

Road Runner

There's not much to eat in the American West. A coyote often has to go to extreme lengths to get a feed. A road runner makes an excellent meal, but they can be tricky critters to catch. Luckily, your average coyote has the smarts to tip the odds in his favour...

Road Runner is a game of outlandish cartoon traps and chases. Each player is a coyote, striving to be the first to catch a road runner for dinner. The trouble is, the road runners are fast runners, and the coyotes are not as smart as they like to think they are.

Preparation

Before playing this game, it is necessary to make your set of game cards. The complete card set is at the end of these rules. Either print them out on to cardstock, or print them to paper and glue them on to suitable blank cards. Alternatively, you could write them on to suitable blank cards (the back of old business cards should be the right size). You will also need a pool of about 5 counters per player to represent points of damage. The counters may be the same or different - it doesn't matter.

Basics

Road Runner is a card game for three to eight players. It tends to play better (and more hilariously) with more players rather than fewer.

There are two types of cards: Capture cards and Escape cards. Capture cards represent a piece of equipment or terrain which the coyote uses to try to catch a road runner. A Capture card usually has one or more Keywords written on it, which define the game characteristics of the card. Some Capture cards have *conditional* Keywords on them. Conditional Keywords apply if the card or cards named in the condition is played at the same time and do not apply if the named card/s is not played. Conditional Keywords are written on the card as the condition first ("With CARD NAME:") followed by any applicable Keywords.

Escape cards represent events which occur to allow a road runner to escape a capture attempt. These can either be cartoonish zip or smarts exhibited by the road runner, cartoonish spurious physics which foils the capture attempt, or cartoonish stupidity on the part of the coyote. An Escape card has text on it which explains which sort of capture attempts it prevents. This text often refers to Keywords which appear on any relevant Capture cards.

A few cards are *both* Capture and Escape cards. These cards may always be played as Capture cards, in which case any Keywords on the card apply. They may also be played as Escape cards, but only after the draw pile has been exhausted and a new draw pile made by reshuffling played cards. Once a reshuffle has been made, these cards may be used as Escape cards, even if they were held in a player's hand during the reshuffle and not themselves reshuffled. These cards represent traps set up by the coyotes which may come back to haunt them later...

Playing the Game

To start, shuffle all the cards well, especially if the Capture and Escape cards have been separated during the previous game. Deal five cards face down to each player and place the rest face down to form a draw pile. The player to the left of the dealer plays first and play proceeds clockwise.

During his turn, a player draws one card from the top of the draw pile and then does one of the following:

- Plays a capture attempt (see below); **OR**
- Passes one card at random from his hand to the player on his left. In practice this can be done by having the player on the left choose a card from the current player's hand, without looking at the card texts.

The turn then proceeds to the next player.

If the draw pile runs out, reshuffle all the Capture cards which have been played so far to form a new draw pile. Any played Escape cards are kept separate and *not* reshuffled into the new draw pile. Cards which are both Capture and Escape cards are included in the reshuffled draw pile, regardless of which type of card they were played as. If a capture attempt is successful, the game is over and the player who made the successful attempt wins.

Capture Attempts

A capture attempt is made by playing one or more Capture cards face up on the table and declaring how the attempt is being made. A capture attempt may only be made if the player can play cards with Keywords making up one of the following sets:

- **BAIT** and **TRAP** (The coyote is baiting a trap to catch a road runner.)
- **ROAD** and **AMBUSH** (The coyote is setting up an ambush on a road where road runners pass by.)
- **DROP** and **HEIGHT** (The coyote is perched on a height and waiting to drop an object on a passing road runner.)
- **SHOOTER** and **AMMO** (The coyote is using some sort of weapon to fire some form of ammunition at a road runner.)
- **VEHICLE** and **THRUSTER** (The coyote is using a vehicle with some form of propulsion to chase the road runner.)
- **LAUNCHER** (The coyote is using some piece of equipment to launch himself through the air to chase the road runner.)

Normally a capture attempt involves two Capture cards, one for each required Keyword of a pair. **LAUNCHER** cards may be played singly, since no other Keyword is required. Note that some Capture cards contain both Keywords of a required pair - these may be played singly. If a Capture card has conditional Keywords, an attempt might require three or more Capture cards to be played at once.

(If you have looked at the cards, you will note at this point that some Keywords do not help in meeting the requirements for a capture attempt. We will get to those shortly.)

When making a capture attempt, the player is encouraged to describe the attempt, creating a cartoonish scene using the equipment involved. This is a large part of what makes the game fun to play.

Once a player announces a capture attempt and plays the relevant cards on the table, every other player has a chance to play Escape cards to prevent that player from capturing a road runner and winning the game. In order around the table, beginning with the player immediately to the left of the player making the capture attempt, each player may play an Escape card if that card will prevent the capture attempt. Each player only gets one chance to play an Escape card - if you hold back on a card thinking that a later player will prevent the attempt, but nobody does, too bad, the attempt succeeds and the game is over!

If a capture attempt is prevented, but some players have not yet had a chance to play an Escape card, those players are still allowed to play Escape cards on the attempt. This may cause extra damage to the coyote who made the attempt, and so be desirable from a strategy point of view. (It will almost certainly be desirable from a humor point of view!)

As foreshadowed by the previous paragraph, some Escape cards can cause damage to the poor coyote making a capture attempt. Such cards have text on them explaining how much damage the coyote takes. Usually the damage depends on numbers written on the Capture cards used for the attempt. If a coyote takes damage, he "falls down" for a few cartoon scenes, and that player must skip a number of turns equal to the points of damage taken.

As with capture attempts, players playing Escape cards are encouraged to describe the consequences listed on the card in a way which makes fun of the cartoonish stupidity of the coyote trying to catch a road runner in what is obviously a very silly way. This is a good place for humorous sound effects such as "Splat!" or "Kaboom!".

Because it often happens that several players will have to skip various numbers of turns, it is recommended that when a coyote is damaged, the player takes that many counters from a central pool. When the player's turn comes around and is skipped, one counter is put back into the pool, and the player resumes playing when he has no more counters.

A player who is skipping turns because of damage does not draw cards or make capture attempts, and does not receive passed cards. Any card passed to a player currently skipping turns is immediately passed on to the next player to the left (continuing if necessary until it reaches a player who is not skipping turns).

When a capture attempt has been foiled, the played Capture cards are placed on one discard pile, and the played Escape cards are placed on a second discard pile. This separation simply makes it easier to reshuffle only the Capture cards when the draw pile runs out.

Example Capture Attempt

The players are, in order: Amy, Brett, Colin, Debby, and Evan. Amy begins her turn by drawing a card. She then declares a capture attempt and plays the Skis, Refrigerator and Fan. The Skis have a conditional Keyword which relies on the Refrigerator. With the Refrigerator also being played, the Skis become a **VEHICLE**. The Fan is a **THRUSTER** with Speed 1.

Amy declares: "I'm strapping the Refrigerator on my back, so that the ice cubes fall out and form a path I can Ski on. I stick the Fan on the fridge to provide thrust and I start chasing that darn road runner!"

Brett now has a chance to play an Escape card. He cannot, so passes. Colin then plays the Escape card Fast Running! This stops any chase up to and including Speed 1.

Colin says: "The road runner puts on a burst of speed and outruns your puny chase attempt!"

The capture attempt is now thwarted, but Debby and Evan still have a chance to play additional Escape cards. Debby has another card which stops chases, but decides not to play it, and passes. Evan is more vindictive and plays a Cliff Face!

Evan gloats: "As your jaw drops to the ground watching the road runner easily outrace you, you don't notice the cliff face directly ahead and... WHAM! Take one damage!"

The Cliff Face! card says the coyote takes damage equal to the Speed of a chase. Since the Speed was 1, Amy takes one damage counter and sits out her next turn as she slowly peels her flattened coyote body off the cliff face...

Basic Strategy

- Although it may seem like a good idea to hoard good Capture cards until late in the game when most of the Escape cards have been used, the chance that you will lose these cards to random passing increases with each turn.
- Sometimes playing a Capture attempt very early in the game will pull off a surprise victory, since few Escape cards are available yet.
- The more dangerous Capture attempts have more chance of succeeding, because there are fewer Escape cards powerful enough to stop them, but also risk making you skip more turns. This should not put you off too much, however, since in a usual game most people end up skipping turns and the skipped turns can pass very quickly.
- Hoarding Escape cards can pay off at the end game, as you foil everyone else's Capture attempts while yours succeeds, but not playing them when an early Capture is on the line (hoping that someone else can and will prevent the Capture) can easily lead to a quick loss.

Playtesters

Geoff Bailey, Rachel Crawford, Claire Garrity, Anna Hansen, David Morgan-Mar, Lachlan Patrick, Collette Patteson, David See.

<p>Long Slope</p> <p>THRUSTER Speed 1</p>	<p>Sail</p> <p>THRUSTER Speed 1 With Fan: Speed becomes 2</p>	<p>Fan</p> <p>THRUSTER Speed 1 With Sail: Speed becomes 2 METAL MECHANICAL</p>
<p>Outboard Motor</p> <p>With Bucket Of Water: THRUSTER Speed 2 METAL MECHANICAL</p>	<p>Internal Combustion Engine</p> <p>THRUSTER Speed 3 METAL MECHANICAL EXPLOSIVE Damage 1</p>	<p>Rocket Motor</p> <p>THRUSTER Speed 4 METAL MECHANICAL EXPLOSIVE Damage 4</p>
<p>Skis</p> <p>With Refrigerator: VEHICLE METAL</p>	<p>Unicycle Helmet</p> <p>With Tightrope: VEHICLE and THRUSTER Speed 1</p>	<p>Skateboard</p> <p>VEHICLE METAL</p>

<p>Ball Bearings</p> <p>VEHICLE METAL With Free Birdseed and Giant Magnet: TRAP</p>	<p>Leg Muscle Growth Pills</p> <p>VEHICLE THRUSTER Speed 2</p>	<p>Roller Skates</p> <p>VEHICLE METAL</p>
<p>Rocket</p> <p>VEHICLE THRUSTER Speed 3 EXPLOSIVE Damage 3</p>	<p>Free Birdseed</p> <p>BAIT</p>	<p>Free Birdseed</p> <p>BAIT</p>
<p>Detour Sign</p> <p>BAIT</p>	<p>Female Road Runner Costume</p> <p>BAIT</p>	<p>Giant Spring</p> <p>LAUNCHER Speed 1 METAL MECHANICAL</p>

<p>Giant Sling Shot</p> <p>LAUNCHER Speed 2 MECHANICAL</p>	<p>Catapult</p> <p>LAUNCHER Speed 2 MECHANICAL</p>	<p>Cannon</p> <p>LAUNCHER Speed 3 EXPLOSIVE Damage 2 TRAP Damage 2 SHOOTER MECHANICAL</p>
<p>Dehydrated Boulders</p> <p>With Bucket Of Water: DROP Damage 3</p>	<p>Anvil</p> <p>DROP Damage 1 METAL</p>	<p>Huge Boulder</p> <p>DROP Damage 3</p>
<p>Refrigerator</p> <p>DROP Damage 2 METAL MECHANICAL</p>	<p>Tightrope</p> <p>HEIGHT Damage 1</p>	<p>Precarious Rock Spire</p> <p>HEIGHT Damage 2</p>

<p>Cliff Face!</p> <p><i>Prevents capture by any VEHICLE or LAUNCHER chase and Coyote takes Speed damage</i></p>	<p>Boulder!</p> <p><i>Prevents capture by any VEHICLE or LAUNCHER chase and Coyote takes 1 damage plus any EXPLOSIVE damage</i></p>	<p>Fast Running!</p> <p><i>Prevents capture by any VEHICLE or LAUNCHER chase up to and including Speed 1</i></p>
<p>Burst Of Speed!</p> <p><i>Prevents capture by any VEHICLE or LAUNCHER chase up to and including Speed 2</i></p>	<p>Zoom!</p> <p><i>Prevents capture by any VEHICLE or LAUNCHER chase up to and including Speed 3</i></p>	<p>Beep Beep!</p> <p><i>Prevents capture by any VEHICLE or LAUNCHER chase</i></p>
<p>Cactus!</p> <p><i>Prevents capture by any LAUNCHER chase and Coyote takes 3 damage</i></p>	<p>Cactus!</p> <p><i>Prevents capture by any LAUNCHER chase and Coyote takes 3 damage</i></p>	<p>U-Shaped Rock Formation!</p> <p><i>Prevents capture by any LAUNCHER chase or shot AMMO and Coyote takes any AMMO damage</i></p>

<p>U-Shaped Rock Formation!</p> <p><i>Prevents capture by any LAUNCHER chase or shot AMMO and Coyote takes any AMMO damage</i></p>	<p>Uh Oh!</p> <p><i>Prevents capture by any VEHICLE chase and Coyote takes Speed+1 damage</i></p>	<p>Uh Oh!</p> <p><i>Prevents capture by any VEHICLE chase and Coyote takes Speed+1 damage</i></p>
<p>Mechanical Failure!</p> <p><i>Prevents any MECHANICAL capture and if a VEHICLE or LAUNCHER chase Coyote takes Speed damage</i></p>	<p>Mechanical Failure!</p> <p><i>Prevents any MECHANICAL capture and if a VEHICLE or LAUNCHER chase Coyote takes Speed damage</i></p>	<p>Bad Aim!</p> <p><i>Prevents capture by any shot AMMO</i></p>
<p>Bad Aim!</p> <p><i>Prevents capture by any shot AMMO</i></p>	<p>Rust!</p> <p><i>Prevents any METAL capture</i></p>	<p>Rust!</p> <p><i>Prevents any METAL capture</i></p>

<p>Dud!</p> <p><i>Prevents any EXPLOSIVE capture</i></p>	<p>Dud!</p> <p><i>Prevents any EXPLOSIVE capture</i></p>	<p>Backfire!</p> <p><i>Prevents any EXPLOSIVE capture and Coyote takes EXPLOSIVE damage</i></p>
<p>Backfire!</p> <p><i>Prevents any EXPLOSIVE capture and Coyote takes EXPLOSIVE damage</i></p>	<p>Oops!</p> <p><i>Prevents any HEIGHT capture and Coyote falls, taking HEIGHT damage</i></p>	<p>Oops!</p> <p><i>Prevents any HEIGHT capture and Coyote falls, taking HEIGHT damage</i></p>
<p>Gravity Failure!</p> <p><i>Prevents any HEIGHT and DROP capture and Coyote falls and has object fall on top, taking HEIGHT+DROP damage</i></p>	<p>Gravity Failure!</p> <p><i>Prevents any HEIGHT and DROP capture and Coyote falls and has object fall on top, taking HEIGHT+DROP damage</i></p>	<p>Truck!</p> <p><i>Prevents any ROAD capture and Coyote takes 2 damage</i></p>

<p>Truck!</p> <p><i>Prevents any ROAD capture and Coyote takes 2 damage</i></p>	<p>Express Train!</p> <p><i>Prevents any RAIL capture and Coyote takes 3 damage</i></p>	<p>Why Didn't It Work?!</p> <p><i>Prevents any AMBUSH capture and Coyote takes AMBUSH damage</i></p>
<p>Why Didn't It Work?!</p> <p><i>Prevents any AMBUSH capture and Coyote takes AMBUSH damage</i></p>	<p>Too Smart!</p> <p><i>Prevents any TRAP or AMBUSH capture and Coyote takes TRAP or AMBUSH damage</i></p>	<p>Too Smart!</p> <p><i>Prevents any TRAP or AMBUSH capture and Coyote takes TRAP or AMBUSH damage</i></p>
<p>Too Dumb!</p> <p><i>Prevents any TRAP capture</i></p>	<p>Too Dumb!</p> <p><i>Prevents any TRAP capture</i></p>	<p></p>