



# DEADWOOD™

The Cheapass Game of Acting Badly



**Lights. Camera. Fall off the roof.**

**Welcome to Deadwood Studios, home of the million-movie month. You're a bit actor with a simple dream. The dream of getting paid.**

**You and your cohorts will spend the next four days dressing up as cowboys, working on terrible films, and pretending you can act.**

**Your goal is to become the best actor in the backlot. Because it's good to have goals.**

**So strap on your chaps and mosey up to the roof. Your line is "Aaaiiggghh!"**

## About the Game:

*Deadwood is a fast-paced board game about actors, acting, and the thrill-filled life of a wandering bit player. It's perfect for 2 to 6 players, still decent with 7 or 8. Play time is about 60 minutes.*

*Using a 6-sided die to represent your talent, you will move from scene to scene across the backlot, taking the best roles that your rank will allow. After four days of acting, the most successful actor (measured by money, credits, and rank) is the winner!*

*This is a completely updated version of Deadwood, so if you have played older versions, you are in for a few surprises. Read these rules even more carefully than you would with a new game. Many rules that you may remember from previous editions are simply not here.*

*Deadwood was nominated for an Origins Award for Best Abstract Board Game of 1999, and it's twice as good now. They should nominate it again. Twice.*

## Components:

To play Deadwood, you will need to print the Boards and Cards files (these are separate PDFs) and assemble them. Detailed instructions for finishing these components are found at the end of these rules. You might also want a box.

**Players:** Best with 2 to 6. Handles up to 8.

**Boards:** There are four one-page board sections that can be rearranged in many configurations. They are super-easy to print and finish.

**Cards:** There are four pages of business card-sized cards (40 cards). They are formatted for pre-perforated sheets of business cards, but you can also print them on cardstock and cut them yourself. These cards are the same size as the cards in the original game, and the original cards are still completely compatible with the new rules. Hooray!

**Player Dice:** A different 6-sided die to represent each player. Invest in some awesome dice. They are you.

**Other Dice:** Six or more less-awesome 6-sided dice for rolling. It helps if these dice are smaller and plainer than the player dice, to prevent party fouls.

**Money:** Paper money in denominations of \$1 and larger, up to about \$50. We suggest pilfering it from Monopoly.

**Credits:** The other currency in the game is "credits." You can use the 100 and 500 dollar bills from the same block of paper money to represent 1 and 5 credits. Or colored chips.

**Counters:** You need about 40 small counters to act as both "shot counters" and "practice chips." Pennies will work great for this. And they're cheap!

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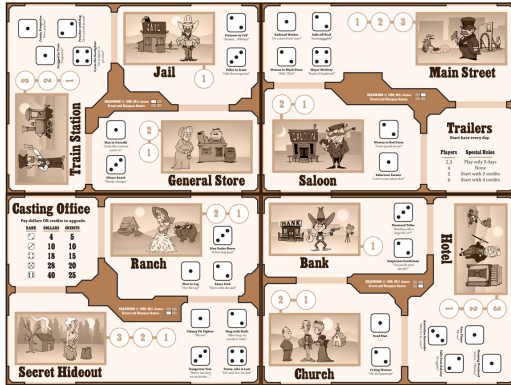
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*Yes! I gave Cheapass Games \$\_\_\_\_\_ for this game!*

To learn more, read the last page of this document, or visit [www.cheapass.com](http://www.cheapass.com).

## Setting Up:

The Deadwood backlot is represented by four rearrangeable board sections. Before you get creative, we suggest that you play your first game using the “basic” arrangement shown here. There are icons on the board to remind you how to arrange them in this default configuration.



Each player is represented by a 6-sided die, which shows that player's *rank*. Place each player's die in the Trailers. Everyone starts with a rank of 1.

Shuffle the deck and deal one card to each set on the board, face down. Each card is a scene. There are ten sets on the board and 40 scene cards, so you have exactly enough cards to play through 4 days.

Depending on where each scene is shooting, it might require 1, 2, or 3 shots to finish. On each set, place a “shot marker” on each of the numbered circles. You will remove these markers as you complete shots.

Determine randomly who goes first. Play will proceed to the left. Also, choose someone to handle the bank.

### Setup for Different Group Sizes:

Because we are all math geniuses (genii?) we have altered the setup to make this game perfect for different numbers of players. These alterations are also mentioned on the Trailers, and they are:

If there are **2 or 3 players**, play only **3 days**.

If there are **4 players**, there are no changes.

If there are **5 players**, start each player with **2 credits**.

If there are **6 players**, start each player with **4 credits**.

If there are **7 or 8 players**, rather than the credits listed above, start everyone with a **rank of 2**. The game is a little longer with 8 players, roughly 90 minutes.

## Your Goal:

The game lasts for four “days.” The object is to score the most points at the end. Your score will be a combination of your *money*, your *credits*, and five times your *rank*. This is explained in detail in the Scoring section.

## On Your Turn:

On your turn, you can do different things depending on where you are.

**Move:** If you are *not working on a role*, you can *move* one step and/or *take a role*. Both of these actions are optional.

**Work:** If you are *working on a role*, you must either *act* (roll a die), or *rehearse* (take a rehearsal chip). *You must either act or rehearse, because you can't walk off a role once you are on it.*

**Upgrade:** At the Casting Office, you can pay to raise your rank. You may do this before or after you move.

## Moving and Taking Roles:

**Moving:** If you are not working, you can *move*. Move from one area to any adjacent area, through any connection, such as stepping from the Trailers to the Saloon. You can take a role on the same turn, but you don't work on it yet.

If you are the first player to move into a set with a face-down scene card, turn that card face up.

Moving is optional.

**Taking a Role:** Taking a role just means placing your die directly on that role. If you don't want to take a role, stand in a blank area of the set. Multiple players can work on the same *scene*, but not on the same *role*.

There are two types of roles. Roles printed on the board are *extras*, who are working “for scale.” Roles printed on the cards are *starring roles*, who are working for a “piece of the action.” The two types of roles are similar in some ways, and different in others, as described in the next section.

You can only work on roles that are *equal to or lower than your rank*. As a general rule, high-numbered roles pay better than lower ones. But not always.

Sometimes it's better to work on scenes with other players, and sometimes it's better to work alone.



**Taking a role**



## Working on a Role:

Working on roles is how you earn *credits* and *money*.

Every film has a budget between 2 and 6 million dollars. This number dictates two things: how difficult the scene will be to complete, and how much money the movie will pay out. It turns out that big-budget movies are harder to complete. Who knew?

When working on a role, you have two choices: you can *act*, or *rehearse*. (Again, you can't leave until the scene is done.)

**Acting:** Acting means performing your role, or at least trying to. For this, you earn money and/or credits.

To act, roll one 6-sided die and compare it to the budget of the movie. If you roll *equal to or higher than* the budget of the movie, you *succeed*. If you roll *lower than* the budget of the movie, you *fail*.



The rewards for success and failure depend on whether you working *on or off the card*.

*On the Card:* When you succeed, remove a shot counter and take *two credits*. When you fail, you get *nothing*.

*Off the Card:* When you succeed, remove a shot counter and take *one dollar and one credit*. When you fail, you still take a *dollar*. Usually, extras earn more while they work, but less when the scene finally wraps.

*Moving Along:* Every set has one, two, or three shots. These shots must be completed before the scene is wrapped. When you succeed, remove one shot counter from the set; when you remove the last one, you have wrapped the scene.

**Rehearsing:** Instead of acting, you can *rehearse*. In this case, you do not roll and you do not earn anything.

To rehearse, add one "practice chip" to your die, stacking it on top or to the side. A practice chip gives you +1 to *all die rolls* that you make while acting *on this role*.

You can accumulate several practice chips if you want, one with each rehearsal, until you reach a point of guaranteed success. At this point, you have to act.

*Hint:* Because you have +1 for every chip, acting gets easier if you rehearse first. The chips remain through multiple shots, so rehearsal is extra-powerful on multi-shot sets.

## It's a Wrap!

When the last shot in a scene is finished, the scene wraps and you remove the card. You also pay out bonus money, but only if there was *at least one player working on the card*.

*Bonuses for On-Card Roles:* The active player rolls a number of dice equal to the budget of the movie (for example, 4 dice for a \$4 million movie.) These dice are distributed among the roles on the card, with the highest die going to the top role, the next die going to the next role, and so on.

This wraps around so, for example, on a \$6M card with three roles, the fourth highest die goes to the top role, the fifth to the second role, and the sixth to the third role.

The players who were working on these roles receive dollars equal to the dice assigned to those roles. Below is an example payout for a \$5 Million movie.

*Bonuses for Off-Card Roles:* When money dice are rolled, all extras on that scene receive a bonus equal to the size of the role they are on. So, an extra working on a rank-2 role (regardless of his own rank) makes a bonus of \$2.

If there was no one on the card, there is no bonus payment when the scene wraps. This means that extras will only earn their bonus cash when there was someone on the card.

## An example payout:

For a \$5M movie, roll five dice. They are distributed from largest to smallest. Start with the highest role and go down, wrapping back to the top. In this example, the top role makes **\$8**, the middle role makes **\$6**, and the lowest role makes **\$3**.









## Upgrading:

At the Casting Office, you can pay to improve your rank. You can do this at the beginning or end of your turn (that is, before or after you move). The cost to upgrade is shown below, and can be paid in either dollars or credits.

### Pay dollars OR credits to upgrade.

RANK	DOLLARS	CREDITS
	4	5
	10	10
	18	15
	28	20
	40	25

Note that the price to reach any particular rank is the same *no matter what rank you are now*. You do not have to pay for the intervening ranks. This means that becoming a 6 is the same price whether you are a 1 or a 5. You may find, however, that waiting to make a bigger jump is not always cost-effective, because you can often earn more in the meantime by taking an intervening rank.

## Ending the Day:

The day is over when there is only one scene left. *This last scene does not finish*, and there is no further payment to anyone who was still working on it. Players return to the trailers to play the next day.

After the fourth day, the game is over.

At the end of the day, to get ready for the next day, do the following:

*Return everyone's die to the Trailers.*

*Remove the last scene card from the board.*

*Deal ten new scenes onto the board, face down.*

*Replace all the shot counters.*

If there is another day, play continues with the next player. If this was the last day of the game, proceed to scoring.



## Scoring:

Your score is calculated as follows: score one point for every dollar, one point for every credit, and five points multiplied by your rank.

For example, if you have \$35, 10 credits, and you are rank 6, you have  $35 + 10 + (5 \times 6)$  points, or 75 points.

*Hint:* to make it easier to calculate your score, you can “sell” your credits and your rank, thus converting all your points to dollars. If you’re clever you will want to ignore this advice, but if you’re *very* clever you will realize that the merely clever people are working way too hard.

## Variants:

The only variant included in this package is the shifting boards. Feel free to experiment with different layouts for Deadwood Studios. But don’t be surprised if the game gets... a little weird. We expect that more variants, including new card sets and different boards, will appear soon!

## Expansions:

There were four expansions for the original Deadwood, each called ‘Another Day, Another Dollar.’ They had themes of *Horror*, *Space*, *Musicals*, and *Kung Fu*. If you can still find those, feel free to mix them in, but some of their special rules no longer make sense. We’ll be issuing new expansions for the game Any Day Now.

There was an expansion called “Deadwood: On Location.” This game has a cute but painful “waiting for the bus” mechanic that all-too-accurately simulates the frustration of waiting for a bus. It is recommended for historians only.

*Deadwood was first released in 1999 and was part of a Golden Era of Cheapass Games. Of course, even gold needs polishing now and then. In 2010 James Ernest and family took the game out for a spin and discovered that it had just a little too much “crazy.” Thus, it entered a cycle of redevelopment that lasted for eight long months. And now it’s super awesome!*

Deadwood was designed by James Ernest and Rick Fish, with help from Paul Peterson and Toivo Rovainen. It was tested by the indefatigable Cheapass Guinea Pigs. 2010 playtesters included Julie Haeahn, Joshua Howard, Tom and Cathy Saxton, and Jeff Vogel. Some rights reserved. Art from [clipart.com](http://clipart.com). Published by Cheapass Games, Seattle WA: [www.cheapass.com](http://www.cheapass.com).

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# Free? Seriously?

*Tell me a little more about that.*

Okay, here's the deal. If I made a great game and sold it to you for ten bucks, I'd probably keep about a dollar. If I sold it to a big game company, they'd probably make a nicer version for thirty bucks, and I'd still get about a dollar.

The rest of your money would go to printers, distributors, retail stores, and freight companies. And most of those guys don't know anything about what makes a great game.

Mass-producing entertainment is a gamble. It's a convoluted way for creators to protect their intellectual property, by selling it in a way that is prohibitively expensive to counterfeit. And it's getting a little old.

Why do you pay \$30 for a board game? The story goes like this: the retail price of a game covers the cost of manufacturing it, and there is no way you could make your own copy for that price, to say nothing of the hassle of finding little wooden men in six colors. So, it's worth \$30 because it costs \$30, *QED*.

But the value in a board game isn't the manufacturing cost. It's the play value. Unfortunately, this means that some games are priced way out of whack with what they are worth. And because the big gamble doesn't always work out, some of your money helps pay for the stuff that goes straight to the dump.

I've decided to try a different gamble. I'm giving my games away for free. This way, you can read the rules, make a copy, and even play the thing, before you decide what it's worth.

If you do like my games, I hope you will send me some money. But I'm also hoping you will share this experiment with your friends. You are my sales force, my marketing department, my demo team.

You're also my testers, so if you can think of ways to improve my games, please share them with me. I'm easy to find at big gaming conventions, and even easier online. Look for Cheapass Games on Facebook, or drop me a line at [cheapassjames@gmail.com](mailto:cheapassjames@gmail.com).

If we do this right, we will get famous and do shaving ads. But more importantly, we will prove that there is a better way for a creator to profit from his work.

And nothing has to go to the dump.

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## How to Make The Boards and Cards:

*Making your own boards and cards for Deadwood is simple. Here's how I do it. If you're an expert, you can ignore these hints and do it however you like.*

### Boards, Step 1: Full-Sheet Labels:

Full-sheet mailing labels are great. Get white ones, not clear, suitable for your type of printer. You can get them at any office supply store for about 25¢ each (in packs) and they will be very handy for making cards and game boards.

Print the four boards on full-sheet labels. Don't cut them until after you mount them.

### Board, Step 2: Heavy Card Stock:

Next, you need to apply the labels to heavy boards. Find something decent that won't warp. Corrugated cardboard is okay, or tagboard from a shirt box. For better boards, You can visit your local framing shop or art supply store, and see if they have any small scraps of matte board. Or just buy some matte board or illustration board.

Stick the labels to the boards. Don't cut them yet.

### Board, Step 3: Clear Contact Paper (optional):

Clear contact paper (for lining shelves) will make your boards almost waterproof. This is especially wise if you are using an inkjet printer. Cut sections of this stuff, larger than the boards, stick them down carefully, and then proceed to trimming. Or, if you want "wrapped edges," you can cut the boards first, and then apply the contact paper. In that case, cut it about four inches larger than the boards (two on each side), and miter the corners so that it will wrap properly.

### Board, Step 4: A Good Guillotine Cutter:

If you don't have an awesome guillotine paper cutter, use the one at the local copy shop. Or get one.

Trim the boards by trimming off the outermost eighth-inch of the artwork, so that the doorways from one board flow into the doorways from another. You can eyeball this or use a clever marking device to make all your cuts perfect. The cut should run down the middle of the outside wall.



### Cards, Step 1: Paper

You can print the 4 sheets of Deadwood cards on plain white paper and cut them with a guillotine cutter.

They also fit on pre-perforated sheets of business cards. These can be a little pricey, so look for a good deal online, or a sale at the office supply store. Choose plain white stock if you can. Also, be aware that perforated sheets don't always feed well through anything but a straight paper path.

Regardless of the details, pick a paper thick enough that the ink doesn't show through.

### Cards, Step 2: Printing

Print the card fronts file and, if you wish, the card backs file on the back. Card backs are a matter of personal taste, and they are not really required. But they do look nice.

### Cards, Step 3: Cutting

If your business cards are pre-perforated, then you can just break them apart at this step. If not, you should use your favorite paper cutter.

Perfect cutting doesn't matter much on these cards, because they are only shuffled once. This means you can just eyeball it and do pretty well. If you want more precision, do this:

Make the first cut vertically, down the *center* of every sheet, hitting the crop marks as closely as you can.

Next, cut the cards horizontally. Use the crop marks for this cut. It doesn't matter if the cards are slightly different heights. You should now have 40 cards with one raw edge.

Finally, your cutter should have some kind of backstop that lets you set the cutting depth. Set it to 3.5", and trim the raw edge off every card. The cards should now have a consistent width, which makes them easier to shuffle. In this step, you care more about getting a uniform width than about hitting the crop marks.

### Everything Else:

The other parts for Deadwood are easy to scrounge from other board games, with the possible exception of the box. I have an extensive collection of empty game-sized boxes at my house. Maybe you should start one.