

How to create a game design document

[Design](#)



There's no one set format for game design documents. A "concept" might be one or two pages describing the basic idea. A "treatment" might be three to fifteen pages to give a broader picture of the idea for a game. A "game design" can be a full document (fifty to two or three hundred pages) describing a game in every detail. The following is a basic outline (well, maybe more of a "checklist") for a game design. The primary goals of a game design are to (1) excite and (2) inform the reader.

First paragraph must excite the reader and make the reader want to read more of the first page. The first page must be interesting, concise, and informative, and must make the reader want to read the remaining pages. When the reader has finished reading the entire design, if the reader does not have a clear understanding of what you want the game to be, you have failed to communicate your vision of the game. L. BACKGROUND STORY If applicable, tell the story of the game that leads into the beginning of the game, and tell the story that unfolds during gameplay, if any. What is the tone?

What is the basic narrative? What is the "heart" of the story? Is it a linear story? Example 1 - It is the year zero and a mysterious alien race is jumping from human colony to colony looking for slaves and resources. You are Thane Ryan, one of the alien's best human pawns. Controlled by nanotechnology you do their dirty work. But you are not alone, your prior love interest, scientist Sara Souza is working on a serum that will stop your addiction to the alien Anna-technology. With this serum you can finally free yourself from alien control and lead the rebellion that will save the human race.

Example 2 - Somewhere in the Wild Jungles of the Midwestern United States... The year is 1989, and in this day and age in the Midwestern United States trouble comes in many forms. Faced with famine, environmental extremes oscillating between drought and monsoon, and not to mention a massive increase in young children eloping, the inhabitants of this troubled land live hard lives. Furthermore, as the proverbial icing on the cake, they have an enormous insect problem. Enormous, as in these insects are huge bastards. Enormous, as in there's a whole frigging' lot of them.

The ragged and tattered United States Government sees only one solution to this almost unfathomable insect problem: total eradication. Using advanced technology, including wireless telegraph, the Government sends out a call to all of the world's best known bug eradicators... Example 3 - The game takes place in 2007 in Landlord after John has worked three days straight surviving only on Red Bull. Now the player must guide John home as he tries to finally make it home and sleep. To make things worse because of John's lack of sleep he has begun to hallucinate, viewing the world around him as a classic video game.

He not only views the environments as video game environments but also human pedestrians as enemies from games. As John makes his way home he will be told many things by the MAD that will help and confuse him. The main thing that he will be told is that he must protect himself from the enemies who are trying to stop him and then the MAD will give him a gun to kill the enemies. If the player loses the game he will be arrested for his crimes against humanity. II. THE SETTING Describe the world... How it looks, how it feels. Is it clean? Dirty?

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New? Old? Talk about what the viewer would see, describing in word details that help sell the entire concept of the world. Example 1 - The overall feel of time and place in Insecticide should immediately injure associations with the Wild, Wild West of America, a frontier land where regular citizens are afraid to venture beyond the edge of town. Gun-toting, grim, bounty-hunter types roam the country side, looking for one or the other of two things: money or fame. It's not a world for the over-sensitive or fragile. Only the best can survive.

Technology finds itself in a hybrid state when compared to what we know as the real world: on the one hand, the milieu of insecticide is set in a rusty, iron-gilded past; on the other, fancy new gadgets abound. Example 2 - The new government has taken over earth and the surrounding leanest. During the raids all non-conformists have been imprisoned and drugged or terminated. While human history has been erased, there are rumors that the year is around 2099. Example 3 - The world is one of airships and dragons. Captain Warwick battle against Tama is a fierce battle for revenge in a stormy and turbulent sea.

This creates a sense of dread for the player by emphasizing the enormous challenge that awaits them. The battle rages on ending with one final harpoon the drops the great beast for the last time. III. THE OBJECTIVE If the objective is simply " get as many points as possible," then state it so. But if the objective is " rescue the princess," then that's another matter. In either case, give as much detail as possible to aid the reader in having some basis in understanding the rest of the design document as he reads on. What is the player's goal and why would they want to accomplish it?

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Example 1 - Fight your inner demons and lead the rebellion against the evil empire. You must build up the courage to be able to fight your controllers and help people rediscover the life they once had. ; To annihilate the alien race that is plaguing the planet. To do this the player will have to use both land and air tactics. The player will have to run, fly, and shoot there way through countless enemies. ; The player first goal in the game is to wipe out a rebellion. While under the Anna-technology you are forced to slaughter the woman and children as they run for there lives.

Example 2 - The mechanics revolve around the player taking control of Captain Warwick as he uses the ship's capabilities to take on Tama. The Captain has use of several mounted weapons, like a machine gun and a harpoon gun. He must defeat Tama before the ship's destruction. The game begins with Tama flying over the Maybe and diving into the ocean below. Captain Warwick uses depth charges to flush out Tama from hiding. Once Tama has surfaced, Warwick needs to weaken Tama by using the turrets to shoot the scales off Titman's chest.