# Flashpoints Submissions

At this point, Norton is the only publishing outlet for Flashpoints games. Unless something dramatic changes, they will not be released through the RC Press. Consequently, in order to be fair to authors, it seems like a good idea to give Norton the chance to give you some feedback earlier in the game development process.

If you are interested in proposing a game for the series, please answers to the following questions to the chair of the Reacting Consortium’s Publications Committee, Jace Weaver ([jweaver@uga.edu](mailto:jweaver@uga.edu)). Please cc me as the Reacting Editorial Board chair ([nick.proctor@simpson.edu](mailto:nick.proctor@simpson.edu)), so that I can maintain situational awareness. Periodically, Jace will bundle proposals and send them to Justin Cahill, the editor who handles Reacting at Norton, for feedback.

1. Proposed title. *If you have a few different ideas, Norton is happy to provide early feedback.*
2. Which course is this game intended for? *In this course, during which topic/unit/week of the course will the game be appropriate to play? (e.g. U.S. History I, during unit on American Revolution; or in Western Civ I, during unit on Scientific Revolution) Have you taught this course before?*
3. Please summarize the game in one paragraph. *Pretend you’re trying to convince a colleague who teaches the course from question #2 to try your game.*
4. Now, in a bit more detail, please describe the arc of the game. *What happens in the first session? What is the ‘game changer’ (the news that students receive between the first and second sessions that causes them to reconsider or reevaluate their positions)? And what happens in the second session?*
5. What are the key primary sources?
6. Who are the key characters?
7. Does the ‘Flashpoints’ template adequately accommodate the game you’ve envisioned? If not, how is your game different?
8. Anything else to add?

# Gamebook structure

Section 1: Introduction & brief overview of the game. This provides potential instructors and players with a quick overview.

Section 2: Historical Background

1. Chronology. The chronology should end where the game begins. Include 8-10 key events.
2. Narrative. Provide endnotes, if needed. Include plenty of subheads so instructors can break the narrative into chunks (e.g. One quarter for the setup; half before gameplay begins; one quarter before the second session).
3. Counterfactuals.

Section 3: The Game

1. Major Issues – *What are the major intellectual collisions?*
2. The players – *Describe the factions rather than individual roles*
3. The action – *Provide a very brief schedule of the game*
4. Winning the game -- *Players want to know how to win. Tell them how.*
5. Your role – *Explain how to use the documents and how to interact with other roles*
6. Preparation for playing a role – *Explain what players should do before the game begins*
7. Assignments – *Describe writing assignments, but make them optional; describe other assignments too.*
8. Rules – *The fewer, the better*
9. Conclusion – *Let players know how the game will end. A culminating vote? An outside threat made real?*

Section 4: The game sessions.In each case, be explicit about what players need to do in order to prepare for the session. Also explain any ways in which the game situation might change due to player decisions or outside interventions (e.g. the “game changers”).

1. Overview
2. Before the game begins
3. Session 1
4. Session 2
5. Debriefing

Section 5. Roles and Factions. Provide a fuller explanation of factions here. One line of description is sufficient for individual roles. Recognize that players will recognize factions, but will miss the details of individuals outside their own factions.

Section 6: Core Texts. Include marginal glosses and headnotes.

Section 7: Glossary

Section 8. Sources

Section 9. Acknowledgments.Thank those who should be thanked—particularly your play-testers.

# Game Concepts

In July, a group of Reacting designers put together a list of 36 possible game topics. They rated these among themselves and then I passed it on to Justin who responded with his sense of how Norton might respond. This may provide a better idea about the sorts of topics that are well-suited for the series.

Everyone liked the games about easily recognizable pivotal events:

* Jackie Robinson integrating major league baseball
* Black Death Comes to Norwich
* NY ratifies the constitution
* The Bombing of Monte Cassino
* Thomas Becket
* WPA artists
* Nullification Crisis
* The decision to drop the atomic bomb
* The Pill Comes to Campus
* Whiskey Rebellion

Less well known events also seem like winners as long as their themes clearly plug into survey texts. For example:

* The Hundred Days reform effort in 1898 China
* The Ciompi Revolt in late 14th century Florence

The following ideas seem like good topics, but some people had questions about the logistics of managing these in two sessions of gameplay:

* Dreyfus Affair
* Opium Wars
* Trial of John Brown
* Sacco and Vanzetti

Games that fell on the margins of history as a discipline were not warmly received by Norton.