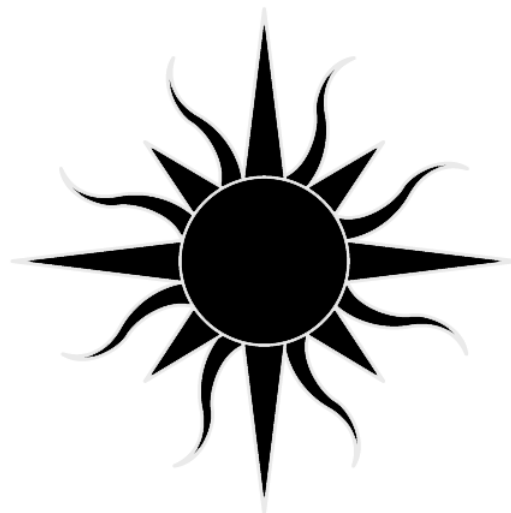


# *Fantasy Imperium*

An Interactive Storytelling Game of Historical Fantasy

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*Fantasy Imperium*  
*An Interactive Storytelling Game (ISG)*

## *Role Playing Games*

A Role Playing Game (RPG) is a type of game that involves one's imagination, much like a movie or novel. There is usually no game board or playing pieces, and most of the action takes place in the minds of the participants.

Playing a Role Playing Game is just like reading a book, except that you, as a player, are actually participating in the story, which is told by a *Storyteller* (who is also called a Dungeon Master, Game Master, Referee, etc.).

The way it works is that one person (the *Storyteller*) creates the story, and the rest (the players) create the characters in the story.

The *Storyteller* will decide on a setting for the story, and will create the characters to be found in the adventure, including the villains.

The *Storyteller* then "runs" the adventure (story) by describing what your character sees, hears, smells, and experiences.

The *Storyteller* will direct the action of everyone in the setting and will interact with the main protagonists, which are the characters that are "run" by the players.

The players decide what they want their characters to do, based on how they think their characters would react to the places and events described by the *Storyteller*.

Most RPGs do not encourage *Storyteller*s to create a structured story, since it has been thought that a heavy emphasis on a structured plotline interferes with the player's ability to choose their actions. This has been referred to as "railroading" the players, or forcing them to do what the *Storyteller* wants.

As a result, most RPGs are run like an ongoing collaborative narrative, with the *Storyteller* deciding on the fly what happens, reacting to what the characters do.

## *Interactive Storytelling Games (ISG)*

An Interactive Storytelling Game is a type of role playing game, but there is more emphasis on telling a story in an ISG.

Typically in a RPG, there will be only a single plot point in a game session, while an ISG will have several plot points occurring in every game session, making it possible to tell an entire story in a shorter time span. In order to have more plot points in a game session, ISGs need to have a more structured plotline.

An ISG will use advanced storytelling techniques to create an entire story, often to be told in a single gaming session.

An ISG will use a system of scripted scenes written by the *Storyteller* to create the plot, while the characters will react to the events of the plot, and will direct how it will play out. Writing this list of scenes is similar to writing a plot outline for a story.

Playing *Fantasy Imperium* is like playing the part of an actor in a story, and also like playing a wargame.

The goal of the game is to complete the quest created by the *Storyteller*. If a player's character dies, he loses the game (unless it was a heroic death). If the goal is completed, then all of the surviving players win the game.

Games typically take from one to four sessions to complete. Each session should last about 4 hours.

*Fantasy Imperium* can be played like any other RPG of course, but when a more structured plotline is used, complete stories can be enjoyed in a shorter time span.

An Interactive Storytelling Game will have a list of scenes to check off. The main tool used to create a structured story is the *Scene Outline Worksheet*.

## **Roles: Storyteller & Protagonists**

Interactive Storytelling Games are just like reading a book, except that you, as a player are actually participating in the story, which is told (or run) by a *Storyteller*.

The way it works is that one person creates the story (the *Storyteller*), and the rest of the players create the heroes, who are also referred to as the main characters (or main *protagonists*) for the story. Each role (*Storyteller* and Protagonist) requires a different style of play.

The *Storyteller* will create a story in the form of a scene outline, and will draw out maps of the locations used in the story.

The *Storyteller* will create a **story goal** and will also create the **main villain** of the story.

The *Storyteller* will also decide on where and when the story takes place (the setting).

During the game the *Storyteller* will describe each scene, will run combat, and will decide what happens next.

The **protagonists** are acted out by the rest of the players, who will react to the events of the plot as they are presented by the *Storyteller* and will direct how the story is played out.

While the main **plot** of the story is created by the *Storyteller*, the **story** is created by the *protagonists*, who are in charge of creating their individual character arcs.

A **character arc** is a process by which a character experiences emotional change of some kind during a story. Character change is what makes a story interesting.

To create a character arc, the player will need to choose an **inner need** and a **main character flaw**. These two elements will create internal conflict.

During the story, a character will learn to overcome his character flaw, and when he changes, he will attain what he truly needs.

## **Telling an Interactive Story**

Telling an interactive story isn't as hard as it seems. The *Storyteller* will open up the game with a bit of exposition (something read aloud) or with a description of the opening scene.

The *protagonists* will then react to the events in the scene, describing to the *Storyteller* what they do. The players will also perform their characters like the actors in a play.

The *Storyteller* will then choose actions for the main villain, deciding his next course of action. Usually this will be predetermined by the scene outline, but it can change based on the actions of the *protagonists*.

The *Storyteller* will also perform for the rest of the minor characters in the story. There are two main approaches to how a *Storyteller* can direct the scenes:

**Third person** (*he goes, she goes*) is where everyone refers to their actions and events with a bit of distance. This is used when the *Storyteller* wants to cover a lot of ground quickly.

**First person** (*I go*) is where everything you say is what your character says. This is used for more intimate role playing.

The *Storyteller* will also give out a map of the scene for the players to study and will then draw out the location where the main action takes place on a mat. Combat and other game mechanics are directed by the *Storyteller*.

Often, the *protagonists* in the story will want to go in a different direction that what has been anticipated by the *Storyteller*, and when this occurs, the *Storyteller* may simply skip a scene, run the scenes out of order, or will even write a new scene based on the ideas and actions of the players. In this way, the *Storyteller* can use a scripted scene list without railroading the players, while at the same time preserving freedom of action for the players.

## *Fantasy Imperium*

### *How to Play*

### ***Creating a Story***

All stories have a protagonist (main character), the quest (goal), trials (opposition) and the resolution, positive or negative. Many variations are possible within this format, but the basic structure is the same.

When designing an adventure, keep these things in mind: The **characters**, the **story goal**, the **conflict**, and the **climax**.

A **scene** is the basic building block of a story, and a collection of scenes will form the basic structure that is used to tell a tale. The most important thing to remember is to **start to think in scenes**.

*A story is about a character that is trying to solve a problem.* In every case, there will be some sort of opposition, interfering with his success. So every scene should contain both a **goal** and a source of **conflict**.

#### ***The format used to create a scene:***

**Title:** The title of the scene should be something that stimulates your imagination.

**Goal:** Every scene should have a goal, such as to cross a bridge, obtain an item, etc.

**Opposition:** This could be an evil knight, a monster or an environmental element like a fire.

**Setting:** The location where the scene takes place could be a castle, a garden, a village, etc.

**Tie-in:** This is something that points to the next scene, such as a map or bit of information.

#### ***Here is how to create a plot outline:***

1. First choose a setting.
2. Create a story goal and a villain.
3. Then create a plot (a list of scenes).
4. Then make maps of the scenes.

In this way, an adventure should take about 30 minutes to 2 hours to create.

**Expect to complete one scene every 1-2 hours of game time.** An entire story should be completed in one to four gaming sessions.

### ***Telling the Tale***

Your most important job as a Storyteller is to **provide a story goal**.

The players will need to care about the story, so you need to **motivate** them properly. Don't hire them to do a job. Instead, kidnap their girlfriend. Murder their brother, etc.

Another important thing is that your stories are **believable**. Your presentation must be logical and the story must make sense.

Also, the story needs **clarity** in order for the players to understand what is going on. If your story isn't crystal clear, nothing will happen.

As a *Storyteller*, your job is to immerse the players into the world of the adventure.

**Research** will help you to know your setting so that when something unexpected happens, you can deal with it.

**Presentation** methods are primarily verbal, but you should also use visual aids such as maps and miniatures. Use all of the senses in your descriptions.

**Acting** in first person (I go) is the best way to bring the players into the story. You will need to become an actor, performing every important character that is encountered in the story.

Always give the players the feeling that they have complete freedom, but keep them motivated by making the goal of the story personal.

#### ***Ten rules for running games:***

1. Tell a story.
2. Be fair minded.
3. Apply common sense to the situation.
4. Give every player a chance to play.
5. If they want to split up, let them!
6. Use miniatures & maps.
7. Run more than one scene every game.
8. Use minor characters to ground the players.
9. Don't have random deaths occur.
10. Keep number of players down to six or less.

## Combat Essentials

### Every round of combat:

1. **Roll initiative** for everyone, giving all of the bad guys a generic -6 and 65% skill.
2. Place a die or **write the initiative numbers down** next to the miniatures.
3. The **highest initiative** chooses an action first.
4. **When someone is attacked**, they may go immediately, no matter what their initiative roll was. Usually, a defense is chosen.

### When a player gets hit, he has three main options:

1. **Parry** with a shield or weapon (weapon parry is one half the skill plus “parry”).
2. **Dodge** (forfeit ability to attack next round).
3. **Parry & Attack** (counterattack). Both suffer a penalty of -25%.

### Important things to remember:

1. Combat actions are **not** simultaneous.  
Also, you can only defend if you know an attack is coming!
2. Only **one action** may be chosen each round (attack or defense).
  - You may choose to do **both (Attack & Parry or Parry & Attack)** at a -25% penalty to both actions.
  - You may choose to **Attack, and hold a parry** for later in the round, but you still must suffer the -25% penalty to both actions.
  - Most players choose the Parry & Attack, or they choose Attack & Parry (when going first).
3. **If attacked after you have taken an action**, you may borrow a dodge maneuver from next round (forfeiting the ability to attack for two rounds).
4. **After someone has been attacked**, anyone else trying to attack that same person will suffer a penalty of -25% to hit.
5. **If an attack is aimed at the head**, the defender gains +25% to parry.
6. Don't worry about the total hits a bad guy sustains. Instead concentrate on **wound levels**.

#### \* \* To defeat an opponent:

**10 points** to the **head** will immediately knock out a person.

**20 points** to the **head** will immediately kill a person.

**10 points** to the **body** will stun a person for 1 round.

If a shock roll is failed, the person is stunned for 1d6 rounds.

**15 points** to the **body** will stun a person for 2 rounds.

If the shock roll is failed, the person is stunned for 2d6 rounds.

**20 points** to the **body** will stun a person for 3 rounds.

If the shock roll is failed, the person is stunned for 3d6 rounds.

7. If a **5 point wound** is sustained, the person will suffer -25% to all actions.
8. **Fatigue** is usually not calculated for small battles, since it will most likely be over before anyone gets tired.
9. **Trauma** is usually not calculated for the bad guys, unless fighting a special kind of adversary that may be hard to take down (like an armoured knight or an ogre).
10. **Bloodloss** is calculated after the combat is over.
11. Ask what the player is aiming for (**head, body, arm, leg**) when attacking.
12. If you move, you suffer a penalty to attack, parry & dodge:  
**3" Jog: -10%    4" Run: -20%    8" Sprint: -30%**
13. **5 Luck points** should be used to save a character's life if he is killed.
14. **Waiting** will give you a bonus of +5 to your initiative in the following round.
15. **If you roll too low**, you will damage your weapon (-1d6 after this attack).  
If you damage a weapon, there is a 25% chance it will break if it is iron, and a 10% chance if it is steel.
16. **If you roll too high** (over 95%) when shooting a bow, you will break your bowstring.

## Combat Essentials

### When a hit is scored:

1. Roll percentile dice for the exact location to determine extra damage.
2. If a missile weapon was used, then don't choose a general location and roll twice on the hit location table.
3. Roll the number of dice indicated for the weapon, adding the extra dice (of another colour) indicated for the location of the strike.
4. Subtract the armour value from the hits, and if penetration occurs, add the extra dice of damage.
5. Determine what kind of wound it is and apply the results (stun, knock out or kill).

### Dodging:

1. When a character dodges, he can dodge all attacks aimed at him during the round. Roll once for all of them, unless the attacks occur far apart in real time (and you forgot what you rolled).
2. If you dodge, you cannot attack in the next round (you can still defend).
3. If you have already taken an action and want to **borrow a dodge from the following round**, then **you can't attack for the next two rounds**, since **next round you will be considered to be dodging**. If someone attacks you next round, you can dodge.
4. You can make separate dodge rolls (one for each attack), if you want, instead of rolling once.

#### For example:

One guy attacks my character, rolls a 43% (since his skill is 65% he hits). I decide to dodge. I have to roll under 43%. If at a later time in the combat round, someone else attacks me, I can dodge again with a different roll (unless I remember what I rolled). Otherwise, lets say two guys attack me right after each other. One guy rolls a 43, and the other rolls a 57..... I roll once to dodge them both, and if I roll under both, I dodge them both.... if I roll between the numbers, one of them hits me (the lower one).

### Notes:

1. You can control how fast a combat will be by what kinds of equipment you give the bad guys. For instance, if you want a fast engagement with many opponents, then don't give them any armour or helmets! If you want an important villain to have resilience, then give him some decent armour and a helmet.
2. Shield skills are very important in the game, since you can last a long time by simply parrying attacks aimed at you with your shield. But shields take damage too! **Wood Shield Hits: 70**
3. Choose your actions wisely. You can use tactics to win a fight. For instance, if you wait for an opponent to attack you can then try a counterattack (Parry & Attack), aiming at his head. Since he has already taken an action, his only option will be to borrow a dodge from the following round.
4. If you want to disable an opponent without killing him, simply aim for his arms or legs. You can also try a Disarm maneuver. Be careful! **Limbs can be severed with a terminal wound.**
5. **Weapon damage:** 2d6 to 8d6 Edged, Blunt, or Point damage (most inflict 4d6 or 5d6).
6. **Break percentages:** 5% to 20% (use 10% for opponents).
7. Opponent's **initiative penalty:** -3 for each item they hold (sword & shield: -6; spear: -3; bow: -3).
8. Opponent's **combat skill:** 65%, 75% or 85% (depending on how tough they are).

9. <b>Armour Values:</b>		<i>Cloth Layer = +1 value</i>		<i>Metallic Layer = +3 value</i>	
<b>Nasal Helm</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Mail Hauberk</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Tunic</b>	<b>Value</b>
Plate, Iron	18	Iron + Gambeson	9	Leather	3
Plate, Steel	20	Steel + Gambeson	11	Ring	4
<b>Coverage:</b>		Reinforced Steel + Gambeson	12	Studded	5
Skull		Fine Steel + Gambeson	15	Scale, Iron	9
<b>Coif</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Coverage:</b>			
Mail, Iron + Cloth	9	Chesk, Abdomen, Back, Shoulder, Upper Arm, Inside Arm,			
<b>Coverage:</b>		Hip, Groin, Thigh			
Skull, Ears, Chin, Throat, Neck					