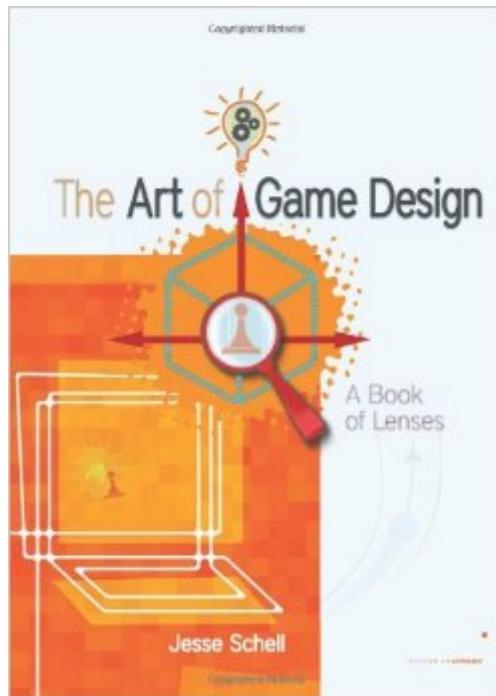


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# The Art Of Game Design: A Book Of Lenses



## Synopsis

Anyone can master the fundamentals of game design - no technological expertise is necessary. The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses shows that the same basic principles of psychology that work for board games, card games and athletic games also are the keys to making top-quality videogames. Good game design happens when you view your game from many different perspectives, or lenses. While touring through the unusual territory that is game design, this book gives the reader one hundred of these lenses - one hundred sets of insightful questions to ask yourself that will help make your game better. These lenses are gathered from fields as diverse as psychology, architecture, music, visual design, film, software engineering, theme park design, mathematics, writing, puzzle design, and anthropology. Anyone who reads this book will be inspired to become a better game designer - and will understand how to do it.

## Book Information

Paperback: 520 pages

Publisher: CRC Press; 1 edition (August 4, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0123694965

ISBN-13: 978-0123694966

Product Dimensions: 9.1 x 7.4 x 1.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.4 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 167 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #102,434 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #17 in Books > Computers & Technology > Games & Strategy Guides > Game Design #29 in Books > Arts & Photography > Other Media > Digital #52 in Books > Computers & Technology > Games & Strategy Guides > Game Programming

## Customer Reviews

Winner of a 2008 Game Developer Front Line Award" This book was clearly designed, not just written, and is an entire course in how to be a game designer. The book is also intensely practical, giving some of the best advice on how to harness your own subconscious I've ever read, as well as short and useful descriptions of probability theory for non-mathematicians, how to diagram interest curves, working with a team, and dozens of other topics. It is simply the best text I've seen that really addresses what a designer should know, and then actually gives practical advice about how to gain that knowledge through life experience. It's a marvelous tour de force

and an essential part of anyone's game design library." •Noah Falstein, Gamasutra.com from Game Developer Magazine "If you're nineteen and have no idea why you adore videogames •you're just enchanted by them, you can't help yourself •dude, is this ever the book for you. You are the core demographic for this particular textual experience. Put down the hand-controller, read the book right now. I can promise you that you will grow in moral and intellectual stature. Instead of remaining a twitchy, closeted, joystick geek, like you are now, you will emerge from this patient master-class as a surprisingly broadminded adult who quotes Herman Hesse and appreciates improvisational theater and Impressionist painting. You will no longer kill off parties with your Warcraft fixation. Instead, other people your age will find themselves mysteriously drawn to you •to your air of quiet sympathy, your contemplative depth. Wise beyond your years, you will look beyond the surface details of shrieking monsters and into the deeper roots of human experience. Schell's creative approach is full of autarchic frontier self-reliance. Out there on Tomorrowland's Gameification Frontier, a theorist intellectual has to slaughter his own hogs and parse Aristotle's Poetics on the back of a shovel. But boy, it sure is roomy over there. It's a large, free, democratic book. It's Emersonian in its cheery disorganization. The book's like a barbaric yawp from the top of a Nintendo console.. I'd read it now, before things get out of hand." •Bruce Sterling, "Beyond the Beyond" blog, Wired.com "• | a good book that teaches the craft of game design in an accessible manner. • | The text goes just deep enough to give you practical insight into how the key concepts might be useful without becoming wordy. • | If you are looking for a competent introduction to game design, this book is a good place to start." •Daniel Cook, Gamasutra.com, February 2009 "As indicated by its title, Jesse Schell's *The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses* uses many different perspectives (the titular lenses), which each prompt their own important questions, ranging from •What problems does my game ask the players to solve?• to •What does beauty mean within the context of my game?• These distinct points are interwoven throughout a step-by-step analysis of the design process that begins with the designer and his or her basic idea, and builds successfully from there. As with *Rules of Play*, the wealth of information presented by *The Art of Game Design* may seem daunting at first, but Schell's agreeable voice eases the reader into a series of invaluable angles we can (and should) use to evaluate what we play." •1up.com "Easily the most comprehensive, practical book I've ever seen on game design." •Will Wright, Designer of The Sims, SimCity, and Spore

Jesse Schell is professor of entertainment technology for Carnegie Mellon University's Entertainment Technology Center (ETC), a joint master's program between Carnegie Mellon's

College of Fine Arts and School of Computer Science, where he teaches game design and leads several research projects. Formerly he was creative director of the Walt Disney Imagineering Virtual Reality Studio. Schell worked as a designer, programmer, and manager on several projects for Disney theme parks and DisneyQuest. Schell received his undergraduate degree from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and a master's degree in information networking from Carnegie Mellon. He is also CEO of Schell Games, LLC, an independent game studio in Pittsburgh, and chairman of the International Game Developers Association (IGDA). In 2004 he was named as one of the World's 100 Top Young Innovators by MIT's Technology Review.

Approached from a more philosophical and what-makes-people-tick perspective, this book provides outstanding insight into why some games work and others should be banished from the face of the Earth. The book is written in a general enough way that it could apply to any type of game (computer/video, board, card, playground, etc.) but it is clearly aimed at the interactive, high-tech entertainment experience. The writing is very conversational-- this is not a book on "how to" make games, but more a book on everything to consider before and during the design and making process. It's very practical in giving useful understanding of the development process (the stages a design goes through, iterations of tuning and balancing, etc.) without sinking into technological specifics. If you love video games, in particular, you might enjoy reading this book just for the sheer pleasure of it (without any aim to applying an of it)-- but it's been the most useful education I've had in the magic that leads to some of my favorite games, as well as insight into why I hate certain games that seem like I should love them.

A well-written and engaging book that, while focused on game design, provides insights far beyond the world of game design and is full of useful advice for anyone designing anything. The book guides the reader through the entire design process, starting with discussing the designer's ultimate objective (to create an experience); continuing through understanding the elements that comprise games, addressing the needs of players, exploring the fundamental types of game mechanics, developing game worlds; and concluding with how to deal with clients, how to pitch a game, and how games transform their audiences. Along the way, the author present a series of 100 "lenses" through which designers can focus on specific aspects of their design. Each lens provides a series of questions that help designers stay on track during the course of their design. The author also sells a card set called "A Deck of Lenses" which present these lenses with illustrations [...] The deck of lenses is also available as an smart phone/tablet app [...] As I noted above, many of the concepts

in this book can be applied to not only game design, but also provide insights that can be applied to other fields as well. I'm a big fan of Walt Disney Imagineering, and found that many of the design principles in this book are the same principles used by the Imagineers in the design of Disney theme parks. Based on the author's background (Jesse Schell is a former Imagineer), this wasn't too big a surprise, but I still find the parallels worth noting. I highly recommend this book to anyone working in the game industry, as well as anyone interested in design in general. You'll be glad you added this book to your library.

This book is excellent. I'm not even halfway though and I've learned so many interesting things. He is a very good writer, pulling in so many examples from all academic areas and games, plus his writing is highly readable and engaging. I would recommend it to anyone.

This is an excellent book. It is not just about the 'art', but it is more with the philosophy of making great games. A lot of summaries (i.e. the lenses and chapter cover diagram) that help you remember the core points. The flow of the book is great, I feel like reading a story book. It gradually brings you into its point and even exposes your thought! Thank you for writing this great book, Jesse Schell.

I am an independent game developer, And this is one of my favorites books ever. Schell teaches how to develop a game from 0 to end. It is an easy reading and I was amazed at the improvements of my own games. 5 stars review absolutely

Awesome book about the principles of informed design, which can easily be abstracted for anything. If you think about it (and read the book), you'll realize that everything can be thought of as a game in some way or another (fun is not required), so if you understand how to make great games, you'll understand how to make great experiences of all kinds.

I had a notion of designing a game. This book was recommended somewhere, I don't remember where. I read an excerpt and it seemed to offer up some good information, and a good place to start to get an overview of what is involved. Upon reading it, I was blown away. Schell covers everything, quite literally everything. I found that the lenses he reveals are useful regardless of what you're doing. I am an in-house designer for a major corporation and can readily see how the topics covered can help in my "day job", both internally to working with the teams in the company, but also

in addressing our customers and their needs. You won't get the technical "how to code something" information, or algorithms or strategies. You will get the underlying principles and guidance for building pretty much any project, games or otherwise. Thank you for publishing this Mr. Schell.

Schell does a great job outlining the philosophy and process of game design. I bought it for my UTDallas ATEC game design fundamentals class. The book reads like a friendly conversation, making studying a little less boring. I don't necessarily agree with everything, but that's okay- my teacher even mentioned how as Schell is one person writing about such an unscientific field, it's okay to disagree with certain parts.

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