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1 Intro

This is a modern, short and practical guide on how to host, intended for those who want to start hosting or improve their workflow.

2 Hosting for beginners

2.1 Preparation

Before you ask people to join your game, you first have to set a couple settings and get familiar with the simulator. First of all, open <http://brantsteele.net/hungergames/> and acknowledge that you're 13 years or older.

2.1.1 Code

A **code** is like a **savegame** containing **events** and one currently running session. They're called **codes** because saving a game gives you a small string in return, which you can enter at a later time to load the events and session again. If you do not load a code, the simulator will fallback to the default events, which are not bad, but in today's times incredibly boring. Nobody wants to play a default game anymore, so instead load someone else's code, or better yet make your own (more to this in a later chapter). You can either load them by visiting their URL, or if you only get the code itself, by pasting it to **Load Season**. For now just load one of these: <https://pastebin.com/Yw0j764h>

2.1.2 Game size

A game can either have 24, 36 or 48 tributes. Choose the size which fits the current thread. 24 or 36 usually suffice. Do not make it too big, or you will have trouble filling the game with legitimate tributes. To change the size, first hover your cursor over **Simulate** at the top of the page, then select **Standard** from the drop-down menu (Simulate → Standard). Near the bottom you can click **Adjust Size** to set it. This size will carry over to your custom game.

2.2 Hosting the game

Before you do this, please read over the rest of this chapter first and install the proper tools for the job. Here is an overview of what will be done:

1. Announce your game and its size to the thread.
2. Enter all tribute information into the simulator. (There's a tool for that!)
3. Simulate the game, screenshot the full pages and crop them. (There's another tool for that!)
4. Post the images to the thread and maybe commentate.

2.2.1 Tools for entering tributes

Entering tributes into the simulator is cumbersome manual labor and you will be sick of it after the first time you do it. So instead, go to <https://hgtools.neocities.org/> and click on Virginia's Userscript, then scroll a bit down and install it. Alternatively you can use `Hosthelper` instead, but it's not guaranteed to work on your pc.

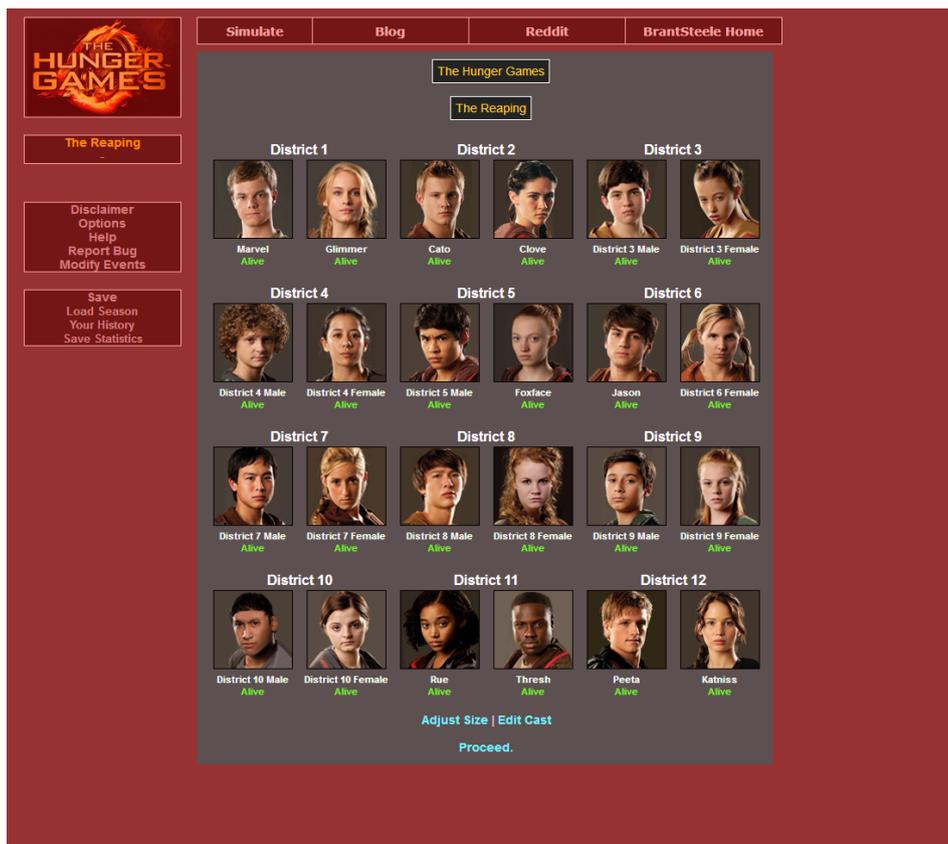
2.2.2 Tools for taking screenshots

In order to take fullpage screenshots and crop them, you can either use `Autocropper` from the hgtools website, which takes the fullpage screenshot, crops it and saves it, but is not guaranteed to work on your pc (if you do this, skip the rest of this chapter! And if you end up on an unknown page, use the back button in your browser!), or you can use an add-on to take a fullpage screenshot, and then crop it yourself in an image manipulation program of your choice. For the latter, **choose one**:

- If you use Firefox, hit `Shift+F2` and enter `screenshot --fullpage --clipboard` to copy a screenshot of the full page to your clipboard. You can then paste it into an image editor with `Ctrl+V` and crop it.

- If you use Firefox version 57.0 or higher, you can click the screenshot button ( ) and drag a rectangle around the cropped area, then hit the save button (). It will be saved in the folder you specified in MenuButton → Settings (Gear) → General → Downloads and is ready to be posted.
- Alternatively you can install any other Firefox add-on which lets you take fullpage screenshots and work with that.
- If you use Chrome, you need to install an add-on like Full Page Screen Capture and use that to save a fullpage image, then open it in an image editor of your choice and crop it there.

If you decide to crop manually, then do it so that the red area in the image below is removed and only the rest remains. A simple way to do this is to select only the good part in the center, copy it, and paste it on a new image:



2.2.3 Entry Post

Once you have loaded a code, set the game size and got familiar with the tools, you can start asking for entries. Just post in the thread and let them know how many entries you are taking, for example by saying *First 24*. Besides that, you should say a bit about your game so they know what they're entering, and maybe add that it's your first time.

2.2.4 Collecting the tributes

Enter the tributes using the tool of your choice. If you use Virginia's Userscript, then scroll to the bottom of the thread and select your game size (24/36/48) from the drop-down menu and hit **Draw**. After that hit **Deselect All** and add the checkmarks to tributes you include in your game. Make sure their name is correct or change it, then select the left radio button if the tribute is male and right if they are female.



Do this for every tribute until your roster is full, then hit **Save** at the bottom of the thread. Switch to your simulator tab and at the top select **Simulate** → **Personal**, then hit the **Load** button at the top left of the page to enter the tributes. Finally enter a **Season Name**, which is the name displayed at the very top of each slide, and hit **Submit** at the bottom to start the simulation.

2.2.5 The Reaping

You will see the **Reaping** page, listing all of the participating tributes. Take a **cropped fullpage screenshot** of it using the tools of the previous chapters. It's a good idea to ask for **Swaps** while you post this slide to the thread. If someone wants to swap their tribute for another one, then go to the simulator and hit **Edit Cast** at the bottom. Look for the tribute to be swapped and replace both its names, the full image URL and gender with that of the new tribute. When you're done, hit **Submit** again. Give them 5 minutes or so, then hit **Proceed** to begin.

2.2.6 The Slides

From now on, you cannot change anything anymore, or the game will reset. The actual game will begin and your job is now to take cropped fullpage screenshots of each slide and post them to the thread for the tributes to see. Here are a few tips:

- At the beginning, the slides will be long. At the end, they will be short. Varyate your posting time according to this! A proven way to do this is to post with an initial delay of **4 minutes** and then gradually lower the delay to **2 minutes** as more tributes die.
- Whether you post the **Fallen Tributes** slides, or **Peace Slides** where nobody dies, is up to you. Most people don't seem to be interested in either of those and you can easily omit them to retain attention.
- **Commentating** each slide can be quite a bit of work, but can greatly increase the attention of the tributes. How you do this is up to you.

2.2.7 The Winner

One of the last slides you will see is the winner page. This is where hosts usually unleash their creative freedom to edit or completely remake the page and make it a unique price worth saving. Whether you're a photoshop expert or just crudely doodle something in paint, it's all appreciated.

If you're not feeling creative at all, then just post the winner. After that post the **Placements** and you're done, congratulations! When you get the hang of it and want to improve further, check the **Advanced Hosting** section below!

3 Advanced Hosting

This section will cover non-essential but very recommended ways to improve your games, like writing your own code, applying a custom CSS to style your games, and so on.

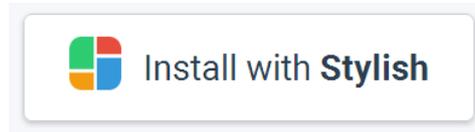
3.1 Userstyles



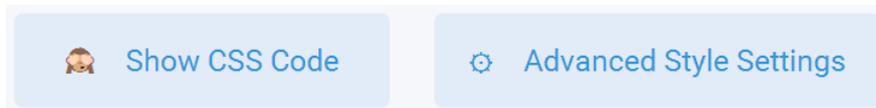
A userstyle is a fun and easy way to raise interest in your games and improve tribute immersion. You can change anything on the page until it looks just the way you want, ranging from colors, fonts and backgrounds to various other style changes. This is usually done by adding CSS "code" to the simulator which changes how the website looks, however there's a tool which does this for you, so all you have to do is select what changes you want. It's rather simple and takes about 30 minutes from start to finish. The following steps will guide you through it.

3.1.1 HG Customizer

The HG Customizer is the tool you want for this job. To use it, go to <https://hgtools.neocities.org/> and click on HG Customizer. After that, hit Install with Stylish on the website to get the browser add-on.



After that refresh the page with F5 and click on Advanced Style Settings further below.



You will see a list with all possible modifications you can apply to the simulator.

WARNING: Since userstyles.org recently changed to an all-new **and flawed** design, you have to refresh the page every time you want to () and apply your settings. However, **refreshing the page resets your advanced settings**. Therefore, in the current state, you should take a screenshot of your settings so you can enter them again later!

3.1.2 HG Customizer Settings

1. Text shadow (None/Normal/Strong): Adds a blurred shadow behind all text (recommended). **Strong** adds a thicker shadow.
2. Image shadow / District shadow: Same as above, but separately for images and The Reaping District titles like "District 3".
3. Shadow radius (Default 1.0): Change how big all shadows are. If you enter 0.5, they're half as big. If you enter 2.0, they're twice as big. Default looks good.

4. Rounded corner radius (0% .. 50%): Setting this to more than 0% enables rounded corners on images. If you set this to 50% or higher, the image will be completely round. Pictured below are 15%.



5. Center Game Logo (Default No): Setting this to Reaping or Always will move the game logo above the game. This allows you to create a **banner** for your games. You can set the link to your banner during the roster creation in the simulator as seen below.



6. Logo Size: If you use Center Game Logo, then this settings allows you to choose the size of it. If you make a banner, make it this size!
7. Title Color: Allows you to change the color of the Title text, pictured below.



8. District Color: The Reaping's text color of "District (X)".
9. Name Color: The color of tribute names in event text.
10. Text Color: Event text color, the majority of each page.
11. Shadow Color: Change the color of all added shadows. Recommended to leave at black.

12. District Size: Setting this increases the empty space between districts on **The Reaping** page. Enable if you use a big district font.
13. Text Size: Can be used to increase the size of all text. Enable if you use a complex font which is hard to see at normal size.
14. Image Size: If you require bigger tribute images, use this, but it's usually not needed.
15. District Font: Enter the name of a font installed on your computer to use for your districts on **The Reaping**.
16. Title Font & Text Font: Two more font settings separately for the **Title** above each page, and all remaining text. More about fonts later.
17. Day/Night/Arena/Feast/Fallen Tributes Images: These are your backgrounds for each kind of event that can happen in the simulator. If you select **Original**, the default brown/grey background of the simulator is kept. You can either upload your image somewhere and paste the link (recommended) or hard-code the background into your CSS by selecting the **Browse...** option (not recommended, slow). Backgrounds will repeat and tile in all directions. Width of at least 679 pixels is strongly recommended.
18. Background X/Y Offset: Fine-tune the position of your backgrounds if you have a need for it. Entering a positive number as **X** will move it that many pixels to the right, negative to the left. Positive **Y** value will move it down, negative up. Don't forget to write **px** behind the number.

After you specified your settings, check over them once more and take a screenshot so you can enter them again later. Hit  and your simulator will be styled, congratulations! If you're not sure how to style your game or how to make it look good, check the next chapter.

3.2 Design Guidelines



This chapter will cover basic design guidelines. *By definition, following a guideline is never mandatory.* However, if this is your first time getting into graphic design, you should be aware of a few basic principles. Utilize these to make a good style that fits **you**. Whether your goal is to make a spooky theme or a happy one, these tips can be applied to any theme.

3.2.1 Text Contrast

Take another look at the previous image. It promises a 'trick' that white text with black outline can be read on any background color. This kind of **readability** is what you should strive for! The 'trick' is correct in what it states, but there's more to it and you can replicate its effect with any other color. What makes text readable is **contrast**, which is the **difference in color**. In the example above, it is the strong difference in color between the white **font and the outline** that achieves the contrast, and no matter what the background color is, the inside of the letters is not affected by it.

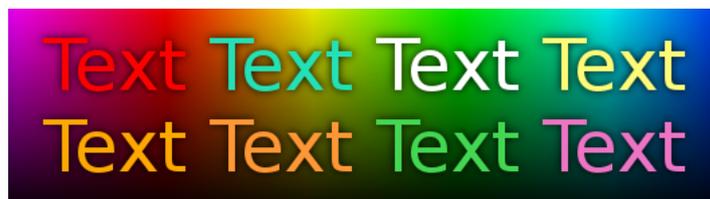


The above image is an **inverted** version of the original image, and as you can see, it is still perfectly readable, despite the text now being black and the outline being white.

What you should take away from this is that your style needs to have **readable font**, created by **contrast between your font color and outline color**. Now you might rightfully wonder *'where is the **outline** color in the simulator?'*

The answer is that it is your text **shadow**. If you enable black text shadow, which you should in most cases, then you will have a black backdrop behind all text. This shadow will start strong and gradually blur out the further it gets away from the letters, making it very subtle. However, this strong black close around the letters is what creates contrast and makes text readable on any background.

⇒ Create perfectly readable text on any background by matching your text color to have a strong contrast with your shadow color!



3.2.2 Text Font



I will use the above font as an example on what to do and what to avoid. First of all, it is a very **complex** font. There are many curls and little details. This is an example of a font you should **not** choose for regular text! The below image is the same font in white, with a black outline, on a color background, at the same size as the text you are currently reading.



A bad font choice for small text

As you can see, a *complex, detailed and curly* font is incredibly hard to read on small text. Avoid doing this at all cost! If it's a pain to read your game, most people will not want to read it at all.



A better font choice for small text

When you choose a font for small text, look for something with few and clearly defined features, which can be unique in its own. However, that doesn't mean complex and curly fonts have no place in the simulator, they just have to be **BIG!** That means they have niche applications, for example you can increase the **Title Text Size** and then use a complex **Title Font** with it. Another situation you can use them at is in combination with the **District Text Font and Size**.

3.2.3 Adding Custom Fonts

You can use any font you want in the simulator. If you're not happy with the selection on your system, download a new one, install it, and enter the correct font name into the **HG Customizer**.

1. Browse the Internet for free font downloads, for example:
<http://www.1001fonts.com/>
2. Download and install the font on your computer. You usually do this by opening the file or **Rightclick** → **Install**.
3. Find the correct font name and enter it into the **HG Customizer**. This is usually the hardest part since if you enter the wrong name, it will not work. Here's an easy way I found to do it:
 - (a) Open Microsoft's **MSPaint.exe**.
 - (b) Use the **Text Tool** and write some text *in the font you want to use*.
 - (c) Click inside of the font selection (red rectangle) and **copy** the displayed font name, then **paste** it into the **HG Customizer**.



3.2.4 Background Images

