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Direct questions to: [James Fan](#)



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## what's this webpage about?

This webpage represents an online version of my game review of Chrono Trigger for STS145. My intent in producing this companion resource was to provide a more complete experience for the interested reader. Within this webpage, you the reader will be able to browse about all that is Chrono Trigger -- the producers responsible for creating the video game, the story driving the gaming experience, and the gameplay mechanics that differentiated from all of the other RPG games out there.

In addition to my own analysis concerning the game, the website also includes outside resouces dealing with Chrono Trigger. You may want to explore the links provided in the [Miscellaneous section](#) for more information.

Please feel free to [e-mail me](#) with any questions you may have. Enjoy.

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# origins the beginning

Square, a well-known Japanese console game maker, released Chrono Trigger during the September of 1995. Best known for their immensely popular Final Fantasy series of RPGs, the most recent of which was Final Fantasy 6 (Final Fantasy 3 in the United States) at the time, Square had already built a formidable reputation as a leading console game manufacturer. With Chrono Trigger, it seemed they were exploring new territory by introducing new elements into the genre.

Led by producer Hironobu Sakaguchi (Final Fantasy) and character designer Akira Toriyama (Dragon Ball Z), the development team for Chrono Trigger sought to create a gaming experience transcending the boundaries of the genre. With composer Yasunori Mitsuda (Xenogears, Chrono Cross) at the helm and Yuji Horii (Dragon Quest) developing the environments and scenery, fans were guaranteed a stellar



gaming experience.  
The final product  
would deliver on all of  
the hype and even  
surpass the  
expectations placed  
upon it, eventually  
becoming one of the  
last great RPGs for  
the Super Nintendo.

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# story

## the adventure

Like all Square RPGs, Chrono Trigger derived most of its appeal from the wonderfully written storyline driving it behind the scenes. Equally as complicated and unpredictable as the stories of the Final Fantasy series, the plot of Chrono Trigger revolved around the main character, aptly named Crono. Throughout the entire game, Crono spoke nary a word, forcing the player to imagine and create his own identity. Taking the role of a silent, unassuming young man, the game player would gradually find himself drawn into a conflict of tremendous proportions, eventually spanning not only the globe, but time itself. The game begins innocently at the site of the Millennial Fair in 1000 AD, a carnival thrown in the plaza of Crono's hometown complete with game booths and bustling market tents. Soon after arriving at the fair, Crono bumps into a mysterious girl named Marle who asks for his assistance in guiding her around the festivities. The two arrive at the display booth of the inventor Lucca, a close friend of Crono, where she's showcasing a simple teleportation device. Fascinated by the bizarre device, Marle asks to try it out only to find her pendant react violently to the



teleportation process, which results in her mysterious disappearance. The only sign of her left behind is the strange pendant. Intrigued by the inexplicable glitch in the device, Crono and Lucca grab the pendant and jump into the teleporter in an attempt to discover the whereabouts of Marle. What follows is a magnificent journey through the threads of history.



The two friends find themselves 400 years into the past in the year 600 AD, eventually finding Marle and discovering that she is of noble blood - in fact, they realize that she is their own princess from 1000 AD, also known as Princess Nadia. Here in the Dark Ages, however, she is mistaken as Princess Leene, her ancestor hundreds of years ago. With the aid of a [noble frog knight](#), one of many colorful personalities introduced throughout the course of the game, they are able to rescue Marle and bring her back to the correct time period. Upon reaching the present, however, Crono is caught by the castle guards and forced to answer to charges of kidnapping the Princess. Aided by Marle and Lucca, Crono manages to escape the castle prison. The party retreats into the nearby forest for refuge, where they stumble upon another time warp that whisks them 1300 years into the future. The future in 2300 AD offers a [bleak landscape](#)

plunged into darkness by an unknown force. It is here where they meet up with one of the robotic denizens of the future, whom they affectionately name [Robo](#). Robo explains to the party the events that transpired to lead up to the destruction of the world, revealing the existence of a destructive alien force named [Lavos](#) that implanted itself into the core of the planet in 65,000,000 BC. Hidden miles underneath the surface, Lavos fed off of planet's energy for millions of years before erupting to the surface in 1999 AD, an infamous day referred to as the Day of Lavos when the world was torn asunder.

Through a series of fantastic events, Crono's party time-hops from period to period, learning more and more about Lavos at each stop and taking steps at each point to alter the future and prevent the Day of Lavos from ever fulfilling itself. Their travels take them to 65,000,000 BC before the arrival of Lavos where they must aid the young human race in [fending off the Reptites](#), a race of intelligent reptilians competing for the planet's resources. Afterwards, they find a portal that transports them to 12,000 BC to the wondrously [advanced civilization of Zeal](#) stationed on floating islands in the sky. Here, they encounter the Queen of Zeal who they find has been corrupted by the presence of Lavos. Apparently, the

civilization of Zeal discovered Lavos long ago and created a device called the Mammon Machine that was able to harness the power of the gigantic beast. The party learns of the Queen's scheme to absorb the power of Lavos herself and breaks into her fortress in order to destroy the Mammon Machine. They manage to penetrate into the heart of the fortress where they defeat the Queen and eventually come face to face with Lavos himself. Forced to fend off the perturbed beast and aided by the benevolent daughter of the Queen, [Princess Schala](#), the party assembles to attack Lavos. He proves to be far too powerful, however, and Crono is killed in the ensuing battle. Forced to abandon the crumbling fortress, Schala teleports the rest of the party out of harm's way. With the aid of the wise sages of Zeal who survived the assault, the party is able to obtain the items necessary to jump back in time and [save Crono](#) before the fateful battle. With their leader miraculously revived, the party is able to gather the weapons necessary to defeat Lavos and are eventually able to penetrate to its core where they defeat the infernal being and release the energy of the planet that had been consumed over its existence. The world is saved, it seems, but the outcome leaves enough plot holes behind to leave the fate of the world in a slightly precarious situation.

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# gameplay

the experience

Developed during the final years of the Super Nintendo's life span, Chrono Trigger was characterized by the same colorful and vibrant graphics that found themselves into most of the RPGs at the time. The world was represented in two different manners: (1) the overworld, and (2) the smaller towns and dungeons that comprised it. The overworld took the form of a large world map containing key areas surrounded by generic scenery and wilderness. Each of these key areas could either be a town, which was a haven for the adventurer and contained inns, shops, and other facilities designed to aid the hero, or a dungeon, which was populated with monsters and traps designed to keep the hero from some ultimate goal that resided at the heart of the dungeon. The player would travel from area to area, discovering new ones and possibly revisiting past areas in order to satisfy the current goal as designated by the structured storyline. At any point in the game, the player could access a status screen with the press of a button, which contained information on the state of the characters in the party. Most of the character management was centered around the status screen, which contained several nested menus that allowed



the player to equip various items, including weapons and armor. There were also informative menus that listed details on the development of each character and their physical attributes, which provided them with new skills and abilities that would assist them in battle.

One of Chrono Trigger's strongest selling points was its promise of an innovative battle system. Rather than opt for the traditional setup where battles are initiated by random encounters and carried out through simple turn-based commands, the designers of Chrono Trigger created a system that promoted player involvement to prevent each battle from degenerating into a tiresome process. The removal of random encounters accounted for a large portion of the success attributed to the game. Instead of introducing some mathematic formula that would randomly force the player into an enemy encounter every few steps, the designers chose to represent the enemies graphically on the screen much in the same way that the hero's character is represented. This way, the player can choose to avoid contact with the enemy if he's trying to move quickly from Point A to Point B.

The changes run even deeper into the battle system. Once thrust into battle, the player has

several new abilities at his disposal in addition to the simple fight/magic/item/run repertoire. While several RPGs before had introduced the feature of special abilities bestowed upon the characters, Chrono Trigger expanded on that feature and introduced the existence of Special Techniques, or Techs for short. Not only could these Techs be performed by individual characters, but they could also be combined among multiple characters to form Double and even Triple Techs that inflicted massive damage on the enemies through a series of flashy effects and pyrotechnics. These combined Techs were also influenced by the placement of the characters and enemies; for example, certain abilities affected lines of enemies in relation to the location of the characters, whereas others had a circular radius of effect. In order to maximize the effect of the Techs, the player would have to take into account the location of the enemies with respect to one another so that as many enemies as possible would be included in its area of effect. This resulted in many new battle strategies; for instance, the player could strategically defend the enemies' attacks and lure them into a clumped placement that would maximize the potential for a special attack.

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# special features

## depth

In addition to the innovative battle system, Chrono Trigger had much to offer towards extending replay value through the inclusion of optional side quests and hidden secrets. One of the more powerful party members that could be incorporated into the group would not join unless some extra requirement had been fulfilled. Certain special items, generally far more powerful than those obtained along the regular course of the game, were well-hidden in some of the game's more difficult side quests



which involved difficult investigative work, fighting more powerful enemies, etc. Perhaps the most compelling secrets to obtain of all were the multiple endings offered by the game. Upon defeating the final boss, the player would be given the option to restart the game with his existing built-up character and possessions.

This would of course make the game considerable easier, but it would also allow the player to defeat the final boss at any point in the game through the inclusion of a special warp that would transport the player to the final battle whenever he wished. By

defeating  
Lavos in the  
middle of the  
game before  
certain  
events had  
taken place,  
the player  
could view  
[one of](#)  
[several](#)  
[alternate](#)  
[endings](#), all  
of which  
offered a  
different  
take on the  
outcome of  
the world.

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## history the legacy

Chrono Trigger would go on to become one of the most successful games developed for the Super Nintendo platform, endearing itself in the minds of many gamers who considered it an equal to the renowned Final Fantasy brand of storytelling. The character designs were thoroughly memorable and helped to create a fantastic, yet believable environment that offered as compelling of a story as that of any written novel.

Furthermore, it introduced the notion of an RPG with replayability through its multiple endings. The game was considered such a success that it would go on to inspire a sequel for the Sony Playstation named Chrono Cross that would build upon the universe created by Chrono Trigger and address several of the plot gaps while introducing new characters and lands. Several other RPGs would attempt to emulate Chrono Trigger in its usage of a dynamic battle system, while others would offer multiple endings through a similar process. Some would find success in the formula, while others would implement it poorly and emerge with a mediocre product. In any case, by creating Chrono Trigger, Square set a new standard for all RPG companies, themselves included, and gamers all



around were left with a  
fond remembrance of  
Crono and his  
companions.

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# miscellaneous information

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