

CaRdPG v.01A

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Materials Required

You'll need two decks of standard playing cards, preferably with different backs. One deck should consist of the normal assortment of 52 cards, (i.e. ace through ten and jack, queen and king for each of four suits) and the other deck should only be 40 cards, omitting all of the face cards (i.e. Just ace through ten in the four suits). This secondary deck is only used in special cases where noted. Aces are usually treated as ones, although a character who is proficient in a particular task treats aces as eleven.

Overview

CaRdPG is a diceless roleplaying game which uses decks of playing cards to simulate the randomness of every day life. CaRdPG is designed to be setting independent; that is to say, by using a different set of skills you can just as easily use this system for everything from a high fantasy game to a hard sci-fi game.

Stats

Each character at their core is made up of eight stats in four groups, and each class has a corresponding suit;

Body Stats (Clubs)

Strength (STR): How strong the character is. Characters with high strength are capable of dealing more damage in melee combat, lifting more weight, etc. A character with low strength is weak.

Toughness (TUF): How tough the character is. Tough characters can take more of a beating than your average joe and are also more resistant to disease and toxins. A character with low toughness has less staying power in combat and may be prone to sickness.

Skill Stats (Spades)

Acrobatics (ACR): How capable the character is at performing various feats. Characters with high acrobatics can run faster, jump higher, balance better and are also more difficult to hit in combat. A character with low acrobatics is clumsy and has difficulty walking and chewing gum at the same time.

Adroitness (ADR): How skilled a character is at tasks requiring hand-eye coordination and intricate movements. Adroitness is used for hitting your opponent in combat as well as doing skilled tasks such as picking a lock or performing surgery. A character with low adroitness is poor at such tasks, and often loses at video games, darts, etc.

Mind Stats (Diamonds)

Intelligence (INT): How knowledgeable a character is. Characters with high intelligence have access to more skills and are better at tasks such as programming a computer or casting a spell. A character with low intelligence is stupid and has a hard time with complex tasks.

Wisdom (WIS): Gumption, prudence, street wise, call it what you will. Wisdom is a measure of a character's common sense and general awareness. A character with high wisdom is observant and difficult to surprise. A character with low wisdom may be short-sighted, impulsive, oblivious, etc.

Social Stats (Hearts)

Influence (INF): How well your character is at coercing people. A character with high influence is well suited to being a leader, a lawyer or a propagandist. A character with low influence would have trouble convincing others of imminent danger without some solid proof.

Presence (PRS): A measure of a character's force of personality. A character with a high presence naturally turns heads and can inspire confidence simply by being around. A character with a low presence tends to fade into the crowd.

Character Creation

1. Come up with a concept for your character. For example, a strong warrior, an elite hacker, a stealthy thief or a debonair con artist.
2. Prioritize your stat groups. You get 8 points to spend in your best stat group, 6 points to spend in your second best, 4 in your third and 2 in your worst.
3. Assign stat points. For example, in your best stat group you might have both stats be 4, or you might have one be 5 and one be 3. 5 is the highest any stat can be.
4. Assign skill points. You get a number of 4 skill points plus 4 points for each point of intelligence. You may not have a skill ranked higher than 3 at this point. Ask your GM what set of skills he's using. Each skill should be associated with one of the stats. Common skills include melee attack (ADR), ranged attack (ADR), dodge (ACR) computer use (INT), intimidation (INF), etc. A character may also purchase additional languages at a cost of 2 points for the first language and 1 point for each additional language. This includes both reading and writing the language.
5. Record derived values. You get 5 hit points plus 5 points per point in toughness, 3 fatigue points plus 3 points per point in acrobatics, 3 stress points plus 3 points per point in wisdom and 3 will points plus 3 points per point of presence. Your character's speed is 20 ft plus 5 ft per point of acrobatics.
6. Choose special abilities. You get two special abilities for your best skill group and one special ability for your second best.
7. Choose equipment. You should work with your GM in deciding what is appropriate.
8. Flesh out your character. An optional step involving detailing your character's background, motivations, etc.

Example of Character Creation

1. Dave is going to be playing in his friend's game, which will be in a modern setting. He's decided that he wants his character to be an FBI agent named Roger Glendale.
2. Dave decides Roger is more of a face man, better suited to interrogation than pursuing criminals. To that end, he decides that the social stat group will be his best, followed in order by mind, skill and body.
3. Dave begins assigning stats. He decides to take the interrogation angle all the way and gives Roger a 5 in Influence and a 3 in Presence. Roger went to a good school and is also quite observant, so he gets a 3 in both Intelligence and Wisdom. Roger has always been a little awkward but is quite good with his hands from a youth spent on video games, so Dave gives him a 1 in Acrobatics and a 3 in Adroitness. Finally, Roger is of reasonable health but isn't about to win any weight lifting contests; he gets a 0 in Strength and 2 in Toughness.

4. Dave gets a total of 16 skill points to assign to his character ($4 + 4 * 3$ INT). With his GM's approval, he chooses to take 3 ranks in Ranged Weapons, Dodge, Legal System and Intimidation. With his remaining 4 points, he takes one point in Driving and decides Roger knows German and Russian
5. Dave records his character's derived values. Roger has 15 hit points ($5 + 5 * 2$ TUF), 6 fatigue points ($3 + 3 * 1$ ACR), 12 stress points ($3 + 3 * 3$ WIS) and 12 will points ($3 + 3 * 3$ PRS). His speed is 25 ft ($20 + 5 * 1$ ACR)
6. Dave gets two Social special abilities and one Mind special ability. He chooses Smooth Talker, Empathy and Research.
7. Dave consults with his GM and decides Roger lives in a small studio apartment in Washington D.C. and has suits for business, formal and work occasions, a standard issue handgun and bullet proof vest, and drives a black sedan, provided by the FBI. Other common and non-noteworthy items, such as casual clothing, food, etc are assumed.
8. Finally, Dave fleshes Roger out a bit more.

Performing a task

Simply walking around driving and performing other simple tasks do not require you to cut. However, when you do something in which the outcome is questionable, it becomes necessary to cut. Cutting is to CaRdPG what rolling is to most other games. You give the deck a quick shuffle and then cut to a card. If it's an ace (which usually counts as one) or two through ten, you add it to any applicable skill you might have and the most appropriate stat (usually the stat associated with the skill, but not necessarily).

Additionally, if the card is of the suit associated with the stat's group (for example clubs if you're making a check involving TUF), add an extra +1. Generally your total must be at least 10 to succeed, although at the GM's discretion you might have to get a higher total for harder tasks or a lower total for easier ones.

If you cut to a jack, queen or king, something different happens. If you cut to a jack, you automatically fail at whatever you were attempting. If you cut to a queen, you get to cut two cards from the secondary deck to add to your total. If you cut to a king, you automatically succeed and do an especially good job.

Combat

Combat is similar to performing a task, with a slight difference. Instead of cutting, the GM shuffles the deck and deals you and everyone else involved a hand of five cards. He also deals a hand to himself for each major NPC, and a single hand for any minor NPCs (such as common thugs) to share.

At the beginning of combat, for each person involved (grouping minor NPCs together), everyone plays a card to determine their order, adding their Initiative skill and wisdom stat. They act in order from high to low. If multiple characters tie (including by using jacks or kings), they go in order of their Initiative skill, then in order of their Wisdom stat. If there's still a tie, those who are tied cut against each other until the tie is resolved.

Combat takes place in rounds. Each round the current character can either run up to twice their speed, walk up to their normal speed and make a single attack, or make two attacks.

When one character attacks another, the attacker plays a card and adds their applicable skill (melee combat or ranged combat) and their ADR. The defender plays a card and adds his dodge skill and his ACR. In case of a tie, the defender wins. If the defender wins, nothing happens. If the attacker wins, he deals damage according to his weapon, which may be modified by any armor the defender is wearing. This damage is taken away from the defender's hit points.

Damage

CaRdPG includes 4 forms of damage. Hit points measures how much of a beating your character can and has taken, fatigue points indicate how far they can push themselves, stress points keep track of the character's level of stress and finally will points are how resistant the character is to coercion. All may go down into the negatives.

Hit points are lost by taking damage, and are restored at a rate of $\frac{1}{4}$ your total, rounded up, after each night of restful sleep. They may also be restored through medial attention. A character with no hitpoints left is knocked unconscious. A character in the negatives is dying and will lose one hit point every round until stabilized by medial attention. If he should get three times as many negative hit points as his TUF rating, he will die. For example, a character with 4 TUF will die when they reach -12 hit points.

Fatigue points are lost when your character pushes himself, for example by running after someone. Each round your character performs a tiring act, you lose one fatigue point. Fatigue points are restored at a rate of $\frac{1}{4}$ your total, rounded up, every five seconds you rest, or every round of combat you do nothing (including dodge). A character with fewer than half of their fatigue points suffers a -2 penalty to all cuts involving physical actions and all combat actions. A character with a quarter or fewer of their total fatigue points suffers an additional -2 penalty on those rolls. A character with 0 fatigue points is exhausted and can perform no physical action until they have been restored to at least half their total. A character who somehow gets negative fatigue points falls unconscious until they return to their full total. Additionally, a character only restores one negative fatigue point per 10 minutes of rest. Once they reach 0, the fatigue points are restored at the normal rate.

Stress points are lost when your character experiences repeated failure or other stressful situations. You lose one stress point every time you attempt something you've already failed at and fail again. Certain situations may also cause you to lose stress points, at the GM's discretion. You can restore $\frac{1}{3}$ of your total stress points by indulging in a relaxing activity your character enjoys for an hour, such as watching a movie, going to a bar, or going for a drive. All stress points are restored after a restful night's sleep. Like fatigue points, you suffer a -2 penalty on cuts involving mental actions if you've got less than half of stress points left and another -2 if you're under a quarter. If you have 0 stress points, your character is irritable and unable to focus properly. You automatically fail any mental tasks you attempt. If your stress points are somehow in the negatives, you risk a psychotic episode; if your will points are also at a quarter or less, your character literally goes insane. Although you recover once you've had some rest, at the GM's discretion you may gain a permanent drawback.

Will points are lost when you are subject to duress, torture, coercion or even seeing something you hold dear defiled or proved incorrect. Typically will points are lost when someone attempts to intimidate, interrogate or torture you, but at the GM's discretion you may also lose them when you are witness to something truly sacrilegious in your character's eyes. Will points are restored at a rate of $\frac{1}{4}$ your total per day as long as you haven't lost any that day and got enough sleep. A character with 0 will points will tell anyone whatever they want to know; a character with negative will points will do whatever he is told to do as long as it is not obviously self-destructive. A character with negative will points equal to or greater than three times their wisdom will do whatever they're told no matter what. Even if the character is no longer under duress, they are weak-willed and unmotivated to do anything until they're restored back to half their will points. Additionally, a character with negative will points instead regains them at a rate of 2 per day instead of the normal $\frac{1}{4}$.