

21st Century Fake News

4-8 players, 4 hours,
by Malcolm Campbell and Mo Holkar.

A re-skin of [Fake News](#) by Mo Holkar
(see Acknowledgements)

GM Setup

So you want to run 21st Century Fake News? This document is a guide to preparing for and setting up the game. For the script for running the game, see the GM Script document.

Help and Advice

If you're running this game and want any help or advice, you can email me at: malcolmc@skirnir.com

I'd love to hear how it goes if you run it.

Advertising the Game

The material I used to advertise the game is on my Second Masque website – feel free to copy it, link to it, or use material from the GM Script to support advertising this game.

<https://secondmasque.org/games/21st-century-fake-news/>

In Advance of the Game

This is the information I send out in advance of the game. You can adapt this to your own gaming event.

Hi Players of 21st Century Fake News...

There is no pregaming material to read, or character generation in advance. The President and the characters will be built from templates at the start of the game, with a chance to define some existing character relationships too. Costuming is not required, but if you want to dress for the part, inspiration can be drawn from White House dramas such as "House of Cards" and "The West Wing", or British political dramas ranging from the original "House of Cards" to "The Thick of It".

The game includes themes of politics, military conflict, immigration and refugees. If these themes are upsetting for you, this might not be the game for you.

There are no sexual assault themes in this game and players will be asked not to introduce them, even off-screen.

The one question I do have, is whether there are any topics players would prefer to avoid being in the game, or keep "off screen" - as the game is based on a deck of cards, it's easier for me to know those in advance, so I can edit the cards.

Lines and **Veils** are two safety techniques used before the game starts. If you send Lines and Veils in advance, that lets me edit the game deck to take account of them.

A **Line** is a topic that you personally don't want to be included in the larp at all: you don't have to explain or defend why. So if you don't want to deal with stories about drug abuse in any way at all: you can declare it as a "line" and it will not appear in the story. You do not have to explain why.

A **Veil** is a topic that it's OK to have included in the LARP, but you'd like it not to be discussed or played in any detail - it should happen off-screen, or only by reference. This can be for any reason and you don't have to explain why.

At the game, we'll read out the list of Lines and Veils without identifying who submitted them and put them on display for the players to refer to during play

If you want to know more about the game in advance, you can find some here: <https://secondmasque.org/games/21st-century-fake-news/>

Adapting the Card Decks

The News Stories are provided as a PDF file - you can just hand-edit, hard-write or print alternative cards yourself if there are small changes to make – it really doesn't matter to players if the odd card looks different.

However, if you want to make significant changes: in the “News Story Deck Generation” folder, you'll find the News Stories in an Excel sheet (News Story Data.xlsx), and they're generated by a mailmerge Microsoft Word document (News Story Cards.docx). You can edit the Excel sheet, then open the Word document - you'll almost certainly need to point the “data source” at the Excel sheet. Then you can run the mail merge and generate a new set of cards that you can print or make a PDF from.

I have considered making alternative decks, for example for a Brexit-themed game. If you make any, I'd love to see them.

Printing

You'll need these things printed for the game. Everything apart from the character cards is designed to be printed single sided on A4.

Print all the PDF files in the folder:

Character Cards print on double sided A4

The Presidents Popularity is a chart that I print on A3 (Or bigger)

Everything else prints on single sided A4

Many things need to be cut up and made into card decks. It should be obvious.

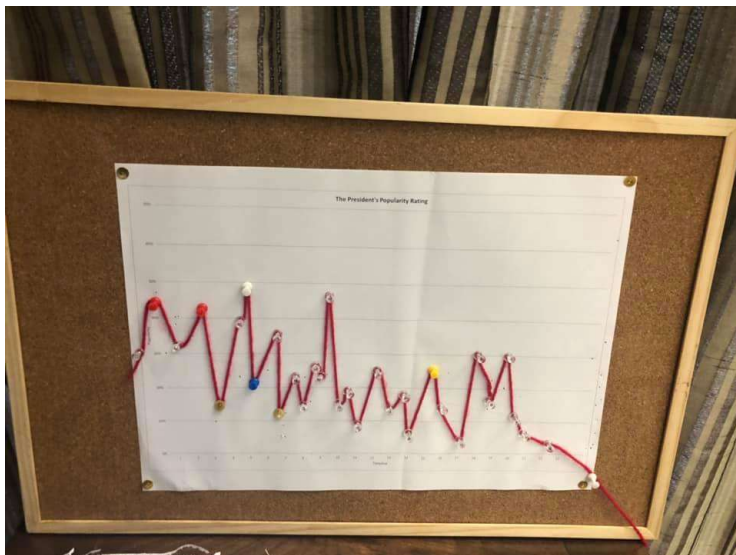
Separate out news stories 101, 102 and 103 and the Advanced Boosters – these stay with the GM until they come into play. See the script for details

Other Things You Need

- A timer that can nudge you every 5 minutes (or a phone app). I use [“Timer” by PacoLabs](#) on the iPhone for almost every game I run that needs timers.
- Name badge holders
- Pencils, Pens, and notebooks for characters to write with

Optional things

A pinboard, pins, and wool to do the popularity chart with (like this)



If you don't have these, you can just use a pen on the chart, but the wool lets you indicate trend with the tail of the line, and even adjust the line after you've placed it.

Questions

Feel free to contact me if you have any. If I get feedback I'll update the documentation.

Malcolm