"Clocks" in Roll20

What the hell are clocks? Well, they show you the progress of time. And some nifty game designers figured out that they can be used in roleplaying games, too! They're usually used to track progress of *something*, which indicates how far away a benefit or an impending doom is.

As far as I know the idea was initially promoted by Vincent Baker's "Apocalypse World". The recently published Blades in the Dark by John Harper has a great explanation on how to use them properly (Blades is also a great game, you should check it out!).

The things you need

- A **Roll20 account** (obviously)
- A **game** on Roll20 (again, that's what we're doing this stuff for)
- You need to be at least the **GM** of that game (**Creator** works as well)
- The **images** of the clocks

Let's expand a bit on the "images of the clocks" part, because that's the most difficult part of it:

The clocks do not actually have hands that move around. Each "hour" or segment of the clock is it's own image. This means for a 4-clock (a clock with 4 fillable segments) you need 5 images: One with no filled segments and one each for segment to fill. This means an N-clock always needs N+1 images. Make sure to have those!

Creators have done this already and you can profit from it. If you can't find any on the internet, I have some set and done. You can find them behind this link.

Bringing the "Clocks" into the game

Log into Roll20 and the join the game you want to create the clocks in.

(1) Navigate to the "Collection" tab in the top right corner. It is indicated by three lines with a dot in front of them. The headings "Macros", "Decks" and "Rollable Tables" should be visible now.

(2) Click the "+ Add" button near the Rollable Tables heading. If you can't see the button, you're not logged in as GM! A new table should show up below.

(3) Click the name of the table to open its creation dialog.
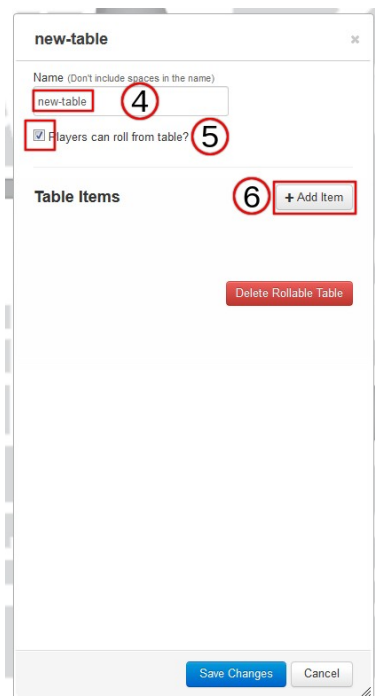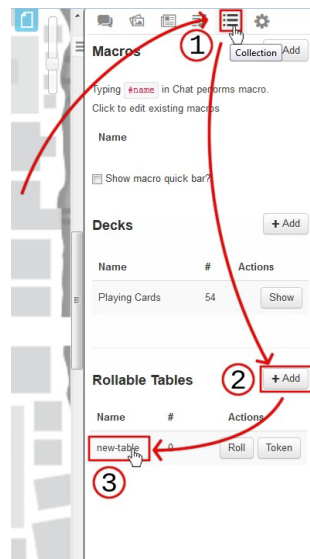
(4) Give the clock an appropriate name, so you can recognise it easily.

I usually name them "clock-N" where N is the number of segments the clock has.

(5) Deactivate the "Players can roll from table?" option. Our clocks don't need that option and it might obstruct other wanted Rollable Tables for the players.

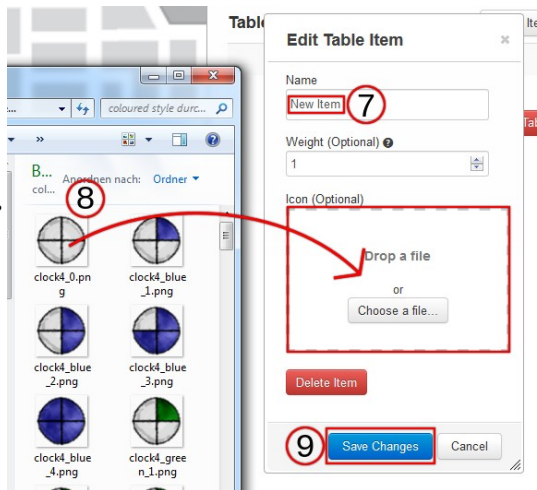(6) Click the "+ Add Item" button to add a new segment.

Cont.

(7) Give the segment an indicating name.

I usually name them after the count of filled segments in that image. So "0" for the first one, "1" for the second, etc.

(8) Drop the file into the marked area or use the "Choose a file …" dialogue. Wait for the upload to finish.
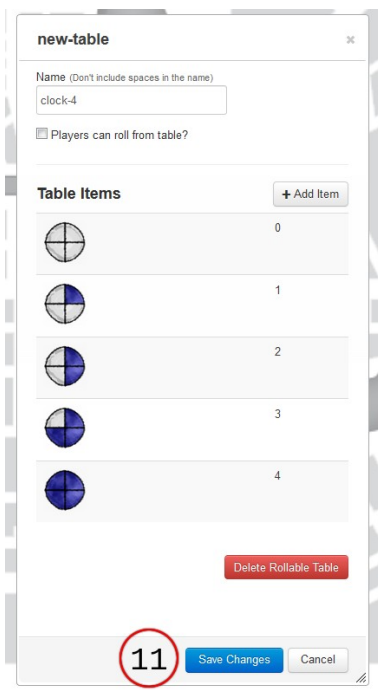
(9) Hit the "Save Changes" button.

(10) Repeat steps 6-9 until all images are in list. Remember: N+1!

Your table should now look similar to the one on the left.

(11) Hit the "Save Changes" button of the table dialogue.

(12) Repeat steps 2-11 until all the clocks you want are created.

In the next part we will figure out how to use the clocks in the game.

Using "Clocks" in a game

From my point of view it's the best practice to set up the different clocks as usually needed and just copy and paste those, if you need new clocks.

Setting up Clocks

Log into the game in which you created the clocks.

(1) Navigate to the "Collection" tab in the top right corner. It is indicated by three lines with a dot in front of them. If you just created the clocks, that tab should still be active.

(2) Click the "Token" button of the clock you want to set up.

(3) The clock will show up in the middle of the currently visible map area. Double click on it to open the "Edit Token" dialogue.

Cont.
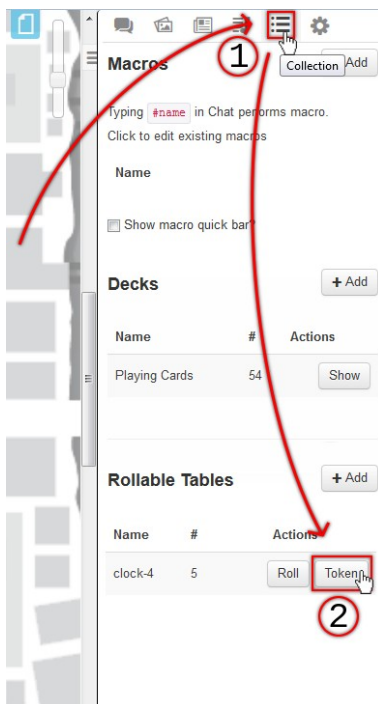
(4) Enter the name of the clock into the textbox labelled "name". I use the name of "Random N clock" for the set ups. Make sure to tick the checkbox labelled "Show nameplate?". Note: This is misleading, because not all players can see it yet, only GMs.

(5) To fix that, navigate to the "Advanced" tab in the top left of the dialogue.

(6) Tick the "See" checkbox next to "Name" of the player permissions. This will allow your players to see the name we entered above.

(7) Click "Save Changes" to leave the dialogue.

Cont.

Random 4 clock

(8) The clock should now look like the one to the left. If you don't see the name under it, make sure you ticked the "Show nameplate?" checkbox in step 4. If players tell you that they can't see the name, make sure you've done step 6.

(9) Repeat steps 2-7 for all types of clocks you want to set up.

(10) Gather all the clocks you need in a spot where you can find them easily, so you can copy and paste them, when you need them in game. In order to change the name of the clock to represent what you need it for,

*In the next part we will figure out how to change the filled segments of the clock.*

Changing segments of a Clock
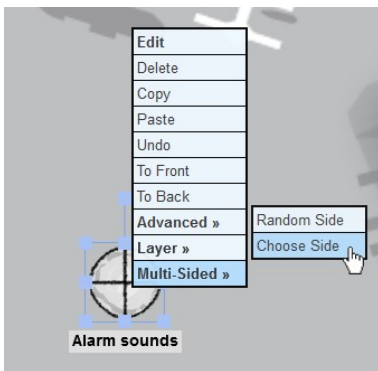
To change the filled segments of a clock, right click on it and navigate "Multi-Sided" → "Choose Side" and click on it.

A dialogue with a slider will show up. Use the slider to choose the image with the correct representation of filled segments.

If you created the segments in order, it should be easy.
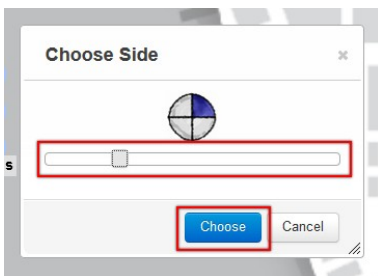
When you're done, click on "Choose" to confirm.

That's how you use clocks in Roll20. For more information on how to deal with clocks in general, take a look at what the rules of the game tell you.

About the Author

Hey, I'm David aka "Red Eye Ragnarok".

I create guides like this one in my free time to help people doing awesome tabletop rpg sessions. All content I create is free, but my patrons get an early access until I finished the content pack.

If you like what I'm doing here, please consider becoming my patron over at www.patreon.com/redeyerpg. Supporting me this way allows me to create more content to make rpg sessions more awesome.

Have a nice day!

~ David