NieR:Automata

UpgrAde SyStem

Upgrades offer a type of **progression** and **accomplishment** to the player that allows him to observe his progress in the gameplay through the statistics and characteristics of his character. This document will analyze **all the types of upgrades that the game offers and what is needed to obtain them**. The upgrades also influence the player's motivation to **explore the open world**, **fight robots**, **obtain resources for the purchase and production of upgrades** that will allow him to continue the gameplay.

Plug-In Chips

Chip System

Plug-in Chips in NieR: Automata are items that the player can equip to acquire or customize Skills. Which Chips he equips will have a **huge impact on his playstyle** and can enhance his *survival chances, offense, defense, and utility*. Plug-in Chips provide **passive buffs** and **additional stat bonuses**, as well as provide the player with different **skills and/or effects**. There are five types of Plug-in Chips: Attack, Defense, Support, Hacking, and System. This page covers a list of all the Plug-in Chips available in NieR Automata.

Plug-in Chips offer a **range of effects** with levels from **0 to 8**, influencing their **strength**.

Each chip has a **Cost**, determining its **storage space usage**; *extra space can be bought from* ***merchants****.*

Chips of the same **Type** and **Rank** can be **Fused** to create a **higher Rank chip**.

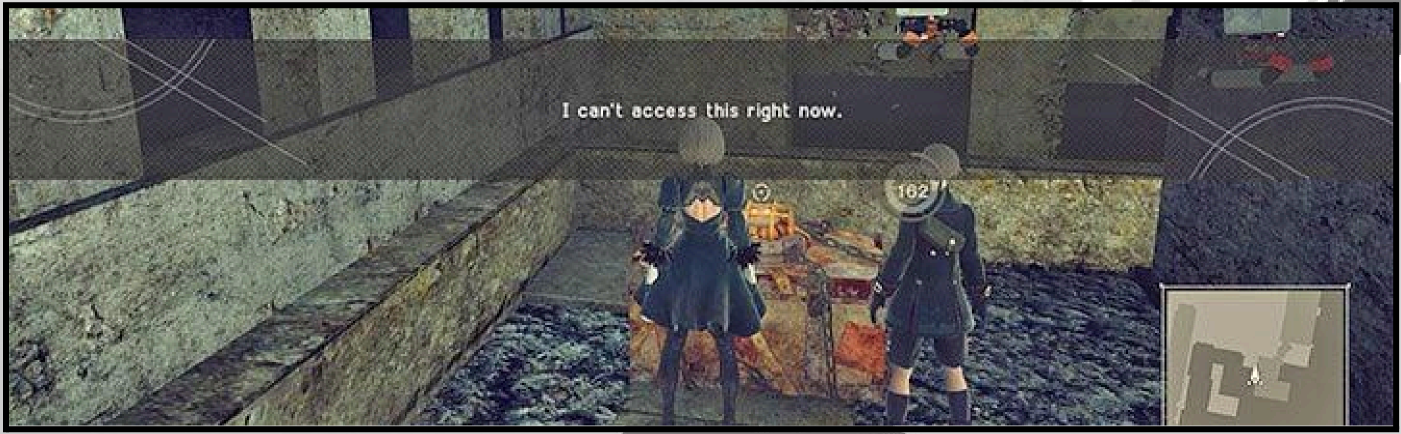
The Canyon Machine can upgrade chips to *Rank 8*.

Chips can be **bought**, **quested**, or **dropped by enemies**, with purchased chips usually **higher Rank**.

Upon **death**, installed chips are **lost unless recovered from the prior body**.

The **chips system** offer:

- **Customization**: The player can **customize** his character's abilities to suit his playstyle by equipping different types and combinations of chips. Having **limited space for the use of chips**, the player must **constantly consider when to purchase** and include this type of upgrade in his build. This affects his motivation to get new chips **(testing new builds).**
- **Enhancement:** Chips enhance the character's performance in combat and exploration
- **Flexibility:** The chip system offers **flexibility in adjusting the character's abilities at runtime**. He can swap out chips to adapt to different challenges or experiment with different combinations to fight his enemies.
- **Progression & Completion**: Obtaining and upgrading chips provides a sense of **progression and accomplishment** throughout the game.
- **Resource management:** Managing chip configurations involves **strategic decision-making** regarding which chips to equip based on their effects, cost, and available storage space.



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Attack Chips	Enhance the character's offensive capabilities, increasing damage output or providing bonuses to weapon attacks.
Defense Chips	Boost the character's defensive stats, such as increasing maximum HP or reducing damage taken.
Support Chips	Provide utility functions, such as health regeneration, auto-use of healing items, or increasing experience .
System Chips	Offer miscellaneous enhancements, such as displaying HUD elements, increasing movement speed, or improving hacking abilities.
Hacking Chips	They allow the player to get boosts or different rewards for killing via **hacking** **(analyzed in details in the System: Nier Automata - Combat System document)**

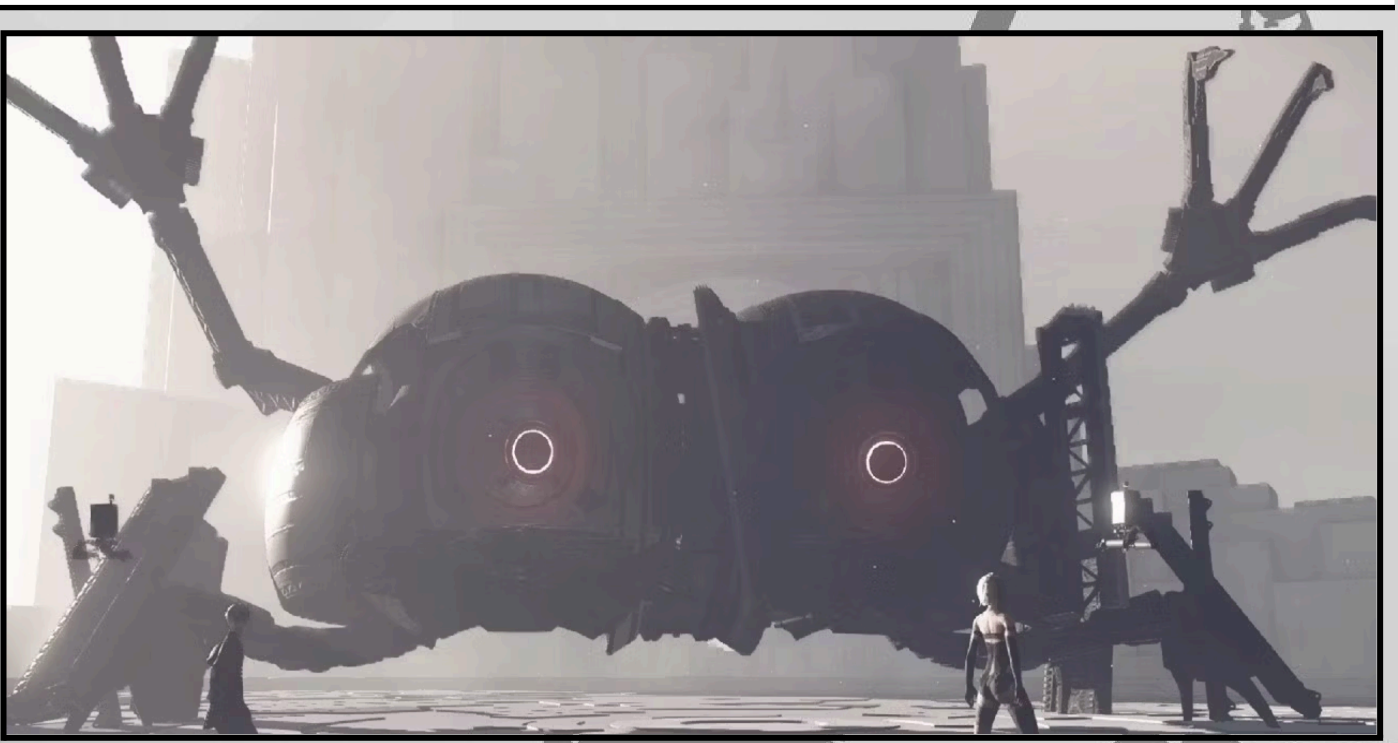
Chip Capacity

In NieR: Automata **chip capacity refers to the maximum number of plug-in chips that a character can equip at any given time.** Each chip occupies a **certain amount of space** in the character's **memory**, represented by its cost. The player can **expand his chip capacity by purchasing upgrades**, allowing him to **equip more powerful combinations of chips** to enhance their character's abilities. Managing chip capacity is a way to **optimize the character's performance** and **customizing** their playstyle.

Chip Fusion

Chip fusion allows the player to **combine two chips of the same type and rank to create a new chip of a higher rank, enhancing his character's abilities**. *This process involves selecting the desired chips, confirming the fusion, and obtaining a new chip with stronger effects*. The cost of the new chip is determined by the **costs of the original chips, and optimization guides can aid players in creating desirable combinations.** Chip fusion provides a means for players to customize and improve his character's performance through upgraded chips.

In addition to giving a sense of **progression** to the player, the system also allows him to have a way to optimize his equipment (**customization** & **logic**). All the gameplay is influenced by the power of the chips, the player chooses and improves his playstyle feeling a strong sense of pure agency in the game world.



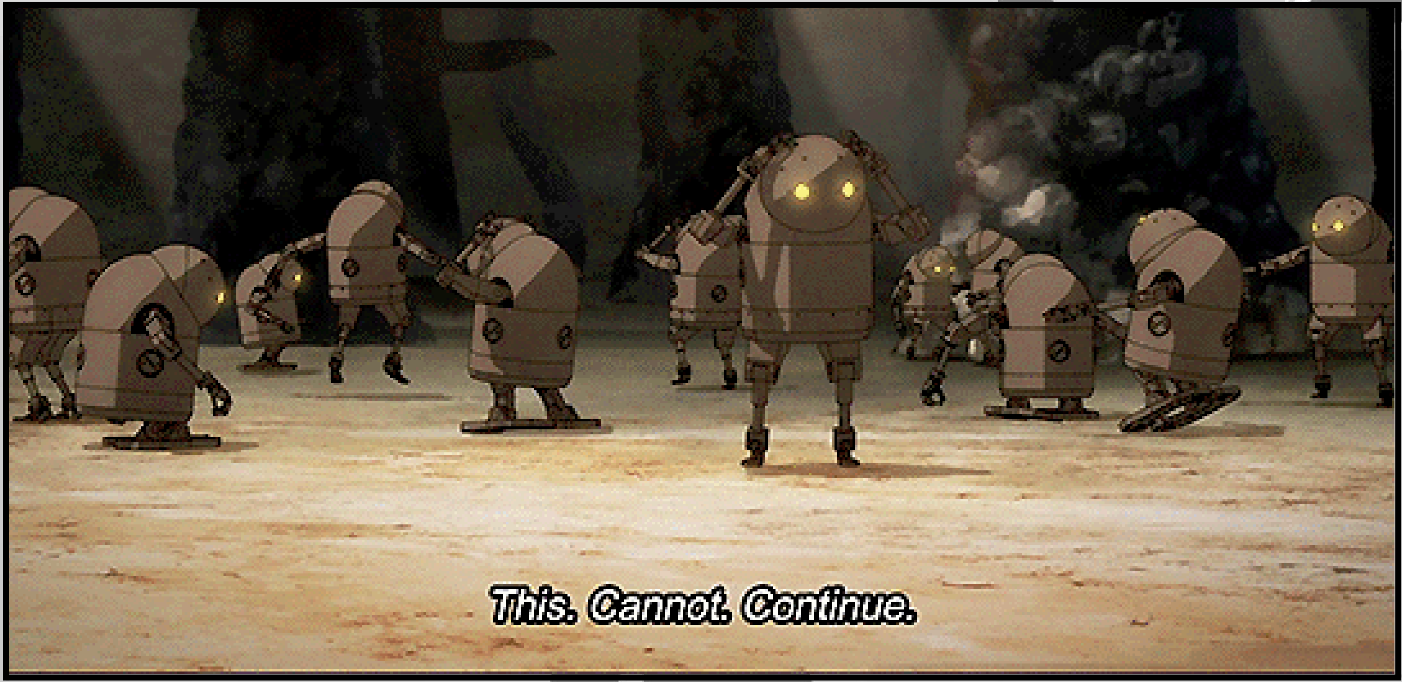
Outcome

The **outcomes** given by the use of chips allow the player to **completely customize his fighting style** without ever influencing the rules established by the **Map Design Grammars** and the **systemic patterns** inserted into the game.

All the possibilities given to the player interact with numerous systems (*NPCs, HUD, Combat System, Stats*) in order to create the **greatest number of interactions possible.**

Player Motivation & Progression

- **Progression and Power Growth**: As the player progresses through the game, he acquires **stronger chips with improved effects**. This sense of **progression** motivates players to continue playing and **exploring the game world** to obtain more powerful chips or materials to fuse them.
- **Strategic Decision-Making**: Managing chip capacity and choosing which chips to equip requires *strategic decision-making*. The player has to consider factors such as the **effects of each chip, their cost in terms of chip capacity, and how they synergize with other chips.** This **strategic depth** motivates the player to engage with the chip system and optimize his character's loadout.
- **Chip Fusion and Upgrades**: The ability to **fuse chips to create higher-ranked ones** provides the player with a sense of **accomplishment** and **progression**. Obtaining stronger chips through fusion incentivizes the player to collect and experiment with different chips to unlock their full potential.
- **Combat Effectiveness and Survival**: Equipping powerful chips improves the player's combat effectiveness and survivability, making battles easier and allowing him to fight more challenging enemies and bosses.



Weapon Crafting and Upgrades

Weapon **crafting and upgrades systems** are features that enable the player to enhance his combat abilities to progress in the gameplay fighting strongest enemies/boss. He can obtain **weapons from different sources** (*craft, merchants, exploration, boss fight*) and upgrade them at **weapon shops** using **materials** acquired from **enemies or quests**. Upgrades improve a weapon's stats and can unlock new abilities.

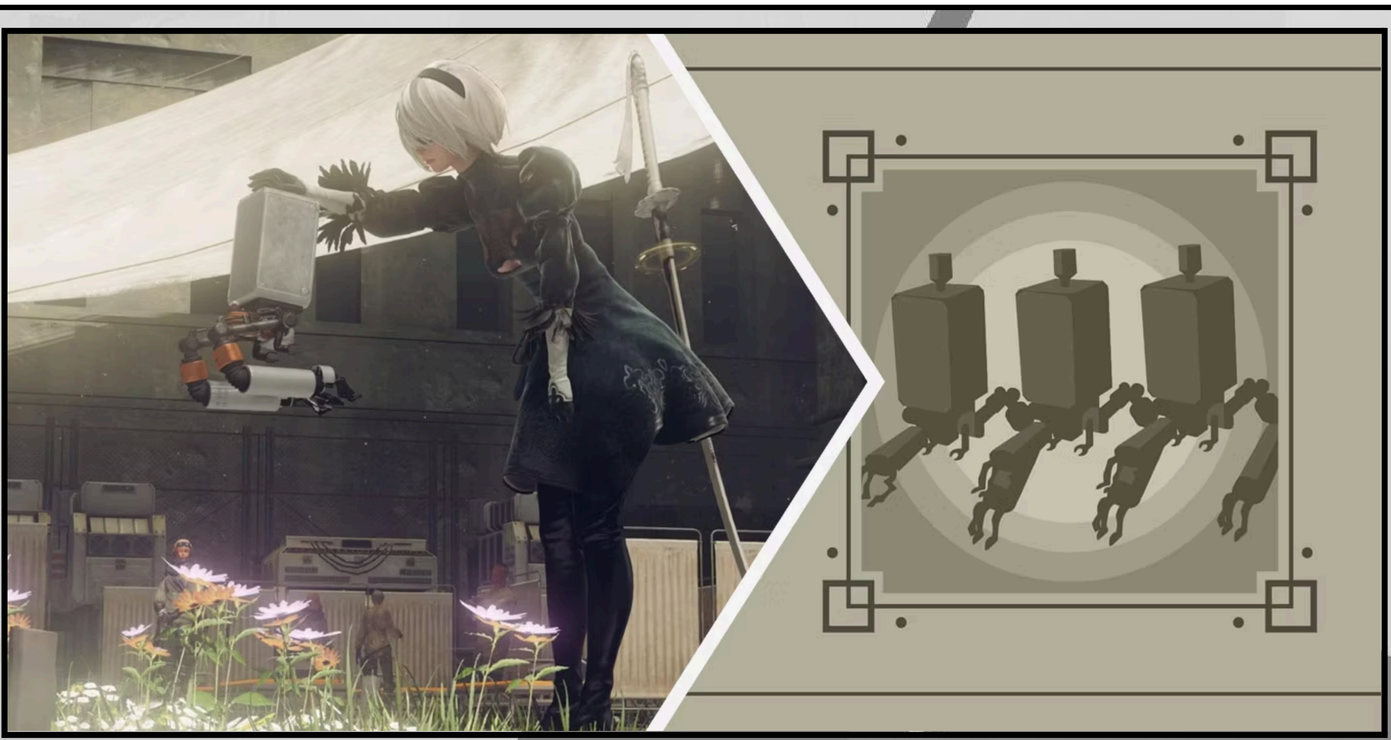
Weapons can be **fused to create stronger variants**. Visual changes accompany upgrades, and players can **manage multiple weapons simultaneously.** This system allows the player to **customize his arsenal and strengthen his character for battles (details in** System: Nier Automata - Combat System)

Weapon Upgrades

Weapons are crucial offensive tools utilized by the player during combat to deal damage to enemies and bosses. The game features four distinct types of weapons: **Small Swords**, **Large Swords**, **Spears**, and **Combat Bracers** **(explain in detail in the System: Nier Automata - Weapons document)**.

Weapon wielding

- **Weapon Switching**: The player can **equip two different weapons at a time**, one for **light attacks** (*faster*) and one for **heavy attacks** (*slower but more powerful*). He can **switch between these two weapons during combat** to adapt to specific situations.
- **Combos and Attacks**: Each weapon type has its **own set of light and heavy attack combos**.
- **Pod Support**: The player has a **Pod** companion that can provide ranged support by firing projectiles at enemies. Players can also use **Pod Programs** (special abilities with different effects) to augment his combat capabilities.
- **Dodging and Evasion**: The player can perform dodges to evade enemy attacks and counterattack with his weapons, allowing for a **fluid and dynamic combat experience**.
- **Skill and Mastery**: Mastering the weapon wielding system requires practice and skillful execution of combos, dodges, and attacks. Players can experiment with different weapon combinations and strategies to find the playstyle that best suits them.



Pod

The **Pods** in Nier Automata are **small robots that follow the main character and provide support assistance.** Pods are useful in combat as they can be used to **hang**, allowing the player to **jump higher** or **slide over long distances**. They can also be used to attack while **dodging to hit larger enemies**.
Pods can be used for **ranged attacks** (*shooting projectiles at enemies*). While effective against smaller enemies, larger enemies, especially those with shields, can easily deflect these projectiles.

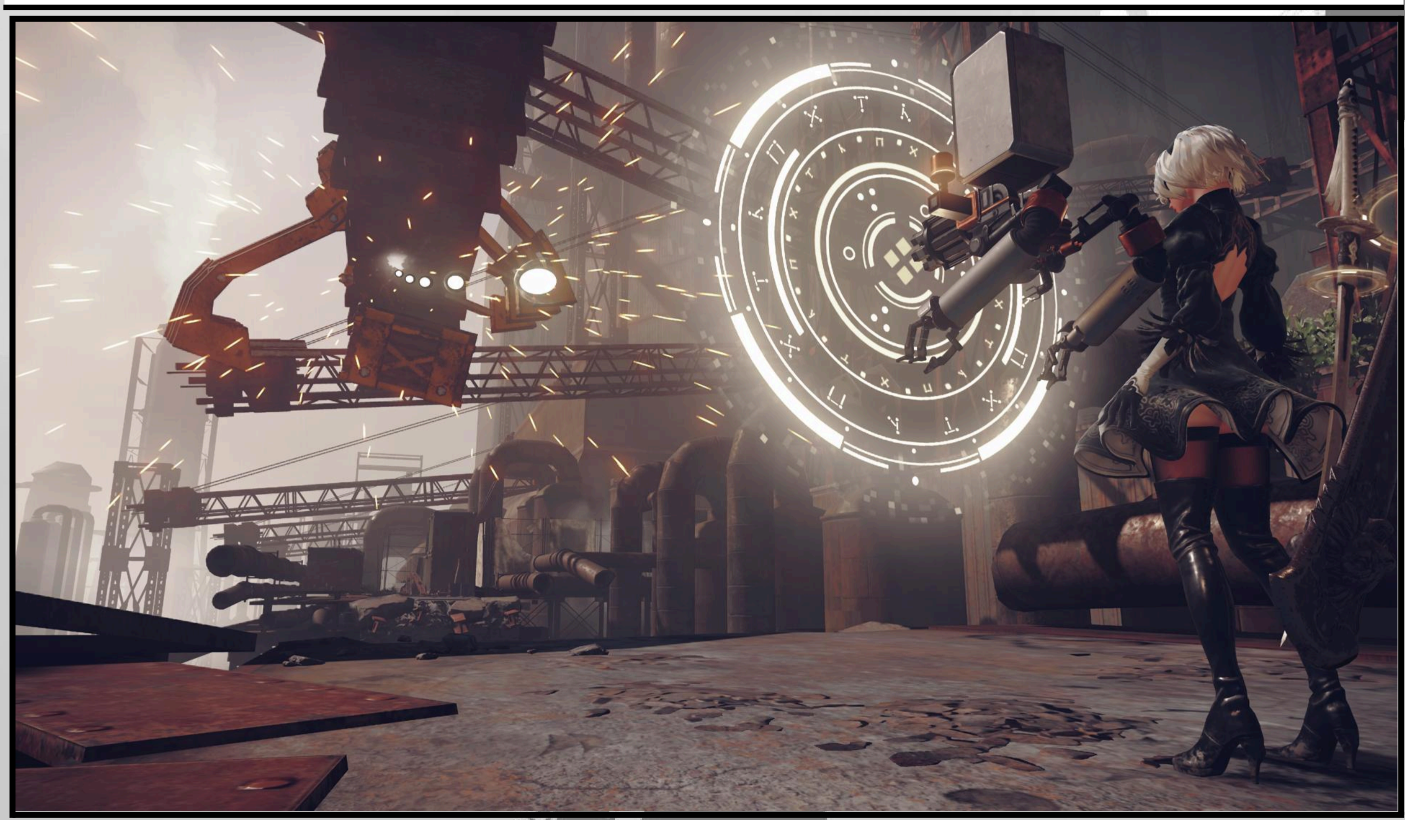
Upgrades

Pod Programs: **Pods can receive special programs that grant them unique abilities**. These programs range from offensive attacks to defensive maneuvers and utility functions. The player can acquire Pod programs as he progresses through the game or purchase them from specific vendors.

Combat Enhancements: Upgrading Pods at maintenance shops can **increase their attack power, allowing them to deal more damage to enemies**. These upgrades typically require specific **materials** and **funds** obtained from defeating enemies or completing quests.

Situational Abilities: Pod upgrades can provide situational abilities that are particularly effective in scenarios, such as boss fights or challenging encounters. These abilities can turn the tide of battle and provide the player with **strategic advantages**.

Utility Functions: Some Pod upgrades offer utility functions that **assist exploration and navigation, such as revealing hidden items or providing map data**.

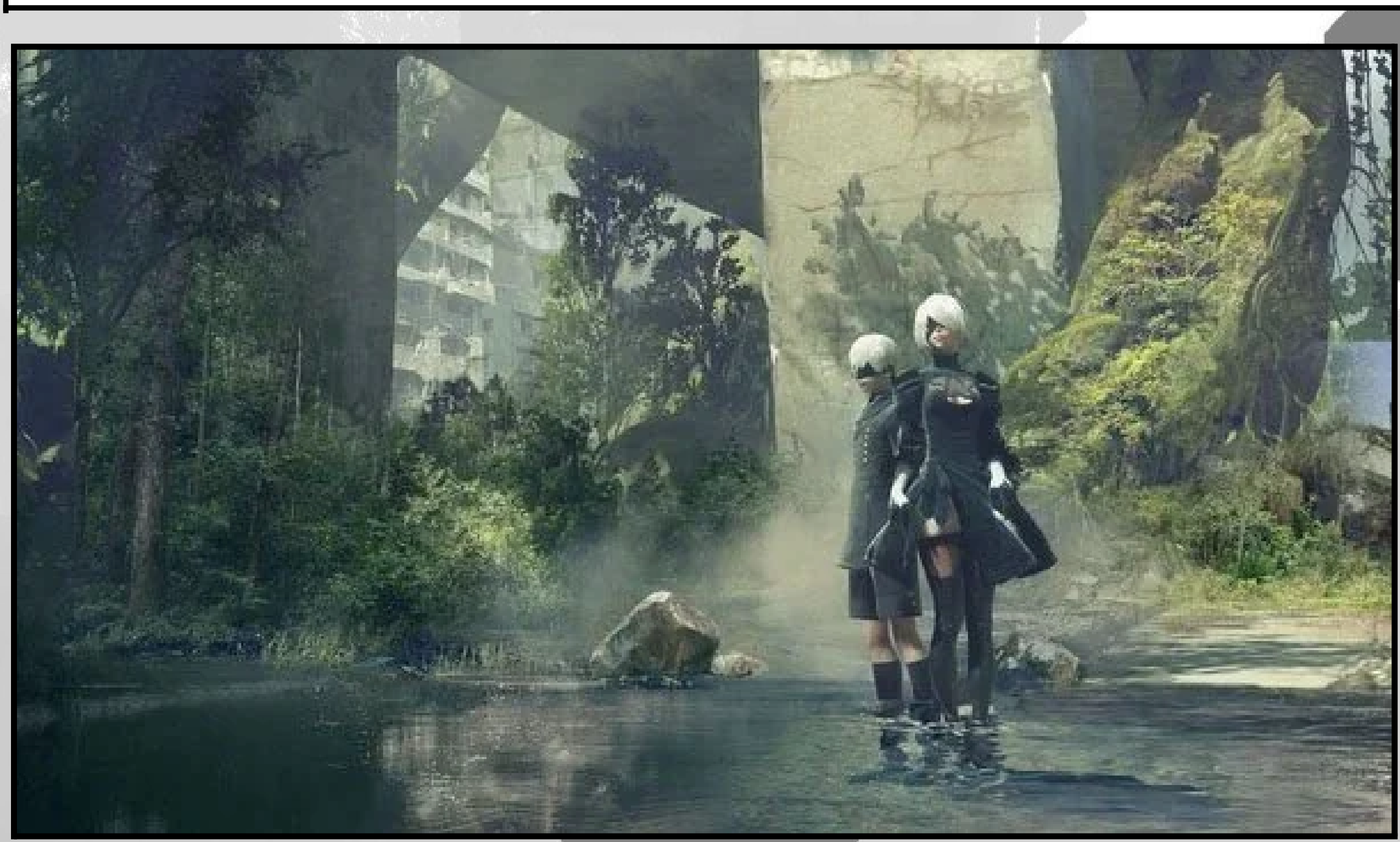


Skills Upgrade

Experience Points

Earning XP
The player accumulates experience points by engaging in combat with enemies, completing missions, and achieving objectives. Each enemy defeated and quest completed awards a specific amount of XP.
Leveling Up
As the player earns XP, he gradually increases his character's level. Leveling up improves attributes of the character, such as **health**, **attack power**, **defense**, and unlocks **new abilities** or access to **higher-level equipment.**

Character Progression
Experience points play a crucial role in character progression, allowing the player to become stronger and more capable as they advance through the game. Leveling up provides a sense of accomplishment and serves as a measure of the player's progress.
XP Distribution
Experience points earned are typically distributed equally among all characters currently in the player's party. This ensures that all party members benefit from combat and progression, even if they are not actively participating in battle.



Skill Points

Skill Points (SP) are earned through gaining **experience points (XP)** and used to unlock and upgrade skills from the skill tree. Players allocate SP to **customize their character's abilities,** choosing from a variety of **combat techniques, defensive maneuvers, hacking skills, and passive bonuses**. This system allows for **strategic decision-making**, adaptation to **challenges**, and enhances gameplay depth by encouraging experimentation and customization.

HUD Unlock

HUD upgrades in NieR: Automata enhance the player's experience by providing additional information and functionality on the **HUD**. These upgrades include displaying enemy health bars, minimaps, quest objectives, and status indicators. The player can customize the HUD to his preferences and unlock upgrades as he progresses through the game. HUD upgrades improve gameplay by offering more information and tools for navigation and decision-making.