Introduction to Second Life

1. What You Need to Know Before You Enter Second Life

What is Second Life?
---------------------------------
Second Life (commonly abbreviated SL) is a virtual world created in 2003 by Linden Research, also known as Linden Lab. Second Life is one of several virtual worlds. Find out more at www.secondlife.com. Virtual worlds are social networks facilitated by online computer-based simulated environments. Second Life is similar in some ways to online games (e.g., it is multiplayer; interactive between players, objects, and other players; immersive; threedimensional), however there are significant differences (e.g., it is persistent; there are no clear objectives, goals, or points; it hosts numerous nonprofits and educational institutions).

Hardware Requirements
---------------------------------
To run Second Life, you need a computer or laptop with 512MB of RAM or more and a powerful video card, and a high-speed Internet connection. You can run Second Life using PC, Mac, or Linux. This page has more details: http://secondlife.com/corporate/sysreqs.php

Headset
---------------------------------
To use the voice chat feature, you need at least a microphone and speakers. A better option is to use a headset. When you use a headset, you will need to indicate that in your PREFERENCES. Ask a Virtual Ability Mentor for assistance in setting up your headset if you need help.

Personal Capability Requirements
---------------------------------
Functioning in Second Life requires certain basic keyboard and mouse operations, all of which can also be performed using appropriate assistive technology. These skills include:

• Typing text
• Seeing the computer screen well enough to read text
• Pressing and holding down one or more keyboard keys for several seconds
• Pressing two keys on opposite sides of the keyboard
• Moving the mouse and pressing mouse buttons
• Pressing and holding down a keyboard key while simultaneously moving the mouse and pressing its buttons

This page has more details: http://www.virtualability.org/signup2
Second Life Vocabulary

Gesture: An avatar action (wave, dance, applaud, etc.) that may include motion, sound, and/or text.
Grid: Total land area in Second Life; the thousands of computer servers that run SL.
Home: Landing point where you can log in or return with one click; a safety feature in SL.
Lag: Delays in functioning or appearance caused by slow Internet connection or too many objects or avatars in the same place.
Landmark: Record of a location for later return (similar to a website bookmark). Landmarks are saved in a dedicated Inventory folder.
Linden Lab: Company that created and maintains the Second Life virtual world.
Lindens or Linden dollars: In-game currency. Can be purchased using a credit card, but there are other ways to obtain Lindens.
Log Out: Remove your avatar from Second Life. Changes that you have made in your appearance or surroundings will persist.
Prim: Short for “primitive”; basic shapes (cubes, spheres, cylinders, etc.) which can be linked together to create complex objects.
Region: Area in SL, usually an island or rectangular landmass, 256 square meters in size; each SL region has a unique name.
Rez: Cause an object, scene, or your avatar to appear.
SL: Shorthand for Second Life.
SLURL: Link to directly teleport to a location in Second Life.
Teleport: A form of rapid transportation in Second Life; the avatar disappears from one location and immediately appears at another one, anywhere in SL. Landmarks allow you to teleport to destinations.
Viewer: Software that resides on your computer and allows you to participate in SL. The viewer connects your computer to the stored virtual world on Linden Lab servers.

To Think About Before Signing Up

1. Once you have chosen the name of your avatar, you cannot change it. The name is case sensitive, so initial capitalization is important for legibility (e.g., georgewashington vs GeorgeWashington). Although you can include numbers, unusual characters, and random strings of letters in your name, that would make it hard for others to find and address you. Keep it simple if possible.
2. You can add a display name later, if you want an additional name besides your avatar name. Display names are handy in role playing, to identify your character. The avatar name you choose, and your display name if you use one, will always be visible above the head of your avatar.
3. You can change everything else! That includes your appearance (clothes, hair, skin, gender, species, etc.), your account information (email, payment,
etc.), your display name, the information you present about yourself to others, and many set-up preferences (font size and color, interface size, clarity of images, etc.).

4. Once you have chosen your avatar name, you may want to set up a free gmail account using that name, for the sake of anonymity. You can use this email account in all your Second Life transactions.

5. You can have a free Second Life account. Or you can pay to upgrade to a premium account, which comes with certain perks. You can upgrade at any time, so we recommend starting with the basic free account.

6. Always follow basic Internet safety rules. Don’t tell anyone your password.

7. If you end up not liking this avatar or name, you can always create another one and ignore or close this account.

Creating Your Second Life Account

1. Sign up to begin on Virtual Ability island here: http://slurl.com/secondlife/Virtual%20Ability/170/97/22/?title=Virtual%20Ability%20Island

2. Click on the orange box in the top right to SIGN UP.

3. Start by choosing an avatar, which is your "character" within Second Life. The appearance you choose is just to get you started - you can always change it later.

4. Then select your username or avatar name. This is your account name, and must be unique. You won't be able to change your username later, so choose wisely. (However, you will be able to later change (weekly if you want) your display name - which is how most people in Second Life recognize you. You do NOT have to have a display name.)

5. Next you'll be asked to enter a valid email address, your date of birth, and a password, and create your Second Life account. None of this information is shared with anyone.

6. Finally, you can then download the Second Life viewer software onto your computer. Its icon will be a green stylized hand with a swirl in the palm. You may want to put this into your dock so you can find it more easily.

Logging In to Your Second Life Account

1. Open the Second Life viewer software (see #6 above).

2. You will be prompted to type in your username (your avatar name) and your password. You have a choice of places to begin. Choose “My last location.” Ignore the advertisements on the login page. Press the LOG IN button.
3. When you log into Second Life for the first time (but not at other times), you will need to read and agree to the "Terms Of Service" and the "Community Standards" which are your legal agreements with Linden Lab, the makers of Second Life. These are pretty standard for any web community.

4. As you log in various messages will appear on your screen. You can ignore those for now.

5. Your avatar will appear on Virtual Ability island, at the start of a training course that will show you, step by step, how to walk, fly, communicate, and perform the other essential tasks of this exciting new world.
6. Across the top of your screen, you will see several Categories from the Destination Guide. You can click the X at the top right to close this screen, as you can find this information later.

7. Just in case you don’t land at the beginning of Virtual Ability’s New Resident Orientation Course, here is the SLURL to get there: http://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/Virtual%20Ability/170/104/23
   Copy/paste this SLURL into Local Chat (white bar at bottom left of your screen), and hit ENTER. When you see it appear on your screen in green, double click it and choose TELEPORT.

8. Proceed through the training course at whatever speed you want. You can go through it all at once or in several shorter sessions, and you can always come
back later if you need a refresher.
9. You can leave any time you want. Log out by clicking on the red X at the top right of the Second Life viewer (red dot at the top left on a Mac). When you log back in, your avatar will be right where you left off.

2. What You Will Learn on the New Resident Orientation Course

There are five sections to the Orientation Course on Virtual Ability island: Intro/Movement, Communication, Inventory, Orienting, and Appearance. Within each section, numerous important skills are introduced and practiced.

NOTE: Since Linden Lab makes frequent small updates to the viewer software, some directions will not exactly match what you see on your screen. Do not worry. The same functionality exists, perhaps with a slightly different name.

2a. Intro/Movement

Walking: Using the keyboard arrow keys, you can move your avatar forward and backward, or turn it to the left or right. You can also use the Movement Control (Walk/Fly/Run) panel to do the same motions.

Mac Notes: Directions are typically given for PC keyboards and mouse. If using a Mac, common translations are here. Most “click” directions in Second Life translate to Apple (or Control or CTRL)-Click on a Mac.

Assistive Technology: Virtual Ability operates in Second Life. If you need help with your assistive technology and interfacing with your computer, please consult a qualified assistive technology professional. Virtual Ability can help you and the professional interface your assistive technology with the Second Life viewer.

Enlarging text and view: You can enlarge the font of Local Chat (but not Instant Messages) and enlarge the entire viewer interface.

Camera Control: The normal view of Second Life is looking forward from behind your avatar’s left shoulder. (You see the back of your head.) These important instructions allow you to “move your camera” or adopt a different point of view. This is useful for exploring the details of this world.

Sitting: This action includes not only sitting (on objects, on the ground) but also interacting with pose balls. Pose balls change the actions of your avatar to allow you to dance, ride a horse or motorcycle, hug a friend, etc. To activate most pose balls, click on them and choose “sit” or the appropriate named action.

Flying: In most areas of Second Life your avatar will be able to fly. In some areas, the landowner does not to allow flight. A symbol at the top of your screen that looks like a person flying crossed by a red slashed circle indicates you are in a no-fly zone.

2b. Communication

Chat: Public conversations with any avatar within 20m; you can also shout (which
carries for 96m) or whisper (10 m).

**Friends:** While “friends” in social media could be anyone, we recommend that you know the person you offer friendship to in Second Life.

**Instant Messaging (IM):** Private conversations (can be at any distance, any location).

**Groups:** Communities or people sharing a common interest; a way to receive notices of events or information in Second Life.

---

### 2c. Inventory

Your inventory is like an infinite storage closet where everything you own is kept in two folders, Library and My Inventory. Items in the Library folder are defaults and donations from Linden Lab. My Inventory folder contains everything else you collect or buy while in Second Life.

**Buying Items:** Many items in SL are free. You “buy” them for zero Linden dollars.

**Finding Items and Folders in Inventory:** Learn how this virtual closet is organized.

**Inventory Search:** What good is an infinitely large closet if you can’t find anything in it?

**Rezzing an Item Out of Inventory:** Bringing things out of the virtual closet.

**Opening a Box:** If an item is stored in a container, you must know how to get it out. “Wearing a box” is synonymous with being new to Second Life.

---

### 2d. Orienting

**Mini-Map:** Uses symbols to show the people in the environment around you.

**World Map:** Bird’s-eye view of the local region.

**Teleporting:** Experience a short hop from one location to another, and back.

**Landmarks:** An easy way to save your position in SL so you can teleport back later.

---

### 2e. Appearance

**Editing Your Physical Appearance:** Easily change your body by modifying body parts or changing skins, eyes, or hair. We don’t recommend that you edit your shape until you have been in SL for a while and know how to view your avatar from all sides. Many nice free shapes are available.

**Outfit Folders:** Once you have a look (physical appearance + clothing) that you like, store it in a folder so you can quickly change appearance. You can have as many outfit folders as you wish.