

Game and Learn:  
An Introduction to Educational Gaming  
2. What Is A *Good* Game?

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A Tale Of Two Games

One of The Best Videogames of All Time: *Pitfall!*

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One of The Worst Videogames of All Time: *ET*

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## What Makes a Game Fun?

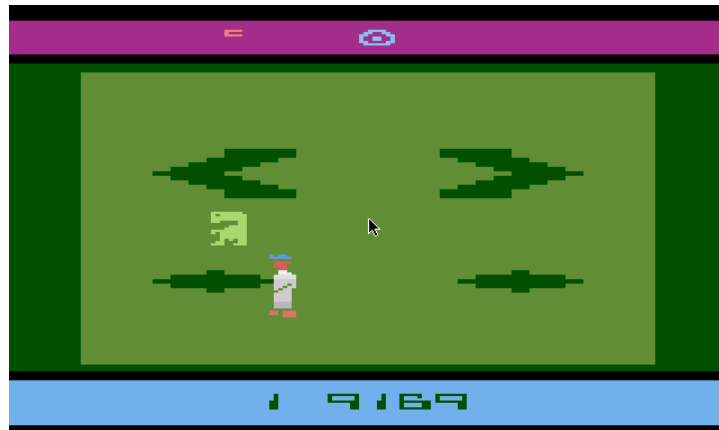
### Games and Boredom

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| When Players Say...             | ...They Mean                                                            |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The game is too easy            | Game patterns are too simple                                            |
| The game is too involved        | Players are uninterested in the information required to detect patterns |
| The game is too hard            | Patterns are perceived as noise                                         |
| The game becomes too repetitive | New patterns are added too slowly                                       |
| The game becomes too hard       | New patterns are added too fast                                         |
| The game runs out of options    | All game patterns are exhausted                                         |

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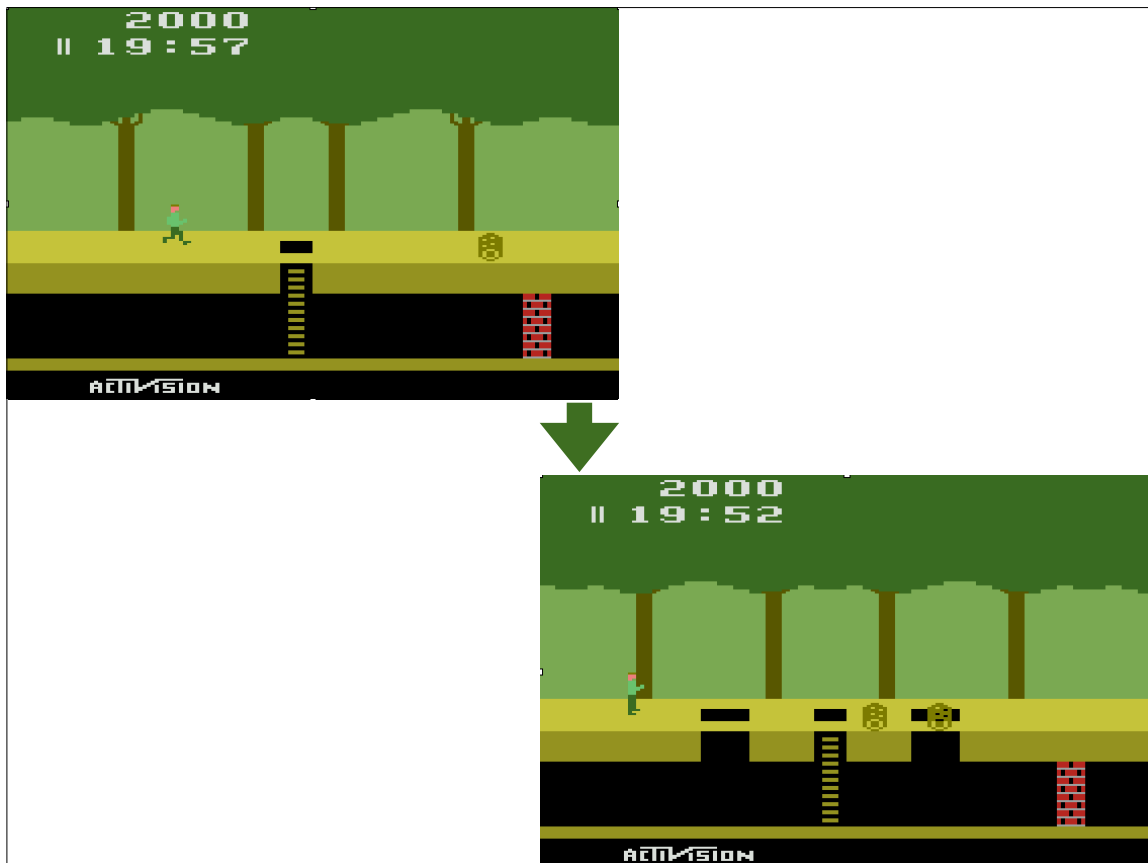
## Successful Games

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| Include These Items...                | ...To Avoid                                   |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Preparation before challenges         | Results due to pure chance                    |
| A sense of a game space               | The perception of the game as trivial         |
| A solid core mechanic                 | The game not being perceived as a game at all |
| A range of challenges                 | The game being exhausted too quickly          |
| A range of required abilities         | The game being perceived as simplistic        |
| Skill in using the required abilities | The game being perceived as tedious           |

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## Three More Key Items for Success

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| You Need to Have...                                         | ...Because                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Variable feedback                                           | Players like to see greater skill result in greater rewards              |
| A way to accommodate beginners and experts playing together | You don't want to see beginners get clobbered, and experts "bottom feed" |
| A definite cost for failure                                 | Players feel cheated by "never-lose" games                               |

## Exercise: Good & Bad Games

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- Good Games:
  - *Pitfall!* (Atari 2600)
  - *Aladdin* (SNES)
  - *Super Mario 64* (N64)
- Bad Games:
  - *E.T.* (Atari 2600)
  - *Captain Novolin* (SNES)
  - *Superman 64* (N64)



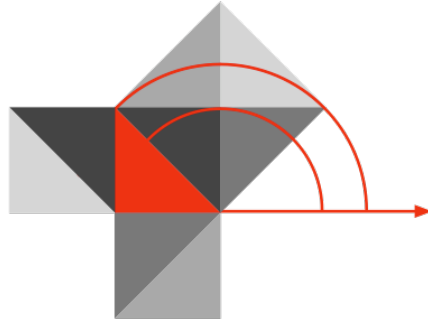
## Resources Cited

- **What Makes a Game Fun:**

- Koster, R. *Theory of Fun for Game Design*. Paraglyph. (2004)

# Hippasus

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