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Smiling instead of Smoking – Brainstorm Report

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1 Smiling instead of Smoking: Brainstorm Report

This report was written after a brainstorm session that focused on the general flow, menu, reward system and minigames of the Smiling instead of Smoking prototype.

The document will be used for discussion, and to base a prototype design document on in a next phase.

Recommended ideas and mechanics we consider most interesting for discussion will be marked as such.

1.1 General Flow Suggestions

We suggest to put some features that are under one of the four main sections, in the main menu, so they can be accessed more easily. That way, it becomes easier to see what the app has to offer.

It should be easy to go back to the main screen at any time. This will make people feel less 'lost'. The current app lacks this feature, which often urges the user to kill the app.

The survey section should get a progress bar and illustrations. Also, it would be an idea to change the brief list of survey dates on the main screen to something akin to the smoking log interface, so you can see some choices and results per week/month as well as upcoming surveys.

Right now, it seems that some features are not connected. For example, it seems that cigarette logs do not influence the questionnaire, or enlisting social support is not considered in these questions. We suggest to connect these features to tie the app together more.

1.2 Happiness Exercises

Right now, the exercises look too much like a form to fill in. The input fields could be separated and interact differently.

Idea 1: The Box (recommended)

Eg 'Acts of Kindness': You could write your act of kindness a small 'paper' you add to a virtual box. Sometimes, you get reminded of an act of kindness you did before, much like Facebook reminds you of past pictures and events.

Idea 2: Wall of Tiles

Eg 'Acts of Kindness'. Your act is immortalized on a tile. You can hover over a huge tiled wall with your previous acts of kindness.

1.3 Permanent Rewards

Even if the games offers one or more minigames, we think an additional reward system is definitely needed for motivating people to perform desirable actions in the app.

Idea 1: Make Relevant Content Collectible

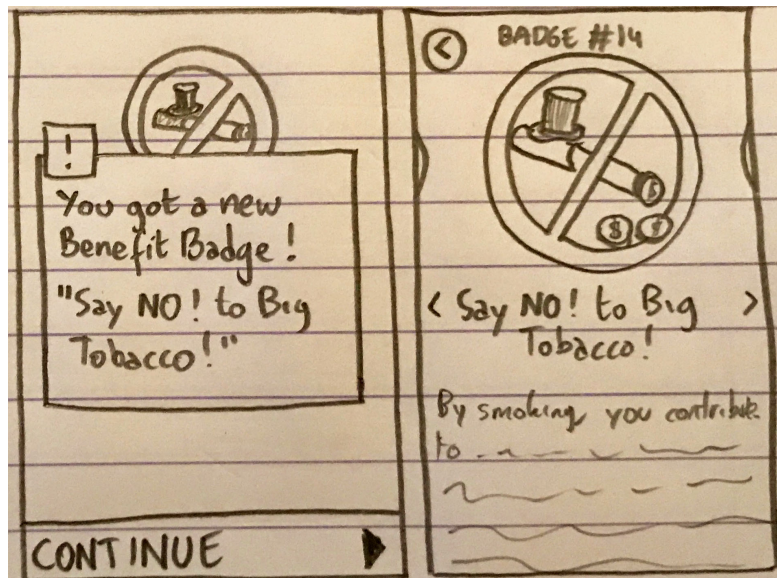
We suggest to make some of the current content (such as the quitting benefits entries) collectible. One of the direct benefits would be that relevant content becomes a commodity. No additional and/or non-related content (such as decorations or trophies) needs to be made for the app. The downside would be that not all information will be available to the user right from the start.

Idea 2: Stickers or Trophies

A sticker book or trophy shelf could be implemented. For every valuable action or after a certain milestone (e.g. a week without smoking), a collectible could be gathered.

Idea 3: Combining these ideas (recommended)

Every piece of content (such as quitting benefits) has an accompanying illustration, which is missing at the start of the app's usage cycle. This illustration can be collected and 'pasted' at the right piece of content.



1.4 Menu Screen and Theme

The main menu screen needs to be attractive and fresh, but also simple and scalable (when other features are added). The current tiled interface could be streamlined, and a certain theme could be used.

For the game, an underlying 'fire + nature' theme seems attractive, as it only vaguely references the act of smoking, but also has associations with freshness, health, life, environment (aspects and themes that are the opposite of aspects and habits associated with smoking). This does not mean the game needs for example a forest background and such, but it could reflect this theme subtly in its icons and colors.

Idea 1: Neutral, flat design

Since the game is going to be used with a wide variety of people, another suggestion is to make the app's theme and style as neutral as possible. It could be inspired by the current app's stylistic neutrality, but made more contemporary and bold.

Here are some specific 'themed' ideas for the menu, in case a less neutral setting would be considered.

Idea 2: Room with objects

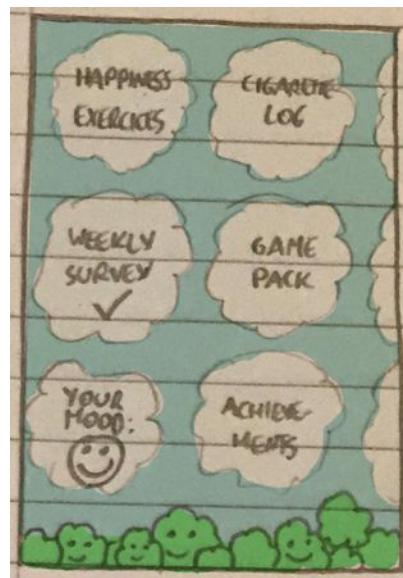
We think a room with objects, as shown in the earlier mockups, is an attractive setting. Its advantage is that such a setting feels at home quickly, and stands out compared to simple menus. However, it is less scalable, meaning that it's difficult to add, remove or change stuff. Also, it needs various different graphics assets.



Idea 3: Sky with clouds (recommended)

In this idea, a sky would be used with clouds as sections. If they are tapped, they vanish, much like a smoke cloud, and the section is opened. A plus for this idea is that clouds can easily be added, come across as a 'fresh' environment, refer only vaguely to smoking, and appeal to most people. A negative aspect is that it might be not 'cool' enough for younger users.

If the fire/nature theme still needs to be referenced, a skyline with trees could be shown at the bottom.



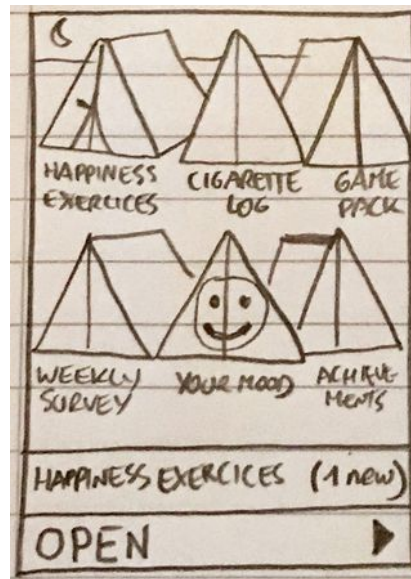
Idea 4: Apartment Building

Every apartment would be a section of the app. An advantage for this idea is that many people can relate to such a setting, and as the apartment is infinitely high, new sections could easily be added. A disadvantage for this idea is that it does not make much sense to divide small sections into entire apartments. Note that the scene should be bright and happy, since an apartment building could also be associated with gloominess, isolation, and depression.



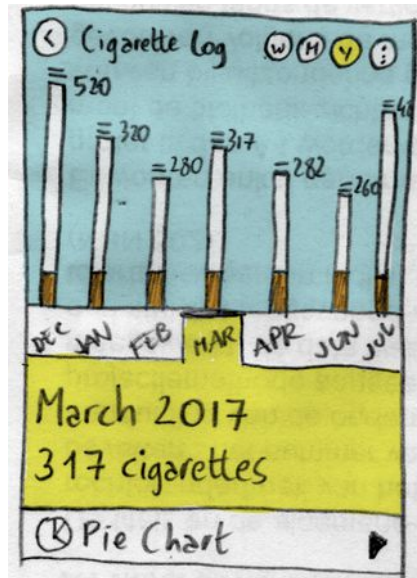
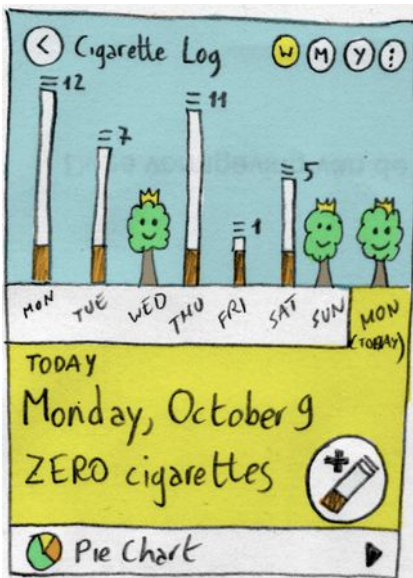
Idea 5: Camp with tents

To fit in with a 'fire + nature' theme mentioned earlier, a camp with tents could be used as a menu. The tents could then be zipped open to access a section. In this case could be patches you can put on the tent related to the reward.



1.5 Data Integration

We suggest that data and UI should be interwoven, unlike the current graphs that use an external tool. Together with the memories (see the Box idea above), it should act as a user log, where information and progress is easily accessible.



Add cigarettes

17

why?

Choose a reason...

Add this to the log



1.6 App Name

Some potential names for the app could be: Smile!, Smile Don't Smoke, The Fresh App, Flourish, Smolder, Breathe!, Puff Puffin, BreezeApp. If the current name is retained, we suggest using the full name (Smiling instead of Smoking) where possible.

1.7 Minigame Integration

If a player wants to play a minigame, a **game pack** will be shown. In the pack, several bars in different colors representing minigames will be present. The player can swipe out a bar to start the minigame, much like you take a cigarette out of a pack.

Idea 1: A Playful Reward (recommended)

Minigames can only be played as a reward: for filling out a survey, setting social support, et cetera. If the games are fun enough this will encourage users to fill out surveys.

Filling out a survey will earn the player one or more 'game bars' that are placed in the pack. Only a limited number of game bars can be obtained every day. There could be a limit to the maximum number of game bars that a player can have, to encourage regular usage of the app.

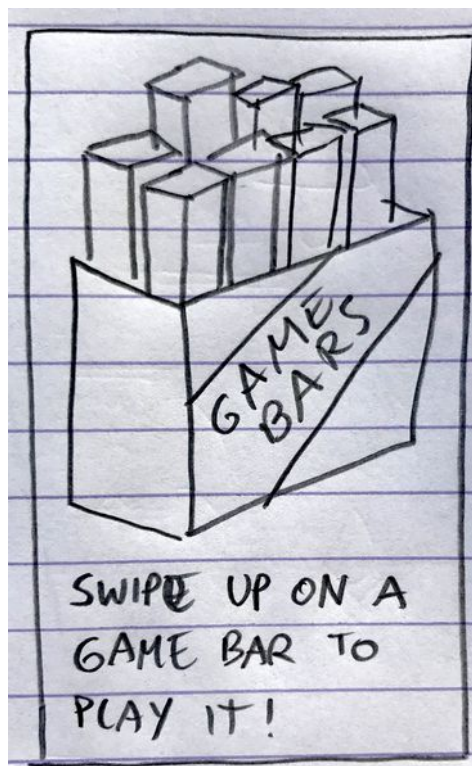


Illustration of the Game Pack

Idea 2: Playing instead of Smoking

In the app, the player can set his or her cigarette craving frequency. Based on this frequency, the game will send a push notification. This can be tweaked, so it's less frequent or not happening at all. It can also be dismissed if the player does not have a craving at that moment.

If the player taps the notification, the 'game pack' will be shown, so the player can select a minigame of his/her choice.

After the minigame, the app will automatically go to the survey questions. As long as the survey has to be filled in, it will repeat this, so the user does not have to fill it in right away. The player can also go to the active survey in the app itself.

The main downside of this idea would be that it would remind you of your cravings, while it's perfectly okay if users do not play the game if there is no craving at that moment.

1.8 Minigame Concepts

We strongly believe in the power of games to motivate users. In the case of smoking, it is important that the game could act as a partial replacement of the satisfaction that can be gotten by the act of smoking. In our brainstorm, we used typical smoking gestures, like getting a cigarette out of a pack, lighting a fire, and inhaling/exhaling, and linked them to simple, abstract game concepts.

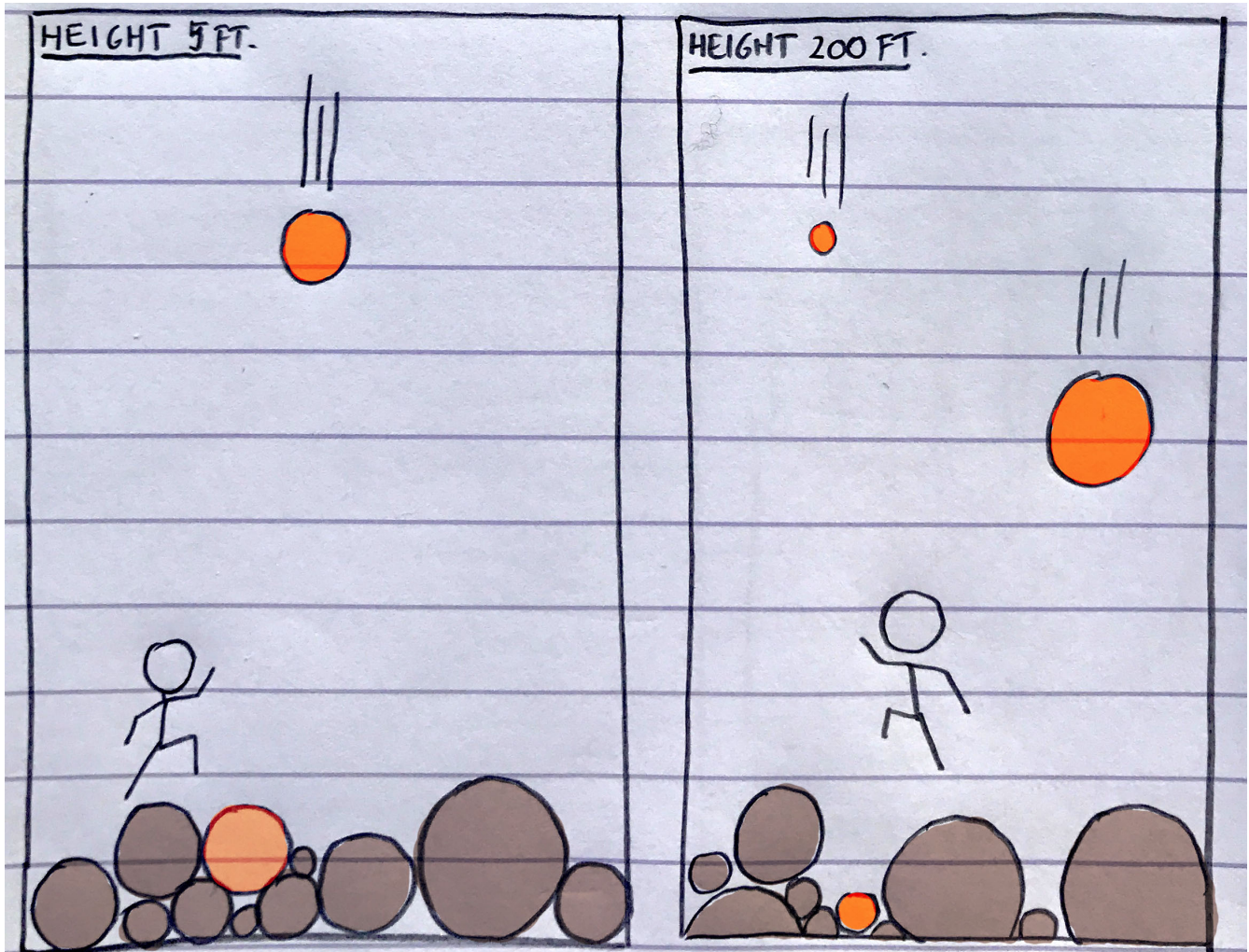
Out of 33 ideas we selected these six games, of which 1 to 3 could be featured in the prototype (depending on the complexity).

Concept 1: Volcano Survival

On a single screen, the player is 'attacked' by lava balls from an off-screen erupting volcano.

Even if they are avoided, the lava balls stay on screen. After a few moments, they cool down and the player can jump on them.

The game gets harder as the player needs to avoid more lava balls and also jump on the pile of cooled down balls. The player needs to get as high up as possible.



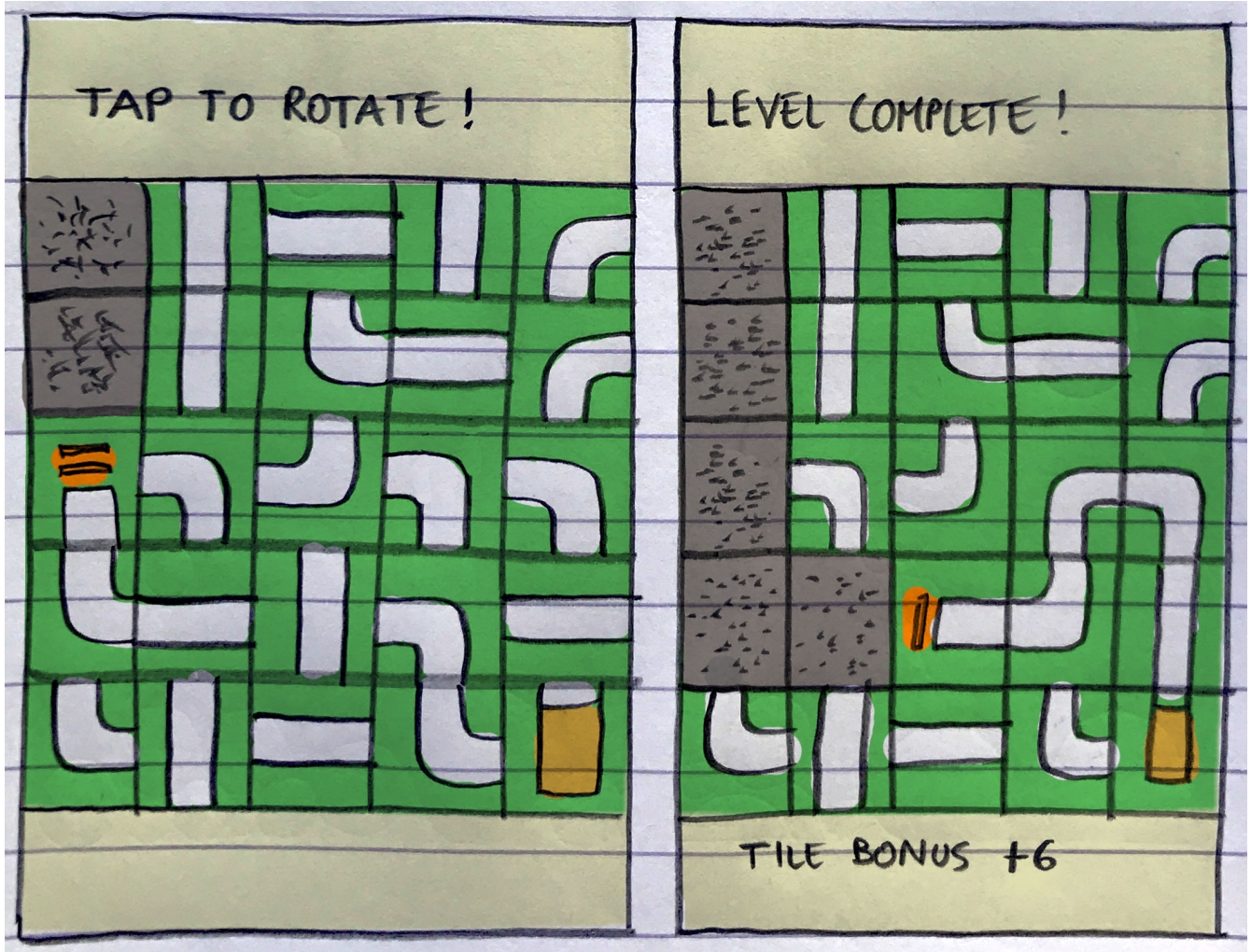
- + Engaging and simple gameplay.
- Maybe too 'stressy' for smokers?

Concept 2: Cigarette Connector

The player needs to rotate tiles by tapping on them, to form one connected cigarette.

The cigarette's smoldering end moves. If it reaches a non-connected part, the game is over.

Points can be earned depending on the number of tiles the cigarette has when it's completely connected.



+ Puzzle game, which is widely popular among a wide age range.

- Strong association with smoking. Another theme could be used, however, such as a bomb that needs to be exploded using a long fuse.

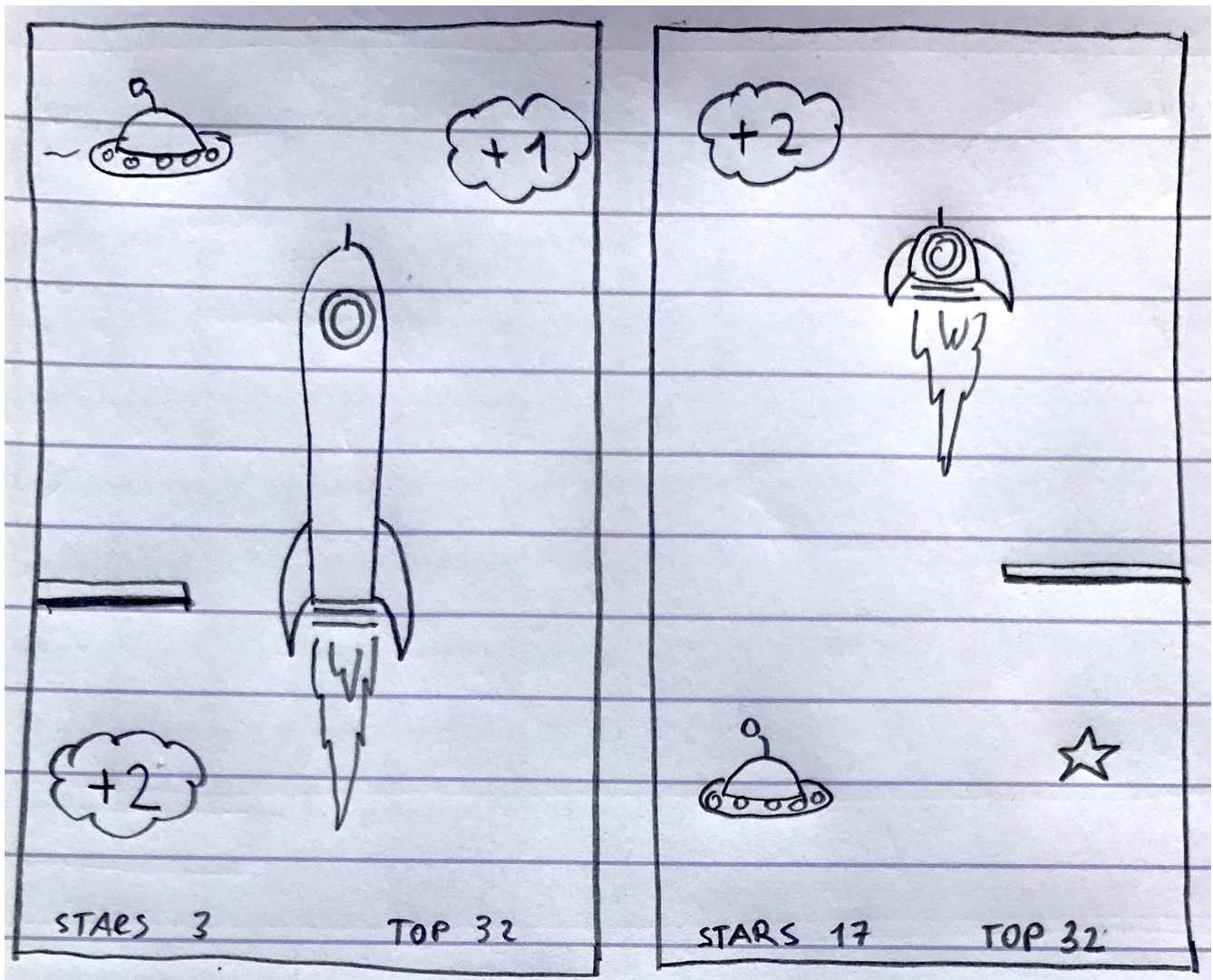
Concept 3: Cigarocket

You're a very tall rocket on a mission to collect stars.

Tapping the screen will propel the rocket upwards. When the rocket uses energy, however, it gets shorter, until it's all burnt up, much like a cigar.

The goal is to collect stars, and rocket pieces to prolong the rocket's burn time. If the rocket bumps into something, it will lose momentum and will cover less distance.

When the rocket is still tall, it's much harder to avoid stuff. When it's really small, however, the player can easily maneuver through obstacles.



+ Could be very replayable

- Difficult to balance so it remains very replayable

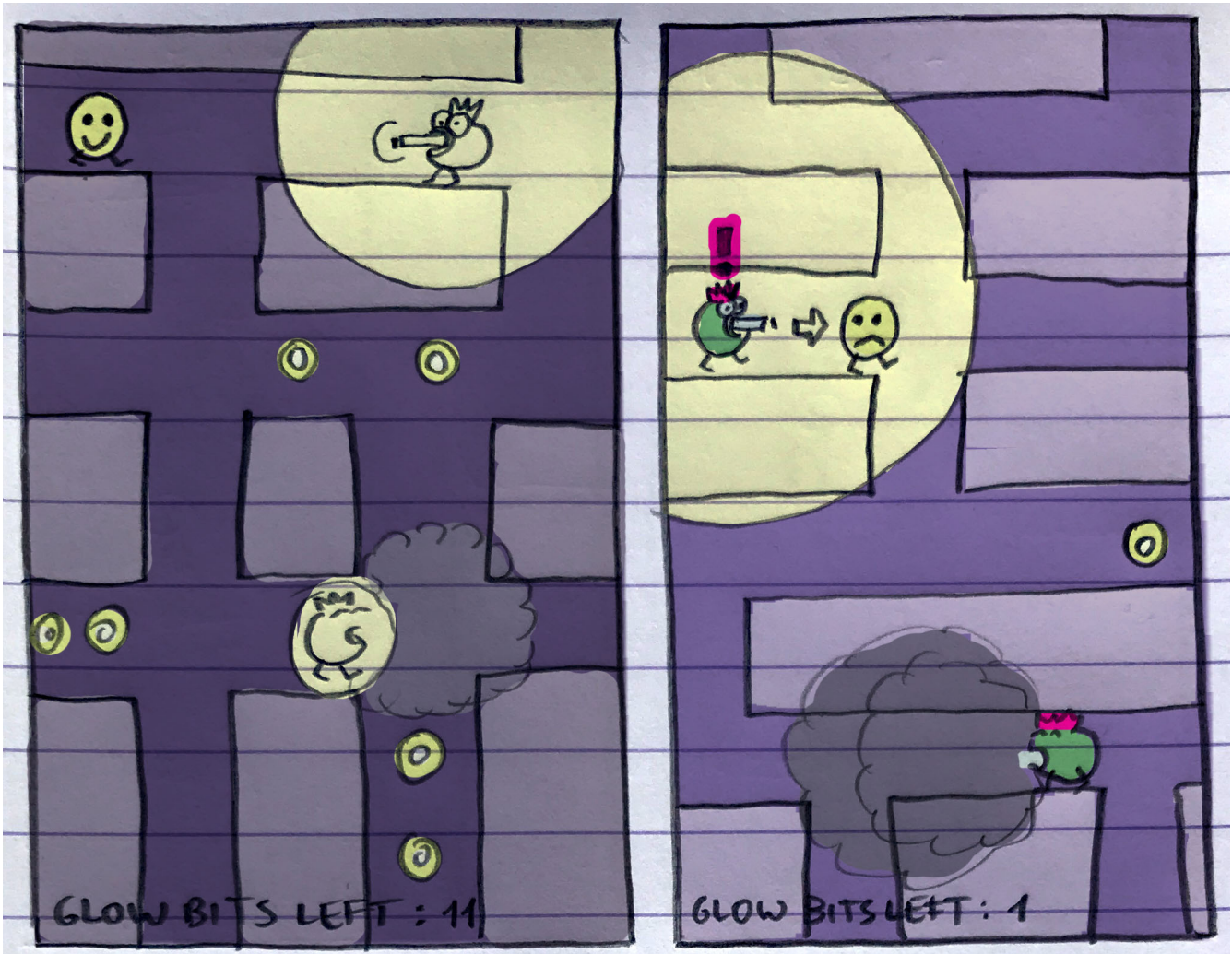
Concept 4: Inhale/Exhale Stealth Game

In this Pac-Man-like stealth game, the player needs to collect glow bits to make the world light again.

At the start, the play field is dark. If the player is seen by an enemy, it's game over.

The enemies smoke. If they inhale, their vision increases. If they exhale, their vision greatly decreases (because of the smoke).

As the player collects glow bits, the enemy's vision range becomes ever larger.



+ Game mechanic could be very interesting and unique.

- Pretty complex game to program; involves smoking characters.

Concept 5: Breathing Game

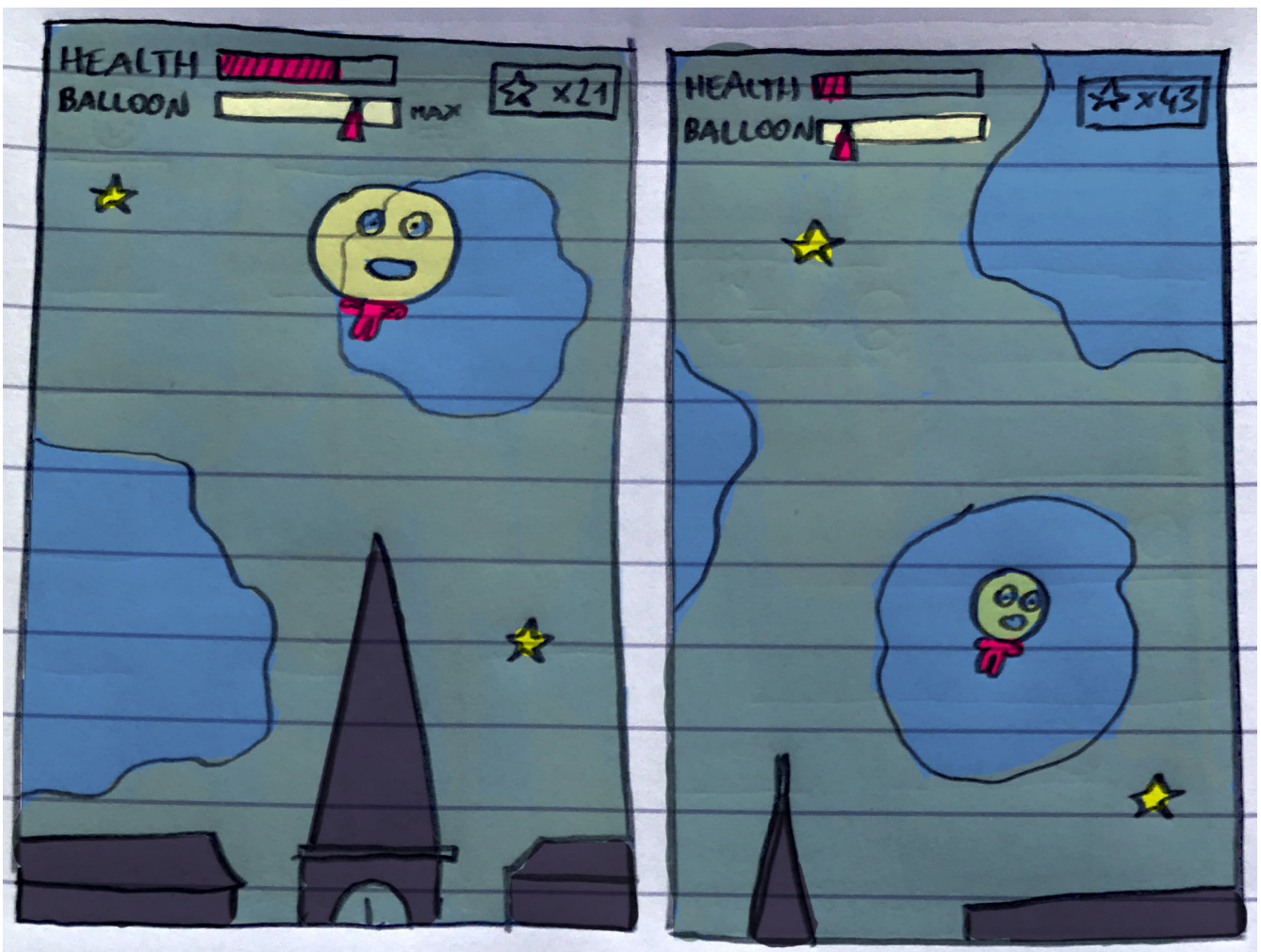
In this game, the player needs to tap to make a balloon-head character float up and collect stars (flappy bird-style). Tapping on the left side of the screen moves the character left, tapping right moves it right.

If the player taps, some air from the balloon head is lost, and the 'jumps' made by tapping will be less powerful.

Long-pressing will make the player breathe in air for the duration of the tap.

Breathing in bad air will reduce the player's health, however. The majority of air is 'bad', forcing the player to navigate to healthy air pockets.

An alternative control for breathing could be that the player needs to blow into the microphone. We do not recommend this, however, since not everyone may be comfortable doing this in public.



+ Engaging gameplay and easy to randomize

- Controls could be difficult

Concept 6: Firestarter

In this puzzle game, the player needs to burn up as many things as possible by making combos.

The playing field consists of a grid, where some items (oil, hay, wood, water) are already present.

The player has one or more matches, that he can place in any empty tile of the playing field.

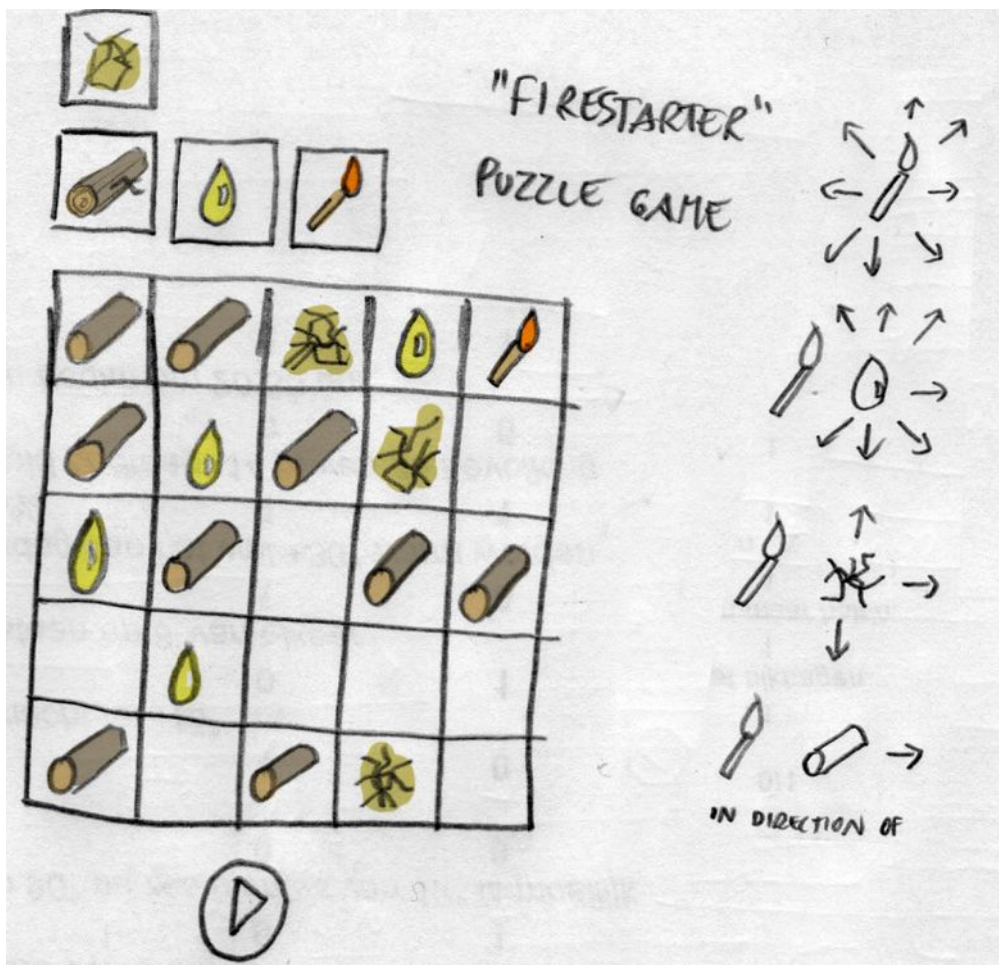
Additionally, the player can place some other items (Oil, hay, and wood) to chain events together.

The player then needs to press a Play button to start the burning.

A match starts a fire and will set all adjacent tiles on fire. Oil will also set all adjacent tiles on fire.

Hay will set the adjacent non-diagonal tiles on fire. Wood will only continue the fire in the direction it received fire (see sketch).

When a tile with water would receive fire, it will douse all surrounding tiles.



+ Another puzzle game that can have a lot of variations

- Probably needs level design (so takes more time)