

# Timeless Journeys Game Design Document

*By Gabriel Faes, with contributions by Hadrien Deo, and help by a bunch of cool people! Any questions, please ask Gabriel Faes first.*

Timeless Journeys is a single player hack and slash RPG video game with a top-down camera view à la The Legend of Zelda. The player travels through eras to defeat bosses which were never supposed to exist in that era. The bosses create a shattered timeline which the player needs to rectify by killing the bosses in each era.

The shattered timeline creates a time loop in each era which lasts a different amount of time per era (around 5 mins as a baseline amount). Once the player runs out of time, they are sent back to the beginning with all monsters respawning. Once the boss is killed, the player is free to roam, and any monster killed is permanently killed.



*Figure 1: The original "The Legend of Zelda" game.*

The player travels between eras during gameplay as they progress. They can reach and travel to the next era before killing the boss of the era, and come back later to kill them when they have the required items. The game is relatively open where the player can complete whichever quest they want first (with a couple being available). The time loop resets every time they travel.

The map is continuous, with no loading screens (potential loading screens between eras if needed by the engine). The map is relatively big, but spacious, with enemies being relatively far apart.

The player has limited health and attacks enemies to get more experience, level up, and get items. The enemies attempt to attack back and damage the player. There are also NPCs which the player can interact with, including talking with them and killing them.

*For the project (which I'll just call demo in these italic parts), the focus is on one Era, the Greek era.*

## Game Order (Kind of the Story)

After pressing play on the main menu, the player is transported into a tutorial in their "lab". Machines which barely attack and damage the player only a little are placed in a big room and the player is given time to learn the combat mechanics, attacks, and main gameplay mechanics in combat. The player's companion is an AI which guides them through the tutorial. While the AI is not sentient, it does adapt its messages based on the player. *This tutorial part will not be in the demo.*

After the tutorial, the player is sent to the first era, where a hidden timer immediately starts. The player is not told there is a timer. Once only one minute is left on the timer, the player is urged to come back to the time machine as quickly as possible by the AI and then explained that there is a time loop in the era and the player would've been lost to time had they not come back (they would've still been brought back, but their loot would've been lost). If the player does not come back in time, they die and then come back at the time machine but without their loot, and then explained the mechanic of time. (If this is too harsh, the timer on the first pass may be reduced to avoid the player going too far into the level and losing too much gear.) *This will all be implemented in the demo, except possibly for the first run where the player is forced to come back. That part will only be implemented if time permits.*

The player then attempts again, this time with the timer clearly visible on the screen. They collect keys and important items to proceed in the era and as long as they come back to the time machine each time loop, they do not lose keys/gear/items collected. The boss of the era requires items and keys which cannot all be acquired in a single time loop.

Once the player has the required items and potential keys, they can attempt to go to the boss as quickly as possible to kill them. The timer does not stop during a boss battle, which forces the player to get to the boss as quickly as possible and kill them. Once the boss is killed, the timer stops and the time loop ends, all actions become permanent (open chests remain open, dead enemies do not respawn, etc.).

Every time loop, the world resets. All enemies come back, chests are full again (with the same item as before), and enemy actions not based on the player are the same (if an enemy would normally walk left after one minute, they do so every time loop, unless interrupted by the player, who essentially has "free will"). Doors also lock again if they had been unlocked, and any other action the player has taken is reverted. The only things which the player gets to keep is the loot (weapons, armor, items, etc.) they had when they came back to the time machine and their XP and levels (special abilities, etc.). To avoid losing gear in case they die/get lost to the time loop, the player can place any items they want in an inventory system in the time machine. Even if the player dies, any inventory placed there is safe. This obviously comes at the drawback of being unable to use such inventory during a run. *This will all be implemented (as much as possible in terms of items/enemies, etc.) except for the time machine part and the inventory in the time machine, which will only be implemented if time permits.*

Some areas of the map may be locked behind doors or require special items or abilities to access, such as the boss room. Some such areas are "safe zones" which, with the help of the AI, the player can set up in one time loop and in any future time loop, going to this safe zone will be the same as going back to the time machine. From the safe zone, the player can also access the time machine inventory, saving time if they want to safeguard specific items. *This will not be implemented in the demo (unless we have lots of time to do so).*

## Player and Enemy Attacks and Movement

For player and enemy attacks as well as movement, please see this document:

<https://docs.google.com/document/u/0/d/1lp18gFoaHXx7uPgk4eB3GfzHTCFg8rTIY-4U0BzM6W0>.

## User Interface and Inventory

The game never pauses, if the player goes back to the main menu or quits the game, this causes their progress for the current loop to be lost. They can safely take a break and quit the game in between loops and their progress will be saved.

The user interface (or UI) has three main pieces of information. The melee and range weapon the player has (with the one currently being used highlighted), the health the player has, and the time remaining in the time loop. The UI also needs to support (i.e., either directly, or not conflict with) speech bubbles and a semi-transparent inventory system, so that the game can still be visible behind the inventory. This is required since the game does not pause, and the player must be able to see what is happening to quickly quit out of the inventory and fight incoming enemies.



Figure 2: (Bad) Diagram of the UI for Timeless Journeys

The time remaining is not visible on the first run, except during the last minute.