



**Hey, my name is Will and I used to learn music at *Cherry Valley Music* just like you. Today I make video games, and it's pretty cool. I took piano lessons with Molly years ago and it keeps helping me make games today. I want to tell you about how video games get made and how I help make them. I'm want to tell you how music makes games great and why learning about all kinds of music is perfect if you think you want to make games.**

## So how do video games get made?

**The best part is that anyone can make a game. There are so many different talents that go into creating a fun game and there is nothing stopping you from making them yourself. The reason you too can make games is that it is a team effort. Lots of different people of all types work together to make it fun from start to finish. Usually, they come in four types, but even if you don't see yourself as one of these, there are lots more things that go into making a game that you can contribute to.**



## Who Makes Games?



**Programmers know how to write instructions for the computer that tells the game how to think when you play it. It involves learning to speak computer language and using math and logic to calculate exactly what will happen in the game.**



**Artists are responsible for all of the beautiful images in the game. They spend countless hours drawing and modeling ideas about how the characters, setting, and style of the game will look, often with fantastic and imaginative results.**





**Audio creators focus on what you hear when you play a game. They decide on the music and even compose it themselves sometimes. They record and mix all of the sound-effects you will hear, and record the dialogue for when characters talk in the game.**



**Producers are good at all 3 - programming, art, and sound. They fill in any gaps when people need help and make the team run smoothly. They plan out exactly how long it will take to make the game and how many people need to work on it. Some producers are designers. They plan the game before it gets made to figure out exactly what will be fun about it and make sure everyone knows what type of game they are making together.**



**That's what I do, I'm a designer. I come up with the idea for how a game will be played before it gets made. I work with a team during development to make sure it's fun. I have people play the game before it's finished to get their opinion on what is good and what is bad so that we can fix it along the way. I also have to be really good at programming, art, and audio to talk to my teammates about what needs to be done, and make changes to test out new ideas along the way. And yes, I have to be good at music too in order to make the game feel right. It's a lot of fun but a lot of work. Nothing is more rewarding than having someone tell you they enjoyed playing a game helped create!**



## So why is music so important when making games?

Here's a fun exercise. Think about some video games you've played lately. They could be games on a computer, or a video game console, or even on a cell phone or tablet. Now think about what you were doing in those games. Were you a hero trying to rescue someone from danger? Were you collecting resources to survive in the woods? Did you fight a monster or jump over dangerous gaps to reach the end of a cool dungeon? Did you have to think for a long time about how to solve a puzzle, and then feel really smart when you got it? Were you playing with friends working together to overcome an obstacle, or were you competing against everyone to see who is the best? Did you experience a good story or did you really like one of the characters in particular?



Now think about how what you did in the game made you feel. Did the game make you feel scared, or loved, or happy, or sad? Did you feel friendship, or achievement, or disgust, or jealousy? Did you feel trust, or frustration, or anticipation, or surprise? The secret about video games is that they are really good at making us feel emotions when we play them. Not surprisingly, music works the same way. Think about the last song you heard and how it made you feel. I bet it made you feel some kind of an emotion. That's why music is so important to video games, it helps us feel emotion when we play them.

Try out this fun experiment. Next time you sit down to play a video game of any kind, turn the volume all the way down. Notice how it's kind of bland and you're just focused on playing the game like a robot. Feels like something's missing doesn't it? Now go back and reload the part of the game you just played but this time turn the volume back up. See what you notice that's different. Did the sound help you play better? More importantly, did the music help you feel emotion better when playing it?





**That's the awesome thing about music in video games: music tells us how to play the game and how to feel about it.**

The melodies remind us about the characters, places, and stories we experience when we play games. The tempo tells whether to play frantically fast or strategically slow. The voices

of the instruments make us feel happy or sad or victorious or defeated. That's why music is so important to video games.

**So music is defiantly important to how we enjoy and play video games, but how does learning all about music help if you want to create video games?**

Simply listening to music and learning how different songs make you feel is great. You can pass that emotion along to someone who plays your game by choosing the types of songs that go into it. Also, maybe you are working on a game that doesn't have any music composed for it yet. Because you know how you want the music to sound in your game, you can put "stand-in" songs into it while the real songs are being finished. And if you get really good at composing your own music, you can write music for the games you make.



But the bottom line is, that learning about music and playing an instrument will help you work in a team – remember, video games are most always made by a team of people working together. You can use musical vocabulary to describe how your game should sound and feel, musical knowledge to show them examples of other songs that would sound great in the game, and musical experience to create your own songs that could wind up in the video games you make.



**Well I hope this has inspired you a little bit to know that I used to take music lessons just like, you and now I have the super cool job of making games that other people play. Just remember anyone can make video games even you, and learning about music now will help with that later! If you have any questions for me, please write me an e-mail. I love talking about video games and answering any questions about them. You can ask Molly for my address and make sure to get your parent's permission first. Thanks for listening :)**



*Looking forward to playing your games  
in the future!*

☺ WILL

