

Focus On: Video Games

A collection of reading and writing
activities for the classroom.



Created by
The Curriculum Corner

What is a video game?

A video game is anything you can interact with by electronically manipulating computer-generated images on a display screen.

Josef Kates

Bertie the Brain

Dr. Josef Kates was a Canadian engineer who was born on May 5, 1921. In 1950 a game he built, Bertie the Brain, was displayed at the Canadian National Exhibition. Kates built the game to showcase a computer processing tube he had invented. Bertie the Brain was a 13-foot-tall version of tic-tac-toe. The game had adjustable difficulty levels. Kates was able to adjust the difficulty up or down to make the game level appropriate for children or adults. This game used lightbulbs to display the player's and the computer's moves. The computer would respond almost immediately after the human's move. At the most difficult level, the computer was very challenging to beat.

William Higinbotham

Tennis for Two

William Higinbotham was a physicist in The United States of America. He was born on October 25th, 1910. In 1958 he created a computer game that he named Tennis for Two. The game was displayed on an oscilloscope screen. It was played with two aluminum controllers that each had a button and a knob. The game was created for an exposition where it was very popular. It was created for entertainment and not a part of any research. The game was also not created to show a product a company had made.

Ralph Henry Baer

Odyssey

Ralph Henry Baer was born in Germany on March 8, 1922. He immigrated to United States before World War II began. In 1966 he was working as an engineer when he imagined playing video games on a television screen. He created a video game system called Brown Box. Working with his team, they developed games for this system. This video game system was used with an ordinary television. In 1973 Magnavox bought his product, creating the Odyssey home video console based on what he had created.

Name: _____

Who Invented the Video Game?

Do you know when the first video game was invented?

Do you know who invented the first video game?

If you have not learned about the history games, you probably don't know that there is some debate over who was responsible for inventing the first video game. Keep reading to learn about those who are often credited with inventing the first video game. After reading, choose who you think should be given credit.

In my opinion, the first video game was invented by:	
I chose this inventor because:	
Another piece of evidence I considered was:	

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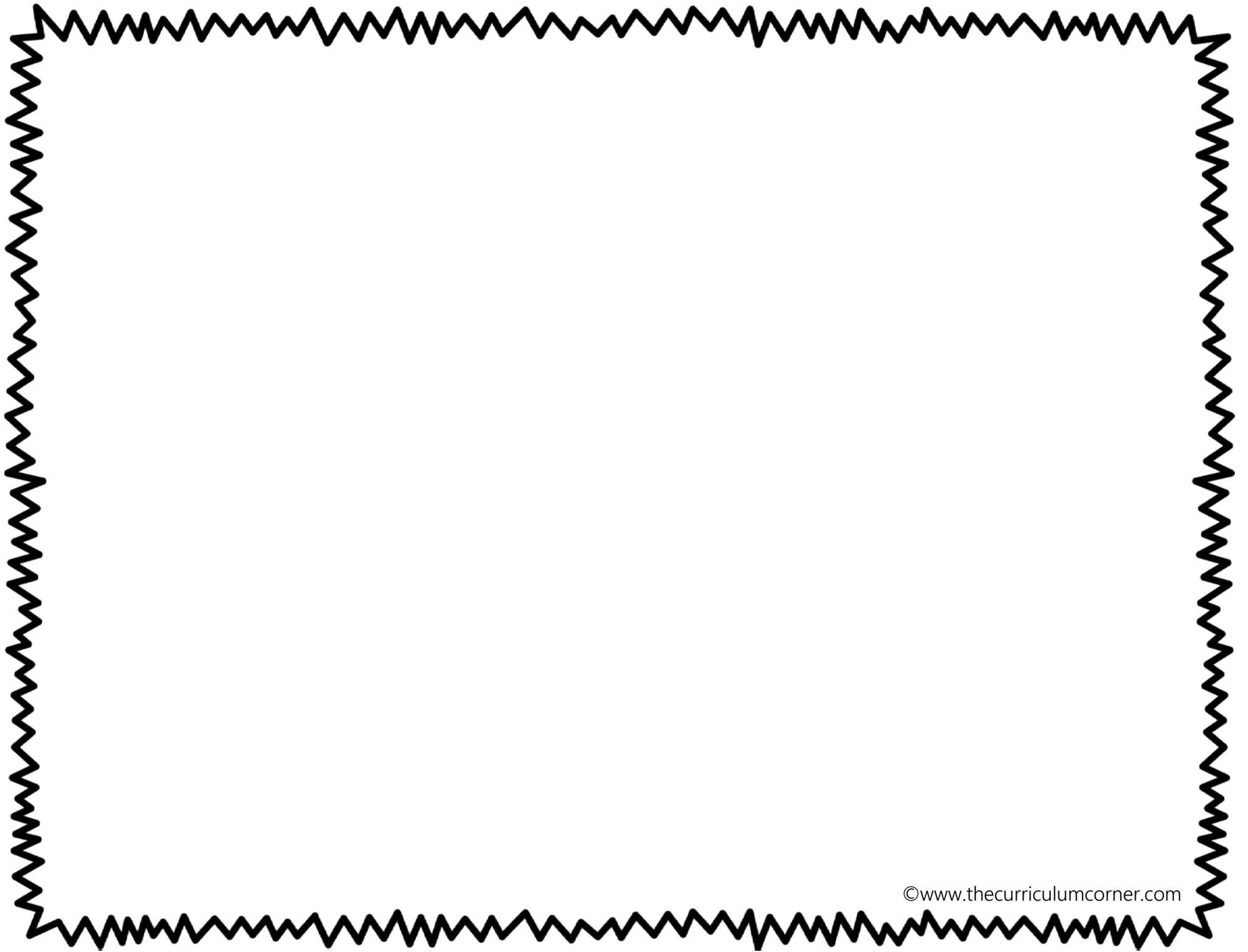
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The History of Video Games

Use words and pictures to share your thoughts as you learn about video games.



Name: _____

Video Games Timeline

Write a date and event in each square below to share the important moments in the history of video games.

Video Game Designers

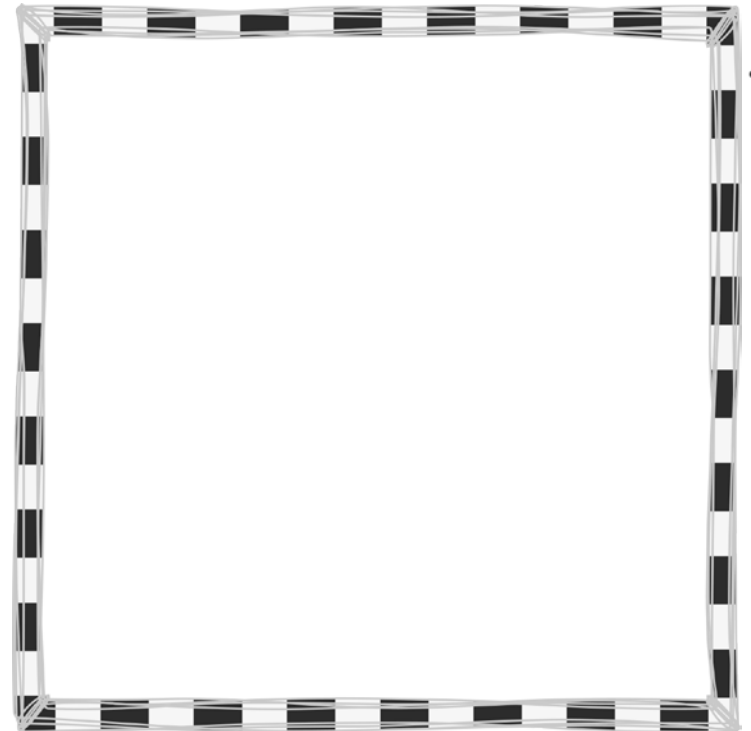
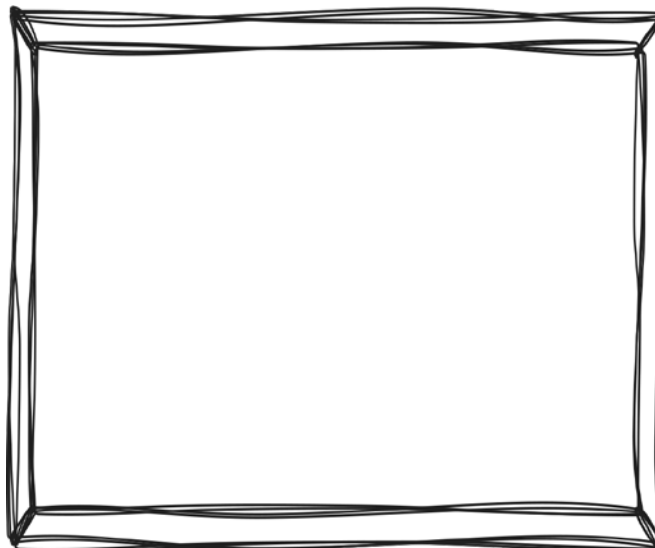
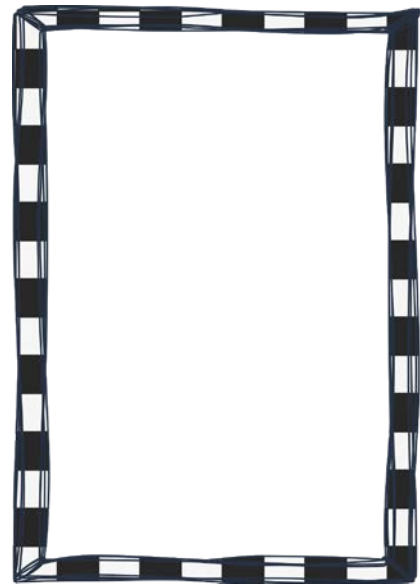
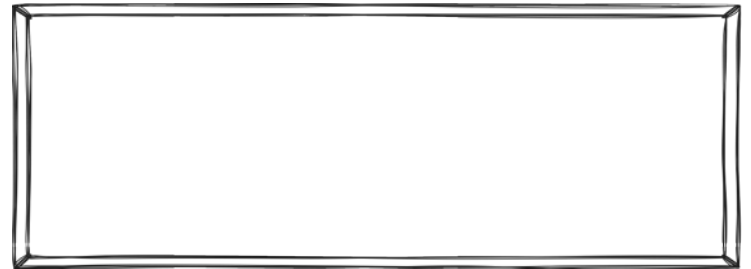
- Shigeru Miyamoto
 - Gunpei Yokoi
- Danielle Bunten Berry
 - Sid Meier
- Roberta Williams
 - Hideo Kojima
 - John Carmack
 - Ellen Beeman
 - Will Wright
 - Satoshi Tajiri
- Michael Morhaime
- Hironobu Sakaguchi
 - Masaya Matsuura
 - Carol Shaw
 - Sandy Petersen
 - Markus Persson
 - Dona Bailey

Name: _____

Designing Video Games

Research

Choose one video game designer. Practice your research skills by learning about your designer.
Use words and pictures to show what you have learned.



Name: _____

Reading an Infographic

Look at the infographic to find the answers to each question.

What can you learn from this infographic?	
What are two things the experts suggest you do if you want to become a video game designer?	1.
	2.
Where might you move if you want to become a video game designer?	

Name: _____

Designing Video Games

Are you thinking about becoming a video game designer? What qualities do you think a video game designer needs? Think of three traits that you believe are necessary. Share why you think each quality is necessary.

Trait 1:	Why is this trait important?
Trait 2:	Why is this trait important?
Trait 3:	Why is this trait important?

Name: _____

Are Video Games Good or Bad?

Persuasive Writing: Research

Name of Source:	What I learned:

Name: _____

Are Video Games Good or Bad?

Persuasive Writing: Planning Your Writing

I believe that video games are:

Reason 1:

Reason 2:

Reason 3:

Conclusion:

Name: _____

Are Video Games Good or Bad?

Persuasive Writing: Rough Draft

Writing area with ten horizontal lines for text.

A writing template consisting of ten horizontal grey bars, each separated by a thin white line, intended for student writing. The bars are arranged vertically and span most of the page width.

Name: _____

Create Your Story

Creative Writing: Planning Your Writing

World	Main Character	Other Characters
The Story		Conflict

Name: _____

Create Your Story

Creative Writing: Outlining Your Story
Use words and pictures.

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Name: _____

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Name: _____

Esports in Schools

A school is trying to start a video game club. The teachers and students are trying to convince the principal to agree. What reasons would you give for starting a video game club? Share why you think this would be a positive addition to the school.

Provide Evidence What is one piece of evidence that shows esports are now a team sport instead of just a hobby?

Benefiting Students How do esports help students?

Making Comparisons How can esports be better than physical sports?

Getting Started When a school starts an esports team, what is something easy about the process and something that could be a challenge?

Name: _____

Join the Club!

A school is trying to start a video game club. The teachers and students are trying to convince the principal to agree. What reasons would you give for starting a video game club? Share why you think this would be a positive addition to the school.

Why do you think a video game club would be good for the school?

1.

2.

3.

Name: _____

Creating a Commercial

Pretend you are creating a commercial for your favorite video game.

Video Game	Characters	Setting
Why should customers buy this game?		
1.		
2.		
3.		

Name: _____

Keeping Things Under Control

We can't control everything in our lives. Controlling what we can make our lives better. What are some things you can control?

