



GAMES IN YOUTH WORK

STRICTLY COME CODING – A SIMPLE, FUN GAMING PROJECT TO HELP YOU CONTINUE YOUR YOUTH GROUPS

WHAT IS THIS PROJECT?

This project can be presented as a tournament to get the young people coding but also to keep them engaged with each other in a youth work context. You will be able to use it, even if you or the young people have no previous experience of coding. This is not just a gaming project; it is a youth work project and as such collaboration and teamwork is an important factor, as is the additional learning embedded in the game. While this game is ostensibly about sheep, it is really about the spread of viruses and social distancing as is revealed in the hyper challenge at the end.

This is intended as a template for you to follow in engaging young people through a project like this. You will need to change it and shape it to suit the groups you work with. You may also use Social Media Apps to communicate with groups as the word format may not work or you.

The idea is to make a tournament/competition out of making a game. The extent to which you enter into the tournament yourself is up to you - however your participation may give structure and additional motivation to young people who participate. It is also important to consider including both boys and girls in this. While boys tend to step forward more willingly when it comes to games, this project should also appeal to girls. Some people may not want to enter in a team and this can also be an option.



SCRATCH PROJECT

This project can be done from home and depending on the young person's access to technology they should be able to collaborate in groups. It is important at the offset to assess young people's access to devices, the types of devices available to them, the boundaries parents set on such access and their interests. You may also need to secure parental consent and GDPR permission in order to comply with your own organisational policy and guidelines.

So, in order to set up a game challenge you will need to decide which of the platforms you want to use. Scratch can be seen by young people over 12 as being "childish". However it can be used to develop very sophisticated games.

Collaboration

It would be desirable to encourage as much collaboration within the project as possible. So I would suggest making teams of three or four (it can be difficult for young people to organise themselves into larger groups than this). If the group are meeting offline or know each other well, five or six would be better numbers to work with. You must also account for the likelihood that one or two may drop out so at least there will be two left if you begin with four in a team.

INFORMATION FOR YOUTH WORKER

Decision for the Youth Worker

Decide whether you are going to run this as a straightforward team project or if you going to organise a tournament – think about things like prizes and publishing the games on your website.

Communication

You, as the youth work organisation, must determine which social media app will be used to communicate with and between young people. Kahoot, Hangouts or WhatsApp may work well. Snapchat is not ideal as it does not maintain an accessible record of communication.

Getting Players

Identify who is interested and in a position to get involved. They will need to have access to a PC, a Smart phone, Broadband, and the permission of a guardian to participate and to download the necessary apps. You can send out the information sheet.

For a tournament, you will need more than 10 participants, broken into at least three teams of either three or four.

It is not necessary that the participants can code; the team members will have particular roles and can learn simple coding as part of the project (graphic designer/artist; 1 or 2 programmers; director/communicator). It would be good if there was one person on each team with some experience of scratch or at least an interest in learning to code.

Setting the Brief

The brief provided to the participants is incremental, clear and achievable. It is incremental so that the challenge aligns with their skills. If they are beginners they can take it one step at a time; if they are more experienced they can get two steps together; if they are very experienced then they can get all of the steps together. In total there will be seven steps for each of the projects. They must follow the steps rather than go off and make the game under their own steam.

Before the teams get the next steps in the project they will show you and the group that they have completed the preceding step. They can include you in a meeting or send a video.

Setting Boundaries

It will be up to you to decide the intervals between each step - perhaps weekly and then to decide how to complete each step. It may also be necessary to set time limits in which they work on this project and to make parents aware of this - two hours every second day for example.

SCRATCH GAME DESIGN PROJECT – INFORMATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The story behind the game

You are a sheep grazing in a field. As the player, you control where your sheep moves within the field. There are four other sheep moving around the field randomly.

A sixth sheep is sent into the field. This sheep has just been painted blue by the farmer. This blue mark means that they are to be sold to the factory for slaughter. The paint is still wet and if this sheep touches other sheep then the other sheep also turn blue; if they in turn touch a white sheep then the other white sheep will also turn blue and so on.

You must avoid turning blue by avoiding any blue sheep. If you turn blue the game is over and your score is the amount of time you have survived in the game before turning blue.

Designing the Game

You will design and code the game in six steps. Each step will have instructions for you to follow. Only when you have successfully completed one step do you move on to the next step.

Judging

A panel will give marks out of 100 to the Games made by the young people. They will use the following criteria (note you get extra points for working in a team):

1. Creativity: how different and interesting is it? (10)
2. Playability: how much would you like to play it again? (10)
3. Production values: how polished is it from start to finish? (10)
4. Uniqueness: Is it different and does it have its own characters? (10)
5. Fun: Can you feel the fun? (15)
6. Technical Ability: How cleverly is it coded? (15)
7. Collaboration: How well did the team work together? (10)
8. Progress: How much progress did the team make? (10)

Getting Involved

You will need to get permission to get involved in this project so once your parent or guardian has agreed you can form into a teams of three or four, if you would prefer we can allocate you to teams, just let us know. Each team member must take one of these roles:

- Graphic designer/artist – drawing/creating the background and the sprites, add the opening sequence, the credits, the sounds etc.
- One or two programmers – developing the code.
- Director/communicator – sets up the meet ups and shares the information about the game etc. The director/communicator will also make proposals for additional story lines or elements for inclusion in the game.

Getting Started

Once you have applied to get involved you can download Scratch

(<https://scratch.mit.edu/>) and Kahoot, Hangouts or WhatsApp and wait for further instructions.

SCRATCH GAME DESIGN – APPLICATION FORM FOR YOUNG PERSON

Name _____

Gaming Skills and Interests

- 1 Game Stories/Comics
 - I haven't thought about making games but would like to try
 - I have a few game ideas
 - I would like to participate in a team
 - I would like to organise a team to make a game

- 2 Games and Coding
 - I have no experience of Coding but want to learn
 - I have no Scratch experience but I have done other programming
 - I have done basic Scratch
 - I am experienced at Scratch

- 3 Game Art and Design
 - I don't draw much
 - I like sketching
 - I draw and sketch a lot
 - I can use computer packages to draw

- 4 Team
 - Please allocate me a team
 - A group of us have organised a team
 - I would prefer to do this on my own

- 5 Devices
 - I can use a laptop or a PC for this project and I have you downloaded Scratch
 - I have a device on which I have downloaded Kahoot, Hangouts or WhatsApp

If you are entering a team, give the following details

- Team name _____
- Name of graphic designer/artist _____
- Programmer _____
- Director/communicator _____
- Programmer _____

SCRATCH GAME DESIGN PROJECT BRIEF FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

STEP ONE

- a. Create an original background field and a sheep sprite or character. This can be done by physically drawing them, photographing or scanning and creating a picture file. You can also search on the internet for interesting pictures or create your own using an app or programme.
- b. Upload these images to Scratch.
- c. Code the sheep so that the player can control how they move around the field.
- d. Use your judgement to decide on the size of the sheep.

Art tips

- Search for free drawing apps
- Explore www.makeuseof.com/tag/top-3-free-digital-painting-apps-android/
- If you draw your own sprite and insert it into a word document you can get rid of the background easily and then save it as a bitmap which can be easily imported into Scratch.
- Explore www.lifewire.com/remove-image-fill-background-microsoft-office-2511935

Coding tips

- Getting Started at <https://scratch.mit.edu/projects/editor/?tutorial=all>
- Learn how to add a sprite to Scratch at www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxzFeqstwmw

Directing tips

- You might want to organise to run the meetings with two devices - communicate using a phone and work on the PC or Laptop.

STEP TWO

- a. Create a sprite representing the fence around the field.
- b. Code the sheep sprite so that if they collide with the fence they bounce backwards.
- c. Use your judgement to decide how big this bounce is.
- d. Try adding a sound.

Art tips

- Make the fence as thin as possible as you don't want it to take up too much of the game space.

Coding tips

- Another approach would be to make the fence part of the background and code in the bounce based on the position of the sprite. Discuss this as a team.
- Learn how to code a bounce at www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXUBiSNo8fE

STEP THREE

Create one more white sheep sprite that moves randomly around the field bouncing when it collides with other sprites. Use your judgement to decide how quickly this sheep moves and whether the sheep move in straight lines or not. You must also add sounds.

STEP FOUR

Introduce a Blue Sheep sprite and code the white sheep to turn blue if they collide with a blue sheep. Play test the game to see how difficult it is for you to avoid the other sheep. Use your judgement to adjust elements of the game until you are happy.

STEP FIVE

Add four more white sheep that move randomly around the field. Code the game to end when all your sheep turns blue.

STEP SIX

- a. Add a timer which starts when the first blue sheep is introduced and stops when all your sheep turn blue. Use your judgement to set a win state in the game.

PHASE 1 – THE X FACTOR PHASE

A panel of experts give 100 marks. They use the following criteria (note extra points are given for working in a team)

1. Creativity: How different and interesting is it? (10)
2. Playability: How much would you like to play it again? (10)
3. Production values: How polished is it from start to finish? (10)
4. Uniqueness: Is it different and does it have its own characters? (10)
5. Fun: Can you feel the fun? (15)
6. Technical Ability: How cleverly is it coded? (15)
7. Collaboration: How well did the team work together? (10)
8. Progress: How much progress did the team make? (10)

PHASE 2 – THE ‘PUBLIC’ VOTE

A specific group of young people are invited to vote. This should include all of the teams and perhaps others. The games should be presented to this group anonymously and voted upon against the following criteria. The votes are averaged and marks out of 100 allocated to each team.

1. Creativity: How different and interesting is it? (20)
2. Playability: How much would you like to play it again? (20)
3. Production values: How polished is it from start to finish? (20)
4. Uniqueness: Is it different and does it have its own character? (20)
5. Fun: Can you feel the fun? (20)

PHASE 3 – THE GAME JAM PHASE

The teams, by surprise, should be given the hyper challenge and given 24 hours to complete it. The extent to which they can do this will give the potential to gain another 50 points. The panel will allocate marks to each team that completes the task in the allocated time

Publishing on the Website

If you have the facility, it might be an idea to put the finished games on your website. Perhaps the Hyper Challenge might be an interesting format to use.

We are currently piloting this and a range of other resources aimed at supporting youth workers to use games to engage young people during the current Covid-19 restrictions on movement. Please send any questions or feedback you have on this to Katrin@nyci.ie or Barbara@nyci.ie. This will help us continue to improve these resources.

Who made this resource?

This resource was developed by Paul Keating, Limerick Institute of Technology as part of the project – ‘Games in Youth Work: Engaging Young People in Climate Action and Development Education’. This is a collaborative project by NYCI’s Development Education and STEAM in Youth Work programmes. It is funded by the Science Foundation of Ireland. Additional funding has been provided by Irish Aid.

