



ADVENTURE WRITERS' ROOM

ABOUT

This is a collaborative storytelling game where we'll brainstorm creative ideas and improvise an exciting adventure from scratch, with no preparation. By playing this game we'll create a one-shot adventure we can playtest between ourselves, run for the other players, or publish.

Come [join our Discord](#) to play this game with us, and brainstorm fun adventures in a lighthearted atmosphere with other friendly and creative people!

HOW TO PLAY

To create an adventure, we'll use the [adventure blueprint](#) that will guide us through the adventure creation process. We'll go through it step by step, and fill it with our ideas.

We will use the [adventure prompts](#) cards to provide an initial inspiration for our story.

We will take turns brainstorming and pitching adventure ideas, pick our favorite one, develop it into a complete adventure, and collaboratively narrate the story we've created.

After the game, we can use the [adventure template](#) to turn the story we've developed into a one-page adventure, playtest it, and publish it to our [adventure library](#).

BRAINSTORMING GUIDELINES

Say "Yes, And"

Embrace other people's ideas and build on top of them. Don't negate ideas - find a way to make ideas work, make them better.

Take inspiration

If you're struggling to come up with a creative idea - take one from your favorite stories (movies, games, TV shows, etc.)

Share the Spotlight

Try to make sure you're not talking over other people and dominating the conversation. If you notice someone being interrupted - ask them what they were about to say.

Brainstorm what's hard to improvise

We want to develop ideas that would be difficult to improvise on the spot during the game, but also avoid over-preparing.

Contribute ideas

Try to contribute at least one idea to every step of the brainstorming process. Even seemingly obvious ideas can lead to something interesting.

Mix and match ideas

Combine two seemingly unrelated ideas into something new, or subvert an idea by adding a surprising twist or an unusual detail.

Try to keep the discussion focused

Avoid going on unrelated tangents. If you notice that people are getting distracted, stuck, or too caught up in the details - try to steer the conversation back on track.

Avoid discussing mechanics

We create system-agnostic adventures that can be adapted to any system. Avoid discussing system-specific rules and mechanics.

1. BRAINSTORM IDEAS

The players draw the [adventure prompts](#) cards. Then the players take turns, each player describes one of the key story elements (inspired by the cards they have):

FUN SETTING

Where does this story take place? Who are the inhabitants of this setting? What makes this world interesting and unusual?

INTERESTING PREMISE

What core idea do you want to build this adventure around? A fun character, interesting magics, tech, items, or creatures.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

What goal will the heroes strive to achieve, what problem must they solve, what evil plan must they prevent? What makes it difficult?

Based on these ideas, the next player pitches an exciting "movie trailer" for the adventure:

EXCITING PITCH

Describe the world of the story, the goal the heroes will pursue, the characters they'll meet, the most interesting obstacles they'll have to overcome on their path, and an epic climax that resolves the story.

The other players can ask questions about the story, or suggest ideas to incorporate into the pitch. Once each player has made a pitch, we pick our favorite idea we want to develop.

2. DEVELOP THE DETAILS

The players take turns making one-sentence statements about the story. On your turn, you can introduce a new idea, or build on top of an idea introduced by the previous player. We answer the questions on these cards until we've made at least 3 locations and 3 characters:

INTERESTING LOCATIONS

Where does the adventure begin? Where might the adventure lead? Awesome set piece for the climax? What makes each place interesting? What obstacles and opportunities does each location present?

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

Who is the main antagonist? Who is the quest giver? Who else may the heroes meet (friendly allies, evil minions)? What's their name, appearance, personality, occupation, motivation (what do they want, and why)?

3. DESIGN THE PLOT

Then we discuss and develop the three key scenes outlining the main plot of the adventure:

ENGAGING HOOK

A scene that introduces the main objective and draws the heroes into action. How do the heroes encounter the problem they must solve by the end of the story?

SURPRISING TWIST

Unexpected complication, twist, or reveal changes the direction of the story, raises stakes and threat level, redefines the goal, makes the objective harder to achieve.

AWESOME CLIMAX

The final, most important challenge overcoming which resolves the story and enables the heroes to achieve their objective. An epic scene at a cool location.

Once we know the plot, we'll break it down into a series of escalating challenges:

ESCALATING CHALLENGES

What obstacles must the heroes overcome as they pursue their objective? What steps must they take to reach their goal, and what makes each step difficult? What setbacks and complications will the heroes encounter?

4. SUMMARIZE THE STORY

We take turns describing the scenes, and collaboratively narrate the story we've created:

STORY RECAP

Narrate a list of scenes that add up to a story. Each scene revolves around heroes striving to overcome a challenge on the path to their goal. Where does the scene take place? Whom will the heroes meet here? What obstacle must they overcome? What important information will they learn about the story?

CREATIVITY PROMPTS

Apply the following methods to introduce more interesting, weird, unusual, surprising, creative elements into the story. To do that - start with a normal, ordinary, "cliche" idea, and then twist it using one of the methods.

Subvert expectations

- 1 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

- 2 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

- 3 Combine an idea with something unrelated, something it doesn't belong with.
Cowboys + Dinosaurs → Cowboys riding domesticated dinosaurs.

Create a surprising contradiction

- 4 Create internal contradiction, change some aspect to something unexpected.
Gorilla → A posh gorilla inventor, smoking a pipe and wearing a tophat.

Reverse

- 5 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

- 6 Change the size, shape, or another attribute. Take the idea to the extreme.
A centipede → An enormous train-sized centipede.

You can apply these methods to various elements of the scene or a story:

Location	Character	Creature	Object
Behavior	Action	Dialogue	Response
Appearance	Occupation	Personality	Beliefs
Adjective	Relationship	Specific Detail	Abstract Pattern

Location: Western town covered in green radioactive snow.

Character: Cowboy with fangs who's afraid of sunlight and garlic.

Behavior: Sheriff obsessed with catching a particular cat at any cost.

Dialogue: "Howdy, partner! Beware of cows 'round these parts, they steal."

Response: Everyone you say hi to challenges you to a duel for some reason.

Personality: The leader of the bandits looks and acts like Michael Cera.

Detail: The bartender on this alien world has an "I♡NY" pin on his shirt.

Pattern: Instead of the common trope of a bandit tying a "damsel in distress" to the railroad tracks, it's the other way around - you see the damsel tie a bandit to the rails.

CHALLENGE PROMPTS

Aim to include a wide variety of challenge types into the story, try to brainstorm at least one challenge of each type:

Action Challenges

Physical conflict against other characters and creatures.

- 1 Combat (or creative ways to avoid it), chasing, racing, riding, piloting, heists, defending castles, escaping monsters, dodging explosions.

Roleplaying Challenges

- 2 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.

- 3 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

- 4 Deal with interesting or dangerous technologies or magics.

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

Stealth Challenges

- 5 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.

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

Antagonist moves

- 7 Responding to the moves the villain makes.

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

Investigation challenges

- 8 Obstacles and problems that come from trying to obtain information.

Following tracks, searching for clues, spying on enemies.

Other good sources of challenge ideas are the problems and obstacles caused by the locations the heroes visit, and the characters they meet.

Also, don't hesitate to take inspiration from the memorable scenes you've seen in action/adventure movies, books, or video games.