Litir gu Gàidhlig

Using techniques in games to create a feeling of connection to endangered language

Aimee Kerr

PROJECT OVERVIEW

My project is focused around the idea of learning a language through games, in order to preserve native languages. I will be looking at ways to use art style to influence opinion and translate the feeling of learning a language and then "unlocking" a culture.

This will be realised through the medium of concepting for a hypothetical game, including character and environment design. The game will have the player working in a post office and navigating interactions with the characters in Gaelic. It will start out simple and progressively become harder as the player is introduced to different concepts within the language. The characters will each have distinct personalities, and some will be more willing to speak English than others, simulating complete immersion into a language and culture.

KILTED OTTER INITIATIVE

My project stemmed a lot from work on the Kilted Otter Initiative as a mentor for participants in the game jam. This game jam was created by Charly Harbord with a focus on bringing awareness to Gaelic.

This is something I was very enthusiastically involved in and influenced by. I took part in a board game making event through the kilted otter for kids at the Royal National Mòd. Talking to the participants and organisers, and creating my own board game (pictured here), along with the children really influenced me to think about how Gaelic can be used in games.

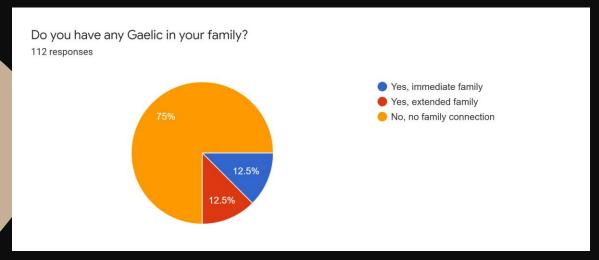
I was also involved in marking for the mentor award after the jam, and so got to play through all the submissions and consider how they put across the language in-games.

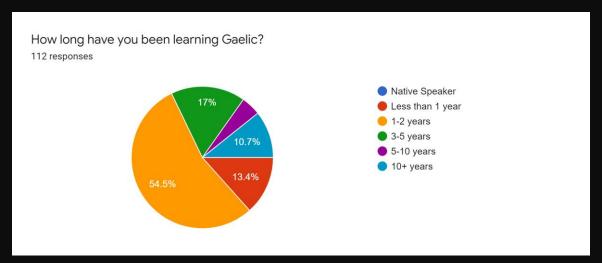
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SURVEY RESPONSES





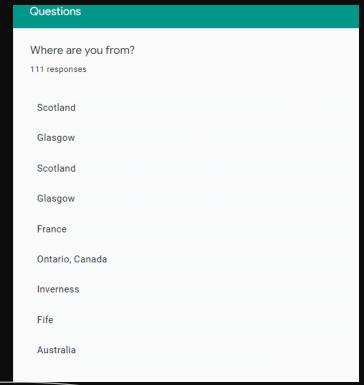
I took a survey of Gaelic learners. This was posted in a facebook group called "Scottish Gaelic Duolingo" and received 112 responses.

I was mainly interested in the open questions which provided suggestions about learning and what may be useful in a game. However I did ask some non-identifying questions to find out some demographic information.

I found it very interesting that 75% of respondees had no family connection to Gaelic. 80 people answered the question of where they were from, and only around half of these participants were from Scotland. This was an interesting statistic as I had imagined that they would be mostly Scottish.

In response to the question "how long have you been learning Gaelic?", over 50% said 1-2 years. It is unclear the reasons for this, but duolingo was launched in late 2019, meaning Gaelic learning became more easily accessible around that time. I also feel that lockdown may have been a factor in this as people had more time to take up a hobby.

It is however important to understand that data may be skewed due to more advanced learners being less likely to use duolingo and have moved onto other materials, and thus not be in this group.



The question "Why did you choose to learn Gaelic?" was a very insightful one, and provided a lot of clarity to others' motivations, rather than just my own. Fortunately there was a good amount of overlap here. The most overwhelming answer was that it was to reclaim their heritage and culture. Many people chose Gaelic as it is a minority language and they wanted to help in the efforts to keep the language alive. Some users sounded angry at not having Gaelic already, and felt that it should be much more involved in modern Scottish culture.

It should be my native language, at least as bilingual

To keep the language alive.

Bha Gàidhlig aig mo shinsearan, Tha ùidh agam air sgath 's gu bheil dùchais, eachdraidh 's cultur anns an cànan fhein agus tha mi airson Ghàidhlig beòthaichadh

For myself and my daughter who is in GME.

I feel it is part of everyone's culture in Scotland

Outlander

There is only minimal provision for more advanced learners - achieving working proficiency is a challenge.

I feel audio content for beginners/early intermediate is lacking. It would have been good to have short stories in Gaelic read out to train the ear

Exposure, I'd love the immersion method.

Conversation oportunities

My Granddad's language

I need to practice. Living in Italy, it's not easy. Also, I still don't feel confident enough to speak in Gaelic to someone. I'll get to that

There were many interesting responses to "Is there anything you feel is missing from the way you learn?"

The main responses focused on a lack of immersion, needing more resources for advanced learners, conversations with other speakers and opportunity for practice.

Many people indicated a need for more audio content to get used to pronunciation. This is something that Duolingo has, but only in short phrases without context.

The other two questions asked were the following:

In a game designed to create an environment to learn and practice in, what do you think would be useful to include?

Any other comments?

There were some great responses from these two spaces which influenced the concepts. The responses highlighted below will be referenced throughout this document alongside what they have influenced.

Full localisation to Gaelic with contextual English hints (e.g. Translations in Tooltips)

Real world situations, a way to pause and look for tips and advice

A hidden cheat sheet, so the English can be revealed if you need it. Very dispiriting if you can't progress because you can't get a concept.

Depends on how complex a game you're considering. A storyline that you have to follow, engage with, through different levels of language difficulty would attract me.

There was a great demand for speech recognition technology within a game like this. This would be ideal for learning, but unfortunately the technology has a ways to go before that would be possible.

University of Edinburgh researchers are working on a Gaelic voice recognition system, so it may be possible to integrate functionality with this in the future. This would have to be assessed based on how good the technology becomes later down the line, as inaccurate speech to text could be frustrating for players. English speech to text dictation is not entirely accurate yet, and often struggles with Scottish voices, so I remain sceptical about the effectiveness of the technology at this time.

There is a huge demand for these features though, so were the game to be developed after completion of this project this would be something that would be further investigated.

Speech recognition practice

Vocal mode

If you say the answer out loud it wins you more points than just clicking on it.

The opportunity to speak/ respond and be responded to.

https://www.scotsman.com/news/uk-news/researchers-working-to-develop-the-gaelic-alexa-3279979

RESEARCH

I feel language learning is a very personal experience from person to person, and am drawing on my own experiences a fair bit for this project. I think that a game where you can move on at your own pace while interacting with characters is a helpful tool but may not help all learners. Despite this however I do feel that having a space (virtual or otherwise) to use Gaelic is a great thing to have access to. Immersion is a huge part of this project, as that is the most effective and time-efficient method of language learning.

Living in the lowlands, there isn't much opportunity for in person conversation. There are virtual meetups which are helpful but these are not all the time.

In my own learning, I speak to the dog in Gaelic. This has been a useful way to incorporate Gaelic into my everyday life. I was concerned that the game may feel a bit awkward if the characters aren't reacting as real people are, but a dog doesn't respond at all verbally and this still helps with learning.



≡ cù ▼ 48 cards show	n + Q :
Question •	Answer ▼
A walk	Cuairt
Am bu toil leat?	Would you like
Back	Air ais
Be good!	Bi modhail!
4	
Biscuit	Briosgaid
Bite!	Bìd!
Break!	Brìs!
Calm down	Gabh air do shocair
Come	Trobhad
Come in	Thig a-steach
	8.0
	1
Down	Sìos
Drop it	Leig às e
Fetch (get that)	Faigh sin
Finished	Deiseil
Give	Thoir dhomh
Go out	Falbh a-mach
Go to bed	Thalla dhan leabaidh
Good girl!	Deagh chaileag!
I am proud of you	Tha mi pròiseil asad!
Left paw	Spòg chlì
Let's go for a walk	Thugainn cuairt
Lie down	Laigh sìos
On you go!	Siuthad!
Other paw	Spòg eile
Paw	Spòg

≡ cù ▼ 48 cards showi	+ 4 :
Question •	Answer ▼
Go to bed	Thalla dhan leabaidh
Good girl!	Deagh chaileag!
14	21
I am proud of you	Tha mi pròiseil asad!
Left paw	Spòg chlì
Let's go for a walk	Thugainn cuairt
Lie down	Laigh sìos
On you go!	Siuthad!
Other paw	Spòg eile
Paw	Spòg
Put it down	Cuir sìos e
Quiet	Bi sàmhach
Right paw	Spòg dheas
Roll	Rol
Sit	Suidh
Speak	Bruidhinn
Spin	Tionndaidh
Stand!	Seas!
Stay	Fan
Stay where you are	Fan far a bheil thu
Stop that	Sgur dheth
Take a bow	Dèan bèic!
Tidy	Sgioblaich
To my heel	Ri mo chois
Toilet	Mùin
Toy	Dèideag
Up	Suas
Wait!	Feith!
Well done!	Sin thu fhèin!

These art pieces - created by Hamid Kachmar - use an endangered language within the artwork. This is a very interesting concept which definitely preserves the writing style of Tifinagh but does little for revitalisation.

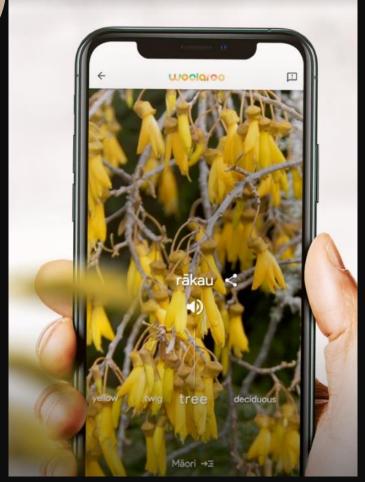
I think preservation is important but that main goal is to bring the language back into regular use within communities. This is one of the reasons I chose to go against my original plan of creating an animation, as revival needs interaction.





http://archive.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/brainiac/2013/10/hamid_kachmar.html

Woolaroo by Google is an app which aims to use machine learning for language preservation. This is very interesting as it shows the user the words for different items using Al through the camera. This is a really great tool for language learning and is very accessible.



https://artsandculture.google.com/story/canyou-preserve-alanguage/MAWBUhEZEG5pyw?hl=en

Heritage and Retro > Heritage

Scotland's Gaelic communities to 'die out' in 10 years given 'remote' language policy, report warns

Scotland's Gaelic speaking communities will 'die out' within 10 years unless a radical new approach is found in the heartlands of the language, a new study has found.

https://www.scotsman.com/heritage-and-retro/heritage/scotlands-gaelic-communities-die-out-10-yearsgiven-remote-language-policy-report-warns-2901128

A recent article from The Scotsman talks about the dire position Gaelic is in. Use of Gaelic socially was said to be "at the "point of collapse"". The article highlights the focus on schools in language promotion, rather than looking at the communities.

The current strategies for preservation are good, but we need something more publicised and accessible. I think the influence through schools is good, but it has to be done right. Most people in Scotland now learn French in school, but it isn't retained. I think pushing it in schools will work for a small minority of people, but there has to be a bigger push within the communities and adult populations.

https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/saving-dying-disappearing-languages-wikitongues-culture

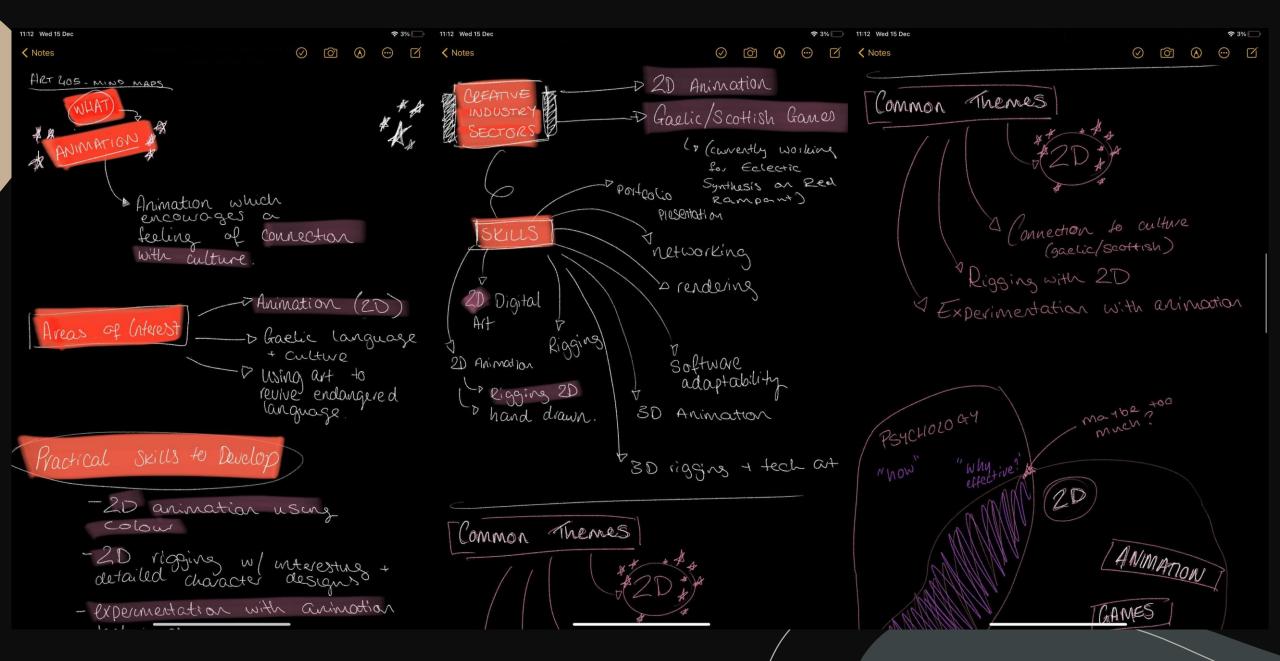
"Imagine if someone who plays music suddenly can't use their fingers," he says. "We're still alive but can only remember these things."

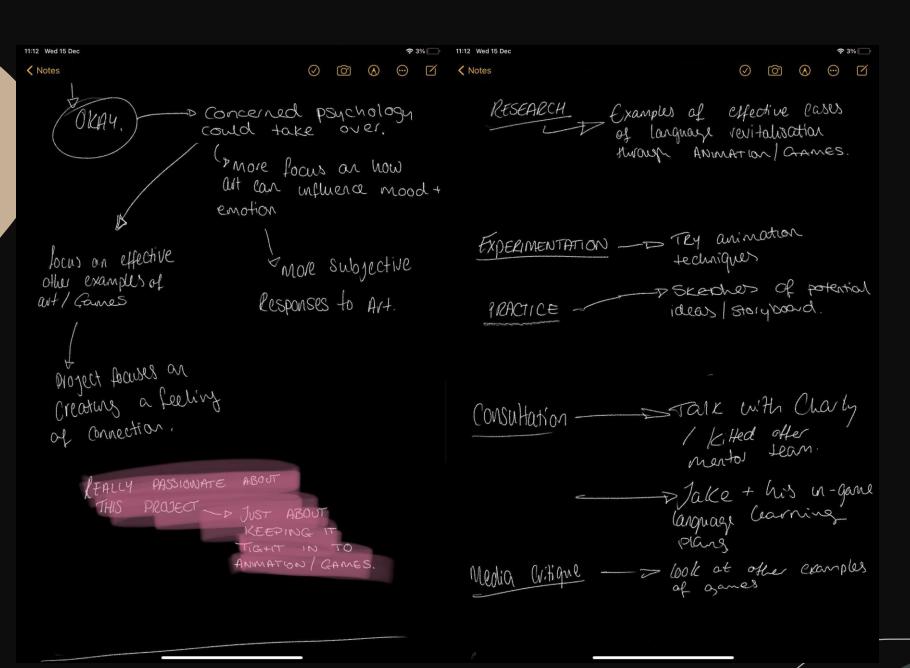
"This form of language loss is a cancer, not a gunshot."

This is a very powerful article about language loss which helped put it into perspective for me. Reading about these languages from different countries is sad, but has a level of disconnect. When realising that these concepts can easily be applied to our own country I think it has a different effect.

I think if there's anything to be done to preserve our language, and through that our culture, then it should be done.

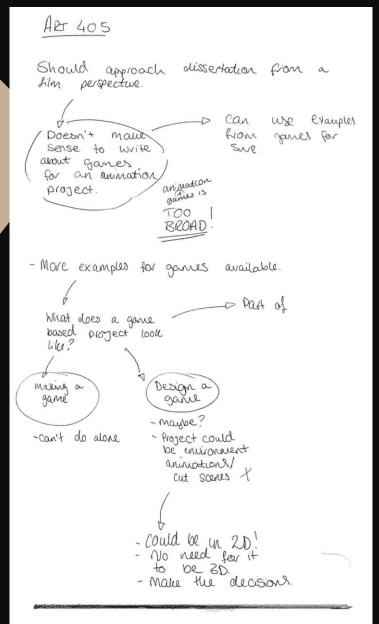
PROJECT PLANNING NOTES





In the beginning of the project I struggled to know if I wanted to focus on animation or games. Ultimately I decided to go with games since I was able to lay out all my ideas in note form and easily compare them. I used notes a lot through these stages of my project to document how I was making decisions.

These notes cover some concerns about the project being too heavy on psychology or languages, rather than being about the art. I ultimately resolved this by making the project mainly conceptual and allowing the work to lead the focus.



What is the purpose of the research?

- help to promote Gaidwig.

- Use animation rames for curtural influence.

How to capture the outcomes of the

What is the project going to be?

GAME OR AN

ANIMATION

- Not actually Making a game.

- More relarant to part practice.
- Concepts + character Not super relevant animations/cutscores. to research
- Potentially game der neary
- Game concepts based on idla for a game.
- focus on aut + mod / feeling generation
- Can animate cutsceres etc so still ger
- More accompanying research for dissertation

GAME PROJECT.

OUTCOMES

- Character Rigs + Animations (20)
- Cutscene
- Concept out

have which excurages use of language throughout

I was also considering at this stage my own skill level in terms of creating a game. I don't know enough to code and didn't want to undertake a group project, so decided that it would be valid to make the game hypothetical and work on the concepts. This felt more feasible and allowed me to work on the project I wanted without the pressure of needing it to be playable.

VISION STATEMENT

- P HOW ART - ANIMATION CAN BE USED TO PRESERVE ENDANGERED LANGUAGES.

(scottish Gaelic)

MEDIUM -D ANIMATION - 2D (coloned)

ANDIENCE -D? non-gaelic speaking Scots

Context - D Endangered language. Want to encourage leaving + Revival of the larguage.

what we you doing/creating? — T 20 Animation

- Peroke a pride in the native language. Encourage Clarking + revival.

Cultival preservation through art / films/ games LA HOW there have been successes an preservation through ast in the past. Some of the

links found during unitial research.

I how the game Jam has been Successful in generating interest. Le Stats from Charly LO ASIC questions.

_ o The mod? - How many attenders online us in person. - How could some of these events be modernised

-How many people signed up for 20 with no gaelic.

> Lp 50% + Remall participants also interesting

- people have leaved english Through video games Sometimes ~ More natural speakers than people who leaned traditionally

Game Concepts

YOST OFFICE

- More simple

- Cute dusigns.

Less secious

- more grounded in community.

MYSTERY

- Complex.

- potentially more compelling) notivoting.

- Could near interesting characters + Designs

how to make game compelling to people with more Gardelig as well?

> Le future game could coan on Speak Gaelic Concept with afterent levels of difficulty.

Slightly different Hory for each











Eigg From Arisaig - Ron Lawson - Ron









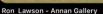




Screenshots from Pinterest boards / traditional moodboards. Looking at Scottish culture and different types of characters that might be found in the game. This is some initial character research for some of the villagers, as well as research for environment and building designs.

At this stage I was also looking at potential art styles and ways that traditional art captures the feeling of rural Scotland.



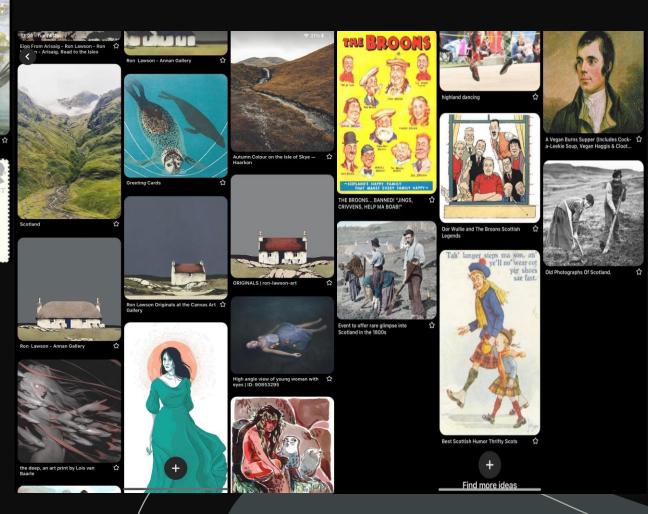




Further Investigation of Scottish based culture. Here I was looking at things like The Broons for reference of an intrinsically Scottish piece of art. I really enjoy how all the characters are completely different yet belong in the same universe.

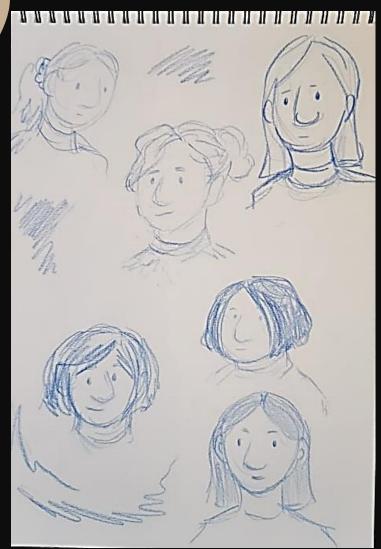
I was also investigating a bit of Scottish mythology and Folklore, with the intention that perhaps some of the characters are superstitious.

Looking again at different Scottish people and their livelihoods and traditional homes and buildings.



INITIAL SKETCHBOOK WORK

Most of the initial ideation for the project has come from sketchbook work. This is the main way I like to begin a project as I find traditional art more freeing than digital and find I get more out of the experimentation stage in this format. I will present these pages in order that they appear within the sketchbook to show the process of thought through the ideation, so ideas may jump around a little. The images here are development work for some of the characters.





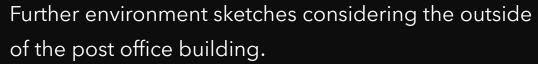
Landscape sketches. These pages in the sketchbook are mostly for warm-ups but looking at potential environments/ objects.

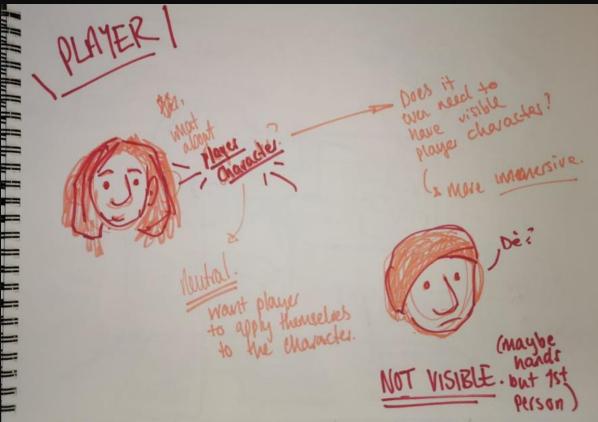












Thinking about the player character. I was considering how to make the player character very neutral in order to create immersion into the game and allow the player to relate to the character. Ultimately decided the most immersive way to do this was to have the game be in 1st Person Perspective eliminating the need for a player character.



Considering how the player's view in the post office may look. What do they need to have a task to complete in game? What does the environment look like? What is the UI like? This is a big part of the next stages of the project - designing the main interface the user sees when they are interacting with characters through the in-game work.

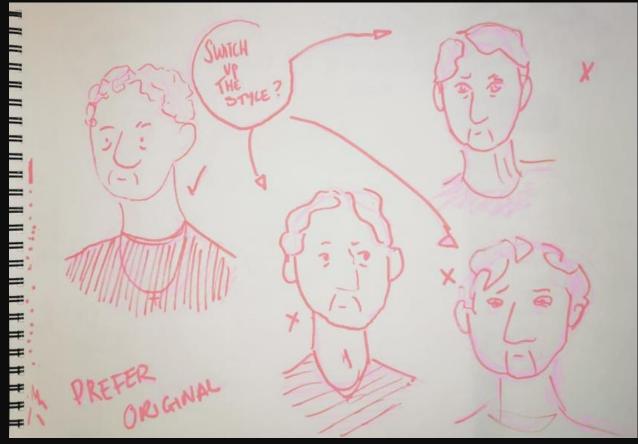
Mairi - the main character whom the player will interact with at first. Want her to be practical and friendly, using round shapes and considering her job through her design.



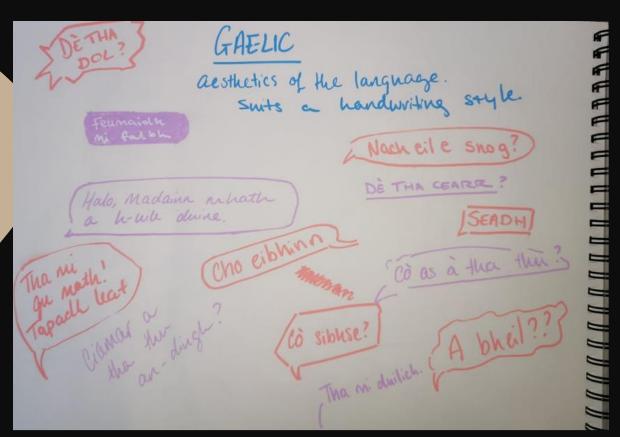
Sketches + painting of the potential outside of the post office. It was at this point that I came up with the idea of the post office being a bit run down in the beginning of the game and being slowly refurbished as the game progresses. This feels like a natural way to show integration into the community as the player unlocks the language - the environment literally becomes friendlier + more inviting.



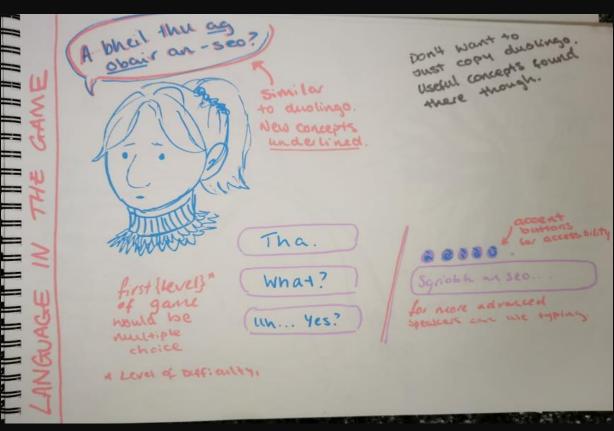
Quick sketches of a potential character.



I knew at this point that I didn't want to deviate too much from my most comfortable style of drawing, but felt it was important to try and change this a little for the purposes of experimentation. These versions do not differ too much from the original style but does try out different eyes and level of detail in the strokes.

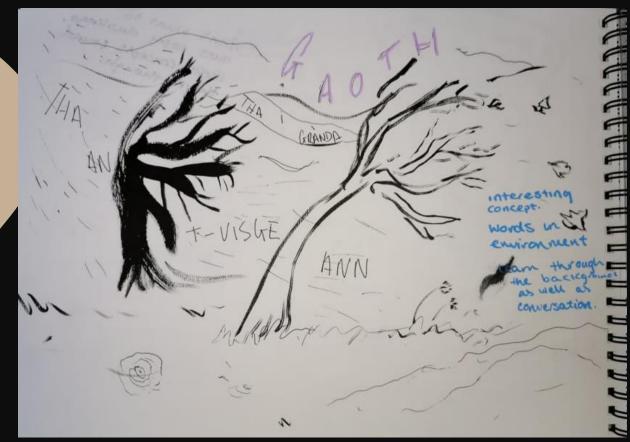


With this page I was considering potential ways for the speech to appear on-screen. I feel it's important to have the game include both speech and text to allow the most exposure to the language. For this I don't want to just use subtitles as I feel it should be more integrated into the design of the game. To fit with the style of the art of the game I feel speech bubbles work well, and these can be different shapes where needed for emphasis etc.



Here I am considering how the language will be used in the game. This stemmed the idea of different levels in the later stages of the game where the player would be typing, and giving them accent buttons to make sure that was possible.

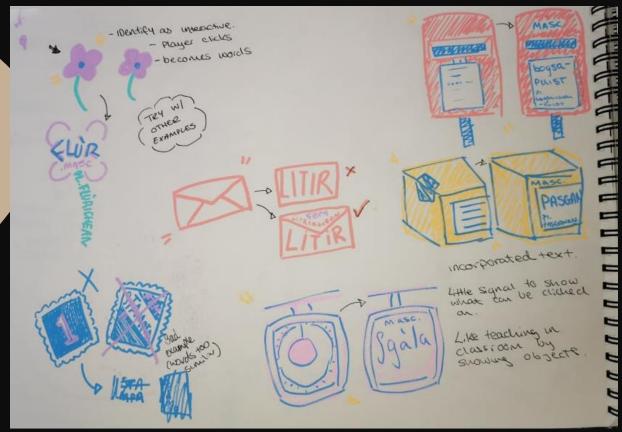
During the game when characters are speaking, I think it's a useful tool to have new or tricky concepts underlined, and allow the player to click on those words and see the translation. This feels more accessible, accounting for some who may pick it up slower than others.



This page was inspired by a stormy night. This started from super quick sketches out of the window and then I began to think about ways to integrate concepts like weather into the game. I think the idea of having the translations blend in with the environment is very interesting and this will be a big part of my environment design going forwards.



Following on from the previous page, I began looking at ways to incorporate this environmental integration concept into other aspects of the game.



A few potential examples of integrating translations. I like the idea that the player can hover over an item and it changes slightly to display the words within that shape.



Some quick sketches of Mairi again, looking at potential hairstyles and focusing on making her look friendly.

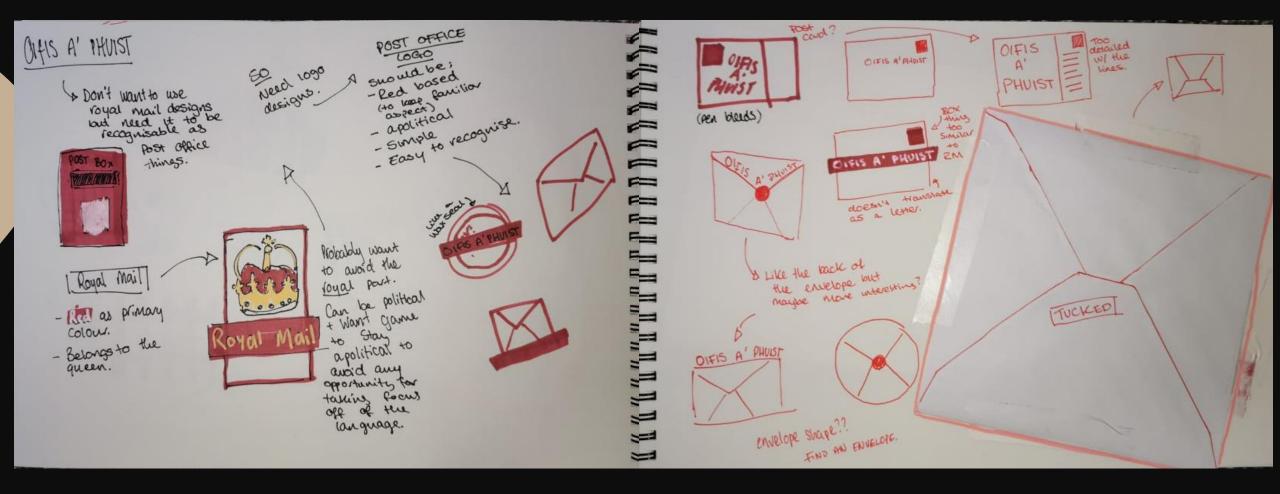


This character is intended to be in the game as a device for learning useful objects that may not come up within the context of a post office. Aonghas wants to send increasingly strange items to his family members on the mainland. This allows the player to learn both place names of where he's trying to send things, but also the names of items and familial relationships.



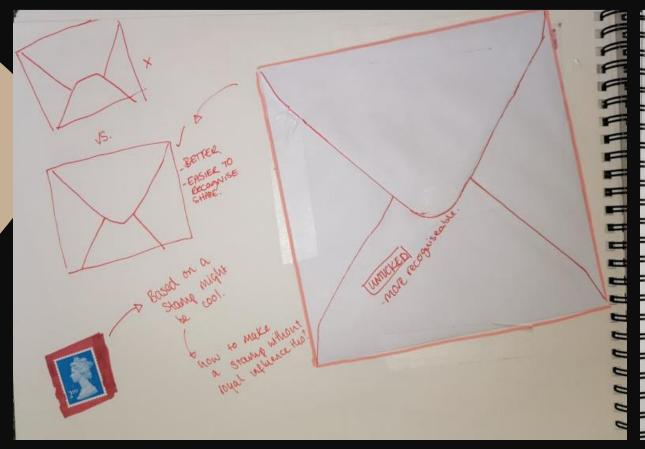
At this point in the project I was able to change the language on Microsoft Office and this was a very interesting development for my own learning. As I am very familiar with the operating system for these programs I still knew what the buttons did but they had Gaelic words. This was very interesting as I have learned new words simply by using the program as normal.





I began looking at the post office branding. I wanted to keep the red from Royal Mail but avoid them being too similar. I also felt that the royals are very politicised at the moment, especially in relation to Scotland and independence - so as I want the game to be apolitical as much as possible I plan to remove this aspect to avoid taking any focus off of the language.

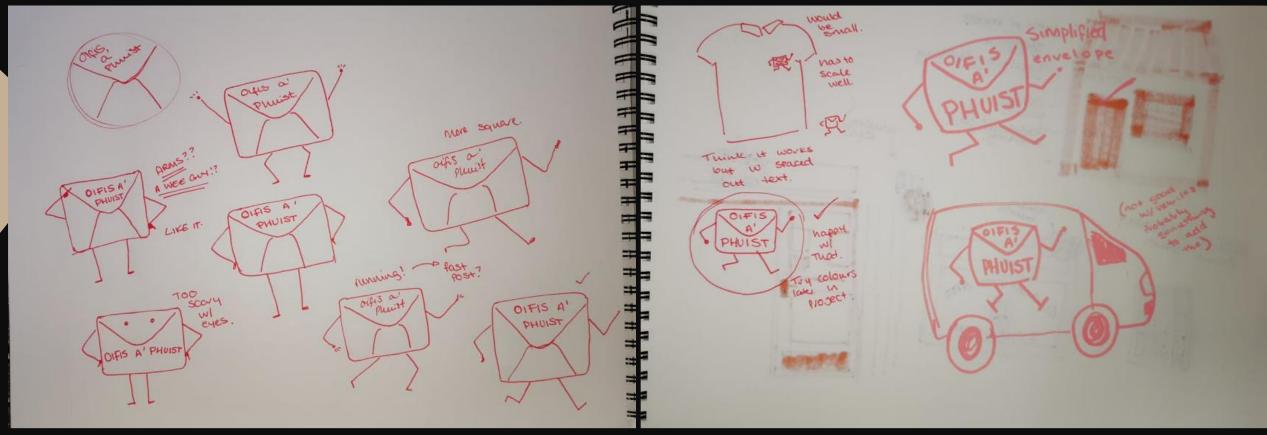
I began looking at logo designs for the post office and thought that a letter based logo would be nice. For this page I got an envelope to see how they fold.

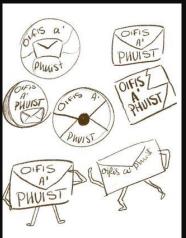


In this page I was continuing to use the envelope ideas and decided that the untucked envelope looked more recognisable when broken down. I also thought about stamps and ultimately decided that this was something to come back to later in the project.



Further envelope ideas. Liked the busy front part but felt this wouldn't translate into a logo.





More logo designs. These ones are based on the idea of the envelope being a little character. I liked the one where he was running because I feel that fits with the idea of speedy deliveries which I feel is a good message for a post office logo.

Also did some digital mock-ups at this stage. Will need to consider colour choices going forwards.

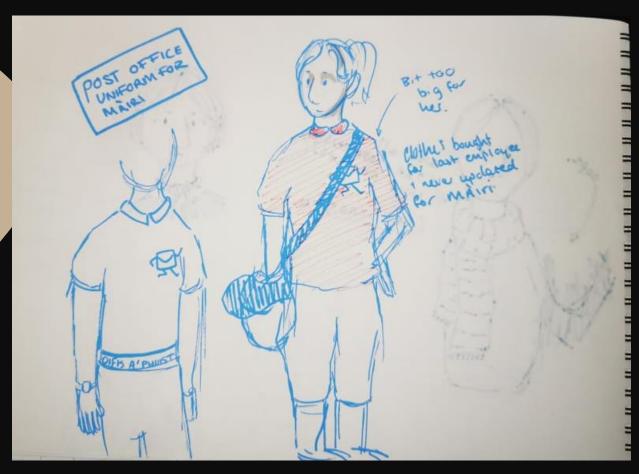
Here I have taken my preferred logo design and tried it out on different things like clothes and the van. This was mainly to make sure I was happy with how it might scale.





Studies based on a local Post Office (in Alloway) which has been designed to fit into the village. This fees very in-keeping with the way I want the post office to look in the game.

I moved back on to designing characters. I was considering having a character who doesn't speak Gaelic but lives on the island and hasn't integrated into the community very well. I'm unsure if this would be an effective way to show the benefits of learning, I will come back to this concept a little later with research to decide if it is useful or just demoralising.





Beginning to design post office outfit for Mairi. I liked the idea of it being a little too big for her as it was bought for the previous postperson and never updated.

A small painting to get an idea of potential colours, along with the palate used for the paint.

DIGITAL WORK

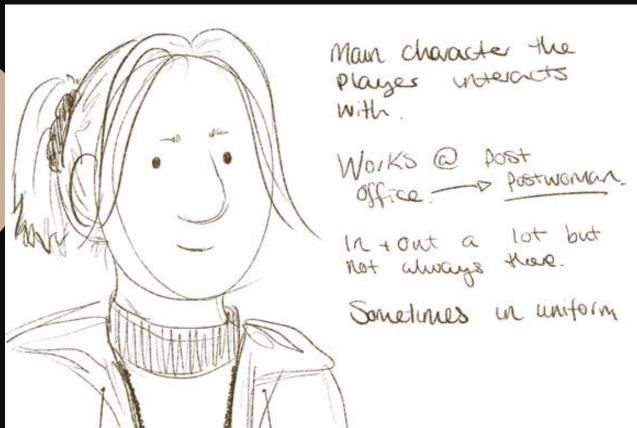
As I moved onto digital work, I started with some environment studies from around my local area. As I live by the sea (Ayrshire) and I'm designing for an island, this has been a great source of inspiration for my project.

















Mairi is the character whom the player will see the most so her design feels the most important. I have focused on her design over the others at this stage of the project. It is very important for me that she feels approachable and welcoming to the player - maybe defending them to other characters.

I had an experience a few months ago with a woman named Rowan who was at the Mod in Inverness and was speaking to me in Gaelic and then translating for the people I was with. I think that's a very inclusive step for beginners which allows people not to feel alienated if they don't understand. I feel that Mairi is very much based on this inclusive and welcoming attitude.

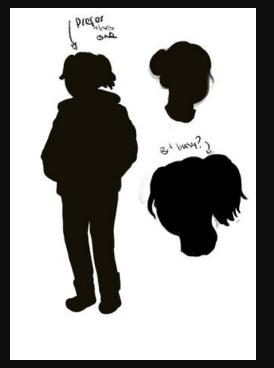






Further sketches of Mairi.



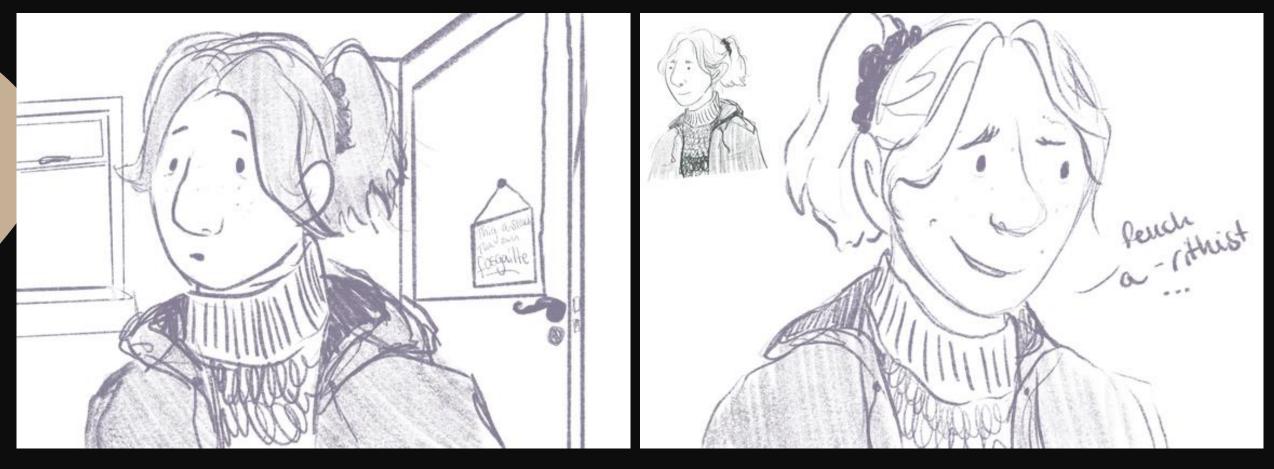




I began looking at a couple of different hairstyles here but ultimately decided the initial hairstyle design was slightly more recognisable in terms of silhouette and seemed to fit the character better.

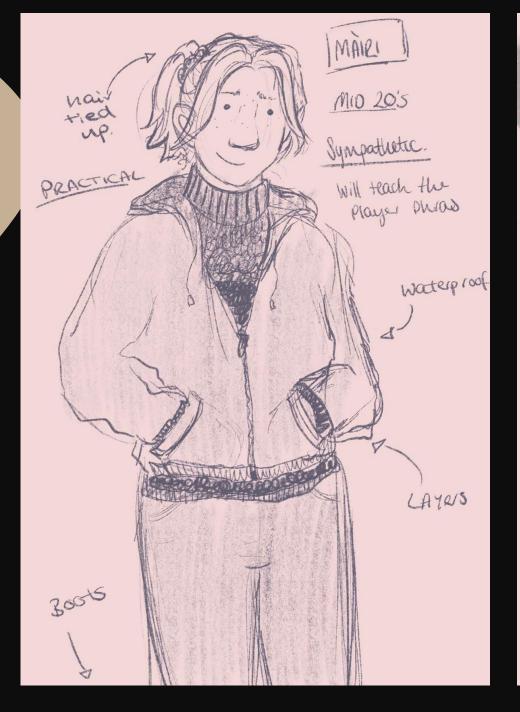
I also started working on designs for a different outfit for Mairi when she is working. This was done at a similar time to the sketchbook work and I hadn't finished designing logos yet.





Some expressions which may feature in-game. The second one here is based on a polite response to the player getting the option wrong "Try again...".

I would want the characters to correct the player but I also want to ensure that it doesn't feel embarrassing to make mistakes.

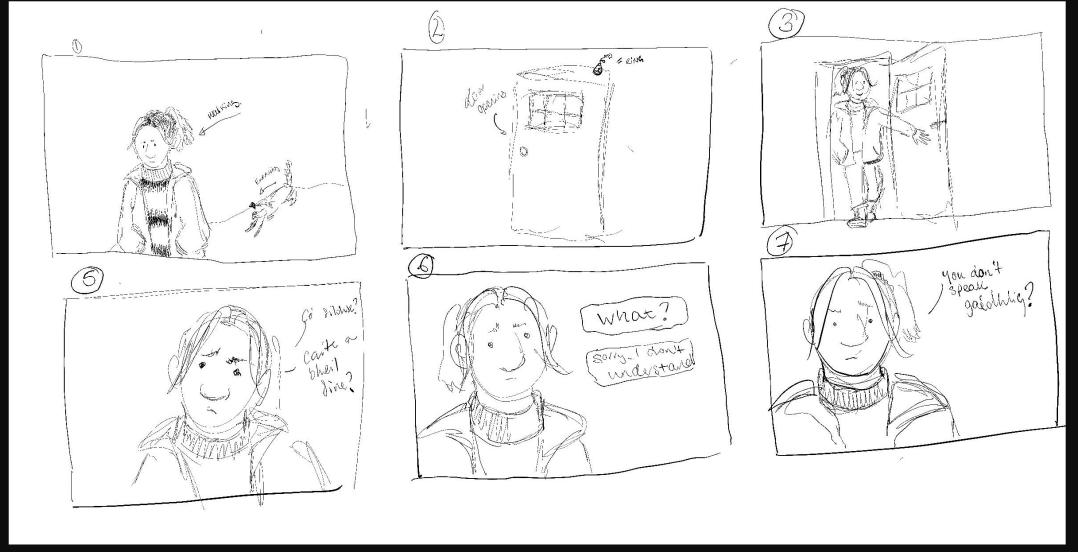




Here I was experimenting with colours for Mairi.

An accidental use of the smudge tool gave this effect, and led to an idea. I am interested in using the art within the game to communicate unlocking a language. After creating this piece I was thinking about ways this could be incorporated.

A potential idea is that as the player gets to know a character their colours will change a little and that influence will seep out into the environment around them. I am unsure if this will be exactly the way that this is carried out but I do want to have the art in the game influenced by the connection with the characters.



First draft storyboard for a potential scene for the animatic. Slide 5 is Mairi asking who the player is and where the previous post office worker is.

I am undecided at this stage on whether I want to use the first introduction to Mairi as the animatic or a later scene in the game.



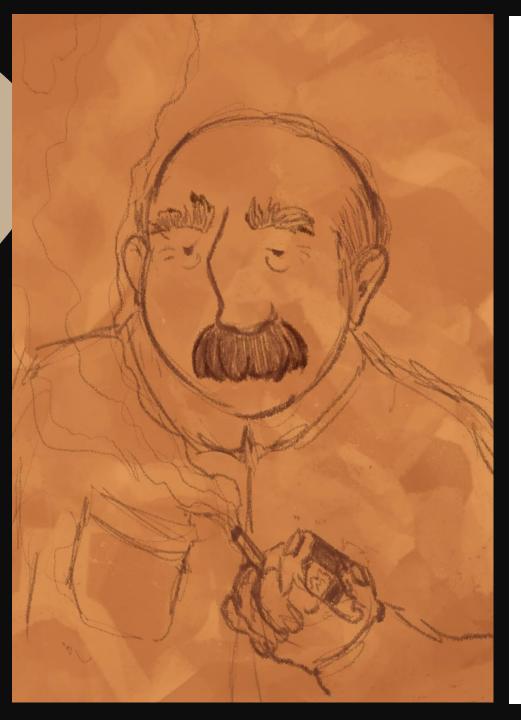


Some quick sketches of secondary characters.

I want to have a minimum of 3 characters other than Mairi designed for the final project.

It is important that these characters are all very individual and have their own personalities. I want them to all feel unique from each other and be recognisable.







Potential character designs.

I have been designing all of the secondary characters as quite serious. This is because at the start of the game they aren't as welcoming to the player as Mairi. They will each have varying degrees of difficulty in becoming friendly with the player, as well as differing amounts of English that they're willing to speak.

This is designed to be a motivator for the player while toeing the line of not being too frustrating.

Example of a character with potential UI design.

The game is intended to be multiple choice in the beginning with the opportunity to include typing in later levels.

This sort of scene would have a background which fits the story, either the post office or outside somewhere depending on different scenarios.

Later in the project I will have to play around with the colours for the UI and try out different options for this.





Following on from the earlier idea with the art style changing with the character connection, I had the idea of the post office being run down when the player first arrives. This would slowly be tidied up and renovated by the locals doing favours for the player – potentially in exchange for side tasks.

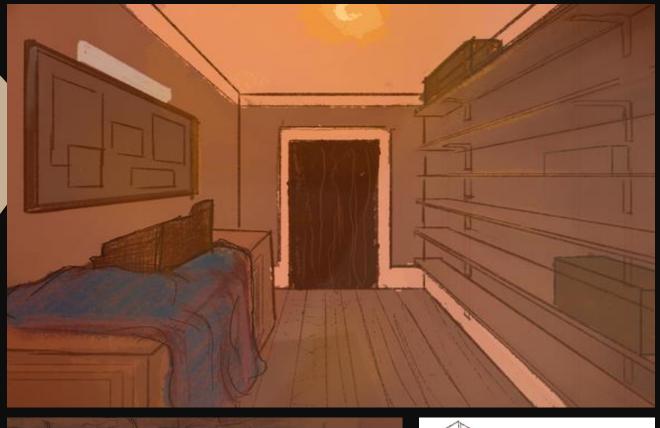
I am very happy with this idea and feel it shows the connection that learning a language can have to culture. What seemed like a hostile place can become friendly when you get to know the culture.



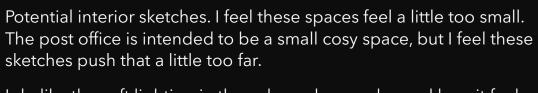


Here I was exploring the idea of revitalisation as the game goes on. In this example it is fairly subtle but there are changes which make the place feel more welcoming.

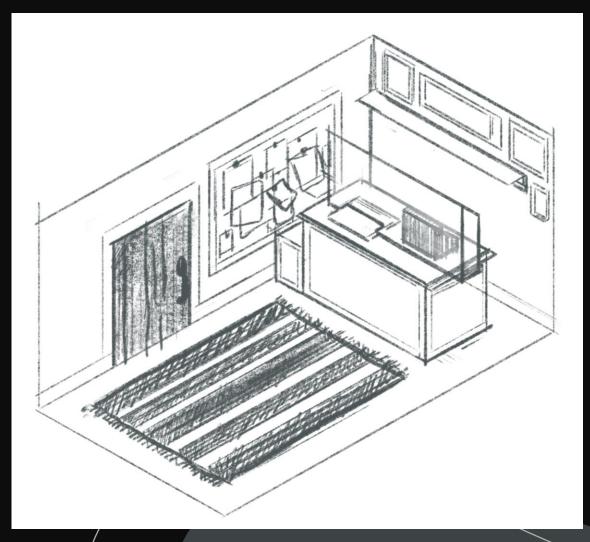
I feel it is important to retain the character of the buildings in the first example when they are cleaned up a bit. This will be something I want to explore further as the project develops.







I do like the soft lighting in the coloured examples and how it feels much more cosy than a standard post office.





Tonal study of what the potential post office desk would look like to the player. This was based on the previous sketchbook work.

The main action the player would be doing in terms of the job would be weighing and pricing packages, and potentially later in the game translating addresses.

Most of the gameplay will come from interacting with characters so this is intended to be a fairly simple mechanic.



I started looking at how to incorporate translations into the environment through the weather. I feel that the "gaoth" (wind) one is the most successful here due to the contrast. The other two would need to be pushed a little more to be widely understood. I also feel that the font choice on "that sneachd ann" is ineffective and this is something I would look at in further iterations.







Aimee - eekerry Today at 19:29
quick question does this translate through context



20

(it's pronounced like goo if anyone is interested haha)



Aimee - eekerry Today at 19:30 also this one pls



diana Today at 19:30

i dont know the context but im thinking gaoth is wind and tha sneachdann is snowstorm?

Phloxnova (´•ω•`)
Today at 19:39

I think it can. It just needs more oompf. More contrast.

I definitely love the hand brush writing

I checked with non-speakers whether these weather mock-ups could be understood. It seemed to be that Gaoth worked well but the other two needed a bit more polish, which I felt already. After this conversation I made some small adjustments.





CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT

The way I approach creating art most often involves a developmental sketchbook or digital sketch files. After the completion of semester 1's work, I took a few weeks of the second semester for sketching and experimentation.

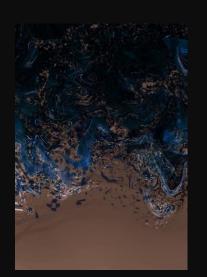
This is the most productive approach for me as this experimentation stage often opens up for new ideas which lead the direction of the project.

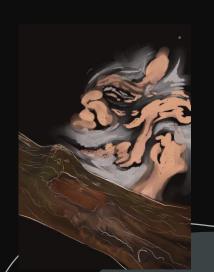




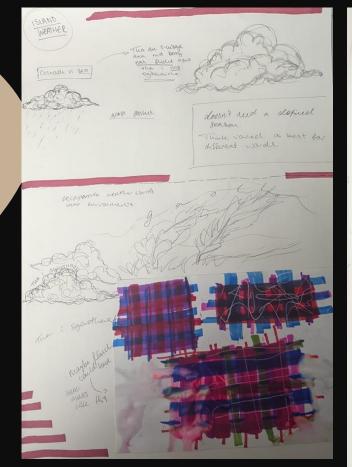








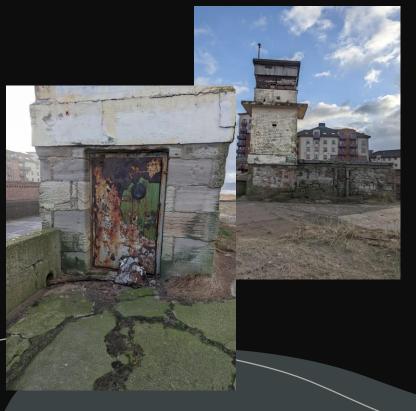




Sketches of seaside items. These were based on images I took at Ayr beach. My location while completing this project was very useful as the fictional island the story takes place on would be on Scotland's west coast, and I had access to west coast beaches during the development stages.





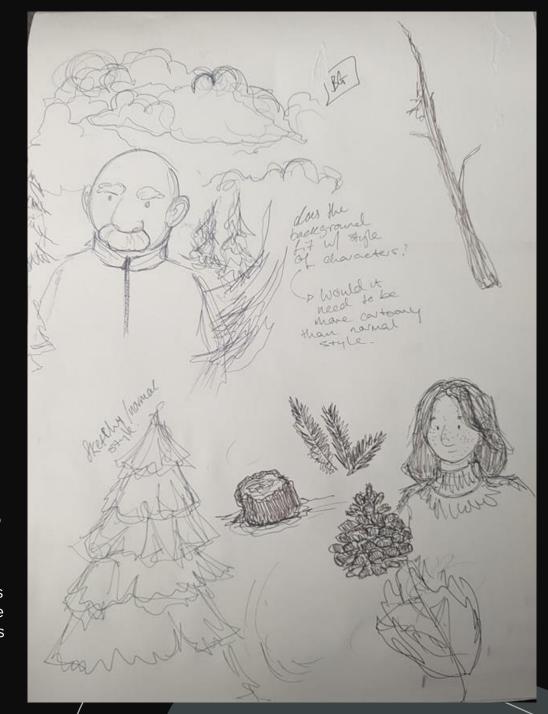






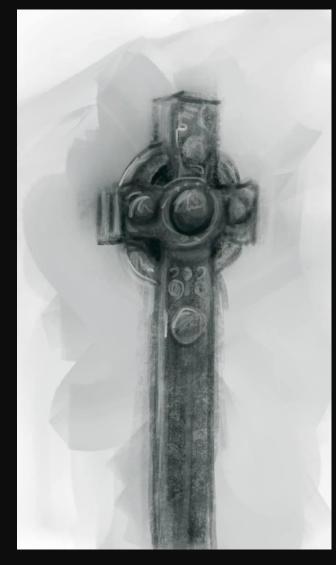
Further sketches. Here I was considering potentially having different fonts for different characters to reflect their personalities. Later in the project this idea was scrapped in favour of different colours. Alongside this I was unsure if I would have to match the style of the backgrounds to the characters. This idea would be revisited later.

Also pictured here are some experiments with markers and drawings of objects. This was initially just sketching as a warm-up, but I quite liked the expressive nature of the page and this prompted consideration of a mechanic within the game where objects may be highlighted, or change in some way, when clicked on where the game has a Gaelic translation for them.

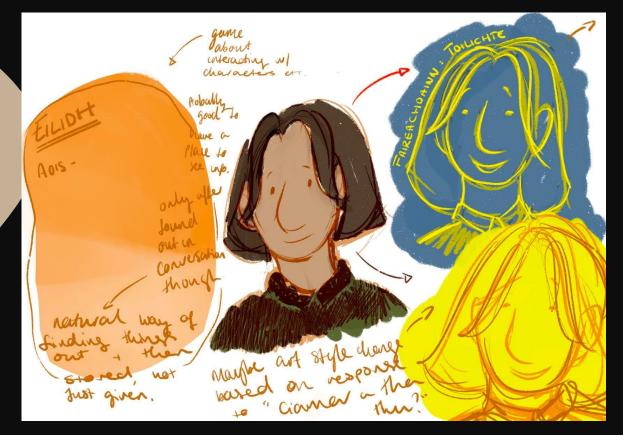


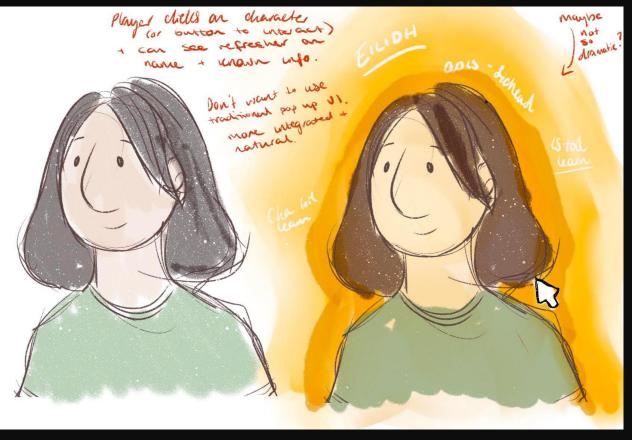
I liked the outcome of this misty scene, but felt that it was maybe a little spooky for the light-hearted theme of the game. This might be useful in later development of the game were it to go further and have more serious storylines featured.





Study of a stone cross from the Isle of Iona.



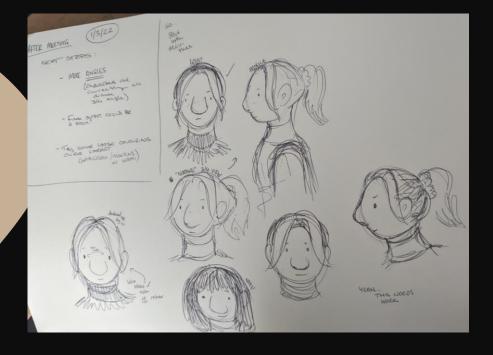




A lot of the development focused on ideas for functionality and art style within different features which might appear in the game.

Here, I had the idea for a mechanic where clicking on a character could bring up some information about them which the player has previously learned, which might be reactive to emotions of characters. This was intended to help beginner players to understand when NPCs tell them how they are, it would give visual hints to help with translations. I'm unsure if this is condescending for the player and too obvious. Emotional reactions could be put across more in the facial expressions and body language of characters rather than explicit in this way.

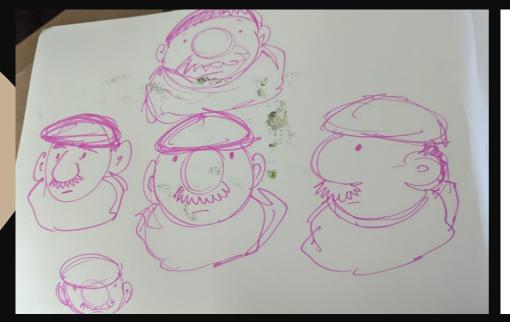
This idea wasn't taken much further but would be reconsidered in any futher development.







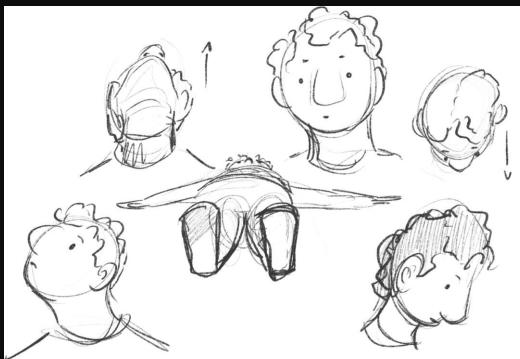
Following feedback, from a group meeting with my supervisor and peers, that most of the characters I had drawn were from the same 3/4 angle, I spent some time figuring out different angles, focusing on Màiri at first. We also discussed that in some of the previous work the characters looked a little strange with nostrils and following some experiments with this idea I agreed and going forwards used more simple shapes with less detail.



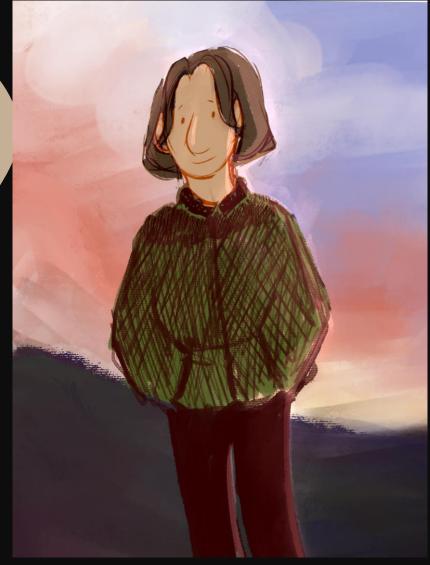






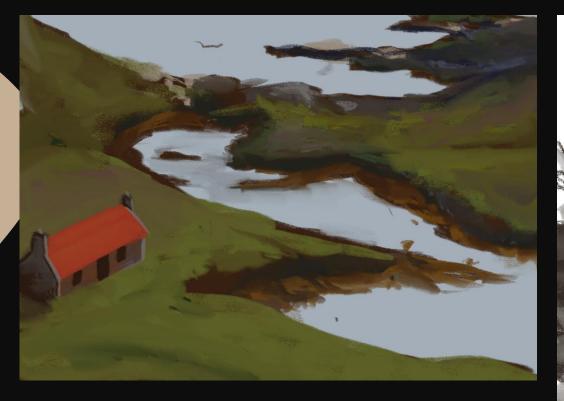


Further experiments with different viewpoints and angles.





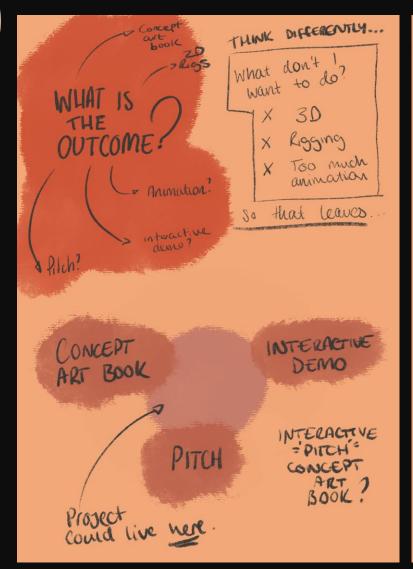
Going back to earlier sketchbook work, I was concerned with how characters would fit with different backgrounds. I decided that the image on the left was less successful than the other one, as the colours merged better. I also wasn't a fan of the way I had used the highlights in the left image, and preferred the more consistent colour scheme. This also informed the decision to use more solid line work for the final characters.



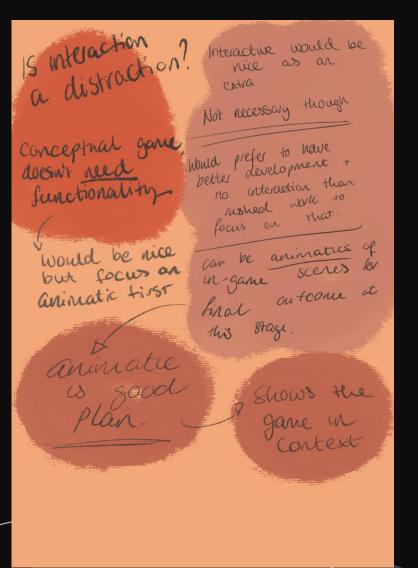




At this stage I felt I had been really focused on investigating new ideas and developing the characters, but was a little unclear on what I wanted the final outcome to be. At this stage I was considering some interaction to the final outcome, such as creating a website or creating an animatic form of a demo level. This was deemed to be a secondary goal though, and due to time constraints was not implemented.



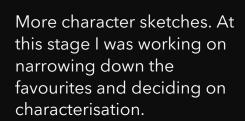
















CHARACTERS Final 3











At this stage in development, I felt that I had a few different characters who kept appearing during sketches.

I chose to narrow these down to 3 to advance further at this stage.

These are Màiri, the post woman, and Iseabail and Alasdair who live on the island.





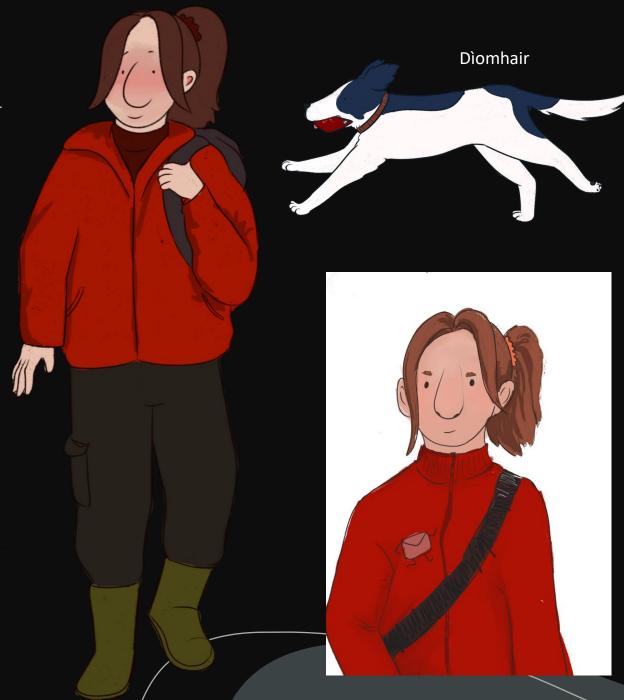
Màiri is the main non-player character.

Her purpose is to assist the player in their learning and provide support throughout the course of the game. She will give explanations of Gaelic grammar and vocabulary, and generally be the main point of contact for the players.

As the game takes place in a post office primarily, Màiri is the postwoman to give her a good excuse to be around the player often, but also have periods where they would be alone and have to problem solve independently.

She has been designed to be very personable and approachable. It is important that players feel comfortable within interactions with her.

Mairi has Dìomhair the dog, and even when not working would be found in various places around the island.





ALASDAIR



Alasdair is a character designed to bring opportunity to learn vocabulary that is useful but perhaps not generally found in the context of a post office. His main way of doing this is through various attempts to post strange items. He is also designed to teach place names and family relationships as he tries to post things to various relatives throughout Scotland and the world.

As with all characters in the game, he is intended to be generally friendly and approachable. He is a quirky character, and despite various hijinks and mischief, is happy to help the player.







ISEBAIL

Iseabail is the character who may seem the least approachable at first. Despite her cold demeanour she is quite fond of her small community and will help out in her own way.

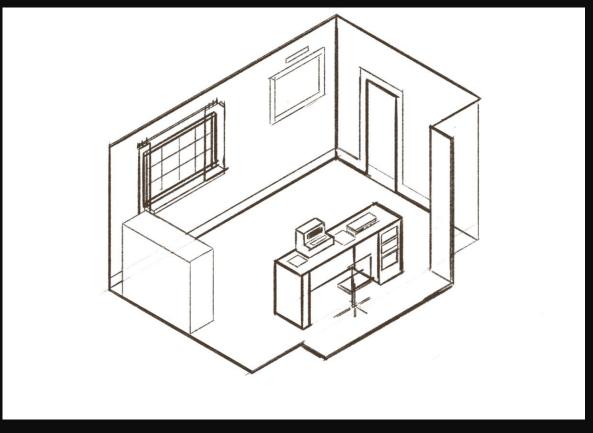
She is often quite a stern woman. One of her close family members lives on the mainland and she can be quite impatient to receive letters from them, so will often come down to the post office to see what the hold up is.

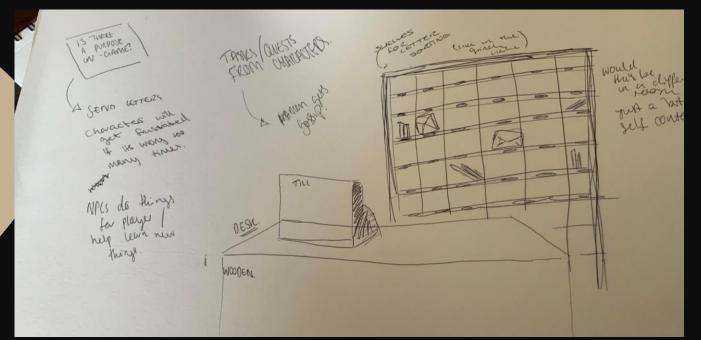


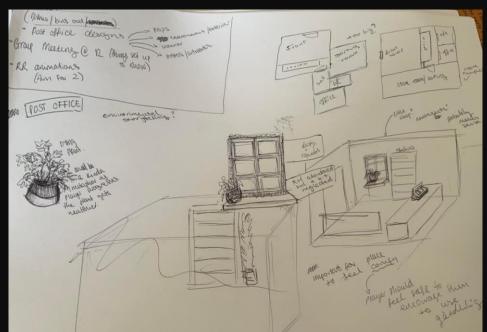
ENVIRONMENTS

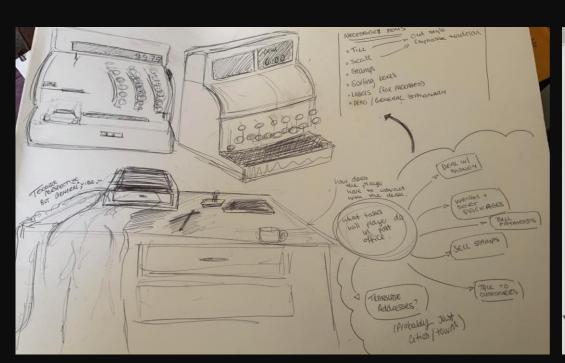


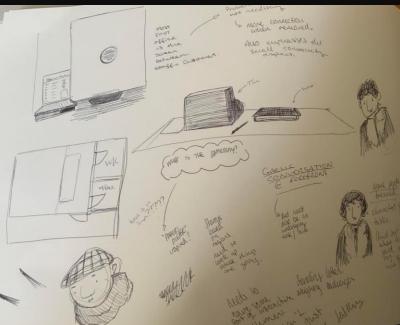
I wanted to create designs for the inside of the post office as this is the main environment that the player will be in at the beginning of the game. Interiors are a weak point for me but I felt it was important to have at least one view of the post office and this is something that would be developed further going forwards after this project.



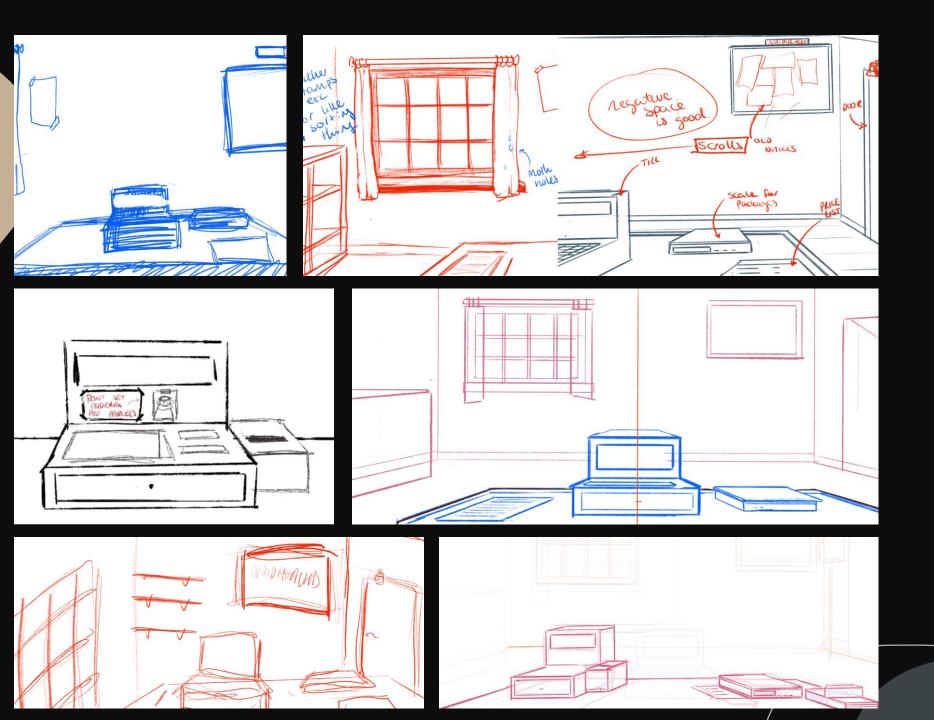








Some initial sketchbook work on the post office interior.

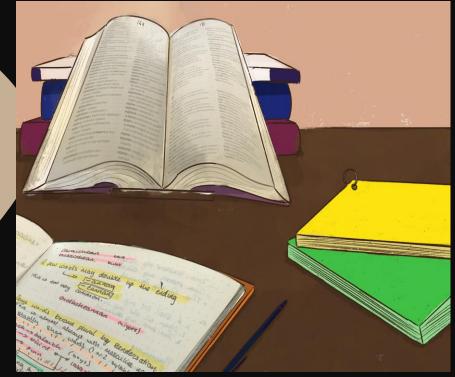


The designs for the post office interior took a fair amount of trial and error.

I had originally imagined this space to scroll, but felt that the final version of this was fine without that mechanic.

The final design includes a small shop section, which sells greetings cards and stationary.







PREVIOUS
POST OFFICE
WORKER

WORKER

LEFT NOTES

DICHOLOM

DICHOLOM

NOTES

PREVIOUS

INTEGRATES

GTHER FROM

STIFF OFFICE

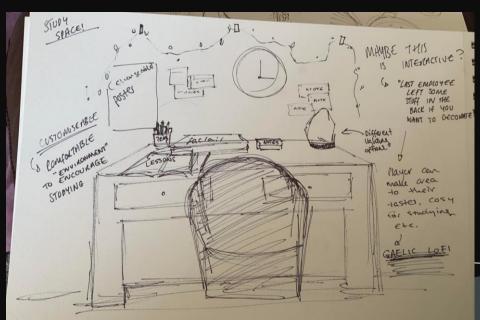
GTHER FROM

STIFF OFFICE

THOM STORY

THE STIFF OFFI

THE STIFF OF



While designing the post office interior I had the idea for a study space within the game. This would be where the player could spend some time refreshing on what they have learned within the game.

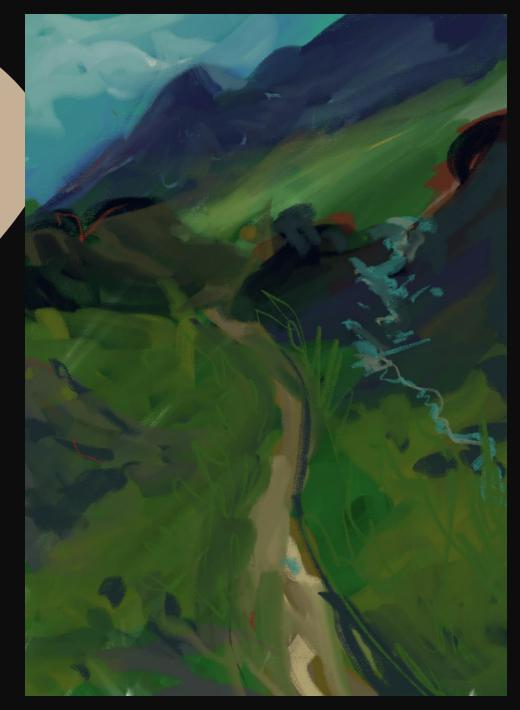
I think this is a useful feature as the game section is mainly for practice and providing context, but traditional study would still be recommended alongside the game.

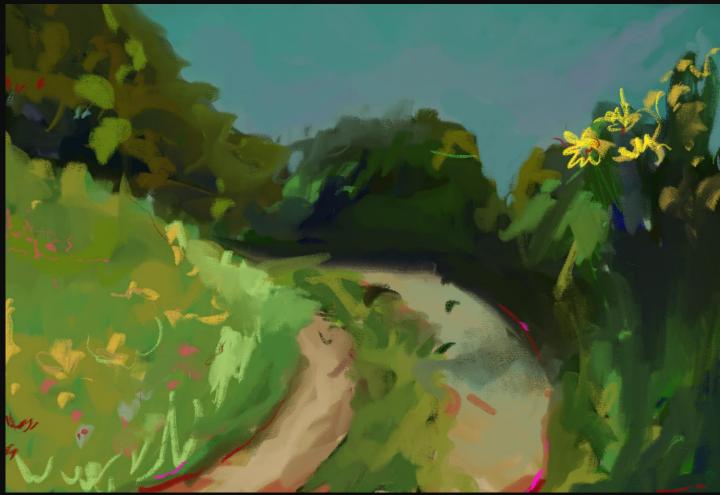
Were the project to go further than conceptual, I would be aiming to partner with an existing learning material such as SpeakGaelic or LearnGaelic, so if this were to happen, the books here would link to lessons from those resources. This section would also have access to flashcards of vocabulary used in the game, and a dictionary.

In a final version this section may also have some educational minigames.

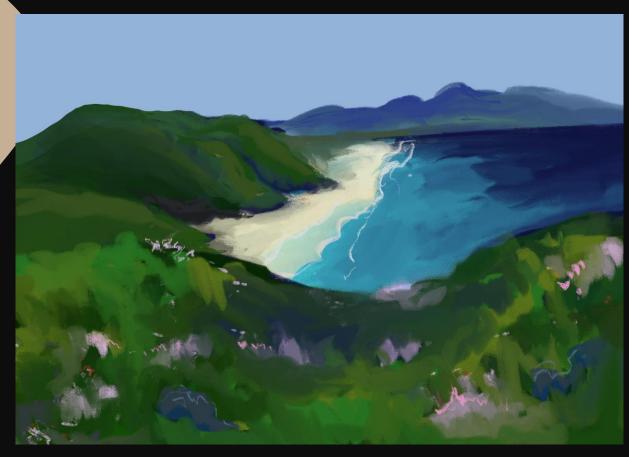
This section would be customisable, so players would be able to change some colours and décor to their own preferences. I felt this was a nice addition as a comfortable environment makes studying much easier.

Fun vocabulary resources for every level. I've been using quizlet at the start but it requires quite a lot of preparation (transcribing lists, etc)



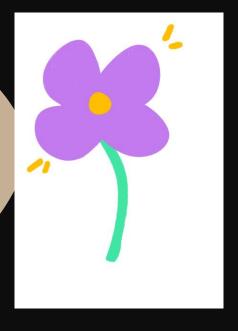


The backgrounds in scenes which are outside have been created in this very expressive style. I felt this contrasts well with the cartoon style that the final characters have been rendered in. Following on from early investigation, I was concerned that the two styles would be too different and oppose each other too much, rather than being complimentary of each other. These two images were initially created as a quick warm up and weren't intended to be used for the final designs, however after completing these pieces I decided to take this idea further.



More experimental backgrounds





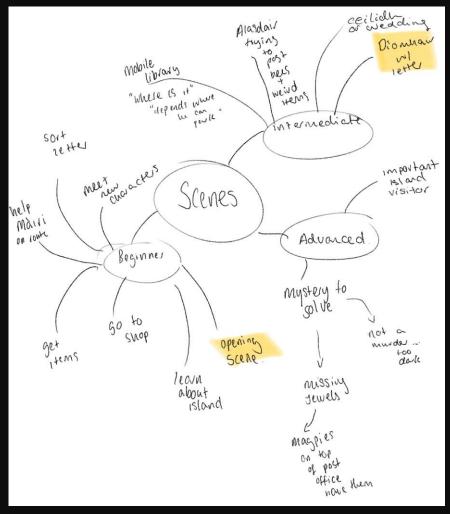


In semester one, I had considered a mechanic which would allow players to click a button or on objects and see a translation for that. Within this, these words would have pronunciation attached, which would allow the player to click on the words displayed and hear the word spoken.



GAMEPLAY / IN GAME SCENES

SCENES!!! Showcase potential gane idea werle Propaph ANIMATE animatie would neipful tho Most Importent Takes communicate Stretch



Alongside defining the art style and experimenting with that side of things, I was working on defining the story and gameplay.

In my initial work on the game I had already decided that it would follow different storylines within real world situations, and this was backed up by survey responses which indicated a desire for this.

I had decided at this point to showcase some scenes within the game, and went through the process of defining some potential ideas for scenes in the game, and how these would match up with different levels of Gaelic ability.

Beginners would have very simple tasks to complete, focused on the Gaelic more than the story. By the time the player reaches higher levels, the storylines would become more engaging which would encourage players to continue with the game as it becomes more engaging with time.

This also reflects a feeling I had as I learned more Gaelic - initially you can only say things that aren't very useful, and then you begin to be able to keep up with conversations. This is a very rewarding feeling which I wanted to put across as much as possible.

Real world situations, a way to pause and look for tips and advice

Depends on how complex a game you're considering. A storyline that you have to follow, engage with, through different levels of language difficulty would attract me.





The in-game dog was based on my own Gaelic-understanding border collie, of the same name.

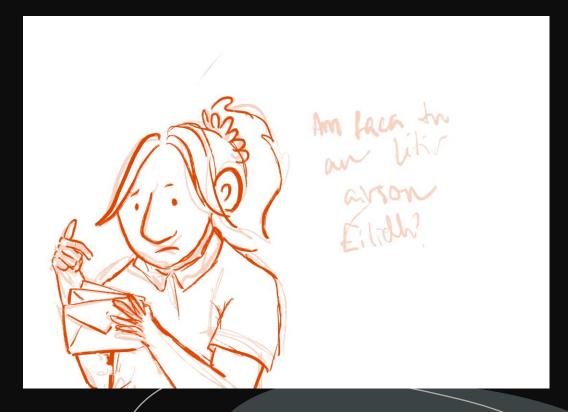
Her colours were changed in the game to be more representative of a traditional border collie and show a Scottish dog breed.



SCENE 2

Called scene 2 as it would be seen later than the other example scene in-game. Appears first in the development as things were created in this order.

The first scene I decided to show was one where a letter has been stolen by a dog, and gets destroyed in the process of an island-wide chase. I felt that this scene was a good one to showcase as it would take place in a variety of different places throughout the island and included the 3 characters designed at this stage.











Job minos



NEEDS ENDING

Initially, this was quite a short scene with only a handful of slides.

These would be:

- Màiri noticing the letter is missing
- Màiri asking the player to phone her if they find it
- Alasdair saying he saw the dog with it
- Màiri receiving a phone call from the player
- Dìomhair the dog running throughout the island with the letter
- Iseabail finding the player searching

And then I was unclear on where this would go after this.

The letter would be



















The initial version of the scene. I received feedback on these that the composition was a bit loud and that it would be good to include some sort of differentiation between background and the subject.

There were also discussions on the speech bubbles and lettering, and how these could do with some extra investigation to elevate these. I agreed with this point, and felt that they blended in too much with the rest of the scene.



CaitlynComics 10/05/2022 I think the blur works yeah, but I think theres something nice about being able to see whats on the noticeboard? i think the last image works well, i dont think it's too dull or anything it looks good

CaitlynComics 10/05/2022

aw man, not that your first stuff was bad or anything but isn't that a big difference! (?) It's looking so good now, I think David will like it better now. It is hard, more to think about that you realise at first Imao but damn you've nailed it so well for just learning about it



🔯 Aimee - eekerry Click to see attachment 🔼



CaitlynComics 10/05/2022

I love how, seeing as I don't know anything about the language, i now kinda get a sense of whats going on? Like that first little bubble and the smaller wording lets me know its something being said under her breath (probably a swear?) and now I realise that like shes messed up something to do with the letter? Like thats how big the difference is for an audience that doesnt know the language

Having asked for help with the speech bubbles from a friend, I received some very useful feedback and resources which I used to inform changes to the speech bubble design. It was also at this stage where I made some changes to saturation of backgrounds and foregrounds to create some depth and contrast within the scenes.

















Updated version of the speech bubbles.

Also added to the UI so that players can click on new words and concepts and have things explained.





I had done some work on the colours of speech bubbles that characters were originally intended to have.





After some work on the speech bubbles I decided to keep these colours for highlighting new concepts and giving hints to the player. This is following suggestions from the survey responses.







A hidden cheat sheet, so the English can be revealed if you need it. Very dispiriting if you can't progress because you can't get a concept.























At this stage I took a look at the scene in its entirety and looked at what needed to be changed.

I felt that it wasn't entirely clear that the dog had stolen the letter, and it felt unclear that Màiri was on the phone with the player.

I also felt that there should be more of an ending to the scene.



























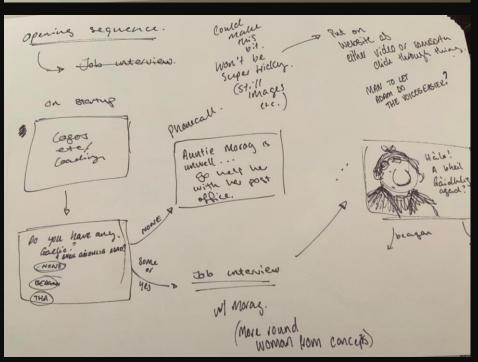




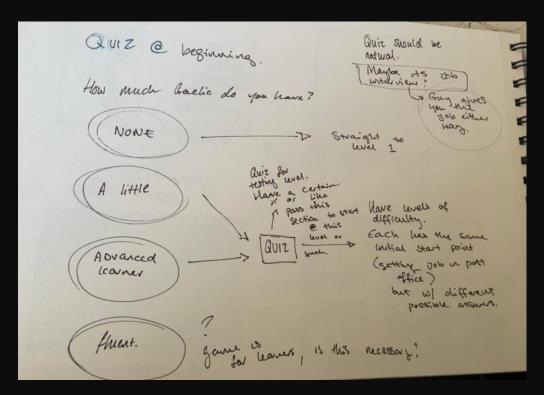




FIRST SCENE FEREY WINDOW MAKE WAITING @ POAT MAKE AND MAKE MAKE AND MAKE MAKE



SCENE 1



I decided to create a second scene, and went for the beginning scene where the player arrives at the island and meets Màiri.

In the beginning of the game, for players who indicate knowing some amount of Gaelic, there would be a quiz to indicate ability and allow the player to jump to later in the game rather than having to start from beginner levels.





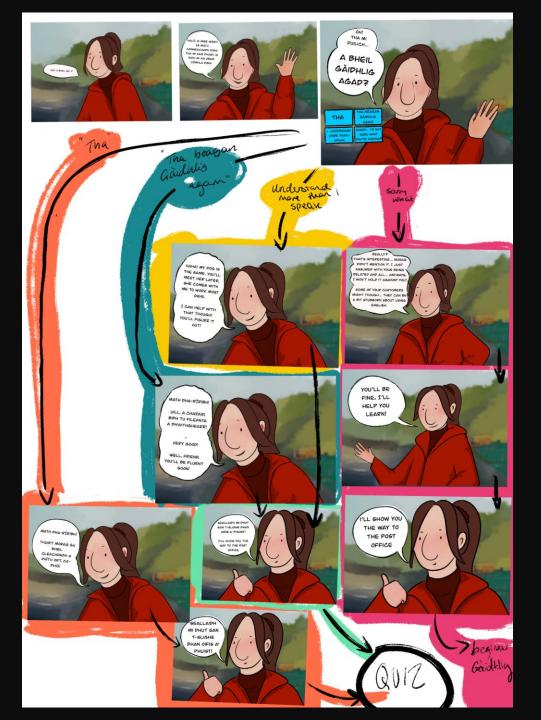
Initial sketches of the scene.

The storyline of this scene follows Màiri meeting the player at the pier. In the beginning, she is excited to see the player and launches into speaking Gaelic, and then realises that she should ask if they understand.

She then has a series of responses based on the players response.







does anyone know the most effective way of making a wee multiple choice story game? (edited) here is a ref for what i mean



Roboroter Today at 15:30 is this just like for a demo video?

Aimee - eekerry

Today at 15:30 was thinking v quick interaction like 1 button

Roboroter Today at 15:30 powerpoint

Roboroter Today at 15:31 non ironically perfect for this Imao and quick and easy

Kaihatsu Today at 15:32 You can hyperlink slides together with buttons

I had considered a few different ways to showcase the final works. At one stage I had these as videos, but ultimately felt it would be best to allow people to navigate at their own speed, even at this conceptual stage. There are only a few sections for actual interaction at the moment, but it also showcases the hint feature.

EXAMPLE DEMO

This short interactive animatic has been created within powerpoint as an example.

PLEASE USE THE BUTTONS TO NAVIGATE THROUGH SLIDES

In a final version the navigation buttons would be either removed or be designed to be more fitting with the style of the game, other than the ones for giving responses.

SCENE 1

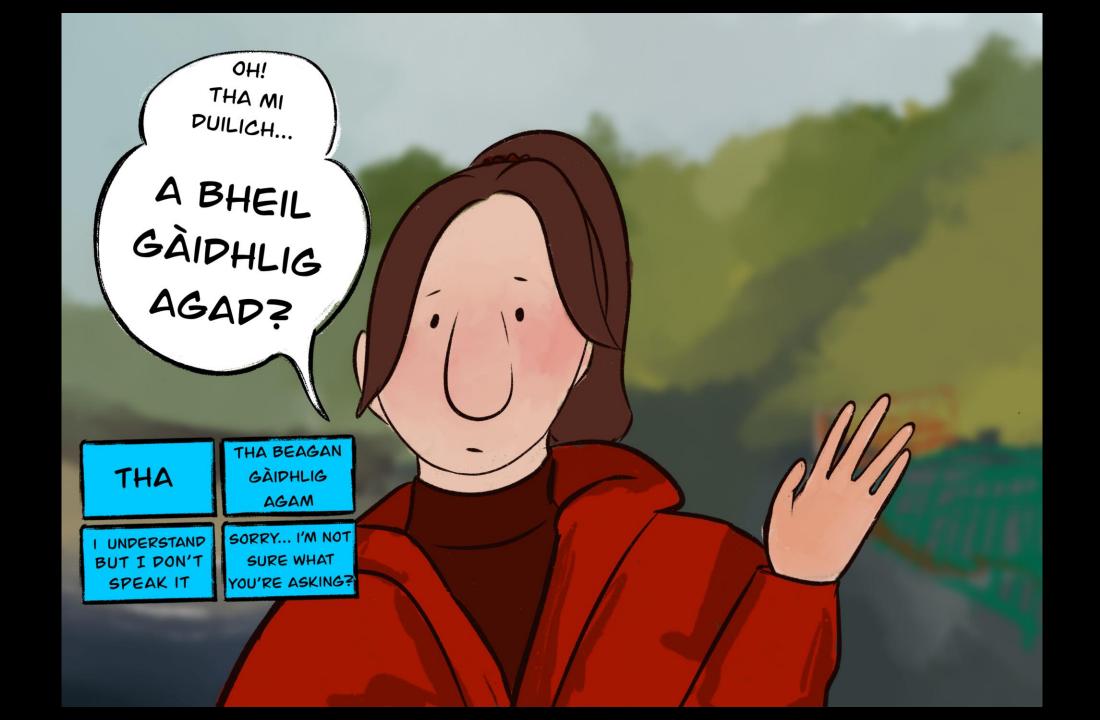
This scene would be the first in the game, showing the player arriving at the island.

























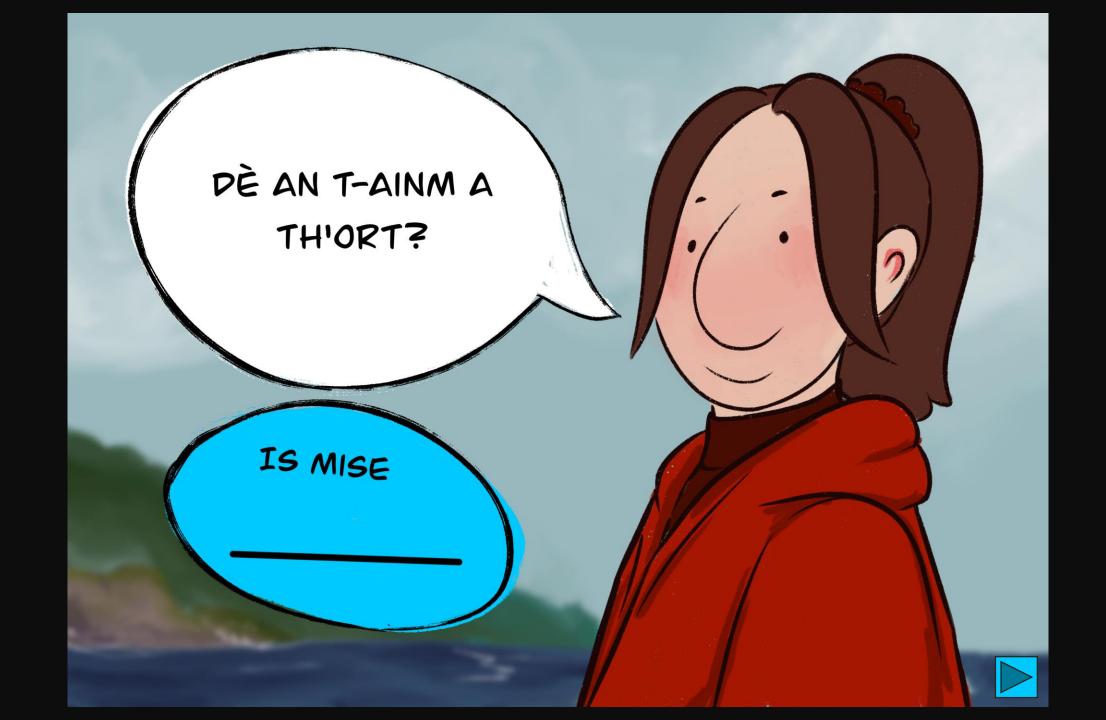












This would be quiz in actual game to determine Gaelic ability. Depending on the players results, they would go on to a varying degree of complexity with the Gaelic. The quiz would be integrated into conversation with Màiri, and afterwards the player would be shown the post office and have the job explained.



Here, Màiri would introduce the player to some basic Gaelic on the walk to the post office, and then show the player around the post office and explain the job.



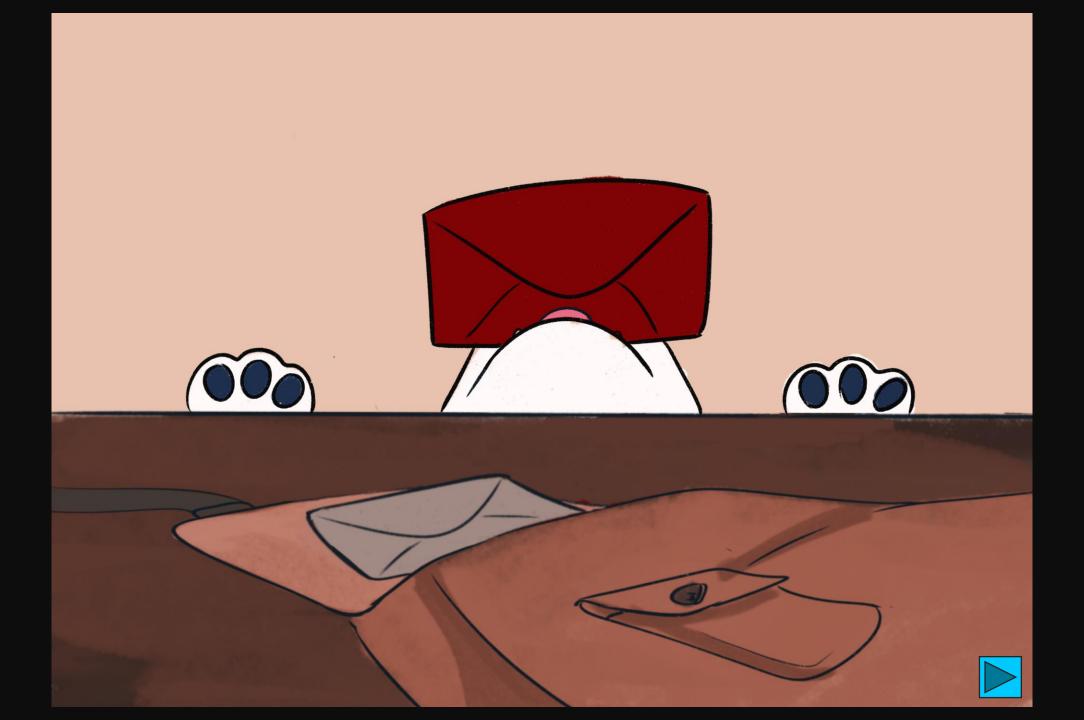
SCENE 2

This scene appears much later in the game, and is intended for users with intermediate Gaelic.

Highlighted text can be clicked on here to find out more information / translate



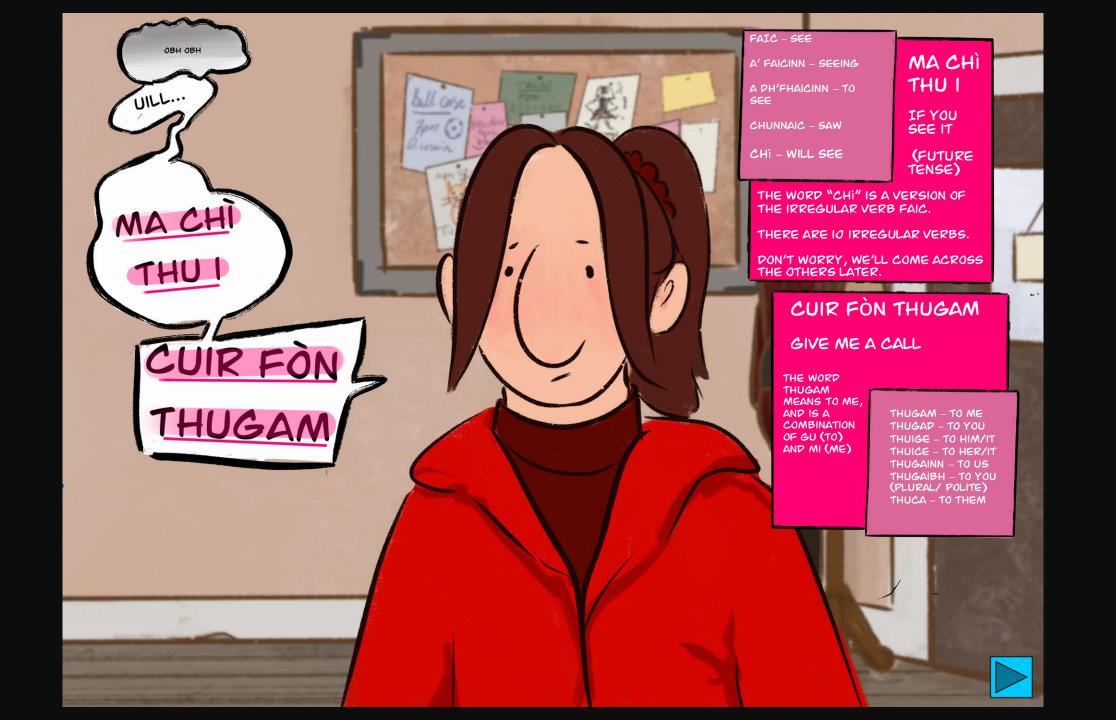




















































End (for now)

FINAL THOUGHTS

Some of the feedback I received about the art style called it nostalgic and cosy, which I feel was a successful aspect of my project. I hope that through this, players are able to enjoy the environments, and feel a renewed appreciation for Scotland and it's environments and language.

Although working on this project did take up a lot of the time I would've spent learning Gaelic, the creation of it has given me a renewed vigour for the language, and I'm excited to get back into serious learning soon.

I hope to be able to develop this idea further moving on from university, and plan to do some research in regards to making it a reality. I think it's incredibly important to bring Gaelic into new forms, especially with content for a range of different abilities. I am happy with the way that this game allows for a simulated immersive experience, which in my opinion is the best way to learn. As with many people in Scotland, and learners from elsewhere, I don't have many opportunities for everyday Gaelic as it is not widely used in my lowland community – so it was very important to me to have an aspect of this involved.

This project began in an email, from the lecturer who would later become my supervisor for this project, asking for volunteer mentors for the Kilted Otter Game Jam. Despite being interested in Gaelic, having been learning for a while, and being on this computer arts course, I had never considered that the two could merge. The game jam really inspired my work, and I'm very excited to continue working alongside them this year (and hopefully onwards).

omg omg i absolutely love the art style of this! it looks absolutely adorable it reminds me of childrens books it feels so cozy and nostalgic c the backgrounds look great too and i absolutely love Diomhair's design he's a good doggo also really like the way vou had some text highlighted and later gave further definitions/ facts about it - it feels really nice and informative! i could totally see this working in some app!

