VIBE STORIES



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VIBE STORIES

MANUAL AND RULES OF THE BOARD GAME

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ABSTRACT

The board game **VIBE STORIES** is an interactive educational tool designed to transform young people from passive consumers of media content into active, critical-thinking story creators.

The game is based on the understanding that the best way to draw attention to a social problem - for example, the European Youth Goals - is to tell it as a fascinating and emotionally moving story.

This game creates a bridge between storytelling theory, the use of audiovisual language, and critical thinking. It teaches how to analyse sources of information, how to recognise misinformation, and how to build a structured narrative ready to shoot on video, create a podcast, or write text for a blog or your own information site.

The game itself works through the translation of a possible real-world scenario into a simple card game. Players select a Hero and an Antagonist, each with real-world characteristics or traits that have been put onto an easy-to-understand numerical scale to define how strong these traits are. Throughout the game, modifiers will come into effect through the use of other cards (see later instructions) and the effect these have on the game entirely depends on the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen Hero and Antagonist. The game progresses through 8 stages, each of which can turn the entire narrative on its head at any given moment – it is up to the players how they interpret these changes based on the cards and their pictograms, and in the end, the story is entirely up to them!

If any of the players face issues or concerns, they always have the moderator to turn to. *Vibe Stories* focuses on possible real-world scenarios, which means there will always be a chance that they will have an effect on the players – the idea is to show the younger generation that change is possible and that what they have to say matters. The moderator is there to ensure safety above all else – if *any* player is adversely affected, they are there to provide support. This game allows the younger generation to make mistakes and learn in a

safe environment before they go out into the real world and face possibilities just like the ones used in this game. **Safety comes first.**

WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW BEFORE WE START PLAYING VIBE STORIES?

1. HOW ARE STORIES CREATED?

Before starting the game, it is necessary to understand the main engines of any good story. This section explains why we tell stories and how their main elements interact.

Each story rests on three pillars. These are: **Characters, Goals, and Conflict**.

The clash between the protagonist's goal and the obstacle they face gives rise to the conflict. It is the conflict that drives the story forward. Without conflict, there is no action, and without action, there is no story.

What is conflict and how does it drive the story?

Conflict in the context of the game is not just a physical confrontation. Conflict occurs when there is a clash of values or interests.

For there to be a conflict, there must be at least two characters: the **Hero (the Protagonist)** and their opponent - the **Antagonist**. How do we distinguish them?

The Hero strives for change, justice and the achievement of a certain goal.

The Antagonist represents the status quo, institutional stagnation, or private interest that resists this change.

The story unfolds when the balance of power changes - the hero makes a move, the antagonist responds, and the community reacts. The role of conflict is to question the values of the characters and force them to develop.

Characteristics of the characters in the story

In classical dramas, characters are rarely flat – you will find they possess one or more qualities, rather than being defined by one singular characteristic. They are even less likely to be perfect – nobody is ever entirely good, and likewise, nobody is ever entirely evil. A good story requires the understanding that every character has their strengths and weaknesses, and that, just like real people, characters in a story always have their positive and negative sides, each of which shows to different degrees.

This idea is employed within this game, albeit through the use of mathematics. Don't stress - it sounds complicated, but it is simple to understand. Every character has five characteristics (personal traits, skills, values) that have a value from 0 to 12:

- **Influence:** In the story, this is the character's social capital - do they have connections, power, media access, or institutional support? In the game, a high value allows a character to quickly impose their opinion on others, while a low value means that they start from scratch as a voice that no one hears.
- **Defense:** In the story, this is the strength of mind, legal immunity, or economic security of the character. A character with low defense is vulnerable to bad Public Relations (PR), threats, or dismissals, all of which increase the drama in our story.
- **Ethics:** This is the moral compass. In a good story, moral dilemmas are the most interesting. Characters with a maximum value for ethics act cleanly, but sometimes naively. Characters with a low value for ethics are willing to do anything to reach their goals - manipulation, lies, and sabotage, among other acts.

- **Speed:** Reaction time in the digital world. How fast can a character publish a video, organise a protest, react to a crisis, or spread news? High speed means quick reactions, and slow speed means slower and more cumbersome moves.
- **Competence:** This is the intellectual and practical resource that the character has. Does the character know how to find and work with documents, how to edit a video, or how to investigate facts? A competent helper can solve a complex legal case, while an incompetent antagonist can make a fatal mistake due to lack of knowledge and skills.

The different numerical profiles in the game mix these five metrics to create authentic personas: for example, a **Hero** with high moral standards (**Ethics: 12**) but who is completely defenseless (**Defense: 1**), against an **Antagonist** - a bureaucrat with maximum protection (**Defense: 12**) but very low morals (**Ethics: 2**).

2. WHAT THE GAME CONTAINS

All the physical elements contained in the box are described here:

1 Playing Field (Board): Dimensions 85.5x37.5 cm. The field contains a linear timeline, divided into 6 main sectors (corresponding to the three-act structure) with separate areas for placing the active cards.



20 Playing Cards: Distributed in 12 themed decks with colourful backs for easy recognition:

- **Characters: Heroes cards (5 pcs.)**
- **Characters: Antagonists cards (5 pcs.)**

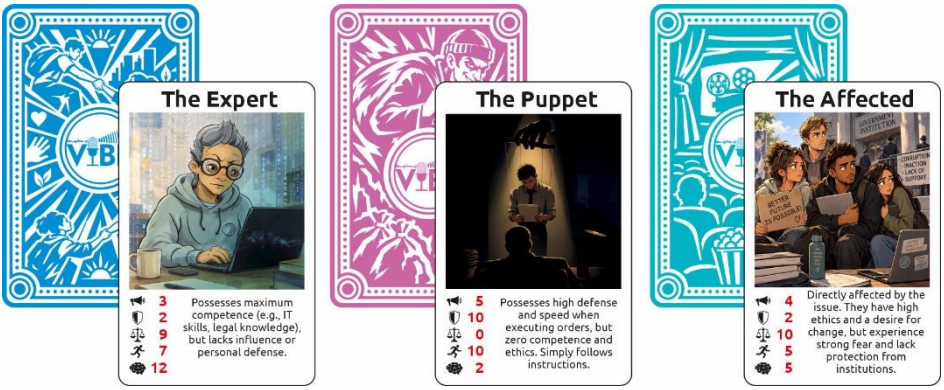








- **Characters: Helpers cards (5 pcs. for each side)**
- **Spectators / Community" cards (5 pcs.)** - defining the target audience.

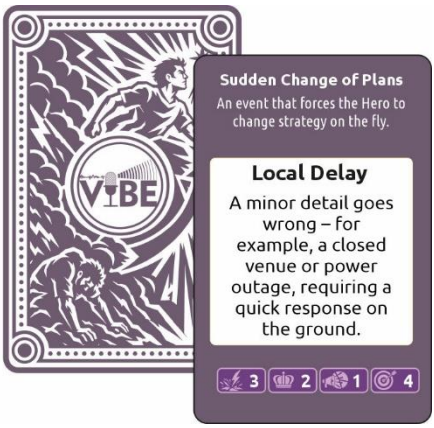


- **Setup cards (11 pcs.)** - contain cases based on the European Youth Goals.
- **Research cards (24 pcs.)** - with four key features and their values, determining the type and impact of the information received.



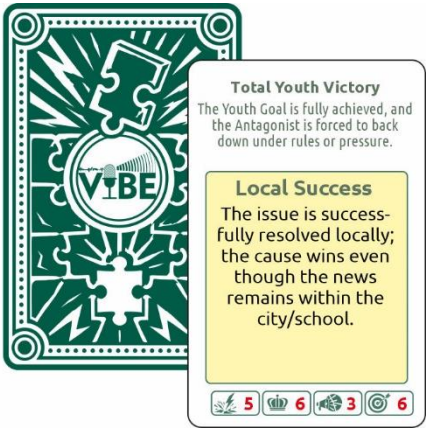
- **Action cards (12 pcs.)**
- **Turnaround cards (21 pcs.)** - introducing crisis events.



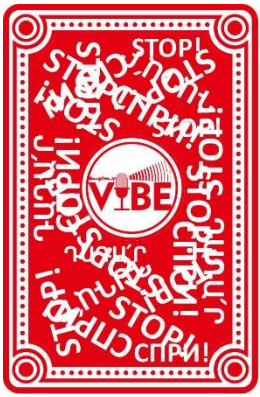


- **Climax cards (8 pcs.)**
- **Resolution cards (18 pcs.)** - details on how the story ends.





- **STOP card**





2 x 6D Dice: One white (for positive modifiers) and one black (for negative modifiers).

60 Cardboard Evaluation Tokens: Distributed in three colours - 20 green, 20 yellow, and 20 red, used in the jury/evaluation phase.

Story Journal (Script Frame): A4 sheet for individual or team storytelling step-by-step.

3. LOGIC OF THE PLAYING FIELD

The playing field of **VIBE STORIES** is designed as a linear timeline that follows the classic Three-Act structure (Beginning, Middle, End), adapted for the creation of audio-visual stories:

ACT	GAME STAGE	DRAMATURGICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FUNCTION
ACT I: THE BEGINNING *(Introduction)*	**1. Setup**	The status quo is established. Here, the problem is defined using one of the Youth Goals and the Characters are presented with their strengths and weaknesses. The story begins with an initial event that disturbs the peace.
	2. Research	Investigation and research phase. The Hero collects evidence. This is where we learn media literacy - how to sift facts from fake news based

		on the values of the cards.
ACT II: THE MIDDLE *(Confrontation)*	**3. Action**	The Hero's first active attempt to solve the problem based on the collected information. This is prompted by pictograms and associations for active campaigns.
	4. Turn-around	Critical point. The Hero's plan faces an unexpected obstacle or opposition from the Antagonist. The tension rises sharply.
	5. Climax	The big moment. The point of highest tension in which the Hero and the Antagonist face each other directly in an open debate, media battle, or protest. The fate of the cause is decided.
ACT III: THE END *(Resolution)*	**6. Repeated Turn-around**	This stage introduces realism into the game. In real life, social battles do not end with a single clash. Even after the climax, the system strikes back, or a new, unforeseen win-or-lose effect appears, testing the resilience of the characters.
	7. Resolution	The conflict is resolved. The cards determine the ratio of success, loss, and compromise. The long-term outcome for the characters and the problem are decided here.
	8. Distribution	Players decide on the format of their narrative. They choose what their media product looks like (video, vlog, film) and what effect (VIBE) they want to cause on the Spectators or the Community. This helps them package the story in a form they can use to share their position on important issues.

4. RULES AND METHODS FOR LEADING THE GAME

The game can be played in three formats, allowing it to be used for individual or group self-study, entertainment, or formal educational activities.

Format 1: Individual Player

- **Purpose:** For building their own scenarios and stories.
- **Process:** The player sits in front of the board, selects a Conflict, and draws cards for the Hero, Antagonist, and Spectator. They move step-by-step in a linear fashion through the fields. At each stage, they draw a card and write down the corresponding scene from the story in their workbook (script frame).
- **Evaluation:** Finally, the player evaluates their own narrative in the Evaluation section, checking whether they managed to integrate all the elements of the game successfully.

Format 2: Multiplayer Team

- **Purpose:** To develop teamwork skills and encourage joint creativity.
- **Process:** A group of 3-5 players share a board. Each participant draws a role card and builds their character. The narrative becomes collaborative and debatable; when a move is required, the players discuss it beforehand. For example, the player with the role of the Antagonist deliberately inserts arguments against the cause, tailored to their card, while the Helper looks for a way forward based on their competence. Together, they piece the story together.

Format 3: Multiple Teams (with Moderator)

- **Purpose:** To simulate a real competitive environment.

- **Process:** Participants are divided into teams. When playing for the first time, the Moderator, with the help of representatives from each team, draws the cards in order, moving in a linear fashion across the field. Once all cards are drawn, the teams start to create their own stories independently, according to the drawn cards, their values and dice rolls. All teams have a set time to develop their stories.
- **Evaluation and Ranking:** At the end of the game time, a presentation panel is organised. Each team tells its story to the others. The listening teams take on the role of a critical audience and jury. They evaluate the other teams' stories in the five fields of the Evaluation section by placing tokens:
    - **Green Token** = 3 points (Excellently presented and well-informed presentation)
    - **Yellow Token** = 2 points (Well-presented but somewhat unconvincing presentation)
    - **Red Token** = 0 points (Criteria not met / poor narrative)

The points from all jury teams are summed up in a table. The team with the highest number of points wins the grand prize for the most engaging and compelling story.

5. ADVANCED RULES

This phase of the game is introduced when players have already mastered the basic linear model and are ready to simulate an unpredictable media situation or crisis.

Using the two dice (white and black)

In reality, no matter how well researched a document or planned an action is, there are always external factors - chance, luck, or sudden sabotage.

When passing through the **Research, Turnaround, and Resolution** fields, after the team draws their respective card, they must roll one white and one black die at the same time.

The values of these two dice are applied to all characteristics of the currently drawn card, modifying its base profile as follows:

New Stat Value = Base Card Value + White Die Value - Black Die Value

Example: If the value of the drawn *Forgotten Archive* card for the Impact characteristic is 3, and you roll a 5 with the white die and a 2 with the black die, the new Impact value becomes 6 (3 + 5 - 2 = 6). This means the impact of the information you find in the archive will be much stronger than the base card predicted. This allows you to assign a stronger, more comprehensive point to the found information, which can turn the whole story upside down.

- **The Ceiling Rule:** The new stat value cannot exceed 11.
- **Negative Value Rule:** If, after subtracting the black die, the value falls below 0, it takes on the opposite effect. Players are required to include this sudden complication in the logic of their story.

How to interpret the opposite effect (< 0)

When an indicator becomes a negative number, it changes its nature. Here is how players must explain it in the story:

1. **Impact Less Than Zero: The Boomerang Effect**

Interpretation: The action or information used by the Hero backfires on them. Instead of gaining support, the team becomes the object of public ridicule, criticism, or bad PR. Explain how good intentions led to a harmful result.

2. **Importance Less Than Zero: Information Noise**

Interpretation: An event, lead, or document that seemed vital turns out to be a waste of time. Players must describe how the team spent

their resources and energy pursuing a red herring (a false lead) while the Antagonist achieved their objectives undisturbed.

3. **Distribution Rate Less Than Zero: Information Eclipse / Censorship**

Interpretation: Complete censorship has been imposed. Algorithms block the activists' social media accounts, links to their investigation are actively removed, or the Antagonist uses their connections to enforce complete media silence. No one outside the team's room learns the truth.

4. **Relevance Less Than Zero: Misinformation / Trap**

Interpretation: The drawn card turns out to be a provocation. The information or event was deliberately fabricated and planted by the Antagonist to trap the Hero. The discovered fact is a lie intended to make activists refer to it publicly, only to be easily exposed and ruined legally.

6. STEPS IN THE GAME

The game unfolds in a sequence of 12 simple steps:

1. **Character Selection:** Initially, draw one character card each from the Hero and Antagonist fields without looking at them.
2. **Setup:** Draw one card from the Setup field and place it on the board. Based on the card, discuss the conflict and its context. Then, turn over the Hero and Antagonist cards. Based on their characteristic values, profile them and describe their roles in the conflict.
3. **Research:** From the Research field, draw two cards. This is the information the Hero will use in their fight against the Antagonist. Tell us what they learned and what effect this has, using the values of the four characteristics of each card.

4. **Target Audience:** While in the Research field, draw a card from the Spectators/Community field. Based on its five characteristics, describe the affected party in the conflict.

5. **Action:** From the Action field, draw one card for the Hero and one for the Antagonist. Using your associations with the images on the cards, tell what action the Hero and Antagonist will take, trying to pit them against each other.

6. **Helpers:** While on the Action field, draw one card from the Hero's Helper and one from the Antagonist's Helper fields. Depending on their characteristic values, describe their profiles and roles in the story.

7. **Turnaround:** Draw a card from the Turnaround box and place it on the storyline. Depending on its type and values, describe what changes in the story.

8. **Advanced / Replay Option (Dice Roll):** While on the Turnaround field, roll the black and white dice at the same time. You have four options:

   If the sum of the two dice is greater than 6:

   - *White die > Black die:* Draw another Hero card.
   - *Black die > White die:* Draw another Hero Helper card.

   If the sum of the two dice is less or equal to 6:

   - *White die > Black die:* Draw another Antagonist card.
   - *Black die > White die:* Draw another Antagonist's Helper card.

Based on the characteristics of the new card, introduce this new character into the story and define their role.

9. **Climax:** Draw a card from the Climax box and place it on the storyline. Based on your association with the image, describe what happened when the tension between the Hero, the

Antagonist, their helpers, and the audience reached its absolute peak (the crisis).

10. **Repeated Turnaround:** From the Repeated Turnaround field, draw a card and place it on the storyline. Depending on its type and values, describe what changes unexpectedly in the story.

11. **Advanced / Replay Option (Second Dice Roll):** Roll the two dice again. Based on the result, introduce a new character following the rules in Step 8. Describe their role by drawing a card from the Research field - this represents the information the new character brings to the story.

12. **Resolution:** From the Resolution field, draw a card and place it on the board. Depending on the situation and its values, tell how your story ends.

At the end of the game, decide how you want to tell this story - as video content for a vlog, text for a blog post, or an audio narration for a podcast. Tell the story. If playing alone or in a team, evaluate your story using the tokens. If playing in parallel teams, evaluate each other's stories.

IMPORTANT: Regardless of the game format, you should write down the cards, their values, the dice rolls, and your associations from the very beginning. This allows you to fill in the **Story journal** that structures your story.

VIBE STORIES

Story journal

GOAL

Chosen feature

Card name | Notes | Influence | Defense | Ethics | Speed | Competence

Hero

Antagonist

Hero Helper

Antagonist Helper

Spectators / Community

RESEARCH

ACTION

TURNAROUND

CLIMAX

TURNAROUND

RESOLUTION

DISTRIBUTION

Impact | Importance | Distribution Rate | Relevance

7. EXAMPLE

For game moderators: This section describes a complete playthrough and can be used to show players how the game progresses, changes and evolves based on drawn cards in later phases.

Initial Parameters:

- **Conflict Card:** 9 Space and Participation for All. Selected key phrase by the team: *"Idea for a Casino vs. a Youth Centre"*.
- **Hero => The Idealist:** Influence: 3, Defense: 4, Ethics: 12, Speed: 6, Competence: 5.
- **Antagonist => The Bureaucrat:** Influence: 10, Defense: 12, Ethics: 2, Speed: 3, Competence: 9.
- **Spectators/Community => The Affected:** Influence: 4, Defense: 2, Ethics: 10, Speed: 5, Competence: 5.

Step-by-Step Story Development:

- **Field 1: Setup**

Team Story: There is an old, abandoned building in our town. A group of active young people (The Affected) want to turn it into a Youth Art Centre. Our protagonist is Alex, a young idealist with pure intentions (Ethics: 12) but no connections in the municipality (Influence: 3). The conflict erupts when the corrupt Chief Architect of the city (the Antagonist-Bureaucrat) announces a contract to lease the building to a private company for a 24-hour casino. The architect has legal immunity (Defense: 12) and controls all related government affairs (Competence: 9).

- **Field 2: Research**

Reliable Information => Eyewitness (Impact: 4, Importance: 6, Distribution Rate: 1, Relevance: 6).

Team Story: Alex begins to investigate. Since the Distribution Rate is only 1, the topic is not yet in the media. However, Alex finds a brave whistleblower, a former municipal official, who gives him the data he needs (Relevance: 6, Importance: 6). The documents prove that the casino contract was illegally modified. The Idealist now holds the truth, but no one in the city knows about it yet.

- **Field 3: Action**

Drawn Action Card Smartphone with a "Live" icon (Streaming).

Team Story: Alex decides to act on this image. Knowing he cannot get into the bought-out local newspapers, he goes to the abandoned building, turns on his smartphone, and starts a livestream on social media. He shows the proof on camera and calls on citizens to protest.

- **Field 4: Turnaround (In Advanced Dice Roll Mode)**

Media Scandal => Information Leak (Impact: 5, Importance: 5, Distribution Rate: 5, Relevance: 6).

- *Dice Roll:* White die: 1, Black die: 6.
- *New Distribution Rate calculation:* 5 (base) + 1 (white die) - 6 (black die) = 0.
- *New Relevance calculation:* 6 + 1 - 6 = 1.
- *New Impact calculation:* 5 + 1 - 6 = 0.
- *New Importance calculation:* 5 + 1 - 6 = 0.

Team Story (Interpretation): Alex's video starts gaining traction, but the Antagonist reacts with a digital attack. He orders the casino's IT company to mass-report Alex's profile. This results in a complete information blackout (Distribution drops to 0) - the stream is cut, the video is deleted, and the algorithm blocks the page entirely. The immediate impact on the city drops to zero.

- **Field 5: Climax**

Drawn Climax Card Two arrows colliding head-on.

Team Story: The day of the City Council vote arrives. Since digital channels are blocked, Alex and the Affected decide on a direct, physical confrontation. They block the entrance to the municipality with a human chain. The Architect comes out with police and security. The climax is a furious face-to-face debate in front of the building between Alex, shouting facts through a megaphone, and the Architect, who threatens him with lawsuits.

- **Field 6: Repeated Turnaround**

Drawn Card Change in Behaviour (Unexpected Ally – Impact: 5, Importance: 5, Distribution Rate: 3, Relevance: 6).

Team Story: Just as the police prepare to disperse the youth, a second turnaround occurs. A municipal councillor, neutral until now, is moved by Alex's courage. He unexpectedly joins their side, uniting those dissatisfied with the administration. His move has high significance (Importance: 5) as he submits a formal request to halt the contract, blocking the Architect from within the system.

- **Field 7: Resolution**

Drawn Card: Compromise => Official Pact (Impact: 6, Importance: 6, Distribution Rate: 6, Relevance: 5).

Team Story: The day ends with official pact in the council room. Backed by their new ally, the youths pressure the Antagonist. A compromise is reached: the casino contract is cancelled. The building will not become a gambling hall, but the municipality does not hand it over to the youths yet; it remains sealed for review until next year. The battle is won, but the war for space continues.

- **Field 8: Distribution**

Team Story: The story ends with Alex editing a short documentary vlog titled "The Day We Stopped the Casino", using footage of the clash and statements from the councillor. This video is shared as an

inspiring example of how a solid ethical stance and physical solidarity can defeat digital censorship.

PEDAGOGICAL LOGIC & VALUES

Theoretical framework of experiential learning

The pedagogical design of **VIBE STORIES** is based on Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle. Instead of presenting media literacy and civic activism theoretically, the process starts directly with concrete experience - the simulation of a social conflict. Participants manage resources and communication themselves.

The game takes young people through the four phases of the cycle:

1. **Concrete Experience:** Entering a role and colliding with the opponent's parameters.
2. **Reflective Observation:** Analysing research cards and assessing their reliability.
3. **Abstract Conceptualisation:** Linking the numerical modifications from the dice to real-world phenomena like censorship, algorithmic pressure, or disinformation.
4. **Active Experimentation:** Turning the script workbook into a finished media product (video, text, podcast).

Mathematical expression of systemic inequalities

A core pedagogical pillar is the refusal to idealise social processes. Using numerical values (0 to 12) for character traits visualises structural inequalities in public spaces. When young people see that their "Hero-Idealist" has an Influence of 3 while the "Antagonist-Bureaucrat" has an Influence of 10, they realise that access to media and institutions is often not equal and never guaranteed.

This approach stimulates systemic thinking. Players realise that high morality (**Ethics: 12**) leaves the character vulnerable if not supported

by practical skills (**Competence**) or legal protection (**Defense**). The system teaches them to look for strategic partnerships (Helpers) and analyse their audience (Spectators) instead of relying on clichéd "good always wins" scenarios.

Teaching values through gamification

While the game simulates crises, its primary goal is to promote democratic values and develop skills to communicate these values. The scoring system (coloured tokens) emphasises the ethical side of the story. Stories relying on manipulation, hate speech, or unverified facts are penalised by other participants during the presentation panel. Thus, the group itself builds quality standards based on: **transparency** (respect for verified sources), **inclusivity** (addressing the needs of the community, **responsibility** (understanding the consequences of spreading a media narrative).

CORE CONCEPT OF THE GAME

Dynamic narrative engine mechanics

VIBE STORIES operates as a structured scenario generator. It ensures stories account for external factors and interests. The narrative engine is driven by the interaction between numerical parameters, random modifiers (dice), and associative stimuli (pictures and cards).

The linear board timeline reflects the classic three-act structure, adapted for modern media:

ACT I: INTRODUCTION	ACT II: CONFRONTATION	ACT III: RESOLUTION
Setup > Research	Action > Turnaround > Climax	Repeated Turnaround > Resolution > Distribution

Each sector requires a specific mode of thinking - from analytical document review in Act I, to tactical crisis management in Act II, and finally, creative processing in Act III.

The role of randomness and risk management

The introduction of dice in advanced modes simulates real-world volatility. Journalistic investigations can be drowned out by sudden political scandals or algorithm changes.

When a value falls below zero, players must use dramatic transformation. They must incorporate this setback into their script. For example, if "Distribution Rate" becomes negative, the team must describe how they were censored or blocked, showing that crisis is the ultimate catalyst for character growth.

The relationship between numbers and metaphors

The main challenge for players is translating numbers and pictures into emotional storytelling. Action cards contain only images (e.g., a smartphone with a live stream icon). Participants must tie this metaphor to their character's mathematical state. If their character has low Speed, the stream might fail technically; if they have high Competence, the stream becomes a professional showcase of irrefutable evidence. This balance keeps the game strategic rather than a chaotic exercise in free-writing.

LEARNING OUTCOMES & EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

Developing key competences under the Youthpass framework

The educational impact of **VIBE STORIES** supports official learning indicators in youth work and training:

Competence in Youthpass	Practical expression in VIBE STORIES
Multilingual Competence /	Writing a concise script, leading debates,

Communication	and presenting a cause.
Digital Competence & Media Literacy	Source analysis, digital crisis management, and content adaptation for social platforms.
Personal, Social, & Civic Competence	Teamwork under time pressure and gaining empathy for different social groups.
Cultural Awareness & Expression	Using audio-visual language (B-roll planning, sound design, framing) to express positions.

Learning Outcomes

In storytelling and media production: Participants acquire the ability to structure information in a three-act model, avoiding scattered narratives. They learn to adapt the same story for three channels: visual (vlog), written (blog), and audio (podcast), respecting format constraints. The concept of *"Show, don't tell"* is mastered through planning B-roll footage and sound effects (SFX) to enhance emotion.

In critical thinking and information hygiene: Players develop a fact-checking reflex by analysing the "Relevance" and "Importance" of source documents. They learn to recognise information noise and disinformation traps illustrated by negative card values, gaining an understanding of the attention economy without compromising ethics.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS & PARTICIPANT SAFETY

Specifics of role-playing and conflict simulations

Because **VIBE STORIES** touches on topics like corruption, discrimination, and rights violations, the simulation can carry psychological intensity. Conflict simulation can trigger personal trauma or cause genuine tension between team members. Therefore,

the methodology prioritises youth safety, providing tools for self-regulation.

Practical tools for emotional safety

The "STOP Card" Mechanism: Each card deck includes a blank red card labelled "STOP". Any participant can touch or pick up this card at any time without explanation. This signals to the moderator that a boundary has been crossed. The game in that team stops immediately, the active conflict card is replaced with a neutral one, and the moderator checks on the participant individually.

Depersonalisation of Roles: To prevent personal qualities from being conflated with a character's negative actions, roles are clearly defined by numerical profiles. Moderators remind players that they are managing a mathematical model, not acting as themselves. Expressions like *"You are corrupt"* are replaced with *"Your character has Ethics 2 and is making this move."* This linguistic boundary maintains a professional distance.

Moderator autonomy and flexibility

The manual respects the professional autonomy of the trainer/moderator. Their role is not to enforce the rules strictly, but to adapt the game to the needs of the group. If working with younger or less experienced groups, they can remove the Helper decks or the dice mechanics to reduce cognitive load. For advanced groups, they can introduce strict time limits (sprints) to increase the pace.

METHODOLOGICAL GUIDANCE FOR TRAINERS

Sample time schedule for a 120-minute session

Trainers can adjust times based on training goals, but the standard recommended structure is:

Briefing and setup (20 min) – Gameplay (60 min) – Presentation and evaluation (25 min) – Debriefing (15 min)

- **Briefing & Setup:** Explaining rules, setting up the board, and drawing initial character profiles.
- **Active Gameplay (The 12 Steps):** Moving through the timeline and filling in the script frame in the workbook.
- **Presentation & Evaluation:** Teams present their stories (3 minutes maximum each), followed by evaluation using the tokens.
- **Structured Debriefing:** Drawing educational and practical conclusions.

Reflective Debriefing

Debriefing is when gameplay experiences turn into lasting knowledge. The trainer should ask structured facilitation questions:

Emotions Phase: *Which moment in your story's development was the most satisfying? How did you feel when the dice altered your plans?*

Analysis Phase: *What strategies did you use to compensate for your character's low Defense or Influence? How did the pictograms help you visualise specific scene setups?*

Transfer Phase: *Which game situations (e.g., media blackout, censorship) do you recognise in the real media you follow? How can the three-act structure help you in your next video or writing project?*

Overcoming typical challenges during the game

If a team gets stuck on a negative stat value: The moderator can ask: *If the importance of this document fell below zero, how did the Antagonist distract the public? What rumour did they launch?*

If a single player dominates the writing: The moderator can remind the team of role-exclusivity: *Only the player holding the Helper card can decide how their character uses their Competence to resolve this scene.*

CONCLUSION

The primary value of **VIBE STORIES** lies in its ability to turn complex, abstract concepts of the media world and civic activism into accessible, tangible, and manageable processes. By combining numerical profiles with the classic three-act narrative structure, the game creates a safe learning simulation of "real" conditions. Within this environment, young people have the right to make mistakes, face campaign failures, and feel the effects of disinformation and censorship without facing real-world social or professional consequences.

The tool successfully supports trainers in non-formal education, providing a flexible framework compatible with European youth work standards. **VIBE STORIES** achieves its ultimate goal not when a team collects the maximum number of green tokens, but when participants complete the session with enhanced critical thinking, increased creative confidence, and a clear understanding of how to structure their own voice to drive positive change in their communities.

Cards icons legend

Hero Cards

Influence 

Defense 

Ethics 

Speed 

Competence 

Action Cards

Impact 

Importance 

Distribution Rate 

Relevance 

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VIBE