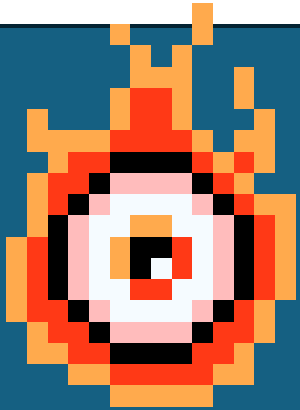


SpellHead

SpellHead is a 2d puzzle game where you are a wizard with a spell for a head. The knowledge and heads you gain on your journey will help you to progress. The project aims to explore puzzle level design and tutorialisation to create exciting discovery moments.



Spells



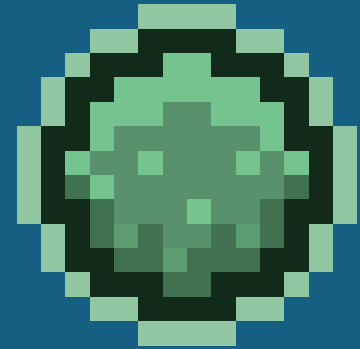
Eye

Shoots a projectile that
hits targets to move
blocks



Ice

Places a cube that
stops all projectiles on
screen



Slime

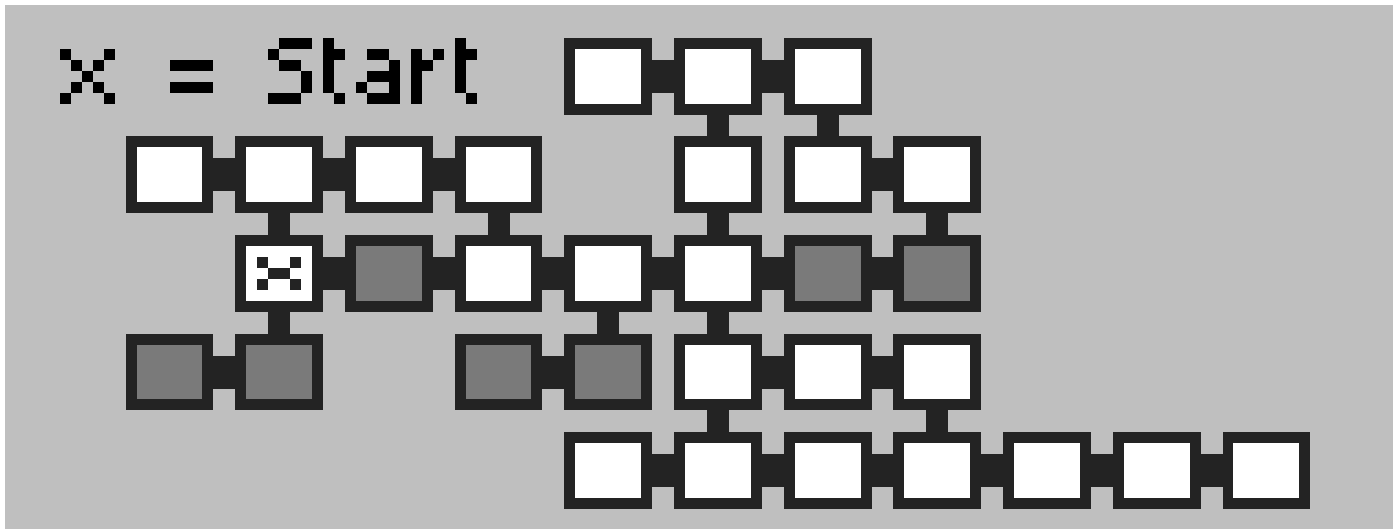
Shoots a slow projectile
that moves blocks and
the player across gaps

Inspiration Games



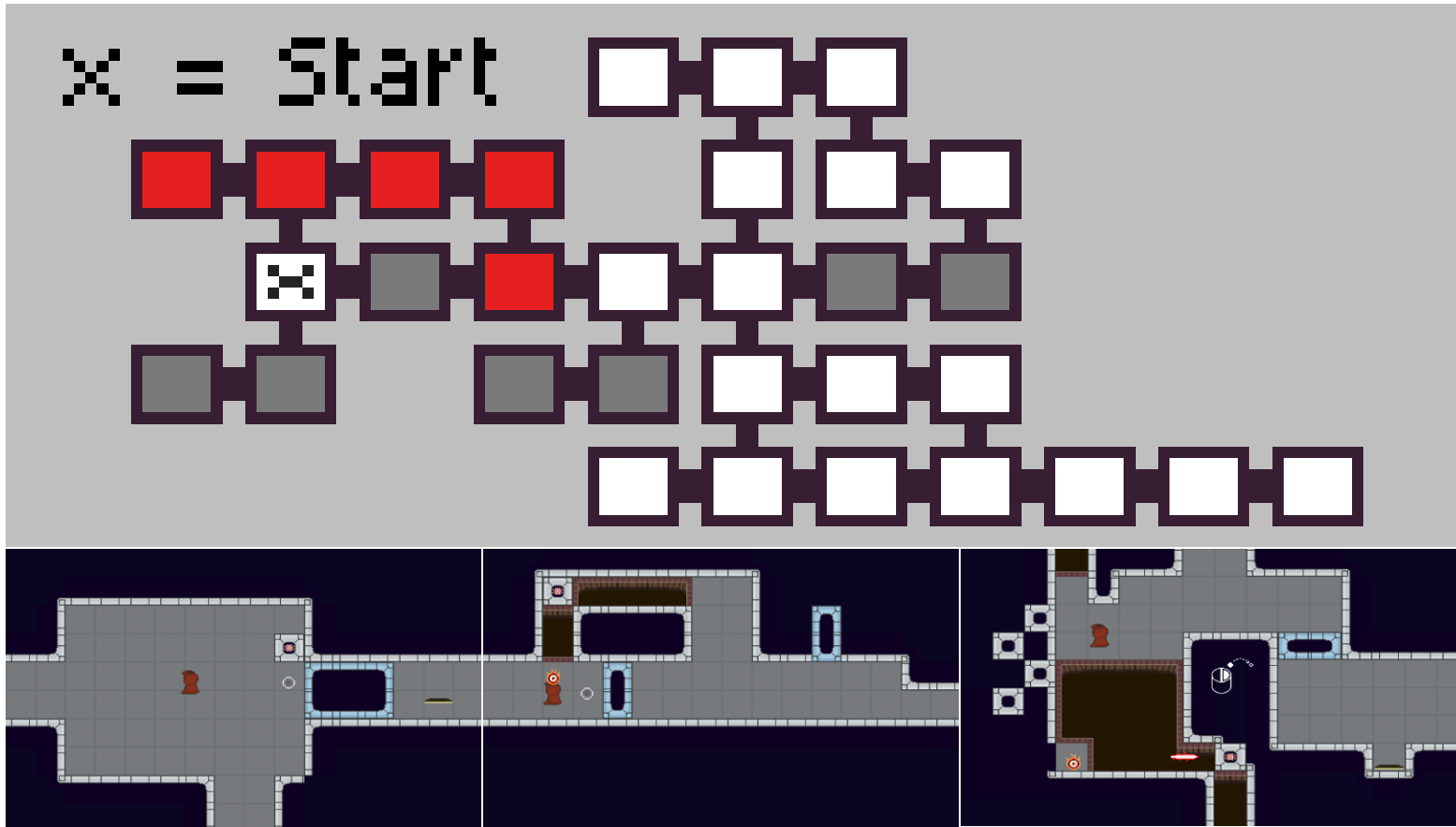
<https://cwpat.me/misc/linelith-level-design-timeline/>

Map



- Starting from the left, the player moves right to gather spells and knowledge
- With the right spells, the player learns they can move back to the start and find the hidden crown to win the level
- Grey rooms are hidden rooms that allow the player to backtrack to the beginning of the game when in the endgame sprint

Section 1: Learning the Eye Spell



- As this is the first spell, the player is eased in with simple puzzles that increase in input complexity as the player learns
- Players need to learn the context in which to use the eyeball, and why they want to use it
- This means learning how to position to hit targets and use the 'head throw' technique to reach distant targets

Blockades



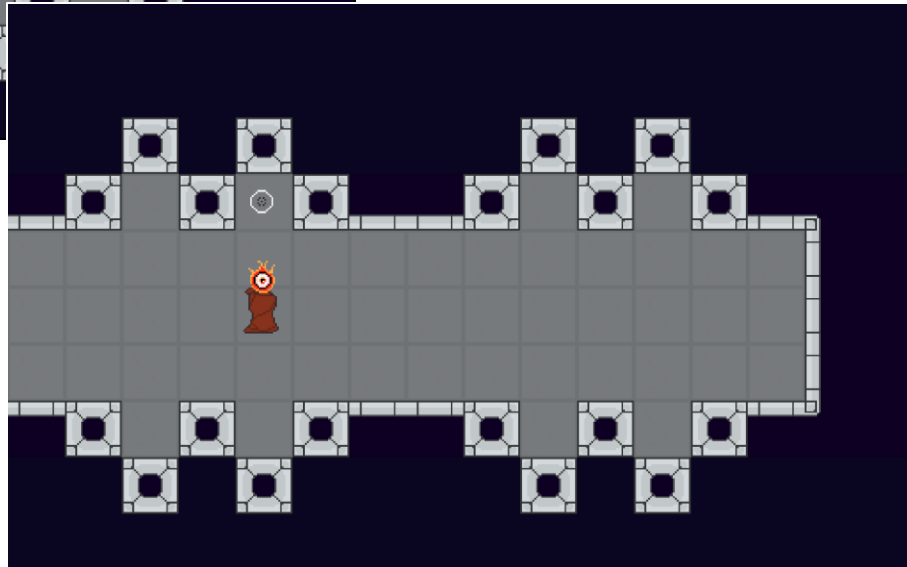
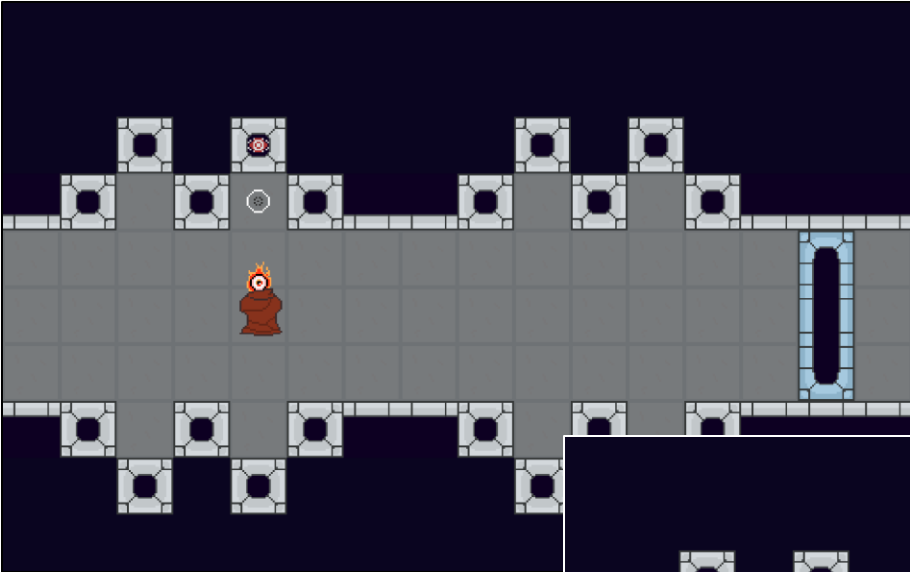
- After onboarding for the eye has finished, the amount of explorable space opens up
- Many of the paths are blocked to motivate players to find more spells and knowledge
- There are also hidden passages that might make the player suspicious, but not knowledgable to act until they discover the solution, such as the missing wall piece (top right)

Block Umbrella Puzzle



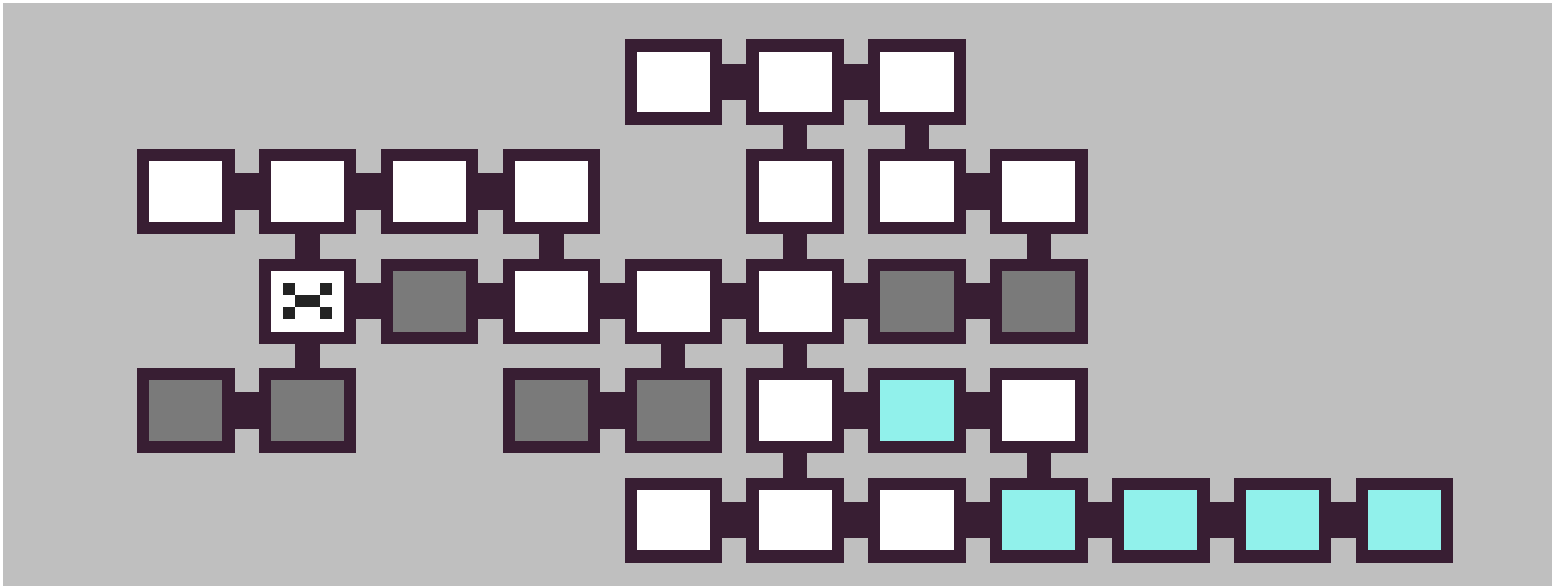
- In this puzzle, the player needs to throw their head to a 'control point' to be able to repeatedly activate a block to act as an umbrella from a wall of arrows
- This teaches the player to think about how puzzles can be solved over multiple screens

Secret Hallway



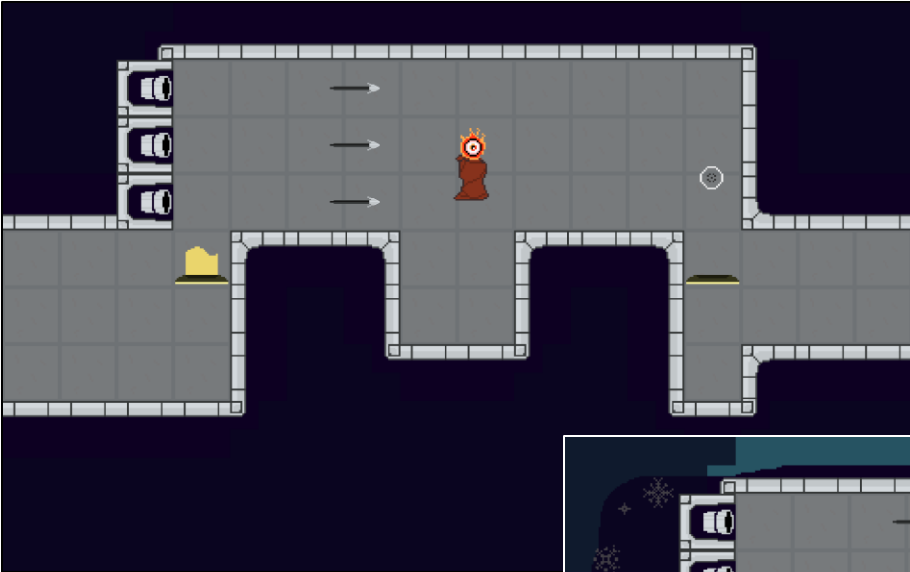
- This puzzle uses a common room layout and hidden information to hide puzzles in plain sight
- All rooms with this layout have the same target position, but its only revealed in one of the rooms
- The player can backtrack once they find the target position to find an extra hallway they have previously traversed has an extra exit

Section 2: Adding the Ice Spell



- Adding another spell means the player needs to learn how this spell can help them differently to the first
- A series of arrow rooms are placed here to show the context of freezing movable objects
- The player also learns the significance of toggling the ice spell on/off to serve different purposes

One-Way Arrows

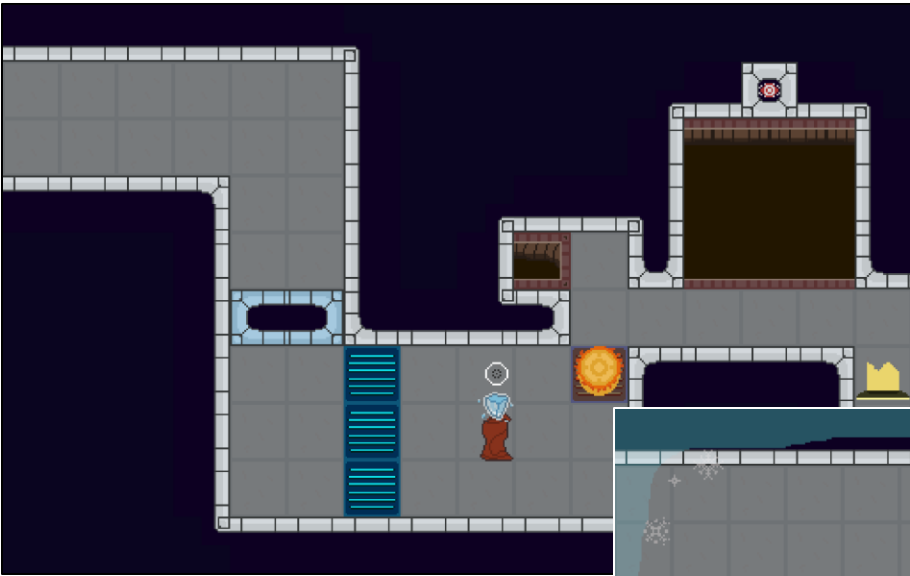


The small nook (bottom right) serves 2 purposes by giving the player a place to put the ice cube and also becomes a visual motif to connect to the ice cube later



- To show the important usability of the ice, the player needs to return through a room that can only be traversed one-way due to the flow of arrows
- The ice will freeze the arrows, and the player needs to toggle the ice on/off to get across

Spell Combination

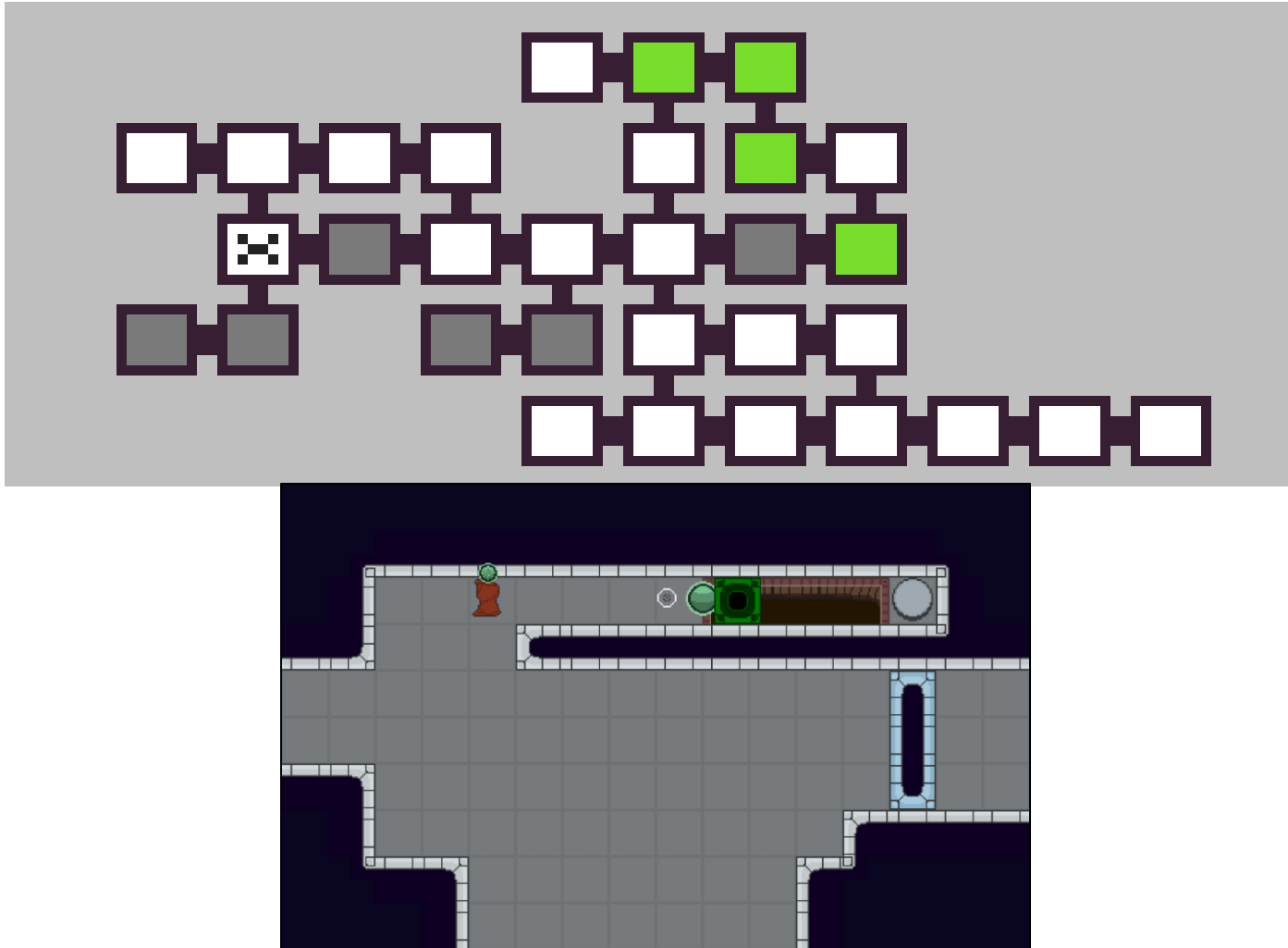


Another small nook gives the players a place to put the ice cube, there is a pit next to the nook to give an escape for a soft-lock my playtesters found



- This puzzle requires a combination of the ice and eye spells to progress
- Players don't have time to traverse the room whilst triggering the target (top right) but freezing their own eye projectile lets them delay the trigger to progress

Section 3: Unlocking the Slime Spell



- Having the ice spell lets the player pass fire walls by freezing them, which unlocks the upper area which holds the slime spell
- With all 3 spells, the player only needs to complete the multiple backtracking puzzles to win
- But first, the player needs to know how the slime ball lets them traverse new parts of the level

Crossing Pits



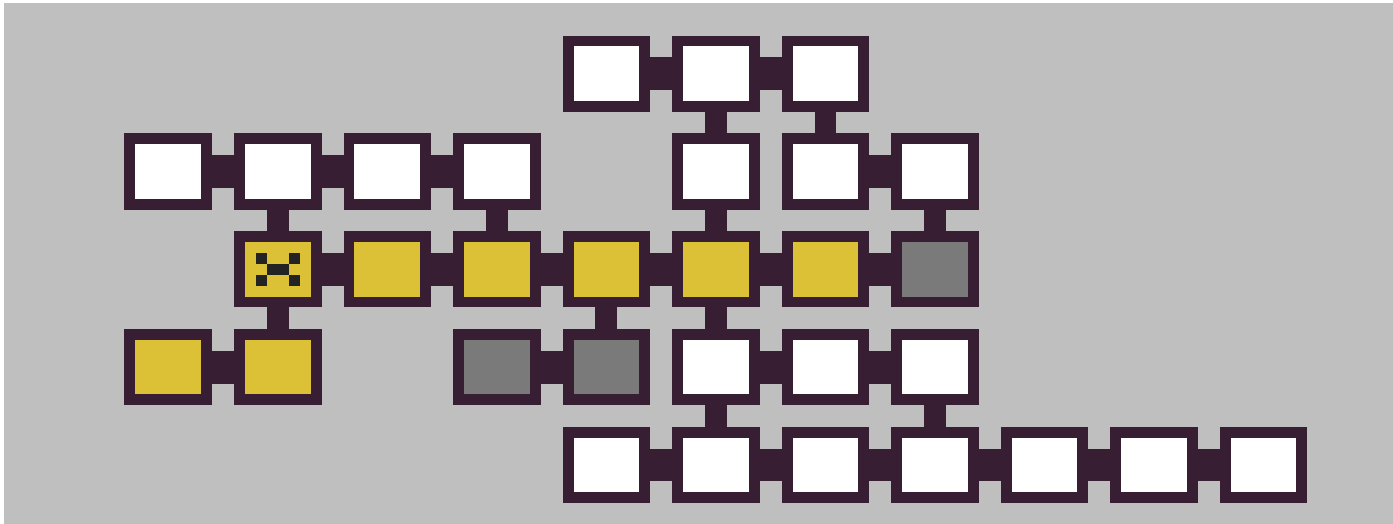
- The slime spell is introduced by pushing blocks, but another important job it does is moving things over large gaps
- This ability is reinforced by this puzzle where a block needs to be positioned across screens otherwise it will fall into a pit

Unlocking Flight



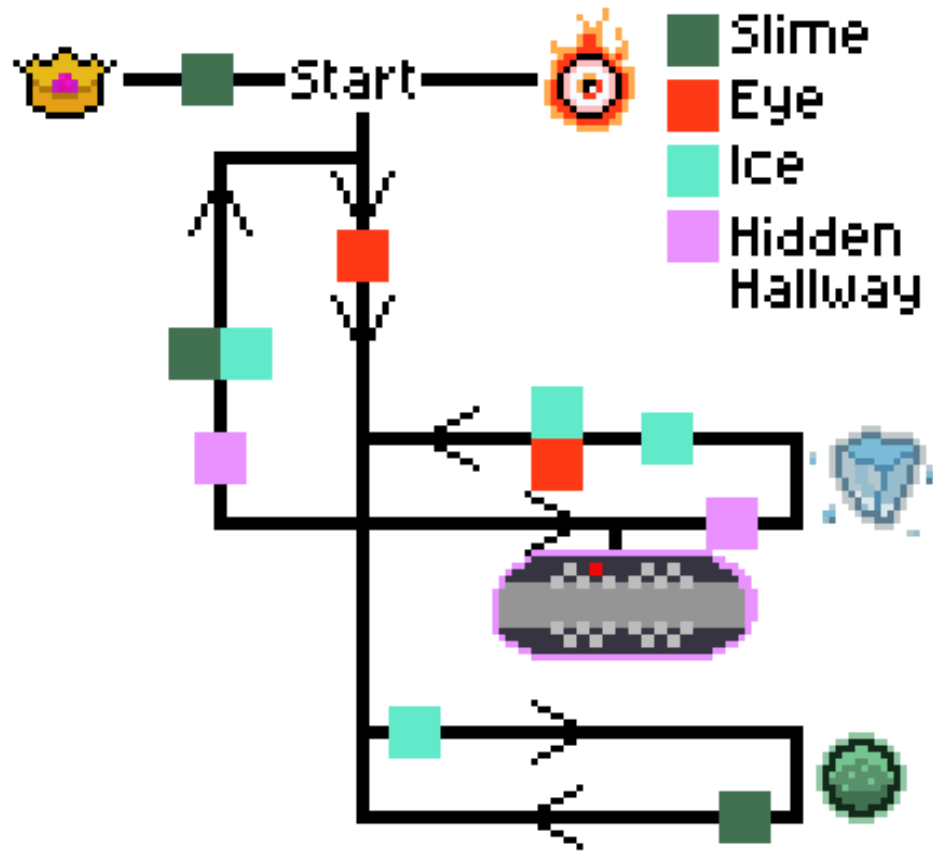
- The final and most complex technique the player needs to learn is that the slime can carry them across gaps if it hits the player
- A checkpoint (far left) is used as a breadcrumb to make the navigation challenge obvious
- Achieving this serves a double purpose of fulfilling the mystery of the missing wall tile as the player is taken off-screen back into the hub area

Section 4: Backtracking to the Crown



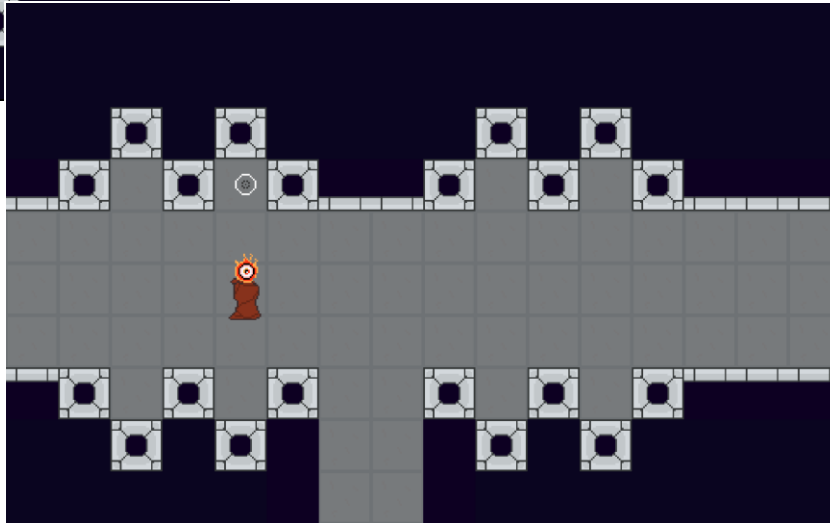
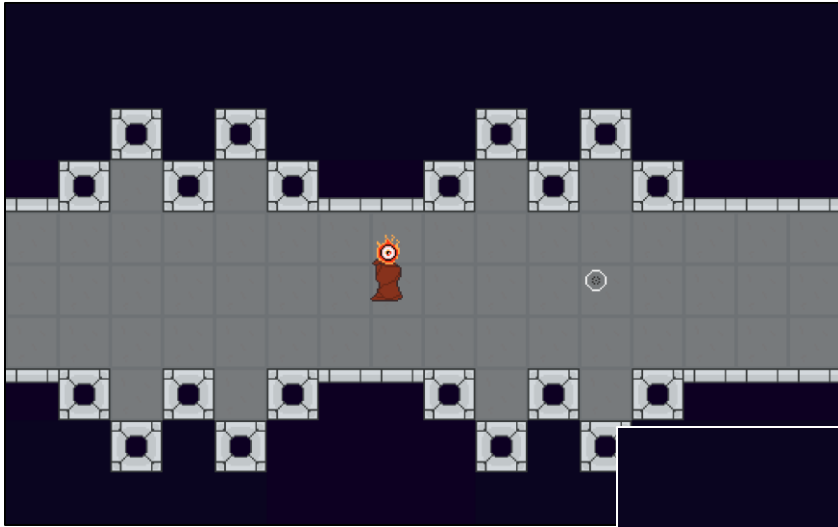
- With all the knowledge and spells the player has gathered, they can now traverse back to the levels beginning
- The golden path uses hidden passages to get to the crown hidden behind the first screen of the game

Dependency Chart



- A dependency chart is a way to show the abstract 'path' the player needs to take to finish the game, showing roadblocks (squares) and the order in which pickups are collected
- As this shows, the crown is behind multiple roadblocks that need spells and knowledge to overcome

Backtracking: Hallway



- Using the knowledge from the other hallways, the player can now open the secret hallway back at the start of the game
- This unlocks access back to the previous area, which also has a suspicious tile missing from the wall

Backtracking: Using Flight



- The player now knows how to access faraway ground using the slime spell, but they don't have enough time or space to be able to use the slime ball to cross
- They need to use the ice trick to delay the slime ball so they can get in the right position to cross the gaps

Grabbing the Crown



- The final payoff happens when the player opens one final secret entrance that leads to the first screen of the game
- The inconspicuous pit in the first room can be crossed with the slime ball and the player gets the crown