

# What Is Cast of Thousands ?

*Cast of Thousands is a dice mechanic that allows you to decide how much you want to risk, every time you roll the dice. The entire system is summed up in four points:*

- **Roll as many six-sided dice as you wish!**  
You must roll at least two, but there is no maximum number. However, with greater chance of success comes greater chance of failure!
- **A 4-6 on a dice is a success.**  
One success is a Common success. (see Ratings Table). Each extra success raises the Success Level by one, eg: four successes are an Impressive success.
- **Double '1's are a Mishap.**  
The action automatically fails regardless of how many successes are rolled.
- **Three or more '1's are a Calamity.**  
The action automatically fails, with additional consequences or penalties.

## Ratings Table & Success levels

40"	10+	Awesome
36"	9	Stupendous
32"	8	Amazing
28"	7	Heroic
24"	6	Magnificent (1)
20"	5	Excellent (3)
16"	4	Impressive (5)
12"	3	Good (8)
8"	2	Reasonable (10)
4"	1	Common(15)

## How Do I Use Cast of Thousands?

*The boxes below describe an optimum way of using Cast Of Thousands for wargaming with units of miniatures.. The following pages describe variations and other ways that Cast of Thousands can be used*

### Ratings

Every unit has a rating ranging from 1-6 (Common to Magnificent). Higher ratings are 'heroic' or "superhuman" and only possessed by individual characters (see variants on page 2). The Ratings Table is used to refer to:

1. **A unit's rating:** *"This unit has a rating of 4, or is Impressive".*
2. **The number of successes needed for an action:** *"I need 3 successes, or a Good success".*
3. **The number of successes needed to move a certain distance:** *"I need 3 successes, or a Good success, to move 12".*

The number in parentheses are the suggested numbers of figures in a unit of that rating.

### Movement

Take a figure from the unit and place it where you wish to move the unit to. Units move in a straight line, but may wheel up to 180 degrees at the start or end of movement, but it costs one success for each wheel.

Measure the distance and consult the Ratings Table to work out the successes required. Each 4" of movement and each wheel requires one success. Roll at least this many dice (but you may roll more).

If you roll the required successes or greater, the unit moves to its target (it may not move further). If you roll less then the unit moves as far as it can towards the indicated spot.

*Eg Zack wants to move his units 12". He needs three successes He decides to roll six dice, but only gets two successes. The unit moves 8".*

Note a unit's rating has nothing to do with how far it can move eg an Impressive unit does not have a fixed move of 16".

### Combat

Both firing and melee are resolved as follows:

Roll as many dice as you want (but at least two). To hit an opposing unit you must roll the rating of the opposing unit. eg to hit an Impressive unit requires four successes. A roll equal to the unit's rating removes one figure. Each extra success removes an additional figure.

*Eg a unit of rifles fires at a unit of Good cavalry. The rifles roll 4 successes, an Impressive success. Two cavalry are removed.*

Melee is not simultaneous, only the currently activated unit may roll.

### Advantages & Disadvantages

Bonuses and penalties are known as Advantages and Disadvantages. These may be specific to a unit, reflecting that unit's skill at something, or general, eg a terrain penalty. A unit may have multiple Advantages and/ or Disadvantages, and they may cancel each other out.

An Advantage adds one success to the number of successes rolled. A Disadvantage subtracts one success.

### Mishaps & Calamities

A Mishap always voids a unit's action. A calamity will usually have additional penalties eg unit runs out of ammo, hero drops weapon, one side loses the initiative. Calamities should be tailored to specific units and circumstances.

## Options and Variations

*Cast Of Thousands is a toolkit. Below are some options that can be added.*

### Turn Sequence by Rating

At the start of the game, randomly decide who is the first player. The player may activate any or all of his Common units. After he has finished, or if he has no Common units, the second player activates his Common units. The first player then activates his Respectable units, then the second player... players continue activating units in order of rating. If both sides have units of the same rating, both sides roll a dice – the higher roller activates first.

When a unit is activated it may move, then combat. Or you may allow movement and combat in any order.

### Open-Ended Movement

Instead of specifying where a unit wishes to move to, simply make a roll. The unit may use all the successes for movement in any direction. This is a faster method of movement, and is useful in large multiplayer games.

### Changing Direction

A unit may change direction **during** its move by spending one success for each wheel or turn.

### Wounds for High Ratings

In most games units and characters will have a maximum rating of 6, as it is very difficult to successfully attack a higher rating. If you wish to use Ratings of Heroic or greater you may wish to introduce “character wounds” as follows:

A Magnificent figure has one ‘wound’. Each higher rating has an additional wound (eg Heroic has 2 wounds, Awesome 3 wounds, etc). If an attack fails to roll the figure’s rating (and kill it outright), but rolls six successes, the figure still takes a “wound”. When a figure has used up all its wounds, it is dead. Thus an Awesome figure will either require 10 successes to kill it outright, or five lots of 6 successes to whittle it down.

### Alternate Methods for Advantages & Disadvantages

The basic method of factoring in Advantages & Disadvantages is very ‘grainy’. More than two Advantages or Disadvantages on a roll will upset game balance. Below are two alternate methods of factoring Advantages and Disadvantages into the dice roll. Both allow a unit or figure to have a greater number of Advantages and Disadvantages

**Alternative 1:** Each Advantage allows you to reroll one failed dice. Each Disadvantage requires you to reroll one successful dice. ‘1’s may not be rerolled, but any ‘1’s that come up when a dice is rerolled do not count towards Mishaps & Calamities.

**Alternative 2:** One Advantage means that the first ‘3’ rolled is a success. Two Advantages means the first two ‘3’s rolled are a success, and so on. A Disadvantage means that the first ‘4’ rolled is a failure, two Disadvantages means the first two ‘4’s rolled are failures, and so on.

### Alternate Method of Determining Additional Losses

This is a significant change to basic Combat, and makes it harder to “kill” figures. When a unit is attacked, each multiple of the defending unit’s Rating removes an additional figure. “Excess” successes are ignored.

*Eg A rifle unit fires at a regiment of Smart unicycles and rolls six successes, a Magnificent success! Two unicyclists are removed. Next turn the rifles fire again at the unicycles, this time they roll five successes. One unicyclist is removed, and the remaining two successes are ignored.*

## Factoring in Ratings

In the basic game, ratings are a “defensive” characteristic and a unit’s skills and abilities are factored in through Advantages. An alternative is to allow ratings to be used as Advantages in a figure’s turn. Eg A Good unit would have 3 Advantages it could spread amongst any rolls in its turn.

Alternatively, you can introduce “skills” or ‘attributes’ . A unit or figure may split its Rating amongst these skills. Each ‘point’ of rating in a skill is an Advantage when using that skill.

## The “Default“ Roll

If a unit or figure wishes to perform an action not covered by the rules, it must roll 3 or more successes. Advantages and Disadvantages may be factored in. You may, of course, use a higher or lower number of successes as a default.

## Movement Increment

The default movement increment is 4”. You may wish to adjust this to suit the size of your playing area.

## Morale Checks

Morale can be introduced by having the unit make a roll each time it takes casualties. It must roll a number of successes equal to or greater than the number of casualties just taken. If it fails, or rolls a Mishap, the unit suffers a penalty next turn eg has a Disadvantage to movement or combat. On a Calamity, the unit routs.

## Alternate ways of using Cast of Thousands

*Here are some ways that Cast Of Thousands can be used in other games*

### Action Points

This is very suitable for skirmishes or games with individual figures, whether a space marine squad, or a sports team. At the start of the figure’s turn, make a Cast of Thousands roll and add the figure’s rating to the successes. This is the number of “action points” the figure has. The points may be used to move, initiate combats, perform special manoeuvres, etc. The points may also be used as Advantages during the figure’s turn. If the figure rolls a Mishap it loses its turn but the player may now activate another figure. On a Calamity the player lose the initiative to the opposing player.

### Opposed Combat Rolls

In a combat **both** sides make a roll and add their rating. The side with the higher number of successes wins, the loser suffers hits or wounds equal to the difference in the successes rolled. On a calamity, the loser suffers an additional penalty, or the wounds are doubled, or the player loses the initiative. This variant may be combined with Action Points.

### The “Scotty” Factor (“the engines canna take it captain”)

In any game involving vehicles, whether bicycles, sailing ships, zeppelins or spaceships, the Cast of Thousands mechanic may be used to determine how hard the vehicle’s engines are pushed and how much corresponding power or velocity the vehicle has. On a Mishap the vehicle or grinds to a halt, or is becalmed, or continues on its previous velocity or temporarily loses an engine. On a calamity the engines explode, or the cyclist crashes, etc.

### Army Command Rolls

In a game where both sides are employing large numbers of units, a player makes a Command roll, using Cast of Thousands, to determine how many units will move this turn. The more units he attempts to move the greater the chance of a Mishap or Calamity. The Army Commander’s rating may be factored into the roll. On a Mishap only a minimum number of units move, or units are disadvantaged. On a Calamity the initiative passes to the opposing player.

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These rules are free, we want you to use and experiment with them, but we’d appreciate acknowledgment and mention of Anubis Studios. Thanks!

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