

why this game exists

A **cliché** is a phrase which has been used so many times that we no longer think about the words it's made up of, or what they mean, or what they mean when you put them together. Clichés have become such a staple of nearly all journalism that we barely even notice when journalists use them any more. In fact, we almost expect them to use them – in their headlines, in their analysis, in their tweets and blog posts.

But using clichés is **lazy and irresponsible journalism**. Lazy because a cliché is a short-cut used instead of thinking, and irresponsible because a cliché conveys an impression or an opinion without actually having any content. They make you think you know what's happening, but don't actually tell you what's happening.

The level of anger and extent of direct action at the **UK student protests** on November 10th 2010 were a massive surprise to many – though not to anyone who'd been keeping track of growing public anger about the coalition government's ideology-driven economic cuts. But public understanding of what happened was hampered by the media – print, broadcast and online – and its endless, inevitable, tragicomic over-reliance on the clichés of protest.

Once again we were treated to a **misleading narrative** in which a “peaceful protest” was “hijacked” by a “tiny minority” of people “only there to cause trouble”. This tired story tells us nothing of who did what, and why, and what the wide range of different people who were there thought about it. Everything gets blanketed over by the false dichotomy of “legitimate protesters” and “mindless anarchists”. I made this game, so that next time, at least, we would have something to do while being shamelessly patronised.

lexicon

<i>mindless anarchists only here to cause trouble professional troublemakers intent on violence (bonus points if linked to "tiny minority" or "small hard core")</i>	Used to deny that direct action and civil disobedience are considered and valuable forms of protest.	<i>tiny minority actions of a few (bonus points if linked to one of the phrases on left or below)</i>	Used to create polarised narrative and cover up a spectrum of beliefs and approaches.
<i>middle-class jobs / thugs spoiled kids (bonus points for "tarquins and jocastas")</i>	Used to separate protesters from the disempowered working class, regardless of actual protest demographics	<i>spoiled it for everyone else undermined/overshadowed legitimate protest hijacked / infiltrated</i>	Heard from liberal participants who paradoxically weaken their message by claiming that others have weakened it.
<i>descended into violence marred by violence violence erupted turned ugly ugly scenes</i>	Terms which provide no detail while editorialising on action. But what happened, how, and why?	<i>alienate the public (bonus points for "doing politicians' work for them")</i>	What it is claimed violent protest does. But no-one asks the public, whoever they are.
<i>utterly condemn (bonus points for "abhor")</i>	Heard from liberal participants who deny the value of a diversity of tactics.	<i>property damage equated with violence</i>	The worst and most common cliché, hence the centre spot. Whenever property damage occurs, the whole protest will be washed over as “violent”.
<i>male/female images</i>	Heteronormative ideals of gender reinforced by protest photographers.	<i>placard images</i>	Two squares for protesters who've seen them once too often.