SocKey: The Maze of Questions

One-Page Game Design Document — by Adriane Walls

Concept	An immersive, Socratic adventure game set in a magical grayscale maze. Players explore philosophical dialogue through AI-driven conversations with animal mentors. The world begins in shadow — colour, light, and access to deeper levels bloom as the player's reasoning and curiosity grow.
Core Gameplay Loop	1. Start: Choose an Animal Mentor (Owl, Fox, Buffalo, or Rabbit). 2. Enter Maze: Begin in a grayscale environment; the mentor appears beside the player. 3. Dialogue Exchange: Player and mentor alternate short (≤15-word) questions or statements, avoiding the word 'but'. 4. Environment Reaction: Strong reasoning → maze brightens; Weak reasoning → mist returns. 5. Exploration: Discover surreal castles, ruins, or gardens as colour spreads. 6. Progress: Depth of reasoning determines maze distance. In teams, progress is combined.
World & Aesthetic	• Visuals: Ultra-realistic fantasy environments (like *Hogwarts Legacy* meets *Myst*). • Atmosphere: Black and grey tones bloom into soft gradients and colour particles. • Landmarks: Castles, ancient temples, crystalline caves, overgrown ruins, and glowing meadows. • Mood: Surreal, mysterious, reflective — 'beauty in becoming.'
Controls	• Movement: W/A/S/D or arrow keys • Interact: E or Left Click • Dialogue: Type or select response • Camera: Mouse / Right Stick • Pause/Menu: ESC • Exit & Save: Tab key or Menu option
Modes	• Single Player: Journey alone with mentor through the maze. • Team Play: Players start at different maze points; dialogue quality drives progress. • Classroom Mode: Optional timed sessions with performance scoring.
Mechanics	• AI Mentor System: Context-aware responses based on reasoning quality. • Scoring: Logic, originality, emotional resonance, clarity. • Dynamic Environment: Colour, light, and atmosphere react to dialogue strength. • Replayability: Mentor personalities and prompts vary each playthrough.

Goal	Reach the heart of the maze — the 'Temple of Understanding' — where colour fully restores. Success is not about speed or points but depth, curiosity, and presence.