



# Story Games

## **Story Games**

Story games are for people who love improvisation and freeform roleplay. We go on imaginary adventures in a lighthearted atmosphere with other friendly and creative people. Together we improvise stories from scratch, with no preparation. It is a combination of roleplaying, brainstorming, collaborative storytelling, and improv. If you feel like stretching your creative muscles - come join us on one of our adventures!

## **How to Play**

During the first part of the game we create our characters and decide what adventure we want to go on. After that we roleplay - improvise the scenes of our adventure, trying to tell a fun story, making things up as we go.

We use the Brainstorming Guide to guide us through the game. It will help us to establish the important elements of our adventure: interesting premise, our goal, setting, important characters, challenges we may encounter.

One player becomes a Game Master (GM) - the narrator of our story. GM describes the world around the players, plays the role of non-player characters, decides what challenge/obstacle the players will face next, and narrates the consequences of their actions. Other players pretend to be their characters, playing their role in the story like actors.

We improvise the scenes of our story. Players take turns GMing. One player GMs a scene, we play through it, the next player GMs the next one. Each scene revolves around players trying to overcome the challenge established by the GM. The scene ends when the challenge is resolved.

If the current GM has trouble figuring out what happens next, they can tap out and let someone else continue the story. When necessary, we can pause between the scenes for a quick brainstorm and figure things out together.

All players actively contribute to the story, introduce new ideas, fill in missing information, create interesting situations, help to advance the story and take the adventure in new directions.

We win the game if we have created an interesting story that makes sense and resolves in an awesome and satisfying climax.

## **Rolling Dice**

Roll a 20-sided die to determine successes/failures of major actions, significant outcomes. If you roll above the target number (set by the GM depending on the difficulty of the task) - you succeed, otherwise you fail. On a failed roll, you can reroll the die at a cost of suffering a negative consequence, setback, complication, or taking a riskier option.

If your character is using an ability or an item relevant to the task you're attempting, you roll with advantage (roll two dice and pick the highest number).

## **Freeform Roleplay**

Freeform roleplay doesn't have many rules - there's nothing stopping us from doing anything we can imagine, but we trust each other to play fairly - avoid game-breaking actions, do things that make sense in the story, and try to make it interesting and fun for other players. To get the most out of our games, take a look at our guidelines.

### **What do you need to play**

1. People who enjoy improvisation, storytelling, and roleplay. Ideally, 3-5 players.
2. About three hours. Roughly 40 minutes for brainstorming, about 20 minutes per scene, about 7 scenes.
3. Something to write down your ideas on (paper, cards, whiteboard), pencils.
4. At least two 20-sided dice (ideally 2 per player).

### **Play Online**

Join our discord community to find people to play with!

**<https://rpgadventures.io/storygames>**

## Brainstorming Guide

### Adventure Idea

What will the adventure be about? Exciting premise. Prompt. High Concept. Fantastical “What if” question. Combine two different movies, books, or games into something new. Mix and match tropes. Add a twist, change details. Combine multiple ideas into one.

---

### Problem/Goal

What problem will the heroes need to solve, what goal will they strive to achieve? What Evil Plan must they prevent? The single most important event that will determine whether the heroes succeed or fail, and resolve the story. The main conflict revolves around it.

---

### Setting/Locations

Where does the story take place? What makes this place unusual, different from what we’ve seen before? Where does the adventure begin? To what interesting or important areas might the adventure lead?

---

### Non-Player Characters

Who is the main antagonist? What do they want, why? Who are some other important characters our heroes will meet? (Quest Giver, Allies, Evil Minions, Neutral NPCs.) Their appearance, personality, occupation, motivations.

---

### Protagonists (Player Characters)

Description: Your name, appearance, personality, occupation, motivations. Abilities: Cool powers you have. Special skills, useful items in your inventory. Relationship: Establish a relationship with one other character in the party.

---

### Challenges

What steps might our heroes take to achieve the goal? What problems and obstacles might they encounter? What unexpected complication might change the direction of the story, raise the stakes and threat level? Twist/reveal that redefines the goal? Antagonist makes a move? Crisis, when everything goes wrong? What final, epic, climactic challenge could resolve the main conflict?

## **Scenes**

Play through the scenes taking turns GMing (pick the scene you'd like to GM).

Climax is the most difficult thing to improvise, if you're unsure where to take it - leave it to the most experienced/confident players.

If you're running low on time - combine "More Difficult Challenge" and "Crisis" scenes with the Midpoint (Midpoint becomes the difficult high stakes challenge where everything goes wrong).

### **Exciting Adventure Hook**

The first scene that draws our heroes into action, gives them the first set of tasks to accomplish. How do the heroes encounter the problem?

### **The First Steps**

First obstacle the heroes need to overcome as they strive towards their goal.  
First milestone they need to reach.

### **Surprising Midpoint**

Unexpected complication that changes the direction of the story.  
Twist/reveal that redefines the goal?

### **More Difficult Challenge**

Second, more difficult challenge. Raise the stakes and threat level.

### **Crisis**

Everything goes wrong, major setback, the goal becomes much harder to achieve. Antagonist makes their move?

### **Awesome Climax**

Epic, most important/dangerous challenge that resolves the main conflict.

### **Resolution**

Outcomes/consequences of the adventure.

How does the world (and heroes' lives) change after the climax?

## **Guidelines**

Follow these guidelines to get the most out of our games. If you're new - don't get too overwhelmed by all these tips. Practice them one at a time - pick one principle you'd like to get better at, and focus on that one thing for the duration of the game. When GMing, try to encourage players to follow these principles.

### **Brainstorm what's hard to improvise**

During the brainstorming part, try to make sure we have prepared everything that would be hard to improvise on the spot, but no more.

### **Take inspiration**

If you're struggling to come up with a creative idea - use one from your favorite Movie, Game, or a TV show.

### **Grounded Story, Funny Roleplay**

When brainstorming/GMing, focus on creating a good, interesting story with a solid plot, establishing the base reality that makes sense. Don't try to make it funny - try to create a grounded believable world on top of which we can improvise funny and entertaining situations.

### **Play to find out what happens**

Do things that result in a good story, optimize for fun instead of "winning".

### **Yes, and**

Treat the ideas suggested by other players as awesome (even when they may seem silly). Don't shut down people's ideas - embrace them, help them succeed. Adopt ideas, build on top of them, add something new, find a way to make them work, make them better. Help other players be awesome. Actively help others to have cool moments and achieve their goals, create opportunities for other characters to shine. When GMing, listen to players and build off of the ideas they contribute.

### **Ask Questions**

When GMing, draw players into the story by asking questions "How does your character feel about [x]?", "What's going through their head as they do [y]?", "Describe how you want to do [z]."

## **Contribute to the story**

Don't be afraid to add information to the story. Help the GM to establish the scene, point out interesting details in the world around you. Vividly describe what you do. Answer unanswered questions, provide explanations for information that seems inconsistent, help to create a story that makes sense. Help the GM to move the story along. If you notice that players are stuck talking to each other and going nowhere - make a decision, conclude this scene, and move on to the next one.

## **Develop your Character**

What is their current goal? What do they want from this quest? What are their values and ideals? What do they fear? What flaws/weaknesses do they need to overcome? What is their backstory, significant events that shaped them? Do they have a strong opinion about what's going on? What's going through their head at this moment? What is their deep dark secret?

## **Be an active player**

Don't wait for others to entertain you, assume the responsibility for making the story more fun for yourself and others, try to actively contribute ideas to the story, enhance everyone's experience. Positive energy and enthusiasm are always welcome.

## **Be a proactive character**

Don't wait for the GM to provide every detail and tell you what to do. Figure out what your character wants, form your own goals, pursue them, and creatively overcome obstacles on their way.

## **Stay in character**

Try to immerse yourself in playing your character, like an actor. Try to make other people love and care about your character. Think about your character's distinctive features, quirks, unique speech patterns. Act it out, do a silly voice.

## **Establish and Explore the Relationships**

How does your character feel about the other party members? Do you have a past? Create interesting conflict dynamics between the characters in the party (while still collaborating as players). What does your character want from another PC? Why are they not giving it to you?

## **Adventure Prompts**

Use these ideas as inspiration for your adventures. Combine two ideas together to create something new. Add an unusual/unexpected twist to an idea. Mix and match tropes. Change it's key elements. Switch the genre, setting, goal, important characters.

1. Adapt a movie, book, game, TV show, myth, fairytale.
2. Egyptian/Aztec Pyramids. Mummies. Curses. Traps.
3. Ancient/Lost Civilization. Atlantis. El Dorado. Ruins.
4. Classic horror. Haunted mansion, cabin in the woods.
5. Castle. Magic School. Adventuring Academy.
6. Wild West. Cowboys, bandits, gold rush.
7. Steampunk. Elaborate machines, inventions.
8. Post-apocalyptic deadlands. Aftermath of a disaster.
9. Adventure on a vehicle. Zeppelin, Ship, Train, Submarine.
10. Underground. Tunnels, mines, glowing mushrooms.
11. The world of the dead. Heaven/Hell. Grim Reaper.
12. On a spaceship. Colony on an alien planet.
13. Scientific expedition. Secret research facility/labs.
14. Extreme weather. Cold, heat, maelstrom, radiation.
15. Spies. Secret government agents.
16. Secret Society/Conspiracy/Cult.
17. Crazy Scientist/Alchemist/Wizard.
18. Dark overlord and his minions. Oppressive regime.
19. Organized crime. Mafia, crime families.
20. Robots. Aliens. Mutants.
21. Undead. Zombies. Ghosts. Vampires. Witches.
22. Body Snatchers. Parasites that control your mind.
23. Giant Monsters. Dinosaurs, Mammoths, Dragons, Kaiju.
24. Pirates. Tortuga, Freeport. Ships. Treasure.
25. Ancient Curse/Prophecy.
26. Portal to another world. Unsealed Gate.
27. Baby monster. Alien/dragon egg.
28. Creatures/objects turned sentient/superintelligent.
29. A person turned into an animal or vice versa.
30. Heroes are shrunk to a tiny size.
31. Story from the perspective of small animals.
32. Child/innocent with dangerous powers



## **Problems/Goals**

1. Obtain/Steal McGuffin/Information.
2. Kill or capture a person/creature.
3. Protect/Rescue a person/creature/item.
4. Escort/deliver/smuggle a person/creature/item/info.
5. Travel to a distant location through dangerous lands.
6. Explore/Survive a hazardous environment, return home.
7. Destroy a target item/location.
8. Invade a location, or defend it from invaders.
9. Break out of captivity. Escape from pursuit.
10. Solve a mystery/crime. Strange events, a conspiracy, secret plot.
11. Heist/Robbery. Enter/exit guarded location, don't get caught.
12. Infiltrate and spy, go undercover. Find a spy/traitor in your midst.
13. Find evidence. Prove guilt/innocence. Clear the name. Frame someone.
14. Perform/sabotage a task. Perform ritual, build weapon.
15. Convince/manipulate/force someone into doing something.
16. Make allies. Impress/Befriend someone. Find love.
17. Seize political power. Gain status, influence, fame.
18. Negotiate. Resolve conflict, broker peace, close deal.
19. Cause conflict, pit people/factions against each other.
20. Run a society/group/organization/army/team.
21. Ensure that an important event goes without a hitch.
22. Win a competition. Put on a show.

## **Customizing Goals**

1. Prevent the antagonist from doing any of the above.
2. Help someone else to do any of the above.
3. Combine multiple goals. They complicate each other.
4. Do it stealthy, no clues/witnesses.
5. Avoid violence, collateral damage. Target must remain unharmed.
6. Do it while competing with the rival team.
7. Do it under time pressure.
8. Do it while pretending to be someone else.
9. Do it with incomplete/false information or limited resources.
10. Do it while being supervised (media/client/police).
11. Do it while protecting someone.
12. Do it while you're forced to cooperate with an enemy.
13. Accomplish it through social/political means only.

## Abilities

Special talents, skills, or superpowers your character has. Don't limit yourself to these options, use this list as an inspiration for making up your own.

- **Strength** - You're as strong as a bodybuilder.
- **Stealth** - You are very good at sneaking, hiding, avoiding unwanted attention.
- **Acute Senses** - You can notice all the imminent threats around you.
- **Deception** - You are cunning, excellent liar.
- **Expert** - You are a master of a profession of your choice.
- **Crafting** - You're good at putting together makeshift devices.
- **Vehicles** - You can drive/pilot any vehicle.
- **Darkvision** - You can see in pitch darkness like it's an overcast day.
- **Fireball** - Set stuff on fire. Hold in your hand as a light source.
- **Hacking** - You're a technology expert, you can break into any system.
- **Deadeye** - You can make an extremely precise shot at the tiny objects extremely far away.
- **Pet Pal** - You can speak with animals.
- **Illusion** - Create an illusory object no larger than a horse, complete with sounds, smells, movement.
- **Charm Person** - The target regards you as their friend for 1 hour. When the spell ends, they know they've been charmed.
- **Technomancy** - Control electrical devices with your mind.
- **Telekinesis** - Levitate small objects.
- **Walk on Walls/Ceiling** - Walk on walls/ceiling as if it was a regular floor.
- **Summon Familiar** - Summon a small creature who will be your pet and a friend. You can communicate with it telepathically, give it commands, sense through its senses.
- **Shapeshifting** - You can turn into an animal once per day for an hour.
- **Spread the Word** - You can spread any rumor. Say a couple of sentences, and they go viral. Not everyone believes them, but everyone is talking about them.
- **Connections** - You're on good terms with a group of people of your choice. They'll do their best to help you to the best of their ability.
- **Famous** - You are well known. Choose what reputation you have in a this region (Hero, Villain, Philanthropist, Sex Symbol, etc.)

## Items

- **Grappling Hook Gun** - Shoots the hook, reels it back in.
- **Friendship Bracelets** - Magical walkie-talkie. Enables you to talk telepathically to anybody who has one (within 300 meters).
- **Ropey** - A sentient piece of rope. 50ft. As smart as a puppy. Obeys simple commands (coil, uncoil, tie a knot, etc.)
- **Horseshoe of Attraction** - Turns into a powerful magnet when activated. Can switch polarity and repel objects instead. Can be activated telepathically (within 300 meters).
- **Cloak of Disguise** - Enables you to create an illusion around yourself, assuming an appearance of any person you've seen.
- **Reverse Gravity Device** - When activated, reverses gravity inside 10 meter radius around it.
- **Ring of Tracking** - The owner of the ring always knows it's location.
- **Book of Oath** - A vow written in this book can't be broken.
- **Ring of Crawlies** - Use it to control every insect within 100 meter radius.
- **Spring Shoes** - Allow you to jump 10 times normal distance.
- **Pokeball** - Stores a friendly or defeated animal.
- **Smoke Grenade** - Creates a huge cloud of black smoke.
- **Invisibility Potion** - Turns you invisible for 10 minutes.
- **Chloroform** - The one who inhales it instantly falls asleep for 1 hour.
- **Shrinking Potion** - The drinker shrinks to be 20 times smaller for 20 minutes.
- **Hoverboard** - Floats above ground, frictionless, supports any weight.
- **Immovable rod** - Activating it makes it magically fixed in place. Until someone deactivates it, the rod doesn't move, even if it is defying gravity.
- **Neuralizer** - In a flash, wipes the last 15 minutes of memories for everyone looking at it. Can be used once per adventure
- **Clay Golem (or Droid)** - Slow and stupid servant, capable of obeying simple commands.
- **Teleportation pyramids** - Two small pyramids. Activating one pyramid teleports anyone who touches it to the location of the other pyramid. Can be used once per day.
- **Wingsuit** - Allows you to glide through the air.
- **Trusty Steed** - A friendly creature you can ride on.