



Longlevens Library Code Club

Escape from the Haunted House



In the early days of home computers, adventure games were very popular with children. Players would start at a certain location and they would have to work out whether to go east, west, north, south, up, or down etc. In certain locations there would be tools such as keys, a compass and lamps to help them open doors and reveal things in the dark. Creatures would be hiding ready to pounce on the unsuspecting visitor or friendly spirits would pop up with helpful hints or cryptic clues for where best to go next.

Often these games would have no pictures, just replies by the player to descriptions of the location and a simple “what next?” question. This wasn’t because the people writing the games were lazy, it was just because the amount of memory in old home computers was tiny in comparison to a Raspberry Pi. In the game you create you will have chance to create pictures and animations.

Use your imagination to develop a game where the player must find their way out of a large country house remotely situated in the countryside. The building is uninhabited by people, without electricity or gas supplies and no connections to the outside world such as telephones and the Internet. The player must work out how to find the way out, avoiding ghosts that haunt the building and nocturnal creatures in the woods surrounding it. Their struggle to escape ends when they find a place of friendly refuge or a form of transport to take them back into normal civilisation.

Requirements

1. Place the player at the start in a room on the top floor of the house after night has fallen. Remember they have no way of communicating with the outside world for help until they reach the safe point.
2. The house shall have at least 4 floors (eg attic, bedrooms, ground floor and cellars). A stairway that leads to the next floor up or down must be available on each floor.
3. The house must have at least 2 hidden passageways or doorways which may lead the player along, up or down the house but connect only 2 rooms each. Use clues to give the player information where to find the doorways.
4. Include ghosts or other evil spirits that reside somewhere on each floor. They can appear at random or to guard rooms you don’t want the player to enter. Set the player a time limit to escape to another room or include a tool that the player can find somewhere which enables them to repel the ghosts away and pick up whatever they were guarding.
5. Include at least 1 friendly mythical creature that will help the player move a step closer to safety.
6. The safe point outside the woods where the game ends shall be reachable in no more than 5 moves after leaving the house. (It could of course take longer if the player makes the wrong moves but don’t make it too long.)
7. The player will need to find food and drink to survive, so set time or energy limits and make snacks and water available at various points in the house and surrounding woods.

Hints & Tips

1. You will find it easier to limit the player to a small range actions to perform. Eg “Go left”, “Pick up <item>”, “Go north”, “Lamp on”, “drink water”. Ensure these are listed as options when the player responds with “help”.
2. Offer a selection of questions for the player to choose from whenever the player needs to ask something.
3. You do not have to create a picture to depict every room. Try to include some but do include drawings of things like maps and other visual aids that may help guide the player. Remember that unless the player has found a lamp of some sort, the rooms will be in black darkness. (Use the darkness to create spooky animations such as a ghost appearing.)
4. Decide on what the player must possess to leave the house and escape safely. For example, if the safe point is a mode of public transport they must have enough money for the fare. They may need a torch and map to navigate through the woods. You can offer items of no actual purpose and limit the amount the player can carry to make their choice of what to pick up a little bit more difficult.

Additional

Make the game have multiple correct ways of escaping so that no 2 games are identical. Maybe start the game with the player in different rooms of the house and randomise where the tools and spirits are to be found.