

# 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!

<https://rpgadventures.io/storygames>

## 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.

We use the Story Template 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.

Then 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 roleplay, improvise, make things up as we go.

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 gamebreaking 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.

# Story Template

## Adventure Idea

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

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## 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.

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## Interesting 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?

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## Important Non-Player Characters

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

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## Protagonists (Player Characters)

Description: Your name, appearance, personality, occupation, motivations, goals.  
Abilities: Cool powers you have. Special skills, useful items in your inventory.

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## Challenges

What steps might our heroes take to achieve the goal? What problems/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? Awesome scene at a cool location.

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# Scenes

## 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? Drama? Mystery? Danger? What’s at stake, what happens if they fail?

## 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, raises the stakes and threat level. Twist/reveal that redefines the goal? Antagonist makes a move? Crisis when everything goes wrong?

## Awesome Climax

The final, epic, most important/dangerous challenge that resolves the main conflict. Exciting ending. Cool set piece.

## Resolution

Outcomes/consequences of the adventure. How does the world (and heroes’ lives) change after the climax?

### **Adventure Prompts**

1. Egyptian/Aztec Pyramids. Mummies. Curses. Traps.
2. Ancient/Lost Civilization. Atlantis. El Dorado. Ruins.
3. Classic horror. Haunted mansion, cabin in the woods.
4. Castle. Fortress. Magic School. Vampire castle.
5. Wild West. Cowboys, bandits, gold rush.
6. Steampunk. Elaborate machines, inventions.
7. Post-apocalyptic deadlands. Aftermath of a disaster.
8. War zone. Battleground between two great powers.
9. The Land of Outcasts/Exiles. Prison.
10. Inside a dream, illusion, game, VR.
11. On a vehicle. Zeppelin, Ship, Train, Submarine.
12. Underground. Tunnels, mines, glowing mushrooms.
13. Underwater. Merfolk. Kraken.
14. The world of the dead. Heaven/Hell. Grim Reaper.
15. Magic forest. Elves, druids, unicorns, creatures.
16. On a spaceship. Colony on an alien planet.
17. Scientific expedition. Secret research facility/labs.
18. Remote island. Tropical Jungle. Oasis. Bayou.
19. Wizard's tower. Mysterious Lighthouse. Skyscraper.
20. Extreme weather. Cold, heat, maelstrom, radiation.
21. Spies. Secret government agents.
22. Secret Society/Conspiracy/Cult.
23. Crazy Scientist/Alchemist/Wizard.
24. Dark overlord and his minions. Oppressive regime.
25. Invaders. Terrorists, hostile foreign nation.
26. Organized crime. Mafia, crime families.
27. Robots. Aliens. Mutants.
28. Undead. Zombies. Ghosts. Vampires. Witches.
29. Body Snatchers. Parasites that control your mind.
30. Giant Monsters. Dinosaurs/Mammoths, Dragons, Kaiju.
31. Pirates. Tortuga, Freeport. Ships. Treasure.
32. Ninjas/Samurai.
33. Ancient Curse/Prophecy.
34. Portal to another world. Unsealed Gate.
35. Baby monster. Alien/dragon egg.
36. Creatures/objects turned sentient/superintelligent.
37. A person turned into an animal or vice versa.
38. Heroes are shrunk to a tiny size.
39. Story from the perspective of small animals.
40. Love potion. Forbidden love. Romeo and Juliet.
41. Child/innocent with dangerous powers

### **More Ideas**

1. Adapt a movie, book, game, TV show, myth, fairytale.
  2. Combine two ideas together to create something new.
  3. Add a twist, change a key element.
- Unexpected genre, setting, characters, etc.

### **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 a dangerous location, find something.
7. Survive in a hazardous environment, return home.
8. Destroy a target item/location.
9. Invade a location, or defend it from invaders.
10. Break out of captivity. Escape from pursuit.
11. Rob a train/caravan/galeon/zeppelin.
12. Solve a mystery/crime. Strange events, dark secret.
13. Discover the fate of a missing person/group.
14. Uncover a conspiracy, secret plot. Find a spy/traitor.
15. Heist. Enter/exit guarded location, don't get caught.
16. Infiltrate and spy, go undercover.
17. Find evidence. Prove guilt/innocence. Clear the name.
18. Perform/sabotage a task. Perform ritual, build weapon.
19. Convince/manipulate someone into doing something.
20. Make allies. Impress/Befriend someone. Find love.
21. Seize political power. Gain status, influence, fame.
22. Negotiate. Resolve conflict, broker peace, close deal.
23. Cause conflict, pit people/factions against each other.
24. Convince/Manipulate/Force someone to do something
25. Redeem or corrupt a person. Teach them a lesson.
26. Make allies. Befriend/Seduce someone.
27. Rebellion. Overthrow an evil overlord.
28. Run a society/group/organization/army/team.
29. Ensure that an important event goes without a hitch.
30. Plant an item. Frame someone for a crime.
31. Find evidence to convict someone of a crime.
32. Win a competition. Put on a show.
33. Defeat a horde or a swarm, clear out an infestation.

### **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 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.
10. Do it with limited resources, no preparation.
11. Do it while being supervised (media/client/police).
12. Do it while protecting someone.
13. Do it while you're forced to cooperate with an enemy.
14. Accomplish it through social/political means only.

## **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. Mix and match tropes. Combine two different movies, characters, settings, or plots. Try to add an unusual unexpected twist to an idea. Reverse one of its key aspects of the idea, switch the genre, setting, goal, important character traits, etc.

## **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 playing characters with real feelings and believable motivations. Try to make other people love and care about your character. Think about your character's distinctive features, quirks, unique speech patterns. Don't be shy to act it out, do a silly voice.

## **Create and Explore the Relationships**

How does your character feel about the other party members (or NPCs)? 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? Could your characters want opposite things? During the story, can your characters resolve the conflict, find an agreement, a win-win outcome?