

Optional: Make a Trailer

Game trailers have two purposes. One is to convey information about what the game is and what it's like to play it. The other purpose is to persuade viewers that the game is interesting.

Observe (5-10 minutes)

The first part of the assignment is to watch some game trailers carefully and take some quick notes about what they're doing. Choose trailers for games that are more about mechanics than story, since a story trailer is different from a mechanics trailer. Try to find trailers for games whose mechanics are similar to yours.

Here are some things to observe:

- When and how often does the camera change? Does that make it feel fast-paced or reflective? Does that pace match the game itself?
- What kind of shots does the trailer use? That is, close-ups, long shots, panning across horizontally or vertically, zooming in or out? Does the trailer only use the game camera or does it alternate gameplay with other kinds of visuals? For example, the camera might fly through a level from high above even though the player's character never leaves the ground in the game.
- Does the trailer use words? Are they text on screen, voiceover or both? If it's on-screen text, does it appear between shots or on top of them?

Plan

The next step is to think about what you want to show in your trailer. It's perfectly fine for this purpose if you just show a title screen and then a single long shot (say 10-15 seconds) of gameplay. Give some thought to what the best 10-15 seconds would be though – it's not necessarily the first few seconds of your game.

If you want to make something a little fancier, you'll start by thinking about the story you want to tell. Is your game exciting? Mysterious? Contemplative? Are there moments in it that are surprising or funny? How can you combine shots to tell this story? What kind of background music would help set the tone?

What you're doing is actually making a little film, so you'll use the tools and techniques of film-making to plan and assemble the final product. See the resources in the next section for videos that introduce the basics of storyboarding and editing.

Make

Once you've decided what you want to capture from your game, you'll need software that actually records the footage. Look below for a few options. Two important tips for recording:

1. If you're planning to use background music in your trailer (recommended), *turn off the background music* in your game before you begin recording. Keep the in-game sound effects on if you plan to use them in the trailer.
2. Be aware that video capture may create *enormous files* on your hard drive, particularly at high resolutions. Try a couple of sample captures to check how big the files are and tweak the settings to something reasonable.

Once you've captured your footage, you'll need to bring it into a video editing program to assemble it with your title screen and background music. The resources in the next section include a list of free and low-cost options for video editing.

When you are finished, post your trailer online (on YouTube, Vimeo, etc.) and put the link in the gallery.

Resources

Storyboarding/editing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQsvhq28sOI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAH0MoAv2CI>

<http://heidigrover.blogspot.com/2014/01/like-for-like-storyboard.html>

Tools for capturing gameplay

<https://www.techradar.com/news/the-best-screen-recorders-for-windows-mac-android-and-ios>

<https://www.techradar.com/news/the-best-free-screen-recorder>

Tools for making a trailer

<http://www.storyboardthat.com/>

<https://www.techradar.com/news/software/applications/the-best-free-video-editor-1330136>

Overview of making an indie trailer

https://www.gamasutra.com/blogs/RyanSumo/20170825/304497/A_Quick_Guide_to_Making_Indie_Game_Trailers.php