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# Lesson Plan: Game Dev 101 - The Pitch

**Subject:** English Language Arts (Disguised as Game Design)

**Grade Level:** 8th-9th Grade (Age 14)

**Time Allotment:** 60-75 minutes

**Teacher's Note:** The goal of this lesson is diagnostic and interest-driven. We are assessing Dain's ability to organize thoughts, use descriptive language, structure a narrative, and articulate ideas persuasively—all without mentioning "English class." The focus is on creativity and fun. Avoid correcting grammar or spelling during the creative process; make notes for yourself to address later in a different context. Your role is more of a "Studio Executive" or "Creative Partner" than a traditional teacher.

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## Materials Needed

- Large whiteboard or several large sheets of paper
  - Markers or colored pencils
  - Notebook paper and a pen/pencil
  - Optional: A laptop or tablet for a 2-minute "research" activity (watching a video game trailer)
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## 1. Learning Objectives (What We're Secretly Assessing)

By the end of this lesson, the student will:

- **Develop a Protagonist:** Create a compelling main character with distinct traits, a clear motivation, and a unique ability. (Assesses characterization, descriptive detail).
- **Construct a Narrative World:** Design a unique setting with specific rules, atmosphere, and key locations. (Assesses world-building, setting, use of sensory details).
- **Outline a Core Conflict:** Formulate a central plot or "quest" that includes a clear goal, a primary obstacle, and an antagonist. (Assesses narrative structure, conflict/resolution).
- **Articulate Ideas Persuasively:** Organize and present the game concept in a clear and engaging manner. (Assesses organization, persuasive language, and verbal/written communication skills).

## 2. Lesson Procedure & Activities

### Part 1: The Hook - Market Research (10 minutes)

**Goal:** To get Dain thinking about the elements of a good story in a context he enjoys.

1. **Engage with a Favorite:** Start with a casual conversation. "Hey Dain, what's the best video game you've played recently? What made it so good? Was it the character, the story, the world you got to explore?"
  2. **Analyze the Professionals:** Say, "Let's do some 'market research.' Game studios spend millions
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on their trailers to hook people in just two minutes." Watch a cinematic trailer for a popular, story-driven game (e.g., *The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom*, *God of War Ragnarök*, or a game he likes).

3. **Quick Debrief:** After watching, ask questions like:

- "What did they show us to get us interested?"
- "What do we know about the main character just from that short clip?"
- "What seems to be the main problem or mission?"

This primes his brain to think about character, setting, and plot.

## Part 2: The Brainstorm - The Design Studio (25-30 minutes)

**Goal:** To generate the core components of the game concept, allowing for creative freedom while assessing his ability to build a coherent idea.

Use the whiteboard or large paper. Frame this as a collaborative brainstorming session at a game design studio. "Alright, let's design our own game. Imagine a big studio wants to hear our pitch, but first, we need a concept. No idea is a bad idea here."

- **The Hero (Characterization):**

- "Every great game needs a hero. Who is our main character? Are they a futuristic soldier, a wizard, a regular kid who finds something amazing? What's their name?"
- "What makes them special? Do they have a unique power or a cool gadget?"
- "What do they want more than anything? (This is their motivation)."

*(Assessment: Can he create a character with depth beyond just a name?)*

- **The World (Setting & World-Building):**

- "Where does our game take place? Is it a mysterious, overgrown jungle planet? A high-tech city in the clouds? A haunted medieval kingdom?"
- "What's one unique rule about this world? (e.g., 'Gravity is weird here,' or 'Magic is illegal.')
- "Describe the coolest location in this world. What does it look, sound, and feel like?"

*(Assessment: Does he use descriptive, sensory language? Can he establish a consistent tone?)*

- **The Quest & The Villain (Plot & Conflict):**

- "What is the main mission or quest? Is the hero trying to find a lost artifact, save someone, or escape from somewhere?"
- "Who or what is standing in their way? Every hero needs a great villain. What is the villain's goal? Why are they doing this?"

*(Assessment: Can he create a logical cause-and-effect narrative structure?)*

## Part 3: The Pitch - Present to the Executives (15-20 minutes)

**Goal:** This is the summative part of the activity. It assesses his ability to organize and articulate his brainstormed ideas into a coherent whole.

1. **Set the Stage:** "Okay, this concept is awesome. The studio executives are ready to hear our pitch. We need to present our idea clearly so they'll give us the funding to make it."
2. **Offer a Choice (Differentiation):** "How do you want to present it? You can either:"
  - **A) The Verbal Pitch:** "Give me a 3-5 minute verbal pitch explaining the game. Use our notes from the whiteboard to guide you. The goal is to get me excited to play it."
  - **B) The One-Page Design Doc:** "Write a one-page summary of the game. It should have a section for the Hero, the World, and the Main Quest. Think of it as the back-of-the-box description, but more detailed."

This choice allows him to lean into his strengths (speaking vs. writing) while still demonstrating the core skills.

3. **Execution:** Give him 10-15 minutes to prepare and then present his pitch or share his document. Your role is to listen enthusiastically.

## Part 4: The Wrap-Up & Feedback (5-10 minutes)

**Goal:** To provide positive reinforcement and make a subtle connection to the real-world value of these skills.

1. **Positive Feedback First:** Start with genuine praise. "That was an amazing pitch, Dain. The idea for [mention a specific, cool detail he came up with] was brilliant. I would totally play that game."
2. **Reflective Questions (Formative Assessment):**
  - "What was the most fun part to create?"
  - "If you had to add a sidekick character, who would it be?"
  - "What would you name the sequel?"
3. **The "Aha!" Moment:** Connect the activity to the skill. "You know, what we just did—creating a character, building a world, and outlining a story—is exactly what authors, screenwriters, and, of course, game developers do every single day. You're a natural storyteller." This reframes "English" as a creative and powerful tool.

## 3. Differentiation and Extensions

- **For Support:** If Dain struggles with brainstorming, provide more structure. Use a "Character Profile" worksheet with prompts like Name, Age, Special Skill, Fear, etc. Or offer three pre-made world concepts for him to choose from and build upon.
- **For a Challenge/Extension:** If he finishes early or is highly engaged, challenge him to:
  - "Write the opening dialogue for the game."
  - "Design a specific level. What are the obstacles and how does the player beat them?"
  - "Draw a concept map of the world or a sketch of the main character."

## 4. Assessment Notes for the Teacher

During the lesson, keep a private log. Note the following:

- **Vocabulary & Word Choice:** Does he use varied and descriptive words, or does he rely on simple, repetitive language?
- **Idea Organization:** Can he connect his ideas logically? Does his plot make sense? When he pitched, was it structured or scattered?
- **Creativity & Detail:** How imaginative are his ideas? Does he add small details that bring the world or character to life?
- **Stamina:** How long did he stay engaged in the writing/planning process? Where did his energy dip?

These notes will give you a clear, low-stakes snapshot of his current abilities and areas to focus on in future (perhaps equally fun) lessons.

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