



GO
PLAY

— GM —
CHEAT
SHEET

The GM Cheat Sheet is a collection of some principles and considerations for running a safe, inclusive, and enjoyable game in an 'open to the public' convention setting. We invite you to read and reflect on these areas as you think about, design, and run your games in this and future Cons.

We've also included some tips and tricks to support and inspire you!



YOUR GAME & THE ENVIRONMENT

Running a game in a shared space for the general public can be quite different to running a game at home for some friends, or in a smaller venue. Some questions to consider...

Our venue 'The Edge' can be bustling in an open-air public setting, how will this impact the atmosphere or communication in your game?

People from all backgrounds, ages, experience levels, genders, and sexualities attend Go Play. Who is your game for? Who is it not for? Who might your game appeal to, and how would you like to attract the right kind of player-fit?

What are the themes or tone of your game? Are there any sensitive areas (i.e. violence or sexual references), how would you like to communicate that?

Your game has a time limit, and players may have other activities to attend on the day. How is your game structured, can you run it on time? What strategies do you have in place to manage the pace, progression and timings of the game?

How familiar are you with the setting and system? Can you run this game blindfolded, or is this a bit new for you? Do you have the time or opportunity to read up, or even playtest it before the con?

TIPS:

- 01** **Creating just the right atmosphere can be a collaborative project, but be aware of the requirements of your game.** Do you expect to whisper in your role-play? That might be challenging in the Auditorium. While we try to be accommodating, you won't really have the same control as you have in your home environment. Be aware of the environment you're walking into, and what you need to run a great game.
- 02** **Even the best-made plan doesn't survive contact with the players...**which is part of the fun! Prioritise a system and adventure that allows for some flexibility and the additional creative forces of your players. Use component scenes that can be easily added in, or shuffled out if things run over or under.
- 03** **Whether it's a game you've had hundreds of hours running, or a new game you're looking to experiment with, choose a game you feel confident running,** and are familiar enough with the rules. No one expects you to be an Unimpeachable Tome of Knowledge, but your game will run more smoothly if you are enthusiastic and informed.



PREPARING FOR & RUNNING YOUR GAME

There are lots of things you can do to set yourself up for success. Some questions to consider...

What do you need to bring on the day? Will you need pen and paper, would a cheat sheet for you or your players be helpful?

Have you got a selection of pre-gens for people to choose from? Are there character creation steps you can complete for your players beforehand to streamline the process? How can pre-gens be made to suit a range of different types of players? What details will you allow players to alter?

Are you planning on developing your characters on the day? How much time are you going to dedicate to character creation, introductions, rules explanations, etc.

How are you planning on explaining the mechanics to your players? What about important elements of the setting, the premise of the game? Do you have an opening scene to really draw the players in, and get them right into the action? Does your session include a scene that might act as a quick tutorial?

What are you doing the night before? Will you have the opportunity to rest before the game? Do you know where the venue is, are you going to drive in and find parking, is public transport an option for you? Do you need to carpool or arrange a lift?

TIPS: WHAT TO BRING

- 01 Write up a pack-list of things you want to bring on the day.** Not just what you need to run the game, but things that might support you on the day. A water bottle, some sugary treat to keep you going, a fidget toy, or anything that might make your experience more comfortable!
- 02 Pregens are recommended for con games, but if your character creation is a feature of your game, try to keep it short and snappy.** Some players LOVE spending hours on their characters, but most are here to play. Focus on stepping into the action as soon as you can, and make the best use of your 3.5 hour timeslot.
- 03 Consider writing a bullet point list of the rules or introduction to the setting,** so you know you're hitting all the important points when introducing the game to your players, without delving too heavily. A lot of people learn by doing, so work out the core rule/s & concepts that need to be explained upfront, and the rest can be explored and discovered in practice throughout the length of the game. This can also help you manage your timings.
- 04 Work out your logistics ahead of time, and plan in a bit of 'buffer time'** just in case traffic or delays come into play. Don't be afraid to reach out to the community to see if someone wants to carpool, Go Play is a friendly and welcoming group of people! And make sure you're practising self-care before and after the game, rest is important!





PEOPLE & SAFETY

At Go Play, we want to create an environment that is warm, welcoming, inclusive and safe for as many people as we can. We have a deep commitment to listening to our community and being responsive to the changes within our hobby and society at large.

Managing Spotlight

Different players have different styles. Some will be more proactive, while others may find it challenging to speak up and get involved in the action. Try to be aware of the balance of airtime and try to provide opportunities for the reserved or quiet players to get involved.

Avoiding Assumptions

Most of the time, you'll be meeting new people. Try not to assume someone's gender or pronouns (or anything, really!). You don't need to overthink it, but a gentle awareness around this is really helpful, and makes a huge difference with making people feel safe and welcome.

Try your best to be on time to set up and welcome players to your table. Think about how you might like to introduce yourself. It's becoming an increasingly common practice to introduce yourself by your name and your pronouns, and we want to encourage and support our GMs to do so.

There's a huge diversity of people who attend Go Play, and while some players may be well equipped, read up, and ready to go... Others could be walk-ins to your game, or quite new to the hobby! Be prepared to ask your players about their experience, what they're interested in, share in tales, compare war stories and really get to know them! Many a gaming group and friendship has been forged at Go Play, and we hope that this year will be no exception.

Conduct and Safety Tools

We support and strongly encourage the use of Safety Tools at Go Play, and have provided some resources for you. We ask that you read through and agree with our Code of Conduct, and make some time to read over and understand the mechanics of the Safety Tools you want to use in your game. We will be providing X Cards on your table.

These policies and positions are also to keep *you* safe. If you experience any discomfort or issues with your game, or if you notice you or one of your players is feeling uncomfortable, please reach out to a Hearth Warden, they will work to support you to resolve the situation safely and pleasantly. Hearth Wardens will be made known to you on the day.

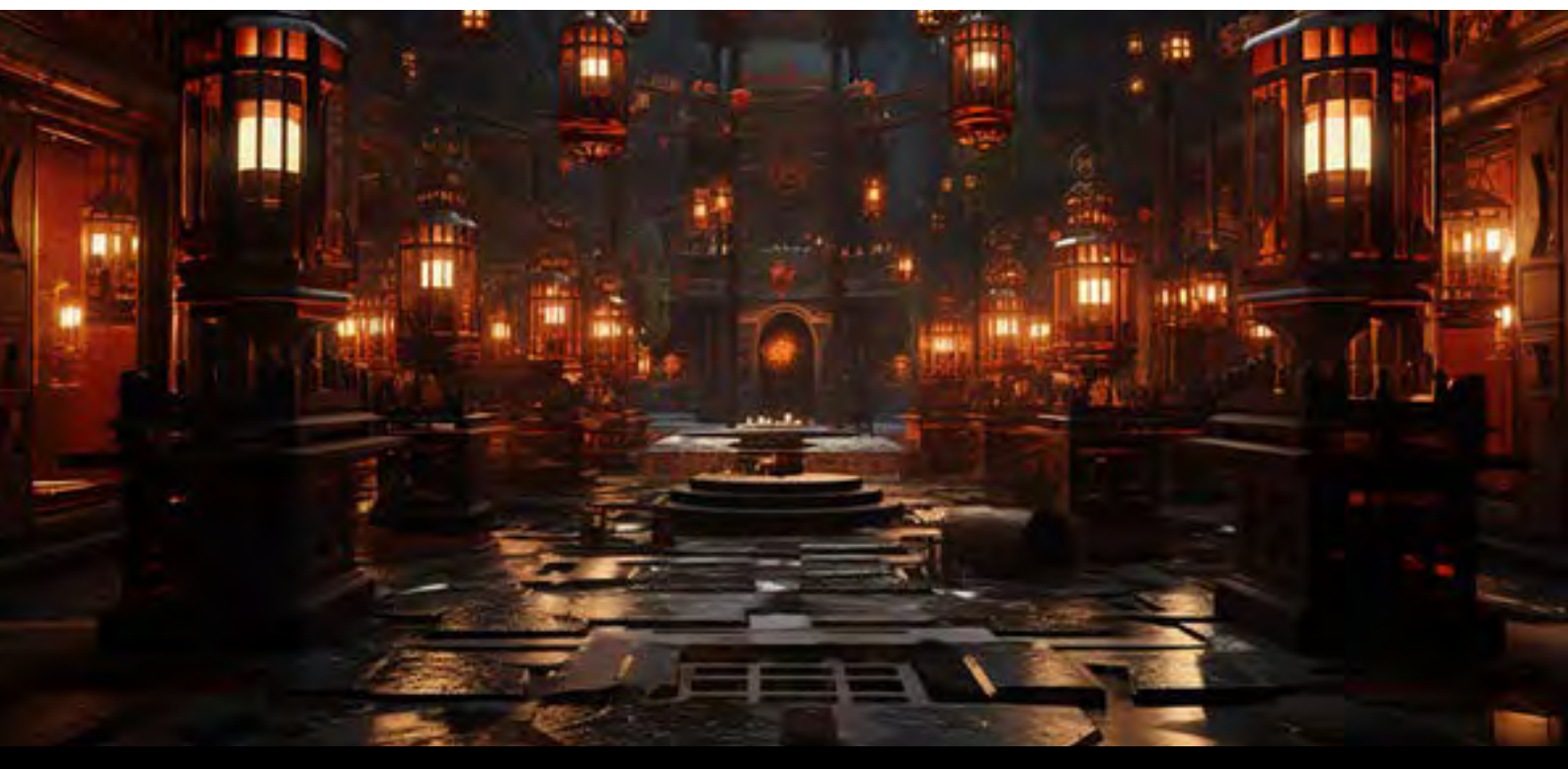
FURTHER READING

[Our Code of Conduct](#)

[Safety Tools](#)

[Hearth Wardens](#)

[RPG Consent Checklist](#)





WRAPPING UP & THE REST OF THE CON

Thank your players & celebrate everyone's successes! You did it!

Got some spare time? You can play too!

There's an Afterparty? Yes! We'd love to see you at our social event 'Ale & Rations' on the evening of Day 1.

If you've met people you'd like to connect with outside of Go Play, offer an exchange of details or agree to meet on the Discord - we want to build on this wonderful community!

Don't forget to complete the feedback form coming your way, we want to make Go Play 2024 even better!



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