

## Writing Sample- NPC Barks – 100 Years War

**Objective:** To create VO ‘barks’ for three groups of NPCs at three points in an example game narrative. The barks should make each of the types of character (villagers, refugees, and soldiers) feel distinct and differentiated from each other, and should provide the player with context as to what is happening in the game world at each moment.

**Game Setting:** The game is set in Medieval France during the 100 years’ war. It’s a loosely historical, action-adventure game, where the player takes on the role of a Scottish longbow-man who works as a mercenary for both sides of the conflict while attempting to travel back to their home in the highlands.

**Writing Approach:** My approach was to focus on three specific moments in which the player will encounter these characters, and to use them to provide context about the overall world in which the village exists.

**Design Process:** I wanted to imagine lives of the non-playable characters in these moments, and to examine the emotions they would be feeling. I did this in context of the players actions, and what they are doing in the village to ensure the barks are appropriate for the player’s current actions (e.g., exploring, fighting, selling loot).

**NB:** Barks Highlighted in **BLUE** denote unique animations that would require signoff and coordination from the ART department before implementation.

**Setting 1 – Arrival at the Village:** The player has just discovered the village after completing a story moment along the main quest. They have completed a series of difficult combat situations, and are looking to explore, decompress, and restock / sell loot that they have accumulated in the previous game moments. This presents the opportunity for more expansive and descriptive dialogue.

**NPCs Relation to Player:** The player has arrived relatively unknown and recognised only as an anonymous mercenary. The village is not outwardly hostile to the player, but are reserved and wary, not offering friendship too quickly.

**Context:** The villagers are going about their day-to-day lives. They live in a small village that so far has not been majorly affected by the advancing army. The only impact on their lives has been a major influx of soldiers and refugees arriving.

<i>NPC Type</i>	<i>Animation</i>	<i>Who NPC is talking to?</i>	<i>Dialogue</i>
Villager	Idle	Player	No space for you here stranger
	Idle	Player	Stranger...
	Idle	Player	The other newcomers are out back
	Idle	Player	No space, keep moving
	Idle	Other Villagers	It's getting mighty crowded
	Idle	Other Villagers	I hope no one else comes
	Idle	Player	We don't do handouts
	Spitting on the ground	n/a	*spits*
	Idle	Other Villagers	Not another one
	Idle	Player	Don't ask, we're full

Idle	Player	We're full
Lifting or carrying object, working	n/a	*grunt*

**Context:** The refugees have been arriving from the path of the advancing army for weeks. They are tired and destitute, with little to no possessions. They've set up a small shanty camp out the back of the village and are trying to rebuild their lives.

<i>NPC Type</i>	<i>Animation</i>	<i>Who NPC is talking to?</i>	<i>Dialogue</i>
Refugee	Idle	Other refugee	We'll be moving on soon
	Idle	Player	Don't mind me
	Idle	Player	We can move if you need
	Idle	Other refugee	I miss home
	Looking after belongings	Other refugee	It's not much, but it's all I could carry
	Preparing food	Player	We've no food to spare
	Idle	Player	Nothing for ya
	Idle	Other refugee	<i>Hope the army ain't coming this way.</i>
	Idle	n/a	*sobbing*
	Idle - sitting	n/a	*groaning*
	Lying on ground/pallet	n/a	*coughing*
	Hunched over	n/a	*crying*

**Context:** The soldiers are the left-over garrison. Most of the force protecting the village has been conscripted into the main armies, and so only a smaller force is left. This, combined with the influx of refugees, has left the remaining soldiers on edge, and stressed.

<i>NPC Type</i>	<i>Animation</i>	<i>Who NPC is talking to?</i>	<i>Dialogue</i>
Soldier	Idle	Player	Keep moving
	Idle	Player	Don't make no trouble alright
	Idle	Player	No news from the front I see
	Idle	Other Soldiers	Garrison's too small for all these people
	Idle	Player	Move along
	Idle	Player	No loitering
	Idle	Refugees	Break it up
	Idle	Player	No fightin
	Idle	Player	Keep the peace
	Idle – walking	Surrounding characters	Coming through
	Idle	n/a	*grunt*
	Spitting on ground	n/a	*spits*

**Setting 2 – The Village is Under Attack:** The player has been called back from exploring the surrounding area by a messenger asking them to provide support because the village is under attack. They arrive as the village is already burning and are tasked with fighting off the last few raiders from the English army. This is a combat

situation. Dialogue is limited as the player is focusing on the game play, so narrative and world building takes a back seat.

**Context:** The villages are fleeing for their lives, feeling woefully unprepared for this attack.

<i>NPC Type</i>	<i>Animation</i>	<i>Who NPC is talking to?</i>	<i>Dialogue</i>
<i>Villager</i>	Running	n/a	*screams*
	Running	n/a	Please No
	Running	Other Villagers	Run!
	Running	Other Villagers	They're here
	Cowering	Other Villagers	*crying*
	Cowering	Other Villagers	Oh God
	Running	Other Villagers	It's an attack
	Running	n/a	Help
	Cowering	n/a	Noooooo
	Cowering	n/a	Please. God
	Cowering	n/a	Jesus no
	Wounded	n/a	*Painful scream*

**Context:** The refugees are again gathering their few remaining positions and fleeing an oncoming army.

<i>NPC Type</i>	<i>Animation</i>	<i>Who NPC is talking to?</i>	<i>Dialogue</i>
<i>Refugee</i>	Running	Other Refugee	Run
	Running	Other Refugee	They're here
	Running	Other Refugee	Oh god, not again
	Running	Other Refugee	It's an attack
	Running	Other Villagers	They're coming
	Running	n/a	*Screaming*
	Running	Other Refugee	Get out
	Running	Other Refugee	Move. Move!
	Cowering	n/a	Please
	Cowering	Player	Help
	Wounded	n/a	Arggggggh
	Cowering	n/a	*Crying*

**Context:** The soldiers are attempting to defend the town and drive away the raiders.

<i>NPC Type</i>	<i>Animation</i>	<i>Who NPC is talking to?</i>	<i>Dialogue</i>
<i>Soldier</i>	Fighting	Soldiers	Attack
	Fighting	n/a	*Screaming*
	Running	Soldiers	Charge
	Fighting	Soldiers	Ready
	Pointing	Player	Get them

Wounded	n/a	*pained scream*
Fighting	Soldiers	Hold!
Fighting	n/a	*battle cry*
Firing Bows	Soldiers	Loose
Pointing	Soldiers	Forward
Wounded	n/a	My leg
Wounded	n/a	*pained grunt*

**Setting 3 – The Aftermath of the Attack:** The attack is just finished. The player is now exploring the destroyed village, collecting any remaining loot and looking for their next quest or direction. Here the objective is to magnify the change between before and after the attack, and to encourage the player to continue in search of a new gameplay or story moment.

**Context:** The villagers have been left with nothing, devastated by the attack. Their homes are destroyed, and their friends are dead. They are left almost unable to speak or function with only a few searching the ruins of their homes for loved ones.

<i>NPC Type</i>	<i>Animation</i>	<i>Who NPC is talking to?</i>	<i>Dialogue</i>
Villager	Idle – sitting	n/a	*crying*
	Idle – sitting	n/a	*sobbing*
	Idle	n/a	They're all dead
	Wounded	n/a	*moaning*
	Wounded	n/a	*painful sobbing*
	Wounded	n/a	Arghhhhh
	Idle	Other Villagers	Why?
	Rocking on the ground	n/a	*rocking backwards and forwards*
	Idle – sicking	Other Villagers	Are they gone?
	Carrying a child	n/a	My baby!
	Idle	n/a	No *sobbing*
	Searching ruins	n/a	Something must be left

**Context:** The refugees are dealing with the aftermath of the attack a little better having witnessed this before. They are collecting their belongings and preparing to move onto a new town, hopefully further away from the advancing army this time.

<i>NPC Type</i>	<i>Animation</i>	<i>Who NPC is talking to?</i>	<i>Dialogue</i>
Refugee	Idle		I thought we'd be safe
	Idle		Where do we go now?
	Idle		*groaning*
	Idle		Everywhere we go
	Wounded	Other Villagers	*crying*
	Idle	Other Villagers	No where's safe

Idle		We'll never go home
Idle	n/a	Oh God
Wounded	Other Villagers	*pained groans*
Idle		We need to leave
Searching		Mummy?
Idle	n/a	They always come

**Context:** The soldiers are regrouping and looking after their wounded after the attack. They suffered major losses, and just want people not directly helping in the repair effort (the player) to move on to a new location.

<i>NPC Type</i>	<i>Animation</i>	<i>Who NPC is talking to?</i>	<i>Dialogue</i>
Soldier	Idle	Player	No time for you now
	Idle	Other Soldiers	We should have been warned.
	Idle	Player	If you're not helping, then leave.
	Idle	Player	Fat lot of help you were
	Idle	Other Soldiers	I need to wash this blood
	Carrying bodies	n/a	*grunting*
	Wounded	n/a	*pained* my leg
	Idle	Player	<i>Get lost</i>
	Wounded	n/a	*screaming in pain*
	Carrying bodies	n/a	*spits*
	Idle	Other Soldiers	We'll move out soon
	Idle	Other Soldiers	So many wounded