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Rules for playing Werewolves

The goal of the game differs for Werewolves and villagers. In order to win, villagers need to eliminate all the Werewolves. Werewolves need to eliminate enough villagers that there are more werewolves than villagers left alive. In the context of this assignment, I inform students that the quality of their assignment does not, at all, depend on winning the game itself. There are many times when we play this game when we don't even finish the game – in those cases, I will sometimes take the last 3-5 minutes of a class block and ask the remaining players to reveal their roles – it seems to satisfy student curiosity.

Each round of the game consists of a night phase and a day phase. During the first night of the game, the Masons wake and recognise each other, Cupid chooses the lovers, who wake and recognise each other (but not Cupid). During every night phase of the game, the Streetrat chooses a villager's home to sleep at, the Seer chooses an identity to discover, the Werewolves choose a victim, the Witch is informed of the werewolves' victim, and can choose to heal them (indicated by a thumbs up sign) and/or poison someone (indicated by a thumbs down sign and indicating the victim), or do nothing.

When morning comes, the village discovers that someone has died, and spends the day deciding who to lynch in retribution (It is possible for the villagers to choose not to lynch someone, which does occasionally come up in classroom games, although the guides to winning the game suggest it is a poor decision because it allows the werewolves to kill twice before the villagers have any chance to retaliate). The form of these discussions is up to players (though in a classroom context, you may wish to set a limit as to their duration); the game master is responsible for tallying votes (this can also be done by the Sheriff), and provoking discussion when needed. Players are allowed to lie about what their cards say, but are not allowed to reveal the cards themselves.

For a classroom game, here are a list of roles I would recommend:

Villager – Simple villagers with no special powers

Werewolf – A group of Werewolves hiding among the Villagers – each night they choose a player to become their nighttime meal

Seer – A villager with the power to see other people's true nature – once each night they can see the identity of one village member of their choice (communicated by silently pointing at a player, the game master then shows the Seer that player's card).

Masons – Simple villagers, but with an awareness of a small number of others in the group who, like them, are Masons (and therefore, not Werewolves)

Streetrat – A villager with no defined home, who must choose a villager's home to sleep at every night. If the Werewolves attempt to target the Streetrat, they go hungry, because this player cannot be found. If the Streetrat chooses to stay at the home of one of the werewolves, they automatically become the

werewolves' nightly kill. If the Streetrat chooses to stay at the home of the Werewolves' victim that evening, they are killed along with the intended victim.

Cupid- A villager with the power to create, at the beginning of the game, a powerful attraction between two players. Without knowing their identities (werewolf, etc.), Cupid chooses two lovers at the beginning of the game. They recognise each other and go back to sleep. If at any time in the game, one of the lovers is killed (by Werewolves or the Villagers), the other dies of grief. Cupid is otherwise played as a Villager.

Witch – A villager with the power to harm and to heal. Once during the game, they are able to heal an intended werewolf victim, and once during the game, they are able to poison someone of their choice. They may exercise neither, one, or both of these options in the course of a round of the game.

Hunter- A well-armed villager. If the Hunter is killed, by either the werewolves or the village, they are able to retaliate by killing one other player of their choice.

Sheriff – A role assigned to a player by other players in the game. They hold the tiebreaker vote if there is a tie between two candidates for lynching, and are able to choose their successor.

Order of actions in the night phase is as follows:

- Masons (first night only) – wake and recognise each other
- Cupid (first night only) – wake and choose lovers
- Lovers (first night only) – wake and recognise each other
- Seer – wake and choose an identity to know
- Streetrat – wake and choose a villager's house to stay at
- Werewolves – wake and choose a victim
- Witch – wake, be informed of the werewolves' intended victim, choose to save them or not, and choose to poison someone or not

It is possible to play this game with nothing but slips of paper with roles written on them in text. I would recommend using cards with icons or images instead (a version of this with the roles above is attached) because it makes it easier for players to identify their role, and for the Seer to determine someone's identity in a crowded room. I generally make a list of icons and roles, with copies of the rules, available to students as they play.

I would recommend the following approximate distribution of roles for games/classes of different sizes.

	10-13 players	16-21 players	22-30 players	30-40 players
Werewolves	2-3	3-5	4-8	5-9
Seer	1	1	1	1
Witch	1	1	1	1
Masons	2	3	3	4
Streetrat	0	1	1	1
Cupid	1	1	1	1
Hunter	0	1	1	1
Villagers	3-5	5-8	10-14	18-22

The numbers of roles are given in ranges because, as a general rule, I don't give students the precise numbers of werewolves in the game. When the question is asked, I use it as a reminder to focus on collecting data rather than winning the game.

I generally play Werewolves in a "role reveal" version, so when players die, they reveal their role. It is also possible to play a version where the village never knows if they have successfully caught a werewolf. This version of the game is much more difficult, and that difficulty does not enhance the learning I'm looking for in this assignment, but may be worth considering in other contexts or to convey particular ideas (e.g. the challenges of knowing someone's "true" internal state, or the sometimes tenuous relationship between accusations and facts).

Although I try to interfere as little as possible in the village's deliberations, I will, occasionally, spend some time talking about how some interaction we've just seen illustrates a relevant social psychological concept, and reminding students to take notes for their papers. This forms part of the scaffolding for completing the assignment later on – from experience, students often fail to take the notes they need because they get caught up in playing the game.

Some notes on managing the game itself:

This game works best in spaces where players can be arranged in a formation facing each other – if my classroom does not allow this, I will often book a different one for the days when we play Werewolves.

Be careful not to give clues to players about who is sitting where in the room with where you stand/direct your voice – I walk around the room as I call on different players to wake up at night, and am careful to sometimes direct my voice away from the player in question – it means clues about who's who should come from players, not the game master.

When revealing roles for the Seer, I often flip over cards for players seated around the room (including dead players), and only show the selected one to the Seer – this prevents my giving clues to players about whose identity was sought overnight.