

Tug of Logic — Official Rules

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1. Game Description

Tug of Logic (ToL) is an Internet-enhanced game of live facilitated philosophical dialogue. Players engage in critical inquiry through guided dialogue, and also participate via required Internet-connected devices. The game is managed by a Logic Referee who facilitates the discussion and solicits players' contributions to the dialogue. The game is played live with active, present participants (e.g., in a café or classroom), and requires a large, shared projection screen or monitor to display on-going vote tallies and provide cognitive social feedback.

A game of ToL is best played with fewer than 20 players unless the Logic Referee has an Assistant. To accommodate larger groups, more than one game can be played at the same time, but each game requires at least one Logic Referee.

2. Game Materials

- A facilitator computer & projector (or big monitor) to share the image in the room.
- Internet-connected devices, at least one per every group of three or four players.

3. Participant Roles

- A facilitator who plays the role of Logic Referee.
- A facilitator assistant (optional).
- Players — the participants (about 5–35, although ideally 10–15).

4. Goals

- Support for critical inquiry and thinking.
- Skills development for philosophical dialogue.
- Acknowledgment of different positions on controversial topics.
- Self-analysis on proposed points of view.

5. Game Terminology

Logic Referee — The game official who facilitates the philosophical dialogue, declares the start and end of Bouts, and ensures fair play. The role of the Logic Referee is to encourage the articulation of

persuasive reasons in defense or critique of the Reason-in-Play (RiP; see below), to encourage prompt revoting, and to ask about specific wording changes to the Reason-in-Play that might make it more acceptable or swing voting results. The Logic Referee may also point Players toward strategic moves (e.g., identifying required but unstated premises for later Bouts; establishing opposing points to block required premises; building common ground before provoking isolated controversy; etc.).

Controversial MainClaim (MC) — a single, complete, self-contained statement (a true/false sentence) that divides players' opinions more or less equally. Without a controversial MC, there can be no game of Tug of Logic. Its wording cannot be changed after the Straw Poll (though a later game can begin with a revised MC, provided it too is controversial, as determined by a new Straw Poll). Once the Straw Poll closes, Players can no longer change their vote on the MC — but they do get to vote on it again in the Final Poll.

Straw Poll — the mechanism that allows all participants to vote on a proposed controversial MC through their Internet-connected devices. A game of Tug of Logic begins with a Straw Poll. For the purposes of the game, an MC is controversial if present participants are divided in their opinions on it, as determined by the Straw Poll. The game cannot be played on an MC that is unanimously accepted.

Reason-to-Play (R2P) — a single, complete, self-contained statement (a true/false sentence) that an individual player enters and submits, either in support of the MC (adding evidence) or in opposition to it (proof against it). Once the initial Straw Poll is complete, Players may submit R2Ps via their devices, which they can edit or supplement at any time throughout the game.

Reason-in-Play (RiP) — a statement selected by the Logic Referee, in agreement with or challenging the MC, from all the R2Ps submitted by Players. The Logic Referee (or Assistant) chooses, from among all submitted R2Ps, one to be the focus of each Bout of Logical Scrimmage. This statement, called the RiP during the Bout, is displayed on the shared monitor and also sent to Players' devices.

Bout of Logical Scrimmage — an open-ended but time-limited period of philosophical dialogue facilitated by the Logic Referee and focused on an individual RiP. Under the Logic Referee's guidance, all players discuss the truth-status of the changing focal RiP. The bulk of a game of ToL consists of a series of Bouts of Logical Scrimmage, during which Players are also able to cast votes on the RiP — specifically, whether, as currently stated, it is Established or Contested. Bout votes can be revoked at any time during the Bout, and the Player who introduced the reason may revise its wording at any time, forcing a fresh vote. The Bout ends when the Logic Referee decides further discussion is unprofitable, or unlikely to improve wording so as to change the vote results.

Final Poll — a final vote on the MC that closes the game. It is called by the Logic Referee after

- Finally, the system displays a list of all the Players who, after the discussions in the Bouts, changed their mind on the MC. If you're one of them, you win — congratulations! Your prize is the last word: a chance to explain why you decided to take another stance on the issue.