

# **EXPANSIVE GENRES** OF PLAY

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# GAMES & LEARNING DESIGN

How people design and learn from games is of enormous interest to contemporary researchers and educators given that recent surveys of Americans over 15 show that they spend more time every day “playing games or using the computer for leisure” as they do “relaxing or thinking” (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).

U.S. Department of Labor (2015). *American Time Use Survey: Leisure and Sports Activities*. Bureau of Labor Statistics Report. Available online: <https://www.bls.gov/tus/charts/leisure.htm>.

We have to conclude, therefore, that civilization is, in its earliest phases, played. It does not come *from* play like a baby detaching itself from the womb: it arises *in* and as play, and never leaves it.



Huizinga, J. (1938, 1955). *Homo ludens; a study of the play-element in culture*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

# TRADITIONAL DEFINITIONS OF GAME GENRES

“This proactive production by players of story elements, a visual-motoric-auditory-decision-making symphony, and a unique real-virtual story produces a new form of performance art coproduced by players and game designers” (p. 61).

Gee, J. P. (2006). Why game studies now? Video games: A new art form. *Games and Culture*, 1, 58-61.

“... for the sake of brevity, this article will utilize case studies of four of the more popular video game genres: simulation, strategy, action, and role-playing games” (p. 8).

Apperley, T. H. (2006). Genre and game studies: Toward a critical approach to video game genres. *Simulation & Gaming*, 37 (1), 6-23.

# ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS OF GAME GENRES

McCann (2009) echoes some of the same “broadly accepted genres around which librarians can organize their game collections.” These “genres” include:

“Action, Action-Adventure, Adventure, MMORPG (Massively Multiple Online Role-Playing Games), Music, Role-Playing, Simulation, Sports, Strategy” (p. 56).

McCann, S. (2009). Game genres. *Library Journal, January*, 56.

# MORE DEFINITIONS OF GAME GENRES

“The genres covered in this list are as follows: Abstract, Adaptation, Adventure, Artificial Life, Board Games, Capturing, Card Games, Catching, Chase, Collecting, Combat, Demo, Diagnostic, Dodging, Driving, Educational (“Games which are designed to teach”), Escape, Fighting, Flying, Gambling, Interactive Movie, Management Simulation, Maze, Obstacle Course, Pencil-and-Paper Games, Pinball, Platform, Programming, Games, Puzzle, Quiz, Racing, Role Playing, Rhythm and Dance, Shoot ‘Em Up, Simulation, Sports, Strategy, Table-Top Games, Target, Text Adventure, Training Simulation, and Utility” (p. 117).

Wolf, M. J. P. (Ed.). (2001). *The medium of the video game*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

# SERIOUS EDUCATIONAL GAME GENRES

Some developers have created what they call “serious games” for educational purposes. But no clear consensus as to what constitutes a serious game currently exists.

Susi, et al. (2007) define serious games as “games that engage the user, and contribute to the achievement of a defined purpose other than pure entertainment (whether or not the user is consciously aware of it).”

Such games often have dubious educational efficacy and tend to be summarized as uninteresting (Van Eck, 2006).

Susi, T., Johannesson, M., & Backlund, P. (2007). *Serious games: An overview*. Technical Report HS-IKI-TR-07-001. School of Humanities and Informatics, University of Skövde.

Van Eck, R. (2006). Digital game-based learning: It's not just the digital natives who are restless. *EDUCAUSE Review*, 41 (2), 16-30..

# REDEFINING GAME GENRES

“A classification of discourse will be rhetorically sound if it contributes to an understanding of how discourse works—that is, if it reflects the rhetorical experience of the people who create and interpret the discourse. A useful principle of classification for discourse, then, should have some basis in the conventions of rhetorical practice, including the ways actual rhetors and audiences have of comprehending the discourse they use” (p. 152).

“... typified rhetorical actions based in recurring situations” (p. 159).

# CONNECTED TO EXPANSIVE PLAY

“Ideal-typical expansive cycle of epistemic learning actions” (p. 152).

Stages include questioning, analyzing, collaboratively modeling new solutions, examining models, implementing them, and then reflecting on the process.

Can now define gameplay, not as an isolated activity restricted to the console, but as an activity that connects players to an extensive number of external resources and practices.

Engeström, Yrjö. (2001). Expansive learning at work: Toward an activity theoretical reconceptualization. *Journal of Education and Work*, 14 (1), 133-156.

# THIS WAR OF MINE



See Developer Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gotK5DLdVv1>; see This War of Mine Wiki: [http://this-war-of-mine.wikia.com/wiki/This\\_War\\_of\\_Mine\\_Wiki](http://this-war-of-mine.wikia.com/wiki/This_War_of_Mine_Wiki).

# THIS WAR OF MINE

City ravaged by war, the 1992-1996 siege of Sarajevo.

Game emphasizes civilian survivors of war, focusing on resource management, cautious reconnaissance, and moral decision making.

Encourages players to share their own survivor experiences by building modding tools and translating the game for multiple languages.

Numerous paratexts connected to the game, with players communicating, collaborating, evaluating, and sharing them.

See This War of Mine Workshop: <https://steamcommunity.com/workshop/discussions/?appid=282070>.

# PARATEXTS AND GENRES

Genette (1997) coined the term “paratext” to refer to elaborations, bibliographical notes, letters, annotations, marginalia that surround a core “text.”

Consalvo (2007) appropriated the term, connecting it to media such as articles, forum discussions, guides, videos, and game mods (unofficial expansions or packages associated with games).

Genette, Gerard. (1997). *Paratexts: Thresholds of interpretation* (Vol. 20). J. E. Lewin (Trans.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

# THIS WAR OF MINE MOD FORUMS



The screenshot shows the 'This War of Mine' Workshop page on the Steam Community. The page has a dark blue background with a grid pattern. At the top, the title 'This War of Mine' is displayed in white. Below the title is a navigation bar with tabs for 'All', 'Discussions', 'Screenshots', 'Artwork', 'Broadcasts', 'Videos', 'Workshop' (which is highlighted), 'News', and 'Guides'. The main content area features a large banner image of a character from the game. On the left side of the banner, the text 'THIS WAR OF MINE' is written in a stylized, white, distressed font. On the right side, there is a blue text overlay that reads 'Welcome to The workshop!' followed by 'Modding community hub' and a 'Learn More' link. Below the banner is a secondary navigation bar with 'Home', 'Browse', 'Discussions' (which is underlined), and 'About'. Below this, there is a breadcrumb trail: 'Workshop > This War of Mine >'. A status bar indicates 'Showing 1-15 of 130 active topics' and includes a pagination control with numbers 1 through 9 and arrows. The first two forum topics are visible: 'Help with custom Item name and description.' by 'Official' dated 'Oct 8 @ 4:58am' with 0 replies, and 'Some help please?' by 'Courtflash' dated 'Oct 4 @ 6:45pm' with 0 replies.

See This War of Mine Workshop: <https://steamcommunity.com/workshop/discussions/?appid=282070>.

# PARATEXTS OF GAMES

Through the production of new paratexts, players have the potential to contribute to social action within a game's activity system, effecting a change in how that game is played via the introduction of new resources and practices.

Educators can focus on different types of paratexts associated with gameplay (e.g., guides, wikis, mods, playthroughs, etc.).

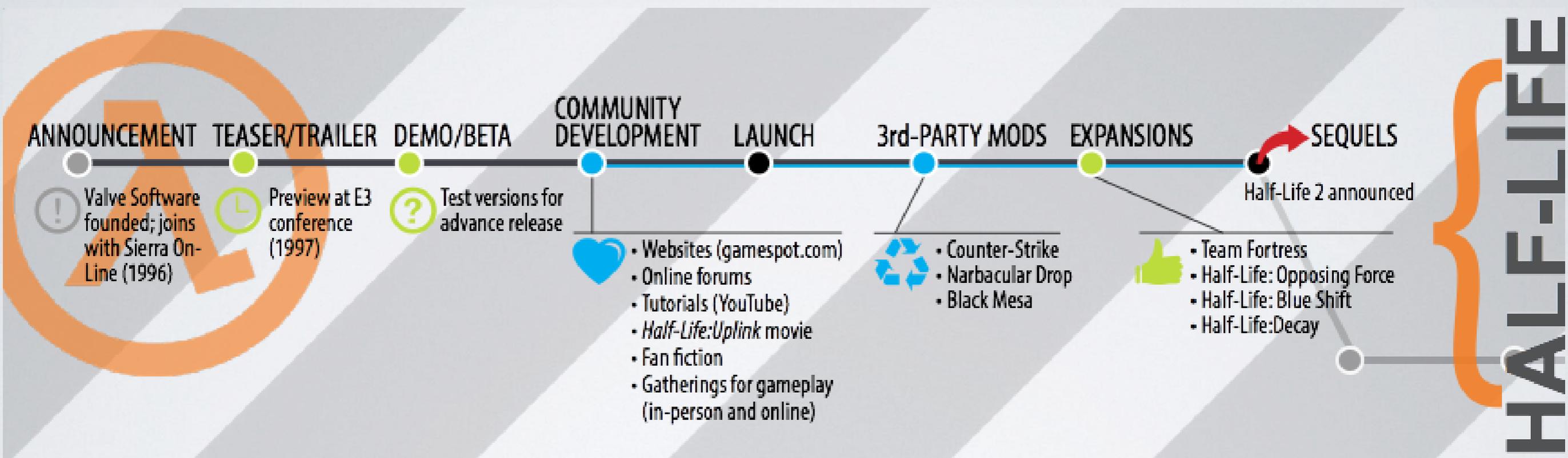
Have students examine the genres of paratextual development and, ultimately, build their own paratextual contributions.

# THE SOCIAL LIFE OF GAME DEVELOPMENT



## GAME GENRE SET

# APPLICATION: HALF-LIFE



# APPLICATION: ICE HOCKEY



# EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

- Game audiences, not only game experiences, encourage gamer-learner engagement, participation, and collaboration surrounding game events.
- Support information, communities, and instructional spaces for novice, intermediate, and expert learners develop.
- Gamers negotiate similar game features and the various discourse communities that emerge via the gaming community.
- Games can facilitate problem solving, creativity, reflection, collaboration, and engaged participation.

# EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

- Genre sets for games explicate abstract concepts such as understanding, learning, motivation, knowledge, expertise, and deep involvement.
- Subject matters can be presented from various perspectives, invite increased participation, and encourage the capacity to build and share.
- Game designers and players can collaborate, communicate, contribute, and evaluate different game releases.

# CLASSIC GAME TEXTS

Huizinga, J. (1938, 1955). *Homo ludens; a study of the play-element in culture*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Caillois, R. (1958, 2001). *Man, play, and games*. M. Barash (Trans.). Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Sutton-Smith, B. (1997). *The ambiguity of play*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Salen, K., & Zimmerman, E. (Eds.). (2006). *The game design reader: A rules of play anthology*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Gee, J. P. (2007). *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy, 2nd Ed.* New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

# THANK YOU!

## QUESTIONS?

