Game Master

The game master (also known as the storyteller) is the role-player tasked with the responsibility of making a plot work. The function of a game master is to provide the Role-Players in his plot with an entertaining, vivid, consistent, and sometimes unpredictable shared imaginary environment by describing that environment and all the Characters it contains. A GM is also responsible for performing administrative duties related to running a plot.

Commonly, there will be at least one Game Master, or 'GM' present in a JP. Their role is multi-purposed. Commonly they will have a commanding, or lead character in the plot. It's not unusual to have an admin GM over a plot GM, as well. Any GM has earned the right to control certain NPCs directly involved with their plot. An example of this is un-important and lowly functionaries of a starship crew, or even an AI. Not any less important, they are also in charge of deciding the outcome of the actions performed by other characters. Game masters also describe the setting your characters are in and usually make the first post. Opening posts generally signal the time and place of a scene.

In the Star Army Role-Play, the person playing a ship's captain is generally the game master for that starship's plot; for example, Wes is the head of the YSS Eucharis plot and also plays its captain, Hanako.

Eligibility

To become or remain a Game Master on Star Army, one must satisfy the following requirements:

- Actively roleplaying in one or more of Star Army's canon role-playing forums for 3+ months.
- Frequent online availability.
- Demonstrated responsibility and helpfulness.
- Demonstrated creativity.
- Permission from the site administrator.

Previous GM experience is preferred but not required.

⚠️ Creating a faction does *not* entitle someone to be a game master. Game Masters guide plots, not factions. Game masters weave stories around the player characters with the ingredients available (the setting) and those ingredients are usable by *all GMs*. You are not a game-master unless you're actually running a group of players.

⚠️ Forum moderators are separate from game masters. Some GMs may be moderators (usually the case for plot forums), while others might not be. Some moderators are not GMs.]

Apply to Become A Game Master

Abilities

Star Army Game Masters have permission to:

- Describe the setting in detail using and building on the resources in the wiki.
- Control any NPCs or small to mid-size groups of NPCs of major factions.
- Regulate the passage of time to help the players
- Resolve conflicts
- Designate a small group of certain NPCs and groups as "hands-off" to other GMs.
- Review Characters for their plot.

Expectations

- GMs must participate in each Roleplay Reviews.
- GMs should communicate with and work together with other GMs.
- GMs should put the players first and work to provide them with a great experience.
- Game-masters have a responsibility to do their best to keep the NPC factions' actions appropriate, realistic, and true to their background. In situations where you're not sure, try to contact the subject-matter-expert for advice.

Rights of the GM

1. A Game Master has the right to control NPCs within his plot
2. A Game Master has the right to control Player Characters that have not posted in the plot's listed timeframe, in order to keep the story moving.
3. A Game Master has the right to refuse any player or player character for any reasonable reason, including but not limited to the following:
   - Player's past RP
   - Player's personality
   - Player's writing skills (spelling, grammar, etc)
   - Plot is already "full" (GM feels he doesn't want more players)

Guide to Being a Star Army Game Master

Roles and Responsibilities of the GM

Your primary function is to KEEP YOUR RP ALIVE by being a good GM.

- **Be available and post as often as possible.** It's not enough to just read the RP, you have to keep it going and that means posting.
- **Keep the plot moving** - if everyone's waiting for a player to post, then you as a GM can post for that person. If you didn't add it to your page during the audit, now's a good time to add posting frequency expectations to your plot's wiki page. It's important to keep the plot going or the waiting will cause players to lose interest and find other stuff to keep them entertained.
- **Ask your players what they're up to.** If someone's going out for 2 weeks on a beach vacation, it's important to your plot group that you know! Players should be telling you this, but it's better to be proactive and on top of things. Move inactive PCs to training courses and other off-camera places until their players return.

- **Make your posts as interesting as possible** with humor, details, and insight. Keeping player interest is key. Get players looking forward to the next post.
- If your JP plot is struggling due to attendance of players, or even yourself, it might be wise to get some SP going until schedules get better.

As A Group Leader...

- Always maintain a positive attitude.
    - If you're not upbeat and positive, your players will quickly lose enthusiasm.
    - Keep negative thoughts to yourself and try to find the positive aspects of a situation.
- Trust your players.
    - Without trust, things go negatively, and negativity breeds distrust.
    - Earn trust by being trustworthy.
- Respect your players.
    - Players need to know they are valued, and value each other.
    - Players shouldn't feel like the GM is the enemy, slavedriver, or other type of evil overlord.
    - Working together is more important than competition.
    - Try to provide balance by incorporating all character classes and give each significance and balanced time to shine.
- Reward your players.
    - Players should get a feeling of satisfaction...provide positive feedback frequently when they do well, or try to do well.
    - Help players learn to recognize and appreciate quality roleplay.
    - Very small effort or achievement = very small satisfaction, so make things more grand/epic and keep adventures from being too easy.
    - If you don't give players recognition for their achievements, they become less motivated to achieve.
    - Find good things in every player.
- Be fair.
    - Don't ignore new or underperforming players.
    - Watch for "clique" formation.
- Foster a sense of community.
    - Be friendly; build friendships and camaraderie.
    - You are part of your plot's player community as well! Don't sit off in a tower overlooking them; be involved and be a friend.

Storyteller

- Describing the setting
- Describing the NPCs and their actions
- Provide a flexible, interactive storyline
- Provide new horizons; allow players to explore and expand the setting with their adventures.

Communication

- Each plot arc should have a planning thread in the GM Planning forum. It is important that we know what each other as GMs are planning. Plus it fills the plot requirement of communicating your plans to an admin.
- An event which is posed to involve the interaction between two factions/nations should be discussed, as that these tend to cause many of OOC conflict, and with proper communication could go more smoothly.
- Discuss your recruiting efforts and plans in the GM forum. We need to see what recruiting methods are working best, what players are interested in, etc.

Referee

- Make rules and standards known, prominent, and easily found.
- Resolve conflicts and rule violations fairly
    - Keep the violation and the player separate in your mind – punish the violation, not the player.

Be Prepared

- Know the setting
    - Your ship/location
- Know the system
- Know your players!
- Communicate with other GMs

Storytelling Through Roleplaying

Linear plots (railroading) is good for the GM and story but not good for the players because they're not empowered. A freeform sandbox style empowers the players but is hard on the GM and story. We recommend a compromise in styles where you have a directed flow, some freedom, and genre-based "soft barriers" that push players in the right direction, influencing them with character motivations and in-game consequences instead of OOC fiat. Decide the level of transparency you want to have with your players. Freeform is helped immensely by strong characters.

Remember the participant, the player, is the one creating the roleplay experience and your role as a GM is a facilitator for their imagination. Tell a coherent story because story is what helps us find meaning in life. Provide hooks and let your players fill in the detail.

Grand Argument Theory

In any story there are four sub-stories:

- The objective story (the historic/external point of view of events that happen)

- The protagonist's story (how the character changes and is impacted)
- The Impact character's story (of the person that impacts the main character)
- The subjective journey (The emotional journey between the characters)

Resources

- Random Generators
- The Big List of RPG Plots
- GM Advice @ RoleplayingTips.com

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Last update: **2019/09/21 19:07**