

SOUR

GRAPES.



It's a trash zine role playing game!



Sour Grapes is a mini-adventure rpg based off of rolling and collecting sets of dice poker style.

The entire game mechanics are handled by rolling five six-sided dice. The result is ranked poker-hand style and if it is higher than the difficulty level, the roller wins!

That's it?

That's it! Well, basically no. There are tricks that you can perform to increase the chances of

success. You can steal dice, change values, re-roll and even throw caution to the wind and gamble on your rolls. You can even do this during other rolls much to the annoyance of your team.

Ok, so why should I bother spending my time to learn this?

This is a great question! Not all games are for everyone. The main goals of Sour Grapes is to be casual, simple, collaborative and creative.

Casual - These are one shots designed to be played between epics or during downtime. They exist for a few sessions and then it's all over.

Simple - Our goal is that you should be able to keep all the basic game rules in your head and provide quick references for things that get complicated

Collaborative - The game has a sharp increase in difficulty and the only way past is for parties to learn to collaborate. This is a key part of the game and a unique challenge for players who wish to solve every problem alone.

Creative - This is an opportunity to really explore ideas and concepts you might work into your epic adventures. These games are meant to be open ended, open world and very short. Introduce strange characters, try out different themes or just sit back and watch the party suffer from their own mistakes!

During character creation players will have 10 points to fill any stat in any column up to a maximum of three points per stat. This will be used as the basis of calculating their life pools as well as their challenge level.

Physical

Endurance

Finesse

Strength

Challenge Level

Mental

Resolve

Focus

Intelligence

Challenge Level

Social

Personality

Prestige

Command

Challenge Level

Sum all the numbers in the column and write the word in the box that matches with your total: 0 - Trivial, 1 - Easy, 2 - Normal, 3 - Moderate, 4 - Tough, 5 - Difficult, 6 - Hard, 7 - Expert, 8 - Impossible, 9 - Absurd

Life

Sanity

Influence

Sum all the numbers in each column, add one, and multiply by 4.

Once these values are filled out each player will receive 4 bonus tokens to place on their character sheet. When a bonus token is spent it goes back to the storyteller who can give them back during the game to reward good playing.

When creating a character, taking damage, making rolls or performing actions you will run into Health, Sanity and Influence.



Health - Your physical being



Sanity - Your mental prowess



Influence - Your social capabilities and standing

Each one of these categories has three stats. You can have up to three points in a stat, the more points the better you are in that stat.

Health

Endurance - resisting physical pain, exhaustion

Finesse - a physical challenge, fighting, running, jumping

Strength - physical power, threatening

Sanity

Resolve - resisting mental or spiritual stress

Focus - an intense mental or visual activity

Intelligence - identifying something, research, understanding

Influence

Command - resisting social pressure, leadership

Prestige - performing a sophisticated social activity, intimidation

Personality - convincing others

Every point you have in a stat is used to determine how many times you can roll dice. It also determines your challenge level in that category and your health pool in that category.

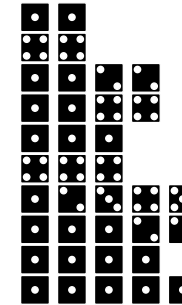
This book will start with the basics: Rolling, Challenge Levels, Health and Tricks. These four sections cover the fundamental rules of the game. Then it will finish with Combat and finally Character Creation.

In order to use this book you will want to have a Sour Grapes adventure booklet handy.

This is a game of rolling five six-sided dice and making a poker hand. In order to be successful in an action the roll must meet or beat the difficulty set by the storyteller. The table below shows the minimum hand necessary in order to beat the difficulty.

Challenge Level Table

- 1 - Trivial
- 2 - Easy
- 3 - Normal
- 4 - Moderate
- 5 - Tough
- 6 - Difficult
- 7 - Hard
- 8 - Expert
- 9 - Impossible
- 10 - Absurd



Every roll will require a stat to be used, this is determined by the storyteller. The difficulty is also chosen by the storyteller. The person performing the action will roll five dice. For each point they have in the roll-stat they can do a flat re-roll of the dice. When re-rolling they disregard their previous roll and roll the entire set of dice again.

You can re-roll up to the total number of points you have in the identified stat. You can stop re-rolling at any time when you have achieved success.

This may not seem fair. That's because it isn't! The chances of rolling a straight even with three re-rolls is not easy, you might say it's Hard! Don't worry, there's plenty of ways to modify your roll through tricks which will be explained later.

Note: The Challenge Level is the **baseline** difficulty for a task. This can be increased/decreased at the storyteller's discretion depending on the type of action being performed. The more intense the action against the target, the more difficult it gets.

Character Challenge Levels represents how difficult it is to hurt, influence or outsmart a character. They are determined by adding up all of the points spent on stats in a category and then matching that number with the **Challenge Level Table**. There is a Challenge Level for each category (Health, Sanity, Influence). A roll against the character must meet or beat the Challenge Level to be successful.

Health Challenge Level = Endurance + Finesse + Strength

Sanity Challenge Level = Resolve + Focus + Intelligence

Influence Challenge Level = Command + Personality + Prestige

0 - Trivial, 1 - Easy, 2 - Normal, 3 - Moderate, 4 - Tough, 5 - Difficult, 6 - Hard, 7 - Expert, 8 - Impossible, 9 - Absurd

Passive Rolls (Did you hear something?)

The storyteller will make a secret roll against a particular category. If that roll does not meet the Challenge Level of a player then the success goes to the **player**. If the storyteller meets the Challenge Level of the player then the success goes to the **storyteller**.

*Example: Do the players notice that they are being followed? The storyteller makes a secret roll and asks if anyone has a challenge level in Sanity higher than **Difficult**. One player says yes, the storyteller informs that player they are being followed.*

Non-Combat Character vs. Character Rolls (Let's make a deal)

First the storyteller decides the category that best represents the type of action (Health, Sanity, Influence). The target's Challenge Level in that category is now the baseline difficulty. A Stat is identified from the instigator to be used for re-rolls. The instigator now makes rolls against the target's Challenge Level.

*Example: Can the players convince the bartender to leave the back door open? The storyteller decides this is a **Sanity** roll against the bartender with a challenge level of **Hard**. The most convincing player uses their **Personality** (stat for re-rolls) to convince the bartender.*

Character vs Thing Rolls (Sure I know how to use this)

Picking a lock, driving a car off a ramp or trying to operate a helicopter follows the same process. First identify the stat, then the storyteller determines the difficulty (Challenge Level) and a roll is made.

*Example: The lock is jammed. One of the players wants to kick it open. It's a tough oak door. The storyteller decides it is going to be **Tough** and the re-roll stat is **Strength**.*

Right, let's talk about tricks. When the game starts every player gets four bonus tokens. These tokens can be used to perform a trick. When spent they go back to the storyteller who can give them back at a time of their choosing.

1. Bribing - Any turn. Add a die to the die pool. It stays in the die pool through all re-rolls.
2. Stealing - Not during your turn. Roll an extra die and place to the side. That number is a "Stolen" number and any die from the pool that match that number are ignored in the pool. If no dice match then you are caught and it's an **automatic success**. If dice were stolen and a re-roll is announced the stolen dice are brought back into the pool for the re-roll.
3. Gambling - Any turn. Roll an extra die and place to the side. Whatever number that die lands on is considered "Wild". Any die from the pool that matches that number can be changed to any other value. If no dice match the "Wild" die then it is an **immediate failure**, regardless of if the roll had a winning hand.
4. Gambling & Stealing - If both a gamble die and a steal die are rolled and they wind up with the same number it is a **collision** and both die are removed.
5. Lying - Your turn only. Keep your dice hidden. Say something objectively true or false about your dice. This could be "I have a pair of fours", "I have only one three" or "I have at least one six". You do not need to tell everything about the dice. The storyteller announces if you are telling the truth or lying. Reveal the dice. If the storyteller guessed correctly they re-roll exactly 3 die in your pool of their choosing. If the storyteller was incorrect you re-roll 3 die in your pool of your choosing. If the statement is too ambiguous the re-roll will go to the storyteller.
6. Cheating - Your turn only. If you have the option to re-roll you can instead choose to re-roll only a portion of the dice, at least one.
7. Begging - Not during your turn. If someone announces a re-roll you may lock up to 3 dice from a roll that is not yours. These dice cannot be re-rolled. Announce your plans to beg before the re-roll.

Start with 5 six sided die. Each trick can only be performed once on a roll. A re-roll is considered a new roll and all tricks can be applied again.

1. **Bribe** - If bribing add one die to the pool. The die stays in the pool for all re-rolls.
2. All dice go in a cup.
3. **Steal and Gamble** - Before making a roll anyone may announce plans to Steal, or Gamble. Roll a die for Stealing and/or Gambling now. Place the die to the side. If Steal and Gamble is played in the same round and they match it is a **collision** and both die are removed.
4. **Lie**
5. **Reveal dice**
6. **Steal** - Remove dice that match Steal. If no die match Steal it's an auto-success and the **action ends here, no re-rolling**.
7. **Gamble** - Any die that matches gamble is Wild and can represent any number the gambler chooses. If no die match Gamble it's an auto-fail and the **action ends here, no re-rolling**.
8. **Present final score**. Action ends if success or there are no re-roll options.
9. **Announce re-roll**
10. **Cleanup** - Add Stolen dice back into the pool. If gambling physically change the Wild dice to the number you want them to be before re-rolling. Remove reference Gamble and Steal die.
11. **Cheat and Beg** - Anyone may now announce plans to Cheat or Beg. When begging the beggar chooses which dice stay on the table. If cheating the roller chooses the dice that stays on the table.
12. Go to step 1

Tricks should be part of the narrative in the story. When using a trick consider what your character is doing to get an advantage. Do they "Steal" by distracting the guards rushing up to attack? Do they take a big risk and "Gamble" their next move? Or maybe they simply take advantage of the situation and make a calculating decision to their favor resulting in a "Bribe" or a "Cheat". Whatever is done should be brought into the story, if you can't think of how to make it work then you can't play the trick!

In a typical rpg you will have one 'health' bar and as you take damage that will go down until you are dead. In Sour Grapes it's the same only there are three ways to take damage.



Health - Your physical health. When you take physical damage you are beaten, bruised or unconscious



Sanity - Your mental health. When you take mental damage you become broken, insane or unable to focus



Influence - Your social health. When you take social damage you become a pariah, or suspect everyone is against you

To calculate your life pool sum up all the stats in each category and add one:

Health = Endurance + Finesse + Strength + 1

Sanity = Resolve + Focus + Intelligence + 1

Influence = Command + Personality + Prestige + 1

Then multiply the result by 4.

Passive Recovery

There is no concept of Passive Recovery in this game. Players will need to be smart and work together if they are to stay alive.

Active Recovery

Players can heal through means if they take time to seek medical attention (health), defeat their daemons (sanity) or right the wrongs they have committed (influence). By performing a critical action (storyteller's discretion) a player can heal 4-12 points.

Hardships

It's twenty minutes into a four hour session and a player did something dumb, now they are at zero sanity. First the player must be taken to an area outside of combat where they have several hours to rest and recover.

The player will take a "Hardship" and must permanently remove one stat point from the category they are at zero with. Then the player will update their new Challenge Level and will be brought back to ½ of their life in that section. If they go to zero again they lose two stat points and health is cut in half **again**. If they go to zero a third time it's over. If they have no points to spend it's over. They are either dead, insane or the entire party no longer trusts them.

A witty retort will send me to my grave?

What happens when all the players decided to go with what they know best and ignore social skills entirely?

Influence is a powerful thing. Influence is a way to measure how the world views the players and how much the players trust each other. Having no influence means that you are not trusted in a social circle.

Since these are one-shot adventures there will likely be a limited setting, such as an evening tea party with vampires or a single city to explore. In these instances having your influence reduced can be deadly. In fact, their poorly planned actions may diminish influence at any time the storyteller decides.

When it comes to reducing the influence of others not all social attacks can be done at any time. In order for a social attack to be successful it must be done in a way that exposes the character to be not trusted in the community.

Interrogation or convincing an unwilling person to perform an action requires social and mental tricks by threatening their prestige or weakening their resolve. However direct personal attacks outside of a social circle will damage **Sanity** and not **Influence**.

If you find yourself with little influence it's important that it is reflected in the broader story. Are you hunted? Exiled? Or simply considered a bully?

Moving to a new area is one way to recover influence that is lost, however going back to the old place will reset your influence to it's previous value.

How to hurt people physically, mentally and emotionally

Regardless of it is a shoulder-mounted-laser-cannon or a simple well timed insult at a dinner party the method of determining damage and outcome are the same. All basic actions, such as weapons, have three properties: The Damage they deal, the stat you must be proficient in, and the stat used to roll.

Challenge Level (CL): The category (Health, Sanity, Influence) to determine the target's challenge level.

Damage: The target category (Health, Sanity, Influence) and base damage. If there is a modifier (2 + Strength) that means it does the base damage (2) plus however many points you have in that Stat (Strength)

Requires: The minimum value you need in a particular stat in order to use the action.

Roll Stat: The stat the attacker uses for re-rolls

<u>Name</u>	<u>CL</u>	<u>Damage</u>	<u>Requires</u>	<u>Roll Stat</u>
Punch	♥	♥1 + Strength	Finesse 1	Finesse
Sword	♥	♥3 + Finesse	Strength 1	Finesse
Sleep Dart (Thrown)	♥	♻️3	Finesse 2	Focus
Witty Retort	👑	👑1 + Prestige	Personality 2	Personality
Knife (Thrown)	♥	♥1 + Finesse	Finesse 2	Finesse
Handgun (Fired)	♥	♥3 + Focus	Focus 1	Focus

Range (Thrown/Fired)

To keep things simple, ranged weapons are either **thrown** or **fired**. A fired weapon, like a handgun or longbow, has a maximum effectiveness of line-of-sight. If someone is 20ft away or 200ft away it's best to assume they are in range of a fired weapon.

Thrown weapons have a maximum distance of 10ft +10ft for each point in Strength.

Coverage

Partial-cover increases the character's Challenge Level by 2

Full-cover increases the character's Challenge Level by 4

Armor

The armor will have a Soak rating. Soak ♥1 means the armor reduces the final damage by one point in health.

Specials follow the same rules as basic attacks except there is usually more narrative around what they do and how. Special abilities could be casting magic or special weapons that have unique properties. Specials also come in the form of abilities that work in and out of combat and there are special items that might do interesting things:

Special Weapon

Name: Hand Grenade (Thrown)

Requires: N/A

Damage: *

Roll Stat: Focus

Challenge Level: Health

Special:

Splash Damage Make a single attack for all people in a 20ft blast radius. Reduce the Challenge Level by three for everyone. Anyone who successfully avoids the attack takes ½ damage.

Deadly ♥12 Damage to everyone in the 20ft circle + (Finesse x 4)

Special Ability

Name: Body Language Expert

Requires: Focus 1 | Personality 1

Special:

Twice a day you can automatically determine if someone is lying without needing to roll.

Special Item

Name: Lock picks

Requires: Focus 1 | Finesse 1

Special:

Reduce the challenge level of picking a lock by 2 when using lock picks.

Combat refers to any event where characters are actively trying to ruin another character's life, sanity or influence. This means combat could be represented as a haughty tea party or dwarves fighting a hoard of werewolves... or dwarves having a haughty tea party with werewolves.

Combat consists of Events, Rounds and Turns. Events is the overall combat narrative, a round consists of all characters ranked in order and a turn is an individual character performing an action. Each round every player takes a turn based on their initiative, when the round is complete it starts over or the event ends when there are no more combatants.

1. **Event** - An event is announced, all parties roll 5d6 for initiative and are ranked highest to lowest. Players can use tricks to increase their initiative rolls, or decrease others, but they cannot re-roll (They can Bribe, Gamble, Steal and Lie)
2. **Round** - A round is broken into turns with the highest ranked person going first.
3. **Turn** - An individual decides which **two** things they are going to do:
Action: Perform an action against another character
Move: Move to a different location. If you are using a grid layout a character can move 2x the number of physical points they have
Task: Perform a simple task such as handing another character something, drinking, switching weapons
4. The round finishes and if there are still combatants go to step 2

