

Creating characters for video games 1

Previous compulsory steps / Prior students' knowledge	Creating the story
Learning objectives	Learning how to create characters for video games
Subjects	Literature/Reading, Arts, Writing, English as a Foreign Language
Recommended Age (10 – 14) or (15 - 18)	10 - 14
Material needed	Videos and images of characters, RPG maker or online creators for creating the characters
Sequence duration	45 – 60 minutes
Individual or group activity	Individual activity
Expected production	Creation of characters
Skills developed (after learning objectives)	Creativity, critical thinking
Price range of the game (<20€, 20-40€, >40€)	RPG Maker MV – 73,99 €, or free if you use free online tools such as Hero Forge
Extension / differentiation activities (at the end of the sequence)	Creating the dialogues; creating the graphic design, creating the animation; creating the sound; creating the video game

Step by step: how to implement the sequence

In this sequence, students can create their characters with the use of different online creators or software such as RPG Maker MV (73,99€ on Steam, or free trial for 30 days) or free online tools as: [Hero Forge](#) or [MetaHuman Creator](#)

- **Step 1 – Showing different characters in video games (10 minutes)**

As an inspiration, show how different characters are created in different video games. During this step, it is important to mention the importance of characters in video games and show how they are developed in different games. Ask the student to pay attention to the character's look, how it acts around others and what are the main characteristics. For this step, different videos and images are needed to show various characters to the students.

Here are some examples of different characters in video games:

- Tails (Sonic and the Hedgehog series)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eV9hyxr7N58> (6:30; 7:00 – 7:30; 8:37; 10:11 - 11:00)
- Jak and Daxter: Trailer - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DK4jDHCY6Ns>
- Jimmy Hopkins (The Bully) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X4MzRIOiTTU>
(useful for showing relationships between characters, until 1:02)
- Young Link (Zelda) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBLdANXkeZg>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_hbcnEQmU0 (5:58 – 6:08, 6:30 – 6:50, 7:16 – 7:25)

- **Step 2 – Brainstorming and developing the backstory (10 minutes)**

This step is crucial before defining your characters and giving them certain characteristics. Writing a story beforehand helps the students in creating the characters. This does not mean that the complete story needs to be written before, but it will help to create the history of a character, its characteristics and relationships between characters.

Questions to guide this step:

- What kind of journey will characters undertake?
- How will this affect them and the other characters? How will the character develop throughout the game?

- **Step 3 – Define character's characteristics (5 minutes)**

Create a list of your character's characteristics to define their personality – what is the name of the character? how old is the character? What is their mission? Skills? Special powers? What does the character like to do? What are their personality traits? You can decide whether you want to already give students some choices or whether you prefer leaving it up to their imagination and creativity.

Here is a short list of personality traits to serve as an inspiration: adventurous, funny, helpful, caring, sensitive, charming, slow, fast, cheerful, energetic, colourful, flexible, protective, aggressive, cute, mystical, quiet, stubborn, cold, impulsive, lazy, messy, creative, uncreative...

- **Step 4 – Relationships with other characters (5 minutes)**

Following the main characteristics of the character, relationships with other character should be defined. This step helps to define who the character is and how they react to the others.

The most important questions here are: How does the character react to other character? Do they go against all other characters? Do they prefer to be alone? Or are they team players? Friendly with all other characters? Do they talk a lot or prefer to stay quiet?

- **Step 5 – Choosing the look of the character and creating the character (20 minutes)**

Based on the story and the characteristics of the character, decide how does the character look – is it a human or human-like character? Is it an animal? Or a magical creature? What kind of equipment does the character have? How tall or short is the character? Hair colour? Style?

The choices are unlimited as the imagination is, just make sure that the character fits the created story and the world created for this game.

References

AmosJAMcLovin (January 6th, 2019) 'The Story of Jimmy Hopkins // BULLY' [Video]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X4MzRIOiTTU>

DiGi Valentine (May 16th, 2018) 'TAILS (Sonic the Hedgehog) - Who Dat? [Character Review]' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eV9hyxr7N58>

Nintendo Unity (August 7th, 2018) 'Evolution of Young Link (1998 – 2018)' [Video]. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_hbcnEQmU0

PlayStation Europe (December 4th, 2017) 'The Jak and Daxter Collection | Launch Trailer | PS4' [Video]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DK4jDHCY6Ns>

Roaxes (May 31st, 2018) 'Young Link enters the battle [SFM]' [Video]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBLdANXkeZg>

