

Hacking Internships!

“How to become a software engineer if you're willing to do anything”

A Comprehensive Guide on Breaking Into the Games Industry

You're reading: <https://tinyurl.com/hackingGamesV2>

How to pass the interview once you get it: tinyurl.com/gamedevStudySheet

By Matthew Ventures ([@mrVentures](#))

Heads up: This guide is still being actively revised and edited!

Introduction - Motivation

There is an old joke in the games industry that an entry-level job takes two years of prior experience (suggesting that in order to start, you need to have started). I don't find it funny, and you probably don't either. This is a no-bullshit guide on how to start a career in this industry. It's everything I wish I knew.

But first, let's be sure this is the right adventure for you. The first element to consider is that this industry requires a gross amount of commitment. A tech support worker likely doesn't help people reset their internet routers over the phone for fun; but as a game developer, it is expected of you to be engaging with games in your free time. Games are going to be a big part of your life. I have heard that, “If it's 90+, you've played it; if it's 80+, you know it”. Which means that if a game scores high on Metacritic, you are responsible for investigating what those developers did

well. Likewise, game developers are also expected to be constantly studying and learning from games that did not do as well as anticipated. This can be a huge time commitment!

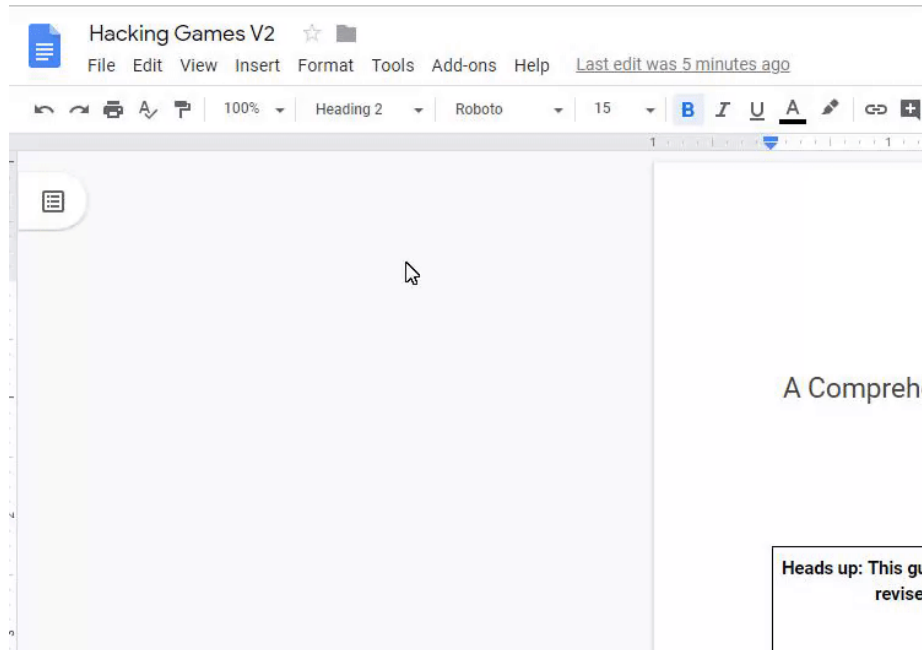
The second consideration if you are considering a job in game development, is the relatively poor pay and lack of social clout. Taking a job in this industry as an engineer means a 50% pay cut (this varies, but in general you will not get reserved stock units or sign on bonuses, unless we're talking about a company like EA or Blizzard) compared to what you would make elsewhere and there are not many ways around that. Unfortunately, on top of that, game developers have been [historically](#) treated very poorly by their employers (this tradition continues in many companies today). Lastly games, in the eyes of many, are a pedestrian or shallow art form. You may want to consider becoming one of those "my self worth comes from inside" kind of people or develop very thick skin!

Did I manage to scare you away? Hopefully! I wouldn't wish a job in game development upon anyone not already passionate about games. The industry is improving... however it unfortunately has a bad reputation of being the kind of job that's meant for people who feel like they have to do it. And if you're reading this, then that may be you. So let's get down to business.

Introduction - How to use this guide

If you're viewing this text in Google Docs, use the "Outline" feature, view→ show outline.

Make sure "Print Layout" is not checked!



Introduction - Sketchiness Scale

This is not your mother's textbook. Whether you're a morale paragon who needs to understand the dirty competition or you are the dirty competition, it's important to know all the sketchy ways people succeed in this industry. In addition to my normal advice, I will include morally ambiguous strategies. These "sketchy strategies" are rated, somewhat arbitrarily, on the Sketchiness Scale.

#TODO: the images spell SKETCHINESS incorrectly

THE SKETCHINESS SCALE

Lil sketchy:	Pretty sketchy:	Etch-n-sketchy:
strategies you shouldn't get into any trouble for, but that may be morally ambiguous #WhiteLies	strategies you're not quite proud of using but still possibly worth doing if you need the job #NoShame	if you're caught using these strategies you probably won't be hired...probably #Desperate

Introduction - About the author

Matthew Ventures ([@mrVentures](#) / [mrVentures.net](#))

I studied computer science at Stanford University and completed many internships (more than 10) mostly in the games industry as both an engineer and game designer. Additionally, I co-founded a small indie game [company](#) and lead development as well as instruction of Stanford's first game development [course](#). I care a lot about providing students, or otherwise aspiring game developers, with tools and support to succeed in our industry. I may have wrote the guide, but much of this advice has been collected from what I have learned from others. I am very grateful for *their* help and support.

Before Applying

You're awesome and a key part of applying to internships is letting companies know that. Applications typically boil down to two items: your online portfolio and resume.

What's the difference between a portfolio and resume?

The portfolio is a product oriented approach to demonstrate your work and should focus on the multimedia aspects of your games. The resume is a role oriented approach to summarize your work and should focus on your impact working within a team.

Portfolios - Internships & Game Jams

<https://twitter.com/tonycoxphoto/status/1206798750133280769>

#todo:

Internship for internationals only allowed for while studying or for one year after

TODO

the multipage CV: <http://ranjaykrishna.com/index.html>

#TODO:

"From the way the resume is worded, you come across as a "doer," not an "achiever." Too many of your job descriptions are task-based and not results-based."

#TODO

I think on of the most important things to ask if is the interviewer (befor ethe interview) has any pro tips because this will getthem into the mind set of how do I help this guy win?

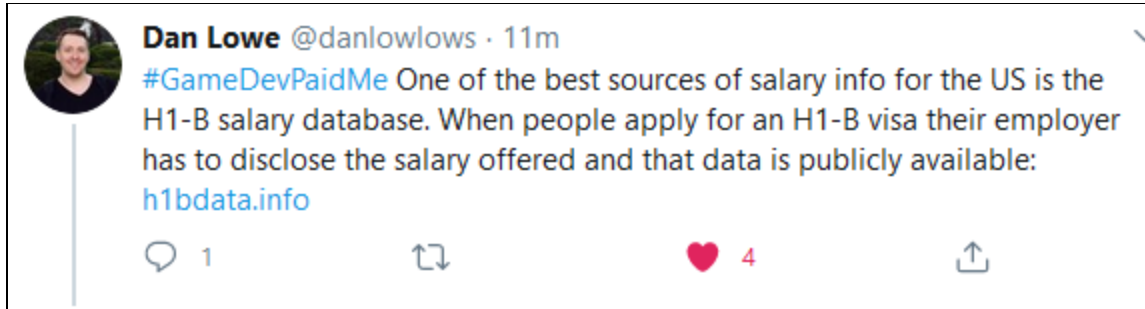
#TODO bullshit names like replace 2nd place with "Won 1st Runner Up"

#TODO: How do I transition titles from one discipline to another? For example I am a 29 year old UI designer, how do I navigate a transition to become a game designer?

#TODO a section about mentors and what that means

#TODO

<https://h1bdata.info/>



#TODO be a silly goofer (meme your boss)

#TODO

games consoles were a 150-200m unit installed base, not the 1.5bn of PCs, let alone the 4bn of smartphones

#TODO Guide talking about reneging offer and trying to move opportunities.



guide never ask a q that you can google

what color is mario's hat?

this is a design question but then the interviewer says are you sure bc i remember it was green and they judge how you respond how you argue

In 2016, researchers sent hundreds of résumés to high-end law firms. They were identical in degrees and grade-point averages, but researchers tweaked the extracurricular activities to make some candidates seem rich (sailing, classical music) and others seem poor (track and field, country music). At the end of the study, upper-class men had been invited to 12 times more interviews than lower-class men.

http://courses.csail.mit.edu/iap/interview/Hacking_a_Google_Interview_Handout_3.pdf
#TODO:

This section would benefit from clarification that your goal as a newbie is working with people better than you, also jams and using existing code, because working with existing code is like working with better people, ultimately making games on your own is better than nothing

So you know that building a portfolio is important but you may be faced with a common situation: you have nothing to show. There are two ways to fix this. The first way is through completing internships and adding content to your portfolio that summarizes the work you complete as an intern. I will cover this in greater detail within the section [During the job](#) but this [video](#) illustrates what a quick summary video of an internship's work might look like.

Relying on an internship experience to build a portfolio for that purpose of acquiring an internship can become a bit of a chicken-before-the-egg problem. If you have no prior work experience the best course of action is to create work for yourself. This may take the form of student work, hobbyist projects, or creating something new.

Game Jams are an excellent way to get together with other developers from variety of skill levels to create your first portfolio piece. They're also a great way to meet new people. The [Global Game Jam](#) is a seasonal game jam every Winter which generates a lot of interest. Definitely put it on your radar! [Ludum Dare](#) is a much more frequent game jam that is also very respected in the industry and sees a ton of applicants. But wait, there's more! Game Jams are happening almost 24 / 7 and the present is always a great time to jump in. [This calendar](#) tracks the current jams and is a great place to see where you can start. After you create a game, don't just add it to your portfolio, it's unlikely recruiters will download and play it. Instead, create a short voice-over video explaining how it works and why you made the design decisions you did. Here is an [example](#).

Still Learning?

I have worked for several years on a beginner course to game development at Stanford University. You can take this course in its entirety by walking through the assignments I posted on our course website [here](#).

Strategy: Submitting to competitions

There are a ton of competitions you can submit your games to here is a brief selection...

- <https://thegameawards.com/awards/>
- <https://www.indiecade.com/>
- <https://ifcomp.org/>
- <https://www.mediaindieexchange.com/faq/>
- <https://qqcon.com/what-is-qqcon/>
- <http://www.indieprize.org/>

- <https://www.therookies.co/>
- <https://gaming.sxsw.com/expo/>
- <http://igf.com/submit-your-game>
 - <http://igf.com/finalists-and-winners>
 -
- <https://playcrafting.com/event/spring-play-nyc-game-expo-2/>
- <https://expo.nikkeibp.co.jp/tgs/2018/exhibition/english/>
- <http://www.a-maze.net/>
 - <https://amaze-berlin.de/>
- <http://meaningfulplay.msu.edu/games.php>
- <https://stonemaiergames.com/about/submission-guidelines/>
- <https://www.nonplussedfest.com/>
- <https://showcase.slamdance.com/DIG>
- <https://expo.nikkeibp.co.jp/tgs/2018/exhibition/english/exhibit/rule.html>
- <http://www.dayofthedevs.com/>
- [Apply compo tigawards](#)
- [2017 Bit Awards](#)

Strategy: Portfolios highlights

Within your portfolio, you want to highlight your best projects. Some might say that you want to only include your best work in your portfolio but I don't necessarily agree with that for all cases. Just be mindful that your portfolio is as strong as its weakest piece. To highlight a project you can create a voice-over video explaining what you did on the project like this [example](#).

Strategy: Copying effective portfolios

A good portfolio achieves a unique and captivating aesthetic while relaying information that is familiar to the viewer. We expect to see your past jobs, your resume, and information on your projects; but it is your choice to make the big decisions on how to present that information. I have found that some of the best sources for inspiration and cool ideas are other portfolios!

Observing how other job candidates present themselves can provide a sense of context on how you look beside competition and where you can improve. One aspect of my portfolio, the filtered gallery was an idea I incorporated after being inspired by a similar feature on a peer's portfolio. Note: A filter gallery allows a visitor to view projects of a given category in isolation. For example if they click "Game Jam Projects" it will show them only my projects from game jams, neat!

Carnegie Mellon University has an excellent online listing of [student](#) and [alumni](#) portfolios. After clicking the provided links, you can select a person on the right-hand column and scroll down to a button which links you to his/her “personal website” portfolios. Let me know if you see something awesome!

My favorite portfolio is <http://noelberry.ca/#portfolio>.

Here’s a close second <http://taotajima.jp>.

Here’s mine [mrVentures.net](http://mrventures.net).

Portfolios - Good UI

If you’re new to web design or looking for inspiration I suggest checking out Jakub Linowski’s work for GoodUI.org. Good UI is focused on commercial conversions but many of the principles carry over to our type of conversion: getting an interview! He also has a newsletter that can keep you up-to-date with exciting news in the UI world.

Portfolios - Weebly

In developing your first portfolio I strongly suggest using a free website tool rather than making it on your own from scratch. Coding your own website is awesome but I think you’ll find the affordances of a website tool sufficient to making your website shine, you can always create your own once you determine the layout.

Weebly is, by far, the best website I have found to do this. I assure you, I have tried them all. I love Weebly’s simplicity and versatility and suggest you try it out. My referral code for weebly will give you 10% off if you choose to pay for the premium plan like I did but the free plan is all you need: <https://www.weebly.com/r/2AO7RK>

My portfolio, mrventures.net, achieves a number of the “big wins” a portfolio can have (such as embedded video) at a cost of about 12 USD per month; but to start out, I successfully used the free version of Weebly for several years. Other options in this category are Wix, Tumblr, and Blogspot. If you use git version control, consider making a portfolio through github which can host direct links to your projects. Itch is another great option for developers who create games on their platform.

Portfolios - Resumes

<Moved> to here: <http://www.mrventures.net/all-tutorials/creating-a-resume>

Strategy: Cover letter Names (TODO)

Consider the literal filename of your resume. Most resumes come to recruiters through the name "firstnameLastname.pdf", lame! You want to stand out in a folder of other resumes and the way to do that is simple. Name it "dream job.pdf". Doesn't matter the company, doesn't matter if they're your dream job. Just do it, trust me, it works!

Portfolios - Business Cards

Business cards have fallen out of popularity as more networking happens online, however they can still be helpful. In general, if you are going to be meeting a person with recruiting potential in person (maybe in the context of a conference) you should just hand them your resume. But alas! Folks still use cards, so let's address them.

Basically the business card is nothing more than a huge arrow to your website. Some folks put their phone numbers on them (I have even seen fax numbers, yikes!). But that should be on your portfolio anyway, the link should be sufficient. The card itself is a canvas for creativity. I recommend you make it something [loud](#). My card, below, has an image that resembles my tatoo on one side and some text overleaf.

In the conference or showcase environment, business cards can be an effective and practical means to collecting someone's email. That's a valuable thing to have because a resume in a hiring manager's inbox is more likely to get his/her attention than an application, among hundreds, through an online portal. I recommend writing down what you seek to get out of the relationship or a key note they may have verbalized directly onto the card so you can remember that information when reading it later.

Strategy - Fake business cards

Watch out for “fake” business cards! They look like the one below and don’t actually provide contact information. If you ask for a business card, someone might hand you one of these which is akin to receiving a vulgar hand gesture. In other words, this card means “fuck off.” If someone hands you this card, that’s not a good sign.

Community - Hangouts

A great way to meet folks in your industry is by attending organized meetups. There are a variety of ways to do this. My first recommendation, for any industry, is always [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com). There is an amazing network of events that are guaranteed to touch upon your interests. These meetups are great because they often show attendance counts so that you can be sure you’ll run into other folks. Hey maybe someone you know is going!

There are also more casual meetups such as a scheduled night at the bar or ice cream parlor.

Here is a collection of UK meetups:

<https://airtable.com/shr0XvMZPyAh2mstM/tblcpq9lRdl2SkAwZ>

Community - Voices

On Facebook, there are two kinds of groups in the dev scene: meetups and chat rooms. The first kind, meetups, is similar to groups on [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com). Groups such as the one below organize regular hangouts where devs get together and talk. Often these are devs talking about non-game topics and provide more of a laid-back atmosphere (whereas [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) meetups can get a bit posture-heavy).

The chat room groups are usually focused on the beginner indie scene. Many folks use these groups to advertise games they are working on and these groups can also be used to get a few opinions on things like art direction for a game. There are often polls such as “which app icon looks best?”

Selected Hangout groups on Facebook:32

- California SF / Bay area
 - https://www.facebook.com/groups/143133329092646/?ref=br_rs

- (Board game focused)
https://www.facebook.com/groups/117488898583202/?ref=br_rs

Selected Showcase groups on Facebook:

- https://www.facebook.com/groups/GameDevShowAndTest/?ref=br_rs
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/IndieGameDevs/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/GameDevBeginners/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1000038303359383/about/>

Blogs where particular developer share and discuss work:

- [Fortress of Doors](#)
- [game design aspect of the month](#)
- [INTELLIGENT ARTIFICE](#)
- [Lost Garden](#)
- [Raph Koster](#)
- [The Ludologist](#)
- [Zen of Design](#)
- [Sir Tap Tap](#)
- [Critical Distance](#)
- <https://gafferongames.com>
- <https://www.randygaul.net/>

Industry History

- [Raycevik](#)
- [NoClip](#)

Competitions you can submit your games to:

- www.imgawards.com
- #TODO

Websites concerning the games industry:

- <http://gamecareerguide.com>
- <http://gamasutra.com>

Community - Conferences

Volunteering in conferences is a great way to get into the venue without facing the expensive ticket fees. I have volunteered at a variety of conferences and found it useful while obtaining my first few internships. After that I have not found it helpful job-wise, but volunteerings is still very

a nice way to engage with the community. Volunteers sort of build their own community and it has a very welcoming “I’m with the band feel.”

Selected conferences:

- GDC
 - The biggest baddest conference
 - It gets worse every year and is continually publisher-focused but if you can afford to have an organ harvested to cover the \$1000+ cost of entrance, consider it! (who needs two kidneys anyway?)
- Casual connect
 - Free-to-play focused
- Indiecade
- PAX
- <http://www.foundationsofdigitalgames.org/>
- SXSW
- Slush
- Siggraph
 - Dedicated to computer graphics, there is some overlap with game development industry.

Strategy: Scholarships

Conferences can be expensive! In addition to volunteering to help out, you may want to consider applying for a scholarship to attend. The IDGA has a respected scholarship here:

<http://scholars.igdafoundation.org/#apply>

Community - LinkedIn

Connect with as many folks as you can. To see results you should aim for over 2,000 connections within game development. At that point you should begin to see job postings in your feed a post like the one below is not uncommon and presents a great opportunity to open the dialogue of “Of you’re looking for engineers? Well, I’d love to take on a junior/intern role within that discipline”.

Secondly, you can't directly message folks on LinkedIn without being their connection. And you can't connect without being a connection of one of their connections, so it's important to always be connecting and actively growing your network.

There's a lot more to be said about LinkedIn we will be touching upon it in many other sections within this guide. Just remember what a wise man once told me, "Great connections can earn you opportunities, but in the end, you will need to earn the job yourself."

At about 2500 connections you will receive notification that you have reached the commercial limit. Nice work! They will impose a temporary ban on your ability to friend request which may last a few days, but after that you can continue expanding your network!

Community - Career Stories

Selected career stories that I found insightful.

- Chris Crawford
<http://www.erasmatazz.com/personal/reminiscences/how-i-got-a-job-at-atari.html>

- Ken Levine
<https://medium.com/@IGLevine/so-lots-of-people-have-responded-to-my-encouragement-to-get-into-the-industry-asking-how-do-i-get-e2d0cd738733>
- Neil Druckmann
<https://www.idlethumbs.net/tonecontrol/episodes/neil-druckmann>
- Glen Schofield
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4RDkqY9y2I>
- Noel Berry
<http://noelberry.ca/#yearsofgamedev>
- Marshall McGee
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nO48Ui5NZY>
- Jethro Jongeneel
<http://www.jethrojongeneel.com/articles/U1.php>

#TODO a section on what mentors look like in this industry. How can a mentor help me? What does mentorship look like? Expand on Sheryl Sandberg's comments here

#add sms interview and treyarch interview into my guide

#TODO

first build confidence and get a commit by end of week

#TODO:

if under 18yo: bafta young game designers initiative

#TODO

It turns out the formatting of a resume (using tables) can affect the way an ATS (applicant tracking system) picks up keywords so you do want to be careful about how you construct your resume.

#TODO a section about turning student projects into bigger games, ways to acquire funding

<https://gamecenter.nyu.edu/about/incubator/incubator-application-info-2019/>

<https://www.unrealengine.com/en-US/megagrants>

Community - Know Thy Genre

Familiarize yourself with the games that you would like to contribute to. When we reach the interview stage, a company may ask questions such as how you would improve their games.

While you are probably already playing games, it's important to thinking about games as a creator early and running questions like that through your mind. There are a ton of great resources you can use to consider games critically. I favor Youtube critique such as [Joseph Anderson](#) and the occasional game deep dive in [Gamasutra](#) often holds many pearls of wisdom (they have an excellent email newsletter by the way!).

Applying

So you created an awesome portfolio, your resume looks fantastic, and you've started networking with folks in the industry. Well congratulations, that was the easy part. Now we need to get eyes on your work and that can be difficult. In applying we are going to take two approaches simultaneously.

First, let's consider that the job often goes to the person who is at the right place at the right time. Fortunately, there are a number of resources which can make sure you are almost everywhere, all the time. We are going to use mailing lists, opening subscriptions, and job listings to listen to job activity and, hopefully, if there's an opportunity you'll know about it.

Second, we need to acknowledge that opportunity doesn't come often. And as the saying goes, "If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door." We are going to create opportunities by proactively reaching out to people while trying to be eager yet not annoying.

Job Search - Mailing lists

You definitely want to join usc-gamepipe-laboratory@googlegroups.com. This mailing list is directed towards USC students searching for jobs in game development and related fields. Other colleges with game design programs may also have a similar mailing list you can join. Companies often target colleges for interns so it's a great tactic to weasel yourself in between that crossfire of opportunity, even if you're not a student there.

Most of my students are Stanford students so I would recommend gsgb-videogames@lists.stanford.edu this is a great list of mostly professionals in the industry within the Bay area. I think anyone can listen in however, you may need a @stanford.edu email to be a member with response privileges.

#TODO: Lookup jobs you would like and see their requirements begin studying those topics so when you're ready to graduate you are ready to take on the job you want

Job Search - New Opening Subscriptions

There are also a variety of newsletters you can join that keep you up-to-date about future job postings. The message below on the left, from [indeed](#), is one that I subscribe to which sends me a bi-weekly update of any new job offers at selected game development companies. Receiving this email is a good reminder for me to apply to any new jobs and it also let's me know what a company is specifically looking for. For smaller companies especially, there is a lot you can learn about them from just the jobs they are recruiting for. Gamasutra also has an mailing list for students (or other applicants) [here](#).

#TODO: Job Search - Off season internships

How to get an internship that is not in the summer #TODO

Job Search - Location Based Searches:

There are a variety of tools that let you search for companies of a chosen field in your area here are two useful sites for game development studios:

[The original Gamedevmap:](#)

[Gamesmith Dev Map:](#)

<https://gamesmap.uk/#/map>

Job Search - Unpaid Internships:

I highly discouraged any work in an unpaid internship. The traditional internship experience must include compensation in the United States otherwise it is illegal according to the Fair Labor Standards Act.

If a prospective employer is offering unpaid work, ensure the [“Six criteria”](#) are met.

1. The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment.

2. The experience is for the benefit of the intern.
3. The intern does not displace regular employees but works under close supervision of existing staff.
4. The employer providing the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded.
5. There is no guarantee of a job at the conclusion of the internship.
6. Both parties understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the internship.

If it meets this criteria then I would still consider other opportunities. Because if it does meet these requirements then it's not the working environment that you would want to be in for an internship in the first place!

Job Search - Opportunities I know of:

This is a non-exhaustive list of a few internship opportunities I have looked into over the past few years.

- <http://www.gamedevmap.com/index.php?location=San%20Francisco>
- <https://www.dreamhaven.com/careers>
- <https://gamejobs.eu>
- <http://www.hnhiring.me/>
- <http://www.failbettergames.com/internships/>
- <https://www.ubisoft.com/en-us/careers/search.aspx>
- <https://www.disneyanimation.com/careers/open-positions>
- <http://www.antimattergames.com/internships/>
- <https://careers.treyarch.com/>
- <https://www.indeed.com/q-Gameplay-Engineer-jobs.html>
- <https://careers.activision.com>
- <https://www.playstation.com/en-us/corporate/about/careers/internships/#job-listings>
- <http://www.gearboxsoftware.com/careers/cogs/>
- <https://disneyanimation.secure.force.com/openings>
- <https://king.com/jobs?locations=all&roles=all&keywords=intern&searchInDescription=1>
- <https://www.warnerbroscareers.com/internships/>
- <https://www.ubisoft.com/en-US/careers/grads-and-interns.aspx>
- <http://careers.digitaldomain.com>
- <https://www.riotgames.com/en/work-with-us/welcome>
- <https://netease-na.com/careers/>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/search/?currentJobId=1850974486&keywords=gameplay%20engineer>
- <https://careers.bungie.com>
- <http://www.bonfirestudios.com/careers>
- <https://www.activision.com/careers/students>
- <https://careers.unity.com/>

- <https://2k.com/en-US/jobs/>
- <https://www.ioi.dk/jobs/>
- <https://square-enix.workable.com/>
- <https://careers.bungie.com/en-US/Careers/Internship>
- <https://careers.microsoft.com/us/en/search-results?from=20&s=1&rk=ur-l-us-intership&rt=university>
- <https://www.guerrilla-games.com/join#internships-1>
- <https://www.trionworlds.com/en/careers/>
- <https://campustocareer-viacom.icims.com/jobs/search?ss=1&searchLocation=&searchCategory=&hashed=-435712829>
- <http://gradsingames.com/services/students/internships/>
- https://ninjatheory.com/?page_id=27
- <https://www.rare.co.uk/careers/rare-internships-2018>
- <https://www.playstation.com/en-us/corporate/about/careers/internships/#joblistings>
- <http://supersplinesstudios.com/internship/>
- <https://jobs.suckerpunch.com/careers/>
- <https://www.respawn.com/careers>
- <https://opmjjobs.com/>

Applications - Cover Letters

The traditional cover letter is dead. Even when jobs ask for them it's usually not super useful for intern roles. I suggest building out a boilerplate letter and adding a variable or two that you can tweak with respect to the company you're applying to. Here's an example...

Hello **Blizzard!**

*I've been studying videogame development for the past few years, have held internships within the gaming industry, QA and beta-tested several AAA titles (**including Battlefield 1, Pokemon Go, Overwatch**), and created several of my own indie games. I'm currently studying CS as a Stanford University student and working as a software engineer at Facebook VR. Previous, I was a tools engineer at NCsoft, a game designer at Tilting Point, and a programmer-designer for Zynga. I have a passion for design and technical implementation and I am pursuing the career of an interdisciplinarian who can mediate ideas and product across those fields.*

*I'm applying to **Blizzard** because I love the breadth of games and I would like to work on these titles. I'm inspired by your company's consistency in creating hits and want to be a part of all the magic behind the scenes. My passion for technical design is well suited for **Blizzard's** wide array of genres which each bring exciting challenges of balance and immersive gameplay.*

Currently I am perfecting my design sense on my indie game [NoStranger](#) which has now surpassed 1 million downloads with no marketing spend. I have learned the power a word of mouth campaign can have on a small game such as my own and I'm stoked to work with the team that built their community from the ground up.

I've attached a copy of my resume that details my projects and experience in software development. I can be reached anytime via email at omatthew@stanford.edu. Check out my work here: mrventures.net

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to speaking with you about this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Matthew Ventures

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In creating a cover letter for a company I generally just change the bolded company references and then tweak examples towards the company. For example, if I beta tested a Blizzard game, I would make sure to include that within an application to Blizzard. You'll notice that I linked my portfolio twice, that's on purpose. The portfolio is the keystone of any application so you want to re-route attention to it as often as possible.

Okay, so as I said before, the cover letter is pretty much dead. Companies shouldn't be asking you for one. But this sort of information is relevant to email introductions. A cold email to a recruiter or hiring manager at another company is a very relevant task and worth investing time into. The goals of an opening email are to summarize applicable work experience as quickly as possible and to ask a question that elicits a response. As long as we get a response, we are successful in our cold email! Here's an example of a strong cold open that I always copy and paste. It has been very successful for me and I hope it serves as a useful template for you as well.

*Hello **Erin**,*

*I have heard really great things about **Activision's Emergent Talent Program** and I would like to apply for potential internship positions. I'm passionate about design and engineering, do you have XFN roles that touch on both of those interests (tools eng, gameplay eng, tech designer)?*

My background is previous work in AAA (Zynga, NCsoft, 2K @Hangar13) and indie dev (my game NoStranger surpassed 1mil downloads last month). Portfolio linked below.

Thank you in advance for any help.

Best,

Matthew

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Now sometimes it's better to be less formal. On LinkedIn, for example, it's a little inappropriate to send someone your portfolio (we get away with it in the email because it's our footer). Since LinkedIn has no footer, I instead send chat messages like the one below and then try to move the conversation to email.

*Hey **Bobby, Obsidian** is awesome and working there has been a long time dream job of mine. Do they offer any internships in the eng or design areas? I would love to learn more about how I can get involved. Thanks!*

Strategy: "I'm already part of the club"

This strategy is moderately spicy on the sketchy scale and relies heavily on one's charisma score. The principle is that you portray yourself as already part of an establishment which you would otherwise need to accrue significant social clout to belong to. I used this a lot in college interviews which would sound something like

"I hang out at this university often with my friends who are students, often attending class lectures alongside them and speaking with professors that conduct research which corresponds to my interests."

The goal is for the interviewer to consider you as already integrated within the culture and therefore an excellent culture fit. This strategy can be used in a variety of ways but the gist is to use white lies to build social credibility. The risks vary with respect to what exactly you choose to claim. In practice, one might say in an interview...

"I attended Bob's GDC talk back in 2015 and spoke with him briefly about level design on Big Game Seven. It was clear, from talking with some of the other folks from Big Game Company, that you're dedicated to weaving a compelling narrative through the environment and that's a design goal I'm very passionate about."

So now it seems like I have some sort of background with Bob and his pals whereas I may have only seen his talk online and never actually spoken to him about level design. This strategy can be applied in many different ways; for example, you can say that you are very active in the modding community of a game produced by the company you are applying to.

Applications - Cold Workflow

My workflow for cold-applying to studios can be summarized by looking them up online and then following up on LinkedIn. I believe this is the most efficient process and I have created a walkthrough of me applying to demonstrate how I do it! I think after watching one or two examples you will be set to begin applying using this process yourself. Timestamps for each application are provided in the description of the video.

[My workflow video](#)

I have also been told "Email Hunter" is a good way to find people's emails.

Applications - Warm Workflow

If you know someone within the company, getting past the initial stage of interviews is much easier. Often this can simply be through asking your friend to introduce you over email to the manager hiring for your role. Note here that we are speaking with the manager instead of the recruiter. Often this is a much faster way to get hired but beyond the initial interview difference, the process is more or less the same. You will almost certainly still need to ace the interview.

Applications - Staying Positive

The competition is tough. After over 8 internships, I still struggle to have my application seen and usually do not reach the interview stage. It's important to stay positive and see each application as a learning experience. In my first 4 technical interviews I would often have no idea how to approach the problem. But I wouldn't give up, I would ask questions. I would even ask for hints. And each time I got a little better. You will too.

Acing the Interview

Becoming a "Crack Coder"

The first part of acing an interview is familiarizing yourself with the content. The book to read is [Cracking the Code](#), it has a ton of common engineering questions and details how you can defeat them. The end of the book has example solutions. This book is famous and the origin of the term “Crack Coder” which refers to interviewers who excel at these sorts of questions. And they really are a very unique sort of questions! Interviewing is a unique skill set, distinct from normal everyday coding, that people become very good at for little reason beyond the ability to interview. Make this your bible.

Strategy: The Glass Door

First, search for the company you’re applying for on <https://www.glassdoor.com/Interview/> This will provide you with a list of past interview questions. Popular questions also have multiple people providing their best answers for you to learn from!

Practice

The second part of acing an interview is familiarizing yourself with the process. Interviewing is something that takes time to become accustomed to. Practice. Practice handwriting code on a whiteboard. Practice with friends in study groups. In college, a few friends and I formed a study group to mock-interview each other, that’s a great way to train. Also consider practicing non-technical questions. For example, a common one is “What are you bad at” and question should meet a prepared response of something you are not best at and how you are improving.

The unequivocal best way to train is to apply to jobs that you would not necessarily consider taking and interview with them anyway. This is also an opportunity to practice other parts of the interview process including negotiating compensation if you are offered a role at the undesirable company.

Strategy: Test-Driven Development

Test-driven development (TDD) is an excellent practice for the initial stage (the first 5 minutes) of an interview question. TDD is a practice used in actual software development that is focused on developing software programs with respect to tests that they must pass. Interview questions are often in this format. To use this strategy, talk through your understanding of the problem by using input test cases and explaining what result you expect the program should return for each test case. This need not be coded. Just make sure to verbally mention “TDD” as you pseudocode your way to fully understanding the problem’s scope.

Strategy: Things to Mention

During a coding interview question there are certain things you almost certainly should mention when working through the problem. Do not forget to make specific note of:

1. Common Candidates: Common candidates for coding question solutions are *recursion* and *hashing*. You should likely acknowledge that you are at least considering these approaches.
2. Edge-Case Analyses: In almost every question you should acknowledge the possibility of strange input (unicode characters, negative numbers, null references) and address how you would deal with them or plainly ask the interviewer what the desired functionality would be for such an input.
3. Space-Time Complexity (STC): What makes engineering interesting is that there are often multiple approaches to a problem. The ideal candidate will acknowledge what the advantages and disadvantages of his/her approach. Specifically, you should be addressing the STC of your solution. How much space will your solution take in memory? How much time will your solution take to compute? Does the STC vary with respect to the best, worst, and average case scenarios?
 - a. If you're not familiar with Big O Notation (a way to summarize STC) please watch this excellent [video](#) (his videos are excellent, I use this resource often).
 - b. Your solution is likely built using the canon of established methods to sort, search and store data. These common methods, and their Big O Complexities, are listed [here](#). You should be vaguely familiar with their values.
4. Making mistakes: It is likely that you will make a mistake and the interviewer will call attention to it. Make sure to be cordial in receiving feedback. Correct responses include "Yes, you're right, that would happen. I can fix that by doing this..." or "That's a good point, that method would be clearly best if we were optimizing for X. Do you think my solution would be the better option if we consider Y..." Correct responses do not include "No, you're wrong; I'm right." Often an interview is a test to see how much you know until they find something you do not know and then they try to evaluate how you face problems you are not prepared for. Or how you react to learning you are wrong. It is important to not be a jerk.

Game Design Interviews

This part of the application, and therefore this part of the guide, is all about talking and thinking like a designer. To successfully ace a game design interview you should demonstrate:

1. A deep understanding of the game that the company is hiring you for (or their most recently released game).
2. A breadth of understanding of the genre of game that the company is hiring you for (experience playing these types of games is a requirement).
3. An ability to clearly discuss opinions on your knowledge from the above points.

There are a number of ways to practice or prepare for this. The interview may take place through an essay or conversation. I have written several essays on game design for job applications and for practice, example essays [here](#). Those should introduce you to how we may talk about games but another great practice is listening to, or creating, video essays.

#TODO so they will ask you to design a game or a level in a game and your focus should be to put the first words to describe every assumption you have about the game your level will be in.

- What is time to kill (how long to dispose of an enemy)
- What does combat feel like in this game (CQC vs ranged vs stealthy)

You want to list comps wherever possible to flaunt how many games you have played and also you want to use specifics such as “this level will take 5 minutes on average but there’s content here to keep the player occupied for twice that time if they want to engage with the lore and read the texts etc.”

Here are a number of essayists I recommend:

- [Game Maker’s Tool Kit](#): good analysis of some games and how to discuss games but a complete misnomer. Not helpful for development, more of a user-critic perspective.
- [TheHappieCat](#): excellent series on game development topics with useful information. A really approachable personality for those new to design.

#TODO Explain what a designer means by rock paper scissors. Identifying the core essence of a game in a way that’s abstractable and applicable to other games. you must do the same for any work. Ex. an atmosphere like GTA5.

Reading List

The reading list for interviewing starts with [Cracking the Code](#), it is the definitive book for learning the engineering acumen. However there are a number of different resources when it comes to the social acumen of describing your past work, working through social case studies, and being well liked. Here are my recommendations:

- [Good in a Room](#): This book is a bit overrated but provides a decent overview on how to present yourself to potential employers within the interview setting.
- [Pitch Anything](#): This book is underrated, it’s absolutely brimming with excellent strategies for dialogue. The Audible rendition is fantastic. Highly recommend.
- Body posture: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXG8i4PE6-mxh52nFKwMkcg>

Here are additional books and resources for further studies into the technical arts of game development.

Non-Coding:

- [Animators resource kit](#)
- [Robert Yang](#)
- <http://gamecareerguide.com>
- <http://gamasutra.com>
- How to handle hard questions: <http://www.gowrikumar.com/interview/index.php>

Coding:

- "Pyramid: Level Design:
<http://www.blog.radiator.debacl.us/2017/10/open-world-level-design-spatial.html>
- Banas (Coding Algorithms) : <https://www.youtube.com/user/derekbanas>
- Bucky (general coding):
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJbPGzawDH1njbqV-D5HqKw>
- King (general coding): https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCda_RJU9-xB0Hswcrjn4SKw
- Maths (specifically for games): [youtube.com/channel/UCEhBM2x5MG9-e_JSOzU068w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEhBM2x5MG9-e_JSOzU068w)
- Scott Meyers' Book: Effective C++ : Literally a bible for excellent coding patterns.

Closing the Interview

#TODO some comment here about the importance of a great close

#TODO address what questions the candidate should ask of the interviewer

Strategy: How did I do?

TODO: Immediately after the interview (during the part where they ask you for your questions) make your final question, "How did I do?" This is definitely a little awkward but worth it because if it's a no from them then you will otherwise hear no feedback.

After the Interview

Negotiations

Negotiations are the topic I am asked most about. People generally don't want to talk about compensation, but it's a very important part of getting the job. Everyone is in a unique financial situation but assuming you're an aspiring intern your main expense is likely housing.

We can estimate the housing cost you will incur by pretending to shop around for housing in the area of the company, please see my advice in the section housing for some tools to find housing in the area. You're looking for the range which represents monthly rent, let's say it's something like 2,000USD - 25,000USD. It's typical to take this number and ask for that sum to be covered with an after-tax stipend.

After-tax stipends are really special and they are an excellent bargaining tool. It's easy to hide compensation in them because the actual sum being paid can be about twice that (taxes take up alot).

For the hourly wage, I would suggest considering salaries posted on Glassdoor at skill level you are applying. For example [here](#) are salaries for a Blizzard engineer. The range is 34USD-44USD so as a junior hire we would expect to fall on the lower end of that range (This is pretty high for a game development job). Many companies won't have salaries listed. In those cases, just search for companies that do similar work to them. Lastly, you may want to request additional compensation for overtime hours. At past companies I have worked for, a contractor will sometimes earn 1.5x or 2x their hourly wage for any hours they work in excess of 40 hours.

Taking these considerations together we might have a mock proposal of:

- A 2,000USD after-tax housing stipend
- An hourly wage of 34USD with a 2x overtime multiple

That covers a basic overview of compensation considerations but in these discussions the greatest preparation you can do is arming yourself with information. One source is <https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/> I have been told it's a good reference for cost of living. However I think the best source is knowing the experience of other interns. Most people I have worked with have been surprisingly open about sharing their compensation if it's requested from a respectful information-gathering perspective. I 100% recommend you to ask folks in your network, especially if they have worked or are working at the company you are applying to, about fair compensation. And as the author of this guide, I am happy to share with you my experiences below if they should interest you. I admittedly don't counter compensation offers very often but, in practice, one really should.

Zynga (software engineer, intern):

Offered: \$32/hr with a \$1500 after-tax housing stipend

Accepted: offer unaltered

Tilting Point (game design, intern):

Offered: \$11.25/hr

Countered: \$20/hr with a monthly \$1200 after-tax housing stipend

Accepted: \$14.75/hr

NCsoft (software engineer, intern):

Offered: \$30/hr

Accepted: offer unaltered

Facebook (software engineer, intern):

Offered: \$8,000 monthly stipend with company provided housing

Accepted: offer unaltered

Hangar 13 (software engineer, intern):

Offered: \$25/hr with company provided housing and a two-way flight

Accepted: \$25/hr with a housing stipend and a one-way flight

Sony Santa Monica (gameplay engineer, intern):

Offered: \$30.25/hr with a sign-on bonus of \$5500 (pre-tax) to cover housing and relocation

Countered: requested a GDC pass

Accepted: offer unaltered

Manticore Games

\$25~30/hour

Countered: 30per hours with 2k after tax housing

reoffered: 32 per hour, flights covered, lunches catered

Epic Games, Fortnite

\$30/hr

Flights paid for, Housing covered

Catered Lunches

Strategy: Additional affordances

Beyond wages and housing stipends, there are many other negotiation affordances. Below are some examples of offer components that I have used to negotiate. Get creative!

- Travel support (plane tickets, gas money)
- Professional development (GDC tickets)
- Time commitment (alternative working hours, vacation time)
 - I always try to talk 12 week internships down to 10 or even 8 weeks so I can spend more time making indie games for my company.
- Benefits (healthcare, dental)
 - Let's say you are covered under your parent's dental insurance and you don't need any. That may save the company money and they may be willing to compensate you in another form.
- Title (change of title)

Housing

So you got the job! But now we need to find you a place to live. The go-to site for apartments listings remains Craigslist. But, let's face it, Craigslist is a little old school.

Thankfully all of the listings on Craigslist are accessible through [HotPads](#). HotPads is my go-to place for finding temporary housing such as a few months apartment rental. I strongly recommend using the service. It's free! Seriously HotPads is amazing. Check it out, trust me.

Strategy: Use Google Maps to estimate how far apartments are from your workplace

I like to have a 15 min or less bike ride to work so I open Google Maps right beside Hotpads to ensure my location fulfills that requirement!

#TODO <https://www.apartments.com/foster-city-ca/>

Strategy: Watch out for these pitfalls!

- If you are trawling the internet for other sites to find housing please watch out for [Roomster](#). Roomster makes you pay money just to search and you should not need to.
- Be mindful of scammers lurking on these sites! Try to see the apartment or have a friend see the apartment before you put down any money. At least have them give you a walking tour on Skype. I once almost got seriously scammed! The scammers are out there and you will encounter them eventually!

- Recently AirBnB has become a very popular site for housing but I recommend against using them for stays beyond a few days. Their policy prohibits you from visiting the apartment before signing what could be a several-months-contract, not cool.
#TODO I dont feel this way anymore
TODO: Warn about minimum itme leases, for example min 12 month.

During the Job

You're in Charge

It's important to address that companies have different approaches to the role of an intern. Some companies treat interns just like any other working staff. If that's the case in your internship, you should know that that's not really normal. That's actually the role of a contractor, albeit a junior or associate contractor, and not a true representation of the "intern experience".

An internship, on the other hand, should be fun. It should be your experience to work with topics that interest you and that will also benefit the company. The experience should be a service for you. You are not in a three month interview, that's bullshit. And you are not cheap labor. If you feel pressured by the experience or bored, you should open a dialogue with your manager to find an application of your skills that has the right amount of challenge and engagement. This is YOUR internship, and you are in charge of making sure it's an awesome experience.

Collecting Contacts

I keep a Google Sheets (Excel) full of contacts (essentially a rolodex) I have met within the games industry. This was a more relevant practice before everyone had a LinkedIn but it still may be useful for folks as it provides a nice way to write notes on everyone you have worked with. This is especially relevant if you expect to reach out to these folks in the future.

During a contract I create a google sheet for that job and write a row for everyone I meet. The other columns usually include what their roles are, important information (maybe they told me they love platforming games), and their contact information. During an internship you will have access to everyone's email but afterwards all that access disssapears. So if you think you might want to talk to that designer you got along with (and maybe ask for a job recommendation), you should record their contact details.

Gather contact information before you leave! You could just collect the emails of folks you worked with directly... but why not collect everyone's information? Most companies will provide you with an email client that has a linked directory of everyone in the company. With a little work you can download the contact information (usually just emails but often also phone numbers as well) of literally everyone in the entire company. Then the next time you want to reach out to someone at that company you will have a few thousand options!

Quick tips

- Time to implement is almost often more important than big-o runtime. Consider if it's worth coding out the optimal solution, especially if the code is not often called upon.
- Be conscious of overtime requirements one time mine were 8+ per day and 40+ per week. That means if I worked longer than 8 hours in a day, my boss would need to pay double my rate for the additional hours and he would not be happy about that!
- Look for learning resources. For example, many companies have a shared account to access GDC vault (that password may even work after you leave the company!)
- Make guides for other people. For example, new hires will appreciate if you create a "getting started" guide for them.

Stealing

Don't.

#TODO To guide you want to leverage the 30x1, Ray Dalio principle of minimizing guidance

Pursue tasks with measurable impact

In the context of an internship's duration, the main goal is to be an excellent worker at or above the level of a fulltime person in your discipline. For example, if you're an engineering intern, you should aspire to take on the workload of an average engineer (or junior engineer). However there's more to it than that! Flashy work that boasts quantitative significance has always been more respected than less sexy tasks. As we mentioned in the earlier section, you want to show measurable impact in your resume so it's important to seek out those tasks.

You don't want to "redesign the app icon" you want to "redesign the app icon which increased click through rate by 10%".

Strategy: Be memorable

Doing great work in an internship is important, but it's also important to stand out.

- Presence: For a time I had completely white hair. Several times I noted that executives specifically recalled that when requesting me for work. The CEO may not remember your name, but he will remember that amazing coder with weird hair. Do whatever you need to do to stand out (in a good way). I have seen people fake the idiosyncrasies of savants (stuttering, twitching, etc.). But something less extreme such as always wearing a cool hat can work just as well.
- Online Presence: There are a number of ways to do a similar thing online that are also geared to keep your work in the public consciousness. One is simply to be social. If your company has a Slack (message board), then post pictures of what you're up to. Comment frequently as well. One method I have found very useful is to brand myself with an emoji icon and use it alot. I adopted the vault boy (from videogame Fallout) as a custom emoji. It's my profile picture and I always use the icon to comment on other's posts. It makes people think, "hey, that intern is here". And that's all it needs to do!
On Slack I use the Vault Boy icon whenever I like a post so people know it's me!

Journaling

Beside my contacts sheet I have another sheet for journaling. Journaling helps summarize the work you completed for your review as well as for discussing with your manager during evaluations. The actual details of the implementation is not important, use what works for you.

These days I make an entry every day and something several times in a day where I simply note the date, time, my recently accomplished goals, and future goals. This allows me to look back at past days and see where my hours are going. It is also very nice to see these logs as progress towards something. For example, some big goals take a few days and the logs are sort of like checkpoints for me.

Here is a longer format I used to use a few years ago....

This format includes the columns Date, TODO, Notes, and Summary. In each row I fill out the following for each column.

- Date: I record the date and my hours worked that day.
 - "4.18.18
9:30am - 6:50pm
30min lunch"

- TODO: I plan the tasks that I intend to complete that day
 - “- Update and submit my task 1
 - Land my task 2 & 3
 - Begin task 4”
- Notes: This cell is often blank. If there’s something important to remember I will put it here or as a calendar reminder.
 - “Today I spoke with both Samantha and Michael and have the following goals:
 - Propose a cool idea for use with character
 - - - See comp for an example
 - - - Read their docs
 - Ask Remi tomorrow to attend a design meeting”
- Summary: What did I actually get done that day and what will remain as a task for tomorrow.
 - “- I completed part 1/3 for the feature rework task”

Meeting new people

Imagine you are an intern at your dream company. You are probably a big fan of their games, and by extension, the developers who created that work. Take advantage of your intern status to break out of your comfort zone and reach out to some of those people!

During my internships, I have scheduled out weeks of time with a different one-on-one meeting every lunch. There’s actually a book on this topic, “Never Eat Alone”. Never seems a bit extreme but it’s a good guiding principle. You should aim for no less than two lunches per week with new people. It’s really important to build relationships with as many people as possible in this intimate industry and a short lunch together is a huge difference from the occasional passing conversation or not talking with that person at all.

Most people are very receptive to the intern’s lunch invite. And they can often get reimbursed from the company if they call it a mentoring expense. But a meeting can be as simple as taking a walk around the workplace, try different things!

A question I am often asked by interns is “What should I talk about during these ‘meetings’?” And the answer is, it depends. Usually I get the most out of talking with people who work within my discipline, but there’s a lot of value in building empathy from learning the perspectives of other contributors to a team. You might ask genuine questions regarding what challenges they face in their work or what their career path has been like. However there is particular kind of question which you want to focus on, and that question is one which addresses change.

You're talking to this person because they have more experience than you, so it follows that you want to know how that experience has changed their approach and methodologies to problem solving. Here are some examples of questions that focus on that delta:

- What challenges are you facing on our current project that you didn't need to face in projects of the past? Why were they not previously challenges?
- What makes this company different from ones that you have worked at in the past?
- What do you wish you knew at the start of your career? If you could give yourself advice at the start of your career, what would you say?

Please note that these questions are not about you, the interviewer. Though you want to hear their advice for you, people will respond more honestly if you ask for their advice for an early-career version of themselves. With that being said, it's important to talk about yourself a bit during this conversation (it's not an interview). You want them to remember you after all! A viable way to do this is to respond to their answers from your perspective. Example:

- Intern: What challenges are you facing on our current project that you didn't need to face in projects of the past?
- Grey beard: Well, this new dialogue system is... We found a work-around during our last project but this time we are going to need to address the issue.
- Intern: Ah, that's impressive you were able to avoid it the first time. I had a similar problem, when I was building a school project, where...

Be nice, be authentic, and people will want to be your friend. If you meet someone who's really cool, I would recommend asking them who at the company they recommend you talk to. Cool people know cool people.

Performance Evaluation

During any evaluation, it can help to know how you are being evaluated. Here are several of the metrics which I have found managers refer to when reviewing an intern's success. I accompanied some of the metrics with advice.

- Not wasting the time of coworkers
 - Study beforehand... If you have a question, invest a significant amount of time looking it up before asking. When you ask your question, acknowledge that work in the form "I am stuck on X. I have tried doing X, and I Googled X. But I still can't X."
 - Spread out questions... Try to ask questions to the best person rather than always going to the same person. For example you may want to talk to an animator about a broken animation instead of annoy your boss who will not know the answer and will need to ask an animator anyway.

- Groom evaluators... Want to cheat a little? Your boss is likely going to ask only one or two other people about this metric (maybe another engineer or a designer you worked closely with). A pro intern will identify the evaluator-engineer and then plan to only show awesome work to this engineer and only ask them intelligent questions. The intern can direct dumb questions to someone else. If you know there is someone on your team who thinks especially highly of you, you can try to weight them into your evaluation by commenting to your boss something along the lines of “I have been working very closely with Jim lately, he’s answered a lot of my questions!” (but actually you have been grooming Jim).
- Amount of work done
 - Commits & Lines of code... Your boss will likely have a metric of how many tasks you have completed and how many lines you have committed. You should try to make tasks for yourself if work you are completing is untasked. That way it will show up on a system like JIRA and your “quick fix” will count towards your net tasks completed.
 - Average amount of code revision rounds... When you have code reviewed, you will likely need to change it according to the whims of code reviewers. Multiple rounds can look excessive but there are easy ways to avoid this. One suggestion is to have invite the reviewer for a quick in person walkthrough. This can catch strong opinions on your approach and can save time that would be wasted in back and forth review rounds. “Hey Jess, I’m planning to submit this code soon would you mind taking a quick look over my approach for a sanity check before I send it in?”

Before you leave!

So your internship is about to wrap-up, well there’s a lot to do before you go!

- Ask for permission to create a demo-reel of the work you have done. If the work is not released, then you may be able to promise to only post the reel after it is released. For example, I worked on an unannounced game but was able to take home a reel of the work I did for the game (which I posted to my website months later). Having a reel to show the actual work you did is especially important if you don’t have sexy numbers to show off (such as “increased profits by 10%”). Creating a reel is possible with work that doesn’t have a graphical component but that may require you to get creative in thinking of ways to show off something like a database.
- Get phone numbers and emails for HR and finance people so that you can easily reach them if you have questions at the end of your year with your taxes.
- If you already set up a 401K (I don’t know if you can as an intern... but if you can, then you maybe should!), you want to roll that into a Roth IRA.

The End

Good luck, you'll need it.