

OVERVIEW

For a millennium, the Empire was at war. Fueled by military precision and an unprecedented alliance with dragons, the Imperial Armies knew countless victories and few defeats. The Empire grew until its greatest enemy was not any of the barbarian nations to the east, but its own unmanageable size. At the frontier, victories and expansion were replaced by an endless cycle of rebellion and re-conquest.

Weary of war, the Emperor crafted a bold new strategy: peace through trade. One hundred and seventy years ago, he ordered the establishment of Thandar, an independent frontier trading post at the confluence of the four great rivers.

Though many argued that peace with the wild tribes was impossible, trade flourished and the trading post quickly grew to a town, then into a small city, and beyond.

Hero Realms is set in and around the sprawling metropolis that Thandar has grown into. The city-state is now home to folk from all the species and nations of the known world. While Thandar's trade has delivered its promised peace to nations, the wealth generated by its trade spurs endless political and physical conflict amongst its residents.

The Basics
This game comes with this rule sheet and 144 cards. (See the card list on the back.) Each player starts with a personal deck of cards representing their resources, equipment, actions, and champions. Each turn, you will play all of the cards from your hand to gain Gold, Combat, Health, and other powerful effects.

Gold ( ) is used to buy cards from the Market to add to your deck. These cards represent the actions you can perform and champions you can recruit to your side.

Combat ( ) is used to attack other players and their Champions.

Health ( ) is your score. Each player begins the game with 50 Health. When a player has no Health remaining, they are out of the game. The last one standing, wins!

Personal Deck and Keeping Score
Each player begins the game with a personal deck containing a Shortsword, a Dagger, a Ruby, and seven Gold.

We suggest you keep score with pencil and paper, but for your convenience we've also included health-tracking cards. To use them, line up the appropriate side of the "tens digit" card just under the correct digit on the "ones digit" card. For example, if you were at 30 Health, then took 3 damage bringing your Health to 27, you would track that as seen here:



SETUP

To set up the game, shuffle the Market Deck and place it face-down on the table. Then, deal the top five cards of the Market Deck face-up in a row next to the Market Deck. These face-up cards make up the Market.

Next to the last card in the Market, place the 16 Fire Gem cards in a single stack, face-up. Finally, leave a space next to the Market Deck for a Sacrifice Pile where some cards will end up during the game.

Each player shuffles their personal deck and places it face-down in front of them. Leave room next to these for a discard pile.

Randomly determine which player goes first. That player draws three cards (players always draw from their own personal deck). The player going second draws five cards.



Beginning of game layout. Player 1 is going first.

HOW TO PLAY

Players alternate taking turns. Starting with the first player, play proceeds clockwise. Each turn has three phases:

- Main Phase
- Discard Phase
- Draw Phase

Main Phase
Any time during your Main Phase, you may perform any of the following, in any order, as many times as you are able:

- Play a card from your hand.
- Use the expend, ally, and/or sacrifice abilities of any of your cards in play.
- Use Gold to acquire new cards from the Market.
- Use Combat to attack an opponent and/or their champions.

Playing Cards
There is no cost to play a card; simply place it into play face-up on the table in front of you. There are three types of cards you can have in your deck: Actions, Items, and Champions.

Actions and Items
When an Action or Item is played, its primary ability happens immediately. If an Action or Item has an ally and/or a sacrifice ability, you may choose to use one or both of these abilities any time during your Main Phase (provided you fulfill the requirements for doing so).

Actions and Items are put into play face-up in front of you until the Discard Phase, at which point they are placed in your discard pile.

All cards have a title, like ***Spark***, and a card type, like *Action*, *Champion*, or *Item*. Many cards will have a subtype, like *Spell*. Card names, types, and subtypes do not affect gameplay directly, but some cards look for these words on other cards to grant bonuses.



Champions
Unlike Actions and Items, Champions are not discarded at the end of the turn. Instead, they remain in play until they are stunned or sacrificed.

Champions enter play vertically-oriented, with the title of the card furthest away from you. We call this *prepared*. Most champions have an expend ability ( ). To use an expend ability, turn the card sideways to gain the effect listed after the ; you may do this at any point during the Main Phase.

Each Champion has a Defense number (in a shield) that represents the amount of Damage that it must take in a single turn to stun it. Once stunned, a Champion is placed in its owner's discard pile. Damage to Champions does not carry over between turns.

Some Champions are guards. Guards have a black defense shield with word "Guard" above it. Guards that are prepared protect you and your other Champions. While you have a prepared guard in play, you may not be attacked, and your non-guard Champions may not be attacked or targeted by an opponent until all of your guards are stunned.

Notes: Guards protect one player and that player's Champions. They do not protect other players or those other player's champions, even when playing a team format. Also, Champions prepare at the end of your turn. (See "Discard Phase" on the back of this sheet.)

Using Abilities
The Primary Ability of an Item or Action is used immediately when they are played. All other abilities may be played at any time during that player's Main Phase.

If an ability grants Gold or Combat, that resource goes into a resource pool which can be used at any point during the Main Phase. If an ability grants Health, immediately add it to that player's Health total.

Some abilities allow you to choose from multiple effects. Make it clear to everyone which effect you are choosing.

Expend Abilities
Expend abilities are indicated by in the text box. To use this ability, turn the card sideways. You can use the Expend Ability of cards at any point during your Main Phase, including the turn you play the card with an Expend Ability.



Example of a champion after using its expend ability

There are some cards which "prepare" other cards during your turn. This would let you use the ability again on the same turn!

Ally Abilities
Ally Abilities are indicated by a faction icon in the text box. On your turn, an Ally Ability may be used as soon as you have another card of that faction in play. The order in which you play your cards does not matter. As soon as you have two or more cards of the same faction in play, you may trigger all relevant Ally Abilities. They may be used at any time during your Main Phase, and each may only be used once per turn.

Sacrifice Abilities
Some cards have a Sacrifice Ability, indicated by in the text box. These abilities represent using a magic scroll that works once, or a heroic act of a champion doing whatever they can to save the day. Whenever a card is sacrificed, place it in the Sacrifice Pile. If a card is sacrificed for any reason other than its Sacrifice Ability, that ability does not trigger. (If one of the Fire Gem cards would be put into the Sacrifice Pile for any reason, instead put it face-up in the Fire Gem pile.)

Acquiring Cards
Some card abilities will give you Gold. When you gain Gold, it goes into a Gold Pool which you may add to and spend from over the course of your Main Phase.

Gold is used to acquire cards from the Market or from the Fire Gem pile. A card's cost is found in its upper-right-hand corner. To acquire a card, subtract Gold from your Gold Pool equal to the card's cost and put the card into your discard pile. Then, fill the empty space in the Market with the top card of the Market Deck.

Acquiring a card does not count as playing it, so it doesn't go into play and you do not use its abilities. Any remaining Gold is saved and can be used to acquire additional cards during the Main Phase.

Attacking
Some card abilities will give you Combat. When you gain Combat, it goes into a Combat Pool which you may add to and use over the course of your Main Phase. You may use Combat to attack your opponent and/or their Champions. You may make any number of attacks during your Main Phase.

To attack a Champion, subtract any amount of Combat from your Combat Pool and the Champion takes an equal amount of damage. If the Champion has taken damage this turn equal to or greater than its Defense, stun the Champion and put it into its owner's discard pile.

Sometimes a card's ability will instruct you to "Stun target champion." In this case, you stun the Champion without using Combat. (Important reminder: You cannot target non-guard Champions if your opponent has a guard Champion in play!)

To attack an opponent, subtract any amount of Combat from your Combat Pool and lower your opponent's Health by that amount. Opponents cannot be attacked if they have a guard Champion in play -- you'll need to stun guards first before you can attack the player they are protecting.

Note: Many Champions have an Expend Ability that gives Combat. Combat gained from expending a Champion goes into your Combat Pool; your Champion does not attack another Champion directly.

Discard Phase
Whenever you discard a card or acquire a new card from the Market, place it face-up in your discard pile. Any player may look through your discard pile at any time. During your Discard Phase, you do each of the following:

- Lose any Gold remaining in your Gold Pool.
- Lose any Combat remaining in your Combat Pool.
- Put all in-play Items and Actions into your discard pile.
- Put any cards left in your hand into your discard pile.
- Prepare all of your Champions.

Draw Phase
During your Draw Phase, you draw five cards and then your turn ends.

Note: If at any time during your turn your personal deck is empty and you need to draw or reveal cards from your Personal Deck, shuffle your discard pile and place it face-down as your new personal deck.

Example: At the beginning of your Draw Phase you have three cards left in your deck. Draw them, shuffle your discard pile into a new personal deck, then draw two more cards.

TERM REFERENCE

Expend - to turn a card sideways to show it has been used.
Expended - a card that is sideways.
Prepare - to put a card back to its original, vertical orientation.
Prepared - a card in its original, vertical orientation.
Stun - to send a champion to its owner's discard pile. Some abilities stun a champion directly. Most of the time, a champion is stunned when it is dealt damage equal to its defense value.

Hunter — First Blood (3+ players)
Same as Free-for-All, except that each player may only attack or target the player to their left, and may only attack or target the champions belonging to the players on their left and right. The first player starts with 3 cards in their opening hand, the second player starts with 4 cards, and each other player starts with 5 cards. The game ends when a player is eliminated; the player to their right wins! (Even if someone else did the eliminating - play carefully!)

Hunter — Last One Standing (3+ players)
Same as Hunter — First Blood, except when a player is eliminated the game continues. The person to the eliminated player's right gains 10 health and draws a card. Last player standing, wins!

Hydra (4 players, 2 players per team)
Each two-player team begins the game with 75 health. All players on a team share a health score. Each individual player has their own personal deck, hand, discard pile and in-play zone. (Your teammate's cards will not trigger your Ally Abilities.)

Randomly determine which team will go first. Players on that team get three-card starting hands, other players get five-card starting hands. Each team takes a shared turn, both playing their hands at the same time, with teammates going through their Main, Discard and Draw Phases together.

Each player has their own Gold and Combat Pools, and still makes their own decisions regarding playing and acquiring cards, ability activations, and attacking. Teammates may work together to stun Champions, using a combination of Combat from their respective Combat Pools. Teammates may also pool their Gold to acquire cards from the Marketplace. As long as any player on a team has a Guard in play, the team may not be attacked and non-Guard Champions belonging to anyone on that team may not be attacked or targeted by opponents.

When a team's health is reduced to zero, all players on that team are defeated.

With an additional purchase of Hero Realms, or by adding Hero Realms Character Packs, you can play with teams of three. Those teams begin with 100 health each. (Learn more about Character Packs at herorealms.com.)

Emperor (6 players; requires Character Packs or a second copy of Hero Realms.)
Players split into two teams of three, with each team choosing one player to be their Emperor. (If using two Character Packs, make those players the Emperors.) The Emperors sit facing each other, flanked by their teammates (Commanders) on either side.



Commanders start the game with 50 health or whatever number is on their character card (from the Character Packs). Emperors start with 60 health, or 10 more than the number on their character card.

The team going first (Team A) gets a three-card starting hand. The other team (Team B) gets a five-card starting hand. Play begins with Player 1 and proceeds clockwise.

Commanders may only attack or target the enemy Commander across from them and/or the champions controlled by that Commander. If that Commander is defeated, they may then begin to attack and target the enemy Emperor and their champions.

Emperors may attack or target any player or champion.

During their Main Phase, a player may pay one Gold to move a card from their discard pile to the discard pile of a neighboring teammate.

When a Commander is defeated, they may put any one card (from their hand, deck, or discard pile) into the Emperor's discard pile. When an Emperor is defeated, their team loses the game!

CREDITS

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ICON REFERENCE

Faction Icons / Ally Ability
These icons are found in the upper-left-hand corner of many cards, and they indicate that card's faction. When this icon is found in a card's text box, it indicates an Ally Ability.

Guild Faction
The fortune in trade that flows through Thandar has fueled a powerful organized-crime syndicate known as "The Guild."

Necros Faction
The demon-worshiping Necros cult festers in the city's underbelly, preying on the homeless, the forgotten, and any that dare challenge them.

Imperial Faction
The Empire still clings to its military traditions. Its highly-trained soldiers, reality-bending wizards, and deadly dragons comprise the best fighting force the world has ever known.

Wild Faction
Elven kingdoms older than recorded human history, ravaging orc war hosts, savage nomadic human tribes, trolls, and deadly wild beasts can all be found in vast wild lands east of the Empire.

Health
Players start the game with a score of 50 health. If your Health is reduced to zero or less, you are defeated. When this icon is found in a card's text box, it indicates an amount of Health you gain.

Combat
When this icon is found in a card's text box, it indicates an amount of Combat you add to your Combat Pool.

Gold
When this icon is found in the upper-right-hand corner of a card, it indicates the card's cost. (If there is no icon in the upper-right-hand corner of a card, that card's cost is 0.) When this icon is found in a card's text box, it indicates an amount of Gold you add to your Gold Pool.

Expend
When this icon is found in a card's text box, it indicates an expend ability.

Sacrifice
When this icon is found in a card's text box, it indicates a Sacrifice Ability.

Guard
A Champion with this icon is a guard. While a player has a prepared guard in play, they may not be attacked and their non-guard Champions may not be attacked or targeted by an opponent.

Defense
A Champion's Defense is the amount of damage that must be dealt to it in a single turn to stun it.

MULTIPLAYER RULES

Hero Realms is designed to support a wide variety of ways to play. Unless otherwise specified, the standard rules apply to the following game formats. To find other formats, or to share format suggestions, please visit herorealms.com/multiplayer.

Free-For-All (2+ players)
This is the default way to play. Randomly determine someone to go first, then play proceeds clockwise. Anyone can attack anyone else. The last player standing, wins! If there are three or more players, the first player starts with 3 cards in their opening hand, the second player starts with 4 cards, and each other player starts with 5 cards.

CARD LIST

Basic Cards
Fire Gem (16)
Score Tracker (8, 2 per player)
Gold (28, 7 per player)
Shortsword (4, 1 per player)
Dagger (4, 1 per player)
Ruby (4, 1 per player)

Market Deck

Imperial Faction
Arkus, Imperial Dragon
Close Ranks
Command
Darian, War Mage
Domination
Cristov, the Just
Kraka, High Priest
Man-at-Arms (2)
Master Weyan
Rally The Troops
Recruit (3)
Tithe Priest (2)
Taxation (3)
Word of Power

Guild Faction
Borg, Ogre Mercenary
Bribe (3)
Death Threat
Deception
Fire Bomb
Hit Job
Intimidation (2)
Myros, Guild Mage
Parov, the Enforcer
Profit (3)
Rake, Master Assassin
Rasmus, the Smuggler
Smash and Grab
Street Thug (2)

Necros Faction
Cult Priest (2)
Dark Energy
Dark Reward
Death Cultist (2)
Death Touch (3)
Rayla, Endweaver
Influence (3)
Krythos, Master Vampire
Life Drain
Lys, the Unseen
The Rot (2)
Tyrannor, the Devourer
Varrick, the Necromance

Wild Faction
Broelyn, Loreweaver
Cron, the Berserker
Dire Wolf
Elven Curse (2)
Elven Gift (3)
Grak, Storm Giant
Nature's Bounty
Orc Grunt (2)
Rampage
Torgen Rocksplitter
Spark (3)
Wolf Form
Wolf Shaman (2)