Program documentation:

This program is a Visual Novel engine implemented in the DOS Console environment.

[A Visual Novel is a genre of game where the user follows a story, usually displayed via text boxes and character sprites. At certain points of the story, the user will be prompted to make a decision or answer a question. After they provide input, the story will alter based on their choice.]

The program uses two pre-made files and creates a third.

The first file used is the Episode 1.visnov file. This file contains the dialogue of the story. The program will run until it reaches the end of the dialogue file, then it will close.

The format of each line of dialogue is as follows:

{CHAR NAME}|{LINE1}|{LINE2}|{LINE3}|{ARTCODE}

CHAR NAME: Name of character “speaking”. Can be left blank if dialogue displayed is not being spoken such as dialogue describing a setting.

LINE 1,2,3: Actual lines of dialogue. Each line can hold 78 characters. Lines cannot have more than 78 characters or glitches will occur.

ARTCODE: references the line number for the ASCII art to be displayed with the dialogue. Must be a multiple of 38.

The second file used is the Art.ascii file.

The format of the art.ascii file is several 38x80 character pieces of ascii art with the art broken into 38 lines.

The file that the game creates is the Save.game file. It generates this file whenever the player saves the game. It has the following syntax:

{LINE NUMBER}

{HP}

{CHOICE1}|{CHOICE2}|{CHOICE3}

LINE NUMBER: This number is the last line that the player was on when they saved. Upon loading, the payer will be on the next line of dialogue.

HP: This is the player’s health upon saving.

CHOICE1,2,3:This keeps track of the choices the player makes during the game.

Most of the programming problems that were ran into during production was related to reading the dialogue file and handling user input.

Bugs such as:

* Not displaying art/dialogue correctly
* Handling QUESTION, CHOICE, RANDOM and other inline dialogue commands poorly.
* Syncing selections and appropriate dialogue trees.

These bugs were ran into frequently but were squashed eventually.  
Testing for bugs was a simple process of running through the story and watching for bad output. Occasionally giving bad input was used to test error trapping.

Bugs that continue to persist:

* Saving during a question, choice, or dialogue tree is impossible.
* Only the most recent player choice can be implemented.
* Game saves must be deleted or manually altered if they are “bad”.
* Potentially others, but not found yet.

These bugs cannot be fixed in a timely manner and do not currently hinder gameplay as long as user follows instructions in user manual.