

## Elements of Game Design



### What is our GOAL for this MODULE?

The goal of this module is to deconstruct a game and learn its design.

### What did we ACHIEVE in the class TODAY?

We learned how to deconstruct games into important game design elements.

### Which CONCEPTS/CODING BLOCKS did we cover today?

- Deconstructing a game and understanding its design.

### How did we DO the activities?

In order to identify the important elements in the game, we began by playing a game called Pacman! This was followed by breaking down (deconstructing) the game into its different components. The characters involved a Yellow Pizza shaped character (Pacman) which eats yellow dots. Ghosts of different colors which tries to catch the Pacman.

A character is either a Playing Character (PC) controlled by a player or Non-Playing Character(NPC). PCs are controlled by the player in the game. NPCs are controlled by computers. Thus, in this game, PC is Pacman and NPC are Ghosts.

The player has a clearly defined goal. The player has to control the Pacman to eat all the yellow dots spread across in the maze.

- Every game also has rules.
- Pacman has two lives.
- Pacman can eat the yellow dots spread all around the maze.
- There are 4 Ghosts patrolling the maze. They can eat Pacman when they see and catch it.
- There are five power pellets kept in the maze. When the Pacman eats them, all the ghosts turn pale and they can be eaten by the Pacman.
- Ghosts can be reborn after they are eaten.
- Game is won when Pacman eats all the yellow dots in the maze.
- Game is lost when Pacman loses both his lives.

The rules of a game should be balanced. This means if the game is too difficult, people will not play it. If the game is too easy, people will not find it challenging enough to spend time on it.

In the Pacman game, there are:

- 4 monsters patrolling vs 1
- Power pellets through which Pacman can eat the ghosts.
- Maze corners in which Pacman can hide

A good game is also adaptive - normally their difficulty level keeps increasing as the player plays the game. The Pacman game gets harder to eat the dots as the game progresses because there are lesser dots and they are spread across.

Good gameplay has some elements of chance and some elements of skill involved. The movements of the ghosts are completely random. So whether the Pacman gets detected by the ghost has elements of chance involved. The skills of the player are in quickly maneuvering the Pacman away from the ghosts and eating all the yellow dots on the way.

Another very good characteristic of games is that they give immediate feedback to the player on how they are doing.

In the Pacman game, the feedback is:

- Players get points depending on the dots/ghosts they eat.
- Player loses a life when eaten by the ghost.
- Sounds in the game also give quick feedback to the player.

Lastly, all games tell a story.

Thus, a game has the following characteristics:

- Characters (PC and NPC)
- Story
- Goals
- Rules
- Balance
- Adaptivity
- Chance vs Skill
- Feedback

In this class, you deconstructed an existing game to identify key elements of a game.

### What's NEXT?

In the next class, you will be learning about Game Story and Mechanics.