Outland Haven

Game Design Document

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1. Introduction

This Game Design Document outlines the vision for *Outland Haven*, a 2D isometric survival and resource management game with RPG and Rogue Lite elements developed as a bachelor's final project. The game emphasizes mechanical design over visuals and explores the tension between safety and risk through a town-building and exploration loop. It is intended to showcase thoughtful game systems, progression, and meaningful player decisions.

1.1 Overview

Outland Haven is a single-player 2D isometric game where the player manages a small town as a safe haven while venturing into dangerous, resource-rich territories. The game blends resource gathering, crafting, and strategic upgrades with survival challenges and exploration.
The core gameplay loop involves building up the town, preparing expeditions, and taking calculated risks to obtain rare materials outside the safe zone, all while managing limited resources and permanent consequences.

- **Target Audience:** Indie gamers, fellow students, and players who enjoy system-driven gameplay focused on mechanics over visuals. Fans of survival, crafting, and exploration genres.
- **Genre:** Combat, Survival, Resource Management, Adventure, Light RPG, RogueLite
- **Theme:** Risk vs. Safety, Isolation, Progress through Exploration.

2. Game Concept

This is a 2D isometric action RPG game focused on combat, exploration, and upgrading as long-term progression. The player begins in a town, which acts as a safe area ("Haven") where they can craft, upgrade, and prepare for ventures into the overworld. Progression requires venturing into the hostile overworld outside of the safe haven to fight enemies, gather resources, and complete objectives before returning safely to the town. The core gameplay loop consists of preparing in the town then exploring and fighting in dangerous areas and afterwards returning to upgrade the player and the town.

Failure during an expedition can result in the loss of a portion of the collected resources, creating tension and meaningful risk during exploration. Over time, repeated successful runs strengthen the player's capabilities and expand the town, enabling deeper exploration and more challenging encounters.

2.1 Core Gameplay Mechanics and Dynamics

The gameplay systems are built around a hub-and-expedition structure, combining procedural exploration with persistent progression.

- Resource gathering, crafting, and upgrading – players collect resources from enemies, environments, and points of interest during expeditions. These resources are used in the town to craft equipment, upgrade abilities, and unlock improvements.
- Exploration based combat and loot collection – combat encounters occur throughout the procedurally generated overworld. Players are encouraged to explore to discover enemies, loot, and challenges that rewards riskier play.
- Risk-reward loop – the town acts as a guaranteed safe zone, while areas beyond the borders introduce escalating danger. The farther the player ventures, the greater the potential rewards, and the higher the risk of losing collected resources
- Character progression and town development – progression occurs on two levels: strengthening the player character through gear and abilities and expanding or improving the town to unlock new upgrades, crafting opinions, or gameplay features.
- Light permadeath and punishment mechanics – death does not fully reset the game state but results in partial loss of expedition-specific progress. Core upgrades, unlocked systems, and town progression persist between runs, maintaining forward momentum while preserving tension.

2.2 Unique Features

- Procedural but finite world design – the overworld is procedurally generated within fixed boundaries rather than being infinite. This allows for large-scale exploration and replayability while maintaining intentional pacing, controlled difficulty progression, and clear world structure.
- Persistent town as a progression anchor – unlike traditional roguelites where progression is primarily character-based, the town functions as a permanent anchor that evolves over time. Town upgrades unlock new mechanics, crafting options, and preparation advantages that persist across runs.
- Risk-Reward exploration loop with partial loss – expeditions outside the town introduce meaningful risk through partial resource loss on death. Players must constantly decide how far to push into dangerous areas before returning, creating tension without fully resetting long-term progress.
- Separation of preparation and execution – gameplay is deliberately split between low-pressure preparation in the town and high-pressure execution during expeditions. This contrast reinforces strategic planning, loadout decisions, and player agency before committing to risk.

2.3 Inspiration and References

Minecraft – resource gathering and crafting

Path of Exile 2 – loot variety, enemies, and itemization

Valheim – world generation

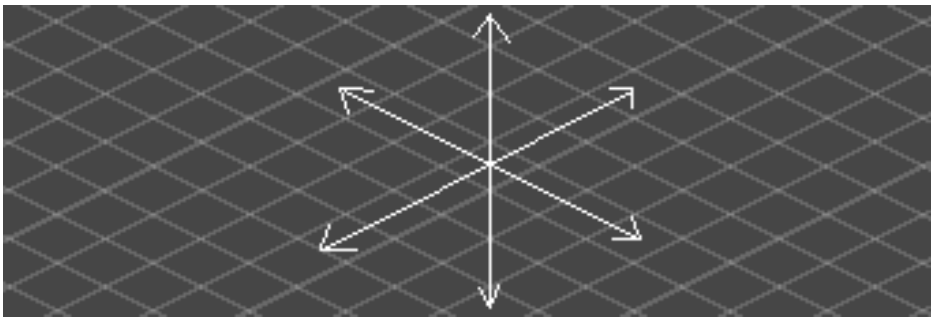
Darkest Dungeon – planning, safe hub vs. overworld

Some of the visual examples from other games

3. Mechanics and Controls

3.1 Player Controls

- **Movement:** 8-directional movement in an isometric view using the keyboard (WASD).



- **Interaction/Action:** Press **E** to interact with objects, pick up items, or activate context-sensitive actions.
- **Combat:**
    - **Attack:** Shoot an arrow towards the mouse position using the Left Mouse Button.
    - **Dodge:** Dash in the current movement direction using the Left Shift.

- **Menu Access:** Inventory (I), Map (M), Pause (Esc).

3.2 Combat System

3.2.1. Player Capabilities

The player character is designed as a ranged-focused combatant, with combat centered on positioning, timing, and spatial awareness rather than close-range engagements. Combat effectiveness relies on maintaining distance, managing movement, and choosing when to commit or disengage from encounters.

- Primary Action (Ranged Attack): The player‘s primary and only offensive capability is ranged combat using a bow and arrows. Attacks are aimed freely toward the mouse cursor, emphasizing player accuracy and positioning.
- Mobility Skill (Dash): The player can perform a fast- short-distances dash to reposition quickly and evade incoming attacks. This ability is the main defensive tool available during combat and is essential for surviving encounters.
- Defensive Timing and Invulnerability: the player’s dash grants a short window of invulnerability, allowing skilled players to avoid damage through timing. Cooldown duration and resource costs associated with the dash are used as primary balancing mechanisms to prevent excessive use and encourage deliberate decision making.
- Abilities: the abilities are unlocked by investing resources in town/player upgrades and by reaching progression milestones during exploration. These abilities enhance arrow behaviour and firing patterns. They are accessed during combat via specific dedicated inputs.

3.2.2. Weapon Tiers and Elemental Bows

The player character’s versatility is driven by weapon progression, allowing bows to be both upgraded and replaced over time. While the player is strictly limited to bow-based combat, different bows introduce distinct combat behaviors, encouraging experimentation and adaptation to different encounter types.

Bows are differentiated through tiers and functional variants, which affect projectile behavior, damage patterns, and situational effectiveness.

- **Starter Bow:** an extremely weak and unreliable bow intended for early gameplay. It features slow arrow output, poor accuracy, and low damage, reinforcing the need for progression and upgrades.
- **Standard Bow:** a balanced and reliable weapon that offers consistent damage output and stable handling. Designed as a dependable option for sustained combat and general encounters.
- **Specialized Bow Variants:** certain bows introduce modified projectile behaviors and additional effects. These bows include:
    - **Lightning Bow:** arrows deal impact damage and chain between nearby enemies, prioritizing multi-target engagement.
    - **Fire Bow:** arrows apply area-of-effect damage on impact, emphasizing area denial and crowd control
    - **Poison Bow:** applies an effect which ticks on the enemy over-time dealing damage

These specialized variants prioritize crowd control, area coverage, or multi-target damage over single-target consistency.

Specialized Bow Unique Abilities: specialized bows have unique abilities which make them useful in different scenarios (exact numerical values and final ability behavior are subject to balance iteration)

- **Lightning Bow:**
  - Unique Skill - Rain: the bow charges up and shoots a circle area-of-effect which rains down lightning and deals high damage
- **Fire Bow:**
  - Unique Skill - Fireball: the bow ejects a massive fire bubble which deals damage to anyone that touches it and leaves them burning
- **Poison Bow:**
  - Unique Skill - Poison Puddle: the bow creates a puddle on the ground on which if stepped on the enemy gets poisoned, already poisoned enemies take x% more damage

Weapon upgrades improve a bow‘s base effectiveness, such as damage output, firing behavior, or interaction with abilities, while acquiring new bows provides access to fundamentally different combat patterns. This system supports long-term progression while maintaining a focused, bow-centric combat identity without expanding the weapon type roster.

3.2.3 Enemy Roles (Archetypes)

Enemies encountered in dangerous zones are categorized into combat archetypes, each defined by a distinct threat profile and battlefield role. These archetypes are designed to pressure the player‘s positioning, timing, and ability usage, forcing strategic use of evasive movement and specialized bows.

- **Melee Archetype:** Closes distance quickly and applies high burst damage at close range. This archetype forces the player to disengage frequently using evasive movement and maintain proper spacing.
- **Ranged Archetype:** Maintains distance and attacks from range, applying consistent chip damage over time. Players are encouraged to use manoeuvrability, line-of-sight control, and positioning to neutralize this threat.
- **Tank Archetype:** Slow-moving enemies with high health and defensive capabilities. Designed to absorb damage and occupy the player’s attention, requiring sustained damage output or specialized weapon choices to clear efficiently.
- **Fast Archetype:** Enemies with very high movement speed and attack frequency but low on health. Their purpose is to disrupt the player’s rhythm and punish stationary firing, force movement.

As the player progresses through the game, difficulty escalation is achieved by introducing variants of these core archetypes. These variants build upon the same behavioral foundations

while increasing challenge through adjusted statistics (such as health, damage, and speed) and limited combat modifiers (elemental resistance, temporary defensive effects).

3.3 Economy

The game's economy is structured around a closed-loop, town-centered system designed to reinforce risk-reward gameplay and long-term progression. All economic activity is anchored in the town and fuelled by resources gathered during expeditions into dangerous areas.
The economy is built on four core resources, each with a distinct purpose and role within progression systems.

3.3.1 Core Resources

- **Food**

Food represents the town's sustainability and operational capacity. It is required for key town services, including weapon crafting and gear enhancement. Food is produced over time by the farm and is not directly obtained from enemies.

- **Money**

Money is a flexible currency used primarily for crafting, repairing, and upgrading equipment. It is obtained by defeating enemies or by selling materials at the smith.

- **Material**

Materials are gathered exclusively from enemies and the overworld. Materials are required for crafting, repairing, and upgrading equipment. They can also be sold for money, creating a decision between immediate currency and long-term progression.

- **Knowledge (XP)**

Knowledge represents the player's accumulated combat experience. It is earned by defeating enemies over time and is used exclusively for permanent gear upgrades through the gear enhancer. Unlike other resources, knowledge cannot be traded or lost.

3.3.2 Town Infrastructure

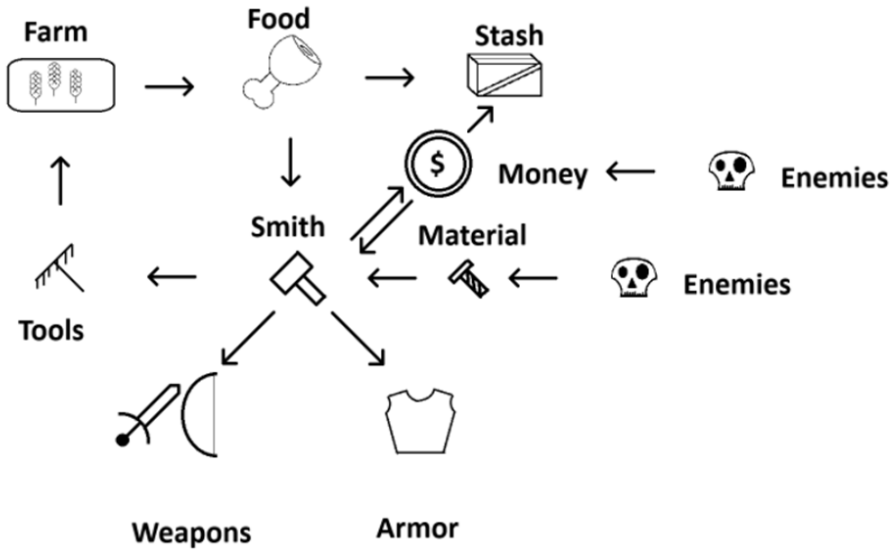
- **Farm**

The farm produces food passively over time, serving as the backbone of the town's economy. The farm requires tools crafted at the smith to remain operational, linking food production directly to equipment progression.

- **Stash**

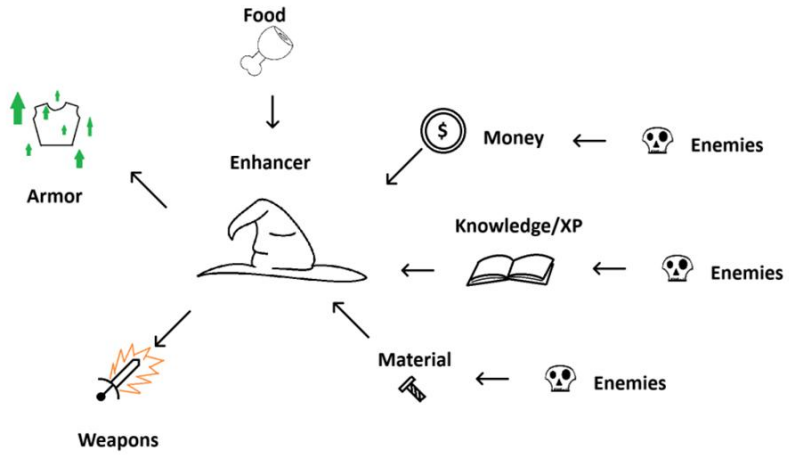
The stash is a permanent, town-only storage system used to hold resources and items between expeditions. It is separate from the player's active inventory and has unlimited capacity, ensuring that long-term progression resources are never lost.

- **Smith**



The smith is responsible for crafting and repairing weapons and armour. Smithing operations consume food to function and require money and materials to perform crafting or repairs. This system reinforces preparation and upkeep before expeditions.

- **Gear Enhancer**



The gear enhancer provides permanent upgrades to weapons and armour, such as increased damage, attack speed, or defensive attributes. Enhancements consume Knowledge (XP), money, and materials, and require food to operate. This system represents long-term investment and progression rather than short-term power spikes.

3.3.3 Economic Flow and Design Intent

Enemies serve as the primary source of money, materials, and knowledge, making combat the central driver of economic progression. These resources are funnelled back into the town, where food-gated systems regulate how much progression can occur at any given time.
This structure ensures that:

- Riskier expeditions yield faster progression
- Town development directly enables combat growth
- Players must balance immediate upgrades against long-term sustainability

The economy is designed to support strategic decision-making, reinforce the importance of returning to town, and maintain tension between progression and survival.

3.4 Loot and Inventory

Loot is a primary driver of progression and risk-reward decision-making. Resources and items obtained during expeditions directly fuel character growth, equipment upgrades, and town functionality.

3.4.1 Loot Types

Defeated enemies in the overworld drop essential progression resources that are collected automatically upon defeat (Knowledge (XP), materials, money)
In addition to these resources, enemies and points of interest may drop equipment or items, which are physically represented in the world and must be manually picked up by the player. This distinction reinforces moment-to-moment risk during exploration and encourages deliberate looting decisions.

3.4.2 Main Inventory (Safe Haven Storage)

The main inventory serves as the player’s permanent, large-capacity storage system for all equipment, items, and crafting resources. It is only accessible within the safe haven, primarily in the town hub, and functions as the game’s long-term progression repository.
Items stored in the main inventory are persistent and protected from loss, reinforcing the importance of returning safely from expeditions.

3.4.3 Personal Stash (Limited Active Storage)

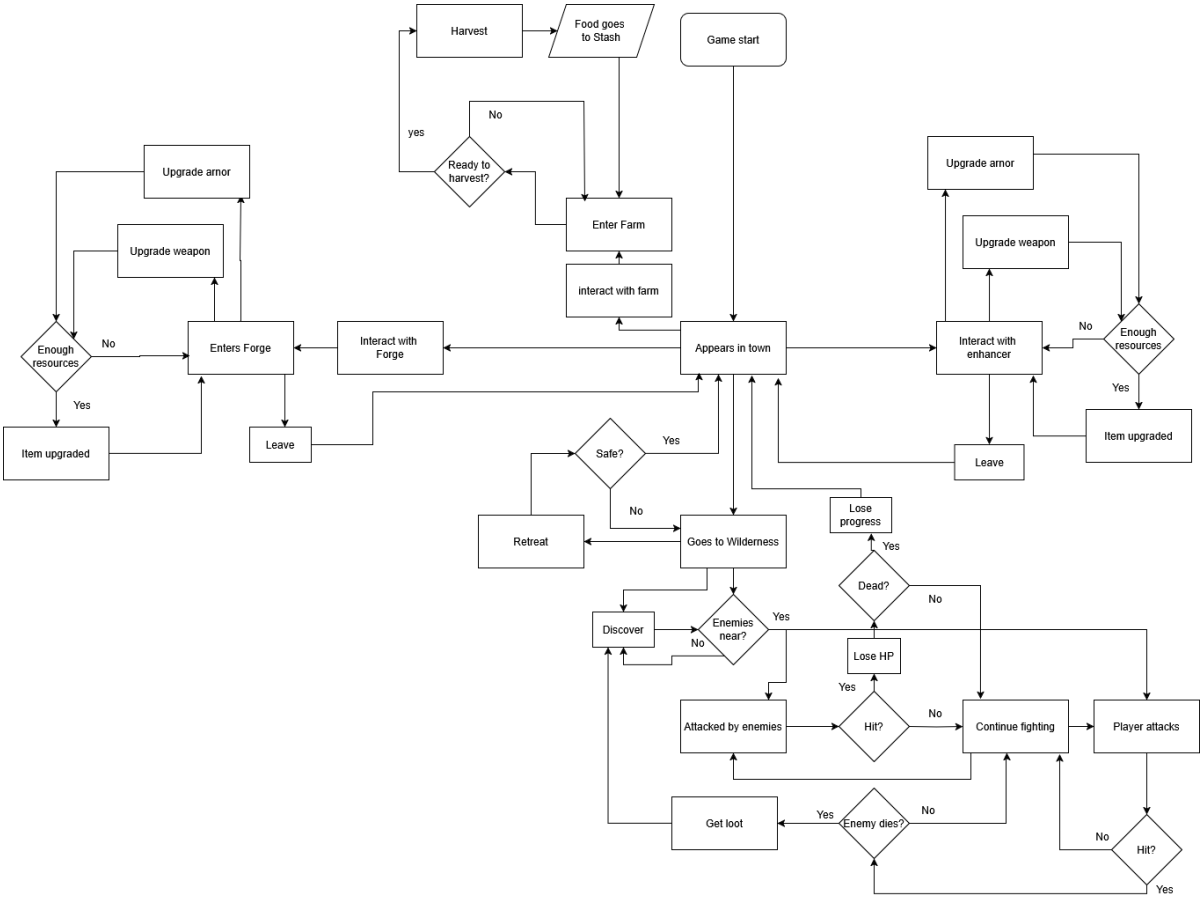
While exploring the overworld, the player is limited to a personal stash with a fixed number of slots. This stash represents the player's active carrying capacity during an expedition.

- Items placed in the personal stash occupy limited space.
- To permanently secure items, players must return to a safe zone and transfer them to the main inventory.

Managing stash space is a core risk-reward mechanic, forcing players to decide whether to push further or return early. This system creates tension during exploration and reinforces the importance of planning, prioritization, and safe extraction.

4. Game World, Levels, and Environments

4.1 Flow Chart



4.1.1 Enemies

Enemies exist exclusively within the overworld and remain passive until the player enters their aggro range. Once engaged, enemy behavior is determined by their archetype. Melee enemies attempt to close distance and attack at close range, while ranged enemies maintain distance and apply pressure through projectile-based attacks. All enemies are defeatable and despawn immediately upon death, droping loot such as current or crafting materials.

4.1.2 The Overworld (Danger Zone)

The overworld is the game's primary combat and resource-gathering environment, accessed via teleportation from the Town Hub. The core gameplay loop within these zones consists of entering an area, engaging enemies, collecting loot, and returning safely to town.

The overworld is governed by high risk. Player death results in:

- Respawn in the Town Hub.
- A percentage loss of carried items in the Personal Stash

To prevent excessive resource accumulation during a single expedition, the player's active inventory space is intentionally limited. This constraint encourages careful planning and promotes shorter, focused expeditions rather than prolonged farming sessions.

Different overworld distinct areas have environment specific points of interest, enemies. This incentivizes the player to explore multiple areas and adapt to them.

4.1.3 Town

The Town functions as a permanent safe hub (haven) and progression anchor. Within the Town, players can store resources, manage inventory, repair or upgrade equipment, and maintain essential infrastructure.

The Main Inventory, which provides massive storage, is only accessible within the Town. Players interact with the Smith to craft and repair weapons using money and materials, while the Gear Enhancer allows permanent stat upgrades through the use of XP, money, and materials.

The Farm produces food over time, which is required to keep town services operational. The Farm depends on tools crafted by the Smith, linking food production directly to progression and equipment management.

4.2 Progression

4.2.1 Player Progression

Player progression is built on two core pillars: character leveling and equipment progression. Advancement is driven by combat and exploration within the overworld, where players gather resources and experience. All permanent progression actions such as leveling up, upgrading equipment, and unlocking enhancements take place exclusively within the safety of the Town.

This structure reinforces the hub -> explore -> upgrade -> repeat loop.

4.2.2 Character Leveling

As players defeat enemies and complete objectives, they earn Knowledge (XP). Accumulating sufficient XP increases the player's character level, directly improving core attributes such as survivability and combat effectiveness.

Character leveling provides a consistent sense of growth across all playstyles and serves as the baseline progression system that complements equipment-based power gains.

4.2.3 Equipment Upgrades

Equipment progression is a central source of player power and is handled entirely within the Town through two specialized facilities. Weapons and armor are upgraded as complete units

rather than individual components, emphasizing meaningful, long-term investment.

- **The Smith**

The Smith focuses on improving the fundamental attributes of weapons and armor. By spending materials and money, players can enhance properties such as:

- Raw damage
- Attack speed
- Armor amount

Access to higher-tier upgrades is gated through progression requirements, such as reaching certain milestones, acquiring rare materials, or defeating particularly challenging enemies. This ensures that power increases are earned through gameplay rather than pure accumulation.

- **The Gear Enhancer**

The Gear Enhancer specializes in unlocking and improving special weapon effects and abilities. Using XP, materials, and money, players can:

- Unlock new weapon abilities
- Enhance existing effects

This system allows players to specialize their equipment and tailor their combat style without expanding the weapon type roster.

4.2.4 The Progression Cycle

The core progression loop follows a clear and repeatable structure: players travel to the overworld to gather XP and resources, return to Town to upgrade their character and equipment, and then re-enter the world to face increasingly difficult challenges.

As exploration progresses, players unlock checkpoints within the overworld that enable fast travel. These checkpoints reduce traversal friction and improve expedition efficiency, encouraging deeper exploration while preserving risk during combat encounters.

5. Story and Narrative

The game's narrative is designed to support and contextualize the gameplay systems rather than drive them rigidly. While the full story is not fixed, a foundational narrative framework is established to guide tone, setting, and progression, with flexibility for refinement as development continues.

5.1 Narrative Premise

The player character once lived within a larger kingdom that ruled the surrounding lands. For reasons that are intentionally left undefined, the player is cast out of the kingdom and forced to survive on the outskirts of its territory. With nowhere else to go, the player settles in an abandoned, ruined town located near the edge of the overworld.

There, the player encounters a lone resident - a Guide NPC - who has survived in isolation for a long time. The town is barren, broken, and largely forgotten. The player begins with minimal resources, a damaged shelter and only a bow and arrows to defend themselves.

Rather than seeking immediate revenge or truth, the player chooses to rebuild and endure.

5.2 World Context

The overworld surrounding the town is not inherently hostile by nature. It is a resource-rich land that has become dominated by monsters and dangerous creatures. These monsters do not actively attack towns or kingdoms. Instead, they occupy and consume the land, making resource retrieval dangerous and contested.

To reclaim materials, food, and knowledge from the overworld, the player must confront these enemies directly. Combat and exploration are therefore framed as acts of survival and reclamation rather than conquest.

5.3 Town as Narrative Progression

As the player gathers resources and strengthens the town, new NPCs gradually arrive. These characters such as the Smith and Gear Enhancer are individuals who were lost, displaced, or similarly rejected by the kingdom. Their arrival is tied to town progression rather than scripted events.

Over time, the abandoned settlement transforms into a functioning community capable of withstanding the dangers of the overworld. The town becomes a refuge for those without a place elsewhere, a haven beyond the kingdom’s reach.

This growing settlement is what becomes known as Outland Haven.

5.4 Narrative Flexibility

Specific motivations behind the player’s exile, the kingdom’s true nature, and the broader state of the world are intentionally left ambiguous. These elements are designed to be expanded, revised, or clarified as development progresses and as gameplay systems mature.

The narrative is meant to emerge alongside progression, reinforcing themes of resilience, rebuilding, and quiet defiance rather than following a fixed, linear storyline.

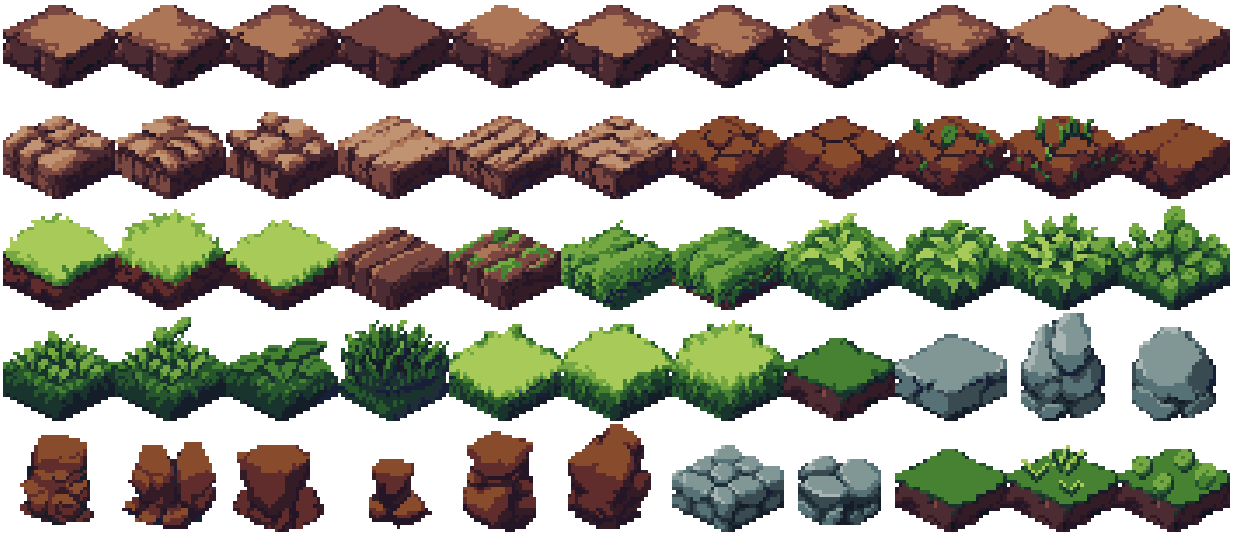
6. Visual Style and Assets

6.1 Visual Style and Art Direction

The game adopts a minimalist pixel art style that prioritizes clarity, readability, and gameplay feedback over visual complexity. Visual elements are designed to clearly communicate game states, threats, and interactions rather than emphasize ornamental detail.

- **Perspective**: 2D isometric projection
- **Resolution**: Low-res tiles and sprites (e.g., (mainly)32x32, 64x64 pixels)
- **Color palette**: Limited palette with high contrast for visibility
- **Animation**: Minimal or single-frame animations where necessary (e.g., movement, interaction feedback)
- **Priority**: Clarity of mechanics and feedback loops over visual fidelity

This visual direction supports efficient asset production while maintaining a cohesive and readable presentation suitable for a system-driven action RPG.



6.2 Concept Art and Design

The visual presentation is designed to remain cohesive across all areas, with a consistent art style, palette logic, and level of detail throughout the world. Rather than relying on drastic visual shifts, differences between locations are communicated through subtle environmental cues and layout changes.

The Town and surrounding areas share the same visual language, reinforcing the idea that they belong to the same world rather than existing as separate visual spaces. Variations in tone are achieved through lighting, density, and structure rather than changes in style.

- **Town (Safe Area):**

More open layouts, clearer silhouettes, and calmer compositions that support navigation, planning, and interaction. The town appears stable and structured, reflecting its role as a safe hub.

- **The Overworld:**

Denser environments, tighter paths, and more obstructed sightlines that increase tension and reinforce combat-focused gameplay. Visual complexity is increased through layout and enemy presence rather than darker palettes and stylistic shifts.

This approach ensures that players intuitively sense changes in risk and gameplay focus while maintaining a unified visual identity across the entire world.

6.3 Asset List (Minimal and Expandable)

The asset pipeline is intentionally modular and minimal, allowing for rapid iteration and scalability as development progresses. The following list represents the minimum viable asset set, with room for expansion.

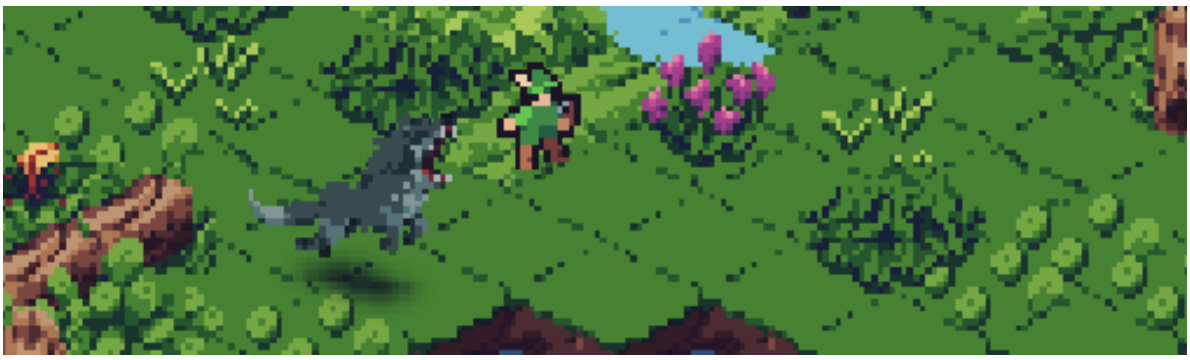
Characters

- Player sprite
- Basic enemy sprites

Some of the Enemy examples

Environment

- Ground tiles
- Structures
- Nature elements



Objects & UI

- Collectibles
- Crafting station icons
- Health/resource bars
- Simple inventory icons

6.4 Generative AI Tools Plan

AI-generated visuals (e.g., concept art, placeholder sprites) may be used in early development for:

- Mockups
- Visualizing game feel
- Presentation slides

Final in-game assets will be either original or from permissively licensed open-source pixel packs.

7. User Interface (UI) and User Experience (UX)

7.1 In-Game Menu Layout and Design

The user interface is designed to be minimal, readable, and efficient, prioritizing fast navigation and low cognitive load. Menus are primarily keyboard-driven, with mouse input supported.

Menus include:

- **Main Menu** – New Game, Continue, Settings, Exit
- **Pause Menu** – Resume, Save, Load, Exit to Menu
- **Inventory/Crafting Screen** – Grid-based, tabbed layout, showing:
    - Item slots (with icons, quantities)
    - Crafting recipes (selectable with feedback)
    - Equipment (player upgrades or tools)

Navigation will be based on arrow/WASD keys and confirm/cancel inputs (e.g., Enter, Esc).

7.2 HUD (Heads-Up Display) Elements

The HUD will display only the most essential information to avoid distracting the player:

- **Health bar** (bottom left)
- **Inventory quick slots or tool belt** (bottom)
- **Resource counters** (money, materials, etc.) with small icons
- **Area indicator** (e.g., “Town”, “Overworld”) with subtle color-coded zone bar
- **Abilities** and their cooldowns

The HUD adapts slightly depending on the area, for example, showing combat stats or threat levels when outside the town.

7.3 User Interaction and Feedback

Player input will follow a responsive and clean design:

- **Keyboard** WASD for movement, E for interact, I for inventory, etc.
- **Mouse** for aiming and shooting projectiles.
- **Visual feedback for:**
    - Successful collection or interaction (e.g., popup or color flash)
    - Errors (e.g., grayed-out button, sound cue)
    - Damage taken (screen flash or shake effect)
- **Context-sensitive interactions**: prompt when near objects or structures (e.g., “Press E to harvest”)

7.4 Cut-Scenes and Narrative Presentation

Narrative presentation is intentionally lightweight. Cutscenes are minimal and primarily text or dialogue-driven, supported by static imagery or stylized transitional screens where appropriate. This approach maintains narrative clarity while remaining compatible with the project’s scope and visual direction.

8. Audio Design

Audio is used to support gameplay clarity, feedback, and atmosphere. The sound design focuses on reinforcing player actions, communicating game states, and providing ambient context for exploration and combat.

8.1 Sound Effects

Sound effects are applied consistently across all core interactions:

- Player actions (movement, attacks, abilities, dodging)
- Enemy actions (attacks, hits, death)
- Environmental interactions (resource collection, crafting, town facilities)
- User interface feedback (menu navigation, confirmations, errors)

Sound cues are designed to be clear and readable, ensuring that important events are communicated effectively without overwhelming the player.

8.2 Ambient Audio

Environmental audio provides a subtle atmosphere in both the Town and Overworld. Ambient sounds are used to establish a sense of place and reinforce the world's tone without relying on complex layering or constant musical presence.

Differences between areas are conveyed through variations in ambient sound density rather than drastic changes in audio style.

8.3 Music

Background music is used sparingly to support immersion and pacing. Music may shift between calmer themes in the Town and more tense or subdued tracks during exploration and combat.

The focus is on maintaining atmosphere without distracting from gameplay or overstimulating the player.

8.4 Audio Scope and Assets

Audio assets will be sourced from original compositions, permissively licensed libraries, or open-source resources, with consistent volume balancing and mixing applied across all sound categories.

The audio system is designed to be complete and functional, covering all expected game interactions.

9. Monetisation

The game will follow a fixed-price model with no in-game purchases or microtransactions.

10. Multiplayer Features

The game is a single-player experience with no multiplayer, networking, or co-op features planned.

11. Testing and Quality Assurance

Testing and quality assurance focus on maintaining a stable, reliable core gameplay loop that supports continued development and iteration. Ensuring system stability is prioritised over feature breadth, allowing new mechanics and content to be added without introducing critical regressions.

Testing is conducted primarily through regular manual playtesting throughout development. Both developers continuously test gameplay systems during implementation to identify bugs, balance issues, and usability problems early.

Identified issues are logged in a shared issue tracker (Trello) and categorized. Critical gameplay-breaking bugs are addressed immediately.

The overall goal of the QA process is to maintain a clean and stable foundation ensuring that the game remains playable, consistent, and resilient as systems evolve.

12. Marketing and Promotion

The game is targeted toward indie game players, fellow students, and players who enjoy action-oriented exploration, combat, and resource management with an emphasis on gameplay systems and replayability.

Marketing efforts will focus on low-cost, community-driven channels, including social media platforms, indie game forums, and student or academic communities. Development updates, gameplay clips, and demonstrations will be used to communicate the game's core mechanics and progression loop.

Key selling points include:

- A system-driven gameplay loop centered on risk and reward
- Strong replayability through progression and exploration
- A clear distinction between safe hub areas and dangerous combat zones
- A readable, minimalist pixel-art style designed to support gameplay clarity

13. Project Timeline

Starting 2025-09-01 ~ Finishing 2026-06-01. Approximately 9 Months

Pre-Production & Planning (Months 1–2)

This phase focuses on defining the core project vision, scope, and technical foundation. Key activities include finalizing the Game Design Document (GDD), establishing all core game math and systems, and creating initial placeholder assets for prototyping the fundamental gameplay loop (movement and combat).

Production: Asset Creation & Core Gameplay (Months 3–6)

This is the main development phase where the bulk of the game content is created and implemented. The focus shifts to integrating final art assets and animations, building all game levels and environment tilesets, and fully implementing the core RPG systems (inventory, leveling, equipment, and enemy AI).

Alpha & Content Completion (Months 7–9)

This final stage is dedicated to content completion, balancing, and preparing for release. The remaining story elements, final boss fights, and end-game systems are implemented, followed by

extensive bug fixing through internal and external testing. The phase concludes with final polishing, optimization, and preparing the build for distribution.

14. Budget and Resources

Estimated Development Costs

As a student duo project, development relies primarily on free tools and open-source resources, minimizing financial costs. Main costs are related to time investment and potential optional assets.

Item	Estimated Cost
Development Software (IDE, tools)	Free (Visual Studio, Unity, etc.)
Art and Sound Assets	Free/Open source
Personal Computer and Peripherals	Already owned
Paid Assets or Tools	~€0–300 (if needed)

Resource Allocation

- **Time**: Duo development over 9 months.
- **Personnel**: Two people (both programmers, designers, planners)
- **Technology**:
    - **Programming**: C#, Unity
    - **Graphics**: Simple pixel art (self-made or open-source)
    - **Sound**: Free libraries
    - **Version Control**: Git (GitHub)