't available, the character begins to suffer from dehydration. Starting the first day after the water runs out, the character must make a Vigor roll. Subtract 2 if the hero has less than half the required amount. Failure means the character gains a Fatigue level.

After the first day, the character must make the required Vigor roll every 6 hours. On land, a successful Survival roll each day provides enough fresh water (and food) for one person per raise. At sea, the ship's water stores will keep a man from dying, but the water goes stale on long journeys increasing the likelihood of dysentery—a grim prospect in the close confines of a sailing ship.

Heroes opting to drink sea water actually make things much worse by dehydrating themselves further. The character must still make Vigor rolls as if he was not drinking, and suffers -2 penalty from the effect of the salt water. Continuing to drink sea water quickly leads to both physical and mental incapacity, hallucinations, and eventually kidney failure and death.

Recovery: Two quarts of fresh water allow a character to recover a Fatigue level every hour.

Other Hazards

The following are a few more hazards characters must occasionally deal with.

Falling

Falling off a roof is likely to break your hero's arm. Jumping from a high cliff, even into water, is probably certain death.

Falling damage is 2d6, plus an additional 5 points per 5" (10 yards) fallen (round up), to maximum of 2d6+50.

Water: A fall into water reduces damage by half, and an Agility roll means the character dives and takes no damage at all, though he must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken. A fall over 15" (30 yards) requires an Agility roll at -2 to avoid damage.

Fire

Fire is the most deadly element. Roll the damage listed below when a character is first burned and at the beginning of each round until he is free of the flame. Armor does not protect a character from fire.

Fire Damage

Damage	Description
+2	Burning weapon
1d10	"Spot fire," such as a burning arm or leg
2d10	Campfire
3d10	Lava

Spreading: Anytime something flammable is hit by fire, roll 1d6. On a 6, the target catches fire. Very flammable targets, such as a bales of hay, catch fire on a 4-6. Volatile targets, such as a person soaked in oil, catch fire on anything but a 1.

Each round after a victim catches fire (at the beginning of his action), roll as if checking to see if the victim catches fire again. If he does, the fire grows in intensity and does its current level +2 in damage that round. This is cumulative to +6.



Smoke Inhalation: Fires in confined areas produce deadly smoke. Every round a hero is in such an environment, he must make a Vigor roll. A wet cloth over the face adds +2 to the roll. If the roll is failed, the hero gains a Fatigue level (as described on page 96).

Disease & Poison

When a character ingests, contacts, or otherwise suffers from poison or disease, he must make a Vigor roll and subtract any penalties for the poison or disease's strength. If failed, the hero suffers the effects described.

Treating Poison and Disease

If a poison can be treated (some can't), it requires a Healing roll at -2. Snakebites and similar poisons can usually be treated. More sinister poisons, such as curare, can only be treated with specific medicines.

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Diseases are much more insidious, and can usually only be treated with specific medicines. When a disease is encountered, you'll find out if characters can recover from it, and how, in the accompanying text.

Here are few you may encounter on the Spanish Main:

Arsenic (-2): Loss of one die of Vigor in 2d6 days. If this would drop Vigor below d4 then death results. Often used in small doses over time to make detection difficult and mask symptoms.

Black Death (-4): Death within 1d4 days. There is no known cure for this disease.

Curare (-2): Immediate Exhaustion; death in 2d10+10 minutes.

Cyanide (-4): Death in 3d6+10 seconds. Must be ingested.

Scurvy (-2): Loss of one die of Vigor each month. If this would drop Vigor below d4 then death results. Characters with scurvy

cannot recover any Fatigue levels and cannot heal any Wounds. Plentiful fresh food (for at least a week) allows the victim to recover from the disease.

Fear

The *Pirates RPG* is primarily a game of swashbuckling action, but there are some things in the Caribbean capable of causing even the toughest hero to flinch. In most cases, the players will likely act out their heroes' reactions, but sometimes you need a game mechanic to handle true fear.

When the characters see certain creatures (or enter certain situations), they must make a Guts check.

A success on the Guts check means the character manages to overcome his fear. With a failure, the character is Shaken and must make a Vigor roll or suffer severe nausea or mental shock. This inflicts a -1 penalty to all actions for the remainder of the encounter. A roll of a natural 1 on the Guts roll (regardless of any Wild Die) causes the victim to panic as well.

A panicked character immediately moves his full Pace plus running die away from the danger and is then Shaken. He may try to recover as normal.

Punishments

The life of a pirate may be "adventurous," but it's also one of criminal activity. When the authorities finally catch up with a pirate, he can expect to be punished.

Flogging

Flogging is the standard punishment for minor crimes and is used on criminals, as well as to punish sailors. The implement of choice for carrying out floggings is the cat-o'-nine-tails, a multi-thong whip, often tipped with small metal balls. Being flogged is known among mariners as getting a "lick of the cat." A typical punishment is 20 lashes, though



the captain's word is law, and sentences of 70 lashes or more, are not uncommon for serious infractions.

If the victim falls unconscious before his full punishment has been carried out, he is usually allowed a day to recover before the punishment is continued. We say usually, because a particularly cruel person may have someone whipped to death.

For every twenty lashes, the victim must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue. This can lead to the victim's death if the whipping is prolonged. Victims recover one level of Fatigue every 4 hours of rest.

Hanging

Hanging, also known as the Tyburn jig and dancing the hempen jig, is the most common way to execute criminals.

Why are we including this grisly spectacle? First, piracy is a crime, so there has to be a punishment. More importantly, rescuing a hanged comrade before he dies makes for a great scene in an adventure.

Assuming a character is first dropped a few feet (usually from a gallows), he makes a Vigor roll at -2. That's -4 for Obese or Brawny seadogs. Failure means your neck snaps and you're dead! A critical failure does exactly what you might think. Though, if you're being hanged, you weren't using that head of yours anyway, were you?

Assuming you survive long enough to start worrying about little things like breathing, make a Vigor roll at -4 each minute (that's every ten combat rounds) or suffer a level of Fatigue. Don't worry, it won't take long.

Gibbet

Hanging is a merciful form of execution, at least in comparison to the gibbet. The gibbet is a small, human-shaped iron cage into which prisoners are sealed and then hoisted so they're visible to all and sundry.

Death comes slowly as the poor victim dies of thirst, all the while suffering intense cramps because he can't move his limbs.

If you want to use the gibbet in your *Pirates* adventures, use the Thirst rules.



Keelhauling

Few pirates resort to this barbarous form of punishment, but it's common in the harsh disciplined world of the navy (which is one of the reasons men turn pirate in the first place).

The unfortunate soul is held by ropes, thrown overboard, and dragged along the ship's keel, where barnacles tear at his flesh. Victims suffer 2d6 damage. That may not sound like a lot, but the process can be repeated up to three times at the captain's discretion.

Marooning

Rather than actually kill a fellow member of the crew, pirates prefer to maroon them. Marooned pirates are left on a deserted island with a flask of water and a pistol with a single shot of powder.

The pistol isn't offered so the pirate can hunt, after all, he only has a single shot. No, the pistol gives the pirate a quick way of ending his life. Pirates unwilling to kill themselves can do little but wait until they die of thirst.

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A few pirates are more merciful, and leave marooned colleagues with provisions, a knife, and sometimes even an axe. Equipped with this gear, a pirate can survive for many days, even weeks or months. Just ask Robinson.

As a GM, if you punish player characters with marooning, we suggest you give them a chance of escaping or being rescued. Otherwise, it's just a succession of die rolls until the heroes eventually die of thirst or starvation.

Walking the Plank

Being made to walk the plank is a common punishment in pirates stories. There's little evidence for this practise being used in real life, but don't let that stop you having fun. Just use the Drowning rules.

Particularly cruel pirates would cut a victim first, and then throw him into shark-infested water. If he doesn't drown, he's shark food.

Ground Travel & Terrain

The Spanish Main is a big place, and there is an awful lot to explore. Sometimes you even have to leave the comfort of your ship and puts those legs to good use. This section just covers land travel. We'll look at ship travel in more detail in the chapter Life at Sea.

Movement Rates

Land movement rates can be worked out using the chart below. It serves for animals as well as characters.

Base Speed: Half Pace in miles per hour, modified by terrain, as follows.

Ground	Speed	Terrain Type
Easy	+0.5	plains, road
Average	+0	rocky ground, light forest, low hills
Hard	-1	steep hills, sand, medium forest
Difficult	-2	mountains, dense forest, marsh

Base speed cannot drop below 0.5 miles per hour unless the hero is Incapacitated. Groups usually move at the speed of the slowest member.

Terrain Effects

Should the heroes find themselves travelling through forests or inhospitable deserts, here's a few rules to bear in mind.

Forests, Jungles, and Marshes

Forests and jungles are rated as light, medium, or heavy vegetation. Notice rolls (and Driving, if you've got a land vehicle) suffer a penalty in accordance with the Cover rules (page 82). Conversely, Stealth rolls for hiding receive a bonus to account for ground cover.

Survival rolls are made at +2 in a forest or jungle, as there's always something to eat (just beware of poison plants).

Hazards

Hazards are natural occurrences that cause problems for characters. They can be meteorological, such as storms or blizzards, or related to the terrain, such as quicksand or avalanches.

Your GM has a lot more information on these events (page 227). All you, the player, need to know is to make sure your character keeps his eyes peeled for danger.

Mass Battles

The *Pirates RPG* is set against the turmoil of the colonial nations' power struggles on the Spanish Main.

While the game revolves around small bands of heroes and can easily handle dozens of combatants on the tabletop, fighting a pitched battle with hundreds, even thousands, of participants at one-to-one scale isn't really practical. That's what these Mass Battles rules are for.

With these you can easily handle a small band of English soldiers holding a fort against a Spanish army using cannons, or an entire French fleet battling a pirate fleet in the wide vastness of the ocean.

Follow the steps below to resolve massive conflicts quickly and easily.

Step One: Setup

This is the hardest part, but once it's done, the rest of the battle goes by like lightning.

- Give the larger army 10 tokens.
- Divide the number of troops in the army by 10 to figure out how many troops each token is worth.
- Give the opposing force a proportionate number of tokens (round up). If one group has 100 men and another has 60, for example, the larger army has 10 tokens and the smaller one has 6.
- The side with more tokens gets to add the difference to his Battle Roll.

Adjustments

The example above is very simplistic. Very rarely are you able to look at two opposing forces and instantly realize their ratio. Most armies have a range of troops of different qualities with different weapons and armor.

If you're willing to fudge it, you can guess a bit. Maybe each cavalry soldier in an army is worth 2 men, and a cannon worth 5.

For mass ship combats, it's quickest to assume that each ship is worth a number of points equal to the maximum number of 8-pdr cannons it can mount.

Step Two: Modifiers

The Game Master now adds up any situational modifiers. The most common modifiers are listed on the table below.

Battle Modifiers

Tokens

+1..... The side with more tokens adds +1 for every token he has more than his foe this round.

Terrain

-1..... Foe has slight advantage (rolling hills, light forest, low wall, entrenchments).
 -2..... Foe has minor advantage (high hills, light defenses).
 -3..... Foe has major advantage (cliffs, fortifications).

Battle Plan

(GM's Call—determined each round)

+/-?..... The army gains a penalty or a bonus depending on the tactical decisions made by the leader each round. Springing a hidden flank attack, sending reserves to a crucial front, and so on, all add to the Battle roll.

These modifiers are cumulative, so attacking entrenchments on hills is a penalty of -2 (-1 for the entrenchments, -1 for hills).

Characters in Mass Battles

The heroes of your campaign aren't likely to sit idly by while war rages around them. Those who want to get involved can dramatically affect the results of the battle.

Have each character make a Boating, Fighting, or Shooting skill roll (depending on the type of battle being fought) each round. Add or subtract the number of tokens difference between their side and their opponent's as well (if the enemy has 8 tokens and the allies have 5, the heroes must subtract -3).

Also add +1 to the roll for each Rank a hero has above Novice to account for his various abilities.

Character Results

Failure: The hero is stopped by overwhelming numbers and bad fortune. He suffers 4d6 damage.

Success: The hero fights well and adds +1 to his side's Battle Roll, though he suffers 3d6 damage.

Raise: The hero wreaks havoc, slaying enemy leaders and destroying important assets. He suffers 2d6 damage, but adds +2 to his side's Battle Roll.

Two Raises: The hero covers himself in glory! Scores of foes fall before him and his success inspires his allies to fight like demons. His efforts add +2 to his side's Battle Roll and he emerges from the fight unscathed.

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Ammo: Each round a hero enters the fray and uses his Shooting skill, he expends ammunition.

Characters with ranged weapons use 3d6 shots. If the hero winds up without any ammunition, he'll have to change tactics for the next round.

Step Three: Battle Rolls

Now generals each make a Knowledge (Battle) roll and add all the modifiers earned above. Each success and raise causes the other side to lose one token.

Step Four: Morale

Each round in which an army loses a token, its leader must check morale. This is a Spirit roll modified by the circumstances below:

Morale Modifiers

Mod	Situation
-1	For each token lost in battle so far
+2	The army is made up predominantly (75% or more) of fearless fanatics.
+2	The army is within major fortifications, such as a base or prepared positions
+2	The army cannot retreat

With a success, the army fights on and both sides return to Step Two. Failure means the army is defeated but the troops conduct an orderly retreat. Make one more Battle Roll and then end the fight. (A leader may choose this option at any time as well.) On a result of 1 or less, the troops rout and the battle is over immediately.

Aftermath

When one side routs, retreats, or runs out of tokens, the battle ends and it is time to resolve casualties. Some of the troops lost in the battle can be recovered as they regroup, repair, or receive first aid.

Each side rolls 1d6 for each token lost in the fight. The victor recovers a lost token on a roll of 4-6. The loser recovers a lost token on a roll of 5-6. A routed army recovers only on a roll of 6.

Once both sides have figured out how many tokens they lost, remove the casualties from each force. The side that started with the larger army simply multiplies the number of tokens lost by 10%. Losing four tokens, for example, means the entire army suffered 40% casualties. The side with the smaller force must figure out what percentage of his men and machines are left. If he started with 8 tokens and ends up with only 2, for example, he's lost 75% of his force.

Once you've figured the total percentage of casualties to your army, distribute the losses among specific units as evenly as possible.

Example: Jack Hawkins leads his fifty-strong pirate crew on a daring night raid of Port Elizabeth. His motley men sneak up on the English garrison under cover of darkness, but Jack has underestimated the size of the enemy force. The GM rules that the British commander's 70 infantry, twenty cavalry, and two cannon are the equivalent of 100 of Jack's lightly-armed pirates, so Jack gets just 5 tokens to the British force's 10.

The battle begins with Jack at a distinct disadvantage—he's at -5 to his Battle roll for being outnumbered. The fortifications at Port Elizabeth give him a further -2, but his surprise attack is worth +2, the GM rules.

Jack makes a Fighting roll at -1 (he gets -5 for the difference in force sizes and +4 for his Rank) and manages to get a raise on his roll, so adds +2 to the battle roll.

Finally, the two sides make their battle rolls and Jack rolls big! He gets three raises, eliminating four of the British tokens, while losing only one of his own. He suffered a wound from his Fighting roll, but his heroic efforts have evened the odds somewhat. The pirate flag could yet fly over Port Elizabeth before the night is out!

Combat Summary

Initiative

- Deal each Wild Card and group of like characters one card.
- Reshuffle the deck the round *after* a Joker is dealt.
- A Joker allows the character to act whenever he wants in a round, and adds +2 to all his Trait and damage rolls that round.

Movement

- A character may move up to his Pace and perform an action, such as making a hand-to-hand attack, firing a ranged weapon, or making a test of wills.
- A character may attempt additional actions, such as running, but incurs a -2 penalty to all Trait rolls for each additional action.

Fighting

- The attacker makes a single Fighting roll. If the roll is equal to or greater than his target's Parry, the attack hits (see **Damage**). A raise on the attack roll adds +1d6 to the damage.

Shooting

- The attacker makes a single Shooting roll and subtracts 2 for Medium range and 4 for Long range. If the roll is successful (TN 4 or more), the attack hits (see **Damage**). A raise on the attack roll adds +1d6 to the damage.

Damage

- If the damage is equal to or greater than the victim's Toughness, he's Shaken.
- A Shaken character who receives a second Shaken result is wounded.
- If the damage exceeds the victim's Toughness by a raise, he's Wounded. Wounded Extras are Incapacitated and removed from play. Wild Cards can suffer up to three wounds.
- When a Wild Card suffers more than three wounds, he falls unconscious for 1d6 days.

Aftermath

- A Healing roll on an injured Wild Card heals 1 wound with a success and 2 with a raise. If the roll is failed, the wound must heal naturally.
- Incapacitated Extras roll Vigor to see if they are alive or dead.

Tests of Will Summary

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Intimidation | Opposed roll versus Spirit; +2 to next action against this target with a success; +2 bonus and opponent is Shaken with a raise |
| Taunt | Opposed roll versus Smarts; +2 to next action against this target with a success; +2 bonus and opponent is Shaken with a raise |

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Attack Options Summary

Attack	Penalty
Aim	+2 Shooting/Throwing if character does not move
Area Effect Attacks	Targets under template suffer damage, treat cover as armor; missed attack causes 1d6" deviation for thrown weapons, 1d10" for launched weapons; x1 for Short range, x2 for Medium range, x3 for Long range
Breaking Things	See Obstacle Toughness Table; Parry 2; No bonus damage or Aces
Called Shots	
Limb	-2 attack
Head	-4 attack; +4 damage
Small target	-4 attack
Tiny target	-6 attack
Cover	
Light	-1
Medium	-2
Heavy	-4
Darkness	
Dim	-1 attack
Dark	-2 attack; targets are not visible beyond 10"
Pitch Darkness	Targets must be detected to be attacked at -4
Defend	+2 Parry; character may take no other actions
Disarm	-2 attack; defender makes a Str roll vs. damage or drops his weapon
The Drop	+4 attack and damage
Finishing Move	Instant kill to helpless foe with lethal weapon
Firing Into Melee	See Innocent Bystanders
Full Defense	Character rolls his Fighting, using the result as his Parry
Ganging Up	+1 Fighting per additional attacker; maximum of +4
Grappling	Fighting roll to grapple, on a raise opponent Shaken; Defender can make opposed Strength or Agility to break free (any other action made at -4); Attacker can make opposed Strength or Agility to damage victim
Innocent Bystanders	Missed Shooting or Throwing roll of 1 (2 with blunderbusses) hits random adjacent target
Nonlethal Damage	Characters are knocked out for 1d6 hours instead of wounded
Obstacles	If attack hits by the concealment penalty, the obstacle acts as Armor
Prone	As Medium cover; prone defenders suffer -2 Fighting, -2 Parry
Ranged Weapons in Close Combat	Pistols only; Target Number is defender's Parry
Touch Attack	+2 Fighting
Trick	Describe action; make opposed Agility or Smarts roll; opponent is -2 Parry until next action; with a raise, the foe is -2 Parry and Shaken
Two Weapons	-2 attack; additional -2 for off-hand if not Ambidextrous
Unarmed Defender	Armed attackers gain +2 Fighting

FLASHING BLADES

Swashbuckling involves leaping onto tables, swinging from ropes and chandeliers, sliding down sails (with or without the aid of a knife), pulling rugs from under feet, and all manner of other stunts. The key ingredient, however, is swordsmanship.

This chapter takes a look at the fencing academies of the Main and the special moves they teach their students. Let's be clear on one thing though, fencing in the *Pirates RPG* isn't like modern Olympic fencing. There are no rules governing fencing in this era (duels are different, but we'll get to them later), and the use of knees, fists, elbows, and heads is a vital part of the art.

We've put these rules here, out of the way, because not everyone is going to be interested in fencing. You don't need to join a fencing academy to swing a sword, and Tricks pretty much cover standard swashbuckling stunts, anyway. Since it's placed after the main rules, you'll understand the rules terminology better as well.

Historically, fencing was a male pursuit. However, this is a game, and national and private fencing academies are open to males and females with no prejudice. The military remains a male bastion, however.

Types of Academy

Before we get down to nifty moves and flashing blades, we'll look at the types of academies available. All academies are places of learning. They are also known as salles (from the French for "room").

Curriculum: One shouldn't think of academies as purely places to learn the arts of war. Fencing masters are learned men, and teach geometry, mathematics, anatomy, and philosophy as well. Characters needn't buy these skills as Knowledges. Instead, they receive a +2 bonus to Common Knowledge rolls involving these subjects.

National Academies

National academies are run by a specific government and are open only to members of that nation. Thus, one finds English, French, and Spanish academies in the Caribbean.

Membership during game play costs \$800, with an additional fee of \$400 per year to remain a member. Characters who start the game with the Fencing Academy Edge are assumed to have paid their enrollment fees and their first year's membership.

Heroes joining a national academy, whether during character generation or during play, must be of the same nationality of the school.

Military Academies

Military academies are similar to national academies, in that they are open only to members of one race, but only officers in the army or navy may enroll.

As well as teaching the fencing arts, such academies often teach military tactics as well (covered by the character learning the Knowledge (Battle) skill). They are also social

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clubs, where officers can relax, enjoy a drink or game of cards, and catch up on the latest news from Europe.

Joining costs \$500, with an additional fee of \$250 per year to remain a member. Any heroes who start the game with the Fencing Academy Edge are assumed to have paid their enrollment fees and their first year's membership.

Heroes wishing to join a military academy, whether during character generation or during play, must be a member of the army or navy of the same nationality as the school.

Private Academies

Private academies are run by individuals, rather than a nation or the military, and are usually open to anyone who can afford the enrollment fees.

Enrollment costs \$1000, with an additional fee of \$500 per year to remain a member. Characters who begin the game with the Fencing Academy Edge are assumed to have paid their enrollment fees and their first year's membership.

Private academies, depending on who runs them, may be little more than a school dedicated solely to combat, or they may be

equivalent to social clubs, where carousing is as much a part of the curriculum as wielding a blade.

Any character can join a private academy, pending special restrictions.

Acceptance

If your character joins an academy during character creation, you can skip this section. If you're thinking of enrolling during play, read on.

While the list of requirements measures a character's aptitude, and his money proves he can pay his tutors, his face still has to fit. In short, if the fencing master doesn't like a student, he won't be accepted.

Prospective applicants make a Persuasion roll at -4. The character gains a +1 bonus for each \$100 he offers as a bribe.

On a success, the character is allowed to join. When he next advances, he may buy the appropriate Academy Edge. This represents the time it has taken to master the basics of the style. With a failure, entry is refused but the character may try again in 12 months. On a critical failure, the hero is blacklisted and may never try to join the academy again.

Note that between the time he joins and the time he takes the Edge, the character is a member but cannot use the benefits described below.

Benefits

So you're thinking of joining an academy, learning all the tricks, and then quitting? Well you could, but there's a few good reasons why you shouldn't.

All academies have a secret, a technique they only teach to members of Legendary rank who have been members for at least three years of game time.

In addition, academies can be used as a place of residence by members for up to one month. All accommodation costs are covered by their annual dues. During this time, the member is referred to by a code name, which makes an academy a good place to hide.



The character can call upon the support of fellow members once per year as if he had the Connections Edge. If he has the Edge, he gains a +2 bonus to his Persuasion and Streetwise rolls to secure assistance from his academy.

Academies of the Main

The following fencing academies can be found on the Spanish Main. Each is treated as a separate Edge, with national requirements noted where applicable. A character may belong to only one academy unless he has the Multiple Academies Edge.

While bonuses are often granted in specific instances, Edges are not. Thus a character who belongs to the Academia Nacional Española may buy Frenzy at a lower Rank and use it with any type of weapon. His Wild Attack damage bonus applies only to slashing weapons, however.

Academia de Hierro

Requirements: Novice, Florentine, Agility d8+, Fighting d6+

Run by two Spanish brothers, Juan and Pedro Martinez, the Academy of Iron is a private institute. The brothers teach the Florentine style of fencing.

When fighting with two weapons or a weapon and cloak against a single foe armed with a single weapon, the character gains +1 Parry, as if the second weapon were a buckler. Students may learn the Wall of Steel Edge at Seasoned Rank.

Secret: Opponents with First Strike or Improved First Strike do not receive a free attack against the hero due to his whirling blades.

Academia Nacional Española

Requirements: Novice, Strength d8+, Fighting d6+, must be Spanish

The Spanish favor slashing weapons, such as sabers, over rapiers. As such, their attacks tend to be furious blows rather than thrusts.

The character increases the damage of his weapon by one die type when making a Wild Attack with a slashing blade. In addition, he may buy the Frenzy Edge at Novice Rank and Improved Frenzy at Seasoned.

Secret: The character suffers no penalty to Parry when making a Wild Attack.

Académie Nationale Française

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d8+, must be French

The teachings of the French National Academy, on Martinique, are more about embarrassing your opponent than finishing him quickly.

Students receive +1 to Fighting rolls when performing a Disarm or Entangle maneuver. They receive a +2 bonus when attempting Agility Tricks.

Secret: The character learns a wide variety of Tricks as well as how to avoid falling for them. He has a +2 bonus to resist Tricks and opponents attempting to Disarm or Entangle the character do so at -2.

Academy of the Sea

Requirements: Novice, Agility d6+, Fighting d6+, Throwing d6+

Despite its name, the Academy of the Sea, isn't a school for naval officers, it's for pirates. The fencing master, Jacob Bowen, is a retired "sea captain," who is deliberately vague about his history. Located in Tortuga, the academy does not advertise its presence, and knowledge of its existence is through word of mouth only.

Bowen primarily teaches knife combat, and students inflict Str+d6 damage when using a knife. Thrown knives have their range increased to 5/10/20. Students are encouraged to take the Close Fighting and Improved Close Fighting Edges as well.

Secret: When using a knife, the character draws an extra initiative card and keeps the best. This stacks with Level Headed and Improved Level Headed.

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Davenport's Academy

Requirements: Novice, Agility d6+, Strength d6+, Fighting d6+

Henry Davenport founded his private academy in Port Royal a decade ago. Although his particular style has earned him much ridicule from his peers, he has attracted a certain type of clientele. You see, Davenport teaches pugilism as part of fencing. Central to Davenport's philosophy is that a gentleman should never be defenseless, even without a blade. Although few gentlemen share his views, there's plenty who see the benefits of his ideas.

Students inflict Str+d4 damage with their bare hands (or feet, elbows, or head).

Students are also taught to use whatever is to hand as a weapon, and may take the Improvisational Fighter Edge at Novice Rank. Likewise, Davenport's "win by any means" attitude allows students to take the Dirty Fighter Edge at Novice as well.

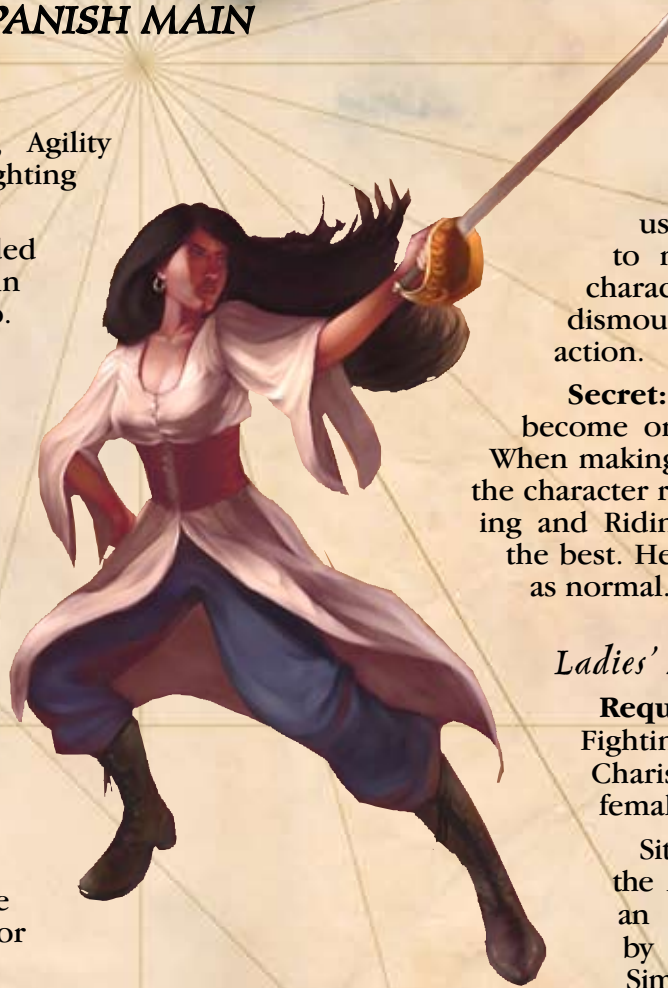
Students are encouraged to take the Close Fighting and Improved Close Fighting Edges as well.

Secret: Students of this academy never count as Unarmed Defenders.

La Caballería Española Enseña

Requirements: Novice, Fighting d6+, Riding d8+, must be a Spanish cavalry officer

The Spanish Cavalry School is an elite military academy. Students receive no penalty for an unstable platform when riding (but suffer on other unstable platforms—such as ships—as normal). They may use the highest of their Fighting or Riding when making mounted attacks.



The character also gains +2 to Riding rolls except when using his Riding die to make attacks. The character can mount or dismount a horse as a free action.

Secret: The character has become one with his horse. When making mounted attacks, the character rolls both his Fighting and Riding dice and keeps the best. He rolls his Wild Die as normal.

Ladies' Academy

Requirements: Novice, Fighting d6+, Taunt d6+, Charisma 1+, must be female

Situated in Port Royal, the Academy is run by an Italian gentleman by the name of Luca Simone. Although he accepts only beautiful ladies into his school, he never dallies with them. According to rumors, he has more than enough ladies to occupy his spare time anyway.

Men have long underestimated women, and this school attempts to exploit that weakness. Exactly why Simone chooses to teach women military matters is known only to him. Some say that Simone is only the front man, and that a mysterious red-headed female is the true power behind the school.

Students of this academy may take the Dirty Fighter and Really Dirty Fighter Edges at Novice Rank.

In addition, their use of feminine charms and distractions gives men -2 on Fighting rolls against them.

Secret: The character's good looks are as dangerous as her blade. The character may add her Charisma to her melee damage. Roll the dice as normal, then add the Charisma bonus to the total.

Longstride's Academy

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d8+, Lunge, may not be French

Claude "Longstride" Benoir, a Frenchman, founded his academy on Barbados after he left the French army in disgrace. He accepts students of any nationality except his own.

The academy teaches variants of the lunge maneuver, but Benoir adds a few tricks. The school has an obvious weakness, of course, in that the techniques are useless against adjacent foes. The key to using this school successfully is keeping one's foe at bay.

When using a lunge, the character may opt to extend his reach by 2. However, he suffers a -2 penalty to his Fighting roll.

When using a standard lunge (+1 Reach), the character receives a +1 bonus to Parry until his next action as he keeps his body lower than normal.

Secret: The hero may use the First Strike and Improved First Strike Edges at a range of 1". If the attack succeeds, the opponent must cease his movement for the round, whether he is injured or not by the attack.

Musketeers' Officer Academy

Requirements: Novice, Fighting d6+, Shooting d6+, Musketeer, must be a French officer

The King's Musketeers are still considered, by the French at least, to be some of the best troops in Europe. Their loyalty is certainly beyond reproach.

The character may use his musket in melee combat as if it were a pistol (see page 85).

Musketeers who score a raise on a Fighting roll when using a musket-mounted bayonet may make a free Shooting roll against the same target. The difficulty is the opponent's Parry, as per using a firearm in melee.

Secret: If he scores a raise on a Fighting roll with a mounted bayonet, he may make a free Shooting attack as above. The attack automatically hits for normal damage.

Peg Leg's Academy

Requirements: Novice, Agility d6+, Fighting d6+, must have the *Lame* or *One Leg Hindrance*

To call Peg Leg's establishment an academy is rather stretching the word to the limits of its definition! "Peg Leg" Dave, an English sailor who lost a leg to French cannon fire, founded his school to help crippled sailors learn to defend themselves. The school is run from a back room in the Three Ferrets Tavern in Port Royal.

Students first learn how to act helpless as a way of deceiving their opponents. At the start of a fight, before the cards are dealt, the character may make a Smarts roll opposed by the average Notice skill of all villains within 12". With a success, the character passes himself off as a harmless cripple, causing foes to underestimate him. He automatically gets the Drop against the first opponent he attacks.

Students also learn how to trip foes. On a raise with an Agility trick, the victim falls prone in addition to suffering the standard penalty.



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So you join an academy and learn some fancy moves, but does this make you a skilled fighter? Academies do give you a cool move or special bonus, but usually only in limited situations. They also use a leveling opportunity, however, with which you could buy an Edge you could use more often.

Being an effective fighter is all about the Edges you take and how you use Maneuvers in combat. Fighting a noble from Longstride's Academy? Get adjacent to him so his special move is useless. Being prepared negates his edge.

The academies certainly give you an advantage, but alone they're no match for a clever fighter. Join one if you think it fits your hero's style, but you don't have to belong to an academy to be a dangerous combatant.



Secret: The character has learned to overcome his disability. While he still suffers the penalties for movement associated with his injury, he no longer receives the penalty to his Fighting.

Royal Fencing Academy

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d8+, must be English

Located in Port Royal, the Academy is as much a social club for the English aristocracy as anything else. According to one report, it is also a nest of foreign spies.

Students learn to conserve their energy by letting their opponents make the first move in a fight. The character may take the Riposte Edge at Novice and the Improved Riposte Edge at Seasoned.

Characters on Hold receive a +2 bonus to interrupt a foe's action. If the character does not move in a round (a Lunge counts as movement for this purpose), he gains +1

Parry until his next action. This stacks with the Defend maneuver if the character remains stationary.

Secret: If the character does not move in a round, he may make a riposte against every Fighting attack made against him, no matter the source. For instance, the character could make two ripostes against a foe with Frenzy who failed both attacks.

The Old School

Requirements: Novice, Agility d6+, Strength d6+, Fighting d6+, Two Fisted

This academy's name refers to the style of fighting it teaches, rather than the age of the institution. Run by a large Scotsman by the name of Dougal MacLellan, the school teaches the use of buckler and long sword, a style which went out of fashion across Europe almost a century ago.

Students learn to use the buckler as a weapon, and may use it to deliver Str+d4 nonlethal damage. If the character performs the Defend or Full Defense maneuvers while using a long sword and buckler, he gains an extra +1 Parry (in addition to his bonus for using a buckler) or +2 to his Fighting roll respectively.

Secret: When armed with a long sword and buckler, the character may make an additional Fighting attack each round with either the sword or the buckler. This stacks with Frenzy and Improved Frenzy.



The word duel comes from the Latin term *duellum*, a contraction of duo (meaning two) and bellum (meaning war).

Duels come in two varieties, formal and pirate. Both are governed by a strict set of rules, which do not apply in standard fights where someone pulls a blade and begins fighting.

Formal Duels

Formal duels are typically fought to defend against a slight to one's honor, whether real or imaginary.

The Challenge

Challenging someone to a duel isn't as easy as it sounds. For a start, a challenge made against a social inferior or superior does not have to be accepted (all nobles short of the king are considered equal status for these purposes). The very idea that a noble would deign to fight a formal duel with a commoner is unthinkable in high society.

Challenging a woman to a duel is considered a serious breach of social etiquette, even if she's a pirate, but a woman may accept such a challenge. She may fight herself (another social breach) or appoint a male to fight in her place.

A challenge may be made verbally, by throwing down a glove, or, if you really want to rile your opponent, by slapping him about the face. This is usually done with a glove, but a hand can be used. In all cases, there must be at least three witnesses.

Stopping the Duel

Either party may stop the duel before it takes place by delivering a sincere apology to his rival. This can get messy where both parties have been guilty of insult, but there are rules governing such matters.

When both parties are guilty of slighting the other's honor, the person who made the first insult must apologize first, followed by the second party.

Decorum dictates that a proper apology be accepted. Honor is considered restored and the matter forgotten.

This "get out" clause is especially useful when someone makes a challenge in anger, only later to find out his rival is a highly skilled fencer!

Weapons

The challenged party receives the choice of weapons, except in two cases. First, when the challenger makes an oath that he is no swordsman pistols must be used, and second, members of an academy have the right to use the melee weapons of their school.

The standard dueling weapon is the rapier, though the challenged party may pick any weapon he wishes.

Types of Duel

Duels do not have to be to the death. Many are to first blood (in game terms, the first duelist to suffer a wound loses), or until one party yields. Note that drawing first blood may also actually involve the death of one party. This is considered an acceptable risk.

In all cases, the challenged party receives the honor of deciding the type. Duelists who frequently call for duels to the death quickly make a name for themselves, and are likely to be challenged by someone better than them in the near future.

In a duel to the death, the victor has the right to desecrate his opponent's corpse as he sees fit. Such is the price for accepting, and losing, such a fight.

Seconds

Both parties must nominate a second (and a third and fourth if they wish). Seconds are responsible for arranging all the details of the duel, such as the time and place, and the seconds on each side arrange such details between themselves, leaving the participants out of such trivial matters.

Seconds, as their name implies, have one further important duty. If one duelist cannot make the agreed time and place, say through



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illness, or a sudden change of heart followed swiftly by running away, the second must take his place.

Many nobles bring an entourage to a duel, including a doctor and a chronicler (to record the details), as well a courtiers and lackeys who want to witness the fight.

Running the Duel

Most duels are run like any other combat. The Spanish Main is not a European court, and tricks, such as flinging sand in a rival's eyes, are considered acceptable behavior. Once the fight begins, decorum often goes by the wayside.

Pistol Duels

Pistol duels work slightly differently to melee duels. Both combatants bring a single-barreled pistol of their choice, which is loaded with a single shot and powder charge at the scene by the seconds in view of each other.

The contestants then stand back to back and walk a number of paces before turning and firing. In game terms, the number of paces brings the duelists to the top of the short range for the weapon with the smallest range. Both contestants are dealt initiative cards as normal.

In the event both shots miss their targets, the duelists may consider the matter settled, or may reload their pistols and try again. This usually depends on the nature of the incident that prompted the duel.

Pirate Duels

Despite their reputation for roguish and criminal behavior, pirates also have a code of honor. Indeed, most captains rigidly enforce the code to prevent crews turning on each other. Those who fail can expect to be severely punished, either with a lick of the cat, keelhauling, or marooning (for more on the game effects of these punishments, see pages 100-102).

The Challenge

When two pirates cannot settle their disagreement with words, one may make a challenge to a pirate duel. The pirate codes typically dictate that if a challenge is made, the other party must either accept or admit that he was in the wrong in whatever the dispute was about.

Pirates who make challenges out of spite or greed (such as wanting a treasure another man earned fair and square) are in breach of the code, and receive 20 lashes from their captain.

Unlike formal duels, pirates do not need seconds. The time and place is usually right now and on the nearest patch of open ground. Pirates may have a code, but they don't go much for formality.

Types of Duel

Pirates, like formal duelists, may fight to first blood, surrender, or death, depending on the severity of the offense that caused the duel in the first place.

While most pirates fight in the regular manner, a few add an extra level to duels to the death, by binding together the off-hands of the contestants in a knife fight, for instance. This prevents either party from fleeing and forces them to fight. Cutting the rope before the duel is ended is treated as surrendering.

In game terms, the furthest a roped fighter may move in this kind of duel is 1" from his opponent.

Weapons

Pirate duels are always fought with a single dagger. Drawing another weapon results in the guilty party forfeiting the duel at once. If he continues to attack, he is likely to be shot by one of the spectators.

Naturally, a fighter who loses his dagger in the duel is allowed to draw a replacement—the onlooking pirates want to see an exciting contest, after all.

LIFE AT SEA

Ships, as you might expect, form a core part of the *Pirates RPG*, and so they get their own chapter. Here you'll find everything you need to use ships in your games, including sample ships, rules for creating vessels with a unique feel, ship combat, chases, and how to travel between ports.

You can use *Pirates of the Spanish Main* CSG ships in your RPG battles by choosing a ship with the appropriate number of masts. Whenever a ship takes a wound, simply remove a mast, just like in the CSG. That way, you can quickly see the state of your ship.

Bear in mind that losing a mast doesn't mean losing a cannon. Only taking a Weapon Critical Hit causes cannons to be lost. It doesn't matter which mast you lose, either. These rules don't require you to fire from masts, and range is measured from the center of a ship rather than from masts.

Ship Templates

All ships, regardless of size or nationality, use a standard template to describe them.

Note that, although this chapter deals specifically with ships, other vehicles in the *Pirates RPG* can be described using the same template.

Acceleration: This lists the vessel's Acceleration in inches per turn, based on tactical tabletop rates.

Top Speed: This is the maximum number of inches a ship may move per turn on the tabletop.

Travel Speed: This is the base number of squares the vessel moves in a day on the map of the Spanish Main. See page 128 for a more complete explanation.

Handling: Some vessels are more maneuverable because of their rigging, the ship's design, or the skill of those who built it. A ship's Handling adds directly to the captain's Boating rolls, as well as the crew's if making a group Boating roll.

Toughness: This is the ship's ability to withstand damage. The number that follows in parentheses is the ship's armor, which is already figured into the listed Toughness. A ship's base Toughness is equal to its listed Toughness minus the armor. Note that most ships have Heavy Armor. That isn't because they're particularly well-armored, it's to reflect the fact that musket shots and axes aren't likely to damage them.

Wounds: Ships can take a certain number of wounds before sinking. In general, the smaller the ship, the fewer wounds it has and so the easier it is to sink.

Crew: The first score is the number of crew required to operate the ship's sails, rigging, and so on. Having less than this number subtracts 2 from the crew's Boating rolls, and having less than half the required number subtracts 4. Sailors must have a minimum Boating skill of d6 to count as crew. The required crew does not count gunners.

Each gun fired or reloaded in a round requires two cannoneers. Note that most vessels can get by with manning only half the guns at any one time.

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The number after the plus is the number of passengers the vessel can easily accommodate, including places to eat, sleep, and linger. Up to twice this number can travel for short distances (a day or less). If the crew stat is altered for any reason, this doesn't affect the number of passengers the ship can carry.

Cargo Space: This is the number of cargo spaces the ship has. Cargoes are bought by "spaces" rather than having to keep track of every individual crate. The exact dimensions of cargo spaces are deliberately vague to keep bookkeeping to a minimum. A cargo space may be converted to hold two guns instead (one on either side of the vessel).

Guns: The maximum number of 8-pdr cannon (if any) that may be mounted on this ship. These are divided evenly along either side. Larger or smaller guns use more or less room, depending on their size (as described on page 123).

Cost: The cost of a ship includes its guns. It does not include ammunition, bow-chasers, extra lumber or sails, or any other necessities of shipboard life.



Ships of the Main

There are a wide variety of ships sailing the Spanish Main. We've organized them by their number of masts, but within each group are ships of different types and names. Each size of ship has a basic template along with the modifications needed if you want to create a particular style of vessel.

1-Mast Ships

Small fast vessels are commonplace in the Main, and are used by all sides.

Acceleration: 2 **Toughness:** 13(2)
Top Speed: 3 **Wounds:** 1
Crew: 3+6 **Travel Speed:** 1
Cargo Space: 4 **Handling:** +1
Guns: 2 **Cost:** \$15,000
Notes: Heavy Armor

Skiff: Skiffs don't carry much cargo, but are quick. To make a ship a Skiff, add +1 Handling and +1 Travel Speed, but lose 1 cargo space.

Sloop: Sloops offer a good blend of speed and firepower. They have +1 Top Speed and +2 Guns.

La Repulsa (Sloop)

"The Repulse" is a small but effective scout sloop, rigged for speed and evasion.

Acceleration: 3 **Toughness:** 13(2)
Top Speed: 4 **Wounds:** 1
Crew: 3+6 **Travel Speed:** 1
Cargo Space: 4 **Handling:** +1
Guns: 4 (8x4lb)
Notes: Heavy Armor
Hindrances:—
Edges: Windcatcher

2-Mast Ships

Larger ships have greater speed and range and can carry more cargo in a single haul.

Acceleration: 2 **Toughness:** 14(2)
Top Speed: 4 **Wounds:** 2
Crew: 8+16 **Travel Speed:** 2
Cargo Space: 4 **Handling:** 0
Guns: 6 **Cost:** \$20,000
Notes: Heavy Armor



Galley: Galleys are long, open ships, used for centuries in the Mediterranean. They have sails, but are propelled by oars allowing them to move even when becalmed or sailing into the wind. Most are also equipped with large rams. Galleys have +5 Toughness, -2 Handling, and require 10 times the regular crew of a ship the same size. Taking the Ram Edge does not count toward a galley's Edge limit.

Hoy: The hoy is a sturdy seagoing vessel primarily used for fishing or to carry cargo between islands, rather than for long ocean voyages. They are excellent for conducting the hit-and-run raids preferred by pirates, but lack the resilience for prolonged sea battles. With sufficient cannons mounted, they make small but effective warships. To make a ship into a hoy, add +2 Handling and -1 Travel Speed.

HMS Gallowglass (Hoy)

HMS Gallowglass is manned by many ex-cons, including several of "Bones" Wylie's crew. These men can strip valuables from sinking ships and barely get their feet wet.

Acceleration: 2 **Toughness:** 14(2)
Top Speed: 4 **Wounds:** 2
Crew: 8+16 **Travel Speed:** 1
Cargo Space: 4 **Handling:** +2
Guns: 8 (6x8lb, 4x4lb)
Notes: Heavy Armor
Hindrances: Poor Crew, Rats
Edges: Hated Foe (Pirates), Overgunned

3-Mast Ships

Three masted ships offer a good blend of speed, cargo capacity and firepower, and are popular with merchants, navies, and pirates alike.

Acceleration: 2 **Toughness:** 16(4)
Top Speed: 5 **Wounds:** 3
Crew: 15+30 **Travel Speed:** 3
Cargo Space: 8 **Handling:** -1
Guns: 12 **Cost:** \$25,000
Notes: Heavy Armor

Brigantine: Brigs are fast and sleek, and dedicate more room to firepower than cargo space. To make a ship into a brigantine, lose 2 cargo spaces, then add +2 Toughness, +1 Handling, and add \$10,000 to the Price.

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Crumster: While less maneuverable than a hoy, crumsters have more guns and cargo space. A crumster has -4 guns and requires half the regular crew of a ship its size.

Schooner: The schooner has a narrow hull and low draft fully laden. Schooners have +2 Handling, -1 Top Speed, and -2 Toughness. They only mount half as many guns as other ships their size, but taking the Shallow Draft Edge does not count toward the ship's limit.

La Cleopatre (Schooner)

Gossipmongers claim the ship's lifelike figurehead, modeled after the famous queen of Egypt, is instead based on Vicomtesse de Richelieu, who posed for the sculptor.

Acceleration: 2 **Toughness:** 14(4)
Top Speed: 4 **Wounds:** 3
Crew: 15+15 **Travel Speed:** 3
Cargo Space: 3 **Handling:** +1
Guns: 13 (6x8lb, 14x4lb)
Notes: Heavy Armor
Hindrances: Communal Quarters, Fragile Rigging, Small Hold
Edges: Overgunned (x3), Shallow Draft

4-Mast Ships

These large ships are the mainstay of most navies and are sought-after by pirates looking to build fleet or carve out a reputation.

Acceleration: 3 **Toughness:** 18(4)
Top Speed: 6 **Wounds:** 4
Crew: 24+48 **Travel Speed:** 3
Cargo Space: 10 **Handling:** -2
Guns: 16 **Cost:** \$60,000
Notes: Heavy Armor

Frigate: Frigates carry goods around the Main and back to Europe. Military frigates are normally assigned to operate in small groups. Frigates have -2 Toughness and +2 Handling. They only mount half as many guns as standard four masters, but are half the price and require only half the crew.

Galleon: Galleons have elevated decks fore and aft so defenders can fire on enemy crews. Their tall, rounded design, however, makes them unstable. Galleons have +2 Toughness, -1 Handling and cost twice as much as a standard four mast vessel.

Sea Nymph (Galleon)

After Captain Jack Hawkins was "asked" to leave the Ballista, he worked his way back to prominence by taking the El Gama Larga, which he renamed the Sea Nymph as an insult to his former crew.

Acceleration: 3 **Toughness:** 20(4)
Top Speed: 6 **Wounds:** 4
Crew: 24+48 **Travel Speed:** 3
Cargo Space: 5 **Handling:** -3
Guns: 18 (12x8lb, 12x4lb)
Notes: Heavy Armor
Hindrances: Small Hold
Edges: Oars, Overgunned

5-Mast Ships

The biggest and most fearsome ships in the Main, the great five mast ships are floating fortresses, striking fear into any unfortunate enough to get in their way.

Acceleration: 2 **Toughness:** 24(4)
Top Speed: 5 **Wounds:** 5
Crew: 25+50 **Travel Speed:** 3
Cargo Space: 10 **Handling:** -3
Guns: 20 **Cost:** \$100,000
Notes: Heavy Armor

Man o' War: Men-o-war have multiple gundecks, a contingent of marines, and thick oak hulls. They are usually reserved for use by the admiral of the fleet. Few pirates have ever managed to acquire one. These huge vessels have +8 guns, but require five times the regular crew for a ship this size. They also cost five times the price of a regular five masted vessel.

Harbinger (Man O' War)

Just sighting the black sails of Blackheart's flagship has sometimes caused ships to strike their colors and surrender without a fight.

Acceleration: 2 **Toughness:** 26(4)
Top Speed: 5 **Wounds:** 5
Crew: 125+50 **Travel Speed:** 3
Cargo Space: 10 **Handling:** -3
Guns: 28 (16x8lb, 24x4lb)
Notes: Heavy Armor
Hindrances:
Edges: Well Built

Edges & Hindrances

As with characters, ships have personalities, strengths, and weaknesses. In game terms, ships can have Ship Edges and Hindrances.

Ships receive 1 free Ship Edge, chosen by the GM. He can then assign Ship Hindrances to buy more Edges. Just like character Hindrances, a Major Hindrance earns the ship 2 points and each Minor Hindrance earns a ship 1 point. A ship may have a maximum of one Major and two Minor Hindrances. Edges cost 2 points each. A ship may have a number of Edges equal to its Wound rating. Unless otherwise stated, an Edge or Hindrance may only be taken once per ship.

Ships can be given Edges during game play without taking Hindrances (to the limit of the ship's Wounds still). A character must forfeit one of his character's advancements to buy his ship an Edge. The downside is that if the ship is sunk, the hero has lost an advancement. Some Hindrances, as noted in their description, can be bought off during play.

The GM needn't give every enemy ship Edges or Hindrances, though any captained by Wild Cards or recurring villains should have them. For ease, the GM can roll randomly for each Edge or Hindrance to determine which a ship has.

d20	Edge	Hindrance
1	Storm Worthy	Rats!
2	Thick Hull	Warped Rudder
3	Shallow Draft	Weak Frame
4	Ram	Poor Crew
5	Extra Cargo	Deep Keel
6	Long Range Guns	Ghost Crew
7	Unsinkable	Thin Hull
8	Helmsman's Dream	Slow
9	Windcatcher	Tinder Box
10	Overgunned	Damage Prone
11	Hated Foe	Poor Rigging
12	Oars	Small Quarters
13	Fast	Small Hold
14	Disciplined Crew	Leaky
15	Rapid Fire	Undergunned
16	Swift Topsails	Barnacles
17	Powerful Guns	Lack of Quarters
18	Passengers	Exposed Decks
19	Well Built	Fragile Rigging
20	Artillery	Small Mounts

Edge Descriptions

A number of the following Edges are based on the *Pirates CSG*, and recreate some of the ship and crew abilities in RPG terms.

Artillery

The crew is trained to fire the guns at exceptionally long ranges. For each 10" over the maximum range of the guns, the crew suffers an additional -1 penalty to Shooting rolls. Guns cannot fire more than twice their maximum range.

If the ship has both Long Guns and Artillery, increase the base Range by 50% before factoring the Artillery Edge.

Example: a standard 8-pdr cannon has a maximum range of 32". The crew may extend this to a maximum of 64". Shots at targets between 33" and 42" away are made at -5 instead of the usual -4. Between 43" and 52", the penalty is -6, between 53" and 64", the maximum range, the penalty is -7.

Example: an 8-pdr with the Long Range Edge has a Long Range of 48". The crew can fire to a maximum range of 96" yards, suffering a -5 penalty at 49"-58", -6 at 59"-68", and so on up to a massive -9 at 89"-96".

Disciplined Crew

The crew is well trained and disciplined. The Edge grants a benny to the ship's company as a whole each session. The benny can be used on rolls made by any crew member, but only if the roll directly affects the ship in some way (firing a cannon is permissible, but firing a musket is not). The captain decides when to use the benny even if he is not making the roll. It cannot be used toward experience points for any crew member.

Extra Cargo Space

The hull of the ship has been designed for optimum space. The ship has 50% more Cargo Spaces (rounded down).

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Hated Foe

The crew, for whatever reason, has a hatred of ships of a certain nation. Each time this Edge is taken, pick one nation (pirates count as a nation for the purposes of this Edge).

The crew gains +2 to Shooting rolls against ships flying that nation's flag.

Helmsman's Dream

The ship responds easily to the helmsman's touch. Increase the vessel's Handling by +1.

Fast

The ship cuts through water like a hot knife through butter. Add +1 to the ship's Travel Speed.

Long Range Guns

The cannons on the ship have a longer range than others their size. Increase the Range of all guns by 50%. So, an 8-pdr cannon would increase from 8/16/32 to 12/24/48.

If the ship has both the Long Guns and Artillery Edges, increase the base Range by 50% before factoring the Artillery Edge.

Oars

The ship is equipped with oars (also called sweeps) and needs neither wind nor sails to move.

The ship has an Acceleration of 1, a Top Speed of 3, and a Travel Speed of 2 when under oar. These ratings are lower than a galley, as the ship does not carry as many oars.

Overgunned

The ship can carry more guns than vessels of a similar size. This Edge can be taken more than once (but remember a ship has a maximum number of Edges equal to its number of wounds).

The ship adds 2 to its Guns rating each time the Edge is taken. These additional guns do not take up any cargo space.

Passengers

The ship's passenger quarters are quite roomy. Increase the number of Passengers by 50% (rounded down).

Powerful Guns

Although the cannons use regular balls, they propel them with greater force. They add +2 to damage rolls when firing regular cannonballs.

Ram

The ship is fitted with a ram. The ram has AP 4 and halves damage sustained when ramming. A galley may not have a second ram.

Rapid Fire

The crew has been trained to fire and reload in expert time. Each round, you may reroll one failed Shooting roll made with a ship's cannon, as if you had spent a benny. This does not apply to cannons fired by Wild Cards, however.

Shallow Draft

A ship with this Edge draws less water than other vessels of her size. Add +1 to Handling to avoid running aground. The ship can also sail up rivers and into shallow harbors without difficulty.

Storm Worthy

The ship has sailed through hurricanes and emerged unscathed.

During a storm (see page 229), the GM draws an extra card and the captain chooses whichever one he wishes. This stacks with the Storm Chaser and Wind Sense Edges.

Swift Topsails

The sails are designed in a way that maximizes the wind. The ship has +1 Top Speed.

Thick Hull

The ship is of the sturdiest construction and has +1 Armor. This Edge may be taken more than once.

Unsinkable

The ship has a remarkable ability to withstand hits. When your ship takes a Critical Hit, the captain may modify the result by 1 point (plus or minus) as he sees fit.

Well Built

The ship is solidly built with her ribs close together to withstand cannon blasts. Increase her base Toughness by 2.

Windcatcher

This ship is rigged for speed. With a combination of lateen sails, staysails and moonrakers, the crew catches every scrap of available wind. This adds +1 to the ship's Acceleration.

Hindrance Descriptions

Some of the following Hindrances are based on the *Pirates CSG*, and so should also be familiar to fans of the game.

Barnacles (Major)

Maybe it's the type of wood, or perhaps the ship is just unlucky, but it attracts more than its share of barnacles and worms. The ship must be careened every two months instead of every four or it suffers penalties to Handling (see page 129).

Damage Prone (Major)

Cannonballs seem to know exactly where to hit the ship. Whenever the ship suffers a Critical Hit, the firer may modify the result by 1 point higher or lower as it suits him.

Deep Keel (Minor)

The ship's keel is particularly deep. The ship suffers a -1 penalty to Handling when attempting to avoid running aground. At the GM's discretion, the ship may not be able to enter shallow harbors.

Exposed Decks (Major)

The decks of the ship leave the crew exposed. Grapeshot causes 2d6 crew hits with a success and 3d6 with a raise.

Fragile Rigging (Minor)

The rigging and masts are fragile and can easily be smashed by chain shot. Chain shot reduces the ship's Top Speed by 1" with a success, and 2" for each raise. Replacing the rigging and buying off this Hindrance costs \$400 per point of the ship's base Toughness.

Ghost Crew (Minor)

The ship's former crew have remained loyal to her even in death and do not like the current mortal crew. Ghostly hands grab the wheel, cut the rigging, and generally cause havoc for the living crew. Each session, the GM gets a "ghost" benny which he may use solely to force the crew to reroll a successful die roll. The crew must keep the lowest roll.

Communal Quarters (Minor)

The ship's company share a single communal area barely adequate for the needs of the crew, let alone allow for passengers.

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Halve the number of passengers the ship can carry (rounded down).

Leaky (Minor)

No matter how much tar the crew uses, the ship leaks like a sieve, and takes an extra d6 damage in a storm.

Tarring the ship costs \$50 per point of base Toughness, and negates the bonus until the ship is next careened, at which point it starts leaking again.

Poor Crew (Minor)

Despite the captain's best efforts, he cannot get the crew to work together. Even new crew members quickly fall out with their colleagues.

When making a Group roll for the crew, they use a d4 Wild Die.

Poor Rigging (Minor)

The ship's rigging needs replacing. All of it. The vessel suffers -1 to Top Speed until the rigging is replaced.

Replacing the rigging removes the Hindrance, but costs \$150 per point of the ship's base Toughness.

Rats (Minor)

The ship has a rat infestation that simply won't go away. A Cargo Space dedicated to provisions holds just 300 "points" of food, rather than 500 as normal (see page 129). The rats eat the rest during the voyage.

Slow (Major)

No amount of wind can make the ship move much above a crawl. Reduce Travel Speed by 1 (to a minimum of 1).

Small Hold (Major)

The ship's hold is poorly designed and makes storing cargo a nightmare. The ship has half the listed Cargo Spaces (rounded down).

Small Mounts (Major)

The ship can only mount 4-pdr cannons, though it treats them as 8-pdrs for the space they require.

Small Quarters (Major)

Due to errors during construction, the crew quarters are inadequate. The crew suffer Cabin Fever every 15 days instead of every 30 (see page 130).

Thin Hull (Minor)

The ship's outer hull is thin and easily shattered by cannonballs. The ship's Armor is reduced by 2 (to a minimum of 2).

Replacing the Armor and removing the Hindrance costs \$300 per point of the ship's base Toughness.

Tinder Box (Major)

The ship has an almost supernatural capacity for catching fire, even when all the lanterns are extinguished. The ship catches fire on any Critical Hit (see page 134).

Undergunned (Major)

The architect should have been strung up! His poor designs mean the ship cannot accommodate as many cannon as others of her class.

Halve the number of guns the ship carries. She may still mount extra guns at the cost of reduced Cargo Space.

Warped Rudder (Minor)

The ship's rudder is warped and the ship has -1 Handling. This can be repaired, and the Hindrance removed, at a cost of \$100 per point of the ship's base Toughness.

Weak Frame (Major)

The ship's ribs are few and far between, meaning she is prone to being holed by a well-placed shot. The ship's base Toughness is lowered by 2 points.

Ship Weapons

Number per Ship: The number of cannons listed for each ship assumes a standard 8-pdr. When choosing cannon there is a trade-off between the numbers of guns the ship can carry against increased range and damage. Every two 4-pdrs or bowchasers mounted on a ship take up one gun slot while every 16-pdr uses two slots. Guns must always be installed in pairs, one gun for each side of the ship.

Example: A standard 3-master is capable of mounting twelve 8-pdr guns. She could instead carry twenty four 4-pdrs, six 16-pdrs, or some combination of all three types.

Powder & Shot: A Cargo Space holds enough shot and powder for 50 shots, regardless of the type of ammunition fired. For simplicity assume a 4-pdr uses half the amount of gunpowder as a standard 8-pdr cannon and a 16-pdr twice as much. As with the number of guns mounted there is a trade—in this case firepower versus powder usage.

Range: The range of cannons is designed for use on the table-top. If you need to know the actual range, multiply the range by 20 to give yards. So, an 8-pdr has a “real world” range of 160/320/640 yards. Bowchasers are

only used in combat between characters, hence their longer range in comparison to cannons.

Bowchaser

A bowchaser is a small cannon meant to be used against an enemy’s crew at close range, or turned on one’s own deck during a boarding action, and fires canister rounds.

Unlike cannons, which are used in ship combat, bowchasers are used when you’re using a tactical grid for melee combat.

Canister is a shell designed to break apart. The jagged metal inside the “canister” then sprays out to shred anything within its deadly cone like a giant shotgun. To determine the effects of canister, place a ruler in front of the cannon in the direction you want it to fire and make a Shooting roll with no range modifiers. If the shot is missed, move the far end of the ruler 1d4” left or right (roll randomly).

Now place a Small Burst Template at the near end of the ruler and move it directly forward along that path for 24”. Every target under the template is hit for 3d6 damage. Cover acts as Armor just as with any area effect weapon, meaning prone characters add +2 to their Toughness.

Ship Weapons

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	Cost	Notes
Bowchaser	24” path	2d6	1	800	See notes
4-pdr Cannon	4/8/16	2d6+2	1	1500	AP 2; Heavy Weapon
Grape shot	18” path	2d6-1		1	See notes
Chain shot	2/4/8	2d6-1	1	—	See notes
8-pdr Cannon	8/16/32	3d6+1	1	3000	AP 4; Heavy Weapon
Grape shot	3” path	2d6	1		See notes
Chain Shot	4/8/16	2d6	1	—	See notes
16-pdr Cannon	10/00/40	3d8+1	1	6000	AP 8; Heavy Weapon
Grape shot	5” path	2d6+1	1	—	See notes
Chain shot	6/12/24	2d6+1	1	—	See notes

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Cannon Ammunition

Cannons can fire four different types of round: solid shot, chain, grape, and fire pot. The gun crew can choose the type of ammunition to be loaded each time it reloads.

Solid Shot is just that—big round balls made to batter walls or plow through packed ranks of troops. You simply make a Shooting roll and apply damage to the ship.

Chain Shot is used to disable a ship. If chain shot hits with a raise, it tears sails and rigging, reducing the ship's Top Speed by 1".

Fire Pot is a regular ball heated until it glows and fired at a ship. It causes -4 damage as the metal is softer, but has a higher chance at starting a fire (roll 5-6 on a 1d6 per hit).

Grape Shot is used against a target's crew. It causes no damage to ships with more than 2 points of Armor, but causes 1d6 crew hits with a success, or 2d6 with a raise.

Nautical Ranks

Characters taking to the seas are likely to do so either as members of a navy or as pirates. Here's some basic information to help you sort out who's who on a ship.

Naval

Early naval ranking was a complex affair. On a large ship, for instance, there may be numerous lieutenants, each with a different rank. The most senior of them would be First Lieutenant, then Second Lieutenant for the next senior, and so on. It is just as convoluted when dealing with Commanders, who were still lieutenants but had more responsibility, and with captains.

In the interests of just having fun over historical accuracy, we've done away with all that nonsense and boiled naval ranks down to fixed ranks.

Although a character can choose the Officer Edge to gain a promotion, the GM can rule that the character has not yet come to the attention of his superiors and so cannot take the Edge. The sample lists of traits and Edges are for the GM to decide when a character is ready to receive a promotion. This isn't a firm set of requirements, just a guideline. The character's deeds should count for just as much as his skills and Edges.

Although we've used British rank names, we've included their French and Spanish equivalents in parentheses.

Admiral (*Amiral/Almirante*)

Historically, admirals commanded a fleet of ships but didn't actually command a ship, leaving that to their captains. In the *Pirates RPG*, admirals command a ship, which is usually the flagship of a fleet.

While having a player in charge of a fleet during a naval battle is fine, we suggest the GM doesn't let the character take his fleet with him on every mission. The characters are the heroes, and they should be the ones risking life and limb in pursuit of fame and glory.



For you history buffs, the correct Spanish term for an admiral in the 1750s was General de la Armada (literally General of the Fleet). Almirante is just cooler.

Suggested Traits: Boating d8+, Intimidation d8+, Knowledge (Battle) d10+

Suggested Edges: Command, and any five other Leadership Edges, Master & Commander

Captain (Capitane de Vaisseau/Capitan de Navio)

A captain commands a single ship and is responsible for her safety, as well as that of her crew. Technically, any officer in charge of a ship is a captain, but in the navies of the various nations it also refers to a specific rank.

Captains are the most experienced officers, and few commanders ever rise to command a ship of the line.

Suggested Traits: Boating d8+, Intimidation d6+, Knowledge (Battle) d8+

Suggested Edges: Command and any four other Leadership Edges, Master & Commander

Commander (Capitaine de Fregate/Capitan de Fregata)

A commander often serves as the second in command to a captain on larger ships, but may also command his own ship. We've assumed the latter, though in a naval-based campaign, the former may also apply. Commanders are usually assisted in their duties by one or more lieutenant.

Suggested Traits: Boating d8+, Intimidation d6+, Knowledge (Battle) d6+

Suggested Edges: Command and any three other Leadership Edges, Master & Commander

Lieutenant (Lieutenant de Vaisseau/Teniente de Navio)

Lieutenants are the most numerous rank in the various navies. On a large ship, there may be as many as eight lieutenants, each in

charge of a specific aspect of the ship. Where there are multiple lieutenants on a ship, seniority is decided by the date of each man's commission, not by their ability.

Skilled lieutenants (such as Wild Card NPCs or player characters) command their own small ship and may themselves be assisted by junior lieutenants.

Suggested Traits: Boating d6+, Intimidation d6+

Suggested Edges: Command and any two other Leadership Edges

Midshipman (Aspirant/Guardia Marina)

The lowest naval rank, and one which holds no real responsibility, is that of midshipman. Technically, midshipmen are trainee officers who don't yet hold a commission, and they tend to be very young gentlemen beginning their naval careers.

Historically, few countries could afford to keep their entire fleet at sea. Officers not assigned to a ship receive half pay. The poor midshipman, who isn't yet a full officer remember, receives no money at all if he isn't serving on a ship.

Suggested Traits: Boating d6+, Intimidation d6+

Suggested Edges: Command

Seaman

Few seaman in the navy were professional sailors in the sense they learned their trade before going to sea. Most were pressganged into service during times of need, with the obvious targets being fishermen or merchant sailors. No wonder then that many jumped at the chance to turn to piracy when their ships were taken by buccaneers.

Seamen can either be ordinary sailors, the lowest of the low in the navy, or hold a non-commissioned post, such as bosun, quartermaster, or master of guns. Use the pirate positions below if a character wants to have a more important job. Such sailors are referred to as petty officers.

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Pirates

Unlike national navies, which have a formal hierarchy of ranks through which sailors progress, pirates, and sometimes privateers, elected their senior officers based on their experience and skill.

The following positions are given in order of importance, along with suggested traits and Edges the officer should possess.

Crew Positions & Characters

If you're planning on running a pirate-based game, it's advisable to have the player characters as officers rather than common sailors, simply because taking orders isn't very heroic.

Who actually steers the ship is up to the players. Ideally, it should be the character with the highest Boating skill, for obvious reasons. However, if the group wants to run a more historically accurate ship, it's usual for the quartermaster to be the pilot.

Naturally, if his Boating skill isn't up to scratch, the crew may call for his resignation and elect a better pilot.

Captain

The captain is top-dog on a pirate ship, but as with other ranks, his position is an elected one. His authority is unquestioned during an engagement or chase, but at other times all decisions are taken by a show of hands among the crew. The captain is expected to be impartial and to judge his crew fairly. The payoff for all this responsibility is that the captain is entitled to two shares of any treasure.

To fulfil their role aboard ship, captains are expected to keep abreast of current affairs, Knowledge on the current state of the various colonies, political alliances, and mercantile activities help him pick rich targets.

Suggested Traits: Boating d8+, Intimidation d6+, Streetwise d6+

Suggested Edges: Any Leadership Edges, Captain, Master & Commander

Quartermaster

The quartermaster is the ship's second in command and is also elected by the crew.

Outside of combat, he runs the day-to-day affairs on the ship and sees that the captain's orders are carried out.

He is also responsible for maintaining discipline and can punish minor infractions. More serious offenses must be referred to the captain, who can order a trial by the ship's court, which comprises a jury made up of the ship's officers.

Flogging is common on naval ships, and many pirates are sailors who have jumped ship to escape the harsh navy discipline. As a result, flogging can only be authorized by a majority vote by the crew.

More importantly to the common pirates, the quartermaster calculates the value of all plunder and distributes the shares. As this involves keeping track of the treasure, the quartermaster must be able to read and write, as well as perform basic math calculations.

On many ships, the quartermaster is also the pilot.

Suggested Traits: Smarts d6+, Boating d8+, Intimidation d8+, Persuasion d8+

Suggested Edges: Any Leadership Edges, Pilot

Master of Sails

The sail master's primary task is to set the sails and supervise the rigging crews. On ships without a navigator, it is also the sailing master's task to decide the course once the captain has given the crew a destination.

Suggested Traits: Boating d8+, Climbing d8+

Suggested Edges: Rope Monkey

Navigator

While most sailors can plot a basic course using the sun or stars, skilled navigators are rare. Historically, many pirates fleets had only one navigator between all the ships.

The ability to accurately calculate longitude remains a mystery in this age, and a navigator who can bring a ship to within a few miles of a destination is held in high regard, at least so long as the ship arrives upwind.

By arriving upwind, a ship can ride the prevailing winds to the final destination. Arriving downwind can sometimes mean the ship cannot make headway against the winds and must plot a course far out to sea to catch favorable winds, adding days to the journey.

This may not sound too bad, until you think that every day at sea means supplies are running even lower.

Suggested Traits: Boating d6+, Knowledge (Navigation) d8+

Suggested Edges: Scholar

Boatswain

The boatswain (or bosun) is in charge of organizing, checking, and storing supplies, overseeing the deckhands' routine activities, and supervising repairs. As such, he is the carpenter's superior officer. Bosuns also lead foraging parties for supplies.

Suggested Traits: Boating d6+, Intimidation d6+, Repair d6+

Suggested Edges: Any Leadership Edges

Carpenter

The carpenter is entrusted to keep the ship seaworthy. He oversees repairs and regular careening of the hull. Carpenters are typically excused combat duties, and have no authority, though they still receive the same shares as a common pirate.

Suggested Traits: Boating d6+, Repair d8+

Suggested Edges: Shipwright

Master of Guns

The Master of Guns is responsible for the cannons and muskets onboard ship. Many are ex-naval personnel and learned their trade by working up the ranks from powder monkey (a boy who carries the gunpowder from the



stores to the guns) to master gunner. Many are scarred from powder burns and have hearing problems.

The master of guns also sifts and grinds the powder, and must keep it dry. In addition, he oversees training of the gun crews.

Suggested Traits: Boating d6+, Shooting d6+

Suggested Edges: Cannoneer, Gunsmith, Steady Hands

Mate

Mate is basically a term for an apprentice. Depending on the size of the ship, there may be a mate for the Masters of Sails and Guns, as well as the navigator, the bos'n, and the carpenter.

Suggested Traits: As the officer he serves

Suggested Edges: As the officer he serves

Surgeon

The surgeon is responsible for seeing to the health of the crew, whether that be amputating limbs, stitching wounds, curing the pox, or offsetting scurvy.

Rules of the Sea

In many *Pirates* adventures, the characters are likely to be traveling via ship. This section takes a look at ship travel and some of the problems encountered on sea voyages.

Navigation

Traveling the treacherous seas of the Spanish Main is an adventure in itself. The following quick method helps you determine how quickly a vessel travels and whether or not it stays on course. To help you plot your course, look at the map of the Caribbean at the front of the book.

Each square on the map equals 10 leagues (30 miles). Vessels cross as many squares as their Travel Speed each day. If sailing with the prevailing winds, the ship may move diagonally. Against the wind, it may not.


For each day of travel, the navigator must make a Knowledge (Navigation) roll or a Boating roll with a -4 penalty, modified as follows.

Navigational Modifiers

Mod	Circumstance
+2	Vessel stays along coast
+1	Sailing with prevailing winds
-1	Sailing against prevailing winds
-2	The navigator has no compass
-2	Most crew have no Boating
-1	Crew averages Boating of d4
+1	Crew averages Boating of d8
+2	Crew averages Boating of d10
+3	Crew averages Boating of d12

With a success, the vessel moves as expected. A raise adds +1 to the vessel's Speed that day.

Failure means the ship travels each square of its movement in a random direction—roll a d8 to determine the square it moves to if sailing with the wind. Roll a d4 to determine which way the lost ship moves if sailing into the wind.



On most ships, where there is no trained surgeon available, the position of surgeon is split among other officers. The carpenter, with his skill with saws, is responsible for amputation, the bosun heats his logging axe to cauterize amputated limbs, and the sail master stitches wounds closed (and stitches the dead into sail shrouds ready for burial at sea).

A ship with a trained physician aboard is rare, and the crew will be glad of his presence.

Suggested Traits: Healing d8+

Suggested Edges: Healer

Sailor

Sailors are the rank and file crew, whose task it is to follow orders. Obviously, they need a knowledge of the sea, as well as basic navigation and ship maintenance. Most are willing volunteers, and know that capture means a date with the noose.

Suggested Skills: Boating d6+

Suggested Edges: None

Crew Upkeep

If the roll moves the vessel into a land mass on the map, including a bank or reef, it may run aground. Whoever is steering the ship must make a Boating roll (the crew adds a group cooperative roll as well to account for lookouts in the crow's nest and so forth). Some Edges and Hindrances affect this roll, too.

Failure indicates the ship has run aground. The vessel is wrecked and everyone aboard must make a single Swimming roll to make it to shore, or begin to drown (see page 97).

Success means the pilot avoided disaster and the ship is merely beached. It takes 2d20 hours to pull it free, or 1d20 hours if another ship is available.

A raise means the ship avoids the shoals, sandbars, or reefs completely and suffers no ill effects.

Careening

Wooden vessels must be "careened" on occasion. The ship is turned on its side and barnacles, sea worms, and other parasites are scraped off. Failure to careen a ship decreases its speed.

A ship should be careened once every four months (three times a year). If it is not, the ship's Handling is reduced by one on the fifth month and every month thereafter, to a maximum penalty of -4.

Any of the major ports offer careening for 100 pieces of eight per point of the vessel's base Toughness, which takes a number of days equal to half its base Toughness.

A ship can also be careened on an island by its crew. This is a tiring and tedious process, taking a number of days equal to the craft's base Toughness (a base Toughness of 17 requires 17 days, for instance). This is an average number based on the standard crew for a ship that size. A crew with twice the usual number of workers can careen the vessel in half the time, half the required crew takes twice the time, and so on.

Sailing isn't all firing cannons and swinging from the yardarms. The crew must be fed and even entertained on occasion or their health and morale begin to suffer.

Provisions

The crews of ships must eat and drink, and ensuring each vessel is properly provisioned is a major concern of any captain.

To keep things simple, provisions are purchased as generic "points" rather than tracking every bit of food and water required. Each point represents one day's food, water, and other supplies for one man, and costs \$1. This includes fruit capable of staving off scurvy. Every 500 points of provisions takes up one cargo space.

Hunger

Wild Cards suffer from starvation normally (one provision a day counts as adequate food). For the rest of the crew, they begin to suffer Fatigue when they don't have adequate provisions.

Make a group Vigor roll each day the crew has half rations (one provision for every two men). Subtract 2 if the crew has less than this. Should a crew reach Incapacitated state, 10% of the men perish each day from starvation. Most crews mutiny long before this starts to happen.

Pay

The standard fee for sailors is 50 pieces of eight per month. A crew of 12, for example, costs 600 pieces of eight each month in wages. The captain must also pay for their provisions (see above). On merchant ships and most privateers, the quartermaster, navigators, carpenters, surgeons, and other specialized crew cost 100 pieces of eight per month.

Officers on a military ship receive wages based on their rank, rather than the position they fill. If the crew comes upon a prize of some kind, such as a floating hulk, buried

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treasure, or the booty aboard a pirate vessel they manage to capture, it is divided up in shares.

Shares

Pirate ships and some privateers don't pay their crews—they give them shares of any booty. Paid crews use shares as well when figuring how to split unexpected payouts.

The typical arrangement is two shares for the ship's "bank," (to be used for repairs, provisions, and so on), two shares for the captain and quartermaster, one and a half shares each for the sailing master, navigator, bosun, and master of guns, and one share to everyone else. The quartermaster is responsible for overseeing the process.

Cabin Fever

One of the worst problems faced by a crew isn't cannon fire or pirates but the sheer boredom of life on the water.

Most of a sailor's time isn't spent taking part in swashbuckling adventures—it's spent swabbing the decks, splicing ropes, or mending sails. Discipline is usually quite fierce onboard as well. Most captains don't

allow gambling or drunkenness (it tends to cause deadly fights). That's why sailors tend to spend so much of their hard-earned (or ill-gotten) booty in port taverns or brothels.

All characters automatically gain one level of Fatigue after every 30 days spent at sea. The crew never becomes Incapacitated due to Cabin Fever, but when that state would otherwise be met, the sailors might start whispering mutinous thoughts.

Carousing

A night spent carousing "resets" the crew's clock. Start the 30-day countdown again. Fatigue lost to Cabin Fever can only be relieved by rest and relaxation. This means carousing in a port with plenty of booze and women for most. Historically, sailors have often spent the equivalent of a year's pay in a single night.

Each week spent in port where the crew can relax (which usually means boozing and wenching) removes one level of Fatigue due to Cabin Fever. Each night of carousing costs $1d6 \times \$5$ for player characters. Extras spend their own pay or shares and their expenses should not be tracked.

Rushing: Characters may unwind quicker than usual by spending more money on good food, drink, and company. Spending $2d6 \times \$5$ reduces the time to remove Fatigue to four days; $3d6 \times \$5$ reduces the interval to three days, and so on, to a minimum of one day and $5d6 \times \$5$.

Player characters can also encourage their crews along. Each additional \$5 for each man reduces the time to remove Fatigue by one day, to a minimum of one day and \$20 per head.

Getting Drunk: Carousing characters must make a Smarts roll each night to avoid getting drunk. A failure means they barely manage to make it back to their hammock that night, and suffer a grueling hangover the next morning (they remain Fatigued until sometime after noon).

Success means the party-goer is drunk, but can mostly handle himself. Agility, Smarts, and all related skill rolls suffer a -1 penalty, but Toughness is increased by 1.

Contacts

Carousing has one additional effect. Every full week spent in a port drinking with the locals adds +1 to the character's Streetwise rolls, to a maximum of +2. This can be very helpful (if experience) when tracking down leads or trying to buy or sell cargo.

Hiring Crew

New crew may usually be hired in any of the settlements around the Spanish Main. The crew can find 1d6-1 able-bodied seamen (using sailor statistics found on page 241) are for hire or sign on for shares. Roll this once per week if the party stays in port for a while.

Experienced crewmen, such as surgeons or carpenters, are much more rare. One of them is found for every five sailors available.

Ship Combat

What's more exciting than firing a full broadside at your opponent, then drawing close while your crew prepare for a boarding action? If you fancy blasting your foe from the water, the rules in this section show you how ships move and attack on your table-top.

These rules are for use with miniatures and the table-top. The ships from WizKids' *Pirates CSG* are perfect for use with these rules. If you've come from the CSG to the roleplaying game, just remember that you're only using the miniature, not the actual CSG rules.

If you want to run a more abstract chase, use the Chase rules starting on page 137. Ship attacks and damage work for both systems, and are covered in this section.

Contact

On a clear day, ships often spy each other at tremendous ranges. Catching up with a foe at such ranges and with relatively slow-moving craft can sometimes take days.

If one ship is attempting to catch another, the captains make opposed Boating rolls. The rest of the crew can help by making a group Boating roll (see Cooperative Rolls on page 72). Each attempt takes about eight hours.

If the pursuer wins, he has closed the gap a little and the chase continues. With a raise, he has brought his foe to close quarters and the combat ensues. If the target wins, he has extended his lead over the pursuer and the chase continues. With a raise, he has escaped.

Example: Blackheart's Harbinger spies a frigate called the Dory on the horizon and wants to close. The Dory decides to flee.

Both captains make Boating rolls. Blackheart gets a 7, and the Dory gets a 6. Blackheart's crew makes a group Boating roll and gets a 9—adding +2 to their captain's roll for a total of 9. The Dory's crew fails and adds nothing. Blackheart wins 9 to 6, but did not get a raise over the Dory's roll.

The Harbinger draws close several times, but fails to bring the Dory to close quarters. The chase continues.

Movement

The main difference between characters and ships is that the latter have to worry a bit more about exactly how they move, so we have to regulate movement just a bit.

Initiative

Ships move on their captain's action card. Steering consumes the captain's action unless he's stopped, though he may take other actions as well at a standard multi-action penalty. Passengers and other crew act on their own initiative as usual.

Speed

Ships have an "Acceleration" value that tells you how many inches per turn they may increase their current speed. A ship with an

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Acceleration of 2, for instance, means the craft can increase its movement by 2" every action, up to its Top Speed, which is also listed.

A ship can decrease its speed by twice its Acceleration (or more in a Hard Brake—see the sidebar on Maneuvers).

The player controlling the ship decides his speed at the beginning of his action, and moves it that many inches. The ship remains at that speed until the captain's next action, so record the current speed somewhere for the next round and in case it hits something.

Turning

To perform turns, use the Turning Template provided on page 252. Simply line the template up with your ship and move the ship along the outside, as shown in the diagram below.

A vessel can perform a tighter turn as a Maneuver if needed (see the Ship Maneuvers Table on page 140).

Collisions

Collisions are dangerous in the *Pirates RPG*. The damage to the ship is 1d6 for every 1" of its current speed. If a ship moving at

5" per turn suffers a collision, for instance, it takes 5d6 damage, as does anything it rams into.

Heavy Armor: Ships with Heavy Armor add their Armor rating as an AP value to their damage. Also, ships with Heavy Armor halve damage they take from colliding with other obstacles (including ships) that don't have Heavy Armor.

Relative Speeds: Increase the damage if a ship hits another object moving toward it. This is called "relative speed." If two ships ram into each other head on at a speed of 5", for instance, their relative speed is actually 10" and each ship suffers 10d6 damage. Similarly, a ship moving away from an attacker subtracts its speed from the ramming ship's.

Losing Control

Failing a Boating roll causes a ship to go "out of control." When this happens, roll 2d6 on the Out of Control Table (see page 139). Resolve any additional movement (such as slips or dips) immediately. Anything in the way gets smashed—check out the collision rules above if that happens.

Falling Out

Falling from a ship into the water is nowhere near as dangerous as tumbling onto hard earth. Characters who fall into water at any speed must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken. They must then deal with swimming and drowning at that point, but otherwise suffer no serious damage from the fall.

Terrain

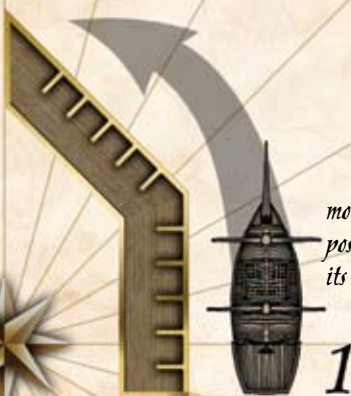
The sea contains many hazards, including reefs, sandbars, Sargasso, and fog. Use the rules below if you want to incorporate these elements into your battles. If you've got terrain pieces from the *Pirates CSG*, you can use them. If not, you can mark its location on a map or simply create your own terrain with pieces of paper or card.

Turning

1. The ship below is making a turn to the left. This is as tight as the ship can turn without performing a maneuver.



2. The ship has moved 6". This is its position at the end of its move.



Fog

Fog banks can be light or heavy. If any part of a ship touches a light fog bank, assume the entire vessel is in the fog.

Treat ships within a fog bank as being in Dark lighting conditions for the purposes of rolls made by or against the crew or ship (so a ship would suffer -2 to Shooting rolls made against a fogbound ship). In heavy fog, the penalty rises to -6, as Pitch Darkness.

Reef

Reef is a generic term covering actual coral reefs, submerged rocks, and wrecked ships lying just beneath the water. Whatever the cause, reefs are dangerous.

When any part of a ship first moves over a reef, the captain must make an immediate Boating roll. Certain types of ships, and those with the Low Draught Edge or Deep Keel Hindrance have their Handling modified as appropriate.

You don't have to make the roll if the ship starts its turn on a reef and moves off.

With success, the ship passes harmlessly over the reef. On a failure, the ship strikes the reef and suffers damage as per a collision.

Reefs and submerged rocks are counted as having Heavy Armor and thus inflict full damage on ships. Sunken ships do not have Heavy Armor, however. Don't roll to see how much damage the ship inflicts on the reef—they're indestructible.

Example: Jack sails his ship over a reef and passes his Boating roll. At the end of this turn, the ship is still in the reef. He may sail off the reef without making another Boating roll.

Unfortunately, he sails straight into another reef. Since this is a separate obstacle, he must make another Boating roll to avoid ripping his hull open.

Sandbars & Sargasso

Sandbars and Sargasso (floating masses of seaweed) have similar effects in game terms.

When any part of a ship first moves over an individual sandbar or Sargasso counter, the captain must make an immediate Boating roll. Again, ships with the Low Draught Edge or Deep Keel Hindrance have their Handling modified when contacting sandbars, but not Sargasso. You don't have to make the roll if the ship starts its turn on the sandbar or Sargasso and moves off.

On a success, the ship sails safely over the obstacle. With failure, the ship becomes stuck and must immediately halt all movement. With a critical failure, the ship is not just stuck, it's completely immobilized. The captain suffers a -2 penalty on his rolls to free the ship.

On the turn after the ship strikes the sandbar or becomes entangled in the Sargasso, the captain must make a Boating roll (the crew adds a group cooperative roll as well). On a success, the ship is free and may continue its movement. Since it is already touching the obstacle, it can now sail clear without making a further roll. Failure means the ship remains stuck and the captain must try again next round.

Attacks

Combat between ship's and their crews works much like regular combat, with only a few exceptions.

Cannons

Roll the lowest of the crew's Shooting or Boating die for each cannon shot. This is not a group roll—only the gunner actually lines up the shot. The other crewmen simply reload.

Range is measured from the center of the attacking ship to the center of the target.

It's difficult to bring all of a ship's guns to bear at once in ship-to-ship combat. Even though the miniatures you're using are static, the ships they represent are in motion, as well as being buffeted by winds and waves. To simulate this, no more than one-quarter of a ship's guns (minimum of 1) may be fired at a single target each round without performing a Crossing the T or Broadside maneuvers (see page 140).

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gun crew. Subtract 1 from any attacks directed at a ship for every full 1" of its current speed.

This is relative, so a ship heading directly toward a hero doesn't get the modifier. Otherwise, subtract the slower speed from the faster if the ships are sailing the same direction and add them together if they are sailing in opposite directions..

Example: Jack fires a cannon at an enemy ship sailing past at 90 degrees to his own ship at 5" per round, so his Shooting roll is at -5.

Damage

Any damage roll that equals or exceeds the ship's Toughness forces the captain to make a Boating roll or go out of control (roll on the Out of Control Table).

Each raise on the damage roll also inflicts a "wound." Each wound caused to the craft inflicts a -1 penalty to the captain's Boating skill rolls until someone repairs the damage. The attacker also scores a critical hit for each wound inflicted, and rolls on the Critical Hit Table (see page 139) to find out exactly what happened.

When a ship takes a number of wounds equal to its Wound rating, it is wrecked and begins sinking (see page 136). The ship cannot move or fire its cannons. It's dead in the water.

Fire

Fires are very dangerous on ships and kill far more men than cannon shots usually account for.

When a ship suffers a Hull hit, there's a chance that a fire can start. The shot itself can start the fire, or it might knock over lanterns



A ship fighting three targets, for example, may fire one quarter of its guns at each. Each shot that hits inflicts damage normally.

Attack Modifiers

Below are a few modifiers to remember during ranged combat.

Attack Modifiers

Situation	Bonus/Penalty
Unstable Platform	-2
Fixed Weapons	-1 per 1" of Speed

Unstable Platform: Any character on an unstable platform, including a moving ship, suffers a -2 penalty to Shooting. This applies to characters who are firing cannons as well. Note that the Steady Hands or Captain Edges can eliminate this penalty.

Fixed Weapons: A fast-moving vehicle is more difficult to hit, and with a cannon's fixed arc of fire, a small maneuverable ship can pose a challenge for even an experienced

and candles, which start the blaze. Roll 1d6 at the start of each round for each fire on board to see what happens to the fire and the vessel.

Fire Table

d6	Roll Result
1	The fire burns out
2-4	The fire continues to burn
5	The fire causes a wound
6	The fire spreads, making two fires

Fighting Fires: Crews can put out fires, but this takes away from their other duties to do so. A team equal to half the ship's base Toughness (ignore Armor bonuses) is required. The team must assemble one round, and in the next may make a group Boating roll at -2 for one fire. With a success, the team extinguishes the fire.

Fire Ships: If a burning ship strikes another vessel, there is a chance the fire will spread from one ship to the other. Roll 1d6 and add +1 if the burning vessel is fully ablaze. On a 5 or 6, the fire spreads to the other vessel.

Repairs

Damage suffered in combat may only be repaired at a dry-dock. There are dry-docks in all of the major ports.

This typically takes 1d4 days per wound or critical hit to be fixed and both wounds and critical hits must be repaired separately. The cost is 10 times the ship's base Toughness, per wound or critical to be repaired.

Magazine

A "Magazine" Critical Hit is bad news for the ship and its crew as well. Ships without cannons simply begin to sink as detailed below. Vessels with cannons suffer a direct hit to their central magazine (where the powder is kept).

This sets off a titanic explosion that destroys the ship and causes 4d6 damage to every named character on board. Assume all but 10% of the rest of the crew are killed in the blast or incapacitated and drown.



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Any ships that were grappled to the unfortunate vessel or within a dozen yards or so suffer $2d6$ + the destroyed ship's base Toughness in damage. If a skiff explodes, for example, it causes $2d6+11$ damage (a skiff's base Toughness without Armor is 11). A Man of War causes $2d6+20$ points of damage to adjacent ships!

Sinking

A wrecked boat begins to sink. Unless the vessel is cracked wide open and sinks instantly, this generally takes a little time. Use the guidelines below should it become important. The "Wounds" column refers to the number of Wounds listed in the ship's stat block, not to how many it took before sinking.

Wounds	Effect
1	Sinks at the end of the round in which they're wrecked
2.....	Sinks in $1d6$ minutes
3.....	Sinks in $4d6$ minutes
4.....	Sinks in $1d6$ hours
5.....	Sinks in $2d6$ hours

Drifting

A wrecked boat that hasn't sunk drifts with the current (if any). This is typically $2d6$ " per round for fast-moving rivers, and $1d6$ " for most other rivers or in strong seas. In the ocean, the GM can roll $1d12$ to determine which direction a vessel drifts, reading the die like a clockface.

A sinking ship becomes a hazard to other ship still involved in combat.

Boarding

Because you can play out ship combat using the table-top or Chase rules, there's a slight difference in how you go about getting close enough to board. Rather than cover boarding twice, we've put all the rules here.

Just to be clear, these rules cover boarding a ship when it's moving or stationary.

Tabletop System

The captain of the attacking vessel must bring his vessel alongside the target and then bring it into contact. The ships do not have to be heading in the same direction, so long as their courses are parallel. Because the ships are moving parallel, this doesn't cause a collision.

The boarders then make an immediate group Throwing roll with modifiers as shown below. Success means the target vessel is grappled and hauled in, close enough to be boarded.

Once the ships have been grappled and joined, both vessels have their speed reduced to zero. The ships remain this way until the ropes are severed. Fight out the ensuing battle between the boarding crew and defenders using the standard combat rules (see pages 75 to 87).

Boarding Modifiers

Mod	Event
+4.....	Enemy ship is stationary
-1.....	Per 1" difference in Speed
+2.....	Boarders have larger crew
-2.....	Boarders have smaller crew
-2.....	Rough weather
-4.....	Full blown storm

Difference in Speed: This is the relative difference. Subtract the lower speed from the higher speed if the ship's are traveling in the same direction. Add the speeds if the vessels are sailing toward each other.

Chase System

If one ship wants to board another using the chase system (see the following section), it must maneuver itself to be on the same initiative card as its foe and the captain must perform a successful Force maneuver. The procedure for the actual boarding action is then followed as above.

Chases

Chases and even massive fleet engagements with the *Pirates RPG* rules are fast, furious, and fun just like battles between characters. Use this system for long chases or to roleplay minor engagements—not when you're battling it out on the table-top.

As with the table-top rules, this system is used once the ships are close enough to begin fighting. Use the rules on page 131 to handle the initial contact.

Setup

To start a chase, first set out a token of some sort for every ship. The *Pirates CSG* minis are suitable for this.

The chase rules use a measure called a Range Increment. This is equivalent to 5" on the table-top scale, or 20 times that in "real life" yards (so, during chases, each game inch represent 100 yards).

Initiative & Position

Now deal each ship a card. Don't deal in each character—only each vehicle. These cards are used both for initiative and to determine the relative positions of all the ships in the fight. Shuffle after each round.

The difference between the cards multiplied by the Range Increment is the distance between the two ships. If one ship is on a Five and the other on a Ten, for example, they are five Range Increments apart, or 25" (500 real yards).

Ships on the same card are half the normal Range Increment apart.

Jacks count as 11, Queens as 12, Kings as 13, and Aces as 14. Jokers can be used for any card the captain wishes, and grant their bonuses as usual. Note that these are more representative of distance than position. If you begin the game on an 2 and your foe on a Ace, but you're dealt a 10 next round while he gets a 3, it doesn't mean you have overtaken him, only that the distance between the ships has closed.

Everyone in the ship acts on the same card. Edges affecting initiative (like Level Headed) are only used if the captain has the Edge.



Chases don't have to involve just ships. You can use the same rules for foot or mounted chases as well with only minor modifications.

The main difference is the Range Increment distance. Foot chases have an Increment of 1" and mounted chases (or ones involving carriages) have a 5" Range Increment.

In a non-ship chase, characters act either on their Town card (for foot or mounted) or the driver's card if they're in a carriage. Naturally, heroes aren't restricted in their fields of fire so you can ignore the Fixed Weapons penalty, though the Unstable Platform penalty still applies.

Remember the mounted rules apply as well if the characters are on horseback (see page 87).

Obstacles still exist, but rather than reefs they're pedestrians, market stalls, barrels, and such like. Jumping an obstacle requires an Agility, Driving, or Riding roll (as appropriate).



Speed

Since positioning is relative in the chase rules, the speed of a vehicle adds to the captain's Boating rolls to reflect the fact that faster vessels should have an edge over slower ones. For every 1" of difference between the ships' Top Speeds the faster captain adds +1 to opposed Boating rolls. A ship's Handling applies as normal.

Attacks

Attacks may be made during any of the maneuvers below. A ship can use one-quarter of its guns in a chase unless they are being trailed by another vehicle (see the Trail maneuver, below).

The captain may not pilot the ship and fire his ship's weapons (or take other actions), but other crew may fire weapons, or take other actions as usual.

PIRATES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

Damage works as in the table-top vehicle rules with one exception: ships that go out of control and suffer a Turn, Slip, or Major Slip simply suffer a -2 to their next Boating roll.

Maneuvers

Now it's time to start the action!

The captain of the ship with the highest card goes first. He may choose from any of the maneuvers listed below.

Some maneuvers change a vehicle's Initiative card. It's important to note that the change reflects the vehicle's new *position*. The crewmen resolve their actions on their original card—they don't go again if their replacement card comes up later.

Change Position

If the captain isn't happy with his current position, he can try to change it. To do so, he makes a Boating roll and draws one card for a success and two for a raise.

The captain must then replace his current card with one of the new draws immediately. If the card is a Joker, the pilot and his crew gain the Trait and damage bonuses as usual.

Flee

To escape a fight, a captain must choose this maneuver and make an opposed Boating roll versus the opponent with the highest Top Speed. If he can do this on three successive rounds, and is not being tailed, he has escaped and the chase is over.

Force

Sometimes a captain sees an opportunity to put a foe at a serious disadvantage. This is called a "force." To force an opponent into some disadvantageous position, the hero makes an opposed Boating roll against his target. If the hero wins, he may force any one of the following conditions on his foe:

- The opponent must make a Boating roll (at -2 if the force was won with a raise) or hit an obstacle (if there are any used in the engagement). This causes an effect as per the specific Terrain (see page 132).

- The opponent must make a Boating roll or go out of control.

- The hero may draw one card for every raise over his opponent's total and use any one as a substitute for his foe's next card.

Trail

Trail puts one ship directly behind another. To get on a ship's tail, a captain makes an opposed Boating roll against the other ship. He must get a raise over his foe to trail him, or he holds steady at his current position.

If successful, the captain is hot on his foe's tail. The trailing ship gives up its card and uses the opponent's card until he is shaken off. This means the range is half the normal increment as well! The trailing ship may fire its cannons as normal. The trailed ship may not attack the ship behind it.

Shake a Tail

The only way to get a trailing ship off your tail is to shake him off. This is an opposed Boating roll, with the trailing player adding +2. To shake the tail, the fleeing captain must get a raise over his foe. If successful, the trailing ship remains on the same initiative card, he just isn't trailing anymore.

Steady

The captain keeps his card for this round and holds his ship steady. This is useful when in a good firing position to allow the crew a chance to open up on the enemy ship.

Obstacles

Chases don't always take place in open water. Sometimes there are reefs to avoid, or other obstacles. Whether they "sparsely" or "thickly" cover the path of the chase is the GM's call.

Depending on how thick the obstacles are in these waters, an initiative card of 2-5 (if sparse) or 2-8 (if thick) force a captain to do some fancy sailing. When a ship is dealt one of these cards, it encounters an obstacle. The captain must make a Boating roll or suffer the effects of the Terrain (see page 132).

Out of Control

- 2d6 Effect**
- 2 Dip:** The prow of the ship disappears beneath the waves, covering the decks in water. Roll 1d6. This many crewmen (pick randomly from any on exposed decks) must make Agility rolls or be washed overboard and lost.
- 3-4 Turn:** Move the ship 1d4" in the direction of the maneuver, or 1d4" away from a damaging hit. Roll a d12, read it like a clock facing, and point the ship in that direction.
- 5-9 Slip:** Move the ship 1d4" left or right (in the direction of a failed maneuver, or away from a damaging attack).
- 10-11 Major Slip:** Move the ship 1d6" left or right (in the direction of a failed maneuver, or away from a damaging attack).
- 12 Roll:** The ship rolls to one side, heeling over hard. The pilot must make a Boating roll (-4) or the ship capsizes and starts to sink (see page 136). If there is loose cargo in the ship's hold, the roll is at -6.

Critical Hits

- 2d6 Effect**
- 2 Mast:** A mast is hit and snapped. If the ship has a rating of 5 Wounds (or masts if you're using CSG minis) Acceleration and Top Speed drop by one fifth. A ship with a rating of 4 Wounds drops by a quarter, and so on (round down). If there are no masts left, the ship drops to zero Top Speed (unless she has oars).
- 3 Rudder:** The rudder is hit. The ship may only turn in one direction (away from the attacker's side), and suffers -2 to its Handling. A second rudder hit to the same side counts as a Hull hit.
- 4-5 Weapon:** A random cannon is destroyed and may no longer be used. If there are no cannons, this is a Hull hit instead.
- 6-8 Hull:** Treat damage normally but roll 1d6 as well. If the result is a 6, a fire has been started. See the Fire section on page 134 for more details.
- 9 Crew:** Crew Critical Hits inflict 2d6 casualties scattered randomly among all crewmen. Remove that many crew immediately. They may recover in the aftermath of the fight in the normal way (see page 91). If the 2d6 roll comes up a double, a random player character or other named personality was hit as well. Subtract the Armor value of the ship from the damage if the victim was below decks.
- 10 Passengers:** As above, except the shot removes passengers, If there are no passengers on board, treat this as a Crew hit instead.
- 11 Cargo:** The contents of 1d4 random Cargo Spaces are destroyed. If the vessel is not carrying cargo, treat this as a Hull hit instead.
- 12 Magazine:** The ship's magazine is hit, which blows the ship to matchwood. See page 135 for details.

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Ship Maneuvers

The following are some common maneuvers that may be performed by ships. The penalty to the Boating roll is listed in parentheses. An entry given as X/Y is for the tabletop and Chase rules respectively. An entry of “-” means no roll is necessary and the ship must maneuver to the correct position on the tabletop.

If the maneuver is failed, move the ship to the point of the maneuver, then roll on the Out of Control Table to see where it actually ends up.

Broadside (- /0): Broadships are the most powerful attacks a ship can make but unless the attacking ship has “crossed the T” it allows the enemy to return fire with their own broadside. This maneuver is usually reserved for daring captains or those with vastly superior firepower.

A broadside may be lined up whenever a ship is parallel to its foe (in the Chase rules, this requires a Force maneuver). A broadside may be attempted at any range. All guns on one side of the vessel may be brought to bear on the target at once. The enemy vessel may likewise fire half its cannons back.

Club Hauling (-4): By dropping the anchor and having all the crew rush to one side of the ship the captain can attempt to turn his ship tightly in a very narrow circle. The captain makes a Boating roll. If successful he turns his ship up to 180 degrees (in the Chase rules, he draws two new cards for position—three with a raise—and keeps the best). On a failure the ship goes Out of Control.

Crossing the T (- /-2): The most favorable position in naval combat is perpendicular to your opponent at close range. This allows a ship to fire a complete broadside (all of its cannons on that side) and rake the target from stem to stern, without presenting the same target to the enemy. This is called “crossing the T.”

A ship may cross the T whenever it crosses perpendicular to the bow or stern of an enemy ship and all cannons are within short range (in the Chase rules, the captain must succeed in a Force maneuver once he has closed the range). The attacker may fire a broadside. The defender may not return fire unless he has some sort of weapon mounted on the bow or stern.

Hard Brake (0): The pilot decelerates up to three times the ship’s Acceleration.

Obstacle or Stunt (-2 or more): Sailing through a really tight obstacle looks easy enough on the tabletop since a ship is simply moved however the player wants. But in “reality,” the ship is pitching and tossing at the mercy of the wind and is much more difficult to hold steady than the battle mat shows.

For this reason, pilots trying to pass through tight obstacles—narrow reefs, between a harbor wall and a ship moving to block you—must make Boating rolls. The standard difficulty is -2, but really tight spots might call for a -4 or greater penalty. If the roll is failed, the ship hits the obstacle and suffers collision damage as usual.

Ram (Opposed): Though we have to move ships in turns on the table-top, they’re actually moving simultaneously in the “real world.” For that reason, when one ship rams another, we give the defender a chance to get out of the way—even if it’s not his turn. When this happens, the two captains make opposed Boating rolls. If the attacker wins, he’s managed to ram his foe and damage is calculated normally. If the defender wins, he must move his ship just out of the way, whether backwards, forwards, or sideways.

Shearing (-2): Shearing involves drawing close along side a vessel powered by oars in an attempt to smash its oars. The attacking captain must maneuver his ship into parallel contact with his target of the enemy ship and make a successful Boating roll. In the Chase rules, the attacking ship must be on the same initiative card as the target and the captain must make a Force maneuver.

On a success, the target ship suffers 3d6 damage applied against its base Toughness (no Armor). If the damage results in a wound the oars are sheared—the vessel suffers no actual wound. The target’s Top Speed is halved and it can only turn to the left or right as applicable, while using oars.

Tight Turn (0): The ship can turn between 45 and 90 degrees.

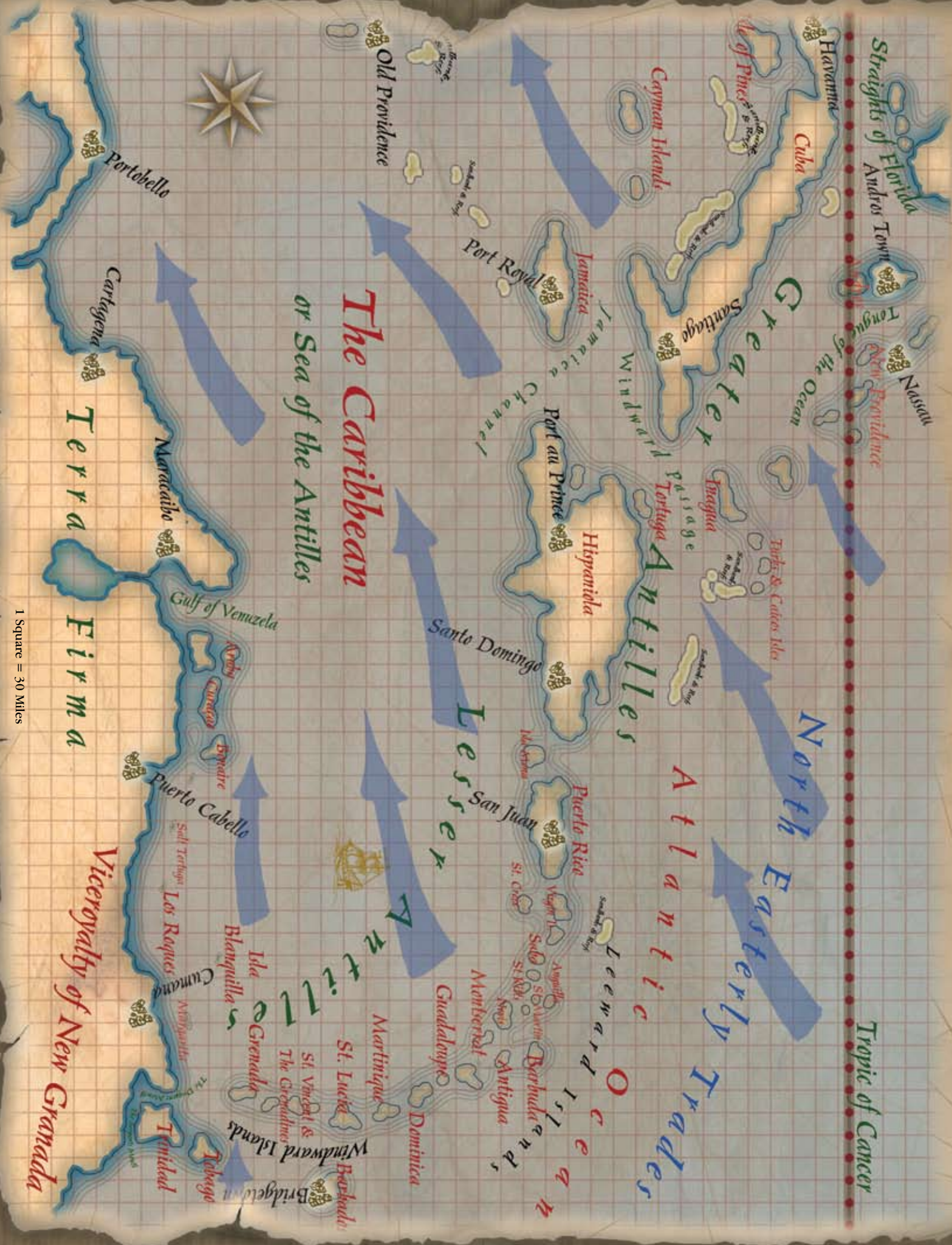
GAME MASTERS' SECTION



AVAST, ME HEARTIES!

*GO YE NO FURTHER UNLESS YE BE THE
MASTER OF THE GAME.*

YE BE WARNED!



Straits of Florida
Andros Town

Tongue of the Ocean
New Providence
Nassau

Tropic of Cancer

Havana
Cuba

Greater

Key of Pines

Cayman Islands

Santiago

Antilles

Atlantic

Jamaica

Port au Prince

Port Royal

Santo Domingo

Lesser

Antilles

Old Providence

The Caribbean
or Sea of the Antilles



Martinique
St. Lucia
St. Vincent & The Grenadines

Windward Islands
Isla Grenada
Blanguilla

Barbuda
Bridgetown

Portobello

Cartagena

Terra Firma

Maracaibo

Gulf of Venezuela

Puerto Cabello

Viceroyalty of New Granada

Cumaná

Trinidad



1 Square = 30 Miles

The Caribbean

The action in the *Pirates RPG* takes place in the confines of the Caribbean Sea, on the numerous islands, the southern tip of Florida, Mexico, and the Spanish Main. Although the phrase “Spanish Main” is sometimes used to describe the entire region, it refers specifically to the northern coast of what is now Colombia and Venezuela, as well as Mexico. We use it in its more general sense to refer to the waters and islands of the Caribbean region and the neighboring coast of the Americas.

In this chapter we take a quick tour of the region, visiting the major islands and towns and dropping a few names of important personages along the way.

Remember though, this game is set “where,” not “when.” We’ve taken three centuries of history and mixed them up with the world of the *Pirates CSG* to create an alternate view of the Caribbean.

Forts

This chapter also introduces forts to the game. Forts are given just three stats—Toughness, cannons, and troops.

Toughness: Toughness is a measure of a fort’s durability and ability to withstand damage. The number in parentheses is the fort’s Armor, which is already figured into the listed Toughness. A fort’s base Toughness is equal to its listed Toughness minus the Armor. Note that forts have Heavy Armor (to prevent a lucky musket shot or crossbow bolt breaching the thick defenses).

Guns: This represents the number of cannon in the fort. Unless otherwise stated, these are 16-pound guns. As with ships, it is not easy to bring all a fort’s cannon to bear on a single target, and only one-quarter of the guns may fire at any one target.

Troops: Should the heroes try to raid a fort or enlist aid from the garrison, this is the total number of defenders.

Notes: Any specific notes are listed here.

Fort Critical Hits

- | 2d6 | Effect |
|-------|--|
| 2-4 | Cannon: One random cannon is destroyed and may no longer be used. If there are no cannons, this is a Wall hit instead. |
| 5-8 | Wall: The round smashes part of the outer wall but has no other effect. |
| 9 | Breach: The round causes part of the wall to collapse, creating a 2” (4 yard) breach. |
| 10-11 | Troops: Troops Critical Hits inflict 2d6 casualties scattered randomly among all soldiers. Remove that many troops immediately. They may recover after the fight in the normal method. If the 2d6 roll comes up a double, a random player character or other named personality was hit as well. |
| 12 | Magazine: The magazine is hit, which blows the fort to rubble. All cannons are destroyed and all but 2d6 troops survives. Wild Card characters take 5d6 damage. |

PIRATES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

Ambergris Cay

Ambergris Cay is a 25-mile archipelago made up of over 200 islands linked together into a single mass by sand dunes and mangrove swamps. It has no economic or strategic value, but is used on occasion by pirates to careen their ships.

Anguilla

Anguilla remained uninhabited until 1650, when the English arrived. The colony was destroyed by Indians from a nearby island after barely ten years.

A decade later, and with the colony rebuilt, it was the French who attacked. They held the island for a year, before it was returned to England as part of a treaty.

Anguilla briefly flexed her muscles against the French six years ago, when, with the aid of privateers, she captured French St. Martin. The French retaliated by despatching two frigates to Anguilla, but the invasion force was defeated in under half an hour.

Anguilla is a plantation island, but the weak soil and poor rainfall mean the crops are far smaller than those of other islands. As a result, Anguilla is the poor cousin in the English Caribbean territories.

Geography

Anguilla is a long, thin island lying close to St. Martin. Although it enjoys a tropical climate, the island is a vast coral covered in a thin layer of soil. Hurricanes are a constant problem.



Places of Interest

Bell & Whistle Tavern: Located on the wharf at Island Harbor, the main town. The owner, William Crumshore, sells forged English letters of marque for \$750. The penalty for owning a forged letter of marque is death, as is printing them, and Crumshore is very selective about his clientele. Knowledge of his business is through word of mouth only.



Columbus named many islands after the Virgin Mary. Antigua takes its name from Santa Maria Le Antigua, a cathedral in Seville.

Although explorers and pirates visited Antigua, none settled, and it wasn't until 1632 that the first settlers, English from St. Kitts, arrived on the island. They immediately began planting tobacco.

In 1666, the French captured Antigua, but returned it less than a year later as part of a peace treaty. This is the only time Antigua has ever been occupied by other European powers.

Sugar became the major crop in 1674, quickly replacing tobacco, and slaves were imported to work the large plantations.

Antigua remained largely unnoticed until just ten years ago, when the slaves planned a rebellion against their abusive masters. The plot was discovered and the ringleaders executed, but the possibility of losing Antigua to slaves has caused the English to renounce slavery on the island, not that the former slaves can see much difference between a life of slavery and their current situation.

Geography

Antigua is the largest of the British Leeward islands, and also one of the flattest. Its tropical climate makes the soil well suited for sugar, and many areas of jungle have been cleared for the cash crop.

Places of Interest

Dockyard: The northern Leeward Islands are an important part of England's holdings in the Caribbean, and 20 years ago a large dockyard was built to service the English West Indies fleet. The dock is larger than that at Port Royal, Jamaica, but is purely a military base.

Falmouth: The island's capital, Falmouth, has become the first port of call for ships riding the trade winds to the West Indies and has grown rich as a result. Falmouth is a close rival to Port Royal, and many of the island's dignitaries are part of the same social scene.

Fort George: Fort George overlooks Falmouth's harbor and was constructed to provide shelter for the entire population of the island, currently just over 1000 souls, in the event of a French attack.

Toughness: 26(10); **Guns:** 20; **Troops:** 100

Notes: Fort George stands ready to repel invaders at a moment's notice. On the first round of combat in which the fort takes part, the troops receive two extra action cards, as if they had the Improved Level Headed Edge.

Sugar Forts: The great wealth of Antigua is vital to the British Crown, and every sugar plantation is protected by a small fort. To date, there are over 40 on the island.

Toughness: 16(4); **Guns:** 2; **Troops:** 10

Notes: Wooden.

The Old School: Operated by Dougal MacLellan, the Old School teaches the use of sword and buckler (see page 112). Dougal gives a 50% discount to Scottish students, which has earned him few friends with the British elite.

People of Note

Captain Percival Blake: Captain Blake is a strict disciplinarian who uses the lash to urge his gun crews to perfect their skills. His excessive use of the lash may, in fact, be creating more pirates from his crew than he is catching. Percival Blake sees himself as Commodore Temple's rival suitor for the Countess Doone's attentions, but while she willingly takes his gifts, she does not take him seriously (see Jamaica, page 158).

PIRATES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

Commodore Rhys Gryffin Owen: Owen's rich merchant family has never been accepted into society, so he went to sea to change his social standing. His unique command style of scanty discipline and huge cash rewards for success is possible only by paying his crew from his own pocket. Being a social climber himself, he has figured out Diana Doone's little secret (see page 160), but since he has not revealed it, some arrangement must have been made.



Aruba was claimed by the Spanish in 1499, the native Indians having little say in the matter. The soil proved too poor to support plantation crops, and therefore never had a large influx of slaves.

The island was a rich source of copper, however, and the Spanish moved the entire population of Hispaniola here two centuries ago to work in the mines. When the mines were exhausted, the Spanish allowed the "settlers" to return home.

Seeing no other economic use for the island, Spain sold Aruba to the Dutch in 1636. With few natural resources, the Dutch use the land to graze cattle, and Aruba has become the primary source of meat for other Dutch interests in the Caribbean.

Pirates frequently raid the island for cattle, and the Dutch Crown is considering building a stone fort to bolster the island's meager defences.

Geography

Aruba's few interior hills reach unimpressive maximum heights of just over 600 feet, and for the most part the island is flat. Without any shelter from mountains or dense jungle, Aruba suffers severe battering from tropical storms during the Fall.

The temperature remains steady at around 80 degrees all year, and with little jungle, humidity is relatively low.

Places of Interest

Fort William: Fort William is actually a small coastal settlement of 300 souls enclosed by a wooden palisade. It serves as a port for merchants bringing supplies and exporting beef. Aside from the tavern and small brothel, there is little to attract visitors (unless they want to buy beef, of course).

Toughness: 16(4); **Guns:** 4; **Troops:** 20

Notes: Wooden.

People of Note

Kapitein ter Zee Thjis Krijger: Captain Krijger is the "governor" of Aruba and responsible for its safety. His "fleet" consists of a single sloop, *Princess Margaret*. He considers his posting a travesty against his nautical skills, and enthusiastically engages any pirates entering his domain in battle to prove his abilities in the hope of earning a new posting somewhere better.



In 1492, the fate of the Caribbean was sealed when Columbus made his first landfall in the Bahamas.

Although Columbus was friendly to the natives, those who followed were not, and within 25 years the natives had all been removed to work in the Spanish gold mines of Hispaniola. Spain's policy of removing the entire population backfired, and with no workers in the Bahamas, the islands remained uncolonized.

The first European colony was established in 1647, when English Puritans fled Royalist Bermuda. Although many colonies sprang up, the majority of inhabitants were pirates, who used the many islands as havens.

King Charles gave land in the Bahamas to the people of Carolina, who founded Charles Town in his honor. The town was destroyed 40 years ago by a French and Spanish fleet, and the pirates, seeing a chance to set up their own Tortuga-like enclave, rose up against the English and proclaimed a Pirates' Republic.

In order to quell the unrest, the British appointed Woodes Rogers as the first governor of the Bahamas, and the former pirate wasted no time in ousting his former comrades. The English Crown has made it clear that pirates will not be tolerated in the Bahamas, and the creaking gibbets are a grisly testimony of their zeal.

Geography

The Bahamas are an archipelago of over 700 islands, of varying sizes. The largest, Andros Island, is over 100 miles long and 40 miles wide, but many of the islands are little more than lumps of rock protruding from the sea.

The great number of islands, and their myriad sizes, gives rise to a wide variety of landscapes. Although no point is higher than 200 feet, some islands have good soil and lush forests, others have mangrove swamps, and the majority are simply scrubby expanses of thin soil on a coral foundation.

Fresh water is in short supply, except on Andros Island, where the many freshwater rivers make it abundant.

Banks & Reefs

This is not actually an island, but instead a navigational hazard that can be found across the Caribbean (notorious places are marked on the map on page 142, though most islands are surrounded by such hazards). Banks are shallow seas, usually exposed at low tide. Reefs are sometimes also exposed at low water. Tabletop ship combat in these regions should involve sandbars or reefs.

For the Chase system, roll two d6. The first indicates the likelihood of obstacles being present. A roll of 5+ means that the water is low enough for obstacles to affect ships.

The second d6 determines the type and density of the obstacles. On a 1-2, treat the area as Sparse Obstacles (Sandbars); 3-4 is Sparse (Reefs); 5 is Thick (Sandbars), and a 6 means Thick (Reefs).



Barbados



Barbados means “The Bearded Ones,” and was named by a Portuguese explorer in 1536. The name refers to the island’s fig trees, whose hanging roots resembled beards (at least to the explorers). Over the next decade, Spanish conquistadors frequently raided the island, taking the Indians to work as slaves.

In 1620, the British landed on what was, by then, a deserted island. Settlers began arriving within the decade and Barbados was soon part of the British Crown.

The plantations of Barbados were, until recently, worked by slaves. Although many were African, a large number were actually white men, seized during England’s consolidation of Scotland and Ireland. As the number of slaves grew, the smaller plantations were swallowed by richer landowners. Many of the farmers uprooted and moved to the Carolinas to farm cotton.



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Geography

Barbados is not part of an island chain, like so many other islands in the Caribbean, but instead sits as the most easterly point of the region. It is a flat island, with central highlands rising to just 1000 feet.

During the rainy season, Barbados is often clipped by hurricanes, though few actually ravage the island.

Places of Interest

Bridgetown: The major town on the island, Bridgetown contains the Assembly House—a regional parliament run by the wealthy plantation owners. While important for trade, Barbados is a small island, and lacks the resources to become a major trading center. As such, Bridgetown is a bustling but small port.

Longstride's Academy: Claude Benoir's refusal to take French students outraged the French nobility, though less so than his opening his academy on English soil (see page 111). What neither the court or any of his students realize is that Benoir is actually a French spy.

People of Note

Patrick O'Reilly: Shipped to Barbados as a slave for his rebellious activities in Ireland, O'Reilly continues to lead small rebellions against his masters. He works at the docks in Bridgetown, and is eager to make contact with unscrupulous crews prepared to sell the slaves guns for a full revolt.



Barbuda is a coral island situated close to Antigua. Although formerly claimed by the English, the island is home to only a few hundred inhabitants, most of whom are farmers, providing crops for Antigua. The single settlement, Codrington, is named after the founder of Antigua.



Bonaire was discovered by the Spanish in 1499. The discoverers quickly realized that the island had no potential for plantations and few natural resources, and so shipped the entire native population to Hispaniola.

The island remained uninhabited until 1526, when the governor, imported cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs to graze on the scrubby vegetation. Whereas the Dutch would use Aruba as a meat-factory, the Spanish were more interested in skins, and left the animals untended, save for a few slave workers.

Constant raids by pirates forced the Spanish to build their single settlement inland. Development of Bonaire was ignored in favor of islands with richer resources, and it was only in 1633, when the Dutch gained control of the island, that the population grew.

Sadly, it was a population of slaves. The Dutch quickly put them to work harvesting dyewood and creating salt pans in depressions (which involved cutting channels to the sea). Bonaire still remains under Dutch control and is a major source of salt.

Geography

Bonaire is another low-lying island, and it is this that enables the Dutch to harvest salt. The northern and eastern approaches are protected by reefs, though there is easy access from the south and west.

Places of Interest

Unless you like salt, there is nothing of interest on Bonaire. The only settlement, Rincon, is little more than the governor's mansion and a garrison of some 30 troops. The slaves live in huts dotted around the island.

People of Note

Governor Ruud Verigo: Verigo, a Dutchman with a Spanish father, runs Bonaire like a prison camp. So long as the salt flows, his masters in the Netherlands care little for his policies. With slavery dying out, Verigo has begun buying convicts from the Spanish.

Cartagena

Formerly known as Cartagena de Indias, this thriving town stands on the coast of the Spanish Main and is the chief port of the Spanish treasure fleet. The town faces west, with the harbor entrance being to the south.

The English and French both assaulted the fledgling town shortly after its construction, which prompted the Spanish to build a vast fortress and encircle the town with walls to create an impregnable bastion.

It is said that the Spanish king once insisted, with some irony, that given the amount of gold he had spent building the fortifications, he should be able to see them from his window in Spain.

Parts of the city were sacked by the French half a century ago, and sections of the fortifications destroyed. Even so, the city withstood a year long siege by the English only a decade ago. Since that time, the inhabitants have further strengthened the walls.

Needless to say, Cartagena is a wealthy city, and many noblemen have settled here, investing their fortunes in shipping and gold mines.

Rafael el Duque de Moreno y Rivera, the current governor, places a heavy tax on imports and exports to help pay for the ships used to defend the treasure fleet. Imports are charged 20%, and exports a hefty 40%. As a result, Rafael is effectively taxing the citizens of both Cartagena and Spain, a fact that has not gone unnoticed back home.

Nobles in Spain with contacts in the Caribbean are more than happy to pay smugglers as much as 10% of a cargo's value to avoid having to pay the 40% export tax. As fast as Rafael spends money defeating pirates, his own policies are forcing his countrymen to hire them.

Places of Interest

Academia Nacional Española: The Spanish Academy is located in one of the oldest parts of the city (see page 109).



Castle of San Felipe de Barajas: First built in 1536 and then expanded in 1657, the castle sits at the entrance to the harbor and has a clear field of fire on any ships trying to sneak into port.

Toughness: 28(10); **Guns:** 20; **Troops:** 200

Notes: Eager to ensure their monopoly on gold and silver remains, the Spanish are beginning the construction of a larger castle on the opposite side of the harbor.

Harbor: The treasure fleets begin their long voyage to Spain here, but must sail to Cuba to load other commodities and then catch the trade winds home.

The treasure fleet leaves Cartagena once a year. The harbor, which is one of the largest in the Caribbean, bustles with activity as the vast armada loads its precious cargo. During this time, soldiers patrol in great numbers and undesirable elements are swept off the street and imprisoned until the fleet leaves.

PIRATES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

La Caballería Española Enseña: Once a shining beacon of Spanish elitism, the Spanish Cavalry School finds it harder to attract new students new year (see page 110).

People of Note

Almirante del Nero: Commander of the Armada de Barlavento, del Nero is a man driven almost insane by his zeal to rid the Spanish Main of pirates. To fail will be to fail in his duty to God. His vision is so singular that he even secretly corresponds with his nation's enemy, Governor Lynch of Jamaica, and colludes with his efforts to rid the region of the pirate scourge.

Rafael el Duque de Moreno y Rivera: Rafael comes from a family made proud and rich from battles with the Moors. The current duke is incensed that Capitán Alarico Castro is in command of one of the largest Spanish ships in the Caribbean, rather than in chains, and he is constantly looking for an excuse to put the man where he belongs.

Rafael is the current governor of Cartagena but has little control over Almirante del Nero or his fleet, a fact which constantly sores him.



Cayman Islands

The Caymans were another of Columbus' many discoveries, and named Las Torgugas (The Turtles) by him. They remained for 150 years nothing more than a place where a ship could forage supplies of water and meat.

England acquired the islands from the Spanish during the same deal that saw Jamaica become an English colony.

Early settlements grew and floundered, constantly harassed by pirates, and England eventually abandoned the islands, though without giving up their sovereignty.

With the English gone, the pirates moved in. Although nowhere near the den of scum that is Tortuga, the Caymans remain unsafe for those who do not follow the pirates' way of life.

Geography

The Caymans are flat, coral reefs with little vegetation. The entire area is surrounded by reefs, through which few pirate captains know the safe passage.

Tabletop ship combat in these regions should involve reefs. For the chase system, treat the area as Thick Obstacles (Reefs).

Places of Interest

There aren't any. The only settlements are ramshackle collections of huts and tents erected and dismantled each time the pirates set to sea. Most of the pirates sleep under the stars or aboard their ships, which nestle in one of the many coves.

People of Note

Calico Cat (see page 247): Now a regular visitor to the relative safety of the Caymans, Cat (real name rumored to be Catherine) got her start only recently by stealing a Spanish sloop from Havana. She leads her crew with a dazzling smile that belies her deadly determination. Her anonymous past cannot hide her suffering, and she intends to make the crowns of Europe suffer as well.

Jack Hawkins (see page 249): Hawkins was an expert marksman and poacher until he was caught and shipped to Port Royal as an indentured servant. Captain Blackheart liberated Hawkins when he sacked Port Royal, and the pair was dynamic until a dispute over Lady Arcadia de Sol. Hawkins won the girl, but also a powerful enemy.

He frequently takes refuge from whatever his current difficulty happens to be in the sheltered waters of the Caymans



The island of Cozumel lies off the Yucatan coast and was once a major Mayan religious site, sacred to Ix Chel, the moon goddess.

Juan de Grijalva discovered the island in 1518 and made peaceful contact with the natives, who allowed him to hold a Mass on the beach for his crew.

Grijalva's peaceful visit was followed a year later by Hernán Cortés, the infamous conquistador. The Mayans welcomed Cortés as they had his predecessor, but Cortés was no mere explorer. He had come to stamp Spanish Catholic values on the natives, and began by destroying their temples. Surprisingly, the Mayans put up little resistance to this desecration, but unfortunately they were not spared.

A smallpox outbreak devastated the local population, which is believed to have been in excess of 30,000. Within a few decades, the island was abandoned.

In 1525, another Spaniard, Francisco de Montejo, landed on the island with orders to start a colony as a port of call for ships heading to the Yucatan. Montejo named the island San Miguel de Cozumel, the name by which it is still known.

Once the Spaniards mapped, then conquered, the Yucatan, stopping off at Cozumel was no longer required. In the space of 30 years, the population plummeted from over 35,000 to less than three dozen. In 1700, the island was officially abandoned by Spain.

Within a year, pirates moved in, and took over the former Spanish settlements.

Geography

Cozumel is a low-lying island of limestone and sandy soil. The interior is thick jungle, which has reclaimed many of the former Mayan sites. The temperature on the coasts, where the pirates make their homes, is generally a cool 75, but quickly rises to over 90 as one ventures into the interior.

Places of Interest

Mayan Ruins: Hernán Cortés successfully destroyed every Mayan temple he found, but rumors persist of temples still standing in the heart of the island. The pirates have made several attempts to find these structures, believing them to be full of treasure, but every expedition has mysteriously vanished without a trace.

People of Note

Crimson Angel: A magnificent creature drenched in the blood of her enemies, Crimson Angel is from either heaven or hell, depending on your point of view. Frequently seen sailing the waters around Cozumel, she attacks crowns and pirates alike, seemingly loyal to none but her own. Even then, she rewards betrayal with swift and deadly vengeance, but her **word** is legend in the Caribbean.



Columbus landed on Cuba in 1492, and it wasn't until 1511 that the Spanish arrived in force to conquer the island. The native population was no match for the technologically superior Spanish, or the diseases they brought, and Cuba quickly became a Spanish territory.

Many settlers followed, and Cuba quickly developed a labor problem. As the Spanish and Indians intermarried, so slave labor became scarce. To make up for this shortfall, the Spanish began raiding other islands, transporting entire populations to work in Cuba's tobacco and sugar plantations.

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Spanish Caribbean policy has signed the death knell for Cuba. Spain has long had a tradition of preventing her colonies from trading with foreign powers, and has fallen behind the Dutch and English in the field of sugarcane technology.

Spain also preferred to get her slaves from the Caribbean, which gave the British a monopoly on African slavery. With most of the Caribbean islands now claimed by European powers, Cuba is finding herself lagging behind the non-Spanish colonies in terms of economic growth.

Geography

Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean, and stretches over 700 miles from tip to tip. Much of the island is plains, but it becomes more rugged as one heads southeast, rising to the 6,000 feet high Pico Real de Turquino. The interior is heavily vegetated, and the main Spanish colonies lie along the coast.

Places of Interest

Academia de Hierro: Owned by Juan and Pedro Martinez, this small fencing academy is developing a name for itself as a superb school (see page 109).

Havana: Originally founded in 1515 on the southern coast, Havana moved to its current position four years later. Havana began as just another trading port, but when the gold began to flow from Mexico, the ships needed an anchorage before riding the trade winds home. Since then Havana has grown into the main Spanish port in the north Caribbean.

Havana was attacked by pirates during the mid-16th century, prompting construction of a series of defenses, culminating with the mighty La Cabaña fortress.

La Cabaña: The name of this fortress means “The Cabin,” and is something of a joke. The fort sits on a bluff dominating Havana, and is visible for many miles in all directions.

Toughness: 28(14); **Guns:** 24; **Troops:** 200

Notes: The gunners of La Cabaña are some of the best in the Spanish territories. They have the Marksman Edge with respect to firing cannons.

People of Note

Captain Alarico Castro: Captain Castro is a dedicated man, but ultimately not to Spain. He “overcame” his Moorish heritage to rise to the top of the Spanish Navy, but he plots against every Castilian who has wronged him. Castro does his duty, but he patiently waits to make his move.

Commandante Antonio de Silva: As a King’s Marine, de Silva was once one of Spain’s top musketeers. When he lost his right eye to a grape-shot volley fired by Christopher Myngs’ ship, he feared for his career. But he learned to shoot all over again, vowing revenge on Myngs, his pirates, and all English.

Fernando Sanchez: Sanchez uses information smuggled to him by Nemesio Diaz to raid enemy ports when they are most laden with gold. Sanchez has put a price on Hawkins’ head for tricking his galleon onto a reef, and he’s doubled that price for Hawkins’ monkey, Skyme (though his expensive hatred of the monkey remains unexplained).



Situated on the northern coast of the Spanish Main on the banks of the Manzanares River, Cumaná was founded by the Spanish in 1521 and is supposedly the oldest European city in the Americas.

Originally, the city was founded because of the rich pearl beds nearby, but as time passed, the settlers began to grow coffee, sugar, and tobacco for export.

Other European powers have raided the town over the centuries, though they have never sought to capture the town outright. Because of this, and to prevent pirates raiding the pearl warehouses, the Spanish have stationed a small fleet here and constructed a fort overlooking the town.

The area is also frequently hit by earthquakes, and the city has been rebuilt more than once.

Places of Interest

El Castillo de Perlas: The Castle of Pearls sit at the harbor mouth, where it commands the approaches to the town.

Toughness: 18(6); **Guns:** 8; **Troops:** 60

Monastery of Santiago de Cumaná: The monastery of Cumaná lies a mile upriver from the town, The original monastery was constructed by Franciscan monks, but it has since been turned over to the Inquisition, who turned it into a prison for Jews and heretics. Rumors circulate that the Inquisition are using the prisoners to secretly operate mines, though what they are mining remains a mystery as there is no gold or silver in this area.

Toughness: 21(7); **Guns:** 6; **Troops:** 40

People of Note

Inquisitor Sebastian Blanco (see page 248): Don Sebastián de la Peña resigned his commission as a career soldier to take up the cause of the Inquisition. His passion for his work burns clearly in his eyes. Even so, those whom he befriends find it remarkably easy to discuss personal matters with the war veteran, who is really using them all as spies to find Jews and heretics.



so the Company moved into other markets. Almost any goods found in the Caribbean are available here for trade.

Both England and France have invaded and claimed Curaçao in the past, but in both instances they were driven out by a combined Dutch-Spanish fleet.

Geography

Curaçao is another flat island, with a high point of just 1200 feet on the northern side. Unlike the larger islands of the Caribbean, Curaçao is semi-arid, and it more closely resembles scrubland than a tropical island.

Its craggy coastline conceals numerous sheltered bays and inlets, which form natural harbors. However, the currents around the northern coast are very strong, and pose a hazard to ships.

Places of Interest

Fort Willemstad: Located on a small hill overlooking the town, Fort Willemstad serves both to protect the town and as a storehouse for valuable commodities. Unlike most other fortifications, Fort Willemstad is actually owned and maintained by a private



Curaçao lies close to Aruba and, like Aruba was settled first by the Spanish, who massacred the local Indians. With no natural resources of any value, Spain sold the island to the Netherlands in 1634.

Unfortunately, for the Spanish, the sale proved rather short-sighted, for although Curaçao has no exploitable resources, it's natural harbors and proximity to the Spanish Main make it an ideal trading center.

The Dutch West India Company exploited this and founded a trading post here a decade later. Curaçao became a major trading center, and the capital, Willemstad, grew rapidly. At first, it was a major slave trading center, but as the international slavery market dropped off,

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company—the Dutch West India Company—although the soldiers belong to the Crown and are hired by the Company.

The Company also maintains a man-o'-war, three galleons, and six sloops, which they hire out to merchants for protection duty.

Toughness: 24(8); **Guns:** 16; **Troops:** 75

Notes: Contains a King's Ransom in trade goods.

People of Note

Administrator-General Piet van der Poul: Van der Poul is the chief administrator for the Dutch West India Company and an extremely wealthy man. His privileged position allows him to secretly skim a small percentage of every trading venture into his private coffers. Never enough to be noticed by any other Company officials, the volume of trade means that he has amassed an immense fortune.



Whereas Columbus spotted many islands from the safety of his ship, he actually landed at Dominica on his second voyage, only to be forced back to the sea by the native Indians.

The British also tried, and failed, to colonize the island in 1627. The French landed a decade later, using missionaries to try to win over the Indians, but were also expelled.

Although France still claims the island, there are no European outposts here, and the number of Indians has actually swelled as the Europeans drive them out of nearby islands. Both France and England make brief landings to gather timber, but the crews retreat to the safety of their ships at night.

Geography

Much of the island is swathed in rainforest, and without any European settlers hacking down the forest for plantation space, the clearings made by the loggers are quickly reclaimed by nature.

The island is cut by many rivers, and during the rainy season explorers are urged to be wary of flash floods.

Places of Interest

Boiling Lake: The volcanic activity of this region makes itself felt on Dominica in the form of a lake of boiling water. The air is ripe with sulfurous fumes, and the waters are considered by many Europeans to have healing properties. Although French nobles on Martinique pay well for bottles of the stuff, gathering it is dangerous, as the natives consider the lake sacred and kill Europeans caught stealing the water.



Named Conception by Columbus, the island reminded his crew of southern Spain, and they renamed it Granada. The French called the island Grenade, and the English altered it further to the current spelling.

Columbus never claimed the island for Spain, and for the next 150 years, the native Indians resisted all attempts to colonize the island. It was the French who succeeded, buying land in return for metal tools.

As soon as they had a foothold, the French sought to expand their dominion, and this brought them into open conflict with the natives. The Indians lost.

Unfortunately for the French, the English were intent on capturing Grenada, and finally did so several decades ago, whereupon they immediately built two forts to protect their acquisition. The French retain an interest in retaking Grenada and have made several failed attempts to dislodge the English.

Geography

Grenada is a volcanic island, and the soil is extremely fertile. Being volcanic, however, it is rather mountainous and only the valleys and coastal plains are useful for agriculture. Like other Windward Isles, it has just two seasons, dry and wet.

Places of Interest

St. George's: The only settlement on the island, St. George's lies on the western side. The port is a mixture of a trading center and

naval base, and the English keep a small number of warships here at all times in case of French attack.

Fort George: Fort George was the first fort constructed and sits on the northern side of the harbor. It's outer walls bear the marks of French cannon balls.

Toughness: 24(8); **Guns:** 12; **Troops:** 60

Notes: The gunners of Fort George fiercely oppose French attempts to retake the island. They receive +1 to Shooting rolls against ships flying the French flag.

Fort Frederick: Situated south of the harbor, Fort Frederick has yet to test her guns in anger. Chances are, it won't be long before the French try to take Grenada again.

Toughness: 22(6); **Guns:** 8; **Troops:** 40

People of Note

Governor Andrew Smythe: Smythe is a retired naval captain and in direct control of the English forces on Grenada. Although outranked by Governor Lynch of Jamaica, Smythe considers Lynch's crusade against pirates a waste of valuable manpower. He has refused several orders to send ships to Jamaica, citing the presence of French warships as reason to keep the fleet at home.



The Grenadines are a collection of over 600 islands, many of them very small, lying between St. Vincent and Grenada.

England acquired the islands in 1600, and despite frequent attempts, the French have been unable to remove them.

All the islands are volcanic in origin, and the soil has allowed extensive plantations to be built on the larger islands. Several of the smaller islands are used by whalers, but these are not permanent settlers.

Pirates have been known to use the smaller islands to careen their ships, though the risk of being spotted by an English warship on patrol is quite high.



Columbus landed on Guadeloupe in 1493 and named it Santa María de Guadeloupe de Extremadura in honor of the image of the Virgin Mary venerated in Guadeloupe.

As was common at the time, Spain ignored the island in favor of richer areas, and the first European settlers there were the French. Unwilling to share control of the island, the French warred against the natives, finally destroying the last Indians a decade later.

Currently still in French hands, the island has been invaded numerous times by the English, who have never managed to secure a strong foothold before being expelled.

Geography

Guadeloupe is not a single island, but a collection of five islands.

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The largest two, Basse-Terre and Grande-Terre are separated by a narrow channel known as the Rivière Salée (Salt River).

The islands are not particularly habitable, with Basse-Terre being rugged, volcanic mountains, and Grand-Terre comprising lightly forested plains. Fortunately, the soil on the plains is fertile, and the French cultivate crops here, though not enough for export.

Places of Interest

Basse-Terre: This small town of just 200 souls passes as the capital of Guadeloupe. The inhabitants are dependent on imported resources, and the small harbor is regularly visited by a supply ship.

Fort Paradis de la Mer: The Paradise of the Sea was a name given to the fort as a joke, given that Guadeloupe is a desolate chain of islands. French settlers will still fight to the death to keep their island safe.

Toughness: 18(6); **Guns:** 8; **Troops:** 50

Notes: Knowing the English are likely to return, the soldiers keep spare cannons in case of attack. The first four cannons destroyed are replaced in the next round.



Columbus arrived in Hispaniola in early December 1492, and made camp on the island. On Christmas Eve, his flagship ran onto a reef and sank. Though the crew, with the help of local Indians they had befriended, rescued much of her cargo, Columbus was forced to leave a small group of men behind when he departed. They founded Navidad, the first European colony on Hispaniola.

The settlers soon fell into fighting among themselves, and then with the Indians, who responded by slaughtering the Spanish. When Columbus returned with supplies, the settlement was a burnt ruin.

Undeterred, Columbus founded Isabella (named for the Spanish queen), and set about conquering the local tribes. Those who managed to survive the attacks and ravages of disease were put to work mining gold.

Columbus' brother, Bartolomew, became the first governor, and founded Santo Domingo in the south near more seams of gold. As a foreigner (Bartolomew, like his brother, was Genoese), the governor attracted hostility from the Spaniards, who had him removed from power by accusing him of incompetence.

The new governor pacified the remaining tribes, murdering the chiefs and enslaving their people. Those who escaped fled to less hospitable parts, where they survived on a subsistence level diet. Those the sword or hard labor didn't kill, smallpox and famine ravaged. One Indian chief still managed to wage a 14-year long guerilla war against the Spanish, who eventually signed a treaty with him and gave him land to build his own town.

When it became clear that the gold was running out, the Spanish moved their gaze to Mexico. Overnight, Hispaniola was nearly abandoned, and the settlers who remained were of mixed Indian-Spanish blood.

With the reduced population, cattle and pigs prospered, and the Spanish settlers did good business selling provisions to ships heading for Spain.

After the establishment of Tortuga as a pirate haven, mainland Hispaniola fell prey to constant attacks.

In 1610, the French, who were catching onto the idea of colonialism, settled north-west Hispaniola, which the Spanish had abandoned years earlier. In 1697, the French laid claim to the western third and named it Saint Dominique. Unlike the Spaniards, the French knew the value of sugar, and St. Dominique quickly became a rich territory.

Geography

Hispaniola is divided by five mountain ranges running roughly north-south across the island. Between the mountain ranges are low-lying valleys. Much of the Spanish territory remains heavily forested, with little clearance save around the coasts. The French, on the other hand, have cut back large tracts to make room for plantations.

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Because of the numerous mountains, and the island's size—it is the second-largest island in the region after Cuba—the forests of Hispaniola's interior comprise both rain forest (in the north and east) and temperate forests (in the south and west).

Places of Interest

Port-au-Prince: The French capital on the island is rapidly growing into a thriving city. The immense wealth brought to the island by the sugar trade is making the aristocracy very rich, and they are beginning to look down their noses at Martinique, which considers itself the center of French influence in the region.

Although there is no open hostility between the two societies, there is plenty of intrigue, with Martiniquan nobles trying to buy plantations from under the noses of the local nobles, and Hispaniolan nobles trying to have the French Caribbean “court” moved to Port-au-Prince.

People of Note

Maurice Aristide: Hiding behind the ridiculous façade of heavy court makeup and a high wig, Maurice Aristide appears every bit the foppishly perfumed and helpless French courtier. In truth, he is a brilliant businessman with the knowledge both to find treasure in the Caribbean and to traffic it safely to his European accounts.

Aristide lives a life of luxury in a grand mansion in Port-au-Prince, where his lavish parties add greatly to the sense of European splendor and sophistication that attracts the cream of Martiniquan society to the capital of Hispaniola.

Phillipe du Brissac: Phillipe makes a living luring ambitious young men into the French navy, promising to introduce them to those with influence and power, and offering them a start in life. By the time they see through his charade, they are out to sea, though it's only a matter of time before someone exposes him for the poseur he is. Fortunately, he is partially sheltered by his good friend, the shrewd Maurice Aristide.

Inagua

Situated southeast of the Bahamas, Inagua is noticeable only for the large lake that takes up much of its western side. Despite its close proximity to the Turks and Caicos Islands, and to Cuba, no nation has laid claim to it.

Inagua serves as the main source of fresh water for the southern Bahamas, and is frequently visited by pirates looking to refill their water barrels after weeks at sea.

Isla La Blanquilla

La Blanquilla remained nothing more than a mark on maritime charts until 1502, when a group of monks traded the Spanish Crown a mysterious map in return for the island. Since then, the monks have built a fortified monastery and declared themselves a neutral part in the affairs of the European powers.

Yet many remark that it cannot be purely coincidental that the major colonization of Mexico and the Spanish Main began only a few short years after the map was handed over?

Geography

The island, named for the white limestone cliffs, rises steeply from the sea and the top can only be reached by climbing treacherous stairs carved out of the cliffs. The soil is chalky, and the monks do not bother to cultivate it.

Places of Interest

Puerto Blanco: The famous Escuela de Cartografia in Puerto Blanco is home to one of the greatest map collections in the world. There are legends that the maps from the library of Alexandria in ancient Egypt reside in its amazing vaults. Tended by a monastic order of mysterious origin, the thousands of maps are rumored to include the map to El Dorado.

Toughness: 21(9); **Guns:** 4; **Troops:** 20

Notes: The Escuela de Cartografia is the perfect place to visit for heroes seeking maps to buried treasure.

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Islas del Maiz



Situated off the Mosquito Coast, these two islands are nominally claimed by Spain, but are not settled. The islands take their name from the wild corn (maize) which grows here.



Isle of Pines



The Isle of Pines, or Isla de los Pinos in Spanish, was discovered by Columbus in 1494, when it was claimed for Spain.

Although the Spanish use the island for logging, they have established no permanent settlements here, with the logging camps being used only seasonally.

Many Cubans refer to the island as Isla de Tesoros ("Treasure Island"), and rumors abound that many pirates have buried treasure in the dense pine forests. Several



expeditions have been launched, some using treasure maps bought from "reputable" pirates, but none has yet found so much as a single piece of eight.

Geography

As one might deduce from the name, the Isle of Pines is covered in thick pine forest. Bountiful fruit trees also grow in the fertile black volcanic soil.



Jamaica



Jamaica is one of the four largest islands in the Caribbean and is situated approximately 100 miles from both Cuba and Hispaniola. Until a century ago, Jamaica was a Spanish territory, but is now firmly in the hands of the English, for whom it is the jewel in their Caribbean crown.

Although plagued by pirates throughout its history, the most damaging (and most daring) raid happened only a few years ago, when Blackheart sacked Port Royal and freed Jack Hawkins. This raid led to the removal of Governor Modyford.

Jamaica is at the heart of the British sugar industry, and the landowners are extremely rich and powerful people, able to bring great political pressure to bear on Governor Lynch. Other Jamaican exports include bananas, as well as small quantities of other fruit, and timber.

Geography

Much of the center of Jamaica is mountainous, with the highest peak rising to over 6,000 feet. Much of the interior is jungle, though large areas have been cleared for sugar plantations. As a result, the major towns are coastal.

Jamaica has a tropical climate, except on the higher mountains, where the elevation makes it temperate. Temperatures in the coastal towns remain around 80 degrees all year round, dropping to a cooler 55 degrees inland. Rainfall is heavier in the east, with the west seeing only half as much.

Places of Interest

Davenport's Academy: Though Henry Davenport's fencing academy isn't as grand as the Royal Fencing Academy, it has attracted a large clientele (see page 110).

Ladies Academy: Governor Lynch has threatened to close the academy more than once for teaching ladies to fight (see page 110). Each time the noblewomen of Port Royal have in turn threatened Lynch with withdrawing support (and that of their husbands as well) for the governor.

Port Royal: The largest town on Jamaica and the center of British influence in the Caribbean, Port Royal is also one of the busiest ports in the region. The town boasts a natural harbor formed by a large sandbar and protected by Ramsgate Fort.

The town has been described as the "richest and wickedest town on Earth," which is perhaps not surprising given the amount of treasure spent here by pirates and privateers. Port Royal boasts a population of only around 6,000 souls, but has over 40 taverns.

Governor Lynch, who's mansion lies on the edge of town, hates pirates, but he also knows they bring great wealth to his town. He allows them to spend their ill-gotten gains in relative peace, so long as none of them are wanted by the English Crown. At the slightest sign of trouble, however, he has his soldiers round them up and throw them in jail to await execution at his leisure.

Ramsgate Fort: Ramsgate was the first fort built by Rogers after the British expanded their colonial interests into the Caribbean. Above the main gates are inscribed the words, "This land and the sea around it belong to the English Crown," a clear sign of defiance to the more numerous Spanish who populate this region.

Ramsgate sits on a spit of land overlooking the harbor and has a commanding view of the sea. Her garrison is small, but few have the courage to mount an attack on the fort, fearful of Big Bessy.

Toughness: 24(8); **Guns:** 12; **Troops:** 30

Notes: One of the cannons is known as "Big Bessy." It can fire twice the range of a standard 16-pound cannon.



Royal Fencing Academy: The place to be seen, for the Jamaican gentry, is the Royal Fencing Academy (see page 112). More deals, legal and illegal, are concluded here than anywhere else on the island.

The Hole: Known properly as Port Royal Gaol, the Hole is the dankest prison in use by the English. Stories told in taverns tell of prisoners who have been there for decades, and who are now completely insane.

Three Ferrets Tavern: The drinks are watered and the food of questionable origin, and most of the clientele are missing limbs. More importantly though, the Three Ferrets is home to Peg Leg's Academy, which is run out from a back room (see page 111).

People of Note

Administrator Scott Bratley: The wily Scott Bratley is Governor Lynch's secret to keeping the Empire's interests prospering in the Caribbean. Administrator Bratley is solely responsible for the smooth working of the fleet and the thriving trade, and seems able to summon resources out of thin air.

Commodore Temple: Temple is the second son of an English nobleman in Ireland. Many say that his success has been

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greased with the blood of men he throws into hopeless situations and deadly boarding actions. His only weakness is his infatuation with the lovely Countess Doone.

Countess Doone: The beautiful Countess Doone is the sweet-talking belle of English Caribbean society. Her dark secret is that she was actually shipped to the Spanish Main as an Irish indentured servant. When her ship was attacked by pirates, she took advantage of the chaos to steal the possessions and identity of a rich young lady who no longer “needed” them. She has spellbound the Jamaican royal court ever since.

Governor Lynch (see page 248): The senior British political figure in the region, Lynch was appointed to Jamaica recently, replacing the less able Governor Modyford.

Lynch hates pirates with a passion that defies reason. He despises Morgan for being a pirate and Myngs and Modyford equally for sullyng the crown of England by associating with them. He often leads his fleet personally in pirate-hunting expeditions.

It’s important to note that Lynch is also an astute politician. His definition of pirate only includes ships that attack English interests. Through this reasoning, he allows “pirates” into Port Royal to spend their money, rather than having them go to a French or Spanish port. Ships with no record of attacking English interests are still issued letters of marque, but the punishments for treachery are very high.

Henry Morgan: Henry Morgan was once a feared buccaneer. Sailing under letters of marque from Sir Christopher Myngs and Governor Modyford, he became wealthy by sacking Spanish Caribbean towns. Governor Lynch sent him to England to stand trial for his crimes, but instead he was knighted and made admiral of all the English fleets on the Spanish Main.

Sir Christopher Myngs: Myngs was sent to the Spanish Main to remove the Spanish. However, he wasn’t given enough ships to do the job, so he pioneered the English-pirate fleet. He personally led the largest of these fleets against the Spanish and Dutch. Since Lynch took the reins of power, Myngs’ reputation has been sullied and he is currently seeking a way to return to the limelight.

Los Roques

This small archipelago lies off the Spanish Main and is unclaimed by any nation. The islands rise vertically from the sea, and have no resources of note worth exploiting. A few crude huts can be found on the lower islands, and these are used by fisherman and pirates when seeking shelter from tropical storms.

Maracaibo

Maracaibo lies on the Spanish Main and is also known as La Tierra de Sol Amada (The Land Beloved by the Sun).

Although Columbus discovered the coast of the Spanish Main, it was Alonso de Oleda who discovered Lake Maracaibo. The local Indians built stilt houses on the lakes of the shore, and Oleda named the land Venezuela, or “Little Venice.”

The first Spanish colony, Nueva Cádiz, was founded on the coast in the early 1500’s, but was destroyed by a tidal wave.

Maracaibo was founded in 1571 on the western side of Lake Maracaibo, where the city sits in a natural harbor. Narrows lead over 30 miles from the lake to the ocean, forcing ships to move slowly to avoid becoming stuck on sandbars. Access to Maracaibo from land is impossible without traversing the lake.

Places of Interest

El Castillo del Infanta (Castle of the Princess): This fortress was designed to protect Lady Arcadia De Sol from the wicked world around her. Her father spared no expense, including hiring the best and most determined gunners, but ultimately it was all for naught, because the lovely lady’s own desires were stronger than the stone walls constructed by her father. The distraught father eventually gave the fort to the town.

Toughness: 24(8); **Guns:** 10; **Troops:** 40

Notes: The gun crews are renowned for their accuracy. Once per round, the gunners may reroll a single missed Shooting roll when using the cannons.

Margarita

Columbus discovered the island in 1498, but it remained inhabited solely by the native Indians until many years later, when two explorers discovered pearl beds in the region.

In 1525, the Spanish Crown sold the island to Licenciado (lawyer) Marcelo Villalobos. Marcelo died on the journey from Spain, but his wife, Dona Isabel Manrique, became the island's first governor. When the last of the family line died out around 1600, the Crown reclaimed the island.

The rich pearl beds were attractive to pirates, who raided the island on a regular basis for over a century. In order to protect their livelihood, and their lives, the islanders used the proceeds of the pearl trade to fund a series of small forts around the coast.

Margarita has only a single sloop to defend her waters, but the fleet from Cumaná makes regular visits, both to check on the safety of the settlers and bring supplies.

Geography

Margarita, also known as La Isla Margarita (The Island of Pearls), is actually two islands joined by a narrow strip of land. Margarita is the larger of the two, and Peninsula de Macanao the smaller. Peninsula de Macanao remains uninhabited due to a shortage of water. Rainfall is light, Margarita being away from the main storm zones, and the temperature a steady 85 degrees.

Margarita is predominantly arid, though along the rivers one can find dense woodlands and fertile valleys. The soil is too poor for extensive agriculture, but fruit grows in sufficient quantities to feed the inhabitants.

Places of Interest

Forts: There are eight small forts on Margarita, protecting the approaches to the natural bays along the coast. Although the pearl industry is not as lucrative as the gold trade, the Crown has no wish to let the income source fall into rival hands.

Toughness: 20(6); **Guns:** 4; **Troops:** 20

People of Note

Governor Alessandro de Seville: Since the island was founded, it has had over 30 governors. According to local folklore, 24 of these mysteriously vanished while sleeping in their beds. Governor de Seville, an educated man, scoffs at such nonsense, putting the high number down to sheer boredom or disease. Still, he has begun counting down the days until his governorship ends and he can return to Spain.

Martinique

Discovered by Columbus on his final voyage, Martinique remained uncolonized for nearly 150 years, after which it was settled by the French. Tensions between the native Indians and the settlers grew as the French began to cut back the forests to make way for sugar plantations, and eventually the Indians rebelled.

The survivors were forcibly removed from the island and African slaves brought in to work the plantations, which now included tobacco.

Martinique remains the center of French activity in the Caribbean, and its lucrative crops have attracted the attentions of the English Crown. Although no overt gestures have been made, English privateers have recently stepped up the activities around the island.

Geography

Martinique is another rugged island, dominated by the peaks of the Carbet and Mont Pelee in the north. Mont Pelee, the larger mountain, towers to 4,500 feet and is a dormant volcano. Due to the rich soil and high rainfall, the north is a lush rainforest.

Further south, one finds small hills and valleys, sheltered by patchy forest, and the ever-expanding plantations.

The island's lush vegetation comes at a price, however, and Martinique lies in the hurricane belt. Severe damage occurs every few years from the powerful tropical storms.

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Places of Interest

Academie Nationale Française: Located in St. Pierre, the Academie has become a tool in the Byzantine politics of the court, and many students earn a comfortable living as assassins (see page 109).

Fort-de-France: Fort-de-France is the main French trading port in the Caribbean. Ships heading to the Caribbean from France must follow the trade winds, and Martinique is their first point of call when they arrive.

The port is one of the busiest in the Caribbean, and is a hotbed for French privateers and mercenaries, who hire their services, at suitably extravagant prices, to newly arrived ships seeking to explore further into the region.

Fort St. Pierre: The fort overlooks not the main harbor, but the secondary port at St. Pierre. Although the French understand the value of their trade, the nobles would rather ensure their own safety first.

Toughness: 24(10); **Guns:** 20; **Troops:** 100

Musketeers' Officer Academy: Although the Musketeers are not present in great numbers on the Caribbean, the Academy has opened its doors to all French officers and has become the place for officers to be seen (see page 111).

St. Pierre: While Fort-de-France is the mercantile capital, the cultural and governmental capital is at St. Pierre. The court models itself on Versailles, in architecture and intrigue. It is well-known that foreign spies operate in the court, as do those of the French Crown.

Although the harbor here is much smaller than at Fort-de-France, it caters primarily for the nobles, who import fine goods from France to the rest of the Caribbean.

Informed captains know that when they dock at the port of St. Pierre, a little extra gold ensures that their cargo will be unloaded swiftly—and without a lot of questions.

People of Note

Amiral Stephan Dupuy: Given the choice, Amiral Dupuy would much rather wear an ordinary sailor's attire than his fussy dress uniform, and he prefers to stand on

the deck of his ship in a raging storm than to attend tedious staff meetings on Martinique or in Paris. Truly a sailor's sailor, Dupuy's experience and intelligence have proved him worthy of his rank.

Monsieur LeNoir: Despite rumors of nobility, Monsieur LeNoir prefers to cultivate a quiet and understated persona. Although he is never at the forefront of events, some speculate that he orchestrates them anyway, as he has ties to almost everyone. Always dressed impeccably in black, he has many lady admirers, who find his dark good looks deliciously menacing.

Vicomtesse Angélique de Richelieu (see page 249): The vicomtesse's exquisite beauty belies a dangerously cunning mind. Clever and very well-connected, she has established an intricate spy network whose tentacles reach all the way back to France. It is not known whether her relationship with the shadowy Monsieur LeNoir is romantic or professional, but it's safer not to inquire.



Despite being named by Columbus after the Virgin Mary, this one being the Blessed Virgin of Montserrat, the explorer never actually set foot here—he simply claimed the territory for Spain.

Since Spain ignored the small island for over 100 years, the English Crown decided to colonize Montserrat, and the first European colony was founded in 1631 by Catholic Irish servants, forced out of St. Kitts by the English, who were fearful of a revolt against the Protestant rulers.

After England had secured its holdings in Ireland, she re-claimed Montserrat from the Irish, and began sending political prisoners to the island.

Sugarcane was introduced a century ago, and the prisoners became workers on the plantations. This stopped only a few decades later, when the first slaves were brought to Montserrat.

Although currently English, Montserrat fell to the French in 1664, and it was almost five years before the English reclaimed the island. The French were not content to let matters lie, though, and sacked the island some 30 years ago, though they did not capture it.

Geography

Montserrat is predominantly a mountainous island, though one covered in lush rainforest. The low-lying coastal plains are perfectly suited for agriculture, though the sugar plantations here are much smaller than those on Jamaica.

The island is something of a hurricane magnet, and has been devastated three times since the English took control, though the last truly devastating hurricane was 80 years ago.

Places of Interest

Plymouth: The main port and settlement of Montserrat, Plymouth is most notable for its jail, a sturdy stone building still used to house political prisoners shipped here from England.



disputes this territorial claim, though as the English lands are restricted to only a single settlement—and that is little more than a glorified logging camp—Spain has not taken to arms to remove the English settlers from her soil.

Mosquito Coast

Home to the Miskito Indians (who give the region its name), Columbus discovered the Mosquito Coast in 1502 but was unable to find a navigable channel inland.

The Spanish arrived in force in 1517, and immediately set about pacifying the natives through the use of brute force. Within a few years, the Spanish had conquered several areas on the Pacific side of Nicaragua and began to colonize the region. By 1524 the towns of Leon and Granada had been established on the eastern side of the country. Fortunately for the Miskito, the Spanish made no attempts to colonize their lands, which held no useful resources for the Spaniards.

During the early 17th century, English and Dutch pirates raided the Spanish settlements, but no attempt was made to colonize the area until 1630, when the English proclaimed a protectorate over the Miskito Indians. Spain

Geography

The Mosquito Coast lies on the eastern coast of Central America. The coastal regions are swampy (and *are* home to mosquitoes), but quickly rise to high hills covered in jungle.

Nevis

Another island discovered by Columbus on his second voyage, the explorer mistook low cloud over the peaks for snow, and named the island “Nieves,” after the Spanish word for snow. Had he actually set foot on the island, he may have discovered his mistake.

The first European to actually set foot on Nevis was an English captain, who was searching for *lignum vitae*, a type of wood so hard it rivaled iron. According to his log, the island was home to many hundreds of turtles,

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which he and his crew found very tasty. The next casual visitor, also English, ran into an Indian hunting party, but both sides fled the encounter.

It was another 20 years before Nevis was settled, by the English from neighboring St. Kitts, but the following year the Spanish managed to conquer the island and drove off the English settlers. The Spanish were then in turn defeated by the English shortly afterward, and the island changed hands once more.

Nevis is still English, but both the Dutch and Spanish make regular attacks in a bid to claim the island. Although the Spanish fleets are currently engaged elsewhere in their war against the pirates, the Dutch are assembling another fleet for an attack.

Geography

Nevis is actually the remains of a volcano and retains a mountainous, forested interior. As with the other volcanic islands, the soil is rich, and many farms and plantations dot the island.

Places of Interest

Bath Spring: A natural hot spring, the waters have proven to have curative effects on burns and rashes. A character who soaks any burns in the water receives +2 to his next natural Healing roll.

Charlestown: The capital of Nevis is a busy port located in a sheltered bay on the west of the island. Charlestown's warehouse district is vast, though much of it now lies empty since the plantations of St. Kitts were destroyed.

Fort Brompton: The fort is always short on soldiers, especially gunners. Many rumors try to explain this, from cannibals on the island to seduction by the native girls. The truth may simply be that the strategically placed fort has seen more than its share of deadly combat, and that has taken its toll on the garrison there.

Toughness: 22(8); **Guns:** 12; **Troops:** 45



When Columbus landed at Puerto Rico in 1493, he found the island to be densely populated with Indians. Fortunately for him, these were peaceful Arawak Indians.

Unfortunately for the Indians, however, Spain wanted workers, not allies, and it quickly subdued the population and put them to work in the gold mines. As it was, the gold proved a meager resource, and was quickly mined out. However, the Indians, who had no rights or freedoms, rebelled against their oppressors. The Spanish took revenge, though disease claimed more Indian lives than sword or musket.

The island soon attracted the attention of pirates, as well as other colonial powers, and the Spanish quickly fortified the main harbor with two forts. The move proved prudent, and three invasion attempts were halted by the defenders.

In recent years, Spain has turned her attentions to the gold-rich lands of the Spanish Main and Mexico, and Puerto Rico has suffered economic hardship as a result. For the most part, it is used as a way-station for Spanish troops heading to and from Spain.

Although there is agriculture on the island, it is subsistence level, and a prohibition on trade with other nations has left the Spanish colonists with no choice but to deal with pirates and smugglers.

Geography

Puerto Rico is mountainous, especially in the center, though the north and south are flatter and contain the best harbors. The central regions are heavily forested and have been little explored.

Places of Interest

El Morro: One of two forts protecting the harbor at San Juan, El Morro sits atop a promontory and provides security for the harbor approaches.

Toughness: 18(8); **Guns:** 8; **Troops:** 30

San Cristobel: The second fort at San Juan sits on a bluff overlooking the town. It serves as the town's jail, though it's well known the guards are corrupt and a prisoner can buy his freedom for a few hundred pieces of eight.

Toughness: 19(8); **Guns:** 8; **Troops:** 60

San Juan: The capital of Puerto Rico has gone from being a commercial port to a pirate den. So long as they do not cause too much trouble, the pirates are welcomed as traders of basic goods. The pirates openly hawk their wares, and the citizens have learned not to ask questions about the origins of the goods.

People of Note

Governor Juan-Alfonso Montoya: The Governor hates Puerto Rico, and he is slowly coming to hate Spain for leaving him to rot on the island. Any pirates wishing to trade at Puerto Rico must receive his blessing, which is easily bought for 300 pieces of eight per visit. Once the "administration fee" is paid, the pirates are free to sell their goods.

Montoya has recently begun issuing letters of marque for just \$500 each, though they aren't recognized by any European power.



Discovered by Columbus in 1493 and named Santa Cruz, his expedition ran into difficulties with the native Indians and Columbus left the island. A Spanish colony was founded several decades later, but was abandoned because of constant warfare with the Indians.

The Dutch and English were the next colonists to claim the island, and the two powers fought over the island for years until the Dutch eventually withdrew. The English prospered for a few years before themselves losing control to the Spanish. With a year, France ousted the Spanish and claimed the island as part of her West Indies dominion.

In 1660, the governor of the French colony on St. Kitts gifted the island to the Knights of St. John, who sold it to the French West India Company only five years later.

The new governor established tobacco, cotton, and sugar plantations, and for a short while the island boomed. After the governor's death, however, the island fell into decline and was abandoned a few years later.

Just 12 years ago, the Danish West India and Guinea Company bought the island. Although it remains largely uninhabited, the Danish have opened the island to settlers of any nationality or religion.

Geography

St. Croix is a rugged island, but less so than some other Leeward Islands. The northern and eastern sides have the most dramatic terrain, with the fertile central plains being the prime area for the cultivation of crops.

Although the central region receives the highest rainfall due to the trade winds, the island is not well watered and drought, which can be severe and prolonged, is a constant problem.

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St. Kitts



Originally named San Jorge, the Spanish never settled on the island after Columbus' discovery, though they did try to prevent other European powers from doing so.

The English arrived in 1623, and settled the island, renaming it St. Christopher, and then shortening the name to St. Kitts.

A few years later, a French privateer and his crew were shipwrecked on the island. The English welcomed the French, and even gave them land, on which they grew tobacco.

St. Kitts was, of course, already inhabited by Indians and as the English and French colonies expanded, the natives sought to remove the Europeans by force. However, the English learned of the plot and launched a surprise attack, during which the Indians were massacred. With the Indian threat removed, the European powers divided the island in two, with the English controlling the center and the French the north and south ends. Since England and France had a long history of animosity, the two sides signed a treaty to help keep the peace.

Barely three years later, the Spanish returned to reclaim the island, which they still maintained was theirs by right of discovery. Although the English and French settlements were destroyed and the inhabitants forced to flee, the Spanish could not afford to occupy the island, and the settlers returned.

England and France could not put aside their hatred of each other for long, and in 1664 the French gained control of the whole island. Their reign lasted 25 years, before the English returned and captured the island.

Twenty years later, the French invaded once more, this time destroying many of the sugar plantations and stealing over 3,000 slaves. Although France has now relinquished any claims to the island, the last French attack has left the island's economy in ruins.

Geography

Like Nevis, just two miles away, St. Kitts is a forested volcanic island with rich soil.

Places of Note

Basseterre: Once a thriving settlement, Basseterre is a remnant of its former glory. Damaged buildings can be seen on every street, and many of the warehouses lie in ruins. Even the fort has been destroyed, although rebuilding work has begun.



St. Lucia



Although discovered by Spain around 1500, St. Lucia remained in the hands of its Indian natives for almost a century,

The Dutch were the first Europeans to gain a foothold on the island, in 1600, though in 1605 the crew of a shipwrecked English vessel began a small, and ill-fated colony that lasted a little over a month. Disease and Indian hostility forced the English to abandon their small foothold.

Despite the Dutch presence, France laid claim to the island in 1635, but their attempts to colonize the island were thwarted by the English, who arrived a few years later. In a repeat of earlier history, the English were, in turn, expelled by the natives.

The French moved in two decades later but only held the island for a few years before the English returned in force. Again, British hopes were short-lived, and before long over 900 colonists had died from disease.

Neither side could secure a strong grip on St. Lucia, and so it became a bargaining chip in political treaties.

At present, the island is claimed by the English, though no European settlers live there. With the growth of the sugar industry, both nations are again turning their gaze to St. Lucia.

Geography

Like many of the Windward Isles, St. Lucia is mountainous. The highest point is 3,000 feet, but due to the island's size, its foothills extend to the coastal regions.

Without the "progress" of the Europeans and their plantations, much of the island remains covered in jungle.



St. Martin



Columbus first spotted the island on the feast day of St. Martin de Tours, and so named the island in the saint's honor. The Dutch West India Company settled the island in 1631, using it as a trading post between their colonies in New Amsterdam (now New York) and Brazil.

The colonists quickly discovered a rich source of salt, and began intensive mining. Catching wind of this lucrative find, Spain asserted her rights to "her" territory and returned to drive the Dutch out.

The Dutch made repeated attempts to secure the island, although each attack failed. Despite this, the besieged governor gained permission from the Crown to destroy the fort and abandon the island, leaving behind a few Dutch and French settlers, who quickly claimed the island for their respective nations.

The two sides signed a treaty in 1648 to settle the territorial dispute, though the presence of a French fleet earned the French settlers a better deal.

The French briefly lost their territory just six years ago, when settlers from Anguilla, assisted by English privateers from St. Kitts, invaded. The territory was returned to France only two years ago.

The island remains split between the Netherlands and France, with the French in possession of the largest portion, though it is currently weak after years of pirate rule. The Dutch, keen to retake the entire island, are smuggling guns to the settlers in the hope of provoking a confrontation on St. Martin.

Geography

St. Martin is a rugged, island, dotted with salt ponds. The southeastern side of the island remains relatively dry, as the wet trade winds deposit rain on the other side of the central mountainous region. This pattern of rainfall means the northwestern side of the island has rich, lush vegetation compared to the scrubs and cacti of the southeast.



St. Vincent



The native inhabitants of St. Vincent fiercely resisted European colonization for decades. The first non-Indian settlers were African slaves, who were shipwrecked on the island. The Indians accepted the new arrivals into their culture, and the two races intermarried.

France finally colonized the islands just three decades ago, and immediately began coffee, tobacco, and sugar plantations, using the natives as cheap labor. The English keep a wary eye on St. Vincent, knowing that it would be a valuable prize were it to fall into their hands.

Geography

St. Vincent is a volcanic island, dominated by the imposing 4,000-foot high volcano, Mount Soufrière. The volcano occasionally belches out steam and sulfurous fumes, but it has not erupted in living memory.

The soil is rich, but the terrain is rocky and thickly forested, leaving only small areas suitable for plantations.

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Places of Interest

Port Royal: A common enough name for a town in the Caribbean, the largest settlement on St. Vincent is home to a small French fleet. The island is strategically placed as a trading center between other French territories and the Spanish Main, and Port Royal has grown substantially in the few years since its founding.

The money to be made from plantations has lured many poorer noblemen from France to seek their fortune in the Caribbean, and the island is rapidly becoming a social hot spot for lesser French aristocrats.

People of Note

Vicomte de Cissey: Not everyone who wears a fancy uniform deserves it—especially not Vicomte Jules de Cissey, Governor of St. Vincent. Every inch the powdered puppy, his shrill demands and pretentious behavior make him generally disliked by all who meet him. He is, however, a vicomte with means, so he continues to receive his social due, though his presence adds no luster to events.



Saba was sighted by Columbus, Drake, and two Dutch explorers, but it remained unexplored until 1632 when an English ship was wrecked here. They discovered traces of Indian houses, but the island was deserted.

Colonization on this tiny rock began just over 70 years ago, when the French claimed the island, though the Dutch first settled here. Crops of sugar and indigo grow well on the volcanic slopes, though the small island cannot support large quantities of either.

The island has changed hands several times, but it is currently a Dutch possession.

Geography

Saba is a tiny island, barely covering 5 square miles, and consists almost entirely of an extinct volcano. The single settlement, The Bottom, is situated high on cliffs. Crews coming ashore must make their way up 800 steps from a small cove called Ladder Bay.



This low-lying limestone island, whose name is a mixture of English and Spanish and means "Salt Turtle," technically belongs to Spain. However, the island is devoid of soil and natural resources, and is Spanish in name only.



As with most islands in the Caribbean, Tobago was already settled by Indians when Columbus made his "discovery." With richer islands and lands to explore, the Spanish Crown ignored it, and in 1508 the English claimed the island for themselves.

Tobago wasn't destined to remain in English hands for long, however, and over the next century it was owned by the Dutch, Spanish, English, and French for short periods, often changing hands on an annual basis.

Currently, the island is unclaimed by any nation, and has become a den for pirates and smugglers. The former colonial settlements have been renamed with typical pirate style, and one can now find Bloody Bay, Pirates Bay, and Man o' War Bay.

The English are beginning to take interest in Tobago once more, and will likely mount an invasion within the next few years. Once they rid the sea of pirates, that is.

Geography

Tobago is an island of gently rolling hills swathed in hardwood forests. Rainfall as with Trinidad, is generally in the latter half of year, and tropical storms are not uncommon.

Places of Interest

Tobago has three main towns, Charlotteville, Canaan, and Moriah, as well as dozens of smaller settlements. Each is den of thieves and cutthroats, where survival depends on a quick wit and a quicker blade. Taverns and brothels can be found in every street of every settlement, as can almost any cargo you care to name (stolen, of course).

People of Note

“Bones” Wiley: The infamous “Bones” Wiley was raised and groomed for command by the dread pirate Rodriguez. When Rodriguez was killed in combat, Wiley was paralyzed by his new post and the responsibilities that it confers. So he carved two dice out of Rodriguez’s skull, allowing his mentor to guide him even in death.

Wily’s somewhat random approach to problem solving scares all but the most confident or fearless crews half to death, but makes him a difficult and unpredictable foe in combat.

Fidel Zuan: Fidel loves his brother, Gaspar. He reminded himself of that every day he rotted in a Spanish prison. After finally setting him free, Gaspar “explained” that Fidel had been falsely accused and wrongfully imprisoned. Fidel now fights the Spanish like the devil himself and the brothers take shelter in the anonymity of Tobago’s motley buccaneer community.

Gaspar Zuan: Gaspar was given the *El Picador* by Spain to hunt English pirates, and his brother Fidel was kept hostage to ensure his return. But Gaspar betrayed them both by attacking the Spanish treasure fleet. Gaspar can talk anyone into joining him, even his brother. He knows that one day his lies will catch up with him, but that day is not today. As long as he stays one step ahead of his pursuers and keeps the truth from his brother, he knows all will be well.

Genny Gallows (see page 248): Captain Gallows has hated England since the day she watched her father’s neck stretched. She will attack any ship, but relishes hurting England the most. Her crew would gladly follow her to the gates of hell, both because of her outstanding leadership and her connections on the Spanish Main.

Genny is at home most anywhere in the Caribbean, but like many pirates finds the unfettered lifestyle of Tobago more to her liking.



Until 1625, Tortuga was largely ignored by the Europeans. A few Spanish settlers had migrated here, but it was in this year that English and French settlers arrived. Unwilling to share an island so close to Hispaniola, the Spanish attacked and defeated the foreign colonists.

The Spanish built a fort to help protect the island, but soon moved the troops to Hispaniola to drive out French settlers who had migrated there. While the Spanish were away, the French returned, captured the fort, and began expanding it.

They added a second fort, Fort de Rocher, in 1630 to protect a natural harbor. Even so, the English managed to secure a foothold shortly afterward, and the two nations shared the island. Unwilling to declare open war, each side turned to piracy to raid the other, though no letters of marque were ever issued. The settlers had become true pirates.

Slavery was introduced around this time, though it lasted less than 5 years. By all accounts, the slave population quickly grew out of control, and much of the island was ungovernable. To make matters worse, the

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constant fighting between the two European powers allowed the Spanish to retake the island in 1635. True to their form in the region, they came, saw, conquered, and left.

With the Spanish vacated, the pirates returned, along with Dutch settlers only for the Spanish to return yet again (they didn't want Tortuga, but neither would they allow anyone else to take it). Unfortunately for the Spanish, the settlers and pirates worked together and Spain was defeated.

In 1640, the pirates formed the Brethren of the Coast, effectively founding the first pirate nation. The all-male population grew unruly and the "governor," appointed by the pirates, brought women to the island as a means of calming them down. Tortuga's spiral into iniquity rapidly increased.

Tortuga remains a pirate nation, governed by pirate captains who form a sort of ruling council. The captains meet only occasionally, seeing each other as rivals, and usually only

when they need to launch a large raid or protect their freedom from a European fleet trying to cleanse the island.

Geography

Tortuga is a small, mountainous island swathed in lush jungle, with several coves and bays suitable for careening ships. The flora and fauna allow the pirates to be self-sufficient without having to soil their hands with agriculture.

The entrance to Tortuga's main harbor is protected by deadly reefs. Tabletop ship combat in these regions should involve reefs. For the chase system, treat the area as Thick Obstacles (Reefs).

Places of Interest

Academy of the Sea: Also known as the Pirate School, Jacob Bowen's fencing academy is hated by those he has refused entry and beloved of those he has tutored. He enjoys the patronage of several pirate captains, which helps keep him safe from his enemies (see page 109).

Dead Man's Fort: The fort at Dead Man's Point on the pirate island of Tortuga is a deadly surprise to ships moving slowly to avoid being grounded on the maze of reefs surrounding the main harbor.

Toughness: 24(8); **Guns:** 12; **Troops:** 30

Notes: The pirates have developed a knack for striking a ship's hold with their cannons. On any Hull Critical Hit, the pirates may instead treat it as a Cargo hit.

Tortuga: The pirates couldn't be bothered with a fancy name for their "capital," and so named it after the island. Tortuga is a maze of gambling dens, taverns, and brothels.

There is little law, but the pirates have a code which prohibits fights using weapons unless a duel has been sanctioned. Those who break the code are thrown in jail to await punishment by the captains' council.

People of Note

Captain Blackheart (see page 248): Angus Skyme came to the Spanish Main locked in the brig of *HMS Prudence*. He

escaped the gallows and gathered the roughest crew in the Caribbean. Now sailing out of Tortuga, Blackheart shows no quarter to his victims or crew, and he has killed many of both for his amusement and profit. He still bears the scar from the duel he fought with Jack Hawkins over Lady Arcadia de Sol.

Hag of Tortuga: Creole Amelie Lejeune, better known as the “Hag of Tortuga” is a sea crone feared and respected by all the sailors, regardless of nationality. It is said that she can commune with the dead, control the winds, and stop a man dead in his tracks with just a glance.

The myths and rumors surrounding Amelie’s past and her supposed powers are enough to chill a man’s blood. Even the bravest pirates on Tortuga tend just to keep out of her way unless they are seeking some information and have run out of other ways to discover it.

Havana Black: A former slave, Havana suffers no delinquency, and he revels in proving it with a cat-o’-nine. Nothing raises Havana’s ire faster than a slaver ship, and he particularly enjoys watching the crew of such a ship being put to the most horrible death possible—despite any pleas for leniency. It is said that even Blackheart fears this powerful ex-slave.

His disdain for authority extends to the captain’s council on Tortuga, which he neither attends nor obeys.

Le Requin: The mannerisms, language facility, and learned nature of the dashing Le Requin seem distinctly out of place against Tortuga’s raucous backdrop and hint at a previous life of privilege. Le Requin won his first ship from “Bones” Wiley in a dice game, and he has proven himself a brilliant tactician and natural leader.

However, for all his wit and charm, he is on a collision course with Hawkins over the affections of the Lady De Sol.

The Stump: No one knows for certain how The Stump got his peg leg, but most are happy to buy him as many rounds as it takes to hear the latest version of the tale. He’s an excellent source of gossip about the latest goings-on.

Trinidad

Although Columbus claimed Trinidad for the Spanish Crown, it was several decades before the king appointed the first governor.

Sadly for the governor—a conquistador—the natives weren’t interested in serving Spain, and after four years he gave up and returned to Spain.

The English and Dutch both started small colonies, but these were quickly abandoned, the settlers speaking of ghosts and spirits haunting them. Whether these were true ethereal entities or native tricks cannot be proved.

Spain tried a new approach to colonizing Trinidad, and rather than despatching troops, the king sent missionaries. They zealously began converting the locals, punishing those who would not submit to Christianity.

In 1699, the Indians rose up against the oppressive priests and slaughtered them. Only one man escaped alive to report the massacre. Spain has yet to make a further attempt to settle on Trinidad, but Almirante del Nero, currently distracted by the war against the pirates, has vowed to make the Indians regret their actions.



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Geography

Trinidad is an island of two halves, with the north being mountainous, rising to a maximum height of just over 3000 feet, and the south being forested plains.

There are just two seasons, dry (the first 6 months of the year) and wet (the latter 6 months). Tropical storms often pass close to the island, but so far none have caused any extensive damage.

Places of Interest

La Iglesia de Santo Sebastian: The Church of San Sebastian was the center of the missionaries' settlement and is all the only indication after the massacre that Europeans ever lived on the island.

Folk stories tell of vast quantities of gold gathered from the natives and buried under the church, but no one has been brave enough to explore the burned out church. The few sailors who have landed there to forage supplies spoke of seeing the ghosts of the missionaries and Indians, but few believe such wild tales. Regardless, none have returned with so much as a doubloon to prove the tales of hidden gold.

People of Note

Americhe: Americhe is the current chief on the native Indians of Trinidad and he detests Europeans. His father led the massacre of 1699. The white men have tried to force his people into slavery, both physically and spiritually, and Americhe wishes only for his people to be left in peace. He is a wise man, however, and knows it is only a matter of time before the Europeans return and make another effort to displace his subjects. Americhe plans to be ready.

Unfortunately, his father had no true inkling of the power of the Spanish, and Americhe is interested in capturing white men in order to learn more of their weapons. A smuggler with a smooth tongue could sell the Indians guns in return for the rights to excavate the old church.



Unlike many other Caribbean islands, the Turks and Caicos Islands were not discovered by Columbus (though some claim this was where he first made landfall), but by Juan Ponce de Leon.

The Spanish used the islands as a source of expendable labor, enslaving the native Indians and dragging them off to the mines of Hispaniola. Within a year, the islands' entire population had been displaced.

The islands remained only sparsely settled by Europeans until Bermudians arrived to gather salt from the shallow coastal regions, which they exported back to Bermuda.

Forty years ago, the French and Spanish, wishing to claim the islands' mineral wealth for themselves, launched a joint invasion. They held onto the islands for just four years, before the English retook them and returned them to the control of Bermuda (which is itself a British colony).

Aside from a small number of salt farmers, the islands remain unpopulated, and pirates frequently use the islands as a safe haven, moving on to other harbors when the first salt farmers arrive each year.

Once a year, the pirates gather in large numbers, like circling sharks, lying in wait for the heavily-laden Spanish treasure ships that pass this way on the long journey to Spain. Although these convoys always sail heavily armed, the rewards are more than worth the dangers to a pirate who takes a Spanish treasure ship as a prize.

Geography

Turks and Caicos form an archipelago of 30 islands. For the most part, the islands are low-lying marshes and mangrove-swamps, plagued by mosquitoes. Fresh water is in short supply, which is a primary reason why Europeans have never extensively colonized the region.

Turneffe Islands

The Turneffe Islands were discovered by Spanish explorers in 1506. Though claimed by Spain, they have never been settled by Europeans, though pirates do stop by on occasion.

Geography

The Turneffe Islands are actually an atoll, formed from numerous coral islands, reefs, mangrove swamps, and sandbars. There are two lagoons, though each is a mass of reefs and seagrass beds.

Despite the dangers of reaching the islands, several pirates, most notably Blackheart, have used Turneffe as a hideout. None have ever made the region their permanent home, but the ruins of their camps can be found on the sandier beaches.

Tabletop ship combat in these regions should involve Sargasso, sandbars, or reefs.

For the chase system, roll two d6. The first indicates the likelihood of obstacles being present. A roll of 3+ means that the water is shallow enough for obstacles to affect ships.

The second d6 determines the type and density of the obstacles. Consult the chart below.

Turneffe Obstacle Table

d6	Obstacle
1-2.....	Sparse Reefs
3.....	Sparse Sargasso
4.....	Sparse Sandbars
5.....	Thick Reefs
6.....	Thick Sandbars



In reality, none of the islands can support any extensive agriculture, nor can they boast any precious resources. As such, they are a strategic rather than commercial territory and neither nation has bothered to invest money in any of the islands.

With no major settlements (there are small fishing settlements, founded to at least give the pretense of caring about ownership), the many small islands have become a haunt for pirates seeking to bury treasure or careen.

Virgin Islands

Discovered and named (collectively) by Columbus, the Virgin Islands are a chain of over 60 small islands east of Puerto Rico.

After much jostling, not to mention some violent encounters, the Dutch and English eventually divided the Virgin Islands between them, at least in name.

Yucatan Peninsula

Spain's first steps on the Yucatan actually happened by error when a ship was blown here by a storm. The natives captured the poor sailors, and sacrificed half of them to their gods. The others they released after the Spaniards learned their language. Sadly for the natives, however, the Spanish had brought smallpox to Mexico.

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Over the next 200 years, Spain's interest in Mexico grew to fever pitch as gold and silver were discovered. The Europeans destroyed (either by violence or disease) or converted every native tribe they came across, enslaved the survivors, tearing down their temples, destroying their works of literature, and transporting their gold and silver back to Spain.

Of all the regions of the Caribbean claimed by Spain, the Yucatan peninsula is the most important and no other European nation has come close to founding a colony on these gold-rich shores.

Geography

The Yucatan is an area of dense jungle and rugged mountains, with areas of swampland in low-lying valleys and coastal depressions. The temperature can reach over 100 degrees and the humidity makes the heat all the more stifling.

Although many of the islands of the Caribbean are home to poisonous snakes, the Yucatan is also inhabited by crocodiles, poisonous spiders, and the large cats of the Caribbean, the jaguar and puma.

Places of Interest

Fortaleza Dorado: The Spanish claim it doesn't exist. Yet natives can be persuaded to speak of the "Golden Fortress," apparently the source of the Spanish gold flowing along the Crimson Coast. No European has ever claimed to have seen this fort, and if it does exist, it is the best kept secret on the Spanish Main.

Mayan Ruins: The Spanish have destroyed dozens of Mayan cities, yet the natives, and a few European explorers, speak of intact cities of gold, the most famous of which is El Dorado. Many expeditions have been launched into the Yucatan interior, but exhaustion, disease, and starvation have been the only reward for the unwary travelers.

Caribbean Islands

Although we've briefly covered the major islands of the Caribbean, there are literally thousands of small islands. Some are lesser parts of large chains while others are just isolated specks of land in the ocean.

If your heroes plan on visiting any of these minor islands, or you simply want to throw something in their path, this section is a very quick random island generator. With the roll of a few dice, you can create a wide range of islands as and when you need them.

Terrain

Roll a d20 on the table below to determine the general landscape of the island.

Terrain Types

d20 Result

1-5	Sand/Coral
6-11	Light forest/jungle
12-13 ...	Thick forest/jungle
14-15 ...	Swamp
16-17 ...	Mountains
18-19 ...	Hills
20	Volcano

Resources

Roll a d20 on the table below to determine the island's natural resources.

Natural Resources

d20Result

1-3	Sparse/Low (\$200, 1d4)
4-5	Sparse/Medium (\$500, 1d4)
6	Sparse/High (\$800, 1d4)
7-10	Common/Low (\$200, 2d4)
11-12 ...	Common/Medium (\$500, 2d4)
13	Common/High (\$800, 2d4)
14-16 ...	Abundant/Low (\$200, 2d6)
17-18 ...	Abundant/Medium (\$500, 2d6)
19	Abundant/High (\$800, 2d6)
20	The Mother Lode (\$1000, 2d10)

Types of Resource

Resources are listed as Quantity/Value. The GM must decide what the resource is, based on the needs of his game and the island in general. An island with Abundant/Low, for instance, may have plenty of fruit—a readily available yet low value resource. A Sparse/High result might indicate a precious metal or other valuable commodity.

Exploring

Locating a resource requires the heroes to explore the island. For each eight hours on the island, one character must make a Notice roll. Other Wild Cards may make Cooperative rolls and others make a Group Cooperative roll. Apply modifiers as shown below.

Exploration Modifiers

Modifier	Event
+2.....	Resource is Abundant
-2.....	Resource is Scarce
-2.....	Island is lightly forested or swamp
-4.....	Island is heavily forested
-X.....	Exploring under poor lighting (see page 82)
+1.....	Per additional day spent searching

On a success, the explorers find the resource and can begin exploiting it. With a failure, they find nothing of interest but may continue searching.

Exploiting Resources

To exploit a resource, each hero must make a Vigor roll per month spent working the resource. Extras make a group roll. Each success and raise earns the heroes 1 Cargo Space with a base value as determined by the Natural Resources table.

No resource lasts forever. The die type after the resource is the Duration Die and should be rolled by the GM when the heroes begin exploitation. Make a note of this and keep it secret. This is how many months the resource

lasts before it is used up. Low value items may be replenished, but medium and high value resources should be a one-time only haul.

For instance, fruit may be out of season and the heroes have to wait another 1d6 months for the next harvest, a gold seam is mined out, or perhaps someone powerful has discovered the resource and doesn't want to share the wealth (this could also form the basis of an interesting adventure).

Inhabitants

Roll a d20 on the table below to determine if the island is inhabited. Use the Reaction Table on page 189 to find the inhabitants' initial reaction. Even cannibals may be friendly—until meal time at least.

Island Inhabitants

d20	Result
1-10.....	Uninhabited
11.....	Cannibal Indians
12-14.....	Indians
15-16.....	Pirates
17-18.....	Fishermen*
19.....	Trading Post*
20.....	Fort or Monastery**

* Roll on the Nationality Table
 ** Roll on the Nationality & Fort Tables

Nationality

d20	Result
1-5.....	English
6-10.....	Spanish
11-15.....	French
16-19.....	Dutch
20.....	Other European (GM's choice)

Fort

Forts on islands may protect a strategic island from foreign invasion or protect a resource. Forts could also be prisons or secret storehouses. If the GM decides the fort is actually a monastery, halve the number of guns. The Troops entry remains the same as listed on the table, but represents the number of monks or nuns.



there's a landmark (such as another island, a reef, or such like) within a day's travel of the discovered island.

With a success, the navigator places the island correctly on his charts, and should be able to find his way back there without undue difficulty. On a failure, the navigator misjudges the island's position. Add 1d4 days to the next journey to the island. On a critical failure, the island is drawn nowhere near it's real location. Add 2d4 days to the next journey to the island.

Selling Knowledge

Clever heroes may try to sell the location of the island to one of the European powers, especially if it has valuable resources. This is a much easier and more immediate way of earning money than trying to exploit the resource personally.

Assuming the characters can find a buyer interested (GM's call and an excellent source of adventure in itself), roll the resource's Duration Die and multiply the result by the value of the resource. Subtract \$200 if the island is already inhabited (buyers reason that there will be other interested parties on an inhabited island and adjust their offers accordingly). The result is the buyer's absolute highest price. In general, they start the bidding at half this value. Buyers won't buy maps for any price if the settlers are of the same nationality as the would-be buyer.

Example: The heroes try to sell the location of an island inhabited by Indians with a Common/Medium resource. The Games Master rolls 2d4 and gets a 5, which he multiplies by \$500 to get a value of \$2,500. He then subtracts \$200 (because the island is already inhabited) to get a maximum price of \$2,300. The buyer's initial offer will be around \$1,200 and the players will have to roleplay the rest of the negotiation until the final price is agreed upon.

Fortifications

d20	Terrain
1-9.....	Small, wooden (Toughness: 16(4); Guns: 4; Troops: 12)
10-14.....	Medium, wooden (Toughness: 17(5); Guns: 8; Troops: 20)
15-17.....	Small, stone (Toughness: 20(8); Guns: 8; Troops: 16)
18-19.....	Medium, stone (Toughness: 22(9); Guns: 12; Troops: 26)
20.....	Large, stone (Toughness: 24(10); Guns: 20; Troops: 40)

Marking Maps

Unless the island is already marked on a map, the heroes must record its position if they ever want to return. In order to add an island to a map, have the navigator make a Knowledge (Navigation) roll at -4, or -2 if

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Now you've read the rules and know how to play. And if you're thinking about being the Game Master and running the game, you probably already have a good idea how to do that as well.

Before you start creating cool adventures, though, let's talk a little about the fine art of Game Mastering.

Your Game

You may think that the first step in starting a new game is finding a group of people to play with. That is important, but it's your next step. Your first step is to get yourself excited. Do that and you'll likely get all your friends excited as well.

Start by reading the rules again. The greater understanding of the core mechanics you have, the easier it'll be to sell the idea to your friends. Then look at the adventure generators (starting on pages 195) and the villains and creatures. Think about what future adventures you might create, and what cool ideas you can use to make them really special. Once you get a few basic ideas, you can sell the vibe to others.

Game Night

Now it's time to recruit. You've got a cool setting to play and enough information about it to explain it to your friends. The next step is to find out who wants to play, and when they can do it.

When you're finding out who wants to play, first ask *when* each person can make it. It's very important that you set both a time and

a regular day to play. If you rely on an ever-fluctuating week-to-week schedule, you're almost certainly doomed to failure. People have busy lives, and as much as everyone involved might love to play, they've still got to study for classes, take care of their children, and otherwise live their lives. If you have a set night every week, it's much easier for your friends to schedule most of their activities around game night. It also helps you know when you've got to be ready to run.

It's most common for people to play from about 6PM to 11PM on a weeknight, or on a Sunday night. Friday and Saturday are great if you're in college, but difficult for older players who have wives and children as they need their weekend nights to be with their families.

If you start at 6PM, your players have time to get off work, grab some food (or share pizza with the group), and get deep into the game by 7 or so.

Make sure you wrap things up by 11PM or so as well. Remember that your players are likely to have work or classes the next day and you don't want your game night to become a stressful experience for them. If you define these things up front, you can help players with very busy schedules figure out ahead of time whether or not they can handle your game night.

A wise Game Master tries to end each night with a bit of a cliffhanger as well (we'll look at these later). If your players are talking during the week about what's going to happen next, you've done your job well.

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Character Types

Once you've got a few friends interested, it's great if you can give them a little primer information and find out what kind of heroes they want to play.

You don't need everyone to make their characters at this point—character creation is fast enough that they can do it at the start of your first session if you want.

But if some of your friends have neat ideas as to their background or basic type (pirate captain, French diplomat, and so on), you can start doing more detail work on your story so it fits the characters better.

Getting the Party Together

The first thing you need to do in any *Pirates RPG* adventure or campaign is figure out why the characters are together. There are two common ways to handle this.

The Mission

The most common way of building a party is for an employer to offer a reward for adventurers to complete some task. Perhaps they come to the aid of a desperate stranger, are hired in a smoky tavern, or are called on by connections or friends. Either way, the heroes are then thrown together by fate and must learn to work as a team.

There's a problem that sometimes arises from this approach. Say the mission is to deliver a message to a distant island, but one of the characters in your group is a duelist. His player is all excited about making such a great swashbuckling character, but you need him (and the others) to be a courier for now and accept the assignment to kick off your campaign.

Fortunately, there's an easy way to fix this. Instead of arguing with the player about his character's motivations, let the player figure it out. Be honest and tell him that this is what you need to get things started. Maybe the duelist is simply between jobs. Or maybe he's got a rival on the island he needs to remind who's the man, or needs to earn some gold

to buy better arms and equipment for his task. Or maybe the employer or the recipient is an old friend (or enemy).

This approach not only helps get things moving, but may establish an entirely new and interesting subplot for your campaign!

Former Acquaintances

You can also start a campaign with all the characters already knowing each other. This works great for getting the game moving, and is very appropriate for certain styles of *Pirates* games. If everyone is a pirate on the same ship or a member of the Spanish court in Cartagena, for example, the characters may have worked together for a bit and know at least the basic faults and obvious vices of their companions.

The downside of starting a campaign like this is that some of the players may feel cheated if they put a lot of work into their characters' backgrounds. Players often come up with deep backstories for their heroes. Of course, this shows great imagination and enthusiasm for your game and should be encouraged.

Unfortunately, unless you've set the hero up as an important figure in your setting and his background figures prominently in the events that are to come, it's very likely all that work will never come to light. The reason is that individual backgrounds aren't likely to be part of your overall plot, and characters don't engage in revealing small talk like real people do. That said, you should try to work in what elements you can. Players who are investing time in your setting should be rewarded as far as possible.

Staying Together

After the first adventure has passed, the players may wonder exactly why their heroes might stay together. This is easy if they're employed by a common benefactor, or all work on the same vessel.

Staying together might be more difficult if the campaign goal isn't very clear, or if some of the characters don't get along that well. How to fix this depends a lot on the type of game you're running. If there's a clear, overall

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objective or over arching storyline, the party might stay together to defeat the greater evil, even if they aren't the best of friends.

If the campaign goal is more ambiguous, the best answer may be to not force the heroes to stay together. Consider the following game. The players are thrust together on a long ship voyage. The group is attacked by pirates, but survive the encounter. Why would they then go out hunting pirates together or hanging out like best buddies just because they had one incredible encounter?

Maybe they don't. Maybe they all go home and try to forget what happened just like normal folks. Let a few days or weeks of nothing happen (narratively, of course). Later though, one of the characters gets involved in a different nautical or swashbuckling encounter. This time out however, he knows at least a few other people who have the right skills, so he calls and asks the other player characters for help.

Friction

So what happens if your group doesn't get along? That depends on whether it's the players or the characters who are arguing.

We won't give you advice on how to handle conflicts with your friends. You know them best, and will have to figure out if there are certain friends who just don't fit in your campaign.

Remember though that friends are more important than games—even ours. If you and the rest of the group can't talk out your differences, find something else to do for a while that doesn't cause such friction. You can always come back to the game once you've worked things out.

Friction between your characters, on the other hand, is not only fine, it's actually encouraged to some degree. Any interesting group of personalities squabble and argue on occasion. As long as this is done in-character, it adds to the roleplaying experience and the depth of your campaign. Quiet fights between the heroes can often take on a life of their own, encouraging players to take you, the Game Master, aside to reveal their plans, or write you private notes about the actions their heroes perform away from the prying eyes of others.

A little rivalry between the heroes can really spice up a game and add a fun dimension to your players' roleplaying.

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Running the Game

The *Pirates RPG* has been designed to make the job of the Game Master as easy as possible. The designers and playtesters of this game want to concentrate on playing the game and making incredible and exciting memories. We aren't interested in spending hours before the game creating statistics for Juan the Spanish soldier.

This means that when preparing for your game, you can concentrate on creating the most intricate plots, tricky puzzles, and cool characters possible. You don't have to do complex math to create all your nonplayer characters, and you certainly don't need to spend an hour on some computer program just to make up a few pirates.

Your job is kept easy during the game as well since there's very little bookkeeping. You might have to track the wounds of a few Wild Card villains, but other than that, the bad guys are up, Shaken, or removed from play. This means you can focus on the action instead of trying to record "2 hit points of damage on the Spanish soldier figure with the chipped paint on his sword."

Take advantage of these things to give yourself a break and run a game like you never have before. If you *want* to spend a lot of time on your campaign, make some cool props or develop your nonplayer characters' personalities and plots—not figuring their game statistics.

Learning the Rules

Before you start to play, at least know and understand the contents of the Game Rules chapter. You need to know how to make Trait rolls, use Wild Dice, attack, and handle wounds. Everything else in this book, from ship rules to combat maneuvers, can be ignored until you need it.

No Winner or Loser

If you're used to conventional boardgames, card games, or CSGs, you're probably used to the concept of winning the game. Well, you can forget about that now.

In the *Pirates RPG* you aren't trying to pit "your" forces against the characters in a bid to wipe them out. Your job as GM is to tell a cool story that gets the players talking about it afterward. Killing off their characters session after session just so you can claim "victory" may get them talking about the game, but it won't be in a good way.

This doesn't mean that your adventures have to be a walk in the park for the heroes either. Players who have seen their characters battle their way through a horde of English Redcoats to rescue a captured ally, avoided death traps, and then fought an epic battle against the dastardly English officer in charge of the prison will talk about the game far more than a group who fight just two guards to achieve their goal.

In a roleplaying game, the players "win" by having a good time and having their heroes achieve something. You "win" by making sure this happens.

Be Prepared

As logical as it sounds, as GM it's your job to be prepared before the session begins. Make sure you have your dice, cards, some paper and pencils, and most importantly your adventure notes to hand. If you need miniatures, ready them before the game.

Once the game starts, nothing ruins the fast, furious, and fun pace worse than you having to leave the table to go print out a map or find some paper to draw maps on. Try to get everything organized before you start to play.

Depending on your skill as a GM, you might be running an adventure without notes. However, if you're new, make sure you read your notes beforehand so you know exactly what's supposed to happen during the game.

Prepare to be Adaptable

Despite all your preparation, however, sometimes the players will come up with a course of action you hadn't considered when you were writing your adventure. You might have planned for a epic battle against a squad of French soldiers in a fort rigged with

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explosives, only to find your character go off to recruit an army of pirates to assist them. Your delicately balanced battle now becomes a one-sided massacre.

Although roleplaying has many similarities to acting, it isn't about sticking to a tight script. You, as the stage director, get to lay out the scenery and the plot, but the rest is ad-libbed by the players.

If your players' characters do something totally unexpected and you need time to recover, call a quick snack break and spend that time thinking about how you can salvage your plot. For the French in the example above, all you need to do is use more Extras. It's quite feasible that, in the time it took the characters to reach Tortuga and recruit their army, the French received reinforcements.

What you shouldn't do is berate the players for not following your adventure to the letter. They don't know what you have planned, and if you continually stifle their creativity, they end up as extras in a story they can't change. They might as well hand you their characters, leave the table, and go do something more interesting.

Unexpected Props

Sometimes players state actions that don't tie in with the description you have of their surroundings. For instance, the characters are involved in a fight with some Spanish guards down at the docks. Suddenly, one of the players says his character wants to kick away the tail gate of a nearby wagon, and



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cause barrels to roll into the soldiers path. There's no mention of a wagon anywhere in your notes.

Although the player has made an assumption about what props are to hand, it is a valid one. There's bound to be wagons at the docks, the same as there are chandeliers to swing on and drapes to pull down in noble's mansion, fancy buttons on an officer's coat for you to cut off, and full tankards perfect for throwing in a foe's eyes within easy reach in a tavern. You can't be expected to think of every single detail about a scene, so give your players some leeway in shaping the world their characters inhabit.

Most times, you should go with the flow, especially if the player has described a cool Trick and his actions won't derail your plot. He might even earn a benny for his quick thinking.

However, if the player in the situation above said the barrels contained gunpowder, you're quite within your right to overrule him. Give them a little rope to play with, but don't let them try to hang you with it.

Style Conventions

The *Pirates RPG* has several conventions you should try to keep in mind when you're running a game.

Action and Drama

The *Pirates RPG* is all about action and drama. Fistfights, sword fights, naval battles, and constant dramatic setbacks and surprises are all part and parcel of being a *Pirates* hero.

Simple game mechanics for generating drama and action are given below, but it is up to you to present the adventures as fast moving, exciting stories. If the players are pondering over a course of action, try to encourage them to act quickly by having a group of soldiers or some wild beast turn up on the scene. Don't give the players too much time to think—force them to act.

The same rationale applies to scenes in which the heroes can't do anything heroic, like when traveling from Port Royal to Bermuda.

Rather than have the players sit through a long description of how their ship moves inexorably closer to their destination, just do a cut-scene. A quick, "Okay, you set sail and ten days later you spot Bermuda," will suffice unless you have an encounter planned for the journey.

Even though the player characters are the heroes, not everything should go their way. Present them with an unexpected obstacle at least once every adventure. This could be something as trivial as finding his pistol has jammed beyond immediate repair, forcing the hero to ditch his ranged weapons and get up close and personal, or something more dangerous, like the sudden arrival of enemy reinforcements or a sudden storm, which threatens a treasure-laden ship.

Running a *Pirates* game should leave everyone at the table exhausted but satisfied.

Tough Opponents

New players may find that they need a raise on a Fighting roll to hit an opponent. That's not too unusual in the *Pirates RPG*, especially against skilled combatants. Make sure the players have a copy of the Attack Options Summary sheet (on page 106) and encourage them to make use of it.

Tricks are a great way of gaining a sneaky advantage over a foe, as is teamwork and ganging up on a superior enemy.

Morality

The *Pirates RPG* has just two types of lead character—heroes and villains. Which side of the line a character stands depends on whether he is seeking Fame or Infamy, as detailed on page 91.

As we've said before, player characters with Infamy are rogues rather than blackhearted murderers. Although we have stated this for the players several times, you should make it clear to them before play begins that they risk losing their characters if they commit despicable acts.

Being a hero or rogue doesn't mean the character has stereotyped himself as good or evil. The stalwart hero, for instance, may be forced to perform some diabolical act for the

greater good or betray his friends to rescue a kidnapped loved one, but in the end he does the right thing.

Likewise, player character rogues retain some conscience. Even a character bordering on true villainy can show a brief glimmer of good. Maybe he takes pity on the villain in the adventure because she reminds him of his sister.

Of course, villains with a Fame of -40 or lower have lost all sense of decency, which is why they're NPCs.

Are there any "neutral" characters in *Pirates*? Certainly there are. In fact, most NPCs in the *Pirates RPG* universe are neutral, in that they try to lead good lives, but they don't throw themselves in front of enemy fire for others or rise up in arms against powerful villains. Likewise, they might steal a loaf of bread to feed their family, but they don't attack and plunder merchant ships.

Heroes and villains sometimes swap moral codes on a permanent basis, though usually only once. The long-serving pirate realizes that maybe the English are going to sweep the seas clean so he accepts an amnesty, or the English noble's love of loose women and gambling cause him to steal some valuable artifacts from his wealthy neighbors, causing him to become a wanted fugitive once the authorities find out.

Using Fame and Infamy

Can you enforce this style of behavior on your group? Of course you can. The Fame system is designed to reward players who get into the swing of the game. Completing good deeds increases their Fame, while criminal acts reduce it—leading them down the path to infamy.

Of course, this is the *Pirates RPG*, so a certain degree of lawless behavior is all part of the game. Bear in mind the characters' backgrounds when you design your stories, too. If all the characters are pirates fighting against the tyrannical rule of Governor Lynch, then sinking an English ship is an act that might earn a character Fame. If your campaign is based around a group of British characters hunting pirates, such an act should definitely lose them fame—and frequently attacking



British ships would certainly result in their eventually being hunted and hated by their own countrymen.

So the Fame rules should be used mainly to encourage and reward the kind of play that suits the campaign you and your players are creating, while still allowing them some freedom of action. As long as the players are having fun, whether they become swash-buckling heroes or lawless rogues doesn't really matter.

Description

Locations should always be described in an exciting way. Jamaica isn't "a jungle island." It's a "rugged landscape, swathed with steaming jungle and sugar plantations." An old temple deep in the jungles of Mexico isn't a "ruin overgrown with vines." It's a "dark and ominous structure. Though vines cover much of its outer facing, the entrance gapes like a dark maw, as if it has devoured anything that tried to enter."

The players, and therefore their characters, see the world through your descriptions, so make them vivid, but without going into excruciating detail.

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The same applies to attacks, especially in melee combat. Unlike some other RPGs, the *Pirates RPG* doesn't use hit points, so players may fall into a routine of simply seeing their attacks miss and therefore cause no damage. After a while, the "I attack but miss" routine starts to grow very stale.

Encourage them to describe their attacks in colorful ways, and do the same for parries. A character doesn't simply miss an attack roll, his opponent parries his blade effortlessly, giving the hero a hard stare as their blades lock or nimbly steps to one side, sneering at the character's lack of finesse.

Humor

Most players crack jokes at the table; it's human nature. *Pirates* humor comprises witty lines, quick comebacks, and even a small amount of slapstick. Don't go overboard, however, or the game may devolve into a comedy. A truly witty **line** delivered *in character* should be rewarded with a benny (we'll talk more about awarding bennies on page 186).

Introducing New Players

Getting your friends to try a new game, especially if they're used to one system and don't like to try many others, can be pretty difficult. We recommend you create a few sample characters and run a very simple fight against a few evil minions.

This should give them a good idea of how the basic rules work, and show them just how fast, furious, and fun the game can be.

Once they're interested, find out what they know about the *Pirates* universe. They might be ardent *Pirates* CSG fans ready to start right away, or they may give you a blank look. Hey, we all like different things.

In the latter case, let them flick through the character generation section. While they're doing that, fill them in on the overall background, and the tone of the game (which is fast-action swashbuckling in case you haven't picked up on the clues). Remember, if you're excited about the game, you can pass the feeling on.

Be prepared to sit down with them and help them through character generation. We've designed it to be as easy as possible, but someone who has never played an RPG before might find some of the terminology strange.

Adjudicating Problems

Even with such a fast and fun system, there may come a time when a rules dispute arises. Maybe a player wants his character to do something cool and feels you've set too high a penalty or insisted he use a trait he feels is wrong, or perhaps there's a different opinion on the wording of something.

Stopping the game to argue about rules isn't fun for anyone. Tell the player politely that your decision stands for now, but you'll talk to him after the session ends. Once the game is over, sit down with the player and talk through the problem. Chances are you can find a solution that keeps everybody happy. Once you've reached a decision, remember to note it down somewhere so that if the same situation comes up again, you can go straight to the solution.

Missing Players

You've set up a cool adventure involving all the characters ready for tonight's session and then Joe calls to cancel. Maybe he has to work tonight, or his kid's sick. So what do you do? Here's a few suggestions. None of them are right or wrong, and your decision will depend on what suits your game best.

- Let someone else run the character for the night in addition to their own hero. Running two characters can be tricky, so pick someone you know can handle the job. You get to roleplay the character if the rest of the group need to talk to him, and you can always override decisions made by the other player if they're stupid or against the character's personality.

In this way, the group don't lose the character's skills, and the character gets his fair share of Experience Points.

- You could have the character called away on another mission, thus removing him from play for the night. This works well at the

start of a new adventure, but having him suddenly disappear part way through the invasion of a French fort will generate a lot of awkward questions for the other players (not to mention their characters).

- He could be captured by the enemy, again removing him from play. This can be done in an existing adventure without too much difficulty, but there's the risk the player will have to sit out the next session if he hasn't been rescued by then.

Ending the Game

As we said earlier, you should set a time limit for your sessions. That doesn't mean that when the clock strikes 11PM you should down dice and abandon the game, however. You need to think about how you're going to end the session.

Most times you should try to end the game in a "safe zone," somewhere the heroes aren't in any mortal peril. Safe zones primarily come in two forms, those just after an event, and those just before.

A safe zone after an event could include following the conclusion of a battle. The heroes will probably be tired or wounded, but they're not in any immediate danger.

A safe zone before an event is a good place to end if you think carrying on will cause the session to seriously overrun. For instance, the characters are about to meet Almirante Del Nero. You know the meeting will take at least an hour of game time to roleplay. Rather than rush through it now, you could end the session with the heroes gathered in an antechamber.

Another option is to end the session on a cliffhanger. We'll talk about those in more detail soon, but for now you just need to know that a cliffhanger leaves the heroes facing mortal danger. If you've written the cliffhanger into your adventure, the heroes might get to that point earlier, say at 10.30PM. Well, that okay, you can just end the session early. Assuming you've set up the cliffhanger well, they players will be begging you to carry on. Make them wait until the next session.

Sometimes, despite all your best efforts, the game has to end during a battle or other confrontation. It happens. Take careful notes on the situation, especially if you're using miniatures. Map out where everyone is and note down what the state of your NPCs' health is. Next week, you can lay out the map before the players turn up ready to get back into the action.

Last Week...

Think back to the old black and white pulp serials of the 1930s and '40s. Remember how they always began with a brief recap from the episode before? The same thing applies when you resume play.

Once you've run your first session, you might find it helpful to provide a recap of events from the previous session before play begins. A lot can happen between sessions, and sometimes players do forget what took place. At the end of each session, jot down a few notes about major events, and more importantly, where the session ended.

Experience

You should usually award two or three experience points per game session. That means your players get to upgrade their characters every other game.

When you end a longer adventure—a story arc that might take four to six sessions or so—you might want to make it three points, but any more should be reserved for really big events. Keeping your average award to two means your characters progress at a steadier rate, and won't be Legendary warriors after only a few months of play.

Starting With Experienced Characters

In general, player characters at the start of the *Pirates RPG* campaign are wet-behind-the-ears rookies. They've got a little training and talent, but haven't had many adventures on their own yet.

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You may occasionally want to start a game with more experienced characters. That's encouraged if you want your players to emulate the heroic feats of Genny Gallows or Jack Hawkins right away. An assault on Del Nero's fort or challenging the greatest swordsman on the Spanish Main to a duel to the death are not appropriate adventures for the inexperienced.

If you choose this path, we recommend starting experienced characters as Seasoned, or very rarely, Veterans. It's important to the balancing process to make your players create their characters as Novices and then "bump" them up through their four progressions per rank. That maintains a better progression of attributes and skills, and ensures they can't take more advanced Edges than they would otherwise be entitled to.

It's also easier to do it this way from a player's perspective. It's a little tricky to add up all the "points" one would have at Seasoned rank. Bump a hero up the Ranks from Novice however and the advancement system is a very simple.

Bennies

Experience is very limited—we encourage you to give out two points just about every game session. Bennies are much more flexible, and allow you to reward creative players on the spot for their actions.

You should hand out a benny anytime a player does something particularly clever, finds a very important clue, or generally advances the plot. You should also hand out bennies for great roleplaying, especially if the player is playing to his character's Hindrances. If a Loyal character jeopardizes his life to save his comrade, for instance, he definitely deserves a benny for his efforts. It never hurts to reward a player for a great line, side-splitting in-game joke, or even a rare serious and dramatic moment.

Good players should get one or two extra bennies per night. Exceptional roleplayers may wind up with two or even three.

Supporting Cast

This section takes a look at using minor nonplayer characters (NPCs) in your game, both as allies and enemies to the heroes.

Allies

Pirates is different in lots of ways. Perhaps the most unusual feature is that allied nonplayer characters, whether they are hirelings, soldiers, or inspired followers, fall under the control of the players.

Though it's rarely written, most games assume that the Game Master controls the nonplayer characters, both when they're being talked to and when they fight alongside the player characters in combat.

Most of the time, this means that the overworked GM simply forgets about the additional characters during a fight, or shoves them off to the side and narratively describes what happens to them. This goes for hirelings as well as sidekicks, or love interests. The simple fact is that in most games, allies are a cumbersome complication. Not so in *Pirates* where allies and NPCs can be numerous and have a dramatic impact on play.

As great as this works in play, it can take some getting used to. If you've been Game Mastering other games for a long time and have a hard time letting go of the nonplayer characters, it may take a little adjustment. We suggest you try it for a bit. The GM acts out these allies when they're spoken to, of course, but he should very rarely, if ever, take them over in combat.

Here are some of the advantages to letting your players take control of the allied nonplayer characters.

First, the players themselves will come to care about their troops. Those extra hands in a fight can be really useful. In the *Pirates RPG*, players should quickly come to realize allies are just as precious as new abilities and solid gold goodies. Having a couple of extra pistol carriers when clearing out a French outpost is nice. Using them to help storm a Spanish fort is a downright necessity. You'll

see your group commit extraordinary acts of courage and heroism just to save a hireling they would ordinarily have forgotten about.

Second, allies allow tactical-minded players to do more than just swing a sword or yank a trigger. Some of the most effective characters in *Pirates* are those who have a number of Leadership Edges and brave followers to use them on.

Third, allies can be very important to a lot of stories, but you, the GM, have your hands full handling the game, rules questions, and your own bad guys. If you have to control a bunch of hirelings, you're in for a lot of dice rolling that your players could be doing for you.

Finally, if you allow your heroes to have allies, you can include all the minions your villains should have as well. Picture an evil French officer cornered in his fort. Would he be sitting there alone? No, he would likely be surrounded by scores of soldiers, aides, and servants.

These minions make great complications for your battles, and your players will have fun bashing through them with the NPCs while their heroes battle the officer and his more capable lieutenants.

Artificial Inflation

When running *Pirates*, a lot of Game Masters become extremely enamored with the ally aspect of the game. That's great and it's what we intend, but it also sometimes leads to very large parties of heroes and their allies, which then demand very large parties of opponents.

Pay attention to the size of your party and its nonplayer characters, and then remember that it'll take a similar number of foes (if of equivalent power) to trouble them in any combat.

It's okay if you do this—the system can handle it—but be warned that a combat with 50+ combatants will take a while, even with such a fast, furious, and fun system as this.

To manage this kind of “inflation,” try to remember that these allies aren't mindless zombies, who do as they are told without question, they are people. The heroes will



have to keep them fed, well-paid, and happy, or they'll desert the characters. This adds some realism and can be a great source of drama as the you can decide when the allies choose to express their dissatisfaction—just when the heroes are planning their attack!

Important Victims

At some point during one of your *Pirates* games, somebody important will inevitably get kidnapped. It might be the hero's sidekick, the daughter of an eminent nobleman, or the spy who has uncovered part of the Spanish plans to invade Jamaica.

Naturally, if there's been a kidnapping, the heroes are involved in the rescue attempt. Where there are heroes, there's usually a large amount of gunfire as well.

In order to ensure the person they are trying to rescue isn't accidentally mown down in a hail of lead, you should give any kidnap victim central to the plot Wild Card status.

They don't have to be any use in combat, and indeed it's better if they're the helpless sort who needs rescuing, but the wound levels given by Wild Card status give you a safety net. Alternatively, you can simply ignore the Innocent Bystander rule, which means they won't get hurt unless someone deliberately targets them.

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Villainous Thugs

Of course, allies aren't the only characters your heroes will meet during an adventure. Here's some tips for handling NPCs. You don't have to use any of these tips, but they're a handy tool.

Henchmen

Henchmen are a step above your standard Extra, but a step below Wild Cards. They're handy for giving the heroes a slightly tougher opponent, but without all the perks of being a Wild Card. To promote a villain up the ranks, simply give him a Wild Die, but keep everything as an Extra.

Hordes of Extras

Watch any good swashbuckling film and you'll see the heroes taking down scores of thugs without pausing for breath.

Now, *Pirates* is already fast, furious, and fun, and Extras aren't hard to take down, but there is room for maneuvering.

Even with such a fast system, a few bad die rolls can mean that Extras remain a threat for a long time, and a horde of Extras armed with pistols can cause a lot of damage to unlucky heroes in a very short time.

One way of ensuring that Extras go down quickly is to remove the Shaken status. An Extra would either be healthy or knocked out. In short, if you equal or exceed an Extra's Toughness, he's out of the fight.

You don't have to use this for every Extra, just the real musket fodder that are totally incidental to the main plot.

Fanatics

Picture the scene. You planned the climatic end-of-adventure battle to the last detail. The battle was set to be an epic struggle between the villain and his thugs and the heroes, all set to the hissing of a fuse as it moves toward a dozen kegs of gunpowder.

Then, what should have been a tense fight against the clock ended in two rounds as the gun-toting heroes blasted the villain to pieces, scattered the demoralized thugs, and snuffed out the fuses. Big disappointment.

Here's a very simple trick to prevent the untimely death of villains. You can use this simply to extend a fight (so the villain gets to use his cool powers) or to allow them chance to get away (and come back later seeking revenge).

Any Extra within 1" of a villain becomes fanatical, sacrificing his life so his master can live. Any attack made against the villain is instead made against one of the Extras of your choice, as he leaps in the way of the sword, fist, or musket ball with his master's name on it.

Reactions

These rules are covered in the Game Master's chapter because they only apply to nonplayer characters. Player characters should never roll on this chart. How they want to approach someone is completely up to them and their particular interpretation of their character's personality. That's why it's called "roleplaying." Each player must make up his mind about how his character reacts to the members of his party. (An NPC's Charisma is a good measure of their general likeability though.)

For nonplayer characters, you should decide their initial attitudes if you have a strong idea of what it should be. It's key to the story that the heroes don't accidentally befriend the villain, for instance, so if the heroes work for the English and the NPC is a member of the Spanish navy, he's likely going to be at least Uncooperative if not openly Hostile. In these instances, there's no need to roll for the NPC's reactions, you're in charge of the game, so you can make that call as you see fit.

For those times when you don't have a strong feeling or definite plan how a non-player character might react to your heroes, however, these rules will come in handy.

Persuasion & Streetwise

Whenever a hero asks a nonplayer character to do something, or tries to use either the Persuasion or Streetwise skill, roll 2d6 on the table below and add both characters' Charisma modifiers to the roll. This is the NPC's initial attitude to the hero. The result should give you a good idea of how the individual reacts to the hero, what the NPC is willing to do for him or her, and how much it might cost—or what the adventurer might have to do in return.

If the hero says the right thing or offers the NPC a significant reward, he may increase the initial reaction by one step (though usually only one step per encounter). The opposite is also true if the hero is rude, or makes a derisory offer.

Reaction Table

- 2d6 Initial Reaction**
- 2.....Hostile:** The NPC is openly hostile and does his best to stand in the hero's way. He won't help without an overwhelming reward or payment of some kind.
- 3-4.....Uncooperative:** The NPC isn't willing to help unless there is some significant advantage to himself.
- 5-9.....Neutral:** The NPC has no particular attitude, and will help for little reward if the task at hand is very easy. If the task is more difficult, he'll require substantial payment of some kind.
- 10-11...Friendly:** The NPC will go out of his way for the hero. He'll likely do easy tasks for free (or very little), and is very willing to do more dangerous tasks for fair pay or other favors.
- 12.....Helpful:** The NPC is anxious to help the hero, and will probably do so for little or no pay depending on the nature of the task.

Creating Adventures

This section looks at how you go about designing an adventure. If you're new to roleplaying games, or just need a helping hand to kick-start your imagination, we've included a very handy Adventure Generator later in this chapter. It'll help you produce the bones of an adventure in a few minutes, leaving you time to put on the flesh.

Bear in mind the style notes we discussed earlier when designing adventures. The golden rule of a successful *Pirates* adventure is to keep the adventures fast-paced with plenty of excitement.

What is an Adventure?

Think of adventures as a movie—they're a collection of scenes or encounters, linked together to form a single story. Unlike with many other roleplaying games, *Pirates* stories focus purely on the main events, rather than journeys made up of random encounters to get from scene A to scene B.

Adventures should always have a definite conclusion, a closing scene that draws the curtain on that particular tale. However, *Pirates* adventures aren't stand-alone events, with no relationship to what has gone before or what will come next. Individual adventures exist within a greater framework known as a campaign.

So what's a campaign? It's a longer story told out over a number of adventures. Think of a certain set of science fiction films that tell the story of a single family over six films. Each individual film is a complete adventure with a definite conclusion, but the six films all tie together to form a single bigger story—that's a campaign.

Adventure Types

Once you're ready to start designing adventures, you need to decide whether your adventures will be scripted, situational, or some mix of the two.

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Scripted Adventures

Scripted adventures are like interactive stories. The players can make choices along the way, but the overall plot advances more or less intact regardless of what they do. Epic stories must sometimes follow this path—it's hard to tell a story if you don't know what chapters are to come. This allows you to tell incredible stories, but also requires more work as you have to plot out each step in the saga.

When running a scripted adventure, try not to make your scenarios *feel* scripted. The group should never feel like they're just observers, going along for the ride no matter what they do. Instead, use the situation, overwhelming opponents, or "down times" to give the group the illusion they control the story more than they really do.

Situational Adventures

Situational adventures are much easier to run if you're able to think on your feet as you won't have quite as much preparation. In these epic tales, you present a situation of some sort and then just let the characters deal with it however they choose. Say the heroes hear tales of a mysterious black-sailed pirate vessel preying on shipping the waters off Tortuga. What do the heroes do about it? Do they set sail in the hopes of finding the ship? Do they start questioning witnesses? Or maybe they spot a pattern and lurk around the waters, waiting for the ship to return.

Because situational adventures give the characters greater freedom to roam, many GMs like to design a flowchart, showing how all the possibilities interact.

Although a flowchart takes time, it does allow you to see the adventure unfold as the players will see it. You can also get an insight into the courses of action they might take, and prepare for them in advance. Remember, we told you earlier to be adaptable—your players are bound to think of something you hadn't considered.

You will need to prepare a few locations, important NPCs, and perhaps a few staged encounters ahead of time. You don't want to

have to figure out the layout of the mystery ship in the middle of the game when the heroes finally discover it, for example.

The Plot

Every adventure is a story, and thus it needs a plot. Ideally, a plot should be just a line or two of text, summarizing the main focus of the story. For longer adventures, try to break the plot down into two or more parts, each with its own summary.

Here's a sample plot, "A French spy plans to detonate a dozen kegs of gunpowder under Governor Lynch's mansion during a grand ball."

The Villain

Every story also needs a villain, someone who pits their might against the heroes. It might be a French officer, a pirate gang, or perhaps even a major character, like Governor Lynch or Havana Black.

Ideally, the villain shouldn't appear directly until the climax of the adventure. Having them captured or killed part way through tends to dampen the firework fuse you lit when you started the adventure, so the French spy should remain elusive for much of the adventure. There's more on creating villains later in the chapter.

Remember as well that villains don't have to die at the end of the adventure. Having a dastardly villain return in a future adventure, especially when the heroes believe them to be dead, can work very effectively. Of course, if you do this with every villain, the players will get frustrated and voice opinions on what miraculous way the villain will escape this week. Save recurring villains for ones the players have come to hate. When they finally manage to defeat them for good, they will appreciate the moment more.

Location, Location, Location

Locations are as important as the plot. They add great flavor to your game, give the heroes a chance to use some of the skills they perhaps don't get to use in every session

(Tracking isn't much use in Port Royal, for instance), and show them there's more to the Spanish Main than the inside of a ship.

Locations can also be used to add excitement to the adventure. A battle in a cave, where gunfire might trigger a landslide, or cause a volley of stalactites to fall from the ceiling can be great fun.

As we mentioned earlier, you should also be prepared to let the players add some details to the location, so long as it doesn't interfere with your story. While fighting some Spanish soldiers down at the docks, for instance, a hero may want to start an avalanche of barrels, or use a pulley to lift himself out of danger.

You may not have thought much about these features when you were designing the adventure, but they fit the location and let the heroes do something dramatic, rather than just blasting away with their pistols.

Of course, you can occasionally turn your players' creativity to your advantage. So when they release a wagon-load of barrels to stop pursuing guards, you can decide that one of the barrels rolls close to the heroes' ship, breaking open to spill gunpowder across the dock. If one of the heroes or the guards were to drop a lantern, the whole lot could blow up, threatening the heroes' escape, and their lives! Don't do this too often, though, or your players will stop being creative with their use of props.

Adventure Structure

Generally, adventures should be created around 3-4 scenes. This should give enough material to last a typical session, and bring the adventure to a suitable close at the end.

Of course, there's nothing stopping you from designing longer adventures. You just have to add more scenes and add a suitable break. Think of them as TV shows where it ends with, "To be continued..." on the screen. These are perfect places for cliffhangers.



Ideally, every scene should have some sort of conflict, whether it's a chase, tense NPC interaction, or a good old-fashioned fight.

The Hook

A hook is the method used to draw the characters into your adventure. It is the carrot dangled to tempt the heroes.

Hooks can be as simple as a superior giving the heroes orders ("I want you to investigate this ruin."), related through rumor ("Did you hear about that explosion in Port Royal?"), or involve the heroes directly (they witness an assassination attempt).

Listen to the things your players say, too. They often reveal their hopes and fears for their characters. If you can incorporate these things into your adventures, you've got a great hook you know your players will respond to—after all, it was their idea!

In Media Res

That's fancy talk for, "starting in the middle of things." Basically, it means that you begin the adventure straight into the action, with just a little prelude to set the scene. The heroes might be engaged in a ship battle, or blasting their way clear from a prison with prisoners in tow.

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This method is excellent for getting the players straight into character, and it grabs their attention from the start. Maybe in our example plot, the first scene begins with the heroes making a daring getaway, having just rescued an English spy from the French.

Once the scene is over, the spy informs his rescuers that the French are planing to blow up Governor Lynch's mansion during his next ball. He's the hook for getting the heroes involved in the rest of the adventure.

The Middle

Exactly what happens in the middle of the story depends on your plot. Ideally, there should be one or two scenes that push the story forward in a logical fashion.

Let's assume in our example plot the first scene, the Hook, has the heroes discovering the existence of a French plot to wipe out the cream of English society in the Caribbean, not to mention their senior naval officers.

Our next scene could have the heroes attacking a French fort, where the gunpowder is being stored, in a bid to stop the it being deployed. We could have this as our only scene, with the villain and his weapon being present, or we can expand the adventure by deciding the villain has already left for Port Royal. Of course, there should be a clue to let the heroes know where he's headed.

For our next scene, we decide to bring in a ship chase. As the heroes sail to Jamaica, they're spotted by a French fleet, who give chase. Cue some dramatic action as the heroes valiantly try to make it to Port Royal without being blown out of the water.

The Climax

The climax is the final scene of the story, where all the pieces come together. Stories should end on a bang, not a whimper. The heroes' victory should be a struggle against terrible odds, not a walk in the park.

Since the climax is the finale of the story, it should feature the main villain of the piece (though he may escape, of course).

In our example plot, the finale takes place in the basements beneath the Governor's mansion, as the villain, surrounded by thugs, lights the fuse on the bomb. Rather than just being a stand-up fight, the heroes have the added impetus of having to extinguish the fuse before everyone is blown to pieces!

Encounter Difficulties

Take a look through the chapter at the end of the book. You might be wondering about what level of heroes the entries are designed for. Are they intended for characters of Novice Rank, or for Veterans? Singly, or in groups?

The answer is none of the above. The encounters reflect the natural organization of the characters or creatures listed. This means your group should be warned *Pirates* isn't like some games that set the challenge level to something the heroes can deal with. Instead, some opponents need to be avoided, or clever tactics needed to defeat them.

We do this both because it's more natural, it's more of a challenge, and any system we created would have a difficult time fitting your game. If the player characters recruit 40 pirates, it doesn't make sense that every group of English soldiers or pirates suddenly grows proportionally to defeat them. This means that just as in real life, exploring the world with a larger party is much safer.

Of course it also means the heroes have to lead the extras and ensure they are adequately supplied and receive medical attention when wounded. They must also contend with the mutineers and troublemakers who are likely to infiltrate their army. There are bad apples in every bunch, as the old saying goes.

All that said, a GM should adjust encounters to fit the nature of his party. If they truly are walking around in a group so large nothing is a threat, feel free to up the difficulty of encounters that make sense—such as ship fleets or squads of English soldiers. A large group is easier to follow, of course, so trouble should find them more frequently, too.

And don't worry if the characters lose a few extras along the way. Even famous heroes rarely make it to the finale of their adventure with all their loyal men.

Nonplayer Characters

The backbone of any good game is the world that surrounds the heroes, and non-player characters are a big part of that. This section shows you how to breathe life into the supporting cast of the *Pirates RPG*.

Creating NPCs

Consider this Game Master's Rule #1 when it comes to NPCs: Don't "design" them!

Don't create your NPCs using the character creation rules. Just give them what you think they ought to have in their various skills and attributes, give them suitable Edges (you don't have to meet the requirements either, if you don't want) and move on. Remember this game is supposed to be easy for you to set up, run, and play. Don't sit around adding up skill points for NPCs when you could be designing fiendish traps and thinking up wicked schemes for your nefarious villains!

A careful look through the rules notes that you never need to know an NPC's Rank—it's purely a mechanic used for balancing player characters so that no one individual hero dominates the game.

There's a sample of stock villains at the back of this book ready for you to use straight away. You can also use them as guides to help you create your own extras.

Personality

Far more important than most nonplayer character's statistics are their personalities. Jot down a note or two about any NPCs the party is likely to come across so you'll have some idea how to run them.

Some GMs find it useful to identify their prominent NPCs with actors or characters from movies, television, books, or comics. Knowing that the Captain of the French Guard is "played by Sam Elliot," for instance, gives you a good handle on how to handle interactions with him. He's likely to be gruff, to the point, and have a deep, throaty voice.



Adding these extra touches to the your NPCs can really make them stand out and be remembered by your players too. That way the Captain becomes a memorable character they may call on in the future rather than just a one-shot resource they forget about by the next scene. Not every NPC needs this kind of depth of course, but those who do add a level of realism and continuity to your game.

Making Villains

Villains lie at the heart of any good story and *Pirates* is no exception. It may have fierce sea monsters, but at the core, the game is about people and the good and evil nature of their species.

What we're going to look at here is how to make a memorable villain to drive your nefarious plots forward.

Motivation

Motivation is important to a *Pirates* villain. After all, this is what makes them a villain and not just a bad person. Villains usually have grandiose plans—they don't want to be rich, they want to be the richest person in the Caribbean. They don't want to govern

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an island—they want to depose a king and rule a country. When you're thinking of your villain's motivation, think big!

Tied in to his motivation is the villain's backstory. Motivation is what the villain plans to do, but his backstory tells you why he is so motivated.

Why do they want to be super-rich? What made the respectable explorer become thirsty for artifacts of power? Why did the once mild-mannered son of a blacksmith join the crew of Havana Black and become a bloodthirsty pirate?

You don't have to write down the entire backstory, but a well-rounded villain with a believable history will impress your players more than just a stereotypical, "He's greedy because he likes the high life," villain.

Appearance

Pirates villains should have an appearance matching their motivation and nature. Think about the villain's motivation for doing what he does, why he's acting against the heroes, and give him a description to match. Here's a quick example.

The Hag of Tortuga has a vile appearance, with a withered face and long, bony claws. This symbolizes her deep involvement with the powers of voodoo, and the fact that the good part of her is now dead. The Hag loves the power it gives her, and she isn't about to give it up.

When dealing with lowlifes, like Novice characters, Governor Lynch wears a harsh expression like he found his cat using his breakfast for a litter tray. He's a no-nonsense leader who isn't bothered with trivial details and has no patience with lesser men.

Sure, clever players will quickly catch on to your descriptions, but that's okay—that's part of the fun of *Pirates*, and you can always throw in a surprise. Maybe the explorer hell-bent on acquiring valuable Mayan artifacts is very skinny, showing that his hunger for power is eating him alive.

Cliffhangers

The term cliffhanger comes from having the poor hero of a pulp show dangling off the edge of the cliff as the credits roll. Wondering how, and indeed if, the hero could survive drew audiences back week after week. In this respect, roleplaying is no different and a dramatic end to a session is a lure for players to come back for the next session.

A good cliffhanger can add greatly to an adventure. Planned well, it leaves players desperate to start the next session as soon as possible. They are just a storytelling tool though, and shouldn't be overused. There's nothing worse than having the jaded players thinking, "What's this week's cliffhanger?"

It is also important to remember that cliffhangers end just *before* anything serious happens. A rockfall in a cavern may drop a few stones on the heroes' heads, but it doesn't actually crush them. A hero surrounded by English soldiers with loaded guns may hear the locks being pulled back as they raise their guns, but they don't fire. A cliffhanger offers a glimpse of the possible fate to come.

Game Mechanics

Cliffhangers are extremely easy to work into a *Pirates* adventure. Most sessions end after a predetermined time, and shaping the course of the adventure to end on an exciting note is a Game Master's prerogative.

After a cliffhanger, at the start of the next session, begin with recapping events that occurred shortly before the cliffhanger. This helps the players quickly get into character. Remember what we said about starting the adventure *in media res*? Using cliffhangers makes it very easy to do just that.

Each player whose character is actively involved in the scene receives one additional benny at the start of the session. If this isn't spent during the cliffhanger scene, it's lost.

Why give a bonus benny? The heroes are supposed to escape and still go on to fight villains later in the adventure. Bonus bennies let the heroes act heroically without draining valuable resources.

Adventure Generator

The heart of any good campaign is the tale of the player characters who adventure through it. This Adventure Generator helps you, the Game Master, create interesting things for your party to do “on the fly.” At the beginning of a session, for example, your players may not yet have decided what they want to do.

If they surprise you by heading to Havana when you thought they would go to Port Royal, you can use the Adventure Generator to help create challenging situations, deadly opponents, and strange obstacles.

There are three different generators in this section. The first allows you to create your own swashbuckling adventures. The second is for those players seeking to make money from piracy (or privateering). The third is for characters who want to engage in some social activities.

Find out from the players what their heroes intend to do, then roll on the appropriate set of tables to create a rough outline.

Swashbuckling Adventures

To create your own swashbuckling story, simply follow the steps below. You can roll randomly and take the results, pick the entries you like, or a mixture of both. Maybe just reading the tables will give you an idea for a cool adventure.

An adventure need only have one major villain, but additional locales, henchmen, allies, and twists should be created for each individual scene.

Sometimes the results might not make sense together immediately. If you have the time, think about how you can make them work. If you still can't find a way, just reroll the dice.

1. Villain

The villain is the main nemesis of the heroes. He is the spider at the centre of the web and usually only encountered at the climax of the

adventure. The villain should be a fully developed Wild Card, at least equal in power to individual heroes, if not the whole party.

d6	Result
1.....	Avenger
2.....	Corruptor
3-4.....	Destroyer
5.....	Warlord
6.....	Zealot

Avenger: The villain seeks revenge for a perceived wrongdoing. These villains may have been former heroes, driven to dastardly acts by events in their past.

Corruptor: These devious types work through subversion rather than brute force. A spy is a corruptor.

Destroyer: Destroyers are seeking to bring something (or someone) to a permanent end.

Warlord: The warlord is a militaristic villain, seeking to conquer by force. He usually has an army or navy supporting him.

Zealot: Whatever his villainous cause (be it political, military, or religious), the zealot has a total belief in it.

2. Goal

The villain's goal represents his primary motivation. Choose his Hindrances to reflect his nature (as defined above) and his goal.

A villain may have more than one goal, but there should always be a primary goal to which the others lead. Think of the others as sub-plots.

d6	Result
1.....	Destroy/Conquer
2.....	Discovery
3.....	Greed
4.....	Kidnap/Steal
5.....	Power
6.....	Revenge

Destroy/Conquer: Though they may be motivated by world domination or owning the whole Spanish Main, most villains in your adventures are usually, but not always, working on a smaller scale. Maybe a French noble (a warlord) is planning on destroying an English merchant fleet.

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Discovery: Discoveries can be the prelude to Kidnap/Steal and Power plots, but they can also stand on their own. An evil villain searching for a legendary treasure is on a discovery mission, for example. A mission of exploration to uncharted islands is also a discovery mission.

Greed: There's more to greed than money. Seeking political favors, rare minerals, or hidden knowledge can just as easily lead to villainous activities. Even a warlord has to fund his conquests.

Kidnap/Steal: The villain seeks to seize possession of someone or something. This may be a close friend of a hero, a major player in the war, or maybe a revolutionary new design of ship or cannon.

Power: Gaining political position or some sensitive information can bring power as easily as acquiring a secret or conquering an island.

Revenge: Revenge can take many forms, from simple humiliation to murder. It often involves methods similar to one of the other goals, but is aimed at a specific target for a personal reason.

3. Hook

The Hook determines how the heroes get involved in the adventure.

d6	Result
1.....	Caught up in Events
2.....	Mistaken Identity
3.....	Motivation
4.....	Old Friend/Enemy
5.....	Patron
6.....	Rumor

Caught up in Events: Through no fault of their own, the heroes find themselves thrust into the action. Starting this way may leave the heroes confused as to what is happening, thus encouraging them to investigate.

Mistaken Identity: The heroes may be confused for someone else, or it could be they who make the mistake.

Motivation: Heroes have Hindrances and sometimes those Hindrances drag them into adventures.

Old Friend/Enemy: An old acquaintance seeks out the heroes, for good or ill.

Patron: Someone approaches the heroes with a job offer (maybe the villain!).

Rumor: With no available means of rapid communication to broadcast official versions of events, rumors circulate like wildfires. A rumor can come in the form of an overheard conversation or a piece of evidence found while scavenging.

4. Locales

Exciting locales make interesting battle-grounds and scenic backdrops. Roll once or twice per adventure. In a campaign, try to use different islands and a mixture of sea- and land-based themes for your adventure, so you can introduce a variety of locales.

2d6	Result
2.....	Villain's Lair
3.....	Castle/Mansion
4-5.....	Ruin
6-7.....	Town/Settlement
8-9.....	Wilderness
10.....	Exotic Landscape
11.....	Important Building
12.....	Ship

Castle/Mansion: Part of the adventure takes place on, or in a castle or mansion.

Exotic Landscape: An exotic locale is something special, such as inside an active volcano or in a swamp where a wrong step can dump the hero into quicksand.

Important Building: Whereas as city locales involve general buildings you'd find in any city, this structure is one of note, such as the Governor's Mansion in Port Royal.

Ruin: Ruins may be war-ravaged towns, forgotten temples of a bygone age, derelict forts, or areas forcibly vacated of inhabitants by the European powers.

Ship: This could be a standard vessel or a derelict. Either way, it's owned by the villain.

Town: The adventure is located somewhere public, where there are lots of innocents.

Wilderness: A story set in an uninhabited natural environment some kind is considered to be in the wilderness.

Villain's Lair: Much of the adventure takes place in the Villain's base. Roll again to see where the base is located.

5. Villainous Henchmen

Villains rarely operate alone. Even the lowliest criminal has a gang of thugs. Roll once or twice per adventure. Henchmen should generally be encountered in the early scenes—save the villain for the climax.

2d6	Result
2-4.....	Combat Veteran
5.....	Right Hand Man
6-8.....	Gang of Thugs/Soldiers
9.....	Seducer/Spy
10-11.....	Thief/Pirate/Smuggler
12.....	Assassin

Assassin: The assassin's primary weapon is stealth. Although skilled combatants, they prefer tricks and subterfuge over brute force.

Combat Veteran: Combat veterans are masters of warfare and should be able to take down any individual hero in a fair fight.

Right Hand Man: The villain's most trusted henchman is usually a capable jack-of-all-trades. He can fight, talk, and sail his way out of trouble. He is also fanatically loyal to his master.

Seducer: Seduction can involve more than just good looks or charm. Blackmail and bribery, as well as old-fashioned romantic entanglement, are all powerful weapons in the seducer's arsenal.

Thief: The lackeys are criminals, maybe serving the villain because he pays them well.

Thugs: English Redcoats or a pirate crew are classic thugs, but the enemy may also be members of a local tribe, the crew of a French merchant, as appropriate. Whoever they are, thugs are lowly lackeys, relying on numbers rather than superior skills.

6. Heroic Allies

Heroes aren't expected to work alone. The very nature of *Pirates* brings out the best in those with a good heart. Roll once per adventure. Allies needn't be involved in



combat—they may supply vital information or simply get the heroes to where they want to be.

d6	Result
1.....	Scholar
2.....	Soldier
3.....	Former Villain
4.....	Sailor/Merchant
5.....	Old Friend
6.....	Administrator

Administrator: Administrators can open many doors of power, as well as supply provisions, shipping manifests, replacement crews, or just valuable information.

Former Villain: The ally may be a reformed pirate, or perhaps a soldier who has switched sides. Can he be trusted though?

Sailor: The ally is someone who has his own ship. He might be a smuggler, a pirate, a naval officer, or even a merchant.

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Old Friend: Old friends might be someone from a character's background, or perhaps a character the group encountered in an earlier adventure. Using recurring characters helps give your game a sense of continuity.

Scholar: Scholars aren't usually the best combatants, but they are sources of useful information.

Soldier: A soldier may be a serving member of the English, French, or Spanish army, or a skilled duelist. What they all bring is skill in combat.

7. Twists and Turns

Swashbuckling adventures rarely run as smoothly as the heroes would like. Ideally, there should be one or two twists and turns per episode. To increase the length of an adventure, make extra rolls.

2d6	Result
2.....	Double-Crossed
3.....	Unexpected Foe
4.....	Trap/Ambush
5.....	Rescue Ally
6-7.....	Chase
8.....	Creature
9.....	Natural Hazard
10.....	Unexpected Ally
11.....	Shock Revelation
12.....	Discovery

Chase: Whether on foot, with mounts, or in ships, a chase adds excitement to any adventure. Sometimes the heroes do the chasing; sometimes they get chased.

Creature: Some sort of creature makes an appearance at an unexpected time. Check out the bestiary starting on page 217, and choose a creature.

Discovery: Many secrets lie buried across the Main and not all bring material reward. Maybe the heroes find a document revealing the villain's plan or discover an inscription that leads to another adventure. For those with mundane goals, maybe a cache of valuable resources is uncovered.

Double-Crossed: At some point, a key figure in the adventure switches side. This can work either for or against the heroes.

Natural Hazard: At some point during the adventure, the characters are hampered by the forces of nature. There a list of suitable hazards starting on page 227. Pick one that fits into the adventure.

Rescue Ally: At some point, one of the heroes' allies ends up in the villain's clutches. Rescuing the ally may be a distraction to cover the villain's actions elsewhere.

Shock Revelation: Something important is revealed during the adventure. Such shock Revelations do not have to be bad—perhaps an Extra declares his undying love for a hero or maybe the heroes discover some clue to Governor Lynch's secret deal with the Spanish to rid the Main of pirates (and the French).

Trap/Ambush: Traps range from simple pits to complex traps involving moving walls. You can either create your own, check out page 230 for an idea, or have the group ambushed.

Unexpected Ally: Maybe the natives rise up against the villain and join the heroes, or perhaps the old man they met earlier in the adventure turns out to be a retired duelist who just can't sit back and watch the villain get away with his foul plot. Either way, someone comes to the heroes' aid at a crucial moment.

Unexpected Foe: Maybe the villain is actually someone the heroes weren't expecting ("It's my sister!"), extra henchmen join the battle at a crucial time, or a harmless looking animal turns out to be a vicious beast.

Example Adventure

Here's a quick example of fleshing out an adventure. After rolling the dice, we end up with Villain: Avenger, Goal: Destroy, Hook: Patron, Locales: Ruin and Important Building, Henchmen: Pirates and Combat Veteran, Ally: Administrator, and Twists & Turns: Natural Hazard and Unexpected Ally. Now all we have to do is work this into a plot.

Since the villain is the key character, we'll start with him. We know he seeks revenge for something, and we know he wants to destroy somebody or something to enact his revenge.

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We decide to make him a minor French noble named of Baron Anton Frois. His son was killed in a duel by an English plantation owner, and Anton wants to avenge his death. The duel was legal, but Anton believes otherwise. To get revenge, he wants to destroy the plantation owner's reputation and business, but not to kill him.

The patron is the plantation owner. Several of his ships have been attacked and parts of the plantation burned, so he hires the heroes to investigate. To assist them in their efforts, the patron assigns his assistant Sneatherby to the group. Sneatherby holds the purse strings and can get the heroes access to the patron's ships if needed.

Now we have the backstory and the major players sorted, it's time to fill in the rest of the blanks. We'll start by looking at how many scenes we want. We've only rolled two Locales, but we'll add a third, a ship.

For our first scene, Sneatherby leads the heroes to the docks, where a shipment of spice is being loaded onboard a vessel bound for England. Cue a fight with a gang of pirates, who attempt to board the ship. Naturally, the pirates are some of the villain's henchmen.

If they question a pirate, the heroes can learn they were to transfer the shipment to their own ship, and take it to an old fort on a small island. The second scene sees the heroes arrive at the ruined fort. Here, they battle (or sneak) their way past more pirates until they come face to face with a skilled duelist (the second Henchman).

Searching the fort, they discover that the villain has already left and has gone after someone called Richard. Sneatherby explains that Richard is the patron's son, who is due to marry in a few days. Just enough time for the heroes to get back!

The final scene takes place in a church. We'll call it St. Margaret's and make it an important church in Port Royal. There's a large congregation already there by the time the heroes arrive. As the heroes burst in, the priest asks if anyone present knows why the couple shouldn't be lawfully married. The villain then reveals himself, tells his tale of how his son was taken from him, and then claims an eye for an eye.



Of course, the villain has a lot of pirates with him. Fortunately, they are not alone. Just when things look bad, Sneatherby reveals himself to be an accomplished swordsman. Can the heroes protect their patron's son and bring the Frenchman to justice? That's for your players to decide.

Pirating Adventures

It's possible your group may decide to prey on others. This is not the path of heroes, but even the greatest sometimes stumble a bit before realizing their true potential.

This isn't the same as simply sailing about to see what the ship runs into. Instead, pirates tend to sail around ports or known shipping lanes and wait for recognizable prey.

Assuming the pirates loiter a few miles away from a port, roll a d20 once per day spent hunting and consult the table below. See the last chapter of this book for more information on the vessel and its crew.

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Note that the pirates won't usually know what a ship is until they approach it. Privateers don't fly their colors so that they can lure pirates in close.

National ships hide their colors as well to avoid "advertising" themselves as prey. Pirates only tend to fly "jolly rogers" when they get within close quarters, urging their quarry to surrender or face "no mercy."

Ship Ahoy!

d20	Result
1-10	No Prey
11-15	Merchant (see page 233)
16-18	Pirates (see page 237)
19-20	Privateers (see page 238)

You can use this table even if your players don't decide to go "on the account" and take up piracy. Whenever you want to break a long journey with a chance encounter at sea, or if you need to generate some random shipping for a military mission, just roll on the Ship Ahoy table and see the relevant section in the bestiary.



Socializing Adventures

Not every adventure needs to involve pirates or naval battles. For those of a more refined character, there's always the chance to conduct a spot of socializing.

1. Event

Roll 1d12 to see what event the heroes can attend.

d12	Event
1	Sporting
2-3	At Home
4-6	Party
7-9	Club
10-11	Concert
12	Ball

Sporting: A rare few sporting events are important enough to be considered social events rather than spectator entertainment. Hunting, duels, game shooting, and bull fighting (for the Spanish) are good social occasions for the wealthy. Prizefights and cockfighting are lower-class pursuits. Wagers and drinking feature pretty heavily at most of these events, regardless of social level!

At Home: Polite society involves calling on friends and acquaintances when they arrange "at home" days. These are relatively formal events of a small scale, perhaps just two or three visitors at a time.

Well-to-do folk (anyone with a positive Fame score of 10+) should have at home days of their own, allowing several contacts to come calling for brief meetings. Decide who is receiving guests, then find out who else may be there when the heroes arrive.

Party: Parties are the lifeblood of polite society and allow a host to gather a diverse group of acquaintances at one time.

Whether they are the wild hedonistic bashes of the young aristocracy, the formal polite dinners of their parents, or a riotous drunken brawl in a Port Royal tavern, a party is a great way to renew friendships, maintain contacts, and forge new alliances.

RUNNING THE GAME

Decide what the occasion is and where it takes place (the lower the heroes' Fame, the less impressive the surroundings).

Club: Social clubs are plentiful in Europe, and colonists have brought the idea with them. Gentlemen in particular are frequently members of a club, which they can visit to enjoy male company and escape domesticity for a while.

Many (though not all) are exclusively male, but all demand a membership fee be paid to take advantage of the club's facilities (which should always include a bar, a dining room, and a reading and smoking room, but may be far more lavish).

Concert: Occasionally, the heroes might find time to take in a show of some kind. While the opportunities for socializing are reduced by the necessity of watching the performers, so too are the chances of making an embarrassing mistake.

Ball: A ball is a grand affair with a large guest list, and heroes must have a Fame of 10+ or better to merit an invitation. Often balls are held for some particular cause or to mark an important date.

Select a reason for the function and decide on a suitably impressive venue. If the heroes aren't respected enough to be invited, choose a different social event! Otherwise, the lowlier characters must find some way to get inside.

2. Results

Roll to see what happens to the heroes in attendance. You can roll once for the team, or once for each character, depending on how eventful you want the occasion to be!

d6	Results
1	Faux Pas
2	Status
3	Crime
4	Allies
5	Information
6	Benefactor

Faux Pas: One of the heroes makes a bad social blunder. Roll again to see what the group misses out on as a result of the slip.

The nature of the mistake depends on the situation and who is involved. Each entry below includes the result of a faux pas.

If you roll this result, keep looking for opportunities to trip the heroes up during the adventure. Don't limit them to a single mistake either. Often it is when the heroes try to recover a perceived error that they truly make a mess of things.

Status: The heroes manage to earn themselves a little respect and improve their standing by attending the event. Each character who makes it through the situation gains +2 Fame. If this is the result of faux pas, the heroes lose 2 Fame instead through the embarrassment.

Crime: During the event, a crime of some sort takes place. Decide the nature and severity of the crime. Roll again or choose to see what the heroes gain if they solve or thwart the crime (ignore Crime or Faux Pas results).

If this is the result of a faux pas, the heroes commit or are suspected of committing a crime—be alert to the heroes' actions. If they say or do anything criminal, or that could be misconstrued as being criminal, they are challenged. Roll again to see what they lose as a result of the furor (ignore Crime or Faux Pas results).

Allies: The heroes manage to impress an individual over the course of the event. Decide who the individual is and give them a brief backstory.

If this is rolled as a faux pas, the team has alienated a potential ally. Depending on the severity of the indiscretion, the individual may be merely offended, or may be outraged and even decide to oppose the heroes, in which case the group makes an enemy!

Information: The heroes learn something of value to their current ambitions or some handy snippet of information that helps them in the future. If this result is rolled after a faux pas, it means the team has picked up false information.

Benefactor: Adventuring costs money and heroes are usually always in need of funds. At this social event, the heroes make a friend with cash. Decide the amount of money the

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benefactor has available, how often he can donate, and how frequently the group has to court him to keep the contributions coming.

Usually the benefactor provides 1d4 x \$50 per month, and the heroes must meet with him or her monthly.

If the characters make a faux pas, this result means an existing benefactor withdraws his support. The heroes' social inadequacies are so immense he wants nothing more to do with them.

3. Details

Now you have the basics of the social event, roll 1d20 to add a little drama to proceedings.

d20	Event
1	Sudden Death
2	Hidden Purpose
3	Villainous Guest
4-5	Unexpected Offer
6-7	Amazing Collection
8-9	Scandal
10-11	Embarrassing Mishap
12-13	Secret Admirer
14-15	Inside Information
16-17	New Invitation
18	Bad Company
19	Smitten
20	Royalty

Sudden Death: Someone at the event dies a natural but sudden death. Nobody saw anything suspicious, the person just collapsed.

The heroes, of course, don't know this and may not believe it, even if a physician tells them so. Decide who dies and how, and think of a couple of strange circumstances the other guests can start to speculate over, just to fuel your players' suspicions!

Hidden Purpose: The host has gathered the group together for some other purpose than simply to socialize. Perhaps the group is to be beneficiaries of his will, or maybe the guests were all present at a previous event when someone died, and the host has decided to solve the case.

Decide what the mysterious purpose is and the dramatic way in which the host intends to announce it.

Unexpected Offer: During the course of the event, the heroes are presented with an offer of employment by another guest or by the host.

Decide what the job is to be (or roll on the Swashbuckling Adventures tables to determine the nature of the task) and what reward is offered.

Villainous Guest: The heroes arrive at the social function to find an enemy is already in attendance. As this is a social function, it is not acceptable to start anything violent here (-3 Fame for any infraction), and the heroes must handle things carefully.

A social event is usually full of innocent civilians, and the antagonists typically resort to one-upmanship and contests of skill (playing cards for huge sums of money, for instance), or veiled threats through gritted teeth. Of course, the groups can always leave the event, but lose 1 point of Fame if they do.

Smitten: A hero's and an enchanting guest's eyes meet across a crowded room, and the character is instantly smitten. These feelings may or may not be returned, but the hero should start making plans to woo the woman or arrange some scheme to force the man to approach her.

It is possible that this is a honey trap laid on by an enemy, and the object of desire could be luring the hero into temptation to take advantage of him or her in some way.

Scandal: The event is a memorable one but for the wrong reasons. A noted aristocrat starts a scene, or some otherwise hidden secret is revealed. This may be mundane and boring (a noble's daughter is unmarried and pregnant), or it may be shockingly important (like Governor Lynch's collusion with the Spanish being revealed).

Whatever the scandal, decide whether or not the heroes are involved in it or are the cause of it. If you already rolled a faux pas, the scandal could be absolutely terrible and definitely involves a mistake the heroes have made.

Embarrassing Mishap: A character does something very clumsy such as spilling a drink, breaking a priceless object, or calling a lady by the wrong name. Whatever the nature of the incident, the hero loses -1 Fame and

draws a lot of attention. In the future, those who attended the event always bring it up when the hero's name is mentioned!

Bad Company: The party turns out to be one of the worst the heroes have ever attended. Every guest is dull, even the ones the heroes want to meet. The result is a -2 modifier to Charisma as the heroes stifle yawns. Anyone leaving the event early loses 1 point of Fame.

Inside Information: The heroes learn (either first hand or by overhearing someone else's conversation) some vital clue. The clue should be a subtle hint rather than explicit instructions, so the team has legwork to do to reveal the meaning of the information. It may be a clue to a resource-rich island or the whereabouts of hidden treasure, for example. Whatever the nature of the clue, the heroes gain this information regardless of what else happens at the event.

New Invitation: The group's ready charm means they are invited to another social event next week. Once they accept, they really ought to turn up, so provide plenty of obstacles to try to distract them! If they fail to show without first making excuses, each hero failing to attend loses -1 Fame.

Secret Admirer: One of the team attracts an admirer. This isn't necessarily a romantic infatuation (though it could be). It may be an impressionable individual desperate to become a pirate or swashbuckling hero. Regardless, the hero is pursued relentlessly, and the admirer becomes more and more irritating as time passes.

Amazing Collection: The heroes' host happens to be fanatical about something and has a world-class collection. This could be African musical instruments or Mexican tree frogs (live, of course). Whatever the nature of the collection, the owner is an expert in the subject and, once a hero has been his or her guest, is happy to help in the future, should they require assistance in his field.

Royalty: The event is attended by royalty of some kind and the celebrity rubs off. All the heroes in attendance gain $+3$ Fame, simply for being able to say they attended. Any Fame losses at the event for any reason are doubled!



Subplots

Occasionally you might want to drop in a few other elements to your story—old acquaintances, running into dread enemies, and so on. This section helps add a little detail or distraction to an adventure. Pick a subplot that fits, or roll a d20.

1) One of the heroes spies an old acquaintance, such as a former shipmate or ex-lover. The person might also be a family member.

2) One of the ships in town is rumored to be carrying food tainted with plague. The ship is damaged and the captain can't sell his cargo to make the necessary repairs.

3) A pox is breaking out all over the town. Heroes must make a Vigor roll every day spent in this town or catch a deadly pox that adds a Fatigue level each week until they die.

4) A large pirate fleet has been sighted in the area. Many believe the pirates will attempt to sack this town. Roll once per day afterwards. On a 5-6, the pirates attack.

The pirate band is huge—at least a quarter of the town's population, up to about 500.

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5) A merchant approaches the crew and attempts to hire them to sail to the Mosquito Coast with a full cargo of muskets and swords. These are intended for rebellious natives, and will almost certainly result in the crew's death if they're captured by the Spanish. The arms are to be delivered to a group waiting up a short river. The rebels will pay them \$1000 per space for the goods.

6) While carousing at the local bar, a group of 2d6 French decide to pick on any English in the party. They're willing to make it a fatal fight if the local authorities aren't too strict.

7) A lone and vengeful Spaniard spies someone in the party he has mistaken for an old enemy. He tracks the crew and tries to wait until the character is alone, then strikes from the shadows.

8) A massive pirate believes the party is just the crew he's been looking for. He feels the need to impress them first. As soon as someone says something rude to the group, he waddles over and attempts to prove his worth by trouncing the party's "foe."

9) Rats have infested the town. Thousands descend on the settlement and keep anyone from leaving their homes for 2d4 days unless some sort of solution is found.

10) A beautiful young girl (or handsome man) approaches the crew seeking passage to a spot far from their current location. She can pay only 500 pieces of eight for the journey, but promises twice that upon arrival. She is looking for her long-lost husband, and has heard he was spotted at her destination. The man isn't there, unfortunately, and she has no further gold to pay.

11) Word reaches the party that one of their crewmen is wanted for piracy by the English. It seems he was condemned to hang but somehow escaped. The fiend has been lying low for a while, but was a bloodthirsty murderer prior to joining the party's crew.

12) The local authorities seize one of the characters and accuse him or her of murder. They've mistaken the hero for someone else, but they won't admit their error. The rest of the crew must rescue their friend and/or bring in the real killer.

13) A local criminal wants to establish a criminal ring in this town. He's willing to pay \$2000 per space for weapons from any French, Spanish, or English source. Finding a supplier there requires a Streetwise roll at -4. If successful, a local smuggler sells the stuff for \$800 per space.

14) The spirit of a former player character or named extra haunts the group over some unfinished business. The spirit can only be laid to rest by finishing up whatever it is has brought him back. If no such cause exists, the departed character is looking for his share of the booty gained when he died. If that is buried with his body—or perhaps given to someone he cared about in his name—the spirit fades. Until then, the thing causes enough minor mischief to seriously curse the characters and their vessel.

15) Particularly voracious seaworms have bored into the bottom of the ship's hull in force. The vessel needs to be careened at once or its Top Speed drops by 2 points and its Acceleration by 1.

16) While carousing in the local tavern, a drunken pirate captain and his crew pick a fight with the heroes. They aren't looking to kill anyone—particularly—but are quick to start a fistfight. The bar might blame the heroes for the fight if they jump in too quickly, charging them 2d6 x \$50 damages.

17) A ship recently sold a large load of sick cows to the local butcher, who then sold it to all the local taverns. A horrible case of the runs spreads over town. Characters are Fatigued for three days and cannot go for more than an hour without a trip to the privy.

18) A down-on-his luck sailor seeks someone willing to buy a wondrous treasure (choose or roll one of the items on page 206) for at least a few thousand pieces of eight. He tells of his mates marooned on an island and finding only death—and this one relic.

19) The town runs out of grog. The sailors are getting surly and fights break out often. Anyone who can bring in a cask of spirits can make a quick \$500.

20) A famous person comes to town—whoever it is, the "celebrity" is simply traveling the region on business. He's likely protected by several very competent bodyguards.

Booty

The Spanish Main is rich in treasures. At the end of an NPC's description is a listing called Booty. Roll on the matching table below to determine the treasure the heroes discover. This is either carried on the NPC's person, or might be found in their home nearby.

The percentage listed under Relic is the percentage chance a special item is present. If there is, see the section on Relics below.

Booty Table

Booty	Currency	Relic
King's Ransom!	1d10 x \$1000	100%
Plunder!	1d10 x \$500	50%
Pillage!	1d10 x \$100	25%
Loot	1d10 x \$10	1%

Relics

Relics come in two sorts—well crafted objects and special items (those with some sort of strange or unusual power).

Well-crafted objects are mundane items, created by master craftsmen. They are better than similar items of regular quality, but are not otherwise special in any way. Such items have a minimum value of at least ten times the listed price for a standard equivalent, though few owners would willing sell such an item. Special items are mysterious artifacts. A small few actually seem to have some power and are the focus of superstition. In fact, such items work because the owner believes they should, or does not understand the true nature of the object. Their value is whatever the buyer is willing to pay.

If a relic of some sort is found in the booty, roll a d20 to determine the type of item found, then check the appropriate subtable for more details. Make sure you roll any relics before a fight breaks out—if a villain has access to one, he'll use it.

Heroes might be offered a chance to buy these items by an NPC (though the buyer should beware of buying a mundane items made to look somehow special), or they may try to sell them. If the price is listed as "+\$," add this to the standard price for a similar item.

Relic Type

d20	Roll Type
1-5	Armor
6-11	Hand Weapon
12-17	Ranged Weapon
18-20	Special Item

Armor

Roll a d20 to determine the type of armor, then a second d20 to determine its bonus. All armor listed on this table is made for average-sized people.

Armor Type

d20	Type
1-6	Leather
7-14	Plate corselet (torso)
15-16	Plate vambraces (arms)
17-18.....	Plate greaves (legs)
19-20.....	Steel helmet



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Bonus

d20	Bonus
1-10	Half weight (+\$100)
11-15	+1 Toughness; half weight (+\$250)
16-20	+2 Toughness; half weight (+\$400)

Hand Weapon

Roll a d20 to determine the type of weapon found, then another to determine its bonus.

Weapon Type

d20	Type
1-2	Dagger
3	Great sword
4-5	Long sword
6-9	Rapier
10-13	Short Sword (Cutlass)
14	Hook
15-16	Axe
17	Boarding Axe
18	Great Axe
19	Maul
20	Spear

Bonus

d20	Bonus
1-10	+1 Fighting and damage (+\$150)
11-15	+1 Fighting and damage; +1 Parry (+\$400)
16-20	+2 Fighting and damage; +1 Parry (+\$600)

Ranged Weapon

Roll a d20 to determine the type of weapon found, then another to determine its bonus.

Weapon Type

d20	Type
1	Bow
2	Crossbow
3-7	Flintlock Pistol
8-11	Musket
12-13	Muskatoon
14-15	Rifled musket

16	Volley gun
17-18	Two-barreled pistol
19-20	Blunderbuss

Bonus

d20	Bonus
1-10	+1 Shooting and damage (+\$100)
11-17	+2 Shooting and damage (+\$300)
18-19	Increase Range Brackets by 50% (+\$250)
20	Double Range Brackets (+\$500)

Special Items

The majority of items are in fact well-crafted mundane items. Those seemingly magical items included here are far from being true artifacts, but these are superstitious times and many natural events are put down to witchcraft and religion. Some objects are perfectly natural, just misunderstood, others seem to work simply because the owner *believes* they have power.

Roll 1d20 and consult the list below. Don't feel constrained by this list, however; feel free to make up your own relics as well.

1) Lucky Charm (\$50): This might be a rabbit's foot, a silver cross, or a gold locket containing the photo of someone's loved one. Whatever form it takes, the charm makes the owner feel luckier and grants him +1 benny at the start of each session. This benny must be used first and cannot be used to earn extra Experience Points. The charm must be worn or carried to be effective.

2) Captain's Compass (\$300): Some superstitious mariners believe that these compasses were crafted by the Devil, and once a course is set, the ship will follow it through any storm. In reality, the compass is simply extremely accurate. It grants +2 to a captain's Boating roll when navigating.

3) Surgeon's Tools (\$450): This finely-made set contains scalpels and a saw. These precision tools give a surgeon +2 to his Healing rolls.

RUNNING THE GAME

4) Books (\$100): Since the printing press was invented, books have become extremely popular. They are still rare and expensive, however and a large library is a sign of great wealth. Pick a single Knowledge skill as the subject of the book each time this entry is rolled.

Characters using the books with a similar Knowledge skill check, a relevant Common Knowledge roll, or a related skill roll gain a +1 bonus. The books also add +1 to Investigation rolls when consulted about the specific topic as well.

For instance, a book on Anatomy would grant the bonus to Healing if the character was making a Healing roll to remove a bullet from inside a patient, but not to sew up a superficial sword cut.

5) “Unbreakable” Rope (\$40): Despite claims to be woven from the hair of virgins or angels, this rope is simply sturdier than most rope on the market. It can hold 500 pounds with ease, instead of 300.

6) Extra-Fine Gunpowder (\$250): Gunpowder must be ground to a specific coarseness to be effective. Too fine, and the powder explodes in the weapon. Too coarse, and it merely fizzles.

The characters have found a casket of specially blended gunpowder which increases the range brackets of blackpowder weapons and cannons by 50%. There is enough powder for 50 blackpowder weapon or 5 cannon shots.

7) Gunsmith’s Tools (\$700): These fine armorer’s tools are masterpieces of tool making and grant the user +2 to rolls when making weapons.

8) Herbal Remedy (\$50): The first Spaniards who were given this brew were unsure whether it was a miracle or witchcraft. In fact, it’s just a herbal potion using natural ingredients.

When drunk by someone suffering from disease, it allows him to make an immediate Vigor roll. If successful, he is cured. Only one dose may be drunk each day—subsequent doses having no effect. The heroes find 1d4 doses.

9) Tonic Drink (\$75): Another native remedy, drinking a dose of tonic immediately removes one Fatigue level. Only one dose an hour can be drunk—subsequent doses having no effect. The heroes find 1d6 doses.

10) Healing Salve (\$300): Healing salve isn’t a miracle cure, but it does stop infection and aid recovery from wounds. Used every day for 5 days, the salve grants a patient +2 to natural Healing rolls. The heroes find 1d4 pots. Each pot contains enough salve for one natural Healing roll.

11) Poison Antidote (\$100): As with the herbal remedy, this is a natural concoction brewed by the natives of the region.

When drunk by someone suffering from the effects of poison, it allows him to make an immediate Vigor roll. If successful, he is cured. Only one dose may be ingested each day—subsequent doses having no effect. The heroes find 1d4 doses.

12) Treasure Map (\$20): There are many hundreds of treasure maps circulating among the pirates of the Caribbean. Many are fakes, but a few point to real booty. Whether this map is real or fake is up to the GM but either way, it’s a great hook for an adventure.

Some maps contain secret codes or clues to hidden treasure, rather than explicit instructions. In such cases, x rarely marks the spot! Instead, cunning treasure seekers must decipher the code, ignore the red herrings and claim their reward.

And, of course, in typical pirate fashion, the map may only be a fragment, leading to an adventure to recover the other parts.

13) Letter of Marque (\$1000): The lucky crew has found a letter of marque signed by a European power of the GM’s choice. They essentially have right to prey on shipping of certain nations See page 70 for details of these items.

14) Waterproof Clothes (\$75): This seemingly normal set of clothes has been treated by natives with a special wax and is completely waterproof. The wearer gains +1 to Swimming rolls because the clothes don’t become waterlogged and the wax allow effortless swimming.

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15) Blessed Figurehead (\$2500): The figurehead, usually that of a saint, has been blessed by a senior clergyman and the crew feel protected by God.

The figurehead grants an extra benny to the ship's company as a whole each session. The benny can be used on rolls made by any crew member, but only if the roll affects the ship in some way (firing a cannon is permissible for example, but firing a musket is not).

The captain decides when to use the benny even if he is not making the roll. It does not count toward experience points for any crew member.

16) Mariner's Lantern (\$300): Despite looking like a normal bullseye lantern, this lantern is of incredible construction. It is watertight, and so cannot be blown out, even in a storm and continues to work when underwater.

The lantern can shine for just half an hour beneath the waves and uses a pint of oil in this time. Penalties due to poor lighting are reduced by 1 underwater due to the light shed by the lantern. Refilling the device underwater is not possible.

17) Flashpowder Bombs (\$25): These glass spheres are about the size of a tennis ball, and were created in centuries past by alchemists. They are of mysterious construction and contain a yellow liquid which flares brightly on contact with air.

Flashpowder bombs have a range of 3/6/12 and are treated as a thrown Area-Effect weapon (see page 80 for more on area effect weapons and deviation). On impact, they fill a Medium Burst Template with blinding light. Everyone under the template must make an Agility roll (-2) to shield their eyes or be Shaken.

18) Figurehead of Neptune (\$2000): Revered by the ancient Romans as the god of the sea, superstitious sailors still whisper prayers to Neptune when a storm is seen on the horizon. This figurehead of Neptune is carved to represent the upper torso and head of a man. It wears a crown of seashells and carries a trident.

When a storm strikes, sailors on a vessel with this figurehead feel themselves under Neptune's protection. The captain gains +2 to Boating rolls when trying to weather the storm and damage caused by the storm is reduced to one die (to a minimum of one 1d6).

19) Neptune's Spyglass (\$500): This spyglass is beautifully engineered with lenses of great precision and quality. The user gains +2 to Notice rolls made to spot distant objects when looking through the glass.

20) Cursed Stash (as Booty): Sailors are a superstitious breed and they treat signs of good or bad luck very seriously. It doesn't take many incidents of bad fortune to begin rumors of a curse as they look for any recently acquired item on which to place the blame.

Whatever the supposed cause of the curse, the effects are real enough. Until the heroes dispose every last piece of the treasure, they must keep the lower result, not the highest, for the first benny each session used to reroll a trait check. Little wonder then that cursed treasure is as unwelcome onboard ship as scurvy.

THE LADY'S FAVOR

The Lady's Favor is a complete adventure designed to start your Pirates campaign as soon as your players have created characters. It's been written to get the party together, and introduces most of the major rules, so you can see how they actually work during a game.

Make sure you've read it through at least once before you begin play. Read text in italics to the players. All other text is for the GM's eyes only.

The Lady's Favor is suitable for 4-6 Novice characters. As with all *Pirates* games, the heroes should be willing to perform heroic deeds. Feel free to adjust the number of opponents to suit a larger or smaller group of players, or if your players are experienced gamers and can handle a greater challenge.

GM's Background

This adventure involves helping a young lady rescue her father and retrieve a fortune in stolen booty—a classic swashbuckling plot.

GM's Notes

Because we don't know the sorts of heroes your group will contain, we've made a few assumptions with this adventure. For instance, we start the adventure in Port Royal and the treasure was once a French payroll. Feel free to change any details to suit your group. If there's a French patriot among your heroes, for instance, change the treasure to be Spanish or Dutch.

Scene 1: The Lady

The adventure begins in Port Royal, Jamaica. The characters are all at the docks. But why? Ask the players what their characters are doing there. A military officer might be on duty, a pirate might be watching potential targets being loaded, and so on.

The characters don't have to know each other in advance, this first scene should get them all together.

The port is a hive of activity. Sailors load cargo onto ships, merchants tout their wares, and passengers wait for berths to become available. Wagons and carriages crowd the roads, carrying goods and people to and from the docks.

As you go about your business, a carriage stops and a lone passenger, an attractive young lady of no more than 20 years, climbs down. Although wrapped in a traveling cloak, her demeanor shows she is out of place in Port Royal.

Whatever her reasons for being amid the bustle and activity of the docks, she quickly attracts attention. A small group of rough-looking men rushes out of an alley, and one of them grabs her arm. She screams for help, then swoons, but nobody seems to take much notice.

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Scene 2: Betrayed

Once rescued, the young lady quickly recovers consciousness. At first she is scared, convinced that the heroes are the kidnappers. A few kind words quickly calm her down, and she tells them her tale.

Her spoken English shows good breeding, and she is obviously well-educated.

“A hundred thanks, kind sirs. Had you not come to my rescue, well, I shudder to think what fate may have befallen me.”


My name is Virginia Cotton. I have recently arrived from England to search for my father. He was a sailor, but he vanished three years ago. I received a letter from a man who claimed to know him, and have arranged to meet him in the Royal Crown Tavern.

Although I have spent most of my money buying passage, I have some coin left. It isn't much, but I would gladly give it to you if you would be so kind to escort me to the tavern. I do not feel Port Royal is a safe place.”

Virginia can offer only 30 pieces of eight per player. Heroic characters may refuse to take her money and offer to help for nothing. They don't earn any Fame for this noble act, but you might want to give them a benny if they roleplay the refusal well. (“My lady, put away your money. It would be an honor to escort such a beautiful woman,” or some similar grand gesture.)

Once negotiations are over, have heroes with a piratical background (or one which involved dealing with pirates) make a Common Knowledge roll at -2. On a success, they have heard of a pirate named Jebediah Cotton, but cannot recall any details other than he disappeared. With a raise, they remember that he was part of a pirate crew who stole a French army payroll.

Virginia's father is indeed Jebediah Cotton, though she refuses to accept he is a pirate. Roleplay her denial to the hilt.



Remember what we said about starting right in the middle of the action? This is your characters' cue to intervene and play the hero. Deal initiative cards to the kidnapper and any character who says he is going to her rescue and to the kidnapper. The man grabbing her arm is a Veteran Pirate, the rest are Typical Pirates.

Don't forget, too, that the docks are a bustling hive of activity. There are plenty of barrels, wagons, ropes, and such like for the characters to use. Let them add the fine details as we discussed in earlier chapters.

If you need to prompt them, have one of the thugs use a piece of scenery to perform an Agility Trick against the heroes. Once the players get into the swashbuckling swing of things, they'll be leaping onto crates, ducking behind passing carriages, and using nearby cargo as improvised weapons.

Rescuing the lady is worth +1 Fame.

☠ **Pirates (1 per hero):** As Typical Pirates (see page 237).

☠ **Veteran Pirate:** See page 237.

THE LADY'S FAVOR

The Royal Crown

If any character asks how come a sailor's daughter sounds so educated, Virginia tells them her father regularly sent her money to pay for her private tuition.

The man she is meeting is called Michael Knotts. She has never met him, but was told he will wait in the Royal Crown Tavern at a private table each day at noon for the next week. The characters know nothing about Knotts, and asking questions around town reveals no information.



Virginia Cotton

Virginia is the adventure's hook, and while beautiful to look at, she isn't much use in a fight. Although she has enemies, they want her alive. Any attacks made against her are nonlethal.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Healing d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6

Charisma: +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5
Fame: +0

Hindrances: Clueless (about the Caribbean), Stubborn (spoilt child)

Edges: Very Attractive

Booty: None

Gear: None

The Crown, as it is known to locals, is a typical sailors' haunt. The tavern is very crowded, and reeks of pipe smoke, stale beer, and unwashed sailors.

Characters dressed in fine clothes cause the patrons to halt their conversations and stare for a moment. Virginia has the same affect, only the looks are overtly lecherous.

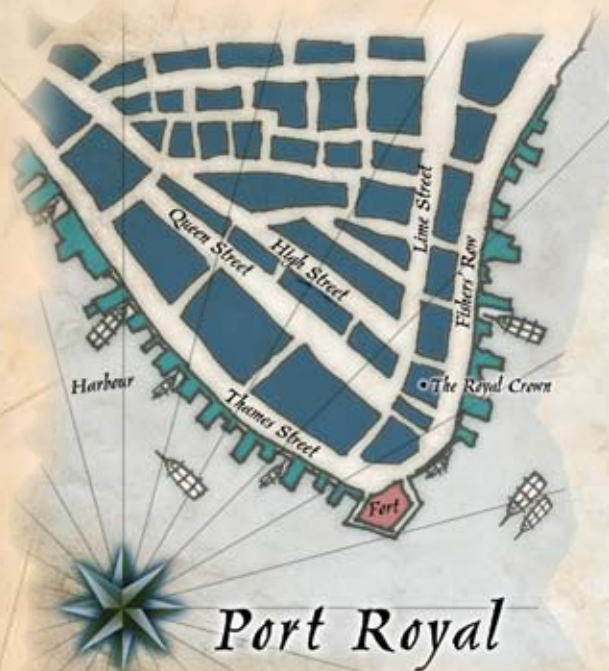
At the far side of the bar are private tables. Most are full of rowdy sailors, but one is occupied only by a well-dressed man. This is Michael Knotts.

Knotts rises when Virginia enters the bar and beckons her over. Have the characters make a Notice roll at -2. Those who succeed detect a flicker of anxiety on Knotts' face, but it quickly passes. This may make the heroes suspicious. Characters who maintain a healthy paranoia (such as keeping an eye on the other patrons) receive a bonus later.

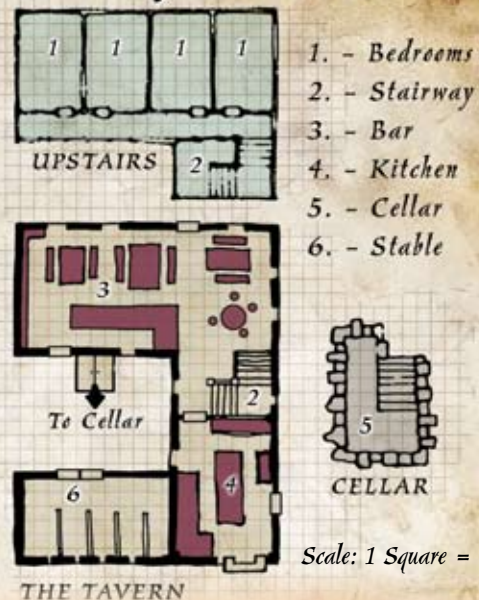
When the group approaches, Knotts offers Virginia a seat.

"Miss Virginia Cotton I presume?" he asks. *Virginia nods.*

"What news do you have of my father?" she asks. *"Is he alive?"*



The Royal Crown



PIRATES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

“Aye,” says Knotts, “but he is not a well man. This may be hard for you to accept, child, but your father is in prison. He and his crew attacked a French payroll ship and buried the treasure. Unfortunately, the haul was large enough to attract other parties. There was a naval battle, and your father was taken to the house of Baron Pettigrew, where his identity could be kept secret from the Governor.”

“My father wasn’t a pirate,” Virginia stammers, tears welling in her eyes.

“He was, my lady, but a gentleman pirate,” Knotts replies. “Pettigrew wants to know where the payroll is buried, but your father won’t tell. I fear he’ll be executed unless he talks. Did he tell you anything about the treasure?”

“No,” Virginia sobs. “I always thought he was a sailor. He told me he was a sailor.”

“A pity,” muses Knotts, “but no matter. I’m sure he’ll talk once he sees you’ve been captured as well. MEN!” he calls out, drawing his rapier.

A number of patrons suddenly draw weapons, and rush toward the table.

This fight is technically an ambush. The attackers begin on Hold. The characters must make Notice rolls. Those who were suspicious earlier on (and made their suspicions known to you) receive a +2 bonus. On a success, the character is dealt a card as normal. Otherwise he is taken by surprise and receives no action card on the first round.

The tavern has all the classic props for a swashbuckling fight—bottles, tables that tilt easily if jumped on, stools, and so on. If you want to make the fight more complex, have the patrons join in as well. They attack the nearest person, including each other, using fists and improvised weapons.

☠ **Knotts:** Master Duelist (page 225).

☠ **Thugs (1 per hero):** See page 246 but armed with cutlasses (Str+d6).

☠ **Patrons (20):** As Sailors (page 241) but armed with light improvised weapons.

Scene 3: The Rescue

Once the fight is over, Virginia beseeches the heroes to help her rescue her father.

“You must help me rescue my father!” she says. “He is a good man, despite what you may believe of... pirates. I don’t have any money to reward you, but if these stories of French payrolls are true, my father will no doubt reward you well. If the stories are false,” she adds, “you will have helped save an innocent man from captivity.”

If the characters discuss the possibility of approaching Governor Lynch, Virginia bluntly refuses.

“I may be a woman,” she says, “but I am not stupid. Pettigrew may be acting on his own out of greed, but I am sure Governor Lynch will act no differently. I know some of you may have doubts about going up against an English aristocrat, but Pettigrew is acting dishonorably. He dare not tell the authorities of the rescue, for fear of being found out.”

Finding Information

Baron Pettigrew, a minor landed noble, owns a manor on the outskirts of town. Any English noble characters automatically know the location and the basic layout. Other heroes can make a Streetwise roll to learn the location. A success gives them the whereabouts. On a raise, they find someone who can draw them a map, though this costs \$50.

If the heroes don’t consider of it, Virginia suggests they have a ship ready to leave as soon as they rescue her father. If a character owns a ship, this is easily done. Otherwise, they will have to hire a ship. This costs \$500 up front (for a sloop) if the character mentions buried treasure and makes a successful Persuasion roll.

THE LADY'S FAVOR

The Manor

The manor is a grand stone building surrounded by cut lawns and ornamental gardens with topiary and classical statues. Pettigrew models himself on the country gentry of England and spares no expense bringing “civilization” to the Caribbean. The nearest jungle is 50 yards from the house.

Jeb Cotton is being held in Room 7 (the Guard's Lounge).

Exactly how the heroes gain entry to the manor is up to them. A fellow noble may try to bluff entrance on the pretense of seeing Pettigrew, for instance, or they may go in guns blazing. The heroes may make a mistake if they are too cocky. Only Pettigrew and his most trusted guards know anything about the prisoner, so a military officer turning up to “inspect the prisoner” will ring instant alarm bells (literally and figuratively).

Whenever and however they gain entrance, there is a carriage parked outside.

Make the inevitable fight as exciting as possible. There are plenty of tapestries to pull over the guards, slippery floors, banisters to slide down, chandeliers to swing from, and so on.

✂ **Baron Pettigrew:** Pettigrew comes across publicly as a foppish dandy with extravagant tastes. In reality, of course, he's a cold, calcu-



Groups containing a noble, merchant, or officer (or just an Englishman with the Rich Edge), allow you to expand the manor scene by having Pettigrew host a masked ball. Naturally, the character is invited and receives his invitation shortly after the tavern scene.

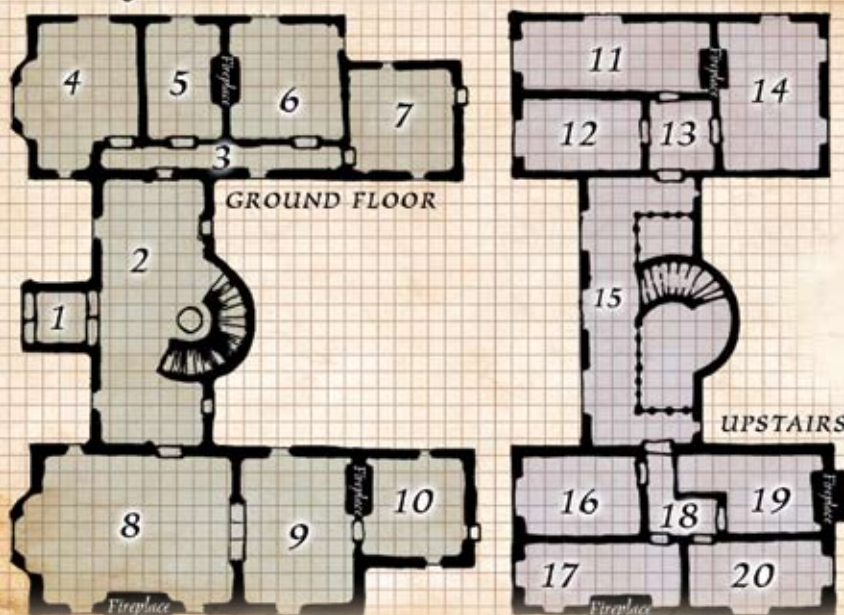
The character would be expected to bring a lady, and can (hopefully) gain entrance for the other characters as visiting friends (who couldn't possibly be turned down) or servants (who get dumped with the other servants, but are otherwise left alone).

Not only does this give you the opportunity to add some in-depth roleplaying as the heroes mix with the gentry, but you can throw in a Social Adventure cameo as well.

lating villain and a master swordsman. Treat him as a Master Duelist (page 225) with the Greedy Hindrance.

If you want Baron Pettigrew to become a recurring villain, you should create him as a villainous NPC with his own strengths and weaknesses.

Pettigrew's Manor House



1. - Entrance Porch
2. - Hall
3. - Corridor
4. - Day Room
5. - Library
6. - Study
7. - Guards' Lounge
8. - Ballroom
9. - Dining Room
10. - Kitchen
11. - Master Bedroom
12. - Bedroom
13. - Corridor
14. - Bedroom
15. - Gallery
16. - Bedroom
17. - Bedroom
18. - Corridor
19. - Bedroom
20. - Storeroom

Scale: 1 square = 2ft

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Either way, Pettigrew should survive the encounter, though he may be badly injured and unconscious. Killing Pettigrew, such as with a Finishing Move, is not a wise idea. Someone witnesses the crime—perhaps as a servant hiding from the battle—and the hero loses 20 Fame and gains the Wanted (Major) Hindrance. Slaughtering the English nobility, even villainous ones, is not the path a hero should walk.

☠ **Guards (2 per hero):** As Soldiers (page 243).

☠ **Virginia Cotton:** See page 211.

☠ **Jebediah Cotton:** As Wild Card Veteran Pirate (page 237). If the heroes are having an easy ride, Cotton is badly beaten and can provide no help. If the heroes are struggling, Cotton is fighting fit.

☠ **Dandy Guests (30):** If you're using the sidebar option, treat the guests as Nobles (page 236). They're little use in combat, save to panic and squeal like young girls.

Treachery

Just in case it happens, handing Virginia over to Pettigrew earns them a \$200 reward each. However, Pettigrew doesn't want any loose ends, and at some point in the near future sends assassins after the heroes.

For the record, Cotton reveals the location of the treasure, which Pettigrew quickly retrieves. Cotton and his daughter are then executed.

Scene 4: The Chase

No sooner has Cotton been rescued, than a small troop of cavalry come into view. These are Pettigrew's men and a guard (or guest) shouts to them to arrest the heroes. Now you know why there was a carriage strategically placed outside the house.

Run the chase as normal (page 137). The chase takes them along the road and into town. Obstacles for the first 5 rounds are fallen trees, potholes, and such like. Later on, when they get into town, there are people, stalls, barrels, other carriages, or stray dogs to avoid. In both areas, obstacles should be Sparse.

Heroes who perform daring tricks, like leaping from the carriage onto a soldier's horse, should be rewarded with a benny.

☠ **Mounted Soldiers (4):** As Soldiers (page 243) with swords and flintlock pistols (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1).

☠ **Virginia Cotton:** See page 211.

☠ **Jebediah Cotton:** As Wild Card Veteran Pirate (page 237). If the heroes are having an easy ride, Cotton is still incapable of helping.

☠ **Horse & Carriage:** See page 57 for the carriage and page 231 for the horses.

Scene 5: The Island

Once the cavalymen are defeated, the heroes can board their ship and set sail. Cotton quickly recovers his health and asks to meet with the heroes in his cabin.

"No words can express my thanks for rescuing me and my daughter," he says. "Three long years I've spent in Pettigrew's clutches, but the thought of my daughter kept me sane and alive." He strokes Virginia's hair.

"Before you ask, yes, the French payroll exists. We were privateers at the time, but I admit we got greedy and had no desire to share the haul, so we buried it. How Pettigrew found out I don't know, but I suspect one

THE LADY'S FAVOR

of my former shipmates betrayed me and made a deal with him. I'm the last survivor, so I guess we'll never know for sure.

"Three years has calmed my lust for wealth, so I'll split the money with you equally. A share for me, a share for Virginia, a share for the crew of this ship, and a share for each of you. What say you?"

The heroes won't get a better offer—at least, not in this adventure.

The journey to the island can be as easy or as dangerous as you want. There's a ship battle later, so don't be in too much of a hurry to get those cannons roaring.

During the journey, allow each hero to make a Notice roll. On a success, they spy a sail on the horizon. The trailing vessel makes no attempt to close the distance, and the captain of the heroes' ship refuses to alter course to investigate. On the morning they arrive, the heroes can see no sign of the sail.

Treasure Island

Three days sailing later, the heroes arrive at a small island swathed in jungle. The captain anchors offshore and orders the longboat lowered. Unless the ship belongs to a hero, the crew stays on board and takes no part in the expedition.

The captain informs the heroes that a storm is brewing and, as the island has no harbor, he is putting to sea to avoid being blown onto the rocks. He assures them he'll return in the morning to collect them. No amount of persuasion, intimidation, or bribery can change his mind.

If a hero owns the ship, one of his NPC officers suggests the ship head to sea. If the hero refuses, the ship survives the storm but suffers one wound from striking submerged rocks.

The jungle is thick, and cutting through it takes several hours. Within the hour, the storm strikes (see page 229), and lasts until the following morning.

By the time the heroes reach the spot where Cotton buried the treasure, it is late afternoon and the characters are soaked to the skin. Sunset is just two hours away.

The spot is marked by an old hut, obviously built by pirates or explorers some time ago as the hut is in a bad state of repair. However, it can be used as shelter and there's enough dry timber inside to light a fire.

The surrounding jungle is light, but encroaches to within 5 yards (10") of the hut.

Buried Treasure

Excavating the site (which is just a few hundred yards from the hut) requires five hours less one hour per success and raise on a Strength roll (minimum of 1 hour). Once the area is cleared the heroes find a chest, then another, and another. There are a total of 3 chests, plus 1 per hero.

The value of each chest is equivalent to \$500 in silver and counts as a hero's share. Since this is a payroll, there are no relics to be found.

Hungry Natives

At some point during the night, when the storm is still raging, a small group of local Carib Indians (they're the hostile ones) arrives. They try to sneak up on the group and capture them (see the Stealth rules on page 20), ready to put them in the pot. That's right, these are cannibals who moved to the island after Cotton came here.

How easy the job is depends on whether or not the heroes have posted a lookout. Make Group Stealth rolls for the natives. The storm gives them a +2 bonus to their Stealth (it's dark, lashing with rain, and the high winds conceal any noise). The sentry gets -1 to his Notice rolls because of the weather.

☠ **Hostile Natives (2 per hero):** As Tribal Warriors (page 246).

☠ **Virginia Cotton:** See page 211.

☠ **Jebediah Cotton:** As Wild Card Veteran Pirate (page 237).

PIRATES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

Scene 6: Naval Battle

The sail the heroes spotted on the trip to the island wasn't a red herring. As the players may suspect, they were followed. Pettigrew (or one of his lackeys if he died during the fight at the manor) ordered a band of pirates in his pay to follow the heroes' ship but only to board it once they had reached the island.

No matter what precautions the heroes take, the pirates catch up with them on the return journey. Begin with Contact (page 131) and run a table-top battle. The pirates want the treasure intact, so they'll try to make a boarding action as soon as possible.

The pirate ship should be identical to the heroes' vessel in the number of cannons, but can be a different type of ship. Roll randomly for one Edge and Hindrance.

Defeating the pirates is worth +2 Fame, as the allied sailors spread word of the heroic action when they reach shore.

☒ **Pirate Captain:** See page 238.

☒ **Pirate Crew (Quantity as per ship):** See page 237. For every 4 Pirates, there is 1 Veteran Pirate.

☒ **Virginia Cotton:** See page 211.

☒ **Jebediah Cotton:** As Wild Card Veteran Pirate (page 237).

☒ **NPC Captain:** If the hero's ship is captained by an NPC, treat him as a Junior Officer (page 235).

☒ **Ship's Crew (Quantity as per ship):** As Sailors (page 241).

Escape

What if the heroes manage to avoid the pirate ship by fleeing the Contact? Simple, as they pull into port, have a pirate ship come out to meet them.

These could be another pirate crew sent by Pettigrew to find the heroes, or just a random bunch of cutthroats. Either way, make sure there's a ship combat.

Alternate Ending

If you don't want Baron Pettigrew to be a recurring villain, and assuming he's alive, this scene gives the heroes chance to finish him off once and for all. Otherwise skip to the What's Next? section below.

Pettigrew and his lackeys are waiting at Port Royal when the heroes arrive. As soon as the heroes leave their ship, Pettigrew and his men move to surround them.

In front of numerous witnesses, some of whom are very influential people, Pettigrew snarls, "*You scum won't stop me from deposing Lynch! I will be governor! Jamaica will be my personal domain!*" He and his men then attack.

Killing Pettigrew now (so long as it isn't by some cowardly means) causes no loss of Fame as the cad has revealed his treachery for all to hear. Indeed, once Governor Lynch learns of Pettigrew's actions, he actually praises the heroes for defeating Pettigrew. They earn +2 Fame, but Lynch (tight sod that he is) doesn't offer any additional reward.

☒ **Baron Pettigrew:** See page 213. The baron has recovered 2 wounds from the previous battle (he has an excellent physician).

☒ **Guards (1 per hero):** Treat as Soldiers (page 243).

☒ **Virginia Cotton:** See page 211.

☒ **Jebediah Cotton:** As Wild Card Veteran Pirate (page 237).

What Next?

Well, that's up to you and the players. They have money, and possibly a former pirate ship at their disposal. The Caribbean is their oyster.

Heroes get 2 Experience Points each. You can award an extra one to anyone who roleplayed well and got into the swashbuckling style.

Cotton quietly retires, but Virginia has acquired a taste for adventure. She could become romantically involved with one of the heroes (the old "hero gets the girl" routine), return as a guest star in future adventures (with a few more combat skills and Edges), or even become a player character if someone wants to take her on.

ENCOUNTERS

We've talked about heroes and their antics. Now it's time to deal with the villains and creatures of the Spanish Main. Also in this chapter are rules for natural hazards such as storms, volcanoes, and earthquakes.

Monstrous Abilities

Below are some abilities available to non-player characters. NPCs and creatures can also have any regular Edges or Hindrances you feel are appropriate.

One major word of warning before you go any further. Don't create NPCs and creatures like player characters. Just give them the abilities you want them to have and spend your time and mental energy on better things, like the plot of the game or how best to entertain your group.

Aquatic

The creature is native to the water. It is a natural swimmer and cannot drown. Just as land animals don't need a skill to move around on land, Aquatic animals don't need a Swimming skill. Their Pace in water is listed after the Aquatic ability.

Armor

A creature's Armor adds to its Toughness (already added in to its statistics), usually in all locations. Thick, leathery hide generally offers 2 points of Armor. "Armored" creatures like a giant crab may have 3 or more points of protection.

Burrowing

Some creatures are able to burrow beneath the earth, tunneling underground so they can reappear elsewhere for surprise attacks against their foes. The distance a creature can burrow in a turn is written immediately after its Burrowing ability. A burrowing creature may tunnel on its action, and may erupt from the ground at any point within its burrowing Pace the same round, if desired. It cannot be attacked while beneath the earth unless the attacker has some special means of detecting it and penetrating the intervening dirt.

Burrowing creatures strike by erupting from beneath their opponents and taking them by surprise. To do this, the creature makes an opposed Stealth roll versus the target's Notice. If the creature wins, it gains +2 to attack and damage that round, or +4 if it gets a raise. If the victim wins and was on Hold at the time, he may try to interrupt the burrower's attack as usual.

Ethereal

Ghosts and other intangible creatures have no form in the physical world (or can turn it on and off at will). They cannot be harmed by physical attacks, and cannot even be seen unless they desire to be. Ethereal creatures can sometimes still be affected by special means, such as holy items, or supernatural powers.

Most ethereal creatures can still affect things in the physical world—throwing objects, wielding ghostly swords, or even pushing heroes overboard.

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Fear

Frightening events force a Guts check from all who see them. Some truly terrifying things may inflict penalties on Guts checks as well. A creature with Fear -2, for instance, causes those who see it to make their Guts checks at -2. See page 100 for Fear effects.

Fearless

Mindless creatures don't suffer from the weaknesses of the mortal mind. Fearless creatures never suffer from Fear and cannot be Intimidated (though Taunts still work).

Gargantuan

Gargantuan creatures are those that are at least size 9 or better relative to their normal environments. These immense beasts have Heavy Armor, meaning they can only suffer damage from Heavy Weapons, and their attacks count as Heavy Weapons as well.

Gargantuan creatures suffer the penalty for being Huge—+4 to ranged attack rolls from man-sized creatures.

These creatures can also bring their immense weight to bear against creatures or obstacles. Add their Size to their Strength roll when doing so, but subtract the Size of their foe as well. Don't add the "size" of vehicles, buildings, or ships—that's already figured into their Toughness.

Example: A sea serpent (Size 12) is crushing a whale (Size 6). The serpent's Strength is $d12+8$, and his Size is 12, so its base damage when crushing the whale is $d12+20$ damage. Subtracting the whale's Size of 6 gives it $d12+14$ damage.

Hardy

Tough and resilient creatures do not fall from lesser wounds.

If the beast is Shaken, a second Shaken result has no effect—so doesn't cause a wound.

Infection

A horrid creature that injects eggs into its victim's wounds, or even the disease-bearing scratches of a swarm of rats are all examples of the Infection ability.

When a victim is Shaken or wounded by this creature, the victim must make a Vigor roll. Modifiers to the roll are listed in the beast's description, with the effects of failure.

Low Light Vision

Many creatures are able to see in the dark. Low light vision ignores penalties for Dim and Dark lighting, allowing the creature to see in all but pitch black conditions.

Paralysis

Some creatures and poisons can instantly paralyze a foe, rendering the victim easy prey for the thing's ravenous appetite.

A target who is Shaken or wounded by such a creature must make a Vigor roll or be paralyzed and incapable of any action—even speech—for 2d6 rounds.

Size

A creature's size has a lot to do with how much damage it can withstand, so we add a modifier to its Toughness to reflect its mass. Note that a beast's size has nothing to do with Vigor—even a mighty kraken can feel the cold or become exhausted!

Toughness modifiers on the table below represent an average individual from each species for comparison, but there are always exceptions, of course. Not every Great White has a +4 Toughness bonus. A young one might have a +3, while a larger fish might be +5 or more.

The same is true for humans. Small humans suffer a -1 penalty, while those with the Brawny Edge gain a +1 bonus. Use the table as a baseline when creating your own creatures and adjust for particularly large or small specimens.

Toughness Modifiers

Mod	Size of a...
-2	Large crab, large rat, hawk
-1	Guard dog, bobcat, small human
0	Human
+1	Giant crab, mule
+2	Bull, horse
+3	Kodiak
+4	Great white
+5	Giant octopus
+6	Small whale
+7	Orca
+8	Large whale
+9	Blue whale
+10	Kraken

Minimum Toughness: Normal creatures have a minimum Toughness of 2 regardless of modifiers. Only insects and the like have Toughness scores of 1.

Small/Large/Huge

Creatures the size of rats are difficult to hit, especially when they're moving. As long as such a creature is active, attackers must subtract 2 from attack rolls directed at it.

Larger creatures are somewhat easier to hit. Attackers may add +2 to any attack rolls directed at Large targets.

Truly huge creatures, at least as big as a whale, are +4 to be hit.

This ability is relative. Two giant octopi don't get the bonus when fighting each other, but a crab who joins the fight adds +2 to its roll. If the giant octopus strikes back, its attack is at -2.

Strength

Strength is a Trait, not a special ability, but this reflects very large creatures that exceed the normal human range of d4 to d12.

Creatures of human or lesser Strength should be expressed as a d4 through a d12, as you think appropriate. Stronger creatures, such as gorillas, ogres, and so on, have a d12 plus a bonus. The bonus depends on just how strong the creature is and how well it can use that strength in combat. As with humans, there is variation within each species, however. A mother gorilla may have a Strength of d12+1, while its much larger mate has a Strength of d12+3.

Here's a quick comparison to help you figure out what strength creatures of your own creation should have.

Creature Strength

Creature	Strength
Warhorse	d12+1 to +2
Great White, giant octopus	d12+3 to +5
Sea serpent, large whale	d12+6 to +8
Kraken	d12+9 to +12

Stun

A creature with this ability often has an electrical attack, mild toxin, or similar ability. When it successfully hits a character (even if it causes no damage), the victim must make a Vigor roll minus any listed penalties or be Shaken. He cannot attempt to recover from being Shaken for 1d6 rounds.

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Undead

Though few believe they exist, rumors abound of undead horrors at large on the Spanish Main. The legends say these foul creatures are particularly difficult to destroy. Below are the benefits of being an unliving abomination.

- Undead add +2 to their Toughness.
- Undead add +2 to their rolls when they attempt to recover from being Shaken.
- Undead don't suffer additional damage from called shots.
- Arrows, musket balls, and other piercing attacks do half damage.
- Undead Wild Cards never suffer from Wound Modifiers.
- Undead don't suffer from the effects of disease or poison.

Wall Walker

Some creatures have the innate ability to walk on walls, ceilings, or other steeply inclined surfaces. These creatures only have to make Climbing rolls in the most adverse or stressful situations—otherwise they can automatically walk on vertical or inverted surfaces just as a human doesn't need to make a roll to walk upright on the earth.

A Wall Walker's Pace when walking on walls is its standard movement rate. It may still run as usual when walking on walls unless the specific creature's text says otherwise.

Weakness

Some creatures are more susceptible to damage from certain sources or substances. Such animals suffer additional damage or other effects when exposed to their specific Weakness.

See the individual creature's description for the effects of its Weakness.

Some creatures can only be killed by their Weakness. They may feel pain or even become Shaken from other attack types, but only suffer wounds when struck by their Weakness.

Bestiary

Below are a sampling of some people and creatures common to the Spanish Main and a few rarities and rumors. If you want to use stronger or weaker archetypes or animals, feel free to lower the attributes or skills, and add or remove Edges.

Note that for some creatures, Smarts is listed relative to the animal world, and is thus followed by an (A) to remind you that this is animal Smarts, not human intelligence, so don't expect a parrot to sail off in your ship just because it's a *relatively* smart animal.

Where a weapon lists a bonus to Parry, this has already been included in the stat block. Should the character lose his weapon, he loses the Parry bonus as well. Armor is likewise figured into Toughness already.

Fame

People have a Fame rating just above their Hindrances. This refers to how famous or infamous they are, depending on whether the rating is positive or negative. See page 91 for details on Fame and the benefits it provides.

Booty

The NPCs and creatures in this book have an entry just above their Special Abilities called Booty. The Booty Table on page 205 tells you what to roll when the group gets a chance to take the treasure.

Intelligent creatures use any special Booty they have if possible, or may have it stored in their hideout somewhere if it's not immediately useful to them (a good reason for heroes to take prisoners).

Creatures of animal intelligence don't tend to hoard treasure, but may have dragged former victims to their lair. Their possessions remain there, so a Tracking roll might lead the party to the thing's lair—and long-lost treasures.

Alligator

Alligators are common in the swamps of Florida and on some islands. The statistics here represent an average specimen. Much larger versions are found in remote areas.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 3; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Booty: None

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Alligators have thick skins.
- **Aquatic:** Pace 6.
- **Bite:** d10+d6.
- **Rollover:** Alligators are known for grasping their prey in their vice-like jaws and rolling over and over with their flailing victims in their mouth. If an alligator hits with a raise, it causes an extra 2d4 damage to its prey in addition to its regular Strength damage.

Assassin

Assassins are hired killers, willing to take on any job, so long as the reward is right. They are rarely short of work.

Typical Assassin

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Riding d6, Stealth d8, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: -5

Hindrances: Various

Edges: Alertness, Dodge, First Strike, Steady Hands, Thief

Booty: Loot per 3 assassins

Gear: Dagger (d6+d4), musket (Range: 10/20/40; Damage: 2d8), shot and powder (10).



Most of the creatures in this section can be eaten by desperate and starving heroes.

Looking for food isn't going to happen in every Pirates adventure, but shipwrecked crews or hardy explorers lost in the jungle need to eat something, and a successful hunting expedition can often net several large beasts.

Usually, an experienced hunter (who makes a Survival roll) can gain 1d6 man days of food for an average-sized creature (no Size bonus). Every point of Size creates an additional 1d6 provisions. A giant crab (Size +1), for example, provides 2d6 man days of food. The GM should adjust this based on the creature. Some things, like sentient or poisonous creatures shouldn't be eaten.



Special Abilities:

- **Poison:** The quickest way to kill someone is with poison. A typical poison requires the victim to make a Vigor roll at -2 or take an automatic wound.

Master Assassin

The master assassin is a veteran who has risen to notoriety in his profession. He likely very capable and very expensive.

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d12, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d10, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d12, Streetwise d8, Throwing d10

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 10; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: -25

Hindrances: Various

Edges: Acrobat, Alertness, Block, Dodge, First Strike, Marksman, Level Headed, Quick Draw, Steady Hands, Thief

Booty: Pillage

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Gear: Dagger (d6+d4), musket (Range: 10/20/40; Damage: 2d8), shot and powder (10).

Special Abilities:

- **Poison:** Master assassins use far more deadly venoms in their trade. Victims must make a Vigor roll at -2 or die in 2d6 rounds.

Big Cat

Jaguars and pumas (also known as cougars or mountain lions) are indigenous to Central and South America, as well as parts of Florida. All are fierce and stealthy predators.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Tracking d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Booty: Loot, in lair

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** d8+1d8.
- **Fleet Footed:** These fast cats roll a d10 running die instead of d6.
- **Frenzy:** Big cats may make two attacks each round with no penalty.
- **Low Light Vision:** Big cats ignore Dim and Dark vision penalties.
- **Pounce:** A big cat can leap 1d6" to gain +4 to its attack and damage. It's Parry is reduced by -2 until its next action when performing the maneuver however.

Boar, Wild

Wild boars are hunted for their rich meat. They are fierce fighters, especially if injured.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Booty: None

Special Abilities:

- **Berserk:** When a boar is Shaken, it goes berserk. It gains +2 to all Fighting and Strength rolls and to its Toughness, but its Parry is reduced by 2. It also ignores wound penalties.
- **Gore:** If a boar charges at least 6" before attacking, it adds +4 to damage.
- **Tusks:** d8+d4.

Citizen

Most of civilian population of the Spanish Main lead unglamorous lives as crafters, shop owners, laborers, or farmers. Most are fairly poor, and have little skill outside their trade and no interest whatsoever in risking their necks on quests to retrieve buried treasure.

They know their place in life and just try to get on as best they can. Naturally, they don't make the best heroes, but sometimes, one citizen can do something extraordinary. That is the stuff of legends!

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d4, Knowledge (one trade) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d4

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: +0

Hindrances: —

Edges: —

Booty: Loot for every 5 commoners; Loot for individual shopkeepers and the like

Gear: Knife (d4+d6), tools of the trade.

City Watch

There are countless towns throughout the Caribbean and not all have the protection of professional soldiers. For the most part, the watch protects the town and is tasked with keeping law and order.

Typical City Watch

These are average town guardsmen. They are competent and brave, but not suicidal.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d4, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: +0

Hindrances: —

Edges: —

Booty: Loot for every 5 watchmen

Gear: Saber (2d6), dagger (d6+d4), flintlock pistol (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6+1), shot and powder (10).

Veteran City Watch

These competent fellows are well-trained, well-equipped, and well-led. They are tough veterans of many scrapes and know how to handle themselves.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d4, Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Fame: +5

Hindrances: —

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Musketeer

Booty: Loot for every 3 watchmen

Gear: Scimitar (2d8), dagger (d8+d4), flintlock pistol (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6+1). Some have muskets as well (Range: 10/20/40; Damage: 2d8), shot and powder (10).

Town Militia

The town militia are just one step up from regular citizens. Though they have received rudimentary military training and are able to handle firearms, they are otherwise very raw troops and are no match for marauding pirates.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d4, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d4, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: +0

Hindrances: —

Edges: —

Booty: Loot for every 8 militia

Gear: Saber (2d6), militia are usually given muskets just before a battle (Range: 10/20/40; Damage: 2d8), shot and powder (5).

Crab, Giant

Considered by many to be a myth told by drunken sailors, giant crabs do actually exist. They are usually found on sandy beaches, where they lurk beneath the sand, waiting to ambush unsuspecting prey.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d8, Stealth d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (3)

Edges: Improved Frenzy.

Booty: Loot, in lair

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +3:** Giant crabs have thick shells.
- **Claws:** d10+d6.
- **Size +1:** These creatures weigh over 400 pounds.

Diplomat

After centuries of warfare, the European powers have a temporary and uneasy truce. Diplomats are still needed, of course.

Some work tirelessly trying to heal the rift between the enemies, seeking a permanent peaceful solution to how to divide the

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Spanish Main. Others are more selfish and scheming, working only to further their own careers.

Diplomat

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d4, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Investigation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Shooting d6, Streetwise d10, Taunt d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: +20

Hindrances: Pacifist (Minor)

Edges: Charismatic, Connections, Strong Willed

Booty: Plunder

Gear: Rapier (d6+d4, +1 Parry), fine clothes.

Hunting Dog

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Notice d10, Stealth d4

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4

Booty: None

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** d6+d4.
- **Fleet Footed:** Dogs roll a d10 running die instead of a d6.
- **Go for the Throat:** Dogs instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly-armored location.
- **Size -1:** Hunting dogs are relatively small creatures.

Dog

Dogs come in two varieties—guard and hunting. Pet dogs are treated as guard dogs, but have no Fighting and Parry of 2.

Guard Dog

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Booty: None

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** d8+d4.
- **Fleet Footed:** Dogs roll a d10 running die instead of a d6.
- **Go for the Throat:** Dogs instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly-armored location.
- **Size -1:** Guard dogs are relatively small creatures.

Duelist

Duelists may be hired swords, who fight duels on behalf of nobles, or fencing masters willing to teach their skills.

Skilled Duelist

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Taunt d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7 (may be modified by Edges); **Toughness:** 5

Fame: +5

Hindrances: Arrogant or Code of Honor

Edges: Fencing Academy (of your choice), Quick

Pick four Edges from Block, Dirty Fighter, Florentine, Frenzy, Lunge, Riposte, Sweep, Two Fisted

Booty: Loot

Gear: Rapier (d8+d4; +1 Parry), dagger (d8+d4).

 *Master Duelist*

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d12, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Taunt d10

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 10 (may be modified by Edges); **Toughness:** 6

Fame: +25

Hindrances: Arrogant or Code of Honor

Edges: Acrobat, Combat Reflexes, Fencing Academy (of your choice, with the Secret ability), Quick, Quick Draw

Pick seven Edges from Fleche, Florentine, Improved Block, Improved Frenzy, Improved Riposte, Improved Sweep, Lunge, Really Dirty Fighter, Two Fisted, Wall of Steel

Booty: Plunder

Gear: Rapier (d8+d4; +1 Parry), dagger (d8+d4).

Electric Eel, Giant

Electric eels live near reefs or wrecks.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Booty: Loot in lair

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 6.
- **Bite:** d8+d6.
- **Electric Shock:** Anyone touching an eel with a metal weapon receives a shock and must make a successful Vigor roll or be Shaken. Rather than bite, the eel can generate a powerful electrical charge. Place two Medium Burst Templates next to each other—everything under the templates must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken.
- **Size +3:** Electric eels are 12' long.

Explorer

Explorers are the intrepid souls who set sail for unknown realms, search forgotten corners of the world, and search for new sources of wealth. Driven by lust for treasure or a sense of destiny, their names live on long after they sail on their last voyage into the unchartable beyond.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (Geography) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Survival d8, Tracking d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Fame: +5

Hindrances: Curious

Edges: Explorer, Woodsman

Booty: Pillage, Plunder in home

Gear: Cutlass (2d6), dagger (d6+d4), flintlock pistol (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6+1), shot and powder (20).



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Game

Characters spending at least four hours hunting game may make a Survival roll to catch 1d6 Provisions per success and raise. Make a group roll for extras in the hunting party and multiply the result by the number of extras. A party of 18 foragers, for example, with a single success, rolls 1d6 x 18.

Ghost

It is widely believed that spectres, shades, or phantoms sometimes return from death to haunt the living or fulfill some lost goal.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidate d12+2, Notice d12, Taunt d10, Stealth d12+4, Throwing d12

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Thrown objects (d6+d4)

Booty: None

Special Abilities:

- **Ethereal:** Ghosts are immaterial and can only be harmed by supernatural attacks.
- **Fear -2:** Ghosts cause Guts checks at -2 when they let themselves be seen.

Ghost Ship, Physical

Unlike spectral ghost ships, physical ones have both a material and ethereal form. Any ship type can become a ghost ship. To make one, just add the following Notes to the vessel.

- **Eternal Crew:** No matter how many crew a ghost ship loses, there are always more damned souls ready to replace them. At midnight, the crew complement returns to full strength.
- **Ethereal:** The captain can turn the ship Ethereal with a successful Spirit roll. This counts as an action. Ethereal ships cannot harm or be harmed by the physical world. Thus, they are immune to cannon fire and

can sail through ships, reefs, and sandbars without harm. However, their cannons do no damage to material objects. Ethereal ships can harm each other, though, so two ghostly pirates could play out a battle.

- **Unsinkable:** Even when material, ghost ships cannot be truly sunk. When they sink, they fade from the material world and enter limbo. A ghost ship reforms at midnight the following night completely repaired.



Ghost Ship Captain

Not all ghost ships are mere phantoms. A few like the *Revenant* and *Deliverance* are physical vessels, crewed by undead pirates. Heading these damned souls is a ghostly captain, of which *El Fantasma* is the most infamous.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d12, Strength d10, Vigor d12

Skills: Boating d12, Climbing d6, Fighting d12, Guts d12, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Taunt d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 10; **Toughness:** 12

Hindrances: Arrogant, Death Wish, Greedy (Major), Mean, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Command, Fervor, Hold the Line!, Improved Arcane Resistance, Improved Block, Improved Frenzy, Improved Level Headed, Improved Tough as Nails, Master and Commander, Mighty Blow, Natural Leader, Strong Willed

Booty: King's Ransom

Gear: Cutlass (d10+d6), pair of flintlock pistols (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1), these pistols automatically reload after every shot and can be fired once per round.

Special Abilities:

- **Ethereal:** Ghost captains are Ethereal when their ship is Ethereal.
- **Fear (-2):** The ghostly captain's fierce appearance forces foes to make a Guts check at -2.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness. Called shots do no extra damage to such creatures. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Arrows and other piercing weapons do half damage.

- **Unkillable:** Ghostly captains cannot truly be slain by weapons. If Incapacitated, they immediately become Ethereal, only to reform 24 hours later aboard their ship. Ghostly captains can only be laid to rest as a result of someone lifting their curse. The GM determines how this can be done.

Ghost Ship Crew

These damned souls committed deeds so terrible in life, that they serve for eternity aboard the phantom ships roaming the Caribbean.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Gear: Cutlass (2d6), flintlock pistols (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1), shot and powder (20).

Booty: Loot for every 5 ghosts

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** d6.
- **Ethereal:** Ghost sailors are Ethereal when their ship is Ethereal.
- **Fear:** Ghostly sailors are terrifying sights. Anyone who sees them must make a Guts check.
- **Fearless:** Ghostly sailors are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Killable:** Non-Ethereal ghostly pirates can be slain, at which time their soul goes to Hell.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage. Arrows, bullets, and other piercing attacks do half-damage.

Ghost Ship, Spectral

Some ghost ships are physical vessels, crewed by the damned. This ship, on the other hand, is an intangible phantom that drifts across the water regardless of obstacles or weather conditions.

The vessel only appears at night, in fog, or during a storm, when its glowing form is clearly visible for many leagues. The ghostly vessel cannot be harmed by any means.

The ship is said to bring bad luck, and in some cases death, to all who see her. Any Wild Card who sees the ghost ship must make a Spirit roll or lose a benny. If they have no bennies they suffer a wound within the next 24 hours from some tragic event of the GM's devising.

Make a group roll for the ship's crew. On a failure 10% of them suffer fatal accidents within the next 24 hours (falling from the crow's nest, being hit by block or tackle, swept overboard, and so on).

Hazards

Remember those hazards we mentioned earlier? Well, here are the game mechanics we promised you.

Hazards can be introduced to the game as a random encounter to add a little extra spice to an adventure, or designed into the adventure from the start. They also make great cliffhangers.

Bad Water

Finding drinking water is a requirement for expeditions as well as pirates needing to replenish supplies. The characters find a river or pool, but the water is polluted. Unless precautionary measures are taken, such as boiling it, any character drinking the water must make a Vigor roll at -2 or be Fatigued for 24 hours.

Cave-In

The ceiling of the tunnel or cavern the characters are exploring collapses. Every hero in the area must make an Agility roll at -2. Success indicates the character managed to leap out the way and has avoided taking damage. A failure means he is struck by falling

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rocks for 2d10 damage. A roll of 1 (regardless of the Wild Die) means the hero suffers 3d10 damage and is buried alive.

Buried heroes cannot extricate themselves and must be dug out. This requires a Strength roll at -4 . Depending on the width of the tunnel, this may be a cooperative roll or a lone endeavor. Each roll requires an hour of hard work. Diggers with mining tools add $+2$ to their roll.

The Game Master may decide that the cave-in has separated the characters. Roll $1d6+3$ to determine how much of the area is impassable (in yards). Each success and raise on a Strength roll at -6 excavates 1 yard. Any diggers with mining tools get a $+4$ bonus to this roll. Every roll represents an hour.

Crevasse

Crevasse exist in rocky terrain. This result means such a formation lies in the party's path. Allow the lead character a Notice roll at -2 to detect the hidden crack. Failure means a tragic fall. The depth of the crack is $1d10 \times 10''$. He can climb back out $10''$ with each successful Climbing roll.

Earthquake

A powerful earth tremor causes the ground to buckle and crack. The heroes must make an Agility roll or be thrown to the ground and Shaken. A roll of 1 (regardless of the Wild Die) means the character has fallen down a fissure and suffers 2d6 damage.

Characters underground or in a building when an earthquake strikes suffer the effects of a Cave In instead.

Forest Fire

Forest fires usually occur where ground vegetation is very dry, and so are quite rare in the Caribbean. Still there's no reason why a villain can't start one deliberately.

To escape the fire, the heroes must make a Survival roll at -2 . Failure means the heroes suffer 2d10 damage from the combined effects of fire, heat, and smoke. On a critical failure, the characters suffer 3d10 damage.

If you are planning on using a forest fire in your adventure, you can make it even more dramatic by using the chase rules on page 137 to represent the flight from the fire.

Heatwave

The temperature soars to over $90+1d20$ degrees Fahrenheit and stays that way for $1d4+1$ two-hour increments. Heroes able to drink 2 quarts of water per four-hour period are sunburned, but suffer no other effects.

If that amount of water isn't available, the character must make a Vigor roll for each four hour period, as per the rules for Heat (see page 97).

Poisonous Fumes

Sulfurous gases from volcanoes and swamp gas present hazards to heroes. A volcanic vent or gas bubble belches a large cloud of noxious gas over the party. Characters must make three Vigor rolls. Each failure causes a level of Fatigue. Incapacitated characters left in the area must make a Vigor roll every hour or die of asphyxiation.

Quicksand

Quicksand comes in two forms, wet (swamp) and dry (desert). The game mechanics are identical.

Allow the lead character a Notice roll at -2 to detect the hidden hazard. Failure means he plunges in to his waist (neck for Small characters) and begins sinking.

Those stuck in the hazard sink completely in three rounds (one round for Small heroes) unless extracted. They can make a Strength roll (-4) to pull themselves out. A success stops them sinking any further, and a raise pulls them. On a critical failure the hero is sucked under and begins drowning.

Heroes aiding a sinking comrade need to make a Strength roll to drag the unfortunate being from the quicksand. On a critical failure they are pulled in and begin sinking as well.

Once a character is under the surface he cannot extricate himself and must be dragged out by allies on the surface. In order to find the character, those searching for him must first make a Notice (-2) roll. Extricating a submerged character requires a Strength (-2) roll.

Rockfall

An avalanche of rocks threatens to bury the characters alive. All characters in the party should make an Agility roll at -2. On a success, the character has managed to leap clear or find a nook in which to hide.

On a failure, the character is swept along with the avalanche for 10+2d10", suffering 2d6 damage per 5" or part thereof. A roll of 1 (regardless of the Wild Die) means the characters is swept 20+2d10".

Storm, Land

Storms are typified by dark skies and lashing rain. The downpour reduces visibility (treat as Dark for lighting penalties), extinguishes most normal fires within 1d10 rounds, and only the most volatile materials have a chance of igniting from fire-based attacks.

Storm conditions inflict an additional -1 penalty to most actions due to slipping, difficulty hearing, strong winds, and so on. The Game Master must decide if other actions are affected.

Storm, Sea

The storms of the Spanish Main are legendary. Riding them out is a true test of mettle for a captain and his crew.

First roll 1d6+3. This determines how long the ship is under serious distress from the storm, in 30 minute increments.

The Game Master then draws a card for each 30 minute increment to determine how rough the storm is that particular half-hour.

The captain makes a Boating roll for each card drawn as well, and subtracts the penalty shown on the table below from his total. The



crew also makes a Boating roll, adding +1 to the captain's total for each success and raise. Handling modifiers apply to both totals.

The penalty to the roll, and the damage inflicted if the roll is missed, depends on the storm's intensity that round. Storm damage is applied against the ship's base Toughness, ignoring all armor.

For every roll that is failed, each character must make an Agility roll (at +2 if tethered). The GM can roll for crewmen as well (use groups of 10 for large ships). Any who fail are washed overboard and must make Swimming rolls every other round to avoid drowning. A critical failure indicates the hero has been hit by driftwood, causing 2d6 damage.

Storm Severity

Card Draw	Penalty	Damage
2	-4	5d6
3-10	-2	4d6
Jack-Ace	0	3d6
Joker	+2	3d6

Trap

Traps are common hazards in ancient ruins bursting with treasure. The system presented here is a quick way of making traps. When you need a trap, draw a single card from the Action Deck—this tells you everything you need to know about its type and lethality.

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Detecting: Detecting a trap requires a Notice roll. Unless a hero has Danger Sense, searching for traps requires an action.

Disarming: Disarming a trap requires a Lockpicking roll. On a roll of 1 (regardless of the Wild Die), the trap activates.

Initiative: Most traps activate with little warning to the victim. Use the Surprise rules. A trap catching a character by Surprise also has the Drop (where applicable).

Area: Static traps, such as pits and blades, affect a 1" square on the map. Projectile traps, such as arrow traps, have a fixed range of 4". Gas traps cover a Medium Burst Template.

Duration: Traps are one-shot devices. Once activated, they must be reset in order to work again. The effects of gas traps last for d4 rounds before the gas disperses.

Effects: Check the card against the Trap Table (see below).

Notes: The following short codes are used on the table. Sh: Shooting skill. Xdx: number and type of dice damage. ROF: the number of attacks a projectile trap makes against all targets in range, unless otherwise stated.

Traps that use Shooting do not suffer multi-action penalties for a ROF of more than 1.

Tropical Storm, Land

Tropical storms are sudden and violent on the islands in the Caribbean. Visibility is reduced to just 12" (and is treated as Dark for lighting penalties) and the ground turns into a quagmire. Any character trying to run must

make an Agility roll or fall prone and become Shaken. Most actions suffer a -2 penalty due to lashing rain and strong winds.

Non-game effects include flash floods and lightning strikes, possibly damaging nearby buildings, drowning creatures, and preventing ships leaving or docking at port.

Whirlpools

Whirlpools are divided into three areas—the outer edge, the turbulent waters, and the maelstrom.

Have the lookout make a Notice roll. On a failure, the ship enters the outer edge of the whirlpool. The captain must make a Boating roll at -2. On a success, he steers the ship clear.

With a failure, the ship is pulled into the turbulent waters and takes 4d6 damage. The captain must make a second Boating roll, this time at -4. On a success, the ship is back in the outer edge (use the mechanics above).

With a failure, the ship is sucked into the maelstrom at the center and takes 6d6 damage. The captain has one last chance to save his ship. He must make a Boating roll at -6. With success, the ship is back in the turbulent waters. On a failure, the ship is sucked under and torn apart. The crew take 4d6 damage and must make Swimming rolls at -6 or begin drowning.

Swimming to the turbulent water requires 4 successful Swimming rolls at -6. Escaping to the outer edge requires another 4 rolls, this time at -4. Reaching still water means yet another 4 rolls, but only at -2.

Trap Table

Value	Trap	Clubs	Diamonds	Hearts	Spades
2-5	Pit Trap	3 yards, 2d6	5 yards, 2d6	10 yards, 2d6+5	20 yards, 2d6+10
6	Spiked Pit	3 yards, 2d6+2	5 yards, 2d6+5	10 yards, 2d6+10	20 yards, 2d6+15
7-8	Projectile	Sh d6, 2d6, ROF 2	Sh d8, 2d6, ROF 3	Sh d10, 3d6, ROF 2	Sh d12, 3d6, ROF 3
9-10	Blade	Fighting d6, 1d6	Fighting d8, 2d6	Fighting d10, 3d6	Fighting d12, 4d6
Jack	Poisoned	<i>Treat as Projectile, but victims must make a Vigor roll per bit or suffer an automatic wound.</i>			
Queen	Poisoned	<i>Treat as Blade, but victims must make a Vigor roll at -2 or suffer an automatic wound.</i>			
King	Boulder	<i>"Runs" in a straight line at Pace 8 (+1d6 running die). Anyone crushed takes 4d10 damage.</i>			
Ace	Gas*	+0, KO 2d6 mins	-2, KO, 2d6 hours	+0, automatic wound	-2, automatic wound
Joker	—	<i>The trap is faulty and does not function.</i>			

Horse, Riding

Riding horses manage a good compromise between speed and carrying capacity.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Notice d6

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 8

Booty: None

Special Abilities:

- **Fleet Footed:** Riding horses roll a d8 when running instead of a d6.
- **Kick:** d12.
- **Size +2:** Horses weigh up to 1000 pounds.

Horse, War

These large beasts are trained for combat. In combat, the animal attacks any round its rider doesn't make a trick maneuver.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Notice d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10

Booty: None

Special Abilities:

- **Fleet Footed:** War horses roll a d8 when running instead of a d6.
- **Kick:** d12+d4+2.
- **Size +3:** War horses are large creatures.

Inquisitor

The Inquisition sees the Caribbean as a den of pagan Indians and heretic Protestants. As a result, it has adopted a more militaristic approach to protecting the Catholic Church.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d4, Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Guts d12, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Swimming d8

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Delusional (heretics are everywhere), Mean

Edges: Berserk, Combat Reflexes

Booty: Loot

Gear: Cutlass (d8+d6), flintlock pistol (Range: 5/10/20; Damage: 2d6+1), shot and powder (10).

Kraken

No creature strikes such fear into sailors as a kraken. While a giant octopus can damage a ship, kraken can grapple a man-o'-war and drag it down to Davy Jones' Locker!

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d12, Strength d12+10, Vigor d12+4

Skills: Fighting d12, Guts d12, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: —; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 24 (4)

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 12
- **Armor +4:** Kraken have rocky hides and have been mistaken for small islands while basking in the sun.
- **Gargantuan:** Heavy Armor. Ranged attacks are made at +4 against a Kraken. The beast cannot bring it's full weight to bear when using a tentacle to slam, and so does d12+15 damage. This is a Heavy Weapon.
- **Size +10:** These gigantic beasts average 60' across with tentacles over 20' long.
- **Tentacle:** d12+d6+10, Reach 10".
- **Whirlpool:** Kraken are so large they create whirlpools when they head for the depths (see page 230). Ships have been dragged below when a kraken dives.

Leech, Giant

Giant leeches are native to the rivers and swamps of the Main.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

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Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: —; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Booty: None

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 6.
- **Bite:** d10+d4.
- **Blood Drain:** A giant leech succeeding in a Fighting roll attaches itself to its prey and begins to drink blood. Each round the leech is attached the victim suffers 1d6 damage, ignoring all armor. Removing a leech requires an opposed Strength roll. Alternatively, the leech can be killed with weapons—a giant leech attached to its victim has a Parry of 2. Unfortunately, any failed attack roll strikes the victim.
- **Size -1:** Giant leeches measure only half a yard in length.
- **Weakness (Salt):** A pound of salt causes 2d6 damage to a giant leech.

Marine

Marines are soldiers trained to fight at sea with a sword, musket, or pistol. Most belong to one of the European nations, but tough mercenaries can be found for hire in the large ports. Few of this sort will fight to the death, though, and they may even switch sides—for the right price.

Typical Marine

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: +0

Edges and Hindrances: –

Booty: Loot for every 5 marines

Gear: Cutlass (2d6), knife (d6+d4), flintlock pistol (Range 5/10/20; Damage 2d6+1) or musketoon (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d8), shot and powder (10).

Veteran Marine

These seasoned veterans have seen many battles with foreign powers and pirates alike. As a result they are tough fighters who often lead squads of less experienced marines or form platoons of elite guards for flagships or other important vessels.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Fame: +0

Hindrances: –

Edges: Boarder, Combat Reflexes, Musketeer

Booty: Loot for every 5 marines

Gear: Cutlass (d8+d6), flintlock pistol (Range 5/10/20; Damage 2d6+1) or musketoon (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d8), shot and powder (20).



Merchants

Many types of ship sail the Caribbean. Use the chart below to determine the type and contents of a vessel encountered via the Adventure Generator.

Ship Table

Roll on the table below to determine the type of ship encountered.

d20	Result
1-4	.....Hoy with a half-full hold
5-6	.....Hoy with a full hold
7-8	.....Hoy with a full hold and escort; roll on Escort Table
9-12	.....Frigate with a half-full hold
13-15	.....Frigate with a full hold
16-18	.....Frigate with a full hold and escort; roll on Escort Table
19-20	.....Convoy (of 1+1d6 Frigates with 1+1d4 escorts); Roll on Escort Table for each.

Escort Table

d20	Result
1-4	.....Brigantine
5-9	.....Crumster
10-14	.....Galleon
15-19	.....Sloop
20	.....Man-o'-War

Most merchants attempt to run when they encounter another ship, regardless of its colors. Once in Short Range, the merchants make a group Spirit roll. Success means they fight if able. Failure means they surrender. Subtract 2 from the merchants' roll if the pursuer shows a pirate flag.

Typical Merchant

From small-time traders owning a store to employees of the great trading companies, merchants can be found in almost every settlement. Few are experienced sailors or soldiers, however, and hire sailors or guards as needed. (See Naval Officers on page 235 for captains of merchant vessels.)



Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Gambling d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6, Streetwise d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: +0

Hindrances: Greedy (minor)

Edges: Merchant, Rich

Booty: Pillage on person, Plunder at home

Gear: Expensive clothes, rapier (d6+d4, +1 Parry), flintlock pistol (Range: 5/10/20, damage 2d6+1), shot and powder (10), 1d4 guards (as Town Watch).

Mermaids

Sailors often whisper tall tales of singing mermaids, who appear to be beautiful, naked young women from the waist up, but have glistening fish tails for their lower bodies. Most consider these stories little more than the fancies of men who've been too long at sea; few realize these stories are true

Once she's dragged her victim beneath the waves, the mermaid's true form is revealed. They are hideous monsters with jagged teeth, and green scaly skin covered in slime. They attempt to lure their victims beneath the waves, and drown the poor souls.



Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Stealth d8, Taunt d8

Charisma: +4; **Pace:** —; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Booty: Pillage, per 5 mermaids

Gear: —

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 6.
- **Claws:** d8+d4.
- **Siren Song:** The mermaid's song is like a narcotic for men. When first heard, male characters must make Spirit rolls. Those who fail stumble obliviously into the sea, believing they're cavorting with beautiful sea nymphs. In truth, they are drowning. If a mermaid's victim suffers a wound or a Fatigue level from any source, he must make a Spirit roll at -2 (in addition to any Fatigue penalty) to realize his peril and break the spell. Success means he is free to act as he wishes, but he is then set upon by circling mermaids.
- **Very Attractive:** The beautiful mermaid (when in her alluring form only) has +4 Charisma.

Monkey, Trained

Trained monkeys are often used by minor villains as pickpockets or to "befriend" soft-hearted heroes, then lead their larcenous masters to the heroes' hideout at the first opportunity.

Note that the monkey's Lockpicking skill only covers picking pockets.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Lockpicking d8, Notice d8, Stealth d10, Swimming d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 3

Booty: None

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** 2d4.
- **Size -2:** Monkeys are only 1' tall.
- **Small:** Attackers suffer a -2 penalty to attack monkeys because of their size.

Mule

Mules are the common beast of burden of the era, and are usually used to haul heavy goods or pull wagons.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Guts d6, Notice d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 8

Booty: None

Special Abilities:

- **Brawny:** +1 Toughness. Mules can carry 8 x their Strength die before becoming encumbered.
- **Fleet-Footed:** If a mule can be convinced to run, it rolls a d8 instead of a d6.
- **Kick:** d8.
- **Ornery:** Mules are contrary creatures. When riding a mule, a hero's Riding rolls are made at -1.
- **Size +1:** Mules are stocky creatures.

Native Bearer

European explorers always need someone to carry their baggage, and the task usually falls to natives. They're not fighters, though, and will typically flee at the first sign of trouble. They can also be treacherous if badly treated and abandon their would-be masters in some remote area.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Guts d4, Notice d6, Survival d6, Swimming d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6

Fame: +0

Hindrances: —

Edges: Brawny

Booty: Loot per 20 bearers

Gear: Knife (d8+d4).

Naval Officer

Naval officers are personnel in one of the European powers' navies. Merchant sailors use the same stats, but have no Knowledge (battle) skill, and one less die in Shooting and Fighting (reducing Parry by 1).

Typical Junior Officer

Junior officers may serve as assistants on a large ship or command their own sloop.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Swimming d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: +8

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Command, Officer (Lieutenant)

Booty: Loot

Gear: Rapier (d6+d4, +1 Parry), flintlock pistol (Range 5/10/20; Damage 2d6+1), shot and powder (10).

Typical Senior Officer

Senior officers command larger ships.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d10, Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Knowledge (Battle) d10, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Swimming d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Fame: +30

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Command, Master and Commander, Officer (Captain)

Booty: Pillage

Gear: Rapier (d6+d4, +1 Parry), flintlock pistol (Range 5/10/20; Damage 2d6+1), shot and powder (10).

Noble

This entry covers both true nobles and their courtier lackeys, such as seneschals and chancellors. The generic noble stats are suitable for every noble rank from baron to emperor.

Courtier

Courtiers are advisors who hold positions of importance within the court. Unless the characters know a noble personally, or hold a noble title of their own, most dealings are conducted through a courtier.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Riding d6, Streetwise d8

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: +5

Hindrances: Various

Edges: Charismatic

Booty: Pillage

Gear: Rapier (d6+d4, +1 Parry).

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Noble

Some nobles are decadent dandies who are content with living a life of luxury. Others are rich landowners, skilled in business matters. Nobles can also be military commanders, advisors to senior nobles, poverty stricken or extremely wealthy, or dabblers in dark arts.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Riding d8

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: +10 or higher, depending on status

Hindrances: Various

Edges: Command, Connection, Noble

Booty: Plunder, King's Ransom in home

Gear: Rapier (d8+d4, +1 Parry) in court; war gear varies with type of noble.

Octopus, Giant

These terrors of the deep are aggressive and always hungry. Alone, they are quite cowardly and attack only what they consider easy prey. Wounded beasts typically emit an ink cloud and attempt to escape.

A tentacle can be severed if it takes the creature's Toughness in damage in one shot from an edged weapon. Attacking a tentacle that has entangled a friend is risky—a roll of 1 on the attack die (regardless of the Wild Die) means the ally is hit instead.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+4, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d4, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11

Booty: None

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Beak:** d8+d6.
- **Ink Cloud:** A giant octopus can release a cloud of dark ink the size of a Large Burst

Template. Any Notice or attack rolls into or through it are at -4.

- **Size (+5):** The body of a giant octopus is as big as a sloop, while each tentacle is over 20' long.
- **Large:** Anyone attacking a giant octopus gains +2 to his attack roll.
- **Tentacles:** Reach 3. A giant octopus may attack up to four targets simultaneously with no penalty. On a raise, the creature has grappled the victim. Entangled victims may only attempt an opposed Strength roll each round to escape. Once grappled, the octopus automatically does d12+d6+4 damage by crushing with its tentacles. Victims dragged under water must make a Vigor roll each round or start to drown (see page 97).
- **Water Jet:** A giant octopus may "run" underwater by using its water jet, which gives it a d12 running die.

Parrot

Parrots are very social birds and make for good companions on long voyages.

Teaching a parrot to speak a single phrase of no more than ten words requires 2d6 hours and a Smarts roll. A success means the parrot has mastered the phrase.

Parrots can master a number of phrases equal to half their Smarts die (usually four phrases). If the GM chooses, a parrot with the right phrases can be given a Taunt of d6.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 1; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 3

Booty: None

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** 2d4.
- **Flight:** Pace 6.
- **Small -2:** Parrots stand 1' tall. Attackers subtract 2 from attack rolls because of their small size.

Piranha

A hungry swarm of piranhas can strip the flesh from a man's bones in minutes. Piranha swarms cover a Medium Burst Template and attack everyone within every round.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Notice d6

Pace: —; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

Booty: None

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 6.
- **Bite:** Swarms inflict hundreds of bites each round. They hit automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template.
- **Split:** Piranha swarms can split into two smaller swarms (Small Burst Templates) if necessary. The Toughness of these smaller swarms is lowered by -2 (to 5 each).
- **Swarm:** Parry +2; As the swarm is made up of hundreds of creatures, cutting and piercing attacks do no damage.

Pirates

The pirates of the Spanish Main are as varied as the isles themselves, but all are united by their lust for loot. Most who sail under the pirate flag, however, are ruthless killers and cowardly thieves.

Roll on the table below to find out what kind of ship the pirates sail.

Ship Table

d20	Ship Type
1-2	Brigantine
3-7	Crumster
8-9	Galley
10-11	Galleon
12-16	Sloop
17-18	Schooner
19	Man-o'-War
20	Fleet of 1d4 ships. Roll for each ship ignoring 20s.

Typical Pirate

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Garrulous, Greedy, Mean

Fame: -5

Edges: Dirty Fighter

Booty: Loot per every 5 pirates

Gear: Knife (d6+d4), cutlass (2d6), flintlock pistol (Range 5/10/20; Damage 2d6+1), shot and powder (20).

Pirate, Veteran

Despite the treasure and freedom from authority, most pirates live short lives—their time cut short by lead or steel, or that other hazard of their occupation, the rope.

Those pirates who do manage to live long enough to enjoy their spoils, however, are clever, fast, and well-skilled with the musket and cutlass.



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Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d8, Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Swimming d6, Taunt d8

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: -15

Hindrances: Greedy, Mean

Edges: Block, Combat Reflexes, Dirty Fighter

Booty: Loot

Gear: Knife (d6+d4), cutlass (2d6), musketoon (Range 5/10/20; Damage 2d8) or pistol (Range 5/10/20; Damage 2d6+1), shot and powder (20).



Pirate Captain

Captains are sometimes the largest and meanest brutes on the ship, but more often they are elected to that position by the crew. Only voluntary surrender of authority or mutiny result in a change of leadership.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d10, Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8,

Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Swimming d6, Taunt d8, Throwing d6

Charisma: -6; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 6

Fame: -30 or worse, depending on reputation

Hindrances: Greedy, Mean

Edges: Block, Command, Grit, Natural Leader, Pilot, Really Dirty Fighter, Reputation (Bad)

Booty: Pillage

Gear: Knife (d8+d4), cutlass (d8+d6), 1d4 flintlock pistols (Range 5/10/20; Damage 2d6+1), shot and powder (20).

Privateers

While pirates are scurvy dogs looking for easy prey, privateers are veteran soldiers in search of bloody combat. Use the Pirate Ship Table on page 237 to find out what kind of ship they sail. Privateers tend to be licensed by one of the European powers, and sign on for bloody work. Pirates face the gallows if caught, so rarely surrender without a fight.

Typical Privateer

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d8, Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Swimming d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: +0

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Combat Reflexes

Booty: Loot per every 5 privateers

Gear: Knife (d8+d4), cutlass (d8+d6), flintlock pistol (Range 5/10/20; Damage 2d6+1) or musketoon (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d8), shot and powder (20).



Veteran Privateer

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d8, Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8,

Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Swimming d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 6

Fame: +15

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Block, Boarder, Combat Reflexes, Musketeer

Booty: Loot

Gear: Knife (d8+d4), cutlass (d8+d6), flint-lock pistol (Range 5/10/20; Damage 2d6+1) or musketoen (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d8), shot and powder (20).

Rat Swarm

Rats may not be the most deadly creatures, but they can form large swarms. Rat swarms fill a Medium Burst Template.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Notice d6

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

Booty: None

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Rat swarms inflict hundreds of tiny bites every round to their victims, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template.
- **Infection:** Anyone Shaken or wounded by a rat swarm must make a successful Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue from infected bites. Multiple bites can lead to Incapacitation, but never to death. Victims recover one Fatigue level is every 24 hours or with a successful Healing roll.
- **Split:** Rat swarms are clever enough to split into two smaller swarms (Small Burst Templates) should their foes split up. The Toughness of these smaller swarms drops by -2 (to 5 each).
- **Swarm:** Parry +2; Because the swarm is composed of scores of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict his Strength in damage each round.

Ray

Rays are flat fish, and generally not very aggressive or dangerous. Two exceptions to that rule are included here.

Devil Ray

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d4, Strength d10, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 12.
- **Bite:** d10+d4.
- **Fleet:** Devil rays can “run” for additional pace and roll a d10 when doing so.
- **Flying:** Devil rays can fly for one round if they “ran” the previous turn. They achieve a height of up to 4”, glide a distance of up to 12”, and may make an attack at any point during the glide.
- **Grapple:** A devil ray may make a grapple attack by engulfing a target with its wings. If successful, it may make a bite attack each round until the grapple is broken. Characters dragged into the water must succeed at a Vigor roll every round or start to drown (see page 97).
- **Size +2:** Devil rays grow up to 15’ wide.
- **Tail Spike:** d10+d4, to the rear only.

Stingray

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d10

Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 12.
- **Bite:** d4.
- **Size -1:** Most stingrays are quite small.
- **Stinger:** 2d4, AP1. If a stinger causes the target to be Shaken or Wounded, he must make a Vigor roll (-2) or suffer a level of Fatigue. Multiple stings may cause death.

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Sea Serpent

Though men of science claim that such monstrosities are the stuff of legend, many superstitious sailors claim sea serpents are real, and that these beasts are capable of crushing ships into kindling. Few still live who claim to have encountered one. Only shipboard cannon can do any real damage to these nightmarish creatures.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d6

Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 19

Booty: None

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 12.
- **Bite:** d12+d6+8, Reach 2. Heavy Weapon.
- **Crush:** The beast can wrap its serpentine body around a target as a grapple. Victims suffer d12+20 damage each round the grapple is maintained. A sea serpent may crush and bite in the same round without incurring a multi-action penalty.
- **Fear (-2):** Anyone seeing a sea serpent must make a Guts roll at -2.
- **Gargantuan:** Heavy Armor. Creatures add +4 when attacking the body of a sea serpent due to its great size. Add Size to damage when crushing but subtract Size of victim. Ships have a Size equal to their base Toughness (ignoring Armor).
- **Long Neck:** The serpent's long neck gives it a Reach of 2.
- **Quick:** Sea serpents possess fast reflexes, able to turn in an instant and whip their long necks to attack passing prey. They redraw action cards of 5 or lower.
- **Size +12:** Sea serpents can grow to over 150' from nose to tail.

Shark

A number of sharks roam the warm waters of the Caribbean, but those most feared by sailors are included here.

Man-eater

These statistics cover most medium-sized man-killers, such as tiger sharks and great hammerheads.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d12

Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Booty: None

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Bite:** d8+d6.
- **Feeding Frenzy:** Once there's a significant amount of blood in the water (usually one wound), all the sharks present go into a feeding frenzy and add +2 to their attacks and damage for the rest of the fight.

Great White

Great whites often trail vessels at sea for days and wait for people to go into the water. They might also nudge ships if they see crewmen hanging over the railing, such as when making repairs.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d8, Notice d12

Pace: —; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 12

Booty: Loot, in stomach!

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Bite:** d12+d8+4.
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result does not cause a wound to a great white.
- **Large:** Attackers add +2 to their attack rolls when attacking a great white due to its large size.
- **Size +4:** Great whites grow up to 25'.

Ships' Crew

Whether it's a merchantman, privateer vessel, or navy ship, a ship needs crew. These stats represent generic ship's crew and can be used to populate the heroes' ship. See the entries on Pirates for those with a more hostile attitude.

Sailor

Sailors typically run the ship or fire the guns but don't participate in boarding actions unless it's obvious they're going to be overrun and are in grave physical danger from their attackers.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Guts d6, Notice d4, Shooting d4, Stealth d4, Swimming d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: +0

Edges and Hindrances: –

Booty: Loot for every 5 sailors

Gear: Knife (d6+d4).

Carpenter

Carpenters are responsible for keeping the ship seaworthy, including making repairs and careening the vessel.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (Carpentry) d8, Notice d4, Repair d8, Shooting d6, Swimming d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Fame: +0

Hindrances: –

Edges: Ship's Carpenter

Booty: Loot

Gear: Knife (d8+d4) or cutlass (d8+d6), carpentry tools.

Pilot/Navigator

Rather than split steering and navigating into two separate jobs, just assume the one man does both.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d8, Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Guts d6, Knowledge (Navigation) d8, Notice d8, Shooting d4, Stealth d4, Swimming d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: +0

Hindrances: –

Edges: Pilot

Booty: Loot

Gear: Knife (d6+d4) or cutlass (2d6).

Master of Guns

Onboard ship, the master of guns has the ultimate responsibility for the effectiveness of the ship's cannon, and of those tasked with manning them.



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He drills the gunners, checks and grinds the gunpowder and ensures all firearms onboard are maintained in a battle-ready condition.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Swimming d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Fame: +0

Hindrances: Hard of Hearing

Edges: Musketeer, Steady Hands

Booty: Loot

Gear: Knife (d8+d4) or cutlass (d8+d6).

Surgeon

The surgeon (on ships fortunate to carry one) is responsible for the health of the crew and treats everything from cuts to diseases. For serious wounds, the best he can usually do is amputate the limb. Despite the poor conditions and relatively primitive methods, most sailors count themselves lucky to serve on a ship with a surgeon, as the alternative is usually the ship's carpenter!

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d4, Fighting d4, Guts d6, Healing d8, Knowledge (Medicine) d6, Notice d6, Swimming d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: +0

Hindrances: -

Edges: Healer

Booty: Loot

Gear: Knife (d6+d4).

Smuggler

Smugglers know there is good money to be made by selling goods through alternate business channels.

Some work with pirates, selling their stolen cargoes for them in legitimate ports, others are out to make money by shipping illegal goods to the black market, especially on Spanish colonies, which are forbidden to trade with other Europeans.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d6, Driving d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: -5

Hindrances: Greedy

Edges: Connections

Booty: Pillage

Gear: Knife (d6+d4), cutlass (2d6), flintlock pistol (Range 5/10/20; Damage 2d6+1), shot and powder (20).

Snake, Constrictor

Pythons, boa constrictors, and other snakes over 15' long are rarely deadly to man in the real world because they aren't particularly aggressive toward such large prey. In *Pirates* adventures, however, such snakes might be

provoked to attack by the characters, trained to kill by a villain, or just plain mean and hungry!

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d10

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Booty: None

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** d6.
- **Constrict:** Constrictors bite when they succeed at a Fighting roll, and entangle when they succeed with a raise. The round they entangle and each round thereafter, they cause damage to their prey equal to d6+d8. The prey may attempt to escape on his action by succeeding on an opposed Strength roll, with a -4 penalty.

Snake, Venomous

Here are the stats for medium-sized snakes with extremely deadly venom.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d12

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 2

Booty: None

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** d4.
- **Poison:** Snakes this size usually do little serious damage with their bite, but may inject deadly venom. A character bitten by a rattlesnake or similar viper must make a Vigor roll at -2. With success, the area swells and becomes numb. The victim becomes Exhausted until healed. With a failure, the victim becomes Incapacitated and must make a second Vigor roll or die. More deadly snakes cause death if the first Vigor roll is failed. A few such snakes cause death in 2d6 rounds. Death in 2d6 minutes is more common, but a few take 2d6 hours to kill a full-grown man.
- **Quick:** Snakes are notoriously fast. They may discard action cards of 5 or lower and

draw another. They must keep the replacement card, however.

- **Size -2:** Most venomous snakes are four to six feet long, but only a few inches thick.
- **Small:** Anyone attacking a snake must subtract 2 from his attack rolls.

Sniper

Snipers are often employed on ships to take up a vantage point (usually high in the tops) and shoot enemy officers.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d10, Shooting d10, Stealth d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: +0

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Level Headed, Marksman, Musketeer, Steady Hands

Booty: Loot per 3 snipers

Gear: Rifled musket (Range: 15/30/60; Damage: 2d8, AP2), dagger (d8+d4), shot and powder (20).

Soldier

Whether they're English, French, or Spanish, soldiers are found in most ports. Depending on the characters' backgrounds, some may be allies, others are dangerous foes, but all are loyal to their cause.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: +0

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Steady Hands

Booty: Loot per 5 soldiers

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Gear: Long sword (d6+d8) or halberd (d8+d6; Reach 1), musket (Range: 10/20/40; Damage: 2d8), shot and powder (20). Spanish soldiers typically have plate corselets (+3; Toughness: 8) and steel helmets (+3).

Experienced Soldier

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 6

Fame: +5

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Block, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Steady Hands, Musketeer

Booty: Loot

Gear: Long sword (2d8) or halberd (2d8; Reach 1), musket (Range: 10/20/40; Damage:

2d8), shot and powder (20). Spanish soldiers typically have plate corselets (+3; Toughness: 9) and steel helmets (+3).



Field Officer

Field officers run the gamut from the green behind the ears rookie to seasoned leaders of men in combat. The stats presented here are for a reasonably competent officer.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Fame: +15 or higher, depending on rank

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Command, Hold the Line, Level Headed, Musketeer, Officer (choose rank)

Booty: Pillage

Gear: Rapier (d8+d4; +1 Parry), pistol (Range: 10/20/40; Damage: 2d8), shot and powder (20). Spanish officers typically have plate corselets (+3; Toughness: 9) and steel helmets (+3).

Soldier Ant Swarm

Living in thick jungle regions, a **column** of soldier ants (also known as army ants) is a danger to everything in their path. Unlike most ants, this variety is an aggressive and voracious hunter, swarming over much larger creatures and using their bites to bring creatures to their knees.

Because the creatures travel in such huge numbers, they fill a Large Burst Template.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Notice d6

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

Booty: None

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Ant swarms inflict hundreds of tiny bites every round to their victims, hitting

automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template.

- **Poison (+0):** Anyone Shaken or wounded by an ant swarm must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue from the bites. Cumulative bites can lead to Exhaustion, but no more. One Fatigue level is regained every 24 hours or with each success and raise on a Healing roll.
- **Split:** When the swarm is first wounded, it splits into two Medium Burst Template swarms. The Toughness of each swarm is lowered by -2 (i.e. to 5). When these swarms take a wound, they split into two Small Burst Templates (Toughness stays at 5). Further wounds disperse them.
- **Swarm:** Parry +2; The swarm contains thousands of ants, so cutting and piercing weapons do no damage. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict his Strength in damage.

Spy

While the European powers may tend to act neutrally toward each other, spies are employed by all sides to gather valuable information on their enemies' activities.

Typical Spy

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Lockpicking d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Streetwise d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: +0

Hindrances: Cautious

Edges: Connections, Thief

Booty: Loot

Gear: Varies with disguise, but usually a pocket pistol (Range 2/4/6, Damage 2d6-1) or dagger (d6+d4), shot and powder (5).

Thief

Some thieves may be allies of the characters, others are antagonists. Despite being tricky customers, thieves can be excellent sources of information—if you can find them.

Thief

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Lockpicking d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6, Taunt d6, Throwing d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: -5

Hindrances: Various

Edges: Thief

Booty: Loot; Pillage in hideout

Gear: Dagger (d6+d4).



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Master Thief

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Lockpicking d12, Notice d10, Stealth d12, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8, Throwing d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: -20

Hindrances: Various

Edges: Acrobat, Dodge, Level Headed, Thief

Booty: Pillage; Plunder in hideout

Gear: Short sword (2d6), flintlock pistol (Range 5/10/20; Damage 2d6+1), shot and powder (20).

Thugs

Big, dumb, and strong, thugs are hired muscle. Most work in gangs, so they can rely on their fellows for support. Thugs are generally reluctant to pursue a fight they are losing, and are most likely to withdraw, threatening to return at a later date and even the score.

Tougher thugs might have the Combat Reflexes or Frenzy Edges, as well as one die (or more) extra in Strength, Vigor, Fighting, and Intimidation. Though they may be meaner, it doesn't make them any braver, and they'll still want a gang with them in a fight.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Fame: -5

Hindrances: Mean

Edges: —

Booty: Loot per 5 thugs

Gear: Dagger (d8+d4) or belaying pin (d8+d4).

Tribesman

Tribesman is a blanket term covering all the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean, Mexico, and Florida. While most of these natives are peaceful, some are cannibals, and others worship gods who demand blood sacrifices.

Regardless of their race or tribe, most are poorly treated by the European settlers: a fact that leads to constant friction between the native tribesmen and the newcomers.

Tribal Warrior

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Fame: +0

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: —

Booty: Loot per 5 warriors

Gear: Spear (d8+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1; requires 2 hands) and bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6).



Tribal Chieftain

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Survival d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Fame: +20 among local tribes

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Fervor, Level Headed

Booty: Pillage

Gear: Spear (d8+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1; requires 2 hands) and bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6).

Whales

There are many whales in the great oceans, but we divide them by size.

Large Whale

Larger whales are valuable for their meat and oil. A Knowledge (Whaling) roll (or a Common Knowledge roll at -2) can process a large whale, to earn \$6,000 (half that if the roll is failed). An adult carcass fills 6 cargo spaces.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d6

Pace: —; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 16

Booty: Loot in stomach!

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 8.
- **Gargantuan:** Heavy Armor. Creatures add +4 when attacking the body of a large whale due to its great size.
- **Size +9:** Large whales average 70' long.
- **Tail Slap:** d12+d8+17. Heavy Weapon.

Small Whale

Small whales are far less valuable than larger ones—the base price of a processed small whale is \$2,000 (half that on a failed roll)—but they are also less dangerous. An adult carcass fills 4 cargo spaces.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+3, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d6

Pace: —; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 12

Booty: Loot in stomach!

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 6.
- **Huge:** Creatures add +4 when attacking a whale for their great size.
- **Size +6:** Small whales average 40' long.
- **Tail Slap:** d12+d8+3.

Legends of the Spanish Main

These notorious heroes and villains are collected in one place for easy reference. The legends of the Spanish Main are characters you may recognize from the *Pirates of the Spanish Main* CSG. They make the perfect NPCs in your RPG games as they epitomize the daring adventure of the *Pirates* setting.

Be warned, though, that they are powerful individuals and your players should be wary until they have a few adventures under their belts. Attempting to overthrow Governor Lynch or steal Blackheart's ship is a recipe for disaster if the players attempt it too early!



Calico Cat

Cat leads her crew with a dazzling smile that belies her deadly determination to make the crowns of Europe suffer. For more on this dangerous female, see page 150.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d12, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d12+1, Fighting d10, Guts d12, Intimidate d8+1, Knowledge (Battle) d10, Lock picking d18, Notice d10, Persuasion d12+2, Shooting d8, Stealth d10, Streetwise d10+1, Taunt d12

Charisma: +6; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 5

Fame: -32

Hindrances: Curious, Death Wish (Make the European Powers pay for the wrongs done to her), Vengeful (Major), Wanted (Minor)

Edges: Ambidextrous, Acrobat, Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Command, Connections (Pirates), Florentine, Great Luck, Improved Close Fighting, Improved Dodge, Level Headed, Master (Boating and Persuasion), Master & Commander, Natural Leader, Pilot, Quick, Quick Draw, Really Dirty Fighter, Seducer, Spot Weakness, Steady Hands, Strong Willed, Thief, Two Fisted, Very Attractive

Booty: Plunder!

Gear: 2 daggers (d6+d4), flintlock pistol (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6+1), shot & powder (20)

PIRATES OF THE SPANISH MAIN



Captain Blackheart

One of the most feared pirates on the Main, Blackheart has killed many of both for his amusement and profit. For more on Blackheart, see page 170.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d12+2, Fighting d12+2, Guts d10, Intimidate d10+1, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Streetwise d8+1, Throwing d8

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 11; **Toughness:** 8

Fame: -50

Hindrances: Arrogant, Branded, Enemy (Jack Hawkins), Mean, Vengeful, Wanted

Edges: Block, Board 'Em, Brawny, Captain, Command, Command Presence, Connections (Pirates), Danger Sense, First Strike, Inspire, Master (Boating and Fighting), Master and Commander, Mighty Blow, Quick Draw, Really Dirty Fighter, Sweep, Tough as Nails, Weapon Master, Wind Sense

Booty: Plunder!

Gear: Cutlass (d10+d6), flintlock pistol (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6+1), shot & powder (20)



Genny Gallows

Captain Gallows has hated the English since the day she saw her father hanged. For more details about her, see page 169.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d12, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d12+1, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidate d8+1, Knowledge (Battle) d10, Knowledge (Pirates) d12, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Shooting d8, Streetwise d12+1, Taunt d10

Charisma: +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 10; **Toughness:** 6

Fame: -30

Hindrances: Enemy (English), Vengeful (Major), Vow (Make the English pay), Wanted (Minor)

Edges: Acrobat, Block, Board 'Em, Command, Command Presence, Connections (Pirates), Fervor, Followers, Gifted Leader, Improved

Dodge, Inspire, Level Headed, Master (Boating), Master and Commander, Natural Leader, Pilot, Rope Monkey, Spot Weakness, Steady Hands Very Attractive

Booty: Plunder!

Gear: Rapier (2d6, +1 Parry), dagger (d6+d4), flintlock pistol (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6+1), shot & powder (20)



Governor Lynch

One of the most powerful men in the region, Lynch hates pirates with a passion. More about the governor is on page 160.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d12+2, Fighting d10, Guts d10, Intimidate d12+2, Knowledge (Battle) d12+2, Knowledge (British History) d12, Knowledge (Pirates) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Streetwise d10, Taunt d10

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 7

Fame: +85

Hindrances: Arrogant, Elderly, Enemy (Pirates), Jingoistic (Minor), Mean, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Command Presence, Connections (Navy), Connections (Privateers), Fervor, Filthy Rich, Followers, Gifted Leader, Grit, Governor, Improved Block, Improved Level Headed, Improved Nerves of Steel, Improved Tough as Nails, Inspire, Iron Jaw, Living Legend, Master (Boating), Master & Commander, Natural Leader, Officer (Captain), Pilot, Riposte, Strong Willed, Steady Hands

Booty: King's Ransom!

Gear: Cutlass (d4+d6), dagger (2d4), flintlock pistol (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6+1), shot & powder (20)



Inquisitor Sebastian Blanco

Sebastián resigned his commission as a soldier to join the Inquisition. For more on this soldier of God, see page 153.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d10, Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d12, Guts d10, Intimidate d12, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Knowledge (Religion) d10, Notice d10, Persuasion d10, Shooting d8, Streetwise d6

Charisma: +3; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 7

Fame: +30

Hindrances: Curious, Jingoistic (Minor), Vow (Seek out heresy)

Edges: Alertness, Block, Charismatic, Command, Command Presence, Fervor, Frenzy, Gifted Leader, Musketeer, Noble, Scholar (+2 to Battle and Religion Knowledge skills), Tough as Nails

Booty: Pillage

Gear: Saber (d8+d6)



Jack Hawkins

Hawkins is one of the most well-known rogues in the Caribbean. For more on this daring rogue, see pages 9 and 151.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Boating d12+1, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidate d10+1, Knowledge (Battle) d10, Notice d10, Persuasion d8, Shooting d12+2, Stealth d10, Streetwise d8+1, Survival d8, Taunt d6, Tracking d8

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 10; **Toughness:** 7

Fame: -35

Hindrances: Dependant (Lady Arcadia de Sol), Enemy (Captain Blackheart), Heroic, Wanted (Minor)

Edges: Acrobat, Attractive, Combat Reflexes, Command, Connections (Pirates), Florentine, Gifted Leader, Grit, Gunsmith, Improved Block, Improved Nerves of Steel, Improvisational Fighter, Iron Jaw, Hero, Level Headed, Marksman, Master (Boating and Shooting), Master and Commander, Musketeer, Pilot, Steady Hands, Two Fisted, Wall of Steel

Booty: Plunder!

Gear: Cutlass (d8+d6), dagger (d8+d4), rifled musket (15/30/60, 2d8, AP2), shot & powder (20)



Vicomtesse De Richelieu

Angelique de Richelieu's exquisite beauty belies a dangerously cunning mind. Further details about this beautiful lady spy can be found on page 162.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Intimidate d10, Knowledge (Gossip) d10, Knowledge (Scandal) d10, Knowledge (Society) d10, Knowledge (Politics) d8, Knowledge (History) d8, Notice d12, Persuasion d12+2, Shooting d4, Streetwise d6, Taunt d12

Charisma: +7; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Fame: +37

Hindrances: Arrogant, Overconfident, Small, Vengeful

Edges: Charismatic, Connections (French Society), Connections (Large Spy Network), Expert (Persuasion), Filthy Rich, Great Luck, Improvisational Fighter, Jack of all Trades, Level Headed, Noble, Seducer, Strong Willed, Very Attractive

Booty: Plunder!

Gear: dagger (d6+d4)

Name:

Rank:

XP:



Empty rectangular box for drawing or notes.

ATTRIBUTES

Agility

Progression icons for Agility: 4, 6, 8, 10, 12

Smarts

Progression icons for Smarts: 4, 6, 8, 10, 12

Spirit

Progression icons for Spirit: 4, 6, 8, 10, 12

Strength

Progression icons for Strength: 4, 6, 8, 10, 12

Vigor

Progression icons for Vigor: 4, 6, 8, 10, 12

BASE DERIVED STATS MOD

Stat selection circles for PACE, PARRY (+2 HALF FIGHTING), TOUGHNESS (+2 HALF VIGOR), and CHARISMA.

HINDRANCES

Horizontal lines for listing hindrances.

SKILLS

Vertical column of skill progression icons (4, 6, 8, 10, 12).

GEAR

Item Location Weight

Table for recording gear items, locations, and weights.

EDGES

Horizontal lines for listing edges.

FAME

Horizontal lines for recording fame.

ARMOR AREA PROTECTED PROTECTION WEIGHT

Table for recording armor details.

BOOTY

Total Weight Carried
Weight Limit
Encumbrance Penalty

WEAPON RANGE ROF DAMAGE WEIGHT

Table for recording weapon details.

WOUNDS! FATIGUE!
-1 -2 -3 INC -2 1

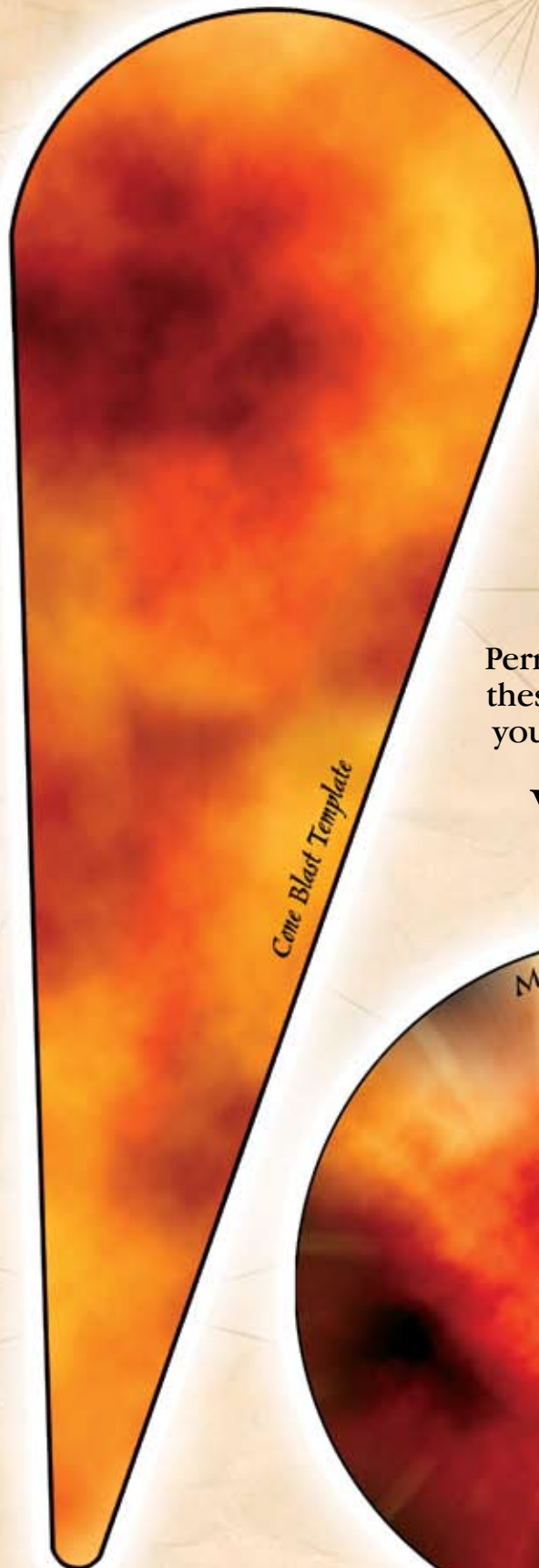
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NOTES

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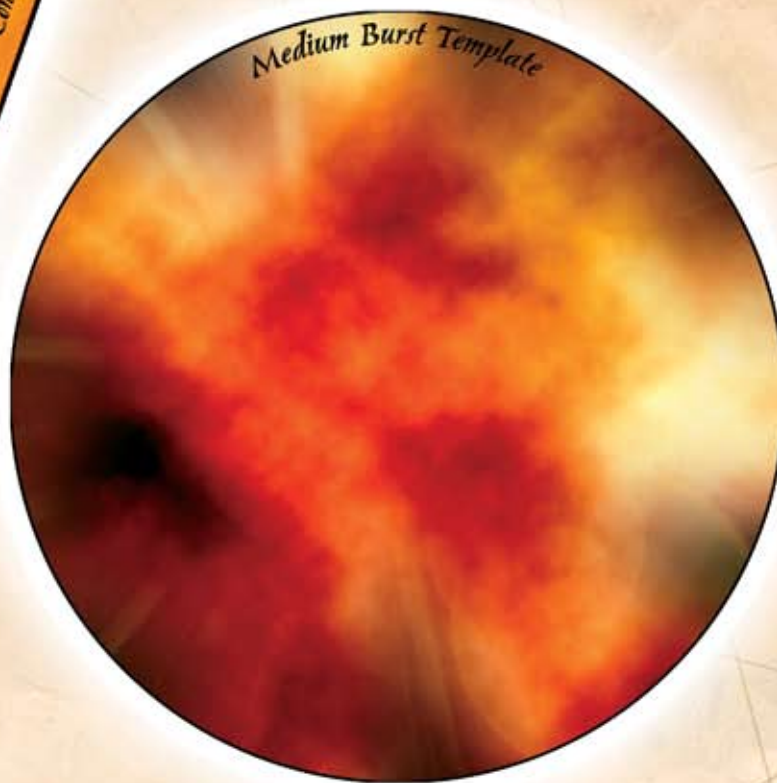
Progression icons for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25.

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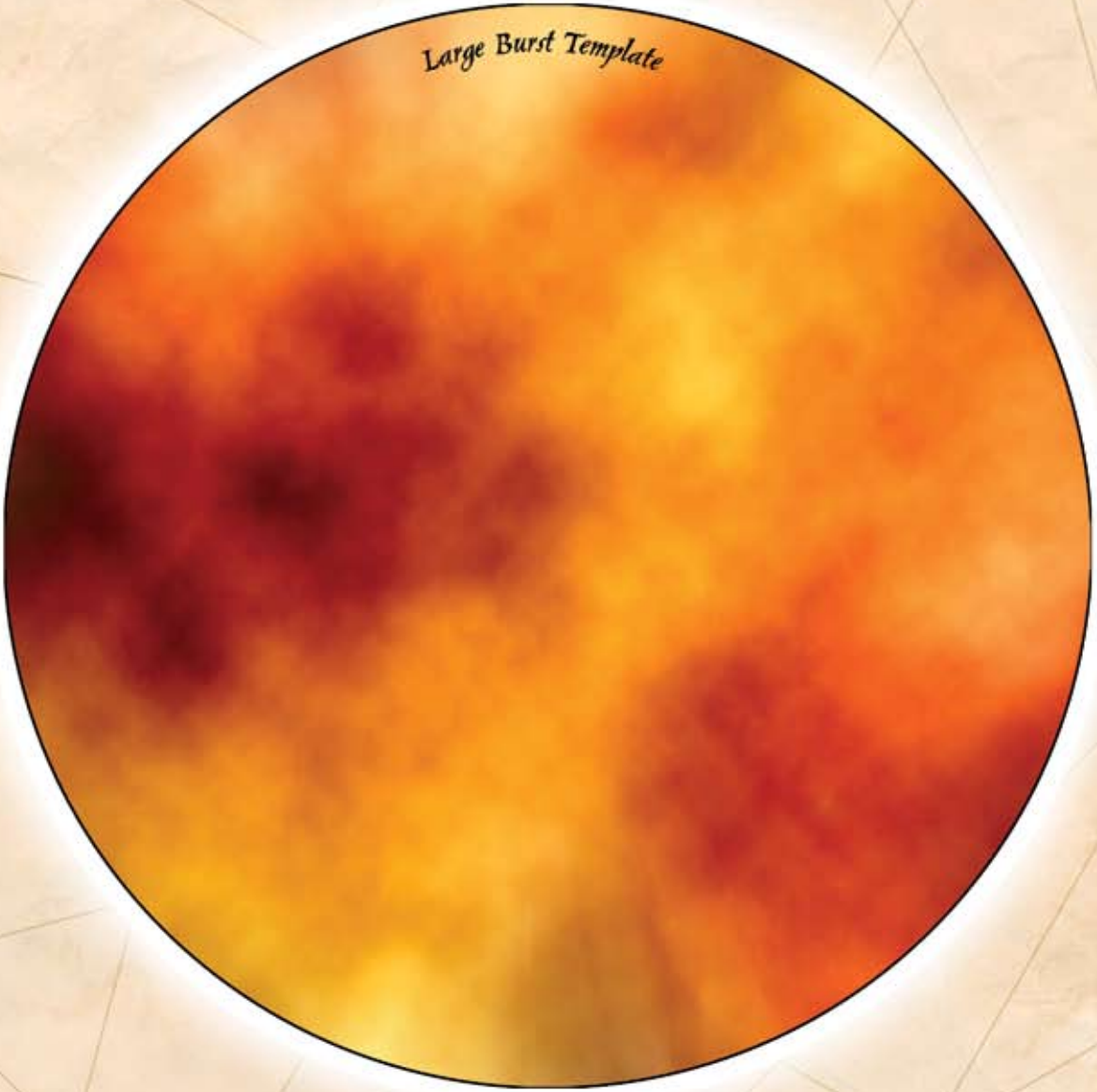


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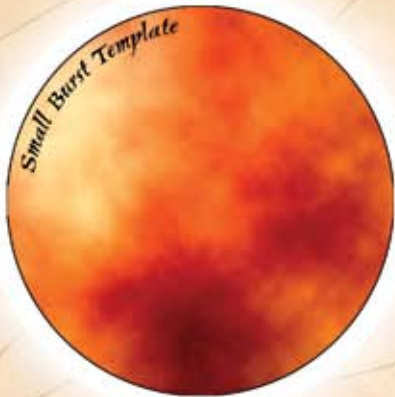
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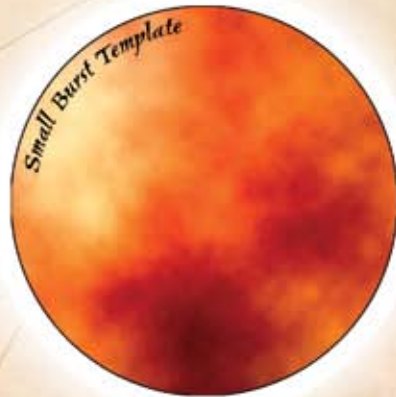
Large Burst Template



Small Burst Template



Small Burst Template



PIRATES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

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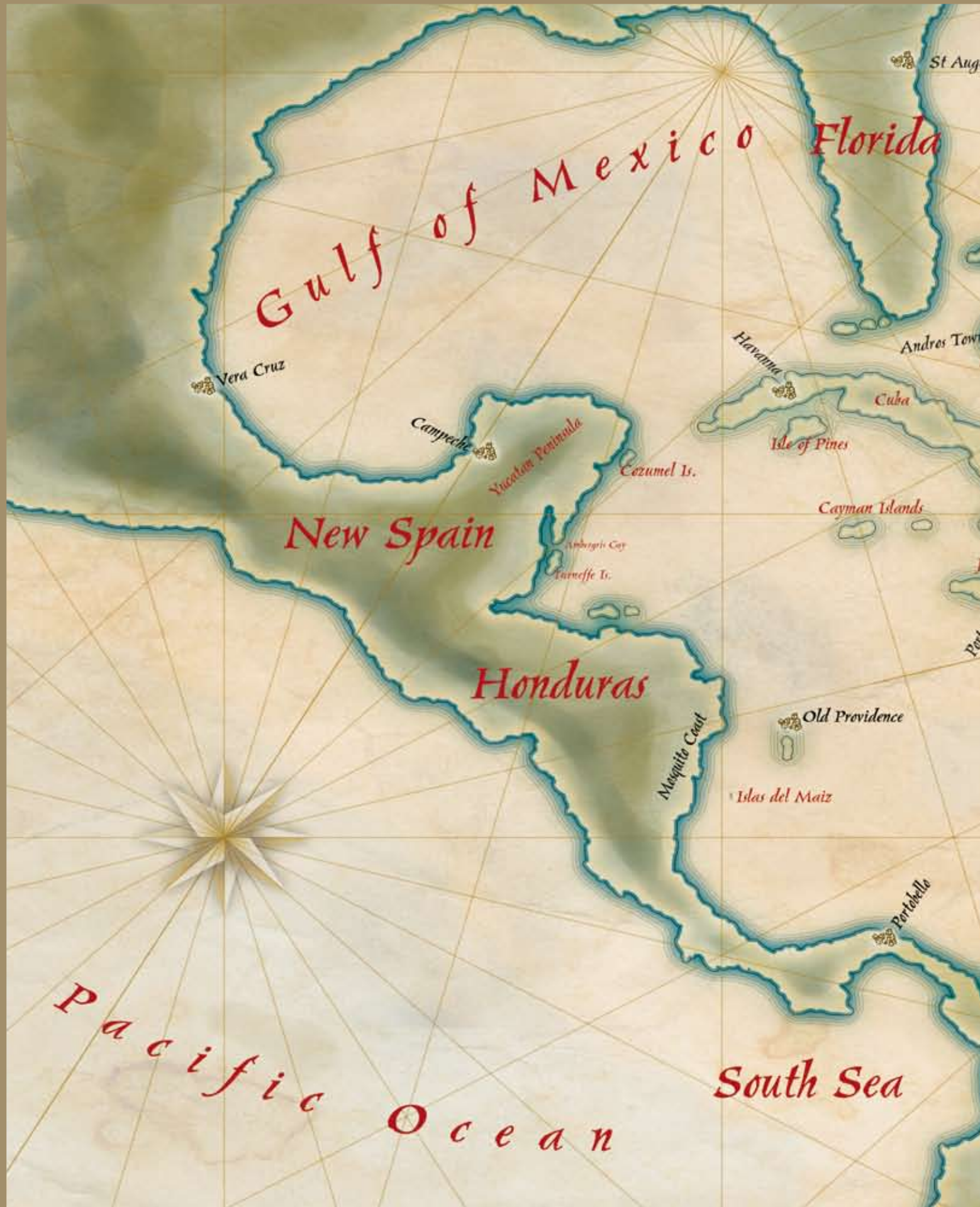


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