

Personally, I like the concept of non-linearity in games. An example of this in one of the first games I ever played, Super Mario 64, is in how the entire game is structured. Mario's basic goal is to collect enough stars to reach the final boss and save the princess. Not much of a plot really. What makes this game great though, (other than the leap to 3D) was the unique way in which you could achieve that goal. Mario does not have to go from stage 1 to stage 15 in order. In fact, the goal of collecting these stars involve exploring these levels to find them hidden around a vast, open environment instead of a walk from point A to point B. Even the hub level is its own open world with its own secrets and stars to find. While certain boss stages had to be completed, almost none of the other stages or stars had to be completed/collected in any order. Additionally, only 70 of the 120 stars were necessary to get to the ending (well, unless you are a completionist...) allowing even greater degree of freedom on how the player wants to play the game.