



**GAMES +  
LEARNING +  
SOCIETY**

# GAME DESIGN CHALLENGE

## GLS:\Game\_Design\_Challenge\

The Games+Learning+Society Center is calling all aspiring game designers to prove themselves in a challenge of skills, smarts, and creativity! We are looking for primary and secondary school (K-12) student teams to design and build their very own game. Participants may use any game design software they are comfortable with – Kodu, Scratch, Game Maker, or even Python or Java.

## GLS:\Game\_Design\_Challenge\Guidelines\

The theme for the contest is recycling – what that means is up to you. You could make a game about recycling paper, or robot parts. You could make a game about driving recycling trucks. You could even make a game about recycling older game mechanics from other games that you like. We'll let you pick how you use recycling in your game. However, your final game must meet the ESRB's "Everyone" rating. Details for that rating can be found at ([http://www.esrb.org/ratings/ratings\\_guide.jsp](http://www.esrb.org/ratings/ratings_guide.jsp)). Teams will also require an adult sponsor – a teacher, parent, or community leader, who will work with the game design team and correspond with the contest organizers.

## GLS:\Game\_Design\_Challenge\Entry\

To enter, complete the entry form included with this document by **Thursday, July 31**. The entry form is a fillable .pdf – your responses will be saved automatically and sent to us. Also included in this document is a “design doc” template. The design doc is a record of the planning, choices, and decisions that you have made in creating your game. You will be required to send a copy of your design doc by the end of week two of the contest, **Friday, August 15**, as well as with your final

**GLS:\Game\_Design\_Challenge\Submissions>\_**

Your finalized game design doc will be due to

*submissions@learninggamesnetwork.org* by 11:59pm on **Sunday, August 31**.

Your game will also be due at this date and time to a Dropbox account that will be set up for all contest entrants – the game files will likely be too big to email.

An expert team of game designers, artists, programmers, and researchers will evaluate each game, and announce winners by **the end of September**. Teams are strongly encouraged to submit their games even if they are unfinished – judging will focus primarily on the quality of planning and execution found in the design docs. Prizes for winning teams are as follows:

## 1ST PLACE

**\$50 PER TEAM MEMBER  
\$200 FOR THE SPONSOR'S SITE**

## 2ND PLACE

**\$30 PER TEAM MEMBER  
\$150 FOR THE SPONSOR'S SITE**

## 3RD PLACE

**\$20 PER TEAM MEMBER  
\$100 FOR THE SPONSOR'S SITE**

**GLS:\Game\_Design\_Challenge\FAQs>\_**

**Q: Who can be a sponsor?**

**A:** Any adult can be a sponsor. Sponsors will be responsible for checking in with the game design team, helping to answer questions and keep work going smoothly, and corresponding with the contest organizers in case of any problems. For prize-winning sponsors who are not faculty in a school district or community service program, we strongly encourage donating the “sponsor site” award to one of these groups.

**Q: Do I need to know how to program to enter?**

**A:** No! There are plenty of free and easy to use game creation tools that you can use to design your own game - Kodu and Scratch are two of the programs that we would recommend. Most of the judging for the contest will concern the ideas and planning in the game design doc, it isn't necessary to program your own complete game in order to win.

**Q: Can students work on their own, or does the work have to be done in a class?**

**A:** No class required! Students can work on their own or in groups at home, or as part of an existing game design or programming club at your site.

**Q: Where can I find game design tools for my kids to use?**

**A:** We suggest using any of the following free tools:

**Kodu** - <http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/details.aspx?id=10056>

**Scratch** - [http://scratch.mit.edu/scratch\\_1.4/](http://scratch.mit.edu/scratch_1.4/)

**Alice 3** - [http://www.alice.org/index.php?page=downloads/download\\_alice3.1](http://www.alice.org/index.php?page=downloads/download_alice3.1)

**Q: I have other questions, who can I contact?**

**A:** You can contact the contest organizers, **Gabriella Anton** ([gabby.anton@gmail.com](mailto:gabby.anton@gmail.com)), or **Stefan Slater** ([slater.research@gmail.com](mailto:slater.research@gmail.com)) with any questions that you have or problems that you run into during the contest.



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#### **GLS:\Game\_Design\_Challenge\Design\_Doc\_Template>\_**

Below is a template that you can use for your game design document, or **GDD**. Your GDD is due halfway through the contest, on August 1, and due again with your final submission. The purpose of the GDD is twofold. First, it provides your audience with an easy to understand summary of all the details of your game. Second, it gives your design team a reference point during the game design process. We encourage you to develop your own GDD and change and modify it frequently. Remember – this is primarily what your game will be judged on!

#### **ROUND 1 - Overview and Description**

Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper or in an electronic document.

**Introduction:** Describe your game like you would describe it to a friend. Be as clear and as brief as possible, while making sure you explain your ideas.

**Gameplay:** What will players do in the game? Will they run, or walk, or drive, or fly? Will there be puzzles? How do the puzzles work? Are there levels? Experience points? What are the verbs in the game?

**Audio and Graphics:** Will the game have pixel graphics, or realistic ones? Will it look like Minecraft? Will there be music and sound effects? What kinds?

**Basic Plot:** Describe the basic plot and story of your game, if it has one (and it's okay if it doesn't). What happens in the game? Who are the main characters? What happens as the story progresses?

## ROUND 2 - Details

**Gameplay:** On a separate sheet of paper or document, explain the path that the player takes through the game in detail. For example, in *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*, the player first sees a cutscene narration, followed by a guided action sequence, before stepping into the game world to explore freely. Focus on what the player will experience, and in what order these experiences should occur. **Save this work and submit it as part of your GDD.**

**Audio:** On a separate sheet of paper or document, list all of the audio assets your game will need. Will there be separate music for the menu screens? Will boss fights get their own music? What sound effects will you need – sound effects for water, or footsteps, or ambient noise? **Save this work and submit it as part of your GDD.**

**Graphics:** On a separate sheet of paper or document, list all of the graphics assets your game will need. What are all of the things that the player will need to see in the game? A common approach is to use sprites. For example, in the Mario games, there are many sprites. Mario is a sprite, as well as Goombas and Koopa Troopas. There are also sprites for blocks and powerup mushrooms as well. **Save this work and submit it as part of your GDD.**

**Project Timeline:** On a separate sheet of paper or document, detail how long it will take you to make your game. How much time will you need to spend writing, drawing, or coding, and who will do what? You may find it helpful to assign roles to team members, or make set periods of time where everyone on your team gets together to work on the same thing. **Save this work and submit it as part of your GDD.**

Keep your GDD current as you work on your game. Take notes, cross things off, add things, make doodles, whatever you and your team may find helpful. You should NOT have to update your GDD before you submit your game – the GDD is a living, changing record of the path your game has taken through development, and if you work closely with it you should not have to do any extra work to submit it once it is created.



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# GAME DESIGN CHALLENGE

**GLS:\Game\_Design\_Challenge\Entry\_Form>**

Please fill in the following questions to the best of your ability. Necessary fields are marked with an asterisk (\*). When you are done, save this file and email it to [submissions@learninggamesnetwork.org](mailto:submissions@learninggamesnetwork.org).

\*SUPERVISOR NAME:

\*SUPERVISOR EMAIL:

SITE NAME:

\*SITE ADDRESS:

\*CITY:  \*STATE:  \*ZIP:

\*COUNTRY:

\*TEAM MEMBER 1:

TEAM MEMBER 2:

TEAM MEMBER 3:

TEAM MEMBER 4:

TEAM MEMBER 5:

TEAM MEMBER 6: