Many MMOs are subscription based and cost money. In these tough times, that money can be hard to obtain. When a person does get said money, he has to spend it on the necessities of life such as food for the body, gas for the car, diapers for the baby. A subscription based MMO quickly falls to the bottom of the list when real life comes in to play.

If a person has internet access, there are many ways to keep playing MMO games. The much-loved subscription based MMO may not be accessible, yet there are many other AAA games from which to choose. . The free to play MMO market, once a wasteland of imported games full of grinding mechanics and unfulfilled promises, has started to evolve in to something better. Many games that were once subscription based are now free to play or are in the process of transitioning to a free to play business model. Games that are designed to be free to play from the start are losing the stigma often associated with the genre. They are all free to download and don't cost a cent to play and try out. The only cost is time. After all, the games cost no money to enjoy.

Here are four examples of good, free to play MMOs.

Dungeons and Dragons Online started out as a subscription based game. In 2009, DDO became free to play and was very successful with the switch. DDO's income has increased and has attracted an all-new player base. This is an action MMO based on the pen and paper Dungeons and Dragons 3.5 edition rule-set. DDO relies heavily on instances but does a good job of retaining the classic Dungeons and Dragons feel.

The same developers that created Dungeons and Dragons Online make Lord of the Rings Online. Going free to play in 2010, the service has switched over. This is a classic styled MMO with wide-open spaces and steeped in the mythology created by J.R.R. Tolkien. A steady stream of content is constantly created for the game, including a new expansion called “The Rise of Isengard.” Though certain dramatic license is used with the source material, it still contains Hobbits, Elves, Dwarfs, and Men. It really is classic Fantasy come to life.

Dungeon Fighter Online is an old school arcade MMO. It is based on a style of game popular in the arcades of yesteryear. The game combines basic MMO concepts like leveling up and crafting with the side-scrolling beat 'em up styling of the past. It is also a good dungeon crawler, even if all the dungeons are from the side. It is quite an intriguing combination for those that miss arcades of the 80s but want a modern twist.

Allods Online is a MMO developed in Russia. The influence of Russian history is seen from the title screen and throughout the rest of the game. Boasting a world that is both familiar and exotic, the game has a world with a great selection of characters with many different classes. It does feel like other, more successful MMOs yet it does much that is original. The familiarity can be a turn off for some people, yet the combat is intense in an open world that encourages both solo as well as group play.

How do these games make any money if they are free to play? Two words: Item shop. These shops sell items that can enhance the playing experience through various means. This can be cosmetic, boosts to speed, expanding the inventory, gaining more XP per kill, among other things. Yet a person doesn't have to be worried about the stem shop if he doesn't have the money. Most free to play games do not make the item shop mandatory for adventuring. A person can just enjoy the game for what it is and not worry about paying anything unless that he wants to support the company behind the MMO.