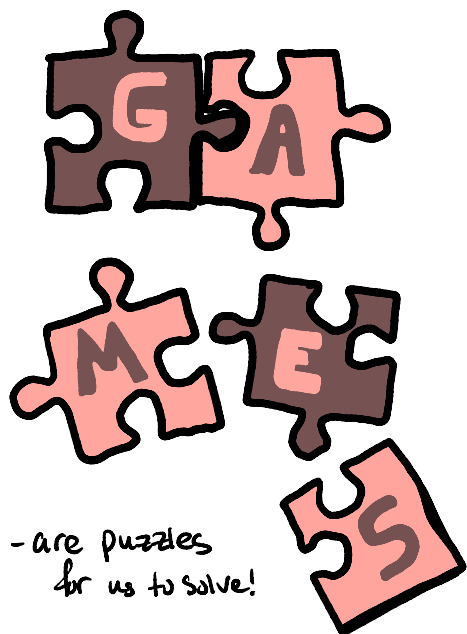


# What Games Are & Aren't

## Are...



- Similar to real life (eg driving a car or doing multiplication BUT w/ lower stakes.

- Can be powerful learning tools

### FUN!



Games are fun + are sources of entertainment.  
↳ Making us feel good through

1) Mastery



A+

2) Comprehension



Designers must be cautious about how rigidly they construct their game

RULES FREEDOM



## boredom

Opposite of learning. When our brain is searching for new info but has no new visible paths to absorb.

6 Examples of Aspects that Cause Boredom

1) Trivial

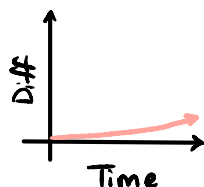
If a player can quickly and completely understand the game.



3) Too Hard

Player struggles to find a pattern due to the game being too hard.

5) Difficulty Ramps Up Too Slowly



2) Too Much Depth

A player may understand that there's depth to a game, but may not feel like it's relevant.

4) Difficulty Ramps Up Too Quickly



6) The Player's "Beat the game"



**Boredom is a sign of failure!**

A good game will teach you what it has to offer before you stop playing.

## Aren't...

### Stories

↳ Players can create stories from games though!

Games vs. Stories?

Games	Stories
Experiential teaching	Teach Vicariously (via imagination)
Good at objectification	Good at empathy
Quantize, reduce, classify	Blur, deepen, make subtle distinctions
External (about people's actions)	Internal (about people's emotions/thoughts)
Generators of player narratives	Provide a narrative

Both are good, but you can never master a good story.

### 8 Types of Fun

- sense-pleasure
- drama
- social framework
- expression
- make-believe
- obstacle
- discovery
- surrender

Fun = act of mastering a problem mentally

Aesthetic appreciation isn't always fun, but is enjoyable

Visceral reactions are generally physical

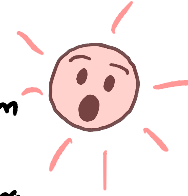
Social status signals are intrinsic to our self-image/standing

↳ Lumping these all together makes "fun" meaningless

**Games aren't about gaining social status**

Aren't about beauty or delight <sup>DEF</sup> → Delight

→ Caused when we recognize patterns but are surprised by them  
Can be lost due to recognition not being lasting  
So... can regain by staying away from the object, then returning



Some reasons other than fun to play a game

### 1) Practice

- very hard work
- games can be thought of as "deliberate practice machines" that make this easier

### 2) Meditation

- many games work well for this
- mantra, breathing pattern, engaging in repetitive behavior

### 3) Storytelling

- come w/ stories, players can construct a narrative
- is this "game-like"?

### 4) Comfort

- safe space for us to exercise mastery w/ little risk
- break from life / escape