Papers, Please

Summary

Papers, Please is a puzzle game set in a fictional Eastern Bloc-like country named Arstotzka in 1982. Players take on the role of immigration inspector in an until-recently contested border town, processing entrants over the course of a month. The game presents players with daily moral choices. For example, one can allow a suffering immigrant into Arstotzka at the expense of receiving a citation and fine or choose to adhere to the law and keep their own family safe and healthy at the possible expense of another individual. This mechanic allows language learners to explore the impacts of the different choices they make in conversation with entrants, and the 20 possible endings allow players to experiment over multiple playthroughs. If you like retro games and 8-bit style, the art will thrill you!

Papers, Please can be useful in the language learning classroom in many ways. Because of the nature/content of the game (non-sexual nudity, graphic pixelated violence), it is better suited for high school age learners and up, at various proficiency levels. Learners can make use of the many contextual clues the game offers for negotiating meaning, and they will benefit from explicit instruction regarding looking for and using contextual clues.

Platform and cost

Steam (PC/Mac/Linux) - $9.99
iPad (iOS) - $7.99
PS Vita (PlayStation Store) - $9.99

Available languages

English
Italian
Polish
Russian
Brazilian Portuguese
Japanese
French
German
Spanish