



Rhode Island Game Design Expo and Scouts

A game creation project with a public showcase and a clear connection to Scouting

The Rhode Island Game Design Expo gives Scouts a real destination for an original game: develop an idea, test it with others, improve it, and present it to a public audience. The same project can support meaningful progress toward the Game Design Merit Badge when planned with a counselor.

The student experience

Students ages 13–18 can create individually or in teams, get feedback from educators and developers, and enter the Student Game Design Competition for prizes and recognition. The Expo brings young creators together with peers, mentors, independent developers, studios, and industry professionals.

Event dates and location

Optional workshops at NEIT	September 19, October 17, and November 7, 2026
Expo and Student Competition	November 17, 2026 • 5:00–9:00 PM
Expo venue	Centreville Bank Stadium, Pawtucket, RI
Event information	RIGameExpo.com

NEIT: New England Institute of Technology.



Student winners at the 2025 event.

Why this fits Scouting

Practical skills become visible through a project Scouts can share

Game design gives Scouts a practical way to take responsibility, help one another, and learn from experience. A public showcase gives that work a goal and an audience.

Problem solving and resourcefulness

Turn an idea into rules, objectives, and game elements. Work within available time and tools, identify problems, and test solutions.

Leadership and teamwork

Divide roles in design, programming, art, testing, and presentation. Practice communicating, resolving disagreements, meeting deadlines, and owning a contribution.

Perseverance and honest reflection

Record what happened during play, acknowledge what did not work, and improve the next version. The design notebook makes learning visible.

Communication and community

Explain design choices, listen to feedback, and welcome new players. Meet peers from other schools, educators, and working creators who share an interest in games.



Scenes from last year's NEIT game-development workshops.

Game Design Merit Badge alignment

Direct opportunities through the project, with counselor review

The strongest alignment is with Requirements 5–7 and the professional-contact options in Requirement 8. These are opportunities to do the required work; attendance, competition entry, or a demonstration alone does not complete a requirement.

5 Design a new game

Use the competition project to keep a game design notebook: write a vision; identify the medium, player format, objectives, and theme; describe why people would play; list rules and resources; and draw game elements. Include setting, story, and characters if suitable. The badge accepts any game medium or combination of mediums.

6 Prototype and improve

Get your counselor's approval of the concept BEFORE creating the prototype. Record the prototype work and address player safety with your counselor if applicable. Test with enough players for the format, compare the experience with Requirement 5(b), fix rule problems, change at least one rule, mechanic, or objective, explain why, and retest. Record whether the change worked. Repeat that testing-and-revision cycle at least two more times.

7 Blind test and reflect

Prepare complete instructions for setup, play, ending the game, and objectives. Arrange a group that has neither played the game nor witnessed a previous test. Give them the prototype, instructions, and needed components; observe without providing instruction and record feedback. Then share the notebook with your counselor, discuss reactions and lessons, identify what you like most, and suggest changes. Workshops or the Expo may provide suitable new players if this test is arranged.

8 Meet a professional through either option

8(a): With parent or guardian permission and counselor approval, visit a game-industry professional and ask about their job and its place in the development process. OR 8(b): Meet a game-development education professional and discuss the skills they emphasize in the classroom. Expo and NEIT contacts may help Scouts arrange the appropriate conversation.

Possible supporting progress in Requirements 1–4

Activities may supply examples for game analysis and play value (1), five design terms applied to specific games (2), and intellectual property (3). Requirement 1 still calls for four games in different media, a comparison chart, and counselor discussion. Requirement 4 requires a normal playthrough, predictions, three separate rule or objective change trials, and counselor discussion. Plan these tasks deliberately; general playtesting does not replace them.

The Expo does not award the badge. Review the full requirements and your notebook with your merit badge counselor.

A practical path to participation

Plan the project, use the workshops, and bring it to the Expo

Start with a Scout and counselor plan

Review the requirements together, choose a game concept, and begin the design notebook. Secure concept approval before prototyping. A team entry can build collaboration; each Scout should record and discuss their own required work with their counselor.

Build through the optional NEIT workshops

Use the September 19, October 17, and November 7 workshops to learn fundamentals, work on a project, ask educators and mentors for help, and gather feedback. Keep the notebook current as the game develops. Arrange any badge-specific testing or professional conversation in advance.

Prepare for November 17

Bring a playable project and practice explaining it clearly. Scouts pursuing Requirement 7 should also prepare complete written instructions and plan a qualifying blind test. For Requirement 8, identify which professional-contact option they intend to complete and prepare relevant questions.

Showcase and connect at the Expo

Present the game, enter the Student Game Design Competition, meet other young creators, and talk with developers and educators. Afterward, take the notebook and reflections back to the counselor to review progress and remaining work.

Share the opportunity with your troop

Invite interested students ages 13–18 to register at RIGameExpo.com through the “Competitors” tab. Select the option to participate in the NEIT Workshops to make the most of the opportunities for merit-badge progress. Workshops are optional for the event; badge credit depends on completing the required work with a counselor.

NEIT workshop	September 19, 2026 • 9 AM–1 PM
NEIT workshop	October 17, 2026 • 9 AM–1 PM
NEIT workshop	November 7, 2026 • 9 AM–1 PM
Workshop location	New England Institute of Technology 1 New England Tech Boulevard East Greenwich, RI 02818

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