

# CS4All Hack League FAQ

*The CS4All Team is excited to partner with Games for Change (G4C) to launch the CS4All Hack League. Through hackathons students are encouraged to apply CS concepts and practices they've learned in the classroom to solve real world challenges. In the past, New York City students have worked together to prototype, create, and demo apps, games, and business plans. This year, up to 100 high schools and middle schools from across the City are invited to participate in a bracket-style competition where students will make games to tackle themes including News Literacy, Wildlife Conservation, Kindness & Empathy, and Connected Cities. Winners of school- and borough-level brackets will advance to a citywide final competition. All participating students are encouraged to submit their games to the G4C Student Challenge Competition in April 2018 for an opportunity to earn additional prizes and recognition. Training for teachers to run school-based hackathons will be offered in November, and the Hack League will kick off during CSEdWee in December.*

- What is the NYC Hack League?
  - 100 high schools and middle schools from across NYC are invited to participate in a bracket-style hackathon competition where students will create digital games that tackle themes including News Literacy, Wildlife Conservation, Kindness, and Connected Cities. In the first-ever CS4All Hack League, winning teams of school-based and borough-level brackets will advance to a citywide final competition.
- When is it?
  - The Hack League competition will kick off in 100 schools in all five NYC boroughs during CSEdWeek (December 4-10, 2017). Rounds 2 and 3 of the Hack League will take place in early 2018.
- Who can participate?
  - For schools to participate in the league, teachers must meet the below eligibility requirements and complete [this application form](#). Selected educators may attend a 1-day training on how to facilitate a competitive, games-focused hackathon within their schools.
  - Eligibility requirements for teachers:
    - Must currently work as a high school or middle school teacher in the NYC DOE school system
    - School must be located within the five NYC boroughs
    - Must meet the time and technology requirements outlined in the [Teacher Application Form](#)
    - Must satisfy **ONE** of the following requirements:
      - Have taught a CS program as part of CS4All or independently; or
      - Have taught a game design course; or
      - Participated in the G4C Student Challenge Program
- What technology requirements are there for schools to participate?
  - Teacher has computer for use during training, school year, at home, and on location

- At least 1 computer for every 4 students (Pentium 4 class CPU or higher; 2 GB RAM (4 GB recommended); 1024x768 display (1280x800+ recommended); Windows XP+, OSX 10.6+ or Chrome OS; Standard 3-button)
- High-speed internet access (10+ MB/s download, 5+MB/s upload minimum)
- Headphones and mouse (one pair per team of students)
- Ability to download free game engines (such as Scratch, Python, Inkle, Unity, etc.) onto hardware.
- Is there a stipend for teachers or schools to participate?
  - Yes, teachers will receive a “Per Session” rate stipend for participating in the 1-day training in November.
- How much time will participating in the Hack League take for a teacher?
  - To host a hackathon at your school, teachers may participate in our 1-day PD (9am-3pm) to better prepare and support you in running a game jam at your school.
  - We anticipate roughly 6-12 hours additional hours to plan and facilitate a hackathon within school during CSEdWeek and 3+ hours of guidance and mentorship to your school's winning team into the next brackets of competition.
- What is the 1-day teacher PD?
  - We are offering a 1-day Hack League training on Saturday, November 18. At the PD, you learn how to facilitate a games-focused hackathon in your school, including practical and logistical tools and supports to run your own hackathon.
- What skills and prior knowledge and/or training will teachers need to participate?
  - You will need to have CS training and/or have participated in one of either the DOE’s CS4All workshops or a G4C workshop.
- Can all students participate?
  - All high school and middle school students can participate. Academic grades should not be a determining factor for participation. If under 18, participants must have consent from a parent or legal guardian to participate in the CS4All Hack League.
- Do they need prior CS or game design experience? How much preparation will students need prior to the game jam?
  - Students do not need to have prior CS experience, but it is highly recommended.
  - Students do not need to have prior game design experience. In fact, typically, the beginning of a game jam is devoted to an introduction to game design experiences.
  - Little preparation is required. Teachers may encourage students to review the Theme material provided, however all game development must start at the game jam.
- How long does a game jam take?
  - They are typically between 2-6 hours.
- When will the first school-wide game jam be held?
  - The School-wide game jams will ideally be held during CSEdWeek in early December; the exact time/day/location/length is up to the discretion of the participating teacher.
- What are students expected to create during the game jam?
  - For games to be considered in competition, teams must design and build a complete level of the game or a game prototype w/ supporting documentation that defines one level of the game (in the form of design documents, storyboards, etc.). This work must be completed onsite.
- Who will judge students’ work?

- Participating teachers will reach out to local/connected CS and tech-knowledgeable professionals and recruit fellow teachers to form a judging jury for local-level game jams.
- How will student games be judged and evaluated?
  - We will provide a scoring rubric, although some subjectivity will also be involved.
- Can students participate individually or must they be in teams?
  - Students must participate in teams of 2-4.
- How many students are expected to participate in a given school?
  - The number can range from 2-250, depending on the capacity at the school level. Typically, 20-75 students from a given school will participate.
- How are winners determined?
  - For the first round (school-based hackathons), students game prototypes will be evaluated by a jury (i.e. a group of teachers at the school) and one winner is selected at each school. These teams move on to the next round: the borough-level game jam. In January, the next round of game jams is held: this time one in each borough. 10 to 20 teams attend each borough-level game jam, which are facilitated by G4C staff. One to two winning team(s) are then selected to represent each borough, and invited to compete at the city-level final game jam in February.
- Why game design & CS? (How does game design help support the development of computer science?)
  - Game design is a powerful vehicle for making computer science more relevant and immediately tangible for students. Game design naturally supports and cultivates many of the skills required of computer science: logic and computational thinking, grit, and persistence in the face of challenge and frustration, as well as the traditional 21st century skills: collaboration, communication, and critical thinking, as young people navigate the design process, empathizing with their players and prototyping, testing and iterating to create an experience for someone else.
- Who has created the CS4All Hack League?
  - The CS4All Hack League is a program initiated by CS4All, the NYC Department of Education, and Games for Change.

**For more information on the CS4All Hack League, please see:**

- CS4All Hack League Competition Guidelines
- [Games for Change blogpost](#)