

= Paper Mario =

Paper Mario , known in Japanese as Mario Story (????????? , Mario Sut?r?) and originally known as Super Mario RPG 2 , is a role @-@ playing video game developed by Intelligent Systems and published by Nintendo for the Nintendo 64 game console . It was first released in Japan on August 11 , 2000 , in North America on February 5 , 2001 , and in Europe and Australia on October 5 , 2001 . Paper Mario was re @-@ released for Nintendo 's Wii Virtual Console in July 2007 as well as Wii U Virtual Console in 2015 .

Paper Mario is set in the Mushroom Kingdom as the protagonist Mario tries to rescue Princess Peach from Bowser , who has imprisoned the seven " Star Spirits " , lifted her castle into the sky and has successfully defeated his foe after stealing the Star Rod from Star Haven and making himself invulnerable to any attacks . To save Mushroom Kingdom , rescue Peach , get the castle back , and defeat Bowser , Mario must locate the Star Spirits , who can negate the effects of the stolen Star Rod , by defeating Bowser 's minions guarding the star spirits . The player controls Mario and a number of partners to solve puzzles in the game 's overworld and defeat enemies in a turn @-@ based battle system . The battles are unique in that the player can influence the effectiveness of attacks by performing required controller inputs known as " action commands " .

Paper Mario is the second Mario role @-@ playing game to be released (following Super Mario RPG) and is the first installment for the Paper Mario series . Paper Mario is the predecessor to the GameCube game Paper Mario : The Thousand @-@ Year Door , the Wii game Super Paper Mario , the 3DS game Paper Mario : Sticker Star and the Wii U game Paper Mario : Color Splash . The game received a positive reaction from the media , attaining an aggregate score of 88 % from Game Rankings and 93 % from Metacritic . It was rated the 63rd best game made on a Nintendo system in Nintendo Power 's " Top 200 Games " list in 2006 .

= = Gameplay = =

Paper Mario combines traditional role @-@ playing game (RPG) elements with concepts and features from the Mario series . For the majority of the game , the player controls Mario , who can jump and use his hammer to overcome physical obstacles placed in the game 's overworld . Many of the game 's puzzles and boundaries are based upon the abilities of Mario 's partners , who each have a specialised skill required for progression in the game . The player accumulates partners as they advance into different locations ; only one partner can accompany Mario in the overworld , although the player can interchange them at any time . These characters also assist Mario in the game 's turn @-@ based battles , where damage inflicted against them results in temporary paralysis as the characters do not have individual HP statistics . Attacks in the game are similar to those in traditional RPGs , although the player can influence the power of a move when attacking or defending by timing a button @-@ press accurately or performing some other action command as required . Mario and his partners have a finite capacity to perform special moves , with each of these consuming a particular number of flower points (FP) when performed . Such statistics can be increased by earning Star Points (experience points) in combat to level up . There is also an on @-@ screen gauge to display Star Energy , which is required to perform another type of move that accumulate in number as the player advances through the game . The player can locate hidden battle upgrades in the game 's overworld , which promotes one partner character to a new rank at a time .

Progression through Paper Mario depends upon interaction with the game 's non @-@ player characters (NPCs) , who will often offer clues or detail the next event in the storyline . As in other RPGs , the player can find or purchase items from NPCs to help in and outside of combat . Badges can also be obtained that yield bonuses ranging from added moves to gradual health restoration during combat ; each consumes a set number of Badge Points (BP) , meaning Mario can only equip a limited number of badges at a time . Princess Peach is playable at particular points in the game as a recurring sidequest . The objectives and actions of each transition to Peach vary , although most are stealth @-@ based .

= = Plot and setting = =

The game is set in the Mushroom Kingdom , beginning as Mario and Luigi are relaxing in their house when the mail arrives with a letter , which turns out to be an invitation from Peach to a party . Mario and Luigi then head to the castle , and as Mario is about to have some quiet time with Peach , her castle is suddenly lifted by Bowser 's fortress . After his invasion and victory over Mario , the attached fortress serves as the location for playable side quests of the kidnapped Peach . In the main quest , Mario tries to retrieve all of the 7 imprisoned Star Spirits on land , where most of the locations are linked to the central Toad Town , which acts as the game 's hub area . The story 's main conflict arises when Bowser invades Star Haven , the residence for the Star Spirits , and steals the Star Rod .

= = = Story and characters = = =

The game 's story centers on Mario as he tries to reclaim the seven Star Spirits , who have been incarcerated in playing cards by Bowser and his assistant , Kammy Koopa . Their combined power is required to negate the effects of the Star Rod , which makes Bowser invincible . Once Mario rescues all of them , he uses their assistance to defeat Bowser and rescue Peach . The story is presented in the context of a novel , with each adventure involving the rescue of a Star Spirit denoted as a single chapter . Peach is playable between chapters , where she allies with a star kid named Twink in the castle to relay vital information to Mario regarding his quest .

Mario allies with eight partners in total , each of whom represents a different type of enemy from the Mario series . These allies are :

Goombario (Kurio (???)) a Goomba , who has the ability to tell the player about any character , any environment , and any enemy .

Kooper (Kameki (???)) a Koopa Troopa , with the ability to throw his shell at otherwise unreachable objects .

Bombette (Pinky (??? , Pink?)) a Bob @-@ omb , with the ability to blow up weak parts of walls .

Parakarry (Paretta (???)) a Paratroopa , with the ability to help Mario cross gaps too large to jump across .

Lady Bow (Resaresa (???)) a Boo , with the ability to make Mario become invisible and transparent .

Watt (Akarin (???)) a Li 'l Sparky , with the ability to light up rooms (also , the only ally in the game with the ability to penetrate an enemy 's defenses) and to see hidden objects .

Sushie (Opuku (???)) a Cheep @-@ Cheep , with the ability to allow Mario to swim .

Lakilester (Pokop? (??? , Pokop?)) a Lakitu , with the ability to allow Mario to traverse dangerous environments , such as spikes and lava .

After Peach 's castle is sent back to the ground and Mario defeats Bowser , he recounts his tale to Luigi , who had remained at home while Mario went on the adventure . Peach throws a huge party to honor Mario and his allies for saving the entire kingdom , which is then followed by a parade during the credits . In the end , Mario and Peach exit their parade float and gaze up the sky , seeing fireworks . This part will not end until the player turns off the console . When restarted , the file will restart from the last save .

= = Development = =

Paper Mario was developed by Intelligent Systems . Kumiko Takeda and Kaori Aoki wrote the game 's script , while Naohiko Aoyama was the art director responsible for the game 's distinctive graphical style . The game was initially called Super Mario RPG 2 , and was first revealed at Nintendo Space World ' 97 , a former video game trade show hosted by Nintendo . Critics compared the game 's 2D character style to PaRappa the Rapper . Shigeru Miyamoto , who consulted on the project , stated

that the game was being developed with amateur gamers in mind . He had earlier revealed at E3 that around twenty developers were actively involved with the project . Paper Mario was re @-@ released on the Wii Virtual Console in 2007 , and the Wii U Virtual Console in 2015 . The game was also released for the iQue Player in 2004 .

= = = Music = = =

The game 's soundtrack was first released in Japan on September 21 , 2000 , with the game 's original title by Enterbrain , and distributed by the magazine Famitsu . It was followed in the United States a few months later as a Nintendo Power exclusive with the illustration from the international game cover . It included both the original music to the game , as well as sound effects , in 78 tracks on two discs . All of the game 's compositions were written by Yuka Tsujiyoko , with reprise arrangement of previous Super Mario themes by Koji Kondo . The game 's other event and sound effects music were composed by Taishi Senda . The game 's music mostly received positive reviews , with Lucas M. Thomas of IGN.com describing it as " vividly appointed with catchy , expressive tunes and comical audio cues . "

= = Reception and legacy = =

Paper Mario received critical acclaim . IGN 's Matt Casamassina praised the game 's accessibility , commenting that " it serves as the perfect introductory game to any person hoping to explore the genre " . Nonetheless , other reviewers complained about the " brain @-@ dead easy " puzzles and bosses requiring " basic strategy at best " . The game 's nostalgic value was lauded , with reviewers noting the sense of familiarity with the Mario series present in the game 's settings and characters . The game has often been compared to the previous Mario RPG title , Super Mario RPG . Eurogamer 's Tom Bramwell judged that " Paper Mario is a vastly superior game to SMRPG " , while IGN compared the game 's simple plot unfavourably with the SNES game and RPGFan claimed that some of Paper Mario 's story was copied from it . RPGFan also questioned the name of Paper Mario , as there were , in their opinion , insufficient gameplay features or aspects which used the paper theme to justify the name .

Critics lauded the game 's blend of RPG and platforming aspects . GameSpot noted the " exciting and somewhat strategic " battle system , which requires the player exploit the enemies ' weak points . The " refreshing " action command features was praised in particular for adding originality to a battle formula that was present in many games of the same genre . IGN claimed the game was " the best RPG for Nintendo 64 " , calling it " fantastically deep , intuitively designed , and wonderfully rewarding " . Despite this , enemy design itself was bemoaned for being " corny and generic " , with notable exceptions to some of the Paper Mario 's original boss characters . Eurogamer noted how " Of the various characters you meet , none is of less importance than any other " , welcoming the partner characters and their relating puzzles . GameSpot praised the game 's use of humour and side quests , with references to the control of Peach in particular .

The reaction to the game 's visuals was generally positive . IGN noted some paper @-@ based visual effects such as when Mario folds in a bed to sleep , but complained about character zoom @-@ ins , which revealed " a pixelated mass of colors " . Although reviewers claimed that the novel graphical style was initially confusing , most welcomed the style eventually , with GameSpot claiming that it was " extremely well done " . The audio was also mainly praised , although reviewers criticised the lack of voice acting and character @-@ specific sound effects . RPGFan were particularly critical of the game 's " generic filler music " , despite enjoying use of multiple songs simultaneously .

The game was also well received upon release for the Virtual Console , with IGN 's Lucas M. Thomas stating " it 's held up very well even placed into context against its GameCube and Wii era sequels , and it 's an RPG for goodness sakes " . Paper Mario also proved popular on the Virtual Console , reaching a high of " second most downloaded game " in the US in August 2007 .

Paper Mario was the top selling game in Japan on the week of its release , selling more than 276

1,000,000 copies , and the top-selling game for two weeks in other regions . It was ranked # 141 on Electronic Gaming Monthly 's " Greatest 200 Videogames of their Time " in February 2006 , the 63rd best game made on a Nintendo system in Nintendo Power 's " Top 200 Games " list , and the 13th greatest Nintendo 64 game of all time by the same magazine . It currently ranks as the sixth-highest scoring Nintendo 64 game on Metacritic , the ninth highest rated video game of 2001 , and the highest-scoring Nintendo 64 game released that year .