Others are abstract, pointing out a relationship or instinct. An aspect can even be meta, such as a callback or an inside joke. Don't get hung up on making your aspects perfect. Write what feels right. You can always make tweaks later.

Setting Creation

Your setting is defined by two aspects: a Genre and a Conflict. The Genre aspect gives a sense of what, when, and where the story takes place. The Conflict aspect is the source of dramatic tension. Talk them through as a group and write these two aspects down where everyone can see them. Don't worry about making them perfect. You can come back and revise them later.

Same

Keep in mind that aspects, including your Genre and Conflict, are best kept short and punchy. This is not the time to go deep on history, politics, geography, or cosmology for your in-game world. Think of these aspects like the blurb on the back of a book, or the first trailer for a movie. The pieces don't all need to be there. Just write down enough to get you excited about it!

> Alex wants to play a swashbuckling pirate. Barry wants to play a streetwise wizard. After a bit of haggling, they settle on something that works for them both:
>
> Genre: SWAGGER AND SORCERY ON THE SEVEN SEAS
>
> The conflict is trickier. They're not exactly looking for a hack-and-slash treasure hunt. They want a bit of suspense and intrigue. Planning out the whole conspiracy on the first day would spoil the fun, so instead they plant an ominous clue to

get them started:

> Conflict: THE PIRATE KING HAS VANISHED WITHOUT A TRACE

Who is the Pirate King? What authority does he hold? What happened to him? Alex, Barry, and the GM all start thinking about possible answers to those questions.

Character Creation

Power? alan? (handwritten annotation)

Player characters (PCs) start at level 2. That means:

They have 2 aspects.
They get a +2 bonus to any roll that's in line with those aspects.
They have 2 stress boxes.
The PC's player starts each session with 2 fate points.

As PCs level up, these numbers all scale. *Equally* (handwritten annotation) Character advancement is discussed in the next chapter (as are rolls, fate points, and stress boxes). Bookkeeping is all kept on the PC's character sheet.

Every PC starts with two aspects: a Concept and a Trouble. The Concept gives a high-level description of the character. Along with the setting aspects, a PC's concept should give a decent sense of who the PCs is and how they fit into the story. *Like this world?* (handwritten annotation)

The Trouble fleshes out the PC by showing them from a less-flattering angle. It could be a bad habit, a damaged relationship, or an old mistake that still hangs over them. Your PC's Trouble is an invitation for the rest of the table to throw complications into the PC's path — entangling them into the story in the process.

> Throughout the rules we will include examples in boxes like this one.
>
> Our example players are named Alex and Barry,

What You Need

AspectRPG requires a few things to get started: pens to write with, paper to record your character on, a set of four Fate dice, and some tokens to represent Fate Points.

Fate dice (sometimes called Fudge dice) are six-sided dice. They are marked with ⊞ on two sides, ☐ on two sides, and ⊟ on two sides. To keep things moving quickly, it's best to have a set of four dice for each player. If you don't have specially marked Fate dice, you can use normal six-side dice as follows:

D6 Roll	Fate Roll
1 or 2	⊟
3 or 4	☐
5 or 6	⊞

You'll also need a way to keep track of fate points for each player. Poker chips are perfect, but in a pinch you can just mark them down with pencil.

> Do we need Fate dice? Not great to ask people to buy a weird thing, and not great that the modal outcome is zero.

the

PC choices are made by the players, while the success of PC actions is judged by dice. That is, the player decides which NPCs to attack and which to barter with. The dice show whether a sword strikes home or a lie rings true. This dichotomy ensures that each PC has strengths and weaknesses, while still allowing players the freedom to play their PCs in a way that feels true to them.

Rolling the Dice

Dice in AspectRPG add drama and excitement to the story. The GM *Hero* should call for a roll only when failure is possible for a skilled here *and* failure would add an interesting twist. A SWASHBUCKLING GENIUS should succeed automatically in defending against the attack of a NAMELESS *the* DECKHAND. She *would* need to roll to subdue him before his friends can *Pirate* escape, or to recognize him as a STUDENT OF THE BLADE DANCERS.

Dupe

Die Face	Value
−	-1
☐	0
+	+1

To set the target number for a roll, the GM chooses a difficulty from 0 (easy) to 6 (hard). They then roll four dice and add the result.

The player then rolls four dice. If one of the PC's aspects is relevant to the roll, the player adds their level to the roll. → *4dF?*

If the player's roll meets or exceeds the target difficulty, they succeed. If they beat the difficulty by 3 or more they succeed with style. Otherwise, they fail.

flesh out

TBY is level 3. He gets a +3 bonus when he rolls to hit something with his axe. Success. Inflicts stress on an NPC.

Naka tries to cook a tasty dinner. None of her aspects apply. She rolls and does not add +3. Target difficulty is 2, but she rolls badly. GM creates the aspect THE SHITS

TODO: below here is accurate but rough

Success means the player gets to do one of the following:

- Does every success create an aspect?! - If you have multiple free invokes on the same aspect, can you burn them all at once?

Create, change, or remove a scene aspect: Players can create a new scene aspect with one free invocation, change an existing scene aspect by rewriting it and gaining one free invocation, or remove an existing scene aspect along with any unused free invocations on it.

Mark one stress box on an opposing character: Players can mark off one stress box on an opposing character's stress track. If all stress boxes on a character's stress track are marked, that character is removed from the current scene.

Success with style means the player may choose any two options, including choosing the same option twice. Failure means the GM chooses one option to use against the character.

Taking a character out of a scene means they cannot act further until the scene ends. The specifics depend on the narrative. For example:

In a sword fight, the character may be wounded or killed.

A player might invoke or create an aspect in a way that harms another player's character. In this case, the GM should give the spent fate point to that player to compensate them. Treat this like a compel: you need the harmed player to accept. If they refuse, figure out a different course of action.

We said something else earlier

Players begin each session with fate points equal to their PC's level. The GM starts with fate points equal to the highest level PC to spend on their own rolls. The GM has an unlimited ~~pool of fate points~~ for compels.

> TBY's trouble tells us that he plays cards. Maybe he's bad, and a degenerate gambler? Maybe he's great, but got cheated? Tagging the aspect allows us to flesh out that part of the story.

Flesh

CONFLICTS

Most of the gameplay in AspectRPG is conversational, with occasional dice rolls to determine the path the story takes. But sometimes you will need to role a lot of dice; that is when you turn to conflicts.

A conflict is any situation where the PCs are up against opponents. This can include battles with mythical creatures or other enemies, negotiations to broker a peace treaty between warring factions, or even a race against time to see if the PCs can get to the capital ahead of their rival's army.

These dragons

Pretty much the same as roleplaying, but:

Flesh

Different pacing due to lots of rolls
Map, optionally, depending on the situation
Worrying about stress and consequences
Play is clockwise around the table instead of unstructured

Stress and Consequences

Do we talk about taking hits?

Each PC has one stress box per level.

If you run out of stress boxes, you can take a consequence to soak one extra hit. This is a big deal! The consequence goes in your next level aspect. It clears at the end of the story arc. When you write your new aspect, it should be a callback to the consequence.

> Naka takes a consequence: BLOOD IN THE WATER. New aspect next level is DELICIOUS TO SHARKS
>
> TBY takes a consequence: RUN CLEAN THROUGH. He's pretty tough. The guy behind him wasn't. New aspect is SWORN TO AVENGE THE COOK

Drawing a Map

"this'!

In a fight, you need to know who's within arm's reach, who's within a few paces, and who's within sight. AspectRPG handles that with zones. Draw each zone on a map with as much or as little detail as needed.

Characters in the same zone can interact with each other and any object in the zone. However, they need permission from one of their

aspects to interact with things outside the zone. A character may move to an adjacent zone on their turn in addition to their action.

Zones can also have aspects, which may restrict free movement or visibility between zones. Consider what makes sense from a narrative perspective when deciding whether a character can move or act over a zone boundary.

The *Grumpy Goat* is circling a mountain outpost exchanging cannon fire after a failed attempt to bypass the Empire's northern border. There are three zones on the board: The *Grumpy Goat*, the sky, and the outpost. The sky has the aspect A VERY LONG WAY DOWN.
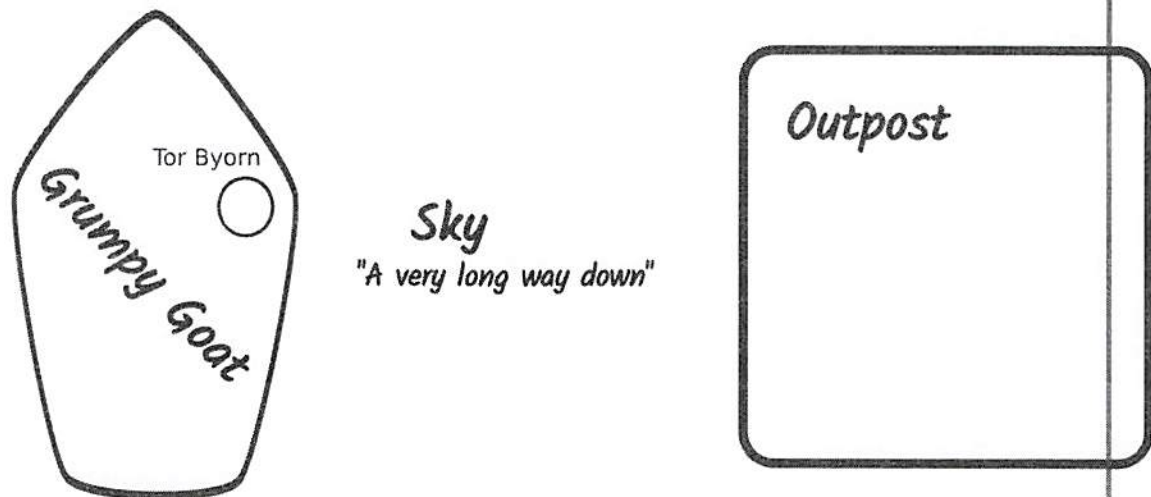
The map sketched by the GM, showing the three zones, the aspect for the Sky, and Tor Byorn's position.

Tor Byorn is stuck on the *Grumpy Goat*, unable to bring his axe to bear on the canons poking holes in his ship since the sky's aspect indicates that he can't cross the zone. Tor Byorn's player decides the Dwarf has had enough enough. He roles to create the aspect FLYING LEAP which would give him the ability to cross the intervening zones. If the Dwarf's rolls succeeds, his aspect will allow him to jump the gap between the ship and outpost, if he rolls poorly... Well, it is A

[handwritten margin note: Does this match rules?]

VERY LONG WAY DOWN.

Character Advancement

At the end of each story arc, each PC gains a level. That means they also write a new aspect, add a stress box, and gain an additional fate point per session. If the PC has a consequence, it clears at this time.

The new aspect should aim to show the PC from a new angle, to demonstrate how they have grown. If the PC had a consequence, the new aspect should be a callback to it. Otherwise, the new aspect can refer to a notable exploit. It can also be about the PC's relationship, positive or negative, with another character. It's generally best to write the new aspect right away, while the just-completed story arc is fresh. You can always tweak it later.