

JUMP THE SHARK

The Writers began The Show full of hope. They had joy in their hearts and a story to tell.

3 years later, their eyes are bloodshot and their hastily scribbled script pages are covered in coffee stains and tears.

What was going to be their crowning joy, their magnum opus, their labour of love... has become their worst nightmare.



HOW TO PLAY

In JUMP THE SHARK, players take on the roles of MAIN CHARACTERS, SUPPORTING CAST, DIRECTORS, and WRITERS in a successful TV show that is going steadily downhill.

This game is designed to be a conversation. Players will collaborate when creating EPISODES and building their MAIN CHARACTERS and SUPPORTING CAST by asking and answering questions.

Each player will need:

- 4d10
- A WAY TO WRITE THINGS DOWN



When a player's MAIN CHARACTER is STARRING in an episode, they should only play the role of their MAIN CHARACTER.

Any players whose MAIN CHARACTERS are not STARRING in episodes can have smaller parts as MAIN CHARACTERS, share the role of DIRECTOR, and play the SUPPORTING CAST.

The DIRECTOR helps to frame scenes, ask questions, and steer narrative.

The game takes the form of four sections:

- THE PITCH - Act as WRITERS, decide the GENRE, SETTING & TITLE
- SEASONS 1-2 - Create MAIN CHARACTERS and SUPPORTING CAST
- SEASONS 3-10 - Film EPISODES until they are CANCELLED
- THE FINALE - Resolve as many LOOSE ENDS as possible



In THE PITCH, players act as THE WRITERS who have just come up with a show that they think is going to change TV forever.

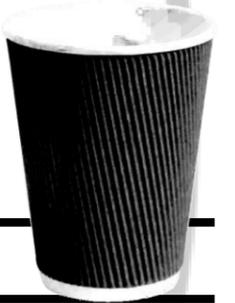
Choose, or roll on the table to generate a GENRE and SETTING for the show. Roll twice for GENRE to really make it stand out.

d10	GENRE	SETTING
1	COMEDY	HIGH SCHOOL
2	HORROR	OFFICE
3	CRIME	SPORTS TEAM
4	ACTION	GOVERNMENT
5	DRAMA	FUTURE APOCALYPSE
6	ROMANCE	ANCIENT HISTORY
7	SCI-FI	SHOP OR MALL
8	THRILLER	ALTERNATIVE HISTORY
9	NOIR	DYSTOPIAN FUTURE
10	TIME TRAVEL	FANTASY WORLD

Once the GENRE(s) and SETTING have been decided, answer these questions as a group:

- What is the show about?
- What sold it to The Network?
- What inspired THE WRITERS?
- Is it low budget, or high budget?

Finally, pick a name for the show, then move on to SEASONS 1-2



SEASONS 1-2

When they first pitched the show, THE WRITERS had it all planned out - two perfect seasons, with story ARCS for each MAIN CHARACTER and a well-rounded SUPPORTING CAST that would tell the story they always dreamed of when they first started out.

Players create their MAIN CHARACTER by rolling on the table to decide their ARC, and answering the questions associated with it.

d10	ARC	QUESTIONS
1	WILL THEY/ WON'T THEY	Who was your romance with? Why is it so tempestuous? Ask the group to pick a MAIN CHARACTER, or create a SUPPORTING CAST member
2	REDEMPTION	What did you do? who has been helping you to make it right? Ask the group to pick a MAIN CHARACTER, or create a SUPPORTING CAST member
3	COMING OF AGE	What event transitioned you to a level of greater respect in the group? Ask the group why they didn't respect you before
4	HERO'S JOURNEY	What lie did you believe about yourself or the world that was holding you back? Ask the group what helped you discover the truth
5	HIDDEN DEPTHS	What amazing, hidden talent took a long time to surface? Who did you first reveal it to? Ask the group to pick a MAIN CHARACTER, or create a SUPPORTING CAST member
6	DARK & EDGY	What did you lose to turn you from happy-go-lucky to moody and cynical? Who is now your enemy? Ask the group to pick a MAIN CHARACTER, or create a SUPPORTING CAST member
7	LIGHT & SOFT	What turned you from a grouch to a teddy bear? Whose life have you made better? Ask the group to pick a MAIN CHARACTER, or create a SUPPORTING CAST member
8	MISCHIEF, CHAOS, CORRUPTION	Why are you trying to cause trouble? Who do you attempt to turn against the MAIN CHARACTERS? Ask the group to pick a MAIN CHARACTER, or create a SUPPORTING CAST member
9	TESTED FRIENDSHIP	Who were you close to? What came between you to test your friendship? How did you overcome it? Ask the group to pick a MAIN CHARACTER, or create a SUPPORTING CAST member
10	FLAT	What dependable aspect of your character has become your only trait? Ask the group to create a catchphrase for you



For extra flavour, answer these questions:

- What did they look like in the pilot episode?
- How did they join the group?
- What's changed since episode 1?
- Why do fans of the show love or hate them?

When you need to create SUPPORTING CAST members, ask:

- What do they look like?
- What makes them special?
- How did they become associated with the MAIN CHARACTERS?



SEASONS 3-10

When the show first aired, everybody loved it. It was hailed as ground-breaking, innovative, and won several awards. The Network signed it for another 8 SEASONS, and it seemed like things could only go up from there...

Unfortunately, THE WRITERS are all out of ideas and have resorted to rehashing any old trope they can until they get CANCELLED.

In SEASONS 3-10, players collaborate to create important EPISODES until they either get CANCELLED or finish SEASON 10.



SEASONS & EPISODES



For each SEASON, players act out 3 important EPISODES, which have a potential impact on the overall story.

Roll on the table to generate a PLOT for each EPISODE - reroll if you've had the PLOT before.

d10	EPISODE 1	EPISODE 2	EPISODE 3
1	IF IT PLEASE THE COURT Someone is put on trial	THE WAY WE WAS Everyone has flashbacks to their younger selves	DEARLY BELOVED Everyone attends a wedding
2	BEACH PARTY Everyone goes to the beach	UNLUCKY FOR SOME Someone has a spell of terrible luck	LOVE IS IN THE AIR Someone goes on a date
3	IT'S ME, YOUR LONG LOST... Someone's long lost relative returns	IT WASN'T ME! Someone's Evil Twin appears and causes havoc	LOCKED UP One or more MAIN CHARACTERS are sent to prison
4	HOW DO WE GET OUT OF HERE? Everyone is locked inside a room or building	ROAD TRIP Everyone spends the entire episode travelling to a destination	DEATH IN HOLLYWOOD One of the MAIN CHARACTERS dies
5	TRIPPED OUT ON WHACKIES Everyone takes some form of hallucinogen	THE REVENANT Someone comes back from the dead (possibly in a different body)	ONCE MORE WITH FEELING It's a musical episode!
6	HAPPY HOLIDAYS Everyone celebrates a holiday	SURPRISE! Everyone plan a surprise party for another MAIN CHARACTER	NEVER WORK WITH ANIMALS Someone gets an unusual pet
7	AND IT WAS ALL A DREAM Someone has a crazy dream	BIOHAZARD CONTAINMENT Everyone is exposed to a potentially deadly virus	THE GOLDEN RULE Someone invents a new game and won't stop playing
8	STORM'S COMIN' Everyone deals with a natural disaster	ABOUT LAST NIGHT Everyone wakes up from a wild night and figures out what they did	THE BIG SHOW Everyone puts on a show or performance
9	THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE Someone encounters a cryptid or alien	DOUBLE BOOKED One or more MAIN CHARACTERS has to be in two places at once	BLAST FROM THE PAST Someone's bitter rival or old flame appears
10	LUCKY NUMBER 7 Someone starts their own casino	BUT WHAT IF? Everyone imagines if their lives had been different	GENRESWAP The series swaps genre for one episode (choose or roll)



When the PLOT for an EPISODE has been generated, players decide how involved their MAIN CHARACTERS are, by choosing one of their DRAMA DICE and putting it in the middle. Once this has been done, any players who are not STARRING decide amongst themselves how to share the roles of SUPPORTING CAST and DIRECTOR.

Each EPISODE runs in 3 ACTS:



ACT ONE - THE SET UP

Act out scenes that answer these questions:

- What is the unrelated, inciting incident that starts the adventure?
- Which MAIN CHARACTERS and SUPPORTING CAST are involved?
- Why are the other MAIN CHARACTERS not there?
- What adventure is being had as a SIDE PLOT?



ACT TWO - THE SETBACK

Act out scenes that answer these questions:

- What has changed since the start of the episode?
- Who is in a worse position than before?
- How did they lose control of the situation?
- Who could fix things, but doesn't? Why?
- How has the SIDE PLOT made things worse?

ACT THREE - THE CLIMAX

Act out scenes that answer these questions:

- What have the MAIN CHARACTERS learnt?
- What have we learnt about the MAIN CHARACTERS?
- Who saves the day or lowers the tension?
- How does the SIDE PLOT join up with the PLOT?
- What is left unresolved at the end of the episode? Mark this down as a LOOSE END

At the end of each SEASON, roll a d10. If the result is lower than the number of the current SEASON, the show is CANCELLED - move to THE FINALE. At SEASON 10, the show ends, move to THE FINALE.



DRAMA DICE

At the start of each SEASON, each player rolls 4d10 for their MAIN CHARACTER. These are their DRAMA DICE.

When you create EPISODES, DRAMA DICE decide how much involvement a MAIN CHARACTER has - the higher the DRAMA DICE, the more involvement the MAIN CHARACTER has in the PLOT of the EPISODE.

- 7-10 MAIN FOCUS - This episode is all about them, they are the focus of most scenes
- 4-6 SIDE PLOT - They appear in the background of most scenes and are occasionally the focus
- 1-3 BIT PART - They appear once or twice, or have little to no involvement



THE FINALE

Sweet Release! The Network has finally let the show die, whether it's by completion of the contract, or by getting CANCELLED. Still, it needs to be rounded off with a hastily put together FINALE...

In the FINALE, any LOOSE ENDS have to be resolved as clumsily as possible.

Stage a scene for each LOOSE END, where the MAIN CHARACTERS involved get together and have FLASHBACKS. Begin each FLASHBACK by asking "Hey, do you remember that time we...?"

