

Herefordshire



Board Gamers

How to teach games

HEREFORDSHIRE BOARD GAMERS

Gaming and Fundraising community
“More than just a games night”

3 steps to teach games

Prepare

- Assess the players / Select the right game
- Learn the rules
- Set up the game

Teach

- Overall concept including themes
- How do you win and how does the game end
- Explain the basic flow

Support

- Reassure and support the players
- Demonstrate by narrating your turn
- Ensure the game runs smoothly



Prepare

Story games and app technology allow for deep narrative for example *This War of Mine*, *Chronicles of crime*

Assess the players / Select the game

- What do they like? Themes? Aggressiveness? Extrovertness, Lying / bluffing
- How experienced are they, learning styles and preferences?
- Any accessibility issues. i.e. colour blindness, mobility, time constraints, language
- Content issues? age or content warnings, triggers?

Learn the rules

- Learn the rule
- Run a trial turn or three if you haven't played before
- Write a teaching check list

Set up the game

- Have the game set up before hand
- It can be fine to suggest easier factions in asymmetrical games or letting stronger players go first.

You won't have the luxury of time or knowing your players well or even at all, all off the time

Teach

If the game allows offer to rest the game after turn one

Try to use the correct in game terms for pieces
i.e. Warriors vs orange cubes in *Lords of Waterdeep*

Explain the overall concept

- Theme / story line.
- Warn / prepare about any content issues including aggressiveness / take that / player elimination or trigger warnings
- How long does it take? (Including teaching time)

How do you win and how does it end?

- Reference back to the theme
- Is there more than one end game trigger?
- Automatic victory or tallied points?

What is the basic flow

- What is a turn made up of?
- Demonstrate a turn
- Ask questions to check knowledge

Do leave some rules to be introduced later but state that up front
“We’ll introduce combat after turn two”



Support

Help the players but don't run their turns for them

How much / if you should offer any advice excluding rules is a point of debate

State at turn x you will reduce the strategy advice but will offer more if needed

Reassure and support

- Reassure the players it's a learning game, we all win if we have fun
- We'll allow limited do overs if no new information is gained
- Offer limited strategy advice and more if they ask for it need it..

Narrated turn

- If possible have the stronger or more experienced players go first
- Everyone narrating turns and doing any maths publicly, this aids learning and reduces mistakes.
- This can include describing clearly bad actions – there is no point going to build a building I have no resources

Manage the table

- Reduce distractions, including controlling how much non game chatter
- Delegate tasks like shuffling or dealing if you want
- Remind players their turn is coming up
- Summarise and pause for rule recaps

Expect to lose as a games teacher, you will likely be the natural targets of attacks and also not have enough concentration left to run your own strategy!

As a player!

Ask questions!

Set a good example

- Pay attention in teaching
- Offer good advice
- Reduce distractions at the table

Let the teacher lead

- If you know the game don't interrupt the teacher
- Rules not taught yet may have been left to later intentionally be patient
- Offer to shuffle or deal to assist

Narrate your turns

- Explain what you are doing narrate
- Do it thematically, use the correct terms
- Run the maths openly

First impressions are important, this may be a player's first ever modern game or first time at a games night!
Games and learning can be very daunting for new players

Remember it's supposed to be fun



▶ Any questions?



RPG teaching 1,2,3

Prepare

- Assess the players / Select the right game
- Learn the rules, share quick start guides
- Session zero to set ground rules, content warnings and social expectations

Teach

- Overall concept including themes
- Introduce safety features like the X card
- Explain the basic flow

Support

- Reassure and support the players
- Share the spotlight
- Ensure the game runs smoothly

Prepare

RPG starter sets often intentionally slowly introduce more complex rules

Assess the players / Select the game

- What do they like? Themes? Aggressiveness?
- How experienced are they, learning styles and preferences?
- Any accessibility issues. i.e. colour blindness, mobility, time constraints
- Content issues? age or content warnings, triggers?

Learn the rules

- Learn the rule
- Run a trial turn or three if you haven't played before, this can include the players run a training montage to test the core rules
- Consider what rules to introduce when.

Set up the game (Session zero)

- Set social expectations, alcohol and drugs at the table, schedule, cancellations, phones at the table
- Length of campaign / one shot. Communications between session expectations
- Themes, content, Player vs Player allowed, secrets?
- Styles of game include deadliness / unfairness, amount of player agency / creativity

RPGs vary from highly player led where players can help define the world used in most *Powered By the Apocalypse* systems to more traditional like *Dungeons and Dragons*



Teach

Explain the overall concept

- Theme / story line.
- How long will it take
- Respecting other players including sharing the spot light

Safety tools

- Lines / Veils.
- X / N card
- Communications channels (Online and in person)

What is the basic flow

- What is a turn made up of?
- Demonstrate a turn
- Ask questions to check knowledge

Support

Help the players but don't run their turns for them

How much / if you should offer any advice excluding rules is a point of debate

Reassure and support

- Support with rules and remind about core abilities (Dial this back when more experienced)
- Give praise and feedback
- Be aware of favourites, shine the spot light evenly

Narrative

- Use all the senses when you describe
- Ask questions about how the characters feel,, what scares them, what did they dream of?
- Describe but leave gaps

Manage the table

- Reduce distractions, including controlling how much non game chatter
- Remind players their turn is coming up
- Summarise and pause for rules and narrative recaps

Don't be frightened to ask the players look up rules and talents

As a player!

Enjoy being smarter (meta knowledge) than your characters and walking into traps!

Set a good example

- Pay attention Reduce distractions at the table
- Use character names
- Don't use Mega knowledge, your characters knows what they know

Let the teacher lead

- If you know the game don't interrupt the teacher or ruin the flow, bring up rules questions at an appropriate time
- Rules not taught yet may have been left to later intentionally be patient
- Learn the rules key to your character and their abilities

Share the spot light

- Be a fan of the other players
- Invite others into your scenes
- Enjoy the failures! They are learning experiences

Fancy voices and accents are not required.