

## Video Game Design Composition © 2014

### Chapter 3: Story Composition—Glossary

**brainstorming.** Recording as many ideas as possible without sorting, editing, or eliminating any of the ideas.

**branching story.** Story that has several paths that branch from decision points.

**character-design document.** Document that contains all of the information needed to fully define the characters, from descriptions and attributes of each character to model sheets showing the character's appearance.

**climax.** Most dramatic part of a story; the turning point in a story.

**dramatic action of the story.** How the character reacts when faced with immediate conflicts or obstacles.

**dramatic arc of the story.** Rising action, a climax, and falling action.

**dramatic tension.** Feeling of anxiety or anticipation related to the story being told.

**environmental illustration.** Illustration that shows the details of the virtual world in the game.

**exposition.** Introduction of the primary conflict of a story.

**falling action.** Events that lead to the resolution of the basic conflict of a story; the level of dramatic tension begins to decrease as the conflicts are sorted out.

**flat character.** Character who does not develop or change throughout a story.

**foldback event.** Resolution point within the game that the player must go through to move the story forward.

**foldback story.** Story that allows the player to make decisions, but all paths lead, or fold, back to the same end point.

**game layout chart.** Chart that displays an overhead view of game.

**graphical user interface (GUI).** Buttons, icons and other graphics that are needed to work the game interface; how the user will send and receive information with the computer.

**heads-up display (HUD).** Means of displaying information to the player during gameplay.

**hub-and-spoke level design.** Level design that allows the player to start in the center, complete a mission, and return to the center to choose another mission.

**interactive story.** Game in which the player performs the actions of the story.

**linear level design.** Level that has a single starting point and follows a single path to a single end point.

**linear structure.** Story that follows a single path from beginning to end.

**localization.** Adapting a game for a different language, region, or culture.

**mission.** In a video game, a large assignment the protagonist must complete in order to reach the end of the game.

**mood.** Emotional feeling of the setting.

**moral.** Lesson to be learned.

**network design.** Level design that allows a player to move freely without restriction from any room to any other room in the game; also called *sandbox level design*.

**nonlinear structure.** Story that has more than one path from the beginning to the end, and there may be more than one possible ending.

**nontrivial task.** Task with purpose, like finding a potion to defeat an enemy.

**parallel-branching level design.** Level design that allows the player to start and make choices as to which room to enter to get to the endpoint.

**plot.** Plan or map for a story.

**predevelopment tool.** Document or other item used before the project is approved for design.

**resolution.** When the conflict of a story is over.

**rising action.** Events that create the basic internal conflict of a story; tension builds to the climax.

**room.** In video game design, a scene in a level.

**round character.** Character who develops and changes throughout a story.

**sandbox level design.** Level design that allows a player to move freely without restriction from any room to any other room in the game; also called *network design*.

**setting.** Time and place of the action in a story.

**stereotyped character.** In-game character that performs a standard game role, but has very general characteristics that provide some variation among the same type of characters in a game.

**stock character.** In-game character that has standard traits and performs a standard role.

**storyboard.** Series of panels that contain sketches of the game action and a description of the actions in that room.

**sub missions.** Series of activities that make up a mission and are themselves made up of atomic challenges.

**thematic element.** Each object that contributes to or conveys a theme.

**trivial task.** Task that has no point or purpose and does not move a game story forward.

**world-design document.** Document that lists the items needed to create game worlds.