

Game Design & Game Designer Workshop: One-Page Overview

Workshop Title:
Game Design Fundamentals: A Critical Workshop for Practitioners

Duration: < 2.5 hours (including break)

Audience: Everybody

Focus: Practical, document-driven game design for modern development

Workshop Structure & Timing

Part	Topic	Duration
1	Deconstructing the Designers, Developers and Game Designer's Role	15 min
2	Genres, Development Process, and Ludology vs. Narratology	10 min
3	The MDA Framework as Critical Tool	15 min
4	Vision-Driven Design vs. Design-by-Committee	20 min
BREAK		5 min
5	The Political Economy of Borrowing Mechanics	25 min
6	Design for Humans, Not Theory	20 min
6	The Realities of Getting Into Game Design and Game Development	15 min
8	Key Takeaways & Final Q&A	10 min

Key Learning Objectives

- Understand the roles of game developers, designers, and game designers as problem-solvers
- Understand the MDA framework (Mechanics → Dynamics → Aesthetics) for analyzing games
- Learn to create and maintain vision-driven game design documents
- Develop critical thinking about borrowing and adapting game mechanics
- Explore real-world game design career paths

Core Concepts Covered

The Designer's Toolkit:

- Game Design Documents (GDD) as living bibles
- Pitch decks, balance spreadsheets, asset lists
- Playtest reports and iteration logs

Critical Frameworks:

- MDA analysis for reverse-engineering player experience
- Vision statements as emotional contracts
- Mechanical contradiction identification
- Target audience alignment

Case Studies Include:

- Red Dead Redemption 2 (honor system, camp mechanics)
- Alien: Isolation (saving mechanics evolution)
- Baldur's Gate 3 (player agency and dice rolls)
- Hades (failure as progress)
- Doom 2016 (push-forward combat)

Interactive Elements

- MDA analysis activity (3 min)
 - Discussion of mechanical contradictions
 - Q&A on industry realities and career paths
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Deliverables for Participants

- One-page GDD template
 - Core loop analysis framework
 - Resource list for continued learning
 - Practical steps for dive to game development
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Contact & Preparation

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Pre-workshop: Participants encouraged to think of a favorite game to analyze