**RPG CLICHE DICTIONARY**

**7-11 Rule.** Shops never close. At the least, they close very rarely and only during certain major events. (Exception: Zelda 64)

**8-bit plot.** Oldest RPG plot. You are the legendary hero. Kill the Big Bad Demon. Most 8-bit RPGs (and some 16- and 32-bit ones) use this plot.

**16-bit plot.** Standard RPG plot. The Corrupt Empire rules the world. You're the leader of a small rebel band. Overthrow the Empire. Usually the hero is a soldier for the Empire at the start of the game (as in Suikoden, Vandal~Hearts, or FF6), but soon realizes that the Empire is evil and joins the fight against them. General standard for RPG plots.

**32-bit plot.** Similar to a 16-bit plot, but somehow religion is involved.

**64-bit plot** (Quest 64)**.** See 8-bit plot.

**99**. Maximum number of units of any item of type you can carry, often leading to peculiar situations in which you could carry 99 Potions and 99 Hi-Potions, but not 100 Potions and 0 Hi-Potions.

**1000 years.** Frequently-occuring date in RPGs. The evil demon (or demons) shows up every 1000 years, or was sealed by the Ancients for 1000 years. Why can't they just kill them off permanently?

**Ability Loss**. Whenever you fight a character before they join you, they have abilities that they can't use once they actually join. (see young Rydia, Yuffie, Sonya in Suikoden)

**Airship.** Every RPG has a flying vehicle, usually an airship or a flying dragon, which is obtained near the very end of the game. (although in FF games, you tend to get the airship sooner).

**Ambidextrious.** All non-polygon characters are ambidextrious. This is to save time by just flipping the character's image for both the left and right facings.

**Amnesia rule.** Whenever there is a good character with amnesia, they were always a bad guy before they got amnesia. (See Shining Force II and Lufia). In addition, everybody with amnesia is cured (Exception: FF5)

**Ancients, The.** Ubiquitous race that vanished long ago (typically 1000 years ago), but left behind advanced technology. Usually, however, one of your party members is a female magic-user who is the last Ancient or a member of some other special race. (Terra, Aerith, Rydia, Mariel, Eleni in Vandal~Hearts, Asellus, etc.)

**Ancient Flying Castle.** Generic final dungeon.

**And Behind Door #2...** When in you are in a dungeon, and you come into a room with two doors, you generally want to go through the door further away from you, as it will have a switch or something that opens a passage behind the closer door.

**Anonymous Hero Rule.** Up until recently, the main character never had a name and you had to enter one. (You can still usually enter a name, but there's also a default one)

**Anorexia Rule.** RPG characters never seem to need to eat. (exceptions: Wild Arms and Earthbound) This may explain Brave Fencer Musashi's appearance.

**Army rule.** No matter how big the armies of both sides are, the final battle always inevitably comes down to a few chosen heroes versus a big bad evil monster. Particularly ridiculous in Suikoden.

**Asbestos Rule.** If something is burning as part of the storyline, it will not burn down until whatever you have to do there is accomplished, yet it stays burning. (See the burning house in FF6 or any burning town)

**Atheist rule.** All priests and churches are up to no good (the same with rich guys). Religions that do not involve priests and/or churches are ok (Wild Arms) and in fact are always on your side.

**Backwards Day.** Whenever somebody tells you not to do something or go someplace, you should.

**Beat You To It.** Whenever the heroes go to stop the bad guys from getting something/somewhere, the bad guys are always there when the heroes arrive at the end, but they apparently didn't have to go through the dungeon because all the puzzles weren't solved, switches not flipped, etc.

**Block Home.** Towns are always completely safe -- those wandering monsters just don't feel like coming inside for some reason. (Exception: FF8)

**Block Home Rule #2.** Nobody cares if you just walk into their house and start talking to them as if they were family and not some strangers with weapons.

**Blues Brothers Rule.** The heroes are always right, no matter what they do. Whatever side the heroes are on is the good side.

**Bonus Boss.** Feature of many recent RPGs. Extremely tough boss that you don't have to beat to win the game and is just there as an added challenge. (Weapons, Elidibs, EarthDragon, ArchMage, Ragu Ragla, etc.) Usually, you get some really powerful item for winning that isn't at all useful because if you're tough enough to beat the boss, you don't need it. (Like the Sherrif Star in Wild Arms or the master materia from the Weapons)

**Broken Bridge.** Adjunct to a Fetch Quest. An obstacle, frequently a broken bridge, prevents you from progressing to the next town. Once you complete the Fetch Quest, however, the bridge is fixed. What a coincidence!

**Broken Record.** Townspeople will continually repeat the same message over and over, even if you revisit the town later in the game and the message doesn't make sense anymore. (Exceptions: FF7 and Wild Arms)

**Buddy rule.** Whenever the hero has a more experienced buddy or leader, that character always dies, leaving the hero to fend for themself (Suikoden [Odessa], Phantasy Star IV, etc.).

**Building Ordinance.** All enemy castles, towers, etc. are all designed as a maze, which must make it really hard for the people living in the castle.

**Cait Sith's Rule.**. Whenever a character permanently leaves the party (due to death or otherwise), all their items and equipment are usually returned to you. So named for the absurdity of Cait Sith No. 2 inheriting all of No. 1's experience, equipment, and Materia, even though No. 1 was crushed in the temple. (Of course, we all know what *really* happened to Cait Sith No. 2 ^\_^) Very weird in FF8, especially parts when allies seem to be dead but you still can equip and un-equip them (Missile Base)

**Call For Help.** Annoying enemy move in which an enemy summons other members of its kind (see Phantasy Star games and Shining the Holy Ark). Can lead to frusteratingly long battles.

**Carrot On A Stick.** Most shops have chests behind the counter. Frusterating as it is, there's no way to reach them.

**Chancellor rule.** Chancellors or other advisors to kings are always up to no good.

**Charades Law.** Whenever a character performs an action such as handing something to somebody else, they usually hold out their hand, but you do not actually see the item in question. For example, when Celes attacks Kefka on the Floating Continent in FF6, her sword cannot be seen. (Exception: the Zodiac Stones in FF Tactics, some items in FF8)

**Chicken In Every Pot.** People in games keep stuff in weird places, i.e. valuable heal potions inside pots, powerful equipment just sitting around caves in chests, etc.

**Clown Car rule.** All buildings, towns, vehicles, etc. appear tiny on the overworld map in relation to your character, but when you are inside them, they are much bigger.

**Clown Car rule #2.** All vehicles have infinite seating capacity. Can all 9 FF7 characters really all fit in the buggy? (Exception: FF8)

**Collapsing Castle Law.** Major enemy hideouts (especially the final dungeon) always collapse when you beat the dungeon, even though there is absolutely no physical force that would cause them to collapse.

**Communist Choice.** A situation in a game where you are presented with a choice, but if you choose one of the choices, you just have to choose again until you choose the choice the game wants you to choose. (I did not come up with this term; I don't know who did, but I claim no credit for it.)

**Confidential Information.** You can never see how much HP a boss has -- spells that normally show enemy's HP don't work. (Exception: Most FFs)

**Conservation of Death.** In most RPGs, one major good character dies, but only one (FF4, FF6, Wild Arms, etc.). There are a few games (Suikoden, for example) where more than one major good character dies.

**Countdown Rule.** Whenever you have to escape from a place within a time limit, the location will blow up / collapse as soon as you leave, no matter how much time is left on your timer. (See the Mako No. 1 Reactor, Galbadia Missile Site)

**Cowardice Rule.** The major bad guys keep running away, leaving flunkies for you to fight, until you finally fight them near the end of the game.

**Crono's rule.** Except in Final Fantasy games, the main character never talks (unless you are choosing the response), although other characters react as if the character was talking.

**Currency Name Convention.** All currencies in games start with the letter G. (gil, gella, goth, gilder, gold, etc.)

**Cute Animal Character.** Stereotypical cute and furry animal character. Usually worthless in battle and just intended for comedic relief. (the only exception is Peco, who is really powerful in addition to being extremely cute, and Spekkio, even though he doesn't join you).

**Dead or Alive.** Characters and enemies can have 1 out of 2500 HP and be perfectly healthy, but as soon as they drop to 0 HP, they suddenly die. (exception: Kartia)

**Deja Vu Dungeon.** Cliched plot device in which a dungeon you visit in the beginning of a game (generally in the game's opening sequence) later is the last dungeon or a dungeon near the end of the game (see BOF2, Mario RPG, Shining the Holy Ark, Shining Force 2, Suikoden, and others).

**Dekar's Rule.** If you don't actually *see* a character die (or are explicitly told so by somebody who did), they're not dead. (Example: Seifer in FF8, Dyne in FF7

**Dibs Rule.** In most cases, your party are the only ones trying to save the world. Nobody else ever beats you to it or even tries. Anybody that is trying to save the world on their own ends up either joining you, or dying.

**Double Agent Rule.** Whenever there is a spy for the bad guys in your party, that spy always up turning good and staying in your party after being unmasked (see Caet Sith, Kira in Vandal~Hearts, and Sanchez in Suikoden). Similar to the [Party Compulsion Rule](http://serpent231.tripod.com/cliche.shtml#compel).

**Disappearing Act #1.** Any overpowering character that joins your party soon leaves your party for any number of reasons (killed, is actually a bad guy, etc.)

**Disappearing Act #2.** Semi-important characters often vanish near the end of the game. Witness Jane's total disappearance in Wild Arms after the Sweet Candy sinks, Palmer vanishing after the rocket launch in FF7, etc.

**Dissection Rule.** Every game has a boss with several body parts (head and arms, or several heads), each of which can be attacked and destroyed separately.

**Dolly's Rule.** All enemies of the same type are completely identical clones of each other (you never see a Slime that happens to be a bit stronger than your average Slime, for example). In addition, many enemy types closely resemble each other with just a variation in color. (Exception: FF8)

**Dronejam.** When annoying townspeople stand in front of a door or passage and won't move.

**Duel boss.** Most games have a boss that you have to find as just the main character.

**Eager Beaver Rule.** In a 16-bit plot, towns and people join the rebellion without hesitation and have no fear of the Empire attacking / killing / destroying them. Exception: Narshe in FF6.

**Earthbound Rule.** All final bosses have some special super duper dimension background that you fight in, frequently out in space. So named because Earthbound has these in *every battle*.

**Earthquake Rule.** Most earthquakes spells generally involve the ground simply shaking, which somehow damages people.

**Eccentric Inventor.** Stereotypical character in most RPGs; usually builds your airship. See Momo, Cid IV, Lucca, Lexus, Emma, and many others.

**Ectoplasm Rule.** Despite having no physical shape, ghosts and other spirit-like creatures can be physically damaged (by swords, lightning bolts, etc.)

**Emperor's Clothes.** RPG armor is apparently invisible; none of the characters ever look like they're wearing armor, just their normal outfits.

**Ending rule.** All endings are considered poor by the majority of players.

**Ending Song.** Lately it has become fashionable for a song (with actual lyrics) to play during a game's credits. See BOF3, Xenogears, Castlevania: SOTN, Wild Arms (the Japanese version), Tales of Destiny, Parasite Eve, etc.

**Endless Fount of Items.** Stores never run out of items.

**Endurance rule.** Both party members and bosses can survive an incredible amount of damage (shot repeatedly, hit with meteor, electrocuted by lightning, attacked with 15-hit sword techniques).

**Energizer Rule.** Lights (torches, campfires, lamps, whatever) never burn out or run out of electricity -- unless, of course, the story requires them too.

**Equipment Progression Rule.** The farther you get away from the starting point of the game, the better equipment the stores have. This is true even when there is no reason for it (why does a podunk place like Icicle Inn have better weapons that Junon?) (Exception: FF8, because of "remodeling")

**Evil unleashed.** Frequently in a Deja Vu Dungeon, the hero accidentally unleashes the big bad evil monster, which was sealed there (this can sometimes be an [Unbeatable Boss](http://serpent231.tripod.com/cliche.shtml#boss)). The hero is then sometimes exiled or punished for doing so, but in the end defeats the monster, and all ends well.

**Evil laugh.** Most games have a bad guy with a weird laugh ("Mwah ha ha!", "Gyaa haa haa!" [Heidegger], "Khhk khhk khhk!" [Alhazad], etc.). Of course, none of them can beat Kefka. [Click here](http://serpent231.tripod.com/malaugh.shtml) for a large list.

**Fake King Plot.** Oldest RPG subplot known. A town has a fake king that is really a monster, while the real king is imprisoned. Sure signs you're dealing with a Fake King Plot are messages like "The king has been acting strange lately" or "The king hasn't been himself since ...". References to this plot have even been found in primitive cave paintings.

**False Endgame.** Transparent attempt to make you believe you are at the end of the game when you aren't (Photosphere in Wild Arms, battle with Zog in BOF1, Floating Continent in FF6, etc.). Believed by no one becuase there is still a lot of the map you haven't explored, items you don't have, etc.

**Family Feud.** One of the major bad guys is always related to one of the major good guys.

**Feeling of Impending Doom.** Save points and healing items inexplicably congregate just before a dangerous area or boss.

**Female Healers.** The second character you get for most of the game is almost always female, a healer of some sort, romantically involved with the main character, or all of the above. (Examples: Tia(Lufia 2), Young Rydia(FF4), Mint(Tales of Phantasia), Nina(Breath of Fire 1), Marle(Chrono Trigger), Kid(Chrono Cross), and lots more)

**Female Only Towns.**Female only towns that hate men. Not only are these in many RPGs, they somehow manage to sustain throughout many generations...that's just wrong. And why aren't there male only towns?

**Fetch Quest.** Any subquest unimporant to the plot, in which you are sent to find a key / rescue a lost kid / save the workers in the mine / otherwise resolve a town's problem. Lufia 2 is filled with these.

**Fire! Fire!** All materials in RPGs are flammable, including metal, stone, and even ectoplasm (Mommy, look at the burning ghost!).

**Flea Market Rule.** All shops will buy any type of item, even if they have no use for it. Want to sell bazooka ammo to a fishing goods shop? No problem!

**Flunky Boss.** A boss that keeps summoning a group of flunky enemies; if you kill all of them, it will just resummon them. Thus, your strategy is always to kill all but one of them. (See Hidon in FF6, Mack in Mario RPG, etc.)

**Free Inn Rule.** When an inn is free for no reason, don't stay there. Somebody will steal your money during the night. Does not apply to inns that are free for a reason (i.e., you saved the town, main character's hometown, etc.).

**Gas Shortage?** There is usually one airship in the world. Despite the bad guys usually being a big empire/company that rules the world, they apparently can't build another airship. Perhaps this is due to a gas shortage... on the other hand, [airships never seem to run out of gas](http://serpent231.tripod.com/cliche.shtml#opec).

**Glass Ceiling of Magic.** Most (but not all) female characters are magic-users.

**Gratuitous Flashback Sequence.** The name says it all. Especially annoying because these are usually extremely linear, change scenes frequently, and have no fighting.

**Graveyard Rule.** All graveyards have a secret passage revealed by pushing one of the tombstones.

**Graveyard Rule #2.**All graveyards with tombstones you can examine has a hidden message from the programmer somewhere, usually about something being dead that shouldn't.

**Greeter Guys.** Town/castle NPCs who have no purpose except to say "Welcome to \_\_\_\_\_\_!" (EVERY RPG KNOWN TO MAN)

**Groundhog Day Rule.** Townspeople remain in the same place, doing the same thing, the whole game. (Exception: FF8)

**Hands Off rule.** Nobody ever opens chests except you. In rare occasions, another important character will open them. (like when Locke opens all the chests in the Phoenix Cave)

**Heat-Seeking Magic.** Magic never misses. In addition, it will never harm people on your side (even if a huge tidal wave just swept across the battlefield, only the opposing side is damaged). (Exception: FF6's Merton)

**Hometown rule.** The hero's hometown, or other town where you start, is usually destroyed, or the hero is somehow otherwise prevented from returning (being exiled in Secret of Mana, FF7, or Wild Arms, for example).

**How Many People You Got In There?** In the majority of RPGs, only the main character is seen walking around. When an important event appears, the other characters come *out* of the main character.

**HP Imbalance.** The enemies always have far more HP than your characters do, but inflict less damage than your party does, so it all comes out even. I guess they don't want your party's HP numbers to get too big...

**HP Imbalance #2.**If you fight someone who joins your party, they always have way more HP when you fight them than they do when they join you. (Magus from CT is the most glaring example)

**Inn Inflation Rule.** Each inn in the game gets progressively more expensive for no logical reason.

**Inn rule.** Whenever the characters go to the inn without you controlling them, something important happens during the night (such as a [Nighttime Chat](http://serpent231.tripod.com/cliche.shtml#night)).

**Inn Accomodation Rule.** There is always vacany at any inn. The inns apparently reserve a room for the party just in case they happen to show up.

**Invisible Guardrail.** Except in action-RPGs, you can never walk off a pit or into water. You can only walk off ledges in certain circumstances, when there is a need for you to be able to jump off ledges.

**Item Duplication.** Almost every recent RPG has had a glitch that lets you duplicate items. (FF7, Wild Arms, FF Tactics, etc.)

**It's All In the Family.**Heroes often have a parent/grandparent/ancestor, almost always male, who was a hero as well. (Examples: Lufia 1/Nameless Redhead(Maxim), FF5/Butz(father), Tales of Phantasia/Cless(Miguel), and even the starter of many cliches, Dragon Warrior/Noname hero(Erdrick))

**It's A Small World After All.** If you think about it, most RPGs take place in an incredibly tiny world with only a few cities and a surface area less than the moon. The same applies for towns -- they have about six houses, tops.

**Kain (or Kane).** Most common name in RPGs. Used in: FF4, Shining Force 1, Phantasy Star 2, Vandal~Hearts, Persona, Xenogears, Legacy of Kain (duh), and the old Sega Master System game Spellcaster.

**King's Treasure Room.** After you somehow help a king, he gives you access to his entire treasure room and lets you just loot the place -- which is weird on its own, but gets weirder when all these kingdoms have in their treasure room is a couple of herbs, a sword, and some money.

**Kleptomaniac Rule.** In most games, you can just walk into houses and loot people's cabinets, chests, and pots; and nobody cares, even though they are standing right in the room as you are ripping them off.

**Last Moment.** The heroes always arrive just as the bad guys are about to execute their plan. The bad guys always wait patiently for the heroes to arrive, even if you go off and spend several days building up levels.

**Law of Foreshadowing.** Whenever there is any mention that a character might die, that character always does. (for example, Gremio in Suikoden; there are some other examples I can't think of right now). In general, whenever there is a hint that something might happen or be true, it always happens or is true.

**Law of Geometric Impossibility.** All RPG world maps wrap around on *both sides* of the map (east/west and north/south). This is physically impossible. (In FF8, though, the map seems to work in two different ways)

**Law of Sequels.** In most RPG series (Suikoden and Arc the Lad excepted, Final Fantasies and Chrono's), each sequel has nothing to do with any of the previous games, but a few characters and locations inexplicably appear in every game in the series.

**Law of Unnecessary Stealth.** Your characters often have to sneak into some bad guy headquarters, even though they are powerful enough to just walk in the front gate and slaughter anybody in their way.

**Laws of Monarchy.** There are never ever queens in games, nor are there any princes (okay, okay, besides in FF4). Any princess in a game is always important to the storyline.

**Laws of Parents.** Similar to the Laws of Monarchy. The only living parent of male characters is the mother; for female characters, only the father is living. See FF7 (Cloud's mother is living, but not his father; Tifa's and Yuffie's father are seen but not their mothers) or Chrono Trigger (Crono's and Magus's fathers are never mentioned, Marle's mother is dead).

**Laws of Programming.** Programmers do not want to expend extra effort on characters and artwork that aren't essential to the game. Thus, any character that joins your party for any length of time (in a game where you can choose which characters you want to use) is not going to die, because the artists don't want to spend time on a character that isn't going to be used much (FF7 is a notable exception here). Also, any character (such as Mina in BOF2) with their own unique sprite is important, even if it doesn't seem like it at the time, because otherwise the artists would not waste their time drawing a different sprite.

**Legendary Sword.** Obligatory weapon that can only be drawn by the hero. Needed to kill the big bad evil demon.

**Leo's rule.** Any bad guy that turns good dies, except for characters (Kain, Magus, the generals in Suikoden, Edea) that were possessed by or under the control of one of the truly evil characters.

**Leo's rule #2.** No rumor is ever true. (Exception: Pokemon)

**Leo's rule #3.** All characters named Leo die. (FF6, SoulBlazer, Y's IV). Okay, EXCEPT for the one in Lunar.

**Level Equality Law.** All characters join the party at a level about equal to what the rest of the party is at, regardless of how much training they have. Occasionally, though, you get a character who starts at level 1 and must be brought up to a normal level.

**Life's A Sport...** Mad scientists to turn themselves into a monster (by drinking something or injecting something into themsleves) when you fight them (see Cort in BOF1, Hojo in FF7, Palet in BOF3, etc.)

**Little Shop of Horrors.** RPGs are frequently populated by plants that wander around and attack people. This is not common in the real world.

**Locked Door Rule.** To open any locked door, you *must* have the key. You can never just break the door down, despite having spells that could take out a small village.

**Lost Kid Plot.** [Fetch Quest](http://serpent231.tripod.com/cliche.shtml#fetch) plot second-most common to the Fake King Plot. A kid from the village has gotten lost in the cave. Go find him.

**Lunar Rule.** Every cliche has an exception. (So named because of all the messages I got telling me that the Leo in Lunar didn't die)

**Main character.** With the exception of Suikoden (uh, and Mario RPG), the main character invariably wields a sword. A large majority of main characters also have spiky hair, generally blue.

**Main Character Intermission.** Segment of a game, usually about 3/4s of the way through, in which the main character leaves the party briefly due to some physical ailment (dead, missing arm, Mako poisoning, etc.), leaving the other party members to take over. Occurs only in recent games.

**Malak's Rule.** Every RPG has at least one completely useless character.

**Max's Rule.** Characters carry their weapons in an invisible space until battle comes, then they appear out of nowhere without being drawned (exceptions: Chrono Trigger and BOF3). So named for Sam and Max's Max, who pulls out of gun out of nowhere.

**Metal Babble Rule.** Monster with a very high defense (you can usually only take 1 HP off it with each hit) that runs after a few turns. Difficult to kill, but you get a lot of experience if you do. So named for the first such monster, in Dragon Quest. Other examples include Cores (Lufia 2), Gold Eggs (BOF3), Movers and Sabotenders (FF), and Acid Bunnies (Wild Arms).

**Missing Family Member Rule.** Most main characters must have a dead or lost family member.

**Mithril.** Usually, you have to find some sort of rare or precious mineral (generally mithril) to repair or upgrade something.

**Moebius Rule**. Most RPGs have exactly one major plot twist.

**Monster Money.** For some reason, all monsters carry money to give you after battle, even though wolves, slimes, dragons, etc. have absolutely no use for money. (Exception: FF8)

**Monster Progression Rule.** All monsters gradually get tougher as you go through the game, no matter what circumstances would normally lead them to be otherwise. (i.e, if you go into a flashback, the monsters will be stronger there, which makes no sense)

**Mother of All Cliches, the.** In every single RPG, without exception, you are trying to save the world.

**Grandmother of All Cliches, the.** In absolutely every single RPG (except BOF3), you are trying to defeat a bad guy.

**Natural Ability.** All party members are already trained fighters and/or magic users, even when there is no reason for them to be so. (look at Chrono Trigger... why does Crono, who's just some random kid, be a trained swordsman? Why would the princess know how to use a bow? etc.)

**Nighttime Chat.** Obligatory scene in which the hero and love interest talk outside the inn and resolve their problem (see Wild Arms and FF6).

**Nomad Rule.** Parties never get tired, no matter how far you walk on the map or in a dungeon.

**NRA Law.** No guns ever run out of ammo. Even in SaGa Frontier, where guns have ammo, they magically reload after battle. (Exception: FF8's Irvine's Limit Break)

**Null and Void.** Most enemies that can inflict some kind of status change (poison, silence, etc.) usually drop the item that cures that change (antidote, echo screen, whatever) when killed.

**Numerical Rationialization.** All damage inflicted can be expressed as a number, which helpfully appear over the target's head.

**Obligatory Dungeons.** Every game has a mountain, at least one cave, some type of icy dungeon, a tower, a castle, a high-tech dungeon, a forest, and a shrine. Most have volcanoes.

**Obligatory Status Changes.** All RPGs have the following status changes: poison, blindness, sleep, confusion, and paralysis.

**Obligatory Tool Rule.** Every action-RPG, or game with action-RPG style puzzles (like Wild Arms or Lufia 2), has bombs and a hookshot.

**Obstacle Course Rule.** Simple objects such as pots and chairs serve as major obstacles, forcing you to walk around them, rather than just step over them.

**Old Guy Rule.** All old men are powerful magic-users.

**Ominous Ring of Land.** Any ring of land has something evil (usually the Ancient Flying Castle) underwater inside (Lufia, Actraiser, Wild Arms). Said rings of land frequently do not appear on the map (as in Wild Arms).

**OPEC Rule.** No vehicles ever run out of gas. (Exception: FF8)

**Packrat Law.** Most RPGs have you collected some type of shiny magical object throughout the game (Crystals, Mana Seeds, Huge Materia, Zodiac Stones, etc.).

**Party Compulsion Rule.** After a character joins the party, they never permanently leave (unless they are killed) even if their storyline would cause them to part ways at some point. Through some silly plot device, the character decides to come with the party anyway (for example, in FF7, Red XIII is about to leave the party when you get to Cosmo Canyon, but Bugenhagen tells him to go with Cloud).

**Pawn Shop Rule**. If you sell something to a shop that the shop doens't normally stock, there is no way to buy the item back, even though the shopkeeper still has it.

**Poison/Poison Swamp Law.** Characters can walk thousands of steps through poison swamps (and other "danger" areas), or with the poison condition, and linger at 1hp, but never die. (examples would be in most of the FF series, Chrono Cross)

**Potty Emergency**. Aside from BOF2 and Vector in FF6, there are no toilets or bathrooms in games.

**Preview Rule**. In games where you can name all the characters, you can tell that a character will join you by the fact that you get to name them when they first appear. (Like in FF6... you meet Shadow in South Figaro, he doesn't join you, but you get to name him so you know he joins later)

**Primary Elements**. All games have fire, ice, and lightning as elements.

**Prison Rescue**. Whenever the party is thrown in prison, somebody immediately shows up to rescue them.

**Prison Rule #2**. When you're thrown in prison, your captors never bother to take your weapons and other equipment. (exception: Tales of Phantasia)

**Prophecy, the**. Your heroes are usually prophecied to save the world, sometimes by some old guy who shows up in the game to give you advice.

**Punctuation**. RPG characters have the unique ability to pronounce punctuation marks, as in "....", "...!", or "???".

**Pyrotechnics Rule**. All bosses have extra-spiffy death effects that normal monsters are not worthy enough to have.

**Rambo Rule.** Having a higher Strength statistic increases the amount of damage guns do (exception: Chrono Trigger). This makes no sense whatsoever.

**Randomly Drops.** Words every gamer dreads. Means you have to spend countless hours fighting an enemy over and over so it will drop the super-duper piece of equipment that you have a 1 in 127 chance in getting. See FF4, Earthbound, and the BOF games.

**Rebellious Princess.** Stereotypical character in many RPGs. Rebellious princess escapes from castle and joins party (Marle, Cecilia, Nina, etc.).

**Repeating Boss.** Many games have a boss that you fight over and over again throughout the game (FF7: the Turks, Wild Arms: Boomerang and Zed, Mario RPG: Croco, FF6: Ultros, etc.).

**Reject Room.** Any RPG where you can switch characters has a room where all the unused characters hang out and demand to be added to the party.

**Resale Anomaly.** Really strong/rare items usually have a resale value of 1 for some reason (perhaps to dissuade you from selling them).

**Revival Law.** Logical loophole that allows you to revive dead characters in battle with items and magic, but keeps characters dead that are killed for plot purposes. *(Exception: In Final Fantasy 5, Galuf is killed, but it makes sense. He fights Exdeath, going way beyond unconsciousness, being stuck at 0 hp most the time but still able to fight. After he's spent, the party tries using revival items and spells on him, but his spirit is too lost for them to work. This is -the- only game I know of which explains the Revival Law, and they did it perfectly, imo.* -- **Minami**)See also [Soft-Hard Rule](http://serpent231.tripod.com/cliche.shtml#softhard).

**Right-Hand Man rule.** Whenever the Emperor in a [16-bit plot](http://serpent231.tripod.com/cliche.shtml#16bit) has a "right-hand man" character, that character always kills the Emperor (or helps you kill the Emperor) and ends up being the final boss. Frequently, the Emperor just wants to rule the world, but the "right-hand man" character wants to destroy the world. (See Secret of Mana, FF6, FF7, Breath of Fire 1, Wild Arms, etc.). Probably the most common cliche; just about every game uses it.

**Ross Perot Rule.** When you defeat a major boss (one that's a character) in battle, it will usually disappear, but once you're back in the normal non-fight screen, the boss will reappear and start talking.

**Roster Rule.** The manual always lists all the playable characters, thus spoiling any surprise as to who joins your party. (Exception: FF8)

**Safety Net.** Characters can jump or fall unlimited heights without ever getting hurt.

**Second Fiddle Rule.** The obligatory Legendary Sword is never the strongest weapon; there's always another sword that's stronger. (Goo King Sword is stronger than Dragon Sword in BOF3, Ragnarok is stronger than Excalibur in the FF games, etc.)

**Self-Awareness Rule.** In totally dark rooms, you can always see yourself perfectly. This is not true in real life.

**Self Help Booklet.** Sequence right before the final boss (sometimes occurs elsewhere in addition) in which every character proclaims their reason for fighting against evil and what they've learned on their journey in an excess of melodrama. Named after Kefka's awesome "This is pathetic! You sound like chapters from a self help booklet! Prepare yourselves!" line in FF6 after such a sequence.

**Setzer's rule.** Any character with a carefree attitude has a tragic event in their background (see also Locke, Jack, and Gen).

**Shadowboxing Rule.** In the majority of RPGs, characters fight by simply swinging their weapons in the air and not coming at all close the enemies. (This is not true for games with polygonal battles or Chrono Trigger)

**Share and Share Alike.** All items carried by your party (except in Earthbound) are carried in some sort of void that can be accessed by any member of your party no matter how spread out your party is.

**Shooting Blanks.** Guns are always weaker than swords.

**Side Quest Rule.** There are never any side quests until near the very end of the game, when a whole bunch of them appear. (See Wild Arms, FF7, FF Tactics, Tactics Ogre...)

**Size Doesn't Matter.** Characters can perform martial arts moves on enemies many times larger than they are. Want to have Sabin do a suplex on a train? No problem!

**Slime.** The easiest enemy in most RPGs is some type of slime.

**Smokey's Rule.** Fire spells do not start fires; they can be used in thick forests with no repercussions. (Exception: Kartia and Bahamut Lagoon)

**Soft / Hard rule.** Characters can get hit with all sorts of attacks (lightning bolts, earthquakes, meteors, etc.) during battle and still be standing, but for purposes of the storyline, they can be killed by a lowly dagger or sword.

**Sound Sleeper.** Characters put to sleep during battle can sleep through the various sounds of battles, including meteor strikes, summoned dragons, exploding bombs, and never wake up -- not to mention being actually attacked and not waking up. In addition, almost all RPG characters either sleep kneeling or standing up. (Chrono Trigger is the only game where your characters actually lay down when they're put to sleep)

**Status Change rule.** All bosses are immune to status changes (poison, sleep, etc.) and instant death spells.

**Sudden Growth.** Until recently, all bad guys would always grow much larger or transform into a different form when you fought them. In most recent games (FF7, Chrono Trigger, Wild Arms, Suikoden, FF8), however, this is not the case, except on the final boss.

**Swiss Cheese Room.** Common type of dungeon room in which there are many pits. Falling in one puts you in a large, emtpy, room with a single staircase that leads back up to the room with all the pits.

**Symmetric Building Law.** Almost all castles in games are symmetric, and most towns are as well.

**Telepathy Rule.** Whenever you are giving permission to go through a pass / gate / whatever, you can go there immediately and they know to let you through, even though you just got permission a minute ago.

**Tellah's rule.** Old men usually get killed (Tellah, Bugenhagen, Galuf, etc.)

**Temporal Battle Shift.** Whenever encountering an unfriendly personage, one usually experiences a psychedelic effect, followed by a transition to a background that does not match where you are standing. (Exceptions: BOF3 and Chrono Trigger)

**Titanic rule.** Whenever the characters get on a ship, it sinks. The exception is ships that you control, but even these sink frequently.

**Training Rule.** It used to be that every RPG had a room / building with people that told you how to play the game (Earthbounds, all the FFs, etc.). Now only appears only rarely.

**Trauma Inns.** For sword impalements, dragon attacks, meteor strikes, gunshots, and even death, nothing beats a nice, refreshing, stay at an inn -- guaranteed to cure all your wounds!

**True Form.** The final boss always has several forms (usually three) that you fight in sequence. The transformation is often accompanied by a message like "\_\_\_\_\_\_ reveals his true form!"

**Typical Bad Guy Cut Scene.**A scene where the Main Bad Guy is in a room with four lesser bad guys. He tells weakest of the lesser bad guys to kill the *only* threat to his plans. Weakest fails, of course, so the second weakest is sent out. Repeat until all four are dead, then all four are revived around the end. The third bad guy is almost always the only female one. Slight variations may apply. (Secret of Stars, Final Fantasy 4, Magic Knight Rayearth)

**Unbeatable Boss.** Obligatory boss that wipes you out easily, but you don't lose the game when you die. Generally a major bad guy fought again later in the game, and often appears in a [Deja Vu Dungeon](http://serpent231.tripod.com/cliche.shtml#dejavu) .

**Universal System Rule.** All game worlds (er, except Evermore) have a universal currency system, and a universal language (except FF1). This is despite most worlds having lost cities, remote elf villages, warring kingdoms, obscure islands, etc.

**Unlimited Warranty.** Weapons and armor never break. (Exceptions: Zelda 64 and FF Rods)

**Untamed Wilderness Rule.** There are never any roads (paved or otherwise) between towns, even in games like FF7 where you would expect there to be. (Exception: FF8)

**Underwater Vacancy Rule.** In games with submarines, there is almost nothing of note underwater. (See FF7 and Lufia 2). Usually there is just a cave or two, and a place where you have to dive to get under some shoals.

**Vegas Law**: Many games have a place for you to gamble away your money (Suikoden, Final Fantasy 7, Lufia 2). Most of these gambling games require no skill, but a very few of them do. They are also usually impossible to win, and/or the prizes cost so many "coins" that you could never afford them.

**Vehicle Progression Law.** Each new vehicle you get allows you to get to some new place which the designers didn't want you to go to before. Used to force you to visit locations in the right sequence.

**Venus Rule.** It is eternally daytime in games (BOF1+2 excepted), which is weird enough, but it also will suddenly become nighttime during certain scenes. (Exception: Zelda 64)

(so named because one day on Venus is as long as 118 Earth days)

**Villainous Disbelief Law.** When defeated, all major bad guys are amazed that you beat them and usually make some remark along the lines of "You're stronger than I thought."

**Wandering Mercenary.** Another stereotypical character in almost every RPG. A wandering ninja or mercenary that is helping the party, but doesn't really care about what they are fighting for. Frequently a popular character. (see Shadow, Magus, Boomerang, etc.). Usually wants revenge on one of the main bad guys (as in Magus or Vincent's case), and rarely talks.

**Warm-up Battle.** Rather than just have you wander around town talking to people, many games start with a really easy dungeon or battle (sometimes a [Deja Vu Dungeon](http://serpent231.tripod.com/cliche.shtml#dejavu)). See the bombing mission in FF7, attack on Narshe in FF6, opening battle against Zoot in Vandal~Hearts.

**Waterfall Rule.** All waterfalls have caves behind them.

**Weapon Specialization Rule.** Each character is very limited in the type of weapons they can use (except in the SaGa games and FF games with Jobs), usually only having one type (swords, axes, staffs, etc.) that they can use.

**Wild Goose Chase.** Annoying part in RPGs where you have to chase some character (sometimes a villain, sometimes an ally) around the globe, being informed you "just missed" the person at every stop. FF7 is the biggest offender here.