

High Level

Scope

- Do something simple
 - What is the end goal? I'm assuming to get hired somewhere.
 - I would be more impressed by a game that is complete and well executed, not half finished and ambitious.
 - The first 30% of a game are the easy and exciting part. The last 30% is the hard part, is hard to practice, and would give you a HUGE leg up in the industry.
 - Goal should be to speak about polish, playtesting, iteration, and SHIPPING something
- “*Sandcastle RTS* is a single-player, base-building, small squad-based, RTS game with survival elements”
 - You’ve described three different games and duct taped them together
- Innovation
 - Games can’t handle more than 20 or 30% innovation. Student projects even less

Direction

- Good exercise for any game: [PRACTICE 2018: Zak McClendon](#)
- Hone in on what makes your game special
 - Do something focused and special, everything else will be built around it.
- The elevator pitch should be more than buzzwords. I like this approach:
 - 1 Paragraph setting up the emotional stakes and context
 - 1 Paragraph talking about the gameplay and what the player does
 - In *Sandcastle RTS* a lost tribe of sand people start with nothing but the beach beneath their feet. But to rebuild they must venture out for resources. But to get resources draws in the natural foes to their base. Every move to grow means the tribe must bolster their defenses.

In *Sandcastle RTS*, players are tasked with commanding a tribe rebuilding their empire. Through classic RTS controls players are pushed and pulled between venturing out into the wilderness and bolstering their defenses back at base. Players build up a base, construct squads to venture out into the wilderness, gather resources, and uncover the secrets of the beach they are on.
- Talk about the emotions of your game.
 - There’s a tendency to be clinical to impress with design.
 - You’re really selling an emotional dream as much as an outline to get there. Here are some exercises:

- Imagine you are a player talking about the crazy experience you had with one of your friends.
 - Describe the game but try not to use any buzz words and focus on the players relationship with the game (second paragraph above)
- What is the fantasy for the player? Be a tactical genius? Be a god playing with their sand creations?

Gameplay

- I read through large swathes of your documentation and I have no idea what it's actually like to play your game.
- Go a level deeper for each of your mechanics. Talk about what that brings for the table, what those mechanics bring to the table, and how they effect the player's experience
 - Ex: "Sandcastle RTS is played from a top down perspective inspired by classic RTS's like Warcraft 3. This perspective gives players a bird's eye view of the action allowing them to see all their troops from a strategic point of view. The abstracted interface gives a tactical empowerment. This comes at the cost of emersion and visual depth in the environment.
- Speak to what you are challenging. What kind of players does this appeal to
 - Sandcastles RTS challenges the player's micromanagement skills as they must split their attention amongst several squads to maximize their time inside the day/night loop.
 - Sandcastles RTS also challenges a players strategic planning under duress as they split their resources between offense for their raiding parties during the day and defense as they need to build up their base.

Documentation

- Give me graphs and images
 - Make a flowchart and create your game loop
- Use concept art or references to give a visual footprint to your docs
 - Not everyone imprints ideas via words (I need something visual to anchor things though I parse details and information just fine)
- Create mock-ups to create a visual game loop
- Bullet points are your friend

Meeting Notes

- 11 people
 - 2 designers
 - Generalists
 - 2 artists
 - 2D artists
 - 7 programmers