

PIRATES vs. SKELETONS

It's a full moon and skeletons are attacking the pirates while their ship is anchored for the night in Dead Man's Bay.

Description

Pirates vs. Skeletons is a dice-rolling game where skeletons are attacking the pirates while their ship is anchored for the night. The pirates must roll well to stop the skeletons from climbing aboard. The skeletons must roll well to be able to seize the ship.

This game's main mechanic is a dice-rolling competition scaling from each player rolling a single die up to scenarios similar to what is used in the board game "Risk", and beyond.

Players have the opportunity to learn early math concepts, like how to recognize numbers, to add numbers, and to determine the greater of two numbers. With the advanced rules, players have the additional opportunities to use the various mathematical operators to compute their rolls and to consider probabilities when deciding how many pieces to use in a given round.



Ages 4+



2 players



5-10 min.

What You Need to Play

To play this game you will need to download and print the game board and playing pieces from the PlayGames2Learn.com website: <http://playgames2learn.com/printables/>

You will also need some dice. 6-sided dice are great to start with, but if you have other dice, like 4-sided or 20-sided, then you can add additional dimensions to the math used in the game.

If you don't have multi-sided dice you could buy some on Amazon:

- <https://www.amazon.com/s?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=multi-sided+dice>

Or, if you would rather make your own paper versions, you can use our 3-D geometric shape templates: <http://playgames2learn.com/printables/>

Getting Started

The game board is divided into a number of squares, some on the ship and some in the ocean surrounding the ship. The Pirates start onboard the ship and the Skeletons start in the ocean. To get started, each player must place their pieces as evenly as possible across their starting squares, eg: before putting a second piece in a square, all your starting squares must have at least one piece.

***Note:** First time players may wish to start with some lesser number of pieces; perhaps just one piece per square.*

Taking Turns

Each turn is comprised of two phases: the Fighting Phase and the Moving Phase.

Fighting Phase

Skeletons can attack Pirates that are in any adjacent square. Attacks cannot be made on diagonals. Skeletons must attack if they are able to do so.

Each Skeleton will choose a specific Pirate in an adjacent square to attack and then declare that attack. Since the Skeletons are attacking the Pirates, the Skeletons will decide the order of these attacks. Attacks continue until each Skeleton that can attack has done so.

The attacking Skeleton will roll a six-sided dice (d6) and the defending Pirate will also roll a six-sided dice (d6). The higher roll wins the fight and the losing piece is removed to that player's graveyard. In the case of a tie, both pieces stay put and survive to the next turn.

Moving Phase

After the Fighting Phase is complete, the players may choose to move their surviving pieces. If any Skeleton is adjacent to an empty square or a square occupied by at least one other Skeleton, it may move into that square. Skeletons may move onto the ship or into the ocean as they wish.

Likewise, once the Skeletons have moved, each Pirate may move to an adjacent square that is empty or occupied by at least one other Pirate. Pirates cannot move into the ocean squares.

Pieces cannot be moved diagonally. Players can have as many pieces in a given square as they can physically place standing upright within the square's boundaries.

Players also have the choice of leaving squares empty as they move their pieces. Once the pieces have been moved, the next turn starts.

Winning

The two players are fighting for control of the Pirate's ship. Whichever player has all of their pieces removed from play has lost the fight and the other player wins.

Additional Rules

Once you are familiar with the basics of the game, you can increase the complexity of play by employing some of these additional rules.

Advanced Fighting Rules

Roll multiple dice to have the pieces in a square attack or defend as a group.

- The attacking player rolls one dice for each of their Skeletons in a given square that are participating in the attack.
- The defending player rolls one dice for each of their Pirates that are actively defending their square for that turn.
- Neither the attacker nor the defender need to use all of their pieces to attack or defend a square in a given turn.

To resolve the fight, the players will match-up their highest rolls, second highest rolls, and so on. The highest roll of each pair of dice wins the fight. This means that multiple pieces from each player may need to be removed to their respective graveyards.

Note: *If one player has rolled less dice than the other, then only that many dice need to be paired up.*

Examples:

- **Same number of attackers as defenders** – In this case all the dice can be paired and the probability of winning any particular pairing is even.
- **More attackers than defenders** – the attacker has an advantage as they will have more chances to get higher rolls than the defender, but at the same time, the defender can only lose the number of pieces equivalent to the number of dice they rolled. Perhaps they are buying time for reinforcements?
- **Less attackers than defenders** – the defender has an advantage this time as they will have more chances to get higher rolls than the attacker, but at the same time, the attacker can only lose the number of pieces equivalent to the number of dice they rolled. Maybe they are planning a strategic move action after the attack?

Attack and Defend Together Rules

Using the bracket-like cut-out pieces, players can indicate that they wish to use a neighbouring square in an attack or defense. The use of these pieces must be declared by the players before a given attack takes place.

The effect of these bracket-like pieces is to allow the player to temporarily combine the forces of two adjacent squares when either attacking or defending.

Each player may only employ this effect once per turn. At the end of the turn, the bracket-like pieces are removed from the game board, ending their effect.

Designate a Captain Rule

Players may designate one of their pieces to be the leader or captain of their forces. This specially anointed piece gains a +1 bonus to all of its rolls.

Make a Stand Rule

IF the players have designated a leader or captain AND all of one player's remaining pieces occupy only a single square AND one of those pieces is the captain then that player's captain's bonus applies to the rolls of all that player's remaining pieces. The other pieces will lose this bonus if the captain is defeated and removed to the graveyard.

Up the Challenge

Increase the challenge of the game further by using different multi-sided dice and different mathematical operations in order to reach the total attack or defense value of the overall roll. For example:

- Use combinations of 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, and 20-sided dice.
- Roll two dice, but instead of adding them, subtract the smaller from the larger.
- Roll more than one kind of dice and subtract the dice that has fewer sides from the one with more sides. You won't always have a positive number!
- Agree to a multi-operator formula for your dice rolls. Use addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. See what happens to the range of numbers you can generate.

Thanks for Playing!

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