

Player Experience Journey Map

Player Journey Mapping defines how a player *emotionally experiences* the game over time. It explains why players stay, what they feel at key moments, and how emotions evolve from first contact to mastery.

Why Do Players Stay?

Players stay because the game:

- Creates immediate tension and curiosity
- Rewards learning through visible improvement
- Makes wins feel earned and losses feel instructive
- Gradually shifts control from the game to the player

The core retention driver is: **“I lost because I misplayed and I can do better.”**

Key Emotional Moments

1. Start

Player Feeling: Curiosity + Mild Tension

- The game feels competitive but readable
- Visuals and audio signal urgency
- Player feels challenged, not overwhelmed

2. First Win

Payer Feeling: Satisfaction + Confidence

- Player understands at least one successful strategy
- Victory feels deserved, not random
- Reinforces belief: “I’m learning”

3. First Defeat

Player Feeling: Frustration + Determination

- Loss is clearly linked to player choices
- Feedback signals *why* the defeat happened
- Player feels improvement is possible

4. First Unlock

Player Feeling: Excitement + Ownership

- New unit or option changes how the game can be played
- Player feels progression without power imbalance
- Encourages experimentation

Journey Mapping Structure

1. Entry Experience

Emotions:

- Curiosity
- Tension
- Cautious excitement

Player Thoughts:

- “What kind of game is this?”
- “Can I understand this quickly?”

Design Support:

- Clear visual language
- Simple early choices
- Immediate feedback on actions

2. Engagement Arc

Emotions:

- Challenge
- Satisfaction
- Frustration balanced with learning

Player Thoughts:

- “That mistake cost me.”
- “I’ll try a different approach.”

Design Support:

- Meaningful wins and losses
- Unlocks that expand strategy
- Audio/visual reinforcement of decisions

3. Mastery Arc

Emotions:

- Confidence
- Control
- Competitive pride

Player Thoughts:

- “I can read the opponent.”
- “I know when to commit energy.”

Design Support:

- High-skill decision making
- Energy-based risk/reward clarity
- Units that reward foresight and patience

