# DES 335

**Spring-2025**

**Week 10 Playtest Notes**

**DigiPen Institute of Technology**

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## Partner RPG System Title: <Court of Alphame>

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## P3 Playtest #1 Report Requirements (You Run Adventure)

Playtesting is critical for any game development, but particularly for the game’s primary, core mechanic. During lab, you will be placed into groups to discuss, analyze, and playtest each other’s adventures.

This may include attempting basic combat, resolving skill tests, etc.—anything that stress-tests any likely scenarios that might occur in your game. This report documents your observations, notes, and actionable items that come from that playtesting.

You are required to do at least ONE (1) playtest session of around 30 minutes per person. However, you are highly encouraged to do additional playtesting. If you do, use as many of the Optional Playtest Notes sections below as needed.

## Rubric

This, like other weekly reports, is not considered a separate grade, but affects your overall final grade.

* **-2%:** Not Submitted at time of grading
* **-1%:** Insufficient information and/or Late turnover of assignment (Instructor discretion)
* **+0%:** Sufficient information and description
* **+1%:** More than one playtests performed and documented

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## Playtest Session #1 [REQUIRED]

**Date:** 3/13/24

**Location:** In-Person, Thursday Lab

**Number of Playtesters:** 2

**Duration:** 30-40min

**Playtest Summary**

I playtested one of my events that I’m writing for my adventure. This event involved the players talking to an accountant to try and get information out of him and hopefully convince him to help them.

**The Good**

Overall, the playtest went fairly well. There was no confusion on the core mechanic or any of the other systems. It was clear what the options were, what you were supposed to roll, and what the outcome was based on your roll. It seems like the system functions well without any hiccups. On top of that, it seemed like both players were fairly engaged through the entire playtest, which tells me that I did a decent job making the event interesting.

**The Bad**

An issue I noticed was that the encounter might not have been balanced very well. There are two reasons for this. The first is that there were only two players instead of four, which would drastically change how the social encounters function. The other reason is that there is very little in the rules to help with the creation of social encounters. There is a difficulty chart, which does help with picking the difficulty of the encounter, but I have no context for how high an NPC’s Patience should be or what Importance level I should make their details so that they’re more balanced. Before running another playtest or making my new events I’ll have to do some number crunching to come up with reasonable values so I can make the encounters go how I want them to. It would be very helpful to have some of this math done and already in the rulebook so I can use them as a frame of reference.

**The Ugly**

This isn’t really an “issue” per say but something else I noticed is that there was some confusion in regards to the various checks being made. This was mainly due to the fact that Alphame as a system is very open-ended and relies heavily on roleplay. All of the actions that players and NPCs can perform are roleplay oriented, which is very cool. The problem, however, is that players and DMs have to either pick an action based on what they want to say, or say something based on the action they want to use. This can create some awkward pauses where people are trying to figure out what it is they’re doing as opposed to what they want to do. The root cause of this is just the roleplay-heavy nature of the system, which obviously cannot be addressed. The way then to mitigate this is to make the categories for actions broader, there were several instances where I wanted to do something specific, but ended up having to change it to fit a more generic action like “Change the Subject.”

Another issue is that it isn’t super clear what all of the stats are used for, Strongarm specifically caused some questions. It’s not always super clear what stat would actually fit what you’re doing, or what you should do based on the stat you want to use.

Easily the biggest problem I noticed was the disconnect between the roleplay and the dice rolling. Ideally in a system like this the roleplay should flow smoothly, with very few gaps in the conversation. However, in reality, we had to stop after every action to roll dice and update values. This is a mostly unavoidable issue since there’s no way to make a TTRPG that doesn’t involve these breaks for checks, but it felt excessive for a system like this. It is entirely possible that this was simply due to our inexperience with the system as we had to spend time figuring out what to roll and what each check was contested by. I will perform another playtest and see if this is an issue again.

The system really doesn’t seem to have anything that appeals to Gamists. One of the players was a Gamist who isn’t super into the roleplay aspect of things and he didn’t seem to vibe as much with the system as the other player. I would definitely recommend adding systems or tweaking things so that the game can appeal more to Gamists.

**Playtest Notes**

It’s difficult to remember what attribute defends against what, once again recommending a chart of some kind.

“What does Strongarm actually mean?”

One player is engaged with roleplay, the other is not

## Playtest Session #2 [OPTIONAL]

## You are highly encouraged to do additional playtesting. If you do, include your notes here. Otherwise, delete this entry.

**Date:** <the date when the playtest took place>

**Location:** <where and how did the playtest take place; e.g.: In-person, Blanc>

**Number of Playtesters:** <how many people playtested your game>

**Duration:** <how long the playtest took place>

**Playtest Summary**

<Include a MINIMUM ONE (1) paragraph summary of the playtest’s results. Include the good, the bad, and ugly here—be honest. You can also include any actionable items you need to address.>

**Playtest Notes**

<Include your specific observations, notes, quotes, etc. from the playtest session.

**[OPTIONAL] Images**

<Use this area to include any screenshots, pictures of your handwritten notes, or any other images. Delete this section if not used>