

Solarpunk Pen Pals Activity

2+ players | 60+ min | Ages 6+ | Print and play with your friends or organisation

Solarpunk: an emerging culture and arts movement which envisions a regenerative future interconnected with community and nature.

Solarpunk pen pals: a collaborative storytelling activity where you imagine a solarpunk world and create a character in it, and then write a letter as your character.

Intro

In pairs of two you will be guided through a process of **collaborative worldbuilding and character creation** similar to preparing for a roleplaying game. In fact, the prompt cards are borrowed from an RPG, **Solarpunk Futures (thefuture.wtf)**. However, in this activity, instead of playing a game with your characters, **your characters will write each other letters updating each other on their lives within their solarpunk world.**

Setup

1. Download and print the cards and character sheets (TODO LINK)
2. Gather a pen or pencil for each player
3. Form pairs of 2

Phase 1: Worldbuilding

Setting the scene: We will be imagining our world 20 years in the future. The solarpunk transition has critical momentum – people are actively building the better and dismantling the bad.

As a pair:

1. **Pull a Challenge Card and a Tool Card.**
2. Take 5 minute turns riffing on how your Challenge might be met with your Tool. If at first your Challenge and Tool seem unrelated, just try your best and see where your imagination takes you. Remember to think local. Discuss how your visions interrelate in the future you're co-imagining.

Tip: Get specific applying these ideas to your familiar communities and locales. For instance you can start with "Parking lots are replaced with community gardens" but then take the next

step to say “the parking lot behind Trader Joe’s is being converted to a community garden by...”
You don’t have to be an expert - **go on a flight of fancy**.

Phase 2: Character Creation

Individually:

1. **Take a character sheet.**
2. **Pull a Value Card and Role Card.** Write these down on your character sheet as your character’s “**Motivating Value**” and “**Movement Role**”.
3. Using your value and role as inspiration, fill out the rest of your character sheet.

Phase 3: Relationship Building

As a pair:

1. **Introduce each other to your characters.**
2. **Decide how your characters know each other and why they are in correspondence.**
3. **Write a letter** from your character to your partner’s character, drawing from the worldbuilding and character creation that you’ve done together. Feel free to leave out whatever doesn’t feel relevant. **Don’t consult each other while writing.**
4. **Read** each other your letters.

Conclusion: Sharing

As a whole group: Share the letters you have written. If it’s a large group, be mindful to keep the backstory to a minimum.

Activity designed by author Todd Medema (toddmedema.com) and artist Taylor Seamount (taylorseamount.com). Cards by Solarpunk Futures (thefuture.wtf).

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