Check or Cheat (CoC) gameplay manual

PREPARING THE GAME MATERIALS

- 104 regular playing cards (2 similar regular playing card decks á 52 cards)

- 10 picture cards are designated as "Role" cards; half (5) of them are marked as "Troll", half as "Normal".

- 10 cards are designated as "Fact check" cards.

- 40 cards are designated as "Share" cards

- 40 cards are designated as "Pass" cards

- 4 picture cards will be left out -> could be used as optional extra "fact check" cards.

It is recommended to make use of the colours and image features of the playing cards (black and red) for signifying – e.g. red picture cards are "Troll", black as "Normal" etc.; and the rest picture cards as "Fact check". In similar fashion, e.g. black number cards could act as "Share" and red as "Pass".

In addition, these "values" of the cards should be clearly marked with a marker. For this reason, plastic playing cards would be best, as they can be washed. A permanent marker would be best, as water soluble will presumably smudge the players' hands.

As an outcome, you should have three separate decks: a deck of Role cards (10), a deck of Fact check cards (10), and a deck of Pass/Share cards (80) – and 4 extra picture cards. Shuffle both the Role and Pass/Share decks so, that the cards in both decks are properly randomized.

SETTING UP THE GAME

To set up the game, you will need:

a)   a group of players with either smartphones, laptops or tablets and

b)   an access to internet, and

c)   preferably laptop with a projector and internet access.

d)   A piece of paper / whiteboard for tallying the points received.

Make sure the internet access is strong enough and works through the playtest.

The game will require approximately 1,5 hours.

Options:

a)   A group of 5 people -> this will test the "plain" version of the game, as played individually

b)   A larger group (e.g. 15-30 people) -> this will test whether the game is suitable for whole classrooms. If this option is chosen, only one device per group is necessary (extra devices per group is also fine).

A suitable space (e.g. a classroom) is needed. If option b) is being tested, the space should be divisible so as to make group work possible – i.e. have tables / chair clusters for 5 player groups.

The teacher should set up e.g. a **Padlet** account (or similar) – this will act as a simulation "social media" – and send invitations to all the players / player groups to join it. If Padlet is unavailable for some reason, any other collaboration tool with a "wall" will do. The play tester might even consider creating a WhatsApp group for the playtest.

The important thing is that the used app / platform should support linking internet content – news, websites, memes etc. Just like in social media.

GIVING INSTRUCTIONS

Note: the game can be used in specific contexts and as a teaching tool for specific topics – e.g. history, biology, health education etc.

A. Hold a briefing about the game – about its purpose and context: what is disinformation, how it spreads in social media, how difficult it is to recognize, and about various motives for spreading it.

You need to prepare some concrete and illustrative examples in advance, and give instructions on where and how to look for both validated and disinformation – how to distinguish the two.

Some detailed briefing on **how to fact check (and do reverse image searches)** is also required (as kids probably don't know how to do it, but just rely on their feelings on whether things are true or not). Have the players do some test fact checks on some claims or images.

Be mindful that deliberately finding disinformation from internet can be quite difficult for children, so some advice and detailed instructions might be in order – how to look for them, and where, and what kind of topics draw a lot of disinformation (e.g. health, politics, immigration…). Prepare examples in advance.

B. Give the playing instructions.

- If playing with a group of students, divide the players in to five groups.

- Open up the Padlet in projected view to show how it works.

- Share access to the Padlet for each group, and have them decide a name for their group. This name should always be posted in the "topic" field, so that it shows who posted and what.

- Have the players test the Padlet i.e. have them post something they find in internet. Make sure they use the "link" option, and not just copy/paste. Using the "link" option gives the content a preview.

Proceed to explaining how the game is played. You can use e.g. the prepared power point slide for support.

The Game Rules:

The point of the game is to share news, social media posts, images, short videos and other media content in the "social media" (which is simulated by Padlet). To win the game you need to get as much points as possible – to have as many "shares" as possible.

1.   Each player is dealt a **Role card**, which is either **normal** or **troll**. Only the player / group should see this, and not reveal it to other players / groups.

•   If a player / group is given "normal", they play as if they were just normally sharing news and other things in good faith.

•   If a player gets "troll"-card, they can either post in good faith, or

fraudulent/fake things. In other words, a Troll is allowed to cheat other players.

• The number of Trolls in each play is totally random. Nobody knows how many Trolls there are in game (every player might be a Troll).

• In other words, the players recognize their role as either Normal or Troll, and then place the card facing down on the table.

2. **The hand cards.** In the beginning each players / groups are dealt **in total 7 hand cards: 2 Fact check cards, and 5 random cards from the Pass/Share deck.** During the gameplay, the players should always have a total of 7 cards in hand.

3. **The gameplay.**

• The gameplay begins by a **"foraging" phase**. In this phase the players search the internet for shareable items – preferably news, blog posts, videos or otherwise ones that make identifiable claims.

• **To make this easier, the teacher should give a topic on which to search the internet**. It's difficult to seek online information in general, narrowing down the topic will make it easier (and make it more educating).

• Give players / groups a short period of time (e.g. 5-15 minutes) to prepare – to search and choose in total of 5 shareable items, and decide in which order they are played. **Note: if playing a troll, maybe starting with disinformation isn't the best idea…**

• **The game lasts for 5 rounds**. In one round each player / group has 1 turn, after which a new round is started.

• Each turn a player / group posts something in the Padlet. After the post other players / groups vote by choosing a card from their hands. The cards are

simultaneously revealed. The hand cards can be:

• **Share**. If a player plays Share, s/he gives the card to the player who posted the item (who then puts the card in front of them **to act as a Point token** and draws two new cards from the deck – one for the table **to act as a Point token**, and one for the hand (to replace the lost card). The points are then counted into the point grid (below) and point token cards are shuffled back to the deck. In other words: when sharing, both the posting player and the sharing player receive points. The posting player gets the point from the sharing player, and the sharing player draws from the deck. In addition, the sharing player completes her/his hand to 7 cards by drawing an additional card.

• **Pass**. If player / group plays Pass, nothing happens. The card is shuffled back into the deck and a new card is drawn to replace it.

• **Fact check**. The players have 2 Fact checks they can use during the game. If two or more Fact checks are played, a Fact checking is called and the posted item is checked for errors and disinformation. All players (except the original poster) participate in

• If the fact check comes through clean ("true"), nothing happens. The Fact check card is discarded, and a new card is drawn from the deck.

• If the fact check comes through as undecided ("50/50"), same as above.

• If the fact check comes through as a fake ("false"), the player who posted the article loses one point, and the ones who played Fact check cards draw two cards as point tokens (and put them in their point deck).

• **Receiving points**. The received points are marked on a piece of paper or on whiteboard. There are two

main ways of receiving points: a) as a posting player by getting shares, and b) as a sharing or fact-checking player (so called free-floating points). Players should mark these two points separately:

• a) **For each round a column** to count how many shares **each post** received

• b) **One column for all the rest of points** – ones received from sharing or fact-checking other players' posts.

EXAMPLE:

• You can use whiteboard or a piece of paper to count points. One player / the facilitator has to act as a point counter. A simple 7x6 grid is sufficient for this purpose. When using this, return all the played Pass / Share cards to the deck. The "Free points" denotes all the points received by sharing and fact checking.

See example of table in the next page.

4. **End of the game / counting the points:**

• The game ends when 5 full rounds have been played.

• The Role cards are revealed – who was a Troll and who Normal.

• For each deliberate fake / cheat, the **Troll receives extra points**. These points are reduced from the players who "shared" the post.

• The player / group who has most points, wins the game.

C. Play the game.

The facilitator should observe the gameplay and resolve all possible contradictions, give advices and to correct / remind how the game should be played & Padlet used. They can also be mindful of who "shared" what as to keep track for the point counting phase.

D. Debrief discussion.

A short reflection about the game, about the posted items and about the difficulty to spot fake items should be in order. A good debrief discussion connects the things learned in the game to real life, so discussions drawing and reflecting similarities between the game and real life experiences in social media would be ideal.

	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Free points
Player 1						
Player 2						
Player 3						
Player 4						
Player 5						

Partners: