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Esports as Accelerator for Social Inclusive Education

LESSON
A PLAGUE TALE: INNOCENCE — REVIEWING GAME DESIGN AND NARRATIVE

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This learning design builds on students' analytical work with narrative structure, setting, and characterisation from the previous lesson about analysing narrative and atmosphere. The focus now shifts to critical evaluation and review writing, where students use their observations to write a structured and well-argued review of the game.

The exercise strengthens students' ability to apply analytical insights to productive writing, mirroring the type of critical response expected in literary essays and media reviews. Students will practice using appropriate vocabulary and structure to express opinions clearly and persuasively.

Subject and level

English B-level. Upper Secondary Education.

Connection to curriculum

This task supports curriculum goals concerning analytical and productive skills: students interpret and discuss multimodal texts and produce coherent, structured, and stylistically appropriate written English. It connects particularly to competencies in argumentation, textual analysis, and genre awareness.

Didactic and pedagogic considerations

Review writing provides an authentic and motivating task format, where students write for a purpose beyond the classroom. Using the shared experience of a narrative game creates a common analytical ground, which can support vocabulary development and deeper critical reflection. The activity encourages genre awareness and use of functional language features such as evaluation, exemplification, and justification.

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Time estimate
2 hours

Group size
Individual writing with optional peer feedback

Overall introduction to exercise
Students will write a review of A Plague Tale: Innocence using their notes from the previous session. They will consider the creative team, gameplay mechanics, rules, goals, and the game's balance between progression and emergence. The task aims to train students in structuring a critical review, integrating analysis with personal evaluation, and expressing nuanced opinions in English.

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Exercise as presented to the students

A Plague Tale: Innocence, part II

Write a review of A Plague Tale: Innocence in about 500-600 words, using the data you collected last time, and the following questions:

Game Developer/Studio; Artists, Designers, Programmers, Writers (or whoever is relevant).
The creative team of a game is important, particularly in the case where it connects to other relevant games they worked on before or after this game. Some development studios or designers have certain trademarks, or specialize on a particular genre (e.g. Valve, Square Enix or Will Wright), so choosing one of their games can mark a specific time in the evolution of their games, which might be important to the context of your analysis.

Description of Gameplay: what do you do in the game?
Focus on the core mechanics: what are the most recurring actions in the game? You can think of this in terms of verbs: what are the main verbs of the game? For example, in Super Mario Bros. the verbs would be run, jump, pick up, slide down, stomp. In Tetris, the verbs would be rotate, drop, clear.

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Rules and goals of the game
Make a summary of the basic rules of the game, a summarized version of the instructions, as it were. If the game has an end / a win state, what is it?

Progression vs Emergence
Does the game force the player to follow a specific sequence? How does the game guide the player to the correct action? Are there multiple paths? Are there emergent behaviors, or is there room for emergent gameplay? How does the game encourage players to experiment with it?

Take inspiration from other review articles and compose your review like the ones you know from the media. Also, give your rating of the game (demo)

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