

Saga Talu — User Guide

Everything you need to write, direct, and export your collaborative stories.

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1. What is Saga Talu?

Saga Talu is a collaborative writing platform where you craft stories alongside AI characters. You play one character. The AI plays the rest of the cast — staying in character, remembering everything that has happened, and responding naturally to what you write.

Think of it as a private creative writing forum where your co-authors never sleep, never lose track of the plot, and always know their lines.

The name draws from the tradition of oral storytelling — a *saga* being a long narrative of deeds and events, and *talu* an echo of dialogue and exchange. Every story on this platform is a conversation between a human imagination and an artificial one.

What makes Saga Talu different from simply chatting with an AI is structure. Stories have casts. Characters have distinct voices, histories, and personalities that persist across every post. The world you build in the setting description shapes how every AI character thinks and speaks. Your Director's Notes set the tone. Your Lorebook holds the lore. The story grows as a proper narrative thread — and when you are done, you can export it as a finished book.

2. Getting Started

Creating your first story takes about five minutes.

Step 1 — Create a Story. Click *New Story* from the navigation bar. Give it a title and a setting description. The setting description is the AI's briefing — describe the world, the era, the tone, the rules of the place. A rich, specific setting like "a crumbling empire in its last years before a magical catastrophe, tone: grim and literary" will produce far more atmospheric responses than "a fantasy kingdom." Come back and expand it as your world develops.

Step 2 — Define Your Character. This is the character you write as. Give them a name, a role, a description, and a personality. The AI will never write for this character — they are yours entirely. The

more specific you are, the better the AI understands who you are in the story.

Step 3 — Add AI Characters. Create one or more characters for the AI to play. Each needs a name, role, description, and personality. Give each a distinct voice — a character described as "terse, deeply loyal, distrusts magic" will behave very differently from one described as "theatrical, self-aggrandizing, hides fear behind charm." You can add more characters later from within the story at any time.

Step 4 — Write the Opening Post. Post number one is yours to write as your character. Set the scene. Establish the situation. This post is the foundation everything else builds on.

3. Writing & Post Control

Writing Your Posts. The reply box sits at the bottom of the thread. Write your post and submit. No special syntax is required — write in whatever style suits your story. First person, third person, present or past tense — all of it works.

Post As... Selector. By default the reply box posts as your player character. You can switch to posting as any other character using the *Post As* selector in the sidebar. This is useful for writing a guest character's entrance post, or directly controlling an AI character for a specific exchange.

Editing, Deleting & Regenerating. Hover over any post to reveal three controls: edit (pencil), delete (X), and regenerate (■). Edit lets you revise any post — yours or an AI's — directly in the thread. Regenerate re-rolls an AI post with the same context. Use it freely — sometimes a second attempt lands better than the first.

Branching from a Post. Hover any post and click the branch icon (■) to split the story at that point into an alternate timeline. See Section 8 for the full branching guide.


Action lines & internal thoughts written in asterisks are rendered distinctly in the thread and can be hidden when you export, so they do not appear in the final document if you prefer clean prose.

4. AI Characters & Group Respond

The AI Characters sidebar card is your primary control for triggering story responses. It appears on the right side of every story view.


Individual Post Buttons. Each AI character has their own Post button. Click it to have that character respond to the current thread. The AI reads the full context — setting, character descriptions, director's notes, lorebook entries, and every post — before writing. You are in full control of who responds and

when.

Group Respond. When your story has two or more AI characters, a  *Group Respond...* button appears below the individual triggers. Click it to open the Group Response panel.

- **Select Characters** — Check or uncheck each AI character to include or exclude them. Use *Select All / Deselect All* to toggle everyone at once.

- **Drag to Reorder** — Drag the handle on the left of each row to set the posting order. Each character sees the previous character's freshly written post before composing their own, producing a genuinely conversational exchange.

- **Order Preview & Run** — A live preview shows the posting chain as *Alice → Bob → Clara*. Click  *Run Group Response* when ready.

Tip: Group Respond is especially powerful for ensemble scenes — a tavern argument, a council debate, a standoff — where you want every character to react without manually triggering each one.

5. The Story Panel

The Story Panel is the gear icon on the left side of the story view. It contains two tabs: Settings and Cast.

Director's Notes. A free-form field where you give the AI standing instructions that apply to every character and every post. Use it to set tone, pacing, style, and any constraints you want maintained.

Examples:

"Keep the tone dark and grounded. No comic relief. Characters speak in short, terse sentences unless emotional."

"This is a slow-burn romance. Characters are emotionally guarded. Subtext over direct statement."

Director's Notes persist across all AI responses for the lifetime of the story and take effect from the next post onward.

Context Summary. As stories grow long, the AI's context window becomes a constraint. The Context Summary solves this: write a summary of what has happened so far, and the AI will use it plus the last ten posts instead of attempting to read the entire thread. Use the *Generate* button to have the AI produce a first draft, then edit to emphasize what matters most.

Note: The context summary must be kept current. If a character seems stuck on a past event or can't register a change you've made, update the summary, save it, reload the page, and regenerate that character's next post.

Story Status. Set the status of your story: Active, On Hold, Complete, or Archived. This affects how stories appear in your Dashboard and Library.

Per-Character Style Tuning. The Cast tab shows each AI character and allows you to adjust a **style note** (character-specific instruction) and a **temperature slider** (higher = more creative and unpredictable; lower = more consistent and on-model) per character.

6. The GM / Story Arbiter

The GM panel sits on the right side of the story view. It gives you access to a separate AI that exists outside the story — not a character, but an advisor and narrator tool.

The Advise Tab. Have a conversation with the GM about your story. Ask it to suggest where the plot might go next, brainstorm character motivations, help work through a scene that isn't clicking, or outline the next story beats. The GM knows your full story and responds as a thoughtful collaborator. Its advice stays outside the thread.

The Inject Tab. Insert a narrator post directly into the story thread. Write a prompt and click *Inquire* to have the GM compose a post — or write your own verbatim and click *Inject Into Story*. Narrator posts are styled distinctly in the thread and count as story posts that AI characters will read and respond to.

When to use the GM: At inflection points when a scene has gone stale, when you want to introduce a plot complication, or at the start of a session to think through where you want the story to go.

7. The Lorebook

The Lorebook is your story's wiki. Access it via the book icon in the story view. Store locations, factions, historical events, items, people, customs, and anything else that defines your world. Entries have a title, category, body text, optional keywords, and an optional image.

Pinned Entries. Always included in the AI's context regardless of what is being discussed. Use for foundational world facts that should never be forgotten: rules of magic, political structure, geography, core tone. Pin selectively — pinned entries use context space.

Keyword Entries. Triggered automatically when their keywords appear in recent posts. Lets you maintain a rich lorebook that the AI draws on only when relevant. Use specific keywords — character names, place names, faction names, item names.

Tip: You do not need to fill the Lorebook before you start writing. Add entries as the story develops — when a new location is introduced, when lore is established, when an organization is named.

8. Branches & Timelines

Branches allow you to split the story at any post and explore an alternate path without losing or altering the original. Hover over any post and click the branch icon (■). The original story is untouched. Both versions exist independently.

Branches are useful when a character reaches a decision point with two viable directions, when you want to try a different version of a scene without committing the main thread, or simply to experiment before deciding. You can branch a branch, creating multiple generations of alternate timelines.

Think of branches as drafts. Some will become more developed than the original. There is no hierarchy — a branch is just another story that happens to share history with its parent. You can export, share, or continue any branch independently.

9. Export Studio

The Export Studio transforms your story thread into a finished document. Access it via the quill icon in the story view. It is a full editing environment with a live preview, supporting export to EPUB, DOCX, and PDF.

Drafts. Save multiple named drafts of the same story — an unedited version, an author's cut, a version for a specific reader. Drafts are independent. Always save a draft before making significant edits or adding images.

Structure & Settings (Left Panel). Include or exclude any post; set chapter breaks with titles; disable the ornament divider per post; edit post content (draft only, does not affect the live story); add images above or below any post with captions. Title page settings let you set the book title, subtitle, and author name.

Front Matter & Cast Page. Add an introduction, foreword, prologue, or author's note that appears before the story content. Configure an optional Cast of Characters page.

Exporting. Click Export and select your format: **EPUB** (recommended for e-readers), **DOCX** (for further editing in Word or Google Docs), or **PDF** (for print and sharing). You can attach a cover image. Two formatting toggles: show ornament dividers between posts, and hide action lines (removes *asterisk* lines from the final document, leaving clean prose).

10. Sharing Your Story

Every story can be shared via a public read-only link. The person receiving the link does not need an account to read it. Open the story and click the Share button. Configure how many posts to include and whether to show the cast list at the top.

The share link is permanent until you revoke it. You can revoke it at any time from the Share panel.

11. The Dashboard

The Dashboard is your home view after signing in, accessible from the navigation bar.

Writing Stats. Total stories, total posts across all stories and branches, total words written, and number of AI characters created. Your most active story is highlighted at the top.

Recent Activity. The last eight posts written across all stories and branches, with direct links back to the relevant thread.

Full Cast List. Every character across every story, all in one place.

Library. The Library (nav bar) shows all your stories with their status, word count, and last activity. Filter by status — Active, On Hold, Complete, or Archived — to keep your workspace organized.

12. Your Profile

Access your profile by clicking your name in the top navigation bar.

Avatar. Upload a PNG, JPG, GIF, or WebP image. Images are automatically resized to 256×256. A preview appears before you save. A *Remove* button lets you clear an uploaded avatar.

Username. Choose a username displayed instead of your email address everywhere on the site. Must be 2–30 characters, letters/numbers/underscores/hyphens only, and unique. If no username is set, the portion of your email before the @ is used as a fallback.

About. A short blurb about yourself or your writing style, up to 500 characters.

13. Bring Your Own API

By default, Saga Talu uses its own AI model for all story generation. If you have an API key from a supported provider, you can connect it in your profile and all your story posts will be generated using

your own account instead of the system default.

This is useful if you want to use a specific model — GPT-4o, a Groq-hosted open source model, Grok, or a different Mistral tier — or if you are on a plan where you provide your own API access.

Quick Select Presets. One-click presets for common providers: OpenAI GPT-4o and GPT-4o Mini, Mistral Large and Small, and Groq Llama and Mixtral. Clicking a preset fills in the Base URL and Model Name automatically — you just need to add your API key.

Security. Your API key is encrypted with AES-256 before being stored. It is never logged, never transmitted in plaintext, and is only used server-side when generating your story posts. The status badge shows whether you are on a personal key (*Active*) or the system default (*Using System Default*).

Custom Providers. Any provider offering an OpenAI-compatible API can be connected — enter the Base URL and model name manually. To remove your key and revert to the system default, use the *Remove My API Key* button.

Verifying your connection: After saving a new API key, visit /api-info while logged in. The page shows which provider and model is currently active for your account.

14. Observations & Best Practices

Invest in your setting description. The setting description is the AI's worldview. A rich, specific, atmospheric setting will pay dividends across every single post. Come back and expand it as you discover more about your world.

Give AI characters contradictions. Characters with a single dominant trait produce flat responses. Characters with internal tensions — brave but afraid of one specific thing, kind but with a sharp edge when betrayed — produce much richer behavior.

Let Director's Notes do the heavy lifting for tone. If every AI response is slightly more cheerful or verbose than you want, adjust Director's Notes rather than regenerating repeatedly. A single note like "maintain a melancholy undercurrent" shifts the entire story's output immediately.

Use the Context Summary before long stories drift. Generate one at around fifty to sixty posts and update it every twenty to thirty posts after that.

Branches are for exploration, not just mistakes. You do not need a reason to branch. Branching to try a different version of a scene — even one you are happy with — often reveals possibilities you would not have found otherwise.

Use the GM proactively. Use Advise at the start of a session to think through where you want the story to go. Asking "given everything that has happened, what are the three most dramatically interesting directions this could go next?" often surfaces an option you had not considered.

Edit freely and without guilt. The posts in your thread are not sacred. If an AI response is eighty percent right and twenty percent wrong, edit it. Treat the thread as a working draft throughout.

Group Respond for ensemble moments. Set the order deliberately — who speaks first shapes the dynamic for everyone who follows. A character who responds early in the chain sets the emotional temperature for the rest.

15. Early Access & Feedback

Saga Talu is in early access. You are among the first people to use the platform, which means two things: some things may not yet be perfectly polished, and your experience directly shapes what gets built next.

The feedback system is always available. Use the *Send Feedback* button in the footer of any page to report bugs, suggest features, or tell us what is working well. Every submission is read.

AI response quality varies by story length, complexity, and the richness of your setup. The more carefully you build your setting, characters, and Director's Notes, the more consistently the AI will perform. Occasional responses that miss the mark are normal — that is what the regenerate button is for.

If you have a question not answered here, write to us at contact@sagatalu.com. We read everything.

Thank you for being here at the beginning.