

Design Process



STEP 1- BRAINSTORM

Brainstorming is the first step in the design process. During this phase, game designers ask themselves what kind of game they can make with the materials at hand to meet their design constraints and goals. Often, you might just come up with a few kernels that can be developed into a game and by testing it out, running it by other people, and pushing your creativity, you can come up with something great! It's important to come up with many ideas during the brainstorming phase - don't edit yourself and certainly don't write anything off just yet!



STEP 2- PROTOTYPE

Once you've brainstormed a number of ideas, it's time to select one or two favorites to push forward and start building. Prototyping is all about trying to get your idea on paper in order to create something playable so that you can test out your idea and get feedback. You want to think about which ideas seem the most possible, given the time you want to spend, the materials you have, and the design challenge at hand. Create a sketch of your idea if you'd like, then start to use the materials to build your game. Index cards and post-its are great prototyping tools! It's ok to change your idea once you start to build it - that's part of the process.



STEP 3 - PLAYTEST

Once you've built a playable prototype and tested it and refined it yourself or with your team members, you're ready to have someone else play to help you determine how to make it the best possible game. Find one or more people to play your game and ask them what they think. It helps if you ask them specific questions about their experience such as:

- + How fun was this game? What did you like about it? What didn't you like?
- + What suggestions do you have for improving it?

Record some notes so that you can use them later to improve your design. Also - you'll be able to learn a lot just by watching them play the game. Did they understand the rules? Did they interact with the game in the way you intended? Was anything confusing or overly challenging? What were you surprised by?



STEP 4 - ITERATE

Iteration is a fancy word for making changes to your game in order to make it better and more fun. What changes need to be made to your game based on the playtest? How can you improve your game? Using playtester feedback, pick one or two ideas that you think are best for making a change to your game to improve it, then put those changes into action by redesigning your game. You can playtest it again and get more feedback if you want until you feel you are done with it.



STEP 5 - REFLECT

Reflection is a key part of the game design process. As game designers, we are constantly evaluating our work and processes and getting feedback from others in order to improve and grow. Think about what you learned during your game design process. It's helpful to think about what you liked about the process and your game, but more importantly, consider what didn't go so well and what you would change if you were going to do this again. The game design process is about reframing failure or mistakes as an opportunity to improve

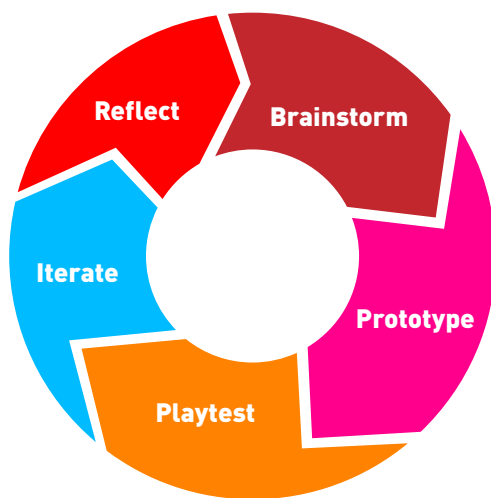
Parts of a Game Modding Worksheet

Tic, Tac, Toe Mod

Now it's time to modify or as real game designers say, "mod" a game. During this activity you will focus on how the Space, Rules and Challenge of a game affect gameplay. Your challenge is to make a new version of Tic, Tac, Toe that is playable for three players! Ready, set, design!

STEP ONE: Gather your materials

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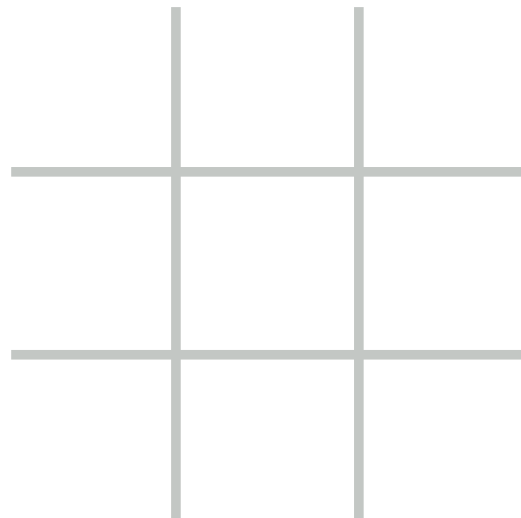
STEP TWO: Remember the design process

At the beginning of your journey to becoming a game designer you learned about the design process. Now you are going to put it to use. In order to modify Tic, Tac, Toe, you will move through each step of the design process. Take a look at the process and go back to the first section to read about any step that you have questions about. Once you remember the process, it's time to get started.

STEP THREE: Game design time!

BRAINSTORM: Part of the first step of the design process is to really understand what you are designing and who you are designing for. In order to really understand your design challenge you need to play a lot of Tic, Tac, Toe and since you are being challenged to redesign for three people, you need to play with three people! Follow the steps below to begin your brainstorming.

- 1 Find two other people to play Tic, Tac, Toe with you. Make sure they understand how to play regular Tic, Tac, Toe. Now explain that they are going to help you understand how to play Tic, Tac, Toe with three players. The only change will be that you will play with an X, an O and a Y.



Tic, Tac, Toe Mod *(CONTINUED)*

2 After a few minutes of playing check in with your players and see how it is going. Here are some questions you might ask:

- a) What works and doesn't work with this new Rule of 3 players in the game?
- b) How does the new rule affect the challenge of the game?
- c) How does the new rule affect how fun the game is?

Record the information you gather:

3 You probably observed that when you add an additional player to Tic, Tac, Toe but keep other parts of the game the same, it's not that fun and doesn't really work. In fact, it breaks the game! Once you added a new rule of adding a third player, it threw the rest of Tic, Tac, Toe off balance. **A good game is a balanced game!** As a game designer, your job is to fix the broken game. How can you mod the game for a third player AND make sure the game stays fun and challenging? Think about how you can mod the SPACE, RULES and/or CHALLENGE to make it more fun for 3 players? Brainstorm some ideas below!

Tic, Tac, Toe Mod *(CONTINUED)*

PROTOTYPE:

Once you have a few ideas, try them out! Use next couple of pages to design a couple different versions of Tic, Tac, Toe. Remember, you can use other materials that you gathered, you could change the look of the Tic, Tac, Toe board, change the rules, etc



Tic, Tac, Toe Mod *(CONTINUED)*

More space for prototyping and writing new rules:

Tic, Tac, Toe Mod *(CONTINUED)*

PLAYTEST:

Now gather some family, friends, or classmates and ask them to playtest. Explain the new rules to them and ask them to play. As they are playing watch them play. Does it seem like the game is fun? Do your new rules make sense? Is there anything that needs to be changed to make it more fun or more playable?

Record your ideas here:

ITERATE:

Use your playtest feedback to make any changes to your game to make it better and more fun.

Share your game!
You did it, you modded a game!

Tic Tac Toe Matching Worksheet

One entry point to becoming a game designer is to mod a game - change one part - to create a new game. Before you change one part you have to understand all the parts and how they work together. Look at the parts of a game chart one more time, below. After reviewing the definitions, match the words below (on the right) to the correct part(s) of Tic Tac Toe.

Parts of a Game

GOAL

What does a player or team have to do to win?
Cross the finish line first, collect the most marbles, be the last standing, etc

CHALLENGE

What obstacles might you put in the player's way to make reaching the goal fun and interesting?
How is she being kept from doing it? Her leg is tied to her teammate's, the marble is hidden, getting hit with a ball ends game play, etc

CORE MECHANICS

What core actions or moves does the player do to power the play of the game?
Jumping, wiggling, searching, solving clues, ducking, bobbing, weaving, dodging

COMPONENTS

What parts make up the materials of play?
Bandanas? A grassy field, red rubber balls and a court?

RULES

What relationships define what a player can and cannot do in the game?
Players' legs are tied together, they must start on the same line, all marbles must be gathered waiting 3 minutes, balls can only be thrown outside the line towards the midsection.

SPACE

Where does the game take place and how does the space affect the game?
Basketball court? A circle? Classroom? The park?

Parts of Tic Tac Toe:

Match the items below to the appropriate part(s) of Tic Tac Toe.

- WRITING UTENSILS
- WHITE BOARD
- BLOCKING
- BE THE FIRST TO GET THREE IN A ROW
- 3X3 GRID
- PLAYERS TAKE TURNS WRITING THEIR SYMBOL
- CHALKBOARD
- 2 PLAYERS
- X AND O
- PAPER
- WRITING
- YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOUR OPPONENT WILL PLACE THEIR SYMBOL



Playtest Reflection Form

GAME: _____

DATE: _____

NAME: _____

GRADE: _____

Fun

How fun was the game?
(Please circle a face)



SO fun!



Fun!



I'm not sure



Not so fun



Epic fail

Difficulty Level

How difficult was the game?
(Please circle one)

Too Easy

Nicely
Challenging

Too
Challenging

Clarity of Rules

How clear were the rules?
(Please circle a face)



Perfectly clear!



A little clear



I'm not sure



Not so clear



Not clear at all

What can you and other players learn from playing this game?

What would you change about the game? What would you add or take out?

What was your favorite thing about the game?

What was your least favorite thing about the game?

Glows and Grows Worksheet

GAME: _____

DATE: _____

REVIEWER: _____

GLOWS

Positive Feedback; what works well

GROWS

Constructive feedback; areas for improvement

