



# MULTIVERSE OF MYSTERY

# WELCOME TO THE MULTIVERSE!

## ABOUT

This is a lighthearted, rules-lite, storytelling-focused, solo roleplaying game.

◆ **You are:** An interdimensional explorer, inventor, and an adventurer.

◆ **You have:** A portal device, a companion, and an ability to invent anything.

◆ **Your job:** Explore the multiverse, solve mysteries, record your discoveries.

Improvise mysteries from scratch (with no preparation), invent weird ideas, and go on wacky adventures in the style of “Rick and Morty” and “Gravity Falls”.



## GAMEPLAY OVERVIEW

◆ **Before the game:** create your character and a companion.

◆ **Pick a world** where you'll travel next, the place where you exit the portal.

◆ **Set up the scene** by describing 3 things you see after exiting the portal.

◆ **Discover something weird:** Introduce a mystery or anomaly without an explanation - something unusual, interesting, or absurd about this world.

◆ **Form a theory:** Make up a guess about a possible answer to the mystery.

◆ **Investigate the mystery:** Describe what you do to search for the next clue.

◆ **Overcome a challenge:** Creatively overcome an obstacle to obtain the clue.

◆ **Roll the dice** to determine the nature of the clue:

    ◆ **If you succeed** - reveal a clue that supports your current theory.

    ◆ **If you fail** - discover a twist, something that contradicts your theory.

◆ **Solve the mystery:** Investigate until you're ready to reveal the real answer.

◆ **Resolve the story:** Play out the **epic climax** of your adventure.

◆ **Travel to the next world** by using your portal device.

# HOW TO PLAY

## CHARACTER AND NARRATOR

As you play, you'll mentally switch between the two modes: **Narrator** and **Player**.

- ◆ As a **Narrator**, you will describe the world around the heroes, narrate the consequences of their actions, introduce mysteries, challenges, and clues, and play the roles of the non-player characters.
- ◆ As a **Player**, you will play the role of the heroes of the story (your main character and your companions) - describe their actions, pursue their goals, investigate mysteries, creatively overcome obstacles on their path.

## IMPROVISE THE SCENES

An adventure can be as short as a 5-minute scene, or as long as an episode of a TV show. Play through the adventure by improvising the scenes of the story.

It's best to leave some record of your adventures, to do that you can use:

- ◆ **Audio:** Improvise the story out loud, record it using an audio recording app.
- ◆ **Journaling:** Describe your story in a journal (much like a fiction writer would).
- ◆ **Screenwriting:** Write your story using screenwriting software (like Highland).

If you will write down your story, don't treat it as a writing project. Approach it as a stream-of-consciousness improv written down on page:

Don't plan, play to find out what happens. Don't edit, don't pause, don't try to write well, don't worry about the plot holes or the quality of your ideas. Don't take it seriously. The stupider - the better.

## NARRATIVE SUMMARY

You don't need to write all scenes in full detail (like in a screenplay or a novel). You can summarize ("pitch") parts of the story, describe them as log entries.

To see great examples of pitch versions of a story, you can watch "Death and Return of Superman" by Max Landis and "Pitchstorm" actual play by Geek & Sundry on YouTube.

## CHARACTER AND ADVENTURE SHEETS

Create a document for keeping track of the important details of the adventure:

### Adventure Sheet

Setting:  
Mystery:  
Clues:  
Theories:  
Resolution:

### Character Sheet

Name:  
Description:  
Talents:  
Items:  
Conditions:

Here you can see the google doc you can duplicate and fill in (with some character examples): <https://rpgadventures.io/multiverse-of-mystery-sheets>

Fill the document as you play. If you discover something awesome on your adventures, share it with our community: <https://rpgadventures.io/discord>

# YOUR PORTAL DEVICE

## ◦ PORTAL FUEL ◦

Your portal device is powered by the Epiphany Fuel. It requires novel, never before seen data to function (new discoveries, ideas, inventions, insights, etc).

- ◆ **Short-range portals:** To open a short-distance portal in line of sight - charge the device it a minor discovery or idea: find, describe, and explain a weird thing or anomaly.
- ◆ **Interdimensional:** To open the portal to a far place or another dimension, you must recharge the device by telling it a solution to a larger mystery or an invention.



To recharge the device, write down a new and insightful idea in your journal.

## ◦ ASSOCIATION ENGINE ◦

The portal device uses an Association Engine, it can open the portals between the two points only if they are connected by some association or an analogy.

If my adventure has ended with me fighting an octopus, the portal may open into a water world, or a world with many-limbed people, or a sushi restaurant.

For a short-range portal, describe or create an association between two places:

To open a portal between a painting on the wall and an opera stage, describe what they both have in common (art). To open a portal between a shark tank and the floor under someone, make the floor wet to create an association.

The associations must be novel, they can't be reused. The more unusual, and creative the associations are - the more powerful and stable the portals are. Stronger associations create longer-lasting portals, more creative and unusual associations create larger portals. Really abstract and metaphorical analogies enable you to reopen the same connection later.

An association between Wooden Door and Wooden Table (both made out of wood) will create a small portal (non-creative association), that lasts a few hours (it lasts a long time because the association is strong and clear).

Filling the room with sad music to open a portal to a nearby cemetery will create a larger, but less stable portal (more creative, but weaker association).

## ◦ SWAPPING PROPERTIES ◦

The portal device can be used to temporary swap properties of objects.

In a chase scene on a snowy mountain, use the portal to swap the cold of the snow with the heat from a nearby campfire, creating a path of melted snow.

Connect a feather to a stone wall, swapping their hardness. The feather becomes a rigid weapon, the stone wall becomes soft and breakable.

Connect a dimly glowing fungus with a lantern to swap their luminosity.

# CREATE THE CHARACTERS

## • DESCRIPTION •

What is your **name, appearance, personality, backstory, flaws?**

Are you an eccentric scientist? A mad wizard? A boy genius? A cool robot?

What is your **motivation?** What do you want, why do you solve mysteries?

Plain curiosity, seeking power, lost in the multiverse and trying to return home, need ingredients for your experiments, looking for something or someone, on a run from an evil empire, protecting the universe from threats.

Who's your **companion(s)?** Describe your relationships: what do you think about each other, how do you know each other, what do you want from each other?

Goofy sidekick, old mentor, trusted partner, snarky robot, pet alien, ghost.

What does your **portal device** look like?

Portal gun, magic tome, Pip-Boy, dimensional visor, phone booth, watch.

## • TALENTS •

Choose 3 talents from the list (for yourself and companions). Or invent your own.

Strong	Nimble	Tough	Sneaky	Cunning	Booksmart
Perceptive	Charming	Brave	Crafty	Helpful	Artistic
Persuasion	Deception	Intimidation	Insight	Investigation	Magic
Science	Technology	Nature	Diplomacy	Performance	Lore
Warrior	Marksman	Detective	Inventor	Leader	Healer

## • ITEMS •

Invent 3 items you start out with, use the examples below for inspiration.

**Telekinesis device** - Levitates small objects, no larger or heavier than a bucket of water, within 50 meters, in line of sight. Has 3 charges, takes 8 hours to recharge.

**Flubber shoes** - Enables you to jump up to 20 times the normal distance.

**Strength serum** - Makes you as strong as Hulk for a minute. Enough for one use.

**Grappling Hook** - Shoots the grappling hook to the distance of up to 30 meters.

Clearly define what each item enables you to do.

If an item seems too overpowered - add some costs or limitations, like:

Takes time to use, attracts attention, unpredictable, can backfire, has limited impact, expensive, has limited number of uses, has negative side effects, works only under certain conditions, only on specific targets, etc.

# VISIT A NEW WORLD

## • PICK THE WORLD •

Come up with a location you want to visit next. That's where your portal opens.

Wild West, Alien Pyramids, Post-apocalyptic wastelands, Prehistoric World, Pirate Ship, Foggy Swamp, Underground Lab, Large Nest, Broken Spaceship.

## • SET UP THE SCENE •

Describe what you see when coming out of the portal. Describe 3 details about the location around you, characters, objects, creatures, things you sense (hear, smell, touch, feel), any activity that's happening in the scene.

Start with a large establishing shot and then "zoom" into details, or vice versa.

## • DISCOVER SOMETHING WEIRD •

Introduce something weird, unusual, interesting, surprising, or absurd about the scene you're in (or any of the details you've described), create some mystery or anomaly without an explanation. To do that, pick any detail (location, character, action, object, etc.), and apply to it one of the weirdness generation methods:

### **Subvert expectations**

What do I normally assume or expect? Change it to something wildly different.

| A bird → I normally expect birds to fly → But this is a bird that burrows

### **Out of place**

Introduce an out of place detail, something that doesn't belong here.

| A desert → An old wooden ship stuck in the middle of the desert.

### **Combine incompatible ideas**

Combine an idea with something unrelated, something it doesn't belong with.

| Cowboys + Dinosaurs → Cowboys riding domesticated dinosaurs.

### **Create a surprising contradiction**

Create internal contradiction, change some aspect to something unexpected.

| Gorilla → A posh gorilla inventor, smoking a pipe and wearing a tophat.

### **Reverse**

Reverse a key characteristic, a relationship, normal logic and order of things.

| A knight fighting a dragon → A knight rescuing a dragon.

### **Over or under exaggerate**

Change the size, shape, or another attribute. Take the idea to the extreme.

| A centipede → An enormous train-sized centipede.

## • POSE A QUESTION •

Ask a question about the weird thing, the core mystery you want to investigate.

| What is this broken robot doing in this abandoned wild west town?

# INVESTIGATE THE MYSTERY

## • FORMULATE A THEORY •

Make up a theory about the possible explanation to the mystery, a guess about what's going on, why is it happening, how did it happen, who is behind it, etc.

Every time you encounter a new clue, you'll update your theory, modify it to explain as many things you've observed as possible.

## • INVESTIGATE •

Describe what you do to investigate the mystery and discover the next clue.

Establish the location you go to, the actions you take, what kind of clues you're looking for, and what you hope to learn about the mystery.

To obtain a clue, you must overcome a challenge. As a Narrator, describe what obstacle or complication makes the investigation difficult (see the next page).

## • DISCOVER A CLUE •

Once you overcome a challenge, reveal a clue (as a Narrator).

Roll the number of 20-sided dice equal to the number of clues your current theory explains, and take the highest result.

- ◆ If you roll 10 or above, reveal a clue that supports your current theory.
- ◆ If you roll below 10, discover something that contradicts your theory, a twist that makes the mystery weirder, takes the story in an unexpected direction.

Investigate the mystery until you're ready to reveal the truth, explain what's going on, and establish the location where climax of the story will take place.

## • CLIMAX •

Sometimes, solving the mystery is enough to resolve the story. Sometimes, the solution to the mystery reveals a problem that needs to be solved, a culprit that must be stopped, or an opportunity you can pursue.

In that case, the investigation transforms into a mission-based save-the-day scenario.

If there's a culprit, their evil scheme is nearly complete. Rush to confront the culprit, help the person in need, or have some other dramatic resolution to the story.

As a Narrator, come up with the final, most important and difficult challenge you must overcome in order to succeed.

Once you overcome it, the adventure is complete!

## • TRAVEL TO THE NEXT WORLD •

Once the mystery is solved, power up your portal device and move on to the next world. Journey through several worlds using the Association Engine until you find one you find interesting and want to explore.

# OVERCOME CHALLENGES

## • OVERCOME A CHALLENGE •

As a Narrator, introduce a challenge, obstacle, problem, or a complication that makes it more difficult for the hero to get what they want.

As a Player, describe how you creatively overcome the challenge (usually by inventing an improvised solution out of materials you can find lying around in the environment, using your wits, charm, or the help of your companion).

### Action Challenges

Physical conflict against other characters and creatures.

Combat, chase scenes, train heists, riding animals, piloting vehicles, defending castles, winning races, escaping monsters, dodging explosions.

### Roleplaying Challenges

You want something from an NPC (information, item, favor, help, some action on their part, etc.), but their desires are at odds with yours, creating conflict.

Negotiation, deception, intimidation, interrogation, exchange of favors.

### Exploration Challenges

Overcome environmental obstacles and hazards.

Journey through, explore, enter, or escape dangerous or guarded places.

Rivers, chasms, locked doors, traps, ambushes, natural disasters, sinking ships, scaling cliffs, escaping collapsing buildings, breaking into buildings.

### Technical Challenges

Deal with interesting or dangerous technologies or magics.

Repair devices, disarm bombs, craft things, hack robots, stop magic rituals.

### Stealth Challenges

Performing any task or other type of challenge without getting noticed.

Hide, sneak in and out of places, infiltrate places, steal things, spy, smuggle.

### Setbacks and complications

Deal with extra problems and misfortunes outside of your control.

Injury, equipment failure, betrayal, misinformation, getting captured, failed plans, time pressure, rivals, innocent bystanders, cooperating with enemies.

### Antagonist moves

Responding to the moves the villain makes.

Attacks, kidnapping, hostages, traps, goons, manipulation, misdirection.

### Investigation challenges

Obstacles and problems that come from trying to obtain information.

Following tracks, searching for clues, spying on enemies,

# ROLL THE DICE

## ◦ ROLLING THE DICE ◦

When you attempt something challenging, risky, or opposed by another character - set the difficulty number and roll a 20-sided die. If you beat the difficulty number - you succeed, otherwise you encounter a complication or a setback. Set the difficulty number based on how likely you think the success is:

**5: Easy**

**10: Medium**

**15: Challenging**

**18: Very hard**

I jump between buildings. I'm not very athletic, the buildings are far apart, and I'm not using some clever approach that would make this task easier. If I saw this scene in a movie, I'd expect the character to fail, so I set a pretty high difficulty number.

## ◦ ADVANTAGE AND DISADVANTAGE ◦

If you have advantage, roll multiple dice (up to 4) and take the best result.  
If you have disadvantage, take the worst result.

**Gain advantage dice** when you:

- ◆ Use talents relevant to the action you're attempting.
- ◆ Creatively use the environment to your benefit.
- ◆ Get some help from your companion.

**Gain disadvantage dice** for each:

- ◆ Condition that would impede the task you're attempting.
- ◆ Aspect of the scene that puts you at a disadvantage.

Advantage and Disadvantage dice cancel each other out:

I jump between buildings. I have a talent "Nimble", I've built a makeshift trampoline, and my companion will double-bounce me - I add 3 advantage dice. But I have a "Fear of heights" condition, and the roofs are covered in ice - that gives me 2 disadvantages, so I add only one advantage die.

## ◦ CONDITIONS ◦

If you fail a roll in a dangerous situation, you gain a condition:

Injured, cursed, angry, tangled, distracted, tired, sand in the eyes, cornered, sneezing, embarrassed, jealous.

Severity of the conditions gradually increases, for example:

Scared → cornered → injured → unconscious.

To get rid of a condition, do something that would fix it.

Use bandage, cut the entangling vines, get comforted by a friend, act cool to improve your reputation, punch a wall to release your anger, run away in fear.

To defeat opponents, inflict conditions on them until they lose or run away. If someone tries to inflict a condition on you - describe how you defend yourself, and roll the dice to see if you succeed.

# OBJECTIVE-BASED ADVENTURES

## COMING UP WITH AN OBJECTIVE

Instead of the mystery-focused adventures where you discover and investigate something weird, your story can revolve around pursuing an objective.

After setting up the scene, introduce a problem to solve, opportunity to pursue, or an antagonist to defeat. Use the prompts below to come up with an objective in the following format: [Type of objective] [action] [target] [optional modifier]

[Go on a mission to] [capture] [a creature].

[Stop someone who wants to] [steal] [an object].

[Help someone to] [destroy] [a vehicle] [stealthily].

### TYPE

Go on a mission to...

Stop someone who wants...

Help someone to...

### ACTION

Defeat

Destroy

Obtain

Rescue

Protect

Help

Journey to

Get through

Bypass

Overcome

Break out

Break in

Liberate

Invade

Escort

Intercept

Chase

Escape

Steal

Capture

Kidnap

Infiltrate

Smuggle

Plant

Sneak in

Spy on

Swindle

Hide

Distract

Sabotage

Complete

Repair

Fix

Create

Stop

Prevent

Persuade

Befriend

Impress

Influence

Negotiate

Tame

### TARGET

Person

Group

Creature

Object

Info

Location

Vehicle

Event

### MODIFIER

Stealthily, without notice

While competing with rivals

Without collateral damage

Cooperating with enemy

Very limited resources

Using social means only

### PLAYING AN OBJECTIVE-BASED ADVENTURE

- ◆ Describe how you encounter this objective, add specific concrete details.
- ◆ Formulate a 3-step plan for achieving your objective. Describe where the next scene takes place and what you do to take the next step.
- ◆ Introduce challenges, complications, describe what makes each step difficult. Challenges should escalate, get progressively more difficult, each challenge should rise the stakes and threat level.
- ◆ Keep going until you're ready to resolve your story in a climax (a scene where the final, most difficult challenge determines whether you achieve your goal).

# OTHER ADVENTURE TYPES

## • MONTAGE •

You can play through a montage of jumping between dimensions, quickly make many small absurd ideas, in the style of “Interdimensional Cable”, “Morty’s Mindblowers”, or the opening credits from “Rick and Morty”. To do that:

Set up the scene → introduce something weird → justify/explain its existence.

Then open a portal and jump to the next world associated with this one.

Open a portal, see a T-Rex roaming through jungle. See that it cowers in fear of a tiny hamster. The hamster opens its fanged maw and drinks all T-Rex’s blood. Making an association, open the next portal into a vampire castle.

## • DISCOVERY •

Just travel through the worlds, introduce weird things, and marvel at them.

Open a portal into a new world, describe the weird and wonderful places, people, and creatures that you see, then move on to the next world.



Use the Association Engine, come up with the next world to visit by making an association from the last thing you’ve seen in this previous world.

## • COMEDY •

Improvise comedy scenes using “UCB” approach to comedy:

- ◆ Establish the **Base Reality** - more or less ordinary location you’re visiting.
- ◆ Introduce the **Unusual Thing** - something weird, surprising, and absurd that stands out in contrast to the Base Reality.
- ◆ **Justify** the Unusual Thing - come up with an explanation for the absurdity, invent a logical rationale that makes it believable, ground it in reality.
- ◆ **Heighten** the absurdity, make the Unusual Thing even weirder, take it farther away from the expected reality we have established at the beginning.
- ◆ As you play through the scene, heighten the unusual thing 2-3 more times, make it progressively more absurd, take it farther and farther away from the expected reality.
- ◆ End the scene as soon as you’ve made the unusual thing as absurd as you can make it (or can’t justify the absurdity any longer).

Learn more: <https://improvgames.io/workshop/game-of-the-scene>

# CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

## ◦ GAINING ITEMS ◦

Your character can become more powerful by obtaining new items and artifacts on your adventures. You can discover them, trade your existing items for them, or invent new items out of things you find in your environment.

At the end of each adventure you can add one more item to your inventory.

To avoid accumulating too many game-breakingly powerful items, clearly define the powers, costs, and limitations for each new item you obtain.

## ◦ GAINING NEW TALENTS ◦

Gain a new talent at the end of a major story arc.

## ◦ YOUR CRAFTING SKILLS ◦

When starting out, you can craft simple objects out of the things and materials in your environment (breaking off a wooden table leg to use as a club). As your experience grows (you can craft a crossbow using table parts and a string, or even a wooden mech-suit).

More advanced things are more difficult to craft (require a higher target number to beat on a roll), so you can add more crafting-related talents (“Inventor”, “Engineering”, “MacGyver”, etc.) to make your success more likely.



# SETTING PROMPTS

ADJECTIVE	LOCATION	INHABITANTS
Abandoned	Wild West	Ghosts
Prehistoric	Jungle	Monsters
Mechanical	Ship	Pirates
Alien	Temple	Ninjas
Ancient	Ruins	Scholars
Sentient	Manor	Survivors
Unnatural	Castle	Rulers
Corrupted	Base	Ancient evil
Fortified	Camp	Criminals
Ancient	Battlefield	Shamans
Strange	Wasteland	Savages
Automated	Metropolis	Superheroes
Forgotten	Island	Vampires
Guarded	Junkyard	Merchants
Decaying	Slums	Zombies
High-Tech	Train	Aliens
Living	Spaceship	Talking Animals
Sacred	Cave	Eldritch Horrors
Colossal	Nest	Bats
Ruined	Pyramids	Hermit
Magic	Tower	Inventor
Hidden	Lair	Cloaked Figures
Infested	Colony	Rebels
Secret	Laboratory	Mutants
Underground	Tunnels	Agents
Deadly	Swamp	Witches
Steampunk	Factory	Robots

# CHARACTER PROMPTS

ADJECTIVE	OCCUPATION	MOTIVATION
Odd	Professor	Keep Secret
Ambitious	Treasure hunter	Obtain object
Nefarious	Supervillain	Gain power
Curious	Child	Get help
Obnoxious	Journalist	Expose fraud
Cunning	Thief	Restore justice
Zealous	Warrior	Follow orders
Eccentric	Inventor	Build something
Flamboyant	Actor	Gain fame
Boring	Bureaucrat	Enforce rules
Alien	Collector	Capture creature
Secret	Agent	Hide identity
Reckless	Rebel	Complete mission
Dangerous	Pirate	Protect treasure
Brilliant	Merchant	Conceal creature
Primitive	Savage	Settle a score
Corrupted	Priest	Revive Someone
Enigmatic	Explorer	Find riches
Old	Robot	Make amends
Lonely	Gangster	Obtain information
Ruthless	Leader	Negotiate a deal
Rogue	Detective	Find someone
Secretive	Servant	Impress someone
Wealthy	Criminal	Gain freedom
Runaway	Princess	Escape pursuit
Arrogant	Rival	Prove superiority
Unusual	Creature	Spread chaos

# MYSTERIES

## MYSTERY

## PROBLEM

Defies natural laws	Disappeared
Drawn to a specific location	Stolen
Attracts creatures	Sabotaged
Inspires unwarranted fear	Kidnapped
Is out of place	Malfunctioning
Has transformed	Trapped
Is linked in unexpected ways	Under attack
Is acting strange	Turned evil
Appears in wrong places	Corrupted
Acts against their nature	Impersonated
Has been replaced	Sick
Has been activated	Transforming
Was discovered	Last of its kind
Is being hunted	Framed
Has been contaminated	Impersonated
Has switched bodies	Going extinct
Is being controlled	Exploited
Accused of a crime	Lost
Has been discovered	Infested
Grows or multiplies	Is infected
Emits unknown signals	Is betrayed
Has gained sentience	Decaying
Covered in strange symbols	Kidnapped
Has a duplicate	Invaded
Alters gravity	Manipulated
Levitates	Sabotaged
Attracts metal	Replaced

# CLUES

CLUE TYPE	CLUE
Witness talking about	Creature
Overheard conversation on	Treasure
Book or journal describing	Artifact
Letter or note about	Midnight gatherings
Tale or legend about	Secret chambers
Map showing the location of	Hidden corridor
A blueprint of	A new gadget
Drawings of	Strange plant
A newspaper article about	Famous criminal
Sudden appearance of	Lost place
Alarming report about	Forbidden experiments
Sudden vanishing of	Old tower
Strange behavior of	Robots
Advanced manuscript on	Seemingly ordinary object
Surveillance footage of	Cool vehicle
Startling transformation of	Someone's pet
Official records of	Object that came to life
A lost or missing	Priceless item
People complaining about	Peculiar person
People complaining about	Legendary creature
Mishap involving	Rare chemical
Unexpected discovery of	Alien ruins
Remains of	Science experiment
Peculiar habits of	Political figure
Cryptic message about	Art object
Sudden change in	Familiar place
Anomalies with	Device