

**Past is Prologue** is a roleplaying game focussed on the characters—what made them who they are and how they are affected by the events that unfold through play.

You can play in a number of ways:

**GMed:** One player is the Game Master, generating the game and scenes, and describing the world and the actions of non-player characters.

**GM-less:** Players narrate the world the characters interact with.  
*This reference will assume a GM-less setup for brevity.*

**Solo:** Prologue can be used as a means of generating a story and how it unfolds.

**Create a Game:** Discuss and make a Game Card as a general guide for what kind of game you'll be playing.

**Create characters:** Make a card per PC (player character).

Write a name, introduce to the group.

Add Words, describe an event that shaped them in this way for each Word. Stop when everyone has a good understanding of their character. A good average number is 3.

**Create Story Elements:** *Figure out what your game is about.*

Roll Find Arcs for every player, add Words to the Game Card.

Turn each Arc Word into a story element—from that past event, or as a regular word. (eg. Mother -> that character's mother.  
Small -> a rebel fleet sneaks past a planetary blockade.)

**Story:** Decide on a Form for the game as a whole, and add it to the Game Card.

One player sets the scene for the game, like an opening crawl of a movie.

**Scene:** *Players' characters take turns being the main character of a scene.*

Find Arcs from the main character. Choose a Form, or use the last Form previously left open. Set the scene.

Roleplay. Work on answering the Form's question. Players may introduce the Game's story elements and NPCs at any time.

Resolve Conflicts when a character's actions become uncertain.

**Ending a Scene:** *A scene can end in one of two ways:*

Resolution: When the Form's "End by" condition has been reached, Close the Form. You may close multiple open Forms from the latest going back.

**Open-Ended:** If it looks like the Form will not be answered in a single scene, make out a card for it. Add the Form and the problem left unresolved.

Place the card on the table as the latest Form left open.

**Endgame:** *The issues have been posed. Time to start closing them.*

After every player has created a scene for their character, if a player has an idea of how the Game's Form could be ended, they may create the Final Scene.

**Find Arcs:** Select at least 1 Word from each character. You may roll Find Arcs for characters you are unsure about.

Build and play the rest of the scene any other scene.

If the scene did not resolve the Game's Form, you've created a cliffhanger! Note down what was left unresolved, to play in a sequel.

**Resolve Conflicts:** When things become uncertain. There are two kinds of opposition:

**Named NPC:** *actively resisting a PC's action.*

If there is no Word affecting the opposition's action or reaction, write and roll one and add it to the card.

They roll and add 1 related Word.

**Roll:** Each side rolls a die.

If they are a named character, add the value of 1 Word that affects their performance, as well as any plusses and minuses next to it.

Subtract Opposition's roll from Player's roll.

**-2** (or less): No, And... Mark a minus (-) next to the PC's Word.  
*Action fails. The PCs' situation worsens.*

**-1:** No, but... *Action fails. Causes a complication for both sides.*

**0:** Insight... If the Opposition is named, write and roll a new Word related to the one they used. *The action doesn't have the desired effect, the situation becomes clearer to the PC.*

**+1:** Yes, But... *Action succeeds. PCs' situation worsens.*

**+2:** Yes, And... Mark a plus (+) next to the PC's Word.  
*Action succeeds. The PCs' situation improves.*

**Non-Player Characters:** NPCs can be introduced by anyone.

If they are an important recurring character (or become one), create a card for them and add a name. If they (or a similar entity) has a card, reuse it. (eg. Droid Turret B looks a lot like Droid Turret A.)

If characters know something about them, each of those players writes and rolls 1 Word and adds it.

Otherwise, play until you come into conflict with them.

Pick a player not involved in the interaction to roleplay the NPC.

**Form:** *Defines a game or scene.* May roll and choose that number from the top. If you roll over 4, choose Event.

**Place:** Start by entering a place. Play to find out how will they get out. Ends by leaving or remaining.

**Question:** Start by asking a question. Play to find out what is the answer to the question. Ends by having an answer.

**Character:** Starts by the main character struggling with an aspect of themselves. Play to find out how they can be happy. Ends by accepting or changing themselves.

**Event:** Start by the state of the world changing. Play to find out how things stabilise. Ends by the change being undone, or accepted.

**Closing the Form:** *People wither and grow after hardship.*

Each character looks at the plusses (+) and minuses (-) next to their Words. If there are more plusses, add +1 to the Word's value. If there are more minuses, subtract 1. Remove all plusses and minuses.

The main character also rolls a die. For each Word used to create the scene: if the roll is higher add +1, if it was lower subtract 1. If the roll is the same, you may change the Word. Players may narrate to reflect any changes to their characters.

**Word:** *Some part of their past that defines them today.*

**Value:** Roll a die. *Dictates the influence their past has on them.*

**Word:** Write a single word. *Represents their past.*

**Find Arcs:**

Roll a die, and find which Words have that value.

If a roll matches multiple Words, choose one or use both.

If no Words match, re-roll and roll 1 extra die. If 1 die per Word have to be rolled, use all Words. Repeat as necessary.