

Unit 7 Become a computer games programmer

Teacher's notes

Preparation

Before you use this lesson plan:

- Make one copy of each worksheet per student.
- Visit the proposed websites to check they are operational.

Warmers

Short (5 minutes)

Ask the students whether they ever play computer games. Ask them whether they have ever wanted to be involved in creating video games. If yes, what do they think they would need to do to fulfil that ambition?

Long (10 – 15 minutes)

Divide the group into pairs and ask them to brainstorm the type of jobs they would expect to find in the production department of a computer games company. Collect any ideas and write them on the board. Ask the students to list the responsibilities of each job.

Job	Responsibilities
Project manager	Co-ordinate all the different elements of the project, keep to budgets and deadlines
Creative director	Oversee all creative elements, e.g. look, feel, sound, etc.
Game designer	Design the game and all its major elements, e.g. rules, story, characters, etc.
Programmer	Design and write the computer code
Artist	Create visual elements
Animator	Design how characters and other elements of the game move
Audio engineer	Create the soundtrack for the game
Games tester	Test and suggest improvements or changes

Please note: the list above is partial and the description very brief. If you or any of your students would like more information, visit the website below.

<http://www.skillset.org/games/careers/profiles>

Set the scene

(5 minutes)

Ask the students to read the *situation*. Explain they are going to research one of the options then compare their findings with someone who has researched the other.

Present the tasks

(5 minutes)

Explain the procedure:

- 1 Divide into small groups or pairs. Allocate either Derby University or the Game Institute to each group or pair.
- 2 Use the website to research and collect information; fill in the table.
- 3 Compare findings in order to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each one.

Do the tasks

Research (20 minutes)

- If computers are available, allocate one to each small group or pair and let the students do their research.
- If computers are not available, set the research as homework to be performed at home or during free time at work. Emphasise to the students that they do not need to spend more than about 20 minutes collecting information.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

After the research, split up the research groups into pairs, ensuring that in each pair one student has researched the Game institute and one the University of Derby. The students compare their findings and list what they think are the advantages and disadvantages of the two training options. Finally, count up who would prefer to do the university course and who would prefer the online option.

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Aims

- talking about university and training courses
- comparing advantages and disadvantages

Situation

You have decided that you want to work as a programmer in the computer games industry. This is not just because you love computer games and want to be involved in producing them, but also because it is a growing industry with good salaries. In order to receive the training and qualifications you need, you have two choices: attend a university course, or study independently using online distance learning.

Tasks

- 1 You are going to research options for learning to become a games programmer on the Web.
- 2 You are going to compare the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

Task 1 – the research

The websites below will give you information about training for games programmers. Your teacher will tell you which one to use.

Explore the website to find out about facilities and resources, the course content, the length of the course and tuition fees (costs). Check the testimonials from past students.

University of Derby

<http://www.derby.ac.uk/games>

Game Institute

<http://www.gameinstitute.com>

Fill in the table.

Name of institution	
Length of course	
Course content	
Facilities and resources	
Cost	
Testimonials	

Task 2 – the discussion

Work with a partner who has researched the other training option. List the advantages and disadvantages of each one. Decide which one you would choose, and report back to the class.

Advantages	Disadvantages
University of Derby	
Game Institute	