Shapes

General Overview:

Shapes is a puzzle-platformer that focuses on player character morphing. Unlike most games, the player changes character during gameplay, and frequently, to complete the levels. The levels are a series of linear obstacle-based puzzles which require the player to use both the active and passive abilities of the various geometric characters, in order to complete the puzzles set before them.

Characters:

There are three main characters which the player can choose from. These are the Sphere, the Cube, and the Cylinder. More characters have been brainstormed but are yet to be finalized. Their passive and active abilities are as follows:

The Sphere

Active abilities:

* full forwards/backwards, left/right movement
* Jump ability

Passive abilities:

* Can float
* Is moveable (objects which hit it, move it)

The Cube

Active abilities:

* Light/heavy mode
* In light mode:
  + Can move forward/backwards, left/right in a gliding fashion

Passive abilities:

* In heavy mode:
  + Immoveable
  + Plummets straight down unless something stops it’s fall
  + If plummets into breakable, breaks that object
* In light mode:
  + Slow fall (glides)
  + Can be boosted by air from vents
  + Automatically returns to heavy mode upon collision

The Cylinder

Active abilities:

* Can roll forward backwards only
* Can pivot left right
* Boost ability possible after charging

Passive abilities:

* Moveable

Level Outlining

Since this game contains various characters with different abilities, the characters themselves will be used as both a form of “leveling” as well as a reward for the player. The first level of the game will be used a tutorial to basic mechanics of the game, with the player starting off with the Sphere. The player will use the Sphere to maneuver through a basic scene, being taught about the jumping ability, the buoyancy of the sphere in water, and shown interactable objects. All of these things will be taught to the player *with as minimal text as possible*. The goal is to have the player learn by playing, rather than by reading.

After the player has been taught about movement, the passive/active abilities of the sphere, and the core interaction mechanics of the game, then a new character form will be given to them: the Cube. Between this point and the end of the level, the player will need to be taught that each character has its own abilities, and that the abilities of the characters will need to be used together in order to solve certain puzzles.

The rest of the game will repeat this basic format, progressively getting harder as time goes on. The format should be as follows:

* Player enters level with x number of characters
* The player using their current loadout of characters to complete a series of puzzles, which should be more complex than the level prior. If the player has received a new character at the end of the previous level, the first part of the level should be focused on teaching the player how to use that character.
* The player should learn at least *one* new way to use their characters in combination in each level.
* After a level (or possibly every other level) the player will be rewarded with a new character to use in the next level.

Moving Forward

If this project is further developed, there is a great deal level design to create. Thankfully, our core code is complete, which is the most difficult part of this game. The majority of the content to be created for the rest of the game will be level building, bug fixing, scripting for a few more characters, and scripting for character interactions such as the breakable objects.

With more people, iterative level design should be quick and enjoyable, with the main focus being on using the handful of tools given to the player to create a variety of different obstacles and puzzles that the player can overcome, using these tools in different combinations.