



# Frequently Asked Questions

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## What is humanities.games?

humanities.games is a web platform that enables students with paper and drawing supplies to create digital games. Supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the platform will live at the web address <https://humanities.games>

## Are students really making games, since they only create art and text, and not code?

Yes. Once the art and text has been submitted to humanities.games and applied to a template, a new game is created. Just as authors don't create their own paper and musicians don't usually make their own instrument, our minigame templates serve more as tools than games in their own right. A student's choice of minigame, their rationale for that choice and the content they produce to communicate that clearly is where the game's value develops.

## How can I sign up my class/after-school group?

Once the platform launches, you can use an email address to create an account for your class, which will live at a unique web address, e.g. stonesoup.humanities.games. You can then create accounts for your students so they can log in and create, or you can publish games on their behalf, depending on the technology available and format of the activity.

## My classroom is not equipped with computers. How can we participate?

humanities.games is designed for this situation. If you can provide the printed minigame packets to your students, our planned mobile app will allow you to capture their work with a smartphone, which will then publish the game and make it playable on the same device. Students who do have access to technology elsewhere, e.g. the library, can also play created games on the web.

## What if my students have access to computers and want to see how the game is built?

Every aspect of the game that can be changed in the dashboard has a button that will show the complete code for a minigame, as well as the lines relevant for each part. One long-term goal is to make the game code downloadable so it can be modified directly by any interested students.



## How does game creation teach a student?

Experiential learning is a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (See work by David Kolb). Students must research and internalize knowledge about a topic in order to brainstorm and choose which minigame would be most relevant, and apply that knowledge when writing game text and creating artwork. Like a science fair uses project creation to foster understanding of the scientific method, making a game encourages a student to internalize the knowledge they need to produce the best game. Like winning educational games themselves, the task of acquiring content knowledge makes immediate, short-term benefits clear to the participant.

## What does an activity look like?

In part this will depend on the level of technology your students have for the exercise.

An example activity:

- Students (in groups) are given the topic and a few options for minigames
- Minigames may be curated in advance to help guide thought
- As a group the students decide on which game they are making and why
- Tasks are given to create the assets, and these are then scanned
- Students play the completed game either on desktop or on mobile

There are different approaches possible (e.g. students uploading their own work, using digital tools to create art vs. drawing), as well.

## How will I know which minigames would work best for my subject?

As part of our minigame creation process, we work with educators to develop minigames that have at least one concrete application (e.g. a street-crossing minigame reworked to portray a ship crossing an ocean and perils it may encounter). We then consult scholars in varied humanities subjects with created minigames and ask them to advise on possible alternative uses. These are not exhaustive ideas, but can be used to help you decide if a minigame is likely to make sense with the subject you are teaching.

**Have more questions?**

*Reach out to*

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