Unhex

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Intro

Why this game?

This is a tactical tabletop roleplaying game that doesn't depend on hex or square grid maps for interesting positional decisions. The rules should fit in your head. Actions are resolved with a single roll to determine success, including damage and hit location. You only have a single target number to keep track of, and no modifiers.

Materials

- Pencils

- Paper

- Printouts of the character sheet at the end of the book, or more blank paper

- Percentile dice. You need separate dice for the tens and ones digits, not a 100 sided die.

- If you're playing online, some way to share a basic drawing. I like excalidraw.com

Participants

You need 2-5 people. One person is the Game Moderator (GM), the other players each create and control a Player Character (PC).

Players make decisions for their PCs. The GM is responsible for making decisions for all Non-Player Characters (NPCs). The GM isn't the author of the story, but they keep the story interesting by challenging the players.

Meta

More specific rules override general rules. When timing matters and is not otherwise specified, out of combat the PC decides, in combat the side with initiative decides. There's no division in this game, so don't worry about rounding. 'You' may refer to you as a player or your character, it should be clear from context. If a rule is unclear, the GM decides, but please file an issue at https://github.com/koeninger/unhex/issues and I'll clarify.

Characters

Decide on a concept, a name, and a description, then fill in your character sheet.

Level

Your level is your basic percentage chance of success when rolling dice. Your current and **max** level start at 50, and are tracked separately on your character sheet. The word 'level' by itself always refers to current level unless prefixed with **max**.

Your level can decrease when you're hurt in combat and increase when you rest. It cannot increase higher than your **max** level. If it reaches zero, you're unconscious.

Abilities

Abilities give you different beneficial special rules. You start with one non-combat ability and one combat ability.

Items

You start with 5 slots for combat related Items. The number and type of non-combat items you can have are up to you, as long as the GM agrees. You can change or replace items when you rest.

Use the top slot(s) on the sheet for the items you typically want in your hands at the start of combat. Items will specify whether they require one or two hands. I'm assuming humanlike physiology, if you want to play an octopus work it out with the GM.

Advancement

All players' **max** level increases by 1 at the end of a session if they achieved their goal for that session. Near the beginning of a session the players should agree on a single goal collectively. The GM may set the scene, and may warn players when a goal isn't likely to be achieveable by the end of a session, but may not choose a goal for the players.

When your level increases to a number ending in 5 you get another slot for items. At level 55 you can have up to 6 combat related items, at level 65 up to 7, etc.

When your level increases to a number ending in 0 you choose another ability. At level 60 you can choose a second combat or non-combat ability, at level 70 another, etc.

Your **max** level cannot increase beyond 99.

Rolling dice

When a result is uncertain, roll dice to see what happens. Don't roll dice unless there's potential for both success and failure to have interesting consequences. Once consequences have been decided, don't keep re-trying for a different result.

Basic rolls

Roll percentile dice. Equal to or under your level is a success. Over your level is a failure. 00 on one die and 0 on the other die is read as one hundred, not zero.

Degrees of success

In some situations, how successful you are is more interesting than just a binary success or failure. In that case, higher successful rolls are better. In other words, rolling exactly equal to your level is the best you can do.

In some situations, there may be two separate degrees of success. In that case, you pick which die is used for which. Each die indicates a degree of success from zero to nine. Higher is usually better. For instance, in combat after a successful attack you pick one die for damage, and the other for hit location.

Critical rolls

If you roll doubles, i.e. the tens die and ones die match, it's a critical, meaning the effect of success or failure is magnified. Rolling exactly equal to your level is also a critical success. Rolling one hundred is critical failure.

If you roll a critical success, choose one of the following options, *not both*:

1. Take the result shown and gain another action. In other words, if you keep rolling critical successes, you can keep taking actions.

2. *Or* adjust the dice to any number equal to or under your level. If you rolled exactly your level, you can adjust the dice to any number equal to or under your **max** level, and it is still treated as a success.

If you roll a critical failure, something especially bad happens. Out of combat, the GM decides. In combat there are some specific options, but the default is that you lose your next action.

Good rolls

If you are **good** at the action you're rolling for, usually due to an [ability](#), you may re-roll one or both dice after seeing the initial result. You must keep the second result. You cannot re-roll one die, see the result, and then re-roll the other. If you're playing online using a die-rolling app, be sure to specify up front whether you're rerolling the ones or tens die. You can get a critical success on a re-roll. Critical failures cannot be re-rolled.

Opposed rolls

In some situations characters' actions directly oppose each other, e.g. attempting to defend an attack. In that case, highest successful roll wins. On a tie of a PC vs an NPC, the PC wins. It's winner take all, the loser gets no degree of success, and does not reduce the winner's degree of success. If both fail the result is a failure for both. A critical success does not beat a higher normal success, just compare the numbers shown on the dice. If the loser rolled a critical success, they still benefit from effects they chose (such as an additional action), as long as those effects don't require a degree of success.

Combat

Catwalk

DJ Booth

Dance Floor

Bar

Pool Tables

Kitchen

Entrance

Alley
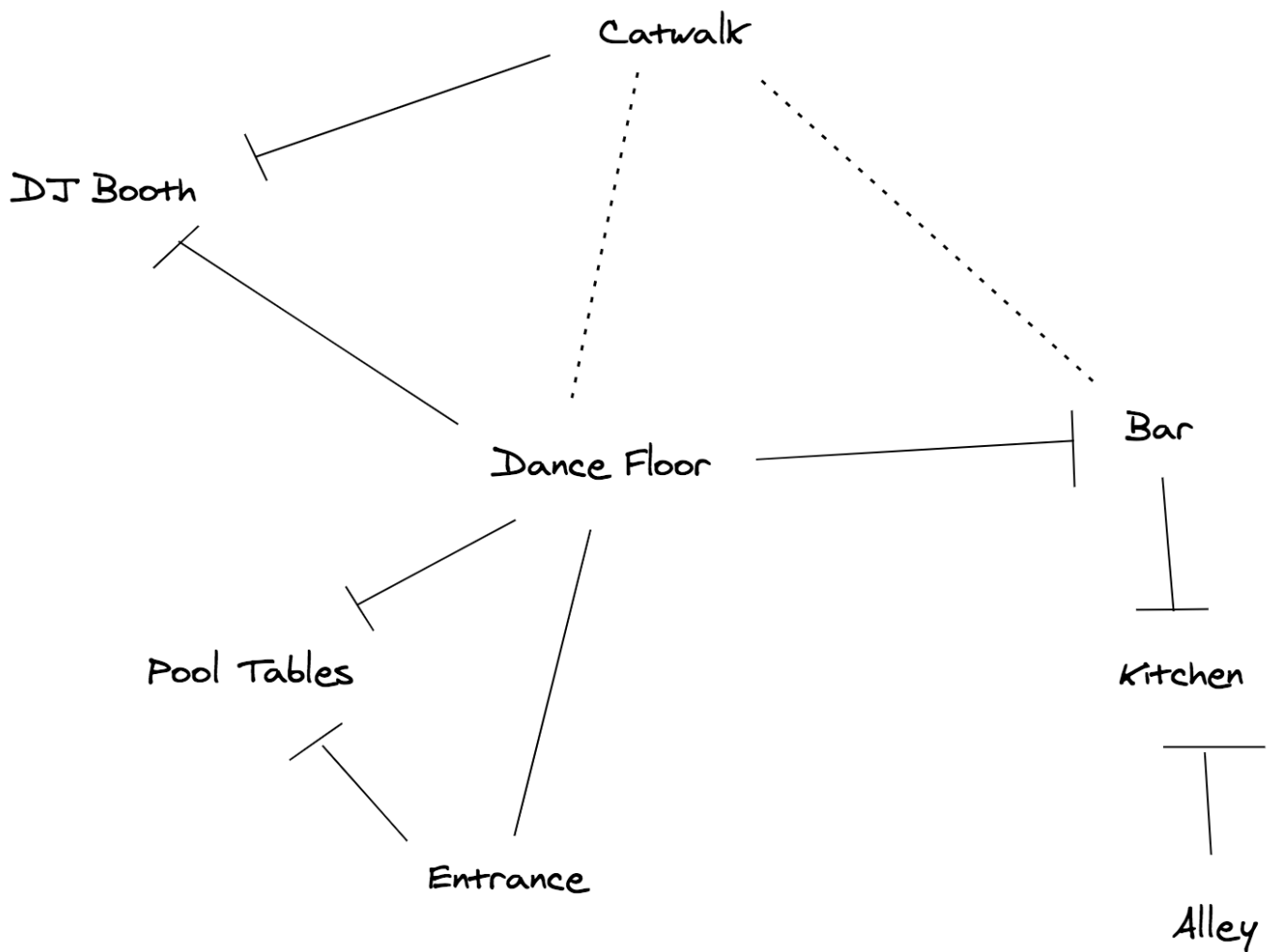
Legend:

Move OK ——

Line of Sight,
but no Move ....

Cover |——— No Cover

Maps

Use a simple map of the different areas reachable in combat, indicating which lines of movement, sight, and cover are available. The important point is to make the consequences of positioning unambiguous before combat begins, in order to avoid confusion or GM fiat during combat. It's up to you whether you use tokens or minis to indicate where charaters are, or use "theater of the mind".

The example map on the previous page shows the drawing conventions I use. You're welcome to use your own as long as they're consistent and players understand.

The GM decides which areas NPCs are in at the start of combat, the players decide where PCs are, within limits set by the GM.

> In the example map, the GM might tell PCs they can start in the entrance or alley.

Movement

Solid lines connecting areas indicate you can both see and move between them. Moving from one area to an immediately connected area takes one action.

Any number of characters can be in an area, and are assumed to be making small movements within that area during combat. If you want to indicate a one-way transition between areas (jumping down?) use an arrow. I don't think doors are interesting, but if you do, use a box along the connection and require an action to open / close them.

Cover

A solid mark perpendicular to the connection into an area means characters in that area benefit from cover against attacks originating from the other area. If you benefit from cover, you get to choose which die is used for damage and which is used for location, instead of your attacker.

> A character in the bar would have cover against a shot from the dance floor. That same character in the bar would not have cover against an attack from the catwalk.

Don't consider the attacker's area when determining cover.

> A character on the dance floor would not have cover against a shot from the bar.

When checking for cover along multiple connections, if at least one of the shortest paths has

cover, the target benefits from cover.

> A character in the bar would have cover against a shot from the DJ booth.

Only cover marks shown on the map can provide cover, not intervening characters.

Cover applies only to attacks made by characters from other areas. This means it does not apply to melee attacks, nor to ranged attacks within the same area.

Range

To make an attack you must be within range of your target. Melee attacks have a range of zero. Items or abilities that can be used to make ranged attacks will define their usable range.

Count the number of connections on the shortest path between the areas. Characters in your area are at range zero. Characters in an immediately connected area are at range one, two areas away at range two, and so on.

> The range from the entrance to the dance floor is one. The range from the entrance to the catwalk is two.

Line of Sight

To make an attack, you must have line of sight to your target.

To determine whether you have line of sight to an area, count the number of cover marks (not including your area) along the shortest path. If one of the shortest paths crosses two or more cover marks, you don't have line of sight. You always have line of sight to a target in your area, even if there's cover in all directions.

> A character in the alley has line of sight to the kitchen, but not the bar. A character in the pool tables has line of sight to the bar, but not the kitchen. A character in the DJ booth has line of sight to another character in the DJ booth.

Dashed lines connecting areas indicate you can draw line of sight between the areas, but not move directly between them.

> A character on the catwalk can see someone on the dance floor and vice versa, but can not move directly between them. They would have to move to the DJ booth first.

There are no situations where line of sight is one-way, nor where you have line of sight and range but are prevented by the map from attacking. In the rare situation where there shouldn't be line of sight between two areas, but you don't want to add enough cover to prevent it, use a dashed line between the two with an X in the middle to indicate line of sight is blocked.

Location of Objectives

If there are places that are important to the scenario (arcane portals that will close? bombs to defuse? avenues of retreat?) mark them on the map.

Rounds

Combat is divided into rounds, each of which has the following steps:

1. Initiative

2. First team turn

   a. First team takes actions until they are done

      i. Second team may react to each action

3. Second team turn

   a. Second team takes actions until they are done

      i. First team may react to each action

4. Round ends, repeat

Combat ends when a GM specified objective is met, or when only one team has characters still conscious and in the fight.

Initiative

Initiative is an opposed roll between the single highest level character from each team. The winner of initiative decides the order teams act in, it doesn't have to be winning team first.

> Several rounds into combat, the PCs have been beat up a bit, so their highest level character is at 40. The NPCs are in worse shape, with a highest level of 25. The PCs roll a 34, the NPCs roll a 62, failing. The PCs decide to let the NPCs go first, intending to react to their expected attempts at moving to retreat.

There are usually two sides to combat, one team of PCs vs one team of NPCs. If for some reason there are more teams, it's a single multi-way opposed roll between the highest level character

from each team, highest roll decides the order all teams act in.

A critical success on initiative is an extra action for the rolling character, a critical failure is a loss of an action. If the NPCs have been wounded in prior rounds and roll a critical failure for initiative, the GM should have them retreat or surrender as appropriate.

If there's a tie for initiative (e.g. both sides fail), initiative stays with the team that had it prior round. If it's the first round the tie goes to the PCs. Similarly, if the order dice are rolled in is important (because one side is **good** at initiative and wants to see what number they're trying to beat), it's decided by who had the initiative prior round, or the PCs for first round.

If there's a tie for which characters are highest level, it's up to that team who rolls. Order of actions within a team's turn is up to that team. If there's a dispute in either case, GM decides.

Actions

Each character gets one action per round. Your action may be used to act when it's your team's turn, or used to react when it's another team's turn. Either case uses your action, you cannot both act and react using a single action.

You must declare that you are reacting before dice are rolled, so give people time to do so on your own actions. You can react at most once per action. You cannot react to a reaction. If you don't use your action during your team's turn, and don't get an opportunity to use it to react, it's wasted.

Act:

- Attack

- Move

- Use or manage items

React:

- Counterattack (react to attack)

- Defend (react to attack)

- Intercept (react to movement)

Dropping items currently in your hands or speaking a short sentence doesn't take an action. Anything more than that does, at the GM's discretion.

If you gain an action from a critical success, you must use it during this round. If you lose an action from a critical failure, and don't have any additional actions this round, you lose it next

round. Use a note or token of some kind to remind yourself.

Attack

Attacking requires that you are in range, have line of sight, and already have in hand any item you're using to attack. Make a roll. On a success, you choose one die for the amount of damage your target takes and the other die for hit location. If the target benefits from cover, they get to choose instead.

Move

Moving from one area to an immediately connected area takes one action, and doesn't require a roll to succeed.

Use or manage items

Rearranging which items are in your hands, including picking items up or stowing away items, takes a total of one action. Using an item already in your hands, or attached to your area on the map (e.g. a lever or terminal), for something other than attack takes one action.

Counterattack

In reaction to an attack against you from a character *in your area*, you may use one action to counterattack. This is not an opposed roll, you each make separate attack rolls and apply any effects simultaneously.

You cannot counterattack against an attack targeting someone other than you. You can counterattack *using* a ranged weapon only if it is effective at range 0. You can counterattack *against* a ranged attack only if it is from a character in your area, i.e. range 0.

Defend

In reaction to an attack against you, you may use one action to defend. This is an opposed roll. If you win, the attack misses and does no damage.

In general, you must spend one action per attack you defend against.

Intercept

In reaction to movement within your line of sight and range, you may use one action to attack the moving character. Cover from either area does not apply. Use the smaller of the two ranges. A character moving between an area at range one and zero is effectively at range zero, between two and one is at range one, and so on. If the effect of your attack forces them to stop moving, you decide which area they end up in.

> The range from the entrance to a character moving between the catwalk and dance floor is one.

Damage

When you are damaged by an attack, reduce your level by the amount of damage and mark the corresponding number of boxes on the hit location section of your character sheet.

Mark damage in empty □ boxes, normally using a \ slash, indicating a wound that may be treatable by first aid. A mark of X is used to indicate a wound that cannot be treated by first aid, only by resting. Marking by completely filling a box ■ is used to indicate a permanent wound that cannot be treated. A box is considered marked if it has any type of mark \, X, or ■.

Hit location

The numbers on the die used for hit location correspond to six locations on the body, the higher the number the closer to the head:

9	Head	□ □ □
8	Right Arm	□ □ □
7	Left Arm	□ □ □
4-6	Torso	□ □ □
		□ □ □
		□ □ □
2-3	Right Leg	□ □ □
		□ □ □
0-1	Left Leg	□ □ □
		□ □ □

When all of the boxes in a location are marked, apply the appropriate penalty for that type of location:

a. Head: unconsciousness

b. Arm: Drop any item held in that hand. You can't use that hand.

c. Torso: unconsciousness

d. Leg: Immediately stop moving. You cannot move without using 2 empty hands.

e. Both Legs: Immediately stop moving. You cannot move.

If there's additional damage to that location, either from this attack or a future attack, apply it to the torso.

> You already had 3 boxes marked \ on your right leg. You move from the dance floor to the bar. An opponent intercepts and hits you with an attack roll of 24. They choose 4 damage to location 2 (right leg). You decrease your level by 4. You mark a \ in the remaining 3 boxes in your right leg, and an additional 1 box on your torso. You stop moving, and the opponent chooses the dance floor as the area you stop in.

First aid

First aid has a range of zero to the character being treated, which can be yourself. First aid requires an appropriate item in your hand. Spend an action, destroy the item, and roll.

On a success, choose one die for the total number of boxes, and the other die for the number of *additional* locations beyond one. Erase \ marks from the chosen number of boxes, distributed among at most that many locations. Do not increase level. Replace any remaining \ marks with an X.

> Your ally has 2 \ marks on their head, and 1 \ on each arm. You succeed at first aid with a roll of 14. You choose 4 boxes and 1 additional location. You erase 2 marks from their head and 1 from their right arm. You can only treat 2 locations, so you replace the left arm mark with an X.

On a failure, replace all \ marks with an X.

On a critical failure, instead of losing your next action, replace a number of pre-existing X marks up to the number shown on one of the dice (10 for a roll of 100, 9 for a 99, etc) with a permanent wound ■. Location of the permanent wounds is up to the player being treated. Then replace all \ marks with an X, as you would for a normal failure.

> Your ally has 1 \ mark and 1 X mark on their head and 3 X marks on their right arm. You critically fail at first aid with a roll of 66. You replace the X marks on their arm and head with ■ permanent wounds, for a total of 4. Even though that's less than the 6 on the die, there are no more X marks to replace. You then replace the \ mark on their head with an X.

Unconsciousness

If your level is below 10 or all of your head or torso boxes are marked, you are unconscious. When you are unconscious, you cannot spend actions and none of your abilities have an effect.

Death

If your level is below 0 or all of your head or torso boxes are marked with ■ permanent wounds, you are dead. Make a new character and the GM will help you rejoin the story at the first available opportunity. If you and everyone on your team is unconscious at the end of combat, your fate, potentially including death, is up to the GM.

Surrender

You may surrender at any point before an action that would affect you, as long as dice haven't been rolled yet. If you surrender, that action isn't spent and doesn't take effect. Reduce your level to zero, you are out of the fight and effectively unconscious.

Items

Non-combat items

The effect of non-combat related items is up to the GM.

Combat items

Unless otherwise specified, a combat related item takes up one slot on on your character sheet, and can be used without needing a related ability. Items will specify the circumstances in which they are destroyed, if any. Erase or otherwise note destroyed items.

Armor

Example: Plate mail, bulletproof vest, forcefield

Armor takes up one slot per hit location. When you are damaged by an attack and have armor in that location, you may destroy it instead of reducing your level and marking boxes. You still suffer any other effects of the attack. You may not have more than 2 armor per hit location.

Shield

Example: viking shield, riot shield, magic bracer

Holding a shield requires one hand. If you are hit by an attack while holding a shield you get to choose which die is used for damage and which is used for location, instead of your attacker. A shield is not cover and has no effect on line of sight. Shields are effective against ranged and melee attacks.

First Aid

Example: healing potion, first aid kit, nanomachines

First aid items take up one slot per use. See the combat rules for first aid.

Melee weapons

2 Handed (2H) melee weapons

Example: greatsword, pickaxe, laser staff

Attacking with a 2H melee weapon requires both hands. When marking wounds caused by a 2H melee weapon, use X instead of \.

1 handed (1H) melee weapons

Example: sword, knife, brass knuckles

Attacking with a 1H melee weapon requires one hand.

Ranged weapons

Ammo

Attacking with a ranged weapon requires that you have at least one slot worth of ammo. On a critical failure for a ranged attack, in addition to losing your next action, destroy one slot of ammo. Reloading does not otherwise take an action. Compatibility of ammo among different ranged weapons is up to the GM.

2 Handed (2H) ranged weapons

Example: longbow, rifle

Attacking with a 2H ranged weapon requires both hands, and has a range of 1 or more, but not 0. The assumption is most combat maps take place within maximum range, exceptions are up to the GM.

1 handed (1H) ranged weapon

Example: sling, pistol

Attacking with a 1H ranged weapon requires one hand, and has a range of 0 or 1. You cannot use a shield and a 1H ranged weapon at the same time.

Area of Effect (AoE) weapons

Example: magic fireball scroll, grenade

AoE weapons take one slot per attack and require both hands. They have a range of 0 or 1. Acquiring or using an AoE weapon requires a corresponding ability, see those rules for details.

Less-lethal

Example: pommel, tranquilizer dart, phaser set on stun

Less-lethal damage only reduces level, it does not mark wounds. You can inflict less-lethal damage with any melee weapon. Ranged less-lethal damage requires a separate ammo slot dedicated to that effect. Abilities that would apply to a given weapon and action also apply to the less-lethal version.

Abilities

Non-combat abilities

Choose a non-combat related activity for which you're **good** at die rolls. It's up to agreement between players and GM as to how specific the ability is. If one player wants to be "good at forensic accounting" and another wants to be "good at being a detective", that's fine as long as everyone is clear about when it applies. Clarify with the GM whether particular circumstances are appropriate for an ability before rolling the dice, don't argue for rerolls after the fact.

Combat abilities

Combat abilities are more specific. Each bullet point below is a separate ability. Many are specific to using particular items, e.g. being **good** at 2H melee is different from being **good** at 1H melee. Some abilities have explicit dependencies on another ability, but otherwise you can choose them in any order during advancement.

In addition to **good**, combat abilities may grant the die roll modifiers **precise** or **powerful**. **Precise** means that after a hit location die is chosen for a successful roll, you can adjust that die up or down by 1. **Powerful** means that after a damage die is chosen for a successful roll, you can adjust that die up by 1. Before your initial roll for an action you must declare either **precise** or **powerful**, not both, but can still use **good** to reroll. You cannot adjust above 9 or below 0.

Not all items have corresponding abilities for particular modifiers, this is intentional.

Shield

- **Good** Defend.

- Can use your action to Defend another character.

- Can Attack using a shield.

- Can declare All-Out Defend after initiative but before any actions in a turn. During that turn you may Defend all attacks against you, but those rolls are not **good** and cannot be critical. During that turn you cannot take any other actions, and cannot defend other characters.

First Aid

- **Good** First Aid.

- Before rolling for First Aid, you can instead choose to automatically succeed and erase only 1 \ mark, replacing the rest with X.

2H Melee

- **Good** 2H melee Attack.

- **Good** 2H melee Intercept and Counterattack.

- **Powerful** 2H melee Attack.

- **Precise** 2H melee Attack.

- On a critical success, in addition to one of the standard effects, you can destroy 1 slot worth of items on your target.

- Cannot be Counterattacked.

1H Melee

- **Good** 1H melee Attack.

- **Good** 1H melee Intercept and Counterattack.

- **Precise** 1H melee Attack.

- On a critical success, instead of gaining another action, you can force your target to lose their next action.

2H Ranged

- **Good** 2H ranged Attack.

- **Good** 2H ranged Intercept.

- **Powerful** 2H ranged Attack.

- **Precise** 2H ranged Attack.

- Line of sight for 2H ranged Attack is prevented by 3 or more cover marks, not 2.

1H Ranged

- **Good** 1H ranged Attack.

- **Precise** 1H ranged Attack.

Area of Effect (AoE)