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WELCOME

While clicking around on the internet last weekend, I learned that *Super Mario Bros. 3* first launched in America almost exactly 30 years ago this month – 12 February 1990, to be precise. From here, I descended into a rabbit warren of features and interviews about Nintendo's effervescent sequel. I didn't know, for example, that development on *Super Mario Bros. 3* went on for more than two years, or that, during its early stages, designers Takashi Tezuka and Shigeru Miyamoto tried to shift its perspective from the side-scrolling 2D of the earlier games to an isometric viewpoint. "At first, we were making it with a bird's-eye view rather than a side view," Tezuka said in an interview published on Nintendo's website. "I wanted to change everything, including [the game's] general appearance," he added.

Tezuka and Miyamoto quickly learned, however, that the pseudo-3D perspective made precise jumps – and knowing where Mario would land – distractingly difficult: "With a diagonal view from slightly overhead," Miyamoto said, "you lost your sense of distance to the ground."

The team soon reverted back to the side-scrolling format of the previous titles, though small artefacts of that earlier build still exist in the finished game, including the chequerboard floor you can see at the beginning. Years later, *Super Mario 64* successfully brought the series into full 3D; certain areas of *Super Mario 3D Land*, meanwhile, experiment with a fixed 3D perspective, complete with chequerboard floors and walls. It's proof that just about all of Nintendo's game ideas find a home eventually.

Ryan Lambie
Editor