Dialogue System CSV Creation / Editing Tutorial

Overview

Here's an example of a fully filled out CSV file for a character:

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Quest Requirements	Item Requirements	Conversation ID	Dialogue	Repeat Requirements	Triggers
2	#brother2_talk	~	#brother1_acceptance	Oh, so you spoke with my brother?	~	#brother1_refusal
3	~	~	#brother1_acceptance	He liked you, huh?	~	~
4	~	~	#brother1_acceptance	Well, any friend of my brother is a friend of mine! I hope you have a splendid day.	~	~
5	~	~	#brother1_refusal	I only talk to people who my brother approves of. He's a good judge of character!	#brother2_talk	~
6	~	~	#brother1_refusal	Until my brother gives you the okay, I have nothing to say to you.	~	~
7	~	~	#brother1_default	Nice day out, isn't it?	~	~

C	D	E	
Conversation ID	Dialogue	Repeat Requirements	Triggers
#brother1_acceptance	Oh, so you spoke with my brother?	~	#broth
#brother1_acceptance	He liked you, huh?	~	~
#brother1_acceptance	Well, any friend of my brother is a friend of mine! I hope you have a splendid day.	~	~
#brother1_refusal	I only talk to people who my brother approves of. He's a good judge of character!	#brother2_talk	~
#brother1_refusal	Until my brother gives you the okay, I have nothing to say to you.	~	~
#brother1_default	Nice day out, isn't it?	~	~

So you can see in this character file, there are three conversations.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Quest Requirements	Item Requirements	Conversation ID	Dialogue	Repeat Requirements	Triggers
	#brother2_talk	~	#brother1_acceptance	Oh, so you spoke with my brother?	~	#brother1_refusal
	~ 1	~	#brother1_acceptance	He liked you, huh?	~	~
	~	~	#brother1_acceptance	Well, any friend of my brother is a friend of mine! I hope you have a splendid day.	~	~
	~	~	#brother1_refusal	I only talk to people who my brother approves of. He's a good judge of character	#brother2_talk	~
	~ 2	~	#brother1_refusal	Until my brother gives you the okay, I have nothing to say to you.	~	~
	~ 3	~	#brother1_default	Nice day out, isn't it?	~	~

Quest Requirements

The quest requirements for a conversation are quests that have to be completed for the character to have this conversation. If the quest requirements aren't met, the narrative system will choose a different conversation for the character to have.

Item Requirements

These are the same as quest requirements, but it checks the items currently in the player's inventory. So if a character is waiting for you to go get them a shovel, the conversation saying "thanks for getting my shovel!" won't appear until the character has it in their inventory.

Conversation ID

The name of this conversation. It can be anything, just make sure there aren't any duplicates across characters.

Dialogue

The text that will appear when the character talks in game. The dialogue on the first line of the conversation will appear first, and every line after that going down in order. After the first line

with the quest requirements, etc, to add more dialogue you just need to put more dialogue lines with the conversation ID.

If you want the character to repeat this conversation until a certain quest is completed, put the quest that you're waiting for here in the repeat requirements. For example if the character wants you to get a shovel but you haven't done it yet, they could say "hey, stop stalling and get my shovel." If you talk to them again, you don't want them to go to their default line because they're still waiting for the shovel.

Triggers
If completing this conversation will mark a quest as complete, put the name of the quest here. So if we have a quest called #retrieve_shovel, in the conversation where you give the character the shovel and they thank you, you'd put the #retrieve_shovel quest in the trigger so it's marked as completed when the conversation is over.

You may notice that the Quest Requirements, Repeat Requirements, and Triggers are all the names of quests. But where are these quests kept? In the Quest List!

A
Quest List
#brother_talk
#retrieve_shovel
#use_the_bathroom
#another_quest
#read_a_book

Quest List
This is its own CSV file that has just one column, a list of all the quests in the game. Any time you add another quest to the game, the quest list will need to be updated. When you put a quest in the Quest Requirements in a character's CSV file, it will search the quest list for the name of that quest. Make sure to spell it right!

Notes

- It is absolutely ESSENTIAL that any space in the excel file that doesn't have info in it is filled with the tilde character: ~. This is how I check with code if I can skip over that space. If you look back at the example above any empty spaces have the ~ in it!! For example, if a conversation doesn't have any quest requirements, the quest requirements

will just be ~. For lines after the first line in a conversation that just have the conversation ID and the dialogue, any other space should just have ~. If this isn't done it'll break the system.

- Conversations need to be organized in order from most requirements to least requirements / chronologically, with the later conversations being at the top of the list. When you interact with a character, the system will try to play the topmost conversation and go down from there. Following the example above, it would make sense to have a default line at the bottom of each character's file for when all other conversations have either already been had or if the player doesn't meet any of their requirements yet.

- To have a conversation with multiple Quest Requirements just separate the requirements with a single space. Same goes for multiple Item Requirements, Repeat Requirements, etc

A
Quest Requirements
#brother2_talk #retrieve_shovel
~

- Make sure not to make any typos, especially with listing quest and item names. If you search for a quest that isn't in the quest list, that conversation won't be selected! Double check all your spelling!!

- I suggest you name each file after the character, so we know where to put it in the game. Since each character will have two files (one for day 1, one for day 2) you could name them James1 and James2, or whatever you think would be easy to understand.

- This is more of a game polish thing, but I think it would be great to have multiple conversations available for even when nothing changes in the game. By default, after a conversation is read it won't be played again unless it's the last default conversation in the file, or it's marked with a Repeat Requirement. This is fine, but it could really add to the game immersion if we have multiple things the character says before hitting a line with a Repeat Requirement. For example, we could have the character have three lines they say while waiting for you to go get their shovel, with the last line repeating until you have it:

Quest Requirements	Item Requirements	Conversation ID	Dialogue	Repeat Requirements	Triggers
~	~	#waiting_for_shovel0	Hey there! I'm missing my shovel. Do you think you could track it down for me?	~	~
~		#waiting_for_shovel0	I think I left it around here somewhere.	~	~
~	~	#waiting_for_shovel1	No luck with the shovel yet? That pesky thing has gotta show up sooner or later.	~	~
~	~	#waiting_for_shovel1	I think I may have left it behind the barn.	~	~
~	~	#waiting_for_shovel2	I let a single tear out for every minute I spend without my shovel	#retrieve_shovel	~
~	#shovel	#obtained_shovel	You brought my shovel! I was beginning to think I'd never see it again.	~	#retrieve_shovel
~	~	#obtained_shovel	Thank you so much, I don't know how to repay you.	~	~
~	~	#default_shovel_guy	At long last, I can dig to my heart's content!	~	~

Since the default line comes after the #waiting_for_shovel2 conversation with a Repeat Requirement it's okay to have the default line be the one where the character was reunited with their shovel. Don't forget to make each conversation still have a unique name though!

Exporting from Excel to CSV

There's an important setting we need to change in Excel before exporting. We want to export CSV (comma delimited) except since we will likely have commas in our dialogue notes, we want to split it up by ';' instead of ','.

To change this setting go to File -> Options
Go to the Advanced tab

You're gonna change these settings here.

Change Decimal Separator to , and Change Thousands Separator to .

Your settings should look like this:

Now you can export the file as CSV (Comma Delimited) .csv

If you want you can export right into our assets folder in Unity. There's a folder specifically for our narrative CSV files in the Assets folder.

Name	Date modified	Type	Size
📁 Animation	1/19/2023 4:21 PM	File folder	
📁 Art	1/25/2023 2:14 PM	File folder	
📁 Narrative Files	1/27/2023 2:49 PM	File folder	
📁 Prefabs	1/26/2023 11:17 PM	File folder	
📁 Scenes	1/27/2023 4:37 PM	File folder	
📁 Scripts	1/26/2023 9:16 PM	File folder	
📁 TextMesh Pro	1/26/2023 9:16 PM	File folder	
📄 Animation.meta	1/19/2023 4:18 PM	META File	1 KB
📄 Art.meta	1/19/2023 4:18 PM	META File	1 KB
📄 Narrative Files.meta	1/24/2023 8:32 AM	META File	1 KB
📄 Prefabs.meta	1/19/2023 4:18 PM	META File	1 KB
📄 Scenes.meta	1/19/2023 4:18 PM	META File	1 KB
📄 Scripts.meta	1/19/2023 4:18 PM	META File	1 KB
📄 TextMesh Pro.meta	1/26/2023 9:16 PM	META File	1 KB

Don't forget to follow good perforce etiquette when you upload files. Check out the repo on perforce before you add them, and submit your changes.

## Editing a CSV that was already made

If you need to go back and edit a character CSV file that was already made, you can do so (but it requires more annoying excel stuff)

Starting from a blank excel file, first we need to enable importing data from text, which for some reason is a legacy feature.
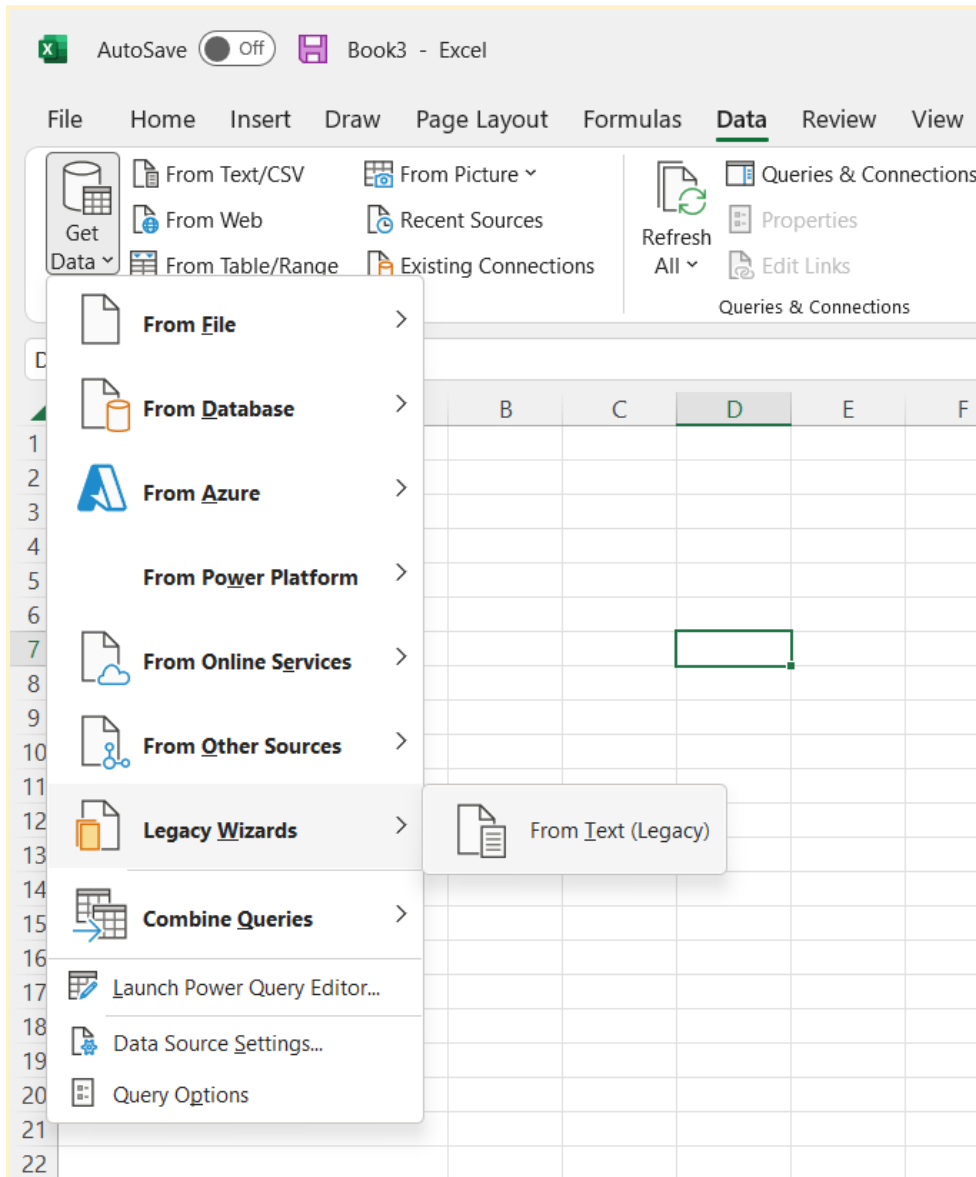To change this setting go to File -> Options
Go to the Data tab

Enable From Text (Legacy) like in the image below.
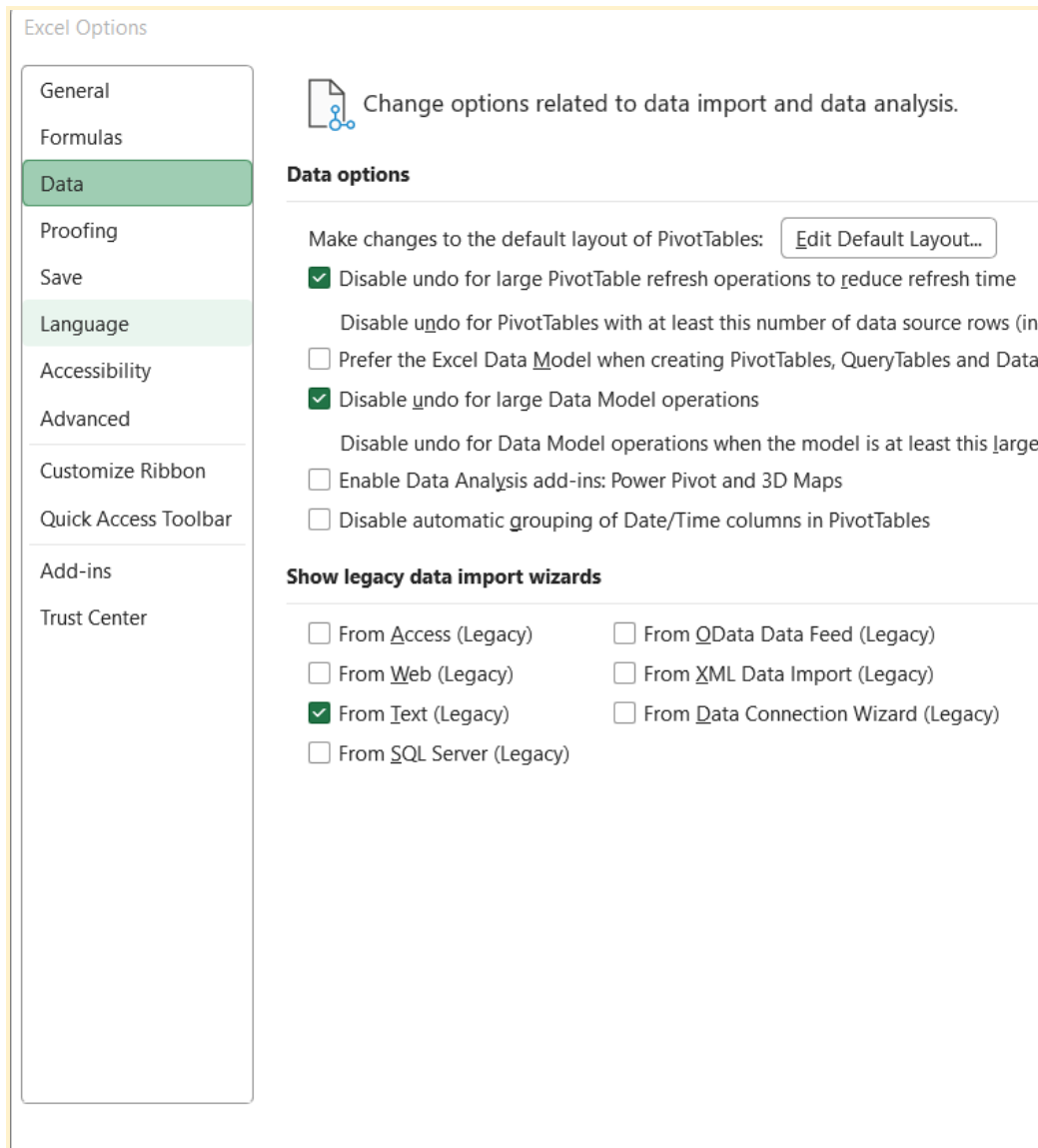
Then go to the Data tab
Select GetData -> Legacy Wizards -> From Text (Legacy)

You can pull the file right out of the Unity asset folder for our project. After you've made your changes, just make sure to export back into the same file instead of making a new one!