Putting links at the bottom of a passage nudges the player to make a choice. They read through the entire passage, and when they reach the link list at the bottom, they choose an action.

By setting all the options together in a single list, the player can more easily see how their choices will have different consequences.

Exploring a Space

You can also use links throughout your passages to describe the player's environment. For example, here's a description of the monster's home in *Spider Milk.*

You look around the monster's parlor. It's one of the fanciest rooms you've ever been in. A huge **chandelier** tinkles over your head. The **pillows** on the couches are all embroidered with very finely detailed pictures of monsters playing water polo. And huge, beautiful **candles** in all colors and sizes are twinkling in every corner of the room.

You can't believe all of this was under your bed.

"Are you going to drink your **tea** before it gets cold?" asks the monster with a smile.

In this passage, the links are objects the players notice as they look around the room. When you place links in the middle of a paragraph, you show the player what to explore, such as the *chandelier* in *Spider Milk.*

For example, clicking **chandelier** shows the player a chandelier and a single *Back* link at the bottom of the page. The *Back* link takes the player back to the previous passage so they can click *pillows* or *candles*, or just finish their tea. These extra details make your game more fun and engaging.

You look around the monster's parlor. It's one of the fanciest rooms you've ever been in. A huge **chandelier** tinkles over your head. The **pillows** on the couches are all embroidered with very finely detailed pictures of monsters playing water polo. And huge, beautiful **candles** in all colors and sizes are twinkling in every corner of the room.

You can't believe all of this was under your bed.

"Are you going to drink your **tea** before it gets cold?" asks the monster with a smile.

The chandelier gleams so brightly with hanging crystals that you can barely look at it.

Hey, those aren't crystals! They're all nickels and dimes and pennies. The monster must have collected all the coins you've dropped under your bed!

Back

When the player is done looking around the monster's home, they need to decide which link to click to move the story forward.

To help the player decide how to move to the next passage, we can hint that the *tea* link is the end of this scene by setting it apart from the other links. Conversely, we place the *chandelier*, *pillows*, and *candles* links in the same paragraph to make them seem similar to each other.

The *tea* link is the only sentence in the passage that refers to time and has a sense of urgency: "Are you going to drink your tea before it gets cold?" The other links are just objects to look at, so the *tea* link invites the player to move forward.

When you're making games, think about how to present your game to affect the player's experience. Even where links appear in a passage can affect how the player makes decisions.

Arranging Your Passages

In the previous chapter, we compared the *Interview with a Cat!* game to a blueprint for a house. Houses come in all sizes: tiny ones with just a few rooms and big, luxurious mansions with patios, verandas, and secret passages—like the kind you'll buy when you're a rich and famous game designer.

As you're creating a Twine game, you can move passages around by clicking and dragging them at any time. How you arrange your passages can change the flow of your story and your perspective on it. For example, here's the blueprint from part of *Interview with a Cat!*
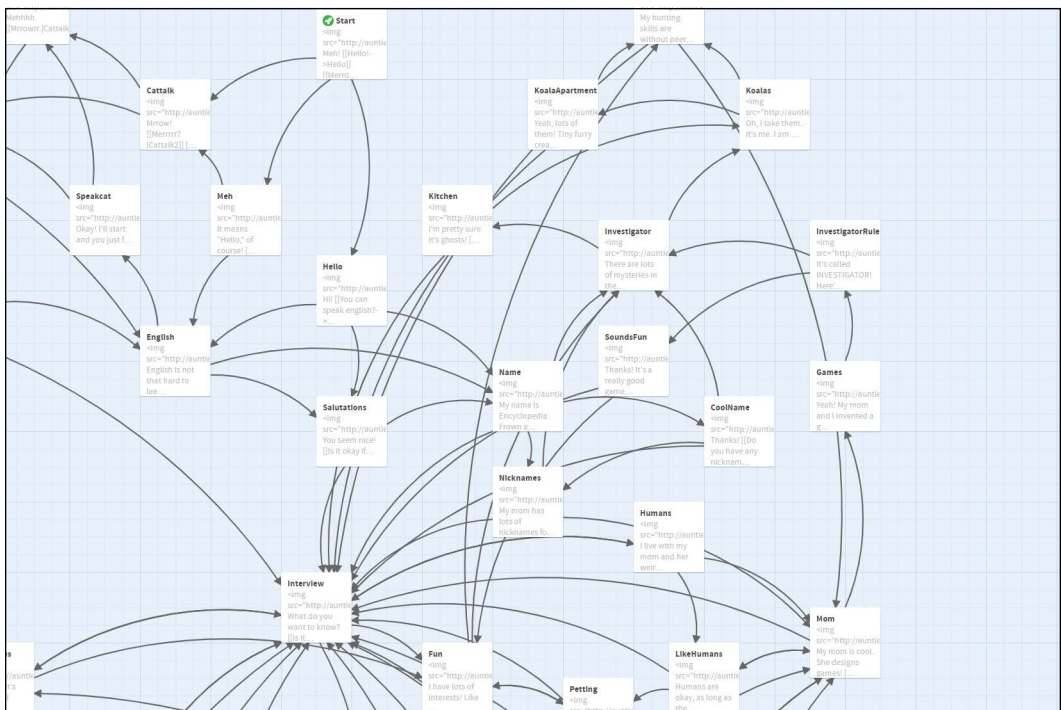
To make the interview with Encyclopedia Frown more formal, I could have lined up all the passages. But I didn't want to, because the interview is meant to be more like a friendly conversation. To create that feeling, I made the passages crisscross and connect in different ways.

When you're adding passages to your Twine games, think of your story as a house and your players as visitors. Where should your visitors go when they step into your game? How do they get around? Twine

makes it easy to see your story as a map. Take advantage of this feature when you're thinking about your game's layout.

Sample Layout of a Twine Game

Let's walk through how we might think about writing a game set at a party in a mansion. Maybe the entrance to the mansion is a grand entry foyer: a big, fancy room designed to impress visitors. But there's nothing for a player to do in the foyer other than hang up their coats: it's a place of transitions.

The foyer draws the player forward toward the center of the house. They step into the main hall, another big room, full of people. A party is going on here with lots of people mingling and introducing themselves. It's loud and crowded. The player can't really get to know anyone here, but there are doors leading to smaller, more intimate side rooms.

In these side rooms, the player can stop and take in some of the details around them. They can have meaningful conversations here as well. Maybe they'll stumble upon secret passages in some of these rooms. Perhaps there's a secret door that leads from one room to another on the other side of the house or to a secret place they can't get to any other way. Maybe your player can find a little door to a backyard where they can get away from the party and look at the stars for a while. The possibilities are endless!

When your player finds their way back to the main hall eventually, perhaps many of the guests have moved to other parts of the mansion. Now they should have a better sense of the house's layout and might decide to check out another wing.

When the player decides they've seen enough, they might return to the foyer to leave the mansion. But because they've seen so many rooms in the mansion, they might think the foyer doesn't look so big and imposing anymore. Passing through the entryway on their way out, the player remembers what it looked like when they first arrived and can reflect on how their impression has changed. They retrieve their coat. It's time to go home.

Determining the Shape and Size of Your Game

Twine stories come in all shapes and sizes. Not all of them are like mansions with rooms to explore. Some are like waterfalls with only one main path, and all other paths branch off that path. Some are like gardens or caves.

When you come up with the shape of your Twine game, decide what kind of story would fit that shape. What would a robot tea party look like or a monster at the grocery store, or what happens to missing socks?

Pay attention to where paths split and then meet again. For example, some stories branch like a tree and never come back together, which means your story can have different endings. Some stories are like chain links: they come apart, come back together, come apart again, and then come back together again, creating different paths to the same ending. Others can be straight lines, and some are like meandering rivers. Try to make stories with interesting shapes, like the one shown in the following figure.

Nudging players toward an ending
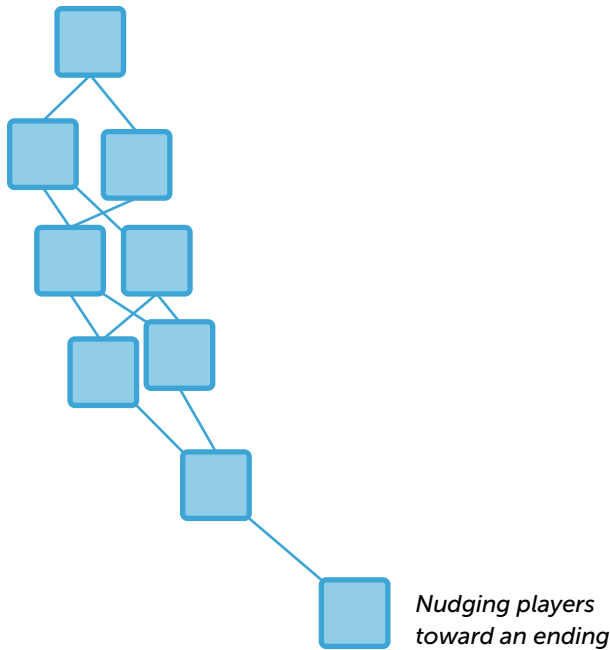
Picture an action movie. The hero sees the villain on the roof of a tall building, probably laughing like a villain. We know that the scene is going to end with the hero confronting the villain, but how does the hero get there?

In our story, maybe the player chooses between running up the fire escape or taking the express elevator, but both branches lead to the exciting confrontation. Thoughtful story structuring allows us to nudge the player toward the scenes we decide are the most important, even if there are a few ways to get there.

Some Twine games are like gardens that players can wander in.

A more open-ended game
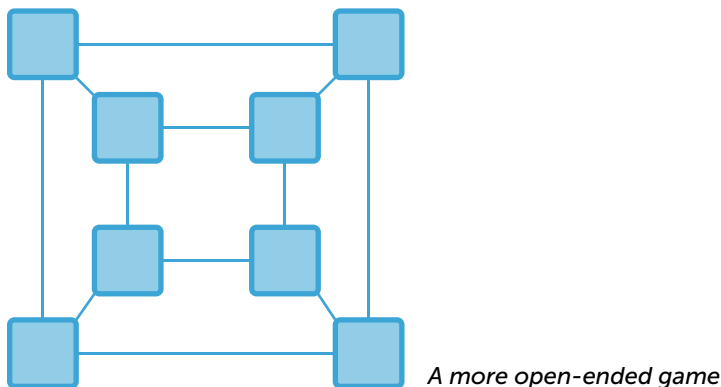
In this game shape, the player can roam through a garden looking at pretty flowers and trees, but most gardens don't have an ending. The player can leave the garden whenever they've seen enough, and maybe by the time they've walked around the entire garden, they'll feel like they know something about the person who planted it.

Some Twine games are like deep, winding caves with multiple paths that all lead to the same place.
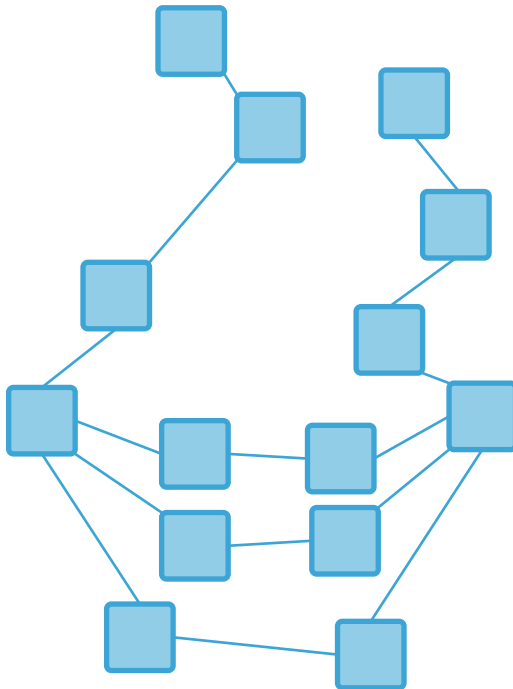
Multiple paths leading to the same place

For example, the paths in a cave can wind around and loop back in on themselves. The player can go deeper and deeper into it until they run out of light. They'll need to feel their way along the walls with their hands, not sure where they're going. They can continue down different paths until they're lost. At some point, the branches might come back together, but the player might not notice, because it's too dark. The player keeps moving forward, and when they least expect it, they see light again!

These are just some examples of different structures you can use in your games.

Emphasizing Text

You can style the words in your stories using italics, bold, or underlines to emphasize certain items or to change the way they look and feel. Let's look at how to do this.

> **NOTE:** To learn more about ways to mark up text in your stories, view the Help option in Twine.

Italicizing

Italics are an easy way to emphasize important words in a sentence. To *italicize* text, place an asterisk (*) on either side of the text you want to italicize. For example, enter the following in Twine:

```
"I don't know about *you* but *I* like a lot of pickles on my
sandwiches. A *lot* of pickles."
```

The resulting text will look like this in your game.

"I don't know about *you* but *I* like a lot of pickles on my sandwiches. A *lot* of pickles."