



DRIVING QUESTION

Every state in this room was drawn by someone else. Why did some of them hold together and some of them come apart?

They are not told which real state they are running until 2001.

THE ROUND — REPEATS SIX TIMES • ABOUT 12 MINUTES EACH

PHASE 1 • THE BUDGET



Spend on four things.
Three hold the country together. One holds it down.

ON THEIR DEVICE • 4 MIN

PHASE 2 • BORDERS & BLOCS



Out of their seats.
Press a claim, sign a treaty, or stay non-aligned.

FACE TO FACE IN THE ROOM • 5 MIN

PHASE 3 • EXTEND CONTROL

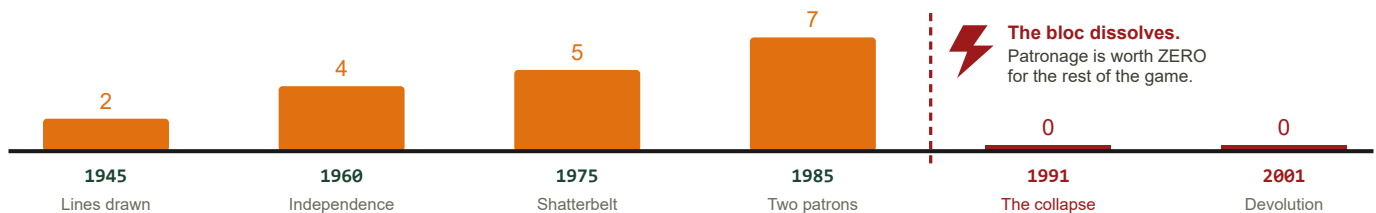


Buy territory.
A line on a map is not control. Supply is capped.

ON THEIR DEVICE • 3 MIN

SOVEREIGNTY UPDATES

THE SIX ROUNDS



BAR SHOW WHAT ONE UNIT OF PATRONAGE PAYS THAT ROUND. DAY 1 COVERS 1945–1975; DAY 2 COVERS 1985–2001.

THE FOUR THINGS THEY CAN BUY — SOVEREIGNTY RUNS 0.00 TO 1.00 AND IS THE ONLY SCORE

+0.025
PER UNIT

National Identity

One language, one curriculum, one flag.

\$400 • max 5

+0.015
PER UNIT

Regional Autonomy

Devolved power. Holds the separatists. Revenue –3%.

\$600 • max 5

+0.010
PER UNIT

Transport & Telecom

Ties the regions to the capital. Revenue +5%.

\$500 • max 5

–0.010
PER UNIT

Security Forces

Costs sovereignty. You need 2 to press any claim.

\$200 • max 8

THE SIX KINDS OF TERRITORY — THEY BUY THESE IN PHASE 3

FARMLAND

The rural interior

MINERALS

The resource frontier

URBAN CORE

Capital and cities

PATRONAGE

Aid money. Zero after 1991

INSTITUTIONS

Courts, census, tax

COASTLINE

Ports and the EEZ

Five states start landlocked. **No Coastline and no treaty means sovereignty cannot rise.**

AT A GLANCE

PLAY AT	witsooth.com/games/borderline.html — no login, saves automatically
PROJECT	witsooth.com/games/borderline-slides.html — 19 slides, a countdown on every round
TIME	Two 50-minute periods, or one 90-minute block
NEED	One device per student. Room they can move around in.
PREP	Cut the assignment slips on page 3 . Open the deck. Press ? in it for the keys.
CLASS SIZE	12–30. Assign from the top of the list down — it is ordered.
UNIT 4	Topics 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10

The game does not resolve claims. It says *"Negotiate in the room first. Then record what happened."* The room decides; the game applies the consequences. **This is the rule you supply**, and without it Day 1 stalls the first time someone presses a claim.

How a border claim is settled in this room

1. **Declare out loud.** Name the state whose border you are claiming so the whole room hears it. A claim nobody heard did not happen.
2. **Both sides read their Security Forces** off the Borders & Blocs screen. **Higher total holds the ground.** Mobilizing costs the attacker \$1,000 either way.
3. **A tie goes to the state with more Institutions.** Border disputes go to arbitration, and the side with the better-documented claim wins.
4. **Both states record it** on their own device — each taps Press a Claim, types the other's name, and records their own result. One holds, one loses. The defender records too, or nothing happens to them.
5. **Every treaty you hold adds +2 Security Forces.** You may hold three.
6. **Forced resettlement overrides the count.** It unlocks at 3 Security Forces, settles the claim regardless of the numbers, and costs **-0.10 sovereignty plus \$1,500 in sanctions** next round.

Why this rule and not a die roll. Three treaties give **+6 Security Forces for free**. Six purchased units cost **\$1,200 and -0.06 sovereignty**. Pooling sovereignty is mathematically the better deal, and your students will work that out inside two rounds. Hold it for the debrief: **if joining a bloc was the better deal, why did Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union come apart instead?**

DAY 1 1945 · 1960 · 1975 — lines drawn elsewhere, independence, the shatterbelt

≈50 MIN

TIME	WHO	WHAT HAPPENS
0–12	TEACHER	Hand out the slips. Students open the game and select <i>their assigned state only</i> . Seat them by bloc — the slip names it, and negotiation is faster when the bloc already sits together. Frame it: "It is 1945. Your borders were drawn by someone else. You have \$10,000 and fifty-six years." Define sovereignty in one sentence — <i>how much of your own territory your government actually controls; it is your score</i> . Project the claim rule. Say nothing about the reveal and nothing about the hidden mechanics.
12–26	STUDENTS	Round 1 — 1945. Slowest round; they are learning the interface. Circulate. Nobody can press a claim yet — it takes 2 Security Forces and everyone starts at zero.
26–38	STUDENTS	Round 2 — 1960. Aid money rises. Expect the first claim and the first treaty here. Watch for the landlocked states discovering they are stuck.
38–47	STUDENTS	Round 3 — 1975. Minerals and aid peak. Say once, to the room: "Somebody else is paying for this." Do not explain why.
47–50	TEACHER	A hard stop mid-round is fine — it saves automatically. Poll sovereignty aloud: highest, lowest. Exit question on a scrap of paper: "Who in this room can hurt you?" Collect. Read them back on Day 2.

DAY 2 1985 · 1991 · 2001 — the peak, the collapse, the age of devolution

≈50 MIN

TIME	WHO	WHAT HAPPENS
0–4	TEACHER	Read back two or three exit slips. Reopen the game — it resumes where they stopped. Re-project the claim rule.
4–16	STUDENTS	Round 4 — 1985. The richest round in the game. Say once: "Everything is worth more this round than it will ever be worth again." Some of them will hear it. Most will buy Patronage.
16–28	STUDENTS	Round 5 — 1991. The collapse. Patronage drops to zero. Let the noise happen.
28–38	STUDENTS	Round 6 — 2001. Institutions are the only thing still paying well. Treaties matter most here.
38–50	ALL	The reveal, then the debrief. Stop the room. Both scripts are on page 3.

SAY THIS

- "Sovereignty is how much of your own territory you actually control."
- "Negotiate first. Then record it. Both of you record it."
- "Read the event cards at the end of the round. That is the game telling you what it just did to you."
- 1985 only: "Everything is worth more this round than it will ever be worth again."

DO NOT SAY THIS

- ! Anything about the reveal. Not a hint, not a wink.
- ! Which real country anyone is. Students who finish early will guess out loud — move them on.
- ! Why Patronage is expensive in 1985.
- ! That multinational states are penalized. They will find the pattern themselves.

ASSIGNMENT LIST – CUT INTO SLIPS, ASSIGN FROM THE TOP DOWN

#	GIVE THEM THIS	BLOC	THEY ARE REALLY	WHY THIS ONE IS WORTH ASSIGNING
1	Ownside •	NON-ALIGNED	Yugoslavia	Six republics held together by one man. Devolved late, then dissolved.
2	Bigovia •	SOVIET	Soviet Union	Fifteen republics with a written right to secede. In 1991 they used it.
3	Allinone •	NO BLOC	Switzerland	The multinational state that works. Landlocked. Devolved first.
4	Notmyline •	AFRICAN	Nigeria	Biafra, and a federation that went from 3 regions to 36 states.
5	Onlyone	NO BLOC	Japan	The textbook nation-state. Survives neglect that ruins the others.
6	Notone	NO BLOC	The Kurds	A stateless nation. Starts with no institutions and no coast. Hard mode.
7	Halfone	NO BLOC	Korea	A multistate nation. The DMZ is a superimposed boundary at its purest.
8	Wontstay •	EUROPEAN	United Kingdom	Devolved in 1999 to keep the union, then left its own bloc in 2016.
9	Twovia •	SOVIET	Czechoslovakia	The Velvet Divorce. Landlocked. No war and no vote.
10	Manyside •	NON-ALIGNED	Indonesia	A fragmented state that invented a national language on purpose.
11	Lostline •	AFRICAN	Ethiopia	Lost its entire coastline when Eritrea seceded in 1993.
12	Cutline •	AFRICAN	Sudan	Split in two in 2011. The oil sits on the line between them.
13	Halfstay •	EUROPEAN	Spain	Seventeen autonomous communities, and Catalonia still asking.
14	Maystay •	EUROPEAN	Belgium	Six constitutional reforms to stop a language border splitting a country.
15	Noside •	NON-ALIGNED	India	Partition, then redraw its own internal boundaries along language lines.
16	Proppedupovia	SOVIET	Cuba	The client state. Highest Patronage on the board when 1991 arrives.
17	Thinline •	AFRICAN	Rwanda	Colonial ID cards fixed an identity. Landlocked, exports cross two borders.
18	Drysides •	NON-ALIGNED	Bolivia	Lost its coast in 1884 and still keeps a navy, on a lake.
19	Richline •	AFRICAN	DR Congo	Katanga seceded eleven days after independence. Borders set at Berlin.
20	Splitstay •	EUROPEAN	Cyprus	Joined the EU in 2004 without controlling a third of its territory.
21	Bothstay	EUROPEAN	Germany	One nation, two states, then one again. Lowest start in its bloc.
22	Onceovia	SOVIET	Vietnam	A divided nation that put itself back together, by force, in 1975.
23	Bothside	NON-ALIGNED	Egypt	Suez, and the 1958 merger with Syria that lasted three years.
24	Cityone •	NO BLOC	Singapore	Made independent against its will. Sits on the Strait of Malacca.

• marks a multinational state. Seventeen of the twenty-four are multinational, and they carry the devolution mechanics. Assign at least the top twelve – that is the shortest list that still puts a landlocked state and a stateless nation in the room.

HIDDEN MECHANICS – WHAT THE GAME DOES WITHOUT TELLING THEM

Devolutionary Pressure

Multinational states only. Spend under 2 units on identity, transport and autonomy in a round and you lose **\$1,500 and 0.02 sovereignty**. Four lifetime autonomy units shut it off.

Separatist Movement

Multinational states only. Two rounds running with zero Regional Autonomy and a region starts collecting its own taxes: **-0.04 and -\$1,000**.

Legitimacy Crisis

Two rounds running with zero National Identity and nobody recognizes your claims. Claims you hold **pay half**. Claims you lose **cost double**.

No Access to the Sea

Zero Coastline and no treaty in force, and **sovereignty cannot rise at all**. One treaty buys transit rights and unlocks it. This is why landlocked states must negotiate.

Pooled Sovereignty

Every treaty signed costs **-0.01 sovereignty** on the spot. Supranational membership buys security and transit and costs authority.

Client State

In 1991 the hit scales with the Patronage you hold: **-0.02 per unit**, up to -0.15. The more of your budget came from outside, the worse 1991 is.

Two more worth knowing: holding all six kinds of territory at 2 or more pays a one-time **+0.06 Effective Control** bonus. Pressing a claim against a state you have signed with costs **-0.08 and \$1,000** and dissolves the treaty.

The reveal — read this, do not paraphrase

"Everyone stop. Press **Reveal Your State**. Read your card to yourself. Do not say your country out loud yet."

Give them ninety seconds. Then go around the room. Each student says two things and nothing more: **the country they were, and one decision they made that the real country also made**. Some of them will have nothing. Ask them what the real country did instead.

DEBRIEF – PICK THREE

- Who did you sign a treaty with, and **what did it cost you**? Did you get it back?
- Seventeen states in this room had the same problem and seven did not. **Name the problem** and name what the seven had that the seventeen lacked.
- Switzerland and Yugoslavia were both multinational states with roughly the same starting sovereignty. **Why did one hold and one come apart**?
- If joining a bloc was mathematically the better deal, **why did the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia break up instead of pooling more**?
- Some of you could not raise your sovereignty at all until somebody signed with you. **What did those states have in common**, and what did it cost them to get unstuck?
- In 1991 the game took Patronage to zero. **Whose sheet did that ruin**? Was it the states that had the least, or the states that had the most?