

Game Style/Genre

The purpose of this section is to identify the main genre that their game will follow. We will allow the kids to include a 'mix' of genres in their game if that's what they want but need to be careful to distinguish main genre from minor ones (e.g. arcade adventure with a screen where you have to shoot aliens to get to the other side or a platform game that incorporates a maze element) otherwise we may risk confusing some of the kids.

Game World

Some people may think that the suggested number of screens is a lot for the kids to manage in 3 weeks. However, it's worth noting that some screens can just be filler material. For instance, in an arcade adventure, they may be just scenery to walk through or play home to an important item to find and collect.

I will be providing a set of 12 numbered template backgrounds that all the teams can use for the purpose of testing their map definitions - they can use those to build all their character behaviours and game features with before developing their screens or finding relevant internet-sourced images - they might end up with a mix of home-grown, internet sourced and Scratch library backgrounds - that's fine.

I would recommend guiding the kids to worry about their background scenery last - there's little benefit in ending up with a beautiful looking set of backgrounds but little actual interactive content.

Characters

This section has a number of important purposes.

Behaviour: whoever codes up the character behaviours will need to know what they are supposed to do. For instance, in Jet Set Willy (platform game) some enemies simply patrol up/down between two defined points on the screen while others patrol left/right or diagonally.

Other enemies might interact with the scenery, by patrolling up to walls/obstacles only. This second type of patrolling enemy could be blocked by a certain type of object (e.g. Vampires hate garlic or crucifixes). This is more complex to code up but allows for interesting game strategy such as "throwing" a crucifix from the other side of the room to block vampire in a corner and make a door/exit accessible. I have a demo of this kind of behaviour that goes along with our Maze Challenge project which the kids have already seen.

In classic space invaders the aliens and the ufo are two different types of characters that do different things.

Character Name: this is really just nothing more than an identification label e.g. "UFO", "Alien", "SwoopingAlien". This is designed to encourage sensible naming of their sprites within their code - leaving everything as the default Sprite1, Sprite2 doesn't make for easily readable code and it might also

cause integration issues down the line if everyone has a Sprite1 character to import. As I haven't yet had time to idiot test the integration part of the process, I'm playing safe here wherever I can for now.

Character Screen ID: this is for locating the starting screen for all sprites within the game (initialisation). Only relevant for games that have more than one screen.

The kids might want to allow some sprites to appear on a selected number of screens. However, the code logic for that could complicate things. For simplicity, I would recommend either limiting the item to a single screen (simple show/hide code logic) or allow it to appear on all screens (no show/hide code logic required) - this is relevant for the main character, for instance.

If the kids really want "selected" screen availability for some items, they could always build and code up the sprite as a single screen sprite and then duplicate it and its code in its entirety (right-click>duplicate menu option does that for you in a single action) and change the copy's local **my_screen** variable. If that character's code subsequently needs to be changed, change it in the original copy only and then delete and recreate the copies.

For characters they want to appear on all screens, write the label "ALL" in the Screen ID field. It's far better to say something specific than be silent ("was this detail simply overlooked or deliberately ignored?").