

Posted Up

A game by Project Mailbox Studio, consisting of Campbell Gilbert and Compton French

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1. High Concept

A mailman. A person who will stop at nothing — not rain, not snow, not sleet, not hail — to do their job: deliver the mail. But nothing — not even death — will stop the mail.

Play Overview

The gameworld is one much like our own — populated with your standard suburbs and large corporate warehouses — but...different. More vicious, more violent. Only one person is capable of standing up to the madness of greed, both corporate and personal, taking over the world, and standing up to the dang dogs that keep trying to bite him while he's just doing his job. And he will keep standing up, even if it kills him...and, even after it kills him. He just keeps coming back. Wait, who is this guy? Why does he keep dying? What job could possibly be so important that he keeps dying and coming back to life (with each resurrection landing him in a slightly different, randomized world each time, in a sort of Rogue-like manner)?

He's just a man. A Mailman. And your job is to help him with the most important job in the world: DELIVERING THE MAIL.

Player Objectives:

- Deliver the mail (duh!) by finding the boss door at the end of each level, fighting the boss, and dropping off the mail as they travel to the next level.
- Fight off package thieves, corporate slaves, and very poorly-trained and vicious dogs as they explore the level, gaining powerups along the way.

Player Obstacles:

- The aforementioned greedy package thieves, brainwashed warehouse workers, and dogs (natural enemies of mailmen).
- The very world itself, as the platforms are difficult to traverse and have new features each time they appear.
- Bosses: large, powerful figures that will stop at nothing to prevent the mailman from completing their missions.

Player Base:

Posted Up is a roguelike metroidvania that incorporates comedic elements. Therefore, this game intends to reach a certain audience.

1. **People who like fun, conceptual indie games.** Likely on the younger side (16-30) and a relatively experienced gamer; they've definitely played "big" indie titles like *Undertale*, *Hades* and *Hollow Knight* and are looking for something with perhaps a less complicated world but the same kind of quirky, endearing concepts & characters they

love.

2. **People who like a challenge.** Roguelikes are hard almost by definition; the main mechanic of the game is not just dying but dying a *lot*. This game will ideally be almost frustratingly difficult at times, but a gamer dedicated to learning the rules and mechanics will find it a fun challenge.
3. **People who enjoy political satire.** Though some gamers wail and complain about games being “too political”, Posted Up will be an unabashed left-leaning satire on America’s greedy, materialist culture. You will fight billionaires just as much as kids who think you’re carrying a PS5, and face every threat with the same stiff upper lip. It’s as ridiculous as it sounds — which is to say, as ridiculous as everything is nowadays. While this may shut out a certain section of the potential playerbase — namely white, cisgender, heterosexual men & boys with right-leaning politics — this is overshadowed by the many, many, many other demographics (of race, gender, sexuality) that will buy our game, whether because of their left-leaning politics or simply because they support the USPS. The most important players are anyone who wants an exciting platformer challenge, with the left-leaning demographic most likely to become fanatics due to agreeing with the game’s political message.

2. Team Bios

Campbell Gilbert



I'm a huge fan of both story-heavy (Disco Elysium, Deltarune) and gameplay-heavy (Carrion, Risk of Rain 2) games, and I'd like to make games that both tell a rich, detailed story and have super fun mechanics for the player. I'm trying to make games for someone like myself: someone with a good sense of humor who appreciates both an interesting story and wants fun gameplay, while also appreciating a good challenge. I put a ton of effort into the things I love, and I take a lot of pride in a job well done; in addition, I have backgrounds in intensive programming, creative writing/storytelling, teamwork, and leadership, making me the perfect fit for the role of game developer.

Compton French



I am a person that enjoys games across a range of genres. I play a lot of games with replayability such as First-Person-Shooter games such as Overwatch and Call of Duty and roguelikes such as Slay the Spire. I also love the personality from metroidvania Indie games such as the Ori series and Hollow Knight. A feature that I value a lot in games is the potential replayability, which is a major driving force in what I want for Posted Up. I want to make games that people will never get bored of and want to boot up again after a period of time. I find the good in various types of games across all genres and can combine these features that will make a unique game which can bridge players across different player-bases.

3. Inspirations

- Risk of Rain: Consists of 2 games, the first being a 2d platformer roguelike (heavily inspiring the structure of our game) and a 3d exploration-oriented roguelike. The randomness of the item drops, as well as the wide array of quirky playable characters (from an engineer that can set up moving turrets to a melee-based giant alien lizard), ensures that no two playthroughs remain the same, and the variety of difficulty options ensure that any player, regardless of skill level, will still face a challenge. As such, Risk of Rain 1 and 2 have remained exciting and attractive for many players for years, and with massive DLCs being released, will remain exciting for years to come. While Risk of Rain is certainly a much larger-scale project than anything we can hope to accomplish in this class, it was similarly made by a small team (in fact, just 2 undergrad students made RoR1!) in the Unity engine. The success of this game, along with others games that deem themselves difficult, shows that difficulty can be a major attraction to players.
- Dead Cells: This is another platformer roguelike, with only one playable character instead of several. The caveat here is that the player character can choose a different set of weapons or power ups on every playthrough, creating a totally different “build” and allowing for a lot of customization. In addition, Dead Cells has an interesting story, told mostly through gameplay, and a very distinctive art style, making it stand out dramatically from other games. Though this is a game that the developers are less familiar with, it is one that they have seen playthroughs of and whose qualities & mechanics they attempted to incorporate into their own game.
- Hollow Knight: Hollow Knight is one of the most popular indie games of the metroidvania genre. The game has some movement mechanics that seem of little importance, upon mastering movement, the game becomes more complex. Incorporating movement complexity similar to this game, it will draw players for a tight movement. The Knight, the player character of Hollow Knight, does not speak but responds in gestures. Despite the lack of communication in the game, players are drawn to the character and are remembered. The mailman in Posted Up will act in a similar fashion to leave all speculation to the player so they love the character to how they envision the mailman. In addition, future versions of the game will also feature challenging and memorable bosses just like the ones in Hollow Knight.

4. Game Map and Navigation

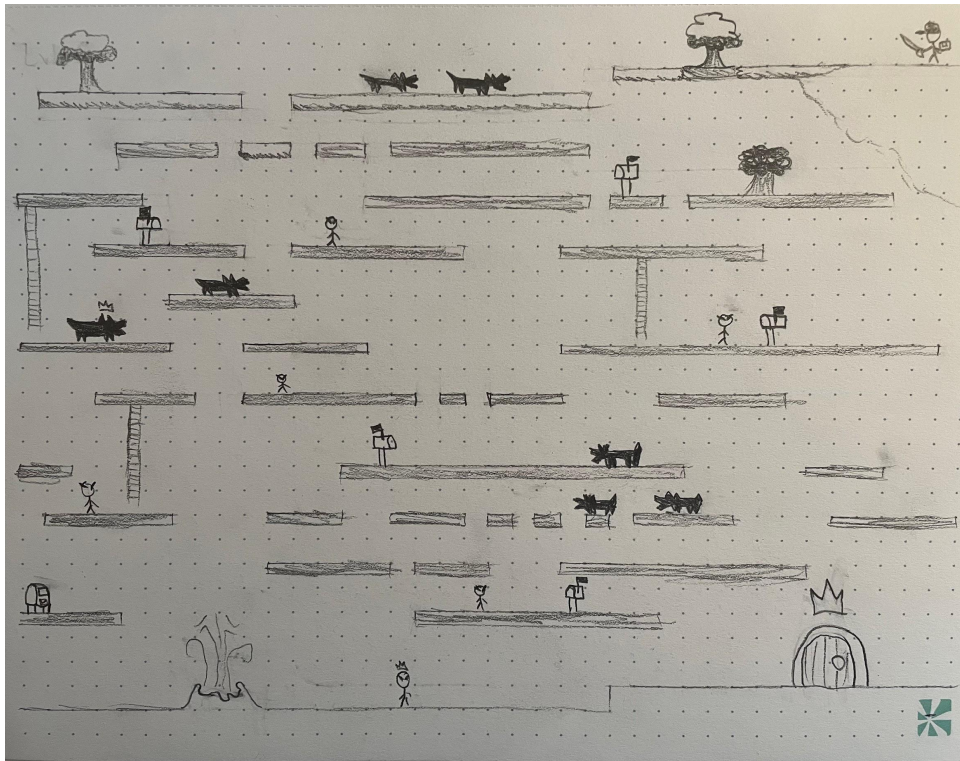


Figure 1: A sample game map of first level, the Neighborhood. Consists of basics for the whole game. The player starts in the top right corner. Platforms that the player can walk and jump onto to traverse the level. Enemies are dogs and other people that are mail thieves. Mailboxes and P.O. boxes are interactables that powerup/heal the player. Boss door in bottom right that brings the player to the next area.

Levels:

Each level has different textures and backgrounds to bring the player to different environments. With each level, the enemies scale in difficulty with factors such as increased health and damage. Various levels include:

- **Neighborhood.** The first level, a very standard suburban area. Lots of houses with big lawns and snarky, entitled kids. The goal is to reach the big gated mansion at the end and deliver the mail. The obstacles on the way to the mansion include entitled kids and yappy dogs, and the final obstacle is the mansion's guard dog, which appears to be a completely normal and adorable Dachshund.
- **Snowy woods.** Not snow or sleet or hail will stop this courier from walking (yes, walking, on foot — the Postal Service can't afford as many cars as they used to) through this treacherously icy forest, full of ravenous wolves and snotty little girls in red coats that think you're carrying a PS5. At the end of the level is what initially appears to be a friendly grandmother but is revealed to be a ravenous werewolf who wants the delicious cookies the mailman is carrying.

- **Slamazon warehouse.** Robotic dog-like creatures and brain-dead worker drones throw boxes of cheaply made items and bottles of mysterious yellow liquid at the player. They're controlled by the giant disembodied head of the CEO, Geoff Pesos, who has gotten so rich he has transcended the need for a body but is still so greedy he wants to destroy the Postal Service — and every mailman in it. Starting with you.

Level Navigation:

Due to the shifting nature of Roguelikes, it is actually important that the player *not* know where they are on the map, as the map is constantly changing and evolving with each playthrough and navigation removes some of the game's challenge. However, the camera does follow the player and an observant/strategically minded player could piece together the map's usual makeup as they run around searching for the boss door.

5. Mechanics

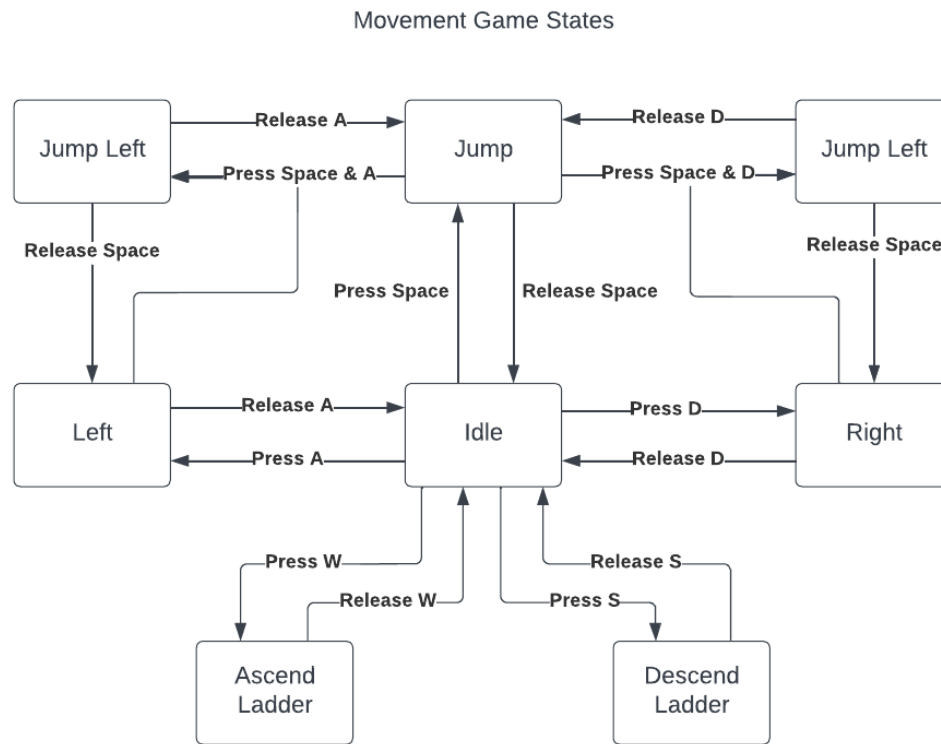


Figure 2: Movement Game States flowchart. Describes what will happen in-game from basic movement inputs.

Mobility mechanics

1. **Input:** To move left and right (and, on ladders, up & down), the player will use the WASD keys. To jump, the player will press the spacebar. Pressing the spacebar and either the A or D key at the same time will prompt the player to jump while moving.
2. **Effects:** Moves the player character from one location to the next. Allows the player to interact with interactables and hit enemies. Aids the player in finding the boss gate and exiting the level.
3. **Method & Properties:** A `Move()` method that will update the character's animation if it's moving in a particular direction, and update the location in the game's storage, with cases in the `Move()` method for direction (Left, Right, Ascend, Descend) and jump (Jump, JumpLeft, JumpRight). Falling will call a `Fall()` method which will deal fall damage if the player falls past a particular distance.



Figure 3: Interact Game States flowchart. Describes the inputs from the player with interactions and criteria.

Attack mechanic

1. **Input:** Left click for primary (melee) attack (Figure 3).
2. **Effects:** A melee attack will remove some of an enemy's health provided the player is in a close enough radius to hit it.
3. **Method & Properties:** The hit radius will be defined in the enemy's information; the combination of the left click and the player being within a proper radius will remove some of an enemy's health and knock it back slightly.
4. **Game States of Mechanic:** See Figure 3; included in interaction flowchart sInteraction mechanics.
5. **Input:** To interact with a Mailbox or the Boss Door the player will use the E key to Interact (Figure 3). They will be prompted to do so when close enough to a mailbox & with enough money to open it, and when close enough to a Boss Door.
6. **Effects:** The Mailbox will open and dispense an upgrade or a heal; the Boss Door will open, segueing into the boss cutscene and subsequently the Bossfight.
7. **Method & Properties:** The eligibility of interacting will be determined by an `IsEligible()` method, taking in the type of the interactable (Mailbox or Boss Door) and open conditions (within radius & with enough money for the former, within radius for the latter) and giving the user a prompt to interact if those conditions are met.

6. Game Art

Posted Up will employ a quirky, low-poly 3d style, largely based off of the visuals found in the Asset Store. The most important visual is, obviously, the player character — the Mailman himself. Though he wears drab, dark-colored clothing and carries a severe baton, the Mailman is no dull character. He's just one of those people that prefers to let his actions speak for him.



Figure 4: Humanoids: the Package Thief, the Mailman, and the Warehouse Worker, from left to right

The Mailman, due to being a bipedal hominid, bears a striking resemblance to some of the enemies he faces (hence why they are grouped together). However, the resemblance is purely a cosmetic one as the Mailman is not just a cut above any non-postal worker but has little in common with the vicious people he faces. The Package Thieves, blinded by greed, are a cut below average. These humanoids want nothing more than what the Mailman is carrying. They don't care what the package looks like; they're utterly convinced the Mailman is carrying a PS5/Dyson AirWrap/whatever valuable thing they want. They also think that attacking and even killing the mailman is the best way to get their cargo. Clearly, they aren't the brightest, but they are vicious and quite literally need to be beaten off with a stick. In the Slamazon warehouse these are replaced by the Warehouse Workers. These are a sad and special case as they could have been allies or even friends had the cruel, greedy CEO not brainwashed them and turned them into enemies of all postal workers.

All humanoids attack with a loud punching sound, though the hits of the barbaric enemies are bloodier and quieter than the righteous smacking of the heroic Mailman.



Figure 5: Dogs, natural enemies of mailmen.

The other main type of enemy the player will face is a dog. Their cute, squishy features hide a devastating bite and an unrelenting hatred for all postal workers. These dogs are especially large and ill-trained — possibly even rabid! — and will hunt down the Mailman relentlessly until he beats them into submission¹. Fittingly, the sound of their bite is accompanied by a ferocious growl and punctuated with the bloody snap of their teeth.

¹ Project Mailbox does not endorse animal cruelty, and assures you that the Mailman's actions are purely in self-defense.

7. Production Milestones

Milestones	Expected Time to Complete
Revisions of Map, Mechanics, Navigation, Art and GUI Design	2 weeks
Art Asset Development	3-4 weeks (if making own art), 1 day (if using premade assets)
Asset Placement, Lighting and Animation Setup	1-2 weeks
Animation and Camera Programming	3-4 days
Player Combat Programming	2-3 weeks
Enemy AI & Combat Programming	2-3 weeks
Power-up Creation & Programming	1-2 weeks
Boss Creation & Bossfight Programming	2-3 weeks
Randomization & Spawning (Platforms, Enemies, Boss Door, Mailboxes)	5 days-1 week
Audio Programming	3-4 days
GUI and Progression (Scoring) Programming	4-5 days
Q/A Testing and Fixing	2-3 weeks
Player Testing and Fixing	3-4 weeks

8. Technical Features

Platform: PC (Windows and Mac)

The game will be primarily constructed for PC. This platform helps reach our target audience and hopefully reach out to a bigger demographic. The audience that wants to try games that have an indie aesthetic will not find issues finding a way to play this game. The graphical intensity will not be super high but have the ability to work smoothly on various computer builds. For instance using a 2D background for simpler processing to decrease technical demand from players' devices. The screen sizes associated with PC builds will allow for the player to notice all the various aspects on screen for their gameplay experience. As a roguelike metroidvania, players will appreciate the tight controls a PC can offer for the challenging game they will be playing. While playing with headphones, the players will be able to hear all key audio cues to know each interaction that occurs.

Input System: Keyboard and Mouse

The input keys will reflect various other games by using the standards for movement and interactions. WASD will be for basic movement, left shift for dash, E for interact, and mouse left click for attack. This input system is common amongst many games and will provide a seamless transition for veteran players. The muscle memory will feel natural and not cause any issues for players, allowing for them to focus on the exploring and fighting aspects of the game without fighting against the input methods.

Memory and Processor Speed:

The game has been tested on a device as low as a 2.4 GHz Quad Core Intel Core i5 and 16 GB RAM Macbook Pro. The highest spec device the game is tested on is a 11th Gen Intel(R) Core(TM) i9-11900H 2.50GHz, 16 GB RAM, and 3060 Laptop GPU on a Windows device. As previously stated, reaching the Windows and Mac market will allow for a broader audience to be reached. The game will not be GPU driven and low intensity allowing for game to run smoothly on devices with low specs, so more people can enjoy the game, especially people that may not be branded as a "hardcore gamer". Players from a range of various devices will be able to enjoy the same experience and share with others based on the game's content and not how their device could not handle it.

Animation:

The not particularly realistic or complex low-poly 3D assets is a stylistic choice. Even though it is a 2.5D platformer using 3D assets, it gives a lot of room to add in the quirkiness and aesthetic of an indie game that people love. While the stylistic choice can allow for some more

comedic interactions, it won't hinder the difficulty aspect expected for a roguelike/Metroidvania, but still add memorable personality and uniqueness.

Sound:

PC players typically play with headphones which allows for audio cues that will be essential for the challenging game. Simple heard audio cues help the player to distinguish what interactions that occur. On the same token, the audio cues are going to be less serious to add to the comedic personality of this game. The game will also include music respective to the environment that the player is currently in to add to the immersion experience. Immersion and comedic elements will keep the player attention and influence a positive gaming experience despite the potential difficulty involved.

9. Prototype as Vertical Slice

Posted Up is a game that wanted to tackle many features in a short amount of time with major inspiration from huge hit projects. The core mechanics of the game are laid down and we look forward to expanding from there with the other features we got inspiration from. We intend to add various other features such as different power-ups for the mailman to add to the replayability. Aesthetics with textboxes and others is a future endeavor to give the player insight to the world they are playing through and add to the immersion. The player should be able to traverse the level and find the door in the level to move to the next level.



Figure 6: Player avoids combat by running past the enemies.

The enemies chase the player throughout the level until defeated. Even though a player's first instinct may be to defeat the current enemy in front of them, sometimes that may not be the best option. The player can run past the enemies to avoid combat for the time being (Figure 5). Some games such as Call of Duty: Zombies have a strategy where the player will train the enemies to follow from a safe distance to engage in safer combat. This strategy can be proven effective in Posted Up by damaging multiple enemies at once, or could result in a storm of enemies all at once. The option is up to the player and the confidence in their ability to attempt this strategy. The player can even attempt to avoid combat altogether and run straight to the door to the next level. Pacifist runs are a feature in some games like Undertale that results in a different ending. Additionally, it adds another layer of difficulty to the base game.

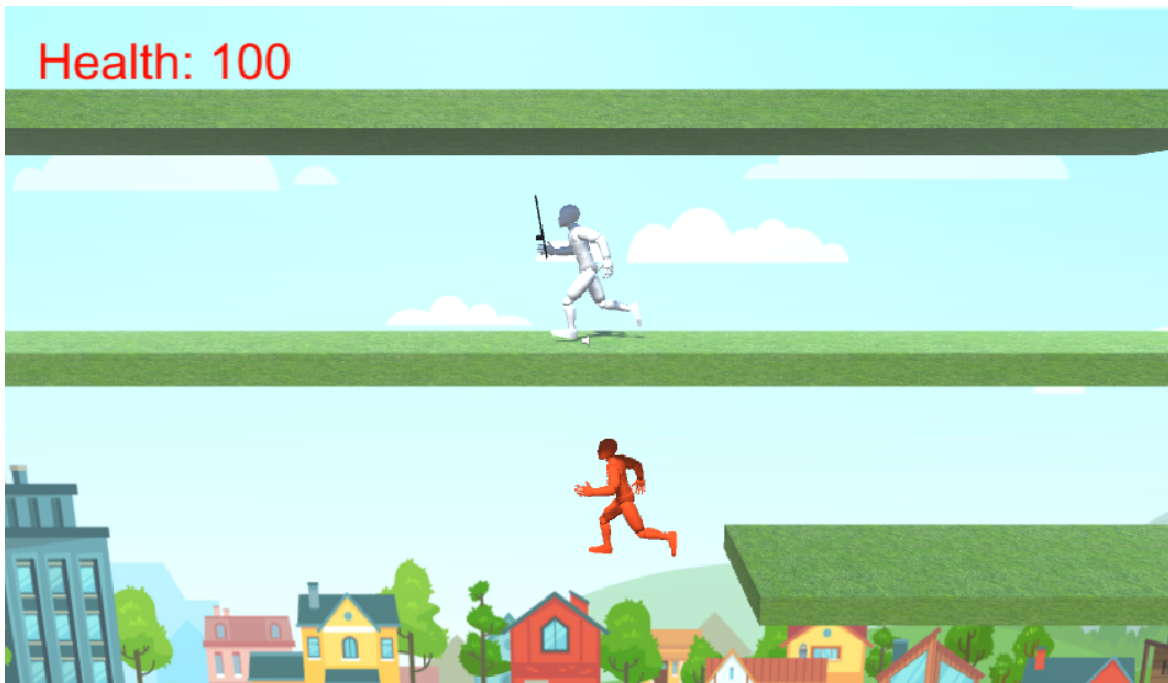


Figure 7: Player manipulating enemy chase to cause the enemy to fall down a platform.

The player should take advantage of the enemies chasing the play between platforms. Players can clear a platform safely by attempting to lead enemies off of platforms, avoiding combat (Figure 6). A simple strategic move that can have a major impact especially players that want to avoid combat whether it is lack of health, or lack of confidence. Can also be seen as humorous watching your enemies fall off screen from your view. Players should also be aware of an opening on the platform above. The enemies can fall on top of the mailman, forcing combat or the mailman to flee their current position.



Figure 8: Player interacting with the mailbox with the E key to heal from previous combat. Player fled from the dog combat engagement below to heal, preventing game over.

The Player should take advantage of the mailboxes throughout the level to heal. Even though strategies listed above are viable, combat with enemies is still a threat to the player. To prevent a game over with a return all the way back to the first level, healing is vital to stay alive to reach the end of the level. Figure 8 shows a player that engaged in combat with the dog below, realized their low health, and retreated to gain some more health before finishing the fight. The mailboxes in future iterations will consist of varying power ups that can assist the player progress further. There is a certain amount of mailboxes on each level and each mailbox can only be triggered once, so make sure to be careful with your mailman's health.