



Gold Belt Ninja Guide

Activity 04: Beta Phase





BETA PHASE

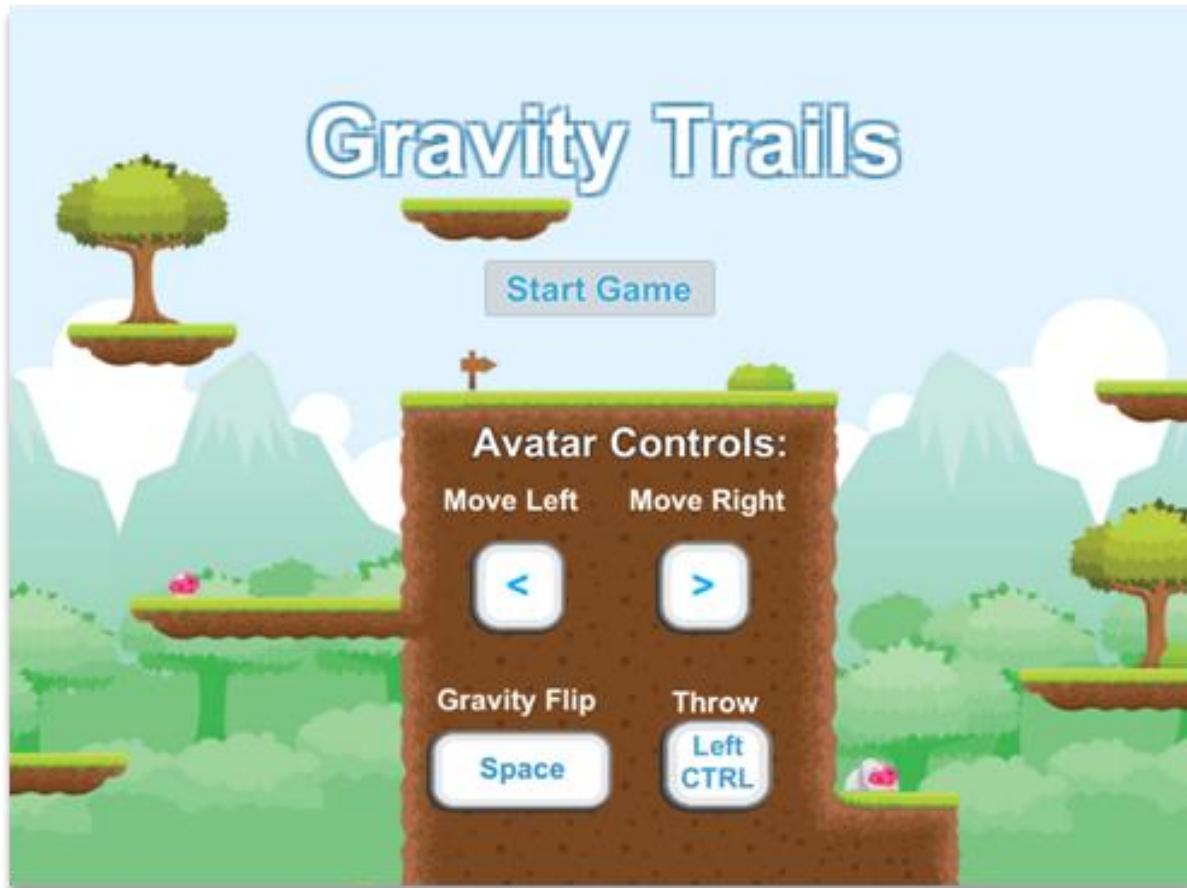
Now that most of your project is built out, it's time to add any final touches and refinements! During the Beta Phase, focus on fine-tuning the mechanics and overall user experience of your project. Now is also the time to add start/end screens, credits, sound effects, music, and a complete UI.

As you move through the Beta Phase, consider the following questions:

- What type of screen might appear at the beginning of your project and at checkpoints for the user? Where might you place credits?
- What "extras" might you add into your project?
- Is your project a reasonable length? Does it have frequent checkpoints for the user?
- When you playtest your project, does everything work as expected? What mechanics might need to be revised to improve the user experience?
- How might you use the feedback you received to make updates to your project?

START SCREEN

A strong Start Screen gives users their first impression of your project. It should clearly present the title, credits or authorship, controls, and visual elements that set the tone of the game. A well-designed Start Screen helps build excitement and prepares the user for what's ahead.



As you create your Start Screen, consider:

- What **tone or atmosphere** do you want to establish right away?
- Does your Start Screen UI match the **style** of the rest of the game (colors, fonts, art)?
- Will you include buttons for? IE Start, Instructions, Credits, Settings, etc.?
- Is there a background image or animation that helps show the game's theme?

PRO TIPS: START SCREEN

- Include key elements such as:
 - Project Title
 - Your Name
 - Start Button
 - Instructions Button
 - Credits Button
- Add a **representative image**, logo, animated background, or key art.
- Include a **controls overview** (optional) if it's not already on a dedicated Instructions Screen.
- Add small **animations** such as blinking prompts, glowing buttons, or fade-in transitions.
- Use the Create a Start Screen steps from Gravity Trails (p. 72–93, steps 121–167) as a reference.
- Test the Start Screen to ensure all button navigation works and transitions load the correct scenes.



Ninja Planning Documents

Complete the **Beta Phase – Start Screen** portion of your Gold Belt Ninja Planning Document to sketch out your starting screen.

CREDITS SCREEN

The Credits Screen recognizes everyone who contributed to your project—both people and assets. This screen emphasizes professionalism and transparency while giving proper credit to artists, sound designers, and anyone who supported you along the way. Be sure to give credit to yourself, Code Senseis or Ninjas who playtested and gave feedback on your project, and online sources used for audio or visual assets.



As you create your Credits Screen, consider:

- Will the credits appear **on the Start Screen**, on a **separate page**, or at **the end of the game**?
- How do you want the credits to feel—simple and static, or scrolling and animated?
- Will you include logos, icons, or images for tools and assets used?
- Does the tone match the rest of your project?

PRO TIPS: CREDITS SCREEN

- Include sections such as:
 - **Creator(s)** – your name
 - **Code Senseis**
 - **Fellow Ninjas**
 - **Asset Creators** (with asset and creator names)
 - **Audio sources** (music, SFX creators)
 - **Tools used** (Godot, external art tools, etc.)
- Design your credits to match your game’s art style (fonts, background images, colors).
- Consider adding:
 - A **scrolling text** animation
 - A **fade-in/out** effect
 - Background music or a quiet ambience
- Keep the screen easy to read with clean formatting and spacing.

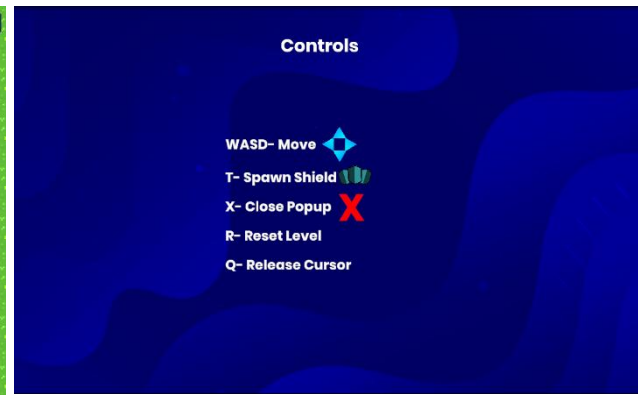
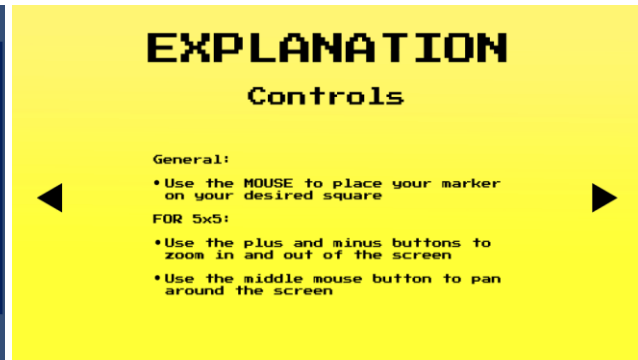


Ninja Planning Documents

Complete the **Planning Phase – Credits Screen** portion of your Gold Belt Ninja Planning Document to sketch out your credits screen.

INSTRUCTIONS SCREEN

Clear instructions are essential so that users understand how to interact with the project from the moment they begin. An Instructions Screen (or tutorial) helps players learn the controls, mechanics, and goals of the project, before diving into the action.



images used from Gold Belt projects created by ninjas at Code Ninjas centers

As you create your Instructions Screen, consider:

- What does the player need to know **at the start** to play effectively?
- Are there any **special mechanics** that require explanation (e.g., double jump, inventory, crafting, special abilities)?
- Will instructions appear only on a dedicated screen, or also as tooltips or pop-ups during gameplay?

PRO TIPS: INSTRUCTIONS SCREEN

- Include a clear list of **movement controls**, **interaction keys**, and **game objectives**.
- Add **icons** or **visual cues** to help make instructions easy to understand.
- Use **UI elements** like panels, text objects, and images to maintain a consistent visual style.
- **Link** the Instructions Screen from the Start Screen using a simple button or UI navigation event.



Ninja Planning Documents

Complete the **Planning Phase - Instructions Screen** portion of your Gold Belt Ninja Planning Document to design your instructions page.



Pause for **Sensei Stop #1!**

Check in with a Code Sensei before moving on. Show and discuss your plan for each of the menu screens.

Reminder: Save your work!

IN GAME UI

While the Instructions Screen is for teaching how to interact with the project, the in-game UI (User Interface) guides the player during gameplay. A good UI is clear, helpful, and never distracting.



As you plan your in-game UI, think about:

- What does the player need to see **at all times** to make good decisions?
- Where should each UI element appear so it's visible but not intrusive?
- Does your UI match the **art style and theme** of your game?
- Are there mechanics that require on-screen feedback (health bars, timers, ammo, inventory, score, quests)?

PRO TIPS: IN-GAME UI

- Add UI elements such as:
 - Health bar / stamina bar
 - Score counter
 - Timer or countdown
 - Inventory slots
 - Mini-map
 - Ability cooldown indicators
- Use anchor points or set the Canvas to **“Scale with Screen Size”** so UI remains aligned regardless of screen size.
- Keep everything visually consistent: colors, shapes, fonts, and spacing.
- Test your UI in different levels or areas to make sure nothing blocks the action.
- Consider adding subtle animations to UI elements for polish (e.g., health bar flashes when low).



Ninja Planning Documents

Complete the **Planning Phase - In-Game UI** portion of your Gold Belt Ninja Planning Document to lay out your plan for the UI.

MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS

Sound is a major part of user experience. Music sets the tone and atmosphere, while sound effects provide feedback that makes actions feel responsive and satisfying.

As you build your audio elements, consider:

- What kind of background music fits the **mood** of your project (calm, energetic, mysterious)?
- Which actions need sound feedback (jumping, attacking, collecting items, taking damage)?
- Does your game benefit from **ambient sound** (wind, crowd noise, machinery, nature)?
- How will you control audio volume? Will you include **audio settings** in the menu?

PRO TIPS: MUSIC AND SOUND

- Add music to your start screen, levels, boss fights, or cutscenes.
- Include SFX such as:
 - Footsteps
 - Button clicks
 - Power-ups
 - Enemy noises
 - Collisions or impacts
- Consider transitions for when music might change: during danger, victory, or new zones.
- Ensure volumes are balanced so SFX aren't overpowering the music.
- Consider adding a **mute/volume slider** to give players control over the experience.
- **If using assets from a third party source, credit all audio sources properly on the Credits Screen!**



Pause for **Sensei Stop #2!**

Check in with a Code Sensei before moving on. Show them the background music you've chosen and any sound effects you'll use.

Reminder: Save your work!

UI, MUSIC IMPLEMENTATION, AND BUG FIXES

Using your planning document, create each of the UI screens. Take time to implement background music and sound effects.

Look back on your feedback from previous playtesting sessions. Think about the points where users struggled, got lost, or ran into a bug. Try to address those pain points to make fixes and improvements.

Once you've added the UI, music, and fixed all bugs, check in with a Code Sensei and move onto Playtesting below.



Ninja Planning Documents

Complete the **Beta Phase - Playtesting** section of your Gold Belt Ninja Planning Document. Be sure to have at least one Ninja and one Code Sensei playtest your project!



Pause for **Sensei Stop #3!**

Show your Code Sensei your completed Planning Document sections.

Discuss with a Code Sensei your playtest feedback and any remaining changes you plan to make.

Afterwards, record Dev Diary #4 and complete the Beta Phase Checklist.