

# W.O.W. FACTOR

## Words Of Wisdom for FPS Coaches and Students

### THE CHALLENGE OF WRITING CHALLENGES

#### WHAT MAKES A GOOD CHALLENGE?

- **RELEVANCE** -- For a challenge to be scored relevant, it should have a strong chance of occurring given the facts in the Future Scene (FS). Your challenge should be about the specific Future Scene you are working on, *not just generically about the topic.*
- **CLARITY** -- Your evaluator should be able to read what you wrote and tell exactly what you mean. The cause/challenge/consequence format is a good one to use in Step 1. However, the cause, challenge and consequence should all have *logical* relationships that make sense. It's best to use an event from the Future Scene or *relevant* research as the cause.
- **CONCISENESS** -- You should be able to express your idea in two or three sentences. One sentence is usually not enough; more than three is usually too much and tends to confuse the issue.
- **GOING BEYOND THE FS** -- Don't simply repeat information presented in the FS. Think of a logical consequence.



#### EXAMPLES OF COMMON CHALLENGE ERRORS

##### Incorrect reading of the FS

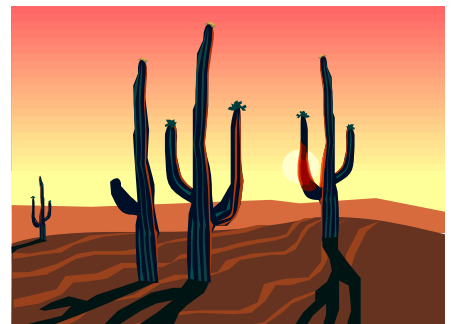
- Because of intellectual property roadblocks, some land may not be available. As a result, land may not be able to be restored. (*Intellectual property is not land.*)
- Since the Great Green Wall initiative needs so many resources, land, and money, it cannot reach all needy areas. Large amounts of money are being spent on it while the plan itself cannot help all areas. This may limit the effectiveness of it and reduce the work of reversing desertification. (*The Great Green Wall has already been implemented in China, and we don't know how much money or resources were needed.*)

##### Not relating a challenge to the FS

- Since people did a lot of construction, kids can trip over equipment playing sports. As a result, the kids' parents could sue the construction company, and the kids could get seriously injured. (*What people, kids, or sports?*)
- Since desertification is such a big problem and attracts so much attention, other topics may be neglected. As a result, these other topics, such as ocean soup and social isolation may worsen. (*Stick to the issues in the FS and this topic, not topics of the past.*)

##### Simply repeating facts presented in the FS

- Not all countries are participating in AAP. Therefore, these countries continue to engage in poor land management practices, leading to the spread of desertification.
- The relationship between the AAP and the African political bodies is tense. Therefore, desertification will spread. (*Both have a word-for-word cause with a consequence that simply restates the topic.*)



## **Making assumptions about things not stated in the FS**

- Factories that make drones will release more CO<sub>2</sub>. This will affect the environment by heating it up and causing desertification to encroach lands faster. *(FS did not present facts that make this seem plausible.)*

## **Extreme consequences that lessen the likelihood of occurrence**

- If the crops die, the farmers will get no money. Consequently, the farmers will die. *(“No money” and “die” make this seem unlikely.)*
- Since solutions to combat desertification exist but have not been shared, countries may lose trust in each other. As a result, wars may be started and total destruction will result. *(War and total destruction seem unlikely.)*



## **Not likely**

- Since gel phones adhere to skin, the phones may not come off. As a result, the person wearing it may permanently have a phone stuck to them. *(Why would the company market/sell them if they stuck to a person permanently? More likely that product testing prior to marketing would have dealt with this issue.)*

## **Cause/challenge/consequence not logical**

- People can't create nice architecture because of deforestation. Therefore, nobody will see anything pretty, so they might not be very happy. *(How does nice architecture relate to deforestation?)*
- Because Africa is right on tectonic plates, it may be at risk for earthquakes. As a result, the rate of desertification there might increase. *(How does an earthquake increase the rate of desertification?)*

## **Vagueness of terms/need an example**

- Since few workers can implement solutions, some very important and needed solutions may not be put into action. As a result, certain problems may not be solved. *(What solutions? What problems?)*
- If drones are hacked, there could be dire consequences. *(What consequences?)*
- Since the AAP members seem to ignore rumors of hacking and transmission failures, they may take risks that should not be taken. As a result, they may get themselves into a situation that they don't know how to get out of. *(What type of risks or situation?)*



## **What's the problem?**

- Since the Great Green Wall in China is now known to be successful, it may become a role model to other countries. As a result, it will hopefully spread to other places. *(Sounds like a good thing – what's the challenge?)*

## **EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENT CHALLENGES**

### **Strong relationship to the FS with excellent use of cause/challenge/consequence**

- Since there are many African countries participating in the AAP, language barriers could exist. Consequently, ideas for sustainable land management techniques and new technologies might not reach everyone, thus stifling the progress to reduce or reverse desertification.
- African political bodies are taking cuts from the AAP, leaving them with less money to implement good solutions. As a result, the AAP may have to be more choosy over which solutions they implement, since money may have the final say over what can be implemented. Some potentially good projects may have to be sacrificed.
- Some Africans are relocating from rural communities to urban areas. If new farming strategies and technologies are accepted and need to be implemented in those rural communities, it may be hard to provide incentives for the workforce to return.
- Many places in Africa suffer “under the shadow of drought and desertification”. This could affect the tourism industry, as fewer people may wish to vacation in such an area.
- Dislocation or relocation of large populations to different areas within Africa may lead to cultural and other social conflicts. This could negatively impact a united effort to deal with desertification in Africa.
- DSD transmission failures may cause inaccurate data to be reported. The AAP may implement a solution based on faulty data, which may not really be suitable for a particular area. Therefore, precious time and money will have been wasted.



## Good show of research

- The Future Scene states that genetically modified drought-resistant solutions are available. Some research has shown that plants produced from genetic engineering may be detrimental to one's health. If the AAP uses such plants in Africa, there could be unfortunate physical consequences for those who consume them.
- If desertification and its problems continue in Africa, mass migrations may occur to areas that are not desertified. This may lead to overcrowding in those areas, resulting in more competition for available resources. (*Mass migration was listed in the resource manual's terms and definitions.*)
- In the U.S. Dust Bowl of the 1930s, there were almost night-like conditions in the afternoons due to all the dust. If desertification continues in Africa, this same situation could occur in many regions. Lack of sunlight may affect one's mood in the form of SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder).
- We learned that in Niger, a drought-ridden country, school-aged children often have the task of finding water, which means they are often late to school, fall asleep during school, or don't attend school at all. This could also occur in many of the African countries that are experiencing desertification.



## Original twist

- Since the drones are placed all over the regions to take data, they may interfere with the local farmers' privacy. As a result, the local farmers may protest against the idea of drones, which might limit the data received about the region.
- Since the AAP has triennial meetings (middle/senior FS), there may be long gap times between starting projects and follow-up meetings to make sure things are going well and as planned. By the time they do meet, there may be many issues to discuss and not enough time to do so adequately.



## SOME FINAL SUGGESTIONS

Now that you've analyzed a number of challenge examples, go back and take a look at your desertification booklet.

- Analyze every challenge that wasn't scored relevant and see if you can determine why your evaluator made his/her decision.
- Practice rewriting each of those challenges so that they would be considered relevant.
- Reread the Future Scene and see if you can think of challenges that hadn't occurred to you before. Think through the list of categories to suggest possible challenges. Practice writing up those new challenges.
- As you prepare for the qualifying problem on Surveillance Society, whenever you come upon a problem mentioned or suggested in your research, practice writing it up as a challenge. An example: is shown below.

- **Article:** "You are being watched" by Kris Slims, *Toronto Sun*, February 25, 2012:
- **Information:** Researchers from Cornell & the University of Michigan are creating cyborgs resembling insects and other elements of nature as tiny surveillance devices. For example, the Nano Hummingbird looks like a creature of nature, but is actually remote-controlled with live streaming capabilities and an on-board microphone.
- **Challenge:** Researchers have created cyborgs that look like bugs, but are actually tiny, remote controlled surveillance devices that have a microphone and live streaming capabilities. A Nano Hummingbird is one example. Therefore, someone could be watched and recorded, and he/she might not have any clue that it is occurring, thinking that the device is just a harmless bug.

