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How wargames are conceived, created and produced.



# Designing wargames

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- What is needed ?
  - **Creativity**
  - **Passion for history**
  - **Attitude to game mechanics**
  - **A rigorous approach**
  - **Teamwork**
  - **Time**
- What is NOT needed ?
  - **Lust for money**
  - **Hurry**



# What are the ingredients to make a wargame ?

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You need some basic stuff:

- £ Have yourself a **good history book**. All begins here: read the right book, which can give you reliable information on space, time, persons. These are the game framework.
- @ Specify the **intent of the game**: who is it for ? Which role each player will play ? Which part of history do you want to simulate ? This the heart of the game.
- # Identify attractive **game mechanics**: «I want my players to focus on strategic problems and not heavy game mechanics», «I do not want to throw too many dice!», «combat must be unpredictable»
- § Give your full attention to **ergonomics** of the game. This includes: colors, forms, fonts, size, contrast, etc.



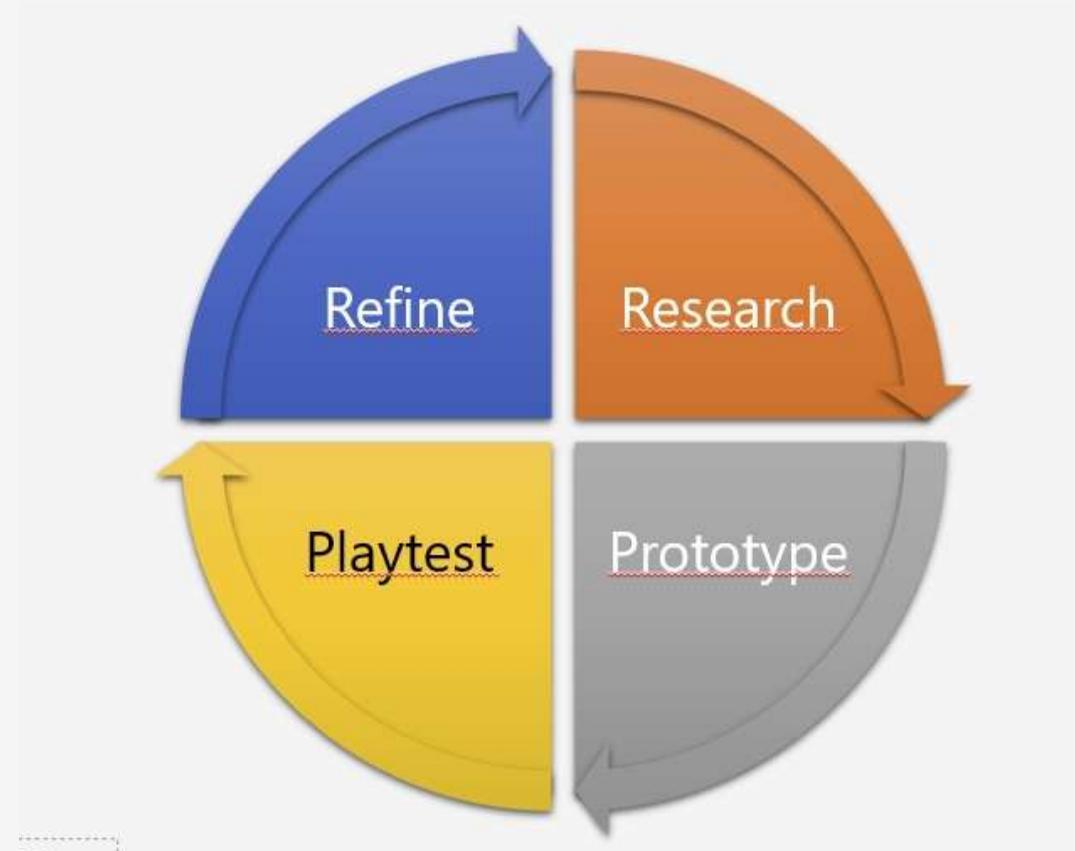
# What are the steps to make a wargame ?

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This is how it all works:

- 1** Conduct **research** on the subject of the game. This step may range from one to three years and ... it never ends!
- 2** Make a **working prototype** of the game, with rules, map, counters and all other needed components. They are working, but at start they are far from complete or consistent
- 3** **Playtest** the prototype. You can conduct any number of «internal» sessions. Then it is good to have at least an «external» session (people who never took part to the project).
- 4** **Refine** the design. Modify all the current components, according to what playtesting has told you. Search for early consistency.

**Are you happy with the current game ? Does it fit the original INTENT ?**  
if YES, restart from Step 1  
If NO, restart all the same with Step 1 !



An iterative approach

# The principles of wargame design

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There is no single recipe. Here are some hints:

**1 Space and time considerations.**

A good simulation should be rigorous in allowing the men to «walk» the right amount of space in a given time (the game turn). The ground scale should be appropriate to the unit scale.

**2 Cross-check your sources.**

Even if your sources are valid and up-to-date, you should cross-check them, to confirm which troops were present on the battlefield and how things actually went.

**3 Make a working model.**

You have to have a model of the reality you want to simulate. Though a model must yield correct outcomes on the basis of certain inputs, do not pretend your model is perfect or even similar to reality. It will never be.

**4 No one plays a game that he cannot see.**

Even the best of games can be impaired by wrong ergonomics. If you can't read the map or the writing on the counters, the game won't be played and all your efforts are wasted. This is a very difficult task.

**5 Have walks in the garden.**

Do not try to resolve all problems of the game in a single playtest session. Design is refinement. If ideas do not come at the table, take a walk in the garden, and let ideas meet you there.

Questions?

Let us know your thoughts about wargame design ...



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