



Introduction

Persona 5 Royal is a JRPG developed by ATLUS, a refined and enhanced version of the best RPG award winner Persona 5. In this report, we analyze one of the core mechanics of this huge game.

The core mechanic analysis for a game like Persona 5 Royal is a demanding job that requires some preliminary analysis of the game, isolating each system and core mechanic. We then will focus on its innovative Turn-Based Combat system, highlighting one of its most interesting mechanics: the Baton Pass mechanic.



Persona 5 Royal - Main Screen

Systems and Core Mechanics

Persona 5 Royal core systems can be divided into 2 macro sets: the RPG set of systems corresponding to your "Phantom Thief" life and the Visual Novel set of systems corresponding to your "Student" life.

The Progression system includes a Time Management system that segments daily activities into "time slots". Activities and mechanics included in your student life set will consume time slots.

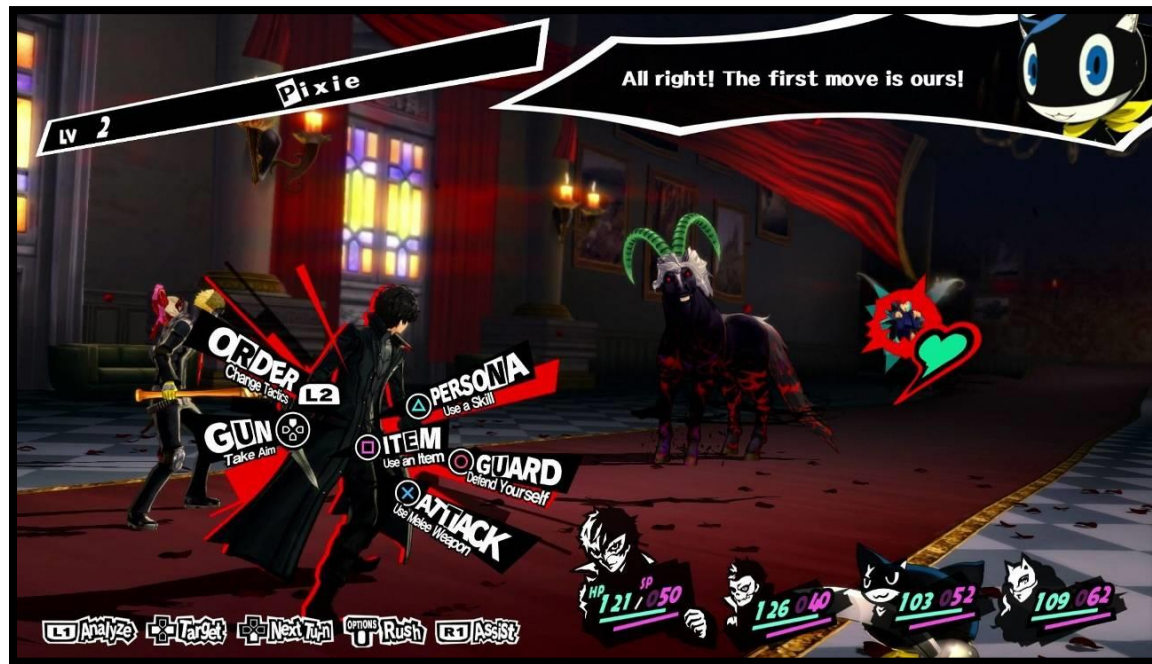
The RPG systems' set consists of the exploration of both hand-crafted and procedurally generated dungeons system, the Turn-Based Combat system, and the collecting of "personae" by capturing them or fusing them.

The Visual Novel systems' set consists of the social "confidants" system and the daily activities system. Each system involves a plethora of mechanics that support each other internally and between systems to create a masterpiece of a gameplay loop. We briefly talk about these systems before focusing on the Turn-Based Combat system.

- Exploration system
 - ◆ Palaces: hand-crafted dungeons, main story progress
 - ◆ Mementos: procedurally generated dungeons, mostly secondary quests
- Personae Collection system
 - ◆ Capture: convince Personae to become yours and be added to your collection during exploration
 - ◆ Fusion: fuse 2 or more Personae to create new Personae
 - Normal: fuse 2 Personae
 - Advanced: fuse more than 2 Personae
 - Online: fuse one of your Personae with one from other online players' Personae
 - ◆ Transmute: transmute a Personae in useful items
 - ◆ Strengthen: strengthen one of your Personae
 - Exp: sacrifice a Personae to give exp to another
 - Stats: use special items to increase specific Personae's stats
- Social Confidants system: spend a time slot with specific NPCs to grow your bond with them up to a maximum of 10 levels
- Daily Activities system: other activities that spend time slots and increase your social stats
 - ◆ ex: read books, study, go to the gym, play baseball, ...

Turn-Based Combat system

The Persona 5 Royal Turn-Based Combat system shares a lot of features with typical JRPG combat systems but distances itself from it with a unique dynamic and rhythm. Its uniqueness is based on the clever use of weaknesses to create a flow in the combat and make it so the turn based combat doesn't feel like turn-based.



Main Mechanics in the Persona 5 Turn-Based Combat system are:

1. Turn order: Determined by Agility stat
 - 1.1. Ambush: during ambushes, the ambushed side will skip a turn
2. Analyze: Show information about targets actor like name, level, and known weaknesses
3. Next Turn: Skip turn
4. Rush: Autocombat
5. Assist: Show hints for your next best move
6. Order: Give tactic orders to your companions like retreat or switch to other companions
7. Attack
 - 7.1. Attack: Use a melee weapon, damage based on weapon stats
 - 7.2. Gun: Take Aim
 - 7.2.1. Fire: Ranged Attack, damage based on weapon stats
 - 7.3. Persona: Use a Skill
 - 7.3.1. Damaging Skills: each with a specific element, scaling based on either Strength stat or Magic stat
 - 7.3.1.1. Physical, Gun, Fire, Ice, Lightning, Wind, Atomic, Psychic, Holy, Cursed, Divine

- 7.3.2. Healing Skills: heal, remove altered status, and revive target
- 7.3.3. Support Skills: buffs, debuffs, and protection skills
- 7.4. Critical Hits: scored randomly, based on the Fortune stat or hitting an actor Weakness
- 8. Guard: Defend yourself reducing incoming damage from the next attack
- 9. Items: Use an Item
- 10. Weaknesses: each actor during a fight has weaknesses and resistances based on elements listed in the "Damaging Skills" point
 - 10.1. 1 More!: Landing a critical hit for the first time in a battle against multiple enemies will result in knocking down that actor and taking immediately another turn
 - 10.1.1. Baton Pass: After a "1 More!" player's characters can perform a "Baton Pass" extending their turn to a companion, buffing them for each "Baton Pass" performed
 - 10.1.2. Hold Up!: when all enemies get knocked down at once before taking their turn your team will take advantage and new combat options will unlock
 - 10.1.2.1. Talk: Talk with the enemies trying to get items, money or join you as new Personae
 - 10.1.2.2. All out attack!: your team performs a devastating combined attack
 - 10.1.2.3. Break formation: Interrupt Hold Up! and get back to normal combat state

Overall Combat Experience



The Persona 5 Royal Turn-Based Combat experience appears different from the static JRPG Turn-Based Combat turn with a turn-based beaten time. This effect is assured using mechanics like "1 More!", the "Baton Pass", VFX, and SFX that create a unique flow and make fights feel alive and turns blend. The combat overall feels satisfying being full of flashy effects, amazing music, and sound effects.

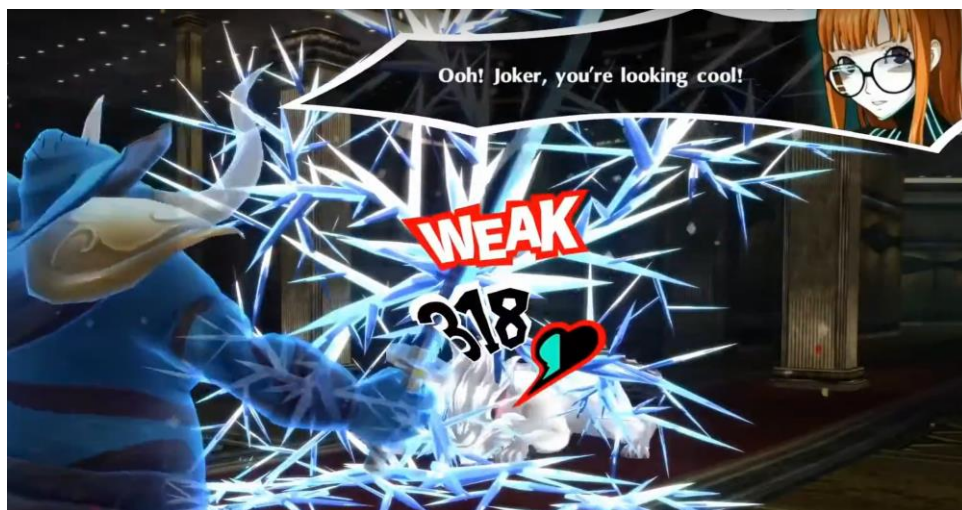
Your companions engage with you constantly, complimenting you when, landing critical hits, cheering you up when missing attacks, or worrying about you when heavily hit. Everything is framed by the indistinguishable Persona 5 art style.

Critical Hits

Critical Hits mechanic is the first step in a system well designed to positively enforce this strategy. Every critical hit gives amazing feedback with its combination of VFX, SFX, and companion compliments creating nice feedback from the player.



Persona 5 Royal - Incoming critical hit animation



Persona 5 Royal - Positive feedback from companions after landing a critica hit

1 More!

The 1 More! mechanic is the second step in this main responsible for breaking the normal Turn-Based Combat structure. It encourages the player to exploit enemies' weaknesses to take more turns, which results very advantageous in battle against multiple enemies, adding another layer of strategy.



Persona 5 Royal - 1 More!

Baton Pass

The Baton Pass mechanic is the last piece for this mesmerizing combat system. After a "1 More!" the turn character can extend their turn to a companion buffing it, increasing its attack and making it recover some resources. This mechanic is another layer of tactics added to the battle, switching to a companion that can exploit weaknesses not covered by the active character or to a character with special moves that benefit from the baton pass. The Baton Pass can be chained multiple times to increase further its effects resulting in devastating attacks and an intense feeling of teamwork between you and your companion.



All Out Attack!

Another last element that contributes to the amazing Persona 5 combat experience is the All Out Attack. The All Out Attack can be performed after knocking down all enemies, is a devastating attack featuring all team members in an acrobatic finisher that ends in different ways based on which character started the attack. Other than being one of the most powerful attacks at players' disposal, the animation itself is satisfying to watch and it alone can push the player to use this mechanic.



Persona 5 Royal - All Out Attack start animation screen



Persona 5 Royal - All Out Ending featuring Ryuji

Conclusions

Persona 5 Royal combat system, thanks to the constant interaction between characters, and the Baton Pass mechanic, is an immersive experience and a design jewel that fits the entire game, not only adding interesting mechanics to add various levels of strategy to the combat but also contributing to the overall focus of the game: make you engage with the story, bonding with story characters and making you feel like being part of the Phantom Thieves.