

GAME DEVELOPER



SALARY

Junior developer ★★☆☆☆

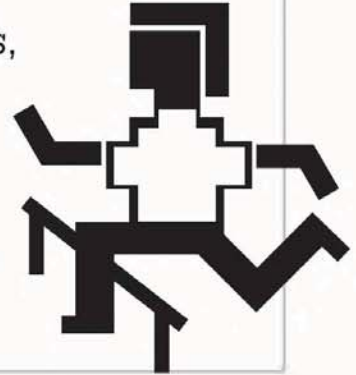
Lead developer ★★★★★

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Massive expansion in recent years, and set to grow further • Many freelance contracts available • Smaller companies with fewer than 50 employees common

JOB DESCRIPTION

A game developer produces games for different platforms, including personal computers (PCs), game consoles, smartphones, tablets, and websites. As a game developer, you could be involved in a variety of roles, from developing the game's initial concept or writing the code for it, to creating audio and video files, to writing instructions for animators and other members of their team.



AT A GLANCE



YOUR INTERESTS Computer science • Graphics • 3-D design • Animation and illustration • Gaming • Coding • Mathematics • Physics



ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS A degree in computer science or a media-related discipline is useful, although not required, for becoming a developer.



LIFESTYLE Teams are close-knit and may work extra hours together to prepare a new game for an upcoming launch date.



LOCATION Game developers work mainly on a computer in an office. The atmosphere is informal and creative, with people from many disciplines.



THE REALITIES Entry to the field is highly competitive. Strict deadlines drive the work, and spending long periods on a computer can be tiring.

CAREER PATHS

There is no formal career structure for game developers. Progress depends largely on which path is taken—for example, focusing on programming graphics or the user interface. In this young and dynamic industry, success depends on performance, and on the sales and critical acclaim of the games.

PLAY TESTER You may be able to find work with a gaming company testing their products for playability and flaws (bugs). This can provide an entry route into the industry.



GRADUATE Having a degree in computer science gives you the best chance of employment. Some colleges offer specialty game-programming courses or modules.



▼ RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **SOFTWARE ENGINEER** *see pp. 118–119*
- ▶ **WEB DEVELOPER** *see pp. 128–129*
- ▶ **ANIMATOR** Brings to life the characters in cartoons, advertisements, and video games by modeling the movement of a character or object on-screen. An animator needs good artistic and design skills.
- ▶ **FORENSIC COMPUTER ANALYST** Investigates computer hacking and other illegal computer-related activities. Forensic computer analysts may be hired by the police or large companies.
- ▶ **STORYBOARD ARTIST** Illustrates how a character progresses in a computer game using a series of drawings or animations. Storyboard artists have good storytelling and drawing skills.

SKILLS GUIDE



Good cooperation skills to work smoothly with people from all different educational backgrounds.



Imagination to develop new products, and the flexibility to handle a wide range of tasks.



A logical approach to problem-solving and strong mathematical and analytical skills.



An in-depth knowledge of computer games and excellent computer skills.



Attention to detail to ensure bug-free codes; the ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines.

SENIOR DEVELOPER

Leads a team of specialists to complete an entire game or part of a larger digital product. This role could go to a person with either a programming or design background.



PROJECT MANAGER

Oversees a project, ensuring that all of the resources and personnel required to complete the work on time are in place.



GAME DEVELOPER Can follow one of two routes: programming (building the game) or designing (creating the graphics).



GAME DESIGNER Devises the look of the characters, levels, and the game's storyline. Some may have a programming background, but many come from a design discipline.



In 2012, the gaming industry generated more than \$20 billion in the US alone.

