

Some Basics to get you started with VTES Trading Card Game:

These are abridged rules. First, read the game premise at <http://www.white-wolf.com/vtes>. Also on the VTES homepage, you may wish to read the complete rules & print out a copy of the playmat & a copy of the card Icons. Keep these printouts handy until you know the game & learn the Icons (left border on most cards). Each player or **Methuselah** (Vampire that is thousands of years old) needs about 40 counters to represent their Blood **Pool**: 30 Pool each to start with, the rest contained & set aside. Alternately, these extra counters can go in the center of the table; a communal pile of counters called the **Blood Bank**. You can use pennies, dice, whatever you like, as long as up to 10 will fit on one card; many use flat red glass beads/tapstones. You will also want an item to represent the "**Edge**" counter, signifies who currently has the advantage in the game. It goes to the center of the table if no one Controls it.

IMPORTANT NOTE: These rules apply at all times UNLESS A CARD SAYS OTHERWISE; In that case, follow the card. This game is best when played with 3 or more players. Order of play is clockwise. Note that the player on your Right is your **Predator** & the player on your Left is your **Prey** who you want to **OUST** from the game (just as your Predator will try to Oust you). ---Any effect, card or successful Bleed Action that drains your Prey's last Pool OUSTS them from the game. No matter how your Prey is ousted, you gain 6 pool from the Blood Bank & one **Victory Point**. Being the last player wins you 1 additional VP; the player at the end of the game with the most VP wins. Yes, you can win without being the last player left. You can Withdraw if you are out of cards for 1VP; see rulebook for how this works.

Borrow a deck or create a **Library**, green backed cards, into a deck of at least 40 cards (+ up to 10 per player; max 100) & at least 12 Vampires for your **Crypt**, amber back vamp cards, into another stack. There are various Pre-constructed starter decks available if you don't want to build your own deck. As a beginner, use all Vamps of the same clan. Shuffle well, let your Predator cut both stacks, then set your Crypt & Library aside, next to each other. Draw 7 Library cards for your hand and draw the top 4 cards of your Crypt to put in front of you, face down. You may look at these Uncontrolled, Inactive vamps at anytime (but don't let your opponents see them). ---You'll also have a discard pile for all cards, collectively called your **Ash Heap**.

---A **MINION** is a Vampire or an Ally. Most times a Minion performs an action, blocks or plays a card, it usually **Taps** them; turn the Vamp (or Ally) 90 degrees to the side to indicate that they have acted & cannot act or block until your next turn. Normally, anytime you play a card, immediately draw a card from your Library to replace it. All Vampires, some Ally cards, many Locations & some Equipment are unique in the game so only one copy of each can be in play. If two unique cards are brought into play they are Contested, turned face down & are out of play. When learning the game, play a different clans of vampires than your opponents to eliminate this game mechanic. If a card is Contested, each Methuselah must pay a one Pool penalty during each of their Untap Phases until one of them Yields or is Ousted; the owner of the unyielded copy then turns theirs face-up & can return it into play.


--Get to know your clan's icon first; all Crypt cards have them (upper left corner)--> Your deck should be constructed with mainly the 3 principal **Disciplines** possessed by your specific clan of Vamps. Basic decks should use The Disciplines your vampires most commonly have; pre-constructed decks are always designed this way.

-->>If a Library card has a clan's symbol on the left side, you must have an active Vamp of that clan out to bring it into play. If a card has a Discipline icon on it, the Vampire wishing to play that card MUST have that discipline to play it. Standard Level (square) discipline gets you the first part of a card's text, Superior Level (diamond) you can use either the regular text or the Bold Face text below it. In some cases, a Superior Level Discipline lets you use both functions of a card. The older Vampires have not only a higher blood capacity but usually have more & better disciplines & more blood to spend on them. Unfortunately, bringing them out uses a lot of your Blood Pool. Deciding which Vamps to bring out, in what order & how many can be crucial, as can luck of the draw.

The 5 Phases of Your TURN: **Untap, Master, Minion, Influence, Discard**. Announce as you start each.

Phase 1, the **Untap Phase**; untap all of your cards.

Phase 2 is the **Master Phase**. You may play one master card per turn. Master cards represent some of acts of great power you can do as an ancient Methuselah. 1 Master Trifle card can be played at this time; it grants an additional Master action if it is played first. Out-of-Turn Master cards are played when it is not your turn; when used, you forfeit your Master Card Phase on your next turn.

Phase 3, **Minion Phase**: This is the most active part of the game & when most of the fun happens. Minions can take actions  (Action Card Icon) as described on the playmat & below. Only untapped Vamps/Allies can take actions or play reaction cards in most cases. Minions may perform 1 action per turn, unless noted otherwise. More on this phase below.

The types of actions Minions can perform in Phase 3 will be listed next; only some require cards:

Bleed (No card required). NOTE: Targets your prey, by default. Not at stealth, though most actions are. The Methuselah bled loses 1 or more Pool.

Hunt (No card required). Vampire only. +1 stealth, Vamp gains 1 blood from the Blood Bank

Equip (Req: Equipment card in hand or Transferred to a Minion you control). +1 stealth

Employ Retainer (Req: Retainer card). +1 stealth; attached to a Vampire

Recruit Ally (Req: Ally card). +1 stealth; these & Vamps are collectively called MINIONS. All are independent once in play & can take most actions on your next turn.

Political Action Vampire only. +1 stealth (Req: Political action card or effect from play).

Leave Torpor Vampire only. (No card required). +1 stealth; more below

Rescue a vampire in Torpor Vampire only. (No card required) +1 Stealth in your own Torpor

Diablerize a vampire in Torpor Vampire only. (No card required); More below

NOTE: an action which initiates combat cannot be used to initiate combat with a vampire in torpor.

MINION PHASE, NOTE: Any untapped minion may tap to take one of the actions above, if appropriate. Each Minion's action is resolved before the next Minion's action begins. -EXCEPTION: any time one or more of your minions has a mandatory action to perform and is not prevented from taking that action, your next minion action must be one of those mandatory actions; such as a ready vampire with zero blood must hunt (mandatory action) before other Minions act.

Phase 4, **Influence Phase** (Bringing out Vamps). Starting with 1, then 2, 3 & 4 on the 4th player's turn, each Methuselah gets 4 **Transfers**, ala moving your Pool to one or more of the 4 face down Inactive, Uncontrolled Vamps you brought out in the beginning. One transfer gets you one blood counter from your pool onto one of your Uncontrolled Vamps, max 4 per turn. When a Vampire's blood capacity is filled (blood red drop on bottom/right corner of vamp card) Vamp becomes Active & Controlled & is placed face up above (closer to the Blood Bank & opponents). For 2 transfers, you can move one blood counter from an Inactive Uncontrolled vamp back to your blood pool. Lastly, you can spend all 4 transfers & pay one Pool to the Blood bank to draw the top card from you Crypt & place it in your Uncontrolled Region, keeping the Vamp card face down. Some players say, "Pay one to see one". Note which disciplines are on the cards in your hand & try to start with a Vamp that can use them.

Phase 5, **Discard Phase**: you may (don't have to) discard ONE card from your hand and draw another to replace it. This is also when Event/Gehenna cards are played in lieu of discarding.

-----More on Phase 3, the Minion Phase: If another player wishes to block your action, your Prey gets first chance, followed by your Predator. This is where **Stealth** and **Intercept** come in. Those words perfectly describe what they do. Most actions you can take are at +1 Stealth, (sneaking). If you wish to block an action at Stealth your Minion has to meet Stealth by Blocking with Intercept (locating the sneak). You do this by declaring a **Block** with an Untapped minion which Taps to block (or uses a Reaction card to block as if untapped). Normally, blocking is the only time Reaction cards can be played, by a Blocking Minion. +1 Intercept cancels +1 Stealth. If Stealth exceeds Intercept, the action is unblocked and continues to completion (usually) & the blocker does not tap. Action Modifier cards can be played by the acting Minion; note the same Act. Mod. card cannot be played twice during an action. Other Methuselah's Minions may play Reaction cards to attempt to block your acting Minion; again, they may play only one of each Reaction card. If blocked, the acting & blocking Minions involved usually enter **Combat**.

The Combat sequence is really easy but takes a few battles to understand it. Some cards allow 1 Minion to enter combat with another. The acting Minion's player plays cards first; In most cases only Combat cards may be played.

1. Play any PRE-Combat cards; (card will say, 'play before range is determined') then
2. Establish **RANGE**. Default is range is CLOSE; Maneuvers can be used to go to LONG Range. Strike cards that grant a Maneuver are played here. Minions can cancel each other's Maneuvers; optional Maneuvers can be reserved to cancel another minion's maneuver, if desired
3. **Choose STRIKE**. The most common strikes are Strength (Hand) Damage, Melee Weapon (Dagger, nightstick, etc.) or a Ranged (capital "R"). If you choose not to use a weapon, you also cannot use an ability that weapon grants (such as a Maneuver). Likewise, if you use a Maneuver from a weapon, you must use it for your initial strike. Some Strike cards take effect before any others such as Combat Ends or Dodge. Strike: Dodge- Vamp avoids damage but also inflicts none. Strike: Combat Ends takes place immediately. Aside from these 2 strikes, FIRST Strikes are resolved first (below); some Minions have First Strike & some cards grant this.
4. **Resolve STRIKES**. Normally, all Damage is dealt simultaneously but First Strikes resolve first. A Minion's default strength (hand) damage is 1. Remove 1 blood for each point of damage from each Minion who are injured. If a Vampire takes 1 or more damage when they have no blood on their card, they are sent to **Torpor**, excess damage is ignored; more on this badly injured state later. If an Ally or Retainer has no more life counters on them, they are burned & discarded to your Ash Heap. Damage Prevention Combat Cards are played at this time. After damage is resolved, go on to any Additional Strikes a Minion may have & resolve them.
5. **Determine PRESS**. (Either to Continue or End Combat) if none are used/available, combat ends by default without a press. Minions can cancel each other's Presses played in the same manner they can Maneuvers.

*Aggravated Damage: Allies & Retainers treat Aggravated damage as normal damage but it is especially grievous to Vampires. When a Vamp takes this type of damage, he/she is sent to *Torpor* unless ALL OF IT is prevented. Wounding a Vamp in this manner immediately causes combat to end (after Damage is Resolved). Move the Vamp who took unprevented Aggravated damage next to your face down, Uncontrolled Vamps. One point of AGG Dmg does not cause a Vamp to lose blood but sends them to *Torpor*; additional AGG Dmg must be paid for at a price of 1 Blood per 1 Point taken or the Vampire is Burned & discarded to the Ash Heap along with any cards & counters on them.

->A Vamp in Torpor can no longer take actions or defend themselves. They can only do one action, Leave Torpor (& then, only when untapped & with at least 2 blood counters) at +1 Stealth. You tap the Vamp and pay two blood off him/her to the Blood Bank. If this action is blocked by a Vampire, there is no combat. The blocking Vamp may commit Diablerie; more on that below. If a Vamp in Torpor has less than 2 blood, another vampire must rescue them. In that case, the rescuing Vamp pays the two blood to the Blood bank (or one from each). If rescuing another Methuselah's Vamp the rescuer can force the Torpor Vamp to pay both blood.

- ***Political Actions**: Vamp ability or play of a Political Action card. If no one blocks the Action, there are 3 steps. 1. Announce the Terms (what the effect will be)
 2. Polling: Active Titled Vampires may cast their votes for, against or abstain. Some reaction cards grant votes. Each Methuselah may cast 1 Political Action card for 1 vote. Also, the Edge can be burned for one vote. Tied votes fail.
 3. Resolve the Effect (if the vote passes).

One last thing; a ready Vampire can commit **Diablerie** on a Vamp in Torpor, draining their blood & destroying them. If successful, you gain any blood on the vamp card (ignore excess) & any equipment. If a younger vampire does this to an older vampire (one with more blood capacity than they have) they gain a Discipline & become one generation older. Go thru your Hand, Library or Ash Heap to find a Master: Discipline card to place on the Vamp (this new higher capacity is not filled automatically). A Referendum (Vote) is automatically called to see if the offending Diablarist will have the Blood Hunt called on them. A tied vote fails; a passing vote destroys the Diablarist (to the Ash Heap).

These are the basics you need to begin playing this complex, yet very fun game!!! I really think you'll enjoy VTES once you get the hang of it & get a few games in. Hope this helps! ---Gangrel-Boy (Rob Reno)--



Action



Political Action



Ally



Equipment



Retainer



Action modifier



Reaction



Combat



Reflex



Event



Burnable



Flight



Advanced



Merge