

# **Design document - MIST**

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# 1. Overview

MIST is a 2D top-down single-player survival horror game. The player, along with their colleagues, travel to a secret research facility on a remote island, when suddenly the boat breaks down and crashes. After waking up, you find that the others have gone missing and that your only means of escape, the boat, is broken. Survive the darkness of the night, fight enemies, collect items, keep yourself sane and escape the island.

## 2. Game mechanics

### 2.1. Darkness & Light

MIST takes place during the night, so the player is constantly surrounded by darkness. The only sources of light are the player's flashlight and some lamps. There are 2 main player states that determine the visibility of the player and enemies:

#### 1) In the light:

- Enemies are visible to the player
- The player is visible to the enemies

#### 2) In the darkness:

- Enemies are not visible to the player
- The player is not visible to the enemies

The enemies are only visible to the player if they're located in the light and the player has line of sight of them. This means that the enemies won't be visible through solid objects like doors or walls.

### 2.2. Enemies

MIST features multiple enemies that the player can either fight or run from. Enemies mostly identify the player based on sight, however the Hivemind is also capable of hearing the player's movements across short distances. When an enemy makes contact with a player, it reduces the player's health by an amount specific to the enemy.

#### 2.2.1. Hounds

- Smaller enemies
- Low HP (50), can be killed quite quickly
- Low damage
- Running speed
- Can travel in packs and can overwhelm the player

#### 2.2.2. Possessed

- Humanoid enemy (infected scientist/personnel)
- Medium HP (100), requires some effort to kill

- Medium damage
- Walking speed
- Usually found alone

### 2.2.3. Monger

- Humanoid enemy that is larger due to having been infected for a long time
- High HP (200), requires high effort to kill
- High damage
- Slow walking speed
- Found alone

### 2.2.4. Hivemind

- Recurring enemy created by the mist, spawns when the mist is present
- Can't be killed
- When shot, it will get stunned for 2 seconds
- Kill the player instantly upon contact
- Can feel it when you touch fleshy growths (described in [2.3.](#))

## 2.3. Fleshy Outgrowths

These appear on the ground and are directly tied to the Hivemind enemy. When touched, the Hivemind is alerted and runs towards the outgrowth in question. The player should avoid touching them if they don't want to alert the Hivemind. Although, rocks can be thrown at an outgrowth from afar to lure the Hivemind to it.

## 2.4. Fighting

There are 2 weapons in MIST. An axe and a shotgun. The axe serves as a close range option. It is more risky to use, as it deals less damage than the shotgun and you are in range of the enemy's attacks. On the other hand, the shotgun is more powerful and can be used at short to medium range (it's inaccurate if shot from far away). The ammo for the shotgun is very limited, so it should only be used when absolutely necessary.

## 2.5. Sanity

In addition to health and stamina, the player will also have to manage their sanity. The player's sanity is measured as a number between 100 (full) and 0 (empty). If the player's sanity reaches 0 they have 5 seconds to replenish it or the game will end with the Insanity Ending (Ending C).

### **Events that can happen with lower sanity:**

- Sounds that would normally be caused by enemy movement
- Hallucinations of enemies that disappear after a short time

### **Events that lower sanity:**

- Staying in the dark

- Staying in the mist
- Close encounters with enemies
- Taking damage from enemies

**Events that have neutral effect on sanity:**

- Staying in the light
- Having the flashlight on

**Events that replenish sanity:**

- Killing an enemy
- Taking sanity pills

## 2.6. Items

Items in MIST are objects that the player can find, pick up and then use to their advantage. They are stored in a small hotbar-like inventory at the bottom of the screen that holds 6 items. The inventory can be navigated and items can be removed from it (dropped on the ground).



**Picture 1** - Inventory & UI design

	First Aid Kit	Small Rock	Axe	Shotgun	Ammo	Sanity Pills	Keycard
Stackable	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
Stack Size	-	5	-	-	2	-	-
Consumable	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Table 1** - Inventory items and their properties

### 2.6.1. First Aid Kit

This item can be used to replenish the player's health by 50 over the period of 10 seconds.

### 2.6.2. Small rock

Small rocks can be thrown to distract enemies. This is either by causing noise or hitting a fleshy outgrowth.

### 2.6.4 Axe

The axe is a weapon.

### 2.6.5. Shotgun

The shotgun is a weapon.

### 2.6.6. Ammo

Ammo is used by the shotgun and serves as one of the 2 forms of self defence against enemies. This item doesn't directly take up an inventory slot. Instead, it is added as a small number in the bottom right corner of the shotgun item.

### 2.6.7. Sanity pills

The sanity pills instantly replenish the player's sanity by 25 when used. Can also save the player when used within 5 seconds of reaching 0 sanity.

### 2.6.8. Keycard

Some doors are locked, and require a keycard to unlock and open. Using a keycard on the corresponding locked door opens the door.

### 2.6.9. Progression items

There are 3 progression items: an engine, a propeller and a battery. All of these 3 items are required to finish the game with the main ending (Ending A). Unlike other items in the game, these don't show up in the player's inventory. Instead, they show up as their corresponding icons in the bottom right of the screen. The icons are greyed out until the player has collected them.

## 3. Gameplay

### 3.1. Character

The player-controlled character has 3 main attributes:

- a) Health - A value between 100 (full) and 0 (empty). If the player's health ever reaches 0, the player dies. The only way for the player to die is to be hit by an enemy.
- b) Sanity - Described in detail in section [2.5.](#)
- c) Stamina - A value between 100 (full) and 0 (empty). Allows the player to sprint for a short period of time. Regenerates slowly over time.

### 3.2. Camera

MIST is a 2D game that utilises a top-down camera.

### 3.3. Controls

**WASD keys** - movement

**Mouse movement** - look around

**LMB** - use item

**E** - pick up item

**F** - flashlight on/off

**Hold Shift + WASD** - sprint

**Mouse wheel** - navigate inventory

**G** - drop item from inventory on the ground

### 3.4. Saving

The game saves progress every time a new level is entered and every time a progression item is picked up. Saves allow the player to exit the game and continue from that point. They also serve as respawn points for the player if they die. Manually creating saves is not possible.

Upon reaching any of the endings, the save file is deleted and the game has to be started from the beginning.

## 4. Levels

### 4.1. First Level - Dense forest

**Progression items** - Keycard, Engine

**New weapons** - Axe

**Enemies** - Hounds, Possessed, Hivemind

**Natural progression:**

- 1) Player spawns on a beach and heads to the forest
- 2) Player explores smaller maze forest
- 3) Player finds keycard to the lab from a dead body
- 4) Player explores further
- 5) Player finds the engine progression item
- 6) Player picks up engine from a fleshy outgrowth
- 7) Mist appears
- 8) Hivemind is angered and starts chasing player further into the wood
- 9) Player tries to avoid more fleshy outgrowths and navigate a maze like forest
- 10) Player finds the lab and enters



Picture 2 - Level 1 layout

## 4.2. Second Level - The Lab

**Progression items** - Research, Propeller

**New weapons** - Shotgun

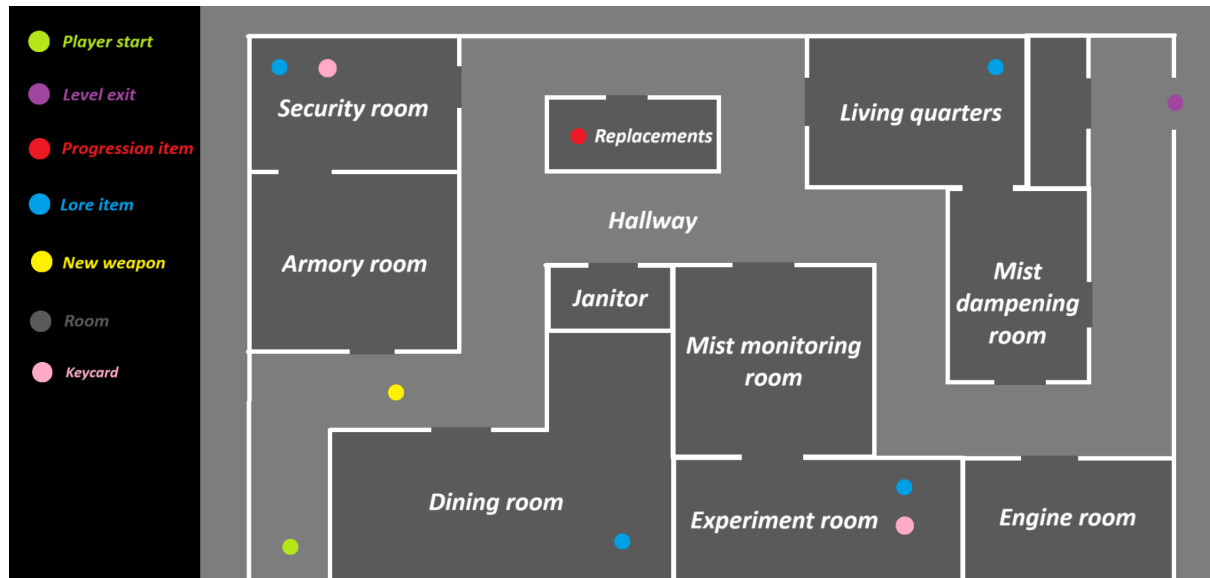
**Enemies** - Possessed, Monger, Hivemind

**Natural progression:**

- 1) Player enters the lab (lights flickering, enemies around)
- 2) Player explores the lab



- 3) Player finds the next progression item (propeller) located on the wall of the facility
- 4) Player explores the facility further
- 5) Player finds research progression item
- 6) Hivemind notices this so they break through the lab door, this causes the door to collapse (no longer passable)
- 7) Player notices signs pointing towards a cave
- 8) Player avoids the Hivemind and makes their way into the cave



**Picture 3** - Level 2 layout

### 4.3. Third Level - Cave/Lab basement

**Progression items** - Battery

**Enemies** - Possessed, Monger, Hivemind

**Natural progression:**

- 1) Player enters the cave, the lights are mostly on, the fans that remove the mist are also on.
- 2) The player navigates through the cave and picks up a battery from an overgrown (by flesh) generator
- 3) Hivemind is angered and breaks through the ceiling/initial entry point into the cave. This causes the cave to collapse which:
  - a) changes the layout of the level
  - b) opens an exit to the forest (between the boat and the first progression item (the keycard))
  - c) Makes small rocks spawn
- 4) The player navigates through the level and exits through the new cave opening back into the forest



**Picture 4** - Level 3 layout

## 5. Endings

### 5.1. Ending A

After obtaining the three progression items, the protagonist will end up on the original beach. They repair the ship using these parts and depart. Soon after departing though, the camera zooms out to reveal many similar islands, all enshrouded in mist.

### 5.2. Ending B

After obtaining the three pieces to repair the ship, the protagonist will end up on the original beach. Instead of interacting with the boat, the player character will walk into the forest yet again, where the cliffhanger ending will start playing. This ending will be indicated

by the screaming sound effect that will play on the beach and if the player chooses to explore the island further, they will reach this optional ending.

### 5.3. Ending C

After reaching 0 sanity on the Sanity Meter and not taking pills to boost it up again for 5 seconds, the player will achieve ending C, the Insanity Ending. The protagonist goes insane, stays on the island and slowly starts turning into one of its monstrous inhabitants.

## 6. Story

The unnamed protagonist is tasked by the government with his team to go to a deserted island near Indonesia and rescue a group of scientists who have not heard from each other for months. Should the mission fail, they must obtain the research the scientists were doing as a secondary objective. On the way to the island, they are engulfed by a heavy fog at sea, causing the ship to crash on a rocky shore, and the crew, except for the protagonist, do not survive the impact. The protagonist thus finds himself on the shore with a new goal - to repair his ship and escape the island.

While exploring the forest further ahead, he stumbles upon a dead crewmate holding a keycard used to access the lab. Other objects such as notes during his journey reveal the history of the island, as well as why it is of such importance. He is also attacked by several enemies who look like they have been influenced by mist itself and he realises that he is not alone on the island and that danger lurks around every corner. In the middle of the forest he finds the first missing part of the ship, which is part of the engine. As soon as he picks it up, mist surrounds him and a new enemy called Hive appears, who was created by the mist. The protagonist tries to escape the monster and eventually comes across the door to the lab which he opens and saves himself.

The protagonist explores the lab with the goal of finding the science team and their research as well as something that will help him repair his ship. He sees many experiments that the team have been doing, which disturb him. He comes across a small fan which he decides to take and use as a propeller for his ship. He is also attacked by several possessed enemies, who he realizes are most likely the scientists. The protagonist finds the research when he is noticed by the Hive, who breaks inside and mist surrounds him again. He escapes into the cave.

The cave collapses behind him, so he has to find another way out. Seeing many cables and lights ensures him that he can find the final part for his ship which is a battery. The cave is a dangerous place with enemies around almost every corner. Exploring it reveals the dark history of the research as well as what might be going on on the island. Finally he finds a generator, from which he yanks a battery. As if mist had noticed the change, it breaks through into the cave and Hive appears yet again. The protagonist escapes the cave and finds himself on the same beach. He hears a loud scream coming from the forest, yet all he needs to do is repair his ship and leave. What he chooses to do is up to the player to decide.

In this document, we are purposefully not trying to spoil the hidden lore our story will reveal. The goal is for the player to discover it themselves if they wish and are interested, but they

don't necessarily have to if they rather wish to focus on the gameplay and finishing the game. That is where visual storytelling will come into place.



**Picture 5** - Shipwreck by Loycee

## 7. Design

### 7.1. Narrative design

Firstly, environmental storytelling is the priority for this game. We don't want to present the story like in a typical linear story driven game, we want the players to explore on their own and put the pieces together, either by showing the effects of the mist on the environment, finding notes that explain where to find items as well as lore, showing the impact of living on the island and so on.

Secondly, our mechanic called Sanity Meter will show how much the protagonist is being affected by the island and will also serve as a timer that, when filled up, will lead to a completely different ending.

Finally, our mechanic called MIST event serves both as a means of showing the player they are in danger, limiting their vision, decreasing sanity and that they are pursued by enemies by utilising sound while also serving as a narrative way of showing how the island swallows its inhabitants.

### 7.2. Sound design

Sounds are a key component in creating the atmosphere of MIST, but they also play an important role in gameplay. The enemies are able to hear the player's movement in the

darkness from up close. There is also a sound to alert the player when they are being approached by an enemy. When the player's sanity is low, they can sometimes hear this sound even if there is no enemy nearby.

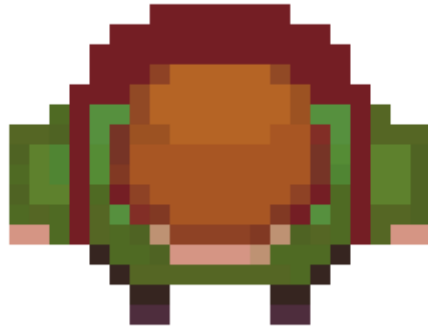
- Ambience - Sounds made by the environment.
  - Wind
  - Leaves rustling
  - Electrical buzzing of lamps
- Feedback - Sounds that give the player feedback on the actions they perform.
  - Movement (in the form of individual steps)
  - Picking up/Dropping/Using an item
  - Stepping on a fleshy outgrowth
  - Opening a door
- Combat sounds - Sounds that are played during combat.
  - Shotgun shot
  - Axe swing
  - Taking/dealing damage
- Enemy sounds - Sounds made by the various enemies.
  - Growling
  - Movement (in the form of individual steps)

### 7.3. Art direction

The game utilises a full top-down style (see Picture 6), which allows the player to see their entire surroundings. This style is prominent mostly in indie games where this aspect is compensated by either restricting what is visible to some other mechanic like flashlight or FOV. This game is utilising full top-down (see Picture 2 and 5), meaning the camera is not tilted (like in Pokémon or Stardew Valley).



**Picture 6** - Hotline Miami (2012)



**Picture 7** - Protagonist design



**Picture 8** - Hound design

The game will also be in pixelated style, which is both simple to make and looks pleasant. When combined with the genre, it can create an unsettling atmosphere that will be easily remembered.