

Suggested Games for the Humanities Classroom

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Below are a number of games that are accessible, free or affordable, and recommended for the humanities classroom. You will have to consider how and why a game should be included in a lesson, assignment, or class, keeping mind the norms, values, narratives, and assumptions presented by each game. This is not an exhaustive list:

- *A Slow Year* (Ian Bogost, 2010): <http://bogost.com/games/aslowyear/>
A collection of four games, one for each season, about the experience of observing things. These games are neither action nor strategy: each of them requires a different kind of sedate observation and methodical input.
- *Darfur is Dying* (2006): <http://www.gamesforchange.org/game/darfur-is-dying/>
A flash-based browser game about the crisis in Darfur, western Sudan.
- *Elegy for a Dead World* (2014): <https://www.dejobaan.com/elegy/>
A side-scrolling exploration game where the player writes a diary visible to other players. The player explores three worlds inspired by British romantic poets Shelley, Byron, and Keats.
- *Ever, Jane* (Judy Tyrer, 2017): <https://everjane.com/>
An on-line role-playing game set in the virtual world of Regency England and the works of Jane Austen.
- *Flower* (Thatgamecompany, 2009): <http://thatgamecompany.com/flower/>
In this environmental game, the player controls the wind, blowing a flower petal through the air using the movement of the game controller.
- *Gone Home* (The Fullbright Company, 2013): <https://gonehome.game/>
A mystery first-person exploration video game in which the player is a young woman returning from overseas to her rural Oregon family home to find her family currently absent and the house empty.
- *The Great Gatsby* (Nintendo, 1987): <https://greatgatsbygame.com/>
A Flash game loosely based on the novel.
- *Hamlet or the Last Game without MMORPG Features, Shaders and Product Placement* (Denis Galanin, 2010):
https://store.steampowered.com/app/222160/Hamlet_or_the_Last_Game_without_MMORPG_Features_Shaders/
An indie adventure game based on William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.
- *He Ao Hou* (AbTec, 2017): <http://skins.abtec.org/skins5.0/>
A indigenously produced point-and-click adventure game set in the far future, when Native Hawaiians have attained space travel.
- *Herotopia* (2010): <https://kizi.com/games/herotopia>
A Flash-based MMORPG as a way to help children learn different ways to deal with bullies.
- *Never Alone* (E-Line Media, 2014): <http://neveralonestgame.com/>
A puzzle-platformer adventure video game based on the traditional Iñupiaq tale, "Kunuuksaayuka."
- *Papers, Please* (Lucas Pope, 2013): <https://papersplea.se/>
A puzzle game where the player plays a border crossing immigration officer in the fictional dystopian country of Arstotzka.
- *That Dragon, Cancer* (Numinous Games, 2016): <http://www.thatdragoncancer.com/>
An autobiographical game is based on the a family's experience of raising their son, who was diagnosed with terminal cancer at twelve months old.
- *Undertale* (Toby Fox, 2015): <https://undertale.com/>
A role-playing video game about a child who has fallen into the Underground, a region under the surface of the Earth populated by monsters.
- *Unmanned* (Molleindustria, 2012): <http://unmanned.molleindustria.org/>
A game about the life of an unmanned drone pilot.
- *The Voter Suppression Trail* (The New York Times, 2016):
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/11/01/opinion/voting-suppression-videogame.html>
A game about voter suppression in the US.
- *Walden, a Game* (USC Interactive Media & Games Division, 2017): <https://www.waldengame.com/>
A game first-person open world video game about the experience of naturalist and author Henry David Thoreau's stay at Walden Pond in 1845-47.
- *When Rivers Were Trails* (Elizabeth LaPensée, 2019): <https://indianlandtenure.itch.io/when-rivers-were-trails>
An educational 2D adventure game which follows an Anishinaabeg in the 1890's who is displaced from Fond du Lac in Minnesota to California due to the impact of allotment acts on Indigenous communities

- *Wao Kanaka* (AbTec, 2018): <http://skins.abtec.org/skins6.0/>
A first-person, exploration and puzzle game based on Kānaka Maoli stories and knowledge, and focuses in particular on the central concept of aloha ‘aina (“love of the land”) as a guide for shaping both narrative and gameplay.

Furthermore, here are is a brief collection of articles, essays, resources, and websites that might help inform the teaching of and with video games:

- “5 Popular Games That Help Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders”: <https://learningworksforkids.com/2015/04/5-popular-games-that-help-children-with-autism-spectrum-disorders/>
- “The Art of Video Games”: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/the-art-of-video-games-101131359/>
- “Can Science-Based Video Games Help Kids with Autism?”: <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/06/can-science-based-video-games-help-kids-autism>
- “Comparing Storytelling in Games & Literature”: <https://medium.com/@Tarnimus/comparing-storytelling-in-games-literature-4e5ff6ca5a73> “Playing with History in Video Games”: <http://www.historymatters.group.shef.ac.uk/playing-history-video-games/>
- “Reading Games: Composition, Literacy, and Video Gaming,” *Computers and Composition Online*: <http://cconlinejournal.org/fall2008.html>
- Game Accessibility: <https://www.game-accessibility.com/>
- *First Person Scholar*: <http://www.firstpersonscholar.com/>
- “The Games Art Historians Play”: <https://www.chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/the-games-art-historians-play-online-game-based-learning-in-art-history-and-museum-contexts/61263>
- *Game Studies*: <http://gamestudies.org/1803/about>
- “How Video Games Benefit Students With Special Needs”: <https://www.aane.org/video-games-benefit-students-special-needs/>
- I Need Diverse Games: <https://ineeddiversegames.org/>
- “I Play Therefore I Am: 7 Videogames that Teach Us about Philosophy”: <https://www.pcgamesn.com/videogames-about-philosophy>
- “Is a Medieval Video Game Historically Accurate Without People of Color?”: <https://www.dailydot.com/parsec/gaming/reddit-tumblr-medieval-video-game-poc/>
- “Learning Disabilities and Video Games”: <https://learningworksforkids.com/2018/05/learning-disabilities-and-video-games/>
- “Learning With: Adaptive Video Game Controllers Open Worlds for Gamers With Disabilities”: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/02/learning/learning-with-adaptive-video-game-controllers-open-worlds-for-gamers-with-disabilities.html>
- LGBTQ Video Games Archive: <https://lgbtqgamearchive.com/>
- *Queer Game Studies* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017): <https://www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/books/queer-game-studies>
- “Screen Saviors: Can Activism-Focused Games Change Our Behavior?” <https://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2017/07/23/538617205/screen-saviors-can-activism-focused-games-change-our-behavior>
- “Shakespeare in Video Games”: <https://transmedialshakespeare.wordpress.com/2011/01/21/shakespeare-in-video-games/>
- “Tropes vs. Women in Video Games,” *Feminist Frequency*: <https://feministfrequency.com/series/tropes-vs-women-in-video-games/>
- “Video Games are Better without Stories”: <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2017/04/video-games-stories/524148/> “Video Games for Literature Lovers”: <http://www.thenarratologist.com/miscellaneous/video-games-literature-lovers/>
- “Video Games in the Humanities Classroom”: <https://www.museumofplay.org/blog/chegheads/2013/02/video-games-in-the-humanities-classroom>

- “Video Games as Modern Art and Poetry”: <https://www.utne.com/arts/video-games-as-modern-art-and-poetry>
- Video Games of the Oppressed: <https://videogamesoftheoppressed.wordpress.com/>
- “Video Games that Improve Skills for Kids with Special Needs”:
<https://www.cnn.com/2016/07/13/health/video-games-special-needs/index.html>
- “Video Games That Ask Deep Philosophical Questions”:
<https://the-artifice.com/video-games-philosophical-questions/>
- “What If a Video Game Was Poetry?”: <https://kotaku.com/what-if-a-video-game-was-poetry-453104628>
- “Why Videogames (Should) Matter to the Humanities”:
<http://iblog.iup.edu/thisprofessorplays/2018/06/10/why-videogames-should-matter-to-the-humanities/>
- *Woke Gaming* (University of Washington Press, 2018):
<https://www.washington.edu/uwpress/search/books/GRAWOK.html>