



## Donkey Kong

*Donkey Kong*  
1981  
(Coin-op)

Complete the current level to rescue the beauty from the beast. This nutshell description fits a boatload of games, but *Donkey Kong* came first. The jump-driven navigation launched a zillion imitators with characters leaping from platform to platform – the so-called platformer genre. This was the debut of Mario and his pet ape, both of whom would later star in their own platformers as well as racing games, sports games, fighting games, educational games, puzzle games, and on and on.



## Mario

*Super Mario Bros.*  
1985  
(NES)

A cornerstone of modern gaming, this title introduced power-ups, warps, bosses, side-scrolling, even theme music. Given the game's epic scale, the arcade version was unsatisfying, but on the new NES home console with which *Super Mario* was bundled, long-form play was suddenly possible.

*Super Mario Bros. 3*  
1989  
(NES)

The best-selling videogame of all time, *Super Mario 3* made more money than 1989's top-grossing film, *Batman* (\$500 million versus \$413 million). A flying feature added vertical scrolling to the now classic horizontal format.

*Super Mario 64*  
1996  
(Nintendo 64)

*Super Mario 64* was as seminal to 3-D gaming as the original *Marios* had been to 2-D gaming – nearly every 3-D title developed since owes something to its camera and navigation systems. Its boundless environments presented a wealth of tasks, missions, and puzzles, and there was rarely a single set way to achieve any goal.



## Zelda

*The Legend of Zelda*  
1986  
(NES)

Less well known than *Mario* but even more influential, the *Zelda* series single-handedly established role-playing and adventure genres on consoles. The initial version set a higher standard for gaming complexity. It was the first to come with a thick instruction booklet, map, and telephone help line (eventually staffed by 200 full-time personnel). It was also the first game that couldn't be completed in one go; the cartridge had a memory chip so players could save their place in midstream.

*Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*  
1998

(Nintendo 64)  
*Miyamoto's masterpiece.* The first 3-D *Zelda* featured an unusually rich story line. Most impressive was its wealth of multifunctional tools, including the one mentioned in the title: a whistle blown via the game controller that could alter space, time, weather, and players' appearance onscreen. Soon after the game was released, the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences created its Hall of Fame and made Miyamoto the first inductee.

## Miyamoto Milestones

In 22 years as a game designer, Shigeru Miyamoto has driven sales of more than 300 million units and generated more than \$10 billion in revenue. From the primitive 2-D arcade rigs of the early '80s to Nintendo's NES console to the state-of-the-art GameCube, he's dreamed up ways to exploit the latest hardware and break new ground with gameplay. Here are some career highlights. – Chris Baker



## Star Fox

*Star Fox*  
1993  
(Super NES)

*Star Fox* players maneuvered through deep-space obstacle courses and rocket ship dogfights, blasting cuddly bad guys. The cartridge incorporated a chip that delivered genuine 3-D graphics, a breakthrough that appeared just as *Doom* was popularizing 3-D action on the PC. A sequel planned for the following year was nearly completed when Miyamoto quashed it, deeming the update insufficiently innovative. Fans had to wait four years for the next version, *Star Fox 64*.

## Pikmin

*Pikmin*  
2001  
(GameCube)

As inventive and strategically demanding as any PC game, but as cute and accessible as *Mario*. You're an astronaut stranded on an alien world, and you must enlist an army of plantlike Pikmin creatures to help rebuild your ship before your oxygen runs out. You sow, harvest, and train them, then utilize their skills to hunt for spare parts. Your Pikmin will die to protect you from hostile aliens, and you'll feel a pang of sorrow watching their adorable ghosts flit up to heaven.