

Make Your Own Game Tutorial I: Overview of Program Structure

What is RPG Maker VX Ace?

RPG Maker VX Ace is a game engine designed to make 2D Roleplaying Games. RPG Maker VX Ace was created to be simple enough for anyone to use: You don't need any specialized programming knowledge to run it.

All the aspects of creating an RPG can be controlled in RPG Maker VX Ace through a simple point and click graphical user interface.

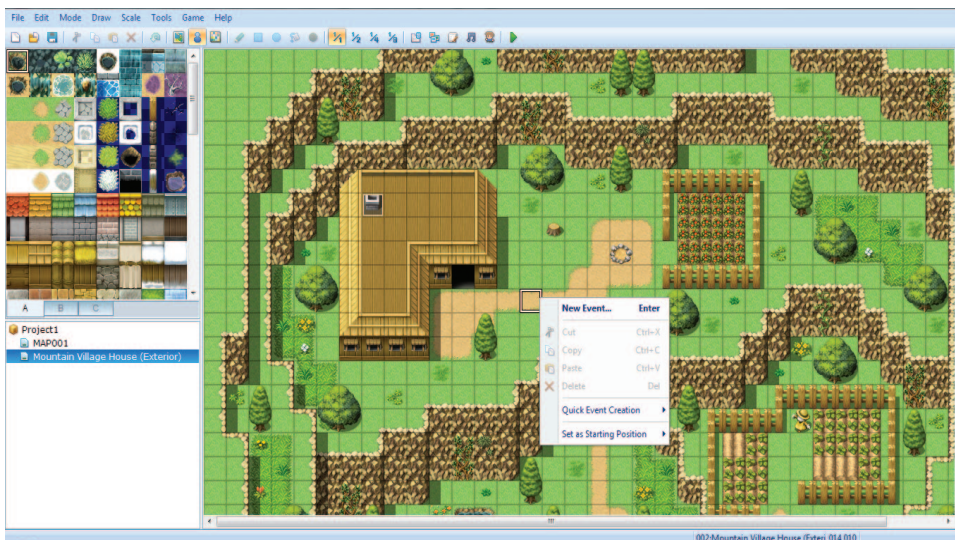
But if it is simple enough for anyone to use, why do we need these tutorials?

The purpose of this series of tutorials is to give the people who read them a head start in making their own game with RPG Maker. While you can learn on your own, and many people have, there are plenty of pitfalls that can be easily avoided with a bit of information.

Throughout this series of tutorials, we will make a simple game from beginning to end, going into every part of the program needed to show how to make your own game.

With the use of this tutorial, you should be able to grasp the basics of using RPG Maker VX Ace faster, so you can move on to exploring some of the more advanced, powerful options available to you.

Before we get into making a game though, let's take a moment to examine the basic structure of RPG Maker VX Ace, and how each of the major components interacts, to give you a basic knowledge of terms used later on.



RPG Maker VX Ace Editor View

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RPG Maker VX Ace Structure

RGSS3

RGSS3 (Ruby Game Scripting System) is the lowest level structure of RPG Maker VX Ace that you as a developer have access to. It is a scripting language based on the Ruby Programming Language that interprets every other component of the game. Everything from how battles run to how the maps are drawn on the screen are controlled by the scripts.

RGSS3 is very powerful, allowing you to edit nearly every portion of the way your game works. Most users of RPG Maker VX Ace will never edit the scripts themselves,

but the use of scripts made by other people is common. You can obtain premade scripts from fan blogs, online fan communities, the RPG Maker Web Forum, or any number of other places on the web.

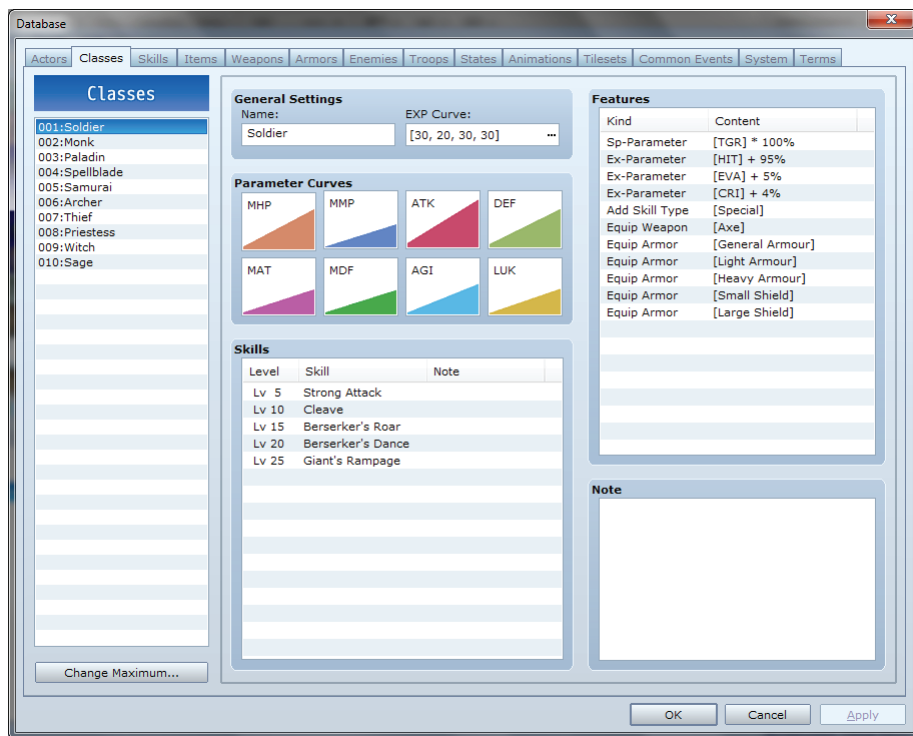
Most premade scripts are plug and play, you can just insert them into the script editor and adjust the settings based on what you want.

This series of tutorials will not cover the use of scripts, as they are more advanced than what we plan to cover, but it is important for you to be aware of their existence, especially when moving beyond this series into making your own game.

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Database

The Database is where you create and edit most of the gameplay components of your game. It is organized into tabs, each holding a different category of components of the game. The tabs are listed to the right.



Database: Class Tab

Actors: This tab is for creating and editing playable characters for your game. It defines the starting conditions of each playable character.

Classes: This tab is for creating the classes used by your playable characters. Classes determine a character's stat growth as well as the skills they learn as they level up.

Skills, Animations: The Skills tab is for creating the skills used by both playable characters and by your enemies. The Animations tab is for creates the skills' animations.

Items, Weapons, Armors: These tabs are for creating the items and equipment that your heroes will find, use, and equip.

Enemies, Troops: The Enemies tab is for creating the enemies your characters will fight, the Troops tab is for setting them into the groups your characters will encounter.

States: This tab is for creating the status effects that can affect your characters and enemies.

System, Terms: These tabs are used to set a lot of the standard settings of the game, such as menu sound effects.

Common Events, Tilesets: These tabs will be covered later.

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Map Editor

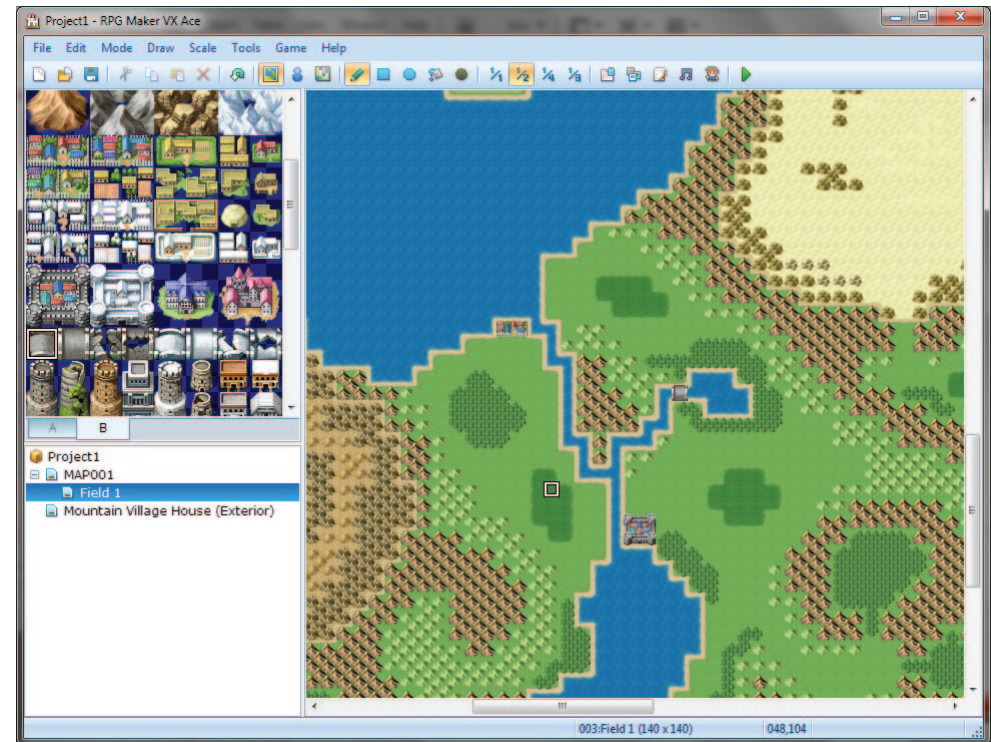
The Map Editor is where you create the world that your characters will explore.

Maps are created by selecting a Tileset to use and then painting the map on screen using your mouse to design the map you want. It's as easy as using MS Paint.

Tilesets are premade 32x32 pixel graphics that you can combine to create your maps. RPG Maker VX Ace comes with 4 Tilesets to use to create your game (Field, Exterior, Interior, and Dungeon) and you can also import new Tilesets or edit the existing ones in a graphics editor.

To create a Tileset from tiles created in a graphics editor you use the Tileset tab in the Database. The Tileset tab determines what tiles are in the set and what tiles your characters can and cannot walk through (you don't want the player walking through the wall!) and also several other settings such as ladder tags and terrain tags.

The Map Editor also allows you to draw RegionIDs a layer not visible during gameplay to be used to separate your map into sections to use for things like enemy encounters.



Map Editor: Creating a World Map

Each map also has a Map Properties window (found by right clicking on the map in the list in the bottom left) which defines things like the name of the map, the music on the map, which tileset it uses, how large the map is, and whether it loops or not. The Map Properties are also used to set random encounters

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Events

Events serve two major purposes in RPG Maker VX Ace. The first is to give your characters something to interact with on your maps. This includes things such as non-playable characters to talk to, treasure chests to open, and shops to buy items at.

The second purpose is to control the flow of your game and its scenes. Things like changing what NPCs say based on your actions, opening up new portions of a quest, or allowing the player to travel to new areas are all controlled by events.

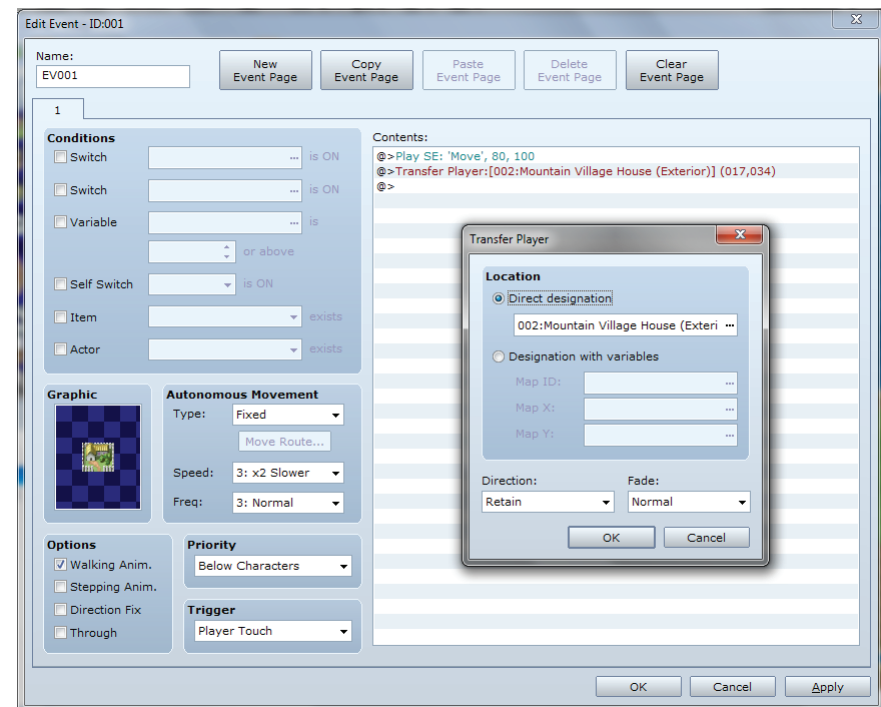
There are three types of events that are accessed through different parts of RPG Maker VX Ace:

Map Events: These events appear on individual maps, and are accessed by using the map layer of the Map Editor. They are used for NPCs, transferring the player to a new map, shops, and other similar map specific things.

Common Events: These events are set up in the Common Event tab in the Database. They are used when events need to be repeatedly called regardless of the player's location.

Battle Events: Battle Events are set up in the Troops tab of the database and are specific to individual battle setups. They can be used to have certain things happen in battle after specific triggers.

Eventing is very powerful, and can be used to create complex systems without ever touching RGSS3 scripts.



Event: Creating a Simple Transfer Event

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How It All Works Together

Now that we've looked at each individual major component of RPG Maker VX Ace game creation, let's look at it all together.

The Database contains most aspects of what the player characters will be, from their stats to the equipment and skills they will use. It also contains the stats for enemies, and the graphics that will be used by the Maps.

The Map Editor is used to create the world the characters and enemies you created in the database will reside in from a graphical perspective. It borrows from the database to determine what tiles can be used, and how the character can walk on those tiles.

Events are used to give your game flow, and to put things on your maps for your characters to interact with.

RGSS3 is what controls all the rest of the components and interprets what they mean.

As you can see, we can do almost anything with this combination, as long as we know where to look.

Next Tutorial Preview

In the next tutorial, we will move on to begin creating a basic game, starting with mapping out a rural village that our hero will be a resident of.

About the Tutorial Author



Portrait by Scinaya

Nick "Touchfuzzy" Palmer has been a regular fixture of the RPG Maker fan communities for several years as both a member and then as an administrator of one of the largest RPG Maker Communities. He now works for Degica running the official RPG Maker Web blog, Facebook, Twitter and forums.

He got his start in RPG Maker using the SNES Super Dante RPG Tsukuru.

Outside of RPG Maker, Nick is a family man who spends most of his days at home with his two kids and wife.