Miso RPG

Minimal Solo RPG System by [Sophia Brandt](#)

What is this?

Miso RPG (Minimal Solo RPG) is a very simple freeform solo system for role-playing games. (Although I love soup, this game is *not* about it.)
The system can stand on its own or you can rip off elements for another game.

What You Need

- pen and paper
- different kinds of dice (use normal six-sided dice, your classic polyhedral set and/or the d24 you always wanted to use)

Or use digital tools (online dice roller, Google Docs...).

Setting

Choose a setting or make your own.

Characters

Describe your characters in a few sentences. Make sure you know their strengths, weaknesses, skills and abilities, talents, knacks etc. How powerful is the character, what are they able to do?

Example:
Laurence Skip:
PI with a heart of gold, ex-LAPD, two-fisted brawler, clever but impulsive, attractive in a rough sort of way (helps with the ladies and the shady elements)
Power Level: Pulp Hero

Alternative Character Creation

Use a character from another game system. As long as you know how they compare to that system's average, you are fine. For example, you use a character from Labyrinth Lord and he has DEX 15. You know that this is above average and the character is nimble.

Rules

Rule #1: Every Coin Has Two Sides

There are two options. Let's call them A and B.
Roll two dice. They can be the same size or different sizes (e.g. a d6 for Option A and a d20 for Option B).
The higher roll wins. If it's close, find a compromise.

Rule #2: If It Doesn't Have Two Sides, It's No Coin

When a character attempts an action, ask yourself: can the action fail? Is failure risky or interesting? If not, there is no need for a roll, the action just succeeds.
If you create a scene (see below) and there is no opposition, there is no need to generate two options. When there is no chance of failure, you don't roll the dice.

Rule #3: No Clue, No Cry

Are you stumped during gameplay about a detail, background information or similar? Create two options and roll dice.
Make sure you don't bog down the flow of the game by asking too many questions. Try to keep it interesting and relevant to the game.

<u>Example:</u>
I need some background information about the barkeeper Sven. Option A: he is a poor college student and a decent fellow but owes gambling debts to the crime syndicate. Option B: he is higher up in the pecking order of the crime syndicate but pretends to be a nobody.
I think that Option B is more fun, thus I give it a d12. I assign Option A a d8, just to show that it still has a chance. But it is lower than Option B.

How the Game Is Played

Create a Scene With Two Options

A scene has a name, a purpose and interactive bits [1] to interact with. Some bits are self-explanatory. If you are in a temple, there are pews, a holy water font, symbols of the deity and at least one priest. If you are on a space ship, there will be a bridge with control stations, an engine room and crew quarters. Come up with two *interesting* options on what happens during this scene.

<u>Example:</u>
Name: The Sunken Ship (shady bar at the docks)
Purpose: find out who is behind the attack on Mack
Bits: Sven (barkeeper), some patrons, hidden back door to gambling den
Option A: The characters interrogate the barkeep successfully and find a clue about the perpetrator.
Option B: The conversation with the bartender doesn't yield results. But one of the characters notices Sven's nervous glances to the hidden back door.

Roll it

Play it out. Then choose dice for the two different options. Think about the character's talents, skills, weaknesses as well as the environment or other modifiers. If Option A has a higher chance of success, give it a higher die than Option B. Or vice versa.
Roll it, higher roll wins. Narrate the outcome. Then continue with the next scene.

Suggestion: Keep track of the options that don't come to pass. You can re-use them later when you have to come up with new details or background material.

<u>Example:</u>
(continued from the example above: The Sunken Ship)
You decide that the player characters try to charm and bribe barkeep Sven to get the information. One of the characters is good at these kind of things. Now think about the opposition. What does the bartender want? Does he have any reason not to help the characters?
In this case, you decide that Sven is afraid of the criminal organization. He doesn't want to tell the characters what he knows.
Now you can play out part of the scene and decide on the chances you give each option. You assign Option A (successful interrogation) a higher die, e.g. a d12. But because Sven has his own reasons not to spill the info, Option B is a strong contender and gets a d10.

[1] Interactive Bits can be things (hidden doors, traps, McGuffins), people, monsters etc.

FAQ

What about equipment or magic items?

Equipment is just one of the many factors you use to determine the die size for the roll. Sometimes it enables you to tackle a task in the first place (e.g. if you have a time machine, you can jump in time - without one this is simply not possible).
Other times, it acts as a positive or negative influence on a die size.

(For example, if you try first aid without a med kit, it should be more difficult to succeed. You'd better give it a lower die. Or you might decide that the task can't be done without a med kit.)

What about hit points, death, and dying?

In a traditional game, hit points monitor the progress one combatant makes towards taking out another combatant.

In Miso RPG, you can either handle a combat in several rolls (every combat round gets its own roll) or as a scene roll for the whole conflict.

With several rolls, you let the outcome of the previous rolls influence the die sizes of the subsequent rolls.

For example, combatant 1 has scored an advantage in the first round. That gives him a better die size in the second round.

If you think that death is a likely outcome in a scene, include it in one of the options.

How do I come up with interesting options?

This is probably the difficult part in this game.

You can use random generators or image prompts as inspiration. Check out this link list of gaming aids.

Or you can use a published adventure as one of the options.

It helps if you are familiar with your game world/setting, non-player characters and factions. The richer your world, the richer your options can be.

What does "interesting" mean, exactly?

Every option or task should give you an opportunity to interact with the world in a meaningful way. Risk and failure are important. In a solo game, you are in charge of the obstacles your characters face. Include surprises and unexpected outcomes, even if you don't know how they will unfold at first. Challenge yourself.

How can I use system "X" together with Miso RPG?

Play a game normally using your preferred ruleset. Miso RPG will handle the Game Master's side of the screen by creating scenes, details and background information.

(For example, I play Dungeon World. I create my character using the Dungeon World rules and use Dungeon World for task resolution, combat etc. But when I create a scene I use Miso RPG.)

Can I use published adventures for system "X" with Miso RPG?

Yes. At the core, Miso RPG has two options. Use your published adventure to inform your options. Let's say you play an old-school Labyrinth Lord module. Read the entries for one of the rooms and come up with two options on what could happen. Play it out, then continue with the next section of the module.

I don't know what die size the options should have. Help?

The die size is a rough measurement for the probability of success. Make sure it is plausible for your game but don't sweat it too much.
If you want to shake it up, give the less probable outcome a higher die.
If you like, you can give the more challenging/fun/strange option a higher die size.

Why are there only two options (rule #1)?

I find it faster to come up and pick between two options. It allows me to focus on what is important in the scene. But you can add more options if you like. The game still works the same: assign a die to each option and roll it.

Why is the game so fuzzy?

Miso RPG is ultimately about freedom and flexibility. The vagueness is intentional to give you maximum choice. That can make it hard to play because freedom can be overwhelming. Creativity likes constraints.
Think about what your focus in your gaming session should be, what you want to explore. What are typical tropes in your genre? Is your game about intrigue and mystery, about fast-paced action or something else?
My suggestion is to use other tools to inform your choices, e.g. random generators.
Or you could just use another system altogether. Miso RPG is freeform and minimalist and that might not be your cup of tea.

Miscellaneous

I hope you enjoy this minimalist solo RPG. Contact me via email or on twitter.

Miso RPG was inspired by Bivius Solo RPG (by Riccardo Fregi), Perfected (by M.A.R. Barker) and Wyaul Hyoiwto (by Norbert G. Matausch).

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