

LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS QUICK PRIMER: WHAT IS GIVEN STATS – RINGS

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Learning a new game and its system can be a daunting task, even to players who have years of experience. This quick primer condenses what you'll need to know to start playing the *Legend of the Five Rings: 4th Edition* game, hopefully with a minimum of fuss.

Before we go to character generation, let's just know what is rated in the game, and what those numbers mean.

RINGS & TRAITS

Every character has five major sets of attributes. These are the **Rings**. Rings are generally dice pools that characters can draw upon when doing actions relevant to the Ring. The higher the number, the more dice a character has for rolling.

Each Ring, however, is made up of **Traits**. These Traits are more specific characteristics to the attribute captured by the Ring in question.

EACH RING AND THEIR TRAITS

AIR – THAT WHICH GOVERNS INTUITION AND UNPREDICTABILITY

Air's Traits are:

- *Awareness* - intuition and the general ability to empathize with others, and perceive feelings and emotions. Useful for many courtier skills and abilities.
- *Reflexes* - physically reacting to things in the environment, speed, and response time. Used in computing Initiative and Armor Target Numbers.

EARTH – THAT WHICH GOVERNS RESISTANCE AND FORTITUDE

Earth's Traits are:

- *Willpower* - bringing one's will to bear, to persist, to bring things to completion. Used to resist manipulation and intimidation.
- *Stamina* - endurance in the face of exhaustion and other physical ailments. A rating used to measure recovery.

FIRE – THAT WHICH GOVERNS THE ILLUMINATION OF BOTH MIND AND BODY

Fire's Traits are:

- *Intelligence* - raw learning ability, the ability to gain knowledge and put it to use.
- *Agility* - hand-eye coordination, general athleticism. Almost all non-brute strength rolls of physicality depends on this, including most weapon skills.

WATER – THAT WHICH GOVERNS CLARITY AND INEXORABILITY

Water's Traits are:

- *Perception* - attentiveness, the ability to track events as they transpire around the character.
- *Strength* - brute force, pure physical power.

VOID – THAT WHICH GOVERNS EVERYTHING AND NOTHING

Void has no Traits. Instead, it is the Ring that has the most meta-functions in the game. Void ratings give characters Void points, which can be spent to:

- Gain a bonus of +1k1 on a skill, trait, ring or spell roll. This must be decided prior to making the roll.
- Temporarily increase rank of a Skill from 0 to 1 avoid an unskilled roll with penalties.
- Reduce the amounts of wounds suffered from one source of damage by 10. This is to be done immediately after damage total is announced.
- Increase an Armor Target Number by 10 for one round. This is to be spent at the beginning of the combat round.
- Exchange an Initiative score with one willing target for the remainder of a skirmish. This is to be spent at the beginning of the combat round.
- Increase initiative score by 10 for the duration of current skirmish. This is to be spent at the beginning of the combat round.
- Power specific spells and effects. Some abilities can only be accessed through the power of the Void.

Void points return at the beginning of each day, presuming characters had the opportunity to adequately rest.

LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS QUICK PRIMER: WHAT IS GIVEN STATS – HONOR AND OTHERS

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Legend of the Five Rings is very much a social game. How society and the wider world regards characters is measured by their **Honor, Glory, Status**, and in some cases, **Infamy**.

All the social scores are ranked in a range from 0 to 10.

HONOR – ADHERENCE TO A CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS

Honor is how an individual samurai rates his adherence to the tenets of Bushido, as well as his personal ability to fulfill his duties and obligations to his lord. While Honor is mostly internal, it has external effects as it also affects how the samurai conducts himself, and thus, how he is perceived by those around him.

THE HONOR SCALE

Honor 0 - 1.0. A dog, a scoundrel, criminal. This person only values their self-interests.

Honor 1.01 - 3.0. Lip-service is given to the tenets of Honor, but not taken seriously. "The ends justify the means" is a common mindset for honor this low.

Honor 3.01 - 5.99. The average person, human and flawed, but neither so burdened with such a strict moral compass that they are driven to self-castigation at disappointing their ethics when making errors in judgment.

Honor 6.0 - 7.99. People of exceptional virtue, who adhere to the code of Bushido. Actions that lack honor for them are rare, and only done in moments where other options have failed.

Honor 8.0 - 9.99. People of such virtue that it cannot be questioned, especially by themselves. It is such a high standard of virtue that to slip from this intractable code of conduct requires harsh disciplining and self-recrimination.

Honor 10 +. Beyond reproach, completely selfless, a bastion of service.

THE MECHANICS OF HONOR

Gaining and Losing Honor: The actions of characters determine whether or not they lose Honor. Page 91 of the Core Book shows how; needless to say, the code of Bushido factors heavily into this rating!

What can I use my Honor rank for? Honor can be used for the following:

- A character may add their honor rank to the total of any roll made to resist uses of the intimidation, temptation skills as well as to roll resist fear effects of any kind.
- To attempt to discern the Honor of another person, one must make a Lore: Bushido/awareness roll (TN 30) to discern the honor rank of the samurai being evaluated.
- **Honor roll** - this allows a character to call upon his honor once per game. When a character fails a Skill, Trait, Ring or spell-casting roll, they may opt to re-roll the attempt at the same Target Number, but instead use their Honor rank in their roll. (Ex: An Honor rank of 6 can re-roll 6k6.)

GLORY, STATUS, AND INFAMY

Glory is used to measure a character's fame. Glory can be used in game to influence those who might have heard of the character's sterling reputation. However, this is not to be confused with...

Status, which is used to measure the character's role and influence in society. A character with high Status can command more resources, authority, and wealth than those with lower ratings. Status can only be awarded however, by those of higher rank than the player. In-Clan, even lowly samurai outrank the commoners and common foot soldier and servants of their lands, and they can and do give out orders to be carried. However, they must be careful not to give out orders that contradict the orders of those higher ranked, as this merits a loss of possibility both Honor and Status.

Infamy, is much like Glory, but rather than filling people with awe and respect, it inspires fear and revulsion. Note that this can, and has been, a form of power in and of itself—but just note that pursuing such a reputation often means a loss of Honor as well.

LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS QUICK PRIMER: USING MY STATS – THE GAME SYSTEM

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Legend of the Five Rings follows the Roll and Keep system. Below shows it works, and the kind of rolls most players will make in game.

ROLLS

The first thing before a roll is that a GM will determine a TN (Target Number) that the player must meet or exceed with their dice. Players will then determine the amount of dice that they have to Roll and Keep. Such details are determined by Skills, Traits, and other techniques care of a character's School. **In general though, dice pools are computed by one's Trait + Skill, keeping one's Trait. Exceptions will be covered in game, such as in Spellcasting.**

The result will look like these: 3k2, 4k4, 9k6, etc. This is read as "3 keep 2," "4 keep 4" and so on. **The first number is the number of dice a player will roll. The number following "k" is the number of results that the player will keep.**

So if someone with 3k2 rolls a 9, 8, and 2, they can decide to keep the 9 and the 8, to have a final total of 17.

Exploding Dice happen when a player rolls at 10. This is kept, and automatically the player gets another die which he can add to the result. This keeps going on as long as the player keeps rolling 10s.

Ex: If I rolled, with 5k3, a 10, 10, 8, 1, and 1, I could roll two more dice because I got two 10s. Rolling those dice, I get another 10, and then a 1. I can roll yet another die! Rolling that, I get a 9. I can keep the results of the first set (10, 10, 8), then results of the second set (10, 1), and finally, the result of the last set (9.) My final total would be 48, a monstrous roll indeed.

KINDS OF ROLLS

Below are the kinds of rolls we'll see in game:

- **Trait roll** - These represent completing a task, based solely on their innate abilities without benefit from any training. Roll and keep dice equal to the character's rank in that Trait, keeping the Ring.
- **Damage rolls** - Roll your damage dice and add Strength. Normally a damage die of a weapon is given a Damage Rating (DR), such as 3k2. (Thus, a Strength of 2, when using a weapon with a DR of 3k2 has a final DR of 5k2.) Unarmed strikes have a DR of 0k1, which means roll a number of dice equal to Strength, and keep 1.
- **Unskilled rolls** - Roll the trait against the skill roll TN. Dice **never explode** on an unskilled roll, and the roll does not benefit from Called or Free Raises.
- **Contested rolls** - both parties roll and compare who has the higher result. Ties call for re-rolls.
- **Raises** - when you need to do something spectacular, Raises are a means to accomplish that. By increasing the TN of the task by 5 per raise, a character can perform special maneuvers in combat. **A character can make a maximum number of Raises per roll equal to their Void rating.** If a character raises and fails to meet the new increased TN, then they fail the roll. Note however, that many Schools provide Free Raises among their abilities: in certain situations,

LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS QUICK PRIMER: CHARACTER CREATION

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Choose one from among the Great Clans: *Crab, Crane, Dragon, Lion, Mantis, Phoenix, Scorpion, Unicorn*. **Apply the Clan bonus to the relevant Trait.** For this game, please no Imperials, Lost, ronin, naga, ratlings, or mahou-tsukai.
- Pick a Family from the Clan you chose. **Apply the Family bonus to the relevant Trait.**
- Pick a School that your character was trained in. This gives your character unique abilities. **Note the benefits befitting your Rank. (In this case, Rank 1.)** Also note the equipment, wealth, Honor, and other starting points detailed in your School.

CUSTOMIZATION

- **You have 40 experience points to spend at character creation.** You can spend these on **Traits, Skills,** and **Advantages.** Please note that for now, the **Dark Fate Advantage is out of play.**
- If you feel you need more experience points to further develop your character, you can purchase **Disadvantages.** Disadvantages penalize your characters in specific situations. The stronger the Disadvantage, the more experience points you get to play with.
- You **cannot purchase more than 10** experience points' worth of Disadvantages.

USING EXPERIENCE

- **Raising a Trait:** you pay experience equal to 4x the next rank. (ex., raising *Reflexes* from 2 to 3 equals 12. [4x3 = 12.]
- **Raising a Ring:** Rings are equal to whatever is the lower of their associated Traits. Raising Rings means increasing your lower Trait.
- **Raising Void:** Void is more expensive than normal Traits, paying 6x the next rank.
- **Raising Skills:** You pay experience equal to the rank of the next skill. (ex., raising *Calligraphy* from 1 to 2 equals 2 experience points.)
- **Buying Advantages:** An Advantage has a set cost of experience in its description.