

Premise: Setting, Character, Plot

2-7 Players | 30-90 Minutes

Welcome to Premise, a collaborative worldbuilding and storytelling game. There are three parts – *Setting*, *Character*, and *Plot* – that you can play independently or chain into one longer game that lasts about 90 minutes.

How to Play

In each part of Premise, players start with blank templates. They simultaneously fill out the first field, writing in silence. When everyone is ready, players pass the templates to the left, read the new sheet in front of them, and then fill out the next field. Passing and writing continues until the templates are full. Then, players share the finished templates with the group.

Keep the Story Consistent

Always strive for internal consistency. A cohesive world invites curiosity and speculation!

Embrace Diversity

It's natural for players to create characters who are similar to themselves in gender, race, class, or other traits. Strive to make diverse characters and you'll generate interesting and unique stories.

Connecting Setting, Character, and Plot

When you chain the three parts together, players will first create settings, then populate one setting with characters, and finally create plots for those characters.

1. Play a round of *Setting* but ignore the epilogue field.
2. Share the finished settings and pick one to use for the *Character* and *Plot* rounds; put that setting aside for the next step.
3. Before moving on, complete the epilogues for the other settings and share them with the group. Then, put those sheets aside.

4. Play a round of *Character* where each character exists in the chosen setting. Don't fill out the characters' epilogues.
5. Play a round of *Plot* to create adventures for your characters. Start by writing the character's name on top of the *Plot* sheet and picking a new, specific goal for the character. Play the rest of *Plot* as normal.

Variants

Worlds within Worlds

You can play multiple rounds of *Setting* to start broad and then zoom in on the details of a world. Try using the first round to build kingdoms or planets. Then, pick one setting and play a new round to create cities in that location. You can keep playing rounds to add more details such as neighborhoods or local places of interest.

Go Episodic

Falling in love with your characters? You can play multiple rounds of *Plot* to see how their adventures play out. Use each plot's epilogue to show the short-term consequences and set things up for the next episode.

Using Premise with other RPGs

Premise is a perfect minigame to use with another RPG. Play *Setting* to populate a kingdom with towns or a galaxy with planets. Use *Character* to invent local NPCs. It's a quick way to build shared context for your next adventure.

Premise was designed by Randy Lubin of Diegetic Games. You can find more free storytelling games on the studio website: <http://diegeticgames.com>

Premise is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 license. That means your free to remix it as long as you give Randy credit for the initial design and don't use it for commercial purposes.

Premise: Setting

In this game, 2-7 players will collectively create interesting settings by building on each other's ideas.

You can pick a common theme for your settings to share (e.g. corruption) or you can make each setting independent. You can even establish a shared setting in which the individual settings exist (e.g. create cities in the same empire).

Make sure each player has a blank *Setting* sheet in front of them and a pen or pencil. Start by simultaneously filling out the first box, silently. In this case, write down a Setting that establishes a time and place. Examples: ancient Atlantis, a dwarven stronghold, the first empire on Mars.

Once everyone is ready, rotate your sheets to the left; silently read the Setting of the new sheet, and fill out the next box: Setting-wide tension / conflict. Always keep the elements internally consistent!

This cycle - pass, read, and write - continues until you fill in all the boxes, including the Epilogue.

After writing the epilogues, take turns introducing your settings to the group. Don't read the sheet verbatim, just summarize what's interesting and let the group know how the tension or conflict resolved.

Premise: Setting

Setting

Setting-wide tension / conflict

Who has power here?

Common sight(s)

Common sound(s)

Common tradition(s)

Setting Name

Epilogue

Premise: Setting

Setting

Setting-wide tension / conflict

Who has power here?

Common sight(s)

Common sound(s)

Common tradition(s)

Setting Name

Epilogue

Premise: Setting

Setting

Setting-wide tension / conflict

Who has power here?

Common sight(s)

Common sound(s)

Common tradition(s)

Setting Name

Epilogue

Premise: Character

In this game, 2-7 players will collectively create interesting characters by building on each other's ideas.

Start by picking an interesting setting. Examples: ancient Atlantis, a dwarven stronghold, the first empire on Mars. You will create characters in this setting.

Make sure each player has a blank *Character* sheet in front of them and a pen or pencil. Start by simultaneously filling out the first box, silently. In this case, write down an interesting Goal for a character in this setting. Strong goals make for memorable characters.

Once everyone is ready, rotate your sheets to the left. Silently read the goal of the new character, and fill in the next box: Role / occupation.

Make sure you keep characters internally consistent - avoid contradictions! Use 'they' as the pronoun until you fill in the Character's Name.

This cycle - pass, read, and write - continues until you fill in all the boxes, including the Epilogue.

After writing the Epilogues, take turns introducing your characters to the group. Don't read the sheet verbatim, just summarize what's interesting and let the group know how the character's goal resolves.

Premise: Character

Goal

Role / occupation

Habits(s)

Secret(s)

Unique Belief(s)

Obligation(s)

Formative Moment(s)

Character's Name

Epilogue

Premise: Character

Goal

Role / Occupation

Habits(s)

Secret(s)

Unique Belief(s)

Obligation(s)

Formative Moment(s)

Character's Name

Epilogue

Premise: Character

Goal

Role / Occupation

Habits(s)

Secret(s)

Unique Belief(s)

Obligation(s)

Formative Moment(s)

Character's Name

Epilogue

Premise: Plot

In this game, 2-7 players will collectively create interesting plots by building on each other's ideas.

Start by picking an interesting setting. Examples: ancient Atlantis, a dwarven stronghold, the first empire on Mars. You will create plots for characters in this setting.

Make sure each player has a blank *Plot* sheet in front of them and a pen or pencil. Start by simultaneously filling out the character's name and the first box. In this case, write down an interesting goal. Strong goals make for memorable characters.

Once everyone is ready, rotate your sheets to the left. Silently read the goal of the new character, and fill in the next box: Obstacle – write down something preventing the character from achieving their goal. The obstacles should get bigger over time so don't start off too crazy. Make sure you keep the plots internally consistent – avoid contradictions!

This cycle – pass, read, and write – continues until you fill in all the boxes, including the Epilogue. The Epilogue can cover the immediate consequences or long-term ramifications of the resolution.

After writing the Epilogues, players take turns sharing the plots with the group. Don't read the sheet verbatim, narrate the adventure with the excitement it deserves!

Premise: Plot

Character's Name: _____

Goal

Obstacle

Solution

Bigger Obstacle

Solution

Final, Biggest Obstacle

Resolution

Epilogue

Premise: Plot

Character's Name: _____

Goal

Obstacle

Solution

Bigger Obstacle

Solution

Final, Biggest Obstacle

Resolution

Epilogue

Premise: Plot

Character's Name: _____

Goal

Obstacle

Solution

Bigger Obstacle

Solution

Final, Biggest Obstacle

Resolution

Epilogue

Premise: Setting

Setting

Setting-wide tension / conflict

Who has power here?

Common sight(s)

Common sound(s)

Common tradition(s)

Setting Name

Epilogue

Premise: Character

Goal	
Role / Occupation	
Habits(s)	Secret(s)
Unique Belief(s)	Obligation(s)
Formative Moment(s)	
Character's Name	
Epilogue	

Premise: Plot

Character's Name: _____

Goal	
Obstacle	Solution
Bigger Obstacle	Solution
Final, Biggest Obstacle	Resolution
Epilogue	