

# Steam page checklist

Congratulations you have a new game coming out!

I am excited for you. Creating a Steam store page can be frustrating, unclear, and a bit nerve wracking. To help you out I have turned the results of my research into a simplified checklist that will optimize your page.

The following checklist is organized according to the way it is laid out in Steamworks as of March 2020.

This checklist was created by Chris Zukowski from [howtomarketagame.com](http://howtomarketagame.com). If you are interested in learning more about how to market your game sign up for my weekly newsletter at [howtomarketagame.com/free](http://howtomarketagame.com/free)



# Your anchor game

Whether you like it or not, your potential customers will be comparing your game to the number 1 game in your game's genre. I refer to this as the "Anchor game." If you add some of the tropes of that game and genre to your store page It will help people understand your game better and increase the likelihood that they will wishlist it.

For example, if your game is in the historical strategy genre, your anchor game is Civilization. If your game is an action rogue-lite, your anchor game is Dead Cells or Rogue Legacy.

**Write your game's genre (be specific, don't say "action adventure"):**

**Write your genre's anchor game:**

Go to the anchor game's Steam page and write down the following information (This information will be used as you fill out the store page):

- All the game's tags (click the + sign to see them all)
- Look at the game's official screenshots and the screenshots uploaded by the game's fans on the community hub. Look for any tropes that are specific to this genre. Look for key UI that are unique to this genre.
- Look at the short description, long description, and user reviews and note any of the gameplay verbs. (e.g. Doom Eternal "conquer demons")
- Record keywords that are important to your genre by looking at reviews. Typically bad reviews clearly list "pros" and "cons" and will often use keywords that are important to that genre.

# Your store page

## Basic Info

### Tags

Tags can be applied by you or anyone who is visiting your Steam page. However the tags you pick have more weight. The top-rated 4-5 tags are the ones that appear on your game's hover tooltip. Your goal is to get the top 5 tags to be the ones that best describe your game's sub-genre while avoiding fluff tags like "great soundtrack" or "indie." Please do everything you can to make sure "indie" is not in the top 5. The tags also determine what games appear (and which games you appear under) in the "more like this" section.

- Apply the tags that you recorded from your Anchor game that best apply to your game.
- Avoid adding tags like "female protagonist" and "indie." Those tags will typically be added by your community and if you pick them they might end up as the top 5. Typically those tags do not help shoppers identify the genre of your game.
- Be aware of polarizing tags like "anime," "horror," "metroidvania." Those tags are instant turn offs if a person doesn't like that genre. Note though that you should not try to hide those tags if your game is, in fact, a metroidvania.
- Ask very active members of your community to add the tags you want and DON'T want. This will ensure the right tags are applied.

# Graphical assets

## Store assets / Screenshots

Screenshots are usually the first thing shoppers look at when they land on your page and are very important for describing gameplay and hinting at your game's genre.

- Prioritize the screenshots so that the first 4 screenshots show the 4 core parts of your game's gameplay loop. (Important because these 4 images are what will appear in the hover tooltip.)
- Include screenshots that contain the UI elements that are unique to your game's genre (e.g. Twin health bars for 2D fighter games, or crafting menus for survival games.)
- Included screenshots with genre tropes (e.g. top-down views for RTSs, or a ship cross-sections for FTL-likes)

## Trailers

For the average Steam shopper, trailers are secondary to screenshots. When they do watch trailers they will scrub through the timeline until they find actual gameplay.

Checklist:

- The main trailer shows action and gameplay within the first 3 seconds.
- The main trailer does NOT start with slow establishing shots but instead cuts right to the action.
- Upload no more than 2 videos trailers. Too many videos crowd out screenshots meaning shoppers must scroll to find them screenshots.

# Description

## About this game

The “About this game” or “long description” is typically skipped by shoppers. However, it does provide additional information if the shopper can’t determine what you do in the game from the screenshots, trailer, tags, short description, and reviews.

### Checklist:

- Section your description into subheads. Each one should be one of the primary beats of your game’s loop.
- Under each sub-head describe how it works for your game.
- Rely on the keywords you recorded when looking at your anchor game (see the section at the top.).
- Used animated GIFs to illustrate key bits of action such as combat or player movement. Also showcase any shots that are emblematic of your game’s genre (e.g. a top-down hex grid if you are making a strategy game).
- List key features, not because it is necessary but because Valve usually rejects your store page if you don’t list features. I usually just list them at the very bottom.

## Short Description

Shoppers skim short descriptions looking for keywords that establish the genre and what you actually do in the game. Conversely, shoppers skip over words that describe story and setting because those can be gleaned from screenshots. Here are some great examples of effective short descriptions. The clearly state the genre, what your primary action is, and avoid going too deep into story / setting.

**Palmyra Orphanage** - Paranormal first-person horror, which takes place in an abandoned orphanage. Walk through the corridors of your childhood, but do remember that you're not only one here.

**Dead Cells** is a rogue-lite, metroidvania inspired, action-platformer. You'll explore a sprawling, ever-changing castle... assuming you're able to fight your way past its keepers in 2D souls-lite combat. No checkpoints. Kill, die, learn, repeat.

### Checklist:

- The short description contains very specific verbs of the game’s primary mechanics and loops. Avoid over-generalized video game verbs such as “battle evil” or “save the world.”
- Short description identifies your game’s “hook.”
- Remove descriptive “setting” text such as “beautiful world” or “war-torn land.” Your game’s setting is better established in your screenshots and trailer.

## Reviews

I know, no developer wants to read the reviews of their own game but they are a very, very important step in a shopper's buying process. Here is how to manage them and stay sane.

### Checklist:

- ❑ If a review is negative, constructive, but slightly incorrect, don't be afraid to leave a friendly and helpful developer response. For instance if they incorrectly say there is no controller customization, tell them where they can find it.
- ❑ Practice good customer service and don't be snarky or glib in your responses to negative reviews. No matter how dumb they are. Shoppers read developer responses and if you sound smug it can be a major turn off.
- ❑ Ignore negative comments that are vague and non-constructive such as ones that consist entirely of "NOPE" or "0/10." Shoppers hate them just as much as you do. Don't engage, don't feed the trolls.

# Testing your page

It is really hard to have a naive view of your own page. It is very important that you validate that your final page aligns with what your goal is. You can do all of these steps before your store page is up by putting all the details in a google doc and sending it to a few people.

How to test:

1. Recruit people who are familiar with Steam but not familiar with you or your game. I like to browse r/steam or r/gamedev and direct message people who contribute nice and constructive comments.
2. Show them all your assets and text.
3. Ask them what game it reminds them of.
4. Ask them what they think the gameplay is like.
5. Don't ask them if they are interested in buying it. That data is useless because most people will say "ya kinda."
6. Review the comments and determine if what they say matches what you expected to happen?

## Additional reading

If you are interested in more in-depth information about how people buy games on Steam, I wrote the following posts:

[https://www.gamasutra.com/blogs/ChrisZukowski/20190906/350248/How\\_Steam\\_users\\_see\\_your\\_game.php](https://www.gamasutra.com/blogs/ChrisZukowski/20190906/350248/How_Steam_users_see_your_game.php)

[https://www.gamasutra.com/blogs/ChrisZukowski/20191118/354221/How\\_players\\_shop\\_during\\_a\\_Steam\\_sale.php](https://www.gamasutra.com/blogs/ChrisZukowski/20191118/354221/How_players_shop_during_a_Steam_sale.php)