

ADEPT PLAY

BEST PRACTICES FOR ACTUAL PLAY POSTING

Hi! Thanks for checking this out.

Actual Play posting means that you write about what happened while table-top role-playing. *The requirement is that you refer to real-life actual play experiences.*

Fortunately, it's not supposed to be a transcript of play in a complete, journalistic account. I repeat, you don't have to do that. Instead, the scope of content is very much up to you.

- Any and every role-playing game is eligible for discussion. There is no favored type or approach to play here.
- Any amount of play: thirty years or thirty seconds, long ago in the past or just last night, whatever you want.
- Open to whatever focus you bring to it, open as well to whatever impressions others may have of it.

You don't get likes or plusses or up-voting at this site, so the only metric for "good" is how well the discussion proceeds. What I call good is that someone – preferably including you – comes away with an enriched notion of anything about role-playing. Maybe we see it explicitly in the discussion, maybe we don't, but the right kind will have that impact, if not now, then later, if not for one of the participants in the discussion, then some other person reading it.

My advice for making that likely is optional but – I submit – honed by pioneering this kind of talk about role-playing on the internet and by learning the hard way through twelve intensive years of doing and moderating it.

A brief orientation helps.

1. Say what game title you were using, and whether you've played it a lot or a little.
2. State your authentic view of the experience. Consider any of these: Was it fun, or mostly fun except for one bit, or terrible, or what? Did you like it? Are you looking forward to doing more of it?

- Keep this simple. "It was great" or "I didn't like all of it," or whatever - no need to explain or justify. It lets the reader know where you're coming from and how to consider what you're about to tell them.
3. Provide the context for who you're playing with. A group you've known and played with for years? A convention one-shot with strangers? Or what?
 - A little bit of detail goes a long way; you don't have to provide full names or complicated social histories.
 - That said, certain details can be important - whether, for instance, siblings or other close ties are included; or the general age range. Mention any of these if you want.

Format

Please don't modify the site's default font and other features of the text. It's boring and I like it that way.

Display images at 300 pixels on the long edge. They'll remain at the original size when they're clicked on, for people who want a closer look. Align them at either left or right. If you use a leading image, align it at the left. If you don't provide one, I'll move one of your images there or I'll put in an image that seems appropriate to me.

What about recordings?

1. Please feel free to include video or audio recordings.
 - You don't have to.
 - If you do, it will help if you edit them to match what you're writing about or time-stamp the content you want people to focus on.
2. Entertainment value isn't the point.
 - Plenty of people are currently billing role-playing, or staged versions, as skits or performance art. You aren't getting paid for this and don't need to do that.

What happened in the game?

1. You could call this "the fiction" or even "the story" or just "in-game" or whatever you want. It's who the characters were, where they were, what they did, and what happened.
 - Don't write it *as* a story, recasting it into fanfic or a script. Use your own voice.
2. Only present a bit of reading, not a novel. It's easy to get swamped in all the possible things to describe.
 - The best ways to avoid that trap are either to describe most of it but stay really sketchy or focus on a specific moment in detail.
 - Please include large chunks of data-type information as attachments instead of text in the post.

The system in action.

1. Mention or explain – to any degree – what you and the other people did which created this fictional content.

- This isn't a review site. You don't have to thumbs-up or thumbs-down, you don't have to recommend or not, you don't have to be complete.
2. When and if you want, evaluate the mechanics you're talking about or compare them to any other way to do it that you're familiar with.
 - Here's where some analysis kicks in. I – for example – really like to compare systemic features of play, and to comment upon what others have presented. If you want to see that, feel free to start it yourself or to encourage it; if you don't, feel free to say so.

It's your post.

1. You started it, you get to manage it. If you stick by the site Etiquette, then the site moderator (that's me) has your back.
 - You can throw it open to whatever anyone might think, or set a goal or point-at-issue to consider, or address some issue or idea about role-playing for which you think the experience is relevant.
 - You aren't captive to whatever someone says – if you don't want to pursue it, or think it's not relevant or helpful, say so.
2. That goes for comportment too. You're basically the local moderator for your posts and their discussions.
 - A lot of people begin with complicated disclaimers like "I know I'm new here," or "Please be kind" – there's no need for that.
 - ... and no need to retort either. It's people's job to respect what you presented; if they don't, I'll step in.
3. Given this authority, you can afford to be magnanimous as well.
 - Be open to what others may think, be willing to be surprised or at least to compare their view with yours.

Style and tone.

1. I mentioned "voice" above, and it's true. It's easiest and best to write just how you would say it in person, without either dressing it up or neutralizing yourself.
 - Check out my posts for how I follow my own advice, but you don't have to *sound* like them or make similar decisions.
2. I strongly recommend writing them out in some other program first, and going over them to be sure you're saying what you want.
 - Does that mean proofreading? Only a little. Good spelling and grammar always help, but I have no formal standards for you to meet.

That's it!

If you have any questions, use Contact, and check out the Etiquette rules too at the sidebar. I hope to see your thoughts at the site.