

CAREER BRIEF

(Grades 9-12)

ART DIRECTOR – VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY



WHAT IS AN ART DIRECTOR?

An Art Director for a video game company leads a team of artists, animators and designers in developing the overall visual style of a specific video game. They create and direct the visual art of the game from concept creation to delivering the final product. The Art Director works closely with the Creative Director and Producer to understand their goals and vision for the project.

WHAT DOES AN ART DIRECTOR DO?

An Art Director has many responsibilities, including the following job tasks.

- Motivates their team to make an amazing video game, but also keeps them on task and schedule.
- Creates the budget to manage all art costs, including employees and number of worlds to create and characters to develop.
- Leads the creation of storyboards (well-designed sketches) that relay ideas to the full team and leadership.
- Manages the process in which programmers place the art into the video game so the characters can come to life with movements and the environments can create scenes.
- Delivers the final product to the Producer and later to players all over the world.

***Fun Fact:** Did you know that MOCAP (motion capture) is the technology that makes characters look and move like humans? Markers are placed on an actor's body and as the actor moves, the markers are tracked and applied to a 3D model.

EDUCATION

- American Institute of Graphic Arts reports that 9 out of 10 Art Directors have a college degree, with most of them majoring in graphic design. 2 out of 10 Art Directors have college degrees in game art, game design or fine art.
- Professional art schools offer 2, 3 and 4 year programs for Art Directors, including classes that focus on figure drawing, painting, graphic design, art history, writing and business administration.
- Courses offered at art schools specifically for video game design, include animation, web design and portfolio development.

TRAINING

- Be an expert in computer software, including but not limited to Adobe InDesign, PageMaker, FrameMaker, Illustrator, and Photoshop and more specialized 3D game creation tools such as Lightwave, 3D Studio Max, and Maya.
- Completion of courses in art, drawing, art history, graphic design, illustration and computer science.

SKILLS

- Strong artistic skills, like drawing, painting, and 3-D modeling.
- Business skills in finance and management.
- Be knowledgeable in color, texture, light and architecture.

EXPLORING THIS CAREER

- Develop your own talent by researching and reading about computer animated art and get some hands-on practice with creative arts like painting, drawing and animation. Learn more about this career here:
 - <http://nasad.arts-accredit.org>
 - <http://www.aiga.org>
 - <http://www.adcglobal.org>
- Visit the website for International Game Developers Association (igda.org) and look for "Breaking in: Preparing for Your Career in Games" to gain insights and earnings expectations.



CAREER BRIEF

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NARRATIVE WRITER – VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY

WHAT IS A NARRATIVE WRITER?

A narrative writer creates and develops the storyline for a specific video game. They also create the dialogue (conversations between characters) throughout the video game.

WHAT DOES A NARRATIVE WRITER DO?

- Develops initial story ideas and plots during the video game’s concept phase.
- Creates the video game characters, giving them personalities and missions to complete.
- Creates scenes based on real places (like California), or uses “world-building” to create whole new worlds.
- Puts together a graphic organizer to show how the story progresses, where it branches off and how it ends.
- Presents the final story to the Creative Director and Producer for production approval.

****Fun Fact:** Angry Birds was made by a team of four people and was completed in eight months. Angry Birds was the first mobile game to hit one billion downloads*

EDUCATION

- A college bachelor’s degree is usually required at most video game studios.
- An education in creative writing and script writing is preferred.

TRAINING

- Overall knowledge of video game stories.
- Participation in courses focusing on fiction, storytelling, literature, and using a narrative voice.
- Two years of professional writing experience is often required from studios.

SKILLS

- Ability to clearly express yourself creatively.
- Creative writing and narrative writing skills.
- Organizational skills, including the ability to meet deadlines.

EXPLORING THIS CAREER

- Learn more about this career by reading the following books:
 - Start Your Video Game Career by Jason W. Bay
 - The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses by Jesse Schell