Insta-Role®
Rule Book

Insta-Role®

Disclaimer: Artificial intelligence tools were used to assist in the design of this product.

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Presentation

A zero-prep role-playing game: just add players.

Insta-Role® is a 'zero-prep' role-playing game that allows an experienced Game Master (the Story Teller, or Teller) to lead a role-playing session without any prior preparation. The play duration is set before the game begins, so as to allow for an experience tailored to the available player count, with the challenge of a time-boxed session.

Insta-Role® is a 'traditional' role-playing game, in that the Teller brings a pre-written scenario to life for a group of player-managed Characters, using game rules to handle the obstacles and oppositions encountered by the Characters during the game. It also has more modern elements, such as shared narrative authority.

Insta-Role® is set in pop culture universes that players can immediately relate to. The micro-scenarios, independent and easily combinable, allow tailoring the duration of play to match players' available time.

The Teller or one of the players will be the Rules Referent. They must have read and understood the rules before starting a game. The other players do not necessarily need to know the rules: the rules referent can explain the minimum to them before starting and elaborate during play, introducing rules in context when they become necessary. No other preparation is required: once the basic rules are understood, the Teller can start a game immediately!

NB: Insta-Role® is not intended to be an initiation rpg, however an experienced Teller will probably find it suitable to initiate novice players to role-playing gaming.

Number of players and duration of games

Insta-Role® is designed for one Teller, and 2 to 5 players. It is possible to play head-to-head or with more than 6 players, but this makes the Teller's task more complex and requires a little more experience.

Insta-Role® is specifically designed for improvised and quick games: The time-boxed duration is a very important aspect of the game. The scenarios are designed specifically to work in limited time. If you are looking for games without time limits, there are many other role-playing games on the market that better meet this need.

It is also possible to play several sessions in 'campaign' mode while keeping the same characters in the same universe from game to game.

Target audience

Insta-Role® is designed for experienced role-players who lack opportunities to play.

As Insta-Role® is targeted at experienced Tellers, this rulebook does not provide an introduction to roleplaying. The same applies to anything related to emotional safety, and handling any sensitive themes that may surface in game: This game is targeted at experienced players, who already have a good grasp of these aspects. **Each group of players is encouraged to adapt the game to their needs and practice.**

Goal of the game

As a reminder, there are no winners or losers in a role-playing game. The real goal of the game is to have a good time and to build an interesting and coherent story together, one that will be remembered. As such, it is possible to fail miserably at the scenario goals, yet for the game session to be a resounding success in terms of gaming pleasure and shared memories.

Each game session is in some ways similar to writing a movie or a novel together, and playing a campaign can very well be compared to writing a complete season for a television series.

Game Materials

Insta-Role® consists of this rulebook, as well as a series of universes, which are available individually.

This rules booklet contains all the information needed to organize a game in one of the universes, as well as 'Character' and 'player aid' sheets (feel free to photocopy them!)

The universe booklets, available separately, each contain a copy of this rulesbook, a complete description of a pop culture inspired universe, with a series of important Characters and places, Organizations to which the Characters can belong, various play aids, and most importantly a large number of short scenarios set in this universe.

Additional materials (not provided)

You will need a few accessories in addition to the book, which you probably already have on hand:

- 'Fate' and 'Injury' tokens used to keep track of variable elements (Use whatever you have: poker chips, coins, matches, beans, wooden cubes,...) You can even write it down and keep count on a piece of paper.

- A ten-sided dice (d10). If you don't have a d10 handy, you can use the seconds digit on a digital clock, or the last digit of the page number of a randomly opened book, or any other 1-10 random generation system that the players agree on. D10 are used to make the game as portable as possible with the least friction to start playing.

- A few sheets of paper and something to write with for each player

- A few copies of the Character sheets and play aids for the players

Set up

One of the players is the 'Teller' and will master the game. The Teller must have experience in mastering a role-playing game, and be able to improvise a little. The Teller and the Rules Referent must have read and understood the full rules of the game before the game. The Teller is also responsible for managing the session time limit. (Don't fret, this comes easily with practice. When in doubt, go for it!)

1° The Teller and the players begin by setting the duration of the game together. (See 'time management' under the Teller's role.) 2 hours is recommended for the first games.

2° The Teller then reads or paraphrases the presentation of the universe being played, and the description of the organization all their Characters will be members of, to the players. (Each group of Characters is linked to a single organization so they can start as a team.)

3° They then invite the players to create and then introduce their Characters to the group. During that time they read a scenario for the session.

4° They finally describe the starting scene to the players, and launch the scenario(s).

This whole setup should take less than 15 minutes!

Some universes may introduce specific rules that complement or replace normal rules, such as rules for managing madness in a "gothic horror"

universe. The Teller and Rules Referent will make sure that they are applied accordingly.

The Characters

Characters have three characteristics: **Physics, Intellect, Technics and Intuition**, which can range from 1 to 10.

Physics (P) represents the Character's physical strength, muscles, and agility. Physics also represents their ability to resist damage (hit points).

Intellect (I) represents their intelligence, their knowledge and their wit.

Technics and Intuition (TI) represents their intuition, magic in the universes where magic exists, and/or technology (which is similar to magic to the uninitiated) in the universes where it exists.

An average human would have P5, I5, TI5. Levels above 7 correspond to superhuman beings and are normally not allowed for Player Characters.

Character building and Destiny tokens

- Each player distributes 15 points between the three characteristics of his Character, with a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 7. They will normally not be able to exceed these starting levels.

- The player records this distribution on their Character's sheet.

- The Players begin each session with a common pool of 2 Destiny Tokens per player participating in the session. (6 tokens for 3 players.)

- The Teller starts with 1 Destiny Token per player participating in the session.

Players and the Teller will be able to use Destiny Tokens during the session to influence the narrative course of the session (see below).

The unused tokens are not kept from session to session! The pool of tokens circulates in closed circuit between the Teller and the players during the session.

Description and Life Goals

Each player briefly describes their Character to the group, along with their character's life goals. This helps build a common frame of reference and provides a clear and shared understanding of the group of Characters being played.
The Teller and the group validate these Characters together, so that everyone agrees on the characters team composition. 'Lone wolves' and

Characters needing much off-group handling time are not desirable for this system designed for short and fluid games. It may be necessary to make some compromises so everyone at the table can have a good time. The Teller will arbitrate such situations.

Organisation

In each universe, each team of Characters belong to a same organization, which provides a story opportunity engine and ensures team cohesion even if the Characters are very different.

The players and the Teller then decide together what circumstances brought the Characters together, in the context of the organization to which they belong. This will help the Teller build a coherent world for this team.

Example

A group consisting of a doctor, a firefighter, a schoolgirl, and a pensioner. They all have a keen interest in the occult and met at the local library, where they regularly consulted the same books. They all belong to the same organization, the Crowley Circle ('Ardéchoise' chapter), which brings together occult enthusiasts from around the world.

Characters Equipment and Game Materials

The Teller will freely create game material for the players and cards describing equipment available to the Characters, money, etc. during the game. We recommend using paper sheets or index cards to create a physical artifact of this equipment and its description. Only the most important objects are concerned, avoid creating pointlessly detailed inventories. The system is intended to be lightweight and non-simulationist, to emphasize the role more than endless lists of stuff or skills.

Weapons, explosives, vehicles, magical objects and other supercomputers or powerful stuff are always subject to prior approval by the Teller at the start of the session.

When an important item is brought into play, the Teller will describe its exact effects to the players, if they know them at all.

Example 1: Open information

You find a healing potion. You have used those before and do know that it's a one-time use potion, and that drinking it immediately restores you to your maximum 'physical' ability.

Example 2: Closed information

You find a Decker data chip. You have no idea what programs it contains, but you do know that viruses can sometimes be found on these chips. (The Teller knows exactly what programs and protections are on the card, but the players will have to figure that out in-game.)

The game system

Tests, obstacles and trials

The game system is based on tests. A test always involves a characteristic score plus a d10 roll, and may include a modifier (called a difficulty factor, or modifier).

Simple Tests

During the game, the Teller may ask players to perform simple tests. These tests are used to determine whether the Character succeeds in an action complex enough to require a test, or whether they succeeded overcoming a passive obstacle.

To perform a simple test, the Teller indicates the characteristic to use, and sets a target threshold for success.

Examples of target thresholds:

Automatic action: no testing required.

Easy Action: 10+

Average Action: 15+

Difficult Action: 17+

Impossible Action: 20+

These thresholds are provided as examples only! The Teller sets the thresholds freely based on tests and the Characters' abilities. They do not communicate the threshold to the players, they only tell them whether it is an easy, medium, or difficult test. If the Teller adds modifiers for things the Characters cannot be aware of, they do so secretly.

The Player rolls [1d10 + characteristic] and must obtain a result greater than or equal to the target. **An unmodified roll of 1 on the d10 is always a failure and is called 'Critical Failure'.**

The Teller will determine the consequences of critical failures as they see fit. Such failures should have dramatic consequences, but not lead to irreparable failure of the scenario.

Passive Obstacles

Player Characters may face passive obstacles during their adventures. For example, a blocked door, or a wall to climb. These obstacles are generally resolved by a simple test.

The Teller will stage the obstacle for the players, and tell them the Characteristic to use and the target to overcome it (easy/medium/hard). Some obstacles can be faced collectively and others must be faced individually, as assessed by the Teller.

If the Teller allows it, the players whose Characters are involved can pool their efforts to act together. A single test is then made, using the characteristic score of one of the characters involved with the highest score in that characteristic as a base, with a +1 per participant. If the Teller assesses that the action does not lend itself to a team effort, they will require an individual test.

The Teller may also decide to let the players offer alternative ways to overcome the obstacle, and designate an alternative characteristic and target accordingly. They may even decide on a different cost, such as Destiny Tokens, or reputation loss, depending on the situation.

Example 1:

The Characters are searching for an ancient formula established by a renowned alchemist. They come across a book written by one of his disciples, which may contain the precious formula. The book is written in an esoteric code, and is full of incomprehensible illustrations. It is all a code, that the Characters will attempt to decipher.

The Teller tells them that this code is an obstacle, to be solved collectively as a team, with a target threshold of 15 (medium), using Intellect and/or Technics and Intuition as Characteristic.

The players discuss the matter, and remember that their Characters have previously met an expert who might be able to decipher this code. They ask the Teller to call on the expert rather than attempting to decode the book themselves. The Teller agrees and tells them that the expert will require a payment of 100 gold pieces. The player characters have the 100 gold pieces and decide to pay the expert to address this obstacle.

Example 2:

A Character is trapped in the airlock of a spaceship. The Characters decide to try to modify the airlock control circuit to free him. The Teller tells them that this is an obstacle that can only be resolved by a single Character, with a test in Technics and Intuition with a target of 12 (easy). One of the players whose Character has a Technics and Intuition characteristic of 5, rolls a 7 on the die (5+7=12), and thus frees the captive in the nick of time.

Example 3:

The Characters are at the back of a dojo and decide to climb on its roof. The Teller says that it is a fairly easy obstacle that they must solve individually, with a target of 12 in Physics. The Characters propose to help each other by giving each other a leg up, and using the first Characters to have climbed to pull the others up the wall. The Teller grants them a reduction of the threshold to 10 instead of 12 to take their teamwork into account.

Active obstacles and adversaries: Opposition tests

Player Characters may face Adversaries or Active Obstacles during their adventures. An enemy determined to block their path, an artificial intelligence whose goals are not aligned with those of the players, or even another player's character opposing their actions.

When it is necessary to resolve an opposition test, the Teller sets the characteristic to be used for this test. An Opposition Test is then made between the Character(s) involved against the Teller (or against the opposing Characters).

Opposing players add up the best characteristic score of the team for the set characteristic, and any modifiers that apply, to the roll of 1d10. The Teller plays active obstacles or enemies in the same way. The highest total wins.

The winner's side states the way they wish to have this resolved, and the Teller weaves it up in the thread of the story, with respect to the

scenario and the universe. In the event of a tie, no one clearly wins and the Teller improvises the outcome of the attempted action, with mixed outcomes.

Combats

All combats are resolved using an opposing test.

Each encounter is resolved using a single test for the whole group. Keep in mind that this is a cinematic game system where narrative and story are far more important than simulation and tactical details.

The Teller describes the situation precisely to the players, who then each in turn describe how their Character will approach the encounter. The Teller then sets the targets and modifiers, and the combat is resolved in a single opposing test. The Teller decides the outcome based on the test results and describes it to the players.

Example 1:

A bear attacks the team of player characters.

The Teller tells them that this is an opposition to be resolved with the Physical characteristic. He sets 4 as Physical for the Bear.

One of the Characters is a magician, he only has 3 in Physical but he knows a spell allowing him to spend a Destiny Token to add 7 to his Physical characteristic for 20 minutes, strengthening him to a total of 10.

The magician steps in front of the animal and wins the opposition test with a roll of 6 on the d10 for a total of 16, against a roll of 6 for the

Teller for a total of 10.

The Teller receives the Destiny token spent by the magician to cast the spell no matter the results.

Example 2:

The player characters' group has found an ancient statue covered in strange runes, glowing with a faint purple aura. Some of the characters want to destroy the statue, which they believe is evil, while others want to leave it untouched, believing it would be dangerous to destroy it.

The discussion lasts for a while, and the Teller decides that they will have to resolve this decision as a test of intellect between themselves, to resolve the debate. The characters form two opposing groups, and ultimately the supporters of destroying the statue win the opposing Intellect test.

The Characters destroy the statue, and the Teller makes a mental note that they are now all cursed for the rest of the adventure.

Outcomes scale

The Teller can use the outcomes scale to qualify the outcomes of the tests and actions undertaken by the Player Characters:

Outcome: description

Catastrophe: The action fails, and the situation worsens unexpectedly

Failure: The action fails

Partial failure: The action fails but the situation improves slightly

Equality: The action is not resolved satisfactorily, and the situation stagnates.

Partial success: The action succeeds, but the situation gets a little worse

Success: The action succeeds

Exceptional achievement: The action succeeds, and the situation improves in an unexpected way

(We deliberately do not provide numbers in this scale; it is up to the Teller to determine the most appropriate targets based on the circumstances in play and the desired style of play.)

Skills and modifiers

Insta-Role® does not use skills, only the 3 characteristics. However modifiers may apply, created by the Teller, or predefined in the scenario.

Items or equipment (stuff) that brings a bonus or penalty can be provided in game by the Teller. Some stuff will be single-use (a potion for example), others will have a cost in Destiny Tokens for a given effect, and others will have a permanent effect.

The Teller just needs to write on a card what the Character knows about the stuff, and give it to the player to materialize the stuff. In game terms, the Character whose player holds the card is the bearer of the stuff.

Example 1:

A revolver. Gives +4 in Armed combat. Use limited to 1x/combat. Depending on the desired playing style, counting ammunition will be completely ignored or, on the contrary, strictly enforced by the Teller.

Example 2:

A 'Physics Potion', which adds +3 to Physics to the Character drinking it (They may temporarily exceed their maximum but will come back down to their normal characteristic if still over it after 4 hours). Single use.

Example 3:

A portable Decker console, which does reduce (-1) the target of an obstacle using the Technics and Intuition characteristic. Use 1x/obstacle.

Exhaustion, wounds and death

When a Character fails an opposition test during a combat, or fails a test in a situation where failure could cause injuries, they receive an Injury Token. In the case of a critical failure (1 on the die roll aka catastrophic failure) of such a dangerous test, they receive two Injury Tokens instead.

When a Character has received a number of Injury Tokens equal to or greater than their Physics characteristic, they lose consciousness, and if Physics becomes 'negative' (received more wounds than his Physics) they continue to bleed and their condition will worsen until they are stabilized, or healed, or they die: They receive one Wound token for each hour spent until stabilized or healed or dead.

To stabilize an injured character who is 'negative', medical skills and equipment are required! The Teller may, if deemed appropriate, grant a Technics and Intuition test to compensate for the lack of specific skill and/or equipment.

When a Character has accumulated a number of Injury Tokens equal to or greater than their [Physics x 2], they die. Depending on the universe played, death can be final or merely a temporary inconvenience.

When Characters heal or rest, the Teller will allow them to discard Wound Tokens. The Teller will determine the healing rate according to the story needs. A base of 1 wound token per 4 hours rest would be suitable for humans in a realistic universe.

If a Character dies, once the action that caused the Character's death has been resolved, the Teller will take a short break to create a new Character, and tell the players a short flashback or side story to integrate the new Character into the existing team. Announce that the new Character was withdrawn and discreet, but following the group from the beginning, or that they are being sent as a replacement by the organization the Characters are members of, for example. As the game is played in short sessions with a fixed duration, it is preferable to prioritize the rapid return of the player to the game over strict realism.

Destiny tokens - sharing the narrative authority

'Shared narrative authority' means that the Teller is not the only one in charge, and that all players are going to be able to actively take part in shaping the story.

The Destiny tokens are a currency circulating between the Teller and the players during the game. Players keep their Destiny tokens in a common pool, usable by the whole group. In case of disagreement between players on the use of the tokens, the players vote, and the Teller arbitrates if necessary.

Players and Teller freely spend their tokens to change the course of the game during play.

The players can spend a Destiny token to:

• Activate an ability that requires spending a Destiny token, such as casting a spell or the activation of an ability requiring such an expense.

• Suggest a story development, which the Teller may or may not accept. (The token is not spent if the Teller refuses.)

• Automatically succeed at a Normal difficulty action, without making a test.

• Being allowed to attempt a test for an action that would normally be outside of one's capabilities (+10 bonus to the die roll. The token is spent BEFORE rolling the die).

• "Undo": Cancel an event that just happened and doesn't involve a failed test. In practice, it's a 'rewind' in history, offering a second chance, always subject to the Teller's agreement.

• Get a big 'helping hand' from the Teller: providential assistance from a passerby, notice an important clue that you've overlooked until now, etc.

• Avoid the death of a Character. This specific case costs all of the remaining Destiny tokens, with a minimum of 1.

These expenses are always subject to the Teller's approval!

In practice, at any time, a player can interrupt the game to suggest a development of the story to the Teller. He makes his proposal and offers a Destiny Token - only if the group agrees. The Teller can accept the proposal and keep the token, or say no and return the token.

The Teller will decide what is or is not acceptable based on the universe and the scenario, ensuring that he is fair and, a priori, favorable to the players.

The tokens spent by the players are given to the Teller, who adds them to his own.

The Teller can give players opportunities to recover Destiny tokens, generally by accepting negative effects:

• Automatically fail a test (instead of throwing the die).

• Accept a negative effect or story development proposed by the Teller.

• Let a captured enemy escape.

• Players can also offer that their character undergo negative effects to recover Destiny tokens.

• He can finally give a Destiny token to players to reward a good action / idea / initiative.

Example 1:

The team of Characters visits the village bank to meet with the manager. One of the players suggests spending a Destiny token and says, 'Uh oh... This scene smells like a robbery.' The players spontaneously agree.

The Teller agrees, pockets the Destiny token and tells the players that two bandits burst into the bank while they are in the manager's office.

Example 2:

A Character attempts to hack into a journalist's computer. The Teller requires a Technics and Intuition test for this hack, which he succeeds. The Teller tells him there isn't any very useful information on the computer disk. The player suggests spending a Destiny token for luck. The group agrees. The Teller takes the token and tells the player that upon closer inspection, their character finds a link in the browser's bookmarks, pointing to the computer system of the newspaper the journalist works for, and which contains the sought after information.

Example 3:

The Characters are investigating a gold prospector who recently died. One of the players grabs a Destiny token on the table and announces, 'As he's missing, his spirit will probably try to contact us to tell us what happened to the prospector.' The players agree on the spending. The Teller however returns the token: 'Sorry, but this is the historic Wild West, and ghosts don't exist here.' The Teller declines the request because it falls outside the scope of the game.

Example 4:

The Characters have just broken into the office of a person they are investigating. When they leave, the teller offers the players to recover a Destiny token in exchange for the team having been filmed by a surveillance camera, and being identifiable. The players agree, and the Teller gives them a Destiny Token from his pool.

The next day they may have to answer questions from the police, unless the owner of the office sends them some muscle instead...

Example 5:

After a long investigation, the Characters finally manage to arrest a dangerous criminal, who has become their sworn enemy. At the end of the trial, the Teller offers the players to give them two Destiny tokens per player if they agree to their captured enemy's escape during his transfer to prison. They agree, knowing that they will have to continue hunting him for a long time to come.

The role of the Rules Referent

Their role is to ensure the fair application of the rules of the game, and to inform the players and the Teller of relevant rules points during the game. Above all they are a facilitator, ensuring the smooth running of the purely mechanical aspect of the game.

The rules referent does not necessarily have to be the Teller. This allows the Teller to be relieved of the rules management burden and gives them time to read the scenario and prepare the game while the rules referent manage the creation of the Characters and the explanation of the rules of the game to the players.

The Teller always has the final say on outcomes, setting targets, modifiers, etc.

The Role of the Teller

The Teller are more **a host, a referee and a narrator** than a 'Game Master': they will make the universe and scenarios come to life, while

taking into account the suggestions and perceptions of other players.

They are also the **guardian of time**. They will also ensure that the time limit set at the beginning of the session is enforced, as well as arbitrate ties and points of disagreement. Once the allotted time has elapsed, they will announce to the players that the session is over, and will improvise an ending to the scenario, taking into account what has been played so far. The Teller will ensure that they do not accept any time extension or prolongation of the session: the time limit is set at the beginning of the session and must be enforced.

The specific format of Insta-Role® allows you to easily change Tellers from one session to another, to allow rotation within a group of players.

Time management

Insta-Role® is played in limited time! The duration of the session is set at the beginning and must be strictly enforced.

At the start of the session, the Teller and the players determine how long the session will last ("we'll play 2 hours", "We'll play until midnight").

During the game, the Teller will ensure that the remaining playing time is taken into account and indicated to the players. Don't hesitate to place a timer visible to all on the table.

The Teller dynamically manages the difficulty to account for the remaining time: If there is little time left, the Teller may provide more clues to the Characters to help them progress faster. Or, on the contrary, he could let them investigate leisurely but put some pressure on them by reminding them of the remaining time... Each Teller has his own style. Just make sure everybody has a good time.

The Teller must take their role as 'timekeeper' very seriously and make it a point to strictly adhere to the time limit set at the beginning of the session. The limited playing time creates an interesting element of tension in the game. In addition, the scenarios are designed to operate within a limited playing time, in order to offer dynamic games. If players want to continue playing further, start a new session with a new time limit.

The Teller will make sure to combine a number of scenarios appropriate for the agreed playing time. Scenarios are designed so that they can easily be combined within the same universe. For a short session, one will be enough, and for a full weekend of play, several scenarios will be used. It is possible to run several scenarios in parallel to combine them, but keep in mind that combining scenarios rather than playing them in

sequence will increase playing time because players will have to sort through information from each parallel scenario by themselves. This is intentional: Scenarios from the same universe are designed to create some confusion between scenarios when combined, which lengthens sessions but enhances immersion.

The system is intended to be completely modular in this regard. As a Teller, you will need to learn to manage this 'time master' aspect from game to game. For a short session, it's best to keep the adventure linear: For a one-hour game, use a single scenario sheet. For two or three hours, use two sheets, but wait until the first scenario is resolved before launching the second. For games lasting four to eight hours, launch two combined scenarios from the outset, and add a third along the way if necessary, and so on.

The Teller's role is clear: to bring the scenario to a resolution, positive or negative, right at the end of the time allocated to the session. **If the deadline arrives and the scenario is not resolved, the Teller will improvise a conclusion to end the session**. No extensions, just "a short story and then go to bed".

Session management

Insta-Role® is a game designed for short, unplanned, one-shot games, although it is also possible to play in a campaign.

Since playing time is limited, the Teller must ensure that the time available provides players with maximum immersion and adventure.

- Keep the time spent on setting up the world and creating characters to a minimum. 10-15 minutes should be enough to create the group and start the session. It is always possible to clarify any missing details during the game.

- If possible get help from a rules referent player, who will allow you to concentrate on the scenario and managing the session while the rules referent handles the explanation of the rules, the setup and the creation of the Characters with the players.

- At the start of the session, immediately immerse the players in the action. "Action, now." There's no point spending an hour visiting all the townspeople before deciding what to do; the action must be immediate, compelling and obvious: the saloon burns down, the Vikings attack the village, the lights go out and strange noises come from the cellar, a gunshot is heard, etc. Take inspiration from film and television techniques to quickly set the scene and get the players into the game.

When in doubt, focus on action.

- Minimize discussions about non-diegetic elements (anything that is not 'in game') such as technical questions about the game system, details of the equipment possessed by the Characters, digressions about cinema and sports, etc. Only what brings gameplay and immersion to the whole group really deserves play time. The Teller arbitrates if necessary, reminding the players that they are in a 'one shot' game with a limited duration, and quickly resuming the flow of the game.

- Keep in mind that an entire combat scene is resolved using a single test. No division into initiative, action turns, etc. Describe the overall situation, quickly go around the table to get the goals and intended actions of all the Characters present, evaluate the characteristics and modifiers to use, and quickly resolve the whole encounter in a single roll. The game engine is only a support for the story and must remain secondary. The important thing is not to know exactly how many bullets are left in the villain's gun, but just to know if he is arrested or if he manages to escape, if the warehouse is on fire, etc.

- If the players are procrastinating or disagreeing, ask them to make an opposing roll between them to break the situation, and resume play.

- Be aware of downtime and systematically restart the action. In a game lasting one or two hours, it is important to maintain a steady pace. Only in longer games can the Teller offer his players the luxury of boredom. When players engage in time-consuming actions, use ellipses to quickly move through these phases of play: "You spend three days questioning the local government and doing research in libraries and you find the following..."

- For the investigation and research aspects, the Teller will take care to keep the pace of the session, by simplifying these phases of play to leave more time for action. The Teller asks the players what type of research/investigations they intend to carry out, possibly accompanied by a test, and provides them with the results.

Universes

An Insta-Role® universe is essentially materialized by a series of sheets for the Teller. They are grouped in the form of a book for convenience, but they are independent from each other in their use and purpose.

Universe Sheet

A description of the pop-culture inspired universe in which scenarios take place: western, medieval fantasy, giant robots, space opera, cartoon, etc.

The Teller or rules referent reads it to the players at the beginning of the session so that everyone knows in which setting their Characters will evolve. These presentations are intentionally succinct and only provide the Teller with a basis on which to develop and bring this universe to life in their own way.

They are based on pop culture in order to facilitate the immersion of the players. The Teller will make sure to be open to the players' vision of the universe played, without imposing his own, and to help the group to build a common vision of the universe played.

Before a first game with a group in a given universe, it is appropriate to do a quick round table to answer the players' questions about the universe that will be played and align everyone on a shared vision.

It is possible for an experienced and adventurous Teller to mix universes for more original games. The Teller will then have to adapt the universe and the scenario on the fly to reflect the combination of universes used.

They will briefly indicate to the players how they intend to combine these universes for the upcoming session.

Example 1:

The Teller tells the group before starting the session that she plans to mix two universes: a futuristic universe where Mars is actively colonized, and a western/gold rush universe. She tells the players that the scenarios will come from both universes, and that everything will be presented from the perspective of near-future Mars, adapting the Western scenarios to this futuristic universe.

Example 2:

The Teller tells the group before starting the session that she plans to mix two universes: An 'American Bikers' universe and a 'Three Musketeers' universe. She tells the players that the scenarios will come from both universes, and that everything will be presented from the perspective of a near future where a new generation of motorcycle clubs is heavily inspired by the period of the Musketeers, and the Musketeer scenarios will be transposed into the biker universe.

Example 3:

The Teller tells the group before starting the session that he plans to mix two universes: A 'Victorian London' universe and a 'Kaijus and giant robots' universe. He tells the players that the scenarios will come from both universes, and that everything will be presented from the perspective of Victorian England, where mad inventors try to destroy the city with steam-powered robots and laboratory grown monsters.

Organization Sheet

Each universe also provides a general framework to ensure the coherence of the games and to help the Teller structure their improvisations.

Characters will always be members of a same organization (government agency, secret society, clan, club, corporation, sect, hierarchical structure, etc.) which gives them common medium and long-term goals as a team from the start.

The Teller will decide which Organization is most appropriate when creating the Characters team. At the beginning of a game or campaign, the Teller will invite the players to specify their Character's position and goals within the organization.

Intro Sheet

These allow players to start a game immediately, providing a clear reason for them to be together in a specific place at the start of the game. They provide an easy introduction to a session. For a campaign, an intro sheet will be used for the first session and then the Teller will improvise based on the previous session's outcomes. These intros are totally optional, they are play aids designed to facilitate a quick start.

Scenario Sheet

Each Scenario sheet contains a complete mini-scenario that should last about two hours of play and reads in less than 10 minutes. Scenarios within a given universe are written to form a coherent whole and can be played in any order. There should be no conflicting elements between scenarios within the same universe.

A Scenario consists of two parts: a public part and a secret part. The information in the public part is read or paraphrased to the players by the Teller, and will introduce them into the session. The informations in the secret part are known only to the Teller and provide the background of this mini-scenario and the foundation to their improvisation.

During a campaign game, after each successful scenario the Teller is encouraged to reward the Characters in the way that seems most appropriate: resources (money, tools, weapons, etc.); promotions within the organization; contacts or Characters willing to provide them with services; or even Destiny Tokens from their reserve at the start of the next game.

Character characteristics should not evolve from one session to another, to avoid power creep and keep things balanced.

Other Sheets

The universe can also include other kinds of sheets: recurring characters, specific places and objects, maps, newspaper articles, rumors, illustrations, etc. The Teller will use these freely to flesh out the games. The Teller can also create additional sheets during the game as they find it useful or necessary.

Insta-Role® Character sheet

Player: _____

Character Name: _____

Organisation :_____

Occupation : _____

Description : _____

_____

(creation: distribute 15 points, min. 2 max. 7)

_____ **PHYSICS**

_____ **INTELLECT**

_____ **Technics and Intuition**

Notes : _____

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Insta-Role® play aid

Tests: [1d10 + characteristic + modifiers] >= target

Opposing tests: [characteristic + 1d10 + modifiers]

Outcomes scale

- **Result** (difference between the result and the threshold): description
- **Catastrophe**: The action fails, and the situation worsens unexpectedly
- **Failure**: The action fails
- **Partial failure**: The action fails but the situation improves slightly
- **Equality**: The action is not resolved satisfactorily, and the situation stagnates.
- **Partial Success**: The action succeeds, but the situation gets a little worse
- **Success**: The action succeeds
- **Exceptional achievement**: The action succeeds, and the situation improves in an unexpected way.

Injuries:

[Physical] = coma   2 x [Physical] = death   Rest = 1 per 4h

Destiny Tokens - Players

- Suggest a development of the story
- Automatically succeed in a normal difficulty action (no roll)
- Attempt an action that would normally be too difficult (+10 to the die roll)
- Cancel an event that just happened (and doesn't involve a failed test).
- Get a big 'boost' or 'tip' from the Teller
- Prevent the death of a Character. This costs all the Destiny tokens of the group (minimum 1).
- Accept a negative effect to recover a token

Destiny Tokens - Teller

- Player agree to automatically fail a test (no roll)
- Player accept a negative effect or development
- Reward an interesting initiative/action
- Players agree to let an enemy escape

Play more often!
An experienced Teller, some friends, a place to play, and it's on!
Insta-Role® is the tabletop roleplaying game for these times where you want to play, but could not prepare. Everything is ready to play immediately. Once the rules are down, you get playing in less than 15 minutes.

Timeboxed 2 hour sessions where every minute matters
Each scenario is designed to play in 2 hours: Your time committment is clear. A perfect format to play without eating up the whole evening, or to link scenarios and play an improvised mini campaign.

A streamlined system made for improv
Each character has only three stats, and a single die roll is used for most situations. The system is very light, no tables or skill trees: story is what really matters. The Teller's improvisations are fully supported and come naturally. The result ? A spontaneous and living TTRPG experience.

Have a say in the story
Destiny tokens drive the story: influence the storyline, making changes for better... or worse! The players and the Teller share the narrative authority.

Instant immersion in your favorite universes
Each Insta-Role® universe book contains about 50 scenarios, playable each in 2 hours. Supernatural western, dystopic science-fiction, gothic horror, vintage spycraft, neon-lighted cyberpunk...
Explore new settings each time you play, or dig deeper in your favorite one.

Insta-Role® is the roleplaying game that fits your lifestyle.
No preparation required, no waiting time, no frustration.
Just a story to share with a few friends, right now.