

= Halo 3 : ODST =

Halo 3 : ODST is a 2009 first @-@ person shooter video game developed by Bungie and published by Microsoft Game Studios . It is part of the Halo franchise , and was released on the Xbox 360 video game console on September 22 , 2009 . Players assume the roles of United Nations Space Command soldiers , known as " Orbital Drop Shock Troopers " or ODSTs , during the events of Halo 2 . In the game 's campaign mode , players explore the ruined city of New Mombasa to discover what happened to their missing teammates in the midst of an alien invasion . In the " Firefight " multiplayer option , players battle increasingly difficult waves of enemies to score points and survive as long as possible ; Halo 3 's multiplayer is contained on a separate disc packaged with ODST .

Bungie initially conceived ODST as a small side project to produce in the lull between Halo 3 's completion and Halo : Reach . Instead of featuring recognizable characters such as armored protagonist Master Chief , the developers focused on the ODSTs . Story director Joseph Staten penned a detective story utilizing film noir designs , settings , and characters . Composer Martin O 'Donnell abandoned his previous Halo themes to create a quieter , jazz @-@ influenced sound . During development , the planned expansion grew in scope to that of a full @-@ sized game . Release marketing for the game included a tie @-@ in comic , live @-@ action trailers , and print and web advertisements .

Upon release , ODST became the top @-@ selling Xbox 360 game worldwide . The title received generally positive reviews from critics , who praised the atmosphere , music , and story approach . Reviewers were divided on whether the relatively short campaign and included extras were enough to justify the game 's US \$ 60 price tag . The game was the top @-@ selling title in the United States in September 2009 , and sold more than 3 million copies worldwide . Softpedia , Time , and Wired were among publications that declared the game one of the year 's best .

= = Gameplay = =

Halo 3 : ODST is a shooter video game with most gameplay taking place from a first @-@ person perspective . The game features an open world environment in the updated Kenyan city of Mombasa , referred to as New Mombasa . Although the gameplay of ODST bears a strong resemblance to that of previous Halo titles , the player does not assume the role of the enhanced human supersoldier Master Chief , protagonist of Halo 3 . Instead , the player controls human soldiers known as " Orbital Drop Shock Troopers " or ODSTs . Since ODSTs do not possess the Master Chief 's advanced armor and reflexes , they cannot jump as high , move as fast , survive large falls , or wield two weapons at once . Instead of the Master Chief 's damage @-@ absorbing energy shield , the game uses a recharging stamina mechanic . After the player sustains damage , the screen flashes red and the stamina score decreases . If the player receives additional damage before the stamina can recover , the player 's health is reduced . Loss of all health causes the player character to die and restart at the last saved checkpoint . Medical packs scattered around the game environment can restore the player 's health . The player 's head @-@ up display ( HUD ) includes a " VISR " mode that outlines enemies in red , allies in green , and items of interest in either blue or yellow .

= = = Campaign = = =

The game 's Campaign mode may be played alone or cooperatively with a maximum of three additional players . As a lone human soldier known as " the Rookie , " the player 's goal is to discover what happened to his missing teammates . After finding a piece of evidence left behind , such as a sniper rifle hanging from a power line , the player will enter a flashback mission , where they assume the role of the missing soldier six hours earlier . After the player has found the first piece of evidence , the choice of where to go next is left open ; campaign levels may be played in any order .

## == Multiplayer ==

In the multiplayer matchmaking , ODSST includes Halo 3 's multiplayer game modes contained on a separate disc . The offering contains 21 multiplayer maps released for Halo 3 as well as 3 additional maps titled Citadel , Heretic , and Longshore . Along with the Halo 3 maps , ODSST includes a version of the Forge map editor ? a utility that allows player customizations of multiplayer levels .

ODST contains a cooperative game mode called Firefight , where players take on increasingly difficult waves of enemies in a timed survival game . Firefight can be played cooperatively with up to three other players via networked consoles ( System Link ) or Microsoft multiplayer service Xbox Live , or up to two players on the same console in splitscreen mode . Players start Firefight with only the Rookie as a playable character ; completing the campaign mode unlocks other characters and maps . Players are awarded medals for making special kills , and individual and team scores are tracked throughout the games . Inside Firefight , players have a shared pool of seven lives , which are replenished after completing five rounds . Adding to the difficulty are modifiers called " skulls " , which give enemies new abilities or a handicap to the player ? the " Catch " skull , for example , causes enemies to throw greater numbers of grenades . Each of the first three rounds in a set activates a different skull . On the fourth set , all skulls are activated and the players must survive 60 seconds .

## == Campaign ==

### == Setting and characters ==

ODST takes place in the 26th century , when humans under the command of the United Nations Space Command ( UNSC ) are locked in a war with a theocratic alliance of alien races known as the Covenant . During the events of the 2004 video game Halo 2 , the Covenant discover the location of Earth and launch an assault on the city of New Mombasa in Africa . Though the UNSC manages to repel most of the fleet , a large ship hovers over the city , depositing an invasion force . The ship eventually retreats via a slipspace jump , creating a massive shockwave . While the rest of Halo 2 's storyline follows the ship to an ancient installation identical to the first Halo , ODSST focuses on the aftermath of the shockwave , while the Covenant still occupy the city .

During the game , the player can unlock audio files to an additional narrative called " Sadie 's Story " , which tells the story of a civilian girl caught in the initial stages of the Covenant invasion and her quest to find her father . The tale can also provide useful information for the player during the game , such as helping to locate hidden caches of weapons .

The game 's protagonist is the unnamed Rookie , a new member of the Orbital Drop Shock Troopers . Troopers , known as ODSSTs or Helljumpers , often deploy in small , one @-@ man Human Entry Vehicles ( HEVs ) , launched from spaceships in the upper atmosphere . The Rookie is assisted in finding his teammates by Mombasa 's city maintenance AI , called the Superintendent or Virgil . The Rookie 's teammates are Buck , Dutch , Romeo , Mickey , and Dare . The lattermost is a UNSC Office of Naval Intelligence ( ONI ) agent in charge of the squad 's operation .

### == Plot ==

The game begins with Dutch ( Adam Baldwin ) , Romeo ( Nolan North ) , and Mickey ( Alan Tudyk ) discussing the Covenant ship above New Mombasa , with the Rookie asleep nearby . Buck ( Nathan Fillion ) arrives and introduces Dare ( Tricia Helfer ) . Romeo wakes the Rookie and the team enter their HEVs and drop through the atmosphere ; at the last minute , Dare changes their trajectory to miss the ship . The Covenant ship enters slipspace , sending a shockwave toward the ODSSTs ; the Rookie 's pod collides with Mickey 's and crashes into a building on the ground , knocking him unconscious for six hours . He awakens and proceeds to find clues as to what happened to his squadmates .

Buck makes a rough landing after the drop and fights through Covenant forces to find Dare . He finds Romeo instead , and the two resolve to find the others and get out of the city . Dutch drops near a nature preserve and helps Marines fighting there . Mickey commandeers a tank and fights his way along a Mombasa boulevard . Meeting up with Dutch , the two defend an ONI base from the Covenant , destroying the facility to keep it from being captured . They are evacuated by a transport and make contact with Buck , arranging a rendezvous at police headquarters , but are shot down . Buck and Romeo rescue Dutch and Mickey , but Romeo is seriously wounded . The squad hijacks a Covenant dropship , but instead of leaving the city , Buck decides to have them turn back and find Dare .

Back in the city , the Rookie is assisted by Virgil ( the Superintendent ) , which leads him to Dare 's position . The two reach the Superintendent 's data core , which possesses information on something the Covenant is looking for underneath the city . Inside the core , they discover a Covenant Engineer . Dare explains that the Engineers are " biological supercomputers " that have been enslaved by the Covenant , and the one they found wishes to defect to the humans ; with the Engineer 's information on the Covenant combined with the Superintendent 's data , Dare 's mission changes from downloading the Superintendent 's data to escorting the alien to safety . The Rookie , Dare , and the Engineer reunite with Buck and fight their way out of the city . As they fly away in the transport , the squad watches as Covenant ships destroy New Mombasa .

In the epilogue , one month after the events of the Campaign , the ODST squad has been keeping guard over the Engineer . Sergeant Major Avery Johnson arrives , informing the Engineer that he intends to ask it everything it knows about the Covenant ? and what they are looking for ? setting the stage for Halo 3 . If the campaign is completed on the Legendary difficulty level , a scene shows the Prophet of Truth overseeing the excavation of a Forerunner artifact buried beneath the Superintendent 's data core .

= = Development = =

= = = Design = = =

Much of ODST 's development team started work on director Peter Jackson 's Halo Chronicles video game during the production of Halo 3 . However , the failure of a Halo film adaptation and the subsequent cancellation of Chronicles meant a sizeable team no longer had a project . Around the same time , production for Halo : Reach began , and Bungie realized that there was a window of time for the studio to create a new product , what producer Curtis Creamer described as a two @-@ to @-@ three @-@ hour " mini @-@ campaign " . After looking at the proposal and the budget , studio head Harold Ryan gave the go @-@ ahead .

With a game engine already assembled , the team began honing the concept . Bungie was interested in bringing changes to the classical Halo format which had remained essentially unchanged over three games . The developers spent weeks considering which characters they wanted to focus on . Having players control previous protagonists such as the Master Chief or Arbiter would have brought with it story baggage and expectations . At one point , they considered making the game a Covenant @-@ themed story about an elite strike force . Instead , the developers looked at human characters ; while they considered Avery Johnson , they settled on the ODSTs . " The ODSTs have always been fan favorites , " Bungie community director Brian Jarrard explained . " We never really got inside [ the ODSTs ] , " story director Joseph Staten said , and he saw that game as an opportunity to flesh out the black @-@ armored soldiers .

Making the player an ODST required gameplay changes to preserve the classic Halo gameplay formula while branching it in new directions . The addition of silenced weapons and a revamped pistol were attempts to split the functionality of Halo 2 and Halo 3 's " battle rifle " weapon and give the ODSTs unique armaments . The sound designers increased the loudness of the game 's submachine gun to make it feel more powerful . The health mechanism was added to provide a level of tension ; " it reminds you that you 're vulnerable , " Staten said .

With the main characters in place , the development team had to decide on a setting . " The events that unfolded on Earth is something fans still clamor for after being ' short changed ' in Halo 2 , " Jarrard said . " Fans wanted to know what happened back on Earth , how humanity was defending it . " New Mombasa 's urban environments fit the intended feel of the game , as Bungie felt that the change of protagonists required a change in location : " We know the kinds of problems Master Chief solves , " Staten explained . " He goes to ancient , alien ring artifacts , fights galaxy @-@ consuming parasitic alien monsters and destroys alien empires [ ... ] The ODST , they maybe take small parts in that larger struggle . But the kind of fights they usually get into are usually the kind of fights they can tackle in a day . "

Returning to a previous setting offered the artists new challenges and opportunities to expand the scope of the city . Having the player walk through the streets at night inspired a film noir ambiance . Color shifts and a high degree of contrast pushed the game 's look beyond what previous Halo games had offered , but the team had to make sure that even dark portions of the city were playable . The entire core development team looked at commissioned concept paintings to decide how lighting schemes would affect the gameplay . The genre also influenced the character names and archetypes . The player character , for example , fits the concept of a lone , hardboiled detective . To increase the depth of the surroundings , Bungie added touches such as advertisements , trash collectors , and civilian versions of previously seen military hardware .

Bungie began development of ODST in March 2008 . ODST was the first Bungie title completed in less than three years , as production lasted 14 months . Since the team ? numbering around 70 , plus a five @-@ person core design group ? had such a small window for development , they had to prioritize features ; for example , rather than completely redesigning the enemies , only a small new subset of artificial intelligence behaviors were added . Because the game featured an open world different from most Halo missions , certain gameplay tweaks , such as the revamped weapons and an overhead map , were necessary . Whereas in a traditional Halo game , the designers would know from what locations players would approach groups of enemies , ODST required a different strategy . " We had to make sure we had groups of Covenant patrolling the city who could react from wherever you attack from and look intelligent doing it , " Creamer said . Though the game engine remained unchanged , graphical enhancements such as fullscreen shader system and parallax mapping added greater detail and realism .

The Firefight game mode was a late addition to the game . Staffer Tim Williams built a prototype shortly after Halo 3 shipped , placing the player in a portion of a Halo 3 campaign map and fighting enemies . When development commenced on ODST , William 's concept was adopted for the game and refined . Designer Lars Bakken described one advantage of the game mode as providing a more friendly multiplayer environment than hardcore players online . The designers reused the campaign scoring and medal system from Halo 3 to add a competitive edge .

Sadie 's Story was created by Fourth Wall Studios in partnership with Staten and artist Ashley Wood . Fourth Wall Studios was formed by former members of 42 Entertainment , who produced the highly successful I Love Bees alternate reality game to promote Halo 2 . Recalled Staten , " we realized that in Halo we do a pretty good job of describing the clash of these military industrial complexes , but it really is the soldiers ' story , " and Halo 3 : ODST offered a chance to take a look at the unexplored civilian story .

By December 2008 , the game was " representational " , meaning that players could experience the game from start to finish , albeit in an unfinished state . The entire Bungie staff was pulled from other duties to play through the game and offer feedback . Among the unfinished elements was the lack of finished dialogue delivered by voice actors , in which Staten filled in placeholder audio . The entire game was completed just before its presentation at the Electronic Entertainment Expo 2009 .

= = = Audio = = =

Bungie 's audio director Martin O 'Donnell and his partner Michael Salvatori composed the music for ODST . In contrast to Halo 's signature gregorian chant , there is no choral music in ODST , and no previous Halo themes make a return appearance . Two out of the game 's three hours of music were

packaged in a two @-@ disc soundtrack released September 22 , 2009 . Due to ODST 's shift to a new protagonist , O 'Donnell wanted to create new music that was evocative of Halo but branched in a different direction . Because the game tells a " human story , not a cyborg story " , O 'Donnell said , the score was more " intimate and personal " . For the Rookie 's rain @-@ slicked investigations , O 'Donnell felt that a jazz @-@ influenced approach worked best in echoing the noir atmosphere . Other characters did not have any themes written specifically for them but became paired with motifs that suited them .

O 'Donnell began writing the game 's music while Bungie was crafting the ODST announcement trailer . O 'Donnell based the trailer 's music on a small segment from the first ODST piece he wrote , titled " Rain " . Salvatori joined the project in February 2009 and helped complete the music chores in two months . Once O 'Donnell felt they had enough material , the Chicago @-@ based Salvatori flew to Seattle , Washington , finishing arrangements and recording live musicians . Most of the music was recorded during early 2009 . Additional composition chores were handled by Bungie sound designer C. Paul Johnson and orchestrator Stan LePard . The Northwest Sinfonia , which recorded the music for Halo 3 , performed orchestral sections at Studio X in Washington .

Members of Bungie were fans of the television series Firefly , and in Halo 3 's development brought in several of the actors to fill Marine voice roles . Three of them voiced the four main characters of the ODST squad : Nathan Fillion ( a Halo fan himself ) , Adam Baldwin , and Alan Tudyk . Tricia Helfer provided the voice for the ONI agent Dare ; Helfer and Fillion recorded their cinematic dialog together in the same room , a rarity in voice acting . Staten said that " their performances were stronger having them together at the same time " . While Staten wrote much of the cinematic dialogue , combat lines could be improvised by the voice actors . Adding Sadie 's Story to the game doubled the amount of voice work in the game . After the voice roles were filled , Bungie licensed Fillion and Helfer 's likenesses for their respective characters .

= = = Announcements = = =

In July 2008 , Microsoft head of Xbox business Don Mattrick told MTV that Bungie was working on a new Halo game for Microsoft , independent of the franchise spinoffs Halo Wars and Chronicles . An announcement of the new Halo project was expected at the Electronic Entertainment Expo ( E3 ) 2008 trade fair , with Bungie unveiling a countdown on their web site , but the announcement was shelved by Microsoft . Microsoft stated that it wanted the game to have its own event . On September 25 , 2008 , a year after the release of Halo 3 , Bungie debuted a teaser for the new project on their web site . A full trailer was released during the Tokyo Game Show on October 9 , 2008 , officially unveiling the game 's name as Halo 3 : Recon and a release date of Autumn 2009 . In an unusual approach for Bungie , the trailer used pre @-@ rendered graphics instead of the game engine or existing assets . Staten explained that it was too early in the game 's development to spend a large amount of time on the trailer , and it would not have allowed Bungie to add touches for fans to discuss .

In post @-@ trailer interviews , Bungie staff members told gaming press that Recon was the last installment in the Halo trilogy . Though Bungie did not consider Recon a full game , with writer Luke Smith comparing it to WarCraft III expansion The Frozen Throne , the game shipped with all Halo 3 multiplayer maps and did not require Halo 3 to play . Smith asserted the game would not be a crossover into stealth and squad @-@ based genres , noting , " this isn 't Brothers in Arms : Halo or Tom Clancy 's Splinter Cell : Halo . " On November 25 , Jarrard announced the game had been retitled to Halo 3 : ODST as a " more straightforward " description of the game .

Bungie and Microsoft first showed ODST in a playable form at E3 2009 , where the game 's release date and retail versions were finalized . Bungie initially marketed ODST as a title smaller in scope than previous numbered entries in the series . When the game 's retail versions were announced , however , the game received a standard price of US \$ 60 , which Bungie and Microsoft attributed to the game growing beyond the planned scope . " Over the course of development it got a lot bigger than we were anticipating , " said Bungie 's Lars Bakken . " We thought of it more as an expansion and then it grew well beyond that . " Creamer explained that since the development platform was

stable , " we were able to create quite a bit more content than we originally thought we would " . The game 's length increased from original estimates of 3 ? 5 hours to 8 ? 10 . The discrepancy was not discussed until E3 2009 when Microsoft decided it was a full game . Unlike the post @-@ launch support for Halo 3 , ODST does not have downloadable content .

= = Release = =

Halo 3 : ODST ships as a two @-@ disc set . The first disc contains the campaign mode as well as the Firefight co @-@ op mode , while the second disc contains the multiplayer mode with the complete set of Halo 3 maps . Owners of the game received an invitation to participate in the Halo : Reach multiplayer beta , which went live on May 3 , 2010 . Pre @-@ orders included a token to unlock Avery Johnson as a playable character in the Firefight multiplayer mode . This code was included only by certain retailers . A special edition " Collector 's Pack " contained the game and a special ODST @-@ branded wireless Xbox 360 Controller . Toys " R " Us offered an ODST action figure and a US \$ 20 gift card as a buying incentive .

By April 2009 , market research firm OTX reported that ODST was the most highly anticipated video game , a spot it continued to hold in late August . Before its release the title was the top @-@ selling game on Amazon.com based on preorders alone , spending 107 days atop the merchant 's top 100 video games and software list . Copies of ODST were sold early in France . Microsoft responded by launching an investigation and threatening to ban any players on Xbox Live playing ODST before its official release ; Xbox lead manager Stephen Toulouse later clarified that they would not ban legitimate buyers .

Microsoft prepared what was described as a " mammoth " advertising campaign for the game , with Entertainment Director Stephen McGill affirming that the game " is absolutely a key title to us ... this is the first time we 've ever done anything like this , and Halo 3 : ODST is a great way to kick it off . " Numerous promotional materials were released through Xbox Live , and many more via online and television advertising . Marvel Comics published a limited comic series , Helljumper , featuring ODST 's main characters .

A live @-@ action trailer titled The Life was posted on the Internet in September and later used in television spots as part of the promotional material released for the game . Filmed at several locations in Budapest , Hungary , The Life follows an ODST named Tarkov from a military funeral where he is inspired to become a soldier , through training and combat and up to the moment he becomes a leader in battle . The short film was created by advertising agency TAG SF with effects by Asylum , and directed by production company MJZ , who also handled the award @-@ winning Halo 3 " Believe " advertisement . Legacy Effects designed and fabricated props , weapons , armor , and a Covenant Brute costume within two weeks . Bungie supplied 3D geometry that allowed the company to quickly create accurate representations of in @-@ game items , and provided input on the UNSC dress uniforms . The initial cemetery scene was filmed inside the cooling tower of an active nuclear power plant in Budapest , and outside the tower the production team created a mud pit and obstacle course to simulate basic training . Members of the Hungarian special forces served as drill instructors in the training sequence , firing blanks . Finally , filming moved to an abandoned Soviet @-@ era aluminum refinery for the short 's final memorial scene . An additional scene was shot there , but did not appear in the final product .

ODST launch events were held around the United States . Bungie and Microsoft sponsored an official launch event at the Experience Music Project and Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame in Seattle , Washington . Featured at the event were discussion panels about the series and advance looks at other Halo content such as the anime collection Halo Legends . About 800 fans attended from around 6 ? 11 pm before heading to nearby game stores to get their copy of the game . GameStop held almost 3 @, @ 700 launch parties across the United States .

On release Halo 3 : ODST became the top @-@ selling Xbox 360 game worldwide . More than 2 @. @ 5 million copies of the game were sold within two weeks of release , totaling more than US \$ 125 million in sales . ODST claimed the overall top spot in UK game sales , becoming the 12th highest sell @-@ through for a single platform title in the market . ODST took the top spot on

Australian game charts on release and , after being outsold by FIFA 10 in early October , reclaimed the best seller position . In Japan , where first @-@ person shooters have generally fared poorly , ODS sold 30 @,@ 000 copies by September 27 . ODS sold 1 @.@ 5 million units during September in the United States , the best @-@ selling title for that month . In October , the game sold 271 @,@ 000 units in North America ( taking sixth place for game sales ) ; Microsoft reported that ODS sold 3 million units worldwide by November . Overall , it was the ninth bestselling game of the year in the United States , one of only two Xbox 360 games to chart . Expecting sales of the game to increase as players wanted to access the Reach beta , UK retailers slashed its price in April 2010 .

The remastered campaign of Halo 3 : ODS was released as downloadable content for Halo : The Master Chief Collection in May 30 , 2015 and was free to all owners of said game that played from launch to December 19 , 2014 . It is available to purchase separately to those who are not eligible for a free code for the add @-@ on .

= = Reception = =

Halo 3 : ODS garnered generally positive reviews . It holds an average of 84 @.@ 77 % and 83 / 100 on aggregate web sites Game Rankings and Metacritic , respectively . Time 's Lev Grossman wrote ODS was a " milestone " as it proved " Bungie can use the same instrument to play in totally different key , " adding to the longevity of the Halo franchise . In contrast , Pete Metzger of the Los Angeles Times wrote that although ODS was a good game with a compelling story , action , and graphics , " the same can be said for nearly every first @-@ person shooter that is released these days " and that ODS failed to raise the bar set by previous Halo games . 1UP.com 's Jeremy Parish noted that while ODS had its flaws , its greatest success was bringing together players who preferred either the multiplayer or campaign portions with a game that would satisfy both camps .

Critics were split on whether ODS was worth its price . Official Xbox Magazine critic Ryan McCaffrey confidently wrote that given the campaign , multiplayer mode , and second Halo 3 multiplayer disc , " no one should have any qualms about ODS 's value as a [ US ] \$ 60 offering ! " Other critics who judged the title a full game included the staff of Edge Magazine , Parish , and Computer and Video Games ' Mike Jackson . Erik Brudvig of IGN did not consider ODS a " true sequel " , but more than an expansion , and recommended that those hesitant about buying the game do so . Those who disagreed included Ars Technica 's Ben Kuchera , GamesRadar 's Charlie Barratt , Eurogamer 's Tom Bramwell , and IGN Australia 's Narayan Pattison . In The New York Times ' Seth Schiesel wrote that " Microsoft Game Studios has overreached in trying to charge the typical retail price for a full game , around [ US ] \$ 60 , for a product that either should cost [ US ] \$ 40 or have a lot more content for the single @-@ player aspect of the product . "

Critics also disagreed sharply regarding whether the game was a large step forward for the series . Parish said that less enemy variety was balanced by changes he considered the most experimental things Bungie had done for years . Edge and Bramwell praised the contrast between the Rookie 's nighttime segments and the more fast @-@ paced flashback vignettes . Edge added that while the narrative design was not groundbreaking , it served as a structure for exploring every possible weapon choice and strategy in the series . While Parish considered the ODS 's abilities much different from those of the Chief , other critics such as Jackson wrote that the Halo feel was barely changed and that this was not detrimental . Brett Molina of USA Today felt that the game disappointed by not spending more time in the Rookie 's open environment ; " instead , " Molina wrote , " roughly two @-@ thirds of ODS 's combat feels very much like a traditional Halo game " instead of exploring new mechanics .

ODS 's visuals and atmosphere were praised . McShea wrote that while the Halo 3 engine was showing its age , the game could still " wow " because of the art design . Parish wrote that the feel of Mombasa changed dramatically when played cooperatively ; G4TV found that additional players spoiled much of the solitary feel . Travis Moses of GamePro wrote that while the game 's graphics were consistently outclassed by other shooters , the game 's frame rate remained consistently high as expected from Halo games . Technology company DigitalFoundry said that , despite welcome

improvements in AI , the main flaws from Halo 3 's graphics engine ? namely a sub @-@ 720p native resolution and lower @-@ quality human faces ? remained .

The game 's audio and sound were lauded . McCaffrey wrote that while the music of Halo 3 was " too familiar " , ODST had freed O 'Donnell to " craft his best work yet " , which the critic considered good enough for a standalone purchase . A significant departure from the consensus was offered by Kuchera , who wrote that the saxophone touches " [ sound ] like the softcore porn they show on Cinemax after midnight " , and GameSpy 's Anthony Gallegos , who felt that the music did not mesh when extended into combat segments .

Firefight was praised as " addictive " , especially for showcasing the excellent artificial intelligence of enemies . Jeff Marchiafava of Game Informer credited the enemies with differentiating Firefight from similar game modes in games such as Gears of War 2 or Left 4 Dead , which featured mindless zombies or cannon fodder . The staff of Official Xbox Magazine UK wrote that the gametype 's depth and options made Gears of War 's comparable mode look " simple " in comparison , and that Firefight extended the life of the game . In contrast , Bramwell felt that in Firefight " there is both a sense of futility in the knowledge that death is only a matter of time and odds , and fatigue in the realisation that many levels play out just as they did in the campaign , except a bit more so " .

Interviewed by G4TV , Bungie representatives saw part of the mixed and negative reception as stemming from their own marketing of the title ? first as an expansion pack , then a full game . " If you look at the lower scores , they almost all cite an issue in perceived value based on an initial expectation that was set for an ' expansion ' and then a feeling that they were overcharged for the final product , " Jarrad said , echoing Staten 's comment that " if we 'd never said the words ' expansion pack ' we would have seen an appreciable increase in the review scores " . Other elements they wish they had improved had they the time were the pacing and navigation of the nighttime segments and matchmaking for Firefight . Halo manager 343 Industries director Frank O 'Connor said that he was glad ODST " didn 't take off " , in his view , because it allowed people to focus on Reach and its launch and marketing .

= = = Awards = = =

Lev Grossman and Peter Ha ranked ODST as the eighth best game of the year for Time , lauding the game as " a dark , slow , jazzy , hard @-@ boiled take on the Halo world " . Softpedia branded ODST the best first @-@ person shooter of the year ; games editor Andrei Dumitrescu wrote that while the game occasionally felt formulaic , it was bolstered by a good plot , great music , and supporting characters that players could care about . Chris Kohler from Wired ranked ODST as the third best Xbox 360 title of the year , writing that the game " injected a fresh breath into the staid corridors of Bungie 's shooter franchise " . Halo 3 : ODST also won " Best Original Score " at the 2009 Spike Video Game Awards . " The Life " was a finalist in the " Outstanding Visual Effects in a Video Game Trailer " category by the Visual Effects Society in the group 's eighth annual awards .