

How do Roleplaying Games work?

The NMD First Timer Guide

A roleplaying game or RPG is an activity where a small group of people tell a story together.

You have one person that develops a story line with various characters and settings, called the "**Game Master**", and then you have **players** (that's you!). The Game Master builds the world for the characters, think of them like the narrator in a book or the director of a movie. The players act as the characters of the story (usually the heroes). Players all have a piece of paper, called a **character sheet** that shows who they are playing in the game. Your character sheet is made up of a set of numbers and aspects that describe who your character is, or what they are good at. The bigger the number, the better.

Different games have different sets of skills they use or '**Stats**'. Some RPGs have fairly complex rules about how you put together powers and abilities, while in others, you simply choose some traits off a list. No matter what game you're playing, your GM (Game Master) will be there to walk you through it.

Character Stat examples:	<i>Hermione Granger</i>	<i>Hal 9000</i>	<i>Batman</i>	<i>Katniss Everdeen</i>
	<i>Magic: +3</i>	<i>Intelligence: +3</i>	<i>Batarangs: +2</i>	<i>Archery: +3</i>
	<i>Friendship: +2</i>	<i>Technology: +4</i>	<i>Batmobile: +2</i>	<i>Viral Marketing: +1</i>
	<i>People skills: -3</i>	<i>Forgiveness: -3</i>	<i>Parents: -2</i>	<i>Peeta -1</i>

When it comes to playing, the Game Master sets the scene and the players say what their character would like to do. The Game Master will add mysteries or problems for the characters to solve. The rules will describe how to apply the player's character's attributes to the challenge you're facing, and how to determine whether you succeed! This usually involves rolling some dice (the GM will tell you which ones) and the adding or subtracting how good you are at that skill.

Game Master: You see a young man trapped under a fallen beam, he cries out for you to help him, what would you like to do?

Player: *I think my character sees themselves as quite heroic, so I run over and lift the beam off his leg.*

Game Master: The beam is quite heavy, so you'll need to be strong for this. Please roll plus your strength modifier.

When your player does something that might fail, they will ask you to roll some dice. In this example if your character is quite strong (has a high strength score) you're more likely to be able to lift the heavy beam. However, even gladiators have off days! You may roll and your GM will tell you the number you have rolled is not high enough, so you can't lift the beam.

Player: *I rolled a 16, plus my strength of +2, so that's 18 to lift the beam!*

Game Master: That's plenty, you lift the beam and the boy wriggles free thanking you profusely, he gives you 5 gold pieces for your help.

Remember though, as long as the players are having fun, it doesn't matter if your character succeeds. Failures are often just as much fun as successes!

Player: *I rolled a 5, plus my strength of +2, is a 7 enough to lift the beam?*

Game Master: I'm afraid not, it looks like he's really wedged in there.

Player:

Player: *What about if I cut his wedged leg off, 127 hours style?*

Game Master: You can always ask him, but you get the sense he's not going to like it!

As most roleplaying games are co-operative, there will be other players at your table also trying to solve the same problem. The other characters will have different strengths and weaknesses to yours, and you can all work as a team to solve problems.

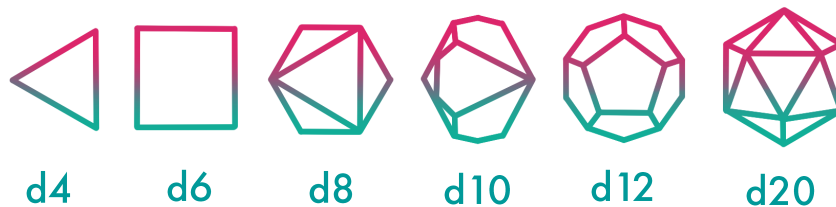
Whether you're fighting monsters, casting spells, or convincing a guard that you are in fact their long lost sister, the sequence is the same:

- 1) The GM sets the scene.
- 2) You tell the GM how your character would like to react, and what they're going to do about it.
- 3) The GM figures out what skills your action might need, and tells you what to roll.
- 4) You roll dice.
- 5) You add any relevant skill bonuses or penalties.
- 6) The GM tells you the outcome of your action.
- 7) Repeat!

Even if your system has some more complicated rules, don't worry! All you need to do is look at your character sheet and try to think, what would my character do? Remember the other players and GM are on hand to help you! We all love playing tabletop games, and we want you to love it too!

Dice types:

Your GM might say roll 1d20. The first number tells you how many, and the second tells you which dice to roll (and how many sides it has). So 2d6 is two six sided dice. They look like this, but your GM will help you find the right one!



Vocabulary:

- RPG:** Role Playing Game, this is any game where you pretend to be someone else to tell a story. Like a play, but without the audience and the wigs!
- GM:** The Game Master. They are the games referee, they set the world and run the game!
- DM:** Dungeon Master. Just another way of saying GM. You might also hear Keeper, Story-Teller or Narrator used.
- NPC:** A Non-Player Character, this is any character who is not being played by one of the players at the table. These are usually being played by the GM, and include shopkeepers, bar staff and villains.

FAQ:

Do I need to bring anything?

You only need to bring yourself. You are welcome to bring a pencil and some dice if you have them, but our GMs will be providing everything you need to play, so don't worry!

What if I'm nervous?

That's okay! Try and nab a seat next to your GM, and remember that they and the other players are there to help you, and they want you to have fun! The trick to RPGs is just decide what you're going to do and let the dice decide. Remember that the game will be fun even if your character fails every single roll!

Do I have to dress up?

Nope! We'll just be playing in whatever makes us feel comfortable! Some of our GMs might be wearing a part-costume to set the mood, but most people will just be in their everyday clothes.

Do I have to do a silly voice?

Only if you want to! Some people like to use voices, and some don't. Just do whatever feels right for you! Some people prefer to talk in the first person and say "I lift the beam!" and others tend to act in third person and say "My character lifts the beam", both are equally good!