

Game Development - LINC'S Vocabulary

(Grades 6-8)

Game Development

Tech for Everyone · LINC'S Vocabulary Sheet

About This Resource

LINCS is a research-based vocabulary strategy from the University of Kansas that helps students lock new terms into long-term memory. Instead of copying definitions over and over, students build a memory chain: a familiar "reminding word" that sounds like the term, a short story that ties that sound to the term's meaning, and a quick sketch that brings the story to life.

This sheet is for teachers and students using the *Game Development* textbook (Grades 6-8).

Every vocabulary term from the book's five chapters appears below with a ready-made LINCS card: the book's definition, a reminding word, a LINCing story, and a picture idea. Teachers can use these as models, and students can use them as study cards — or as inspiration for building their own versions with the blank card at the end.

The five LINCS steps are:

1. **List the parts** — write the term and its definition.
2. **Identify a reminding word** — pick a familiar word that sounds like part of the term.
3. **Note a LINCing story** — write a mini-story connecting the reminding word to the term's meaning.
4. **Create a LINCing picture** — sketch a simple scene from the story.
5. **Self-test** — quiz yourself in both directions until the chain is automatic.

Tip

To self-test, cover everything on the card except the term. Say the term, recall the reminding word, replay the story, picture the sketch, and let the story hand you the definition. Then flip it: cover the term, read only the definition, and work backward through the picture and story until the term pops out. When you can travel the chain both ways without peeking, the word is yours.

Chapter 1: What Makes a Game?

This chapter introduces 4 terms — the core vocabulary of what every video game is made of.

Game loop

Definition: A continuous cycle that runs every frame: check input, update game state, render graphics. This is the heartbeat of every game.

- **Reminding word:** hula hoop ("loop" sounds like "hoop")
- **LINCing story:** A kid keeps a hula hoop spinning around and around without ever stopping, and on every single spin she does the same three moves: check, update, draw. The game's spinning hoop repeats that cycle 60 times every second — it is the heartbeat that keeps the game alive.
- **Picture idea:** A kid spinning a hula hoop with three arrows riding the hoop labeled "check," "update," and "draw."

Game state

Definition: All the data that describes what's happening in the game right now: player position, score, health, enemy locations, etc.

- **Reminding word:** slate ("state" sounds like "slate")
- **LINCing story:** A referee carries a chalk slate that lists everything happening right now — the score, where each player stands, how much health is left — and erases and rewrites it every moment as things change. The slate holds all the data about the game at this instant.
- **Picture idea:** A referee holding a chalkboard slate covered with a score, hearts for health, and X marks for enemy positions.

Rendering

Definition: The process of drawing all game objects onto the screen as pixels. Happens every frame — typically 60 times per second.

- **Reminding word:** Rembrandt ("render" sounds like "Rembrandt")

- **LINCing story:** The painter Rembrandt sits inside your computer and repaints the entire screen from scratch 60 times a second, turning the game's data into a fresh picture of pixels every frame. His nonstop painting is what you actually see.
- **Picture idea:** A painter at an easel furiously repainting a monitor screen while a stopwatch counts "60 per second."

Pixels

Definition: The tiny dots of color that make up everything you see on a screen. A 1080p screen has over 2 million pixels.

- **Reminding word:** pickles ("pixels" sounds like "pickles")
- **LINCing story:** A giant mural is built from millions of tiny pickle slices; up close it's just little green dots, but step back and the dots blend into one big picture. A screen works the same way — millions of tiny colored dots make everything you see.
- **Picture idea:** A TV screen made of tiny round pickle-slice dots that form a smiley face when viewed from far away.

Chapter 2: The Blueprint of a Game

This chapter introduces 15 terms — the planning vocabulary designers use before a single line of code is written.

Environmental storytelling

Definition: Telling a story through the game world itself — objects, scenery, and details — instead of dialogue or cutscenes.

- **Reminding word:** mantel ("-mental" sounds like "mantel")
- **LINCing story:** The dusty trophies and cracked photos on a fireplace mantel tell the family's whole history without anyone saying a word. Game worlds do the same: a rusted sword by an old campfire tells the story with objects instead of dialogue.
- **Picture idea:** A fireplace mantel holding a dusty trophy, a cracked photo, and a rusted sword — with no people talking.

Nonlinear story

Definition: A story structure where the player's choices change what happens next, leading to multiple possible paths and endings.

- **Reminding word:** "no line here" ("nonlinear" sounds like "no line here")
- **LINCing story:** A theme park sign reads "NO LINE HERE — pick any door!" and each door the visitor chooses leads to a completely different ride and ending. A nonlinear story works the same way: player choices open different paths to different endings.
- **Picture idea:** A kid standing before three doors under a "NO LINE HERE" sign, each door showing a different ending scene.

Dialogue trees

Definition: Sprawling maps of conversations that show how every player choice connects to the next piece of dialogue or story event.

- **Reminding word:** family tree ("trees" sounds like "family tree")

- **LINCing story:** A writer draws a huge family tree, but instead of relatives, every branch is a speech bubble: each answer the player picks grows a new branch of conversation. The whole tree maps how every choice connects to the next line of dialogue.
- **Picture idea:** A big tree whose branches end in speech bubbles connected by arrows.

Game mechanics

Definition: The actions the player can take and the way the game responds to them — jumping, shooting, crafting, managing health, etc.

- **Reminding word:** car mechanic ("mechanics" sounds like "mechanic")
- **LINCing story:** A car mechanic installs the levers and pedals that decide what the car can do and how it responds when you press them. Game mechanics are the same: the actions a player can take — jump, shoot, craft — and how the game responds.
- **Picture idea:** A mechanic bolting a big button labeled "JUMP" into a car dashboard.

Core Game Loop

Definition: The primary sequence of actions a player repeats throughout the game. If this loop isn't fun, the whole game will feel boring.

- **Reminding word:** apple core ("core" sounds like "apple core")
- **LINCing story:** Eating an apple down to the core is the same repeated cycle — bite, chew, swallow, repeat — and if the apple is mushy, every single bite is boring. A game's core loop is the action cycle players repeat most, so it has to stay tasty.
- **Picture idea:** An apple core in the center of a circle of arrows labeled "bite," "chew," "repeat."

UI

Definition: User Interface — the visual elements on screen like health bars, mini-maps, menus, and buttons.

- **Reminding word:** "You, eye!" ("UI" sounds like "you, eye")
- **LINCing story:** A coach points and shouts "You! Eye on the screen!" — because everything the player's eye needs is drawn right there: the health bar, the mini-map, the

menus and buttons. UI is the on-screen stuff your eye sees.

- **Picture idea:** A giant eyeball looking at a screen showing a health bar, a mini-map, and a menu button.

UX

Definition: User Experience — how intuitive, smooth, and enjoyable it feels to use the game's interface and controls.

- **Reminding word:** eggs ("X" sounds like "eggs")
- **LINCing story:** Two diners serve the exact same eggs, but at one the fork is easy to reach and breakfast feels great, while at the other you dig through three drawers just to eat — frustrating! Same food, different experience: UX is how it *feels* to use something.
- **Picture idea:** Two kids with identical plates of eggs — one smiling with an easy fork, one groaning while digging through a messy drawer.

Objective

Definition: The goal the player is trying to achieve, such as "rescue the prince," "defuse the bomb," or "win the race."

- **Reminding word:** detective ("-jective" sounds like "-tective")
- **LINCing story:** A detective pins one card to the wall — "GOAL: solve the case" — and everything she does aims at that goal. A game's objective is the same kind of card: the one goal the player is trying to achieve, like rescue the prince or win the race.
- **Picture idea:** A detective pointing at a wall card that reads "GOAL," with strings running from it to clues.

PvE

Definition: Player versus Environment — the player fights computer-controlled enemies, avoids hazards, or solves puzzles.

- **Reminding word:** peewee ("PvE" sounds like "peewee")
- **LINCing story:** A peewee soccer player runs a field with no other team at all — the field itself fights back with mud pits, wind, and cones to dodge. That's PvE: one player against

the game's world and its computer-controlled hazards.

- **Picture idea:** A small kid dribbling a ball alone through mud puddles and traffic cones on an empty field.

PvP

Definition: Player versus Player — competing against real human opponents.

- **Reminding word:** ping-pong ("PvP" sounds like the two P's facing off in "ping-pong")
- **LINCing story:** Ping-pong only happens when two real people stand at opposite ends of the table smacking the ball back and forth. That's PvP: a real player versus another real player, not the computer.
- **Picture idea:** Two kids at a ping-pong table mid-rally, one on each side.

Game balance

Definition: Designing a game so that no single strategy, weapon, or character is so powerful that it makes everything else pointless.

- **Reminding word:** balance beam seesaw ("balance" sounds like "balance beam")
- **LINCing story:** On the playground seesaw, one giant sword sits on one end and every other weapon piles on the other — and the sword still slams its side down. When one thing outweighs everything else, the game is no fun; balance keeps the seesaw level.
- **Picture idea:** A seesaw with one huge glowing sword outweighing a pile of small weapons on the other end.

OP

Definition: Overpowered — when something in a game is so strong that it breaks the balance and everyone uses it.

- **Reminding word:** "Oops!" ("OP" sounds like "oops")
- **LINCing story:** The designer says "Oops!" — the new sword defeats everything in one hit, so now every single player carries it and ignores all the other weapons. Something that strong is overpowered, and it breaks the game's balance.
- **Picture idea:** A long line of players waiting to grab one glowing sword while a rack of

dusty weapons sits ignored.

Game Design Document (GDD)

Definition: The giant blueprint for a game. It contains the story, rules, victory conditions, controls, and a list of every asset needed to build the game.

- **Reminding word:** giddy ("GDD" sounds like "giddy")
- **LINCing story:** The team gets giddy flipping through a binder as thick as a phone book — it's the giant blueprint holding the whole game: story, rules, controls, victory conditions, and every asset they'll need to build it.
- **Picture idea:** An excited developer hugging a huge binder with a castle blueprint on its cover.

Technical Design Document (TDD)

Definition: A document for programmers explaining the math, code architecture, and software needed to make the game mechanics work.

- **Reminding word:** teddy ("TDD" sounds like "teddy")
- **LINCing story:** A programmer's teddy bear wears glasses and sleeps on a manual stuffed with math formulas and code diagrams — the document that tells programmers exactly what math, code, and software will make the mechanics work.
- **Picture idea:** A teddy bear with glasses lying on an open binder covered in equations and code boxes.

Assets

Definition: All the individual pieces needed to build a game — 3D models, sound effects, music tracks, UI buttons, textures, etc.

- **Reminding word:** a set ("assets" sounds like "a set")
- **LINCing story:** A LEGO set dumps out every individual piece you need to build the model — bricks, wheels, stickers. A game's assets are the same idea: all the individual pieces — models, sound effects, music, buttons — needed to build the game.
- **Picture idea:** An open LEGO box spilling out bricks labeled with a music note, a button,

and a tiny tree.

Chapter 3: Creating Characters and Worlds

This chapter introduces 14 terms — the visual-design vocabulary of art, characters, levels, and animation.

Immersion

Definition: The feeling that you have actually stepped inside the game world. Strong visuals, sound, and interaction all contribute to immersion.

- **Reminding word:** in the ocean ("immersion" sounds like "in the ocean")
- **LINCing story:** When you dive in the ocean, the water wraps around you completely and the outside world disappears. A great game does the same thing — you feel like you've stepped all the way inside its world.
- **Picture idea:** A kid diving headfirst into a giant screen the way you'd dive into a pool.

Color theory

Definition: A set of rules about how colors work together and how they affect mood and perception. Game designers use it to communicate information and emotion without words.

- **Reminding word:** theater ("theory" sounds like "theater")
- **LINCing story:** In the color theater, the colors are the actors: a gold spotlight tells the audience "legendary treasure," a red one screams "danger" — and nobody on stage says a single word. Colors follow rules that talk straight to the player's brain.
- **Picture idea:** A stage where a gold spotlight shines on a treasure chest and a red spotlight shines on an exploding barrel.

Composition

Definition: How you arrange visual elements on the screen. Good composition guides the player's eye exactly where it needs to go.

- **Reminding word:** composer ("composition" sounds like "composer")
- **LINCing story:** A composer arranges notes so your ear follows the melody exactly where

he wants it to go. A game artist arranges shapes on the screen the same way, so the player's eye lands exactly where it needs to.

- **Picture idea:** A conductor waving a baton at floating screen elements that slide into place on a monitor.

Leading lines

Definition: Visual elements like paths, light beams, or edges that naturally draw the player's eye toward an important object or destination.

- **Reminding word:** leash ("leading" sounds like "leash")
- **LINCing story:** A dog leash pulls the puppy straight to its owner no matter what else is around. A dirt path or a beam of sunlight works like a leash for the player's eye, pulling it straight to the hidden castle.
- **Picture idea:** A dirt path shaped like a leash stretching from a player's eye to a castle gate lit by a sunbeam.

Archetype

Definition: A classic personality pattern that audiences instantly recognize, like the Hero, the Rebel, or the Sage. Archetypes give you a starting framework for building a character.

- **Reminding word:** Archie ("arche-" sounds like "Archie")
- **LINCing story:** Everyone at school recognizes Archie the class clown the second he walks in — the joker, just like the brave hero and the wise teacher are instantly recognizable patterns. An archetype is a classic personality pattern people know on sight.
- **Picture idea:** A yearbook page with four labeled faces: "the Hero," "the Clown," "the Rebel," "the Sage."

Stereotype

Definition: A harmful, lazy, or inaccurate assumption about a real group of people. Great game designers avoid stereotypes so that all players feel welcome.

- **Reminding word:** stereo ("stereo-" sounds like "stereo")
- **LINCing story:** An old stereo is stuck on repeat, blasting the same lazy, hurtful song about

a group of real people over and over. A good designer unplugs that stereo — stereotypes are harmful assumptions, and games should make everyone feel welcome.

- **Picture idea:** A hand pulling the plug on an old boombox that keeps blaring the same note.

The Silhouette Test

Definition: A character design test where you fill in your character completely black. If you can still identify who it is from shape alone, you have a strong, recognizable design.

- **Reminding word:** window sill ("silhouette" starts with "sill")
- **LINCing story:** A cat sits on the window sill at night — you see only its solid black shape, but you instantly know it's *your* cat from the shape alone. Fill a character in pure black; if you still know who it is, the design is strong.
- **Picture idea:** A pitch-black cat shape sitting on a window sill against a bright moon.

NPCs

Definition: Non-Player Characters — the shopkeepers, villagers, quest-givers, and enemies controlled by the computer that make the game world feel populated and alive.

- **Reminding word:** an empty sea ("NPC" sounds like "an empty sea")
- **LINCing story:** A ship sails an empty sea with a full crew of shopkeepers and villagers — but no real person is aboard steering; the computer runs them all. They fill the world and make it feel alive, even though no player controls them.
- **Picture idea:** A ship crewed by a shopkeeper and villagers with an empty captain's wheel spinning by itself.

Environment

Definition: Everything that makes up the game world the player moves through: ground, walls, background, lighting, obstacles, and decorative details.

- **Reminding word:** in my tent ("-ment" sounds like "tent")
- **LINCing story:** A camper looks around and everything near the tent is her world for the night — the ground, the walls of trees, the lantern light, the rocks in the way. A game's environment is everything that makes up the world the player moves through.

- **Picture idea:** A camper by a tent surrounded by labeled arrows: ground, trees, lantern, rocks.

Pacing

Definition: The rhythm of a game level — alternating between high-intensity moments (like boss fights) and low-intensity moments (like puzzle rooms or safe zones) to keep players engaged.

- **Reminding word:** pace car ("pacing" sounds like "pace car")
- **LINCing story:** At the racetrack, the pace car controls the rhythm — sometimes the field roars at full speed, sometimes it cruises slow to let everyone breathe. A level needs the same rhythm: a wild boss fight, then a calm puzzle room.
- **Picture idea:** A rollercoaster with a huge drop labeled "boss fight" followed by a flat, calm stretch labeled "puzzle room."

Principles of animation

Definition: A set of rules (originally from Disney animators) that make movement look natural and satisfying. Key principles include anticipation, squash and stretch, and timing.

- **Reminding word:** principal ("principles" sounds like "principals")
- **LINCing story:** The school principal posts a short list of rules that make the whole school day run smoothly. Disney's animators posted their own principal rules — anticipation, squash and stretch, timing — that make movement look natural and satisfying.
- **Picture idea:** A principal pointing at a rules poster that shows a bouncing ball squashing and stretching.

Anticipation

Definition: The "wind-up" before an action. In games, this gives the player a visual cue and a brief window to react — like a boss pulling back their fist before a punch.

- **Reminding word:** Aunt Cindy ("antici-" sounds like "Aunt Cindy")
- **LINCing story:** Aunt Cindy always winds her arm way back before tossing you the ball, so you have a moment to get your hands ready. A boss winding up before a punch gives the player that same warning window to dodge.

- **Picture idea:** A pitcher with her arm wound way back while the batter braces to react.

Squash and stretch

Definition: An animation technique where characters squish down on impact and stretch out during jumps, making movement feel bouncy, energetic, and alive.

- **Reminding word:** squash the vegetable ("squash" sounds like the garden squash)
- **LINCing story:** Drop a soft garden squash and it squishes flat on the floor; fling a rubber band and it stretches long in the air. Animators make characters do both — squish on landing, stretch mid-leap — so they feel bouncy and alive.
- **Picture idea:** A cartoon squash flattening as it lands next to a rubber band stretching in mid-jump.

VFX

Definition: Visual effects — special graphical elements like particle systems for rain, fire, smoke, explosions, and magic that add impact and polish to a game.

- **Reminding word:** very fancy explosions ("VFX" sounds like "Very Fancy eXplosions")
- **LINCing story:** The wizard's very fancy explosions — bursting sparks, swirling smoke, orange fire particles — make every spell hit feel powerful. VFX are those special graphical effects: rain, fire, smoke, and magic that polish the game.
- **Picture idea:** A wizard casting a fire spell that bursts into a shower of orange particle sparks.

Chapter 4: The Brains of the Operation

This chapter introduces 15 terms — the programming vocabulary that brings a game to life.

If/then statement

Definition: A logic rule that tells the computer: IF a condition is true, THEN do something. It's how programs make decisions.

- **Reminding word:** sniff ("if" sounds like "sniff")
- **LINCing story:** A well-trained dog follows one rule: IF it sniffs a treat, THEN it sits.
Computers make every decision the same way — if the condition is true, then do the action.
- **Picture idea:** A dog sniffing a treat with an arrow to the dog sitting, labeled "IF sniff, THEN sit."

Boolean

Definition: A data type that can only be True or False. Named after mathematician George Boole.

- **Reminding word:** "Boo!" ("Boo-lean" starts with "Boo")
- **LINCing story:** A ghost jumps out and yells "Boo!" — and there are only two possible outcomes: you jump (True) or you don't (False). A Boolean is exactly that: a value that can only ever be True or False.
- **Picture idea:** A ghost yelling "Boo!" at two kids — one leaping in the air labeled TRUE, one shrugging labeled FALSE.

Flowchart

Definition: A diagram that maps out a program's decisions and actions step-by-step using shapes and arrows.

- **Reminding word:** river flow ("flow" sounds like a river's flow)
- **LINCing story:** A river flows downstream and splits at every fork, with a signpost at each branch: "yes, go left — no, go right." A flowchart maps a program the same way, with

shapes and arrows showing every decision and action step by step.

- **Picture idea:** A river splitting into two branches at a fork with "YES" and "NO" signposts.

Loop

Definition: A programming structure that repeats a block of code either a set number of times or while a condition is true.

- **Reminding word:** Froot Loops ("loop" sounds like "Froot Loops")
- **LINCing story:** Every morning it's the same Froot Loops cycle: scoop, bite, repeat — and it only stops when the bowl-is-empty condition comes true. A loop repeats a block of code a set number of times or while a condition holds.
- **Picture idea:** A cereal bowl with circular arrows of spoons going around it until the bowl is empty.

Function

Definition: A reusable block of code that performs a specific task. You write it once, then call it whenever you need it.

- **Reminding word:** funk song ("function" sounds like "funk song")
- **LINCing story:** A DJ records one great funk song, and every time the crowd calls for it, he just presses play — no need to re-record it. A function is code you write once and call whenever you need it.
- **Picture idea:** A DJ pressing one big button with a music note while the crowd shouts "Play it again!"

Variable

Definition: A named storage location in a program whose value can change during execution.

- **Reminding word:** very able ("variable" sounds like "very able")
- **LINCing story:** Your gym locker is very able to hold different things — sneakers Monday, a jacket Tuesday, a lunch Friday — but the name on the locker door never changes. A variable is a named box whose contents can change while the program runs.
- **Picture idea:** A locker with a name tag on the door, shown three times holding different

items.

Constant

Definition: A named storage location whose value is set once and never changes during execution.

- **Reminding word:** Constance ("constant" sounds like "Constance")
- **LINCing story:** Constance orders the exact same smoothie every single day — the staff wrote it down once and it never, ever changes. A constant is set once at the start and stays locked for the whole program.
- **Picture idea:** A girl at a smoothie counter pointing at a framed sign reading "Constance's usual — never changes."

Data type

Definition: The category of data a variable can hold, such as whole numbers, decimals, or text.

- **Reminding word:** dates ("data" sounds like "dates," the fruit)
- **LINCing story:** At the market, dates go in the fruit bin, never in the lemonade cooler — every item belongs in its matching category bin. A variable is the same: you pick its category — whole numbers, decimals, or text — and that's what it holds.
- **Picture idea:** Three market bins labeled "whole numbers," "decimals," and "text," each holding matching items.

Array

Definition: An ordered, numbered list that stores multiple values of the same type in a single variable.

- **Reminding word:** a tray ("array" sounds like "a tray")
- **LINCing story:** An egg tray holds a dozen eggs in numbered slots inside one single container — and the strange chicken who made it labeled the first slot 0, not 1. An array stores many same-type values in one numbered list, starting at index 0.
- **Picture idea:** An egg carton with slots numbered 0 through 11, each holding an egg.

Object-Oriented Programming

Definition: A programming approach where you create reusable templates (classes) and stamp out individual copies (objects) from them.

- **Reminding word:** "Whoop!" ("OOP" sounds like "whoop")
- **LINCing story:** The baker yells "Whoop!" each time the cookie cutter stamps out another identical cookie — one cutter (the class), fifty independent cookies (the objects). OOP means designing a template once, then stamping out copies from it.
- **Picture idea:** A cookie cutter stamping a row of identical gingerbread monsters while a baker cheers.

Hitbox

Definition: An invisible shape (usually a rectangle) drawn around a game object that the engine uses to detect collisions.

- **Reminding word:** hat box ("hitbox" sounds like "hat box")
- **LINCing story:** Each fighter secretly carries an invisible hat box around their whole body — and the moment two hat boxes bump into each other, the game counts it as a collision and decides what happens next.
- **Picture idea:** Two characters with dashed invisible rectangles drawn around them, overlapping at one corner.

Feedback loop

Definition: A cycle where the game responds to player actions with visible or audible rewards (like score updates and sound effects), encouraging continued play.

- **Reminding word:** feeding ("feedback" starts with "feed")
- **LINCing story:** Every time the dog does its trick, you feed it a treat and it eagerly does the trick again — action, reward, repeat. A game feeds the player points and satisfying sounds after each action, which keeps them playing.
- **Picture idea:** A dog doing a trick, getting a treat, with circular arrows showing the cycle repeating.

Syntax

Definition: The rules for how code must be written — spelling, punctuation, and structure that the computer requires.

- **Reminding word:** tin tacks ("syntax" sounds like "tin tacks")
- **LINCing story:** Hanging a poster takes tin tacks placed in exactly the right spots — one missing or misplaced tack and the whole poster falls down. Code is the same: every spelling mark and punctuation piece must be exactly where the computer requires.
- **Picture idea:** A poster falling off a wall because one tack is missing from its corner.

Semantics

Definition: The actual meaning or logic behind your code instructions — what you intend the code to do.

- **Reminding word:** cement mix ("semantics" sounds like "cement mix")
- **LINCing story:** The builder followed perfectly spelled instructions but poured pancake batter instead of cement mix — every word was correct, yet the meaning was wrong and the wall flopped. Semantics is what your instructions actually *mean*, not how they're spelled.
- **Picture idea:** A builder pouring pancake batter into a wall mold while holding neatly written instructions.

Debug

Definition: The process of finding and fixing errors (bugs) in your code.

- **Reminding word:** the bug ("debug" sounds like "the bug")
- **LINCing story:** A gardener lifts every leaf with a magnifying glass, finds the bug chewing holes in the plant, and picks it off so the plant works again. Debugging is hunting through your code, finding the error, and fixing it.
- **Picture idea:** A kid with a magnifying glass plucking a cartoon bug off a laptop keyboard.

Chapter 5: Rules, Respect, and Release

This chapter introduces 11 terms — the real-world vocabulary of law, safety, and the future of gaming.

Intellectual property (IP)

Definition: Creations of the mind — like stories, characters, art, and code — that are legally owned by their creator and protected by law.

- **Reminding word:** private property ("property" sounds like a "Private Property" sign)
- **LINCing story:** A kid nails a "Private Property" sign on the treehouse she designed and built herself — it came from her mind and the law says it's hers. Stories, characters, art, and code you create are property of your mind, legally protected.
- **Picture idea:** A treehouse with a "Private Property" sign, and a kid below holding the blueprint she drew.

Creative Commons

Definition: A set of public licenses that let creators share their work with specific permissions — like allowing others to remix it, as long as they give credit.

- **Reminding word:** the commons ("Commons" sounds like a shared park commons)
- **LINCing story:** The town commons is a shared park anyone may use — but the posted sign lists the rules: "Play here, clean up, and thank the gardener." Creative Commons licenses share creative work the same way, with rules like "remix it, but give credit."
- **Picture idea:** A park with a big sign listing sharing rules while people paint and play music inside.

Open-source

Definition: Software whose source code is publicly available for anyone to view, modify, and distribute. Godot is a popular open-source game engine.

- **Reminding word:** open kitchen ("open-source" starts with "open")

- **LINCing story:** A restaurant with an open kitchen hands every customer the full recipe card — anyone can watch, cook it at home, or improve it and pass it on. Open-source code is published the same way for anyone to view, modify, and share.
- **Picture idea:** A chef at an open kitchen window handing recipe cards to a line of happy customers.

Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA)

Definition: A legal contract where you promise not to share confidential information about a project. Breaking an NDA can have serious legal consequences.

- **Reminding word:** the closet ("-closure" sounds like "closet")
- **LINCing story:** You signed a promise to keep the surprise party locked in the closet — tell one person and there are serious consequences at home. An NDA is a legal contract promising to keep a project's secrets locked up.
- **Picture idea:** A locked closet labeled "SECRET PROJECT" with a kid beside it making a zipped-lips gesture over a signed paper.

ESRB

Definition: Entertainment Software Rating Board — the organization that assigns age and content ratings to video games in North America, similar to movie ratings.

- **Reminding word:** "Ask Herb" ("ESRB" sounds like "Ask Herb")
- **LINCing story:** Before you buy a game, you Ask Herb at the counter — he stamps every box E, T, or M so you know what's inside before you pay, just like movie ratings. The ESRB is the board that assigns those age and content ratings.
- **Picture idea:** A man at a store counter with three big rubber stamps labeled E, T, and M hovering over game boxes.

Accessibility

Definition: Design features that make a game playable by people with disabilities — such as colorblind modes, adjustable text sizes, remappable controls, and visual sound cues.

- **Reminding word:** access ramp ("access-" sounds like "access ramp")

- **LINCing story:** The ramp built beside the front stairs lets every single person enter the building. Colorblind modes, bigger text, and remappable controls are ramps built into a game so every gamer can play.
- **Picture idea:** A game controller at the top of a wheelchair ramp leading into a glowing screen.

Privacy

Definition: A player's right to control their personal information. Developers must use strong security practices to protect player data from hackers.

- **Reminding word:** private diary ("priva-" sounds like "private diary")
- **LINCing story:** Your diary has a lock because only *you* decide who gets to read it. A player's personal information is their diary — developers must lock it up with strong security so hackers can't read it.
- **Picture idea:** A diary with a heavy padlock while a shadowy hacker figure reaches for it and gets blocked.

Piracy

Definition: Illegally copying and distributing a game without permission or payment. Studios use Digital Rights Management (DRM) to prevent this.

- **Reminding word:** pirates ("piracy" sounds like "pirates")
- **LINCing story:** Pirates haul away a treasure chest they never paid for and hand out the gold to their whole crew. Game piracy is the same theft: copying and sharing a game without permission or payment.
- **Picture idea:** A pirate sneaking off a ship carrying a treasure chest stuffed with game discs.

Digital Rights Management (DRM)

Definition: Technology used to control how digital content is accessed and copied, preventing unauthorized distribution of games and software.

- **Reminding word:** drum ("DRM" sounds like "drum")
- **LINCing story:** A guard pounds a huge drum the instant anyone tries to copy the museum's

treasure, and the copying machine locks shut. DRM is the technology that controls how digital content gets accessed and copied.

- **Picture idea:** A guard beating a big drum next to a locked glass case holding a game disc.

E-sports

Definition: Organized, competitive video gaming at a professional level. Major e-sports tournaments fill stadiums and offer millions of dollars in prizes.

- **Reminding word:** sports stadium ("-sports" sounds like "sports")
- **LINCing story:** The stadium roars like a championship sports final — but down on the field, the athletes are holding controllers, competing for a million-dollar prize. E-sports is professional, organized competitive gaming big enough to fill stadiums.
- **Picture idea:** A packed stadium cheering two gamers on a stage with a giant trophy between them.

Cloud gaming

Definition: A technology that runs games on powerful remote servers and streams the video to your device — like Netflix, but for games.

- **Reminding word:** rain cloud ("cloud" sounds like a rain cloud)
- **LINCing story:** A giant supercomputer hides inside a rain cloud and rains the game's video straight down onto your little tablet — your device does almost none of the work. Cloud gaming runs the game on remote servers and streams it to you like Netflix.
- **Picture idea:** A cloud with a computer inside, streaming a beam of video down to a phone in a kid's hands.

Blank LINC S Card

Copy this table into your notebook to make your own LINC S card for any new term.

Step	Your work
1. List the term	
2. List the definition	
3. Reminding word (sounds like...)	
4. LINCing story	
5. LINCing picture (sketch it!)	

Tips for good LINC S cards

- Your reminding word must be a real, familiar word or phrase you already know — and it has to genuinely sound like part of the term.
- Your story must connect the sound to the meaning: someone who remembers the story should be able to rebuild the definition from it.
- Your picture must show the *story*, not the term — draw the scene, not the vocabulary word.
- Keep it simple: if you can't sketch the picture in about 30 seconds, simplify the story.
- Self-test both directions: term to definition, then definition back to term.