

Shadowrun is a cyberpunk action role playing game for the Super NES adapted from the pen and paper RPG Shadowrun by FASA. The game was developed by Australian company Beam Software (now Melbourne House) and released on November 1, 1993 by Data East.

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Overview

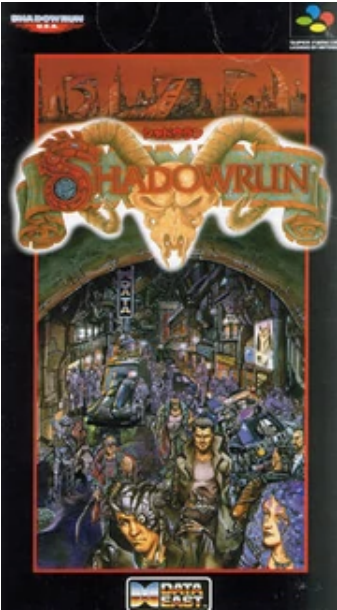
The player takes on the role of Jake Armitage, a courier who is shot and nearly killed in the streets of Seattle in the year 2050 by a hit squad. He wakes up in a morgue with significant amnesia as to what he was doing that resulted in his near-death—in fact, he was thought to be literally brain-burnt, which he himself felt as if he was when awakened.



USA Box art for Shadowrun SNES



Back of the USA Box of Shadowrun SNES






Japanese Box Art for Shadowrun SNES

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As an action RPG video game, *Shadowrun* combines both the statistical factor in the tabletop game with real-time gameplay. For example, the player controls Jake, moves him around using the controller, and when attacked, must use guns or magic commands to respond. Some battles within the game require sharp reflexes. This is further complicated by the fact that the Seattle in the game is a rather tough city - practically every screen contains at least one hidden assassin who, from random locations, opens fire on Jake; the player must immediately find the source of the attack and respond or risk getting killed.

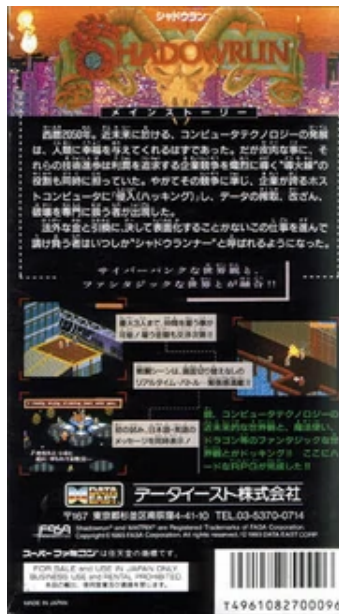
At the same time, Jake builds up "karma" from killing enemies - on a steady basis from killing regular enemies, and in large chunks from beating bosses. This karma can then be allocated by the player into different attributes, skills, and magical powers. Physical attributes include basic factors as how many hit points Jake has. Jake also has the ability to learn new skills, such as "negotiation" and "leadership," which allows him to haggle prices and to retain the loyalty of henchmen.

As the title of the game implies, Jake is described as a "shadowrunner," a mercenary character common within the *Shadowrun* RPG. Moreover, in the game, Jake is able to hire other shadowrunners as henchmen. It is possible for the player to win the game without hiring a single shadowrunner.

In interacting with non-player characters, *Shadowrun* uses an unusual system. Whenever Jake hears a new and unusual term, this word is highlighted, then added to a sort of database of terms he can use. From that point on, when speaking with NPCs, Jake is able to ask them about this new word; only in this manner can a player progress with the game.

The game also includes an unusual way of entering into cyberspace. After a certain point in the game, Jake, using a cyberdeck, is able to hack into computers to retrieve information, as well as gain more money. During such scenes, the gameplay becomes two-dimensional while an icon of Jake moves through cyberspace, fights intrusion programs, and retrieves data. As in the original RPG (and cyberpunk literature in general), if the player dies in cyberspace, he dies in real life as well.

Storyline



Back of box for Japanese *Shadowrun* SNES



European *Shadowrun* SNES
Box art



Back of the European *Shadowrun* SNES Box

Beginning in the morgue the brain-burnt Jake must first get his bearings and find out what put him there and who is helping him or not. Immediately bumping into a witness who saw him before, the player is given the option to follow him, where Jake will obtain a weapon and some body armor. It is possible to obtain a lot of items from the first area, although some are decidedly more difficult than others.

Eventually arriving at the Caryards, Jake will meet several others as well as be able to fight in the arena for money where there is a series of boss-type one-on-one battles. It is possible at this point, although difficult, to use the gun picked up from the prior punk witness to actually fight and kill all comers up to a certain level; after that, the gun has no effect because body armor negates the low damage. In order to leave the Caryards, one must either pay the "King" or kill him in battle. It is also a good idea for the player to learn the Negotiation skill as this saves a great deal of money for use in weapons and the like.

After this, the player receives relative freedom. The part of town Jake immediately enters has a magic item shop, a gun shop, a bar, and a street doc. It is revealed that Jake was carrying a program in his "head computer" that was able to destroy artificial intelligence. Shortly after he got a copy of this program, a corporation trying to construct an extremely powerful AI, aided by a mysterious figure known as "Drake," destroyed both the company that created the program (Matrix Systems) as well as the computer programmer who created it (Raitsov). As Jake has the last-known copy, Drake sends hit men to assassinate him. On the verge of death, Jake is saved by a Shadowrunner named Kitsune.

As the game progresses, Jake meets Kitsune, who is apparently attracted to Jake. Unlike other shadowrunners, Kitsune will never leave Jake once hired. Unbeknownst to him, Jake is really a shaman (a possible player class in the original RPG). With Dog as his shamanistic totem, Jake is able to learn and cast magic, as well as gain insight into his situation. The mysterious Drake is in reality a dragon with a secret lair located in a volcano. He must be defeated before Jake can attack the final enemy, Aneki Corporation, which is behind the entire plot.

Characters

Weapons

Name	Strength Required	Damage	Accuracy	Type
Zip Gun	1	3	0	Light
Beretta 101T Pistol	1	3	1	Light
Colt American L36 Pistol	1	3	1	Light
Fichetti Light Pistol	1	4	1	Light
Ares Viper Heavy Pistol	2	4	2	Heavy
Ruger Warhawk Pistol	3	6	2	Heavy
Defiance T-250 Shotgun	4	8	2	Heavy
Uzi III SMG	4	8	3	Auto
HK227 Assault Rifle	5	10	2	Heavy
AS7 Assault Cannon	5	20	6	Heavy
Grenade	1	13	-	-

BM = Business Man, OT = Old Town, DB = Dark Blade

Zip Gun

The gun is given if you are unequipped and don't have any weapon in your inventory when being brought to the Caryards by Glutman. It's a poor substitute for the Beretta 101T due to its lower accuracy.

Beretta 101T Pistol

This pistol can be found by following the Decker who approaches you as soon as you leave the morgue. After hearing a scream, walk forward and the gun will be laying on the ground near his body. This is the best gun that you can get until Old Town, and should be good enough to carry you through a few Arena fights. You can prolong its usefulness by raising the Firearms skill, which will have a noticeable impact on the frequency with which you hit enemies.

Colt American L36 Pistol

This gun can be purchased from the Weapon Shop in Old Town. Its stats are identical to the Beretta, so buying this gun is a waste, unless you are upgrading from the Zip Gun and don't have enough nuyen for anything better.

Fichetti Light Pistol

The Fichetti can be purchased from the Weapon Shop in Old Town. It's a slight step up from the Beretta, but nothing that will really speed up your killing rate. You're better off saving the 2,000 Nuyen for something more useful.

Ares Viper Heavy Pistol

This gun can be purchased from the Weapon Shops in both Old Town and Dark Blade. The damage is still not much of a step up from the Beretta, but you will notice your shots hitting more often. Still, there probably isn't a time when this gun is ever worth buying.

Ruger Warhawk Pistol

The Ruger Warhawk can be purchased from the Weapon Shop in Old Town. The Warhawk is probably the first gun with which you will notice a significant improvement over the Beretta. It is twice as powerful as your starting weaponry and has a good hit rate. It's also fairly cost effective, and will be a good substitute if you're really in need of an upgrade but can't afford the Shotgun.

Defiance T-250 Shotgun

The Shotgun can be purchased from the Weapon Shops in both Old Town and Dark Blade. This gun is a noticeable step up from anything else available in Old Town and will greatly increase your killing rate. You could probably get by most of the game without having to upgrade from the Shotgun again. It's more affordable if you wait to buy it at Dark Blade, but, by that time, you've missed out on most of the opportunities where its power would come in useful. You should try to save up enough so that this gun is your first upgrade.

Uzi III SMG

The Uzi III can be purchased from the Weapon Shop at Dark Blade Mansion. There is a good deal of debate about the usefulness of this gun. Its damage level is the same as the Shotgun and its accuracy is higher, but the main advantage it has is the automatic trigger. While all guns have the same maximum firing rate, unless you are using a turbo controller, it's probably not possible to fire the other weapons at the same speed as the Uzi. In this case, it is capable of dealing out damage at a much faster rate than any weapon before it. However, this is a very hard sell at 30,000 Nuyen. Your money would be much better spent on the Boosted Reflexes with the Shotgun. The accuracy difference can be made up with a single point in Firearms.

The Assault Rifle can be purchased from the Weapon Shop at Dark Blade Mansion, but it is only available after you have defeated the Jester Spirit. The Assault Rifle isn't a bad deal at 24,000 Nuyen, as it is a step up in damage from anything available before it. By the time it's available, you'll likely be facing foes with decent armor ratings, so the added damage should be quite noticeable. You probably could get by without this gun, but, if you have the nuyen at the time, it's a good purchase.

AS7 Assault Cannon

This gun can be purchased from the Weapon Shop at Dark Blade Mansion, but it is only available after you have defeated Drake. The Assault Cannon is, by far, the best weapon in the game. Its damage and accuracy are roughly double even the next best guns, and most enemies won't survive more than 1-2 shots from it. It's unfortunate that this gun comes as late in the game as it does, but you should still save up and purchase it as soon it becomes available. The damage potential is simply unparalleled.

Grenades

These are purchased from several different places: Business Man in Tenth Street Area (100 nuyen), the Old Town Weapon Shop (100 nuyen), or the Dark Blade Weapon Shop (80 nuyen). The maximum number of grenades you can hold at a single point is 6. Grenades aren't equipped, as other guns are; they are used individually like items. When you use a grenade, the game pauses while you select a target. You can only throw the grenade at an object that has a name label at the bottom. Grenades also do splash damage to nearby targets, including Jake. Grenades have a 100% accuracy rating, but some enemies are immune to them, including most bosses and many of the Arena fighters.

Despite the low cost and decent attack power, Grenades aren't extremely useful. They are ineffective on most bosses, and the small carrying limit impedes their usage against regular enemies. Grenades are also useless on enemies that move around quickly, as the target will be outside the explosion area by the time the grenade arrives. They are also useless against melee enemies that attack Jake from close up, as using a grenade in this situation will damage you as well. About the only point in the game where grenades might have some use would be in the Rust Stiletto stage. Even then, the benefit is only marginal.

Armor

Armor Name	Required Strength	Defense Rating	Price	Source
Leather Jacket	1	1	-	From a dead decker at the start of the game
Mesh Jacket	2	2	5000	Old Town Weapon Shop
Bulletproof Vest	3	3	8000	Dark Blade Weapon Shop
Fully Concealable Jacket	4	4	13000	Dark Blade Weapon Shop (After defeating Jester Spirit)
Partial Body Suit	5	5	20,000	Dark Blade Weapon Shop (After clearing Drake Tower)
Full Body Suit	6	6	30,000	Dark Blade Weapon Shop (After clearing Drake Volcano)

Cyberware

Name	Price	Availability	Description
Head Computer	None	Start with it	<p>The Head Computer allows Jake to download and process information from the Matrix. At the start of the game, Jake's Head Computer is protected with a Cortex Bomb, which prohibits the transfer of information either into or out of the Matrix. Jake will need to have the Cortex Bomb disarmed by a Street Doc before he can log into computers. Aside from this point, the Head Computer does not play a direct role.</p>
Datajack	None	Start with it	<p>The Datajack is the physical connector in Jake's head that allows him to enter the Matrix. Until Jake has the Cortex Bomb disarmed from his Head Computer, he cannot use the Datajack to log into computers. Once the bomb is removed, Jake need only select his cyberdeck and connect this to a computer terminal to access the Matrix; the cyberdeck is automatically linked into Jake's Datajack. Aside from this indirect role, the Datajack has no purpose in the game.</p>

Name	Price	Availability	Description
Skill Software	3000	The first time you visit Dr. Maplethorpe	<p>The Skill Software teaches Jake the Leadership ability, which extends the amount of time a hired Shadowrunner will remain in your party.</p> <p>The price of Skill Software is fairly steep, so it doesn't make much sense to invest in it unless you really plan on using Shadowrunners fairly often. If you do hire frequently, however, this item will greatly extend the life of each runner and pay for itself after a few hires, once the Leadership skill is boosted.</p>

Name	Price	Availability	Description
Boosted Reflexes	15000	The first time you visit Dr. Maplethorpe	<p>Boosted Reflexes (which are displayed as Wired Reflexes on your cyberware screen) increase Jake's firing rate. Note that the maximum firing rate of all guns is the same both before and after purchasing this item. The exact firing rates increase from 1.8 shots/second to 2.6 shots/second. Note that Boosted Reflexes only affect firing rate, and not damage or accuracy. Also, note that the above times are maximums. They are possible using either an automatic weapon (Uzi III) or a turbo controller, but may be slower if you are firing manually. The Boosted Reflexes are one of the best deals in the game, and should be purchased as soon as possible. The ability to deal damage nearly 45% quicker is one of the greatest ways to improve your offense, and will be noticeable with any gun you use.</p>

Name	Price	Availability	Description
Dermal Plating	6000	After defeating the Jester Spirit	<p>The Dermal Plating (which is displayed as Dermal Armor on your cyberware screen) provides Jake with added defense over whatever protection his current armor gives him. Specifically, the Dermal Plating adds 2 points to Jake's Defense. So, for example, if Jake is equipped with the Mesh Jacket, his defense will jump from 2 to 4 once the Dermal Plating is purchased. The Dermal Plating is another worthwhile purchase. Two points of added defense for just 6,000 nuyen is a clear bargain. With this piece of cyberware equipped, Jake will likely take zero damage from most of the street enemies in the game. It also helps give you much needed protection when scaling the Drake Tower and fighting through the Volcano.</p>

Magic

Name	Required Items	Description
Heal	Dog Collar, Magic Fetish, Leaves	This is the first spell you get in the game, regardless of whether you have the items for any subsequent spells. Learning Heal also gives you the Magic attribute. The effects of the Heal spell are straight-forward: it restores the HP of you or your allies when used. It heals for a fixed amount each time, and the healing power goes up with each spell level.
Powerball	Paperweight, Ghoul Bone	The Powerball spell fires a magical orb that targets a single enemy. The Powerball hits its target every time, with the potential to also damage any targets within the explosion area. The damage calculation for the Powerball is exactly the same as the calculation for physical damage in the previous section, meaning the target's defense will reduce the damage. If Jake is close enough to the target, he can also suffer damage.
Invisibility	Potion Bottles (filled with Clean and Dirty Water)	The Invisibility spell prevents enemies from either seeing or attacking you. Jake can still suffer damage while invisible, but it is rare since nothing will actively target him. If you have any Shadowrunners, you will need to separately cast this spell on each one. Increasing the spell level of Invisibility raises the time duration that the spell lasts.
Freeze	Black Bottle (filled with Octopus Ink), Mermaid Scales	The Freeze spell encases a block of ice around a single target, completely halting that target's actions. While frozen, the target is still susceptible to physical and magical damage. Increasing the spell level of Freeze extends the time duration that the target stays frozen. You will notice that the ice block begins to flash exactly 2 seconds before it wears off, signally the end of the spell's effects. You can have no more than 4 frozen targets on the screen at one time.


Name	Required Items	Description
Summon Spirit	Dog Tags, Dog Collar	When cast, Summon Spirit will unleash a small dog spirit to quickly strike all enemies. The damage each hit does is analogous to Powerball, and it is calculated using the same damage formula. Summon Spirit attacks will never miss, and the caster does not need to select a specific target to use the spell.
Armor	Mermaid Scales, Serpent Scales	The Armor spell places a rotating shield around your character when cast, which adds 30 points to your defense for a short time. You can have up to 4 rotating shields at any one point, for a total of +120 defense. Since nothing in the game has an attack power of more than 30, casting the armor spell once is "effective" invincibility. There isn't any added benefit from having more than one shield active at a time, as the protection is redundant. Raising Armor's spell level increases the duration of time that the invincibility will last.

Trivia

- Jake's last name, "Armitage," appears to be a homage to the character of the same name in William Ford Gibson's novel *Neuromancer*, an early cyberpunk novel. Naming a character 'Armitage' seems to be a cyberpunk trope.
- In the Beta 1 version of the game, the people at the morgue are referred to as the "chop shop guys". A later revision of the game replaced this phrase with "morgue guys", as well as making several other minor changes that slightly toned down the game.
- It is possible, as in the original pen and paper game, to hire runners. This reflects the D&D style of group playing, but because the game is a one-player game, the runners follow you closely, and shoot on sight. The max amount hired depends on Jake's Charisma level, and if he has the Leadership skill, he can retain the runner for variable, longer amounts of time. If they die in your hire, they will respawn back at where they were previously (e.g., at the bar) to be hired again; thus, it is a good idea to keep track of the health levels of the party. Depending on the strength and skill value of the character hired, the player can give the character weapons from one's own arsenal, allowing

them to shoot for more damage. This also applies to body armor.

One hired character actually betrays Jake at a certain part of the game, adding depth to the story: if in the player's party at a certain mission point, he will begin to attack Jake. Because the character must be hired first, this makes the betrayal "optional".

- The plot is an "alternate telling" to the Never Deal With A Dragon novel, with Jake replacing Sam Verner. Haesslich and Drake (SNES video game)  are the same character with similar goals.