01 / START HERE

Ready for your classroom.

Students learn the logics of realism by making decisions, checking evidence, comparing alternatives, and explaining what the figures cannot establish.



FLAGS & FERRIES

A fictional coast. Real choices about power.

Single-player | Introductory international relations | Classical realism + structural neorealism

Created by Yoav Duman

At a glance	What to expect
Audience	Introductory international relations; no prior theory knowledge needed.
Core route	Ten chapters and four written checkpoints. Plan 65–75 minutes for Class, including writing and review. Timing is an estimate.
Instructor desk	About & help → Instructor desk. Code: 5907; 5-9-0-7 also works.
Student output	One Class PDF with the chronicle, two model comparisons, objective checks, and four written responses.

Before students arrive

1. Open the game once on a classroom device. Check that students can access the link you plan to share; hosting access and the instructor code are separate.
2. Share the For Class link and specify the due date. Have students enter their name and add a class or section if useful.
3. Ask for all four Class checkpoints. They require 240 words in total. Students can pause after the pact.
4. Use About & help → Evidence display → Tables first when that makes the quantities easier to read. Students can use hints and revise without a penalty.

The opening instruction
Select Take the chair. Keep Aster independent and functioning. Read the evidence and pledge conditions, make a defensible choice, then check your prediction. Use hints freely. There is no conquest score.

02 / RUN A SESSION

Let the choices do the opening work.

Let students experience the first decisions before giving them a vocabulary lecture. The route reveals concepts after action and brings them back in later cases.

Choose a format that fits the clock

Format	Suggested use
Full route	Plan 65–75 minutes for Class, plus any orientation and discussion. Use the pause after the pact to split the work.
50-minute meeting	Assign chapters 1-4 beforehand: 23 suggested minutes. In class: 3 minutes to reconnect, about 34 for chapters 5-10, 10 for debrief, 3 to export. Let slower readers finish afterward.
Asynchronous	Assign the complete route and four written responses. At a later meeting, compare reasoning across different choices.

During play: four useful checks

- After the budget: Which number is spending, which is ready capability, and what did the other state gain?
- After the border: Did your observation change the force itself, your estimate, or the other side's scripted response?
- After the pact: Which units have arrived here, and which remain a conditional promise?
- At each fork: Point to the changed factor and the conditions that stayed fixed.

When someone asks, 'Which option wins?'

Ask what they are protecting, what means they have, and what a choice might cost. A fortunate policy outcome is different from an accurate interpretation of evidence. Avoid steering everyone toward the same branch.

The six policy decisions, the comparisons, and the new-coast recommendation give repeated application. Short retrieval screens revisit earlier ideas. Students may revise checks; first and latest responses remain distinct.

Do not race the route
There is no countdown. Chapter times are pacing suggestions. Pause and resume, use the table alternatives, and let students explain a number before asking for a theory label.

03 / KEEP THE THEORIES CLEAR

Two realist lenses. Different emphases.

The core teaches classical realism and structural neorealism. It offers an introductory comparison, not a complete survey of either tradition.

Lens	Explanatory emphasis	Classroom question
Classical realism [1]	Power, interests, ambition, and the limits of political judgment. Prudence weighs feasible means and consequences in context.	Which interest is vital? Does the ambition fit the means, and who bears the costs?
Structural neorealism [2]	Anarchy, similar state security tasks, and unequal capabilities. The international arrangement constrains states even with the same leaders and goals.	What pressure changes when the capability distribution changes? What can the state do for its own security?
Shared concerns	Security, power, uncertainty, and the limits of dependable protection. Both lenses can make restraint or limited force intelligible.	What makes a commitment credible and usable in this situation?

Keep these distinctions visible

- Anarchy means no central authority guarantees security; it does not mean constant chaos.
- Self-help can include building one's own means and forming alliances. An alliance is conditional external balancing, not a replacement for self-help.
- Classical realism is more than leader personality. Structural realism is more than a large military total. The forks illuminate different questions without proving either theory.
- The scenario has three significant regional powers: a toy multipolar arrangement. Brin becoming stronger changes relative distribution; it does not by itself demonstrate a change of polarity.

What this edition leaves for later

Liberal institutionalism, neoliberal institutionalism, constructivism, and bureaucratic foreign-policy analysis are outside the active core. Adviser voices present costs and positions; departments do not bargain through a separate causal engine. Communication can change a specified patrol response, but an institution, identity change, or service allocation cannot erase a material shortfall.

A later teaching sequence
Future modules can revisit comparable dilemmas with their own assumptions and assessments. They are not currently playable. Keep each module's explanations and records separate rather than rewriting this realist chronicle.

04 / FOLLOW THE ROUTE

The ten-chapter teaching map.

Suggested chapter times sum to 57 minutes. No instructor pause, new reading, or extra task is added to the game by this guide.

Chapter / time	What students do	What to listen for
1. Your first morning · 4 min	Inspect the map, figures, or pact conditions.	Equal ready totals do not establish equal intentions or guaranteed peace.
2. The posters came first · 6 min	Respond to a disputed pier claim.	Vital access, prestige, prudence, and the consequences of coercion or concession.
3. There is no second page · 6 min	Divide 12 credits between military investment and services.	Internal balancing; stock versus flow; own growth versus relative position.
4. From the other shore · 7 min	Choose defenses, observation, both, or holding position.	Security dilemma [3]; uncertainty; national versus local capability.
5. The promise arrives · 6 min	Deploy with Cyra's timely aid after a covered attack.	External balancing can work. Only 10 delivered units apply here, not Cyra's 60.
6. The thank-you has a second page · 6 min	Answer an ally's request for an excluded strike.	Entrapment, abandonment [4], partner interests, and 4/0 conditional eligibility.
7. Tomorrow's timetable · 6 min	Choose limited defense, a wider demand, or disengagement.	Prudence faces material limits; a future pledge is not present cover.
8. The carbon-copy council · 4 min	Try a different policy from the same starting snapshot.	A whole policy package changes. This is not a personality-only experiment.
9. Same call. Heavier pressure. · 4 min	Keep the original policy; increase Brin's stock from 52 to 72.	Distribution and systemic constraint; a thinner margin may matter without changing the outcome label.
10. A letter from Dune · 8 min	Recommend a policy for a fresh coast; complete eight checks and a note.	Transfer the logic. Use a number, a vital interest, a tradeoff, and an uncertainty.

Original history stays original
The policy and structural forks are separate comparisons. They do not overwrite the campaign. The final new-coast recommendation is recorded without simulating a supposedly correct future outcome.

05 / READ THE DATA

Make the quantities earn their meaning.

All state names, numbers, intelligence ranges, conversions, and response rules are fictional teaching devices. They are not observations, calibrated probabilities, or empirical tests of the theory.

Quantity	Read it this way
Spending / ready stock	Aster's budget is 12 credits. The authored rule adds one next-round ready unit per military credit; spending is a flow, ready capability a stock.
National / local	Aster starts at 40 national and 24 local units. Four emergency credits add 6 local units only. Do not count local works as a national-stock gain.
Estimate / actual force	Observation costs 2 credits and narrows Brin's estimate from 20-36 to 24-28. These are intelligence bounds, not statistical confidence intervals or proof of intentions.
Promise / delivered aid	Cyra's national stock is 60. Ten aid units arrive in chapter 5; they are recalled before chapter 6. A later covered-attack pledge can be 4, while an excluded Aster-initiated strike has 0.
People / policy costs	Services and access have concrete consequences. Service funding is an opportunity cost, not a numerical condition that makes the regional bargain succeed.

Worked comparisons for the debrief

Budget example: 8 military credits take Aster from 40 to 48; Brin goes from 40 to 52. Aster grows by 8 units, or 20%, yet its Aster-Brin share falls from 40/80 = 50% to 48/100 = 48%. That pairwise share excludes Cyra.

New coast: Dune rises 30 → 36; Elm rises 45 → 60. Dune gains 6 units, or 20%, while its combined share falls from 30/75 = 40% to 36/96 = 37.5%. A falling relative share is not an absolute decline.

Ask for the denominator
A pairwise share is not the full three-state distribution. A unit total is not a motive. Ask students to name what is measured, what is compared, and what remains unknown.

06 / INSPECT THE MODEL

The bargain still needs usable power.

These branch notes contain instructor spoilers. They help you explain why reassuring language, an alliance signature, or restraint does not automatically remove a material constraint.

Regional rule: an authored constraint

Opposing local deployment = floor(Brin national stock / 2) + 4 if earlier unannounced works triggered the patrol. Effective defensive cover = Aster local × 1.2 + aid actually present. A limited position needs 2 emergency credits for supply, no continuing excluded strike, and cover at least as large as the opposing deployment.

With works plus observation, local 30 gives cover 36. Against Brin 52, deployment is 26 and margin 10; against Brin 72, deployment is 36 and margin 0. The opening can remain feasible with greater exposure. The fixed geography factor does not boost offensive demands; future pledges and notification do not enter this arithmetic.

Regional policy	Additional branch conditions
Limited defense	The 2-credit supply condition and nonnegative cover margin matter. An earlier excluded strike must actually end before limited access is feasible.
Wider demand	A temporary opening needs national parity, own local units at least 4 above opposing deployment, and no continuing excluded strike. Defensive geography does not boost the demand; success prompts opposing balancing efforts.
Disengagement	Withdrawal from a strike costs 2 credits; removing added works reduces local cover to 24. Without a changed deployment, an established channel, or an implemented withdrawal, a statement alone leaves terms unresolved. Greater national inequality permits only partial access in the authored opening branch.

A comparison inside a model
A same-policy fork may change exposure while preserving the headline outcome. Discuss both. It illustrates a mechanism under authored assumptions; one branch cannot validate realism as a universal account of history.

07 / DEBRIEF & ASSESS

Grade the reasoning you can see.

Separate completion, policy outcomes, first/latest checks, and the student's explanation. The app does not grade prose or establish mastery.

A three-question debrief

- What did you protect, and what cost did you accept? Point to a recorded decision.
- What changed in each fork? Compare both the outcome and the margin. How do prudence and structural pressure help explain them?
- What evidence would make you reconsider your advice to Dune?

A light, instructor-reviewed rubric

Use 0 for missing or incorrect, 1 for partly supported, and 2 for clear application with an example. Assess the chronicle, checks, and four written responses together.

Dimension	Evidence of a clear application
Classical realism	Connects a vital interest, feasible means, and consequences; prudence is not automatic aggression or automatic restraint.
Structural neorealism	Connects anarchy and unequal capabilities to pressure; distinguishes distribution from a claimed polarity change.
Security dilemma	Explains how protective measures can produce reciprocal alarm without assuming either state's true intentions.
Conditional alliances	Distinguishes coverage, timing, delivered help, and a partner's other demands; recognizes dependence and entrapment risk.
Units and baseline	Names the unit and starting value; distinguishes stock, spending, local deployment, and an intelligence estimate.
Absolute / relative change	Shows how a state's capability can grow while its pairwise share falls; states the denominator.
Self-help and balancing	Distinguishes building own means from usable allied support; neither provides guaranteed security.
Controlled comparison	Identifies the changed package or capability and the fixed conditions; limits the claim to this model.

Suggested submission
The four Class checkpoints are Budget (45 words), Border (45), the second model fork (65), and the Dune advisory (85). Have students use Print / Save PDF after completion and upload the PDF to Canvas.

08 / SAVE, SHARE & FOLLOW UP

Keep the work. Revisit the logic.

The game runs in a browser without a gameplay backend. Records and instructor controls belong to the current device; there is no classroom roster or automatic gradebook.

Need	What to do
Pause / switch devices	Download a progress JSON before switching devices. Restore it in the same mode. For Class and For Fun keep separate progress.
Print the record	After completing Class, choose Print / Save PDF and upload the PDF to Canvas. Keep the progress JSON if you need to resume.
Work offline	Download the offline HTML from Save & exit while online, then open it in a browser. Artwork and rules are included. Transfer a progress JSON to continue the same run.
Access / readability	Use the keyboard controls, hints and self-paced play. For Class, the student name is required and class or section is optional.
A device problem	Download progress if storage is unavailable. Keep older files for recovery. Use the current For Class route for a Class PDF.
Teaching controls	5907 is a local convenience code, not an account password or privacy boundary. Sharing the hosted game is a separate access setting.

Optional application after completion

A fresh 5-minute case revisits evidence interpretation. After the pact is a separate 5-8-minute choice about internal investment, conditional external balancing, or keeping alignment open. Add realist debate offers an extra closing reflection. These are optional; they do not overwrite the core chronicle or activate another theoretical approach.

Class response entry

Type, dictate, or reuse text within the same assessed answer.

09 / WEBSITE COPY & READINGS

A ready-to-use website kit.

The homepage includes the new illustration, a short description, and a link to the guide. The same materials can introduce the activity in your course site.

Website blurb

Copy for your course website
A flag on a pier. A ferry full of people. An ally with a price. In Flags & Ferries, you lead a small coastal state through tense choices about power, protection, and promises. Discover classical realism and structural neorealism through action while learning to read capability data and test explanations. Ten chapters with four Class checkpoints. Plan 65–75 minutes. No prior knowledge needed.

Artwork and credit

Download the poster from the online guide. The PNG is 1536 × 1024; the WebP is the smaller web-ready version. Keep the whole 3:2 frame so the title, ferry, and creator credit remain visible.

Created by Yoav Duman

Suggested alternative text: Flags & Ferries, Created by Yoav Duman. A bold cut-paper maritime poster shows an orange passenger ferry navigating a winding blue channel between three fictional coastal states. The artwork evokes vulnerability and unequal power; it is not a quantitative map.

Primary readings behind the concepts

[1] Hans J. Morgenthau. Politics Among Nations, chapter 1, Six Principles of Political Realism, especially principles 2 and 4.
Open reading

[2] Kenneth N. Waltz. The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory. Journal of Interdisciplinary History 18(4), 1988, 615-628. System-level constraints, security, and the distinction from foreign-policy explanation.
Open reading

[3] Robert Jervis. Cooperation under the Security Dilemma. World Politics 30(2), 1978, 167-214.
Open reading

[4] Glenn H. Snyder. The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics. World Politics 36(4), 1984, 461-495.
Open reading

The readings ground the concepts. The model uses fictional rules and numbers. Pilot the Class timing and discuss how students explain the evidence.