

Lanesa Bowman

Dr. O'Donnell

Advanced Composition

Game: *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*

Genre: Role Playing Game

Creator: Bethesda Game Studios; in conjunction with Bethesda

Softworks

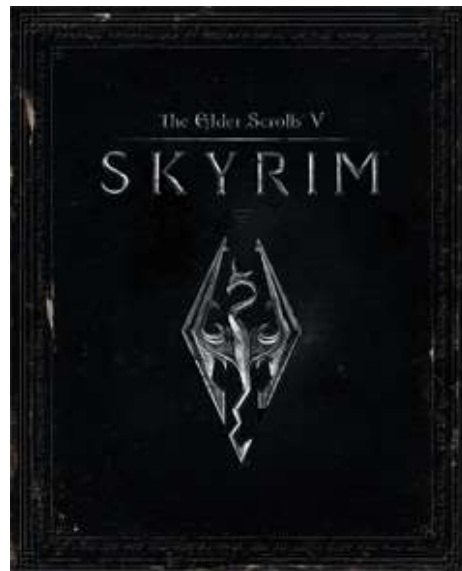
Platforms: Microsoft Windows, Xbox 360, PlayStation 3

Release Date: 11-11-2011; Re-release date: 6-7-2013

Overall Grade: 9.5/10

The Best RPG On the Market:

Review of The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, A Timeless Classic



Cover Art for *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* [Photo Credit: Bethesda website]

Imagine a game you can play infinite amount of times, yet it will never get old. *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* is a timeless classic that can provide you an infinite amount of hours of game

play to lose yourself in. *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* is the fifth installment in The Elder Scrolls games series, and Skyrim comes from the name of the land that you are free to explore. You start off as a prisoner who soon will become the Dragonborn, the one individual in the entire land who can save all inhabitants of Skyrim. The ‘Dovahkiin’, aka, The Dragonborn isn’t limited to the main quest where you save the land; you can also go rogue and have even more adventures.

There are endless possibilities for your character, but whatever you choose affects how the game reacts to you. If you are the hero the land deserves and go with the main quest before going to free play, you will be praised by the leaders of the land. If you are a criminal pick pocket in the wee hours of the morning and get caught by the guards, you will have a bounty on your head. If you make secret societies mad, they will hire assassins to come after you. Every action has a reaction or consequence, which creates an ever expansive world in which you can lose yourself.



Map of Skyrim [Photo Credit: Elder Scrolls: Wikia Website]

My Experience with Gaming:

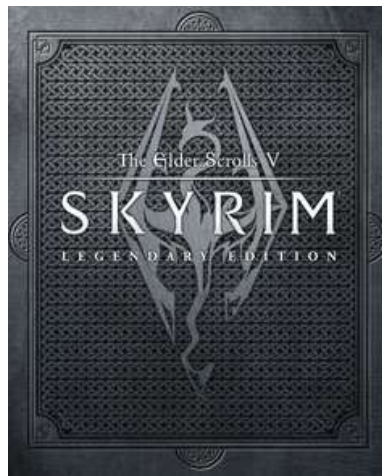
I've played many different kinds of video games. In the twelve years I've been playing video games, I've tried different platforms and I've tried a myriad of types of games: RPG's (Role Playing Games), FPS (First Person Shooters), Puzzle Games, Simulation (Sports), and MMO's (Massively Multiplayer Online).

'I had played many games before Skyrim, and never thought it would have such a massive hold on me like it did.'

I pre-ordered *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* and waited outside Game Stop for hours in line until it was finally released to the public. It was midnight when I finally was able to hold my copy of this wonderful game. I had played many games before Skyrim, and never thought that it would have such a massive hold on me like it did. The best and worst issue with Skyrim is that you can get completely and utterly submersed in it. When I went home that night I picked up my pre-order from Game Stop, I logged roughly sixteen hours of game play during the first two weeks alone. I know that doesn't sound like much, but that is the equivalent of two full shifts at a job, one per week. I like that you can get so deeply into the game, which is how an RPG is supposed to feel, but when you are an adult with many other responsibilities, Skyrim just sits in your game console, nagging at you to return to it. I feel this way every time I go off to play a different game for a while, whether it be board game, video game, etc.

I still consider Skyrim to be the best game I've ever played since you truly can roam free and visit whichever city you find inside the massive map and do whatever you want whenever you want, but it is very time consuming. I often have to save Skyrim for my breaks from school, if not, I would not be focused on my studies, or attending classes.

When *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* was re-released in 2013 as *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim- Legendary Edition*, which included three new add-ons to the original game, I of course waited outside Game Stop for it to be released at midnight. And once again, I was suckered back into the game and lost even more hours of my life, hours I consider well spent.



Cover Art for *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim- Legendary Edition* [Photo Credit: Bethesda Website]

What is The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, and What is an RPG?

Skyrim is the fifth installment of the Elder Scrolls video game series of RPG's; each are predecessors to the next one. *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* was released on November 11, 2011. In the first week alone, Bethesda, the creating company, sold over 7 million copies of Skyrim.

The game was release for both console gamers as well as PC gamers with the following platforms: Microsoft Windows, Xbox 360, and PlayStation 3.

In Skyrim, you play the main character, The Dragonborn or 'Dovahkiin', who is trying to defeat the Elder Dragon named Alduin, the dragon who is prophesied as the one who would end your entire world. The game itself has the main quest but also has a tremendous amount of side quests and obscure items of value that you get when completing side and main quests. The map is by far the largest map on a video game at the time of its release, allowing the player to not only have the experiences of the main quest, but also explore the land of Skyrim.



Dragon Fight [Photo Credit: The Elder Scrolls Website]

Settings and Character Development:

Skyrim is set two hundred years after *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion*, but it is still set very far back in time. The fictional year is 4E 201, but relatable to us as being around the 5th century or so. The main character is the best part about Skyrim. You can choose to be one of ten different races, each with their own special abilities unique to that race. You can customize the

way your character looks as well. With its numerous options for varying physical features including, but not limited to: Eye Shape, Eye Distance, Lip Shape, Lip Size, Hairstyle, Hair Color, various types of scars and dirt colors, and the always entertaining bouncing back and forth between the different types of characters until you get your personal character just right.



Character Race/ Gender Choices [KOTOWARI (game reviewer)]

Before getting your character the way you want, you have to start the introduction to the game. The intro to the game acts as both the tutorial, and as the introduction to the storyline of the game. At first gameplay is limited, since the game is trying to show you how to use the controls in a fun and informative way.

Skyrim opens to your character sitting across from one of the rulers of the five main holds of Skyrim in a cart being pulled by a horse. Once you make it to the military installment, Helgen Keep, you then get to choose your character type, which does affect your character starting stats. When you go to the chopping block to be relieved of your head, a massive dragon, who at this time is considered just a legend, swoops in and ‘shouts’ at the group of people trying to murder both you and the ruler of the Windhelm hold. This shout, as all dragon speaking will be called the rest of the game, gives you and the ruler of Windhelm time to break free of your

bindings and race to the nearest tower where you follow the ruler through what is left of the military installment and then the underground caves and tunnels as well.

The attention to detail in the opening scenes of this game second to none. Each individual hair on the characters opposite of you wave in the wind and bounce with every bump the cart hits as it makes its way to your place of certain demise. The audio is clear and flows well for being just a bunch of soundbites that play when interacted with. The graphics, for its time of release, were also amazing and clear. It was easily the best looking game of 2011. I would still say that Skyrim graphics are just as good as the day I bought it, which was the midnight release in 2011.

Main Quest and Free-Roaming:

After completing the opening introduction, you are assigned the Main Quest. In this quest, the main character is facing a civilization crisis. A civil war has broken out between the rebel Stormcloak army and the Empire's Imperial Army. This divide amongst the land is the last prophecy in The Elder Scrolls, also known as the holy text. The scroll then prophesied that Alduin, the World eater would return with the other dragons to reclaim the world after the civil war had finished breaking down the establishments.



Final Fight with Alduin [Photo Credit: Fallout Forum]

Once you've added the main quest to your 'Quest Menu', you are not required to complete it, ever, unless you want to. Since finishing the main quest will effectively end the main mission, one would think it would end the entire game. Wrong! After finishing the main quest, if you chose to do so, the beauty of *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* is that you can roam free and do whatever you want whenever you want. And I truly do mean beauty. The graphics for the land that you travel across are beautiful. Each flower bends when the wind blows, creature like deer, bear, and rabbits will roam the land around you, much like if you were to walk out in an uninhabited forest today.



Mountains in Skyrim [Photo Credit: The Elder Scrolls Website]



Mountain Forest Path [Photo Credit: The Elder Scrolls Website]

There are all kinds of consequences in the game. If you do something deemed 'illegal' in whichever specific hold you are in, you can be taken to jail. The nine holds have almost the exact same rules and laws. For instance, if you steal in any of the holds, you will be approached by the guards of the hold to either do jail time, pay for the amount you stole, or persuade them to let you go by paying them a bribe. Free roaming in Skyrim, which is the collective whole of all nine holds, can take days (in game time), especially if you are not hiring a cart to find a city, however, once you have discovered a place, you can always fast travel (a link in the map that will allow you to travel immediately without actually trekking across the land) back to it immediately-- as long as you are not around any enemies at the time.

Overall Grade of The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim:

With the expansive map, many layers of interactive game play, extent of the character development options and the detail that went into this game, I would easily rate it a 9.5/10, or a 95%, whichever suites you. I have yet to find another RPG, even in the ones released since Skyrim that is even remotely as large of a play range, or as interactive either. Skyrim is also the only RPG I've ever played where you can choose to have your own individual race and are able to develop it further with hundreds of physical options to try out on your character, including eight different kinds of dirt stains on the face, and twelve shades of war paint, that can be arranged in nine different shapes or placements on the character. The options are almost endless. In addition to the character development options physically, what you do during the game play will affect your character's stats, which gives even more variety to the game play. No matter how many times I come back to Skyrim, each time is different from the previous one, and even

though I am well versed in the game play, it feels like a new game each time. *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* is easily the best video game released since 2011.



One Does Not Simply 'Finish' Skyrim Meme [Photo Credit: 9gag Website]



About the Author: Lanesa Bowman is a junior at East Tennessee State University. She serves as the Vice President of the Student Service Board at the Allendale campus of ETSU. When not in class, Lanesa spends her time homeschooling her two young boys, road trips with her family, and gaming when she gets the chance. Her favorite kind of video game is the RPG,

where she can leave the game after saving and no matter how many days or weeks pass, she can come back to that particular spot like time stood still. She is an English major with an interest in Technical Writing.