GAMES FOR CHANGE
STUDENT CHALLENGE
GAME JAMS

GAME JAM GUIDE

This guide will assist you in planning and facilitating a Game Jam in partnership with G4C.

GAMES FOR CHANGE

What's a Game Jam?

A G4C Game Jam is a 3-4 hour event in which students of all skill levels create games around social impact themes. Game jams engage students with the tools, software, and process of game design. Students also get the opportunity to dive more deeply into the Student Challenge's impact themes.

Why Should I Lead a Game Jam at My School?

Perhaps you are teaching a game design course to one class of students this year; game jams provide access and an entry point for many more students into the Student Challenge. You will build community and inspire more students across your school to become impact game creators. Running a G4C-supported game jam at your school will connect your students to a worldwide movement empowering students to become change agents through social impact game design.

What Tool is Used to Develop Games during the Game Jam?

The primary tool for this challenge is **Scratch**, a free web-based tool for creating animations and games. If you are unfamiliar with Scratch, take an hour or so to learn the basics and create a simple project. You can also pass these helpful Scratch tips to students:

- Scratch has plenty of tutorials and how-to's, so getting started is made easy, even for beginners. Clicking "Tips" at the top of the editor unlocks many additional resources.
- Projects on Scratch are "remixable," meaning they can be copied and modified. You can remix an existing game as long as you make enough changes to make it uniquely yours.
- Only one student per group needs to know Scratch well, while the others can lend their artistic, audio, and creative skills to the project.
- If you prefer to use another platform besides Scratch, the Game Jam format is highly adaptable, and can be used with any platform.

What Does a Game Jam Agenda Look Like? (Sample)

Time	Description
9:00 – 9:10 (10 min)	Welcome and Introductions
9:10 – 9:30 (20 min)	Game Modding Warm Up
9:30 – 10:15 (45 min)	Parts of a Game – Theme Activity
10:15 – 11:00 (45 min)	Paper Prototyping
11:00 – 11:30 (30 min)	Lunch
11:30 – 1:00 (90 min)	Digital Game Making
1:00 – 1:30 (30 min)	Game Pitches/Share-Out

Running a Game Jam

Setting Up Your Event

Where should I plan to host the Game Jam?

Choice of venue is a very important consideration for a successful game jam. The space should have:

- Strong Wi-Fi
- A main projector/screen
- Speakers
- Tables and seating for all attending students
- Ample power outlets to connect laptop chargers (and/or extension cords and power strips)
- Check the venue's capacity against projected attendance levels

What type of staffing will I need?

- Lead facilitator (structures the day, leads most activities)
- Lead event producer (manages A/V, tech, and event logistics)
- Support staff (depending on the number of students for additional supervision and logistics, i.e. set up, attendee registration, taking photographs, snacks/lunch, unlocking doors, cleanup)

How should I advertise and collect invitations?

- Create an event page. We recommend Eventbrite, but if this is a smaller event a Google form can work just as well
- Create social media posts that advertise the event and how to sign up
- Promote to your school and local community
- Collect email addresses of participants
- Send an email welcoming participants to the event
- Send an email reminder about the event 1-2 days before the event

What materials will I need?

- Computers and respective chargers
    - 1 per pair of students or 1 per group of 3-4 students
- Extension cords and power strips
    - As needed per venue's power availability
- Projector/Big Screen and speakers
- A camera to take pictures!
- Welcome Sign
- Registration list (we recommend having kids sign up in advance using a tool like Eventbrite or Google Forms, so you can plan accordingly)
- Name tags
- Pens, pencils, and sharpies
- Participation & Media release forms (1 per student)
- Parts of a Game Handout (1 per student)
- Game Design Worksheet (1 per student)
- Paper prototyping materials (About one "package" of each for every 15 students)
    - Essentials: Dice, plain paper, construction paper, index cards, post-its, plastic pieces, markers, scotch tape, scissors
    - Extras: sticky chart paper, pipe cleaners, popsicle sticks, other craft supplies

Running the Game Jam

Facilitator Guide

Time (duration is flexible depending on scheduling)	Title	Description
10 minutes	Welcome and Introductions	Introduce the Student Challenge and the goals of the Game Jam. Review the agenda, go over any logistics such as rules of the space, WiFi, lunch, etc.
20 minutes	Game Modding + Warm Up + Parts of a Game	The goal is to modify a common game to be about one of the 3 themes found on the Student Challenge website. You can either choose to focus your game jam on all three themes or choose just one that is important to your school community. This will get students thinking creatively and become familiarized with the game design process. First, start with a simple, common game such as Thumb War, Tic-Tac-Toe, Staring Contest, Telephone, Simon Says, or Rock-Paper-Scissors. Choose one that would match the themes well. Students get into groups of 2-4 and follow this simple process: 1. Play the original game 2. Brainstorm an idea 3. Playtest to try it out 4. Make changes to make it more fun or thematic For example, in a game of Telephone, a mod about climate action might be to add a rule that the beginning phrases must be ways to reduce your carbon footprint. After this process, do a short reflection, either publicly or in a think-pair-share format, on the

		following questions: What did you change about the original game? Was it fun and theme-appropriate? How did your team collaborate? **The Parts of a Game (5m)** To get students more steeped in the language of games, introduce the 6 parts of a game, using this resource. Soccer is a great example to use when introducing these 6 parts of the game. Space: Where does the game take place? Goal: How do you win? Challenge: What stands between you and the goal? Core Mechanics: What actions do players take repeatedly to reach the goal? Components: What are the things needed to play? Rules: How is play structured? What can and can't players do? Go over this list, then identify the parts of the game the group just modified. Then, invite them to identify the parts of a different game as a group.
45 minutes	Theme Activity	On our website, we have provided dozens of theme-related teaching and learning resources. For this part of your game jam, you can choose to have students focus on all three themes or just one that is essential to your school community. Once you access the resources, you can choose how you want students to dive into the theme content.
45 minutes	Paper Prototyping	**Agenda** 5m – Introduction: Explain the challenge and introduce paper prototyping by example. 10m – Brainstorm: Explore game ideas. Use the theme activities as a source of inspiration. 15m – Prototype: Use the materials to create a basic paper version of the digital game. 5m – Playtest: The tester should pretend as if they are interacting with a digital game, and the design group should make the prototype react as if it were the digital game. 5m – Reflect: What did you learn? How might you plan your digital game differently now?

		The goal is to begin the digital game process by first brainstorming ideas and creating a simple prototype made of physical materials. This helps students imagine the design of the game independent of the technology required to create it. This activity is for groups of 2-4. During the challenge, make available to students the paper prototyping materials, but be mindful no group monopolizes too many. By the end, the group should have created and play-tested their prototype and documented the design using the Parts of a Game worksheet. Testing a paper prototype should involve a tester interacting with the prototype as if it were a working digital game and a designer making the prototype react accordingly. For instance, the user might say "I click here" and the designer demonstrates how a character moves to that place. Prototypes should focus on game mechanics and player choices rather than the nitty- gritty of menus and interface interactions (unless those are essential to gameplay). This video is a good example of a paper prototype in action.
30 minutes	Lunch	
90 minutes	Digital Game Making	**Agenda** 5m – Introduction: Explain the challenge, create Scratch accounts and/or log in 5m – Brainstorm: Think of ideas to improve the game based on the paper prototype playtest 45m – Prototype: Make the game playable, focusing on the essentials first. 10m – Playtest: Test the game with team members and/or other jammers 25m – Iterate: Make more changes based on playtests The goal is to create a digital game around the theme of the day. This is the lengthiest and most challenging part of the jam, but also has the least amount of constraints. Structure the time like the

		analog challenge, using the design process to keep it well-paced (see agenda below). This activity is for the same groups that created the paper prototypes. While Scratch is the main tool, some students may wish to use others such as Unity. Students may use what they wish, but direct those with no preference to Scratch. Students can even make an analog game for this challenge. Some may bring already in-progress Student Challenge games using any theme or tool; this is also fine.
30 minutes	Game Pitches & Share-Outs	At the end of the day, have each group pitch their game and demonstrate it to everyone else. This is an important payoff moment that allows everyone to view and appreciate the day's work. You can also use this time to distribute surveys and encourage students to participate in the Student Challenge, directing those who are ready to submit right now to the submission page. For large jams (10+ groups), do this "science fair" style, where students stay at their tables and pitch to visitors. For small jams (10 or less groups), do this "presentation" style, where each group comes up and presents to the whole group for 2-3 minutes each.

Game Jam Resources

1. Game Jam Checklist

Use this checklist over the course of planning and running the jam to ensure proper preparation and smooth execution of the various phases.

➢ Prep Phase

- Event Location
- Staffing (before, during and after event)
- Advertise
- Collect Materials

➢ Arrival Phase

- Check off student names on registration list as they arrive
- Make sure each student and parent signs release form
- Encourage students to create a name tag
- Offer Mailing List sign-up as a way to receive future Student Challenge updates
- Collect attendee data (head count, approx. gender ratio)
- Test technology (projector, sound, computers)

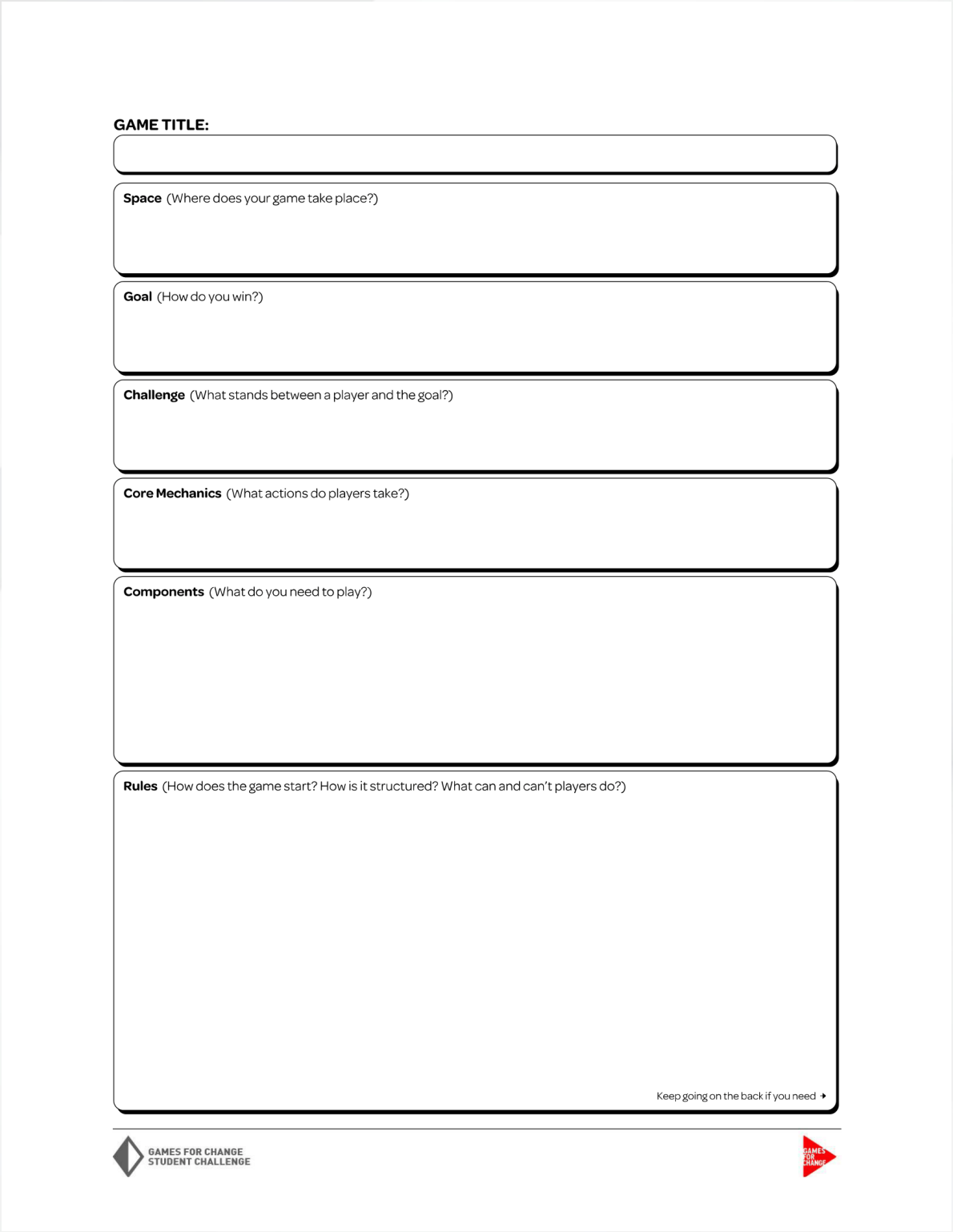
➢ Jam Phase

- Take LOTS of pictures
- Post to social media and tag on behalf of G4C: @g4c and #g4cstudent

➢ Post-Jam Phase

- Clean Up event space
- Share attendee information and photos with G4C (studentchallenge@gamesforchange.org)
- Share pictures with G4C via Google Drive or another file sharing system
- Direct students to the Student Challenge website. It's quite possible your students will be inspired to continue iterating on their digital games and want to submit their games for a chance to win a 10K scholarship, game consoles, mentorship from industry experts, and more!

2. Game Jam Planning Template



GAME TITLE:

Space (Where does your game take place?)

Goal (How do you win?)

Challenge (What stands between a player and the goal?)

Core Mechanics (What actions do players take?)

Components (What do you need to play?)

Rules (How does the game start? How is it structured? What can and can't players do?)

Keep going on the back if you need →

GAMES FOR CHANGE STUDENT CHALLENGE

[Download Template]

3. Share Your Experience!

Share pictures your Game Jam experience with us on social media!

Use our hashtag #GetYourGameJamOn and tag us

Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	LinkedIn
@gamesforchange	@G4C	@gamesforchange	company/GamesforChange