



I AM BLACK IN GAMING

Black in
Gaming
FOUNDATION



Big Byte Game Jam

Game Jam guidebook

We at Black in Gaming alongside our partner organization, The Melanated Game Kitchen, want to welcome you to our inaugural game jam event . This jam is many years of effort , desire, and passion in the making and your participation makes all of it possible.

We are asking game developers within our communities and beyond to come together to build teams , create games , and explore their passion for game development together.

Our goal throughout this event and this guide is to provide you with the support and tools to make the most of this game jam and we will have several events and opportunities to support that purpose. Be it mentoring and support from other industry professionals, links to free and cheap resources, team building and networking support or more we are here to make your game jam experience as fun and inviting as possible. If you have any suggestions or thoughts on how we can help improve your experience throughout the jam please reach out to us at blackgamingjam@gmail.com or within the Melanated Game Kitchen discord server.

Last but not least, let's have fun and we can't wait to see how you choose to express your genius !

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Where to Start?

One of the oldest and most intimidating questions for ANYONE beginning a new game project is “Where do we start?”. Do you start by visualizing characters and environments, writing your core character controller and game manager scripts, defining the audio identity through music styles and sound effects? No the answer is more boring, the best place to start when beginning your game is making a plan so that your team and project is given the best chance to succeed.

The Theme

Game Jam themes are a great place to put your team's interpretation around a central idea, there are lots of ways to interpret a theme so give yourself and your team a few days to sit with and discuss your ideas then come together and figure out how your game will explore the core messages and ideas behind the game jam theme.

[Theme information, readings & references](#)

The Roles

Another important aspect of any solid team is knowing who is responsible for what, who is writing for your game? Who is creating or sourcing sounds? Who is doing the programming or design? Who is creating art? Who is helping to keep track of tasks being done and organizing? Who will set up the itch.io page and submit your game? Even if you share the responsibilities for the most part it's always good to have someone to take ownership of a particular piece of your game as an area of focus to make sure that everything that needs to get done is done on time.

Schedules and Planning

Production Tool Recommendation - Game Jam Task Tracker

Communication. Knowing Who's Doing What. Production! - These are **Major Keys** to the success of any game, no matter how small.

YOU NEED A DESIGNATED PRODUCER!

(or some people on your team who are working together to do production.)

To help you with this, we're providing you with the [Game Jam Task Tracker](#), a production task tracking spreadsheet optimized for game jams to help your team be successful. (Thank you to Candace of Strange Scaffold for providing us with this template.)

How to Use: Make a copy of this template, add it to your team's google drive folder, and start filling it out with high level tasks for your game.

View and Copy the [Game Jam Task Tracker Here](#)

Contrary to what you might assume, Production and Communication are two of the most important areas for a game jam, especially one that lasts for multiple weeks AND is remote.

Finding a regular weekly meeting time is critical for your games success. We'd recommend meeting two to three times a week to discuss progress, issues, and changes that need to happen. Communication is going to be especially helpful especially towards the end as the deadline approaches and the importance of changes become more significant.

Game Jam advice

Know Your Goal

For many people finishing and submitting a game is the ultimate goal of a game jam but that's not everybody's goal. For some this is an opportunity to build work for their portfolio, for others this is a chance to explore a new role, for some people it's just the opportunity to work as a member of a team . Know your goal from the beginning , communicate that goal, and find ways to work together so that everyone involved has their goals for the Game Jam satisfied

Take Breaks

You will feel compelled to make the most of every second of this game jam experience but taking care of yourself and managing your health is a key part of any game developers life. Be sure to take small breaks often . Stretch, go for a walk, take a shower, get away from your game a bit so that you can come back focused and energized . Burn out destroys careers,don't be the the cause of your own burn out

Over Communicate

You've been working on something alone for a day or two and are nearing completion, you only want to reach out when your work is 100% done but then you discover a problem or worse when you think it's 100% done THEN you discover that there's a problem when you present your work to the team . It can be tempting to silo yourself away during development to focus but small brief check-ins can save your team lots of confusion and incompatible work . Communicating too much early will save you a lot of stress as your team prepares for submission where there isn't as much time to problem solve.

Add Buffer Time

Whether experienced or a newcomer, time estimates for game work are always tricky , make sure any time estimates you give that you add a little extra time to your estimate to fix problems or add additional polish if everything is in a great place. It's better to overestimate and finish early in a time estimate than it is to underestimate and end up playing catch up on other parts of the game.

Watch your Licenses

AI is everywhere , Open Source tools are available, and free use items can speed up development of your project but be careful to ensure everything you use in your project can be claimed to be owned by you and your team.. Ideally you want to use tools that are listed under the [Creative commons 0 License](#) which waives the legal liability and ownership of the content from the original creator. Sometimes creators also list their work under the [Attribution License](#) which tends to mean you can use and modify their work but you just have to make sure to credit them somewhere for it (typically in your game credits) . Overall just be mindful of who owns the content that exists in your game whether that's code, art, audio ,etc.

Don't reinvent the wheel

You didn't join this game jam to create a game that we've all already seen nor do we want you to BUT game development is filled with hundreds of thousands of titles, many of which may have explored similar styles, characters, gameplay, concepts, and overall lessons that you and your team may be considering now. Do yourself a favor and go play similar games (set a time limit), watch gameplay , check out reviews, and look for games with similar gameplay and core concepts in how they play . Allow yourself to learn what does and doesn't work or at least play

and experience why systems don't work before you lock in on your game and how you want it to play . 3 hours of research can save you days of walking down a dead end.

Project Timeline Check List

One month sounds like A LOT of time but it's really not. Within this month we're asking you to build a team , conceive a game idea, plan out its development, do the actual development work, playtest, create a store page for it, and upload your final submission. Along the way you will likely encounter technical issues, creative differences, and just deal with the realities of life. This rough checklist is here to help you keep a pulse on how your project is progressing, if things are starting to lag, cut content and reduce scope if your goal is to submit the project for judging.

Here's a step-by-step overview:

1. Decide main game mechanics, decide art style, complete 95% of game's design (the fewer game mechanics, the easier to complete your game)
2. Complete overall code architecture, i.e. what are your objects/scripts, how will they communicate, etc.
3. Complete main game mechanics
4. Complete 1 fully featured "level"
5. Have a fully playable game. No more new features, focus on bugs and polishing.

Before Jam

- Begin downloading and getting to know tools and signing up for software needed to deliver this project (Game engines, Project Planning, audio creation, Art creation, Source control etc.)

Week 1

- Build your team and set roles/ expectations
- Figure out how you will work within the theme and set your design pillars
- Define your Core Loop and figure out what one game loop (whether it's a level or timed round) of your game should look like by the end of this week

Week 2

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- Fail Fast , build and explore the look ,feel, and sound of your game try to form its core identity
 - Begin implementing your game ideas in engine

Week 3

- Time to focus on what is working well for your project and begin cutting ideas that aren't working as well , begin focusing on stabilizing and solidifying core features
- Begin creating test builds of your game and playtesting on the hardware you expect the final version to run on and expect users to play on.
- Begin setting up your Itch.io page for your project and looking over Final submission needs

Week 4

- Cut loose ends or features that aren't working well and focus on polishing and adding “juice” to the aspects of your game that do work well
- Get your team members names and setup for the credits
- Begin uploading screenshots of final game , listing final project description and details
- Begin moving towards your final submission build the build which will ultimately be judged and played by the community
- Make sure to submit your final project before the deadline

Final submission Check List

Create Jam submission game page on Itch.io Prepare screenshots project description,

- Create game submission page on Itch.io learn more [here](#)
- Write Project description for your game
- Upload Screenshots and cover art for your game project
- Playtest and re-test your final build several times
- Upload your final build and make sure you have all the appropriate platforms and field info appropriately filled out.
- **IMPORTANT** After submitting your build and ensuring your project is ready go to the main Game Jam page and press submit which should allow you the opportunity to submit your project to our game jam page. **THIS STEP IS CRITICAL** otherwise your game won't be counted in the official game jam judging phase.
- **BONUS:** Celebrate the fact that you completed a game and take a few days to relax, schedule some time to come together as a team and do a post-mortem . A post-mortem is a **BLAME-FREE** to discuss your shared experience as a team on the project, what worked

well, what didn't work , what would you have changed? What cuts had to be made to scope ? The Post- mortem is a great opportunity to learn and tie a bow on all the excellent work you've done for this event.

Examples : <https://itch.io/devlogs/most-popular/games/postmortems>

RESOURCES

Here we will place a few of our favorite and most recommended resources to aid in developing your game project.

****Note: Many of these resources are compiled by the Melanated Game Kitchen.***

Game Design

Tools to help you plan out your game

- [GDD Template \(One page\)](#)
- Level Design Book - online compilation of level design resources and tools
<https://book.leveldesignbook.com/>
- Game Design Template #1:
<https://www.slideshare.net/AntoineTaly/game-design-document-template-for-serious-games>
- Game Design Wiki - A Collection of Resources for Game Designers (by Rosa Carbo-Mascarell):
<https://rosacarbo.notion.site/Game-design-wiki-6902c5dc9d1242c9a70822f13e6c76b3>

Game Engines

Tools to help you build your game

- [Construct 3](#)
- [Game Maker](#)
- [Godot](#)
- [Unity](#)
- [Unreal Engine](#)
- Moving from Unity to Unreal - <https://impromptugames.com/movingtounreal.html>

Programming

Tools to help you write The logic behind your game

- Vince's playlist of Unity dev tutorials and tips - https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLATpRc_0DG51JcJOuE6WgkpC23KDanKtK
- Game Programming Patterns - <https://gameprogrammingpatterns.com/contents.html>
- 3D Math Primer for Graphics and Game Development - <https://gamemath.com/>

Art Creation

Tools to help you create the look of your game

2D Tools

- [GIMP](#)
- [Sketchbook](#)
- [Krita](#)
- [Piskel](#)
- [Ink Scape](#)
- Pixel Art Color palettes - <https://lospec.com/palette-list>

3D Tools

- [Blender](#)
- [Tinkercad](#)
- [Magica Voxel](#)
- [SculptGL](#)
- [Figuro](#)

Visual Effects

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- VFX references + tutorials in substance: <https://youtube.com/c/1MaFX> (Require creative attribution)

Audio Creation

Tools to help you create your games audio

- [Audacity](#)
- [Soundbox](#)
- [sfxr](#) (SFX Generator)
- [Chiptone](#) (SFX)
- [Bosca Ceoil](#) (Music Composition)
- [BeepBox](#) (Music)

Narrative design

Tools to help you write your game story

- [Articy](#) - a visual database to keep track of all your storylines, characters, and variables in one place.
- [Arcweave](#) -Arcweave is an accessible, collaborative tool empowering creators of interactive experiences to design, iterate, and integrate their game and narrative content.
- [Game Narrative Resources \(sashakirlee.com\)](#) - This is a curated collection of resources for narrative designers and game writers
- [Game Narrative Resources Spreadsheet](#) by Adanna Nedd (Spirit Swap, KissU) - Massive list of resources and tools for narrative designers. Possibly a bit more black and queer oriented too.
- Yarn Spinner - tool for writing game dialogue. Integration with Unity <https://yarnspinner.dev/>
- Celtx - Film and game industry standard script writing software. <https://www.celtx.com/>
- Ink - Popular and robust game writing tool + scripting language.

<https://www.inklestudios.com/ink/>

[Dialogic](#) - Narrative scripting and dialogue tool for Godot Engine.

- [Twine](#) - Branching narrative tool + interactive fiction engine. [The Twine Grimoire is a great resource](#). (added by MagzThaWriter, Maggie)
- [Renpy](#) - Popular visual novel engine. Python-based code. (added by MagzThaWriter, Maggie)
- Scrivener - full featured writing software.
<https://www.literatureandlatte.com/scrivener/overview>

Fonts

- [BitFontMaker2](#) (Font Creation)
- [Fontsource](#)
- [Font Squirrel](#)
- [Google Fonts](#)

Collaborative spaces to brainstorm

Places to share images, notes, and references

- [Figma](#)
- [Notion](#)
- [Miro](#)

Project / Task Management (Production tools)

Tools to help you manage / track the progress of your games creation

- [Trello](#)
- [Jira](#)
- [Notion](#)
- [Game Jam Task Tracker Spreadsheet](#) (Simple!) -
- Game Jam Tello Board Template (Production/Project Management) -
<https://trello.com/invite/b/asABFFhx/ATTI261d7fdc864d5b2ef3bc490aab5434d9047C6753/game-jam-template-board>

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- Docsify - <https://docsify.js.org/#/awesome> - Github based wiki generator

For Itch.iuo

- Easy Releasey (itch.io page designer) - <https://jannikboysen.itch.io/easy-releasey>

Source / Version control

Tools to help you work as a team on a single project

- [Git Hub](#)
- [Unity version Control](#)
- [Git with Unreal Engine 5 - An introduction \(anchorpoint.app\)](#) + Azure DevOps (5 users for free!) - Simplest setup

Asset Stores

When you need a little help to make a big impact

- [Unity Asset Store](#)
- [Unreal Market Place](#)
- [Godot Asset Library](#)
- [Game Maker Marketplace](#)
- [Construct Game Asset Store](#)

Youtube University

Videos to teach , inspire, and help you with various parts of the development process

- [How to quickly get ideas in game jams](#)
- [Beginners Guide to Game Jams \(Firsthand perspectives\)](#)
- [29 Game Jam Tips !](#)

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- [5 Simple game Trailer Templates](#)
 - [The Art of making Trailers](#)
 - [No Clip \(game development documentaries\)](#)
 - [Game Developer Conference \(game development presentations\)](#)
 - [Game Makers Toolkit \(game development lesson deep dives\)](#)
 - Helpful Dev Tips Playlist by Vince (MGK Member) - https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLATpRc_0DG51JcJOuE6WgkpC23KDanKtK
 - Prototyping and Iteration on Gunpoint by Tom Francis - <https://youtu.be/aXTOUNzNo64>
 - Brackey's How to Game Jam Guide - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_NA_yTXOOQ&t=5s

Free to use Assets

Free legally safe assets for you to use in your project

(Make sure to look for creative commons 0 or attribution licenses)

- **Music**
 - [Freesound.org](#)
 - [Free PD \(music\)](#)
 - [Kenney.nl](#)
 - Free SFX Resource Spreadsheet (via Presley Hynes): https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UEY8T8CII2XHDnALzWf_x4MZGKoHPNYHlf2CqStSGWQ/edit?usp=drivesdk (Require creative attribution)
 - MetaSounds Tutorials: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLH7KomA3r8D2yknyJb53HzAmnmsOb5wCr> (Require creative attribution)
 - Free Music Archive (Music) - <https://freemusicarchive.org/>
 - Ramses B Free Music Playlist (Electronic/Piano/Chillstep/Melodic/) - <https://soundcloud.com/ramesesb/sets/no-copyright-free-to-use>
 - Motion Array - royalty free music for videos - <https://motionarray.com/learn/royalty-free-music/>
- **Art**
 - [Itch.io Creative Commons 0 Asset Library](#)
 - [r/GameAssets](#)
 - [Craftpix.net](#)
 - [Kenney.nl](#)
 - Tiny Tools (More!) - <https://tinytools.directory/>

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- [Game Dev Market](#)
 - [Pixabay](#)
 - <https://game-icons.net/>
 - <https://www.textures.com/>
 - Poly.pizza (3D) - <https://poly.pizza/>
 - Auto Rig (3D) - <https://github.com/Msicuro/SPYDR> (by Mattia Sicuro) still in progress
 - 2d black hair brushes - <https://byvegalia.gumroad.com/> ; <https://www.etsy.com/shop/ByVegalia>
 - Black centered 2D portrait character creator - https://picrew.me/image_maker/1706331
 - Blockbench (3D) - Low poly 3D model and animator editor. Web-app available too. <https://www.blockbench.net/>

Cultural Resources

Cultural inspiration to help power your games creativity

(**Make sure to look for creative commons 0 or attribution licenses**)

- Jamaican Patwah (Patois) Translator/Dictionary - <https://jamaicanpatwah.com/>
- African Studies Online Courses/Community - <https://www.knarrative.com/>
 - Youtube Videos from classes: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpWkZIGpEty98EGT_WiRHAQ/videos
- African History Project - <https://africanhistoryproject.org/>
- <https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/trans-atlantic-food-migration-the-african-culinary-influence-on-the-cuisine-of-the-americas/>
- <https://www.blackculinaryhistory.com/episode-1> - Website and Resource tracking Black Food Ways
- Gullah Food Traditions - <https://youtu.be/bvUUgNFYVNk?si=HRRlCot8EI5CVx7P>
- Collard Green History - <https://www.ghostsavannah.com/2016/04/history-of-collard-greens/>

Glossary of terms

Core Loop - Think about what one successful sequence in playing your game looks like . A Loop could be completing a single dungeon , one level , finishing one match in a sports game or first Person Shooter, completing a shift in a cooking game, or a single run in a rogue-like game . The

loop represents the repeatable sequence that defines your players' core game experience.

References: <https://youtu.be/B2Ut-LH8ai8?si=47O1ybmHqw0GMXHy>

Source Control - How do large teams of hundreds work on the same project without destroying each others work everyday ? They use tools called source control, online repositories for project data that manage a shared project across dozens or even hundreds of users.

References: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHA22QcR-bM>

Project / Task management - Your game is a project and over the next month you will shape it from just an idea into a playable experience that you can share with dozens, hundreds, thousands, or potentially even more players. In order to make it possible the work of structuring your development process is critical. Who does the work ? When should the work be done ? Is anyone else dependent on the work (programmer will need to finish character controller before Artist can see how their animations look in-engine)

References: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8m859pxcyLY>

Builds - You've been working on your game for 3 weeks and it works flawlessly within the game engine, unfortunately your players and our judges can't and won't download your game engine source files to enjoy the experience, instead we'll need you to export a build. Builds are standalone files uploaded to an environment so that players can enjoy your game on their own machines. Be it in a browser window, a downloadable app, or a project loaded from a disc. Making builds early and often allows you to make sure the game works well on the systems of your players. Typically whatever game engine you are working with will have information on how to begin creating an exportable build file of your project and the steps needed to make sure the game starts in the correct way and all the intended levels are accessible.

Post-Mortem - You've finished the game, everything is submitted and in the quiet moments you think back on everything you've experienced, learned, and worked through to get this game out in a months time. The many meetings, conversations, plans, designs, and concepts explored and abandoned which lead to this end-result. Post-mortems act as an opportunity to collect and share all the thoughts and experiences working on this projects produced. The goal isn't to accuse or blame teammates or yourself but to take a moment and share all the lessons working

together on this project taught you.

References: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6375cSINW0>