Instructions

Step 1: Pick a game you plan to analyze

Step 2: Playtest your game choice (or review streamers playing the game)

Step 3: Analyze, research, and review your chosen game. Collect resources (website links, etc that you used during the exploration) include these with the responses in the related sections. Fill in the responses of the below prompts/checklist/etc.

Step 4: Export the PDF. Upload it to Github and upload the same PDF to Canvas.

Section #1: (1.25 pts.) Game Overview

Task #1 (0.63 pts.) - Historical Context and Game Description

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Weight: *50%*

Objective: *Historical Context and Game Description*

Details:

- Game's title, developer, publisher, platform, and release date.
- Historical context of the game's release and its place in the industry.
- Game's genre and how it compares to similar games of the time.

Your Response:

Game Title: Rhythm Heaven Developer: Nintendo SPD, TNX Music Recordings Publisher: Nintendo Platform: Nintendo DS Release Date: April 5, 2009

Historical Context:

- Part of a series of rhythm-based videogames, this one designed specifically for the Nintendo DS
- Considered a "classic" amongst 2000s rhythm players/experts

Game Genre:

- Rhythm/Music

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Task #2 (0.63 pts.) - Gameplay Mechanics

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Weight: *50%*
Objective: *Gameplay Mechanics*

Details:

- Discuss the core gameplay mechanics and how they shape the player's experience.
- Explain how players control the game and interact with it.
- Identify and describe any unique aspects or creative elements in the game's gameplay.

Your Response:

Most of the mini games primarily uses four mechanics: tapping, holding, sliding and flicking, only accessible through the DS's touchpad. The only game that has a different set of controls is Rockers 2, which uses the Nintendo DS's L/R buttons. These core mechanics are used to follow of the song, sort of like a drum. And since the controls are so simple to use, it keeps the player engaged to follow the beat of the song.

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Section #2: (1.25 pts.) Software Architecture And Technology

Task #1 (0.63 pts.) - Technical Framework

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Weight: *50%*

Objective: *Technical Framework*

Details:

- Describe the game engine and any special software (middleware) used to make the game. Explain why these were important for making the game work.
- List the programming languages and software tools used to build the game. Discuss how these tools helped in creating the game's features.

Your Response:

Rhythm Heaven us NITRO SDK combined with Metrowerks CodeWarrrior's C/C++ development tool to create the framework. It mostly utilized special Nitro libraries for graphics, audio, input and their file system management and GUI utilities (Nitro Sound Maker & itro Character) for assets.

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Task #2 (0.63 pts.) - Innovations and Challenges

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Weight: *50%*

Objective: *Innovations and Challenges*

Details:

- Identify and describe any new or unique technical features in the game. Explain how these features made the game different or improved it.
- Discuss any major difficulties the developers encountered while making the game. Describe how they solved these problems.

Your Response:

Compared to previous and future titles, which prioritized button function, this iteration of the game decided to use the DS's touch screen and stylus. However, with that came months and months of research and adaptation to make sure that the games could be played in this format.

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Section #3: (1.25 pts.) Gameplay Mechanics And Level Design

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Task #1 (0.63 pts.) - Mechanics Analysis

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Weight: *50%*

Objective: *Mechanics Analysis*

Details:

- Explore and describe the main rules and actions that players use in the game. Explain how these core mechanics define the game's playstyle.
- Discuss how the game's core mechanics keep players interested and involved. Describe the ways these mechanics make the game fun or challenging.

Your Response:

The main rule and basic mechanics of the game relied solely on the touch screen and stylus, where the player has to tap, hold, flick or slide; depending on the mini game tutorial. With all the tapping and flicking, it helped the player stay on beat sinceapping/flicking the stylus on the screen made a louder sound compared to pressing a button. And with these mechanics, they made different minigames that support the mechanics of the game (Glass Tappers).

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Task #2 (0.63 pts.) - Level Design

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Weight: *50%*

Objective: *Level Design*

Details:

- Describe the design of the game's levels or environments. Focus on the layout, obstacles, and visual elements, and how they contribute to the game's setting.
- Explain how the level or environment design affects the way players play the game. Discuss how these

design choices impact the overall experience, such as creating challenges, guiding the player, or setting the mood.

Your Response:

Every environment is different, ranging from a white endless abyss to a factory or even an island. The style is very simple and very cute, adding on to it's charm as a silly little rhythm game.

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100% Section #4: (1.25 pts.) Graphic And Audio Design

100% Task #1 (0.63 pts.) - Graphic and Audio Design

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Weight: *50%*
Objective: *Graphic and Audio Design*

Details:

- Describe the game's visual appearance and the artistic choices made. Discuss elements like color, art style, and thematic consistency, and how they contribute to the game's overall look and feel.
- Discuss the design of the game's characters and environments. Focus on aspects such as realism, creativity, and how they fit within the game's world. Explain how these designs enhance the player's immersion in the game.

Your Response:

With the exception of a few games, the color palette is very colorful which is meant to draw the player's attention to the game. There's a combination of 2D and 3D visuals that's playing as your playing the game, and the art style for the game in general is very cutesy and simplistic.

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100% Task #2 (0.63 pts.) - Audio Design

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Weight: *50%*

Objective: *Audio Design*

Details:

- Examine the game's sound design, focusing on the music and sound effects. Describe how they are used and their quality. Discuss any memorable or unique audio elements in the game.
- Explain how the game's audio contributes to its overall mood and setting. Discuss how sound and music influence the player's emotional response and enhance the gaming experience.

Your Response:

The entire game's main focus is on the music and sound effects. Depending on which mini game you're playing, you get a wide variety of music genres plus any perfect/fail effects in order to know if you're on tempo or not.

In terms of sound effects outside of the minigames, the game sometimes has dialogue in between remixes, giving that little click to progress to the next block of text that's permanently etched into my brain.

In terms of what type of mood they're trying to go for in the audio, its supposed to be cutesy and at times a bit niche, which it definitely accomplishes. The background/menu music hypes up the player for the next mini game, while the settings/cafe music is meant to feel more nostalgic and homey.

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Section #5: (1.25 pts.) User Interface And User Experience

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Task #1 (0.63 pts.) - User Interface and User Experience

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Weight: *50%*

Objective: *User Interface and User Experience*

Details:

- Describe the layout of the game's user interface (UI) and how it functions. Discuss elements like

menus, icons, and on-screen prompts, and how they help players navigate and understand the game.

- Evaluate how well the game's UI communicates important information to players. Discuss aspects such as clarity, readability, and the ability of the UI to provide necessary game details without overwhelming or confusing the player.

Your Response:

User Interface:

Very simple and clear; provides visual and auditory cues that helps the player know when to perform different actions. It uses the touch screen and pen to tap, hold, or flick on beat, depending on the mini game; which helps keep the game engaging without confusing new players.

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100% Task #2 (0.63 pts.) - UX Analysis

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Weight: *50%*
Objective: *UX Analysis*

Details:

- Discuss the overall feel of playing the game, focusing on how different aspects of the game contribute to the player's experience. Analyze how these elements, such as ease of use, game flow, and feedback, affect the gameplay.
- Evaluate the design decisions made to enhance the player's experience. Consider factors like tutorial design, learning curve, and player engagement. Discuss how effective these choices are in making the game enjoyable and accessible to players.

Your Response:

User Experience:

Although simple, it combines its simplicity with different rhythms and tempos that require precise timing and acute auditory perception. In terms of the flow, after every 5 minigame levels is a Remix stage that calls back to elements from the games that were played before but in a more challenging pace. There's also the immediate feedback that's given after the level ends, which enhances the learning experience and keeps the player entertained and motivated to keep the rhythm.

Some design decisions that enhances the player's experience includes:

- Tutorial Design & its Learning Curve (difficulty increases as you progress)
- Replayability
- Accessibility and Control Scheme (touch screen)

Section #6: (1.25 pts.) Narrative And Storytelling

Task #1 (0.63 pts.) - Narrative Structure

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Weight: *50%*

Objective: *Narrative Structure*

Details:

- Describe the game's story, including its narrative structure, main plot points, and the setting in which it takes place. Discuss how these elements come together to create a cohesive and engaging story.
- Analyze the storytelling techniques used in the game, such as dialogue, cutscenes, or environmental storytelling. Evaluate how effectively these techniques convey the story and engage the player.

Your Response:

Since this game is basically a collection of mini games, there's no official story with narrative structure or plot points. However in the games themselves, there's a sort of short story that adds on to the charm of the game, some of my favorites include:

DJ School: Yellow guy teaching blue guy how to DJ and gain self confidence.

Love Lab: Cute little love story where two student scientists create physical and emotional chemical reactions by creating chemicals (?) out of their feelings.

Glee Club: Three little guys with their director performing at a choir concert.

Most of the selections in the game have a sequel game, which changes the atmosphere of where the character your assigned as is. The remixes also have a sort of overarching theme that ties together with the mini games you've played so far, which tells its own story.

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Task #2 (0.63 pts.) - Character and Integration

Text Prompt

Weight: *50%*

Objective: *Character and Integration*

Details:

- Discuss the development of the game's characters. Describe their roles within the story, their personalities, and how they evolve throughout the game. Consider how the characters contribute to the overall narrative.
- Examine how the game's narrative and characters are integrated into the gameplay. Discuss how story elements are woven into the game mechanics and how this integration affects the player's experience.

Your Response:

Again as mentioned, since this game is basically a collection of mini games, there's no official character you play as. You're assigned a character, depending on the minigame, and playthough the mini game.

How the character you play as affects the gameplay, that's a different story. Depending on how on/off beat you are, you get different reactions from the AI you're playing with.

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Section #7: (1.25 pts.) Impact And Reception

Task #1 (0.63 pts.) - Reception and Impact

Text Prompt

Weight: *50%*

Objective: *Reception and Impact*

Details:

- Research and summarize how the game was received by critics and players. Include key reviews, ratings, and player feedback. Discuss any notable praise or criticism the game received.
- Analyze the game's impact on the gaming industry. Discuss how it may have influenced game design, trends, or inspired other games. Consider any lasting effects it has had on the industry.

Your Response:

Overall reviews and criticisms of the game were for the most part favorable, garnering high scores and with

the overall critique that this game is simplistic, charming and fun but can't possibly be compared to the first game.

After Rhythm Heaven came its predecessors Rhythm Heaven Fever (Wii), Rhythm Heaven Megamix (3DS) and the recently announced Rhythm Heaven Groove (Switch). Some games inspired by this game include Beat City, released in 2010 by THQ, which has similar controls.

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Task #2 (0.63 pts.) - Cultural Significance

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Weight: *50%*
Objective: *Cultural Significance*

Details:

- Examine the game's cultural significance and the legacy it has left behind. Discuss how the game has been remembered over time and its status in the gaming community.
- Describe the game's presence and representation in media, such as films, books, or online content. Discuss its role in fan communities and any influence it has had on broader cultural aspects, such as art, music, or social trends.

Your Response:

Along with the other titles tied to this franchise, there's been a fan resurgance with a fan-based level editor created via Unity that allows the person to create their very own custom remix with any song that they've chosen (Heaven Studio). It's free to use, and it even has its own repository on GitHub, which allows Rhythm Heaven fans to create and expand their imaginations.

Rhythm Heaven content has also garnered a following on social media sites, mainly TikTok and Youtube. TikTok showcases people who've dug out their DS and copy of the game to showcase the gameplay; while Youtube has dozens of animated fan-made content that parodies certain levels; most notable to me is @MysteryBen27, who's rhythm centered fan animations had preteen me in a chokehold.

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Section #8: (1.25 pts.) Reflection

Task #1 (0.63 pts.) - Describe your personal experience playing the

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Weight: *50%*

Objective: *Describe your personal experience playing the chosen game*

Details:

- Was it "fun"? What made it fun or not fun?
- Is this genre/game-type aligned with personal interests?
- What made you pick this game? Was it a good choice?

Your Response:

I personally found this game very fun, all of the different rhythm mini games had a different feel/sound to it and it was very interesting to experience. It's definitely alligned with my personal interests, especially since im making my own rhythm game for my senior thesis.

What made me pick this game wasn't just the fact that it alligned with my assignments for my thesis, it was also one of the first rhythm games I've ever owned and played when I first got my DS. That and the recent announcement for a new Rhythm Heaven title coming out for the Switch in 2026.

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Task #2 (0.63 pts.) - Assignment Reflection

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Weight: *50%*

Objective: *Assignment Reflection*

Details:

- What interesting or new "thing(s)" did you learn during your research and analysis?
- Did you find it was easy to come across the information you were looking for? What was your primary means of research/analysis?

Your Response:

I had to view this game in an interesting way to describe the characters and setting of a game that doesn't really have set characters or setting. In terms of finding this information, I'd say that it was pretty easy to find the information I was looking for; especially since my primary means of this type of research is for my senior thesis.

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