

CISC 3667: Game Design and Development

Homework 1: What is a Game?

Assigned: Thursday, September 3

Due: Tuesday, September 8 **before class**

Total Points Available: 50

Objective

The purpose of this assignment is to explore the question:

What is a game?

In class, you examined several activities and explored how different definitions can change whether something is considered a game. For this assignment, you will take a closer look at **one game that you personally enjoy**.

You will play the game, analyze your experience, apply several different definitions of a game, and use your analysis to develop **your own definition of what a game is**.

Instructions

Choose and Play a Game You Enjoy

Choose a game that you enjoy playing and spend some time playing it before completing your analysis.

You may choose any type of game, including:

- A board game
- A card game
- A video game
- A sport
- A children's game
- Another activity that you consider to be a game

Examples include *Chess*, *Monopoly*, *Uno*, *Solitaire*, *Minecraft*, *Celeste*, *Soccer*, *Basketball*, *Hide and Seek*, *Tag*, or another game of your choice.

Written Analysis

Submit a **2-page response** that addresses the following:

1. The Game

Briefly introduce your chosen game and explain how it is played.

Include enough information for someone unfamiliar with the game to understand:

- What the player does
- What the player is trying to accomplish
- The basic rules or structure of the game

You should also briefly describe what you typically do during a normal play session.

2. Applying the Definitions

Analyze your chosen game using each of the following definitions:

- **Kevin Maroney:**
 - A game is a form of play with goals and structure.
- **Jane McGonigal:**
 - Games have goals, rules, a feedback system, and voluntary participation.
- **Jesse Schell:**
 - A game is a problem-solving activity approached with a playful attitude.
- **Chris Crawford:**
 - A game is an interactive, goal-oriented activity in which players or active agents can interfere with one another.

For **each definition**, explain:

- Does your chosen game fit this definition?
- How strongly does it fit?
- What specific examples from the game support your reasoning?

Your answer does **not** have to be the same for every definition. Your game may fit one definition very strongly while fitting another less clearly.

You are encouraged to consider limitations or exceptions as part of your analysis.

3. Comparing the Definitions

After applying all four definitions, compare them.

Consider questions such as:

- Which definition best describes your chosen game?
- Which definition do you find the most convincing or useful?
- Did any definition seem too broad or too restrictive?
- Do any of the definitions leave out something that you believe is important?

You do not need to answer every question separately. Use them to guide your comparison and discussion.

4. Your Own Definition of a Game

Based on the definitions discussed in class and your analysis of your chosen game, create **your own definition of a game**.

Write your definition in **one or two sentences**.

Then briefly explain:

- Why you defined a game this way
- Which ideas from the theorists influenced your definition
- Whether your definition includes anything that you believe the other definitions were missing

There is no single correct answer. Your goal is to develop a definition that reflects **your own understanding of what makes something a game**.

5. Brief Reflection

Finally, briefly reflect on your experience as a player.

Why do you enjoy playing this game? What keeps you engaged or makes you want to continue playing?

You do not need to formally analyze what makes the game fun yet. Instead, reflect on your own experience.

Submission

Submit your completed **2-page response** to Brightspace **before class on Tuesday, September 8.**

Your response should demonstrate your understanding of the definitions discussed in class and use specific examples from your chosen game to support your analysis.

Grading Rubric (50 Points)

Category	Points
Game Description & Player Experience: Clearly explains the chosen game and provides enough information to understand how to play it.	8
Application of the Four Definitions: Accurately applies Maroney, McGonigal, Schell, and Crawford to the chosen game using specific examples and reasoning.	18
Analysis & Comparison: Thoughtfully compares the definitions and considers their strengths, limitations, and applicability to the chosen game.	10
Your Own Definition of a Game: Creates a thoughtful definition and clearly explains the reasoning behind it.	8
Personal Reflection: Reflects on why the game is personally engaging or enjoyable.	3
Clarity & Organization: Response is clear and well-organized, and it follows the assignment requirements.	3
TOTAL	50