



LIFE IS STRANGE CRITICAL ANALYSIS REPORT

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REVIEWED ON XBOX ONE

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- UI and Controls
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- Story Progression



Format and Prioritization

P

- **Priority Intrusion:** Aspects of the game that significantly hinder play-experience and/or occur frequently

M

- **Medium Intrusion:** Issues of the game that may be common or difficult for players to engage with, but surmountable nonetheless

S

- **Small Intrusion:** Infrequent or inconsequential issues that may only pose minor annoyances to some players

G

- **Good Practice:** Aspects of the game that should be kept (Good Job!)

?

- **Question?:** Parts of the game that may be intentional design choices but otherwise are of note

G UI and Controls

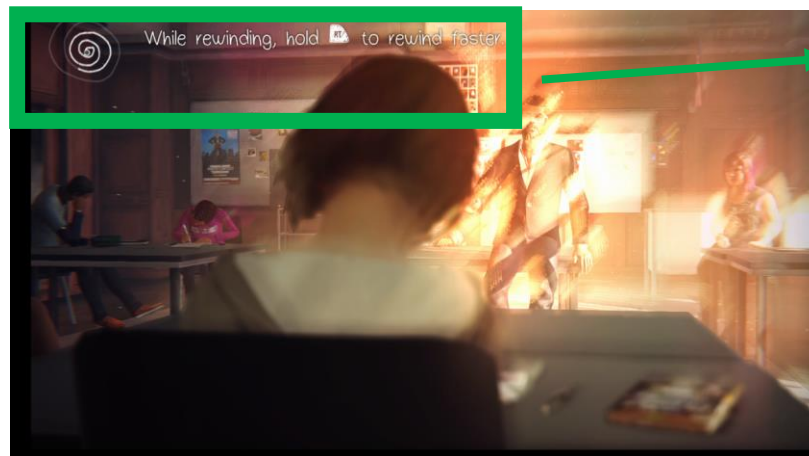
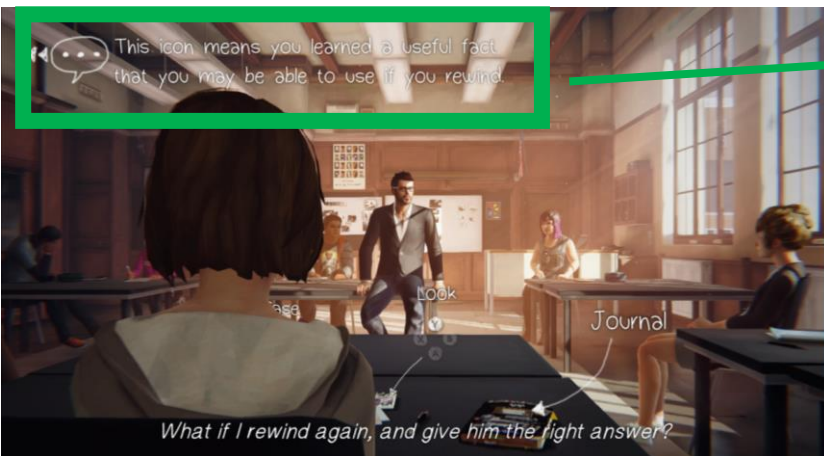
- **Consistent Button Action Prompts:**
 - **Situation:** Players should know which buttons perform specific actions on interactive objects on player approach
 - Game aesthetic is maintained throughout UI as well
 - **Cause:** Players can rely on certain buttons to consistently represent certain actions (e.g. “Y” = “Look”, “A” = “primary action” etc.)
 - Buttons differentiated by location on controller as well
 - Distinctive style stands out from environment, even as player moves throughout the environment
 - **Cause:** “Drawn” arrows and outlines clearly mark interactable objects/characters



G UI and Controls

- Recognized (Not Recalled) Prompts

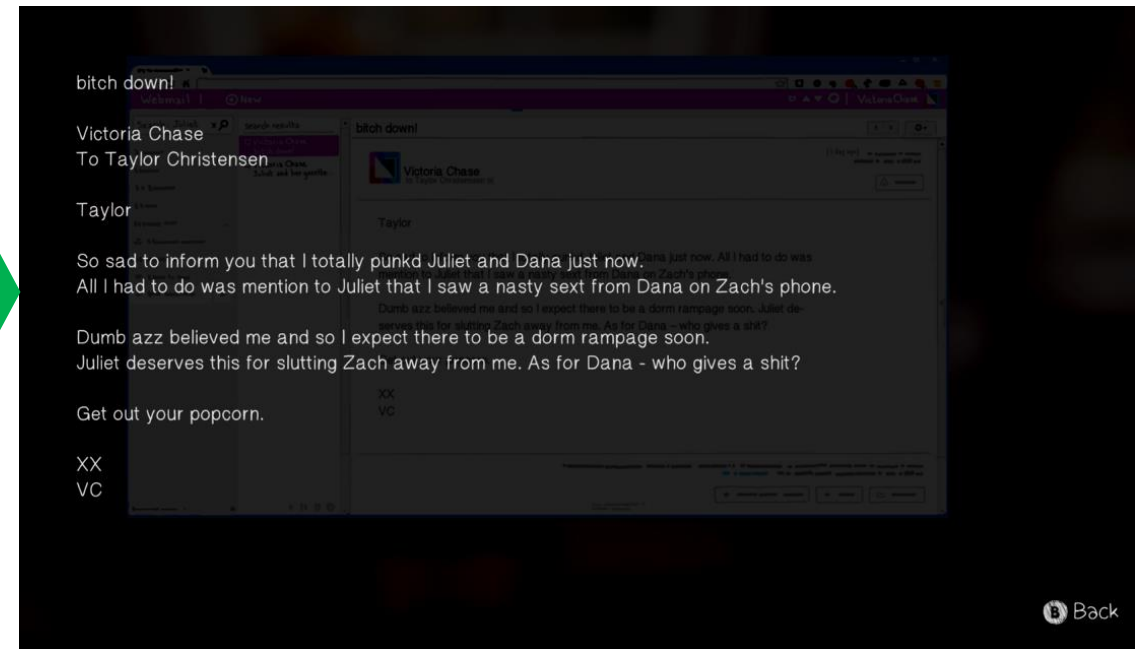
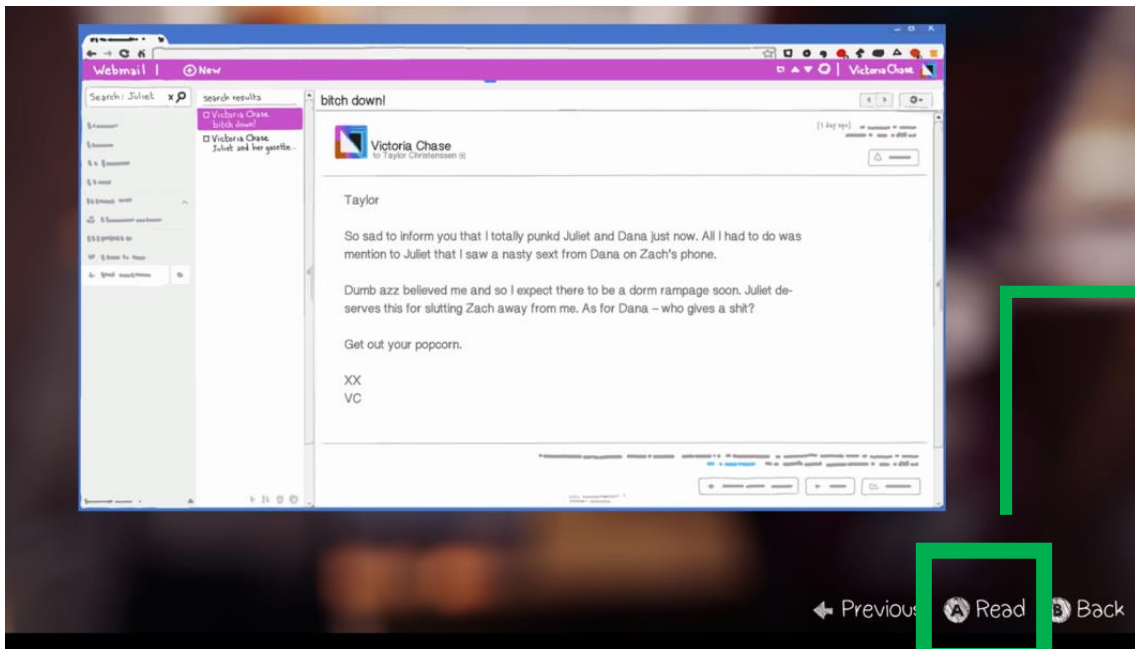
- **Situation 1:** Players should generally know where important information will appear on screen to remind them of their options/abilities (top left of screen)
- **Cause 1:** Story prompts consistently appear in same spot
- **Situation 2:** Players generally know what is being asked of them at an objective without pulling them out of story
- **Cause 2:** Screen noticeably changes when story requires certain actions to continue
 - Player character also remarks with in-character dialogue reminding player of necessary actions



G UI and Controls

- Readable Items

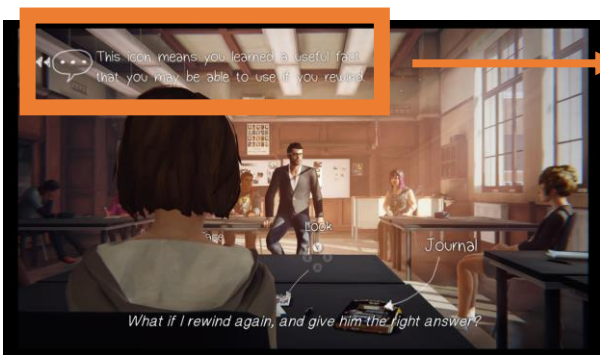
- **Situation:** Players should easily be able to read unstructured, potentially difficult to see text without having to sacrifice game aesthetics and world immersion
- **Cause:** Items with text can be “read” to give players clear view of the text



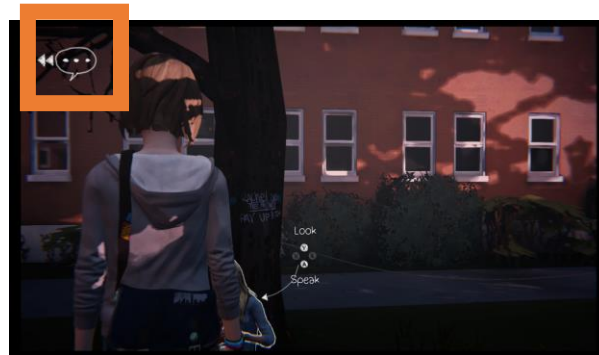
M UI and Controls

- **Difficult to Recognize Main Story Icons :**

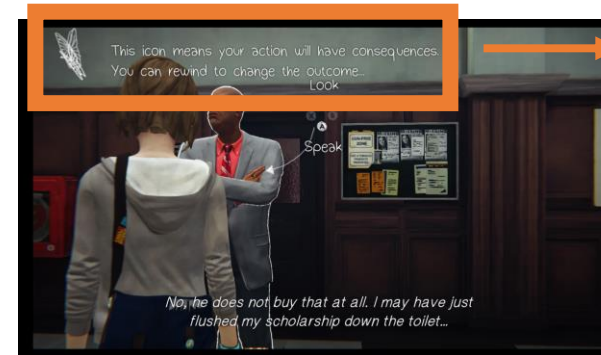
- **Situation:** Players may be confused about whether the game is telling them that the current situation will have consequences or whether they learned something useful
- **Cause:** Different icons have the same audio cue
 - “...your action will have consequences...” and “...you learned a useful fact that you may be able to use if you rewind”
 - **Pros:** Singular audio cue does, however, introduce a singular, universal audio cue reminding players to pay attention
- **Cause:** Players have limited time to make decisions because scenes progress in real time
- **Cause:** Descriptions of respective symbols do not appear in later chapters of the game
 - Example: A player playing Chapter One may have no trouble distinguishing the two symbols however, after waiting a week to play Chapter Two, may have trouble remembering the distinction without the symbol description
- **Solution:** Use different audio cues for the two main story icons to give players an additional method of quickly differentiating between the two cues
 - **Alternative Solution:** Include shortened descriptive text with the symbols, even past the introductory first chapter of the game (e.g. “This Action Will Have Consequences” or “Useful Fact”)
 - However, this could however clutter a clean, and otherwise clear UI setup that may detract from player immersion



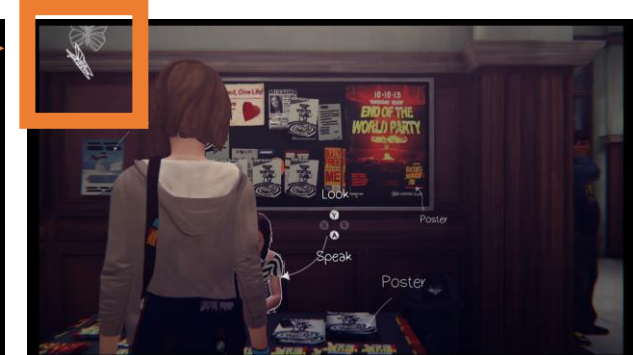
Chapter 1



Later Chapters



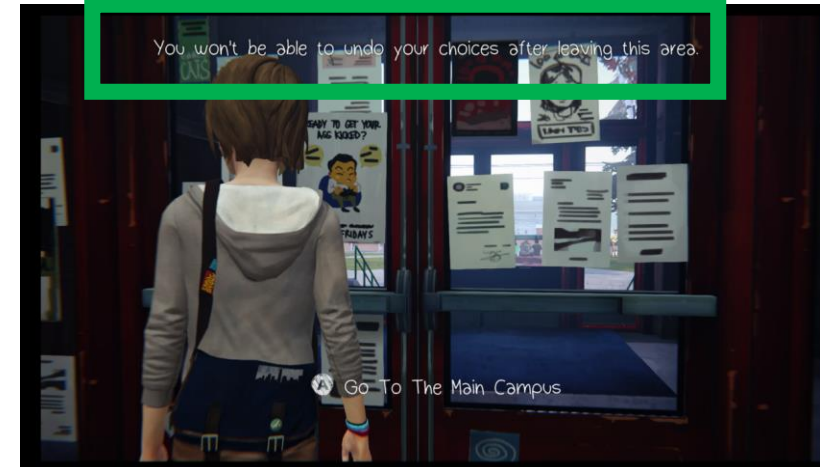
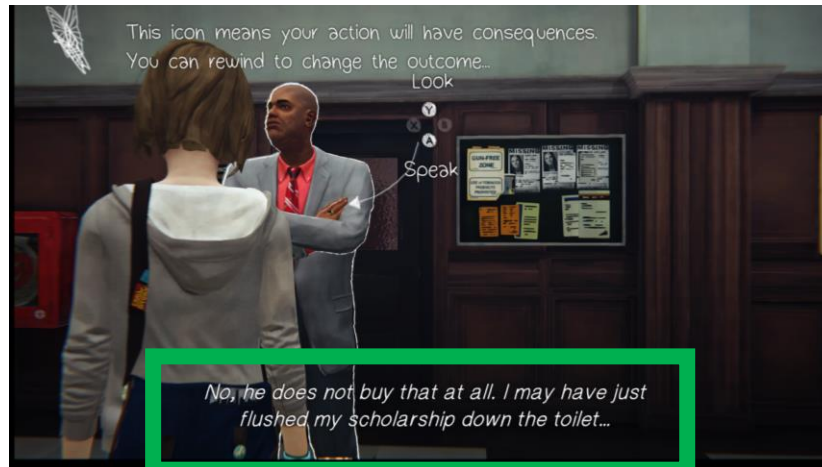
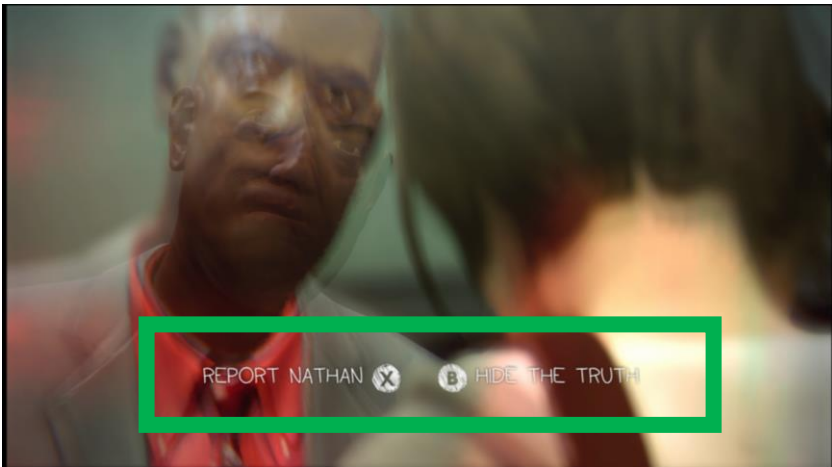
Chapter 1



Later Chapters

G Decision Making

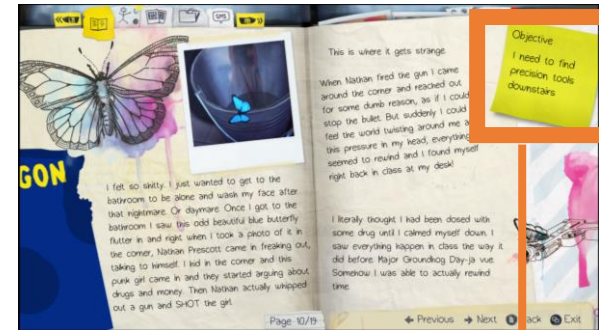
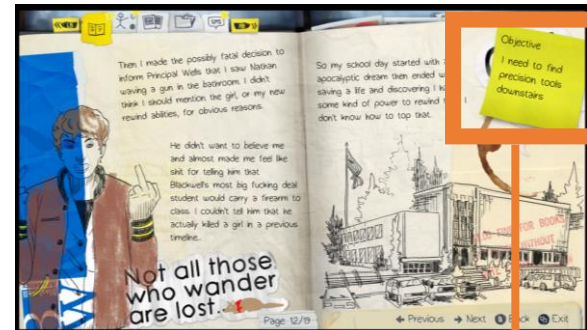
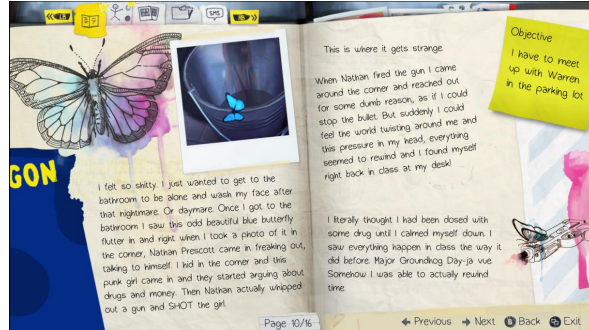
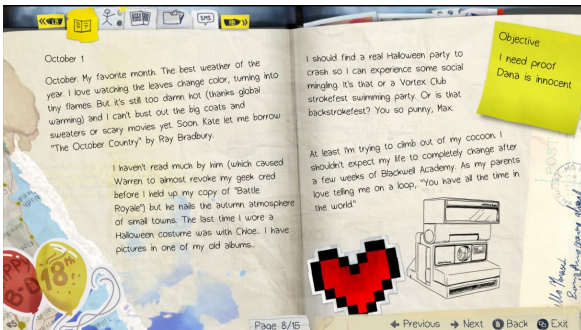
- Major Decision Points are Clearly Signposted
 - Situation 1: Players should generally know where the major decisions are and can easily, and quickly, go back to change their important decisions
 - Cause 1: Major decisions are given unique screens and unlimited time to choose an option
 - Situation 2: Players maintain control over their decision-making process without being given full knowledge of the decision's later repercussions
 - Cause 2: Major decisions are almost immediately re-playable but clearly marked as irreversible after a given point
 - Player character gives dialogue post-decision that reinforces the ambiguity of the decision, reacts to what the player decided and encourages players to seriously evaluate their decision



M Journal 1/2

• Losing Track of the Objective

- **Situation:** Players may lose track of their objective and struggle to find it within their journal
 - If a player returns to the game after some time away, they may struggle to remember their most recent objective
- **Cause:** Objective “sticky note” changes to different pages in the journal as the game progresses, meaning players sometimes have to search for the objective within the journal
- **Cause:** Objective “sticky note” blends into the aesthetic of the journal, making it difficult to see amongst the other content in the journal
 - **Pros:** The sticky note does, however, match very well with the consistent, overall aesthetic of the game, in effect keeping players in the game world even whilst giving game-related information
- **Solution:** Goal- Make sure that the stick note with the current objective is easily accessible to the player
 - **Possible Solution:** Include an additional, consistent place where the objective “sticky note” can always be found (e.g. the first page of the journal “chapter”, or the most recent journal entry in the story)



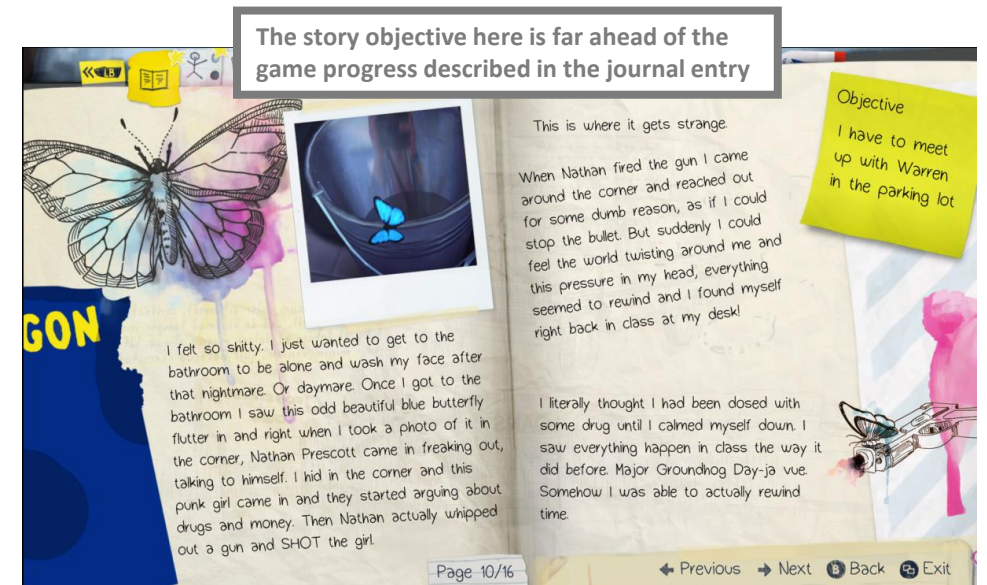
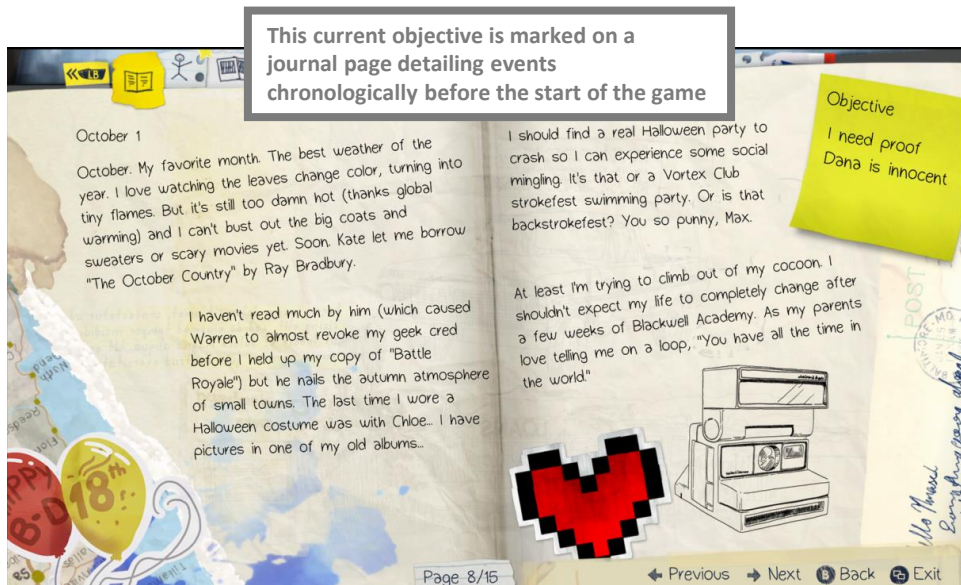
The sticky note can move to different pages

Moreover, the same sticky note can end up on different pages

S Journal 2/2

- Losing Track of the Story

- Situation: Player may become confused by their position in the story
 - If a player were to leave the game for some time and then return, they may struggle to find their position in the story and how their objective fits with the narrative
- Cause: The objective sticky note on the journal page does not necessarily match to the story contents described on the journal page it is on
- Solution: Goal- Give the player an indicator where they are in the story
 - Possible Solution: Add a small bookmark on the area where the player currently is in the story (keeping with journal aesthetic) indicating current story progression
 - Possible Solution: Use the right trigger (a button not used in the journal but already associated with 'speeding up' as per standard console gameplay controls) as a way to skip ahead to the most recent journal page
 - Pros: The player is given a clue to their story progression from the numbered pages
 - Possible Addendum: With the numbered pages in mind, keep the sticky note on the most recent journal entry



S Story Progression

- Story/Quest Direction is Sparse:
 - Situation: Players may get unduly disrupted from story progression if they do not hear or understand the next objective clue
 - Cause: Dialogue prompts that clue player towards next objective are only given once
 - Players can rewind, however player must re-do entire dialogue to be reminded of that one-time dialogue cue
 - Solution: Dialogue clues should repeat after extended period of inactivity (much like how control prompts are re-displayed after inactivity)



G Story Progression

- Skip Function

- **Situation 1:** Players will not unintentionally skip dialogue/cutscenes (particularly important considering how crucial dialogue is to the story)
- **Cause 1-Error Prevention:** Skip function is highlighted and must be pressed twice to utilize

S

- **Situation 2:** However, experienced players (e.g. players on 2nd playthroughs) cannot accelerate through dialogue or cutscenes, preventing them from accelerating through content (some of which they may wish to speed through having already completed a previous playthrough)
- **Cause 2:** Skip function is only allowed in repeated dialogues/cutscenes (e.g. Player completes full dialogue with NPC, only upon re-doing the dialogue with NPC may the player character use the skip function). In other words, players going through a 2nd playthrough will not be able to accelerate through dialogue or cutscenes, possibly discouraging repeated playthroughs

