

Fantasy and Legends Organization

Quick Start Guide

You're going to a FALO gather and, well... that and the fact that it is a fantasy event is about all you know. What do you do at a gather? How much do you need to know about your character? What will be expected of you? What are the rules? This guide will try to answer some of those questions. You should seek additional guidance or clarification from the person who invited you to the gather. We don't always remember what it is like to be new at this, so don't hesitate to ask. Below is some basic information to help you get started on what we hope will be a rewarding journey with new friends.

What are FALO's Rules?

Let's start with the basic gather rules. The most important is a variant of the Golden Rule:

Respect everyone and everything. If you aren't sure what constitutes respectful behavior ask the stoneholder (FALO member) who invited you or the gather host.

This includes asking before you use something that isn't yours, letting someone know if something gets broken, cleaning up any trash, smoking only where permitted (not indoors), and minding your weapons. Honesty and courtesy are highly valued. We want everyone to feel... at home. Beyond that, it is important to remember that our goal is to maintain a medieval-fantasy environment and to behave accordingly. We encourage fantasy. Fey are encouraged to exhibit manifestations (e.g. ears, wings, etc.) and humans must be fey friendly. Evil and undead characters are not permitted (we smite them).

What Happens at a Gather?

Gathers have been compared to the gathering of companions after a quest. We portray our characters as we share our adventures and plan the next ones (see roleplaying below), and we have a feast. A brief meeting, moderated by an elder, is held in the evening and stoneholders introduce themselves and their guests and announcements are made. The evening continues with more roleplaying, music, and songs.

What Do I Need to Know about My Character?

At a minimum, you should know your character's name, race (elf, dwarf, human, etc.), identity/class (e.g. warrior, mage, cleric), and special abilities. It helps to have a rough idea of what your character is about (ideals, goals, history), but if you don't have everything worked out quite yet, don't worry. If someone asks you a question you haven't prepared for, you can either make something up on the spot (you won't likely be held to it forever; the whole point of being a guest is to experiment), or you can politely whisper that you haven't worked out that detail, and your conversation partner will nod knowingly (we've all been there) and steer the conversation in another direction. The key is to try to remain in character and share in the camaraderie, food, music, and whatever roleplays you feel comfortable in participating in.

How Does Roleplaying Work in FALO?

A FALO gather is not a planned game event. It is a gathering of characters, and those characters interact in a setting within the FALO world of E'atara as is appropriate to those... well, characters. The whole day generally involves some degree of roleplaying, and there are two types that you should keep in mind:

1. **The "Roleplay"** - Members each have their own story line and may set up a short scenario that many people will refer to as a "roleplay." Such roleplays often take the form of an unexpected event or visitor that augment someone's story line and is intended to involve others in that story. Roleplays can often generate a sequence of events/decisions that result in undertaking a quest (often carried out "between gathers" and either written or told later).

Some gathers will have a lot of intense roleplay scenarios; others are relatively calm. Not everyone participates in every roleplay. The nature of your character depends on whether you do and how. Many people only watch the first couple of gathers until they get a feel for things. Others jump right in with their characters. Either is fine.

One important factor to consider is that you can't force someone to react a certain way, and you can't harm or kill another member's character (unless such is planned in advance). Nor can you invalidate another character by disregarding what he/she should be able to do. For instance, a healer heals. If a roleplay requires that someone not be healed, the orchestrator of that roleplay will usually talk to the healers in advance and work out a reason. It isn't appropriate to just make a character fail because it suits your story. In addition, some people like carefully scripted skits, and others prefer organic, open ended problems to solve. This is the main reason many people start slow in interacting with roleplay scenarios.

There are no dice or cue cards to determine what happens, and it takes a little time to learn how roleplays unfold and which characters are capable of what. If you are preparing a roleplay, ask the member who invited you for help in figuring out what you will need to consider with regards to other members' abilities. And... be prepared to have things turn out differently than you expected.

2. **Being Your Character** - Another kind of roleplaying that occurs is much more subtle. It consists simply of the interactions between characters--behaving the way your character would among friends and getting involved in things that your character would be interested in. This is easy if there are games or discussions already going on that draw others in. If there doesn't seem to be much going on, don't be afraid to ask people about their homelands, ruling structure, social classes, deities, and customs... whatever your character might be interested in.

After you've experienced some of that kind of roleplaying, start thinking about what you might be doing between gathers and how you can bring what your character does to gathers in a way that involves others, whether it be with discussions, activities, or problems to solve. In short, what would you do with your friends if you were your character?