TTRPGs

Contents

Chapter 1. Tabletop Role-Playing Games: An Overview

Tabletop Role-Playing Games (TTRPGs for short) are exactly what the name implies.

They encompass a broad range of games, but all have some key characteristics:

- They ask players to assume specific roles during play.
- They are traditionally played around a shared, physical table, but virtual options are becoming more prevalent.
- They ask players to describe their characters' actions through speech.

Chapter 2. How to Start Playing (most) TTRPGs

TTRPGs can be played in a wide variety and number of ways.

However, there are key steps that most (if not all) TTRPGs follow:

1. One person (often referred to as a game master) determines the rules the group will play with.
2. The rest of the group (the players) create characters or select roles, according to the rules determined by the game master.
3. The game master describes the setting of the game while the players describe how their characters react to the world.

Should you Roll Dice?

Many--if not most--TTRPGs involve the use of dice in the course of play. But not all systems do! Here's an overview of some of the pros and cons of both options:

Table 1. Pros and Cons of Using Dice in your TTRPG game

Pros and Cons of Using Dice	Pros	Cons
Roll those bones!	The added sense of randomness increases immersion	Player choices are often curtailed, or meet failure
Don't roll those!	Players are more free to do whatever they want narratively	Players can more easily subvert the fiction of the game

The effective TTRPG player

Players new and old have a lot to keep in mind when contemplating a new TTRPG game. Here are few key points to remember:

- Keep to your commitments: for most TTRPG groups, the greatest challenge is finding players that are able to get together consistently. Be sure when you sign on to a game that you can, in fact, make it to every game!
- Be charitable: whether it's your tried-and-true adventuring party or a group of complete strangers, every player should strive to be sympathetic and sensitive to the others at the table.
- Respect the game: at the end of the day, it's the game master's world! For the fiction of the game to make sense, it's crucial that all players buy into that core truth, and understand where their role has space to play out.

Running A Game

A brief overview of steps that prospective game masters should follow to run their games effectively.

If you want to run a new regular TTRPG game, there are some things to consider:

1. Do your research: make sure you fully grasp the rule-set you want to work with, whether it's home-grown or one of the major commercial publications.
2. Let your players be cool: sometimes, the rules *were* made to be broken! And most of those times, it's when your players have made a truly amazing choice for their character. Don't get in the way of the fun!
3. Be consistent: it's your job to not only create a fun and immersive world for your players, it's also your job to be fair and reliable, both in- and out-of-game.

Chapter 3. Dungeons and Dragons

Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) is one of the most popular TTRPG rulesets. Published by Wizards of the Coast since 1974, D&D has been released in 5 offical editions, the most recent of which is the 5th Edition, the Core Rulebook of which was released in 2014.

Dungeons and Dragons has influenced nearly every other game in the genre in one way or another. Its gameplay standardizes the use of polyhedral dice for various mechanical purposes. Its narrative and setting cues--partly cribbed from the likes of Tolkien, Lewis, and Carroll, among others--have become common cultural touchstones, both across other TTRPGs and in culture at large. But its gameplay structure, where the Dungeon Master manages play and prompts story events, is perhaps its most iconic aspect in other media.

Creating a Dungeons and Dragons Character

This page describes several steps one must follow to create a character in Dungeons and Dragons 5th Edition.

Dungeons and Dragons asks its players to inhabit a defined character in the setting chosen by the Dungeon Master. According to the 5th edition rulebook, there is a defined process to creating a character. Before beginning, be sure to have a 5th Edition-compatible character handy, either physically printed out or ready for digital form-fill. You will also want a series of polyhedral dice--virtual versions abound if you lack physical ones.

Read on for specific instruction

1. Choose a Race
    a. Races in the original 5th edition rulebook are pre-defined from a suite of fantasy archetypes such as Elves, Dwarves, Gnomes, and also Humans--other rulebooks expand the races on offer. In terms of gameplay, races are defined by specific traits that have gameplay and characteristic differences.
    b. Recent rules published by Wizards of the Coast remove the requirement for races to have inherent attribute differences and instead allow you to create a character with customized features. Keep the rules your game will be using in mind, and confer with your Dungeon Master if you are uncertain.
2. Choose a Class

    a. Classes are generally understood as the kind of work or role the character plays in the setting, particularly from a combart perspective. Classes on offer are Fighters, Druids, Monks, Warlocks, Clerics, Wizards, Bards, Barbarians, and Sorcerors. Additional rulebooks expand the selection to include other specialized classes.

3. Determine Ability Scores

    a. D&D defines six primary abilities that all characters and creatures possess: Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. Each ability has a defined score which affects the outcome of dice rolls that affect your player character.

    b. To determine your ability scores, roll four 6-sided dice and record the total of the highest three. Do this five more times, and allot the numbers to the scores of your choice based on what features you want your character to have. Add in any bonuses from race (if using original 5E rules), background, or class after alloting these scores.

4. Describe Your Character

    a. This is the most free-form part of the process; here you determine who your character is: their name, their general physical appearance, their values, their ideals, their flaws, and the people and things your character is bonded to.

    b. Use your background, class, and ability scores to inform this process as much as possible, and consult your DM with questions about the setting.

5. Choose Equipment

    a. Refer back to the class and background you selected; each of these provides guidance for what your starting gear will be. This gear will also include some quantity of money (gold pieces in standard 5E settings) that you can use to purchase other equipment defined in the rulebook's equipment section.

    b. By the end of this process you should have a primary weapon or spell-focus and some basic protective clothing or armor, along with whatever else your class and background provide for you to select.

6. Come Together

    a. The best and often most difficult step: find a time to play with your group!

    b. Refer to your character sheet as-needed, and have fun!