**Apex Legends**

**A popular first-person shooter battle-royale video game.**

**Overview**

Apex Legends is a free-to-play battle royale-hero shooter game developed by Respawn Entertainment and published by Electronic Arts. It was released for Microsoft Windows, PlayStation 4, and Xbox One in February 2019, and for Nintendo Switch in March 2021. A mobile version of the game specially designed for touchscreens titled Apex Legends Mobile has also been announced which is scheduled to be fully released by 2022 on Android and iOS. The game supports cross-platform play.

Before the match, players form into two- or three-player squads, and select from pre-designed characters with distinctive abilities, known as "Legends". The game has two gameplay modes. In "Battle Royale", up to 20 three-person squads or 30 two-person duos land on an island and search for weapons and supplies before attempting to defeat all other players in combat. The available play area on the island shrinks over time, forcing players to keep moving or else find themselves outside the play area which can be fatal. The final team alive wins the round. In "Arenas", players form into three-player squads and fight against another squad in a 3v3 team deathmatch over a series of rounds to determine the winner of the match. Teams win when their team has at least 3 points and is 2 points ahead.

Apex Legends is set in the same science fiction universe as Respawn Entertainment's Titanfall series. Work on the game began around late 2016, though the project remained a secret right up until its launch. The game's release in 2019 came as a surprise, as until that point it had been assumed that Respawn Entertainment was working on a third installment to the Titanfall franchise, the studio's previous major game. Apex Legends received positive reviews from critics, who praised its gameplay, progression system, and fusion of elements from various genres. Some considered it a worthy competitor to other battle royale games. Apex Legends surpassed 25 million players by the end of its first week, and 50 million within its first month. By April 2021, it had approximately 100 million players.

**Gameplay**

Apex Legends is an online multiplayer battle royale game featuring squads of three players using pre-made characters with distinctive abilities, called "Legends", similar to those of hero shooters. Alternate modes have been introduced allowing for single and for two-player squads since the game's release. The game is free-to-play and monetized through microtransactions and loot boxes, which allow the player to spend both real money and in-game currency on cosmetic items, such as outfits for the Legends and new colors for weapons.

Each match generally features twenty teams of three-player squads. Players can join friends in a squad or can be matched randomly with other players. Before the match, each player on the squad selects one of the 18 playable characters (as of season 10), with the exception that no character may be selected more than once by a squad. Each character in the squad has a unique design, personality, and abilities that provide different playstyles to the team. All teams are then placed on an aircraft that passes over the game map. One player in each squad is the jumpmaster, selecting when the squad should skydive out of the aircraft and where to land with the concurrence of the other squad members. However, players are free to deviate from the squad's path.

Once on the ground, the squad can scavenge for weapons, armor, and other equipment that is scattered around buildings, or in crates randomly distributed around the map, while keeping an eye out for other squads. Apex Legends includes a nonverbal communication "ping system" which allows players to use their game controller to communicate to their squad certain directions, weapon locations, enemies, and suggested strategies. While the game offers movement options similar to other shooters, it includes some of the gameplay features of previous Titanfall games, such as the ability to climb over short walls, slide down inclined surfaces, and use zip-lines to traverse an area quickly.

Over time, the game's safe zone will reduce in size around a randomly-selected point on the map; players outside the safe zone take damage and may die if they do not reach the safe zone in time. This also confines squads to smaller spaces to force encounters. The last squad with any members left alive is crowned the "Apex Champions" of that match. Players are awarded in-game currency based on their squad's placement as well as experience points. Players who become knocked down in the course of a game can be revived by their squadmates. Should a player be killed completely, they can still be resurrected if their team member(s) collect their respawn banner, which appears at the place where they died, and bring it to one of several beacons on the island. The banner, however, must be collected within a time limit, before expiring and fully eliminating the player.

Season 9 introduced a new permanent mode named "Arena". In this mode, players form into three-player squads and fight against another squad in a 3v3 team deathmatch over a series of rounds to determine the winner of the match. Teams win when their team has at least 3 points and is 2 points ahead. Additionally, if a game should drag on to round 9 (where both teams have 4 points) a final sudden death round begins. Respawn stated this scoring system "prevents total blowout games from dragging on for too long" and also "lets more competitive games keep the heat going for longer". Rather than skydiving onto the map and gathering equipment like in the battle royale mode, players spawn in a "shop" where they can purchase equipment and charges of their Legend's abilities using materials earned in the previous rounds to prepare for the next fight. This variation of the game borrows mechanics from other shooters such as Counter Strike and Valorant. The mode is the first permanent deviation away from the battle royale format.

**Development**

Developer Respawn Entertainment had previously developed Titanfall (2014) and its sequel Titanfall 2 (2016), both of which were published by Electronic Arts (EA) who eventually acquired Respawn Entertainment in 2017.

According to design director Mackey McCandlish, initial design on Apex Legends started before Titanfall 2 had shipped in 2016 and as of 2018 the entire Titanfall team at Respawn Entertainment was working on the project; however, executive producer Drew McCoy stated that work on the game did not begin until the spring of 2017. He also confirmed that the game had approximately 115 developers working on it, making it the studio's most labor-intensive project. Titanfall 2, by way of comparison, had around 85 developers.

According to McCoy, the studio was not sure what their next game would be after completing the post-release support for Titanfall 2, though they knew they wanted to keep making Titanfall games. As with the development of Titanfall 2, the studio broke into several small teams to create "action blocks", small game prototypes that showcase a gameplay element, a weapon, or similar feature of a game that would fit into a Titanfall sequel. One such "action block" was inspired by the success of the battle royale game genre led by PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds; this prototype, which applied gameplay mechanics of previous Titanfall games in a battle royale format, was considered very successful and the studio decided to expand this model. The designers decided that having the pilotable Titans (large mecha) from their previous games would not work well in a battle-royale setting and instead focused on creating strong character classes which felt appropriate for the Titanfall franchise. They also found that some maneuverability features of prior Titanfall titles, such as wall-running, would make gameplay too challenging in a battle royale format, as identifying the direction of threats would be too difficult.

Respawn Entertainment CEO Vince Zampella told VentureBeat that Apex Legends, as a live-service and free-to-play battle-royale game, was a new challenge for the studio and represented a new way for them of developing games. Their design philosophy was focused on "chasing the fun" and designing all the mechanics around team-based play, rather than solo play. The final decision on major design factors, such as the size of the teams, the number of teams and the size of the map, were all based on what felt "most fun" to the developers and were strongly guided by "gut feeling".

Design director Mackey McCandlish also stated that with Apex Legends, they were looking to challenge the conventions of the still relatively young battle-royale genre and to add their studio's unique touch to that class of games. They felt that the choice of three-man squads and a limit of 20 teams gave players on average a greater chance to win and also felt more in line with the type of intimate gameplay they were hoping to achieve. McCandlish claimed that the studio felt the need to create a "defensible space" in the battle-royale mode which could not be easily imitated and that the communication system, the three-man squads, and the smaller playing area were all aligned with this goal.

As part of the development process, the game underwent extensive play-testing to ensure that all elements felt fun and balanced. Collectively the developers spent 100 to 200 hours a day trying out the game, a process which executive producer Drew McCoy called "probably the most important part of development". To refine the game's non-verbal communication system, the studio play-tested the game for a month without the use of voice chat and applied fake names to the play-testers to predict how most players would experience the game.

With the game mostly completed, Respawn's director of brand marketing, Arturo Castro, began working on how the studio would name and market it. Castro recognized that the game featured many elements which players would expect from a Titanfall franchise game, but lacked core elements such as Titans, Pilots and a single-player experience. Additionally, it had already been reported that Respawn was working on Titanfall 3 from a source at the studio. Respawn therefore decided that attempting to market the game as part of the Titanfall series would have been difficult and would risk alienating Titanfall fans. They, therefore, opted to treat the game as a new intellectual property (IP). Respawn were also concerned that as they at that time had recently been acquired by EA, players would think that EA had forced them to make a battle royale game. McCoy affirmed that they had to convince Electronic Arts to allow them to make this game: "we decided to make this game.

Concerned that a standard six-month marketing campaign for the game would have generated negative publicity from disgruntled Titanfall fans, Castro claims they eventually took inspiration from musical artist Beyoncé whose release of her self-titled album came as a surprise to fans—a strategy which proved financially successful. Wanting to generate some buzz about this new product before its release, the studio secretly arranged for about 100 social media influencers to travel to their studio to try the game and then instructed them to "tease" news of it on their social media accounts during halftime of the Super Bowl LIII, the day before Apex Legends' formal release. Respawn CEO Vince Zampella felt the approach was "gross", according to Castro, as he found it reminiscent of the infamous Fyre Festival "hype" which later turned out to be a fraudulent event. However, as Apex Legends was already ready for release at this point, Castro felt the approach was an appropriate marketing strategy. Because of the game's performance in terms of player-count and viewership on streaming services, Castro felt vindicated in this decision. This approach was uncharacteristic of any prior EA title.

The game is built using a modified version of Valve Corporation's Source engine; Source had previously been used for Titanfall 2, however for Apex Legends several necessary adjustments to allow for the increased draw distances and the large game map were made. Apex Legends is believed to be pushing at the technological limits of its game engine and as a result, the game compromises on dynamic display resolution, with the quality of the image and frame rate suffering particularly on console versions and on lower-end PC devices.

Prior to launch, McCoy confirmed there were plans to implement cross-platform play to the game in the future, though claimed that game progression and in-game purchases cannot be transferred across systems due to hardware limitations. McCoy has also expressed the desire to eventually bring Apex Legends to iOS, Android, and Nintendo Switch.

According to anonymous reports, the Chinese corporation Tencent is working with Electronic Arts to bring Apex Legends to China, as partnering with a local Chinese firm is a requirement for Western media companies wishing to make their products legally available in the country. In January 2020, EA confirmed to investors that it was working with a local partner in order to bring the game to PC in China, though it did not mention the partner by name.

Respawn established a new Vancouver, British Columbia, studio, within the EA Vancouver campus, dedicated to supporting Apex Legends in May 2020.

As part of the June 2020 EA Play presentation, Respawn announced that Apex Legends would be brought to the Steam storefront for Windows players, as well as to the Nintendo Switch by late 2020. Further, the game would support cross-platform play across all supported platforms on these releases. In a blog post by Respawn in late October 2020, it was revealed that the Steam version will launch on November 4, the same day as the launch of season 7. However, the Nintendo Switch version was delayed to March 9, 2021. The Nintendo Switch version of Apex Legends was developed by Panic Button, known for their Switch ports of the DOOM series and Rocket League.

Electronic Arts also confirmed that mobile launches on iOS and Android were in development in collaboration with a Chinese mobile company. The mobile ports are set to release by the end of 2022. In April 2021, Electronic Arts announced that the mobile version of the game would be titled Apex Legends Mobile, and would begin beta testing in the coming months. In July 2021, Apex Legends was hacked by individuals wishing to draw attention to persistent problems with cheating in the Titanfall series that had been unaddressed by Electronic Arts and Respawn. Large banners pointed players of Apex Legends to a website outlining their concerns.

**Seasons**

1. Wild Frontier
2. Battle Charge
3. Meltdown
4. Assimilation
5. Fortune’s Favor
6. Boosted
7. Ascension
8. Mayhem
9. Legacy
10. Emergence

**Characters**

* Bloodhound
* Gibraltar
* Lifeline
* Pathfinder
* Wraith
* Bangalore
* Caustic
* Mirage
* Octane
* Wattson
* Crypto
* Revenant
* Loba
* Rampart
* Horizon
* Fuse
* Valkyrie
* Seer

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