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Design Exercise

For a popular shooter or action game of your choice, design a 10-15 minute campaign level.

- **High-Level Design**

    - Describe the level and setup in as much detail as you feel is necessary

    - Focus on the scenario, pacing, encounters, and level flow

    - Include a low fidelity sketch of the entire level, so we can follow along

- **Choose one encounter from your level and design it in complete detail**

    - Please include a detailed sketch of this one encounter (doesn't need to be pretty, but should convey your idea)

    - Focus on environment layout - cover, sightlines, and paths

    - Describe how the encounter unfolds

    - Explain your choices about what the enemies or obstacles are (where they are? how do they behave in the encounter?)

We realize this is a task that could take several days. We're only looking for you to spend one afternoon or evening on this. Focus on the fun big idea, and only capture details for that one specific encounter. We're looking for clarity in communication and not artistic sketching abilities.

CHOSEN GAME: SPLATOON 2

You play as an Inkling, splattering colorful ink throughout the game world. Sprayed ink damages on impact; ink on surfaces affects your movement.
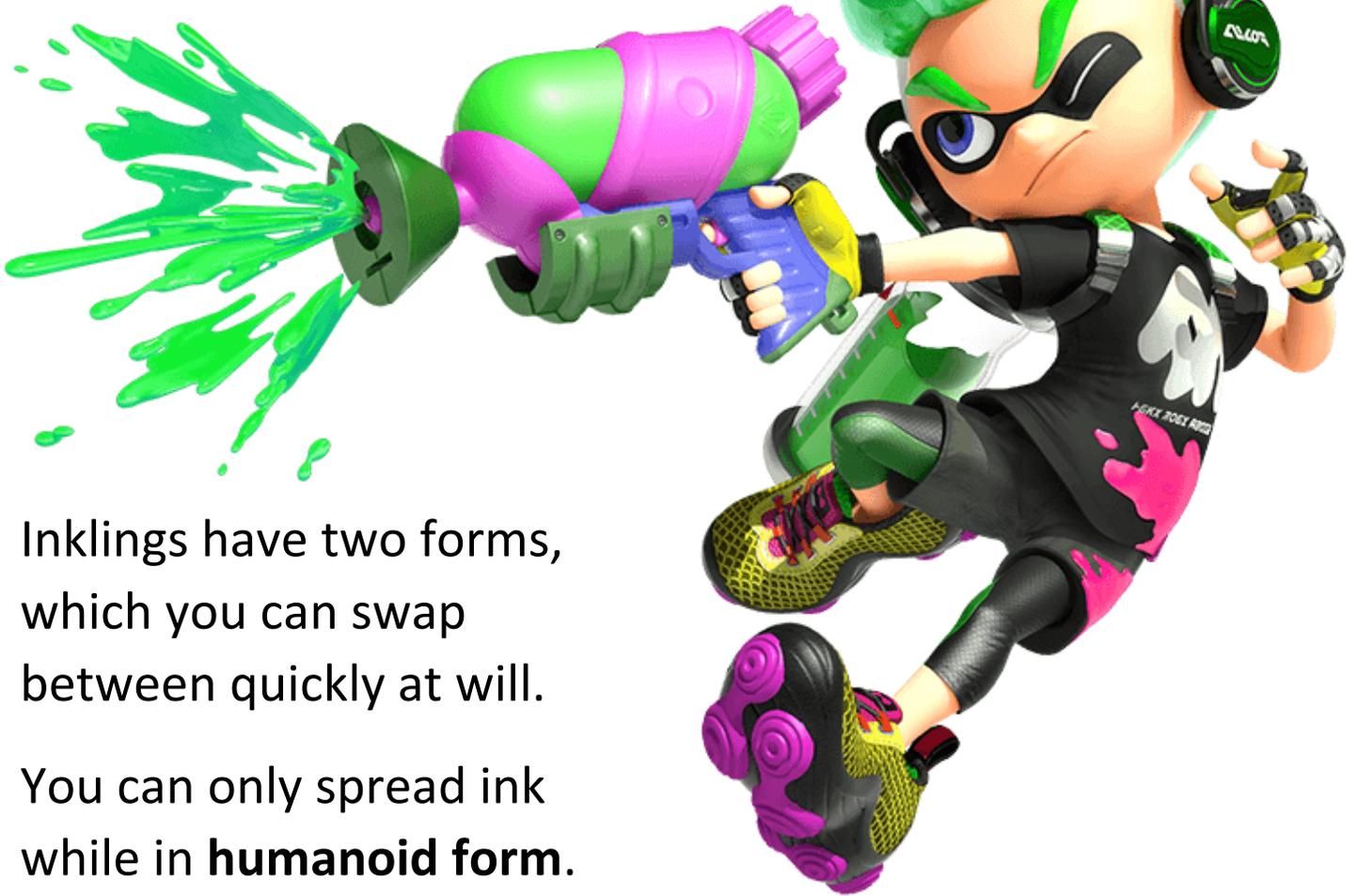
Inklings have two forms, which you can swap between quickly at will.

You can only spread ink while in **humanoid form**.

Squid form moves fast through ink of your color, is stealthier, and refills your ink supply.

Additional Mechanics

Launchpad

Inkable & Non-Inkable Surfaces

Grate

Ride rail

Balloonfish

Dash track

Squee-G

Gusher

Collectables

Power egg /
Can of power eggs

Armor

Sardinium

Sunken Scroll

Crate

Enemy Types

Octotrooper

Shielded
Octotrooper

Octodiver

Octocopter

Octosniper

HIGH-LEVEL DESIGN

Zapfish

Setup

Level fits into **Octo Canyon** (aka **Hero Mode**), Splatoon 2's existing single-player campaign.

- **Objective: Release the Zapfish.**
  (same objective as all non-Octoling, non-boss-battle levels in this mode)
- Level adjusts slightly based on weapon used; can use any one of nine weapons (plus bomb-type sub-weapon).
  (same as all other levels in this mode)

Concept

- Level is fast-paced, exhilarating, and plays with familiar mechanics in ways that feel novel.
- Unifying theme is the creative use of grates.
    - Grates appear frequently in minor/supporting roles but are rarely in the spotlight themselves.
    - As permeable barriers, grates have interesting applications in both environment traversal and combat.
    - Level name could incorporate a grate pun (*The Grate Escape*, *Grate Day in the Morning!*, etc).

Level Flow

Section one

Purpose: Kick off the level in an exciting way. Get the player paying attention to grates.

Overview:

- Player appears at spawn point; short paintable wall blocks initial view
- Climbing short wall reveals a much larger wall beyond it, with two tiers of grated catwalks
- The bulk of this section involves navigating up the wall
    - Ground-based enemies appear as player reaches wall, creating sense of time pressure
    - Can maintain pressure by spawning low-flying enemies as player gets higher; general trajectory of fire should encourage continued climbing
    - Players choose how much to explore / engage with enemies vs. focus on getting over the wall quickly
    - Grates provide places to shoot from while in humanoid form without impeding climbing in squid form
    - Wall has strategically-placed dash tracks, grates, and balloonfish to create paths of varying difficulty
        - More challenging paths areas can incorporate Squee-Gs and/or crates that block grates
        - Offer paths of least resistance as well as risky opportunities accessible w/ forethought (shooting crates to unblock grates, prepping areas of wall with ink from a distance) or backtracking (can encourage this by placing balloonfish in places bypassed via dash track, for easier access)
        - Grates provide necessary connections to bypass non-inkable sections of wall
        - Could have player round a corner in the wall at each catwalk tier, revealing new area of wall
- At the top of the wall is a small area with crates and a launchpad to the next section
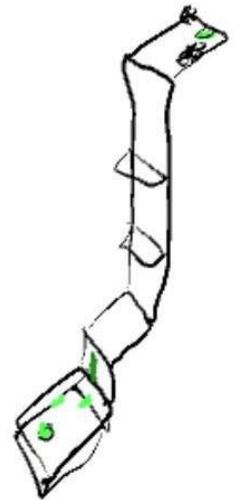
Notes: Starting this level with a fast-paced combat encounter is a little subversive, but by the time this level takes place players are very familiar with all the skills and mechanics involved here.

Section two

Purpose: Provide a feeling of reward for having successfully scaled the wall. Keep up momentum while providing a break from combat.

Overview:
- Player arrives at section, activating a checkpoint
- Taking a Gusher up to a higher platform brings player to another ride rail, leading into an extended joyride of passing through grates, jumping from one ride rail to another, and collecting power eggs and squid rings
  - Players can stay in squid form for the entire ride, making this section a jumping timing puzzle only
  - Shooting balloons (which reward additional power eggs) while still successfully passing through the grates requires well-timed swaps between humanoid and squid form in addition to well-timed jumps
  - Optional ride rails running in parallel add yet another layer of risk/reward to an otherwise linear section
- Final ride rail spirals around next section, giving a good view from multiple angles before dropping player off
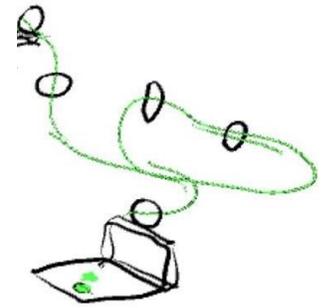
Notes: Although this section focuses on timing elements, its primary purpose is to feel rewarding, and so default challenges are forgiving and the sequence ends on a high note. A Sunken Scroll is hidden in a secret area in this section.

Section three

Purpose: Encourage learning & experimentation to prepare player for final encounter

Overview:
- Player arrives at section, jumping off the ride rail and activating a checkpoint
- Layout is made up of serpentine walkways of metal, glass, and grates
- Player faces a mix of puzzles/minor combat encounters that involve climbing up/dropping down through grates
  - The player cannot get to the end of the section without using a Gusher to get up through a grate
  - At least one required puzzle involves seeing a dynamic obstacle from below through glass and needing to emerge through a grate at the right time to avoid it
- Player emerges from grate onto a platform with a launchpad leading to the next section

Notes: After two fast-paced and primarily two-dimensional sections (one upwards-driven and the other forwards-driven) this section lets the player set the pace and gets them thinking in three-dimensions. Sardinium is hidden in this section.

Section four

Purpose: End with a dramatic encounter that is entertaining, challenges the player, and rewards skill and improvisation.

Overview:
- Player arrives at section, activating the final checkpoint; wall blocks initial view
- Climbing short wall reveals a long broad ramp with scattered cover, and beyond it, a large octagonal platform with enemies including Octosnipers
- Octosnipers shoot as player makes their way across walkway & under platform
- Underneath the platform are more enemies, creating combat on two levels: Octotroopers and Octodivers underneath the platform, and Octosnipers and Shielded Octotroopers on top of it
  - Gushers below the platform aligned with grates in the platform allow rapid travel between the two, enabling ambushes where player pops up through grate, engages enemies & drops back down to reload
  - Players can choose to focus on clearing one area of enemies first or engage with both simultaneously
- On top of the platform, up a narrow tower, a ride rail leads to the Zapfish and the end of the level
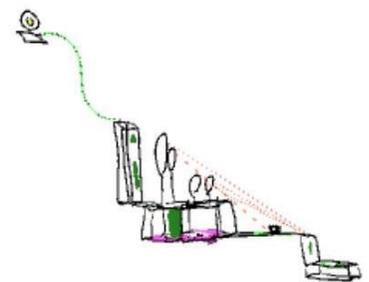
Notes: Players do not have to defeat all enemies in this encounter in order to complete the level, but attempting to sidestep or speedrun this encounter is a significant challenge in itself.

LOW-FIDELITY SKETCH
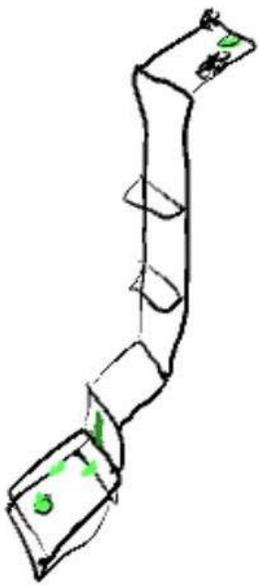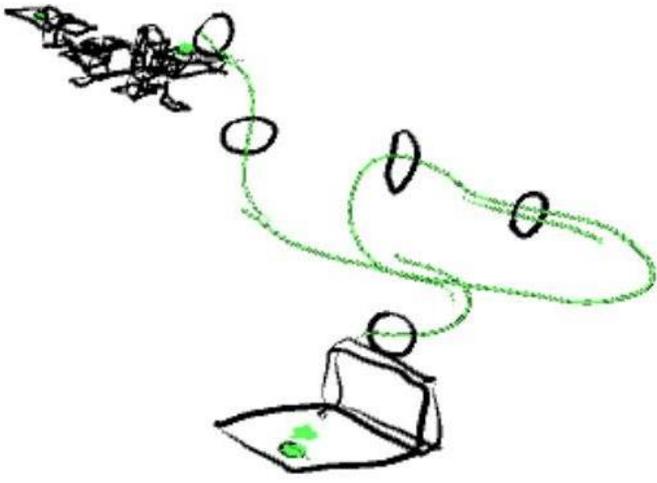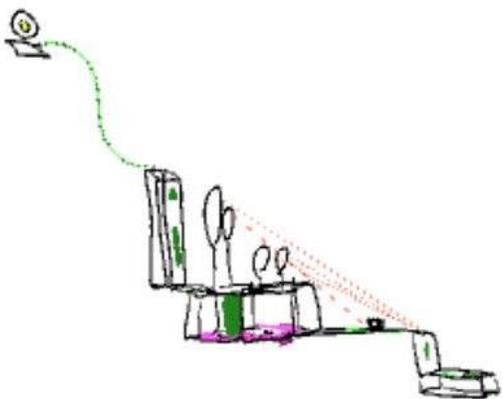
DETAILED ENCOUNTER (SECTION FOUR)

Wall of glass & grating cannot be climbed; player must pass through grating into area beneath platform

Exposed climb necessary to reach Zapfish makes player likely to want to take out Octosnipers first

Releasing the Zapfish ends the level!

Crates provide minor temporary cover; being fired on from above by snipers creates an underdog feel

Quick, breezy ride rail to platform

Climbing inkable wall reveals encounter

Octosnipers & Shielded Octotroopers on top of platform encourage grate-based ambushes

Player lands here; final checkpoint

Octotroopers & Octodivers below platform add an additional layer to combat; Octodivers in particular can catch player by surprise

Vertically-aligned Gushers and grates enable player to rapidly pop up & drop down through platform
(Gusher ink should be green)

REFERENCE SCREENSHOTS