



Game Jam Tips

A game jam is a gathering of people who plan, design and create video games in a short space of time ranging from a day to a week, even a month. Just take a look at this particular game jam directory to get an idea of how popular they are: <https://itch.io/jams>.

Here are some top tips to help you and your pupils get involved.

1. The most important point is to always participate. This may sound silly but if nobody took part in games jams there would be no game jams. Even with little experience, people can benefit from the game jam experience on so many levels, so just get stuck in.
2. It's a mistake made by many, people start working on a game before the theme of the game jam is announced and they then try to shoehorn their game idea to fit the theme. Always wait for the theme of the jam before brainstorming ideas.
3. Always keep ideas simple as quality will always triumph over quantity. People will always prefer playing a really good short game over a lengthy one. Keeping ideas short and simple will also make it easier to experiment with new concepts and at the end of the day, that is the main point of game jams.
4. Create multiple ideas at the pen and paper planning stage, then condense these down to one. Take time to do this, giving each idea careful consideration as this will pay dividends further down the line. Expect this final idea to keep evolving over time as development progresses.
5. Manage your time and write your development time on your calendar, plan your work in two hour blocks and put everything in your calendar. Remember to always factor in time for polishing and bug fixing as these stages are often overlooked. You don't have to work the full allotted time of the jam.

6. Never overlook the impact that sound has in a game. If your skills lie elsewhere, hunt out all the free resources that will help you out when sourcing sound effects and backing tracks.
7. Write a good, clear explanation for your game and pick a great title for it.
8. Most importantly, **have fun!**

