

My first focus was on the mechanics. I had a few basic ideas for what the level would be but I wanted to recreate the shovel knight basics first. To me, that was the ability to destroy blocks ahead of you and critically the shovel drop (where you hit down in the air and do a pogo-like move with your shovel.) After I had the ability to destroy blocks in front of you and bouncing on blocks and also destroying them, I moved on to the level. The dig mechanic in Shovel Knight is used more for combat and as a means of basic interaction for the world. I knew combat was going to be way out of scope so I focused my design around the shovel drop. I give a few basic blocks to dig up and get money as well as a checkpoint and a small spike pit if you want to test it out, and then move on to teaching the shovel drop.

This was a really important part for me because I wanted to see if I could teach shovel drop without slapping text on the screen. Shovel Knight doesn't explicitly tell you how to do it so I wanted to see if I could do something similar. This led to having a block in the ground that was destructible and nowhere else to go. If you just panic spam buttons you'll almost inevitably hit down in the air and go straight through it. This was the case in all of my playtesting as well. Next, I introduce blocks that will break if you land on them normally but will let you bounce on them with shovel drop. This is the practicing the mechanic. I have a safe space first where failing just lets you try again and you can't proceed until you learn the skill. Then, a checkpoint followed by one more test over spikes this time. There's a threat, but the punishment is resetting to the space right before the jump. The difficulty is increased next where you have to do several in a row to cross a gap.

Here comes the twist. I then made a bouncy block that when you shovel drop on it, you go shooting really high up. It's taught the same way shovel drop is. Stuck in the ground with nowhere else to go. It's also a safe area if you want to mess around with it a bit. This leads right

into the mastery section. A longer series of jumps combining the new bouncy block with the old disappearing block leading to a bunch of coins and triumphant music. My playtesting had a lot of really positive reactions even if they died a few times and I think I hit the general idea of the 3D World design plan while still emulating Shovel Knight's style.