

How to Write a Video Game Review

Playing games and then dissecting them to find out what was working, or even better yet, not working, can be so helpful in understanding what makes a good game 'good,' and a bad game, 'bad.'

In this assignment, you will play a game and then write up an Official Review. This assignment should look polished in its presentation. That is, like something that could be used in a magazine or website.

Follow these steps to create a review on a game chosen by your instructor:

1. **Playing the Game and Taking Notes**

Get a good feel for the game by playing it. Take notes as you play. These notes translate directly into what you put in your review. Pay attention to playability, sound, graphics. Jot down anything that sticks to you. Write down what could be improved upon; be specific. How does the game compare to others like it?

2. **Compile Your Notes**

Your review should be in-depth. Think about clearly articulating each point that you made in your notes. Give examples! Explain yourself clearly. Start with an introduction about what the game is, open with a hook that grabs your reader's attention. Discuss the quality of the sound and graphics. Consider the system you are using to run the game – decent for gaming or not? Write about the story and characters. Describe the action, weapon options, and other unique elements of gameplay. Note your personal opinion. What would you tell the developers if you could talk with them? Give some sort of rating for the game – be creative in how you present the rating. Proof read your work! Have someone else read it too.

3. **Other Things to Include**

You want to present your review in a logical, easy to read and understand order. It might be helpful to include:

- a. Major Heading that hints at what your review will be about. Think newspaper article titles.

Operation Flashpoint

Here's your chance to dispatch terrorists 1984-style.

- b. Use Subheadings when appropriate. Subheadings can be really be helpful to emphasize certain points that you make in your review. Subheadings can also help organize your thoughts in the review. Pull out sections can also be helpful and interesting.

The next chapter of BioWare's sci-fi RPG
brings the battle home to Earth

- c. Use graphics/screen captures. Pictures can really help support what you are saying. Grab those screen captures as you play! Consider using captions to clearly explain what is happening in the screen shot.



- d. Format your review! Make it look interesting, like it belongs in a game review magazine!

A new Elder Scroll unfurls

Hear ye hear ye! The long-awaited sequel to *Oblivion* will be released on 11/11/11

It's been four years since *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* came out, forever changing our expectations for what an open-world role-playing game should be. In the fifth year, the fifth game will emerge. Bethesda now says that *TES V: Skyrim* will arrive in November.

The new chapter is set in the titular land of *Skyrim*, the chilly mountains directly north of *Oblivion*'s stomping ground of Cyrodiil. It's home to the Viking-like Nords, and the plot revolves around an evil related to the demon invasion events of *Oblivion*, one that can only be stopped by the Dragon-Born. The third game, *Morrowind*, casts you as the chosen

one, but in *Oblivion* it is actually the Emperor who ends up saving the world—you just serve as his bodyguard. It might be your turn to do the honors again in this time.

Like every numbered *Elder Scrolls* game, *Skyrim* will be a generational jump forward, with an all-new engine. Though the old Gamebryo engine was the foundation for several great games, plenty of gamers are glad to see it go due to frequent glitches and bugs. Bethesda hasn't given any technical details yet, but *Skyrim* has been in development for years, so if there isn't something good to show for it in November they'll likely all be grounded. **—Tom Francis**

DARK COMES TO LIGHT

CLASSIC LONG-LOST DARK ENGINE SOURCE CODE APPEARS BY MAGIC

Good news for fans of *Theif* and *System Shock*: source code for the Dark Engine—the engine most of Looking Glass's games were built on—was recently rediscovered. Potentially, this means that updated versions of *Theif*, *Theif and System Shock 2* could be made to run on modern PCs. There's still a lot of work to be done to get it in shape for us, but you can keep up with the discussion at <http://bit.ly/darkengine>. **RM**

WOW: CATAclySM SELLS BIG

STATS EXPANSION IS THE FASTEST-SELLING PC GAME EVER

World of Warcraft: Cataclysm sold 3.3 million copies in the 24 hours between December 7 and December 8. To put that in perspective: the previous expansion, *Wrath of the Lich King*, only managed 2.2 million in a full day, and *Call of Duty: Black Ops* did 2.7 million (but that was across all platforms). Assuming \$40 per copy (not factoring in collector's editions), Blizzard took in \$132 million in revenue on that day. **CP**

NOW PLAYING

AT THE PC GAMER WEB STORE

Huge new games are being announced at such a dizzying rate that unless you start downloading from www.pcgamer.com/store right away, you'll never have time to play all of the recently released games that you want to play before the next round hits! Just one of these PCGs can keep you busy for 100 hours, so you've got no time to waste.

- Dead Space 2**
- Back to the Future**
- BF: Bad Company 2—Vietnam**
- Bejeweled 3**
- Fallout: New Vegas**

Great Scott!

