

Testing plan for all aboard

Testing session 1: 18/11/2021

What we're testing:

How well we communicate different characters to the player

Who initially the player thinks did it - inspector sands, lady mortimer, the conductor, not enough info(?)

How will people access it?

Upload to itch.io.

Send everyone a link to it to try out/have it open on a pc for in-person testing.

How are we collecting data?

2 part approach

- Google form with a mix of questions to collect both quantitative data (with multiple choice and likert scales) and qualitative data (short written responses)
- Screen record PC in labs to analyze player input

What do we want to find from our testing?

- How do players make their choices, and what are people most likely to pick?
- Do we communicate our characters well even with a limited slice of interaction?
- Is a mix of dialogue and actions good?
- How easy is it for players to navigate the story and get the information they want
- Is the writing style/story delivery effective?

Results

Data from forms.

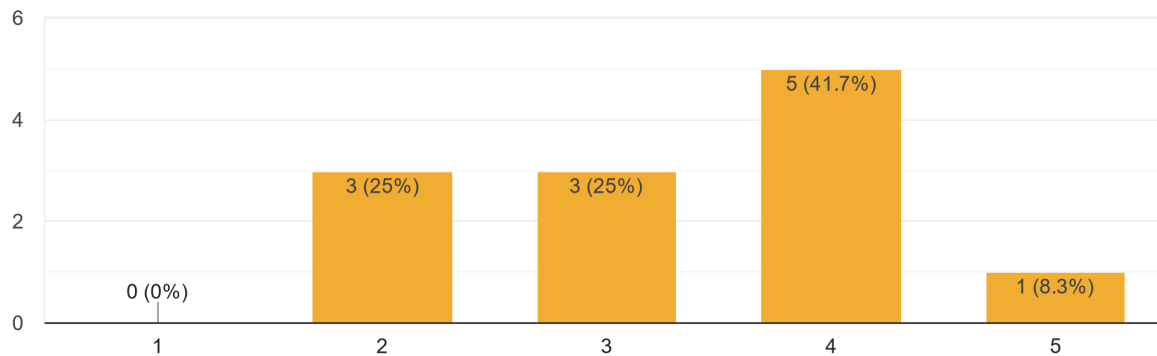
Likert scale data

1 = completely disagree

5 = completely agree

I understood how to navigate my options in order to talk to everyone and progress the story.

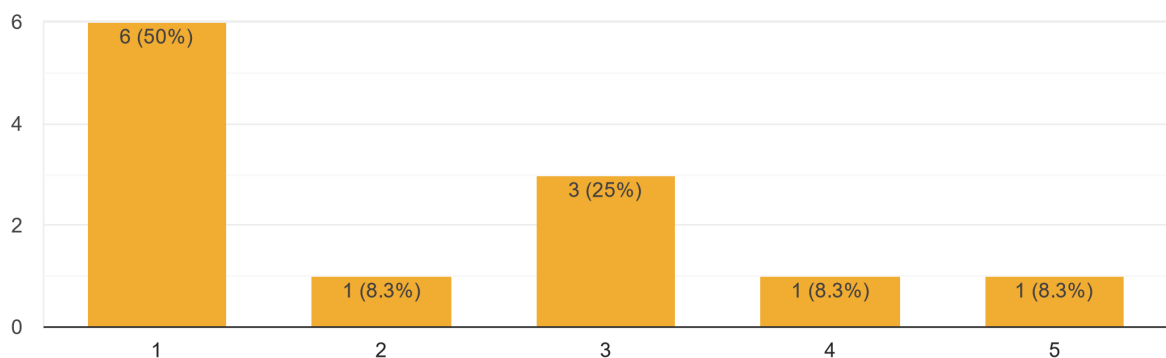
12 responses



1. People generally found navigation okay, but responses were mixed. This is in line with what we were expecting, this being a text-only demo. This supports our decision to add a world you can walk around in order to interact with characters, as it should make it more obvious how to talk to different characters and progress the story.

I found it hard to tell who I was talking to at any given point.

12 responses



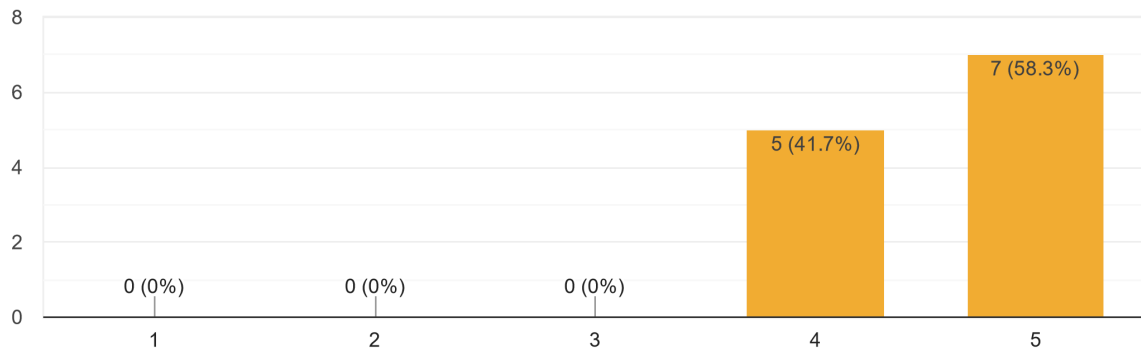
2.

Around half of people found it easy to know who they were talking to at a given point. This is encouraging, because the text only demo only mentions the character you're talking to at the top of each interaction, so we can deduce that the dialogue is unique enough to be able to tell which character you're talking to. However, the other half of people struggled with this. For our final implementation we'll have character art

that goes alongside the dialogue to make it clearer who is speaking.

The different characters have distinct voices and personalities.

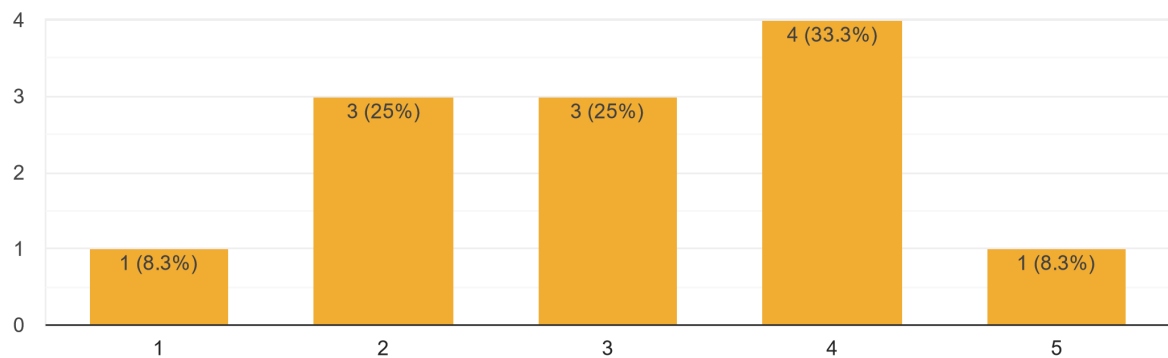
12 responses



3. Users thought the characters all ‘talked’ distinctly, which is important for a character driven game. We will continue to develop our characters and their dialogue, but will keep a lot of the core personality traits that make them memorable to players.

It isn't clear how to navigate the game in order to talk to everyone and get the information I need.

12 responses

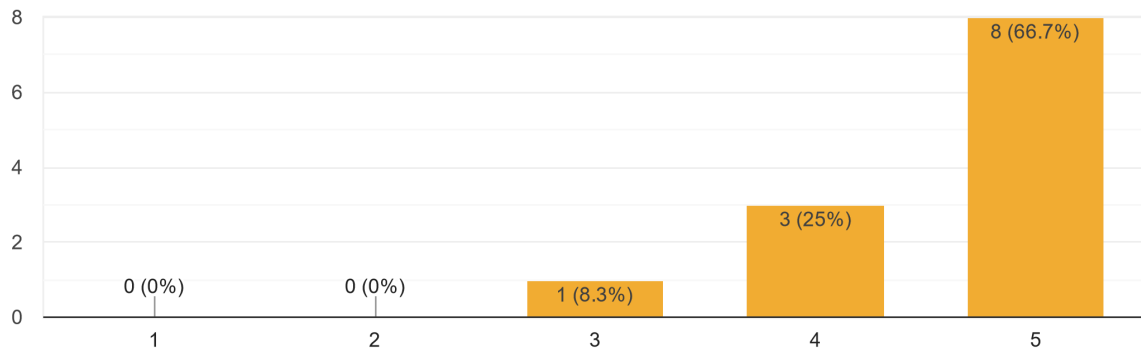


4. Responses on how to talk to everyone and get information was mixed. This question was written purposely as an inverse of question 1 to avoid bias. The results are similar, so this also supports our plan to add

visuals and a world to explore to help ground the game and make navigation more intuitive.

I had enough information about the characters to be comfortable accusing someone.

12 responses

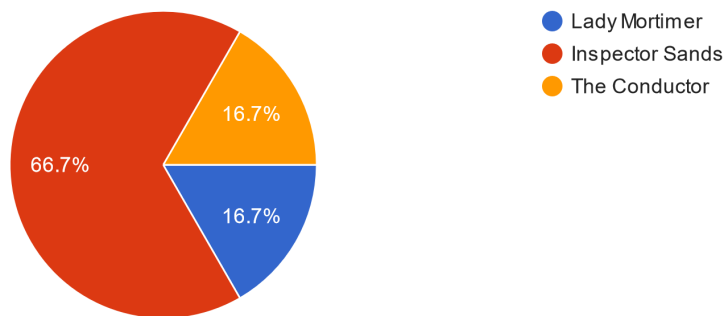


5. Players generally felt that they had enough information to accuse someone at the end of the game. This is positive given how small our demo dialogue was, as we focused more on characters than narrative. Because our final implementation will include a greater amount of branching dialogue, we can be fairly confident that players will feel they get a suitable enough of information each loop.

Player choices results

Who did you interrogate first?

12 responses

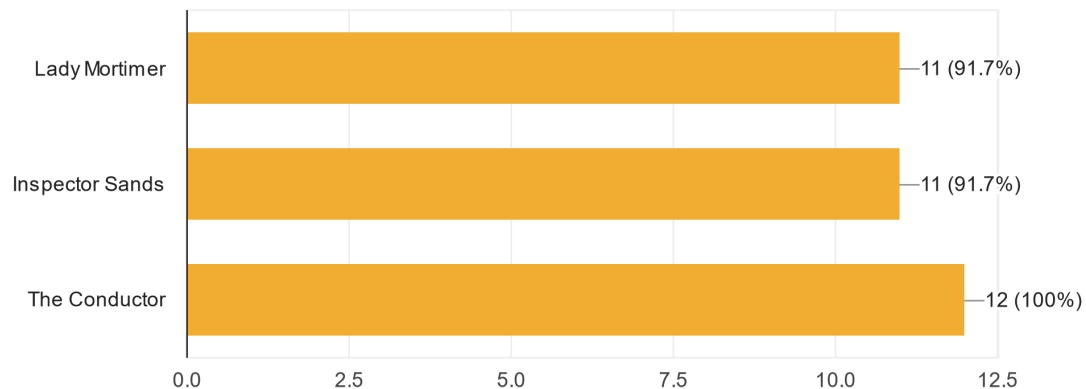


1. The majority of players interrogated the Inspector first, as expected, because his name appeared first on the list. Going forward to a more world-based implementation where players move around the train to interact with NPCs, we should keep this in mind - players are likely to talk to the closest people first. This means we should place the NPCs thoughtfully around the carriage, with those we want player to interact with first

placed closer to the players starting point.

Who did you interrogate before making an accusation? (select all that apply)

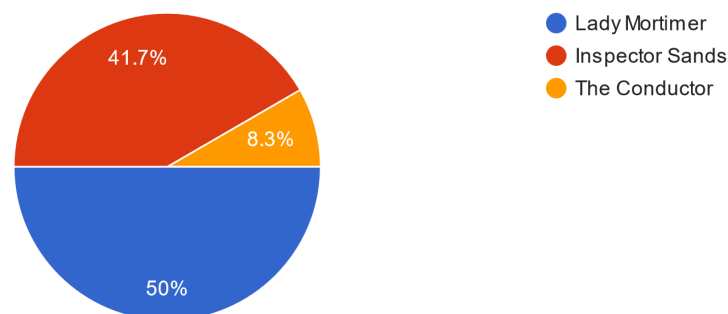
12 responses



- Nearly all testers talked to all of the characters before accusing someone. For this demo, that means they had access to all of the information available in their first run before making that choice. In order to make the game replayable and unique every time, we need to stop players from being able to access all of this information in one go. We will achieve this by limiting the amount of interactions the player can have per loop, so they have to replay and talk to different people in different orders each time in order to gather new information.

Who did you accuse?

12 responses



- Half of the testers correctly guessed the murderer! This is a good sign for the demo, because they identified the clues we laid out in our dialogue. However, similarly to question 2, we need to ensure the game is replayable, in which case we don't want players to get it right straight away. We'll achieve this by fleshing out our characters more fully and giving all of them a secret for the player to uncover - this way, everyone is suspicious and the player will have to find out more information in order to understand who did it.

Short answer questions

In a few words, how would you describe the character Inspector Sands? 12 responses

- suspicious, short, confrontational
- Incapable and arrogant
- Something slightly creepy about him, I also didn't like that he questioned my ability to investigate the murder
- As an inspector, had a VERY vague description for the event, almost an unprofessional approach about it. But the level of detail in about being a P.I. was overboard and irrelevant
- An over-sensitive detective wannabe.
- Overly self-confident
- Posh, well to do waist coat kind of guy
- Bit of a douche, washed up, full of him self
- Bumbling idiot of a man who has obviously failed upwards his whole life xD
- An idiot, though I had a thought that it could possibly be an act, but his behavior around the case was too pure and kind of sad for a simple act.
- Shady, incompetent at his job, bit vain?
- P.I guy who is clearly way out of his depth

In a few words, how would you describe the character Lady Mortimer? 12 responses

- distracted, offended
- Eccentric and dramatic
- Pretty weird, as she talked about her bird as if it was a person, but I did apologize to the bird. Her motive seemed to obvious at the time
- Good but with one major problem. I did not know she alleged to leave the dining cart first, but after I accuse her, my text as the investigator says that her alibi doesnt match up because she said she left first, but the inspector left first.
- Also over-sensitive but far more-so. High-and-mighty/pretentious.
- less than sane
- festhers, tacky makeup from the 50's, flowery dresses with vibrant colours. White hair, styled hard.
- Eccentric, a little mad, hairtrigger about bord
- Amazing, batty
- Hard to read, but the hint of resentment from mocking her bird helped fortify my opinion of her being a sly old lady.
- old mad lady/countess of some mansion, obsessive with bird,
- Crazy cat lady, but with birds and only one of them

In a few words, how would you describe the character The Train Conductor 12 responses

- defensive, proud, regretful
- Loveable train nerd
- Loved his train, probably a bit too much. I didn't quite get his speech patterns.
- funny use of intercom i liked it
- An honest, hard-working man.
- likeable
- an intercom - but I wears a train conductor uniform
- Mysterious, strange, pleasant to talk to
- Cool, calm, collected
- Sweet innocent boy. Liked the intercom cutting out, could be interesting depending on what's cut...
- Northern, working class, likes his job
- Professional bloke who really loves his train

What did you like about this demo? 12 responses

- the characterisation was really good and each individual felt distinct, I can tell that when you have to flesh out a full cast each will feel distinct and enjoyable to interact with. Ink is a good choice of technology as it nicely shows off the work you have done.
- DARK MODE and the characters were lovely
- Easy to use, great example of the the ideas of the final game
- clean and easy to scroll back through all text said
- I enjoyed the setting and how clear it was in my mind. Despite my initially getting it wrong, I found my mistake and was satisfied with who the true culprit was.
- Despite the small number, characters are varied.
- I enjoyed the stories. I think there is the right amount of information here
- The characters where great to talk to, really felt like a solid short story
- I like how well the voices came through in the character
- MURDUH MYSTEREEEE! Characters are really well written, several options available all make sense, and their dialogue changes to fit previous options which is awesome.
- the dynamic characters, presentation, being able to scroll up to dialogue
- I like how the game encourages you to read between the lines and think about what each character is saying before making an accusation

What didn't you like about this demo?11 responses

- n/a
- I feel there wasn't necessarily enough information to be able to correctly accuse someone, OR I didnt have the information accessible in a way that less me assess the information I had recieved
- A lack of ability to reference people's alibis
- the major plot hole
- There really isn't much that I disliked. The only suggestion for improvement I have is adding a small amount more to base the accusation upon. A single alibi discrepancy is arguably not quite enough to go on. (This is regardless of me initially getting it wrong).
- N/A
- It seemed like some of the options for talking became locked
- Some of the choices seemed a little out of place. The main clue that leads onto Lady Mort, the alibi issue, wasn't obvious to me. Maybe having some way of taking notes for major notes?
- Not knowing that some dialogue options were unique (ie couldn't go back to ask them). Indication of such questions/answers would be nice
- Slight plot hole: When accusing Lady Mortimer, the detective states that she said that she left the dining car first, but when you ask her: She never says anything about leaving first.

Any further comments?10 responses

- <3
- Wonderful idea and adorable execution. Can't wait to see more.
- Looking forward to seeing the final project with some visuals, a note book with easily accessible info that I've already discovered would be super helpful as my memory is terrible. This would also save me scrolling through loads of text.
- no
- Not beyond what has been said.
- No
- I was not aware of how much info I need to track so perhaps I need a pen an paper
- I love the bird, the bird is the best, all hail the bird. Very exited to see this in a full game
- Very gud, much fun. Characters are all well written and unique. Maybe try not to have the "interrogations" so linear? able to switch between who you talk to and come back later with new info? Hopefully you plan on this. Either way, awesome

- I think that the option to accuse the suspect should not be made available until every suspect has been spoken to. By having it available right off the bat, there is the risk of players being able to effectively speedrun the game and complete it on the third playthrough by process of elimination (assuming that the first two attempts involved you accusing two different people) as opposed to the player winning the game by going through the proper process of interrogating all suspects and having all the information in front of them to read through before they make an accusation.

Findings from Short Answer questions

- Players liked our characters! Many of the descriptions given by players matches the ideas we had when we wrote them, showing that our dialogue portrayed them accurately. We will continue to develop these same core characters.
- People found the world engaging and easy to imagine - great feedback for a word-only demo. Adding graphics will make it easier for everyone to be able to put themselves in the world like this, and become absorbed in the game.
- Multiple people said they struggled to keep track of information in their heads. While it may not be possible for our first release, an MAP feature we will add will be a notebook which keeps track of key information discovered by the player.
- "Maybe try not to have the "interrogations" so linear? able to switch between who you talk to and come back later with new info?" - someone suggested our exact plan! This confirms that our branching dialogue plan with greater interaction will improve gameplay and experience for the users.