

= Halo : Combat Evolved =

Halo : Combat Evolved is a 2001 military science fiction first @-@ person shooter video game developed by Bungie and published by Microsoft Game Studios . The first game of the Halo franchise , it was released on November 15 , 2001 , as a launch title for the Xbox gaming system , and is considered the platform 's " killer app " . More than five million copies were sold worldwide by November 2005 . Microsoft released versions of the game for Microsoft Windows and Mac OS X in 2003 , and the surrounding storyline was adapted and elaborated into a series of novels , comic books , and live @-@ action web series . The game was later released as a downloadable Xbox Original for the Xbox 360 . A high @-@ definition remake , Halo : Combat Evolved Anniversary , was released for Xbox 360 on the 10th anniversary of the original game 's launch , and was rereleased as part of Halo : The Master Chief Collection on November 11 , 2014 , for the Xbox One .

Halo is set in the twenty @-@ sixth century , with the player assuming the role of the Master Chief , a cybernetically enhanced supersoldier . The player is accompanied by Cortana , an artificial intelligence who occupies the Master Chief 's neural interface . Players battle various aliens as they attempt to uncover the secrets of the eponymous Halo , a ring @-@ shaped artificial world . The game has been commended for elements such as its story , the variety of strategies players can employ , and its multiplayer mode ; however , the repetitive nature of its level design was criticized by some reviewers .

Halo has been praised as one of the greatest video games of all time , and was ranked by IGN as the fourth @-@ best first @-@ person shooter ever made . The game 's popularity has led to labels such as " Halo clone " and " Halo killer " , applied respectively to games either similar to or anticipated to be better than it . In addition , the game inspired and was used in the fan @-@ created Red vs. Blue video series , which is credited as the " first big success " of machinima ( the technique of using real @-@ time 3D engines , often from video games , to create animated films ) .

= = Gameplay = =

As a first @-@ person shooter , the gameplay of Halo : Combat Evolved is fundamentally similar to that of its peers , focusing on combat in a 3D environment that is viewed almost entirely from a character 's eye view . The player can move around and look up , down , left , or right . The game features vehicles , ranging from armored jeeps and tanks to alien hovercraft and aircraft , many of which can be controlled by the player . The game switches to a third @-@ person perspective during vehicle use for pilots and mounted gun operators ; passengers maintain a first @-@ person view . The game 's heads @-@ up display includes a " motion tracker " that registers moving allies , moving or firing enemies , and vehicles , in a certain radius of the player .

The player character is equipped with an energy shield which nullifies damage from weapons fire and forceful impacts . The shield 's charge appears as a blue bar in the corner of the game 's heads @-@ up display , and it automatically recharges if no damage is sustained for a brief period . When the shield is fully depleted , the player is highly vulnerable , and further damage reduces the hit points of a secondary health meter . When this health meter reaches zero , the character dies and the game reloads from a saved checkpoint . Health can be replenished through the collection of health packs scattered around the game 's levels , but the game 's introduction of a regenerating shield mechanic represented a departure from FPS games of the time .

Halo 's arsenal consists of weapons from science fiction . The game has been praised for giving each weapon a unique purpose , thus making each useful in different scenarios . For example , plasma weapons need time to cool if fired too rapidly , but cannot be reloaded and must be discarded upon depletion of their batteries , whereas conventional firearms cannot overheat , but require reloading and ammunition . In contrast to the large weapon inventories of contemporary FPS games , Halo players may carry only two weapons at once , calling for strategy when managing firearms .

Halo departs from traditional FPS conventions by not forcing the player character to holster its

firearm before deploying grenades or melee @-@ range blunt instruments ; instead , both attacks can be utilized while a gun is still equipped , supplanting or supplementing small @-@ arms fire . All weapons may be used to bludgeon enemies , which allows Master Chief to silently kill opponents without alerting other nearby enemies . The Chief can also carry up to eight grenades at a time : up to four fragmentation and four plasma grenades each . Like the game 's other weapons , the two types of grenades differ ; the fragmentation grenade bounces and detonates quickly , whereas the plasma grenade adheres to targets before exploding , sometimes with blackly comic results .

= = = Combatants = = =

The game 's main enemy force is the Covenant , a group of alien species allied by belief in a common religion . Their forces include Elites , fierce warriors protected by recharging energy shields much like the player 's own ; Grunts , which are short , comically cowardly creatures who are usually led by Elites in battle , and often flee in terror instead of fighting in the absence of a leading Elite ; Jackals , originally space pirates , they wear a highly durable energy shield on one arm and a form of handgun on the other ; and Hunters , large , powerful creatures with thick armor plates that cover the majority of their bodies and a large cannon that fires explosive rounds of plasma .

A secondary enemy is the Flood , a parasitic alien life form that appears in three main variants . Infection Forms , the true form of the Flood , are fragile beings and do little damage individually , but often travel in swarms of several dozen in order to infect their prey . Combat Forms result from humans and Covenant Elites who have succumbed to the Infection Forms , and have hideously deformed bodies as a result . Bloated Carrier Forms are the result of an aged or unused Combat Form and serve as incubators for new Infection Forms ; when wounded or near a potential victim , they explode to damage other nearby life @-@ forms and to release their spores , thus perpetuating the Flood life cycle .

Battling the Flood , Covenant , and human forces are the Sentinels : robotic drones designed by an extinct race called the Forerunners to protect their structures and prevent Flood outbreaks . Sentinels are able to hover around in enclosed spaces and produce an energy shield when under attack . They lack durability , but use powerful laser beam weapons and are immune to infection by the Flood .

The artificial intelligence in Halo has been favorably received . Enemies take cover and use suppressive fire and grenades . Some enemies retreat when their superiors are killed . The player is often aided by United Nations Space Command ( UNSC ) Marines , who offer ground support , such as manning gun turrets or riding shotgun while the player is driving a vehicle .

= = = Multiplayer = = =

A split screen mode allows two players to cooperatively play through Halo 's campaign . The game also includes five competitive multiplayer modes , which all can be customized , for between two and 16 players ; up to four players may play split @-@ screen on one Xbox , and further players can join using a " System Link " feature that allows up to four Xbox consoles to be connected together into a local area network . Halo lacks artificially intelligent game bots , and was released before the launch of the Xbox Live online multiplayer service ; therefore LAN parties are needed to reach the game 's 16 @-@ player limit , a setup that was a first for a console game , but was often deemed impractical by critics . Aside from this limitation , Halo 's multiplayer components were generally well received by critics , and it is widely considered one of the best multiplayer games of all time .

Although the Xbox version of Halo lacks official support for online multiplayer play , third @-@ party packet tunneling software provide unofficial ways around this limitation . The Windows and Macintosh ports of Halo support online matches involving up to 16 players and include multiplayer maps not in the original Xbox release . However , co @-@ operative play was removed from the ports because it would have required large amounts of recoding to implement . In April 2014 , it was announced that GameSpy 's servers and matchmaking , on which Halo PC relied , would be shut down by May 31 of the same year . A team of fans and Bungie employees announced they would

produce a patch for the game to keep its multiplayer servers online . The patch was released on May 16 , 2014 .

== Halo : Custom Edition ==

On March 15 , 2004 , Gearbox Software released Halo : Custom Edition for Windows , which enabled players to use custom @-@ made maps and game modifications via the Halo Editing Kit developed by Bungie . Halo : Custom Edition is multiplayer @-@ only , and requires an original copy of Halo for PC to install .

== Synopsis ==

== Setting ==

Halo : Combat Evolved takes place in a science fiction universe created by Bungie Studios . According to the story , the realization of faster @-@ than @-@ light travel has allowed the human race to colonize other planets after the overpopulation of Earth . A keystone of these efforts is the planet Reach , an interstellar naval yard and a hub of scientific and military activity . A secret military endeavor , dubbed the SPARTAN Project , is established on Reach to create an army of biologically engineered , cyborg " supersoldiers . " Twenty @-@ seven years before the beginning of the game , a technologically advanced collective of alien races , the Covenant , begin to attack human settlements , declaring humanity an affront to their gods . The United Nations Space Command experiences a series of crushing defeats ; although the supersoldiers of the SPARTAN @-@ II Project are effective against the Covenant , they are too few in numbers to turn the tides of war .

To prepare for a mission to discover the location of the Covenant 's homeworld , SPARTAN @-@ II soldiers are recalled to Reach . Two days before the mission was to begin , Covenant forces attack Reach and destroy the colony . A starship , the Pillar of Autumn , survives the onslaught with the SPARTAN @-@ II Master Chief on board . The ship initiates a jump to slipspace ( similar to hyperspace ) , hoping to lead the enemy away from Earth . The game starts with the Pillar of Autumn encountering Halo .

The titular Halo is an enormous , ring @-@ shaped artificial space station / planet , which ( according to Bungie Studios ) has a diameter of ten thousand kilometers . Halo sits at a Lagrange point between a planet and its moon . Centrifugal force created by the rotation of the station provides the ring 's gravity .

== Characters ==

The player character is Master Chief Petty Officer John @-@ 117 , one of the few ( see Halo : The Fall of Reach and its sequels for more information ) surviving supersoldiers of the SPARTAN @-@ II project , and the main character of the story . Accompanying Master Chief is the Pillar of Autumn 's feminine artificial intelligence construct , Cortana , who resides in a neural implant connected to his battle armor , code @-@ named MJOLNIR Mark V. The Pillar of Autumn 's captain , Jacob Keyes , is also a major character , with Staff Sergeant Avery Junior Johnson as a supporting character . Playing a mainly antagonistic role in the game 's events is 343 Guilty Spark , an eccentric artificial intelligence responsible for monitoring and maintaining Halo 's systems .

== Plot ==

The game opens just following the events of Halo : Reach , as the Pillar of Autumn exits slipspace near a mysterious ring @-@ shaped space station , called " Halo " by the enemy in the game , the Covenant . A Covenant fleet attacks and heavily damages the Pillar of Autumn . Captain Keyes initiates " The Cole Protocol , " a procedure which destroys all navigation data and is designed to

prevent the Covenant from learning the location of Earth . Master Chief and Cortana fight their way to an escape pod , where they eject from the ship along with a group of Marines . As they fly away they can see Keyes attempting to crash land Pillar on Halo .

Master Chief and Cortana are the only survivors of their pod 's crash landing , but they soon contact other survivors and help collect them into a fighting force . The survivors tell them that Keyes survived the Pillar of Autumn 's crash landing , but has been captured by the Covenant and is being held aboard the Covenant ship Truth and Reconciliation . Master Chief and a force of Marines board the ship and rescue Keyes , who orders Master Chief to beat the Covenant to Halo 's control center and to discover Halo 's purpose . Master Chief and Cortana travel to a map room called the Silent Cartographer , which leads them to the control room . There , Cortana enters the systems and , discovering something urgent , suddenly sends Master Chief to find Captain Keyes while she stays behind . Keyes was searching for what he believed was a cache of powerful weapons , but when he reaches his position Master Chief finds only signs of a battle and a recording revealing they have accidentally released the Flood , a parasitic alien race capable of spreading itself by infesting other sentient life @-@ forms .

The release of the Flood prompts Halo 's AI monitor , 343 Guilty Spark , to recruit Master Chief in retrieving the Index , a device that will activate Halo and prevent the Flood from spreading beyond the facility . After Master Chief retrieves and prepares to use the Index , Cortana re @-@ appears and warns him against the activation . She has discovered that Halo 's defense system is a weapon designed to kill all sentient life in the galaxy , which will deny the host bodies the Flood requires to spread , a revelation which Guilty Spark confirms .

Faced with this information , Master Chief and Cortana decide to destroy Halo to prevent its activation . While fighting the Flood , the Covenant , and Guilty Spark 's Sentinels , Cortana discovers that the best way to accomplish this is to cause the crashed Pillar of Autumn to self @-@ destruct . However , Captain Keyes ' authorization is required to destroy the Autumn , forcing the Chief and Cortana to return to the now @-@ Flood @-@ infested Truth and Reconciliation to search for him . By the time they reach Keyes , however , he has been infected beyond the point of no return by the Flood . Master Chief retrieves Keyes ' neural implants directly from his brain and retreats to the Autumn , where Cortana activates the ship 's self @-@ destruct sequence . However , 343 Guilty Spark reappears and deactivates the countdown , discovering the record of human history in the process . Master Chief manually destabilizes the Pillar of Autumn 's fusion reactors , and he and Cortana narrowly escape the destruction of the ring via a fighter . Cortana scans nearby space and finds that they are apparently the only survivors . Cortana justifies the sacrifices of the other humans on Halo , stating that they had no choice due to the threat posed by Halo , the Covenant and the Flood . Cortana believes it 's over but the Master Chief tells her that they 're just getting started .

In a brief post @-@ credits scene , 343 Guilty Spark is seen fleeing Halo 's destruction and into the unknown of deep space .

= = = Voice cast = = =

Steve Downes as Master Chief

Jen Taylor as Cortana

Pete Stacker as Captain Keyes

David Scully as Avery Johnson / Elites ( voice pitch @-@ altered and reversed )

Tim Dadabo as 343 Guilty Spark

Tawnya Pettiford @-@ Wates as Foehammer

Chris Wicklund as Pvt. Jenkins

Mike Madeoy as Pvt. Bisenti

Mark Dias as Pvt. Mendoza

Andrew McKaige as Pvt. Chipps Dubbo

Joseph Staten as Grunts

= = Development = =

On July 21 , 1999 , during the Macworld Conference & Expo , Steve Jobs announced that Halo would be released for Mac OS and Windows simultaneously . Before this public announcement , game industry journalists under a non @-@ disclosure agreement had previewed the game in a private showing during E3 1999 , and were reportedly amazed . Bungie Studios later stated an even earlier development build of the game centered on real @-@ time strategy and was " basically Myth in a sci @-@ fi universe . "

At E3 2000 , the first trailer of Halo was well received . The version shown there differed greatly from the one exhibited previously , marking the first major overhaul in the game 's development . At this point , Halo was a third @-@ person action game , in which a transport starship crashlands on a mysterious ring world that orbits a star . Early versions of Covenant aliens appear in great numbers and loot what they can , and war erupts between them and the humans . Unable to match the technologically advanced alien race , the humans on the ring world resort to guerrilla warfare . This version of the game featured Halo @-@ specific fauna , which were later dropped because of design difficulties and the creatures ' " detract [ ion ] from the surprise , drama and impact of the Flood . "

As rumors had predicted , Microsoft announced on June 19 , 2000 , that it had acquired Bungie Studios . Halo became an exclusive game for Microsoft 's Xbox video game console , and Bungie Studios rewrote the game 's engine , heavily altering its presentation and turning it into a first @-@ person shooter . Originally a key element , the game 's online multiplayer component was dropped because Xbox Live would be unfinished at the time of Halo 's release . While a playable demonstration of the game at Gamestock 2001 was well @-@ received , critics had mixed reactions to its exhibition at E3 2001 . The game was released in North America simultaneously with the Xbox , on November 15 , 2001 ; the " Combat Evolved " subtitle was an addition by marketers at Microsoft , who felt that Halo alone was not a descriptive enough title to compete with other military @-@ themed games .

On July 12 , 2002 , a Halo port for Windows was announced to be under development by Gearbox Software . Its showing at E3 2003 was positively received by some critics , with skepticism by others . It was released on September 30 , 2003 , and included support for online multiplayer play and featured sharper graphics , but had compatibility issues that caused poor performance . Halo was later released for Mac OS X on December 11 , 2003 . On December 4 , 2007 , the game became available for the Xbox 360 via download from the Xbox Live Marketplace .

= = = Audio = = =

Halo 's soundtrack was created by Bungie 's audio director , Martin O 'Donnell , and received enthusiastic praise from many critics . O 'Donnell has stated that his goal was to provide " a feeling of importance , weight , and sense of the ' ancient ' . " He designed the music so that it " could be dissembled and remixed in such a way that would give [ him ] multiple , interchangeable loops that could be randomly recombined in order to keep the piece interesting as well as a variable length . " Development involved the creation of " alternative middle sections that could be transitioned to if the game called for such a change ( i.e. less or more intense ) . "

O 'Donnell has remarked that he " sat with the level designers and ' spotted ' the level as though it was a movie , with the knowledge that the music would have to be malleable rather than static .... [ T ] he level designer would tell me what he hoped a player would feel at certain points or after accomplishing certain tasks . " Based on this information , O 'Donnell would " go back and develop appropriate music cues , then have the designer script the cues into the level , and then we 'd play through it to see if it worked as desired . " He explained that the use of music in Halo is sparse because he believes that " [ music ] is best used in a game to quicken the emotional state of the player and it works best when used least , " and that " [ if ] music is constantly playing it tends to become sonic wallpaper and loses its impact when it is needed to truly enhance some dramatic component of game play . "

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical reception = = =

On its release Halo broke sales records ; by April 8 , 2002 , a little under five months after its release , one million units had been sold : this pace was faster than that of any previous sixth @-@ generation console game . During the two months following Halo 's release , the game sold alongside more than fifty percent of Xbox consoles . By July 14 , 2003 , the game had sold three million copies worldwide , and by January 28 , 2004 , it had reached four million copies . As of November 9 , 2005 , Halo has sold over five million copies worldwide .

Halo gained positive reviews ; on Metacritic , it currently holds an aggregated score of 97 out of 100 , based on reviews from 68 professional critics . Ste Curran 's review for Edge praised the game as " the most important launch game for any console , ever " and commented , " GoldenEye was the standard for multiplayer console combat . It has been surpassed . " GameSpot claimed that " Halo 's single @-@ player game is worth picking up an Xbox for alone , " concluding , " Not only is this easily the best of the Xbox launch games , but it 's easily one of the best shooters ever , on any platform . " IGN remarked similarly , calling Halo a " can 't miss , no @-@ brainer , sure thing , five star , triple A game . " Among the specific aspects that reviewers praised were the balance of weapons , the role of drivable vehicles , and the artificial intelligence of enemies .

The game received numerous Game of the Year awards , including those of the Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences , Electronic Gaming Monthly , Edge , and IGN . The British Academy of Film and Television Arts awarded Halo " Best Console Game , " and Rolling Stone presented it with their " Best Original Soundtrack " award . According to Xbox.com , the game received a total of 48 awards .

Although Halo 's overall reception was largely positive , the game received criticism for its level design . GameSpy commented , " you 'll trudge through countless hallways and control rooms that all look exactly the same , fighting identical @-@ looking groups of enemies over and over and over ... it is simply frustrating to see a game with such groundbreaking sequences too often degenerate [ into ] this kind of mindless , repetitive action . " Similarly , an article on Game Studies.org remarked , " In the latter part of the game , the scenarios rely on repetition and quantity rather than innovativeness and quality . " Eurogamer concluded , " Halo is very much a game of two halves . The first half is fast , exciting , beautifully designed and constantly full of surprises . The second half is festooned with gobsmacking plot twists and great cinematics but let down by repetitive paint by numbers level design . " Halo was released prior to the launch of Xbox Live , and the lack of both online multiplayer and bots to simulate human players was criticised by GameSpy ; in 2003 GameSpy included Halo in a list of " Top 25 Most Overrated Games of All Time . "

Halo 's PC port garnered mixed reactions and received a score of 83 % on Metacritic . GameSpot stated that it was " still an incredible action game ... [ and ] a true classic , " awarding it 9 @.@ 0 out of 10 . It received a score of 8 @.@ 2 out of 10 from IGN , who stated , " If you 've played the game on the Xbox , there 's not much for you here . " Eurogamer called the game " a missed opportunity , " but stated that the online multiplayer component was " a massive draw ... for Halo veterans . "

= = = Legacy = = =

According to GameSpot , Halo 's " numerous subtle innovations have been borrowed by countless other games since . " The game is often cited as the main reason for the Xbox 's success , and it began what is commonly regarded as the system 's flagship franchise . Game designer Vox Day credited the game with using science @-@ fiction environments to follow Half @-@ Life in eschewing static levels and a similarity to dungeon crawls , which the FPS genre inherited from Akalabeth . Day further wrote that Halo spurred a sustained trend of many other FPS console games . In July 2006 , Next @-@ Gen.biz published an article estimating Halo as the second @-@

highest revenue @-@ generating 21st century console video game in the United States , behind Grand Theft Auto : Vice City . The game 's popularity sparked the usage of terms like " Halo clone " and " Halo killer . " The Halo engine has been used for the game Stubbs the Zombie in Rebel Without a Pulse .

Halo has been featured at both Major League Gaming and the World Cyber Games . In machinima , the game was used as the basis for the popular web series Red vs. Blue . The game 's sequel , Halo 2 , made US \$ 125 million with unit sales of 2 @.@ 38 million on the first day of its release , earning it the distinction of the fastest @-@ selling United States media product in history . Three years later , Halo 3 shattered that record with the biggest opening day in entertainment history , taking in US \$ 170 million in its first 24 hours .

= = Adaptations = =

The story surrounding Halo : Combat Evolved has been adapted into novels , the first of which was Halo : The Fall of Reach , a prequel . Published in October 2001 , this novel was written by Eric Nylund , who reportedly completed it in seven weeks . The novel became a Publishers Weekly bestseller with almost two hundred thousand copies sold . The following novel , entitled Halo : The Flood , is a tie @-@ in to Halo : Combat Evolved , describing not only the experiences of the Master Chief , but also those of other characters on Installation 04 . Written by William C. Dietz , this novel appeared on the Publishers Weekly bestsellers list during May 2003 . Nylund returned to write the third novel , Halo : First Strike , which takes place between the events of Halo : Combat Evolved and those of Halo 2 . Written in 16 weeks , it was published in December 2003 . Later novels , Halo : Ghosts of Onyx ( written by Nylund and released on October 31 , 2006 ) and Halo : Contact Harvest by Joseph Staten further extended the Halo storyline . More recently , a collection of new stories in Halo : Evolutions and Greg Bear 's first book of his Forerunner series Halo : Cryptum was released continuing to flesh out the stories . Two additional books : Karen Traviss 's Halo : Glasslands , the first in a new Post @-@ Halo 3 series and Greg Bear 's Book 2 of his Forerunner series entitled Halo : Primordium will be released in the near future .

Another adaptation is The Halo Graphic Novel , a collection of four short stories released by Marvel Comics in July 2006 . It was written and illustrated by Lee Hammock , Jay Faerber , Tsutomu Nihei , Brett Lewis , Simon Bisley , Ed Lee and Jean Giraud . Bungie regards Halo 's adaptations as canon . Marvel subsequently released the four @-@ issue miniseries Halo : Uprising , which was written by Brian Michael Bendis and illustrated by Alex Maleev , which premiered in August 2007 . Halo Wars : Genesis , a supplemental graphic novel featuring art by Graeme Devine and Eric Nylund , was included with Halo Wars : Limited Edition in March 2009 . Marvel then published Halo : Helljumper , a five @-@ issue miniseries written by Peter David and illustrated by Eric Nguyen , which premiered in July 2009 . Additionally Halo : Blood Line and Halo : Fall of Reach were released , the latter being a comic retelling of the novel Halo : The Fall of Reach premiered in 2010 and 2011 respectively .

= = = Remake = = =

During the Microsoft press conference at the 2011 E3 Expo , it was revealed that Halo : Combat Evolved would be remade by 343 Industries with an in @-@ house game engine and would include achievements , Terminals , and Skulls . It was released for the Xbox 360 on November 15 , 2011 . The release date marks the 10th anniversary of the original game 's release . The remastered version of the original game includes online multiplayer and cooperative play functionality . The remake is also the first Halo game to include Kinect support . The game is a mix of two game engines ? the original Halo engine created by Bungie which provides gameplay and a new engine created by 343 and Saber which is responsible for improved graphics ? and the player is able to switch between the improved and classic modes of the game at any time . The game is also the first in the series to support 3D televisions ; however , this is only available for the improved mode within the game . The game 's multiplayer component uses the Halo : Reach gameplay engine , tailored with a map playlist to mimic the original multiplayer , as opposed to including the original game 's

multiplayer mode .

The Anniversary version of the game is the version contained in The Master Chief Collection for Xbox One . The single @-@ player game is identical to the Xbox 360 version , including the ability to swap between the updated " anniversary " graphics and the original game graphics . However , unlike the Xbox 360 release , the multiplayer component is the original multiplayer engine from Combat Evolved as opposed to Halo : Reach and is playable over Xbox Live , something not possible until The Master Chief Collection .