

STORIES FOR GAMES

This document accompanies the StoriesForGames deck of cards and elaborates on roles and further use of the cards. A complete list of all 126 cards supports identification of all cards with visual representations. The deck of cards is available for purchase on www.ideasforgames.org

EXPANDED USE

We recommend working in a small group of 2-4 people. Tell each other what you come up with and find common ground. You may want to set an own rule for the whole process of brainstorming a story idea for a game, for example you only continue with the weirdest solution of the group's members.

Alternatively draw one card each and tell everyone what you imagine. The first group member draws a Character card and describes the character. The second player draws an Emotion card and paints her view of the character. The third player draws an Action card and defines game-play and events. The fourth player draws a Theme card and starts on the storyline. The fifth player draws a Setting card and provides the narrative game world.

Draw more than one Character card. Determine which one is your main character and how the other characters are related (enemy, ally, mentor etc.).

Add more than one Emotion card to your character and deepen personality traits of your figure.

Emotion cards may also be used to define actions and themes. Or they could serve as an underlined motif or to describe the mood for your setting.

Add more Action Cards to your pick and create a more complex game-play and set of events.

Start with drawing a Theme card first and not a Character card. Theme is now dominant for your story and the character has to adapt to it.

Open up your possibility space with using cards on your own terms. But don't make the mistake of starting by choosing a Setting.

DESCRIPTION

1 The Character is the focus of your story and game. It may be your main character, your hero or the figure the player emotionally bonds with. Most of the time it is the player's avatar. Before you start developing your story, you need to imagine your character's life and circumstances. If you choose more than one character, start imagining their relationships and figure out their respective roles. Don't start with a complex situation, you may build into that later on in the story. If you draw object or toy as character, imagine their histories and stories too. Breath life into your characters.

2 Emotions are used as attributes to your character or to the game world. Emotions are often intertwined with mood, temperament, personality, disposition, and motivation. Generally, they are a conscious experience of mental activity and pleasure or displeasure and greatly influence behavior. The Emotion words you draw help defining character, events and story. If you think they contradict, try to come up with situations where they complement each other or find separate events for them. Start small and build on it.

3 Actions describe the movement of the game and the story. As simple verbs use them for movements, abilities and interactions of your character. Draw an Action card and define your gameplay. Enhance with actions that fit your main action. Create events for your actions and behaviors. Then, think of a narrative progression line for your action(s) and work towards a plot.

4 Theme is a broad idea, topic or message for your game story that is recognized by the player. Themes are usually implied but do not have to

be explicitly stated in a work. A theme is often a conflict between characters, groups or forces (like nature and technology). But it can also be just the fact that you have to align colors or shapes. Theme is deeply intertwined with plot, character and emotion. In fact, you may well be able to build your own theme with the Character, Emotion and Action cards. Theme delivers a motif for your narrative.

5 Setting means location and time in a fiction. It means the story world of the game that includes context beyond the immediate surroundings of the story. Setting is a fundamental component of a game that includes cultural context, historical placing, geography and time. Games thrive on well thought out settings. However, it is recommended to start the creative process with other card elements and include precise setting later in the process. Once you have planned character and plot, it is easier to set it into a fitting social milieu.

6 Genre is our surplus category. It means the form or type of game. Genres in video games are mostly based on gameplay interactions and not on narrative differences. If you know exactly what kind of game you want to develop, you can disregard it. If you don't, our last category may help you find the right game genre for you. We narrowed it down to 9 cards. However, genres are based upon conventions, and they change over time. This means game genres are in constant flow, so take into consideration that some concepts fall in between genres or take up aspects of different genres or come up with completely new solutions and drive a genre in a new direction. Still, choosing a genre or having to face a randomly allocated genre can provide certainty to your game story project.

LIST OF ALL CARDS

This is a list of terms for all cards that should allow you to look up exactly what the card is supposed to represent. We didn't use any numbering, but we have allocated the individual cards to their categories. The corresponding graphic should then be easy to find.

CHARACTER

Clown
Toy
Scientist
Astronaut
Pirate
Wizard, Witch
Female/Male Hero
Abstract
Dancing Zombie
Detective, Agent, Spy
Talking Gorilla
Soldier
Couple
Knight
Old Woman/Man
Slave, Prisoner
Baby, Child
Athlet, Runner
Fighter
Leader
Villain
Hitman
Monster
Robot
Animal
Fantasy Animal
Healer, Doctor

SETTING

Steampunk
Snow, Ice
Mountain(s)
Experimental, Abstract
Water, Underwater
Sky, In the Air
Fire
Desert
Marsh, Swamp
Earth
Underground
Island
Countryside, Village
City, Community
Outer Space, Space
Ancient Times
Dark Age, Medieval
Horror
Forest
Apocalypse
Mythical Place
Dream, Surreal
Fantasy

THEME

Nature, Plants
Power, Force
Princess, Prince
Treasure
Unknown World
Crime, Murder
Nightmare
Labyrinth
Richness, Money
Romance and Love
Kidnapping, Abduction
Vengeance
Error and Confusion
Evil, Monster
War, Army
Nature's Force(s)
Yourself

EMOTIONS

peaceful, calm
empathic, trustful
ecstatic
free, liberated
funny
delighted, happy
lion-hearted, brave, (proud)
gentlemanly
skilled, clever
bored
thrilling
mysterious
magical
crazy
terrified, scary, frightened
hostile, grouchy
disappointed
foolish, imprudent
stressful, tense
skeptical, doubting
sick
rude
confused
impulsive
mad, insane
malicious, devious

ACTIONS

Share
Travel to
Defend, Protect
Explore, Observe
Dig
Fly
Teach
Shoot
Love
Cheat, Betray
Tempt, Trap, Lure
Eat
Lead
Escape
Open
Solve
Grow
Shout at
Hurt
Sing
Destroy
Buy, Sell, Trade
Save, Rescue
Swim (to)
Stick to
Fight

GENRE

Exploration
Simulation
Adventure
Role Play Story
Epic Story
Back Story
Multilinear Story
Ego-Shooter
Indie Story