



# WELCOME!

The Projector is a game of exploration and adventure for 2-4 players that takes place (mostly) in a psychic space in-between realities, a space that your Aunt Helena calls “Wonderland”. You are her nieces and nephews, and you have gathered at her house after receiving a message from her saying that she has disappeared.

To find her, you’ll need to interpret the breadcrumbs she left behind through different worlds, each with its rules and challenges... but the first challenge in many areas is finding out your goal!

As you progress, you’ll learn and improve abilities as a party. You’ll each specialize in some abilities, and you’ll also be able to customize the loadout of abilities you take into a particular area. An ability that is very powerful in one area might be weak in another, so planning for what you might meet is crucial. But if things go awry, don’t worry - you’ll be able to try again!

Your journey to find your Aunt takes place in a living world made up of thousands of cards which remember your decisions and previous travels. Because there are many different decks and cards, each card has a unique identifier using two letters for the deck and two or three numbers separated by a colon, such as PR:123 (Projector card 123). You will usually only need a few decks per play session, so it is recommended to keep decks in the game box until they are needed.

This game is fully cooperative, meaning that you will only succeed by working together as a party. It is also a campaign game, meaning that you will play it together over time, revealing an ongoing story in an order of your choosing as you explore the worlds before you.

Play alternates among progressing the story, exploring worlds, and improving your abilities. You progress the story by reading unlocked cards from one of the eight story decks. You explore worlds from an area deck, arranging those cards face down according to the setup rules for that area - these make up the game board. You move around these cards, flipping cards as you land on them and responding to the situations they present by using your abilities.

Finally, whether you achieved the goals of an area or not, you’ll have the opportunity to learn and improve your abilities. This cycle repeats until you’ve unlocked and achieved the goals of all the areas and found your Aunt.

Many of the cards in the game contain secrets that you are meant to discover. This is your game, so you are free to do what you wish, but you will likely have the best experience if you resist the temptation to read ahead.

You will often be asked to move cards or entire decks from a set-aside (“locked”) deck to an active deck, a process called “unlocking” or “evolving,” depending on the situation. This can open new worlds or even create changes in places you’ve already explored. When searching for a card to add to a deck, use the numbers on the back of the card if possible. Some decks will require you to look at the front of the cards to find the number; When this is the case, the number is printed in the top center on the card face to make it possible to search for a specific card without spoiling any secrets.

The rules are simple at the beginning and build over time. This rule book contains the foundation for playing the game, but the decisions you make are based on the interactions between your abilities and the areas you unlock throughout the game. There are some basic concepts that are required to make sense of how the abilities and areas interact, so we strongly recommend that one person in the play group read through these rules before the first play session.

But the most important concept is this: The Projector exists for friends to have fun and make memories together. The sheer number of cards and possible combinations mean that there may be times when the “correct” rule is hard to determine; don’t let rules questions break your enjoyment of the game! Do what makes sense to the party and keep the adventure going.

When you sit down to play the first time, set up the game based on “Setup,” page 10. Then, take the top card of Helena’s Story (HS:01) and read it out loud.

We made this game to delight our friends. We hope you’re delighted!

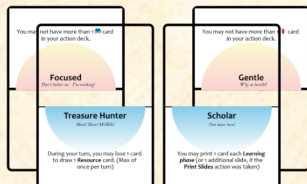
# GAME CONTENTS

## ABILITY DECKS (8)



These tarot-sized cards are the universe of abilities you will have available throughout the game. 3 of these decks are locked at the beginning of the game.

## PERK & STYLE CARDS



These semi-transparent cards combine to give each player a unique combination of ability and constraint.

## AREA DECKS (23)



These large square cards make up the areas that you will explore in their search for Helena. All of these are locked at the beginning of the game.

## BADDIES DECK



The various opponents that you will face.

## CONDITIONS DECK



Conditions you receive on your journey

## MANEUVERS DECK



To be unlocked and discovered later...

## PROJECTOR DECK



This deck contains the results of your choices and the source of your options. These should never be shuffled and kept in the box so you can pull the cards you need when directed.

## ENTROPY DECKS (5)



These cards represent psychic remnants of Helena's and your travels through this world as well as the effects of time. Each deck is numbered by difficulty tier 1-5.

## DIARY DECKS



These cards are the various notes that Helena made about her travels and herself.

## ITEMS DECK



Various items you will discover on the journey

## RESOURCES DECK



Materials that can be either used for crafting or for their own properties

## STORY DECKS (8)



The interconnected stories of Helena's travels... and yours!

## ACTION DECKS (8)



These small square cards are the primary cards you will use during play. The Realspace deck is used at the beginning of the game. After that, you will use the 7 decks separated by type to write in your own abilities and sleeve them in the included custom sleeves.

## ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS

- Campaign tracking sheet
- 6 playmats (4 player, 1 central, 1 ship)
- 4 apperception trackers
- Action card sleeves
- Dice (d4, d8, d10, d12, d6x2, d20x4)
- Figures (4 character figures + 4 lighthouse)
- Tokens (4 sets in each player color, 2 neutral)
- Rulebook
- Card reference booklet
- Keyword reference
- 4 player reference cards

## IMPORTANT NOTE

None of the cards should be removed from shrinkwrap until you are told to do so. Most of the cards are locked at the beginning of the game and will be unlocked through game progression.

# CORE CONCEPTS

## AREAS & PROJECTIONS

As you search for Aunt Helena, you will traverse different worlds, called Areas. Each area is made up of location cards along with background and setup cards that tell you how to setup the area and what you're trying to accomplish. The Projector sends you to most of these areas, so each time you explore an area is called a Projection.

## KEYWORDS

The game world of The Projector comes to life through cards and the ways they interact with each other. These interactions are created through keywords, which are located on every card on a banner in the middle. If a card has a keyword, it is that thing. For example, look at the Ability card layout in the Card Layout Reference (page xxx). Spot has the keywords survival, awareness, and reaction. This means that anything that references one of these keywords applies to a Spot card. For example, if a card said "You may discard a Survival card for free ice cream," you could discard a Spot card, since it is a Survival card.

Most of the keywords only have meaning when referenced by other cards, so they can be ignored if they don't mean anything to you. To help you focus on your adventure, all keywords are bolded, and those with a built-in meaning are bolded and italicized, and detailed in the Keywords Reference. For example, survival is a keyword, but it only means something if another card references survival. On the other hand, reaction is bolded and italicized, which means that it does have a specific rule associated with it, and that is in the Keywords reference.

Every card is assumed to have the keyword of the deck it is in. For example, every card in the Item deck has the Item keyword and is an Item card.

## ABILITIES

The main way you'll affect the game world is through abilities - unlocking them, using them, and improving them. You activate abilities as you explore by playing action cards (see Action Cards on page 7).

Before an ability can be used, it must be unlocked. When an ability is unlocked, the ability card is taken from the ability deck and moved to the unlocked area and the ability card under it is flipped face up.

Abilities are improved by the party as a whole, and the party's skill at an ability applies to all players. When a player tests an ability, they add the party's ability level to their die roll along with any other modifiers. If those add up to 20 or more, the roll is a success - but sometimes trying to do really hard tasks can require more than just success (see Success Margin, page 16)! The party improves abilities by spending experience points (called apperceptions - see below).

The text on ability cards is intended to serve as a reference, not as a tutorial. Each ability has its own tutorial online at:

[https://www.theprojectorgame.com/\[abilityname\]](https://www.theprojectorgame.com/[abilityname])

for example,

<https://www.theprojectorgame.com/scavenge>

## TRAITS AND ABILITY DECKS

There are 7 Traits in The Projector, each of which is associated with a color and a symbol. They are:



Every ability belongs to exactly one trait, and an ability's trait is its primary defining characteristic. For example, Spot belongs to the Awareness trait. Where possible, the trait symbols are used to distinguish their importance relative to keywords.

When you succeed in an ability of one trait during a projection into a particular world, it improves your chances of succeeding on all subsequent tests of all abilities of that same trait. When you gain experience (called apperceptions - see below), that experience is in a particular trait, and can only be used to improve abilities of that trait.

Before it is unlocked, each ability also belongs in a deck; for example, Spot is in the Survival deck. These are numbered in the order that they should be revealed, so that you can restart the game easily (or sort the cards if someone - probably a cat - knocks the cards off the table). An ability's deck is just a keyword. It has no inherent meaning and only matters when setting up the decks or when referenced by other cards.

There is no relationship between trait and deck. An ability can have any trait and start in any deck. Spot, for instance, uses the Awareness trait and starts in the Survival deck. Scavenge also starts in the Survival deck, but it uses the Construction trait. There are other Awareness and Construction abilities found across the different ability decks.

## APPERCEPTIONS

When you successfully perform an ability, you'll gain apperceptions in that ability's trait. Apperceptions represent your experience for a particular trait and may be used to improve abilities of that particular trait. For example, apperceptions gained by successfully using Spot can be used to improve other Awareness abilities, but could not be used to improve Scavenge (which would require Construction apperceptions).

However, as you explore the psychic space of Wonderland, sometimes certain events can be so jarring that you forget what you learned in that exploration, like a dream fading away from memory when someone wakes you up (probably a cat). When you gain apperceptions while exploring an area, they are temporary and benefit only the player who gained them. Temporary apperceptions may not be used for permanent improvements, but they do improve all the abilities of that trait for that player during the current exploration. If you successfully leave an area, you bank these temporary apperceptions, meaning that they are added to the party's permanent shared apperception bank and removed as temporary apperceptions. Banked apperceptions unlock new abilities and improve existing abilities for all characters and last across play sessions. Keep track of banked apperceptions using the campaign tracking sheet.

## QUICK RECAP

During your adventure, you'll be solving challenges across unique worlds by learning and improving a number of abilities. Each of these abilities belong to a trait, and when you successfully use an ability, you gain apperceptions in that ability's trait. These apperceptions are temporary while you are exploring, but might eventually be banked, where they can unlock and improve abilities.

Cards interact with each other through keywords. Most keywords only mean something when referenced by another card; however, some do have specific meanings, and these are all listed in the Keyword reference. To help you know which is which, all keywords are bolded on all cards, and keywords that have an entry in the Keyword Reference are bolded and italicized.

If that all makes sense, you're probably thinking, "Ok, but how do I actually use abilities when playing the game?" Read on, intrepid explorer, read on....

## **ACTION CARDS**

Ability cards are never played directly; they act as reference cards. Instead, when you explore an area you play action cards, which represent abilities. Action cards are acquired during the Learning Phase (see page xxxx) and accumulate in a reserve deck, which is limited by party size.

Before entering a projection, you build a deck of action cards from your reserve deck, and then during the projection you draw a hand of action cards and play those cards to perform abilities. For example, if you draw a Spot card in your hand, you may play the Spot card and then follow the rules for Spot on the Spot ability card to see what happens.

At the beginning of your adventure, there are only a few abilities available. However, as the party unlocks more abilities, players will have to make choices; there are too many abilities to represent in a 10-14 card deck. Furthermore, since success in an ability of one trait improves subsequent tests of all abilities in that trait for that player, specialization in one or two traits can dramatically increase your chances of success. Finally, since you only draw a few cards from your deck each turn, you may want to include multiple copies of the action cards that are most important to you, to make sure you draw them when you need them. You can rebuild your action deck before every projection, so you can have different builds for different goals. The only limit to the number of builds you can store is the size of your reserve deck.

The action cards included in the game are templates for you to write on. (Pre-printing the full possible combinations of action cards for four players would add several thousand cards to the game!) When you gain an action card, take a blank action card of the matching trait, write the name of the ability on it, check whether it is a reaction or not, and then place it in a sleeve of the matching ability deck. This way, you'll be able to see at a glance the four most-used aspects of each action card: Ability name, trait, deck, and whether or not it is a reaction.

## **ELIMINATING AND REPLACING CARDS**

As you explore the worlds of The Projector, the game remembers your choices by adding and removing cards from the various decks. When told to eliminate a card (using the card's identifier, such as AH:02), you should take that card out of the game permanently, and if told to replace it, find the locked card in the appropriate locked card deck and add it to the same deck. If told to replace a card (and not told to eliminate it), usually in an area deck, set the replaced card aside and reset the deck when the projection is over, moving the added card back to the locked deck from which it came.

## **ENTROPY AND THE**

### **NEXT-TIER ENTROPY DECKS**

It takes energy to maintain your presence as a party in Wonderland! The 20-card Entropy deck represents the pressures of time and change, and contains psychic traces of Aunt Helena as well as of your ongoing journey. You draw one of these before each turn, and when they are exhausted, you are as well. Entropy cards each have a tier, with higher tiers representing greater challenges. The starting Entropy Deck consists of all 20 Tier 1 cards.

The Next-Tier Entropy deck is always placed in the play area alongside the Entropy deck; this deck consists of all the Entropy cards of the next highest tier. At the beginning of the game, this will be all of the tier 2 cards. Throughout the game, you will be told to evolve the Entropy deck (or a specific Entropy card). When this happens, you should eliminate one card and place the top card from the Next-Tier Entropy deck on the bottom of the Entropy discard pile. When the Next-Tier Entropy deck is empty, replace it with the full deck of the next highest tier (in this example, Tier 3 cards). The current Entropy and Next-Tier Entropy deck should be preserved between play sessions.

## BADDIES

One of the most common challenges you'll face in a projection are Baddies. These might have eyes only for you, they might affect the entire party, or they might create tokens that stay or move on locations. You can either defeat them or dismiss them - in which case they might come back! When you face a Baddie from the Entropy deck, defeating them sends them to the discard pile and dismissing them sends them to the dismissed pile. Baddies from other sources are discarded back from whence they came whenever they are defeated or dismissed. The Baddies attack - dealing their damage - after you end your turn, during the Baddie turn (see page 14).

## RANGE

A number of abilities involve ranges (e.g., "any player within 1 space"). These refer to the number of cards between player figures as they explore. A card's range is 1 if any part - corner or edge - of the card touches the card from which the range is being counted. In other words, while movement may never be diagonal (see page 14), range is counted diagonally. Treat card-sized spaces as if they were cards for range purposes.

## COVERING CARDS

Sometimes you will be instructed to place a card on top of another card. When this happens, do not interact with the bottom card, even if the card covering it cannot completely obscure it because of card sizes. Don't flip, read, modify, fold, spindle, or mutilate the underlying card.

## QUICK RECAP, TAKE 2

To sum up the basics, as you explore these strange worlds looking for your Aunt, you'll be moving around cards that make up the game world, using abilities to meet challenges by playing actions cards from your hand. Throughout the campaign, cards will be added to and removed from decks, changing the worlds around you. Sometimes these changes are temporary, but often they are permanent.

Along the way, you'll meet a number of Baddies. These enemies might attack you, or they might attack everyone in the party. You can try to find ways to defeat them, or you can try to escape them, which dismisses them. However, dismissed Baddies have a way of coming back...

But the world itself will not be the only set of challenges - entropy is always driving change, and even entropy itself is always changing. The entropy deck represents this constant pressure, and it contains traces of Aunt Helena's experiences as well as your own. The next-tier entropy deck is one of the main ways it changes over time. Both the entropy deck and the next-tier entropy deck must be preserved across game sessions, as these are important ways that the game remembers your decisions and progress throughout the campaign.

## CARD CHAINS

There will be a number of times when the result of a card or a set of choices involves reading a chain of additional cards, often from the Projector deck. These are considered instantaneous results and cannot be interrupted by other player actions unless specifically allowed (e.g., “at any time”). Reaction cards can be played at any time, which includes during a card chain.

## BREAKING THE RULES

Rules are made to be broken, especially as you get more powerful. Sometimes a card may explicitly change a specific rule and this always takes top priority. Otherwise, the priority of rules from highest to lowest are:

- Specific exceptions (for example, “Peek does not break Hidden”)
- Ability cards
- Area cards
- Entropy cards
- General rules

All rules, whether in this rulebook or on cards, have the implicit rule, “unless otherwise specified.” Many of the cards and abilities will “break” rules. Sometimes, a particular combination of cards can result in complicated interactions. When in doubt, do what makes the best story. This is a game. You play it for fun.

## PERKS & STYLES

There are two small decks in the game - Perks and Styles. A Perk is a powerful bonus that can enhance the party’s abilities; a Style is a constraint that limits possible builds. At any point in the campaign, each player may choose a single perk and a style; any perk may be paired with any style but both must be chosen together. Once chosen, these are permanent throughout the campaign. Because these are permanent, players are encouraged to play several sessions before selecting perks and styles.

## PARTY SIZE

The Projector can be played with 2-4 players. The table below shows the different limits when playing with different party sizes. If you want to play with different party sizes, you’ll need to make up your own rules for that. If you want to play solo, you could play two-handed with this set, but you might want to check out the Solo Adventurer’s Companion, available at [www.coopability.com](http://www.coopability.com), which provides additional rules and cards for solo play.

Party Size	Reserve deck Size	Deck Size	Hand Size
2	70	14	6
3	60	12	6
4	50	10	5

# THE TARGET NUMBER FOR ALL TESTS IS 20.

# SETTING UP THE GAME

If this is your first game, you can ignore setup instructions in italics.

## Prepare the Global Area

Take a new campaign tracking sheet and write in your party name (*or take your campaign sheet from previous play if you have one*).

- Place the following decks on the table:
    - *Unlocked craftable items*
  - Have the following decks within easy reach (they can remain in the box):
    - Locked Items
    - Locked Areas
    - Locked Entropy Cards
    - Diary Cards
    - Projector Cards
    - Conditions
    - Baddies
  - Set out all 8 story decks
  - Set out dice within reach of all players
- Flip over the top card of each Ability deck.
  - *Place all unlocked abilities and ability groups out on the table as recorded in the campaign log.*
  - *Create the party stash of all unlocked permanent items*

## Prepare your Player Area

- Each player places their reserve deck of action cards in their play area
    - The maximum number of cards you can have in your reserve deck is based on the number of players (see Party Size, page 9)
    - When your reserve deck is full and you want to create a new action card, you can overwrite an existing card.
    - Before exploring an area, create a new action deck from your reserves. The size of your action deck is based on the number of players (see Party Size, page 9)
    - Reserve decks can be altered between explorations, based on party choices
  - Each player takes a figure and a set of tokens of a single color.
  - *Each player that has selected a Perk and a Style places them in their player area.*
- Take the stack of tarot-sized cards labeled “Unlocked Abilities” and divide them by deck: Crafting, Defense, Movement, Negotiation, and Survival, and place each deck face down.

### **Set up the projection area**

- Set aside space for the area layout.
  - This should be large enough for a 6x6 grid of 80mm square (approx. 3"x3") cards.
- Prepare the Entropy deck
  - *The Entropy deck should always contain 20 cards and should be the same deck that was in play at the end of the previous exploration.*
  - For your first game, use the level 1 Entropy deck.
- Place the Entropy deck and the Resource deck in reach of all players
- Save space for the following piles:
  - Entropy Discard pile
  - Entropy Dismissed pile
  - In-play cards
  - Resource discard deck
- Set aside the next-tier Entropy deck
  - For the first game, this will be the tier 2 cards.
  - *When the tier 2 deck is depleted, the tier 3 deck becomes the next-tier Entropy deck, and so on.*

# PLAYING THE GAME

## GAME PLAY

The Projector is an ongoing adventure, spanning months of game time (and likely play time). You will split your time between advancing the story, exploring different worlds, and discovering and improving abilities and action decks.

## PLAYING A DAY

A day has three phases, in this order:

- **Story phase** (page 12): Advance an available story path
- **Adventure phase** (page 13): Explore one of the worlds that is available to the group
- **Learning phase** (page 17): Use the experience of your exploration to expand and improve your capabilities

## STORY PHASE

The quest to find your Aunt Helena is guided by eight interwoven stories. Often, stories are blocked until certain progress is made in other parts of the game; this block is represented by a lock card. When you discover a way forward in a story, the game will instruct you to eliminate that lock card, freeing you to advance that story should you choose. These stories are augmented by diary entries, which you will discover a page at a time.

During the story phase you may advance a single unlocked story until you reach a locked card. These steps must be done in this order:

- If there are no story decks with an unlocked card on top, the Story Phase ends.
- Otherwise, choose a story deck with a top card that is not locked and read that card.

- You may only read cards for one story per story phase, even if there are multiple decks with unlocked cards on top.
- You may be asked to make choices; your choices may adjust existing decks or unlock new decks.
- After reading a card and doing what it says (if anything), place it face up on the bottom of the deck.
- You may go back and reread previously read cards in any story at any time.
- Continue to read cards from that story deck until you reach the next lock card.

There will be times when you are instructed to eliminate a locked story card that is not on top of the deck. Even if you have eliminated a locked card lower in the story deck, you may not advance the story unless the top card is an unlocked card.

# ADVENTURE PHASE

During the Adventure phase, you set out from Wonderland to explore projections: instances of the different areas (or worlds) that make up the game. Projections use area decks made up of locations. Each area deck also includes a background card, one or more setup cards, and possibly objective cards. Setup cards detail placement of location cards and figures for that specific projection. While an area may remain largely the same across runs, the player's experience of it - the projection - may change drastically across runs, depending on the setup rules for that area. Objective cards include goals for the players to successfully complete the area. However, sometimes the first goal of an area will be to figure out the goal...

Once the projection is set up, play begins. Players take turns moving their figures around location cards, resolving them and playing cards from their action deck to perform abilities in response. This continues until all players return to Wonderland, either by choice (they "return home"), or by failure (they "dissipate").

The Adventure phase consists of:

- **Area setup**
- **Exploration Rounds**
- **Area cleanup**

## AREA SETUP

At the beginning of the Adventure phase, do the following:

- Each player takes a figure and a set of tokens of a single color.
- The party chooses which unlocked area to explore
- Read the Setup card for the area you chose, laying out cards and performing other actions as described.
  - Place player figures according to the Setup card
- Each player builds an action deck from their action reserves no larger than Maximum Deck Size
  - The deck size is set by player count (see Party Size, page 9)
  - Some areas may disallow certain cards from your action deck, and different areas may require different abilities.

- Players may take permanent items from the party stash, honoring any Unique keywords
- Each player draws up to their maximum hand size (see Party Size, page 9)
- Players choose turn order. Turn order remains the same throughout the whole projection.

## EXPLORATION ROUNDS

Exploration takes place in rounds, each of which includes a single turn for every player.

Exploration continues until every player has ended their exploration by either:

- **Returning Home:** If you meet the conditions described on the Carousel Setup, you may Return Home. If you return home, bank all of your temporary apperceptions for each trait, removing them from temporary tracking and adding them to the party's permanent count for that trait on the campaign tracking sheet. Discard all your resources, items, and baddies. Permanent items return to the party stash.
- **Dissipating:** When you dissipate, immediately discard all your resources and items. Any Baddies in your play area are dismissed. Permanent items return to the party stash. Keep your temporary apperceptions until the end of the projection. Unless otherwise indicated, you may not bank your temporary apperceptions and should reset them to zero once the projection ends.

When a player ends their exploration, they no longer participate in the exploration and may not take turns or play action cards of any type. Note that because an area is a shared psychic space, when one player leaves, it becomes harder for the other players to maintain that space, and all are at risk of dissipating immediately.

## Turn Sequence

- **Draw and resolve the top entropy card**
  - After doing what it says, place it in the discard pile unless it says "Remains in Play"
  - If you cannot draw an entropy card and you have not yet recycled the dismissed cards for this projection, shuffle any dismissed cards and use them to create a new entropy deck.

- If you have already recycled the dismissed cards once during this projection or there are no dismissed cards, all players remaining in the projection dissipate.
- **Play action cards to move and perform abilities**
  - Resolve the location card you are on
    - Any time you are on a face-down location card, you must flip it over before taking any other action.
    - Resolve the location card based on the “occurs” text (see Area card reference)

**When flipped:** Resolve the card’s text immediately and only when flipped. No action may be taken between flipping the card and resolving the text (unless the action has the keyword reaction)

**When landed on:** Resolve this card’s text each time you land on it. No action may be taken between landing on the card and resolving the text (unless the action has the keyword reaction)

**Once per turn:** Each player may choose to resolve this text once at any point during their turn while on this location card.

**Once per player:** Each player may choose to resolve this text once during the projection while on this location card. Use a player token to track when a player has chosen to resolve this text.

**Once per projection:** A player may choose to resolve this text on behalf of the party once at any point they are on this location card. Use a player token to track when this card’s text has been resolved.

- You may discard any action card to provide one movement point.
  - If you discard an action card to move, do not perform the ability. This does not count as playing the card.
  - Each movement point allows you to move your figure one space in a direction allowed by the card you are on and the card you are moving to. Green sides with no barriers on both cards must connect to each other for movement between them to be possible. You may never move diagonally.
- You may play an action card to attempt to perform an ability

- The rules for each ability are on the ability cards. A tutorial for each ability may be accessed online at [https://www.theprojectorgame.com/\[ability name\]](https://www.theprojectorgame.com/[ability name]).
- If an ability card says “Use as specified on another card,” another card (e.g., a location card or an entropy card) must explicitly allow that action.
- You may only play a card if it could materially affect game play. For example, you may not hide if there is no benefit to be gained from hiding. However, you could Spot even if someone had already Spotted, if it would extend the duration/range of the Spot bonus.
- Most abilities require a test – see “Testing abilities” on page 16.
- When you succeed at an ability test, you gain temporary apperceptions for that ability’s trait. The number of temporary apperceptions you gain is on the Ability card’s XP value (see the card layout reference, page xxx). You may track temporary apperceptions with <tracking mechanic>.
- Actions for abilities with the **reaction** keyword can be played outside of a player’s normal turn. All other actions must be played before you declare you are ending your turn (see Keyword reference sheet: reaction).
- You may move and perform as many actions as you can before ending your turn.
- If you meet the conditions, you may return home at any point as a reaction (either during your turn or during another player’s turn)
- **End your turn**
  - Once you end your turn, you may not play another action card until your next turn unless the ability has the reaction keyword.
  - You may discard as many cards as you want
  - Draw up to your maximum hand size, shuffling the discard pile to make a new deck as necessary.
  - **If you cannot draw up to your maximum hand size, you dissipate.**
- **Baddie Turn (Take Damage)**
  - All Baddies in your player area or in the global area attack the current player, dealing damage equal to the Baddie’s attack value
  - You may choose the order of Baddie attacks, but if a card has multiple instances, all instances of that card attack at the same time.
  - To resolve damage, lose one card for each point of damage against you.

- To lose a card, put the top card of your draw deck into your lost deck face down, shuffling the discard pile to make a new draw deck as necessary. Do not look at this card.
- Note: “Attack”, “Damage” and “Lose a card” are all different. There may be ways to mitigate damage that do not affect losing a card, Attacks may not cause Damage, etc. The order is Attack->Damage->Lose a card
- **If you are ever required to lose a card and cannot, you dissipate.**
- **Stability Check**
  - Roll a 1d4. If the number you roll is equal to or less than the number of players who have left the projection, you dissipate.
  - Note: Most of the time, if no one has left the projection you may ignore this roll, since it will always succeed.
- **Play passes to the next player**

### **Area Cleanup**

When all players have either returned home or dissipated, do the following:

- Place the area deck back in the box
  - If any location cards were replaced (and not eliminated), return the locked location cards to the locked area decks and save the area decks with the original cards in place.
  - If a location card was eliminated and permanently replaced, keep the replacement with the area deck
- Read any Projector cards that were set aside to be read “at the end of the projection”.

- If you were able to return home (instead of dissipating), bank the temporary apperceptions you accumulated for each trait by adding those to the party’s banked apperception total on the campaign tracking sheet.
- Reset all temporary apperceptions to zero
- Return your action cards to your reserve deck.
- Remove all items from all player and global areas. (Note: Some items have the keyword **Permanent**. These items are kept by the party in the global area for the rest of the campaign unless eliminated.)

**Strategy note:** The bonus modifiers from temporary apperceptions dramatically increase your chances of success as you progress during a projection. Since you only benefit from the temporary apperceptions that you earn and since they only affect abilities of the traits that you earn them in, you will maximize the benefit of these modifiers by specializing your action deck around a small number of traits before entering a projection. You can enhance this more by including some abilities that might not be quite as useful, but which may be easy to accomplish, thereby giving other abilities of that same trait easy bonuses to success. By the end of a projection, these modifiers can be quite high for players who have built their decks in this way and rolls that seemed impossible at the beginning may become nearly automatic late in the run.

# TESTING ABILITIES

## THE TARGET NUMBER FOR ALL TESTS IS 20

You can only attempt an ability when the ability will benefit the party. (You can't attack if there is nothing that you can attack, for instance.)

Double-dipping is not allowed - If an ability has both a normal effect and a location-specific special effect, you must specify the desired effect when you make the attempt. For example, if a location says "When Flipped: You may test Spot to search the room. If successful, read Projector Card PR:001," and you have a Spot action card, you may play it to test Spot either for its normal ability effect **or** to search the room. A successful test will not trigger both effects.

To attempt an ability, you must play an action card of that ability. **You cannot perform an ability without playing the action card of that ability.** Once you play the action card, you have to perform a test to see if you succeed or not - this involves rolling a d20, adding or subtracting the modifiers to that roll and then determining whether you were successful in what you were trying to do.

### Testing an Ability

When testing an ability, perform the following steps in order:

- Play an action card
- Roll a d20 and apply all applicable modifiers, including:
  - Your party's current level for the ability you are testing
  - +1 for each temporary apperception you have earned in that ability's trait (Temporary apperceptions only apply to the player who has earned them and are not shared by the party)
  - Modifiers imposed by the ability itself (e.g., Hide takes a negative modifier for the Baddies in your player area and in the Global Area)
  - Location modifiers, if present (see card layout reference pg xxx)
  - Meld bonuses on the action card itself (see page 18)
  - Other modifiers as specified by cards in play

- **If your modified roll is equal to or greater than 20, you succeed!**
- Many tests involve the Success Margin (SM) to determine the outcome. The SM is your [modified roll - 20].
  - When asked to divide the SM by a given number (e.g., SM/4), always **round down**.
  - For example, you might make a roll where you need SM/4 to be 3 or more. If your modified roll is a 30, the SM would be 10 (30 - 20). 10 / 4 rounded down would be 2, so the roll would have no effect.
  - A test can be successful but have no effect - for instance, you may make a successful attack, but cannot get through the Baddie's armor, or you may be persuasive, but not persuasive enough.

If you roll a 1, you automatically fail and must use the "Natural 1" results on the Ability card. If you roll a 20, you automatically succeed and may use the "Natural 20" results on the Ability card.

If you are successful (even if the roll did not meet the SM to have the desired effect), gain temporary apperceptions as specified on the ability card for the ability's trait.

For example, Spot is an ability based on the Awareness trait. If you succeed at a Spot check, gain one Awareness temporary apperception.

## THE ENTROPY DECK

The Entropy Deck is a living deck of 20 cards that reflects the state of the game. It should be kept intact across play sessions. You will often come upon cards that echo events from earlier sessions or that foreshadow something you have not yet experienced. You may be told to do one of the following:

- **Dismiss:** Place the card in the dismissed pile. (If a non-entropy card or token would be dismissed, such as a Baddie, remove it from play.) This represents entities that might have lost track of you for the present, but would still like a word with you.
- **Evolve the entropy deck:** Look through the following piles of Entropy cards in the following order for the topmost card of the lowest tier in the deck that does not have the Story keyword:
  - Discard pile
  - Draw pile
  - “Remains in Play” cards
  - Current card

Eliminate that card and add a random card from the next-tier entropy deck to the bottom of the discard pile. **Never evolve cards with the story keyword unless the card says “Evolve this card.”**

- Check the next-tier entropy deck: If the next-tier deck is empty, replace it with the complete deck of entropy cards of the next tier. For instance, when you use up all of the Tier 3 entropy cards, the next-tier deck would be all of the tier 4 cards.

## LEARNING PHASE

During the learning phase, you learn about Aunt Helena’s past, improve the party’s existing abilities, and learn new abilities.

Perform the following in order:

- **Read diary entries**
  - If you have unlocked any diary entries in your last exploration phase, you may read them now.
  - You may review available diary entries at any time, but you may read newly unlocked entries during the Learning phase only.
- Perform a total of three Learning actions, chosen from the following:
  - **Unlock an ability**
  - **Print slides**
  - **Improve abilities**
  - **Meld slides**
  - **Study an ability** (May only be performed once per Learning Phase)

### Unlock an Ability

The party may choose to spend apperceptions to unlock a single revealed ability. To do this, the party must spend banked apperceptions of the ability’s trait equal to the unlock cost of the ability (see Ability Card).

When you unlock an ability, move it into the active ability area, flipping the next ability card in its deck face up. Then, mark your new ability as unlocked in the campaign tracker and set the skill level to 4. Each player may take one action card for that ability and add it to their reserve deck as part of this action. If a player is already at their reserves limit, they will need to eliminate an existing card to make room.

**All unlocked abilities start at level 4.**

### **Print Slides**

Each player may create 1d6 action cards of any unlocked abilities and add them to their reserve deck. If a player does not have any space in their reserves, they may overwrite existing action cards. These cards may be any combination of any abilities that the party has unlocked and may be different for each player.

Players may not trade or give slides to each other.

### **Improve Abilities**

The party may spend any number of banked apperceptions to improve unlocked abilities. When you improve an ability, you increase its level by 1, making tests of that ability easier to pass (see Testing Abilities, page 16). All players share the same ability levels.

To improve an ability, spend (subtract) banked apperceptions of the ability's trait equal to the desired level. You may never skip a level. To move from ability level 5 to ability level 7, you have to first improve to ability level 6.

For example, if you wanted to improve Spot's starting value of 4 to 5, the party would have to spend 5 Awareness apperceptions. Improving it 5 to 6 would require 6 Awareness apperceptions. Going from 8 to 10 would require 19 apperceptions - since you may never skip a number, going to 9 costs 9 apperceptions, and then going to 10 costs 10 more for a total of 19.

You may improve any number of abilities any number of levels each phase, provided you have the apperceptions to spend. However, you may never improve an ability level above 18.

Track your party's current skill values on the campaign sheet.

### **Study an ability**

You may, as a group, choose to study one ability. When you study an ability, improve the level of that unlocked ability by one without spending apperceptions. Most abilities have a Study Limit (see Ability Card Layout, page xxx); you may not use Study to improve the ability above this limit.

When you study, increase the skill level by 1 on the campaign tracker.

### **Meld Slides**

Each player may eliminate 4 copies of identical action cards to create a card of that ability with a +1 bonus (write the modifier on an action card). These bonuses may stack, so you could eliminate 4 copies of Spot+1 to gain a Spot+2 card.

Each player may meld slides of different abilities and you may meld as many cards as you want during this phase.

# TELLING YOUR STORY

The Projector campaign tells an extended story, and we hope that you enjoy it. However, we left out the best part: your story. And we think that's where you'll get the most enjoyment.

There are a lot of mechanics in this game, just like most long-running campaign games. We find that when we focus too much on the mechanics, play can start to feel, well, less playful. Your story is how you choose to go about finding Helena and why: your interpretation of what's going on. Best of all, however, is the story that you add to the little polyhedral randomizers that so many of us associate with our best gaming moments. For someone focusing on the mechanics, a 1 is a failure. It stinks. It takes all the fun out. It makes us want to fling the dice across the room before we remember all the breakable objects (or cats) it's likely to hit.

However, we've found that sometimes rolling a 1 leads to some of the best gaming memories we have. One of the early playtests involved our group going into a projection requiring pitch-perfect planning: building the decks just right, coordinating how we were going to do things, planning for the current entropy deck. After a few false starts, everything was in place, and it started exactly as planned. Support characters distracted the baddie and then hit him across the back with tremendous success, dazing him and setting up the active player for one final blow - it was perfect! All that had to happen was that the active player roll anything other than a 1... and then, instead of hitting the helpless baddie incapacitated by the heretofore flawless execution, the active player (let's call him, oh, "Tate") ended up bashing his fist into the wall next to him just before the baddie got a second wind and took out his fury on all of us.

It was glorious, chaotic, hilarious, beautiful mayhem.

Yes, we went back again and got him a run or two later (the baddie, not the unnamed player who rolled the 1), but no one really remembers how that happened.

Of course, 20's can be fun as well...

Let the mechanics tease your imagination so you can make the story your own. And be sure and let us know how it goes!

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