

Creating characters for video games 2

Previous compulsory steps / Prior students' knowledge	Creating the story
Learning objectives	Learning how to create characters for video games
Subjects	Social Sciences, Writing, English as a Foreign Language
Recommended Age (10 – 14) or (15 - 18)	15 - 18
Material needed	Videos and images of characters
Sequence duration	45 – 60 minutes
Individual or group activity	Individual activity
Expected production	Understanding the characters and their representation
Skills developed (after learning objectives)	Creativity, critical thinking, cultural skills
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 will dive deeper into the analysis of characters: what do characters in video games represent and how are they portrayed?

- **Step 1 – Showing different characters in video games (15 minutes)**

For this step, different videos and images are needed to show various characters to the students.

Ask the student to pay attention to:

- the diversity of characters
- the character's look
- how the character acts around others
- the main characteristics of the character
- what the character represents
- how do characters represent disabilities and/or gender identity?
- do characters have mental health issues and if they do, are they portrayed realistically? Are they seen as good or bad?
- ethnicity of the characters – do they represent the ethnic majority or ethnic minority? Do you see some ethnic characteristics?

Here are the examples of different characters in video games:

- Abby (The Last of Us 2): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dotOCy0mALw>
- Jill Valentine (Resident Evil 3):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4lx4eyNYps>

- Joel and Ellie – the Last of Us 2:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StFHPnf3mQE>
- Kratos (God of War) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=puYnEC4AmCU>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fvRr2s2kz8>
- Lara Croft (Tomb Rider): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JoxMgPHPp2c>
- Lee Everett (The Walking Dead):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Yr9_xFLQoA
- Lester (Grand Theft Auto V) : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKp9_lh9sJ4
From 0:39 – 2:53
- Miles Morales (Spider-Man):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWMvHJdC4eM>
- Vaas Montenegro – Far Cry 3:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6AEIY0eQd2g>
- **Step 2 – Individual written reflection on portraying diversity through game characters (35 min)**

During this step students will focus on a written assignment. Points for attention in step 1 can be used to guide the written reflection and here are some additional ones:

- Ask the students to offer ways on how to address diversity of population through game characters.
- How can disabilities (e.g., physical, sensory, mental) be represented in video game characters?
- If you would develop video game characters, how would you approach representing disabilities through character?
- How to approach serious topics, or even taboo topics through the development of a character?

- How to represent going through a painful experience in video games?
 - How would you develop a character that represents certain mental health issue?
 - How to avoid stereotyping and prejudices in characters development? Should they be avoided?
 - How to create diverse, inclusive characters that are not based on stereotypes?
- **Step 3 – Presentations of individual work and discussion on representation of diversity through game characters (10 minutes)**

You can ask the students to share their thoughts on this pedagogical sequence and on the characters, they saw in videos. In this step, you can ask some of the questions above (which were used for inspiring written assignments) or base the discussion on the feedback you receive from students.

Resources

AP Nerds (January 24th, 2021) 'Why Abby is Loved in The Last of Us 2' [Video].

Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dotOCy0mALw>

BabyZone (June 16th, 2019) 'Lee Telling His Story With Clem & Last Wish – The

Walking Dead' [Video]. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Yr9_xFLQoA

BBC Radio 1 (March, 16th, 2018) 'Lara Croft - what was so special about her?' [Video].

Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JoxMgPHPP2c>

GameNews (June 11th, 2020) 'SPIDER-MAN Miles Morales Trailer 4K (PS5)' [Video].

Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWMvHJdC4eM>



GameSport (March 27th, 2020) 'Resident Evil 3 - Official Jill Valentine Story Trailer' [Video]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4lx4eyNYps>

Gaming by Gamers (May 25th, 2020) 'Far Cry 3 - Making A Memorable Villain (Video Essay)' [Video]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6AEIY0eQd2g>

Generic Gaming (September 18th, 2013) 'Grand Theft Auto V - Meeting Lester/The Keynote' [Video]. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKp9_lh9sJ4

Liana K (May 15th, 2018) 'God of War - Kratos, Masculinity, and Trauma' [Video]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=puYnEC4AmCU>

Orange Lighting (December 2nd, 2018) 'God of War - Dealing With Disappointment' [Video]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVtRr2s2kz8>

Sylfer2812 (June 27th, 2020) 'Ellie | The Last of Us' [Video]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StFHPnf3mQE>