

Introduction / Basic Design

The Night Before Midterms is a simulation game set in the New York Public Library. It is a first person game set in a 3D space using hand drawn 2D graphics, and utilizing “stealth-like” gameplay to create an engaging, and *pleasantly* annoying atmosphere.

GOAL

The player is a student who needs to cram for their midterms, which are happening tomorrow. Unfortunately, contrary to popular belief, the NY Public Library is not a 24/7 establishment. It'll close at 6PM. Before that happens, The Student needs to find 4 text books and fully read them to absorb enough information to pass their classes!

But as we all know, a certain level of calm and focus is needed to be able to retain information. Trying to read while one is too bothered or annoyed will lead to entire pages of forgotten information. So, the player must keep their *anxiety* down or they will not be able to study! They'll also need to be seated- that's just good manners.

GAMEPLAY

The player's controls are daily simple- WASD to move, mouse to look, and E/Clicking to interact with things. The game takes place within a single level, the library, which is filled with winding pathways, the books that must be read, tables to read at, and **Stressors**. Stressors are obstacles or hostiles that raise the player's Anxiety. If anxiety is too high, they cannot study. If the player's anxiety is low enough, and they are at a table while holding a book, they will automatically study it, filling it's “study meter”. The player wins when all four “study meters” are full, and they lose when time runs out and the library closes.

Optionally, if time allows: the game will also have power up items the player can use, that will be hidden around the map for the player to find to reward their exploration of the library, and give additional ways to interact with the game's simple core mechanics. Much of the complication will come from the different types of **Stressors** and how the player deals with each one.

Mechanical Explanations

ANXIETY

The anxiety system should operate fairly simply. It should be a variable that can be increased or decreased, and measured via a UI meter on screen. If the anxiety variable is above a certain variable, the player cannot study. If the variable exceeds a further high point, the player's vision will blur slightly.

STUDYING

Studying as a mechanic can also operate simply. There are "studying desks" in the library. When the player is standing near them, if anxiety is below the first danger value, they will begin to study their currently held book, causing that book's study meter to fill (once again, a UI bar representing a simple variable). Once the meter is filled, they will discard the book. When all four meters are filled, the game is completed.

PICKUPS

This game has two types of items that will be picked up, held, or dropped by the player. The primary, mandatory one for our design and development are books. The player *should only be able to hold one book at a time*. Running into a book picks it up, and then running into the

next book won't pick up the second book. When the first book is studied, it is removed, so the player can go back and grab the next book to study.

Along with that, there are "boosting" items that provide small benefits to the player to reward exploration. These will be picked up when the player runs into them, and have varied effects, depending on their use case.

STRESSORS

The main obstacle for the player. In some way, Stressors will either block the player from navigating the level, raise their Anxiety, or both. Stressors come in multiple forms, and can be either *stationary* or *roaming* or *on a set path*. These are the things that force the player to find new routes, to explore, and to have to manage their stress.

They should be annoying to deal with, but easy enough to understand that a player can figure out how to remove or avoid them without us having to set out tutorials for each one. **The player being annoyed because they're stopping them from studying is fun, the player being annoyed because they can't understand how they're supposed to even win is not.**

Mechanic Lists

There are multiple types of stressors and boost items in the game, below is where we will list each one in itemized format along with explaining what they specifically do.

Stressor Types

- Example Stressor Name
 - Example Stressor Function Description
 - Example Stressor How To Handle
 - (Note: **Highlighted Stressor Types** are extra/optional, should only be worked on if we have extra time... I'm not super sure about them working.)
- Slow Old Man
 - An old man the player cannot move through- slowly wanders around the level, blocking pathways and causing anxiety if he collides with the player.
 - The player must simply avoid the Slow Old Man, going around passages he has blocked
- Arguing Couple
 - A couple that is arguing in a loud voice, without a care for the people around them- stays in one location, emitting an aura of stress and anxiety
 - Moving near the arguing couple will raise the player's stress; they'll have to think for themselves if it'd be better to save time and travel through their space, or to go around
- **Annoying Child**
 - A lost child- they're not the player's problem, but they're annoying. If the player is close enough to them, they should move towards the player, but their pathfinding doesn't need to be too powerful.
 - The annoying child will be most annoying when the player has to study. The player should be slightly faster than the child- it should be easy to outrun them if they're trying to do so. But when the player has to study, they have to stand still... better hope there's no kids trying to bother them while they're doing that.
- Snacking Student
 - Another student, cramming for midterms like you. They'll be using the same study tables you're using. Mechanically, that means they'll be emitting a short range anxiety radius, and will periodically teleport from study table to study table
 - Another bother to alter the player's course through the library, this will prevent them from being able to use one of the study tables at a time- creating sudden bursts of panic after players discover their chosen study spot is taken!
- The Library Ghost
 - Eek! A ghost! That's scary... and more scary is how they ignore walls! The ghost just moves in random directions, with an anxiety aura around it. It also emits a constant noise, so players sort of know it is around even when they can't see it (did some testing, having things just *show up* out of the blue is sort of annoying)
 - Keep an *ear* out for this one- it's hard to keep an eye on it or predict its movements, so hearing the spooky noise is a sign to run away.

Boosting Items

- Canned Tea
 - Soothes the nerves, lowering anxiety by a set value
- Earplugs
 - Keeps out sounds, preventing anxiety gain for 10 seconds
- Study Guide
 - Gives the player some of the answers, giving a little bit of study completion for their currently held book.