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Dulwich College | 2025

Trains

A Level Computer Science: Component 3

Table of Contents

[Analysis 3](#_Toc169615725)

[Problem Identification 3](#_Toc169615726)

[Stakeholders 3](#_Toc169615727)

[X Interview 3](#_Toc169615728)

[Form 1 3](#_Toc169615729)

[Justification 4](#_Toc169615730)

[Requirements 4](#_Toc169615731)

[Must 4](#_Toc169615732)

[Should 4](#_Toc169615733)

[Could 4](#_Toc169615734)

[Won’t 4](#_Toc169615735)

[Research 5](#_Toc169615736)

[OpenTTD 5](#_Toc169615737)

[YouTube Tutorials 8](#_Toc169615738)

[Python Games 8](#_Toc169615739)

[Themes 9](#_Toc169615740)

[Solution 9](#_Toc169615741)

[Potential Design Ideas 9](#_Toc169615742)

[Design 10](#_Toc169615743)

[Interface 10](#_Toc169615744)

[Data Structures 10](#_Toc169615745)

[Algorithms 10](#_Toc169615746)

[Decomposition 10](#_Toc169615747)

[Solution 10](#_Toc169615748)

[Testing Approach 10](#_Toc169615749)

[Implementation 11](#_Toc169615750)

[Iterative Process & Comments 11](#_Toc169615751)

[Iteration 1 11](#_Toc169615752)

[Error 1 11](#_Toc169615753)

[Iteration 2 11](#_Toc169615754)

[Iteration 3 11](#_Toc169615755)

[Testing 12](#_Toc169615756)

[Executed Test Plan 12](#_Toc169615757)

[Evaluation 13](#_Toc169615758)

[Testing 13](#_Toc169615759)

[Solution 13](#_Toc169615760)

[Product 13](#_Toc169615761)

[Maintenance & Development 13](#_Toc169615762)

Analysis

# Problem Identification

There is an innumerable selection of games available to play, but I know from playing some of the most popular games for teenagers myself that they are usually very addictive. Though I do not necessarily enjoy playing the most popular games (notably first person shooters or action-adventure games) I do enjoy the puzzle and problem solving aspect of other games such as sudoku. It would make sense, therefore, that I develop a game which suits this preference, and find suitable stakeholders who agree too—motivation is a huge factor to consider when developing this project.

Without a doubt, the most obvious project that suits the brief would be a game.

# Stakeholders

Finding a stakeholder for my game was relatively simple. One of my peers (X) plays many many strategy and puzzler games and they have agreed to be the stakeholder for my project.

This game will be developed for casual gamers who enjoy problem solving.

## X Interview

To begin with, I asked X a series of questions to gauge their interest and develop an initial idea of the requirements.

**What, in your opinion, makes a game interesting?**

**What is your favourite problem-solving-oriented game, and why?**

**What makes a game stand out for you?**

**What does gaming mean to you? Why do you game?**

**What’s the main emotion you feel after you have finished gaming—is it mainly enjoyment or sense of achievement?**

As well as the initial interview, X and I will have regular weekly meetings to update him on the progress of the project. His feedback will inform my next stage of development, and this ensures that all work carried out it in line with his requirements.

## Form 1

In early 2024, I sent out a form to gauge the interests of some other potential stakeholders to help inform my gaming decisions and narrow down my choices.

I asked the following questions:

1. What type of game would be most appealing to you?
2. What games do you play?
   * If a stakeholder answered with games I hadn’t played before, I then disregarded their other answers
3. How do you like games to make you feel?
4. What is your preferred gaming platform?

The results were inconclusive, but I did find that the majority of people answered that the game should be:

* Exciting and mentally challenging
* Get progressively harder
* Based on strategy
* Should be on web or desktop

Forms response chart. Question title: How would you like my game to make you feel?
Select as many options as you wish.
. Number of responses: 6 responses.

Figure 1

Forms response chart. Question title: What type of game would be most appealing to you?
Select as many options as you wish. Feel free to write anything else in the Other area.
. Number of responses: 6 responses.

Figure 2

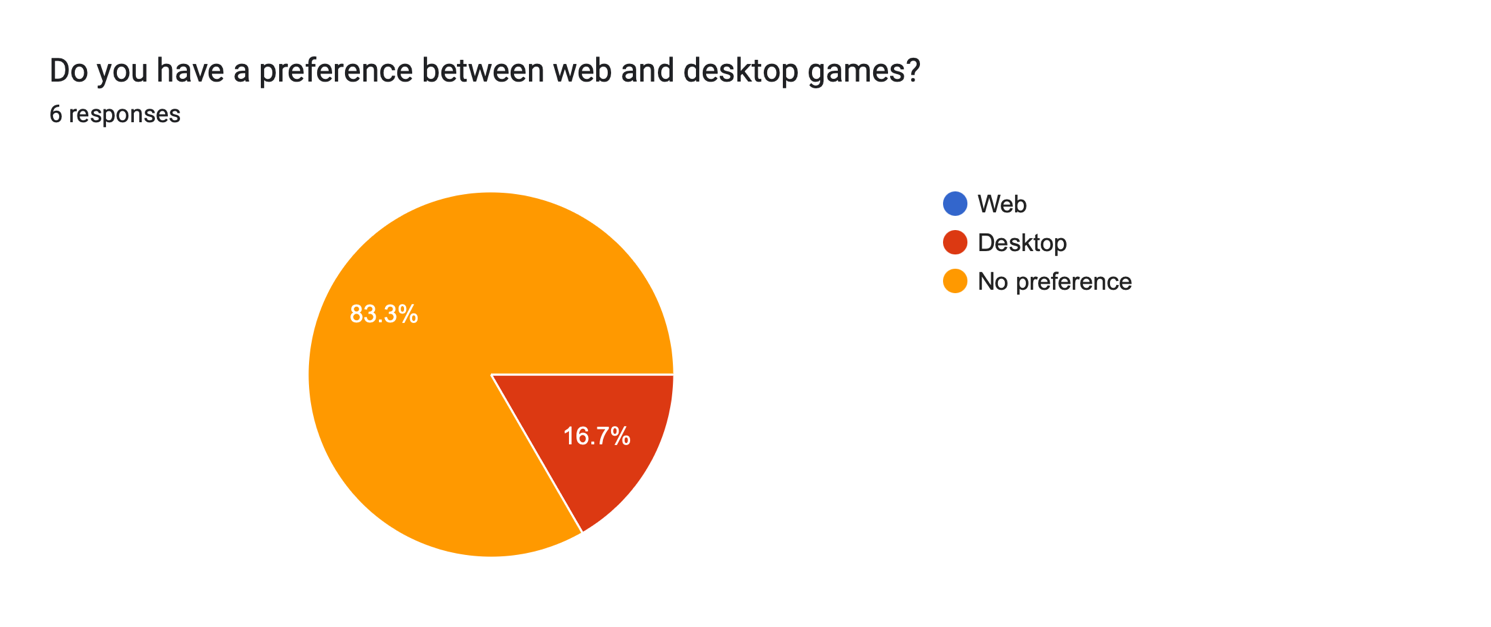


Figure 3

[need to insert a screenshot, maybe?]

## Justification

As shown above, the data shows X, as well as the other potential stakeholders, would prefer a game of strategy, which aligns well with something I would enjoy designing and implementing.

## Requirements

### Must

1. Function offline
2. Use object-oriented programming concepts
3. Be an arcade game
4. Have a recognisable game
5. Run on any computer with a Python interpreter installed

### Should

1. Be written in PyGame
2. Use the PyGame library for the interface and game loop
3. Use comments for the ease of myself, the programmar, and others who may wish to view the code
4. Be easy to understand and to play
5. Have a comprehensive 800 lines of code, including comments
6. Have a main menu
7. Have multiple levels with increasing difficulty
8. Be humorous with intelligent puns

### Could

1. Have sound effects
2. Use text files to save and load game progress
3. Have paid and professional game art
4. Have a parallax effect
5. Have a parental controls feature that limits time on the game
6. Have an elaborate colour scheme which matches the game story
7. Have a start screen the first time the game is opened to explain the game
8. Have a dedicated download website with updates, a help page and more information
9. Support multiple languages (probably French)

### Won’t

1. Be in 3D, or try to simulate it
2. Have any major bugs that impact the enjoyment of the game
3. Have unintentional loopholes that bypass game logic
4. Be violent, graphic, or destructive
5. Not include any complex AI elements
6. Connect to the Internet for software updates

# Research

As mentioned above, I am not very familiar with gaming and needed to research a wide range of games that I could potentially build. The main type of achievable game genres I found were: platformer and puzzler. Most other game types like first-person shooter (e.g.: Fortnite) and sandbox (e.g.: Minecraft) require complicated 3D graphics outside of the scope of this project.

During my research, I was pleased to be proven wrong that not all games are designed to be addictive. In fact, I found a large community of games much more low-key and cleverly designed, and so wished to emulate this.

The most basic template for a game is an arcade game, which is what I have decided to stick with. I already have experience in coding Space Invaders, and a basic attempt at PAC-MAN.

## OpenTTD

I found one particular open source game called OpenTTD.Une image contenant carte, capture d’écran, texte, Logiciel multimédia

Description générée automatiquement

Figure 4: OpenTTD Home Screen

Une image contenant carte, capture d’écran

Description générée automatiquement

Figure 5: OpenTTD Game

Une image contenant carte, capture d’écran

Description générée automatiquement

Figure 6: OpenTTD Gameplay

Une image contenant texte, capture d’écran, logiciel, Site web

Description générée automatiquement

Figure 7: OpenTTD Wiki

At first, the game was difficult to play, but I grew to enjoy the complexity as it meant there were so many possibilities, and that the game is designed for exploration more than anything else. The game is clearly very technical and I am aware that coding something of this nature would be a struggle for me. There was an element of nostalgia that the NT design brought forward, and I know that I want to continue this theme in my game.

## YouTube Tutorials

[insert links from X and add title of each one, explain relevance]

I researched some different ways I might implement the game. A popular choice was Unity, but I am most comfortable coding in Python, and am aware of the PyGame module used by other Python developers to make games.

I also found YouTube to be a good source of game reviews and gameplay videos. The following videos helped my understand how puzzle games are built and what makes a successful puzzle game. I had initially started implementing an escape room for this project, but researching this made me realise that it was not very well thought-out and required some further thought.

## Python Games

All other Python games that I have the opporunity to play fitted the 2 genres outline above: platformer and puzzler. There were no complicated 3D graphics.

[screenshots, names and author]

## Themes

There were a couple of personal interests that I could feasibly apply to the game, computing and trains. Trains, however, is the much more unique option and I saw an opportunity to add humour by having cheesy National-Rail-related puns throughout the game that would appeal to my audience.

[find an example of a train game online with such puns, if possible]

# Solution

After the above research, it is very clear that my stakeholder would enjoy playing a simple train puzzler, developed in PyGame.

## Potential Design Ideas

Design

# Interface

* Draw, label, explain and **justify** choices made

# Data Structures

* Classes with attributes and their methods, **justify**

# Algorithms

* All algorithms made or used need their own pseudocode

# Decomposition

# Solution

# Testing Approach

* Any information here about how you plan to test the project and who you plan to test it with

Implementation

(mention previous game design **only if relevant**)

# Iterative Process & Comments

## Iteration 1

* Go back through Github log and take screenshots of code development and show the story of the code
* Screens, objects, classes and game loop changes all require a **justification**

### Error 1

* Show error
* Explain error
* Fix error
* Show error fix

## Iteration 2

* Movements, game logic etc.

### Iteration 3

* “AI” and how enemies react

Testing

# Executed Test Plan

* Use Computer Science textbook and approach testing formulaically

Evaluation

# Testing

# Solution

# Product

# Maintenance & Development

* How the product can be improved and maintained
* How effective was the development technique