

Task

Find and analyze a game's design pillars and the synergies between pillars.

League of Legends Design Pillars

[League of Legends Design Pillars Pitch](#)

Game Overview

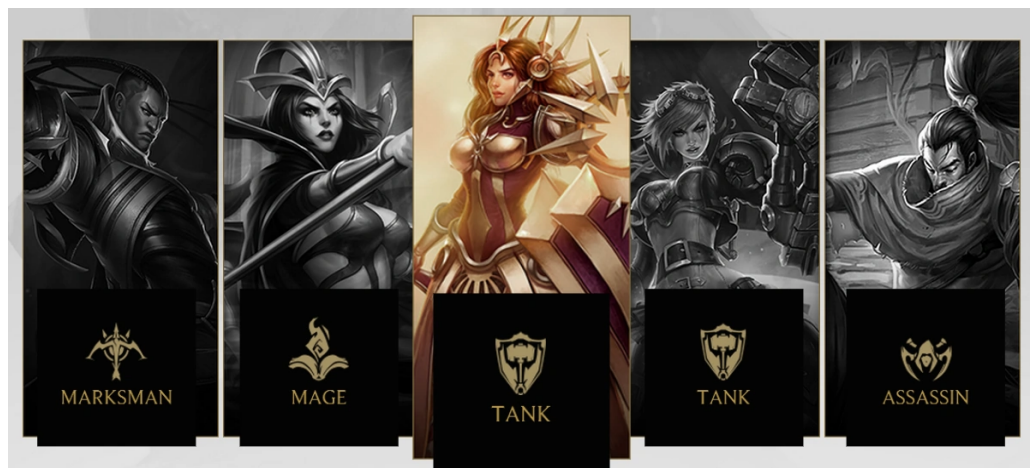
League of Legends (LoL), commonly referred to as **League**, is a 2009 multiplayer online battle arena video game developed and published by Riot Games.

In the game, two teams of five players battle in player versus player combat, each team occupying and defending their half of the map. Each of the ten players controls a character, known as a "champion", with unique abilities and differing styles of play. During a match, champions become more powerful by collecting experience points, earning gold, and purchasing items to defeat the opposing team. In the game's main mode, Summoner's Rift, a team wins by pushing through to the enemy base and destroying their "Nexus", a large structure located within.

Teamplay

One of the core pillars of the game is definitely Teamplay, as said before League is a game played by two teams of five players battling each other to destroy the enemy nexus and **no victory is won alone**.

- 1. Collaboration :** Players need to rely on their teammates to obtain a victory. The game map is designed with various hot points that provide gold or buffs to players, having that one man advantage or a faster rotation can decide a team victory or loss. It is demonstrated that players have a higher chance to lose the game when they do not collaborate with their teammates.
- 2. Roles Division and Team Comps :** Each player plays as a League champion and these champions can be divided into various **archetypes** such as Assassin, Mage, Fighter, Tank, Marksman (ADC) and Support.

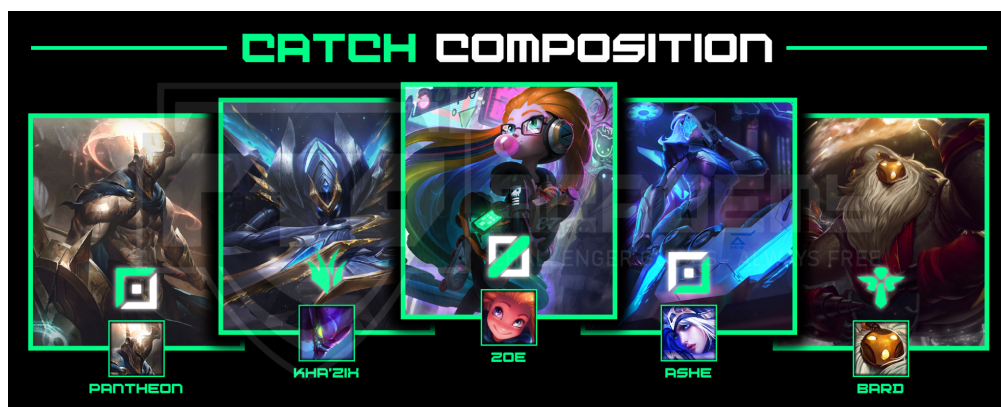


Examples of champions and their assigned classes

The team comp can decide the fate of the match, infact having a good balance when planning the squad composition is fundamental. Usually a team will have a Tank or a Fighter playing in Toplane, a Mage or an Assassin in the Midlane, an Adc with a Support in the botlane (Adc champions are renowned to be weak to enemy assaults, that's why they're usually accompanied by a Support that can defend them), meanwhile the Jungle is a bit special and a bit of everything can be played in it, mostly it depends on the player's playstyle (it can support allies, disturb enemies or even assassinate them).

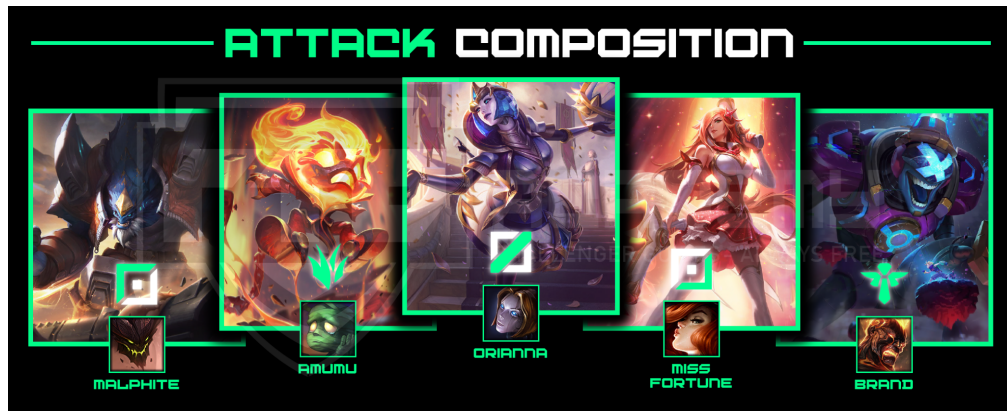
There's no written rule that obliges players to follow these guidelines, an only assassin team comp can still win if the team performs well, but when players compete to improve their ranking they tend to follow their role constraint. Even though most players stick to these rules, there is a lot of creativity when making a team, in fact many different team comps exist, it's up to the team to decide which fits their playstyle best.

Here're some examples:



The **Catch composition** is based on champions that perform well against isolated targets. Players will look for opportunities to catch enemies that are

split from the rest of the group. One of the disadvantages of this comp is that it doesn't perform well in a 5vs5 teamfight.



Meanwhile the **Attack composition** or the so called **Teamfight Comp** is based on champions that perform well in teamfight. These champions will have a lot of [Aoe](#) damage or stuns, and their main objective will be to group and force the enemy team to fight them. One of the disadvantages of this comp is that the team will have no control in the side lanes, so if the enemy team plays a **Splitpush comp** they might lose without having the chance to fight.

3. **Ping System** : The game has a Ping wheel composed of 4 different pings with an addition of 3 other pings that can be executed from the keyboard.



Ping wheel in game

Players that need a **fast way to communicate** with their teammates instead of using the chat tend to use these pings to save time.

Each ping has a specific use :

- **The yellow question mark** indicates that an enemy is missing from a lane or is in fog of war (Fow).
- **The red exclamation mark** indicates a particular dangerous area, players might use it to indicate an enemy moving in fog of war, or a particularly strong enemy.
- **On my way** is used by players to indicate in which part of the map they will go.
- **The blue flag** indicates a call for help, players might use it to ask for the jungler's help.

Meanwhile the pings that can be done by pressing a keyboard button are :

- A basic blue ping to attract the attention to an area or a particular target like an enemy champion/structure.
- The same basic ping but yellow that indicates to be careful or to fall back from that particular area/target.
- An eye ping that indicates that the enemies have vision in that area.

Competitive

Since its birth, the main objective of League of Legends has been to create a competitive game that would last for decades.

1. **Pursuit of Mastery** : League is a game with a **high skill ceiling-low skill floor**, during their games players can grow in micro-skills, teamwork, decision making and adaptability. Whether a player's starting their 10th or 1000th game, there will always be new and exciting challenges to pursue. Small trivia about the game: Every year for the Worlds tournament League of Legends produce a Worlds song, these two in particular are very related to the Pursuit of Mastery :

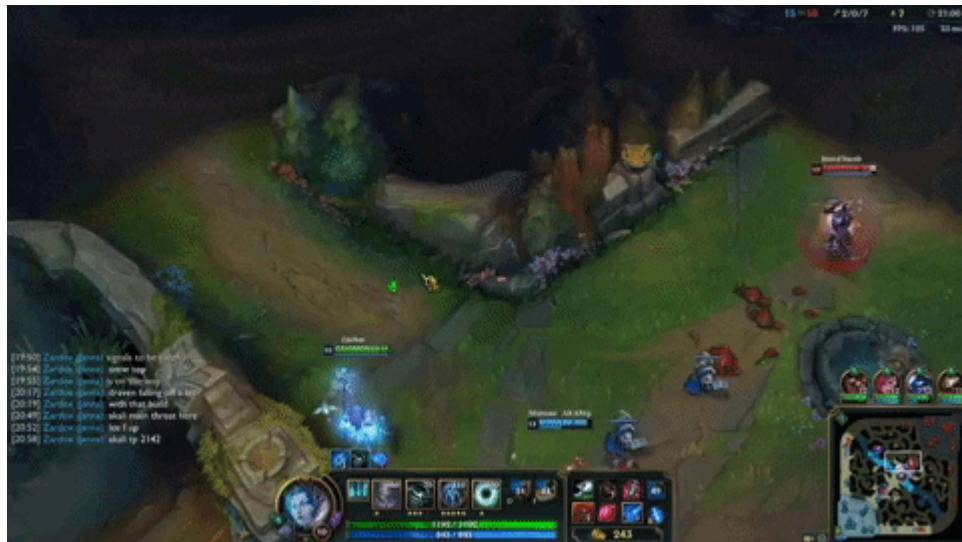
[Legends Never Die \(ft. Against The Current\) | Worlds 2017 - League of Legends](#)
[RISE \(ft. The Glitch Mob, Mako, and The Word Alive\) | Worlds 2018 - League of Legends](#)

Legends Never Die video explains it all, meanwhile Rise tells the story of Ambition, a player that after losing Worlds, changed role and against all the predictions won the next Worlds.

2. **Meaningful Choices** : The ability to make decisions that have an impact on the state of the game is of absolute importance in driving satisfaction and mastery, and League always rewards those who make the best decisions. **Multiple attractive choices** allow for variety in experience, with games

following many different paths, also they grant players the power to shape the game based off their own preferences and what they feel they're best at.

3. **Counter Play** : Another important aspect of the game is its **fairness**. Fights are fun when they're not one-sided, but everyone has a chance to win. No game is decided before it starts, the player's decision, actions and reactions do matter. Everytime the designers create a new champion they focus on preventing hard counters and abilities that have no room for reaction.



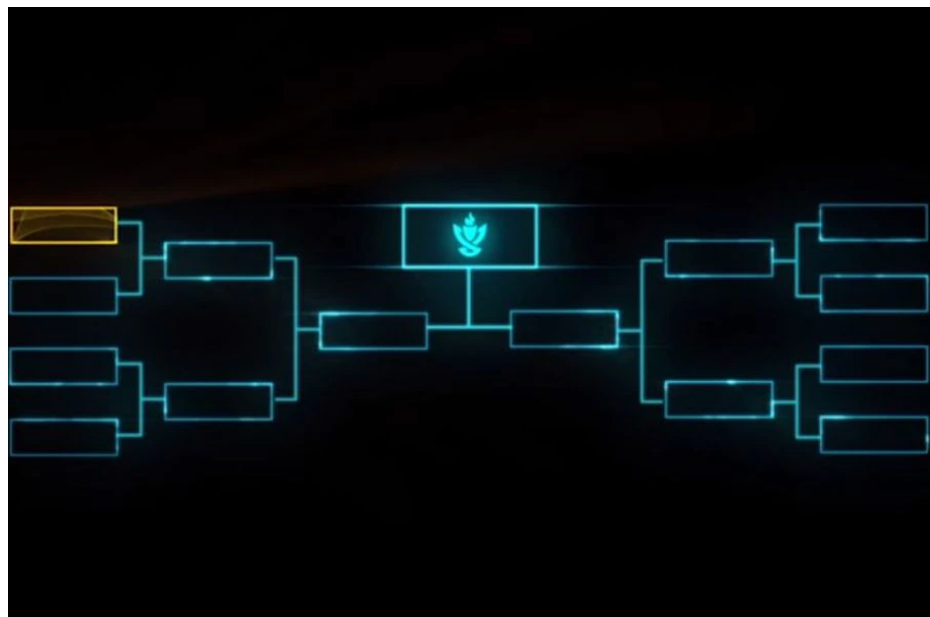
The supports use an ability to counter the enemy engage

4. **Ranking System** : The most competitive players will focus most of their time in the Ranked Solo Queue. Here, when a player wins a game his rank will improve and when he loses it will worsen. This incentivizes players to **improve their skill level** so that they can climb the game ladder.



The ranked tiers in League of Legends

5. **Clash** : Clash is a new game mode where players can create their own team to participate in an “amateur” **tournament** and challenge other teams of their same level. The victorious team will be awarded with in-game skins. There is a new clash every two weeks, this deadline provides a clear objective to players, even to the ones that don't really care about competing, incentivizing them to play and train to obtain the tournament prize.



An example of a Clash bracket

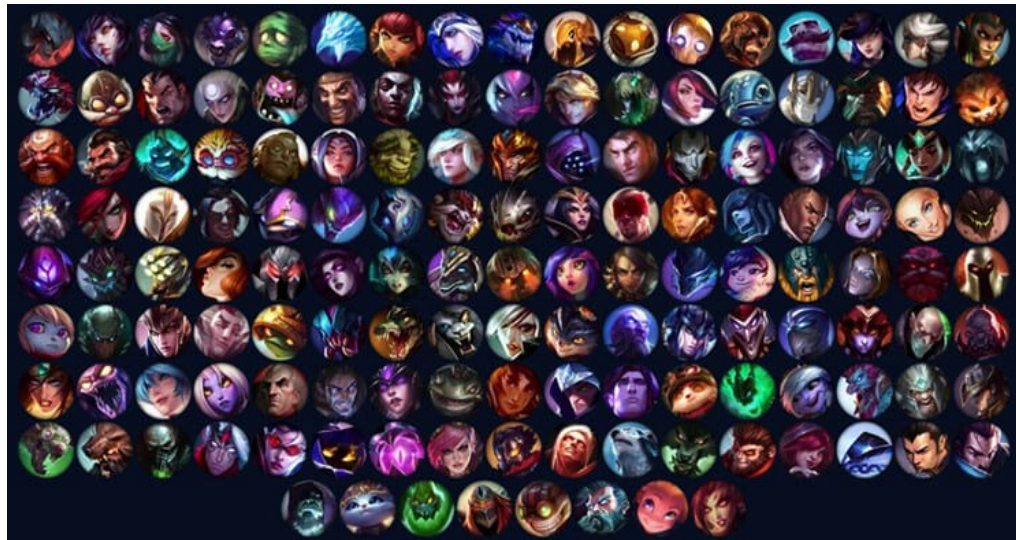
6. **Nearly No RNG** : To make the game as competitive as possible there are very few RNG aspects in the game. An example of RNG is related to the jungle, there is a certain jungle monster (the dragon) that after dying 2 times transforms the map in 1 out of 5 different options, and these maps can advantage or disadvantage particular champions.



7. **Meta** : The meta for LoL is traditionally decided by two core factors: the popularity of Champions and their in game impact. For as long as the game is live for, there will always be Champions that are picked more than others, whilst there will always be those that are stronger based upon the state of the game. For example if there is a meta that revolves around tanks, meaning that tank items are particularly strong right now, then tanky Champs will be high priority picks/bans. To maintain the game as competitive as possible the **meta is constantly changing** and evolving for League. Riot consistently releases new patches every week or so, which introduces adjustments such as nerfs of buffs to Champions, as well as item changes amongst a range of other things.

Replayability

1. **Champions** : The game offers a vast choice of playable characters. A player can play over **150 different champions**, this makes every game feel a bit different, creating retention. In addition every champ has a cost in the game shop, the currency needed to buy one is acquired when completing games or quests, so players actually need to play the game for a while to unlock most of the champions.



Champions splash arts

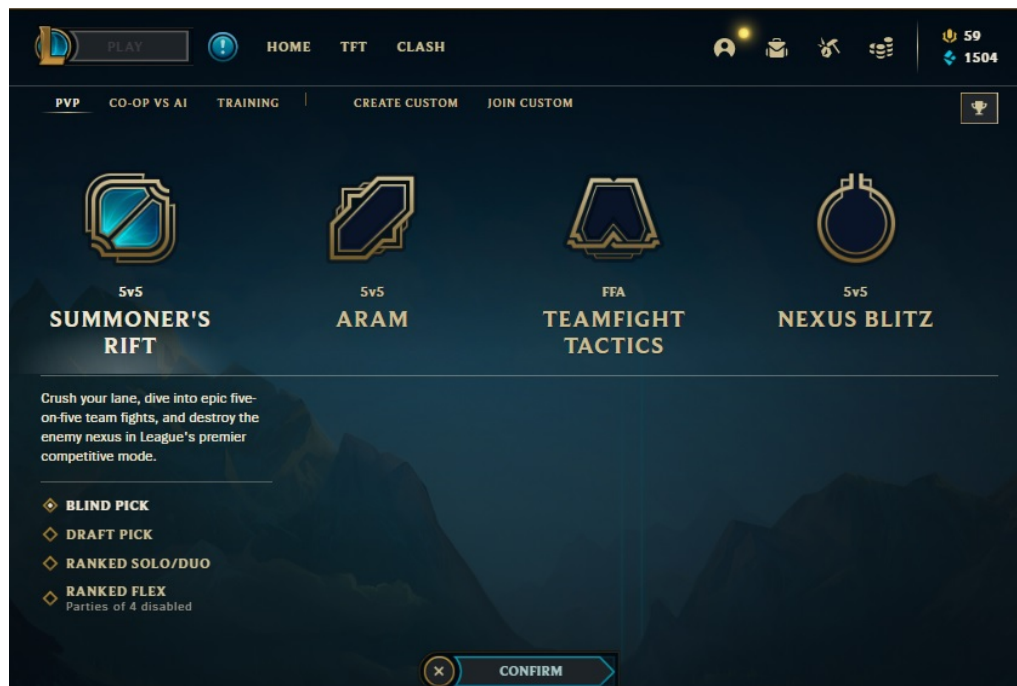
2. **Leveling** : League of Legends has an infinite leveling system, each time a player completes a game or a quest, he will gain experience, and with enough experience he will level up. Each time a player levels up, he will be awarded with a champion chest (an item that gives champions shards).

3. **Eternals** : Eternals are a recently new “**trophy**” system added to league. Eternals are divided into two categories: the common type and the special one. When executing particular actions such as killing an enemy or breaking a tower, the common eternal will show up, and everytime the player beats his personal record it will appear in the endgame screen. Meanwhile the special eternals are usually tied to the champion spells, for example everytime the player will stun an enemy with his crowd control skill, the special eternal will show up.



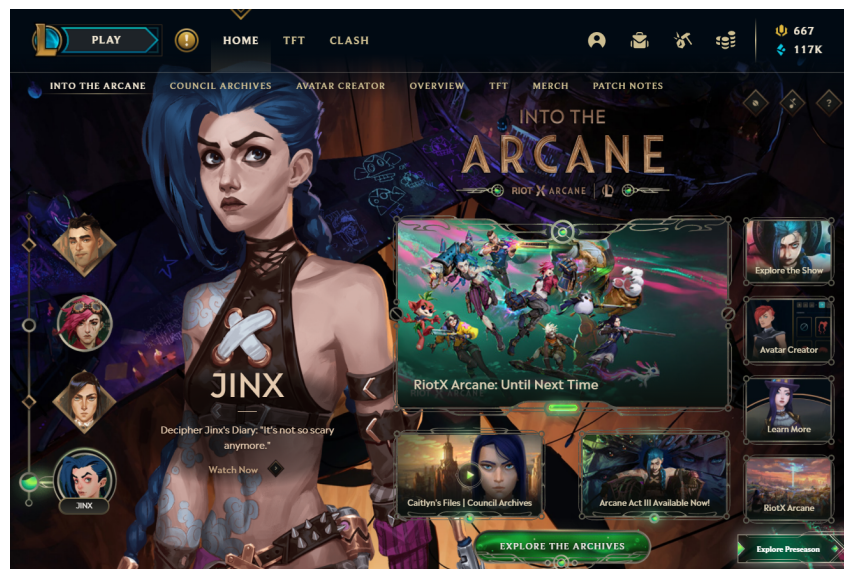
An example of a special Eternal

4. **Different Game modes** : League of Legends offers a vast choice of game modes. Players can choose between Normal Blind games, Normal Draft, Ranked Solo/Duo Queue, Ranked Flex, ARAM, Ultra Rapid Fire, One for All, Ultimate Spellbook, Teamfight Tactics, custom games, etc. Each game mode has a **different set of rules** but in most of them the objective remains the same, to beat the enemy team.



Client view when choosing a game mode

5. **Events** : During a game season there will be many different events. With every event the game introduces new skins, special battle passes and sometimes even new game modes. For example with the start of Arcane (the first animated series related to League of Legends) a new event also started in the game, where every player could obtain four different skins (related to the champions involved in the animated story) after winning a game, and also the home view of the client changed, offering a visual novel-like game for the most important characters of the show.

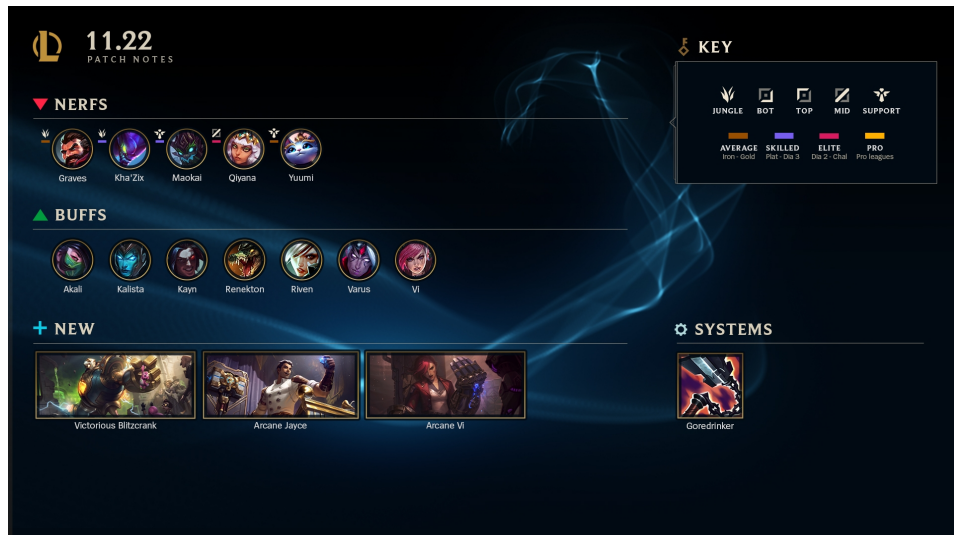


Client view during the Arcane event

Game as a Service

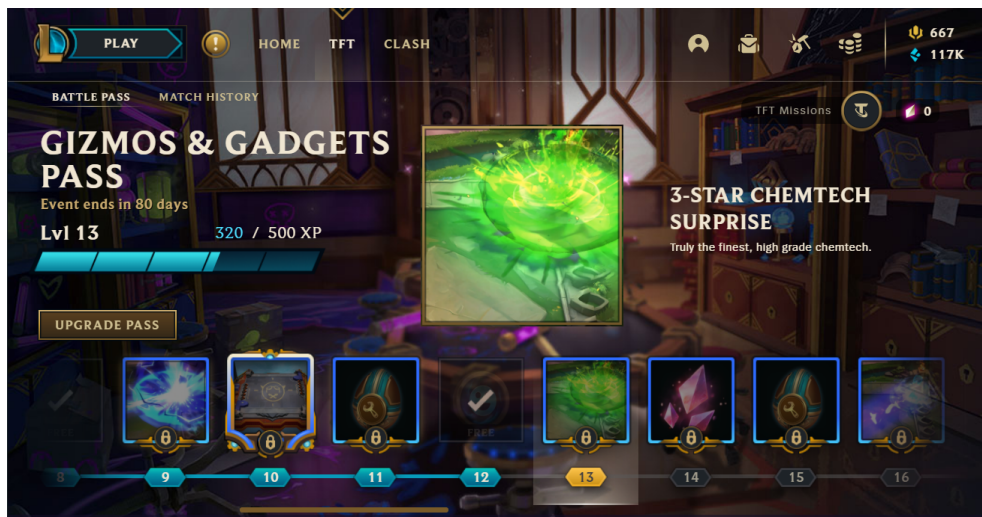
League is the most played free to play game, and as most free to play multiplayer it is a game as a service ([GaaS](#)).

1. **Patches** : To make the game feel not obsolete, there are constant patches to balance existing champions and to introduce new ones, also new champions skins get released. Every time a game “season” ends, there is a big patch introducing new mechanics and revolutionizing the game map and the champions items.



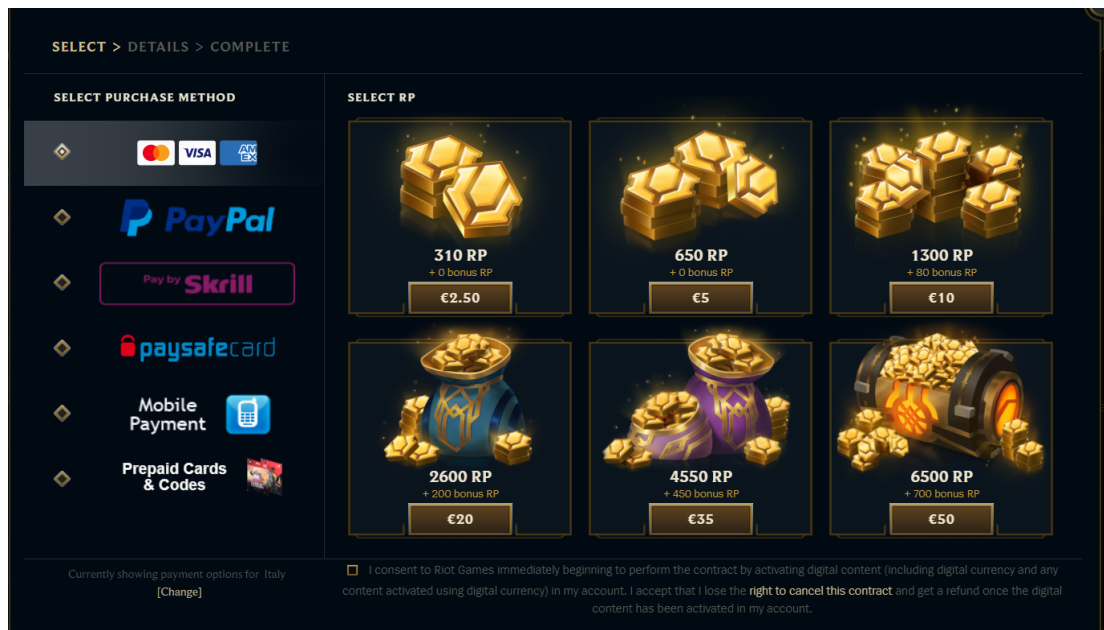
An overview of patch 11.22

2. **Battle pass** : League offers a variety of battle pass, that awards the player with special rewards when leveling it. The players obtain battle pass EXP when completing in-game quests or just by playing the game.



The TFT battle pass

3. **Microtransactions** : As a free to play most of League of Legends revenue comes from microtransactions. In the game shop players can exchange real money with a premium currency that can be used to buy in-game cosmetics such as champion skins. It is worth noting that this premium currency doesn't give any advantage to players when comparing them to a completely free to play player.



Client view of the premium currency shop

Honorable Mention

Another significant aspect of League of Legends is gameplay **Clarity**.

Clarity is the ability to understand what's happening in League and respond to it.

The three main aspects of Clarity are:

1. **Gameplay should always be clearly conveyed.** The game visuals and audio should help the player identify and react to champions, spells and attacks. For example most champions have unique VFX/SFX to easily identify them, but with over 150 champions and 1000 skins it's hard to maintain the same quality for every new champion.
2. **Always preserve Hierarchy.** Meaning that the most important things (like a major ultimate or CC) should draw the most attention.
3. **Noise should be kept minimal.** It's not only about the audio, also visual noise can make it difficult to properly react to a teamfight.

Read more about clarity [here](#).

Pillars Synergies

Game as a service and **Replayability** work particularly well together. A game that is regularly updated avoids for most of the playerbase to grow tired of it, but why?

Thanks to the introduction of new champions and also new game modes, players always experience novelty when playing, thus the developers can create retention with weekly patches to keep the game “**fresh**”.

Another important benefit of weekly patches is that they maintain the game **competitive**. The game designers study each week the playrates and winrates of the champions or items to balance them and to evolve the meta.

The competitive and teamplay pillars also work well together, even though they cover two different player archetypes. One is the social player that enjoys playing in the company or feeling like part of the team and the other is the competitive player that wishes to improve his mastery and face new challenges. In the end, these two types of players are bound to cooperate: the competitive player will try to collaborate as much as possible with his team to improve his chance of winning, meanwhile, the social player’s objective is to have fun while playing in a group, but for most of the players winning is funnier than losing and also having a good standing while in a group makes an individual feel more appreciated.