

DESIGN A LEVEL WORKSHEET

LEVEL TITLE

What is the name of the level or area?

THEME

What is the theme of the level, or the idea that comes up again and again? It can be simple or complex. For example, the themes of *Mario Brothers* levels includes “long jumps” and “fireballs,” while the themes of *Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild* locations include “exploration” and “overcoming despair.”

What is the theme of your level?

CHARACTER

Games allow people to identify as the characters they are playing. The levels should support that. Levels can make players feel heroic, brave, powerful, or more.

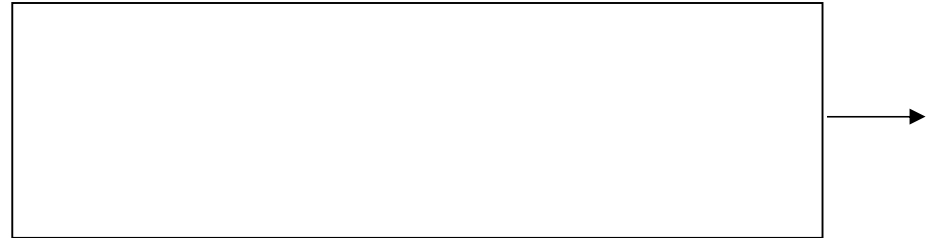
What kind of person will the player feel like when playing this level?

INTRODUCTION

The first part of the level should have little tension, so that later areas feel more intense by comparison.

How will the starting area create feelings of relaxation and low tension?

Draw art that shows the feeling of this area in the box below.



However, the starting area also needs to interest the player. One way to do that is to introduce the theme. For example, in levels with the theme of “overcoming despair,” the starting area will often have plants growing out of ruins.

How will the starting area introduce the theme?

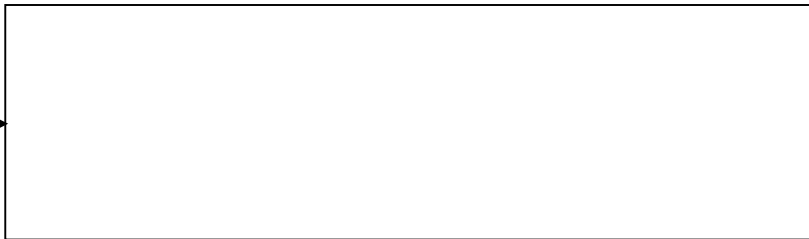
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Choose this page or the reverse for the Rising Tension area.

LINEAR RISING TENSION AREA 1

How will this area have more tension than the last?

Draw art that shows the feeling of this area in the box below.



Here is where we start developing the character that the player is inhabiting.

What qualities does the character need to make it through this area? Ex. intelligence, bravery, a will to survive...

LINEAR RISING TENSION AREA 2

How will this area have *even more* tension than the last?

Draw art that shows the feeling of this area in the box below



More tension isn't enough. Players also need surprises—sudden changes in the gameplay, art, or challenge level.

How will this area surprise the player?

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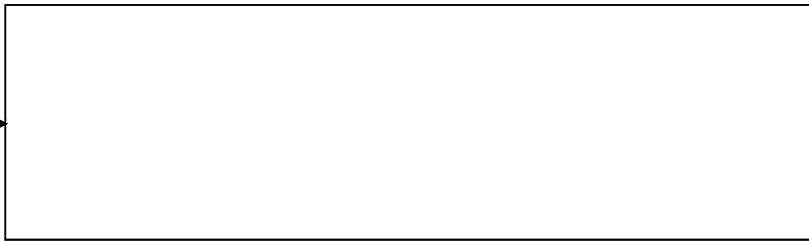
Choose this page or the reverse for the Rising Tension area.

CYCLICAL RISING TENSION AREA 1

Players must explore Area 2 and 3, and then return to Area 1.

How will this area have more tension than the last?

Draw art that shows the feeling of this area in the box below.



The player will need to visit this area three times before moving on. It should be interesting each time.

How will this area change as the player makes progress? How will it surprise the player?

CYCLICAL RISING TENSION AREA 2

Draw art that shows the feeling of this area in the box below.



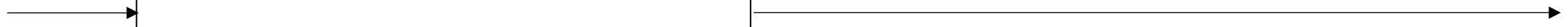
How will this area have even more tension?

CYCLICAL RISING TENSION AREA 3

Draw art that shows the feeling of this area in the box below.



What qualities does the character need to make it through this area? Ex. intelligence, bravery, a will to survive...



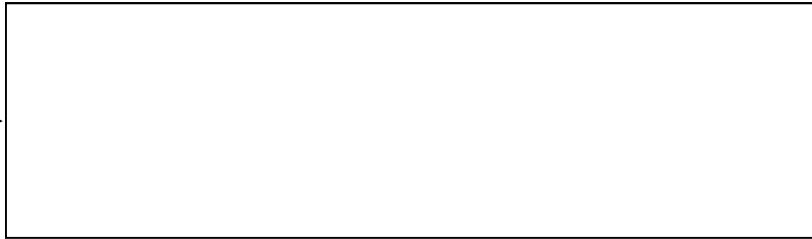
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THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

Almost all fantasy and science fiction stories use a structure called *The Hero's Journey*. In *The Hero's Journey*, the hero is weakest in the middle. This gives the hero time to overcome the darkness, regain strength, and finish the quest.

Video game levels are no different. At the midpoint, the player is confronted with a sudden increase in difficulty, like a mini-boss, a difficult jump, or a lack of supplies.

Draw art that shows the feeling of this area in the box below.



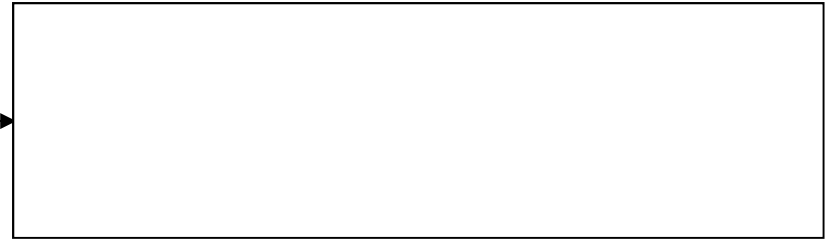
How will this area make the player feel afraid or overwhelmed?

THE RETURN

After overcoming THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL, the player should feel more powerful and capable. Tension decreases, and the player can make progress rapidly toward the climax.

How will the character be made more powerful in this area?

Draw art that shows the feeling of this area in the box below.



How does the character's new powers change the way the character feels? Is the character now stronger, more resilient, or more capable?

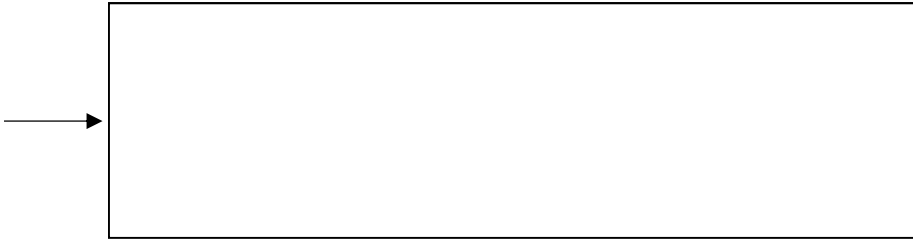
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CLIMAX

The final challenge is big, but not new. Instead, it is based on the events and theme of the previous areas.

What will the final challenge be?

Draw art that shows the feeling of this area in the box below.



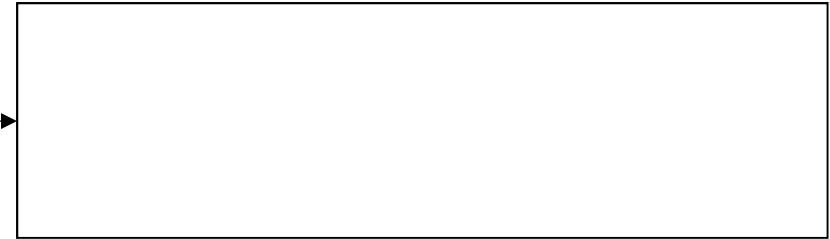
How will this challenge show the theme of the level?

How will this challenge show the qualities of the character?

RESOLUTION

The end of a level should have no challenges. This area is supposed to show how the character or world has changed as a result of the player's actions. To do that, it needs to be a lot like the INTRODUCTION area, but it should also be different in a way that relates to the theme or character changes.

How will this area be similar to the INTRODUCTION?



Draw art that shows the feeling of this area in the box below.

How will this area be different from the INTRODUCTION?

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Feedback is always appreciated!