

Chapter 2: Game Design Atoms

Lecture

- **Game State** - the state of the game if you were to click a “pause” button during gameplay - all relevant virtual information that may change during play
- **Gave View** - the portions of the game state that the player can view
- **Game Space** - the entire area of the game
- **Avatar** = token = pawn = player representation
- **Game bits** - property cards, dice, plastic army pieces in RISK, etc. In video games, these are referred to as “art assets.” (icons, sprites, models). They are referred to as “objects” when discussing from a programming perspective. They can also be referred to as NPCs (non-player characters, items, monsters, enemies, etc).
- **Game mechanics** = rule = how something happens. Mechanics are the ingredients of game design. You can search board games by mechanics at Boardgamegeek.com.

Some common mechanics:

- **Setup** - rules for how the game begins
- **Victory conditions** - rules that describe how players win. Some games, like open-ended RPGs (role-playing games) have no victory conditions.
- **Progression of Play**- Who goes first and how? Is the game turn-based on real-time?
- **Player action** - sometimes referred to as “verbs” - they describe what players can and cannot do and what effect those actions have on the game state
- **Dynamics** - the pattern of play that comes from the mechanics once they’re set in motion by the players
- **Metagame** - dynamics that are not part of the play experience - player negotiations, discussion, alliances, online chat, trash talk, etc.
- **Goals** - there can be various goals and of course the is the ultimate goal of winning the game. Some goals are called “missions” or “quests.” Goals typically provide rewards that motivate players to defeat creatures, search for treasure, equip themselves better, and compete with their friends
- **Theme** - what a game is about. Also referred to as color, story, or narrative