

The Curse of the Sceptrum

Where to find the game

<https://d-esl.itch.io/the-curse-of-the-sceptrum>

Hosting the game sessions

Accessibility

English level

The game can be played by students who want to improve their A2 English level.

Accessibility features

The Curse of the Spectrum is a game which can be available on multiple devices; it can be played using the mouse or the keyboard arrows (up, left, down, right) and touch input.

Advice for specific student profiles

The game can be controlled with either a mouse or the arrows on the keyboard, making it accessible to everybody.

Auditory disability or deafness

There is background music along with sound effects within the game, but they are not necessary to accomplish the steps, nor are they relevant additions to the

required information. The game can thus be played on mute, and students with auditory issues or deafness will be able to accomplish all the tasks without issue.

Classroom organisation

Duration

This game can be played in 30-40 minutes by solo players.

Classroom suggestion: groups of 4-5 students, each member of the group being a player, while the other students focus on the tasks given for each game stage.

The game can be finished as a home assignment, too.

Single-player mode

Solo

The game can be played by one student in front of the desktop, using the controls mentioned above (mouse or arrows).

In Group

As the game was divided into **4 stages** according to the protagonist's progress, the learning activity can be organised in groups made of 1 player and 3-4 members, as follows:

Group	1 player	3-4 members	Task	Evaluation
STAGE A	- plays the game	- solve the tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">household and housekeeping words;	Matching the correct definition

STAGE B	- plays the game	- solve the tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepositions which describe the position of things in a room 	Example: in, on, under, between, against, next to, behind
STAGE C	- plays the game	- solve the tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • winter clothing items and accessories 	Vocabulary list
STAGE D	- plays the game	- solve the tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of Houses 	Gamified resource
Note: each group member should have the privilege to be a game player.				

Multiplayer mode

None

Remote Play

Play as homework

The game meets all the requirements to be accessed and played by students at home. It does not contain harmful or socially unacceptable vocabulary or facts, which allows playing with no adult supervision.

Distance learning activity

The game can be played as a distance learning activity, provided that language learning tasks accompany it as a separate folder.

Briefing

Pedagogical requirements

There is no previous knowledge the students should have (considering CEFR level). The vocabulary and the grammar categories are easy to understand. If need be, the teacher can use the blackboard to explain the unknown words and phrases, but their meaning can be worked out from context inside the game or during group activities settled for each step.

Explanations to give before playing

The game will flow naturally to reveal its events. It is a 2D game of 30-40 minutes created with RPG Maker and the students will be able to play it easily.

Emotional security and other warnings

There are not any sensitive topics or situations depicted in the game.

Follow-up and Post-play activities

Evaluation: score analysis or resolving difficulties encountered

Although the video game does not include a scoring system, the player's level of satisfaction is maintained through the rewards (gold pieces, chest key, objects) collected to advance in the game. It is a slightly non-linear plot which engages the player to pursue all the story objectives and successfully reach the end.

Lesson plan using the in-game content learned

- a) Reinforcing grammar and vocabulary (present constructions, household items)
- b) Cultural aspects (professions, skills, inventions)

As the vocabulary in the story is not particularly difficult for this language level, the teacher has a good opportunity to **drill on the cultural aspects** of the game. For instance, the students can have a **short debate to guess the epoch** of the game or **read online facts** on houseworking and housekeeping; see the link:

<https://www.museumofthehome.org.uk/explore/stories-of-home/cleaning-and-housework/>

The students can **write short informative texts** on discoveries and inventions (e.g. the vacuum cleaner, the washing machine, recipe books)

Moreover, they can indulge in more complex tasks and **write articles or reports** about old professions and practices (e.g. traditional mining, witchcraft, farming, commerce).

Learning skills: reading, speaking, writing

Debrief or production based on the game session

Debriefing in Game-Based Learning is present in this game as well, as it fosters connection with learning. Examples of students' productions:

- **Writing:** description (the students are invited to describe an entertaining activity for teenagers in the past); informative notes about housekeeping inventions; magazine article about an old profession
- **Reading:** online facts about householding in the past years
- **Listening:** abridged (A2-A2+) classic novel excerpts on domestic life and house chores (e.g. Tom Sawyer, Huck Finn)
- **Speaking:** debate on means of entertainment for teenagers in past and present times

The game

Context and story

Plot

Ed, a teenager, sets off to look for his older brother Harold, who had left to find the secret scepter, despite the warnings. Ed proves to be a clever and witty boy because he manages to surpass all the obstacles, find his brother and, on top of that, to release him from the curse. In the end, the two brothers return home safe from danger and free from injury.

Lore – game world

The game world is based on medieval fantasy, with real characters (Ed, Harold, the Wise Man, the prisoner) and fantasy ones (the witch, the spirit). At first glance the plot seems simple, but it is built on small sub-quests which add flavour to the game.

Characters

Protagonist(s)

- Ed

Character description

A brave teenager worried about his brother long missing

Antagonist(s)

- None

Character description

There are no antagonists in this game.

Companion(s)

- **None**

Character description

There are no companions in this game.

Gameplay

Gameplay: Quest

Description

The older brother is missing... and the younger one sets off to look for him. The game gives a top-down view that the player navigates using the **arrows** on the keyboard or the **mouse**. The player can collect or interact with items or characters using the interaction button when standing next to them.

Pedagogical impact

The communicative part of the game is based on the interaction with objects and people. The students will find A2 level sentences in different forms (affirmative, interrogative and negative) and common vocabulary derived from housekeeping. Starting with Harold's appearance, the students can describe how other game characters may look like (e.g. the wise man, the witch, the prisoner).

Moreover, with the help of the teacher who can bring interesting material to support such activities, students can immerse into the cultural dimension of the

game and learn about old professions (e.g. traditional mining) or household inventions (e.g. vacuum cleaner).

Roadmap and solutions

STAGE A: Setting off

Description: A boy named Ed leaves his native place to find Harold, his lost brother, 'a tall young man, with straight brown hair and blue eyes', who set off to search for the legend of the Sceptrum.

Objective: The first adjutant, a Wise Man, advises the boy to search for the Witch in the forgotten forest. Before that, the boy visits different places in the village and collects different objects that he might need for the journey.

Solution: The hero enters the house on the left to find a key in a pot; he also visits the house on the right to find another key in a barrel. He obtains the third key from the prisoner, after fulfilling his wish. These keys will help him in his quest.

Tip: To be able to bear the winter cold in the next level, the hero needs winter clothes. The shop is the top left building next to the angel statue. He needs to pay 20 golden coins which he needs to collect on his way. Moreover, the player should visit the prison as well; here, the convict tells him to buy him a meal and he will give him a chest key. The tent offers money in a chest on the right.

Learning objectives:

At this stage, the students can exploit the vocabulary, as the hero stops in front of every item related to household and housekeeping (e.g. flowers, wardrobe, bucket, barrel, chest etc.) and drill on Present Simple constructions.

Level: A2

Grammar: Present Simple constructions with 'be' + adjectives (it's broken, it is closed, it is covered, it's empty, it's locked etc.)

Vocabulary: lexical items related to household and housekeeping; words and phrases used for describing people (tall, blue eyes, straight brown hair)

STAGE B: Meeting the Witch

Description: Seeing the snowy ground at the distance, the player should visit the Forgotten Forest in order to meet the Witch. The old woman is not mean at all, on the contrary, she wants to help the boy! She receives the stone and the hero is properly equipped for winter. Before visiting the witch, the player goes to the Tower, where he unlocks a chest with gold with one of the keys. Down into the Basement the player will also find the key for the emerald chest in the Royal Tent. The Witch is the second adjuvant and tries to help Ed, but she wants something in return, of course. Her wish is very... precious!

Objective: Getting information from the Witch

Solution: After the Witch gets the emerald, she gives some information about Ed's brother who was seen going to the Big Castle beyond the rocky mountains and receives a pair of boots. Some winter clothes are also necessary... Let's visit the village shop again!

Tip: The Witch tells you to bring her an emerald, which is found in the Royal Tent, in the chest he couldn't open so far because he didn't have the proper key.

Learning objectives: Position of household objects - vocabulary exercises to help learn words for things you can see in a room and their position.



Level: A1-A2

Grammar: Present constructions with **there is** and **there are** (e.g. There is a bookshelf against the wall)

Vocabulary: Prepositions which describe the position of things in a room (e.g. in, on, under, between, against, next to, behind)

STAGE C: Facing the harsh winter conditions

Description: The player can now access the snowy zone where he finds a tent. The man there promises to give him the key to unlock a cart if he gets a shovel. All goes

well and our hero enters an abandoned house. The Totem will help unlock the Big Castle.

Objective: Unlocking the gate to the Big Castle

Solution: The man in the tent seems to be the answer. Please him and you'll get to the Big Castle!

Tip: Don't forget about the village shop to buy the shovel!

Learning objectives: Winter clothing

Level: A2

Grammar: Present Simple, adverbs of frequency, Past Simple

Vocabulary: winter clothing items and accessories

Vocabulary list: <https://7esl.com/winter-clothes-accessories-vocabulary-english/>

The students will learn extra vocabulary about winter outfits following the link above.

STAGE D: The Big Castle

Description: Once inside the castle, Ed finds a chest key in a barrel, later to be used in the dungeon. He sees his older brother in a cell. What a sweet reunion! He then must search for the Lord's tomb and take the diary. The Witch knows what to do with it!

Objective: The Lord's diary and the Music Sheet are necessary to free Harold and break the curse.

Solution: The Music Sheet provides the key to Harold's cell, while the diary will be used to summon the Lord's spirit and break the terrible curse. The Witch seems to have unusual powers, as the two brothers can now leave in peace.

What a great adventure!

Tip: The dungeon's entrance is located in the kitchen, the upper left area.

Learning objectives: Types of Houses

Level: A2

Grammar: Adjectives, Present Simple

Vocabulary: cottage, bungalow, block of flats, castle, farmhouse, palace

Gamified video material: <https://en.islcollective.com/english-esl-video-lessons/vocabulary-practice/general-vocabulary-practice/home/types-of-houses-with-pictures-and-definitions/788112>

Sources:

RPG Maker MV

<https://itch.io/game-assets/free/tag-sound-effects> (sound external asset)



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