



RULES OF PLAY

Getting Started

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 Literary Worlds MOO. A MOO is a browser-based environment somewhat like a chat. 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 Literary 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 Manager (teacher) and players (students) should know how to do the following tasks within the MOO environment:

Manager

- Login (Username: Manager; password 1984)
- Setup the game (MOO command *setup counter*)
- Start game play (MOO command *start counter*)
- Check progress of game (MOO command *score counter*)
- Read notes (MOO command *scan note reader*)
- End the game (MOO command *end counter*)

Players

- Login (see Player Names and Passwords)
- Talk to other players
- Move from room to room
- Use the following commands: take, drop, hand, look, @describe

Both the Manager and the players should spend time learning these tasks prior to beginning game play. For the purpose of MOO orientation, the 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 game role sheets, which should be distributed only when players and game manager are comfortable with the above tasks.

Playing *Thoughtcrime*

The Game Space

Within the 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. 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 to 6 to 1. 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 Manager starts the game counter, which keeps track of character allegiances and game events (MOO command *start counter*). A game event occurs when a character successfully executes a command specific to his character class (see below), thereby changing the Thought Police to Party Member to 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 MOO Commands

Thought Police

Monitor telescreen

Listen in on conversations, but risk revealing identity

Vaporize player

Eliminate brotherhood players, but risk revealing identity or accidentally vaporizing other Thought Police

Party Members

Betray Brotherhood

Give up suspected Thoughtcriminals to the Thought Police, but risk losing the game if Brotherhood is victorious

Write notes

Communicate with others without being overheard by telescreen, but risk being caught with incriminating note

Brotherhood

Recruit Party Member

Add members to your cause, but risk revealing your identity or accidentally recruiting Thought Police

Write notes

Communicate with others without being overheard by telescreen, but 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.

Ending *Thoughtcrime*

The game is ended automatically when any of the following occur

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

In addition, the Manager may end the game at any time with the MOO command *end counter*.

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. It also emails the logs from each room to the Manager.