Making Stories Into Games

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The Toolkit

• Playfic
  • http://playfic.com/

• Inform 7
  • http://inform7.com/

• Parchment
  • http://parchment.toolness.com/
An Intro to Inform 7
Creating a Room

The Forest Clearing is a room.

The printed name of the Forest Clearing is "A Sunny Clearing".

The description of the Forest Clearing is "A clearing in a lush forest."
Adding Another Room

The North Forest is a room.

The printed name of the North Forest is "The Northern Forest".

The description of the North Forest is "A forest straight out of a fairytale, with a large oak tree looming over you."

The Forest Clearing is south of the North Forest.
The oak tree is scenery.

The description of the oak tree is "A robust, healthy oak tree. Unfortunately, it's a bit too tall to climb."

The oak tree is in the North Forest.
Adding a Thing

The mallet is a thing.

The description of the mallet is "A heavy wooden mallet, suitable for hammering pegs into the ground."

The mallet is in the Forest Clearing.
Making Things Affect the Player

The coat is a **wearable thing**.

The **description** of the coat is "A nice woolen coat, suitable for winter treks."

The coat is **in** the North Forest.

**After wearing** the coat: **say** "You feel nice and warm."
Putting Things on Other Things

The desk is a supporter.

The description of the desk is "An imposing desk, straight out of a barrister's office."

The desk is fixed in place in the Forest Clearing.

The cookie is an edible thing.

The description of the cookie is "A yummy chocolate chip cookie."

The cookie is on the desk.
The comfy chair is an enterable supporter.

The description of the chair is "An overstuffed chair, warm and comfy."

The chair is fixed in place in the Forest Clearing.

After entering the chair: say "You sit in the chair and find it a very comfy chair indeed - you could easily go to sleep here."
Putting Things Inside Other Things

The treasure chest is a **closed openable container**.

The *description* of the treasure chest is "Just your standard pirate gold treasure chest."

The treasure chest is *in* the Forest Clearing.

The teleporter is a **device**.

The *description* of the teleporter is "Turn this switch on for fun."

The teleporter is *in* the treasure chest.
Putting Things to Work

After switching on the teleporter: say "You hear a buzzing noise, and all is dark for a moment."; move player to the North Forest.

After switching off the teleporter: say "You hear a dull click."
Adding an Animal

The rat is an animal.

The description of the rat is "A rather scrawny rat, always looking for food."

The rat is in the North Forest.
Adding a Person

The wizard is a **person**.

The **description** of the wizard is "A wizard with a pointy hat and a robe. No magic wand, though."

The wizard is **in** the North Forest.

**Every turn** when the player **can see** the wizard: **say** "The wizard mumbles something about [the random thing which is in the Forest Clearing]."
Instead of asking the wizard about "coat" or "the coat": say "The wizard exclaims 'Take it – I have no use for it!'"
Writing a Game Story
Basic Screenplay Design

ACT I

First Half

Dramatic Context

25%

Plot Point I
(approx. 20-30)
17–25%

SET-UP

ACT II

Second Half

Dramatic Context

50%

Midpoint
about page 60

CONFRONTATION

ACT III

75%

Plot Point II
(approx. 80-90)
67–75%

RESOLUTION

Linear Storytelling

Branching Stories

Story Step A

Story Step B1 → Story Step C1 → Story Step D1

Story Step B2

Story Step B3

Story Step C2 → Story Step D2 → Story Step E2 → Story Step F2 → Story Step G

Story Step C3

Story Step C4 → Story Step D4 → Story Step E4 → Story Step F4
Controlled Branching

- Story Step A
- Story Step B1
- Story Step B2
- Story Step B3
- Story Step C
- Story Step D1
- Story Step D2
- Story Step D3
- Story Step E
- Story Step F
- Story Step G
# Games and Fun

<table>
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<th>Successful Games</th>
<th>...To Avoid</th>
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<tr>
<td>Include These Items…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation before challenges</td>
<td>Results due to pure chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sense of a game space</td>
<td>The perception of the game as trivial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A solid core mechanic</td>
<td>The game not being perceived as a game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A range of challenges</td>
<td>The game being exhausted too quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A range of required abilities</td>
<td>The game being perceived as simplistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill in using the required abilities</td>
<td>The game being perceived as tedious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Also Have…</td>
<td>...Because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable feedback</td>
<td>Players like to see greater skill result in greater rewards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ways to accommodate beginners &amp; experts</td>
<td>Beginners need not get clobbered, or experts “bottom feed”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A definite cost for failure</td>
<td>Players feel cheated by “never-lose” games</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Unsuccessful Games</th>
<th>...They Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When Players Say…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The game is too easy</td>
<td>Game patterns are too simple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The game is too involved</td>
<td>They are uninterested in the info required to detect patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The game is too hard</td>
<td>Patterns are perceived as noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The game becomes too repetitive</td>
<td>New patterns are added too slowly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The game becomes too hard</td>
<td>New patterns are added too fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The game runs out of options</td>
<td>All game patterns are exhausted</td>
</tr>
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Hippasus

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