

Content Authoring for Ideate Games

Content for the 6 games at ideategames.org are loaded (for all games) from 3 sources:

- spreadsheet with the text content: 10 columns and at least 24 rows
- form with 5 fields, short text strings naming the content for different purposes
- images — one unique image for each row in the content spreadsheet

Spreadsheet with text content

For most error-free handling, this file should have a unique name meaningful to you. Examples of filenames used by IdeateGames are “Strings_through_Literature”, “Strings_of_Art”, “Strings_between_Alaskan_Cities”, “Strings_in_the_British_Museum”.

Every topic has a single spreadsheet with all the text for that content. This comprises 10 fields described below with content presented at different places for different purposes in the different games.

Column name	Purpose, use	Restrictions	Example
Description	Most games provide the description of the item either when the image is touched or on demand. This is considered the primary source for learning.	The text should be less than 550 characters long, but longer descriptions can work if needed. The games work best if the description is written without specific mention of names and dates, because those are used as other information as part of the game.	He was the first conductor to give numerous television lectures on classical music, continuing until his death. He was a skilled pianist, often conducting piano concertos from the keyboard. As a composer he wrote in many styles encompassing symphonic and orchestral music, ballet, film and theatre music, choral works, opera, chamber music and pieces for the piano.
Clues	These clues drive several of the games, and should be unique and primary learning items. The field can take many short clues, separated by a semi-colon (;). Each game that uses these clues randomly selects one of the set for each item.	The semi-colon between clues is critical and necessary. The game can work with as many clues as you can provide for each item, best with between 3 and 8.	The Well-Tempered Clavier;tune for How Gentle is the Rain;Cello Suites;Mass in B minor;Goldberg Variations;Magnificat; The Art of Fugue;St Matthew Passion and St John Passion;Tocatta and Fugue in D minor
Topic	Your unique name for	It can be any text	Composers

	this topic.	string, is not shown to players. Short, no spaces.	
Location	Provides names for rooms in some of the games, and categories in the Buckets game.	One or more location, simple text, separated by commas . Can be city, country, regions, this can be a useful learning opportunity if written carefully.	Giza, Egypt
Date	Used in Strings and Paths for required sorting by order.	Any single numeric. Can include negative numbers.	1812
Agent	Used for hints, often for roll-over text identifying the image. Should indicate who is responsible for doing/creating the event or item.	Usually a single text name, though can be a few, separated by columns.	George Frederic Handel
Category	Use for sorting items in several of the games. A primary learning opportunity, learning types, similarities, classes, styles.	List of short text names, separated by commas.	physics, chemistry
Source	Not used in the games, only for IdeateGames to help check the content if some question arises.	Usually a book title or URL or even 'Wikipedia'.	The New Penguin History of the World
Image	Name of the image file for this item.	Can have any extension, but must be unique. Ideally, will be meaningful for the content, giving the games a short name for the item. Best if you can provide images that have open copyright, such as Creative Commons BY or NC or other similar. If copyright is not cleared for use in the game, then this topic	planetary_ellipses.png

		will not be made public, will only be available for private (eg, within-school) use.	
URL	Source for the image. Shown in the filmstrip view of images, allowing the player to go to the original image.	URL format	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Haydn#mediaviewer/File:Joseph_Haydn.jpg

For most efficient and error-free processing, it is best to use the columns in the same order as specified above.

Topic Name Form

Each topic needs a short name (and optional image) that is shown to the user who can select that topic. This set of name variations can be submitted as either a text file or (ideally) as a spreadsheet. All of these are optional, though we strongly recommend you provide the first item.

Field	Use	Restrictions	Examples	Default
DisplayTopics	Text shown to the player to choose this topic	Less than 40 characters	Discoveries in Science	The value of the 'Topic' form in the content spreadsheet.
ObjTypes	Used in feedback text to make the text less generic	Less than 20 characters. Must be plural form.	movies, objects, diagrams, paintings, composers	objects
objectTypes	Used in feedback text to make the text less generic	Less than 30 characters, usually the singular of the above. Must be singular form.	work of art, city, event	object
TopicIcons	Icon used on topic selection bar.	Filename. Image should be 50px diameter circle, though can be 50px square. If larger, will be reduced to 50px on display.	dino_Icon.png	[Ideate Games logo]
TopUnits	The unit used in the numeric columns ('Date' above).	Use the plural form.	years, degrees of latitude, millions of years	years

Images

Images must be unique for each item, and have unique names. The name in the spreadsheet must correspond to the filename of the image provided.

Ideal images are at least 500 px wide, though larger and smaller will work. Larger images will be reduced to 600px max width for use in the games.

Images must be at least 200px width and 200px height, with no border.

The round images used in the games are 150px diameter cut from the center of the images provided. For images larger than 150px, images are reduced/resampled down to 154px width or height (whichever is smaller) before the round image is extracted, allowing maximum use of the original image.

Images to be used should be copyright cleared for non-commercial use. If they are not, then the game cannot be exposed to the public (but can still be arranged for private, eg within-school use). We recommend looking for images with CC-BY or other Creative Commons license (<http://creativecommons.org/>) that allow non-commercial use without royalty. A Google search for 'image CC license Beethoven' for example will typically get appropriate images.

If you want your topic to be available to the general public, you must provide a clear statement that you have verified that all images are available for free non-commercial use.