STRATEGY!

* Little Wars HG Wells 1913
  + First TableTop Strategy Game
  + “Like a small real battle”
* Kriegspiel
  + 1812, George Leopold von Reiswitz, Board Game, Prussia
  + Popular among Prussian officers in training
  + Started out as a variant on chess, pushing two chess boards together
  + A referee was involved and now there’s hidden information
  + Fog of war, you can’t necessarily see where the enemies are
  + Evolved to have fancy custom made pieces and boards
  + **Literally means “The Game of War”**
    - Is also a type of game, the war game.
  + **WHY**
    - **First war game**
    - **First example of detailed combat situation**
    - **Roots of D&D (and therefore much of modern games)**
  + Transition from Kriegspiel to Little Wars
    - Kriegspiel was used more as a training tool
    - Little Wars was just for the lulz
      * More about an aesthetic experience
* Why War? Why is that fun?
  + Carl Von Clausewitz (1780-1831)
    - War is an area of uncertainty
    - Created the term “the fog of war”
    - War creates a tumult of confusing and complicated situations
    - In response the general has to dig deep in order to make decisions under pressure
      * The aspect of war that merits appreciation
      * The ability to make difficult decisions under extreme duress
  + In addition to making decisions under extreme situations, there’s also the idea of “something at stake”
    - When you are making decisions where every decision matters
    - Largest stakes you can imagine are at play in war
      * We draw from these when we simulate war
* Lots of games that simulate war
  + Strategy < —— > Tactics
    - **Strategy: High Level Plans, Abstract Logic**
    - **Tactics: Low Level Operations, Concrete Action**
    - A spectrum between these.
  + Focusing on Strategy today.
    - The high level perspective of looking down at the world making decisions
  + 3 Ways to Win
    - Luck (being in the world, right place right time)
    - Action (doing something, execution, aim, strength)
    - Strategy (thinking, intelligence, cerebral)
  + Games of this type become a love song to the cerebral and the ethereal
* Strategy games emphasize
  + **Knowledge, information, calculation**
  + **Prediction and guessing**
  + **certainty /uncertainty**
  + **Heuristics (rules of thumb)**
* Common features of strategy games
  + Top-down perspective
  + Resource management
  + Mutual decision-making (not puzzle-solving)
  + Military conflict
  + Unit differentiation (strengths and weaknesses)
  + Terrain
  + Lines of sight/lines of fire
  + Games of repetition and emergence
* Axis and Allies
  + Board game, 1981, Larry Harris, Two Teams, Semi-Realistic
  + Harris was a historian
  + Wanted to capture dynamics of WW2
  + What was the possibility space of WW2?
* Early Computer Strategy Games
  + Computer Bismark, Developed by SSI, 1980, AppleII
  + Reach for the Stars
* **M.U.L.E.**
  + 1983, Danielle Bunten Berry, Ozark, Atari 400/800, C64, USA
  + Adversarial decision making more so than actual combat
  + **4 player game, inspired by Monopoly?**
    - Can we make a game with the same economic conflict but is a good game?
  + Supply and demand economic
  + 4 colonist on an alien planet
  + You’re staking claim to plots of land and expanding and getting more stuff
  + An auction phase
    - For each resource, players moving to find a price and agree on it
    - Auctioning as a 4 player “action” game
  + **WHY**
    - **Deeply respected and influential among designers**
    - **Advanced ideas— far ahead of its time**
      * **A game that is both digital and has qualities of strategy board game**
    - **A game of economic conflict**
    - **Deep multiplaeyer interaction**
    - **Real time auction**
* Civilization (series)
  + 1991-present, Sid Meier, Micropose, PC, USA
  + Originally a board game
  + Classic example of 4X games
    - **eXploration, eXpand, eXploit, eXterminate**
    - You start out small, in the fog of war, and expand
    - In theory you can win peacefully, but it doesn’t happen often
  + Deep, detailed, complex, layered ruleset
  + Complex diplomacy
    - Adversarial decision making
  + Multi-modal interface
  + Multiple paths to victory
  + **Tech tree**
    - **Super important because it embodies the idea that as you make decisions for how your civilization develops, when you research a thing, it opens up something else later down the road, and the decisions you make have ramifications continues and lingers in the game**
  + A game of epic scope and grandeur
  + Also weirdly cartoonish and reductive
    - Part of what makes it fun
    - Simplified cartoony model of history and culture
  + Sid Meier
    - “A game is a series of interesting choices”
  + **Why?**
    - **A cartoony theme of grand history**
      * **No sci-fi, pulpy action**
    - **Depth of the system**
    - **A feeling of exponential growth**
    - **Considered one of the all time greats**
* XCOM
  + Series, 1993, Julian Gollop, Micropose, PC, England
  + Aliens invade earth and you put together squads to fight them
  + Another GOAT (greatest of all time)
  + Zooming into these turn based tactical battles,
    - **Moving between tactics and strategy**
  + WHY
    - Deep gameplay
    - Strategic and tactical levels
    - **Each character has a name**
      * **Over the course of the game there is an emergent property that comes out as units survive and die**
* Fire Emblem
  + 1990 CE, Intelligent Systems, Famicon (NES), Japan
  + Console game
  + How can we take what’s happening in these intense strategy games and make them just a little lighter
  + Putting together units and taking them on an RPG style adventure
  + Carefully composed stories and battles
  + During the battles you’re moving pieces around the map.
  + WHY
    - **Permadeath in RTS**
    - **Units have relationships**
    - **Best animation of all time**
    - **The idea of the Japanese version of strategy games**
* Turn-Based vs Real-Time
  + **Analysis paralysis**, **when you’re in a game where decisions matter, you can just sit there and do it forever**
    - Time pressure highlights efficiency of decision making
* Populous
  + 1989, Bullfrog, Peter Molyneux, PC, England
  + **First example of a god game**
    - Where you play a super powerful presence over a little simulated world
  + Complex rpg style story
  + The way you interact with the game are through these secondary things like
    - Terrain
    - Weather
  + **WHY**
    - **Great example of Molyneux’ genius**
    - **First God game**
    - **Early Real Time Strategy**
    - **Isometric 3D terrain**
* Herzog Zwei
  + Developed in 1989 for Sega Genesis
  + Often considered grandpa of RTS
  + Two player game
  + Flying around shooting, but sometimes you’re using your vehicle to pick up things and give them simple commands.
* Dune 2
  + Designed by Westwood in 1992
  + Based on David Lynch movie, Dune. Not actually a sequel.
  + Standard RTS stiff originating here
  + Resource gathering
  + Base building
  + Tech dev
  + Indirect unit control
  + Context sensitive cursor based control
  + All by Brett Sperry
    - He’s a badass apparently
    - Single handedly invented RTS
* Command and Conquer: Red Alert
  + Adding more and more units and layers of complexity
  + Adding features like queuing up commands and online play
* Warcraft 2
  + Blizzard vs. Westwood
  + Reason Blizzard won the rivalry was because of the colorful world building of Warcraft.
  + There’s more of a sense of “place” and it’s more satisfying
* StarCraft
  + Series, 1998-present, Blizzard, PC, USA
  + **Was just a cash idea and a reskin of Warcraft**
  + Team kept working on it and actually just kept improving it
  + Focused more on higher level of irregularit
  + Introduced three distinct races with profoundly different units.
  + Allowed for totally different styles of play
  + Kinda stole some design ideas from Warhammer 40k
  + Starcraft is the highpoint of RTS
  + Strong asymmetry between different races
  + Developed a strong competitive scene
  + Depth of game is found in the creative imaginative play it allowed
  + Designers weren’t even aware of some of these strats
  + Opens up the ceiling of performance for playing and allows for incredibly high levels of play
  + StarCraft in South Korea
    - In the late 1990’s early 2000’s it becomes the national game for South Korea.
    - It’s no longer a novelty to see large stadiums filled with people, but it started in South Korea
    - They didn’t play a lot of japanese games
    - Invested in infrastructure before everyone
    - StarCraft comes along and takes advantage of this infrastructure
    - There’s already a tradition in S. Korea of professional startegy game players playing something, with Go.
* StarCraft II
  + Designed it deliberately thinking about e-sports
  + Clear, Simple, High Skill, and Uncertainty
  + You want to be able to allow players to predict other people’s play
  + Balance between Macro and Micro
    - 1a2a3a
    - Have to think large and small at the same time
    - Rather than in different phases
    - How you’re harvesting resources and building an economy, but then actually moving stuff around to engage the enemy
    - **The real resource you’re managing in starcraft is your attention**
* The Decline of Starcraft
  + The tennis of e-sports
  + In decline
  + Some design decisions in StarCraft2 that may have been mistakes
  + Corporate politics decided to go into Korea and control the e-sports scene
    - That backfired
  + WHY STARCRAFT
    - Arguable GOAT RTS
    - macro/micro
* Homeworld
  + RTS
  + Takes place in space
  + By Relic
  + 1999
  + Table top games, looking down at a 2D surface (normally)
  + HOMEWORLD 3D
  + Great design solutions for interacting with units in 3D space
  + Zooming in and out, slow motion conflicts, very pretty
* Desktop Tower Defense
  + A folk genre (tower defense)
  + Started out as people modding stuff
  + Instead of controlling lots of units, it was focused on structure
* League of Legends
  + 2009 Riot Games, PC, USA
  + MOBA (Multiplayer Online Battle Arena [DOTA clones])
  + Folk genre, emerged from custom game types and modding
  + Defense of the Ancients (DOTA), people were modding stuff like this.
  + The idea was, instead of a godlike view, you had a single hero and you would be in a world that had all the RTS components, but you controlled an indiviudal hero
  + Like tower defense, but only kinda, more like diablo.
  + **No single author for DOTA, it was a folk culture development over time**
  + But then people made it.
  + League of Legends in the World
    - Several people thought that we needed to make commercial versions of League of Legends and DOTA games
    - Riot came along and made it happen
  + **WHY** 
    - **Biggest most popular videogame in the world?**
    - **Complex, difficult, deep, challenging, beautiful!**
    - **Team-based strategy game**
    - **Most successful e-sport**
    - **Most advanced expression of action rpg**
    - **Legacy for kriegspiel continues to evolve**