

4. Design documents and project plans

In the pre-production phase at the start of the project, design documents are created to help define and scope what you are going to create. These documents include:

- Game (or Experience) Design Documents (GDDs)
- Target user personas
- Project charters
- Technical specifications

Design documents

Design documents contain the blueprint for your project. They include:

- High level overviews; for example, an overall project vision in the Game (or Experience) Design Document
- Requirements and standards for particular pipelines in the project
- Detailed design specifications for particular features

In your high level design document, you should identify:

- The goal and purpose for the project
- The intended users and audience
- Key features of the project
- The final form of delivery

A design document can include diagrams, flow charts, sketches, inspirational images from similar products, and reference images to capture the intended look and feel of the product.

If you don't already have a design document, you can download a PDF version of the design document template from the materials section or you can make a [Google document copy](#).

[image.png](#)

Project charters

Once the design document has been approved and the project is greenlit to be produced, a **project charter** is useful, especially when you are working in a team. This is a formal document

that describes the entire project, including the project's objectives, how it will be carried out, and who the stakeholders are. The project charter is used in both the pre-production and production phases.

You can download a PDF version of an example project charter in the materials section or make a [Google document copy](#).

The project charter usually includes:

- Reasons for the project
- Objectives and constraints of the project
- Who the main stakeholders are
- Risks identified
- Benefits of the project
- General overview of the budget

Additional documentation

Depending on your project, you may need to create additional supporting documentation during the pre-production phase to help you scope and plan for production. You can iterate on these documents throughout pre-production and production, as needed.

These include:

- **Technical documentation:** This includes documents that specify the architecture and functionality of the technical parts of a project.
- **Meeting notes:** If you're working in a team, it's useful to capture meeting notes to record what the whole team is working on, dependencies, progress, and blockers.
- **Proposal or pitch document:** If you need to get approval from your company, or if you are asking investors to fund your project, a formal proposal or pitch document is recommended.

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