



## NARRATIVE DESIGN TEST PACKET

**START**

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This companion pitch shows off how well you can get creative given certain limitations. Don't forget the barks!



## Option A: Sci-Fi Companion

You're writing a companion character for a sci-fi, space-travel RPG. Please provide the following details: physical description, high level backstory, class, gender, skills, and any other vital characteristics you deem fit. Total length should not exceed 250 words.

Please write 3 barks for this character for each of the following states: giving a critical hit, low health, succeeding at one of their skill checks, a rallying cry, and poisoned/ill/weakened state.

## Option B: Fantasy Companion

You're writing a companion character for a fantasy RPG akin to D&D. Please provide the following details: physical description, high level backstory, class, race, gender, skills, and any other vital characteristics you deem fit. Total length should not exceed 250 words.

Please write 3 barks for this character for each of the following states: giving a critical hit, low health, succeeding at one of their skill checks, a rallying cry, and poisoned/ill/weakened state.

# 1. COMPANION PITCH & BARK SAMPLES

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## Option A: Sci-Fi Companion

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Please write 3 barks for this character for each of the following states: giving a killing hit, low health, succeeding at one of their skill checks, a combat shout, and a plea for assistance/weakened state.

## Option B: Fantasy Companion

You're writing a companion character for a fantasy RPG akin to D&D. Please provide the following details: physical description, high level backstory, class, race, gender, skills, and any other vital characteristics you deem fit. Total length should not exceed 250 words.

Please write 3 barks for this character for each of the following states: giving a killing hit, low health, succeeding at one of their skill checks, a combat shout, and a plea for assistance/weakened state.

## 2. DIALOGUE VARIATION BARK SAMPLES

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These dialogue variation bark samples display your ability to provide clever additions to the game to provide immersion and avoid repetition. Barks must be specific to the situation, but broad enough that they can be used in a variety of situations.

### **Option A: Learning a New Spell**

You're writing variations for a spellcaster player character. Please write at least five variations of the player learning a new spell. Note that these variations must be valid for any kind of spell - conjuration, necromancy, fire, ice, etc.

### **Option B: Capturing a Checkpoint**

You're writing variations for an infantryman player character in a military FPS. Please write at least five variations of the player character capturing a new location/checkpoint. Note that these must be valid for any type of location - forest, desert, compound, city, etc.

### **Option C: Caught by the Cops**

You're writing variations for a 1920's gangster player character. Please write at least five variations of the player character failing a mission and caught by the cops, resulting in a "game over" screen. Note that these must be valid for any kind of failure - failed stealth, failed combat, etc.

### 3. CINEMATIC SAMPLE

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This sample gives you a vague prompt from which to create a dramatic, high tension scene. Be creative! Fill in the setting, characters, and stakes. If you are struggling, consider existing settings and characters for inspiration.

Note that you do not need to stick to the specific prompt, but you should write a high tension scene between two characters that has satisfying tension & resolution, or twist.

Fill in the following prompt with your own ideas, then write a short (3-5 page) cinematic in screenplay format based on it. This should fit a 3-5 minute cinematic.

PROMPT:

- CHARACTER A and CHARACTER B are in a [BAD SITUATION]
- CHARACTER A wants X, but CHARACTER B wants Y
- However, there is a [PLOT TWIST] which makes them act
- They must formulate a plan to [RESOLVE ACTION] and enact it as gameplay resumes.

## 4. PLAYER CHARACTER BACKSTORY

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The player character backstory offers a unique challenge with a constrained prompt which must remain open-ended for the player. Consider how to balance something interesting with something that won't overshadow the rest of the game.

You are writing for an action-adventure cyberpunk dystopian game. The game has four unique player characters who all need backstories. Choose one, and from the bullet points below, please write a full-length bio for this character (or do them all!). The bio should be between 650-800 words.

### **Character A: Eunji**

- female, Korean, mid-20s, small and lithe
- rogue-type character
- raised on the streets by her gang, the Night Dragons, after her parents were killed by an IntelOps raid gone-wrong
- wants to protect her younger sister, Kali, but doesn't want her involved in the gang

### **Character B: Daniel**

- male, late 20s, American, stout and muscular
- close-range fighter and brawler
- wanting to do more with his life, he left his job as a bouncer for one of Bellington's busiest clubs, Dreamfunk, and is looking for bigger opportunities

## 4. PLAYER CHARACTER BACKSTORY

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### Character C: Ulrich

- male, German, mid-30s, tall and fit
- intelligence, ranged weapons
- former member of Intelligence Operations (IntelOps) before being sold out by his ex-partner, Martin, for learning about internal corruption and dirty cops
- wants to get revenge on Martin while purging the corruption from the pseudo-military branch he worked for

### Character D: Sol

- female, late-30s, tall and lean
- technologically savvy, gun-woman
- a pilot and independent drug-runner in the Gelesh Waste, she's the fastest pilot in the region, with several bounties on her head
- wants to avoid conflict with the groups that want her head, and looking for the biggest job she can

## 5. IMPROVE A MISSION DESIGN DOC

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This sample gives you an opportunity to flex those design muscles and consider the scope of a mission.

Your mission designer has given you the following mission pitch. How would you improve it? If you feel you need more details about the game and its narrative, please fill them in yourself.

### **Mission Pitch:**

[Context for the mission: narrative leading up to the mission, locations, high-level narrative, character goals, gameplay goals, loot/reward/progression.]

### **Objective One: Enter the Building**

Enemies are guarding the mansion grounds, either in idle or pacing the area. The player has found only one route in: the restoration work along the east side of the mansion, revealing an old crawlspace system.

### **Gameplay Overview:**

The player has two options- take out the guards and make their way inside through the construction, or look for an opportunity to enter the crawlspace unseen. The objective is complete when the player enters the crawlspace.





### **Objective Two: Explore the Building & Look for Clues**

Player crawls through the floorspace and finds a trapdoor into the main floor of the mansion. The player must now explore the mansion to find clues.

#### **Gameplay Overview:**

The player may wander through the mansion, looking for clues. The objective is complete when the player finds the necessary clues and examinable information.

### **Objective 3: Escape**

When the player finds the necessary clues and information, guards are alerted and the player must escape to the river with the clues and info.

#### **Gameplay Overview:**

The player may either sneak out of the mansion through a broken attic window or take out the enemies and leave through the front door. The objective is complete when the player rendezvous with the boat waiting for him in the river.

## 6. DESIGN A QUEST

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Some narrative roles require that you help design quests as well as write them. Either way, you'll be prepared with this sample. Note that you may not need to fill in every section, and you may want to detail more information as needed. Treat this document as though it will be handed to a coworker to write.

You are writing for a either 1) a fantasy RPG, 2) a sci-fi shooter, or 3) a topic of your choice. Your lead has asked you to write a design doc for a side quest and communicate the vision and specs of the quest to your team.

Your design doc should fall within the following parameters:

- Be no more than 4 pages (this should be a sidequest/miniquest in length).
- Remain in the same gameplay region.
- Have a satisfying start and finish.
- Detail the flow of the mission, loot, information gathered, encounters, and special assets.

**Title:** name the quest

**Region:** the player should not have to cross the map to complete this quest.

**Summary:** write a brief summary of the quest here. A few short paragraphs will suffice.

**Quest Giver:** NPC name

**Quest Giver Location:** the specific location at which the player receives the quest.

## 6. DESIGN A QUEST

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**Quest Goal Location:** the specific location at which the player completes the quest.

**Major NPCs:** list their name and key traits (job, race, appearance, etc.)

**Player Actions:** what are the steps the player must take to start, progress, and complete this quest? Consider the player actions as the “Objectives” that will pop up on the player’s screen, or in their journal. Don’t forget any branching or optional paths. Illustrate the flow of the quest in a clear manner. Consider using a flowchart.

**Narrative Information Learned:** what key narrative info does the player learn about the world?

**Encounters:** combat or otherwise, what does the player encounter on this quest? Consider encounters they may have while traveling to and from, not just conversations or battles they have for this quest specifically.

**Loot Given:** what does the player receive from completing this quest? This may also include level-ups or game mechanic perks.

**Asset Requests:** are there any special art, VFX, animation, sound, area design details, or other assets needed for this quest? Think of the other departments you work with - what do they need to make this quest come to life?

**Post Document Considerations:** briefly explain the choices you made and why.

## 7. WRITE A QUEST

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This sample may be one of the more complicated, but it displays your game writing ability more than any other!



Using your outline above or the suggested one below, please construct and write the conversations needed for a small side quest. Use whatever format you are comfortable with (Word, Twine, a flowchart software), but please ensure the quest format is easy-to-follow.

Please meet the following parameters:

- Do not stray far from the quest design document.
- This quest should be in the form of conversation files - player and NPC dialogue only.
- Do not exceed 1,500 words total.
- Include at least three instances where a player may use their skills to advantage (or disadvantage!). Example skills: persuasion, stealth, athletics, insight, history, charisma, etc.

Ultimately, the aim is to create a small quest that feels immersive to the player. Don't forget to reference the quest design document and include necessary loot, lore, and other details as necessary. Feel free to embellish lore and characters to make the world feel lived-in.

## 7. WRITE A QUEST

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### Quest Design Doc Reference

You are writing a short quest for a fantasy RPG. Fill in the details as necessary, and feel free to embellish, while staying true to the doc.

**Title:** [write your own ]

**Region:** Kaerlund, Northlands. A coastal region in the north, populated by lords, soldiers, traveling merchants, and fishermen.

**Summary:** the player has just arrived in the coastal village of Fallund, in Kaerlund as a part of the main storyline. The region has been plagued by missing shipments and raids from a band of mercenaries, the Ravagers.

Upon speaking with Gunnhild, the lord's Thegn, the player may accept a quest to investigate wrecked ships along the northern coast of Fallund. When the player investigates, they find remains of merchants, and tracks leading to a band of Ravagers hiding out in a local cave. The player may either 1) fight the Ravagers, 2) return to Gunnhild with this information, or 3) attempt to negotiate with the Ravagers.

If the player attempts to talk to the Ravagers, they will say that they were the ones shipwrecked and did not dare go back to the town for help. Whether this is true is up to you.

Upon returning to Gunnhild, the player may 1) report their findings (and earn a greater reward if they wiped out the Ravagers), or 2) attempt to lie to Gunnhild about the cause of the shipwrecks.



## 7. WRITE A QUEST

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**Quest Giver:** Gunnhild

**Quest Giver Location:** Valhol, the mead hall.

**Quest Goal Location:** the north strand of Fallund

### Major NPCs:

**Gunhild:** the lord's thegn. A broad redheaded woman in well-polished metalarmor. Stern.

**Ragnar:** the lead Ravager. A lean, muscled man in leather armor and warpaint. Clever.

### Player Actions:

- talk to Gunhild, acquire quest
- travel to the North Strand
- investigate shipwrecks, find tracks
- follow to Ravager camp
- (optional) talk to or fight the Ravagers
- return to Gunhild with a report

**Narrative Information Learned:** the player learns about the tensions between the Ravagers and Kaerlund, and the people are suffering from food shortages in Fallund. The player may learn that the lord taxes his people harshly in an attempt to conquer foreign lands.



## 7. WRITE A QUEST

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**Encounters:** the player will encounter a shipwreck, assorted loot among the ships, and the camp of Ravagers. Combat or stealth may ensue at the Ravager camp. The player may also encounter randomly spawned monsters on the path to the ships.

**Loot Given:** [please supply loot, names, and abilities if applicable]

**Asset Requests:** the area must include a camp with tents and campfire effects and several broken ships.