

Genres of your game ([from this list](#), or permission)

The Legend of Zelda belongs to the action-adventure and Metroidvania (oddly enough) genres.

Genre / Comparison Game Descriptions

1. Provide the title, and your pitch, for NES genre game #1 (2 sentences)
2. Provide the title, and your pitch, for NES genre game #2 (2 sentences)
3. Provide the title, and your pitch, for NES genre game #3 (2 sentences)

1. Castlevania: Castlevania is a 2D adventure platformer in which the player must use their whip and reflexes to quell the forces of evil. Fight never ending waves of enemies, and face challenging bosses to bring holiness back to the land.
2. Metal Gear: Metal Gear is a 2D stealth adventure game in which a military operative must sneak his way through hostile compounds. You must use the environment, your Close Quarter Combat skills, and weapons to evade guard patrols and accomplish your mission.
3. Solomon's Key: Play as a sorcerer conquering a dungeon, avoiding each unique enemy, creating and destroying blocks to shape the level to your advantage, and discovering ammunition to cast fireballs. Find your way through each puzzling level before time runs out!

Contrast: Castlevania - Genre Game #1

1. Describe three mechanics / game design differences between these two games.
2. How do each of these differences manifest? What impact do these differences have on the player experience in both games?

1) Castlevania lacks the top down perspective found in Zelda, and instead is controlled from a 2D perspective. There is no grid based movement system, instead, the player can move either forward, backwards, or can duck to avoid enemy fire. In addition, level progression is linear, where the player simply moves to the end of a level, where they face a boss to proceed to the next level. In Zelda, the player could backtrack to areas they previously visited.

2) The 2D perspective of Castlevania, and the movement system, makes it very platform heavy. Players must jump onto and navigate across different platforms in the environment. There are stairs which players have to walk to proceed through doors that lead them to the next section of the map. All the while, the player must fight respawning enemies that approach them from behind and the front. Some enemies have unblockable projectiles, and the player must either jump over them, or duck under them to avoid taking damage.

In comparison, Zelda's top down perspective and grid based movement makes it more of a discovery game, where the player has frequently backtrack to levels they have previously visited due to lacking certain items. Locked doors, for instance, require the player to gather keys from defeating enemies. Upon entering a new area, the enemies spawn before the player, and they have more time to figure out how to dispose of them. In addition, Zelda compensates for the lack of the jump mechanic by providing the player with a shield that they can use to block most enemy projectiles. Overall, both games are adventures in their own right. However, the differences between them make for completely different challenges which the player has to overcome.

Contrast: Metal Gear - Stealth Action Genre

3. Describe three mechanics / game design differences between these two games.
4. How do each of these differences manifest? What impact do these differences have on the player experience in both games?

- 1) There are more modern weapons (guns) to utilize in the game when compared to Zelda. Unlike Zelda, Metal Gear is a more stealth-based game, where avoiding enemy encounters is encouraged. There is also a stronger emphasis on storytelling, with significantly amounts of dialog.
- 2) Metal Gear is a game built around stealth mechanics. In each level, the player must avoid the sight of enemies patrolling the given area. The game features a melee combat system, where players can carefully approach enemies from behind, and knock them out. Although guns and other projectile weapons are provided, engaging in direct combat is heavily discouraged in the game (aside from specific boss encounters later in the story). If you get caught, the environment will enter into an "Alert Status", where waves of enemies will spawn to kill the player. The player must either defeat them all, or escape to another area to exit this status. These mechanics make Metal Gear a game that is less error friendly when compared to Zelda.
- 3) Metal Gear has a storyline which the player is set upon, providing the ability to explore each level and learn about game mechanics along the way. Guiding the player from one mechanic, region, and difficulty level to the next in an orderly fashion helps ensure a player experience

more true to the way the developers intended it. In contrast, the Legend of Zelda is very open world, allowing the player to often discover areas that are beyond their limits, either in terms of gear or skill level. In Metal Gear, the developers maintain control over when and how players will struggle, but in the Legend of Zelda, a player working through the game out of order will struggle with little to no bounds other than their own limits for exploration and steady progress through scattered accomplishable tasks. We can use more open-world game concepts to stay true to the Legend of Zelda style, allowing players to learn by exploring and discover enemies they can't yet conquer.

Contrast: Solomon's Key - Action-Adventure / Platformer

5. Describe three mechanics / game design differences between these two games.
6. How do each of these differences manifest? What impact do these differences have on the player experience in both games?

Health

The player in Solomon's Key has a single health point – they get one-shot by every enemy in the game. As a new player, this makes it extremely frustrating to learn about interactions with each enemy. For example, jumping under a block will break it, like in Mario. There are some enemies that will die when falling from any height. But breaking a block with an enemy on top of it, the enemy can fall down and kill the player before dying. While in hindsight, this seems fair, this was not a very friendly new-player experience. Learning enemy movement patterns, ability sets, and weaknesses is a key part of the fun in playing a game; restarting the level for every mistake as you learn feels to increase the learning barrier to casual play.

By contrast, The Legend of Zelda has a health bar with at least three hearts. For the beginning experiences, you can typically take 3-6 hits before dying. This makes Zelda a lot more forgiving than Solomon's Key. The danger is not in a singular enemy, it's in the quest as a whole and the player's accumulated injuries from exploring. Making an input error or a bad decision is still punished, and you cannot be successful in the game without properly learning the mechanics of each enemy, but the pace at which the player learns is much more inviting, especially for casual play.

Deaths

In the Legend of Zelda, death is not heavily punished. You reset to the beginning of the area (the global spawn if you're in the overworld, or the dungeon start if you're in one). This allows players to explore without feeling restrained by their life – at worst, they'll have to walk back to where they were.

Solomon's Key is a lot less forgiving. In the game, you start with three lives, and once you lose all three, you lose all progress and start from the beginning of the game. This may give players a bigger sense of suspense and peril while playing the game but comes at the cost of forcing players to experience re-playing the intro levels for every single run. Forced replaying of introductory levels does not feel like a good experience.

Time Limit

In Solomon's Key, each level has a time limit. Failure to complete the level within the limit costs the player one of their few lives. This compounds with the threat of all enemies killing the player in one shot – you must move fast, and you must be perfect. This setup enables skilled players to perform well in the game and be rewarded with additional progression but is yet another factor for new players which makes this game hard to pick up. This is not a concern in the Legend of Zelda, and players can enjoy the game at their own pace.

Limited Attacks

Solomon's Key has a limited number of attacks the player can use – they must pick up items to obtain a ranged fireball they can cast, at a rate of one fireball per each item picked up. This makes it difficult to fight enemies head-on; proper strategies for a level require avoiding enemies more than slaying them all. It also forces a certain precision in attacks. Zelda does not have these constraints; the player can attack as much as they would like and successfully kill enemies. There are additional abilities or weapons which require ammunition, but the player can still kill enemies with basic attacks. Unlocking the player's ability to kill enemies (and more critically, the forgiveness to miss an attack) in Zelda makes attacking feel like a standard part of the game. In Solomon's Key, it's to be reserved for specific occasions where it can speed up level progress or skip a difficult enemy – but not often, and not for all enemies.