

HOW TO PLAY WESTERN

This is a short overview of *Western*'s rule system.

EFFECT, FUMBLES, & DIFFICULTIES

Western is a dice-based roleplaying game. Success or failure is based either on one of your **ATTRIBUTES** (e.g., **STRENGTH** or **INTELLIGENCE**) or a **SKILL** you have learned (e.g., **RIDING**). You combine your values with the result of a twenty-sided die — which you re-roll each time you roll a 20 — and add up the results (this is called an *unlimited dice roll*). The higher the result, the better the **EFFECT**, where 20 means you have just barely succeeded and 30+ means it went better than you could have hoped.

In the same way that rolling a 20 means you have succeeded beyond expectation, rolling a 1 is a **FUMBLE**. This means you haven't just failed, but that your entire circumstances and possibilities may have changed completely. Both the player and the game master must improvise, which is always fun.

Your chances of success in different situations depends on what you are trying to do. Easy things like tracking footprints in snow will give you a plus on the roll, but difficult things like riding at a full gallop while simultaneously shooting at the fleeing robbers will give you a minus. These modifications are called **DIFFICULTIES** and always occur in increments of 5.

STYLES OF PLAY

Different players want to experience different things. Some want to play down-to-earth and gritty while others want to play something closer to super heroes in the Wild West. Most groups fall somewhere in between. We have tried to devise the rules to be flexible enough to work with all of these different requirements. The only thing you must do is figure out which playing style works best for you before you begin, and then create player characters based on the rules for that specific style (**CAMPAIGN**, **REALISM** or **ACTION**).

REPUTATION: HONOR AND FAME

Whatever you decide to do, you can be sure others will hear about it. Rumors spread like wildfire. It matters what people say about you and how well known you are. It affects how you are treated and what you get paid. If you are known as an honest and upstanding person, people will show their appreciation. If, however, you have a reputation as a mad dog, you'd better keep an eye out for that revenge-seeking posse. Your **REPUTATION** is divided into two different values: **HONOR** and **FAME**. **NEUTRAL HONOR** is 0, and the higher the value in either direction, the more extreme you are deemed to be. **FAME** describes how well known you are.

WEAPONS: DEGREES AND SPECIALIZATIONS

If you draw your weapon, you'd best be able to handle it. Most gunslingers prides themselves in being able to hit their target with a single shot. To determine where your shot went, you use the **CROSSHAIR**, an oval gun sight where 30 is a perfect shot. If you're skilled with your six-shooter, you'll hit where you aimed, but if you're a bad shot, you might wind up shooting someone's hat off while aiming for their leg.

It's not enough to hit the target. You have to be quick on the draw too. The first shot is often decisive. In a duel, the first shot could be the last. That's why there are lots of tricks to improving your speed, such as choose a fast gun or shooting directly from the hip.

When you handle guns of different types, you are training your **COMBAT SKILLS**, where you learn **ACCURACY** and **SPEED** separately. For each fifth step you gain in **ACCURACY**, you increase one **DEGREE** in your knowledge and can choose a **SPECIALIZATION** that can be anything from reducing the chance of fumbling to improving your aim. The more you have in **SPEED**, the more **ACTIONS** (abilities to act during a round of combat, which is 6 seconds long) you get. The different **DEGREES** describe how good you are when you reach them (see the table below).

TALENTS, OBSTACLES AND DESTINY

To help you play a more colorful character, *Western* has developed a system with **TALENTS** and **OBSTACLES**. A **TALENT** is something you are better at, or that makes your life easier (such as **PERFECT RECALL**, **SLIPPERY** and **EAGLE EYE**), as opposed to **OBSTACLES** (like **OPPRESSED**, **INCORRUPTIBLE** and **RECKLESS**). You can only use your **TALENTS** if you have previously played one of your **OBSTACLES** in a way that had clear consequences to the game play and the game master has given you a **OBSTACLE POINT**.

DESTINY POINTS represent the player's chance to cheat the system. In a critical situation, they can choose to sacrifice a **DESTINY POINT** to manipulate the outcome (by reducing damage from injuries or adding a bonus to an important roll of the dice).

DEGREES

DEGREE	SKILL LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	BONUS
1	5-9	LAYMAN	+1
2	10-14	EXPERIENCED	+2
3	15-19	VETERAN	+3
4	20-24	EXPERT	+4
5	25-29	MASTER	+5
6	30	LEGEND	+6