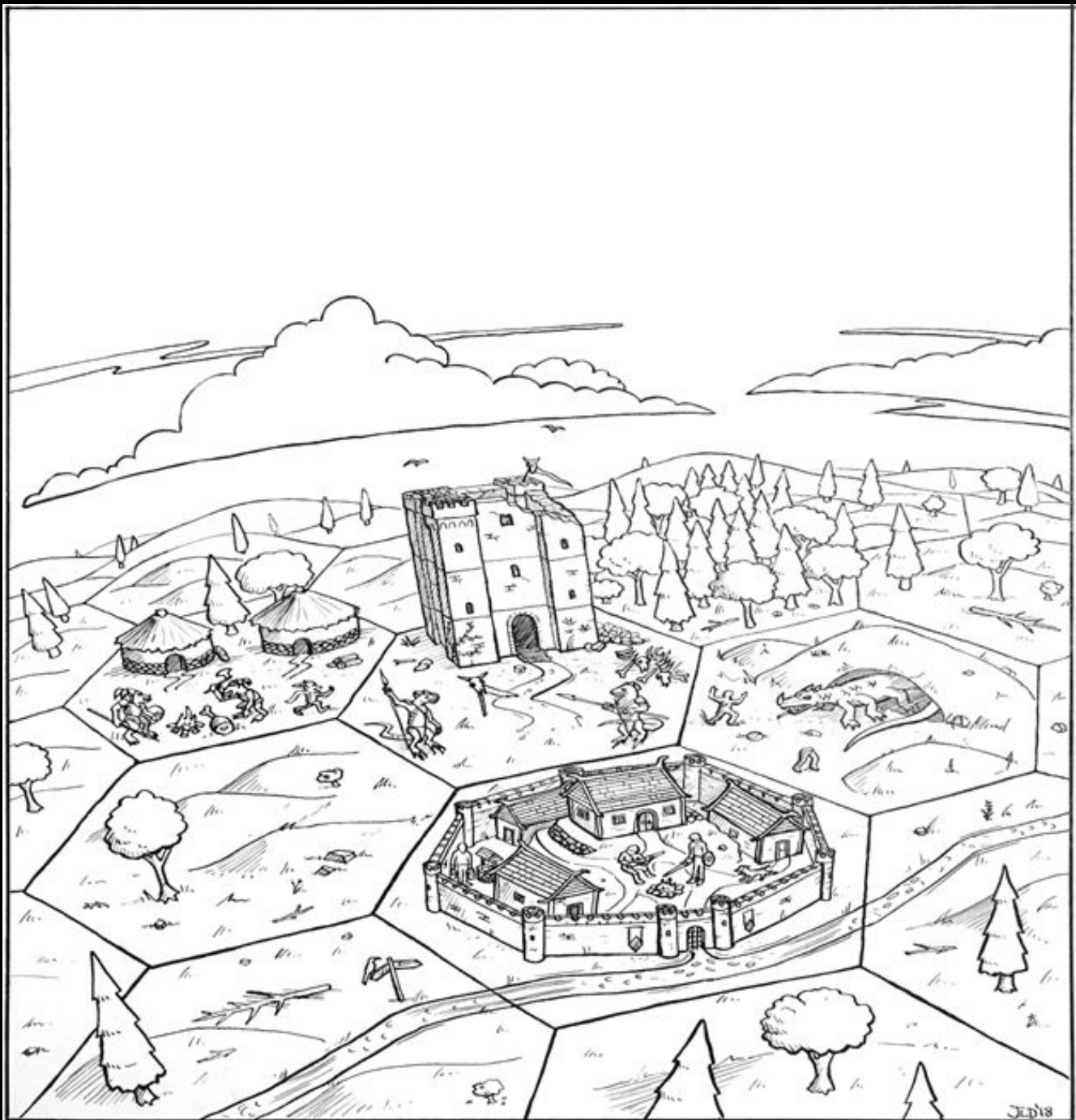


# Populated Hexcrawl Series: Hexcrawl Basics



Todd Leback

DESIGNED FOR USE WITH

**OLD-SCHOOL  
ESSENTIALS**

# Hexcrawl Basics

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## Scale

The scale represented on the maps included in this product are as follows:

- ❖ Large hex = 6 miles, face to face.
- ❖ Subhex = 1.2 miles, face to face.

## Populated Hexes

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## Hexcrawl Basics

There's a ton of literature out there – both published and on the internet – dealing with hexcrawling. But there is precious little information on how to mechanically run a hexcrawl. This publication is meant to go hand in hand with the *Populated Hexes* releases and provide a general guideline as to how to run a hexcrawl in play. Look for additional titles with the *Populated Hexcrawl Series* tagline to expand on these basic rules.

## What is Hexcrawling?

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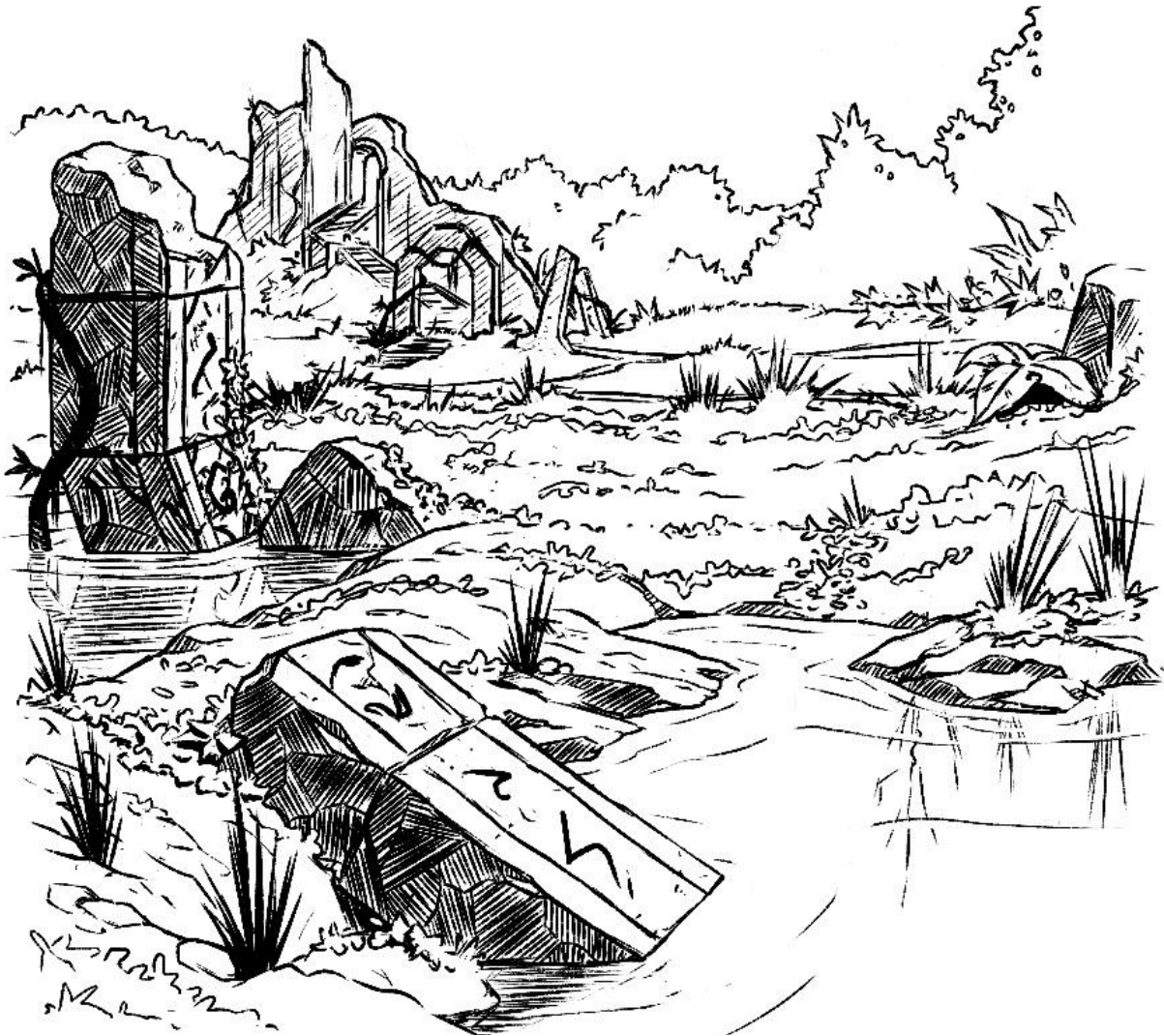
Hexcrawling is a type of exploration that takes place in an outdoor setting. While there may be ruined cities, moldering tombs, and forgotten

dungeons to explore, the most basic form of exploration in a hexcrawl is simply setting out to discover what interesting (and valuable!) things there are within a given chunk of land.

## References

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This product assumes the use of the *Old School Essentials* rules by Necrotic Gnome, but does occasionally make reference to other OSR products. Wherever possible, they will be cited as needed so you do not have to purchase additional rules systems.



## Hexes

These supplements assume a 6-mile hex. As pointed out in the article [In Praise of the 6 Mile Hex](#), The Hydra's Grotto notes the 6-mile hex has many built in advantages, as follows:

- ❖ The hex is 6 miles face to face and 7 miles vertex to vertex.
  - ❖ Half the distance of a 6-mile hex (3 miles), is approximately the distance a person can see to the horizon on, say, a large flat lake. (As a general rule of thumb a person can see a distance in miles equal to the square root of their height times 1.22.)
- ❖ The template used herein breaks down each six mile hex into five smaller hexes (sub-hexes), from face to face. This means that each sub-hex is 1.2 miles from face to face.

## Hex Size

Each 6-mile hex contains approximately 31 square miles, while each 1.5 mile sub-hex contains roughly 1.9 square miles. That's a lot of land in a single 6-mile hex! The assumption of the *Populated Hexes* series is that each six-mile hex contains a random number of points of interest. This includes both monster



lair and features that the adventurers can discover through exploration of a hex.

It is, of course, perfectly fine to use hexes with a different scale other than 6 miles. Hexes of 5 and 8 miles are both common sizes that are used in gaming. It's a trivial matter to adjust these guidelines to different sized hexes.

## Hex Travel & Exploration

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There are two different types of wilderness travel; through a hex and within a hex.

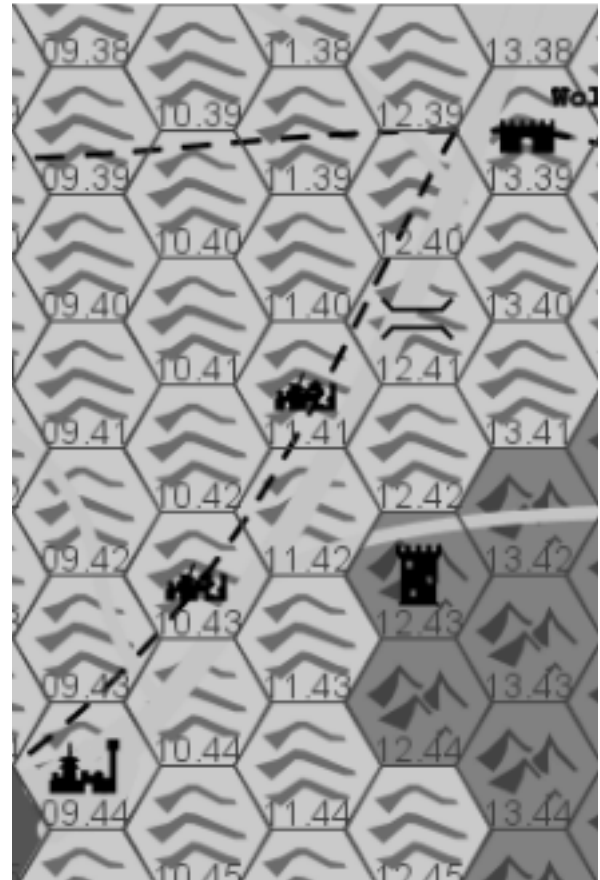
### Traveling Through a Hex

Traveling through a hex is pretty straightforward and uses the movement rate modifier for whatever the hex's terrain type is. As a general rule, travel is either in a relatively straight line or following some feature of the terrain: a trail, a creek, the ridge of a mountain range, etc. The rules for wilderness exploration can be found in the "Adventuring→Wilderness Adventuring" section of *Old School Essentials*.

It's also relatively easy to figure out the distance it takes to travel straight through a hex. If the party is following a road, river, or ridgeline, find that feature on the map and trace its path. Remember that the hex measures six miles from face to face and seven miles from vertex to vertex.

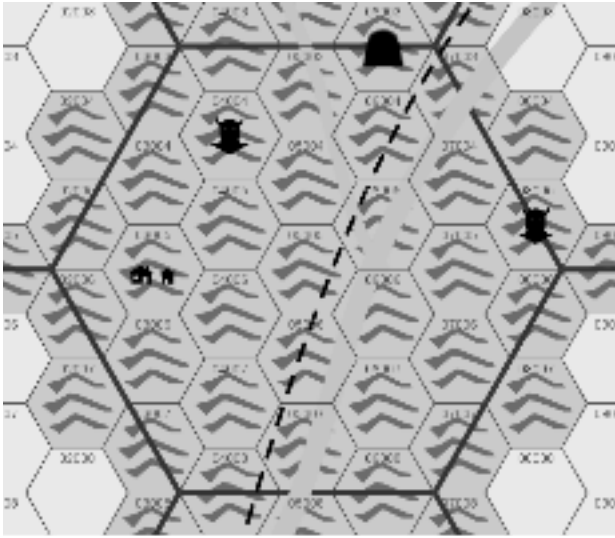
Other distances can be eyeballed pretty easily. If the party is not following a predefined feature – if they're trying to get from point A to point B across a tract of wilderness – it's easy to take the campaign map and trace a straight line, or very nearly so.

Figuring out what lies along the path is also simple by dividing each six-mile hex into smaller sub-hexes. The route the adventurers take can be superimposed onto the regular six mile hex to determine what features, if any, are encountered during the travel.



For instance, using the map below, the road following the river crosses through three hexes at the vertex (12.40, 11.41, and 10.43). This means that in each of those hexes, the road is approximately seven miles in length. In four other hexes, the road runs parallel to—and is roughly the same length as—one of the faces on the hex. Since the distance from vertex to vertex is 7 miles, we know that the length of the face is 3.5 miles. Therefore, the length of the road shown below is approximately 35 miles.

Now, let's take one of these hexes—12.40, to be precise—and see what happens when we superimpose a child hex grid over it. Doing so allows us to drill down into the hex with greater detail, and tells us several things, as detailed below.



**Terrain & Visibility.** The terrain is hilly, so visibility is going to be limited to a degree. The adventurers will be aware of any features within their current sub-hex, and because of the hilly terrain can actually see quite far from the tops of hills.

**Features & Encounters.** There aren't any features immediately present along the road. Unless the adventurers can see a feature from the road, or venture off the path, they won't encounter any of the features shown on the map. If the adventurers are simply traveling through this hex on their way to somewhere else it is very likely they will not encounter any of the denizens or features shown here, unless said features are tall enough to see over the hilltops.

### Travel & Exploration Within a Hex

The adventurers can also explore the land within a hex, as opposed to merely passing through the hex. It is assumed that every hex has a certain number of interesting features such as ruined buildings, toppled monuments, caves, and so forth, in addition to monster lairs. Traveling through a hex only reveals those features on the adventurers' direct path; traveling within a hex can uncover all of the secrets it contains.

The amount of time it takes to fully explore a hex is dependent upon the terrain, as follows:

- ❖ **Plains/Grassland/Desert:** 6 sub-hexes per day (four days to explore an entire 6-mile hex), or 1 sub-hex every 80 minutes (1-1/3 hours).
- ❖ **Hills/Broken/Light Forest:** 4 sub-hexes per day (six days to explore an entire 6-mile hex), 1 sub-hex every two hours.
- ❖ **Mountain/Heavy Forest:** 3 sub-hexes per day (eight days to explore an entire 6-mile hex), or 1 sub-hex every 160 minutes (2-2/3 hours).
- ❖ **Jungle/Swamp:** 2 sub-hexes per day (twelve days to explore an entire 6-mile hex), or 1 sub-hex every four hours.

Hex exploration can be sped up by having an aerial spotter:

- ❖ **Plains/Grassland/Desert:** 12 sub-hexes per day (two days to explore an entire 6-mile hex), or one sub-hex every 40 minutes.
- ❖ **Hills/Broken:** 6 sub-hexes per day (four days to explore an entire 6-mile hex), or one sub-hex every 80 minutes.
- ❖ **Forest:** No reduction in time, although tall features that break the tree line or breaks in the tree cover will be spotted automatically.
- ❖ **Mountain:** 4 sub-hexes per day (six days to explore an entire hex), or one sub-hex every two hours.
- ❖ **Jungle/Swamp:** No reduction in time, although tall features that break the tree line or breaks in the tree cover will be spotted automatically.

In order to gain the benefits of an aerial spotter, however, at least three-quarters of the party must be on the ground, whether mounted or on foot. There must, in other words, be boots on the ground. In addition, use the most unfavorable terrain type to determine the overall time; exploring forested hills with aerial surveillance, for instance, won't help speed

anything along because the forest is the worse of the two terrain types.

## Exploring a Hex

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The following assumptions are made when exploring a hex.

**Route.** The party starts exploring wherever they enter the hex, and travel in a manner that allows them to pass from sub-hex to sub-hex in the most efficient manner. Usually this means moving left to right, then left, or up then down, then up. Of course, the party can declare they're exploring the hex in any manner they see fit.

**Discoverability.** Entering a sub-hex is enough to discover whatever feature or lair is to be found within it, unless it is cunningly concealed, invisible or otherwise difficult to perceive. In such cases there should be some condition that must be met for discovering the feature, such as, "The Ossified Pyramid is only visible in the light of a full moon."

**Movement Rate.** The adventurers are moving at a rate generally equivalent to cautious dungeon movement. Thus, they have decent chances to notice tracks, avoid ambushes, and so on.

**Tracks & Spore.** As a general rule, creatures that lair within a given sub-hex will leave signs of their presence in the ring of sub-hexes immediately surrounding their lair.

**Encounter Frequency.** For every day spent searching, roll for random encounters dependent on the terrain.

**Encounter Time.** If the party engages in combat, reduce the number of sub-hexes that can be explored by one, regardless of injuries, for each encounter.

**Camping.** It is assumed that the adventurers camp in the final sub-hex they search for the day. Otherwise, they may, if desired, establish a base camp guarded by mercenaries. A base camp is a stationary location to which the adventurers return every night. It allows the party to fortify a single location to be as defensible as possible, as well as provide a location where any injured can recover from wounds through rest, if needed.

If the party is retreating to a base camp established elsewhere, reduce the number of sub-hexes explored per day by 1. The base camp must either be in the hex being explored or within three miles of that hex.

## Monsters & Clearing a Hex

Characters have a 1 in 6 chance of discovering monster tracks every time they enter a new sub-hex (rolled once for the party, not each character). If a member of the party is an experienced outdoorsman or elf this chance is increased to 1-2 in 6. This assumes that there is a monster lairing within that specific sub-hex, and that the monster can leave some sort of tracks; it serves to give advance warning that a threat may be lurking within.

If a hex is being cleared to found or expand one's domain, the hex must be kept cleared by regular patrols, or empty lairs or suitable features may become inhabited again by monsters (see below). Refer to the supplement *Domain Building* for more information.









## Random Encounters

Each hex has a custom encounter table based upon the number and type of lairs in that hex and surrounding hexes. In order to determine which monsters from adjoining hexes may wander into the current hex you can use the “% in lair” rating (found in [OSRIC](#) and available online at the [OSRIC Wiki](#)) to determine the range, in 6-mile hexes, of various creatures. Simply double the percentage, with each “doubling” indicating another 6-mile hex, until the total is equal to or greater than 100. If doubling the number will produce a number greater than 100%, the monster is only found within the initial hex.

As a general rule, the greater the range of a creature the more likely the given monster type is to be found within an adjacent hex. Hill giants are more likely to be encountered within one adjacent hex than kobolds, since hill giants have a greater range. This is a general rule used to populate random encounter tables.

Large flying or swimming creatures (such as giant eagles, rocs, dragons, etc.) have their ranges doubled to two hexes per interval, instead of one. Large creatures in general, will have a larger range due to their need to find sustenance for themselves.

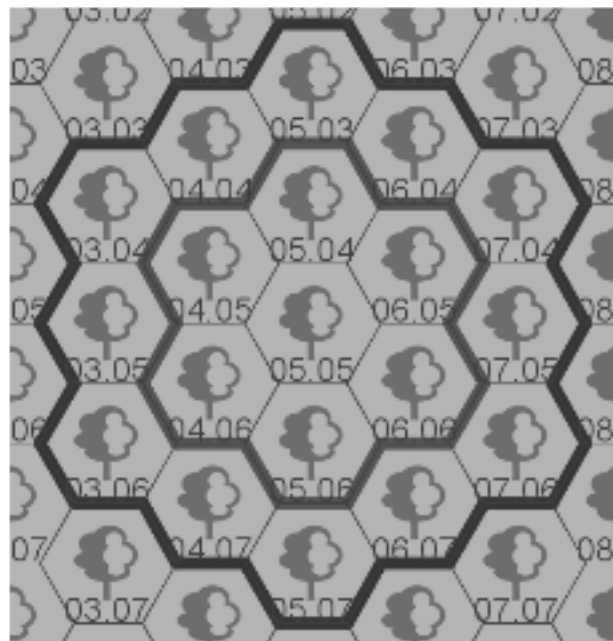
For example, even though a kraken has a 75% chance of being found within its lair, and would typically be found mostly within a single six mile hex, it is a large creature and has its range expanded to a central hex and the surrounding ring.

**Examples**

Kobolds have a 40% chance of being found within their lair (using the Lair Probability numbers in *OSRIC*), meaning that they will certainly appear on the encounter table for the hex their lair appears in. Doubling that chance we get 80%, which means they also have a chance of being encountered in the ring of hexes immediately around that central lair. However, when doubled again we get 160. Subtracting 100 from this number yields 60, which is greater than their base chance, so we know that kobolds from that specific lair will typically just be encountered within their hex, or the ring of hexes immediately adjacent.

However, hill giants have a 25% chance of being found in their lair. Therefore, they'll be found in their own hex, the adjacent ring of hexes (50%), and the ring of hexes adjacent to that (100%).

The base encounter table includes encounters that are either lairing in the given hex, or likely to be encountered in that hex from an adjacent hex. The Secondary Table includes creatures that are still possible to encounter within a hex, but less likely than the standard table.



## Encounter Tables

A sample encounter table may look like this:

1d8	Monster	Notes
1	Goblins	Broken Fang tribe
2	Goblins	Shattered Sun tribe
3	Dire wolves	-
4	Giant eagles	-
5	Spider, black widow	-
6	Antelope, herd	From adjacent hex
7	Giant, hill	From adjacent hex
8	Roll on Secondary Table	

Assume a tribe of kobolds and a tribe of hill giants lair in hex 05.05. The kobolds have a maximum range indicated by the bounds of the blue line and the hill giants have a maximum range indicated by the red lines. Both kobolds and giants will have a roughly equal chance of being encountered within their home hex (05.05), and although both can be encountered in the ring of hexes surrounding 05.05, it is more likely that giants will be encountered, as they have a larger overall range. Only giants (from hex 05.05) will be encountered in the ring of hexes bounded by the red line.

### Restocking Lairs

If a lair is eliminated (those dwelling within are slain or driven away), it results in the specific monster entry being removed from the random encounter table.

Once a lair is cleared there's a chance, assuming it's not secured by the adventurers, of it being repopulated anew. At the end of each month after a lair has been cleared, make a wandering monster check using the given chances for the terrain type. If the result is positive for an encounter, it means that the lair has been repopulated by a randomly determined monster.

Once a lair has been repopulated the monster type is added to the encounter table for that lair. To determine exactly what type of monster resettles a lair, re-roll on the tables for wandering monsters. The *Old School Essentials* rulebooks have tables for random wilderness encounters by terrain.

Unless the monster is humanoid or intelligent and capable of carrying goods, newly settled lairs will possess no treasure. It takes 1d12 months after moving in for a monster to accumulate treasure as given in their treasure type.

## Extended Example

As an example, let's assume a party of adventurers sets out to clear a hex, using the random encounter table just provided. The hex contains five lairs: two goblin tribes, a dire wolf pack, giant eagles, and a black widow spider.

Over a period of a week they wipe out the Broken Fang goblin tribe, the pack of dire wolves and the black widow spiders. This leaves the encounter table for that hex looking like the one in the next column.

If they were to continue to explore the hex (let's assume it's a forested hex), each day there would be a 1-2 in 6 chance of a random encounter, of which a positive result has a 1-5 in 8 chance of leading to an actual encounter (since three of the encounter spaces are empty).

Now, let's assume the party gets distracted by something shiny and spends the next three months pursuing another goal before returning to the partially cleared hex. The referee has been rolling for each cleared lair in secret, once per month, with a result of

1-2 indicating something new has settled in the empty lair. The results are:

- ❖ **Lair One:** 2, so it is resettled a month after being cleared.
- ❖ **Lair Two:** 8, 6, 9, 5, so it remains empty three months on.
- ❖ **Lair Three:** 4, so it, too, is resettled.

1d8	Monster	Notes
1	No encounter	
2	Goblins	Shattered Sun tribe
3	No encounter	
4	Giant eagles	-
5	No encounter	
6	Antelope, herd	From adjacent hex
7	Giant, hill	From adjacent hex
8	Roll on Secondary Table	

To restock our two empty lairs we roll 1d8 twice and compare the result to the "Woods" table. The rolls are 7 and 3: dragon and insect, respectively. This refers us to following tables of those monster types and moving on to those we roll a 7 (for dragon) and 12 (for insect). A result of 12 indicates a giant tarantula spider, and the 7 indicates a white dragon. We decide to re-roll the result, since it doesn't fit the terrain type, and get an 11, indicating a wyvern.

When our adventurers return to the hex they had cleared over three months prior they may be surprised to discover that a wyvern has taken over the former village of the Broken Fang goblins, and a family of tarantula spiders now nests in the former black widow lair!

## Optional Rules

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Below are several optional and variant rules that can be used to personalize how often encounters or specific monsters occur, as well as guidance for adding new tomes of monsters into the mix when creating your encounter tables. Not everyone relies on the monsters found in only a single rulebook!

### Adding New Sources of Monsters

When rolling on the wilderness encounter tables to determine the actual type of monster, considering rolling a larger sized die. The tables in *OSE* generally use 1d12, but if you use a larger die, results beyond 12 can be used to reference other tomes of monsters a referee may have access to.

For example, this author uses 1d16 instead of 1d12. Results of 13-15 indicate a monster from another source, such as [Advanced Edition Companion for Labyrinth Lord](#), or *OSRIC*, or one of the excellent third-party sources floating around. A result of 16 indicates a unique (and usually very powerful) monster or NPC.

### Rarer Dragons

Referees are, of course, free to modify the wilderness encounter tables as desired to produce the lairs they want. This is especially useful when you have access to published adventures or encounters that can be incorporated into the campaign setting. Additionally, this gives leeway for making certain types of monsters more or less rare.

For instance, this author has adopted a house rule from another referee called “Double Dragons,” which serves to reduce the frequency of dragons. If the result of the initial 1d8 roll indicates a dragon, roll again. If the second roll also indicates a dragon, then roll on the Dragon sub-table. Otherwise, use the new result to determine the type of monster encountered instead.



## Encounter Frequency

The core *OSE* rules state that encounters should be checked for once per day, though it suggests changing this frequency as high as four times per day. Many referees roll for random encounters twice per day: once during the day and once during the night.

*OSE* normally uses 1d6 to determine random encounters, but some referees may prefer to use 1d12 to add a little more granularity.

### Random Encounter Chances (1d12)

Terrain	Day	Night
City	1-4	1-3
Clear, Grasslands, Ocean	1-3	1-2
Desert, Hills, Forest, River	1-4	1-2
Jungle, Mountains, Swamp	1-6	1-3
Badlands, Marsh, Moors	1-5	1-2

## Encounter Distance

When a random encounter is indicated, or the party enters a sub-hex containing a lair, the referee should determine the distance at which the encounter occurs prior to anything else. Encounter distance is covered in *OSE*'s Adventuring chapter, in the Encounters section.

For a little more variety, referees might have the terrain type determine the distance at which an encounter normally occurs, as detailed below. At night halve the given distance. The referee should use their best judgment when an encounter occurs. A party standing atop a hill can see for many miles around and down the slopes into the valleys surrounding, but they won't be able to see what is on the side of the next hill opposite them.

### **Plains/Fields/Grasslands/Flat Desert.**

1d10x100 yards. Settlements and creatures over 10' tall visible from 3 miles away.

**Mountains/Hills.** 4d6x10 yards. Settlements and creatures over 10' tall visible at three times this distance.

**Marsh/Badlands.** 2d6x10 yards. Settlements and creatures over 10' tall visible at twice this distance.

**Light Forest.** 6d10 yards. Settlements and creatures over 10' tall visible at twice this distance.

**Heavy Forest/Jungle.** 6d6 yards. Settlements and large creatures visible at 1.5 times this distance.







## Features & Lairs

Every six-mile hex is going to contain between 1-6 features and 1-6 lairs.

**Features.** Features are points of interest calling out to be explored. They can include dungeons, rivers, an area of differing terrain, a resource to exploit, a graveyard, abandoned dwellings, natural hazards, and much more. As a general rule, there will be only one feature per sub-hex, although a feature can (and often does!) share the same sub-hex as a lair.

Like lairs, features are discovered upon entering a given sub-hex, although some features, such as a grove of trees on a flat prairie, can be seen some distance away.

**Lairs.** Lairs are permanent or semi-permanent settlements of predominantly one type of monster. A lair is considered to be distinct from an actual dungeon, although some creatures may lair in a dungeon-like environment

### Water

Water is one feature that deserves special notice. When water appears as a feature, it is because there is something about it to engage the adventurers. Otherwise, it is safe to assume that any given hex has a certain number of water sources such as springs, creeks, etc. Tropical regions will have multiple water sources in a given sub-hex; temperate regions will have at least one water source every hex, and often at least one source per sub-hex; and arid hexes may have only one source of water every two, three or even ten hexes!

Typically, you shouldn't make the characters track water in tropical or temperate climates; in arid climates they most certainly must make sure to be carrying enough water (one gallon per day for humans) in order to survive.

## Entering a Sub-hex with a Lair

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Whenever the adventurers enter a sub-hex containing a lair, they will automatically discover it. The main question at this point is whether the inhabitants of the lair discover the adventurers at the same time! The referee should determine a couple of things in advance, though. First, are the inhabitants of the lair intelligent enough to post guards, spotters or some sort of early warning system? Second, how many of the inhabitants are presently in the lair?

### Alertness & Guards

The first question is pretty easy to answer: humans and humanoids that lair in large groups will almost always post guards or have some sort of early detection system, while intelligent creatures that lair in small groups – giants, dragons, etc. – will either have some

manner of trap to alert them to the presence of an intruder or will often have others stand guard for them. If there are guards posted it is a safe assumption to make that the first encounter will be between the party and the guards, unless suitable precautions are taken.

Creatures of less intelligence than, say, goblins, will most often not post guards.

Once it is determined how many creatures are in the lair (see the next section), the referee needs to roll to see if the inhabitants are aware of the adventurers' presence. A modified surprise roll is made for both groups using 1d6, with the following modifications:

- ❖ If the party has more than ten members add +1 to the roll.
- ❖ If more than half the party is mounted add +1 to the roll.
- ❖ If the monster has guards posted add +1 to the roll.
- ❖ If the monster has taken pains to hide their lair subtract -1 from the party's result.
- ❖ If the adventurers are aware that there is an encounter nearby (they are following tracks, have been alerted by other nearby monsters, etc) add +1 to the party's roll.
- ❖ If the lair is exceptionally large, such as an entire village of goblins, or a lair of giants, add +1 to the party's roll.
- ❖ If the "party" consists of one or two advance scouts trained used to moving through the wilderness the monsters suffer a -1 penalty.
- ❖ Do not add Dexterity modifiers to the roll.
- ❖ If the inhabitants are sensitive to light and the encounter occurs during the day, apply a -1 penalty to the inhabitant's roll. If the encounter occurs at night and the inhabitants can see in the dark subtract -1 from the party's roll.

As with normal surprise rolls a given side is surprised on a result of 1-2. Use the encounter distance table by terrain to determine when a lair is first "seen" (and surprise can first occur). Note that lairs are often much larger – and much more obvious – than a group of monsters, so are often apparent at two or three times the given distances.

### Lair Probability

To answer the second question we use the Lair Probability numbers (again, using *OSRIC*). Roll as normal, and if the result of the roll indicates that the monster is in the lair then all of the inhabitants will be discovered in their lair.

### Where Are They Now?

If the result indicates they are not in their lair refer below. The referee should, of course, use their best judgment when determining if any inhabitants are currently in the lair. If young are present it is unlikely the lair will be completely abandoned.

**Herd & Pack Animals.** If the inhabitants are herd animals or monsters that travel in packs, assume the lair is empty (such as wolves, or hellhounds).

**Humanoids.** Humans and humanoids will rarely entirely abandon their lair. Roll 1d8. On a result of 1 the lair will be completely empty, otherwise there will be a percentage of monsters remaining equal to the result of the roll x 10%.

**Powerful Monster Organization.** If the inhabitants are powerful monsters that appear in small numbers (dragon-kin, giant-kin, etc.) roll 1d6. On the result of a 1-5 all of the monsters are absent, otherwise only 50% of the number will be absent.

**Small Group Organization.** If the inhabitants congregate in small numbers or are, vermin, bugs or other unintelligent monsters roll 1d8. On the result of 1-3 the lair will be empty, otherwise there will be a number of monsters left equal to the roll x 10%.



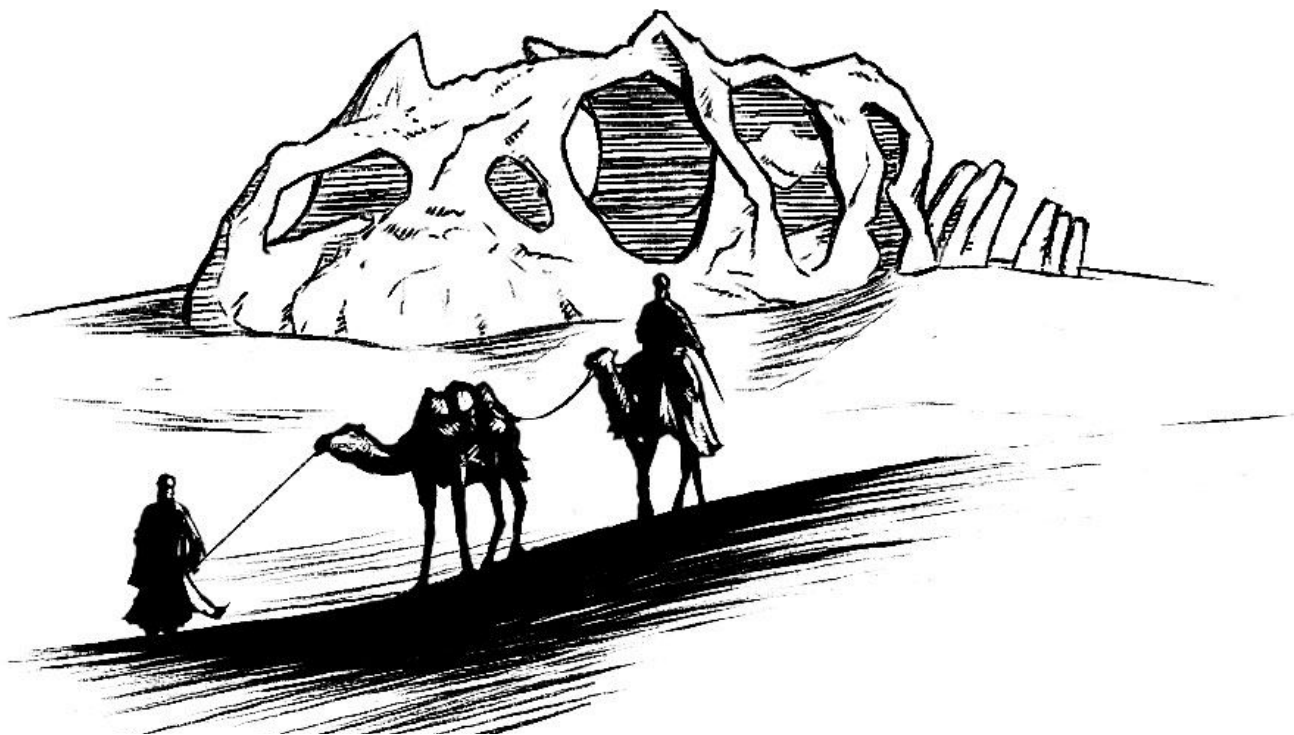
**Solo Monsters.** If there is but a single inhabitant the lair is empty. Note that intelligent monsters rarely leave their lair unguarded for any significant amount of time.

### Returning Monsters

Absent monsters will return as follows, rolling 1d6: 1 in 1d4 turns, 2-3 in 1d4 hours, 4-5 in 3d4 hours, 6 in 1d4 days.

### Example

The party enters a sub-hex containing a goblin village with 32 inhabitants. Goblins, according to *OSRIC*, will be found in their lair 40% of the time. The referee rolls 1d100 and gets an 80; the goblins are not in their lair. However, goblins are intelligent, so the referee now rolls 1d8, and gets a 4. 40% of the goblins (13) are still in the village, while the remainder are absent.



## Getting Lost

Assuming the party has a mapper and is keeping track of their location, they will not get lost if:

- ❖ They are following a path, trail or other landmark (such as a river).
- ❖ They have successfully traveled over the terrain in question previously.

Otherwise, if the adventurers are traveling through hexes, roll for the standard chances of getting lost, as per the rules in the following sections of the Adventuring chapter of *Old School Essentials*:

- ❖ "Hazards and Challenges"
- ❖ "Wilderness Adventuring"
- ❖ "Waterborne Adventuring"

Getting lost while exploring within a hex, however, is slightly different. Once per day of exploration, the referee rolls for the chance of getting lost based on the terrain they will be traveling through. If the adventurers are traveling through more than one type of terrain roll for the terrain that has the greatest chance of getting lost.

### Chance of Getting Lost (1d6)

Terrain	Lost	Delayed
Plains	1	2
Mountains, Hills, Forest, Sea	1-2	3-4
Desert, Jungle, Swamp	1-3	4-5

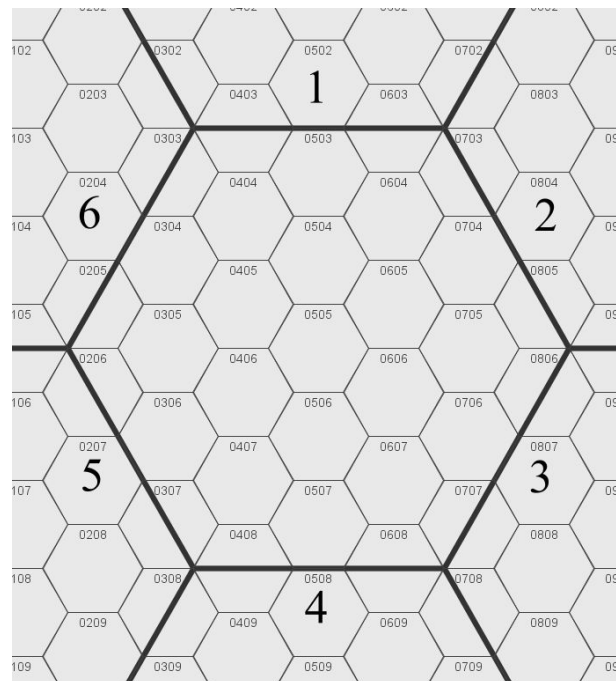
### Example

The party is exploring a hex and will be traveling through sub-hexes contain forests and swamps. There's a 1-4 chance of getting lost or delayed in the forest, and a 1-5 chance of getting lost or delayed in the swamp. Use the greater chance of getting lost. The referee rolls 1d6. On a result of 1-3 the adventurers become lost; on a result of 4-5 they're merely delayed. Either way, the first thing to do is determine when the party becomes lost.

The following modifiers can be used to adjust the chances of getting lost:

- ❖ If fleeing (p. 116, OSE) add +1 to the chance of getting lost.
- ❖ If the party has aerial support -- and in terrain without heavy tree-cover -- reduce the chance to get lost and delayed by 1 each.
- ❖ If the party has a native to the territory acting as a guide reduce the chance of each by 1.
- ❖ If the character has an appropriate background \*or\* you're using a skill system and they have the appropriate skill (like navigation) reduce the chance of getting lost by 1.
- ❖ If the character has some means of determining direction reduce the chance of getting lost by 1.

As a general rule, getting lost and being delayed can be caused by separate factors; it is possible for an expert navigator to be delayed based upon local terrain or conditions.



If the party becomes lost or delayed roll to determine when they get lost: either roll 1d8 to determine the hour they become lost, or a die corresponding to the number of sub-hexes to be explored. If lost, the party loses the path and heads in a randomly determined direction for 1d8 hours (less the time already traveled in the day). To determine the direction the party goes in assign each face hex a number from 1 to 6, calling the one to the north "1" and continuing clockwise; this is shown in the illustration. Roll 1d6 and assume the adventurers travel in the given direction.

## Being Lost

When lost, the adventurers travel at their normal rate and will often not note they are lost until they either encounter a known feature or roll successfully (see below). Every time a new sub-hex is entered roll 1d6 to determine which way they head. Getting lost while exploring a hex isn't necessarily a huge problem: the party is still exploring sub-hexes, although there's a



good chance they mistakenly label the sub-hexes

The chance to get lost is rerolled each day to determine if they remain lost. If the new result is "Lost" again, they stay lost until they encounter a new feature or roll well enough to avoid getting lost on their daily roll.

If the result on the new roll is "Delay," the party is delayed for the given amount of time. They then make a new roll to determine if they remain lost or not; the chance to remain lost is equal to the sum of "Getting Lost" and "Being Delayed."

### Example

A group of adventurers are traveling through forested hexes and will get lost on a roll of 1-2 and delayed on a roll of 3-4. The referee rolls a 1, so the party becomes lost. They begin wandering off in a direction determined by rolling 1d6. They are wandering in unfamiliar territory, so will not come across any known landmarks, and spend the rest of the day going in the wrong direction.

The next day the referee rolls again to determine if they get lost or delayed, using the same chances, and gets a 3: Delayed. Once they're able to find their way around the obstacle, the referee rolls to see if they remain lost. They will remain lost on a roll of 1-4, which is the sum of the two chances. The referee rolls a 5, and the party realizes they've been traveling in the wrong direction.

Simply realizing that the party is lost does not impart knowledge of how to get back on track, nor reveal for how long they have been traveling in the wrong direction. It is up to the adventurers to figure out how to get back on the right track!

### Getting Delayed

A result of "Delayed" simply means that the local terrain is such that it impedes progress

for a time: steep ravines, impenetrable undergrowth, etc. The adventurers know where they are, and where they're trying to go, but it takes them a while to figure out how to get there. Roll to determine which sub-hex causes the delay (as with getting lost). The length of delay is as follows and based on terrain:

### Delay by Terrain

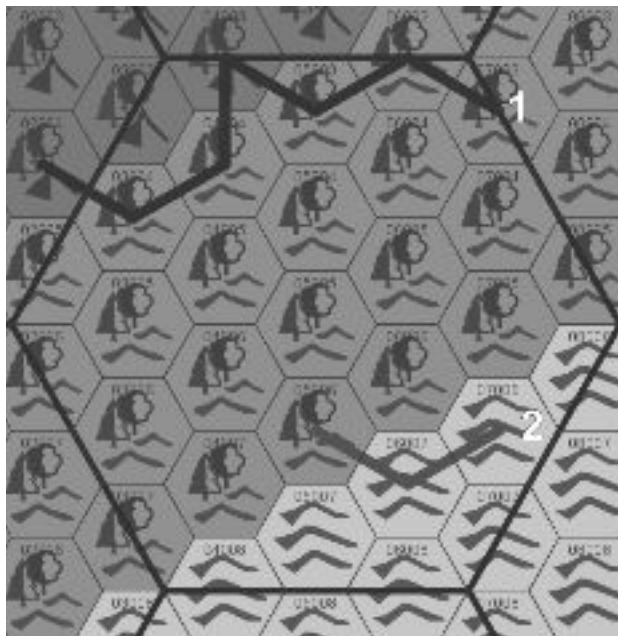
Terrain	Length of Delay
Plains, Light Forest	1d2 hours
Hills, Badlands, Marsh, Heavy Forest	1d4 hours
Mountains, Desert	1d6 hours
Swamp, Jungle	1d8 hours

If a member of the party is woods-wise and familiar with the terrain type being traversed, the delay is reduced by one hour, to a minimum of one hour. Once the sub-hex has been mapped the obstacle causing the delay will be accounted for and will no longer pose a problem.

A sub-hex might also have a "Delay" as a feature; use the same rules when they occur. The only difference is that they have been placed, as opposed to being random.

### Aerial Support

If the party has an aerial spotter there's a flat 1% chance of getting lost and half the given chance of being delayed, regardless of terrain, provided there is no tree-cover heavier than "Light Forest" to conceal the party on the ground.



## Extended Example

The party is exploring a hex of primarily wooded hills and mountains. They start in sub-hex 703, expecting to cover four sub-hexes per day. They are by themselves, without a guide, following the northern path on the map (refer to the red line labeled "1").

Based on the table above, there's a 1-2 chance of getting lost and a 3-4 chance of being delayed. The referee rolls a 1, so the party gets lost. The referee then rolls 1d8 to determine during which hour they get lost (a full sub-hex takes two hours to explore, a half sub-hex, such as 703 and 603, takes one hour). The result is a 3, which means they get lost in the middle of exploring sub-hex 503, or three hours into the day.

The referee rolls 1d6 to determine which way they go and gets a 6. The party heads northwest and explore the mountainous sub-hex 403; so far so good, as that's the hex they would likely explore, anyway. However, the referee decides that they explore the entire sub-hex, instead of just half, and that it takes two and two-thirds hours to do so (due to the terrain). They have now spent five and

two-thirds hours exploring. The next 1d6 roll is a 3, so they head straight south into sub-hex 404. It takes two hours to explore this hex, and the party ends up camping in this hex for the night.

The following day, the referee rolls a 3, for the result of "Delay." According to the above table hills cause a delay of 1d4 hours, and the result is a 4. They spend 4 hours working their way out of a vexing box canyon. Rolling percentile again the referee gets a 12, so the party stays lost for the rest of the day.

After making their way out of the box canyon they go southwest, into sub-hex 304 (taking two hours to explore it), and then veer northwest back into the mountains and sub-hex 204. There they camp for the night. In the morning the percentile roll is 5, so the party realizes they're lost.

Several days later the party is in the south of the hex, finishing up their explorations (blue line, labeled "2"). Again, it takes two hours to explore a hex. The referee rolls percentile and gets a 3; the party is Delayed! Rolling 1d8 results in a 3 and determines the delay occurs in the middle of searching sub-hex 607. Rolling 1d4, the referee determines the delay lasts for 2 hours, and decides they end up riding into a maze of valleys between the hills, and must spend two hours figuring out where they are. Five hours in total have elapsed since they've started, and they'll only be able to explore a total of three sub-hexes. However, they've now mapped the confusing terrain and can avoid it – or navigate it – in the future.



## Random Weather

Adding randomly generated weather to your hexcrawl makes it both a more realistic experience and provides an opportunity to add a layer of complication to the adventurers' plans. See the *Random Weather Generation* release for a more detailed system useful for hexcrawl campaign play.

It is recommended to generate weather for a block of time in advance of play. Doing so allows the Referee to include portents of impending weather ("as dusk approaches the sky begins to darken as a heavy cloud cover rolls in from the north, bringing with it a noticeable drop in temperature) as well as make it easier to actually incorporate while playing.

The weather should have an impact on play; rain is going to reduce visibility, potentially erase monster tracks, make the ground slippery during fights, etc. A cloudy day might allow beastmen such as goblins to operate during the day without penalty.

Traveling by air will likely be inadvisable during a thunderstorm, or during extremely cold weather.

## Weather Generation

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The steps to generate random weather per day are as follows (this assumes a temperate climate):

### Step One: Daily Outlook

Roll 1d20. A result of 1-12 indicates a sunny day, 13-20 a cloudy day. A result of 1 or 20 indicates unusual weather. See below.

### Step Two: Chance of Precipitation

Roll 1d20. If the initial result was for a sunny day it will rain at some point during the day on a result of 17-20 (15-20 during the spring). If the initial result was cloudy it will rain on a result of 13-20.

### Step 3: Precipitation Severity

Roll 1d20 and compare to Table 1, below. Roll 1d24 (or use a random number generator) to determine when the precipitation start (1 being 1 am, 2 being 2 am, etc.)

#### Precipitation Severity

1d20	Event	Duration
1	Storm, violent	6d6 hours
2-4	Storm, moderate	6d6 hours
5-7	Storm, mild	6d6 hours
8	Storm, violent	1d6 hours
9-11	Storm, moderate	1d6 hours
12-14	Storm, mild	1d6 hours
15	Storm, violent	3d20 minutes
16-18	Storm, moderate	3d20 minutes
19-20	Storm, mild	3d20 minutes

**Mild Storms.** Mild storms have a 10% of lightning and a 10% chance of high winds (4d6 mph). Increase these chances by 15% during the summer.

**Moderate Storms.** Moderate storms have a 25% of lightning and a 30% chance of high winds (8d6 mph). There is an additional 5% chance of hail (warm weather) or sleet (cold weather). Increase the chances of lightning and high winds by 15% during the summer.

**Violent Storms.** Violent storms have a 50% chance of lightning and 60% chance of high winds (8d20 mph). There is an additional 10% of hail (warm weather) or sleet (cold weather). Increase the chances of lightning and high winds by 15% in the summer.



### Step 4: Unusual Weather

If the initial result was a 1 or 20 roll 1d6:

- ❖ A result of 1-2 indicates unseasonably warm or hot temperatures, lasting for 1d8 days.
- ❖ A result of 3-4 indicates unseasonably cool or cold temperatures, lasting for 1d8 days.
- ❖ A result of 5-6 indicates an unusual event, such as a tornado, rain of blood or frogs, eclipse, meteor shower, etc.



## Hexcrawling in Action

When it comes down to bringing all of this together, the order of operations is as follows:

**Step One: Destination & Path.** The adventurers define which areas they're going to search, and the approximate route they want to take.

**Step Two: Travel Time by Terrain.** The referee determines the weather, and how long it will take to explore each sub-hex based on terrain type.

**Step Three: Random Encounters & Getting Lost.** The referee rolls for random encounters and chances of getting lost. If a random encounter occurs, the party gets lost, or they face a delay, determine which sub-hex it occurs in and what the encounter is with.

**Step Four: Spore.** As the adventurers explore each sub-hex roll to see if they notice signs of the presence of monsters in nearby sub-hexes.

**Step Five: Features & Lairs.** As the adventurers enter each sub-hex they

automatically encounter any features or lairs within the sub-hex

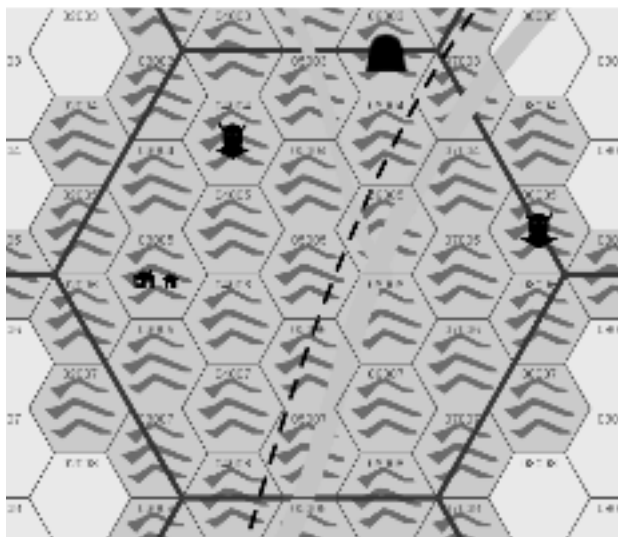
**Step Six: Passing Through or Exploring?** If the adventurers are just traveling through then only the land immediately surrounding their path is mapped. If they're exploring within it the hex is considered mapped once all of the sub-hexes have been physically explored. At this point the adventurers learn the number of resources within a hex as well as their approximate value; this is important in regards to the *Domain Building* publication.

**Step Seven: Clearing a Hex.** A hex is cleared once all lairs within a hex have been killed, driven off or reasoned with.

## An Extended Example

Let's take a sub-hex and see how everything comes together. We'll use some of the optional rules for encounter frequency (see Chapter 2). Use the map below as a reference.





### Step One: Destination & Path

The party decides to fully explore hex 12.40 and clear it to add to their growing domain. The referee determines it will take about eight days to fully explore: hills can be explored at a rate of 4 sub-hexes per day, plus a couple of extra days to allow for encounters.

### Step Two: Travel Time by Terrain

The referee then rolls for weather for nine days, getting the following results on the following table.

On a sweltering hot day, the adventurers start their exploration of hex 14.20, beginning with sub-hex 703 and working their way west. Since they can explore four sub-hexes per day, the referee knows each sub-hex takes about two hours to explore.

Day	Weather
1	The referee rolls a 1: unusual weather! They then roll 1d6 and get a 2, which results in unusually warm weather lasting 2 days.
2	An 8, then a 7. Clear, no rain. Last day of heat wave.
3	An 18, then a 19. Cloudy, rain. Moderate storm lasting 45 minutes (result was 46, but we rounded down), starting at 2:00 pm. No lightning, no high winds.
4	5 and a 5. Clear, no rain.
5	17 then a 6. Cloudy, no rain.
6	11, 15. Clear, no rain.
7	8, 17. Clear, with rain. Mild storm lasting 6 hours, starting at 9:00 pm
8	11, 5. Clear, no rain.
9	18, 5. Cloudy, no rain.

### Step Three: Random Encounters & Getting Lost

Before the adventurers take off, the referee rolls for a random encounter (encounters occur in hilly terrain on a result of 1-4 out of 12) and gets a 12, for no random encounter.

### Step Four: Spore

The referee knows there's a monster lair in the next sub-hex (603), so they secretly roll 1d6 to see if the adventurers pick up on monster tracks in the first sub-hex and gets a 2. Since they've hired a guide familiar with the local terrain that's a success, and the guide points out tracks belonging to several grizzly bears.

### Step Five: Features & Lairs

They enter the next hex with some care, and sure enough before too long discover a cave in a hillside! Since it takes two hours to explore a sub-hex, and this is the second partial sub-hex they've explored, the encounter occurs during the second hour of exploration.

The referee now rolls to see if the bears are in their lair. Referring to *OSRIC*, we see that brown bears have only a 10% chance of being discovered in their lair. Rolling 1d100, the referee gets a 6, which means they are present in their lair! Next, they determine if anyone is surprised: the adventurers, alert to the potential presence of bears, gain a +1 bonus to their roll. Since the adventurers are mounted the bears also gain a +1 bonus. The referee rolls in secret again for both sides, getting a 4 and a 3, meaning that neither side is surprised. Finally, they must determine how far away the lair is when it is seen. Since this is hilly terrain we know that encounters take place at a distance of 4d6x10 yards, or 170 yards, as the result is a 17.

### Encounter!

At this point the encounter begins as a normal encounter, with the referee making a reaction roll. They decide that since grizzlies are more aggressive than normal bears and are encountered in their lair that the check is made with a +2 penalty. Luckily for the adventurers, the roll is a 4, yielding a modified result of 6. The bears are uninterested in the adventurers, and the players decide that this is one lair they will take note of but not deal with at the time being.

### Step Six: Passing Through or Exploring?

The party moves on and explore sub-hexes 503, 403 (half hex), 303 (half hex) and 404. Since there's a monster lair in hex 404 and they've got a guide with them, there's a 1-2 in 6 chance per sub-hex that they encounter tracks from the lair in hex 404. The referee rolls a 6, 3



and 5, meaning they have no advance warning of the lair. This is the last hex of the day, which means the encounter occurs approximately 7 hours into the exploration.

The encounter then proceeds and is resolved as normal (with combat or parley). They camp, any random encounters are rolled for at night, and they pick up where they left off in the morning.

This continues until the adventurers either completely explore the hex, finding all of the features and lairs within, or they get pulled into some other plot thread or quest!

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