

RUNNING A PATHFINDER ADVENTURE CARD GAME DEMO WITH SKULL & SHACKLES

This guide provides advice for running demos with cards from the Skull & Shackles Base Set. It doesn't restate the rules; rather, it points you to sections of the Skull & Shackles rulebook as needed. Before you demonstrate the game for people you don't know, please familiarize yourself with the rules and play through the demo a few times with friends.

In the demo, players will experience an abbreviated version of the scenario that kicks off the first chapter of Skull & Shackles. The demo is designed for 2–4 players, but it works best with a party of 4. If you are demonstrating the game for 1 to 3 people, please join them as a player yourself; if you have 4 people, guide them without playing. This demo should run approximately 30–40 minutes.



After completing this demo, whether the players succeeded or not, each player earns a deck upgrade and a mini-Chronicle sheet for the Pathfinder Society Adventure Card Guild. A player can apply this upgrade to one character built using a Pathfinder Adventure Card Game Class Deck; use the rules in the Pathfinder Society Adventure Card Guild Guide to Organized Play (see paizo.com/pathfindersociety). After building her deck, she may replace one card in her starting deck that has

both the Basic trait and the B set indicator with another card of the same type that has the B set indicator; the deck upgrade card does not need to have the Basic trait. She can then fill out the mini-Chronicle sheet with her name, her character's name and class, and her Pathfinder Society number. She should also indicate which card she has taken in the "Deck Upgrade" section of the mini-Chronicle sheet. Each player may earn only one mini-Chronicle sheet per season.

SETUP

Before interacting with players, take cards from the Demo Card List in the back of this booklet and separate them into the following stacks:

- A 14-card stack for each character, with the character's token card on top, the character card beneath it, and the 12-card character deck below it. (The deck lists are in the Demo Card List found in the back of this booklet.)
- A 6-card "story card stack": The adventure card (Plunder and Peril), the scenario card (Island Hopping), and the 4 location cards (Coastline, Fog Bank, Lonely Island, Shark Island). Note that all of the story cards have one side that's more colorful—that's the face of the card.
- A 4-card "bane stack": 2 monster cards (Blood Moon Pirate and Merfolk) and 2 barrier cards (Man Overboard! and Pirate Hunting)
- A 4-card "boon stack": 1 ally card (Deckhand), 2 item cards (Anchor, Emerald of Dexterity), and 1 weapon card (Boarding Pike)
- A 4-card "threat stack": 1 villain card (Adaro Barbarian) and 3 henchman cards (Enemy Ship and 2 Hammerhead Sharks)
- A 3-card "fleet stack" (Shackles Pirate Ship, *Wormwood*, *Truewind*)
- A 6-card plunder stack (Sailor, Nautical Charts, Black Spot, Fire Lance, Heartbreak Hinsin, and Magic Buckler.)

Place the party's ship (Merchantman) on the table, randomly choose 1 plunder card, and stash that card facedown under the ship. Set aside the fleet card; the Plunder Table is on the opposite side. You should have 22 blessing cards left over. If you intend to play a standard demo, randomly select 12 of them to form the blessings deck; for a longer demo, select 15. (If you're short on time, you can select just 8 blessings, but if your group is unlucky enough to draw the villain early on, the game could be unwinnable.) You will need the remaining blessing cards only if the party defeats the villain but the villain is able to escape.

BEGIN THE DEMONSTRATION

When the players are ready to start the demo, pass them the 4 token cards and ask them to each choose a character. Don't show them the character cards or decks yet—encourage them to make their choice based on the artwork and the character bios, relying more on the flavor of Pathfinder and general fantasy tropes. If you're playing, choose your character last.

After each player has chosen a character, pick up the story card stack. Show the players the adventure card and explain that you're beginning Island Hopping, the first adventure in the Plunder and Peril Adventure Path. Read the flavor text on the card to them, then put the card faceup on the table. (See the diagram in the rules for an example table layout.) Show the players that the adventure card says that to complete Peril and Plunder, they have to complete five scenarios, starting with Island Hopping.

Show the players the scenario card and explain that the characters are a group of adventurers at sea on a pirate ship. Read the flavor text to them, then put the scenario card faceup next to the adventure card.

Explain that each scenario normally uses several locations depending on the number of players, but for this demo, you're using 4 locations. Put the location cards faceup on the table.

Explain that each location is represented by a deck of cards, and that you normally build the decks using the deck list on each location card, plus the villain and henchmen listed on the scenario card, to create a unique location deck drawn from the hundreds of different cards that come in the full version of the game. For this demo, though, you're using a simplified list. Shuffle the bane stack and deal 1 random card to begin each location deck, then shuffle the boon stack and deal them out to the location decks.

Pick up the threat stack. Explain that this scenario involves finding the Adaro Barbarian villain card (show that card), cornering that villain, and then defeating him. Along the way, you are likely to encounter Hammerhead Shark henchmen and an Enemy Ship (show these cards). Shuffle the threat stack, then deal one card to each location, explaining that the Adaro Barbarian and the henchmen are hiding somewhere in the Shackles. Explain that the Adaro Barbarian will attempt to escape if overwhelmed, so the players might have to fight him multiple times (avoid going into detail now—explain it further when they confront the villain).

Shuffle one location deck, and ask the players to help shuffle the other three. If you have a standoffish player, this is a good opportunity to increase that player's involvement.

Put the blessings deck facedown near the middle of the play area, leaving room next to it for a discard pile.

PLAYING THE DEMO GAME

Explain that you're almost ready to start the scenario.

Hand each player the character card and deck matching the token she chose. The players will naturally want to look at these cards, but tell them not to do that just yet. Ask them to put their character cards on the table with the cards list facing up, and put their decks facedown next to the character card. Tell the players they'll use their token cards to track their characters' current locations. (If you have miniatures or pawns, feel free to use those instead.) Have the players put their tokens at their starting locations. For the demo game, Lirianne begins at the Fog Bank, Lem and Valeros begin at the Coastline, and Jirelle begins at the Lonely Island. (Don't place tokens for characters that aren't being played.)

Point out the cards list on the character card, and tell the players that normally, this list tells you the number of each type of card you can put in your deck; for the demo game, though, their decks are a bit smaller. Show the players that these lists are different for each character—for example, because Lem is a bard, he gets the most spells. Valeros the fighter, though, has lots of weapons but no spells. Tell the players that the numbers listed to the right of the white checkboxes are called card feats—once you check off the boxes, you get to have more cards in your deck. You gain feats (and get to check boxes) after completing scenarios and adventures. Explain that this is one big way that characters grow over time. Acquiring new cards as you play is another, and acquiring special cards called role cards (which are not part of the demo) is yet another.

Tell the players that each character has a favored card type printed above the cards list, and that characters will always start with a card of their favored type in their hand. Point out that Lem's card allows him to choose a type. Suggest that he should choose "weapon" for this demo.

Tell everyone to flip their character cards to the other side; direct their attention to the skills section. Explain that the dice listed next to the bold skill names are the dice they'll use when attempting checks with those skills, and that if they're using one of the non-boldface skills, they get to add the number listed to the die they roll. Point out that there are skill feats, and they work much like card feats.

Direct players to the powers section, and have them read their powers, but tell them that you'll explain the powers in detail when the players are able to use them. Note that for Valeros, Lem, and Lirianne's powers, it matters whether there are other characters at their locations. Show the players that there are power feats.

Point out the hand size on each character card, then have the players shuffle their decks and then draw that many cards. Make sure that everyone has at least one of their favored card type in hand. (If they don't, see Draw Starting Hands in the rulebook.)

Since this is a cooperative game and a demo, suggest—but don't



require—that the players play with their hands faceup in front of them.

Ask how many cards are in Valeros's hand, then ask how many cards are in Jirelle's hand. **Explain how damage is dealt and healed in the game** (see Taking Damage in the rulebook), pointing out that Valeros's smaller hand size essentially makes him tougher because it caps the amount of damage he can take at any one time.

Point out that each character's deck is effectively her Hit Point total—if someone cannot draw because she is out of cards, she is dead.

Show the players that the back of the rulebook has a reference sheet that reminds them how to do important things, like the different actions that make up a turn, and tell them that you're now going to lead them through the first player's turn. **Direct the person to your left to begin his turn** by flipping over the top card from the blessings deck to create the blessings discard pile. Everyone will lean in to read the card. Tell them not to worry about what it says right now, because **the blessings deck is primarily the timer for the game**—if someone goes to turn over a card there and there are none, the group has lost the scenario, and the villain has won. Tell them that, because they're not playing that card from their hands, they don't get to use the powers on it. However, have one player show a Blessings of the Gods card from her hand, and explain that the bottom power of that card means that players with Blessings of the Gods can use them as if they were the top card of the blessings discard pile. Take this opportunity to explain the many uses of the Blessing of the Gods card.

Show the players their ship and begin explaining how ships work. You can explain the rest of the ship rules as they come up during play.

Tell the first player that he shouldn't worry about giving cards to other players or moving this turn, and that the player should explore the current location deck. Tell him he is about to reveal either a boon or a bane.

Explain that boons—weapon, spell, armor, item, ally, and blessing cards—represent good things that the characters can use to help them achieve victory. Because players can give cards to other players, it's often worthwhile to acquire a boon even if the player who encountered it doesn't want it. Also point out that even if a character fails to acquire a boon, the party has still made progress: the location deck that character explored is smaller, which shortens the party's hunt for the villain.

Explain that defeating banes—villain, henchman, monster, and barrier cards—provides valuable progress in the hunt for the scenario's villain. Let the players know that when parties fail to defeat a scenario, it's usually because the group didn't find and defeat the villain in time. Failing to defeat a bane usually hurts at least one character, and it doesn't get the party closer to defeating the villain. It's generally in the group's best interest to defeat every bane they encounter, so other

players should help out when they can.

Have the first player turn over the top card of the location deck.

Explain what Check to Acquire/Check to Defeat means. Then lead the players through the steps of attempting the check. During each step, ask the players to look at their character powers and to look through their hands for things that might help at that point.

Give the players an overview of the types of cards they may have.

- Character cards tell you what to roll to do things—higher numbers are better.
- Weapon cards and many spells help you fight monsters.
- Armor cards help you shrug off damage from failures.
- Item cards, ally cards, and many spells help you accomplish non-combat tasks like overcoming traps, acquiring cards, and closing locations.
- Blessing cards give boosts to your or to other players.
- Many blessing cards and ally cards can also be used to explore multiple times during your turn.

After the first check is completed, ask the first player if he has cards or character powers that let him explore again, and let him decide whether he wants to or not. When he's done exploring, explain how players reset their hands and end their turns.

At this point, the players are now making choices that you'll simply need to respond to as best you can, and this guide can only give you generic advice. The following important points come up during play.

- The first time that a player begins a turn at the same location as another player, explain that the active player can give the other player a card, but nobody can give cards to the active player.
- On the second player's turn, when that player has the opportunity to move, explain that when the villain is encountered, it will escape to an open location, so the party needs to be able to permanently or temporarily close all of the locations. Players should consider the When Closing requirement for each location, especially the Coastline.
- When a player decides to move, explain that because his character is on a ship, characters at his location can choose to move with him.
- Encourage the players to be adventurous and bold, especially since it's a demo. Some scenarios reward more conservative play, but this demo is likely to be more fun if the players are more aggressive.
- Try to let the players figure things out by themselves, but be right there with an explanation as soon as they hesitate.
- Have the players read the cards aloud as they play them, and involve them in understanding how the cards work.
- Make sure that the players remember to advance the blessings deck each turn. When each player flips over a blessing card, orient that card so that the text is right-side up to that player—this makes it easy to see if somebody forgot to advance the deck.
- If you have limited time, and the group has not found the villain before you have about 5 minutes to go, advance to the endgame. Close any unoccupied locations, find the villain, and put it on the top of the next player's location deck so the next player encounters it right away.

AFTER THE GAME

Tell the players that in the full game, when they complete a scenario, they get the reward listed on the scenario—usually either a feat or a new card for their decks. Tell them they get to divide up the plunder cards under their ship, rebuild their decks with boons that they acquired during play, and trade cards with other players. The more they play, the greater the variety of cards they'll see, and the more they'll be able to tailor their cards to suit their vision of their characters. Explain that the full Skull & Shackles set includes hundreds of different cards, presenting a variety of banes, boons, locations, and scenarios—and not all of the scenarios involve finding and defeating villains. Then thank them for playing!

DEMO CARD LIST

| Quantity | Type | Name | Deck |
|----------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Fleet | Fleet | -- |
| 1 | Adventure | Plunder and Peril | Story Card Stack |
| 1 | Scenario | Island Hopping | Story Card Stack |
| 1 | Location | Coastline | Story Card Stack |
| 1 | Location | Fog Bank | Story Card Stack |
| 1 | Location | Lonely Island | Story Card Stack |
| 1 | Location | Shark Island | Story Card Stack |
| 1 | Monster | Blood Moon Pirate | Bane Stack |
| 1 | Monster | Merfolk | Bane Stack |
| 1 | Barrier | Man Overboard! | Bane Stack |
| 1 | Barrier | Pirate Hunting | Bane Stack |
| 1 | Ally | Deckhand | Boon Stack |
| 1 | Item | Emerald of Dexterity | Boon Stack |
| 1 | Item | Anchor | Boon Stack |
| 1 | Weapon | Boarding Pike | Boon Stack |
| 1 | Ally | Heartbreak Hinsin | Plunder Stack |
| 1 | Item | Nautical Charts | Plunder Stack |
| 1 | Spell | Black Spot | Plunder Stack |
| 1 | Weapon | Fire Lance | Plunder Stack |
| 1 | Armor | Magic Buckler | Plunder Stack |
| 1 | Villain | Adaro Barbarian | Threat Stack |
| 1 | Henchman | Enemy Ship | Threat Stack |
| 3 | Henchman | Hammerhead Shark | Threat Stack |
| 1 | Henchman | Hammerhead Shark | set aside |
| 1 | Ally | Sailor | set aside |
| 1 | Ship | Merchantman | Starting Ship |
| 1 | Ship | Shackles Pirate Ship | Fleet Stack |
| 1 | Ship | <i>Truewind</i> | Fleet Stack |
| 1 | Ship | <i>Wormwood</i> | Fleet Stack |
| 7 | Blessing | Blessing of the Gods | Blessings Deck |
| 3 | Blessing | Blessing of Pharama | Blessings Deck |
| 3 | Blessing | Blessing of Milani | Blessings Deck |
| 3 | Blessing | Blessing of Sivanah | Blessings Deck |
| 3 | Blessing | Blessing of Gozreh | Blessings Deck |
| 3 | Blessing | Blessing of Achaekek | Blessings Deck |
| 1 | Character and Token | Lem | -- |
| 1 | Weapon | Sap | Lem |
| 1 | Weapon | Rapier | Lem |
| 1 | Spell | Arcane Armor | Lem |
| 1 | Spell | Force Missile | Lem |
| 1 | Item | Rum Bottle | Lem |
| 1 | Item | Bracers of Protection | Lem |
| 1 | Ally | Jinx Eater | Lem |

| Number | Type | Name | Deck |
|------------|---------------------|----------------------------|----------|
| 1 | Ally | Lookout | Lem |
| 1 | Ally | Captain | Lem |
| 1 | Blessing | Blessing of Erastil | Lem |
| 1 | Blessing | Blessing of Abadar | Lem |
| 1 | Blessing | Blessing of the Gods | Lem |
| 1 | Character and Token | Jirelle | -- |
| 1 | Weapon | Cutlass | Jirelle |
| 1 | Weapon | Whip | Jirelle |
| 1 | Weapon | Cutlass +1 | Jirelle |
| 1 | Armor | Chain Shirt | Jirelle |
| 1 | Item | Amulet of Life | Jirelle |
| 1 | Item | Caltrops | Jirelle |
| 1 | Ally | Surgeon | Jirelle |
| 1 | Ally | Dolphin | Jirelle |
| 1 | Blessing | Blessing of Erastil | Jirelle |
| 1 | Blessing | Blessing of Milani | Jirelle |
| 1 | Blessing | Blessing of Sivanah | Jirelle |
| 1 | Blessing | Blessing of the Gods | Jirelle |
| 1 | Character and Token | Lirianne | -- |
| 1 | Weapon | Musket | Lirianne |
| 1 | Weapon | Dragon Pistol | Lirianne |
| 1 | Weapon | Pistol | Lirianne |
| 1 | Weapon | Dagger | Lirianne |
| 1 | Armor | Buckler | Lirianne |
| 1 | Item | Powder Horn | Lirianne |
| 1 | Item | Eyepatch | Lirianne |
| 1 | Ally | Master Gunner | Lirianne |
| 1 | Ally | Quartermaster | Lirianne |
| 1 | Blessing | Blessing of Erastil | Lirianne |
| 1 | Blessing | Blessing of Gorum | Lirianne |
| 1 | Blessing | Blessing of the Gods | Lirianne |
| 1 | Character and Token | Valeros | -- |
| 1 | Weapon | Boarding Axe | Valeros |
| 1 | Weapon | Morningstar | Valeros |
| 1 | Weapon | Main-Gauche | Valeros |
| 1 | Weapon | Falcata | Valeros |
| 1 | Armor | Chain Mail | Valeros |
| 1 | Armor | Buckler | Valeros |
| 1 | Item | Conch Shell | Valeros |
| 1 | Ally | Cabin Boy | Valeros |
| 1 | Ally | Parrot | Valeros |
| 1 | Blessing | Blessing of Cayden Cailean | Valeros |
| 1 | Blessing | Blessing of Gorum | Valeros |
| 1 | Blessing | Blessing of the Gods | Valeros |
| 104 | TOTAL CARDS | | |



Season of the Shackles: Mini-Chronicle Sheet

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|-----------------|
| A.K.A. _____ | | | |
| Player Name | Character Name | Pathfinder Society # | Character Class |
| Success? | Deck Upgrades | Organizer Initials and Pathfinder Society ID# | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Notes: | | | |



Season of the Shackles: Mini-Chronicle Sheet

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|-----------------|
| A.K.A. _____ | | | |
| Player Name | Character Name | Pathfinder Society # | Character Class |
| Success? | Deck Upgrades | Organizer Initials and Pathfinder Society ID# | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Notes: | | | |



Season of the Shackles: Mini-Chronicle Sheet

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|-----------------|
| A.K.A. _____ | | | |
| Player Name | Character Name | Pathfinder Society # | Character Class |
| Success? | Deck Upgrades | Organizer Initials and Pathfinder Society ID# | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Notes: | | | |