

A Spark in Fate Core

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Illustrations by the many talented artists at The Noun Project

Building worlds is an exciting, collaborative, and creative process. This is a hybrid system that uses the procedures of **Spark RPG** to support a game powered by **Fate Core**.

1. You start by listing your favourite **Media**.
2. Explain the **Inspirations** from your media.
3. Use those inspirations to **Describe the Genre**.
4. **Establish Facts** about the Setting.
5. **Create a Title** to focus your vision.
6. Create a list of potential **Issues** for the setting
7. **Order the Issues**, picking three of them from the list.
8. Create an **Aspect** for each Issue.
9. Create two **Faces** for each Aspect.
10. Create a **Place** for each Spark unused.

All you need to start is a blank sheet of paper, one token per person, and a group of friends. This replaces chapter 3 in Fate Core.

Step 1: List your Favourite Media

Go around the table, and ask each person to name one of their favourite pieces of media. This could be a book, a movie, video game, comic, poem, or a song. It's ok if other people don't know the media, so try to make them unique.

Write these down on the sheet under the heading of **Media**.



Step 2: Gather Inspirations

Go around the table again. Now, everyone explains what they like the most about their choice. Write these down concisely in a numbered list on the sheet under the heading of **Inspirations**. Each person can add more Inspirations to the list if they want.

This step is all about gathering ideas and brainstorming. You assemble a list of ingredients that you would like to include in the Setting. The more ingredients, the more material you have available to define the world. You aren't obliged to use all of your inspirations.



Step 3: Describe the Genre

As a group, consider all of the inspirations and decide on some single genre for your Setting. Here are a few common genres you can pick from, though this isn't a comprehensive list.

- Alternate History
- Fantasy
- Modern
- Romance
- Mystery
- Horror
- Sci-fi
- Super-hero



Once you have your genre, you get to explain what exactly makes your Setting different from others within the genre. Create a single adjective or noun that describes those differences. The best descriptors are emotional, cultural, or philosophical.

This step provides a common vision to interpret your inspirations and establish Facts. Write the genre and descriptor on the sheet.

Step 4: Establish Facts

In this step, you establish Facts about the Setting. Each Fact expresses two different inspirations on the sheet, and are established by asking a few questions.



Everyone at the table should take two tokens from the supply. The GM then starts the process by asking one question about the setting. **Questions** must be based on the Inspirations you previously created, and ideally, they should focus on how two specific inspirations interrelate.

Anyone with a token may put that token forward into the middle of the table and claim the right to answer that question by creating a Fact about the setting. The best Facts are evocative, concise and specific, relating. Feel free to create some interesting names for people, event or factions, but don't feel obliged to explain them. Everyone else can offer suggestions and elaborations on that Fact, but the person who paid the token gets the final say. So long as everyone is comfortable with a Fact, write it down on the sheet under the heading of **Facts**. The person who just created that fact now gets to ask his or her own question and let someone else respond to it.

Continue to ask questions and establish Facts, until everyone has spent both their Tokens. When that happens, some common themes will emerge. This step helps you express the unique character of your Setting, and ensures that the world is filled with content that the group is interested in.

Be considerate of the quieter members of the gaming group. This process is very engaging and exciting, which can lead to some people dominating the conversations.

Step 5: Create a Title

This is a step where you get to step back and look at the setting on a whole. Consider all of the Facts and look to see if any common ideas emerge. This step helps you discuss all of the Facts and come to a common understanding of what the Setting is all about.



Try to express that with a short and evocative Title for the Setting. Suggest 1-3 word titles for the game and select the best one.

You should be able to express the core concept of your Setting by stating your Title, followed by Genre Description you came up with in Step 3.

Title: Genre Descriptor

Step 6: Create Sparks

Every setting is defined by the struggle over certain key **Issues**. These are the broad problems that affect society on a whole, and your protagonists in specific. Maybe there's some kind of broad social upheaval. Maybe there's a major culture clash, horrid disaster or demographic shift. Corrupt regimes, organized crime, a new pestilence, or a new technology all has the potential to spur the protagonists into action.

Creating these issues is a communal responsibility. In this step, everyone gets a chance to create two **Sparks**: problems and questions that may become full Issues. These Sparks need to all relate to the Title, the Genre Description, and any Facts you have already established. As you propose these, the other people at the table will check that the Spark makes sense, and that the group is comfortable with the subject matter. Write these on the sheet under the heading of Sparks.

Go around the table, giving each person the chance to create their own Spark. Once everyone has contributed one, go around the table one more time so that everyone can write in their second one. When these are proposed, write them down on the sheet under the heading of **Sparks**.

Step 7: Select the Issues

Each Spark has the possibility to start a wildfire, and change the setting. The GM choose three Sparks and upgrades them into full Issues.

First, she chooses one of the Sparks as a **Legacy Issue**. This used to be the dominant problem in the setting, and traces remain in the normal setting. Perhaps some alien race went mysteriously extinct 50,000 years ago, or the human and elves allied in an old war against a dark god. While it the events may be fading, they left their indelible mark on the world.

Next, she chooses one of the Sparks as a **Current Issue**. These are the problems and threats that are currently dominant in the setting. Almost every character is shaped by this issue, either struggling to support it or stop it from happening. Each protagonists needs to tie into the current issue in some way, and this will likely dominate the first arc of any campaign. Maybe you are trying to build a unified alliance of the countless alien races, or a dragon has reclaimed a mountain fortress.

Last, she chooses one of the Sparks as an **Impending Issue**. These are the problems and threats on the horizon. They are the seeds of future conflicts and the unanswered questions that you may have to face. Perhaps an ancient and powerful enemy shall return to conquer your civilization, or some new religion will spread across the empire.

Each Setting will also change over time, being altered at each Major Milestone. The Legacy Issue will fade into history, the Current will become the new Legacy and the Impending Issue will become Current. The GM will choose a new Spark from your list to become the next Impending Issue.

Step 8: Create Aspects

The Game Aspects are where the Issues you generated can directly influence play. Work together as a group to create one Aspect for each of the three Issues you just generated. Try to imagine situations that the issues might act as compels for protagonists, or invocations for foes.

Write them down on the sheet under the heading of **Game Aspects**. The Aspect for the Current Issue will be felt in every scene of the game, and will have a strong influence over the narrative. At the beginning of each Scene, the GM also chooses one of the two other Game Aspects to be in effect. This means that each scene will either be looking forward toward the impending issue, or looking back at the legacy one. There will always be one Game Aspect that doesn't apply in any given scene.

Step 9: Create Faces

Aspects are inherently nebulous things, full of potential meaning. In this step, create a number of **Faces**, characters who express those aspects in the story in a concrete way.

Each Game Aspect is represented by two different Faces; one defined by their support for the aspect, and one that struggles against it. If the aspect is "Might makes right", then your two Faces might be a vindictive criminal kingpin and a beleaguered judge. Both these characters express the Game Aspect in very different ways.

While these Faces are important mechanically, don't worry about formal statistics. They don't have to be a single individual either; a pair of ruthless lieutenants, or a horde of minions would do the trick as well so long as they deal confirm or reject the relevant Game Aspect.

Go around the table, giving each person the chance to claim one of the Faces. Each person gets to create an evocative name for each face, followed by a single sentence description. They can also choose one particular skill that character has at a high level, based on the kinds of activities that Face typically performs. Since the GM is the one playing the Faces, she gets to veto or reinterpret them as she sees fit.

When you have your six Faces created, you can move onto the last step.

Step 10: Create Places

Everything in the game needs to happen somewhere, and this step helps you create a variety of different locations that have deeper meanings.

Each Place represents one of the Sparks generated in Step 6. They will represent the different potential issues and problems that have yet to emerge as full issues.

Go around the table, giving each person the chance to claim one of the Places. Each person gets to create an evocative name for their location, followed by a single sentence description. What does this place look and sound like? Any strange smells or tastes? How busy or quiet is it?

They also create one situational Aspect for that location, based on the physical features of the place (Dark Alley, Frozen Lake) or contextual details (Suspicious Townsfolk, Lurking Terrors).

Once again, GM gets an opportunity to veto any location or aspect that she feels is out of line.

What's the outcome?

Thanks to this process, the GM will have a number of resources at her disposal to help run the game for the group.

- **One Impending Issue**, with an aspect.
- **One Current Issue**, with an aspect.
- **One Legacy Issue**, with an aspect
- **Six Faces**, characters who represent the major Issues.
- **Many Sparks**; potential issues that might appear in later arcs of the campaign.
- **Many Places** that express those Sparks during play.

With all of that in place, you can move on to character creation where each player can make a Protagonist. Each protagonist should have some connections to the Faces and Places, to tie them into the world on a personal level.