

Kyūketsuki

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Gameplay Elements

Elements Table

Feature	Explanation	Implementation
Interaction and control	The player must control a game “avatar”, which could be a character or a vehicle	Interactions with environment and enemies: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attack light• Attack heavy• Suck blood• Stealth kill• Combo• Sleep• Take cover

Movement	The game should involve moving around an environment	Several different methods of movement can be used, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crouching and sneaking • Jumping and striking • Sprinting • Vaulting • Moving while attacking
Aim	Something the player is trying to achieve. This could be to solve a puzzle, get to a particular place in the environment, collect a number of "coins" or other collectible, kill all enemies...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entire game aim - Some kind of revenge plot to kill master vampire hunter or something • Each level aim - To get closer to this master/???/something by locating temples on the way that the player can safely stay in during the day
Win condition	A way of actually winning at the game, which is recognised by the game.	Seeking refuge in temples to hide from the incoming daylight
Lose condition	A way of actually failing at the game. This could be some form of avatar death, a timer running out, losing a race, or gaining fewer points than an AI opponent	Predetermined timer running out which will represent the Sun coming up, effectively killing the player if they do not complete the game in time
Cheat	Some way of bypassing or making gameplay considerably easier in order to facilitate testing and demonstration of the full game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level skip codes • Set health and timer limits pregame to see outcomes rather than waiting for them to diminish
Setting	Which drives the environment design	13th Century Japanese forest with temples
Use of setting	Meaningful to the gameplay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Player can use large trees and rocks for cover • Enemies can be hidden in bushes • The temples will act as the end point of the level because the vampire can use it for shade from the incoming daylight

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focus of combat is the wielding of a katana and this weapon served most prominence in early Japan • The mountainous environment of Japan is integral to gameplay as the player is blocked from leaving the area and also the levels follow an uphill trajectory • The large disparity in the samurai code and the code a vampire lives by made the choice of setting the game in samurai-era Japan a necessity
Extra gameplay elements	Which may include enemies, combat, but could be other things, to realise the game idea	<p>2 types of enemies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civilians who can be used for health by sucking their blood • Vampire hunters actively seeking out the player, they will be on patrols
Tactical Choice	Create interesting gameplay	<p>Stealth vs Attack</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stealth - Navigate around the environment killing civilians to keep health high while avoiding vampire hunters patrol pathways and eyelines. Game should reward stealth kills • Attack - Utilise the combat system and engage every target. Game should also reward for combos and brutal kills
Balanced gameplay	In terms of difficulty, resources or any other relevant aspects	As levels progress there will be less temples to seek for winning the game and more enemies will be added, potentially with different attributes such as increased eyeline and stronger weapons/armour

Gameplay Explained

Overview

Background

Kyūketsuki is an extremely unique game where you take control of a vampiric samurai named Suki who attempts to hack and slash their way through the forested outlands of 13th century rural Japan. The game is played from a 3rd person perspective and follows the player as they find conflict in balancing the samurai's orthodox moral code with their new found and deadly vampiric abilities.

Story

Suki's story is one of vengeance. They are traversing the lands to one day get close enough to the vampire that turned them. The samurai code is one of honour and integrity and upon becoming a vampire Suki can no longer pursue this pathway. Suki must feed on the living in order to survive and can no longer abide by their heritage's law.

Level Progression

Upon exploring the tutorial each level is set out as a rural land or an underground cave system with an end goal. The player's goal in each level is to reach the temple which acts as the checkpoint each level and is also a place where the character can hide away from the enemies. The levels progress with a cutscene of the character sleeping, when this has ended the player is launched into the next level exiting the area they just rested in. More often this is a cave entrance.

Display

When in game the player will be presented with many indicators and icons to help them progress through the level.



As seen in the screenshot above HUD shows the time remaining and a health bar.

What is winning?

This section will go into details of how the player can complete levels and the different way this can be accomplished.

Completing a level

In order for the player to complete an individual level they must traverse through to get to one of the temples at the end. This can be shown in this generic series of events:

1. Start point
2. Fight/Sneak around map
3. Try to find temple
4. Enter temple
5. Progress through rest of level
6. Find a cave/ any other end point resting area
7. Move onto next level

Offering the player choice

Within each level the player can reach the end goal in whichever way they want to. This gives the players freedom to play the game how they wish and an approach of either stealth or all out attack are both welcomed.

Stealth

If the player wishes to take the stealth approach then they will be aiming to avoid the enemies lines of sight. The player can also make use of the many different options of movement types and special abilities, such as transforming into a bat. The bat offers the player the option to recon a large area of the map, however this has a cool down operated by stamina. Further the player can use bushes to hide in and perform stealth kills when in this mode.

Attack

However, if the player wishes to face the enemies head on then this is also accommodated for. The player has a large arsenal of attacking methods and a variety of weapon attacks.

Bonuses

If the player takes either approach to the level then they will be rewarded for doing so

Attack Bonus

If the players successfully defeats every enemy in the level then they will be given a large score bonus

Stealth Bonus

If the players successfully completes the level without alerting any guards then they will be given large score bonus

What is losing?

The player can fail to complete a level when certain requirements are met. The main two methods the player can lose is by death and time running out.

Death

If the player takes enough damage and their health bar diminishes then they will die and the level will be over.

Time Limit

If the player fails to complete the level in the time limit given (time before the Sun comes up) then they will die and the level will end.

Environment

Era and Setting

The game is set in the Kamakura Period (1192-1333) of Japan. This is the era in which the Samurai gained prominence. The architecture of this era has influenced the setting of the game to feature temples, farm houses and large mountainous areas.

Use of Setting

This setting's key features have affected gameplay directly to allow the user to lose themselves inside the world

How the player is influenced by era and setting

The player has been equipped with a katana which is the primary weapon of the samurai and thus cements the realism.

How the enemies are influenced by era and setting

Further, the game's era is integral due to the fact that the player would be overwhelmed if the enemies possessed firearms so they have been stripped back to slow-firing crossbows and short-ranged stakes.

How the world is influenced by era and setting

The level design has been undertaken by performing in-depth research on 13th century Japan and rural areas of the country. Mountain ranges, authentic early Japanese architecture and building interiors have all taken influence from this research and each

feature affects gameplay. For example, the mountain ranges provide the player with an inescapable area and the building interiors contain realistic hidden trap doors.

Summary of Demo Levels

The player will only be subjected to 3 different areas in this demo. A tutorial, level 1 and level 10. This array of levels was chosen because it eases the user into the gameplay experience but also shows the jump in difficulty that the finished game will delve into deeper.

Tutorial

To start the game the player will be put into a closed-off tutorial area. This area will allow the player to hone their skills as well as teach them new ones. The walls have controls plastered on the wall in the form of decal posters with an image showing off how they work.

[2 or 3 SCREENSHOTS OF TUTORIAL AREA]

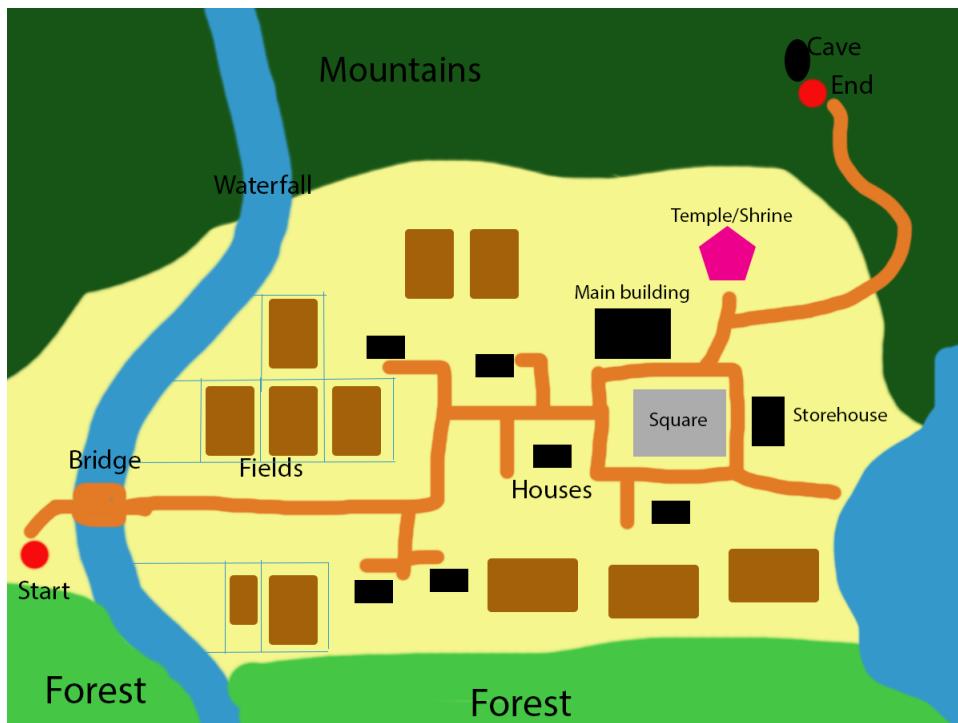
There will be a civilian NPC to allow the player to test out combat and abilities.

There will also be a building and some basic terrain to practice movement controls.

Once the player becomes comfortable with the controls and character, they can simply exit the tutorial through a door which begins the full game and starts the timer off.

Level 1

Level 1 is the first taste of full-fledged gameplay so the player is eased into it by having enemies placed at the end of the level. The level is laid out like this:





As seen here, the map is a large open area with many key features.

To begin the level the player is placed in a safe area where no enemy or civilian can see them, this allows the player to get accustomed to their surroundings and also does not prevent a stealthy approach. This area can be seen below:





As the player progresses the level they will encounter civilians walking about and tending to the fields. This area can be seen below:



Further in the level they will encounter much more enemies as they progress towards the end cave point





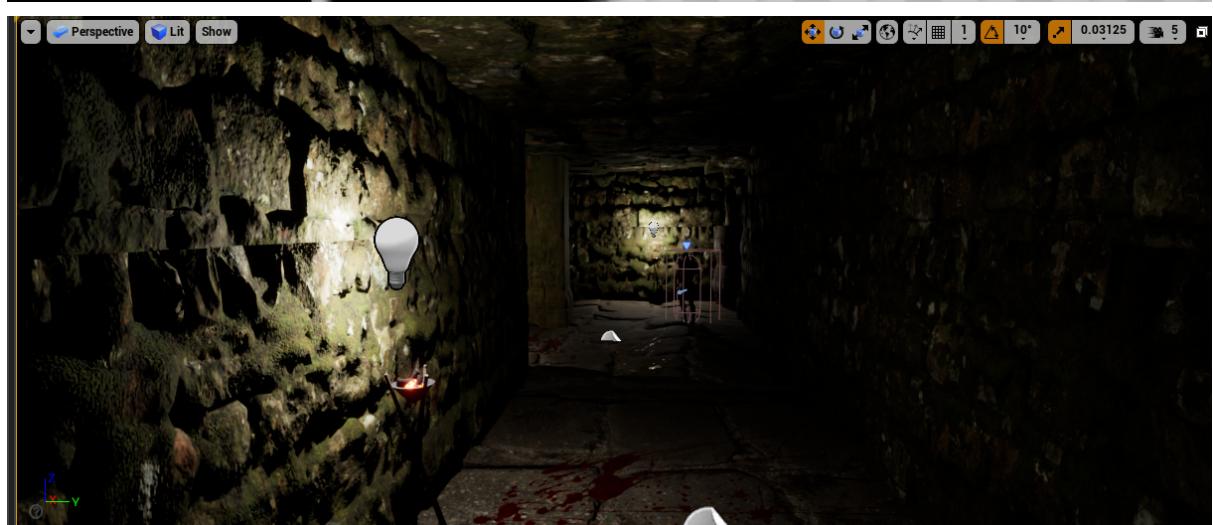
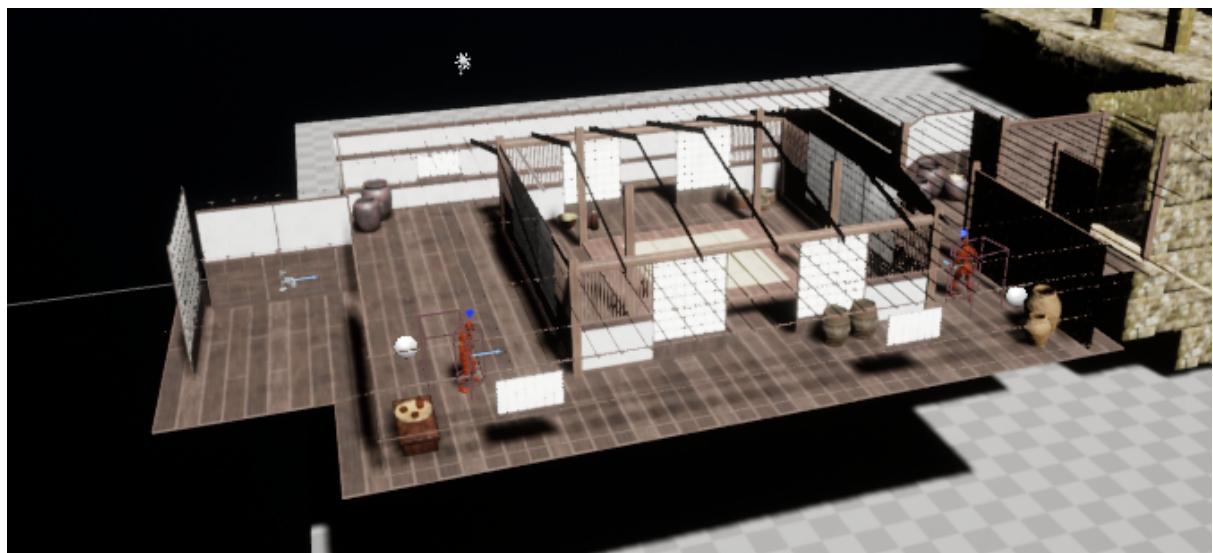
Level 10

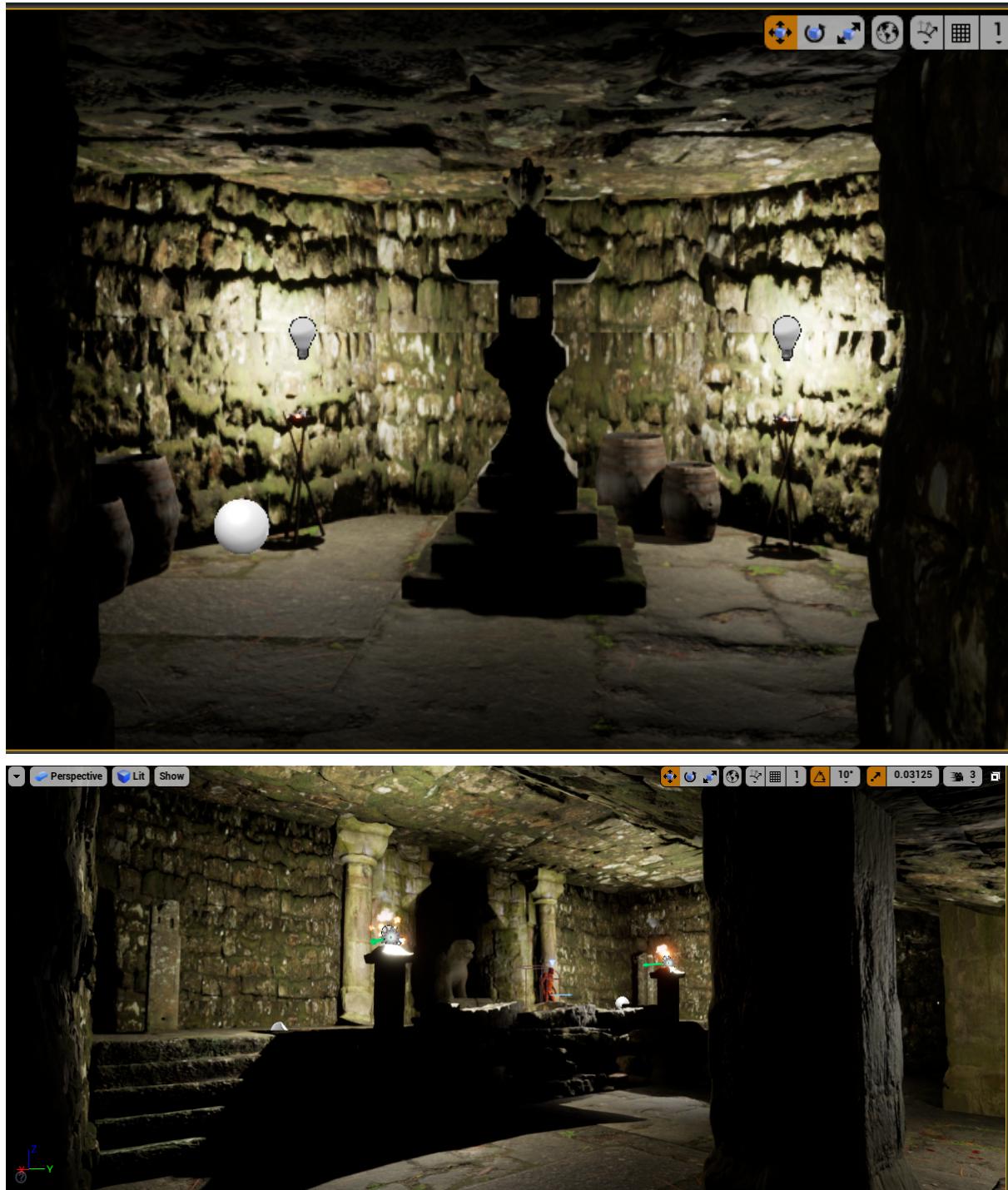
The player will then be sent to level 10, this level will be much more of a challenge than level 1. Enemies will be stronger, the map will be more dense.

The level is laid out like this:



As seen here, the map is a tight inside area with many key features.





Further Levels (beyond the demo)

As this is only a short demo not all the gameplay features and potential new areas can be explored, as well as this no significant story progression is shown.

Levels 2-9

With the addition of levels in between 1 and 10, the player would see progress through the story in a gradual way rather than a large leap like in the demo. Also the jump in difficulty wouldn't be as clear as it is in the demo.

Level 11+

Levels beyond the demo would add many more features, these are listed below:

- A fully fledged story with a conclusion
- Addition of XP bar that would be seen next to HP bar, earned through kills and/or stealth
- Levelling system that can be progressed with XP
- Additional special abilities earned as player levels up
- Additional weapons the player can wield earned as player levels up
- Variety of NPC types, including bosses at end of certain game levels
- Additional NPC features, like new weapons and stronger attacks. Most notably a use of ranged weaponry in crossbows

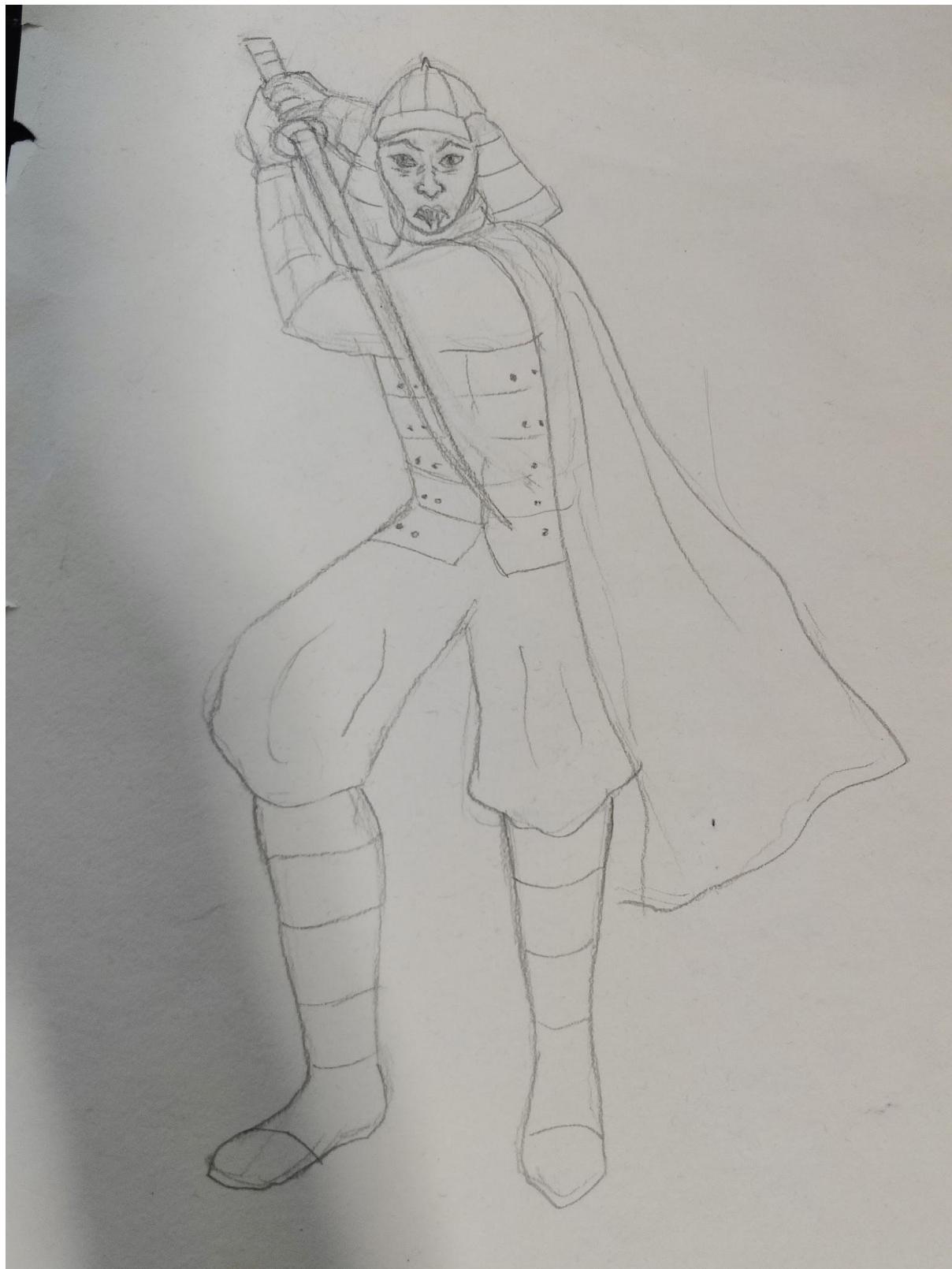
Player - Suki

The protagonist of the story is Suki who the player will control from the third-person perspective. This character has had time spent on their design, movement and combat.

Character Design

The character design has been taken from hand-drawn concept art, to researching similar models, to finally looking at 3D rendered mannequins to use as a skin in Unreal.

Concept Art



Online Art



3D Model



Movement

The movement of the character has been influenced by various other games in the Eastern hack 'n' slash genre, such as Dark Souls and Ghost of Tsushima. This is because the player should feel heavy in their shogun armour and feel the weight of the sword they wield. However, being a vampire, the movement for abilities synonymous with the mythical creature have been made buttery-smooth to maintain the disparity between the samurai and vampire ways. The additions of climbing, vaulting and dashing means that the player is fully unrestricted from exploring the dense world built around them.

Combat

The main weapon the player wields is the two-handed katana that can deal heavy damage to the enemies they face. Along with this the player can use the blood sucking special ability to take down civilians and replenish their health in the process

Control Scheme

Basic Movement

- Walk - WASD
- Run - WASD + SHIFT
- Dash - W + SHIFT
- Dodge - ASD + SHIFT
- Jump - SPACE
- Jump + float - SPACE + SPACE

Basic Combat

- Battle mode (on/off) - TAB
- Light attack - LEFT MOUSE BUTTON
- Heavy attack - RIGHT MOUSE BUTTON
- Lock to enemy - Q

Special Abilities

- Blood drain - E
- Bat change - F

NPCs and AI

In the game there are a variety of NPCs that the player will encounter, each with their own specific use and abilities.

Enemy

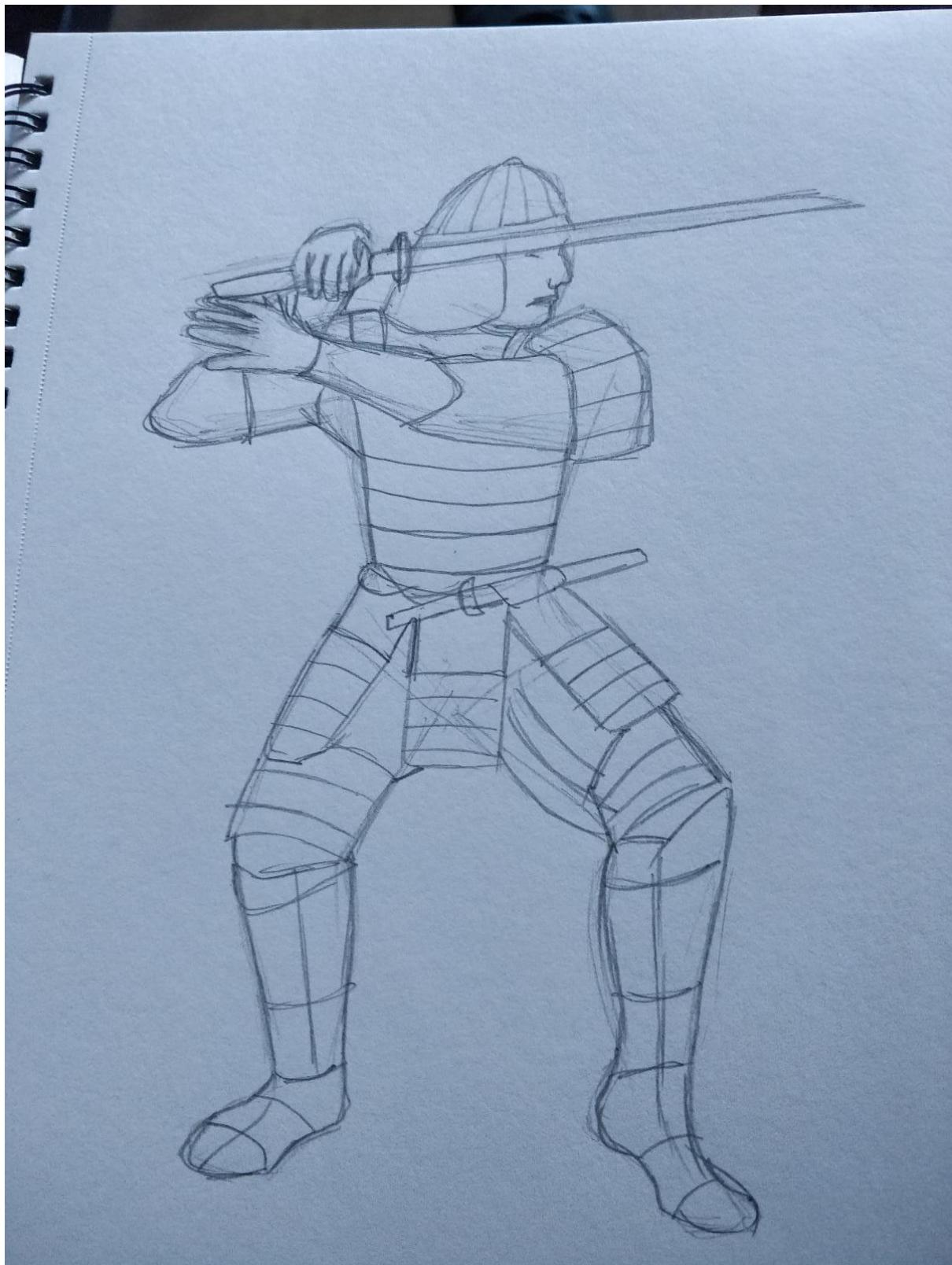
Throughout the game the player is faced against opposition preventing them from reaching the end.

Enemy Design

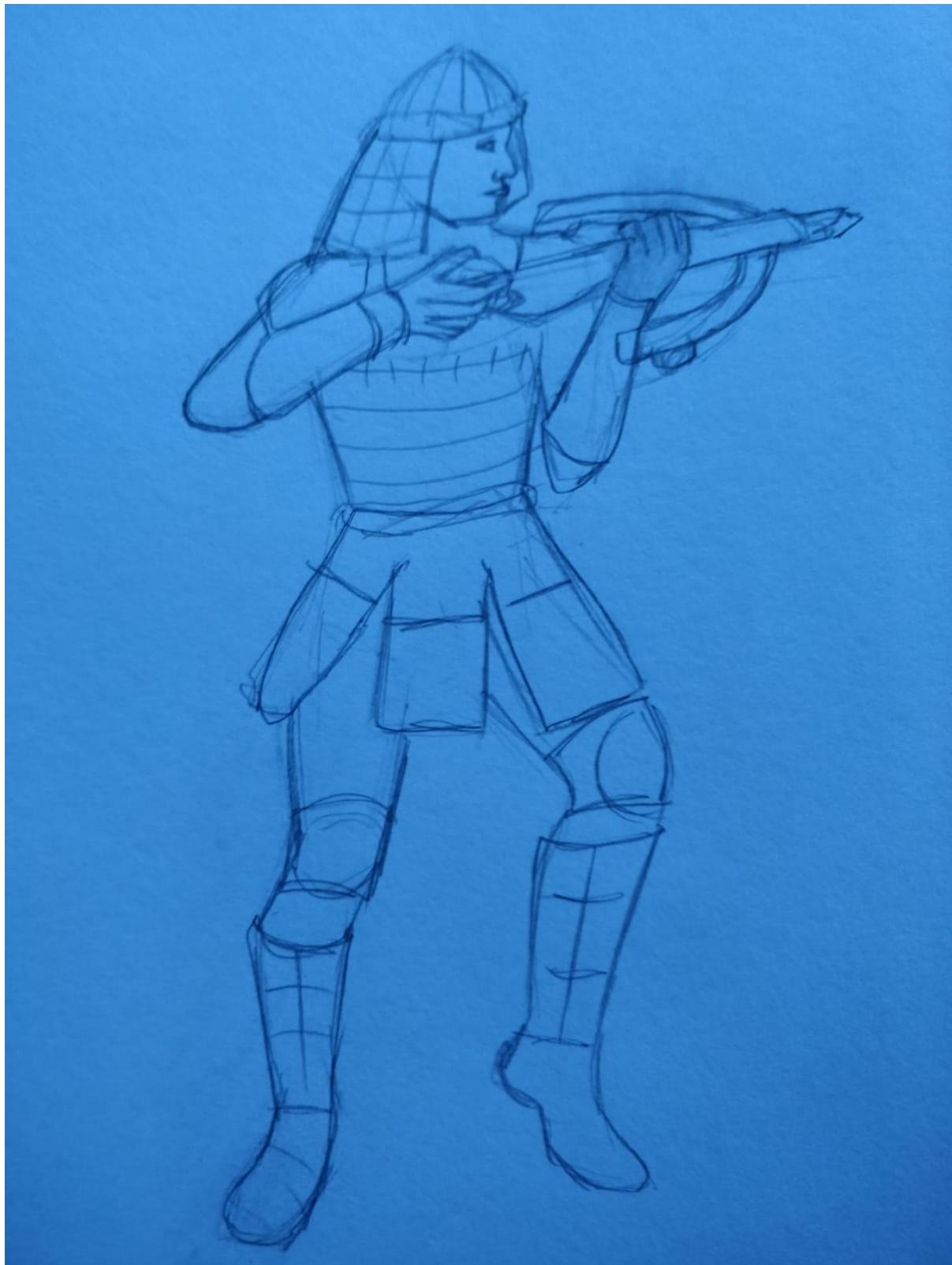
As with the player, the design of the enemies is consistent with the game's theme and setting. As the player is a vampire the opponents faced are vampire hunters and they are armed with weapons capable of taking down the player such as stakes and crossbows loaded with projectile-stakes.

Concept Art

Melee Enemy



Ranged Enemy



Online Art

Melee Enemy



Ranged Enemy

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3D Model



Interaction with player

The enemies have a line of sight and modular patrol path that prevent the player from going a desired route without being detected and thus attacked by the enemy. When provoked they will go agro and attempt to attack and ultimately kill the player. If the enemy is in the vicinity of other enemies while attacking you then they will subsequently be alerted too.

Enemy Behaviour

To vary gameplay between players and runs, each enemy will have a random patrolling path that they will follow in later levels. In the opening levels many enemies will remain stationary as to make killing easier and alerting others harder to do.

AI Progression

As levels progress the enemies will become stronger, have a larger line of sight and have unpredictable patrolling pathways. In addition, there will be different enemies added, such as

very strong bosses and long ranged enemies stationed in hard to reach towers that the player can only access by entering bat mode.

Civilian

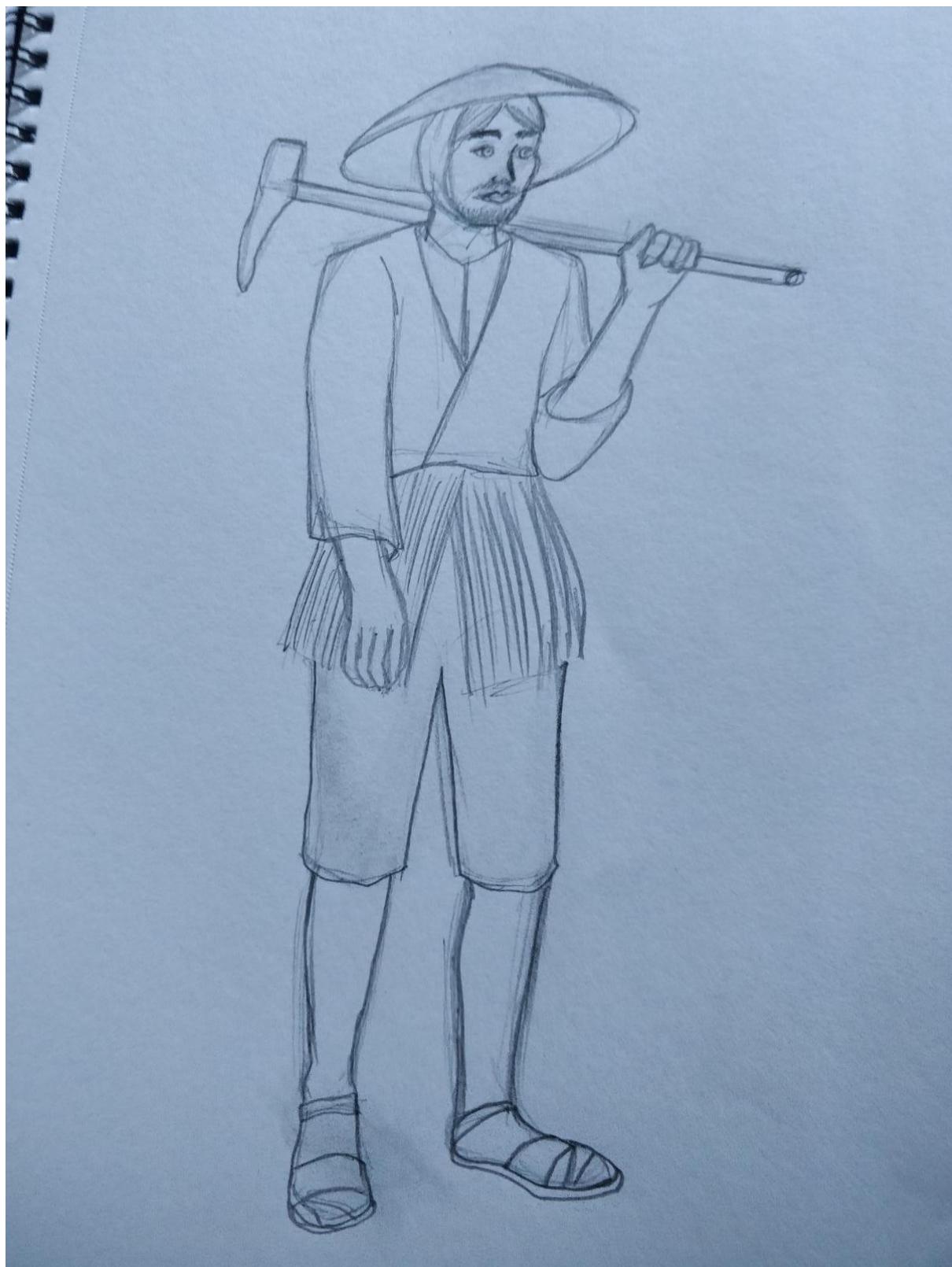
Throughout the game the player is faced with civilian NPCs who pose no threat to the player but can be used to their advantage.

Civilian Design

The design of the civilians is taken from Japanese horticulture origins with the models representing different varieties of farmers.

Concept Art

Standing



Farming 1



Farming 2



Online Art



3D Model



Civilian Behaviour

The civilian's AI is much more passive compared to the enemies. They will not be spooked or turn agro towards the player. They will be too distracted tending to crops or sleeping in houses.

Civilian Use

The civilians are extremely useful to the player as they can use them to regain HP. This is due to the civilians having no way of defending themselves. The player can use the sucking blood special ability to kill the civilian and boost their HP total.

Testing

The game will need to be tested as production furthers, methods of quickly testing different areas will need to be used. This can be broken down into cheats and skips, an example of each is listed below.

Cheat Example

Setting the player to having invincible health will be used to test the effect of the timer running down. Alternatively, the timer time can be reduced to see what will happen that way.

Skip Example

Skipping to a different level that needs testing will be used rather than having to go through the whole game to get to that specific area.