



## BASE REALITY

- Practice establishing the key elements necessary for every scene:
1. **Who** are the characters and what is the relationship between them.
  2. **Where** the scene takes place.
  3. **What** the characters are doing, the action in the scene.

**How to Play**  
Two players play a three-line scene (Player A says a sentence, Player B responds, Player A responds with the final sentence).

- The goal is to establish who, what, and where in these 3 lines.
- If you manage to establish the who, what, and where faster (in the first 1-2 lines), use the remaining lines to establish the relationship between the characters, or the emotion they're feeling.

Try playing scenes set in our normal reality, in a high-stakes reality of a movie or a TV show, or in a fictional (fantasy or sci-fi) world.

**Player A**  
Arr, matey, charge the cannons!  
**Player B**  
Sir, yes sir, let's plunder that galleon and get us some treasure!  
**Player A**  
That's the spirit boy, keep it up you'll be the first mate in no time!



## EXPAND OUR ACTING RANGE

Practice portraying believable and grounded, as well as cartoony and exaggerated characters, and expanding our acting range.

Two players play short (1-2 minute) scenes. Your goal is to establish the base reality (who, what, where), the relationship between the characters, and play out a brief fun interaction between them.

We'll play 3 different types of scenes/characters:

**Ordinary Characters**  
Play realistic characters who are similar to yourself. Scenes take place in our world - normal, ordinary, boring reality. The goal is to practice acting in the most believable and realistic way.

**Exaggerated Characters**  
Play cartoony, exaggerated, over-the-top characters in extreme situations (e.g. cartoon supervillain's last monologue before they fall into a volcano). Make big, bold character choices. Bring as much enthusiasm and energy as you can. The goal is to get comfortable with being bold and playing ridiculous and absurd characters.

**Believable Fictional Characters**  
Play characters who are very different from yourself, in the scenes set in a fictional reality (fantasy, sci-fi, action movies, drama, etc). The goal is to play a serious and dramatic scene with the characters who are as realistic and believable as possible. Avoid introducing any absurd elements, aim for a grounded, believable scene that you could see in a serious movie.



## DRAMATIC CONFLICT

Conflict is an essential ingredient of a good scene, it makes the scene interesting to play, and gives the characters something exciting to do.

**Conflict = Desire + Obstacle.** Establish what do the characters want (from the world or from each other), and why is it difficult to get.

A scene is about the heroes trying various tactics to get what they want, and actively striving to overcome obstacles in pursuit of their goal. Their attempts progressively escalate the conflict and raise the stakes.

**Establish the Base Reality (who, what, where)**  
Two players improvise a scene. Establish who the characters are, where does the scene take place, and what the characters are doing.

**Establish the Conflict**  
Player A's character wants something, Player B's character opposes them: refuses to give it to them, wants the opposite thing, stands in their way, or competes for the same thing.

**Escalate the Conflict**  
Player A's character should try at least 3 different tactics in an attempt to get what they want, opposed by the other character, each attempt raising the stakes, intensity, and tension.

Player B's objective is to help Player A to create a dramatic scene by supporting their choices. Player B will put obstacles in their way, helping them to escalate the conflict.

**Resolve the Conflict**  
Play the scene until the conflict is resolved (Player A's character gets what they want, or suffers a setback taking them farther away from it).



## VIVID DESCRIPTIONS

Practice describing characters and locations.

**Player A**  
Come up with a suggestion for a location or a character, in the format: **[Adjective] [Noun]**

Abandoned space station, wizard's tower, bottomless chasm.  
Rebellious princess, broken robot, unlucky viking, old wizard.

Then name an interesting specific detail:

In the wizard's tower, an old spellbook is lying on the floor.

**Player B**  
Describe this detail in a couple of sentences. Paint a vivid picture in people's imagination, use specific details, engage multiple senses.

The dusty, spider-covered spellbook, its pages wrinkled from a spilled, tangy-smelling potion, lies abandoned on the cold, stone floor of the tower, whispering ancient secrets in the silence.

Then come up with a detail for the next player to describe:

An old owl sits on the windowsill.



## ACTION SCENES

Practice vividly describing interesting and creative action scenes.

**Player A**  
Come up with an action scene, establish: **[Location] [Characters] [Action]**

Detective chases a criminal through the big city's rooftops  
Ninja steals a diamond from the magic vault  
Pirates fight inside of a fancy ballroom  
Pilot lands a burning plane

Name one specific action that happens inside this scene.

Pirate dodging a crossbow bolt.

**Player B**  
Improvise a vivid cinematic description of that action. Try to make it exciting, aim for creative or unexpected use of the environment.

The pirate leaps over a fallen table just as a crossbow bolt slams into its surface. With a quick glance, he spies a silver candelabra perched on the table's edge. With a flick of his sword, he sends it spinning towards his assailant, the candelabra's sharp edges slicing through the air with deadly precision.

Then come up with an action for the next player to describe.

One of the pirates swings from a chandelier to attack him.



## STORY WARS

Improvise an epic battle between two legendary opponents.

**Take turns, establish the 4 components of the scene**

1. **Protagonist** (with a special Power)  
Cooky inventor with a portal gun, ninja with Spider-Man powers, the pope with a sniper rifle, caveman with a pet veolciraaptor.
2. **Antagonist** (with a special Power)  
Evil necromancer who can raise zombies, hyper-intelligent raccoon on a hoverboard, space pirate with a jetpack.
3. **Battlefield**  
Top of a skyscraper, desert oasis, graveyard, rope bridge, steampunk factory, subway, moon base, pirate ship.
4. **Victory Condition**  
Destroy their opponent, defeat the opponent without violence, defend their base, win a race, chase, an election, convince someone to go on a date, gain the most twitter followers, survive the longest in a zombie apocalypse, be the first to capture a beast, win at hide and seek.

**Take turns describing the battle**  
On your turn, describe the actions of one of the opponents, creatively using the Battlefield and their Power to their advantage. Escalate the battle until we have a clear winner.



## SUBVERT EXPECTATIONS

Practice coming up with unusual and creative ideas.

**Any Player - Come up with the suggestion**  
Make a suggestion for a setting.

Fantasy kingdom.

**Player A - Say what you assume about this world**  
Make a statement about what you'd normally expect about this world.

I expect to see a brave knight saving the princess from a dragon.

**Player B - Subvert this idea**  
Explain how your version of this world is wildly different from the expectation. Make it weird, surprising, unexpected, absurd.

But in this world, the brave knight saves the dragon from a princess.

**Player B - Justify the subverted idea**  
Invent an explanation for the weirdness, describe how it came to be, make it make sense. If this unusual thing is true - why is it true?

The knight is rescuing a dragon because an evil princess has captured it to fight other monsters for the public's entertainment.

Then make a statement about this world for the next player to subvert

I expect that this world has wise old wizards living in magic towers.



## INTERNAL CONTRADICTION

Practice a simple method of making your characters more interesting.

**Any Player**  
Come up with a character suggestion

A pirate.

**Player A**  
Take one of the character's aspects, and replace it with something surprising, very different from what you'd normally assume or expect. You can reverse an aspect, exaggerate it, replace it with an out-of-place detail, or apply an aspect from an entirely different character. Try to create a surprising internal contradiction.

**[Characters] are usually [an expected aspect], but this one in particular is [surprising aspect].**

Pirates are usually scary and rowdy, but this one in particular acts very gentlemanly and polite.

**Player B**  
Explain why this character is so unusual.

Because he fell in love with a fancy lady and is trying to impress her.

Then come up with a character prompt for the next player.

A vampire.



## COMBINE INCOMPATIBLE IDEAS

In this game we will practice a fun method for coming up with creative ideas, and use it to pitch exciting and interesting scenes.

**Players take turns, suggest key scene elements**  
Take turns coming up with prompts for: **Setting, Character, Action.**

The goal is to suggest ideas that don't belong together, that are as unrelated from each other as possible, fit together the least. What kind of character would you least expect to see in the location? What kind of action you would not expect this character to take?

**Player A** pitches a Setting prompt:  
Sci Fi Laboratory  
**Player B** pitches a Character prompt:  
Angry ghost  
**Player C** pitches an Action prompt:  
Performing a Heist

**Pitch a scene based on these prompts**  
A player pitches a scene (characters in a location doing something) that combines these ideas in a way that makes sense, and justifies how that happened, explains how this scene came to be.

A sci fi laboratory is working on a hyper-advanced AI, projected as a 3D hologram (our "ghost"). A group of highly advanced thieves infiltrate the laboratory and steal this AI in order to liberate it from the scientists.