

Gameplay Metadata Schema: Version 1.0

Jentery Sayers developed this metadata schema with copy-editing by Amy Anderson and feedback from Amy Anderson, Callum Carroll-Ireton, Abigail Fry, Martin Holmes, Reg Kachanoski, Maya Wei Yan Linsley, Emma Newton, Greg Newton, Illya Nokhrin, April Rogers, Héctor López Segarra, Marie Silhova, Charlie Susheski, and Christina Woods at the University of Victoria's Praxis Studio for Comparative Media Studies and Humanities Computing and Media Centre (HCMC).

The schema describes video files in the Press Record Gameplay Footage Collection (GPFC). It is an evergreen document. Its elements, definitions, and controlled vocabularies are not intended to be exhaustive, and we will update and correct them as we learn from the collection and description process.

No generative artificial intelligence tools were used to create or populate this schema.

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1. Sources

The metadata schema adapts the following projects for many of its entities, elements, and controlled vocabularies:

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See citations below for specific instances of adaptation.

2. Abbreviation and Acronym Key

- Elements marked with [R] are required.
- Elements marked with [+] are repeatable.
- GPFC refers to the Press Record Gameplay Footage Collection.
- NPC refers to a non-player character.
- PC refers to a player character.

3. Platform Edition Entity

Definition: “Denotes a particular instantiation of a video game. An edition may be a particular release of a game that is in some way different than another release of the same game” (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

The platform edition played and recorded for the GPFC may or may not correspond with the game’s initial release. For instance, *Journey* was initially released on PlayStation 3 in 2012. That release was the game’s first platform edition. Other platform editions of *Journey* include iPad (2019), iPhone (2019), PlayStation 4 (2015), and Windows (2019). These four platform editions (later releases) are ports of the 2012 platform edition (the initial release).

The following elements of the Platform Edition Entity should describe the platform edition of the game played and recorded for the GPFC.

- Game Title [R] (text input field)
- Release Year [R] (text input field)
- Release Type [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Platform [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Engine [+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Developer [R][+] (text input field)
- Developer’s Location [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Publisher [R][+] (text input field)
- Publisher Class [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Platform Edition Note (text input field)

3A. Game Title [R]

Definition: The proper name of the platform edition as assigned by its developer and/or publisher (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024; CIDOC 2011)

Provide the complete, official game title. Avoid using an alternative, abbreviated, or colloquial title.

text input field

3B. Release Year [R]

Definition: The year the platform edition was publicly/commercially released (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

The edition’s release year may differ from the game’s initial release year.

text input field; format: YYYY

3C. Release Type [R][+]

Definition: The platform edition's release type as assigned by its developer, publisher, and/or distributor

Use existing scholarship, MobyGames, Wikipedia, Steam, and/or fansites to confirm the release type if it was not assigned by the developer, publisher, and/or distributor.

controlled vocabulary

- Alpha
- Beta
- Demo
- Downloadable content (DLC)
- Early access
- Emulation
- Expansion
- Fan game
- Initial release / original release
- Port
- Reboot
- Remake
- Remaster
- Unfinished

3D. Platform [R][+]

Definition: The operating system, device, computer, console, and/or service on which the platform edition was played and recorded (Lee et al., "VGMS 4.2," 2024)

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with minor changes, from Poff and Atari 2025)

- 1291 Advanced Programmable Video System
- 3DO
- ABC 80
- Acorn 32-bit
- Adventure Vision
- AirConsole
- Alice 32/90
- Altair 680
- Altair 8800
- Amazon Alexa
- Amazon Luna
- Amiga
- Amiga CD32
- Amstrad CPC
- Amstrad PCW

- Analogue 3D
- Analogue Duo
- Analogue Mega SG
- Analogue Nt Mini
- Analogue Pocket
- Analogue Super Nt
- Android
- Anstream
- APF MP1000 / Imagination Machine
- Apple I
- Apple II
- Apple IIgs
- Arcade
- Arcadia 2001
- Arduboy
- Astral 2000
- Atari 2600
- Atari 5200
- Atari 7800
- Atari 8-bit
- Atari ST
- Atari VCS
- Atom
- Auto Response Board
- bada
- Bally Astrocade
- Bandai RX-78 Gundam
- BBC Micro
- BeOS
- BlackBerry
- Blacknut
- Blu-ray disc player
- BREW
- Browser
- Bubble
- Computers Lynx
- Casio FP-1000 / 1100
- Casio Loopy
- Casio Programmable Calculator
- Casio PV-1000
- CD-i
- CDTV
- Champion 2711

- Channel F
- ClickStart
- Coleco Adam
- ColecoVision
- Colour Genie
- Commodore 128
- Commodore 16, Plus/4
- Commodore 64
- Commodore PET/CBM
- Compal 80
- Compucolor I
- Compucolor II
- Compucorp Programmable Calculator
- COSMAC
- CP/M
- CreatiVision
- Cybervision
- DAI
- Danger OS
- Dedicated console
- Dedicated handheld
- Didj
- digiBlast
- DoJa
- DOS
- Dragon 32/64
- Dreamcast
- DVD Player
- ECD Micromind
- Electron
- Enterprise
- Epoch Cassette Vision
- Epoch Game Pocket Computer
- Epoch Super Cassette Vision
- Evercade
- Excelvision
- ExEn
- Exidy Sorcerer
- Feature phone
- Fire OS
- FM-7
- FM Towns
- Freebox

- FreeBSD
- G-cluster
- Galaksija
- Game Boy
- Game Boy Advance
- Game Boy Color
- Game Gear
- Game Wave
- Game.com
- GameCube
- GameStick
- Genesis
- GIMINI
- Gizmondo
- Gloud
- Glulx
- GNEX
- GP2X
- GP2X Wix
- GP32
- GVM
- HD DVD player
- Heath/Zenith H8/H89
- Heathkit H11
- Hitachi Basic Master
- Hitachi Basic Master Level 3
- Hitachi H68/TR
- Hitachi SI
- HP 9800
- HP Oscilloscope
- HP Programmable Calculator
- HP Series 80
- Hugo
- HyperScan
- IBM 5100
- Ideal-Computer
- iiRcade
- Intel 8008
- Intel 8080
- Intel 8086 / 8088
- Intellivision
- Interact Model One
- Interton Video 2000

- iPad
- iPhone
- iPod Classic
- J2ME
- Jaguar
- Jolt
- Jupiter Ace
- KaiOS
- KIM-1
- Kindle Classic
- Laser 200
- LaserActive
- LeapFrog Explorer
- Leapster
- LeapTV
- Linux
- Lkit-16
- Luna
- Lynx
- Macintosh
- macOS
- Maemo
- Magic Leap
- Mainframe
- Marvel 2000
- Matsushita / Panasonic JR
- Mattel Aquarius
- MeeGo
- Memotech MTX
- Meritum
- Microbee
- Microtan 65
- Microvision
- MiSTer FPGA
- Mitsubishi Multi-8
- Modular Game System
- Mophun
- MOS Technology 6502
- Motorola 6800
- Motorola 68k
- MRE
- MSX
- N-Gage

- N-Gage (service)
- Nascom
- NEC TK-80
- Neo Geo
- Neo Geo CD
- Neo Geo Pocket
- Neo Geo Pocket Color
- Neo Geo X
- NES
- NetBSD
- New Nintendo 3DS
- NewBrain
- Newton
- Nintendo 3DS
- Nintendo 64
- Nintendo DS
- Nintendo DSi
- Nintendo Switch
- Nintendo Switch 2
- North Star
- Noval 760
- Nuon
- Oculus Go
- Odyssey
- Odyssey 2
- Ohio Scientific
- OnLive
- OOParts
- OpenBSD
- Orao
- Oric
- OS/2
- Ouya
- Palm OS
- Pandora
- PC Booter
- PC-6001
- PC-8000
- PC-88
- PC-98
- PC-FX
- Pebble
- Philips P200

- Philips VG 5000
- Photo CD
- PICO
- Pippin
- Playdate
- Playdia
- PlayStation
- PlayStation 2
- PlayStation 3
- PlayStation 4
- PlayStation 5
- PlayStation Now
- Plex Arcade
- Pokémon Mini
- Pokitto
- Poly-88
- PS Vita
- PSP
- Quest
- RCA Studio II
- Research Machines 380Z
- Roblox
- Roku
- SAM Coupé
- SC / MP
- SD-200 / 270 / 290
- SEGA 32X
- SEGA CD
- SEGA Master System
- SEGA Pico
- SEGA Saturn
- SG-1000
- Sharp MZ-80B / 2000 / 2500
- Sharp MZ-80K / 700 / 800 / 1500
- Sharp X1
- Sharp X68000
- Sharp Zaurus
- Signetics 2650
- Sinclair QL
- SK-VM
- SMC-777
- SNES
- Socrates

- Sol-20
- Solaris
- Sord M5
- SPC-1000
- Spectravideo
- SRI-500 / 1000
- Stadia
- Steam
- Steam Deck
- Super A'can
- Super Vision 8000
- SuperGrafx
- Supervision
- Sure Shot HD
- SWTPC 6800
- Symbian
- TADS
- Taito X-55
- Tatung Einstein
- Tektronix 4050
- Tele-Spiel ES-2201
- Telstar Arcade
- TempleOS
- Terminal
- Thomson MO
- Thomson TO
- TI Programmable Calculator
- TI-99 / 4A
- TIC-80
- Tiki 100
- TIM
- Timex Sinclair 2068
- Tizen
- Tomahawk F1
- Tomy Tutor
- Toshiba Ex-80
- Toshiba Pasopia
- Triton
- TRS-80
- TRS-80 CoCo
- TRS-80 MC-10
- TRS-80 Model 100
- TurboGrafx-16

- TurboGrafx CD
- tvOS
- V.Flash
- V.Smile
- Vectrex
- Versatile
- VIC-20
- VideoBrain
- Videopac+ G7400
- Virtual Boy
- VIS
- visionOS
- Wang 2200
- watchOS
- webOS
- Wii
- Wii U
- Windows
- Windows 16-bit
- Windows Apps
- Windows Mobile
- Windows Phone
- WIPI
- WonderSwan
- WonderSwan Color
- XaviXPORT
- Xbox
- Xbox 360
- Xbox Cloud Gaming
- Xbox One
- Xbox Series
- Xerox Alto
- Z-machine
- Zeebo
- Zilog Z80
- Zilog Z8000
- Zillions of Games
- Zodiac
- Zune
- ZX Spectrum
- ZX Spectrum Next
- ZX80
- ZX81

3E. Engine [+]

Definition: The software framework and/or development environment used to design the platform edition

Use existing scholarship, MobyGames, Wikipedia, Steam, fansites, official advertisements, the developer's official website, and/or the platform edition's official website, title screen, and/or credits sequence to confirm the engine.

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with minor changes, from Wikipedia, "List of Game Engines," 2026)

- 4A Engine
- A-FRAME (VR)
- Adventure Game Interpreter
- Adventure Game Studio
- Aleph One
- Amazon Lumberyard
- Anvil
- AppGameKit
- Ardor3D
- Aurora toolset
- Babylon.js
- bitsy
- Blend4Web
- Blender
- Build Engine
- Buildbox
- C4 Engine
- Chrome Engine
- ClanLib
- Clausewitz
- Clickteam Fusion
- Cobra Engine
- Cocos2d / 2d-x / 2d-html5
- Codea
- Construct
- Coretech
- CraftStudio
- Creation Engine
- CryEngine
- Crystal Space
- Crystal Tools
- Cube Engine
- Cube 2 Engine

- Custom-built engine
- Dagor Engine
- Dark Engine
- Decima
- Defold
- Delta3D
- Dim3
- DimensioneX Multiplayer Engine
- Divinity Engine
- Dunia Engine
- DX Studio
- EGO
- Electron toolset
- Enforce
- Enigma Engine
- Essence Engine
- Exult
- Flame
- Flare3D
- Flash (Adobe)
- Flixel
- ForgeLight
- Fox Engine
- Freescape
- Freespace 2
- Frostbite
- Future Pinball
- Gamebryo
- GameMaker
- GameSalad
- Gamestudio
- GDevelop
- Genie Engine
- Godot
- Gold Box
- GoldSrc
- Havok
- HeroEngine
- Horde3D
- HPL Engine
- id Tech
- iMUSE
- Infinity Engine

- ioquake3
- Iron Engine
- Irrlicht
- IW Engine
- Jade
- Jake2
- Java 3D
- Jedi
- jMonkeyEngine
- Kinectica
- Kivy (framework)
- LayaAir
- Leadwerks
- LibGDX
- LithTech
- LÖVE
- Luminous Engine
- LyN
- M.U.G.E.N.
- Marmalade
- Messiah
- Moai SDK
- Monkey X
- MonoGame / XNA
- MT Framework
- Northlight
- NScripter
- O3DE
- Odyssey Engine
- OGRE
- OHRRPGCE
- ONScripter
- OpenClonk
- OpenMW
- OpenSimulator
- ORX
- Panda3D
- Panta Rhei
- Phaser
- PhyreEngine
- PICO-8
- Pie in the Sky
- Pixel Game Maker MV

- PlayCanvas
- PlayN
- Pulp
- Pygame
- Pyrogenesis
- Q
- Qfusion
- REDengine
- Ren'Py
- RenderWare
- Roblox
- Rockstar Advanced Game Engine
- RPG Maker
- S&box
- SAGE
- Scratch
- SCUMM
- Serious Engine
- Shark 3D
- Silent Storm Engine
- Snowdrop
- Solar2D
- Solaris
- Source
- Source 2
- Starling Framework
- Stencyl
- StepMania
- Stingray (Autodesk)
- Stratagus
- Stride
- Telltale Tool
- Three.js
- Torque3D
- TOSHI
- Treyarch NGL
- Turbulenz
- Twine
- UbiArt Framework
- Unigine
- Unity
- Unreal Engine
- V-Play

- Vengeance Engine
- Vicarious Visions Alchemy
- Virtools
- Vision
- Visual3D Game Engine
- Visual Pinball
- VRAGE
- Wintermute Engine
- Wolf RPG Editor
- World Builder
- WorldForge
- XnGine
- Zero

3F. Developer [R][+]

Definition: “An individual, organization, or group of individuals or organizations responsible for [the] creation, realization, [and/or] manufacture” of the platform edition (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024; IFLA 2009)

Use existing scholarship, MobyGames, Wikipedia, Steam, fansites, official advertisements, and/or the platform edition’s official website, title screen, and/or credits sequence to confirm the developer(s).

text input field

3G. Developer’s Location [R][+]

Definition: The geographic location of the platform edition’s developer(s)

Select the country for all developers except those in Canada.

For developers in Canada, select the country and province or territory: for example, Canada / British Columbia.

Use existing scholarship, MobyGames, Wikipedia, Steam, fansites, official advertisements, the developer’s official website, and/or the platform edition’s official website, title screen, and/or credits sequence to confirm the developer’s location.

controlled vocabulary

- Afghanistan
- Albania
- Algeria
- Andorra
- Angola
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina

- Armenia
- Australia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Bahamas
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Barbados
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Belize
- Benin
- Bermuda
- Bhutan
- Bolivia
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Botswana
- Brazil
- Brunei
- Bulgaria
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cambodia
- Cameroon
- Canada
- Canada / Alberta
- Canada / British Columbia
- Canada / Manitoba
- Canada / New Brunswick
- Canada / Newfoundland and Labrador
- Canada / Northwest Territories
- Canada / Nova Scotia
- Canada / Nunavut
- Canada / Ontario
- Canada / Prince Edward Island
- Canada / Quebec
- Canada / Saskatchewan
- Canada / Yukon
- Cape Verde
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Chile
- China

- Colombia
- Comoros
- Congo, Republic of the
- Congo, Democratic Republic of the
- Costa Rica
- Croatia
- Cuba
- Curacao
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Djibouti
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- East Timor
- Ecuador
- Egypt
- El Salvador
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Estonia
- Eswatini
- Ethiopia
- Fiji
- Finland
- France
- Gabon
- Gambia
- Georgia
- Germany
- Ghana
- Greece
- Grenada
- Guatemala
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Honduras
- Hungary
- Iceland
- India
- Indonesia

- Iran
- Iraq
- Ireland
- Israel
- Italy
- Ivory Coast
- Jamaica
- Japan
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Kiribati
- Kosovo
- Kuwait
- Kyrgyzstan
- Laos
- Latvia
- Lebanon
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Libya
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Mali
- Malta
- Marshall Islands
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mexico
- Micronesia
- Moldova
- Monaco
- Mongolia
- Montenegro
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Myanmar
- Namibia

- Nauru
- Nepal
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Nicaragua
- Niger
- Nigeria
- North Korea
- North Macedonia
- Norway
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Palau
- Palestine
- Panama
- Papua New Guinea
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Philippines
- Poland
- Portugal
- Puerto Rico
- Qatar
- Romania
- Russia
- Rwanda
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Samoa
- San Marino
- São Tomé and Príncipe
- Saudi Arabia
- Senegal
- Serbia
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- Singapore
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Solomon Islands
- Somalia
- South Africa

- South Korea
- South Sudan
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Suriname
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Syria
- Taiwan
- Tajikistan
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- Togo
- Tonga
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Tunisia
- Turkey
- Turkmenistan
- Tuvalu
- Uganda
- Ukraine
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom
- United States
- Uruguay
- Uzbekistan
- Vanuatu
- Vatican City
- Venezuela
- Vietnam
- Yemen
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

3H. Publisher [R][+]

Definition: “An individual, organization, or group of individuals or organizations responsible for . . . [the] manufacture, marketing, and/or distribution” of the platform edition (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024; IFLA 2009)

Both publishers and distributors may be included in this field.

Use existing scholarship, MobyGames, Wikipedia, Steam, fansites, official advertisements, the developer’s official website, and/or the platform edition’s official website, title screen, and/or credits sequence to confirm the publisher(s) and distributor(s).

text input field

3I. Publisher Class [R][+]

Definition: The size, profile, and/or budget of the publisher and, in some cases, the developer, too

This element rarely needs to be repeated. Exceptions include cases where the platform edition is both “indie” and “self-published.”

Use existing scholarship, MobyGames, Wikipedia, Steam, and/or fansites to confirm the publisher class.

controlled vocabulary

- AAA
- AA
- B
- III
- Indie
- Licensed game
- Self-published

3J. Platform Edition Note

Definition: “Any other notable characteristics of the platform edition” that are “not captured in other fields” of this metadata schema (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

This field may be left empty.

text input field

4. Gameplay File Entity

Definition: Denotes a video file containing gameplay footage of a particular instantiation (a “platform edition”) of a video game; also called “game capture” and “game recording”

For the fair-dealing purposes of the GPFC, the video file will typically be a “clip” that is 30 seconds to five minutes long.

The following elements of the Gameplay File Entity should describe the gameplay video file intended for the GPFC.

- Clip Title [R] (text input field;)
- Clip Length [R] (text input field)
- Date Recorded [R] (text input field)

- Commentary [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Chat [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Gameplay Attribution [R][+] (text input field)
- Metadata Attribution [R][+] (text input field)
- Metadata Record Status [R] (controlled vocabulary)
- ID [R] (text input field)
- Filename [R] (text input field)
- Gameplay File Note (text input field)

4A. Clip Title [R]

Definition: A public-facing, search-friendly description of the gameplay footage as assigned by the person who played the platform edition while the video was recorded

Provide a title that helps viewers anticipate what they will see, hear, read, and watch. Describe the content of the clip and the actions occurring in it. An example is, “Starting a New Game: Naming the Player Character, Encountering Emus and Hobgoblins, and Collecting Darts, Scrolls, and Potions on Level 1.”

text input field

4B. Clip Length [R]

Definition: The length of the gameplay video in minutes and seconds

text input field; format: MM:SS

4C. Date Recorded [R]

Definition: The date the gameplay video was recorded

This date is presumably identical to the video file’s “created” date.

text input field; format: YYYY-MM-DD

4D. Commentary [R][+]

Definition: The type of player commentary, if any, included in the gameplay footage of the platform edition

Commentary is reflective, and it typically addresses the video’s audience.

Select “No commentary” if the footage contains no commentary.

controlled vocabulary

- Avatar / VTubing
- Captions / subtitles
- Emotes
- Face cam / facecam

- No commentary
- Voice over / voice-over / voiceover (VO)

4E. Chat [R][+]

Definition: The type of chat, if any, included in the gameplay footage of the platform edition

Chat typically occurs between players; however, in cases such as livestreams, it may also occur between players and audiences.

Select “No chat” if the footage contains no chat.

controlled vocabulary

- Emotes
- No chat
- Text chat
- Video chat
- Voice chat

4F. Gameplay Attribution [R][+]

Definition: The chosen or preferred name of the person who played the platform edition while the video was recorded

Multiple names may be included. Full names are optional.

text input field

4G. Metadata Attribution [R][+]

Definition: The chosen or preferred name of the person who described the platform edition, the gameplay file, the gameplay settings, the gameplay footage, and/or the gameplay instruction and/or entered the metadata

Multiple names may be included. Full names are optional.

text input field

4H. Metadata Record Status [R]

Definition: Communicates whether the metadata record for the gameplay file is complete

A gameplay file may appear in the GPFC even if its metadata record is incomplete.

controlled vocabulary

- Complete
- Incomplete

4I. ID [R]

Definition: The internal reference number for the gameplay file and its metadata

This number is used by the Press Record team to identify files and metadata in the GPFC. It is a five-character numeric string.

text input field; format: #####

4J. Filename [R]

Definition: The filename of the video file containing gameplay footage of the platform edition

Use camelCasing to include the following information in the following order: gameTitlePlatformEditionReleaseYearClipTitleID. An example is: rogue1985StartingANewGame00011.mp4. Abbreviate the clip's title to avoid long filenames.

text input field; format: gameTitlePlatformEditionReleaseYearClipTitleID.extension

4K. Gameplay File Note

Definition: "Any other notable characteristics of the" gameplay file that are "not captured in other fields" of this metadata schema (Lee et al., "VGMS 4.2," 2024)

This field may be left empty.

text input field

5. Gameplay Settings Entity

Definition: Denotes the settings of a particular instantiation (a "platform edition") of a video game

The following elements of the Gameplay Settings Entity should describe the platform edition's settings while it was played and recorded for the GPFC.

- Input Device [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Connectivity [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Number of Players [R] (controlled vocabulary)
- Gameplay Mode [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Language [R][+] (text input field)
- Accessibility [+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Mods [R][+] (text input field)
- Gameplay Settings Note (text input field)

5A. Input Device [R][+]

Definition: The equipment used to play the platform edition while the video was recorded (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with minor changes, from Wikipedia, “Game Controller,” 2026)

- Adaptive controller
- Balance board
- Camera
- Crank
- Dance pad
- Exercise accessory
- Fishing rod
- Gamepad / joypad
- Joystick
- Keyboard
- Light gun
- Mechanical motion tracker
- Microphone
- Mouse
- Optical motion tracker
- Paddle
- Pedals
- Racing wheel / steering wheel
- Rhythm game accessory
- Touchscreen
- Trackball
- Wii remote

5B. Connectivity [R][+]

Definition: Whether and how the platform edition was online or networked while the video was recorded (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

Select “Offline” if there were no online or networked components.

controlled vocabulary

- Cloud gaming / gaming on demand
- Offline
- Online browser
- Online computer / networked computer
- Online console / networked console
- Online features / networked features
- Online mobile device / networked mobile device

- Online play / networked play

5C. Number of Players [R]

Definition: The number of players in the gameplay footage of the platform edition (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

controlled vocabulary

- 1 player
- 2 players
- 3 players
- 4 players
- 5 players
- 6 players
- 7 players
- 8 players
- 9 players
- 10 players
- 11-50 players
- 51 or more players

5D. Gameplay Mode [R][+]

Definition: A distinct configuration of the platform edition’s mechanics and gameplay in the gameplay footage

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with minor changes, from Wikipedia, “Glossary of Video Game Terms,” 2026)

- Arena
- Attract / display / show
- Capture the flag
- Career
- Challenge
- Control point
- Deathmatch
- Debug
- Easy / beginner / casual
- Endless
- God / invincible / infinite health
- Hard / expert
- Holiday
- King of the hill
- New game plus
- Noclip
- Normal / moderate / default

- Permadeath
- Photo / photography
- Score attack
- Skirmish
- Spectator
- Story / campaign
- Survival / horde
- Time attack

5E. Language [R][+]

Definition: The language appearing in the gameplay footage of the platform edition

Multiple languages, including constructed languages such as Simlish, may be included.

Include languages that are read as well as heard, be they diegetic (read or heard by characters in the world) or non-diegetic (intended to be read or heard by players).

text input field

5F. Accessibility [+]

Definition: A configuration or appearance of the platform edition's accessibility features in the gameplay footage

controlled vocabulary (based on guidelines from Ellis et al. n.d.)

- Alternate inputs
- Arachnophobia mode
- Assist mode
- Auto aim
- Auto float
- Autosave
- Customized audio
- Customized background movement
- Customized colours
- Customized communications or chat
- Customized control sensitivity
- Customized cool-down period
- Customized cursor or crosshair design
- Customized font size
- Customized game speed
- Customized haptics
- Customized interface
- Customized motion tracking
- Customized speed
- Customized steering

- Customized text formatting
- Customized virtual keyboard
- High contrast mode
- In-game help / guidance / tips
- Infinite items
- Interactive tutorial
- Manual save
- No blood or gore
- No button mashing
- No camera movement
- No flashing and strobing effects
- No flickering images
- No music
- No permadeath
- No quick time events
- No sound effects
- No triggering content
- No unexpected movement or events
- Practice level
- Progress summary
- Realtime speech-to-text
- Realtime text-to-speech
- Remapped controls and buttons
- Screenreader
- Sign language
- Skip boss or enemy
- Skip level
- Skip scene
- Subtitles / captions
- Surround sound
- Symbol-based chat
- Tank controls
- Text chat
- Text highlighting
- Thalassophobia mode
- Visually indicated interactive object
- Visually indicated movement
- Visually indicated speech
- Voice chat
- Voiced global positioning
- Voiceovers for menus
- Voiceovers for text

5G. Mods [R][+]

Definition: A configuration or appearance of a player or fan-authored alteration of the platform edition in the gameplay footage

Provide the complete title of the mod if it has one. Avoid using an alternative, abbreviated, or colloquial title.

Leave this field empty if no mods were used or appear in the gameplay footage.

text input field

5H. Gameplay Settings Note

Definition: “Any other notable characteristics of the” gameplay settings that are “not captured in other fields” of this metadata schema (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

This field may be left empty.

text input field

6. Gameplay Footage Entity

Definition: Denotes the recorded video material of a particular instantiation (a “platform edition”) of a video game

The following elements of the Gameplay Footage Entity should describe recorded gameplay of the platform edition intended for the GPFC.

- Type of Play [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Gameplay Genre [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Gameplay Subgenre [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Narrative Genre [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Narrative Subgenre [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Dimension and Perspective [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Location [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Time Period [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Biome [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Built Environment [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Means of Transport [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Items [R+][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Atmosphere [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Player Character [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Non-Player Character [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Mechanics [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Timekeeping [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Progression [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)

- Theme [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Assets [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Style [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Interface [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Experience [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Transaction [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Metagaming [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Gameplay Trope [+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Environment Trope [+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Progression Trope [+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Narrative Trope [+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Character Trope [+] (text input field)
- Content Warning [R] (text input field)
- Gameplay Footage Note (text input field)

6A. Type of Play [R][+]

Definition: How players relate socially to each other and the game in the gameplay footage
controlled vocabulary

- Asymmetrical multiplayer
- Asynchronous multiplayer
- Collaborative
- Competitive
- Competitive teams
- Cooperative
- Cooperative teams
- Geolocate
- Local multiplayer
- Massively multiplayer
- Online multiplayer
- Player versus environment (PvE)
- Player versus player (PvP)
- Single-player
- Split screen
- Synchronous multiplayer
- Zero player

6B. Gameplay Genre [R][+]

Definition: “The overall nature of . . . interactivity” in the gameplay footage “based on [the platform edition’s] objectives, types of rules, distinctive characteristics, modes of action, and manners of gameplay” (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

Note: “Traditional” in the controlled vocabulary below denotes “games based on mechanics that exist in the real world and can be played in a physical setting.” They include board, card, exercise, gambling, game show, maze, pinball, and trivia games (Lee et al., “Controlled Vocabulary for Genre,” 2024).

controlled vocabulary (adapted from Poff and Atari 2025 and Lee et al., “Controlled Vocabulary for Genre,” 2024)

- Action
- Adventure / story-driven
- Compilation / collection
- Educational
- Idle
- Puzzle
- Racing / driving
- Role-playing / RPG
- Simulation
- Social
- Sports
- Strategy
- Traditional

6C. Gameplay Subgenre [R][+]

Definition: Patterns of interactivity appearing in the gameplay footage “based on [the platform edition’s] objectives, types of rules, distinctive characteristics, modes of action, and manners of gameplay” (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with additions, from Poff and Atari 2025 and Lee et al., “Controlled Vocabulary for Genre,” 2024)

- 4X
- Abstract
- American football
- Arcade
- Arena shooter
- Artillery
- Australian football
- Auto battler / auto chess
- Auto runner
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Battle royale
- Beat ’em up / brawler
- Blobber
- Block breaking

- Board game
- Boardsports
- Bowling
- Bullet hell
- Business sim / tycoon
- Card battle
- Casino / roulette
- Castle defence / castle attack
- Chess
- Choose your own adventure
- City building / construction sim
- Claw machine
- Clicker
- Collect-a-thon
- Combat sports / wrestling
- Cooking sim
- Creature breeding / genetics
- Cricket
- Cryptic puzzle
- Cue sports / billiards
- Cycling
- Darts
- Dating sim
- Deckbuilder
- Dexterity
- Dodgeball
- Dungeon crawl
- Escape room / exit game / riddle room
- Extraction
- Extreme sports
- Fairy chess / unorthodox chess
- Falling block / block fill
- Farming sim
- Fashion sim
- Fighting
- Fitness / exercise
- Flight sim
- Friendslop
- Fumblecore
- Gambling / gambling elements
- Game show
- Gashapon
- Genetics

- God game
- Golf
- Government sim
- Graphic adventure
- Guessing / charades
- Hack and slash
- Hero shooter
- Hidden object
- Hockey
- Horde shooter / horde survivor
- Horse racing
- Hunting / hunting sim
- Immersive sim
- Incremental
- Interactive book
- Interactive fiction
- Interactive movie / full-motion video
- Japanese-style adventure
- Japanese-style RPG / JRPG
- Job sim
- Karaoke / singing
- Kart racing
- Life sim / social sim
- Logic puzzle
- Looter shooter
- Martial arts
- Mascot
- Massively multiplayer online RPG (MMPORG)
- Math puzzle
- Maze / maze chase
- Mechanical puzzle
- Medical sim
- Mental training
- Metroidvania / search action
- Military sim / milsim
- Mini-game / micro-game collection
- Monster taming / raising
- Movement shooter
- Multi-user dungeon / MUD
- Multiplayer online battle arena / MOBA
- Obstacle course
- Off-road racing / rally racing
- Pachinko

- Paddle / ball and paddle
- Parkour
- Parser adventure
- Party / parlour
- Photography sim
- Physics sim / physics puzzle
- Picross / nonogram
- Pinball
- Pipe puzzle
- Platformer / precision platformer
- Platform fighter
- Point and click
- Programming / hacking sim
- Racing sim
- Racket sports
- Rail shooter
- Real-time strategy
- Rhythm / music / dancing
- Rocks and diamonds
- Roguelike / roguelite
- Rugby
- Run and gun
- Sandbox / open world / falling sand
- Shoot 'em up
- Shooting gallery
- Skating
- Slot machine
- Snake
- Soccer / football
- Social deduction / secret identity
- Sokoban
- Soulslike
- Sports sim
- Stealth
- Surveillance
- Survival
- Tabletop card / tabletop tile
- Tactics / tactical
- Tennis
- Text adventure
- Tile matching
- Tiling puzzle / jigsaw
- Time management

- Timed input
- Tower defence
- Track and field
- Trading / collectible card
- Tricks / stunts
- Trivia / quiz
- Turn-based strategy
- Twin-stick shooter
- Twitch skill
- Typing
- Vehicle combat / car combat
- Vehicle sim
- Virtual life
- Virtual pet
- Visual novel
- Volleyball
- Walking sim
- Wargame / grand strategy
- Water sports
- Winter sports
- Word puzzle / crossword

6D. Narrative Genre [R][+]

Definition: The overall nature of storytelling in the gameplay footage based on how the platform edition tells, plots, and arranges stories

Use “abstract / no narrative” for abstract games and games without narratives or narrative elements.

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with minor changes, from Poff and Atari 2025 and Lee et al., “Controlled Vocabulary for Narrative Genre,” 2024)

- Abstract / no narrative
- Action
- Adventure
- Comedy
- Documentary
- Drama
- Epic
- Fantasy
- Historical
- Horror
- Mystery
- Nonsense
- Romance

- Satire
- Science fiction
- Speculative
- Thriller
- War
- Western

6E. Narrative Subgenre [R][+]

Definition: Patterns of storytelling in the gameplay footage based on how the platform edition tells, plots, and arranges stories

Use “abstract / no narrative” for abstract games and games without narratives or narrative elements.

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with additions, from Lee et al., “Controlled Vocabulary for Narrative Genre,” 2024 and Wikipedia, “List of Genres,” 2026)

- Abstract / no narrative
- Alternate history
- Bait-and-switch
- Biography / memoir / autobiography
- Body horror
- Burlesque
- Children’s
- Coming-of-age / Bildungsroman
- Cosmic horror / eldritch horror
- Crime / detective
- Cyberpunk
- Dark comedy
- Dark fantasy
- Fable
- Familial epic
- Folk horror
- Folklore / fairy tale
- Found footage / creepypasta
- Ghost story
- Heist
- Heroic epic
- Heroic fantasy / sword and sorcery
- High fantasy
- Instructional / pedagogical
- Isekai / portal fantasy
- Literary / classic
- Love story
- Low fantasy

- Melodrama
- Metafiction
- Military
- Monster / kaiju
- Myth / mythic
- Observational comedy
- Parody / spoof
- Period piece
- Physical comedy
- Psychological
- Religious
- Retropunk / steampunk / dieselpunk
- Revisionist Western
- Romantic comedy
- Shenmo
- Sitcom / situational comedy
- Slasher horror
- Slice of life
- Space opera / space Western
- Spy / espionage
- Superhero
- Supernatural
- Suspense
- Vampire
- Variety show
- Wuxia
- Young adult / teen drama
- Zombie

6F. Dimension and Perspective [R][+]

Definition: “The intended perception of the depth of the represented entities in” the gameplay footage and “[t]he [graphical projection, camera, and/or point of view] from which the player experiences the gameplay” (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

This element will typically be repeated: for example, 3D, 1st-person, and perspective camera.

Two terms in this element (free camera and cinematic camera) are defined here to avoid confusion.

Select “free camera” if “the camera is not attached to a specific avatar and does not follow a specific target” (Poff and Atari 2025). Such cameras are common in strategy and sandbox games, where the “player is able to freely slide/scroll/rotate through the environment” (ibid).

Select “cinematic camera” if “different, fixed camera positions are set during the game’s creation for a maximum cinematic effect. These positions cannot be controlled by the player” (ibid).

Don’t select “free camera” or “cinematic camera” if they do not apply to the gameplay footage.

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with minor changes, from Poff and Atari 2025, Jan 2017, and Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

- 2D
- 2.5D
- 3D
- 1st-person / first-person
- 2nd-person / second-person
- 3rd-person / third-person
- Audio game
- Augmented reality
- Behind view / over the shoulder
- Breaks the fourth wall
- Camera zoom / scaling
- Cinematic camera
- Curvilinear projection
- Diagonal-down view / isometric / 3/4 projection
- Fixed screen
- Free camera
- HD-2D
- Oblique projection / cabinet
- Perspective projection
- Side view / multiview projection
- Stereoscopic 3D
- Text-based / spreadsheet
- Top-down view / multiview projection
- Tracking camera
- Virtual reality
- Wraparound

6G. Location [R][+]

Definition: The planet, continent, and/or country appearing the gameplay footage

Select “Fictional” if the location is imaginary (that is, it originated in the video game or its franchise).

Select “Unspecified” when the location (such as “outer space”) is vague or cannot be determined.

Note that gameplay footage may combine actual and fictional locations: for example, the town of Tigland in Canada on Earth. It may also combine actual and unspecified locations: “somewhere on Earth,” for instance.

Use the “Gameplay Footage Note” to include a more specific location, such as an actual city or fictional town appearing in the gameplay footage.

Use existing scholarship, MobyGames, Wikipedia, Steam, fansites, official advertisements, the developer’s official website, and/or the platform edition’s official website to confirm the location.

controlled vocabulary

- Afghanistan
- Africa
- Albania
- Algeria
- Andorra
- Angola
- Antarctica
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Asia
- Australia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Bahamas
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Barbados
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Belize
- Benin
- Bermuda
- Bhutan
- Bolivia
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Botswana
- Brazil
- Brunei
- Bulgaria
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi

- Cambodia
- Cameroon
- Canada
- Cape Verde
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Chile
- China
- Colombia
- Comoros
- Congo, Republic of the
- Congo, Democratic Republic of the
- Costa Rica
- Croatia
- Cuba
- Curacao
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Djibouti
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Earth
- East Timor
- Ecuador
- Egypt
- El Salvador
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Estonia
- Eswatini
- Ethiopia
- Europe
- Fictional
- Fiji
- Finland
- France
- Gabon
- Gambia
- Georgia
- Germany
- Ghana
- Greece

- Grenada
- Guatemala
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Honduras
- Hungary
- Iceland
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Iraq
- Ireland
- Israel
- Italy
- Ivory Coast
- Jamaica
- Japan
- Jordan
- Jupiter
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Kiribati
- Kosovo
- Kuwait
- Kyrgyzstan
- Laos
- Latvia
- Lebanon
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Libya
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Mali
- Malta
- Mars

- Marshall Islands
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mercury
- Mexico
- Micronesia
- Moldova
- Monaco
- Mongolia
- Montenegro
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Myanmar
- Namibia
- Nauru
- Nepal
- Neptune
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Nicaragua
- Niger
- Nigeria
- North America
- North Korea
- North Macedonia
- Norway
- Oceania
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Palau
- Palestine
- Panama
- Papua New Guinea
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Philippines
- Poland
- Portugal
- Puerto Rico
- Qatar
- Romania
- Russia
- Rwanda

- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Samoa
- San Marino
- São Tomé and Príncipe
- Saturn
- Saudi Arabia
- Senegal
- Serbia
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- Singapore
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Solomon Islands
- Somalia
- South Africa
- South America
- South Korea
- South Sudan
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Suriname
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Syria
- Taiwan
- Tajikistan
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- Togo
- Tonga
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Tunisia
- Turkey
- Turkmenistan
- Tuvalu
- Uganda
- Ukraine
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom

- United States
- Unspecified
- Uranus
- Uruguay
- Uzbekistan
- Vanuatu
- Vatican City
- Venezuela
- Venus
- Vietnam
- Yemen
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

6H. Time Period [R][+]

Definition: The general time period in which the gameplay footage is set

Select “Fictional” if the time period is imaginary (that is, it originated in the video game or its franchise).

Select “Unspecified” when the time period is vague or cannot be determined.

Note that the “Future” option is diegetic. Select it even if that future is now the past or present. For instance, a game published in 1984 that’s set in 2025 but played in 2026 can be assigned the “Future” time period.

Use the “Gameplay Footage Note” to include a specific date, year, period, moment, or event represented by the gameplay footage.

Use existing scholarship, MobyGames, Wikipedia, Steam, fansites, official advertisements, the developer’s official website, and/or the platform edition’s official website to confirm the time period.

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with changes and additions, from Lee et al., “Controlled Vocabulary for Setting,” 2024)

- Axial Age
- Bronze Age
- Classical antiquity
- Contemporary
- Copper Age / Chalcolithic
- Early modern
- Fictional
- Future
- Geologic time
- Iron Age
- Late antiquity

- Late modern
- Mesolithic
- Neolithic
- Paleolithic
- Postclassical
- Time immemorial
- Unspecified

6I. Biome [R][+]

Definition: The ecological community type appearing in the gameplay footage

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with changes and additions, from Lee et al., “Controlled Vocabulary for Setting,” 2024)

- Abstract
- Aquatic / underwater
- Beach / island
- Cave / subterranean
- Desert
- Forest / woodlands
- Grasslands / plains / savanna
- Jungle
- Lava / volcano
- Mountains
- Outer space
- Ruins
- Sky
- Suburban / suburb
- Swamp / marsh
- Tundra / snow / ice
- Urban / city

6J. Built Environment [R][+]

Definition: An artificial physical feature or edifice appearing in the gameplay footage that’s typically meant to surround, structure, and/or guide the diegetic activities of characters in the platform edition

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with changes and additions, from Lee et al., “Controlled Vocabulary for Setting,” 2024)

- Alley
- Amusement park / circus / carnival
- Aquarium
- Arcade / diegetic video game
- Arena / coliseum / stadium

- Bank
- Basement
- Bathhouse / spa / sauna
- Bathroom / washroom / water closet
- Bedroom
- Bridge
- Castle / fortress
- Church / cathedral / chapel / temple
- Club / bar / saloon / pub
- Computer / cyberspace / internet
- Door
- Dungeon
- Factory
- Farm / farmhouse
- Funeral home / morgue
- Garage
- Graveyard
- Gym / gymnasium
- Hospital / asylum
- Hotel / inn
- House / apartment / townhouse
- Invisible wall
- Jail / prison
- Kitchen
- Laboratory / lab
- Library
- Longhouse
- Mansion / palace
- Maze
- Military base
- Mill
- Mine
- Monastery
- Museum / archive / gallery
- Office / office building
- Park / nature reserve
- Playground
- Racetrack
- Restaurant / cafe
- Rooftop
- School / classroom
- Sewer
- Shack

- Ship
- Shrine
- Skyscraper
- Space station
- Stairs / ladder
- Store
- Streetlight / streetlamp
- Tower
- Town
- Training ground
- University campus / college campus
- Village
- Visible wall
- Window
- Zoo

6K. Means of Transport [R][+]

Definition: A means of conveyance or travel from one place to another appearing in the gameplay footage

Select “No means of transport” if the footage contains no means of conveyance or travel.

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with changes and additions, from Poff and Atari 2025 and Lee et al., “Controlled Vocabulary for Setting,” 2024)

- Airplane
- Airship
- All-terrain vehicle
- Bicycle / bike
- Boat / sailboat / steamboat / yacht
- Bovine / cow / buffalo
- Buggy / carriage
- Bus
- Cable car
- Camel
- Canoe / kayak
- Car / racecar
- Caribou / reindeer
- Cat
- Chocobo
- Dog
- Elephant
- Equine / horse / donkey / mule
- Ferry
- Fictional item

- Fictional species
- Fictional technology
- Fictional vehicle
- Gliding
- Helicopter
- Hot air balloon
- Hoverboard
- Hovercraft
- Kart / go kart
- Llama
- Mecha / giant robot
- Minecart
- Motorcycle
- No means of transport
- Pipe / warp pipe
- Portal / fast travel / teleportation
- Running
- Skateboard
- Skates
- Skis
- Sled
- Snowboard
- Snowmobile
- Spacecraft / spaceship
- Submarine
- Swimming
- Tank
- Taxi
- Time machine
- Tractor
- Train / subway
- Trolley
- Truck
- Tube
- Unicorn
- Walking
- Wheelchair
- Wings / flight
- Zipline

6L. Items [R][+]

Definition: Types of consumables, equipment, progression items, crafting materials, currencies, and valuables appearing in the gameplay footage (Wikipedia, “Item (game terminology),” 2026)

Select “No items” if the footage contains no items.

controlled vocabulary

- Accessory
- Ammunition / ammo
- Antidote
- Armour
- Blueprint
- Book
- Buff / boost
- Coat
- Collectible
- Compact disc / CD
- Compass
- Computer / computer parts
- Cooked food / prepared food
- Cosmetic / skin
- Credits
- Digital optical disc / DVD
- Dress
- Drink
- Dye / ink
- Energy
- Fabric / textile
- Film / rolls of film
- Fruit / fruit product
- Hat
- Health potion
- Key / keycard
- Letter / journal entry
- Mana potion
- Map
- Meat / bone / animal product
- Money / coins / cash
- Monster parts
- Mushroom / fungi
- Musical instrument
- No items

- Oil
- Ore / minerals / metals
- Pants
- Photograph
- Recipe
- Shirt
- Shoes / boots
- Skirt
- Suit
- Swimsuit
- Tape / cassette / audio / video
- Tool / technology
- Underwear
- Vegetable / herb / plant / plant product
- Water
- Weapon
- Wood

6M. Atmosphere [R][+]

Definition: “The pervading [mood] or tone of the” world appearing in the gameplay footage; it “evokes or recalls a certain emotion or state of mind” (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

The controlled vocabulary for this element avoids duplicating options included in the controlled vocabularies for the “Narrative Genre,” “Narrative Subgenre,” “Type of Play,” and “Experience” elements.

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with changes and additions, from Lee et al., “Controlled Vocabulary for Mood,” 2024)

- Accessible
- Beautiful
- Believable
- Bleak
- Bold
- Bright
- Brittle
- Captivating
- Cozy
- Creative
- Dangerous
- Eerie
- Energizing
- Erotic
- Gloomy
- Haunting

- Hopeful
- Hostile
- Intellectual
- Intense
- Lonely
- Mischievous
- Mournful
- Ominous
- Opaque
- Peaceful
- Pensive
- Punishing
- Quotidian
- Rigid
- Scary
- Sentimental
- Serene
- Snarky
- Suspicious
- Theatrical
- Threatening
- Toxic
- Unpredictable
- Violent
- Welcoming
- Whimsical

6N. Player Character [R][+]

Definition: A character in the gameplay footage whose actions are controlled by the player

This element will typically be repeated.

Select “No player character” if no player character appears in the footage.

When pertinent, tag the option with “implicit” when characters are implicitly coded and “explicit” when they are explicitly coded. As Adrienne Shaw et al. (2025) note, these selections are a fraught process, and thus we will correct and update this controlled vocabulary as the GPFC unfolds.

Use the “Gameplay Footage Note” to further describe the player character(s).

Use existing scholarship, MobyGames, Wikipedia, Steam, fansites, official advertisements, the developer’s official website, and/or the platform edition’s official website to substantiate metadata about player characters.

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with changes and additions, from Shaw et al. 2025 and Lee et al., “Controlled Vocabulary for Protagonist” and “Controlled Vocabulary for Tropes,” 2024)

- Adult
- African
- Agender
- Amnesiac
- Aromantic
- Asexual
- Asian
- Assimilator
- Australian / from Oceania
- Autistic
- Avatar
- Bisexual
- Black
- Blank slate / cipher
- Blind
- Brawler
- Builder
- Canadian
- Child
- Collector
- Colonizer / settler
- Customizable age
- Customizable character model
- Customizable complexion
- Customizable gender
- Customizable hair
- Customizable race/ethnicity
- Customizable relationships
- Customizable species
- Deaf
- Demisexual
- Disabled
- Dragon
- Elder
- Entitled
- European
- Female
- Fictional species
- Fundamentalist
- Gay

- Gender non-conforming
- Genderfluid
- Genderqueer
- Hearing-impaired
- Heretic
- Hero
- Heterosexual / straight
- Hivemind
- Hostage
- Hunter
- Immigrant
- Indigenous
- Intersex
- Isolationist
- Knight
- Lesbian
- Librarian / archivist
- Magic user
- Male
- Matriarch
- Migrant
- Monster
- Neurodivergent
- No player character
- Non-binary
- Non-corporeal
- Nonhuman
- North American
- Original character
- Orphan
- Outlaw
- Overlord / conqueror
- Overpowered
- Pansexual
- Parent / guardian
- Party member
- Patriarch
- PC can die
- PC cannot be customized
- PC cannot die
- PC has black or brown hair
- PC has blond hair
- PC has blue hair

- PC has green hair
- PC has pink hair
- PC has purple hair
- PC has red or auburn hair
- PC has white or gray hair
- PC is bald / has no hair
- Pirate
- Poor
- Pregnant
- Queer
- Racialized
- Ranger
- Religious
- Revolutionary
- Robot / android / automaton
- Rogue / assassin
- Royalty
- Shapeshifter
- Shopkeeper
- South American
- Spy / spymaster
- Stranger / visitor
- Strong
- Student
- Tank
- Teenager
- Trans
- Twin
- Two-spirit
- Undead
- Villager
- Villain
- Visually-impaired
- War veteran / commander
- Weak
- Wealthy
- White

60. Non-Player Character [R][+]

Definition: A character in the gameplay footage whose actions are not controlled by the player

This element will typically be repeated.

Select “No non-player character” if a non-player character does not appear in the footage.

When pertinent, tag the option with “implicit” when characters are implicitly coded and “explicit” when they are explicitly coded. As Adrienne Shaw et al. (2025) note, these selections are a fraught process, and thus we will correct and update this controlled vocabulary as the GPFC unfolds.

Use the “Gameplay Footage Note” to further describe the non-player character(s).

Use existing scholarship, MobyGames, Wikipedia, Steam, fansites, official advertisements, the developer’s official website, and/or the platform edition’s official website to substantiate metadata about non-player characters.

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with changes and additions, from Shaw et al. 2025 and Lee et al., “Controlled Vocabulary for Protagonist” and “Controlled Vocabulary for Tropes,” 2024)

- Adult
- African
- Agender
- Amnesiac
- Aromantic
- Asexual
- Asian
- Assimilator
- Australian / from Oceania
- Autistic
- Bisexual
- Black
- Blacksmith
- Blind
- Boss
- Brawler
- Builder
- Canadian
- Child
- Collector
- Colonizer / settler
- Companion / buddy
- Customizable
- Deaf
- Demisexual
- Disabled
- Dragon
- Elder
- Enemy / hostile

- Entitled
- European
- Familiar
- Female
- Fictional species
- Friendly / not hostile
- Fundamentalist
- Gay
- Gender non-conforming
- Genderfluid
- Genderqueer
- Guide
- Hearing-impaired
- Heretic
- Hero
- Heterosexual / straight
- Hivemind
- Hostage
- Hunter
- Imaginary
- Immigrant
- Indigenous
- Intersex
- Isolationist
- Knight
- Lesbian
- Librarian / archivist
- Magic user
- Male
- Matriarch
- Migrant
- Monster
- Neurodivergent
- No non-player character
- Non-binary PC
- Non-corporeal
- Nonhuman PC
- North American PC
- NPC can die
- NPC cannot die
- NPC has black or brown hair
- NPC has blond hair
- NPC has blue hair

- NPC has green hair
- NPC has pink hair
- NPC has purple hair
- NPC has red or auburn hair
- NPC has white or gray hair
- NPC is bald / has no hair
- Orphan
- Outlaw
- Overlord / conqueror
- Overpowered
- Pansexual
- Parent / guardian
- Party member
- Patriarch
- PC's child
- PC's grandparent
- PC's mentor / adviser
- PC's parent / guardian
- PC's partner
- PC's rival
- PC's roommate
- PC's sibling
- PC's teacher / tutor
- Pet
- Pirate
- Poor
- Pregnant
- Protagonist
- Queer
- Racialized
- Ranger
- Religious
- Revolutionary
- Robot / android / automaton
- Rogue / assassin
- Royalty
- Shapeshifter
- Shopkeeper
- South American
- Spy / spymaster
- Stranger / visitor
- Strong
- Student

- Tank
- Teenager
- Trans
- Twin
- Two-spirit
- Undead
- Villain
- Visually-impaired
- War veteran / commander
- Weak
- Wealthy
- White
- Zombie

6P. Mechanics [R][+]

Definition: A method or “verb” players use to interact with the state of the platform edition as it appears in the gameplay footage (Sicart 2015; Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

This element will typically be repeated.

Select “No mechanic” if a mechanic is not used in the gameplay footage.

Use existing scholarship, MobyGames, Wikipedia, Steam, fansites, official advertisements, the developer’s official website, and/or the platform edition’s official website to substantiate metadata about the mechanics.

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with changes and additions, from BoardGameGeek n.d. and Lee et al., “Controlled Vocabulary for Mechanics,” 2024)

- Accelerating
- Aiming
- Aligning
- Attacking (melee)
- Attacking (ranged)
- Auctioning
- Avoiding
- Balancing
- Barricading
- Battling
- Bidding
- Blocking
- Bluffing
- Breaking
- Building
- Buying
- Capturing

- Caretaking
- Carrying
- Chaining
- Choosing
- Cleaning / washing
- Clicking
- Climbing
- Closing
- Collecting
- Communicating nonverbally
- Communicating verbally
- Cooking / making food
- Crafting
- Crawling / dungeon crawling
- Dancing
- Dating
- Dealing
- Deckbuilding
- Decoding
- Decorating
- Defenestrating
- Delivering
- Destroying
- Digging
- Disk-flicking
- Dodging
- Doing acrobatics
- Drawing
- Drinking
- Driving
- Eating
- Eavesdropping
- Emoting
- Equipping
- Exercising
- Exploding
- Exploring
- Falling
- Farming
- Fetching
- Fighting / kicking / punching
- Fishing
- Flying

- Foraging / gathering
- Gardening
- Grabbing
- Hacking
- Healing
- Hiding
- Hitting
- Hunting
- Inputting text
- Investigating
- Jumping
- Locking
- Looting
- Managing
- Matching
- Mining
- Moving
- Negotiating
- No mechanic
- Opening
- Parrying
- Pausing
- Photographing
- Piloting
- Placing workers
- Playing cards
- Playing music
- Pool building
- Positioning
- Programming
- Pulling
- Pushing
- Racing
- Raising creatures
- Releasing
- Researching
- Rewinding
- Riding
- Rolling
- Rolling dice
- Romancing
- Rotating
- Running

- Sailing
- Saving
- Searching
- Sharing
- Shooting
- Signing
- Singing
- Skateboarding
- Skating
- Skiing
- Sneaking
- Sniping
- Solving puzzles
- Spellcasting
- Spinning
- Stealing
- Storytelling
- Swimming
- Swiping
- Talking / speaking
- Taming
- Throwing
- Timing
- Trading
- Travelling
- Typing
- Unlocking
- Voting
- Walking
- Wandering
- Writing

6Q. Timekeeping [R][+]

Definition: How the platform edition handles the passage of time in the gameplay footage; approaches to timekeeping inevitably influence narrative pacing as well as the timing and rhythm of both players and games

Two terms for this element (“meditative / zen” and “persistent”) are defined here to avoid confusion.

Select “meditative / zen” if the game “tr[ies] to calm or relax players. These types of games often have no goals and players can’t do anything wrong inside the game” (Poff and Atari 2025).

Select “persistent” if the game’s “mechanics continue even when the player is not playing the game. Either the game state is simulated on a remote server or the changes over time are calculated when the player returns to playing” (ibid).

Don’t select “meditative / zen” or “persistent” if they do not apply to the gameplay footage.

controlled vocabulary (adapted from Poff and Atari 2025)

- Meditative / zen
- Persistent
- Real-time
- Turn-based

6R. Progression [R][+]

Description: How, as demonstrated by the footage, the platform edition allows players to advance, acknowledges their attempts to advance, or affords them with a sense of progress, achievement, or productivity (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

This element will typically be repeated.

Forms or systems include horizontal progression (unlocking options), vertical progression (earning upgrades), player progression (developing skills and knowledge), character progression (levelling and new abilities), world progression (new levels, locations, and enemies), journey / mission progression (tasks or quests to be completed), narrative progression (from exposition to resolution, including pacing), and gamification (achievements or trophies) (Brazie 2024).

controlled vocabulary (with nine beats adapted from Laws 2010 and environmental storytelling from Jenkins 2002)

- Achievement / trophy / badge
- Act structure
- Aha moment
- Anticipation beat
- Auto-scrolling
- Branching narrative
- Bringdown beat
- Checkpoint
- Choice-and-consequence system
- Climax
- Cognitive development
- Collectible
- Commentary beat
- Core loop
- Cutscene / live-action cutscene
- Death
- Dialogue tree

- Dramatic beat
- Dynamic loading
- Elimination / team wipe
- Embedded story
- Emergent gameplay
- Emergent narrative
- Enacted story
- Endless game
- Evoked story
- Experience points
- Exposition
- Falling action
- Flashback / analepsis
- Flashforward / prolepsis
- Flip-screen scrolling
- Gating
- Gratification beat
- Highlight reel / replay reel
- Hit points
- Horizontal movement
- Hub / home base
- In-game reward
- In medias res
- Jumpscare / jump scare
- Level complete
- Levelling up
- Loading screen
- Lore drop
- Lore dump / info dump
- Mini-game
- Mission complete / quest complete
- Motor development
- New ability / skill
- New character / secret character
- New cosmetic / skin
- New game plus
- New item
- New level
- New location
- New mission / quest
- New round
- Parallax scrolling
- Pipe beat

- Platinum / 100% achievements
- Procedural beat
- Procedural generation
- Progression map / player path
- Question beat
- Quick time event
- Random event
- Ratchet scrolling
- Resolution / ending
- Respawn
- Reveal beat
- Rising action
- Rolling credits
- Round complete
- Save point
- Scripted event
- Side-scrolling
- Skill tree / tech tree
- Time loop
- Unlosable
- Unwinnable
- Upgrade
- Vertical movement

6S. Theme [R][+]

Definition: “A common thread, motif, subject, or idea that recurs in” the gameplay footage (Getty 2004; Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

This element will typically be repeated.

The controlled vocabulary for this element avoids duplicating options included in the controlled vocabularies for the “Atmosphere” and “Experience” elements.

Use the “Gameplay Footage Note” to further describe the theme(s).

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with additions, from Lee et al., “Controlled Vocabulary for Theme,” 2024)

- 2SLGBTQIA+ cultures and communities
- Abandonment / trust
- Ableism (internalized, interpersonal, institutional)
- Abduction
- Addiction
- African cultures and communities
- Aging
- Alienation / isolation / solitude

- Alter-ego
- American cultures and communities
- Anti-capitalism
- Anti-colonial
- Anti-war
- Antisemitism (internalized, interpersonal, institutional)
- Apocalypse / post-apocalypse
- Arab cultures and communities
- Arrogance / hubris
- Art and creativity
- Asian cultures and communities
- Assimilation
- Athletics and sports
- Authoritarianism / totalitarianism
- Beauty / attraction
- Belonging / inclusion
- Betrayal / heartbreak
- Binaries
- Biphobia (internalized, interpersonal, institutional)
- Black cultures and communities
- Blackness
- Blasphemy
- Bravery / courage
- Buddhist cultures and communities
- Canadian cultures and communities
- Capitalism
- Catastrophe
- Chance / certainty
- Chaos / order
- Childhood
- Christian cultures and communities
- Circle of life
- Cisnormativity
- Civilization
- Class / wealth
- Climate change
- Companionship / friendship
- Competition / winning / losing
- Connecting with nature / land / water
- Conquest / colonization
- Conservation
- Conspiracy
- Convention / rebellion

- Corruption
- Cult
- Curse
- Decolonization
- Democracy
- Destruction
- Diaspora / migration / displacement
- Diplomacy
- Disability
- Displacement
- Dreams / hopes
- Drugs and alcohol / intoxication
- Duty / responsibility
- Dystopia
- East / West
- Economy / economics
- Education / learning / pedagogy
- Empire
- Equality / equity
- European cultures and communities
- Evolution
- Failure
- Faith / doubt
- Family / found family
- Fascism
- Fate / free will
- Fatphobia (internalized, interpersonal, institutional)
- Fear
- Feminism
- Freedom
- Gay cultures and communities
- Gender / gender expression
- Gentrification
- Gods / goddesses
- Good versus evil
- Grace / humility
- Greed / ambition
- Grotesque
- Guilt / conscience
- Happiness / joy
- Harassment
- Hate / hate crime
- Health / healing / medicine

- Help from others
- Heroism
- Heteronormativity
- Hierarchies
- Hindu cultures and communities
- Hinduphobia (internalized, interpersonal, institutional)
- Holiday / vacation
- Homophobia (internalized, interpersonal, institutional)
- Human rights / civil rights
- Humans versus machine
- Humans versus nature
- Humour / laughter
- Identity / self-image
- Illuminati
- Illusion / disillusionment
- Indigeneity
- Indigenous cultures and communities
- Intersectionality
- Interspecies friendship
- Intrigue
- Invasion / alien invasion
- Islamophobia (internalized, interpersonal, institutional)
- Jealousy
- Jewish cultures and communities
- Justice / injustice
- Knowledge / ignorance
- Language minority communities
- Latin American cultures and communities
- Lesbian cultures and communities
- Light and darkness
- Logic / common sense
- Loss / grief
- Loss of innocence
- Love / romance / everlasting love / forbidden love
- Loyalty
- Lust / desire
- Marginalization / discrimination
- Masking
- Matriarchy
- Memory / amnesia
- Mercy / ruthlessness
- Miscommunication
- Misogynoir (internalized, interpersonal, institutional)

- Mistaken identity
- Morality
- Mortality / immortality
- Murder
- Nationalism / patriotism
- Neoliberalism
- Nonviolence
- North / South
- Nostalgia
- Obscenity
- Occult / witchcraft
- Oceanic cultures and communities
- Oppression (internalized, interpersonal, institutional)
- Orientalism (internalized, interpersonal, institutional)
- Othering
- Pandemic
- Paranormal
- Parenthood
- Passing
- Patriarchy
- Peer pressure
- Perseverance
- Personal growth / maturity
- Police / policing
- Polyamory
- Power / regime change
- Pride
- Privacy
- Privilege
- Productivity
- Progress
- Prophecy
- Queer cultures and communities
- Race / racialization
- Racism (internalized, interpersonal, institutional)
- Rebirth
- Redemption / forgiveness
- Regret
- Religion / religious cultures and communities
- Religious intolerance, persecution, or segregation
- Resistance
- Reunion
- Revenge / honour / reputation

- Rivalry
- Royalty / monarchy
- Sacred / profane
- Sacrifice / dedication
- Sanity / madness
- Secrecy
- Self-harm
- Self-reliance / will to survive
- Sex
- Sexism / misogyny (internalized, interpersonal, institutional)
- Sexuality
- Sikh cultures and communities
- Sikhphobia (internalized, interpersonal, institutional)
- Simplicity / simple living
- Slavery
- Social mobility
- Social norms / conformity
- Socialism
- Spirituality
- Sublime
- Succession
- Technological determinism
- Temptation
- Tokenism
- Tradition
- Trans cultures and communities
- Transitioning
- Transmisogyny (internalized, interpersonal, institutional)
- Transphobia (internalized, interpersonal, institutional)
- Trauma
- Treachery / deception
- Truth
- Tyranny
- Urban / rural
- Utopia
- Vanity
- Violence / combat / war
- Vulnerability
- White supremacy
- Whiteness
- Wisdom
- Work / labour
- Wrath / anger

- Xenophobia (internalized, interpersonal, institutional)

6T. Assets [R][+]

Definition: Audio, visual, and functional elements, including individual pieces of content, appearing in the gameplay footage

This element will typically be repeated.

controlled vocabulary (informed by game assets available at itch.io)

- 3D models
- Action animation
- Adaptive lighting
- Adaptive music
- Ambient sound / soundscape
- Articulated animation
- Character art
- Character dialogue / speech
- Character portrait
- Destructible objects
- Environment art / scenery
- Exteriors
- Flavour text
- Fluid dynamics
- Foley sound
- Foliage / terrain
- Fonts / typography
- Free-form animation
- Gauges
- Haptics
- Icons / buttons
- Idle animation
- Interiors
- Items / clothes / equipment
- Level art
- Licensed music
- Locomotion animation
- Motion capture / mocap
- No audio
- No visuals
- Original soundtrack
- Particle effects
- Photographs
- Pre-recorded audio
- Pre-recorded video

- Previews
- Props
- Ragdoll physics
- Ray tracing
- Rigid animation
- Rigid body dynamics
- Shaders
- Skeuomorph
- Skyboxes
- Soft body dynamics
- Sound effects / SFX
- Sprites
- Text boxes
- Textures
- Tilesets
- Vector graphics
- Visual art / drawings
- Visual effects / VFX
- Voice acting / barks
- Voice-over / VO

6U. Style [R][+]

Definition: “The predominant and recognizable [artistic tendencies] and appearance of” the platform edition as demonstrated by the gameplay footage (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

Use the “Gameplay Footage Note” to further describe the style(s).

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with changes and additions, from Wikipedia, “List of Art Movements,” 2026 and Lee et al., “Controlled Vocabulary for Visual Style,” 2024)

- Abstract
- Achromatic
- Adaptation / homage
- Art Nouveau
- Art shift / change in artstyle
- ASCII art
- Avant-garde
- Baroque
- Bauhaus
- Bricolage / mixed media
- Cartoon / anime
- Cel shaded / toon shaded
- Chiptune
- Comics / manga
- Cubism / assemblage

- Cutout / papercutting
- Expressionism
- Flat / superflat
- Futurism / retrofuturism
- Glitch art
- Gothic
- Hand-drawn / hand-painted
- High fidelity / hi-fi
- Impressionism
- Lego
- Low-poly 3D
- Low fidelity / lo-fi
- Lowbrow / populist
- Magical realism / fantasy realism
- Maximalism
- Medieval art
- Miniature art
- Minimalism
- Monochromatic
- Naturalism / regionalism
- Outsider art / art brut
- Photorealism
- Pixel art
- Pointillism
- Pop art
- Psychedelic
- Punk
- Renaissance art
- Romanticism
- Semi-realistic 3D
- Social realism
- Stop motion
- Stylized 3D
- Surrealism
- Vector art
- Voxel art

6V. Interface [R][+]

Definition: The means by which players interact or communicate with the game and each other in the gameplay footage; also, how the game prompts and transforms input into output in the gameplay footage

Common interfaces include menus, maps, popups, graphic overlays, and heads-up displays.

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with changes, from Coates 2025)

- Ability list screen or overlay
- Button layouts screen
- Button prompt (contextual)
- Buying and trading screen
- Character customization screen
- Character intro screen
- Character select screen
- Class / party select screen
- Clock / timer
- Codex / journal
- Collectables / collections menu
- Content discovery menu
- Content or health warning screen
- Crafting menu / screen
- Credits sequence / screen
- Decals and liveries menu
- Dialogue menu / speech screen
- Difficulty select screen
- Equipping / loadout menu
- Gallery / gallery menu
- Game over / failure screen
- Hacking or lockpicking controls
- Heads-up display / HUD
- Hub menu
- Inventory menu
- Items and unlocks menu
- Leaderboard / ranking screen
- Level complete screen
- Level editor
- Load / save screen
- Log / history screen
- Maintenance or management screen
- Map / area map / world map
- Matchmaking lobby
- Minimap / compass
- Mission accept / quest select screen
- Mission intro screen
- Modals and popups
- Mode select screen
- Music player
- NPC information screen
- Object information screen

- Objectives or goals menu
- Overlay menu
- Pause screen
- Photo / camera mode
- Pickup prompt (contextual)
- Playable menu
- Player chat / communication overlay
- Player profile / customization screen
- Player select screen
- Post-game menu
- Progress notification / feature unlocked
- Quick time event
- Results screen
- Reticle
- Reward or achievement notification
- Screen shake
- Settings menu / options menu
- Skins or accessories menu
- Stage intro screen
- Stage / level select
- Stats / overview screen
- Store / purchase menu
- Team summary screen
- Title screen
- Tutorial overlay / guided tutorial
- Update popup / news screen
- Upgrading / ranking up screen
- Video player
- Waypoints and markers
- World customization screen

6W. Experience [R][+]

Definition: An emotion, feeling, or range of emotions and feelings experienced by the player when the gameplay footage was recorded

The person responsible for the gameplay (see “Gameplay Attribution”) should complete this element.

The controlled vocabulary for this element avoids duplicating options included in the controlled vocabularies for the “Atmosphere” and “Theme” elements.

Use the “Gameplay Footage Note” to further describe the experience(s).

controlled vocabulary (informed by Isbister 2016 and Anable 2018)

- Admiration

- Affection
- Alienation
- Amusement
- Anger / rage
- Anticipation
- Apathy
- Avoidance
- Awe / wonder
- Belonging
- Betrayal
- Better as a Let's Play
- Bittersweetness
- Boredom
- Camaraderie
- Catharsis
- Compassion
- Complicity
- Confusion
- Contempt
- Contentment
- Curiosity
- Dehumanization
- Disappointment
- Discouragement
- Disgust
- Dread
- Embarrassment
- Empathy
- Escapism / power fantasy
- Excitement
- Fascination
- Fatigue
- Fear
- Flow
- Freudenfreude
- Frustration
- Gratification
- Grief
- Guilt
- Happiness
- Humility
- Intimacy
- Jealousy

- Joy
- Love
- Overwhelm
- Perfectionism
- Pity
- Pride / mastery
- Regret
- Relief
- Resignation
- Sadness
- Schadenfreude
- Shame
- Stress
- Surprise
- Sympathy
- Terror
- Tilt
- Tranquility
- Triumph
- Trust
- Vulnerability
- Worry

6X. Transaction [R][+]

Definition: Purchases and forms of monetization that appear in, or are indexed by, the gameplay footage

Select “No transaction” if the footage contains no observable purchase or form of monetization.

controlled vocabulary (adpated, with minor changes and additions, from Wikipedia, “Video Game Monetization,” 2026)

- Advertising
- Battle pass
- Cosmetics / skins
- Downloadable content / expansion pack
- Free-to-play
- Freemium
- Freeware
- In-game currency / premium currency
- Loot boxes / Gacha
- No transaction
- Play-to-earn / pay-to-earn
- Player trading

- Premium content
- Progression skip
- Season pass / buy-to-play
- Shareware
- Subscription / pay-to-play

6Y. Metagaming [R][+]

Definition: Acts of play appearing in the gameplay footage that “involve or consider resources that are ‘beyond’ the scope or control of what players . . . collectively consider to be the ‘right and correct game’” (Carter et al. 2012)

Select “Orthogame (no observable meta)” if the footage contains no observable or deliberate metagaming.

The “Current meta” option applies to the meta as of the date of play and recording.

controlled vocabulary (informed by Carter et al. 2012 and Boluk & LeMieux 2017; adapted, with changes and additions, from TV Tropes 2026)

- Advanced movement technique
- AI breaking
- Anti-meta
- Challenge run
- Cheat code
- Cheesing / cheese strategy
- Complacent gaming
- Current meta
- Derailing / derailment
- Dev console
- Disc-one nuke
- Duping
- Easy level trick
- Emulation
- Exploit
- Game-breaker
- God mode
- Good bad bug
- Griefing
- High score chasing
- House rules
- Min-maxing
- Mod / modding
- Movement glitch
- Munchkinning / munchkin
- Not the intended use

- Optional stealth
- Orthogame (no observable meta)
- Outside-the-box tactic
- Pause scumming
- Safe zone
- Save scumming
- Score milking
- Script breaking
- Sequence breaking
- Smurfing
- Soft reset
- Solo-character run
- Spawncamping
- Speedrun
- Testing the narrative
- Testing the system
- Theorcrafting

6Z. Gameplay Trope [+]

Definition: “A generally recognizable [gameplay] device or convention [appearing in the footage]. [Gameplay] tropes rely on culturally mediated expectations to expedite the development of [mechanics, action, agency, experiences, and] events. When overused or oversimplified, tropes often come at the expense of fair and inclusive representations” (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

This element will typically be repeated.

See [TV Tropes](#) for definitions and examples of most tropes in this controlled vocabulary. The use of TV Tropes should be accompanied by peer-reviewed scholarship in Media and Game Studies.

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with changes and additions, from Lee et al., “Controlled Vocabulary for Tropes,” 2024, and TV Tropes 2026)

- Action-based mission
- Action commands
- Adventurer is you
- Anti-hoarding
- Area of effect attack
- Attack its weak point or injury
- Aura vision / detect evil
- Bottomless fuel tank
- Calvinball / we don’t know the rules
- Collision damage
- Combat resuscitation

- Comeback mechanic
- Commander is you
- Context-sensitive button
- Controllable helplessness
- Cooldown
- Corridor cubbyhole run
- Coup de grâce / thwarted coup de grâce
- Coyote time
- Cranium ride
- Critical hit
- Dialogue during gameplay
- Easy to learn, hard to master
- Elaborate equals effective / evolving weapon
- Entrepreneur is you
- Essence drop
- Extra turn
- Fake difficulty
- Fatigue mechanic
- Frustration simulator
- Game-favoured abilities
- Game-favoured gender
- Game-favoured race
- Game-favoured sexuality
- Gameplay automation / game plays itself
- Gendered fighting style
- Healing boss
- Hide-and-seek horror
- Hit flash / hit spark
- Hitbox dissonance
- Home field advantage
- Instant death radius
- Interior designer is you
- Intoxication mechanic
- Limited-use magical device
- Luck stat
- Magical weapon
- Magnet hands / never lose grip
- Mirror match / fearful symmetry
- Misaimed realism / breakable weapons
- Morale mechanic / team spirit
- Musical gameplay / Mickey Mousing
- No such thing as dehydration or hunger
- No such thing as drowning

- Optional party member
- Overheating
- Personality mechanic
- Power-up motif
- Power equals rarity / hard-to-acquire item
- Purely aesthetic customization
- Purely aesthetic gender
- Quest giver is you
- Racialized fighting style
- Racing ghost
- Random drop
- Regenerating health
- Regenerating mana
- Rubber-band AI
- Shows damage / damage is fire
- Simon says minigame
- Simple rescue mechanic
- Some dexterity required
- Spiteful AI
- Status effect / ailment / buff
- Status line / expressive health bar
- Stealth-based mission
- Tactical door use
- Taunt button
- Three-approach system
- Unbroken first-person perspective
- Unexpected gameplay change
- Unexpected shmup level
- Unexpectedly realistic gameplay
- Unpopular mechanic / scrappy mechanic
- Useless item / joke item
- Victory pose / victory quote
- Wandering you / random encounters
- Whack-a-monster
- You are you
- You will not evade me / grabbing and pulling
- Zip mode

6AA. Environment Trope [+]

Definition: “A generally recognizable [worldbuilding] device or [environment design] convention [appearing in the footage]. [Environment] tropes rely on culturally mediated expectations to expedite the development of [atmospheres and experiences as well as the traversal of biomes, built environments, and locations]. When overused or oversimplified,

tropes often come at the expense of fair and inclusive representations” (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

This element will typically be repeated.

See [TV Tropes](#) for definitions and examples of many tropes in this controlled vocabulary. The use of TV Tropes should be accompanied by peer-reviewed scholarship in Media and Game Studies.

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with changes and additions, from TV Tropes 2026)

- Abandoned ship / abandoned means of transport
- Adventure-friendly world
- Air-vent passageway
- Announcer or commentator chatter
- Annoying enemy won’t leave you alone
- Antepiece for the setpiece
- Apathetic citizens or villagers
- Battle or combat theme music
- Bottle episode
- Bright and colourful war
- Broken bridge
- Cardboard prison
- Colour-coded for your convenience
- Control room / surveillance station
- Conveniently available escape route
- Conveniently timed guard / clairvoyant security force
- Crate expectations / crates everywhere
- Cut and paste environments
- Death from above
- Deserted island
- Destroy the security camera
- Don’t go in the woods
- Easter egg hunt
- Empty room psychology
- Empty room until the trap
- Enemy chatter / enemy barks
- Enemy overconfidence
- Everyone is dead or gone
- Everything breaks
- Everything is smashable
- Everything is trying to kill you
- Fake trap
- Faux symbolism
- Fog of war

- Foreboding architecture / malevolent architecture
- Frictionless ice
- Gravity barrier
- Grimy water
- Healing spring
- Hide your children / no children anywhere
- High culture, low tech
- Highly visible landmark
- Historical revisionism
- I can't reach it / PC cannot perform this action
- Impassable desert
- In-universe game clock
- Incompetent guard / guard animal
- Inconveniently-placed conveyor belt
- Inside a computer system
- Insurmountable fence
- Intercom villainy / acousmatic villain
- Invisible wall
- Laser hallway
- Level ate / world made of food
- Level in the clouds / world in the sky
- Locomotive level / on a train
- Low culture, high tech
- Monsters everywhere / swarms / hordes
- Narrow colour palette means realistic
- New weapon target range
- Nice day, deadly night
- Notice this / shiny thing
- NPCs are irrelevant / are decor
- NPCs repeating dialogue
- Old area, new enemies
- Only shop in town
- Override command
- Pawn maker
- Pixel hunt
- Poisonous mushrooms or gas
- Pressure plate
- Real-place background
- Renovating the headquarters
- Respawning enemies
- Saw blades of death
- Scenery manifests as you go
- Security blindspot

- Slow doors
- Songs in the key of panic
- Sound-coded for your convenience
- Spikes of doom
- Springs, springs everywhere!
- Steam vent obstacle
- Stock puzzle
- Suddenly-harmful harmless object
- Suspiciously cracked wall
- Temporary platform
- There are no tents, only inns
- Thriving ghost town / low population
- Title theme drop
- Unguided lab tour
- Vice city
- Video game cruelty punishment
- Video game geography
- Video game physics
- Video game vista
- Weather demands the right gear
- Weather effects / weather gameplay mechanic
- What the hell, player?
- Who forgot the lights?
- Your door was open

6BB. Progression Trope [+]

Definition: “A generally recognizable [progression] device or [level design] convention [appearing in the footage]. [Progression] tropes rely on culturally mediated expectations to expedite [advancement, acknowledge attempts to advance, or afford players with a sense of progress, achievement, or productivity]. When overused or oversimplified, tropes often come at the expense of fair and inclusive representations” (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024).

This element will typically be repeated. It differs from the “Narrative Trope” element, which focuses on diegetic events and actions, by focusing on devices and conventions that influence or shape players’ decision-making. These devices and conventions often prompt non-diegetic actions.

See [TV Tropes](#) for definitions and examples of many tropes in this controlled vocabulary. The use of TV Tropes should be accompanied by peer-reviewed scholarship in Media and Game Studies.

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with changes and additions, from Lee et al., “Controlled Vocabulary for Tropes,” 2024, and TV Tropes 2026)

- Ability required to proceed

- All or nothing / zero-sum game
- Anti-idling
- Arbitrary mission restriction
- Backtracking
- Big first choice
- Boss battle
- Breather level / easy level
- Catastrophic countdown
- Character-specific dialogue
- Character class system / job system
- Character level or strength gate
- Character level scaling
- Checkpoint starvation
- Choices don't matter
- Choices matter
- Common / common monster
- Completion or achievement mockery
- Computer shall taunt you
- Cooperation versus competition
- Cruelty is the only option
- Deadly game of chance
- Defeat means friendship
- Defeat means playable
- Dev is smarter than me
- Difficulty spike
- Door roulette / magical mystery doors
- Driving test
- Early game hell
- Earn your bad ending
- Earn your fun
- Earn your happy ending
- Easy EXP / experience farming
- Enjoy the story, skip the game
- Enter the solution here
- Escort mission
- Event flag
- Expanded ending / secret expanded epilogue
- Expository gameplay limitation
- Failure is the only option / misère game
- Fame gate / must be famous to progress
- Fetch quest
- Follow the money / pass through the rings
- Foolishness is the only option

- Game of chicken
- Grinding / stat grinding / level grinding
- Groundhog day loop
- Inescapable ambush
- Informing the fourth wall / PC's intrapersonal communication
- Instant death
- Involuntary group split
- Kill screen
- Kingmaker scenario
- Last lousy point
- Light-and-mirrors puzzle
- Loading screen message gag
- Lock-and-key puzzle
- Locked door
- Multiple game openings
- Multiple persuasion modes
- New world tease
- No-gear level
- No-harm requirement / bring them back alive
- No campaign or canon for the wicked
- No exploration / no sidepaths
- Non-standard game over / deliberate game crash
- NPC scheduling
- NPC volunteers to repeat information for you
- One game, one boss
- Only one save file
- Only smart people may pass
- Optional boss
- Optional encounter
- Optional party member
- Overly generous time limit
- Password save
- Path of most resistance / harder route, better rewards
- Pawns but no bosses
- Pawns go first
- Philosophical choice ending
- Placate the NPC or monster
- Play the game, skip the story
- Plot lock
- Point of no return
- Pop quiz
- Press X not to die
- Railroading / blamed for being railroaded

- Real-time with pause
- Recollection sidequest
- Repeatable quest
- Respawn point
- Rock, paper, scissors
- Romance option
- Romance sidequest
- Runback / boss runback
- Running-out-of-time warning
- Safe space / bonfire
- Secret final campaign
- Secret level
- Story branch favouritism
- That one achievement
- That one boss
- That one level
- That one puzzle
- That one sidequest
- Tiebreaker round
- Time trial / timed mission
- Training stage
- Trap is the only option
- Treacherous checkpoint
- Tutorial failure
- Variable player goals
- Violation of common sense
- Violence is the only option
- When all else fails, go right
- Winner is you

6CC. Narrative Trope [+]

Definition: “A generally recognizable narrative device or [storytelling] convention [appearing in the footage]. [Narrative] tropes rely on culturally mediated expectations to expedite the development of [stories, plots, beats, arcs, experiences, and] events. When overused or oversimplified, tropes often come at the expense of fair and inclusive representations” (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

This element will typically be repeated. It differs from the “Progression Trope” element, which focuses on players’ decision-making, by focusing on devices and conventions that influence diegetic events and actions.

See [TV Tropes](#) for definitions and examples of many tropes in this controlled vocabulary. The use of TV Tropes should be accompanied by peer-reviewed scholarship in Media and Game Studies.

controlled vocabulary (adapted, with changes and additions, from Lee et al., “Controlled Vocabulary for Tropes,” 2024, and TV Tropes 2026)

- Abandoned hospital awakening
- Acceptable break from reality
- Achieve three goals
- Apocalyptic log / audio log
- Arduous descent to terra firma
- Artistic license / putting the story first
- Back from the brink of destruction
- Battle intro scene or animation
- Before the dark times speech
- Bring help back / bring news back
- Broken masquerade
- Character arrives late to the tragedy
- Chase / chase scene
- Chekov’s gun
- Chess motif
- Clear my name / clear their name
- Colonizing or settling the frontier
- Coming-out story
- Computer is lying to me / is cheating
- Coup de grâce cutscene
- Crashing the coronation
- Cutscene incompetence
- Damsel in distress
- Darkest before the dawn
- Deal with the devil
- Declaration of personal independence
- Decolonizing lands, waters, or space
- Defeating the cheating opponent
- Destiny reveal
- Don’t celebrate just yet
- Dragons versus knights
- End of an age / end of an era
- End justifies the means
- Enemy mine / common enemy, common goal
- Epic competition, battle, or journey
- Escape the labyrinth
- Excuse plot / no plot, no problem
- Face-heel turn
- Failed audition plot / talent contest
- False utopia
- Find the cure

- Five-second foreshadowing
- Former friends, now foes
- Friend in need / chronic hero syndrome
- Gameplay-guided amnesia for tutorials
- Grass is greener
- Hail mary
- Heel-face turn
- Heroic sacrifice / occupational hazard
- Hijacked by a body snatcher, symbiote, or hacker
- Hold the line
- How we got here / whole episode flashback
- I choose to stay / character remains in new environment
- I fought the law, and the law won
- Jade-coloured glasses / newcomer becomes cynic
- Journey of reclamation
- Journey to the sky
- Lampshading / characters call attention to the illogical
- Last moment together / but now I must go
- Lecture as exposition
- Led by the outsider
- Life-affirming event / carpe diem speech
- Living a double life
- Lost at sea
- Love triangle
- MacGuffin
- Makeover scene or plot
- Musical spoiler / what's that sound?
- Nature is not nice / is not a toy
- No main villain / no Big Bad
- Now it's personal
- NPC has their own adventure or story
- Odd couple / two completely different characters
- Offer you can't refuse
- Outside context problem / alien invasion
- Painting the medium / design conveys story
- Paranormal scene or episode
- Passing the torch
- Patience plot / we wait
- Pawn debut cutscene
- Perpetually saving the same character
- Player and protagonist integration
- PC death is dramatic
- PC death is not dramatic

- Plot armour / story-driven invulnerability
- Plot coupon
- Plot twist
- Prevent the war, crime, or tragedy
- Prized possession giveaway / this is a gift
- Prodigal protagonist / prodigal family
- Protagonist stumbled into the plot
- Protagonist without a past
- Pygmalion plot
- Quest for identity
- Quest for the rest or others like you
- Removing the rival
- Rescue arc
- Resistance is futile speech or scene
- Revenge plot / pointless revenge
- Rip Van Winkle / slept through the apocalypse
- Road trip plot
- Sanity slippage / driven to madness or misanthropy
- Seal the breach
- Sell what you love / I ran out of cash
- Significant wardrobe change
- Static role, exchangeable character
- Superpowers for a day
- This is the final battle speech
- Time-compression montage
- Time travel / wayback trip
- To hell and back
- Unreliable narrator
- Upsetting the balance
- Virtual training simulation / diegetic simulation
- War sequence / a thousand against one
- We cannot go on without you
- We need to get proof
- What could possibly go wrong? scene or speech
- You can't fight fate / but thou must!
- You wake up in a room / on a beach

6DD. Character Trope [+]

Definition: "A generally recognizable [representational] device or [storytelling] convention [appearing in the footage]. [Character] tropes rely on culturally mediated expectations to expedite the development of [story, action, agency, identification, player characters, non-player characters, experiences, and] events. When overused or oversimplified, tropes often

come at the expense of fair and inclusive representations of vulnerable identities” (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

A controlled vocabulary for this element will be available after we conduct additional research. Most tropes in such a vocabulary are stereotypes that, echoing Lee et al. (2024) and Sarkeesian et al. (2024), have harmful effects on historically and systemically marginalized and oppressed groups. Thus, the development of this element is and will continue to be a fraught process (Shaw et al. 2025). Thank you for your patience.

text input field

6EE. Content Warning [R]

Definition: A written statement that lists aspects of the footage that may be upsetting, offensive, challenging, or graphic; it should also note when the footage contains flashes, if applicable

Write “No content warning” if the footage does not contain flashes or material that may be upsetting, offensive, challenging, or graphic.

text input field

6FF. Gameplay Footage Note

Definition: “Any other notable characteristics of the” gameplay footage that are “not captured in other fields” of this metadata schema (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

This field may be left empty.

text input field

7. Gameplay Instruction Entity

Definition: Denotes the instructional affordances and pedagogical dimensions of the gameplay footage

This entity foregrounds research, teaching, and learning in Media and Game Studies, since the GPFC’s primary audience includes students, faculty, and staff in UVic’s Media Studies program.

The following elements of the Gameplay Instruction Entity should describe recorded gameplay of the platform edition intended for the GPFC.

- Game Studies Topic [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Media Studies Topic [R][+] (controlled vocabulary)
- Gameplay Instruction Note (text input field)

7A. Game Studies Topic [R][+]

Definition: Area of Game Studies research, analysis, and discussion prompted by the gameplay footage

Definitions and sources for terms in this controlled vocabulary are provided in UVic's Media Studies courses, including "Game Studies" (MDIA360).

controlled vocabulary

- Action as a medium / operator and machine acts
- African game studies
- Agôn / competition
- Alea / chance / fortune
- American game studies
- Analog play / analog game studies
- Animals and nonhumans in games / posthumanism
- Animation and animation techniques
- Anonymity, aliases, and privacy
- Appropriation / cultural appropriation
- Art games / games as art
- Artificial intelligence / AI programming
- Asian game studies
- Automated play and progress / idle gaming
- Autotelic play / autotelic activity
- Balance, design patterns, and anti-patterns
- Black game studies
- Canadian game studies
- Capitalism and capitalist logic in games
- Cards and card design
- Character agency / NPC agency
- Character art and design / character models and physics
- Cinematography, cinematics, and cameras
- Cisheteropatriarchy in games
- Code of conduct / community guidelines / safeguarding
- Colonization and settler colonialism in games
- Comics, graphic novels, and games
- Completionism / 100-percenting games
- Content creation / gaming content
- Cooperative and interdependent play
- Critical play
- Critical race theories of games and play
- Cursed problems in games
- Customization / appearance customization
- Death, dying, and necropolitics in games
- Deckbuilding and resource competition
- Decolonizing play
- Difficulty, failure, and frustration in games
- Disability game studies

- Dopamine games / compulsion loops
- Ecology and nature in games / playing nature
- Empire and manifest destiny in games
- Environment design / interactive environments
- Environmental storytelling
- European game studies
- Experience design / UX design
- Fair play / moral evaluation of play
- Fan games / fangames / mods and hacks
- Fashion, hairstyles, and accessories in games
- Film and games / television and games
- Flow theory / flow experiences
- Games by 2SLGBTQI+ developers
- Games by Black developers
- Games by disabled developers
- Games by gender-diverse developers
- Games by Indigenous developers
- Games by oppressed or marginalized groups
- Games by racialized groups and people of colour
- Games by women and femme developers
- Games from the Global South
- Gamification / gambification / monetization / exploitationware
- Gender and sexuality studies of games
- Genre uptake / genre knowledge / genre anarchy
- Gentrification of video games
- Geography of video games and virtual spaces
- Glitch art / glitches / exploits
- History in games / historical representations
- Homophobia in games
- Ilinx / vertigo
- Implicit and explicit tutorialization
- Inclusive design / access needs
- Indie games / independent and self-published games
- Indigenous game studies / sovereign games
- Interaction design / computers as theatre
- Interface design / UI design
- Intersectional feminism / intersectionality in games
- Joy / politics of joy
- Labour studies of play / playbour / games and work
- Leisure studies of games and play / games and hobbies
- Level design / possibility space
- Library of agency / agency as art
- Literary games / electronic literature

- Live play / live performance / livestreaming
- Localization / culturalization / translation
- Ludomusicology / music and original soundtracks
- Ludonarrative dissonance
- Ludonarrative resonance
- Metagames and cheating / playing it right, playing it wrong
- Metalepsis and diegetic boundaries in games
- Mimetic communication in games
- Mobile gaming / handheld gaming
- Moral panic / third-person effects of games
- Motion capture / kinesthetics in games
- Motivation / clear and attainable outcomes
- Mundanity and the everyday in games
- Narrative design / writing, pacing, and dialogue
- Neoliberalism in games / management games
- Non-English games / not originally written in English
- Nonverbal communication in games
- Oceanic game studies / Australian game studies
- Optimization / theorcrafting / statistical thinking
- Paidia / playfulness
- Paragames / self-imposed challenges / making your own fun
- Pedagogy / games as teachers / learning from games
- Performance, dance, rhythm, and motion controls
- Platform studies / game engines
- Play spaces / horizons of intent and action
- Player-agnostic design
- Player-antagonistic design
- Player-centric design
- Player agency / player as author / emergent gameplay
- Player two / designed identity
- Playframes / affordances, conventions, customs, and parameters
- Playstyles / expressive mechanics / player personality
- Playing with feelings / rehearsing feelings
- Poetics / poetic play / poetic games
- Power fantasies / escapism in games
- Preservation / collections and emulations
- Primary mechanics / consistent verbs
- Privilege of play / toxic geek masculinity
- Procedural rhetoric / procedural literacy
- Puzzle design / secrets and hidden information / decoding games
- Queer game studies / queergaming
- Racism in games
- Randomization / random number generators

- Reading games / visual novels
- Realism in games / photorealism / mixed realism
- Religion in games / playing with religion
- Remaking and remastering games
- Remediation, adaptation, and homage in games
- Replayability / replay value / quality of life improvements
- Resources and resource extraction in games
- Roleplay / mimicry / theatre of the mind / shared fantasies
- Secondary mechanics / occasional verbs
- Self-determination theory in games
- Sexism and misogyny in games
- Sexuality, romance, love, affection, and erotics in games
- Shared pulse or shared affect in gaming
- Simulation / fidelity of connection in games
- Situational game design / immediate and anticipatory play
- Social comfort / social gaming
- Social learning theory in games
- Sound design / sound art / soundscapes / Foley
- Sports, esports, and sports video games
- Stereotypes and tokenism in games
- System agency / framework agency
- Task communication and productivity in games
- Toxicity, hate, and harassment in games
- Training or disciplining players
- Transphobia and transmisogyny in games
- Whiteness and white supremacy in games
- Worldbuilding and worldviews
- Visual design / visual art / graphic design
- Voice acting / voice performance / voice-over
- Xenophobia in games

7B. Media Studies Topic [R][+]

Definition: Area of Media Studies research, analysis, and discussion prompted by the gameplay footage

This controlled vocabulary corresponds with primary topics taught in MDIA200, “Media in the 21st Century,” at UVic.

controlled vocabulary

- Acts and senses of communication
- Audio
- Communities and cultures
- Fandoms
- Forms and models of communication

- Images
- Interfaces
- Meaning and semiotics
- Means and levels of communication
- Media aesthetics
- Media effects
- Narrative and genre
- Noise and miscommunication
- Ownership effects and regulation
- Preservation
- Representation and intersectionality
- Rhetoric and persuasion
- Text
- Understanding media
- Video

7C. Gameplay Instruction Note

Definition: “Any other notable characteristics of” gameplay instruction that are “not captured in other fields” of this metadata schema (Lee et al., “VGMS 4.2,” 2024)

This field may be left empty.

text input field