

# Roleplaying

Star Army is a play-by-post roleplaying game. It could also be described as collaborative fiction.

Once you're in a plot, start role-playing! If it's a single-post plot you can start right away (or as soon as it makes sense in the plot). If it's a [Joint Post](#) plot, then find out when the next chat session is (most plots have a scheduling thread in their forum).

## Basic Rules

1. Posts on Star Army, in general, do not have a word count, meaning they can be as long or as short as you need them to be.
  1. Game Masters and thread OPs may make exceptions to this based on their preferences, but it's their duty to make it clear at the start of the RP.
2. It's usually the GM or thread OP's role to post what is happening and what NPCs are saying and doing.
3. Respect other players' [Player's Rights](#).
  1. Do not control other people's characters or "auto" them without permission.
  2. Example: You can shoot *at* them, but you can't just *shoot* them, unless you're the GM.
4. Please post in third-person, past tense, like a novel. "Andrew reached for his weapon."

## Format and Use of Forum Code

The following formatting is standard for in-character posts:

- **Bold** text is used for announcements (such as the ship's intercom) and emphasis.
- *Italics* are used for:
  - wireless communication and telepathy (using quotation marks)
    - Example: "*Don't fall,*" the neko warned him.
  - thoughts (with or without quotation marks)
    - Example: *Ten seconds to get this spacesuit sealed*, Mia thought.
  - emphasis (for things like sarcasm, etc.)
    - Example: "I'm sure this will be an *entirely* eventful mission."
- Quote boxes should be used for any content from a previous post and for in-character quotes of things like electronic mail, dinner menus, etc.
- Parenthesis can be used to signify OOC (Out Of Character) comments. You should start the OOC comment with **OOO**: so it's clear what it is. Please don't make off-topic OOC comments during JPs, and keep the OOC to a minimum in IC posts.
- Use caution with colored text, as it may not be readable on some styles (Star Army has blue, red, white, and black styles).

# Communicate!

Communicate with other players and with your [Game Master](#).

Sub-plots, problems, questions, concerns, suggestions, and many, many other things have to be worked out between members, and these are the best ways to do it.

Ways to communicate:

- OOC threads
- Conversations (sometimes called PMs)
- The [chat room](#)

## Conflicts

Any major event, situation, condition, action, etc. which directly involves another Player's character must be discussed with said Player beforehand, if possible. The Player reserves the right to have any post deleted that directly involves their character and was not discussed beforehand, unless that post was made by the GM. The post will be deleted or moved and sent to the offending Player for editing.

In the case that someone has used your character in some way, or done something that went against one of your plots, sort it out politely and quickly. Attempt to work it out with the offending Player first. If this fails, take it to the Plot GM. In an RP as large as this one to become, it is nearly impossible to avoid all problems, but if we can sort them out smoothly, politely and quickly, there will be minimal difficulties.

## Metagaming

Let's all remember to keep OOC knowledge separate from IC knowledge. Don't direct your character to stuff if he/she wouldn't find it by themselves. That includes sniffing at a random moment when a character has no reason to do so and then find someone stalking them that way. If something is hidden, let it be hidden until there is a plausible reason for it to not be. Just because you know a player character is plotting to kill yours, etc. does not mean you can have your character act like he's especially alert for some reason. Keep it realistic.

## Breaking the Fourth Wall

**Q:** Is it possible, every once in a while (Like only once or twice in a plot arc) to do this in the name of comic relief?

For example:

- Luca: What would the audience think of this?

- Luca: "John? How come you keep saying things like: 'Press the X button to do something' whenever you give me instructions!?"
- Luca: "Oh, you're that girl I met in the prologue!"
- John: "Luca, turn the game console off right now. Cut the power!"

**A:** Only the GM of a plot is okay with it.

## Keeping Up

Try your hardest to read each and every new post in the threads your character is involved in. This cuts down on confusion and prevents conflicts in the storyline from arising. Print them if you need to. You are expected to post regularly (each plot has its own pacing guidelines). If you can't for some reason, let your RP partners know in the plot's OOC thread and excuse your character from the "scene" or arrange for someone else to play her in the meantime.

## Starting a Side Plot

In each adventure there are two types of plots: The Backbone Plot, and the various Sub-plots. The Backbone Plot takes precedence over sub-plots. Sub-plots must be worked in and around the Backbone Plot in order for the RP to function correctly. This is not to say that because a sub-plot goes against the Backbone Plot it can't be used. It simply means that you must either rework, or put off the sub plot until such a time as it can be used.

## Quality Of Writing

Writing is the means with which we interact with one another. It is vital that you write well, so that others can understand you and so they aren't distracted from the RP by errors. Don't bother posting a sentence if you can't be bothered to capitalize it or put a period at the end. The clearer your post, the less the likelihood it will be overlooked or misunderstood.

- Sentence structure, and correct grammar and spelling are a must.
- Double spacing between paragraphs is required. This means paragraphs should have a full blank line between them.
- All posts should be written in third person past tense. The third person is mostly for clarity because there are many "I's" in this story.
- Please use your character's name in the first reference to them in a paragraph (especially in JPs).
- Try to be detailed and descriptive.

## Ways to Roleplay

There are two main ways to roleplay on Star Army:

- Posting on the forums
- Joint posts

## Single Posts

This is your standard play-by-post RP. Most Star Army roleplay is done by posting directly onto a thread (or start a new one), which is called a Single Post or just a post. Sometimes single posts are consolidated into compilations.

Single posting is fairly easy: just post your characters speech and actions into the appropriate role-play thread.

The ideal roleplaying post:

1. Advances the plot/story
2. Is fun and interesting to read (Think details, action, and humor)
3. Involves other characters (Give the next poster something to react to!)

Posts are generally in chronological order. It's not required to wait for every player to have their turn, but it is courteous to give them a chance if you feel the story is starting to move along without their character; however, if the game is lagging and you are able to post, do it. And don't just post to yourself! Try to interact with other characters.

Please start each post by giving the location where it takes place (for example: *YSS Aeon Cargo Bay*).

## Joint Posts

Two more more players can collaborate on an in-character post. This is referred to as joint posting (JP). Joint posting saves time and can feel more exciting because it's done in real time. For JPs, we usually arrange a meeting time or just spontaneously start role-playing with whoever is online that fits into a plot. These RP sessions usually last about an hour or two and when we're done, one of the people in the RP session saves, edits, and posts the transcript (the joint post) onto the boards. The above methods of RP are why some parts of the board tend to have big, long posts with multiple characters and few replies—so don't let them intimidate you, they're just giant edited transcripts.

These accomplish several things, including:

- Speeding up the pace of the roleplay.
- The ability to accomplish complicated combat scenarios.
- Making multi-character interaction fluid.
- Adding narrative, story, and theme to the overall plot arc in large portions.
- Being able to talk about what's going on in real time, with all or most of the participants present.

Joint posts usually undergo editing before being posted for others to read. All in all, the joint post is here for the enjoyment of all role players on this site! Enjoy the quickly evolving plot, or back and forth social situation your character is a part of! Later, others will be able to enjoy it as well!

## JP Mediums

Yahoo messenger and IRC were once the most common JP tools but Etherpad type sites have become the most favored and used. They're real-time multi-user document editors that allow roleplayers to write a group RP post simultaneously.

- Etherpads
  - [Piratepad](#)
  - [PublishWith.Me](#)
  - [Shamblespad](#)
  - <http://write.roleplaygateway.com>
- Chatrooms
  - IRC

## Joining a Joint Post

When the needed players are all online, one of them will invite everyone else into a 'conference' to facilitate the JP. Just click 'Join this conference' when the request is delivered to your YIM client. When a GM posts 'ON:' to the conference, this is when OOC chatter should be kept to the plot, until 'OFF:' signaling the end of the JP is posted to the conference.

## JP Terminology

- ON: A signal that the JP has begun, at this point all OOC chatter not involving the plot must cease. To speak OOC, use brackets. '(message)' Followed by the setting (Example: "ON: YSS Sakura, Bridge").
- OFF: A signal indicating a temporary halt in mid JP, usually for OOC clarification or catching up a late player. Normal OOC chat can take place without brackets.
- OOC: Out of character, actions or chat related to Earth, or messages in the JP attributed to you, the player, not your character. After the GM signals the JP's beginning, put OOC comments in parenthesis and try to keep them to a bare minimum.
- OOS: Out of Scene; actions or dialogue that characters in the scene cannot experience. OOS events should take place in separate JPs.
- Editor: The player who has been tasked with clearing out all the chat handles from the raw transcript of the JP. They may also perform such tasks as spellchecking, fixing problem passages, and moving certain postings around slightly to improve the flow of the JP when read as a story.
- END: The end of a JP and end of a scene. The next JP will be a new scene, rather than a continuation.
- PAUSE: Similar to END, this signals the end of a JP, when the JP will be a direct continuation of the previously paused one.

## Flow

If you're used to a posting only RPG site, this can get tricky when you're pre-disposed towards longer narratives for your character. This changes however, when you are role playing with many other players and their characters. If you're expecting an answer to a question from another character, don't add on actions that need to take place after an answer is received. A pre-assigned 'order' of posters can help to supplement this.

Example A:

- Player A: At his behest, Eve stopped and stood at attention in the halls of the Academy, apparently the senior instructor needed to speak with her.
- Player B: "Just what unit would you like to train in first?" he asked, then walking away after receiving his answer.

In that assumed space of time before player A could respond, the GM might want to insert an external action. That is why this style can cause problems. Also, the answer Player A's character gave could not have been sufficient enough, or demanded an extended conversation on the part of Player B's character.

To reiterate, a shorter post does not have to mean a bad post.

## Order

As mentioned earlier, the order of posting will normally follow a logical order. For example: Between five players, the GM might begin with a post to set everyone in the JP. The character that most immediately needed to post will either do so, or be asked to by the GM in OOC. Then each player has their first post, and they continue in the same order unless a divergence is needed later.

If the above method is not used, or a more strict order is needed, the order should be decided beforehand. It is up to the GM to decide how strict their 'order' is.

Alternatively, we can do a free-for-all method that relies on situational awareness on the part of the players involved. In that case, posts would be entered on an as-needed basis and some characters may be skipped if they're not doing anything notable.

## JP Tips

- Make sure you have the time to JP. If you're not sure, ask how long it's expected to take. If you have to leave early, or can't JP at all, be sure to inform your plot's GM.
- Don't GM anything unless asked to do so.
- If you have to go away from your computer a moment for whatever reason, be sure to let everyone know. This is OOC, of course. (Bathroom, be right back)
- Do your best to use English (US) spelling. If you're not sure about a word, or are a poor speller, remember that the editor will be double-checking before it is posted for others to enjoy. In other words, if you spell something incorrectly it's not the end of the world.

- Pull up the technical schematics, descriptions, or character biographies you think you might need for reference at a moment's notice. In other words, have multiple windows open in case you would like to access information you might need to glance at while composing a post.
- Do not post in the present-tense.

## Post Your JP Immediately

Once a JP is finished, it should immediately be posted in the appropriate roleplay forum. If editing is not possible (due to time constraints or software problems), post the unedited JP and edit it later. This prevents "post collisions."

## Pacing

As a player, it is partially your responsibility to keep the game moving. You don't have to wait for the moderator to post to a turn when you're not in a combat situation. The moderator is only there to resolve major events that require mediation. So long as what is happening isn't going to change the face of the world, or isn't combat, don't wait for the moderator. Just continue roleplaying! You are encouraged to develop your character's relationships with others. Forge friendships, find a lover, argue, create rivalries, go out, see the sights! Experiment! Just don't do anything that will change the nature of the game without your GM's permission.

Most GMs even impose posting time limits in order to keep the pace up. If the game is lagging and you are able to post, do it. And don't just post to yourself! Try to interact with other characters to keep things exciting.

Posting speed and leave of absence policies are set by individual GMs. On a site-wide basis, threads are considered inactive if it has been a month since the last RP post.

## Flexible Timeline

At a site-wide level, a year in real life is equivalent to a year in the Star Army universe. However, you are not required to stay aligned with the actual dates throughout the year. To help keep track of space and time, please include the location, date, and time at the start of your posts as needed.

See also: [Yamatai](#)

## Scene

The scene is where the focus and action of the Joint Post takes place, usually, in a space where all the characters (and thus, an imaginary observer) can interact with one another. It is considered rude to post actions and speech which occur outside of the scene, because

1. It disrupts the scene and
2. Characters can't react to it.

A scene is generally a room or area, such as a ship's bridge or a clearing in a forest; it is generally specified at the start of a roleplay (eg; ON: "YSS Sakura Wardroom").

It is both the players and the GM's responsibility to keep things within a unified scene. Think of the roleplay as an interactive movie. You have one camera—the reader. You can skip between scenes if it makes sense, but DO NOT just throw everything together, or things will get horribly confusing.

Players who post out-of-scene might have their posts removed from the edited transcript.

The best way to avoid being Out-Of-Scene is to have your character join the others.

## Subject

The subject is the person or thing taking action in a particular paragraph. If the subject changes, one should start a new paragraph. The subject (generally a PC) should always be mentioned in paragraphs, unless it is obvious (such as a verbal reply when only two characters are speaking). To avoid repetitiveness, you may want to vary the subject; for example, [Ketsurui Hanako](#) could be referred to as Hanako, the Shosho, Shosho Ketsurui, the Captain, the Blue-Haired Neko, the Golden-eyed girl, et cetera.

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