

Writer's Bloc Final User Documentation

Team 6 - CS 4911 - Spring 2014

Note to instructor: User documentation is presented as a user manual / rules document for new players. While the ruleset is relatively simple, we believe this is sufficient information for new players to understand the basic mechanics of the game. We also strive to impart on players the collaborative atmosphere we hope players will exhibit in game.

Welcome!

Welcome to *Writers' Bloc*, the ultimate collaborative storytelling game where 4-10 players work together to create a story given its beginning and end. While we hope the rules are intuitive enough to just jump in, we encourage you to read this manual to better familiarize yourself with the rules and basic strategy of the game.

Joining a Game

Upon first loading *Writer's Bloc*, you'll be prompted to enter a username. Once you do so, you will be able to either join or create a new game. We recommend joining your first game. Simply click "Join a Game" and choose a game from the list. You can see a game's name, starting sentence, number of players, and number of turns. Each turn takes about two minutes, so be sure to join a game that you'll have time to finish. The game will automatically begin once enough players have joined.

Gameplay: Writing Phase

Gameplay is divided into two phases: the writing phase and the voting phase. During the writing phase, you're given 90 seconds to write what you believe the next sentence of the story should be. Looking at the top of the screen will show you the story so far. At the beginning of the game, the only sentences in the story are the first and last sentences, and your job is to write

the second sentence. When you've finished writing your sentence, click the "submit" button. If all players submit before 90 seconds, the game will automatically move on to the voting phase.

Gameplay: Voting Phase

During the voting phase, you're given 60 seconds to read all other players' sentences and vote for one to be included in the story. You cannot vote for your own sentence, and if you don't vote, you can't receive any points for this round, so be sure to vote for your favorite sentence. If all players have voted before the end of 60 seconds, the game will automatically end voting early.

Once voting has ended, votes are tallied and the sentence with the most votes is added to the story. You receive one point for each player that voted for your sentence, one bonus point for being 2nd place, and three bonus points for being 1st place. If your sentence ties for 1st with one or more sentences, one of the sentences is randomly chosen to be included in the story, but all tied sentences receive two bonus points. If your sentence ties for 2nd place, the bonus point is rewarded to all tied players.

Gameplay: The Endgame

The game will warn you before you reach the final round. Be sure to wrap up your story so that it flows smoothly from first sentence to last sentence BEFORE the final round, because the final round will have you give your story a title! This round works identically to previous rounds, except that all rewarded points are doubled, If you're falling behind, now is your chance to catch up!

Once the final round is over, author credits are added to the story. Everyone is credited, but those with a higher score are listed first, with the highest-scoring player being named *First*

Author, so be sure to contribute great sentences to receive higher recognition! Click the “Return to Lobby” button to start a new game!

Creating a Game

Want to customize your own game? Try making your own game by pushing the “Create a Game” button. Here, you can customize...

Game Title: Write a short name for your game! This is not your story’s title.

Number of Players (between 4 and 10): Games won’t take longer with more players, but they’ll be more competition and more sentences to read, so expect to be busy in larger games!

Starting and Ending Sentences: How should the story begin and end? You decide! Leaving these sections blank will make the game decide.

Number of Turns (at least 5): Decide how long your game will be. Remember that each turn will take about three minutes!

Once you’re happy with your game, click the “Create” button and you’ll be transported to an empty lobby. The game will automatically start once you have all your players, but you can also choose to start a game early by pushing the “Start Early” button. Note that you need at least four players to start the game.

Have Fun!

You should now understand the basics of *Writers’ Bloc*. You’re on your way to becoming a *First Author*, so go out there and start playing! We hope you enjoy playing it as much as we enjoyed bringing it to you.

Thanks!

-The Writers’ Bloc Team