

# **BONUS LEVEL 3**

## **GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT**

### **TEMPLATE**

The following pages are a template for creating a game design document or GDD. The GDD is skewed towards an action, adventure, platform, RPG, and shooter-style game. However, most of the elements listed in the template can be adapted for any style of game.

Don't feel like you have to fill in every detail of information while creating the GDD, but it is better to have areas of the design roughed out than to not have them at all. I tell the developers I work with that a "TBD" is better than nothing at all.

Remember that a GDD is a living thing: everything in it is liquid and might change due to anything from technology limitations to production time realities.

In the end, use the information in this template in the way that's best for YOU and your team. If you need to draw more pictures, then do so. If you need to break the data up into "one-pagers" then do that. (See Bonus Level 1.)

## COVER

(Insert evocative cover image here)

## YOUR GAME'S TITLE

Document version number (keep this current!)

**Written by (your team name here)**

Point of contact (producer or lead designer w/phone number)

Date of publishing

Version number

Footer should always have:

Copyright Company Date      Page number      Current date

# GDD Outline (for action, adventure, platform, RPG, or shooter-video game)

**Table of contents**—remember to keep this current

**Revision history**—update this with publishing dates and track which author updated the material

**Game goals**—this includes:

*Game's "high concept"*

*The "back of the box" listing of any new/novel mechanics or gameplay features*

*Include all Internet and wireless features*

**Story overview**—remember to keep this short and frame it in the context of the gameplay. This includes:

*Set up—how does the player start the game?*

*Locations and how they relate to the narrative—how does the player get from one location to the next?*

*Finale—what is the ending? What is the player expected to be/have done by the end of the game?*

**Game controls**

*Overview—list specific moves the player will be doing, but don't go into detail on the actual moves ... yet*

*Control scheme*

*Show an image of a controller (controllers if game is on multiple platforms) with corresponding button mapping*

**Technological requirements**—keep this brief as many of these features will be included in the game's technical design document (TDD).

*What tools is this game going to use?*

- How are camera, physics, bosses, and so on going to be done?  
Implemented by programmer? By designer? Hard coded?  
Scripted?

*What design tools is this game going to use?*

- Level creation tools
- Scripting system

*Proposed tools for cheats—include controls for cheats*

- Level cheat
- Invulnerability cheat
- Camera cheat
- Other cheats (full health, full armor, full money, and so on)

**Front end of the game**

*Indicate what credit screens will be shown when game is first turned on including:*

- Publisher
- Studio logo
- Licensors
- Third party software manufacturers
- Legal screen

**Cutscene description (if applicable)**—no need to reproduce the entire script here, just give the reader an idea of what it is about.

**Attract mode description (if applicable)**—give a description of what in-game material will be shown if the game is left idle on the start screen.

**Title/start screen**—what is the first impression of the actual game? Include:

*An image of the title/start screen*

*Detail of what is presented to the player*

- Title name and how it appears on screen
- Any associated animation/graphics

*A list of what selection options are available to the player*

*How the player interfaces with the options (cursor, d-pad, and so on)*

*Save/load file—describe how a game file is saved and loaded*

*How to name/designate a save file—keyboard or other file-naming convention*

*List details of saved file shown to player*

- Name
- Date
- Level location or chapter name/number
- Time played elapsed
- An image of what a saved game file looks like (if applicable)

*Detail any cross-save features*

*Player options—include image, sound and music, and player interface details. Detail out connecting links to options.*

- Video settings
- Audio settings
- Music settings
- Subtitle settings
- Contrast tool
- Alternate control settings (reverse joystick, feedback on/off, and so on)

**Other screens**—these could be unlockable content accessed from the title screen. Make sure to include image, sound and music, and player interface details. Possible screens include:

*Credits*

- Team photo
- Studio images

*Bonus material*—include image of screens, how will player interact with interface, activate this material? (unlockable, buyable, Easter eggs, and so on)

- Alternate costumes or weapons
- Cheats
- Functional cheats (invulnerability, full health, and so on)
- Licensor required cheats (for marketing purpose)
- Other cheats (big-head mode, color swap, and so on)
- Art/sound/animation galleries
- Video player to replay cutscenes, movies, and so on
- Trailers for other games/products

*Special features*

- Commentary
- Team interviews
- Deleted material
- Documentary
- Gag reels

**Game flowchart**—show how all the screens from “title/start screen” to “game over” connect to each other.

**Loading screen**—what does player see when the game is loading? Include:

*An image of the pause screen (and indicate if there are multiple images used)*

*Overview of data presented to player on pause screen (hints, trivia questions, minigame)*

**Game camera(s)**—call out any specific camera types

*Image of camera’s point of view any of the following applicable cameras:*

- First person
- Third person
- Three-quarters view
- 2.5-D view
- Forced scroll
- Spline
- Locked camera

*Description of logic system for camera*

- Game-specific situations requiring unique cameras
- Camera troubleshooting guide—examples of what camera will do when encountering problems

*Logic for cheat/screenshot camera*

- How developer/publisher can access and operate this camera

**HUD system**—information presented on screen to the player. Include images of all of the following:

*Health/status*

*Lives/continues*

*Money/score/rank*

*Power/fuel*

*Ammunition*

*Abilities/skills*

*Timer*

*Map or navigation system*

*Options: links to outside screens*

*Plings/context sensitive information*

*Targeting system/reticule/cursor*

*Speedometer*

*If a game is HUD-less, describe how the above information is going to be conveyed to the player.*

### **Player character(s)**

*Character name*

*Inspirational image or concept drawing of your character*

*Short description explaining player's motivation and relationships to other major/player characters*

### **Player metrics**

*Size relationships of player character to other elements/characters in the world*

*Movement (walk, run, sneak, duck, roll, crawl)*

- Show metrics

*Navigation (jump, swim, fly)*

- Show metrics
- Conditions for navigation moves

*Hoist/hang*

- Show metrics

*Context-sensitive moves (push/pull, operate switch, swing, and so on)*

- Show examples and metrics
- Conditions for context-sensitive moves

*Reactions/damage/death*

- Show examples and metrics

*Idles*

### **Player skills**

*Description of basic skills*

*List of skill upgrades*

- Description of skills
- Skill modifiers
- Player metrics (if applicable)

### **Player inventory tools (equipment, spells, buffs, and so on)**

*List of tools*

- Image of tools
- What does each tool do?
- Controls for using tool

*Inventory screen*

- Image of inventory screen
- How does player access inventory?
- How does player select tool from inventory?

*Combat: melee combat*

- Combat moves—include metrics and controls
- Combat reactions—include metrics and controls
  - Block
  - Dodge
  - Parry
  - Grab
- Types of effects (damage, knockback, stun, poison, and so on)
- Combat progression—how player improves moves
- Descriptions of combo moves
  - Controls for combo moves
  - Combo progression
- Combat gauge
  - Combat gauge descriptors/combat value modifiers based on descriptors
- Descriptions of combo moves
  - Controls for combo moves
  - Combo progression

*Weapon combat**Weapon progression*

- Technology tree
- Weapon inspiration/concept images
- Weapon damage and effects
  - Targeting system details
  - Lock-on system details
- Ammo required
- Range
- Special attributes (breakable, degrades)
- Controls
  - How does player use weapons
  - How does player swap weapons?

**Power-ups/state modifiers***List of power-ups/state modifiers*

- Description including image
- Effect
- Duration
- Effect on controls (if valid)

**Health***Health (general)*

- HUD display
- How to replenish health
- Power-ups and health items
- Warning for player when health is low

*Alternate states (stunned, poisoned, turned into a baby)*

- Controls
- Show examples and metrics

*Lives (if applicable)*

- How are lives earned?
- How are lives lost?
- What happens when you run out of lives?

*Death*

- Instant death conditions—(combat, fire, drowning, and so on)
- Game over conditions:
  - Penalty for dying
  - Game over screen (show image of game over screen)



*Checkpoints*

- Continue system

**Scoring (if applicable)***Point values**Bonuses*

- What gives a bonus?

*Leaderboard setup*

- Image
- Elements that contribute to scoring

*Achievements*

- List
- Icon image

**Rewards and economy***Monetary system*

- Shopping interface
  - Description
  - Player navigation
- What does it buy?
- Cost

**Vehicles***How does player enter/exit vehicle?**How does vehicle interact with world, enemies, objects, and so on**Vehicle description*

- Image of vehicle

*Vehicle controls**Vehicle metrics (size, speed, and so on)**Attributes (armor, weapons, and so on)*

- Attribute stats
- Special effects

**Major characters in story**—anyone mentioned in the above story outline, preferably ones that have impact on the story or gameplay.

*These include allies/helpers, love interests, rivals/villains*

*Include visuals*

- What is their relationship to the player character?
- Where do they appear?

**Game progression outline**

*Overview of all game levels—insert game beat chart here. Remember to:*

- Include story beats to show how gameplay and story intertwine
- Indicate if story beat is a cutscene or in game

*Indicate progression/reward elements for the player*

- Show where new skills, abilities, weapons, and collectibles are earned in relation to the story

### **Gameplay classifications**

*Descriptions of gameplay types (stealth, battle arena, driving, flying, and so on)*

### **World overview/level select/navigation screen**

*Image(s) of world overview screen (if applicable)*

*List of game levels available on World Overview*

*Description of how information is presented to player*

*Details on how player will navigate this screen (cursor, character, and so on)*

*Animation (character and/or elements) required for this screen*

*Sound and music required for level select screen*

**Universal game mechanics**—list mechanics that will be found throughout the game. Always include images of each mechanic.

*Platform mechanics*

- Description
- Metrics in relationship to player

*Portal mechanics*

- Doors
  - Handle/switch operated
  - Key operated
  - Breakable
  - Hatch (context-sensitive move)
- Teleportals
  - Description and image
  - Effects
  - Navigational aids

*Checkpoints*

*Breakable objects (crates, furniture, grass clumps, and so on)*

- How is item broken
- What items are yielded/percentage of yield
- Other effects (explosion, timer, switch, and so on)

*Non-breakable objects (treasure chests, and so on)*

- Description and image

- What items are yielded/percentage of yield
- Other effects (explosion, timer, switch, and so on)

*Puzzle objects (pushable blocks, keys, and so on)*

- Description and image
- How does player interact

*Switches*

- Description and image
- How does player interact

*Climbable/swingable objects*

- Description and image
- How does player interact

**Game levels**—list out each of the level mentioned in the world overview

*Name/title of levels*

- Short description of level
- Player's objective (training, get from A to B, find key, and so on)
- Reward of level (level up, magic sword, progression, and so on)
- Major gameplay found in this level (stealth, platform, vehicle, and so on)
  - Sub-game found in level, with description of gameplay and control scheme
- Enemies found on this level
- Visual style guides for level
  - Include inspirational and concept artwork
  - Time of day
  - Color guide
- Music for level
  - Provide examples/sound files

*Hub level*

- Description/image of hub
- List of locations found in hub
- Requirements for travel/unlock
- State changes
- Save/load options (if applicable)

*Training level*

- Goals of training level
  - List of training level activities

*Level specific mechanics*

- Hazards (spikes, flame jet, laser fields, and so on)

- Description and image
- Timing information
- Damage/effect
- How does it affect player? (Movement, health, and so on)
- How does player avoid/thwart?
- Special effects or elements needed

*Level specific contextual mechanics*

- Description and image
- Timing information
- Effect
- How does it affect player? (Movement, health, and so on)
- How does player interact?
- Special effects or elements needed

**General enemy rules**

*Behavior types (patroller, hunter, flyer, and so on)*

*AI rules and detection metrics*

*Spawn parameters*

*Defeat parameters*

*Reward yield rules*

**Level-specific enemies**

*Enemy image*

*Enemy description—include enemy type*

*Levels enemy is encountered*

*Movement pattern—show metrics*

*Attacks*

- Damage value
- Damage effects (knockback, stun, and so on)

*Reactions/damage/death*

*Idles*

*Special effects*

*Reward yield*

**Bosses**

*Description and image of boss*

- Include scale

*Call out weak points/attack spots*

*Interaction with player (will hurt player if collides, only hurt player when in specific state, and so on)*

*Movement patterns*

- Show metrics in relationship to player

*Attack patterns*

- Warnings
- Specific attack
  - Damage done
  - Special effects
- Reactions/damage/death
- Idles

*Description of player's experience*

- Description of intro/cutscene
- Include number of rounds
- Progression/ramping of action

*Description and image of environment*

- Hazards and mechanics used
- Power-ups and collectibles found
- Other enemies used in boss fight

*How is the boss defeated?**Reward yield***Non-player characters**

*NPC type overview (information, mission deliverer, escort/defend, and so on)*

*Character list*

- Name, sex, age
- Background material
- NPC type
- Level where encountered

*Interacting with NPCs*

- Dialogue
- Collision

*NPC rewards***Collectibles/object sets***List of items*

- Images
- Level(s) found on
- What object or set unlocks (if applicable)

**Minigames***Types of minigames**How are minigames accessed**Player controls*

*Elements needed/repurposed*

*Levels encountered*

### **Cutscenes**

*List of cutscenes*

*Short outline of each cutscene*

*Level where cutscene is presented*

### **Music and SFX**

*List of music*

- Level where music is needed—don't forget title, pause, options, end credits
- Tone/feeling of music

### **Licenser points and concerns**

### **Appendixes**

*Player character animation lists*

*Enemy character animations lists*

*Sound effects list*

*Music list*

- Level location

*Cutscene scripts*

- Cutscene storyboards

*VO scripts*

- Player
- Enemies
- Bosses
- NPC barks

*In-game text*

- Warning screens
- Tutorial text
- Character dialogue/subtitles