

“The Venetian Cat-astrophe” is inspired by a school trip to Venice. I found this city to be the perfect setting for an adventure. You will meet a mysterious talking cat from outer space, named Captain Cosmos, who crash-landed in Venice and his enemy Mickey Mouse the Mouse. He asks for your help to rebuild the spaceship. Captain Cosmos realises that there are three pieces missing. He needs your help to find them to return home. This is the goal of the game: get the three missing pieces, before Mickey Mouse the Mouse can steal them.

The game is designed as a live dialogue between Captain Cosmos and you. I chose a typewriter effect to create the atmosphere of a real-life conversation. To keep it engaging, you can choose from the start on how to respond to the questions, for example choosing between wanting to help Captain Cosmos for free or negotiating which reward you get for your help. This choice can earn you flowers, the in-game currency. Flowers are also given for answering quiz questions correctly. If needed, these flowers can later be used to buy missing pieces. In short, there are two ways to succeed: answering enough quiz questions correctly or buying a piece if you have enough flowers to spend. If you’re able to retrieve all three pieces, it’s a clear win: Captain Cosmos flies back home. If not, he is stuck on Earth, a clear “Game Over”.

This game builds over three stages. Gradually more elements are added.

- In Stage 1, you have to answer 6 multiple choice questions, each correct answer earns you 5 flowers. Furthermore, if you get more than 50% of the answers right, you recover the piece right away.
- Stage 2 introduces a new element: first, you have to solve another quiz. On top of being able to win the piece right away and to earn flowers along the way again, this time you also have the opportunity to purchase a missing piece, if you have failed one of the quizzes but have earned enough flowers.
- Stage 3 involves an element of luck. You can choose to play a Joker, which randomly determines whether you have to answer double, half or the same amount of the usual number of questions, or you can play it safe and stick to the normal amount. For the first time, failing the quiz and not having enough flowers to buy a piece means Captain Cosmos doesn’t make it home.

Knowing where I would set my game, I moved on to brainstorming and decided on which characters would appear, the storyline, the quizzes and the other elements. I then made a clear plan of the structure of the game, to keep on track while coding. I coded in stages, first creating the text and quizzes, then adding the different effects like typewriting and finally the joker. This saved me a lot of time at the end, as it made it easier to resolve the bugs.