

# Game Script and Storyline Writer

## Spotlight

Are you an avid gamer? If so, you know that today's video game landscape is teeming with all sorts of exciting and visually exhilarating video games, but what makes a game truly immersive is the narrative. Game script and storyline writers create the engaging dialogue that unfurls as the player progresses through the game, and emerging technologies are redefining the methods through which these stories can be told.

## Personal Connection

Game storyline writers work with the game developers to generate a game's narrative; they write the dialogue, the storyline, and create characters. The job involves a high level of creativity and excellent spoken and written communication skills.

- Do you love video games?
- Do you like to write?
- Are you interested in coding and computer programming?
- Do you have an active imagination?
- Are you a good storyteller?

## Other Connections

Becoming a game script and storyline writer is an exciting career to pursue, but many similar career paths may sound appealing.

- Becoming a video game designer and creating video games
- Becoming an animator and using 3D modeling software to execute the game designer's vision
- Utilizing your coding skills to improve the programs that game designers and animators use
- Becoming a game character artist and intricately detailing a game's characters with all their unique qualities and flaws
- Working as an illustrator for designers or writers and providing imagery for their imaginary worlds

## Fun Facts/ "Did You Know?..."

Some fun video game trivia:

**Enderman Game Sounds:** In Minecraft, the sounds the Enderman make are people saying "Hi" and "What's up?" but backward and distorted. [Read more here.](#)

**The Creation of Donkey Kong:** Donkey Kong got his name because his creator thought that "donkey" meant "stubborn ape" in English. [Read more here.](#)

**From Butterflies to Pokémon:** Pokémon creator, Satoshi Tajiri, used to catch caterpillars and watch them turn into butterflies. He says that this inspired him to create Pokémon, a game based on metamorphosis. [Read more here.](#)

**Mario's Three Names:** When Mario first appeared in "Donkey Kong," he was called Jumpman, then renamed Mr. Video, then Mario. [Read more here.](#)



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## STEM Connection

Video games are one of the most rapidly evolving mediums. Look at some of the ways advancements in technology are changing the game storyline writer's profession.

- **Embedded narratives vs. emergent narratives:** As the computing power of video games has evolved, so too has the method of storytelling. Older games typically had 'embedded narratives' where the narrative content existed before the player interacted with it, and the game could only be played one way, in one order. Newer games are trending towards 'emergent narratives' where the narrative unfurls as the player explores the world and interacts with the game's content. This idea makes for an immersive and unique gaming experience and allows writers to interweave many storylines. [Read more.](#)
- **The power of choice:** An emerging gaming trend that modern gamers are becoming accustomed to is the power of choice. Game developers are continuing to push the issue, allowing players to make decisions about a game's plot points to create their adventure. While this idea is exciting, it presents a challenge for the game storyline writers who must prepare content for each of the players' decisions. [Read more.](#)
- **Facial animations are bringing video games to life:** With the advances in gaming technology, different professionals in the industry are being forced to collaborate. Video games have been voiced by actors for decades. Fully voiced characters are more comfortable to connect with and provide a multi-sensory storytelling experience. Today, game animators are skilled enough to match the facial expressions of the characters with the inflection of the actors' lines. These advancements in something as subtle as facial expressions can fully immerse the player in a video game and connect them with the characters. [Read more.](#)
- **Artificial intelligence is getting eerily smarter:** Some of the most enriching parts of any video game are the interactions you have with in-game characters (NPCs). Classically, these NPCs have served the simple purpose of moving the player along in the story. Still, the potential exists to grant NPCs an agency, which would allow them to respond according to every unique player's actions. Future gaming AI may be able to have novel interactions, providing a singular gaming experience for every player. [Read more.](#)
- **Full immersion could facilitate an alternate means of storytelling:** Historically, games have been pretty straightforward in their delivery of the narrative, either presented through cinematics or clear character dialogue. But what if games could tell stories more subtly by appealing to your other senses? Full immersion is the idea of embedding your consciousness into an artificial body. As it pertains to gaming, your senses, thoughts, and actions would have one-to-one consequences on your in-game character. If executed properly, game storyline writers could tell stories through smells or feelings, adding a bizarrely immersive element to their narratives. [Read more.](#)

## Articles, Videos, and Podcasts of Interest

Tech Times argues that video games are the ultimate storytelling medium. [Read their thoughts here.](#)

Halley Gross talks about how Naughty Dogs Games are trying to create the most complex character in gaming in "The Last of Us 2". [Read more here.](#)

YouTube Channel 'Extra Credits' lays out the three pillars of video game writing. [Learn more.](#)

Chris Stone gives a comprehensive overview of game narratives; past, present, and future. [Learn more.](#)

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## Journeys to Becoming a Game Storyline Writer

The path to becoming a game storyline writer may seem like that of any other writer. Still, it requires specific knowledge of game development processes and the way that video games will present the story to players. This career path can begin in high school.

Read about one man's journey to becoming a game storyline writer:

Marc Laidlaw is a veteran game storyline writer. He developed his writing career independently of video games by writing short stories and novels, having some professional success in his teens. Marc went to college to study English literature, which is where he developed his writing style. After college, Marc began analyzing and critiquing video games, which led him to his first job in the industry. He did not have much computer programming experience going into this job, which he acknowledges would have been helpful. He mentions that the game development industry is more of a collaboration than a specialization. Often programmers, artists, developers, and writers will collaborate on every step of the process, and sometimes specific jobs are absorbed by others. Many of the young people Marc works with got into the industry by independently developing modifications of existing games and releasing them to the public, which is an excellent way to showcase your talent and potentially be scouted by professional game developers. Marc also mentions that game storyline writing is a very collaborative work environment, and for it to be successful, every member must put the quality of the product before any of their personal interests. Marc is passionate about using video games as a way of storytelling and is eager to pass his knowledge and wisdom onto the next generation.

Read more about Marc's journey [here](#).

Read about one man's interest in video games as storytelling devices:

Paul Dunn has a passion for storytelling through video games. He found his way into the gaming industry through his background in communications. He has developed an interest in the way that video game storytelling differs from storytelling through other mediums. "Like any author, a game writer needs a diverse and well-stocked toolkit, but they also need a keen understanding that the protagonist will have the last word in what they do or don't engage with." His basis is the fact that as the game storyline writer, you are not totally in control of the way the story is presented. The player will always control the pace and how the story unfolds. Paul now tutors video game writing classes at schools in New Zealand, The U.K., and South Africa. He urges his students to be considerate of the tools that games provide for storytelling and encourages them to develop a working knowledge of how games are made.

Read more about Paul's story [here](#).

