

NUKES

“ It's a **LOT** like chess - but with nuclear bombs and an infinite number of players! ”



v0.4.1.5

(First Published: Jan 2012 - Last Updated: Feb 20th - 2025)

Summary

The world is at war. Which world? Any world and any setting ...

Nukes is the first of many open source board-games developed by Modable Games.

The primary design objectives for Nukes were as follows:

- Create a system that allows for any number of players
- As few (unique) components as possible (can use anything)
- Modular board that allows for endless possibilities (can combine existing Catan sets)

Each player is given X number of tokens. Depending upon where those tokens are located and how many of them are placed together, these tokens can represent different things.

- **Hostages** - your tokens in someone else's hand
- **Nukes** - your tokens in your hand
- **Units** - your tokens on the board
- **Infantry** - a single unit within a single region on the board
- **Artillery** - two units within a single region on the board
- **Airborne** - three units within a single region on the board
- **Bases** - four or more units within a single region on the board
- **Generals** - the unit that carries the Nuke and hides in bases

A player can win the game by reaching either of the following objectives:

- Have a base on an opponent's starting region
- Have the last hostage(s) or unit(s) in the game

Components

The following components are required to play a condensed two player game:

- One board including or made by combining a minimum of 61 regions (hexagons)
- 80 tokens (representing units on the board) in two different colours (40 X 2)

Table of Contents

Summary	2
Components	2
Rules	4
Setup	4
Turn Order	4
Victory Conditions	5
Units	5
Infantry	6
Artillery	8
Airborne	9
Base	11
General	12
Actions	14
Movement	14
Capturing Hostages	15
Support	15
Blind-Sides	17
Nuclear Explosions	20
Regions	21
Tundra	21
Forests	21
Mountains	21
Water	21
City	21
Biohazard	22
River	22
Boards	23
Standard Continent	23
Standard Island	24
Scenic Example	25
Odd Continent	25
Terraforming	26
Random	27

Rules

Nukes was designed as a system that can be adapted to all kinds of play styles - and although it is possible for any number of players to play, so long as the required board and necessary tokens are available, Nukes was specifically designed with 2 to 8 players in mind, which we will account for within this rulebook. We also encourage users to create their own scenarios.

Special river regions can be used to enable symmetrical games with odd numbers of players and (or) simply something completely different - should the board not have the required number of spaces to naturally split odd numbers or players simply want to add some extra complexity.

Setup

To setup, players place 20% of their token supply as bases on city regions at the edge of the board, with the remaining 80% of their supply split and distributed equally between other players as hostages. Players then take one token from their headquarters (starting base) to represent its use as a Nuke that is available for that player to be used by any of their generals.

The number of recommended tokens is dependent upon the number of players - as follows:

# Players	Starting Nukes	# Units at HQ	# Hostages	Total Tokens
2	1	9	40	50
3	1	9	20 X 2	50
4	1	9	13 X 3	49
5	1	9	10 X 4	50
6	1	9	8 X 5	50
7	1	9	6 X 6	46
8	1	9	5 X 7	45

Turn Order

Players take turns performing two actions in specific order:

- 1) Return a hostage to an active player (**if able**)
- 2) Move units from a single region (**required**)

When returning hostages to an active player, the player returning the hostage can choose the region that the hostage will return to, but it must be a region that already contains friendly units and cannot be a starting region (otherwise known as headquarters or HQ).

If the placed unit results in an invalid placement (such as airborne in mountains), those units are destroyed. Destroyed units are removed from the game, whereas captured units are given to the player capturing them as a way to increase their hostage count. If a player only has a headquarters region or bases with nine units in them already, the player that would need to return the hostage does not need to return a hostage for that turn.

This order continues until all but one player is able to start their turn by returning a hostage.

Victory Conditions

Someone can win the game in one of three ways:

- A player establishes a base on an opponent's headquarters (starting region)
- A player is the last person to be able to return a hostage
- A player is the last person to have units on the board

Theoretically, in the game of Nukes, if nobody captures or destroys anyone, the player going first will win as that player does not need to return a hostage before making their move.

Units

Units are represented on the board as individual tokens of identical shapes. Depending upon how units are grouped together they can be used as any combination of the following ranks:

- **Infantry** - one unit
- **Artillery** - two units
- **Airborne** - three units
- **Base** - between four to nine units
- **General** - one unit from a base

Units that are grouped together for movement are referred to as platoons, and include an artillery platoon and an airborne platoon. Only infantry units, artillery platoons and airborne platoons are able to capture opponent units, and do so by completing a movement with their turn ending on an opponent's region. They can only do this if their unit strength is higher than the unit strength they are capturing. Surrounding units providing support can bolster the strength of an attacking unit or platoon, but at the cost of sacrificing themselves to destruction.

Infantry

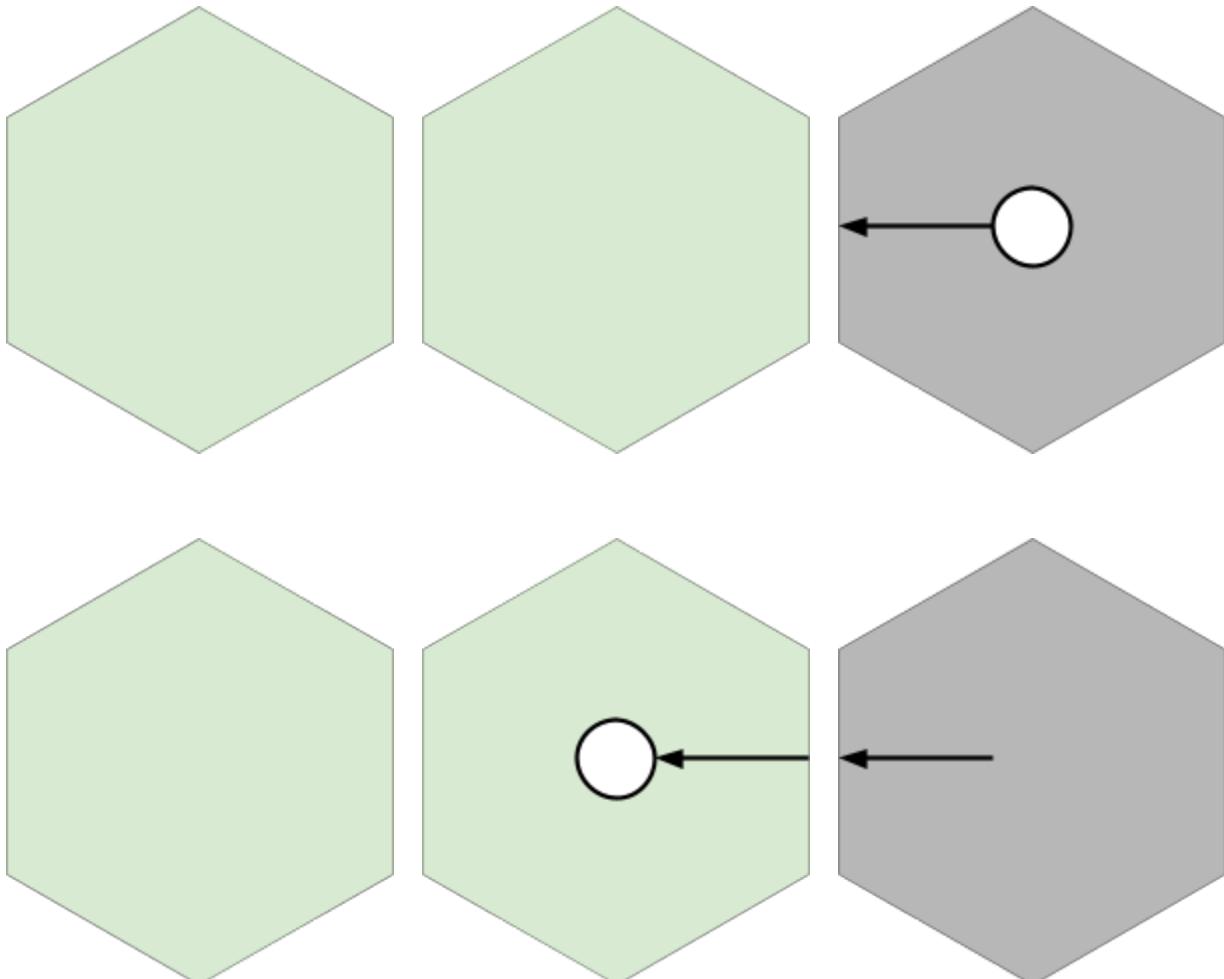
Infantry platoons are represented by a single unit in a single region.

Infantry may move from one region to any adjacent region that is not water or desert. Regions that are of the same type as an infantry's starting biome can be moved through freely before utilising that infantry's movement of one.

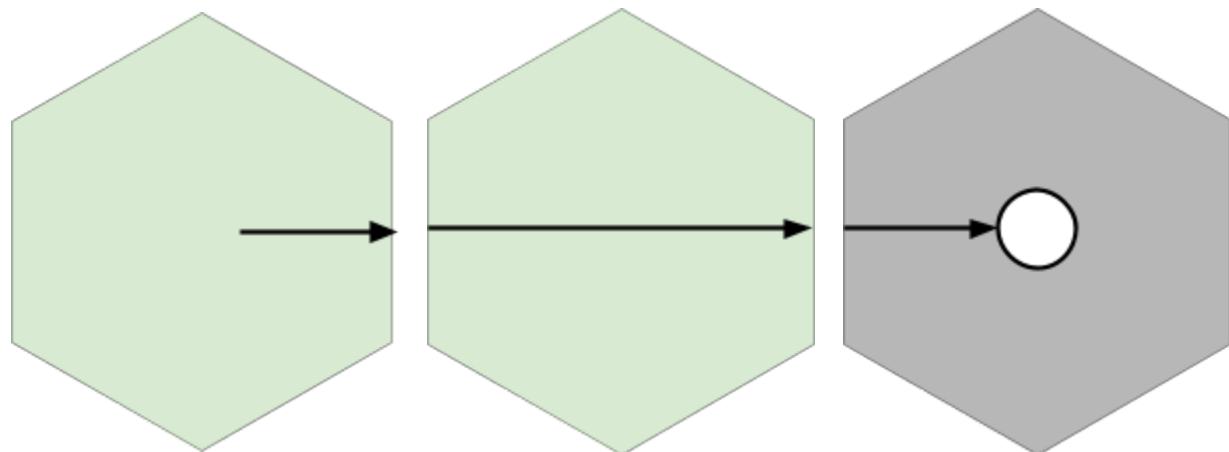
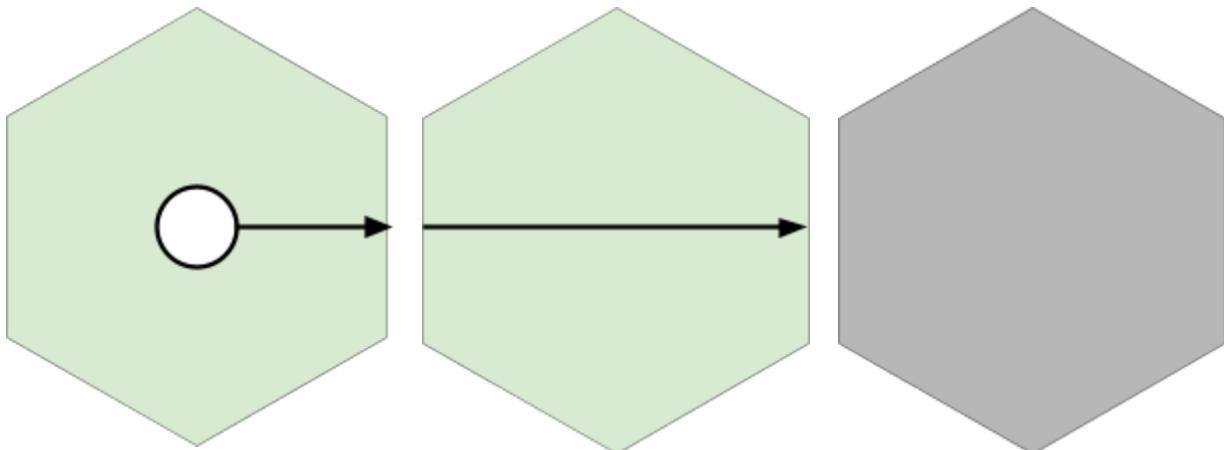
However, infantry are unable to move through regions with other infantry or artillery units.

An infantry unit is unable to capture any other units without receiving support.

Example infantry movement can be seen below:



In the example above, the infantry moving from mountains to tundra can only move one, whereas in the example below, the infantry moving from tundra to mountains can move two.



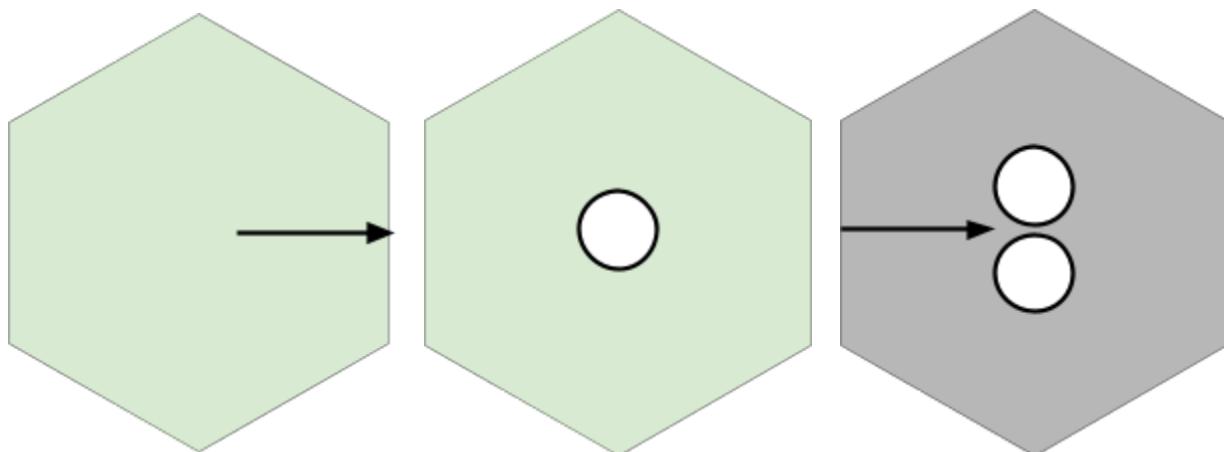
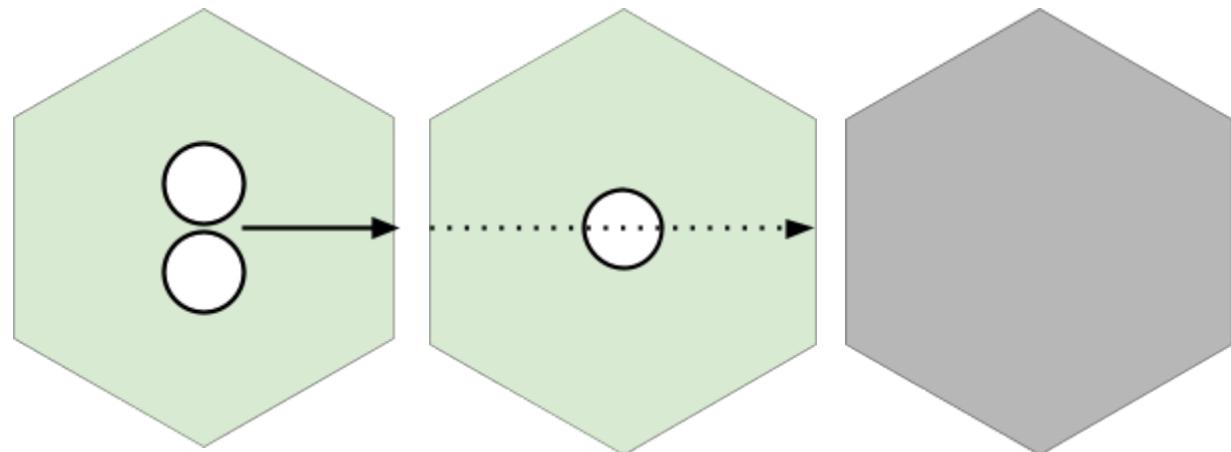
Artillery

Artillery platoons are represented by two units in a single region. Two infantry units within the same region are automatically referred to as an artillery platoon, but can be redistributed as two separate infantry units during movement.

Artillery must move in a straight line and can move as many regions as they are able to jump. Other units of any type or player provide a path that artillery can cross. Artillery are also able to move over city biomes as though those regions had units in them regardless of whether they do or not. Artillery may not end their turn on a water region.

Artillery units are only able to capture single infantry units - unless they have support. Additionally, artillery units are unable to capture units if they start or end their turn in a forest.

Examples of artillery movement can be seen below:



Airborne

Airborne platoons are represented by three units in a single region.

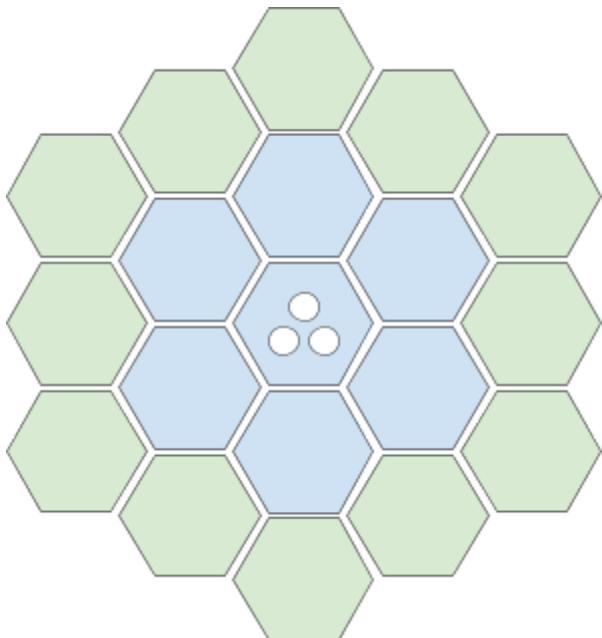
Three infantry units within the same region are automatically referred to as an airborne platoon, but can be redistributed as an infantry unit and artillery platoon during movement.

Airborne units must move exactly two spaces and must end their move on a tile that cannot otherwise be reached by making a single move. Airborne units cannot however, end their move or even pass through mountain regions as part of two moves.

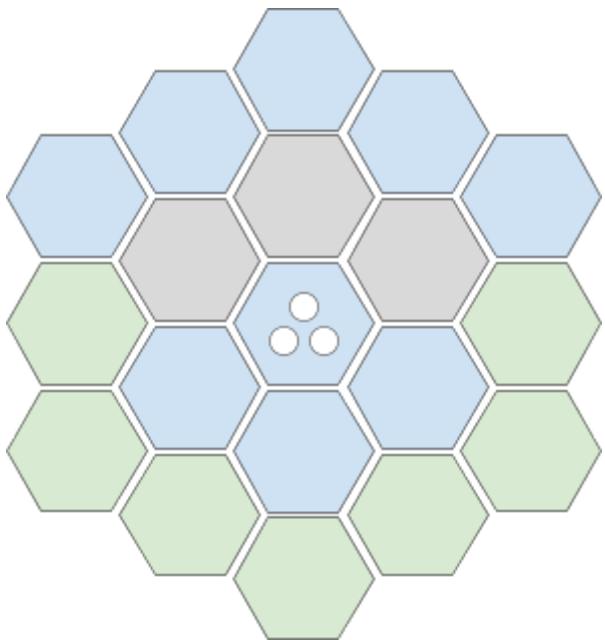
An airborne unit can also act as a city biome (bridging different biome types) for infantry use.

Without support, Airborne units are only able to capture artillery units or an infantry unit.

Examples of airborne movement can be seen below:



In this example without mountains, an airborne platoon of three units starting within the middle region may move to any of the green (tundra) regions, but is unable to move to any of the other blue (water) regions.



In this example with three grey (mountain) regions, an airborne platoon of three units starting within the middle region may move to any of the green (tundra) regions, but is unable to move to any of the other blue (water) regions or grey (mountain) regions.

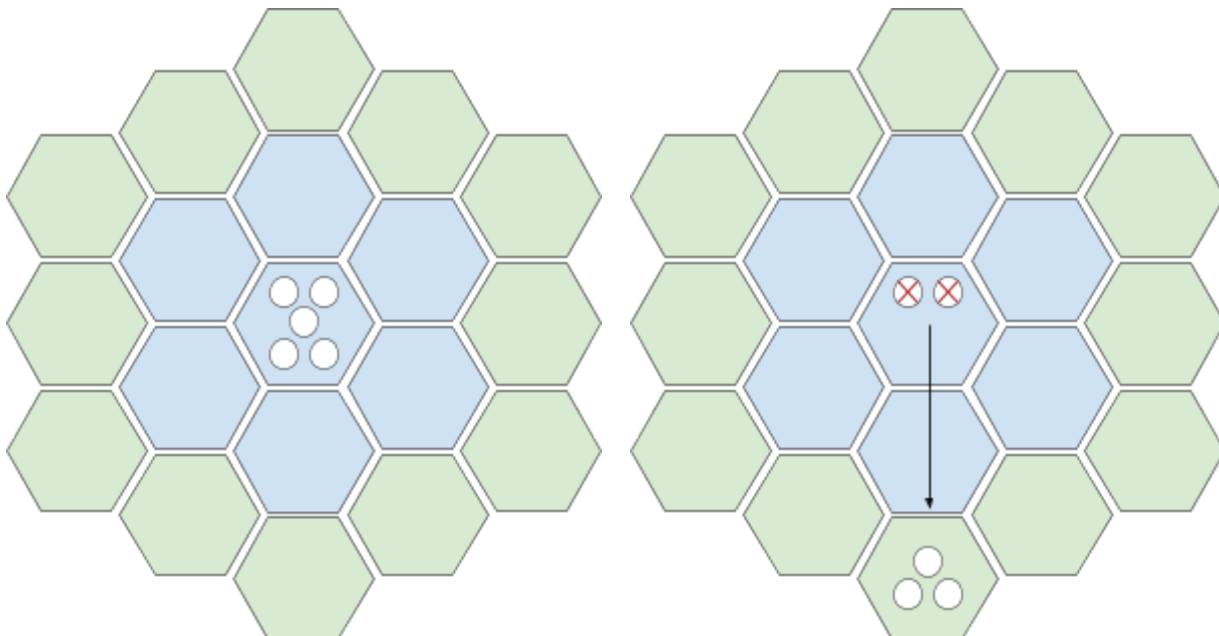
Base

Any region with more than three units is referred to as a base.

Although a base cannot move, a general, infantry unit, artillery units or airborne units may move from a base and a base can also act as a city biome (bridging different terrain types) for infantry. Although a base cannot be captured or blind-sided, it can take part in a blind-side as well as also providing support for capturing units. There is also a limit of nine for a base, which prevents any region from ever having more than nine units in it.

When a player establishes a base of five or more units in a city region other than their starting region and that has not already had a Nuke harvested from it; they have the option to convert one of those units into a Nuke and flip over the tile to show that the city has produced a Nuke. If using Catan tiles, the yellow wheat tile used for cities can be replaced with the red mine, both of which represent cities, but one can still be harvested and the other cannot.

When units move out of a base, the units that remain must follow the rules of the biome. If for example a base of five established on a water biome moves an airborne platoon of three units out of the base, it would mean that there would be an artillery platoon of two units remaining where the base once was, and artillery is not allowed on water. Those units would be destroyed and removed from the game when the airborne platoon moves out - as illustrated below:



General

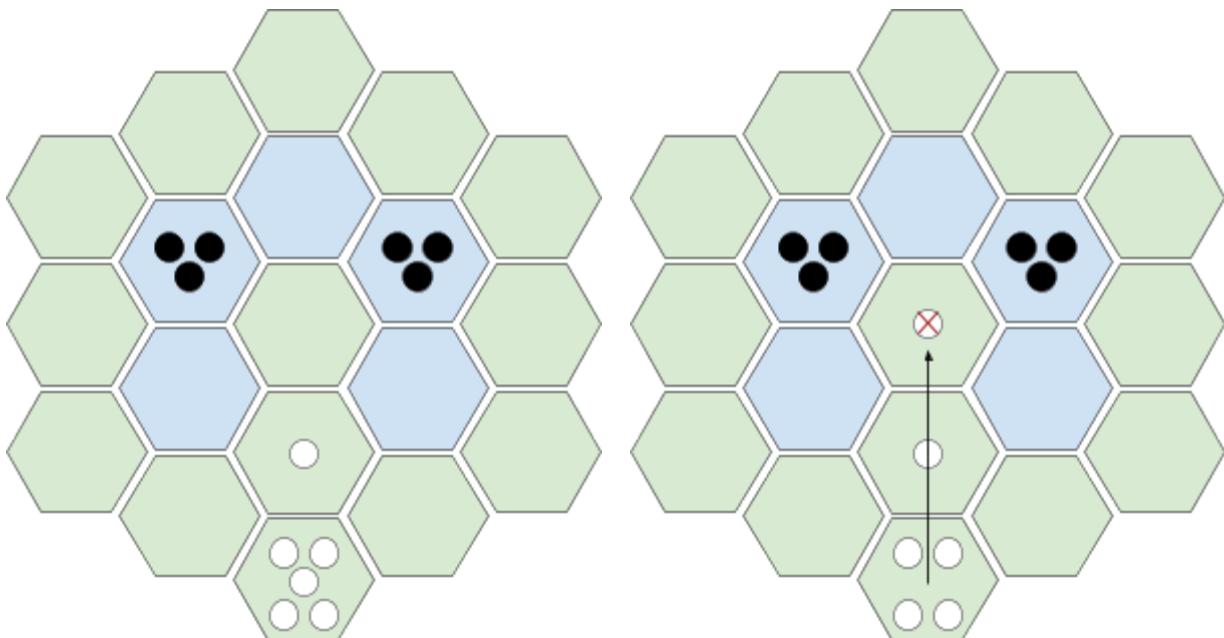
Generals are never seen and can only emerge from a base if they are also going to explode by triggering their nuclear weapon, which cannot be done if the general ultimately ends its turn alone within a water or desert region.

A general moves in the same way as artillery, by crossing over other units of any type or player, but is also as vulnerable as infantry and unable to end their go alone in either water or a desert.

A general can only move if it is also going to explode, and can only do that if the player moving it has an available Nuke whilst also having the option to end the general's move, before exploding; within either part of another friendly platoon or by having an empty space to move into after jumping units, destroying all units in and surrounding the region it moved into.

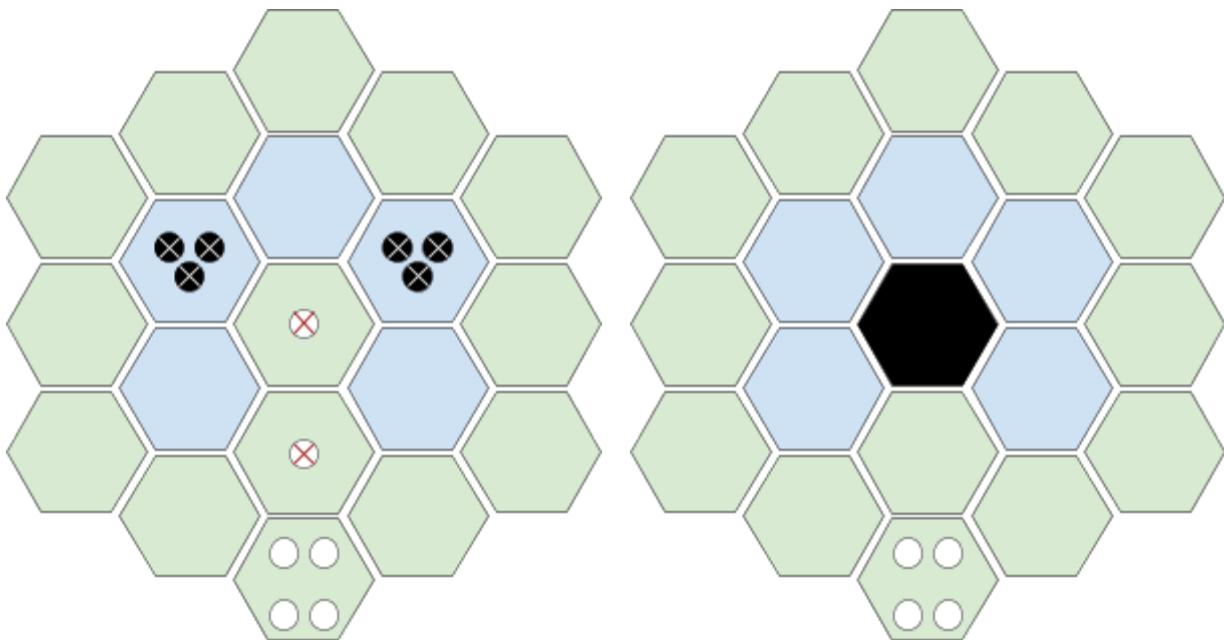
Generals can never capture units. Any units they destroy are removed from the game.

An example of a general moving by detonating a Nuke can be seen below:



In this example, the white player used his general to destroy two of his own units and six of the black player's units whilst also turning the center region into an inaccessible biohazard.

All of the units destroyed by this Nuke were removed from the game.



Actions

Turns proceed clockwise with each player performing exactly two actions in their turn, which must be performed in the following sequence:

- 1) Return a hostage
- 2) Move unit(s)

When returning hostages to an active player, the player returning the hostage can choose the region that the hostage will return to, but it must be a region that already contains friendly units and cannot be the headquarters (starting region) or in a base that already has nine units.

Doing so can however also result in a loss of units. If (for example) a player has artillery units in a mountain, returning a hostage to that region would result in that set of units becoming airborne, which cannot be used in mountain regions, so are then destroyed.

Any units that are destroyed are removed from the game.

Units captured are given to the player capturing them so that they can be used as hostages and in-turn provide that player with more available turns to make.

If a player is unable to return a hostage or has no units, they are removed from the game.

Movement

After a player returns a hostage to an opposing player they are then entitled to move.

Units can only be moved from a single region and only as either a single platoon (infantry, artillery and airborne) or as a general (if moving from a base to trigger a nuke). Units cannot move into a region occupied by opponent units unless capturing those units. Units may not move into a region that is already considered blind-sided.

Any units that may remain in a region after moving units from that region must adhere to rank rules. This is especially important when water, deserts or mountains are concerned. For example, a water region with a base of four or five units in it moves an airborne platoon of three units out of the base, leaving either a single infantry unit or an artillery platoon of two units.

In either case, those units cannot be used in water regions so they are destroyed and removed from the game. The same could apply to a base that leaves an airborne platoon of three units in mountains or a single infantry in a desert region.

Capturing Hostages

Without support, units can only capture units of smaller value. Without support, Infantry and generals cannot capture. Artillery can only capture infantry. Airborne units can capture artillery units or an infantry unit, but cannot be captured by another airborne platoon.

However, with the introduction of support; this changes.

Units are captured when movement takes place and if that capturing platoon has a valid move into the region that contains the lesser valued opposing units. Captured units are held by the capturing player as hostages to in-turn provide that player with more turns.

Support

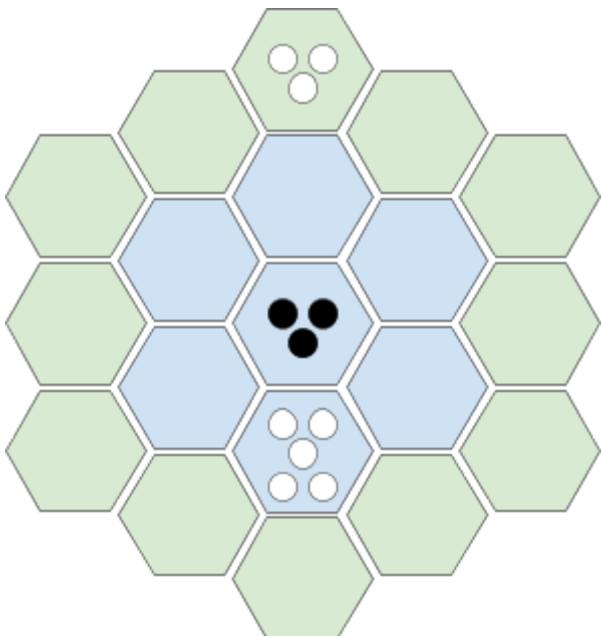
For every occupied region adjacent to a unit that is threatened by capturing, the unit capturing may gain an additional strength from allied units.

For example, an airborne unit belonging to Player A that has a single infantry unit directly beside it belonging to Player B can now be captured by an Airborne platoon also belonging to Player B, even though the airborne platoon belonging to Player A cannot capture the airborne platoon belonging to Player B.

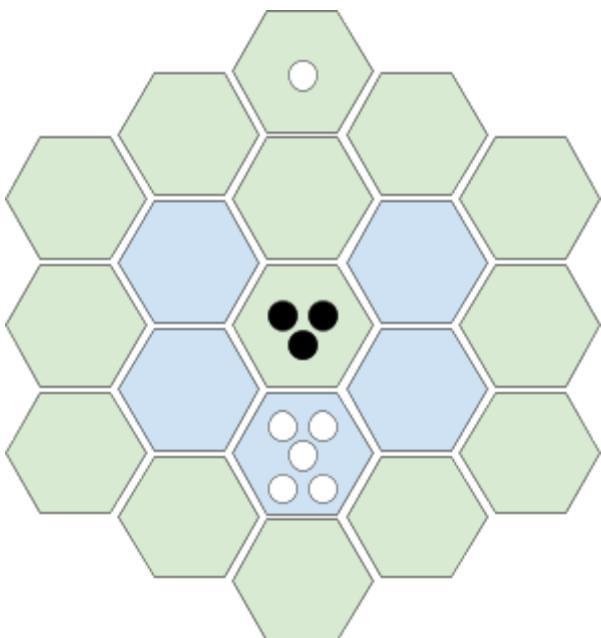
In games with more than two players, support can be provided by other players, and captured units that provide hostages are divided by the total number of allied players with the player that captured taking the additional difference where relevant.

However, any units providing support are destroyed if they agree to support a capture.

Support cannot be used to capture bases, but a base can provide support as seen below:



In this example, the white airborne platoon at the top of the board is able to capture the black airborne platoon as it can receive one additional strength from the white base that is adjacent to the black airborne platoon. If the white airborne platoon does decide to capture the black airborne platoon the white base of five would also be destroyed in the process.



In this example, the white infantry unit at the top of the board is unable to capture the black airborne platoon as it can receive only one additional strength from the white base that is adjacent to the black airborne platoon (for a total of two versus the airborne platoon strength of three).

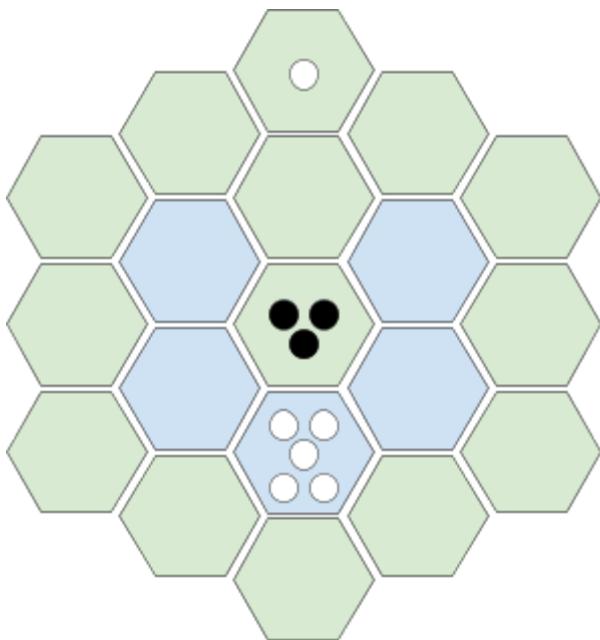
Blind-Sides

A blind-side is able to destroy infantry, artillery and airborne units - regardless of the exact unit types that are used to do so. Blind-sides occur when a unit has opposing units in opposite regions adjacent to the target. This provides a way for two separate infantry units in different regions to destroy an airborne unit (for example).

Units destroyed by blind-sides are removed from the game.

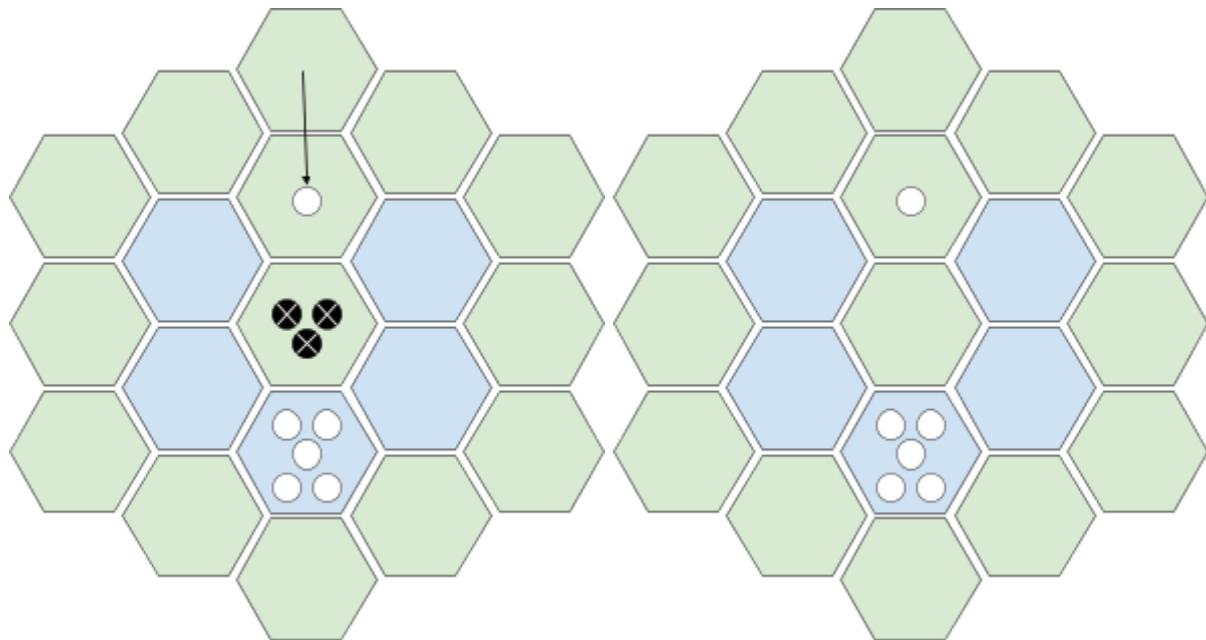
This enacts automated partnerships between players when there are more than two players as units are automatically blind-sided if two different opponents have units on opposite sides of other opponent units. It is important to note that no unit may ever move or capture units by placing itself within another blind-side - this would be considered an invalid move - in the same way an airborne platoon is unable to move into mountain regions.

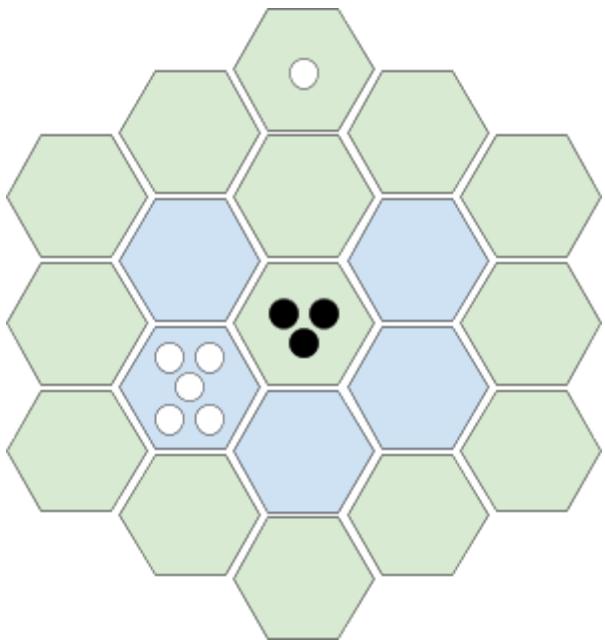
An example of a blind-side can be seen below:



In this example, the white infantry unit at the top of the board is able to move down one region and in-turn have units on either (opposite) sides of the black airborne platoon. This would result in a blind-side.

In the example blind-side seen below, the three black units are destroyed and removed from the game. Importantly, unlike capturing units with support, blind-sides do not result in the white player losing any units.





In this example, if the white base of five had been in any of the other regions surrounding the black airborne platoon, the white infantry would not be able to move into any position that would result in either a blind-side or a capture.

Nuclear Explosions

In order to use a general a player must have an available Nuke.

In standard games, each player is given one nuke at the start of the game and is able to gain another Nuke every time they establish a base with more than four units in any city region other than their starting region, which has not already harvested a Nuke. Nukes are represented as tokens held by a player after having converted one unit from the base into a Nuke.

If using individual region tiles, city regions can be flipped over to show that a Nuke has been harvested or if using a board, a new harvested city region can be placed on top.

A nuclear explosion is the only way a base can be destroyed and in doing so, players will need to sacrifice at least one unit to do so. When a general explodes, the region in which they ended their turn is replaced by a biohazard region and all units of all players on or directly surrounding that region are destroyed. If a general ends its move in an airborne unit then it will be destroying a minimum of four of its own units (for example).

This example also demonstrates how a general can explode above water.

Destroyed units are removed from the game.

Regions

A region is a hexagonal space on the board. Each region is one of the following biomes:

- **Tundra** (light green / Catan fields)
- **Forests** (dark green / Catan forests)
- **Mountains** (grey / Catan mountains)
- **Water** (blue / Catan water)
- **City** (pink / forest and mountain / Catan gold valley for HQs, or wheat / mines)
- **Desert** (yellow / Catan deserts)
- **Biohazard** (black / removed tile)
- **River** (blue lines) - only used with odd numbers of players when needed

Tundra

Tundra are considered land regions that can be accessed and controlled by any rank.

Forests

Forests are considered land regions that can be accessed and controlled by any rank. However, although artillery units may move freely into or from a forest, artillery units cannot capture other units if they are moving into or from a forest, but can perform blind-sides when entering forests or offer support from forests.

Mountains

Mountains are considered land regions that can be accessed and controlled by any rank other than airborne units, which cannot move onto or through mountains.

Water

Water regions cannot be held or accessed by artillery or infantry, but it is possible for these ranks to bridge water using either airborne platoons or bases.

City

City regions are considered land regions and for the purposes of infantry, a city can also be used as either one of a tundra, forest, or mountain. A city can also be used as a bridge for artillery, allowing them to move over cities without needing to have units placed in those regions. Players establishing bases of five or more units in city regions that have not already harvested a Nuke have the option to convert one of the units in that base into a Nuke, taking the unit into their hand and flipping or replacing the city region with a harvested city region.

Biohazard

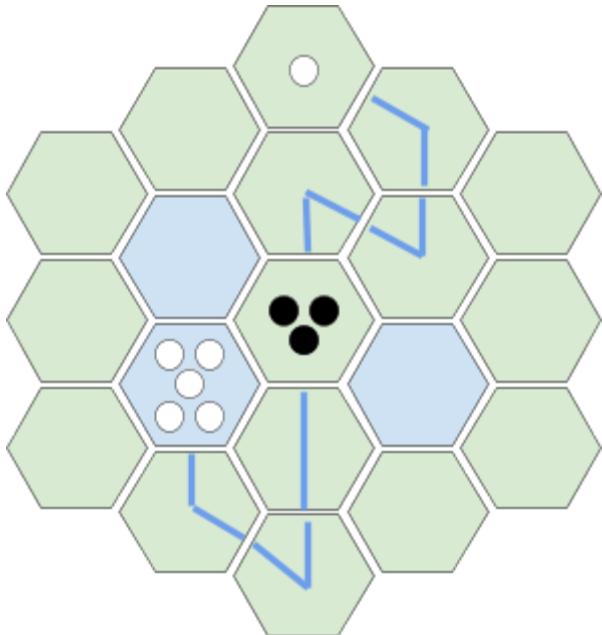
Biohazardous regions are inaccessible by any unit type and act as holes in the board. They only appear after a nuclear explosion, replacing the space wherever a general ends its turn.

River

Rivers are entirely optional and are recommended to be used in odd-player games that cannot be supported by the board or number of total tiles.

Rivers enable regions they connect to be adjacent for movement, support and blind-sides.

No units may ever end their turn on a region with a river.



In this example, with rivers the white player has already blind-sided black as the infantry and base are directly opposite the black platoon already.

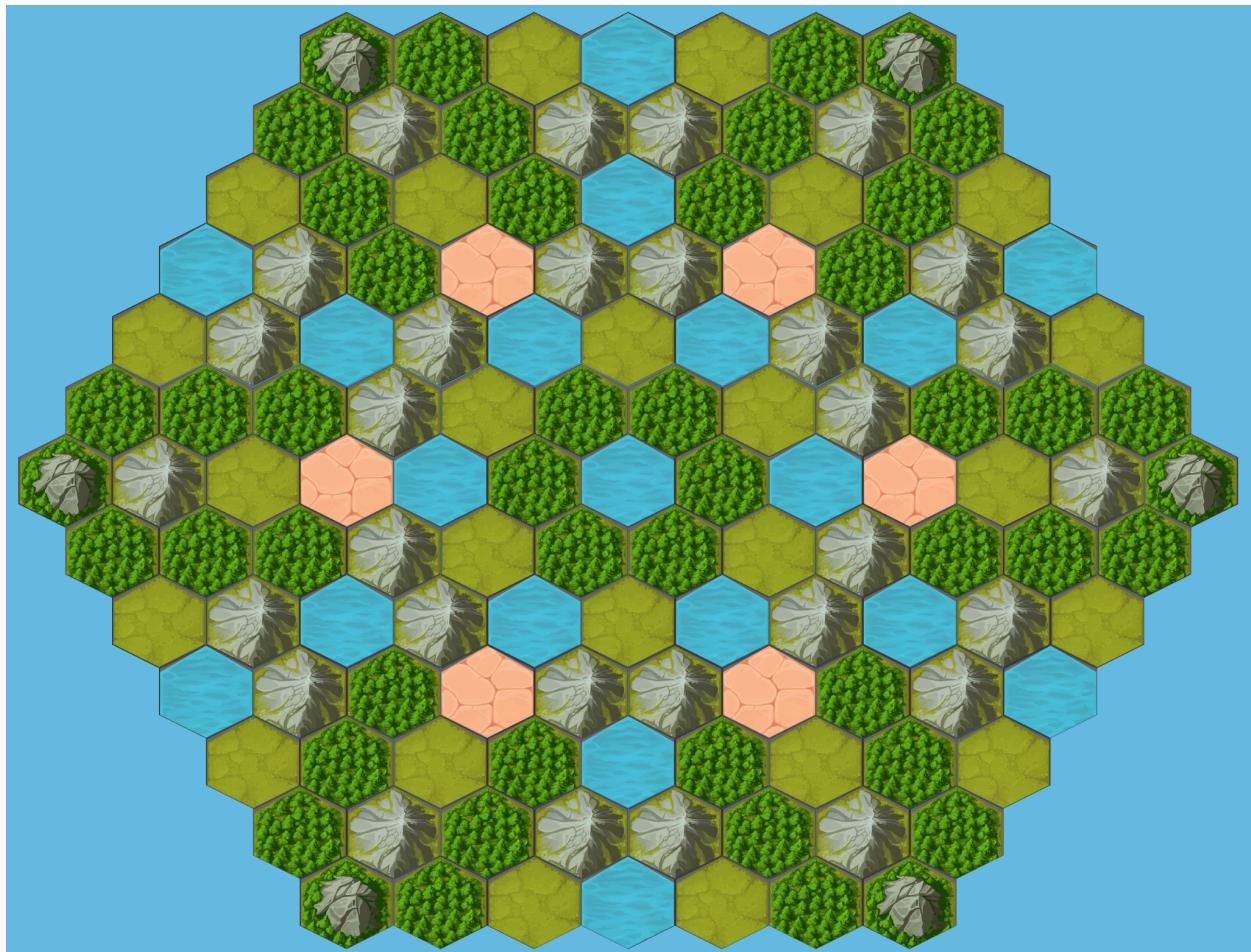
Boards

Boards can come in many shapes and sizes to suit different play styles:

- Referenced Boards
 - Standard Continent
 - Standard Island
 - Scenic Example
 - Odd Continent
- Terraformed Boards
- Random Boards

Standard Continent

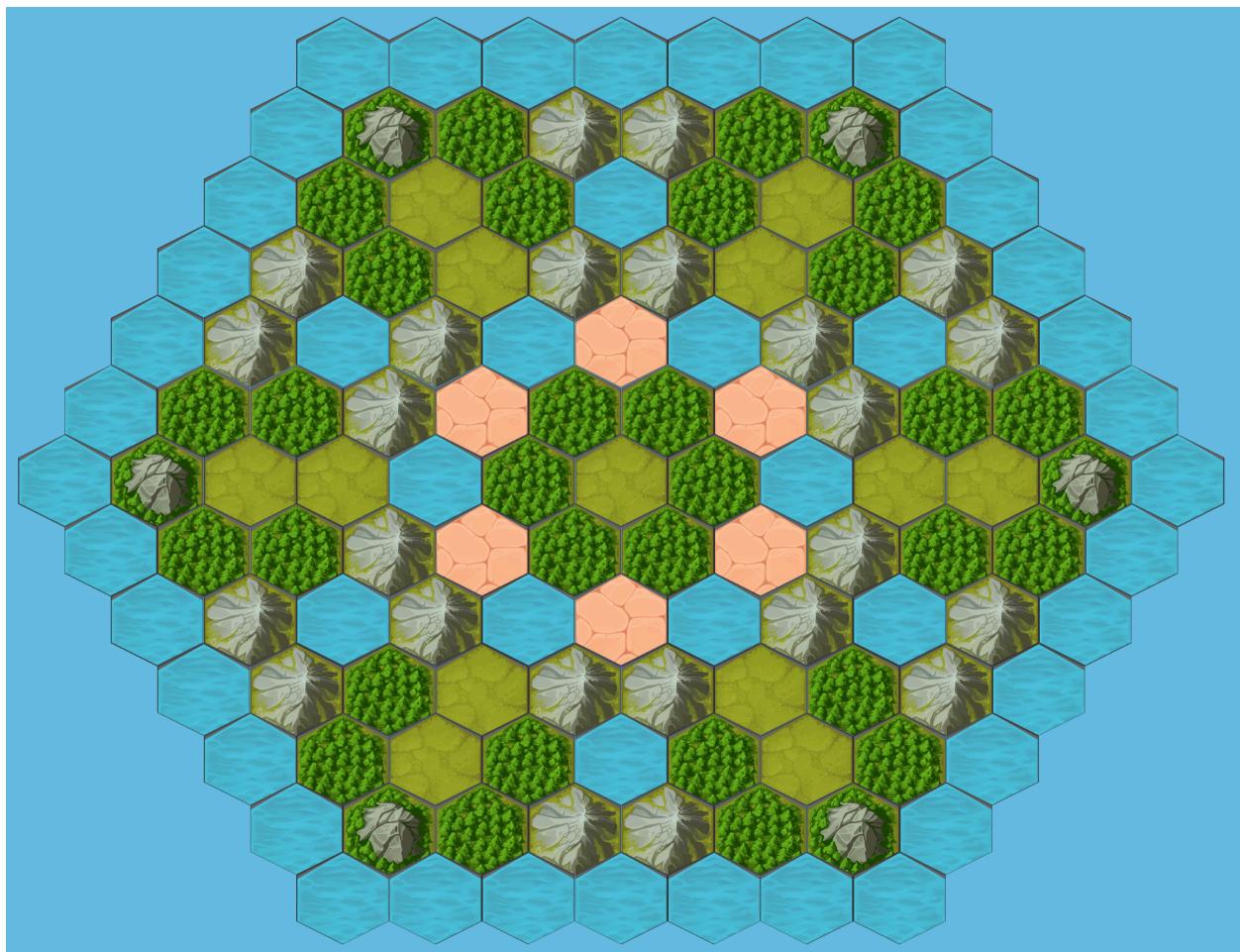
The following **standard continent** board provides options for 2, 3, 4 and 6 player games:



The board featured above is perhaps the most versatile referenced board.

Standard Island

Used as a centerpiece for large scale games surrounded by other islands or continents:



Additionally, the above board can also be used for more confined two player games.

Standard reference boards should allow for symmetrical game-play.

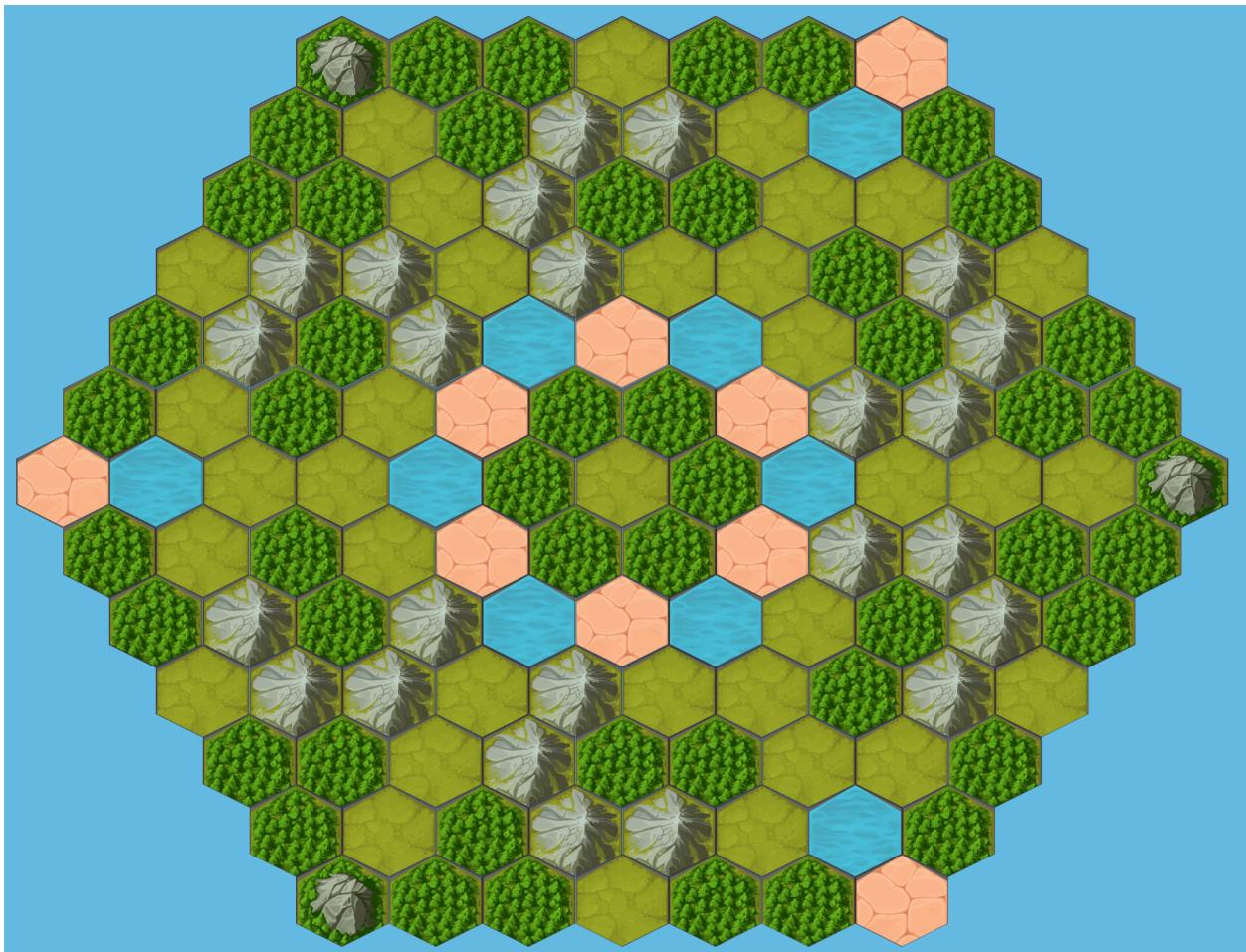
However, scenic boards, or collections of different referenced boards connected in specific ways can also be used to recreate historical events or known land masses.

Scenic Example

Someone needs to recreate a famous battle here using a 6R board.

Odd Continent

Used for standard referenced three player games:



Also need to provide an odd-continent with rivers for five player games ???

Terraforming

Terraforming makes board setup part of the game and requires the use of individual regions.

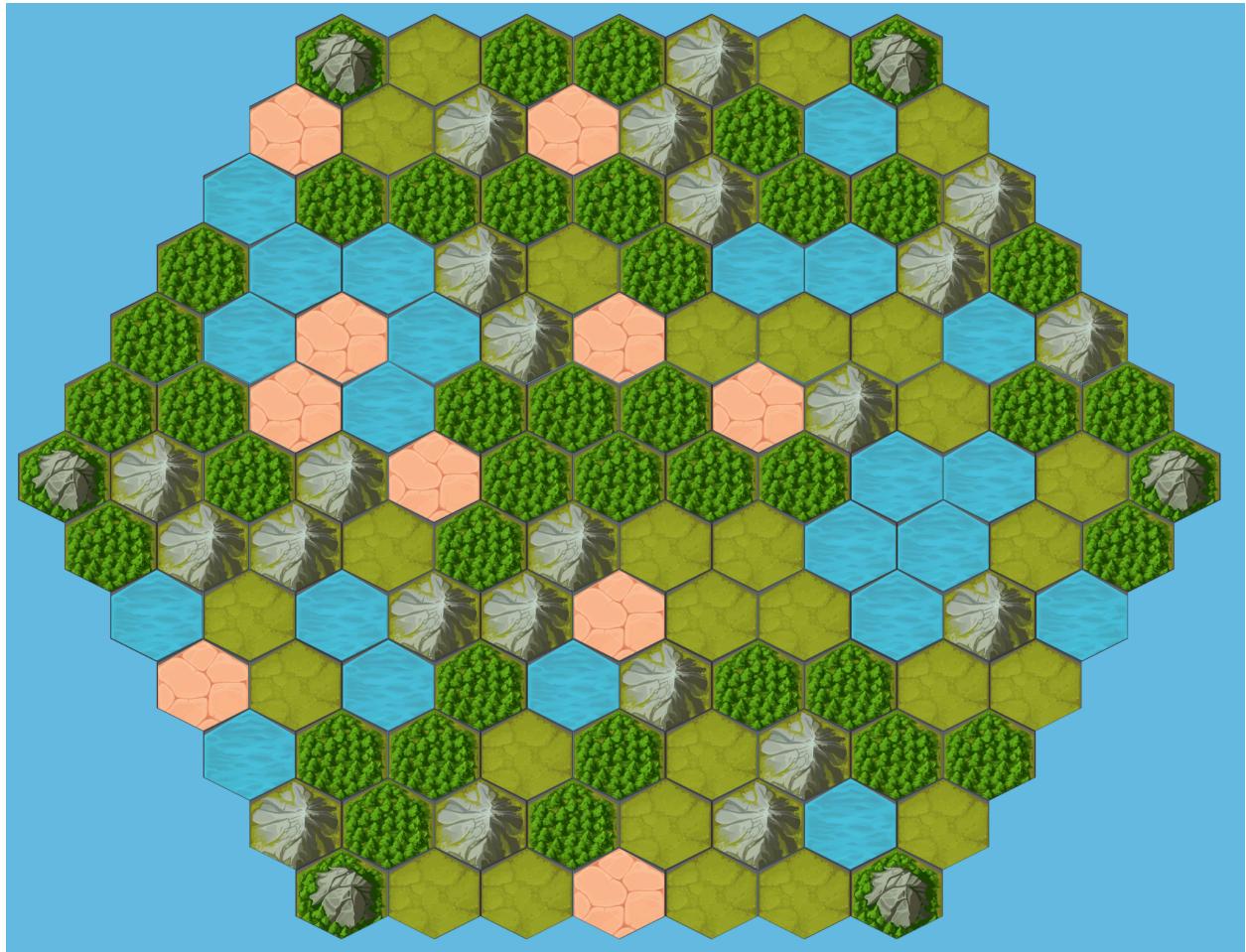
A desert region tile is placed in the middle of the board and each player places their headquarters (starting city region) at the edge of the board equally spaced from other players. Players then take turns placing a tile that must be connected to another tile that has already been placed. To do this, each player should be given an equal number of regions of equal types as seen in the table below to choose from:

# Players	Tundra	Forest	Mountains	City	Water	Desert	Needed	Random
2	6	6	6	4	5	3	60 (4R)	0
2	8	8	8	7	8	6	90 (5R)	0
4	4	4	4	3	4	6	90 (5R)	2
4	6	6	6	4	5	4	126 (6R)	2
6	4	4	4	3	3	3	126 (6R)	0

Before placing any tiles, any un-dealt terrain (as seen by 4 player games above) should be randomly placed around the central desert region before setup commences.

Random

An example of a random setup board is shown below:



Show another random example (with rivers) ???

Include links to online randomizer and level editor ???