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| Studio Name |
| Game Title |
| Design Document |

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# Marketing

## Pitch

Pitch is a one or two sentence description intended to draw curious players or investors in to learn more about your game.

## High-Level Overview

The high-level overview is a longer description of your game that you might use later in a store-listing, funding campaign, or under a trailer on YouTube. This is where you want to highlight unique elements about your game including unusual blends of genre, notable contributors, innovative mechanics, etc.

## Genre

What kind of game is it? If you’re blending genres, take a moment to list them and explain which part of your game borrows from which genre. List examples of games that use similar mechanics to help the reader immediately get a sense of the game’s style.

## Platforms and Stores

List where you intend to make the game available and take this opportunity to explain at high level your strategy for where you will release the game and at what point. If you plan to release a game on Steam and port it to consoles if it generates enough interest, for example, capture that here.

## Target Audience

Describe who you suspect will be most receptive to your game. You may have an age range in mind, or you may be trying to interest fans of a certain game, series, sport, or activity. Knowing who you’re targeting will help you answer many questions during development.

# Creative

## Story Synopsis

You don’t need to have every minor detail pinned down about your story at this point, but you need to have a good idea what’s going to happen. Introduce major characters and explain the nature of the story that’s going to unfold. If you haven’t landed on the perfect name for someone, give them a temporary nickname so you can keep working and help readers make sense of this section. Hit all the major beats of your story before moving on.

## Characters

Introduce all major characters and give a sense of their role in your game. Again, a temporary nickname is fine if it allows you to keep working. Examples below.

**The Player –** The player will be selected from a collection of possible sprites. Whichever is used, the player will be a pre-teen from a sleepy village who will answer the call of adventure when strange beasts threaten their small community.

**Grandpa** – The player’s grandpa kicks off the adventure by giving the player his old boxing gloves, declining to give them a hunting rifle, and suggesting they go into town to learn self-defense and discipline from the Combat Sports Academy. The player will uncover secrets about Grandpa’s past while seeking answers to help him vanquish the game’s antagonist.

## Outline

Build out the skeleton of the game’s story here in as much detail as you can. This will help guide each major functional area in development.

* Introduction
  + Player character is chosen
  + Player is introduced to their home
  + Grandpa gives the player is gloves
  + Player reluctantly goes to learn fight sports in town
  + Player returns home to find that mysterious beasts have ravaged the village
* Gameplay
  + Player follows a trail from the village to an enemy encampment
  + More things happen, I’m not writing out this whole imaginary game that is not in development.
* Endgame
  + The player returns to the village to rebuild, having vanquished the beasts, thanks to Grandpa’s insight and the friends he or she made along the way, probably.
  + This is a good place to also explain any alternate endings you plan, and try to capture what leads to them along the way

## Gameplay Experience

This is where to describe the experience of playing the game from the player’s perspective. Explain what they will do when they turn on the game, including character creation, watching an introduction, gradually learning the game’s mechanics, and at high level how they will spend most of their time before the game draws to a close. This will of course vary greatly between different types of games.

## Non-story Modes

Everyone loves a good campaign, but if you have more cool things for players to do (or you do not have a campaign) here’s where to describe what you have planned. Go into as much detail as you need to for readers to get on the same page before development starts.

## Art Overview

Take this opportunity to describe the game’s visual style, including what the graphics will communicate and how you intend for them to be created, if you are not delegating those decisions to someone else. For my latest project, for example, I explained the era of the games I intended to emulate with a retro style and some asset packs I was using to get started.

## Art Influences

* *Final Fantasy* (NES)
* *Final Fantasy II* (SNES)
* *Breath of Fire II* (SNES)
* *Stardew Valley* (PC)

## Audio Overview

Same as the art overview. What are you communicating with your sound, and how are you creating it? If it’s someone else’s responsibility, capture what you want them to achieve with the game’s audio.

## Audio Influences

* *Kirby’s Adventure* (NES)
* *Super Mario RPG* (SNES)
* *Stardew Valley* (PC)
* Art Influence games listed above

# Technical

## Gameplay Overview

Describe from a software developer’s perspective what must be created for the player. For example, the player requires a means of selecting and customizing their character. An action RPG combat system will allow them to fight creatures threatening them or other characters. A dialogue system will allow them to have conversations with peaceful non-player characters, and an inventory/equipment system will allow them to manage inventory and customize their stats according to what items they have equipped. Refer back to the Gameplay Experience section if it helps.

## Gameplay Influences

What games inspired the mechanics in your game that are not brand new?

* *Elite: Dangerous* (PC), inventory management and gathering information from NPCs
* Early *Final Fantasy* series (NES/SNES), town exploration, NPC communication
* *Stardew Valley* (PC), sense of quaint surroundings and personal quest

## Levels, Areas, and Major Scenes

Listing these areas and events will help you identify places and things that the underlying engine must support.

* **Home** – Player is first introduced here. After the village is attacked, the player will mostly leave it behind. It will need to be shown as a thriving, peaceful place, and as the scene of terror and carnage.
* **World Map** – This is where the player will determine where to spend their limited time. The world will contain several regions and multiple smaller cities and surrounding areas.
* **Water Level** – One day I’d like to make a game that builds up to what looks like a menacing water level that everyone is going to hate, but someone stops you at the last moment and explains this is almost never necessary.

## NPC Interaction

If this is the kind of game that has NPC interaction, explain the nature of those interactions here. If you have branching personal dialogue, that will have to be supported. If interactions can change the way events unfold, that needs to be supported in the engine as well. If we’re veering off course from the type of game you’re developing, you may need this section to describe something else entirely. A store with sports equipment you can buy and customize between matches. The goal is to make sure the developer/development team knows exactly what to plan out and avoid costly surprises later.

## Objectives and Scoring

Your player is trying to do something in this game. How do we track how good they are at it? If it’s story-driven, what are they trying to achieve? Is there a secondary means of tracking that will be used for scorekeeping or achievements? What will you track just for fun? Distance travelled? Enemies vanquished? Potions hoarded?

## Play Mechanics

List as many specific gameplay mechanics as you can:

* Basic movement
* Navigating overworld map
* Interacting with objects during exploration
* NPC discussions
* Combat – basic moves
* Combat – special moves

## Networked Features

Online multiplayer? News and updates screen? Log into an account? Downloadable content? Store?

## Store Integrations

If you know for sure what stores you’re targeting for launch, list any special integration work you’re going to have to do. For example: Itch.io build tools, Steam achievements, etc.

## Special Systems and Other Considerations

Does your game include its own commodities market? Planning on any special data systems? Document them here.

# Milestones

## Prototype

What do you want your game to be able to do in the prototype? Will you make the prototype available to anyone? What will you do to gather feedback?

## Alpha

What needs to be done in Alpha? Will you put the game anywhere at this point? Temporarily or permanently? Will you charge for it?

## Beta

What should Beta look like? Will you take it to Early Access? How will you refine the game at this stage to move toward a release candidate?

## Release

What is your plan for launching the game? What will it cost? Where will it go? Where will your community be most active?

## Ports

If reception is positive (or downloads are high), will you port the game to any other platforms? Which will be your priority? What goals do you hope to meet by developing the port?

## Expansions

Will you extend the game’s content? Holiday updates? Full DLC? What will it contain? Will you charge money for it? Will it take priority over ports? Which do you anticipate will be a better return on investment?