



Pedagogical sequence/Introductory sheet

Fake News

Where to find the game

<https://gd.games/instant-builds/4743dfe8-d6a4-49b4-b40d-765c74201ac6>

Hosting the game sessions

Accessibility

English level

B2: The game uses B2-level vocabulary and idioms.

Accessibility features

We used a DYS-friendly font (open-dyslexic) and a 1.5 line spacing to make it easier.

Reading the dialogue aloud in pairs could alleviate the focus on reading.

We also tried to break down long texts into several smaller pieces when possible.

Advice for specific student profiles

Classroom organisation

Duration

The game can take from 20 to 40 minutes to play, depending on the learners' level and detective skills.

Make sure you read the timeline of the events and the step-by-step solution of the game. Use it to help students understand what happens in the game, guide their reflection, and help them if they are stuck.

Single-player mode

Solo

The game can be played from a computer through a web browser. The students will need the internet to play it.

Allow students to report when they don't understand a sentence: you can put vocabulary on the board so that your students can use it if and when they need it.

Also, record the sentences or grammar points that were hard for your students to understand.

If your students are stuck at one point due to a misunderstanding of the English content, make sure to let all students reach the problematic point. Those who are ahead can pause the game and help their classmates.

Most dialogues can be triggered again so you can ask the students to go to a specific character and discuss with them what is said.

In Group

The game is mostly about reading dialogues and trying to find the culprit. It is then possible for several students to use the same device and to think about the events together.

You can even think of a classroom setup where you or a student plays the game in front of the entire class and whenever a dialogue happens, the entire classroom participates:

- To clarify the meaning of the sentences
- To sum up what was said, information acquired and possible leads on the case
- To feed a “case” board that you can put in the classroom. For example a mindmap with the different characters as well as a timeline to try to reconstruct the events.

Multiplayer mode

None

Remote Play

Play as homework

The teacher can ask their students to play the game at home before the next English class.

They need an internet connection and a computer.

You can ask students to investigate a specific character, draw conclusions and sum up the information acquired from them.

Distance learning activity

You can play the game and share your screen with your students remotely. It is a remote version of the “play in front of your class” setup.

Briefing

Pedagogical requirements

The past tenses

The use of “quite”.

Explanations to give before playing

The game is an investigation. In order for players not to get lost in the story, it is advised that they take notes.

They should try to do like real investigators: figure out the objectives of the protagonists as well as the storyline.

They should try to record the timeline of the events.

If you use the game in a classroom setup, you might want to visually represent this timeline on a board as well as circles with the characters’ names inside, in a mindmap fashion.

Students can complete the timeline and mindmap with the information they gather while playing.

Emotional security and other warnings

The game deals with fake news and politics. It is set in an imaginary town and world with imaginary characters and beliefs but is a metaphor for actual events.

Follow-up and Post-play activities

Evaluation: score analysis or resolving difficulties encountered

You can use the difficulties encountered by the students while playing the game as a basis for a lesson.

For example, when a student doesn't understand a sentence, try to find out why and use the grammar or vocabulary point involved as a subject for a lesson.

Lesson plan using the in-game content learned

The game sometimes mentions cognitive biases or human behaviours on which fake news draw. It can be the occasion for a multidisciplinary lesson on the topic of fake news and political debate.

Debrief or production based on the game session (essays, list of words to review...)

You can ask students to produce an essay on what they understood of the story. Explain their conclusions based on the proofs they found and then compare in class.

They could even pretend to be the main character writing a report to their superior. Explaining the situation in the town and explaining why they think this suspect is the culprit.

They can also imagine the article the main character would have published after the game's events.

The game

Context and story

Plot

The game is set in an imaginary small town on the brink of civil war. Political divides are heated by a local Social network called "Veracity".

People are divided on the matter of the construction of a mall.

The current government wants to prevent this construction as experts and scientists warn about potential dangers and harming of the ecosystem.

A group called the "Natueros" could be depicted as followers of a group/sect, based on a pseudo-science supposedly nature- and environment-centered. They follow the influencer "Vera Saints". She recently advocated for the construction. Ecologists were surprised but her followers agree with her arguments.

A cult called the Church of Dagon, lead by Anne Heading are conservatives who have advocated for this project for a long time but things have changed recently. To the surprise, Anne heading has produced ethno-nationalist arguments to back the protection of the local ecosystem. Not all follow her of course, but the arguments have started to infuse, up until the recent events of the game: fake news on the social network saying that Anne is a traitor.

Josh Burdinhams, the libertarian CEO of the company leading the construction is also in secret the manager of “Veracity”. He tries to manipulate opinion, brewing conflict and confusion using fake news and targeted content, to make the project happen.

The game begins after an assault on the mayor, brewed by posts signed by an anonymous user called “Veritas” who called for violent action against government regulations.

Soon, Anne Heading will also be poisoned, but she will survive.

The player plays Alyssa Nowak, a journalist who will cover up the situation. Her investigation will lead her to reveal Josh’s actions. He is indeed the one indirectly responsible for these murder attempts.

Lore – game world

Timeline of the events:

January 2025

Vera Saints campaigns against the mall because it encroaches on land she says is inhabited by the spirit of nature that makes her medicines powerful. The citizens must protect it, it is a mystical place and provider of resources and health.

Josh helps Anne with fake news, as she is anti-regulation. He mocks Vera and the Naturos.

The mayor and science-based ecologists, get mocked in the process, as they try to warn of a landslide danger if building there.

The mayor teamed up with Vera and Naturos because of common goals but never should have, as it gave Josh the perfect opportunity to discredit them by pointing out the fake science used by Vera.

Vera in fact just wants to keep her business but sells her approach as for the common good.

March

Vera convinces Anne to save the environment with ethno-nationalist arguments.

Vera starts to sell herbal treatments to Anne to fix her mind, they can be dangerous if ill-prepared. Anne gets to read Vera's articles on the social network "Veracity".

This "campaign" rallies many people to Vera's cause. With her many followers and her capacity to talk to people according to their values, she becomes a danger for Josh's construction plan.

The alliance between Vera and Anne is just for the sake of the landslide. They are still very much at odds on social issues.

The mayor takes advantage of Vera and her followers to support the environmental protection project.

Anne starts buying medicinal herbs from Vera to help with her mental illness, abandoning her official treatment. She starts slipping.

April

The mayor asks Vera to urge her followers to vote for him, as they have common goals. She refuses, it gets a bit heated.

May

The mayor brings in an expert/scientist to debunk what Vera is saying about both the ecosystem and her business.

This is seen as a declaration of war by Vera.

June

Josh signs a big cheque to Vera to turn her around. She accepts and campaigns in favour of the construction. She creates a rationale: in fact, it will benefit the ecosystem to sacrifice a piece of it, invoking concepts like survival of the fittest etc. Ecologists feel the heat, Naturos buy what Vera says.

Josh asks Vera how one could prepare Anne's herbs in a way that it becomes poison. She hesitates but accepts for more money.

July

July 1

Josh discredits Anne who changed her mind, in order to rally her voters.

To do so, he posts on Veracity under the "Veritas" pseudonym: he calls Anne a traitor, and provides fake photos showing her conversion to Naturo's divinity "Gaia". He also calls for violent action against the mayor to protect the community, refusing the mall project would be economically harmful.

July 3

An extremist nationalist/libertarian attacks the mayor after reading "Veritas" 's post.

"Veritas" publishes a recipe on social media, he uses the filtering algorithm to target Anne's profile.

Anne sees this, "repurposes" her herbs to follow the recipe and poisons herself.

The poisoning sends Anne into a tailspin. She ends up in the hospital under physical and mental supervision. She thinks she's been poisoned: probably that damn Verra saint.

Josh gives up the identity of the attacker, to play the nice guy and make himself look good a few moments after Alyssa starts her investigation.

Characters

Protagonist(s)

- **Alyssa Nowak:**

(not covered in the game due to lack of time) In her youth, misinformation almost killed a family member.

She was anti-vax. One day her mother caught a disease and almost died, probably because of her.

She was traumatised by it and wants to fight misinformation.

She went to journalism school and studied human behaviour/psychology and the mechanisms of fake news. She did it to try and understand what made her make

her mistake and also perhaps to find some comfort by realizing she is not just "bad".

Antagonist(s)

- **Josh burdinhm**

He is the CEO of a big construction company. There clearly is a conflict of interest in this story.

He wants to be recognized and to see the construction project start.

He clearly wants to prove himself.

His father, Fred, is a wealthy tycoon.

Josh grew up worshipping his father. He was not allowed to contradict, or even raise his voice against him.

Fred was irritable, angry, and had high expectations for his son, who was to carry on his name and legacy...

These expectations put pressure on Josh who was often labelled as a loser by his father. He unconsciously developed the need to prove to the world and to himself that he is special and powerful.

Other characters(s)

- **Vera Saints**

She passed a scientific degree but didn't have much talent, opportunities and pleasure in the lab. She uses her degree to justify her pseudo-science.

People love her speech. She sees herself as a scientist who has seen the other side of the coin, a rebel who brings the truth to the people.

The truth, actually, is that she was a very bad scientist, she only cares about her business.

She actually doesn't believe in a single word she says, whether it's Gaia or the strengthening of the ecosystem.

She just wants to make money.

- **Anne Heading**

She has been traumatized in the past, which has created a tendency to excrete cortisol. Cortisol damages brain cells.

This physiological tendency coupled with very poor mental speech and a lack of scepticism leads her to "madness".

She broods and imagines things and convinces herself that they are true.

To get better, Anne needs to talk to sane friends: she has none, her beliefs have isolated her. She only has followers or conspiracy theorists like her as a community.

She could also talk to a professional, but she doesn't trust doctors and prefers self-medication and "soft" medicine.

Gameplay

Top down point and click adventure

Description

The game camera is oriented top down.

The user can use the cursor to point objects, those that can be interacted with have their names showing up.



If close enough to the item, the name highlights and the player can click on it.

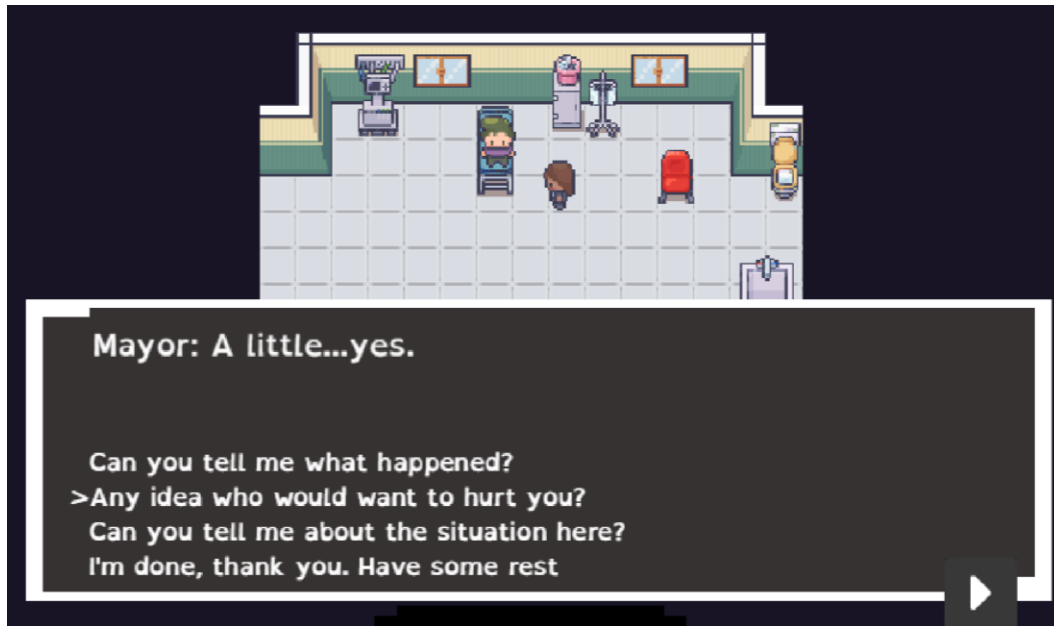


Revealing a piece of information or starting a dialogue.

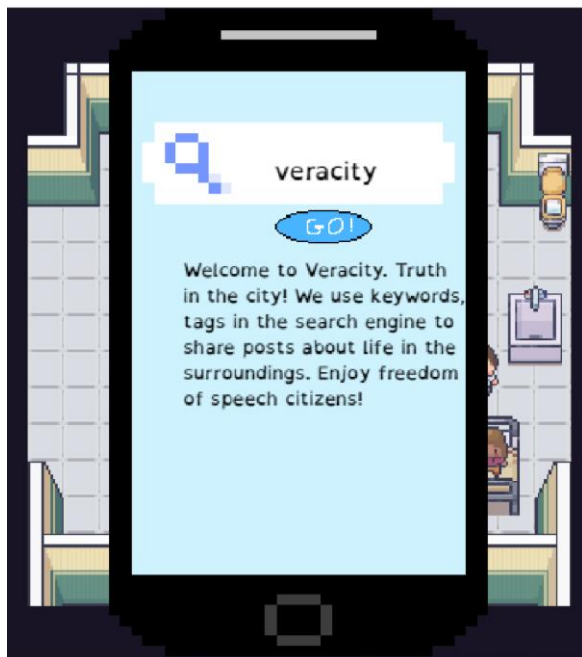


The player moves the protagonist using ZQSD, QASD or arrow keys.

Dialogue offer choices, they can be navigated using Z and S (up and down) and selected using E.



Finally, the player can bring up Alyssa's phone anytime by clicking on it. It lies at the bottom of the screen. When displayed, the player can type in some words and press the search button.



If the keyword is a valid search, it displays information.

Pedagogical impact

The player has close to real life dialogues with characters. They must search their environment and connect data to solve the investigation.

It is mostly reading comprehension, with B2 vocabulary.

Roadmap and solutions

The city



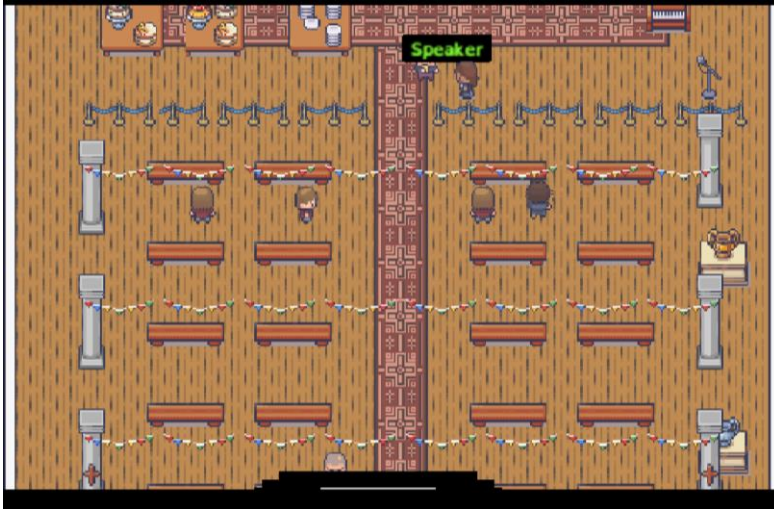
- 1:** Hospital (can find mayor and Anne after her poisoning)
- 2:** Church (can find Dagon cultists)
- 3:** Vera's house and shop (can find Vera and her future ex-employee)
- 4:** Construction site (can find Josh, the expert and Josh's partner)
- 5:** Bar (can find the bartender and customer)
- 6:** Anne's House (triggers the poisoning scene of Anne and then takes us to the hospital)

The player is free to explore the city and talk to different characters.

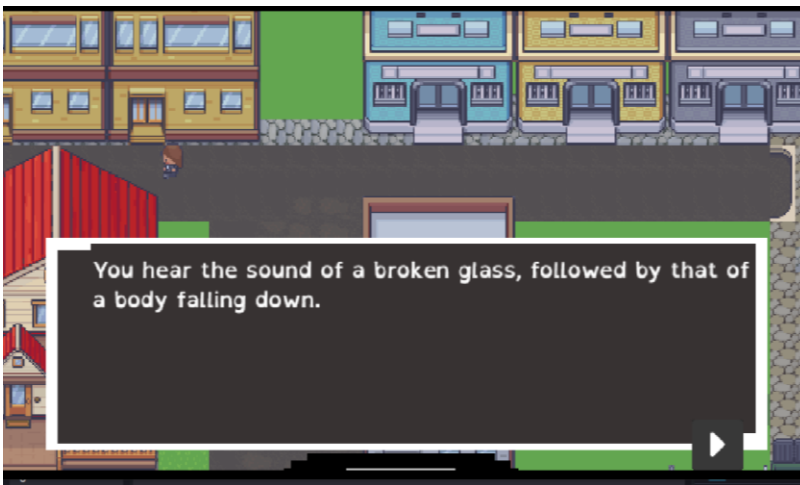
By interacting with them they will pickup intel on the situation and timeline of the events.

To finish the game here is how to pickup the most important information.

- You can go to the hospital to get in introduction on the situation by the mayor (but it isn't actually required to finish the game)
- Go to Dagon church and talk to the speaker. Ask him about the decorations to find out that it's the same paint than the one the Mayor aggressor used to tag his house. You also find out that Connor and Mike are the owner and users of the paint. There was a church of dagon party at the bar yesterday: alibi. There was a party because it was the anniversary of the cult creation. Ask about the mayor attack to learn the keyword to access the post on veracity that led to the attack. It is signed "Veritas"



- Go to Anne's house. The poisoning scene will happen. In the hospital, use the cult anniversary date as the phone password. Unlocking it will reveal that Anne met Vera at the bar. It will also reveal that Anne read an article about a recipe using plants. It is signed "Veritas". Talking to the doctor about it will reveal it is the cause of poisoning.

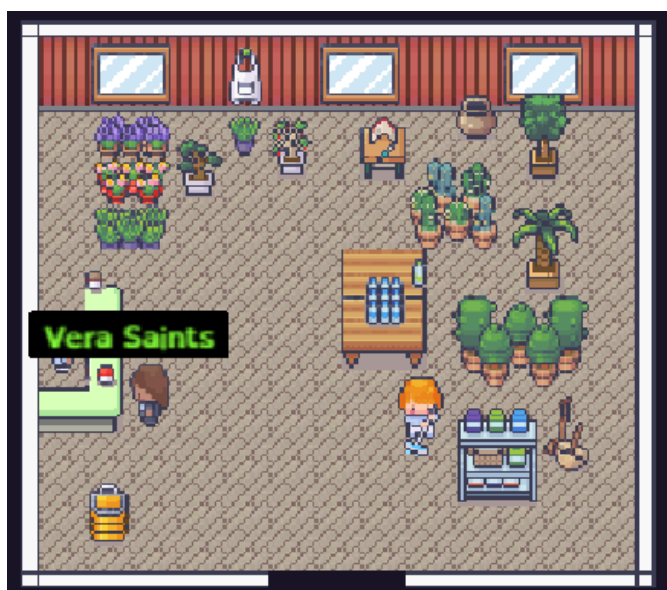


- Go to the bar to check the alibi and investigate on Anne and Vera's meeting. Ask the bartender about these subjects. Connor's alibi is broken, he left the party early with a mission. You learn that Vera wanted to keep her business flowing that's why she convinced Anne to stop campaigning against the construction (she needed the natural products in the area). While exiting the

bar you meet Josh. He offers the identity of the culprit. You explain to him that “Veritas” and the social network manager if proven to know about these posts could go to prison.



- Go to vera's shop. Talk to Vera about the construction project, she explains her point of view and gives the search keyword for her article on the subject. Searching it, you notice it was published in June. It is totally opposed to her previous campaigning against the construction, weird.



Talk to Vera about the ingredients used in the recipe Anne used before being poisoned. It puts pressure on her.

Talk to her employee about the shop closing: she reveals that Vera saw a real estate agent in June.



- Go to the construction site. Talk to Josh's partner: he wants to take him down. He reveals that someone was bribed in June to make the construction project happen and will help prove it with financial evidence if you come with a solid case on who was bribed.



Talk to the scientist about Vera, he reveals she doesn't believe in what she says or sell, she is just interested in the money.



- Go back to vera, you gathered enough evidence to pressure her:

She doesn't believe in Gaia or the ecosystem power, she just wants money. She got a cheque from Josh in June to put articles that support the construction project, she also gave him the recipe to poison Anne. Only him could then publish the article about the recipe, Josh is Veritas.

Veritas published the article that called to violent action on a politician, since it is josh, josh is the guilty one. You gathered enough case to make josh fall well done!

References

Sound effects

Music

Music by GavinNellist https://pixabay.com/users/gavinnellist-25774004/?utm_source=link-attribution&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=music&utm_content=108985 from <https://pixabay.com>

Visual assets

City and interiors: itch.io, LimeZU

<https://limezu.itch.io/moderninteriors> free version

<https://limezu.itch.io/modernexteriors> paid version (1.5\$)



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