

KEY IN-CLASS STUDENT ACTIVITY 1.4: DESIGN THE USER INTERFACE

Lesson Objective 1.4:

Design the user interface. *Topics:* UI layout and concepts, asset management, game state, gamer services.

Resources, software, and additional files needed for this lesson:

1. None

Guiding questions:

1. **List the basic principles of UI design.** Simplicity, unity, flexibility, intended audience, color, and feedback.
2. **How are game assets managed?** The XNA® Game Studio Content Pipeline process starts with assets in their original form as files, and it continues to their transformation as data that can be retrieved and used within an XNA Game Studio game through the XNA Framework Class Library. XNA Game Studio uses a content pipeline to help a game run fast. Without the content pipeline, a game would have to be built with its art assets in their original file format. When the game needs to load its art to draw it on the screen, it would have to determine its format and convert the data into a form that it could use more directly. This would have to be performed at run time, for each asset, which would make the game slower.
3. **Describe game states.** The term *game state* refers to a phase of a game, such as the title screen, loading, pausing, gameplay, signing into an online game, and so on.

Student activity:

Directions to the student:

Read the following scenario and respond to the situation presented. Verify your answers with the instructor. Request assistance from the instructor as needed. Share your ideas with the class.

Scenario:

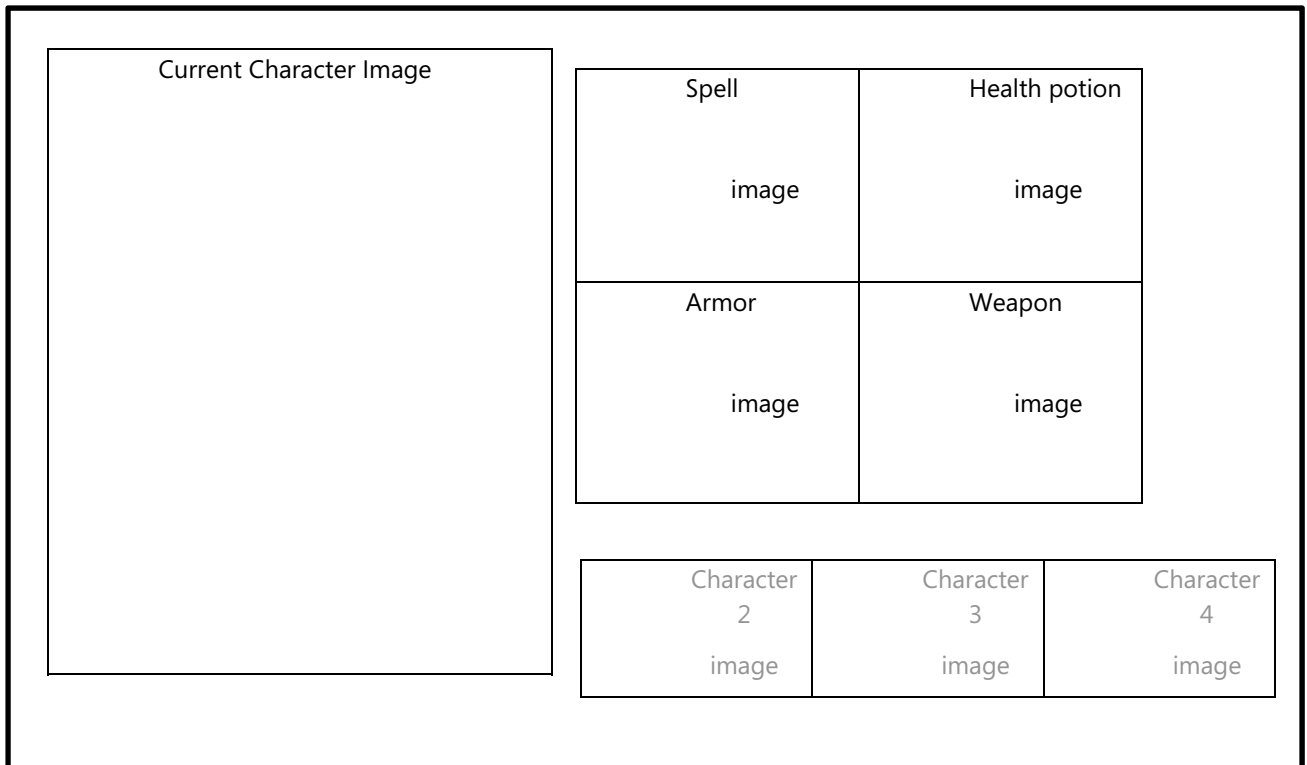
Feathers of Hope is a fantasy role-playing game that takes place in the supernatural world of Fairyland, where fairy tales come alive. A player manages a party of characters, but only one character can be controlled by the player at a time. Each character has an inventory of spells, health potions, armor, and weapons. The inventory items can be shared or exchanged between players.

Content:

Compare the experiences of your classmates with fantasy role-playing games to create a list of design possibilities for the user interface.

Draw and label a UI screen that will enable the player to select an active character and manage the team's inventory. Explain how you addressed the following design principles: simplicity, unity, flexibility, intended audience, color, and feedback.

Sample Answer: (Answers may vary)



The design is simple because it only has relevant data and is controlled mostly by clicking images, not buttons. There is not a great deal of visual information other than what is necessary. It shows unity with other interface screens in the game because other screens are image-dominant rather than text-heavy. The design is flexible because the order of the characters is switched easily when a player clicks on a character. Also, the inventory box labels stay the same—just the image changes. The intended audience is RPG gamers who are familiar with inventory screens that are grid-based. The color of the interface is a neutral brown so as not to draw attention away from the most significant parts of the interface, which are the images of the characters and their inventory items. Players know that they have clicked on an item successfully because the rectangle in which the image is located will be highlighted in yellow.