# Outsiders Academy – Outline – 1.0

# Overview

## Foundational Information

### 1. About this Game (Pitch)

### 2. Categorization Tags

#### a. Genre

Visual Novel

Text-Based

2D

Indie

Single-Player

Interactive Fiction

Choose-Your-Own-Adventure

Story-Rich

#### b. Themes

Choices Matter

Multiple Endings

Psychological Horror

Mystery

Supernatural

Romance

(Implied) Sexual Content / NSFW

Dating Sim / Simulation

LGBTQA+

### 3. Game Premise

### 4. Visual Style and Aesthetics

The visual style of the game will be 2D, and use sprite models of the characters with different expressions and/or outfits, depending on the scene. Unlike traditional visual novel games, the art style won’t be similar to anime. Instead, I intend for the art-style to be cell-shaded and similar to a sketchbook of sorts. The UI will be notebook paper, dialogue text will be the character’s handwriting, and the colours in the game will be in a watercolour-painted style.

### 5. Creative Intent / Creative Vision

## Reception

### Intended Audience

### Intended Reception

### Emotional Response

# Gameplay Frameworks

## Introductory Stage

### Character Creation

#### Creating a Player Character for a New Game

The Player inputs their name, presenting gender, and preferred pronouns. For their preferred pronouns, they can have up to three (optional) preferences.

The Player Character’s default name changes based on the pronouns chosen by the Player. There are three pre-set names:

1. Male (he/him) - Levi Lazar

2. Female (she/her) - Lana Lazar

3.Non-Binary / Queer (they/them, it/its, neopronouns, etc.) - Lyn Lazar

Alternatively, implement the option to customize their (first) name, and choice of pronouns; like how *Sims* does it — have pre-set pronouns (i.e., he/she/they) and then a custom picker for inputting more pronouns.

#### Establishing Player Character Stats for Interactions and Gameplay

After the Player has chosen their pronouns, presenting gender, and name, they take an (optional) quiz. If the Player skips the quiz, they are instead provided default stats corresponding to the default Character, as if they had chosen any of the three default names.

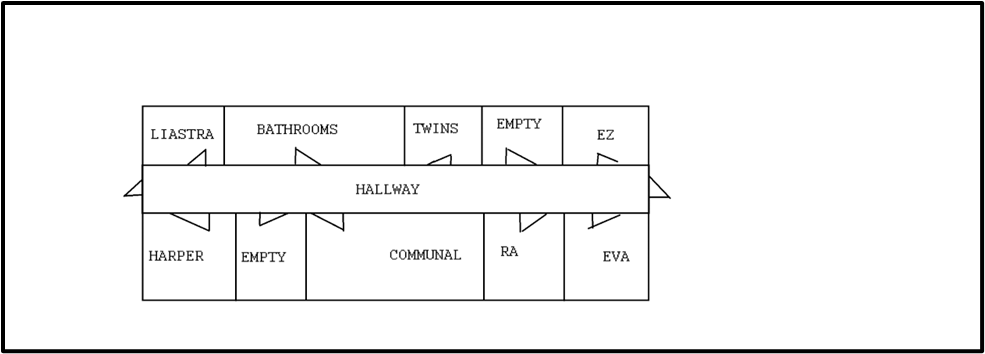
This quiz results act as the basic stat pool for Player interaction, via giving the Player their traits for the playthrough. Certain traits above or below n number give an extra +1 for certain answers and -1, respectively.

After the Player completes the quiz, they will be able to see their stats/traits and alter them as desired.

#### Choosing the Player’s Dorm Room

After they complete the quiz, the Player can choose where they want to dorm — whether that be by one cast member, or between two, or by the RA tutorial NPC — Rowan Aubrey.

##### Default Map of University Dormitory



##### Standard Conventions of Dorm Room Layouts

Regardless of what visual layout the dormitory has, there are conditions regarding where certain Characters reside:

• Ezekiel is at the end of the hall.

• Eva is at the end of the hall.

• The twins are on the same side as Liastra || Eva.

• Bathrooms include laundry.

##### iii. Advanced Implementation of Dorm Layouts (Optional)

1) Procedurally generate dorm layout via a seed, whether it be a hallway, a stairwell with multiple floors, etc. — a rectangle with rooms on both sides, an L shape, a rectangle with rooms only on one side of the hallway, a square with levels.

2) Create a tool that follows the rules given:

a. Random generator to make decisions about room specification.

b. Specify: [ Total # Rooms ] [ Your Room # ] [ NPC Room # ] [ Non-interactable Room }

c. Write into specification (JSON object?)

d. Room display / renderer takes specification and sprites to draw out the given defined layout.

### Tutorial

#### a. Tutorial – Overview

The RA guides the Player Character through the core mechanics of the game, step-by-step, first settling them into their dorm, and then showing them around the school campus.

#### b. Tutorial – Events

The Events within the Tutorial are introductory “first day” Decision Events; these events are when the Player meets Characters for the first time after settling into their dorm, or when the Player first goes to class. Parallels the real-world in that the first day of college courses have a requisite “overview day” where they usually go over the syllabus.

#### c. Tutorial – Conclusion

At the end of the tutorial day, they give the Player an item — their dorm key — as a sort of “you completed the tutorial!” item which also serves as an introduction to the mechanic of Trinkets and Memories.

#### d. Tutorial - Gameplay Checkpoints

The communal study and kitchenette area of the school dormitory is where the RA will “check in” with the Player throughout the year, at certain “end of chapter” points. There is one check-in per season — Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer — during which the RA will ask how the year's going. This will give the Player opportunities to know more about a Character of their choosing. Each season has midterms and finals, between which Fable and Friendship Events happen.

### 3. Non-Playable Characters

#### a. The Main Cast – Overview

Each of the main cast is tied to an area of study in the humanities. Each study is tied to a university building. Each of the main cast has unique scene(s), a unique backstory, and a dorm room unique to them, if applicable.

#### b. The Main Cast – Introduction to the Characters

##### *i. Ezekiel Alexander Dubois*

*A photography and film student;   
“His room is always nestled as far away from other students’ rooms as possible. I’d like to say that you’ll be able to find him, but most days, I barely see him if I’m not at his usual haunts. He’s really, really reserved, to the point of eating lunch in his dorm every day. You’d be lucky to find him at all – but if you’re that determined, hang around the media arts building. The place is a maze, but he should be in the hallways somewhere. If he isn’t, follow the scent of Earl Grey, hot. Good luck.”  
  
Profile Information**Age: 24 / Height: 6’ 5  
Birthday – Spring, 4/11  
Likes – Cards, Rainy Weather, Classical Music, Singing (In Private)  
Hates – Brussel Sprouts, Texting, Admitting Something is Wrong  
Favourite Mythological Figure – Charon/Kharon  
Something to Share - “You ever wonder why cameras and guns are the same? No? Yeah, I don’t think you want to know the answer.”*

##### *ii. Harper Swift*

*An audio production and sound design student;   
“Her room is always closest to the doors out. She can’t stand being inside for longer than a class period. You’d think she didn’t have a dorm room at all. At this point, I’d be surprised if she didn’t have a secret apartment off-campus. Definitely seems that way, sometimes, given that she either doesn’t mind or realizes how she’s always breaking the rules. She really is a sweet girl, though, if weird. And I mean that as a compliment; she’s got moxie. She’s weird, sure, but in a sort of… endearing, flighty, overly vibrant way. I don’t have the heart to send her to detention for not wearing a uniform, let alone for just being herself.”  
  
Profile Information  
Age: ???? / Height: 4’11  
Birthday – ????  
Likes – Birds, Taking Colourful Notes, Poetry, People-Watching  
Hates – The Indoors, Beeping, Being Defined and/or Restricted  
Favourite Flower – Sunflower  
Wants – To be Brave; To Learn how to (Literally) Swim in the Deep End; To Not Be Alone.*

##### iii. Liastra

*An agricultural science student with a minor in art, its concentration in ceramics;   
“Oh, her? Her dorm room isn’t closest to the exit only because Harper got to the room first. She’s like Harper, too: also a little strange. I’ve seen them outside on campus grounds together, usually sitting in the grass... talking to the wildlife. I’d guess they get along because of the whole ‘hating being inside’ thing. Birds of a feather, and all that. But Liastra will at least come inside to work on her ceramics every once in a while. I just wish she’d stop bringing animals inside* **with** *her. I have no idea how she enrolled, let alone got past academy policies with an owl. Don’t even get me started on the peacock living in the dorm common area; even though I have to report the thing to faculty, I’ve given up on actually catching it.”  
  
Profile Information  
Age: 20 / Height: 5’3  
Birthday: Spring, 5/27  
Family: Her pet owl, Sol. Flora and fauna. Orphaned from a young age.  
Quirks: Will Often Misunderstand Social Cues; The School’s Resident Gremlin; Everyone Has Silently and Unanimously Agreed to Not Hurt Her Because She’s Baby  
Hobbies: Making Amulets and Flower Crowns out of Foliage, Sneaking Animals into the Dorms, Daydreaming About Will.*

##### iv. Eva Blanche

*A poli-sci and creative writing student;   
“Like Ezekiel, she prefers her privacy, and stays out of sight. The only reason I see her is because she usually picks a dorm near my room to have a private space away from both her room and the other students. I let her sit in my room to calm down from— from stress. Besides that, she’s quiet, and a bit of a goth, as far as I can tell. Either that, or she never gets any sleep. Or both. The only places she’ll talk to you is from behind a book, behind her door, or behind the school, which is fine by me. Something tells me that I wouldn’t want to see her dark side, or inside her writing journal; poor girl seems like she’s barely holding it together.”  
  
Profile Information  
Age: 26 / Height: 5’ 3  
Birthday – Fall, 10/5. Unplanned.  
Likes – Law and Order (both the concepts and the show), The Night Sky, Comfortable Clothes, Noodles, Having Backup Plans, Books.  
Hates – Entitlement, Success Without Effort, Her Appearance  
Aspirations – Being Better Than Her Sister, Lily; Feeling Confident; Having a Partner without the Problems of One; Having Control Over Herself.  
Fears – Other People, Her Own Mind, Her Dreams, Her Journal Being Stolen*

##### *v. The Vale Twins*

*Visual art students (drawing and sculpting, respectively);   
“They share a dorm room. Actually, they share most everything ~~as if they were identical~~. They’re both walking chaos, and doubly so together. It’s a shame, really, because anyone can tell by looking at them that they’re both smart – maybe too smart. I honestly don’t know much about them, besides the fact that they both nearly went to jail. They were bailed out by their godfather; he pulled strings, and they were sent here – saved their skins. Doesn’t stop them from skipping class and getting into trouble, though. Those two practically live in detention, feet up on respective desks like they rule the school.”*

###### 1. Will Vale

*Profile Information  
Age: 22 / Height: 6’  
Birthday – Winter, 1/22, 1:00 A.M  
Likes – Causing Problems, (Playing with) Fire, Dissecting and Understanding Information, Chess, Noodles   
Hates – Broken Promises, Broken Glass, Fairytales, Hyperthermia, Being Weak  
Preferences – Always Going Second in Chess / Playing Black, Making Hot Chocolate with Milk, Using His Head  
Believes – In Keeping One’s Word; That He’s Going to Hell (and Proud of It); That He Looks Sexier with his Hair in His Eyes (He Doesn’t).*

###### 2. Aiden Vale

*Profile Information  
Age: 22 / Height: 6’  
Birthday – Winter, 1/22, 2:00 A.M.  
Likes – Causing Problems, (Playing with) Knives, Dissecting and Understanding Individuals, Chess, Miso Soup  
Hates – Broken Homes, Broken Glass, Parables, Hypothermia, Being Seen as Weak  
Preferences – Always Going First in Chess / Playing White, Making Hot Chocolate with Milk, Using His Heart  
Believes – In Keeping One’s Word, That He Has a Chance at Heaven (and Scared that it’s True), That He Can Flirt with Anyone and Get Away with It (He Does).*

#### Gameplay Systems

##### Events

###### Friendship Events

Friendship Events are Events that affect the Player Character’s relationship with other Characters. Completing a given Character’s Friendship Events unlocks their Fable Events.

###### Fable Events

Fable Events are Events integral to the overarching themes and narrative elements of the game – affecting everything from the game’s unfolding storyline *in media res*, a Character’s arc within the timeline of the game, a given Character’s backstory Events, to the ending of a given playthrough.

###### Finale Events

Finale Events are conclusory Events that finalize a Character’s arc narratively, platonically, or romantically. Completing a given Character’s Fable Events unlocks their Finale Events. There are three types of Finale Events: Monochromatic, Portrait, and Vignette.

1a. Monochromatic Endings

Monochromatic Endings are Finale Endings that the Player will achieve naturally at the end of a given playthrough. Monochromatic Endings are ones related to the main storyline or Character Backstory. These Endings are not romantic in nature or suggestive in nature. Rather, they emphasize an established bond between the Player Character and individuals of the main cast. Monochromatic Endings can be one of four categories: True, Good, Neutral, or Wrong.

1b. Portrait Endings

Portrait Endings are Finale Endings that the Player will achieve naturally throughout a given playthrough. Though these Endings are from side plots that feed into the main story, they are not directly related to it, nor do they influence it to a significant degree. Instead, Portrait Endings have a specific Character (and any Characters in direct relation to them) as the focal point. The side plots that lead to these types of Endings can be progressed in any order or time, though some will possibly be made available or be blocked off depending on the Player’s progression in the main storyline. These Endings are not purely platonic, nor are they suggestive in nature — though a degree of mutual affection, care, and love is implied.

1c. Vignette Endings

Vignette Endings are Finale Endings that are amorous and intended for mature audiences, though these scenes are not explicit in nature. These Events are entirely optional, and the Player must intentionally choose the dialogue options that pertain to a romantic relationship to receive this type of Event. Monochromatic Events require the prerequisite of a certain level of Friendship that varies by Character. These events will usually occur during the epilogue of the main story.

#### Interacting with the Main Cast

The random pool of possible decision scenarios – Friendship Events – will trigger a given Character’s Events based off friendship level (e.g., the start of class: pay attention vs. focus on Character || during a five-minute break between classes, accepting vs. declining an offered cigarette).

The Player will have a maximum of three or four choices per decision within a Character’s Event. The offered choices will not always be equally divided between love/like/neutral/hate.

Completion of Events will give the Player favour with a given Character (relationship points, -*n*, neutral, +*n*). This point system will be like *Persona 5* and *Dream Daddy*, putting less onus on individual choices and picking the “right” decision.

An Event splits depending on what choices you make, and potentially has more than one time that it’ll split.

###### Example Diagram – Figure 1

An example of a possible event1 can be seen below: A picture containing text, screenshot, font, number

Description automatically generated

Figure

#### Character-Specific Events - Overview

##### Friendship Events

###### Ezekiel’s Friendship Event Scenes

###### Harper’s Friendship Event Scenes

###### Liastra’s Friendship Event Scenes

###### Eva’s Friendship Event Scenes

###### 1a. The Twins

The Twins’ Shared Friendship Event Scenes

Will’s Friendship Event Scenes

Aiden’s Friendship Event Scenes

##### Fable Events

###### Ezekiel's Fable Event Scenes

###### Harper’s Fable Event Scenes

###### Liastra’s Fable Event Scenes

###### Eva’s Fable Event Scenes

###### 1b. The Twins

The Twins’ Shared Fable Event Scenes

Will’s Fable Event Scenes

Aiden’s Fable Event Scenes

##### Finale Events

###### Ezekiel’s Finale Event Scenes

###### Harper’s Finale Event Scenes

###### Liastra’s Finale Event Scenes

###### The Twins’ Finale Event Scenes

###### Eva’s Finale Event Scenes - None - STC

###### 1c. The Twins

The Twins’ Shared Finale Event Scenes

Will’s Finale Event Scenes

Aiden’s Finale Event Scenes

## Intermediary Stage ~ Under Construction

### Player Interaction

#### 1. Gameplay Systems in Relation to User Interaction

##### UI and Customisation

The GUI is the primary bridge between the Player and the game environment. The dialogue text box, in-game menus, interactable icons, Player choice buttons, and Player inventory are all GUI elements that a Player will come across and utilize to play the game. Additionally, the Player can change the UI visuals to better immerse themselves in the role of the Player Main Character.

##### Mouse Events

The Player’s primary method of interaction with both the scene environment and foreground elements that facilitate gameplay. In this context, Mouse Events are defined as the point-and-click actions the player takes throughout the game, including but not limited to: clicking on (and, therefore, interacting with) elements/items within a scene’s environment; mouse-hovering over dialogue options to select the desired response; clicking a dialogue option on a choice screen; clicking on displayables or the narrative/dialogue text box; scrolling their mouse wheel to rollback or roll forward lines; or clicking out-of-game options (quick load, quick save, history, toggle auto-forward mode, etc).

##### Dialogue Options

Dialogue options are the primary way the Player will influence the overall narrative, character development, and direction of their playthroughs. The ability to make certain choices may fluctuate or be excluded throughout the course of the game, depending on where a player is in the main story.

##### Interactable Objects and Items

Interactable objects and items are an essential part of gameplay, though entirely optional. These interactables give the Player more insight into the nature of the story or a character, as well as potentially influence the latter’s arc – which may effectively change the Ending a Player gets entirely.

#### 2. Dormitory Rooms

Each Character, including the Player Character has a dormitory room. These dormitory rooms serve as a separate, more personal area for a Player to interact with a given Character, and a central hub for the Player, respectively.

##### a. The Player’s Dorm Room

[The Player's Dorm Room](https://d.docs.live.net/22552548da4ace26/Desktop/PR/Coding/OA%20Planning%20Documentation/Dorm%20Rooms/The%20Player's%20Dorm%20Room.docx)

##### b. Character Dorm Rooms

[i. Ezekiel’s Dorm Room](https://d.docs.live.net/22552548da4ace26/Desktop/PR/Coding/OA%20Planning%20Documentation/Dorm%20Rooms/Ezekiel's%20Dorm%20Room.docx)

[ii. Harper’s Dorm Room](https://d.docs.live.net/22552548da4ace26/Desktop/PR/Coding/OA%20Planning%20Documentation/Dorm%20Rooms/Harper's%20Dorm%20Room.docx)

iii. Liastra’s Dorm Room

iv. Eva’s Dorm Room

v. [The Twin’s Dorm Room](https://d.docs.live.net/22552548da4ace26/Desktop/PR/Coding/OA%20Planning%20Documentation/Dorm%20Rooms/The%20Twins'%20Dorm%20Room.docx) ~ Incomplete

##### c. Other Dormitory Areas

i. The RA’s Dorm Room

ii. Dormitory Common Area

iii. Laundry / Lavatories

## Conclusory Stage

### ~Under Construction

# Storyboarding ~ Under Construction

## Characterization ~ Under Construction

### Character Personalities

### Character Backstories

### Character Relations

#### Ezekiel’s Relationships

#### Harper’s Relationships

#### Liastra’s Relationships

#### Eva’s Relationships

#### The Twins’ Shared Relationships

## VFX ~ Under Construction

### Character Visuals

### User GUI

### Character Interface and Dialogue

Each Character has their own text colour, text font, and UI colour palette (their name above the dialogue text, the dialogue box border, when the mouse hovers over dialogue choices).

## SFX ~ Under Construction

### Character Themes

### Environmental Themes

### SFX On Mouse Event

## Narrative Elements ~ Under Construction

### Plot

### Timeline of Events

### Main Storyline

### Character Storylines and Backstory

### Character Themes and Inspirations

### Overarching Themes

# Concepts and Ideas Under Review

## Gameplay Systems and Mechanics

### Scheduling Classes and Dorm Placement

1. An academic advisor gives the quiz to determine the Character’s class schedule. This mechanic is not entirely necessary; just having the stats works, but the quiz can act as a test run for the relationship system.
2. The use of an additional quiz to figure out who to put the PC by, dorm-room wise (at the end of the hall away from the cast members, to the far left/right of one room but in the corner, in-between two rooms. Adds replayability through giving more events with certain Characters over others. Potentially unnecessary.

### Changing POV

1. Parts of the story from another Character's perspective will likely be cutscenes/flashbacks of important events. I'd ideally like to have choices within these flashbacks, but these choices won't affect the main story too much (i.e., still be important within the scope of the main story, but not overtly change it).
2. The implementation of a Player Character sprite; depends on if some branches will be from another Character’s perspective. Will likely add a whole truckload of variables.

## Romantic and Suggestive Endings

Unsure about adding endings that are Mature, if only implied. Some Players may be aro&/ace.

## GUI

Allow the Player to customize their UI to a minor degree out of a small pool of options: handwriting choice, and two colour choices (one for text, one pastel shade for their UI background).