**Researching demographics**

**Age**

According to Jesse Schell’s “The Art of Games Design: A Book of Lenses”, when it comes to demographics, for game designers the two most significant variables are **age** and **gender**.

He continues by listing nine age groups, which according to him, are the “typical age demographics that a game designer has to consider.” These groups are:

* **0 – 3: Infant/Toddler** – “very interested in toys, but the complexity and problem solving involved in games is generally too much”;
* **4 – 6: Preschooler** – “show their first interest in games”, “games are very simple, and played with parents”;
* **7 – 9: Kids** – “age of reason”, “children start making their own decisions about what kinds of toys and games they like and dislike”;
* **10 – 13: Preteen or “Tween”** – “age of obsessions”, “start to get quite passionate about their interests”
* **13 – 18: Teen** – “we generally see a significant divergence between male and female interests”, “boys…interested in competition and mastery”, “girls become more focused on real-world issues and communication”;
* **18 – 24: Young Adult** – “established certain tastes about the kind of play and entertainment they enjoy”, “usually have both time and money on their hands, which makes them big consumers of games”;
* **25 – 35: Twenties and Thirties** – “at this age, time becomes more precious”, “most adults in this age bracket are only casual game players, playing games as an occasional amusement”, “on the other hand, the hardcore gamers… are an important target market because they purchase a lot of games, and are often quite vocal about what they do and don’t like”;
* **35 – 50: Thirties and Forties** – “most adults… are very caught up in career and family responsibilities and are only casual game players”
* **50+: Fifties and Up** – “suddenly have a lot of time on their hands”, “some return to games they enjoyed when younger, and others, looking for a change, turn to new game experiences”, “particularly interested in game experiences that have a strong social component, such as golf, tennis, bridge and online multiplayer games”.

I have also looked at various games published by Bandai Namco Entertainment, to get an idea of what kind of genres they usually invest in. They have lots of intellectual properties under their name, ranging from games rated (using the PEGI rating) 3 to 18 for a variety of platforms, in many different genres (for example action/adventure, arcade or fighting).

Since the brief states we have to produce a game for the mobile platform, I have looked at games that Bandai Namco Entertainment has published on mobile platforms (Android/iOS). Most of the games appear to have a rating of 3 (6 out of 11 games (taken from their official website), with 2 having a rating of 7 and 2 of 12, with only one being rated 16.

This suggest that most mobile games from Bandai Namco are targeted towards the younger audiences. This also goes well with the requirements set out by the brief, as the game is supposed to be multiplayer, meaning that the younger children could play the game together with friends or even parents. Despite that, the game is still for a mobile device, meaning that most likely younger kids will not be able to play the game without their parent’s permission. As they most likely will not possess the mobile device that is required.

In the end I would suggest that the best age bracket to aim for with this project would be **7 – 13**. This way, the kids will be able to play the game with their friends, and since they will be in school, they can use the game to pass time during breaks or lunches, if they wish so to do. They are also old enough to understand what the game is asking of them.

Also, the kids are young enough to have an enjoyment in getting toys, would the game become popular enough that Bandai Namco would use its Toys & Hobby SBU to produce toys to further popularize the game and increase the revenue the game produces.

**Gender**

Schell continues by saying how “the majority of videogames are played by boys and men” due to “male-oriented aesthetics of these games, which often feature aggressive male characters, graphic violence, and hyper-sexualised female characters”. He later continues by listing five things both genders enjoy seeing in the games they play.

For males the five things include: **mastery, competition, destruction, spatial puzzles** and **trial and error**.

For females, on the other hand, the five things include: **emotion, real world, nurturing, dialog and verbal puzzles,** and **learning by example.**

In terms of the gender our game would be targeting, it appears that **males** are more likely to be our target, since competition and mastery are pretty much requirements for our game.

**Psychographics**

Schell also talks about psychographics, which are more about how the players “think on the inside”. He says that “some psychographic breakdowns have to do with “lifestyle” choices”, “but other kinds of psychographics aren’t so tied to concrete activities. They have more to do with what a person enjoys the most – the kind of pleasures they look for when participating in a game activity, or really, and activity”.

He then talks about LeBlanc’s Taxonomy of Game Pleasures which include:

* **sensation** – using your senses, whether it is the sound, the visuals or imagining smells and tastes. Often provided by the aesthetics of the game. Our game could possibly utilise it in some capacity;
* **fantasy** – “pleasure of the imaginary world, and the pleasure of imagining yourself as something that you are not.” This one could possibly be achieved, depending on what kind of genre and setting we finally decide that our game should take place in;
* **narrative** – “a dramatic unfolding of a sequence of events”. The casual and competitive nature of our game limits our ability to create a narrative pleasure, since the games should be fast, and there is no need for a complicated story in a game that does not really progress;
* **challenge** – “can be considered one of the core pleasures of gameplay, since every game, at its heart, has a problem to be solved.” This is the pleasure that our game will most likely aim for, since it goes well with the mastery and competitive nature of our game, despite the rules being simple, the player will be able to become better and use their knowledge to fight against the newer players;
* **fellowship** – “referring to everything enjoyable about friendship, cooperation, and community.” This pleasure goes against our adversarial requirement, and so we must not aim for it;
* **discovery** – “any time you seek and find something new, that is a discovery”. This pleasure goes well with the mastery requirement, as the players will eventually discover new ways of playing the game.
* **expression** – “pleasure of expressing yourself and the pleasure of creating things.” I don’t think the brief goes well with this pleasure, since the main target are casual players who want quick games, but depending on what kind of gameplay we decide upon, we might go with making the players able to express themselves;
* **submission** – “pleasure of entering the magic circle — of leaving the real world behind, and entering into a new, more enjoyable, set of rules and meaning”. This pleasure appears to be similar to fantasy, and is something that we could aim for, making the player immersed in the world, feeling like they are really performing the abilities they do in game.

Schell then goes onto to talk about Richard Bartle’s taxonomy of player types, dividing them into four groups:

* **achievers** – “want to achieve goals of the game”, interested in “acting on the world”. Similar to challenge;
* **explorers** – “want to get to know the breadth of the game”, interested in “interacting with the world”. Similar to discovery;
* **socialisers** – “are interested in relationships with other people”, interested in “interacting with players”. Similar to fellowship;
* **killers** – “are interested in competing with and defeating others.”, interested in “acting on players”.

Schell then lists more pleasures to consider:

* **anticipation** – “when you know a pleasure is coming, just waiting for it is a kind of pleasure”. This could be a good method to create engagement, as the players are waiting for something to happen, to see who wins for example;
* **delight in another’s misfortune** – “typically, we feel this when some unjust person suddenly gets their comeuppance” (“schadenfreude”) This would work well with the competitive nature of our game;
* **gift giving** – “there is a unique pleasure when you make someone else happy through the surprise of a gift.” That would not work well with our requirements;
* **humor** – could be used to further make the game engaging with the players;
* **possibility** – “this is the pleasure of having many choices and knowing you could pick any one of them”. This one could also be utilised somehow to make the game more interesting, as well as feed into the focused gameplay experience as the players would need to focus to determine which choice to choose;
* **pride in an accomplishment** – “this is a pleasure all its own that can persist long after the accomplishment was made.” (“naches”) Could further emphasises the competitive nature of our game;
* **purification** – “it feels good to make something clean” (“clear the level”-like game is shown as an example). Could be utilised;
* **surprise** – “the brain likes surprises”. Could be utilised, making the player more engaged;
* **thrill** – “fear minus death equals fun”. Could be utilised along with surprise and/or anticipation to create more engagement from the players;
* **triumph over adversity** – “pleasure that you have accomplished something that you knew was a long shot” (“fiero”). This also goes well with the mastery and competitive requirements of our game.
* **wonder** – “an overwhelming feeling of awe and amazement”. I don’t think it would go well with our requirements but could be attempted.

In terms of psychographics, it seems that with our game we would most likely want to aim for **killers** and **achievers** (in terms of Bartle’s player types), trying to hit the pleasures of **challenge, expression and fantasy** (in terms of LeBlanc’s pleasures).

In the end our target audience would most likely be **male 7–13 year olds who are achievers and killers.**