

Halivar's World Creation Game

The goal of collaborative world building is creating a rich, expansive game world that is familiar to the world builders. The games set in that world are therefore more immersive and engaging.

This particular set of world building rules is to encourage the creation of organic, natural worlds, with many hands shaping each part of the world in a “crowd-sourced” manner.

World creation occurs in three phases: The First Age, which will document the rise of the elder races and the creation of the game world's oldest legends; The Second Age, which tells the story of the rise of the lesser races and the decline of the elder ones; and finally The Third Age, which is the age of Man, and documents humanity's rise in the world.

How It Works

The goal is to have more map pieces than builders, so that there is always at least one spare. At the start, each builder pulls a random map piece and gets to work. A turn looks like this:

1. Pull a map piece from the available pieces (the “Queue”) and roll on the chart.
2. Read up on the changes made to the map pieces since you last had it.
3. If prompted, update the map piece with new terrain features, or alter an existing one.
4. Unravel the story of the map piece according to the roll you made, using loose-leaf paper attached to the map piece. Update the data sheet for the map piece.
5. Place the map piece at the bottom of the Queue. Pull the top piece and roll again.

Some builders will build faster than others. Let them take their time. The quick ones can cycle through the queue as furiously as they like.

The optimal queue size is the number of builders plus one; it's best if there is always one map piece waiting to be picked up by the next available builder.

Deferrals & Prompts

Sometimes you're asked to do something and you're stumped. This will probably happen most often when naming a race or city. In this case, the world-builder can put a Deferral on the map piece before putting it back in the Queue. To put a Deferral on the piece, put a Post-It note on the map piece describing what task remains, and it will be up to the next person that receives that piece to perform that task. The goal is to keep the map pieces moving; if you find yourself pondering a piece for too long, consider a Deferral.

A Prompt is different in that a Prompt is determined by the task. For instance, in The First Age, a task to create a cult for a deity comes with a Prompt for the next person that receives that map piece to create that deity's personal domain. A Prompt works the same way as a Deferral; use a Post-It note describing the task to be performed. The person who receives a Prompt does not roll on the task chart; the Prompt is their task for this turn.

The First Age

The first age is the story of the world's elder races. Many of these races will be extinct, and only their ruins will remain, but their story is what populates the world with its oldest legends and artifacts.

To begin, each world builder pulls a portion of the world map from the Queue, blank except for coast lines. This map is numbered.

The first task of each world builder is to create a sentient race and put it in the world. Each builder draws a 1 inch land feature (a mountain, a forest, a plain, a desert, etc.) and names it. On a separate piece of paper, describe a sentient race that awakens in this environment (this separate piece will soon expand as others handle this map piece). This is one of the elder races of this world, and should not be human. In fact, it can be as strange and bizarre as you want, or have whatever powers and abilities you wish. The race should reflect its home environment.

Each subsequent turn after the first involves expanding the game map. To do this, create a 1 inch environment next to an already created environment (so the first such environment will always be next to the one created in

the first turn).

The First Age ends when there is no more room for more land features.

The First Age Chart

1. Create a new land feature. A member of this region's races ascends to major deity (1-30 good, 31-70 neutral, 71-100 evil; use the same method to determine lawful/chaotic). Describe this new deity, and how they ascended. Once this region has 2 major deities, re-roll 1's on the task chart.
Prompt: Describe the deity's personal domain and cosmic servants.
Second Prompt: Create a cult devoted to this deity. How do they interact with the authorities of this race? ARE they the authorities of this race?
2. Create a new land feature. Create a city for the one of this region's races here. How was it founded?
3. Create a new land feature. Describe a legend of The First Age tied to this land feature.
4. Create a new land feature. Tie an element of the previous map you worked on to it.
5. Create a new land feature near a map edge or coast. Place a colony here of an elder race of the last map you had and add that race to the list of races in this region. What are they doing here? How do they feel about their new neighbors?
6. Create a new land feature. Introduce a cult from the previous map you had to this area and add its patron to the list of the regions deities. How does this cult interact with other cults in this region? How does the race of this map adopt the cult's teachings? If no cults exist in your previous map, re-roll on the task chart.
7. Create a new land feature. A member of one of the cults in this area ascends to minor deity and takes up a place in their domain. How do they interact with their old master? Are they still servants, or now rivals?
8. Create a new land feature. Destroy or irrevocably alter an aspect of the map or pantheon. Tell the tale of what happened.
9. Create a new land feature. Choose an evil cult of this region. This evil cult wages war against all good and goodly folk and tries to capture a city. This cult has a 50% chance of winning this war. If they win, the city becomes a stronghold of evil. If this region has no evil cults, choose one of another region. If no other regions have evil cults, re-roll on the task chart.
Prompt: A member of the winning side becomes a legendary hero (50% chance of ascending to minor deity). Describe them and the holy order of warriors devoted to them.
10. Create a new land feature. A great hero emerges from one of the races. Describe his or her legendary exploits.
11. Create a new land feature. Choose a good-aligned cult of this region. This cult wages war against an evil cult in this area. If they win, they establish a new stronghold in this region. If this region has no good-aligned cults, choose one of another region. If no other regions have good-aligned cults, re-roll on the task chart.
Prompt: A member of the winning side becomes a legendary hero (50% chance of ascending to minor deity). Describe them and the holy order of warriors devoted to them.
12. Create a new land feature. A natural disaster or cataclysm destroys or irrevocably alters a terrain feature. Describe how the civilizations of this region are affected by this.
13. Create a new land feature. Create a place of power here. Who made it? What is its power?
14. Create a new land feature. Describe an ancient monster of great power that lives here, and any legends tied to them.
15. Create a new land feature. Two deities make war against each other. Decide who in the pantheon of this region gets involved. Decide who wins by die roll. If the winning side is a minor deity, that deity ascends to major deity if there are fewer than 2 major deities in this region. If there are already two, and the losing side has a major deity, that major deity is demoted to minor deity to make room. Describe how this war is manifested in the world; constellations, signs, and disaster. Describe how the deities' personal domains change during the course of this war. If there is fewer than two deities in this region, re-roll on the task chart.
16. Create a new land feature. The gods choose a champion who becomes king or queen over all this region, and all its cities. Describe how these different cities, with their races and cults, are melded into this empire. There is a 50% chance this champion has the blood of a immortal being. Choose their patron deity, and give the champion some of the attributes of their patron's cosmic servants. If there are no deities in this region, then the champion has no immortal lineage.
Prompt: Describe what happens when this leader finally passes away. Does the empire fall to petty rivalry? Does it endure? What legends does this king or queen leave behind?
17. Create a new land feature. The personal domain of one of this region's deities spills over here through an impassable portal. How does it affect the flora and fauna of this area? If there are no deities in this area, re-roll on the task chart.
18. Create a new land feature. Give a race some piece of advanced, non-medieval technology that will not survive The First Age. How does it change their civilization?
19. Create a new land feature. Give this land feature one bizarre attribute that either helps or hinders those who live in it.
20. Create a new land feature. Create a new city with members of every race and cult in this region. How do they get along? Who rules the city and how do they maintain power? If there is only one race and one cult in this region, then treat this roll the same as for task #2.