

The Pool

A role-playing game by James V. West

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1. Character Creation

Write a 50 words Story (Who is the character? What does they want? Why?)

- Make it as if it was in introduction
- Focus on the main elements
- Make them fit into the setting

2. Assigning Traits & Bonuses

Pick the **most important elements** of the Story: these are the **Traits**

- can be anything (friends, enemies, a good horse, a knack for attracting trouble)
- must not expand the Story
- must not contradict the Story
- must be specific enough to avoid vagueness or game conflicts

Assign **Bonuses** (in the form of dice) to important Traits:

- cost is Bonus times itself (+2 costs 4 dice; +3 costs 9 dice etc.) subtracted from your Pool
- each player starts with a Pool of 15 dice
- leave at least 3-4 dice in your Pool

3. Casting the Dice

Dice are cast:

- to determine the general outcome of conflicts
- not to determine the outcome of an action

Anyone can call for a die roll whenever:

- a conflict is apparent
- someone wants to introduce a new conflict

State the intention: what do you want to achieve in this conflict?

SUCCESS is when rolling a 1 on any dice.

FAILURE is when no 1 is rolled.

When rolling you may add **Bonus Dice**:

- the GM will provide 1-3 dice
- add Trait Bonus dice, if there is a connection between the Trait and the intention
- gamble up to 9 dice from your Pool (but if you fail the roll you lose them)

4. Success & Failure

IF YOU SUCCEED you can choose to:

- add a die to your Pool + the GM narrates the positive outcome however they wishes
- make a Monologue of Victory (MOV) and narrate the positive outcome however you wish

When **making a MOV** you can:

- describe your character's actions
- the actions of those around them
- the outcome of those actions
- focus on less direct elements of the conflict (what's happening on the next room, who's entering the scene etc.)
- ask the GM questions or prompt the other players for responses

When **making a MOV** you cannot:

- make alterations to the characters of other players (but you can add complications for them)
- go against the established facts and tone of the game
- make it too long

IF YOU FAIL two things will happen:

- You lose any gambled dice
- The GM will narrate an outcome that is not what you intended however they wishes.

5. The Continuing Story

At the end of the session

- if you have 9+ dice left in the Pool: you start the next session with the same number
- if you have 8- dice left in the Pool: you start the next session with 9 dice

You may

- add up to 15 new words to your Story, in addition or in replacement of the old lines
- add nothing until the end of the next session, and then add 30 new words instead
- add new Traits, if you choose
- add or increase Bonuses to Traits, in the same way you did in Character Creation

6. At Death's Door

Characters have no Hit Points, but they can die.

When you fail a die roll in a lethal situation you can either

- accept death and make a final MOV to describe it
- make a final roll to save you

When making a **final roll**:

- no Trait or GM Bonus dice are granted
- all dice from the Pool must be gambled
- fellow players can gamble up to 9 dice each to help

No matter what, all gambled dice are lost.

If you succeed the final roll:

- Your character has survived
- The GM will describe how they cheated death

If you fail the final roll:

- Your character dies
- You get to make a final MOV to describe their death in detail