



## **RULES OF PLAY (Version 2.0)**

### **I. Getting Started**

#### **The Literary Game**

*Thoughtcrime* is literary game, meant to be played before or while reading *1984* by George Orwell. When used in this fashion, *Thoughtcrime*:

- Motivates students to read the novel through interactive and competitive game play.
- Introduces the dystopian setting of the novel by allowing students to explore virtual representations of its key locations.
- Helps students connect to characters by role-playing as Party Members, Thought Police, or members of the Brotherhood.
- Guides students to anticipate the major themes of the novel, including its critique of totalitarian government and the inherent tension between social order and individual freedom.
- Acquaints students with specific language and ideas of the novel, including Thoughtcrime, telescreen, Big Brother, newspeak, and more.
- Provides subject matter for writing before reading.
- Offers a starting point for discussions of reading strategies, as students compare the experiences of playing *Thoughtcrime* to reading *1984*.
- Serves as a reference point during the reading of the text, as students compare their experiences in the game to the experiences of the characters.

#### **The MOO environment**

*Thoughtcrime* is played at Secondary Worlds MOO. A MOO is a Web environment somewhat like a chat room. Each user has a login and password, and can talk to other players simply by typing. Unlike a chat room, however, a MOO has a permanent architecture, with multiple interconnected rooms that players can explore, and in some cases, create. The Secondary Worlds MOO also features a graphic interface very similar to a Web browser, so users can view images and icons in addition to text. But most importantly, the MOO environment is infinitely adaptable. Programmers fluent in MOO code can change how the environment and its inhabitant function. This last feature allows for the creation of games like *Thoughtcrime*.

Before play begins, the game manager (teacher) and players (students) should know how to do the following tasks within the MOO environment:

**Players**

- talk to each other
- move from room to room
- use the following commands: take, drop, hand, look, @describe

**Game Manager**

- setup the game
- start game play
- check progress of game
- read notes

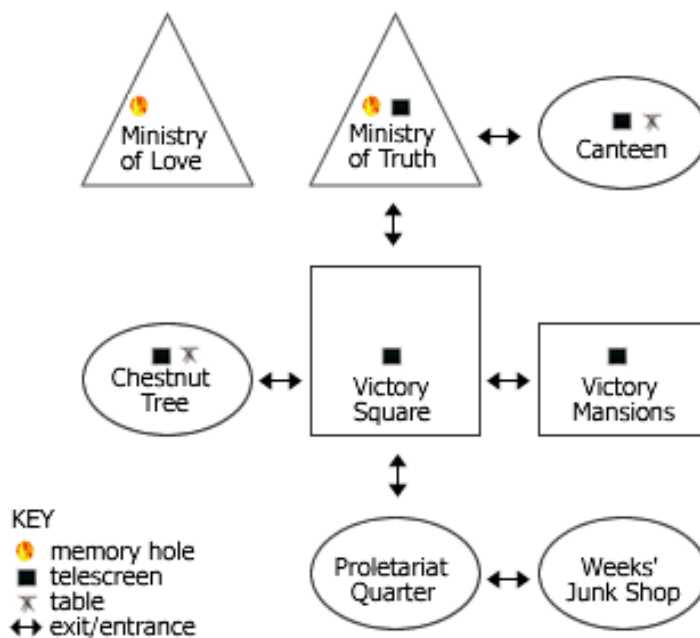
Both the game manager and the players should spend time learning these tasks prior to beginning game play. For the purpose of MOO orientation, the game manager may distribute character names and passwords without revealing the allegiance of the players.

Additional commands for each player class (Brotherhood, Thought Police, and Party Member) are described on the role sheets, which should be distributed only when players and game manager are comfortable with the above tasks.

**II. Playing *Thoughtcrime***

**The *Thoughtcrime* playing space**

Within the Secondary Worlds MOO, the playing space of the game is divided into eight locations based on key settings from the novel. They are as follows: Victory Square, Ministry of Love, Canteen, Chestnut Tree Café, Proletariat Quarter, Weeks' Junk Shop, Victory Mansions, and Ministry of Love.



Each of the eight spaces can be classified as safe (no telescreen), partially safe (telescreen with private table), or unsafe (telescreen). Memory holes may be used to dispose of incriminating evidence, such as a note. Arrows indicate the connections between the spaces. Note that not all space are linked together, forcing traffic movement through the centrally located Victory Square.

## **Object of the game**

In the setup process, *Thoughtcrime* players are divided into three character classes: Thought Police, Brotherhood, and Party Members. Each character class has a slightly different objective:

Thought Police must vaporize all members of the Brotherhood and preventing the Brotherhood from recruiting new members.

Members of the Brotherhood must recruit Party Members to their cause, while avoiding vaporization at the hands of the Thought Police.

Party Members must join the Brotherhood or enter the ranks of the Thought Police, depending on who they believe is winning the game.

## **Gameplay**

Prior to play, the game manager uses the counter to establish the number of players in each character class. The game is successful when the Thought Police—Party Member—Brotherhood ratio is approximately 1—6—1. Therefore in a class of 24, there should be 3 Thought Police, 18 Party Members, and 3 Brotherhood. In addition, the Brotherhood recruitment goal should be approximately 1/3 the total player population, or 8 in the above example.

The game begins when the game manager starts the game counter, which keeps track of character allegiances and game events. A game event occurs when a character successfully executes a command specific to his character class (see below), thereby changing the Thought Police—Party Member—Brotherhood ratio. Gameplay occurs as players move through the playing space, gathering and acting on information from each other.

Because *Thoughtcrime* is played in an online and real time environment, there are no individual turns or limits to playing time. A game begun in class may extend well beyond classroom hours, as players login to the game from different locations. Nor do all characters need to be present to play: two Thought Police, for example, might meet secretly to plot the vaporization of a member of the Brotherhood.

## **Character Commands**

### **Thought Police**

#### **Monitor telescreen**

Listen in on conversations

Risk: Revealing identity by using telescreen

#### **Vaporize opponents**

Eliminate Brotherhood

Risk: Accidentally vaporizing other Thought Police or innocent Party Members ; revealing identity as Thought Police.

### **Party Members**

#### **Betray Brotherhood**

Give up suspected Thoughtcriminals to the Thought Police

Risk: Losing the game if Brotherhood is victorious

#### **Write notes**

Communicate with others without being overheard by telescreen

Risk: Being caught with incriminating note

### **Brotherhood Members**

#### **Recruit Party Members**

Add members to your cause

Risk: Accidentally recruiting Thought Police; revealing your identity

#### **Write notes**

Communicate with others without being overheard by telescreen

Risk: Being caught with incriminating note

## **Vaporize**

Only the Thought Police may vaporize a player. When a player is vaporized, he or she becomes an unperson. In gameplay, the vaporized player is transported to the Ministry of Love, where he or she chooses a new identity for the remainder of the game. A vaporized player can no longer win the game, but may still influence its outcome by continuing to interact with other players.

## **Recruiting**

Only the Brotherhood may recruit a player. Party Members who accept recruitment are added to the ranks of the Brotherhood and gain the ability to recruit others.

## **Betraying**

Only Party Members may betray a member of the Brotherhood. Party Members who successfully betray a member of the Brotherhood become Thought Police and gain the ability to vaporize others.

## **The Game Counter**

Prior to play, the game manager sets the following elements on the game counter:

- number of Thought Police
- number of Brotherhood
- Brotherhood recruitment goal

During game play, the game counter tracks:

- number of Thought Police
- number of Brotherhood

The game is ended when any of the following occur:

- All Brotherhood are eliminated by Thought Police
- Brotherhood reaches its recruitment goal
- Thought Police eliminate themselves

## **Winners and Losers**

Players in the character class that has achieved its goals win the game; correspondingly, players in the character class that fails to achieve its goals are losers . Party Members who have remained neutral are neither winners nor losers. The game counter announces the conclusion of the game and the game winners.