

EXODIPLOMACY

**A RESEARCH-BASED GAME ABOUT
THE WAYS WE TALK TO EACH OTHER**

STYLES OF PLAY

Freeform larp, edularp, diplomacy simulation, streaming/online face to face

SUMMARY

Alien diplomats representing each member civilization in the Interstellar Compact come together to debate Humanity's application. Each diplomat has different priorities and a different way of communicating those priorities, using patterns of communication found in a variety of real world cultures.

TAGS

Language, educational, diplomacy, sci-fi, aliens, silly

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

You will need 6-10 players (yourself included) and about 2.5 hours, in person or online using video chats.

If playing in-person, print out two copies of the communication patterns (Pages 5 and on) and bringing several six-sided dice, two index cards per player (to be used as a name tent and note-taking paper), and enough pens or pencils to go around.

If playing online, you will need a video chat client capable of break-out rooms or multiple voice channels. We recommend Discord, with a text channel for sharing this text, one out-of-character voice channel to host all of the players, two voice channels for the committee meetings, and a voice channel for each team of diplomats.

SCHEDULE

Setting & Character Creation	.....	30 minutes
Out-of-Character Break	.....	10 minutes
Team Meetings	.....	15 minutes
Committee Meetings	.....	45 minutes
Final Vote	.....	10 minutes
Out-of-Character Break	.....	10 minutes
Debrief	.....	15 minutes

SETTING

Every alien civilization in the Interstellar Compact is unique. That's what makes the Interstellar Compact beautiful, powerful, and such a headache to drag a consensus out of. And now that bizarre civilization "Humanity" wants to join too. You are the diplomats representing the Interstellar Compact's current member civilizations. In order to draft a compromise that will allow Humanity to safely join, you will need to navigate your colleagues' strange demands and stranger ways of communicating those demands.

CHARACTER CREATION

Pair up with another player. You will both be diplomats from the same alien civilization. If you have an odd number of players, have one team of three.

Together, choose one communication pattern as your alien civilization's preferred way to communicate. Only they speak this way; no other alien civilization shares this communication pattern with them.

Each player then chooses one proposal that their alien civilization is making and that they will personally champion, either from the list on Page 4 or your own creation. Make sure everyone feels good about including that proposal in the game, especially if you created your own. For all other teams' proposals, each player secretly rolls one six-sided die (www.google.com/search?q=roll+1d6) to determine your individual diplomat's opinion of it. The lower the number, the more you disagree with that proposal. Let these opinions inform your vision of the alien civilization your diplomat comes from.

Meet up with your partner in private for 5 minutes. Create a name for your alien civilization, like the Zorz, Radelphii, the United Confederacy of Recombinatorial Tau, Hesh-8b, or Blumanity. Some silliness is welcome! Then, create a revealing fact that everyone knows about your alien civilization, like "We only live for three hours, and we're already one-hour-old," or "We founded the Interstellar Compact, and we've regretted every century since." Make it something that will change how you play. Finally, create a name & pronouns for the diplomat you will be playing.

Return to the main room and share your diplomat's name & pronouns, your alien civilization's name, that revealing fact, and your proposal, so everyone knows and feels good about playing. This would be a good time for a 5 or 10-minute break.

TEAM MEETINGS

Set a 15-minute timer. During this time, diplomats confer with their partner (or partners, if you have one team of three) to strategize. Make the most of your shared communication pattern, as you decide which proposals you support and which you hope to vote down. This is your chance to practice your communication pattern and to speak easily with someone. It's also a good opportunity to flesh out your alien civilization in-character. After the 15 minutes are up, you will say goodbye to your partner and go into separate committee meetings, where you will champion the proposal you picked during character creation and vote on the proposals made by the other diplomats in your committee.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Set a 45-minute timer. All teams are now split into the two committees. During this phase, each diplomat can formally announce the proposal they chose during character creation to their committee, which has the power to approve the proposal, but not without debate!

When you debate your fellow committee members, serve your communication pattern even at the cost of your in-character goals. This is your chance to define yourself in contrast to others. Also, feel free to invent unpredictable compromises, endorse ruthless quid-pro-quos, and throw procedure to the wind, if that demonstrates your communication pattern. Make sure everyone knows that it is okay to step away whenever they need to; you can even excuse this in-character (shedding your carapace, going to the little spores room, cloning yourself, etc.). We're all mature sentient beings here; do what you have to be comfortable, happy, and healthy.

Once the timer has sounded, any remaining proposals must be given an immediate vote. Make it quick! Proposals are approved with a majority vote from their committee, unless a majority from a committee has successfully voted to radically change the rules. Finally, pick a spokesperson who will announce your committee's final decisions to the whole group.

FINAL VOTE

Return to the main room with all players present. Each committee spokesperson will announce all the proposals that their committee has approved. This is not a place for debate, though exasperated shouts, tentacle waving, or even pheromone bombardments are expected. Finally, a spokesperson will ask everyone in turn to vote Yay or Nay to Humanity's inclusion in the Interstellar Compact, given the conditions agreed to by the committees. Diplomats are permitted a very brief final comment with their Yay or Nay vote. Count the votes, announce the final decision, and declare the larp to be over. A hard day of diplomacy is done! This might be a good time for a 5 or 10-minute break.

DEBRIEF

Bring all the players together again to break character and debrief. Make sure to pay attention to any players who were often talked-over during play or otherwise struggled to communicate. How did it feel using your communication pattern during team meetings versus committee meetings? How did it differ from your natural way of communicating, and how was it similar?

PLAY VARIANT - PEDAGOGIZE!

If you're playing this larp with students, here are two recommended readings you could incorporate:

- Goudreau, Jenna and Gus Lubin. Aug 14, 2015. "23 fascinating diagrams reveal how to negotiate with people around the world." Business Insider. www.businessinsider.com/how-to-negotiate-around-the-world-2015-8
- The communication diagrams are snapshots of a much more complex theory, which you can read about here: www.crossculture.com/the-lewis-model-dimensions-of-behaviour

And you can augment the Debrief with these guided discussion questions:

- To what extent do you think these different patterns are "true?"
- What are ways we discover that people have very different communication styles?
- What are some benefits of different communication styles in a discussion? Drawbacks?
- If you were to construct a diagram for your own style, what would it be like?

PROPOSALS

1. End the quarantine on human media and allow it to be accessed by all Interstellar Compact citizens.
2. Permit Humanity to access Interstellar Compact media, regardless of cultural contamination risk.
3. Legalize gambling on human sports, elections, and intra-species wars.
4. Invite 10 humans to study at the Interstellar Diplomatic Academy.
5. Ban the eating of humans, even the deceased ones.
6. Teach Humanity faster-than-light engine technology, allowing them to access the Interstellar Compact territory and beyond at will.
7. Require all humans to keep their unsightly ears covered at all times in polite company.
8. Forcibly remove all human access to materials used predominantly for inter- or intra- species war, including but not limited to: Radioactive isotopes, cloaking devices, and cats.
9. Convert 50% of Humanity's homeworld into a nature preserve.
10. Request human labor in the design and construction of a Humanity theme park.

COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

On the following pages, we have provided twelve communication patterns from non-fictional human cultures, taken from Business Insider ([i.insider.com/535eb0d1ecad0457511f7328](https://www.businessinsider.com/535eb0d1ecad0457511f7328)), who in turn based them on Lewis, Richard. 2010. When cultures collide: Leading across cultures. Nicholas Brealey International.

Neither we nor Professor Lewis claim that all or even a majority of speakers from these human cultures follow these patterns. We recommend that you see them as a light-hearted starting point of a discussion for how humans are alike, and can be different, in communication styles.

Each communication pattern has different phases. Your phases will almost certainly not line up with others. Try to get all phases in during your meeting time - if you run out too quickly, you can always start again from the beginning of your pattern at the start of a new proposal. As a player, you might be confused by the wording in your pattern. Just make a snap decision on what it means and forge ahead.

We have removed all identifying labels from them, but below is a key for the curious. Though, we recommend not looking closely at it until Debrief.

KEY

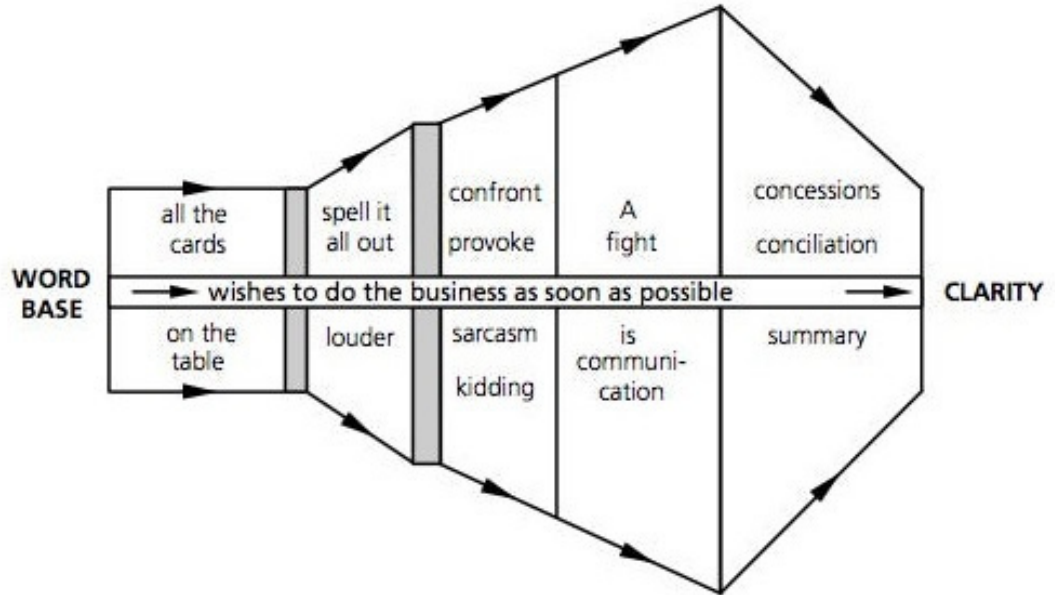
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C - Germany	D - Italy
E - Spain	F - Hungary
G - Bulgaria	H - Poland
I - India	J - Australia
K - Singapore	L - South Korea



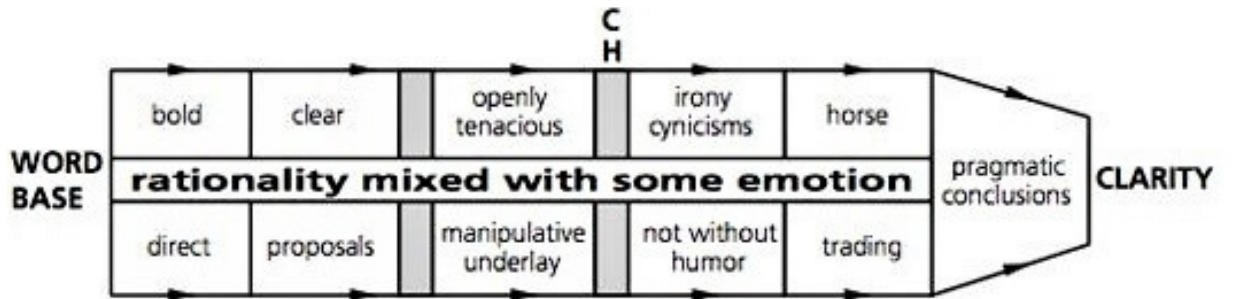
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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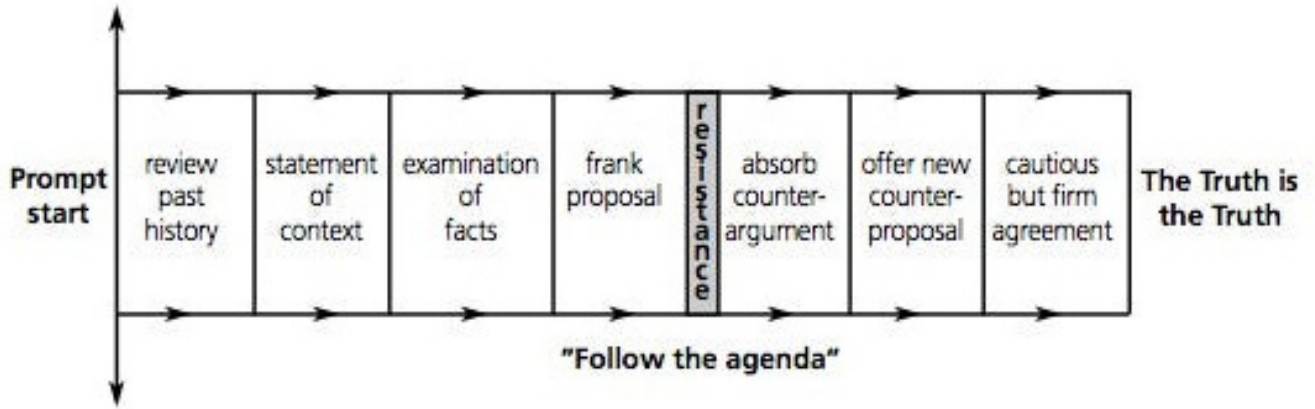
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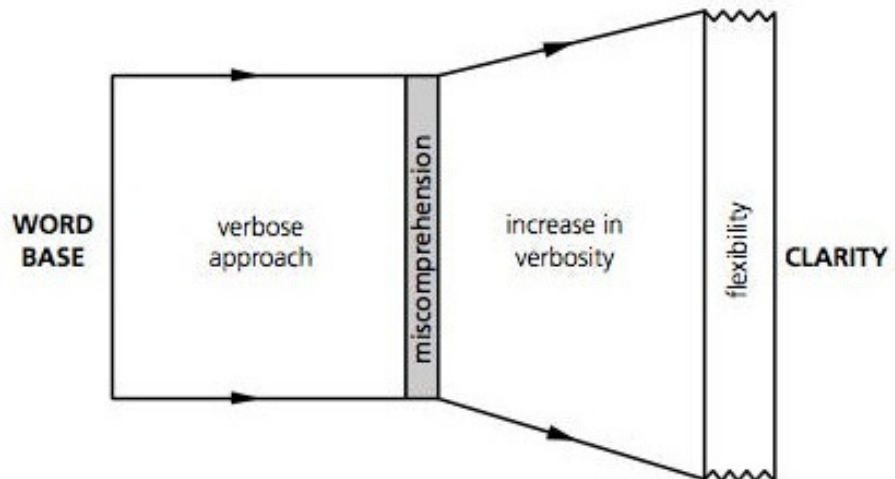
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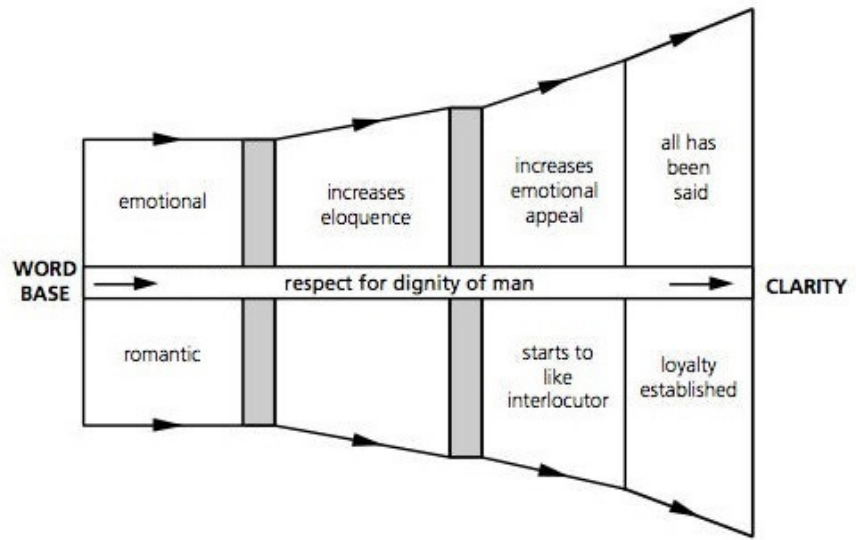
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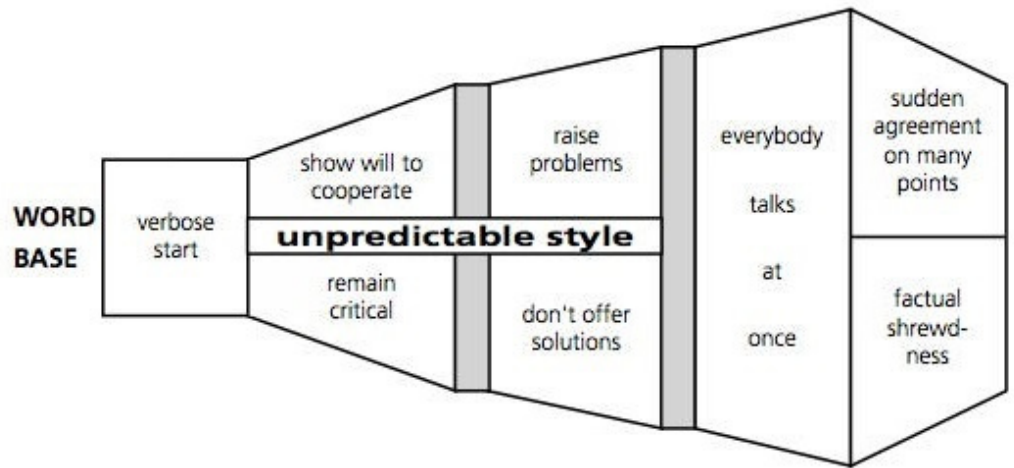
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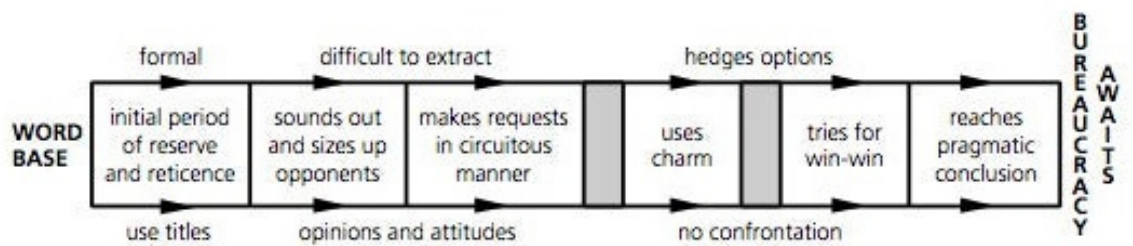
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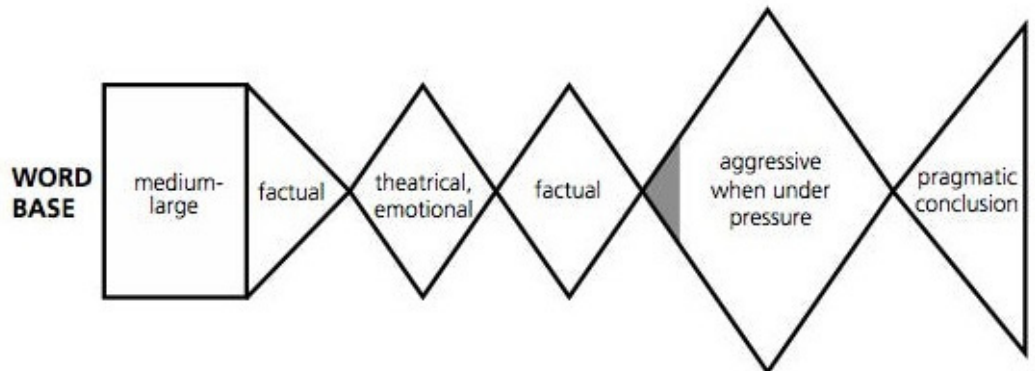
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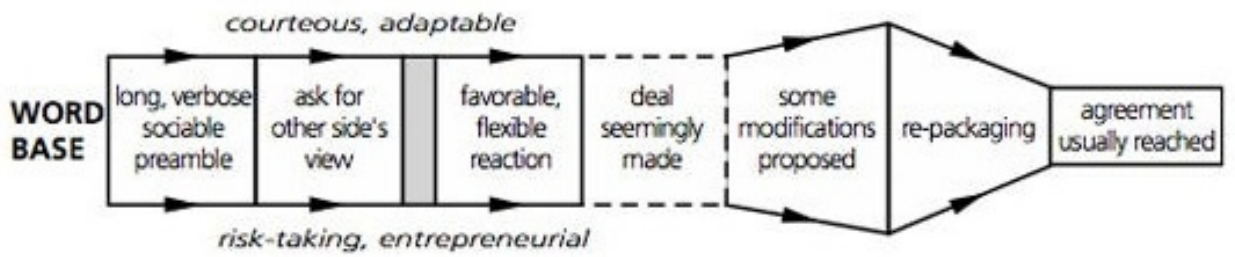
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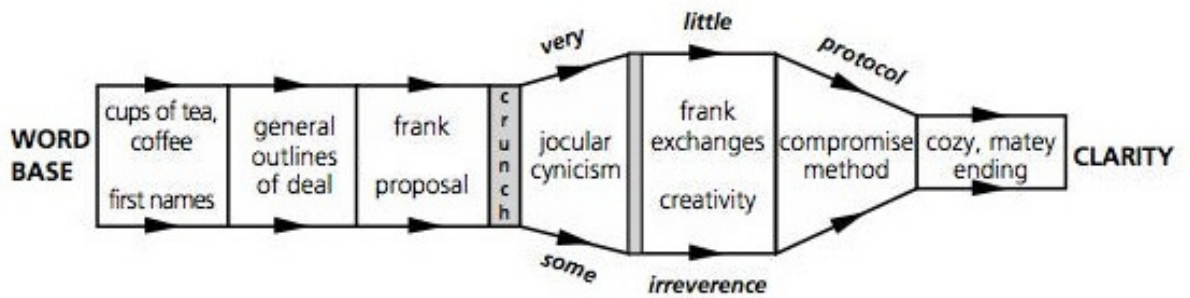
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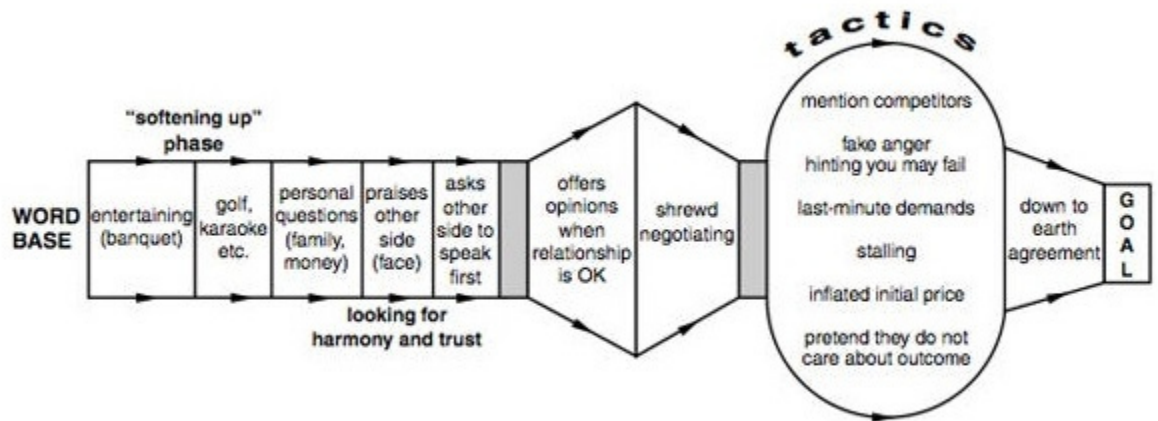
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