

## GWU US Game Writer Survey 2019

Hi! Are you a writer, narrative designer, editor, localizer, journalist, or other narrative person working in the U.S. game industry? Do you make money doing so? You do? Cool! Game Workers Unite is working on initiatives to better the lives of game writers!

\* Includes previously working game writers who are currently unemployed/seeking work.

We want to collect information on current labor conditions, thoughts, and wants from writers in the U.S. game industry. This allows us to spread transparency about the real condition of labor for game writers, but we also want to make future decisions that reflect the writer community as a whole. We understand not everyone can be directly involved with GWU, but we still want our decisions to reflect the greater community's interests. So we're running this survey to get a more accurate view on the U.S. game writing community.

The results of this survey, such as salary graphs and other statistics may be made public, but none of your personal information will be released with it. Most of this will be used internally for strategizing where to focus support for game writers in the future.

GWU: <https://www.gameworkersunite.org/>  
If you want to get involved: <https://www.gameworkersunite.org/get-involved>  
Español / Spanish: <https://tinyurl.com/y5efkvaz>  
FAQ: <https://tinyurl.com/yxf4y86>  
Contact/Support: <https://twitter.com/GWSsincclair>

By clicking the checkbox below, I consent to have my survey answers used for the purposes \* of publishing public information about game writing, as well as having the information used for general labor organizing within Game Workers Unite. Your personal information (email, phone number, name, etc) will not be published.

☐ I consent to have my answers in this survey used as described in the above paragraph.

What's your current role? If you have more than one, mark all that apply. [If you are a late entry \* filling this out in 2020, please answer with answers that are true for your 2019. Thank you!]

- ☐ Game Writer (Digital)
- ☐ Game Writer (Analog: Tabletop games, etc)
- ☐ Contributing/ Jr. / Associate Game Writer
- ☐ Narrative Designer
- ☐ Editor
- ☐ Journalist
- ☐ Quest Designer
- ☐ Localization
- ☐ Intern
- ☐ Currently Unemployed (if so, also mark your past title)
- ☐ Critic
- ☐ Other...

How many years of experience do you have as a game writer? [If you are a late entry filling this \* out in 2020, please answer with answers that are true for your 2019. Thank you!]

- 1 - 6 months
- 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4 years
- 5 years
- 6 years
- 7 years
- 8 years
- 9 years
- 10-15 years
- 15-20 years
- 20-25 years
- 25+ years

Which state or territory in the U.S. do you primarily work from? [If you are a late entry filling this \* out in 2020, please answer with answers that are true for your 2019. Thank you!]

- Alabama (AL)
- Alaska (AK)
- American Samoa (AS)
- Arizona (AZ)
- Arkansas (AR)
- California (CA)
- Colorado (CO)
- Connecticut (CT)
- Delaware (DE)
- District of Columbia (DC)
- Florida (FL)
- Georgia (GA)



- 13. Guam (GU)
- 14. Hawaii (HI)
- 15. Idaho (ID)
- 16. Illinois (IL)
- 17. Indiana (IN)
- 18. Iowa (IA)
- 19. Kansas (KS)
- 20. Kentucky (KY)
- 21. Louisiana (LA)
- 22. Maine (ME)
- 23. Maryland (MD)
- 24. Massachusetts (MA)
- 25. Michigan (MI)
- 26. Minnesota (MN)
- 27. Mississippi (MS)
- 28. Missouri (MO)
- 29. Montana (MT)
- 30. Nebraska (NE)
- 31. Nevada (NV)
- 32. New Hampshire (NH)
- 33. New Jersey (NJ)
- 34. New Mexico (NM)
- 35. New York (NY)
- 36. North Carolina (NC)
- 37. North Dakota (ND)
- 38. Northern Mariana Islands (MP)
- 39. Ohio (OH)
- 40. Oklahoma (OK)
- 41. Oregon (OR)
- 42. Pennsylvania (PA)
- 43. Puerto Rico (PR)
- 44. Rhode Island (RI)
- 45. South Carolina (SC)
- 46. South Dakota (SD)
- 47. Tennessee (TN)
- 48. Texas (TX)
- 49. Utah (UT)
- 50. Vermont (VT)
- 51. Virginia (VA)
- 52. Virgin Islands (VI)
- 53. Washington (WA)
- 54. West Virginia (WV)
- 55. Wisconsin (WI)
- 56. Wyoming (WY)
- 57. I wish not to answer.

Is game writing your main source of

ie Does game writing pay your cost of living (rent/mortgage, food, healthcare,etc)? [If you are a late entry filling this out in 2020 please answer with answers that are true for your 2019. Thank you!]

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What is your employment status as a game

Check the status that best describes you. [If you are a late entry filling this out in 2020, please answer with answers that are true for your 2019. Thank you!]

- ☐ Full time employee - You work more than 35 hours a week for a studio on a permanent basis.
- ☐ Full time contractor - You work more than 35 hours a week for one studio on a contract that is on a fixed amount of time or a rolling cycleof renewal.
- ☐ Part time employee - You work around 1-30 hours a week for one studio on a permanent basis.
- ☐ Part Time Freelancer - You work around 1-30 hours a week for one or multiple projects (which can include your own)
- ☐ Full Time Freelancer - You work 35 or more hours for one or multiple projects (including your own)
- ☐ Full time executive - You run a company/studio as a writer, narrative lead, editor, etc. (with hiring power) for 35 or more hours per week
- ☐ Part time executive - You run a company/studio as a writer around 1-30 hours a week
- ☐ Solo developer - You work primarily on your own projects with no other permanent paid team

Do you identify as part of a marginalized

Ex: LGBTQ, Gender, Ethnicity, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What was your net income from game writing in 2018 ? \*

Net income is the the total amount you made from game writing in 2018 after subtracting the cost of business expenses/taxes, travel, etc). Round your income to the nearest dollar. ie \$23,000.43 should be typed as \$23,000. If you did not work in 2018 or don't know the answer, enter "0" and continue to the next question. [If you are a late entry filling this out in 2020, please answer with answers that are true for your 2019. Thank you!]

Short answer text  
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How much are you being paid for game writing in 2019?

If you are being paid a salary, please enter your 2019 salary from your game writing work below. If you are not being paid in salary structure, leave the answer section blank and continue to the next question. [If you are a late entry filling this out in 2020, please answer with answers that are true for your 2019. Thank you!]

Short answer text  
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How much are you charging for game writing in 2019?

Please enter your hourly rate for game writing below. If you are charging a daily rate, being paid through milestones, or other alternative pay structures, please calculate that into an hourly number by dividing your final paid amount by the amount of hours it took you to complete. If this question does not apply to you, leave the answer section blank and continue to the next question. [If you are a late entry filling this out in 2020, please answer with answers that are true for your 2019. Thank you!]

Short answer text  
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What do you expect your net income from game writing to be in 2019? [If you are a late entry filling this out in 2020, please answer with the amount of money you did make in 2019, if you feel comfortable doing so.] \*

Short answer text  
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What issues have you experienced in your game writing \*

- ☐ Crunch (working over 40 hours a week)
- ☐ Unpaid over-time
- ☐ Low pay
- ☐ Lack of benefits/healthcare
- ☐ Frequent job instability (due to lay-offs, contract status, etc.)
- ☐ Lack of remote jobs
- ☐ Lack of relocation assistance
- ☐ Delayed/missing payments
- ☐ Lack of mentorship/training
- ☐ You have not personally experienced any major issues as a game writer
- ☐ Your work was not credited
- ☐ Harassment/Discrimination (on basis of race, gender, sexuality, age, etc.)
- ☐ The 2019 ESA Journalist Leak
- ☐ 2019 Game Informer Layoffs
- ☐ Other...

What are the main issues you experience as a game

Use this answer to describe any of your main issues that might not be acknowledged by the above question. Feel free to skip this question.

Long answer text  
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Have you been miscategorized as an independent contractor now or in the past? \*

Some workers are paid as Independent Contractors but are actually working under conditions the IRS would consider an "employee". This means you may be paying your own self-employment taxes (as a contractor does), but your boss is also directing and controlling the way your work is performed--both as to the final results and the details of when, where, and how the work is done, known as the "right to control". More info on the difference between contractor and employee can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2pAF05W>

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

Do you believe the game industry should be unionized? \*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

Should game writers work with a pre-existing labor union? \*

Such as The Writer's Guild of America, Authors Guild, and so on.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ No - We should form our own specific guild or union for U.S game writers
- ☐ No - We should form a union for all game developers
- ☐ Unsure/Don't know enough about the options to feel comfortable making a choice
- ☐ Other...

Provide any (positive or negative) feedback you'd like about the

Short answer text

Would you like GWU to follow-up with you about your answers to the

If yes, please provide a way to electronically contact you. Discussing certain topics on your employer's equipment/digital accounts can sometimes pose a risk to you, so make sure to provide a contact that keeps your safety in mind. We will not share or sell your contact information.



Short answer text