



# WORLD CRAFT

*An asynchronous journaling  
game telling the story of a  
World inspired by Nature*

For 2-10 players

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# Introduction

*“For a time, I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.” - Wendell Berry*

Nature isn't just the world around us, it's a state of being for our world stretching back to the dawn of time and forward to the time when our planet finally passes away into nothing. It is the fundamental state of the world we live in every day. And yet we spend so much time disconnected from Nature around us, distracted by the complex society we've created. Distractions that keep us from the story of our world as seen outside of our human perspective. This game is meant to strip away those distractions to tell the story of a World from the perspective of its own history, rooted in its own beautiful, terrible, amazing Nature.

*Worldcraft* is an asynchronous journaling roleplaying game where players take on the roles of different Epochs or eras in the world's history. Players take on the role of Epochs and write entries into the World Record journal, passing from one to the next until the last player writes how the world ends during their Epoch. In between each Epoch, two players handing off the journal from one to the other play out a scene transitioning one era to another, helping to create a continuous story.

To find inspiration for each Epoch, players will first answer several questions to help them flesh out their part of the world's history (see: *Character Creation*). But most of all, the inspiration for the world's Epochs should come from the greatest inspiration of all: Nature.

What you need to play:

- A journal or means to record the entire history of the World being created (notebook, shared Google doc, email chain, Discord server, etc)
- A way for players to interact with one another for OOC coordination and scenes between written portions of the game.
- Anything a player needs to go out into the world to explore (examples: phone with charged battery, comfortable clothing and shoes, water for hydration, weather-proof bag for supplies and clothing, snacks, service dog, etc.).
- Map or GPS so as to not get lost.

## A Walk In Nature: A Relay Race Roleplay (Without the Racing)

*Worldcraft* is about enjoying the experience of time spent out in Nature, helping the player reconnect to the world around them to indulge their imagination and build the story of a new world's birth, life, and eventual end. Additionally, the game is meant to help people come together to build a whole world narrative while still doing their parts individually, asynchronously. The goal is to allow players to unite to build this narrative and play together without necessarily having to worry about playing for long periods of time, at the same time, or even being geographically close. The game is designed to help people connect without the restrictions of cost, ability, geography, family situation, or other man-made obstructions.

Armed with the players' best exploration gear, this game sends players out into Nature one at a time to create different eras in a fictional world's lifespan. All the players need is the chance to wander in the Nature of our world and let their imaginations become inspired.

## How to Play

To play *Worldcraft*, a group of players (between 2-10) come together to tell the story of a World. This new world can be close to ours or else as far away as possible. Players should establish what kind of setting themes they'd like to see in game before they go any further. For example, some setting themes might be Fantasy, Science Fiction, Religion, Climate Change, Super Powers, and so on. They can begin by collectively naming their World.

## Themes, Safety, and Ratings

Note that, before going on, it's equally as important for players to discuss what elements they don't want in their game as well. Should one player decide an element is not acceptable, that element should not be introduced to the game. Establish a rating for the game as well, based heavily on the age of those involved and the comfort level of the players. A game set in a World full of talking animals with children as players would warrant a less intense rating for the game than one set in a high magical world full of politics and war. Make sure each player's entries are appropriate to the rating and the themes agreed to by all the players.

## Get Your Walking Shoes - Nature, Gameplay, and Players

Each player takes on the role of the Avatar of an **Epoch**, a different era in the history of this World. One player starts off the game by playing the beginning of the world and one will play the ending. All other players will pick where in the order they want to go between. Then, each of the players choose what kind of Epoch they'd like to represent and what themes they'd like to utilize in their journaling.

The players should then choose where in **Nature** they'd like to explore. This is where the asynchronous play can come in. Players can either choose to:

- Play together in the same area, handing off a physical journal one to the other
- Play asynchronously by playing their character alone and then handing over the journal to be played by the next player at their leisure (works with digital journals).
- Play together across large distances at their leisure using fully digital interactions.

Bear in mind the schedules and means of the players involved in the game when deciding where in the real world the game will take place. Those who can't travel for whatever reason or who have a less flexible schedule may find options like asynchronous play or digital options across larger distances a better fit.

## Character Creation

Next, **create a character** by writing brief answers to the following questions in the journal:

- What is the character name and pronouns?
- How does your character appear to others as they walk the World?
- What three defining characteristics describe your character?
- What life events affected them the most?
- How does your character find hope when life is difficult?
- What is the most important thing your character has learned about life in this World?

This is an optional start; players can come up with their own prompts and can consider questions to help a character connect to the Nature they will explore. Players can make their characters/Epochs together or keep their characters secret until the hand off scenes (see: *Time Goes On - Hand-Off Scenes*). Should your game include young players, help them create age appropriate characters capable of being chaperoned through play by an adult.

Once the players have fleshed out the Avatars, the first player (the first Epoch) takes the journal and goes to their selected inspirational location for their Epoch's World Journal entry.

## Nature As Inspiration

Nature is a key element to draw upon for your character's experience as the Avatar of an Epoch. The player should choose a location they'd like to wander, be it a park or a mountainside, a waterfront or even out on a boat. Players should choose locations that draw them in, all while keeping safety in mind. Then, with supplies and journal in hand, the player should wander through the area, keeping in mind who their character is and what they would experience in their particular Epoch. Inspiration for their character's journal can come from anywhere: birds or animals around, the trees, the weather, the people seen, or time of day. Players should do this wandering alone and take as long as they need, bearing in mind only if there is another player waiting immediately to do the hand-off scene. Schedule appropriately.

The Avatars of the Epoch are meant to tell the story of an entire world during a specific time span. The first player should draw inspiration from Nature around them for the birth of this World and its early years. Every player builds on the story from what came before during their hand-off scenes (described below) after they've written their journal entry. The very last player then builds off what scenes came before as they explore Nature for inspiration on just how the world ended. Then they, just like the players before, use the journal to record the last Epoch.

## Journal of A World

Once the player has spent their time gathering inspiration in Nature for the story of their Epoch and their Avatar's experience, the player creates a **journal entry**. Players are encouraged to be as creative, intimate, and explorative as they'd like. An entry can be a few sentences or multiple pages. It can include sketches, little souvenirs picked up on the wander (example: flowers, leaves, sand), or photos, anything to create the most evocative and expressive entry about their particular Epoch. The sky's the limit, but please remember to keep on theme and mind the game rating and the content players agreed not to include.

## Time Goes On: Hand-Off Scenes

A player has finished their journal entry. Now they must turn the journey of this World over to the next player and their Avatar of an Epoch. Players can roleplay the handoff in whatever way is mutually accessible. This could be an in-person meetup, a text-based roleplay session (chat, email, Discord, etc.), an online video or voice session, or physical mail. Regardless, the current Epoch must pass the journal on.

The hand-off should consist of a small out of character (OOC) discussion about the previous Epoch's experience and how things went. This serves as a debrief to inspire the next player's choices even before they read the existing journal entries. It also can give the player of the previous Epoch a chance to talk out their experience if they need any after-care. Discussion points can include what happened in the last Epoch, goals for the next one, and changes the World may face (including any World-changing events in the previous Epoch). Here are some optional questions to answer during the handoff:

- What are our hopes and dreams for the next Epoch?
- How does the last Epoch impact what happens now?
- What does it feel like to bear the responsibility of being Avatar of an Epoch?

After the OOC interaction, players can have an optional in character scene if they wish, allowing the two Avatars a chance to interact one-on-one in whatever fashion the game's setting allows. Perhaps the Avatars meet in a sacred cave or on a generational space ship, or even a coffee shop at the end of the universe. The sky (or the World) is the only limit.

Once the hand-off scene is concluded and the journal has been handed off, the new Epoch player should read the journal's previous entries. Once that is done, they begin their wander through nature and their Epoch begins, until the Final Epoch writes the World's end.

## Concluding The Experience

When all the Epochs have done their wandering and all the entries have been written, participants should all convene as a final meeting of the Avatars. The Avatars come together to discuss the experiences, challenges, and triumphs of their now finished World. Together they create a single defining statement about their World. It can be as simple as a one line statement ("The cycle of survival continues") or a short paragraph summing up the World beginning to end. This is the statement they will leave for whatever comes next after their World has passed on.

So ends the World as crafted. Players are last encouraged to have an OOC discussion about their experiences, including brief descriptions of any positives or difficulties in play, highlighting positive moments in Nature and interacting with other Epochs in scenes. Players who wish copies of the journal should discuss how to make it happen.

After all, this is everyone's story.