



Introduction to the Game Concept Statement

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A game concept statement, or premise, is a short, direct description of the situation of a game. It describes the player's goal, the opposition to that goal, and the means through which that goal will be accomplished. When dealing solely with the narrative portion of the script, the game concept statement reads like a screenplay pitch. Realistically, game play is described because it effects some elements of the storytelling. A short concept statement might read as follows:

In Trick or Treat the player characters have been trapped in the labyrinth of an ancient haunted house. They must escape by destroying adversarial monsters, avoiding traps, and solving the maze. Trick or Treat is a third person perspective action game.

The goal of a concept statement is to give the reader a sense for the game. It should answer these basic questions:

- What is the goal of the game?
- How is the goal of the game accomplished?
- What are the challenges to the game?
- Where does the game take place?

Most people want to add marketing jargon and implementation specifics to their concept statement. This is simply a mistake. Reporting that is it the best game ever, or that it will be available for the PS10 in 2020 just does not strengthen a concept. To put it bluntly, the concept statement is about *the concept*. Concepts are general, high level notions. The concept of a car, for example, did not begin with the use of carbon fiber at the Indianapolis 500.

Do not include the following elements in a concept statement:

- Game platform (e.g. for the NES because I'm retro-chic)
- Game rating (e.g. "M" for mature)
- Game play specifics (e.g. controls)
- Game programming details (e.g. uses recursive algorithms for speed)
- Marketing (e.g. "more exciting than a ride on a roller coaster")

There are exceptions to every rule. There are times when it is important to add implementation details. These are exceptionally rare situations, such as a game designed solely to exploit a new type of controller or for use on a non-standard game platform. In these cases, it makes sense to touch upon the distinguishing detail.