Defence Academy of the UK

Wargaming

Op THUNDERSTRIKE





HISTORY

We have delivered the **Op THUNDERSTRIKE wargaming campaign** in DCLC for nine years. Over that time, it has evolved into a large-scale language-training campaign, consistently highlighted as a productive and motivating aspect of ELW courses in InVal feedback.

In 2022, **Op THUNDERSTRIKE** was awarded the Defence Academy Entrepreneurs' Prize for Innovation. In 2025, it was given a dedicated space at the Defence Academy.



SLP LEVELS AND OVERVIEW



- We deliver the **four-mission campaign** at **SLP1, SLP2 and SLP3** levels. Each mission involves a full day of language training.
- There is a full set of pre- and post-gaming materials, including *mission audio briefs, reading texts on terrain features, post-gaming incident reports and follow-up discussion lessons.*
- Sessions last approximately **1–2 hours**.
- Each mission is divided into **four rounds**.
- A maximum of **10 students per force**.
- Forces remain either **insurgents** or **military** personnel throughout the campaign.
- At the end of each round, both forces receive feedback on their use of the target language and are awarded points for accuracy.
- Our sessions directly correlate with our examination tasks.

STORYLINE



The campaign follows an overarching storyline, with each force pursuing distinct objectives. As forces explore the terrain, they encounter characters through role-play activities and complete video-based listening tasks featuring informants and contacts, which drive the narrative forward. Teams can collect items to assist their progress.

GAMEPLAY AND VOCAB CARDS

- There are two basic rules:
- **Movement** using dice.
- **Combat** using dice.



Additionally:

- **Cards** can be collected throughout the sessions to gradually introduce new vocabulary. Each card has an in-game function, with simple rules printed on it.
- Forces must place a player figure on a card before turning it over to reveal the item.

GAMEPLAY

Here, students have found a card to assist them.
The rules are printed on the card.



HOW EACH ROUND RUNS

1. Both groups plan their actions.
2. Both teams roll a dice. The team with the highest score speaks first and then enacts its decisions (usually involving two students speaking).
3. The other group then explains its plan and enacts its decisions (usually involving two students speaking).
4. Both sides discuss the opposing group's previous actions.
5. Finally, language feedback is provided, and points are awarded and recorded on the whiteboard.

Additionally, students are awarded bonus points for completing mission objectives, e.g. rescuing civilians or meeting a contact.

A VIDEO OF GAMEPLAY



- This video shows students using Op THUNDERSTRIKE for the first time.

- The students have already completed two pre-gaming lessons:

  - The mission audio brief.

  - A reading lesson on terrain features.

- The target language (TL) includes **future tenses**, **descriptions** and **past simple**.

A VIDEO OF GAMEPLAY

This footage is from Round 2 and starts after the group discussion part has taken place. In this round students advance, collect a card and attempt to cross an area containing considerable rubble. Suggestions for dealing with unexpected group decisions, e.g. crossing rubble, climbing a building are provided in the lesson plans/scenario book.

THE FUTURE



A complete boxed set containing all the components, rules and guidance needed to create your own scenarios and campaigns.