

# Review: 'W.E.L.D.E.R.' leads parade of iPad gems

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This product image provided by Highline Games, shows "W.E.L.D.E.R." which combines elements of "Bejeweled," "Boggle" and "Scrabble" in one of the iPad's most addictive word games. (AP Photot/Highline Games)

So you just got an iPad for Christmas. You already have all the essentials loaded - Facebook, Twitter, iBooks, whatever news app you prefer.

Now it's time to get serious and start learning what the [iPad](#) was really built for: games.

There are more than 26,000 iPad games available from Apple's App Store, with something for every imaginable taste. And the prices are so low you can build an impressive library for less than the cost of a single Xbox game. Here are some of my favorites from the last few months.

- "W.E.L.D.E.R." (Highline Games, \$3.99): For the record, it stands for "Word Examination Laboratory for Dynamic Extraction and Reassessment," but never mind the strained acronym. What "W.E.L.D.E.R." really stands for is the iPad's most addictive word game, a clever combination of "Bejeweled," "Boggle" and "Scrabble." The object is to slide letter tiles around an 8-by-8 grid, forming words of four or more letters. However, you won't get far unless you figure out how to combine score-multiplying gold tiles with the limited number of moves you're given. If you're burned out on "Words With Friends," let this provide your new [crossword puzzle](#) fix.

- "Infinity Blade II" (Chair Entertainment, \$6.99): If you want to show off your new toy, there are few better demonstrations than this sword-fighting epic. It's a series of one-on-one battles in which dodging, parrying and blocking attacks are just as important as slashing your foes. This sequel adds some role-playing elements and more alternate paths to the goal, but the core attraction remains the same: bone-crunching combat in breathtaking environments.

- "Chocolate Fix" (ThinkFun, \$2.99): Take nine candies - three shapes, each in three colors - and arrange them in a 3-by-3 box. If you're a Sudoku maven, that probably sounds simple. But at the expert level, the clues to which candy goes where are more abstract, making this innocent-looking brainteaser devilishly challenging. It's another elegant treat from the creators of "Rush Hour."

- "Bag It!" (Hidden Variable Studios, \$1.99): It's another adventure in food packaging! This time, you're a clerk cramming groceries into a

paper bag. The goal is to fill each bag as tightly as possible without breaking anything; if you put a watermelon on top of a carton of eggs, you're asking for trouble. The groceries themselves are endearingly anthropomorphized, making "Bag It!" one of the cutest puzzle games around.

- "Blueprint 3D" (FDG Entertainment, 99 cents): Each screen in this game is a seemingly random assortment of lines floating in three dimensions. When you rotate the space, you can see how some lines might fit together. Eventually, they snap in place to create a 2-D image of a familiar object - a house, perhaps, or the Eiffel Tower. The 200-plus puzzles here aren't terribly demanding, but they're undeniably satisfying.

Finally, some essential games from earlier in 2011:

- "Jetpack Joyride" (Halfbrick Studios, 99 cents): Keep your hero airborne while avoiding lasers, missiles and other obstacles in this breathless race from the creators of "Fruit Ninja."

- "Superbrothers: Sword & Sworcery EP" (Capybara Games, \$4.99): The old-school point-and-click adventure gets a postmodern makeover.

- "Where's My Water?" (Disney, 99 cents): Help an alligator take a bath in this adorably goofy physics puzzler.

- "Ticket to Ride" (Days of Wonder, \$6.99): The best board-game translation on the iPad is this suspenseful race to build cross-country railroads.

**More information:** [www.apple.com/ipad/from-the-app-store/games.html](http://www.apple.com/ipad/from-the-app-store/games.html)

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