C H A P T E R

1

Video Game Developer Communication

In this chapter, we focus on the "basics" of communication for video game developers, including email, verbal, and non-verbal communication, as well as discuss the methods that you can use to make your communication more effective.

1.1 Overview

In many ways, communication and time management are the most important skills that companies desire in a video game developer. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, communication and time management skills need to be developed over a long period of time. Technical knowledge, on the other hand, can be obtained quickly using research or education. As a result, job candidates who display better communication and time management skills during the interview process are usually hired instead of other job candidates who have more technical knowledge.

Secondly, video game developers are typically required to work on diverse parts of a video game project, each of which have their own milestones and deadlines. Time management is key to doing this effectively.

Finally, both large and indie game studios depend on developer communication at all levels today. Video game developers must be able to effectively communicate with a wide variety of people within the organization (sales, QA, artists, animators, etc.) using a wide variety of methods (email, reports, verbal, meetings, presentations, etc.).

By focusing on the communication and time management concepts that are required in today's video game industry, this eBook will allow you to build the skillsets that organizations desire, and ultimately help you in your job search. To accommodate this, your textbook is divided into four major chapters:

- In Chapter 1, we focus on the "basics" of video game developer communication, including email, verbal, and non-verbal communication, as well as discuss the methods that you can use to make your communication more effective.

- In Chapter 2, we review the essentials of English grammar and why they are important to use in all facets of video game developer communication.

- In Chapter 3, we discuss how to prepare formal and informal reports, as well as how to prepare for and give game presentations.

- In Chapter 4, we examine the concepts and practices that will allow you to manage your time as a video game developer effectively.

1.2   Understanding the Geek Sterotype

What is the Geek sterotype?

The **Geek sterotype** is a general classification that society has traditionally given to anyone who works with computers. Born in the 1970s when computer system operators (or "sysops") were commonly employed in companies to run the mainframe computer, it gained momentum in the 1980s when personal computers flooded homes, schools and businesses. And to make matters worse, the media (films, sitcoms, newspapers, etc.) solidified this sterotype amongst the general public.

In short, the Geek sterotype depicts the average Geek as follows:

- Male, poorly dressed, and messy

- A nerd/geek (doesn't have a social life, and can prove it mathematically)

- A poor communicator (too technical)

- Rude and inconsiderate (intolerant of non-technical people)

Even today, the Geek sterotype from the 1970s and 1980s is perpetuated in many films and sitcoms. While some video game developers from the 1970s and 1980s may have fit this Geek sterotype, very few people who work in the video game development industry today fit this sterotype, and the Geek sterotype is not considered favorable today by organizations for many reasons.

The "real" video game developer environment

The ideal video game developer today contains qualities that are typically the opposite of the Geek sterotype of the 1970s and 1980s. Today's video game developer:

- Is a well-organized problem solver

- Participates in social activities in and outside of work

- Can work on several projects at the same time and manage their time effectively

- Dresses business/artistic casual (no ditry t-shirts or ripped jeans)

- Has superb interpersonal and communication skills (must be able to explain/paraphrase concepts to others)

1.3 Introduction to Video Game Communication

Since video game developers must communicate with several different people as part of their job (peer developers, clients, users, manager, artists, animators, etc.), the method of communication they employ will vary depending on the environment. Additionally, since video game developers must communicate frequently in order to solve problems, coordinate development, and relay information/results, the most common method of communication that video game developers use is written (email, instant messaging) since that method is the quickest and doesn't require that the other party is present.

However, video game developers must also communicate verbally and non-verbally in certain situations as well as during meetings/presentations. Moreover, today's video game developer must also be able to prepare *Game Design Documents (GDDs)*, *Technical Design Documents (TDDs)*, and proposals designed to obtain funding for projects on an occasional basis.

To combat the Geek stereotype, video game developers should always dress business casual and gear all communication towards the recipient. To achieve the latter, understanding cultural differences is a must. For example, in some middle eastern cultures, direct eye contact is considered offensive. In Europe, most people talk while standing close to one another (which is generally considered strange/offensive in North America). And in South Africa, people usually talk while holding the other person's hand or while putting their hand on the other person's arm or shoulder. A good video game developer can recognize cultural differences and use them to enhance communication – if you are talking with someone from Europe, it is best to stand a bit closer to them than what is normally acceptable in Canada – this will make them feel more comfortable with you during the communication process and build rapport.

Additionally, you should avoid idioms when talking with anyone of a different culture. *Idioms* are culturally-specific phrases such as "Straight from the horse's mouth," "Bend over backwards," or "Pay through the nose." Idioms are seldom understood, and communication/rapport will suffer as a result.

1.4 Email Communication

Email etiquette

Email etiquette refers to a set of do's and don'ts that are recommended by business and communication experts in response to the growing concern that people are not using their email effectively or appropriately.

Since email is part of the virtual world of communication, many people communicate in their email messages the same way they do in virtual chat rooms: with much less formality and sometimes too aggressively. Email etiquette offers some guidelines that all writers can use to facilitate better communication between themselves and their readers.

One overall point to remember is that an email message does not have non-verbal expression to supplement what we are "saying." Most of the time we make judgments about a person's motives and intentions based on their tone of voice, gestures, and their proximity to us. When those are absent it becomes more difficult to figure out what the message sender means. It is much easier to offend or hurt someone in email and that is why it is important to be as clear and concise as possible.

There are a number of things to consider before clicking the "send" button on your email.

- How should I format my email?
- To whom am I sending my email?
- Can I send attachments?
- How long should my email be?
- Am I flaming someone?
- When should I not send an email?

How should I format my email?

You are most likely familiar with the general rules about formatting email but here are some tips to keep in mind. Be sure that your email is formatted to include whitespace, and wrap your text after about 60-70 characters. This dramatically improves the look of the email. When you do not use whitespace or have a wrap around option for 60-70 characters, then your email will mostly likely look like this:

> Hi John,
> I am very interested in moving to your development team, but I need just a little bit more information. Do you have time to meet with me tomorrow afternoon around three or so?

However, this same email could be improved as follows:

> Hi John,
>
> I am really interested in moving to your development team.
> However, I need just a little bit more information.
>
> Do you have time to meet with me tomorrow afternoon around three or so?

Here are some additional formatting tips to consider.

- Try to keep the email brief (preferably to one page) so that readers do not have to scroll through the email.

- Return emails in the same day that you would a phone call.

- Use capitalization and punctuation in the same way that you would in any other document.

- Format your email to be sent in plain text rather than HTML because some email clients may not read HTML.

- Write a salutation or greeting for each new subject email. However, if you exchange several emails over the same topic (for example, a meeting day and time) it is not necessary to include a greeting because it is as though you are carrying on a conversation. When we carry on conversations, we do not say hello each time we speak.

- Be sure to write an appropriate and specific subject in the subject line so that the recipient knows what to expect. For example: "April 22 production server deployment team meeting agenda" instead of "meeting."

To whom am I sending my email?

It is always important to know who will receive your email, including the number of people you have on the mailing list. This helps you in two ways. First, it helps you think about the tone of your writing.

When emailing your boss, a manager, or a group,
- Be direct and clearly organize concepts
- Avoid acronyms (ROTFLOL)
- Avoid emoticons :-)
- Paraphrase all technologies (purpose)
- Re-read all emails twice or more before sending
- Use white space (blank lines) between topics to make the email more readable
- Use proper grammar

When emailing a peer or coworker,
- Acronyms are OK (provided your peer/coworker has the same knowledgebase)
- Vary contents and style depending on rapport
- Write as if anyone will read the email (they tend to get forwarded in the future)

When emailing a client,
- Be direct and clearly organize concepts
- Explain all technologies (include steps if necessary)
- Avoid all idioms and acronyms (client may not be familiar with them)
- Avoid long words (i.e. aforementioned)
- Avoid humour
- Include contact information

Second, if you send an email to more than four people regularly you should create mailing groups so that the recipients do not need to scroll through names before they can get to the content of the email. It also helps to keep some email addresses anonymous, as some perceive it as rude for their names and email addresses to be posted for strangers to see. For the same reason, if you email several different people who do not work for your organization, ensure that you blind carbon copy (bcc) them so that they do not see the email addresses of the other people.

Emails are public documents, despite the fact that you may send an email to someone privately. Therefore, only include those statements in email that you can openly defend should your message be circulated or shown to other parties. For example, it may be

perfectly appropriate to send a coworker (Bob) the following email reply because you have developed a good rapport (working relationship) with him:

WTF? Rick never approves anything I send him. Anywho, I will get him the spec sheet faster than a boar at a garden party. What is Lisa doing on the Dragon Racer project today? I may need to use their dev server.

---- Original message ----
From: Bob
Sent: September 16, 2005 12:30 PM
To: Karl
Subject: HP SAN

Hey Karl - youre not going to believe this but Rick approved the purchase of the HP SAN for next month. Just send him the spec sheet with the quote number and he will send it to purchasing today.
Bob.

However, if Bob forwards the email to someone else, who forwards it to your boss (Rick), your boss may not like your tone and choice of words or acronyms (WTF).

Can I send attachments?

Yes, as long as you are sure that your recipient can receive them. Sending attachments is a normal practice when you are submitting documents for review or exchanging information in the workplace. Here are some tips to consider before attaching a document.

- Title the document that you are attaching in a way that is easy for the recipient to find once he or she downloads it to his or her files. For example, if you are sending a document that is a goal statement then title it "goalstatement.doc."

- In the content of your email, tell your recipient what type of software was used to create the document, the year/version, and the title of the attachment.
For example: "The file attached is called 'goalstatement.doc' and it is in MSWord 2010."

- Make sure that you do not send overly large attachments unless you are sure that your recipient's Internet connection and email client can handle them. For example, a user on a 56K dialup would have to spend a long time downloading a 5MB PowerPoint file, whereas a co-worker on a fast work connection would have no problem.

- Don't send unnecessary attachments - if you've already presented all of the relevant information in an email message, don't attach a Word document repeating the same information.

How long should my email be?

In general, the email should be approximately one page printed or the length of your computer screen before scrolling. However, there are times when email messages need to be longer to convey important information. Oftentimes organizations seeking to reduce their paper costs will use email as their primary source of communication. Longer emails generally consist of: Orientation schedules and information, memos, convention information, newsletters, and policy changes.

When you need to write a long email try to include three essential elements at the top of the email: (A) an executive summary at the top of the document, (B) how soon a response is required from the recipient(s), and (C) a table of contents.

A) An executive summary

This is a short summary of everything in the email document including the main goal of the email or the "bottom line." For example, *"Welcome to ZDF Company. This email contains important information about your orientation week. You will find the five day schedule, names of the speakers, the menu, hotel arrangements, and testimonials from employees who previously participated."*

B) Required response

Because your reader is most likely going to read the first few lines of your document thoroughly and browse through the rest, if you need to have him or her respond by a certain time with certain information, that should be stated within the executive summary. For example, *"Please let me know by Wednesday whether you are attending the meeting."*

C) Table of contents

A table of contents allows the reader to pick and choose what sections of the email are most relevant to him or her.* A person is most likely to comply with your requests when you make it easy for him or her to navigate your materials. For example,

> *Table of Contents*
> *- Five Day Schedule*
> *- Speaker List*
> *- Menu*
> *- Registration Form*
> *- Hotel Arrangements*
> *- Travel Reimbursement Policy*

Am I flaming someone?

Flaming is a virtual term for venting emotion online or sending inflammatory emails. It is best to avoid flaming because it tends to create more conflict and tension. Flames are virtual food fights (Angell and Heslop) and are unproductive and injurious to the parties involved.

What you say cannot be taken back. Misinterpretations happen very easily in neutral emails because there is a lack of nonverbal expression to cue the recipient about your motives and intentions. You can imagine how much misinterpretation can occur when you are expressing frustration and/or anger.

Things to consider before venting in email:

- Would I say this to this person's face?
- Am I putting the receiver in awkward position?
- How would I feel if I got this email message?

Usually, by the time you consider the above questions you will be calm enough to write your message with a different approach. Catching someone by surprise in a flaming message is a quick way to alienate your reader mainly because they will react with anger or embarrassment.

Below are some examples of flaming messages and then some suggestions on ways to re-word them in more sensitive and thoughtful ways.

Flame/inappropriate message	Not a flame/appropriate message
"This project really sucks and I cannot believe that he is making us do this. I'm sick and tired of all these dumb assignments. He needs to get a life!"	"This assignment came at a tough time. I wasn't expecting so much work. I can't wait till the end of the semester."
"If you don't fix this problem then I am going to quit TOMORROW!!!!!!!! I am sick and tired of Martha's incompetence!!!"	"I'm growing increasingly frustrated by the current situation. Can we set up a time to talk about this more?"

When should I not send an email?

There are many subjects that are too sensitive to discuss over email mainly because misinterpretation could have serious consequences. Some topics that should generally be resolved outside of email are:

- Disciplinary action
- Conflicts about grades or personal information
- Concerns about fellow classmates/workmates
- Complaints

When it appears that a dialogue has turned into a conflict, it is best to suggest an end to the swapping of email and for you to talk or meet in person. If you receive a flaming email try to respond in a short and simple response. If that does not appease the flamer than make contact with him or her outside the virtual realm.

1.5 Verbal Communication

Verbal communication is an art that is developed with practice and patience. The key to any verbal communication is to listen carefully – by taking the time to listen to the other person, you are validating their communication (which helps to resolve heated issues or angry clients) as well as ensuring that you understand what the other person has said.

It is also important that you don't rush communication. If someone is relaying a great deal of information to you, you should pause for a few seconds after listening – this allows you to formulate an appropriate response. In other words, "Don't speak without thinking first!" (especially in sensitive situations).

In support situations, it is important that you repeat what the user has told you – this tells the user that you understand their problem, and ultimately reduces their anxiety. Also avoid blame in support situations – rather than using the phrase "your problem", use the word "we" as much as possible – for example, *"We need to find a solution…."*

In essence, your success at verbal communication largely depends on whether you can word concepts in a way that others can understand and in a way that doesn't offend. In general, you can use the following tips in different situations (development collaboration, meetings, etc.) to help ensure that your verbal communication is effective:

1. Ask, "How did you decide to do that?" rather than, "Why did you do that?" when a situation goes wrong. "Why?" questions put people on the defensive and produce justifications rather than useful answers.

2. State what you want in the positive rather than what you don't want. "Remember" rather than "Don't forget." People tend to ignore the "Don't" and do the opposite of what you want.

3. Introduce a new idea to a listener who may be resistant to change by relating the new idea to something they are already comfortable and familiar with.

4. Use a metaphor to illustrate your point when explaining a new or unfamiliar idea to your audience.

5. Listen fully when a person is speaking to you rather than preparing what you are going to say next. You will hear more.

6. Acknowledge what people say to you in conversation so that they feel heard. Say "Okay, alright," or "I understand."

7. Empathize with people you speak to. They will care more about what you have to say when they know you care about them.

8. Ask the person you disagree with to explain their point of view. This way you will have a better understanding of their perspective and find the common ground.

9. Ask what you want from people in your life rather than assuming they should know. Avoid the disappointments when they can't mind read.

10. Ask your listener to repeat back their understanding of your instructions for the sake of accuracy. It is less time consuming that redoing an incorrect task.

11. Repeat back aloud the name of a new person you are being introduced to. You will be able to check your pronunciation and remember it more easily.

12. Introduce yourself with your name when you are phoning someone you don't speak with regularly, rather than expecting the person to recognize who you are.

13. Ask, "Is this a good time to speak?" when calling. If it isn't, then ask for a better time. You want to have the full attention of the person.

1.6 Non-verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication, which is commonly referred to as ***body language***, is often subliminal and difficult to notice explicitly – however, it has been proven to be just as effective in communicating key pieces of information as verbal communication.

For example, the way that you stand often says a great deal about your mood or your opinion on a topic or conversation. What does the picture below tell you?

Also, when answering questions in a meeting or during a presentation, don't point your finger at someone – finger pointing resembles gun pointing and usually elicits a negative or affronting response in the recipient. Instead, use use an open hand when motioning to someone – an open hand is welcoming and friendly.

Similarly, nervous gestures, such as scratching your arm, rattling your keys in your pockets, or tugging at your clothes/collar gives others the impression that you are not comfortable with the topic(s) at hand.

Some non-verbal gestures are excellent ways of providing emphasis on key pieces of information. For example, you can use your arms to signify an important topic by extending them outwards or upwards. Simiarly, when talking about a circle, drawing a circle in the air emphasizes the point to your audience. Even the way that you hold your arms and hands signifies whether you are open or closed to comments as shown below:
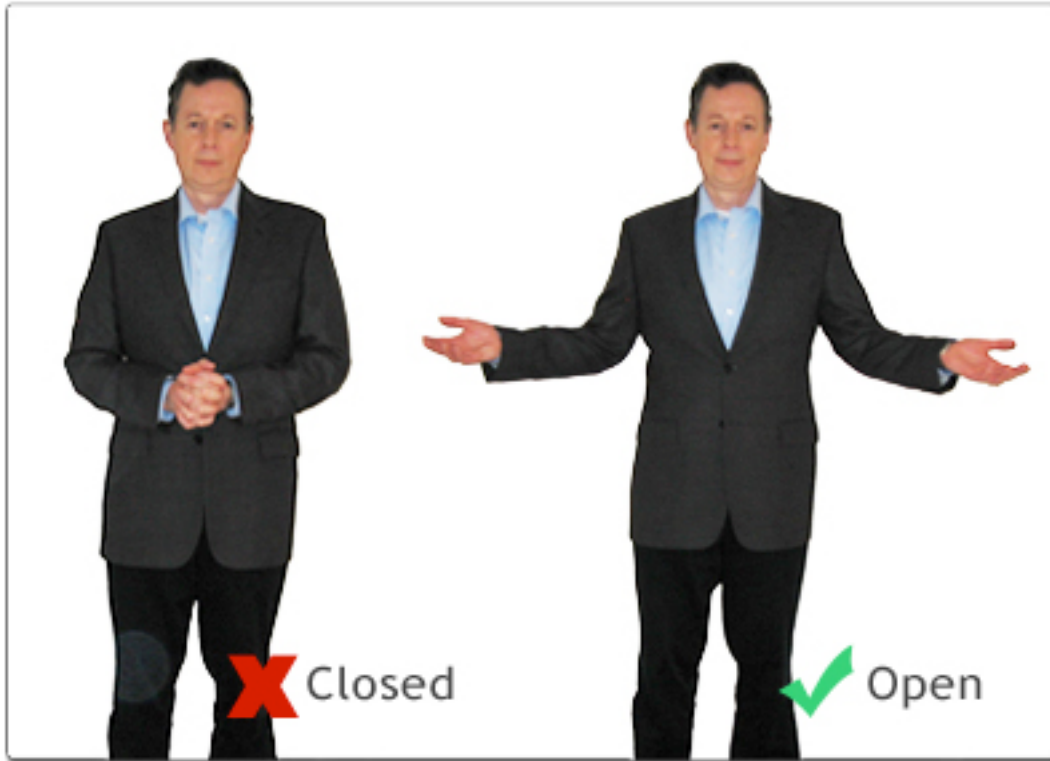
Another useful non-verbal method of communication involves actions that you take prior to communicating verbally with someone. For example, if someone stops you in the hallway to discuss something important, you can motion the other person to move to the side of the hallway or duck into an empty room to continue the discussion – this tells them that the discussion is important and that you are dedicating your full attention to it.

CHAPTER 2

Grammar

In this chapter, we review the essentials of English grammar and why those essentials are important to use in all facets of video game developer communication.

2.20 Sentence Fragments
2.21 Misused Words
2.22 Parallel Structure
2.23 A or An?
2.24 Spelling IE/EI
2.25 Grammar Assignment

2.1   Why is Grammar Important?

Recall from Chapter 1 that video game developers today are required to communicate with people at many different levels of the organization. As a result, video game developers today must use English grammar successfully in all written and verbal communication.

If you email a client with poor/incorrect grammar, their impression of you as a communicator will suffer – ultimately, this could result in a poor working relationship, or a lost sales opportunity. Similarly, if you regularly use poor grammar when communicating with your boss/manager, your boss/manager will identify you as a poor communicator – consequently, the liklihood that you will be promoted to a more senior position or be involved in a more exciting project is unlikely because these opportunities almost always involve communication to a wider range of people.

While it is important to use the spelling and grammar check that is part of your office suite and email programs, they do not catch all mistakes. In addition, there will be many times where you don't have access to a spelling/grammar checker (i.e. memos, BlackBerry, whiteboards, etc.) or times where you forget to use the spelling/grammar checker. Moreoever, grammar is used in verbal communication as well – others will pick up the poor grammar in a simple phrase such as "The production team and me will be there at five PM" (it should be "The production team and I will be there at five PM").

By learning or refreshing your knowledge of English grammar, you will become an expert communicator.

2.2   Parts of a Sentence

The information below is provided for your information & review – the following terms will be used when discussing grammar, punctuation, sentence structure & spelling.

Subject

The word or words in a sentence about which something is said.
Examples: *Children read.*
Friends and neighbours stopped by to offer help after the event.

Noun

Person, place, or thing.
Examples: *paper, dog, magazine, desk*

Adjective

A word that describes a noun.
Examples: pretty, ugly, wet, green

Pronoun

A word standing for a noun. There are many different kinds of *pronouns*, including the following:
indefinite pronouns ("some," "any"),
demonstrative pronouns ("this," "those"),
interrogative pronouns ("who," "which"),
personal pronouns ("I," "you," "she"),

Verb

An action word.
Examples: walking, jump, run

Adverb

A word that modifies the meaning of a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. They answer the questions "how?" "when?" "where?" "what?" "who?"
Example: The little girl climbed quickly up the very tall tree.

Verb Phrase

The combination of a verb and an adverb whose combined meaning cannot be deduced from their individual meanings.
Example: Friends and neighbours stopped by to offer help after the event.

Clauses

Independent Clause (IC)
An independent clause is a group of words that contains a subject and verb and expresses a complete thought. An independent clause is a sentence.
Example: Jim studied in the Sweet Shop for his chemistry quiz. (IC)

Dependent Clause (DC)
A dependent clause is a group of words that contains a subject and verb but does not express a complete thought. A dependent clause cannot be a sentence. Often a dependent clause is marked by a **dependent marker word.**
Example: When Jim studied in the Sweet Shop for his chemistry quiz . . . (DC)

Dependent Marker Word (DM)
A dependent marker word is a word added to the beginning of an independent clause that makes it into a dependent clause. Some common dependent markers are: *after, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, even though, if, in order to, since, though, unless, until, whatever, when, whenever, whether, and while.*
Example: When Jim studied in the Sweet Shop for his chemistry quiz, it was very noisy. (DM)

Connecting dependent and independent clauses
There are two types of words that can be used as connectors at the beginning of an independent clause: coordinating conjunctions and independent marker words.

Coordinating Conjunction (CC)
The seven coordinating conjunctions used as connecting words at the beginning of an independent clause are *and, but, for, or, nor, so, and yet*. When the second independent clause in a sentence begins with a coordinating conjunction, a comma is needed before the coordinating conjunction:
Example: Jim studied in the Sweet Shop for his chemistry quiz, <u>but</u> it was hard to concentrate because of the noise. (CC)

Independent Marker Word (IM)
An independent marker word is a connecting word used at the beginning of an independent clause. These words can always begin a sentence that can stand alone. When the second independent clause in a sentence has an independent marker word, a semicolon is needed before the independent marker word. Some common independent markers are: *also, consequently, furthermore, however, moreover, nevertheless, and therefore.*
Example: Jim studied in the Sweet Shop for his chemistry quiz; <u>however</u>, it was hard to concentrate because of the noise. (IM)

Preposition
One of a small number of relational (function) words like "in," "on," "behind," etc. which are known as *prepositions* because they are "pre-posed" or "placed before" the phrases they introduce.
Example: In the box which sat on the porch behind the house was an egg.

2.3 Nouns

Count and Noncount nouns

The main difference between count and noncount nouns is whether you can count the things they refer to or not.

Count nouns refer to things that exist as separate and distinct individual units. They usually refer to what can be perceived by the senses.
Examples: table, chair, word, finger, remark, girl, bottle, award, candidate - all can be counted
Example sentences:
I stepped in a puddle. (How many puddles did you step in? Just one.)
I drank a glass of milk. (Glasses of milk can be counted)
I saw an apple tree. (Apple trees can be counted)

Noncount nouns refer to things that can't be counted because they are thought of as wholes that can't be cut into parts. They often refer to abstractions and occasionally have a collective meaning (for example, *furniture*).
Examples: anger, furniture, warmth, courage, education, leisure, progress, weather, precision
Example Sentences:
I dove into the water. (How many waters did you dive into? The question doesn't make any sense; therefore water is noncountable.)
I saw the milk spill. (How many milks? Milk cannot be counted.)
I admired the foliage. (How many foliages? Foliage cannot be counted.)

NOTE: Since the issue is complicated and almost no rule is absolute, there will be exceptions to the above definitions; however, we can show some general patterns. Bear in mind that what is countable in another language may not be countable in English, and vice versa.

Pluralizing

The General Rule
Most Count nouns pluralize with 's' and most Noncount nouns don't pluralize at all.

An Exception to the Rule
For a number of nouns, the rule needs slight revision. Certain nouns in English belong to both classes: they have both a noncount and a count meaning. Normally the noncount meaning is abstract and general and the count meaning concrete and specific.

Comparing

Count
- I've had some <u>difficulties</u> finding a job. (refers to a number of specific problems)
- The <u>talks</u> will take place in the Krannert building. (refers to a number of specific lectures)
- The city was filled with bright <u>lights</u> and harsh <u>sounds</u>. (refers to a number of specific lights and noises)

Noncount
- She succeeded in school with little <u>difficulty</u>. (refers to the general idea of school being difficult)
- I dislike idle <u>talk</u>. (refers to talking in general)
- <u>Light</u> travels faster than <u>sound</u>. (refers to the way light and sound behave in general)

A special case of the use of noncount nouns in a count sense has to do with classification. Sometimes a usually noncount noun can be understood as one item separate and distinct from other items of the same category. The nouns that function in this way often denote foods and beverages: food(s), drink(s), wine(s), bread(s), coffee(s), fruit(s), and so on.
Examples:
- *There are several French wines to choose from. (= kinds of wine)*
- *I prefer Sumatran coffees to Colombian. (= kinds of coffee)*
- *We use a variety of different batters in our bakery. (= kinds of batter)*

2.4 Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun. They can be in one of three cases:
Subject, Object, Possessive or Reflexive.

Subject Pronouns

<u>*I, you, he, she, it, we,* and *they*</u> are subject pronouns. Subject pronouns are used when the pronoun is the subject of the sentence. You can remember subject pronouns easily by filling in the blank subject space for a simple
sentence.

Subject pronouns are also used if they rename the subject. They will follow to be verbs such as is, are, was, were, am, and will be.

Examples: *It is he. This is she speaking. It is we who are responsible for the decision to downsize.*

Object Pronouns

me, you, him, her, it, us, and them are object pronouns. Object pronouns are used everywhere else (direct object, indirect object, object of the preposition).
Example: Jean talked to him. Are you talking to me?

To decide whether to use the subject or object pronoun after the words than or as, mentally complete the sentence.

Example: Tom is as smart as *she*/her.
If we mentally complete the sentence, we would say, "Tom is as smart as she is." Therefore, *she* is the correct answer.

Example: Zoe is taller than I/me.
Mentally completing the sentence, we have, "Zoe is taller than I am."

Possessive Pronouns

mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, and theirs are possessive pronouns. Possessive pronouns show ownership and never need apostrophes.
Example: The car is mine. The hat is hers.

Reflexive Pronouns

myself, himself, herself, itself, themselves, ourselves, yourself, yourselves are reflexive pronouns. Reflexive pronouns should be used only when they refer back to another word in the sentence.

Example: I did it myself. Correct
Example: My brother and myself did it. Incorrect - the word myself does not refer back to another word in the sentence.
Example: My brother and I did it. Correct
Example: Please give it to John or myself. Incorrect
Example: Please give it to John or me. Correct

2.5 Simple, Compound & Complex Sentences

Simple sentences

A simple sentence, also called an independent clause, contains a subject and a verb, and it expresses a complete thought. In the following simple sentences, subjects are in underlined by a single line, and verbs are underlined with a double line.

Example A: Some students like to study in the mornings.
Example B: Juan and Arturo play football every afternoon.
Example C: Alicia goes to the library and studies every day

The three examples above are all simple sentences. Note that example B contains a compound subject, and example C contains a compound verb. Simple sentences, therefore, contain a subject and verb and express a complete thought, but they can also contain a compound subjects or verbs.

Compound sentences

A compound sentence contains two independent clauses joined by a coordinator. The coordinators are as follows: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*. (Helpful hint: The first letter of each of the coordinators spells *FANBOYS*.) Except for very short sentences, coordinators are always preceded by a comma. In the following compound sentences, subjects are in underlined with a single line, verbs are underlined with a double line, and the coordinators and the commas that precede them are shaded.

Example A: I tried to speak Spanish, and my friend tried to speak English.
Example B: Alejandro played football, so Maria went shopping.
Example C: Alejandro played football, for Maria went shopping

The above three examples are compound sentences. Each sentence contains two independent clauses, and they are joined by a coordinator with a comma preceding it. Note how the conscious use of coordinators can change the relationship between the clauses. Examples B and C, for example, are identical except for the coordinators. In example B, which action occurred first? Obviously, "Alejandro played football" first, and as a consequence, "Maria went shopping. In example C, "Maria went shopping" first. In example C, "Alejandro played football" because, possibly, he didn't have anything else to do, *for* **or** *because* "Maria went shopping."

Complex sentences

A complex sentence has an independent clause joined by one or more dependent clauses. A complex sentence always has a subordinator such as *because, since, after, although, or when* or a relative pronoun such as *that, who, or which*. In the following complex sentences, subjects are underlined with a single line, verbs are underlined with a double line, and the subordinators and their commas (when required) are shaded.

Example A: When he handed in his homework, he forgot to give the teacher the last page.
Example B: The teacher returned the homework after she noticed the error.
Example C: The students are studying because they have a test tomorrow.
Example D: After they finished studying, Juan and Maria went to the movies.
Example E: Juan and Maria went to the movies after they finished studying.

When a complex sentence begins with a subordinator such as examples A and D, a comma is required at the end of the dependent clause. When the independent clause begins the sentence with subordinators in the middle as in examples B, C, and E, no comma is required. If a comma is placed before the subordinators in examples B, C, and E, it is wrong.

Complex sentences / Adjective clauses

Finally, sentences containing adjective clauses (or dependent clauses) are also complex because they contain an independent clause and a dependent clause. The subjects, verbs, and subordinators are marked the same as in the previous sentences, and in these sentences, the independent clauses are also in bold.

Example A: **The woman** who(m) my mom talked to **sells cosmetics**.
Example B: **The book** that Jonathan read **is on the shelf**.
Example C: **The house** which Abraham Lincoln was born in **is still standing**.
Example D: **The town** where I grew up **is in the United States**.

2.6 Subjects and Verbs

Being able to identify the subject and verb correctly
- will help you correct errors concerning agreement.
- will also help you with commas and semicolons as you will see later.

Definition of a verb

A *verb* is a word that shows action (runs, hits, slides) or state of being (is, are, was, were, am, etc.).
Examples: He (subject) walked (verb) down the stairs. You (subject) are (verb) my neighbour.

If a verb follows 'to', it is called an infinitive phrase and is not the main verb. You will find the main verb either before or after the infinitive phrase.
Examples: I like (verb) to run. The efforts (verb) to get her elected succeeded.

Definition of a subject

A **subject** is the noun or pronoun that performs the verb.
Example: The woman hurried.   (Woman is the subject)

A subject will come before a phrase beginning with 'of'.
Example: A bouquet *(subject) of yellow roses* will lend *(verb) colour and fragrance to the room.*

To find the subject and verb, always find the verb first. Then ask who or what performed the verb.

Example: The jet engine passed *inspection.*
Passed is the verb. Who or what passed? The *engine*, so *engine* is the subject.
What if I included the word jet as the subject? Technically, jet is an adjective here and is part of what is known as the complete subject.

Example: From the ceiling hung *the* chandelier.
The verb is *hung*. Now, if you think *ceiling* is the subject, slow down.
Ask *who* or *what* hung. The answer is *chandelier*, not *ceiling*.
Therefore, *chandelier* is the subject.

Any request or command such as "Stop!" or "Walk quickly." has the understood subject you because if we ask who is to stop or walk quickly, the answer must be you.

Example: (You) Please *bring* me a glass of water.
Bring *is the verb. Who is to do the bringing?* You – *understood – is the subject.*

Sentences often have more than one subject, more than one verb, or pairs of subjects and verbs.

Examples:
I like candy and *she likes* ice cream.
Two pairs of subjects and verbs.

She and *I like* candy.
Two subjects and one verb.

She lifts weights and *jogs* daily.
One subject and two verbs.

2.7 Making Subject and Verbs Agree

When the subject of a sentence is composed of two or more nouns or pronouns connected by *and*, use a plural verb.

She *and* her friends are at the fair.

When two or more singular nouns or pronouns are connected by *or* or *nor*, use a singular verb.

The book *or* the pen is in the drawer.

When a compound subject contains both a singular and a plural noun or pronoun joined by *or* or *nor*, the verb should agree with the part of the subject that is nearer the verb.

The boy *or* his friends run every day.

His friends *or* the boy runs every day.

Doesn't is a contraction of *does not* and should be used only with a singular subject. *Don't* is a contraction of *do not* and should be used only with a plural subject. The exception to this rule appears in the case of the first person and second person pronouns *I* and *you*. With these pronouns, the contraction *don't* should be used.

He doesn't like it.

They don't like it.

Do not be misled by a phrase that comes between the subject and the verb. The verb agrees with the subject, not with a noun or pronoun in the phrase.

One of the boxes is open.

The people who listen to that music are few.

The team captain, as well as his players, is anxious.

The book, including all the chapters in the first section, is boring.

The woman with all the dogs walks down my street.

The words *each*, *each one*, *either*, *neither*, *everyone*, *everybody*, *anybody*, *anyone*, *nobody*, *somebody*, *someone*, and *no one* are singular and require a singular verb.

Each of these hot dogs is juicy.

Everybody knows Mr. Jones.

Either is correct.

Nouns such as *civics*, *mathematics*, *dollars, measles*, and *news* require singular verbs.

The news is on at six.

The word *dollars* is a special case. When talking about an amount of money, it requires a singular verb, but when referring to the dollars themselves, a plural verb is required. Note: other words like 'years' can be used the same depending on the context of the sentence.

Five dollars is a lot of money.

Dollars are often used instead of rubles in Russia.

Nouns such as *scissors*, *tweezers*, *trousers*, and *shears* require plural verbs. (There are two parts to these things.)

These scissors are dull.

Those trousers are made of wool.

In sentences beginning with *there is* or *there are*, the subject follows the verb. Since *there* is not the subject, the verb agrees with what follows.

There are many questions.

There is a question.

Collective nouns are words that imply more than one person but that are considered singular and take a singular verb, such as: *group*, *team*, *committee*, *class*, *and family*.

In very few cases, the plural verb is used if the individuals in the group are thought of and specifically referred to.

The team runs during practice.

The committee decides how to proceed.

The family has a long history.

My family have never been able to agree.

Expressions such as *with, together with, including, accompanied by, in addition to*, or *as well* do not change the number of the subject. If the subject is singular, the verb is too.

The President, accompanied by his wife, is travelling to India.

All of the books, including yours, are in that box.

2.8 Who/Whom, Whoever/Whomever

Who/Whom

Use the he/him method to decide which word is correct.
he = who
him = whom

Example: **Who***/Whom wrote the letter?*
He wrote the letter. Therefore, *who* is correct.

*Example: For who/***whom** *should I vote?*
Should I vote for him? Therefore, *whom* is correct.

Example: We all know **who***/whom pulled that prank.*
This sentence contains two clauses: *We all know* and *who/whom pulled that prank.* We are interested in the second clause because it contains the *who/whom*. He *pulled that prank*. Therefore, *who* is correct.

*Example: We want to know on who/***whom** *the prank was pulled.*
This sentence contains two clauses: *We want to know* and *the prank was pulled on who/whom*. Again, we are interested in the second clause because it contains the who/whom. *The prank was pulled on him. Therefore,* whom *is correct.*

Whoever/Whomever

First of all, use the 'ever' suffix when who or whom can fit into two clauses in the sentence.

Example: Give it to him. He asked for it first.
Because we can substitute *him* and *he* in both clauses, we must use the *ever* suffix.

Now, to determine whether to use *whoever* or *whomever*, here is the rule:
him + he = whoever
him + him = whomever

Example: Give it to **whoever***/whomever asks for it first.*
Give it to whoever asks for it first.

*Example: We will hire whoever/***whomever** *you recommend.*
We will hire him*. You recommend* him*.*
him + him = whomever

Example: We will hire **whoever**/*whomever is most qualified.*
We will hire him. *He is most qualified.*
him + he = whoever

When the entire *whoever/whomever* clause is the subject of the verb following the clause, look inside the clause to determine whether to use *whoever* or *whomever*.

Example: Whoever is elected will serve a four-year term.
Whoever is elected is the subject of *will serve.*
Whoever is the subject of *is.*

Example: Whomever you elect will serve a four-year term.
Whomever you elect is the subject of *will serve.*
Whomever is the object of *you elect.*

2.9 Accept/Except

Errors in writing that involve sound-alike words (homophones) are known as "wrong word" errors. Such errors are more significant than simple spelling mistakes, since they involve word-level confusion, not merely incorrect spelling of the correct word. Two common sources of wrong word errors are the homophone pairs *accept/except* and *affect/effect*.

Accept is a verb that means "to receive, admit and regard as true".
Example: "He was accepted to Harvard".

Except is a preposition that means "excluding."
Example: "He bought a gift for everyone except me".

Except is also a conjunction that means "if not for the fact that" or "other than."
Example: "I would help you, except I'm too busy".

Except is a fairly uncommon verb that means "to leave out, exclude."
Example: "I hate lawyers, present company excepted".

The confusion between *accept* and *except* is due to their somewhat similar spelling and pronunciation. In fact, it's rather strange that they do get confused, because the meaning of *accept* and the meaning of *except* when used as a verb are more or less opposites.

2.10 Adjectives and Adverbs

Adjectives

Adjectives modify nouns. To modify means to change in some way.

Example: "I ate an enormous lunch."
Lunch is a noun, and *enormous* is an adjective that modifies it. It tells us **what kind of** meal the person ate.

Adjectives usually answer one of a few different questions: "What kind?" or "Which?" or "How many?"

Example: *"The* tall *girl is riding a* new *bike."*
Tall tells us **which** girl we're talking about. *New* tells us **what kind of** bike we're talking about.

Example: "The tough *professor gave us the final exam."*
Tough tells us **what kind of** professor we're talking about. *Final* tells us **which** exam we're talking about.

Example: "Fifteen students passed the midterm exam; twelve *students passed the final exam."*
Fifteen and *twelve* both tell us **how many** students; *midterm* and *final* both tell us **which** exam.

Adverbs

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. (You can recognize adverbs easily because many of them are formed by adding -ly to an adjective, though that is not always the case). The most common question that adverbs answer is **how.**

Example: "She sang beautifully."
Beautifully is an adverb that modifies *sang.* It tells us **how** she sang.

Example: "The cellist played carelessly."
Carelessly is an adverb that modifies *played.* It tells us **how** the cellist played.

Adverbs also modify adjectives and other adverbs.

Example: "*That woman is extremely nice."*
Nice is an adjective that modifies the noun *woman*. *Extremely* is an adverb that modifies *nice*; it tells us **how** nice she is. **How** nice is she? She's extremely nice.

Example: *"It was a terribly hot afternoon."*
Hot is an adjective that modifies the noun *afternoon. Terribly* is an adverb that modifies the adjective *hot*. **How** hot is it? Terribly hot.

Most of the time, adjectives come before nouns. However, they come after the nouns they modify, most often when the verb is a form of the following:
- be
- feel
- taste
- smell
- sound
- look
- appear
- seem

Example: "The dog is black."
Black is an adjective that modifies the noun dog, but it comes after the verb. (Remember that "is" is a form of the verb "be.")

Example:"Brian seems sad."
Sad is an adjective that modifies the noun *Brian*.

Example:"The milk smells rotten."
Rotten is an adjective that modifies the noun *milk*.

Example:"The speaker sounds hoarse."
Hoarse is an adjective that modifies the noun *speaker*.

Be sure to understand the differences between the following two examples:

Example: "The dog smells carefully."
Here, *carefully* describes **how** the dog is smelling. We imagine him sniffing very cautiously.

But:

Example: "The dog smells clean."
Here, *clean* describes the dog itself. It's not that he's smelling clean things or something; it's that he's had a bath and does not stink.

2.11 Semicolons (;)

Use a semicolon in place of a period to separate two sentences where the conjunction has been left out.

Example: Mary went to work; John went shopping.

Also use a semicolon to join 2 independent clauses when the second clause restates the first or when the two clauses are of equal emphasis.

Example: Road construction in Dallas has hindered travel around town; streets have become covered with bulldozers, trucks, and cones.

Also use a semicolon to join 2 independent clauses when the second clause begins with a conjunctive adverb (however, therefore, moreover, furthermore, thus, meanwhile, nonetheless, otherwise) or a transition (in fact, namely, for example, that is, for instance, in addition, in other words, on the other hand, even so).

Examples: Terrorism in the United States has become a recent concern; in fact, the concern for America's safety has led to an awareness of global terrorism.

Also use a semicolon to join elements of a series when individual items of the series already include commas.

Example: Recent sites of the Olympic Games include Athens, Greece; Salt Lake City, Utah; Sydney, Australia; Nagano, Japan.

2.12 Apostrophes (' ')

The *apostrophe* has three uses:
- To form possessives of nouns
- To show the omission of letters
- To indicate certain plurals of lowercase letters.

Apostrophes are **NOT** used for possessive pronouns or for noun plurals, including acronyms.

Forming possessives of nouns

To see if you need to make a possessive, turn the phrase around and make it an "of the..." phrase.
Example: the boy's hat = the hat of the boy,
*   three days' journey = journey of three days*

If the noun after "of" is a building, an object, or a piece of furniture, then no apostrophe is needed!
Examples:
*   room of the hotel = hotel room*
*   door of the car = car door*
*   leg of the table = table leg*

Once you've determined whether you need to make a possessive, follow these rules to create one.

Add 's to the singular form of the word (even if it ends in -s):
Example: the owner's car
Example: James's hat

Add 's to the plural forms that do not end in -s:
Example: the children's game
Example: the geese's honking

Add ' to the end of plural nouns that end in -s:
Example: houses' roofs
Example: three friends' letters

Add 's to the end of compound words:
Example: my brother-in-law's money

Add 's to the last noun to show joint possession of an object:
Example: Todd and Anne's apartment

Showing omission of letters

Apostrophes are used in contractions. A contraction is a word (or set of numbers) in which one or more letters (or numbers) have been omitted. The apostrophe shows this omission. Contractions are common in speaking and in informal writing. To use an apostrophe to create a contraction, place an apostrophe where the omitted letter(s) would normally go.

Examples: don't = do not
I'm = I am
It's = it is
he'll = he will
who's = who is
shouldn't = should not
didn't = did not
could've = could have (NOT "could of"!)
'60 = 1960

Forming plurals of lowercase letters

Apostrophes are used to form plurals of letters that appear in lowercase; here the rule appears to be more typographical than grammatical, e.g. "three ps" versus "three p's." To form the plural of a lowercase letter, place **'s** after the letter. There is no need for apostrophes indicating a plural on capitalized letters, numbers, and symbols (though keep in mind that some editors, teachers, and professors still prefer them).

Examples:

p's and q's = a phrase indicating politeness, possibly from "mind your pints & and quarts"
Nita's mother constantly stressed minding one's p's and q's.

three Macintosh G4s = three of the Macintosh model G4
There are two G4s currently used in the writing classroom.

many &s = many ampersands

Don't use apostrophes for possessive pronouns or for noun plurals.
Apostrophes should **not** be used with possessive pronouns because possessive pronouns already show possession -- they don't need an apostrophe. ***His, her, its, my, yours, ours*** are all possessive pronouns. Here are some examples:

Example: **wrong**: ~~his' book~~
correct: *his book*
Example: **wrong**: ~~The group made it's decision.~~
correct: *The group made its decision.*

Its and it's are not the same thing. It's is a contraction for "it is" and its is a possessive pronoun meaning "belonging to it."

It's raining out= it is raining out. A simple way to remember this rule is the fact that you don't use an apostrophe for the possessives his or hers, so don't do it with its!)

Example: **wrong:** ~~a friend of yours'~~
                    correct: *a friend of yours*
Example: **wrong:** ~~She waited for three hours' to get her ticket.~~
                    correct: *She waited for three hours to get her ticket.*

2.13 Commas (,)

Use a comma to join 2 independent clauses and a coordinating conjunction (**and, but, or, for, nor, so**).
Example: Road construction can be inconvenient, but it is necessary.
Example: The new house has a large fenced backyard, so I am sure our dog will enjoy it.

Use a comma after an introductory phrase, prepositional phrase, or dependent clause.
Example: To get a good grade, you must complete all your assignments.
Example: Because Dad caught the chicken pox, we canceled our vacation.

Use a comma to separate elements in a series. Although there is no set rule that requires a comma before the last item in a series, it seems to be a general academic convention to include it. The examples below demonstrate this trend.
Example: On her vacation, Lisa visited Greece, Spain, and Italy.
Example: In their speeches, many of the candidates promised to help protect the environment, bring about world peace, and end world hunger.

Use a comma to separate nonessential elements from a sentence. More specifically, when a sentence includes information that is not crucial to the message or intent of the sentence, enclose it in or separate it by commas.
Example: John's truck, a red Chevrolet, needs new tires.
Example: When he realized he had overslept, Matt rushed to his car and hurried to work.

Use a comma between coordinate adjectives (adjectives that are equal and reversible).
Example: The irritable, fidgety crowd waited impatiently for the rally speeches to begin.
Example: The sturdy, compact suitcase made a perfect gift.

Use a comma after a transitional element (however, therefore, nonetheless, also, otherwise, finally, instead, thus, of course, above all, for example, in other words, as a result, on the other hand, in conclusion, in addition)
Example: For example, the Red Sox, Yankees, and Indians are popular baseball teams.
Example: If you really want to get a good grade this semester, however, you must complete all assignments, attend class, and study your notes.

Use a comma before with quoted words.
Example: "Yes," she promised. Todd replied, saying, "I will be back this afternoon."

Use a comma in a date.
Example: October 25, 1999
Example: Monday, October 25, 1999

Use a comma in a number.
Example: 15,000,000

Use a comma in a personal title.
Example: Pam Smith, MD
Example: Mike Rose, Chief Financial Officer for Operations, reported the quarter's earnings.

Use a comma to separate a city name from the state.
Example: West Lafayette, Indiana
Example: Dallas, Texas

NOTE: Avoid comma splices (two independent clauses joined only by a comma). Instead, separate the clauses with a period, with a comma followed by a coordinating conjunction, or with a semicolon.

2.14 Capitals

Use capital letters in the following ways:

The first words of a sentence
Example: When he tells a joke, he sometimes forgets the punch line.

The pronoun "I"
Example: The last time I visited Atlanta was several years ago.

Proper nouns (the names of specific people, places, organizations, and sometimes things)
Example: Worrill Fabrication Company, Golden Gate Bridge, Supreme Court,
Example: Livingston, Missouri, Atlantic Ocean, Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Family relationships (when used as proper names)
Example: I sent a thank-you note to Aunt Abigail, but not to my other aunts.
Example: Here is a present I bought for Mother.
Example: Did you buy a present for your mother?

Titles preceding names, but not title that follow names
Example: She worked as the assistant to Mayor Hanolovi.
Example: I was able to interview Miriam Moss, mayor of Littonville.

Directions that are names (North, South, East, and West when used as sections of the country, but not as compass directions)
Example: The Patels have moved to the Southwest.
Example: Jim's house is two miles north of Otterbein.

The days of the week, the months of the year, and holidays (but not the seasons used generally)
Example: Halloween, October, Friday, winter, spring, fall

Seasons are capitalized when used in a title.
Example: The Fall 1999 semester

The names of countries, nationalities, and specific languages
Example: Costa Rica, Spanish, French, English

The first word in a sentence that is a direct quote
Example: Emerson once said, "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds."

The major words in the titles of books, articles, and songs (but not short prepositions or the articles "the," "a," or "an," if they are not the first word of the title)
Example: One of Jerry's favorite books is The Catcher in the Rye.

Members of national, political, racial, social, civic, and athletic groups
Example: Green Bay Packers, African-Americans, Anti-Semitic, Democrats, Friends of the Wilderness, Chinese

Periods and events (but not century numbers)
Example: Victorian Era, Great Depression, Constitutional Convention, sixteenth century

Trademarks
Example: Pepsi, Honda, IBM, Microsoft Word

Words and abbreviations of specific names (but not names of things that came from specific things but are now general types)
Example: Freudian, NBC, pasteurize, UN, french fries, italics

2.15 Colons (:)

Use a colon to join 2 independent clauses when you wish to emphasize the second clause.
Example: Road construction in Dallas has hindered travel around town: parts of Main, Fifth, and West Street are closed during the construction.

Use a colon after an independent clause when it is followed by a list, a quotation, appositive, or other idea directly related to the independent clause.
Example: Julie went to the store for some groceries: milk, bread, coffee, and cheese.
Example: In speaking to the croud Mayor Brown urged all citizens to concerve energy: "We need to leave sufficient resources for our decendants."
Example: I know the perfect job for her: a politician.

Use a colon at the end of a business letter greeting.
Example: To Whom It May Concern:

Use a colon to separate the hour and minute(s) in a time notation.
Example: 12:00 p.m.

2.16 Parentheses ( )

Parentheses are used to emphasize content. They place more emphasis on the enclosed content than commas.

Use parentheses to set off nonessential material, such as dates, clarifying information, or sources, from a sentence.
Example: Muhammed Ali (1942-present), arguably the greatest athlete of all time, claimed he would "float like a butterfly, sting like a bee."

2.17 Dash (-)

Dashes are used to set off or emphasize the content enclosed within dashes or the content that follows a dash. Dashes place more emphasis on this content than parentheses.
Example: Perhaps one reason why the term has been so problematic—so resistant to definition, and yet so transitory in those definitions—is because of its multitude of applications.
Example: In terms of public legitimacy—that is, in terms of garnering support from state legislators, parents, donors, and university administrators—English departments are primarily places where advanced literacy is taught.
Example: To some of you, my proposals may seem radical—even revolutionary.

Use a dash to set off an appositive phrase that already includes commas. An appositive is a word that adds explanatory or clarifying information to the noun that precedes it.
Example: The cousins—Tina, Todd, and Sam—arrived at the party together.

2.18 Quotation Marks (" ")

Use quotation marks to enclose direct quotations. Commas and periods are placed inside the closing quotation mark, and colons and semicolons are placed outside. The placement of question and exclamation marks depends on the situation.
Example: He asked, "When will you be arriving?" I answered, "Sometime after 6:30."

Use quotation marks to indicate the novel, ironic, or reserved use of a word.
Example: History is stained with blood spilled in the name of "justice."

Use quotation marks around the titles of <u>short</u> poems, song titles, <u>short</u> stories, magazine or newspaper articles, essays, speeches, chapter titles, short films, and episodes of television or radio shows.
Example: "Self-Reliance," by Ralph Waldo Emerson
Example: "Just Like a Woman," by Bob Dylan

Do not use quotation marks in indirect or block quotations.

2.19 Italics

Underlining and Italics are often used interchangeably. Before word-processing programs were widely available, writers would underline certain words to indicate to publishers to italicize whatever was underlined. Although the general trend has been moving toward italicizing instead of underlining, you should remain consistent with your choice throughout your paper.

Italicize the titles of magazines, books, newspapers, academic journals, films, television shows, <u>long</u> poems, plays of three or more acts, operas, musical albums, works of art, websites, and individual trains, planes, or ships.
Examples: *Time*
           Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare
           The Metamorphosis of Narcissus by Salvador Dali
           Amazon.com
           Titanic

Italicize foreign words.
Example: Semper fi, the motto of the U.S. Marine Corps, means "always faithful."

Italicize a word or phrase to add emphasis.
Example: The *truth* is of utmost concern!

Italicize a word when referring to that word.
Example: The word *justice* is often misunderstood and therefore misused.

2.20 Sentence Fragments

Fragments are incomplete sentences. Usually, fragments are pieces of sentences that have become disconnected from the main clause. One of the easiest ways to correct them is to remove the period between the fragment and the main clause. Other kinds of punctuation may be needed for the newly combined sentence.

Below are some examples with the fragments shown in *italics*. Punctuation and/or words added to make corrections are highlighted in **bold**. Notice that the fragment is frequently a dependent clause or long phrase that follows the main clause.

Fragment (phrase or dependent clause)	**Possible Revision**
UW offers many majors in engineering. *Such as electrical, chemical, and industrial engineering.*	UW offers many majors in engineering**,** **s**uch as electrical, chemical, and industrial engineering.
Coach Dietz exemplified this behavior by walking off the field in the middle of a game. *Leaving her team at a time when we needed her.*	Coach Dietz exemplified this behavior by walking off the field in the middle of a game**,** **l**eaving her team at a time when we needed her.
I need to find a new roommate. *Because the one I have now isn't working out too well.*	I need to find a new roommate **b**ecause the one I have now isn't working out too well.
The current city policy on housing is incomplete as it stands. *Which is why we believe the proposed amendments should be passed.*	**Because** the current city policy on housing is incomplete as it stands**,** we believe the proposed amendments should be passed.

You may have noticed that newspaper and magazine journalists often use a dependent clause as a separate sentence when it follows clearly from the preceding main clause, as in the last example above. This is a conventional **journalistic** practice, often used for emphasis. For **academic writing, business writing and other more formal writing** situations, however, you should avoid such journalistic fragment sentences.

Some fragments are not clearly pieces of sentences that have been left unattached to the main clause; they are written as main clauses but lack a subject or main verb.

Fragment (incomplete main clause)	**Possible Revisions**
No main verb *A story with deep thoughts and emotions.*	**Appositive: <u>Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper,"</u>** *a story with deep thoughts and emotions***, has impressed critics for decades.** **Direct object: <u>She told</u>** *a story with deep thoughts and emotions.*
Toys of all kinds thrown everywhere.	**Complete verb:** *Toys of all kinds* **were** *thrown everywhere.* **Direct object: They found** *toys of all kinds thrown everywhere.*
A record of accomplishment beginning when you were first hired.	**Direct object: I've noticed** *a record of accomplishment beginning when you were first hired.* **Main verb**: *A record of accomplishment* **began** when *you were first hired.*
No subject *With the ultimate effect of all advertising is to sell the product.*	**Remove preposition:** *<u>T</u>he ultimate effect of all advertising is to sell the product.*
By paying too much attention to polls can make a political leader unwilling to propose innovative policies.	**Remove preposition:** *<u>P</u>aying too much attention to polls can make a political leader unwilling to propose innovative policies.*
For doing freelance work for a competitor got Phil fired.	**Remove preposition: <u>D</u>**oing freelance work for a competitor got Phil fired. Rearrange: **Phil got fired** *for doing freelance work for a competitor.*

These last three examples of fragments with no subjects are also known as *mixed constructions*, that is, sentences constructed out of mixed parts.

2.21 Misused Words

Many words sound alike but mean different things when put into writing. This list will help you distinguish between some of the more common words that sound alike. Click on any of the blue underlined links to open a longer and more complete definition of the word in a new window.

Accept, Except

accept = verb meaning to receive or to agree:
*Example: He **accepted** their praise graciously.*

except = preposition meaning all but, other than:
*Example: Everyone went to the game **except** Alyson.*

Affect, Effect

affect = verb meaning to influence:
*Example: Will lack of sleep **affect** your game?*

effect = noun meaning result or consequence:
*Example: Will lack of sleep have an **effect** on your game?*

effect = verb meaning to bring about, to accomplish:
*Example: Our efforts **have effected** a major change in university policy.*

A memory-help for affect and effect is is **RAVEN**: **R**emember, **A**ffect is a **V**erb and **E**ffect is a **N**oun.

Advise, Advice

advise = verb that means to recommend, suggest, or counsel:
*Example: I **advise** you to be cautious.*

advice = noun that means an opinion or recommendation about what could or should be done:
*Example: I'd like to ask for your **advice** on this matter.*

Conscious, Conscience

conscious = adjective meaning awake, perceiving:
*Example: Despite a head injury, the patient remained **conscious**.*

conscience = noun meaning the sense of obligation to be good:
*Example: Chris wouldn't cheat because his **conscience** wouldn't let him.*

Idea, Ideal

idea = noun meaning a thought, belief, or conception held in the mind, or a general notion or conception formed by generalization:
*Example: Jennifer had a brilliant **idea** -- she'd go to the Writing Lab for help with her papers!*

ideal = noun meaning something or someone that embodies perfection, or an ultimate object or endeavor:
*Example: Mickey was the **ideal** for tutors everywhere.*

ideal = adjective meaning embodying an ultimate standard of excellence or perfection, or the best;
*Example: Jennifer was an **ideal** student.*

Its, It's

its = possessive adjective (possesive form of the pronoun it):
*Example: The crab had an unusual growth on **its** shell.*

it's = contraction for it is or it has (in a verb phrase):
*Example: **It's** still raining; **it's** been raining for three days. (Pronouns have apostrophes only when two words are being shortened into one.)*

Lead, Led

lead = noun referring to a dense metallic element:
*Example: The X-ray technician wore a vest lined with **lead**.*

led = past-tense and past-participle form of the verb to lead, meaning to guide or direct:
*Example: The evidence **led** the jury to reach a unanimous decision.*

Than, Then

Than = used in comparison statements:
*Example: He is richer **than** I.*

Than = used in statements of preference:
*Example: I would rather dance **than** eat.*

Than = used to suggest quantities beyond a specified amount:
*Example: Read more **than** the first paragraph.*

Then = a time other than now:
*Example; He was younger **then**. She will start her new job **then**.*

Then = next in time, space, or order:
*Example: First we must study; **then** we can play.*

Then = suggesting a logical conclusion:
*Example: If you've studied hard, **then** the exam should be no problem.*

Their, There, They're

Their = possessive pronoun:
*Example: They got **their** books.*

There = that place:
*Example: My house is over **there**. (This is a place word, and so it contains the word here.)*

They're = contraction for they are:
*Example: **They're** making dinner. (Pronouns have apostrophes only when two words are being shortened into one.)*

To, Too, Two

To = preposition, or first part of the infinitive form of a verb:
*Example: They went **to** the lake **to** swim.*

Too = very, also:
*Example: I was **too** tired to continue. I was hungry, **too**.*

Two = the number 2:
*Example: **Two** students scored below passing on the exam.*

Two, twelve, and between are all words related to the number 2, and all contain the letters tw. Too can mean also or can be an intensifier, and you might say that it contains an extra o ("one too many")

We're, Where, Were

We're = contraction for we are:
*Example: **We're** glad to help. (Pronouns have apostrophes only when two words are being shortened into one.)*

Where = location:
*Example: **Where** are you going? (This is a place word, and so it contains the word here.)*

Were = a past tense form of the verb be:
*Example: They **were** walking side by side.*

Your, You're

Your = possessive pronoun:
*Example: **Your** shoes are untied.*

You're = contraction for you are:
Example: You're walking around with your shoes untied. (Pronouns have apostrophes only when two words are being shortened into one.)

Allusion / Illusion

Allusion is a reference or a suggestion, whereas an **illusion** is a fantasy, delusion or impression.
Example: In her speech she made an allusion to the new meeting structure.
Example: The magician's vanishing act was an example of an illusion.

Assure, Ensure, Insure:

Assure means "to declare" or "to promote."
Example: I assure you that I am trying to find your lost package.

Ensure means " to make safe or certain"
Example: Some people claim that eating properly ensures good health.

Insure means to protect with a contract of insurance**.**
Example: This insurance policy also insures my car against theft.

Between / Among

Use **among** when referring to three or more things and **between** when referring to two things.
Example: The decision was discussed among all the members of the committee.
Example: I had to decide between the chocolate mousse pie and the ice cream.

Amount / number

Use **amount** for things or ideas that are general or abstract and cannot be counted.
Example: He had a huge amount of work to finish before the deadline.

Use **number** for things that can be counted, as, for example four chairs or three tables
Example: There were a number of people who saw the accident.

All ready/already

all ready: used as an adjective to express complete preparedness
already: an adverb expressing time
Example: At last I was all ready to go, but everyone had already left.

All right/alright

all right: used as an adjective or adverb; older and more formal spelling, more common in scientific & academic writing:
Example: Will you be all right on your own?

alright: Alternate spelling of all right; less frequent but used often in journalistic and business publications, and especially common in fictional dialogue:
Example: He does alright in school.

All together/altogether

all together: an adverb meaning considered as a whole, summed up:
Example: All together, there were thirty-two students at the museum.

altogether: an intensifying adverb meaning wholly, completely, entirely:
Example: His comment raises an altogether different problem.

Anyone/any one

anyone: a pronoun meaning any person at all:
Example: Anyone who can solve this problem deserves an award.

any one: a paired adjective and noun meaning a specific item in a group; usually used with of:
Example: Any one of those papers could serve as an example.

Anyway/any way

anyway: an adverb meaning in any case or nonetheless:
Example: He objected, but she went anyway.

any way: a paired adjective and noun meaning any particular course, direction, or manner:
Example: Any way we chose would lead to danger.

Awhile/a while

awhile: an adverb meaning for a short time; some readers consider it nonstandard; usually needs no preposition:
Example: Won't you stay awhile?

a while: a paired article and noun meaning a period of time; usually used with for:
Example: We talked for a while, and then we said good night.

Maybe/may be

maybe: an adverb meaning perhaps:
Example: Maybe we should wait until the rain stops.

may be: a form of the verb be:
Example: This may be our only chance to win the championship.

Accompanied by / Accompanied with

Use **Accompanied by** for people, use **Accompanied with** for objects.
Example: He was accompanied by his supervisor when he attended the seminar.
Example: The payment arrived, accompanied with an explanation.

2.22 Parallel Structure

Parallel structure means using the same pattern of words to show that two or more ideas have the same level of importance. This can happen at the word, phrase, or clause level. The usual way to join parallel structures is with the use of coordinating conjunctions such as "and" or "or."

Words and Phrases

With the -ing form of words:
Not Parallel:
*Example: Mary likes hik**ing**, swimm**ing**, and **to ride** a bicycle.*

Parallel:
*Example: Mary likes hik**ing**, swimm**ing**, and bicycl**ing**.*

With infinitive phrases:
Not Parallel:
Example: Mary likes to hike, swim, and riding her bicycle.

Parallel:
*Example: Mary likes **to hike**, **to swim**, and **to ride** a bicycle.*
OR
*Example: Mary likes to **hike**, **swim**, and **ride** a bicycle.*

> **NOTE:** You can use "to" before all the verbs in a sentence or only before the first one.

Not Parallel:
*Example: The production manager was asked to write his report quick**ly**, accurate**ly**, and **in a detailed manner**.*

Parallel:
*Example: The production manager was asked to write his report quick**ly**, accurate**ly**, and thorough**ly**.*

Not Parallel:
*Example: The teacher said that he was a poor student because he wait**ed** until the last minute to study for the exam, complet**ed** his lab problems in a careless manner, and **his motivation was** low.*

Parallel:
*Example: The teacher said that he was a poor student because he wait**ed** until the last minute to study for the exam, complet**ed** his lab problems in a careless manner, and lack**ed** motivation.*

Clauses

A parallel structure that begins with clauses must keep on with clauses. Changing to another pattern or changing the voice of the verb (from active to passive or vice versa) will break the parallelism.

Not Parallel:
*Example: The coach told the players **that they should get** a lot of sleep, **that they should not eat** too much, and **to do** some warm-up exercises before the game.*

Parallel:
*Example: The coach told the players **that they should get** a lot of sleep, **that they should not eat** too much, and **that they should do** some warm-up exercises before the game.*
*Example: The coach told the players that they should **get** a lot of sleep, not **eat** too much, and **do** some warm-up exercises before the game.*

Not Parallel:
*Example: The salesman expected **that he would present** his product at the meeting, **that there would be** time for him to show his slide presentation, and **that questions would be asked** by prospective buyers. **(passive)***

Parallel:
*Example: The salesman expected **that he would present** his product at the meeting, **that there would be** time for him to show his slide presentation, and **that prospective buyers would ask** him questions.*

Lists after a colon

Be sure to keep all the elements in a list in the same form.

Not Parallel:
*Example: The dictionary can be used for these purposes: to find **word meanings**, **pronunciations**, **correct spellings**, and **looking up irregular verbs**.*

Parallel:
*Example: The dictionary can be used for these purposes: to find **word meanings**, **pronunciations**, **correct spellings**, and **irregular verbs**.*

Proofreading Strategies to try:
- Skim your report/email, pausing at the words "and" and "or." Check on each side of these words to see whether the items joined are parallel. If not, make them parallel.
- If you have several items in a list, put them in a column to see if they are parallel.
- Listen to the sound of the items in a list or the items being compared. Do you hear the same kinds of sounds? For example, is there a series of "-ing" words beginning each item? Or do your hear a rhythm being repeated? If something is breaking that rhythm or repetition of sound, check to see if it needs to be made parallel.

2.23 A or An?

"A" goes before all words that begin with consonants.
- *a cat*
- *a dog*
- *a purple onion*
- *a big apple*

with one exception: Use **an** before unsounded *h*.
- *an honorable peace*
- *an honest error*

"An" goes before all words that begin with vowels:
- *an apricot*
- *an egg*
- *an Indian*
- *an orbit*
- *an uprising*

with two exceptions: When **u** makes the same sound as the **y in you**, or *o* makes the same sound as **w in won**, then **a is used**.
- *a union*
- *a united front*
- *a unicorn*
- *a used napkin*
- *a U.S. ship*
- *a one-legged man*

NOTE: The choice of article is actually based upon the phonetic (sound) quality of the first letter in a word, not on the orthographic (written) representation of the letter. If the first letter makes a vowel-type sound, you use "an"; if the first letter would makes a consonant-type sound, you use "a." So, if you consider the rule from a phonetic perspective, there aren't any exceptions. Since the 'h' hasn't any phonetic representation, no audible sound, in the first exception, the sound that follows the article is a vowel; consequently, 'an' is used. In the second exception, the word-initial 'y' sound (unicorn) is actually a glide [j] phonetically, which has consonantal properties; consequently, it is treated as a consonant, requiring 'a'.

2.24 Spelling IE/EI

In general, this is the rule:
    Write I before E
    Except after C
    Or when it sounds like an A
    As in "neighbour" and "weigh"

i before e:
Examples: *relief, believe, niece, chief, sieve, frieze, field, yield*

e before i:
Examples: receive, deceive, ceiling, conceit, vein, sleigh, freight, eight

exceptions:
seize, either, weird, height, foreign, leisure, conscience, counterfeit, forfeit, leisure, neither, science, species, sufficient

CHAPTER 3

Reports and Presentations

In this chapter, we discuss how to prepare GDD and TDD reports, as well as how to prepare for and give game-related presentations.

3.1 Informal Reports (e.g. TDDs)
3.2 Formal Reports (e.g. GDDs)
3.3 Presentations

3.1   Informal Reports

What is an informal report?

Informal reports are the most common type of report that people create, and could span a wide range of purposes.   For example, brief documentation, problem resolution summaries, technology reports, and project summaries are all types of common informal reports used in game studios.

NOTE: Informal reports often contain diagrams that detail the structure of technologies, software, or network infratructures.   These diagrams can be made easily using one of several programs available on the market such as Microsoft Visio.

NOTE: *Technical Design Documents (TDDs)* are the most common type of informal report that you will deal with in a game studio.   TDDs are intended to be used internally and often contain diagrams (e.g. UML) and other key guidelines for development on a particular project.   The content within a TDD is ultimately dictated by the nature and needs of the organization and project – in general TDDs are kept as simple as possible so that others within the organization can understand their contents.

They differ from formal Reports in that they:
- Are usually shorter, often only two or three pages in length.
- More conversational, using frequent personal pronouns and contractions.
- It has a less "ornate" physical structure.
- Often written as a letter or memo, with the content divided into sections and subsections.
- The key to a good informal report is OBJECTIVITY!

Informal report types

Before you are able to create an informal report, you must identify the purpose and type of your report. There are two general types of informal reports:

1. The Informational Report
    - Gives the facts of a situation or project (e.g. TDD), often on a regular schedule.
    - Details tend to be routine.

2. The Analytical Report
    - The more common type and the more challenging to write.
    - It is a problem solving report.
    - Analyzes a situation and recommends a certain course of action.
    - Primary reason is to help others to make a decision.
    - The writer wants to convince the reader of the appropriateness of the analysis and the resulting recommendations or conclusions.

Planning the report

Step 1: Assess your reader and your reason for writing. Consider the reader's:

- Position,

- Knowledge,

- Concerns, and

- Possible objections or biases.

Step 2: Decide the precise reason or reasons for writing the report, including the results you hope to obtain from it. This will make it easier for you to organize and focus your material.

Step 3: Work out in exact terms the subject of your study. In defining your subject think of building a fence around a topic. Figure out:

- What exactly are the boundaries of your discussion?

- What will be included and what will be left out?

Defining the subject clearly will help keep the proportions of the study manageable and identify for potential readers the exact nature of the report. You don't want to spend time on areas of marginal importance or on details that the reader won't care about.

Choosing the best order for topics in the report

Two considerations will determine the best order for a report

1. **What Is The Most Important Information?**

    For an Analytical Report, the most important information is likely to be the conclusions drawn from the investigation or the recommendations for solving a problem.

    For an Informational Report it may merely be a summative statement that generalizes from the facts or draws attention to the most important ones.

    In any case, construct a hierarchy of information, or ideas; decide what matters most and what matters least. The information or ideas you select as being most important will become your key points.

2. **What Is The Reader's Likely Reaction?**

    Usually the readers of informational reports want to receive the information, and most analytical reports are written at the request of a reader who will be interested in the conclusion or recommendations. They are usually generated at the request of another individual.

Predicting reader response is an important step in deciding how to organize your report.

Organizing the elements of the report

Purpose

Open with a short statement of purpose – this statement should be simple and link the purpose with the recommendations. If the title clearly reveals the aim of the report, then perhaps include the method of collection in your introductory statement.

Key Points

Simply list them with the key points first.

Body

This is the most extensive part of the report and may have several headings. It can be organized in different ways the most common are listed below.

1. **Order of Importance**
   Follow the direct approach - for each point or finding make a new section or heading.

2. **Classification or Division**
   This method of organizing divides a topic into classes or component parts

   When classifying or dividing the subject:

   Do incorporate all relevant information within the categories you have devised.

   Don't let information overlap categories.

   Don't put vastly different amounts of information in each of the categories.

3. **Chronological Order**
   This arrangement groups information according to time periods. It can be an effective way to report on trends. It can also be the obvious choice for reporting a sequence of events or actions.

   Usually use this form where the sequence itself matters or a time frame makes the information easier to understand.

4. **Comparison – an alternating arrangement**

Point by Point Comparison	**Block Comparison**
1. Purchase price	1. Car X
a) Car X	a) Purchase price
b) Car Y	b) Maintenance record
	c) Gas consumption
2. Maintenance record	2. Car Y
b) Car X	a) Purchase price
b) Car Y	b) Maintenance record
	c) Gas consumption

Writing the report

As soon as you have decided how to organize the material in the report, try to get it all down on the page as quickly as possible.

Write, rewrite, revise, rewrite, etc.

You should always rewrite any report a few times in order to refine your thoughts and make the report more coherent. Don't worry about the grammar or spelling on the first pass - just concentrate on getting your thoughts down. Find what method works best for you and "run" with it. Then, focus on the grammar and spelling during the second pass.

Three Steps To Overcoming Writer's Block:

1. **Dictating**

    This method works best if you have already devised an outline for your report, and have to fill in the details of sections. You should be prepared to do some heavy editing of the transcribed draft.

2. **Composing Onscreen**

    This method is helpful even if you are not a good typist. Since it's easy to change what you have written – to add, delete, or move whole sections around – you will feel less constrained by your wish to write a perfect first draft.

3. **Free Writing**

    Start with the part of the report you find easiest and put your thoughts down. Keep writing continuously without hesitating and correcting as you go. This should help to get the writing juices flowing.

Write objectively

1. **Identify Your Assumptions**
   - If you have assumed that some aspects of a given topic are not worth discussing in the report, say so.
   - If you have chosen to limit the topic, give the reason.

    By identifying your assumption, you're demonstrating your thoroughness – you have considered all possibilities and have fixed upon the most appropriate ones.

2. **Substantiate Your Opinions**
   - Your conclusions and recommendations should follow from the facts.
   - Opinions should have the support of evidence or explanations.
   - Don't imply what you cannot improve.
   - If your findings aren't foolproof, show where the uncertainty lies.

3. Avoid Subjective Language
  - Let the facts speak for themselves.
  - Not "awesome, fantastic" growth, but the sales figures increased by 30% overall last year.

4. Be Specific
  - Concrete language is livelier than abstract language; it can also be clearer.
  - Try to be exact when referring to people, places, times, and amounts – especially when you think the information might be disputed.

3.3   Formal Reports

What is a formal report?

Formal reports are essentially long informal reports. They almost always have a title page and a table of contents to organize the different sections. Because of their length, formal reports are often used to relay large amounts of information and may not seem as objective and easily read as an informal report. However, it is still important to ensure that formal reports are as objective as possible and have a robust and easy-to-understand structure to allow them to be understood as quickly as possible.

> **NOTE:** The process used to prepare for and create formal reports is identical to informal reports, but the time required will usually be much greater.

> **NOTE:** *Game Design Documents (GDDs)* are the most common type of formal report that you will deal with in a game studio. GDDs are intended to be used both internally and externally, and usually contain multiple sections that are somewhat standard between games. They are often used to receive funding, provide development guidance for the overall game, as well as produce game documentation. Your instructor can provide you with several different examples of GDDs that you can review.

As an example to show the general structure of a formal report, the following 4 pages detail a very simple formal report entitled: Analysing the Differences between Informal and Formal Reporting. Most formal reports are much longer than this example – a typical formal report, such as a GDD, is usually between 20 and 50 pages.

ANALYSING THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN

INFORMAL AND FORMAL REPORTING

Prepared for
The Technology Communication & Time Management Class

Prepared by
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Business Faculty
triOS College

May 15, 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY

By understanding the differences between informal and formal reports, it will better enable you to differentiate between the need for one or the other.

The report will compare the differences between:

1. Readers,
2. Length,
3. Summary,
4. Introductions,
5. Title,
6. Transmittal page, and
7. Content page.

It will also outline the other necessities that are inherent for any formal report while only briefly outlining the how the informal report differs.

Hopefully, once completed, you will understand the differences between the two reports and when one should submit a formal report and when one should submit an informal report.

THE INHERENT DIFFERENCES

	Informal Reports	Formal Repots
Reader	- often internal	- often external or distant within the organization
Length	- usually short	- usually long (three pages or more)
	- several sections	- sections and subsections
Tone	- personal	- more impersonal
	- contractions	- no contractions
Summary	- integrated	- on separate page
Introduction	- no heading	- can have one or more headings
Title	- appears as subject line in memo heading or simply as a heading	- appears on separate page
Transmittal page	- optional	- covering letter or memo
Research	- usually the reader already knows something about the topic; therefore, the research is minimal	- usually much more extensive

3.3 Presentations

As a video game developer, there will be many times where you are required to present a topic in front of your coworkers, clients, or superiors. To do this effectively, you must prepare in advance and practice good presentation techniques.

The first step to a good presentation is note preparation. Today, most presenters use PowerPoint (or OpenOffice or Apple Keynote) slides as a way to prepare structured note. Since PowerPoint presentations are used during the actual presentation, they also provide structure and cues to the presenter as well. In other words, if you use a PowerPoint presentation, you don't need to memorize your presentation – you simply need to be able to expand upon the points in your presentation from your knowledge of a topic. This allows you to prepare presentations quickly and effectively.

## Designing a PowerPoint, OpenOffice, or Apple Keynote presentation

It is important to realize that your PowerPoint, OpenOffice, or Apple Keynote presentation should NOT contain every detail that you are presenting – it should contain key pieces of information that you expand upon during your presentation. If done correctly, a PowerPoint, OpenOffice, or Apple Keynote presentation can enhance, rather than hinder, a presentation and make it more enjoyable for the audience.

When designing a PowerPoint, OpenOffice, or Apple Keynote presentation, keep the following in mind:

- Ensure that you do not use more than 20 slides (or your audience will experience a boredom effect known as "PowerPoint poisoning")
- Use 4-6 points per slide
- Do not use full sentences (bullet form only – keep it simple!)
- Use a standard, simple color scheme that is not distracting
- Use graphics/diagrams in your slides occasionally to make them more appealing to your audience

Guy Kawasaki's 10-20-30 Rule: This rule states that a PowerPoint, OpenOffice, or Apple Keynote presentation should have no more than 10 slides, last no longer than 20 minutes and have no text less than 30 point font. He says it doesn't matter whether your idea will revolutionize the world, you need to spell out the important nuggets in a few minutes minutes, a couple slides and a several words a slide.

It is also important that you print out your presentation for your audience so that they can take notes – PowerPoint, OpenOffice, and Apple Keynote allow you to print your slides in a way that 6 slides are printed per page, or that 3 slides are printed per page with a lined section next to each slide where the audience can print notes as shown in the following figure:
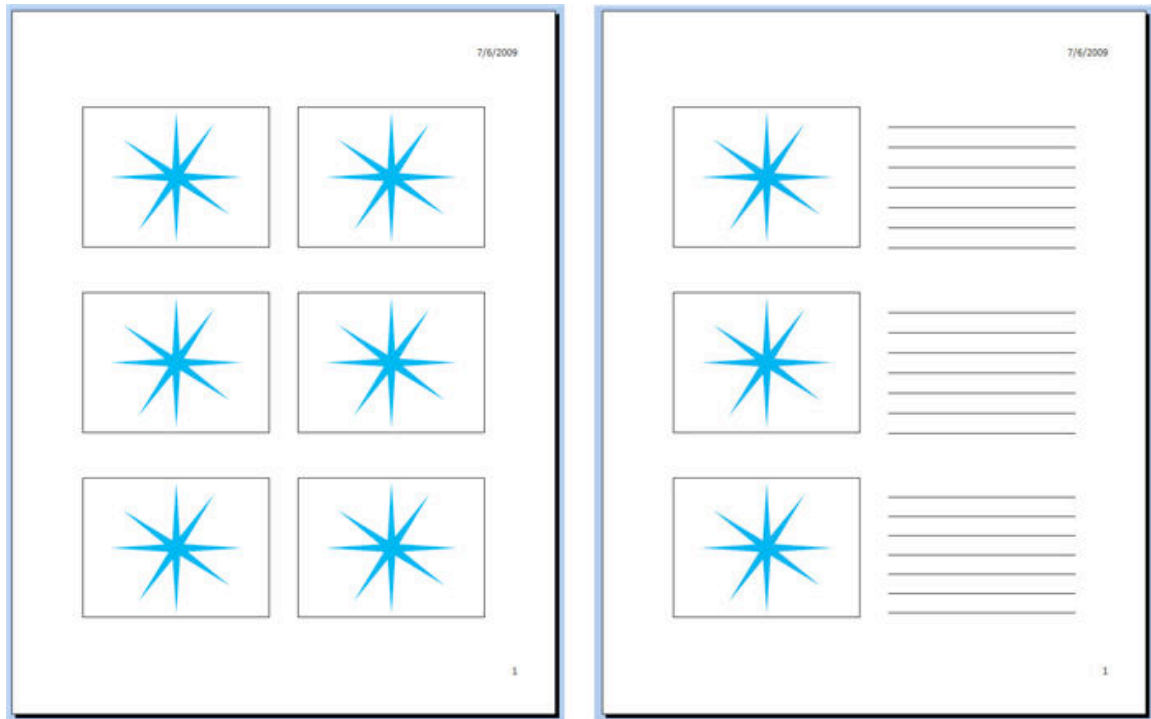
Worst presentation ever!

You instructor will now show you a sample PowerPoint presentation called "Worst Presentation Ever" that illustrates what you should NOT do. You can also obtain this presentation from www.elmhurst.edu/~jacobh/**Worst**PresentationEverStandAlone.ppt.

Rehearsing the presentation

After you have created your presentation, you should rehearse it at least 3 times to ensure that you can expand upon each topic within the presentation off the top of your head. Make sure that you can summarize each slide in 15 words or less. If not, rewrite it and try again. Speaking is an inefficient medium for communicating information, so know what the important fifteen words are so they can be repeated.

If you find it is too difficult to remember all of the topics this way, keep a small set of notes (ordered by slide) with the information that you will expand upon for during the presentation.

Giving the presentation

Once you have created and rehearsed your presentation, you need to present your topics to your audience. Presentation skills are mastered in much the same way that you would master an art: with plenty of practice.

In general, try to follow these guidelines:

- Arrive early and take your time.

- Spend a few moments before you begin in front of your audience to reduce tension (talk with a few audience members, etc.).

- If speaking to a large audience, open with "In a few moments, we will begin." Wait about 1 minute until the crowd calms down before you begin.

- Have a strong opening – tell the audience why they should care about what you are about to say.

- Speak clearly, and loudly (if you think you are talking loud enough, talk a bit louder!).

- Speak with conviction (as if you really believe in what you are presenting) – this tells your audience that the information you are presenting is important.

- Use body language (non-verbal communication) appropriately. Use arm gestures to signifiy important topics. Avoid nervous gestures, rattling your keys in your pockets, etc.

- Do not talk too fast (if you think you are talking slow enough, talk a bit slower!).

- Use humor often – but make sure that it is appropriate (no dirty jokes!).

- Pause often – this allows the audience to absorb your statements and to allows you to collect your own thoughts.

- Interact with your audience by asking questions. Make sure that you wait 5 seconds after asking a question to allow your audience enough time to formulate an answer.

- If you are polling the audience for volunteers or question answers, make sure that you make eye contact with the person before selecting them – if you try to make eye contact with someone and they quickly look away, it means that they are uncomfortable with being selected.

- Don't apologize frequently during the presentation. Apologies are used when you make a mistake – by apologizing during a presentation, you are telling your audience that you don't know what you are talking about! However, if you do relay inaccurate knowledge by accident, make sure that you apologize to ensure that you don't lose credibility with the audience.

- Periodically check the clock since most presentations are time-limited. If you are falling behind, you can speed up your presentation by NOT expanding upon some of the lesser points on your slides.

- Try to have fun presenting your topics – if you enjoy your presentation, your audience will as well.

NOTE: There are many organizations that allow you to build your public speaking and presentation skills through regular speaking engagements in front of peers – Toastmasters is one such organization that has chapters in most cities within Ontario.

CHAPTER 4

Time Management

In this chapter, we examine the concepts and practices that will allow you to manage your time as a video game developer effectively.

4.1 Why is Time Management Important?
4.2 Avoiding the Perfection Trap
4.3 Staying Organized
4.4 Maintaining Focus
4.5 Reducing Stress
4.6 Avoiding the Attention Trap
4.7 Working Efficiently

4.1   Why is Time Management Important?

Video game developers are tenacious problem solvers who are often tasked with several different problems at the same time. Moreover, each problem usually requires constant focus in order to be solved. As a result, Video game developers must prioritize problems, deal with stress, as well as manage their time and resources extremely well in order to be successful.

4.2   Avoiding the Perfection Trap

Many video game developers fall into the *perfection trap* – that is, they believe that they can make sure that everything related to some project is perfect.   However, in reality, perfection takes an unrealistic amount of time and is often unnecessary.

Say, for example, that you are developing a mobile game for Windows Phone 7, and you think it is important to add plenty of "bells and whistles" that will make it more appealing to users in the Windows Marketplace. More specifically, you chose to:
   a) Add effects to each of the objects on the screen (e.g. glitter).
   b) Add the location of the person on the high scores screen using the GPS.
   c) Put in several hidden levels and clues about their existence.
   d) Allow users to tweet and send pictures of their surroundings from within the game to friends.

While these may all be good features to add, the amount of time to create and develop these features must be weighed against their benefits.   For example, adding the location of the person on the high scores screen using the GPS is nice, but may be too much for a mobile game on a small screen – in other words, it won't make your game sell more. It will also use your valuable time to develop and test (remember to always expect everything to fail testing at least once!).

This problem is called *feature creep* and is one of the main reasons why game projects don't meet their deadlines and/or budgets.

As another example, say you are developing an Xbox game, and there is a component/level/feature that is having problems during the testing phase on the actual target. You have spent an exhoritant amount of time on trying to remedy the issue, and are worried that you will not meet your development milestones. Although it would be best to spend time to solve the problem, there will be times where you simply need to remove that part of the game and publish – remember the famous words of Steve Jobs: *real artists ship!*

4.3   Staying Organized

Staying organized is one of the most important ways to manage your time as it gives you the ability to "see the big picture" and make decisions regarding your tasks such as prioritizing them. Moreover, it increases your self-esteem and makes you feel in control of your situation when you have too much work to do!

Store all of your job/task information (calendar, notes, tasks, etc.) in one place

This is usually Microsoft Outlook or some other email program, but could be a written journal/organizer. Email programs such as Microsoft Outlook are the best method for storing the information that will keep you organized since email is the number one method of communication anyways and you are likely to spend the most time using that application anyways.   Plus, your email program stores its information on an email server within your organization so that you can access it from multiple computers.

Microsoft Outlook has a calendar-scheduling feature that allows you (and others in the organization) to book appointments. But more importantly, it also allows you to quickly enter Notes and Tasks, as well as manage and keep track of those tasks over time. You can even view a task timeline as shown in the figure below:
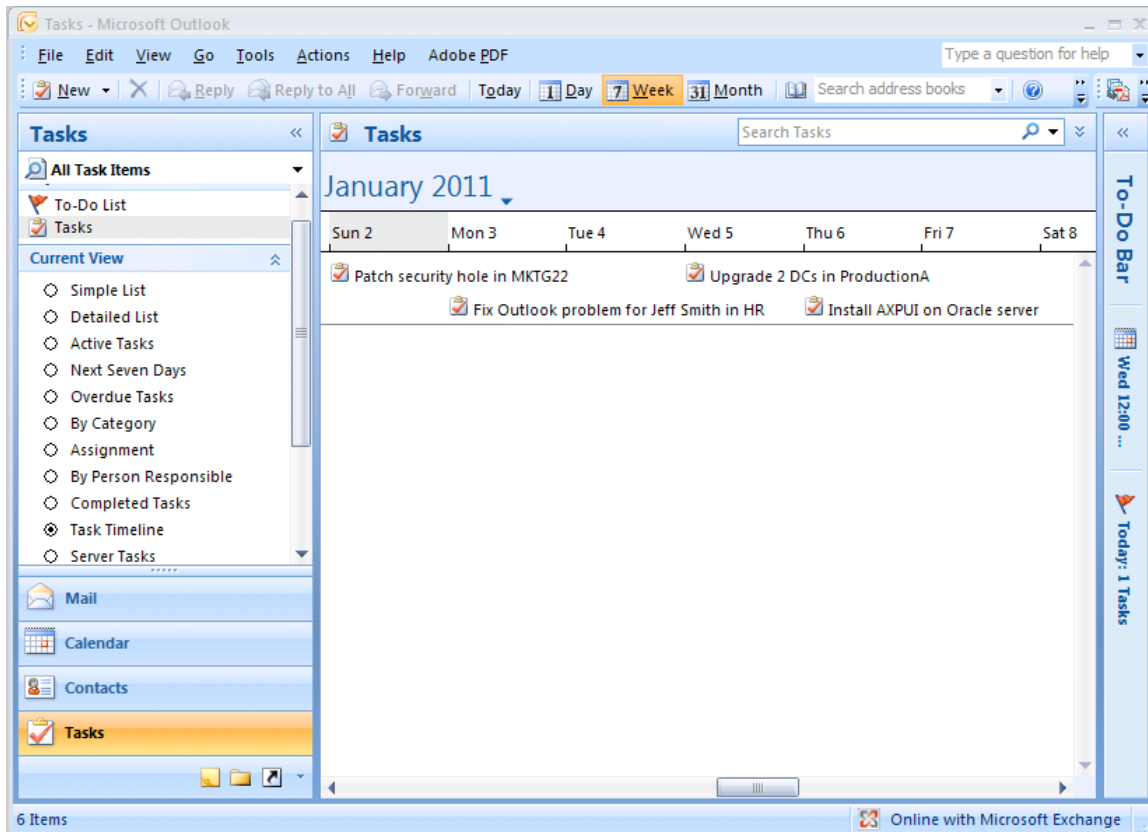
> **NOTE:** Scattered sticky notes is NOT an efficient way of organizing tasks – they are difficult to organize and access (chaos!).

Your smartphone is your best friend

This includes your BlackBerry, iPhone, Android phone, or Windows 7 phone because these phones allow you to access all of your email, calendar appointments, and job/task information anytime, anywhere**.**   In addition, you can create new calendar appointments, notes and tasks you're your smartphone as well as respond to email.

Nearly all organizations have users that use smartphones for this reason, especially those that develop mobile games! If you record your job tasks within your email program, then they will automatically sync to your smartphone (and vice versa) – for example, the following figure show what the tasks used earlier in Microsoft Outlook look like in the Tasks application on a BlackBerry for the same email account (the bolded tasks are due today, but you can easily modify the view options to display the tasks any way that you wish):

Being able to check your email any time is a huge time saver because you can check your email when you would otherwise be wasting your time (i.e. waiting for a server to reboot at the data centre or waiting in line for a coffee on break) - if there is an email that you can respond to in a few short lines, then you can type out a response - if the email requires that you respond using a long email, you can think of a response and plan your day accordingly until you get to a computer to reply to the email.

> **NOTE:** The more time you spend figuring out all of the cool features of your smartphone, the better you will be at managing your time!

Prioritize your tasks on a daily basis

At the beginning of each day (which could be after noon for video game developers), check the tasks that you have for the day, add any additional tasks, and then prioritize them. The criteria that you use to prioritize your tasks will ultimately depend on the tasks themselves and the nature of your organization – however, following are some questions that you can ask yourself to determine which tasks need a higher priority:

- What tasks need to be done by today and which ones can wait until tomorrow? (put off low priority tasks until the next day if you are too busy)
- What tasks are the most critical to the organization (i.e. must be done NOW)?
- What time today would be best for each task? (i.e. A task that includes a lengthy software compilation should be started in the morning so that you can move to other tasks in the meantime.)
- What problems could happen during each task (which may increase the time needed for the task)? (start these tasks earlier so that you have enough time)
- What meetings to I have today and when? (any tasks must work around these meeting times – also ensure that there is enough time if a meeting is expected to run past its scheduled time)

NOTE: Only focus on prioritizing the tasks for the current day – if you start prioritizing future tasks, you will quickly notice that you'll be changing their priorities because new tasks crop up on a daily basis.

NOTE: Nearly all task applications (Microsoft Outlook, BlackBerry, etc.) allow you to easily add priorities to each task.

NOTE: Many video game developers who don't manage their time properly end up working late and eventually believe that working late is part of the video game developer job. Truthfully, there are times where video game developers must put in extra time to make sure a mission critical bug is fixed or a feature implemented on time, but this should be an exception and not the norm. Some organizations pay their video game developers a premium for the added responsibility of ensuring that deadlines are met, even after working hours. Other organizations do not and require that any unfinished tasks wait until the next day. Ensure that you are clear on the job expectations for your organization.

Don't rely on your memory

Whoever said that "the human mind is a wonderful thing" probably wrote it down in order to remember it. If you are the type of person who likes to keep their schedule in their mind, you may find yourself quickly frustrated in a game development environment. As humans, we often forget important details if we are rushed or under stress, and nearly all tasks that we need to perform involve plenty of details.

Always make time to write new tasks or information down as soon as possible so that you don't forget them. This should preferably be done using your smartphone or email program as described earlier, but could also be done using a simple notebook (don't use sticky notes, because they are too disorganized!).

Understand your organization's busy and slow times

Quite often, you can anticipate when you will be extra busy and will be able to prepare for it weeks in advance. For example, if you work for a mobile game development studio, you will likely be busiest 4-6 months before a new mobile device is released (such as the iPhone 5 or Windows Phone 8).

It is generally a very very very bad idea to take vacation around busy times. Vacation, documentation, and professional development (learning new skills, taking a course, setting up a new dev environment, etc.) are best scheduled during slower times.

Organize your home life too

You can use the same methods that we described here to manage your home life as well. However, it is important to use a different schedule for both work and home. For example, you could use the Calendar and Tasks sections of your Gmail account to manage the tasks that you need to remember for home (take out garbage, get groceries, do laundry, etc.) in the same way that you use Outlook to manage the tasks for work.

4.4   Maintaining Focus

Manage interruptions

As a video game developer, much of how busy you are can be attributed to the number of problems that have occurred at the time. Most of the time, you will have a large number of tasks to complete and still be flooded by constant interruptions such as phone calls, people dropping by to see the game development progress, etc. This makes it very difficult to focus on a single task and complete it in a reasonable amount of time.

If you work in a game studio that has more than one developer on the same project, then you and your fellow coworker can work together to minimize the effect of interruptions. While you are working on a particular task that requires focus, your coworker can be dealing with the interruptions – in other words, your coworker is "on call" and handling any interruptions while you are busy focusing on a particular problem. Similarly, when your coworker needs to focus on something, you could be "on call" to handle any interruptions.   This is called a *mutual interruption shield*.

Of course, in order for a mutual interruption field to work, you must find one or more coworkers and organize the time that you will work on tasks versus being "on call."   For example, I may be "on-call" from 8:00am-10:00am and 1:00pm-3:00pm and my coworker would be "on-call" from 10:00am-12:00noon and 3:00pm-5:00pm. In this case, I would ensure that I schedule any tasks that require focus during the time that my coworker is "on-call" only, with the odd exception that I could work out with my coworker.

However, if you are the only video game developer on a project, or your coworkers are unable to support the same parts of the project that you do, then you won't be able to use the mutual interruption shield. In this case, you must deal with interruptions quickly.

For certain interruptions, such as the release of Duke Nukem Forever, you must drop what you are doing and deal with it right away. However, for others, you can defer it, but you must do so in a polite way.

Organize your work area

Most work on servers is done on your developer workstation(s) in your office. If your desk is cluttered or there are distracting posters on the walls, you are more likely going to lose focus when performing tasks. Make sure that your desk has a small filer or organizer tray that has different folder/section for the common types of stuff that you get during the day. For example, you could have a folder called "Important" for time-sensitive stuff, a folder called "No Rush" for things that could wait a day or two, and a folder called "Junk" for magazines and other things that you could look at if you had some time. Next, spend a few minutes each day to tidy your desk, file stuff in the correct folder, and throw out old items – the 2 or 3 minutes that you use each day to do this will

make a big and positive difference in your ability to focus as well as impress the people you work with (if your desk is organized, people will think that you are also organized and on top of things!). And of course, NO sticky notes!

Eat well

In order to successfully focus on a particular problem, you must keep your attention high and fatigue low. In addition to worry and anger, one of the most common causes of fatigue is poor eating habit. Eating small meals/snacks more frequently (usually every 2 hours) to keep your metabolism steady will keep your attentiveness extremely high all day long (so sugar highs/lows).

> **NOTE:** Although Skittles and Aspartame is the traditional developer diet, it is not the ideal one.

Work on mind-intensive tasks at your optimal time

Most people find that they are the most energetic, fast thinking and focused at certain times of the day. For example, I find that I am much more productive in the morning and less productive in the afternoon, so I tend to work on the hardest projects and tasks in the morning and leave the trivial and non-intensive tasks to the afternoon.

4.5 Reducing Stress

Stress is something that you must manage as a video game developer. By managing stress, you will better manage your job tasks, interact calmly with others, as well as maintain adequate focus on each task and bring it to completion.

That the stress you experience can come from a wide variety of different sources, and is something that is largely under your control. **Short term stress** occurs where you find yourself under pressure in a particular situation. A certain level of short term stress is needed to feel alert and alive, however, too much is unpleasant and can seriously damage performance. Short term stress is best handled using mental or physical stress management techniques. For example, if you are in a situation where three different coworkers are yelling at you to fix a problem and you notice that you are experiencing anxiety as a result, you can simply remove yourself from the situation to regain focus – simply advise the people involved that you are *"experiencing unhealthy stress at the moment and must take a few minutes to regain focus in order to deal with the problems at hand."*

Long term stress comes from a build up of stress over a long period - sustained high levels can lead to serious physical and mental illness if not controlled. Long term stress is best managed by changes to lifestyle, attitude or environment. Moreover, long term stress is usually difficult to detect – once you detect that you are experiencing long term stress, it is easy to take steps to reduce it.
Common types of long term stress include:
* Family stress
* Financial stress
* Social stress

Family stress is usually caused by spending too much time away from family members due to working long hours. In this case, other family member will often confront you about working too much. Instead of creating an argument, it is best to identify the family stress and work out a solution that is acceptable to both your family and yourself. For example, you may agree that working late for the next two days is acceptable if you can spend the weekend on a family excursion.   In certain situations, it may be necessary to take a few days off of work to spend with the family and relax – after all, if you have home issues, you will be unable to focus at work.

Financial stress is another long term stress that is often difficult to identify since people often fail to equate financial problems with stress (they see it only as a problem that is caused by something). Once you realize that your financial problems are causing you stress, you will find it much easier to relax in difficult financial situations as well as take steps to reduce your financial stress (i.e. setting up a budget, obtaining a low-interest loan, etc.).

Social stress is a stress that is often associated to North American society. In North American society, we are socialized from birth to equate self-worth with money and job success – as a result, a physician is automatically treated with more respect than a janitor. Social stress is that stress in the back of your mind that is saying *"if I mess this up, I'll get fired, my friends will think I'm a loser, and I'll wind up a bum on the street with dreadlocks."* Luckily, social stress is the easiest to deal with – by simply recognizing it, you will understand how silly it is and feel better about your job. Focusing on the positive things that you have achieved on a personal and professional level for a few moments also helps. If social stress is left unrecognized, it will force you to lose focus at work, and can lead to low self esteem and depression.

4.6   Avoiding the Attention Trap

Working in a game studio is very similar to studying in a college environment. Have you ever read a textbook chapter over and over again for a long period of time to study for a test? If so, then you have fallen into the *attention trap*.

Say, for example, that your instructor has assigned you Ch.1-4 of your textbook to read for a test the following day. If you go home after class at noon and lock yourself in the basement and study your textbook for the next 6 hours, you will quickly find yourself frustrated because you aren't picking up the information and remembering it as fast as you would like – this in turn will get you stressed out (social stress) and lead you to waste more time studying your textbook.

The reason for this is simple: your attention span is very short. Attention span refers to the amount of time that you can stay focused on a particular task with ambition. During your attention span time, you will activate assimilate new concepts into your mental understanding of a problem, make connections that you otherwise wouldn't make between different concepts, and encode information into long term memory with ease.

Education psychologies have spent many years monitoring and measuring the average human attention span – the longest human attention span measured was 40.8 minutes, and the average person can stay attentive for 25-30 minutes. Thus, if you spent 6 hours studying your textbook, you were only actively learning for the first 25-30 minutes – the rest was simply reading for memorization.

A better way to mange your studying would be to study in 30 minute chunks. For example, you could get home from class at noon and study from 12:30-1:00pm. Next, you could take a break and go for a walk. When you return, you could study from 2:00-2:30pm.   After that, you could spend some time with your family, make dinner, and wash the dishes afterwards. Then, you could study from 7:00-7:30pm, watch some television with your family and study again from 9:00-9:30pm.

At the end of the day, you will have only spent 2 hours studying, but during those 2 hours, you will have been focused and attentive – you will have actively learned new concepts, made connections between those concepts, and committed those concepts to memory.

Alternatively, if you spent 6 hours studying your textbook continuously, only 30 minutes of that time was focused study, and the rest was wasted. Plus, you will probably increase your social/family stress, which in turn inhibits your ability to learn (a nasty cycle).

This is illustrated below:

TIME	Method 1 (bad)	Method 2 (good)
12:00		
12:30		
13:00		
13:30		
14:00		
14:30		
15:00		
15:30		
16:00		
16:30		
17:00		
17:30		
18:00		
18:30		
19:00		
19:30		
20:00		
20:30		
21:00		
21:30		

	Method 1 (bad)	Method 2 (good)
TOTAL STUDY TIME	6 hours	2 hours
FOCUSED STUDY TIME	30 minutes	2 hours

Most game development tasks are very similar to studying in a college – you must investigate problems, research solutions/specifications, and configure software and hardware using the knowledge that you have learned. As a result, it is important to ensure that you don't spend too much time focusing on a single part of a problem or technology – this will often lead to *functional fixedness* (the inability to see a problem or the application of a technology from multiple angles).

As a result, when focusing on a single aspect of a problem for more than 30 minutes, it is much better to switch to another task and return to problem at a later time during the day to maintain focus. Alternatively, if it is a problem that must be solved in a short period of time, simply ensure that you take short breaks every 30 minutes to maintain focus. In essence, quality is more important than quantity when it comes to time spent on any task.

4.7   Working Efficiently

In addition to the time management concepts introduced earlier in this chapter, there are many different good practices that will increase your efficiency and minimize the amount of time that you spend on tasks (which in turn allows you more flexibility when managing your time).

Multitask trivial and non-intensive tasks

For trivial tasks, such as compiling, or a non-intensive task that doesn't require intense focus, such as a software installation, you can perform several tasks at the same time and switch between them with ease. However, ensure that you don't multitask too many different tasks or you may get confused and forget which tasks you have already started and must return to later on.

If you are under a great deal of pressure or stress on a particular day, avoid multitasking altogether and simply focus on one task at a time. Stress impedes our ability to keep track of different tasks – simply dedicate what little focus you have during stressful times on the task at hand.

Be consistent when organizing

Consistency allows us to work much more efficiently – for example, if you connect to several different PCs remotely, keeping the remote connection to SERVER-A on the left side of your desktop, the connection to SERVER-B in the middle of your desktop, and the connection to SERVER-C on the right side of your desktop will make it easier to identify which server you are working on at any time and in the future.

Ensure that you have constant access to the Web

The Web is your most important developer resource – ensure that you carry an Internet-enabled mobile computer (laptop, netbook, tablet) at all times. If you regularly perform work off site where it is impractical to assume that you will have WiFi access, ensure that you have a high-speed wireless stick or card (WiMAX, LTE, etc.) that gives you Internet access anywhere a cell phone signal is available.

Make the most of your downtime

The work of a video game developer is never constant or consistent – there will be times where you have too much work as well as time where you have less work and more free time. There are plenty of activities that you can do with your free time that will help you be productive in the future. You could review your schedule for the next day, plan efficiencies, start future tasks early, clean your office, clean up your email Inbox,

organize your files on your workstation, learn some new technology that you are considering implementing in the future, or set up a test lab.

Meet regularly with your boss

Regularly meeting with your boss provides plenty of benefits. Firstly, it allows you to understand your boss's direction (help them achieve their goals, and they will help you achieve yours) as well as ensure that your boss knows your career goals (they ultimately help you get where you want to be in 5 years). In addition, requests that you make with your boss over time become much easier because of the rapport that is generated from mutual understanding.

You can also use your boss's position in the company to solve problems that you can't solve at your level (funding, procedural issues with another department, etc.), but only request this help if it helps your boss in their position as well (don't ask for something that will ultimately make your boss look bad).

Follow up with all problems/tasks

This is the quickest way to get a promotion! Ensuring that your users/managers are satisfied with the end results looks good both personally and professionally.

Manage your email

As a video game developer, you will receive a large number of emails in your mailbox. Some of these emails such as vendor emails (from surveys/tradeshows) can be removed using filters or junk mail options in your email program (i.e. Outlook).

For other emails, try to keep your Inbox as small as possible. Don't save every email – just keep emails with key information in them (such as access codes) and sensitive emails that may need to be revisited in the future. Create custom folders in your email program (by project/task/etc.) to store emails that you must keep – simply move these emails from your Inbox to the correct custom folder.

When you get flooded with emails that you must read, ensure that you have a plan. For example, if you have 100 new emails, first scan the subject lines and senders in the entire list and read any emails that look critical. Next, you can read the remaining emails from bottom-up (oldest first) or top-down (newest first). I prefer reading them top-down since some emails that involve several recipients are replied to several times – by reading the latest reply, you can see the whole email string, and then delete the other individual emails that comprise the email string without reading them. Also, since you are reading the most recent emails first using the top-down method, any new emails that arrive will be immediately visible at the top of your email list (including new critical emails).

Reserve time for professional development (PD)

Quite often, there is little time to learn new technologies in a busy development environment. Smaller or familiar technologies are easier to learn, such as upgrading from Visual Studio 2010 to Visual Studio 2014, because many of the concepts are transferable. However, other technologies may require more intensive learning (and time).

Don't forget to work out a professional development (PD) schedule with your boss that allows you to learn new skills that will be necessary in the future for the organization, or skills that will help you be more productive at your current job. When there is some downtime (or a slow period), you can best use the available time to sit a course or read a textbook.

Avoid time wasters

There are many different events that waste time that could otherwise be spent being more productive. Unproductive meetings (yes, there are many of these) that don't require your input, supply new information, or give the ability to affect change in your own job are best to avoid. Similarly, unnecessary office socializing, online games, and instant messaging are good things to avoid since you can easily lose track of time while doing them.

APPENDIX A

Grammar Exercises

To practice the concepts introduced in Chapter 2, complete the following grammar exercises and hand them in to your instructor for grading.

Count vs Noncount Noun Exercise (from section 2.3)

A *noun* is a word used to name a person, animal, place, thing, and abstract idea. *Count nouns* are things that can be counted. *Non-count nouns* usually are things that cannot be counted.

1. Information
   a. Count
   b. Non-Count

2. Telephone
   a. Count
   b. Non-Count

3. Assignment
   a. Count
   b. Non-Count

4. Vocabulary
   a. Count
   b. Non-Count

5. Honesty
   a. Count
   b. Non-Count

6. Candidate
   a. Count
   b. Non-Count

7. Homework
   a. Count
   b. Non-Count

8. Letter
   a. Count
   b. Non-Count

Pronouns Exercise (from section 2.4)

Select from the following words to complete the sentences below:
(Me, myself, I, themselves, yourselves, ourselves, himself, herself, each other, itself**)**

1. I can recommend Mars bars. In fact, I have bought two _____.

2. Jack and Jill are good sports. They don't mind making fools of _____.

3. We will complete most of the project _____.

4. Make _____ at home.

5. I couldn't treat you any better if you were the Queen of Sheba _____.

6. Help _____ to the buffet.

7. Maurice bought _____ a new suit.

8. Jane really knows how to enjoy _____.

Simple, Complex & Compound Sentence Exercise (from section 2.5)

Identify each type of sentence.

1. John took the bus home after school.
    a. Simple
    b. Complex
    c. Compound

2. Monica was not impressed with her peer's conduct in class.
    a. Simple
    b. Complex
    c. Compound

3. As soon as I heard the news, I rushed straight to the hospital.
    a. Simple
    b. Complex
    c. Compound

4. Give the customer service representative your personal information, we will contact you when the new Whirlpool fridge come in.
    a. Simple
    b. Complex
    c. Compound

5. Dave understands the Simply Accounting exercises; he has mastered the subject.
    a. Simple
    b. Complex
    c. Compound

6. Kay goes to the library and studies every day.
   a. Simple
   b. Complex
   c. Compound

7. When he handed in his assignment, he forgot to give the instructor the last page.
   a. Simple
   b. Complex
   c. Compound

8. I tried to speak French, and my friend tried to speak English.
   a. Simple
   b. Complex
   c. Compound

Subjects and Verbs Exercise (from section 2.6)

Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice.

1. He depends on her in times of need.

2. (You) Watch your step.

3. The insurance agent gave her sound advice.

4. On the table was her purse.

5. In the newspaper, an interesting article appeared.

6. (You) Look before you leap.

7. Across the road lived her boyfriend.

8. We are forced to inhale and exhale this smog-filled air.

Making Subjects and Verbs Agree Exercise
(from section 2.7)

Singular subjects need singular verbs; plural subjects need plural verbs.
Select the appropriate verb "is" or "are" to complete each sentence.

1. Accounting _____ my favourite subject.   is   are

2. Those _____nice triOS sweatshirts.   is   are

3. The liberals _____ extremely powerful.   is   are

4. One of my peers _____ coming over for lunch.   is   are

5. A number of us _____ happy with your service   is   are

6. The rest of the student body _____ coming later.   is   are

7. Business communication _____a very important course.   is   are

8. There _____ a couple of points to make.   is   are

Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. If the subjects and verbs do
not agree, change the verbs to match the subjects.

1. At the end of the story, they was living happily ever after.

2. Al and Ali go to the alley to watch gambling.

3. When Al and Ali arrive, they will notice that the games has already
   stopped.

4. The group of children from that school has never seen the ocean.

5. If our staff don't quit picking at each other, we will not meet our goals.

6. Either Gary or I are responsible for allocating the funds.

7. Neither she nor they were willing to predict the election results.

8. Nora is one of the candidates who is worthy of my vote.

Who/Whom, Whoever/Whomever Exercise (from section 2.8)

Choose the correct word for each sentence.

1. _____ is your closest friend?

2. _____ do you bank with?

3. _____ do you think will win the award?

4. Clare knows _____ the winner is already.

5. Bill will talk about his girlfriend with _____ asks him.

6. Patty donates her time to _____ needs it most.

7. Larry will work on the project with _____ you suggest.

8. _____ was that in the clown costume?

Accept/Except Exercise (from section 2.9)

Fill in the blank with either *accept* or *except*.

1. The whole army is out of step _____ Fred.

2. I'll _____ no money from that cheapskate.

3. Please _____ this pot of Mama's chicken soup.

4. It will cure anything _____ flat feet.

5. Rip could do anything _____ make money.

6. I had to _____ their negative evaluation.

7. All the girls went to the game _____ Mary.

8. Howard could not _____ the job.

Adjectives and Adverbs Exercise (from section 2.10)

Identify whether each word in bold is an adjective or an adverb and if it is being used correctly. If not correct it.

1. Come **quick** or we will miss our bus.

2. You drive so **slow** that I am afraid someone will hit the car from behind.

3. I have never been **more surer** of anything in my life.

4. Ella was the **best** of the two sisters at gymnastics.

5. You did that somersault so **good**.

6. Helen felt **badly** about forgetting Hank's birthday.

7. This is the **worst** oil spill I have ever seen.

8. The jasmine has bloomed and smells very **sweet**.

Semicolon Exercise (from section 2.11)

Correct any punctuation errors in the following sentences.

1. You asked for forgiveness, he granted it to you.

2. We ask; therefore, that you keep this matter confidential.

3. The order was requested six weeks ago, therefore I expected the shipment to arrive by now.

4. Clothes are often made from synthetic material, for instance, rayon.

5. I have been to Montreal, Toronto, Halifax, London, Windsor and Guelph.

Apostrophes Exercise (from section 2.12)

Correct any apostrophe errors.

1. Her husbands wallet was full of curious, little items.

2. I went to my mother-in-laws house for dinner last night.

3. You may not enter Mr. Harriss office without his permission.

4. The girls vitality and humor were infectious. (one girl)

5. The womens dresses are on the second floor.

6. Its a shame that had to happen.

7. Its hard to believe that winter is almost here.

8. Her mother and fathers business went bankrupt.

Comma Exercise (from section 2.13)

Correct any comma errors. Some sentences need no correction.

1. I took Angie the one with the freckles, to the movie last night.

2. Bill and I, have had our share of arguments.

3. You are I am sure, telling the truth.

4. She left Albany, New York on January 18 of that year.

5. I need sugar, butter, and eggs, from the grocery store.

6. Please Jack, come home as soon as you can.

7. Although you may be right I cannot take your word for it.

8. We will grant you immunity if you decide to cooperate with us.

Punctuation Exercise
(from sections 2.11, and 2.14 to 2.19)

Put in semicolons, colons, dashes, quotation marks, Italics (use an underline), and parentheses where ever they are needed in the following sentences.

1. The men in question Harold Keene, Jim Peterson, and Gerald Greene deserve awards.

2. Several countries participated in the airlift Italy, Belgium, France, and Luxembourg.

3. Judge Carswell later to be nominated for the Supreme Court had ruled against civil rights.

4. In last week's New Yorker, one of my favorite magazines, I enjoyed reading Leland's article How Not to Go Camping.

5. Yes, Jim said, I'll be home by ten.

6. There was only one thing to do study till dawn.

7. Montaigne wrote the following A wise man never loses anything, if he has himself.

8. Darwin's On the Origin of Species 1859 caused a great controversy when it appeared.

Sentence Fragment Exercise (from section 2.20)

The sentences below appeared in papers written by students. Act as their editor, marking a C if the sentences in the group are all complete and an F if any of the sentences in the group is a fragment. If the sentence is incomplete (fragmented) suggest a correction.

___ 1. Then I attended Morris Junior High. A junior high that was a bad experience.

___ 2. The scene was filled with beauty. Such as the sun sending its brilliant rays to the earth and the   leaves of various shades of red, yellow, and brown moving slowly in the wind.

___ 3. He talked for fifty minutes without taking his eyes off his notes. Like other teachers in that department, he did not encourage students' questions.

___ 4. Within each group, a wide range of features to choose from. It was difficult to distinguish between them.

___ 5. A few of the less serious fellows would go into a bar for a steak dinner and a few glasses of beer. After this meal, they were ready for anything.

___ 6. It can be really embarrassing to be so emotional. Especially when you are on your first date, you feel that you should be in control.

___ 7. The magazine has a reputation for a sophisticated, prestigious, and elite group of readers. Although that is a value judgment and in circumstances not a true premise.

___ 8. In the seventh grade every young boy goes out for football. To prove to himself and his parents that he is a man.

Misused Words Exercise (from section 2.21)

Circle the correct word.

1.   He *accepted / excepted* their praise, graciously.

2.   Will lack of sleep *affect / effect* your game?

3.   I *advise / advice* you to be cautious.

4.   Despite a head injury, the patient remained *conscious / conscience*.

5.   Mickey was the *idea / ideal* for tutors everywhere.

6.   The crab had an unusual growth *on its / it's* shell

7.   The evidence *lead / led* the jury to reach a unanimous decision.

8.   I would rather dance *then / than* eat.

9.   I went to / too the store with Mabel as I was hungry *to / too*.

10.   At last I was all ready to go, but everyone had *all ready / already* left.

Parallel Structure Exercise (from section 2.22)

Make the following sentences parallel. Write the corrected sentence underneath each sentence.

1. She likes to listen to music and reading the latest novels.

2. He spent his time studying Spanish. working at the convenience store, and jogg every afternoon.

3. The apartment was filled with old newspapers, broken bottles, and the ashtrays were overflowing.

4. Mary wanted to paint her office, to add some new draperies, and the carpet needs cleaning.

5. When Friday rolls around, do you go to the mall, head for a bar, or are you going to work?

A or An Exercise (from section 2.23)

In the following phrases, supply either "a" or "an":

1. ___ bingo game

2. ___ idiot

3. ___ good job

4. ___ rotten plum

5. ___ used fork

6. ___ uncle

7. ___ historian

8. ___ apple

Spelling IE/EI Exercise (from section 2.24)

Write in either **ie** or **ei** to complete the words in these sentences.

1.   There are ___GHT candles on the cake.

2.   I have not REC___VED a letter since Saturday.

3.   Have you ever been on a SL___GH ride?

4.   Her N___CE is going to come to GR___F.

5.   She SHR___KED in surprise when he dropped the ice cube down

      her back.

6.   Drop that silver, you TH___F!

7.   He's the most CONC___TED man I know.

8.   I don't BEL___VE he is so CONC___TED.