

The image shows the exterior of a modern school building. The main entrance is a curved, light-colored concrete structure with the words "TRIAL HIGH" in large, dark, sans-serif capital letters. Below the entrance is a set of double glass doors with a white frame, flanked by large glass windows. The building has a curved roofline and a brick section above the concrete. The sky is blue with some white clouds. In the foreground, there are dark silhouettes of plants and a paved area.

TRIAL HIGH

Trial High

This is a game about how high school resembles a trial, where you fight for your position while constantly being judged. You can play it for laughs or you can invest more in seeing how the main Characters' stories play out.

You will need:

- a deck of cards
- at least one pen or pencil (three is better)
- the Character and Clique sheets

Character players take on the challenge of speaking in character in ways that will elevate their Character, belittle their opponents (and maybe dig up some dirt), and earn support and loyalty from their Clique.

Clique players act as enforcers of their Clique's values, judging the Characters and supporting them or not accordingly.

Playing Cliques and Characters

- If you have **three players**, every player will have one Character, and Cliques will change hands. Whichever player's character is not in a Challenge will play both relevant Cliques.
- If you have **six players**, there's one Character or Clique for each.
- If you have **four or five players**, allot Clique responsibilities as you see fit (with four, one player could play all the Cliques).

A suggestion: play the Character whose strengths and weaknesses (in Showing Off, Digging Up Dirt, or Putting People Down) most closely match your own. That way the modifiers will make sense without you having to factor them into your acting. If you *like* factoring that in, then never mind!

Winning . . . Or Assimilating

Throughout the game, the Characters will gain Loyalty from their Cliques, and the Cliques will gain and lose prestige from Challenges. There are two ways the game can end:

1. When one Clique has more than twice as many cards as any other Clique, they have won the social landscape.
2. When every Character has at least three Loyalty, they have thoroughly become what their Clique values and their stories are over.

Clique: Winners

Description:

The popular kids, envied and/or resented by all. They appear to have it made, and yes, it is good to be king (or queen). They have high standards for clothing, sports, beer, slang, dating, and everything else, and will scoff at those who fall short.

Members: Josh, Brett, Anton, Ronnie, Katie, Erin, Jill, Becky

Values:

Priority: Superiority

Peeve: Awkwardness

Do: Tell others why they're outsiders

Don't: Take any outsider seriously

Read the above, and then make it your own. Member names are suggestions only. Your job is to know how this Clique will react to heated one-liners going back and forth in front of them. What do they think is brilliant, and what do they think is weak sauce? Refer to the sheet for consistency, but flesh it out however you wish. If you make any significant changes, communicate them to the player whose Character is the new member of your Clique.

Rules for Playing Cliques

See Rules for Playing Characters for the rest of the rules.

Giving Support:

Take the Jack, Queen, King and Ace cards of any suit from a deck of playing cards. These are **Support Cards**, which you should give to a player when their Character speech during a Challenge accords with your Clique's **Values** (listed above). When you give a Support Card, describe or act out how the Clique supports the Character.

Gaining and Losing Cards:

Once the Challenge is over, and after the Character players have tallied their Support Cards, gather up all the face cards you played. The winning Clique then takes one face card from the losing Clique, or two face cards in the case of total victory (higher totals in all three card piles).

Dirt:

Whenever a Character gets Dirt on your Clique, you must invent some Dirt on at least one member of your Clique and tell it to that player.

Ideas for Dirt on a Winner: wardrobe malfunction, friends with a loser, DWI, parents divorced, family in cult (anything unseemly)

Clique: Hippies

Description:

They'd rather we all get along, and what better way to do that than with music, weed, hacky sacks, frisbees, and earth-friendly lifestyle choices? If only everyone else got it and would stop bringing their strife around.

Members: Michael, Tyler, Aidan, Tapan, Holly, Alison, April, Liz

Values:

Priority: Enlightenment

Peeve: Intensity

Do: Show them a better way

Don't: Increase discord

Read the above, and then make it your own. Member names are suggestions only. Your job is to know how this Clique will react to heated one-liners going back and forth in front of them. What do they think is brilliant, and what do they think is weak sauce? Refer to the sheet for consistency, but flesh it out however you wish. If you make any significant changes, communicate them to the player whose Character is the new member of your Clique.

Rules for Playing Cliques

See Rules for Playing Characters for the rest of the rules.

Giving Support:

Take the Jack, Queen, King and Ace cards of any suit from a deck of playing cards. These are **Support Cards**, which you should give to a player when their Character speech during a Challenge accords with your Clique's **Values** (listed above). When you give a Support Card, describe or act out how the Clique supports the Character.

Gaining and Losing Cards:

Once the Challenge is over, and after the Character players have tallied their Support Cards, gather up all the face cards you played. The winning Clique then takes one face card from the losing Clique, or two face cards in the case of total victory (higher totals in all three card piles).

Dirt:

Whenever a Character gets Dirt on your Clique, you must invent some Dirt on at least one member of your Clique and tell it to that player.

Ideas for Dirt on a Hippie: accidental pregnancy, failing school, played football (anything un-chill)

Clique: Punks

Description:

Their spiked clothes, painful-looking piercings, loud cursing and frequent rule-breaking make everyone around them uncomfortable. Fuck The Man! It's all about sincere free expression, seized as viciously as possible.

Members: Gareth, B.C., Damien, Gridlock, Eryka, Mercy, Markia, Fish

Values:

Priority: Confrontation

Peeve: Sugar-coating

Do: Refuse to compromise

Don't: Throw the first punch

Read the above, and then make it your own. Member names are suggestions only. Your job is to know how this Clique will react to heated one-liners going back and forth in front of them. What do they think is brilliant, and what do they think is weak sauce? Refer to the sheet for consistency, but flesh it out however you wish. If you make any significant changes, communicate them to the player whose Character is the new member of your Clique.

Rules for Playing Cliques

See Rules for Playing Characters for the rest of the rules.

Giving Support:

Take the Jack, Queen, King and Ace cards of any suit from a deck of playing cards. These are **Support Cards**, which you should give to a player when their Character speech during a Challenge accords with your Clique's **Values** (listed above). When you give a Support Card, describe or act out how the Clique supports the Character.

Gaining and Losing Cards:

Once the Challenge is over, and after the Character players have tallied their Support Cards, gather up all the face cards you played. The winning Clique then takes one face card from the losing Clique, or two face cards in the case of total victory (higher totals in all three card piles).

Dirt:

Whenever a Character gets Dirt on your Clique, you must invent some Dirt on at least one member of your Clique and tell it to that player.

Ideas for Dirt on a Punk: mainstream parents, coddled upbringing, prefers pop music, ratted on a friend (anything corporate)

Rules for Playing Characters

See any Clique card for the rest of the rules. Character players start with nine cards, 2 thru 10 (any suit).

1. On your turn (**Winner** goes first, **Hippie** goes second, **Punk** goes third), pick another Character and describe how you Challenge them in front of both your Cliques. Invent what's at stake, and make sure it matters to both Characters.
2. Then, play a card face-down in one of the three positions (Left, Middle, Right) and describe something that will help you in the Challenge.

Examples: you give an icy stare, you put your hand on your hip, you're wearing black, it's first thing in the morning so your clique looks super sharp, the sun is behind you, it's cold out and you've got the warmest jacket, someone hot just gave you a kiss.

When you are done, the other player may then play a card and narrate likewise. Go back and forth until one player chooses to flip a card from a pile instead of playing a new card. No one may play a card after this.

3. Go back and forth, taking turns flipping. When you flip a card, speak as your Character. This speech must match the pile you flipped from. **Example:** flip a card from the Right pile and say something designed to Show Off.

If you have Dirt on someone, you can reveal it when you flip any card, turning that card into a 10 (indicate this by turning it sideways). Each piece of Dirt can only be used once.

4. Once all cards have been flipped and the Clique players have given out any face cards they wished, tally up each pile.

The total is the sum of your cards ($10 + 8 = 18$, etc.) plus one for each face card, plus your relevant modifier (+3, 0, or -3), plus Loyalty.

5. Compare totals by pile: Right vs Right, Middle vs Middle, and Left vs Left.

Whichever player has the **higher Dig Up total** gets one **Secret** about the opponent's Clique (from that Clique's player).

Whichever player has the **higher total** in the **majority** (i.e. two or three) **of the piles** wins the Challenge. Their Character **wins whatever was at stake**.

6. Each player should tally up the face cards they earned and mark this number by "Support Cards" on the character sheet. This number will continue to go up over subsequent challenges.

Every **four Support Cards** earns **one point of Loyalty**. You get your second point of Loyalty after the Challenge where you receive your eighth Support Card, etc.

Character: The New Winner

Name:

Real name must start with a "J", be one syllable, and be different from the other Characters.

Examples: Jane, Jess, Jenn, Jill, Joan, Jeff, Jim, Joe, John, Josh

You can use an alias if you'd like.

Take cards 2-10 of any suit from a deck of playing cards.

Show Off (Right pile) -5	Dig Up (Middle pile) +5	Put Down (Left pile) 0
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Support Cards:

Loyalty:

Dirt you know:

1.

(ask the player with the Hippies Clique for a secret about one of the Hippies)

2.

3.

4.

Character: The New Hippie

Name:

Real name must start with a "J", be one syllable, and be different from the other Characters.

Examples: Jane, Jess, Jenn, Jill, Joan, Jeff, Jim, Joe, John, Josh

You can use an alias if you'd like.

Take cards 2-10 of any suit from a deck of playing cards.

Show Off (Right pile) 0	Dig Up (Middle pile) -5	Put Down (Left pile) +5
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Support Cards:

Loyalty:

Dirt you know:

1.

(ask the player with the Punks Clique for a secret about one of the Punks)

2.

3.

4.

Character: The New Punk

Name:

Real name must start with a "J", be one syllable, and be different from the other Characters.

Examples: Jane, Jess, Jenn, Jill, Joan, Jeff, Jim, Joe, John, Josh

You can use an alias if you'd like.

Take cards 2-10 of any suit from a deck of playing cards.

Show Off (Right pile) +5	Dig Up (Middle pile) 0	Put Down (Left pile) -5
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Support Cards:

Loyalty:

Dirt you know:

1.

(ask the player with the Winners Clique for a secret about one of the Winners)

2.

3.

4.

Game Chef 2014 notes:

My "unbound" intent is that the Trial High overview be a large card or tiny folded page, and the 6 sheets be, you know, sheets. (In this version, Character rules would be on the reverse of Character sheets.)

Ingredients:

Wild = Untamed Punks

Sickle = Commie Hippies

Glitter = Bright & Shiny Popular Kids

Absorb = Trying to become part of a Clique by taking on its values.