Making A Great Video Game
by
Adam J. Capps

Making A Great Video Game
By Adam J. Capps
2022- Public Domain

Introduction:

Here is a no nonsense approach to game creation. It goes over what makes a game either good or bad, how to make a game good, and where the focus should be. It is a condensed book that only goes over important things. Is a quick read but a useful book. It is a small guide. As such it is meant as a primer for the game maker. It is a book to read before committing yourself to making a game. It goes over the best ideas both old and new. I have included a whole section on new ideas you may have. This book brings to mind those things in making a good video game. I have split it all up in genre and elements. So it can be a quick guide. In fact this whole book doesn't have to be read. Only the genre you want to learn about is necessary. But reading the whole thing could be helpful as well. My method in coming up with ideas is by always having an answer to the questions *who, what, when, where, why, which, and how.*

I wrote this book because I always wanted to be a programmer but was never able to learn programming. So I have done the next best thing here by providing all the best input I have on making a good video game. It is in fact a public domain book, a free ebook, and a lowest possible cost paperback. So feel free to share it with others.

Part One: Going Over Good Ideas For Different Genres.

The Adventure Game: Includes games like Zelda. The best formula is making it a game of discovery that immerses its player in a quest. Things gradually unfold. What was once thought impossible no more is. Along the way there's no telling what might be right there in front of your face but unseen. Everything has a little magic to it. Sometimes a lot. With every given new powerup the world opens even more. Suddenly there is a surprise. Just like JRR Tolkien, strange beings and beasts are everywhere along the way.

Characters- The characters you talk to and those that befriend you can come in many forms. In some cases they want something from you and will give you something in return. Sometimes they give you something to help them. Characters could include talking trees, owls, monkeys. They could be a sage, a thief, a person who doesn't want you to step on her flowers. There are the characters in your hometown. There are characters afraid of you because you have been lied about. Some can be pests, others just jogging around. Some could be really proud to teach you something new. With some you may have a love interest. My advice is simple: just think up some neat kinds of characters for your game, ones that have a good place in the game. Make encountering them be special- or good, neat, ect. On the other hand sometimes going bland is actually a good thing. In that way you aren't bothered with talky characters. You

don't feel like you are being told what to do. You aren't bothered to go find them again and again. I think people can appreciate The Legend Of Zelda in that it was straight forward. "Here, take this," and all the time possible was given to exploring and venturing through without being bothered.

Enemies- Whether they are based on preexisting things or a variation of it there are a lot of choices to make regarding them. Will it be like a spider? Or a dragon? Go it neat. Make it fun- challenging in different ways. That one little enemy differs from another in how it comes after you. I really liked the Yiga clan from The Legend of Zelda: Breath Of The Wild. I still remember the first time I encountered a person from the Yiga clan. He was going off into how I looked like the hero of Hyrule and he seemed kind of fake in his flattery. Then suddenly his tone became serious. He said their clan's purpose is to kill that hero and he came into his true form. What stood out was that they knew who Link was while all the other enemies never indicate that they do. Zelda also presents us with the following ideas: a thief that comes after you, bumping into you, and taking your things; a centair; ghosts that appear when you bump the tombstone; dinosaurs that can be fed bombs; and centars. It isn't any good intention or even good effect to copy them. Rather to take their soul, and use it for something new. We want the spirit of a thing, not its body. It is like what they did with the sword in stone. They took the spirit of the idea and used it in their game. In fact, Link was based on Peter Pan. Mario climbing a vine in Super Mario Bros to coin land is just Jack and the Beanstalk. My advice is to go to the drawing board- take a pencil and paper, think about things in the real world, warp them, change them a little or a lot, give them an attack, and there you go!

Weapons- Getting greater and greater gear is important for adventure games. Sometimes you can only get a sword after certain things are accomplished. They can be minor and natural or major and difficult. They could be a part of a puzzle. At full health you can shoot a beam from your sword. Holding down a certain button then releasing it makes you swing it. That has been done before, a lot, because it adds a good thing. In this book we are all for taking an old idea and making it better. So you could apply the same thing to every weapon you have, not just the sword. It may be good practice to consider any given thing and make a weapon out of it for your game. A light bulb.. A light bulb wand.. A wand with a light so bright it blinds everything around you. A fan.. A wind power attack. A wire in my room.. That can be an electrified whip. That could be very useful in fact. It could turn things on or attack, it could electrify a pond to get rid of a creature that's bothering you. I've found it is a useful trick when thinking up weapons and tools.

     If your character can get around quickly and easily then their mechanics are operating in the right way. This can be tested in the game itself. If you struggle to get by then adjustments should be made. If an enemy is just too unavoidable, to the point of

being unfair, then it must be toned down. In all movements that the character has, things should be smooth. It's like a "tuning in" process. You must make it as close as possible to the right feel.

Tools- Tools can be very inventive. Who would have thought that a boomerang would be an acceptable weapon in the game and not something strange? Before Zelda a boomerang wasn't a weapon at all- just a toy. But people have long forgotten that. Some of the best tools can be found in The Legend of Zelda. Personally I'm not a copycat person and it's good not to be- copy cats go nowhere. There are some exceptions to that: like with bow and arrows and swords. Those are closer to a public domain thing, so to speak. There should be significant enough changes otherwise. It is true that clone games/copycats are just an ugly form of something better. It kind of looks like ( ) but it is all disfigured! That's what they lead the player to think. The best games have always stood on their own, as a rule. This is how a thing can be done differently: one game gives you a glove that lets you lift large boulders (obviously I'm talking about Zelda) but your game could have a flute which summons a large hand to move it for you. Zelda has the master sword. That was an idea taken from The Sword and the Stone. In Conan The Barbarian Conan came into a cave after being chased by wolves. He found the skeleton of a king on his throne. That skeleton had a sword in his hand. Conan took it and it became his greatest weapon.

Some of my ideas include a tool that creates a lot of smoke- that smoke pushes away enemies. A tool that turns metal into wood so it'll float to the top. Such as a metallic treasure chest deep in the water. Or turning wood to steel or silver. That way you can make a weapon out of a tree branch. There could be a wand that puts a random portal on the ground. There could be monster taming tools that make the monsters serve you. You could then go forward protected into a place where you alone were not strong enough to pass. The next part of my book provides a lot of free ideas. I have found that the best way to think them up is by thinking of things in the real world and putting them into a video game. In a video game they can be so much more, so keep that in mind. Some of these things in real life would cost thousands of dollars. In a game, they are free. An adventure game should be full of neat gadgets and physics suited to them.

Mechanics- The game maker should be careful, and test. One little thing can make a big difference such as if your character swings his sword or thrusts it. It's a good thing to have enemies moving in different ways. Some hop around, some are rigid and hard to get around, some are quick, others blast at you, and some are erratic. You could build the ideas of weapons around those. First make the enemies, then make the weapons. Think of a thing that slows down a fast enemy for example. Also, set the right speed for

your character and have him maneuverable and easy to manage. Make his strikes "right on target." Beware of anything being too unfair such as going from platform to platform. There is a good and fair kind of difficulty and then there is the frustrating and necessary kind. More 3D games have lunges and targeting. They have dashing backwards moves and defensive ones. Those should be well implemented as well.

Remember, you don't have to follow the rules in the real world. Sometimes you don't even have to come close to it. It is like cartoons and movies. Video games are always wanting to be movies these days. What's more, they have to be realistic movies- that is a norm of our time. Yet people still fully enjoy cartoons which couldn't be further from reality. In a video game a boomerang really does come back. You can fly in a video game, wall jump and other things, just as it should be. Video games have their own rules. They do have rules. You not only jump but should be able to turn in mid air- to keep things fair. Some would have one attack kill you. If it works for the game. Most games give you more chances. Link from Zelda slices his sword. In real life that is less effective. In a video game that is more effective. So just remember there are different rules for video games. My advice is to make something work. Sometimes you have to if it is going to. So you may have to make an action a little different in some way or another, by adding to it perhaps. And, if it is just not going to work out, have the character move about in some other fashion.

Puzzles- In a typical fashion they involve switches, barriers, blocks, necessitate magic or tools, involve rearranging things a certain way, sometimes involve code words or numbers, looking in every area, going around turning some things on, defeating all of the enemies in a room, or even leaving the dungeon itself and reentering in another doorway from the outside. You could have a hard puzzle, even impractical, but give the player a hint. There are things like rolling cubes so that they all color match then the doorway will open. There are things like flooding an area so you can swim across it. There are more simple things like lighting all of the torches in a room. A link to the past has had its more elaborate puzzles. I really like the one where you find a female prisoner who asks that you help her escape. But you enter into this room that has light shining down on it and she turns into a monster. That monster was the enemy boss of the dungeon. Things like that take a lot more imagination and should be more common. A trickiness to the puzzle could just be what tool to use and where. It isn't always so obvious. In fact it could be.. Puzzling. And things can involve using two tools. Let's say that there is a torch in the middle of a room. Ahead of the torch is something that looks like it could catch fire. It is subtle though. The puzzle is that you light the torch and shoot an arrow through it. That arrow will burn the doorway allowing you to pass. It could involve a tool that changes an enemy into a fairy, bottling it with a bottle and net, taking

them to a special room in the dungeon, where they get your key, a key you couldn't reach yourself. Or it could be a form changing tool that turns certain enemies into keys.

Equipment- Things found throughout the game can add up quickly. Some of it has more permanent uses, some of it is often switched around to something else. I would suggest that most of it be permanent-use so that the player isn't always having to go to the menu. There are the up-defense items. That could be a shield then a better shield. One shield blocks things better than the other. Could be in the form of a ring- makes attacks against you less harmful. Could be the suit you wear. The red one protects you more than the green. Could be a whole suit of armor. Then there are items that gradually raise your energy, automatically. There are the magic providing items. They let you fly, jump higher, turn into something else, making you invisible, giving you fire power, ect. They usually go hand in hand with two things: getting you to new places or making getting through old places easier. Where new things are found: a cave, a basement, a tomb, a home, treasure chest, forest, or just a store, is a major purpose for the player to be there. In other words they want things and things more while they are playing. There is a lot of diversity possible. There can be magical undertones to how you get them. It could be from unveiling a secret. If it is a really good item then it must be earned. It could have even come by accidentally. It all adds flavor to the game and the more the better: video game sugar will not kill you. Over time your current equipment loses its flavor.

Graphics- They can be as real or as fake as you want them to be. Cell shaded, cartoon like, like toys from claymation, or simply real looking. It could be real looking for what it is- just not earth looking. Meaning they are life that looks a little different from life on earth. People still go back to more 16 bit looking games. There is still an audience for the more traditional style even if it is amped up to "2.5D." Just as I said earlier, people still enjoy cartoons even though movies are more realistic than ever. Game makers go by it in different ways. They may go cartoony (like Nintendo's remake of Link's Awakening.) Out of all of them my favorite return to the past was Octopath Traveler. But we are talking about adventure games here. The Legend Of Zelda: Breath Of The Wild pulled off some impressive graphics that rested somewhere between realism and cell shading. Wind Waker was complete cell shading. They are all games that took years to make with a full game making team. If all you can do is a sort of 16 bit thing then don't be discouraged. People to this day still play SNES games, in fact a great deal of people do. Hell, some still play Atari 2600 games. People young and old alike, in fact.

Environment- This is simple. Having differing environments. A graveyard, a forest, a mountain, ect. Then below it all the dungeons. Rain effects were of great use in the game The Legend of Zelda, A Link To The Past. It's as classic as maps found in old

sword and sorcery books going back to The Hobbit. Bilbo Baggins was taken to many different places throughout his adventure. To caves that had goblins, giant spiders, trolls, unto the treasure at the end of the road which was guarded by a great dragon. That is the essence of Adventure games: it is an adventure. In a video game world it translates to a more personal affair, with visuals and interaction that lends well to imagination.

Story- How about the original Legend of Zelda! It was a perfect idea to show the player what could be found in the game. Then the player isn't fully lost on anything. The game is about getting those things and they aren't left with guessing if they have it all or not. It tells you to find Zelda and save her from Gannon. It is very straightforward. After you enter the cave in the first scene you are given a weapon and basically told you are good to go. It expressed things in a way that this guy that gave it to you was hiding himself from the world around. A world that among Zelda games has been called apocalyptic. A Link to the Past had a very nice opening as well. It thrusts you into the game just as much. It added a more sad feeling to getting the first weapon. It is taken from your uncle and it is now your responsibility to save Zelda, as it was meant to be. First you wake up in the rain and your uncle sets out to save Zelda. Suddenly the land of Hyrule has changed. The people- the soldiers are under Gannon's spell. It also set the story up in the title screen and did so in such a nice way.

   The story could be around for those who want it. It can unfold quickly or gradually. It could depend on who you speak to. It can be expressed in cut scenes with video like imagery or just imagery. It could fill in the missing pieces at just the right time. It could be that your character has forgotten where he was and needs to be reminded.

Secrets- You can't have a good adventure game without secrets. It makes an adventure game unique in that the challenge isn't from gameplay so much as it is figuring out puzzles. The most used idea is that one thing leads to another. Like get a raft to go here or get this to go there. There should not be anything taken for granted. Every area has its own unique purpose. For places to find things and to get there according to what tools the game gives you. Where once a thing is an obstacle. You are very familiar with it. You come across it and it blocks you from going ahead. Then, out of the blue, while in a dungeon or something you get an item you know will be helpful there. Things could be where you didn't expect them to be. They could be under a bridge, through a small waterfall, behind a curtain, off a clif, or through a well. A lot of rooms each needing a tool to get what is there. The first few times you went there there wasn't anything you could do. Then after getting a special tool you can go back and get it. You can go beyond certain boundaries after getting an item like a raft. You could even find that the game had much less boundaries than you thought. You could be in a dungeon that you can't entirely get through until you find that thing you need to proceed further. You can find a friend that swims well- a fish friend or something, that passes the water

onto a platform where he flips a switch for you. That switch brings forth a bridge. Why couldn't you swim though? Because the water was not water but something toxic.

Money And Buying- To get extra money there are always little gambling games or games of skill tossed about here and there. Link's Awakening had that famous thing where you could steal from the shop. You dare not return though or you're dead. Money can come from the blades of grass that you cut, dropped by an enemy, inside something, or from selling something. There could be secret areas where it is just everywhere. Grinding to get money is the job you have. Nothing is free, even in video games. Well, sometimes money is free in video games but not often. Most of the time it requires the work of grinding- whether you are slashing plants to reveal rupees, hunting down a treasure chest, doing some errand, gambling again and again, or fighting. Yes it annoys the player but it makes the money worth it. As long as it isn't unrealistic then it's okay.

Theme- Among them things could be: apocalyptic, being in a world that is just a dream, some miniature world, a world and another world, a place much like Earth or far from it, a very dark or gothic realm, a realm very medieval, sword and sorcery, something more sci fi, or a world very modern. It does not have to align with anything that has been done before in adventure games. You could take a sci-fi setting and accomplish the same sorts of things. Those kinds of games are few and far between.

Interact-ability- It is what will do what kind of thing. You could dash into a tree, it will drop fruit (powerups) or coins. You could bomb or burn a suspicious place then get something. You could lift and remove a boulder then proceed- if you had the titan gloves. You could push a gravestone revealing a special basement. You could interact with the NPCs in a sort of trading game. Give them one thing then they give you something, that something is given to another, who gives you yet something different. The environment can have you doing things like tossing a fish into a pond.. One that was just flopping around (poor thing.) And what does it do? It throws up a treasure of his up to you in thanks. Those are all ideas that have been used already, though, and just serve as examples.

It is what other characters or enemies do to you and what you can do because of them. That could present itself in a trade thing- give this to me, I'll give this to you, give that to (   ) who will give you (   ). Or it could be a gambling game/ game within a game. You could help a blacksmith back home who would temper your sword (like in a Link to the Past.) You could help a non playable character in any number of ways who returns the favor with a good thing. You could throw a fish back into the water who gives you what is in the pond. Whatever it is it can be put to use in some way or another, in getting help from it. For better or worse. Some things may not be helpful, such as a thief trying

to steal your goods. That may involve fairies, animals, thieves, creatures, people with certain talents, or a person who can go where you cannot. Just think of what kind of people and things you want to include. Give them the neatest interaction you can think up. And know that you are not really limited in any way. It could be any given thing in the real world or it could be entirely fiction. You could have a lion head horse with spiked hooves and dragon wings.

Places- Some places are enchanting. Some are spooky. Others are mysterious. Some are plain- the plains. There are towns to include and castles. There are mountainous areas. Areas ever-raining or other strange places. Tombs, dungeons, underground areas, neat places. A place of ruins. Rivers and caves, rooms and lonely dwellings. Nothing quite got to me like the graveyard in the original Zelda game. That was so cool- bumping into the gravestones to bring out the ghosts. They even added the effect that you could draw out many ghosts but to kill them all at once, kill the original ghost. The thing is, they float around so erratically that it is hard to keep an eye on the original ghost. I have nothing but good to say about the dungeons and accompanying music too. I also appreciate the action RPG "Ys 3: Wanderers From Ys" for the SNES. Especially its opening cinematic. Games that put you in its place from the start can very well cement you into the rest of the game. Link wakes up in the rain while Zelda is calling out to him. Or Ys 3 as it did so well. They say that first impressions matter the most. That isn't so true however, not totally. I'm sure we have both seen games with an excellent title screen that turned out to be hot garbage.

Simplification- Auto jumping is good. That you don't press a button to jump onto a platform or off it. You just do by walking right into it. Getting around quickly is important. Nobody likes long video game walks. That is unless you make that walk worth it as there are always things to get and do along the way. Shifting through inventory is a good thing to implement.

I've said earlier that most items should be in "permanent" use. It can get annoying having every item in the world and always having to switch them. A permanent item is like something that stays in place. For example a suit that gives you greater defense and there might be only three of them in the game. Instead of a dozen swords, just three or four. Still, it's a balance. It is a sweet spot between variety and convolution.

Enemies should be manageable. Having them have multiple attacks at once may cause irritability and frustration. Might make it where the player doesn't really know what the hell to do and when, not exactly. So enemy phases have always been used by those who know. They have one kind of attack until you hit them a certain amount of times. Then they switch to a different style of attack until you've hit them a few times more, and a third phase the same. It just seems so silly when I see an enemy in a game

that rapages you. That onslaughts you with multiple attacks at once as though it is in a desperate frenzy.

Fetch quests could lower the quality of play for the gamer. The worst fetch quest I had ever had to endure caused me to drop the game altogether. It wanted me to spend hours and hours of gameplay hunting down an ever elusive item. The moment I thought I had it, nope! It slipped away from my hands yet again.

Mood And Feeling- Ways and means to mood and feeling:

1- Make something feel important. Make it seem like the player has a good purpose that must be accomplished.

2- Make the gamer care for the character or characters. Give them a soul. Show their concerns and worries, implant hope into the heart of the player.

3- Give them a sense of innocence. Make them see that the character *is* worthy of his or her mantle. While all others in the game doubt them, you do not.

4- Bring about the unexpected. Suddenly everything has changed. "This changes everything." The volume has been turned up.

5- Make the main enemy worthy to defeat. Make him detestable, but strong. Pour the story into this with legends old.

6- Give pride through things accomplished/ defeating difficult enemies. Make things tence. Have them succeed by the skin of their teeth.

7- Make the characters attractive and compelling. Make the player want to be them. Include many types of them since that is different from person to person.

8- Give the player a sense of growth. Make them feel as though they have come a long way and are just getting better and better.

9- Make the world of the game an exciting and interesting place to be. Do the best you can at putting the game world into the heart of the player.

10- Be all good things: enchanting, mesmerizing, interesting, worthwhile, and give things depth. Make the game really immersive.

Music- George Lucas of Star Wars instructed the composer to not make a traditionally sounding space movie score. He wanted something more epic. I believe that music can make or break a movie, and a video game, too. That its music lends to its success more than about anything else. Unfortunately music composition is a natural talent- or at least requires a lot of education on what makes music good. You could hire the best if you had money. Doing so you could very easily have good music in the game- likely at high cost. Or you could find that one special composer like finding a diamond in the rough. That is just the way things are. So my only advice is to get a known good composer, the best you can afford, or else hunt for that one hidden talent who just wants a chance to be heard.

Attack And Defense- Attack and defense should be a custom tailored thing. That is, giving the player a lot of different options on how to attack, and how the player personally chooses to defend. Some people may be more into attacking. Others might be more defensive when they play. Each has their own place. Making both options good fulfills the desires of both. So we have weapons that stun, we have weapons that pierce, slash, thrust, or magic that are used in different ways. No one weapon should be more important than the others, not too much so anyways. If that happens then you may have a load of weapons in the game that are just junk. Sometimes an enemy is only defeated by a certain weapon. It may be a good thing to have a little of that for every available weapon. Some only hurt by bombs and others only hurt by arrows. That would go far in making every weapon worthwhile.

Special Levels/Areas- A moment of fun. A mini game. One in a kind of gambling style or a place of skill. Then it could just be a hidden space where once finding a person inside gives you something. In The Legend of Zelda (NES) everything was so apocalyptic that nobody was outside. They were hidden in areas and worth finding in every case.

"Easter eggs" are always a good inclusion. Those may reference other games or reference a movie, the programmer credits, or allude to something similar to the game such as characters of other games. It could just be a hard to reach area that says "wow! How'd you get here?" Once I saw a gravestone in a Final Fantasy game that said "Here lies Link." What is an easter egg all along? It is a special hidden thing. Like in The Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time, there was a hard to see painting of Mario if you carefully look into Zelda's palace.

Special areas can also be tricky things to get to. That may require unnaturally twisting around some corridors. Or it could be a place only gotten to with a special tool (hook shot or something.) It may be a hidden spot to begin with. Something right in front of your face but hard to spot. It might be a pit you jump down into thinking it would kill you, but no, in fact you can and there is something there. It could entail something very

cryptic. To do a certain thing you'd have no idea would bring you someplace. Though they aren't from adventure games I have two examples. Like when Simon Belmont knelt down in a certain area for a moment (in Castlevania 2) that revealed a lower area. Or in Final Fantasy 6 you rested in a bed as the character Cyan in order to enter into a dream realm. There were many characters in Final Fantasy 6 and it wouldn't work unless it was Cyan who chose to rest there.

Besides that special areas could just be special areas. Places of mini games held on a single screen or a few. A gambling thing perhaps. A witch's strange store. That guy through the waterfall or the hobo under the bridge. NPCs in their caves or other hidden spots. Unlikely random occurrences too like something may appear but at low odds. Conditions might have to be a certain way for them or it to appear. It all enriches the game and can be a fun part of programming it.

Philosophy Of- Even though I mention Zelda a lot I must. It is the premiere adventure game. Others have always just been side dishes. In making your game go about it in your own unique way. So many adventure games are just an imitation of Zelda. An adventure game is an adventure. The name serves it well. It is an accurate name for a genre. It turns the world into something mysterious and magical. It involves the player into discovery and exploration. It has you learn something in one spot then another something in another until it is all brought together. You go from knowing nothing of your little world to knowing everything about it. It is always a fun game to turn on and learn more, wondering what that will be. It is challenging in its own way. Sure there are difficult enemies sometimes. But the real challenge comes from finding the hidden things that have eluded you. That is why I can really appreciate the title screen for the original Legend of Zelda game. It provided a list of everything that was out there to find. That way the player knew there was more to find. They even knew there was a more powerful sword to get.. Somewhere in Hyrule.

Variety- A variety of characters, enemies, items, tools, weapons, upgrades, places to visit, types of places, areas to explore, dungeons, towns, music..

The RPG Game-

Characters- In the best RPGs it is all relationship driven. One character may be fond of another, one may despise the other (until they prove themself) and one might be a loner. One character may have known another since childhood, a character may be attracted to another, and one may be protective. That is the relationship side of it. They are always trying to figure things out together. Sometimes they don't agree about what they should do next while other times they are certain. But they are always working things out together.

Characters have their own personality. There is the tough kind, the goofy kind, the responsible kind, the serious kind, the fun kind, the smart kind, and so on.

Enemies- There is the evil king (or queen) after greater and greater power. One that is corrupt is gradually becoming more powerful, a threat. S/he might even have an agenda to destroy the world. They might be using magic to warp everything into a dark world. They may be trying to "open the doors of darkness." They have all sorts of soldiers and things on their side. You however are just one person among a few that have decided to take them out. It is not as easy as that and could be a long journey before getting to that point. You might have even been on the side of the ruler until you witnessed the worst things being done by him or her.

There might be a sneaky enemy behind that king. The king just wants to rule, is the lesser of two evils anyway, while a figure behind him or her wants nothing but destruction. Maybe that king got more than he expected and became corrupted in the pursuit of power- a new and twisted character that no longer can even be considered human.

The king and his people are ever searching for you. Sometimes you are on the run, sometimes you are well enough hidden, sometimes you are unexpectedly found. Sometimes you are a thorn on his side. Sometimes you just narrowly escape. In the process you may have been helped out of prison by an unexpected ally. Along the way you find people who had the same purpose at heart. Along the way they each have their own struggles and back story- the reasons why they do things, the reason for them to keep going on. There could be periods in the story where you are just tending to them. Some may have betrayed that king, sought you out, found you, and joined their party. Or you could have helped them out of the clutch of the king and so they join you.

Weapons- RPG games should be lush with weapons but I would say "up to a point." After all it is good to have some choices on what to buy but if there are too many the player couldn't get them all. Otherwise you level up for money to spend in the store but cannot possibly get it all. There are so many different ways to get weapons in an RPG. They can be found in hidden chests, they can be made from a mix of things you find, dropped from an enemy, stolen from an enemy, just given, purchased, and so on. I like how Final Fantasy 6 had a battle tournament where you bet your weapon on the fight. The better the weapon the better thing you would win. Some weapons have magic powers infused in them. Others have a stat effect. Some prevent status ailments like poison. A good RPG gives you a feeling of evolution like starting out with wooden swords to going to diamond swords. Some characters have an inclination towards swords and others bow and arrows. Magicians use wands. There could be special

attributes to them such as "the cursed sword." It has great potential if you could remove the curse from it. Some weapons are found in highly elaborate places which entail their own adventure. Some come after a series of bosses are defeated like "the great dragons."

Tools- You could have flying machines of all kinds- the skys the limit. You could include mech machines if you want. There could be submarines or there could be machines that take you exactly where you want to go. You could go about on a hovercraft, a raft, or a boat. If things are in a future setting then there are many devices and sci fi things you could put to use. If in a modern setting, cars. Final Fantasy 8 had a lot of high techy stuff. Final Fantasy 6 even had a castle that could travel underground. We may have slightly thought that was silly but it worked.

Items- Sometimes an item is cursed. If you cure the curse it becomes valuable. Sometimes a monster is in a chest. If you defeat it you get the treasure. They could just be bought, put into bookshelves, behind bookshelves, a wall clock, a treasure chest, a put, dresser, barrel, ect. I guess the only real question is if something you put into the game can have a thing in it for the player. Take time on this. Take time to proportion things. Proportion is important. If you give the player too much then the game will be too easy. If you don't give them enough, they starve for good things. Place the better things in more hidden spots. Have the greatest things be earned. What one needs for the area should be around to find or buy. Like a plant that causes poison and a remedy found close enough by.

Mechanics- There's a choice between random battles, turn based battles, or action battles (live action.) Don't feel too old fashioned for preferring random turned based battles. Even after the years and years we've had 3D gaming games are still being made with turned based fighting. It is a very clean form of battle. I myself think of live fighting as being messy- stuff all over the place, less strategy too, less time to think. Not so much chess as an erratic card game. That's just my opinion but I'm not alone. Random battles are not so random anymore though. You see the enemy on the screen before a fight starts. It starts with contact. There are even items that scare them away if you don't want to be bothered. Random battles to begin with were because of technical limitations to old systems. They couldn't possibly program all of those enemies into the playing field. One mechanic is to have a trigger attack. That if a button is pressed right before you hit your enemy then the attack power is increased. For the sake of strategy and fun, spell casting should be robust and diverse. For example the "reflect" spell makes spells bounce off you. If the enemy has it too then you have to bounce spells off you to land on them. Or taking their magic power through osmosis. Spells like shell and protect, increasing your defenses. Enemies being weak to certain elements. Casting

Float so the quake spell you cast doesn't affect you as well. These instead of just some ordinary spell casting.

Graphics- Some games make it realistic but some make it like cartoons. Some are 2D. Some 3D and others are 2.5D. Towing castle walls are always a cool thing. So are enormous statues. There could be a swampy area, a march, a heavy moon, whatever you can imagine. The enemies could be grotesque, more abstract (made up of many different things), or pretty basic like a good looking dragon. There is the thumbnail of the character on the options screen. Some games are so basic as to just have a slightly moving character in the store. These little 2D characters have emotion described by lighting up their faces and making their eyes pop wide open. A nice touch is to have the character's weapons and shields viewable. Like in a 2D game it is seen for a moment while attacking. Status effects should be visible over the character so that it can be known how to cure them.

Players like cinema scenes. When I first turned on Final Fantasy 8 I was astonished by it. It still has great graphics to this day.. On the Playstation too. I learned later that some real video was used in it. In the early 3D days they were working themselves up to life like graphics. Now that we juuust about have it we have started going back to older styles of graphics. Kind of like abstract paintings in the art world. Realism was nothing new.

Environment- Characters can be specially linked to their hometown or homeland. That's where all of their friends are. That is where the story revolves around them. In the environment could be a lonely home with a crazy old man inside. Eventually you could go under water. Doing so in a breathing mask or even a submarine. And you could eventually go to another planet or the moon. You could be in a dark world and a light world or a world of ruin and a world before ruin. There could be a hidden underground civilization.

Day and night cycles provide easier and more difficult enemies. During nighttime more difficult monsters come out. On a blood moon maybe even worse monsters could come out. The environment could provide a lot to gather. When brought together they form something good. In fact that has been a popular element in gaming lately. Areas could be specialized for individual characters making them work better there in one way or another. Like if you are a king/queen in their kingdom you get better prices. Like going to your home town with lots of people to help you.

Story- The story is both the hardest thing to flesh out and the most important. There have been many good RPG games. Good, not great. They were bland in story. They fail where others succeed. The games with the better story always win. That means

connecting every character. It means to give them all a back story. It means to make them need each other. In good times and bad they alway worked well together. They've come through so much. And sometimes they are just enjoying being with each other. There have been moments of happiness among them despite everything.

Include elements of: love, anger, betrayal, hope, the unexpected, the exciting, the surprising, the sad, the happy, the resolve, the twist in the story, and the personal stories each player carries.

Secrets- "Leave no stone unturned." Just hopefully there's not too much. It may be where quality over quantity comes into play. So a player isn't expected to go over every inch, limit what's there. Enemies could have rare drops with a 1% chance. An auction house might have a thing up for sale at a low percentage. Like a powerful weapon only sold at 5% of the time. You might have to do a certain thing to an enemy encounter. Such as letting him swallow you in. After the battle (which wasn't fought) you are then in an underground layer. Some games have had hidden dragons to defeat one by one. Each is hidden. By defeating them all you get a highly valuable item. And it could be that a tool leads you to a place otherwise blocked and you just have to guess when/how/where.

Money And Buying- You might find yourself in a town with really expensive things. At the time you couldn't afford them but the player could return there later in the game. It is good to show the worth of something by name. For example, going from a wooden sword to silver, then gold, then at last to the "diamond sword." If you need to sell something and the player is nowhere around a town, you could always put a traveling merchant there. It is good to include interesting items in the game. Like what Final Fantasy 6 had- a thing called relics. They were more than just offensive or defensive things. You never knew what was going to be in the next store because of them. One relic would make your character defend those on low HP. Another would let you dash around instead of walk around. Some protect you against status elements. Another reduced MP use by half. There is always the selling option there too. But "trading" is less common in RPG games. A thing where you could trade two weaker weapons for a singular but more powerful one. How you get money- normally from winning a fight or finding them in a chest, of course, but there can be a lot more to it than that. You might have some piece of junk. You don't even know why you should keep it. Then you find someone that would pay you top dollar for the thing. Final Fantasy 8 paid you automatically, like a salary. The better you are at the game the more you are paid. Then sometimes the king gives you a lump sum to begin with and say "there you go, go off on your quest."

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- ➢ HTML (Free /Available to everyone)

- ➢ PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)

- ➢ Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below