

# Re-Energizing the High School History Lesson

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## **Dedication**

To my Mom, who is always there for me, constantly cheering me on.

To Dalton Cantrell, Caroline Parker, and Faith Hilton for providing me the emotional support I needed to complete this project.

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Dawn McCormack, the one who encouraged me to join to the History Department and the one who acted as my mentor throughout this project.

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## **Abstract**

Traditional methods of teaching History in High School lead to disengaged students. *Reacting to the Past* is a university-level pedagogy that has improved retention rates among college students. The RTTP pedagogy could be successful in the high school classroom as well. In order to test that theory, I have devised my own RTTP game which is tailored for high school students. So that I may assess the effects of the game, I have tested it with a group of volunteers and analyzed the data. Based on the results of my data, I will revisit the game I have written and make improvements based on the feedback I received from volunteers.

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## Chapter I: Introduction

### Pedagogical Review

History education has remained the same for roughly the past 100 years.<sup>1</sup> Students find themselves in classrooms where the “quest for knowledge” belongs solely to the teacher.<sup>2</sup> It is the professor that controls what each student will learn and the perspective through which they will learn it. Recently, though, history education has undergone a dramatic makeover. Various pedagogies have emerged, offering a multitude of ways to encourage student interest in what they are learning in the classroom. Constructivism, democratic teaching ideals, and other educational philosophies have swept across the teaching world. Generally, what tends to be the norm in the history classroom, students are faced with a traditional method of learning. This traditional style of education, which uses lectures and emphasizes memorization, results in a vast number of students growing weary of the material and, thus, not retaining it.<sup>3</sup>

Educational philosophers combat that issue head on and in a variety of ways. They claim that it is possible for students to be engaged with their learning if the lessons are more dialogical.<sup>4</sup> Students need to be challenged in the classroom, a teacher needs to

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<sup>1</sup> Ashley Wiersma, “A Study of the Teaching Methods of High School History Teachers,” *The Social Studies*, (May 2008): 111.

<sup>2</sup> Wiersma, 111.

<sup>3</sup> Wiersma, 111.

<sup>4</sup> Kelvin Stewart Beckett, “Paulo Freire and the Concept of Education,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 45, no. 1 (2013): 50.

pose a question rather than provide his or her own answer.<sup>5</sup> In fact, Paulo Freire and John Dewey recognized that necessity in their own pedagogical pursuits. For education to be effective, it needs to be interactive and thought provoking. In some way or another, it must expand a student's perspective. This theory can even be traced back to the 1800s and seen in the words of Johann Friedrich Herbart and Friedrich Schleiermacher.

Educational theories tend to vary drastically from each other, yet often seem to have one commonality; these theories emphasize the relationships between educator and learner.

By following a traditional approach, history education tends to push the concept of "collective memory."<sup>6</sup> Rather than focusing on the expansion of the learner's cultural perspectives, the curriculum is built around the formation of a nationalistic ideology. This tends to go directly against the oft-cited idea of investigative educational philosophies. The notion of an investigative approach requires students to ask their own questions and, in doing this, students' abilities to think historically are improved.<sup>7</sup> Pedagogues, such as Freire, sought out investigative methods of education. This concern about education was first brought up by Herbart and Schleiermacher.<sup>8</sup>

Friedrich Schleiermacher, in 1800s Germany, claimed that educational theory had to be approached like scientific theory. This means that, though we seek universal truths through our education, we are always bound by our perspectives.<sup>9</sup> In contrast to the

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<sup>5</sup> Kelvin Stewart Beckett, 50.

<sup>6</sup> Bruce A. VanSledright, *The Challenge of Rethinking History Education: On Practices, Theories, and Policy* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 12.

<sup>7</sup> Bruce A. VanSledright, 1.

<sup>8</sup> Karsten Kenklies, "Educational Theory as Topological Rhetoric: The Concepts of Pedagogy of Johann Friedrich Herbart and Friedrich Schleiermacher," *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, no. 31 (2012): 273.

<sup>9</sup> Karsten Kenklies, 266.



traditional approach of “collective memory,” this idea seeks to find a way that would create a balance between the truth and how we interpret that truth. Schleiermacher postulated that there are empirical and speculative aspects to learning.<sup>10</sup> In terms of history education, empirical data would be dates, names, and places. These are the tangible pieces of evidence that are not easily refuted. The empirical aspect, however, deals with the interpretive aspect of those elements. In the eyes of Schleiermacher, there can be no separation of the two. To speculate without the use of the empirical data would remove the reality of the “historic situation.”<sup>11</sup>

Johann Friedrich Herbart recognized the genius of Schleiermacher’s educational theory. There is sound logic in the concept that knowledge relies on the balance of empirical and speculative information. He also, however, found that this theory could not realistically be implemented. There are four modes of relation that Herbart discusses, all of which confront the conundrum of the individual within the educational system.<sup>12</sup> Specifically, the issue of the individuality of the educator versus that of the student. If the point of education is to challenge students to interpret the empirical data based on their own perspectives, then how can that be done if the teacher is tied to his or her perspective? This is where Herbart’s theory of pedagogical tact comes into play. Karsten Kenklies describes this as the “ability of the educator to connect the theory and its abstract rules and laws with the individuality of the single case.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Karsten Kenklies, 268.

<sup>11</sup> Karsten Kenklies, 268.

<sup>12</sup> Karsten Kenklies, 270.

<sup>13</sup> Karsten Kenklies, 270.

The concept of pedagogical tact is a vast one. It was expanded on in 1991 by Max van Manen.<sup>14</sup> Educators are governed by their own “compulsions,” as described by Mark Vagle. These compulsions affect the way people interact with others, whether consciously or subconsciously.<sup>15</sup> Van Manen’s idea of pedagogical tact was centered on an “openness” to the various ways in which students learn; this meant an attunement to how the student best explores the material.<sup>16</sup> Instead of a teacher relying on the methods with which he or she is most comfortable, the idea of pedagogical tact encourages educators to seek out alternative methods. The issue of the individual within an educational setting is one that must be accounted for by educators. The goal, for a teacher, is to find the best way in which to encourage his or her students to seek a higher understanding of the material that has been placed in front of them.

Around the time that Herbart and Schleiermacher were theorizing about education, the concept of constructivism was being born. This is the notion that knowledge is constructed by the students and the teacher, together; learning becomes a process rather than a product.<sup>17</sup> This theory works well with Herbart’s idea of pedagogical tact in the sense that it is more flexible with regards to students’ individual learning needs. The teacher becomes a facilitator of his or her students’ learning experiences. This method of constructivism can be approached in a multitude of ways. One specific methodology is that of radical constructivism. The individual, in this tactic,

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<sup>14</sup> Mark D. Vagle, “Critically-Orientated Pedagogical Tact: Learning About and Through our Compulsions as Teachers and Educators,” *Teaching Education* 22, no. 4 (2011): 413.

<sup>15</sup> Mark D. Vagle, 414.

<sup>16</sup> Mark D. Vagle, 414.

<sup>17</sup> Emel Ultanir, “An Epistemological Glance at the Constructivist Approach: Constructivist Learning in Dewey, Piaget, and Montessori,” *International Journal of Instruction* 5, no. 2 (July 2012): 196.

constructs his or her own understanding without the assistance of a group. This branch of constructivism focuses on the singular rather than the plural quest for knowledge.<sup>18</sup>

John Dewey helped to solidify the definition of constructivism and adapt it to his own educational theories, which tended to focus on the individual within the communal society.<sup>19</sup> Dewey advocates for a progressive style of education, one that emphasizes the uniqueness of each student's abilities.<sup>20</sup> The individual student's perspective is one that, when nurtured, can affect the understanding of a group. In terms of Dewey's educational philosophy: observing how these individual perspectives react with others is a mirror of socio-political issues.<sup>21</sup> This mirror is important in creating an educational system that promotes student engagement and intellectual curiosity. It was clear to Dewey that the traditional classroom setting would never be an environment that would encourage that type of self-awareness.

Part of the progressive philosophy was focused on re-defining the traditional classroom. The classroom needs to be a place of experiences.<sup>22</sup> Much like Schleiermacher, Dewey drew similarities between education and science. Students require the ability to experiment in their educational settings. This means that, per Seaton Tarrant and Leslie Thiele, "new information and amended perspective is accomplished by

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<sup>18</sup> Ashley Weirsmas, 115.

<sup>19</sup> Emel Ultanir, 198.

<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth Meadows, "Dewey, Democracy, and Teacher Education: What do People in a Democracy Need to Learn, and How Do Teachers Need to be Educated?" *Teacher Education and Practice* 29, no. 3 (Summer 2016): 443.

<sup>21</sup> Seaton Patrick Tarrant and Leslie Paul Thiele, "Practice Makes Pedagogy – John Dewey and Skills-Based Sustainability Education," *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* 17, no. 1 (2016): 58.

<sup>22</sup> Leonard J. Waks, "John Dewey and the Challenge of Progressive Education," *International Journal of Progressive Education* 9, no. 1 (2013): 75.

experimentalism: the iterated process of knowledge acquisition, planning, experimentation, and knowledge creation.”<sup>23</sup> Dewey considered this the idea of structured experimentalism. This included an emphasis on communication in the classroom and the creation of “equal footing” between student and teacher.

Dewey’s ideas on communication led to the rise of curriculums centered around dialogical approaches. Encouraging student discussion in class helps teach the skill of adaption, which was a concern for Dewey.<sup>24</sup> He explained that, since globalization is spreading, students need to feel confident in their command of their critical thinking skills. In today’s world, there will be many cultures and traditions encountered that may be foreign to them. It is necessary for students to be able to adapt to those types of situations to create a more cohesive society. Thus, Dewey embraces the fact no student is the same and neither is their perspective. The best way to pursue a progressive education in that situation is to build upon those already rooted ideas and beliefs.<sup>25</sup>

Paulo Freire, while in agreement with Dewey on the dialogical approach to learning, disagrees with the concept of building upon already rooted ideas. Instead, he boasts a liberatory style of education that seeks to combine the perspectives of the teacher and the student to create an entirely new one. Instead of highlighting the differences between students, Freire desires to create an entirely new experience between the teacher and student.<sup>26</sup> This cannot be done, though, if students are not engaged with their learning. Students must be completely involved with the education process. Liberatory

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<sup>23</sup> Seaton Patrick Tarrant and Leslie Paul Thiele, 58.

<sup>24</sup> Seaton Patrick Tarrant and Leslie Paul Thiele, 57.

<sup>25</sup> Kelvin Stewart Beckett, 53.

<sup>26</sup> Leonard J. Waks, 55.

education centers around a student-driven classroom where knowledge is approached through questions rather than answers.<sup>27</sup>

Student engagement is a huge issue that many educational philosophers attempt to tackle. Yet, historical education still follows the path of passive consumption.<sup>28</sup>

Traditional lecture-style history classes require students to sit and listen, rather than allowing them to interact with the material they are being taught. This form of teaching does not encourage critical thinking. Bruce VanSledright asserts that the use of history textbooks offers students no tangible epistemological value.<sup>29</sup> Students do not find themselves being challenged in the classroom. It is because of this that Dewey and Freire advocate for student-centered curriculums that will allow students to seek out their own conclusions and to build their critical reasoning skills. With the spread of globalization, it is imperative that our educational system adopt more interactive pedagogies. Students need to be able to explore foreign ideas and cultures so that they may be truly prepared for the diverse society in which they will find themselves.

### **Reacting to the Past**

To address the issues outlined in the previous chapter, Mark Carnes, a history professor from Barnard College-Columbia University, created an active learning

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<sup>27</sup> Kelvin Stewart Beckett, 50.

<sup>28</sup> Bruce A. VanSledright, 25.

<sup>29</sup> Bruce A. VanSledright, 8.

pedagogy for higher learning institutions that is known as *Reacting to the Past*.<sup>30</sup> This is a historical simulation that employs competitiveness to drive student engagement and participation. Carnes implemented this new teaching method in the late 1990s as an attempt to motivate and interest his Freshman survey students.<sup>31</sup> As a professor, Carnes had come to realize that many of his entry-level students struggled with an overwhelming sense of failure in their courses.<sup>32</sup> This paralyzing fear affects students' desire to participate in their classes. In the system of higher education within in the United States, there has been a substantial struggle by educational institutions to "engage undergraduate students in academic pursuits."<sup>33</sup> Thus Carnes, confronted by these issues in his own classroom, developed an interactive method of learning that places the students in charge and allows the professors to facilitate the learning experience.

Russell Olwell and Azibo Stevens assert that: "the central idea of RTTP is that students will be motivated by the desire to 'win' the classroom game, and this will lead to higher student engagement." There are a lot of factors that go into this process. RTTP is an immersive role play game that can be foreign to many educators and learners. Carnes recognizes that and accounts for that in the design of the games. Before game play can begin, students are required to read through the gamebook and take a quiz over the material. These gamebooks provide the outline of how the game will work and what the procedures are. Often, the gamebook will include literature that is related to the historical

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<sup>30</sup> Matthew Fifolt, "Minds on Fire: How Role-Immersion Games Transform College," review of *Minds on Fire: How Role-Immersion Games Transform College*, by Mark C. Carnes, *College & University*: 57.

<sup>31</sup> Mark C. Carnes, "Setting Students' Minds on Fire," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 57, no. 27 (March 2011).

<sup>32</sup> Matthew Fifolt, 59.

<sup>33</sup> Matthew Fifolt, 57.

topic around which the game is centered. Commonly, many RTTP games will incorporate works that are considered “classics.” For example, the French Revolution game requires students to read Rousseau’s *Social Contract*<sup>34</sup>. The emphasis that *Reacting to the Past* places on primary source documents is integral in its effectiveness with regards to promoting critical thinking skills.

The purpose of the pre-game quiz is to ensure that the students understand the general organization of the game. Once students have been quizzed, they are assigned their roles. Each student will be provided with a character that is either a historical figure or a fictional character that portrays some of the concerns of the time-period. These characters all come with their individual goals and, to win, a student must achieve his or her character’s goals. Beyond the individual focus, there is also the communal aspect that manifests itself in the form of factions. Every character in the game is a member of a faction or is an indeterminate. In the French Revolution game, there were roughly four factions. A faction generally represents a particularly influential group of people from the past. Each faction has its own set of goals that its members work together to achieve.

Actual game play centers around in-class debates. Each debate tackles an issue related to the specific historical turning point the game depicts. To ensure that students are pulling from historical fact, every person is required to write at least two papers that depict his or her character’s stance on different debate topics. Generally, the most influential decisions are made during these debates, so it is important that students are able to create well-thought out arguments to win. Each debate tends to conclude with a

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<sup>34</sup> Jennifer Popiel, Mark C. Carnes, and Gary Kates, *Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791 (Reacting to the Past)* (New York : W.W. Norton & Company, 2015).

vote. The results of these votes will affect the victory goals of each faction and individual character, determining the “winners” of the game. Throughout the entire game process, professors usually remove themselves from the game play. They act as an observer who is there to correct any blatant historical fallacies and to provide guidance. Most games tend to deviate from actual historical events. Depending on debates and votes, history can change through the actions of the students. Thus, the game concludes with a “post mortem” discussion that corrects the actual timeline of historical events.

The design of this pedagogical process is greatly influenced by other educational philosophies. Dewey’s ideas on the role of competition in the classroom are clearly seen in *Reacting to the Past*. The idea of active-learning, to Dewey, applied solely to younger children rather than young adults.<sup>35</sup> Carnes, seeing the rise of online gaming among college-aged students, felt that the idea of using play to improve education could be expanded to young adults.<sup>36</sup> Carnes’ RTTP pedagogy is deeply rooted in the theories of John Dewey. One of which is the concept of adaptability.

Dewey argues that students need to be able to easily adapt to different situations. *Reacting to the Past* forces students to think on their feet. Bret Mulligan states that “they [the students] must shape and react to the events of the evolving historical circumstances in which they find themselves.”<sup>37</sup> Dewey also advocates for a progressive style of education that employs the use of experiences to teach students. The entirety of RTTP allows students to place themselves into a historical moment and experience controversial

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<sup>35</sup> Mark C. Carnes, “Dewey’s ‘New Education’ and an Alternative: Reacting to the Past,” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 14, (2015): 583.

<sup>36</sup> Matthew Fifolt, 58.

<sup>37</sup> Bret Mulligan, “Coniuratio!Ethiopoeia and ‘Reacting to the Past’ in the Latin Classroom (and Beyond),” *The Classical Journal* 110, no. 1 (2014): 109.



issues and beliefs of that time. RTTP allows historical experience to become personal experience, which helps students to understand “historical development and causation” and encourages a “sense of how history might easily have turned out differently.”<sup>38</sup>

Not only that, but Carnes expanded on Freire’s belief in the equality of the student and teacher. By allowing the educator to take themselves “off stage” and act as a resource rather than the sole source of information, control of the classroom is in the hands of the students.<sup>39</sup> This creates a symbiotic relationship between the student and the teacher, where both rely on each other to succeed. He also seizes upon Freire’s idea of a liberatory education. When a student is assigned a historical character, he or she cannot lean on personal beliefs to succeed. Instead, students must open themselves up to the arguments that suit the time-period.<sup>40</sup> This process allows students to experience a completely foreign perspective.

Setting aside one’s beliefs to further a different set of beliefs can be difficult for some students. That is where Herbart’s pedagogical tact comes into play within the realm of RTTP. When an instructor notices students struggling with that concept, Carnes encourages them to work with each student to overcome these differences.<sup>41</sup> This discretion expands to a multitude of issues that can be brought out in an RTTP classroom. Public speaking is a very common fear among students and the task of participating in

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<sup>38</sup> Carla A. Anderson and T. Keith Dix, “‘Reacting to the Past’ and the Classics Curriculum: *Rome in 44 BCE*,” *The Classical Story* 103, no. 4 (Ap/My 2008): 449.

<sup>39</sup> Russel Olwell and Azibo Stevens, “‘I had to double check my thoughts’: How Reacting to the Past Methodology Impacts First-Year College Student Engagement, Retention, and Historical Thinking,” *The History Teacher* 48, no. 3 (May 2015): 563.

<sup>40</sup> Russell Olwell and Azibo Stevens, 568.

<sup>41</sup> Russel Olwell and Azibo Stevens, 569.

debates can be nerve-wracking. The instructor has full control over deciding the best possible type of game play for each student.

The blend of pedagogies that make up *Reacting to the Past* have been extremely successful in university settings. At some universities, the implementation of RTTP in survey courses has increased student engagement enough to have a positive effect on retention rates.<sup>42</sup> As previously noted, participation in a *Reacting* game is key to winning it. It is no surprise that many educational institutions that have used RTTP see a major rise of student engagement in those courses. An oft cited result of *Reacting* is the increased level of outside work students put into the game versus a traditional lecture style course. Tracy Lightcap notes that “students quickly...become adept at developing victory strategies, insuring teamwork, and negotiating with other players for support.”<sup>43</sup>

Since *Reacting to the Past* relies on many different classics to provide a background for students, many RTTP participants are better equipped to work with primary and secondary sources. Some professors reported that first-semester students were pursuing their own research out of their desire to win the game.<sup>44</sup> This helps students to improve their ability to think historically. In active-learning settings like RTTP, university students often see an increase in their ability to critically think and to reason logically. *Reacting to the Past* increases student engagement at such a drastic level that students can be found going out of their way to prepare for the game. This

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<sup>42</sup> Russell Olwell and Azibo Stevens, 570.

<sup>43</sup> Tracy Lightcap, “Creating Political Order: Maintaining Student Engagements through *Reacting to the Past*,” *The Teacher*, (Jan. 2009): 176.

<sup>44</sup> Ian Binnington, “Teaching with *Reacting to the Past*- Bringing Role-Immersion Play into the College Classroom,” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 14, (2015): 591.

engagement helps educators fulfill traditional learning goals by nurturing students “critical and analytical skills” through an environment that emphasizes “ethical awareness and civil engagement.”<sup>45</sup>

### **Re-Energizing the High School History Lesson with *Reacting to the Past***

Universities across the globe have found success with the implementation of *Reacting to the Past* in the classroom. The RTTP pedagogy allows institutions of higher education to improve student engagement and to better critical thinking skills. These are some of the same concerns that face the high school history classroom, yet those classrooms are still governed by traditional teaching methods. There a lot of reasons for this. Educators at the university level have a lot more freedom in their courses compared to teachers in the k-12 system. High school history teachers find their curriculums tied to government mandated centralized exams.<sup>46</sup>

*Reacting to the Past* games center around a plethora of different historical turning points. This makes the pedagogy difficult for high school teachers to work with, since these games do not concern themselves with test standards.<sup>47</sup> Since teachers must cover so much material to prepare students for these centralized tests, there is often not enough

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<sup>45</sup> Kathleen A. Kelly, “A Yearlong General Education Course Using ‘Reacting to the Past’ Pedagogy to Explore Democratic Practice,” *The International Journal of Learning* 16, no. 11 (2009): 147.

<sup>46</sup> Bruce A. VanSledright, 10.

<sup>47</sup> Russell Olwell and Azibo Stevens, 565.

time for a teacher to devote to a month-long *Reacting* game. Another issue with using RTTP in the high school classroom is the limited availability of academic resources for high school students. College students have access to their university's library which tends to lend students access to a variety of academic journals and books. A high school student is much more limited in that department, which makes doing research for the games a crushing barrier.

Regardless of these issues, it is evident that high school history classrooms are in dire need of an alternative to traditional teaching methods. Not only that, but RTTP has been proven to have positive effects on the learning experiences of freshmen university students. This is significant because, due to the reliance on traditional teaching methods, most students are not prepared for college after graduation. The traditional "collective-memory" approach to teaching history often leaves learners with a sense of "cognitive helplessness," this is when a student is unable to evaluate a source based on logical factors.<sup>48</sup> Students who are not equipped with critical thinking skills or the ability to logically reason will find themselves at a severe disadvantage when they enter university. There is a solution to this problem: *Reacting to the Past*. The RTTP pedagogy can help students "make a successful transition to college."<sup>49</sup>

I have created my own *Reacting to the Past* game to test this theory. My game, however, is tailored for a high school setting rather than a university one. The game is a shortened, self-contained one that incorporates high school history learning standards. The historical turning point that I chose to focus the game on is the 1916 Easter Rising in

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<sup>48</sup> Bruce A. VanSledright, 30.

<sup>49</sup> Russell Olwell and Azibo Stevens, 567.

Ireland. This event would be categorized under the social studies standards for Tennessee under World Wars 1914-1945. I have chosen this revolutionary event because it ties in well with the effects of World War I on the British Empire.

As I mentioned previously, this is a condensed game. I have shortened it down from a month of game play to two hours, similar to other *RTTP* games that have been scaled back for a shorter time frame. This tackles the time restraint issue that so many high school educators face, while still providing enough time for students to benefit from the *Reacting* experience. This game is also self-contained, meaning that primary sources are included in the game materials. Access to academic resources for high school students is limited, so a self-contained game will alleviate that problem. Part of the social studies standards for Tennessee high school students is to consider supporting texts such as *All Quiet on the Western Front*. This text is incorporated into the game materials that are to be provided to the students.

There are three standards, in particular, that the Easter Rising game will be able to adequately address. Social Studies Standard W.23 emphasizes that students need to be able to evaluate primary source material to draw conclusions about “political and economic rivalries, ethnic and ideological conflicts, domestic discontent, disorder, propaganda, and nationalism in mobilizing the civilian population in leading to the outbreak of WWI.”<sup>50</sup> Ireland had many young men that went to serve the British Empire during World War I. This connection will be useful in fulfilling the goals of the above

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<sup>50</sup> “World History and Geography High School Standards,” Tennessee Department of Education: Social Studies,” last modified July 26, 2012.

stated standard. Not to mention that a huge aspect of the *Reacting* pedagogy centers around improving students' ability to use primary source documents in critical analysis.

Standard W. 28 focuses on the “nature of the war and its human costs,” with a specific look at the effects of trench warfare.<sup>51</sup> The game I have created incorporates two WWI soldiers who have returned home to Ireland after being injured in the trenches. These characters will be indeterminates that the factions will need to win over so that they may win the game. Since *Reacting* is a collaborative learning effort between students, these two characters will force students to consider the effects of WWI in each decision they make. Another standard that this game will address is that of W. 35. This standard requires students to be able to “integrate multiple sources of info presented in diverse media explaining the influence of WWI on ... intellectual life.”<sup>52</sup>

The Easter Rising of 1916 game includes characters that are on both sides of the movement. Some will side with the British Empire and some will side with the Irish Republican Brotherhood. The diversity in opinions on the Rising can be connected to WWI. Characters like W. B. Yeats will aid in strengthening that connection to the influence WWI had on intellectual life, particularly in Ireland. The issue of the “lost generation,” which is also emphasized by standard W. 35, of WWI can also clearly be seen through the lens of the 1916 Rising. To succeed in the game, students will need to use these factors around which to build their debates.

The inclusion of state standards was the first step in creating a game that would suit a high school setting. I will also be testing the game among a group of voluntary

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<sup>51</sup> “World History and Geography High School Standards.”

<sup>52</sup> “World History and Geography High School Standards.”

participants. Post-game play, participants are asked to fill out a voluntary survey. The results of the survey will be analyzed to reach a conclusion as to the possibility that this game could be applicable in a high school setting. Based on the survey results, I will amend the game as needed to improve it and further tailor it to a high school setting. In the long term, I would like to see this game test played in an actual high school setting. That way the effects of the game on high school learners could be better assessed.

## **Chapter 2: The Gamebook**

*Reacting to the Past:*

Ireland Has Risen

By Quinlan Odom



## Contents of *Ireland Has Risen*

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## Prologue

It's March of 1916 and you've just returned home to Ireland. While you were away, you heard rumors about an uprising that was being planned by Irish revolutionaries. You are Irish to your core and have a strong pride in your country. Too young to have lived through the days of the Famine, you recall the horrifying stories your mother told you about it. Unwilling to flee to the United States, your family had chosen to stay in Ireland. Though they were poor tenant farmers, they somehow managed to defy the odds and survive. This, of course, was with no help from the British government.

Stories of the cruelty of the British have haunted your childhood. Your family is Catholic and many of your ancestors suffered under the penal laws that the British Empire inflicted on Ireland. Stripped of their rights, your family could do nothing but try to survive. The penal laws set out to oppress Irish Catholics. You remember some of the harsher laws:<sup>53</sup>

- The Irish Catholic was forbidden the exercise of his religion.
- He was forbidden to receive an education.
- He was forbidden to enter a profession.
- He was forbidden to hold public office.
- He was forbidden to engage in trade or commerce.
- He was forbidden to live in a corporate town or within five miles thereof.

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<sup>53</sup> Sora Sato, "Edmund Burke's Views of Irish History," *History of European Ideas* 41, no. 3 (2015): 396-397.

- He was forbidden to own a horse of greater value than five pounds.
- He was forbidden to own land.
- He was forbidden to lease land.
- He was forbidden to vote.
- He was forbidden to keep any arms for his protection.
- He was forbidden to inherit anything from a Protestant.
- He was forbidden to rent any land that was worth more than 30 shillings a year.
- He was forbidden to reap from his land any profit exceeding a third of the rent.
- He could not attend Catholic worship.
- He was compelled by law to attend Protestant worship.
- He could not himself educate his child.

You are well aware of the “Protestant Ascendancy” that the British implemented in order to try and eradicate the uncivilized Irish. It has been many centuries since Ireland has belonged to her people and, because of that, you feel she has suffered greatly.

Now, you are not too young to remember the Home Rule bills. The possibility of Ireland having autonomy from the British government had been a spark of hope. That spark was smothered, though, when Home Rule was delayed due to World War I. Now you wonder if your great country will ever be able to call herself independent.

That is why you have returned to Dublin today. You are curious about the rumored uprising and want to learn more. This may be something you could support, but you need to know what its aims are. Luckily, your father has invited you to the Nationalist Summit that is being held by leaders of the three Irish nationalist sects. Here,

you will be able to hear the ideologies and arguments of each group. From there, you feel that you will be able to make an informed decision.

Do not forget, though, that World War I is raging across Europe. You have many childhood friends who enlisted to fight for the British army. While you are walking the streets of Dublin, those friends are becoming the victims of trench warfare. It is knowledge like this that makes you hesitant about supporting an uprising. You wonder if the revolutionaries should wait until the end of the war to strike. Yet, you also long for an Ireland free from the influence of the British.

It is with these thoughts weighing heavy on your mind that you agree to attend the Nationalist Summit. You want answers to these questions, and this is the place you will receive them. Now, you make your way to the pub where the gathering is being held.

## The Factions

### **Physical Force Nationalists**

Organizations like the IRB, Citizen's Army, and the Irish Volunteers were considered physical force nationalist groups. They believe that it will require an armed conflict to push the British out of Ireland, and they are willing to lay down their lives to do it. This faction considers Britain's involvement in World War I a chance for them to take their country back. These characters desire to see an overturn of the political and economic policies of Britain within Ireland. They strive for an independent Ireland and understand that violence may be necessary to achieve that goal.

### **Moral Nationalists**

This faction focuses on achieving Irish autonomy through political and legal means. Land reform movements would have been popular among this group. In particular, the center of this faction's attempts at autonomy lies with the Home Rule bill of 1912.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 1912, the third Irish Home Rule bill was introduced into the British House of Commons.<sup>54</sup> Home Rule promised to provide Ireland the independence she craved while still allowing Britain to manage foreign affair issues, currency, and tariffs. The House of Lords chose to veto it, but in 1911 the veto power of the House of Lords had been limited to a 3-year time span.<sup>55</sup> Thus, in 1914, Ireland was ready to see

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<sup>54</sup> Gabriel Doherty, *The Home Rule Crisis 1912-14* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2014).

<sup>55</sup> Joseph Coohill, *Ireland: A Short History* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2000), 123.

the implementation of Home Rule. There was an issue, though. Ulster, which is a province located at the Northern tip of Ireland, did not want Home Rule. When Britain entered World War I in August of 1914, the Home Rule bill was to be delayed until the end of the war.<sup>56</sup> The conflict between Ulster and the rest of Ireland was left unresolved. Come 1916, the moral nationalists were still fighting for Home Rule.

### **Cultural Nationalists**

The Gaelic Revival will be of great importance to this faction. In the 1840s, a group known as the Young Irelanders created an inclusive movement that involved both Protestants and Catholics. Eventually, it would come to be known as the Gaelic Revival.<sup>57</sup> The revival emphasized an embrace of ancient Irish culture, traditions, and language. There were three aspects of this revival: literary, sports, and language. The Gaelic League focused on the Irish language while the Gaelic Athletic Association aimed to revive ancient Irish games. The intent of this movement was to bolster a sense of cultural pride among Irish people. Cultural nationalists wanted the autonomy of Ireland to be found within her culture and traditions.

### **Characters**

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<sup>56</sup> Joseph Coohill, 124.

<sup>57</sup> Dennis Dworkin, ed., *Ireland and Britain 1798-1922: An Anthology of Sources* (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2012), 50.

### **Physical Force Nationalists**

#### *James Connolly*

A Scotsman, socialist, and revolutionary, he leads the Citizen Army.

#### *Thomas Clarke*

A nationalist to his core, Clarke is a member of the Gaelic League, Sinn Féin, and, most importantly, the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

#### *Constance Markievicz*

More commonly known as Madame Markievicz, she is a proud suffragist and revolutionary.

#### *Thomas MacDonagh*

A former member of the Gaelic League, MacDonagh is a teacher and writer turned republican revolutionary.

#### *Eoin (pronounced "Owen") MacNeill*

Leader of the Irish Volunteers and co-founder of the Gaelic League, MacNeill is prominent supporter of the fight for Irish autonomy.

### **Moral Nationalists**

*John Redmond*

Leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, Redmond is a strong supporter of using parliamentary methods to gain Irish independence.

*Bulmer Hobson*

While not a devout supporter of moral nationalism, he is a very strategically minded man who is concerned with likelihood of the failure of any uprising.

**Cultural Nationalists**

*William B. Yeats*

Considered one of Ireland's greatest poets, he is a man dedicated to the revival of the ancient Irish culture.

*Douglas Hyde*

Educational reforms are Hyde's largest focus. He desires an educational system that emphasizes Ireland's ancient language and history.

*Mary Butler*



A member of the Gaelic League and a conservative woman, Butler feels that a woman's place in the nationalist movement revolves around her power as a homemaker.

*George Russell*

A writer and an activist against British policies, Russell seeks a movement that emphasizes Irish culture.

**Indeterminates**

*Jack O'Sullivan*

Shortly after Britain joined World War I in 1914, O'Sullivan enlisted. After almost a year of trench warfare, he has returned home having sustained substantial injuries.

*Liam Holohan*

Thanks to the Land Acts of the late 1800s, Mr. Holhan was recently able to purchase the land he had been a tenant of his entire life.

*Felix O'Brien*

The Land Acts have not served him well. As an agricultural laborer who owns no land, he has found himself, once again, at the mercy of the British government.

*Katherine Byrne*

Mrs. Byrne is a conservative woman with a small family. She has strong nationalistic emotions, but is unsure of her role in Ireland's fight for autonomy.

*Christopher Lawless*

Father Lawless is a Catholic Priest who is concerned with the effect of Irish Nationalism on his parish.

**Distribute Initial Roles (10 minutes)**

Assign the character roles for each participant and allow 10 minutes for people to get acquainted with their roles. The character sheets will provide each player with valuable information regarding their character's goals for the game.

**Faction Meetings (15 minutes)**

Once everyone has read through the role sheets, it is important that the players have time to meet with their factions. During these meetings, students should be encouraged to try and create a game plan for the first debate. Indeterminate characters are welcome to interact with the various factions so that they may get an idea of what each faction can offer them.

**Nationalist Debate (30 minutes)**

This is the first of two debates that will take place during the game. At this point, the characters are aware that there are rumors of an uprising planned around Easter. The debate will center around which form of Nationalism will be the best to lead Ireland forward. Students should focus on matters such as the Gaelic revival and the fact that World War I is still raging.

Towards the end of the debate, the Gamemaster should announce that Patrick Pearse, along with the military council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), has called for the Irish Volunteers to take up arms and attack the GPO on Easter Monday.

Shortly after, the Gamemaster will need to seek out James Connolly and deliver word that Sir Roger Casement has been arrested and his 20,000 German rifles sunk. Eoin MacNeill, chief of staff of the Irish volunteers, will now be forced to call off the Rising. Now, players must choose whether to defy those orders.

When this is announced, certain characters will leave. When this happens, they will be sent to another room and become British soldiers. They will return at the end of the game, but, until their return, they will need to discuss how to react to the uprising.

### **Faction Meetings (15 minutes)**

Now, factions will need to meet to discuss what to do with regards the uprising. Some members of each faction may want to fight and some may not. This will give each faction an opportunity to outline their arguments for or against the rising.

### **Fight or Flight Debate (30 minutes)**

A lot has happened since the first debate. James Connolly will need to announce what has happened to Sir Roger Casement. From there, the players will need to debate whether or not they should join Patrick Pearse on Easter Monday.

Towards the end of the debate, the Gamemaster should announce that Irish forces have taken the General Post Office. Once this happens, James Connolly will need to call a vote to determine if the group will or will not participate in the uprising.

**The British React (15 minutes)**

Immediately following the vote, the characters that left to become British soldiers will return. When they return, they should be ready to announce their plan of action against the rebels.

If the vote resulted in a majority wishing to join the rising, then all of those who voted will face the repercussions that the British have planned. If the vote resulted in a majority wishing not to join the rising, then only those whose role sheets required them to fight no matter the vote will be forced to face the judgment of the British.

## Role Sheets

James Connolly

## **Faction**

Physical Force Nationalist

## **Biography**

You are the head of the Citizen's Army and have worked closely with Patrick Pearse to plan the Easter Rising. Before moving to Ireland with your family, you lived in Edinburgh. It was here that you first got involved with the labor movement and socialism.<sup>58</sup> While you subscribe to the cultural revival and republicanism, you believe that the only way forward for Ireland is physical force nationalism.<sup>59</sup> It is a deeply held belief of yours that the issues existing within Ireland are inherently tied to British capitalism; therefore a rising must occur and guide the Irish people towards socialism.<sup>60</sup>

In 1897, you wrote an essay entitled *Socialism and Nationalism* in which you said:

*“Now, traditions may, and frequently do, provide materials for a glorious martyrdom, but can never be strong enough to ride the storm of a successful revolution.*

*If the national movement of our day is not merely to re-enact the old sad tragedies of our past history; it must show itself capable of rising to the exigencies of the moment.*

*It must demonstrate to the people of Ireland that our nationalism is not merely a morbid idealizing of the past, but is also capable of formulating a*

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<sup>58</sup> Fergus A. D’Arcy, *1916 Portraits and Live* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2015), 92.

<sup>59</sup> Dworkin, 173.

<sup>60</sup> Dworkin, 173.

*distinct and definite answer to the problems of the present and a political and economic creed capable of adjustment of the wants of the future.”<sup>61</sup>*

Be sure to take your words into consideration as you pursue your goals. How does this statement argue that physical force is a more effective than cultural nationalism?

### **Goals**

-You want the Irish Nationalist movement to be driven by physical force nationalism.

You will need to convince indeterminates why that type of nationalism is the best one for them to follow.

-You must vote in favor of fighting in the Easter Rising, but your goal is to have a majority of the summit vote to fight as well.

### **Responsibilities**

Your role will be to lead the Nationalist Summit. At the end of each debate session, you will need to call for a vote. The first debate centers around which type of nationalism should lead the Irish movement. The second will revolve around whether to fight in the uprising.

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<sup>61</sup> Dworkin, 182.



Thomas Clarke

## **Faction**

Physical Force Nationalism

## **Biography**

You are a true Fenian, devout in your belief that Ireland will only find freedom through force of arms.<sup>62</sup> The Easter Rising is something you have been working towards your whole life, so you are deeply passionate and believe that people will support the physical force movement and vote to participate in the Rising.<sup>63</sup> Patrick Pearse is a close friend of yours and, in fact, it was you that brought him into the IRB. While you tend to be the quieter of the revolutionaries, you are extremely intelligent and well respected.<sup>64</sup>

You have been fiercely planning an Easter Rising since December of 1915 and now you must convince people to support it. There are already plans in place for Roger Casement to bring back 20,000 rifles from Germany with which to equip the rebels, a plan you have made sure to solidify.<sup>65</sup> This is not common knowledge, so use it at your discretion.

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<sup>62</sup> James Quinn, *1916 Portraits and Lives* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2015, 78.

<sup>63</sup> James Quinn, 79.

<sup>64</sup> James Quinn, 77.

<sup>65</sup> Joseph Coohill, 125.

## **Goals**

-You want the Irish Nationalist movement to be driven by physical force nationalism.

You will need to convince indeterminates why that type of nationalism is the best one for them to follow.

-You must vote in favor of fighting in the Easter Rising, but your goal is to have a majority of the summit vote to fight as well.

## Constance Markievicz

### Faction

Physical Force Nationalism

### Biography

Known as Madame Markievicz, you are a force with which to be reckoned. You had a privileged childhood and were allowed to study the arts.<sup>66</sup> Since you pursued an education in art, you have a soft spot in your heart for the cultural nationalists. You're even friends with the poet, Mr. W.B. Yeats.<sup>67</sup> Keep this in mind as you try to sway him to vote in your favor.

A suffragist and socialist, you have dabbled in many different nationalist organizations. Sinn Fein was not radical enough for you, so you looked to organizations like the IRB. Now, you are heavily involved with the Cumann na mBan, which is a militant organization for women.<sup>68</sup> Your background in the women's movement may help you convince Katherine Byrne to join your cause.

For you, dying for Ireland would be the most heroic act you could do.<sup>69</sup> Physical force nationalism is about Ireland's freedom and, you believe, Irish men and women must

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<sup>66</sup>Senia Paseta, *1916 Portraits and Lives* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2015), 195.

<sup>67</sup> Senia Paseta, 196.

<sup>68</sup> Senia Paseta, 196.

<sup>69</sup> Dworkin, 213.

be willing to sacrifice for that. You hope that the uprising will “arouse the nation to a passion of love and loyalty, loyalty to Ireland and hatred of foreign rule.”<sup>70</sup>

### **Goals**

-You want the Irish Nationalist movement to be driven by physical force nationalism.

You will need to convince indeterminates why that type of nationalism is the best one for them to follow.

-You must vote in favor of fighting in the Easter Rising, but your goal is to have a majority of the summit vote to fight as well.

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<sup>70</sup> Dworkin, 213.

Thomas MacDonagh

## **Faction**

Physical Force Nationalism

## **Biography**

You stumbled upon the Irish Nationalist movement. Originally, you were a teacher and a writer. After you joined the Gaelic League, you took classes to learn Irish and became a proponent of cultural nationalism.<sup>71</sup> In 1913, you witnessed the horrors of “Bloody Sunday” and, as a result, began your career as a physical force activist.<sup>72</sup> You joined the Irish Volunteers and you were also initiated into the IRB. Outspoken, you made your feelings known with regards to the involvement of Irish soldiers in World War I. You did not feel Irishmen should be fighting for the British Empire, which is something for which John Redmond had advocated.<sup>73</sup>

It was only very recently that you were allowed to be a member of the IRB military council, which is responsible for the “rumored” Easter Rising. You will want to motivate as many people to support physical force nationalism as possible. The more

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<sup>71</sup> Lawrence William White, *1916 Portraits and Lives* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2015), 164.

<sup>72</sup> Lawrence William White, 168.

<sup>73</sup> Lawrence William White, 168.

people you are able to persuade to support your cause, the more people who will be likely to vote to fight in the uprising.

### **Goals**

-You want the Irish Nationalist movement to be driven by physical force nationalism.

You will need to convince indeterminates why that type of nationalism is the best one for them to follow.

-You must vote in favor of fighting in the Easter Rising, but your goal is to have a majority of the summit vote to fight as well.

Eoin MacNeill

## **Faction**

Physical Force Nationalism

## **Biography**

You co-founded the Gaelic League as well as the Irish Volunteers.<sup>74</sup> Now, you are in charge of the Volunteers. You know of the Easter Rising and are not too keen on it. You do, however, support it since Roger Casement claims to be bringing 20,000 German rifles with him. It is because of this that you push the attendees of this Nationalist Summit to vote in favor of physical force nationalism.

## **Goals**

- You want the Irish Nationalist movement to be driven by physical force nationalism. You will need to convince indeterminates why that type of nationalism is the best one for them to follow.
- The way you vote during the second debate will depend on news regarding Roger Casement. Whichever way you vote, you will want to do your best to get the majority to vote with you.

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<sup>74</sup> R. F. Foster, *Vivid Faces* (Penguin Books, 2015), 413.

## **Responsibilities**

-If there is news of Roger Casement failing in task of retrieving German rifles for the rising, then you must command the Irish Volunteers not to strike.



## John Redmond

### **Faction**

Moral Nationalist

### **Biography**

You are quite the orator; you lead the Irish Parliamentary party.<sup>75</sup> While representing Ireland, you have helped pass many land, education, and housing reforms.<sup>76</sup> Come 1912, you would even see the third Home Rule bill introduced to Parliament. A true statesman, you are able to work with both Irish Nationalists and British Loyalists to try and secure freedom for Ireland. This is a talent and also a weakness, many of your physical force nationalist colleagues are not in favor of working with the British.

To further their dislike of you, you supported Irishmen enlisting in World War I to fight for the British Empire.<sup>77</sup> You tend to be rather conservative, so you are opposed to women's suffrage and to the Labor movement.<sup>78</sup> Physical Force Nationalists are not likely to support you, especially since you condemn any type of uprising.<sup>79</sup> Now you must plead your case to those that might listen to you. You still hold some political power; you may be able to sway some Irishmen.

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<sup>75</sup> Dermot Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader* (Dublin: Merrion, 2013), 1.

<sup>76</sup> R. F. Foster, 426.

<sup>77</sup> R. F. Foster, 426.

<sup>78</sup> R. F. Foster, 426.

<sup>79</sup> Dermot Meleady, 5.

As you plead your case, remember the words you spoke in 1914:

*The Empire is engaged in the most serious war in history. It is a just war, provoked by the intolerable military despotism of Germany. It is a war for the defense of the sacred rights and liberties of small nations, and the respect and enlargement of the great principle of nationality. Involved in it is the fate of France, our kindred country, the chief nation of that powerful Celtic race to which we belong. The fate of Belgium, to whom we are attached by the same great ties of race, and by the common desire of a small nation to assert its freedom, and the fate of Poland, whose sufferings and whose struggle bear so marked a resemblance to our own.<sup>80</sup>*

Make sure you remind the cultural nationalists about the ties that Irish ancestors have with France. (As a race the Celts migrated through France leaving Celtic settlements behind in many French towns with the largest and most active Celtic community, even today, in the French province of Brittany.) As cultural nationalists, they value Irish heritage, so this will be a strong arguing point for you.

## **Goals**

- During the first debate, you want to do your best to convince everyone that parliamentary/peaceful methods are the best way for Ireland to seize her freedom.
- For the second debate, you will want to do everything in your power to convince people not to participate in the uprising.

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<sup>80</sup> Dworkin, 201-202.

## Bulmer Hobson

### **Faction**

Moral Nationalist

### **Biography**

You are not a good moral nationalist even though you would not consider yourself one. Since you influenced MacNeill to collude with Redmond on the issue of World War I enlistment however, many leaders of the IRB find you untrustworthy.<sup>81</sup> While you do not buy into the fact that parliamentary procedures will secure Irish freedom, you are against an uprising. Guerilla warfare is more to your taste.<sup>82</sup>

You are aware that there is to be an uprising since you were strongly connected to the IRB military council.<sup>83</sup> Being a practical man, you do not see any chance of military success for the rising. So, though it still remains a rumor to most, you advocate for moral nationalism in order to deter support for any uprising.

### **Goals**

-You will do whatever you can to ensure that the physical force nationalists do not garner support.

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<sup>81</sup> R. F. Foster, 406.

<sup>82</sup> R. F. Foster, 406.

<sup>83</sup> Marnie Hay, "Kidnapped: Bulmer Hobson, the IRB and the 1916 Easter Rising," *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 53.

-If there is a rising, you will vote not to fight and work to persuade others not to participate. In your eyes, the uprising is doomed from the start due to inadequate military strategy.

W.B. Yeats

## **Faction**

Cultural Nationalist

## **Biography**

You are one of Ireland's most prized poets. Irish culture and language is of a deep value to you; in 1899 you helped co-found the Irish Literary Theatre of Dublin in order to produce Celtic literature.<sup>84</sup> You desire Ireland to pursue a path of cultural revival. Instead of uprisings, you want Irishmen and Irishwomen to focus on ancient art, literature, and culture.

Under no circumstances will you fight, you do not find that to be your proper place in the nationalist movement. You feel that "political action fades before the timelessness of myth" and you despise revolutionary politics.<sup>85</sup>

## **Goals**

-You hope to be able to convince everyone that the cultural nationalist approach is the way to go. Irish independence can only be achieved when Ireland has rejected British culture in order to embrace her own.

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<sup>84</sup> Dworkin, 85.

<sup>85</sup> James Sullivan, "William Butler Yeats," *Salem Press Biographical Encyclopedia* (January, 2013).

-If the uprising turns out to be more than just a rumor, you will return to your home.

### **Transformation (Richard Pennington)**

At this point, you will take on the role of a British officer. You will need to leave the meeting room and join your fellow British officers elsewhere to discuss the consequences for those that choose to rebel.

You belong to a group known as the Sherwood Foresters. Originally, your unit was to be sent to the frontlines of World War I, but, instead, you were sent to deal with the Easter Rising. 180 out the 200 men from your unit died because of the uprising.<sup>86</sup> Now you must choose, along with your fellow officers, on whether or not to execute the Irish rebels.

Be cautious of how you react, it is wise to remember that execution may anger the rest of Ireland and you risk making the revolutionaries into martyrs. At the same time, though, should there not be justice for your fallen soldiers?

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<sup>86</sup> Ephraim Hardcastle, "Forgotten in the Centenary Commemoration," *The Daily Mail*, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Douglas Hyde

## **Faction**

Cultural Nationalist

## **Biography**

You tend to focus on the reassertion of Irish identity.<sup>87</sup> Focusing on the Irish language and its revival is your goal. You desire an Ireland that removes the shackles of British culture from her ancient hands. When it comes to physical force nationalism, you are staunchly opposed. Ireland's freedom will come from her culture, not her weaponry.

It will be important for you to remember the words you said back in 1894:

*"We have at last broken the continuity of Irish life, and just at the moment when the Celtic race is presumably about to largely recover possession of its own country, it finds itself deprived and stripped of its Celtic characteristics, cut off from the past, yet scarcely in touch with the present. It has lost since the beginning of this century almost all that connected it with the era of Culchullain and of Ossian, that connect it with the Christianisers of Europe, that connected it with Brian Boru and the heroes of Clontarf...It has lost all that they had – language, traditions, music, genius and ideas...we find ourselves despoiled of the bricks of nationality."*<sup>88</sup>

When remembering these words, try to remember the significance of what you were saying. Dwell on the idea of a free Ireland without an Irish culture, what did your words from 1894 present about that issue?

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<sup>87</sup> Dworkin, 71.

<sup>88</sup> Dworkin, 75-76.

## Goals

-You'll want to strongly advocate for the cultural nationalism movement in Ireland. The more people you can get on your side, the more likely you'll be to promote educational reforms involving the Irish language.

-If the uprising turns out to be more than just a rumor, you will return to your home.

## Transformation (Andrew Wadsworth)

At this point, you will take on the role of a British officer. You will need to leave the meeting room and join your fellow British officers elsewhere to discuss the consequences for those that choose to rebel.

In particular, you feel that the rebels who participated in the Easter Rising should be imprisoned at Kilmaihoam Gaol (pronounced jail), then executed. Why might you want this to be the punishment? Do not forget that World War I is still raging and you are an enlisted officer of the British army who has lost many friends to the war. As you consider the fate of the rebels, remember this description of what soldiers are facing in the trenches:

*We see men living with their skulls blown open; we see soldiers run with their two feet cut off, they stagger on splintered stumps into the next shell-hole; a lance-corporal crawls a mile and a half on his hands dragging his smashed knee after him; another goes to the dressing station and over his clasped hands bulge his intestines; we see men without mouths, without jaws, without faces; we find one man who has held the*



*artery of his arm in his teeth for two hours in order not to bleed to death.  
The sun goes down, night comes the shells whine, life is at an end.*<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1928), 134.

Mary Butler

## **Faction**

Cultural Nationalist

## **Biography**

You are much more conservative than the Countess Markievicz. You believe that women have a role in the nationalist movement, but that it is a traditional role. Women need to embrace their position as homemakers; this stereotypical role of women gives them the power to surround their children with Irish culture. You have worked closely with the Gaelic League and are a big supporter of the revitalization of the Irish language.

Reflect on your writings of 1900-1901:

*This movement in which Irishwomen are now earnestly asked to join, is frequently described as "the language war," and rightly so. It is a war to the death between Irish ideals and British sordid soullessness.*

*Now the women of our race are dignified and decorous; they shrink from mingling in a melee, and retiring into the inner courtyard, they leave the scene of strife in the outer world to the sterner sex. They may, therefore, think that in this language war they have no place, but they are mistaken, for it is warfare of an especial kind, warfare which can best be waged not by shrieking viragoes of aggressive amazons, but by gentle, low-voiced women who teach little children their first prayers, and, seated at the hearth-side, make these around them realise the difference between a home and a dwelling.<sup>90</sup>*

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<sup>90</sup> Dworkin, 81.

Think about your motives in writing that. You might be able to use this conservative argument to appeal to Katherine Bryne, the conservative woman who is trying to figure out her role in the nationalist movement.

### **Goals**

-As a conservative woman, you feel that you can only be involved with the cultural movement. Therefore, you will advocate for their cause and try to sway opinions to your side.

-If the uprising turns out to be more than just a rumor, you will return to your home.

### **Transformation (Phillip Westwick)**

At this point, you will take on the role of a British officer. You will need to leave the meeting room and join your fellow British officers elsewhere to discuss the consequences for those that choose to rebel.

While you are loyal to the British Empire and want to seek justice for the insurrection performed against her, you also realize the political side effects of executing the Easter Rising revolutionaries. You fear that the any executions will further incite the anger of the Irish. It is your duty to convince your fellow officers to not execute the rebels.

## George Russell

### **Faction**

Cultural Nationalism

### **Biography**

In the late 1890s, you served with the Irish Agricultural Organization.<sup>91</sup> You have socialist tendencies and have worked with James Connolly in the past. Often, your concerns with regards to Ireland, center around economic and cultural development.<sup>92</sup> In your eyes, Ireland's freedom can only truly be sought through culture. There must be an overhaul of the current educational system in order to make way for a new one, which focuses on Irish language and traditions. You argue that Ireland cannot be politically autonomous if she is not also culturally free of Britain's influence.

### **Goals**

-You want to see Ireland pursue a course of cultural nationalism, so you work to convince your colleagues that is the correct path for the movement to take.

-If the uprising turns out to be more than just a rumor, you will return to your home.

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<sup>91</sup> R. F. Foster, 426.

<sup>92</sup> Liam O'Dowd, "Intellectuals in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Ireland: And the Case of George Russell," *The Crane Bag* 9, no. 1 (1985): 6.

**Transformation (Patrick Edwards)**

At this point, you will take on the role of a British officer. You will need to leave the meeting room and join your fellow British officers elsewhere to discuss the consequences for those that choose to rebel.

You are unsure of how you feel the rebels should be punished for the uprising. It is your job to listen to the concerns of your fellow officers and to come to a consensus. Will the rebels be executed or will they be imprisoned?

Jack O'Sullivan

## **Faction**

Indeterminate

## **Biography**

You are a young soldier who has just returned from the trench warfare of World War I. When the war broke you heeded John Redmond's call for Irishmen to enlist with the British Army. Back in December of 1915, you suffered an injury, which sent you home to Ireland. Now, you are trying to figure out your place within the nationalist movement.

Even though you have been home for a few months now, you still have nightmares about the war. They stir memories like this one:

*The shelling has ceased, I turn towards the crater beckoning to the others. They take off their masks. We lift up the wounded man, one taking his splinted arm. And so we stumble off hastily.*

*The graveyard is a mass of wreckage. Coffins and corpses lie strewn about. They have been killed once again; but each of them that was flung up saved one of us.*<sup>93</sup>

It is these memories of your fellow soldiers dying that make your heart weary of the physical force nationalism. You wonder, to yourself, if the United Kingdom has not seen enough warfare for now. You hope that, maybe, there is another sect of nationalism that will succeed at bringing independence to Ireland without bloodshed.

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<sup>93</sup> Erich Maria Remarque, 70-71.

Many will try to convince you to favor their brand of nationalism. To determine the right path of nationalism for you, you will need to be active and participate in the discussions.

### **Possible Questions**

You will want to pose questions to the members of each faction during the debates.

Ask for clarification on:

- What should Ireland's role in World War I be?
- How can cultural nationalism bring independence to Ireland?

Liam Holohan

## **Faction**

Indeterminate

## **Biography**

You come from a long line of tenant farmers, meaning that your family always worked the land, but was never able to truly own it. Thanks to the passage of the Land Acts, you were able to purchase the land your family had worked. Now, you are able to work your own land. This has made you less involved with the move for Irish nationalism. You embraced the Home Rule bill and want to see it implemented. At the same time, though, you fear that Britain will continue to delay the Home Rule bill for as long as they can.

So, you have come here today to see what the alternatives are. You are sympathetic to John Redmond's cause for moral nationalism; you have benefitted from the Land Acts and prosper from the trade arrangements that accompany being a member of the British Empire. Yet, you are fiercely loyal to your country; your family has worked Irish soil for centuries, this is your home. Like many, you are concerned that this is not the time for a violent movement to seize Irish independence.

Many will try to convince you to favor their brand of nationalism. To determine the right path of nationalism for you, you will need to be active and participate in the discussions.



**Possible Questions**

-Agrarian workers did not seem to benefit from the Land Acts like you did. You may want to figure out which group will ensure that the Land Acts are not repealed and that you are able to keep your land.

-If a rising were to occur, you will need to decide whether or not to fight. Ensure that you understand the goals of each faction before you choose to give your life for Ireland's freedom.

Felix O'Brien

## **Faction**

Indeterminate

## **Biography**

You hate the British. Your family suffered terribly during the Great Famine and had been forced off of their land due to inability to pay rents. Now, with the Land Acts, you have suffered even more. Since you are an agricultural laborer, and not a land tenant, you did not benefit from the Land Acts passed by the British government. It is because of this that you are staunchly opposed to the approach of moral nationalists. You do not believe that Britain will ever do right by Ireland.

Before the start of World War I, you were fully in support of physical force nationalism. Shortly after the war, though, your son enlisted and was sent to the frontlines. While you want to fight back against the British, you also do not want your son leaving one war to return to another. He has written you letters about his time in the trenches:

*Then we begin to realize we are in for trouble. The observation balloons have spotted the smoke from our chimney, and the shells start to drop on us. They are those damned spraying little daisy-cutters that make only a small hole and scatter widely close to the ground. They keep dropping closer and closer all round us; still we cannot leave the grub in the lurch. A couple of splinters whizz through the top of the kitchen window. The roast is ready. But frying the pancakes is getting difficult. The explosions come so fast that the splinters strike again and again*

*against the wall of the house and sweep in through the window. Whenever I hear the shell coming I drop down on one knee with the pan and the pancakes, and duck behind the wall of the window. Immediately afterwards I am up again and going on with the frying.*<sup>94</sup>

That is not the life you had envisioned for your son, one of constant aggression. You fear an uprising will turn Ireland into a battleground.

### **Possible Questions**

-You will want to ask some of the physical force nationalists about weaponry. If they intend to take Ireland back with violence, you want to ensure that she is not set up for failure.

-Make sure that you get to know the cultural nationalists, figure out how they plan to free Ireland from Britain without the use of violence.

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<sup>94</sup> Erich Maria Remarque, 234-235.

Katherine Bryne

## **Faction**

Indeterminate

## **Biography**

You are a conservative homemaker. You enjoy your role and love being able to keep the home. Yet, you come from a long line of Irish Catholics and you have a deep pride in your country. As a woman, you fear that there is no place for you in any of the nationalist efforts. That is why you have come to the Nationalist Summit today. You are seeking to find a revolutionary path that suits you.

In your quest, do not forget that you are a conservative Irish Catholic woman. You may choose to subscribe to the physical force nationalist movement, but it will take a lot of convincing. At home, you are raising two children. Make sure you think about them as you choose your revolutionary path.

## **Possible Questions**

-You will want to talk to Alice Miligan and Constance Markievicz. These women are suffragists, which is a little too radical for you, but they are deeply involved with the Irish nationalism movements. They may be able to convince you to fight.

-Mary Butler will also be very important to you. Like you, she is a conservative woman who was looking for her role in Ireland's independence.

## Christopher Lawless

### **Faction**

Indeterminate

### **Biography**

What no one knows is that you are a spy. You are working for the British government. Intelligence has caught wind of a possible uprising and has sent you to infiltrate the Irish nationalism movements. People assume that you are a Catholic priest and often come to you for guidance.

Make sure that you cozy up to the physical force nationalists. If anyone is plotting an uprising it is going to be them.

### **Possible Questions**

-You will want to discuss weaponry and logistics with the physical force nationalists. Try to get them to give you information on whatever it is they have planned.

### **TOP SECRET**

If an uprising does occur, you will remain at the summit. From that point on, your purpose will be to gather as many names of the rebels as possible. At any point, if British

soldiers appear, you will expose yourself and hand over the information you have gathered.

This requires that, during the second debate, you keep track of how each person will vote at the end. This will be important to the fate of the characters.

### Chapter 3: Testing the Game

The process of testing my *Reacting to the Past* game was drastically different than the process of writing it. Originally, I had anticipated a group of 10-15 voluntary participants to come and test the two-hour game I had created. Instead, though, I was faced with modifying my game so that it could work with just six players. The game itself needs at least 10 players for the entirety of the game to run its course. Since I only had six players the game ran for only 45 minutes. There were enough players for me to have a representative from each faction and three indeterminates. This distribution of roles allowed me to maintain the competitive aspect of the game while also ensuring that the three factions were all represented. Due to the small sample size, participants only played the first half of the game. This did, however, still involve teamwork, public speaking skills, and primary source analysis. At the conclusion of the test play, the players were asked to fill out a voluntary survey. The purpose of the survey was for me to see the type of effect my *Reacting* game had. Survey questions focused on issues that pertain specifically to a high school audience, even though the participants of this test run were not in high school.

The majority of the participants are in their twenties, except for one outlier participant who is 59. While the game I have created is aimed at a younger audience, I am pleased that this first test run featured students in their 20s. Many of these students

only recently graduated high school and their survey responses will help me further tailor my game to a high school classroom. Another positive from this test situation was that my participants had a wide range of grade point averages (GPA). Only one participant was not a college student, otherwise the GPA range was between 2.3 and 3.7. The wide-ranging GPAs allowed me to see the effects of my game amongst students with varying academic abilities. This is important as I analyze the results and consider how the survey responses will affect my game.

One of the main goals I had in creating a *Reacting to the Past* game for a high school classroom was to facilitate the improvement of critical thinking skills. The game I created quickly acquaints players with historical issues and ideologies of Ireland that are not commonly taught at the high school level. Exposing students to foreign ideas encourages them to think critically, which was a result of this test play. One participant said that the RTTP experience affected critical thinking skills by forcing players to think on their feet. Another player wrote that it makes you think in ways that are unfamiliar to you.

Another issue commonly found in the high school classroom is low student engagement. In creating a high school RTTP game, I wanted to address that issue by creating a competitive setting that encourages students to engage with the subject matter. Based off the results of the surveys, I succeeded in that. This result is best seen through the words of one of the players: "I actually paid attention and had to remember what was said so I could have a rebuttal." By using a competitive pedagogy like *Reacting*, I wanted to use that competitive angle to draw out generally withdrawn students. According to my



survey results, placing students in an active learning environment like that of RTTP is an effective way to promote student engagement.

One other major goal of mine was to help students improve their public speaking abilities through the *Reacting* experience. The results of the survey show that my test play did just that. There were two participants that dominated the debates. That is not, however, to say that other participants did not talk. In fact, even the shyest of players was very vocally involved. I was pleased to find that there was a constant flow of conversation throughout the entire experiment. One student noted that the *Reacting* setting created a comfortable atmosphere, which, for the player, made public speaking a lot less intimidating. The majority of participants agreed, they felt that the game positively affected their public speaking confidence.

While the survey results showed that my game was effective in creating a more engaging and beneficial learning experience, it also highlighted some of the issues of my RTTP game. Most of the survey participants agreed that they would have liked to have more background knowledge. There is a prologue in the game book that gives a brief overview of Irish history and sets the stage for the game. Going forward, though, I think it would be wise to expand on the historical background of Ireland. Particularly, a glossary of terms could be very beneficial to this game. This would allow players, specifically high school participants, to have quick access to unknown definitions when they are debating or analyzing one of the primary source excerpts.

One glaring issue with this test-run was the few number of players able to test the game. In the future, the game needs to be tested on a larger group of people so that I can continue improving the game for a high school setting. Since we were unable to test the

entire second half of my game due to the lack of players, I would like to see if that second half would change participants' opinions on the game and whether or not it would have made the game more beneficial.

In the future, I would like to add more background information on Ireland to the game I created. It is supposed to be a self-contained game and, while it does fulfill that definition, it is evident that it would benefit from more information on Irish history. I do believe that this is a viable alternative to traditional high school classroom settings and would like to continue improving the game in hopes that it will be tested in a high school classroom.

***Reacting to the Past: Ireland Has Risen Survey***

What is your age?	
Please indicate your gender	
Have you participated in RTTP games before?	
What is your major?	
Would you please indicate your GPA?	
How do you feel this RTTP experience has affected your critical thinking skills?	
Can you please explain the effect this experience has had on your public speaking confidence?	
How do you feel about RTTP as an educational tool? Please explain your answer.	

How did the competitive aspect of RTTP affect your learning experience?	
How do you feel this experience could have been more beneficial?	
What do you find to be the best method of learning for yourself?	
What would you describe as the most beneficial skill RTTP helped you improve on?	
Was there anything you specifically disliked about the experience? If yes, please describe it.	

## Chapter 4: The Game Writing Process

The process of writing a *Reacting to the Past* game is a grueling one. It required me to do a lot of research and a lot of planning. To write a successful game, one must ensure that all of his or her characters complement each other. There must be a clear storyline for players to follow, and there must be also be a competitive component. When I first embarked upon writing a *Reacting* game, I underestimated the extent of research and time it would take to create the game. If it had not been for the study abroad trip I took to Ireland in the Summer of 2016, then my project would have lacked a lot of substance. The trip focused on the Easter Rising of 1916 and the centenary celebrations. By centering the trip around the celebrations, I was able to view the different roles the Rising plays in Irish historical memory. This allowed me to create a diverse game full of characters with varying opinions on Irish nationalism. One of the most notable aspects of the Rising that I learned from my travels was the inclusion of women in the movement.

Generally, when one hears about the Easter Rising of 1916 it is associated with the 15 leaders of the movement that were executed. All of those leaders being men, the role of women in the Rising has often been ignored in Irish historiography. On the trip, we toured sites like Richmond Barracks, which is where a large number of women involved with the Rising were detained. It was a newly opened museum that provided a

detailed perspective on the importance of women in the Rising. The same day we visited that site, we also had the opportunity to partake in a 1916 bus tour. This particular experience was aimed at tourists, but it offered an important change in the memory of the Rising. Two actors portrayed characters from the Rising, one of which was a woman. The role of women in the Rising had transcended academia and historical sites and had found its way into popular memory. I knew when I returned home from the trip that I would need to convey the importance of women to the Rising through my game characters.

On this trip, I also had the opportunity to visit Kilmainham Gaol, the site where the leaders of the Rising were executed. Visiting this site let me step directly into history. I was able to see the cells where they were held, with their names carved above the door. I saw the exact site where so many of them were executed. This visit provided a very personal connection to the leaders of the rebellion and their idea that dying for Ireland was the greatest sacrifice they could make for her. I wanted to get that emotion across in the physical force nationalists included in the game. No matter what happened, those men were prepared to die for their country. This was something that I wanted students to grasp as they try to understand Irish nationalism.

Another visit that was incredibly important to the production of this game, was the one to Belfast. In Northern Ireland, the 1916 Rising is not exalted the way it is in Ireland. Instead, there is a focus placed on memorializing World War I and the Battle of the Somme. Understanding the effects of World War I on Ireland was crucial to tailoring my game for a high school audience. World War I is a key subject in high school history

courses. I needed World War I to play a part in my game and, visiting the memorials in Belfast, helped me ensure that. World War I was a key point of contention between Irish nationalists. Many Irishmen had enlisted in the war, especially in Northern Ireland. It is often said that England lost an entire generation to that war, but so did Ireland. Some hoped that, by enlisting, they were proving to England that they were loyal and capable of being an independent Ireland. Others, though, saw enlisting in the British army as an affront to Irish nationalism. Thus, it only made sense to incorporate those sensibilities into some of my game characters.

The trip to Ireland was hugely important to my understanding of the 1916 Rising. When I returned home, though, I still did not have all the information I needed to write the game. I continued doing research. I combed through biographies and personal documents, all in hopes of creating a succinct, self-contained game on the Easter Rising. Having done all that and having created the game, I still find that there is so much more that could be included. In future, I plan to continue editing the game. The game would benefit immensely if I were to add even more context about Irish history and the Rising itself. That was one of the biggest hurdles I faced in creating the game. I had to find a balance between context and limited time. For this game to truly work in a high school setting, it must remain within a two to three-hour time limit. Thus, I was forced to choose what information was vital to the game and what was not. Going forward, I will continue working on finding that balance.

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## **Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter**

## IRB

### INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Office of Research Compliance,  
010A Sam Ingram Building,  
2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd  
Murfreesboro, TN 37129



## IRBN007 – EXEMPTION DETERMINATION NOTICE

Tuesday, March 14, 2017

Investigator(s): Quinlan Odom, (Student PI) and Dawn McCormack (FA)  
Investigator(s') Email(s): qdo2a@mtmail.mtsu.edu; Dawn.McCormack@mtsu.edu  
Department: History

Study Title: Re-Energizing the History Classroom with Reacting to the Past  
Protocol ID: 17-1182

Dear Investigator(s),

The above identified research proposal has been reviewed by the MTSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) through the **EXEMPT** review mechanism under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) within the research category (2) *Educational Tests*. A summary of the IRB action and other particulars in regard to this protocol application is tabulated as shown below:

IRB Action	EXEMPT from further IRB review***	
Date of expiration	<b>NOT APPLICABLE</b>	
Participant Size	20 (TWENTY)	
Participant Pool	<b>MTSU Students</b>	
Mandatory Restrictions	All participants need to consent.	
Additional Restrictions	<b>18 years of age or older</b>	
Comments	NONE	
Amendments	<b>Date</b> N/A	<b>Post-Approval Amendments</b> NONE

\*\*\*This exemption determination only allows above defined protocol from further IRB review such as continuing review. However, the following post-approval requirements still apply:

- Addition/removal of subject population should not be implemented without IRB approval
- Change in investigators must be notified and approved
- Modifications to procedures must be clearly articulated in an addendum request and the proposed changes must not be incorporated without an approval
- Be advised that the proposed change must comply within the requirements for exemption
- Changes to the research location must be approved – appropriate permission letter(s) from external institutions must accompany the addendum request form
- Changes to funding source must be notified via email ([irb\\_submissions@mtsu.edu](mailto:irb_submissions@mtsu.edu))
- The exemption does not expire as long as the protocol is in good standing
- Project completion must be reported via email ([irb\\_submissions@mtsu.edu](mailto:irb_submissions@mtsu.edu))

- Research-related injuries to the participants and other events must be reported within 48 hours of such events to [compliance@mtsu.edu](mailto:compliance@mtsu.edu)

The current MTSU IRB policies allow the investigators to make the following types of changes to this protocol without the need to report to the Office of Compliance, as long as the proposed changes do not result in the cancellation of the protocols eligibility for exemption:

- Editorial and minor administrative revisions to the consent form or other study documents
- Increasing/decreasing the participant size

The investigator(s) indicated in this notification should read and abide by all applicable post-approval conditions imposed with this approval. [Refer to the post-approval guidelines posted in the MTSU IRB's website](#). Any unanticipated harms to participants or adverse events must be reported to the Office of Compliance at (615) 494-8918 within 48 hours of the incident.

All of the research-related records, which include signed consent forms, current & past investigator information, training certificates, survey instruments and other documents related to the study, must be retained by the PI or the faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) at the secure location mentioned in the protocol application. The data storage must be maintained for at least three (3) years after study completion. Subsequently, the researcher may destroy the data in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity. IRB reserves the right to modify, change or cancel the terms of this letter without prior notice. Be advised that IRB also reserves the right to inspect or audit your records if needed.

Sincerely,

Institutional Review Board  
Middle Tennessee State University

Quick Links:

[Click here](#) for a detailed list of the post-approval responsibilities.  
More information on exmpt procedures can be found [here](#).