

Fundamentals of Tabletop Role-Playing Games

The Basics

In Role-Playing Games or (RPG's), there are three components that make it up. The game component (Tactics and Strategy), the story and environment (Story Campaigns), and the continual growth of the characters in the game and setting (Character Development).

There are usually two types of people in this game, the Game Master (GM) and the Player. The Player is usually in control of one character of his/her own design. The Game Master is in control of characters called Non-Player Character's or (NPC's) and sets the places, events, and conditions of the game. The GM is the final word on how the game is played; he/she basically sets the rules of the game.

There are materials that are needed. They are gaming books, pencils, paper (character sheets), and dice. These are the fundamental ingredients for recording and advancing the game. Gaming books contain rules and game world information that the GM and players need in how to play the game. Character sheets record the stats, features, and profile information of the player's character. Dice are used in character creation and in resolving tests and combat that come up in the game session.



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Role-Playing Game Basics

Tactics and Strategy
Story Campaigns
Character Development

The Roles of People

Game Master
Players

Materials Needed

Gaming Books
Pencils
Paper
Dice

Tactics and Strategy

A major part of RPG games is the use of tactics and strategies to advance the characters along in the game. Combat is the obvious use of these concepts, but there is also the use of skills and when they are employed to good effect. In addition, there is resource management. The character has weapons, tools, equipment, transportation, and funds that must be managed for good use. All-in-all this is the decision-making portion of the game: When to employ the right set of skills and equipment to make the most impact in the game.



Uses of Tactics and Strategies

Combat Tests

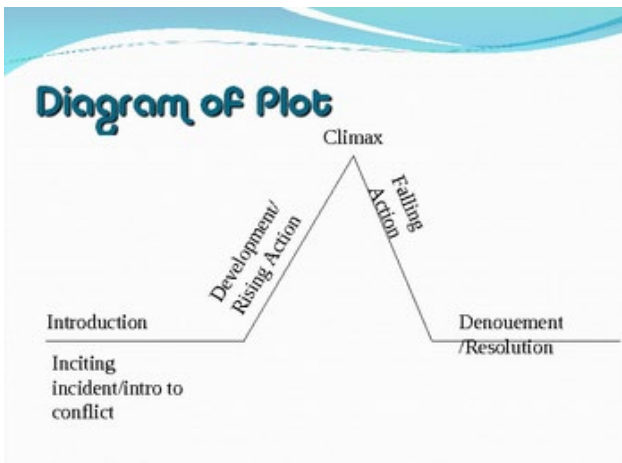
Skill Tests

Resource Management

Story Campaigns

Story campaigns fall under the Game Master's purview of making the environment, coming up with the countries and cities, the marches and deserts, the seasons and natural events, the people of prominence and influence, and a whole slew of other components that make-up a story.

This also gives the GM and the players the opportunity to create character backstories that lead up to the story campaign: Where were they born, what was their family life like, how did they gain skill and prominence, and descriptions of what the character looks like. Like a novel, the story develops as the characters proceed with their quest or task at hand. There are antagonists and protagonists. Characters get challenged in many ways that put them in harm's way or unwanted positions. These characters must fight their way out of these messes to escape, proceed, or find success in their tasks.



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The Story Elements

The Game World

The Plot Points of the Story

Character Backstory

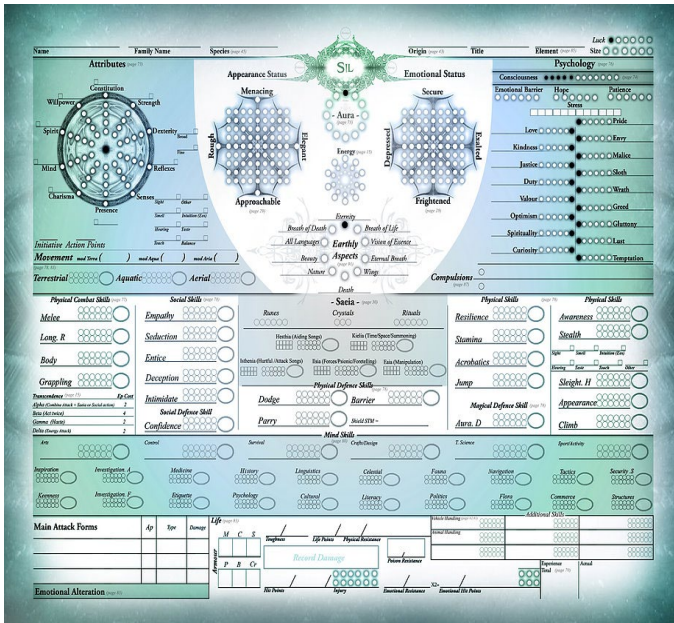
The Challenges of the Character

Character Development

In all, these story events and progression of tasks to advance a story, there comes a point at which a character grows and advances in seasons of maturity. This could be improving in skill, ability, or the gaining of new abilities and skills, or both.

To measure this season of maturity there are either levels that must be obtained or improvement points gained to spend on improving the character's abilities.

Also along the way is the gaining of resources, such as material and monetary gain. Favors and rewards are also given for being successful, and favors and allowances are given or required to complete a task.



Ability Development

Improving Existing and New Abilities
Gaining Levels and Point Buy Systems
Gaining Resources through Rewards
Gaining Resources through Allowances

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Conclusion

When we get right down to it, a good role-playing session is found when the players are having fun, yet willing to be challenged by the Game Master and to try and overcome the challenges laid forth with good decisions and properly made characters. Players who make good tactical and strategic decisions, who play the story as the character's would dictate them to be, and make wise use of resources, and develop the character's improvements the right way should come out enjoying the game session. GMs should make sure the challenges laid forth are not too impossible to overcome or escape. Party capture is always a possibility, but escape, parley, or release should always be in the GMs mind. One wise note: GM and players should not be impossible to work with. It is fun to converse and enjoy each other's company but keep the story advancing so it is enjoyed by everyone.



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