

BLADE RUNNER:

REP-DETECT

by I. J. Thompson

Welcome to **Blade Runner: Rep-Detect**, a game of action and suspense for 2-4 players based on the 1982 film *Blade Runner*. In this game, you portray one of the film's titular detectives - part cop, part bounty hunter... all human?

Your quarry: five genetically-engineered humanoid *Replicants*, who have illegally escaped to Earth from the off-world colonies and are virtually indistinguishable from the human population.

Your job: shoot to kill, upon detection, any trespassing Replicant.

This isn't called execution.

It's called retirement.

(Note: this game has been created purely for free, purely for fun, and is not intended to be bought or sold. If the license-holders have any objection to the existence of these materials, they need only contact me and I will happily remove them.)

GAME COMPONENTS

There are only a few components required to play **Blade Runner: Rep-Detect**, and, apart from the dice, they are all provided. Instructions for printing and assembling the included components can be found in their own document, found in the same location as this one. The components of the game are:

BOARD: The game board represents futuristic Los Angeles, and features many of the Locations seen in the film. For the purposes of these rules, the word 'Location' refers only to these named areas - the nine city Locations, and the four players' Homes. The grey, circular spaces on the board are the means by which players get from place to place, but they are not Locations as such and cannot be Investigated. However, when the word 'space' is used in these rules, Locations are included in that term - though they are Locations, they are still also a 'space' that can be moved through or landed on.

Each corner of the game board has an area for one player, designated by colour. It is in these areas that players record their skill values and place the cards or counters representing the Replicants they have retired, Sympathizers they have killed, or the Replicants that they are rescuing.

Additionally, there are spaces provided on the board for the Draw Deck, Discard Pile, Replicants deck, and Out-of-Play cards. The related decks don't need to be placed in these areas to play the game, but the spaces are provided for your convenience, and for clarity.

If the Draw Deck is ever completely emptied of cards, the Discard Pile should not be shuffled to make a new Draw Deck until such time as one of the players needs to draw a card - this is because more cards may yet be discarded by the players before that time comes.

It is recommended that players not be allowed to look through the Discard Pile during the course of a game, as this can slow things down. However, this rule can be relaxed somewhat while new players are learning the game.

CARDS: There are sixty playable cards in **Blade Runner: Rep-Detect**: 9 Clues, 12 Hassles, 19 Helps, 15 Suspects, and 5 Replicants. The five card types are described further below.

COUNTERS: Included in the card deck is a set of player counters,

ready to cut out and assemble. A player might choose to employ plastic stands from another game to use with these counters, but they are not required. Alternatively, coloured pawns from most any other board game, coins, beads, or other identifying markers will work fine, as well.

REFERENCE CARDS: Also included in the deck are two double-sided reference cards. One side describes the 'Phases of a Turn', while the other provides information on 'Becoming a Sympathizer'. You can't learn the complete game rules solely from the information presented on these cards, but they are included for easy reference and can be given to new players or thrown away once all players are familiar with the game.

DICE: One of the players will need to provide two six-sided dice to play the game. These dice should be of two different colours, or in some other way distinguishable from one another. Designate one die the 'Blade Runner die', the other the 'Replicant die', and do not deviate from these distinctions.

CARD TYPES

There are five types of cards used in **Blade Runner: Rep-Detect**, each type identified by a different-coloured title (though the card type is written at the beginning of the card's game text as well, for ease of reference). **A player's hand limit is five cards** - under no circumstances may a player have more than five cards in his hand. Also, players may not voluntarily show their hand to other players - they may only be ordered to do so by certain cards. If the text on a card contradicts any of the rules described in these rules, the card text takes precedence. The five card types are:

CLUES: These green-titled cards represent useful information found during the course of an Investigation. They are almost always tied to specific Locations on the board, enabling the Clue's owner to draw extra cards at the related Location when he arrives there (keeping in mind that no player may have more than five cards in his hand). Once the Clue is played, it is discarded. Clues are most often played for one's own benefit, but there can be the rare occasion when a player chooses to play a Clue on another player, during that player's turn.

Clues that affect card draws must be played before the cards are drawn.

HASSLES: These yellow-titled cards are, for the most part, the opposite of Clues, and usually reduce the number of cards a player may draw when they Investigate a Location. Like Clues, most (but not all) Hassles are related to specific Locations on the board - when a player arrives at a Location and begins to Investigate, any player with a relevant Hassle can play it on that player, who suffers the result. Then, the Hassle is discarded. Hassles are most often played against other players, though it is not unusual for a player to play a Hassle against himself to make room in his hand for a more desirable card later on.

Hassles that affect card draws or die rolls must be played before the cards are drawn or dice are rolled.

HELPS: These white-titled cards offer a variety of effects that either benefit the owning player, or hinder another. Like Clues and Hassles, a player may play a Help on any player at any time, regardless of whose turn it may be (if the Help must be played during a certain phase of a turn, or only on one's own turn, the card will say so). Once its effect is resolved, the Help is discarded. Players most commonly play Helps to benefit themselves, but, like Clues, there may be occasions when the owner of a Help will play it to assist another player.

Helps that affect die rolls must be played before the dice are rolled.

SUSPECTS: These blue-titled cards represent the 'persons of interest' who can be found around the city, and who may or may not be Replicants. Players test these Suspects using the Voight-Kampff empathy scale during their Detection phase. It is important to note

that a Suspect in a player's hand is not literally 'with' that Blade Runner - you might say that the Suspect is 'on his mind'. It is only when the Suspect is played to the Blade Runner's Location during the Detection phase that the Suspect is physically present at the Location.

REPLICANTS: These red-titled cards are the ultimate goal of the game. It is only through interacting with these cards, by either retiring or rescuing them, that a player may win. It is important to note that Clues, Hassles and Helps may not be played on Replicants - they may only be played on other players (Blade Runners or Sympathizers). There are five Replicants in the game: Batty, Leon, Pris, Rachael, and Zhora.

When playing a card onto another player or Location, players should clearly announce that card's title. That way, there is no question as to the order in which everyone's cards were played.

THE RULES

While it is recommended that you read this complete rulebook before starting your first game of **Blade Runner: Rep-Detect**, you don't need to. If everyone is ready to play, you can start immediately by simply following the steps presented here.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

There are three ways to win a game of **Blade Runner: Rep-Detect**. As soon as one of these events occurs, the player in question wins the game:

1. Retire more Replicants than any other Blade Runner (tallied when the fifth and final Replicant is retired, if there are no active Sympathizers currently in play).
2. Escape from the city as a Sympathizer, ideally rescuing one or more Replicants in the process.
3. Be the last player whose character (Blade Runner or Sympathizer) is still alive and in-play.

To begin the game, place the four Blade Runner counters (Red, Blue, Green, and Yellow) in their respective 'Home' spaces. Then, shuffle the five Replicant cards and place them face-down on the space labeled 'Replicants'. Now, shuffle the remaining 55 cards and place them face-down on the space labeled 'Draw Deck'.

Each player now selects a player colour and seats him/herself before the corresponding section of the board. Have each player roll one die (the Blade Runner or Replicant die - it doesn't matter for this roll), re-rolling any ties for highest place; the player with the highest roll will take their turn first, and play continues clockwise around the table until the end of the game. Before the first regular turn begins, however, we need to perform the Preparation Round.

THE PREPARATION ROUND

The player who rolled highest now chooses his/her skill values. There are three relevant skills in a game of **Blade Runner: Rep-Detect**. These are:

Investigation

This is a reflection of a Blade Runner's street smarts and knowledge of the city. A person with a high Investigation skill is adept at finding Clues, talking their way into sensitive areas, and spotting suspicious persons in a crowd. Additionally, in a Combat situation, a high Investigation skill will aid a player in searching their location for anything that might help to keep them alive. In game terms, the Investigation skill dictates how many cards a player may draw at a Location.

Detection

This skill represents a Blade Runner's proficiency with the Voight-Kampff empathy test - the mechanical device that can definitively prove whether a Suspect is a human or a Replicant. The Detection skill reflects not only a Blade Runner's familiarity with the equipment itself, but also the sensitivity and observational skills required to know what questions to ask, and when. In game terms, a player's Detection skill is added to a die roll when administering the Voight-Kampff test to a Suspect.

Combat

The most straightforward skill, Combat encompasses not only physical strength, but also marksmanship, agility, physical endurance, and tactical savvy - the ability to get 'the drop' on one's opponent. In game terms, a player's Combat skill is added to a die roll when in combat with a Replicant, Sympathizer, or Blade Runner.

The player gives each skill a value from 1-4, and all three skills must add up to exactly 6. Write these values in the spaces provided on the board, or on a scrap of paper that is visible to all. Then, the player draws a number of cards from the Draw Deck equal to his/her Investigation skill - these cards make up the player's starting hand. The Preparation Round then continues clockwise around the board. No player may have the same skill values as any other. When all players have taken their turn in the Preparation Round, the first player now takes his first regular turn, and play continues clockwise thereafter.

TURN SEQUENCE

There are 5 phases in each turn: Move, Investigation, Detection, Combat, and Discard. Each of these phases, apart from the Combat phase, are optional - a player may choose not to Move, Investigate, Detect, or Discard, but a player in Combat has no choice but to fight. However, while some of these phases might not occur on a given turn, the order must be followed exactly - if a player forgets to perform a phase, he/she may not do so at a later time. Let's examine the phases in detail:

Move

Since one's ability to get around the city is partially dependent on outside factors, the player rolls a die and may move any number of spaces up to the number rolled. A player may move in any direction he wishes, while observing the following rules:

- Players in their own Home must move immediately out of it if they can, and may not re-enter it unless they are a Sympathizer.
- Players may not move directly back into a space they just left.
- A player currently in Combat may not move.

Any number of players may occupy the same space, and players may move through one another at will (though again, a player in Combat must skip her Move phase entirely). A player not in her own Home may choose not to move at all (for example, if she wants to continue to Investigate her current Location). However, if a player rolls to move, he/she must move at least part of the amount rolled (i.e., a player may not roll to move, decide he doesn't like the result, and choose to remain at his present Location instead).

(Example: Red is currently at Animoid Row, and wants to get to The Snake Pit to follow up on a Clue in his hand: 'Not Fish... Snake Scale!'. The Snake Pit is 6 spaces away, but he rolls a 5. Red can't make it all the way there this turn, but he has the option of instead going to the Tyrell Corporation, Police Headquarters, White Dragon, Chinatown, or any space up to 5 spaces away from Animoid Row. Red really wants to get to The Snake Pit quickly, so he moves the full 5 spaces and ends up one space shy of his destination.)

Investigation

If at a Location, and even if you are already engaged in or going into Combat, the player may Investigate by drawing a number of cards equal to his Investigation skill, possibly modified by any Clues or Hassles played by himself or others. However, no player may ever have more than 5 cards in their hand - no matter how high a player's Investigation skill on a given turn, he may only draw a number of cards that would bring his hand up to 5 cards or less. Additionally, players may not Investigate the Police Headquarters Location.

(Example: On a later turn, Red (with an Investigation skill of 2) arrives at The Snake Pit and plays one of the 3 cards in his hand: 'Not Fish... Snake Scale!', which gives him +1 Investigation at that Location, enabling him to draw 3 cards [because playing the Clue has dropped his current hand count to 2 cards]. Unfortunately, Blue plays 'Buzz Off', a Hassle that reduces Red's Investigation by 1 at The Snake Pit. Luckily, one of Red's 2 remaining hand cards is the Clue 'Precious Photos', which gives him +1 Investigation at any Location. He plays it [reducing his current hand count to 1 card], and draws 3 cards.)

Detection

If the player is at a Location, is not already in Combat, and has one or more Suspects in her hand, the Detection phase begins. The player places one of the Suspects in her hand face-up at the Location and rolls a die, adding her Detection skill to the result (possibly modified by any Helps or Hassles played by herself or others). If the result is less than the Suspect's Evasion number, the test is inconclusive and the Suspect must be released (discarded) - the player then continues on to the Discard phase. If the Detection result equals or exceeds the Suspect's Evasion, the test is successful and the player rolls an additional die: on a result of 1-3, the Suspect is human and must be released (discarded). If the result is 4-6, the suspect is a Replicant - discard the Suspect, draw the top card from the Replicants deck, and place it face-up on the Location... it's time for the Combat phase.

(Example: One of the 3 cards Red drew is a Suspect with an Evasion of 6. Red's Detection skill is 3, but Green plays 'And If the Machine Doesn't Work?', which reduces Red's Detection skill by 1. Nonetheless, Red rolls a 4, for a final Detection score of 6 - a success. A second die roll yields a 5: the Suspect is a Replicant. Red discards the Suspect card, draws the top Replicant card, and places it on The Snake Pit... it's Roy Batty!)

Combat

The player rolls both the Blade Runner die and the Replicant die, adding his Combat skill (again, possibly modified by any Helps or Hassles) to the Blade Runner die, and the Replicant's Combat to the Replicant die. If the Blade Runner's total is higher, the Replicant is retired and placed in that player's Retired/Rescuing box. If the result is a tie, the player remains in Combat and proceeds to the Discard phase. If the Replicant's total is higher, the Blade Runner is killed (see: Death). Then, if there are no other Blade Runners present at the Location, the Replicant escapes (place it on the Discard Pile), and the player's turn is now over.

A player may only Combat one character during his Combat phase, no matter how many enemies may be present.

(Example: Red (with a Combat skill of 1) plays the Help 'That's the Spirit!', which increases his Combat skill by 1. Unfortunately, Yellow plays the Hassle 'Time to Die!', which reduces it by 1. Red rolls both dice. The Blade Runner die comes up a 1, for a final Combat of 2, while the Replicant die yields a 3, so Batty (whose Combat is 3) has a final Combat of 6. Red would be killed, but he plays the Help 'Desperate Leap' - this card keeps him alive, but he remains in Combat and must miss his next turn. Red tips his counter onto its side to remind himself of this; on his next turn, he may do nothing but stand the counter back up.)

Discard

Rounding out a player's turn, the player now has the option to discard any number of cards from her hand. Although this phase can be easy to forget while in the heat of combat, it is vital - because a hand with fewer cards in it enables the player to Investigate more effectively - i.e., draw more cards - on her next turn (remember: you may never have more than 5 cards in your hand). However, a player may only discard Hassles at Police Headquarters - the only other way for a player to get rid of Hassles is to play them against herself or others.

(Example: Although Red must miss his next turn, his current turn isn't finished yet, and he may still discard cards. He discards the Clue 'That's the Hotel' because he feels the related Location is too far away to warrant going there. He'd like to discard the Hassle 'You Not Come Here!' (-1 Investigation at Eyeworks), but he can't, because Hassles may only be discarded at Police Headquarters.)

Play then proceeds to the next player, clockwise around the table.

DEATH

If a Blade Runner is killed, discard the player's hand, place his retired Replicants and Sympathizers out-of-play, and place the counter back at its Home - but do not Investigate the Location. The player will need to set out again on his next turn as a new Blade Runner, with the same skill values as the last and with an empty hand - he'll have to get into the city 'cold' and gumshoe around for more Clues.

A player needn't be too disappointed if his Blade Runner is killed - combat in **Blade Runner: Rep-Detect** is fast and deadly and, in a roundabout way, being killed early can actually facilitate winning the game later on.

A Sympathizer who is killed discards all of his cards, has his counter placed in the Retired/Rescuing box of the Blade Runner who killed him, and is permanently out of the game.

SYMPATHIZER

If even one Replicant manages to kill a Blade Runner and escape into the Discard Pile, it is inevitable that one of the players will eventually draw that Replicant from the Draw Deck and into their hand while Investigating a Location. At that point, the player has a big choice to make: skip to his Combat phase, play the Replicant to the Location and try to retire it, or become a Sympathizer. A Sympathizer consciously decides to abandon his career as a Blade Runner and side with the Replicants, and might even be one himself (though whether the Sympathizer is a human or a Replicant is open for debate, and beyond the scope of this game).

If the player chooses to become a Sympathizer, he keeps the Replicant(s) that he has drawn from the Draw Deck in his hand until the Discard phase of this or any of his future turns (it is important to note that, like Suspects, a Replicant in your hand is not physically 'with' your character until it is on the board, visible to all). Then, the player places any Replicants and/or Sympathizers he's previously retired Out-of-Play, takes the Replicant(s) from his hand, and places it in the Retired/Rescuing box - announcing that he is a Sympathizer and is attempting to rescue the Replicant(s).

Now, starting with his next Move phase, the Sympathizer must make it to his Home as quickly as possible, stop there, and Investigate the Location as normal. Meanwhile, the other players will likely pursue the Sympathizer, trying to engage him in Combat. Blade Runners do not need to catch the Sympathizer on a Location to attack it - any space on the board is eligible. When one or more Blade Runners catches the Sympathizer, they must fight one of the Replicants that the Sympathizer is rescuing first (the Sympathizer decides which one). That Replicant fights all attackers until it is retired. Then, the next Replicant (if there is one) takes over. While the Replicant is battling Blade Runners, the Sympathizer is still considered to be in Combat with them and may not move. Once all Replicants present are retired, the Blade Runners are now in direct Combat with the Sympathizer. If

on any of the Sympathizer's future turns he is in his Home, not in Combat, and able to Move, the Sympathizer leaves the city (taking any rescued Replicants with him) and wins the game!

Suspecting a Blade Runner of Sympathy

If you believe that another Blade Runner is going to sympathize (maybe you saw a Replicant in their hand via the 'Suspicion' card, or perhaps the Draw Deck with a Replicant in it has just been emptied and you're sure that a particular player has the card), you are in an advantageous position: since a Sympathizer can only reveal themselves (and their Replicant) in their own Discard phase, you can Combat them before they can get their Replicant into play. In most cases, you'll want to keep your suspicion to yourself so that you alone may act on it. However, if the suspected Sympathizer is far away across the city, it may be a good idea to accuse the player in front of everyone - you'll potentially be giving away the kill, but at least you might keep the suspected Sympathizer from winning the game

If you Combat a suspected Sympathizer and defeat him, that player must show his hand to all. If a Replicant card is there, that's all the proof you need that they were going to sympathize and you may claim the kill; place their counter in your Retired/Rescuing box, and that player is out of the game. If he defeats you, the attack was in self-defense and the player suffers no penalty; restart in your Home as normal. If it's a tie (or if you have to play 'Desperate Leap'), the suspected Sympathizer is free to move away from you on his own turn as normal (he's still a Blade Runner after all, even if only for the moment).

Be warned: if you kill a suspected Sympathizer and it turns out that they don't have a Replicant in their hand, you have murdered a fellow officer and are permanently out of the game. Your victim, meanwhile, restarts in his own Home as normal.

DEGREES OF SUCCESS

While it is certainly pleasing to win a game of **Blade Runner: Rep-Detect**, winning by retiring several Replicants (and maybe even one or two Sympathizers along the way) is even better. Similarly, as a Sympathizer, winning the game by escaping the city with a carload of Replicants makes for a pretty good feeling. For this reason, players may like to quantify their victories, to compare their degree of success against themselves and others.

If you win the game as a Blade Runner, you get one point for each Replicant in your Retired/Rescuing box at the end of the game. For each Sympathizer in your Retired/Rescuing box, you get two points. Remember that, if your Blade Runner is killed at any time during the game, all the Replicants and Sympathizers in your Retired/Rescuing box at that time are placed Out-of-Play and do not count toward your point total. Only the characters in your Retired/Rescuing box at the time of your victory grant you points.

If you win the game as a Sympathizer, for each Replicant in your Retired/Rescuing box, you get one point (you do not get a point for 'rescuing' yourself - that's what your victory is). Additionally, if you rescue a Replicant who previously saved your life as a result of the 'I Owe You One' card (and you have not been killed in the interim), you receive two points for rescuing that Replicant.

Since the amount of possible points to be won is different for Blade Runners than it is for Sympathizers, points won between the two types of victories should not be compared to each other (because they can't be, in any meaningful way).

ALTERNATE CUTS

While the rules collected above represent the complete game of **Blade Runner: Rep-Detect**, the following variants can be an enjoyable change of pace. If one (or more) of the following 'cuts' is to be used, all players should be in agreement as to which one(s) will be

used before the game begins.

Desolation Path

This is the no-Sympathizer variant of the game. In Desolation Path, no player may become a Sympathizer, and any card text related to being one should be ignored. The only way to win the Desolation Path cut is to retire more Replicants than any other Blade Runner. While this variant removes one of the more thrilling elements of the game, it can be useful when teaching the game's mechanics to new players, negating the added distraction that Sympathizers can create.

Dangerous Days

In the Dangerous Days cut, death is permanent. If you are killed by a Replicant, Blade Runner, or Sympathizer, you are out of the game. While this variant can be particularly excruciating, it does add an extra layer of tension, and certainly makes for shorter games.

Blade Runner Blues

This is the solitaire variant of the game, and it's called Blade Runner Blues because, well... it's kind of a drag. However, this cut can be useful in learning the game's mechanics before getting a group together, and is included here for that reason. In Blade Runner Blues, you are on your own against all five Replicants. You should couple this variant with Desolation Path and Dangerous Days, to ensure that there is a challenge. If you eventually manage to retire all five Replicants... "you've done a man's job, sir!"

STRATEGY TIPS

In closing, here are just a few things you may wish to keep in mind:

- Once all five Replicants have been identified (when the Replicants deck is empty), remember to discard all of your Suspects and any Helps related to Detection during your Discard phases - they're no longer needed.
- If you have drawn a Replicant from the Draw Deck and you intend to become a Sympathizer, it might be a good idea to get as close to your Home as you can before you reveal yourself as such. That said, be warned that the longer you hold a Replicant in your hand, the greater the chance that another player will discover it by playing the 'Suspicion' card on you (or steal it via 'Street Bandits').
- If you have a high Investigation skill, you may want to discard any Clues that you draw. You're a keen enough observer that you don't need them taking up space in your hand.
- If you play 'Suspicion' against a Blade Runner and they have a Suspect in their hand, but they didn't test one in their last Detection phase, that's a pretty good sign that the player intends to sympathize, and is just waiting to draw a Replicant.
- If you have a low Combat skill, you may want to keep your distance from Blade Runners with a high Combat skill. If you engage a Replicant and roll a tie or have to play 'Desperate Leap', nearby high-Combat Blade Runners will swoop in and steal your kill. And if you decide to go the Sympathizer route, they'll be right there to put an end to your plans.
- If you play 'Suspicion' on another Blade Runner and they don't have an escaped Replicant in their hand, it might be a good idea to pretend that they do. If another player heeds your warning and kills the Blade Runner, only to find no Replicant in his hand (i.e., no proof that the Blade Runner was going to sympathize), you've just rid yourself of one opponent.

*Thank you for playing **Blade Runner: Rep-Detect**. Have rules questions? Gameplay stories you'd like to share? Want to rate or review this game? Please come and visit us on our page at boardgamegeek.com!*