

Submission Worksheet

Submission Data

Course: IT265-002-S2026

Assignment: Case Study 1 - Atari

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Status: Submitted | **Worksheet Progress:** 100%

Potential Grade: 604.00/604.00 (100.00%)

Received Grade: 0.00/604.00 (0.00%)

Started: 2/9/2026 4:35:22 PM

Updated: 2/9/2026 5:22:09 PM

Grading Link: <https://learn.ethereallab.app/assignment/v3/IT265-002-S2026/case-study-1-atari/grading/ilf>

View Link: <https://learn.ethereallab.app/assignment/v3/IT265-002-S2026/case-study-1-atari/view/ilf>

Instructions

1. Step 1:

From this spreadsheet, pick a game you plan to analyze (selection must be unique) and put your UCID to the left of it:

[Game Selection Spreadsheet](#)

If a selection turns red, it has already been chosen. Do not edit others' content/selection and be mindful if multiple people are working on the sheet simultaneously.

2. Step 2:

Use one of these sites to playtest and analyze your game:

- [Free 80s Arcade](#)
- [AARP Atari Games](#)
- [Keystone Kapers](#)
- [Triplets and Us](#)

If none of these work, use an alternative close to the original game.

3. Step 3:

Analyze and research your chosen game. Collect resources and include them in your responses for related sections.

4. Step 4:

Save the worksheet, export as a PDF, and upload it to the mentioned branch on GitHub. Create a pull request, merge it to main, and upload the PDF to Canvas.

Section #1: (150 pts.) Game Overview

Progress: 100%

⇒ Task #1 (50 pts.) - Game Details - Note the Game's title, developer, publisher, platform, genre, and release date

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

Title: Haunted House

Developer: Programmed by James Andreasen

Publisher: Atari, Inc.

Platform: Atari 2600

Genre: Action-Adventure / Survival Horror

Release Date: February 1982



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⇒ Task #2 (50 pts.) - History and Industry - Note the historical context of the game's release and its place in the industry

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

Haunted House was released during a strong period for Atari, just before crash of 1983. The game was developed entirely by a single programmer, James Andreasen, a University of Colorado graduate working as a software engineer at Atari. This was the norm during that era as most games were created by individual programmers rather than large teams.



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⇒ Task #3 (50 pts.) - Compare the game to similar games of the time

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

The Haunted House game drew inspiration from Atari's own Adventure, which established the template for action adventure games on the 2600. Both games feature maze like environments, item collection limited to one object at a time, and a clear end goal. However Haunted House differentiated itself through its horror atmosphere and the innovative darkness mechanic. While Adventure used bright colors and featured enemies that players jokingly called ducks, Haunted House embraced its horror theme with a dark screen, glowing enemies, and sounds meant to unsettle players.



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Section #2: (2 pts.) Gameplay Mechanics And Level Design

Progress: 100%

⇒ Task #1 (1 pt.) - Core gameplay mechanics and how they shape the player's experience

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

The player controls a character represented only by a pair of glowing eyes navigating a pitch black, four story mansion.

Primary mechanics:

Match Lighting: The mansion is completely dark. Player press the fire button to light a match which give light a small circular area around them. Matches are unlimited but temporary.

Item Collection: Players carry only one item at a time. Touching a new item automatically swaps it with whatever you're holding.

Enemy Avoidance: There are three types of enemy roaming in the mansion and any contact with any enemy causes the player to lose one of nine lives.



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⇒ Task #2 (1 pt.) - Level design and how it affects gameplay

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

The mansion consists of 24 rooms across four floors with six rooms per floor. Each floor is color coded and the current floor number displays on screen.



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Section #3: (150 pts.) Graphic And Audio Design

Progress: 100%

⇒ Task #1 (75 pts.) - Game's visual appearance, artistic choices, and how they contribute to the experience

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

Your Response:

Haunted House features intentionally minimalist graphics that serve the horror atmosphere. The screen is almost entirely black and the player is depicted as just two floating eyes. The color palette changes with each floor, providing visual feedback about location. The eyes of the character notably track movement direction and when the player loses a life, they spin wildly.



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⇒ Task #2 (75 pts.) - Sound design, including music and sound effects, and their impact on the game

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

Sound design in Haunted House compensates for graphical limitations and creates much of the game's atmosphere. Andreasen worked with footsteps, stairway music, door sounds, wind, wall collisions and lighting. Players learn to hear the sounds to navigate and detect threats.



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Section #4: (150 pts.) Narrative And Storytelling

Progress: 100%

⇒ Task #1 (75 pts.) - Narrative structure, main plot points, and setting

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

Within the game, there is no context on story unless you read it entirely through the instruction manual.

The setting is the fictional town of Spirit Bay and the condemned mansion of the late Zachary Graves. Zachary Graves was a mean reclusive old man who spent his life brooding in his decaying mansion. After his death, the house was condemned. Townspeople believe Graves knew the location of a magic urn which is a family heirloom of Spirit Bay's founding family. The player enters the mansion to recover the three urn pieces and escape. The manual warns of flickering lights, eerie sounds, and shadow sightings reported by neighbors.



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⇒ Task #2 (75 pts.) - Character development and how it integrates with gameplay

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

Character development in the traditional sense does not exist in Haunted House. The character has no name, dialogue or even a backstory. Just a foolish soul entering the mansion. However the game creates character through its mechanics such as the eyes representing the player as you have been reduced to your most basic sense in an environment designed to deny it.



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Section #5: (150 pts.) Impact And Reception

Progress: 100%

⇒ Task #1 (75 pts.) - Critical and player reception, including reviews and feedback

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

It appears to receive largely positive reviews. A video game magazine called Electronic Games called it as one of the most intriguing and novel video game cartridges to appear in some time, praising its atmosphere as superior to Adventure and rating its audio and visuals as excellent. Though they did find the scoring system somewhat difficult to understand.



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⇒ Task #2 (75 pts.) - Game's impact on the gaming industry and its cultural significance

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

Haunted House holds an important place in gaming history as a possible origin point for the survival horror genre. Haunted House demonstrated that video games could create fear and tension, not just action and excitement. The game also pioneered player controlled scrolling between large visual spaces.



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Section #6: (2 pts.) Reflection

Progress: 100%

⇒ Task #1 (1 pt.) - Was the game "fun"? What made it fun or not?

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

This is complicated to answer honestly. My experience with Haunted House was defined largely by frustration with the controls and lack of clear instructions in the emulator I used. I could see the eyes on screen and could tell something is happening but I had no idea what the controls were. Once I understood the keys to move, light matches and to actually start the game, the experience was okay. I find it to be an interesting experience? Though I didn't really find it that fun as I still felt frustrated with figuring it all out.



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⇒ Task #2 (1 pt.) - Reflection on the learning experience and ease of research

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

Researching Haunted House was easier than playing it since at least the internet still works and I understand how to use it. Information about the game's development, reception, and historical significance is well documented across retrospective articles and archived reviews. The original manual is available online which when I found it it got me even more annoyed but also confused on the backstory and why it is on the manual.



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