

your^{flame}job

MINI LESSON

GAME ON!

Students will read about game designer Mitu Khandaker. Then they'll learn about the core loop, the fundamental component of what makes games fun to play. Students will use one to conceptualize a game of their own.



Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.RI.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.RI.3
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.8

Materials

Class set of “Game On!”; access to [Kahoot quiz](#); “Core Loop Design” worksheet (optional); *Core Loop Essentials* video (optional)

INTRODUCTION

Work as a class to create a list of different kinds of games. These can be sports, board games, puzzles, video games, etc. Poll students on their favorite type of game. Have them turn and talk to a partner about what they enjoy about these games. Explain that they’ll be reading about a video-game designer who incorporates her interests in her game design. Then use the Kahoot! quiz at ti.me/gamingKahoot to see what students know about video games.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How can people get started with video-game design?
- What are some of the hats that game developers must wear?
- Why does Mitu Khandaker value representation in games?
- What qualities would make someone successful as a game designer?

CLOSING

Watch the *Core Loop Essentials* video at ti.me/coreloopvideo to learn about a basic game-design concept: a core loop. Tell students they’ll be outlining a new game using the core loop formula. Provide students with the worksheet “Core Loop Design,” at ti.me/coreloopdesign. Have them think of the world or environment their game will explore, the tasks that players will face, and how users will be able to customize their play. Encourage students to incorporate their interests into the game. Have them share their game ideas with the class. Allow them to give feedback to one another about their games. If time permits, have students draw a design of their world and/or characters.

GAME ON!

Meet Mitu Khandaker. She turned her love of gaming into a career as a video-game designer.

Do you enjoy playing video games? Have you ever thought about what it would be like to design them for a living? TIME for Kids spoke with Mitu Khandaker about her cool career.

“I’m a game developer,” she explains. “I’m someone who codes and designs games. And I’m a game-design professor, so I also teach games.” (Khandaker is an assistant arts professor for the NYU Game Center, at New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts.) “I’m an entrepreneur, too,” she says. “I started my own game-development company.”

Read on to learn about how Khandaker got her start as a video-game developer, what her job is like, what inspires her, and what keeps her motivated.

How do you become a game designer?

These days, you could actually go straight to school for game design and development. That’s one route you can take. But if college isn’t for you, for whatever reason, there are lots of ways to get training in making games.

What’s it like to be a game designer?

Being a game developer is like wearing a lot of different hats at once. One minute, I might be fixing some code. Another minute, I might be solving a design problem, or creating art. The other part of the job is working with people. It’s very collaborative.

What makes a great game designer?

The best game designers are people who have a wide range of interests, because you want to bring those into games. So yes, you might love playing games. But you might also be someone who loves painting or writing stories, or making music, or even just listening to music. For instance, I love listening to hip-hop and rap. Whatever your interests are, there is a space for that in games to tell these amazing new stories.

What impact can you have as a game designer?

I would love for my work to change the way people think about representation in games. I’m all about

telling stories that make people feel seen. For me, growing up as a little brown girl, I didn’t see any characters who looked like me. That’s something I really want to change.

What’s your advice for future game designers?

If you want to be a game designer, I would say absolutely follow your passion and believe in yourself. If you like writing stories, or you like drawing or painting or designing board games—whatever it is—there is a place for you in games. Don’t take no for an answer. That’s how I got to where I am.



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CYBERSECURITY ANALYST
SOFTWARE ENGINEER
SOLAR-PANEL TECHNICIAN

THIS INTERVIEW HAS BEEN EDITED FOR LENGTH AND CLARITY.



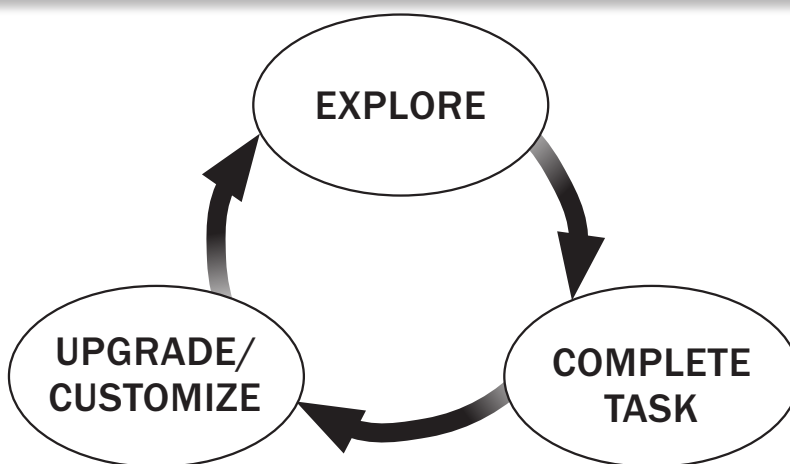
LEADING THE WAY Mitu Khandaker is a video-game designer, an entrepreneur, and an educator.

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CORE LOOP DESIGN

Read “Game On!” (March 24, 2023). Then design your own video game, using the core loop below.

What is the setting of your game? What kinds of environment will players be exploring?



What part of the game is customizable?
What upgrades or rewards can players earn?

What tasks or activities will players complete?