

FORGOTTEN TIME

Virtual Reality Game Design Document

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Overview

Theme / Setting / Genre

Theme: Non-Linear Narrative Experience

Setting: London Apartment Through Time

Genre: Exploration Mystery Drama

Core Gameplay Mechanics Brief

GM #1: Grab and Place

- Players press left and right grips on the controller to grab certain interactive objects to either move around or trigger new events by placing them in specified areas of spaces that are in the environment and can release these objects by releasing the grip controls.

GM #2: Colliding Interactions

- Players will be able to move around the environment to walk through certain areas of the apartment that will trigger certain events while also grabbing and placing certain objects into designated highlighted areas that will also trigger an event or animation etc.

GM #3: Drawing Interaction

- During one of the time periods the player will have the opportunity to interact with a drawing mini interaction where they can pick up a paint brush and they will be able to draw on the canvas what they want.

GM #4: Drinking Mechanic

- One of the mechanics of the game is the player drinking medicines which they will be able to do by grabbing and lifting the medicines towards the players head to trigger a scene change.

GM #5: Walking/Movement

- Player uses the left joystick to move around the environment and the right joystick to rotate their field of view around the environment.

GM #6: Touch Trigger Events

- When the player moves through or their hand collides with certain areas, objects or points of interest in the experience it can trigger dialogue, events or animations.

Targeted platforms

- Oculus Rift S (Tethered Headset) - Primary Platform Target
- Oculus Quest 2 (Wireless Headset)
- HTC Vive (Tethered Headset)

Influences

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

This is a 2008 fantasy romantic drama film directed by David Fincher and tells the story of a man who ages in reverse. We felt that this was an interesting starting point for a virtual reality experience about how a player could transition through time or environments in this manner and also the ability to see the world around them change as they age through the experience.

To the Moon

This is a psychological drama adventure video game developed by Freebird games and tells the story of two doctors who offer to fulfill a dying man's last wish of going to the moon using a virtual artificial intelligence technology to alter his memories. This was a huge influence on our work due to how the character is at an old age and is able to go back through his life and relive moments of his past and also see his memories with the help of the two doctors.

Tatami Galaxy

This is a Japanese varsity novel and anime adaptation created by Tomihiko Morimi and tells the story of an unnamed student looking back at his time and campus life with each chapter taking place in parallel universes where he is enrolled in different student societies. This particular piece of media inspired our project mostly based on one chapter or episode where the character is stuck inside an endless loop of universes where any time he tried to escape his room he would find himself falling back into his room but in a new reality. This initially was going to inspire ways in which the player could navigate through the different time periods or memories for our experience.

About Time

This is a science fiction romantic comedy drama written and directed by Richard Curits which tells the story of Tim Lake who is part of a family where all the men can travel through time to any point in their own lives that they have already lived which he uses to improve his life and find love. The character in our narrative will look back through his memories and essentially travel in time and so About Time is a very similar story in which you can relive moments from your past, especially in the sense that you are reliving and not changing your past.

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind

This is a romantic science fiction drama film created by Charlie Kaufman and tells the story of a man who wants to remove the specific memories of life with his old girlfriend. The film is described as using elements of psychological drama, science fiction and non-linear narrative to explore the nature of memory and romantic love. We felt that this story was very relevant to ours because of the narrative specifically looking into a character's memory but also how it uses this particular story to tell a non-linear narrative to the viewer which might not fully make sense until the end of the film.

The Elevator Pitch

Time travel Virtual Reality experience where you are an aging character who is losing their memory and trying to uncover and remember events from their life by taking medicines given to them by their doctor.

Project Description

This project is called 'Forgotten Time' which is a virtual reality experience which is also accompanied by a separate cross media experience in Augmented Reality also called Forgotten Time AR. This experience is a science fiction drama story based on an aging character with developing dementia that is given the chance from their doctor to revisit memories from their past. The main aim for this experience is for the player to explore, discover and uncover mysteries and stories about the character they are portraying in this experience and also of this will be told in a non-linear narrative with the intention of replayability to see the story in a different order or to find certain story beats or interactions that may have been missed on a first playthrough of the story. The mechanic of time travel will be shown through a more unique concept of consuming medicines to trigger a random memory.

What sets this project apart?

There have been a lot of different media and video games which explore a character's dreams, world, memories and uncovering mysteries from someone's past but we feel that our concept could present this type of narrative in a more unique way. The way in which the user navigates through the different memories is with the help of a doctor and physically taking the medicines using virtual reality which will hopefully be interesting and different to what the player may have been expecting when jumping into this experience. Another way that we feel sets this project apart is how we use virtual reality to not only tell a story about a character at different points and ages in their life, but also trying to make the player physically feel like they are a different age as well. The older age and younger age scenes have different XR rigs that are altered to either make the character walk more slowly when they are old or appear much smaller in the world around them when they are the younger character. This method has also been done in many other games in the past but not so much in virtual reality which we feel can make this project stand apart from others.

Core Gameplay Mechanics (Detailed)

GM #1: Grab and Place

- Players press left and right grips on the controller to grab certain interactive objects to either move around or trigger new events by placing them in specified areas of spaces that are in the environment and can release these objects by releasing the grip controls.

GM #2: Colliding Interactions

- Players will be able to move around the environment to walk through certain areas of the apartment that will either be hidden in doorways or certain areas or perhaps highlighted to the player to guide them and when the player walks through these colliders, it will trigger certain timed events. These events can also be triggered by grabbing and placing certain tagged items into highlighted or faded areas that can also trigger events, animations or sounds etc.

GM #3: Drawing Interaction

- During the 1980s time period where the character is age 10 there is a brush and an easel that the player can interact with to draw whatever they want in red paint. The player can grab the brush and move it across the white canvas but only on this canvas and the progress of drawing cannot be reset or changed in the level once it has started.

GM #4: Drinking Mechanic

- The core mechanic of the whole experience to transition to different memories is being able to drink one of three medicines in which the player can use the grip to pick up one of the medicines and lift it gently towards their head to then consume the medicine and this will trigger a scene transition and they will be taken to the next scene depending on the medicine of choice.

GM #5: Walking/Movement

- Player uses the left joystick to move around the environment and the right joystick to rotate their field of view around the environment.

GM #6: Touch Trigger Events

- When the player moves through or their hand collides with certain areas, objects or points of interest in the experience it can trigger dialogue, events or animations.

Story and Gameplay

Story (Brief)

The story follows an aging man/woman who is dealing with memory loss and is given a series of medicines by a doctor that allow him to travel back and remember different points in his life. The experience will take place in one apartment over different decades and points in the main character's life. The story is told through a non-linear experience where you can choose to take any medicine at any given time to travel back through his memories. Similar to the character's journey of remembering and uncovering his past, the player will also be a part of this mystery to find out more about the character they are playing, who they are and the life they have lived. You will begin with the main character at eighty years old living on his own and trying to reminisce and remember the photos he has around his apartment. After taking the medicines you can travel back to his life at age ten, age twenty nine and age fifty three where you will meet or find out more about other people in his life and uncover mysteries and find tasks to complete in his memories.

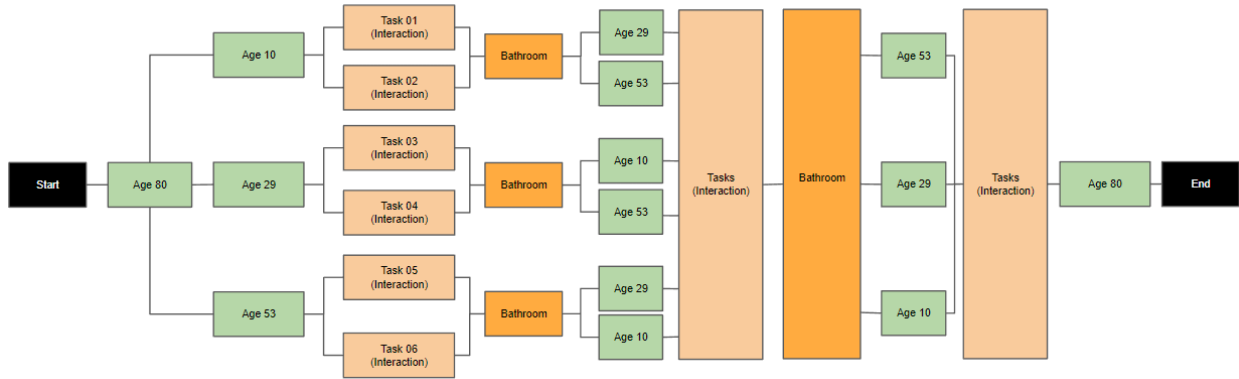
Story (Detailed)

The story begins with a character who is dealing with the loss of their memory who is then visited by a doctor who explains to them that their condition is worsening and the only way to possibly remember some moments from their past are by taking the medicines in their bathroom. After learning how to take medicines the character then goes to bed and wakes up finding themselves in their bathroom with three medicines in front of them and in any random order they can start taking the medicines and reliving memories from their past. However after taking one medicine and visiting that memory the character is not able to go back to that memory again. If the character chooses the blue medicine bottle they will go back to when they were ten years old and find themselves on the morning of their own birthday party put together by their mother. The character can grab and place decorations around the apartment and find their mother cooking and preparing for a party with the characters friends later on. The mother says to the character that there is a present waiting for them in their bedroom and when they open the present they find out that it is a painting set which they can spend some time trying out and painting while their mother is preparing food. The mother asks if they like the present and wants to take a photo of you before the character's friends arrive later and when she does this they will go back to the bathroom where they can take another medicine.

If the character chooses the red medicine bottle they will go back to when they were twenty nine years old and find themselves in their apartment at night and can hear the phone ringing in the kitchen. They will find that there is an answering machine with a couple of messages they can listen to, one from their boss who is asking where their artwork is and another from a friend who is worried about them ignoring their friends during this time. It is shown that the character is going through a dark and sad period of their life where they have a photo of their mother and some candles in the living room showing she has passed away and how it has affected them. In their workshop area they have torn up their painting and want to repair the damage after being upset over a certain situation. In their bedroom there are a number of photos thrown on the floor including the lamp showing that the character was angry and started to damage items around their room. Once the voice messages are finished they are prompted to delete these messages and when they do they will go back to the bathroom where they can take another medicine.

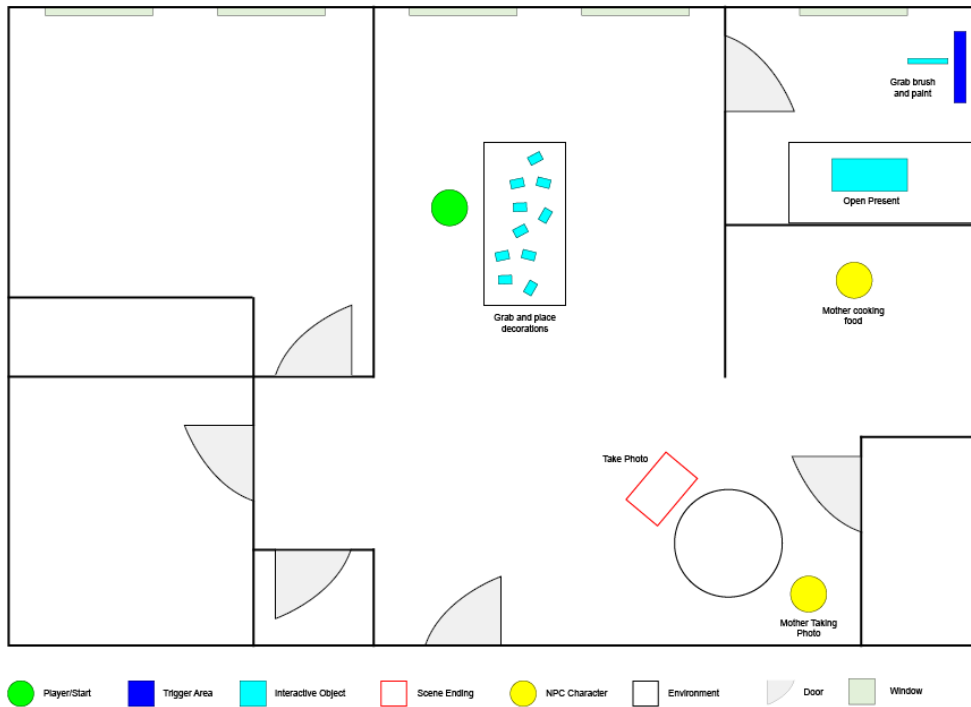
If the character chooses the orange medicine bottle they will go back to when they were fifty four years old and find themselves in their apartment covered in tarps and dust showing they have been away for a long time. They can turn on the hoover and answer a phone call from their daughter who is checking in on them and suggesting that they clean up the apartment and also make themselves some food while they are doing this as well. If they turn on the television they will see an advert for a heavenly tablet system that will allow old people to take care of themselves without much help. The daughter also suggests hanging up some of their old photos in their room from the suitcase and when they do this they will go back to the bathroom where they can take another medicine. After all of the medicines have been taken and the character has visited all three memories they can then leave the bathroom and go and explore the apartment again. When the character goes back to their bedroom and looks at their photos they will hear the door opening and their daughter will walk into the room to check on how they are. The daughter notices that they are remembering their old photos and asks if the character can actually remember those particular moments as well which will then end the story and experience.

The Player Journey

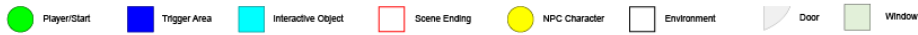
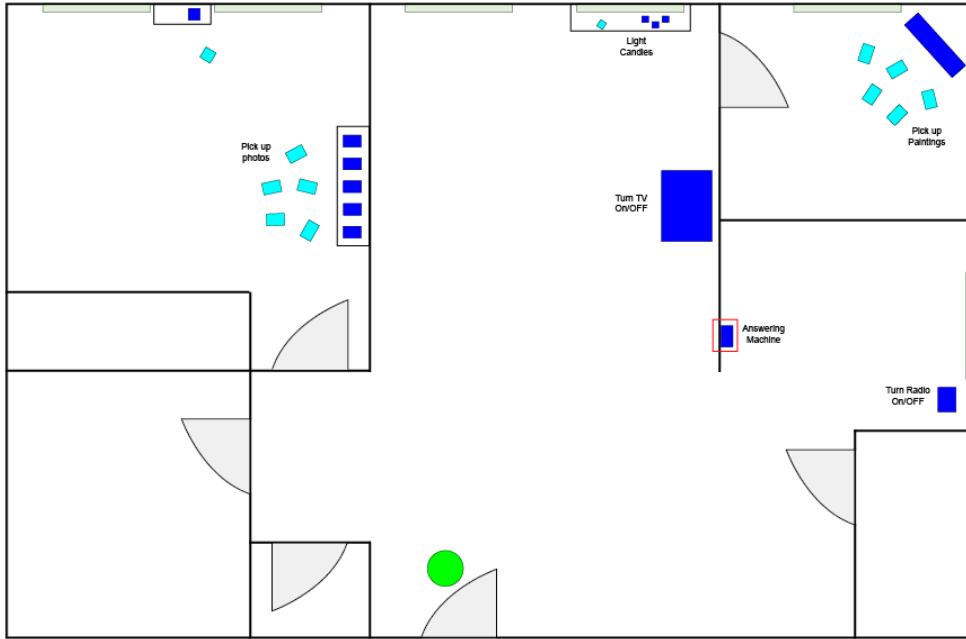


World Layout/Environment

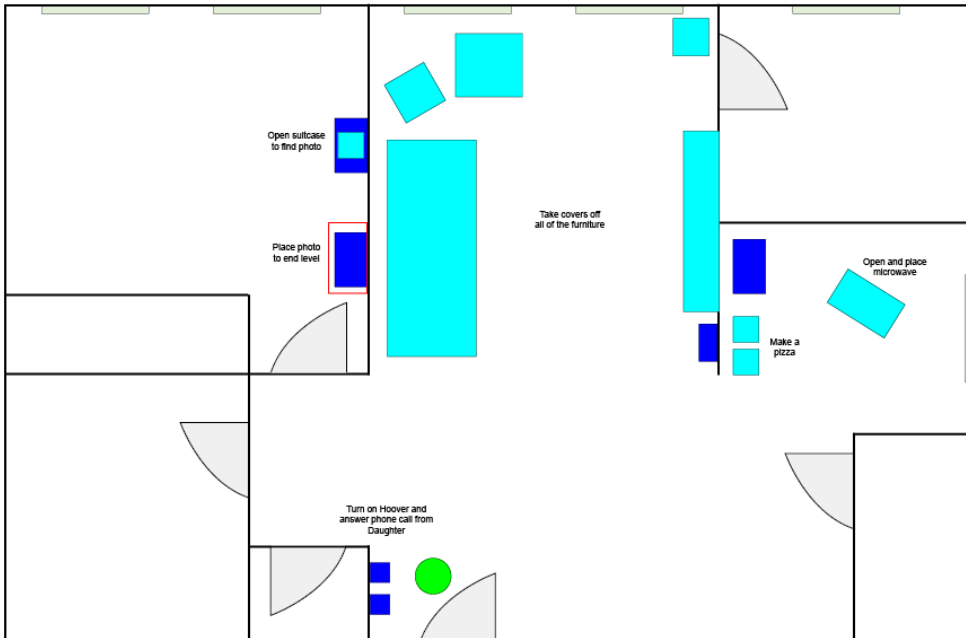
1980s Apartment Layout



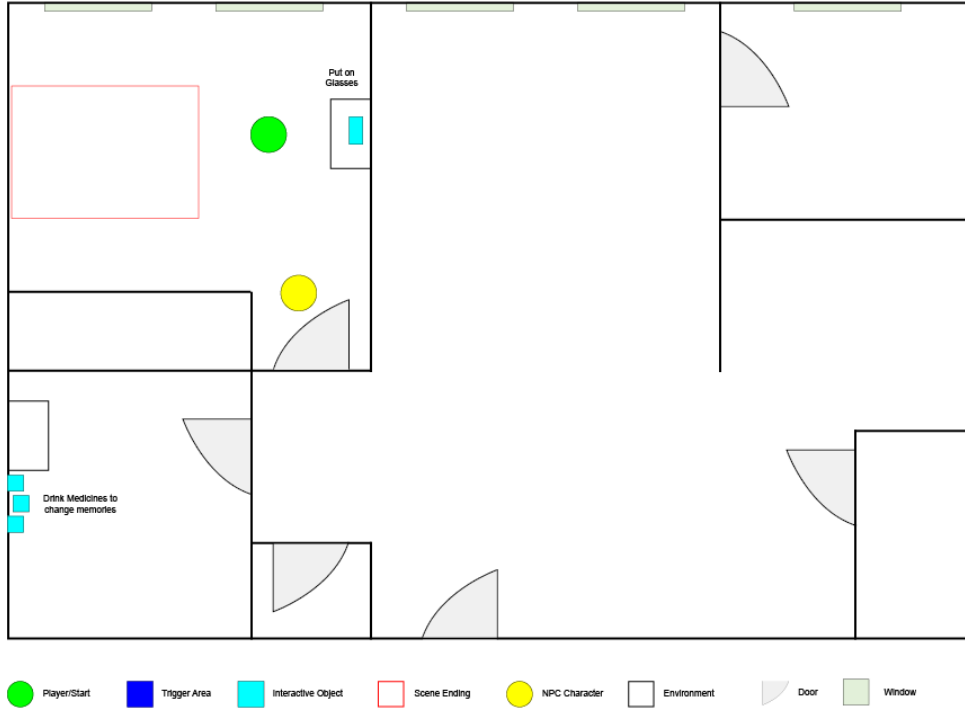
1990s Apartment Layout



2020s Apartment Layout



2060s Apartment Layout



Higher res version found in submission folder

Gameplay (Brief)

The player will take on the role of a character over four different stages of their life which will include ages 10, 29, 54 and 80 which the player may move or appear a different size in the scenes entirely dependent on the age of the character at the time. The user can walk around the different environments using continuous movement and rotation in four different time periods of the apartment including 1980s, 1990s, 2020s and our interpretation of the future. The player can grab and move around certain objects in the scenes while also being able to press certain buttons to trigger events and placing certain objects to snap in place on certain locations that may also trigger an event, dialogue or animation. The medicines within the opening scene will be used as a scene changer or memory trigger where the player can lift these medicines towards their head to consume them and start a transition to another random scene.

Gameplay (Detailed)

The gameplay in your experience will be based upon many of the basic virtual reality gameplay functions that have been used in many games or other projects. This includes navigating around the different environments of the experience using continuous movement and also a continuous turn provider which will hopefully allow the player to navigate through the experience understandably and with ease. The continuous movement will be triggered by the player using the left joystick and being able to turn around will be triggered using the right hand joystick on the controller. The game starts with an opening menu which explains the controls to the player and presents a start button and the player will have a line renderer coming from their right hand and when they round the line at the start button and press the right trigger, it will start the experience and load up the first scene or level.

In the apartment there will be a number of objects that the player can pick up and interact with that will either appear as normal or will be highlighted to draw the player's attention towards these specific items. The player can pick up these objects by using the inner grip buttons on either controllers and this will allow them to interact with these items around the environments. If the player releases these items depending on which ones they are they will stay in the exact location and orientation that the player released them in or they will reset back to their starting position which is normally dependent on the purpose of said item in the scene. There will also be a number of highlighted points of interest for the player where if they place their hand into these objects they might disappear, change or trigger another event such as removing certain items or pressing a button in certain scenes of the experience.

One of the main gameplay mechanics of this experience is how the user will transition and trigger the change of memory or time travel in our experience. To do this the user will need to consume a certain medicine bottle from in the bathroom. To do this the player needs to pick up one of the medicine bottles using the grips on the controllers and then gently lifting that medicine bottle object towards their head and once they do this they will hear a drinking sound effect and the bottle will disappear indicating to the player that it has been consumed which will then trigger the scene change by the screen fading. In some of the scenes there will also be a number of faded outline areas or places of interest that the player can interact with the finish or complete certain areas of a scene. For example in some areas you might find that on a shelf there is a faded object and on the floor is that object shown clearly and highlighted so if the player picks up that object and places it on that faded section, it will snap into place and complete that area, interaction or task in the narrative.

The overall story and narrative of the experience will be very visual and also told through spoken dialogue and other audio in the scene either from NPC characters, phone calls and other means etc. A lot of these different sounds and audio will be triggered by the actions of the player by either having to press a certain button, move a certain item or walking into a certain location which will hopefully drive the player to explore, look around and uncover some mysteries of the environment. One of the last interactions that will be found in one of the scenes will be a drawing/painting interaction where the user can grab a paint brush, and move that object onto the canvas in the same environment which will allow them to draw a line on that particular page and the user can do this for as long as they like but they will not be able to delete, change or reset their drawing progress once they have started to manipulate the canvas.

Ethics of the Experience

There is the possibility that some ethical challenges could show up during this experience which would need to be considered during the project's development. Accessibility will need to be considered in this experience such as those with physical needs and impairments. The navigation for the experience is done through teleportation so the user is not required to walk around the environment but some assets or objects could be out of reach for the player so this will need to be considered to have adjustable POV or scalable objects in the environments depending on the user. The experience will also include audible as well as written dialogue through speech bubbles which can be helpful for those with hearing or visual impairments while playing the experience.

This is a dramatic narrative driven experience and is a work of fiction written by us as a group but it should be made clear to the players through a disclaimer that the experience is a work of fiction and is not representative or based on real life experiences, people or locations. This experience is also mostly targeted at more of a young adult or upwards demographic and so is not specifically for children which means an age rating or further disclaimer might need to be placed into the experience. The XR rigs of the experience also include a younger age version which may make the player even smaller if played by a younger audience member and so this will need to be considered and be more restricted on who can play and enjoy this particular virtual reality game. This particular experience also features a few different voice actors who are a mix of genders but are all of White-British ethnicity and there is an opportunity here to be more inclusive if this project or concept could be taken further into a future project or production to include more nationalities, race and identities. The experience is also told only in the English language which also includes the subtitles and prompts in certain scenes and so these could have also been written in different languages and dialects for representation and also making the overall experience more accessible to more players and users from any part of the world.

Assets Needed

2D

Textures

- Building Textures
- Apartment Wall and Floor Texture
- Subtitles Text for each scene Dialogue
- Guided messages in each scene

3D

Characters List

- The Doctor
- The Daughter
- The Mother

Environmental Art Lists

- 1980s Apartment Furniture & Decorations
- 1980s Outside Cityscape
- 1990s Apartment Furniture & Decorations
- 1990s Outside Cityscape
- 2020s Apartment Furniture & Decorations
- 2020s Outside Cityscape
- 2060s Apartment Furniture & Decorations
- 2060s Outside Cityscape
- Medicine Bottles
- Glasses
- Art Brush and Easel
- Lighter
- Candles
- Photo Frames
- Paintings
- Pizza
- Pepperoni
- Microwave
- Birthday Decorations
- Camera
- Presents
- Mobile Phone
- Landline Telephone
- Radio
- Television
- Lamp

Sound

Sound List (Ambient)

Outside

- Raining
- Street Ambience
- Birds and Nature

Sound List (Player)

Character Sound List

- Drinking Sound

Inside

- The Doctor Dialogue
- The Mother Dialogue
- The Daughter Dialogue
- The Daughter Phone Call Dialogue
- The Friend Phone Call Dialogue
- The Boss Phone Call Dialogue
- Flame/Candle
- Glass
- Paper
- Wood Placement
- Radio
- Television Cartoon
- Television Static
- Hoover
- Phone Answering Machine
- Phone Ringing
- Camera Shutter

Animation

Environment Animations

- Rain
- Fireflies
- Candle Flame
- Door Opening
- Hoover Movement
- Television
- Text Transition Fades
- Scene Transition Fades
- Flickering Lights

Character Animations

Player

- Hand Grab/Movement Animation

NPC

- Walking
- Turning
- Speaking
- Idle
- Hand Movements