

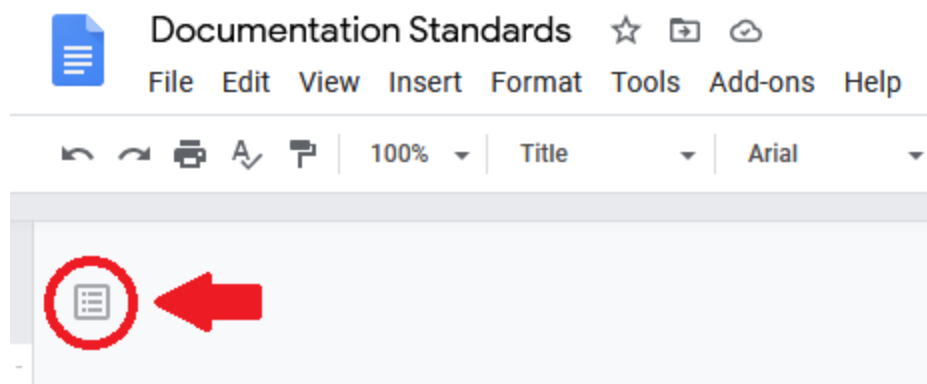
# Documentation Standards

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## Document Structure

For an example of this documentation structure, look at... this document!

This structure uses the Google Docs titles and headings to subdivide the document. Not only is this easy and effective, it also means that Google Docs will auto-generate an outline that allows for easy navigation of the document.



Click the tab in the top left corner of this document, below the undo and redo buttons, to see an example of this.

## Title

The title of the document should be written at the top in the Google Docs Title font.

## Attributions

List of all contributors. This is placed directly below the title and uses the Google Docs Subtitle font. Add your name to this list whenever you make a meaningful change to a document!

## Sections and Subsections

Each section of the document will use the Google Docs Heading 1 font.

Subsections will have the Heading font that immediately follows the Heading font of their immediate parent section.



Organizing sections and subsections is a very useful tool for keeping information approachable and understandable for readers.

# Document Content

An example will be provided at the end of this section to clarify how our documentation standards will look in application.

## General Approach

Our documentation for each subsection will be divided into two categories: a technical description and a brief description.

### Technical Description

The goal of the technical description is to disambiguate as much as possible, providing enough details to answer most questions by reading the document without having to ask the author for details.

To avoid this, make it a habit to ask yourself as many questions as possible about what you have written throughout the documentation process. If those questions cannot be answered by what you have written so far, add that information into your documentation. Repeat this process until you are confident that you have provided all potentially relevant information.

Of course, overwhelming paragraphs may also be difficult to understand, so it is important to do a once-over of your documentation upon completion to clear up long or confusing sections. *(Bulleted lists, tables, and visual aids are very useful tools!)*

Additionally, the technical description should include no uncertainty. If you are unsure how exactly you want something to work in an in-progress document, it is acceptable to mark it with a question mark (?), provide a number of possibilities, etc. Before submitting a document for review, however, you must make a decision on what content it will contain and state that content definitively. *(Number values often do not have to be too exact, see the [note](#) in the example at the end of this section.)*

### Brief Description

After the technical description, add a brief summary in the form of a tiered bulleted list. The other teams (particularly systems) sometimes like to refer to this section kind of like a to-do list. As such, it should cover every relevant system/asset in a succinct way.

- Again, bullet lists are useful for organizing information.
- Especially if you use different tiers like this!

This section is an important step of documentation, as it allows readers to quickly refer back to details without having to search for them in a wall of text.

# Language and Grammar

## Pronouns

As a general rule, use pronouns as little as possible. Sometimes you can use a pronoun to improve the readability of the document, but you should do so sparingly. In every sentence, you should explicitly name every entity being discussed at least once.

Additionally, if you refer to the player using a pronoun, our documentation standard is to use “they”, as, of course, our games are not exclusive to one gender, and “he/she” is very clunky to read and less inclusive for non-binary identities. If using “they” is unclear in some context due to plurality, it is best to revert to referring to the player as “the player”.

## Player vs Player Character

In general, try to refer to the person playing the game as “the player” and the character that person is controlling as “the player character” or, if context allows, “the character”, “their character”, etc. This can also be abbreviated to “PC” to maintain readability, in which case the first reference to the player character should be “the player character (PC)” to ensure the reader understands the abbreviation.

This standard is low priority, as confusion between the player and their character has very little potential to cause any issue. It is only brought up because, still, it is important to be precise and consistent in your documentation.

## Present Tense

All documentation for the game should be in present tense. This may seem pedantic, but there are many reasons for this.

Firstly, writing in present tense ensures that, when what you have written has been implemented, the documentation will accurately describe the current state of the project. If you write “the player will move”, once the player can move their character in-game, that documentation is strange to read.

Next, using present tense works against the sense of dissociation that is easy to feel when writing design documentation in future tense. Instead of envisioning the game as a future product that will be created independently of your work, recognize that any documentation you write becomes a part of the game, in project form, during development, and defines the current state and direction of the product.

## Example

Documentation that does *not* meet our standards:

***“When the player presses the shoot button, he will shoot a projectile”***

- Very ambiguous about specific behavior
- Incorrect pronoun usage
- Player character is not properly specified
- Incorrect tense (future instead of present)

This piece of documentation is too vague for both the brief description and the technical description. How does the projectile move? Does it have a maximum range? Does it stop when it hits an enemy, or does it pierce them? Under what conditions can a player shoot?

The following paragraph has been expanded to include both and altered from the previous example to fit our documentation standards.

Technical Description:

***When the player presses the shoot button, a projectile is created at the tip of the player character's gun, moving in the direction the player is facing. The projectile moves at a constant, medium speed until it collides with a wall or enemy. Upon collision, the projectile is destroyed, and whatever it collided with takes one point of damage if applicable. At the moment they shoot, the player has a ~.2 second cooldown before they can fire again. The button does not need to be repressed to continue firing; the player can hold the button to automatically fire every time their cooldown is over.***

Brief Description:

- ***Continuous shooting***
  - ***While the shoot button is held, a bullet is fired every ~.2 secs in the direction they are facing***
  - ***Bullet despawns when it hits a wall or enemy***
  - ***1 bullet = 1 damage to enemy if hit***

***Note:*** Specific values are not necessary in documentation, but an approximate value, range of values, or qualitative description should be provided. For example, in the paragraph above, I described the projectile as moving at a “medium speed” and the delay between shots as “~.2 seconds”. This allows the systems team to have an idea of how the mechanic should feel as they implement it, and the specific values can be tweaked later.

Again, this may seem pedantic, but describing every detail is crucial for the process. If someone from the systems team was tasked with implementing the shooting mechanic described above, which version would allow them to complete their task without any guesswork?

# Drive Management

## Subfolders

The Design folder of the Team Drive has four subfolders between which documents will be organized.

### Proto-Design Docs

This folder contains documentation from the summer session's creation of the prototype. There are many brainstorming documents with discarded and/or accepted ideas. This folder should generally be ignored during the Fall/Spring semesters.

### Free Range Brainstorming

This contains an array of documents with no particular organization structure. It is present to allow for a space in which any and all ideas can be tossed out so we can see what might stick for the actual game. *Other teams should **never** work from documentation in this folder.*

### In-Progress Documentation

This contains all documentation that is being worked on by designers. When a Design member begins work on a new document, they create it within this subfolder. This subfolder will be organized by the Design officers as they see fit.

### Official Documentation

This contains all documents deemed to be as accurate as possible and to abide by our documentation standards. Content of any document that is planned to be changed within this subfolder is highlighted in yellow. It is intended to be a space in which club members from other teams can trust all the information they see, unless otherwise specified, to be detailed and accurate. This subfolder will be regularly and intentionally organized by a Design officer in order to maintain ease of finding relevant documentation.

## Document Approval Process

When an individual or group of Design members completes their work on an in-progress document, they must notify a Design officer to review the document and ensure it meets our documentation standards.

- If the document meets our standards, it is moved to the corresponding location in the official documentation folder.

- If the document does not meet our standards, the reviewing Design officer can coordinate with its author(s) to whatever degree they see fit to make edits before moving it over.

This process is to maintain the Official Documentation subfolder as a space for detailed and reliable information. Designers can share in-progress documents with any member of any team, just be sure to inform the recipient that the document has not yet been confirmed as official documentation.