



**Inclusive tools to create ESL video games**

## **Storytelling resources**

### **Introduction**

Narrative games let players choose dialogue or decide on the next action to take. The choices they offer and their branching stories increase the narrative emotions and identification with the protagonist because they make us feel responsible for what happens.

### **Storytelling games**

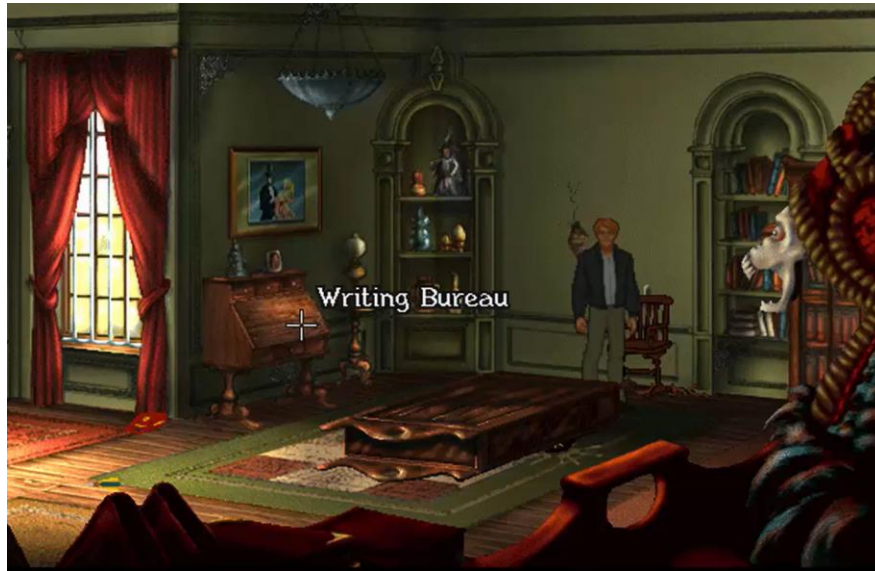
#### **Description**

Narrative games descend from the “point and click” genre. The gameplay consists of finding, getting and combining elements to solve enigmas.



the “[Broken Swords 2 : The smoking mirror walkthrough part 1](#)” by

AdventureGameFan8



(Picture extract from the video)

Narrative game examples for inspiration:

- [The wolf among us](#) (TellTale Games, 2013)
- [Inkle Studios](#) ' games
- The Council (Big Bad Wolf studio, 2018)
- Disco Elysium (ZA/UM, 2019)
- Gone Home (AnnaPurna interactive, 2013)
- Firewatch (Campo Santo, 2016)
- What Remains of Edith Finch (Giant Sparrow, 2017)
- The Stanley parable (Galactice Café, 2013)
- Ord (Ord,2019, Mujo Games)

## Accessibility

Narrative games feature simple controls but usually a heavy dose of text to read. In consequence, these games will require a good reading level and can be a strain on dyslexic students. When supported with voice-over it is an opportunity practice pronunciation.

## Narrative games for ESL

The central role of choice can be used to gamify a quiz. Every choice is an opportunity to ask a question in English.

New vocabulary and difficult words should be supported with visuals to help the language acquisition process.

# How to make a storytelling game

## How do interactive narrative work

### Choices and branches

Interactive stories, in the end, are flowcharts where the elements are pieces of text or narrative sequences.

Choices are minor, they customize the story, and give a feeling of choice.

Branches are major choices that will select a piece of narrative and hide others.

### Decision tree shapes

- **The only one true pass**

It is a section of the narrative game where only one set of choices will lead to success. It is to be used when we want to put pressure on the player.

- **The not only one true pass**

In this one, the bad choices the player get them back on the “main road” until they find the correct one. It is a good shape to use when we want less tension.

- **The diamond**

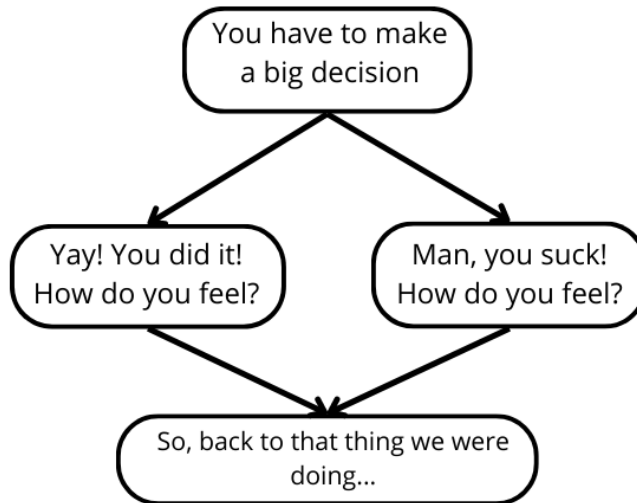


Figure 1 The diamond narrative shape ( source: GDC, 2018, Youtube)

The diamond is a “not only one true pass”. It lets customize the story, give a feeling of choice. It’s also nice to give ways of interpreting the same events differently.

You can make a “right road”: the expected path and a “hard road”: missteps that hit back to teach the player the road.

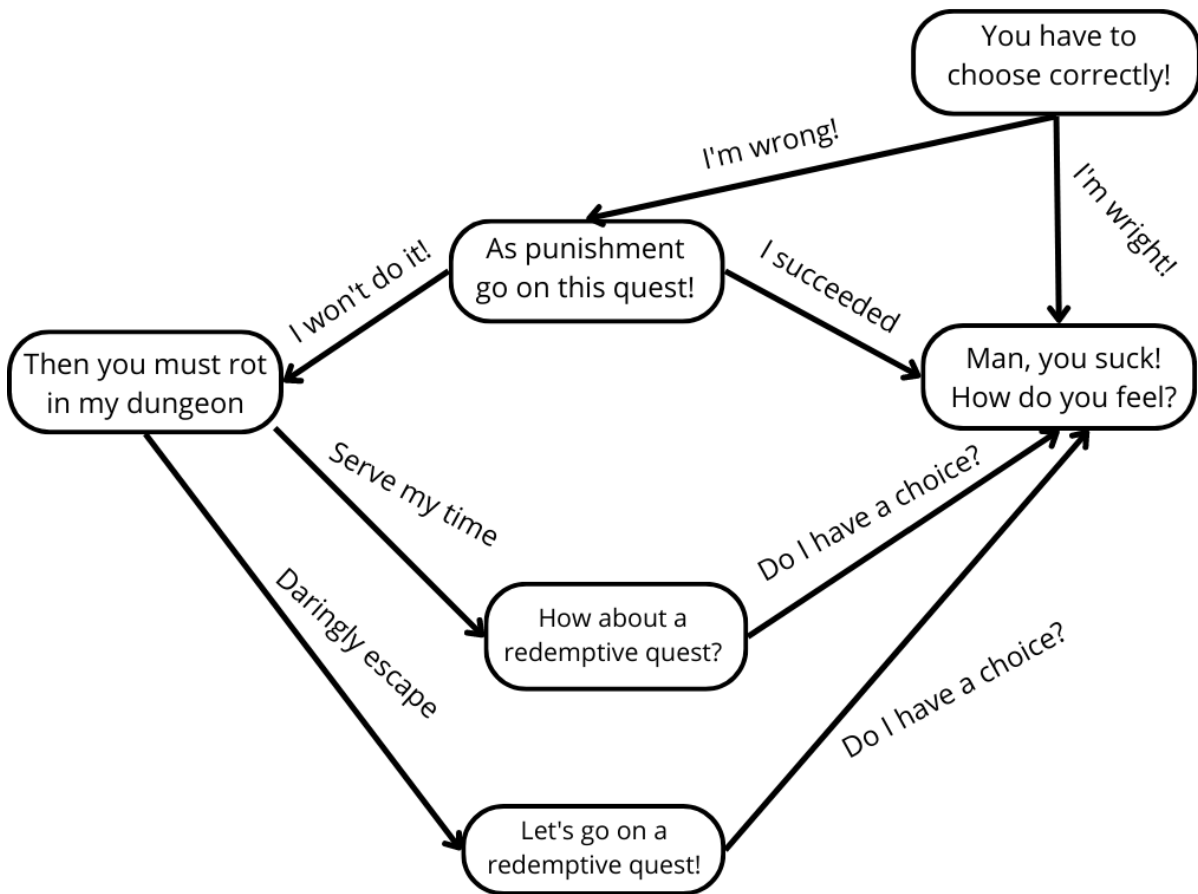


Figure 2 Another diamond narrative shape ( source: GDC, 2018, Youtube)

This example shows that the player will go on a quest whatever happens, but for different reasons.

- **The zipper**

It lets players make minor choices until they have to deal with a major branch.

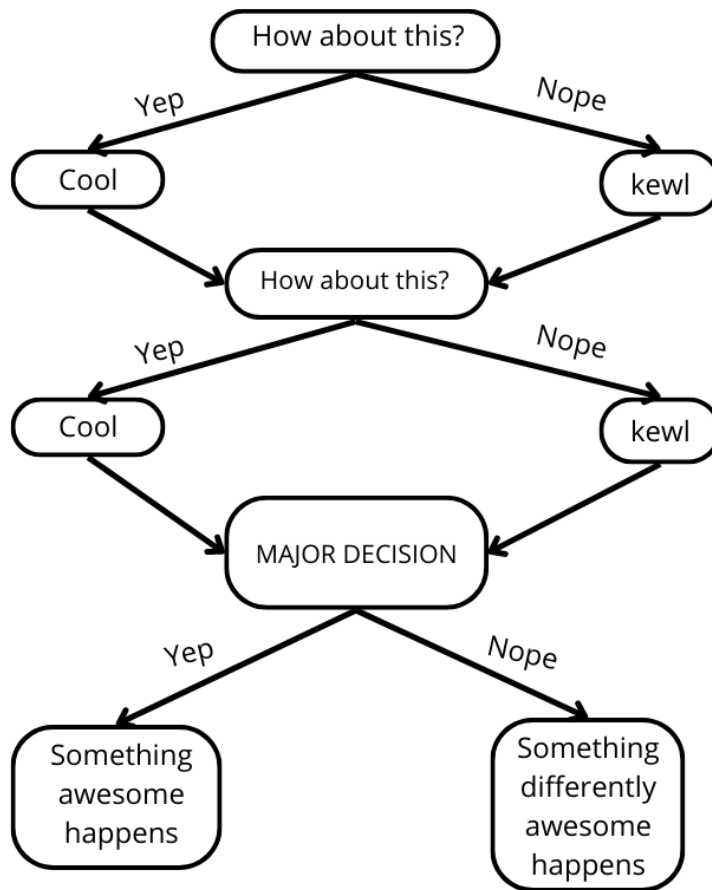


Figure 3 The zipper narrative shape ( source: GDC, 2018, Youtube)

## Game engines specialized in storytelling games

### Twine

Twine lets the user draw flowcharts that represent the story flow. It generates an html file that can be used in an internet browser to use the interactive story.

To help you get started:

- the [official cookbook](#)
- a [youtube tutorial series](#)



## Ink

Similar to Twine, but usable with only text and simple markup syntax. [inklewriter](#) is an online tool to write basic interactive stories.

**ink** is a more powerful narrative scripting language. It can be used to [write and share choice-based interactive fiction](#).

## Other tools that can be used

### Google forms

For low tech versions, you can create more simple narrative stories using Google Forms. [Here is an example](#) of what it looks like. You can follow [this tutorial](#) to get you started.

### Genially

In a similar manner to Google forms but with a open source software you can use [Genially](#). [Here](#) is an example.

### Ord.

This narrative game features a story creation mode that uses excel sheets. [Here is a tutorial](#) to help you use it.



Figure 4: Screenshot from Ord ( Mujo Games, 2019) (source: Steam.com)

## Advice on how to write your story

### Narrative design resources

You can check these GDC talks from narrative designers to go deeper in the topics:

[Designing Episode's Interactive Fiction in Three Phases](#)

[Death to the Three Act Structure! Toward a Unique Structure for Game Narratives](#)

And this 4C Conference talk:

[Narrative System Design Basics / Leszek Szczepanski, Guerrilla Games](#)

## Conclusion

We saw tools you can use to create narrative games. They can be a nice way to make your quizzes more engaging or to have students go through texts in a more engaging manner.



## Resources and references

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## Images

- Narrative shapes were reamed after the ones presented in this video:
- [GDC]. (2018, October 31). 'The Shapes in Your Story: Narrative Mapping Frameworks' [Video File]. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_Xrsn2HBs6w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Xrsn2HBs6w)
- steam.com. (2019). [Figure 4: Screenshot from Ord (Mujo Games, 2019) ]. Retrieved from <https://store.steampowered.com/app/1079000/Ord/?l=french>



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