Creating worlds

on

Everybody Edits

Contents

1. General things about creating worlds

In the first chapter we'll talk a bit about worlds in general and what you should do when you're making one. It'd be good to think a bit of these things – it can help you a lot!

Motivation

Motivation is something that always troubles me. I might get an awesome idea and be super motivated, but I tend to lose my motivation before finishing the world. I know it's the same thing for many others too.

There are many things that can motivate you. A good idea is to check out some worlds from your favorite builders, you might get this "Oh want to make cool worlds like these too!" feeling, which is motivating.

There's also this thing called the "2-minute technique". The idea is that you don't need to go build a lot. Go build for only two minutes, that isn't bad right? After the two minutes it will feel a lot easier to work since you've already started, and you might find yourself working for an hour instead!

I've been told that in any creative process, the hardest thing to do is to begin doing anything. I guess it's this natural laziness we have!

Practice

…makes perfect! The only way to get better is to practice, it's true!

Everybody edits, however, is a game, so don't take it too seriously. If you aren't having fun playing it, you're doing something wrong. If that happens, try taking a break! Breaks are very relaxing and refreshing :)

Creativity

I hear players talking about creativity all the time nowadays, so I thought I'd write a bit about it here too!

Creativity is basically the ability to create something new using the knowledge and information you already have with you. So let me get this one thing straight: Creativity is **not** creating something new out of nothing. Sure, that kind of creating exists too, and you could call that creativity, but I don't. When I talk about creative thinking, I actually mean thinking – seeking for something new, not just randomly finding it.

Finding new ideas can actually be quite fun once you get into it. I'll only show you the technique I use, because it's the only one I memorize. If you're interested in this topic, you should go read a book or two about it, it's worth it!

Ok, let's get to the point then. I'll write this as a step by step guide.

1) The first thing you need to do is to decide what you will be creating. Is it a world concept, or maybe an idea for a minigame?
2) Once you have decided that, start thinking about random things. Dogs, cars, anything.
3) Try to combine those random things with the thing you are trying to create. So for example if you want to make a world concept, think what kind of concepts you could make out of dogs, cars, or anything else that flies through your mind. This is the part where the ideas are found.

   It might sound a bit silly to make a world concept out of dogs, but you should really try to make a world concept out of them, otherwise you won't get any ideas. You might end up with something like "flee adventure" or "zoo garden", which might not be the best ideas, but can lead you to other better ideas. If you were to make a gameplay concept out of a grand piano, you'd end up with megaman dash.

4) Once you get an idea, write it down. It doesn't matter if the idea isn't the best possible one, because bad ideas can actually turn out to be better when you think more about them.
5) Write down ideas until you have a fine list, and choose the best one.

This kind of creative thinking is something that does get better the more you practice it. This technique might not work for everyone, but it hopefully will work for some people at least!

Feedback

Players join your world and tell their opinions of it. You might post your world on the forums and get feedback there. Listening to other people helps you a lot to get better at building worlds: They can notice exploits or mistakes that you haven't, give new ideas, and most importantly they tell you what they like and dislike about your world.

If you're just having some fun creating your own worlds, you don't really need care what others think about them (even though I highly recommend listening to them!), but if you want to make popular worlds, get famous, win contests, etc. you really should hear out other players' opinions. The reason to this is simple: You're not the one who decides what other people like - it's the other people themselves.

Make sure you understand what people are telling you. If you hear people say "This is bad", remember to always ask why. You're not getting any help from knowing that your tree looks bad, knowing how to change it to make it look better would be a lot more helpful. It's also important not to take everything too seriously. If you disagree with someone's feedback, then you disagree with it. It's your own world in the end - you can do things the way you want.

Publishing your world

When you have a finished world and want to show it off to others, there are a couple of ways to do that:

1) Everybody edits' official forums have a room section where you can post your worlds to. It also has a level creation section for unfinished worlds!
2) Invite your friends to your world. Not only will your friends see your amazing creation, other people will join you world more likely when a few people are already in it.

In addition to those two, you can account bomb your world, or share the link in other worlds. Both of these can be a bit risky though, because sharing links to your worlds is often considered as spam, and account bombing doesn't have a good reputation either.

Don't worry if your world isn't too popular, popularity isn't everything after all!

2. Gameplay

Gameplay is in many cases the most important part of the world. When players join your world, they're usually looking for something to do. That might be playing minigames, collecting coins, finding solutions for puzzles, etc. It might also be just looking at the minimap, if the minimap is really fancy. On this chapter we won't concentrate on art though, we will learn to make worlds where players' fingers get busy!
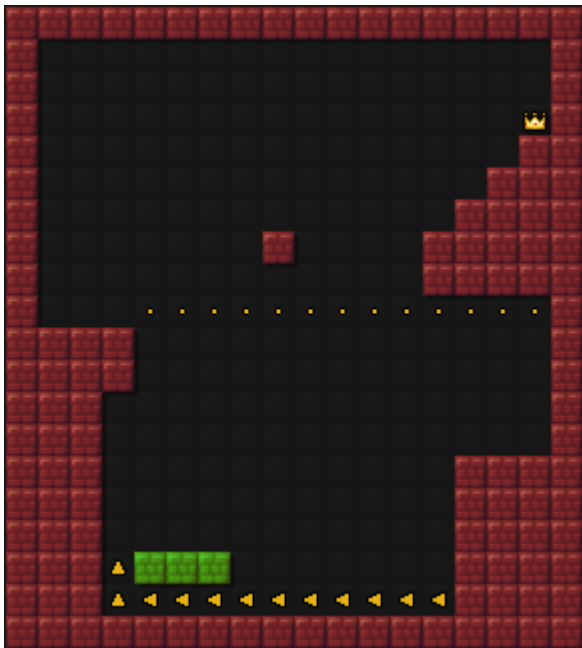
Beginning, obstacles, end

In most cases gameplay works like this: You start from the beginning, you want to get to the end, and you have to do something to get there. I'll just call the "having to do something" part "obstacles". Here's a basic example:
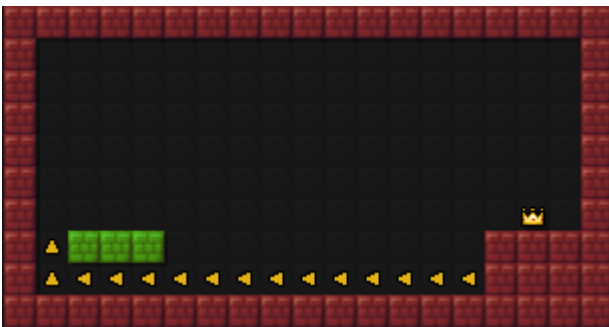
The green platform is the starting point and the crown is the ending point. The obstacles part here is that you have to jump over the gap to get to the crown. The arrows bring you back to the beginning if you aren't able to jump to the other side.

This little box could be our world, but it might be a bit short. That's why people usually make more of these "boxes", which we tend to call "minigames" or "minis". Not all gameplay include minigames, but worlds based on minigames are very popular and you learn a lot making minigames.

Here's another minigame:

This one is a bit more complex. The green platform is still the beginning and crown is the ending. However, now we have more stuff as obstacles. First you have to jump on the right platform, and then up on the dots, then move left using the dots. After that you jump on the red block and from there you can jump to the stairs which lead to the crown.

If you think about it, this minigame actually consists of many smaller minigames. One could be the first jump, another one could for example be moving on the dots. Usually minigames do consist of smaller challenges, and that might be something to keep in mind when building them.

Building minigames: Methods

How to build minigames, you ask? There's no simple answer to that question. There are so many different ways to build minigames that you could write dozens of books just about that. I, however, am too lazy to write that much, so I'll give you just a few methods and tips. Remember that I am only explaining the building process with different methods because it's simpler that way. When you're building a world, it really doesn't matter how you place the blocks if the finished product is good!

Method 1: Setting the beginning and end first

This is one of my favorite ways to make minis! You just set the starting and ending points to random places and then add stuff to make it possible to get to the end from the beginning. Here's an example of me creating a mini using this method:
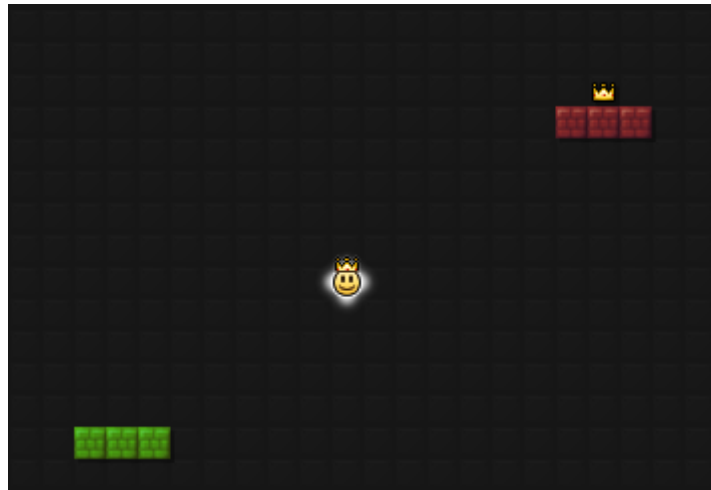
1) I added the beginning and the end. I use green bricks as the beginning and crown as the end.
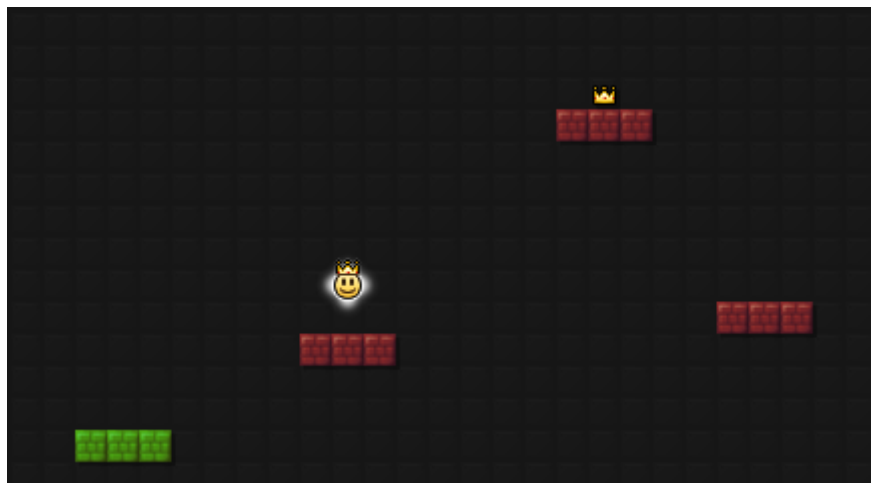
2) Added some platforms that lead to the right.
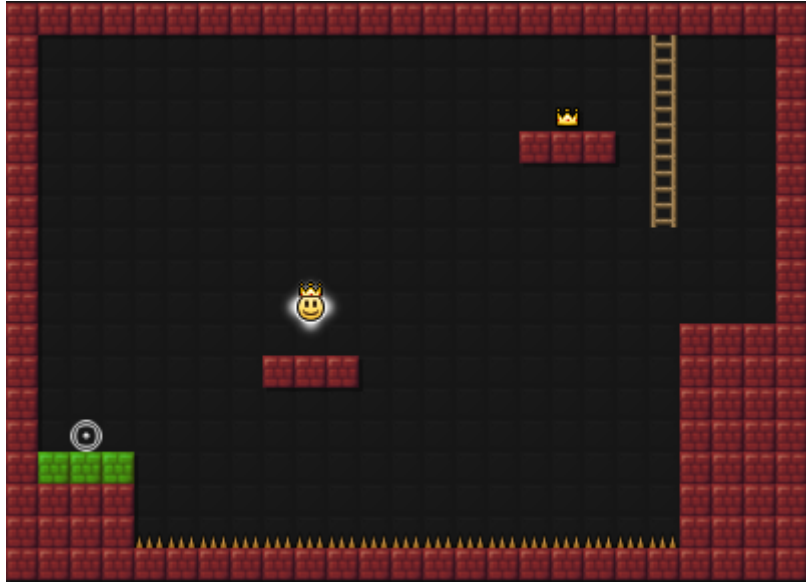
3) After getting to the right, the ladders will get the player to the crown. I also added spikes and a checkpoint. You could use arrows instead of spikes as well, but I personally think spikes look better.

Method 2: Editing another mini

I don't think this is used a lot, but it's a really fun way to make minis! Basically you just take a mini and edit it until it becomes something totally different! The reason I like this a lot is that you can just keep editing and editing and see how the mini changes bit by bit. Here's an example:

1) This is the mini I'll be editing. I haven't done anything to it yet

2) I squashed it and added red key doors. Now you can get to the crown if the doors are open, but not if they're closed.

3) Now there are keys that open the doors. I also added key gates on the floor next to the doors. This prevents players from getting trapped behind them.

4) Lastly I changed the place of the end. Looks very different from the first mini as it's supposed to. This mini actually takes more time to finish than the one I started with, but is still smaller!

Method 3: Piece by piece

With this method you can easily make your mini as long as you want up till to the point where it pretty much wouldn't be considered a minigame anymore. The way this method works, is that you start either from the beginning or the end of the mini (If you choose to start from the end you need to build stuff in reverse). Then you start building stuff like a path with no end.

Basically you are building many minigames but you always start the next one right away without ending earlier one. By using this method you often end up with something that doesn't look like one single minigame, but this works very well for "arrow path" minigames (I'll explain the term arrow path later). Example:
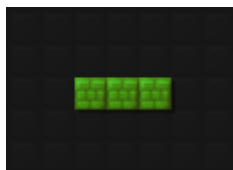
1) First I make a green platform as the starting point again.
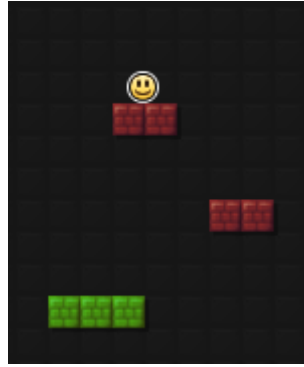
2) Added some platforms to get up.
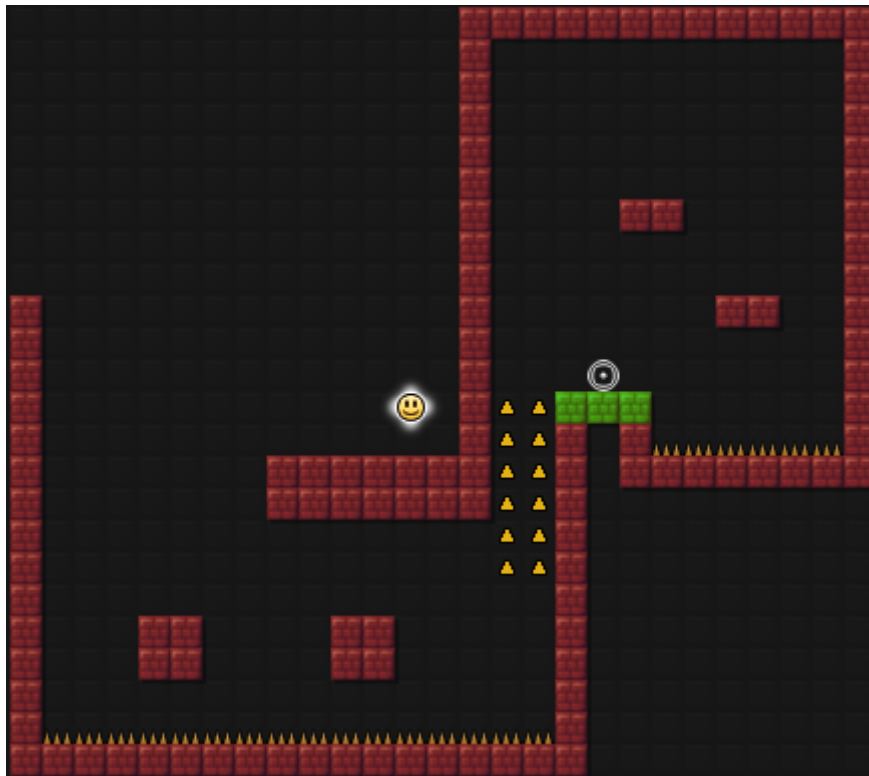
3) Then you can jump through the arrows and get to the left corner.

4) From there you can go get two coins which open the doors blocking the crown.

Method 4: Just making one

Just choose some blocks and start placing them. Just create the first thing that comes in to your mind, and edit it till it's cool. Not much to say about this one!

Method 5: Troll minis

This one is fun! You start by trolling an area, you can just troll with basic blocks or you can also use arrows and other action blocks. After that you try to play in it, just go jumping in that crazy creation of yours. Then choose a beginning and an end for the mini, and edit it so that it's possible to get from the beginning to the end. Then delete the useless stuff if you want to. Here's an example:
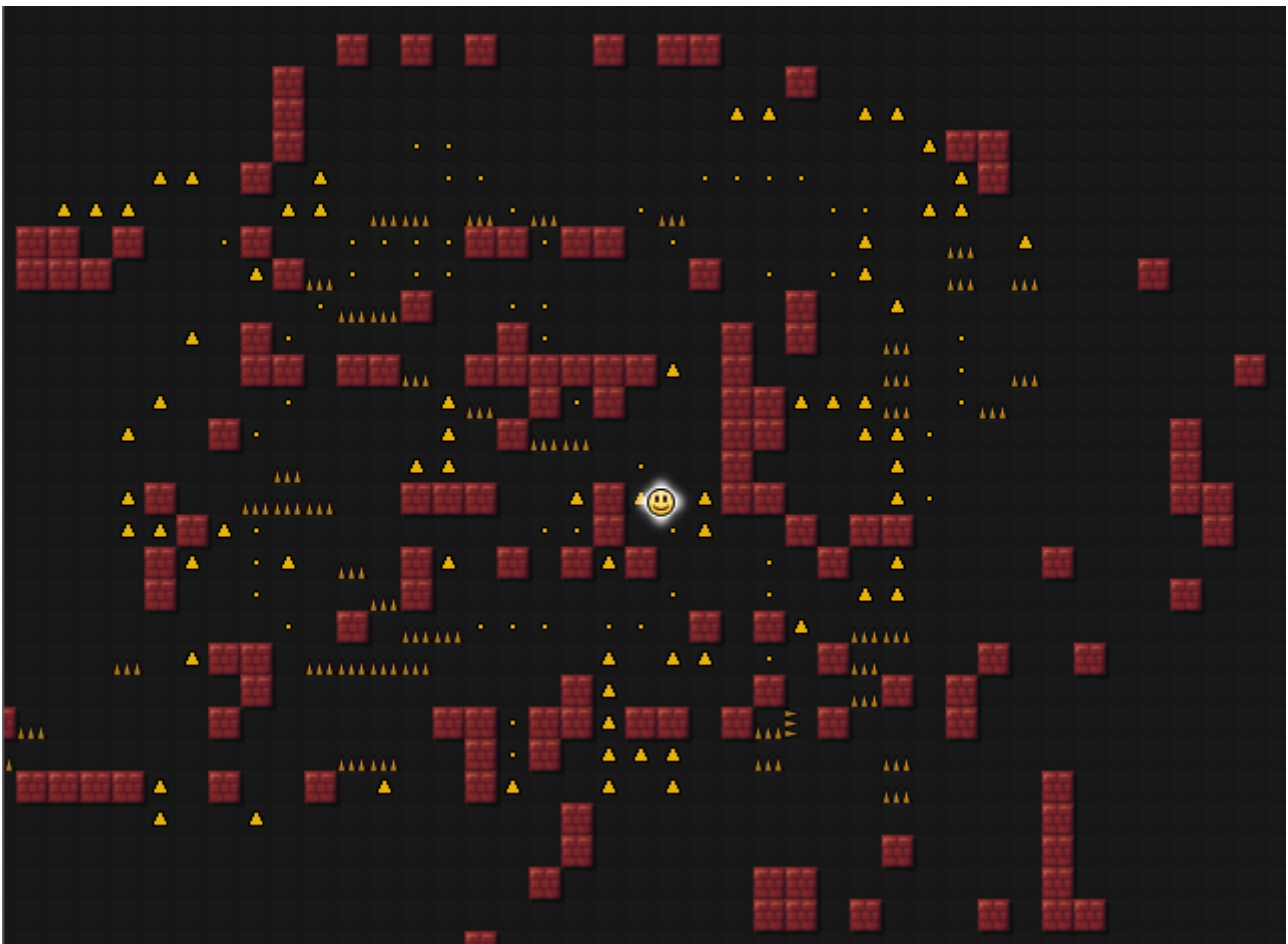
1) Here is my troll. I used solid blocks, gravity for more interesting paths, and spikes for the player to avoid.

2) I chose the beginning and the end after playing in it for a while. I also have a pretty good idea of the path which I want to player to use.

3) And after playing through and editing it this is what I ended up with! This consists of quite a many small challenges, so I'm not sure if it'd be good to call this a mini, but it's still really cool! It might look a lot different from the original troll, but it's all based on it. The troll should really be there just to help you and give ideas :)

Method 6: Thinking, planning, etc.

This is the one where you actually think really hard. You plan your mini on paper, in your mind, or however you want to do it. You should have a clear idea of what you will be doing when you start placing blocks. I will talk more about planning in its own chapter.

Types of minigames

It's hard to put all minigames into different categories, but there are a few I want to tell you about. You can see people using these terms on the game so it might be good to know what they mean.

Illusions

Illusions are minigames which often look like normal ones, but the only way to beat them is usually hidden. Here's an example to show what I mean:

At first you'd think you have to get enough speed to get through the arrows and then get the crown, but it's actually impossible to win like that.

What you really need to do is to get on the edge of the arrows and do a hook jump. This is quite a simple illusion, but getting on the edge can be difficult.

Puzzles

There're many definitions for the word "puzzle". I think what really makes a puzzle minigame is that you have to think, you really need to use your brain before you can beat it. Illusions actually are puzzles too.

I'm not really an expert on puzzles, so I can't give any tips for creating them, but practice makes perfect? :)

Here's a puzzle world made by whatter: http://everybodyedits.com/games/PWczAToIbAa0I

And here's a link to a puzzle crew: http://everybodyedits.com/crews/puzzles

Arrowpaths

I stole the term from someone else, and I don't think it's used a lot, but it's a lovely term so I'll use it! Arrowpaths are the kind of minigames where you usually don't stop at all before the end of the minigame. These usually use a lot of arrows, that's why the name is arrowpath!

Here's an arrowpath world created by Stagecrew: http://everybodyedits.com/games/PW7ZvfgWU-bUI

Boxed minigames

Minigames in equal size squares are usually called boxed minigames. People often use the term to describe a bit unoriginal worlds which repeat the same kinds of minigames over and over again, but those are not the only boxed minigames there are.

200 green minigames by Whatter: http://everybodyedits.com/games/PWw-V4ac-Oa0I

Don't touch by Azurt: http://everybodyedits.com/games/PWxpV1Vzwsb0I

Rage minis

These are very hard minigames – like **very** hard.

Forgotten Veil by EX Crew: http://everybodyedits.com/games/PWrAEJNqJja0I

Co-op minigames

Minigames you have to play with a friend. These are fun, but rare!

Lethal Lava Labyrinth by Koth: http://everybodyedits.com/games/PWhTV7I8V1a0I

Different gameplay

I'd say most of the worlds on everybody edits are based on minigames, but there are many which are not. The only way to use minigames is not to just put them in a row either. Of course there's nothing wrong making just basic platforming worlds (and most of the worlds are like that), but creative gameplay can make your world stand out more.

Here're some examples of different kind of gameplay:

Boss worlds

In boss rooms there's a boss (usually the owner) who creates challenges for other players. Usually the idea is that players get eliminated until there's just one left, who wins a crown, coins, etc.

There are many different ways to do a boss. You can make minigames so that the ones who win the minigame can continue to the next minigame and the ones who failed can't. You could also do a boss where you are editing the room while players play. You can add blocks, delete blocks, etc. and the players try not to fall (if they fall, they get eliminated).

I enjoy bosses a lot, and boss once in a while myself too. Creating minigames in a boss room is great practice!

Non-linear worlds

You don't have a single direction to follow; you can explore the world and find new places! Coin hunt worlds are perfect examples. You explore the world and try to find enough coins for winning.

There's also something between linear and non-linear. You could for example have 4 areas in your world. You begin at area 1, and after finishing it you get to area 2. After area 2 comes area 3 and

finally area 4. All these areas however are non-linear. You'll have some sort of direction in your world but also that exploration feeling.

Here's an example of a non-linear world

C.U.B.E by Bizaro: http://everybodyedits.com/games/PWESiFUKcfb0I

Story based worlds

Worlds where story has a big role can be very fun to play. TOOP and Badoosh are known for making cool story based worlds, and those worlds sure are good. Not only does a story bring your world a bit more alive, you can create very cool puzzles with it!

The Square by TOOP and Badoosh: http://everybodyedits.com/games/PWgxmS-oCNbUI

Some worlds to check out

Here are some worlds with cool gameplay ideas.

Invasion by ipwner: http://everybodyedits.com/games/PWZD60ChO2bkI

4 Monster Battles by Sensei1: http://everybodyedits.com/games/PWPWwHw_XOb0I

Heroic Quest 1 by TOOP and Badoosh: http://everybodyedits.com/games/PW_fo7ulHea0I

Megaman Dash by MIHB and Megalamb: http://everybodyedits.com/games/PWP7D66Ld4a0I

Difficulty curve

Difficulty curve basically means how the difficulty of the gameplay changes through the world. The most used difficulty curves are a flat and an ascending curve. A flat curve means that all the gameplay is pretty much the same difficulty. An ascending curve means that the world gets more difficult as you move on.

People rarely make the gameplay go easier as you progress, but sometimes you see a world getting easier if you get enough deaths. This will help players with less skill, if they die too many times.

 It's usually good to keep your world's difficulty pretty much the same, because if you have one super hard mini in an easy world, everyone will get stuck on that.

3. Planning your world

Usually when people make a world, they have planned it a bit. Not all people like to plan anything before they start to build, but I'm of the people who don't get anything done without properly planning it beforehand.

How does one plan a world then? First of all you should have an idea for the world, like what kind of world it will be. Check the Creativity part in the beginning of this book for getting good ideas :)

So after you have that idea, you can either start planning in your own mind or on paper, whichever works better for you. I like to use paper and pen when they're available, because then I can look back at my plan if I need to.

I suggest planning the big things first. If you're just making a platforming world I'd start by choosing the art theme for example. If there will be a story, I'd have to plan that too. After the big things I'd move onto planning gameplay and get more detailed on art planning. There's not really a right or wrong way to plan stuff, but I'll share the way I do it with you.

Theme of the world

The theme of the world might affect the gameplay your world will have, so it might be a good idea to think of it first. If your world is based on a cool gameplay idea however, let that be the base and choose a theme which fits that idea.

What I mean by theme is mostly art. Will your world be a beautiful summer day, or maybe a storm at the sea? Maybe it's something more abstract, in that case it could be hard to name, but try to imagine what it will be like, since that will help you creating it.

The theme can affect gameplay in many ways. If you choose the theme to be mountains, you might want the player kind of climb up the mountains. If the world is an ice cave, you could use the ice blocks for slipperiness. Think the other way around too – if you've decided to make a race world, maybe make the art look like a race too! You get the idea :)

You don't need to make your gameplay and art have anything in common, but it's always cool to have a "meaning" for the gameplay. And remember that the theme can give ideas for the gameplay and the other way around! If you run out of ideas those are good places to look for some.

Planning gameplay

If you're making a basic world with just some minis and art, you could plan a bit what kind of minigames you will be making. Will they be easy or hard, plain platforming or puzzles? Stuff like that.

You could also plan the path of the player. Will the player start on a corner, or maybe on the center of the world? Where will he go after that, where's the end of the world? Maybe there're several ones!

If you're having some cool gameplay concept which will use some complicated system, planning it in detail can help a lot. I like planning systems on paper, because if it gets real complicated I don't need to figure it out again on the game, I can just take a look at my paper and create it using that.

There are a lot of things you can plan, but if it doesn't work for you, you don't need to of course. I suggest trying it though.

## Planning minigames and the player curve

I personally find it a lot easier to make minigames if I plan them on paper before placing a single block. I call the technique I plan my minigames with the *player curve.* The player curve is basically the path the player must travel in order to win the mini. Here's an example of one:
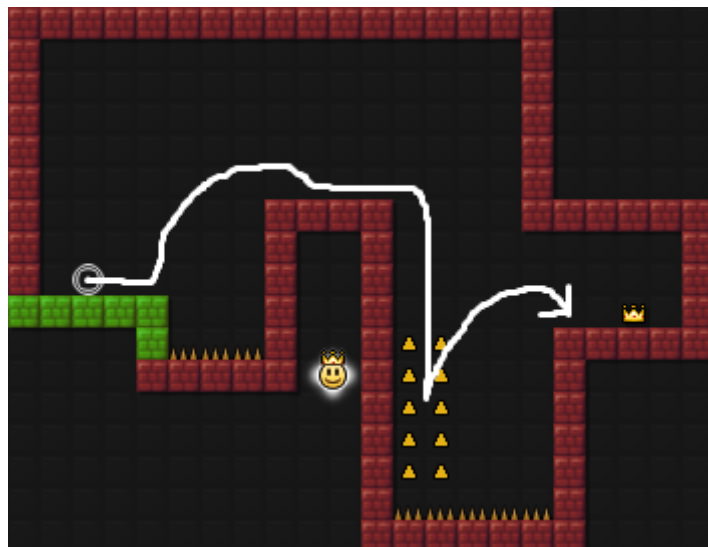

The white line is the player curve. I usually draw an arrow at the end to indicate the direction. I'll show you a few ways to use the curve next.

## Making a mini from just a curve

Let's start by drawing a curve, because we'll need one! You can use a pen or some fancy computer program like MS paint. You don't even need to think about the curve, just place the pen (or your cursor) on the paper and start moving your hand. Try to keep it pretty simple though, it's hard to use a huge messy curve. Here is mine:
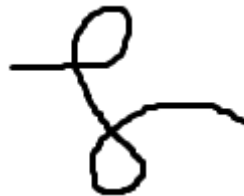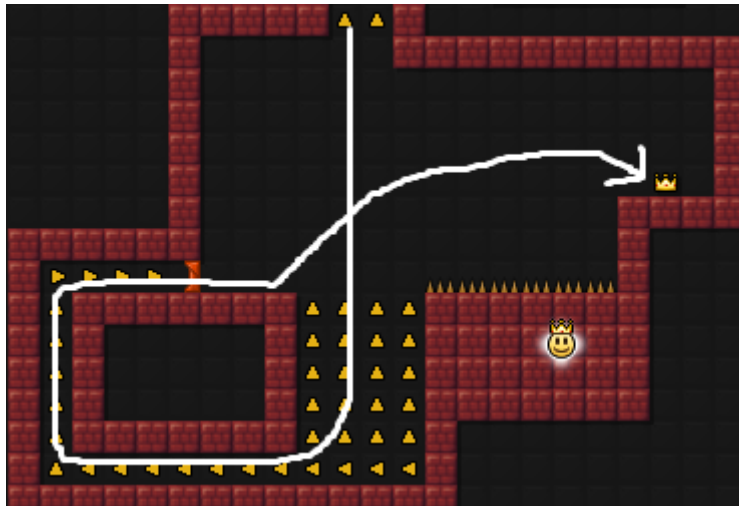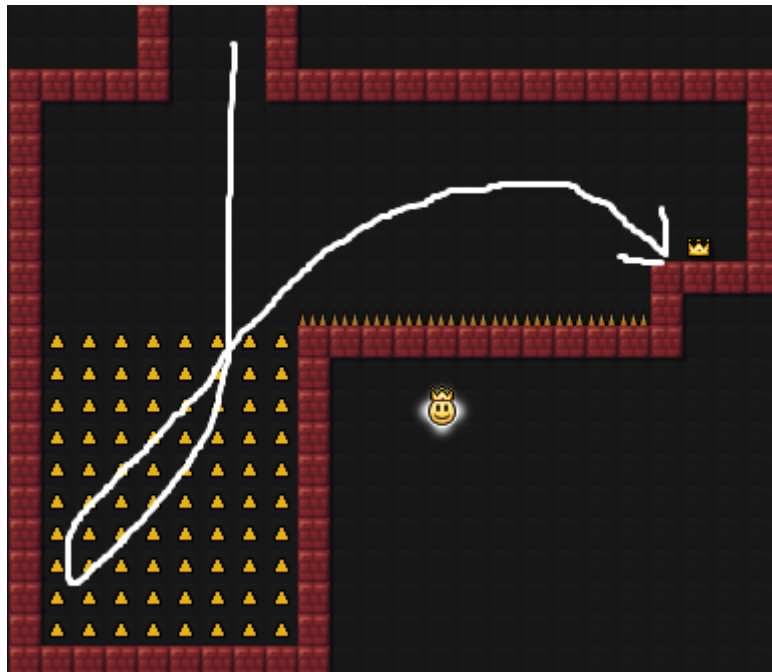

Next I'll choose the direction:
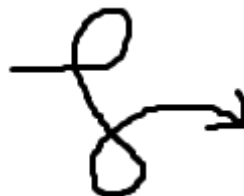
Amazing! Now I'll try to think how a player could make that kind of curve on the game. I'll show you two different solutions for this:
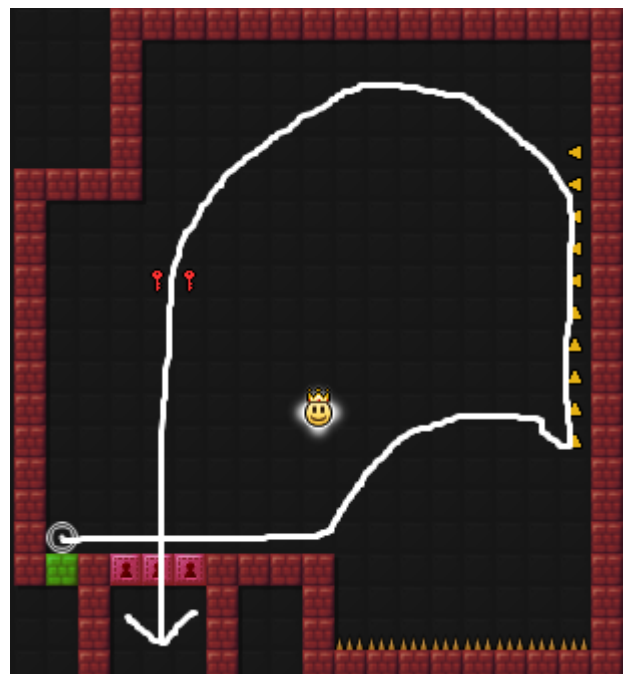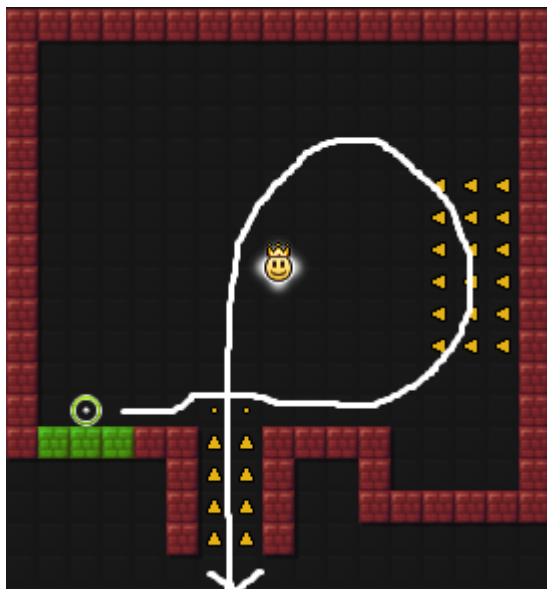
These are the top part of the curve.

And these are the bottom ones.

As you can see, the curves don't look exactly the same, but as always these curves are here just to help us, we should not follow them to the extreme.

Curve and objects

You don't have to draw just a curve - you can add other stuff too! Here's one sketch by me:

Those triangles are representing spikes. You may also notice that there's one jump on air. That's because this mini will use the double jump effect. Here's a mini created with the sketch:
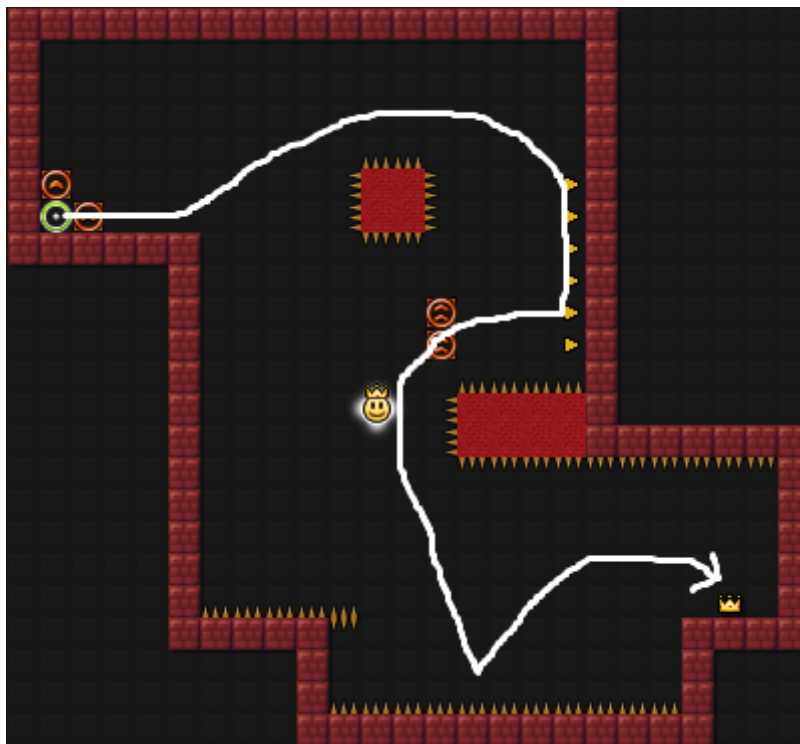

These sketches are much more detailed than just curves, and leave you with less work on actual EE.

Sketching a whole world

You can actually use the player curve for planning a whole world. Just keep in mind that when you're drawing stuff on paper, it won't be the same on the game. If you plan a whole large world filled with minis on paper, it probably will not fit an actual large world. So leave some space!
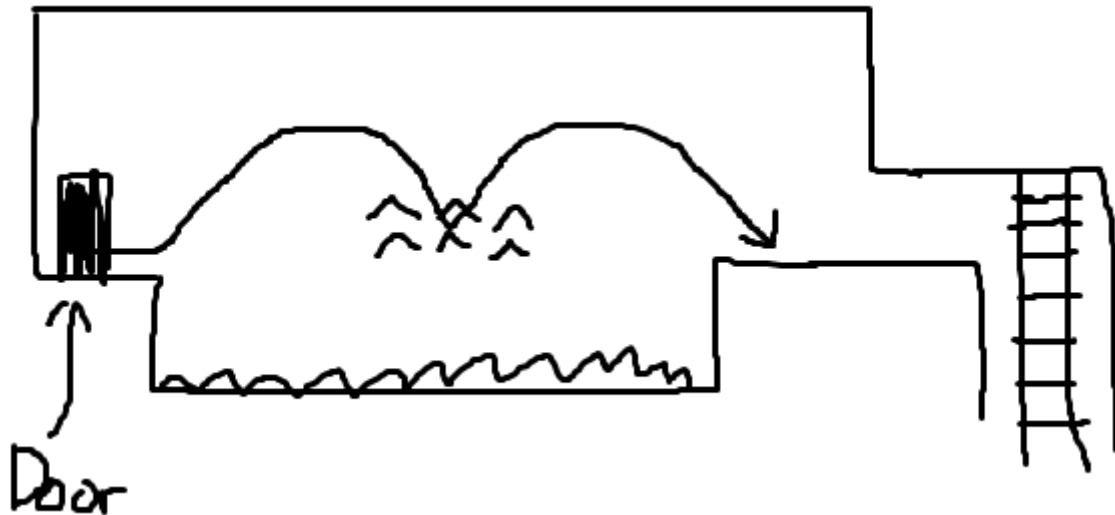
You can choose how detailed you want your world sketch to be. I'll show you 3 different sketches of a same world:
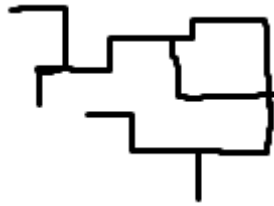
1) A simple world sketch
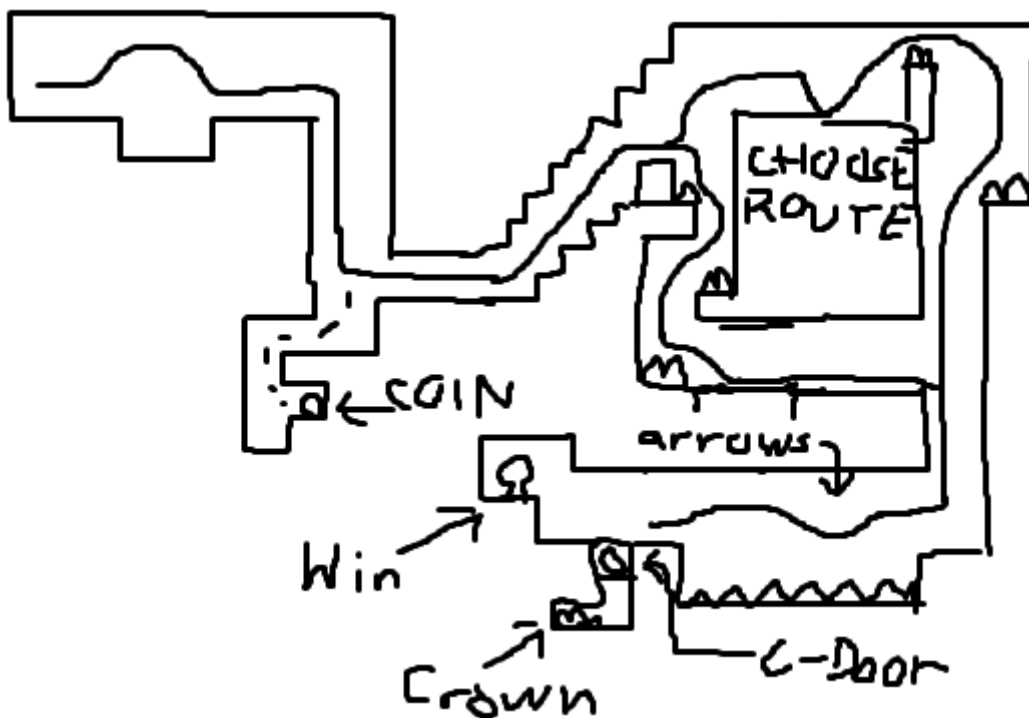
2) A bit more detailed sketch with some sort of minis sketched

3) The first mini sketched with more details. I didn't sketch the whole world like this because it would take too much space and I don't like using paint :(

As you can see, the first sketch doesn't really tell much anything, but it can still help you to build the world (or to make a more detailed sketch). The second sketch tells you more about the world, but not much about the minis, and the third sketch would show all the minis too.

I don't sketch my worlds as much as just minis, but I enjoy my time when I do!

Planning the art

When you're thinking of art, think of the theme. If your world is a cave, you could use grey blocks to make it look rocky, or you could use very dark blocks and backgrounds to make the cave look dark. Think of how detailed you want the art to be, will you use a lot of decorations or just simply blocks?

You can also sketch the art on paper. You can combine a minigame sketch and an art sketch to make sure they work well together.

If you're sketching minimap art for a minigame world, you could "place" the minigames to your art sketch. Basically leave empty spaces to the places where the minis will be. That way you won't waste your energy designing too much detailed stuff when it all can't fit to the world.

4. Art

Art is one of the most important parts of the world, and in some cases the most important one. Art on everybody edits is usually divided in to two different categories: Minimap art and ingame art.

Minimap art is what you see on the world map. Many people make worlds containing just minimap art, and many people also want their gameplay based worlds to look good on the minimap. The minimap shows up on the world preview and your profile, so it actually is often the first thing people see of your world.

Ingame art is everything you see on the actual playing area. A lot of new blocks, backgrounds and decorations have been added lately, so making ingame art look good has become easier, and a lot of people now care more about the ingame look of worlds than the minimap.

It's the same blocks that make the minimap art and the ingame art, so good minimap art might not always look good ingame and the other way around. That's where people make different choices. Some will only concentrate on the minimap art even if ingame art looks bad, some might choose ingame art instead. Then there are people who choose both. I think it's beautiful how people can make both the ingame art and minimap art look good at the same time! Anyway, let's get started now.

Minimap art

When we work on minimap art, we work block by block. That also means that we work on pixel level, because one block is one pixel on the map. So when we're making minimap art, we're actually creating pixel art!

You could go so in depth about art in general here, because it's a huge subject, but I will not. There are loads of people on the internet who can explain art better than me, so for learning minimap art, I suggest you to visit the mighty internet.

For learning the basics of drawing and digital painting, ctrl paint is great site to visit. Matt has made loads of short, easy to follow videos there teaching you to understand how artists work. Visit the site here: http://www.ctrlpaint.com/

I haven't searched for any decent pixel art tutorials online, but I'm sure you can find some if you take the time to google. When working on everybody edits, we actually have less space to use that pixel artists often have. That's why all tutorials found online might not be useful, but learning techniques like dithering and anti-aliasing is, so checking some out is a good idea.

Choosing the colors and creating palettes of blocks is one of my favorite things about minimap art! These days we have a few tools to help us find the right colors.

EE color wheel: http://ee-colorwheel.herokuapp.com/

Jawapa's palette: http://everybodyedits.com/games/PWt0njExrxbEI

Note that these two might be outdated, because many new blocks have been made after these were published. They're still fine tools, and one more that surely isn't outdated is our block bar's search function! You can just type a color to the search bar, and it will show all blocks of that color, amazing right?

Ingame art

I consider ingame art to be a bit more difficult task that minimap art - depending on how detailed you want it to be of course. I'm actually pretty new to ingame art myself and have no idea how to explain it to you, but I'll still try!
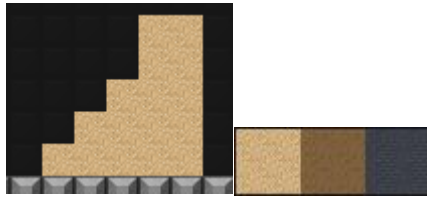
Learn to look

If you've been dealing with art in your life, you probably know what I mean here. You cannot create a cow, if you don't know what a cow looks like. "Well of course I know what a cow looks like", you might say. Sometimes what we think something looks like isn't what it really looks like.

You can try drawing a realistic cow on a paper without looking at a reference picture, and draw one with reference pictures. I'm sure the one where you used reference pictures looks more realistic.

We don't always want to make realistic art, especially when we're talking about a 2D platformer game here, but most of the art we make is based on real things. That's why it's important to learn to use reference pictures.

Good practice is to create random objects on everybody edits. I will create a dog for you; I found this cool picture so I'll be using it as my reference: http://www.buzzle.com/images/dogs/german-shepherds/adult-german-shepherd-facing-sideways.jpg

First I'll get the basic shape of the dog done and choose some colors which I think might work with it.

After that I'll try to make it look a bit less like a brown slime and a bit more like a dog. The reason it looks so weird at the moment is because the head doesn't look like a head, it doesn't really have any legs, and it's all the same color. I'll start by making the legs. I'll make the right and left legs different color so that they don't look like one big thing.
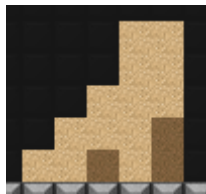
Still looks weird? Don't worry, let's continue. Next we'll color the back grey. It's more black in the picture but out world has a black background so I think grey will look better.


Now we're talking! It indeed is starting to look like a headless dog now! Let's try to create a head for him next. Might be a bit difficult, since it's the most detailed part of the dog, but let's try!
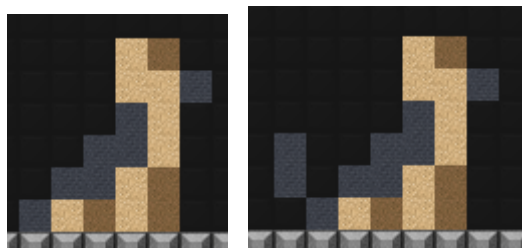
Amazing! I just had to add that tail also, it fits so well! This ended up looking really good, but it's kind of weird that our dog is 20 times as big as a smiley. That's one problem of ingame art; smileys are only the size of one block, so we'll have to leave the fun of creating smaller objects for TOOP.

Using decorations

Decorations are very important for ingame artists. Why? Because those are almost the only non-square objects we have! Let's have a look at some basic rooms with ingame art:
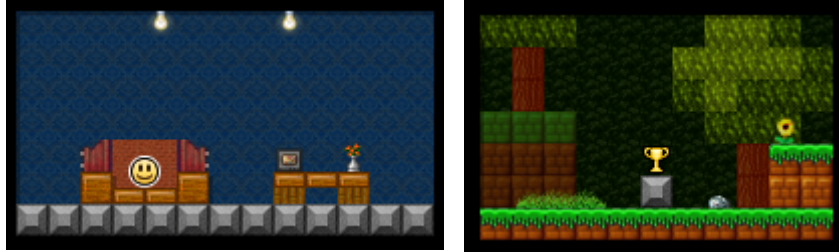
Both use quite a lot of decorations and would probably look a bit boring without. Next, here're some cars from TOOP and Badoosh's worlds:

These use many decorations, and wouldn't work at all without them. Decorations are what we use for detailed art. Besides decorations, one way's and half blocks are very useful too, because of their shape.

Here're some ways of using decorations:

1) Decorations are smaller than blocks, so if you need something small (let's say a door knob for example), you can try looking for something fitting from decorations.
2) You can use round decorations for many things, like eyes (the eye decorations are excellent for this purpose!), wheels, etc.
3) You can smoothen up corners with decorations.
4) If you're looking for another shape than square, you can most likely find it from decorations. For example sci-fi decorations work very well as pecks!
5) Use them as they're supposed to be used. A painting works the best as a painting, and it's the best painting you'll get.

Landscapes and using backgrounds

When we're making art for worlds, we very often want to make cool landscapes. I really love landscapes, nature has a lot to offer, and so do urban cities. In my opinion a landscape should give a big feeling, so that you don't feel like you're just in a room – you're in a world!

One of the most important things when making landscapes is to have the idea of layers. You have things on the front, and things far away. On everybody edits the best way to do this is to use solid blocks as the front ones and backgrounds as the far away ones.

Here's how the stuff on the front differs from the stuff far away:

1) Everything is more detailed on the front. The farther you go, the less detail will show!
2) Everything looks bigger on the front and smaller far away.
3) Objects far away start the blend with the actual background. If you have a blue sky on the background, the objects far away should be slightly bluer than the ones on the front.

And here are some landscape examples:
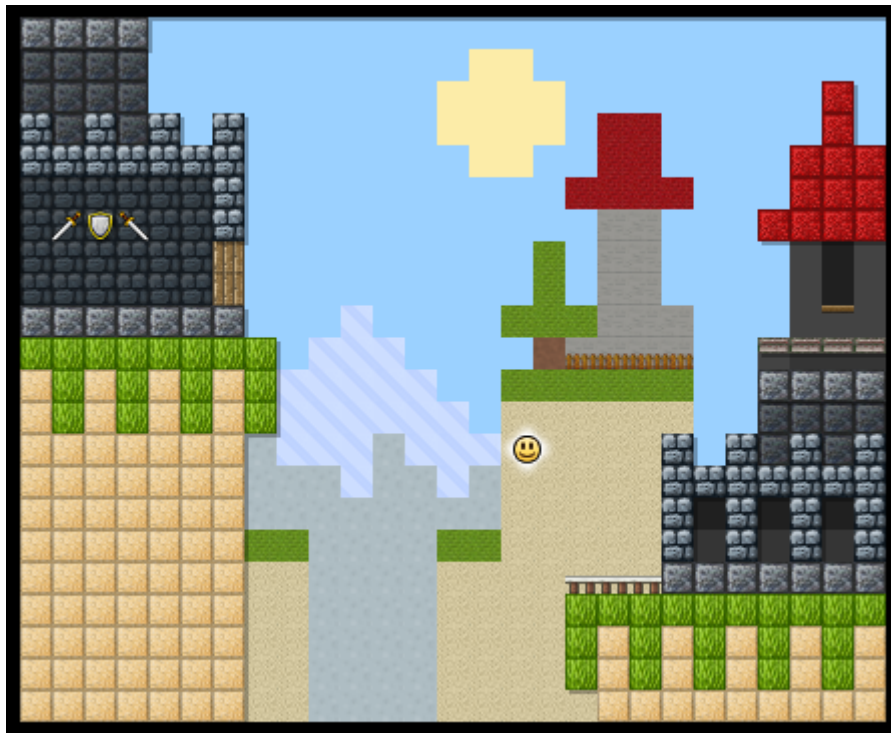
This one is a bright landscape with some grassy hills and castles. As you can see, this one has three layers. The front and middle layer have hills and castles, and the back layer has mountains and sun which are both very far away.

Notice how detailed the castles are on the front layer, but not on the middle layer. Also notice how the mountain looks slightly blue. I used a light blue candy background for the top of the mountain instead of white.

Let's take a look at a bit more urban example now:

This one has buildings, buildings, and more buildings! Again, the buildings on the front are a lot more detailed. This time the sky is completely black, so the buildings get darker as they go further away. I also added some stars because I think it fit well!

This kind of layer art can fit very well in some worlds, but not everywhere. Often the best choice could be just to have a single color background, especially if there's a minigame in that room.

Squareland by Stagecrew: http://everybodyedits.com/games/PWFyQkhiXWbUI

This world doesn't have much anything on the background, and it still looks very beautiful.

Combining art with gameplay

If you're making art to a world with gameplay, you have to make sure they work well together. Think of the minigame as a part of your art, because it kind of is. Here's a room where they don't go well together:
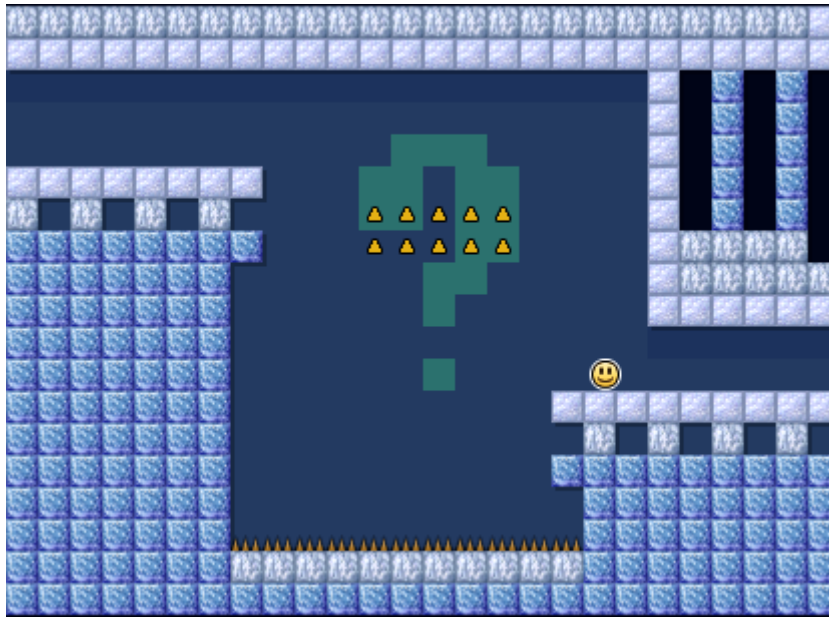
This does look ok otherwise, but there's one thing that keeps bugging me. The arrows are on top of the question mark. It looks bad to me; the arrows kind of ruin the question mark, and the other way around.

There are two ways to fix this kind of problem. You either change the minigame or the art. In this case both would be easy to do, but since this is part of the art chapter, I'll change the question mark's place.
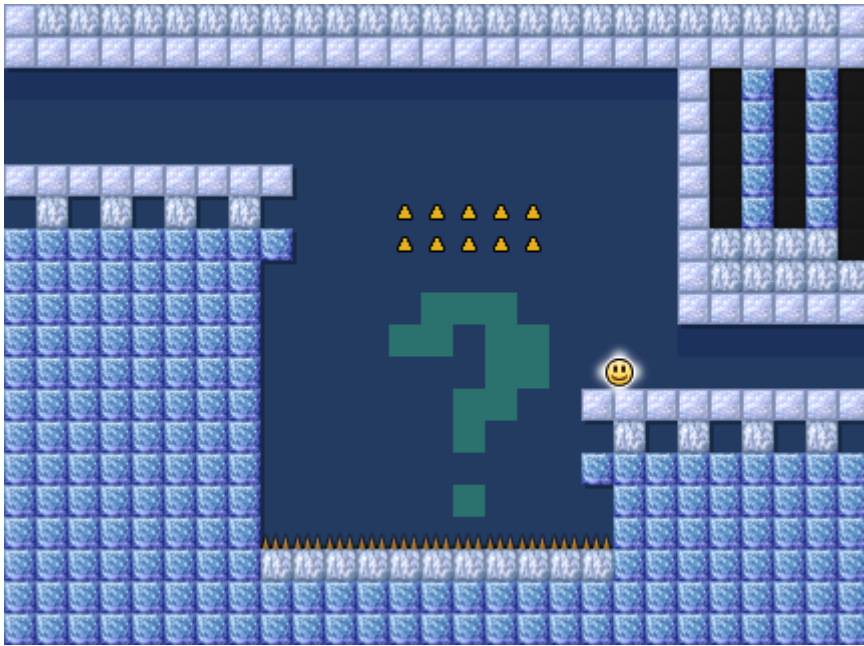
This way it looks a lot cleaner.

Most of the time, the problem is art being too complex for a minigame room. The more complicated the minigame is, the simpler art is should have (Usually. Do not think this as a rule, more as a tip).

Keep it simple

This is just a remainder for you to not make your worlds too messy. Of course messiness can be a style of its own, but usually it's not. I personally like to make quite clean and simple art with not many details, but there are worlds with so detailed art that it starts to look a bit messy, while still being very beautiful.

When you start making art, you'll notice after a while what looks good and what looks like a mess to you. Find your own style and listen to your eyes :)

5. Have fun

Remember to have fun. Fun is all!