AI AND TUTORIAL USE

There are some great tools for teaching and learning that teams can can use to support the development of their entries in the Challenge. The use of AI and tutorials are allowed as part of student's development process. But, they still need to adhere to these points from our official rules:

Submissions must:
1. Not contain any intellectual property, including footage, images, artwork, programming or sounds that are not created by the Registrant unless such content is included as part of the Game Engine or is free for public use;
2. Be solely the Registrant's original work and must not be created in collaboration with any other individual or entity not registered as part of the Challenge competition or part of the Registrant's Team;
3. Use only the features available in the free tier of the Game Engine or features that are made available specifically for use in the Challenge as specified.

To assist you with judging entries that may include AI and/or tutorials, here are some guidelines.

Artificial Intelligence

Teams can use AI when creating an entry in the STEM VGC provided is it carefully referenced in their GDD. How the team uses AI should be guided by their mentor and school or club's AI policy, if there is one.

Much like using tutorials to support game development, AI can be used to help teams develop their game but they must personalise and acknowledge the content. For example, using small chunks of AI code in large sections of their own coding is acceptable. Using AI as part of the testing process to find and fix bugs is also acceptable.

Teams should reference and explain their AI use in the same way they might reference a tutorial. They should be specific about what they used AI for, and they should include screenshots whenever possible. We encourage teams to explain how and why they modified the AI content so that it is very clear to the judges what they have done.

Clarity is key. We think of AI as a tool for learning but just like any tool, it's how teams use it and importantly, how they communicate their use of it, that really counts. We ask you to be looking for this.

If you are concerned about inappropriate use of AI, consider these questions:
- Does content show evidence of critical thinking, analysis, and reflection? AI-generated content may lack depth or nuance.
- Does the GDD contain sections where the team provides personal insights, reflections, or original ideas that AI tools are unlikely to generate?
- Is the voice and writing style consistent throughout the GDD? Sudden changes might indicate AI usage.
- Don't underestimate the ability of primary students to articulate ideas about topics they are passionate about. Take a look at the How to judge page of our website for a explanations of real student examples.

Tutorial use

When learning to program it is common for teams to start by using a tutorial. The step-by-step instructions provide teams with great support to get started with game making. When judging these games, we advise that you look for evidence of learning. If there is no evidence that the student has applied learned skills, then you need to alert the STEM team.

Here is what is acceptable when using tutorials to support entries:

- There needs to be evidence that the team has tried to make the game their own. For example, by changing the main character, audio, incorporating more obstacles than the tutorial instructed or incorporating some new element.
- The game cannot be a direct copy of a tutorial with no modifications.
- Detail of the tutorial use should be provided in the GDD.

🎮 AI AND TUTORIAL USE cont.

Modifying a game built by someone else

We do occasionally get games have been directly copied from the game platform and altered by students. As per points one and three of the submission rules, this is admissible provided the game is free for public use on the game platform. As with tutorials, we expect teams to have made these games their own through modifications and provided details of the games they have used in their GDD. If the game includes a combination of modified levels and unmodified levels, only judge the modified levels.

How should the games be scored?

It is difficult to give a definitive answer to the question of what impact these tools should have on student scores. **We ask that you give students the benefit of the doubt by assuming they are well-intentioned and acting in good faith.** This is a free video game challenge and many students have never attempted something as big as making a video game. Look for evidence of learning and use this as your guide for scoring. The amount of effort and learning it takes to modify an existing game compared to building from scratch can be accounted for in the scores that you give the entry.

Feedback for inappropriate use of AI, tutorial and copied games

Our mission is to provide students with positive and constructive feedback with the aim of keeping them engaged in STEM. Teams will make mistakes, and some might push the boundaries. We want to acknowledge inappropriate use and provide guidance on what to do next time. Here are some examples of what you might include in your feedback.

Your GDD is well-structured and grammatically correct, but it seems to lack your personal thoughts. We want to know what you think, and we would like to know the details of how you solved problems in your game development. When you are using AI tools, tutorials or free games to help you with your development, please ensure you reference these in your GDD.

Using a tutorial or a free game to help you learn about developing games is a great way to learn new skills. Make sure you change some things so that the game becomes your own unique work. For example, create a new main character, include more or different obstacles and record your own audio. Show your ideas and personality in what you create.

If you know the game or tutorial that the team has used, make specific reference to it in your feedback.

XXX game is a great basic game to help you to learn how to program. I have used it with my students to get them started too. In the STEM VGC, you can use the structure of games to help you get started but don't forget to make changes so we are seeing your ideas. This can be through the development of your own character sprites, level layout and audio elements. We want to know what you can do. We hope that you use the skills you have learned to try again next year.