

Game Creation Guide

Getting Started



Step 1: Pick your team

The first step you should take is deciding whether you want to work solo or with others. Either way is fine!

If you do want to work with others, it can be helpful to team up with people who have skills that complement yours – for example, if you like to write code but don't enjoy making art, you might want to find an artist and work together with them.



Step 2: Think up an idea

The next step is to decide on a game idea that you want to make. Try to go for something small and simple to begin with, so that you won't get too overwhelmed while you're still learning.

It also helps to draw out your idea on paper first and try to visualize how it will work before you jump right in to trying to build it. A few questions to keep in mind while working on your idea are:

- How does the player control the game?
- What is the goal that the player is trying to achieve?
- What are the challenges the player must overcome to reach their goal?



Step 3: Choose a game making tool to use

Once you have settled on an idea, it's time to select which tool you'll use to bring it to life! If you're using a Windows machine, I strongly recommend Construct 2 because the free version is simple, versatile and intuitive. You can download the free edition of Construct 2 at scirra.com.

The main downside of Construct 2 is that it only runs on Windows. If you are using a Mac, or if you just want to explore what other tools are available, visit the website sortingh.at for some more detailed advice on what tools are best to use based on the specific game idea you have in mind.



Step 4: Learn the basics of your tool's interface

Once you have selected the tool you'll be using to create your game, you need to spend some time getting familiar with the interface and the basic features that the tool provides. A good place to start is by going through the beginner tutorial for the tool – for instance, the beginner's guide for Construct 2 is located at scirra.com/tutorials/37/beginners-guide-to-construct-2.

Another good way to practice using the interface for your tool is to take a look at any example projects that came with it. Try making some of your own modifications to these projects and see what happens – sometimes it's easier to learn by experimenting with an example project rather than starting from scratch.

Building Your Game



Step 1: Make a prototype

The first step in building your game is getting a functional prototype up and running. It doesn't need to look pretty just yet – instead, it's best to focus on getting the basic controls and game object behavior working first. Geometric shapes and other simple visual representations will often suffice for this stage of development.



Step 2: Playtest and refine your prototype

Once you have a basic prototype working, it's helpful to have other people test it out and give you some feedback. If players are struggling to understand how to play your prototype, ask them what they find confusing about it and then try to make some changes to improve the experience.

Don't worry if players don't fall in love with your game right away – prototypes are never perfect the first time around. The more you're able to make improvements and have people try them out, the better your prototype will become.



Step 3: Create and polish game assets

Once you are satisfied with the way your game feels to play, it's time to dive in and start creating some nice visual assets to replace the temporary art you used for the prototype. There are many different tools that you can use to create visual assets, but I suggest trying out GIMP, a free tool that has many of the same features as Photoshop. You can download it from gimp.org/downloads. Alternatively, you can also use art created by other people – you can find a list of sites that provide free art assets at pixelprospector.com/royalty-free-graphics/.

At some point, you'll also want to consider adding some audio assets to your game. You can easily generate sound effects using BFXR, a free tool which can be found at bfxr.net. If you have access to a microphone, you can also record and edit sounds using Audacity, another free tool that you can get from audacityteam.org.

Music can be a bit more tricky – Garage Band is a good option on Mac, while Windows has a variety of decent options. You can also find a variety of sites that offer free music and sounds at pixelprospector.com/the-big-list-of-royalty-free-music-and-sounds-free-edition/.



Step 4: Save, export and upload

Don't forget to save your project periodically as you work on it! When you're ready to share your game with the world (or just with your friends), there are numerous options for where you can host your game files. A few popular choices are [dropbox](https://www.dropbox.com), itch.io, [newgrounds.com](https://www.newgrounds.com) and [kongregate.com](https://www.kongregate.com). Each site has its own upload method, so you'll need to take a look and follow the instructions listed on the website you want to use. If you're using Construct 2, you can find some instructions about how to upload your games online here:

- scirra.com/tutorials/42/upload-your-game-to-dropbox
- scirra.com/tutorials/74/publishing-and-promoting-your-construct-2-game
- scirra.com/tutorials/655/tips-on-publishing-html5-games-to-the-web

Leveling Up



Additional resources

There are a number of websites that provide useful information and resources for continuing your game development journey. Here are a few that I recommend checking out:

- **gamesareforeveryone.com** – A hub with links to many useful resources for prospective game developers, that serves as a great starting point for learning
- **pixelprospector.com** – A huge compendium of resources, particularly lists of tools that are available for performing various tasks related to making games
- **opengameart.org** – A large collection of free art that you can use in your games
- **freesound.org** – A massive selection of free sound clips
- **itch.io** – An online platform for distributing your games and easily setting up a digital storefront
- **gdcvault.com** – A collection of videos from conference talks given by professional game developers on a wide variety of topics, many of which can be watched for free
- **gamasutra.com** – The most prominent website for professional game developers, including a wealth of articles and content about the art and business of making games
- **critical-distance.com** – A website that provides a weekly summary of some of the most interesting critical writing and online conversations about games and game creation
- **igda.org** – The website of the International Game Developers Association, the premier professional organization for game developers, which contains chapters all over the world including a local Albany chapter that holds free and open meetings on a monthly basis
- **techvalleygamespace.com** – Your source for getting involved with the local game development scene ;)