

= Master Chief ( Halo ) =

MCPON John @-@ 117 , or " Master Chief " , is a fictional character and the protagonist of the Halo fictional universe created by Bungie . Master Chief is a playable character in the series of science fiction first @-@ person shooter video games Halo : Combat Evolved , Halo 2 , Halo 3 , Halo 4 , and Halo 5 : Guardians . Outside video games , the character appears in books and graphic novels ? Halo : The Fall of Reach , Halo : The Flood , Halo : First Strike , and Halo : Uprising ? and has cameos in other Halo media , including Halo : Reach , Halo : Ghosts of Onyx , The Halo Graphic Novel , Halo Legends and Halo 4 : Forward Unto Dawn .

The Master Chief is a towering and faceless biochemically and cybernetically @-@ enhanced supersoldier , raised and trained from an early age to be a weapon ; he is almost never seen without his green @-@ colored armor and helmet . He is commonly referred to by his naval rank , rather than his given birth @-@ name or serial @-@ designation . The character is voiced by Steve Downes , a Chicago disc jockey , in the video games in which he appears . Downes based his personification of the Chief on an initial character sketch which called for a Clint Eastwood @-@ type character of few words .

The Master Chief is a video game icon , a relative newcomer among more established franchise characters , such as Mario , Sonic the Hedgehog and Lara Croft . The character has received a mostly positive reception . While some have described the Chief 's silent and faceless nature as a weakness of the character , other publications have suggested these attributes better allows players to assume his role .

= = Character design = =

The task of developing Master Chief for the character 's first appearance in Halo : Combat Evolved fell on Rob McLees and the project 's art director , Marcus Lehto . Eventually , Shi Kai Wang was hired for conceptual art . One of Wang 's sketches was accepted and became the basis for the Master Chief ; however , after Wang 's version was converted to a 3 @-@ D model , it was decided the character looked too slender , " almost effeminate " . The Master Chief was subsequently bulked up to the version currently found in the games . Similarly , the Chief 's armor went through various changes , such as the addition of an antenna , which was removed later in development , and a green tint .

In an interview on creating believable video game characters , Bungie 's Joseph Staten noted that , " Master Chief is really what kicked off the creativity , " he said , " in terms of how people react to him . He 's a space Marine in really cool green armor . " The character 's perspective changed as the game itself changed from a real @-@ time strategy game to a first @-@ person shooter , but the Chief was always intended to be a soldier in the last part of a long and bitter war . For much of the game 's development , the character had no name . The developers spent time considering what rank and branch of the armed forces the Chief would belong to ? naval ranks grabbed them as " different " from ones the developers had heard of before . " Master Chief " was intended to be a placeholder while a real name was finalized , but the moniker stuck .

Downes , who voices the Master Chief , is a disc jockey and voice actor who had never played video games before Halo . Downes only previous experience with video game voice work was a small part for Septerra Core : Legacy of the Creator . During production of Halo , Martin O 'Donnell , Bungie 's music director , recommended Downes for the part of the Chief based on his experience working on Septerra . Downes never interviewed for the part , describing his acceptance as " a phone call " . For years Downes never appeared at Bungie or Microsoft events and believed that the Master Chief is left masked because " [ the character 's identity ] is really in the eye of the player " .

= = Attributes = =

= = = Personality = = =

Downes said that his voicing for Master Chief was based entirely on Bungie 's written character description provided , which specified a character similar to Clint Eastwood and of few words . In a podcast interview , the actor noted that , during the recording , he was given a fair amount of creative leeway to develop the Chief 's personality . In the games , Master Chief never speaks during player @-@ controlled gameplay , making him an almost silent protagonist . Even during cut scenes , the character generally speaks sparingly . Bungie Studios ' Frank O 'Connor has described the Chief as " so quiet and so invisible , literally , that the player gets to pretend they 're the Chief . The player gets to inhabit those shoes [ and ] apply their own personality . " Bungie concept artist Eddie Smith described Master Chief as " pretty much the consummate professional . He does his job , walks off , doesn 't even get the girl , he 's that cool he doesn 't need her . " Although the Master Chief is usually depicted as calm , quiet , and wryly cynical , some reviewers stated that Eric Nylund 's portrayal of the character in Halo : The Fall of Reach deviates significantly from the treatment found in the games and other media . Alternatively , William C. Dietz 's portrayal of the Chief in Halo : The Flood was occasionally blasted by fans as too radical a departure from Nylund 's template .

Initially , the very existence of the SPARTAN project and thus John 's existence , was categorised as classified information . Many within the United Nations Space Command ( UNSC ) , who were aware of this information , were strongly opinionated against the project , as the SPARTAN unit 's proven versatility elevated them into direct competition with role @-@ dedicated , established units . Since John emerged as the most exemplary Spartan from among the unit , he became the natural target of their sentiments . Antonio Silva , an officer from one such unit ( ODSTs ) , exemplifies this attitude , and considers the Master Chief the freak product of an experiment that should never be repeated . Although the Chief resents Silva 's dishonor to his fallen comrades ' memory , he is also loyal to the chain of command , and remains quiet . Following the partial declassification of the SPARTAN project , John 's heroic achievements caused the overall sentiment to lean in his favor . Despite these explorations of the character 's personality , O 'Connor said in an interview that revealing the face of the Chief is not as important as revealing the events going on around the character .

The Master Chief has a close relationship with the artificial intelligence construct Cortana , whom he meets just prior to the fall of the human colony Reach before the events of Combat Evolved . Cortana was created as a game design requirement to guide the character as Master Chief throughout the game world , but she became an important aspect of revealing the Chief 's humanity . " Over time , Cortana became a fully realized character ? a friend and companion to the Chief , not to mention the only person to poke revealing holes in his tough @-@ guy exterior , " Staten recalled . The game designers also crafted the player experience of the first game to focus on abandonment and loneliness in many levels , as it reinforced the plot point that many of the Chief 's friends were killed before the game began .

= = = Outward appearance = = =

In the video games , the Master Chief is rarely seen without his armor . In @-@ game cutscenes tease the character 's face , but never reveal it ; for example , at the end of Halo : Combat Evolved , the Chief removes his helmet , but camera movement hides his head . Bungie says this helps the gamer fully assume his character . At the end of Halo 4 , Master Chief 's eyes are briefly shown when he removes his armor and helmet . One physical description of the adult Master Chief comes from the novels . During a briefing scene in Halo : The Flood , the Chief is described as tall with short hair , serious eyes , and strong features . His skin is " too white " , a consequence of spending most of his time in his armor . The Master Chief stands about seven feet ( 2 @.@ 13 m ) tall and weighs 1 @,@ 000 pounds ( 450 kg ) in armor ; without it , he stands six feet , seven inches ( 2 m ) tall and weighs 287 pounds ( 130 kg ) .

= = Appearances = =

== Halo : The Fall of Reach ==

The Master Chief 's backstory is never explained in the games . A prequel of Halo : Combat Evolved , the 2001 novel The Fall of Reach , reveals much of the character 's history and was released as a companion to the game . Master Chief , originally named John , was born in 2511 and first lived with his family on the human colony planet Eridanus II . Large for his six years of age , and approximately a foot above his school peers , he is described as a typical boy with brown hair , freckles and a gap between his two front teeth . In 2517 , John and dozens of children his age are covertly taken from their homes and replaced with clones to hide the kidnapping . The original children are brought to the planet Reach , one of the UNSC 's bastions , to begin intense physical and psychological training to become " Spartan @-@ II " supersoldiers . They are assigned new identification numbers instead of last names ; John becomes known as John @-@ 117 . Approximately eight years later , John and the other children are biologically and cybernetically augmented and enhanced . These procedures have substantial risks ; only John and thirty @-@ two other Spartans survive .

After the Spartans ' first successful operation , John @-@ 117 is briefed on the threat posed by the Covenant , a theocratic alliance of alien races , and witnesses the utter devastation wrought by a single ship . In 2552 , the Chief and Spartans return to Reach , where the UNSC High Command has developed a last @-@ ditch plan to capture a Covenant High Prophet , who they hope could be used in order to barter a truce . The Master Chief 's armor is upgraded , and he first encounters the artificial intelligence ( AI ) Cortana during a training mission . The Covenant arrive and invade , despite the best efforts of the Spartans and other UNSC forces . Aboard the spaceship Pillar of Autumn , Cortana plots a random course of escape . Seemingly the last Spartan alive , the Master Chief enters cryonic sleep along with the Pillar of Autumn 's crew .

== Halo : Combat Evolved ==

Master Chief first appears in the games as the protagonist of Halo : Combat Evolved and the 2003 novelization , Halo : The Flood . During the opening cinematic of Halo : Combat Evolved , the Chief is awakened from cryonic sleep . Upon exiting slipspace , the Pillar of Autumn is attacked by the Covenant and crash lands on Halo , a ring @-@ shaped megastructure . Master Chief escapes the ship via an escape pod . Upon landing on Halo , his first task is to find other survivors . While fighting the Covenant , Master Chief and Cortana learn that Halo was created by an ancient race , the Forerunners , as a last line of defense against an alien parasite called the Flood . The Covenant accidentally release the Flood , which begins to spread across the ring . At the request of the installation 's resident AI 343 Guilty Spark , Master Chief retrieves the Index , a device used to activate Halo 's defenses and eliminate the Flood . However , Guilty Spark neglects to inform the Master Chief that Halo would accomplish this by destroying all sentient life in a vast radius , essentially starving the Flood to death . Cortana intervenes to prevent the activation of Halo . She and the Master Chief destroy it by detonating the Pillar of Autumn 's fusion reactor core . The Master Chief and Cortana escape in a Longsword spacecraft , believing they are the only survivors .

== First Strike and Halo 2 ==

Halo : First Strike , the 2003 novel by Eric Nylund , follows the Master Chief after the events of Halo : Combat Evolved and bridges the events of Halo and Halo 2 . Floating in Halo 's debris field , Cortana and the Chief discover that there are in fact other human survivors . The Master Chief and these soldiers capture the Covenant flagship Ascendant Justice , and return to Reach to save any UNSC survivors on the planet . At Reach , the Master Chief discovers that the Covenant had not destroyed the planet 's biosphere in the usual manner , and that a few other Spartans survive . The Chief retrieves Dr. Catherine Elizabeth Halsey , the creative genius behind the SPARTAN @-@ II

Project , and his fellow soldiers . The Spartans then attack a massive Covenant command station , the Unyielding Hierophant , thus delaying a Covenant assault on Earth .

The Master Chief returns as one of two playable characters in Halo 2 , the 2004 sequel to Halo : Combat Evolved . Returning to Earth with heavily damaged armor , the Master Chief receives an upgrade . Aboard Cairo Station in space , he attends a brief awards ceremony , which is interrupted by a Covenant invasion . Master Chief is commanded to protect the station . The Covenant is repelled , and the Master Chief joins the ship In Amber Clad to fight the Covenant on Earth 's surface , in New Mombasa . As the Covenant departs via slipspace , the In Amber Clad follows them to Installation 05 , another Halo . The Master Chief lands on this Halo and subsequently assassinates the Covenant High Prophet of Regret . Emerging from a structure , the Master Chief is attacked by orbiting Covenant forces , but is rescued by the Gravemind , an intelligence of Flood origin . The Gravemind sends him to High Charity to search for Delta Halo 's Index . Subsequently , the Master Chief boards a Forerunner ship bound for Earth , intending to " finish the fight " .

= = = Uprising and Halo 3 = = =

Back on Earth , the Master Chief helps to repel hostile Covenant forces from Mombasa , Kenya and Voi . With the Arbiter ( a Covenant Elite who has sided with humanity ) and fellow allies , the Chief leads the assault on a Forerunner artifact that the Covenant Prophet of Truth is attempting to activate . Soon after Truth escapes Earth through the slipspace portal opened by the artifact , the Flood lands on Earth . After helping to control the infestation , the Master Chief follows Truth to the Ark , an immense constructed world more than 262 @,@ 144 light @-@ years from the center of the Milky Way galaxy and well beyond the range of any Halo . There , all the Halos can be remotely activated , thus killing all sentient life that could be infested by the Flood . It is discovered that a new Halo is being constructed to replace the one that the Master Chief destroyed in Halo : Combat Evolved . The Flood follow the Chief to the Ark , bringing High Charity through the slipspace portal to escape the range of the six original Halos . The allied Elites and humans decide to activate the new Halo in order to kill the Flood outside the galaxy , and thus preserve life there . 343 Guilty Spark opposes the premature activation of the incomplete installation and attempts to stop it . Master Chief destroys him , activates the ring , and escapes with Cortana and the Arbiter on the UNSC frigate Forward Unto Dawn . During the escape , the collapsing slipspace portal severs the Dawn in two , stranding Cortana and the Master Chief deep in space . While the Arbiter returns to Earth , Cortana activates a distress beacon , knowing that rescue could take years ; the Master Chief enters cryonic sleep , telling Cortana , " Wake me , when you need me . " If the player finishes the last level on Legendary difficulty , a cutscene shows the severed half of the ship floating near an unknown planet .

= = = Halo 4 = = =

Master Chief awakens from the cryo @-@ pod he entered at the end of Halo 3 within the Forward Unto Dawn . The Covenant are invading the ship and Master Chief fights his way outside as the frigate crash lands on a Forerunner shield world . He survives the fall and awakens inside the shield world without serious injury . There , while fighting the shield world 's defensive AI which Cortana identifies as " Prometheans " , he encounters the Didact , an antagonistic Forerunner who plans on using a Forerunner artifact called The Composer to turn humanity into digital data . Master Chief manages to foil his plans by delivering a HAVOK nuclear warhead inside the Didact 's ship and detonating it , while the increasingly rampant Cortana protects him with a hard light barrier before fading away leaving the Chief mourning her loss .

= = = Halo 5 : Guardians = = =

During the events between Halo 4 and Halo 5 , Master Chief has reunited with and taken command of Blue Team , the last remaining known survivors of the SPARTAN @-@ II program since Halo :

First Strike . By the events of Halo 5 , Master Chief has been known to execute countless military operations non @-@ stop without rest alongside Blue Team . Blue Team 's latest operation entailed the attempted retaking of an Office of Naval Intelligence facility on Argent Moon from Jul M 'Dama 's Covenant remnant forces . During the operation , Master Chief comes into contact with what he believes to be Cortana , directed to go to Meridian . After sharing his findings with both Blue Team and the UNSC flagship Infinity after scuttling the station , Master Chief goes AWOL to investigate Meridian , with Blue Team following out of their lifelong loyalty to their team leader . Blue Team 's rogue actions attract the attention of Fireteam Osiris , a team of SPARTAN @-@ IV operatives led by Jameson Locke assigned with the purpose of returning them to custody .

Blue Team finds a dormant Guardian , an autonomous Forerunner ship . After a brief fight with Locke , Blue Team boards the ship and is transported to the Forerunner World of Genesis . Upon reaching Genesis , Blue Team learns that Cortana did not perish , but came across the Domain , a Forerunner computer network that serves as " the fountain of youth " for artificial intelligence . Suspicious about Cortana 's nature and aware of the damage Cortana had caused , Blue Team attempts to meet with Cortana in an attempt to return her back to the UNSC . Fireteam Osiris reaches Blue Team 's location and attempts to assist them , only for the two SPARTAN fireteams to get separated . After fighting through scores of Promethean forces , Master Chief attempts to negotiate with Cortana and asks her to return to the UNSC , only for Cortana to refuse and imprison Blue Team in a Forerunner prison called the Cryptum with the intent of preserving them while Cortana enforces a forced peace across the galaxy . Fireteam Osiris narrowly releases Blue Team from Cortana 's captivity , and reunites Blue Team with Dr. Catherine Halsey , the creator and surrogate mother of the SPARTAN @-@ IIs .

= = Other appearances = =

The Master Chief has appeared or has been referenced several times in non @-@ canon media . He is mentioned several times in Rooster Teeth Productions ' Halo @-@ based machinima parody series Red vs. Blue . In the first episode of the series , Grif , talking to teammate Simmons , says , " I signed up to fight some aliens . Next thing I know , Master Chief blows up the whole Covenant Armada , and I 'm stuck in the middle of nowhere , fighting a bunch of blue guys . " In the Halo Zune exclusive video titled " Turn On , Tune In , Zune Out " , Doc has a segment on his radio broadcast called " You 're not Master Chief , and that 's okay " . Team Ninja approached Bungie Studios and asked to use the Master Chief in their 2006 video game Dead or Alive 4 . Although the Chief could not be used due to storyline restrictions , Bungie 's interest in the idea resulted in the development of Nicole ( Spartan @-@ 458 ) .

Marketing for Halo 3 focused heavily on the character of the Master Chief , including " The Museum " , and appears in the subsequent video as part of a special advertisement series for Halo 3 entitled " Believe in a Hero " . The character appears outside Halo fandom and associated works ; a medieval variation of the Master Chief 's MJOLNIR armour appears in Fable II , as the suit of armour worn by a legendary hero named " Hal " . Hal 's Armour only appears as downloadable content .

Peter David 's graphic novel Helljumpers contains a cameo by the Master Chief " before he actually was [ the Chief ] . " The Master Chief appears as a main character in Marvel 's limited series Halo : Uprising , which ties together the events of Halo 2 and Halo 3 . The Master Chief appears in four episodes of the 2010 anime collection Halo Legends : " The Package " , " Origins " , " Homecoming " and " Odd One Out " .

Master Chief can be seen briefly at the end of the Halo : Reach campaign . When moving the right analog stick at the proper time during a cutscene , he can be seen in his cryo @-@ tube , ready to be revived at the beginning of Combat Evolved .

In 2008 , Neill Blomkamp , director of the delayed Halo film , said the film would have depicted the character as " the most important supporting cast member " because of his faceless nature . Instead , " other characters around him [ ... ] did most of the emotional heavy lifting " , with their story exploring their perception of the Chief .

= = Influences and analysis = =

IGN saw in the Master Chief elements of John 6725416 , a character in Christopher Rowley 's novel Starhammer . Other reviewers have suggested that the name John 117 could be a Biblical reference . Michael Nitsche of the Georgia Institute of Technology found similarity to Gordon Freeman , the protagonist of Valve Corporation 's Half-Life series of FPS video games : " [ Both characters ] are the independent , individualistic , and often lonely heroes that gain admiration by constantly proving their superiority ... in technology-driven , hostile , often closed spaces " .

Roger Travis , associate professor of classics at the University of Connecticut , compared the Master Chief to the epic hero Aeneas , in that both superhuman characters save a civilization by defeating strong enemies in a martial setting . The audience is intended to identify with the protagonist similarly in both stories . Matthew Stover compared Halo to the Iliad , saying that both stories share the meta-theme that " war is the crucible of character " . As military science fiction , Halo further raises the issue of being human . Stover argued that , since players are to imagine themselves as the Master Chief , the character is correctly presented as a cyborg , neither a flawless machine nor fully human . Players would be unable to empathize with the former , and the latter would be too specifically developed . This immersion has facilitated the use of the Halo series ' multiplayer mode for live digital puppetry , as in Chris Burke 's machinima talk show This Spartan Life .

= = Cultural impact = =

= = = Merchandise = = =

BusinessWeek listed the Master Chief among several video game characters who have been branded beyond their respective video games , " helping them transcend the very medium in the process " . The Master Chief has been used in marketing on a variety of products , from 7-Eleven Slurpees to T-shirts , Xbox 360 controllers , and Mountain Dew .

Several action figures of the character have been created to market of the Halo series ; the most recent were manufactured by McFarlane . One2One collectibles produced 1 : 2 scale busts of the Master Chief . These actions have been called necessary to the game franchise ; Ed Ventura , director of Xbox 's worldwide marketing , said , " We want to be in the hearts and minds of our fans as much as we can . "

= = = Reception = = =

In an article in Time , Lev Grossman stated that the Master Chief represents a " new kind of celebrity for a new and profoundly weird millennium " and is a symbol of the increasing legitimacy of video games as an art form . Asher Moses of The Sydney Morning Herald simply described the Chief as " iconic " . Electronic Gaming Monthly and Empire wrote that the Master Chief had become the de facto symbol for the Xbox and for a new generation of gamers to boot . The recognition of the Master Chief has spread to mainstream culture ; Madame Tussauds in Las Vegas has developed a wax sculpture of the Chief . At the ceremony , Pete Wentz of Fall Out Boy said that " the Master Chief is as much of a hero today as characters like Spider-Man , Frodo , and Luke Skywalker were for previous generations . " Downes only realized his character was such a huge hit after children lined up around the block for his autograph about a year after the game shipped .

Reaction to the Master Chief as a character is mixed . Some reviewers see the character 's silent nature as a strength ; others have said that this quality leaves him insufficiently developed and not believable . UGO ranked the Master Chief at number eight on its 2007 list of top heroes of all time , ahead of fellow video game characters Samus Aran , Link , and Gordon Freeman . In 2009 , GameDaily listed the " strong and silent type " among top 25 video game archetypes , using Master Chief as an example . Master Chief was also ranked number eight in Empire 's list of the greatest

video game characters . In 2009 , GamesRadar included him among the 25 best new characters of the decade . UGO listed Master Chief 's " trademark " helmet in its 2011 list of the coolest helmets and headgear in video games . In 2012 , GamesRadar ranked him as the eight " most memorable , influential , and badass " protagonist in games , commenting : " Chief isn 't the strongest or most crafty hero , and he isn 't particularly charismatic or intelligent or playful . But when civilization is on the line and all other options have been exhausted , Chief is the guy who 's going to get you through . " In 2013 , Complex ranked him as the second greatest soldier in video games .

Conversely , in listing the top ten choices for most overrated video game characters , IGN placed the Master Chief first , suggesting that the real appeal of the games was not their protagonists but the multiplayer mode . In another listing of the top ten video game characters that needed to die , IGN suggested that the dramatic death of the character could be one of the most powerful events in gaming . Cheat Code Central featured him in the 2011 list of top ten most overrated video game characters for being " rather bland . "