

Apostrophe

Apostrophe is a combination typing challenge crossed with a side-scrolling runner for the PC, and any devices with a standard, physical keyboard. In Apostrophe, players must perfect their typing ability, while simultaneously honing their language skills. Given the minimum required vocabulary and typing ability, Apostrophe is targeted mainly at players looking to improve either their typing ability or language proficiency.

Apostrophe follows the narrative of an unnamed writer as he or she races to complete a creative and editorial masterpiece. The words come slowly at first, but as the writer places words on the page, the stream of thought increases in complexity and pace. Indeed, the actual contents of the author's manuscript may even vary between sessions.

In the spirit of Canabalt, a figure accelerates across the screen, avoiding obstacles. However, gameplay proceeds somewhat differently than in a traditional runner. Instead, the player dynamically creates the floor of each stage, using words drawn from a selection of predetermined text. As the player types, letters fly in from above and below the screen. If the player correctly types the indicated word, the floor created from the letters solidifies, allowing the player sprite to continue running along the track.

If the player makes a typo, the player may backspace to correct the mistake, at the cost of leaving an empty letter of width equal to the number of missed or deleted letters. The player sprite will then attempt to jump the gap, and may potentially fail if the gap exceeds the maximum traversable distance based on the runner's current velocity. Should the player make an egregious typing mistake (such as an entirely invalid string of letters), the typed letters instead shatter and fall away, leaving a gaping hole in the floor that may prove difficult for the player sprite to navigate without sufficient speed.

Thus, the overall objective of Apostrophe is to type as quickly and as accurately as possible so as to provide the runner with enough "track" to continue. Slow or inaccurate performances will cause the player sprite to fall through, or even off the end of the track.

The fundamental design of Apostrophe addresses two separate, but related learning objectives: improving typing speed and accuracy, and the English language (also applicable to other languages, with some adaptation). Rather than drill players with letter triplets, Apostrophe emphasizes reading comprehension and transcription, teaching players to improve their typing speed and accuracy by learning fundamental letter/word associations commonly found throughout the English language. With enough practice, accomplished players will find their hands naturally shifting into position for upcoming words.

Apostrophe combines the thrill of a runner with an intense, but forgiving challenge of a typing test. Players must keep up with a feverish stream of thoughts spewing forth from the mind of a brilliant writer as they provide the track for the human avatar representation of the writer's mind. By pairing spelling and grammar with gameplay and personal achievement, Apostrophe is sure to create an engaging and educational experience for players seeking to improve their language skills and typing ability.