Game Programming & Design - Homework #1
GAME REVIEWER

I. BACKGROUND

In the last lecture we talked extensively about "game design". In particular we tried to answer a series of questions, including:
1. What defines (how do we classify) a game?
2. What makes a game fun?
3. Can we come up with a methodology for creating successful games?

There are individuals who make a living by playing and then reviewing games. Writing a game review isn't easy. Anyone can say that they "like a game" or "don't like a game" but not everyone can intelligently explain what made a particular game enjoyable (or un-enjoyable) to play. A good or bad review of a game can severely affect how profitable that game becomes (remember, some games may cost millions of dollars to create).

You should now have the knowledge and vocabulary to be a successful game reviewer!

II. PICKING A GAME

You will need to pick a game to review. It will be best if you pick a game that you have already played and can describe in detail.

You may choose to review:
1. A console games (Xbox, Playstation, Wii)
2. A computer game (game that runs as an application on a computer).
3. A browser game (game that runs in a browser, such as Internet Explorer or Firefox).

If you can't think of any games to review, then you can play one of the following games and review it:
- http://scratch.mit.edu/projects/MrMeyer/1111951
- http://scratch.mit.edu/projects/MrMeyer/1111924
- http://scratch.mit.edu/projects/MrMeyer/1111845

Note: DO NOT review any games that have, or would have, an 'A', 'M' or 'RP' rating, even if your parent/guardian allows you to play it.

III. WRITING A REVIEW OF THE GAME

A. You should assume that:
1. The reader has no knowledge about game design theory.
   a. Don't mention the "theory of natural funativity".
   b. Don't talk about the rules of game design.
2. The reader has never played the game before.

B. Make sure your review answers the following questions:

1. What is the genre of the game?
    a. Make sure to address all 3 aspects of genre that we talked about when we discussed MDA.
        i. Mechanics: What can you say about the platform, programming language and code design of the game?
        ii. Dynamics: What can you say about the rules and objects of the game?
        iii. Aesthetics: What can you say about the "look and feel" of the game?
    b. Example: "*Creeper is a sci-fi, overhead-view, single player strategy game written in Flash and played using a web-browser.*"
2. What is the games ESRB rating (or what would it be if not listed)?
    a. http://www.esrb.org/ratings/ratings_guide.jsp
    b. DO NOT review any games that have (or would have) an 'A', 'M' or 'RP' rating, even if your parent/guardian allows you to play it.
3. If there is a story to the game, what is the story?
4. How is the game played?
5. What makes the game fun?
    a. What specific activities that the game allows did you find enjoyable?
    b. Examples:
        i. "*It's fun to blast the enemy.*"
        ii. "*I enjoyed figuring out the optimal pattern for defense towers.*"
        iii. "*The multi-player mode allows you and up to 8 friends to play together.*"
6. How does this game compare to other games?
    a. Is this game better or worse than other games in its genre?
    a. Is this game better or worse than other games available on its platform (Xbox, Wii, Browser)?
    b. Examples:
        i. "*This is one of the better "tower-defense" games that I have played".*
        ii. "*There are better Xbox games to spend your money on.*"
7. What could be done to make the game better?
    a. What specific things about the game bored or frustrated you?
    b. Examples:
        i. "*The game is unfortunately very linear, not offering players very many choices.*"
        ii. "*The simple game-play could be improved with more side-quests of levels.*"
        iii. "*After struggling through level 8 I felt the player should have been rewarded with more than just a quick cutscene.*"
8. Where can the reader find/buy the game (and what if anything is the cost)?
9. Should the reader buy/play this game or not?

C. Be sure and include the following:
    1. Your name at the top of the paper.
    2. The title of the game, at the top of the paper.
    3. At least one picture of the game, preferably showing some aspect of game play that you enjoyed.