

Universal Game System Lite Rulebook

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Overview

This document contains a simpler, “lite” version of the full [Universal Game System](#) (UGS) by Guardian Adventures, a live action role playing ([larp](#)) system for summer camp, school, afterschool, or even adult recreation setting. We made this easier-to-learn version for people who don’t have any experience in role-playing games ([rpg](#)), either table top or computer-based. A UGS Lite 1-hour adventure and character sheets are also included.

We recommend reading this full document first to understand the concepts, rules, and mechanics of running a larp adventure. This document was written under the assumption you have little or no experience with role-playing games and larps, but have some experience running group events for children and/or teens. Thus national learning standards and best practices for facilitating these events are not included. Note that we have placed links on some terms which will take you to [articles](#) on our website that explain more about that concept.

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Glossary of Terms in Order of Importance

Roleplaying – Improvisational acting as a character.

Roleplaying game (RPG) - Any game where participants roleplay characters. There are three main types: 1) pen and paper RPGs, where players *narrate* what their character is doing, e.g., “I listen at the door before opening it,” 2) video/computer RPGs, where players *move a digital avatar* using a keyboard, mouse or controller, e.g., “Press X to check the door”, and 3) Live Action Role Playing (larps), where the player often *performs the actual action* their character does, e.g., they really put their ear to the door. Although often used as a form of entertainment, RPGs are seeing robust growth in education, business, and other areas.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) - An educational topic that focuses on fostering social and emotional skills in students. RPGs are quite good at teaching SEL.

Universal Game System (UGS) – A proprietary role-playing game system—a set of rules, mechanics, and guidelines—designed for use with groups of players, both in person and over a computer. The UGS sets up “*how things are done*” in a make-believe setting.

Nonviolent Conflict System (NCS) – An optional supplement to the UGS that features conflict rules based on debate (talking). This system allows for more opportunities to explore and practice [nonviolent communication](#). NCS skills can be used instead of or in addition to the

regular conflict rules of the UGS. *A lite version of the NCS is featured in these rules and in the sample module.*

Player Character (PC) – In RPGs, there is a line between the actual human, whom we refer to as the *Player*, and the make-believe persona they are portraying, called the *Character*. Sometimes the character is the player in a fictional setting, e.g., they play their real selves but in a fictional world where zombies exist. *When we say Player we mean the real person, and when we say Character we mean the fictional person, and when we say Player-Character (PC) we mean both.*

In the RPG, *Players* must remain as safe as possible, but their *Characters* can be—and usually are—endangered.

PCs have *agency* (freedom) to improvisationally act and react to what happens in the RPG. PCs have some rules to follow (the UGS), but within those rules they are free to do what they want when they want, in the scenario and NPCs react accordingly.

Non-Player Character (NPC) – Real people who represent other beings that are not the Players. NPCs are often portrayed by Facilitators (but they don't have to be), and NPCs are designed and directed by the rules of the specific scenario. Some examples of NPCs are a Police Chief that asks the superheroes (PCs) for help, or a monster living in a cave that guards a treasure, or Dr. Lazray, an evil genius. Unlike the PCs, who are mostly free to do what they want within the bounds of the rules, NPCs are more restricted in their actions and have little agency. IE. If the station sentry NPC doesn't allow the PC's ship to dock, the plot cannot unfold.

Facilitator (Game Manager or GM) – The person(s) running the adventure, the ones responsible for the players' enjoyment and learning. This is probably you and your colleagues. Facilitators set up and run the narrative, often play NPCs, and ensure that all real world concerns, such as safety, are addressed. Facilitators are encouraged to customize UGS scenarios—including the sample module—to their particular context and circumstances.

Module or Adventure – A narrative adventure that uses the UGS. If the UGS is “*how* things happen,” a module is the “*what* things happen.” Modules can take a few minutes, like the included sample, or can be an ongoing campaign at a camp, event location, or even online that lasts for years. Modules are not fixed scripts like a movie. Different things can happen based on what the PCs do, and it is expected that no two module runs are exactly alike. Example: Some PCs might decide to attack a large shadowy figure in the forest. In a different run, the PCs might try to talk to it first, or shine a light on it, or simply run away. As long as the PCs follow the UGS rules, and those are all legitimate options, the Facilitators & NPCs need to react accordingly.

Each module offers advice on what to do in many eventualities, but the beauty of RPGs is the amazing human capacity to do the unexpected, so not every possible choice can be written into the module. But since Facilitators are human as well, we can react to the unexpected even if it falls outside module suggestions. This is a big reason why RPGs can operate better than video games or a Choose Your Own Adventure book: Facilitators can “go with the flow” and immediately react appropriately to PCs doing something unexpected.

UGS Specific Terms

Theme – The Universal Game System works across multiple settings, or genres. The six themes available are: Fantasy, Space (sci-fi), Spy, Superheroes, Wilderness Protector, and Zombies. The rules and mechanics are the same for each theme (that’s why it’s called a Universal Game System), but certain terms and titles change, e.g., a Healer class in the Fantasy theme is called a Medic in Wilderness Protector and an Empath in Superhero.

Facilitators must choose a theme before setting up and running a module. Which theme you select changes the set dressing, props, costumes, character sheets, terminology, etc. The rules won’t change due to the theme—a PC will still put their ear to the door to listen before entering—but that door might be an airlock (Space), a wood and iron block (Fantasy), or a collage of corroded metal plates (Zombie).

Character Class – The fictional occupation or identity that the Players pretend to be. There are three Classes in the UGS: Protector, Scholar, and Healer. Each has a slightly different set of skills they can use in the fictional narrative. *For this Lite version, only generic UGS names are used. In the full UGS, the character class names vary depending on the theme.*

Player Group – Player Groups, featured in the UGS, are *optional* in this Lite version. Like houses in wizardry schools, there are three player groups in the UGS that roughly indicate what kind of motivation the players have for the adventure or what they want to focus on. In the main UGS, each individual player chooses their player group. In the sample module, a majority of players choose the player group for all (an opportunity for SEL). Each Player Group has a power they can use once in a module. Details below.

Skill – Something a Character can do within the fiction—magical abilities, superpowers, and spy gadgets are all represented by skills. All UGS skills fall into one of five categories: Universal (the Stamina skill), Conflict (attack and defense skills), Hinder (creating traps and enemy distractions), Information (the Clue skill), and Support (healing skills). *For UGS Lite, all skills will use their theme-neutral name. The full UGS has different names for skills depending on the theme. Also, the full UGS has more skills than the ones listed here.*

Character skills are used instead of the Player actually performing the action on someone. They are a way to *represent* an action in the fiction that in real life is impractical, unsafe, or outside a Player’s capability to do. Otherwise, Characters can figure out or do whatever the Player can do (their agency), *as long as it is within the UGS Rules and Safety Guidelines explained below*. Character skills for each player are recorded on their Character Sheet which they carry with them to remind them what skills they have and how many.

UGS Lite Rules

Facilitator/GM

Each time you run a UGS Lite module, you will need at least one Facilitator to govern both the real world concerns, such as making sure the event starts and ends on time and every Player remains safe, moving the narrative forward, describing what the Player-Characters see,

hear, feel, and smell, especially if it is not immediately obvious. IE. You have to tell them there is a magical gateway shimmering in front of them if you can't build a prop that does so.

If there is only one Facilitator, they will also need to roleplay any NPCs the Players encounter. If this is the case, *be sure to let Participants know before beginning that if you call a Halt or give a real world directive, it must be obeyed even if you are roleplaying a character.*

Players/PCs

It helps Players to know when they should be roleplaying and when they shouldn't, and if they can do something or not. Before beginning any module, Players *must* have the general rules explained (rephrase to suit your style):

"We are going on a make-believe adventure for [however long your event lasts], but some rules need to be followed at all times. First, you need to listen and follow my real world instructions, even if I am playing a fictional character. I will call "HALT!" to stop the game and ask everyone to break character and stop what they are doing.

[Review all Safety rules, below.]

You will be yourselves in this adventure, but some things may change and you will be able to do some amazing things in the make-believe world. There are specific ways that have to be followed to do these amazing things, or they won't work. What you can do and how to do it will be explained later."

Safety

[Safety in the LARP](#) is the highest priority. We don't know your group of players as well as you do, even if you just met them. Therefore, we are presenting safety *guidelines* instead of rules, although our only *rule* is that you consider and explain safety to the players *before starting play*.

Rule 1 – Consider the physical and emotional safety of all Participants, including Facilitator(s).

- If you have a group of strangers as players—if you don't know them or they don't know each other—use maximum safety techniques.
- Consider the maturity of the players when deciding on the set design and realism. A large, life-like monster with slavering fangs and evil red eyes with a terrible howl might be too much for young players, just right for teens, and "not even" for adults.
- Consider the number of Players in the module. If the ratio of Players to Facilitator is more than 10:1, the safety risk increases as more bodies move around, interact with a single NPC, or are left out of the action and try to play their own game instead.

Whatever guidelines you use, **make sure all Participants know them before play**. Explain in your own words, tailoring your explanation to the Participants you have. The first guideline is the most important and is strongly recommended:

Shouting the word HALT! stops all action for all Participants.

This breaks the fictional narrative, like calling “cut” on a movie set. Everyone is expected to stop role playing and address any safety concerns. Examples of calling Halt: someone is about to be injured or was just injured, someone is upset and the fiction needs to pause, etc.

Anyone can call Halt! to stop roleplay, but only Facilitators can start it back up again.

Encourage Players to call Halt if they see a real world problem occurring or about to occur. It might not be warranted, but it is far better to lose time in the module than have someone hurt. After Halt is called, *game play does not resume for anyone until the Facilitator counts down from five and gives the agreed-upon signal, e.g., “Play on!” or “Action!”* after the real-world concerns are addressed (injury, glasses knocked off the face, etc.).

You may also choose to use a hand signal in addition to shouting to indicate a Halt. This is useful for situations when the action is so chaotic PCs can’t hear you. You might also consider having all Players kneel on one knee with their weapons down during a halt until the Play On signal is given. This can make it easier to immediately assess what is wrong.

Physical Safety

The following guidelines for physical safety can be adjusted, but only do so if you are familiar with your venue and your Players.

- No direct contact between PCs or NPCs (no high-fives, no hand shake, no fist bumps, no attacks, no hitting, pushing, shoving, tripping, kicking, etc.) This is specifically to reduce transmission of viruses and prevent fighting.
- No running.
- No stealing or taking something held or owned by someone else.
- No throwing items other than those designed for it (spell packets, foam rocks, etc.)
- No unsafe use of foam weapons or blasters (if you have access to the [full UGS](#), there are videos included for showing Players how to use foam weapons safely).

Property Safety

The preservation of props, costumes, and the venue may also be important for your game. Some things might be expendable sheets of paper or pencils, but if you want to keep and reuse anything for subsequent module games, be sure to include some rules about objects:

- Don’t break any props or set dressing.
- Other people’s objects, including those from the game, are theirs.

Emotional Safety

Players may become upset during the course of a module, either because the fiction is too intense or another player or even Facilitator might say or do something that bothers them.

Decide on a signal, preferably a physical one, that Players can use to indicate emotional distress, e.g., raising their arms up in a X shape.

If they use the signal, it indicates they are upset, *but does not indicate a full Halt*—yet. Depending on the situation, other participants or the Facilitator should ask the PC what is wrong. Depending on their answer, a Halt may be called, or they are allowed to simply break from the action and move to an “out of game” space for a moment to compose themselves. *Facilitators should check in on the emotional health of the participants at least once during the module and definitely at the end. A simple “Show me with thumbs up (OK), down (not OK, attention needed), or thumb sideways (sort of OK—immediate attention not needed, but closely monitor their demeanor), how you are feeling right now” may suffice.*

Note that someone may be hurt or emotionally distressed and unable to give any signal or announcement. Encourage all participants to support and check in on each other.

Honesty

It is expected that the Players will be honest and play fair. Although the included sample module is short enough that a Facilitator can probably track all the Characters’ skill use, hits, etc., [SEL](#) can be exercised if Players recognize that admitting mistakes, failings, injuries or misfortunes, and getting help from other PCs, can make for a more enjoyable experience for all. Here, there is no serious consequence for failing; they won’t be removed from the game and may only be momentarily limited. **This expectation should be explained prior to beginning play.**

Character Classes

There are three character classes in the UGS. In order to make the story more immersive, they have different names according to the theme in the [full UGS](#), but for this Lite version we only use the generic name so you don’t have to memorize additional terms. The three classes are:

Protector - Combat-oriented archetype with offensive and defensive conflict abilities and greater Stamina.

Scholar - Versatile archetype with conflict abilities, as well as the unique power to learn more information through the Clue skill.

Healer - Support-oriented archetype with access to abilities that allow them to restore themselves and their allies.

In the sample module, Players perform an activity that assigns a Character Class to them. It does not matter in the sample module if the Classes are uneven or if they all choose the same Class. However, Facilitators can use a different method for Character Class selection, either assigning them intentionally or randomly, or letting the Players pick one after they are all explained. You can also choose to limit the number of each Character Class to any ratio you like.

Character Sheets

The character sheets accompanying UGS Lite are meant to be printed out and given to Players to indicate which Character Class they are playing. There is no switching Character Class once chosen. The sheets are designed to be torn or marked as part of Skill use and tracking Stamina.

Conflict Resolution Methods (Choose one before running UGS Lite)

Before running the UGS Lite, Facilitators must decide the Conflict Resolution Method they are going to use, for this affects what Skills the Characters can use as well as the opportunity for make-believe physical violence in the game. Note that these are in-game Conflict Resolution Methods for conflict between characters, not the actual players. In UGS Lite, there are two different systems for character conflict resolution in the game based on the licensed versions: The full [UGS system](#) and the [Nonviolent Conflict System](#) (NCS). We have taken a couple of aspects of the licensed version and provide them below for you to use.

LARPs create a safe way for Players to do things they cannot do in real life, like magical spells, or things they should not do in real life, like battling other characters or creatures. However, thrilling stories often involve conflict; therefore, the UGS (and NCS) is a system designed for Players and Facilitators to play-pretend battling or negotiating with one another without any actual harm done. The UGS and NCS also allows for Players who have no training whatsoever to do things like heal wounds, uncover clues, or harm another creature.

Note that with either conflict method, *no one is actually harming another person, it is only in the make-believe fiction of the narrative that characters are harmed or harming others.*

There are two methods to handle make-believe conflict or combat in the UGS Lite:

NCS only (method 1) = Characters cannot physically engage others

Possibly the easiest option. Here, characters do not have skills that simulate *physical* conflict; they don't even have the option. Instead, they have skills that represent intellectual debate and emotional persuasion, which reduce Stamina and wear down or change the opponents' perspective. The game effect is the same: Characters can mitigate a foe. But the means to do so is through talking. Although the characters do not have physical conflict skills, *you can still allow the antagonists this option!* The game effect is the same: Reducing Stamina. Healing works whether wounded by a scorpion sting or a sharply-worded accusation.

With NCS only (method 1), each Character Class has two skills they can use.

NCS+UGS (method 2) = Players can simulate their characters *physically* engaging others.

The main UGS has three ways to handle conflict resolution (sometimes known as combat), to simulate characters physically attacking or defending in the fictional narrative. *However, for the UGS Lite there is only one way to simulate physical violence:*

Declaration - Players either use their foam sword or NERF Blaster to engage the antagonist or they state aloud what their Characters are doing and play a round of rock-paper-scissors or other approved interaction against their target to indicate their skill use.

With this second method, Character Classes have the same two NCS skills as above plus one more physical combat skill (simply called "Attack") for three skills total.

If using this method, PCs can *both* use a physical attack *and* a "talking" NCS attack.

It is important for the Facilitator to decide if the Characters have the option to hit an enemy with a weapon such as a NERF dart or foam sword or not. In game terms, both the NCS "talking" skills and the UGS "Attack" skill have the same result: reducing Stamina. However, one reduces

the stamina of the ego through elocution while the other reduces stamina through physical engagement (again, this is all make-believe, no one is really hurt).

Before ruling out the second method entirely, consider the SEL teachable moments for Players weighing the difference between talking their way out of trouble versus blasting their way out. Yet also, using method two means there is one more skill Players need to learn.

Skills

Skills are a way for Participants (Players and Facilitator) to *simulate* what their Character is doing in the make-believe setting without doing actual harm.

UGS Lite features six skills if using the NCS only, and seven skills if both NCS+UGS.

All Characters (PCs and NPCs) have the Stamina skill. Each Character Class has one non-violent combat skill and one skill unique to their Class for three total. If using method two, each Class also has a physical Attack skill for four skills total. NPCs can have different skills than the PCs.

Explanations of these skills also appear on the character sheets below. In many instances the skill is torn off the character sheet or marked to indicate that it has been used, or that the character is wounded (lost Stamina). Facilitators are welcome to ignore the “tearing” rule and ask players to remember their Stamina and if their single-use skills were expended. The skills, who has them, how often it can be used, the game effect and how to activate it are:

1. Stamina - All characters and NPCs have the Stamina skill. It represents the number of times a character can be hit. ***If a PC or NPC is reduced to 0 Stamina, they “fall unconscious”. They are unable to move, talk, or use any skills. Players must remain in place with one arm placed on their head.*** Safety rules override the last direction, e.g., if someone is reduced to 0 Stamina in a doorway, they can move to one side to avoid being jostled as others move through the portal. Protectors have 5 Stamina while Scholars and Healers have 4. **Whenever a PC loses Stamina, they should find the Stamina points on their character sheet and tear one off or mark it.** This provides an easy visual reference to see how healthy the Characters are.
2. Emotional Appeal - An NCS skill that both Protectors and Healers have. They can use this skill as often as they like in the game. It represents manipulation of the ego or heart. **A successful Emotional Appeal reduces the target’s Stamina by 1.** To use, the PC must say aloud the phrase “[Name or title of target], *isn’t it too bad that...*” followed by a short statement about the current situation. The target must be able to clearly hear the key phrase and the statement; if someone interrupts or the PC doesn’t finish saying it or pauses too long, or the Appeal is not convincing enough, the Appeal fails. The player cannot make the Appeal while attacking. **Important: Each statement after the key phrase must be different against one target, even if another PC said it. PCs cannot keep repeating the same statement (even with slight variation) each time, they have to continuously come up with new things to say or the Appeal will fail.** This encourages active listening and observation or the Players will run out of things to say. The same phrase can be used against *different* targets.

Example: A border guard refuses to allow two Spies across a bridge. She levels her NERF Blaster at them and commands them to retreat. Protector Juanita says "Border guard, isn't it too bad that you are alone here without anyone to talk to?" The Border Guard NPC considers this Emotional Appeal and decides it is compelling. She then pauses, looks down and responds, "Yes, I miss my pet parrot. I taught it to sing nursery rhymes and ask me questions." The Border Guard takes 1 point of Stamina deduction from Juanita's successful Emotional Appeal, indicated by looking sad. Jiro the Healer enthusiastically says "Border Guard, isn't it too bad that you don't have another guard with you to help patrol?" The Border Guard looks at Jiro and shakes her head. This is too similar to the previous question so this Appeal fails, and the guard raises her blaster again. If Jiro instead made a compelling statement about the guard's pet parrot, her Stamina would be reduced by 1 again.

3. **Debate** - An NCS skill that only Scholars have, it operates the same way as Emotional Appeal but has a different key phrase. Scholars can use this skill unlimited times. It represents using logic to trip up and confuse targets. **A successful Debate reduces the target's Stamina by 1.** To use, the PC must say aloud the phrase "[Name or title of target], *have you thought about...*" followed by a short statement about the current situation. The target must be able to clearly hear the key phrase and the statement; if someone (not the target) interrupts or the PC doesn't finish saying it or pauses too long, the Debate fails. **Important: Each statement after the key phrase must be different against one target, even if another PC said it. PCs cannot keep repeating the same thing each time, they have to continuously come up with new things to say or the Debate will fail.** The same statement can be used against *different* targets.

Example: Superduper Goat, Pink Lightning, and Dragonfly, members of the superhero team The Most Excellents, have breached the inner sanctum of the archvillain Angry Badger Bureaucrat just as he's about to launch an army of robot bulldozers to raze all the playgrounds in the city to make space for luxury condos. Angry Badger bellows to the heroes "You're too late! My robo-dozers will soon clear away those annoying playgrounds! MWAH HA HA HA!"

Dragonfly the Scholar calls out "Angry Badger, have you thought about the environmental impact of robo-dozers and how it can affect the health of your condo customers?" Badger thinks for a second and furrows his furry brow to indicate 1 Stamina deduction and then retaliates with his own Debate skill "Yes, Dragonfly, but have you thought about the lack of housing for our growing population?" Dragonfly takes 1 Stamina deduction. Since there are three heroes, it was important that Badger specify which one he was Debating.

- **If multiple PCs use Debate and Emotional Appeal at the same time against the same target, they can block each other's success if the NPC can't hear each one clearly.**
- **If a Target is being Attacked (the NCS + UGS skill, see below), all Debate and Appeals are blocked.**
- **Emotional Appeal and Debate work as long as the key phrase is stated, the statement is about the plot (true or not), the target hears it completely, and it has not been stated before (which means NPCs have to remember the statements, but favor the PCs**

if you aren't sure if they said it before). However, Emotional Appeal must also be a compelling statement and will fail if not compelling enough as determined by the NPC.

4. **Defense** - An NCS skill only Protectors have. It protects any character, Protectors or others, from taking Stamina deduction in one instance. Each Protector can use their Defense skill **once**. To activate, the Protector must tear off the corner of their character sheet with the Defense skill and shout "Defense!" and their target, like "Defense, me" or "Defense, Dragonfly!" It must be used within (roughly) five seconds after taking Stamina loss, and that instance of deduction is blocked. They can throw their paper away or give it to the GM or the defended target. Protectors can use Defense as long as the target can hear them. **Defense completely blocks one attack, trap, or deduction from having any effect on one Character.** But if the target is attacked again, or stays in the trap, they can be hurt again. **Defense cannot be preemptively applied, it has to be used after the attack.** This encourages Players to pay attention to the status of others.

Example: Afika finds herself cornered by a horde of mindless zombies. One of them lunges, striking her shoulder. Normally she would take 1 Stamina deduction, but she quickly calls out "Defense, me!", rips off her Defense skill on her character sheet (which indicates she used it) and the gory grasp of the undead instead barely misses her.

5. **Clue** - A UGS skill that only Scholars have. They can use this skill **once** in the game. It represents the ability to interpret information their Character has observed to gain insight into the plot or whatever the PC asks about. To activate, the PC must ask the Facilitator "I want to use Clue to find out about..." and mark off the corner of their character sheet with the Clue skill. Alternatively, they can write their question on the paper and hand it to a DM. Any phrasing is acceptable as long as the Scholar indicates they are using their Clue skill and asks a question related to the adventure. The Facilitator must pause (even if roleplaying an NPC) to truthfully answer the Scholar. **The answer should be genuinely useful and not circular—don't provide a riddle.** It is better to give them more info than less. Only answer one question, there is no follow up. PCs might ask how to defeat the Big Boss, which reveals its weakness, but don't mention the Henchmen lying in ambush. Your discretion and intuition as an educator will help to improvise an answer. A Scholar could ask a vague question like "How do we win?" In that case, give them info about their current predicament, but nothing further. **If portraying an NPC, answer in a GM voice (stop acting as NPC) so the PC knows you are truthful.**

Example: Skylar the Scholar opened a door to the treasure chamber and woke a dragon up. They know there's a magical sword inside that can defeat the monster, but can't see it anywhere. They decide to use Clue so they mark off the skill and ask the GM "I use Clue, where is the magic sword?" The GM in her dragon costume stops charging the door and in her teacher's voice says "The door you came through hides it. Look on the other side of the door," before snarling and resuming to rush ahead as the dragon.

6. **Heal** - A UGS skill that only Healers have and can use **once** in a game. This skill **restores 1 Stamina to one character**. If the wounded is at 0 Stamina, it immediately brings them back to 1 Stamina and they can talk, move, and use skills normally. Healers can use this skill on themselves **unless they are at 0 Stamina**—the rule for zero Stamina means no skills can be used. To activate, the Player tears off the corner of their character sheet with the Heal skill and places it on the wounded PC—*without touching them*—as if it were an adhesive bandage. The Healer can, if they want, mime first aid (without touching) in the fashion of whatever theme they are in, e.g., applying a topical potion in Fantasy, using an injector for Spy, Wilderness Protector or Zombie, concentrating and waving their hand for Superhero, or pushing a button on a medical device for Space. **The Healed character should hold onto the Healed paper as an extra Stamina point.**

Example: Healer Hyla rushes over to Skylar, who was wounded in their battle with the dragon. She tears off the Heal skill from her character sheet, places it between her palms and rubs them together before dropping it into Skylar’s cupped hands. Skylar hangs on to the Heal paper fragment to represent the additional Stamina they received.

7. **Attack** - **This skill is only for use with Conflict Resolution Method 2, NCS + UGS.** All Character Classes have this skill in method 2. Attack can be used as often as they like. It represents a physical attack on a target in whatever fashion matches the theme: foam swords or NERF bows and arrows for Fantasy, laser foam swords or NERF Blasters for Space, etc. The attack can come from close up or far away, as long as the target can see or reach the attacker. To use the Attack skill without foam weapons, the attacker must announce their target, **wait for the target to acknowledge the incoming Attack**, and then they both throw a round of RPS: rock-paper-scissors (count to three, and on three both combatants put their hand out as a fist for rock, flat for paper, or two fingers for scissors. Rock beats scissors, scissors beats paper, paper beats rock). If the Attacker wins, they deliver **1 point of Stamina deduction to the target**. If the target also has an Attack skill and they win, **they deliver 1 Stamina deduction to the attacker**. If the target does not have the Attack skill they still use RPS, but if they win they do not damage the attacker. No one wins in a tie. After one round of RPS, the NPC can address another PC or do another action. *It is **not** recommended to repeatedly do rounds of rock-paper-scissors with one PC until there is a winner; move your attention to someone else.* **Only two Characters can do RPS against each other at one time.**

Skill Name	Which method?	Which class?	# Uses	How to Activate	Game Effect
Stamina	1 & 2	All	varies	N/A	unconscious at 0
Emotional Appeal	1 & 2	Protectors, Healers	unlimited	“Isn’t it too bad”	-1 stamina to target
Debate	1 & 2	Scholars	unlimited	“Have you thought about”	-1 stamina to target

Defense	1 & 2	Protectors	1	"Defense [target]"	block 1 attack
Clue	1 & 2	Scholars	1	Asking GM	hint about plot
Heal	1 & 2	Healers	1	give paper to target	restore 1 stamina
Attack	2	All	unlimited	RPS or Foam Weapon	-1 stamina to target

Player Groups (optional)

Player Groups are an **optional** inclusion for the UGS Lite. It is standard in the full [Universal Game System](#). Player Groups are like “houses” at a College of Witches and Warlocks; the player decides their approach or motivation to the game by joining a group. Those groups usually hang together, and each group gets a unique power they can use **once** in the game.

The three Player Groups, their motivation, and their unique powers are:

- Strike - Conflict Focused - can do one multi attack from all
- Surveillance - Knowledge Motivated - can locate all Clues in a single area
- Subversion - Consequence Motivated - can convert one antagonist to ally

In the UGS Lite, **a majority of players decide which Group they will be in, and all players are in that group.** There is never more than one Player Group in UGS Lite. To use the Player Group power, **all players must unanimously agree when to use it.** If there is even one hold out, they cannot use the power, but they can still use it later.

Pros: Using it adds another SEL element as the players have to choose a group to belong to, plus remember they have a group power, and **unanimously** agree on when to use it.

Cons: More things to print out, more things to remember for Players.

The sample module only has one antagonist, and with group powers it is possible they can neutralize it immediately—this could be a good thing (if you are running out of time) or a bad thing (players wanted a big climactic fight). Facilitators have to decide before running if there will be Player Groups or not, and if so, the Player Group rules must be printed out to give to players when they get their characters.

Debriefing

“Post-game debriefs help everyone leave their characters behind, provide a venue for organizer feedback, and help players talk about emotionally difficult experiences and things that were or could have been problematic.” (from *Nordic Larps for Noobs*).

A [debrief](#) after the game is extremely important. Players often want to recap what just happened: “Did you see that time when I...?!?” which helps all Participants bond through the experience. Although a certain amount of this is fun, a Debrief could also be used to:

- Explain or expound or review any educational lessons presented.
- Check in with everyone to see what they liked or would change; this helps Facilitators improve their facilitating.
- Introduce a “hook” or sneak preview of future adventures to encourage retention.

General Tips

Following are some general tips for running UGS Lite. Specific ideas related to the sample module are in that document.

Before the event:

- Scout the venue, it might help you choose a theme related to it.
- Choose your theme based on the venue, your familiarity with the theme, and your resources such as props, set decoration, costumes, etc.
- Choose which Conflict Resolution method to use based on the expected player demographic and your goals.
- Decide if you are going to use the optional Player Groups or not.
- Print out appropriate character sheets and Player Group rules if you use that option.
- Dress the venue before Players arrive. Tips on this are in the sample module.

During the event:

- Introduce the real you to Players ahead of time.
- Let Players meet and chat with one another.
- Make sure Players understand the safety rules and their Characters Skills.
- Feel free to make a ruling on the fly or alter the rules in UGS Lite if it means the game runs easier, the players learn better, or the players have more fun.
- When role-playing an NPC, try to alter your voice (non-stereotypical accents, better or worse diction, speed up or slow down your speech, raise or lower your volume, etc.), behavior (nervous, proud, scared, angry, etc), posture, gait, etc., based on the character. A little change often goes a long way.
- You can call a Halt and narrate, like an oral storyteller, anything that set decor, props, etc., cannot reveal.
- Check in on the emotional state of players roughly once per scene.
- Be sure to indicate through role-playing when a Skill has been successfully used, especially any conflict skill. Give the PCs immediate feedback to let them know their skill worked: gasp in pain, clutch your chest or your head in confusion, etc. But keep it short, you don't want to distract the players from their experience.
- Keep in mind that each player is a hero in their own adventure. Try to ensure that each player has at least one moment to shine in the spotlight.
- Temporary failure is OK, but total loss is not. It is OK if Players do not succeed on the first try at a task and even if they take deductions as a result. Help them to try again.
- Be ready to improvise and adapt to go with unexpected PC actions; as long as they are within the rules, they should be able to perform their action. Remember the [improv](#) mantra "Yes, and..." Yes, they can do that, *and* this happens.
- Prepare for many teachable moments to occur, and take a moment to emphasize it, answer a Player question (especially educational ones), or explain in depth during the debrief. You can also skew your roleplaying to highlight lessons you want to impart.

After the event:

- Unless time has run out, always try to have even a short “show of hands” debrief for players to indicate their enjoyment or lack thereof. Answer questions they may have about any educational aspects first, and game or plot elements second.
- Have the Players help clean up (safely); this can sometimes be combined with a debrief as people gather and dispose of trash and discuss things at the same time.
- Have a printed inventory of all your items to make sure everything is being returned, note anything that needs replacement.
 - Remove batteries from any electronics if they are going to be in storage.
- Follow up a few days after the event, thanking them for playing and checking in on them.
- If your Players have played the UGS Lite multiple times and are starting to get bored, consider upgrading to the [full UGS](#). This system provides many more options for the Players and for creating more educational and immersive experiences.

Modifications for Accessibility

Feel free to use other means to activate Skills if player [accessibility](#) may be an issue.

- For the NCS skills, use hand signals, ASL, or pre-printed cards or small writing boards.
- Print out the puzzles and use Braille
- Use avatars (dolls or puppets) that players can direct to perform their character actions.
- Narrate more actions instead of performing them (like tabletop roleplaying games).
- Section off one wheelchair-accessible area with curtains or even floor tape for all activities instead of asking players to use a second, inaccessible area.
- Avoid using strobe lights, chemical fog, products that can trigger allergies such as certain foods or scents, sudden loud noises, strobe lighting, small fonts or color-based puzzles.

What You are Missing

The [full UGS](#) contains:

- Two other methods for simulating physical combat
- Methods for teaching actual [Nonviolent Conflict Skills](#) inside the game - not just roleplaying the skills
- Themed Skill names for each type of character as well as antagonists
- Character Advancement and Skill Point Rewards
- A Guild Hall to learn additional Skills based on [STEM](#) topics
- Directions on running online adventures for in between sessions or for global players
- Ready to play themed module
- Guidelines for designing your own module
- Marketing materials including banners, flyers, logos, and videos
- Video instructions, training manuals, handouts, articles, and much, much more!
- **SPECIAL: \$595/yr for package deal of all 3 UGS systems: UGS 2.0 main rules, UGS STEM Guild Hall, UGS Nonviolent Conflict System, and your choice of one Online Birthday Party. Includes 3 hours of zoom consulting and up to 10 client leads a year if no higher**

license in your area. **ALSO: Sport Sword foam sword training module for free with this package!**