Preproduction is treated as an exploratory stage, with all disciplines working loosely together to determine a vector for the game development. Various partners, publishers, and platforms may be included in the decision process. Nothing is set. The goal is lay the ground work for the project.

The main cycle of development, there are various passes in this stage. First Pass of development should be built to the level of functionality, which means that all content called out by the LDD can be tested. The goal is to allow sufficient time to test gameplay and lock down levels for refinement in 2nd and 3rd pass.

Once the game flow is complete, it enters the postproduction phase. This phase includes extensive testing, review, marketing and finally, distribution. All content called out by the LDD is represented in the game.

The Q.A release stage is a process where no new content is added and all certifications are done

The game is feature complete and stable.

PRE PRODUCTION   PRODUCTION   POST PRODUCTION   Q.A.   RELEASE

ART

Pre-production
Visual Reference is collected and external sources and Pre Visualization drawings are made either based on Design or explorations.

Style guides are developed and confirmed.

Art is informed by (or informs) development tools for rendering.

Prototype
Game Play Setups are mapped out according to GDD

Story content visuals are mapped out.

Critical Level Whitebox / Objects
Level is blocked out as simple primitives for critical path, background expansion, all game play set ups.

Non-Critical Level Whitebox / Objects
The First Pass topographical geometry of the nonplayable areas of the level is Modeled.

Texturing
The playable areas of the level is Textured and UV mapped.

Set Dressing
Primitive blockout is replaced with exported objects or with proxy representation.

Setups
Setup Primitives are replaced with functioning Setups.

Critical Path
The Walkable areas of the level are modeled to level of detail.

Marketing Materials
Creation of materials and assets (inc. screenshots, videos, and media) for marketing and press needs.

Release Materials
Creation of materials and assets (inc. press, packaging, launch content) for games full release.

DESIGN

Treatment
The pitch, defining the overall direction of the game

GDD
- Setting
- Story Arc
- Core Mechanics
- Players & NPCs
- Player Moves
- UI and HUD
- Visual FX
- Sound FX

Core Loops
Mechanics are refined to details required for development and art to implement.

Play Beats
- Level flow is called out.
- Key Moments and vistas are called out.
- The Level is pitched and reviewed.

Story Development

Core mechanic works to the specs of GDD.
Navigation through level and core experience set.

Prototype
Core mechanic works to the specs of GDD.
Navigation through level and core experience set.

Level Fidelity
- Navigation through entire level feels good.
- Visual Navigation and Vistas feel good.
- Player controls are consistent and playtesting can begin.

Mechanics Setup
The Game Play Setups and areas are blocked out. Features as per GDD are added.
- If the core mechanic works, then Setup must have functionality that meets the requirements called out in the GDD. Otherwise, a placeholder should be used.
- Gating mechanics are added and Player can navigate between levels.

Story Moments
Story Moments are built in collaboration with Design.
- Triggers and Timers are in place.
- Story pacing feels good.

Balancing
Density and behavior of the challanges feel good.

Full Experience
- All Setups should be Locked Down with functionality that meets the requirements called out in the GDD and they *must* work to Alpha specifications.
- All systems and collectibles accurately save persistent data.

Optimisations
Optimization tasks are focused on improving the performance of the level and getting the level ready for lighting passes. Any remaining issues from art or design changes since pass must be resolved.

Polish
The level is reworked prioritzing overall improvement to player experience.

Polish
- The player is able to navigate from the beginning of the game to the end.
- All Gameplay assets function and feel good.

DEVELOPMENT

Technical Specs
The pitch, defining the overall direction of the game

Tools Setup
Tools required for production.

Infastructure
All initial code required for basic project path and interactions is mapped out and added.

Prototype
The initial mechanics required for critical path is mapped out and added.

Level Fidelity
Full asset rendering and player controls. Disciplines able to provide content easily.

Mechanics Setup
The Game Play Setups are built. Game Rules, entities, networking

Story Moments
Story Moments are built in collaboration with Design.

Balancing
Density and behavior of the challanges feel good.

Full Experience
- All Setups should be Locked Down with functionality that meets the requirements called out in the GDD and they *must* work to Alpha specifications.
- All systems and collectibles accurately save persistent data.

Polish
- Framerate hits requirements.
- Memory footprint hits requirements.

Testing
Testing of system economies, challanges, and progression.

Certifications
All requirements to publish on platforms or in accordance with publishers are met

PRODUCTION

Direction
Based on market research, determine business model.

Staffing Plan
List of full-time staff required.

Budgeting
Budget for feature and gameplay development mapped out.

Prod. Schedule
Frameworks for feature and gameplay development mapped out.

Legal
Secure Patents, Copyrights, Trademarks and Tradedress and all works that should be protected

Pipeline Management
Managing communications between different teams such as design, art and programming.
Managing outsourced work and talent quality and resources. Managing the project assets and infastructure.
Designating team deadlines, features, and sprints
Determining all requirements for release and distribution

Govt. Compliance
ESRB Ratings etc.

Legal
- Content Licenses
Frontend Privacy Policy and Terms and Conditions

Copywriting
All legal and mandatory content is applied to the game.

Internationalisation
All content is localised, all government compliances are met .

MARKETING

Market Research
Determine target audience, USP's, competitive positioning.

Distributions
Determine the platforms, and distribution partners.

Distribution Partner
Pitch to distribution partner, build relationships for funding / features.

PR Direction
Strategy for marketing and consumer outreach set.

Industry Reveal
Internal reveal of content to select press / studios / publishers

Announcement
Public reveal of game to consumers and full industry

Dev. Interviews
Internal outreach to explain game content.

Game Content
Public release of videos, screenshots, etc.

Community Management
Outreach with fans and enthusiasts

Press Negotiations
Secure Patents, Copyrights, Trademarks and Tradedress and all works that should be protected

Media Saturation
Supporting content across all social media and consumer platforms

Enthusiast / Consumer Reviews.
Developer Media: Print, Online, Mags, Consumer Media: Print, Online, TV / Radio, Mags. Newspapers, Business Publications.

Launch Event
Secure Patents, Copyrights, Trademarks and Tradedress and all works that should be protected

Keiran Lovett, 2017