Atlantis Remixed – The Doctor’s Cure: Impact Guide

For Teachers

The Atlantis Remixed (ARX) Project is an international learning and teaching project that uses 3D multi-user environments to immerse children, ages 9-16, in educational tasks. Students enter roles as “Remixers” who are sent into different worlds and tasked with the responsibility of making impactful decisions. They experience the importance and outcomes of applying what they learn in their adventures. Through interactions with in-game mentors, Remixers are supplied with the tools necessary to make influential decisions within their world.

ARX’s The Doctor’s Cure, a unit inspired by Mark Shelley’s Frankenstein, was designed to help young people understand the role that ethics play in science and technology. As Remixers, students become responsible for driving the fate of a town, called Ingolstadt, suffering from a devastating plague. In this world the player becomes invested by experiencing first hand the stress that the plague has placed on the town. The plot will center on controversy about whether or not Dr. Frank, the only person working on a cure, and his research methods can be trusted. The player is recruited by the local newspaper to investigate the issue and eventually is tasked with writing a persuasive article that will decide the fate of the town.

To learn more, including videos and impact stories, check out: gamesandimpact.org/games/atlantis-remixed.

Player gets sick from coming in contact from the plague

Player collects evidence for their THESIS

Persuasive Argument Tool

Mayor offers a source to the player
How to use this guide: Teachers – We’ve identified several interesting or important themes in the game. We recommend that you play through the game and reflect on it as a player first, then think about how to incorporate it into your class. How have you experienced these themes? Will students experience them as well? How do they align with how you might normally teach them? Are there other important ones present in the game? What kind of impact does your play allow in the larger world? Answer the questions we’ve provided – but feel free to add more at www.gamesandimpact.org.

We have also included potential lesson plans and classroom activities, as well as handouts for in-class student reflection or homework.

Warning: Questions contain some spoilers about the games.

**Theme: Ethics and Decision Making**

The Doctor’s Cure places the player in a powerful position that ultimately decides the fate of Ingolstadt. As a part of the mission, the player is required to interact with a lot of characters to help them build their argument. They are asked to make difficult decisions and are able to explore the effects of those decisions. In the end the player will have made a sacrifice; neither outcome of the article they write will make everyone happy.

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITY – Is Honesty Always the Best Policy?**

**Theme: Science and Technology**

The player is supplied with a lot of tools that make carrying out their mission easier. Different people provide them with these tools in order to serve different purposes. The ultimate “tool” created in the game to help the town is Tim. As the mission progresses, the player is asked to evaluate the limits science should have in order to help society.

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITY – Artificial Intelligence and the PAT TOOL**

**Theme: Persuasive Argumentation**

In mission 4 and 5 the player is charged with defending their thesis to the best of their ability, in order to persuade the town that they should or shouldn’t allow the doctor to continue with his research for the cure. Through advice from Scoop and Gracie, as well as the PAT tool, the player is guided on what makes a good persuasive argument.

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITY – [DEBATE] Should Dr. Frank be Allowed to Continue his Research?**
Classroom Activity: Is Honesty Always the Best Policy?

The constable at the graveyard gate makes a big point of his belief that honesty is the best policy. This sets up the scenario for when the player tries to leave with the package picked up in the crypt. Players are unable to leave the graveyard without facing the constable (he blocks the crypt door).

The constable has a “gem of wisdom” to pass along to the player when they encounter him at the graveyard in mission two: “Honesty is the best policy.” Some students may find the decision to lie or tell the truth to the constable clear-cut in *The Doctor’s Cure*; others will struggle with the decision.

Use this opportunity to take the concept of honesty out of the virtual world and into the real one by discussing situations where many people have had to make these types of decisions. Divide the class into five small groups and ask each group to discuss the pros and cons of honesty in one of the following scenarios.

- Your best friend asks for your opinion about a new hairdo. You think it is the ugliest style you’ve ever seen!
- You are in a car accident that you know was your parent’s fault. You realize that this will raise their car insurance payments.
- A waitress gives you too much change back for your lunch bill. You know that she has to pay for any mistakes out of her own money at the end of the workday.
- A child—who suffers from a frightening illness—asks her mother what is wrong with her.
- You come home from a party where a kid with whom your parents have forbidden you to associate showed up unexpectedly. They ask who was at the party with you.

Bring the groups back together and have them report on their discussions, taking a poll to see if the whole class agrees with their decisions.

**Teachable Moment:**

**How Does Honesty Affect the Game?**

Apply what students discovered in their group work to *The Doctor’s Cure* with these discussion prompts.

- From your experiences, would you say that the constable is an honest man? Why or why not?
- How does he compare to Caretaker Sid?
- Do you think that Ingolstadt should place such a high value on telling the truth?
- How does the truth affect the reporter’s role that you’ve taken on in this game?
Classroom Activity: Artificial Intelligence and the PAT Tool

In mission one, players were introduced to Scoop Perry’s Persuasive Argument Tool (PAT), which is used to analyze the ways they match evidence to reasons in creating a strong argument. That tool will show up again in mission four. This activity is designed to help students understand how the PAT works so that they will be better informed in gathering the best evidence to support their chosen thesis in that part of the game.

Preparation

- Prepare for display the PAT Examples chart, found on page 8 of this chapter of the guide.
- Duplicate the PAT and Artificial Intelligence worksheet, one for each student or pair (see page 9).

Introduce the PAT Scoring Device

- Display the PAT Example chart, masking the bottom half of the page. Describe the parts of the concept map, making sure that all students understand how the thesis statement, three reasons, and evidence fit together into a logical argument.
- Point out the small circles beside each piece of evidence and explain that this is where the PAT “scores” the strength of each match. If the first piece of evidence STRONGLY matches the reason it is pointing to, it should get a score of THREE. Not so strong scores a TWO, and so on. If the evidence doesn’t seem to fit at all, it should receive a zero score.

Tailored Instruction

If you have students with special language or learning needs, you might wish to conduct this activity in small groups or peer-tutored pairs.

The students can either work together to come up with a shared score for each match, or they can discuss the matches and each write their own separate scores.

Begin Class Activity

- Pass out the PAT and Artificial Intelligence worksheets to students.
- Read the instructions and allow enough time for all students to score the argument.
- Bring the class together to discuss the activity (see next page).
Let’s Talk About the PAT Tool

Discuss Artificial Intelligence

- Write the term *Artificial Intelligence* on the board. Have the class work together to develop their own definition of the term.
- Ask students to share what Scoop told them about his Persuasive Argument Tool (PAT). (*NOTE: This conversation took place in M1, and some students might not remember it.*) Help them explain that:
  - The PAT is an example of artificial intelligence (AI).
  - The PAT grows smarter over time as it learns from each argument it analyzes.
  - The PAT has been used in hundreds of editorials, so it has become quite smart... in Scoop’s opinion.
  - Some people don’t agree with the ratings, but Scoop “taught” it to recognize evidence that fits with The Bugle’s point of view.
- Explain that the activity they just completed will allow them to match their ratings against Scoop’s PAT tool to see if they agree.

Compile a Class Score

- Ask students to take turns providing the scores they gave to each of the six evidence-to-reasons matches. Have classmates who had different scores debate their decisions.
- Select a score for each and input it into your overhead blank version of the PAT Example.
- Total the scores and discuss the resulting score. Does the class agree with the rating? Why or why not?

Compare and Discuss the Class Score and PAT Score

- Uncover the bottom image on the PAT Examples worksheet to show the “actual” score that Scoop’s PAT assigned these matches.
- Discuss the differences between the class and PAT scores:
  - Which of these evidence match scores do you disagree with most? Why do you think Scoop’s tool is wrong?
  - Why did the PAT score the second evidence match a zero? Do you agree with that score? Explain.
  - Do you agree with the score groupings? For example, do you think a score of 15 is only “pretty good?”
  - Do you think all of the citizens of Ingolstadt would agree with the PAT’s scores? Do you think they’d agree with your own more? Explain why or why not.
  - Why do you think Scoop insists that all Bugle articles must score well on his PAT?
Classroom Activity 2: Summarizing Texts in *The Doctor’s Cure*

In this mission players are introduced to the Lenses of Lumination (LOL) Goggles. This tool is designed to help students grapple with complex textual evidence, all with a readability level above seventh grade (see page 7 for more about the inclusion of complex texts in the game). To ensure that students truly grasp the content of each of the texts, they are first asked to summarize them. Summarizing is one of the most powerful strategies to support reading comprehension. This activity is designed to help you introduce and support the skill of summarizing for *The Doctor’s Cure*.

Why summarize the texts in *The Doctor’s Cure*?

- Explain to students that they will not only be interviewing citizens of Ingolstadt during the game to find support for their editorial, but they will have to read documents and other written evidence as well.
- Scoop will expect them to use these documents to find good, solid support for their articles and to SUMMARIZE each of them.
- Explain the importance of summarizing to investigative reporters:
  - A reporter reads many, many documents, and some of them are lengthy. Trying to remember the important parts of every one of them would be impossible, so good reporters learn to summarize, or put key ideas and details into their own words.
  - Having a brief summary of each text in the game means you can quickly scan your documents to find the one you need, just like reporters do in real life.
  - Summarizing solidifies the concepts found in the text for you. It helps you take ownership of ideas.

What does a summary look like?

- Explain that a summary should be a very short paragraph... No more than three or four sentences. Write or post the Steps for Summarizing guidelines listed in the box in the sidebar and briefly discuss why each guideline is important.

Practice writing summaries

- Either post or pass out the sample journal entry found on page 10 of this guide. Read the introduction and give students time to read the entry and write a brief summary, following the guidelines.
- Divide the class into small groups and have them share and compare their summaries. Look for evidence in each other’s work that all four guidelines were followed.
- Ask the groups to work together to create a summary they all agree on.
- Come together as a whole class and discuss the group summaries.

Tell students that they will be using their summarizing skills through the LOL Goggles as they gather supportive evidence in mission four of *The Doctor’s Cure*.
A Final Thought

Text Complexity in The Doctor’s Cure

In accordance with Common Core prescriptions, we ensure that students encounter and engage texts of steadily increasing complexity as they progress through the game, including independent (the conversations they have with NPCs in the game), instructional (the scaffolded lessons on writing persuasively) and stretch levels.

The last range comes into play as students grapple with complex texts, written at a 7th- to 10th-grade reading level, in which additional evidence can be found to support their in-game thesis.

Asking students to engage complex texts in a game is tricky, as our goal is to provide an entertaining experience in which learning is fun. With the addition of the Lenses of Lumination Goggles, we’ve found a way to support student reading of these complex texts, guiding them through a leveled series of questions that lead them to the evidence they can glean from the text.

Mission Resources

This collection of resources may include background for teachers and students as well as additional activities that support or extend the learning of this chapter of the guide. None are required for completion of the mission. At the time of publication all URLs were current.

INTERNET LINKS


Measuring Text Complexity: Three Factors

Standard 10 of the Common Core describes why the complexity of what students read matters. The creation of the texts in The Doctor’s Cure was guided by these strictures.

http://pbskids.org/cyberchase/videos/harry-makes-a-mess/

For Real: Harry Makes a Mess

Explore how mathematical reasoning and proof can be used in real-world situations. Discover how to recognize, identify and deconstruct the fallacies used in advertising. In this video clip from PBS Cyberchase, Harry is tricked into believing a TV ad.

http://www.knowitall.org/sites/artopia/media/artcritic/closer/index.html

Media Arts: How to Be a Critical Viewer

Learn how to become a critical viewer by applying five key concepts of media literacy to an ad for Camel cigarettes. Determine how print ads are carefully constructed to convey both obvious and hidden messages.
**PAT Examples**

NOTE: Mask the bottom image until the class discussion of the activity (see page 5)
Pat and Artificial Intelligence

Do you agree with the PAT’s ratings? Let’s test it to see! Read each piece of evidence below and decide for yourself how strongly it matches the reason. In the circle beside it, enter a number from 0 to 3. A strong match is worth three points, a very weak match is a zero. Add the scores and place the total in the big circle above the thesis to see how strong YOU would rate the logic of this argument.
Classroom Activity: [DEBATE] Should Dr. Frank be Allowed to Continue his Research?

(45-60 minutes)

Grade Level: 7-9

Teacher Materials: Timer, Reward for the team with the best arguments (optional)

Teacher Pre-req: Play through Mission 4 and 5

Student Pre-req: Play through Mission 4 and 5

Summary of Goals: To bring the debate in the game to life by trying to convince each other. They will practice persuasive argumentation skills to debate whether or not Dr. Frank should be allowed to continue his research.

Lesson Plan:
Divide class randomly into two teams that will represent the PRO and CON sides of the debate. Ask students to abandon any inclinations they have toward either side of the argument for this activity, because the success of the team will depend on their ability to defend it and use sources. Give students 5 minutes to decide as a team which three reasons they will use to defend their argument, and then have them announce those reasons to the opposing team. Then give students 10 minutes to build a strategy as a team that will effectively support their points and challenge the opposing arguments. During these 10 minutes they can work together to recall sources from the game (exact details aren’t necessary as long as the concepts they reference are accurate) that they want to use for the debate; they can use paper to write anything relevant to their strategy down. After team strategies have been determined, decide randomly which team can go first. Give the class 5-10 minutes to debate one of the points offered by the first team (you can determine how informal or formal the discussion should be), then alternate to one of the points of the opposing team, etc. It won’t be necessary to revisit a reason chosen by a team if it overlaps with a reason that was already debated (i.e. Is Dr.Frank’s creation a monster or a human with rights?). Finally, have students reflect about the experience— through class discussion and/or free write.

Discussion Prompts: 
How did your team develop the strategy you used? How did you determine which sources you would cite? Was it hard to defend any of your reasons, or to challenge the reasons given by the opposing team? Why or why not?

Deliverables:
• Handout/worksheet (attached)
• Class vote (with or without the handout) on the team they felt won - optional
• Teacher can determine the winner by considering the outcome of the vote as well as their own judgment of which team incorporated persuasive argumentation skills the best (if determination does not coincide with the outcome of the vote, teacher could explain why to the class) - optional
Class Debate: Should Dr. Frank be Allowed to Continue his Research?

If you were an outside observer of the debate, who do you think would have won? Why?

How well do you think the opposing team defended their reasons? Would you have done anything differently?

Did you enjoy participating in the debate? Did it excite you or did you find it frustrating? What did you like and not like about it?

If you could have changed one thing about your team’s strategy, what would it be? Why?

Has this debate affected your view or approach of the thesis you have chosen (or will choose)? Why or why not?