CGC VIDEO GAMES™

2023

REFERENCE GUIDE



THE ULTIMATE SOURCE FOR VIDEO GAME COLLECTING


SUPER MARIO 3
BROS.
Nintendo
ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SUPER MARIO 3
BROS.
Nintendo
ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
MADE IN JAPAN
NES-UM-USA



REFERENCE GUIDE

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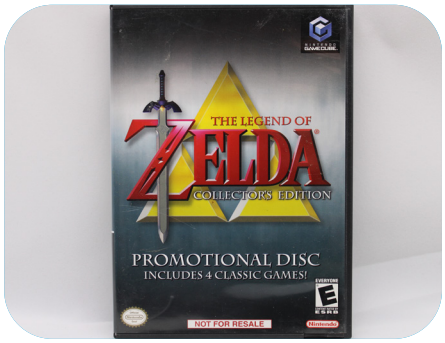
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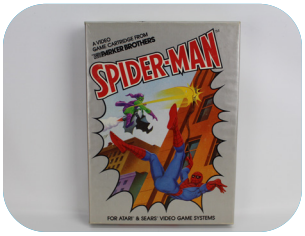
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CGC UNIVERSAL GRADE
9.4
The Legend of Zelda
Nintendo Entertainment System, 1988
Circle SoQ, Rev-A, NES-GP, NES P ZL
First Video Game Graded
SEALED
Type: H-Seam
Grade: A+
The Legend of
ZELDA™
Includes invaluable maps and strategic playing tips.
Nintendo ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM®
REV-A

Welcome!

Video game collecting is a growing hobby that has gone through several evolutions. In the 1990s and early 2000s, collectors were once content with just acquiring the cartridges and discs of their favorite games. By the late 2000s, collectors began taking their hobby a step further, finding the original boxes and manuals to go with their games to make them complete once again.

Now, video game collecting is going through yet another change. More and more collectors are shifting from collecting complete-in-box games to collecting factory-sealed examples. This is due to an increasing demand for authentic, high-grade items. There is also a rising awareness of production runs, matching components and variants. All these developments have made video game collecting more complex than before.

CGC Video Games is here to help new and experienced collectors with video game preservation, authentication and encapsulation. Like other collectibles, video games are susceptible to damage and forgery. Games can also be hard to identify, especially production runs and variants. Certification through CGC Video Games alleviates these concerns by identifying the variant of the video game, determining its authenticity and encapsulating it in the hobby's best holder.

CGC Video Games will also support video game collectors by providing the most up-to-date knowledge about the hobby. The CGC Video Games Reference Guide will help collectors better understand the video game collecting hobby, including information on video game variants. It is organized by both publisher and console. There are sub-set lists throughout the CGC Video Games Reference Guide that will help collectors learn which video games are the most significant and the most desirable. There are also detailed descriptions and high-resolution pictures of significant variants to be aware of.

Every console section begins with a list of Key Titles. The games on a Key Titles list are the most significant titles for that console because of their remarkable gameplay, enduring popularity and cultural significance. Each console section also includes a Traditional Rarity list. Games on the Traditional Rarity list are licensed games that have been consistently ranked among the rarest and most sought after for the console.

Over time, CGC Video Games will continue to release information that benefits the video game community, as well as providing certification services to preserve these cherished collectibles. Future content will be geared towards collectors of varying levels of video game knowledge. Whether you are new to the hobby or have advanced experience, CGC Video Games is here to help.

Make sure to check out the CGC Video Games website for additional content and instructions on how to submit your games for certification. Our team of collectors, dealers and enthusiasts are ready to unlock a new level of video game collecting!

If you notice something that is incorrect in this reference guide, or have suggestions for additions, please email CGC Video Games at Service@CGCvideogames.com. Video game collecting is a community based on transparency and shared knowledge and CGC Video Games shares these values.

Key Terms

Cartridge – A case containing a ROM-based video game program.

Disc – An optical disc with stored video game data.

Complete in Box (CIB) – A game state that includes the original box/case, cartridge/disc and manual.

Unopened – A game state in which the original seal was removed but the game's packaging has not been opened.

Sealed – A game state that maintains the original method of packaging and sale.

Qualified – A video game that has either been restored in some way or has incorrect or missing parts. Signaling something significant is wrong with the game.

Region – The geographical location a video game was originally sold in. Some regions are locked due to publishing rights.

Game Specific Inserts – Inserts that are specific to the video game, such as hint books, maps and slipcovers.

Publisher Specific Inserts –Inserts that are specific to the publisher, such as posters, publisher advertisements and registration cards..

Console Specific Inserts – Inserts that are specific to the console, such as consumer information booklets, dust covers and trays.

Traditional Rarity - A game that has long been considered rare or is desired by video game collectors.

Key Titles - A game that had a significant impact on the console or gaming community.

Seal of Quality (SoQ) – The Nintendo and Sega Seals of Quality which change over time, resulting in new variants from different production runs.

Big Box – A box that is larger than the standard box or case size of a video game, commonly used for collector's editions, limited editions and special editions.

Clamshell – Any larger game case that is opened on a hinged side.

Seal Type – The method of sealing a video game.

Console – The specific hardware that a video game is played on.

Handheld – A console that fits in the hands and is meant for mobile gaming.

Variant – Any distinct difference in the printing of a video game or its components. Some video games can have multiple variants.

Country of Production – The country in which a video game or its components was produced, made or assembled.

Not for Resale – A video game that was distributed by the publisher but not intended for retail sale. They will typically bear a phrase such as "Not for Resale," "Not for Sale," "Promotional Copy" etc.

Not for Resale (Bundle) – A video game that was originally packaged with other components but not intended for individual retail sale, such as Guitar Hero or Mario Party 10.

Age and Content Rating – The rating assigned to a video game by a third party that describes the content and recommended age for play.

UPC – The barcode of a video game.

Retailer Variants – Video games that have components, content, cover art or stickers that are from a specific retailer.

Variant Cover Art – A cover art with an alternative image or design.

Rerelease – A video game that has been definitively released after the initial launch, such as a Greatest Hits or a port to a newer console.

Game Code – A sequence of numbers and/or letters that publishers use to identify a video game and its components, such as a USA Code or Product Code.

Publisher – The company that is responsible for the manufacturing and distribution of a video game.

Developer – The company that is responsible for the design and programming of a video game.

Cover Art – The original artwork that appears on the outside of a box, on the front page of a manual, or on the slipsleeve of a video game.

Console Library – An all-encompassing list of games that were released for a particular console.

Reproduction – A bootleg or fake copy of a video game or its components.

Home Brew – A game produced by a hobbyist for a proprietary console after that console's lifespan.

Prototype – A game state in which the video game is still in development.

Conservation – A treatment to stabilize a video game's structural state using archivally safe materials, such as a replacement foam or tray.

Restoration – A treatment intended to return a video game to a known or assumed state by adding non-original material for aesthetic purposes.

Preservation – The process of ensuring that a video game's structural integrity and aesthetic appearance remains consistent over time.





Nintendo Entertainment System

Historical Background

When Nintendo launched the Nintendo Entertainment System in 1985, it revolutionized the video game market. Commonly referred to as the NES, this console introduced and popularized some of the world's most iconic video game franchises, including Castlevania, Final Fantasy, Kirby, The Legend of Zelda, Mega Man and, of course, Super Mario Bros. To this day, the NES remains one of the best-selling video game consoles of all time.

The history and nostalgia surrounding the NES has made it an enduring favorite among countless gamers and recently, collectors have become aware of several important NES variants and are adjusting their collecting accordingly. Regardless of collecting style, the NES represents the epitome of retro video game collecting.

Key Titles

Battletoads
Castlevania
Castlevania II: Simon's Quest
Castlevania III: Dracula's Curse
Contra
Dr. Mario
DuckTales
Final Fantasy
Kirby's Adventure
The Legend of Zelda
Mega Man
Mega Man 2
Mega Man 3
Mega Man 4
Mega Man 5
Mega Man 6
Metroid
Mike Tyson's Punch Out!
Super Mario Bros.
Super Mario Bros. 2
Super Mario Bros. 3
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: The Arcade Game
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III: Manhattan Project
Tetris
Zelda II: The Adventure of Link



Traditional Rarity

Bonk's Adventure
Bubble Bobble Part 2
Cowboy Kid
Donkey Kong Jr. Math
Dragon Fighter
The Flintstones: Surprise at Dinosaur Peak
Kid Klown in Night Mayor World
Little Samson
Panic Restaurant
Power Blade 2
Stadium Events
Zombie Nation

Nintendo World Championships (NWC)

The Nintendo World Championships cartridge is perhaps the most desirable item in all retro video game collecting. This competition cartridge was produced by Nintendo for use during the Nintendo World Championships, a national video game tournament held throughout the United States in 1990 during the Nintendo PowerFest '90 tour. Most hobbyists consider the Nintendo World Championships to be the first significant eSports event in the United States and devote serious attention to collecting materials associated with it.

At least ninety of these competition cartridges were given out to finalists of the tournament. Other copies were given to exhibition employees or kept by the tour's promoters. Some may have even been stolen or saved from the trash.

Each of these cartridges were individually numbered, making it easier to track them than most other video game collectibles. An additional 26 of these competition cartridges were cased in a gold-colored cartridge and mailed to the first and second place winners of a 1990 Nintendo Power sweepstakes event.



Nintendo World Championships cartridge (No. 0120) from the Nicholas Membrez-Weiler Collection.

Nintendo Entertainment System Variants

Hangtabs

Hangtabs represent one of the most critical variants in NES collecting. Several Nintendo Series, as well as some third-party games like Castlevania, feature boxes with either a cardboard hangtab built into the back of the box or a box with no hangtab. Boxes with hangtabs are more desirable to collectors because they are associated with earlier releases of games.

Significant Nintendo Series Hangtab Games:

Donkey Kong
Duck Hunt
Kung Fu
Metroid
Super Mario Bros.

Significant Third-Party Hangtab Games:

Castlevania
Chubby Cherub
Ghosts 'n' Goblins
Ikari Warriors
Sqoon

Circle Seal of Quality vs. Oval Seal of Quality

Another critical variant is indicated by the Nintendo Seal of Quality, or SoQ. Nintendo prints its SoQ on every game it licenses, ensuring to the customer it meets the company's quality standards. Nintendo's original SoQ was circle-shaped and thus is often referred to as a "circle seal." It was later redesigned to an oval shape, which is often referred to as an "oval seal." What's more, the oval seal underwent its own design change. Earlier printed oval SoQs feature a ™ logo while the re-designed oval SoQs feature a ® logo. Several NES games have released with varying SoQs, with several of those examples belonging to games in the Nintendo Series.





Rev-A vs. No Rev-A

This variant is signified by the addition of the phrase "REV-A" on boxes featuring a circle SoQ. The current understanding is that this variant correlates with Nintendo's transition from 5-screw cartridges to 3-screw cartridges. Several Nintendo Series and third-party games feature this variant.

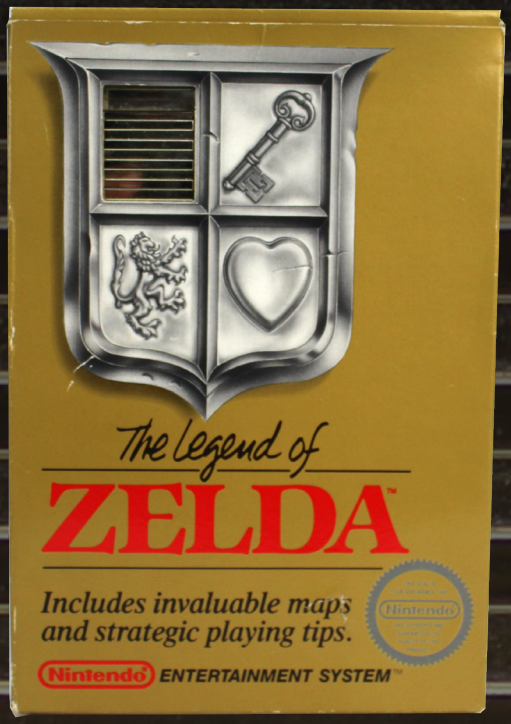




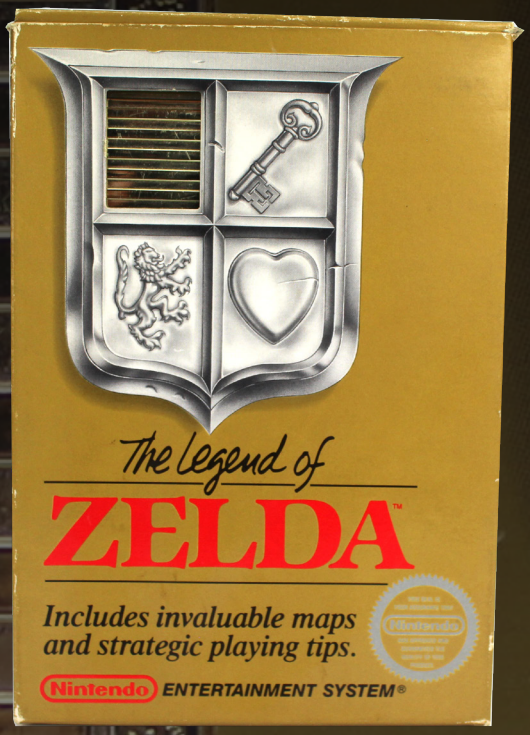
The Legend of Zelda (Known Variants)

Many NES games have different variants, some of which are not included in the above descriptions.

A great example is The Legend of Zelda, which has several box variants. Below is a list of every known box variant, so collectors can easily and quickly identify variants in their collection.



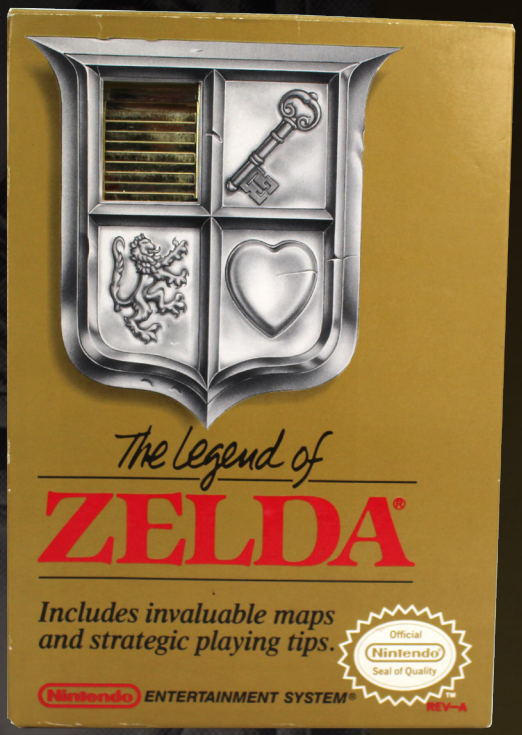
Nintendo Entertainment System ™



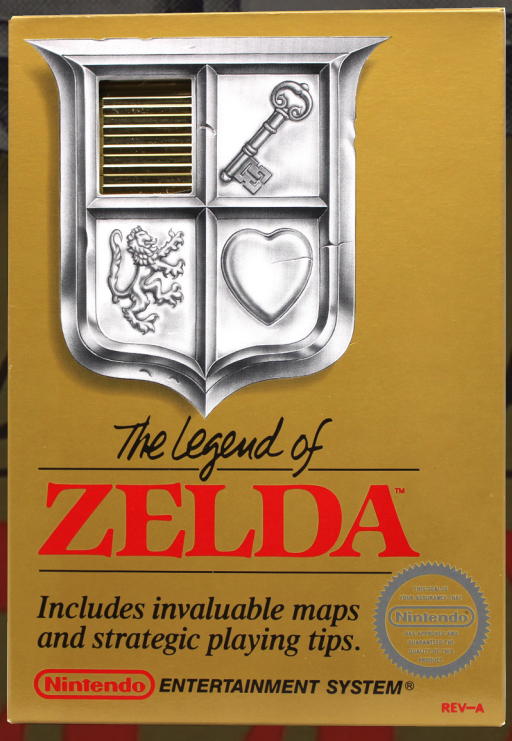
Nintendo Entertainment System ®

Known Box Variants

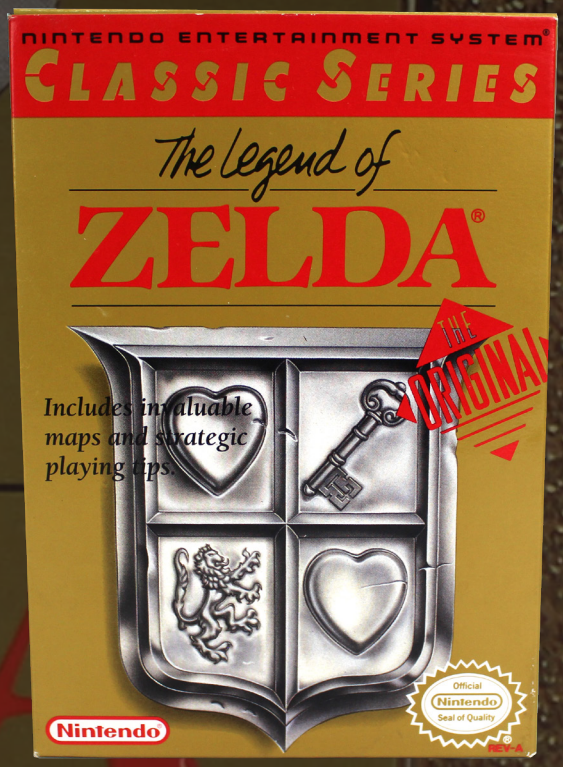
Nintendo Entertainment System ™
Nintendo Entertainment System ®
Nintendo Entertainment System ®, Screenshots Revised
Circle SoQ, Rev-A
Circle SoQ, Rev-A, NES-GP
Circle SoQ, Rev-A, NES-GP, NES P ZL
Oval SoQ ™, 5 Digit Zip Code
Oval SoQ ™, 9 Digit Zip Code, Star
Oval SoQ ®
Classic Series, Grey Cart, USA-1



Oval SoQ ™, 5 Digit Zip Code



Circle SoQ, Rev-A



Classic Series, Grey Cart, USA-1



Super Nintendo Entertainment System

Historical Background

Following the immense success of the Nintendo Entertainment System, Nintendo decided to develop and distribute a new home console that featured enhanced video graphics and sound designs. The Super Nintendo Entertainment System (often simply called the Super Nintendo, or SNES) launched in 1991 and became a cultural phenomenon.

Players across the world applauded the Super Nintendo for its superior gameplay and in-depth storylines. Many of the video game industry's most popular characters were introduced on the Super Nintendo, including Star Fox and Yoshi, as well as enduring franchises such as Harvest Moon and Mario Kart.

Its commercial success was aided by what has come to be known as the "Console Wars," Nintendo's direct marketing strategy against Sega. The Super Nintendo also sparked controversy, as its popularization of video game violence became a political talking point that persists to this day. This combination of adoration and notoriety has led many to proclaim the Super Nintendo as the greatest video game console of all time.

Key Titles

Chrono Trigger
Donkey Kong Country
Donkey Kong Country 2: Diddy's Kong Quest
Donkey Kong Country 3: Dixie Kong's Double Trouble!
EarthBound
Final Fantasy II
Final Fantasy III
F-Zero
Harvest Moon
Kirby's Dream Land 3
The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past
Mega Man X
Mega Man X2
Mega Man X3
Mortal Kombat
Mortal Kombat II
Star Fox
Street Fighter II
Super Castlevania IV
Super Mario All-Stars
Super Mario Kart
Super Mario RPG: The Legend of the Seven Stars
Super Mario World
Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island
Super Metroid
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles IV: Turtles in Time
Zombies Ate My Neighbors



Traditional Rarity

Aero Fighters
Castlevania: Dracula X
E.V.O: Search for Eden
Exertainment Mountain Bike Rally/Speed Racer
Final Fight Guy
Hagane: The Final Conflict
Mega Man 7
Metal Warriors
Pocky and Rocky 2
Space MegaForce
Super Turrican 2
Wild Guns

Competition Cartridges

Two of the most prominent collectible Super Nintendo games are the console's competition cartridges.

The first competition cartridge, Super StarFox Weekend, was used for 1993's Super Star Fox Weekend Competition: A national competition hosted by Nintendo Power that corresponded with the release of Star Fox. After the competition, copies of the competition cartridge were sold by Nintendo through its Nintendo Super Power Supplies Catalog for $45 in the United States and $70 in Canada.

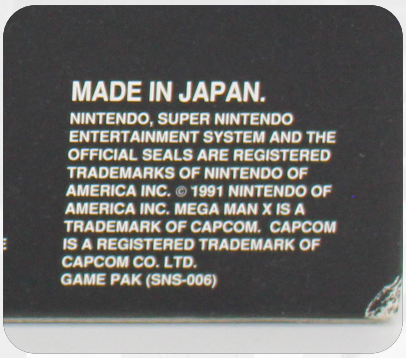
The second competition cartridge, the Donkey Kong Country Competition Cartridge, was used for the finals at Nintendo PowerFest '94 and later for the Blockbuster World Video Game Championships II. According to the game's case, 2,500 of these cartridges were produced.





Super Nintendo Entertainment System Variants

Country of Production



One of the most fundamental Super Nintendo variants is the games' country of production. Super Nintendo games were first manufactured in Japan. This is indicated by the phrase "Made in Japan," which can be found on both the box and the cartridge label.

In late 1994, Nintendo shifted most Super Nintendo production to Mexico. These games are denoted by the phrase "Made in Mexico," which again appears on both the box and the cartridge label.

Beginning in 1996, Nintendo sold the licensing rights of various third-party games to Majesco. These games are indicated by the phrase "Assembled in Mexico," which can also be found on the box and cartridge label. These shifts in production are critically important for complete-in-box collectors, as the construction quality differs between all three.

Player's Choice

One of the most significant variants for Super Nintendo collecting is Players Choice, a marketing label that Nintendo began using in May of 1996. These games feature a Players Choice logo on the upper-right corner of the box and on the right side of the cartridge label. Slight deviations in the box art and label designs are also visible. Fourteen different Super Nintendo games received a Players Choice label, most of which were first-party titles:

Super Nintendo Player's Choice Games:

Donkey Kong Country
Donkey Kong Country 2: Diddy's Kong Quest
Donkey Kong Country 3: Dixie Kong's Double Trouble!
F-Zero
The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past
Mario Paint
SimCity
Super Mario All-Stars
Super Mario Kart
Super Metroid
Super Star Wars
Tetris & Dr. Mario
Tetris 2

USA Codes

Many Super Nintendo games went through several printings and each of which are designated by separate USA codes. The USA code can be found on the inside flaps of the box, the lower-left corner of the cartridge label and the top-right corner of the manual. These codes can be used to identify other variant information, such as country of production and Players Choice. For instance, Super Mario World features three different USA codes for the cartridge label:

Super Mario World features three different USA Codes for the cartridge label:
SNS-MW-USA
SNS-MW-USA-1
SNS-MW-USA-2





Not for Resale

Nintendo's marketing strategy for the Super Nintendo included providing gameplay demonstrations for the public. To do this, Nintendo sent demonstration cartridges to selected retailers to be played in-store. These cartridges are identified by a unique label with the phrase "Not for Resale" (NFR) and a sticker on the back that reads "Not for Resale, Demo Game Only." There are a total of fourteen known Super Nintendo games with a NFR label:

Known Not for Resale Games:

Contra III: The Alien Wars
Donkey Kong Country
Donkey Kong Country 3:
Dixie Kong's Double Trouble!
Ken Griffey Jr.'s Winning Run
Killer Instinct
Mortal Kombat II
NCAA Basketball
StarFox
Street Fighter II
Street Fighter II Turbo
Stunt Race FX
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles IV:
Turtles in Time
Tetris Attack
Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island

Locking and Open Cartridges

There are two types of Super Nintendo cartridges: locking cartridges and open cartridges. The Super Nintendo's original design had a mechanism that locked into a slot on the front of the cartridges while powered on. However, players would often remove cartridges without releasing the locking mechanism, causing damage to the console. Nintendo remedied this by redesigning its cartridges without the locking slot in the cartridge. This change has created several variants, especially for first-party titles.


SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
CAPCOM
STREET FIGHTER II
LICENSED BY Nintendo
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES IV
TURTLES IN
SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
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Exp date: 1/31/23
Nintendo
MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL
FREE INSIDE!
Collector
eball Card!
SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
Only For
Nintendo
SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
LICENSED BY
Nintendo



Nintendo 64

Historical Background

Nintendo launched the Nintendo 64, its third home video game console, in 1996. Its unique controller design and wide selection of first-party Nintendo titles make the console a favorite among video game collectors.

The Nintendo 64 introduced players to several iconic franchises such as Paper Mario and Super Smash Bros. Many of its games are considered among the best ever produced and helped redefine their respective genres.

One of the Nintendo 64's most distinguishable features is its use of color and design variations for not only its cartridges, but also the console and controllers. Known as the Funtastic Colors Series, these consoles and controllers feature differently-colored translucent plastic, which was a popular trend at the time.

Nintendo also secured licensing rights for several late 1990s properties, including James Bond, Star Wars, WCW and WWF. Together, these characteristics make the Nintendo 64 a true pop-culture icon of the Y2K era.

Key Titles

Banjo-Kazooie
Banjo-Tooie
Conker's Bad Fur Day
Diddy Kong Racing
Donkey Kong 64
F-Zero X
GoldenEye 007
The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask
The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time
Mario Kart 64
Mario Party
Mario Party 2
Mario Party 3
Mario Tennis
Perfect Dark
Pokémon Snap
Pokémon Stadium
Pokémon Stadium 2
Star Fox 64
Star Wars: Rogue Squadron
Super Mario 64
Super Smash Bros.
Turok: Dinosaur Hunter
WWF No Mercy





Traditional Rarity

Bomberman 64: Second Attack
Castlevania: Legacy of Darkness
Clay Fighter: Sculptor's Cut
Goemon's Great Adventure
NFL Blitz Special Edition
PGA European Tour
Stunt Racer
Super Bowling
Transformers Beast Wars Transmetals
Worms: Armageddon

Nintendo 64 Variants

USA Codes

Similar to the Super Nintendo, Nintendo 64 variants can be identified by the USA code, which can be found on the inside flaps of the box, the cartridge label and the top-right corner of the manual. Some new printings of a box, cartridge or manual received an updated USA Code.

Players Choice

A common Nintendo 64 variant is Players Choice. These are identified by the Players Choice logo in the upper-right corner of the box and on the cartridge label. Twenty-six titles are known to have a Players Choice variant:

Nintendo 64 Player's Choice Games:

1080° Snowboarding
Banjo-Kazooie
Cruis'n USA
Diddy Kong Racing
GoldenEye 007
Kobe Bryant in NBA Courtside
The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time
Mario Kart 64
Star Fox 64
Star Wars: Rogue Squadron
Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire
Super Mario 64
Super Smash Bros.
Wave Race 64
WCW vs. nWo: World Tour
Yoshi's Story

ESRB Rating Logo

Another significant Nintendo 64 variant is the ESRB rating logo. A Nintendo 64 game's ESRB rating logo may be located on the bottom-right corner of the box and on the cartridge label. Because the ESRB was a relatively new organization in 1996, its rating system and its logo went through several design changes during the lifespan of the Nintendo 64. This is reflected on several titles that bear two or even three of these ESRB rating logo designs. One of the variants is a change in the rating system from "K-A" (Kids to Adults) to "E" (Everyone). Another variant is the shift from a pixelated rating logo to a solid rating logo.







Fiber Count

Another important variant is the fiber count. Nintendo manufactured its Nintendo 64 boxes using recycled material. The amount of recycled material is designated by the fiber count, which can be found on the left-side of the back of the box. These fiber counts can range from 78% to 100% recycled material.

Nintendo 64 Not for Resale (NFR) Games

Like the Super Nintendo, the Nintendo 64 was also marketed using demonstration kiosks at retail establishments. Demonstration cartridges were sent to these retailers by Nintendo. These cartridges are identified by a unique label with the phrase "Not for Resale" and usually with a sticker on the back that reads "Not for Resale, Demo Game Only." There is a total of twenty four NFR cartridges for the Nintendo 64:

Nintendo 64 Not for Resale Games:

1080° Snowboarding
Banjo-Kazooie
Banjo-Tooie
Diddy Kong Racing
Donkey Kong 64
Excitebike 64
GoldenEye 007
Jet Force Gemini
The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask (Gold)
The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask (Grey)
The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time
Mario Kart 64
Mario Party 2
Mario Party 3
Mario Tennis
Perfect Dark
Pokémon Snap (Black Text)
Pokémon Snap (Red Text)
Pokémon Stadium
Pokémon Stadium 2
Star Fox 64
Star Wars Episode 1: Racer
Star Wars: Rogue Squadron
Super Mario 64
Turok 2: Seeds of Evil
Yoshi's Story: International Version





Nintendo GameCube

Historical Background

The Nintendo GameCube launched in 2001 as the first Nintendo console to feature optical disc technology. The GameCube's smaller optical disc sacrificed enhanced video graphics but made up for it with innovative gameplay. Many video game collectors consider the GameCube controller to be one of the best controllers ever designed and it remains a popular option for use in Super Smash Bros. tournaments.

Some of Nintendo's all-time best titles were produced for the GameCube, including Luigi's Mansion, Paper Mario: The Thousand Year Door and Super Smash Bros. Melee. Meanwhile, several prominent franchises were introduced to North American audiences with the GameCube, such as Animal Crossing and Pikmin.

Combined, these factors make the GameCube an attractive console library for video game collecting.

Key Titles

Animal Crossing
Eternal Darkness
Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance
F-Zero GX
Kirby Air Ride
The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker
Luigi's Mansion
Mario Kart: Double Dash
Mario Party 4
Mario Party 5
Mario Party 6
Mario Party 7
Metroid Prime
Metroid Prime 2: Echoes
Paper Mario: The Thousand Year Door
Pikmin
Pokémon Colosseum
Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness
Resident Evil 4
The Simpsons Hit & Run
Super Mario Sunshine



Traditional Rarity

Chibi-Robo!
Cubivore: Survival of the Fittest
Def Jam: Fight for NY
Disney Sports Basketball
Go! Go! Hypergrind
Gotcha Force
Phantasy Star Online Episode I & II Plus
Pokémon Box: Ruby and Sapphire
Resident Evil: Code Veronica X
Ribbit King

Nintendo GameCube Variants

Product Codes

The product code is one of the easiest ways to identify a GameCube variant. Each new printing of a GameCube game received a new product code, so each variant of a GameCube game has a unique product code. Product codes as they were introduced on the GameCube have since become a staple on all Nintendo products. The product code consists of five numbers and a letter and can be found on the back of the cover art.



Country of Production and UPC 5

An important variant for GameCube collecting is the country of production. Many GameCube games were produced in both Japan and the United States. This variant can be identified by the phrases "Made in Japan" or "Made in USA," which can be found on the back of the cover art. Similarly, you can check the UPC 5 number to confirm the country of production. UPC 5 numbers that read "00000" were made in Japan, while UPC 5 numbers that read "00100," "00101" or "00102," were made in the United States.



Player's Choice

Player's Choice variants made a return on the GameCube. These variants can be identified by a yellow panel on both the top and front, and the lower spin of the cover art. There are a total of 106 Player's Choice titles.





Best Seller

This GameCube variant features a marketing label that reads "Best Seller" on the front of the cover art. It is possible that this marketing label was affixed to GameCube games after they reached a certain number of copies sold, but before they reached the threshold to become Player's Choice. There are a total of eight Best Seller variants:

Nintendo GameCube Best Seller Games:

Mario Party 6
Mario Power Tennis
Mario Superstar Baseball
Paper Mario: The Thousand Year Door
Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness
Star Fox: Assault
Super Mario Strikers
Super Smash Bros. Melee

Player's Choice and Best Seller

In some instances, the Best Seller logo will also appear on Player's Choice variants. A prominent example is Paper Mario: The Thousand Year Door.







Nintendo Wii

Historical Background

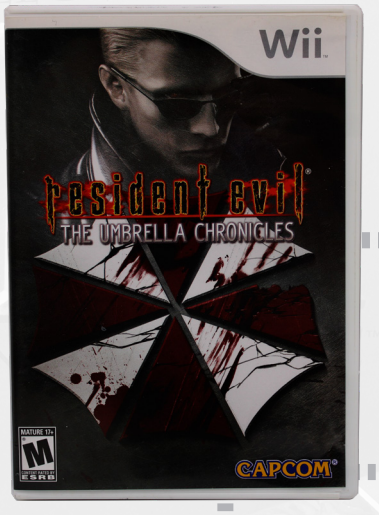
The Nintendo Wii is one of the best-selling video game consoles of all time. Launched in 2006, its revolutionary use of motion-capture technology broke through traditional gaming demographics, expanding sales away from the typical young male demographic to include entire generations, from pre-teens to senior citizens.

The Wii features a vast library that includes some of the most popular video games ever produced, including Wii Sports, which remains the best-selling single platform game to date with over eighty million copies sold worldwide. Similarly and according to review aggregator Metacritic, Super Mario Galaxy and Super Mario Galaxy 2 rank fifth and sixth on their all-time best games list by user score.

Key Titles

Animal Crossing: City Folk
Donkey Kong Country Returns
Fire Emblem: Radiant Dawn
Kirby's Epic Yarn
Kirby's Return to Dream Land
The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
Mario & Sonic at The Olympic Games
Mario Kart Wii
Mario Party 8
Mario Party 9
Metroid Prime: Trilogy
New Super Mario Bros. Wii
Pokémon Battle Revolution
PokéPark Wii: Pikachu's Adventure
Resident Evil: The Umbrella Chronicles
Super Mario Galaxy
Super Mario Galaxy 2
Super Paper Mario
Super Smash Bros. Brawl
Xenoblade Chronicles







Traditional Rarity

American Mensa Academy
Atrévete a Soñar Cyberbike: Cycling Sports
Dokapon Kingdom
Fragile Dreams: Farewell Ruins of the Moon
Fritz Chess
JU-ON: The Grudge
The Last Story
Pandora's Tower
Veggy World

Nintendo Wii Variants

Product Codes

Product codes may be used to identify Wii variants. Like the GameCube, each new printing of a Wii game received a new product code. The product code consists of five numbers and a letter and may be found on the back of the cover art.



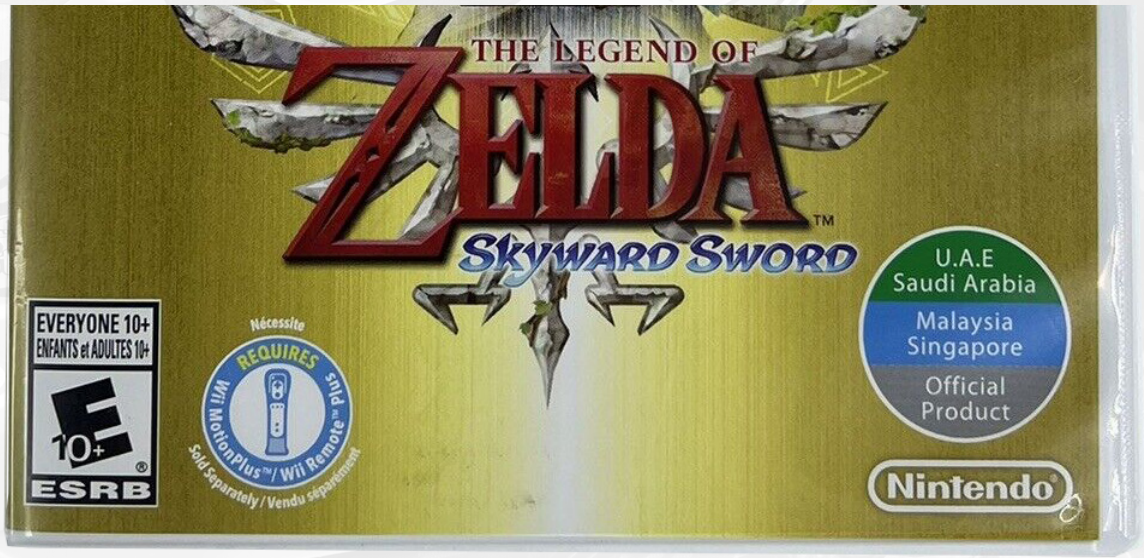
Country of Production and UPC 5

Many Wii games were produced in both Japan and the United States. The country of production can be identified by the phrases "Made in Japan" or "Made in USA," which can be found on the back of the cover art. Similarly, you can check the UPC 5 number to confirm the game's manufacturing country. UPC 5 numbers that read "00000" were made in Japan, while UPC 5 numbers that read "00100," "00101" or "00102" were made in the United States.

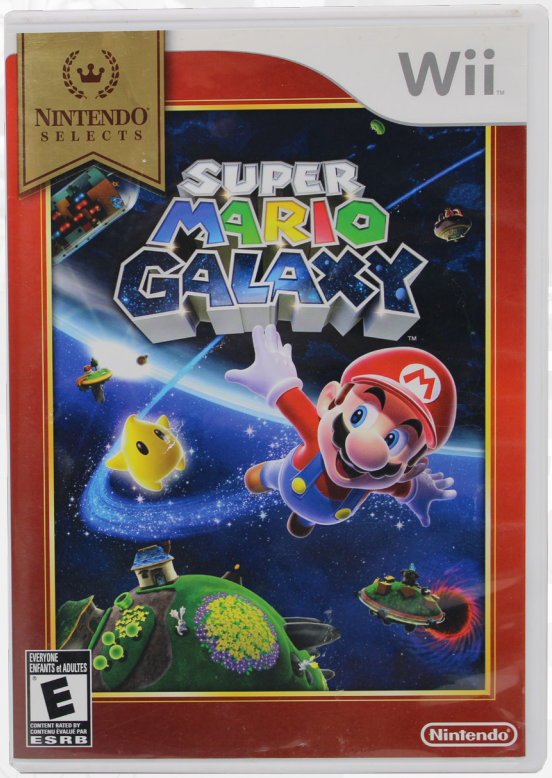


World Edition

World Edition Wii variants feature a World Edition logo on the lower-right corner of the front cover art. This variant commonly appears on Nintendo Select variants.







Nintendo Selects

The Wii was the first console to incorporate Nintendo's new marketing label, Nintendo Selects, which replaced the older Player's Choice label. Nintendo Selects variants are identified by the Nintendo Selects logo and a red border around the front cover art.
There are thirteen Wii titles that have a Nintendo Selects variant:

Nintendo Wii Nintendo Select Games:

Animal Crossing: City Folk
Donkey Kong Country Returns
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
Mario Power Tennis
Mario Strikers Charged
Mario Super Sluggers
Pikmin 2
Punch-Out!!
Super Mario All-Stars
Super Mario Galaxy
Super Mario Galaxy 2
Super Paper Mario
Wii Sports

ESRB logos

There are three ESRB rating logo variants that may appear on Wii games: the Black ESRB, the Black English/French ESRB and the White English/French ESRB. The English/French variants commonly appear on Nintendo Selects variants.





Nintendo Wii U

Historical Background

The Wii U launched in North America in 2012. Nintendo hoped that the Wii U would appeal more to its core demographics than its predecessor, the Wii. Critics and players praised the Wii U's enhanced graphics and unique gamepad, but its sales lagged.

However, the Wii U did introduce gamers to some beloved franchises, such as Splatoon and Super Mario Maker. New Super Luigi U was at the center of The Year of Luigi, one of Nintendo's most successful marketing campaigns. Despite its low sales numbers, the Wii U is cherished by collectors.

Key Titles

Bayonetta 2
Captain Toad: Treasure Tracker
Donkey Kong Country: Tropical Freeze
Hyrule Warriors
Kirby and the Rainbow Curse
The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild
Mario Kart 8
Mario Party 10
New Super Luigi U
New Super Mario Bros. U
Nintendo Land
Pikmin 3
Pokkén Tournament
Splatoon
Super Mario 3D World
Super Mario Maker
Super Smash Bros. for Wii U
Xenoblade: Chronicles
Yoshi's Woolly World







Traditional Rarity

Axiom Verge Multiverse Edition
The Book of Unwritten Tales 2
Cabela's Big Game Hunter: Pro Hunts
The Croods: Prehistoric Party
Devil's Third
Game & Wario
Shakedown Hawaii
SteamWorld Collection
Turbo: Super Stunt Squad
Wii Sports Club

Nintendo Wii U Variants

Product Codes

Each new printing of a Wii U game received a new product code. The product code consists of either five or six numbers and a letter, and may be found on the back of the cover art.



Country of Production and UPC 5

Many Wii U games were produced in both Japan and the United States. These different country of production variant can be identified by the phrases "Made in Japan" or "Made in USA," which may be found on the back of the cover art. Similarly, you can check the UPC 5 number to confirm the country of production. UPC 5 numbers that read "00000" were made in Japan, while UPC 5 numbers that read "00100," "00101" or "00102" were made in the United States.



Nintendo Selects

Nintendo Selects variants returned during the Wii U era. These variants can be identified by the Nintendo Selects logo and a red border around the front cover art. There are eight Wii U games that feature a Nintendo Selects variant:

Nintendo Wii U Nintendo Select Games:

Donkey Kong Country: Tropical Freeze
The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker HD
Lego City Undercover
NES Remix Pack
Nintendo Land
Pikmin 3
Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed
Super Mario 3D World





Multicolored Cases

Wii U collectors will want to pay attention to the color of their game cases. Most Wii U games were produced with a blue case, but a few games were distributed with a red or green case.

ESRB Rating Logos

There are at least two ESRB rating logo variants for the Wii U: the black ESRB rating logo and the white ESRB rating logo. Usually, if a game features both an ESRB logo variant and a case color variant, a black ESRB rating logo will appear on a blue case while a white ESRB rating logo will appear on a red case.



Nintendo Switch

Historical Background

As of late 2022, the Nintendo Switch is Nintendo's newest and best-selling video game console. As a home and portable console hybrid, the Switch appeals to many audiences.

The console's popularity is aided by a solid lineup of first-party Nintendo titles. For example, many video game enthusiasts consider The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild to be one of the greatest games ever produced. The Switch also features significant third-party support, giving it a library far superior to that of its immediate predecessors.

These attributes make the Nintendo Switch a must-have for video game collectors. However, it remains too early in the Switch's lifespan to properly determine what, if any, games on the console have Traditional Rarity. As the console library expands, CGC Video Games will update this section accordingly.

Key Titles

Animal Crossing: New Horizons
Fire Emblem: Three Houses
Hyrule Warriors: Age of Calamity
Kirby and the Forgotten Land
Kirby Star Allies
The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild
The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening DX
Luigi's Mansion 3
Mario Kart 8 Deluxe
Metroid Dread
Monster Hunter Rise
New Pokémon Snap
Paper Mario: The Origami King
Pokémon Brilliant Diamond
Pokémon Shield
Pokémon Shining Pearl
Pokémon Sword
Pokémon Legends: Arceus
Splatoon 2
Super Mario Maker 2
Super Mario Odyssey
Super Mario Party
Super Smash Bros. Ultimate

Nintendo Switch Variants

Product Codes

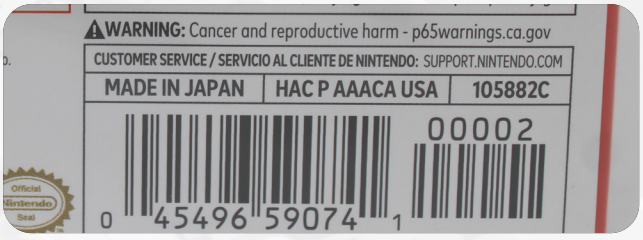
Most Nintendo Switch games have a Product Code. These codes may be used to identify Switch variants. Each new printing of a Switch game receives a new Product Code. The Product Code consists of six numbers and a letter and may be found on the back of the cover art.



Country of Production and UPC 5

One of the more important variants for Nintendo Switch collecting is the country of production. Many Switch games were produced in both Japan and the United States. This variant can be identified by the phrases "Made in Japan" or "Made in USA," which may be found on the back of the cover art. Similarly, you can check the UPC 5 number to confirm the country of production. UPC 5 numbers that read "00000" were made in Japan, while UPC 5 numbers that read "00100," "00101" or "00102" were made in the United States.







Game Boy

Historical Background

Nintendo released the Game Boy to North America in 1989. It became the third best-selling console of all time, due to its appeal to children, adults and even American soldiers serving in the Gulf War.

The Game Boy helped popularize console-specific accessories, especially attachments and carrying cases. One of the more innovative accessories was the Super Game Boy, which allowed Game Boy cartridges to be played on the Super Nintendo.

A voluminous library was made possible by strong third-party support, a relationship Nintendo continued for its subsequent handhelds. Some of the best-selling games of all time were produced for the Game Boy, including Super Mario Land and Tetris. The Game Boy also introduced the extremely popular Pokémon series. Some Game Boy games are extremely rare and both complete-in-box and sealed games are hard to find in quality condition.

Key Titles

Donkey Kong Land
Donkey Kong Land 2
Donkey Kong Land III
The Final Fantasy Legend
Final Fantasy Legend II
Final Fantasy Legend III
Kirby's Dream Land
Kirby's Dream Land 2
The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening
Metroid II: Return of Samus
Pokémon Blue Version
Pokémon Red Version
Pokémon Yellow Version:
Special Pikachu Edition
Super Mario Land
Super Mario Land 2: 6 Golden Coins
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles:
Fall of the Foot Clan
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II:
Back from the Sewers
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III:
Radical Rescue
Tetris
Wario Land: Super Mario Land 3



Traditional Rarity

Amazing Tater
Avenging Spirit
Castlevania Legends
Jimmy Connors Tennis
Kid Dracula
Knight's Quest
Rolan's Curse 2
Spud's Adventure
Sumo Fighter
Toxic Crusaders

Game Boy Variants

Players Choice

A significant variant for Game Boy collecting is Players Choice, a marketing label that Nintendo began using in May of 1996. These games feature a Players Choice logo on the lower-left corner of the box and on the cartridge label. Slight deviations in the box art and label designs are also visible, including a change in design of the Game Boy logo on the left side of the box. Twenty-four Game Boy games received a Players Choice label:

Game Boy Player's Choice Games:

The Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle
The Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle 2
Disney's Mickey Mouse Magic Wands!
Donkey Kong
Donkey Kong Land
Donkey Kong Land 2
Dr. Mario
Golf
James Bond 007
Kirby's Dream Land
Kirby's Dream Land 2
Kirby's Pinball Land
The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening
Mega Man II
Mega Man in Dr. Wiley's Revenge
Metroid II: Return of Samus
Mickey's Dangerous Chase
The Smurfs
Space Invaders
Star Wars
Street Fighter II
Super Mario Land
Super Mario Land 2: 6 Golden Coins
Super R.C. Pro-Am
Tennis
Tetris
Wario Land II
Wario Land: Super Mario Land 3
Wave Race

Red Box Warranty vs. Three Line Warranty

Game Boy games feature warranty information on the right side of the box. A notable variant is whether there is a red box warranty or a three line warranty. The red box warranty variant is a solid red box with white lettering. The three line warranty has no box with black text. There is also differentiation in the text itself.



ESRB Ratings Logo

The ESRB rating can be located on the bottom-left corner of Game Boy game box and on the cartridge label. Since the ESRB was a relatively new organization in 1996, its rating system and its logo went through several design changes during the Game Boy's lifespan. One of the variants is a change in the rating system from "K-A" (Kids to Adults) to "E" (Everyone). Another variant is the shift from a pixelated ESRB rating logo to a solid ESRB rating logo.

Fiber Count

Like the Nintendo 64, Nintendo manufactured its Game Boy game boxes using recycled materials. The amount of recycled material is designated by the fiber count, which can be found on the left side of the back of the box. These fiber counts can range from 83% to 100%. Boxes with an 83% Fiber Count have a Y-fold bottom and those with a 100% fiber count have a flip lid bottom.

Publisher Label

Several third-party Game Boy games feature publisher variants. For example, the Final Fantasy Legend series was released by Square in 1990, then re-released by Sunsoft in 1998. This variant can be identified by the publisher logo that is on the front of the box, the cover page of the manual and the cartridge label.

Game Boy Not for Resale Games

Nintendo sent demonstration cartridges to select retailers to let players preview upcoming Game Boy games.. These limited cartridges are identified by a unique label with the phrase "Not for Resale" and a sticker on the back that reads "Not for Resale, Demo Game Only." There are a total of nine known Game Boy games with a NFR label:

Game Boy Not for Resale Games:

Donkey Kong Land
Donkey Kong Land 2
Ken Griffey Jr. Presents Major League Baseball
Killer Instinct
Kirby's Block Ball
Kirby's Dream Land 2
Tetris Attack
Wario Blast
Wario Land II

English and English/French

Most Game Boy games released in North America are in English. However, some titles released in Canada have boxes and manuals with English and French text.



Game Boy Color

Historical Background

In 1998, Nintendo released the Game Boy's successor, the Game Boy Color. The console featured a color screen rather than the monochrome screen of the original Game Boy. The Game Boy Color was also the first Nintendo console to have backwards compatibility, which proved an immensely popular feature that Nintendo continued to incorporate into subsequent products.

Like the Nintendo 64, variations in model colors were a huge hit, making the Game Boy Color a cultural icon of the Y2K era. Enhanced processing paved the way for more complicated gameplay and intricate storylines, helping make the RPG genre a handheld staple.

Much like the Game Boy, Game Boy Color games are extremely difficult to find in quality condition.

Key Titles

Dragon Warrior Monsters
Dragon Warrior Monsters 2: Tara's Adventure
Dragon Warrior Monsters 2: Cobi's Adventure
Harvest Moon 2 GBC
Harvest Moon 3 GBC
Kirby Tilt 'n' Tumble
The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening DX
The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Ages
The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Seasons
Mega Man Xtreme
Mega Man Xtreme 2
Metal Gear Solid
Pokémon Gold Version
Pokémon Silver Version
Pokémon Crystal Version
Pokémon Pinball
Pokémon Trading Card Game
Super Mario Bros. Deluxe
Wario Land II
Wario Land 3
Yu-Gi-Oh! Dark Duel Stories





Traditional Rarity

Azure Dreams
Bomberman Quest
Lufia: The Legend Returns
Puzzle Master
Resident Evil Gaiden
Return of the Ninja
Rhino Rumble
Shantae
Survival Kids
Wendy: Every Witch Way

Game Boy Color Variants

ESRB Rating Logos

The Game Boy Color also has ESRB rating variants. The ESRB rating can be located on the bottom left corner of the box and on the cartridge label. Like its predecessor, Game Boy Color games were affected by the ESRB's early rating logo revisions. Games released early in the console's lifespan featured a pixelated ESRB rating logo, while later releases featured a solid rating logo.

Fiber Count

The fiber count can be found on the right side of Game Boy Color game boxes. Fiber counts for Game Boy Color range from 83% to 100%. Boxes with an 83% fiber count have a Y-fold bottom, while boxes with a 100% fiber count have a flip lid bottom.

Holographic Box vs. Non-holographic Box

Some Game Boy Color games came in either a holographic or non-holographic box. The holographic boxes will have a holographic finish across the Game Boy Color logo along the left side. A prominent game that features this variant is Super Mario Bros. Deluxe.

Not for Resale (NFR)

Nintendo also promoted the Game Boy Color using Not for Resale demonstration cartridges. These cartridges are identified by a unique label with the phrase "Not for Resale" and a sticker on the back that reads "Not for Resale, Demo Game Only." There are a total of eleven known Game Boy Color games with a NFR label:

Game Boy Color Not for Resale Games:

Donkey Kong Country
Hamtaro: Ham-Hams Unite!
The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Ages
The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Seasons
Mario Tennis
Mickey's Speedway USA
Pokémon Crystal
Pokémon Gold
Pokémon Silver
Tetris DX
Wario Land 3


GAME BOY COLOR
SUPER MARIO BROS.®
Deluxe
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Nintendo
ONLY FOR GAME BOY COLOR



Game Boy Advance

Historical Background

Nintendo released the Game Boy Advance in 2001. It proved to be a successful console, selling over eighty-million units worldwide. Despite the updated design of its cartridge, the Game Boy Advance featured backwards compatibility for its two predecessors. Early models came with a front lit screen to better illuminate the display; later SP models came with a better backlit screen.

Like the Game Boy Color, the Game Boy Advance also came in different colors. Several accessories — including a wireless adapter and a link cable for the Nintendo GameCube — made the console quite versatile.

The Game Boy Advance's library features a wide variety of re-releases from previous consoles in addition to a strong lineup of console exclusives. Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow, Kirby: Nightmare in Dream Land and Metroid Fusion are widely considered among the best titles in their respective franchises.

Key Titles

Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow
Castlevania: Circle of the Moon
Final Fantasy Tactics Advance
Fire Emblem
Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones
Kirby and the Amazing Mirror
Kirby: Nightmare in Dream Land
The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past
The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap
Mario and Luigi: Superstar Saga
Mario Kart: Super Circuit
Metroid Fusion
Metroid: Zero Mission
Pokémon Emerald Version
Pokémon LeafGreen Version
Pokémon FireRed Version
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Red Rescue Team
Pokémon Ruby Version
Pokémon Sapphire Version



Traditional Rarity

BattleBots: Beyond the BattleBox
Boktai 2: Solar Boy Django
Car Battler Joe
DemiKids: Dark Version
Dragon Ball: Advanced Adventure
Moto Racer Advance
Ninja Five-O
Pocky & Rocky with Becky
Sega Rally Championship
Spirits & Spells

Game Boy Advance Variants

Player's Choice

One significant variant for Game Boy Advance is Player's Choice. These games feature variant box art with a yellow Player's Choice banner across the top of the box's front. Ten Game Boy games received a Player's Choice label:

Game Boy Advance Player's Choice Games:

The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past and Four Swords
Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga
Mario Kart: Super Circuit
Pokémon FireRed Version
Pokémon LeafGreen Version
Super Mario Advance
Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2
Yoshi's Island: Super Mario Advance 3

Not for Resale

Like the Game Boy and the Game Boy Color, the Game Boy Advance also has Not for Resale demonstration cartridges. These cartridges are identified by a unique label with the phrase "Not for Resale." There are a total of thirty-four known Game Boy Advance games with a NFR label:

Game Boy Advance Not for Resale Games:

DK: King of Swing
Donkey Kong Country
Donkey Kong Country 2
Donkey Kong Country 3
Drill Dozer
Fire Emblem: Sacred Stones
F-Zero: Maximum Velocity
Kirby and the Amazing Mirror
Kirby: Nightmare in Dreamland
The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past and Four Swords
The Legend of Zelda: Minish Cap
The Legend of Zelda: Minish Cap (Demo)
Mario Golf: Advance Tour
Mario Kart: Super Circuit
Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga
Mario Pinball Land
Mario Tennis: Power Tour
Mario vs. Donkey Kong
Metroid Fusion
Metroid: Zero Mission
Pokémon Emerald Version
Pokémon FireRed Version
Pokémon LeafGreen Version
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Red Rescue Team
Pokémon Pinball
Pokémon Ruby Version
Pokémon Sapphire Version
Super Mario Advance
Super Mario Advance 4: Super Mario Bros. 3
Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2
Top Gear Rally
Wario Land 4
WarioWare, Inc.: Mega Microgames!
Yoshi's Island: Super Mario Advance 3


ONLY FOR
GAME BOY ADVANCE
SUPER MARIO WORLD
SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2
Link It Up!
1 Game Pak
4 Players
See back panel for details.
WITH CLASSIC MARIO BROS. ARCADE— INCLUDED!
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Nintendo



Nintendo DS

Historical Background

The Nintendo DS was released in 2004 in North America and quickly became one of the best-selling handheld consoles of all time. The console was highly innovative, incorporating two LCD screens, Wi-Fi connectivity, two megapixel cameras and a built-in microphone.

Over 1700 games were released for the DS. There is no shortage of Nintendo first-party titles, especially Pokémon. Several of the best video games ever produced were re-released on the DS, including Chrono Trigger, Goldeneye 007 and Super Mario 64. There was also significant third-party support for the DS, especially among Japanese RPG publishers. With such a vast and diverse library, the DS remains highly appealing to video game collectors.

Key Titles

Animal Crossing: Wild World
Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow
Castlevania: Order of Ecclesia
Fire Emblem: Shadow Dragon
Kirby: Squeak Squad
The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass
The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks
Mario & Luigi: Bowser's Inside Story
Mario Kart DS
Mario Party DS
Mario vs. Donkey Kong: Mini-Land Mayhem!
Metroid Prime Hunters
New Super Mario Bros.
Pokémon Black Version
Pokémon Black Version 2
Pokémon Diamond Version
Pokémon HeartGold Version
Pokémon Pearl Version
Pokémon Platinum Version
Pokémon SoulSilver Version
Pokémon White Version
Pokémon White Version 2



Traditional Rarity

Blue Dragon: Awakened Shadow
Drone Tactics
Etrian Odyssey III: The Drowned City
Little Red Riding Hood's Zombie BBQ
Mega Man Star Force 3: Black Ace
Mega Man Star Force 3: Red Joker
Powerbike
Shepherd's Crossing 2
Solatorobo: Red the Hunter
Veggy World



Nintendo 3DS

Historical Background

The Nintendo 3DS — the successor to the best-selling Nintendo DS — launched in 2011. The 3DS built upon many of the successful innovations of the DS, adding new features such as 3D compatibility and StreetPass, while also keeping familiar mechanics that made the DS family of consoles so loved. It also introduced Nintendo's Virtual Console, which allowed players to download and play games originally released on older consoles.

There were 223 3DS games released in North America. Besides a solid lineup of first-party Nintendo titles, the 3DS also boasted an impressive library of third-party games. There are also some popular rereleases for the 3DS, including The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask 3D, The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D and Star Fox 64 3D.

Key Titles

Animal Crossing: New Leaf
Fire Emblem: Awakening
The Legend of Zelda: A Link Between Worlds
Kirby: Planet Robobot
Luigi's Mansion: Dark Moon
Mario Kart 7
Metroid: Samus Returns
Monster Hunter Generations
New Super Mario Bros. 2
Paper Mario: Sticker Star
Pokémon Alpha Sapphire
Pokémon Moon
Pokémon Omega Ruby
Pokémon Sun
Pokémon X
Pokémon Y
Super Mario 3D Land
Super Smash Bros. for Nintendo 3DS
Tomadachi Life
Yo-kai Watch
Yo-Kai Watch 2: Bony Spirits
Yo-kai Watch 2: Fleshy Souls
Yo-Kai Watch 2: Psychic Specters
Yo-kai Watch 3
Yoshi's New Island



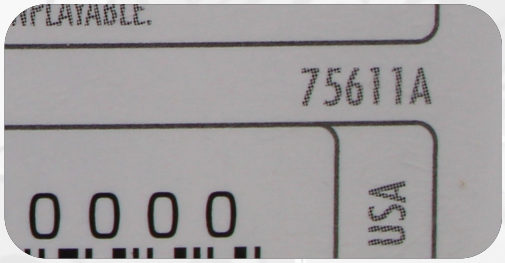
Traditional Rarity

Alien Chaos
Barbie: Groom and Glam Pups
Dragon Quest VIII: Journey of the Cursed King
FIFA 14: Legacy Edition
Professor Layton and the Azran Legacy
Rhythm Thief & the Emperor's Treasure
Shantae and the Pirate's Curse
Yo-kai Watch Blasters: Red Cat Corps
Yo-kai Watch Blasters: White Dog Squad
Zero Time Dilemma

Nintendo DS & 3DS Variants

Product Codes

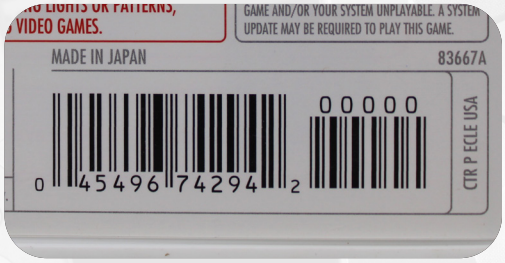
Product codes have become a staple on all Nintendo products since they were introduced with the GameCube. Each new printing of a DS or 3DS game received a new product code, so each variant of a DS or 3DS game has a product code that is unique to that variant. The product codes for 3DS and DS games consist of five numbers and a letter and can be found on the back of the cover art.



Typically, games that have a product code ending with the letter "A" were manufactured in Japan. Meanwhile, a game with a product code ending with the letter "B" was manufactured in the United States. However, there are exceptions to this rule.a

Country of Production and UPC 5

The country of production helps identify whether a game was made in Japan or in the United States. This variant can be identified by the phrases "Made in Japan" or "Made in USA," which can be found on the back of the cover art. Similarly, you can check the UPC 5 number to confirm the country of production. UPC 5 numbers that read "00000" were made in Japan, while UPC 5 numbers that read "00100," "00101" or "00102" were made in the United States.







Nintendo Selects (3DS)

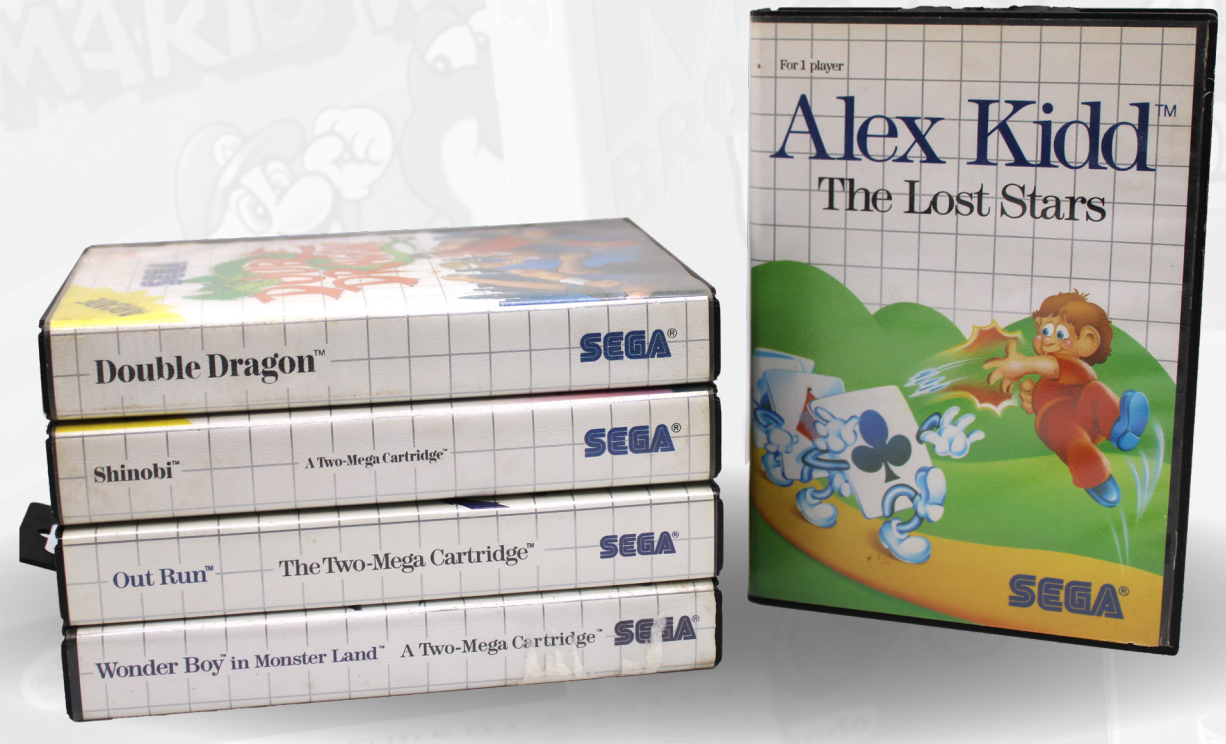
A prominent 3DS variant is Nintendo Selects. These variants can be identified by the Nintendo Selects logo and a red border around the front cover art. There are twenty-one 3DS games that feature a Nintendo Selects variant.

Nintendo Selects 3DS Best Seller Games:

Animal Crossing: New Leaf
Disney's Frozen: Olaf's Quest
Donkey Kong Country Returns 3D
Kirby Triple Deluxe
The Legend of Zelda: A Link Between Worlds
The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask 3D
The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D
Lego City Undercover: The Chase Begins
Luigi's Mansion: Dark Moon
Mario & Luigi: Dream Team
Mario Party: Island Tour
Nintendogs + Cats: Golden Retriever & New Friends
Paper Mario: Sticker Star
Star Fox 64 3D
Super Mario 3D Land
Super Mario Maker for Nintendo 3DS
Tomodachi Life
Ultimate NES Remix
Yoshi's New Island

World Edition

World Edition variants are similar to Nintendo Selects variants. The World Edition logo can be found on the lower-right corner of the front cover art. All World Edition variants were released with a white 3DS case.



Sega Master System

Historical Background

The Sega Master System was Sega's first home video game console to release in the United States. Sega released the console in 1986, hoping that the Master System would fare better in North America than it had in Japan, where sales lagged in comparison to the Japanese version of the Nintendo Entertainment System.

Unfortunately, the Master System didn't have much luck in the West. Nintendo had strict licensing agreements with its third-party publishers that guaranteed console exclusivity. Without access to many of the most popular video game franchises, Master System sales faltered.

However, this meant that the Master System library also featured a significant number of console exclusives. Several important franchises were introduced by the Master System, including Alex Kidd and Phantasy Star. Sega was also successful in porting many arcade favorites to the Master System, such as Double Dragon, OutRun and Rampage.

For collectors interested in finding games in the best condition possible, the Master System poses a unique difficulty because the white cover art of its games often suffers from various defects. Regardless, the different variants and conditional rarity of these games make the Sega Master System an exciting console library to collect!

Key Titles

Alex Kidd: High-Tech World
Alex Kidd: The Lost Stars
Alex Kidd in Miracle World
Altered Beast
Double Dragon
Fantasy Zone
Fantasy Zone II
Golden Axe
Golden Axe Warrior
OutRun
Phantasy Star
Rampage
R-Type
Shinobi
Sonic the Hedgehog
Space Harrier
Spider-Man
Strider
Wonder Boy
Wonder Boy in Monster Land
Wonder Boy in Monster World



Traditional Rarity

Aerial Assault
ALF
Dick Tracy
E-SWAT
Ghouls 'n Ghosts
James Buster Douglas Knockout Boxing
King's Quest
Montezuma's Revenge
Psycho Fox
Super Monaco GP

Sega Master System Variants

Bold Typeface and Label Changes

Several early-release Sega Master System games were re-released by Sega near the end of the console's lifespan. These re-releases feature significant changes to the cover art, manual and cartridge. Sega redesigned the cover's artwork and utilized a bold typeface for the title. The manuals for these re-releases were reprinted on cheaper paper stock and feature a copyright date of 1990 or 1991. Sega also replaced the typical red label on the cartridge with a blue label.

"Sega for the 90's" Sticker

Towards the end of the Master System's lifespan, Sega placed maroon stickers with the phrase "Sega for the 90's: The New Generation" on the case, manual and cartridge of several games. These stickers can be found on the back of the case and the manual and on the right side of the cartridge label.

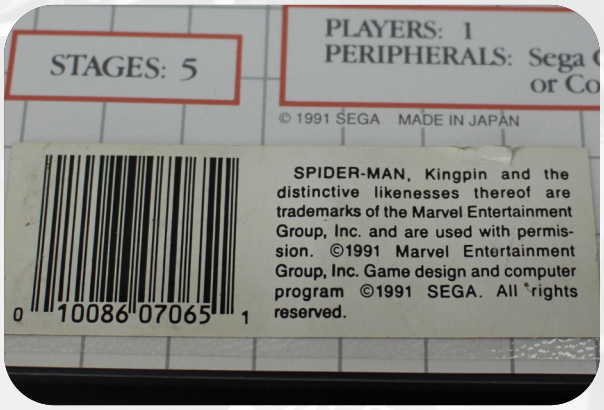


NTSC vs. PAL

Most Sega Master System games were region free and could be played on most hardware models. Because of this, many Master System games do not have the typical regional variations in cover art, manuals or cartridge labels as seen on other consoles. However, there are ways of determining which region certain games were released in. The easiest way is to look at the UPC number. NTSC Master System games have a five-digit US UPC code of "10086," while PAL games have a six-digit code of "974365." Some Master System games lack a UPC number on the cover art.

US UPC Sticker

Some Master System games that were released in the United States came with PAL cover art and thus featured a PAL UPC number. However, PAL UPC numbers are not compatible with American bar code readers. Rather than reprint the cover art, Sega opted to place a sticker with a US UPC number on the case over the PAL UPC.



Some Master System games do not have a UPC number printed on the cover art. These are PAL releases. NTSC releases will have a US UPC Sticker affixed to the case where the UPC should have been printed.

Significant US UPC Sticker Titles

Golden Axe Warrior
Sonic the Hedgehog
Spider-Man
Strider

Blue Cartridge Label vs. Red Cartridge Label

Another way to distinguish NTSC games from PAL games is the color of the cartridge label, especially for late-release Master System games. For instance, Alex Kidd in Shinobi World and Slap Shot were only released with blue cartridge labels in the United States while their PAL versions came with red cartridge labels.







Sega Genesis

Historical Background

Released in 1989, the Sega Genesis was Sega's best-selling home video game console. Like with the Master System, Sega was hopeful that the Genesis would rattle Nintendo's dominance in the video game industry.

One of Sega's most popular marketing campaigns was "Genesis Does What Nintendon't," a call-out campaign that contributed to the Console Wars of the 1990s. However, the release of Super Mario Bros. 3 for the NES and the launch of the Super Nintendo Entertainment System kept Nintendo on top. Still, Sega remained determined and in 1991 released Sonic the Hedgehog to compete directly with Nintendo's Super Mario Bros. franchise. Sonic proved immensely popular among audiences and has become one of the most iconic video game characters of all time.

While not reaching the sales figures of the NES or the Super Nintendo, the Genesis performed better than any non-Nintendo console up to that point. Several popular franchises were introduced by the Genesis, including Earthworm Jim, John Madden Football, Shining Force and Streets of Rage. The Sega Genesis's significance to both the history and culture of video games make its console library a staple for any collection.

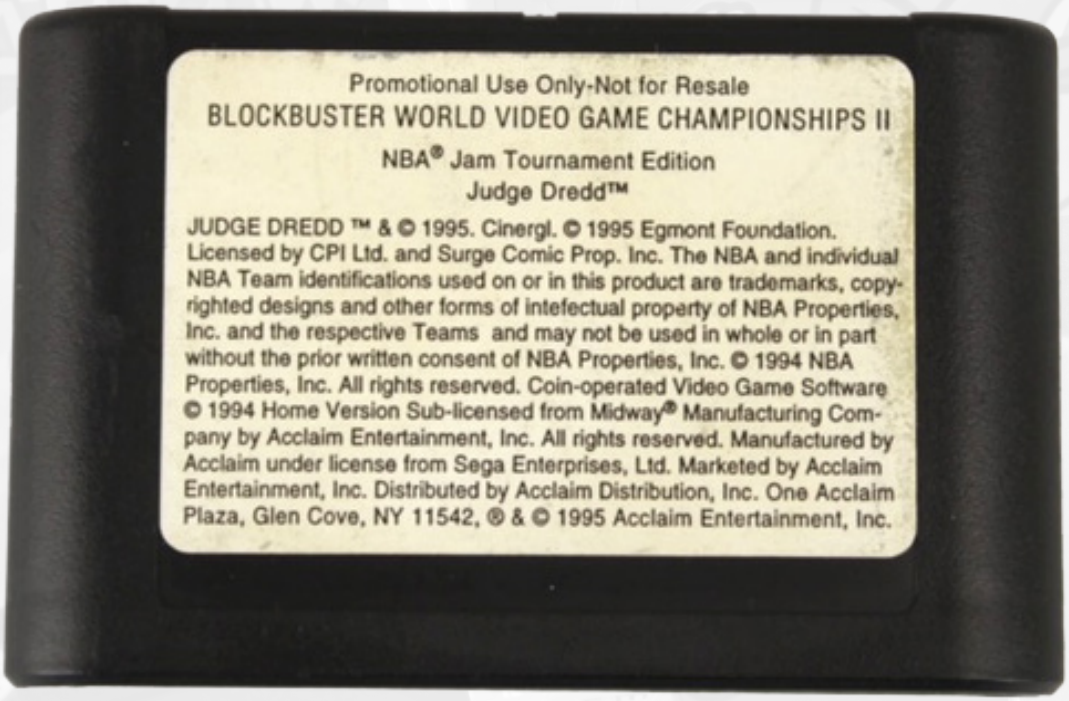
Key Titles

Batman: Revenge of the Joker
Battletoads & Double Dragon:
The Ultimate Team
Castlevania: Bloodlines
Contra: Hard Corps
Disney's Aladdin
Earthworm Jim
John Madden Football
Mortal Kombat
Phantasy Star II
Phantasy Star III
Shining Force
Shining Force II
Shining in the Darkness
Sonic & Knuckles
Sonic the Hedgehog
Sonic the Hedgehog 2
Sonic the Hedgehog 3
Spider-Man and Venom: Maximum Carnage
Street Fighter II Turbo
Streets of Rage 2
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles:
The Hyperstone Heist



Traditional Rarity

Crusader of Centy
Elemental Master
El Viento
John Madden Football '93:
Championship Edition
MUSHA
Outback Joey
The Punisher
Trouble Shooter
Zero the Kamikaze Squirrel



Blockbuster World Video Game Championships II

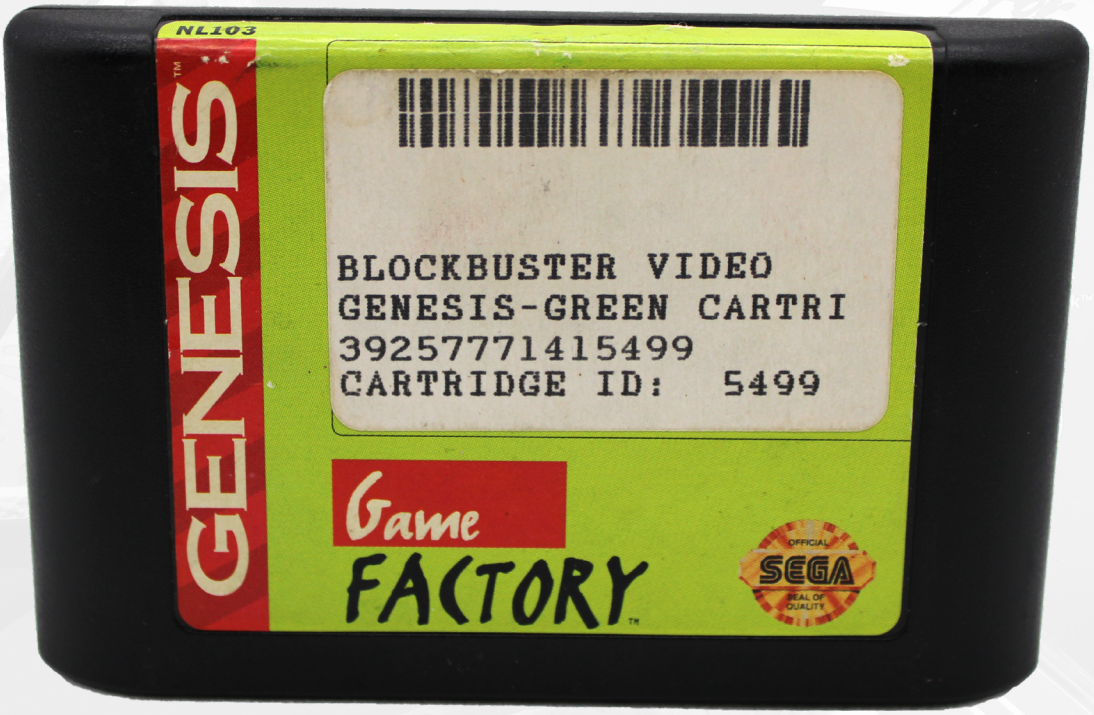
The Blockbuster World Video Game Championships II cartridge is one of the rarest collectible competition cartridges. In 1995, mega video-rental chain Blockbuster Video hosted a national competition in select retail locations called the Blockbuster World Video Game Championships II. This tournament allowed contestants to play either the Sega Genesis or the Super Nintendo Entertainment System. Those who chose the Super Nintendo played with a custom-designed Donkey Kong Country Competition Cartridge while those who chose the Genesis competed with the Blockbuster World Video Game Championships II cartridge. The Genesis cartridge was designed by Acclaim and included gameplay from both Judge Dredd and NBA Jam Tournament Edition.

Winners from each participating store were then invited to play at a national final event hosted at GamePro's San Francisco headquarters. Copies of the competition cartridge were meant to be destroyed, but several were saved from destruction and have made their way into collectors' hands.

Rewritable Cartridges

One of the more interesting video game innovations of the 1990s was the introduction of rewritable cartridges. Spearheading this effort was New Leaf Entertainment, who developed a process that could download any video game program onto a specially-designed cartridge. Additionally, New Leaf Entertainment could wipe the cartridge clean and restart the process with a different video game program.

These New Leaf cartridges are among the rarest Sega Genesis cartridges. New Leaf Entertainment successfully marketed this technology to Blockbuster Video, which created its own versions of the cartridges dubbed Game Factory. Blockbuster's Game Factory has two variants: the green cart and the blue cart.



Sega Genesis Variants

Not for Resale

Several Sega Genesis games were released either individually or bundled with the console. Those that were bundled may have the phrase "Not for Resale" printed on the cover art, the manual and/or the cartridge.



ESRB Rating Logo

The ESRB rating logo for Sega Genesis games may be located on the front cover art. Some games feature cover art with either an ESRB rating logo or no ESRB rating logo. Since the ESRB was a relatively new organization during the Sega Genesis' lifespan, its rating system and its logo went through several design changes, which is reflected in different Genesis game variants. One such variant for the Sega Genesis is a change in the rating system from "GA" to "K-A" (Kids to Adults).



Seal of Quality (SoQ)

There are two variations of the Sega Genesis Seal of Quality (SoQ). Both appear on the front cover art. The Genesis SoQ features the word "Genesis" in the center of the SoQ. The Sega SoQ features the Sega logo in the center of the SoQ.







Country of Printing

Sega printed its games in both Japan and the United States. This variant can be located on the back cover art at the end of the copyright information.

Country of Production

Sega manufactured its games in four distinct countries: China, Japan, Taiwan and the United States, each with a different country of production label. This variant can be located on the back cover art at the end of the copyright information.

Sega Address

Some Sega Genesis titles feature variations in Sega Enterprises' address information, located in the copyright information on the back side of the cover art. For instance, examples of Sonic the Hedgehog that were made in Taiwan have either a Redwood, CA address or a South San Francisco, CA address.

Clamshells vs. Cardboard Boxes

Most Sega Genesis games came packaged in a plastic clamshell case. This is especially true of early releases. However, towards the end of the Genesis' lifespan, Sega sold the publishing rights for various games to Majesco Sales for re-release. Games that were re-released by Majesco came packaged in a cardboard box.

These games often feature similar cover art, but with some variations. Typical differences include ESRB rating logo changes and the inclusion of Majesco's publishing information on the back of the box. To save money, Majesco opted to print the manuals in black and white and to use a lower-quality paper stock for the cartridge labels. Majesco cartridges also feature the phrase "Assembled in Mexico" on the back, either in the form of a sticker or embossed into the plastic.

Sega also sold some publishing rights to Ballistic, which manufactured the games similarly to the way Majesco did. Ballistic re-releases feature a Ballistic sticker on the back of the cardboard box.

Clamshell and Cardboard Box Types

There are several variations of Genesis' clamshell and Majesco's cardboard box designs. This is especially true for third-party publishers, who often designed non-standard cartridge sizes that required custom-designed cases.

Most clamshells designed for the Genesis came with hangtabs, but some late-release games were manufactured without them. There are nine different clamshell variants and four different cardboard box variants:



Sega Clamshell: A standard-sized plastic clamshell with the Sega logo embossed on the inside of the case. The molded-in cartridge holder is designed for a standard-sized Genesis cartridge and is oriented vertically.



Accolade Clamshell: A standard-sized plastic clamshell. The molded-in cartridge holder is designed for oversized Accolade cartridges and is oriented horizontally.



Acclaim Clamshell: A standard-sized plastic clamshell with the Acclaim logo embossed on the inside. The molded-in cartridge holder is designed for a standard-sized Genesis cartridge and is oriented vertically.



Codemasters Clamshell: A standard-sized plastic clamshell with the Codemasters logo embossed on the inside. The molded-in cartridge holder is designed for a Codemasters oversized cartridges and is oriented horizontally.





EA Clamshell: A standard-sized plastic clamshell with the Electronic Arts logo embossed on the inside. The molded-in cartridge holder is designed for both standard-sized Genesis cartridges and oversized EA cartridges.

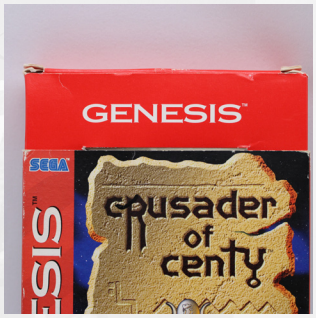
EA Large Clamshell: A plastic clamshell that is roughly a quarter-inch thicker than a standard Genesis clamshell. The molded-in cartridge holder is designed for oversized EA cartridges and is oriented horizontally. This clamshell was typically used for sports titles published by EA.

EA Slim Clamshell: A plastic clamshell that is roughly a quarter-inch thinner than a standard Genesis clamshell. It does not have a molded-in cartridge holder, so the cartridge will be loose inside. This clamshell was typically used for early-release EA titles.

Konami Clamshell: A standard-sized plastic clamshell with the Konami logo embossed on the inside and a vertically-oriented cartridge slot.









Multi-Cart Clamshell: A standard-sized plastic clamshell with a molded-in cartridge holder designed for both standard-sized and oversized Genesis cartridges. Third-party publishers often used this clamshell.

SVP Clamshell: A standard-sized plastic clamshell with the SVP logo embossed on the inside. The molded-in cartridge holder is designed for oversized SVP cartridges and is oriented horizontally.

Cardboard Slide Box: A cardboard box that has a removable slide-out tray. Most titles came with a tray that oriented the game vertically, but some came with a horizontally oriented tray.

Flip-Top Box: A cardboard box with a top flap that flips open. The built-in divider is designed to hold a standard-sized Genesis cartridge in place. Third-party publishers often used this box for late-release games.





EA Flip-Top Box: A cardboard box with a top flap that flips open. The built-in divider is designed to hold an oversized EA cartridge in place.

Two-Piece Accolade/Ballistic Box: A cardboard box with separate front and back pieces and a removable tray on the inside. The cardboard is thicker than most standard Genesis cardboard boxes.

Sega Genesis Variants

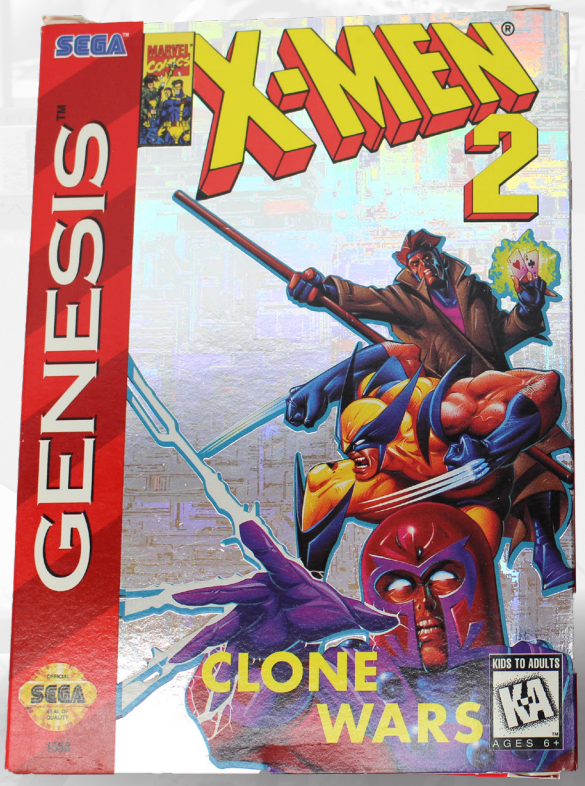
Sega Classic

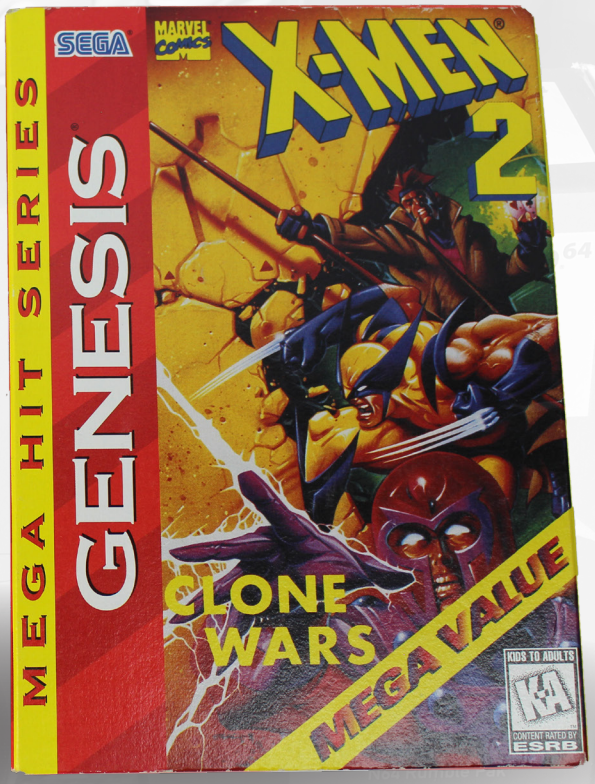
One of the more prominent variants for the Sega Genesis is Sega Classic, a marketing label that Sega applied to games that performed well on the market. These re-releases feature an updated cover art design with either a blue or red border around the artwork and the phrase "Sega Classic" on the top of both the front and the spine. Sega Classic variants were packaged with a black and white manual. Fourteen Genesis titles received a Sega Classic re-release:

Sega Classic Games:

Arnold Palmer Tournament Golf
Columns
Golden Axe
James "Buster" Douglas Knockout Boxing
Joe Montana Football
Joe Montana II Sports Talk Football
Pat Riley Basketball
The Revenge of Shinobi
Shadow Dancer: The Secret of Shinobi
Sonic the Hedgehog
Streets of Rage
Super Monaco GP
Tommy Lasorda Baseball
World Championship Soccer







Mega Hit Series

Like Sega Classics, the Mega Hit Series is a marketing label that Sega applied to well-performing games. Rather than a clamshell, these games were packaged in a cardboard box with updated cover art that featured the Mega Hit Series logo along the box's front left side and a "Mega Value" banner across the bottom-right corner. They also came with a black and white manual with the Mega Hit Series branding printed along the left edge. The cartridges also have the Mega Hit Series logo printed along the left side of the label. Ten Genesis titles received a Mega Hit Series rerelease:

Mega Hit Series Games:

Desert Demolition Starring Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote
Ecco: The Tides of Time
Eternal Champions
Mega Bomberman
Mighty Morphin Power Rangers
Sonic the Hedgehog 3
Super Monaco GP
Taz in Escape from Mars
Vectorman
X-Men 2: Clone Wars



Sega CD

Historical Background

The Sega CD is a CD-ROM attachment for the Sega Genesis that was released in North America in 1992. It was one of the first consoles to incorporate compact disc technology and helped popularize the CD as the preferred medium for video game software.

The Sega CD also sparked controversy with one of its games: Night Trap. The interactive movie's violent gameplay and perceived sexual aggression against women was heavily cited during the 1993 United States hearings on video game violence.

Many of the most sought-after titles in all of video game collecting are exclusive to the Sega CD, including Keio Flying Squadron, Popful Mail and Snatcher. With a healthy selection of platformers, shooters and RPGs, the Sega CD is a wonderful console library to collect.

Key Titles

Adventures of Batman and Robin
Android Assault
Batman Returns
Dark Wizard
Eternal Champions
Final Fight CD
Lunar: Eternal Blue
Lunar: The Silver Star
Night Trap
Road Rash
Samurai Showdown
Shining Force CD
Sonic CD
Soul Star
Spider-Man vs. The Kingpin
Star Wars: Rebel Assault
The Terminator
Vay



Traditional Rarity

Earthworm Jim: Special Edition
Fatal Fury Special
Flink
Keio Flying Squadron
Popful Mail
Radical Rex
Robo Aleste
Snatcher
The Space Adventure
Wolfchild

Sega CD Variants

Not for Resale

Some Sega CD games were released either individually or bundled with the console. Those that were bundled came in either a cardboard slip case or a standard CD case rather than a plastic long box. Not for Resale (NFR) games also have the phrase "Not for Resale" printed on the disc artwork. Often, the color of the disc artwork will be different on a NFR variant than a non-variant.

Packaging Variants

Sega CD games were released in four different types of packaging: either a jewel longbox, a cardboard box, a jewel case or a slip case. Most Sega CD titles were packaged in a jewel longbox. However, a few were packaged in a cardboard box, with notable examples including Final Fight CD, Marky Mark and the Funky Bunch: Make My Video and Night Trap.

Other titles could come packaged in either a standard-sized jewel case or a cardboard slip case. The variety of packaging has created some variants. For instance, different releases of Sewer Shark were packaged in either a cardboard box or a jewel case.




SEGA
SEGA CD
ROBO ALESTE
TM
TENGEN
Rated by V.R.C.
GA
Appropriate for all audiences.
General Audiences
MANUFACTURED
FOR PLAY ON THE SEGA CD™ SYSTEM



Sega 32X

Historical Background

Another attachment for the Sega Genesis called the Sega 32X was released in North America in 1994. The 32X was a direct response to the launch of the Atari Jaguar; another contender in the popular Console Wars. 32X cartridges are different from Genesis cartridges and showcase early 32-bit processing power.

With a small library, the 32X is relatively easy to collect for. However, there are some especially rare games for the console, especially Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure and Spider-Man: Web of Fire. Fan favorites include the console-exclusive Knuckles' Chaotix and colorful side-scrolling shooter Kolibri.

As of publishing, there are no known variants for the Sega 32X.

Key Titles

After Burner
BC Racers
Corpse Killer
Doom
Knuckles' Chaotix
Mortal Kombat II
NBA Jam Tournament Edition
Night Trap
Primal Rage
Shadow Squadron
Space Harrier
Star Trek: Starfleet Academy
Star Wars Arcade
Toughman Contest
Virtua Fighter





Traditional Rarity

The Amazing Spider-Man: Web of Fire
Kolibri
Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure
Tempo
World Series Baseball



Sega Saturn

Historical Background

The Sega Saturn was released in North America in 1995. Although it was a commercial disappointment, the Saturn did much to revolutionize gameplay, like the introduction of 3D polygonal graphics.

Several titles for the Saturn helped popularize these 3D polygonal graphics, especially Virtua Fighter. However, it was the lack of innovative 3D games — and the cancellation of Sonic X-treme in particular — that hurt the Saturn's reputation.

Things were made worse by Sega of America's refusal to westernize several popular Japanese RPGs. There was also a general lack of third-party support for the Saturn, with many publishers opting instead to develop for the Sony PlayStation. These factors all led to poor sales for the Saturn.

Despite these problems, the Saturn still maintains one of the best libraries of any console. A solid array of RPGs tops the list, including Dragon Force, Guardian Heroes, The Legend of Oasis, Panzer Dragoon Saga and Shining the Holy Ark. Many consider Panzer Dragoon Saga to be not only one of the best RPGs ever produced, but also one of the best video games of all time. The combination of quality and rarity makes the Saturn console library one of the best to collect.

Key Titles

Clockwork Knight
Clockwork Knight 2
D
Daytona USA
Die Hard Arcade
Enemy Zero
Guardian Heroes
Madden NFL 97
Mega Man 8
Mega Man X4
Mortal Kombat Trilogy
NiGHTS Into Dreams
Resident Evil
Panzer Dragoon
Panzer Dragoon II Zwei
Quake
Sega Rally Championship
Sonic 3D Blast
Sonic Jam
Sonic R
Virtua Fighter 2
X-Men: Children of the Atom







Traditional Rarity

Albert Odyssey: Legend of Eldean
Battlesport
Burning Rangers
Daytona USA CCE: Net Link Edition
The House of the Dead
Lunacy
Magic Knight Rayearth
Panzer Dragoon Saga
Power Slave
Saturn Bomberman

Sega Saturn Variants

Working Designs Disc Artwork

Perhaps the most significant variants in Sega Saturn collecting are the variations in Working Designs disc artwork. Several games published by Working Designs feature multiple changes to the artwork found on the game disc. Known titles with disc variants include:

Working Designs Disc Variants

Albert Odyssey (Two Known)
Dragon Force (Four Known)
Magic Knight Rayearth (Three Known)

Not for Resale

Several Sega Saturn games were released either individually or bundled with the console. Those that were bundled came in either a cardboard slipcase or a standard CD case rather than a plastic longbox. Not for Resale games also have the phrase "Not for Resale" printed on the disc artwork.



Packaging Variants

Some Sega Saturn games were released in three different types of packaging: a jewel longbox, a jewel case or a slip case. Many Saturn titles were packaged in a jewel longbox. However, a few were packaged in either a standard-sized jewel case or a cardboard slip case.

The variety of packaging has created some variants. For instance, different releases of Nights into Dreams were packaged in all three.


SEGA
SEGA SATURN
81307
PANZER DRAGOON SAGA
"Unique, trailblazing and wonderful." -NextGeneration
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB



Sega Dreamcast

Historical Background

The Sega Dreamcast, Sega's last home video game console, was launched in North America in 1999. Although the Dreamcast's sales did not meet Sega's expectations, the console is widely regarded as one of the best ever produced.

Many Dreamcast games were highly innovative at the time of release. For instance, Phantasy Star Online was the first online RPG produced for home video game consoles. Meanwhile, Shenmue helped pioneer the open-world genre.

Key Titles

Capcom vs. SNK
Crazy Taxi
Jet Grind Radio
Marvel vs. Capcom: Clash of the Super Heroes
Mortal Kombat Gold
NFL 2K
Phantasy Star Online
Power Stone
Power Stone 2
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing
Seaman
Shenmue
Sonic Adventure
Sonic Adventure 2
SoulCalibur







Traditional Rarity

Bangai-O
Cannon Spike
Giga Wing
Giga Wing 2
Gunbird 2
Illbleed
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure
Mars Matrix
Project Justice
Skies of Arcadia
Tech Romancer

Sega Dreamcast Variants

Sega All Stars

Dreamcast games that sold well were later re-released by Sega under its Sega All Stars branding. These variants are distinguishable by a change in the front cover art, where the typical white label featuring the Dreamcast logo changes to an orange label with the Sega All Stars logo.

Sega All Stars re-releases also had re-designed manuals. The white panel on the left side of the cover switched to a black panel with the Dreamcast logo inside. Game discs had the Sega All Stars logo added to the front artwork and featured a re-designed Sega Game Secrets logo.

17 titles received a Sega All Stars re-release:

Sega All Stars Branded Games

Crazy Taxi
The House of the Dead 2
Hydro Thunder
Marvel vs. Capcom: Clash of Super Heroes
NBA 2K
NBA 2K1
NFL 2K
NFL 2K1
NFL Blitz 2000
NHL 2K
Power Stone
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing
Sega Bass Fishing
Sonic Adventure
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater
Virtua Tennis
World Series Baseball 2K1

Not for Resale

Some Sega Dreamcast games were released either individually or bundled with the console. Those that were bundled have the phrase "Not for Resale" printed on the disc artwork. Sonic Adventure also contains a Limited Edition NFR version.


Dreamcast
SONIC ADVENTURE 2
SEGA
SONIC TEAM
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
51117



Sony Playstation

Historical Background

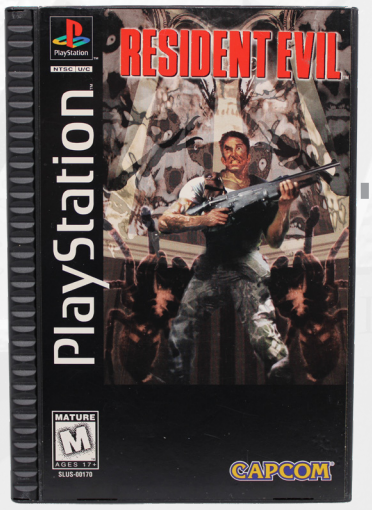
The PlayStation launched in North America in 1995 as Sony's first home video game console. Nintendo and Sony collaborated on a CD-based attachment for the Super Nintendo. However, the relationship between the two tech-giants fizzled after several years in the development process and Sony proceeded on its own.

The PlayStation was an instant success, becoming the first home console to sell over a hundred million units. It introduced some of the most popular video game franchises, including Crash Bandicoot, Gran Turismo, Medal of Honor, Resident Evil, Spyro the Dragon, Silent Hill and Tomb Raider. Several PlayStation titles are considered among the best video games ever produced, especially Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2.

With significant third-party support, the PlayStation boasts an impressive library with one of the best RPG lineups of any console. It is no wonder why the PlayStation remains a favorite among retro video game collectors.

Key Titles

Castlevania: Symphony of the Night
Chrono Cross
Crash Bandicoot
Crash Bandicoot 2: Cortex Strikes Back
Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped
Final Fantasy VII
Final Fantasy VIII
Final Fantasy IX
Gran Turismo
Gran Turismo 2
Metal Gear Solid
Resident Evil
Resident Evil 2
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis
Silent Hill
Spyro the Dragon
Spyro: Ripto's Rage
Spyro: Year of the Dragon
Tekken
Tekken 2
Tomb Raider
Tomb Raider II Starring Lara Croft
Tomb Raider III: Adventures of Lara Croft
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
Twisted Metal
Xenogears







Traditional Rarity

Batman Forever: The Arcade Game
Clock Tower II: The Struggle Within
Klonoa: Door to Phantomile
Misadventures of Tron Bonne
Persona Revelations Series
Persona 2: Eternal Punishment
Suikoden II
Tail Concerto
Tales of Destiny II
Valkyrie Profile

Sony Playstation Variants

Packaging Variants

Early releases of PlayStation games were distributed in Longboxes. There are three types of Longboxes: jewel, ridged and cardboard.



The jewel Longbox is a clear jewel case that was also used by Sega for its Sega CD and Sega Saturn. Every launch title for the PlayStation has a jewel Longbox variant, so it is hypothesized that this type of Longbox was the first used by Sony.

Ridged longboxes are hinged clamshells with textured ridges on the left side of the case and a thick paper stock adhered to the outer casing. Many believe this to be Sony's original design for PlayStation cases and the replacement for the jewel Longboxes.

A cardboard Longbox is a cardboard clamshell with the ridges printed on the left side of the case.

Black Label vs. Greatest Hits

After Sony switched from longboxes to a standard-size jewel case, they maintained the printed ridges design for the PlayStation's front cover art in addition to a black-colored spine. This cover art is commonly referred to as "Black Label."



Greatest Hits was a marketing label that Sony affixed to games that had been on the market for one year and had sold at least 150,000 copies. A green label with the phrase "Greatest Hits" replaced the "Black Label" design on the front cover art. A green label also replaced the black label on the spine. Additionally, Sony removed the printed artwork that had that appeared on Black Label discs for its Greatest Hits discs which featured no artwork.

Collectors' Edition

Some third-party publishers packaged multiple games together and branded them as a Collector's Edition titles. These games feature variant cover art with a white label along the left side and the phrase "Collectors' Edition" along the top. On the back cover art, the phrase "Part of a Set" appears in lieu of a UPC number. Collector's Edition games also feature variant discs with a solid white design and the phrase "Collector's Edition."









Sony Playstation 2

Historical Background

Sony's PlayStation 2 is the best-selling video game console of all time with over 150 million units sold since its launch in 2000. The console's game library is one of the largest of any system, with several games considered among the best ever made. The PlayStation 2 boasts an impressive selection of action-adventure and racing games, and it is unrivaled in the survival-horror genre.

Some of history's most enduring video game franchises were introduced on the PlayStation 2, including Devil May Cry, Guitar Hero, God of War, Kingdom Hearts and Ratchet & Clank. It also helped popularize the immensely successful Grant Theft Auto series.

With a healthy combination of quality, quantity and rarity, the PlayStation 2 is a fun and challenging console library to collect for.

Key Titles

Devil May Cry
Final Fantasy X
Final Fantasy XI
Final Fantasy XII
God of War
God of War II
Grand Theft Auto III
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City
Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas
Gran Turismo 3: A-spec
Gran Turismo 4
Kingdom Hearts
Kingdom Hearts II
Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty
Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater
Resident Evil 4
Silent Hill 2
Silent Hill 3
Silent Hill 4: The Room
Shadow of the Colossus
SoulCalibur II
Suikoden III
Suikoden IV
Suikoden V



Traditional Rarity

Blood Will Tell
Echo Night Beyond
.hack Quarantine
Futurama
Haunting Ground
Kuon
Rule of Rose
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories
Wild Arms Alter Code: F
Xenosaga Episode III: Also sprach Zarathustra

Sony Playstation 2 Variants

Black Label vs. Greatest Hits

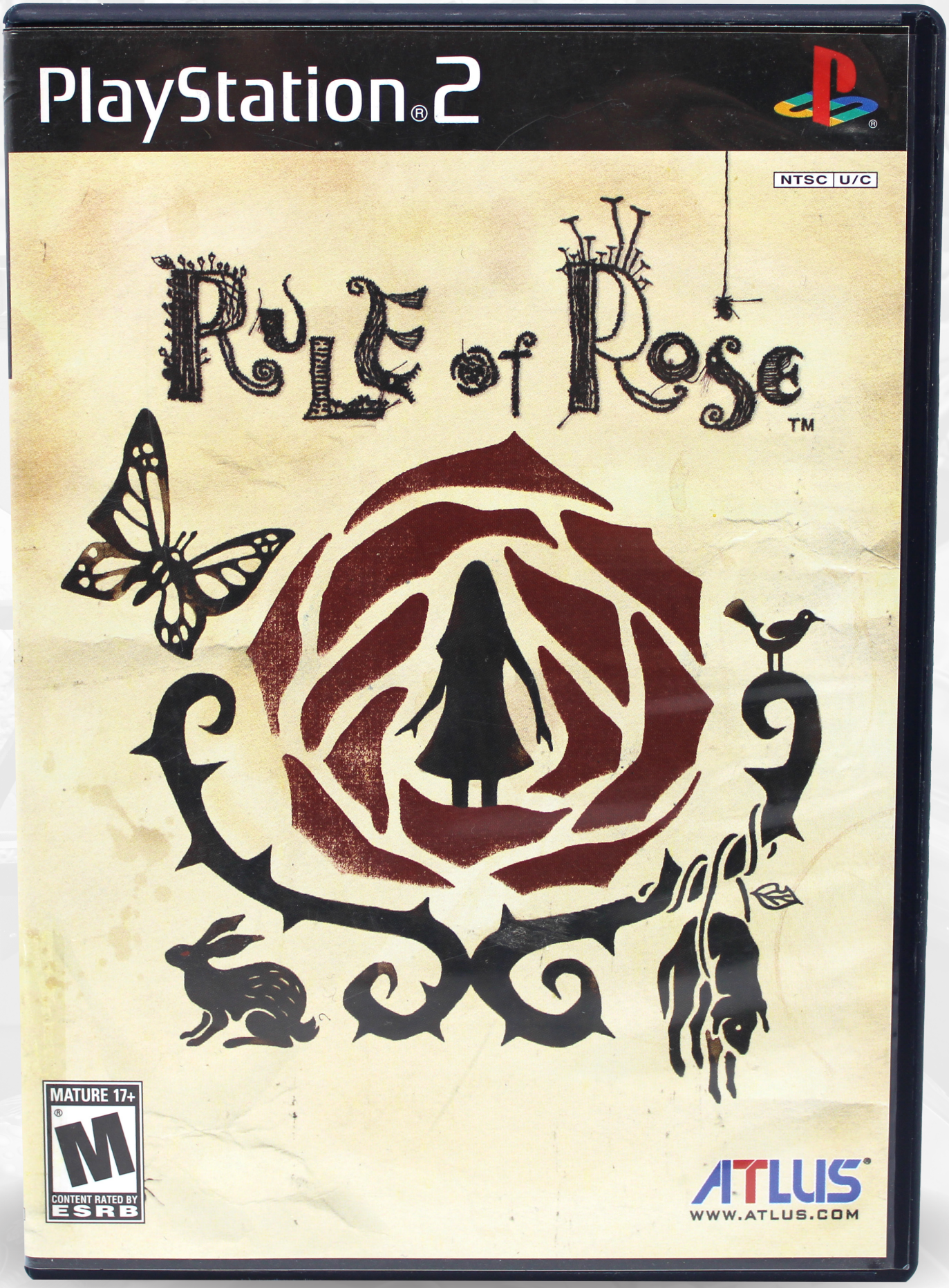
Like the PlayStation, most PlayStation 2 games feature a black panel with the system name and PlayStation logo at the top of the front cover art. A similar black panel is visible along the top of the spine. This is commonly referred to as a "Black Label."

The Greatest Hits variant is a re-release of a game with a redesigned cover art. These variants feature a red panel at the top of the cover art with the phrase "Greatest Hits" beneath it. Similarly, Greatest Hits variants replace the black panel on the spine with a red panel. A Greatest Hits game also includes the addition of a red panel to the bottom of the disc artwork.

Not for Resale and Part of a Set

Many PlayStation 2 games were sold both individually and pre-packaged in console or set bundles. Games that were packaged in bundles usually have different cover art than their non-bundled counterparts. These variants come in two styles. The first is the "Not for Resale" version, which will often feature the phrase "Not for Resale" along the front or back of the cover art, as well as the disc and manual. The second variant is the "Part of a Set" version, which will feature the phrase "Part of a Set" on the back of the cover art, sometimes in lieu of a UPC code.




PlayStation 2
NTSC U/C
Rule of Rose
TM
MATURE 17+
M
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
ATLUS
WWW.ATLUS.COM



Sony Playstation 3

Historical Background

The PlayStation 3 had its North American launch in 2006. While critical reception was somewhat negative during its lifespan, the PlayStation 3 has emerged as a popular system.

Many PlayStation 3 titles redefined the relationship between cutscenes and gameplay, especially The Last of Us and Metal Gear Solid IV: Guns of the Patriots. Several important franchises were also introduced on the PlayStation 3, including Assassin's Creed, Red Dead Redemption and Uncharted.

Games such as Batman: Arkham City, Bioshock: Infinite and Demon's Souls are considered among the best in their respective genres. There is also a substantial selection of Japanese RPGs. These factors make the PlayStation 3 a wonderful console library to collect.

Key Titles

Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag
Batman: Arkham City
Dark Souls
Dark Souls II
Demon's Souls
Dishonored
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
Fallout: New Vegas
God of War III
Grand Theft Auto IV
Grand Theft Auto V
Gran Turismo 6
Heavy Rain
inFAMOUS
The Last of Us
LittleBigPlanet
Minecraft: PlayStation 3 Edition
Ni no Kuni: Wrath of the White Witch
Red Dead Redemption
Resident Evil 5
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves Resident Evil 5
Uncharted
Uncharted 2



Traditional Rarity

Afrika
Ar nosurge: Ode to an Unborn Star
BlazBlue: Central Fiction
Class of Heroes 2G
El Chavo Kart
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: All-Star Battle
Lost Dimension
NBA Elite 11
Spider-Man: Web of Shadows
Syberia Collection

Sony Playstation 3 Variants



Black Label vs. Greatest Hits

Again, the PlayStation 3 uses Black Label and Greatest Hits branding variants. Most PlayStation 3 games feature a Black Label, which can be identified by a black panel with the system name and PlayStation logo either along the left side or the top of the front cover art, and a black panel visible along the top of the spine..

Meanwhile, Greatest Hits re-releases are identifiable by a red panel at the top of the game's cover art and the "Greatest Hits" phrase on the box and disc artwork.

Not for Resale

Like its predecessors, PlayStation 3 games were sold individually and as bundles. Bundled games usually had a "Not for Resale" phrase on the cover art, sometimes in lieu of a UPC number. A few PlayStation 3 "Not for Resale" variants will also include the phrase on the disc artwork.


PS3
PlayStation Network
El Shaddai
ASCENSION OF THE METATRON
TEEN
ADOLESCENTS
T
CONTENT RATED BY
CONTENU ÉVALUÉ PAR
ESRB
UTV IGNITION
GAMES



Sony Playstation 4

Historical Background

Launched in 2013, the PlayStation 4 is the second best-selling home video game console of all time. Video game enthusiasts have praised its versatility while collectors have grown fond of its library of third-party titles.

Intricate storylines and smooth gameplay are quite common in many of the PlayStation 4's game titles. Some of the best games ever made were released for the PlayStation 4, including Persona 5 and Read Dead Redemption 2. Like its predecessor, the PlayStation 4 also has a sizeable selection of Japanese RPGs.

As collectors become more familiar with the PlayStation 4, it will surely be a very desirable console library to collect.

Key Titles

Bloodborne
Dark Souls III
Devil May Cry 5
Doom
Fallout 4
Ghost of Tsushima
God of War
Horizon Zero Dawn
Spider-Man
Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain
Monster Hunter: World
Nier: Automata
Overwatch
Persona 5
Red Dead Redemption 2
Resident Evil 7: Biohazard
Uncharted 4: A Thief's End
Until Dawn
The Witcher III: Wild Hunt
Yakuza 0



Traditional Rarity

1001 Spikes
Attack on Titan 2: Final Battle
Blue Reflection
Demon Pit
Firewatch
Godzilla
Poop Slinger
Shadow Warrior 2
Tamashii
What Remains of Edith Finch

Sony Playstation 4 Variants





Blue Label and PlayStation Hits

Most PlayStation 4 games come packaged in a blue case featuring a blue panel with the system name and PlayStation logo along the top of the front cover art. A similar blue panel is visible along the spine. This is commonly referred to as a "Blue Label."

The PlayStation Hits variant is a re-release of a game with a red case and re-designed cover art. These variants feature the addition of a red panel below the below panel on the front cover art with the phrase "PlayStation Hits." Similarly, PlayStation Hits variants include a red panel along the spine. A PlayStation Hits game also includes the addition of a red panel and the phrase to the disc artwork.


PS4
PLAYSTATION VR MODE INCLUDED
MODE INCLUS
TOUHOU
KOBUTO V
BURST BATTLE
TEEN
ADOLESCENTS
T
ESRB
Online Interactions Not Rated
Interactions en ligne non classées
NIS America
ENHANCE YOUR GAMEPLAY WITH PSVR
AMÉLIOREZ VOTRE JEU AVEC PS VR





Sony Playstation 5

Historical Background

The PlayStation 5 is Sony's latest home video game console. Since its launch in 2020, the PlayStation 5's sales have been limited due to supply-chain issues wrought by the global COVID-19 pandemic. However, consumer demand for the console remains high.

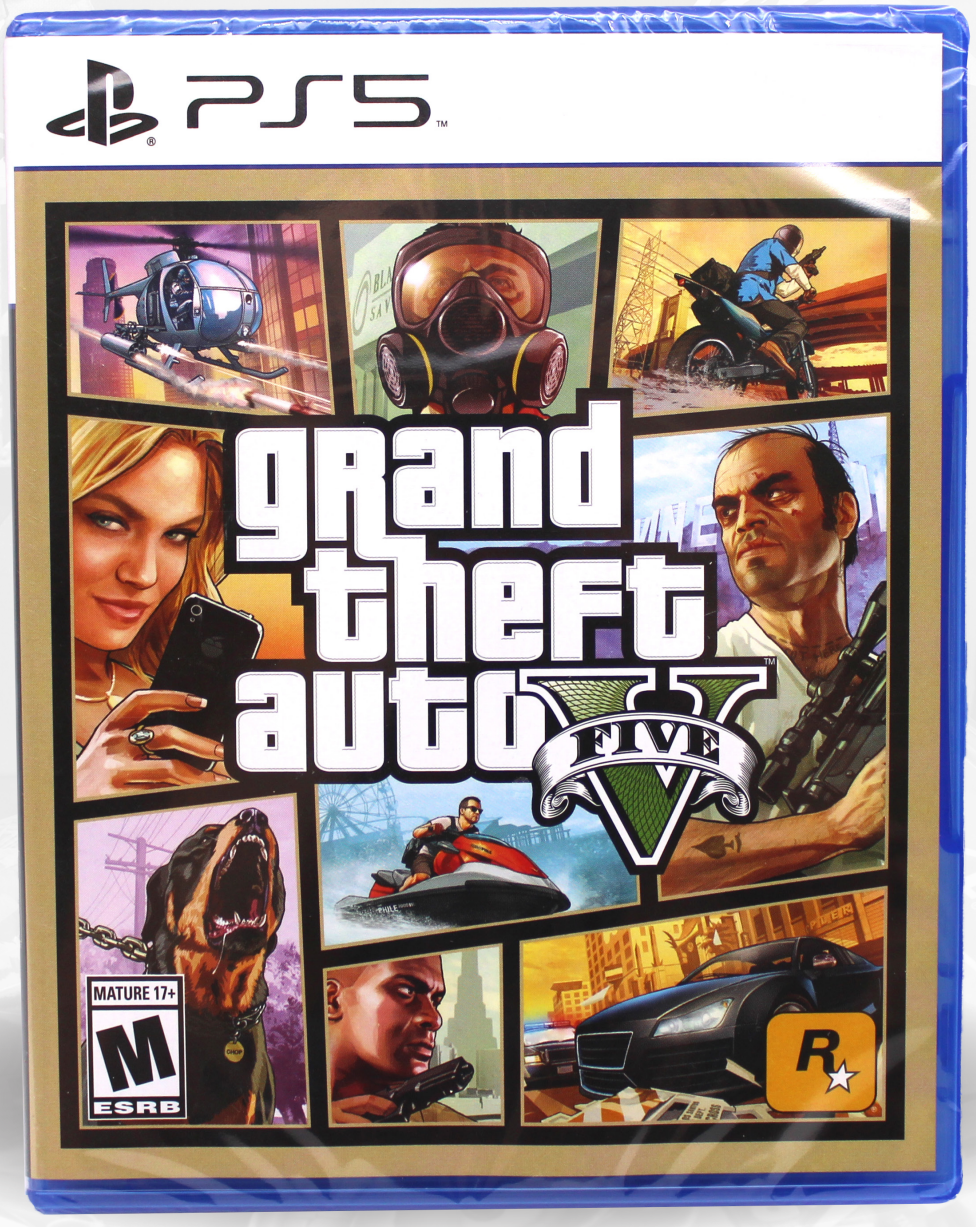
Games have not been as affected by these supply-chain issues and continue to be released. Many video game collectors expect the PlayStation 5's game library to be highly sought after. The following list of Key Titles includes several launch titles, including games that have received critical praise.

As time goes on, more information about the popularity and rarity of particular PlayStation 5 games will become more available.

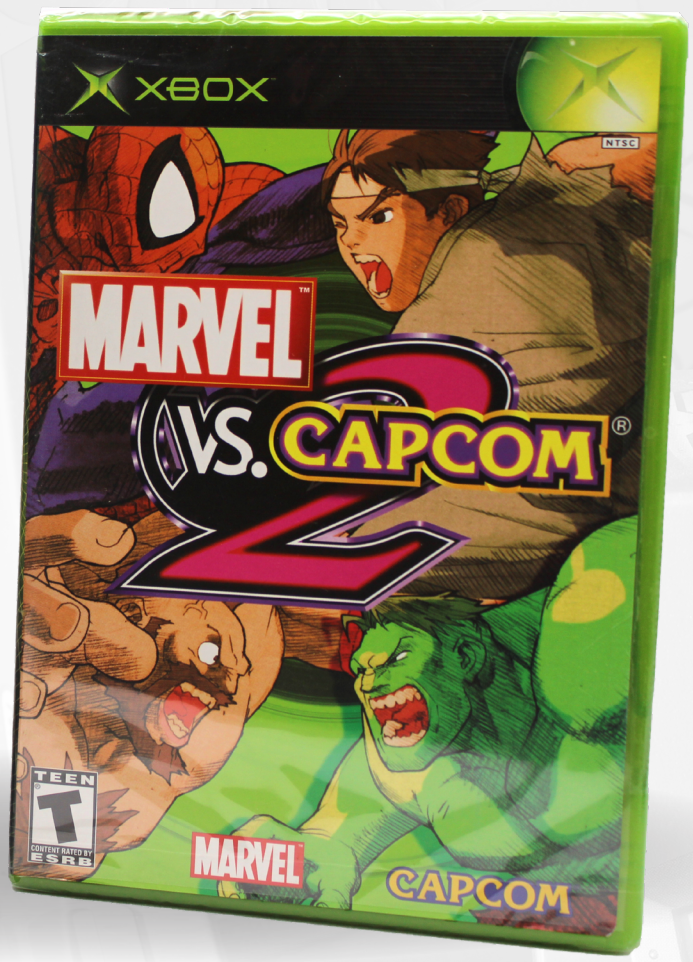
As of publishing, there are no known variants for PlayStation 5 game titles.

Key Titles

Assassin's Creed: Valhalla
Bugsnax
Call of Duty: Black Ops Cold War
Deathloop
Demon's Souls
Dirt 5
Elden Ring
Grand Theft Auto V
Gran Turismo 7
Hades
Horizon Forbidden West
Ratchet & Clank: Rift Apart
Resident Evil: Village
Sackboy: A Big Adventure
Marvel's Spider-Man 3: Miles Morales
Watch Dogs: Legion







Microsoft Xbox

Historical Background

The Xbox was Microsoft's first home video game console. After launching in 2001, it quickly became a favorite among many video game enthusiasts, surpassing the Nintendo GameCube and Sega Dreamcast in sales. The Xbox's built-in broadband connectivity and the creation of Xbox Live helped revolutionize online gameplay.

Some of the most important video game franchises were introduced by the Xbox, including Fable, Forza and, of course, Halo. The Xbox also features some of the best first-person shooters and racing titles available.

Although there was limited third-party support for the Xbox, its game library is quite large and features many console-exclusives, making Xbox console library collecting an exciting challenge.

Key Titles

Call of Duty 2: Big Red One
Conker: Live & Reloaded
Dead or Alive 3
The Elder Scrolls: Morrowind
Fable
Forza Motorsport
Half-Life 2
Halo: Combat Evolved
Halo 2
JSRF: Jet Set Radio Future
Ninja Gaiden
Panzer Dragoon Orta
Star Wars: Battlefront
Star Wars: Battlefront II
Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic
Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic II
Stubbs the Zombie in Rebel Without a Pulse
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4



Traditional Rarity

Bloody Roar Extreme
Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth
Curse: The Eye of Isis
Futurama
Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis
Marvel vs. Capcom 2
Obscure
Otogi 2: Immortal Warriors
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast
Teen Titans

Microsoft Xbox Variants





Black Label vs. Platinum Hits

First releases of Xbox games often have what is known as a Black Label. These games feature a black panel with the console's name and logo along the top of the front cover art.

Platinum Hits Variants

Platinum Hits
Platinum Family Hits
Best of Platinum Hits
Best of Platinum Family Hits

Once an Xbox game had been on the market for nine months and had sold well, Microsoft re-released the title with the Platinum Hits logo. These Platinum Hits variants replaced the black panel on the front cover with a silver one and included the phrase "Platinum Hits" underneath it.

Each of these variants features the same silver plane at the top of the cover art. The Platinum Family Hits looks just like regular Platinum Hits variants, except that it includes the word "Family" within the phrase in the shape of a stamp.

Both the Best of Platinum Hits and the Best of Family Platinum Hits appear as the originals, except with the addition of the phrase "Best of" above the original phrases and a reddish highlight around the entire phrase.

Not for Resale

Many Xbox games were packaged both individually and in bundles. Xbox games that were packaged in bundles often have the phrase "Not for Resale" affixed to the front cover art. There are Microsoft employee "Not for Resale " versions that are highly sought after by collectors.


XBOX
ONLY ON XBOX
NTSC
HALO
COMBAT EVOLVED
MATURE
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Not for Resale
BUNGIE



Microsoft Xbox 360

Historical Background

Launched in 2005, the Xbox 360 is Microsoft's best-selling home video game console to date. Early versions of the console were plagued with manufacturing defects, but subsequent versions removed these issues. Regardless, the Xbox 360 remained both popular and influential. It continued to innovate online gaming and digital media distribution, popularized achievement awards and served as serious competition against the Nintendo Wii's motion-sensor gameplay with the Kinect.

Several game franchises were introduced by the Xbox 360, including Gears of War and Mass Effect. In addition, the Xbox 360 was considered by many players to have superior versions of titles also available on Sony's PlayStation 3.

Microsoft was also able to secure significant third-party support and worked with publishers to ensure several popular game franchises were not PlayStation 3 exclusives. In conclusion, the Xbox 360 has a great library that is perfect for video game collecting.

Key Titles

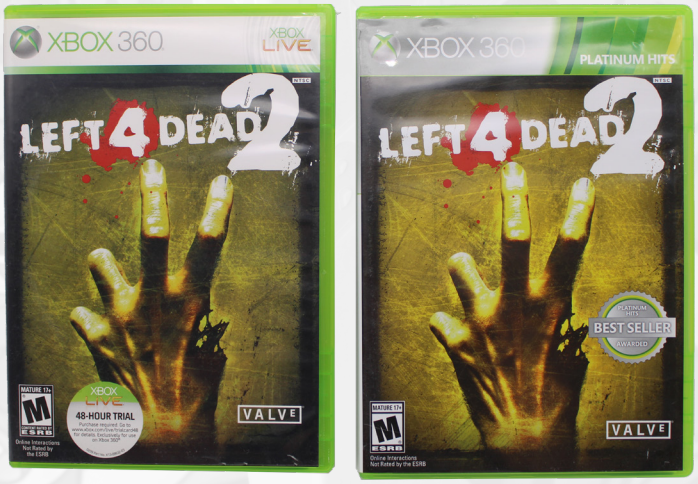
Alan Wake
Batman: Arkham City
Bioshock
Borderlands
Borderlands 2
Call of Duty: Black Ops
Call of Duty: Black Ops II
Call of Duty: Modern Warfare
Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2
Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3
Call of Duty: World at War
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
Fable II
Fallout 3
Fallout: New Vegas
Forza Horizon
Forza Motorsport 2
Gears of War
Gears of War 2
Grand Theft Auto IV
Grand Theft Auto V
Halo 3
Halo 3: ODST
Halo 4
Halo: Reach
Halo Wars
Left 4 Dead
Left 4 Dead 2
Mass Effect
Mass Effect 2
Minecraft: Xbox 360 Edition
Red Dead Redemption
Saints Row



Traditional Rarity

Blitz: The League II
College Hoops 2K8
El Chavo Kart
NCAA Basketball 10
NCAA Football 14
Operation Darkness
Peter Jackson's King Kong
Raiden Fighters Aces
Saw II: Flesh & Blood
Spider-Man: Web of Shadows

Microsoft Xbox 360 Variants



Platinum Hits Variants

Like its predecessor, the Xbox 360 employed the Platinum Hits branding for games that had been on the market for a set period of time and sold well. There are four Platinum Hits variants for the Xbox 360:

Platinum Hits Variants

Platinum Hits
Platinum Hits (Silver Case)
Platinum Family Hits
Kinect Platinum Hits

Platinum Hits variants feature re-designed cover art with a silver border around the original front cover art. The phrase "Platinum Hits" rests above it.

Platinum Hits (Silver Case) features the original cover art with the phrase "Platinum Hits" added to the right of the Xbox 360 logo and a change from a typical green case to a silver case.

Platinum Family Hits looks just like the regular Platinum Hits, except that it includes the word "Family" in the phrase.

Kinect Platinum Hits are exclusively for Kinect titles. These variants replaced the white panel at the top of the front cover art with a silver panel and included the addition of the phrase "Platinum Hits" underneath the Kinect logo.

Not for Resale

Many Xbox 360 games were packaged both individually and in bundles. Xbox 360 games that were packaged in bundles often have the phrase "Not for Resale" affixed to the front cover art, the front cover of the manual and the disc artwork. Additionally, the phrase "Not Packaged for Individual Sale" may appear on the back of the cover art.


XBOX 360
XBOX LIVE
NTSC
GEARS OF WAR
Winner of 30+ Xbox 360 Game of the Year Awards!
Includes: GameSpot, OXM, TeamXbox, GameSpy
MATURE 17+
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Game Experience May Change During Online Play
Microsoft game studios
EPIC GAMES



Microsoft Xbox One

Historical Background

Microsoft launched the Xbox One in 2013. Initially, Microsoft envisioned a console that would favor digital media over physical media, but consumer backlash forced the company to reconsider. Video game enthusiasts praised the Xbox One, but were quick to note that its graphics were inferior to that of Sony's PlayStation 4. This made the Xbox One's small list of exclusive titles even more disappointing.

Still, the Xbox One features a solid library of popular game titles. Many of Xbox's core franchises are well represented on the console, including Forza, Gears of War and Halo. True to its roots, the Xbox One offers a strong lineup of first-person shooters and racing games.

While it is perhaps too early to pinpoint any traditionally rare games for the console, there remain several key titles for the Xbox One to collect.

Key Titles

Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare
Call of Duty: Black Ops III
Call of Duty: WWII
Fallout 4
Fortnite
Forza Horizon 3
Forza Horizon 4
Gears of War 4
Gears 5
Grand Theft Auto V
Halo 5: Guardians
Minecraft: Xbox One Edition
Monster Hunter: World
Player Unknown's Battlegrounds
Red Dead Redemption 2
Star Wars: Battlefront
Sunset Overdrive
The Witcher III: Wild Hunt



Microsoft Xbox One Variants

Greatest Hits

Once Xbox One games had been on the market for a set time and had sold well, Microsoft re-released them under its Greatest Hits branding. These variants feature a "Greatest Hits" logo on the front cover art.





Microsoft Xbox Series X/S

Historical Background

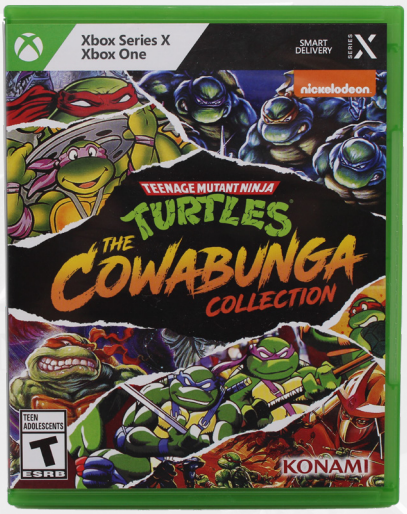
The Xbox Series X and Series S are Microsoft's latest home video game consoles. Both Xbox consoles released in 2020 to compete with Sony's PlayStation 5, but suffered the same supply-chain issues related to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Video game enthusiasts were initially disappointed by the lack of console exclusives at launch but have praised the Xbox Series X/S for its backward compatibility.

The following list of Key Titles includes several launch titles and games that have received critical praise. As time goes on, more information about the popularity and rarity of certain Xbox Series S/X games will become available. Microsoft's Xbox Game Pass has made the need for physical games less demanding, resulting in even fewer copies of physical games being produced for the Microsoft Series consoles.

Key Titles

Assassin's Creed Valhalla
Call of Duty: Black Ops Cold War
Call of Duty: Modern Warfare II
Call of Duty: Vanguard
DIRT 5
Dying Light 2: Stay Human
Elden Ring
Forza Horizon 5
Hades
Halo Infinite
Psychonauts 2
Resident Evil: Village
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Cowabunga Collection
Watch Dogs Legion









Atari 2600

Historical Background

The Atari 2600 was released in North America in 1977. Originally called the Atari Video Computer System, the 2600 popularized cartridge-based home video game consoles.

While lacking in the quality-control that Nintendo would later introduce, Atari quickly developed market dominance with the 2600 and helped pave the way for successful third-party publishers. Over five hundred unique titles were released for the 2600 during its fourteen-year lifespan, giving it one of the largest libraries of the 1980s. However, the over-saturation of poor-quality titles published by Atari helped lead to the video game crash of 1983.

Still, Atari brought many of the video game industry's most iconic franchises into the American home, including Donkey Kong, Frogger, Pac-Man and Space Invaders. While many of the 2600's key titles are plentiful, there are several 2600 games that are extremely rare. This makes Atari 2600 game collecting both a challenge and a thrill.

Key Titles

Adventure
Asteroids
Centipede
Defender
Dig Dug
Donkey Kong
E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial
Frogger
G.I. Joe Cobra Strike
Joust
Mario Bros.
Masters of the Universe: The Power of He-Man
Ms. Pac-Man
Pac-Man
Pitfall!
Q*bert
Raiders of the Lost Ark
Space Invaders
Spider-Man



Traditional Rarity

Bumper Bash
Cakewalk
Chase the Chuckwagon
Glib
Guardian
Halloween
Master Builder
Music Machine
Out of Control
Quadrun
Rescue Terra I
River Patrol
Springer
Stronghold
Swordquest: Waterworld
The Texas Chainsaw Massacre
X-Man

First Party Atari 2600 Variants

Atari Box Design

Box designs are an incredibly important variation for Atari 2600 collectors. Several first-party Atari 2600 games were released with different styles of boxes. There are nine separate standard Atari box designs. Eight of them are single-piece boxes with flap variations, while the ninth is a two-piece style box.



Gatefold: A book-style flap that opens along the front side of the box. All nine Atari launch-titles, known as the Numbered Series, were released with a Gatefold box.



Notch Lid: A single flap that opens at the top of the box with a half-circle notch on the back and two wing side flaps. Most games with a notch lid had text label cartridges and a small manual.



Glue Hang Tab: A double flap that opens at the top of the box with a hang tab that was originally glued down. Picture Label cartridges and Large Manuals were first released in glue hangtab boxes.



Locking Notch Lid: A double flap that opens at the top and features a locking mechanism similar to a cereal box. Some of these boxes came in factory shrink wrap, but not all.



Standard Flip Lid: A single flap that opens at the top of the box and has two a locking feature near each end to catch each wing side flap. Most games with this style of box came in factory shrink wrap.



Glue Flap: A double flap that opens at the top of the box which was glued together. Once opened, the flaps cannot close.



Hang Tab Flip Up: A box style similar to the glue flap variant, but with a perforated hangtab that can be punched out of the back of the box.



Hang Tab Flip Lid: A box style similar to the glue flap variant, but with an extra flap with a hangtab hole that is not glued down. Some of these boxes came in factory shrink wrap, but not all.



Two-Piece Box: This box design has two pieces of cardboard that fit together to form a box. A top piece features the cover art and slides over a bottom piece. Inside the box is a removable tray that stores the cartridge.

Full Picture vs. Red Banner

Silver Box Series Atari 2600 games were printed with either a full picture or a red banner. The full picture variant features cover art that takes up nearly the entire front of the box. A red banner variant limits the size of the color art to half the box with the game's title in a red banner across the center of the box.





Numbered Text Labels

Atari 2600 games that were released in a gatefold Box came with numbered labels. The numbered labels featured the game's number on the end label next to the title. They did not include the phrase "Use with Joystick Controllers" on the front label.

Text Labels vs. Picture Labels

An important variant for Atari 2600 games is whether they have a text label or a picture label.

Many early-release Atari 2600 games came with a text label that featured a line of text describing the components of the game program.

Later releases of games came with a picture label that had original artwork specific to the game. This became the standard form of cover art for most cartridge-based games.

Typically, a text label cartridge was released with a small manual, and a picture label was released with a large manual.

Text Color

Some text labels feature variations in the color of the text. For example, some text labels may feature red text and others may feature an orange text.

Special Edition

A few first-party Atari 2600 games may have the Special Edition variant. This variation in the cover art features a black and chrome looking banner across the cover art with both the Atari logo and the phrase "Special Edition.'



Third Party Atari 2600 Variants

Publisher Variants

Some Atari 2600 games feature publisher variants. For example, Q*Bert was originally published by Parker Brothers. Atari later acquired the rights and re-released the game under their Atari Corp brand.



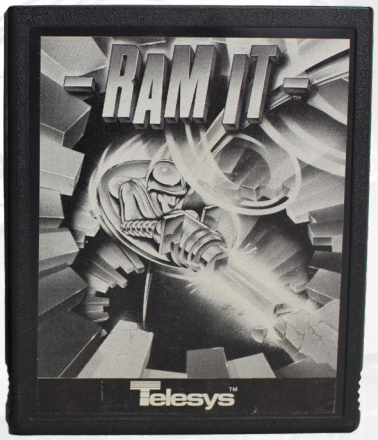


Grip and Handle Shells

Many third-party publishers manufactured their own unique cartridge shells. However, some used either a grip or handle shell that was different than their standard shell.

For instance, Spy Hunter may have a typical sega shell with four small grooves along the sides, or it may have a grip shell with protruding sides. Eggomania may have a typical US Games shell or a handle shell designed for better grasping.

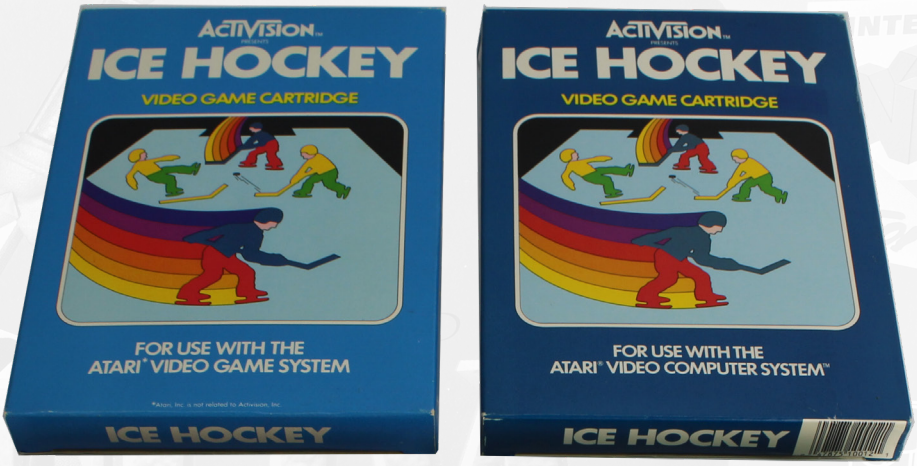




Activision Box Color and UPC

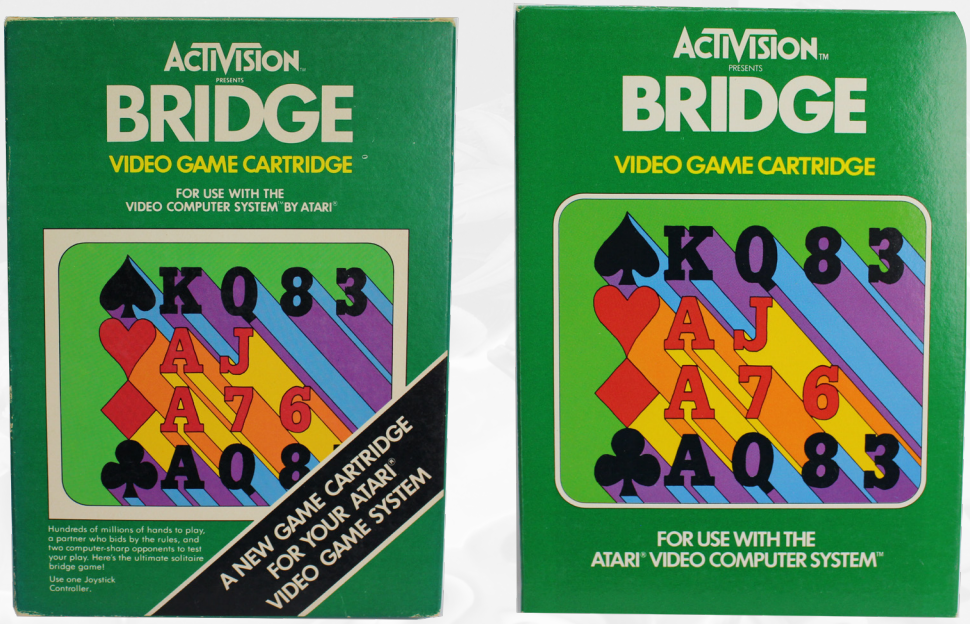
Some Activision games feature box color variants. Typically, an individual title will have the same colored box, but in different shades. For example, Ice Hockey has an earlier release with a light blue box and a later release with a dark blue box.

Additionally, a later-release Activision game will feature a UPC number on the bottom of the box and an earlier-release of the same game will not.



Activision New Banner

Several games published by Activision feature either a black banner across the bottom-right corner of the box with the phrase "A New Game Cartridge" or no banner at all.



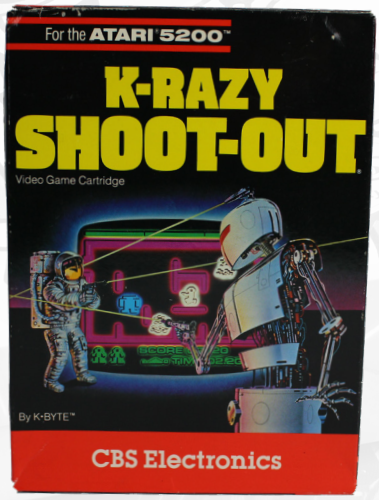


Atari 5200

Historical Background

The Atari 5200 was released in 1984 as Atari's second home video game console. It lacked any significant changes to the 2600's graphics and was largely a disappointment. Sixty-nine games were released for the console during its eighteen-month-long lifespan.







Key Titles

Frogger
Galaxian
Gremlins
Mario Bros.
Miner 2049er
Ms. Pac-Man
Pac-Man
Pitfall!
Space Invaders
Star Wars: The Arcade Game

Traditional Rarity

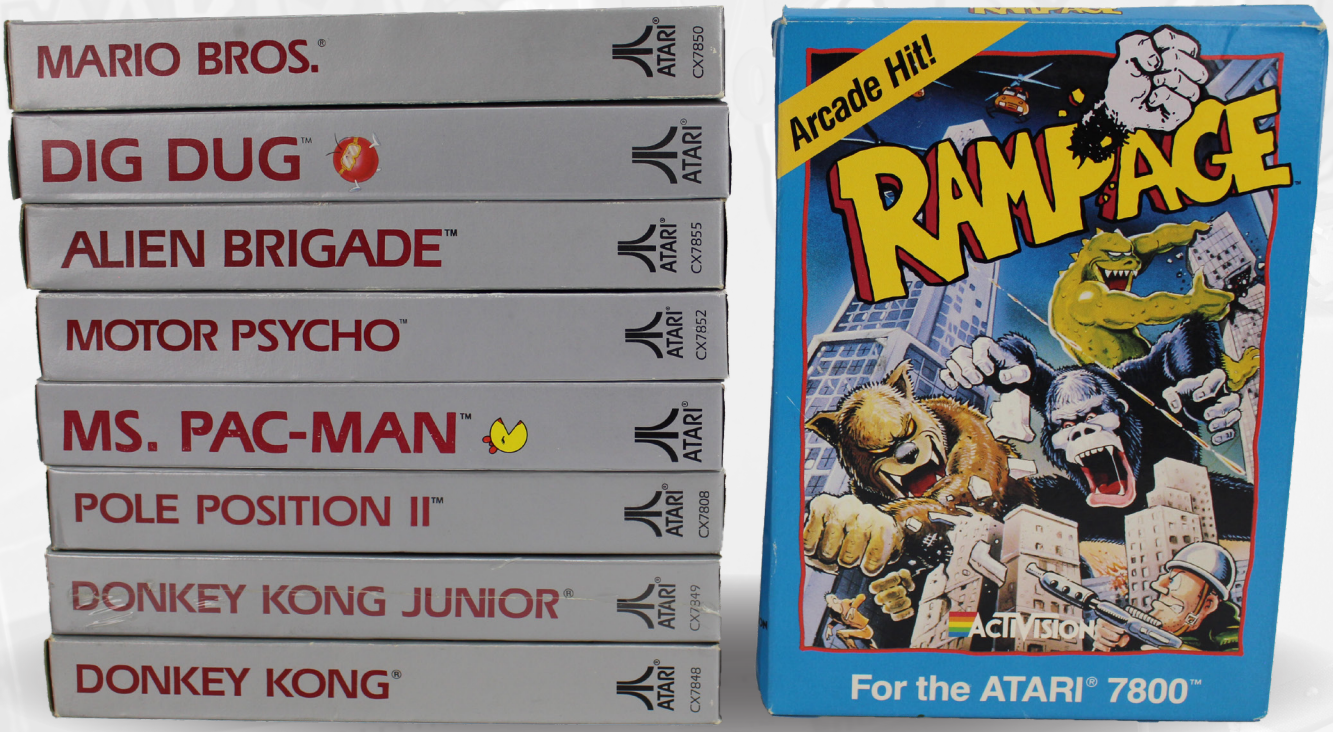
Bounty Bob Strikes Back
Frogger II: Threeedeep!
K-Razy Shootout
Meteorites
Montezuma's Revenge
Quest for Quintana Roo
Star Wars: Return of the Jedi Death Star Battle
Zaxxon
Zenji

Atari 5200 Variants

Large Ribbon vs. Small Ribbon

The blue ribbon that surrounds the game's title on the front of first-party Atari 5200 game boxes can either be larger or smaller, depending on the game's variant. They're designated as either large ribbons or small ribbons.



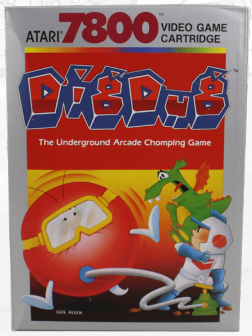


Atari 7800

Historical Background

The Atari 7800 was first announced in 1984, but its release was delayed until 1986. The console could play both Atari 7800 and 2600 cartridges, making it one of the first home video game consoles to feature backwards compatibility.

Atari hoped the 7800 would revive the company's sales after the video game crash of 1983. However, sales remained low, and the popularity of the Nintendo Entertainment System pushed the 7800 into obscurity.







Key Titles

Commando
Dark Chambers
Dig Dug
Donkey Kong
Donkey Kong Junior
Food Fight
Joust
Mario Bros.
Ms. Pac-Man
Pole Position II

Traditional Rarity

Alien Brigade
Double Dragon
Ikari Warriors
Kung-Fu Master
Midnight Mutants
Ninja Golf
Rampage
Sentinel
Tank Command
Title Match Pro Wrestling

Atari 7800 Variants

Copyright Date

In 1984, Atari changed its name from Atari Inc. to Atari Corporation. This rebranding sometimes reflects on certain Atari 7800 games' copyright information.

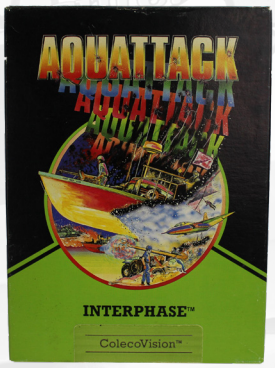


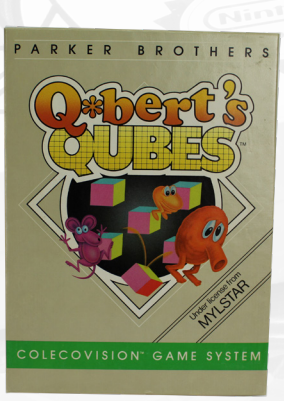
ColecoVision

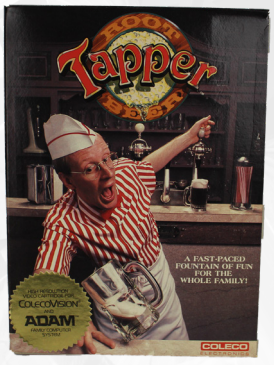
Historical Background

The ColecoVision was released in 1982. It was the first Coleco home video game console to feature programmable cartridges. ColecoVision was also the first home console to feature a port of Nintendo's popular game, Donkey Kong, which was the standard pack-in game for the console.

Coleco ported several other popular arcades to the ColecoVision. Many consumers considered these versions superior in both gameplay and graphics to the ports available on other consoles. Yet, diminishing sales due to the video game crash led to the ColecoVision's discontinuation in 1985.







Key Titles

BurgerTime
Cabbage Patch Kids: Adventures in the Park
Centipede
Donkey Kong
Donkey Kong Junior
Gorf
Lady Bug
Smurf: Rescue in Gargamel's Castle
Spy Hunter
Root Beer Tapper
War Games
Zaxxon

Traditional Rarity

Alcazar: The Forgotten Fortress
Amazing Bumpman
Aquattack
Boulder Dash
Dragonfire
Evolution
Jungle Hunt
Q*Bert's Qubes
Skiing
Threshold
Tournament Tennis (IMAGIC)
Up n' Down
Wizard of Id's Wiz Math

Yellow Box vs. Silver Box

Several ColecoVision games published by Sunrise were released in either a yellow box or a silver box. Yellow box games were released in the United States and were packaged with cartridges that had a gold foil label. Silver box games were released both in the United States and overseas. They were packaged with cartridges that had a silver foil label.



Foil Label vs. Paper Label

ColecoVision games released by Sierra On-Line had two types of cartridge labels: a foil label and a paper label. Foil labels were often thicker and had a metallic paper stock while paper labels were made with thin paper stock and had no metallic finish.



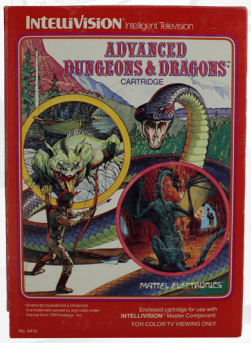


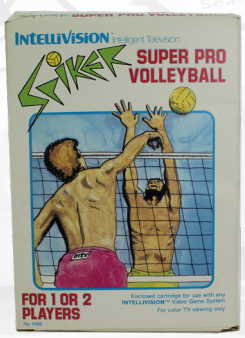
Intellivision

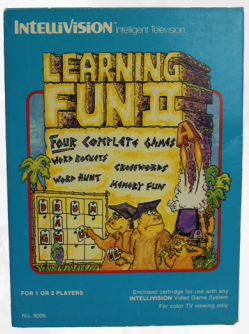
Historical Background

Mattel Electronics released the Intellivision in 1979. While competitors Atari and Coleco focused on arcade ports for their home video game consoles, Mattel Electronics concentrated on sports titles. The company secured the licensing rights of several prominent sports leagues and branded its sports titles accordingly.

The Intellivision featured several add-on components, including the innovative Intellivoice. With over three million units sold, the Intellivision was the second most successful home console before the Nintendo Entertainment System.







Key Titles

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons
Advanced Dungeons & Dragons:
Treasure of Tarmin
Beauty & the Beast
BurgerTime
Demon Attack
Diner
Lock 'n' Chase
Major League Baseball
Microsurgeon
NFL Football
Shark! Shark!
Tron Deadly Discs

Traditional Rarity

Body Slam Super Pro Wrestling
Congo Bongo
Learning Fun I
Learning Fun II
Spiker Super Pro Volleyball
Stadium Mud Buggies
Super Series Big League Baseball
Turbo
Tutankham

Mattel Releases vs. INTV Releases

In 1984, a group of former Mattel Electronics employees formed the company INTV and bought their former division from Mattel. However, in doing, so they lost the licensing rights to several sports games. This change in licensing is reflected on several titles. Early releases of certain sports titles were published by Mattel and included the professional licensing of the respective sports. Later releases were published by INTV.





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