

Engaged Citizenship | ETHICAL DECISIONS

PAPERS, PLEASE: PLAYER IMPACT GUIDE

Age 14+ | 1+ Hours

"When people connect with the game, it's not really the mechanics. People [like the] characters, or the events that have you make tough decisions. You know, I wrote it, but I only get something from the randomised, procedural gameplay."

--Lucas Pope, Creator, *Papers, Please*



ABOUT PAPERS, PLEASE

The country of Arstotzka has regained control of Grestin and now the player been picked from the October Labor Lottery to work at the new border control. The only job in the game is to follow the law and make the decisions the player thinks is best. However, well-meaning travelers may not always have the appropriate documentation and there are also spies, terrorists, and criminals trying to get through. For more information, visit: <http://papersplea.se/>

THEME FOR THIS GUIDE: Ethical Decisions

Ethics refers to moral principles that govern what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, and benefits to society; fairness; or specific virtues. It is specifically concerned with behavior, and is not completely about morality or what is socially acceptable alone. In *Papers, Please*, the story of border enforcement makes for an interesting context to practice applying ethical strategies and experiencing outcomes. In the beginning, only Arstotzkans are allowed entry, but as the game progresses foreigners are allowed entry provided they have the necessary documents. Throughout the game players will find terrorists, smugglers, and spies who want to enter the city, and it is up to the player to decide to follow the law or not. The only tools available are the primitive booth inspection materials, but the player's usage of them is his or her choice.

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| <p>WHY USE THIS GUIDE?</p> | <p>In this guide, we invite you to think about ethics as a factor of decision-making in <i>Papers, Please</i>. What defines a decision as ethical? Why is it important to consider ethics? When do ethical decisions apply to your life?</p> <p><i>Answer the questions below and add up your points when you are finished!</i></p> |
| <p>GAME BASICS</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play through the first day. What was the rule for that day and did you follow that rule? [+1] • Play through the second day. What was the rule for this day? What significant event happened during gameplay? [+1] • Continue into the next several days. What options do you have in regards to the fate of players with incorrect documentation? [+2] • Now play a couple more days and apply a model of ethics that is different from how you played. How did that affect your gameplay? [+3] |
| <p>THEME INSIGHTS</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The world of <i>Papers, Please</i> is full of strict laws that you can choose to obey or not. What outcomes did you get when you followed the law? What happened when you didn't? [+1] • When you make ethical decisions, you have to consider all factors. What were the most pressing factors when you made a decision whether to let someone pass the checkpoint? [+2] • Later in the game you encounter people with seemingly valid stories. Do you believe that these stories can be verified with your single encounter? [+2] • <i>Papers, Please</i> paints Arstotzka to have a very distinct set of cultural morals. Did you generally play the game based on your own morals or based on Arstotzka's? Why? [+2] |
| <p>WORLD CONNECTIONS</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This game leaves the question of ethics in the open with fairly real consequences. What kinds of ethical decision-making models are you faced with in real life and why do you think these models exist? [+2] • There are many consequences of letting the same person through the checkpoint or not. Do you think this game will change the way you make ethical decisions in the real world because of this simulation and how? [+1] • As you saw in the game you had to make your choice fairly quickly in order to proceed to the next person. Do you think important ethical decisions should be made in so little time? Why? [+2] • <i>Papers, Please</i> has different outcomes, but it can be difficult to determine whether they were good or bad. What should be the outcome of a "good" ethical decision? Do you think they're easy to make or difficult? [+2] |

Bonus Challenge: In *Papers, Please* you might have noticed that there are empty circles on the left side of your screen at the end of every day. These are tokens that can be gained for doing various deeds that another person sees as good. Try to get tokens in the game by making the decisions that correspond to receiving them. Share the link on the Center for Games & Impact Facebook page at <http://facebook.com/gamesandimpact>.