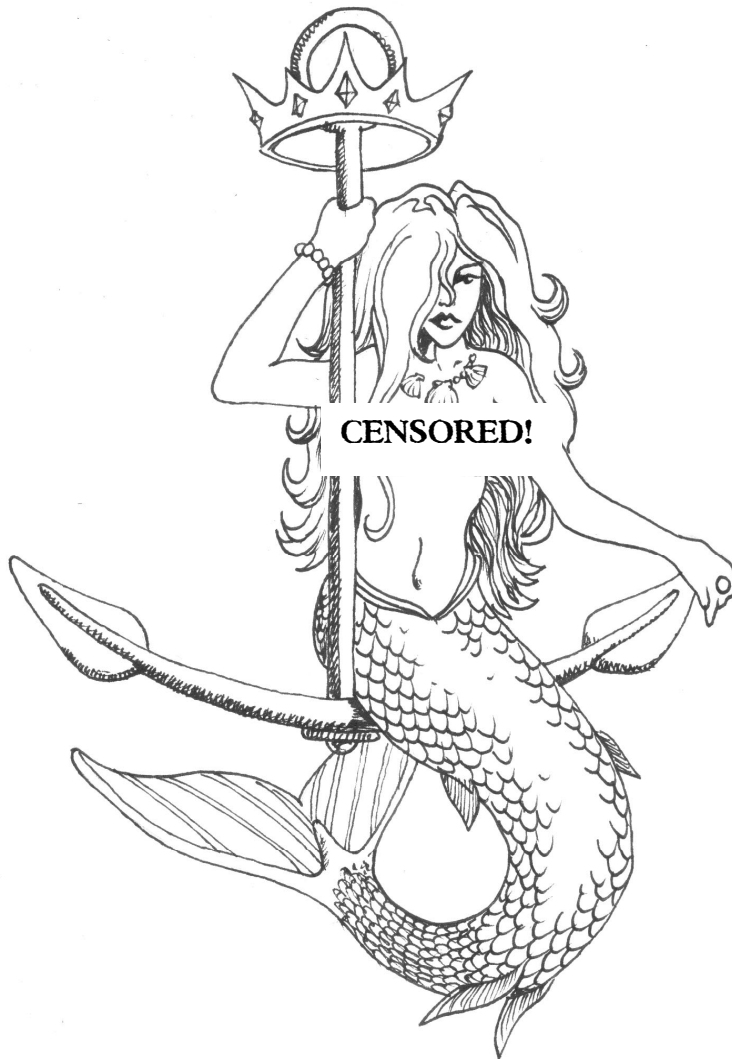


Rules for Here Be Pyrates



These are the game-specific rules and information which you may need to refer to when playing. If you have any questions or have trouble deciding the outcome of an action please see a GM.

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Freetown

Freetown is a settlement on the small island of **Benediccion** in the Lesser Antilles archipelago, in the Caribbean Sea. It has become a refuge for pirates in the last few years, gaining in importance as other pirate bases such as Tortuga have been denied to them. Freetown is not controlled or even claimed by any of the European powers who have colonies in the Caribbean, so has no civil or military presence from any of them.

Freetown is governed by the **Council of Seven**, a self-perpetuating group of leading citizens who decide which ships are allowed to have harbouring rights and which pirates are welcome to visit or set up home. The anchorage is protected by a maze of sandbars and rock stacks that shield the entrance and hide the one safe channel. Ships desiring entrance to the harbour must request a pilot to lead them through the channel at the correct combination of tide and current.

The other institution in Freetown is the **Black Assizes**. This is the only form of law and order that operates there and is based on the **Pirate Code**, a series of rules that all pirates who visit Freetown

agree to abide by. The Black Assizes are presided over by **Blind Pugh** an elderly and respected pirate. Disagreements between shipmates are also arbitrated by him to avoid unnecessary bloodshed. The Council of Seven decide what version of the Pirate Code applies in the town at any time.

Blind Pugh as the judge of the Black Assizes hears the evidence against the accused and decides the verdict, which is carried out by the residents. This can be anything from a fine up to the ultimate punishment, the **Black Spot**, usually delivered by **Blackspot Sal**. This is as good as a death sentence; the pirate so punished has an hour's grace then is fair game for any pirate. This is contrary to the usual situation in town where the Code bans the cold-blooded murder of any pirate by another. Pirates can be tried in their own absence but the accuser does need to turn up to proceedings.

Freetown's Pirate Code

All residents when they settle in Freetown have to swear they will abide by the rules of the Code: these rules apply to behaviour within the town and harbour. These are the rules at Game Start:

- The punishment for doing violence to any woman not a pirate, any child or oldster, is a public flogging of 40 lashes on the bare back.
- The compensation to anyone for losing a limb is 100 gold doubloons for an eye arm or hand, 50 for a leg or ear, to be paid by the assailant.
- The punishment for killing another pirate, except in an arranged duel, is the Black Spot.
- The punishment for killing any member of the Council of Seven, except in an arranged duel, is the Black Spot.
- The punishment for betraying a Blood Brother is the Black Spot.
- The punishment for betraying the location of Freetown, the route into the Harbour, or any information about the disposition of its defences is the Black Spot.
- Anyone found stealing will have his ears and nose slit open and be exiled.
- No pistols to be fired inside the confines of the town.

- All breaches of this Code, other disagreements and disputes to be dealt with by the Black Assizes and disputants to abide by the verdict of the judge.

The Rumour Jar

This sits on the main GM desk. If your game is going slowly or you're not sure what to do next, see a GM and ask for a rumour. You must tell at least two people the rumour within the next half hour.

Name Badges

The name badge for each character has the gender displayed as both the badge colour and a symbol (♀ for women and ♂ for men), and this is what you should be reacting to rather than the gender of the player. Also displayed is the Legendary Status of the character (a number of skull and crossbones between 0 and 5) which will give a good idea of how infamous they are. Their character number is also displayed on the badge and this will be important for logging Legend Points with the GMs and for giving contingency slips (which will be on the ring in your pack normally) to the correct player.

Note that many contingency slips you start with will be handed to, and opened by, another player; this should happen if you speak to or interact with them for more than a few seconds, unless the slip says otherwise.

Some players will have more than one badge and this will represent that, as far as you are concerned, they are entirely different characters. Some characters will also have various abilities to disguise themselves and will have a second badge that says they are in disguise when this is being used; in which case you will have no idea who they are unless their badge says so. The badge will also indicate how good the disguise is!

Players may also have another badge showing special weaponry, since we will not be using physical props in the game for weapons.

Some players will have a second/third badge that is bright red and marked "Old Tars." See the general rules for what this means. GMs have badges marking them out as such. Everyone should have at least one badge on whilst in play!

Money

There are two sorts of money in the game. Small amounts (and occasionally larger amounts) will be represented by coins. Silver Pieces of Eight are worth one, and there are eight of them to a Gold Piece or Doubloon. Large amounts of money may be represented by an items card. If you need change for an items card please see a GM.

To give you an indication of prices, a Beer or some grog would be a silver piece, a large meal for a small group a doubloon. The tavern will have some prices set up as no one haggles for a pint, (and walks out unscathed!)

Destroying cards

If you have an instruction on a card to destroy it, then if it's a item card or skill card then you must rip it up after use, you may then throw it away. If it is a combat card then please remove it from your card ring and at the first opportunity place it in the box on the GMs desk.

Romance

There is no specific mechanism for romance in this game. If two of you want to be romantic with each other's characters you will need to simply act it out. If another player is not interested then no means no, in character terms as well; please don't pester them. If you want to be so besotted with your love as to exchange an objective with each other that is dear to your heart, then please feel free to do so.

Dying Breath Wish

If someone makes a request of you as they lie dying, this is a Dying Breath Wish and you are under a moral obligation to carry out their last wish to the best of your ability. Of course, some folks don't keep their word... It is also possible to curse your enemy with your dying breath! If you curse someone please tell the Resurrection GM, who, what and why. It is a way to make sure that some element of the concern uppermost in your character's head at the moment of their death is carried over into the game.

Note it is almost impossible to use your dying breath wish in the middle of a complex melee or ship to ship action as no-one will hear you over the noise! However if you really feel there is a

pressing case to be made for its use speak to the GM overseeing the combat.

Blood Brothers

This is a way of declaring yourself a partner in some way with someone else. You should act out cutting your thumbs or palms to mingle your blood and swear a terrible oath. You then exchange your Blood Brother Cards. You are under an obligation to work together towards whatever you swore an oath about and to look out for your Blood Brother's interests – but beware! If you betray or otherwise harm them there are very strict penalties under the Pirate Code!

Being Drunk

Pirates consume a *lot* of rum, both as grog and neat. They're also quite fond of beer...although some people seem to get drunk very quickly and others seem to be able to drink all night with no ill effects! Thus if you drink more than eight tots of rum or pints of grog/beer in an hour, you are officially Drunk. If you carry on drinking immediately you will be Unconscious for 2 minutes (During this time your items may be looted, although this would of course be an infraction of the stealing section of the Pirate Code) followed by an evil hangover of course! Please act this out. If you get Drunk in the tavern go and see the GMs. If you somehow get into a drinking competition you need to get a GM to referee!

Healing Wounds & Bruises

Bruises are dealt in Brawling and Wounds in Combat (ie usually involving weapons). For how this happens and the effects of both see the Combat section later on. Bruises do not have any long term effect and any left at the end of a session are automatically healed by the start of the next. Bruises can also be healed by the Surgeon skill.

In Pyrates, if you have one Wound you are wounded, and if you are wounded again you are dying. Wounds might be healed by someone with the Surgeon skill or certain other special skills. The higher the level of Surgeon skill, the better the chance and quality of healing. See the skills section for descriptions of what happens. Special skills will describe how they work - in any event, if attempting to heal someone please fetch a GM. (**Exception:** A Surgeon with skill level 3 or higher can *always* heal a *single*

Wound - the wounded character may remove their sticker. In this particular circumstance, you need not involve a GM.)

If you survive to the end of a session with one Wound, you will be fully healed by the start of the next.

If you are alive but Wounded after a combat please get a Wound sticker from a GM and put it on your badge.

Legend Points & Notoriety

A pirate's life is short, violent and ugly (much like the GMs) so the best that a pirate can hope for is that his or her name will be remembered down through the ages. The ways that a pirate/buccaneer/privateer would go about this are different from any other profession. The main ways a pirate can build their notoriety are: by taking prizes, by besting other pirates and the forces of law & order, by associating their name with amazing feats of daring, by dying memorably and by discovering legendary treasures.

None of these feats count for much unless news of them is disseminated as far as possible. The main way this occurs is by tales, yarns and shanties being repeated in a tavern or other place with an audience. This can be by the protagonist themselves but is more compelling if done by a third party. A tale is even more credible if physical evidence is available to back up the claims of the teller.

There are five levels of notoriety and they are:

- "Hand" (Level 1),
- "Pirate" (Level 2),
- "Named Pirate" (Level 3),
- "Notorious Pirate" (Level 4)
- "Legendary Pirate" (Level 5).

plus "Who?" (those who have insufficient notoriety for anyone to have heard of 'em).

These levels are attained by earning **Legend Points** when doing all those deeds of daring or general piracy mentioned earlier. Once gained, Legend Points are never lost, but your total will eventually be eclipsed if other pirates amass more of them. Professions other

than pirates will have their own scale against which they are trying to attain their own version of immortality.

A character's level of notoriety is displayed on their badge; the number of skull-and-crossbone stickers tells you their level. It does not show exactly how many Legend Points they have. A list of the most famous pirates of all will be displayed and updated in the Market Square at the start of each session; and of course at the end of the game the pirate with the most points will be declared **The Most Legendary Pirate Ever to Sail the Seven Seas!**

So, how does it work? Legend Points are awarded by the GMs to players for daring deeds, are obtained through adventures and encounters at sea and on land, and captains can reward their crew for piratical deeds once they have points from a successful adventure. All Legend Points are on cards showing the number of points, and all are awarded by people, whether GMs or players. Additionally players will each have some points which they can award to the character they feel best deserves it, towards the end of the game Sunday. These are to be filled out and given straight to the GMs before 11am Sunday to count towards the final total.

All Legend Point cards are to be signed by the person awarding them. On them there is a space to put the **number** of the character you are awarding it to (as shown on their name badge); it is important to get this right as otherwise you may be awarding points to the wrong character! You will also see a space to sign the card. Without both of these the card is useless. Only if you are a captain (or GM) do you then give the player the card in situ.

Adding Legend Points to your tally

Points are added to your total in two ways. The first is to hand in the cards you are given direct to the GM's desk. The second is to multiply the number of points by Telling Tall Tales.

Telling Tall Tales

This is a one-off process for any particular set of points you are given. There are times listed within the sessions when people will congregate to hear yarns, usually in the tavern or market square. However you can also do this at other times by collecting an audience of at least five people who haven't heard the story and weren't there when you did whatever it was. In either case there will need to be a GM present. You have the same number of

minutes to tell the story as there are points, up to a maximum of five minutes.

First give the Legend card(s) to the GM. Either you can tell your own tale, increasing the points to up to double their value, or someone else can tell it, in which case you get up to double the points and the storyteller receives up to the original value. You must of course have done a good job of telling your storyteller the tale in the first place! In either method the audience reaction and the GM's impression of how good the story is determines the number of points finally received. The GM will note the extra points on the card and sign it; they will then return it to the player to deliver it to the GMs desk. Of course witnesses, dramatic telling, and evidence make for a more convincing tale; but whilst exaggeration is natural, outright lying is considered bad form!

Setting out on a Voyage

To set sail, you need three things: a crew, a ship and a destination. The Crew must also contact the Harbour Master who will find them a Pilot (Ship GM). Some ships may be able to circumvent this requirement; they should go to the Treasure GM who will allocate a Ship GM.

One at their ship's table, the Crew need to appoint a Captain (who will choose officers and decide upon a destination.)

The Crew

The minimum size of any Crew is two people. The maximum size of a Crew is determined by the size and capabilities of the Ship, but every space may be represented by a player. Most ships of any size have a few NPC crew who are represented by a "Hench" card which comes with the Ship Sheet. These do not take any active part in sailing or combat but can be used to do one simple thing, such as stand watch or delivering a message.

A Crew may have a number of Officers. The first, and most important of these Officers is the Captain. The Captain is elected by the Crew and **is the only person who can give instructions to the Ship GM about actions** – Ship GMs will not listen to any other Crew member (unless there is a **Mutiny**.)

Other officers typically include:

First Mate (responsible for provisions and crew morale)
Navigator (responsible for steering the ship)
Look-Out (responsible for identifying encountered ships)
Gunner (maximum one per bank of guns)

The Captain may appoint any or all of these Officers before the Ship leaves port by giving each player the appropriate Officer card for the Ship, and is the only person who may do this. These posts may also be reallocated by the Captain at any time during the voyage unless that Officer is performing their duty at the time. A character may hold more than one Officer post at the same time (unless explicitly prohibited by the Officer card). The Captain decides at all times what the Hench crewmembers are doing and where- if guarding the ship they are left with the Ship Sheet.

Crew Morale:

A Crew can be Elite, Able or Scurvy. Most Crews are Able, but a Crew with a particularly good combined Sailing skill will be considered Elite. A lack of Rum is the most likely cause of a Crew becoming Scurvy and possibly Mutinying against their Captain.

The Ship

Each ship has a minimum Crew size in order to leave port (note – this does not include NPCs). Each ship will also have its own unique Ship Sheet and set of Officer cards, held at the Harbour Master's office when not actively sailing. Players only hold Officer cards when aboard ship. The Ship Sheet (held by the Captain when under sail) gives further details of the Officers and crew needed, and its capacity for both cargo and people. Fighting men or raiders take up people space; the Ship Sheet indicates how many the ship can carry.

The Sheet is also used by the Captain to record crew, passengers, the ship's state of repair, and cargo. Some cargo space will need to be taken up with provisions and rum; the First Mate (or Captain, in the absence of a First Mate) is responsible for provisions. They need to bring provision and rum item cards to the Ship GM who will determine how full the hold is. When these items are loaded they all become Barrels of provisions which are referred to elsewhere below and shown on the Sheet.

The Destination

The Crew must also decide where they are going. If they can't agree on a destination, it can be decided by show of hands; which means the Captain can be over-ruled. Once decided, the Captain should notify the Ship GM of their decision. The ship may hoist a flag at this point, or choose to keep their anonymity. The journey can now begin!

The Journey

A journey consists of several stages. *Normally you need a Ship GM for each stage. Note that at certain times, the Ship GM may be running more than one journey (although we shall try to minimise this as much as possible).* Each stage has three parts:

1. Navigation
2. Encounter
3. Morale check

Note that specific details about skill checks have been omitted for reasons of space; questions will be handled at the Introductory Briefing and during play.

1. Navigation: The Navigator must steer the Ship. How successfully they manage this task will determine the initial state of the subsequent encounter. A particularly bad piece of Navigation may result in the Ship getting Completely Lost.

2. Encounter: The Caribbean is full of surprises: Spanish Galleons filled with gold, French Navy ships, Dutch merchantmen, and who knows what else? Your Look-Out may help you to identify vessels before they become a threat to you – or, alternatively, before they sail away before you can catch them. A ship encounter consists of three parts: Closing In, Gunnery and Boarding.

- *Closing In* will require the Crew to utilise their Sailing skill to try and manoeuvre into the best position for attacking or defending.
- *Gunnery* enables the Gunner to launch Broadides or Targeted Attacks on the enemy ship. Good Gunnery will reduce the threat of an enemy including by damaging them – but beware; they may fire upon you with similar effects.
- *Boarding* will test the rival Captains' Leadership as they lead their crews against each other. Combat is the most likely

outcome, but a particularly successful Boarding may lead to the enemy's immediate surrender.

3. Morale Check: After an encounter has been resolved, and assuming that the Ship is still in one piece, all the Crew haven't been captured or killed, or that nothing else unexpected happened, then it will be necessary to check the Morale of the Crew. First, at least one Barrel of provisions must be consumed from the ship's provisions. Bad navigation (leading to a longer journey) may result in additional Barrels needing to be used up. Prolonged ship bombardment may also result in destruction of supplies.

If there are not enough Barrels, then rumblings of discontent will begin amongst the Crew. If a second Journey stage is completed with insufficient Barrels then they will become restless. If a third stage is finished without provisions then they will become Scurvy. (If two or more Barrels are required and the Crew are discontented, they skip straight to the Scurvy stage.)

Any Barrels consumed whilst the Crew are discontent, restless or Scurvy will immediately restore them to Able. However, a First Mate cannot attempt to hide Barrels to make a Crew intentionally Scurvy.

Mutiny

If the Crew are now Scurvy as a result of low morale, then some of the Crew may wish to Mutiny against their Captain. If the Crew decide not to Mutiny at this point, they will have another opportunity to do so at the next Morale Check, assuming that they are still rated Scurvy at this time.

If they do wish to Mutiny, they need to have a candidate (one of the characters with the highest Leadership amongst the rest of the Crew) who must Challenge the Captain (if there is more than one candidate, they must first resolve who is going to be the Challenger through a contest of Leadership). First, a show of hands is called for. If the Challenger has the support of more than three-quarters of the Crew, then the decision is clear-cut and the current Captain must resign. The new Captain will then decide what happens (both to the Captain and any Crew that supported them).

If the result is closer, then there will be a combat between the two. The participants must decide whether to have a duel or a brawl and how the outcome will be determined. The victor will then decide what to do with the loser. If no agreement can be made, the First Mate (if they are not the Challenger!) will decide how the combat will be resolved.

In either case, the Crew are restored to Able status, and lose all their discontent. If the Ship is still without provisions however, the new Captain will need to sail to their Supply Island or back to Benedicion rather than anywhere else (the Ship GM will deal with this special case) at once.

The End of the Journey

At the end of the journey the Captain will distribute any Legend Points earned during the trip at their discretion. You cannot return to the Freetown part of the game unless you have returned to Freetown harbour. When the ship does return to the harbour the Captain gives the Ship Sheet back to the Harbourmaster. He and the crew may also wish to arrange for any necessary repairs or reprovisioning. Repairs are made by bringing a willing craftsman up to see the Treasure GM. Should characters for some strange reason be left behind at a destination, they can be rescued by another player Ship passing that destination – other circumstances are at GM discretion.

Treasure Hunting

Many former pirates chose to bury their treasure on obscure islands, with the intention of returning for it later. Of course, almost as many failed to do so. However, not all of these hoards have been lost. Or, at least, their “owners” often left maps which held cryptic indications of where they may be found. Instead of seizing new treasure from raiding ships and ports, some pirates have chosen to go hunting for these legendary hoards. Be warned though: the clues may not be easy to follow... and the maps themselves may not be exactly what you expect.

There are many islands in the archipelago around Benedicion Island. All you need to locate a treasure hoard is to know which island it is on, and whereabouts on the island it is hidden. Gather a crew and persuade them that the adventure will be worth the reward.

Once you have reached your destination, you must then find the place where the treasure is hidden. All the islands have a standard 5 x 5 grid to search. Simply indicate which square you are going to choose, and inform the GM (see the diagram.) If you have understood the instructions correctly, then the right square will normally be very clear.

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25

The crew will usually only have time to travel to one particular square, so the decision about where to go must be made carefully. And, once there, your search may not be over immediately.

Assuming that you surmount all the obstacles standing between you and the treasure, the reward can be great. Everyone involved in the find can earn Legend points, along with whatever the treasure turns out to be.

But always beware. If you guide your colleagues to dig in the wrong place... they may not be terribly happy with you.

Fightin'

Sometimes there is nothing as satisfying as winning a closely debated point of philosophy in the local pirate tavern by thumping your opponent until they fall unconscious to the floor. Sorry, that should be - Usually there is nothing as satisfying...

When two characters or a character and a non-player character want to fight, either with fists (Brawling) or using deadly force (Combat) then the following procedure is used. Only one player character may ever fight one other player at a time. They are both running around, vaulting over furniture and moving too much for another character to get any attacks in. A second attacker just has to wait their turn at the end of the first fight.

Each combatant has a "Combat Deck" (somewhere about their person or back in their hotel room – go and get it now.) From their own deck each combatant chooses a "hand" of 5 cards.

Now the fight begins:

1. Each player **CHOOSEs** one action (a card) and holds it face down in front of them.
2. Both players **REVEAL** which action they chose.
3. If one of them has chosen an action that beats the opponent's choice they have **SCOREd** a nick (or a bruise in Brawling.) Which action beats which is listed on the card and also follows the wheel below.
4. Place the used card face down as a **DISCARD**. It cannot be used again until the all the cards of the hand have been used.
5. **REPEAT**

The first player to reach 2 NICKS is WOUNDED
In Brawling 2 BRUISES is STUNNED

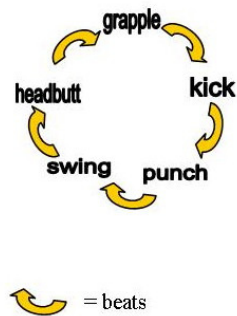
The fight now continues. If a WOUNDED fighter is now WOUNDED for a second time (2 nicks) they are unconscious and dying. A STUNNED brawler STUNNED a second time is unconscious but comes around in a minute (they remain stunned until they go and drink a tankard of grog.)

Once one of the combatants is WOUNDED or STUNNED they can choose to surrender. Refusal of a surrender prevents the refuser from gaining any Legend Points for the combat.

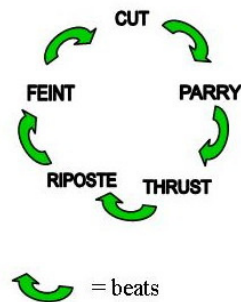
If the two combatants are different skill levels, the higher level fighter gets to use the blue results on the card as well as the standard ones. A combatant just one level higher loses this advantage if they are stunned or wounded. A combatant 2 levels higher retains this advantage even if stunned or wounded. (A dead or unconscious combatant no longer has this advantage!)

If a lower skill level swordsman/brawler beats a higher level one, they get the difference in their skills in Legend Points. This applies if they kill them/render them unconscious or if they accept their surrender. These points can be increased with Tall Tales as usual.

Brawling Rules Summary



Combat Rules Summary



Example:

Captain Kidd has challenged Captain Pugwash to a duel. He does this by walking up to his intended opponent and saying something like;

*“Have at you **Captain Pugwash!** Ya scurvy lubber.”*

The important things are that he is within easy talking distance and specifies by name who he is initiating the fight against. Feigning deafness is not a way to escape a fight nor is sprinting out of the same gamespace. Attempting either of these will cause a player to be docked legend points by the GMs. (A gentle stroll away, if an opponent is seen approaching, is possible.)

Both players must now choose which five combat cards from their deck they will use. This choice is locked for the rest of this combat, so careful selection is advised. Remember that there are two types of fight:

Brawling – anything non-lethal, including the use of fists, feet, bottles, chairs, parrots etc.

Sword Combat – anything with lethal intent, including the use of cutlasses, claymores, boarding axes, Karate kicks, bottles, chairs, parrots etc.

Check with the person initiating the fight, before you have chosen your cards, which type he intends.

In this case Captain Kidd adds that he is pulling out a very sharp cutlass, so the fight uses the Close Combat end of the cards (there are crossed swords in the background.)

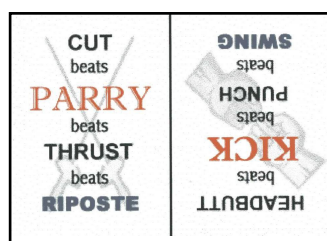
Both players having chosen their hand of five cards, they compare their respective skill levels.

Captain Kidd has a Sword skill of just 2 *(he has been worrying about where he buried his treasure too much to practise recently)*

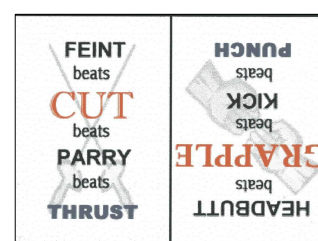
Captain Pugwash has a Sword skill of 3 *Oh dear.*

Each player now chooses a card and they reveal their choices together.

Captain Kidd plays:



Captain Pugwash plays:

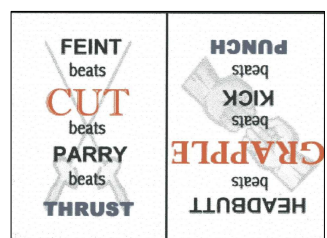


By reading from the cards it can quickly be seen that Captain Kidd's PARRY is beaten by Captain Pugwash's CUT. (From the combat wheel above you can also see that CUT always beats PARRY.) Because Pugwash also has a better Sword skill than Kidd he would also have won if his opponent had chosen to THRUST (He gets the second result on the card – CUT beats PARRY and THRUST.)

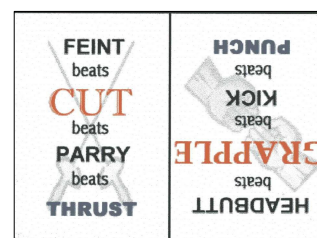
Captain Kidd is hit and gets a "nick sticker" to wear, but he is still in this fight. For now.

The next round the two players choose a card from their remaining 4 (remember they have used and discarded one of their hand of five.)

Captain Kidd plays:



Captain Pugwash plays:



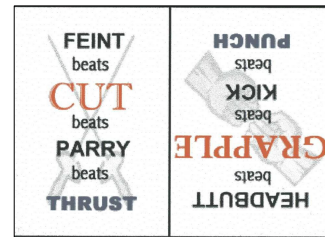
This time the result is a stand-off. If Kidd had chosen to play a RIPOSTE card (if he has a RIPOSTE card in his hand) you can see from the combat wheel that it would also be a stand-off.

The next round the two players choose a card from their remaining 3 cards.

Captain Kidd plays:



Captain Pugwash plays:



This time Captain Kidd has predicted the weakness in Pugwash’s sword fighting technique and chooses FEINT which beats Pugwash’s CUT. Now both combatants have a nick (and should be wearing a natty “nick sticker.”)

*As the fight continues, the next one of them to receive a nick will be **WOUNDED**. If it is Captain Pugwash who is nicked next and become WOUNDED, he will lose his advantage of using the second result on the cards as well as the first. (In the fight above Pugwash’s CUT would only now hit a PARRY not a PARRY or a THRUST.)*

When one of the combatants is WOUNDED they may surrender and ask for mercy. Refusing a surrender means that the fight will continue but no Legend Points will be won by the player doing the refusing. (If, in the fight above, Pugwash is wounded, surrenders and is granted mercy, Captain Kidd will get the difference in their skill scores as legend points; these can be increased in the usual way at Tall Tales sessions – Oh the boasting!)

*If a player is wounded for a second time in a fight they are **SERIOUSLY WOUNDED** and dying. Immediate medical assistance from a skill level 3 or higher healer might keep them alive; otherwise it is Davy Jones’ locker for them. There is an alternative. A dying player can crawl away and re-enter the game*

minus a leg, a hand or an eye (both players must go to see the Pegleg GM in this circumstance.)

Multiple Combats

Close combat moves too fast for two people to successfully fight against one target at the same time. The only exception to this is if one player has Backstab skill at level 2 or higher. The explanation of how this then works is on the card.

In Brawling things work slightly differently. If two pirates are fighting against one, the two play alternate cards against the one opponent.

If Captain Pugwash and Roger the Cabinboy catch up with Captain Kidd on another occasion and decide to punch his lights out, the combat proceeds as before using the non-lethal Brawling decks. Each player chooses their five cards but Pugwash and Roger alternate who plays a card against Captain Kidd. The higher of the two Brawling skills decides which one goes first. In this circumstance Kidd will run out of cards before his attackers, so will have to reuse his same hand, giving Pugwash and Roger the advantage of knowing all Captain Kidd's moves.

In the case of a barroom brawl(that's a bit la-di-da for pirates isn't it? Should be a "taproom brawl) with multiple combatants on each side, there is an optional rule to simulate the rolling, chaotic nature of this sort of event. After each card is played every brawler turns ninety degrees to their left and fights the closest person in front of them. It is strongly encouraged to attack friend or foe alike without preference in this type of brawl, for maximum enjoyment. At least one GM will be required to get the timing right for this sort of insanity.

NB It is difficult for a dead body to prevent their items being looted. They can only hope that they did not die surrounded by ruthless evil cutthroats and thieves - Damn your eyes!

Skills

Below are some descriptions indicating the effects of various levels of the common skills. This is an indicative list and is not intended to be exhaustive!

Leadership. Inspires people to follow them ...

1. aboard a ship
2. across an ocean
3. to the ends of the earth
4. into an unwinnable battle
5. to the very gates of Hell

Navigation. Enables them to plot a course...

1. from island to island
2. from sea to sea
3. across an ocean
4. into the unknown
5. to the very gates of Hell

Sailing – (Ship). Can set the rigging aboard...

1. a familiar ship adequately
2. a familiar ship competently
3. an unknown ship reasonably
4. an unknown ship expertly
5. any ship as it goes to the very gates of Hell

Boathandling. Can handle a boat...

1. on calm, placid waters
2. on choppy waters
3. in stormy seas
4. through a hurricane
5. across a lake of fire to the very gates of Hell

Identify Ships. Can attempt to identify a ship type...

1. at long distance
2. at far distance
3. at very far distance (on the horizon)
4. ... and the name of the boatyard it was built in
5. ... and its name and the names of all the crew

Cook You can...

1. make beans on toast
2. make a passable salmagundi
3. make a decent 3 course meal
4. create cordon-bleu dishes
5. legitimately call yourself the World's Greatest Chef

Cooper. Can make and repair...

1. simple barrels
2. leakproof barrels
3. watertight barrels
4. more complex watertight barrels
5. barrels respected by the crowned heads of Europe

Carpentry. Can...

1. put up a nice set of shelves / repair broken mast / do small jobs
2. make shelves and cabinets / jury-rig a mast / do larger jobs
3. make a range of acceptable furniture / make a new mast from scratch / refit a ship
4. make a piano / rebuild a shipwrecked ship
5. make a chair fit for a king / build a new ship from scratch

Gunnery. Can hit...

1. the broad side of a barn
2. a ship at close range
3. a ship at long range
4. a ship at far range
5. a ship over the horizon

Swim...

1. to a nearby longboat
2. across to another ship
3. to a nearby island
4. around the archipelago
5. to another continent

Pistol. You can fire at and hit...

1. someone... sometimes.
2. the broad side of a barn
3. the person you were aiming at
4. a limb on the person you were aiming at
5. a hair on the person you were aiming at

Sword. You can wield a sword...

1. at the right end
2. with some flair
3. using many manoeuvres
4. and exploit your opponent's weaknesses
5. and win with your eyes closed

Brawling. In a rumble, you will...

1. flail at random
2. strike with intent
3. use many manoeuvres
4. exploit your opponent's weaknesses
5. win with your eyes closed

Music. You can...

1. hold a tune / play a basic instrument
2. sing popular sea shanties in harmony
3. compose a popular sea shanty
4. compose a light opera
5. compose a symphony

Read/Write. You can...

1. follow simple text with your finger
2. get all but the really long words
3. earn a living writing
4. know this skill should really be called "Literacy"
5. be a Chair at Oxford

Disguise. I am wearing...

0. a disguise which is as poor as a stick-on false nose and glasses
1. a very poor disguise
2. a rather good disguise
3. an excellent disguise that fools almost everyone
4. a disguise so good that my own mother wouldn't recognise me
5. ... wait, I am not wearing a disguise

Languages. You can...

1. speak simple words and phrases
2. construct basic sentences
3. hold a coherent conversation
4. can discuss erudite philosophical issues
5. can write learned articles in jargon

Note: almost everyone speaks reasonable English. If you are speaking to someone in a foreign language you must openly display the skill slip for that language whilst you do it. If you want to join in a conversation you must also display your skill slip. If you can overhear

a conversation in a language your character speaks we rely on your honesty as to how much of it you understand. The general rule still applies about generally being overheard by other players; if you want to have a secret chat, keep your voice down, or go somewhere quieter.

Surgeon. Has a good chance to heal...

1. minor wounds and bruises
2. wounds and stuns
3. fatal wounds and internal injuries
4. major internal damage
5. life-threatening diseases

A character with the Surgery skill may attempt to heal another character with a Wound or Bruise. To attempt any Surgery in this fashion, both players need to see a GM to determine the outcome. However, a Surgeon with skill level 3 or higher can always heal a single Wound (the character may remove their sticker.) If they are nearby (i.e. aboard the same ship, or within Freetown) then they may be able to prevent the second Wound from killing or seriously incapacitating the victim (who still takes the first Wound, which cannot be immediately healed by the same surgeon).

Trade. You can make...

1. a poor deal
(sell something for barely what it is worth)
2. a good deal
(sell it for more than it is worth)
3. a great deal
(sell it for considerably more than it is worth)
4. an exceptional deal
(sell it and the buyer thinks he's got a bargain)
5. a deal with the devil at the very gates of Hell.

Trade actually works on the difference between two people's skill levels. Each cargo has a nominal value. The price is adjusted by 20% times the difference in levels –in favour of the person with the highest skill. For example, Bob (Trade 1) sells a barrel of rum (value 10 doubloons) to George (Trade 3). George actually pays 2x 20% less, ie 6 doubloons. If the buyer is really unhappy with the prices offered

after this calculation they of course can refuse to buy the goods; likewise sellers can make their deals better to shift their cargoes. If two people have the same skill level they simply have to barter for real. The Haggle special ability nullifies any Trade ability in the other person and Trade skills are then compared on that basis.

How do skills work?

Some skills work mainly in particular situations, eg sailing or fighting, and for these there are separate rules. Some are special skills which players have as slips on their Skill Rings, and the text on these describes how they work. For non-specialist skills the outcomes are indicated by the descriptions above. If you are trying to do something unusual or difficult or creating an item, see a GM. If you are in some form of contest or competition, the winner is decided by comparing skill levels (of course you can elect to declare or use a lower level of skill than you actually have). If two or more people have the same level of skill, you need to find a judge, ie another player with a relevant skill whose opinion you will abide by, or a GM.

The exceptions are Language, Trade and Surgeon, which are described above (also see Healing Wounds and Bruises); these are also not competitive.

Learning/Teaching Skills

It is possible (but difficult) to learn or improve skills in game. You can only be taught by someone with a skill two levels above *your* own; you *can* learn a new skill this way but only skills in the list above; this includes all languages. You must get the agreement of the person who is to teach you. If you are sailing you must spend an hour with your teacher to acquire the skill; you must tell the Skills or Treasure GM **before** you start. If you are on land you must spend a whole game session with your teacher to acquire the skill; you must tell the Skills GM within half an hour of session start. The players should roleplay the process of learning at some point during the training period. Once you have completed your training go to see the Skills GM, tell them what you have learnt and they will modify your skill accordingly.