

Taxi Stories – Detailed Level Design

1. Game Overview

This document defines a full level design for the game **Taxi Stories**.

The goal is to describe four concrete levels – Tutorial, Easy, Medium, and Hard – with enough detail so that a programmer can implement the levels directly.

Each level specification includes: narrative setup, gameplay objectives, detailed content (passengers, dialogues, routes, obstacles), win/lose conditions, difficulty rationale, and a textual diagram of the map layout.

2. Level 1 – Tutorial (Beginner)

1. Narrative Setup

- Time of day: early evening, light traffic, clear weather.
- Location: small neighbourhood near the Tel Aviv central bus station.
- Mood: relaxed and slightly humorous – meant to let the player explore safely.
- Story hook: this is the driver's first official shift as a taxi driver.

2. Player Objectives

- Primary objective: successfully complete one ride for a single passenger.
- Secondary objectives:
 - Avoid hitting any car or pedestrian.
 - Try at least one dialogue choice during the ride.

3. Detailed Content

3.1 Passenger

Name: "Leo, the confused tourist"

Profile:

- Nationality: foreign tourist, basic English, a bit shy.
- Goal: wants to get from the bus station to a nearby falafel stand.
- Mood: curious, friendly, easy to please.

Dialogue examples (3–4 choices total):

- Opening:

– Passenger: "Hello! This is my first time in Tel Aviv. You know good falafel?"

– Player choices:

1) "Of course, I know the best place here." (positive, +Reputation)

2) "Yeah, I guess. I'll take you somewhere." (neutral)

3) "Just tell me the address, I'm busy." (slightly negative, -Reputation)

• Mid-ride small talk:

– Passenger: "Is it always this warm here?"

– Player choices:

1) Friendly explanation about the city (+Reputation).

2) Short answer, no emotion (no change).

3) Sarcastic answer (-Reputation).

3.2 Route Layout

The route is short and very simple on purpose.

Segments:

1) Start point: taxi stand at "Central Bus Station – Side Street".

2) 50 meters of straight road.

3) One right turn at an intersection with a stop line.

4) 70 meters of straight road along small shops.

5) End point: "Avi's Falafel" on the right-hand side.

Traffic and obstacles (minimal):

• 2 slow cars driving ahead of the player at low speed.

• 1 pedestrian crossing with a zebra crosswalk, no traffic light.

• No traffic lights in this level.

• No police, no fines.

Driving rules introduced:

• Basic acceleration and braking.

• Steering left/right.

• Stopping for pedestrians.

• Using the mini-map arrow to follow the route.

3.3 Interface and Guidance

- An arrow on the mini-map shows the falafel stand location.
- On-screen tutorial prompts:
 - “Press W / Up to accelerate.”
 - “Press S / Down to brake.”
 - “Turn right at the next intersection.”

4. Win / Lose Conditions

Win:

- Reach the destination with the passenger still in the taxi.
- Do not crash into other cars or pedestrians.

Partial success:

- Player reaches the destination but caused 1 light collision with another car:
 - Passenger comment: “Oh, that was a bit scary, but we’re okay.”
 - Reduced tip, small Reputation penalty.

Lose:

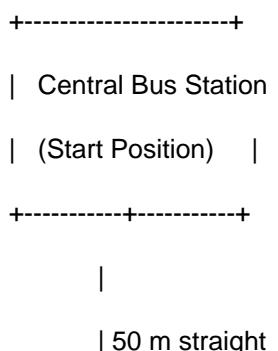
- Player hits a pedestrian.
- Player drives in the wrong direction for more than 30 seconds after on-screen warning.

5. Difficulty Rationale

- Very short route with only one turn.
- Almost no traffic – just 2 slow cars to teach following distance.
- Simple, friendly passenger who reacts mildly to choices.
- No time limit – the player can drive slowly and experiment.

6. Level Diagram (Textual)

Below is a simplified top-down diagram using text characters.



v

+----+ Pedestrian crossing

| |

| +---+-----+

| | Straight road |

| | Small shops on right |

| -----+ F |

| | a |

+-----+ | |

|

Destination: "Avi's Falafel" (End)

3. Level 2 – Easy

1. Narrative Setup

- Time of day: late morning, slightly busier streets.
- Location: mix of residential area and main road leading to a small hospital and a military base shuttle stop.
- Mood: calm but with a bit more responsibility – the driver now meets local citizens.

2. Player Objectives

- Complete two separate rides in sequence:
 - 1) Elderly woman to the hospital.
 - 2) Tired soldier to the soldier shuttle point.
- Start learning to balance careful driving with basic time expectations.

3. Detailed Content

3.1 Passenger A – “Rivka, the elderly woman”

Profile:

- Age: 78, walks slowly, gentle and polite.
- Destination: “Ichilov Clinic – Entrance B”.
- Mood: nervous about a medical checkup.

Dialogue examples:

- Entering the taxi:

- Passenger: "Good morning, dear. Can you please take me to the clinic?"

- Player choices:

- 1) "Of course, no problem, I'll drive carefully." (+Reputation)

- 2) "Sure, hop in." (neutral)

- 3) "I'm in a bit of a hurry, but okay." (-Reputation)

Driving sensitivity:

- If the player brakes too hard more than 3 times:

- Rivka: "Oy, my back! Please drive a bit softer."

- Each harsh brake reduces Reputation slightly.

3.2 Passenger B – "Omer, the tired soldier"

Profile:

- Age: 20, in uniform, big backpack.

- Destination: "Soldier Shuttle – Northern Station".

- Mood: exhausted after a week on base.

Dialogue examples:

- Mid-ride:

- Soldier: "Sorry if I fall asleep, I barely slept this week..."

- Player choices:

- 1) "No worries, get some rest." (+Reputation)

- 2) "Don't fall asleep, I might need directions." (neutral)

- 3) "As long as you pay, I don't care." (-Reputation)

Driving sensitivity:

- Talking too much (selecting every optional dialogue prompt) can annoy him:

- "I really need quiet right now, sorry..." (Reputation -1).

3.3 Routes and Traffic

First ride (Rivka → Clinic):

- Start: small residential street near player's home.

- Segment 1: narrow two-way road with parked cars on both sides (no moving cars).

- Segment 2: intersection with first traffic light in the game.

- Segment 3: busier road with 3–4 moving cars.

- End: hospital drop-off area.

Second ride (Omer → Shuttle):

- Start: hospital drop-off.
- Segment 1: exit hospital via roundabout.
- Segment 2: main avenue with 5–6 cars and one slow bus.
- Segment 3: a gentle S-shaped curve.
- End: “Soldier Shuttle – Northern Station” on right side with a small parking area.

Obstacles:

- 1 traffic light at main junction (red/green cycle).
- 1 pedestrian crossing near a school.
- 1 bus occasionally stopping at bus stops, slowing traffic.

3.4 Time and Scoring

- Soft time limits (shown as recommended time, not a strict failure):

- Rivka’s ride: recommended \leq 3 minutes.
- Omer’s ride: recommended \leq 3.5 minutes.
- If player takes longer:
 - Rivka: “Thank you, dear. I just hope I’m not late.” (no fail, smaller tip).
 - Omer: “No worries, I’m used to waiting.” (no fail).

4. Win / Lose Conditions

Win:

- Both passengers reach destinations.
- No pedestrian is hit.
- No more than 1 serious collision with other cars.

Lose:

- Hitting a pedestrian.
- Ignoring the red light twice (automatic fine and mission fail).

5. Difficulty Rationale

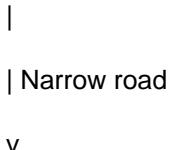
- Two rides instead of one – introduces sequence and variety.

- Traffic lights and modest traffic increase cognitive load.
- Age and mood of passengers introduce the idea of driving style affecting satisfaction.
- Still no strict countdown timer – forgiving but more demanding than Tutorial.

6. Level Diagram (Textual)

FIRST RIDE – RESIDENTIAL → CLINIC

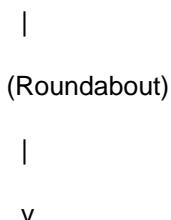
[Home Street (Start)]



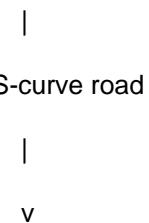
[Main Junction] --(Traffic Light)---> [Clinic Road] ---> [Hospital (End A)]

SECOND RIDE – CLINIC → SHUTTLE

[Hospital (Start B)]



[Main Avenue] ~ ~ ~ (Bus, 5–6 cars)



[Soldier Shuttle Station (End)]

4. Level 3 – Medium

1. Narrative Setup

- Time of day: rush hour in the late afternoon.
- Location: city center with business district, university campus, and beach promenade.
- Mood: more intense and dynamic – the player must handle time, traffic, and emotional conversations.

2. Player Objectives

- Complete three rides:
 - 1) Businessman in a rush.
 - 2) Stressed university student.
 - 3) Loud tourist wanting to see the beach.
- Manage basic time pressure and make thoughtful dialogue choices.

3. Detailed Content

3.1 Passenger C – “Dan, the businessman”

Profile:

- Destination: “Rothschild Offices – Tower 3”.
- Mood: stressed, in a hurry for a meeting.

Gameplay:

- Strict time recommendation: \leq 2 minutes to reach the tower.
- At the start he says: “Please, I really need to be on time!”
- At one point the GPS suggests a shortcut through a side street.

Choice example:

- On-screen decision:
 - Option 1: Take the busy but safe main road (longer, no special risk).
 - Option 2: Take the side-street shortcut (shorter but includes a police checkpoint).
- If the player takes the shortcut and speeds:
 - There is a 50% chance to be stopped by police:
"Sir, you were driving too fast in a residential area." → Fine and time loss.
- Dan's reaction depends on outcome:
 - If on time and no fine: very high tip, big Reputation gain.
 - If late or fined: small tip, Reputation loss.

3.2 Passenger D – “Noa, the stressed student”

Profile:

- Destination: “University Campus – Main Gate”.
- Mood: anxious about an exam starting soon, may cry.

Dialogue examples:

- Mid-ride:

- "What if I fail this exam? It's so important..."

- Player choices:

- 1) Encourage calmly, "You've prepared, you'll do fine." (+Reputation, +Mood)

- 2) Neutral: "I'm sure it will be okay." (neutral)

- 3) Negative: "Well, life is hard, what can you do." (-Reputation, -Mood)

Driving impact:

- If the player drives very aggressively (3 or more harsh turns or near-crashes):

- Noa: "You're making me even more nervous!" (Reputation penalty).

3.3 Passenger E – “Marco, the excited tourist”

Profile:

- Destination: "Beach Promenade – Viewpoint".

- Mood: over-excited, wants to see as much as possible.

Gameplay:

- At mid-ride junction, there are two possible routes:

- Direct route to beach (shorter, less scenic).

- Scenic route through old streets (longer, more views).

- Marco occasionally shouts: "Oh! What is that place? Can we pass there?"

- If the player chooses scenic route:

- Time to arrive increases.

- Passenger happiness increases – bigger tip if not extremely late.

3.4 Traffic, Obstacles and Systems

- Overall density: medium to high – 8–10 cars active at once in center streets.

- 2 traffic lights in series on the main road.

- One broken traffic light at a small junction – player must yield manually.

- One speed camera on a straight section (over 70 km/h triggers small fine).

4. Win / Lose Conditions

Win:

- Complete all three rides.

- No more than 2 collisions total.

- No pedestrians hit.

Extra score modifiers:

- Bonus money for arriving Dan on time.
- Bonus Reputation for calming Noa successfully.
- Bonus tip from Marco if you give him a scenic ride.

Lose:

- Hitting any pedestrian.
- 3 or more serious collisions.
- Completely ignoring a police stop event (if triggered).

5. Difficulty Rationale

- Three rides with different emotional states require flexible dialogue choices.
- First strong time pressure (businessman) teaches planning and route choice.
- Broken traffic light and speed camera add complexity to driving rules.
- Player starts feeling tension between time, safety, and passenger satisfaction.

6. Level Diagram (Textual)

CITY CENTER HUB

[City Center Roundabout]

|

| | |

[Business District] [University] [Beach Promenade]

(Passenger C end) (Passenger D end) (Passenger E end)

- Player starts at the Roundabout for each PASSENGER in sequence.
- Each branch has slightly different traffic density and obstacles.

5. Level 4 – Hard

1. Narrative Setup

- Time of day: late night turning into early morning, after a long shift.
- Location: wider city map including central square, main highway, blocked streets, and residential protest area.

- Mood: tense and demanding – the driver is tired, and the city is chaotic.

2. Player Objectives

- Complete three demanding rides in one continuous scenario:
 - 1) Mother with a baby.
 - 2) Aggressive man on a phone call.
 - 3) Quiet passenger who is actually an undercover police officer.
- Handle strict time windows, heavy obstacles, and strong behaviour reactions.

3. Detailed Content

3.1 Passenger F – “Dana, the young mother”

Profile:

- Destination: “Home – Small Apartment in Side Street D”.
- Mood: sleepy but worried about her baby.

Mechanics:

- A “Baby Calmness” bar appears on screen.
- Factors that reduce calmness:
 - Harsh braking.
 - Sudden sharp turns.
 - Crashes.
- If the Baby Calmness bar empties:
 - The baby cries loudly, Dana becomes upset: “Please, I asked for a gentle ride!” (mission fail).

Route specifics:

- Residential streets with many parked cars.
- 2 speed bumps to encourage slow driving.
- 1 unexpected cat crossing the road (scripted event).

3.2 Passenger G – “Yossi, the angry caller”

Profile:

- Destination: “Office Tower – Legal District”.
- Mood: very angry; yelling at someone on the phone for most of the ride.

Dialogue rules:

- During the ride, he shouts sentences like:
 - “This is unacceptable! I’ll sue them!”
- Sometimes turns to the driver:
 - “Do you think I’m overreacting?”
- Player choices:
 - 1) Side with him strongly – he calms slightly (+Reputation).
 - 2) Neutral answer – minimal change.
 - 3) Tell him he is overreacting – he gets angrier (-Reputation).

Driving impact:

- If the player drives too slowly, he complains: “Faster! I don’t have all night!”
- If the player drives recklessly, he shouts: “Are you trying to kill us?!”
- The key is to maintain moderate speed and avoid visible mistakes.

3.3 Passenger H – “The silent passenger” (Undercover cop)

Profile:

- No name given at start, says only: “City Center, please.”
- Mood: calm, observant, speaks little.

Hidden mechanic:

- While appearing neutral, he evaluates driving rules very strictly.
- System tracks:
 - Full stops at stop lines.
 - Respecting red lights.
 - Speed violations.
 - Yielding to pedestrians.

End revelation:

- If the player drove carefully:
 - At destination: “I’m actually a police officer. Your driving is impressive.”
 - Player receives big Reputation boost and money bonus.
- If the player broke many rules:
 - “I’m a police officer, and you have been quite reckless.”
 - Fine applied, large Reputation loss.

3.4 Routes and Obstacles

Overall flow:

- 1) Start at "Night Market Street" for Dana.
- 2) Move to "Main Square" and "Highway Entry" for Yossi.
- 3) Finally traverse "Government District" and return to "City Center Plaza" for the undercover cop.

Obstacles and events:

- Roadblock due to construction – forces detour for ride 2.
- Protest near Central Square – one side of the square is closed, forcing a longer path.
- Minor accident blocking a lane on the highway – slows traffic.
- 2 police checkpoints (for drunk-driving control) – must slow down and pass correctly.

Traffic density:

- High on highway and near protest area.
- Medium elsewhere.

4. Win / Lose Conditions

Overall win:

- Finish all three rides without hitting pedestrians.
- No more than 2 major crashes.

Level-specific failures:

- Dana: baby calmness reaches zero.
- Yossi: if the player completely ignores route hints and drives in circles for over 2 minutes – he leaves taxi angry (ride fail).
- Undercover cop: if the player runs a red light directly in front of a visible police car, immediate fail.

5. Difficulty Rationale

- Three emotionally intense passengers in one long sequence – endurance challenge.
- Many simultaneous constraints: time, traffic, special meters (Baby Calmness), and strict rule enforcement.
- Complex city map with forced detours and blocked areas.
- Encourages mastery of all mechanics introduced in earlier levels.

6. Level Diagram (Textual)

NIGHT & CITY CHAOS MAP

[Night Market Street] (Start, Dana)

|

Residential maze

v

[Mother's Home (End F)]

|

v

[Main Square] --X--> (Closed side due to protest)

|

v

[Highway Entry] ~ ~ ~ (Accident, heavy traffic)

|

v

[Legal District Tower] (End G)

|

v

[Government District] --> [City Center Plaza] (End H – undercover cop)