

DISCOVER VIDEO GAMING

ROLE-PLAYING

VIDEO GAMES

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AT A GLANCE

- A role-playing game (RPG) allows a gamer to take on the role of a character in a story. Dungeons & Dragons is famous tabletop RPG.
- The earliest video games were invented in the 1950s. RPG video games emerged later as computer technology improved.
- The first RPG video games were based on tabletop role-playing games.
- RPGs can be divided into multiple genres. Turn-based RPGs and action RPGs are two major genres.
- In turn-based RPGs, players take turns performing actions. This slows down the pace of the game.



- Action RPGs require players to quickly respond to events in the game. Players must move and fight with their character in real time.
- Other genres of RPGs include massively multiplayer online RPGs (MMORPGs), tactical RPGs, and roguelikes.
- RPGs remain one of the most popular types of video games today.

WHAT ARE RPGs?

Many types of RPGs exist. However, all RPGs share basic elements. First, a gamer assumes the role of a character within a story. This character is called the player character. The player character may already have a name and personality. Or the character may be unnamed.

Other characters are called non-player characters (NPCs). They may appear around the world of the game. They play

In the game *Baldur's Gate 3*, gamers can create new characters to play as or use built-in characters.





[Persuade] It's not too late to end this peacefully.

I'll pass along your demands to the Marshal.

I've heard enough. This is a waste of time.

In many RPG games, a gamer chooses their character's dialogue from several options.

parts in the storylines. Modern RPGs may feature very long stories. For example, the story in the 2019 game *Persona 5 Royal* is lengthy. It takes most players at least 100 hours to finish.

RPG stories fall into several subgenres. Many RPGs are set in fantasy worlds. These stories include magical elements such as monsters. Fantasy stories often take place in medieval settings. Gamers may take on the roles of knights or wizards. The Elder Scrolls series is a classic example. These fantasy RPG games take place in the land

Gaming and Reading

Many RPGs use narration and dialogue to tell their stories. Some games contain more words than the average novel. The 2019 game *Disco Elysium* contains more than 1 million words. Many of its words are in the narration. Helen Hindpere was the game's lead writer. She says, "The narrator is the voice of *Disco Elysium*."

Quoted in Matt Purslow, "*Disco Elysium: Bringing a Million Words to Life for The Final Cut*," IGN, February 9, 2021. www.ign.com.

of Tamriel. Humans and other creatures live among magic and monsters.

Science fiction, or sci-fi, is another popular subgenre for RPGs. Science fiction tales often take place in futuristic worlds. They may be full of amazing technologies. Many are set in outer space. Gamers may play as space travelers or aliens. Mass Effect is a popular sci-fi RPG series. Gamers play as Commander Shepard, who journeys on a high-tech spaceship.

GAMEPLAY FEATURES

Often, a key part of an RPG is that the player character grows stronger over time. A character's growth can be measured in several ways. They may gain experience points and level up. Characters often get



Gamers' inventories may contain items such as weapons, food, and treasure.

experience points by beating enemies. They may gain points by finishing quests, too. Then characters can move to the next level. They may even gain new powers.

RPG characters may also gain strength through new weapons or tools. As gamers explore, their characters may find these items. In RPGs, characters typically have inventories, or bags. Gamers keep their characters' items there.

GLOSSARY

combat

physical fighting

console

a machine that people use to play video games

franchises

collections of related media properties such as books, movies, and video games

generates

creates

genre

a group or type of games that share similar features

graphics

the visual features of a video game

morality

a system of right and wrong

mythology

a collection of popular stories that explain the worldview of a group of people

replayable

able to be replayed a lot

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