

ACCA7034

Game concept development and project scope

Session 2
Advanced Games Design and
Production



A Short Hike / Adam Robinson-Yu

Today's output: a one-page concept sheet

By the end of the session

A clear high-concept statement

An intended audience and player experience

A defined visual direction and core activity

A feasible prototype scope with a reasoned choice

Starting point: three possible concepts

Quick individual review / then pairs

Write one sentence for each idea

Name what the player repeatedly does

Circle the idea you can explain most clearly

Mark one question you cannot yet answer

The parts of a playable concept

A useful planning sequence

Player: What can they do and how?

Goal: What are they trying to achieve?

Challenge: What requires a decision or skill?

Experience: How should those choices feel?

Baba Is You: a distinctive core action



Concept analysis

Push words to change the rules

Use the new rules to solve a puzzle

What makes this easy to describe?

A Short Hike: activity and experience



A Short Hike / Adam Robinson-Yu

Concept analysis

Explore, climb and glide

Travel towards a mountain summit

Which choices support a relaxed pace?

A high-concept statement

One or two sentences that explain the playable idea

A [genre] game where [player role] uses [core action] to achieve [goal], while dealing with [distinctive constraint].

A concept becomes more specific

Early idea

A mysterious game about a lighthouse keeper.

The setting is clear. The player activity needs definition.

Developed idea

A first-person puzzle game where a keeper redirects light around broken equipment to restore a warning beacon.

The role, action, goal and obstacle give the design a direction.

Audience and intended experience

A working hypothesis to support with evidence

Relevant player interests and experience

Expected pace, challenge and session length

Control, readability and access needs



Journey / thatgamecompany

Genre, platform and production constraints

Choices that affect the work you will need to do

Genre creates expectations about actions and feedback

Platform affects controls, display and performance targets

Choose tools and hardware you can access consistently

Explain what you will adapt from relevant games

Concept comparison workshop

10 minutes / one provisional selection

Compare all three ideas for clarity and distinctiveness

Check audience fit and opportunities for visual development

Identify the main technical or production uncertainty

Select one idea and write a reason for rejecting the others

Break

10 minutes

Next: deciding what the prototype needs to demonstrate

Concept scope and production scope

Concept scope

The full game you can imagine

Its world, progression and wider systems

Useful context for the artistic direction

Production scope

The section you will develop here

Its playable space and essential interactions

A concrete limit on tasks and dependencies

Prototype, vertical slice and complete game

Working distinctions for project planning

Prototype: a build used to explore an idea or answer a question

Vertical slice: a small section representative of the intended final quality

Complete game: the full intended content and supporting systems

CW2 asks for a functional prototype of the primary gameplay systems

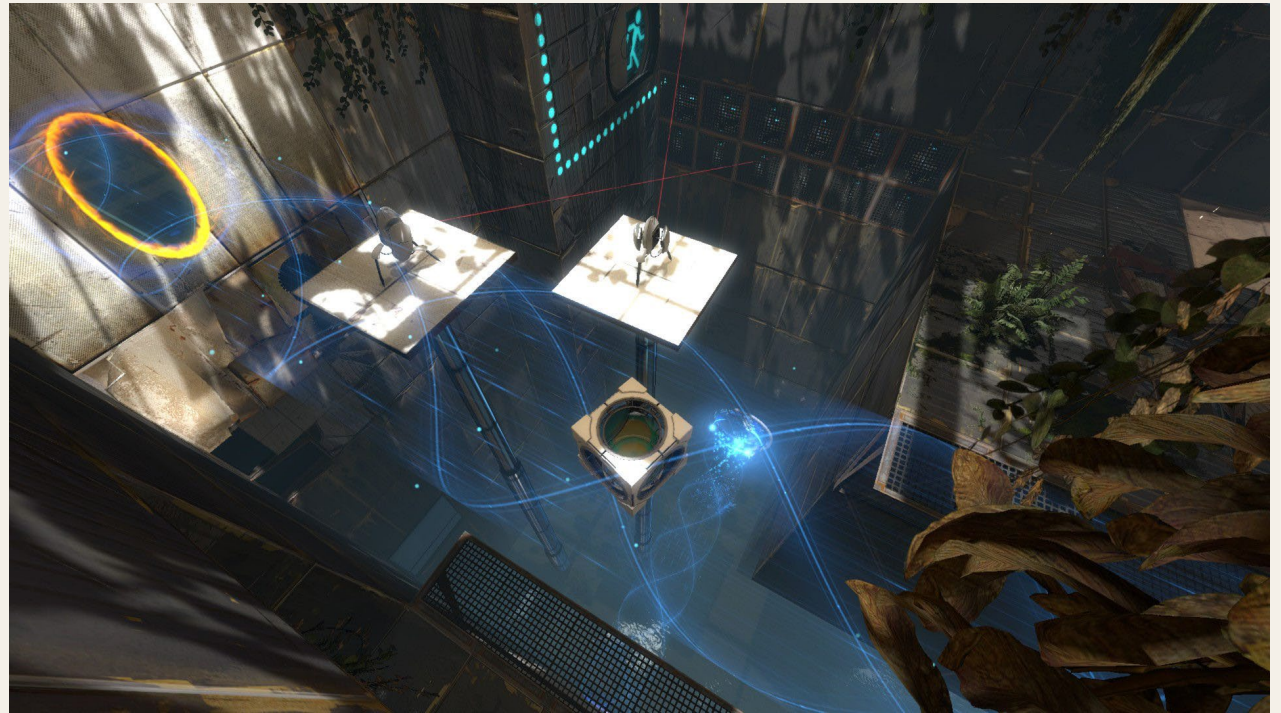
The smallest meaningful playable situation

A planning question for your own project

What does the player attempt?

What decision or obstacle gives it meaning?

How can the player recognise the result?



Portal 2 / Valve

Example scope: A Lighthouse Game Idea

Included in this build

One room and one light-routing challenge

A controllable mirror and responsive receiver

A clear completion state and restart

Future development

Several coastal locations

A branching mystery and voiced characters

Weather systems and multiple puzzle types

Dependencies and production risk

A small feature can involve several tasks

Example: **A locked door and key**

- Create the door and key
- Add the interaction
- Make the door open
- Add sounds or UI
- Playtesting
- Fix any problems

Small ideas can still take a lot of work.

Scope review workshop

10 minutes / peer challenge

Write your prototype's start, core interaction and end

List the essential features and planned exclusions

Circle the largest dependency or skill gap

Agree one scope reduction and record its consequence

Your one-page concept sheet

Game concept

Working title and high-concept statement

Genre, platform and intended audience

Player activity, challenge and experience

Development proposal

Initial visual direction and influences

Prototype scope and exclusions

Main risk, fallback and next step

Example concept sheet: Last Lighthouse

Concept

First-person light-routing puzzle on PC.

Players who enjoy unhurried spatial puzzles.

A keeper restores a beacon by redirecting light.

Scope and direction

One room, one challenge, visible success and restart.

Weathered coastal machinery with clear lit and unlit states.

Requires: beam logic. First step: one mirror and receiver.

Concept sheet studio

10 minutes / individual development

- **Describe your concept** – What are you making, and what is the main idea?
- **Identify your audience** – Who is the experience intended for?
- **Set the scope of the prototype** – What will you actually build and test?
- **Identify the main unknown** – What are you most unsure about and need to test?
- **Choose a visual direction** – Add images and name games, artists, films, or other influences that inspire the look and feel.
- **Decide your next step** – Write down one specific thing you will do next to move the project forward.

Pitch and peer feedback

Individual / 60-second pitch each

- **Explain your game idea** – Who is the player, what do they do, and what is their main goal?
- **Highlight what makes it interesting** – What is the key feature or idea that makes your concept distinctive?
- **Explain your prototype** – What part of the idea will you build to show that it works?
- **Listener: summarise the idea** – Repeat the main concept back in your own words to check that it was clear.
- **Ask two questions** – One question about anything that was unclear, and one about whether the idea is realistic to make.

Next steps

Independent study

- **Improve your one-page concept sheet** – Use the feedback from today's session to make your idea clearer and more focused.
- **Keep your earlier ideas** – Show the alternatives you considered and briefly explain why you chose your final direction.
- **Gather visual references** – Find images, games, films, artwork, or other examples that support your visual direction.
- **Record your sources** – Note where each reference came from so you can refer back to it later.
- **Bring the updated sheet to the next session** – You will use it as the starting point for the next stage of development.