

## Ashley Cates

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### EDUCATION

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#### University of Southern California, School of Cinematic Arts

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Interactive Design & Game Development

Graduation Date: May 2025

Minor in Writing for Screen & Television

GPA: 3.83

**Honors:** Magna Cum Laude, Presidential Scholarship

### RELEVANT COURSEWORK

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User Research for Games

Introduction to 3-D Computer Animation

Advanced Games Crew

Interactive Systems Design

Character Development & Storytelling for Games

Programming in Python

Advanced Improv

Writing the Hour-Long Dramatic Series

Motion Picture Script Analysis

### PROJECTS / WORK EXPERIENCE

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**Walt Disney Imagineering** (*Show Writing & Story Development, Research & Development, Disney Live Entertainment*)

February-September 2024

- Designed experimental interactive experiences for the Research & Development department
- Led an internal project for Disney Live Entertainment using various forms of unique software
- Worked with in-house AI technology to design conversation flow and guest experiences using Disney IP
- Wrote dozens of scripts for user experiences and informational content about the Disney parks within the Show Writing & Story Development department
- Contributed to “Blue Sky” brainstorming sessions to brainstorm fresh ideas for Disney parks worldwide

**Toontown Rewritten** (*Game Design Coordinator*)

May 2022-Present

Website: <https://www.toontownrewritten.com/>

- Working with an elite team of artists, programmers, and audio specialists to help design and produce original content for an MMORPG with over 2,000,00 registered accounts
- Leading and directing projects and individuals within the design team through meeting organization, design documents, etc.
- Design Director for a new interactive region within the virtual world of Toontown

**Grandma Green** (*Narrative Design Lead*)

January 2023-May 2023

Website: <https://www.grandmagreen.app/>

- Led all narrative endeavors for a gardening simulation app with over 50,000 downloads in the App Store
- Wrote over 100 unique lines of dialogue and planned storylines for each individual character
- Worked closely with art, programming, and marketing teams to develop a well-rounded narrative experience

### LEADERSHIP AND INVOLVEMENT

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**Open Alpha** (*VP of People, Producer, Game/Narrative Design Lead, Artist*)

September 2021-September 2023

Website: <https://openalphausc.weebly.com/>

- Helped select new members for the 2022-23 school year, helped determine the future of the club, and ensured that each club member had an enjoyable experience
- Responsible for keeping the release date schedule on track for the release of 2 club-made video games which released on Steam. Only 3 months were given for the complete alpha development of each game.

**Young Storytellers** (*Head Screenwriting Mentor*)

February 2022-December 2023

Website: <https://www.youngstorytellers.com/>

- Coordinating and leading weekly sessions in which a group of 9-10 fifth-graders learn the basics of narrative and screenwriting in preparation for a live performance of their independent scripts.
- Attended various training sessions and recruited a team of mentors to work with small groups of students to create their own original screenplays.

### TECHNICAL SKILLS

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- Unity, Unreal Engine, Adobe Creative Suite, C#, Twine, Python, Final Draft, Figma, Notion, Maya, Procreate, MS Office