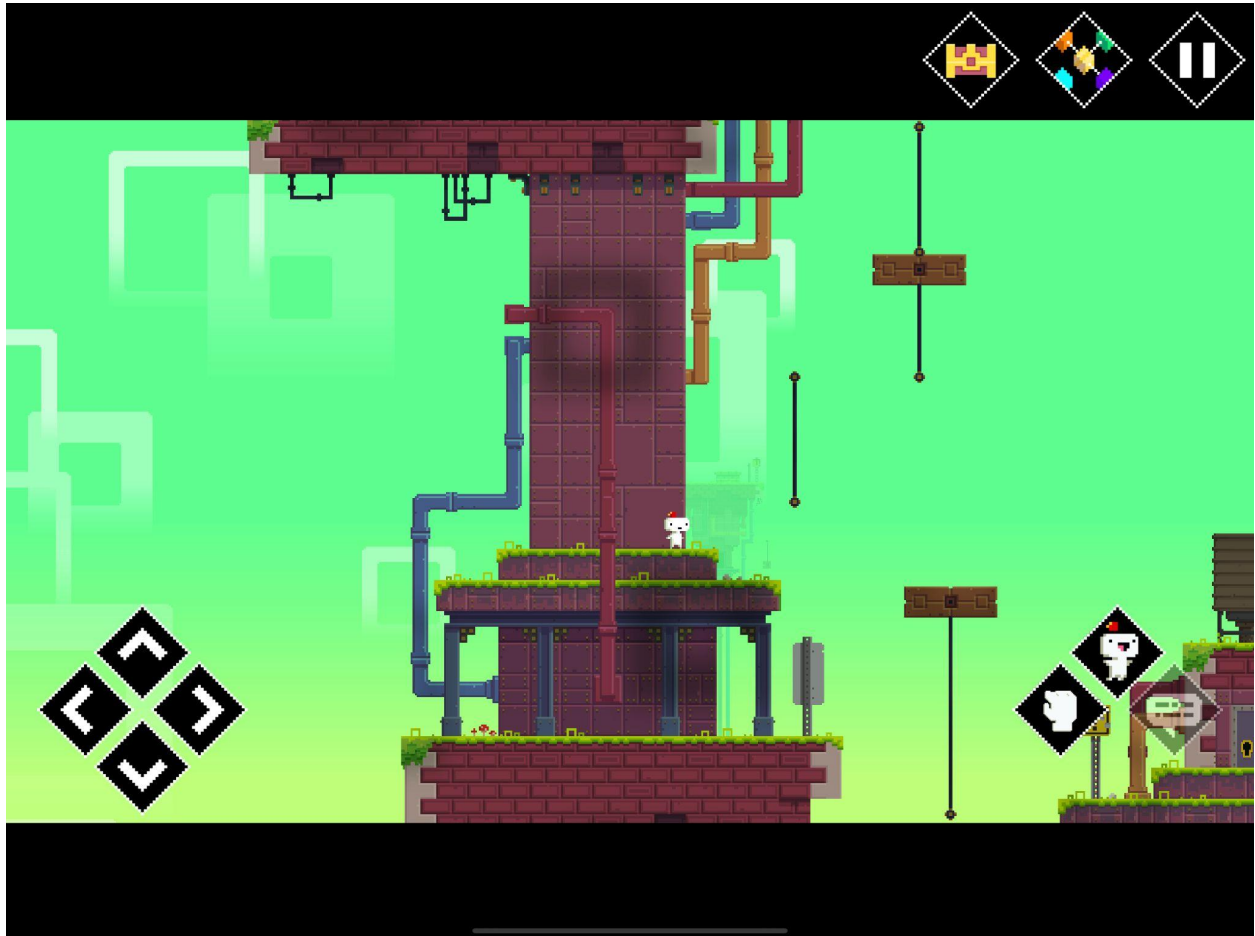


# Critical Play: Fez

Creator: Polytron Corporation & Bitwoks

Platforms: Nintendo, PS4, IOS, Android, Windows



## How do the mechanics of the puzzle influence the experience of the game?

The mechanics of Fez make the puzzles super unique and add to the narrative of the game. Most of the mechanics are 2D-centric except for the unique mechanic of rotating the perspective. Gomez can only move in 2D. This mechanic is really unique because it means that when the perspective rotates, items in the foreground and background get merged together into one 2D surface. The 3D aspect of the world is compressed and can be exploited when trying to solve the puzzle. Thinking about the dimensionality of the game in order to solve the puzzles gives a very different puzzle solving experience that I haven't had in other games. I also think the mechanics of the game help its narrative.

The cuteness of Gomez in combination with his new understanding of his world were elevated by the fact that Gomez could traverse this new 3D world.

### **Target Audience**

I think a good target audience would be ages 6 and up. The puzzles can get complicated but I think the fun and cartoony exploration aspect will still be enjoyable for younger kids.

### **Formal Elements of the Game**

This is a single player game where the player tries to beat the levels to eventually beat the game. The most important formal elements of this game would be the boundaries, procedures and objectives. The objective of finding cubes drives the player to explore the new worlds and solve puzzles. The boundaries of the game limit where the player explores and gives direction for solving the puzzles. The procedures of the game involve the player learning new methods of solving puzzles and building off previous levels in order to solve the current level.

### **Type of fun**

The most type of fun in this game comes from the challenge and also a bit of fun comes from discovery and narrative. The game rewards players by continuously building their capabilities for solving harder puzzles. It does this one level at a time, and forces the player to master specific mechanics before going to the next level. There also is a bit of fun when players unlock new worlds that have different cartoony scenes. When solving the puzzles, players inevitably explore these new areas which to me was very fun.

### **Success/Fails/Things I Would Change**

I found the combination of mechanics and puzzles in the game very successful. The mechanics made the puzzle solving very unique from other games and I really enjoyed thinking about the different perspectives I could take advantage of in order to solve the level. I also really enjoyed the different levels and how they built off each other in difficulty. One level involved learning about pistons and then the following levels required the mastery of pistons in combination with other mechanics to solve them. As I progressed, the intricacies of the puzzles also evolved which rewarded me as I was solving harder puzzles. One fail of the game was during a level that involved two pistons. I was stuck on this level for a good amount of time and could not figure out how to rotate the pistons to beat the level. This level also included a lot of falling into water which reset my upwards progress and made me do the same jumps over and over again. One thing I would change about the game is the layout of the controls and also the type of controls. I think the separate buttons for moving left, right, down and up

are a bit too constraining on Gomez's movement. It's hard to go up and to the right because I'd have to have my finger in the middle of two buttons. This also gets annoying when I need to jump to the right and up since I can't pay full attention to placing my finger exactly in between the right and up buttons. I think a joystick for moving would allow for better movement and less frustration while doing more complicated movements.