

Game Writing Bootcamp

Curriculum & Program Overview

Game Design Skills • Lead Instructor: Kelly Bender

Program at a Glance

- 17 weeks • 34 live sessions
- One narrative-focused project with 8 major deliverables, 8 feedback sessions, and 16 iterations
- 8 studio templates
- One portfolio piece developed through the program
- Three game-writer tests based on real studio hiring processes
- One-on-one live interview practice and feedback
- Dedicated instructor DM feedback and concierge support
- No game engines, scripting, or coding required

Curriculum

Week 0 — Bonus Career Workshops

How to Make a Game Writing Portfolio That Gets You Interviews

Professional game-writer and narrative-designer roles; 15 types of portfolio pieces; real examples; next steps.

How to Make a Level Design Portfolio That Gets You Interviews

What studios look for in level-design portfolios; five portfolio-piece types; real examples and next steps.

How to Pass Level Design Tests and Interviews

What level-design tests and interviews look like and how to prepare.

How to Structure a Game Design Portfolio to Retain Attention

Applying conversion, copywriting, landing-page, and long-form content principles to portfolio presentation.

How to Network Effectively on LinkedIn

Networking, gaining attention, and building a professional presence as a new game developer.

Week 1 — World Building

Day 1: World Building Fundamentals for Video Games

Worldbuilding for games; theme and narrative reasoning; cartography fundamentals; demonstrations; two skill-internalization drills; portfolio journaling and material collection. Project Mission 01/16: create the world's foundations (baseline context, lore, geography, etc.).

Day 2: World Building Feedback and Iteration

Guest presentation on turning a world from words into virtual space; constructive feedback; productive disagreement; feedback evaluation; instructor and peer feedback; group workshop. Mission 02/16: iterate the world based on feedback.

Week 2 — Locations & Architecture

Day 3: Locations and Architecture Design and Cultural Congruency

Design locations and architecture from the world's context; cultural congruency; demonstration; two skill-internalization drills. Mission 03/16: design culturally congruent locations and architecture.

Day 4: Locations and Architecture Feedback and Iteration

Guest presentation on level design based on locations and architecture; instructor and peer feedback; group workshop. Mission 04/16: iterate locations and architecture based on feedback.

Week 3 — Characters, Weapons & Attacks

Day 5: Characters, Weapons, and Attacks Design

Character types and congruency; character design based on world context; weapons and attacks; character-design tools; demonstration; two skill-internalization drills. Mission 05/16: design characters, weapons, and attacks congruent with the world.

Day 6: Characters, Weapons, and Attacks Feedback and Iteration

Guest presentation on designing mechanics from weapons and attacks; instructor and peer feedback; group workshop. Mission 06/16: iterate characters, weapons, and attacks based on feedback.

Week 4 — Character Bios & Barks

Day 7: Character Bios and Barks

Writing character bios and barks; tailoring writing to in-game and marketing formats; demonstrations; two skill-internalization drills. Mission 07/16: write bios and barks for the designed characters.

Day 8: Character Bios and Barks Feedback and Iteration

Guest presentation on turning character writing into visual concepts; instructor and peer feedback; group workshop. Mission 08/16: iterate character bios and barks.

Week 5 — Dialogue

Day 9: Dialogue Writing for Video Games

Professional game-dialogue structures, types, formatting, and tools; guidelines for compelling game story and dialogue; character-voice consistency; dialogue creation/editing demonstrations; three skill-internalization drills. Mission 09/16: write character dialogue.

Day 10: Dialogue Writing Feedback and Iteration

Guest presentation on quest-design fundamentals and dialogue integration; instructor feedback; peer table reads; group workshop. Mission 10/16: iterate character dialogue.

Week 6 — Storyboarding

Day 11: Storyboarding for Video Games

Storyboarding fundamentals, techniques, and tools for cinematic game scenes; camera shots and scripts; AAA vs. AA vs. mobile trailer analysis; demonstrations. Mission 11/16: create storyboard and script.

Day 12: Storyboarding Feedback and Iteration

Guest presentation on turning storyboards into cutscenes; instructor and peer feedback; group workshop. Mission 12/16: iterate storyboard and script based on feedback.

Week 7 — Narrative Systems

Day 13: Narrative Systems

Narrative-system types and functions in interactive gameplay; branching-dialogue tools and techniques; writing/design demonstration. Mission 13/16: design the narrative system.

Day 14: Narrative Systems Feedback and Iteration

Instructor and peer feedback; group workshop. Mission 14/16: iterate the narrative system based on feedback.

Week 8 — Voice-Over Scripts

Day 15: Voice-Over Script Writing for Video Games

Designing and writing interactive voice-over scripts; collaborative documentation and tools; script design/writing demonstration. Mission 15/16: design and write the voice-over script and documentation.

Day 16: Voice-Over Script Feedback and Iteration

Guest presentation on performing video-game scripts; instructor and peer feedback; group workshop. Mission 16/16: iterate the voice-over script and documentation.

Week 9 — Game Writer Tests & Application Materials

Day 17: Game Writer Test and LinkedIn, CV, Cover Letter Optimization

Video-game recruitment processes for writers and narrative designers; recruiter visibility; game-writer tests; LinkedIn, CV/resume, and cover-letter optimization; writer's-test demonstration. Complete cover letter and writer's test.

Day 18: Application Materials Feedback and Iteration

Instructor review of cover letter and writer's test; iterate both based on feedback.

Week 10 — Portfolio Development

Day 19: First Portfolio Piece Draft

Who reviews portfolios, what they look for, and how to prioritize content; turn raw project materials into portfolio draft 1.

Day 20: Portfolio Piece Formatting, Feedback, and Draft 2

Formatting for attention retention; application of advertising principles; instructor feedback; portfolio draft 2.

Week 11 — Portfolio Development & Featured Visual

Day 21: Portfolio Piece Feedback and Draft 3 + Featured Visual

Visual types and formats (GIF, video, image); realistic execution; instructor feedback; portfolio draft 3 and featured visual draft 1.

Day 22: Portfolio Piece Feedback and Draft 4

Free hosting option; portfolio-site foundations; instructor feedback; portfolio draft 4 and site foundation.

Week 12 — CMS & Final Portfolio Iteration

Day 23: Adapting the Draft to a CMS

CMS and page-building tools; templates; adding content; finish adding the portfolio piece.

Day 24: Lead Instructor Feedback and Final Iteration

Portfolio-instructor feedback; playtesting a portfolio with users including recruiters/hiring managers; lead-instructor feedback; final portfolio iteration.

Week 13 — LinkedIn Content & Career Materials

Day 25: Turn Your Portfolio Piece into LinkedIn Content

Repurpose portfolio content into LinkedIn posts through demonstrations and instructor feedback.

Day 26: LinkedIn Content Feedback and Iteration

Instructor feedback and live drill; iterate and publish the first post; update LinkedIn content and resume/cover letter.

Weeks 14–16 — Game Writer Tests & Industry Analysis

Preparation Before Day 1

Create/update LinkedIn profile and CV; vote on session times; receive Game Writer Test #1 based on The Walking Dead: Survivors (MMO strategy/mobile).

Day 27: LinkedIn Profile Overview

Game-writer/narrative-designer CV and portfolio requirements; LinkedIn requirements; ATS; recruiter review and selection processes. Complete Game Writer Test #2 based on Assassin's Creed Odyssey (open-world combat/AAA).

Day 28: LinkedIn Profile and Mobile Game Writer's Test Review

Instructor and peer feedback on LinkedIn profile and Test #1; adjust LinkedIn, CV/resume, and Test #1.

Day 29: How to Analyze Video Games of Various Genres

Gameplay, narrative, and genre analysis; common analysis mistakes; what studios look for; live analysis demonstration; game-analysis template. Complete Test #3 based on Mafia (open-world shooter/AA).

Day 30: AAA Game Writer's Test Review

Breakdown and review of Test #2; live adjustments, comparison, peer feedback, and instructor-guided revision.

Day 31: Analyze Mobile, AA, and AAA Game Writer's Tests

Cross-genre and studio-size analysis; analysis of job-post keywords and assignments; Arcweave tools; participation in SIG Arcjam.

Day 32: AA Game Writer's Test

Breakdown and review of Test #3; peer/instructor feedback on SIG Arcjam; live adjustments and revision.

Week 17 — Interview Training

Day 33: Interview Process Insights + Mock Interviews

How HR staff interview, review, and select candidates; navigating different interview questions; practice questions; scheduled one-on-one mock interview with the lead instructor.

Day 34: Interview Feedback + Recruiter Mock Interviews

Review recordings of one-on-one mock interviews; feedback; live adjustments; selected candidates participate in live recruiter mock interviews.

Key Skills & Areas Covered

- Worldbuilding and lore
- Locations, architecture, and cultural congruency
- Character design, character bios, and barks
- Weapons, attacks, and mechanics integration
- Game dialogue structure, formatting, and character voice
- Storyboarding and cinematic scripting
- Narrative systems and branching dialogue
- Interactive voice-over scripts and documentation
- Game-writer tests and studio hiring processes
- CV/resume, cover-letter, and LinkedIn optimization
- Portfolio case-study development and presentation
- CMS/page-building and portfolio-site foundations
- Game analysis across mobile, AA, and AAA contexts
- Interview preparation and mock interviews
- Feedback, iteration, collaboration, productive disagreement, and conflict resolution