

# FAYBELL

*A co-operative storytelling activity*

**15-30 minutes**      **2-4 players**

## Overview

First, determine 4 central **'story elements'** and their order. In a 2nd phase, weave the story - one sentence at a time. Each player not only continues the story, but also provides a word to restrict and/or help the following player.

## Choose the Starting Player

*I suggest the best storyteller. Or if you can't decide that, the player who most recently told a good story. Or if you can't decide that, choose the player whose name starts earliest in the alphabet.*

*There is no need to shuffle, but feel free to do so.*

## Phase 1 - Creating story elements

Each player, in turn, flips a card face up and uses the 2 letters as initials of 2 words, describing a story element. *Use the letters in order. E.g. IQ could be 'Intelligent Questions', 'Industrial Quota', 'Illustrated Questionnaire', 'Inventing Quoridor' or 'Irritating Quandry'.*

Place each card face up on a communal **'timeline'** wherever you choose - before, after or even in-between previous **story elements**. *This timeline dictates the order that the story elements should appear in the story.*

After the 4th **story element** has been placed, the storytelling begins.

[deck] [] [] [] []

## Phase 2 - Storytelling

The next player now flips a new card face up, then starts the first sentence of the story with either of the letters on the card.

After saying the sentence, they will then say a **keyword** starting with the other letter, which the following player must include in their sentence. *This could be a word aimed at guiding the next player, implying where you hope they will take the story, giving them a helpful restriction, or perhaps - for extra silliness - challenging them with a strange word that will be hard to fit in.*

Each subsequent player flips another card; starts a sentence using one of the letters; includes the previous player's **keyword** within that sentence; then chooses a **keyword** starting with the other letter for the next player to include.

*If someone wants to speak for more than one sentence, that's OK. If they forget to use the keyword mentioned, they can add another sentence and include the word. The intention is simply that no player should dominate.*

## Progressing and Concluding

Together, try to tell a satisfying story involving every **story element**.

Whenever the leftmost **story element** is mentioned, turn it sideways. You can only turn one **story element** on your turn. *Keep taking turns, slowly moving towards the next story element in the timeline. You can keep referring to previous story elements. It is better if you do not rush through, but instead take your time and enjoy the story you are telling. Feel free to take as many turns as you wish before incorporating the next story element.*

[deck] [discards] [sideways card] [sideways card] [] []

After using every **story element**, work together to reach an enjoyable end. Anyone can finish the game after their contribution, simply by saying 'the end'.

If any of you are happy, you all win!

*Maybe take a minute to reflect upon the story you told together - its beauty, warts and idiosyncracies. Or just smile at each other in silent appreciation of the story that you - and only you - have told. Or do neither of these. The choice is yours. Your life is a story that only you can tell.*

# USEFUL WORDS FOR AWKWARD LETTERS

J : Jaguar, Jet plane, Jumping, Jen, Japan, Jelly, Just

K: Kangaroo, King, Koala, Killers,

Q: Qi, Quick, Quandry, Question, Queen, Quarrel,  
Quacking, Quiet, Quest, Quality, Queer, Quoting

V: Vet, Vest, Veering, Vertebrates, Values, Venting

W: Wetness, Wildness, Wit, Wind, Water, Wearables

X: X-men (*mutant superheroes*), Xenopus (*a type of clawed frog without a tongue*) xerosis (*abnormal dryness of the skin or eyeball*) xylem (*water-carrying vessels in plants*) X-chromosome, X-factor, X-rays, Xmas, Xena (*star of an old TV show*), Xanthos (*a city in ancient Lycia, where Turkey is now located*), Xyster (*a tool for scraping bones*)

Z: Zoo, Zebra, Zenith, Zest, Zero, Zigzag, Zone

## POSSIBLE STORY ELEMENTS

The card [AP] could be:

- Algerian President
- Antarctic Piracy
- Angry Pounding
- Alternative Party
- American Possibilities
- Archaic Pride
- Anteater Poison
- Amaretto Pouring



The card [xx] could be:

- xx



## OPTIONAL: FEWER ELEMENTS

If you wish, feel free to play with only 3 **story elements** rather than 4. This will make them easier to remember and tends towards either shorter or more freeform stories.

Be sure to not rush through them all in phase 2, but take as much time as you wish exploring each **story element** before introducing the next one. Tangents are always fine.

## AS A LEARNING AID

Children who can already read might find this helps increase language proficiency. **Faybell** motivates use a wider vocabulary to fit the starting letters. It also strongly encourages creative thinking as you first devise unique **story elements** and then use language to connect them all.

## CREDITS/THANKS/HISTORY

Designed and developed by Bez, with the help of many playtesters. Special thanks to PlaytestUK as a whole, Andy Yiangou, Dave Cousins and Andrew Dennison. Thanks to everyone who playtested - at conventions, PlaytestUK meetups, at my home or in the pub. These rules were proof-read by \_\_\_\_\_ .

This game was probably inspired by the 'one word stories' that are often told as an improvisational exercise. The letters were used as a new restriction and - to accommodate - the fragments of the stories were made longer.

Originally, the game was very different. The exact rules I played by at UKGE 2015 have been forgotten (I mean, I can't remember them) but I do remember some folk having fun with it. The elements weren't a timeline as such. They may have all been a starting point, and then you carried on until you wanted to stop.

I remember that shortly afterwards, the elements became 3 aspects - location, key character and theme/topic. Still, they provided a starting point but no direction.

By early 2016, the game had a rule of 5 story elements on a timeline and this rule continued until November 2017 - well after the printing of the 1st edition.

I noticed - in the hundreds of games that I oversaw at conventions - that folk occasionally forgot what the story elements are. I tried playing with only 4 to minimise this and the game seemed to work better! For the 2nd edition of the deck, the rules were slightly changed.

If you ever have any feedback, questions or comments, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

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