Educating the gamer.

An analysis on how the “gamer” is taught the rules of a game efficiently to recognize patterns and become a better player.

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Abstract, English
In this thesis, the question of immersion and learning in tutorials is examined to find whether there are principles of design that can universally form a tutorial of a high quality according to several predetermined traits. A formal analysis of the tutorials for three specified games are conducted to identify the underlying principles of design that govern the structure for each individual tutorial. The resulting analyses are then compared to each other to reveal similarities between the tutorials so that the principles of design can be identified and examined. The findings point to no universal principles of design that will generate a tutorial of high quality, instead, the utilization of these principles is angled towards the specific needs of the game being developed.

Keywords: Tutorial, Immersion, Game Mechanics, Formal Analysis.
Abstract, Swedish
I denna uppsats undersöks frågan om fördjupning och inlärning i de inledande, handledande/guidande sekvenserna i spel för att granska om det finns design-principer som universellt kan användas för att göra handledande/guidande sekvenser i spel av en högre kvalitet enligt flera förbestämda drag. En formell analys av introsekvenserna för tre specifika spel görs för att identifiera de underliggande design-principerna som utgör strukturen för varje individuell introsekvens. De resulterande analyserna blir sedan jämförda med varandra för att uppdaga likheter mellan introsekvenserna så att design-principerna kan identifieras och undersökas. Resultaten visar att inga sådana universella design-principer finns, istället bör dessa design-principer nyttjas på ett sätt som bäst passar de specifika krav som spelet som utvecklas har.
Terminology

Primitives: Basic building blocks of games. Each primitive may exist in several different instances and have individual values. The Game-State is not a primitive.

Components: Game entities that can be manipulated by the players or the game system. Also, known as game elements. For example: weapons, herbs, bullets, covers, rocks, chairs, tables.

Actions: Player actions are the actions that a player can initiates. In some games, the player owned component is influenced by the player’s actions. In Witcher: Geralt can move based on the action performed unto the player component (Geralt) by the player (moving.)

Goals: Goals are descriptions for conditions that have specific significance for the gameplay. Reaching or failing a goal is tracked by the game system. They are things that the player strives for during gameplay. These are not limited to the overarching goals of the game, but can be immediate, such as “Dodge that attack.” Goals are often related to each other in “Goal-structures”. Goals can be obligatory or not.

Game-space/Game-World: The areas within which the gameplay takes place.

Player: The person playing a video game.

Actor: Someone or something that is influencing something else in the game-space.

RPG: Role Playing Game. A genre of video games.


Witcher 3: A video game released by CD-Projekt Red. It is analysed in this Thesis.

Dark Souls 3: A video game released by From-Software. It is analysed in this Thesis.

The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim: A video game released by Bethesda. It is analysed in this Thesis.

Mechanics: The way in which the player influences the game. What the player can do in a game. Running, Jumping, Attacking, etc.

Dynamics: The way in which a game behaves according to the player’s inputs and other mechanics.

Aesthetics: The emotional responses evoked in the player when they interact with the game system.

Assets: Rendered objects in the game-space. Trees, Rocks, Barrels, etc.

NPC: Non-Player Character. A character in a game that the player cannot control.

HUD: Heads-Up-Display. An overlay used to convey information directly to the player. Does not exist in the games universe, rather exists only as a tool for the player.
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1. Introduction

Tutorials have been a part of games for a long while now, albeit by a different format. For example, The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time (Nintendo, 1997) introduces the player into a village filled with signs explaining basic movement mechanics and the concept of 3D (which was new at the time). Since then, with the growth of the video game industry, and a willingness from game developers to have their games reach broader audiences, refinement and inclusion of tutorials in video games have become more prominent. While the inclusion of a tutorial might serve to better inform a player about how to play a game, they can feel disconnected from the rest of the game and immersion-breaking. In this study, we’ll examine the tutorials from 3 games and discover whether there are universal design-principles that can be applied during the development of any tutorial to circumvent those problems.

Teaching gamers the rules of the games they play can be difficult or easy, depending on the rules of the games that they play. The rules of Tetris, while abstract, do not require much explanation to be understood quickly. Shapes that have “landed” cannot be moved, while shapes that are falling can be moved and rotated. Tetris, however, consists of simple systems. Games that run on more complex systems often have much more complex rules about what the player can do, what the win/lose conditions are and how the game is played most effectively.

These complex systems usually require a higher variation of input to account for a vast range of actions. To navigate these systems, the players usually need a lot more information to make effective choices on what actions to take.

The process of learning the patterns and rules of any game can be more efficient, or less efficient, depending on how the challenges of any given game build upon each other to better help the player map out those rules through pacing. Pacing plays a part in how players understand the rules. When and how a game presents the player with new information pertaining to both already existing problems and new challenges plays a part in how players perceive and overcome those challenges.

McGrenere and Ho writes extensively about a concept coined by James J. Gibson and developed further by Donald Norman known as “Affordances.” To quote her paper on affordances: “An affordance is the design aspect of an object which suggests how the object should be used.” (McGrenere, 2000) Gibson and Norman had varying definitions of what an affordance is, and for the sake of this paper, we will be following Normans definition as it suits the research topic better, as games are experienced by individuals, and according to Normans definition of affordances; affordances can be dependent on an individual’s experience, knowledge or culture. In a research paper highlighting the differences in Gibson’s and Normans affordances, McGrenere writes that Normans affordances are/require/can:

- Perceived properties that may or may not actually exist.
- Suggestions or clues as to how to use the properties of an artefact.
- Be dependent on the experience, knowledge or culture of an actor.
- Make an action difficult or easy. (McGrenere, 2000.)
By looking at the different primitives, systems, concepts, and designs of the tutorials in this way, affordances can be mapped out, and their relative meaning and value within the tutorials in context to each other can be understood.

A common (but not universal) way for games and game developers to instruct the players in the rules of a game is to include a tutorial at the start of the game. Tutorials can be used for a variety of different things, and are almost exclusively introductory. They can set the stage contextually, teach the player the mechanics of movement or introduce characters, among other things. Immersion, which happens when a player perceives the world that a game is mediating to be believably real, can be easily broken by a badly designed tutorial. (Madigan, 2010).

However, tutorials are important for several purposes that interlink strongly:
For example, they are important since they educate the player about the rules of the game. In so doing, there’s less cause for frustration about a lack of information when the game begins in earnest. Another purpose is to introduce settings, characters and overall social structure within a games world as these sometimes play a big part in the player’s actions.

Generally, a tutorial is a strong solution to make sure that all the players that are playing a game will enter the world with the same basic understanding of the games systems and the games world.

Financially, a tutorial serves another purpose as well. In the words of Sheri Graner Ray, “What we need to understand is that tutorials are not only the player’s first impression of our work, but also they are the onramp to our products. If our onramp is smooth, wide and broad, then more people can easily get on. If the onramp is narrow cramped and made of mud, then very few people will get on. Better tutorials make a better first impression, which makes for happier customers – and thus better business.” (Graner Ray, 2010).

A well-made tutorial can serve as all these things, all while not breaking the player’s immersion.
2. Background
Tutorials act as the game developers hand-shake with the player. It serves as mentor, introduction and safety net. It is a space where mistakes are encouraged to learn from, but also where information about the game is introduced in a way that is understandable and relatable, so that the player experiences that they have reached the basic understanding of the games systems and structure. Complications can arise during tutorials of a game. Especially when there are unclear goals for the tutorial.

One problem for tutorials is that of different styles of learning, or “learning styles.” “Learning styles” is a concept which stems from the uniqueness and individualism that each person experiences in how they learn new things. This in turn determines that due to these individual differences, by diagnosing how individuals prefer to take in new information, instructions can be tailored accordingly. The problem, then, stems from the individuals distinct preferred way of absorbing new information efficiently. Tutorials centred around one form of learning will serve to sever the suspension of disbelief of the neglected player and bring them out of their immersion, and therefore the game experience. (Sheri Garner Ray, 2010)

2.1 What determines a well-made tutorial.
A tutorial does not make the game. A terrible game with a great tutorial won’t necessarily gain economic success. A tutorial is a teacher, and as such should be judged based on how well it instructs the player in the questions that the developers have chosen to bring up. At the end of a tutorial, the player should feel as if he has learned something and is ready to tackle a bigger challenge. There are many aspects as to what makes a player experience a tutorial as good or bad. Intended purpose is one of them, over-abundance of information is another. Essentially, a well-made tutorial fits well into the games narrative, gameplay and design, while implicitly teaching the player the fundamentals, all without breaking the player’s immersion.

Ernest Adams states in an article on tutorials that tutorials exist to teach the players, and that game designers are not natural teachers. What they are taught to do is to tailor experiences to the user, not necessarily to teach them about how to use the experience. Bad tutorials take many forms, Earnest Adams states that there are 8 ways to make sure that your tutorial will be disliked. (Adams 2011.)

- Forcing the player to take the tutorial.
- Making the player read a lot.
- Using poor illustrations or descriptions for buttons and menu items.
- Leaving steps out of a tutorial.
- Punishing the player’s inexperience.
- Patronize or humiliate the player.
- Force the player to complete the whole tutorial.
- Not including a tutorial.
At first, these points may seem obvious, and in some cases even contradictory, however the players experience and immersion must be at its focus. Having text in a tutorial, for example, does not make the tutorial bad, but having exclusively text in your tutorial makes the experience one of reading, not of interactivity. In the same way, if the player feels that they (before the conclusion of a tutorial) has become familiar with the systems of the game, they might not wish to continue the tutorial and start the actual game. If so, then forcing the player to complete the whole tutorial might become tedious. A tutorial might be shown leniency by a player if the tutorial is not a separate entity from the game, but serves to advance the plot as well, keeping the player interested.

A well-made tutorial satisfies a need for an explanation or an indication of information for someone who needs instruction. They exist for any number of topics, come in both good and bad forms, subjective to the recipient. For games, and their many different categories, tutorials exist in the same way. They are a means to instruct a player in the handling of a product that is (generally) designed to immerse the player in an experience. “Immersion” or “Suspension of disbelief” is a state of mind in which “media contents are perceived as “real” in the sense that media users experience a sensation being spatially located in the mediated environment,”. (Wissmath, B, Weibel, D. & Groner, R. 2009).

Immersion can be an easily disrupted state of mind, especially considering that there are many variables that each play a part in maintaining the immersion. The lack of something may bring the player out of their immersion as much as the inclusion of something. For example, bringing up a tutorials text-box message in the screen during a conversation that is taking place might disrupt a player’s suspension of disbelief/immersion. The tutorial, which bridges the gap between the player (the real world) and the game (the mediated environment) often brings the player out of their immersion as part of the instruction due to the need to explain certain elements of the game to the player, such as HUD elements, which (mostly) only exist as information to the player, and not to the characters in the game.

There are several terms that, going forward, need to be explained and understood for clarity in this study. Some of these will have already been covered or understood in the entry pages of the study, however, some will not have.

**Assets** – Assets are anything in the game that must be created in an external software. This means textures, animations, 3D-rendered objects, and more. It does not include physics, or inherent game-engine features.

**Inherent Game-Engine features** – These are features that the developers themselves don’t have to construct, and that exists as part of the feature package that comes with using a specific engine to run your game. These can include, and are not limited to: physics, lighting engine, sound management, etc.

**Illustrations** – This refers to illustrations by the developers to reinforce a point. For example, by displaying a render of a button on the screen at the same time as you are instructing the player to press that button.

**Movement Mechanics** – The way in which the player-component behaves in a game when the player gives the game input through the controls that the game utilizes (most often mouse and keyboard/controller pad.)
3D-rendered – Is the process of converting 3D assets into 2D images on a screen on a computer.

Suspension of Disbelief – This refers to a person’s willingness to suspend their critical faculties and believe the unbelievable. This is a sacrifice of realism and logic for the sake of enjoyment.

Game World – The world in which the gameplay takes place. The rendered environment and all that it contains.

Game Mechanics – The base method for controlling a game. What the player does. This includes moving, jumping, exploring, etc.

Character Progression – This is a concept which refers to the way in which a character gets stronger in a game. A system made for increasing a player characters’ power and impact on the game system.

3. Purpose
The purpose of this study is to find out which principles of design determines how an introductory tutorial in the RPG-genre:

• Retains the player’s suspension of disbelief.
• While also teaching the player the basic mechanics of the game.
• The social structure of the games universe.
• The players overall goal.
• How to navigate the game world.
• How to level up/utilize character progression.

These points are important in the chosen games, as without them, understanding the games gameplay and narratives becomes difficult, rather than challenging. An unclear player-goal gives rise to confusion and frustration, and being unable to solve the challenges of the game due to sub-par explanations of game mechanics gains the same results. These are logical points, albeit shallow.

It is to find these principles and to compare them to each other to see whether a pattern emerges that is transferable between games, and if there is a pipeline to follow to produce tutorials that manages to do all the above points, and to integrate that tutorial with the game, and not bring the player out of their immersion while teaching them.

4. The question
Can we identify a set of universal design principles that govern the quality of a tutorial that teaches a player the fundamentals of a game while still retaining that players immersion?
5. Method and Materials

By examining and analysing the tutorials of the games, the notes being produced as we analyse the recordings of the games for one tutorial can be compared to another’s, thereby finding common principles of design in the tutorial. These common principles can then be gathered and analysed themselves, to understand why a choice was made to raise the principle. By utilizing these principles, tutorials are iterated upon and a higher quality tutorial can be constructed in the same genre of games.

5.1 The Method

We will be utilizing a method known as a formal analysis to analyse the tutorials. A formal analysis is where an artefact and its specific elements are examined closely, and the relations of the elements are described in detail. (Lankoski and Björk, 2015). In this case, the artefact describes the tutorial, and the elements are the parts of the tutorial. We will take the tutorials of three games apart ourselves to understand the underlying systems, implications of those systems and the systems themselves in context to each other.

As the tutorial will run chronologically from start to end, where player choice is limited to what the tutorial is currently trying to teach the player, we will attempt to extract as much information as possible at any given time in the tutorials. This means looking at (and finding out through experimentation) what rules the game system has implemented to limit player-choice. By performing all the actions possible at any given time, we exhaust the amount of information that the player can get, and enable more player-originated choices. We can then describe what happens at any given time, to any given primitive, asset, component or element to the tutorial, and form an understanding as to why the tutorial works the way it does, accessing the principles of design, and thereafter comparing them to the other games.

Lankoski and Björk state that “In practice, formal analysis of games depends on playing a game and forming an understanding how the game system works. “This form of analysis focuses on the formal features of the artefact. What formal features are, depends on the artefact being analysed. In the case of formal analysis for games, the formal features are composed of the systemic features of the game. Such as elements, rules and goals.

This suit our needs for studying tutorials, since games are generally built this way, with elements comprising the game-space, systemic rules for determining allowed or not allowed player-action, and goals that the player needs to understand to progress through the game. This in turn means that analysing the elements will reveal the relationships between them, and in turn the principles governing their design.
In part, a formal analysis is built in 3 levels of descriptions.

Level 1. Describing primitives and their relations.

Level 2. Describing the principles of design.

Level 3. Describing what is the role of the primitives and principle of design in the game.

Each level in this rising level of detail is dependent on the previous. To describe the role of the primitives of a game (level 2) one must first describe the primitives (level 1.) Most importantly for this study, games can be compared based on the resulting descriptions. Ergo, Game A may be compared to Game B with the question in mind of what is different between the games, a practice that we will utilize to discover any patterns of similarity between the games. These three levels will help us structure the findings that we extract from both playing the game and analysing the recordings of the gameplay. As we describe the primitives, their relationships will emerge.

This type of analysis requires that a constant update of validity and verification is used for the data sets generated by the analysis. Lankoski and Björk suggests 4 ways to make sure that validity is maintained throughout the analysis.

- Rich Description of the gameplay that is analysed.
  - For the sake of this study, our descriptions will be in two forms. Firstly, while we play the tutorials, they will be recorded. This is done as a time constraint limits the amount of time available to play and re-play the tutorials. Recording the tutorials make sure that the same footage is used every time it is analysed to limit the amount of times that the researcher has to play each tutorial. Secondly, each element that is relevant to the players understanding in the tutorial will be described.
  - Spending prolonged time with the game. It should be played multiple times, and an effort should be made to experience the game in different ways to bring about different results of player-game-interaction.
    - While the approach of using a video recording of the playthrough to analyse the process conflicts with this point, the data gathered will not be less essential than if the game had been played more than one time. Attempts will be made to stream-line this point due to time-constraints. The playthrough of the tutorials will be as thorough as possible, with an emphasis on possible actions to perform. The researcher has ample experience with video games and will be relying partly on that experience. The risks are diminished, and the amount of data is enough even though the time-constraints prevent multiple playthroughs.
- Checking categories and descriptions against their definitions.
  - This will be done during the analysis of the tutorials, when we make the descriptions on the primitives.
- Letting other researchers check descriptions.
  - As this thesis is being written alone, this point as well will be hard to fulfil.
- Provide descriptions of the researcher’s background, interests, etc. to reveal biases.
  - The researchers background and interests will be provided with the thesis.

(See title 6.4)
5.2 Delimiting the games

To find the principles of design for the tutorials, a couple of games will be investigated. We begin by delimiting what kind of games we should be looking at.

**RPG.** Firstly, games within a specific genre, to minimize the extent of comparison between genres. For example, it would be futile to compare a strategy games tutorial with an RPG-games tutorial, as they would require dramatically different criteria to fulfil their purposes.

**Third Person Camera.** We will be limiting ourselves to games that feature a third-person-camera.

**Progression/Level System.** Games of the RPG-genre often has a level-up system associated with them. The games to be investigated will contain these too. This is mainly due to the inherent complexity of progression/level up systems that allows the player to customize their character. Determining how tutorials teach the players the fundamentals of these systems could be valuable.

**Fantasy Style Setting.** Fantasy settings often take place in constructed alternate universes, and they prominently feature names of characters and places that are foreign to the real world. This abundance of foreign names could confuse the player, and analysing how a tutorial prepares the player for this type of information would be a good test of the tutorial.

**Action-Based-Real-Time-Combat.** As RPG-games are a broad and diverse category, containing many different types of games, we will be limiting ourselves to games that feature real-time combat, and is based on the players performed action in real time, as opposed to a turn-based RPG (Such as Final Fantasy XIII, Square Enix, 2009), where the players action performed, then the enemies, then the players, etc.

**Inventory Management.** The inventory management systems in RPG’s is something that the player must get accustomed to using since RPG’s prominently feature upgrades or usable items that are usually worth stockpiling. We will be limiting ourselves to games that has some amount of inventory management incorporated as well.

**Last in a Series.** For added limitation, the latest released games in series of games will be analysed, if they are available. That is, if a game has a sequel, that sequel will be chosen. This is due to game-design being an iterative process. Thusly, there is a higher chance that there is more to be revealed in a newer games tutorial than in an older one.

With these criteria 3 games will be selected. These games are:
Dark Souls 3.
Dark Souls 3 is an Action-Adventure RPG developed by FromSoftware and produced by Bandai Namco. In it, the player takes the role of an undead that has been resurrected for a specific purpose. The game takes pride and is renowned for its unyielding difficulty and punishments. Where another game would explicitly tell the player what to do, Dark Souls remains silent and expects the player to figure it out. It is a complex game with a steadily rising curve of difficulty through the experience.

The Witcher 3.
The Witcher 3 is an action adventure fantasy RPG released on the 19th of May 2015. It was developed by CD Projekt and published by CD Projekt RED. In this game, the player steps into the role of Geralt of Rivia, a Witcher whose job it is to hunt monsters across the lands, as he travels to find his lover Yennerfer and their adopted daughter Cirilla. The series is based on the books written by Andrzej Sapkowski and is renowned for its uncompromising dedication to portraying a living and realistic fantasy-based universe, as well as for its overall aesthetic quality and reliance on player choice to turn the game into a fully-fledged experience.

The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim.
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim is an Action Adventure RPG released in 2011, developed by Bethesda Game Studios and produced by Bethesda Softworks. As the name implies, it is the 5th instalment in a series portraying the events of a specific imagined universe. In this instalment to the series, the player steps into the role of the Dragonborn, a human with extraordinary powers. The game series has always been known for the large amount of content in each instalment, as well as the freedom of choice the player has in making their own stories relevant in the game and the open support to what is referred to as the “modding” community: a community that creates fan-made content for the game in the form of add-ons. These add-ons can range from texture-packs that changes specific textures in the game, to whole quest-lines and new areas.

These games share a lot of qualities between them, specifically due to these delimitations, their fantasy setting and the Action-Based-Real-Time-Combat systems. There are, however, certain differences that are specific to each individual game that are rooted in each game’s specific design. These differences muddle the results of the analyses to an extent due to each games distinct and unique design. For example, while both The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt and Dark Souls 3 contains a systemic, real-time combat system, they vary wildly, and as such may be subject to different interpretations.
5.3 Tutorial Limitation.
There is a strong chance that the tutorials will run at different lengths of play-time. As such, the tutorial will be encompassing everything that the player must do until they are free to make their own choices.

For the Witcher 3: This means until the Geralt has completed his practice in his home with Ciri.

For Dark Souls 3: This means until the player has defeated the first boss Iudex Gundyr, which serves as a tutorial boss-test, to ensure they have learnt enough to make their own choices.

For the Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim: This means until the player leaves Helgen, where Alduin attacks, and is free to go wherever they want in Skyrim.
6. Applying the method to the tutorials
There are several stages to applying this method to the tutorials, as it follows the method.

6.1 Playing the tutorial
As our games are selected, we will approach each games tutorial to be played in the same way to reduce the biases between the games as much as possible. Relying on the researcher’s previous experience with games, playing the tutorials will be done once, extensively, while recording software is running. The produced recording of each tutorial will then be analysed extensively separately until theoretical satisfaction has been achieved.

6.2 Describing the primitives and their relations in the tutorials
Extensive notes will be taken during the playthrough of the tutorials, and as the analyses of the video footage is conducted. These notes will relate to all the previously mentioned aspects of the tutorial, including:

- A brief description of the main characters in the games
- The tutorial structures
- The goals of the games
- Component identification
- Rich component descriptions
- Player actions (player choice)
- Environment
- The design principles one can draw from these
- Final thoughts/conclusions

While the above points are what forms the formal analysis, certain criteria will be held in mind as the analyses are ongoing to efficiently measure player learning as these are important to tutorial structure. These include, but are not limited to:

- Terminology
- Player Choice
- Illustrations/Wording
- Tutorial Inclusion
- Movement Mechanics
- Explanation of the Games Universe
- Progression

They will be extensive in that they will describe the purpose for every action taken, the result and the results relationship to other actions in the tutorial. They will not strictly speaking be related to player actions exclusively, but rather in the sense that, as the player, there are actions that you can perform by the game system, and actions that you are not allowed to perform. The aim is to document all the possible interactions to these choices that the game system allows. These are important as without these notes, comparisons will be hard between the games, an imperative part of this study. Another reason for this is to check and maintain validity.
One document each will be provided for each tutorial with all the notes contained within. Notes will be in chronological order, where actions taken during the early stages of the gameplay/recording will be described early in the document. These can be found in appendix 1, 2 and 3; The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt analysis, The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim analysis and Dark Souls 3 analysis respectively.

6.3 Comparing the findings (notes, video) of the different games to each other

As the first set of notes and video are produced, and analysis of them begin, similarities between the tutorials will be examined. By looking at things suggested both by Lankoski and Björk in the “Formal Analysis” section of “Game Research Methods”, as well as the points brought up by Ernest Adams in his article on tutorials called “The Designers Notdebook: Eight Ways To Make A Bad Tutorial” there are a number of points where comparisons can be made to discover similarities and differences. While these points are well-intended and will be kept in mind during the analyses for purposes relating to player learning and tutorial structure, our results and analyses will mainly stem from the formal analysis of the tutorials.

These points include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset/Primitives</th>
<th>These are from the formal analysis.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terminology</td>
<td>How text is worded during text-intensive parts of the tutorials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Player Choice</td>
<td>What the player must do to complete the tutorials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrations/Imagery</td>
<td>How text-based learning is reinforced during the tutorials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement Mechanics</td>
<td>How the player moves through the game-space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanations of the games universe</td>
<td>Context for the players choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progression/Level System</td>
<td>How the player increases their strength.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But also, overall structure of the tutorial.

The way in which these comparisons are made is analogue, by reviewing the notes from the analysis of the gameplay, and attempting to find similarities as well as differences, and by examining the notes of one game and comparing them to the notes of another.

The reason we compare the analyses to each other is to reveal the shared similarities that form the principles of design for the tutorials. If something works well in one game, and does not in one of the others, by comparing our findings in the different tutorials, we will be able to reason as to why it is that the results are different in the various games.
The comparisons themselves will produce a new set of notes specifically related to the similarities and differences of the different tutorials, as well as discussions and drawn conclusions from the available data. Design patterns are drawn out and recognized as they emerge from the formal analysis. By describing primitives in the tutorials, and their relations, their intended purpose emerges, and a design principle can be drawn out. For example:

Items placed in the world in Dark Souls 3 can be picked up by the player (the primitive/component/level 1).

Picked up items can be used as Player Actions by the player (relationship to another component/level 2).

As items are strewn throughout the game-space, and different items are more useful or less useful, exploration is encouraged to find the items useful to the player. (Level 3, design principle: Exploration.)

6.4 Prolonged exposure to the tutorials. Researchers background

This will happen naturally as we immerse ourselves in the analyses of the tutorials. The researcher is a 24-year-old male student at Uppsala University Campus Gotland, Sweden, and has been enrolled for 3 years. The researcher has, as previously mentioned, experience with the titles being researched prior to the study as listed:

Witcher 3 – 112 hours of gameplay.

Dark Souls 3 – 661 hours of gameplay.

The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim – 185 hours of gameplay.
7. Results / Analyses of the games

The results from the analysis were produced as a document detailing the comparison of design principles between the research subjects of this thesis. That is the three games:

Dark Souls 3

The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt

The Elder Scroll V: Skyrim

The comparison has been recorded in this study in appendix 1, 2 and 3. The analyses have been completed in several steps for each game. First, each tutorial was examined to discover the best breaking points for where to start the recording of gameplay, and where to stop it. This was done for purposes relating to clarity in the gameplay recordings. After a start and an end had been identified, the tutorial was played while recording.

Components were the first to be identified by examining the gameplay recordings. Doing this exposed some of the relationships between the different components and their importance for the tutorial structure. After describing the components, the structure itself was examined to reveal more general concepts about the pacing of learning in the tutorial. Characters and character creator came next, revealing more about tutorial goals and narrative structure. Player actions and environment were examined and identified last and connected to the structure of the tutorial.
8. Identified shared principles of design, Comparisons of the games.

By comparing the analyses to each-other, certain similarities have been identified as being shared principles of design. This was done by examination of the produced documents during the analysis of the tutorials. Three principles of design were discovered as shared between the games, 1 principle of design was left out of all three games, and 1 principle of design was included to a limited degree. These 5 are discussed in a game-by-game fashion in the following titles as each principle is handled similarly in each game respectively.
8.1 Three-Part Structure
In all three analyses, a three-part structure has been evident through multiple facets of the tutorials, including the way in which elements that the player needs to learn are structures, as well as the way in which the terrain is divided. Each game handles this in its own way. In Dark Souls 3, this understanding became apparent during the transitions between the more expansive areas in the terrain where moving from one open area to the next introduced more complex player-actions and strategies. In the Witcher 3: Wild Hunt tutorial, the player had control over the Player Character a total of three times, while cutscenes played in the interim. In The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, the three act structure is more recognizable as it follows the rules of this structure very well. It sets up a plotline, introduces a villain and de-escalates as the player escapes danger. It’s also evident in the three stages of control the player has of their Character, as at first, they are bound to only moving the camera, then given control of movement, and lastly full control.

8.1.1 Dark Souls 3
Dark Souls 3 is the only game among the three analysed that has a tutorial where the player can choose to skip all the elements that have to do with explicit learning. The way that the three-part structure is executed in this game is through the environment, by way of implicit design.
Figure 1, depicting the tutorial area for Dark Souls 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset</th>
<th>Colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enemies</td>
<td>Orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items</td>
<td>Light Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iudex Gundyr</td>
<td>Purple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonfires</td>
<td>Dark Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Lizard</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 16 depicts the tutorial area of Dark Souls 3, which is split into 3 major parts that we discussed briefly in the analysis for Dark Souls 3. In the first area, the landscape is relatively flat and the messages used in Dark Souls 3’s Message System introduce gameplay mechanics that are relatively simple to perform, or that has few pre-requisites to be performed. These mechanics are things such as Camera Movement, Rolling, Sprinting and Attacking. In the second part, more complex manoeuvres are introduced, as well as verticality in level design, vista based progression, checkpoint systems and jumps. These are slightly more complex manoeuvres and the concepts introduced here are more ambiguous concepts. The third part consists of a room that houses a boss-fight that serves as the last test of the tutorial.
In Dark Souls 3, the way in which this three-part structure is managed opens a few privileges to the confident player and a few detriments to the new player. Since this is the only tutorial out of the three that were analysed that attempts (at its core) to deliver an experience where the player is beset by challenge, having the tutorial itself be challenging seems fitting. That the player can choose to skip parts or most of the tutorial is well-intended as it helps veterans and experienced players get back into the game quicker, but can lead to confusion on a new player’s part, should they miss a message explaining a core player action. This structure builds well on top of itself, as core mechanical player actions are explained early in the tutorial and iterated upon in part 2.

8.1.2 The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
In the tutorial for The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, the three-part structure is evident in a different way. The first part of the tutorial is a passive experience, while the second and third part are active experiences.

Part 1 of the tutorial in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim has the player bound to inaction as they are wheeled on a cart through a snow-covered landscape while 2 other non-player-controlled characters in the cart discuss the context of the games setting.

In part 2, Alduin attacks the town of Helgen, changing its physical structure and introducing the major plot-lines of the game, as well as gameplay mechanics relevant to player-locomotion; such as moving and jumping.

Part 3 of the Skyrim Tutorial takes place in Helgen Keep and in the tunnels beneath Helgen Town. In these tunnels, the players are taught more wide-ranging and complex concepts such as loot-hoarding and combat, as well as picking locks and stamina management and sneaking.

In Skyrim, this three-part structure helps to manage the players overall experience. It succeeds well at mechanically taught skills, such as movement and jumping, while failing to bring the player into a position of understanding in terms of narrative context. The way in which it changes the layout of the town Helgen between the first and second parts helps to guide the player through the tutorial and creates a path that encourages the player to perform and understand how to play the game. While its imparting of the social and political as well as narrative structure leaves a lot to be desired, the tutorials encouragement for progress and its attempt to entwine on-screen storytelling and tutorial messages creates an experience that suffers heavily in part one as a passive experience, but that in part two works exceptionally to deliver instructions in how to perform actions mechanically.

8.1.3 The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, and to some extent Dark Souls 3 as well, attempts this three-part structure in an open-world setting to teach the player about the level-layout and aesthetic of those games. The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt opts for a more linear three-part structure.

Part 1 of the tutorial in The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt has the player exploring basic exploration mechanics, such as movement, camera control and a player action called Witcher Senses. These mechanics are all part of the core element of the Witcher 3, which is exploration. The player also learns that player choice has an impact on the games narrative as well as its conversational cutscenes.
In part 2 of the Witcher 3 tutorial, the player takes part in a race with another character from the game. During this time, the player learns how to navigate the game-world by running, sprinting, jumping and climbing.

Part 3 of the tutorial is an instructor in combat as the Player Character Geralt initiates a sparring session with another character called Vesemir. During this part of the tutorial, the broader concepts of preparation and combat are explained, and the player is taught how to execute combat-related movements such as dodging, dodge-rolling, attacking and using items and spells. Where Skyrim and Dark Souls 3 attempts an implicit use of the three-part structure in terms of gameplay, The Witcher 3 manages to weave this structure into the core narrative as well. The tutorial takes place during one of Geralts many days, and the structure helps to emphasize his relationships and what he did during the day, as well as helps the player reinforce their understanding of different concepts and mechanics of the game. It is a linear tutorial, which enforces the games narrative, while relying enough on simple enough concepts for the player to understand.

8.1.4 In general

The three-part structure is prevalent in all three games, and used in some form in all three tutorials to iterate learning in part 2 and 3 based on what the player was taught in part 1. This means that an introduction of the simple and most fundamental mechanics of the game is introduced in part 1 of the tutorials, and more complex manoeuvres are based on what was learnt during part 1. This helps the player reinforce what they’ve learnt earlier. This structure also helps with the games narrative, as it gives the player a dramatic curve to follow, and helps introduce settings. The Witcher 3 especially uses this structure well to support its narrative and the core elements of what the game itself is built on and Skyrim utilizes this structure to teach mechanical performance exceptionally well.
8.2  Message System
All three games support some form of message-system that gives the player explicit information that has been directly put into the game by the developers of the respective games.

8.2.1  Dark Souls 3
In Dark Souls 3, the message system is primarily a tool for players to relay information about their experiences and the world to each other. This message system, however, is used by the developers during specific moments in the game when the need for relevant and specific information cannot be left to random chance. One of these moments is during the tutorial. The messages are activated by the player using the “Interact” button when the Player Character Component is within a specific range from the message, which appears on the ground as an orange texture. This is the only form of explicit teaching built into the game, and the messages are quite minimalistic in that they only tell the player exactly what they need to know and leaves it up to the player to experiment with the new information.

![Figure 2, depicting a message in Dark Souls 3](image)

8.2.2  The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim has two different variations of messages that can be activated based on a different set of prerequisites. Variation 1 is triggered by a specific set of events and teaches the player some of the fundamental mechanics in the game and variation 1 messages only appear in the tutorial of the game.

![Figure 3, depicting a Variation 1 message in The Elder Scroll V: Skyrim](image)
Variation 2 messages can be triggered by events specifically tied to the message. For example, when the Player Components Stamina resource reaches the value 0, a message related to the concept of stamina management will appear on the screen for the player. These messages pause the game and are set to appear at any time in the game when the prerequisites are met.

![Figure 4, depicting a Variation 2 message in The Elder Scroll V: Skyrim](image)

8.2.3 The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt

The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt has the most text-heavy tutorial of the three games analysed. It uses a combination of 2 variations of messages for the player, accompanied with an “active quest” descriptor and a mini-map to relay relevant information to the player. In the same style as Skyrim, The Witcher 3 utilizes two forms of messages that relay explicit information about player control to the player. The first form of message is used to relay small bits of information that is relevant to the player’s current situation, such as what key to press to perform a specific action. For example, the following message appears on the screen when the player is attempting to climb a ladder.

![Figure 5, depicting a control message from The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt](image)
The second variation of message displays more general and broad concepts of the game. This type of information is given to the player when there’s a lot of information to take in, as these messages also pause the game and require the player to indicate when they are ready to keep playing the game. The following message is displayed before the player enters combat in part 3 of the Witcher 3 tutorial.

"Witchers must be prepared to fight foes of all kinds, be they plate-clad knights, ethereal wraiths or bone-crushing giants. To match the strengths and exploit the weaknesses of different enemies, witchers need to use a variety of weapons and combat techniques."

"The core tools of their trade are their swords – one steel, for fighting humans and nonhumans, the other silver, for slaying monsters."

"Witchers have also mastered a simple form of combat magic. These signs are not as powerful as the spells wielded by mages, but they can be cast very quickly – with simple, one-handed gestures – making them quite useful in the heat of combat."

"Witchers are also adept in basic alchemy. They can brew powerful potions, blade oils, and bombs – all of which give them a keen advantage when fighting stronger or faster foes."

Figure 6, depicting a tutorial message from The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt
In general

A message system is an effective way to instruct the player in both broader concepts of the games systems and setting, as well as specific player action.

In Dark Souls 3, this system is utilized to instruct new players, however, the system doesn’t make sure that the player has understood the message before allowing them to continue. This can be a cause for confusion for a new player. However, its three-part structure that ends in a boss serves as a well-rounded test for players in general and ensures that all the players that have cleared the tutorial areas boss have reached a common starting level of skill before they take part in the rest of the game.

In both Skyrim and The Witcher 3, messages come in two variations. This could be explained due to both games massive open worlds, and for their systemic design that allows player actions to be performed at any times, and the ways in which these systems overlap to create strategies and concepts that require more explanation. While Skyrim extends this system to include pick-locking and other world-related skills on a very detailed level that includes player mechanics, Witcher 3 focuses on relaying information in this system that is relevant to explanations of combat concepts in its tutorial in broader strokes. This is used to great effect in Witcher 3, as the player gets to understand in what ways the systems interlock before they begin experimenting with how they interlock. In Skyrim, the design of this second variation of message means that no matter when the player needs to know a specific set of knowledges to perform a new skill, the player will receive that information.
8.3 Exploration

All three games rely on the player’s willingness to explore to some degree.

In The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, the game encourages the player early to pick up items that might be useful to the player. This concept is first introduced during the tutorial, when the player is asked to loot a chest or a body (depending on which character the player chose to follow) and is iterated upon during the gameplay. Edibles, potions, weaponry and reagents all carry meaning in the game, and the game introduces the concept of hoarding early.

In Dark Souls 3, the branching paths and dead-ends support the players willingness to explore, as these often end in new weaponry or armour or other useful items. More-so than in Skyrim, Dark Souls 3’s different usable items have a higher impact due to a lower number of items, but also generally more powerful ones that suits the games design aesthetic. This convinces the player to explore, not only to find the right path through the levels, but also to find the items strewn through the levels, as they can help the player overcome future challenges.

In the Witcher 3, exploration is not introduced to any great extent during the tutorial. Instead, the tutorial introduces mechanics that will help the player explore when they are released into the open game world.

8.3.1 Dark Souls 3

This challenge is relayed in many forms, primarily combat between the player and the non-player-characters, but also in the environment and level design of the game as even the world is against the player. Useful items and equipment dot the levels as either traps or ways to encourage the player to explore the area, leading them to face more enemies or more traps. Dark Souls 3 tries to provide the player with a lonely aesthetic in a world that is broken beyond repair. Time and space have been stretched to their minimum, and the strange rituals that keep the world going have had adverse effects on the world itself. The player’s willingness to fix these problems and understand how they came to be is the driving force behind the cruel difficulty of Dark Souls 3. The challenges are persistent and found on every level of the game, from combat, through level design, into exploration. As explorers, the players must navigate treacherous areas dotted with traps and dangerous enemies or sudden pitfalls and treacherous swamps.

In the tutorial, the player is conditioned to look for white flames (items) as these items are incredibly useful and have a high impact on the player’s performance through the game. While the more common items are usually accompanied by one or two low-tier enemies, the truly useful items are usually placed after boss-fights and next to traps and high-tier enemies. This inherent usefulness of these items causes the player to look for them, thereby exploring. Dark Souls 3’s tutorial manages to convince the player of the usefulness of these items early, by giving them a core item; The Ashen Estus Flask, thereby reinforcing the player’s willingness to explore throughout the entire game.
8.3.2 The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
To a lesser extent, the tutorial for The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim attempts to condition the player to loot useful items the same way that Dark Souls 3 does, however it never manages to truly convince the player of the impact of doing this. During the third segment of the tutorial in The Elder Scroll V: Skyrim, the player enters the keep in Helgen and descends through the tunnels beneath Helgen. During their time spent in these two areas, the player is free to move through them as they please and pick up what they can. They are encouraged to do this by the games quest system, which gives them the choice to loot a few potions before continuing in a specific part of the tutorial. However, the impact of picking up reagents and crafting materials in Skyrim is never explained, and as the games tutorial is not a challenging experience, their use is not evident either since the player never needs to utilize any of the materials to continue forwards.

8.3.3 The Witcher 3
In the Witcher 3: Wild Hunt, exploring has a specific purpose, as Geralt (The Player Character) is a monster hunter. Part of the experience of being a monster hunter is looking for clues as to what monster the player is currently hunting, as well as preparing to hunt the monster in the most effective manner. When the player has accepted a contract for a hunt, they are usually expected to make an appearance at the scene where the monster was last seen. There they must use their skills to deduce which type of monster they are hunting. This is done using the Player Action “Witcher Senses”. This Player Action is one of the first player action introduced during the first part of the tutorial, when the player must find a key to unlock a door. Conditioning the player in the first stage of the tutorial to explore and look around them constantly for new information works well for the Witcher 3, as the game (at its core) is about this type of player observation and exploration.

8.3.4 In General
Most games rely to some degree on a player’s willingness to explore the game. Whether it be the games systems, the game world, or the narrative; most games try to supply a player with something to explore in some fashion. RPG-games usually set this exploration in the game world, as it tends to support the setting and helps create challenges. In the games analysed in this study, each game has utilized exploration of the game world to suit a specific need. In the Witcher 3: Wild Hunt, exploration is utilized to reinforce the aesthetic of the monster hunter. By giving the player the ability to highlight assets in the game-world that are relevant to the players progression in both narrative and gameplay, the player is made to feel both powerful and prepared, suiting that aesthetic. In Dark Souls 3, exploration is utilized to create challenge for the player, by placing items in specific locations to reward a player’s incentive to explore the game world. Since Dark Souls 3 is a challenging and punishing game, the reward (items) are made to matter more, as the player must overcome the challenges and puzzles necessary to reach them by exploring. In The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, the exploration itself is the goal of the game, supported by most of the other features in the game. Item-hoarding is a tool to stay out in the world and explore for longer periods of time.
8.4 Exclusion of Progression Systems
None of the three games analysed include a mention of the player-progression systems that are in place in the games.

8.4.1 Dark Souls 3.
Dark Souls 3’s progression system is located outside of the games tutorial. This game has a feature that doesn’t follow the “conventional” level-systems of RPG’s. To level up in Dark Souls 3, the player must acquire a specific number of souls for each level. Sours are acquired through several ways, the most common being the killing of enemies. When the player has accumulated enough souls, they must be brought to the hub-world called Firelink Shrine. There, the player can initiate a sequence with a specific Non-Player-Character that makes the Player Character level up. Souls are dropped in the game world when the Player dies, and can be recovered from the spot where the player died if they are retrieved without the player dying. If the player dies a second time, the souls are removed from the game permanently. This level-up system is never explained in Dark Souls 3 at all. The player is expected to find out how to level up, where to level up and how to level up on their own.

8.4.2 The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim relies on its second variation of tutorial message to instruct the player in the nuances of the level-up systems in the game. The game relies on a more traditional way to determine player level. By killing enemies using certain proficiencies, the player gains experience in those proficiencies. Once enough experience has been accumulated, the player earns a level. When the player accesses their level-up window, the game pauses and teaches the player how to work the menus, and how the level-up system works. This takes place outside of the tutorial, as there is no way for the player to earn enough experience to reach their first level-up during the tutorial.

8.4.3 The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt
The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt utilizes a uniquely designed way for players to get more powerful as they play through the game that relies on conventions of progression-system in older games. While the player is completing Main-Quests, Side-Quests and Monster Hunts in the game, they will earn Experience Points. These points accumulate into Ability Points, which are used to upgrade Geralts abilities, signs and other skills and traits. While the Witcher 3: Wild Hunt has a thorough explanation of the many different systems which determine overall Player-Character power, they are not explained during the tutorial.

8.4.4 In general
As all three games have opted to exclude any mention of character-progression systems in their tutorials, and one game (Dark Souls 3) even fail to mention it altogether, it’s clear that the tutorials have been niched towards exclusively showing the fundamentals of the game. This means that while the progression-systems are explained in most cases, it is not imperative that the player understands how these systems work at the start of the game.
8.5 Limited exposure to Goals
The three games analysed in this thesis all make mention or introduces some form of the overall player goal in the game, albeit vaguely.

8.5.1 Dark Souls 3
Dark Souls 3 is a game that has been renowned for its lack of reliance on explicit storytelling. The way that the game hides information for players to find has been something that many players find as part of the challenge of the game. The games introductory cinematic serves as one of the few sources of reliable information on the games context and setting, and the cinematic itself is vague. Instead, the game expects the player to puzzle together the games narrative themselves, and make their own place in the world. The player is free to imagine for themselves why they are doing what they do, and what compels them. For a game with this aesthetic of overcoming challenge, it does well. However, this lack of information may be confusing to some players.

8.5.2 The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim relies on the Three-Part-Structure of the tutorial to relay the players position in the drama taking place, as well as its context. During the first segment of the tutorial, the player is passive, and gets to listen to a conversation between two characters as they discuss how themselves as well as the player got into the situation that they are in. In segment 2, the situation escalates as the dragon Alduin attacks the village, and the player makes their escape from the shackles that bound them. In segment 3, the player flees Helgen with a companion and is introduced to the broader plot. This tutorial does a good job of introducing the player to the drama of the game, yet lacks some plot-emphasis during the tutorial, as it’s easy to get lost in the situation in the tutorial. Everything that the player does relates in some way to Alduin during the tutorial, yet as the tutorial doesn’t provide the player with any meaningful challenge, the importance and impact of the situation falls flat, and the player is left feeling confused about their goals.

8.5.3 The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt
Most of the bigger plot-elements are established outside of the tutorial in The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt, however the tutorial establishes the basis of the drama very well. By having the most important characters’ present during the tutorial, and having the Player Character interact with them in various ways, the player is made to understand the different connections and relationships that the Player Character Geralt shares with the other characters in the game. These connections and relationships serve as the basis for the drama in the game, as immediately after the tutorial has concluded, we’re introduced to Geralt’s problem: finding Yennefer and Cirilla, two characters that are introduced during the tutorial.

8.5.4 In general
As all three games have attempted to include a mention of the narrative goals of the games in their tutorials, it suggests that inclusion of this goal is important for the player’s motivation early. Only in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim is an introductory cinematic excluded. Th three cinematics seem to serve an important role in the players understanding of the games narrative. The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt establishes a basis for future drama by introducing characters that are important to the plot early in the game, during the tutorial, so that when drama emerges, the player recognizes the problems and understands them easily. The game is also multi-layered in that players can express their own desires and goals through Geralt's
actions. Therefore, goals are easy to create and take part of during questing in the Witcher 3: Wild Hunt.

Dark Souls 3 relies on the player forming their own goals throughout the gameplay, as well as their own understanding of the games narrative, through the delivery of minimal explanations that are decidedly ambiguous and vague. The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim establishes the games villain early in the tutorial to motivate players towards this antagonist’s defeat, however fails to deliver an impactful enough motivation.
9. Discussion

During the analysis of these game’s tutorials, several design principles were noted as shared between the games, and several observations were made that will be mentioned here. The similarities between the games were listed in the comparisons section of this thesis, and will be mentioned here in a short list for structural purposes. These principles are:

- Three-Part Structure.
- Message System.
- Exploration.
- Exclusion of Progression System.
- Limited exposure to Goals.

9.1 Biases and limitations

The use of formal analysis might not be the most optimal way of analysing tutorials and their design principles. This method is highly effective to understand the relationships and purposes of specific assets in a game; however, it does not consider player preference and designer intent. Instead, for a more complete understanding of why certain elements of games work for their consumer base, having both experienced and inexperienced test-subjects play through and record the tutorials as raw data would have yielded more relevant results on player learning and player preference. As far as choice of method is concerned, another way to have conducted this study would be to have other people play the tutorials. Having one set of people that play video games regularly play the tutorials, and one set of people that do not play video games regularly play the tutorials would be an adequate way to measure how well the tutorials do in instructing the player. The Formal Analysis works well to reveal the relationships between assets and the principles that govern the structure and pacing of the tutorials, however the effectiveness of the tutorials teaching is not measured well with this method. A combination of both methods over a longer period would be a suitable way to gather a broader set of data for analysis, and thereby reaching a more defined conclusion.

Biases includes the researchers time spent playing these games prior to analysis. Having played these games before-hand means that playing these tutorials as if though a new player was playing is not intuitive, but rather a process and mindset that needs to be considered always while playing the game’s tutorial.
9.2 The Three-Act Structure.

The three-part structure, or the three-act structure is a narrative structure commonly used for screenwriting. It is a model which divides a fictional narrative into three parts (Mesce, 2016). Each part is relevant to one component of a story, and looks as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1</td>
<td>Setup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2</td>
<td>Confrontation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 3</td>
<td>Resolution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each game analysed uses this structure, and each title has customized just how they use this model to function for their game.

Dark Souls 3 takes the three-part structure and applies it to the environment to use as a teacher of mechanically based controls and player actions. This also integrates into the message system, and the systemic design of combat in the game.

The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt uses this structure on two meta-levels during the tutorial. Firstly, it is used to split the tutorial into 3 parts that each teach the player a more complex form of locomotion and core functionality in the game. However, it also uses the entire tutorial as the Setup in a three-part story, by establishing the major characters and explaining the setting and context.

The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim utilizes this structure as a tool for its narrative structure as well as an application to the terrain and structure of the tutorial. It manages the Setup of the games antagonist Alduin as well as gets the character introduced to the basic elements of the games narrative plotline. The dramatic curve in Skyrim fails, however, to introduce the player in an impactful enough way to the games narrative, as the game quickly encourages the player not to pay attention to this plotline, and instead forge their own path through the game.

It’s interesting to see the three-part structure, that is so prevalent and successful in almost all other forms of media, being referenced and utilized to suit videogames as well. This structure is well known and utilized in as far ranging works as Shakespearean plays to Hollywood blockbusters (Children of Men, 2006) (The Avengers, 2012). What it means for tutorials is that it is an easily recognizable principle of design that is a proven model. This model allows the uninitiated of the game to easily recognize their place in the relation to the three-part structure and how it is utilized in that game. For example, as the player plays through the tutorial to The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt, they will recognize it instinctively as the first part of a three-part structure, though maybe not by that name, as the game takes this time to introduce new characters and relationships during that time.
9.3 Message System

All three games also utilized some form of message system for the developers to communicate to the player. Most of the messages were related to the controls or understanding the games systems except for Dark Souls 3, which contains messages that is related to the games narrative, as well as serving as help for world-located puzzles.

A direct message which explains visually and through text how to perform a specific action in correlation with a test that forces the player to apply this knowledge is an extremely effective way of making sure that the player has understood how a player action works.

The Elder Scroll V: Skyrim and The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt utilizes two variations of messages. They would rely on short messages during gameplay to instruct the player in the controls of the game, and on longer messages to explain complex concepts or (in the case of Skyrim) player actions. While both these games utilized the two variations of messages to teach both complex and simple instructions, The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt succeeds to keep the complex instructions simplified and easily digested during the playthrough of the tutorial. This means that even though The Witcher 3 contains more text in general, it is experienced as less complex, while The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim contains more instances of text in lesser quantity that breaks the flow of the gameplay, and therefore is experienced as more complex. Due to this, The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim fails to keep the contents of those instructions easily digestible.

Dark Souls 3’s development team elected to have the messages present in the game-world in locations where it made sense to have them. This means, however, that the player can accidentally miss messages that are relevant to basic player locomotion in the game.

9.4 Exploration.

All three of the tutorials introduce the concept of exploration in the tutorials, though to different degrees. The Witcher 3 establishes the mechanics necessary to explore the game world as the first thing that the player has to learn by teaching them about the mechanics “Witcher Senses” which highlights objects that are relevant to the player for them to explore. Dark Souls 3 counts on the players willingness to explore branching paths and dead-ends to receive new items that will help them through the game, and The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim establishes the concept of hoarding. The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim is about exploration at its core, yet does the least to introduce this concept to the player during the tutorial.

The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt is an open-world-RPG. It has a vivid and gruesome world full of monsters, secrets, ancient elven ruins and magical spells. As the player plays the game, they must traverse the wilderness to find monsters, alchemical reagents, combat gear and useful items. It’s also narratively driven, meaning that if the world and its sights are not interesting to the player, there’s a plotline to follow that depicts the events as Geralt, Master Witcher of the school of the Wolf, tries to find his lover Yennefer and their daughter Cirilla.

The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim offers the player a blank slate and an open, harshly-cold landscape for them to explore. This is a land where dragons have returned and all manner of otherworldly creatures exists. Players step into the shoes of the Dragonborn who must save the land from the evil dragon Alduin. Players here are expected to loot-hoard, as most the items in the game has more than one use. This, and the many events that the player can stumble into, leads the player to explore the map and find what hidden secrets they can.
Dark Souls 3 is not a game with exploration itself at its core, however it utilizes this willingness to explore to guide the player into new challenges and rewards them with new equipment, items or souls. By counting on the players willingness to explore, the game creates tension and new challenges by placing items behind traps and enemies, thereby creating challenges with unique rewards for the player, something that the other games does not do as well.

All three games are designed around exploration to suit a very specific aesthetic. In Dark Souls 3, the player is supposed to feel lonely, like its them against the world. In the Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, the player is supposed to feel like an adventurer, like having that extra loaf of bread could come in handy to restore some health later. In the Witcher 3: Wild Hunt, the player is supposed to think about how prepared they are to fight that next monster at any given moment. It’s evident that while exploration may be inherent to this particularly small sample of games, utilizing exploration as a design principle to use as it suits the game could serve as an intuitive help to developing tutorials for games. For example, if a game is designed around a players willingness to explore, then by designing levels with this specifically in mind, and testing those levels against control groups, pacing as well as reward-systems could heavily influence that willingness to explore, thereby creating an experience in the tutorial that is more catered towards the players own inherent willingness to explore and thereby learn themselves, rather than an experience that inherently feels disconnected from the rest of the game.

9.5 Exclusion of Progression System
All three games that were analysed chose not to include an explanation of the games levelling/character progression systems. Through prior experience with these titles, it is known how these systems work and where they come into play, however rather than talking about how these systems function, rather the exclusion of any explanation of them is more interesting.

This exclusion indicates a willingness to not overwhelm a new player with excessive information that is not relevant to the current situation. It is worth mentioning here that these three games do not stop teaching the player at the moment of the tutorials ending. Quite the opposite, explicit learning goes on for quite a while in both The Witcher 3 and Skyrim. In Dark souls 3, implicit learning takes over after the tutorial. Dark souls 3 never makes a mention or teaches the player about how to level up. Witcher 3 and Skyrim, however, does try to teach the players how to make their choices in the respective games. That these games include an instruction set for their progression system, and that it is outside of the tutorial is what indicates this inclination to spread out information over a longer period of gameplay to make the absorbing of that information less intensive.
9.6 Limited Exposure to Goals
These tutorials also appear to have included a limited exposure to the player’s overall goals of the game to some extent. All three games make some mention of the overall goal to the player in the initial sequences of the game. In Dark Souls 3 and the Witcher 3, introductory cinematics are played before the games tutorials. In the Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and The Witcher 3, the games antagonist is introduced briefly during the tutorials as well. This seem to indicate a willingness to keep players interests about the game active while they learn how to handle the games system without it becoming a central focal point of the tutorial. The games want the players to know how to handle the mechanics, and the games wants the players to be interested in the plot-lines going forward. A way to ensure that this happens is by teasing impactful content before the player is at a level of understanding where they can take part in that. It gives the player a goal to work towards, and it helps them remember why they are learning how to handle the games systems. This relates to what was discussed as an over-abundance of information. It is necessary to limit the player’s exposure to select elements of a game to make sure that players are experiencing the game in a timely paced manner.

9.7 Observation
All three game utilizes these design principles in specific ways that suit each respective game’s need for a specific aesthetic. Design principles in the games suggests that by tying the game to a specific aesthetic, and designing to bring out that aesthetic is possible and effective, and an important aspect of storytelling. In the Background section of this thesis, we speak about learning styles according to an article written by Sheri Garner Ray, 2010. In it, she describes different learning styles, and how different people will learn in different ways. These tutorials subject players to a very linear type of introduction to their games, however they manage to include many different styles of learning in each game. Dark Souls 3 encourages the player to discover for themselves how to play the game, but provides a means for players to visually see how other players play the game using the component “Blood Stains”. Dark Souls 3 particularly rewards the observant and experimenting player. Witcher 3, meanwhile, shows the player how to do things by having other people do them first. During Geralts run across the castle walls with Cirilla, the player can choose to run behind her to see which actions must be performed where, and how they are performed. Or, they can run ahead of her, allowing the player to experiment for themselves. This indicates an understanding of this concept that players learn in different ways, and a willingness to cater to the different needs of different people.

Immersion, exclusion of character-based progression system and explanations for the core-mechanics of the game. These three things are consistent with all three games. All three games manage to immerse the player to a comfortable degree, while maintaining a solid grip of the player’s entertainment. Skyrim, specifically, relays too much information to the player during the first five minutes of the game. Witcher 3 utilizes a text-heavy tutorial that avoids delving too deep into concepts that are not currently relevant for the player to understand.
9.8 Table of Shared Principles of Design.
The following table displays which principles of design were discovered, and which game contained them. It is important to note that a player might take to a principle easily or with difficulty depending on their individuality. For example, one player might form cognitive maps in all games, while only Dark Souls 3 contains design principles which encourages this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Dark Souls 3</th>
<th>Witcher 3</th>
<th>Skyrim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three-Act Structure</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message System</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploration</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character Progression</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>🔧</td>
<td>🔧</td>
<td>🔧</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systemic Design</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Mapping</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lonely Aesthetic</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming Challenge</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vista Based Progression</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit Teaching</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Teaching</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escort Quest</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Cutscenes</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Included in a limited fashion.

- Not Included.

- Included.
10. Conclusion
By relying heavily on proven concepts such as the three-part/act structure and human inquisitiveness, tutorials can be structured in ways that make tutorial content easier to digest, as well as themed towards a games specific aesthetic. There is no universal way to make sure that a tutorial succeeds in immersing a player while still teaching the player the fundamentals of a game. Rather, there is a process within which a tutorial can be refined and themed towards a certain aesthetic that matches the intended vision of any game. Utilizing proven and reliable means to relay narrative, while twisting those means to be better suited for interactive partaking is a way to ensure that a tutorial supports a player with what they need, while also remaining an activity that the player performs, rather than is subjected to.

10.1 Learning Styles
All three games, due to them being interactive, support some form of learning style. Both The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt, and The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, support players who are visual learners by having “escort quests” through the tutorial, allowing the player to watch another character complete actions before they try it themselves, as well as players who learn by doing and exploring, by allowing them to bypass the escort quest and go straight to where they want to go. Dark Souls 3 supports players who learn by doing and exploring best, as the game is very implicit in its design. The “blood-stain-system” in Dark Souls 3 somewhat supports visual learners, though this is an unreliable system for learning, as blood-stains are formed where other players die, and not necessarily where players need instructions. Dark Souls 3 does not support aural learners well either, as there is scarce communication with other characters in the game, while The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt and The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim supports aural learners well by having other characters explain situations and concepts to the player during the tutorial.

10.2 Immersion
Out of the three games, The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt contains the tutorial that is the most disconnected from the rest of the game, as the tutorial takes place in one of Geralts nightmares, where he remembers one of the days of his past. The message systems employed by The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt and The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim serve to break the players immersion in some ways, though it is retained generally through the course of the tutorials. Out of the three, Dark Souls 3 is the game that strives the hardest to retain the players suspension of disbelief/immersion, as all of its systems have in-universe explanations, such as the Message-System, which is explained by having players “carve” messages into the terrain using certain stones. This principle of design (the message systems) are by far the most damaging system to the players immersion, and the most effective tutor. It suggests that while immersion is an important part of these games, player understanding takes precedence.
10.3 Affordances
The affordances of the tutorials are numerous, as each primitive in the tutorial affords something different. Mainly, they afford player understanding. All three games are meant for their players to enjoy, and as such is their affordance. While the tutorials mainly afford understanding to the players, they afford context, immersion, interaction, support and narrative plot drivers too. This seems to be an inherent concept, rather than a designed one. To determine how a tutorial should be used is mostly up to the designer, however a player will experience a tutorial differently every time it is played, as player choice is the central focus of interactivity for these three games, as, according to Normans affordances, affordances can be perceived properties that may or may not actually exist. Specifically, the message systems are used to great effect to afford understanding and learning to new players, while the aesthetics of the games are what affords the most immersion. These two affordances clashing is what breaks a player’s immersion. The players own experience influences affordances, as an experienced player will relate easier to movement mechanics and player actions that can be performed on a mouse/keyboard/controller than a new player who has never interacted with these things in a gaming format before.

10.4 Final Thoughts
According to our list in the purpose section of this study, our tutorials should in some way address the following:

- Retaining the player’s suspension of disbelief/immersion.
- Teaching the player about the basic mechanics of the game.
- Teaching the player about the social structure of the games universe.
- Teaching the player about the players overall goal.
- Teaching the player about how to navigate the game world.
- Teaching the player about how to level up/utilize character progression.

The three game’s tutorials manage to instruct the player in all but one of these points, and where immersion is concerned, it is handled differently by each game. All three games leave out all instruction related to levelling up/character progression, however this is explained in the later stages of the game to the player, which indicates a willingness to not overwhelm a new player with information that is irrelevant early in the game. Immersion is best handled by Dark Souls 3 and the Witcher 3: Wild Hunt, as both these games rely heavily on the players willingness to immerse themselves in the games universe and take part in the events taking place there. The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim is more concerned about being an open world for the player to explore and play in, where the player can take part in the events of the world should they so choose. Goals are explained to a lesser degree, again in an attempt not to overwhelm the player, and the social structures of the games are relayed through conversations with other characters, which makes Dark Souls 3 suffer on this point, as it has fewer NPC’s to converse with than the other two games.

Games are an interactive media that rely heavily on a player’s willingness to take part. As such, they are hand-crafted experiences. Experiences that are built for players to take part in a specific fantasy, dream or setting. How to deliver that setting is the important part of any game, as these aesthetics are what game developers are promising to deliver to their players through the game. Therefore, applying design-principles to the tutorial which are relevant to the experience that the developer is trying to give the player is more important than having a
universal set of design-principles which are applicable on any game in any genre. Tutorials have a very niched and specific purpose. They are meant as instructors to players, are the first hand-shake between the developer and the player and serves as the on-ramp for a game. By tying the tutorial into the games narrative in some way, while still providing a safety-net as well as keeping the instructions simple and understandable the developers have found a way for players to keep themselves immersed and learn at the same time. That doesn’t change, however, that these design principles need to be modified for them to work on any game. For example, each game utilizes a message system, but each system is distinctly different in each game, as the system serves the purposes of that game.

This mindset is helpful, as no two games are meant to be exactly alike. Games are intended as experiences, and experiences are experienced differently by different people. Basing design on proven concepts, and applying it in a way that most suits the game is commendable and efficient, as that games experience will be reinforced.

As stated in the discussion part of this study, a more thorough examination of these tutorials using a method that combines formal analysis with raw data from test-subjects playing the tutorials would be a more adequate way to examine the tutorials, as the prior experience from the researched might have influenced the results.

For the thesis, only part of the game is being examined. Specifically: from after the games introductory cinematic until Geralt wakes up from a nightmare which is used as the games tutorial.

Character
Geralt is a Witcher and the main character of the game The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt. A “Witcher” is someone who has undergone extensive training, harsh mental and physical conditioning and rituals (which take place at Witcher Schools such as Kaer Morhen) in preparation for becoming a monster hunter. Witchers are taken in as children and are subjected to alchemical rituals, consume mutagenic compounds and subject themselves to strenuous physical and magical training to make them versatile and dangerous to the monsters they hunt. The player has access to most of these traits in some form, either by narrative or by gameplay. The sixth sense can be activated as a player action called Witcher Senses, and magic is a feature that is deeply weaved into the combat of the game. Geralt himself has an inherent disposition and personality, however the player can influence this greatly.

Tutorial Structure
The tutorial in the Witcher 3: Wild Hunt is built into the narrative of one of Geralt’s days at Kaer Morhen. In terms of gameplay, it consists of 3 parts, intermingled with cutscenes.

Part 1 takes place in Geralt and Yennefer’s room.
Part 2 takes place on the castle walls.
Part 3 takes place in the castle courtyard.

The following is the sequence of events that the player must take part in to complete the tutorial:

- Cutscene with Geralt and Yennefer
- Player gets control of Geralt.
- Player finds key.
- Player opens door.
- Player heads downstairs.
- Cutscene with Geralt and Vesemir.
- Cutscene with Geralt and Cirilla.
- Race to the courtyard between the Player and Cirilla.
- Cutscene.
- Sparring session with Vesemir.
- Cutscene.

As is evident by the list above, this tutorial contains many cutscenes. These cutscenes are used to great effect to establish the relationships of Geralt and the other cast of characters, and as cutscenes are active player events, where the player must choose how Geralt behaves and responds to the other characters, the cutscenes remain interactive and player-choice driven.
Goals

The introductory cinematic the Witcher 3: Wild Hunt tells the new player what the first major goal of the game is, as we see one of the game’s main characters, Yennefer, running for her life through a battlefield, using her knowledge of magic to her advantage and to survive and Geralt retracing her steps. The cinematic time-skips between the two, showing the same scene from two perspectives: Yennefer’s, as the battle is happening presently, and Geralt’s, as it’s already happened and he’s looking for clues to figure out what happened, and where Yennefer went. The cinematic is not directly part of the tutorial, however it is played as the player initiates a new game, and tells us the bigger strokes of where the game’s narrative is heading: Geralt is looking for Yennefer.

After the cinematic, the first thing to happen in the tutorial is a cutscene depicting Geralt as he’s taking a bath, and Yennefer reading a book in a corner of a well-lit room. We see a foreign insect-like creature slip into Geralt’s bath, and we’re made to understand that Yennefer has conjured it to speed Geralt up as Geralt tells her that he doesn’t find her illusory tricks amusing. They converse about how a person named Ciri is waiting for Geralt to train her, per Geralt’s prior promise. This cutscene is meant to establish the relationship between Geralt and Yennefer. They are not shamed by their obvious nudity together, and they have clearly (indicated by the lived-in state of the room) shared the room for quite some time. As they kiss during the cutscene, and the way they speak to each other also strongly indicates a very affectionate and respectful relationship.
The goals in the tutorial in The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt is built in the same style as quests in the rest of the game. At the start of the tutorial, the player is given a quest in Kaer Morhen, indicated on the mini-map and the quest objective text.

![Image](image-url)

*Figure 7, depicting the hud elements located in the top right corner of the screen in The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*

In figure 1, the yellow highlighted area indicates the area where the quests objective can be found. The yellow dot on the left side of the mini-map is used to tell the player how many meters away from the quest-objective area they are. In this case, as the player gains control of the Player Character Component inside the area, it simply mentions that the objective is nearby. The text beneath the mini-map describe the sequence of events necessary to complete the current quest objective, which is to find the key and unlock the bedroom door. These quest-objectives (or sub-goals) are used to guide the player through the game-world. There are 18 sub-goals to the tutorial quest in The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt and they follow the narrative structure of the tutorial. That means that the players time spent in the tutorial will follow the narrative that is built up around that day in Geralts life. These sub-goals encompass everything that the player needs to learn from the tutorial as well, and the message system is built into the sub-goals, displaying information about movement relevant for the player’s current situation in the tutorial.

For example: When the player has reached, and spoken to Cirilla, the sub-goal of the tutorial will change to “Join Ciri in a run along the ramparts down to the lower courtyard.” The first obstacle while doing this is to climb a ladder up to the castle wall. First, Cirilla will climb the ladder, showing the player that “climbing” is an action that can be performed on ladders. As the player approaches the ladder, the game will display a message, telling the player how to perform the action.

There are many cutscenes in the tutorial for The Witcher 3. Though they do not appear exaggerated. These cutscenes are often conversations in which the player takes part, telling Geralt how he should behave and respond in the conversation.
As for the overall goals of the game, Geralt is a very influential person in the game-world. His goals, and therefore the player’s goals, are related to the political events governing the game-world, if they tie into his search for his daughter Cirilla. This search takes up the main space of the game’s narrative, but is not the only important event that takes place during the game. In the tutorial, the Wild Hunt is introduced for the first time in the game. A player who’s familiar with the previous instalments to the series will recognize this Wild Hunt as the game’s main antagonists. There are also two expansion packs to the game which shifts the game’s narrative focus.
Components
These components can be found in the tutorial for The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Component Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Player Character Component: (Geralt)</td>
<td>Walk, Run, Sprint, Jump, Dodge, Dodge-roll, Climb, Interact, Draw Weapon, Sheathe Weapon, Lock-On, Parry, Riposte, Light Attack Heavy Attack, Use Spell, Use Item, Witcher Senses, Meditate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character Component: Yennefer</td>
<td>Walk, Run, Sprint, Jump, Dodge, Dodge-roll, Climb, Interact, Draw Weapon, Sheathe Weapon, Lock-On, Parry, Riposte, Light Attack Heavy Attack, Use Spell, Use Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character Component: Lambert</td>
<td>Walk, Run, Sprint, Jump, Dodge, Dodge-roll, Climb, Interact, Draw Weapon, Sheathe Weapon, Lock-On, Parry, Riposte, Light Attack Heavy Attack, Use Spell, Use Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character Component: Eskel</td>
<td>Walk, Run, Sprint, Jump, Dodge, Dodge-roll, Climb, Interact, Draw Weapon, Sheathe Weapon, Lock-On, Parry, Riposte, Light Attack Heavy Attack, Use Spell, Use Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character Component: Cirilla</td>
<td>Walk, Run, Sprint, Jump, Dodge, Dodge-roll, Climb, Interact, Draw Weapon, Sheathe Weapon, Lock-On, Parry, Riposte, Light Attack Heavy Attack, Use Spell, Use Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonfire</td>
<td>Burn, Not Burn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candelabra</td>
<td>Burn, Not Burn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine-Pitcher</td>
<td>Initiates conversation between Yennefer and Geralt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yennefer’s Clothes</td>
<td>Initiates conversation between Yennefer and Geralt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key</td>
<td>Unlock Door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sword</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cage-Fire</td>
<td>Burn, Not Burn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yrden</td>
<td>Slow Enemies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quen</td>
<td>Shield User</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Igni</td>
<td>Damage Enemies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axii</td>
<td>Disorient Enemies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aard</td>
<td>Stun/Knock Back Enemies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Bomb</td>
<td>Explode, Damage Enemies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladder</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area (Kaer Morhen)</td>
<td>Initiate cutscenes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Messages</td>
<td>Appear</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutorial Messages</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini-Map</td>
<td>Rotate, Highlight areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Quest</td>
<td>Update</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Scheme</td>
<td>Update</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Witcher 3 tutorial uses components to emphasize player learning for specific purposes. These purposes range from teaching the player about Geralts direct influence on the game world, such as Bonfires, Candelabras and Cage-Fires, which can be lit by Geralts Igni sign to cast more light onto the surrounding areas, to understanding basic movement controls such as climbing; which is taught using a ladder. Every component serves a purpose. The player component contains several other components such as armour, weaponry, equipment such as bombs and traps, as well as consumable items and crafting resources. These are not mentioned in the analysis as they are not mentioned in the tutorial, and have relatively low impact on the design principles inherent to the tutorials structure. Out of the other character components in the tutorial, Geralt does combat with one: Vesemir. The session of combat with Vesemir serves at the basis for learning how combat works in the tutorial.

To help the player keep track of their tasks in the game, the game system relies on the use of a Quest-System, which tracks Geralts current activity and updates with new information once a sub-goal to a current quests overall goal has been complete. For example, the quest-goal during the tutorial is to complete the tutorial. As the player gains control of Geralt, however, his immediate goal is to use his Witcher Senses to scan the area and find a key to unlock a door. Once the player has done this, the current goal is updated, telling the player to head to the lower level.
Component Descriptions
Player Character (Geralt)

Geralt, the Player Character Component, is bipedal humanoid. This component contains several other components that are not relevant to the tutorial in that they are never explained or taught, apart from the Training Bomb, which is used to teach players how to aim thrown components. These components are weapons, armour, item equipment and crafting resources, as well as different currencies for use in the game-world.

4 Resources govern the player component. Health, Stamina, Adrenaline and Toxicity.

- **Health**
  - The Player Character Component starts the game with a set amount of base health. This value can be increased later in the game. When this value reaches 0, the player character component dies. Health is diminished by receiving attacks from enemies or by falling great distances.

- **Stamina**
  - Stamina governs the Player Character Components access to 2 Player Actions. These Actions are Sprint and Cast Spell. Sprinting causes the Stamina resource value to slowly diminish. Casting spells immediately uses up all remaining Stamina. Stamina is regenerated quickly out of combat, and at a slightly slower rate while the Player Character Component is in combat.

- **Adrenaline**
  - Adrenaline is a resource that governs the Player Character Components damage output with melee weapon. When the Player Character Component strikes an enemy with a melee weapon, the Adrenaline value goes up, increasing the damage output of the Player Character Component. It is also a resource that is used to activate skills that rely on the Adrenaline resource. These skills are not available in the tutorial, and so will not be mentioned.

- **Toxicity**
  - Toxicity is a resource that governs the players access to multiple potions and elixirs that are can be created by the player. Each consumable elixir or potion has a Toxicity-value tied to it. When the combined Toxicity-values of potions that the Player Character Component has consumed is above 95, the Player Character Component takes damage until the Toxicity value has diminished. Toxicity diminishes over time, and has a value range of 0-100. Toxicity is not used during the tutorial.

Yennefer

Yennefer is important to the games narrative, and is introduced during the tutorial to establish Geralts relationship to her. She’s established as Geralts lover, a mage, and Cirillas adoptive mother. She appears repeatedly throughout the game as a narrative plot driver, and shares many of the same Player Actions that are available to the Player Character Component.

Vesemir

Vesemir (like Yennefer) is important to the games narrative, and is introduced during the tutorial to establish Geralts relationship to him. He is the Master Witcher of the Wolf School, which Geralt is enrolled in together with Lamber and Eskel. He is Cirillas theoretical and practical instructor, as well as Geralts mentor. Vesemir specifically share more of the same
Player Actions that are available to the Player Character Component, as Vesemir is also a Witcher and has access to the same spells and weaponry as Geralt.

Lambert
Lambert is another Witcher enrolled in the School of the Wolf together with Geralt and Eskel. During the tutorial, he is used as an aesthetic piece to set the mood and theme, as all the Witchers of the school spar together in the castle square.

Eskel
Eskel is another Witcher enrolled in the School of the Wolf together with Geralt and Lambert. During the tutorial, he is used as an aesthetic piece to set the mood and theme, as all the Witchers of the school spar together in the castle square.

Cirilla
Cirilla is, for all intents and purposes, Geralts and Yennefers daughter. Though not by blood, the relationship established between the three of them is that of a family. During the tutorial, this component is used to show players how movement controls work.

Bonfire, Candelabra, Cage-fire
The bonfire in Yennefer and Geralts room. This bonfire can be interacted with, using the Interact button to light it or to smother it. There is a candelabra in the room that serves the same purpose, and a bonfire in a cage outside in the courtyard that casts a bigger light-source.

Wine-Pitcher
This component is used to teach players how important items are highlighted while the Player Character Component is using the Player Action Witcher Senses. Interacting with this component after it has been identified using Witcher Senses will trigger a comment from Geralt, stating that Yennefer is “running out of juice.”

This component is one of three (Wine-Pitcher, Yennefers Clothes and Key) that is highlighted in Geralts and Yennefers room as the player uses Witcher Senses, and is used as an emphasis, as the Key component is a physically smaller item to find, and establishing what colour is associated with important components during Witcher Senses helps the player track down the Key. It also gives the player a hint about how Geralt and Yennefer interact in their relationship.

Yennefers Clothes
This component is used to teach players how important items are highlighted while the Player Character Component is using the Player Action Witcher Senses. Interacting with this component after it has been identified using Witcher Senses will trigger a comment from Geralt, asking whether Yennefer possess any clothes that aren’t black or white, to which Yennefer responds: “Mhm, undergarments”.

This component is one of three (Wine-Pitcher, Yennefers Clothes and Key) that is highlighted in Geralts and Yennefers room as the player uses Witcher Senses, and is used as an emphasis, as the Key component is a physically smaller item to find, and establishing what colour is associated with important components during Witcher Senses helps the player track down the Key. It also gives the player a hint about how Geralt and Yennefer interact in their relationship.
Key
They Key is the item that teaches players the value of the Player Action *Witcher Senses*. To progress through the tutorial, the player must use the action *Witcher Senses* to locate the key and pick it up, then *interact* with a locked door to reach the current goal, one floor down.

Door
This door is the door to Yennefer and Geralts room. The Door can be *interacted* with at any time, but will only open once the player has located the Key using *Witcher Senses*. The only way to progress through the tutorial is by opening the door.

Sword
There is only one weapon available in the tutorial, and it is only available during the sparring session which serves as the instructor for combat in which Geralt (the Player Character Component) spars with Vesemir.

Pressing the “1”-key during the sparring session will make Geralt draw the sword. This gives the Player Character Component access to more Player Actions. These actions are: Quick Strike, Heavy Strike, Parry, Riposte, Dodge and Dodge-Roll.

Ladder
The ladder is a component which allows the player access to areas by climbing. There are several variations of ladders in the tutorial; they function the same, however their aesthetic properties change to suit the location better.

Yrden
Yrden is one of the Witcher-Signs that Geralt can perform through the Player Action *Cast Spell*. This variation of spell creates a circular field on the ground wherein enemy movement and attack speed is slowed down.

Quen
Quen is one of the Witcher-Signs that Geralt can perform through the Player Action *Cast Spell*. This variation of spell creates an orange shield around Geralt which absorbs a set amount of damage from enemy attacks.

Igni
Igni is one of the Witcher-Signs that Geralt can perform through the Player Action *Cast Spell*. This variation of spell creates a wall of flame which originates from Geralt’s position and spreads forwards in a cone. Enemies struck by the spell will take damage, and has a chance to be afflicted by the status effect “Burn”. Enemies under the effects of “Burn” will take periodically sustained damage, as well as increased fire-based damage from other sources.

Axii
Axii is one of the Witcher-Signs that Geralt can perform through the Player Action *Cast Spell*. This variation of spell can be cast on opponents to stun them for 7 seconds or until they take damage.
Aard
Aard is one of the Witcher-Signs that Geralt can perform through the Player Action Cast Spell. This variation of spell creates a shockwave which originates from Geralts position and spreads forwards in a cone. Enemies struck by the spell will take a small amount of damage, be stunned and has a chance to knocked to the ground.

Training Bomb
The training bomb is a consumable item that is used to teach the player the controls for aiming with an equipped item. It is a thrown weapon that explodes upon contact. By holding the Mouse-Wheel Button, the player enters a state of aiming, where a blue arc indicates the trajectory of the equipped item. The player must stand at a specific location and throw the bomb at 1 of 2 targets in order to proceed through the tutorial.

Area
The area asset in the tutorial for The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt is an old castle called Kaer Morhen. It is an old castle where the Witcher School of the Wolf make their home. This place is used in the tutorial to establish Geralts relationship to the people in his Witchers guild. It is a shared bond between the Witchers, and strengthens the relationship between them.

Control Messages
Control Messages are messages that show up during gameplay on the left side of the screen. These messages show the player which buttons to click to perform specific player actions. These messages appear as follow:

![Figure 8, depicting a Control Tutorial Message in The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt](image)

These appear at specific points in the tutorial, and are triggered when the player must perform an action that they have not performed yet.
Tutorial Messages

Tutorial messages function slightly different from the control messages, and have a slightly different purpose. These messages don’t directly impart any explicit information about how to control or play the game, rather, these messages give the player a more general idea about something. For example, the first tutorial message in the tutorial looks like this:

*Figure 9, displaying what a Tutorial Message looks like in The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*

These messages also pause the game. The player must press the “Space-key” to resume playing the game.
Mini-Map
The mini-map is mentioned here due to how it displays the players current sub-goal, as well as how to get there. It is also introduced in the tutorial by a Tutorial Message, which tells the player that keeping an eye on the mini-map and the current sub-goal is an effective way to play the game.

The mini-map shows the player the terrain and quest-markers that is within a set range from the Player Character Component.

Active Quest
The Active Quest shows the player the current sub-goal in the form of text.

Figure 10, depicting the mini-map in The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt.

Figure 11, depicting the active quest in The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt.
Control Scheme
The Control Scheme is a miniature map of what Player Actions are available to the player at any given point in the game. This scheme is dynamic, as it displays information that is relevant to the current situation. For example, during combat, this scheme will display how to perform attacks, while out of combat it will show how to perform jumps and sprinting.

Figure 12, depicting the control scheme in The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt.

The components of the Witcher 3 tutorial ties directly into the tutorial structure. By the utilization of components as triggers or emphases of player-based learning in conjunction with a structure that reinforces and iterates on player-action controls, the components become the props which accelerates information intake and allows the player to continue learning how to efficiently handle the game.
**Player Actions**

These are the player actions available to the player in The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt. Most of these actions are performable at any time in the game-play. Some Player Action is contextual, such as basic movement, which is done with the “W, A, S, D-keys”, but is altered depending on whether the Player Component is indoors or outdoors, or is holding down the “Shift-key”.

Some player action has been left out of this list, as they are not available in the tutorial, or are not relevant to the tutorial. Conversational choice was included since it plays a big part in the game while not directly included in the core loop, and Menu Navigation, while not part of the tutorial, is mentioned due to its exclusion.

In The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt, bipedal humanoids share Actions with the player. Most enemies can perform the standard combat elements, but are excluded from utilizing Witcher Signs. Enemy weaponry can vary as well, to give them specific moves related to their equipment. For example, a fully armoured knight with a sledgehammer can use attacks that a bandit with a short sword cannot and vice versa.

Player Actions are mostly performable at any point in the game, provided the player is not in a cutscene or in a conversation. Certain player actions are locked into context, for example running and sprinting, which is not allowed in door. Sprinting, specifically, is a function that is also used while the Player Character Component is on horseback with the same key. Horse-riding is not visited in the tutorial however.

Attacks are performed in combos of 3, before they rotate back to attack 1. However, attack can be done in several directions, and animations use blend-spaces to keep character movement interesting and dynamic.

Combat in this game is reliant on the player learning and remembering what attacks are effective against what opponents. Much of the gameplay takes place in learning about the weaknesses, and then preparing accordingly to hunt specific monsters.

These are the Player Actions available in the tutorial in The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Prerequisite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jump</td>
<td>Player Component performs a jump.</td>
<td>Contextual. Performed with the “Space-key”. Jump, when out of combat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodge</td>
<td>Player Component performs a dodge.</td>
<td>Must be in combat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodge-roll</td>
<td>Player Component performs a dodge-roll. This Player Action serves the same purpose as the Dodge, but causes the Player Component to travel a further distance.</td>
<td>Contextual. Performed with the “Space-key”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climb</td>
<td>Player Component grabs a ledge and climbs up. This is done by jumping towards a location where a ledge is within a certain range of the Player Component.</td>
<td>Contextual. Performed with the “Space-key”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interact</td>
<td>Player Component interacts with an object that can be interacted with. Examples: Weaponry, which is picked up with the interact button. Fires, which are lit or smothered with the interact button.</td>
<td>Contextual. Objects behaviour determine outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw Weapon</td>
<td>Player Component draws the currently equipped weapon.</td>
<td>Must have Weapon Equipped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheathe Weapon</td>
<td>Player Component sheathes the drawn weaponry.</td>
<td>Must have weapons drawn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lock-On</td>
<td>Player Component locks cameras focus point on enemy component.</td>
<td>Must be within certain range of enemy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parry</td>
<td>Player Component parries incoming melee attacks from the front.</td>
<td>Must be in combat. Must have weapon equipped and drawn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riposte</td>
<td>Player Component ripostes incoming enemy melee attacks from the front.</td>
<td>Must be in combat. Must have weapon equipped and drawn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Attack</td>
<td>Player Component performs a quick attack.</td>
<td>Must have weapon equipped and drawn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Attack</td>
<td>Player Component performs a slower, stronger attack.</td>
<td>Must have weapon equipped and drawn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick Menu</td>
<td>Player opens the radial quick menu.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Spell</td>
<td>Player Component uses the currently equipped Witcher Sign.</td>
<td>Must have Witcher-Sign equipped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Item</td>
<td>Player Component uses the currently equipped item.</td>
<td>Must have item equipped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witcher Senses</td>
<td>Player Component enters a state called <em>Witcher Senses</em> highlighting certain assets in the game-world.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meditate</td>
<td>Player Component sits down. This function is used to make time pass, restock potions and elixirs and regenerate health.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversational Choice</td>
<td>Player makes a choice in a conversational cutscene. Player Component responds according to the player’s choice.</td>
<td>Contextual. Player Choice and possible answers determine outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menu Navigation</td>
<td>Player navigates the menus of the game.</td>
<td>Player must enter menu state.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Player Actions are deeply tied to the games inherent willingness for the player to explore and combat monsters. As these two concepts are what serve as the foundation for the games gameplay, this is reflected in the player actions. Combat is fluid and aesthetically pleasing, as well as easy to weave spells and items into. Movement is basic, yet responsive and easy to handle, which makes positioning an active player choice rather than a random event that simply happens in combat.

These player actions also reflect on the games aesthetical values. As the Witcher 3: Wild Hunt boils down to the retelling of the story of Geralt The Witcher, the actions and events tied to this narrative need to be executable as well as interactive to the player. This means that cutscenes/conversations with other characters needs to respond to the player’s choice as well, which is reflected in the conversational choices that the player can make. These choices directly impact the goals of the game in general, however in the tutorial, impactful choices are scarce.
Environment
Kaer Morhen is an old run down castle where the Witchers of the School of the Wolf make their home. It’s been in the possession of Vesemir, the schools Master, for over 200 years, however its state of decay is evident in crumbling castle-walls, fortifications missing and the general rubble around the castle. It does, however, feel like a home. Each part of the castle is used for something, and while it’s falling apart, it is explained to use that the Witchers do try to keep the castle as repaired as possible, yet too few hands are available to keep the castle in pristine condition. It is an area that the player returns to multiple times throughout the game, and as such is designed to fulfil all the functions that are necessary for the games narrative events. In the tutorial, the player has access to a limited portion of Kaer Morhen. These areas encompass Geralt and Yennefers Room, a linear path from where Cirilla is training to the lower courtyard, and the courtyard itself. Each part serves a specific purpose. In Geralt and Yennefers room, the player is taught how to move, look around, and use their Witcher Senses. It is also here that Geralts relationship to Yennefer is established. Once the player has left the room, 2 cutscenes play, and the Player Character Component is moved unto the linear path to the courtyard. Cirilla suggest racing down to the courtyard, and the player must participate and run the correct path to the courtyard while the game teaches the player the movement mechanics of the game, such as running by having the player race Cirilla, sprinting by including long stretches where the player must sprint past Cirilla, climbing by including verticality in the linear path as well as that great falls will lead to the Player Character Component taking damage. In the courtyard, the open space allows for a sparring session between Geralt and Vesemir. The others of the school are present too, giving the sensation that it is a class for the Witchers.
Design Principles

Exploration

The Witcher 3 is a game that at its core is about exploring the world and the narrative. This isn’t overly evident by the tutorial, but the tutorial gives hints and prepares the players for this slightly. The first part of the tutorial takes place in Geralt and Yennefer’s room, where the player must find a key. It is also in here that the elements of the mini-map and the active quest are introduced and explained. These two elements help the player sift through information that they find irrelevant and help them focus on the things they want to do.

In terms of exploration, what the tutorial tries to help the player explore is the narrative of the game. The Witcher series of games share a narrative, and following the events in the third game without having played the previous 2 titles is not impossible, but it becomes necessary to establish the characters and the problems that the player is facing early in the third game due to this. By introducing us to the most important characters early in the game (like the tutorial) the player is brought up to speed about their overall goals in the game-world. The game introduces two characters specifically that the player should relate to and feel a relationship with. These two characters are Yennefer and Cirilla, Geralt’s lover and adopted daughter, respectively.

Interactive storytelling/cutscenes

The interactive conversational cutscenes in the game help the players explore that narrative. By allowing the players to choose what Geralt says and how he says it, players can explore and pose questions to things they don’t understand through Geralt. This makes sure that even as the game slows down the pace of the gameplay with a cutscene, the player is still actively listening to take in new information, ask questions or have Geralt perform actions that lead to player satisfaction. How the player does this is also introduced in the tutorial, through the cutscenes. As these are mandatory, and the tutorial helps the player by telling them how to make a conversational choice, by the time the tutorial ends, the player will have understood the impact of the choices they make during conversation. And as the other characters will remember what Geralt says, they are aware that the choices they make during conversation has impact on the later stages of the game’s narrative.

Combat Mechanics

Combat in The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt is subtly reactive. The game gives the players tools to dodge, dodge-roll, parry and riposte incoming attacks, however parries and Ripostes can only be performed on attacks that are incoming from the front. The tutorial also teaches the player to look for enemy attack animations and react accordingly. While the game shares similarities to Dark Souls 3’s reactive combat, failing to evade or negate an attack is not as punishing in Witcher 3 as it is in Dark Souls 3. The Witcher 3 also relies on the players access to spells which can be equipped and cast quickly in combat. It’s a dynamic system that allows for a lot of player expression in how they choose to tackle combat in the game. Some players till customize Geralt to be more of a brawler, while others will customize him to be more of a battle-mage.
Control/Tutorial Messages
The two message variations in the Witcher 3 help the players depending on what type of information they need in the current situation. These messages always appear on the screen when the prerequisites to the message are met. The Control Messages are triggered when the player needs to know how to perform a certain action. This dynamic approach to messages appearing on screen means that the player cannot miss taking part of certain information.

Tutorial message also pause the game, and explain more general and broad concepts of the game. This means that when there’s a lot of new information to take in, the game will pause until the player has understood and wishes to continue playing the game. An example of this is the message which appears as the games combat tutorial takes place, found below.

Figure 13, depicting the Tutorial Message which appears before the Combat Tutorial in The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt
While this message contains a lot of text, the text is general about the information it is giving, and is more of an instructor of general combat, than any combat specifics. Notice also that the player must press the “Space-key” to continue the game, as the game system will pause the game while this message is displaying.

**World-based challenges**

The Witcher 3 has a lot of navigational puzzles and challenges that take place in the three-dimensional space of the game world. Some of these puzzles involve figuring out which sequence of portals to enter, jumping over gaps in the terrain, sieging the weaker structures of forts and finding the correct path up the side of a mountain. These world-based challenges rely on the player learning how to control the player avatar Geralt, while also enforcing what they’ve learnt.
**Thoughts, Conclusion**

The Witcher 3 tutorial does an excellent job to keep the player immersed and interactive despite the text-heavy tutorial. Its cutscenes make for a nice change in pace while not removing the interactive element entirely, thereby keeping the player entertained and interested, due to the impact of player choice during the cutscenes. Its three-part-structure help the player to iterate on control related mechanics, such as basic movement, which is performed with the “W, A, S, D-keys” and is iterated upon with the player action *Sprint* which is performed with the “Shift-key”. It also reinforces the narrative during the tutorial, which is of a normal day in Geralts life, as well as the relationships introduced in the tutorial. Namely those between Geralt and Vesemir, Yennefer, Cirilla, Lambert and Eskel.

The tutorial leaves out many of the games other mechanics and systems, such as levelling/character progression, horse-riding, alchemy, crafting and beast-hunting. However, as we mentioned earlier in the analysis, the tutorial is meant to instruct the player in the most fundamental mechanics of the game, and after the tutorial has been completed, the Player Character is placed in an expansive area known as White Orchard, which continues to instruct the player in the above-mentioned mechanics and concepts. As far as the fundamental mechanics goes, the game does an excellent job of waiting for the player to be ready to accept new instruction before imparting new information to the player by way of the sub-goal system which is inherent to the quest-system that the game utilizes.

The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt is a game that is designed to portray the events of a specific Witchers life; Geralt. The game succeeds to mix Geralts character and player choice exceedingly well, while also enforcing his relationships, making the player care about and explore those relationships, as well as teaching the basic controls to the player. While the tutorial relies heavily on cutscenes and text, its inherent interactive thematization makes sure that the player stays active and interested, as well as compelled to learn more, explore more and play more.

It is worth mentioning that The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt is an open-world game with a very linear tutorial. It is worth mentioning that after the tutorial has concluded, Geralt wakes next to Vesemir in a country-side region called White Orchard. This area is open for the player to explore at their leisure, and is smaller than the rest of the games open areas. It allows the player to explore the more complex nuances of the game, such as monster-hunter, horse-riding, crafting, gathering and of course exploring. The tutorial in the game is meant to introduce players to the most fundamental controls of the game, but the learning doesn’t stop there.
12. Appendix 2, The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim

For the thesis, two videos were created of the playthrough of the tutorial in this game. The reason for this is that the first part of the introduction/tutorial to The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim is a passive experience within which the players only action is to move the camera around. This passive part of the experience runs for 5 minutes. After that, the player gains limited control of their character.

The first video captures the events between when the player starts a new game up until they enter the character creator while the second video capture the events between when the player has created their character up until they leave Helgen, the starting area.

There are two branching paths to take during the tutorial, yet the player may only experience one. For this thesis, only one part was played. The difference is marginal, and will be covered during the analysis.
Character

The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim contains a character creator in the middle of their tutorial, something which has become somewhat of an expectancy when it comes to the Elder Scrolls series. The character creator in Skyrim is extensive and varied. There are multiple choices that the player can make for each category of choice as well as sliders to vary proportions on the body. Categories include, but are not limited to: hairstyle, beard, eye colour, bodily size, hair colour and scars.

There is only one choice in the character creator that has an impact on the gameplay, and that is the choice of race. As such, no modifications were made to the default settings of the character creator, and the default race Nord was chosen. The character creator is located chronologically in segment 2 of the tutorial. There are 9 races to choose from in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, each accompanied with unique traits that have an impact on gameplay. The races that can be found in Skyrim, and their abilities, are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Skill name/Description</th>
<th>Trait(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altmer</td>
<td>Highborn: Regenerate 25% of the character’s maximum Magicka per second for 60 seconds</td>
<td>+50 Magicka.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argonian</td>
<td>Histskin: Regenerate health 10 times faster for 60 seconds</td>
<td>50% Disease Resistance, Water breathing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosmer</td>
<td>Command Animal: Make all surrounding animals your allies for 60 seconds.</td>
<td>50% Disease Resistance, 50% Poison Resistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breton</td>
<td>Dragon skin: Absorb 50% of Magicka from all incoming spells for 60 seconds.</td>
<td>25% Magic Resistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunmer</td>
<td>Ancestor’s Wrath: Surrounds the character in fire for 60 seconds.</td>
<td>50% Fire Damage Resistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperial</td>
<td>Voice of the Emperor: Nearby people are “Calmed” for 30 seconds.</td>
<td>Find more gold than usual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khajit</td>
<td>Night Eye: Improved Night Vision for 60 seconds. Can be toggled multiple times per day.</td>
<td>+15 Base Unarmed Damage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nord</td>
<td>Battle Cry: Nearby enemies are “Frightened” for 30 seconds.</td>
<td>50% Frost Damage Resistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orsimer</td>
<td>Berserkers Rage: Take half damage and do double physical damage for 60 seconds.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redguard</td>
<td>Adrenaline Rush: Regenerate stamina 10 times faster for 60 seconds.</td>
<td>50% Poison Resistance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Race choice also determine the player starting spells as well the starting values for all the various skills in the game. Accompanying each race in the tutorial is a small description of their general attributes. For example, the Nord description is as follows: “Citizens of Skyrim, they are a tall and fair-haired people. Strong and hardy, Nords are famous for their resistance to the cold and their talent as warriors. They can use a Battle cry to make opponents flee.”
Tutorial Structure

The tutorial in Skyrim is divided into 3 segments which all encompass some form of player learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Segment 1</td>
<td>Passive experience. The player is moved through a landscape as other characters talk about the social structures and problems of the game world. The character creator is also part of segment 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment 2</td>
<td>Active experience. Alduin (black dragon), the game’s antagonist, attacks the town of Helgen where the player character is about to be executed. The commotion serves as the player characters’ escape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment 3</td>
<td>Active experience. The player character, having escaped the immediate threat of Alduin, makes their way through the tunnel-system beneath Helgen. As they escape the tunnels, the Tutorial ends.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There’s a dramatic curve of intensity to the tutorial that peaks in the second segment, during Alduin’s attack, which is consistent with a three-act structure. The player is expected to learn the basic gameplay mechanics during all three segments of the tutorial, and this done in the form of text and symbols that appears in the middle of the screen, indicating something that the player can learn. This text/symbol combinations come as text-messages from the developers as instructors in gameplay-controls.

There are two variations of text-messages that are relayed to the player. One variation activates during specific events in the tutorial. For example, in figure 1, the player is told that they may “Use [Mouse Symbol] to look around.” This happens as the player character “wakes up” on the cart in the first segment.

This variation of text/symbol indicators appear like this:

*Figure 14, the first of the tutorial messages in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*
There are 9 of this variation of message, and they appear at specific points in the tutorial.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Appears When</th>
<th>During Segment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use Mouse to look around.</td>
<td>Player character wakes up on cart.</td>
<td>Segment 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press Space to jump</td>
<td>Player must jump from a tower through the roof of an adjacent building.</td>
<td>Segment 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press E to open containers.</td>
<td>Player must open a chest to find starting armour.</td>
<td>Segment 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press Tab to access your inventory and magic.</td>
<td>Player must equip starting armour.</td>
<td>Segment 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press R to ready your weapon.</td>
<td>Player must ready their sword.</td>
<td>Segment 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press M1 to attack. Hold M1 to power attack.</td>
<td>Player must attack enemy NPC’s.</td>
<td>Segment 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press M2 to block.</td>
<td>Player encounters enemy NPC’s.</td>
<td>Segment 3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The other variation of message activates during specific events but are not (in the same way as the first variation of message) bound to specific locations. There are more messages of this variation than what is seen in the tutorial. This variation of message appears as follows:

![Stamina Low](image)

*Figure 15, Message variation 2 from The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*

These messages explain specific concepts in a more extensive way, and relay how specific components work, rather than gameplay mechanics. In the message seen in figure 3, the trigger that activates the message is that the player’s stamina has reached the value 0. This
doesn’t have to happen during the tutorial, and is something that the player can experience at any point in the game, or not at all.

The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim is a game that takes place on the world of Nirn. It has its own structure and narrative, separate from the other instalments in the series, yet should be considered part of the broader narrative spanning the 5 games. The tutorial depicts the scenario following the events (not portrayed in the game) as the Player Character has tried to cross the border out of the country Skyrim. The player component is stuck in a cart which is pulled by a horse and steered by a guard. In the cart is three other men, which the player is introduced to.

The Player Character has supposedly fallen asleep or been knocked out during an ambush set up by a squadron of Imperial guards. These guards were lying in wait for a rebel group known as the Stormcloaks. As the Player Character wakes up, a man on the carriage, Ralof, speaks to the player. He explains where the carriage is going, as well as who is on it. Ralof states that the player has been asleep, and asks whether he is correct to assume that we (as the player) was trying to cross the border. He says that he and his other Stormcloak friends, along with a horse thief called Lokir, as well as ourselves (the player) walked into an imperial ambush and was put on the carts. A small argument takes place between Ralof and Lokir, and we’re introduced to the third man in the cart: Ulfric Stormcloak, Jarl of Windhelm and the leader of the rebellion. Lokir begins to grasp the seriousness of the current situation, and Ralof confirms that the people in the carts are most likely not going to survive. As the carts begin to get closer to the small town of Helgen, Ralof tells Lokir that his last thoughts should be of home. Lokir dejectedly claims that he’s from Rorikstead. After this, Lokir recites the names of “the divines”, divine figures from the religious faith.

An imperial known as General Tullius has personally taken charge to see to Ulfrics execution, and that’s where the carriage is heading: into the town of Helgen to see Ulfric and his band of rebels executed. As the carts pass through the gate, we can observe as a conversation occurs between General Tullius and the Thalmor elves. A few bystanders chatter about the convoy, a father tells his child to head inside, away from the execution, and the people get off the carts.

We are then introduced to the character creator. After the character creation, the prisoners are called one by one to the executioner’s block. As the Player Character is laid on the executioner’s block, a black dragon lands on the central tower of the town and summons a storm which sends flaming rock from the skies. As chaos erupts in the small town, the Player Character and the other rebels take advantage of the commotion and set up an escape plan. The Player Character is separated from the rebels and finds Hadvarl, a citizen of Skyrim who’s joined the Imperials. He helps the Dragonborn get to the towns keep. As the player approaches the keep, Ralof reappears and the player must make a choice to follow either Hadvarl or Ralof. No matter what choice the player makes, the Player Character finds themselves in the caves beneath the town, accompanied by the chosen companion. The winding tunnels eventually lead to a cave-entrance, and upon exiting the cave, the tutorial stops.
Goals

The first part of the tutorial, segment 1, is a mostly passive experience wherein the player can move the camera to look at what they so choose during a cart-ride into a town called Helgen. During this segment, the player is introduced to concepts pertaining to a few goals in the game as well as a few social structures within the game-world. This is done in the form of a conversation between 3 characters, the player character, Ralof and Lokir, the Horse Thief. During the conversation, we (as the player) are meant to extract information from what is being said. Ralof is part of a group of individuals that refer to themselves as Stormcloaks, named so after Ulfric Stormcloak; A jarl, and the leader of the Stormcloak Rebellion. These men and women are rebelling against what is referred to as “the Empire” as well as a faction known as “the Thalmor”. Horse thief Lokir is not part of the rebellion, and claims that on that basis, the Empire shouldn’t execute him. When he realises that they are going to anyways. He mentions “the divines”. “The divines” refer to “The Imperial Pantheon of the Nine Divines”. Lokir prays to them and mentions them by name on the cart, asking for their protection, before they roll into the small town of Helgen. The goal for the player during segment 1 is to understand the context of the current situation.

The second part of the tutorial, Segment 2, introduces the main goal of the game. As the player is being wheeled to the town square in Helgen, we are met by an Imperial captain and her aide. The aide claims that we were unlucky to have been captured in the ambush, as we were not meant to be there, but that there is nothing to be done, as the captain orders the aide to add the player to the line of rebels about to be executed. As we are pushed onto the execution block, a roar can be heard echoing in the valley. General Tullius dismisses the roar as nothing and calls for the executioner to proceed. As the axe is about to fall, a big, black dragon, Alduin, lands on the central tower in Helgen and summons a storm which causes flaming rocks to fall from the sky. In the commotion, the Stormcloak rebels group up and head for safety, and Ralof tells us to head with them. We’re escorted up a tower and told to make a jump for the adjacent building, and that Ralof will catch up to us later.

As we proceed, we are met with the captain’s aide, Hadvarl. Hadvarl tells us that if we want to live, we should stick with him. As Alduin circles the village in the air, spewing fire at the Imperials and villagers alike, the player makes their way to the keep with Hadvarl, were Ralof meets up with the player again. In front of the keep, the player must make a choice to either follow Hadvarl the Imperial or Ralof the Stormcloak. This choice has an impact later in the game during certain quests, but for the tutorial, the choice matters little. As the player enters the keep, Segment 3 of the tutorial begins.

The goals introduced here are relevant to the political situation in Skyrim. We’re introduced to two warring factions: The Stormcloaks and the Imperials, and that the Thalmor have a stake in this war. We’re also introduced to Alduin, the games main antagonist and the source of the current problems in Skyrim. The player doesn’t know their relationship to Alduin at this point, but the situation that arises from him appearing in Skyrim involves the player character.
The third part of the tutorial, segment 3, takes place in the keep in Helgen, as well as the tunnels beneath Helgen. Depending on the player’s choice in segment 2, either Hadvarl or Ralof will accompany the player through the areas. This part of the tutorial introduces more gameplay mechanics and helps the player understand more complex concepts, such as Stamina resource management and lock picking. Hadvarl or Ralof will first want to cut the bonds limiting the player characters’ action. Once this is done, the player must loot an armour set and equip it before Hadvarl/Ralof will let the player continue.

As the player proceeds through the keep, they make their way through 2 notable rooms. A store-room and a torture-chamber. The store-room holds useful items for the player such as consumable edible items like bread and meats, as well as consumable potions of health, magicka and stamina. Ralof/Hadvarl will wait for the player to clear the room of what they want before continuing. In the next area, the torture chamber, the player and Ralof/Hadvarl finds the torturer locked in combat with 3 enemies. Killing these enemies will trigger a conversation with the torturer, who is disgruntled about the player taking the valuables off the corpses in the chamber. Once the enemies have been killed and the corpses looted, the player and Hadvarl/Ralof continues down into the tunnels beneath Helgen. Hadvarl pulls a lever to lower a bridge that form an escape route which leads to a big open cavern. A few more enemies are found in the large cave that must be defeated.

The next big room is a room with Frostbite Spiders of varying size. Though there is no narration or goal-clarification in this room, it imparts a form of implicit teaching that will be discussed in the Design Principles section of this analysis. The player and their companion then find themselves in a cave with a sleeping bear. Hadvarl/Ralof offers a bow to the player in case they want to try their luck against the bear, but suggests that sneaking past it might be the best course of action. Past this, the cave entrance can be seen, and as the player approaches the entrance, the tutorial ends.

The goal during this segment still relies heavily on escaping Alduin, as well as understanding certain combat concepts such as environmental hazards and different damage types. Not much is said or introduced to the player in terms of narrative during this segment of the tutorial. Instead it introduces more gameplay mechanics and concepts.
Components
These components can be found in the tutorial for The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. The listed components do not reflect the number of components in the game.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Component Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lokir the Horsethief</strong></td>
<td>Run, Sprint, Walk, Jump, Aim, Crouch, Sneak, Left Hand Action, Right Hand Action, Interact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alduin</strong></td>
<td>Fly, Land,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bear</strong></td>
<td>Run, Sprint, Walk, Left Hand Action, Right Hand Action, Interact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frostbite Spider</strong></td>
<td>Run, Sprint, Walk, Attack, Attack Ranged, Interact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Melee Weaponry</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hide Shield</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long Bow</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flames</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sparks</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heal</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Armour</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Iron Helmet</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Helgen Keep Key</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coin (Gold)</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potion of Minor Healing</strong></td>
<td>Restore Health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potion of Minor Magicka</strong></td>
<td>Restore Magicka.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potion of Minor Stamina</strong></td>
<td>Restore Stamina.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jump-Tower in Helgen</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Web-Sac Room</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Message Variation 1</strong></td>
<td>Display message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Message Variation 2</strong></td>
<td>Display message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lockpick</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lock</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lever</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chain Lever</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Door(s)</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oil</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aesthetic Meshes</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Helgen</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim is a physics based fantasy simulation game. This means that the player can pick up and interact with most of the games assets at will. By definition, these assets are also defined as “components” for the formal analysis of this tutorial. As this means a much higher count of components for the tutorial, and not all components are relevant for this thesis, some components will be grouped into other categories, and some components will be left out.

For example: In figure 1, the player has reached a specific room in the introductory tutorial for the Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. In this picture, there are 2 skins hanging on the walls, 3 shelves, 2 chairs, 4 barrels in 2 variations, as well as several pots, bowls and tankards on the table. None of these components are relevant to the design and execution of the tutorial other than their aesthetic values as descriptors of the environment. As such, they will be neglected for mention and thusly grouped into categories with other components that lack relevancy to the purpose of the thesis.

![Figure 1. A room in Segment 3 of the Skyrim Introductory Tutorial.](image16.jpg)
Component Descriptions

Player Character
The player character is a bipedal humanoid. 9 races may be chosen for this character, and during the character creator, the player character can be customised to suit a player’s play-style and tastes.

The player character component contains several other components. Equipped armour and weaponry are inherent to the player character component, as well as all the menus and inventory. This includes consumable items, useable items, and items that have no inherent purpose to the player character such as aesthetic meshes like “spoons” or “Cups”. The contained components will vary from player to player, depending on what that player has placed in their inventory.

Three main resources govern the Player Character Components overall well-being. Health, Magicka and Stamina. Every time the player levels up character, one of these three resources may be increased to boost a character’s power.

- **Health.**
  - The player starts with a set value of Health points. When this value reaches 0, the player character component is considered dead. Health is diminished by receiving attacks, falling from great heights or standing in hazards, such as fire.

- **Stamina.**
  - The player starts with a set value of Stamina points. When this value reaches 0, the player character component must wait for stamina to regenerate before they can spend it again. Stamina regeneration is initiated automatically by the game system when the player is not using the Stamina resource.

- **Magicka.**
  - The player starts with a set value of Magicka points. These points can be considered as traditional “mana” of the fantasy setting in games. This resource governs the use of spells in the game, and is drained when spells are used. Magicka regenerates automatically when the player is not consuming the Magicka resource.

Ralof
Ralof is a non-player-controlled humanoid character in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. This character is part of the band of Stormcloaks that are being sent to their deaths in Helgen with the Player Character component at the start of the game. Since this character is a humanoid, it shares most of the same actions as the Player Character. This character represents the Stormcloak side of the rebellion taking place in Skyrim.

Hadvarl
Hadvarl is a non-player-controlled humanoid character in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. This character is introduced to the Player Character prior to the Character Creator sequence in Segment 1 of the tutorial. This character represents the Imperial side of the rebellion taking place in Skyrim.
Ulfric Stormcloak
Ulfric Stormcloak is a non-player-controlled humanoid character in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. This character is the leader of the rebellion taking place in Skyrim. His relationship to Ralof becomes apparent after the tutorial.

Lokir the Horse thief
Lokir, the Horse thief is a non-player-controlled humanoid character in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. This character is introduced to the Player Character during the cart-ride into Helgen during the introductory tutorial. His primary function is to relay information to the player about the games social structure. During his conversation, he mentions the religious beliefs of Skyrim’s inhabitants, speaks of a place called Rorikstead, informs us that horse-thievery is illegal and that the rebel Stormcloaks aren’t necessarily viewed with positivity in the public’s eyes.

Alduin
Alduin is a non-player-controlled black dragon and the main antagonist in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. During the tutorial, Alduin attacks the town of Helgen, forcing a conflict between the Player Character and himself.

Thalmor Elf
The Thalmor faction of elves play an important part in the politics of Skyrim which becomes evident during the later stages of the game. For the tutorial, they are merely present during the very beginning as the carts roll through the gates of the town.

General Tullius
General Tullius is a non-player-controlled humanoid character in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. While this character has a more impactful role during the tutorial, his main purpose becomes more apparent during the later stages of the game, as he is a prominent political figure in Skyrim.

Bear
Bears are non-player-controlled animal characters in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. The Player Character must either sneak past or attack a bear in the cave system beneath Helgen to complete the tutorial.

Frostbite Spider
Frostbite Spiders are a type of non-player-controlled animal characters in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. These enemies are in the tunnels beneath Helgen, guarding Web Sacs. This enemy is vulnerable to fire attacks, and can attack from range with a poison spit.

Melee Weaponry
Melee weaponry function much the same way no matter what weapon is equipped. The player may attack by tapping the left-mouse-button or holding it down for a power attack. Different weapons have different attributes governing attack damage, weapon speed and stamina consumption.

Message Variation 1
This component serves as a component inherent to the tutorial in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. It is part of a system of messages and situations meant to educate the player in the
fundamental controls of the game. There are 9 different messages of this variation in the tutorial, each pertaining to a specific part in the controls of the game.

Message Variation 2
This component serves as an instructor to the player. It is a variation of a message that can appear at any point during the game, provided specific prerequisites are met. For example, in the tutorial there is a locked cage with a spell-book, a few coins, a dead body wearing the Novice Robes and the Novice Hood, as well as a potion inside. To open the cage, the player must use a lock pick to pick the lock. Upon interacting with the lock, one of these messages will appear to instruct the player in how to pick the lock.

This variation of message is not used to explain fundamental controls of the game, but rather more complex and specific concepts pertaining to the game.

Web-Sac Room
This room is the home of the Frostbite Spiders in the tunnels beneath Helgen. In this room, there are web-sacs hanging from the ceiling. These web-sacs can be shot down using arrows or spells, or brought down with a melee-strike. They contain loot.

The reason this room is mentioned is because an observant player will be instructed in the use of physics based meshes in this room. By interacting with the Web-Sacs, they will fall and the player will be rewarded for taking the time to bring them down.

Jump-Tower in Helgen
The Jump-Tower serves the same purpose as the Web-Sac room, though in a more explicit manner. This tower is where the player learns to jump with the help of Ralof the Stormcloak as well as a system message telling the player to “Press [SPACE] to jump.”

The player must jump between a gap in the tower wall and the second story of an adjacent building. Should the player fall, they must climb the tower and attempt again.

Iron Arrow
A projectile used for shooting. The player receives this from either Hadvarl or Ralof, depending on which character was chosen during the branching path in the tutorial for The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. It is used with a bow.

Hide Shield
A weak shield made of hide. This is looted in the imperial barracks if the player chose to follow Hadvarl in the tutorial for The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim.

Long Bow
A ranged weapon. This weapon is received by Either Hadvarl or Ralof depending on which character was chosen during the branching path in the tutorial for The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. This bow is given to the player during the encounter with the bear in the tunnels beneath Helgen. The player must choose to either engage the bear or to sneak past it. Hadvarl or Ralof gives the Player Character this bow to help them understand the concepts of critical hits from stealth.
Flames
This is a spell that all races start the game with, and can be used as soon as the Player
Characters hands are freed at the start of Segment 3 in the tutorial. This spell causes fire to
shoot in streams from the hand in which this spell is equipped.

Sparks
This is a spell that one of the races start the game with, and can be used as soon as the Player
Characters hands are freed at the start of Segment 3 in the tutorial and have picked up the
spell-book that teaches this spell. This spell causes lightning arcs to stream from the hand in
which this spell is equipped.

Heal
This is a spell that all races start the game with, and can be used as soon as the Player
Characters hands are freed at the start of Segment 3 in the tutorial. This spell causes the
player to be healed by 10 points per second.

Armour
Armor in Skyrim, much like Melee Weaponry, shares a lot of behaviour with each other. The
player is forced to equip an armour set during the tutorial but apart from this instance there’s
no single piece of armour that have relevancy to the games tutorial. Different armour pieces
will have different attributes and passive effects.

Helgen Keep Key
Key looted during segment 3 of the tutorial in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. This key allows
the player character to unlock certain doors in the keep in the town of Helgen.

Coin / Gold
The currency in Skyrim. These coins can be found in most places in Skyrim, both as an asset
in the game-world, or as a value to be looted from corpses or by pick-pocketing.

Potion of Minor Healing
A consumable item that restores a portion of the player’s health.

Potion of Minor Magicka
A consumable item that restores a portion of the player’s Magicka.

Potion of Minor Stamina
A consumable item that restores a portion of the player’s Stamina.

Lockpick
Used to pick locks in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. Can be looted in segment 3 of the tutorial,
and is required to open a cell in the tunnels beneath Helgen that contains the Novice Hood,
Novice Robes, 29 gold Coins, 2 Potions of Minor Magicka as well as a spell-tome which
teaches the player the spell Sparks.

Lock
Locks are components used in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim to lock players out of rooms. The
Player Component has access to player-progression skill-trees within which the player can
invest points into lock-picking. Locks can be forced open with this skill.
The lock referenced here is used to introduce players to the lock-picking skill, as it is attached to a cell within which the player can find various valuable items. Upon interacting with the lock, the player is introduced to a message which describes how the skill functions in terms of gameplay.

**Lever**
This lever sits in front of a fall-bridge in the tunnels beneath the town Helgen in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. It is used to create a bridge over a gap that the player character would otherwise fall into. It introduces the player to a feature that spans the length of the game; buttons, levers and chain-levers are used to open doors, raise or lower gates or bridges, and several other uses.

**Chain Lever**
This lever sits in front of several doors in the keep in the town Helgen in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. It is used to open those doors.

It introduces the player to a feature that spans the length of the game; buttons, levers and chain-levers are used to open doors, raise or lower gates or bridges, and several other uses.

**Door(s)**
Doors are components that can be opened and closed in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim.

**Oil**
Oil can be lit on fire to deal damage to enemies. There is a puddle of oil in the tunnels beneath Helgen that introduces the player to the concepts of hazardous materials and traps in the game world.

**Aesthetic Meshes**
Aesthetic meshes are components that the player can interact with, but they have little relevancy for this analysis for the thesis. These components can be things like spoons, forks, chairs, barrels, cabinets, wicker baskets, etc. They serve the purpose of selling the setting of Skyrim as a place that could exist, and in the later stages of the game, these components might be more relevant.

**Helgen**
Helgen is the village that the player is carted to for execution at the start of the game. It changes during segment 2 of the tutorial, when Alduin attacks to allow for a more linear level progression.

The high number of components in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim tie directly into the games physics based engine. By allowing players to loot and stock their inventory with what they so choose, the game conditions the player towards a habit of hoarding. This comes in useful later in the games gameplay, however serves little purpose for the tutorial.
**Player Actions**

Some Player Action in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim is contextualized and relies on Skyrmis menu system to function, though this is not true in all cases. All player actions originate from the Player Character component and can be performed at any time, provided the right prerequisites are met.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Prerequisite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Run</strong></td>
<td>Player Component moves in the desired direction.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sprint</strong></td>
<td>Player Component moves in the desired direction at a faster pace.</td>
<td>Must hold sprint key. The sprint key can be assigned to any key on the keyboard using the menu system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Walk</strong></td>
<td>Player Component moves in the desired direction at a slower pace.</td>
<td>Must hold walk key. The walk key can be assigned to any key on the keyboard using the menu system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jump</strong></td>
<td>Player Component performs a jump.</td>
<td>Must not be falling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aim</strong></td>
<td>Player Component aims using a ranged weapon.</td>
<td>Must have ranged weapon equipped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crouch</strong></td>
<td>Player Component crouches in place.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sneak</strong></td>
<td>Player Component moves while crouching, enemies have less chance to detect the player.</td>
<td>Must be crouching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Left Hand action</strong></td>
<td>Player Component performs action with left hand.</td>
<td>Contextual Player Action. May be performed at any time with differing results depending on equipped weaponry. Melee weapons/unarmed will cause the Player Character component to perform a strike animation. With spells equipped, the Player Character component will use the equipped spell, and with bows and crossbows, the Player Component will shoot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Right Hand action</strong></td>
<td>Player Component performs action with left hand.</td>
<td>Contextual Player Action. See cell above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interact</strong></td>
<td>Player Component interacts with relative item.</td>
<td>Contextual Player Action. Interact will cause the Player Component to perform an action that is relevant to the component the player is attempting to interact with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Menu Interaction</strong></td>
<td>Player interacts with menu. The menu system is navigated using the W,A,S,D-</td>
<td>Player must be in menu.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Player Actions are shared with humanoids as well as some creatures in the game-world. Humanoids can use the same weaponry and equipment as the player, and therefore relies on the same animations and locomotive systems to move them in the game world. Skyrim heavily relies on its menu-system to change behaviours of the Player Component. By equipping different weaponry, the behaviour of the Right-/Left-Hand Action changes dramatically. For example, changing your weaponry from an Iron Sword to the spell Flames changes the performed action from a strike to a stream of flames. This means that equipping new items and weaponry changes how the player plays the game. Menus also pause the game while the player navigates them, meaning that active changes in player equipment during combat is encouraged.

Most challenges can be completed and overcome using any weaponry or gear, as the main source of a character’s general power is based on the value of their current level. Enemies are designed to scale to always provide a challenge to the player.

Environment

Helgen itself (the tutorial area) is designed to create specific challenges for the player as the tutorial plays out. As the carts carrying the rebels enter the town, this is what it looks like:

![Figure 17, the town of Helgen prior to Alduin's attack in The Elder Scroll V: Skyrim](image)

Players enter the town through the gate on the right side of the image and are brought by the carts to the green marker, where the execution takes place. As the players are brought to the execution block, Alduin (The games antagonist) lands on the middle tower (marked in yellow). The player character is thrown to the ground during the commotion, and during this time when the camera faces the ground, there’s a drastic change in the area as Alduin begins his attack.
This is what Helgen looks like as the player is given control of their character when they get up off the ground just after Alduin attacks the town:

![Figure 18, depicting the changes to the town Helgen after Alduin's attack in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Players Path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Destroyed/inaccessible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>Players goal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The player begins in front of the central tower, where they fell to the ground. As they get up, Ralof tells the player to follow him into the tower. Since all other paths out of the plaza are blocked off with rubble, the player has no choice but to follow Ralof. As the player climbs the tower, a hole in the tower-wall is created by Alduin. This results in the player leaping out of the hole into the second floor of the adjacent building. The player then makes their way out of the building, and crosses the street to the wall. Making their way through the burnt down houses, the player finds themselves at the main gate into the town, and must make 2 left turns to get to the keep plaza, and eventually enter the keep. The obstacles and rubble in the player’s path serve as navigational challenges for the player. The “goal” (the keep) can be seen from where the player first gains control of their character, and the tutorial characters instruct the player in how to get there. It creates a social dynamic of the player listening to what the game is saying, and responding to the information that is being given.

This change in environment is an efficient method to introduce simple challenges that are tied to specific control-related mechanics that the player must understand. By ensuring that the path forward is linear, the developers have made sure that the player must complete a challenge before moving forwards, thereby ensuring that a player has understood one piece of instruction before being introduced to another.
As the player nears the keep and Ralof reappears before the player, the player has to make a choice. The choice consists of two options, to either follow Hadvarl into the keep through one entrance, or to follow Ralof into the keep through another. Hadvarl and Ralof represent two different sides of the same conflict: the rebellion in Skyrim from the Nords against the Imperials. The difference is marginal in terms of the tutorial. Should the player follow Ralof (the rebel Stormcloak) they will enter the keep into a circular room where the player must interact with another NPC’s body, loot their equipment and equip it. Upon completing this task, Ralof tells the player that there are Imperials approaching from a connecting corridor and that the player needs to hide. The Imperials step into the room, the player and Ralof ambush them, and from the circular room they continue into the tunnels beneath Helgen.

Should the player choose Hadvarl, the player will enter a barracks area in the keep. Here, the player must interact with a chest that contains a set of imperial light armour. It must be looted and equipped before the player may continue. Hadvarl pulls on a chain that opens up the path which leads into the circular room where the player would have been had they chosen to go with Ralof. There’s an ambush of 2 Stormcloaks waiting here that the player must defeat. After this, the player and Hadvarl head into the tunnels beneath Helgen.

The difference in terms of the tutorial is minor, but plays a bigger part in the rest of the game, as the characters will remember the player’s choice when the player hits the point in the game where the rebellion takes place. Due to the small impact in the tutorial, the choice made was to follow Hadvarl. No second playthrough of the alternate path was made for this thesis, however the researchers prior experience covers this part of the tutorial.
**Design Principles**

These design principles can be found in the tutorial for The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim.

**Implicit and explicit teaching**

The tutorial in the game relies on a mixture of implicit and explicit teaching. This means that as the game-world in encouraging the player to execute a specific sequence of actions, the game system tells the player how to execute that action. This is true specifically for the tutorial messages that the game shows the player. The jump-tower is a good example of this. As the player needs to learn how to jump, the character Ralof asks that the player character jump through a hole in the wall to an adjacent building. At the same time, a message appears on the screen from the game system, informing the player to “Press [SPACE] to jump.”

During segment 1 and 2 of the tutorial, the player characters’ hands are bound. This means that the player cannot interact with anything in the game-world. As the player enters segment 3, their hands are freed. This is done through implicit narration, as the characters Hadvarl or Ralof will suggest cutting the bonds. The intensity of segment 2 of the tutorial, and the relative calm of entering the keep and segment 3, means that the freeing of the hands allows the player more time to explore the areas and loot what they need. This mentality of scavenging, or even hoarding, is beneficial to the player, as the number of variations of different resources is high, and the impact of using resources in the game is proportionately high. Picking up items becomes second nature, since they directly impact the player’s success in the game.

The Web-Sac Room is an example of more implicit teaching, which rewards the observant player. This room is filled with Frostbite Spiders of varying size that attack the player. A player experimenting with the spell Flames will notice that spiders are vulnerable to fire based damage. This imparts the knowledge (implicitly) that there are different types of damage, and that enemies may be vulnerable to specific types of damage. Another thing this room teaches the player is physics-based gameplay. The roof in this room is covered in webs, and from these webs hang Web-Sacs. Web-Sacs are containers for loot of varying value, and they must be shot down using a ranged weapon. Since the game is a physics-based simulation, knowing that objects will interact with the player using the law of physics becomes useful.
**Message variations**

There are two variations of messages in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and they teach the player different things. Variation one will appear as a small message in the middle of the screen to impart knowledge that is relevant to the fundamental player-actions and movement in the game. Variation two will, similarly, appear as a message in the screen, but is stylised as a large box with text inside. These messages teach the player more complex concepts that require more in-depth description. These messages are triggered to appear based on more specific events. During the tutorial playthrough, three of these messages appeared, however these messages will appear at any point during the game when a message specific trigger has been activated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message describes</th>
<th>Message trigger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stamina resource functionality.</td>
<td>Stamina resource value reaches 0.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why the player cannot open a door.</td>
<td>Player interacts with barricaded door.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How lock-picking works.</td>
<td>Player interacts with a locked lock.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This second variation of message will continue to instruct players when they trigger the messages to appear outside of the tutorial.

**Escort-quests**

The tutorial itself is based on a series of escort quests. During segment 1, the player is escorted into the town Helgen. During segment 2, the player escorts Ralof and Hadvarl to the keep. During segment 3, the player escorts Hadvarl or Ralof through the keep and through the tunnels beneath Helgen.

While this type of escorting works well for the tutorial, and for the imparting of knowledge by conversation with these characters, the game suffers for this. Later in the game, exploration becomes a crucial point of interest as the game system encourages an explorative behaviour heavily in the combination of looting/hoarding and exploring to find more loot. None of this explorative behaviour is encouraged in the tutorial, due to it being very linear, and requiring that the player stay within a certain range to the characters in the tutorial. The paths shown in figures 4 and 5 depict a mandatory route (coloured red) that the player must take through the area. The only choice of path that the player can make is to follow Hadvarl into the keep, or to follow Ralof into the keep. This choice moves the player into one room of two rooms that are adjacent to each-other.
Thoughts, Conclusion

While Skyrims tutorial interestingly imparts knowledge to the player using a message system like that of Dark Souls 3, their mixture of using implicit and explicit teaching creates an experience that feels intuitive to the player and manages to relay gameplay information well. The first minutes of any game sets the tone for a new player by providing a clear reason as to why the players choices matter, and the context of the setting that they are in. Coming into The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim as a new player, however, can be daunting, as the amount of information that is required to understand the political and social scene of the game is staggering.

The prior experience that the researcher has had with this title reveals that at its core, Skyrim is a game about exploration. Caves, villages, mountains, dungeons and ancient ruins dot the land and it’s up to the player if they want to visit these places or not, but the world is a sandbox for discovery. By venturing to these places, new narratives present themselves and the players hunt for more information and better equipment becomes the core of what drives the player forward. By limiting the player actions in the first minutes of the game, Skyrim attempts to set the context of the world and the political and social structures through conversation with other characters as the Player Character is forced to sit, locked to only using the camera to look around. The game is attempting to tell the player their role and the situation that the game is about. The conversation mentions the following topics:

- Imperial
- Stormcloak
- Hammerfell
- Nord
- Kynareth
- Dibella
- Ulfric Stormcloak
- Divines
- Akatosh
- General Tullius
- Sovngard
- Thalmor
- Rorikstead
- Helgen

While it is not impossible to understand the general gist of these concepts, many of the mentions in the list above are locations in the game world that the player has no connection to, many of them are the names of the “divines” which is a system of religious belief in the Elder Scrolls series. These mentions are new to a new player, and confusion can arise as they are never explained. This, in conjunction with limited player expression during the tutorial makes the player feel less important than they should, and patronized, as they are not allowed to perform the way they want to.

The tutorial manages to teach the player how to play the game effectively through the clever use of linear level design, well placed items that the player can interact with, explaining movements mechanics and a deeper understanding of specific systems. However due to the
delivery of the setting and context, the tutorial suffers from an excessive amount of information that is being delivered to the player in a way that isn’t compelling. Alduin is introduced as the antagonist, but the player has no obvious connection to him. The divines are introduced as an important aspect of the ordinary people’s life, but the player has no idea what the divines are, who they are or why they matter. The rebellion in Skyrim is introduced as the current difficult political situation, however Ralof explains that the player character was attempting to leave the country precisely because of this unstable situation, yet is expected to choose to support one or the other during the tutorial. The flow is interrupted in the tutorial by the character creator, which happens just before the Player Character is led to the execution block, which indicates that the character you are creating is not going to be killed. The exclusion of an understanding of the player-based progression systems during the tutorial matters little, as the second variation of messages will activate when the player levels up, thereby explaining how a character’s power increases throughout the game. However, a mention of these systems would serve a new player well during the tutorial.

By the end of this tutorial, the player will have a good understanding of the core loop that the game wants the player to follow. However, the immersion and the context of the game is going to be somewhat confusing until a couple of hours into the game.
13. Appendix 3, Dark Souls 3.

For the thesis, only part of the game is being examined. Specifically: from when the first cutscene of the game beings playing until the completion of the tutorials boss-fight, Iudex Gundyr.

Character

Dark Souls 3 is a game that allows the player to customize their own character’s appearance and starting values. We have elected not to do this and instead we’ll choose a pre-existing template among ten possible to start the game with. The template we have chosen is known as the “Knight”-class. Since the character creation takes place outside of the tutorial and the players choices in the character creation has minimal impact on the gameplay, we won’t go into too much detail regarding this feature. One thing worth mentioning however, is the burial gift. The burial gift is exactly what it sounds like. It is a gift that the players character was buried with, and (because the player’s character is resurrected at the beginning of the game) it is an item that the player may choose to start the game with. There are many to choose from in the character creator, and they all affect the game. For simplicities sake, we will opt for the burial gift called “Life Ring” as it increases our character’s health slightly.

The character creator is a way for the player to customize their appearance in the game-world, but it does not change their character’s inherent narrative purpose in the game. No matter the choices in the character creator, the player character will always be “Unkindled” and will have the same goals through the game.
**Tutorial Structure**

The structure of this tutorial is designed to offer the player some choice, as well as cater to both veterans of the game/game series and new players being introduced to the universe. Veteran players will find little need to take part in the tutorial-messages, and can complete the tutorial at a faster pace because of this. New players will find themselves exploring the areas extensively in search for new information as well as useful items. It is built in a way that scales the difficulty from part 1 into part 2 and eventually part 3 of the tutorial, which serves as a test for the player.

*Figure 19, The Cemetary of Ash from Dark Souls 3.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset</th>
<th>Colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enemies</td>
<td>Orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items</td>
<td>Light Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iudex Gundyr</td>
<td>Purple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonfires</td>
<td>Dark Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Lizard</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The player starts on the red marker at the bottom of the figure 13 and (for our purposes in the analysis) ends on the green marker on the far left.

The player is free to move and do as they want within the area, with the exception of defeating Iudex Gundyr. This is the only requirement for moving forwards in the game at this point. The area is split into 3 smaller segments. Each segment introduces a new concept of terrain to the player. The first segment is relatively flat, and contains crumbling architecture that obscures the view of the player from certain angles. Enemies here consists of the standard Grave Warden enemy as well as an optional monster known as a Ravenous Crystal Lizard.
The second segment introduces more verticality to the player. There’s a hidden, sloped pathway along the cliffside, as well as an item that is only reachable by jumping a gap in the terrain. Plunging attacks are introduced here as well. The player can not move out of bounds, as this results in a fall and eventually death. Death causes the Player Component to be reset at the start of the area, the red mark on the map above. The third segment of the tutorial houses the boss-fight against Iudex Gundyr. This is a flat, circular area with a crumbled wall along one side where the player can fall to their death. Aesthetically, the area is very bleak. The colours seem to have been washed out of everything. The presence of tombstones and caskets are prevalent everywhere. The wandering undead in combination with the numerous tombstones gives us a few hints about the problems affecting this world and the crumbling ruins hints towards a better time.

Goals

The introductory cinematic for Dark Souls 3 is decidedly vague as it lacks a lot of context that you would expect from a traditional RPG. It is only mentioned here since the introductory cinematic is the only mention of a goal that the player has in the game. There are a few phrases that hints towards a narrative in the cinematic.

“The fire fades, and the lords go without thrones.”

“Only in truth, the lords will abandon their thrones and the unkindled will rise.”

This is mentioned as a problem, something that must be corrected. In the context of the previous two instalments of the games series, this problem is clarified a bit. It also insinuates that we, as the player are the “Unkindled”, as we rise and exit a casket during the first cutscene of the game.

During the first cutscene of the game, we’re introduced to a bleak landscape (a graveyard) and a tree standing over an opened casket. We see our character climb out, stand up and look towards the path forwards. In terms of gameplay goals during the tutorial, the player is given one. To advance to the next area, the player must defeat Iudex Gundyr. However, this is implied and is never explicitly stated. Very little is said in terms of narrative goals, or the player’s goals in relation to the games narrative structure. What is explained is done so during the games introductory cinematic. In terms of narrative structure within the tutorial, to reach and open the door at the end of the tutorial, only 3 events need to happen.

1. The player must awaken from the first cutscene.
2. The player must defeat Iudex Gundyr.
3. The player must interact with the door.

How the player gets there, or what they do during the journey is entirely up to them and will vary from player to player depending on player choice.
Components
These are the components found in the tutorial for Dark Souls 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Component Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Player Character</td>
<td>Run, Sprint, jump, move camera, roll, rolling attack, backstep, light attack, heavy attack, plunging attack, Use Item, Interact, Raise Shield, Two Hand Main-hand/off-hand, Parry, Riposte, Swap Main-hand/off-hand, Cycle item, Weapon Art.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grave Warden</td>
<td>Run, Sprint, Light Attack, Heavy Attack, Weapon Art, Use Item, Raise Shield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messages</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonfires</td>
<td>Restore Health, Restore Estus, Reset Enemies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iudex Gundyr</td>
<td>Run, Sprint, Light Attack, Heavy Attack, Weapon Art, Grab, Transform, Leap Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Souls</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood Stains</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fog Wall</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combat System</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the Player Character component contains several other components, we won’t mention them here as when we touch these components in the tutorial, we do so succinctly from the game-space and not a menu. There are three types of different enemies in the tutorial. The first is the standard Grave Warden enemy. This enemy has slight variations between entities. For example, one Grave Warden might use a spear and a broken buckler, while another uses a crossbow from range. The second enemy is Iudex Gundyr, which is the boss-monster of the tutorial. Due to his unique attack patterns and tailored animations that differentiate from the other enemies, he will be recognized as a separate component. The same reasoning applies to the enemy Ravenous Crystal Lizard, as its attack patterns and animations are unique.

The game system keeps track of several hidden triggers in the game world, such as music triggers, boss-fight triggers, invasion triggers and others that we never experience in the tutorial as well as statistical values determining a character’s overall power that the player may choose to raise while levelling up.
Component Descriptions
There is a clear distinction between components and the world in Dark Souls 3. It becomes clear after relatively little time spent playing this game which assets in the world can be interacted with and which assets are purely aesthetical.

Player Character
The player character is a bipedal humanoid. This component contains several other components that we won’t go into too much detail over. For example, some of the contained components are things like weaponry, armour pieces (legs, head, arms, chest,) and usable items. The contained components vary from character to character depending on starting class and burial gift, as well as the player’s choice in equipment.

3 main resources govern the player component. Health, Faith and Stamina.

- **Health**
  - When *Health* reaches 0, the player component dies, is punished and reset. *Health* is diminished by receiving attacks.

- **Stamina**
  - When *Stamina* is reduced to 0, it begins to regenerate after an interval. *Stamina* is diminished by performing certain player actions. Rolling, Backstepping, Sprinting, Light Attacks and Heavy Attacks are examples of these.

- **Faith**
  - When *Faith* Points is reduced to 0, the player may no longer use *Faith*-based skills and attacks, such as the Weapon Art or a spell.

Grave Warden
The Grave Warden is the first enemy that the player encounters in the game. It is a common enemy that is (like the player component) a bipedal humanoid that can perform most of the same actions as the player component in terms of combat. Grave Wardens all wear black cloaks, though their weaponry may differ. Some wear broken short-swords while others are equipped with spears and shields, and some have crossbows.

Messages
Messages are small, few-worded lines of text left in the player’s game-world by the developers or by other players. The messages are limited and not anything may be said with them as words must be chosen from pre-determined categories of lists containing developer-approved words. In the tutorial area, only the developer’s messages are visible. The messages left by developers are different from the ones left by players in the regard that Developer Messages can contain any phrases or words that the developers wish.

Bonfires
Bonfires serve as checkpoints in Dark Souls 3. The player action *Interact* must be utilized to “light” bonfires, thereby activating them for future use. *Interacting* with a bonfire restores all the health points to the player, and refills their Estus Flask (a component inherent to the Player Character component), an item that restores a set portion of the player’s health when used. Upon Player Component death, the Player Component will be returned to the bonfire that the Player Component last “rested” at.
Souls
Souls is Dark Souls answer to Experience Points, and they may be viewed as the conventional experience points of RPG’s with a twist. As the player defeats enemies in the world, they accumulate Souls. Souls may be spent for equipment, items and levels. Dying causes the player to drop their souls on the location that they died. They can be reclaimed by returning to the point of death, finding the souls (visible in a glowing green colour) and Interacting with them.

Pick-Ups
In the broad category of the entirety of the game, this could mean any item located in the game world that the player can “interact” with and receive an item for doing so. There’s also a factor of randomization when it comes to enemies, as they may drop armour, weaponry or other items that they have equipped or that are in their loot-table.

In the tutorial however, pick-ups are limited to a few items. The reason for the grouping of these items is that there are only 6 items that can be picked up in the tutorial, and they behave the same way (as pick-ups), before the player receives the item in question. As we are never taught how to equip other items in the tutorial, they remain unused with the exception of the Ashen Estus Flask, as it is automatically equipped. The items in question are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashen Estus Flask</td>
<td>When used, this item restores the player’s faith-points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titanite Scale</td>
<td>This is a material used for upgrading weapons later in the game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Souls of an Unkown Traveler</td>
<td>When used, gives the player a set amount of souls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul of a Deserted Corpse</td>
<td>When used, gives the player a set amount of souls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chimes</td>
<td>This is an item that can be dropped by Grave Wardens. It’s an item that the player can equip and use as a catalyst for spellcasting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firebombs</td>
<td>These, when equipped, can be “used” to throw them as a projectile that deals damage in an area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Iudex Gundyr
Iudex Gundyr is the tutorial-areas boss-fight and serves as a final test before the player reaches the HUB-world. He has wide sweeping attacks for catching the player, straight thrusting attacks with longer reach, leaps that cause him to crash into the ground to deal area damage, a grab attack and a second phase which activates when Gundyr’s health has been brought down to about half its starting value.

During Iudex Gundyr’s first phase, he will constantly move towards the player and activate one of his move-sets to inflict damage to the player. These are activated based on certain criteria. Gundyr is more prone to use sweeping attacks if the player is standing to his side or behind him, and more prone to use thrusting or leap attacks if the player is in front of him, or out of his reach.
During Gundyr’s second phase, a black mass known as the Pus of Man sprouts from his back and envelops him partly. It gives Gundyr 3 new attacks that have a bigger area of effect, as well as more damage. As well as the 3 new attacks, the Pus of Man-enveloped Gundyr's normal attacks are modified for bigger hit-detection areas and deal more damage. Part of the difficulty in this transformation lies in its sheer size. During the first phase, Gundyr’s size ratio to the arena you fight him with allows the player to get distance from Gundyr and observe him. During the second phase, Gundyr's bigger size and more aggressive mentality makes arena feel smaller, as Gundyr forces himself closer to the player.

Door
The door refers to a specific door in the tutorial that the player can interact with. It is in the same room as you fight in with Iudex Gundyr, and can only be opened after he has been defeated. The reason we mention this component is because it serves as the finishing line for our analysis of the tutorial.

Area
There are a lot of aesthetic components contained within the area where the tutorial takes place. Dark Souls 3 is constantly trying to convince the player of the games narrative and location, and this is reflected in the aesthetics of the environment. To mention a few, some of the components are: Tombstones, trees, rock-formations and terrain elevation. The individual components have two primary purposes, affording support to the player (that is, giving the player something to stand on) and providing the desired aesthetic to the player. What that aesthetic is will be discussed later in the paper.

Blood Stains
Blood stains marks spots in the world where other players have died. By interacting with a blood stain, the player may witness the last moments before another player’s death. The other players character appears in the player’s world as a red ghost and re-enacts the last moments before death. This can give the player information about challenges in the area. Upon dying, the player character also leaves a blood-stain behind for other players.

Ravenous Crystal Lizard
This component is an optional enemy that the player may fight in the first segment of the tutorial. It awards a much higher amount of souls than the Grave Warden component and deals proportionately more damage, and is accompanied with bigger and more varied attacks. Upon death, this component drop a “Titanite Scale” to the player, a material used for upgrading weapons.

Fog Wall
The Fog Wall is a component used in Dark Souls 3 for two purposes, and depending on the purpose it functions slightly differently. In some cases (notably in the HUB-World named Firelink Shrine) the fog wall is used as a conventional “loading screen” to block the players access to an area before it has fully loaded into the game. Aesthetically, it looks like a thick waterfall of fog that the player cannot see through. The other purpose of this wall is to prevent players from leaving certain areas. In the tutorial, a fog wall arises when the player engages the boss-monster Iudex Gundyr which prevents the player from leaving the area before the player has either defeated Gundyr or died.
The combat system of Dark Souls 3 consists of multiple player actions. This system is at the core of the gameplay of Dark Souls 3, so while there are specific Player Actions that relates to the combat system explicitly (such as light attacks), Player Actions such as *Interact* (which can be used to call elevators for example) also have their uses during specific instances of player versus player combat to act out strategies. Listed below are the more common combat-oriented Player Actions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Run</td>
<td>Standard player movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprint</td>
<td>Player moves faster, uses stamina resource.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backstep</td>
<td>Player component jumps backwards, uses stamina resource.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Item</td>
<td>An item equipped in the player’s item-slots is used if it is selected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll</td>
<td>The player character rolls in the desired direction. The player gains invincibility during specific frames in this animation. These frames are called I-Frames. Uses stamina resource.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolling Attacks</td>
<td>The player attacks after a roll, uses stamina resource.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Attacks</td>
<td>Standard attack, uses stamina resource.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slow attack that deals more damage, uses stamina resource.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Attacks</td>
<td>Varies depending on weapon. Consumes Faith-points (mana).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miracles</td>
<td>A class of spell, consumes Faith-points (mana).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorceries</td>
<td>A class of spell, consumes Faith-points (mana).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyromancies</td>
<td>A class of spell, consumes Faith-points (mana).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of these actions relate to each other to form strategies and combat concepts such as “Spacing” or “Aggressive Shield Play”. Dark Souls 3’s combat system is designed in a way that encourages that the player learns the different available “moves” of any given enemy, so that the player will be able to “read” when an enemy makes a mistake and take advantage of that.
Player Actions
While some player action is contextualized in Dark Souls 3, most player actions are not. They all originate from the Player Component. That is to say that outside of the medium of the player avatar, there is no way to influence the game. Player Actions can be performed at any time, if the pre-requisites are met. This systemic design allows the construction of strategies or combos.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player Component Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Prerequisite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Run</td>
<td>Player Component moves in a direction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprint</td>
<td>Player Component moves faster.</td>
<td>Must be running.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumes Stamina.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jump</td>
<td>Player Component jumps forward.</td>
<td>Must be sprinting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move Camera</td>
<td>Player repositions camera</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll</td>
<td>Player Component rolls in the desired direction.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumes Stamina.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolling Attack</td>
<td>Player Component performs a Rolling Attack.</td>
<td>Must be moving to perform roll.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Must have weapon equipped and selected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backstep</td>
<td>Player Component jumps backwards.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumes Stamina.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Attack</td>
<td>Player Component performs an attack.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumes Stamina.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Attack</td>
<td>Player Component performs attack that</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>has slower animation, deals more damage.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumes Stamina.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plunging Attack</td>
<td>Player Component performs plunging attack.</td>
<td>Must be falling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Item</td>
<td>Player Component uses item.</td>
<td>Must have item equipped and selected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interact</td>
<td>Player Component interacts with specific component.</td>
<td>Contextual Player Action. May only be performed in relation to other components while the Player Component is within range of a separate component that can be interacted with. This includes picking up useful items, pulling a lever or opening doors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise Shield</td>
<td>Player Component raises shield.</td>
<td>Must have shield equipped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Hand Main-hand/Off-hand</td>
<td>Player Component equips main-hand or off-hand</td>
<td>Must have main-hand or off-hand equipment equipped and selected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>equipment in two hands.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parry</td>
<td>Player Component parries with shield.</td>
<td>Must have shield equipped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riposte</td>
<td>Player Component performs a riposte after a</td>
<td>Only available after successful parry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>successful parry.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swap Main-hand/Off-hand</td>
<td>Player Component cycles equipment in main-hand/off-hand.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle Item</td>
<td>Cycles usable items.</td>
<td>Must have items equipped.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dark Souls 3 has a dynamic player action system in place to manage the variations of player actions available. Certain items will give players new actions to their repertoire. As the knight-class, part of the template determines that our class starts with a sword and a shield. These equipment-items modify the weapon art of the player component. An item received later at the game, such as a Curved Sword, might change other Player Actions of the Player Component, such as the Kick, or (in the case of the Pyromancy Glove) can give players access to new libraries of attacks. Most player actions can also be performed by humanoid, bipedal enemies. Usually accompanied with their own unique animations. For example, Grave Wardens with bucklers can raise them to protect themselves, use light or heavy attacks, use items, run and sprint. The complexity in this game stems from the player knowing which Player Actions they have access to and choosing the right one in the current situation.

Environment
The cemetary of ash is the environment that facilitates the tutorial of Dark Souls 3. It is a bleak space beneath the towering Lothric Castle, hidden amidst the Consumed Kings Garden and the High Wall of Lothric, it as an area that has served as a cemetery for a long time. In the game-world, normal humans have been inflicted with a curse of undeath, which stops them from truly dying. This has created a problem relating to death in the games universe. The characters of the game are struggling to find new places to bury the newly dead, as they rise and die again. The many tombstones in the tutorial area are evidence of this. At the same time the world itself is crumbling, having been subjected to abuse as “Gods” in the game-world have toyed and corrupted the natural order of time and space in the game. The many items and spells that are available narrate events or relay information about an era where the world was not falling apart and the cities and its people were happy and thriving.

It is a dying world that the player is introduced to, and their quest is to restore the world to its natural order. The area is built to suit the design necessary for the games tutorial, but the implicit narrative of the game has been weaved through the aesthetic meshes and the thematization of the entire game, including the tutorial, in a way that makes discovery fun, while also retaining an element of hazard to the player.

Design Principles
Systemic design
Dark Souls 3 relies heavily on a systemic cooperation between systems to fill the gameplay. The movement system that propels the character, the root-motion based animation system, and the attack system with its numerous attacks and weapon arts all intermingle to create a combat system that is diverse enough that no fight with a tough enemy will be the same. The player is expected to make a choice during a fight that is strategically sound based on the information that the game supplies the player with. The game expects the player to learn from mistakes which is evident in the harsh conditions for death and take advantage of openings during the fight. The result is a choice-driven systemic combat that becomes easy to analyse
as you play the game. It is not uncommon for the player to die several times to a new type of enemy as the player learns the openings and weaknesses of that particular enemy so that the player is better equipped with new strategies the next time the player faces the enemy.

This choice of design works well for Dark Souls as it enhances the aesthetic and the explorative mindset, two factors that the game wants the player to cultivate. We see this early in the tutorial, as explained in the next principle.

Exploration
One of the principles that govern Dark Souls 3 is its encouragement for players to explore. There are 4 optional paths to take in the tutorial, and they all have some form of reward for taking them. In segment 1 of the tutorial, there are 2 optional areas that the player has access to. One of them leads to a consumable item. The other is where the player may face the Ravenous Crystal Lizard. A message that reads “Turn back” is in front of the path leading to this monster, placed there by the developers. While this does not encourage the player to head down the path, another one of the core principles of design for the tutorial is for the player’s willingness to overcome great challenge. This message could be interpreted as a taunt to the player, and players successful in defeating the monster on this path will undoubtedly feel a sense of accomplishment. In segment 2 there are 2 items placed on optional paths to take. This type of positive reinforcement to the explorative nature of the players who find these items is prevalent throughout the game, and during the tutorial it conditions the player to find these alternative or optional paths.

Cognitive mapping
The principle of exploration mentioned above supports and encourages the player to create cognitive maps of the areas that they are in, so that they might remember where they are in relation to where they’ve already been. Specifically, with exploration in mind, this becomes an asset as it helps the player track down the hidden paths and items available in the game.

Lonely Aesthetic
The game-world itself is oppressively bleak and lonely in Dark Souls 3. The washed-out colour palette and the heavy emphasis on the problems of the world, as well as the focus on death and rebirth creates a depressive and foremost lonely view of the world. The world itself, with its crumbling walls and dying fauna as well as drops in terrain feels like it intends to harm the player whenever it gets the chance. This cultivates a mentality that synergizes well with some of the other principles as this feeling of loneliness encourages the player to “overcome” at a constant rate. While not all players may relate to this feeling, or even enjoy it, the ones that see this feeling of loneliness as another challenge to overcome may find themselves resonating with the games intended message.

Message System
What serves as the only form of explicit teaching in Dark Souls 3 is the message system implemented by the development team. This system allows players to leave behind a message that can be read by other players. Players can choose from several templates of sentence structure and are then allowed to insert words into the template from a predetermined list of words. While players do not transition seamlessly with their avatars into other player’s games, their messages do.
The developers have more control over what they can put into a message, and in the tutorial, they use this system to teach the player the fundamental controls of the game. This both pros and cons. Specifically, this system requires players to interact with the messages to read them and receive instruction sets. This means that a player who doesn’t read these messages, or misses one, does not receive the explicit teachings of the fundamental controls. At the same time, it means that experienced players who are creating a new character for the game can choose to skip this part of the tutorial.

**Overcoming Challenge**

The core value and principle of design for the entire Dark Souls series is that of overcoming great challenge. The president of the development company FromSoftware and the games director Hidetaka Miyazaki has spoken in several interviews about the games difficulty and challenge, and about finding the balance between “difficult” and “unreasonable”. This is evident in the games themselves too. In the tutorial for Dark Souls 3, we only have one goal, implied rather than stated, and that is to defeat Iudex Gundyr.

In pure size, Gundyr outweighs the player, has longer reach, deals more damage, has more health and can move in ways that the player cannot. Initially, this forced confrontation seems unbalanced, but by learning from our experiences and mistakes within the game, Dark Souls 3 conditions the player to accept defeat rationally and analyse what could have been done to succeed. Eventually, enemies cease to be intimidating, and it becomes less “difficult” and more “challenging”. Learning the enemy’s movements and behavioural temperament becomes crucial, and rather than focusing on the impossibility of success in a fight that is not in the players favour, focus falls on rolling and attacking at the correct moment. This design principle is at the core of what makes Dark Souls 3 so compelling to many players.

**Vista Based Progression**

One of the design principles that the tutorial introduces is that of vista-based progression. What this means in dark souls is that if you can see an area in the distance, you’ll be able to get there eventually. We are first introduced to this as we move between segment 1 and 2 in the tutorial (06:50-07:16 in the video recording) where we are introduced to 2 distant areas that become available to us later in the game.
The first is the tower of Firelink Shrine.

*Figure 20, depicting Firelink Shrine in the distance*

It is encircled by the sun behind it as we crest a hill and arrive at an overlook. The path to the shrine declines in altitude down towards the left, where we can see Gundyrs arena.

The second instance of this happens at the same interval of time and at the same overlook in the tutorial video recording. We can see a castle towering above the player character. This area is not accessible in the tutorial; however, it is an area that is accessible later in the game.

*Figure 21, depicting Lothric Castle and the Mad Kings Garden*
Thoughts, Conclusion

Dark Souls 3’s systemic design makes it easy for players to understand individual allowed player actions and how to combine them to increase their own effectiveness in the game. The message system, being the only explicit form of teaching in the game, comes with a few risks, and isn’t a particularly interactive form of teaching the player the fundamentals of the game, however; this system is used efficiently as it introduces the very basics of camera control and basic attacks first, and more complex manoeuvres later as the player understands the importance of the previous. In this way, the game conditions the player in the tutorial based on what type of experience the principles of design in the game have been implemented by the developers.

While the tutorial imparts the fundamentals of the game well, the deeper concepts of progression, levelling and overall goal of the game is left out completely to devastating effect. New players will struggle to understand why (as they level up) their impact on the world might lessen as they don’t understand how to level up. The player is encouraged to make their own choices and paths through the game through the inclusion of exploration and a variation in level distribution as well as starting class choice. The chance for experienced players to skip the big parts of the tutorial supports the experienced community while risking little in terms of new players.

Dark Souls 3 is a game that is aesthetically and interactively designed to feel lonely. The world itself feels hostile, while the game provides the player with the means to fight back and overcome the challenges posed to them. The game will test players every step of the way, and this is reflected in the tutorial, where a wrong turn may lead to an enemy that the player is not ready to tackle yet, or a fall into the abyss, killing them. Overcoming these challenges becomes the goal of the game quickly, and the narrative falls into a less interesting category. This is something that has also been confirmed to be by design. The developers want the narrative of the game to be a supporting role, but not the main attraction, where the player who are interested can go digging for more information about the narrative, but will still have to face the challenges of the game to find that information. Its tutorial makes the game easy to get into, but leaves a lot to be desired when it comes to a deeper understanding of the game and its progression.
14. Acknowledgements

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Thanks to all of you, and for all your encouragement!
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