PICK-A-PATH MANUAL

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1.0   General Information

The general information section of the manual presents a general overview of the program and the organization of this manual.

1.1   Software Overview

The main goal of Pick-A-Path is to have an adaptive environment molded by user decisions in order to experience basic story game development. This software provides a platform for you to make logical decisions to create a text-based game. This can be used to make a number of different possible outcomes for your game. You will have two different modes to develop their game, a editor mode and a player mode, to make this software as user-friendly as possible.

In the editor mode, you can start by creating boxes, which will represent the scenarios that you want to incorporate into your story. An arrow connects two boxes (scenarios) by representing the option that would take the player from the first box to the second. In this manner, you can create as many boxes as you would like and connect them with a logical flow.

In the player mode, the player will be presented with the scenario and the options. According to the option selected, the player is going to be taken to the next scenario and so on till the end of the game.

1.2   Organization of the Manual

This manual is organized into four parts: General Information, System Summary, Getting Started and Using the Software.

General Information explains the purpose of the software and provides information about the manual.

System Summary provides an overview of the system's hardware and software requirements, user access levels and the system's behavior during any contingencies.

Getting started explains how to run the software in order to use it. It summarizes the features of the system menu and introduces the two modes of game development provided by the software.

Using the software explains in detail how to work with Pick-A-Path to create games. It explains every feature of the system and how to use it for game development.

2.0   System Summary

2.1   System Configuration

Pick-A-Path will operate only on Desktop or Laptop computers; it currently will not support mobile devices. It will be coded and run using primarily Java.
The hardware needed for the game should not be very demanding. You will need to meet the minimum hardware requirements to run our software:
- CPU: Intel Core i3-3210 3.2 GHz / AMD A8-7600 APU 3.1 GHz or equivalent
- RAM: 2GB
- GPU (Integrated): Intel HD Graphics 4000 (Ivy Bridge) or AMD Radeon R5 series (Kaveri line) with OpenGL 4.4*
- HDD: At least 1GB for game core and other files

The basic software requirement for this software would be a computer that can run java and is installed with a java editor that can run the program.

2.2   User Access Levels

Everyone who wishes to create a text-based game can use this software.

2.3   Contingencies

In case of power outages, the software just retains the most recent saved memory of the game file and does not auto-save. The software does not require an Internet connection in order to be used.

3.0 Getting Started

3.1 Running the program

Pick-A-Path can be accessed by obtaining a java program file. This file can be run on any java editorial platform to launch the software. You can access all the features available through the system without a User Id or password.

3.2 System Menu

The System Menu consists of two items: File and Mode.

The File Option consists of the following options shown in the figure below:

- The New Project option creates a new .pap file for creating a new game.
- The Open Project option allows you to access and edit an existing .pap file from your computer.
- The Save option saves the file you are currently working on.
- The Exit option allows you to exit the application.
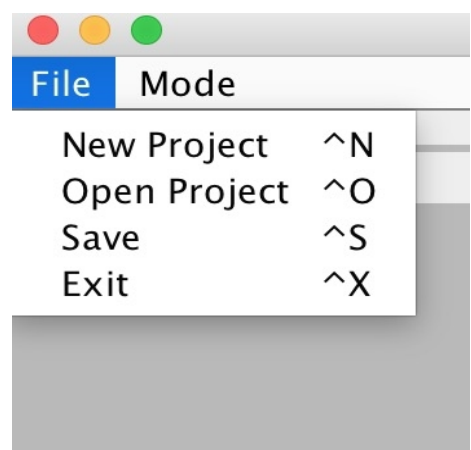
Shortcuts displayed in Mac OS
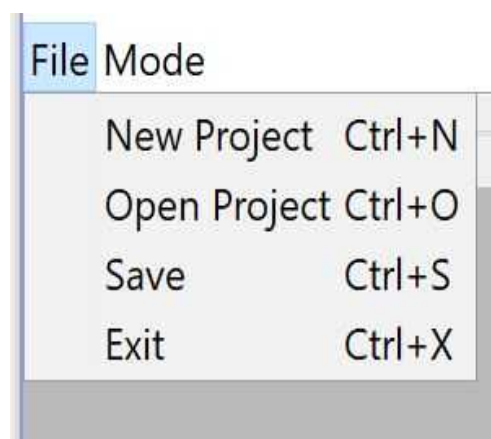
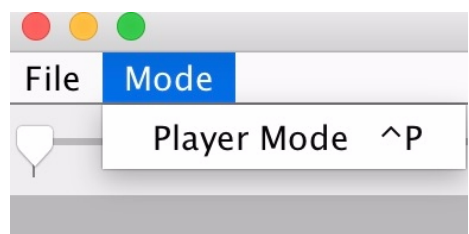**Shortcuts displayed in Windows**

3.3   Two Modes of the program

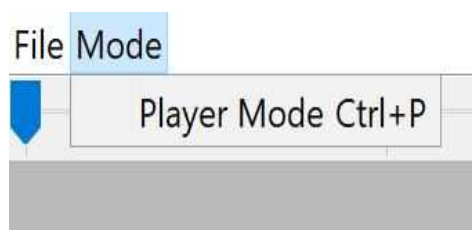There are two modes of the program: The Editor Mode and the Player Mode.

The software is in editor mode by default. To enter playing mode, follow the following instructions:

- You can save the file that you are working on in the editor mode or open an existing file from the computer.

- Select the player mode from the system menu

- A new window will appear with the game for the player.

(Check section 4.2 for instruction on how to play the game.)

Shortcut displayed in Mac OS   **Shortcut displayed in Windows**

4.0   Using the Software

4.1   Editor Mode

The Editor mode of Pick-A-Path is where the game is created. This section explains all the features of the system and how they can be used to create a game.
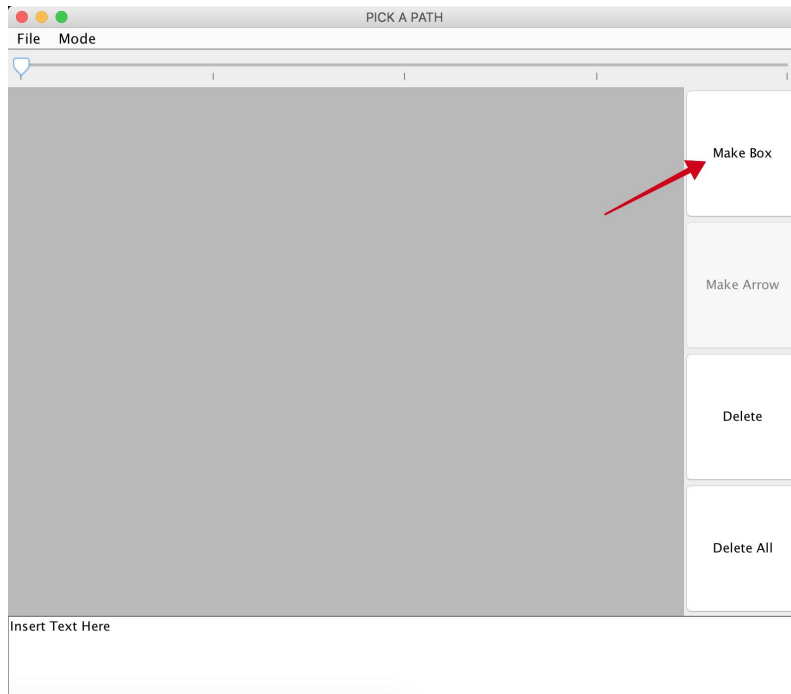
4.1.1 Canvas

The figure below shows the starting window of the software. The grey area is known as the Canvas and it is where the game is created.
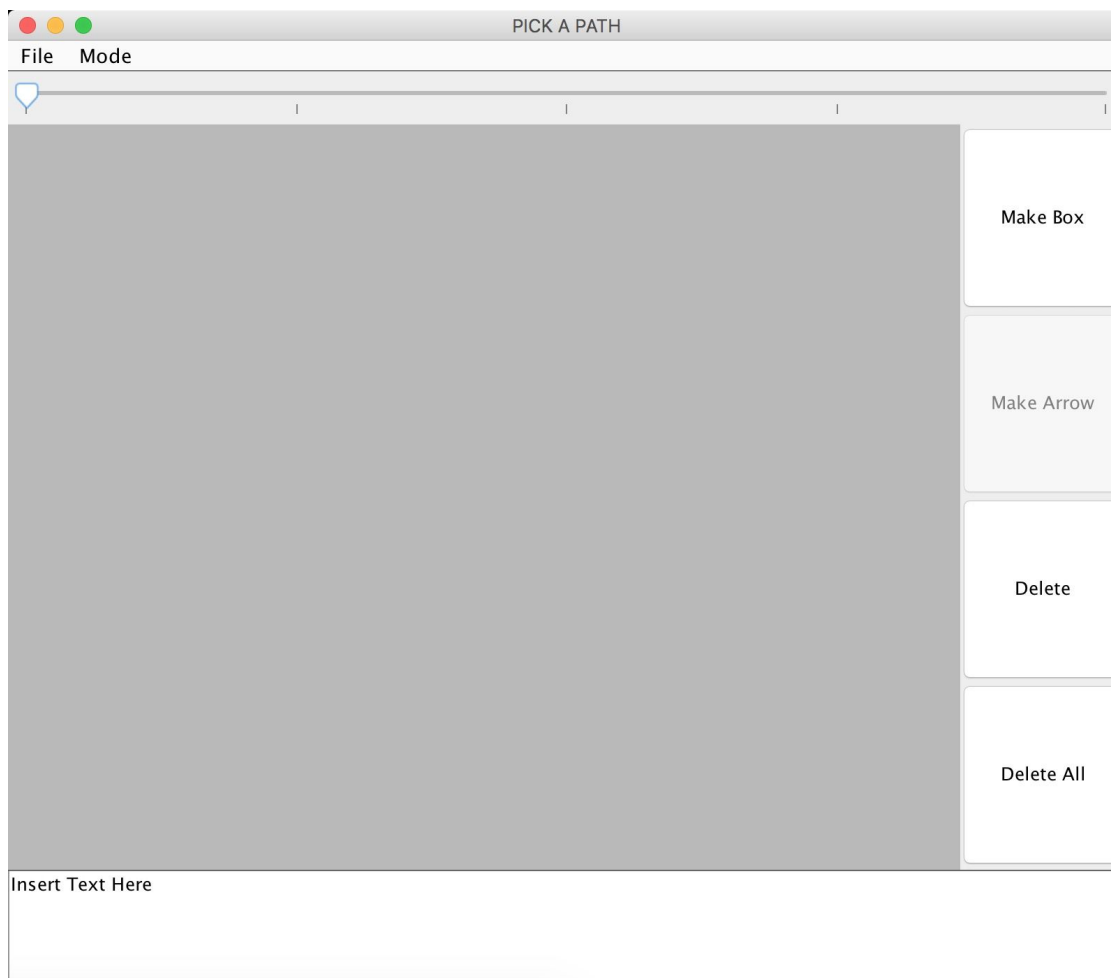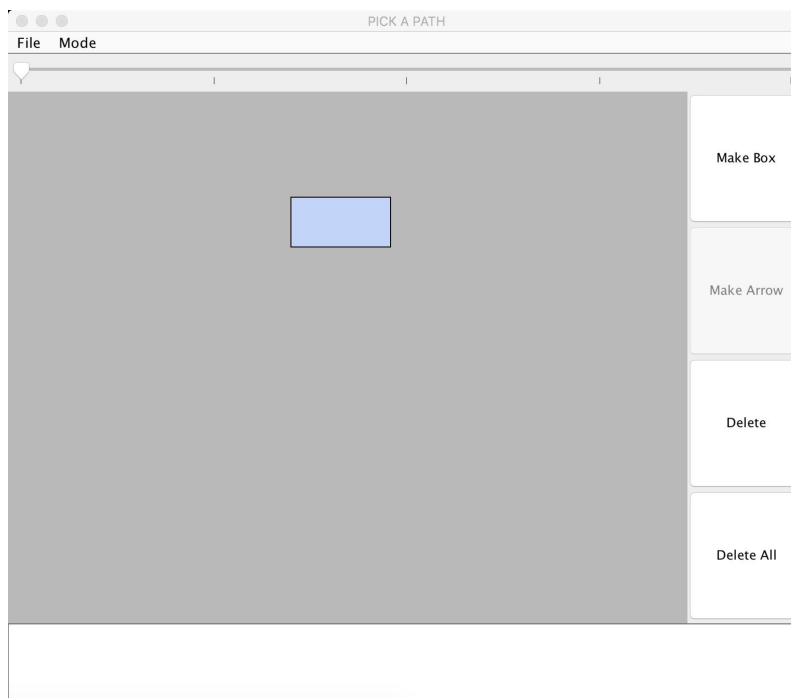
4.1.2 Make a Box

The boxes in Pick-A-Path represent the scenarios that you want to create. Follow the following steps to create a box.

Step 1: Click on the Make Box Button

You will see a box created on the Canvas each time you click the "Make Box" Button.

4.1.3 Select a Box

A box can be selected by clicking on the box. A selected box is going to appear in a darker shade of blue as compared to the rest of the boxes.
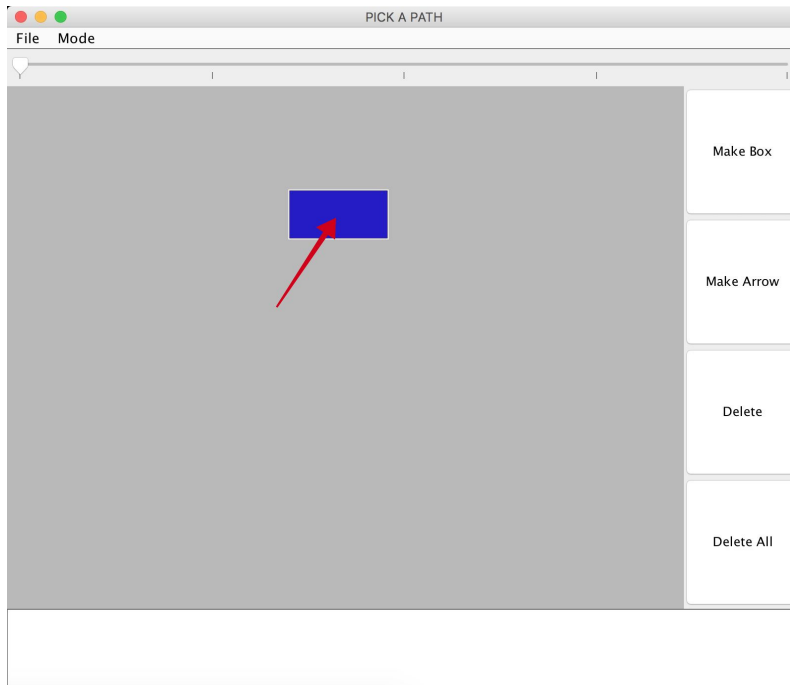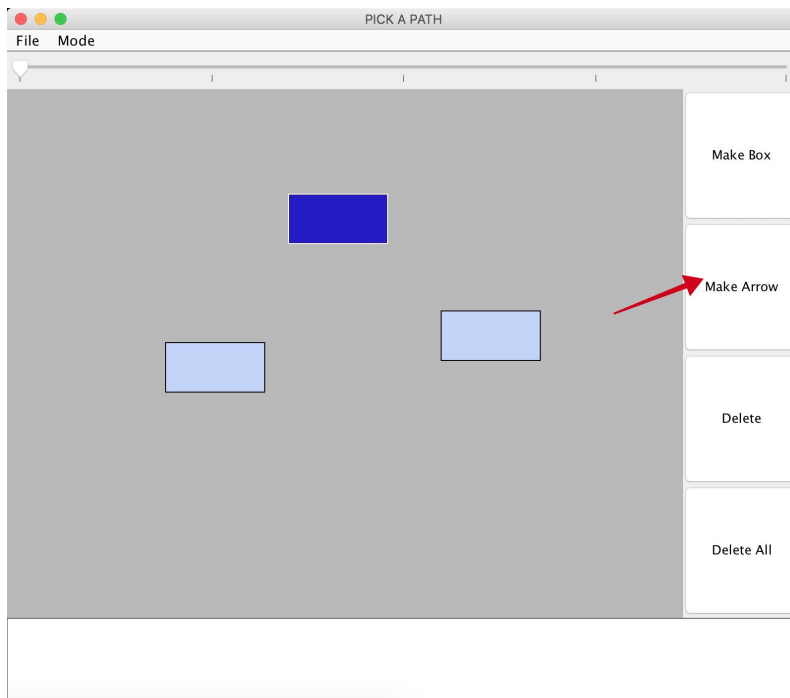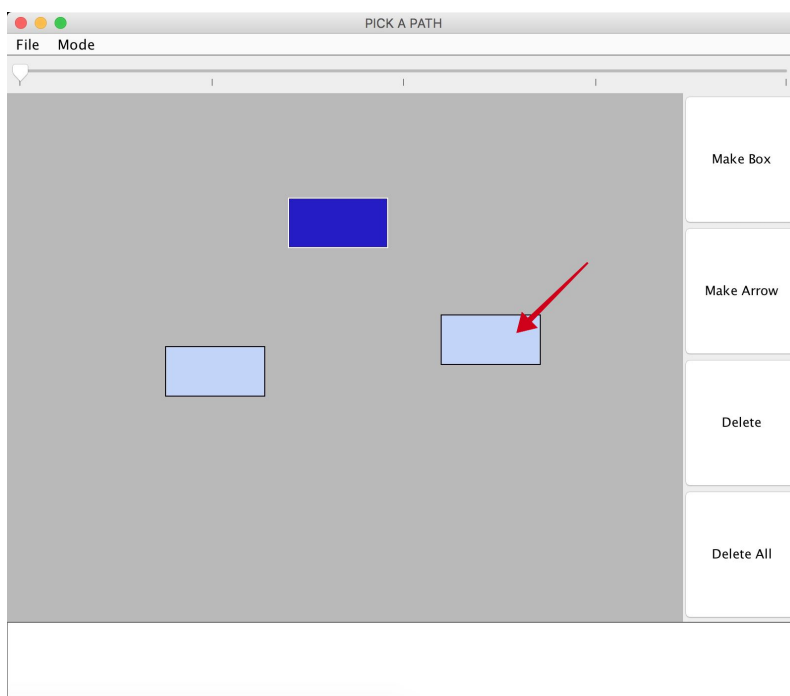

4.1.4 Make an Arrow

The Arrows allow the boxes to be connected in a logical flow. These arrows represent options, to move forward from one scenario (box) to another. Follow the following steps in order to make an arrow.
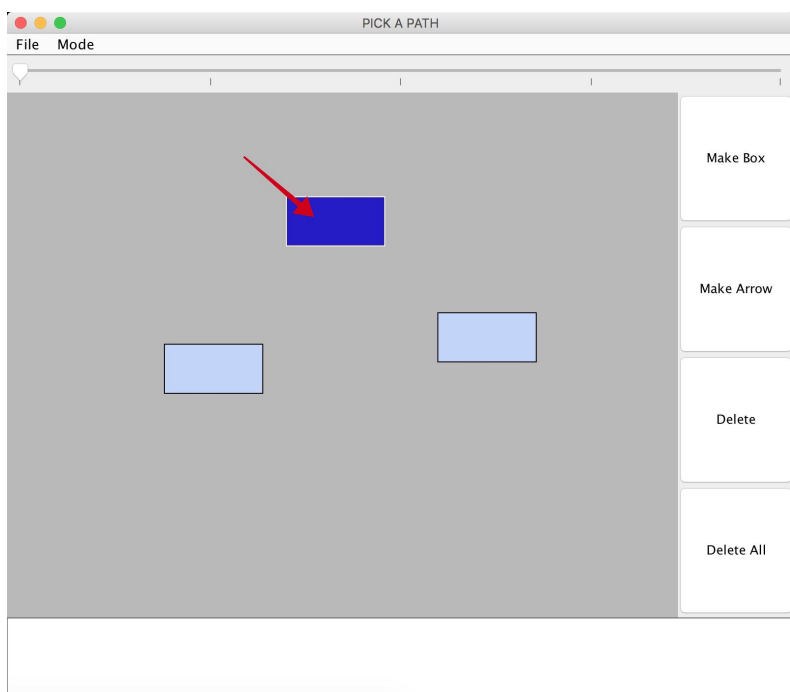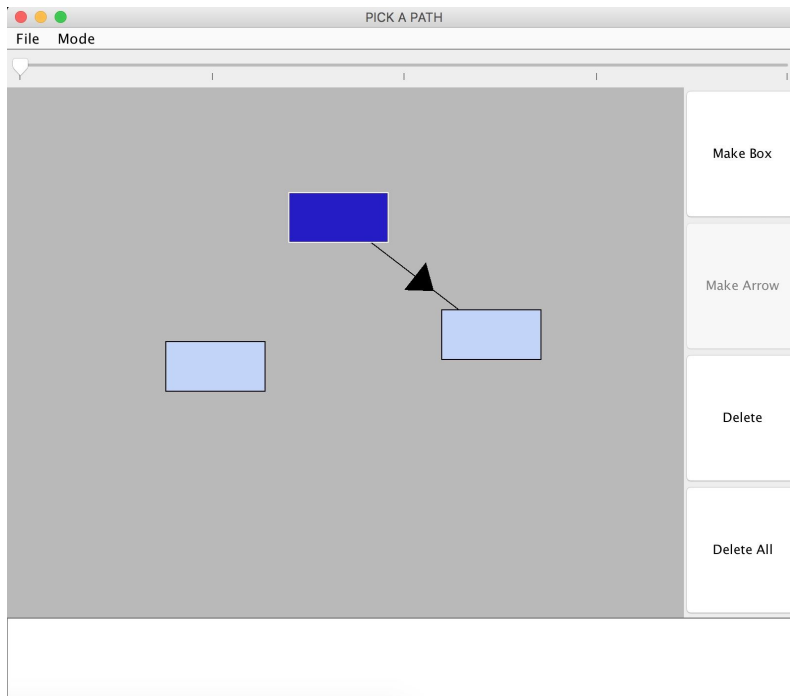

Step 1: Select the box from where the arrow needs to originate.

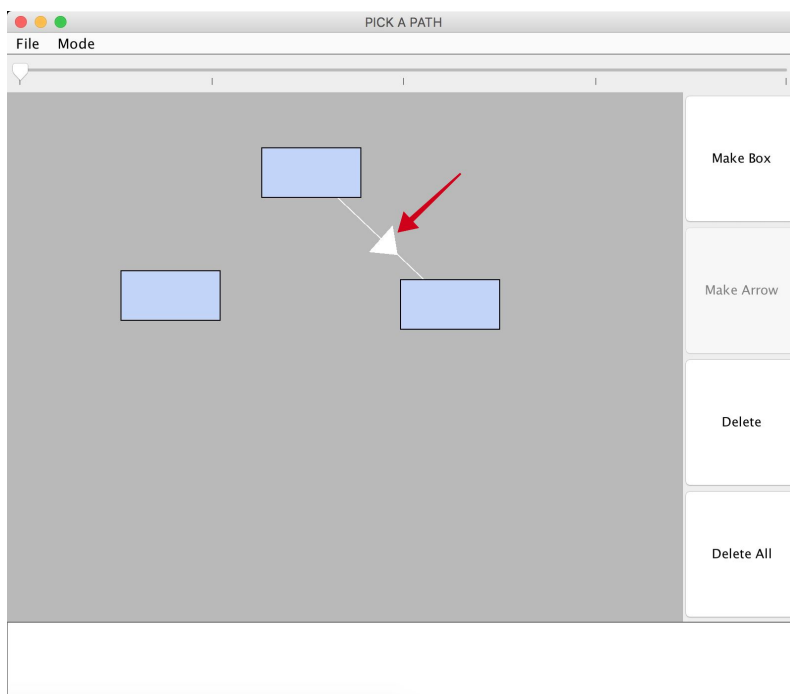Step 2: Click on the Make Arrow Button

Step 3: Select the box that the arrow needs to connect to.

You will be able to see the arrow connecting the two boxes.

4.1.5 Select an Arrow

An Arrow can be selected by clicking on the arrow. A selected arrow is going to appear white in color as opposed to all the black arrows.

4.1.6 Add text to box and arrow

After knowing how to create boxes and arrows, you can start creating your own game. The story that needs to be told is presented in the form of text in the boxes and arrows. The texts in the boxes are the scenarios and the texts in the arrows are the options to move from one scenario to another. You click on the respective box or arrow, and add text in the white space available at the bottom of the window for each of them. While the text for the boxes is represented in each box, the text in the arrows is shown as options in the player mode.
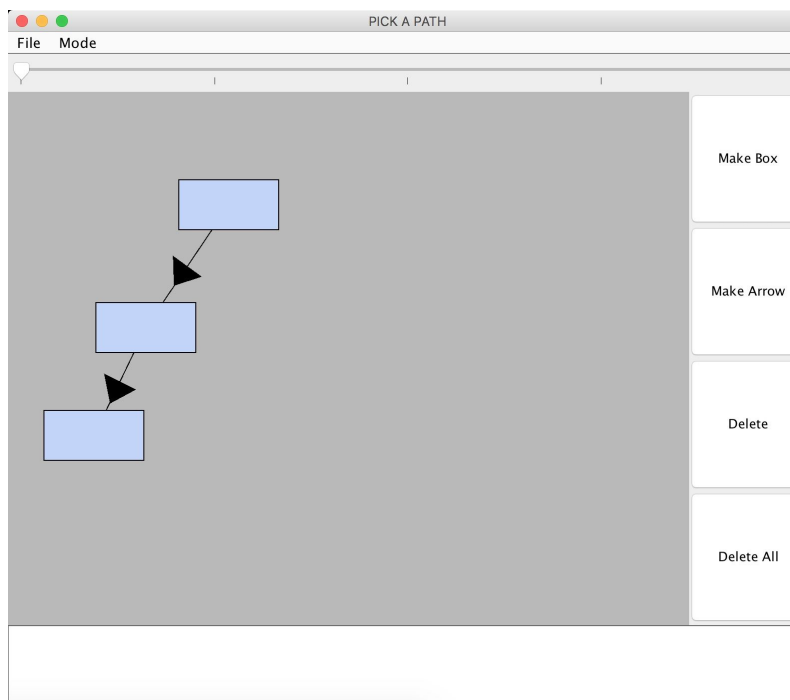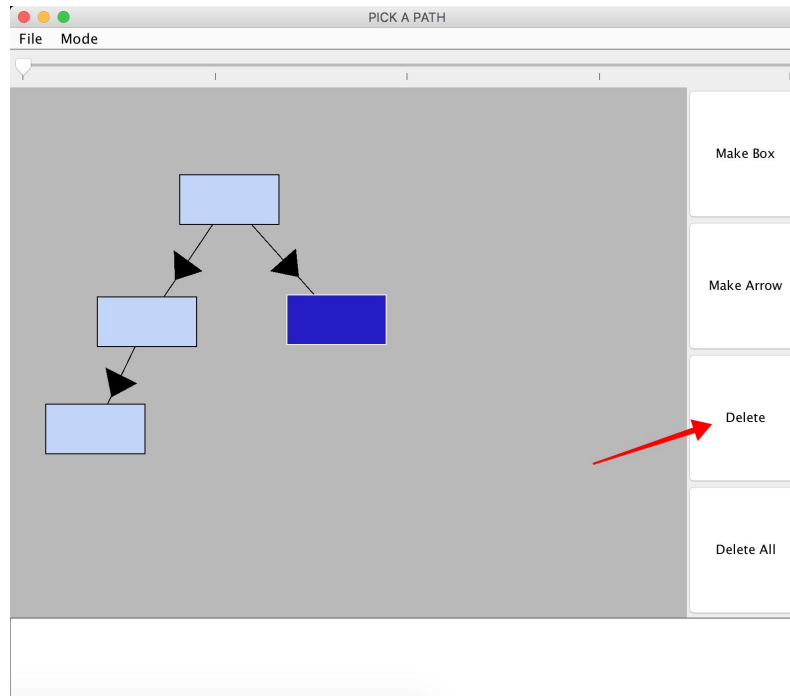
Each box and arrow needs to represent some form of text.
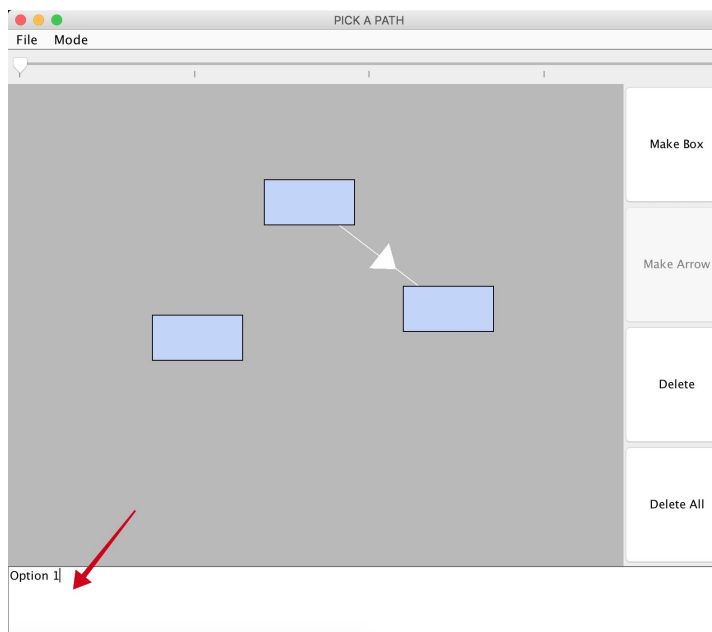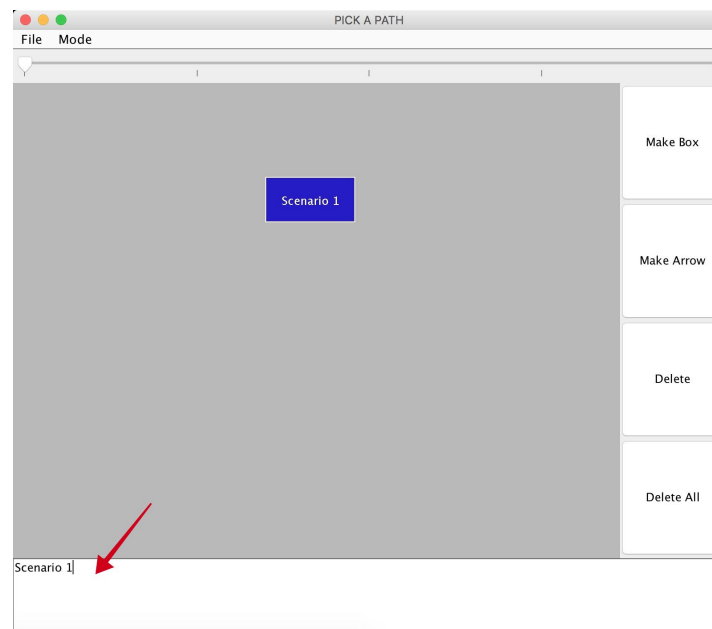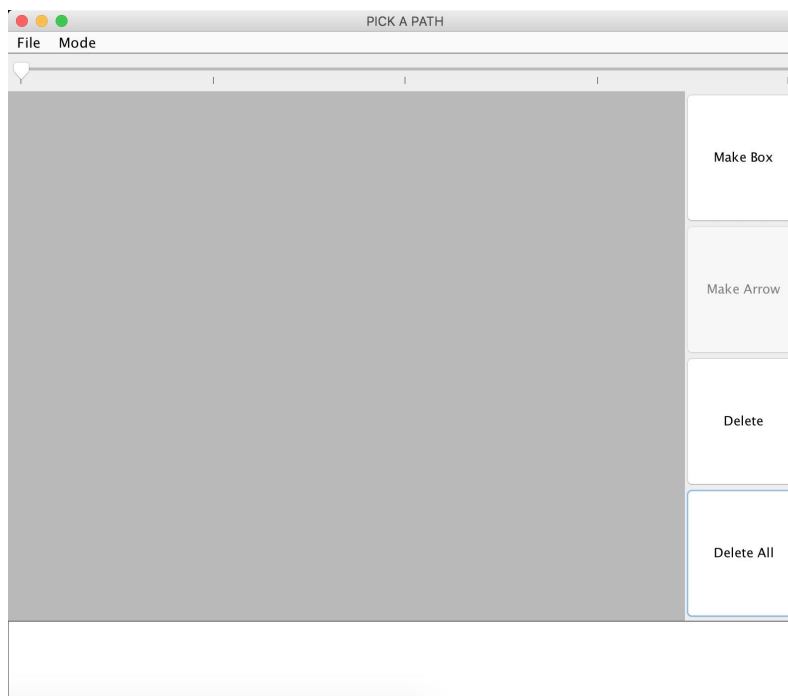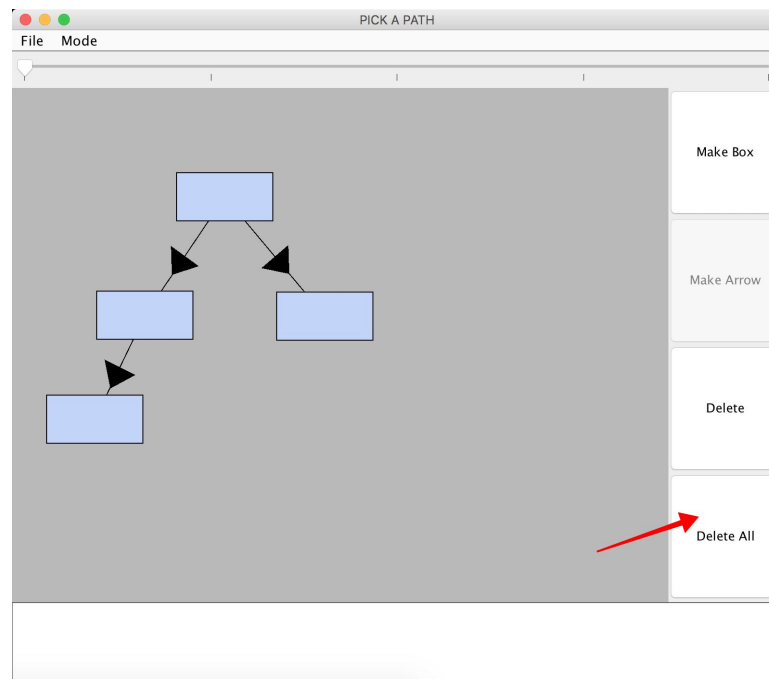
4.1.7 Delete

To delete a box or an arrow, you need to select the respective item and click on delete.
When the delete button is used for an arrow, it only deletes an arrow. However, when the delete button is used for a box, it deletes the box along with all the incoming arrows to the box.
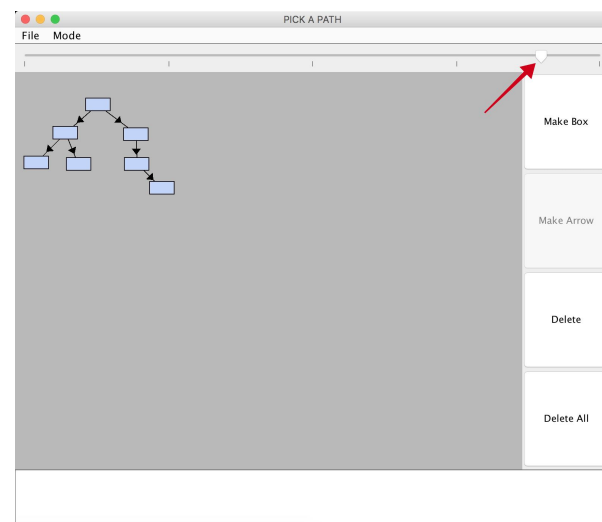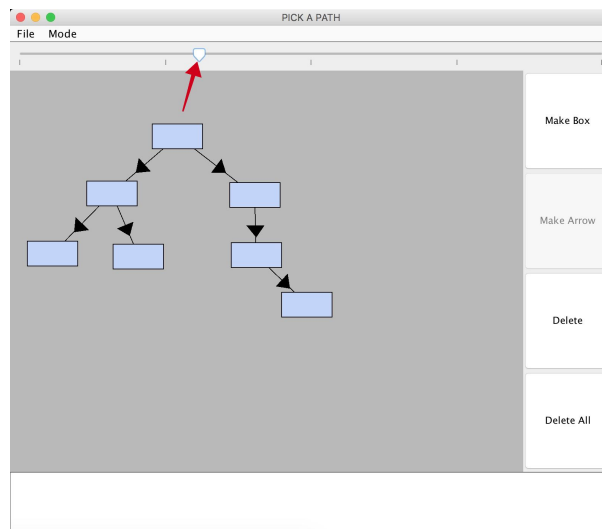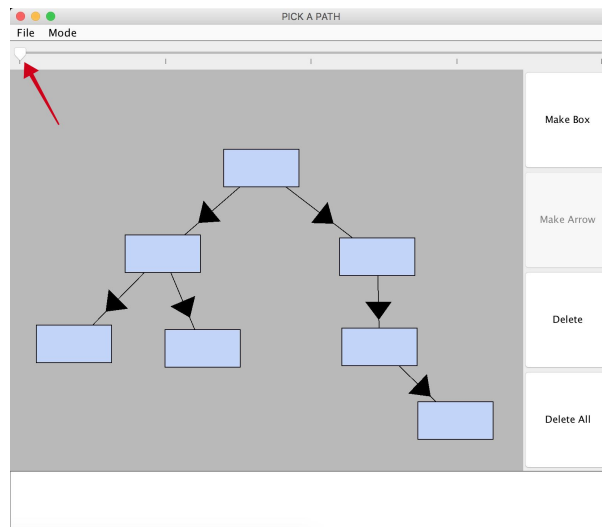
4.1.8 Delete All

The Delete All button clears the entire game once in for all.

4.1.9 Slider

The top of the window contains a slider that can zoom in and out to get an overall or specific view of the game.
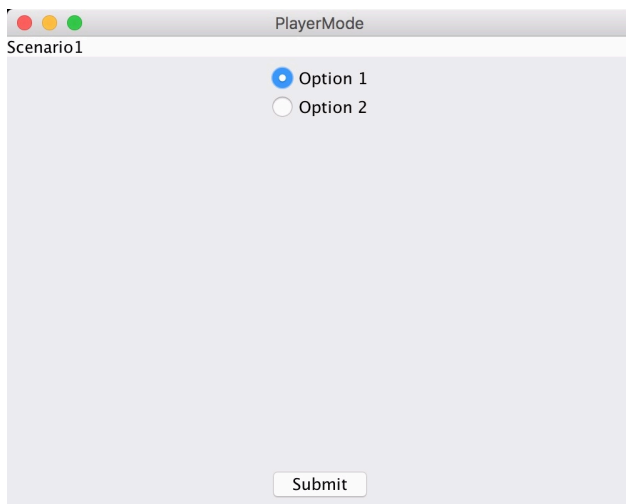
4.2   Player Mode

The Player Mode in Pick-A-Path is where you can play the game. The figures below show how the same game looks in the editor mode and the player mode. By clicking on the radio button next to the option that you want, you are going to be directed towards different scenarios in the game.
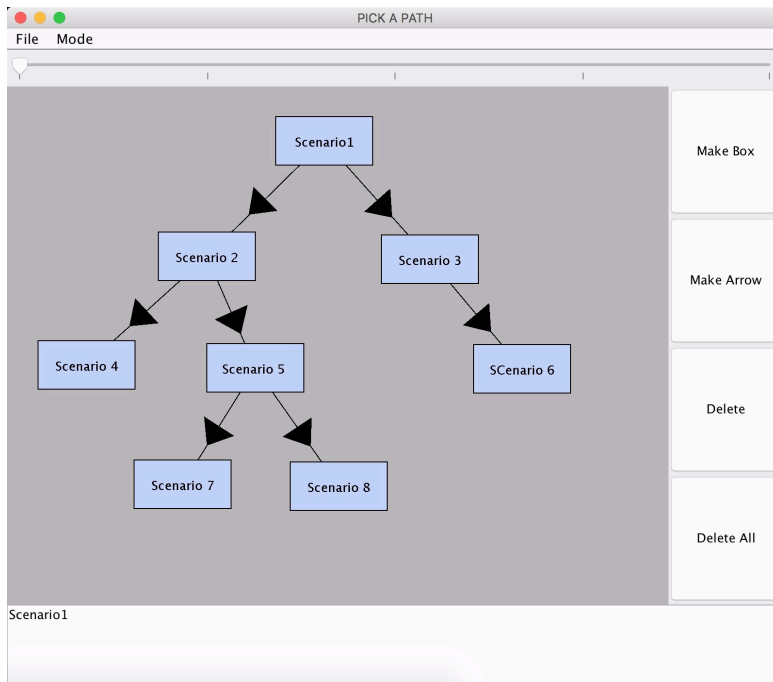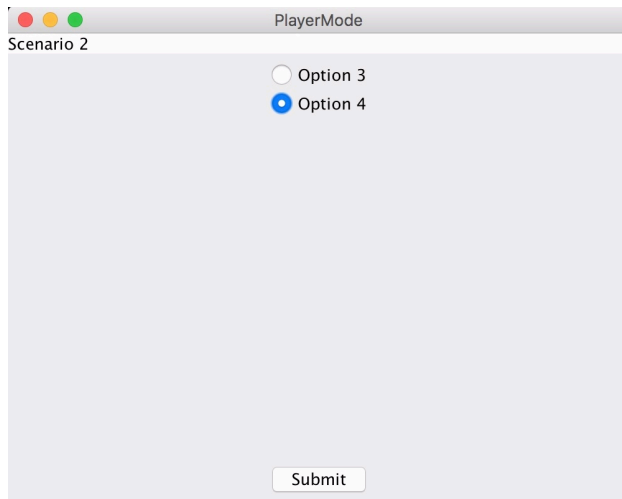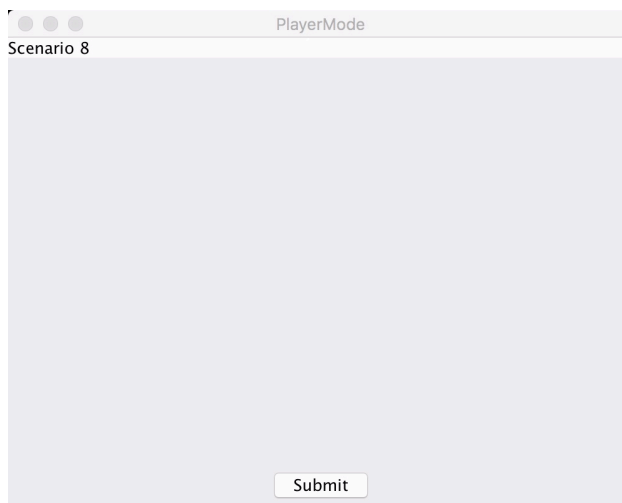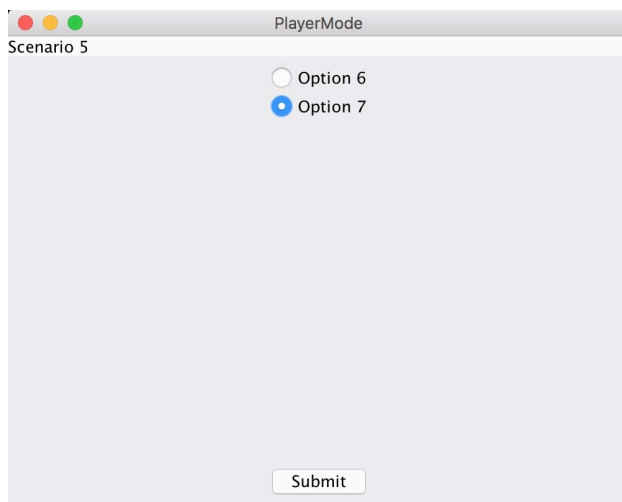

The view of the game in the editor mode

The view of the game in the player mode:

The first page starts from the scenario of the first box.

PlayerMode

Scenario 2

○ Option 3
● Option 4

Submit

The game is going to progress each time an option is selected.

PlayerMode

Scenario 5

○ Option 6
● Option 7

Submit

PlayerMode

Scenario 8

Submit

The last option will show no options and will return back to the editor mode once you click on Submit.

5.0 Addendum

There are a few improvements that we hope to make to Pick-A-Path moving forward:

1. Auto-save: We want to add this software feature so that you do not need to worry about loosing any data in case of any contingencies.

2. Player Save: This feature would allow you to save the game you are playing, so that you can return at any time and continue playing the game.

3. Items: We would like to add items like characters, weapons and so on that you can collect during the game.

4. Zooming Features: This feature would allow you to zoom in and out of your game conveniently with your mouse or track pad.