

Overview

Gameplay Loop: as a team of 4-6, pilot a ship around a desert arena killing bad guys and improving your ship's weaponry. Once sufficiently strong (subjective), assault an enemy fortress. Defeating it spawns a challenging boss, which you must fight to open a portal to the next arena.

Creative Pillars: coordinated combat, meaningful progression, a living world

Moments: railgun gunner coordinating with the pilot to kill a threatening enemy (*coordinated combat*); upgraded blaster cannon with flame damage melting bad guys (*meaningful progression*); kiting a sand worm to kill an enemy skiff (*a living world*)

Components

Environment: Desert arena, with scattered objects and debris to give it life. Large enough to roam and maneuver, but small enough that it doesn't feel barren.

- Crashed ship, takes up $\frac{1}{3}$ of map and creates pockets and hallways
- Variety of foliage/rock features (6-8 unique models, start with 6)

Ship (Player): Skiff-style ship with railgun, 2 unique turrets, and 4 different stations for the player to mount. Each gun features a robust upgrade system; one path per turret should be built out and feel impactful.

- Ion cannon—charge up, splash damage, can hone at higher levels
- Blaster turret—burst, becomes full auto later, can be infused with fire damage via pickups

Enemies: 3 mobs should be sufficient to display enemy behavior, keep the player engrossed, and provide variety. Mobs should have unique movement and weapons. Build an additional 2 sand creatures that engage mobs.

- Sand shark: gnat, fodder
 - Galleon: slow, powerful, outmaneuver to kill (weak spots)
 - Skiff: mid-tier, most common enemy. Dangerous in packs, but easy to kill when isolated.
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- Sand worm: burrows and emerges every 3-8 seconds. Fast. Incredibly damaging if it emerges under a ship, but otherwise weak.
 - Sand crab: chases ships. Has talons and acid spit. Acid spit will slow your ship if it hits it, making it easier for the crab to catch and disable your turrets.

Bosses: 1) stationary fortress, must require tactical combat and several gun upgrades. 2) powerful final boss, very deadly, requires *coordination* to defeat.

- Fortress: guns can be disabled, should be fought from far away. In one corner of the map.
- Boss: will shred you with cannons if you're alongside it. Must find a way to stay behind/in front and kill quickly. Fast.

Items: player should have the opportunity to pick up and/or purchase 5 items that change ship or gun behavior. Items should feel impactful and be noticeable (so VFX or UI changes are essential).

- Lightning strike an enemy when they hit projector shield
- Infuse cannons with flame damage
- Add drift mechanic to driving
- Smoke bomb to obscure the ship from enemies for 3 seconds (activated by driver)
- Auto-loading railgun mechanic when at full charge