DRAGON AGE™ II
BIOWARE™

EPILEPSY WARNING

Please read before using this game or allowing your children to use it.

Some people are susceptible to epileptic seizures or loss of consciousness when exposed to certain flashing lights or light patterns in everyday life. Such people may have a seizure while watching television images or playing certain video games. This may happen even if the person has no medical history of epilepsy or has never had any epileptic seizures. If you or anyone in your family has ever had symptoms related to epilepsy (seizures or loss of consciousness) when exposed to flashing lights, consult your doctor prior to playing.

We advise that parents should monitor the use of video games by their children. If you or your child experience any of the following symptoms: dizziness, blurred vision, eye or muscle twitches, loss of consciousness, disorientation, any involuntary movement or convulsion, while playing a video game, discontinue use IMMEDIATELY and consult your doctor.

PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE DURING USE

- Do not stand too close to the screen. Sit a good distance away from the screen, as far away as the length of the cable allows.
- Preferably play the game on a small screen.
- Avoid playing if you are tired or have not had much sleep.
- Make sure that the room in which you are playing is well lit.
- Rest for at least 10 to 15 minutes per hour while playing a video game.

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INSTALLING THE GAME

NOTE: For system requirements, see electronicarts.co.uk.

To install on a PC (disc users):

Insert the disc into your disc drive and follow the on-screen instructions.

If the Autorun menu does not automatically appear, launch the installer manually in Windows® 7, Windows Vista® or Windows® XP by opening **Start > Run**, typing **D:\AutoRun.exe** in the text box, then clicking OK (substitute the correct letter of your CD/DVD-ROM drive if other than 'D:').

Once the game has installed you can launch it from the game's AutoRun menu or by locating the game through the **START** menu.

To install on a PC (EA Store users):

NOTE: If you'd like more information about purchasing direct downloads from EA, visit www.eastore.ea.com and click MORE ABOUT DIRECT DOWNLOADS.

Once the game has been downloaded by EA Download Manager, click the install icon that appears and follow the on-screen instructions.

Launch the game (once it is installed) directly from the EA Download Manager.

NOTE: If you've already purchased a title and would like to install it on another PC, first download and install the EA Download Manager on the other PC, then launch the application and log in with your EA account. Select the appropriate title from the list that appears and click the start button to download the game.

To install on a Macintosh:

1. Insert the game disc into your DVD-ROM drive. A DVD icon representing the game disc appears on your desktop. Double-click the icon to open the game's launcher.
2. Select the game's installer icon at the bottom of the launcher to prompt the installation menu.
3. Follow the on-screen instructions to complete the installation.

To install on a PC or Macintosh (third party online users):

Please contact the digital retailer through whom you purchased this game for instructions on how to install the game or how to download and reinstall another copy.

WWW.DRAGONAGE.COM

STARTING THE GAME

To start the game:

For PC:

Games on Windows Vista or Windows 7 are located in the **Start > Games** menu and on earlier versions of Windows in the **Start > Programs** (or **All Programs**) menu. (EA Store users must have the EA Download Manager running.)

NOTE: In Windows Vista Classic Start menu style, games are located in the **Start > Programs > Games > Games Explorer** menu.

For Macintosh:

Open a Finder window, select 'Applications,' and double-click the game's icon.

COMPLETE CONTROLS

To zoom the camera, scroll with your mouse wheel. Clicking the right mouse button and dragging rotates the camera.

To execute most actions, right-click the mouse. Right-clicking on an object makes your currently selected character take appropriate action—attack an enemy, talk to a friendly character, loot a corpse, open a door, pull a lever, and more. You can also right-click on the ground to direct your character to move to that location if you don't feel like using the keyboard to move.

However, once you have selected a spell or talent that requires a target—either by clicking on your quickbar or pressing the appropriate number key for that quickbar ability—you must left-click on the target. Right-clicking cancels the spell or talent. Left-click also selects a character in your party to control. Drag a box around multiple characters while left-clicking to select them all.

GENERAL CONTROLS	
Quick save	F5
Quick load	F9
Highlight objects	TAB
Hide main interface	V
Take screenshot	PRT SCN
Character	C
Journal	J
Inventory	I
Abilities	P
Map	M
Tactics	\
Pause menu	ESC

MOVEMENT/CAMERA	
Run forward	W
Rotate camera left	A
Run backward	S
Rotate camera right	D
Run left	Q
Run right	E
Rotate camera up	HOME
Rotate camera down	END
Zoom in	**Pg Dn** (or scroll forward)
Zoom out	**Pg Up** (or scroll backward)
Toggle run/walk	/ (num pad)

COMBAT	
Pause	SPACEBAR
Target nearest enemy and attack	R
Use quickbar ability	1-0
Quick heal	-
Quick mana/stamina	=
Party move/hold	H
Select full party	CTRL + A
Select one character	F1-F4
Select many characters	SHIFT + F1-F4

MAIN MENU

The main menu is mostly self-explanatory. To begin playing, select NEW GAME; to load your most recent saved game, select RESUME; or to load a specific saved game, select LOAD GAME.

These are the options that might not be as obvious:

SIGN IN TO *DRAGON AGE*™ SERVERS

This lets you log into your EA account (or create a new account) so that you can track your character profile at http://social.bioware.com. To change what data is uploaded when you log in, visit the Account Options screen.

DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT

This screen displays new content made available after the release of *Dragon Age*™ *II* and also lets you manage the content you've already downloaded.

EA ACCOUNT, REGISTRATION WITH ENCLOSED SINGLE-USE SERIAL CODE, INTERNET CONNECTION AND ACCEPTANCE OF END USER LICENSE AGREEMENT REQUIRED TO PLAY AND TO ACCESS BONUS CONTENT (IF ANY) AND ONLINE FEATURES AND/OR SERVICES. SERIAL CODE IS NON-TRANSFERABLE ONCE USED. EA ONLINE PRIVACY POLICY AND TERMS OF SERVICE CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.EA.COM. YOU MUST BE 13+ TO ACTIVATE SOFTWARE. EA MAY RETIRE ONLINE FEATURES AFTER 30 DAYS NOTICE POSTED ON WWW.EA.COM/2/SERVICE-UPDATES.

INTRODUCTION

Dragon Age™ *II* tells the story of a member of the Hawke family, a refugee of the Fifth Blight who became a central figure in events that would reshape Thedas.

The full story is not well documented, and the details of how a refugee became Kirkwall's Champion are known only to a few. The story is not told as it happens, but long afterward. And the narrator is sometimes prone to exaggeration.

CREATING HAWKE

Varric, our narrator, has told this story once or twice before. He has a certain way of remembering Hawke that, er, might not be wholly consistent with the facts. After all, who would you find to contradict him?

But there are a few basics for which even Varric can't get away with lies. You can't say that a woman was actually a man, or a warrior actually a mage, and expect your audience to still take you seriously.

CLASS

Hawke's class determines which abilities he or she can learn during the course of the game and has a profound effect on combat. Class—and gender, of course—also affects how characters in the story respond to Hawke.

Warrior

Warriors are front-line fighters, the backbone of any party under assault. Some heft an enormous two-handed weapon that strikes several foes at once. Others pair a one-handed weapon with a shield that doubles as a bludgeon.

Mage

Mages command arcane spells and hurl bolts of magic from their staves. Although mages are vulnerable when fighting toe-to-toe with enemies, they deal immense amounts of damage and heal their allies when protected by the party. Because they risk demonic possession, mages are either persecuted or carefully supervised in most nations in Thedas.

Rogue

Rogues are crafty combatants who wield a dagger in each hand or rain arrows from a distance. They are particularly adept at tearing down individual opponents and are the only class that can pick locks or disarm traps.

Class Comparison

	WARRIOR	MAGE	ROGUE
Starting attribute bonuses	+3 strength	+3 magic	+3 dexterity
	+2 constitution	+2 willpower	+2 cunning
	+1 willpower	+1 cunning	+1 willpower
Starting talents/ spells	Pommel Strike	Mind Blast	Miasmic Flask
Starting health	160	100	125
Starting stamina/ mana	105	160	130
Stamina/mana regeneration	With each kill	Continuously	With each hit

IMPORTING THE EVENTS OF *DRAGON AGE™: ORIGINS*

A few minutes into Varric's retelling, his interrogator demands more specifics. Did Hawke truly look as Varric describes? And how was Hawke connected to the events of the Fifth Blight, which ravaged Ferelden until a Grey Warden slew the archdemon atop a fortress in Denerim?

At this point, you can import a save from *Dragon Age™: Origins* to ensure that Varric's story remains consistent with your own recollection of history. Alternately, choose one of three pre-written histories that represent common paths through *Origins*.

You can import any save from *Dragon Age: Origins*, the *Dragon Age: Origins Awakening* expansion, the *Golems of Amgarrak* stand-alone downloadable content, or the *Witch Hunt* stand-alone downloadable content, regardless of whether you completed the game with that save. If you did not complete the game, Varric will presume that the remaining events of *Dragon Age: Origins* match the rumors he has most often heard.

CONVERSATIONS

When it's Hawke's turn to speak in a conversation, you see a dialogue wheel that offers several options for what Hawke can say. The options presented often vary based on your choices earlier in the game.

The text you see is a short paraphrase of the longer line that Hawke will speak if you pick that option. Each paraphrase is accompanied by an icon in the middle of the wheel, indicating the type of response or the tone in which it is intended.

ICONS

Indicates that Hawke will be helpful or particularly nice.

Indicates that Hawke will take an agreeable, tactful position.

Indicates that Hawke will be wry, humorous, or witty.

Indicates that Hawke will act charmingly.

Indicates that Hawke will speak or act aggressively.

Indicates that Hawke will speak directly or rudely.

Indicates that Hawke will initiate a fight, or strike/kill someone in conversation.

Indicates that Hawke will deputize a companion to act or speak instead.

Indicates that Hawke will flirt or pursue deeper romance.

Indicates that Hawke will permanently end a romance or turn down a proposition.

Indicates that Hawke agrees or consents.

Indicates that Hawke disagrees or refuses.

Indicates that Hawke is choosing one of multiple exclusive options.

Indicates that Hawke is making a special choice that is only available because of previous decisions.

Indicates that Hawke will either extort money or pay an informant, as indicated.

Indicates that Hawke will lie.

Indicates that Hawke will ask a question that does not necessarily lead the conversation directly toward its conclusion. The information Hawke learns, however, may lead to new conversation options in the future. When more than one of these questions is available at the same point in the conversation, they are grouped together in a special Investigate section of the wheel.

COMPANIONS

Although it is possible for Hawke to venture out alone for most of *Dragon Age II*, the game is designed around a party of four combatants, selected from among the many prospective companions you encounter. Hawke's party members are not just important during combat; they often have personal connections to the story and may ask for Hawke's help with quests of their own.

To change which party member you control, click on a character or their portrait. You can also select characters with the **F1** through **F4** keys, or press **CTRL** + **A** to issue orders to all party members at once. You can change the composition of your party whenever Hawke returns home or visits a companion at his or her home base.

COMPANIONS' HOME BASES

Once Hawke creates a new life in Kirkwall, each companion has a location in the city where they retreat when Hawke doesn't need them. Seek out these home bases and visit often—once Hawke's companions are away from the stress of battle, they are much more likely to relax and offer insights that they won't share on the road. These conversations may lead to new quest options or, for certain companions, the possibility of romance.

FRIENDSHIP AND RIVALRY

Hawke's companions have their own agendas and will react to major decisions. When they support Hawke's decisions, they move toward friendship; when they disagree, they move toward rivalry. Rivalry is not necessarily bad; it still indicates that Hawke's relationship with the companion is deepening, albeit in a confrontational direction.

You can track a companion's friendship or rivalry rating in his or her character record. When Hawke's relationship with the companion has progressed sufficiently along one path or the other, new conversations become available in the companion's home base in Kirkwall. Once Hawke attains complete friendship or rivalry with a companion, a passive ability is unlocked in the companion's personal school, and subsequent decisions no longer sway the companion's opinion of Hawke.

CHARACTER PROGRESSION

To grow into the legendary figure whose story Varric is telling, Hawke needs to become more powerful, learn new abilities, acquire advanced equipment, and recruit experienced companions. Sure enough, a short time into the family's escape from Lothering, Hawke gains a level and can spend a few points on Attributes and Abilities for the first time.

As Hawke recruits companions, they too progress in largely the same manner.

EXPERIENCE AND LEVELS

Experience points (XP) are awarded whenever Hawke completes a quest or finds a codex entry, anyone in the party kills an enemy in combat, or a rogue in the party picks a lock or disarms a trap. Once Hawke or a companion has the XP required to cross a certain threshold, the character gains a new level. Progress towards that threshold is shown just above the quickbar in the main interface and in the character record screens.

With each new level, a character gains three attribute points and one ability point. At levels seven and 14, Hawke alone gains a specialization point (see p. 14).

When a character levels up, you can spend the points yourself in the Attributes and Abilities screens.

ATTRIBUTES

Hawke begins with at least 10 points in each of the six attributes, which primarily determine prowess in combat, both directly (more constitution means more health points) and indirectly (equipping heavy armor requires great strength).

When you first see Hawke's attribute scores, however, some will already exceed 10 because of the class bonuses listed earlier. With each level, Hawke and other companions gain an additional three points to spend on attributes.

Strength

Strength increases damage and attack values for warriors. For all classes, it increases fortitude, which measures resistance to effects like being knocked back or set aflame.

Dexterity

Dexterity increases damage and attack values for rogues. For all classes, it increases the likelihood of landing a critical hit.

Magic

Magic increases damage and attack values for mages. For all classes, it increases magic resistance, which absorbs a proportion of damage from magical attacks and determines the duration of hostile magical effects.

Cunning

Cunning increases defense for all classes as well as the amount of damage inflicted by a critical hit. Cunning also determines a rogue's aptitude for picking locks and disarming traps, with difficulty thresholds set at 10, 20, 30, and 40 points.

Willpower

Willpower increases the size of the mana pool for mages or the stamina pool for warriors and rogues.

Constitution

Constitution increases maximum health for all classes.

TALENTS/SPELLS

Talents (for warriors and rogues) and spells (for mages) are special abilities that can be used in combat instead of a basic attack. Talents or spells usually draw from the character's pool of stamina or mana, although some are passive, providing permanent advantages without stamina or mana expenditure. A character gains one point to learn a talent or spell each level, as well as at a few other points in the game.

The character you control—whether Hawke or another companion that you have switched to—uses activated abilities and sustained modes only when directed. Other characters in your party use their abilities whenever appropriate, or when the conditional instructions you set up in the Combat Tactics screen tell them to (see p. 27).

When you have points to spend in the Abilities screen, only the abilities highlighted in blue are currently available to learn. To unlock others, you need to meet the requirements listed in red by learning specific prerequisite abilities or reaching a certain level.

Activated Abilities

The most common talents or spells are those marked "activated," indicated by a diamond icon. These abilities vary widely—some are offensive strikes against one or more enemies, whereas others provide positive effects to the character or other companions. Some activated abilities last for only a second, while others remain active for a short time. Most incur an immediate cost in stamina or mana, and after you use a particular activated ability, there is generally a short cooldown period before you can use it again.

Passive Abilities

Talents or spells marked "passive," indicated by a circular icon, are permanent effects, although some only apply in particular circumstances. They do not consume stamina or mana, and, because you don't need to activate them, they do not appear in your quickbar. To review which passive abilities your character has learned, take a look at the Abilities screen.

Sustained Modes

Once you use a talent or spell marked as a "sustained mode," indicated by a hexagonal icon, it remains active until you disable it. However, most sustained modes reserve a fixed percentage of the character's mana or stamina pool. That reserve is not available for other abilities to use until you deactivate the ability. After you deactivate a sustained mode, there is generally a short cooldown period before you can use it again.

Upgrades

In each school of abilities, a number of small icons indicate possible upgrades to activated abilities or sustained modes. These upgrades are not abilities in themselves but instead improve an existing ability. Although it may seem as if an upgrade is less valuable than a completely new talent or spell, the size of a character's mana or stamina pool limits the number of abilities that can be used in a single battle. Upgrades can thus be much more useful than yet another new ability. As well, only upgraded talents and spells can lead to cross-class combos (see p. 25).

Specializations

Hawke can learns one specialization upon reaching level seven and another at level 14. Three specializations are available for each class. Each grants a unique bonus and unlocks a new group of powerful talents or spells. Hawke's companions cannot learn specializations, but their personal ability schools include talents or spells that are related to the same specializations available to Hawke.

COMBAT

The core combat mechanic in *Dragon Age II* is simple: a combatant's attack percentage is the chance that a basic attack will hit an opponent, whereas the combatant's defense percentage is the chance to evade a basic attack. (Special attacks like using an activated ability or throwing a bomb almost always hit.)

These percentages vary based on the opponent's rank and level; the percentages you most often see are for a normal-rank enemy of the same level as the character, but percentages against enemy lieutenants and bosses are also available, as explained below.

Assuming the attack is successful, the target suffers a certain number of points of damage subtracted from current health, after accounting for the target's resistance to certain types of damage.

However, each of those statistics—attack, defense, and damage—can be modified by a number of additional factors, as explained in the following pages. Talents, spells, status effects, high-quality equipment, and the difficulty level can further alter most statistics.

DIFFICULTY

Dragon Age II offers four levels of combat difficulty, which can be changed at any time in the Gameplay Options screen. Higher settings are meant not to punish, but to challenge you; with sufficient tactical planning and careful management of each party member, even nightmare difficulty should be satisfying, not frustrating.

Specifically, each successive difficulty level increases enemies' health, damage output, attack scores, and the frequency with which they use special abilities.

Casual

Casual difficulty is best suited to players who are new to role-playing games or expect to play combat in real-time, rather than pausing often to plan tactics.

Normal

Normal difficulty is the recommended setting for players familiar with role-playing games, providing a good balance of challenge and survivability. It requires moderate use of tactical pausing to plan actions during combat. You will generally only need to control your main character, and can allow the game to control your companions.

Hard

Hard difficulty provides a considerably greater challenge than normal difficulty. To survive most fights, you will need to make sophisticated use of tactical pausing as well as clever combinations of spells and talents, controlling each of your party members in turn.

Nightmare

Nightmare difficulty is intended for tactical geniuses who found hard difficulty too easy. Aim carefully: At this setting, errant spells and attacks will harm your allies as easily as your enemies.

HEALTH

Whenever a character takes damage, points are subtracted from a pool of total health points. Maximum health is initially determined by the character's class (see p. 7); it increases with each point spent on the constitution attribute. Lost health regenerates slowly during combat but almost immediately after a fight. If you're near death, use a health potion or cast a healing spell.

Injuries

So long as at least one party member survives a fight, those who fell in combat revive themselves once all enemies are dead—but they sustain injuries that reduce their health pool. At most difficulty settings, it is possible for each character to sustain multiple cumulative injuries, which prevents them from fully healing until the injuries are treated.

To remedy an injury, use an injury kit on the character. The party's injuries are also automatically treated whenever Hawke returns home.

STAMINA/MANA

Warriors and rogues draw from a pool of personal stamina to power many of their talents, and mages use their mana for spells. (A few abilities, however, cost nothing to use.) Each class regenerates stamina or mana differently: warriors replenish some stamina each time they kill an enemy, rogues regain a small amount of stamina with each hit, and mages regenerate mana continuously. Certain spells and talents also allow characters to regenerate mana or stamina.

Because mana and stamina are limited, talents and spells are special supplements to basic attacks, not the focus of battle. The size of the stamina or mana pool is initially determined by the character's class (see p. 7). It increases with each point spent on the willpower attribute.

ATTACK

Attack is usually represented as a percentage that indicates a character's chance to hit an opponent with a basic attack. This percentage is based on a flat attack score, which is visible alongside the percentage in the Attributes screen.

For a given flat attack score, the percentage varies based on the level and rank of the opponent. The percentage score that you see most often is calculated in comparison to a normal-rank enemy of the same level as the character. To see a character's attack percentage against enemy lieutenants or bosses, hover the mouse over the attack score in the Attributes screen.

Because the attack percentage is calculated in comparison to an enemy of the same level as the character, the percentage diminishes each level unless you spend points to improve it. This means that you must continually invest in the strength attribute for warriors, magic for mages, and dexterity for rogues.

Cover

Arrows and crossbow bolts cannot penetrate obstacles like columns or trees. Although it is possible to target and fire at opponents behind cover, the shots will not hit them, no matter how high the attack score is.

DEFENSE

Defense represents a character's ability to avoid attacks entirely. Defense works just like attack, as described above, except that defense produces the opposite effect: with sufficient defense, attacks glance off harmlessly or inflict minimal damage.

Defense, like attack, is usually represented as a percentage that varies based on the opponent's rank and level. Consequently, as characters increase in level, you must continually invest in the cunning attribute to keep their defense score high.

Dodging

A few abilities and effects provide a percentage chance to dodge attacks. Dodging is similar to defense, except that it is absolute. Whereas defense can be overcome with a high attack score, a chance to dodge applies regardless of the aggressor's attack score.

DAMAGE

The damage inflicted by a basic attack is a combination of the weapon's damage rating and the attacking character's primary attribute—strength for warriors, magic for mages, and dexterity for rogues.

However, while swings from a warrior's weapon or shots from a rogue's bow are very powerful, they are also slow. By contrast, a rogue wielding two daggers may not cause much damage with each hit, but the strikes come at blinding speed. These differences are why the Attributes and Inventory screens also indicate damage per second (DPS) for the character's equipped weapons.

Weapon damage is important even for characters who concentrate on using spells or talents because damage inflicted by abilities is almost always a multiple of the character's basic attack damage.

Armor

Armor mitigates physical damage—if a character's armor is rated at 10%, the character suffers 10% less damage from physical attacks than they would otherwise. Like attack and defense, the armor percentage is calculated relative to an opponent of the same level, so the percentage degrades if characters do not continually find better armor.

Keep in mind that armor is completely ineffective against the different types of elemental damage, which are instead counteracted by specific resistances.

Elemental Damage

There are five types of elemental damage—fire, cold, electricity, nature, and spirit. Most offensive spells produce one of the types of elemental damage, and some weapons inflict elemental damage instead of physical damage. Weapons that have been enchanted by runes (see p. 31) may inflict several different types of damage simultaneously.

If you enable damage numbers in the Interface Options screen, you can identify different types of damage by the color the text appears in:

- Damage to your party is red, no matter the type
- Physical damage is white
- Fire damage is orange
- Cold damage is blue
- Electricity damage is yellow
- Nature damage is medium green
- Spirit damage is purple
- Healing is bright green prefaced by a + symbol

LABEL	EXPLANATION
1	Character taking damage (red fog)
2	Currently controlled character
3	Fallen character (p. 17)
4	Level-up notification (p. 11)
5	Character's current action
6	Character's health (p. 16)
7	Character's stamina (warriors and rogues only; p. 17)
8	Character's mana (mages only; white portion is reserved by a sustained mode; p. 17)
9	Hold position/pause buttons
10	Activated abilities with cooldown meter (p. 13)

LABEL	EXPLANATION
11	Sustained modes in quickbar (p. 14)
12	Usable item and quantity in inventory (p. 29)
13	Current character's XP (p. 11)
14	Quick heal / quick stamina
15	Sustained modes affecting character
16	Shortcuts to common menus
17	Mini-map of area
18	Current target's name / health
19	Ground ring to identify characters (if enabled in gameplay options screen)
20	Indication of cross-class combo effect (p. 25)

Elemental Resistances

Each type of elemental damage is counteracted by a specific resistance in the same way that armor counteracts physical damage. For example, characters with 10% fire resistance suffer 10% less fire damage. As with armor, party members' elemental resistances change based on enemies' rank and relative level.

If enemies have significant resistance to a certain type of damage, a small shield appears next to their name whenever they're hit by that element.

Magic Resistance

Whenever an attack's source is magical, the victim's magic resistance score is added to their elemental or physical resistance. Just like physical or elemental resistances, magic resistance counteracts a percentage of the damage that an attack would have inflicted.

Magic resistance also reduces the duration of hostile magical effects on a character. Thus, with 20% magic resistance and 10% fire resistance, a character would suffer 30% less damage from magical fire attacks, 20% less damage from magical cold attacks, and a magical paralysis effect would last for 20% less time.

Damage Resistance

Just as magic resistance applies to all damage inflicted by magic, regardless of the elemental type, damage resistance is a further layer of protection that applies to all damage of any type. For magical attacks, it is cumulative with magic resistance and elemental resistance or armor; for non-magical attacks, it is cumulative with just the basic damage resistance, which is usually armor.

Critical Hits

Every attack has a small possibility of generating a critical hit, as indicated by the critical chance percentage shown on a character's Attributes screen. When the character does succeed in landing a critical hit, it inflicts bonus damage beyond what a normal attack would produce, as indicated by the critical damage percentage shown on the same screen.

You know you've landed a critical hit when you see an opponent's health bar flash white.

FLANKING

An attacker is more likely to score a critical hit when striking anywhere at an opponent's back half, including hits that are just slightly past the opponent's side. This is true for all combatants, so don't let enemies get behind your party members!

FORCE AND FORTITUDE

Basic attacks and many spells or talents produce physical or elemental force. Every combatant has a specific level of force they can withstand, based on fortitude, which is determined by a character's strength attribute, and maximum health, which is determined by the constitution attribute. When the force of an attack exceeds what the combatant can withstand, physical force results in effects like knocking a character to the ground, and elemental force results in effects like setting the character aflame. In one way or another, when combatants are overcome by force, the effect interrupts their current attacks and may delay them from returning to combat for up to a few seconds.

Spell and talent descriptions indicate elemental or physical force with numbers like 4x. That means the ability produces four times as much force as it does damage. If the damage the ability inflicts is fairly small, then 4x force might not be a significant effect—perhaps only enough to push an enemy back for a second—but for high-damage abilities, 4x force could easily knock an enemy completely down.

ENEMY RANKS

As previously explained, some statistics like attack, defense, and armor percentages are displayed relative to a normal-rank enemy of the same level as the character. There are five ranks of enemies, although these are usually simplified to just normal foes, lieutenants, and bosses. The length of enemy health bars indicates their relative threat—normal enemies have short health bars, lieutenants' are somewhat longer, and bosses have very long health bars.

Higher-ranked enemies gain several advantages. Notably, the party's attack, defense, armor, and resistance percentages are lower when fighting a lieutenant or boss than they are when fighting normal enemies. To see the precise percentages, hover the mouse over the score in the Attributes screen.

Some spell or talent descriptions also list effect chances with the note "vs. normal enemy." The likelihood of applying those effects is much lower against a high-ranking enemy.

THREAT

Enemies choose their targets based on which character they perceive to be the greatest threat. Each enemy considers three factors—which character is wearing the heaviest armor, who has inflicted the most damage to them personally, and which character is closest to them.

If enemies perpetually attack characters that cannot withstand direct assault, there are several spells and talents that can help characters gain or lose threat so that enemies will switch to other targets. Stun effects also cause enemies to forget their targets and choose anew.

WEAPON STYLES

If Hawke is a warrior or rogue, a choice of weapon styles is available, with two options per class. Those weapon styles determine the speed of attacks, how many foes a single strike can hit, and, in some cases, which talents Hawke can use. (Mages' staves perform double duty by firing magical bolts at long range and operating as a melee weapon at short range.) Each of Hawke's companions has already trained in their personal favorite weapon style and thus cannot make this choice.

Two-Handed Weapon

Warriors who heft two-handed weapons attack relatively slowly, but hit every enemy in the front third of the warrior's personal space with a single swing. The two-handed school of weapon talents includes several attacks that sweep through even wider areas of the battlefield.

Weapon and Shield

Warriors who opt for a one-handed weapon and a shield strike more quickly than two-handed warriors but only hit enemies in the front quarter of their personal space instead of the front third. The shield increases the warrior's armor score, of course, and acts nearly like a weapon itself, battering foes who get too close, if the warrior makes effective use of talents from the weapon and shield school.

Dual Weapon

Rogues who choose to fight at close range can wield a dagger in each hand. This is the fastest of the weapon styles, more than making up for the relatively limited damage of each hit. In particular, because rogues regain stamina with each strike, this weapon style ensures that the rogue's energy reserves never stay depleted for long. Talents in the dual-weapon school focus on inflicting large amounts of damage at optimal times.

Archery

Rogues who carry a bow can rain death from a great distance, keeping them relatively safe from enemy retaliation and giving the party more flexibility in tactical positioning. Arrows impact with great power, but the shots are much slower than a dual-weapon rogue can slash. When enemies come close, archers pull out a hidden dagger, switching to a rapid slashing style in order to regain space to shoot. Talents in the archery school allow the rogue to control specific parts of the battlefield, which widens the strategic possibilities of this weapon style.

Mage's Staff

Mages always carry magical staves that they use to enhance their spellcasting, to hurl magical projectiles for their basic attacks, and to defend themselves in melee combat. Unlike spells, the staff does not consume mana, so a mage need not worry about being left defenseless. There is no particular school of spells dedicated to staff combat; rather, the staff is an integral part of every school. Like archers, mages can strike out with the staff as a melee weapon when enemies draw near.

CROSS-CLASS COMBOS

Each class has a special status effect that can set up a cross-class combo, in which a character of one class uses a talent or spell to hinder an enemy with the effect before a character of another class exploits it using another talent or spell. This produces a tremendously powerful attack.

Warriors can STAGGER enemies using any of several upgraded talents from the Vanguard and Warmonger schools. Mages can exploit STAGGER using upgraded spells from the Arcane or Primal schools, or rogues can do so using upgraded talents from the Dual Weapon school.

Mages can make enemies BRITTLE using any of several upgraded spells from the Primal and Elemental schools. Warriors can exploit BRITTLE using upgraded talents from the Two-Handed school, or rogues can do so using upgraded talents from the Archery school.

Rogues can DISORIENT enemies using any of several upgraded talents from the Sabotage, Scoundrel, and Archery schools. Warriors can exploit DISORIENT using upgraded talents from the Weapon and Shield school, or mages can do so using upgraded spells from the Spirit school.

The STAGGER, BRITTLE, and DISORIENT effects are lost if the enemy suffers a cross-class combo. This means that the additional benefits of those effects only apply before the combo is completed (see *Status Effects*).

Brittle

Enemies that a mage has made BRITTLE suffer significantly more damage from all attacks. A rogue or warrior can perform a cross-class combo by using a talent that has a damage bonus against BRITTLE targets.

Disorient

Enemies that a rogue has DISORIENTED suffer a large penalty to defense. A warrior or mage can perform a cross-class combo by using a talent or spell that has a damage bonus against DISORIENTED targets.

Stagger

Enemies that a warrior has STAGGERED suffer penalties to both attack and defense. A rogue or mage can perform a cross-class combo by using a talent or spell that has a damage bonus against STAGGERED targets.

STATUS EFFECTS

Many talents, spells, and items produce effects beyond simple damage. Sometimes these effects are as simple as knocking opponents to the ground, but the more complex effects described below persist for a time. All of these effects apply to enemies, but only some can apply to Hawke's party.

Confusion

A confused enemy may attack its allies or make other irrational choices.

Dispel

Dispel effects cancel persistent hostile magic, which usually means forcibly deactivating sustained modes. This affects both magic that improves enemies' combat capabilities and magic that hampers the dispeller's allies.

Enslavement

Enslaved enemies fight as Hawke's allies for the duration of the effect.

Obscure

Obscure gives allies a partial veil from their foes. This results in a significantly greater chance of dodging enemy attacks.

Silence

Silence prevents combatants from using spells or talents, although they can still move and execute basic attacks.

Stealth

Stealth prevents a combatant from being seen by enemies. Generally, stealth is lost as soon as the stealthed character takes any action beyond moving. Stealthed characters can still be hit by attacks that affect a whole area. If stealthed enemies take damage, they lose the stealth effect.

Stun/Sleep/Knockback/Knockdown/Paralyze/Pinning

These status effects all prohibit the affected combatant from taking any action, and they abort their current actions. The visual effects are different, however. Stunned enemies also forget their current target; they choose a new target (often the same as before) once they are no longer stunned. Sleeping enemies awaken as soon as they suffer further damage.

TACTICS

Once you have the hang of basic combat strategy, you're ready to build tactics that help the whole party work together efficiently without needing constant direction. Although the Tactics screen looks complicated at first, it's built around one simple idea: if the first condition on the left side of the screen is true, execute the corresponding action on the right side of the screen; if the condition is not true, check whether the next condition is. You must always control the current character directly, but the other members of your party follow whatever tactics you command.

Behavior

The Behavior menu at the top of the Tactics screen controls the character's general approach to combat, like when to attack, what distance to try to keep from enemies, when to give chase, and when to switch between ranged and melee weapons. Essentially, behaviors are generic reactions, whereas tactics are specific actions.

Basic Tactics

As your characters learn new spells and talents, the preset tactics (like Supporter, Damager, or Healer) automatically populate with combinations of conditions and actions. For example, the Healer preset might appear empty for Bethany at first, but tactics fill in automatically when she learns the Heal spell. Select a tactics preset that corresponds to the sorts of actions you want the character to take. The more similar abilities that character learns, the more tactics fill in.

Custom Tactics

You can also create your own customs sets of tactics, either by modifying the presets or starting from scratch with the preset marked CUSTOM.

Let's say you want to add a new tactic that tells Bethany to cast Fireball whenever she sees several enemies in a small area. First, switch to Bethany, then click on a condition slot on the left side of the screen. From the menu that appears, first select who you want the tactic to affect. For this condition, we're trying to scorch a number of enemies, so select ENEMY. Now another menu opens; select CLUSTERED, then CLUSTERED WITH AT LEAST 2 ENEMIES. That's your first condition: whenever three enemies are near each other (one enemy plus two near it), the game sees that this condition is true and activates the corresponding action.

Now you need to set up the action. Click on the slot on the right side of the screen next to the condition you just created. Select USE ABILITY and then FIREBALL.

That's it! Tactics always evaluate from the top down, so urgent requirements like healing should usually go at the top. Move a tactic up or down by clicking on the number in front of it and dragging the tactic. Disable an individual tactic by clicking on the checkmark symbol next to the number.

Tactics are particularly powerful when they help different party members support each other. For example, if Bethany is in your party and knows a healing spell, tell her to monitor all of your party members simultaneously and heal anyone in need. Since mages are weak in close combat, you can then direct a warrior to always attack enemies who are targeting the mage (Enemy > Attacking Party Member > Attacking Bethany).

As your characters level up, you gain more condition/action slots on the screen, permitting more complicated battle plans.

ITEMS

There are hundreds of unique items in *Dragon Age II*, corresponding to five major groups—equippable items like weapons, armor, or accessories, usable items like health potions, runes that can enchant weapons or armor, crafting items like recipes or resources, and plot items like keys or gifts for Hawke's companions.

INVENTORY

The inventory stores all of the usable and equippable items you purchase, find, or create through the crafting system. (The recipes and resources required for crafting, however, are listed in the crafting screens, and plot items do not appear in the inventory.)

To inspect an item, hover the mouse over it in the inventory. This displays the item's various properties, which are explained throughout this manual. If a character has another item of the same type equipped, you will see a side-by-side comparison.

To equip or unequip an item, drag it to or from the appropriate slot next to the character or double-click on the item. To use a usable item, double-click on the item. You can also drag a usable item into the quickbar, then use it just like a spell or talent.

Stars

The inventory displays between one and five stars next to each weapon, piece of armor, or accessory. These are an approximation of the item's usefulness relative to the character's level and class. Two stars indicate basic equipment for that level. As characters increase in level, the number of stars next to a given item will decrease, suggesting that it is becoming less appropriate and should be replaced.

Capacity

You can only carry so much equipment; once the inventory is full, you have to sell or destroy items before you can pick up more. To increase the inventory capacity, purchase a backpack.

Junk

When you find an item in the inventory that you don't think you'll use, right-click on it and select MOVE TO JUNK. Some items that have no use, only value, are moved to the junk tab as soon as you pick them up. Junk items still count toward your inventory capacity, but when you visit a store, you can sell them all at once. You can also destroy items to free up inventory space by right-clicking on them and selecting DESTROY.

CONTAINERS/LOOT

Whenever an object in the world or an enemy corpse is shimmering, it contains items that you can pick up, presuming you're able to open the container and have space in your inventory. Many doors and chests are locked when you find them. To open a lock, you either need a key—which doesn't always exist—or a rogue to pick the lock. All rogues are able to open simple locks, but more complex mechanisms require additional points in the cunning attribute. At 20, 30, and 40 points of cunning, rogues become able to open more difficult types of locks.

ITEM SETS

Certain combinations of items from the same set—usually bearing similar names—offer an extra bonus when equipped simultaneously. When you receive an item-set bonus, an extra passive ability appears in the character's abilities screen. If you manage to find multiple sets of items that can be equipped simultaneously, the bonuses are cumulative.

ITEM POWERS

Equipment sometimes improves (or even diminishes) a character's statistics. When inspecting an item in the inventory, positive effects are colored green and negative effects are colored red. These bonuses or penalties come into effect when you have the item equipped.

COMPANION ARMOR UPGRADES

Although Hawke's companions choose their own attire, a few improvements are available for their armor or robes. When you find one of these upgrades, the companion applies it automatically. If you examine their armor in the inventory afterwards, you see the upgrade listed in green.

RUNES

High-quality weapons and armor can be improved by inscribing one or more lyrium runes on the item using an enchanting apparatus. Runes are rarely found, but they can be created through crafting. Once a rune has been inscribed, its properties are added to the item and it cannot be removed intact; applying another rune atop it destroys the first rune. The effectiveness of a rune varies based on the quality of the weapon or armor it is inscribed on, so save your best runes for your best equipment.

CRAFTING

Skilled craftsmen are constantly looking for new varieties of the resources they use in their trades. If Hawke discovers resources in the wild, along with a recipe for how to use those resources, craftsmen will happily create usable items like potions, poisons, bombs, or runes in exchange for coin. After meeting a craftsman, Hawke can also order items of that type from home.

The craftsmen manage collection of the resources once Hawke has found the initial supply, and, consequently, the resources themselves are not lost when the craftsmen create items. But note that if Hawke doesn't discover a variety of a crafting resource, someone else is sure to find it. Undiscovered resources disappear as the years roll by.

PERFORMANCE TIPS

MACINTOSH SOFTWARE UPDATE

An outdated version of your MacOS X system software may lead to issues with game performance. To be sure that you have the latest version of MacOS X, choose 'Software Update…' from the Apple menu and follow the directions to update your system software.

PROBLEMS RUNNING THE GAME

- Make sure you meet the minimum system requirements for this game and that you have the latest drivers for your video card and sound card installed:
  For NVIDIA video cards, visit www.nvidia.com to locate and download them.
  For ATI video cards, visit www.ati.amd.com to locate and download them.
- For PC users, if you are running the disc version of this game, try reinstalling DirectX from the disc. This is typically found in the DirectX folder on the root of the disc. If you have Internet access, you can visit www.microsoft.com to download the latest version of DirectX.

GENERAL TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS

- For PC users, if you have the disc version of this game and the AutoPlay screen does not automatically appear for installation/playing, right-click the disc drive icon found in My Computer and select AutoPlay.
- If the game is running slowly, try reducing the quality of some of the video and sound settings from the game's options menu. Reducing the screen resolution can often improve performance.
- For optimum performance when playing, you may like to disable other background tasks (except the EADM application, if applicable).

CUSTOMER SUPPORT

If you have trouble with this game, EA Technical Support can help.

The *EA Help* file provides solutions and answers to the most common difficulties and questions about how to properly use this product.

To access the EA Help file (with the game already installed):

Windows Vista and Windows 7 users, go to **Start > Games**, right-click the game icon, and select the appropriate support link from the drop-down menu.

For users on earlier versions of Windows, click the **Technical Support** link in the game's directory located in the **Start > Programs** (or **All Programs**) menu.

To access the EA Help file (without the game already installed):

1. Insert the game disc into your DVD-ROM drive.
2. Double-click the My Computer icon on the Desktop. (If the My Computer icon is not visible on your desktop, you may need to click the **Start** button and then click the My Computer icon).
3. Right-click the DVD-ROM drive that has the game disc and then select OPEN.
4. Open the **Support > European Help Files > Electronic_Arts_Technical_Support.htm** file.

To access the EA Help file on a Macintosh:

1. Insert the game disc into your DVD-ROM drive.
2. Click the Finder icon in the Dock.
3. Open a new Finder window by choosing 'New Finder Window' from the File menu.
4. Click the game disc icon in the Finder window.
5. Open the **Support > Electronic Arts Technical Support.html** file.

If you are still experiencing difficulty after utilizing the information in the EA Help file you can contact EA Technical Support.

EA CUSTOMER SUPPORT ON THE INTERNET

If you have Internet access, be sure to check our EA Technical Support website at:

http://support.electronicarts.co.uk/

Here you will find a wealth of information on DirectX, game controllers, modems, and networks, as well as information on regular system maintenance and performance. Our website contains up-to-date information on the most common difficulties, game-specific help, and frequently asked questions (FAQs). This is the same information our support technicians use to troubleshoot your performance issues. We keep the support website updated on a daily basis, so please check here first for no-wait solutions.

SUPPORT CENTRE CONTACT INFO

If you require further assistance and would prefer to speak to a technician, telephone our Customer Support team (9am-9pm, Monday-Friday):

Telephone: 0870 243 2435

NOTE: No hints or codes are available from Support Centre.

Fax: 0870 2413231

Calls charged at national call rates; please consult your telecoms provider for details.

To help us diagnose the problem please generate a DirectX Diagnostic report of your PC before calling us:

Click **Start > Run…** and type dxdiag. Click OK, then once the report is complete, Click SAVE ALL INFORMATION… and save the report to your Windows Desktop.

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Music Production and Recording: Penka Kouneva, John Kurlander, Tim Loo, Idan Raichel, Assaf Rinde, Noah Snyder, Paul Taylor
Translation: Albion Localisations (Poland), Robert Böck (Germany), ExeQuo (France), ITI Ltd. (Russia), Synthesis International S.r.l. (Italy and Spain), Florian Vanino (Germany)
Voice-Over Direction: Phil Evans, Damien Goodwin, Ginny McSwain
Voice-Over Post-Production: Wave Generation (Montreal), Wolf Willow Sound (Edmonton)
Voice-Over Recording: Anakan GmbH (Germany), ExeQuo (France), Pomann Sound (New York), Rec Games Sonido (Madrid), Side UK (London), Studiopolis (Los Angeles), Wolf Willow Sound (Edmonton)

Programming

Platform Optimization: Mesopotamia Software Inc.
Real-Time Rendering R&D: Jorge Jimenez, Diego Gutierrez

TransGaming, Inc.

Executive Producer: Daniel Posner
Producer: Blair Yakimovich
Programmers: Mark Adams (Director of Research and Development), Roman Kliotzkin (Game Enablement Lead), James Helferty (Graphics Lead), Daniel Koch (Graphics Architect), Tim Burrell, Nicolas Capens, Philippe Casgrain, David DePauw, Remi Dufour, Jason Gorski, Jason Green, Carlos Quinones, Kartik Ravi, Matt Robinson, Jay Sistar, Gavriel State, Robert Stepinski, Seelan Vamatheva, Eric Van Beurden, Shannon Woods
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Secretary and Chief Financial Officer: Dennis Ensing
Founder and Chief Technology Officer: Gavriel State
Vice President, Corporate Marketing and Business Development: Paul Nowosad

"I'm Not Calling You a Liar (Dragon Age II – Varric's Theme)"
Performed by Florence and the Machine
Produced by Inon Zur and Steve Schnur
Mixed by Jack Joseph Puig
Mastered by Bernie Grundman
Written by Florence Welch
Published by Goldzeal / Universal Polygram Int'l (ASCAP)
Recording courtesy of Island Records under license from Universal Music Enterprises

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