

## Quiz 1 – Study Guide

### Chapter 1: Building Blocks: The Basics

- **What is game design?**
  - Good game design is the process of creating **goals** that a player feels **motivated to reach** and **rules** that a player must follow as he makes **meaningful decisions** in pursuit of those goals.
  - Examples: [Risk](#) - goal: world domination, [how to play](#)
- **Good game design is player-centric.**
  - That means that **above all else, the player and her desires are truly considered.**
- **Meaningful decisions**
  - Distilled down to its essence, game design is about creating opportunities for players to make meaningful decisions that affect the outcome of the game.
- **Types of design: - be able to define these terms**
  - **[World Design](#)** is the creation of the overall backstory, setting, and theme of the game. While it's generally performed by the lead or sole designer, it often determines the scope of the other design tasks listed below.
  - **[System design](#)** is the creation of rules and underlying mathematical patterns in a game. This is the only game design task that is common to all games, because all games have rules.
  - **[Content design](#)** is the creation of characters, items, puzzles, and missions. While it's much more common in video games, role playing and collectible card games also feature a significant amount of content.
  - **[Game writing](#)** is the writing of dialogue, text, and story within the game world.
  - **[Level design](#)** is the crafting of levels in a game, including the layout of maps and placement of objects and challenges within those maps. Though level design is a shared discipline—dungeon masters have been mapping levels in tabletop paper games since the 1970s—when one refers to a “level designer,”
  - **[User interface](#)** (UI) design consists of two things: how the player interacts with the game, and how the player receives information and feedback from the game. All types of games have UI, even non-digital ones. Boards are designed to fit on an average table and cards are designed to be held in an average-sized hand. The game components must present information that is easily understood, used, and interpreted by the players.
- **What is a game?**
  - An activity with rules. It is a form of play often but not always involving conflict, either with other players, with the game system itself, or with randomness/fate/luck. Most games have goals, but not all (for example, The Sims and SimCity). Most games have defined start and end points, but not all (for

example, World of Warcraft and Dungeons & Dragons). Most games involve decision making on the part of the players, but not all (for example, Candy Land and Chutes and Ladders). A video game is a game (as defined above) that uses a digital video screen of some kind, in some way.

- **The core of a game**

- This game is about...
- This game is the experience of being...
- This game teaches...
- This game simulates the experience of ...

- **Aesthetics, Mechanics, Dynamics**

- **Aesthetics - the emotional responses evoked in the player.**
  - **Sensation** (*Game as sense-pleasure*): Player experiences something completely unfamiliar.
  - **Fantasy** (*Game as make-believe*): Imaginary world.
  - **Narrative** (*Game as drama*): A story that drives the player to keep coming back
  - **Challenge** (*Game as obstacle course*): Urge to master something. Boosts a game's replayability.
  - **Fellowship** (*Game as social framework*): A community where the player is an active part of it. Almost exclusive for multiplayer games.
  - **Discovery** (*Game as uncharted territory*): Urge to explore game world.
  - **Expression** (*Game as self-discovery*): Own creativity. For example, creating character resembling player's own avatar.
  - **Submission** (*Game as pastime*): Connection to the game, as a whole, despite constraints.
- **Mechanics - The rules of a game.** Common non-digital mechanics include trick taking, turn taking, rolling a die, and moving. Examples of mechanics from video games are running, jumping, and shooting.
- **Dynamics - dynamics result when rules are put in motion.** The rules that allow players to attack each other might be a mechanic, but players actually using these rules to team up against the player in the lead is a dynamic. In some first-person shooter games, players always begin in certain locations ("spawn points"), which is a mechanic; standing next to a spawn point and killing players that come out of it ("spawn camping") is a dynamic.

- **Common core dynamics: - be able to name three from the list below**

- Territorial acquisition - Risk, [Chess](#)
- Prediction - [Rock, paper, scissors](#)
- Spatial reasoning - [Tetris](#)
- Survival - Resident Evil, etc. Here's a list:
  - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Survival\\_video\\_games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Survival_video_games)
- Destruction - FPS ([first-person shooter](#))

- Building - [Sim City](#)
  - Collection - [Magic, the Gathering](#)
  - Chasing or evading - [Pac-Man](#)
  - Trading - [Settlers of Catan](#), Pokemon
  - Race to the End - [Snakes and Ladders](#), Parcheesi, Trouble, Sorry!
- **Where do ideas come from?**
    - Everywhere
    - Play lots of games
    - Network with other designers
- **Game design terms:**
    - **Feature list.** A list that details key features or selling points of the game. In published games, these are typically found on the back of the box.
    - **Brainstorming.** A process to generate ideas, usually done in a group.
    - **Prototype.** A prototype is a playable early version of the game or part of the game constructed by the designer to assist in understanding and enhancing the player experience.
    - **Balance.** A term used to describe the state of a game's systems as either "balanced" or "unbalanced."
    - **Mechanics** - game rules
    - **Dynamics** - game play
    - **Aesthetics** - emotional response to game
    - **System.** A collection of game mechanics that is responsible for producing a given outcome within a larger game such as character creation, combat, or casting spells.
    - **Avatar.** The direct representation of a player in a game.
    - **Playtesting.** The systematic testing of gameplay, systems, balance, and interface to find all the errors, inconsistencies, or issues and report them to the design team.
- **Digital game terms**
    - **Platform.** The console, device, or system upon which the game will be played.
    - **Concept Doc.** A one-to three-page document that provides a high-level overview of a proposed game. It usually contains the following sections: an introductory paragraph explaining the theme of the game; demographic breakdown, including target audience, genre, and intended platform(s); and a bullet-point feature-list and a feature list breakout that explains each of the features in more detail.
    - **Proposal.** A 5- to 20-page document that provides a more in-depth view of the potential game than a concept document.
    - **Pitch.** A brief "elevator speech" given to a game publisher or VC (venture capitalist) to solicit funding for the project.
    - **Design Document.** A "living" document that is continuously undergoing revision, it contains the entire design vision for the game. It may be in a document file or in

a wiki. Some teams use Agile development, which requires no design document at all. More information on Agile can be found at [AgileManifesto.org](http://AgileManifesto.org). Game design documents (GDDs) are usually separate from the technical design document (TDD) for programmers and the art style guide for the art team.

- **Bugs.** Errors in the game's design, code, art, sound, or writing.
  - **Engine.** The core program that runs the game. Unreal and Unity are popular engines used in the game industry. Developers will layer additional technology on top of the engine to achieve the exact design specifications of the product.
  - **Alpha.** The milestone at which all systems have been implemented and all code is theoretically complete. It is usually full of bugs, however, and not terribly balanced. Some companies also require that all content—art, sound, and narrative—be implemented for alpha, too. Therefore, alpha is content and code complete.
  - **Beta.** The milestone at which all systems and content are in the game. It is significantly more stable than the alpha version, and many of the big bug and balancing issues have been addressed.
  - **Gold.** The final version of the game that is then released.
  - **Game jam.** A timed period during which a group of individuals attempts to create a complete game while working around the clock. These events are usually 1–3 days in duration.
  - **Milestone.** A point at which the developer is expected to deliver some type of predetermined content. It may be a document, numerous art assets, or a complete game.
- **Non-digital game terms**
    - Game bits
    - Card game
    - Board game
    - Tile game
    - Dice game
  - **Approaches to game design – be able to name three from the list below**
    - Blue sky - no limits
    - Slow boil - given a theme and setting - lots of research
    - Mechanic - jumping, such as Mario
    - MDA (see above)
    - IP - intellectual property
    - Story - developing a game based on a story
    - Research - flow - explores concept of flow and dynamic difficulty adjustment in games
  - **Iterative Design**
    - Rapid prototype
    - Playtest
    - Revision
    - Repeat

- Note: don't write your rules down until you have to
- **Video game design constraints**
  - What is the budget?
  - What is the timeline?
  - What is the platform?
- **Other key questions**
  - Who is the target audience?
  - What is the desired rating for the game (ESRB - Entertainment Software Rating Board)?
  - Do you have a particular genre or category in mind for the game?
  - Are there any features you'd like to see in the game?
- **Publishing your game** - best to go the indie publishing route
- **Board games**
  - Cost to manufacture per unit
  - Physical dimensions
- **Additional ideas for shaking up your game design**
  - Make a resource limited or unlimited
  - Playtest with your friends
  - Mess with the play order
  - Kill a rule
  - Try doubling (or halving) something