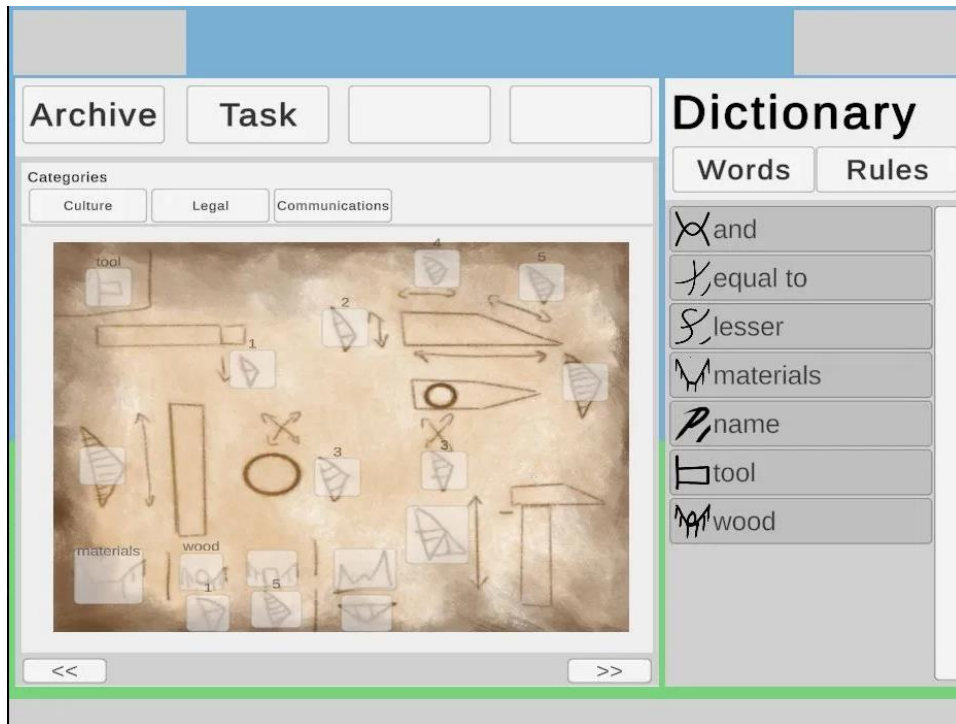


Jam 2 - Introduction

- **Design**
- UI
- Art

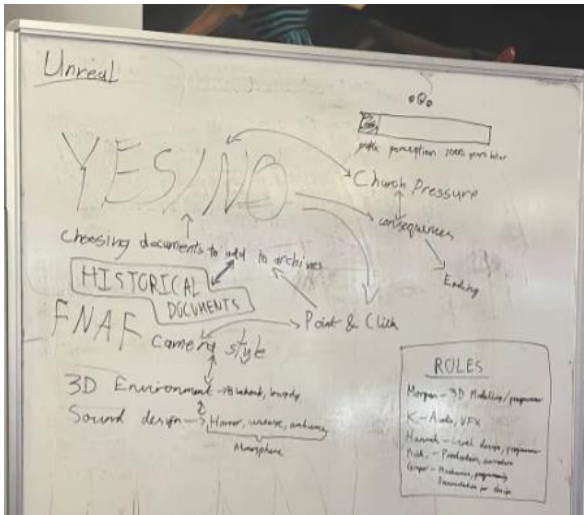


Going Mediaval – Archive.os

Archive.os is a 2d point and click game where the player takes the role of an intern at a historical archival company.

They receive the task to find out what happened to the carpenter's tools in an old civilisation that little is known about. The player must sift through various types of documents, building up their vocabulary of the language to find the relevant documents that will slowly reveal what truly happened.

Ideation



For the first part of ideation, I was set on creating a game in Unreal that had a 3d environment. I leant too heavily on the horror aspect so we went back to the drawing board.

I went back to my notes and developed them further to come up with a new framework for the game. I looked into the archives to gain inspiration for this

pc screen view, point and click
going through fictional medieval records
- select words/symbols recognise on each one, groups them

all papers about 1 person/event

piece together what happened through searching for keywords about person/event

maybe utilises images to give context

what are issues w interpreting unfamiliar sources?
- language
- context, old so meanings change
- reliability
- fictional
- incomplete
- primary/secondary sources

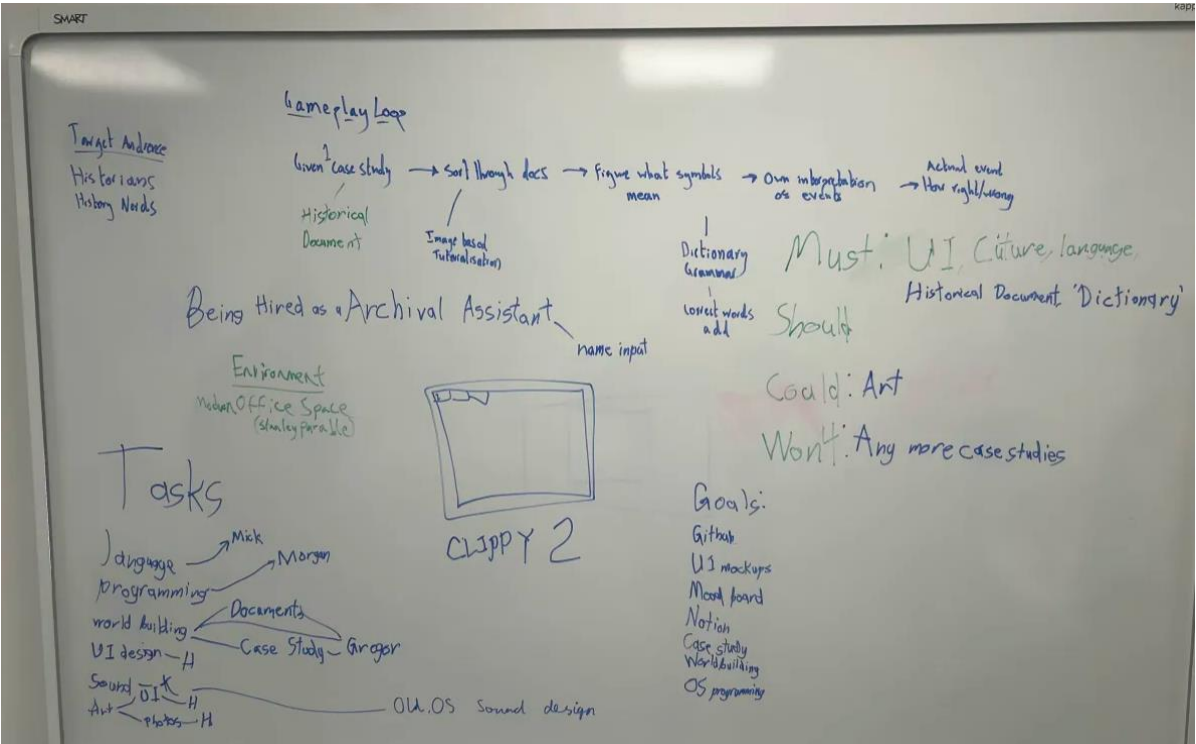
types of sources e.g art, legal documents, archeology, plays etc

paper ab woman accused of witchcraft
- could be interpreted she was a witch
- could be interpreted (as is true) she's just normal woman experimented medicine

offshoot like common problem: how do you warn things not of your culture that a place/thing is dangerous

In the next team meeting I took the initiative and pitched my idea, I wrote the gameplay loop and from there as a team we built off of my idea. I ensured all of our design ideas were advised by the brief – sticking to the core of the *struggle of interpreting* rather than the act of interpreting itself.

As the game came together, it was apparent that it would be better made in Unity and as fully 2D.

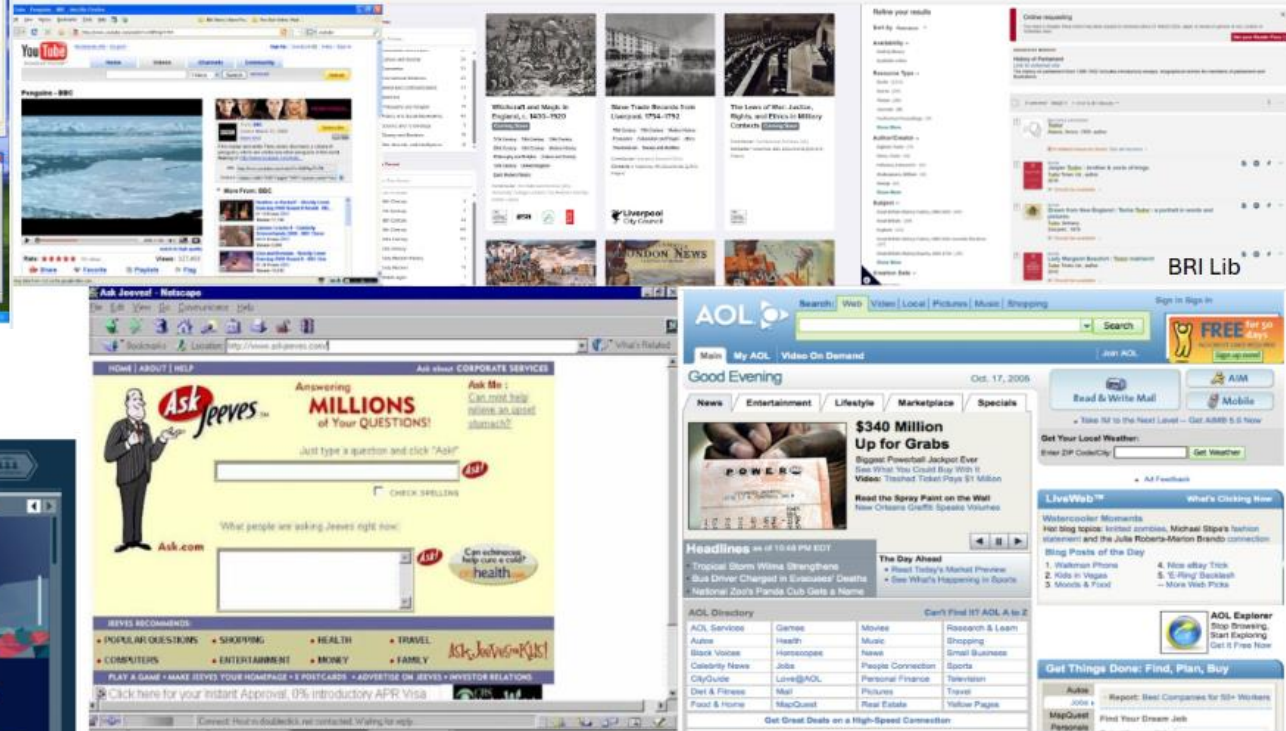


Research

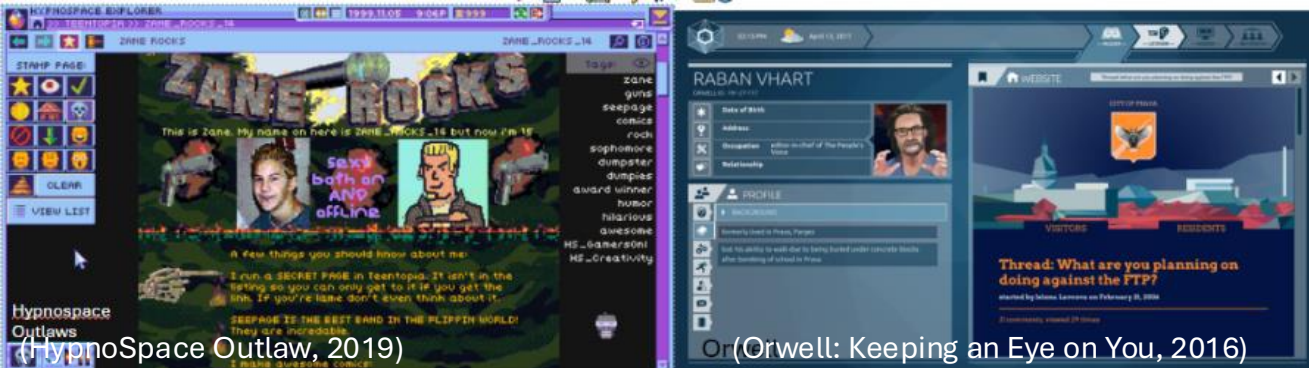
Moodboard in to the Windows XP aesthetic



Moodboard into old websites UI as well as archives UI



UI for other pc-screen games



My research was mostly visual, I started off creating a moodboard for the aesthetic of the game. When I thought of archiving my mind immediately went to the WindowsXP aesthetic; old dial up ringtones and floppy discs. I then looked into how archival websites of the current age are presented, how does one navigate through them and what categories do they (if they have any at all) allow people to search through. I very quickly learnt that they were all fairly similar in terms of making a user search keyterms then manually selecting and going through each document. It was not intuitive.

I also looked into the layouts of old early 2000's version of websites; what did they look like, how did they separate menu icons and icons within the webpage.

I greatly increased my research skills as I learnt the importance of grouping my moodboards into relevant categories; what I was inspired by for each thing.

GDD

Concept

Description

The player takes the role of an archival intern who is tasked with deciphering documents from a forgotten culture to find out the true version of events in a case study.

Key Features

Nostalgic 90s computer screen gameplay

Fictional symbol-language deciphering

Investigative gameplay

Audience

Historians and history nerds

Genre

2D point and click, mystery, language deciphering game

Mechanics

Core Gameplay

Searching: The player will have to search through archival records to learn the language as well as finding information on the case

Deciphering: The player will have to decipher the symbol-language using context clues and skills of deduction

Building Dictionary: Players will have a dictionary that will start with a few key words and grammar rules filled in, as the player progresses through the game and translates words – these will be added to the dictionary.

Game flow

1. The player is given a case study
2. The player searches through a selection of X documents from 1/X categories, clicking on the symbols and typing in the English translation, which if correct gets added to their dictionary.
3. Once X documents/words are deciphered, the player unlocks another category of documents to decipher. They can go back to previous categories at any point.
4. To end the game, the player must type in a sentence declaring what they believe happened in the case study, after which they will receive the correct answer.

Gameplay Elements

Case Study

The first screen that the player will see is the Case Study screen, they can access this at any point of gameplay. It will contain the event that the player is trying to investigate, as well as the section for them to type in their conclusion.

Dictionary

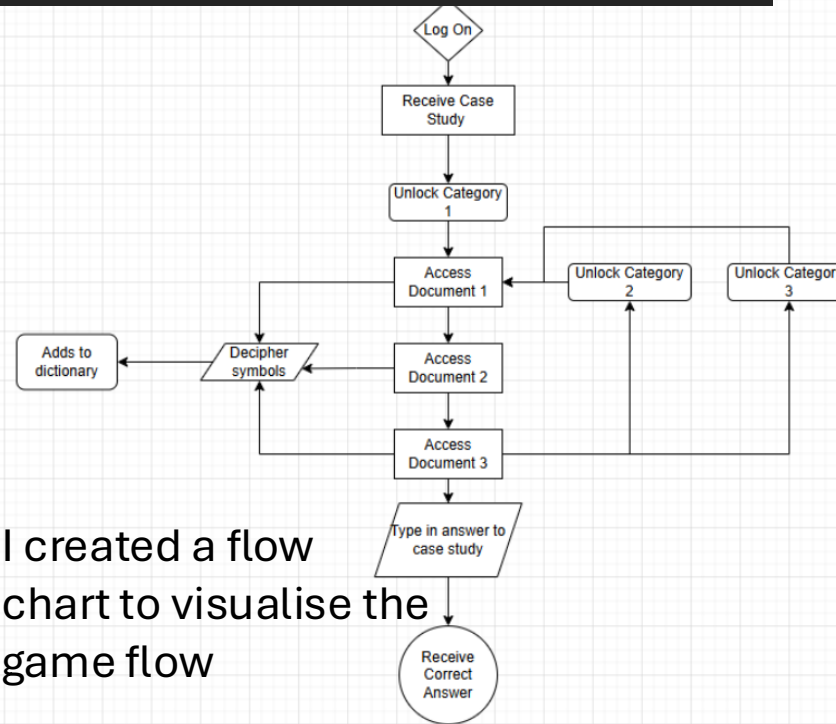
The dictionary will start off with a small selection of basic words that the player will need to start their search, as well as some grammar rules for the symbol-based language. As the player deciphers the documents, any new words will be added to the dictionary with the symbol and the English translation.

Documents

The documents can contain either images with accompanying symbol-language, or text. The player will be able to click on a symbol, whereon a text box will appear that they must type a word into. The word and symbol will then be added to the dictionary.

Player Controls

The game will be mostly point and click with the mouse, the keyboard will be used only to type in the English translation of the symbol-language.



I created a flow chart to visualise the game flow

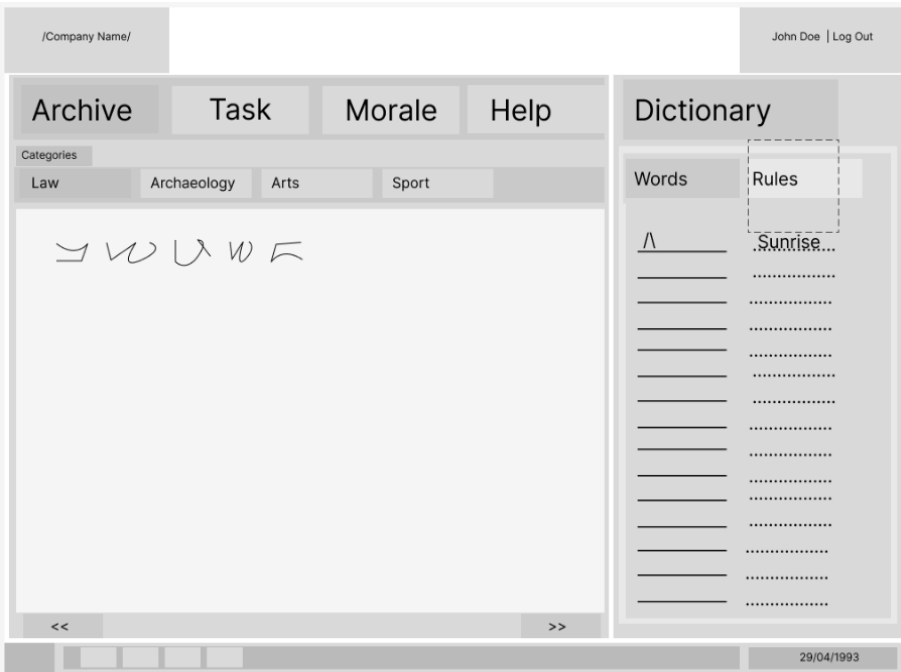
As I had been the one who spearheaded the ideation and design for this game, I took the initiative and created a GDD consolidating all the information that had been talked about, into one place. Creating the GDD allowed me to revisit my documentation skills, as I had not created one in a while – it gave me confidence as my skills were still robust for this.

Unfortunately, there was a communication issue where one team member had not heard me stating that I was going to make the GDD, so he made his own separate GDD. This is one example of people not paying attention to what was being said and agreed upon in this jam.

There was a continuous problem of people not knowing what we were making, and putting in no effort to ask questions or look at the relevant documentation for answers. I thought everything was on track. This was not the case as everyone else was silently confused. This experience was reflected on well during the final week of the jam as the problem was realised. To avoid this in the future, I will have to repeatedly check up on people and consistently tell them to look at the documentation to ensure we are on the same page.

Figma Mockups

Main Game Screen



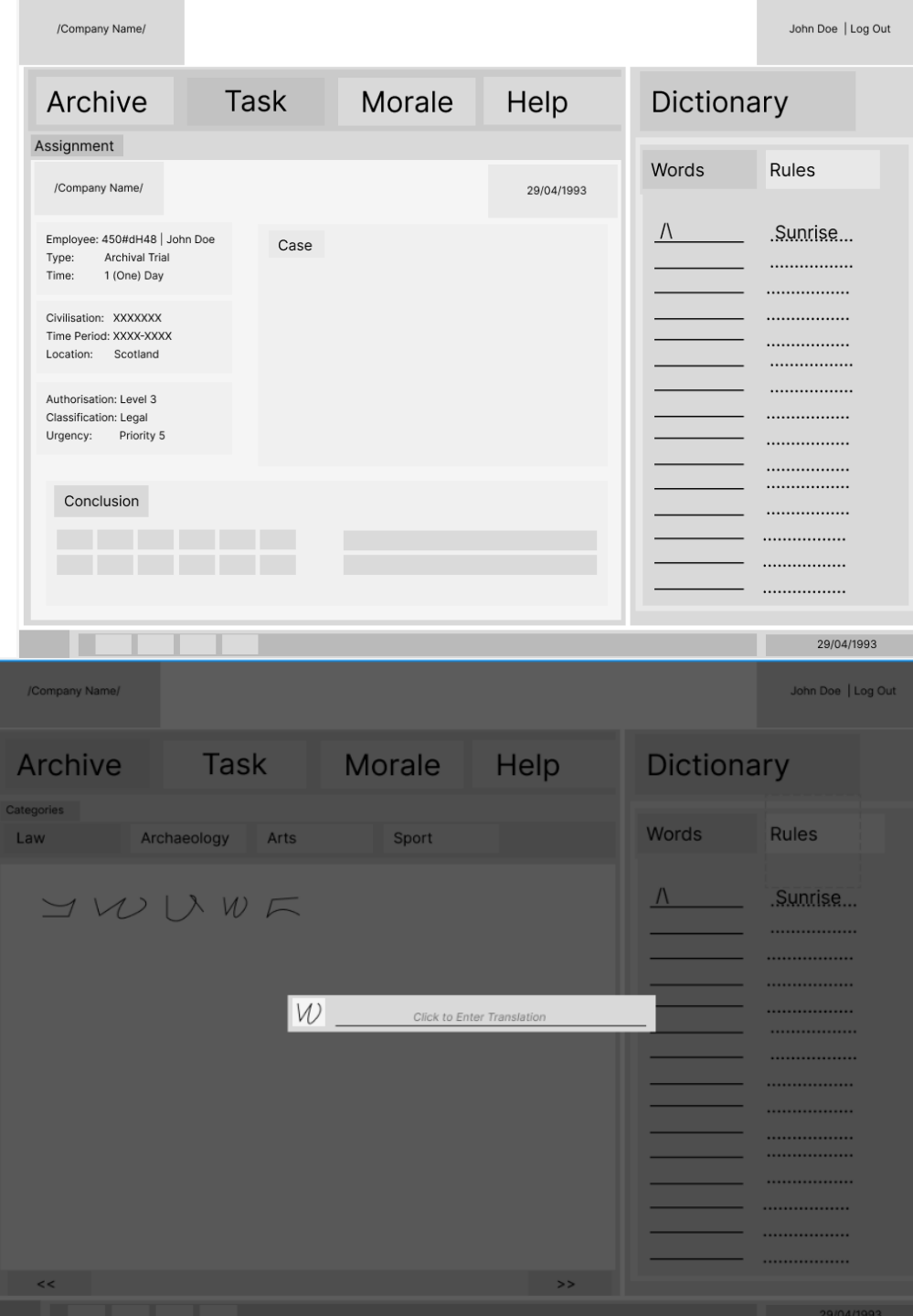
In figma I started to mockup the visual design for the game. I started with the main menu screen. For worldbuilding elements, I included a spot at the top to add the company name and a logo. In the top right I added a placeholder name – when the player starts the game they would be greeted with a PC login screen, the name they typed in there would replace 'John Doe', the log out text would work as a way to exit the game. I added the dictionary to the right of the screen, as a tab that is permanently open as the struggle of interpreting in this game is about deciphering the language – not constantly switching tabs as this would become too tedious with how the documentation navigation works.

The player will start in the 'Task' tab, which will just display the goal of the game, the text on the left is mainly just worldbuilding set dressing – the case section is where the details on what the player needs to find out will be displayed. The conclusion at the bottom is where the player will end the game by selecting the symbols that answer the case.

The tab at the top is always visible and able to navigate. Once the player selects the archive tab, three more tabs will appear; only one will be available at a time, the player has to search through every document in the previous tab before moving on to the next. Navigation is done through a backwards and forwards arrow at the bottom, this is to replicate the feeling of frustration I experienced when trying to navigate other archives across the internet. There was no simple or easy way to search through the documents, it was always clicking off and on different things.

I also created a mockup of what the screen would look like when a player selected a symbol, they would then type in the word in English which would add it to their dictionary.

Designing a game purely for 2D UI was new to me, but I managed to apply skills I had learnt about menu designing to this project, to create a successful design. I kept in mind user experience as I was designing, ensuring the 'struggle of interpreting' wasn't too overpowering and kept a fairly intuitive design.



Documents

Culture

e.g diaries, arts, posters

1st: Diary entry with lovey-dovey doodles

Symbol language: "[Name] stolen my heart", under doodle of man taking woman's heart

"Money", next to doodles of money

2nd: Drawing of court room

Symbol language: "Authority" over judges head. "Accuse" in speech bubble of prosecutor pointing at defendant, "Witness" over person in stand

3rd: shopping list

Symbol language: "10 Tool" next to drawing of 10 diff tools under "crafter/maker", "5 eggs" next to drawing of 5 eggs under "farmer"

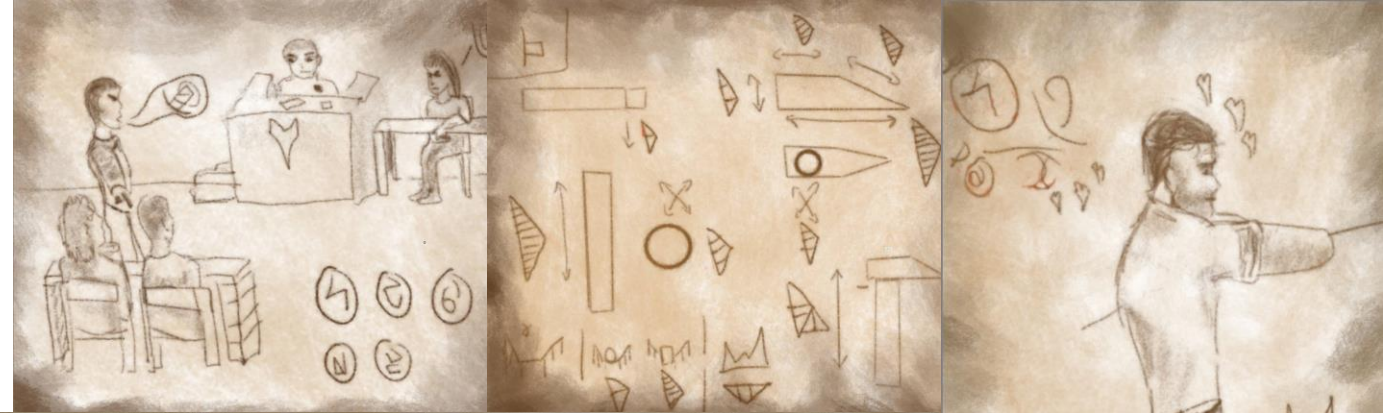
4th: Design specification for a hammer

Symbol language: "Wood" next to the handle, "[whatever material it is] next to the head, "crafter" top right "[name of crafter in case] next to it

5th: Village layout

Symbol Language: "farm" on fields next to "farmer" house, "tool maker" next to blacksmiths, "church" next to church, "river" next to river flowing around village, "forest" [could just be lots of wood], next to dense forest area

I developed my interpersonal skills by reaching out more often to other team members whose work I relied on in order to continue my own. After I finished the UI designs, I started coming up with some tutorialisation documents that would introduce the player to the game, how it works and provide them with some easy starter words, and words that would aid their goal. I wrote these up on the GDD and notified the member in charge of designing the symbols that I had done so.



Whilst I was waiting for this work to be done, I started creating the art documents. I wrote what would be the symbol words in English as placeholders. I created a map of the village that the case study was created in first in order to add more context and give a visualisation as to where everything that was occurring took place. This was also intended to be used by the other member creating documents, in order to help them place events in certain places. My project planning skills increased through this, as I was planning ahead – creating the most relevant information first. I also got what I could do done, instead of waiting around doing nothing.

In Engine

With the help of the programmer, I added a drawing to Unity and attempted to set up the functionality of clicking the symbols to bring up the enter-text overlay. There was a lot more teamwork during this jam, I was less hesitant to reach out for help – asking questions about how to implement it in Unity. This aided in the development of all my interpersonal skills.

