

A Level Design Document (LDD) (PDF) summarizing design choices, an annotated map, and playtesting insights.

## **Phase I: Decision-Making & Justification (45 min total)**

### **(5 min) Choose Genre & Game Type**

Our game is a first-person horror puzzle mystery focused on atmosphere and discovery. Players solve puzzles to progress through interconnected rooms while uncovering a deeper mystery. The first-person view enhances immersion, with controlled lighting and sound design building suspense.

### **(5 min) 2D vs. 3D Decision**

We are making a 3D game with a first person POV. We created our project using the Unity 3D core template and our main scene is created using the unity 3D scene option. Camera will be fixed to the player unless a puzzle requires a full screen view of it while it is being solved.

### **(5 min) Level Structure: Linear vs. Semi-Open vs. Open**

We are planning on a semi-open game as rooms unlock as the player progresses in each level, completing the necessary puzzles. There is a linear aspect as progression in the game will happen as you move from one room to the next, however room exploration and backtracking allows an open world aspect.

### **(5 min) Verticality & Multi-Layered Design**

Our game will have a flat level design with minimal verticality, as it is a puzzle-based escape room experience. Players will progress through interconnected rooms by solving puzzles, without requiring jumping or climbing. Additionally, player visibility remains clear, with puzzles and interactable elements positioned at eye level for accessibility.

### **(5 min) Navigation & Wayfinding**

We are going to have UI hints, if the player takes too much time we are going to give them UI hints or light the area they should go. There is also a progress bar in

the game to show the players how far they are in the room.

### **(5 min) Challenge & Pacing**

We are going to have puzzles in each room which the difficulty of the puzzles gradually increases. Players will have to solve different puzzles for each room, and each puzzle is going to get more difficult after each room so players will feel challenged.

### **(5 min) Enemy & Encounter Placement**

We do not have any enemies in the game so there is not going to be an enemy counter, our game is based on puzzles, players' objective is going to be solving the puzzles and run away from the house.

### **(5 min) Sightlines & Occlusion**

Our game uses controlled sightlines and occlusion to focus player attention and maintain suspense. Walls and room layouts naturally limit visibility, preventing players from seeing upcoming puzzles too soon. Occlusion ensures a structured gameplay flow, guiding discovery and revealing solutions only when needed.

### **(5 min) Environmental Storytelling**

We will use the environment to tell the story by placing subtle clues in the setting. Props like old books, maps, or strange objects give hints about the past, while textures like rusted metal or flickering lights show the decay or hidden secrets in the world. The sound design also plays a big role, with creaky doors, distant footsteps, and other ambient noises to set the mood and guide the player.

### **Final Team Review (5 min)**

We're creating a first-person horror puzzle mystery, where players solve puzzles to uncover a deeper story, using 3D with a first-person perspective to enhance immersion through lighting and sound.

The level structure is semi-open, allowing room exploration and backtracking while progressing through puzzles. We'll keep minimal verticality for accessibility,

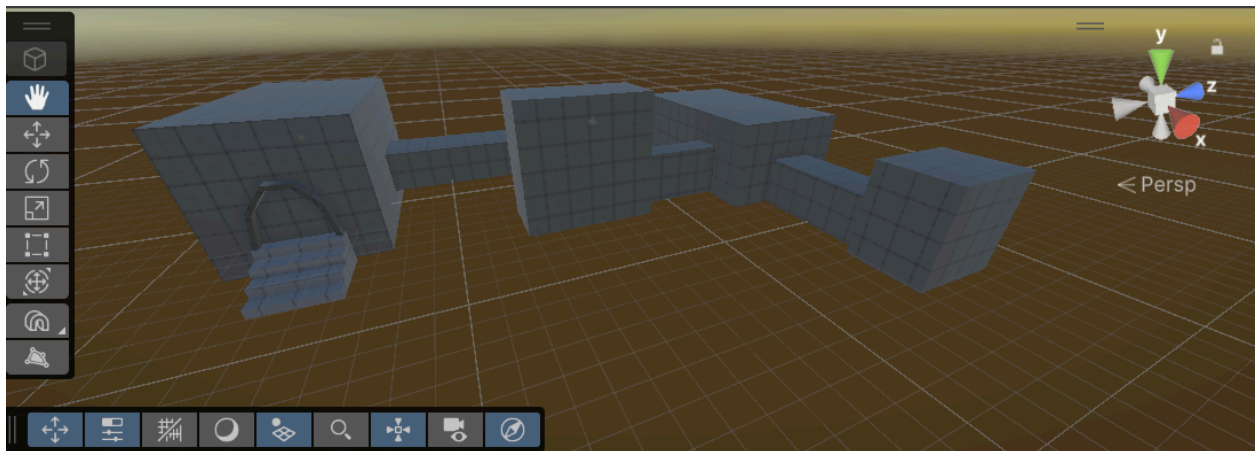
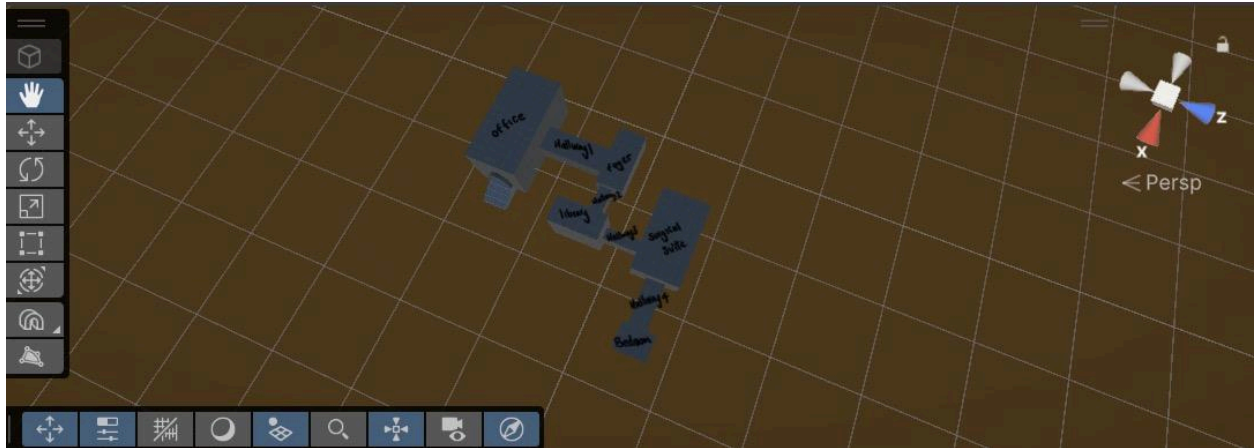
focusing on puzzles rather than platforming. UI hints and lighting will guide players through navigation.

The puzzle difficulty will gradually increase as players move through rooms. Since there are no enemies, the focus is on exploration and puzzle-solving. Sightlines and occlusion will build suspense by limiting player visibility.

Lastly, environmental storytelling will use props, textures, and sound to subtly reveal the story and engage players. We're now ready to implement these decisions in Unity!

## Annotated Map





# Player Test insights

## 1. Game Flow & Navigation

- The linear room-to-room structure works well for guiding players, but there might be a lack of exploration freedom. Consider adding alternative paths or hidden shortcuts for replayability.
  - Corridors connect rooms well, but some might feel like empty transitions. Maybe add minor environmental storytelling (e.g., flickering lights, eerie sounds, or interactive objects).
  - The final stretch (Corridor 4 → End Room) builds anticipation well since it's a direct path to escape, but it could use a final challenge or twist to feel more climactic.
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## 2. Puzzle Variety & Engagement

- Since each room contains a puzzle, make sure they aren't too repetitive. Vary the puzzle mechanics (logic-based, physical interaction, hidden clues, environmental hazards, etc.).
  - Room 3 has a puzzle before a door, which could mean unlocking mechanics (key, switch, etc.).
  - Room 4 is isolated and the last major puzzle before the exit—consider making it a high-stakes puzzle, maybe a time-based challenge or one requiring clues from previous rooms.
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## 3. Difficulty & Player Experience

- Stairs at the start could hint at verticality—does the player ever revisit previous areas? If not, backtracking could be an interesting way to add depth.
- If doors require keys or solutions, ensure players can easily track progress

(maybe add an inventory or visual indicators for completed rooms).

- The corridors might feel repetitive unless they contribute to tension (e.g., unexpected obstacles, eerie atmosphere, or NPC movement).
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#### **4. Atmosphere & Horror Potential (if applicable)**

- Uncertainty in navigation: If the game aims for a creepy or suspenseful vibe, playing with lighting, shadows, and sound design can enhance immersion.
- Puzzle difficulty balance: Ensure puzzles don't cause frustration—add subtle hints in the environment to guide players.
- Final room tension: Maybe add a final decision or escape challenge rather than a straightforward exit (e.g., "The front door is locked. Find another way out!").