The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses, Second Edition

By Jesse Schell

The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses, Second Edition By Jesse Schell

Good game design happens when you view your game from as many perspectives as possible. Written by one of the world's top game designers, **The Art of Game Design** presents 100+ sets of questions, or different lenses, for viewing a game's design, encompassing diverse fields such as psychology, architecture, music, visual design, film, software engineering, theme park design, mathematics, puzzle design, and anthropology. This **Second Edition** of a Game Developer Front Line Award winner:

- Describes the deepest and most fundamental principles of game design
- Demonstrates how tactics used in board, card, and athletic games also work in top-quality video games
- Contains valuable insight from Jesse Schell, the former chair of the International Game Developers Association and award-winning designer of Disney online games

The Art of Game Design, Second Edition gives readers useful perspectives on how to make better game designs faster. It provides practical instruction on creating world-class games that will be played again and again.

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The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses, Second Edition By Jesse Schell Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #11043 in Books
- Brand: imusti
- Published on: 2014-11-06
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.50" h x 8.00" w x 1.25" l, 2.20 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 600 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"… a solid pick and a 'must' for any collection looking for an in-depth, fundamental textbook on how to design and work with games."
?*Midwest Book Review*, March 2015

Game Nite's **Editors' Choice**
"… this book is considered by many to be the 'bible' of game design. … Much of the material has been updated … the introduction to probability … is a must read for aspiring game designers … engaging and thought provoking … a substantial book for someone looking to get serious about game design. … the cards are brilliant and a joy to keep on your desk and pull one or more out and see how they relate to your current design. … Highly recommended."
?*Game Nite*, Issue 2, 2015

"I could not think of a better name for this work because game design isn't a skillset, it's a Tao: a way of looking at the world. This was perhaps the most important thing that Jesse ever taught me. It is the principle lesson of this book. … The things you will learn here are universally applicable. … Each section individually is a lens and tool in your designer's tool belt but, taken as a whole, they form a system of thinking that will allow you to tackle problems well beyond their scope. … this book trains you to think as a designer …"
?James Portnow, Game Designer, CEO of Rainmaker Games, and Writer of *Extra Credits*

Praise for the First Edition:

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*

"… 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 has lovingly crafted a great resource for both aspiring developers as well as seasoned gaming industry veterans. I highly recommend this book."
?Cliff "CliffyB" Bleszinski, CEO Boss Key and Former Design Director for Epic Games

"Inspiring and practical for both veterans and beginners."
?Bob Bates, Game Designer and Co-Founder of Legend Entertainment

"Jesse Schell's new book, **The Art of Game Design**, is a marvelous introduction to game design by a true master of the form. Schell is the rarest of creatures: a gifted teacher who is also a talented and successful current game designer. This book reflects Jesse's skill at presenting information clearly and coherently, and the knowledge he has acquired as a master game designer. I have already referenced this book while preparing lectures and classes in the U.S., Germany, and New Zealand, and recommend it as an invaluable aid for anyone interested in game design. **The Art of Game Design** is a pitch-perfect blend of valuable knowledge and insights with an informal and compelling presentation. The sections on harnessing the creative power of the subconscious mind are particularly insightful and delightfully written. It is immediately clear that Jesse Schell not only knows the theory behind what he writes about; he has also put it to use many times and honed his techniques to perfection. A must-read for anyone interested in interactive design, and even the creative process in general."
?Noah Falstein, Chief Game Designer, Google

"**The Art of Game Design** describes precisely how to build a game the world will love and elegantly crank it through the realities of clients and publishers. It draws wisdom from Disneyland to Michelangelo, gradually assembling a supply of concrete game design rules and subtle psychological tricks that actually work in surprising ways. It is fertilizer for the subconscious: keep a stack of Post-it notes nearby to record all the game ideas that will sprout out of your own head while reading."
?Kyle Gabler, Game Designer and Founder of 2D Boy, Makers of *World of Goo*

"He embodies a tradition of reconciling diverse disciplines, extending the possibilities of each and creating new theories and opportunities for both industry and academia. Jesse is like the Einstein of entertainment."
?Mk Haley, Walt Disney Research

"Packed with Jesse's real-world experience and humorous insight, **The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses** is a tool chest crossed with a kaleidoscope. Both fantastical and practical, methodical and wonder-full, this book and deck will have you looking at and dreaming up games with a fresh vision. Like a chemistry set for making mental explosions, it's an idea(l) book guiding the design process for both new and seasoned game designers. In short, using Jesse's book is FUN."
?Heather Kelley, Artist and Game Designer

"**The Art of Game Design** is one of a handful of books I continuously reference during production. Whether you're just starting out or looking for ways to approach your design from a fresh perspective, this book is a must for your library."
?Neil Druckmann, Creative Director on *The Last of Us* at Naughty Dog

"On games industry desks, books tend to come and go, but they all seem to go on top of Jesse Schell's **The Art of Game Design**, because that's the one book that seems to stick around."
?Jason VandenBerghe, Creative Director, Ubisoft

"Ken Rolston, internationally celebrated game designer, recommends Jesse Schell's **The Art of Game Design** both for smart people and for people who are learning how to be smart."
?Ken Rolston, Director of Design, Turbine

About the Author

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

Users Review

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Candice Delgado:

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