



Composition Quest Log

Writing Prompts to Level Up Your Game Music (Level 1)

Print this out, hang it up, and physically check off each Quest that you complete. Use these prompts to break out of your comfort zone and challenge yourself to try new things - you never know what you might come up with next!

- ☐ **The Forgotten Beats:** Write a melody that starts on beat 2 or 3. Most melodies start on the first beat of the measure, but starting on beat 2 or 3 can create a neat sense of anticipation or surprise.
- ☐ **A Minor Challenge:** Compose a piece in a minor key. It doesn't have to be any more complicated than writing a piece in a Major key, and you should be comfortable with both.
- ☐ **Compounding the Problem:** Use a Compound Meter (time signature) - like 5/4, 9/8, or 12/8. You don't hear these very often, but they can bring a strong sense of rhythm to your writing and force you to come up with new rhythmic ideas. See for an explanation of Compound Meters.
- ☐ **A Pirate's Life for Me:** Compose a Piratey-sounding jig. Everyone loves a good jig.
- ☐ **Game Over:** Create an awesome 'Game Over' theme that's less than 10 seconds in length. Any longer would just be rubbing it in.
- ☐ **The Julie Andrews:** Use a human voice to sing the melody of at least an entire section (not necessarily an entire track). No lyrics required - 'Oohs' and 'Ahs' can be very effective!
- ☐ **Kickin' it Old School:** Make a chiptune track! Remember your roots and bring back some of that 8-bit flavor.
- ☐ **Something Borrowed:** Use at least one Borrowed Chord in one of your compositions. Borrowed chords give you new and exciting options for harmonizing your melodies. See the analysis of Final Fantasy VII's main theme at vgmacademy.com/ff7 for an explanation.
- ☐ **If It Ain't Got That Swing:** Write a piece that uses a swung beat. Dancing along encouraged, but not required.
- ☐ **Something Strange & Wonderful:** Write a melody using an instrument you've never used before whose name you aren't even 100% sure how to pronounce. Did you know there's an instrument called a "Crwth?" Those 11th-century Welsh musicians really knew how to rock. Good luck finding a sample library with THAT included.
- ☐ **Music Box:** Compose a piece for a music box, which may also be called a "lamellophone," "linguaphone," or "thumb piano," in sample libraries. Most multi-voice keyboards have an onboard music-box-sounding instrument.
- ☐ **Make it Modulate:** Change keys in the middle of a composition, using any form of modulation you'd like. If the piece is meant to loop, don't forget that you'll have to modulate back to the original key!

Complete a Quest? Get stuck? Share your progress on Twitter with @VGMAcademy!