ANDI VN
Contributor Manual
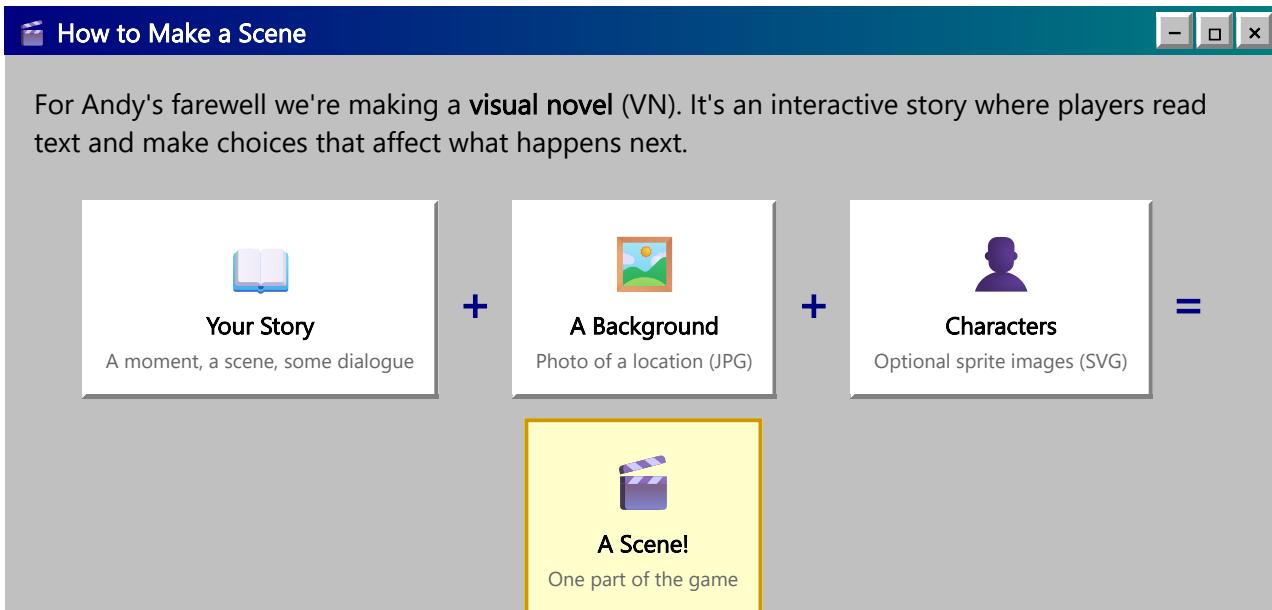
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How to Make a Scene

For Andy's farewell we're making a **visual novel** (VN). It's an interactive story where players read text and make choices that affect what happens next.

Your Story A moment, a scene, some dialogue	**+**	**A Background** Photo of a location (JPG)	**+**	**Characters** Optional sprite images (SVG)	**=**

A Scene!
One part of the game

The game is made of **scenes** linked together by **choices**. Each scene is a simple text file.

HOW THE BUILD WORKS:

.md files Your scene files (easy to edit)	→	**Build Script** Combines all scenes into one file	→	**story.js** The game loads this to play

Why not just make a huge HTML salad? Separate .md files are easier to write, easier to review, and let multiple people work on different scenes without conflicts. The build script validates everything and catches errors before the game breaks.

YOUR WORKFLOW:

1	Write your story text	2	Pick a background image	3	Add character sprites (optional)

4	Define player choices	5	Save & run the build script

TWO WAYS TO CREATE SCENES:

Option A: Visual Editor

Point-and-click interface with live preview and story graph. Outputs .md files.

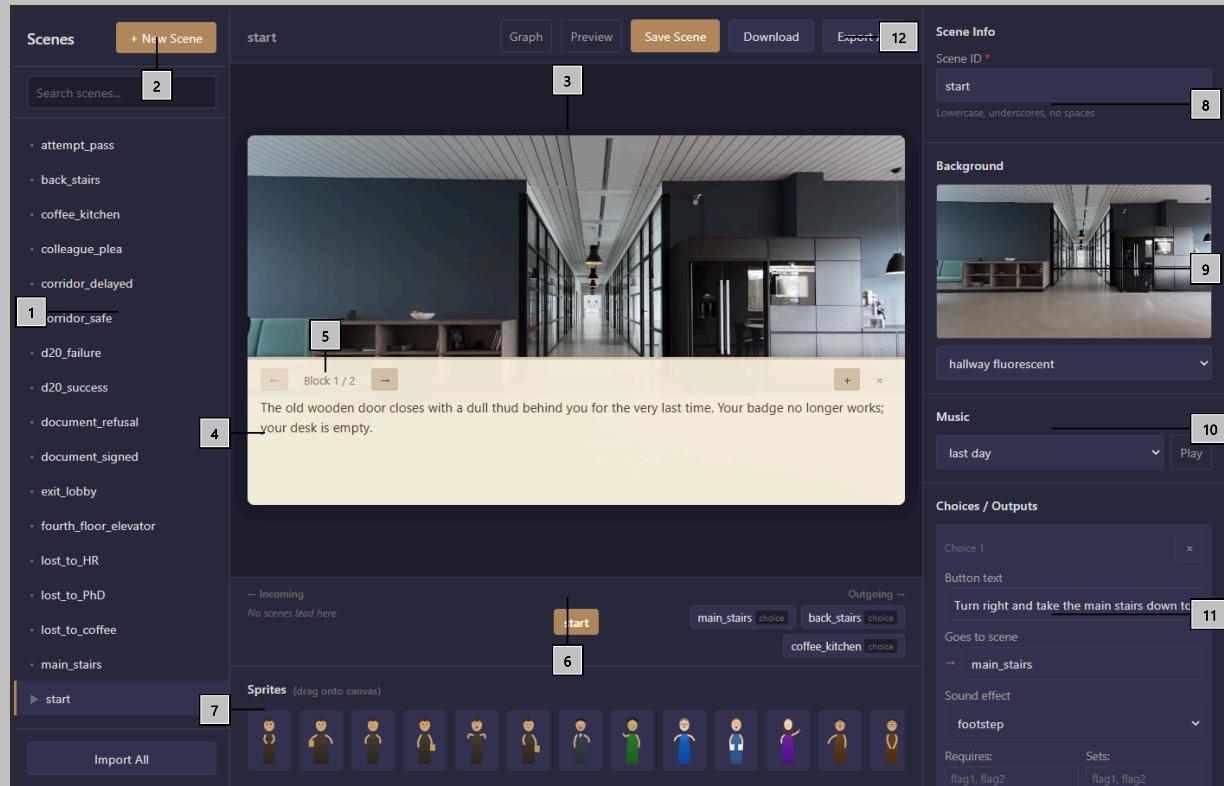See **Figure 1** below

Option B: Edit Text Files

Write .md files directly in any text editor. More control, same result.

See **Figure 2** below

Both methods produce the same `.md` scene files. Pick whichever you prefer!

Figure 1: Visual Editor (Option A)

The editor is a helper tool that creates `.md` files for you. It includes a **live preview** of how your scene will look and a **graph view** showing how scenes connect together. Open `editor/index.html` in your browser to use it.

1	**Scene List** — All your scenes. Click to edit. Yellow dot = unsaved changes.
2	**+ New Scene** — Click to create a brand new scene.
3	**Canvas Preview** — See how your scene looks! Background fills the area.
4	**Text Block** — Write your story here. This is what players read!
5	**Block Navigation** — Use ← → to move between text blocks. Each block = one "Continue" click.
6	**Scene Flow** — Shows which scenes connect to this one (incoming) and where choices lead (outgoing).
7	**Sprite Palette** — Drag character sprites onto the canvas to add them.
8	**Scene ID** — Unique name for this scene. Lowercase, underscores, no spaces!
9	**Background** — Pick a background image from the dropdown.
10	**Music** — Choose background music. Click Play to preview.
11	**Choices** — Set up player choices: button text, target scene, sound effects.
12	**Toolbar** — Graph view, Preview in game, Save, Download, Export All.

Figure 2: Text File Format (Option B)

Each scene is a simple `.md` text file you can edit in any text editor (Notepad, VS Code, etc.). Here's what each part does:

1 **FRONTMATTER** — Scene settings (between `---` marks)

```
---
id: kitchen_scene          ← Unique name for this scene
bg: office_kitchen.jpg     ← Background image file
music: coffee.mp3          ← Background music (optional)
chars:                     ← Characters to show (optional)
  - agnes_happy.svg
---
```

2 **TEXT BLOCKS** — What the player reads (separated by `---`)

```
You walk into the kitchen. The smell of
fresh coffee fills the air.

---                        ← Player clicks "Continue"

Agnes waves at you from the coffee machine.
"Good morning!" she says cheerfully.
```

3 **CHOICES** — What the player can do next

```
### Choices

- Wave back and chat → talk_agnes          ← Goes to scene "talk_agnes"
- Leave quietly [sfx: door.ogg] → hallway  ← With sound effect!
```

4 **FLAGS** — Remember player choices (optional but useful!)

```
In frontmatter, SET a flag when something happens:
set_flags:
  - talked_to_agnes

In choices, REQUIRE a flag to show an option:
- Ask about the secret (requires: talked_to_agnes) → secret_info
```

🎭 **SPRITE PLACEMENT**

Two ways to place character sprites:

Simple (centered)

```
chars:
  - agnes_happy.svg
```

Sprite appears centered on screen

With position

```
chars:
  - file: agnes_happy.svg
    x: 200
    y: 100
    scale: 1.2
```

x/y = position, scale = size (1.0 = normal)

💡 Easier method: Use the **Visual Editor** to drag sprites where you want them!

QUICK REFERENCE:

`id:` Scene name (lowercase_underscores) `bg:` Background image `music:` Music track

`chars:` Character sprites `---` Separates text blocks → Points to next scene

`[sfx: ...]` Sound effect `(requires: ...)` Need this flag

📖 Step-by-Step: Adding Your Story

STEP 1

📦 Gather Your Materials

Before you start, you'll need:

- Your story idea (what happens in this scene?)
- A background image (JPG format)
- Character sprite if needed (SVG format)

💡 Unsplash.com has great free photos for backgrounds!

STEP 2

🖼️ Choose Your Background

Either use an existing background from `assets/bg/` or add your own image to that folder.

📁 `assets/bg/your_image.jpg`

💡 Adding a new image? Use lowercase with underscores, e.g. `office_kitchen.jpg`

STEP 3

📝 Create Your Scene

Choose your method:

🖱️ **Option A: Visual Editor**

1. Open `editor/index.html`
2. Click "+ New Scene"
3. Fill in the fields
4. Click "Download"
5. Put file in `scenes/`

⌨️ **Option B: Text Editor**

1. Create `scenes/my_scene.md`
2. Copy template (see below)
3. Edit the content
4. Save the file

STEP 4

✍️ Write Your Story

Keep text blocks short! Each `---` = one "Continue" click.

> ☑️ **GOOD**
>
> ```
> The door creaks open.
>
> ---
>
> A shadowy figure stands
> in the doorway.
>
> ---
>
> "Hello, Andy..."
> ```

> ❌ **AVOID**
>
> ```
> The door creaks open and
> a shadowy figure stands
> in the doorway and they
> say "Hello, Andy" in a
> creepy voice and you
> feel scared and...
> ```

STEP 5

🔀 Add Player Choices

At the end of your scene, add choices:

```
### Choices

- Run away → escape_scene
- Stand your ground → confrontation
- Hide under the desk → hiding_spot
```

> 💡 No choices = ending scene (shows "Play Again")

STEP 6

🔨 Save & Share!

Two ways to get your scene into the game:

Option A: Push to Git (recommended)

Save your `.md` file to the `scenes/` folder and push to the repository. The build happens automatically!

```
$ git add scenes/my_scene.md
$ git commit -m "Add my scene"
$ git push
```

✨ GitHub automatically runs the build script when you push!

Option B: Build locally (if you have Python)

```
$ python tools/build_story_from_md.py
```

Then open `index.html` in your browser to test.

GIT BASICS

📦 New to Git? Here's the quick version:

Git tracks changes to files. **GitHub** hosts the project online so we can all work together.

1 **Clone** (one time only)
```
git clone https://github.com/[repo-url]
```
Downloads the project to your computer

2 **Pull** (before you start working)
```
git pull
```
Gets the latest changes from others

3 **Add + Commit** (after making changes)
```
git add . && git commit -m "description"
```
Saves your changes locally

4 **Push** (share with everyone)
```
git push
```
Uploads your changes to GitHub

💡 Stuck? Ask for help! You can also edit files directly on GitHub.com

📄 Template - Copy This!

Copy this into a new file: `scenes/your_scene.md`

```
---
id: my_new_scene
bg: hallway_fluorescent.jpg
music: default.mp3
---

Write your first text block here.
This is what the player sees first.


---

Second text block. Shown after
clicking "Continue".


---

Third block. Add as many as you need!

### Choices

- First choice → target_scene_one
- Second choice → target_scene_two
- With sound [sfx: click.ogg] → target_scene_three
```

📋 COPY TO CLIPBOARD

Asset Folders

Put your files in these folders, then use the filename in your scene file:

🖼️ Backgrounds

📁 assets/bg/

Add JPG images here. Use in scenes with `bg: filename.jpg`

```
back_stairwell_dim.jpg
bedroom_morning.jpg
dark_office_desk.jpg
desk_computer_code.jpg
hallway_dim.jpg
hallway_fluorescent.jpg
hallway_red_alert.jpg
meeting_room_whiteboard.jpg
office_corridor.jpg
```

👤 Sprites

📁 assets/char/

Add SVG files here. Use in scenes with `chars:`

```
agnes_angry.svg
agnes_blocking.svg
agnes_happy.svg
agnes_neutral.svg
agnes_surprised.svg
agnes_victorious.svg
ali_friendly.svg
fabio_friendly.svg
gilles_explaining.svg
```

🎵 Music

📁 assets/music/

Add MP3 files here. Use in scenes with `music: filename.mp3`

```
BOSS_TIME.mp3
OH_SHIT.mp3
coding.mp3
coding_frenzy.mp3
coffee.mp3
default.mp3
dicey_decisions.mp3
game_over.mp3
glitch.mp3
```

🔊 Sound FX

📁 assets/sfx/

Add OGG files here. Use in choices with `[sfx: filename.ogg]`

```
alarm.ogg
alarm_clock.ogg
alert.ogg
```

```
chain.ogg
click.ogg
dice_roll.ogg
door_open.ogg
door_slam.ogg
elevator ding.ogg
```

🚀 Advanced Features

Once you're comfortable with the basics, try these!

🎲 Dice Rolls

Add randomness! Player rolls, result determines the next scene:

```
---
id: risky_escape
bg: stairwell_landing.jpg
actions:
  - type: roll_dice
    dice: d20
    threshold: 13
    success_target: escape_success
    failure_target: escape_failure
---

You try to sneak past the guard...
Roll for stealth!
```

> 🎲 Available dice: d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, d20, d100

👤 Making Character Sprites

Sprites are SVG files, 200×400 pixels. You can:

- Draw in Inkscape (free!)
- Use AI image generators
- Ask the team for help!

Save as: `assets/char/name_emotion.svg`

Example: `agnes_happy.svg`, `agnes_angry.svg`

🎮 ANDI VN — A Visual Novel for Andy's PhD Farewell

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