

Factions is a Werewolf-esque social deduction game designed by [Douglas Wilson](#).

Factions takes Mafia/Werewolf and fuses it together with elements from Survivor and Two Rooms & a Boom. There are multiple teams, but the twist is that players aren't told how many teams there are, or what all the unique powers are. The goal is to find your teammates, deduce as much information as possible, and be the last team remaining.

The game supports about 20 players, and is played over Discord, every evening for approximately 7 or 8 days (or might end earlier for you if/when you're eliminated). It is played mostly via text, though some players may opt into audio/video meetings.

The game is "open" for ~3 hours each evening. Results are announced at the beginning of each day's play window (e.g. who was eliminated at night, who was voted out, etc) then the new day's votes are due before the game closes again. All channels close after the three-hour play window, until the next day. These limited opening hours are designed to prevent the game from intruding into every moment of your daily life.

Players do **not** have to play continuously for all three hours each day! You can participate as little or much as you want, as long as you check in each day and vote. Some players will want to spend a lot of time chatting, publicly or by DM. Others may just dip in a little, and register their daily votes accordingly.

Each season of Factions adds new rules and new twists. The main design pillars are:

1. Multiple factions. Unlike Mafia, there is no "uninformed majority" - every team is an uninformed minority, to differing degrees.
2. Players have to deduce the rules/twists. In a sense, I'm Agatha Christie and the gameplay includes trying to guess (or even lie about!) what I have designed
3. Color Query as a central mechanic (in addition to voting)

Doug first ran Season 1 in July 2021, and Season 2 in August 2021. He is currently gearing up to run Season 3 in October 2021, for a Melbourne timezone, but would like to re-run Seasons 1+2 for new player groups in other timezones.

I've posted the (public) Season 1 rules below.

FACTIONS - SEASON 1 - PUBLIC RULES

Last update: 2021-10-03

***Note:** None of the private rules / teams / powers are documented here, to avoid spoiling the game. A lot of the most "fun" parts of the game design reside in the secret rules. I may publish those after I have a chance to run Season 1 for new players.*

OVERVIEW

You'll be assigned a Color / Team by @doogle via DM. You don't know how many teams there are. Each team has its own secret powers. You will be told the powers for your team, *but you might not be told who else is on your team!* Figure out who's on your team, get info about the other teams, and try not to get eliminated.

Players will gradually be eliminated either by vote or by special kills at night (see below). Once you're eliminated, you're out of the game and cannot vote or chat with players who are still alive. However, you're welcome to watch the game unfold and chat about it in the special Spectators channel.

The goal is to eliminate the other teams and be the only team remaining. The GM will stop the game once the winning team(s) prevails. You win if your team wins, regardless if you are dead or alive. *(Note: some teams have specialized or alternative victory conditions that complicate who wins and when the game is stopped).*

SCHEDULE

- All results from previous night announced at 6pm each day
- Votes are due every day by 9pm via a Google form
- Game is "open" from 6pm to 9pm each day
 - Don't post in game channels "overnight" between 9pm and 6pm
 - We can't enforce this, but don't DM about the game overnight either

NO CHEATING

- 1v1 DMs are allowed
- No group DMs! Any 2+ player group can request a private channel (see below)
- Alive players shouldn't DM with dead players or players on another island
- Alive players can tell each other whatever they want, truth or lie, but no sharing screenshots of messages
- No copy-pasting messages! (exception: you can copy from the public rules)
- When you submit your daily voting form, don't lie about who you are

COMMUNICATION

- I recommend that players on each island organize an audio and/or video call each evening (but it's ultimately up to you)
- Some of you may feel less comfortable with a real-time call - that's ok! - but we've found in similar games that voice contact can be a lot of fun!
- If a group of 2+ people want their own private channel, you can DM me
 - Does not necessarily have to be people on the same team
 - Can only be people on the same island
 - I recommend group channels instead of DMs, even for 1v1 chats, so Spectators can follow along (but it's up to you)

"TEAM" vs "COLOR"

- "Team" refers to your victory condition, i.e. who you win with
 - If your team is ever changed, you will be notified
- "Color" refers to the color reported when you accept a Color Query (see below)
 - Various items and powers can change how your Color is reported
 - You will not necessarily be told if your reported Color is altered
 - If your Color is altered, that doesn't change your Team in it of itself (you are always informed if your Team changes)

COLOR QUERY

The Color Query is one of the main gameplay mechanics of Factions.

Players are welcome to tell each other their colors informally... but of course they could be lying! The Color Query provides a GM-verified answer about a player's color.

Each day, each player can send **one** Color Query:

- DM @doougle during game hours and state the player you're querying
- @doougle will DM your query target, notifying them who queried them
- The target can decide to **share** their color or **decline**, and tells @doougle by DM
- If **share** is chosen, @doougle reports the target's color to the querying player
- The target can also decide to not answer. If so, the query effectively times out at the end of day. The querying player cannot rescind a Color Query.

When the game gets to 7 or fewer players, formal Color Queries will no longer be allowed. So, there's a limited number of rounds to query for GM-verified info.

Notes:

- It's possible you might get Color Queried by multiple people in one day. You can give different people different answers (share or decline)

- Certain secret abilities may complicate what colors get reported by the GM
- The Scholar, Oracle, and Silencer roles all affect color queries (see below)

TWO ISLANDS / MERGE

Players start split across two different "islands" (Discord channels). Most players will only be able to communicate with other players on their island.

When enough players are eliminated, there will be a Merge, and all players will be put on the same island (Discord channel).

At the Merge, the game speeds up. Starting with the Merge, **two** people will be voted out each night, determined by the top two vote recipients. This rule ends when there are five or fewer players, i.e. at five players left, we go back to only one vote out each night.

Notes:

- Some abilities can only be used before or after the Merge
- Some teams, like the Red Team, are given a special channel where they can all talk together, even before the Merge

END GAME

The default win condition is to be the only Team remaining.

If only two players are remaining:

- If one of those two players is Red, the Red Team wins
- Otherwise, *both* remaining teams win together

VOTING / NIGHT TIME

- You can only vote for people on your island
- Whoever receives the most votes on the island each day is eliminated
- When someone is eliminated, it is not publicly divulge what team they were on
- Votes are anonymous. The vote totals are reported, but not who voted or when
- Each player can only submit the day's voting form once. All subsequent form submissions that day will be ignored.
- You *are* allowed to vote for yourself.
- In the case of a tie, the **3rd** vote form submitted chronologically decides the tie
 - If the 3rd voter did not vote for one of the tied targets, GM moves through the next votes chronologically looking for deciding vote (i.e. 4th, 5th, etc)
 - If only three players are remaining, this rule changes such that the **2nd** chronological vote becomes the tie breaker

- If no single player receives a vote, *nobody* is eliminated in the vote (possible if multiple idols gets played, see below)

Order of Night Operations:

1. Items used
2. Items gifted
3. Votes tabulated, per island. Any ties resolved per directions above. Eliminated player removed.
4. Special powers processed
5. Night kills (e.g. from Red) processed

COLLECTIVE DECISIONS

Some teams make decisions collectively (see below)

- In their daily voting form, a teammate specifies who they want to target for the collective action (e.g. kill, save)
 - You can also decide to "pass" if you don't want to vote on the target
- Target must be on your island (you cannot target someone on a different island)
- If there are multiple teammates on the same island and their specified targets conflict, the target is decided by a simple vote
 - In the case of a tie, teammate who voted earliest determines the target
- If there are teammates spread across multiple islands, a target is chosen on each island where there is at least one representative of that team
 - For example: if there is at least one Red Player on both islands, the Red Team gets to try to night kill one player on each island

ITEMS

A player may start with, earn, or be given an item.

- Items can be gifted to other players, but only at night, in your daily voting form
 - Items are gifted before votes are tallied (see Order of Operations above)
 - The recipient is not be informed by the GM as to who gifted them the item
 - The recipient cannot "refuse" the gift
- If the current holder of the item is eliminated, the item vanishes with them
- There's no formal mechanism to "prove" you have (or don't have) an item

IMMUNITY IDOLS

An Immunity Idol is an item that can be played to protect someone from an elimination vote. You can play the idol by specifying it in your daily voting form.

- Unless otherwise specified, you can play it on yourself *or* on another player
- Any votes cast against whoever had the idol played on them are voided
- GM will announce the next day who played the idol, and on who
- Immunity Idol does *not* protect you from a night kill
- You cannot play an idol when there are 4 or fewer players remaining
- Once played, the Immunity Idol is “used up” - it no longer exists

SHIELD

A Shield is an item that can be played to protect yourself from a night kill. You can play the Shield by specifying it in your daily voting form.

- You can only play the Shield on yourself, *not* on another player
 - However, as with all items, you *can* gift it to another player
- Any night kill attempt against whoever had the Shield played on them fails
- GM will *not* announce that a Shield was played
- If a kill is successfully countered, the GM will *not* announce anything (i.e. you won't get confirmation if the Shield was actually needed)
- The Shield does *not* protect you from an elimination vote
- You cannot play a Shield when there are 5 or fewer players remaining
- Once played, the Shield is “used up” - it no longer exists

PUBLIC TEAM INFORMATION

Here's public knowledge about the Red, Silver, and Grey teams. Some of these teams may or may not have additional secret powers not divulged here.

There are definitely additional teams, but you don't know how many or what colors.

● Red Team

- All Red Team players, across both islands, share a secret channel and know who each other are
- If there are Red Team players on an island, those players get a collective decision (see above) about who to night-kill (eliminate)

○ Silver Team

- Silver Team consists of only one player
- Silver player wins if they're alive when there are **four** or fewer players remaining
 - Silver player is immediately removed from the game once they win, and the remaining players keep playing
 - Silver win does not preclude another team from winning
- If the Silver player is on an island, they can try to night-kill one player per night

- In their daily voting form, Silver player specifies who they want to night-kill
- Unlike the Red Team, the Silver player has to *earn* their night-kill: they must guess who their target voted for that night. The night-kill only succeeds if they guessed correctly.
- This power cannot be used on Night #1

Grey Team

- Grey players do *not* share a secret channel and do *not* start the game knowing who each other are
- If there are Grey Team players on an island, those players get a collective decision (see above) try to save another player
 - Whoever the Grey Team targets (saves), that target is safe that night from a night-kill by the Red or Silver team
 - A save only works against a night-kill. The Grey Team power cannot not save a target from public daily vote
 - Grey Team cannot target someone on their own team, i.e. can only save someone from another team
 - If a player is successfully saved, there will be no public confirmation. That player will simply just avoid being eliminated, with no fanfare.

SPECIAL ROLES

Here's a public rundown of some (not all) special roles in the game. There might only be one player of each type, or there might be multiple.

The Scholar

- If someone ever accepts a Color Query from a Scholar, the GM privately tells that Scholar all non-secret rules about that team
- A player who accepts a query will *not* be told if the asking player is/was a Scholar

The Oracle

- In addition to their normal Color Query, The Oracle can opt to do a Magic Query
- Magic Query automatically succeeds. The targeted player is not told who queried, but will be told that an Oracle queried them

The Silencer

- In their voting form, a Silencer can choose a target (not themselves)
- The following day, the target is privately informed they are silenced
- Silenced players **must** decline any Color Query that day
- The GM does not confirm whether or not a target is actually silenced. It just looks like a normal decline.

- An Oracle can still Magic Query a silenced player

FINAL NOTES

- Someone(s) may or may not end up switching teams
- It may or may not be possible for someone to have their color reported in a surprising or altered way, whether they're aware of it or not
- Someone(s) may or may not have a unique winning or losing condition