

ONBOARDING WITH PLANTS VS. ZOMBIES

1. BLEND THE TUTORIAL INTO THE GAME
LIKE CHAMELEON
"LEARN WHILE PLAY"
PLAY
DON'T SEPARATE TUTORIAL & PLAY
GOOD GAMES MAKES PLAYER FEEL:
"THAT GAME HAD A TUTORIAL?"

2. HAD THE PLAYER DO, THEN READ
"DO FIRST, READ ONLY WHEN NEEDED."
- LET PLAYER TRY IN SAFE ENVIRONMENT
- IN PVZ, DESIGNER ONLY HAVE:
1 LANE + 1 PEA + 1 ZOMBIE
↓
THE EXPERIENCE TEACHES DIRECTION, DAMAGE, AND THINKING

3. SPREAD OUT THE TEACHING OF MECHANICS
TEACH 1 AT A TIME
MECHANIC #1
MEC #2
MEC #3
TEACH → PRACTICE → CHALLENGE ← COMBINE

EG. IN PVZ, THEY INTRODUCE "SHOVEL" AT LEVEL 1-3, STORE IS EVEN LATER
"JUST ENOUGH - NOT EVERYTHING AT ONCE."

5. USE FEWER WORDS

SOPHISTICATED CAVEMAN!

TOO MUCH WORDS

FEW WORDS + USEFUL MEANING

↳ EG. "GIVES YOU ADDITIONAL SUN"

"BLOWS UP ALL ZOMBIES IN AN AREA"

"SAY ONLY WHAT MATTERS!"

4. GET THE PLAYER TO PERFORM AN ACTION ONCE

ONLY ACTIVE



& 50 STARTING SUN

↓
SUNFLOWER FLOWER FIRST

"GUIDE THROUGH RULES, NO COMMANDS"

ONE SUCCESSFUL ACTION THROUGH GUIDANCE CAN TEACH THE RULE!

8. DON'T CREATE NOISE
LEVEL #1 FINISH!

REMOVE:

- UI CUTTER
- EARLY ACHIEVEMENTS
- IRRELEVANT POP-UP
- REPEATED INSTRUCTION

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"ONE FOCUS AT A TIME"

"PROTECT PLAYER'S ATTENTION!"

6. USE UNOBTUSIVE MESSAGING

GOOD



SMALL MESSAGE GAMEPLAY

DON'T BREAK THE GROOVE
"TEACH WITHOUT STOPPING PLAY"

BAD



LARGE POP-UP + FROZEN SCREEN

7. USE ADAPTIVE MESSAGING

EXPERT → NO HINT

BEGINNER → HELPFUL MESSAGE

IN PVZ,
LOST PEASHOOTER
↓
PUT PEA PARTHER LEFT

↓
"SUPPORTS BEGINNERS WITHOUT ANNOYING EXPERTS"

"HELP APPEARS ONLY WHEN NEEDED"

10. LEVERAGE WHAT PEOPLE ALREADY KNOW

NEW MECHANIC BUILT ON FAMILIAR LOGIC
REAL WORD → GAME RULE
☀️ + 🌻 = ENERGY
💰 = PURCHASES
🔧 = REMOVES METAL

↓
"FAMILIAR IDEAS REDUCE LEARNING"

9. USE VISUAL TO TEACH



→ SHOOTS



→ SHIELD



→ GROUND DAMAGE

SEE IT → UNDERSTAND IT

"DESIGN REPLACE EXPLANATION"