Figure 1: Overall Impression Image
Source: http://media.moddb.com/images/mods/1/23/22407/hallway0007.jpg

Level Design Document:
Staring is Caring

Half Life 2 – Katie Wood

Version 1.0

Designer:	Katie Wood
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Document Revisions Table

Version	Description	Requestor	Date
0.1	Initial Document	Professor Ouellette	9/4/15
0.2	Updated Page 1 Information, Updated the Documents Revisions Table, Completed the Quick Summary Section, Completed Setting Summary, Completed Characters Section, Completed the Visual Themes Section, Completed the Key Theme References Section, Completed the Level Summary: Context, Backstory, and Aftermath Sections	Professor Ouellette	9/6/15
0.3	Created and Imported Overview Map, Completed the Mission Metrics Section, Completed the Game Difficulty Section, Completed the Gameplay Highlights and Hooks Section, Completed the Objectives Section, Completed the Level Flow Section, Completed the Appendix, Completed the Gameplay Area Breakdown Map, Completed the Area # Maps and Keys, Completed the Level Progression Chart, Completed the Critical Asset List, Completed the Area Descriptions, Updated the Documents Revision Table, Imported Various Reference Images, and Completed References Section	Professor Ouellette	9/7/15
1.0	First Submission of Document	Professor Ouellette	9/8/15

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Level Abstract

Quick Summary

Sequel to the original *Half Life* video game, *Half-Life 2* depicts the continuation of Gordon Freeman's conflict with the multi-dimensional, antagonistic Combine [1]. Twenty years have passed since Dr. Freeman's original Combine encounter [1]. Since this initial confrontation, the empirical force has managed to invade earth and, subsequently, harvest the planet's resources [1].

Set within the *Half Life 2* universe as a part of the game's expansion pack, the "Staring is Caring" level also takes place within this Combine infested environment. However, unlike the standard *Half-Life* series, the "Staring is Caring" level provides a unique variation on existing gameplay. Inspired by elements of *Alien* and the *Dr. Who* series, the "Staring is Caring" level permeates a horror-based theme and atmosphere. Mechanically, players have gained the ability to freeze enemies residing in their line of sight. Nevertheless, if players glance away from their unfriendly targets, these enemies suddenly regain all movement functionality.

"Staring is Caring" reveals the tragic, alarming tale of an experiment gone wrong. Initially, various scientists worked to exploit and instill weaknesses or degradations in the Xen biology. With Gordon Freeman's assistance, these testers acquired test subjects with which to experiment. Due to these individuals' efforts, the Xen creatures exhibited a fascinating malady. When individuals directly observed the creatures, the creatures, subsequently, lost the ability to move. However, looking away from the Xen test subjects resulted in the creatures regaining full movement capability. Unfortunately, a sudden failure in laboratory procedure caused the escape of the Xen test subjects. Despite attempting to flee, the numerous "Headcrabs" and "Fast Zombies" killed a majority of their human captors. "Staring is Caring" opens on Gordon Freeman as he tries to escape the Xen infested laboratory and office space. As power starts to fail, Dr. Freeman must manipulate environmental physics objects and solve puzzles to reach the only elevator guaranteeing safety.

Hook(s)

Bolstered by its terrifying horror genre, the "Staring is Caring" level inherently intrigues and fascinates participants. Mysterious or unknown situations naturally draw human spectators. Halloween, corn mazes, and horror films are merely a few examples of such phenomena. Therefore, this level's frightening theme forces players forward through desperation.

The Xen creatures and their response to the "look and freeze" mechanic also serves as a potential hook for players. As the participants attempt to escape the confines of the Xen-infested laboratory, they encounter Headcrabs and Fast Zombies. However, these creatures respond in a unique fashion. Instead of merely attacking, the Xen beings freeze with the player's stare. However, once the player glances away, the aliens are free to move again. Balancing and experimenting with this intriguing mechanic hooks players, encouraging them to keep experiencing the "Staring is Caring" level.

Gameplay Highlights

The bulk of "Staring is Caring's" gameplay centers around the unique "look and freeze" gameplay mechanic. This intriguing feature limits the Xen enemy movement based entirely on the player's line of sight. By staring directly at Headcrabs or Fast Zombies, the player halts the creatures' impending attack. Instead, the aliens merely stop and wait. However, once the player alters their line of sight, the Xen regain full movement functionality and resume their charge. Due to the required focus on the player's part, this type of gameplay heightens participants' feelings of helplessness. Subsequently, the tense atmosphere increases and previously simple challenges appear more difficult.

To compliment this style of gameplay, each of the areas present challenges meant to impede the player's progress. Turning a valve, breaking down a door, or stacking boxes serve as obstacles that require the player to balance keeping an eye on their enemies and accomplishing their objective. Instead of moving through the environment quickly, the "Staring is Caring" level encourages a slower paced progression.

Setting Summary

Theme	Futuristic, Mystery, Horror, Sci-Fi
Mood	Eerie, Suspenseful, Creepy, Scary, Tense

Setting	Dystopian, Combine-Infested Earth: Twenty Years After First *Half-Life*
	1. Underground, Futuristic Laboratory (Interior)
	  *Connects to office spaces
	  *Provides elevator access

Time of Day	Preferably nighttime but late afternoon acceptable
Season	No preference
Weather	No preference

Mission Difficulty

Position	Difficulty	Reasons
Beginning (Exiting Elevator to Entering the "Stacking Boxes" Area)	3	The initial portion of the "Staring is Caring" level is significantly less challenging than the later sections. Initially, the player encounters rather weak Headcrab enemies. These confrontations allow players to familiarize themselves with their "look and freeze" ability in a safe environment. However, this task may still prove difficult to the player depending on player skill and design efficiency.
Middle (The "Stacking Boxes" Area to Exiting the Ventilation System)	5	The middle section of the "Staring is Caring" quest proves slightly more challenging than the previous portion. Upon entering the compound's fourth room, the player meets their first Fast Zombie. While dodging this creature, the player stacks physics boxes to reach an overhead grate. This enemy encounter is far trickier than previous Headcrab battles. Continuing forward, the player destroys the grate and moves inside of the ventilation system. Within this section, wandering Headcrabs surprise and attack the player as they crawl through the vents.
End (From Exiting the Ventilation System to Exiting the Level)	6-7	In the final segment of "Staring is Caring", the player drops from the ventilation system into the level's laboratory sections. These final two areas provide the greatest challenge thus far. Multiple Fast Zombies appear, requiring the player to quickly solve and address challenges in order to escape. The sheer number of Xen creatures proves more daunting than the middle section.

Scale: 1-10 (1 is Easiest and 10 is Hardest)

Mission Metrics

Play Time	3-5 minutes depending on player expertise
Critical Path	Critical Path = ~5,030 Hammer Units * 1 foot = 16 Hammer Units [2] Critical Path = ~315ft
Physical Area	Interior: (Maximum Height X Width) *One Block: 64 X 64 Hammer Units Overview Map = 1,152 X 3,200 Hammer Units * 1 foot = 16 Hammer Units [2] Overview Map = 72ft X 200ft

Characters

Character	Description
Player: Gordon Freeman	To combat the Combine's overwhelming empire, Gordon Freeman assists a laboratory in their scientific study of Xen creatures. Throughout his journey, Dr. Freeman captures Fast Zombies and Headcrabs, subsequently delivering them to the facility's scientists for research purposes. However, after a brief visit to the lab, a sudden disaster results in Dr. Freeman's imprisonment within the Xen-infested facility. Due to the laboratory's weapon policy, Dr. Freeman only has his crowbar and gravity gun on his person. Adding to his miserable situation, the various alien-like lifeforms he helped capture are freely roaming the halls. However, by utilizing the "look and freeze" mechanic detailed earlier in the "Staring is Caring" level, Dr. Freeman is able to move about the laboratory, unlock and solve several environmental puzzles, and exit the compound safely.
Ally: Unnamed Assisting Scientist (Voice Only)	At the outset of the "Staring is Caring" level, Gordon Freeman rides an elevator upward to a higher floor in search of safety. As the doctor resides within the elevator, an unfamiliar voice booms over the intercom. This unnamed individual tells Dr. Freeman of the laboratory's misfortune and reveals the Xen test subjects' weakness. This mysterious voice also details Dr. Freeman's objectives within the level.
Enemy: Fast Zombie	Fast Zombies are a Xen species consisting of both human and Headcrab appendages. Dr. Freeman captured several of this zombie type for the laboratory's research purposes. These creatures are extremely quick and agile, perusing through the environment with relative ease. Due to their speed, the player must constantly utilize the "look and freeze" exploit to halt their onslaught. When destroyed, these zombies release a Standard Headcrab. Fast Zombies serve as the primary antagonist within the "Staring is Caring" level. These creatures are extremely difficult to destroy with a crowbar alone. Therefore, Gordon Freeman's best choice of action when confronting a Fast Zombie is simply to avoid or flee.
Enemy: Standard Headcrab	Standard Headcrabs are a parasitic Xen species of relatively small stature. They utilize their four long appendages to leap at their target and latch atop the target's head. When attached to their victim, they inject them with a chemical, which causes the host creature to turn into a zombie. Dr. Freeman captured several of this zombie type for the laboratory's research purposes. Standard Headcrabs serve as the secondary antagonist within the "Staring is Caring" level. In this level, these creatures are much more difficult to destroy with a crowbar alone. Therefore, Gordon Freeman's best choice of action when confronting a Headcrab is simply to avoid or flee.

Visual Themes

| Theme	Description
Eerie, Frightening, Tense, Futuristic, Sci-Fi Laboratory (Interior)	The majority of the "Staring is Caring" level occurs within a futuristic, Sci-Fi inspired laboratory. Within this environment, there exists advanced machinery, computers, notepads, desks, tools, and monitors. However, due to ambient lighting effects and environmental details, this area exudes a darker, horror-filled tone than a standard testing facility. Bloody corpses of fallen scientists, overturned clutter reveal the details of a struggle or slaughter. The Xen creatures themselves roam the halls, hiding behind the nearby equipment. Artificial yellow lights flicker and dim as the player moves throughout the laboratory. This type of lighting serves as the only light source as the laboratory is deep underground. No natural light resides within the facility. Throughout both the lab and the offices, connecting ventilation shafts also serve as a viable route for the player.
Disheveled, Professional, Frightening, Tense Office Space (Interior)	Within the laboratory, there exists several professional offices for the scientists' use. These areas contain desks, lamps, chairs, computers, coffee mugs, office plants, and office equipment. However, this environment like the laboratory is overturned. Items appear in disarray. Blood markings and corpses parallel the desperate frightening tone of the laboratory. The Xen creatures themselves hide within these areas. As with the laboratory, artificial yellow lights flicker and dim. This type of lighting serves as the only light source as the laboratory is deep underground. No natural light resides within the facility. Throughout both the lab and the offices, connecting ventilation shafts also serve as a viable route for the player.

Key Theme References
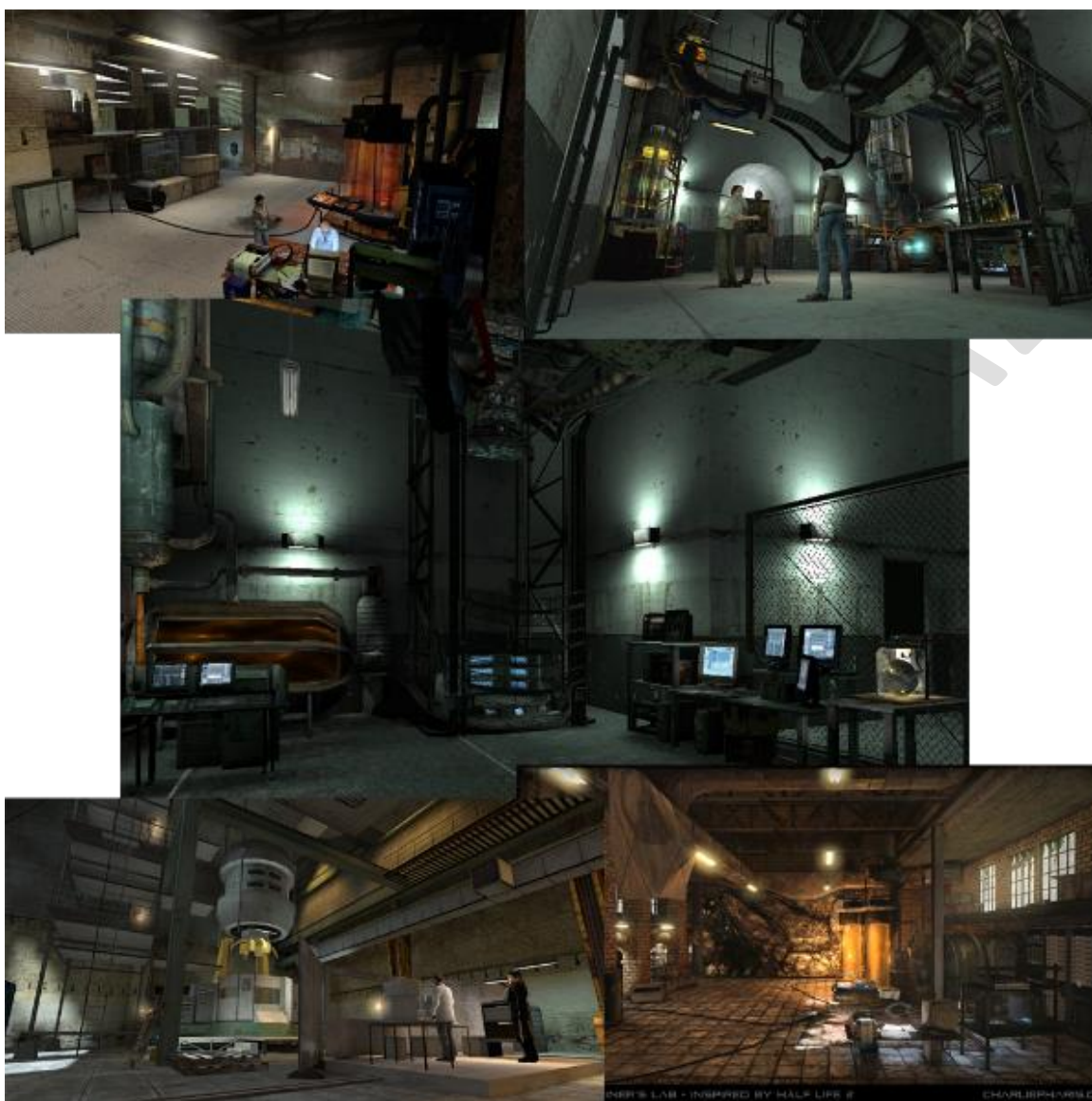
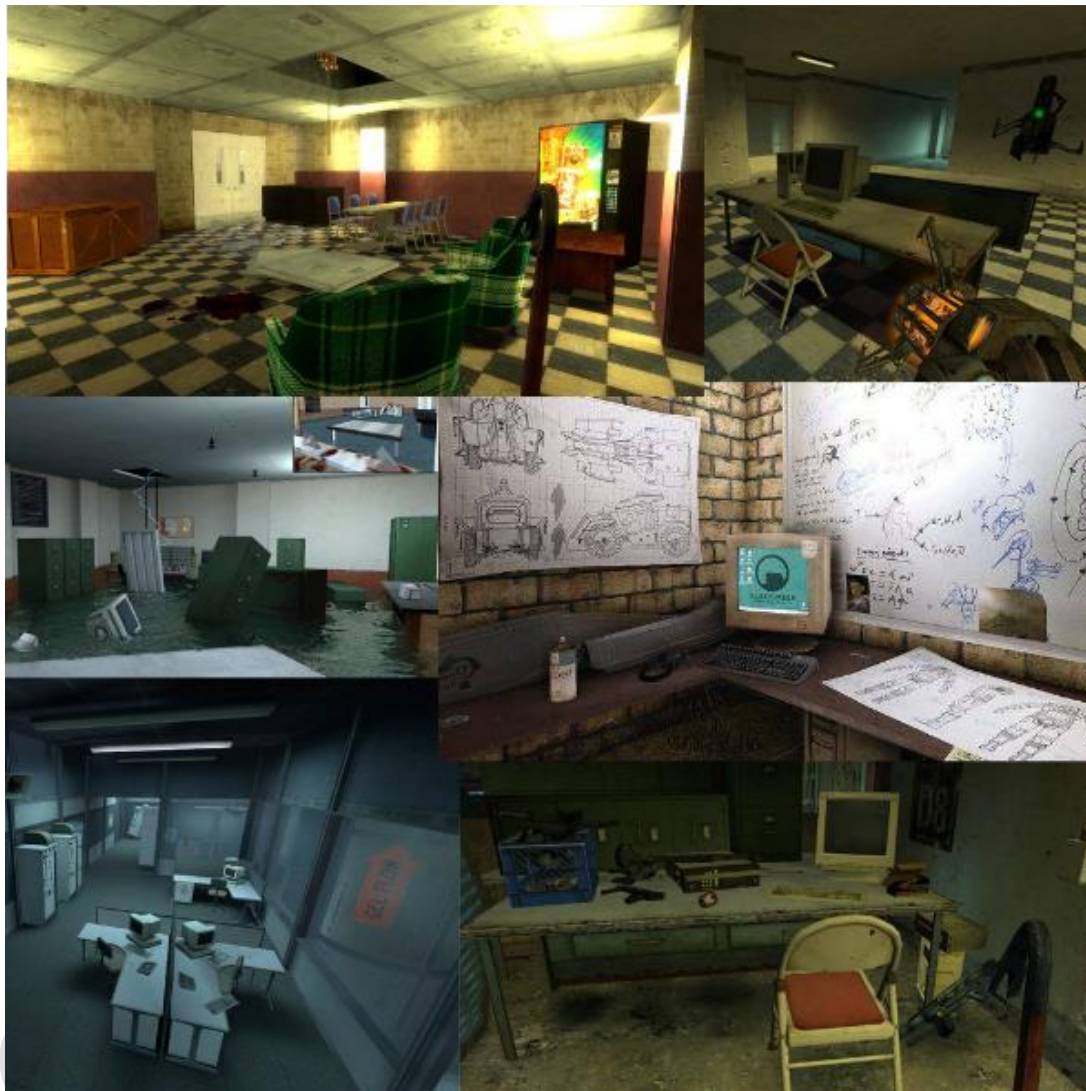**Figure 2: Laboratory Theme Contact Sheet [3]**

Figure 3: Office Space Theme Contact Sheet [4]

Figure 4: Artificial Lighting Contact Sheet [5]

Figure 5: Atmospheric References Contact Sheet [6]

Figure 6: Ventilation Shaft Contact Sheet [7]

Level Summary

Campaign

Context

Within the context of *Half-Life 2*, "Staring is Caring" is an independent, stand-alone mission added due to the *Half-Life 2* expansion pack's release. As the Xen and Combine forces are active in this level, the mission occurs during the events of *Half-Life 2*. The completion of the main game or other episodes is not necessary to begin and finish this horror-themed alteration to the *Half-Life* franchise. However, "Staring is Caring" itself, contains various sub-objectives required to achieve a single overarching objective.

Backstory

Due to the devastating effects of the Combine takeover, rebellious scientists devised a retaliation plan. These technicians created a secret laboratory hidden beneath the Earth's crust. After the facility's completion, the scientists elicited their old friend and colleague Dr. Gordon Freeman for assistance. Upon his various travels and conquests, he captured Xen aliens and delivered them to the laboratory for testing. With these new captives, the scientists devised, tested, and discovered weaknesses or degradations in the Xen biology. After numerous experiments, the Xen creatures began demonstrating an abnormal malady. When individuals directly observed the creatures, the creatures, subsequently, lost the ability to move. However, looking away from the Xen test subjects resulted in the creatures regaining full movement capability.

Devastatingly, a failure in laboratory procedure causes the Xen test subjects to escape their confines. With their newfound freedom, the creatures destroy everything in their wake. Coincidentally, Gordon Freeman is visiting the laboratory during the breakout. Dr. Freeman must flee the Xen infested laboratory before the power completely fails, trapping him underground.

Aftermath

Upon entering the final elevator, Gordon Freeman rides the device to the surface with no interruption or conflict. As the doors open, Dr. Freeman exits and immediately notifies his allies of the laboratory tragedy. With their assistance, the silent protagonist destroys the underground, hidden facility. Mourning the loss of his fallen comrades, the doctor briefly holds a vigil in their memory. With the incident fresh in his mind, Dr. Freeman continues with his original *Half-Life 2* objectives.

Objective(s)

<u>**Overall Objective:**</u>

- Reach the surface elevator to escape the Xen-infested facility.
    - Failure: Death by Headcrabs
    - Failure: Death by Fast Zombies
    - Failure: Unable or unwilling to board the surface elevator.

<u>**Detailed Sub-Objectives needed to complete Overall Objective:**</u>

- Exit the first elevator and enter the main office hallway.
- Avoid the charging Headcrab.
    - Failure: Death by Headcrab.
- Break the door to enter the second room.
    - Failure: Death by Headcrabs
- Break the door to enter the third room.
    - Failure: Death by Headcrabs
- Stack the nearby physics boxes to reach the vent/grate above.
    - Failure: Death by Fast Zombie
    - Failure: Death by Headcrabs
- Enter the ventilation shaft.
    - Failure: Death by Headcrabs
- Reach the vent's exit and enter the first laboratory section.
    - Failure: Death by Headcrabs
- Continuously crank the valve wheel to retract the security gate.
    - Failure: Death by Fast Zombie
    - Failure: Release wheel before completing cranking
- Enter the final laboratory section.
    - Failure: Death by Fast Zombies
- Call for the elevator.
    - Failure: Death by Fast Zombies
- Survive the Xen attacks until the elevator arrives.
    - Failure: Death by Fast Zombies
- Enter the surface elevator.
    - Failure: Death by Fast Zombies
- Press the interior surface elevator button.
    - Failure: Death by Fast Zombies
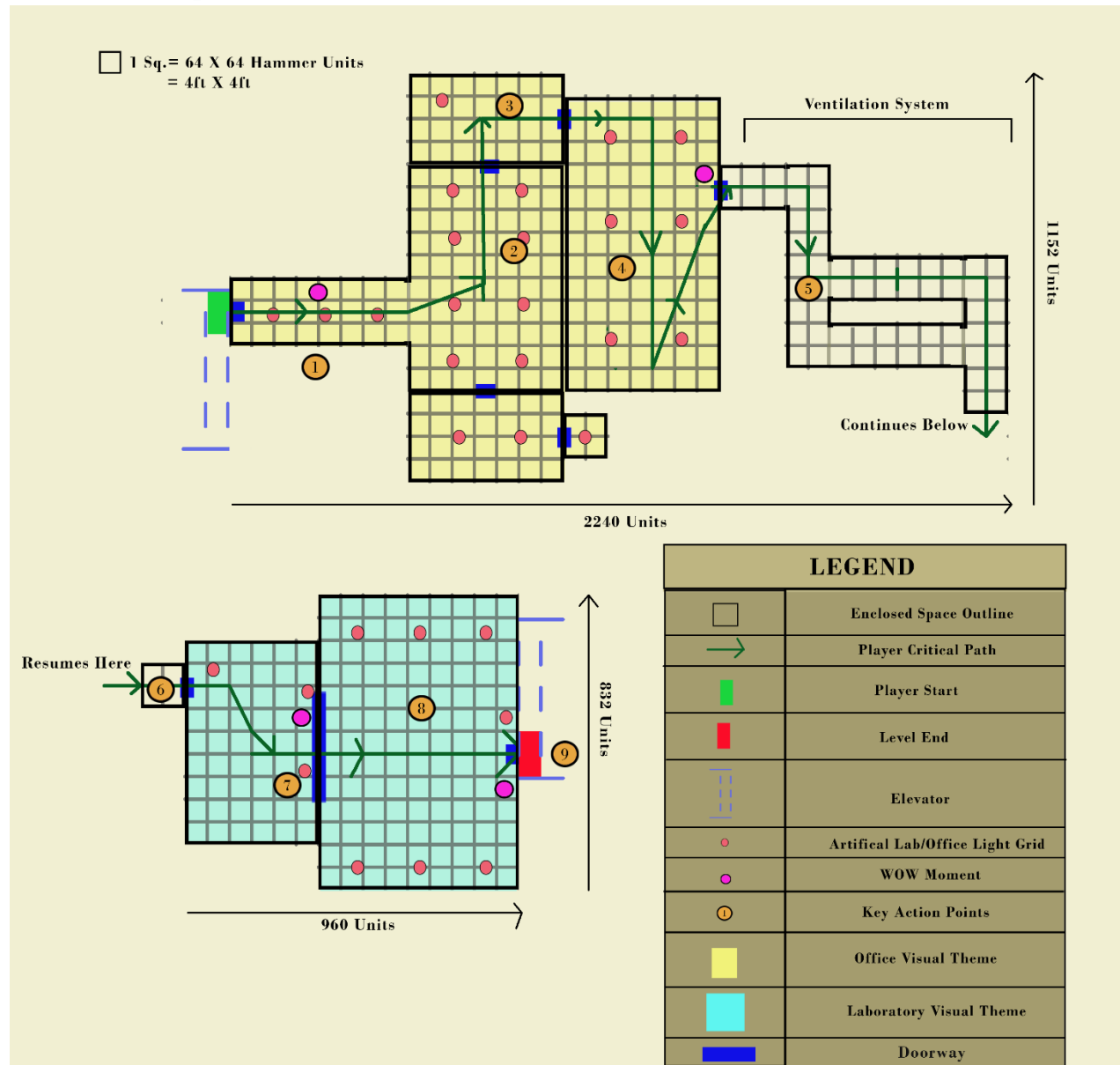- Leave the testing facility.

Overview Map

1 Sq.= 64 X 64 Hammer Units
      = 4ft X 4ft

Ventilation System

1152 Units

Continues Below

2240 Units

Resumes Here

832 Units

960 Units

LEGEND	
☐	Enclosed Space Outline
→	Player Critical Path
▮	Player Start
▮	Level End
┆┆	Elevator
○	Artifical Lab/Office Light Grid
●	WOW Moment
①	Key Action Points
▮	Office Visual Theme
▮	Laboratory Visual Theme
▬	Doorway

Figure 7: "Staring is Caring" General Overview Map

Level Flow

Flow Summary

1. The player rides an elevator to a higher level. While riding, the player hears a mysterious voice through the intercom. This individual debriefs the player on their overall objective as well as their "look and freeze" ability. Upon reaching the designated floor, the player exits the elevator and emerges into a wide hallway. As they move forward, a Headcrab suddenly charges. The player subsequently freezes their first enemy. (WOW Moment)

2. As the player avoids the Headcrab, they enter a larger office waiting area. A few Headcrabs patrol this section. The player moves to the left and breaks down the impeding doorway with their crowbar.

3. The player enters the second side room and encounters another Headcrab. Moving away from this creature, the player again uses their crowbar on the doorway to their right side.

4. In the third office area, the player discovers the first Fast Zombie in the level. While glancing at this enemy, the player gathers stackable boxes and places them near an out-of-reach grate. With the boxes in place, the player scrambles upward, breaks down the grate, and enters into the ventilation system. (WOW Moment)

5. Within the ventilation system, the player navigates around the patrolling Headcrabs while making their way to the exit. This area is darker due to the lack of light and requires the player to utilize their flashlight.

6. At the end of the ventilation system, the player jumps down into the first laboratory section. As they move forward, a security gate rattles down and blocks the player's progress.

7. Suddenly, Fast Zombies enter the room via overhead compartments. The player must continuously turn a valve to lift the security gate. (WOW Moment)

8. Passing through the gate brings the player into the final laboratory section. This wider area contains several Fast Zombies. The player moves forward and presses the elevator call button. While waiting on the elevator to arrive the player needs to dodge and activate their ability to survive. (WOW Moment)

9. Once the elevator arrives, the player rushes inside and presses the button to close the door. As the door slowly shuts, the enemies rush forward. Finally, the doors completely seal and the elevator whisks the player to the surface. Subsequently, the "Staring is Caring" level ends.

Level Progression Chart

Time (min)	0		0:20		0:40		1:00		1:20		1:40	
Terrain/Objective	Reach the Elevator to Escape Facility						Stack the Boxes to Reach the Vent					
Opponents			Headcrab		Headcrab			Fast Zombie				
Challenges			First Enemy Encounter				First Fast Zombie/ Physics Puzzle					
Wow Moments			"Look and Freeze" Mechanic: First Use								Entering Ventilation System	
New Skills/Weapons			"Look and Freeze" Mechanic									
Cinematics	Voice Over: Story Introduction											

Time (min)	2:00		2:20		2:40		3:00		3:20		3:40	
Terrain/Objective	Exit the Ventilation System				Open the Security Gate				Call the Elevator		Enter the Elevator and Escape	
Opponents		Headcrab				Fast Zombie				Two Fast Zombies		
Challenges						Valve Turning Puzzle				Dealing with multiple, fast enemies		
Wow Moments					Gate Shutting/Xen Jumping from Ceiling							
New Skills/Weapons												
Cinematics												

Time (min)	4:00											
Terrain/Objective	END											
Opponents												
Challenges												
Wow Moments												
New Skills/Weapons												
Cinematics												

Legend
1 square = 10 sec.
Office Environment
Laboratory Environment
Ventilation System
Challenge Highlight
Wow Moment
New Weapon/Skill
Cinematic

Figure 8: Level Progression Chart

Detailed Design

Level Details

Gameplay Area Breakdown Map
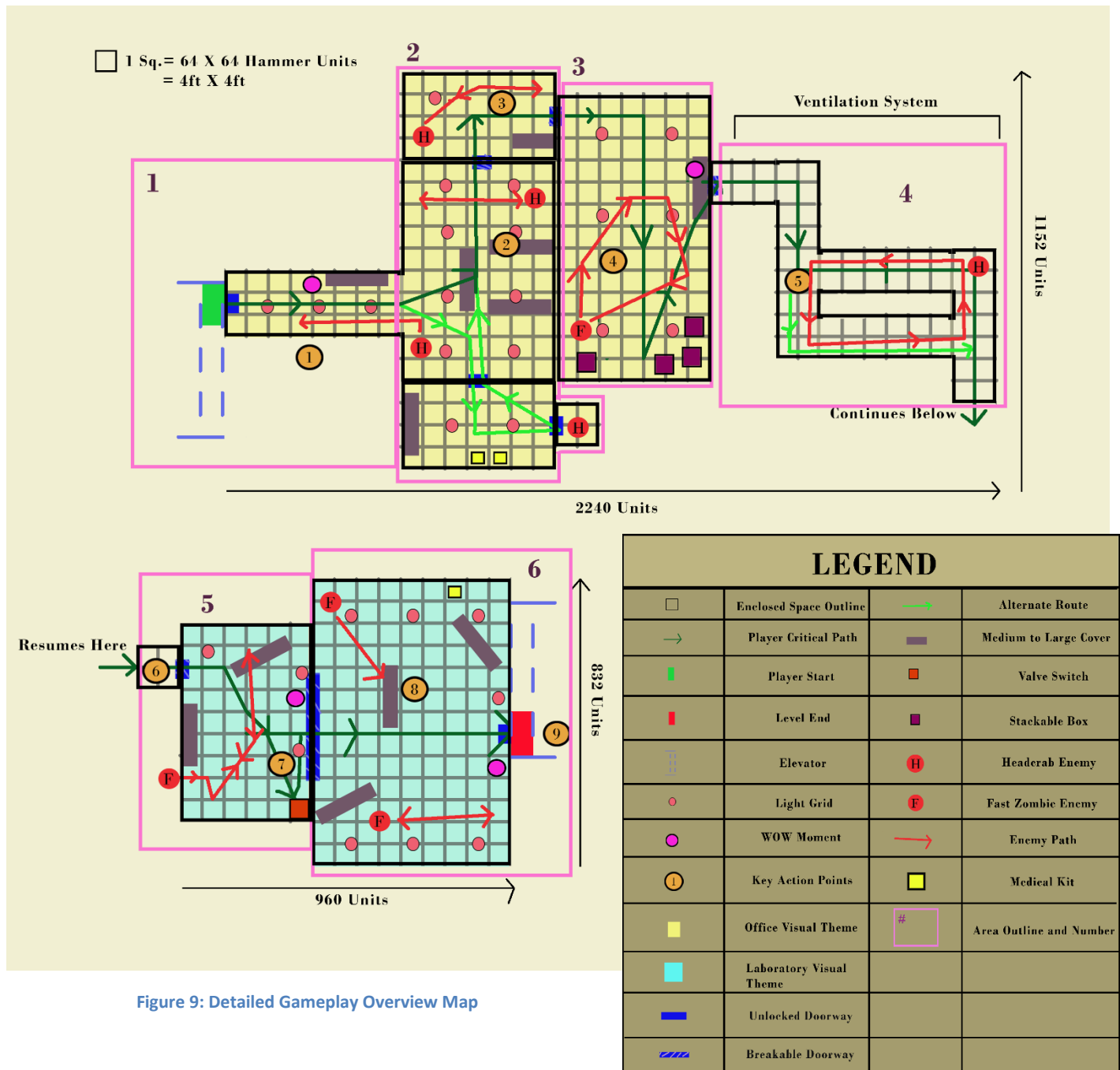
Figure 9: Detailed Gameplay Overview Map

LEGEND			
☐	Enclosed Space Outline	→	Alternate Route
→	Player Critical Path	▬	Medium to Large Cover
▮	Player Start	◻	Valve Switch
▮	Level End	◼	Stackable Box
⫶	Elevator	Ⓗ	Headcrab Enemy
○	Light Grid	Ⓕ	Fast Zombie Enemy
●	WOW Moment	→	Enemy Path
①	Key Action Points	◻	Medical Kit
▫	Office Visual Theme	#	Area Outline and Number
▫	Laboratory Visual Theme		
▬	Unlocked Doorway		
▨	Breakable Doorway		

Detailed Walkthrough

Area 1: Elevator Entrance

Figure 10: Area 1 Detailed Map with Key

Initial Load out
- Player's Starting Ability
  - "Look and Freeze" Technique
- Player's Starting Equipment
  - Crowbar
  - Gravity Gun

Gameplay/Story
1. Initially, the player begins the "Staring is Caring" level inside of a moving elevator. Playing as Gordon Freeman, the player's starting equipment consists of a crowbar and gravity gun. As the player rides the elevator, an unknown voice booms over the intercom. This mysterious figure reveals, in detail, the disastrous happenings within the testing facility (Dialog Section). He also instructs the player regarding their "look and freeze" ability (Dialog Section). Once the elevator reaches the designated floor, the doors open and the player emerges. At this point, the objective text prints and the voice-over concludes (Objective Text Section).
2. The player steps into the hallway from the elevator. When the player takes a few steps, a Headcrab enemy rounds the corner. These creatures are much stronger in this level than in the original *Half-Life* games. Therefore, the player's weapons are very weak in comparison. As the

creature crawls and leaps forward, the player is able to practice and experiment with their "look and freeze" ability. (WOW Moment)

3. Avoiding the Headcrab is the optimal solution in this instance. Therefore, the player continues into the next area, Area 2.

Text and Dialog

Objective Text
*Objective text prints when the player exits the elevator.

- **Objective:** *"Reach the surface elevator and escape the facility."*

Dialog/Script
*Dialog plays while player is in the elevator heading to the second floor. It concludes when the player exits the elevator

- **Unnamed Scientist:** *"Hello? Gordon is that you? I'm sorry but there isn't much time to go into specifics. Listen, the experiments we struggled with regarding the Xen creatures backfired. Due to a mishap, the entire lot of them has escaped. I'm afraid the only way out now is through the surface elevator. You'll have to make it out through the rooms on the next floor."*
- **Unnamed Scientist:** *"Don't worry Gordon! You may not have all of your weapons but we scientists were able to make a slight breakthrough. These particular Xen aliens freeze when you look at them. You can use this to your advantage. However, look away and they resume their attack!"*
- **Unnamed Scientist:** *"Ah! Looks like you've almost reached your stop. Good luck Gordon! I know you can make it out if anyone can…"*

Visual References

Figure 11: [13]

Figure 12: Corridor Layout and Texture Reference [15]

Figure 13: Office Interior Reference [16]

Figure 14: General Office Layout Example [17]

Theme

The visual theme utilized in this area is the "Office" theme listed in the Mission Metrics section.

Characters/Vehicles Introduced

Figure 16: Headcrab Enemy [10]

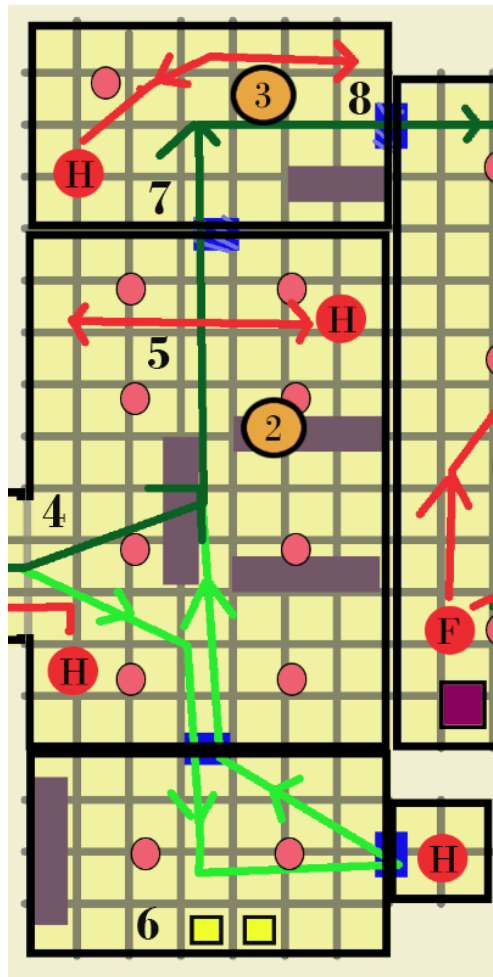**Figure 15: The Player Character-Gordon Freeman [11]**

Figure 17: Mysterious, Unnamed Scientist [12]

Environment References

Figure 18: Artificial Lighting Reference [14]

Figure 19: Prop, Clutter, and General Layout Reference [4]

Area 2: Two Side Rooms

Figure 20: Area 2 Detailed Map with Key

Gameplay/Story

4. At the start of Area 2, the player notices a second wandering Headcrab, located on the far left. Several couches and office furniture pieces serve as potential cover from the Headcrab foe.
5. The player moves to the left, heading for a side room. However, a breakable door blocks the player's progression. Utilizing the crowbar, the player must smash the door away, while also avoiding the nearby Headcrab. With the door destroyed, the player enters the left side room.
6. Alternate Route: In the side room to the player's right, two medical kits reside. The player can grab these, if necessary, to restore heath.
7. A third Headcrab sneaks to the player's immediate left within this side room area. The player must quickly freeze the Xen creature and proceed to their right, heading toward another breakable door.
8. Once again, the player must balance staring at the Headcrab while also chipping away at the obstacle. With the door fully broken, the player exits Area 2 and moves into Area 3.

Text and Dialog

Objective Text
N/A

Dialog
N/A

Visual References

Figure 21: Wide Open Office Environment [16]

Theme
The visual theme utilized in this area is the "Office" theme listed in the Mission Metrics section.
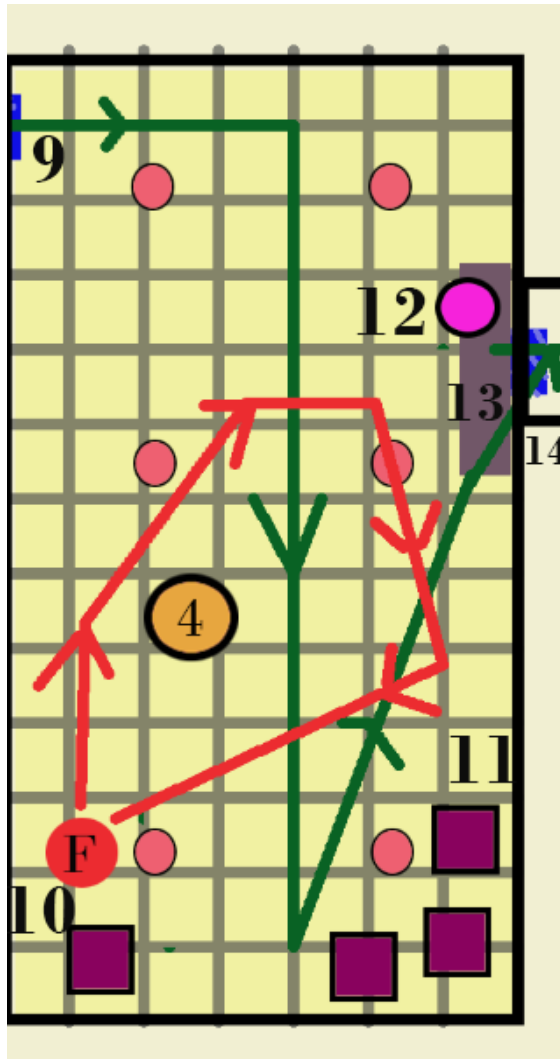
Characters/Vehicles Introduced
N/A

Environment References

Figure 22: Side Room Reference for Scale and Layout [31]

Figure 23: Office Clutter and Layout Reference [4]

Area 3: Stackable Boxes

	LEGEND			
☐	Enclosed Space Outline			Alternate Route
→	Player Critical Path		▬	Medium to Large Cover
				Stackable Box
•	Light Grid		Ⓕ	Fast Zombie Enemy
●	WOW Moment		→	Enemy Path
①	Key Action Points		◻	
◼	Office Visual Theme			
▨	Breakable Doorway			

Figure 24: Area 3 Detailed Map with Key

Gameplay/Story

9. As the player enters Area 3, the help text prints, instructing the player to stack the nearby physics boxes in order to reach a vent.
10. However, moving into this area also triggers a new Xen enemy type known as the Fast Zombie. This creature moves much more quickly than the Headcrab. Therefore, the player must balance staring at the enemy and dodging appropriately.
11. The player moves to the far end of this room and grabs a physics box with either their hand or their gravity gun.
12. While avoiding the Fast Zombie, the player moves toward the far wall and stacks the box near a large furniture piece.
13. With the box in place, the player jumps onto this entity and then, subsequently, atop the furniture piece. While performing these actions, the player observes the Fast Zombie to freeze it in place.

14. On the furniture piece, the player notices a ventilation shaft cover. Utilizing their crowbar, the player destroys the vent shaft cover (WOW Moment). Ignoring the Xen creature below, the player crawls inside of the ventilation system and consequently moves to Area 4.

Text and Dialog

Objective Text

*Help text prints when the player enters Area 3.

- **Help:** *"Stack the boxes to reach the vent above."*

Dialog
N/A

Visual References

Figure 25: Clutter Example and Layout Reference [32]

Theme
The visual theme utilized in this area is the "Office" theme listed in the Mission Metrics section.

Characters/Vehicles Introduced

Figure 26: Fast Zombie Enemy [9]

Environment References

Figure 27: Physics Boxes Reference [27]

Figure 28: Office Storage Area Reference [29]

Area 4: Ventilation System
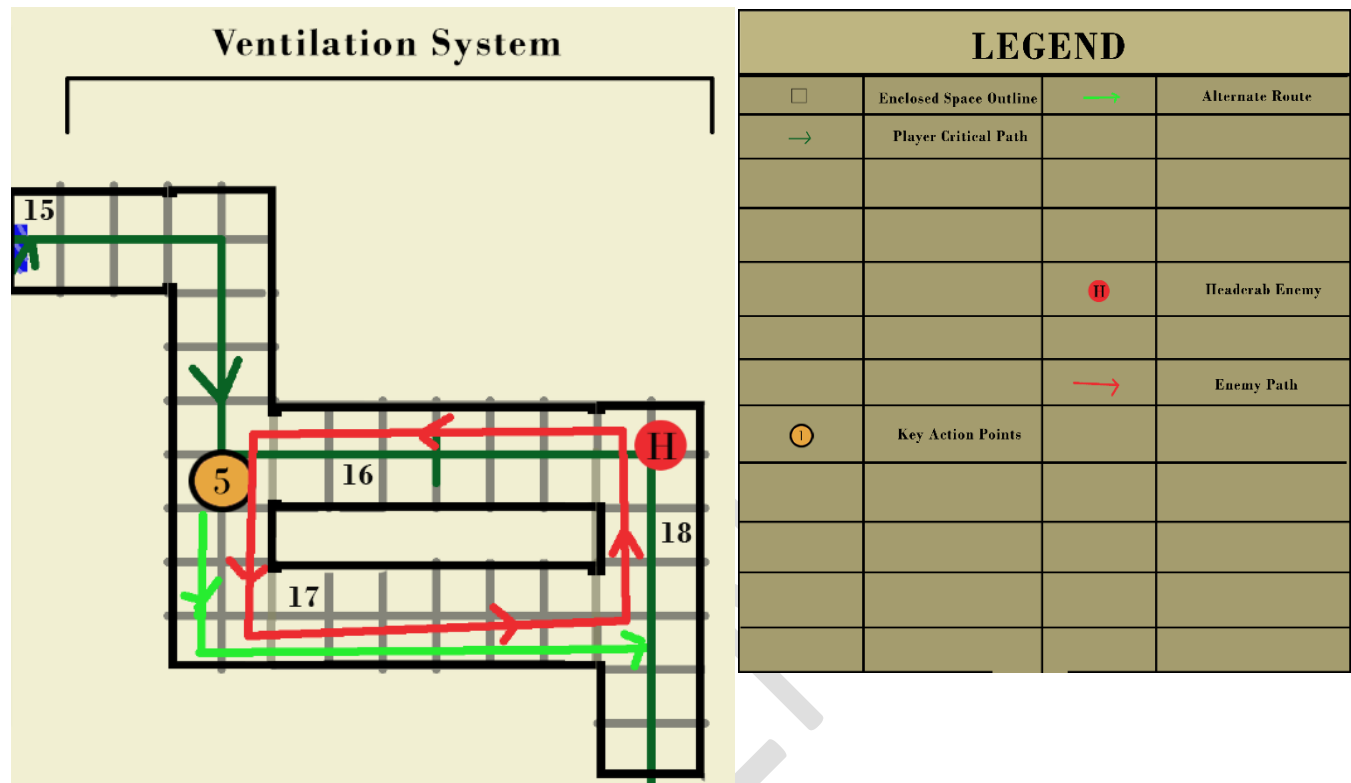
Figure 29: Area 4 Detailed Map with Key

Gameplay/Story

15. The player enters the ventilation shaft and subsequently Area 4. This area contains one patrolling Headcrab enemy. The Xen creature moves in a circular movement through the various passages. Furthermore, this lightless area is dark and requires the player to utilize their flashlight.
16. Moving along the ventilation shaft, the player turns right and continues forward. Before continuing, the player waits and guarantees that no enemy approaches. With no Headcrab in sight, the player turns left and hurries along the vent.
17. Alternate Route: The player also has the option to continue forward, turn left and move along the ventilation chamber. This route also requires the player to avoid the wandering Headcrab.
18. This route naturally dead-ends and forces the player to turn right. While freezing or avoiding the Headcrab, the player moves forward along the vent. Consequently, the player exits Area 4.

Text and Dialog

Objective Text
N/A

Dialog
N/A

Visual References

Figure 30: Lighting Reference [22]
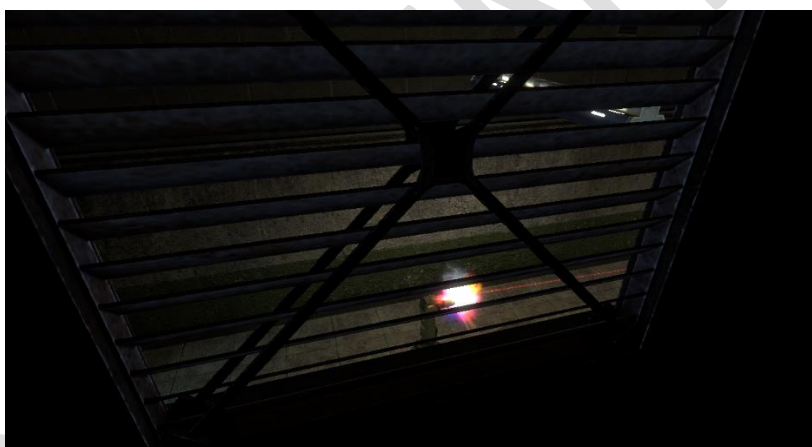
Figure 31: Grate Cover Reference [23]

Figure 32: General Ventilation Texture and Layout Reference [24]

Figure 33: General Ventilation Texture and Layout Reference 2 [25]

Theme
The visual theme utilized in this area is the "Office" theme listed in the Mission Metrics section.

Characters/Vehicles Introduced
N/A

Environment References

Figure 34: Lighting, Texture, and Prop References [7]

Area 5: Security Gate Activated
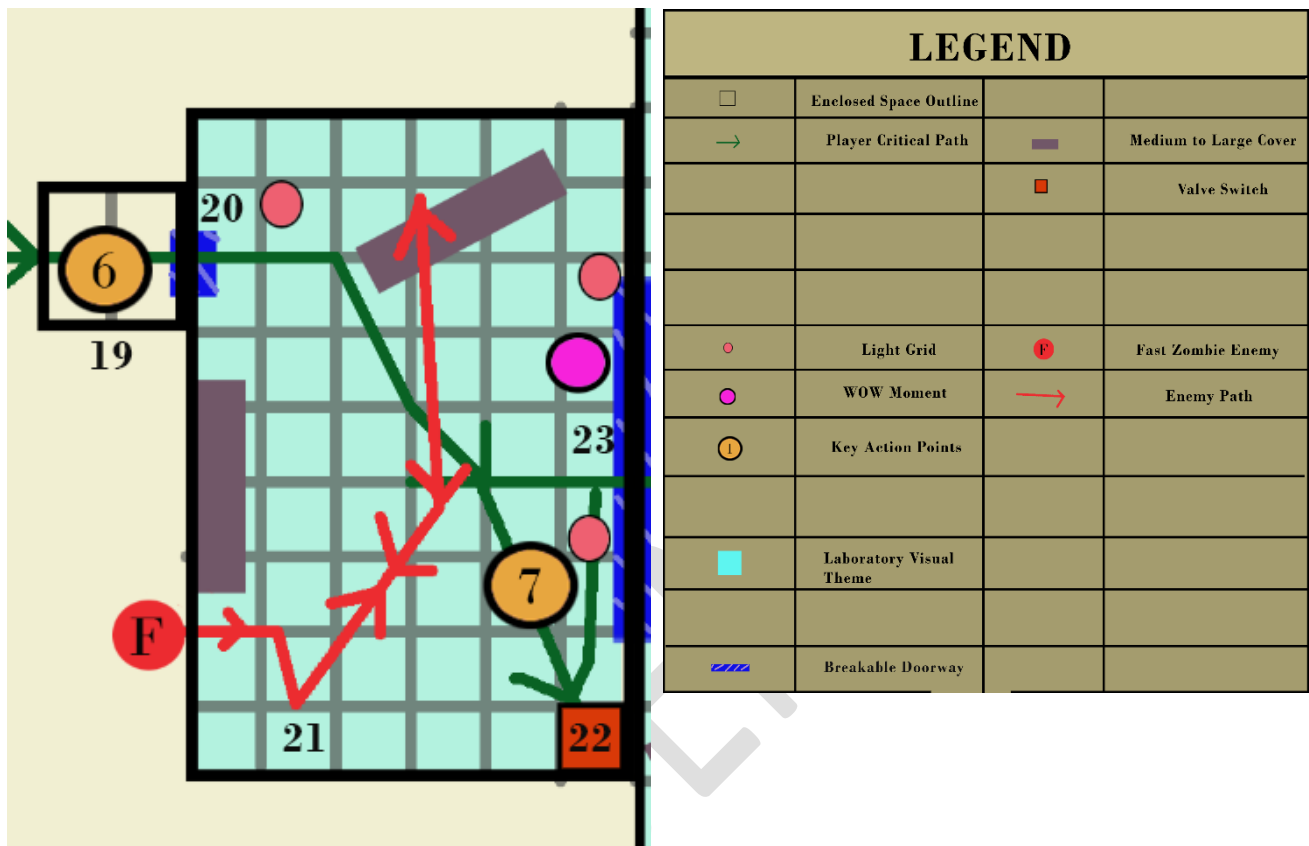
Figure 35: Area 5 Detailed Map with Key

Gameplay/Story

19. At the outset of Area 5, the player still resides within the vent. Reaching an intact ventilation grate, the player proceeds to use their crowbar and smash it away.
20. With the obstacle removed, the player drops into the first laboratory themed area. As the player moves forward a few steps, a security gate suddenly falls, blocking the player's path (WOW Moment).
21. Suddenly, a Fast Zombie enemy drop from another vent to the player's left. The creature immediately lurches toward the player.
22. While the player dodges and avoids the Xen creature, the player makes their way toward a nearby valve. Grabbing ahold of the valve, the player must continuously crank the object in order to reopen the gate. Meanwhile, the Fast Zombie proceeds to attack if the player is not currently freezing it.
23. Once the gate is open, the player releases the valve and moves through the gateway to Area 6.

Text and Dialog

Objective Text

*Help text prints when the player enters Area 5 and moves forward a few steps.

- **Help:** *"Continuously turn the valve to lift the gate."*

Dialog
N/A

Visual References

Figure 36: Laboratory Visual Reference [18]

Figure 37: Sleek, Non-Cluttered Interior [19]

Figure 38: Scientific Clutter Objects [20]
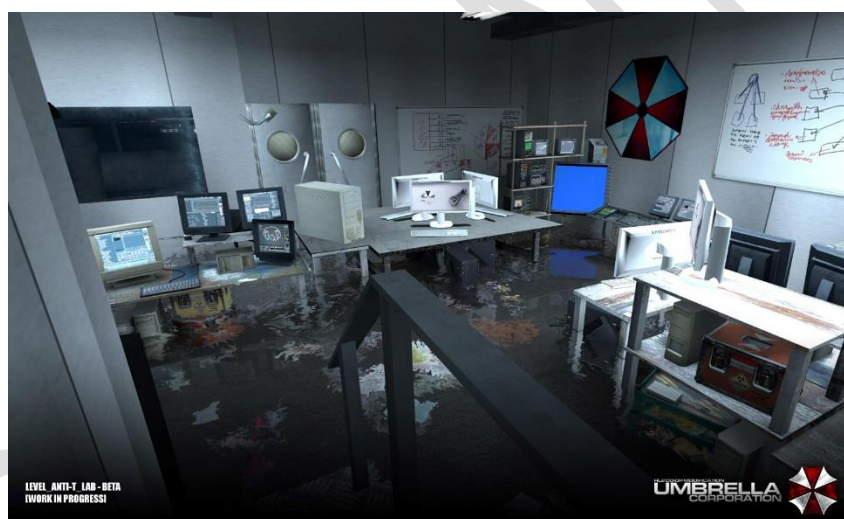
Figure 39: Example of Disheveled Lab Environment [21]

Theme
The visual theme utilized in this area is the "Laboratory" theme listed in the Mission Metrics section.

Characters/Vehicles Introduced
N/A

Environment References

Figure 40: Laboratory Lighting, Clutter, and Prop References [3]

Figure 41: Example of Valve Puzzle [26]

Figure 42: Example of Valve Puzzle 2 [28]

Area 6: Final Encounter
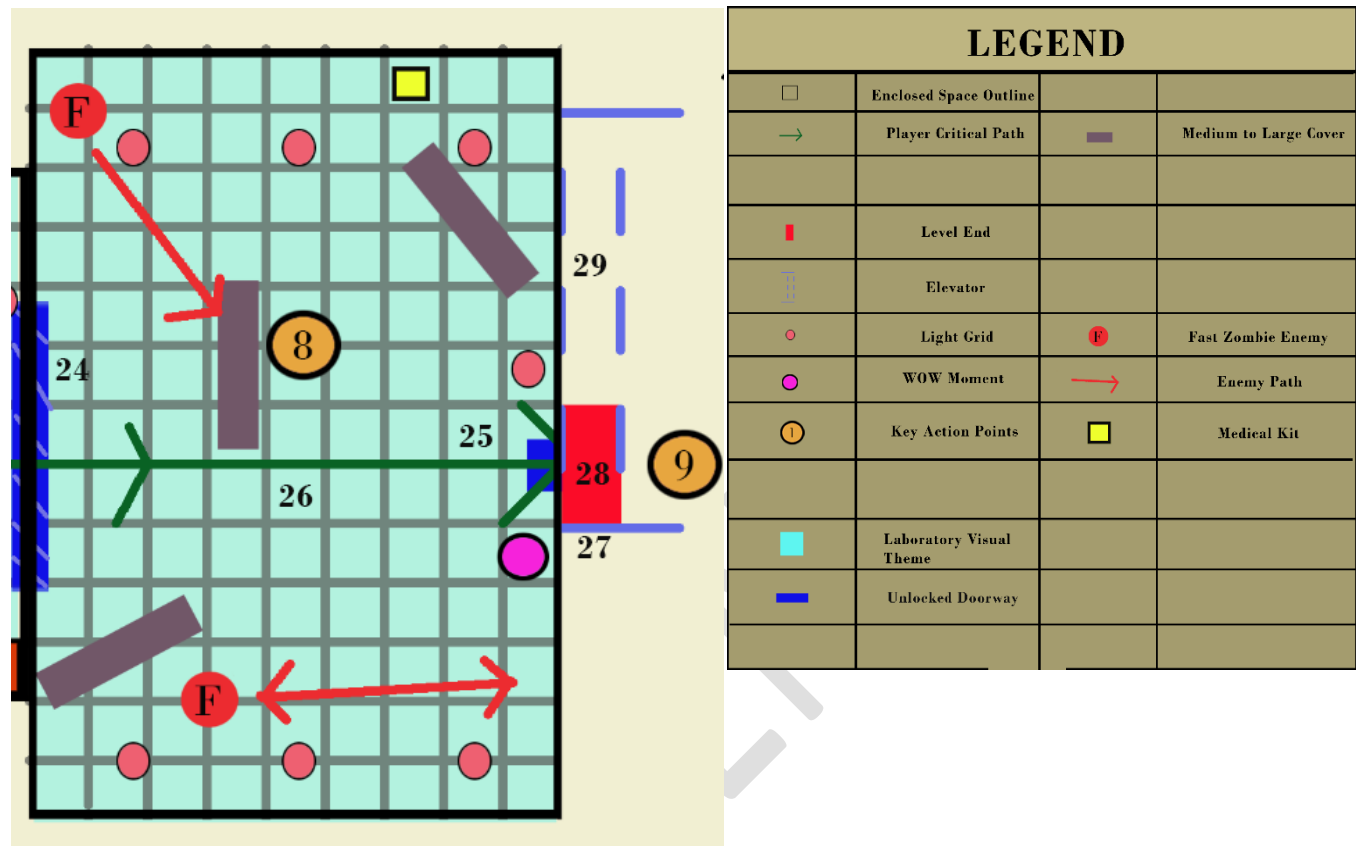
Figure 43: Area 6 Detailed Map with Key

Gameplay/Story

24. Entering the final area, the player immediately encounters two Fast Zombie enemies. These enemies are moving along the far left and right side of the room.
25. Before the zombies notice the player, the player rushes forward and presses the elevator button. However, the elevator is located on the surface and requires time to arrive.
26. While the player waits for the elevator's arrival, the two Fast Zombies move in to attack the player. The player must freeze and dodge the enemies for 15 seconds (WOW Moment).
27. After the specified time interval passes, the elevator arrives and the doors open. With light pouring out of the elevator, the player rushes forward and enters.
28. The player must press the interior elevator button to activate the elevator's upward movement.
29. With the button pressed, the doors slowly close. After the doors close, the elevator carries the player upward and the level consequently ends.

Text and Dialog

Objective Text
*Help text prints when the player enters Area 6.

- **Help:** *"Call the surface elevator."*

Dialog
N/A

Visual References

Figure 44: Wide Open Lab Environment [18]

Figure 45: Little Clutter but Still Populated Reference [19]

Theme
The visual theme utilized in this area is the "Laboratory" theme listed in the Mission Metrics section.

Characters/Vehicles Introduced
N/A

Environment References

Figure 46: Laboratory Lighting, Wide Open Area Reference [3]
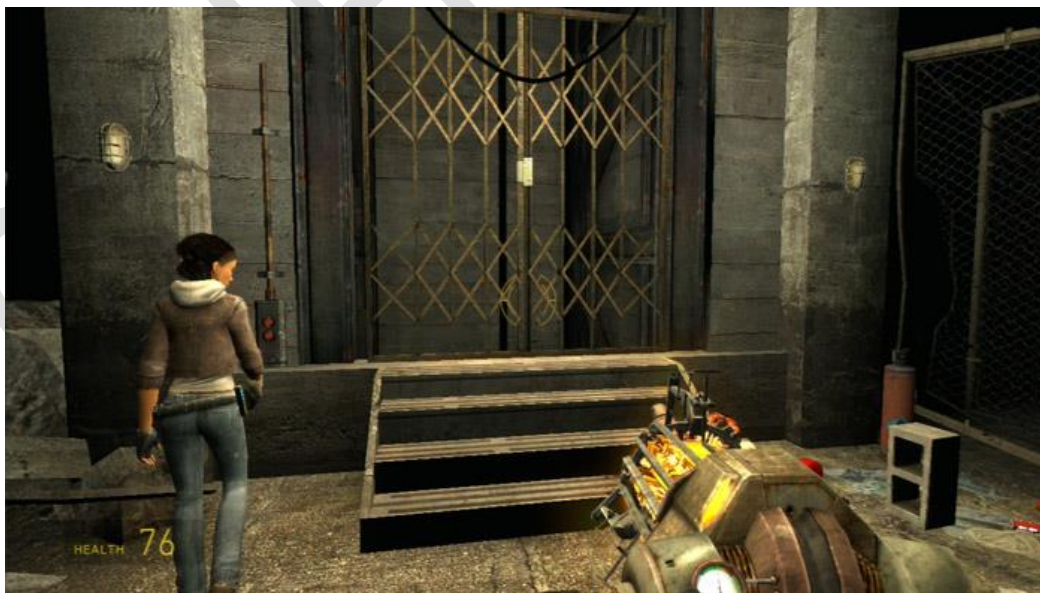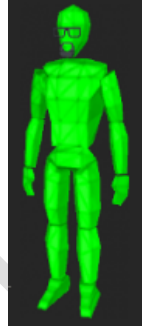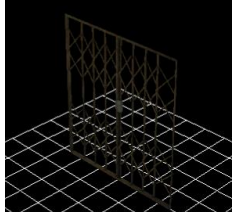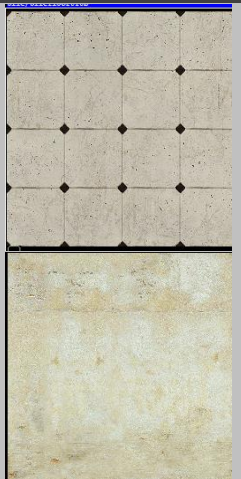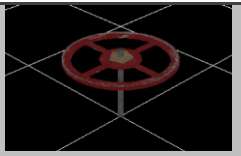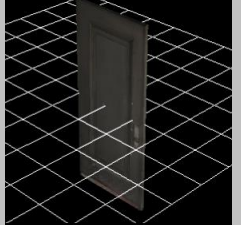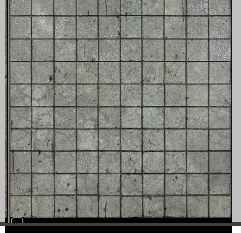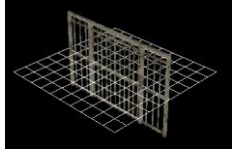
Figure 47: Elevator Reference [30]

Critical Asset List

Asset Name	Type	Use	Exists?	Link/Pic
info_player_start	Actor	The info_player_start actor serves to spawn in the player upon playing the level.	Yes	[8]
npc_FastZombie	Actor	The npc_FastZombie entity spawns in a Fast Zombie enemy. This enemy type is extremely quick and agile in battle. When destroyed, the Fast Zombies' head detaches, creating a new Headcrab.	Yes	[9]
npc_Headcrab	Actor	The npc_Headcrab entity spawns in a standard Headcrab enemy. This enemy type is slower than the Fast Zombie but can leap large distances. If the creature manages to grasp onto its target's head, it takes over their body.	Yes	[10]
Elevator Mesh	Static(Mesh)	The elevator mesh serves as one component of an in-game elevator. However, the prop requires more functionality to move.	Yes	
Elevator Doors	Dynamic (Mesh)	Upon proper scripting, the elevator doors model opens and closes. Once the player reaches their intended destination, these doors release.	Yes	
Hallway Mesh	Static (Mesh/BSP)	The Hallway Mesh is a custom asset created from BSP. It serves to form the shell or foundation of the hallway itself.	No	N/A

Hallway Textures	Texture	The Hallway Textures decorate the Hallway Meshes and provide the player with aesthetic details.	Yes	
Room Meshes	Static (Mesh/BSP)	The Room Meshes are a custom asset created from BSP. They serve to form the shell or foundation of the rooms themselves.	No	N/A
Ventilation Mesh	Static (Mesh/BSP)	The Ventilation Mesh is a custom asset created from BSP. It serves to form the shell or foundation of the vent itself.	No	N/A
Voice Over: Ally Scientist	Sound	At the outset of the level, an unnamed scientist instructs the player and conveys pertinent narrative information.	No	N/A
Valve Wheel	Physics (Mesh)	Upon scripting, the valve wheel prop forces players to turn the wheel continuously. If the player stops turning, the valve's corresponding target entity reverts to its previous state.	Yes	
Stackable Boxes: Non-Breakable	Physics (Mesh)	The stackable boxes serve as stepping platforms for the player. During a section of the level, the player must stack these physics props on top of one another to reach a nearby vent.	Yes	
Breakable Doors	Physics (Mesh)	To slow the player down and force them to engage their "look and freeze" mechanic, breakable doors shield many rooms. These doors take a few hits to destroy.	Yes	
Ventilation Grates	Physics (Mesh)	The ventilation grates seal off the entrance and exit of the ventilation system. These assets are breakable. Therefore, the player can destroy them.	Yes	

Room Wall Textures: Laboratory	Texture	The Room Wall Textures decorate the Room Meshes' walls and provide the player with aesthetic details.	Yes	
Room Wall Textures: Office	Texture	The Room Wall Textures decorate the Room Meshes' walls and provide the player with aesthetic details.	Yes	
Ventilation Texture	Texture	The Ventilation Texture decorates the ventilation system and provides the player with aesthetic details.	Yes	
Room Floor Textures: Laboratory	Texture	The Room Floor Textures decorate the Room Meshes' floor and provide the player with aesthetic details.	Yes	
Room Floor Textures: Office	Texture	The Room Floor Textures decorate the Room Meshes' floor and provide the player with aesthetic details.	Yes	
Security Gate	Dynamic (Mesh)	The security gate falls rapidly into place during one of the level's sections. The player must crank a nearby valve in order to raise it again.	Yes	
Elevator Button	Dynamic (Mesh)	The player must press the elevator button in the final room to call the surface elevator. While the player waits on the elevator, enemies attack.	Yes	

References

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[2] https://developer.valvesoftware.com/wiki/Dimensions

[3] http://vignette4.wikia.nocookie.net/half-life/images/9/9b/Kleiner's_Lab_overall.jpg/revision/latest?cb=20100803114618&path-prefix=en
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[9] http://vignette4.wikia.nocookie.net/half-life/images/0/00/Fast_zombie.jpg/revision/latest?cb=20090527180413&path-prefix=en

[10] http://vignette3.wikia.nocookie.net/half-life/images/3/35/Headcrab_model.jpg/revision/latest?cb=20091109101704&path-prefix=en

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Appendix

1. **Why is this fun?**

   The "Staring is Caring" level provides an interesting, unique *Half Life 2* experience. By utilizing the "look and freeze" mechanic, players encounter obstacles and enemies in unexpected ways. Instead of merely attacking in a standard manner, participants need to avoid their fast foes. This interaction provides previously unseen *Half Life 2* gameplay. Players can experiment and explore, while also desperately attempting to flee the horror-themed environment.

2. **What makes this sequence interesting/memorable?**

   The entire "Staring is Caring" sequence is highly memorable due to the horror-themed encounters as well as the "look and freeze" gameplay. By utilizing the "look and freeze" mechanic, the level contains various startling enemy encounters. In particular, Fast Zombies drop from the ceiling in Area 5 and Headcrabs hide within the ventilation ducts in Area 4. Sudden enemy interactions prove highly effective for the player, as they struggle to adapt and react to the situation.

3. **How will you communicate to the player what they need to do?**

   Throughout the duration of the "Staring is Caring" level, the designer employs various conveyance and communication techniques. At the sequences' outset, an unnamed scientist debriefs the player regarding their situation. This narrative interlude provides contextual backstory and updates the player on their objective. In later areas, text prints to the screen, explicitly stating the player's newest sub-objectives.

   Sound and lighting are also two large communication tools. Due to the laboratory's underground location, the only lights within the level are primarily artificial. These assets can serve to highlight passageways, enemies, or items. Furthermore, lighting and sound both serve to set the mood and create emotional tension for the player.

4. **How can the player break it?**

   Unfortunately, players can potentially break the "Staring is Caring" level. Specifically, players can trap or manipulate how their enemies move throughout the environment. If players push a Xen creature into an unexpected position, the level's intended gameplay could falter. Additionally, within the ventilation system section, the designer currently plans to incorporate wandering Headcrabs. However, there is the possibility that Headcrabs in this area could trap players, blocking their path forward. The third and final way the player could break the level relates to puzzle

solving. If players do not solve or interact with the puzzles properly, the level cannot complete. For example, the "stacking physics boxes" section provides the opportunity for the player to break the boxes. If all the boxes break, the player cannot proceed forward. Therefore, the designer must account for this issue and prevent the boxes from fully destroying in some manner.