

Story



Time



Frames



STORY TIME FRAMES

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INFLUENCES

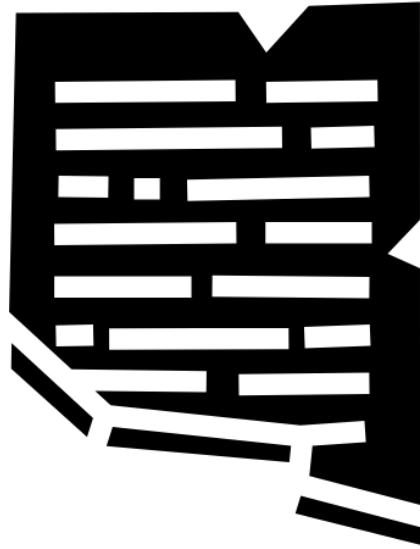
Microscope by Ben Robbins
The Sundered Land by D. Vincent Baker

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X Card by John Stavropoulos
<http://tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg>

THE GAME

Story Time Frames is a set of rules for telling a story with your friends over social media. You and your friends detail moments in a fictional world to create a timeline of historic events, important people, and interesting moments. The narrative of a game of Story Time Frames may cover the span of centuries, decades, or even just an incredibly eventful weekend. It is designed to be played on any social media platform: Facebook, Slack, Discord, Instagram, etc. You will find tips for different methods of play and which social media platforms fit best with Story Time Frames later in this rulebook.



RULES OF PLAY

The player who starts the game is called the **Storyteller**. The **Storyteller** begins each game by choosing a method of play, providing a **Beginning** (when the story begins) and an **Ending** (when the story and the game ends), and describing the rules of play for everyone in a post on their chosen social media platform. It is the Storyteller's responsibility to create a **Taste Menu** and an **X Card**, moderate comments, and be supportive of each player's contributions. The Storyteller is also responsible for commenting when the story is completed so that all the players know when the game is over.

The **Beginning** and **Ending** are a great chance for the Storyteller to set expectations for the story's genre. For example, "2157 - The generation ship Arroway leaves the Sol system for the last time" and "3102 - The Arroway is disassembled for the last time" that sounds like a sci-fi story. This is also the Storyteller's chance to show which unit of time they care about. In the previous example, you would expect participants in the story to post about what happens during each year of the Arroway's journey, sometimes jumping forward by centuries. But if your Beginning is "October 7th, 1986 - Private Detective Vickers is hired to

solve the mystery of the golden calf" and your Ending is "October 11th, 1986 - Private Detective Vickers solves the mystery" that sounds like a story that cares more about days, perhaps even down to the hour or minute.

Each person who contributes to the timeline of events by posting a comment is a **Scribe**. Scribes reply to the **Storyteller's** original post with a date or resource amount (depending on the method of play) and a brief description of what happened. When you play as a Scribe it is your responsibility to provide interesting details, to honour what has already been posted, and to follow the rules of play as set out by the Storyteller. Everyone gets a chance to contribute to the story, so make sure you're not posting too often, or that you don't post something that directly contradicts or undoes another Scribe's work. For example, if someone posts about the birth of a character who will play a role later in the timeline, don't post about how that character dies a few years later. Instead perhaps post about an important moment in that character's life, and then provide your own contribution to the story.

Storytellers are also Scribes. They can comment on their post with interesting contributions. Just make sure you don't steer the story too much towards your own goals, Timeframes works best when each player gets to enrich the story with their own details.

BEGINNINGS & ENDINGS

Writing a compelling **Beginning** and **Ending** scenario is important to get a game of Story Time Frames running. It is the **Storyteller's** responsibility to write these endings, though you are free to collaborate with the other **Scribes**.

The Beginning and End should use the same units of time or resources to make it clear what the story is about and how it will progress. For example if your Beginning is "1273 - Sir Arthur leaves home on his pilgrimage to the Land of the Dead" the ending should be something like "1317 - Sir Arthur returns home without a soul." You don't want to use days and hours in one part and just the year or another unit of time in another. You want to be specific so all the players know what unit of time or resource to track. A good Beginning and Ending also hints and what may have happened in the story, giving prompts for the players to build from.

For example, "2175 - The spaceship Arroway leaves the Sol system" and "3102 - The Arrow arrives at it's final destination" illustrate a science fiction story, but these say little about what might have happened to the Arroway and its crew. A better Beginning and Ending would be "2175 - The generation ship Arroway leaves the Sol system for the last time" and "The Arroway is disassembled for the last time." These two prompts hint at all sort of things that could have happened to humanity and the Arroway during that span of time. How many times was it disassembled? Why? How many times did it leave the Sol system? Why is it a generation ship? What becomes of humanity the last time it is disassembled? A good beginning and ending will get all the players excited about the moments in the story you are telling together.



EXAMPLES

Here are some examples of strong Beginnings and Endings to start your game of Story Time Frames. Feel free to use or modify these for use in your own game.

- Year 0 - Human survivors begin to rebuild after an apocalyptic conflict.
- Year 257 - The Empire of Pacifica falls
- 30 adventurers leave the town of Hogsmead to kill the Dragon Queen
- 2 adventurers leave the lair of the Dragon Queen
- 12:00 AM - Six thieves break into the Hoffstader Mansion
- 3:42 AM - The last two surviving thieves reunite and flee the Hoffstader Mansion
- October 12th, 2199, 11:10 AM - The hacker group White Rabbit infiltrates the first of the Ziggurat corporation's servers
- October 14th, 2199, 6:07 PM - White Rabbit withdraws billions of dollars from the Ziggurat corporations corporate accounts
- The mining vessel Vespia finds a new form of life on the planet Set-III. 57 crew members remain.
- The last living member of the crew is rescued by the space freighter Logos.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Story Time Frames is best experienced on a social media platform where the **Storyteller** has some control over who can contribute, where posts and comments can be easily edited, and everything can be contained in a single thread or channel so that players can easily see what has been posted.

For this reason Twitter is ill-suited for playing Story Time Frames. It is impossible to moderate, posts cannot be edited, and it is hard to contain each Scribe's contributions into a single comprehensive thread. That said, if Twitter is the platform you wish to use, I suggest using a **#hashtag** to make each post by the Storyteller and each Scribe easy to find. This also makes it easy for people to opt-in or opt-out of the game.

FACEBOOK

Facebook is an ideal platform for Timeframes. The Storyteller has plenty of room to start the game with their first post, and they can also link to a Taste Menu document or keep one updated on the original post. The Storyteller can easily moderate comments, each contribution can be edited, and the thread is easy to find and follow.

INSTAGRAM

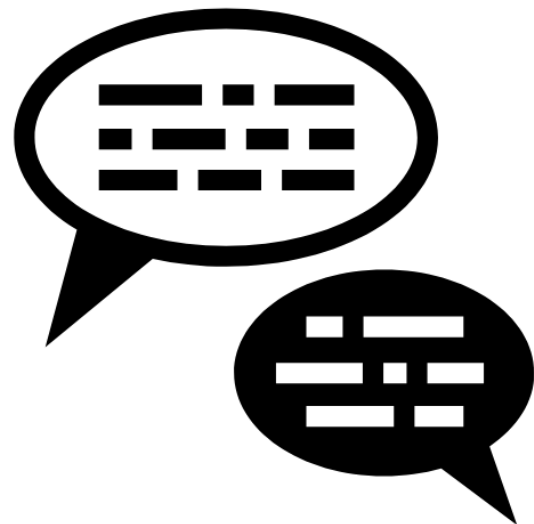
Similar to Facebook, Instagram gives the Storyteller and Scribes a lot of freedom to tell their story in an easy to follow thread. The Storyteller can even get creative and list the rules and/or the Beginning and Ending conditions of the game in a picture.

DISCORD & SLACK

These chat rooms can be a great place to play Story Time Frames so long as they are contained within their own channel. Everything can be found in one location, and it is simple to update and edit posts if necessary. The Storyteller should make sure they have the ability to delete posts if anyone violates the Taste Menu or uses the X card.

OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA

Feel free to play Timeframes on your social media of choice. Just remember that something like Facebook or Instagram is best: you want a single thread that can be easily followed and moderated.



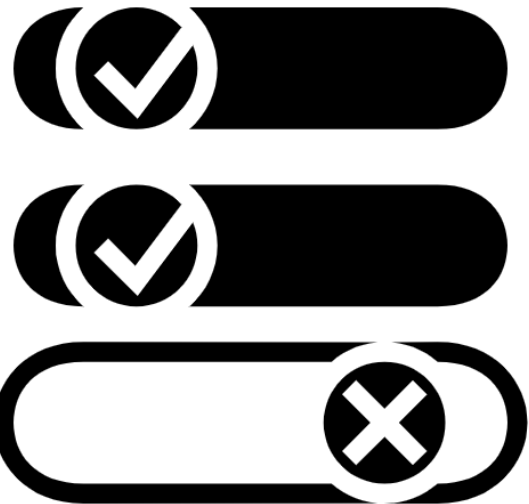
TASTE MENU

Story Time Frames is a game where people get to create their own fictional world, characters, and conflicts. To ensure this game only contains topics that everyone playing is comfortable with you'll create a menu of things everyone wants and does not want to see in the course of the game. This is called a **Taste Menu**.

The Taste Menu can be part of the Storyteller's original post that starts the game, the first comment immediately after it, or a document linked in the original post. It must be made available to every potential player of the game. To make a Taste Menu create two sections labelled "Yes" and "No" or "Okay" and "Not Okay." Starting with the Storyteller, everyone who contributes can comment or directly message the Storyteller something they definitely want to see in the game, or something they definitely do not want to see in the game. The Storyteller writes each preference under the appropriate heading of the Taste Menu.

These could be specific things fitting to the genre of story being told, or just general ideas or topics the players are interested in including or excluding. Each player can add things to the Taste Menu. The two sections don't need to be even, they just need to include anything the players feel strongly about.

Players can always add or remove things from the Taste Menu as the game progresses. Including and excluding the ideas recorded on the Taste Menu is the responsibility of everyone playing the game. Just because something is in the "Yes" column doesn't mean it needs to be present in every post, but if you think your post might contain something from the "No" section, don't include it. These are ideas that the story of your game will gravitate around or avoid as it is told.



THE X CARD

In order to make sure the game doesn't stray into territory that the players involved are uncomfortable with for any reason, create an X Card. This can mean replying to the offending comment with an "X", using an X emote, or some other emote as determined by the Storyteller in the original post.

If at any point one of the players is uncomfortable about what is being portrayed during the game, whether it is present on the Taste Menu or not, they can comment with "X", use an X emote, or whatever method indicated by the Storyteller in the original post. If this ever happens it is the Storyteller's responsibility to delete the comment. Don't delve on why the X Card was used, respect the decision and move on.

METHODS OF PLAY

There are several ways to play Story Time Frames, and each one is better at telling certain stories. If you are the Storyteller be sure to include the general rules of the method of play you have selected in your first post. Feel free to copy the examples given in this document.


FREEFORM TIMELINE

This is a game where all the players will have the freedom to detail major events in a fictional world. The Storyteller posts the rules as well as a Beginning and an Ending that will encompass the major events of the story. Each player may contribute to the story by posting a date and then a description of what happened during that time.

For a short game you will want to pick a start and end date that are separated by only a few moments of time, like a few years, months, or days. For a longer game you can have a Beginning and Ending separated by hundreds or thousands of years. A Freeform Timeline game is completed when there are no more available dates between the Beginning and Ending of the game.

FREEFORM PROGRESSIVE TIMELINE

In this mode all the players describe major events in a fictional world. The Storyteller begins with a post about the game, the rules, and the Beginning and Ending as normal. However, whenever a player makes a post, the time of that post must come after the previous post. For example, if the previous post was in the year 1656, the next post must be at least 1 year after that time. Scribes may skip ahead in time as long as they want, which means this mode of play is best suited for longer time frames (at least 1 century is best if you're measuring time with years). A Freeform Progressive Timeline game is completed when you reach the Ending.



Michael: Let's tell a story about a fictional world. I'll start with a beginning and an ending. Everyone can contribute by posting a date and a description of what happened.

I'll keep a taste menu on this post with anything we want to include or exclude from our story. If anyone is uncomfortable with things being portrayed, please reply with an X or message me and I will remove the post.

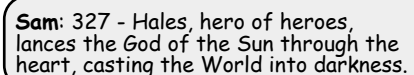
Taste Menu - Yes: Mortal heroes, myths. No: Sexual assault, spiders

Beginning: 0 - The Gods create the World

Ending: 1275 - The last God disappears



Alice: 42 - The scribe Scippio accidentally captures a God in a story.



Sam: 327 - Hales, hero of heroes, lances the God of the Sun through the heart, casting the World into darkness.



Jacob: 1000 - The New Millenium. Tzaphquiel, God of justice, goes missing during the celebrations.

RANDOM INCREMENTAL TIMELINE

This method is similar to Freeform Progressive Timeline except each player uses some sort of on-hand randomizer to determine how far they progress the timeline. This could be a single die with any number of sides, so a player can roll the die and add that number to the year of the previous post and describe what happens. This could also be something like a deck of cards, where the player draws a card and adds the numerical value of that card to the previous posts' year. A Random Incremental Timeline game ends when the Ending is reached or surpassed.

FREEFORM RESOURCES

Instead of telling a story using units of time, you could do so by tracking a dwindling or growing resource. In this mode the Beginning is a certain amount of resources and the Ending is a different amount of resources. Perhaps you are telling the story of human beings doomed to a mass exodus from Earth, starting with a fixed population, and ending when you reach a population of zero. Or maybe your game takes place before this exodus, and your resource is people being added to the exodus ship. A Freeform Resources game ends when you reach the Ending amount of resources.



Allison: Hey folks! I want to play a game of Story Time Frames. We all tell a story based on a timeline of events. Everyone can contribute to the story by posting a date and a description of what happened. But when you do, roll a dice or draw a random playing card to determine how many years have passed since the previous post.

I'll keep a taste menu updated on this post with anything we want in our story. If anyone is uncomfortable with things being portrayed, please comment with an X and I'll remove the post.

Taste Menu - Yes: Pirate history, No: Sea monsters, detailed violence

Beginning: 1652 - The Brandywine sets sail under an independent flag

Ending: 1710 - The Brandywine sinks

Allison: 1654 - Captain Katarina Rogue raids a British supply ship.

Ben: 1660 - The Brandywine's only safe port, Port Royal, turns them away due to the infamous "bar brawl crawl." Captain Rogue leads the Brandywine crew to the legendary hidden treasure hoard of the Golden Hind.

Denise: 1662 - The crew of the Brandywine leaves Captain Katarina Rogue behind in Scotland after a multi-year hunt for a legendary treasure. The crew is soon arrested for piracy and the Brandywine is left unoccupied in port in London.

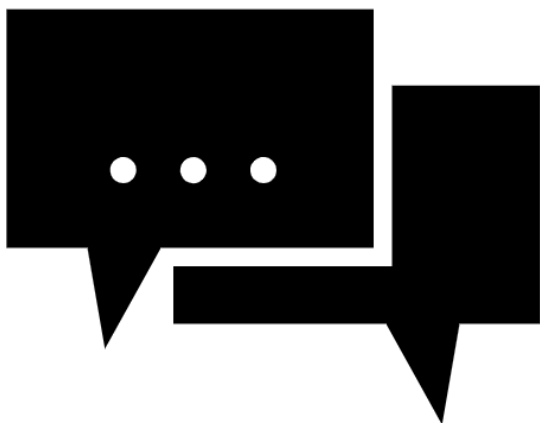
Michael: 1663 - A group of orphans and thieves escaping the law use the Brandywine to flee from London.

RANDOM INCREMENTAL RESOURCES

This game mode is similar to a Random Incremental Timeline, except you keep track of resources rather than time. Each player uses dice or playing cards to increase or decrease the amount of resources you're keeping track of, depending on the story. Each player adds or subtracts to the resource amount of the previous post using the value of the die rolled or the card drawn. A Random Incremental Resources game ends when the amount of resources described in the Ending is reached or surpassed.

MIX IT UP!

There are several ways to play Story Time Frames so feel free to experiment to figure out what sort of stories you want to tell with your friends and how to tell them. You could even combine the game modes to create something new! Maybe you want each post to advance time and dwindling resources, or have a timeline that keeps track of specific calendar dates or even specific times of day. Play around with different timeframes! Instead of tracking years you could tell a story that encompasses a weekend, or maybe a fight scene that lasts only a few minutes!



Leeland: Story time! Let's tell a story about a fictional world by keeping track of a finite resource. I'll start with a beginning and an ending. Everyone can contribute to the story by posting a comment and a description of what happened. When you do, roll a die or draw a playing card and increase the resource by that amount. Make sure to include the current total of our resource in the post!

I'll keep a taste menu updated on this post with anything we want to include or exclude from our story. If anyone is uncomfortable with things being portrayed, please post an 'X' or comment with an X emote and I'll remove the post.

Taste Menu

Yes: Magical sci-fi, space witches

No: Torture

Beginning: 0 Survivors have joined the fleet

Ending: 150 survivors have joined the fleet, and the ships leave the doomed planet

Aaron: The pirates of Ket-V dig up their asteroid caches and join. 11 survivors join the fleet.

Leeland: 3 star witches are sent from the covens. 14 survivors have joined.

Brenna: Half a dozen diplomats from the Ket system argue their way on board the fleet. The citizens of the doomed planet Ket Prime hold demonstrations outside the fleet landing site. 20 survivors total.

Cassie: The star witches reveal that they have brought with them 5 child-codices, each memorized the collected work of the Ket system. 25 survivors have joined.

Ella: The warriors of Ket-II hold a tournament to determine who will join. There are 8 warriors left at the end. 40 survivors total.