World of Warcraft Classic beta testers are reporting vanilla WoW features as bugs

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- Blizzard has released a few images of *World of Warcraft Classic* that cater to players' nostalgia. Certainly, a select few dedicated vanilla *WoW* players will remember trying to take down Ragnaros.
- They'll also remember the OG armor sets.
- Shamans sure have changed a lot since vanilla *WoW*. So has Orgrimmar, for that matter.
- One thing that hasn't changed: Blizzard's skill at making excellent CGI cinematics.
- Those early low-poly models, though—ouch.
- Fans will look past the graphics to enjoy nostalgia-laden zones like Westfall as they were pre-*Cataclysm*, though.

Nostalgic World of Warcraft (WoW) fans have been calling for game publisher Activision-Blizzard to release *World of Warcraft Classic* for years, and they're finally getting their wish. *World of Warcraft Classic* is now in beta, but some players have been surprised by what they've found when playing it.

WoW Classic seeks to recreate the "vanilla *WoW*"

experience—that is, *WoW* as it existed before a series of seven game-altering major expansion packs from 2007's *The Burning Crusade* to 2018's *Battle for Azeroth*. To achieve this, Blizzard has rebuilt the game based on archived data from back in 2005 and 2006 (patch 1.12 is the goalpost—the current game is on patch 8.1.5). The company has committed to meticulously presenting the experience *exactly* as it was back then—warts and all—with only a small number of unavoidable or critical changes.

The argument for this is simple: what makes classic *WoW* great to one player might be different from what makes it great for another. And who are Blizzard's designers to say which old features were just good or bad design for each player? It's an approach that shows Blizzard believes (at least to some degree) that *WoW* doesn't just belong to its creators but to its fans. That struggle between authorial intent or game design orthodoxy and "the player is always right" is at the heart of many of gaming's big contemporary controversies. But so far, Blizzard seems committed to its plan with regards to *WoW Classic*.

So committed, in fact, that modern WoW players are trying the beta and reporting what seem like bugs today but what were actually intended functionality 13 years ago. This became such a common occurrence that Blizzard publicly posted a list of known non-issues called the "*WoW Classic* 'Not a Bug' List." For example, hitboxes for the Tauren player race are much larger than those of other races. In a modern game, this would be seen as a serious balance issue (see: *Apex Legends*). But it's what vanilla *WoW* was like, so it has been faithfully reproduced.

There are even items that really do seem more like bugs than anything. For example, from the notes:

> *NPCs which offer multiple quests may inconsistently display them as a dot or a "!" on the available quests list. They*

> *were inconsistent in 1.12, and we've reproduced the exact inconsistency they had back then.*

Some players have been surprised by these apparent flaws—even players who have been eagerly awaiting *WoW Classic*'s release based on fond memories of vanilla *WoW*. In truth, it has been so long since *WoW* first released, players' memories may not always be accurate. Some details might be fresh, but others might be lost in time, and it's those lost details that could surprise players revisiting the original experience in *WoW Classic*.

Blizzard community manager Kaviax alluded to that in the post on the *WoW Classic* forums that included the list of known non-issues, writing:

> *As we've discussed before, the nature of WoW Classic sometimes invokes different memories for different players, and this leads to certain misconceptions for some about what is or isn't working as intended.*

Most people who have spent years playing massively multiplayer online games will tell you that there's something special about the first one you played, too—and *WoW* was the first for many people. You can become so swept up in the uniqueness of your first experience that you overlook many flaws. It's likely many look at *WoW Classic* with rose-colored glasses, just as many simply forgot which features were added when. And some of today's *WoW* players may be too young to have even played vanilla *WoW* as it once was.

That's not to say that everyone has an unrealistic vision of what vanilla *WoW* was like. There were already plenty of people on the *WoW Classic* forums pointing out that perceived bugs are just recreations of the original game. And as noted before, a flaw to one player is a key component of the original positive experience to another. *WoW Classic* will surely please plenty

of purists in spades. But this goes to show that it won’t be for everyone who has fond memories of the game circa 2006.

For some of us, those memories are just that—memories, imperfect as they are fond.

Listing image by Blizzard

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