Reacting Microgame Framework

Microgames run in a single, self-contained session, including any required preparation and debrief. Microgames' greatest strength is also their greatest challenge: flexibility. Because of their shorter length and lower preparation threshold, microgames can potentially be used as course openers, summations of themes or blocks of instruction, bridges between blocks of instruction, or even final exams. In a microgame, players receive very brief materials on game day (or have minimal preparation time beforehand). GMs have additional supporting materials that are used during the game to support player activity. Therefore, two opposing design principles are paramount in the creation of microgames and should be understood to inform the elements below:

- For all student-facing materials (Role Sheets), shorter and more directive is better. Microgame student materials will generally be more concise and structured than Flagship and Short Games. Note that microgames only use Role Sheets, not an additional Game Book, so the key rules of the game must be in the Role Sheet.
- For all instructor-facing materials (Instructor's Manual), more options are better. Think about the different ways the microgame could be used in a course, and provide guidance and material that can support an instructor using it in that way.

The documents themselves and components listed for each document have a suggested length; these should be considered illustrative rather than prescriptive (i.e., these are goals, not limits).

Role Sheets

300-500 words (without Primary Source) is the optimal length. There is no minimum or maximum number of roles, but consider scalability for different class sizes in the design of the game.

1. Situation / Historical Context (1 paragraph). Quickly orients the student to the setting of the game, both temporally and geographically. If factions are used, this paragraph should contain descriptive names of the factions.
2. Name / Title / Faction (if used) (1 line). Should include pronunciation of the name.
3. Key Biographical Notes (4-5 bullets). These can be in bullet format, and should be easily digestible elements that a student can use to "inhabit" the role.
4. Goals/Objectives (2-3 bullets). These are what the role wants to achieve by the end of the game. Ideally, these should consist of a primary or ideal goal, which might be followed by some acceptable compromise goals.
5. Responsibilities in the Game (1 paragraph or 2-3 bullets). Players need clear direction about how they should enter into the game. This section describes required actions for each role in the game. Responsibilities vary from role to role. Here are some examples:
   a. Speak (e.g., say something in support of topic X)
   b. Do (e.g., engage with another role on a specific topic; serve as chair)
   c. Write (e.g., short reflection at game's end)

6. Resources/Powers (bullets as needed). This may include:
    a. How the role interacts with the game mechanics (e.g., Money held, number of votes, etc.)
    b. Unique actions available to the role
7. Strategy Advice (Optional). This can be a short section with recommended actions or "watch out for" comments (e.g., "Watch out for Maddie. She will try to foment trouble."
8. Primary Source (Optional). Ideally, the role should be playable without the need to resort to primary sources. However, if a primary source is essential to the role, it should not exceed 250-500 words. Images, charts, or diagrams may also be useful primary sources for a microgame.

Instructor Manual

Overall suggested length: 5-10K words. This may vary widely depending on how much additional information authors wish to provide instructors. A general rule of thumb is to err on the side of more material, especially material that gives instructors additional options or flexibility for the running of the game. It is especially important to think about the different points in a course where an instructor might choose to use the game, and provide resources that can support those options.

1. Pedagogical Goals/Utility (10%). Lays out the learning goals of the game, including courses that could best benefit from its use and the clash of ideas/ideologies in the game.
2. Situation/Historical Context (30%). Sufficient material to give a non-specialist a fundamental understanding of the events and forces leading to the moment of the game. The intent of this section is to allow the instructor to answer student questions on "how did we get here" without doing further research. Authors should also consider including expanded descriptions for topics that students struggle to understand or that can lead to controversial classroom events.
3. Gameplay (20%). Details the steps of the game itself. Key details to include:
    a. Recommendations for classroom layout
    b. Materials required to play the game (e.g., dice, a bell)
    c. Any factions or categories that impact the play of the game.
    d. The overall likely arc of the game
    e. Recommended timing of game phases. Consider scalability for different class lengths (i.e., guidance for 50-, 60-, 75-, and 90-minute classes).
    f. Significant actions that can be taken by all characters
    g. Conditions that end the game
    h. Potential "wrong turns" in the game and how to deal with them
4. Role Management (10%). Should include a chart for how to assign roles in classes of different sizes, and recommendations for student personalities that can best support key roles. These include:
    a. Role assignment sheet
    b. Name cards/badges

5. <u>Supporting Materials (20%)</u>. Put items here that can help a teacher quickly get the game off the ground without having to do resource-intensive prep, such as:
   a. Ballot formats
   b. Money tokens
   c. Voting tracker
   d. Slideshows or visuals that support class play
6. <u>Supplementary Readings for Instructor (10%)</u>. Bibliography of additional readings that a teacher can reference if they need a stronger background or understanding of the topic.