

WHAT IS A FACTION?

A faction is a group of people who have come together under a common banner for a similar cause. They may be idealistic missionaries who wish to spread the word of their deity, a band of mercenaries who are out to make a name and a fortune for themselves, a guild of merchants interested only in profit, or anything in between. Factions are able to interact with the world on a much larger scale than individuals, if for no other reason than simply by virtue of numbers. They may establish settlements, trade routes, alliances and militaries to suit their needs, and may earn PCs involved in the faction a reputation, as well as some silver to spend.

Each month, factions will be allowed to take certain actions that must be submitted on the forums by the action deadline each month. These actions include writing letters to NPCs, moving troops, and many more. If unsure as to whether or not the faction is able to do something, ask before actions are due, allowing time to change the action if not capable of doing exactly it.

At the end of each month, a Monthly Report will be posted on the forums. This includes the outcomes of any combats actions involved, the completion of any projects, the current total of each Capacity available to the faction for that month, and responses to letters.

Not everyone is a master tactician, a shrewd politician, or an expert bookkeeper. One may choose to take a very active role in the actions of the settlement each month, reaping the benefits as they arrive and having a more direct impact on the game. One also may choose to take a more passive route, allowing the faction to go about their business with minimal direct intervention from as the faction leader. Doing so results in the faction taking fewer risks and leads to smaller payouts.

HOW DO I START A FACTION?

First ask: Do I really need to start a faction? There are several groups in the game; see if you like any of them. They already have a working faction, and most are happy to recruit new members. If you find one you like which fits your character and their personality, feel free to talk to that Faction's Leader to ask about joining. If this works for you, congratulations! You are now a member of a faction! To find more information about existing factions in the game, feel free to check out our wiki page on the subject. There you will find a brief summary of each faction, which may help answer some questions you have.

There are also plenty of other options that do not involve creating a faction as well: Perhaps your character is a wandering merchant, moving goods for whoever offers the juiciest profit. You could be a member of one of the massive Ulven clans such as Nightriver or a citizen of one of the colonies like New Aldoria, technically affiliated with them in-game, though without a cohesive group or monthly actions to worry about. Nothing in the rules state that you must join or create a faction, and while groups tend to be more influential in the world, individuals can make a substantial difference by talking to the right people, greasing the right palms, and swinging a sword for a cause.

If no factions fit your needs, then there are a few things to know before your faction can be submitted for approval. The first step is to have an idea. What kind of group do you want to be? Noble warriors and their supporters? Scoundrels and thugs without morals? Perhaps you would prefer to be merchants united in the name of profit? There is a possibility for whatever you want to do within the scope of the world.

To be recognized as a faction, have access to the mechanics in place, and start earning resources, a faction must meet the following requirements:

- At least **four dedicated, active Player members and their PCs**; meaning they cannot already belong to another faction and a PC is considered “Active” for the purposes of the faction mechanics if they have attended an event in the current “block of time”. See “Active Status Members” below.
- At least one of these members must have the **Resources skill Martial, Economic, or Political**, allowing them access to the funds, supplies, and people necessary to form a settlement.
- The loyalties of the members should be easily discernible through some form of **heraldry**: tabards, belt flags, color motifs, and the like all work well, but must be unique to your faction and worn by any PCs and NPCs during events. Check with a Faction Team members if you need any help deciding what to use.
- A **starting investment** of 25 silver, representing your group putting money into the settlement in an attempt to get it off the ground.
- The final piece of the puzzle for the Faction Leader to assemble is the **back-story**. Similar to PCs, each faction requires a backstory approved by a Herald to ensure that it fits the scope and feel of Last Hope. This story should explain roughly how the faction came to be, explain a little about their personality as a group, and give a little information about the direction they may be trying to go. It will be posted on the wiki page once it is approved, so revealing major plot twists in said story may not be in your best interest.

Faction Checklist:

1. Four Players with PCs not affiliated with another Faction
2. One member with Resources: Martial, Economic, or Political
3. Heraldry
4. 25 Silver investment
5. Backstory

When all of that is completed, it must be submitted as a whole to the Faction team. The Faction team will discuss it and any revisions that may be needed. In addition, they will ask:

1. What type of Faction it is (Martial, Economic, Political). This will determine the Capacity bonus (below)
2. Location of the settlement
3. Units you can start with
4. Perks/Flaws the Faction may have

Establishing a Faction takes time. Be patient and check in with the Faction team periodically to help address any issues as they may come up.

SETTLEMENT RULES

The Faction settlement at the beginning is little more than a somewhat organized community, a handful of families who banded together towards a common goal. This may be improved through any of the Buildings listed below. Each Settlement also begins with one of the basic unit types: Militia, Representatives, or Traders, to be decided upon the founding of the Settlement. Note there is an **Upkeep** cost on this unit of 1 Martial, 1 Economic, and 1 Political Capacity per month.

Each Settlement is operated and maintained through the expenditure of four main Resources: **Capacity, Growth Points, Time, and Experience**. To construct a building or train a unit, you must first have the required Capacity, Growth Points, and Experience. Declare your intent to construct the building or train the unit during the Monthly Actions for your faction.

Once you declare your intent to create said building/unit, the resources will be deducted from your totals and your timer begins until the project is complete. Your Faction can build as many buildings and train as many units at a time as they have the resources to do.

Listed below are some major points of each settlement or in managing a settlement or faction, including the four main resources described above.

- **Capacity** is the amount of an action your settlement can do a month. It is an abstract measure representing the available work hours and actions your people can do in that time. Every faction action will take Capacity, including growing the settlement.
- **Growth Points** are accumulated by dedicating Capacity (or not) every month. These Growth Points determine both the number of buildings you can build (as every building takes 1) and the size of your settlement.
- **Faction Size** is determined by the number of Growth Points a faction has accumulated. The more Growth Points accumulated, the larger the settlement is. However, if you accumulate negative Growth Points, your settlement starts to shrink. This can have adverse effects over the long term.
- **Morale** indicates the happiness of your population. If the people are happy, they will work harder and faster than if they are unhappy. Upset villagers can slow work, and may engage in protests, and even riots or open banditry. The scale for settlement morale is Inspired / Elevated / Neutral / Concerned / Demoralized. Things that can boost morale are things such as donating gifts to the people, holding festivals, or dedicating Capacity. Things that can diminish morale are pushing workers too hard, taxing them heavily, and being attacked and raided by enemies. Morale will “return to neutral” over time whether it is boosted or diminished. Morale modifies almost everything your faction will try to do, so keep your people happy!
- **Time** is the full number of months required to build a structure or train a unit. The label of “Action” means the month the action is submitted in. Projects with additional time requirements will be listed as “Action + X” meaning that after the initial action, it will take X complete months to complete.
- **Communication** between groups and entities in the game can make an enormous impact on your efforts as a faction. Player run factions and players may communicate freely among themselves without the need of skills or buildings. However, communicating with the “game” is different. Should you find yourself wanting to send a message to an NPC entity then you have to go through proper channels. You cannot just simply submit a

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letter and expect it to be delivered. Factions may build a Falconer's Tower to send messages, players can take the Trade: Courier/Falconer or Resource: Courier skills and be able to assist in sending messages, or players can hire a courier for a fee to deliver a message. Some methods of communication are limited (hawks can only carry so much) and some methods may allow you to deliver silver and items as well (like a courier).

- **Units** are groups of individuals with a themed purpose, such as a militia for fighting or traders for moving goods. All units that are able to be given orders in the field take up Capacity in the form of Upkeep. Units must be trained, paid, and sustained no matter where they are and what they are doing. A faction will eventually max out the number of units they can field due to not being able to sustain their Upkeep.
- **Contracts, Campaigns, & Projects** are circumstantial or can be granted by certain buildings/units and conducted at a settlement giving your people another goal or activity to work towards from month to month. Contracts will be specific requirements to complete, Campaigns let your faction push certain agendas, and Projects allow your people to organize efforts, research, and larger goal oriented changes.
- **Experience** (or XP) is used to show how active members of the faction are in the events surrounding their lives in the world, and also indirectly represents the motivation of the population to strive for greatness. A faction earns one experience point each time one of their members attends an event AND visibly displays the heraldry of the faction. **Declare your faction affiliation and display your heraldry at check-in to earn this XP.** Standards and flags played a large role in the fame and attention granted to nations, factions, and units. To replicate this, showing up to an event with at least four PCs and prominently displaying a standard, flag, or other herald-approved symbol for your faction will earn you an additional XP for that event. In addition, Faction XP can be earned through monthly membership subscriptions.
- **Active Faction** - In order to wield any sort of significant influence over the world, factions are expected to maintain some level of active presence, both in- and out-of-game. **To remain Active as a faction**, the group must accrue 5 XP in a 6-month period (see "blocks of time" below) by attending events and it must have 4 dedicated player members. Failure to do this means the faction is "Inactive". In addition, the Faction Leader must, in those 6 months, submit at least one monthly action via the forums. Attendance for factions will be based on two "blocks" throughout the year; January-June / July-December. A PC is considered "Inactive" if they fail to attend one event in any given block of time. After another continuous 6-month block of time of being Inactive they will be removed from the roster.

If inactive, the Faction and settlement cannot take actions or further projects. After another continuous 6-month block of time of being Inactive, the faction becomes an NPC group and has a chance to disband entirely. Other players interested in reviving the faction may work with the Faction Team at this point to take over. If at any time the roster of a faction drops to less than 4 Player members, the faction immediately reverts to Inactive status for the current block of time.

- For example, Faction A has 4 Players. During the first block (Jan-Jun) of the year, two Players attend one event and the faction leader attends three events. The group has earned 5 exp in the Jan-Jun block, so it remains active. However, the 4th Player never attended any events, so their roster now shows 3 Active members and 1 Inactive member. During the second block (July-Dec), each active member attends

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2 events, generating 6 exp for the faction. However, the Inactive PC still did not show and is removed from the roster. Even though the faction earned enough exp (6 total) from attendance, the current roster still places the faction as “Inactive” for the next block of time, Jan-Jun of the next year.

- **Perks and Flaws**: During their creation, factions may choose to add a unique perk and flaw to their group, granting them certain in-game bonuses at the cost of an in-game detriment. These benefits should be small; approach the Faction Team with an idea before finalizing your faction. The faction also be given a comparable penalty, determined by the Faction Team to counterbalance the benefit gained. You may choose to accept or decline the perk at this point, or respond with a different benefit idea, which will follow the same process. You do not need to pursue this step if you don't want to, although after your faction has been finalized, you may no longer add such a perk to the group.
 - For example, the Phoenix Syndar live alone on an island that happens to stay more temperate year-round than the mainland. They do not have competition for supplies, and may harvest food slightly easier, although their secluded location makes moving goods and units to and from their settlement more difficult. On the other hand, the Vandregonian Infantry enjoys the protection and some of the resources of Newhope where their headquarters is stationed. In order to recuperate some of these expenditures, however, the Council of Ten has levied a tax against the group, which makes financing projects more difficult.

CAPACITY

Capacity is the amount of an action your settlement can do a month. It is an abstract cap representing your available work hours and the actions your people can do in that time. There are three types of Capacity: **Martial, Economic, and Political**. All settlements start with three base Capacity in all categories. The Capacity type the same as the Faction type will get a two Capacity bonus (ie. A Martial Faction will start with 5 Martial, 3 Economic, 3 Political). Capacity is “reset” every month, meaning that spent Capacity returns and unspent Capacity does not get stored.

While there may be ways of temporarily boosting Capacity, the only permanent way is the construction of Buildings. Buildings require Growth Points as this represents attracting more people to the settlement to be able to be put to work.

- **Martial Capacity** - Martial Capacity represents combative power, policing, and law and order functions of the settlement. Creating, training, upgrading, and maintaining military units all takes Martial Capacity. This is due to having to dedicate time and energy to the process. Some of these actions require consistent attention month to month, which is captured as Upkeep. Martial Capacity also represent law and order functions in the settlement. Policing the settlement is a martial job and requires trained personnel. The Courts of the settlement require the martial powers to sentence and jails require the martial powers to punish.
- **Economic Capacity** - Economic Capacity represents not only the wealth of the settlement, but also the agricultural and production capabilities. Financial actions like trading, selling, buying, and centralized monetary institutions will increase the wealth of the settlement through the movement of silver. However, agricultural activities are the baseline of the economy, and is required for the settlement to be successful. Finally, the settlement produces goods as well, whether it be food, pottery, or other resources. These resources all affect the economy.
- **Political Capacity** - Political Capacity represents not only the political actions you can undertake, but the social actions as well. The focus of politics is the community, and Political Capacity is first focused on maintaining the community. Factions are purpose driven organizations when started. Paying attention to reaffirming that purpose keeps citizens behind the cause. In addition to solidifying the homefront, Political Capacity can be used to help support the Faction’s interests abroad as well. Whether its supporting their own initiative or others, this Capacity adds weight to those actions.

Conclusion:

Capacity’s main purpose is used to maintain and grow the Faction settlement. To this end, it can be used to generate Growth Points to build new buildings. However, it can be used like the Resources skills to put additional weight behind a cause. Finally, there may be events that come up during the year that require certain amount of Capacity to achieve.

GROWTH RATINGS AND POINTS

Every Faction has a Growth Rating. This represents whether they are attracting people, focusing on having a stable population, or ignoring/driving people away. The ratings are **Growing / Stable / Declining**, and are calculated on Capacity put towards growth.

- To be **Stable**, a settlement must dedicate 1 Martial, 1 Economic, and 1 Political Capacity per month. This represents the Law and Order functions of the settlement running (Martial) as well as defense; the money, trade, and agricultural being undertaken and distributed (Economic); and maintaining the people behind your cause and their leadership (Political) . This will net a Faction +0 Growth Points per month.
- To be **Growing**, a settlement must dedicate an additional 1 Martial, 1 Economic, and 1 Political Capacity per month (for a cumulative 2/2/2). This represents additional services required by new residents to your settlement. Having 2/2/2 will net a faction +0.5 Growth Points per month. If a Faction wishes to grow quicker, dedicating a cumulative 4/4/4/ will net +1 Growth Points per month, 8/8/8 will net +1.5 Growth Points per month, and so forth.
- If a Faction does not dedicate at least 1 Martial, 1 Economic, and 1 Political Capacity per month to maintain their settlement, they are **Declining** and will net a -0.5 Growth Point per month.

Growth Points are used to build Buildings for your settlement. 1 Building requires 1 Growth Point, 5 Faction XP, and may require additional Capacity during its construction. Buildings will NEVER have Upkeep costs; any additional Capacity required will ONLY be during the construction phase.

| Capacity Dedicated | Growth Points per Month |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| None | - 0.5 |
| 1 Martial, 1 Economic, 1 Political | + 0.0 |
| 2 Martial, 2 Economic, 2 Political | +0.5 |
| 4 Martial, 4 Economic, 4 Political | +1.0 |
| 8 Martial, 8 Economic, 8 Political | +1.5 |
| 16 Martial, 16 Economic, 16 Political | +2.0 |

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Faction size is determined by the sum of the Growth Points earned by the Faction. A Faction earning positive Growth Points will increase the faction size; factions earning negative Growth Points will decrease faction size. Factions fall under five size categories that are roughly related to population.

| Faction Size | Growth Points Earned | Approx. Population |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Tiny | 0-10 | 0-100 |
| Small | 11-20 | 101-300 |
| Medium | 21-30 | 301-600 |
| Large | 31-40 | 601-1000 |
| Grand | 40+ | 1000+ |

MONTHLY ACTIONS

Each month, your faction leader will be responsible for giving instructions to each of your units, dedicating Capacity to causes, and allocating resources as they see fit, all of which will be submitted as their Monthly Actions. These actions may be detailed, allowing you to exert a greater level of control over the minutia involved in political, military, or economic wheelings and dealings. On the other hand, you may opt to leave your faction to their own devices, taking a more passive role in their actions. Doing so will lead the units to be far more cautious, with their chances of success slightly reduced, and their opportunity to excel diminished significantly.

Here is a summarized list of the information covered in the monthly reports for each faction:

=== FACTION RESOURCES & STORAGE ===

Faction Size: (The size of your settlement determined by Growth Points)

Growth Points: (The number of surplus people you have to work buildings)

Morale: (The current morale of the settlement)

Martial Capacity: (The ability to take and sustain martial actions this month)

Economic Capacity: (The ability to take and sustain economic actions this month)

Political Capacity: (The ability to take and sustain political actions this month)

Silver: (The amount of silver in the Faction coffers)

Experience: (The amount of experience points your faction has available to spend on new training and buildings)

Heraldry: (Summary of the heraldry/uniform of your faction)

Members: (List of the names of the characters in your faction. Inactive members will be tagged as such, so faction members can see this and plan accordingly)

=== SETTLEMENT BUILDINGS & PROJECTS ===

Building Name (This is where each building is detailed. The effects and attributes of the building will be summarized here).

Projects: (Current projects, if available, will be here along with any resources or items allocated towards it with a detail of estimated goal, estimated time to completion, % of completion, and a list of anything contributing to the project)

Faction Perk: (Your faction perk, if chosen, will be detailed here. You must take a flaw if you choose a perk.)

Faction Flaw: (Your faction flaw, if chosen, will be detailed here. You must take a flaw if you choose a perk.)

=== FACTION UNITS ===

Housed Units: (What units currently housed at your settlement)

Unit Name

- Rank: (The current rank or training level of that unit)
- Max Size: (The largest size the unit can grow to unless later modified)
- Able: (The number of able bodied people that contribute to any actions taken)
- Injured: (The number of injured people; injured cannot contribute to actions like regular troops can)
- Morale: (The current Morale of the unit, which influences actions).
- Skills: (This is where additional training, add-ons, or equipment is listed with their effects)
- Located: (Current location of the unit)
- Notes: (Special notes like drives, conditions, or updates may be listed here)
- Upkeep: (How much Martial, Economic, Political Upkeep the unit needs)

=== MONTHLY ACTIONS & UPDATE ===

Monthly Information

Messages: (Incoming and outgoing messages will be summarized here.)

Settlement: (This is where a brief summary will go that details out many aspects of the faction's settlement; visitors, gifts that came in, construction projects, festivals or events, encounters or attacks on the people, etc.)

Random Encounters: (Each month, we roll for random encounters that add flavor for the faction. These can be good, bad, or special encounters. Sometimes, they are modified greatly by existing buildings or units.)

Unit Actions: (This is where each unit will have a summary of their actions and what they did for the month.)

Player Actions: (This is where players who use skills or donate items will be detailed.)

Due to many factors involved in each group's actions each month, leaders are encouraged and even expected to strive for more critical thinking when announcing their faction's monthly plan. Asking “What can I do?” is a very open-ended question that could not realistically be answered in a timely fashion and to the player's satisfaction. Instead asking “Can I do...?” allows for a much more pointed answer, shows the heralds that the players are thinking for themselves, and allows for expansion and elaboration on both the part of the player and of the herald dictating the action.

As a faction, you will also be forced to respond to things that can periodically happen. Crime in your settlement, banditry against your units, harsh weather conditions, favorable merchant visits, and moments of opportunity can all randomly happen from month to month. This will require each faction to react to random encounters much like we have to in the real world. You may also use some of your player skills creatively, such as Resources: Economical, to have access to buying things on the open market. This is a place where commodities, such as Reagents, could be purchased. Many factors can influence the costs of things you may need; distance to nearby settlements, the time of the year, the current state of banditry in your area, etc.

It is very important to keep in mind the scope of the world when planning your faction's desired

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actions each month: you make up a small community of people. Cities such as Newhope and New Aldoria are comprised of several thousand, whereas the larger Ulven clans may be tens of thousands or more. This does not mean that your faction is insignificant, it is simply to remind leaders that there is always someone bigger. Your faction may not have the numbers to win an assault on the center of a Clan's territory, but perhaps they could take or hold an outlying village, or persuade someone who has that kind of military presence to assist you. Other factions will often be willing to work with you to accomplish these goals, so communicate! Talk to each other, set up trade routes and deals, determine the tactics to be used for an upcoming battle. Find allies, send hawks or diplomats to speak for you where you cannot. The world will change, with or without your efforts. You may not be able to force a drastic difference in the course of actions, but you may be able to guide it towards a favorable outcome, and with enough groups working together and planning their actions accordingly, the possibilities are nearly endless.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Factions are handled and coordinated in various ways and it is up to the players joining a faction and that faction's leaders to figure out how they want to be involved. Factions are not required to be a part of Last Hope, but they are a great way to join forces with other players and accomplish goals. Here are a few ways to get involved.

- Players can attend events and properly wear their faction heraldry. This can allow them in-game role playing opportunities but will generate experience points for their faction.
- Read the faction summaries and actions that are posted on the Last Hope forums. Each faction has their own private board that has their faction info and what is happening each month with the faction. Knowing this information can help you expand your own story and role play.
- Support projects, initiatives, and units through the use of donating items and money, or even certain skills. For example, if you want to influence the economy of your settlement, then pledging your PC's Resource: Economics skill to influence the Economic Capacity would be a great option. Another example could be to use Resources: Political to help a current political campaign.
- Trade skills can sometimes help other faction members during downtime mechanics. For example, if a PC has a warrior and their equipment is busted up, if another active PC in the faction has Trade: Blacksmith then they can assist in the cost in-between events. Downtime mechanics are paid for by each PC at check-in and they represent the costs of healing and repairs. A small faction with a blacksmith may give a small bonus to each other faction member... but if this is combined with a Trade Guild, a Hospital, and an Armory, then faction members can work together to get premium/low costs on repairs and healing.
- Nothing. That is right, there is nothing saying you are required to get more involved in factions. Some players are very involved, making new props and writing lore and content for their faction, and others take on a passive role and let someone else do the faction work. Either option is fine and is up to you and your faction members.