Creators, contributors, users of the document

* Overall concept of the game
* Details of gameplay
* Control Scheme(s)
* Characters Details
* Levels(Layouts, types, etc.)

Structure of the document

* Be succinct, be aware of it’s potential size
* Info presented should be well organized + labelled
* Table of contents, section headings
* Maybe sub-documents(art bible, etc.)

Writing style

* Easy to search (info grouped appropriately)
* Maintaining a good table of contents
* Lots of titles, headings, sub-headings, use of references/cross-references when referring to them
* Allows skimming for relevant info
* Use bulleted + enumerated lists
* Maybe paragraph first then redo as list
* Choose referencing over repetition of info
* Don’t duplicate functionality
* Reference other parts of the document or other documents
* Keep it updated, ensure no internal inconsistencies
* Concise
* Stimulating read? Intro/Overview Story Overview
* Comparison with other games? Might be useful but must include a thorough description

Sections to be included(Depends on what game we’re making)

* Table of contents
* Intro/Overview
* Game Mechanics
* AI
* Game Elements
* Story Overview
* Game Progression
* System Menus

Sections-Table of Contents

* Create an index
* It’s a tool for navigating, structure
* Defines sections, sub-sections, etc.
* Bolded Headings

Sections-Intro/Overview

* 1 page max
* Intended audience
* New member
* Producer
* Company Exec
* Marketer
* Non Dev
* Understand central parts of the game, gameplay, core design

1. Expand high concept statement
2. “Story” Paragraph:

* Player’s experience
* Worlds, characters encountered
* High points

1. “Aspects of Gameplay” Paragraph:

* Most central features
* Features that make game compelling and unique

1. “Conclusion” Paragraph:

* Overview of overview
* Emphasize compelling aspects of the game

Sections-Game Mechanics

* Defines the game
* What actions player(s) can perform
* How it’s played
* Avoid mentioning specific objects/characters
* Effects of different weapons
* How players will control them
* Don’t list weapons/mention specific ones
* Introduce players’ different capabilities
* In order of experience for first-time player
* Basic moves(forward, backward, left, right)
* Complex moves(jumping, crouching, rolling)

Physical commands needed

* Not necessarily mapped directly to keyboard/controller keys
* More independence("forward button” not “up arrow”)
* What a programmer needs to know?
* Number of controls
* Mapping to actions
* Mapping to keys is secondary
* Player’s character movement model
* Realistic movement model
* Reaction when bumping into objects
* Move to more complex movements
* Actions build on previous ones
* Refer back to basic action descriptions
* Describe how actions combine to make more complex one
* Combat
* How we use different weapons
* How to pick up/manipulate objects
* How inventory management works
* Dependence on Tech
* 2D or 3D
* What players see(Camera views)
* GUI/HUD(Data overlaid on game world)

Sections-Game Mechanics Summary

* Avoid making assumptions, don’t assume what’s obvious to you is to others
* Describe how players will accomplish every different action
* Can influence other team members’ decisions
* How artist draw characters and locations
* What composers create to accompany actions

Key Concerns:

* What will the player do
* How will he/she do it

Sections-AI

* How will the world react to players’ actions?
* How will NPCs react?
* Initiate combat/conversation?
* Influences programmers decisions(i.e. best AI technique to use based on type of reaction desired)
* Try to follow same rules used when outlining mechanics
* Include AI in Game Mechanics section? Scale and complexity of the game usually decides this

Sections- Game Elements: Characters, Items, Objects/Mechanisms

* Characters:
* Active non-player-controlled elements in the game
* Objects/Mechanisms:
* Things players can’t pick up but can manipulate, doors, pressure plates, etc.
* Items:
* Things a player can pick up/use

Sections-Story Overview

* Not strictly necessary
* Quick way for everyone to understand “big picture”
* Must be easy to read
* Concise but include all major story points
* Pleasure to read
* Compelling + readable as possible

Sections-Game Progression

* Break game down into events the player experiences
* How they change/progress over time
* Guide for art teams and level designers
* Types of environments needed
* Usually broken down over levels
* Describe challenges a player will face on each level
* What story, if any, will transpire on them
* Enemies, items player will encounter
* Describe how player will be affected
* Desired gameplay experience?

Sections-System Menus

* Main menu and other options screens presented
* Types of interfaces
* Not truly needed
* Maybe can be specified in another document

Document is like an architectural blueprint

* Outlines how each member and their work fits into the overall dev process