

The Students' Guide to

Place Out of Time

2nd Edition (August 2010)

by Jonah Roth

This guide is dedicated to every student who participates in POOT. So, dedicated to you.

Visit Place Out of Time: <http://poot.icsmich.org/>

(It'll be useful for following along for part of this guide)

If you don't have an account, feel free to use my demo credentials:

Username: `alberteinstein@demo`

Password: `demo`

If you like this guide, or have questions that absolutely must be directed to me, please contact me! My email is jonahrr@gmail.com, or you can look me up on Facebook (Jonah Roth, [facebook.com/jonahrr](https://www.facebook.com/jonahrr)). In all other cases, you should write to Jeff Stanzler (the leader of this operation) at info@ics.soe.umich.edu.

Who are you and why should I care what you have to say?

Hi, I'm Jonah, and as you've probably guessed, I'm here to tell you about an online simulation game called Place Out Of Time (POOT for short). This is run by the University of Michigan. I'm a normal student. During the last three years (2008-2010), I was lucky enough to participate in POOT three times.

At this point I'd like to thank Jeff Stanzler and Michael Fahy, two of the people in charge of this program. They've been in touch with my friend and me, and they must really think we know something, because they've asked for our help with stuff a couple times. One of the things they asked me most recently is to write this guide.

Just, really quick, a little about me, so you have some perspective: I'm 16, a sophomore at Walnut Hills High School in Cincinnati, OH. I participated in POOT three times, and enjoyed it. I also record music, do volunteer work, and have a life and friends. I'll probably refer to myself as a POOT nerd at some point, because that's the name a friend and I came up with for ourselves a few years back, but I don't consider myself a nerd, and I don't think anyone else does (or should) either.

Before I start explaining anything, a warning. You're about to read some stuff that I wrote, and some stuff that I didn't write. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that everything you're about to read was written by someone smarter than you. When you get into POOT and become used to it, you'll be just as capable of writing these things as the people who wrote them. You probably already are, and just may not realize it.

That said, let's move on to the interesting stuff.

So what is POOT anyway?

A year ago, I wrote the first edition of this students' guide and framed POOT as a game. I still think it's a smart online game, but now I can compare it to Facebook or other social sites and have a point.

It's not a video game, or one of those internet role-playing games where you walk around and talk to people. It's not exactly Facebook, either. There are a lot of differences between those things and POOT, but the most important one is that in those, the conversations mostly consists of misspelled words in lowercase in a way were u kinda rite 2 ppl liek this. (For other examples of that, I'd like to refer you to EVERYWHERE ELSE ON THE INTERNET.) That can get really annoying.

So what is POOT? Well, like online games, you have a character you play. If you're like me, that character is something kind of different from your own personality, and that's true for POOT as well. In fact, in POOT the first rule is that you play, or write in the voice of, a historical character (or in some cases, fictional—I'll get to that in a second). And you really have to play them. That is, you have to say what they would say, the way they would say it. The catch is that other people will be playing people that your character probably never met in their life, so you have to basically make up how their interactions would go.

You following me so far?

So, for example, in one simulation, I played Atticus Finch, from the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee. (You've probably read it, and if you haven't, then you should have. It's a classic novel, and I really recommend it.) Look at the difference between this...

Yeah we all know people can be racist. Whatwe really need to do is just try not to be racist and get over the fact that people are different. Then i think that alot of the problem will be solved.

...and this:

Racism and discrimination have been around seemingly forever, especially in our time, and sadly, too often people participate in it unintentionally. I am glad that there were and are people in the world who realize that this is WRONG and has to stop.

Both of those are actual examples (although both were written by me and one was made up specifically for this comparison). Not even paying attention to the grammar for a moment, the second one sounds a lot more like what Atticus would say. The first one (which is the only example in this guide that wasn't actually posted on POOT) sounds a lot more like a stereotypical teenager's opinion. It isn't proactive, doesn't sound thought out at all, reads badly, sounds apathetic, and makes no sense. Atticus would probably have a more logical, less general, and better-worded strategy, if this were a good place to put an opinion. (In this context it was more of sort of a compliment.) Even though you won't find the second example in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, I think it sounds a lot more like what Atticus would have said if he were to introduce himself to Gandhi. As a matter of fact, that's part of a letter I wrote as Atticus to the student writing as Gandhi.¹

It gets a little crazier. When the 120 or so "characters" gather together in the virtual Alhambra (located at <http://poot.icsmich.org/>), they're there to sit in on a trial, and hear testimony from the plaintiff and the defendant, one of whom (usually the plaintiff) is completely fictional. When it comes to the trial, I had two completely different experiences over the two years, so I'll refer to them throughout this guide. (I have a summary of both a few pages in—it's inside of a box so it's easier to find.) The trial is complicated, so I'll explain most of that later on.

For now, though, think of the person you'll be playing (if you know who that is) and imagine him or her in the situation of participating in POOT. How would, for example, George Washington feel about being in this place to watch a trial? The Buddha? Hitler? During the last simulation, I "saw" all these people through other students' writing on POOT. The #1 thing to do when you get on POOT is to research, and get into character as quickly as you can.

Don't go into detail like that yet! Tell me about the site first!

Okay, don't get too excited. I'll give you a little walkthrough of the website. At press time I'm using a demo website for POOT which bears the heading "Jewish Court of All Time" (which may be what you're playing if you go to a Jewish school) so it may look a little different from what you'll have, but the layout should be roughly the same.

¹ When I sent this guide in for the first edition, they asked me to rewrite this section, because I apparently didn't make it clear enough why the first one isn't Atticus-like. I did my best to explain this time around. All I can say is that if you're still confused, just disregard the example. It's not crucial to my point.

Below is a quick overview of what the website should look like. All the web design, as I understand it, is the work of Jeff Kupperman at UM. As you can see, the site is divided into six basic parts: the Foyer, the Mailbox, the Great Hall, the Courtroom, the Guest List and the Green Room (not pictured here because it's farther down the list).

The front page of POOT - the Foyer - is comparable to Facebook's home page, and that's probably the best way to look at it.

The Foyer?

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Jewish Court of All Time" with the URL "http://jcat.icsmich.org/". The search bar contains the text "the meaning of life, the universe, and everything". The main content area is titled "The Foyer" and features a navigation bar with tabs for "Featured", "Latest Activity", "Announcements", "Speeches", and "Polls". Below this, there are several posts:

- Latest Announcement: Welcomel**, by Judah Halevi on June 04, 2010 12:36. Content: "Welcome, and please make yourself at home. I trust you will find the halls ...[\(more\)](#)"
- Speech: Immigration**, by Golda Meir on June 08, 2010 14:24. Content: "I believe in unrestricted Jewish immigration as this was a core Zionist value as we built the fou...[\(more\)](#)"
- Comment**, by Emma Lazarus on June 06, 2010 20:29. Content: "What else could I bring but the plaque from the Statue of Liberty on which my poem is engraved.[\(more\)](#)"
- Great Hall Topic: Something fr...**, by Judah Halevi on June 04, 2010 13:44. Content: "I have taken great interest in the unique objects many of you have brought with you from your pl...[\(more\)](#)"
- Testimony: Outsiders**, by King Solomon on June 04, 2010 13:36. Content: "Before we address the specifics of this hearing, I would like all guests who are willing to come...[\(more\)](#)"
- Committee: Committee on...**, by King Solomon on June 04, 2010 13:09. Content: "The Chief Magistrate hereby calls upon Cleopatra, Anne Frank, and Albert Einstein to draft a whi...[\(more\)](#)"
- Comment**, by Maimonides on June 04, 2010 12:53.

On the right side, there is a sidebar with a welcome message: "Welcome, Cleopatra! (demo game)" with a profile picture. Below this are several menu sections:

- Logout**
- Mailbox**
- Foyer**
 - Featured
 - Latest activity
 - Announcements
 - Speeches
 - Polls
- Great Hall**
 - Featured
 - Recent posts
 - Topics
- Courtroom**
 - Featured
 - Latest
 - Justices
 - Testimony
 - Committees
- Guest List**
 - View all guests
 - My profile
 - People I'm following

Featured Latest Activity Announcements Speeches Polls

Latest Announcement: Welcome!, by Judah Halevi on June 04, 2010 12:36
 Welcome, and please make yourself at home. I trust you will find the halls...(more)

Speech: Immigration, by Golda Meir on June 08, 2010 14:24
 I believe in unrestricted Jewish immigration as this was a core Zionist value as we built the fou...(more)

Comment, by Emma Lazarus on June 06, 2010 20:29
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Great Hall Topic: Greeting w..., by Judah Halevi on June 04, 2010 13:44
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Topic: Outsiders, by King Solomon on June 04, 2010 13:44
 Before we address the specifics of this hearing, I would like all guests who are willing to come...(more)

likes saying "i dont know" when you just dont want to think. on See More...
 48 minutes ago · Comment · Like

The only piano I've played in like a month is the tiny one on the iPad. I'm suffering from withdrawals.
 about an hour ago · Comment · Like

attending Pick Your Flick Movie Ball
 2 hours ago · RSVP to this event

NOOOOOOOO I HATE YOU GERMANY
 WHYYYY!!!!!!!!!!!!
 about an hour ago · Comment · Like
 View all 9 comments

Write a comment...

Here we go:

If you use any kind of social networking site, that picture should be a good explanation of how the Foyer works. Like Facebook's news feed, it shows updates about all the goings-on in POOT land, with a quick summary and a picture. There's no "Like" button or chat, but they're similar enough that this should be pretty easy to pick up on. Also like Facebook, that's not *everything* that's happened, but just the important stuff. Click on the "Latest Activity" tab to see everything. Click on Announcements, Speeches, or Polls to show only those items.

But this isn't like a social network site in that you won't know anyone when you first log on. That's where the Guest List come in.

Okay, then. Tell me about the guest list.

Jewish Court of All Time

http://jcat.icsmich.org/main/show_profile/8

Jewish Court of All Time Facebook | Jonah Roth

Albert Einstein *I'm the account being used as a demo for Jonah's 2nd edition POOT Guide.*
 Edit resume or picture
 What's new?
 Submit status update

Latest Activity Resume Gallery Following Wall

status update (June 27, 2010 22:46)
 I'm the account being used as a demo for Jonah's 2nd edition POOT Guide. (more)

Resume (June 06, 2010 20:28)
 I'm a brilliant guy, with a funny face. And might I add, I won the Nobel Prize and was asked to b... (more)

Comment (June 06, 2010 20:22)
 Show off. [1 response] (more)

Welcome, Albert Einstein! (demo game)

Logout
 Mailbox
 Foyer
 Featured
 Latest activity
 Announcements
 Speeches
 Polls

Great Hall
 Featured
 Recent posts
 Topics

Courtroom
 Featured
 Latest
 Justices
 Testimony
 Commitment

The Guest List is simply a page that shows you everyone who's registered to this season of POOT. You can choose to follow people (i. e. become friends with them), and if you click on a name, a profile comes up. (See the previous page.)

As you can see, the historical figures present can leave comments for each other, update their statuses, and work on their Resume, something I'll go more into detail about in a moment. Looking at that screenshot for a second, "Gallery" is for pictures and "Wall" is a place where people can write messages to each other, publicly viewable. It's not a coincidence if that sounds familiar - it's really hard to write this and not compare it excessively to a social network site.

The Great Hall

This is similar to discussion boards on the internet - one person posts a topic for discussion, and others can respond to it and to each other's comments, which can inspire some lively discussion. Later on I'll provide samples from fascinating discussions that I was a part of.

The Courtroom

This is where all the action of the POOT trial goes on. It is here that you can take a look at the panel of justices, assign votes of confidence, hear testimony, and more. I'll get more into this when I talk about the trial.

The Mailbox

This should be self-explanatory. My assumption is that if you're doing POOT, you have some idea of how email works.

The Green Room

This is my favorite page of POOT. Here you can relax and discuss the topics out of character (as in, talk about it with Jonah rather than Einstein). In theater, the green room is a room offstage where actors wait. It hasn't been used much (in the theater or on POOT), but with this new website (which is why the guide says 2nd edition on the front) that should change. Use it as much as you want, maybe I'll even see you there.

Sounds good! Now tell me about getting into character.

Well, given the nature of this project, you can see why it's important to get into character and stay there. Thankfully, there is a little device built into POOT to help you with this. One of the first things you must do the first time you log into POOT is write a "résumé", or bio, for your character, in your character's voice. These are the important bits:

- **Put as much factual information in as you can.** There are plenty of ways of doing this. You could tell it straight out (see example 1), hide the facts in the character's normal way of speaking (see example 2), or show it (by this I mean don't say "I'm known for having a bad temper", but write in an irritable tone instead). I would stick with the latter two, using the first only when necessary.
- **Speak the way your character speaks.** The Holden Caulfield example below is a good example of this. If your character has any famous quotes,

use them (as Atticus Finch, I referenced his statement about walking around in other people's shoes a lot).

- **Not too long, not too short.** Francisco Franco wrote a 12-paragraph (and I mean actual, long, complicated paragraphs) bio that, if I copied and pasted it here in this font and size, would go a good 3 or 4 pages. I don't think anyone read the whole thing, to be honest. On the other hand, Barack Obama's original résumé (before, I guess, his teacher made him change it) was: "I am Barack Obama. You are not." This isn't Wikipedia, or Twitter. 4 or 5 paragraphs should be about right.
- **Use your own words.** This should be obvious, but this isn't an assignment where you can get away with copying and pasting the Wikipedia article (and really, you should never do that).

If you want to, there's a tool to include a picture of your character. Make sure to check your facts and use books when you can (remember, anyone can put anything on the Internet, but only really smart people get published in the real world).

Both the examples below were written by people who participated in the Winter '08/ Spring '09 simulation. (The first one is more of a non-example, a trap people fall into, of writing a report-style article, just in first person. This makes absolutely no sense and doesn't read well. The second example is really good, in my opinion—if you've ever read *The Catcher in the Rye* you'll get it right away. If you haven't, well, this is one of those books you need to read—not because it's an assignment, but because it's a good book.)

Example 1 (beginning of Stonewall Jackson résumé):

Hello there. I am Thomas Jonathan Jackson, also known as Stonewall Jackson. I was born on January 21, 1842, in Clarksville, VA. My parents died when I was a child, so I had to go to an orphanage. It was very hard growing up there. Growing up, I wasn't the best student, but later on, I learned many things and became a great student.

Example 2 (beginning of Holden Caulfield résumé):

If you honestly expect me to write you some long as hell autobiography, you are sadly mistaken. Sure, I could tell you about my parents, two real nice folks who really want the best for me, sending me to all these fancy schools filled with phonies and hot-shots. I could tell you about my brother, DB whom lives in Hollywood, or my sister, Phoebe, sweet kid she is, lives back home with my parents, she's a real nice girl. I could even tell you about my brother Allie, poor sucker died, and I miss him pretty bad. But none of that has anything to do with me, it's nothing to do with my story.

Now, after you write the résumé, you may be tempted to just be done with it and not do anything the rest of the semester unless you have to. But listen: you're in school already. You have to be there. I'm willing to bet you'd rather be somewhere else right now. But why not make the most of it, as long as you're here? Get everything you can out of POOT while you have this unique opportunity.

Okay, I get that you want me to participate. But nothing's going on at the beginning! What do I do?

Depending on when you first log in, you may have to wait a couple weeks before POOT really gets off the ground. Until then, respond to the first topic, and email someone in the guest list.

Actually, the best way to do something that will quickly become interesting is to say something really controversial. If you're lucky, someone else on POOT will disagree and get into an argument with you.

Maybe that sounded a bit vague, or maybe you're confused. So I'm going to actually show the best example I have of the statement above.

Example 3: Finch vs. Franco (Flores v. the US Navy)

The second topic was something to the effect of "Have you ever made other people angry?" and Atticus Finch was quick to respond. (In these examples, anywhere you see ... it means that something unrelated, distracting, or redundant has been left out in this guide.)

Finch: Yes, certainly! Shortly before I left for the present-day alhambra, I lawed for Tom Robinson, a negro, the defendant in a rape case in which he was innocent. I will say that the majority of Maycomb, infected with their usual disease of racism, seemed to think I was breaking some [social] code, and many hated me for it. ... However, whatever social code I may have been breaking pales in comparison to the importance of making sure the truth was heard, even though, sadly, the jury's own racism prevented the men sitting in on it from believing him.

Francisco Franco wrote a response to this the Monday after. (Above was posted on a Thursday.)

Franco: Ah, truth-tellers. There are none so righteous as those self-appointed truth-tellers, and often there are none with as inflated an opinion of themselves as those who tell the "truth." Of course, truth is subjective, and it is often the self-appointed guardians of truth who jeopardize what would otherwise be a quite harmonious social order.

Lest there be any doubt, Mr. Finch, I am speaking to you.... I respect the personal risk that you took, Mr. Finch, but I worry that there may have been consequences to the social order that we do not know about, given that all we have is (you must allow) a quite reverential book about you, and your "heroism." Perhaps you are indeed a hero, sir, but when you impugn the honor of many of your fellow citizens (tossing around words like racism, ...), I am left to wonder if this is truly a story of justice served, or if it ultimately is one of ego served.

I had to think for a while about how to respond to that. I realized that if I wrote a big long thing publicly, I would only be proving his point, so I decided to email him about this instead. After that, a few people emailed me asking if I had read his post, so I decided to go public.

Finch: ... The social order about which you seem not to have read was warped with prejudice before the trial. Following the trial and Bob Ewell's attack, my defense of Tom Robinson can't have had a bad effect on the people. I do not deny the honor of my fellow citizens, as you claim I do, but I do deny that the trial was held in a completely unbiased environment.

(By the way, Mr. Franco, I don't think that in this situation you are very qualified to talk about ruining social order. The social order you helped to create was one of the most evil of our time; Maycomb pales in comparison.)

You claim that "it is often the self-appointed guardians of truth who jeopardize what would otherwise be a quite harmonious social order". I am a state-appointed lawyer who, if I did not tell the truth, would not deserve the respect that I seem to have. Whether I have earned it or not is up to each person to decide on their own.

I assure you, sir, that taking and defending the case I mentioned earlier had nothing to do with my ego or desire for social reform, but everything to do with what is MORALLY RIGHT. I have no desire or need to do anything hurtful to any person or social order, but when it is a question of morality, what is right comes before what is socially acceptable.

As for your question about the book: *To Kill a Mockingbird* is written from the viewpoint of my daughter; of course it will be "reverential". Toward the end of this book you can see that my choice to defend Mr. Robinson affected very few people negatively; Bob Ewell was one of them. ...

(Following this, Franco and I had a discussion/argument going on for the rest of the semester. I'll never know who played him, but I wish I did so I could thank them.)

But I read *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and I don't think Atticus would have said that.

First of all, congrats on reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*. But second, there's no right or wrong answer to the questions that go up on POOT. It's really up to you to decide exactly what your character would say, based on their past actions. Especially if there's only limited information about your person (like with Atticus), finding a concrete answer can be really hard. So, in my opinion, that's what Atticus would say. What you think might be different.

Right, so write your résumé and start an argument. How else can you get involved? Another great tool that can get a lot of attention is the button halfway down the Foyer page labeled "Make a speech". Example 4 shows part of one of the better speeches from the Winter/Spring '08 simulation.

Example 4: Israel as an Example (Eissa v. The State of Israel)

A friend of mine who played Elie Wiesel two years ago got a huge response when he made a speech about Israel. It's a little long so I put the most important part below:

This Darfuri family we will debate and judge upon has had a troubling life thus far, and it is our duty to give them respect, whether the government is involved or not. I feel, however, that they are the government's responsibility. A turn off for politicians is that they have to provide food, shelter, education, etc. They also believe this will give the other refugees the satisfaction that it is okay to come to Israel for safety. But we need to think of these people as just that, people. Not about what they require or how they might effect the will of others, but as people in need, no, a FAMILY in need. The reason I have [emphasized] family here is because they cannot be separated, or else their hopes and dreams for the near future will be abolished. The Torah and most LAWS [connote] fairness, equality, and a better life! For Israel needs to set an example, because yes, they cannot take in all of them or stop the violence. But this is a chance for Israel to shine as a nation, to be recognized as a peaceful, fair, and loving country.

(The only changes I made were corrections to spelling.) He got a bunch of responses and a bit of publicity in the Great Hall:

I was chatting with a young Israeli soldier who drove the Chief Magistrate up to Masada today, and who happened to hear Mr. Elie Wiesel's speech in which he

movingly spoke of Israel's special responsibility. She told me that though she greatly respects Mr. Wiesel, she was frankly getting tired of Israel being held up as an example.

"We will know that we have truly arrived as a nation," she told me, "when we are held to the same standards of justice as all other nations-- not higher ones. If we are held to a higher standard, it means that someone is waiting for us to prove that we truly belong."

So, what do you think?? Should Israel be held to a higher standard? Does she have a special responsibility??

That was the liveliest discussion in POOT for the rest of the semester.

How can you expect me to stay in character all the time? I have a life, you know.

No, you can be yourself most of the time. But one of the important things to learn is how to quickly slip in and out of your character's shoes, so to speak.

You probably have an email, MySpace, Facebook, or other kind of account on some other social network, discussion forum, etc. I keep "Gmail" and "Facebook" in Bookmarks in my web browser, and right next to them I have "POOT" (which links, by the way, to <http://poot.icsmich.org/>). During the summer I move this somewhere else, but when POOT starts I make sure it's a part of my routine. Check it at least twice a week and hopefully more, if only to scan your email and the recent posts.

What are some good sources for getting my information?

Try your library before anything else. I like the library because it forces you to take notes—in your own words. There's no chance of plagiarism this way. And if there's a copier, use it only as a last resort.

If you insist on the Internet, though, here are some good places:

- Google. I'm not kidding. Before you do anything else, Google your person's name.
- There are a few places in the Wikimedia foundation you can try:
- Wikipedia, **but only the external links at the bottom**. Don't use the actual article, because like it or not, there's a pretty good chance that parts of it are wrong. (<http://en.wikipedia.org>)
- Wikiquote. This is a much better source for our purposes. It contains a repository of quotations from the person that has never failed me (as far as being real goes). (<http://en.wikiquote.org>)
- Wikisource. This is a collection of documents about different people. My searches for "Albert Einstein", "George Washington", and a few others turned up good results. This may or may not be helpful. (<http://en.wikisource.org>)
- Google again, but now look for a biography. There are plenty of these. You may want to add "-site:amazon.com" exactly as written to your search to avoid search results from Amazon.
- World Book Encyclopedia or a similar service provided by your school or something. If you ever participated in a city spelling bee, that means you

won the school/local one and may have gotten a one-year subscription to Encyclopedia Britannica online. (That's the standard prize for local spelling bees, at least for the 2008-2009 school year.) You may still be able to use that. My middle school also had an account with something called InfOhio, which is more useful at some times than others. Another school I went to had an account with World Book that everyone could use. Ask your teacher, there may be something like that. (<http://www.worldbookonline.com>)

- If you know your character won a Nobel prize, there are excellent biographies of Nobel prize recipients at <http://nobelprizes.org>.
- And of course, that's just the beginning. As good as the Internet is for watching funny videos and such, it's even better for finding more information than you'll ever need, even for a thing like POOT.

So you mentioned a trial, how does that work?

The trial begins a little less than a month in, with an announcement in the Foyer. About 1 out of 10 participants will be selected as a justice to rule on the trial for a total of 12-15 justices. Each justice must post a legal philosophy, which is simply a statement on the perspective from which you are looking at the trial, and it's a good idea to go public and post a lot. Anyone who agrees with them can give them a "vote of confidence", and once a justice has twelve, they see a new button in the courtroom that they can click on to rule on the case. When approximately 2/3 of the justices have voted one way, that is the resolution to the trial and POOT is over.

The way I see it, guests who aren't justices have just as much of a responsibility as guests who are justices. You have to realize this when the trial starts, because you may find yourself tempted to stop just because you're not a justice. But if you remember what you learned in a Social Studies class some time ago, the people of the US only vote for what their representative in the electoral college should vote for, not the actual outcomes of the vote. The guest/justice system in POOT works in a similar way, only your vote has more of an impact.

Then toward the end, after the justices have read every bit of information², they will make a final vote on the outcome, and when a real majority votes one way, the trial is over.

By this time, classes at U of M will probably be over (they were in my experience), and so, to be honest, it won't really matter too much how often you check it. But I recommend sticking around until whenever school ends for you, talking in the green room if it's open, and so on. It doesn't do anything for your grade, I know, but there's more to education than grades, and this is one of those things that can be very helpful to you the more you do it.

Wait—what? How can this possibly be so helpful?

A friend and I (the friend who played Elie Wiesel) put together a short video about POOT a little over a year ago—we were asked to by the professors at Michigan—and he made a

² And really, if you become a justice, please take this seriously. Actually read every bit of information and vote thoughtfully.

little list about the things that POOT causes you to think about/the jobs it prepares you for. Here is the quote from the video:

“Even though we felt the simulation was actually fun, what makes it so worthwhile is the... lessons it brings to the table. It involves research, critical thinking, individual history, anthropology, persuasive writing, the usage of the Internet, and even more.”

That’s the best, shortest summary of POOT there is.

But here’s a real-life example of where this comes in handy: My first assignment in my freshman English/History classes (which are not involved in POOT) involved working with a partner to write an interview for some historical figure from the Enlightenment age. A fellow POOT nerd—excuse me, POOT *enthusiast*—and I wrote an interview where I was Galileo being interviewed by Larry King. POOT gave us both the researching skills and creative resources to be able to pull this together really well.

Also, now that I’m in my second half of high school, I’m hearing some phrases that either are or will soon be familiar to you: “On the AP [test], you’ll need to write an essay that...” or “You’ll need these research/essay writing skills for next year when...”, etc. Very often it’s something I can already do, thanks to POOT. This guide, even, only needed to be written once (aside from the updated website), thanks to the skills POOT gave me.

In short, you get extra advantages other people won’t get. And better yet, you get them without spending hours and hours studying. It doesn’t take studying to be able to quickly write paragraphs and paragraphs of organized persuasive writing on the fly. It takes practice. And POOT is the perfect place to get that practice.

I have one last question.

If your school is participating in the simulation (which I assume it is if you’re reading this), then if you have any questions, ask your teacher. If you have a question that your teacher can’t answer but someone at Michigan can, the email address to write to is info@ics.soe.umich.edu. This will put you in touch with Jeff Stanzler, who is more or less in charge of the simulation, but just one of the many amazing people who make this possible. (For more such people, see the next page.) Similarly, if you have any questions that absolutely must go to me (and I can’t imagine what kind of question would be like that) feel free to email me at jonahrr@gmail.com.

So I hope you enjoy POOT. Just remember: Participate, treat it as a project rather than an assignment, participate, do a lot of writing and pre-writing, participate, and have fun with it!

Acknowledgements

You can't possibly have done this all by yourself.

You're right. Although the writing is all mine, the work is not. There are a bunch of people who made this possible. Professors Jeff Stanzler, Michael Fahy, and Jeff Kupperman run most of what goes on with POOT, as well as have a couple of classes at Michigan who participate as mentors, and without those three, POOT would not be the educational, entertaining simulation it is today. Jeff Stanzler, especially, gave me a lot of help with this guide and it's thanks to him that you're reading this now. I'd like to also thank Dr. Miriam Raider-Roth at the University of Cincinnati for feedback and support with this guide, and for getting me to actually finish this guide even after I started drowning in homework. Thanks also to Zach (Elie Wiesel), Anna (Holden Caulfield), Jake (Stonewall Jackson), and the unknown Francisco Franco, all of whose work I sampled in this guide, and Aaron (Machiavelli) and Joe (Napoleon), who I met in Ann Arbor after writing the *first* edition of this guide. We had some really interesting conversations about POOT and redesigning the website, and they were my inspiration for this edition of the guide. Of course, I could go on and on, and list the names of everyone involved with the project, like all the amazing mentors and teachers who facilitate this experience, like Jon D'Angelo, Abbi Gee, and Elaine Kaplan (three POOT teachers I met personally). Thank you all.

Jeez, I just put in page numbers. I didn't realize how much I wrote until I noticed this is page 13. It says here I wrote about 5800 words or 128 paragraphs, which is more than I've written collectively since the end of the last school year (from May to August). So especially, thanks to you, the student who has just finished reading this long guide, for making all my work worthwhile by actually reading it, and for helping your education more than you can guess by participating in POOT.