Designing Games Worksheet

Questions to ask about your players

- What are our target audience's visual, motor, and cognitive capabilities?
- How do our target audience vary in terms of abilities including language and numeracy?
- Where, when, and on which devices are our players playing the game?
- What aspects of that context could impact gameplay?
- Does our projected session length match players' *actual* session lengths, and fit into their real lives?
- Do we provide enough time for players to perceive and comprehend gameplay feedback?
- What are the players' norms and expectations around gameplay mechanics?
- Are your players more likely to learn by exploring your game or by relying on help?
- Are your players likely to be particularly resistant to tutorials?
- Do your players seek out games with longer-term goals?
- To what extent do players seek out this type of game for its social aspects? Do they want to play with or against other players?

Questions to ask your team

- How have we ensured that our game is accessible and offers an optimal challenge considering our target audience's current visual, motor, and cognitive capabilities?

- Should we adapt our game experience to accommodate differences in abilities?
- How early should we bring in users to test the experience?
- How might we protect our game from 'complexity creep' during development?
- How might we let players personalize their experience to their everyday *preferences and capabilities*, such as offering video and audio settings?
- Can we design gameplay that accommodates interruptions?
- How could we accommodate players returning to the game after a long period away?
- Do the game controls reflect players' ergonomic restrictions when holding their device, for example, require them to reach across the screen or potentially cover elements with their fingers?
- Can we give players the option to automate, hide, or turn off gameplay features that are not core mechanics?
- Is the UI laid out in a manner that is consistent with players' existing mental models?
- How can our mechanics, features, and interactions be made more intuitive and understandable using our players' *real-world knowledge*?
- How can our mechanics, features, and interactions be made more intuitive and understandable by being consistent with *other aspects of our game*? And *other games* that our audience may have played?
- Can we ensure our iconography and terminology is distinct and can be recognized quickly?
- What are the ideal times (and locations) to present players with supportive information?
- What undesirable errors might players make in our game, and how might we elegantly protect them from that negative experience?
- How might our gameplay feedback better communicate player's influence on the gameworld?

- Is our UI accurately communicating the game structure to players?
- Can players recognize our gameplay feedback and are they able to respond as we want them to?
- Which areas need more — or less — tutorialization?
- Have we maximized opportunities to teach players (for example through loading screens, pause menus, teaching through menu interactions, videos, or cutscenes)?
- Are we using tutorials in the right places?
- Are we presenting longer-term goals in an understandable manner?
- How do we meaningfully communicate the presence of other real players and how multiplayer and social interactions fit into our metagame?
- How might we reinforce the relationship between gameplay progression and metagame progression?
- Which features are designed to bring players back, and are they presented meaningfully to players in the first-time user experience?

Questions to ask your players

- Did you feel confused at any point while you were playing?
- While playing, did you feel like you had all the information you needed? Did you know where to find it?
- Can you show me how to find [feature] in the menus? Were you able to use the menus easily?
- Do you feel like this game is 'for you'? Is it aimed at you? If not, who is it aimed at?
- How often do you find that you are interrupted during game play?

- When your game was interrupted, what happened when you returned to the game? Was that what you expected to happen? If not, why not?
- Did you change any settings in the game?
- Was there anything about the game or the controls that you would have liked to be able to change?
- What do you think these icons mean at first glance?
- How might you expect this feature to work?
- Did this feature work as you expected it to? If not, why not?
- Was there anything in the game that didn't work as you expected it to?
- Is this feature something that you've seen in other games?
- Did you ever make any mistakes that you couldn't recover from? If so, what happened?
- Do you prefer to figure out how to play these sorts of games on your own? Could you do that in this game?
- Did you see any help messages in the game while you were playing? Did you take their advice, and were they useful?
- Did you go looking for further help or information about how to play? Where would you expect to find that information?
- Did you feel like you knew when you were doing well or badly in the game?
- Are tutorials something you feel comfortable using while learning a new game?
- Did you feel restricted by the tutorials in the game? Were there times where you would have preferred to learn on your own?
- Were you able to understand each tutorial? Did you manage to quickly learn what it was trying to teach you?
- How do you progress in this game?
- What are you trying to do in this game now?
- What do you need to do in this game [in the long term]?
- How do you get better at this game?
- Will this game get more difficult?

- Can you interact with other people in this game? How?
- What can you buy in this game? Can you buy things to help you?
- What do you spend to buy things in this game? How do you get more of them?