

The Math Inside Video Games

- Video games are all about *change*: How fast is this character moving? How does the score change if the player collects a coin? Where on the screen should we draw a castle?
- We can break down a game into parts, and figure out which parts change and which ones stay the same. For example:
 - Computers use **coordinates** to position a character on the screen. These coordinates specify how far from the left (x-coordinate) and the bottom (y-coordinate) a character should be. Negative values can be used to "hide" a character, by positioning them somewhere off the screen.
 - When a character moves, those coordinates change by some amount. When the score goes up or down, it *also* changes by some amount.
- From the computer's point of view, the whole game is just a bunch of numbers that are changing according to some equations. We might not be able to see those equations, but we can definitely see the effect they have when a character jumps on a mushroom, flies on a dragon, or mines for rocks!
- Modern video games are *incredibly* complex, costing millions of dollars and several years to make, and relying on hundreds of programmers and digital artists to build them. But building even a simple game can give us a good idea of how the complex ones work!