

# An Introduction to Play-by-Mail Gaming

v1.1, 12 October 2021, created by Raven Zachary (raven@rinzai.com)

**What are play-by-mail games?** Play-by-mail games, often referred to as PBM games or turn-based games, are multi-player games played through the postal mail. A player sends orders for a position (a nation, kingdom, empire, or a character, usually) which is processed by computer and the results of the game turn are printed out and mailed back to the player. Turns are often due every two weeks or every month, depending on the game. Play-by-mail games were a popular gaming format in the 1980s and 1990s. Although video games and the Internet resulted in a decline in the PBM gaming hobby over the past 25 years, many of these games have survived, moving to email (play-by-email) or the web (browser games). Five play-by-mail gaming companies continue to offer their games via postal mail.

**What types of games are there?** There are generally two types of play-by-mail games – victory conditions games and open-ended games. A victory conditions game has a set of objectives for a player to win the game, with games lasting anywhere from six months to several years in duration. Open-ended games continue on until you are eliminated, and these games will likely last for many years. Open-ended games have been marked in the game list below. As play-by-mail games are multi-player, it is recommended that you have diplomatic contact with other players who may be allies or adversaries. This can be done through postal letters, phone calls, or email. You can also join the same game with friends and work together as a group towards a set of common objectives or goals.

**How do I start?** If you are interested in learning more about any of the games listed below, contact information has been provided for these gaming companies. Pricing information supplied by the companies is accurate as of the date of publication of this flyer and is subject to change at any time. This flyer was created as a volunteer effort by a PBM player and is not a commercial enterprise.

Reality Simulations (RSI)		Madhouse USA		Rick Loomis PBM	
<b>Duel II</b> <i>open-ended</i>	Duel 2, the game formerly known as Duelmasters, is a play-by-mail game of ancient gladiatorial combat.  \$3.25 per turn + \$1.50 per warrior	<b>DungeonWorld Adventures</b> <i>open-ended</i>	DungeonWorld Adventures is a character-based multiplayer turn-based fantasy adventure game that has been running for 20 years continuously and is as popular as ever.	<b>Battle Plan</b>	In Battle Plan, war (and lots of behind-the-scenes intrigue) takes place on a map of Europe, among 4-8 players all trying to conquer 29 countries.  \$5.00 setup, \$3.50 per turn
<b>Forgotten Realms</b>	In Forgotten Realms: War of the Avatars, your goal is to carefully cultivate your realm's growth, using economics, diplomacy, and your military might.  \$1.50 per turn + \$0.50 per order up to \$15.00	<b>DungeonWorld Estates</b> <i>open-ended</i>	In DungeonWorld Estates, the player takes control of a landholder in the Kingdom of Bereny to ensure the health and growth of the estate.	<b>Heroic Fantasy</b> <i>open-ended</i>	In Heroic Fantasy, you direct a party of up to fifteen fighters and magic users through a dungeon maze killing monsters, gathering treasure, and hunting for magical prizes.  \$5.00 setup, \$3.00 per turn
<b>Hyborian War</b>	Hyborian War is a game of imperial conquest in the age of Conan.  \$5.00 (Small), \$7.00 (Medium), \$9.00 (Large) per turn based on the kingdom size	<b>Pricing</b>	£3.00 GBP per turn + £0.50 GBP per character £0.20 or £0.10 per sub-character  <i>All payments converted from dollars to pounds Current exchange rate: 2 characters is \$5.50</i>  <i>The game is operated in the UK with a US office</i>	<b>Mobius I</b>	Mobius I is a unique combination of science fiction, grand strategy, diplomacy, and exploration.  \$5.00 setup, \$8.00 per turn
<b>Pricing</b>	<i>All RSI games offer free first-time setup and rules</i>	<b>Mailing Address</b>	Madhouse USA P.O. Box 712 Katy, TX 77492	<b>Rift Lords</b> <i>open-ended</i>	Rift Lords is a space trading game where you fly from world to world buying and selling eighteen different commodities in a universe of at least 1000 worlds, trying to make the most money.  \$4.00 per turn and up based on position size
<b>Mailing Address</b>	Reality Simulations, Inc. P.O. Box 22400 Tempe, AZ 85285-2400	<b>Telephone</b>	(832) 519-8395	<b>StarWeb</b>	Starweb is a play-by-mail game of 15 stellar empires clashing over 255 worlds.  \$5.00 setup, \$4.50 per turn
<b>Telephone</b>	(480) 967-7979	<b>Email</b>	neil@madhouseusa.biz	<b>World Wide Battle Plan</b>	In World Wide Battle Plan, war (and lots of behind-the-scenes intrigue) takes place on a map of the world, among 20-31 players all trying to conquer 255 land and sea spaces.  \$5.00 setup, \$4 to \$9 per turn based on size
<b>Email</b>	csr@reality.com			<b>Mailing Address</b>	Rick Loomis PBM P.O. Box 8467 Scottsdale, AZ 85252
Rolling Thunder Games		Talisman Games		<b>Telephone</b>	(480) 945-6917
<b>SuperNova: Rise of the Empire</b> <i>open-ended</i>	SuperNova: Rise of the Empire is an interactive play-by-mail game of galactic conquest, colonization and exploration.  \$15.00 new empire setup \$10.00 printed rules \$9.50 per turn (40 orders), double for 80 orders	<b>Galac-Tac</b>	Galac-Tac is a science fiction war game based on economic expansion and military conquest in space, in play since 1982. Compete for territory, designing and directing your own fleets to rule the galaxy.  \$10.00 per turn + \$0.10 per page + postage \$10.00 for printed rules	<b>Email</b>	games@rickloomispbm.com
<b>Mailing Address</b>	Rolling Thunder Games, Inc. P.O. Box 460999 Aurora, CO 80046	<b>Mailing Address</b>	Talisman Games P.O. Box 861147 Plano, TX 75086		
<b>Telephone</b>	(303) 627-1487	<b>Telephone</b>	<i>No phone number available</i>		
<b>Email</b>	russ@rollingthunder.com	<b>Email</b>	sales@talisman-games.com		