

Yes

The first round of Act II asked for one word. It took four reels, four days and five million views to get it done exactly.

THIS IS	PART OF	STATUS
PAPER 002 · A FINDING	THE GAME · ACT II, ROUND 1	FILED · V1 · 31 AUG 2026
SOURCE	PLATFORM COUNT · 31 AUG 2026	
5	5.2M	494,000
15 to 19 Mar 2026		
POSTS	VIEWS	COMMENTS
	DATES	

IN PLAIN WORDS

In March 2026 we asked an Instagram audience to comment one word: YES. Nothing was offered for it. No prize, no reason, no account of what YES agreed to. The same instruction was posted four times over four days. The first three attempts failed. The fourth, with the rule tightened to “YES, once”, passed.

The thread that carried the round holds 154,480 comments from 113,180 distinct people, counted when the round closed. 101,709 of those comments are the word YES and nothing else. 46,970 ignored the instruction and wrote anyway. And the single most liked comment in the whole round, ten minutes in, was a refusal.

That is one reel, on one day. The round was five posts: four attempts and the pass, and by the count the platform reports on 31 August 2026 they have drawn 5.2 million views and 494,000 comments. Attempt 1 alone drew 1.67 million views and 198,064 comments, more comments than the thread the pass was declared on. The exact-YES analysis runs on attempt 3 because the archive holds that thread whole (154,480 comments, the same number the ledger filed) and holds only 8,882 of attempt 1. Every post in the round is tabled at the end of the paper.

This paper is about two things the count shows. A crowd will do a small exact thing for no stated reason, but only once the thing has become the obvious move. And the same crowd that complies will put the one person who refused on top.

THE QUESTION WE ASKED

The posted pass condition was one word, once, from enough people to matter. The hypothesis underneath it was simpler still: will strangers perform the cheapest possible public act, exactly as asked, with

nothing offered in return?

WHAT WE DID

- **Instruction:** “Comment YES. Once.” Attempt 4 tightened the rule to YES once, with repeated entries discarded.
- **Where:** Instagram. Four posts on four consecutive days, 15 to 18 March 2026. The thread that carried the round is the attempt 3 post, which ran to 154,480 comments.
- **Who:** the ordinary audience of the account plus whoever the platform showed the post to. 113,180 distinct people commented on the carrying thread.
- **How we counted:** every comment on the thread, replies included (40,411 of the 154,480 are replies). A comment counted as exact if its text was YES and nothing else. Comments that contained YES with other words were counted separately. Everything else counted as ignoring the rule.
- **Why one thread carries the exact count:** exactness is a reading of each comment’s text, and the platform reports totals, not text. Only the comment archive has text, and it holds attempt 3 whole (all 154,480 comments at round time) and slices of the other four posts. Table 1 is the whole thread; Table 3 runs the same rule on every post’s slice with the coverage stated.
- **Two clocks:** the exact-YES count is the carrying thread as it stood when the round closed, which is the count the ledger filed and the pass was declared on. The platform totals in The whole round are from the Instagram API on 31 August 2026 and have kept growing since the round.

WHAT HAPPENED

TABLE 1. What 154,480 comments on the attempt 3 thread contained. This is the one thread the archive holds whole.

COMMENT	COUNT	SHARE OF THREAD
YES, exactly	101,709	66%
YES plus something else	1,787	1%
Ignored the rule	46,970	30%
Comments on the thread	154,480	113,180 people

TABLE 2. Shares of the 154,480 comments on the carrying thread, with 95 percent intervals.

MEASURE	COUNT	OF	SHARE	95% INTERVAL
YES, exactly	101,709	154,480	65.8%	65.6% to 66.1%
YES plus something else	1,787	154,480	1.2%	1.1% to 1.2%
Ignored the rule	46,970	154,480	30.4%	30.2% to 30.6%

At this size the intervals are narrow to the point of formality. The uncertainty that matters here is not sampling; it is that the count includes 40,411 replies and that the crowd changed between attempts.

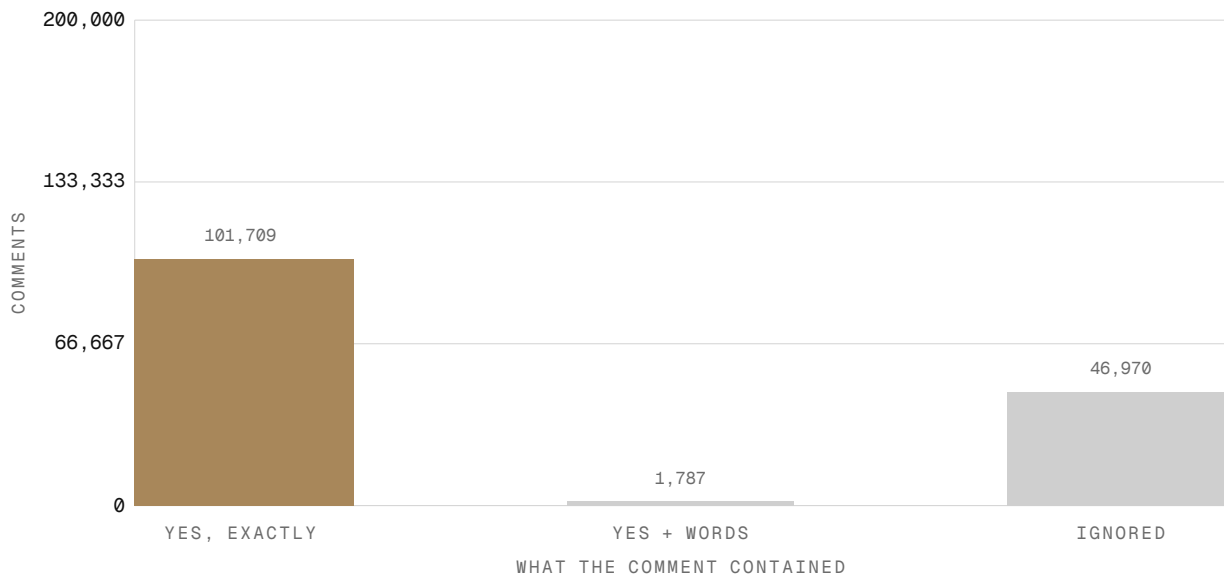


FIGURE 1. The three kinds of comment on the carrying thread. Exact compliance is the accented bar.

TABLE 3. The same rule run on every post in the round, on what the archive holds of each.

POST	ARCHIVED OF PLATFORM COMMENTS	EXACT YES IN THE ARCHIVE
Attempt 1 · 15 March	8,882 of 198,064 (4%)	5,337 · 60%
Attempt 2 · 16 March	13,136 of 61,652 (21%)	7,137 · 54%
Attempt 3 · 17 March	154,480 of 186,251 (83%; whole at round time)	101,076 · 65%
Attempt 4 · 18 March, YES once	13,785 of 40,189 (34%)	8,568 · 62%
Pass declared · 19 March, no YES asked	7,466 of 7,552 (99%)	917 · 12%
Five posts	197,749 of 493,708 (40%)	

The exact count is a reading of text, so it can only be taken where the text exists. The archive kept attempt 3 whole and slices of the others, and the slices are mostly what arrived after 17 March, not the first wave. Run on those slices the rule lands at 54 to 62 percent, close to the 65 to 66 percent of the whole thread, and the pass post, which asked for nothing, lands at 12 percent. The round-time figure of 101,709 and this re-count of 101,076 differ by the trimming rule; both are reported.

The room took four days to do one word correctly. The instruction did not change between the failures and the pass except for the word “once”. What changed was that the crowd had seen the instruction three times.

Ten minutes into the largest round on record, a player answered it with Nuh uh and a chair emoji. That comment reached 3,151 likes, the most of any participant comment in the round. Only the rules post itself scored higher. Two thirds of the room did as asked and then voted the one refusal to the top.

Open the replies under it and the room turns on itself. The three most liked replies, as they stood on the day we captured them, all tell the commenter to delete it: 1,211 likes on the top one, 405 and 235 on the next two. The people who put the refusal on top and the people demanding its removal are the same thread, minutes apart.

WHAT IT MEANS

Participation is cheap, precision is dear, and repetition buys precision. The same instruction failed three times and then passed, unchanged.

The first three attempts did not fail because people would not comment. They failed because people would not comment exactly. Writing YES costs nothing; writing only YES, once, requires reading the rule and accepting that the rule is the point. On the fourth day the rule had become the obvious move, and the crowd made it so by watching itself not make it three times.

The second result is the one the count was not designed to catch. The crowd that complied crowned the refusal, and then, in the replies, told the refuser to delete it. Compliance, applause for disobedience, and a demand to erase it came from the same hands, in the same hour. A comment section is a voting machine as well as a reply box, and the two votes do not have to agree.

The 46,970 off-rule comments matter for a different reason. To the platform they are activity, and activity is what the platform rewards. So the same thread reads as a pass or a failure depending on which number you quote. The record prints both.

WHAT THIS DOES NOT SHOW

- **Four attempts is not a clean repetition test.** The audience grew between attempts and the fourth post tightened the wording, so repetition and the word “once” cannot be separated in this data.
- **The count includes replies.** 40,411 of the 154,480 comments are replies to other comments. The exact-YES count is a count of comments, not of people, though 113,180 distinct people is on the record.
- **The thread kept growing.** The archive now holds 114,069 top-level comments on the carrying reel and the platform reports 186,251 comments in total. The exact-YES share of everything written since the round closed is not in the ledger and this paper does not estimate it.
- **We do not know why the refusal was liked.** It may have been the joke, the emoji, or the refusal. The count only shows that it was.

WHAT WE WOULD RUN NEXT

Every round after this one narrowed the instruction until exactness itself was the thing being measured. By Round 8, one wrong character on one comment could cost the whole wall. Those rounds are the follow-ups, and their papers sit beside this one.

THE WHOLE ROUND

The round this paper reads is 5 posts, not one. Every post is below with the platform’s numbers and what the comment archive holds of each.

POST	DATE	VIEWS	REACH	COMMENTS	ARCHIVED
Attempt 1	2026-03-15	1,666,774	1,045,973	198,064	8,882
Attempt 2	2026-03-16	424,427	240,251	61,652	13,136
Attempt 3, the carrying thread	2026-03-17	2,732,690	1,732,015	186,251	154,480
Attempt 4, YES once	2026-03-18	226,987	134,569	40,189	13,785
Pass declared	2026-03-19	190,269	102,154	7,552	7,466
THE ROUND		5,241,147	3,254,962	493,708	197,749

Views, reach and comments are the platform’s figures from the Instagram API, snapshot 2026-08-31, and keep growing. The reach total adds each post’s reach and overlaps between posts, so it is not a count of distinct people. Archived is the number of comments the archive holds for the post; ingestion is selective, so a gap between the two columns is expected and is stated wherever it changes a count in the paper.

IN THE RECORD

The round is filed in the Chronicle as THE YES ROUND, ◇029. Its law, participation is cheap and precision is dear, is the rule every later round was built to test.

THE POSTS, AS ISSUED

The instruction as it went out: the reel frame beside the caption, captured from the operation’s own signed-in account. What the paper counts is the answer to exactly this.



**kinggwuu_** 
Original audio

**kinggwuu_**  23w
ALGORITHM GAME — ACT II Round 1

Attempt 3

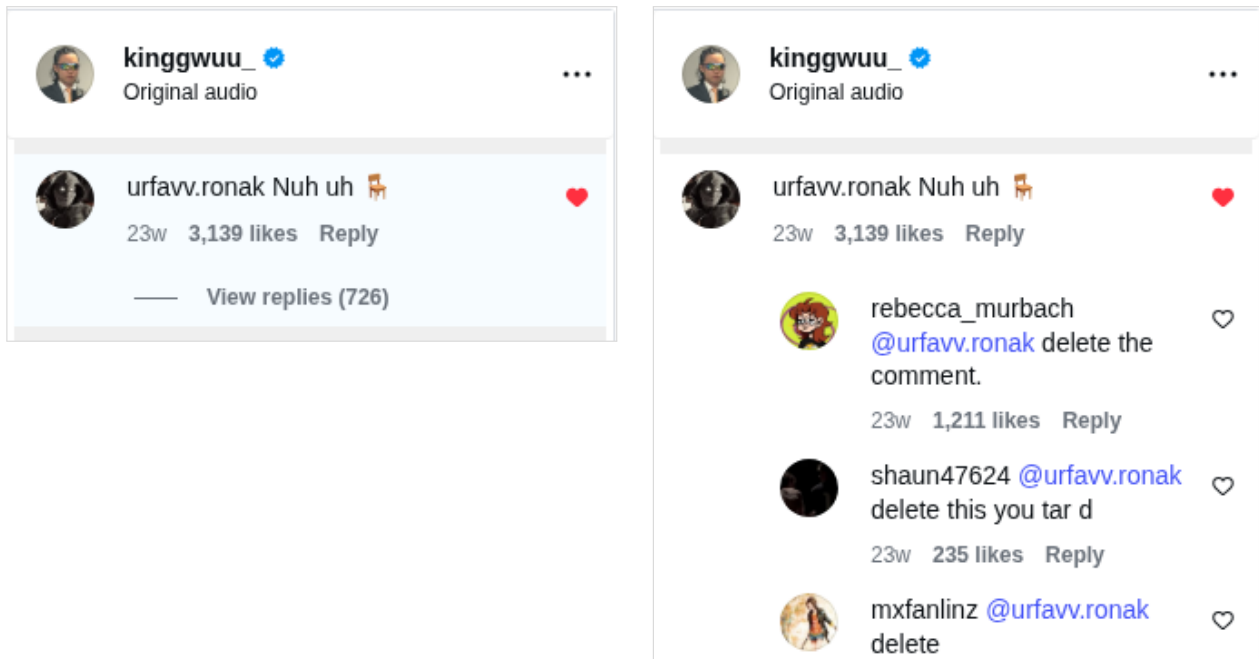
Comment YES. Nothing else.

If it breaks... fix it.



THE RECEIPTS

Native captures of the comments this paper leans on, taken from the operation’s own signed-in account on 31 Aug 2026. Handles and like counts are as they stood that day; the numbers in the paper are the round-time count.



METHOD NOTE

- **Source of truth:** the round ledger (Act II, Round 1) as filed on the round record, with the counts witnessed at the time of the round.
- **Exact comment:** text equal to YES and nothing else. YES with other words counted separately.
- **No outside baseline is cited.** We do not know of a comparable public count of exact one-word compliance at this scale, so this paper stands on its own numbers.

SOURCES, BY LINK

- 01 Attempt 1 · 2026-03-15 · https://www.instagram.com/reel/DV6FLxjCR6_/
- 02 Attempt 2 · 2026-03-16 · <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DV8YGZGCU8G/>
- 03 Attempt 3, the carrying thread · 2026-03-17 · <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DV-8otyifAc/>
- 04 Attempt 4, YES once · 2026-03-18 · <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DWBjQuRCU08/>
- 05 Pass declared · 2026-03-19 · <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DWEPKywiRSt/>

WHERE THE NUMBERS COME FROM

POST-LEVEL COUNTS

Views, reach, comments, likes, shares and saves per post come from the Instagram Graph API (Meta), read with the operation's own access token for its own business account. Each paper states the date of the snapshot it uses. These are the platform's counts of events, not of people: one person can view a reel twice and comment ten times, and the counts keep growing after a round closes.

COMMENT TEXT

The comment archive is the operation's own database of public comments on its own posts, pulled through the Instagram Graph API comments endpoint and stored with the comment id, username, text, like count, timestamp and whether it is a reply. Ingestion is selective: the most engaged posts were backfilled and recent posts are pulled daily, so some posts are held whole and others only in part. Every paper states how much of each post the archive holds. Every count that reads text (exact matches, categories, keyword themes) is run as a read-only script against this archive, and the scripts are in the repository beside the paper data.

THE ROUND LEDGER

For Act II rounds, the counts filed on The Game's round record at the time each round closed. Where a paper uses a ledger figure it says so, and where the archive re-count differs from the ledger both numbers are shown.

RECEIPTS

Every comment and post shown as evidence is a native capture from the operation's own signed-in Instagram session, taken by opening the exact permalink, with the source URL, a description, the rights basis and a file hash recorded in a manifest that is checked on every build of the site. Nothing shown is recreated, retyped or edited beyond cropping to the post header and the comment.

STATISTICS

Shares carry Wilson 95 percent intervals: the range the share would land in 19 times out of 20 if the same count were taken on a fresh crowd of the same size. Differences between two shares carry a Wald interval. Where a study is cited as a baseline, its own reported figure and sample size are used.

WHAT NONE OF THIS CAN SEE

No demographics beyond what people typed. No view durations. No private messages. No comments that were deleted before the archive pulled them. No way to verify that a self-report is true. Every paper's limits section names the specific things its count cannot show.