



COVER FEATURE: MEET THE SIMS 4

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A first look at the long list of things new and different

The Sims 4 is exactly what you'd expect a sequel to be — a deeper game, a better experience, and more, more, more of the stuff we've loved since the original *The Sims*. We'll have a lot to cover in the months between now and the game's 2014 launch, so let's start with the basics: Create A Sim, Build, and just a hint of the new gameplay features to come. **BY AJ GLASSER**



PRE-ORDER
The Sims 4
NOW!

WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

Styling your Sims

Create A Sim ditches the menu-heavy merry-go-round of CAS in favor of a more intuitive click-and-drag experience with minimal category menus. Players in CAS use the mouse to select individual body parts — thighs, calves, butt, stomach, chest, shoulders, biceps, feet, head — and sometimes even more detailed sets of body parts (selecting the head opens up the entire face to the click-and-drag experience). By scrolling or dragging, players can change the size and dimensions of each of these body parts to create truly unique-looking Sims.

Beyond the body, there are outfits, and Sims fans will be pleased to see a broad selection of shirts, pants, shoes, skirts, dresses, accessories, and hairstyles to get you started. Each piece

has been crafted by *The Sims 4* artists to fit with any combination of other pieces. So boots will automatically fit under dresses or inside boot cut jeans, long hairstyles will automatically swoop down over the top of clothing, and hats can be worn with any hairstyle. Clothing options in *The Sims 4* now serve an actual gameplay function (see “Getting Emotional”





below), so there are prices attached to each individual piece — and your Sim won't be able to afford some of the more expensive stuff until they've made some simoleons. This should make the act of dressing Sims a whole lot more interesting.



Building

Build introduces new room-based building techniques. Once placed on a lot, players can adjust a room's dimensions by dragging walls. Rooms placed side-by-side automatically join walls. Foundations can also be added (or subtracted) without the need to demolish the entire house.

The Sims 4 now has a Magazine View sorted both by room type and additionally by item type (which should be familiar to *The Sims 3* players). By clicking a tile, players can take a look at various items in a room (e.g. a “modern” living room with flatscreen TV, blocky couch, and cream-white rugs) and then purchase an entire set or individual item to drag onto the lot. Rooms can also be viewed in a set of different color palettes so that players can mix and match items or guarantee that all items placed in a room will have the same color palette.



WHAT'S NEW?

Getting Emotional

The Sims 4 sticks with the moodlets seen in *The Sims 3*, but it takes them to an all-new level. In *The Sims 4*, Sims are now emotionally aware. They are capable of a range of emotions that have a direct impact on the way you play the game. In effect, Sims' emotions govern all their interactions, both with objects and with other Sims. Certain emotions make some interactions impossible, just like in real life. *The Sims 4* opens up (and closes off) interactions that fit with their emotional state. For example, a Sim in a romantic state might be able to play new types of music on a violin — but they couldn't say mean things to a Sim they were flirting with; that type of interaction would be grayed out. Sims in an angry state can actually run faster on treadmills to burn away the rage, but they might not be able to look at a painting. There are even some wacky emotion-specific socials and actions — like sulking in a bathtub while eating ice cream.



NEW ITEMS

New items we've seen so far include:

- Rocket ship
- Microscope set
- Cupcake factory

Whims, Traits, Aspirations

We're used to crafting Sim personalities with Traits, and those of us that played *The Sims 2* even remember when we used to control their Wishes. *The Sims 4* lets us get to know our Sims' thoughts and feelings not just through Traits, but through Whims and Aspirations. Whims are like the thought bubbles that come up when Sims are out in the world doing stuff. They're often something a Sim wants to do in the moment, like mix a drink or play with a chess set. Fulfilling a Whim grants the Sim something like Lifetime



SKILLS

Here are the skills we can confirm so far.





CAREERS

Each career has up to 10 levels for a Sim to master. Like *The Sims 3 Ambitions*, there will also be timed events that your Sim can complete for a job boost. Each job level will unlock new content for a Sim to place in their home, so it's easier for players to represent that Sim's career in decoration.

sim something like Lifetime Happiness points to spend on rewards.

Aspirations are more long-term Sim desires, similar to the Lifetime Wishes from *The Sims 3*. A Sim might want to master a certain skill or career, or own certain items. Unlike *The Sims 3*, which limited players to only one Lifetime Wish, the Aspirations in *The Sims 4* are organized such that every Sim can have as many as he or she wants. Once a Sim completes an Aspiration, they'll get the corresponding Aspiration Trait that goes along with it. A Sim that becomes a master chef, for example, will get a cooking-based Aspiration Trait.

Yes! For the first time ever, Sims can now level-up their WooHooing abilities

- Violin
- Guitar
- Hacking
- Writing
- WooHoo
- Cooking
- Gardening

FRIENDS and LOVERS

In *The Sims 4*, players will now be able to develop relationships, romances, or both. There

is a "relationship" bar that tracks how well your Sim knows another Sim, which has been seen in previous iterations of the game, but now *The Sims 4* introduces a separate "romance" bar. This is independent of the "relationship" bar, and it allows your Sim to develop romance-specific relations with other Sims. If a one-night rendezvous is what your Sim is after, they can live their life hopping from one bedroom to the next, WooHooing with Sims they barely know — if the chemistry is there. These new romantic relationships are characterized in modern terms.





WHAT'S THE SAME?

Gotta have more stuff

The Sims 4 includes a lot of familiar things from all the previous Sim games. Though we can't share too

much just now, we can tell you to look for the crafting table, the voodoo doll, the cowplant, and the telescope — only it's an "observatory" telescope that your Sims can go inside to get up to all kinds of mischief. Your Sim's day-to-day life will also look familiar, with things like trash piles, puddles, public spaces, and various collectable or upgradable objects.

Want more?

This is just the tip of the iceberg that is all the new stuff in *The Sims 4*. There's still lots more yet to be revealed. We'll bring you all the latest news about *The Sims 4* as it becomes available.

CONFIRMED SIM CHAR- ACTERS

- The Grim Reaper
- The Maid
- The Postal Worker





Q&A with EXECUTIVE PRODUCER



RACHEL FRANKLIN

What feature or item are you most excited about in *The Sims 4*?

I'm most excited about how we're giving Sims a rich, emotional center. For the first time, our Sims are now emotionally aware. It sounds subtle, but that opens up a lot of opportunity for our fans.

Talk a bit about how the Sims move. Do you think players will immediately notice how "aware" Sims suddenly seem of each other, or will it be too subtle?

We're starting with a stronger foundation when it comes to movement. In previous games, we were focused on creating animations that met our basic functionality, but it wasn't until the later expansion packs that we added more variety to those animations. Here, we're focusing on variety of interactions and the fluidity of movement to show the expressive moments our fans love. Our goal is Sims that are more relatable and believable beings with fluid and natural behaviors that articulate their feelings.

Building has been almost completely overhauled. Do you think anyone will miss the old building mechanics, or will the block-based system be embraced?

Our new room-based system will make building fast and flexible. There may be fans who miss the old way of building, and for them we still have the trusty wall tool. We believe once they play with the new tools, they'll appreciate the power to more easily expand, contract, or adjust their creations. We've concentrated on taking the tools that worked for *The Sims 3* and making them better and more intuitive.





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**What's your favorite
part of working on *The
Sims* franchise?**

My favorite part about working on *The Sims* is the opportunity to touch an entertainment phenomenon that inspires such creativity among its fans.

**What's one real life
feature that hasn't
been in *The Sims* yet
that you'd like to see
in-game?**

What we're working on now is delivering Sims that are more emotionally intelligent, giving them moods, emotional centers, social skills and memories. I suppose that's technically more than 'one real life feature,' but I really want to see that in-game because it's going to create a much more believable and more relatable experience. That's the type of game I look forward to playing.



END