



# DVNGEON HACK

by Andrew Jackson

aka

CrazyPenguin

In Dungeon Hack, you and several friends/enemies band together under the watchful eye of the Hackmaster and go on a quest to find the Holy Red Herring!

## Character Creation and Classes:

Creating a character is easy. First, you chose a name and a gender. These are unimportant, for the most part. Then, you choose a class. There are three classes; Fighter, Magic User, and Herring Farmer. All of these classes are heroic vocations, and so your character has to be one to be an adventurer in this fantasy land.

All of the possible actions in the world can fall under the three skills, Fighting, Magic Using, or Herring Farming. All skills can be one of four levels, Great, Good, Ok, or Suck. Each one corresponds to a die; Great is 1d10, Good is 1d8, OK is 1d6, and Suck is 1d4. The skill name which is the same as your class name is the skill you are Good at. Choose one of the others to be OK at and the third to Suck at. Done!

### Skills

Any time you do something with a questionable result, such as punching out a dragon or climbing a wall, it is a skill roll. Everything has a Good/OK/Suck set up (except for Big Bad Evil Guys), so it is kinda rock-paper-scissors which skill is the best to use.

Hackmasters, try to have the Good/OK/Suck spread in mind before the players roll to overcome the obstacle. You should probably also try to have it make sense. Fighting should be a barbarian's Good skill, not Herring Farming.

Fighting refers to not only the actual act of fighting, be it with weapons or unarmed, but also with anything to do with fighting, such as weaponsmithing or discussing tactics. It can also be used for feats of strength. Perhaps you're fighting that rock when you scramble up it.

Magic Using is about, well, using magic. It could be casting spells, it could be identifying spells, it could be choosing which robes are the right ones to wear today. What magic system does Dungeon Hack use? Whatever you want! You describe the spells and what they do!

Herring Farming is a dangerous activity with many things one must know in order to perform successfully. Therefore, this skill covers everything not already covered by Fighting or Magic Using, be it sneaking around or inciting a crowd. Herring Farming is serious business.

### Using Magic

Say that a barbarian is charging you, and you want to cast a spell to defeat him. You could fireball him, but that'd be boring. You could instead describe how you cast a spell to momentarily send yourself back in time, allowing you to charm some beavers to gnaw on the trees so that at the exact moment in the present, the trees fall and smash the barbarian. That one would probably get you a description bonus as well.

## How to use skills

When performing an action, you describe what your character is trying to do. Then you roll the relevant skill, and the enemy (or inanimate object) rolls the same skill. The winner of the skill roll determines what actually happens. Don't be afraid to hold back. A single skill roll can be much, much more than "I swing my sword!" In fact, a single skill roll is all that is needed to get past most encounters.

Remember, the winner of the skill roll determines what actually happens. If you try attacking an NPC dude, and you roll Fighting lower than they roll Fighting, then it's up to the Hackmaster to decide what happens, does he riposte and chop your head off? Does he just humble you and let you go? You don't know! But if you win, you get to choose!

## Initiative

Most of the time, it will be first-come-first-serve. The person who describes their action first goes first. The exception is that if someone comes up with something else to do before the first person rolls, and everybody agrees that it is more awesome than the first person's action, then that can happen instead. Don't get too rowdy about it, though, no shouting over all of the other players to try to go first.



## Ties

If both you and the enemy roll the same number when doing a skill roll, it's a tie. Neither side wins, and a different skill has to be used to pass this obstacle.

## Description Bonus

Make sure that the description of your action is entertaining, because if it is, the Hackmaster can apply a description bonus to your roll!

This is only applicable to the offense (you don't describe your action before hand on the defense, you see), and only for player characters. And Big Bad Evil Guys.

This is relative, of course, and varies from +1 to +3.

## Advancement and Death

Every time you succeed in a skill roll, congratulations! You increase that skill by one step! Only the class skill, such as Fighting for Fighters, can be increased to Great.

However, whenever you lose a skill roll, you'll probably die. If that happens, the character is dead, gone forever. No resurrection on the quest for the Holy Red Herring. However, you can create a new character, with the Good/OK/Suck skill set up, and the group will probably find him and pick him up shortly. You don't even have to change the names. Parents in Dungeon Hack aren't very inventive.

## Big Bad Evil Guys

If you happen to meet a Big Bad Evil Guy, then you're probably near the end of your quest to get the Holy Red Herring! However, these are tough guys indeed. They're Good at all of the skills, can have a description bonus, AND they have to be defeated using all three skills in order to be wholly defeated, making them the only obstacle where you have to roll more than one successful skill roll to get past.

## Suicide

If you want to, you can suicide your character on an obstacle, killing your character instantly but allowing those who survive you to continue on. Make sure to describe how your character sacrifices himself to allow the others to survive, otherwise the Hackmaster might do it for you, and he'd make sure that your character performed a very embarrassing action.

## Puns

Creative interpretation of the Hackmaster's words is encouraged. If you can turn what he says into a pun, by all means, do so.

## Loss

If all of the player characters die before acquiring the Holy Red Herring, you lose. Too bad.

## Win

If any player character, even one, reaches the Holy Red Herring, then congratulations! They have won the game! Their adventuring career is finished. That's it, pack up your stuff, go home. Game over.

## Variants

The system which lies as the foundation of Dungeon Hack can be easily adjusted to fit many different genres. Perhaps you wish to run a cyberpunk game, but don't quite like the ruleset of the cyberpunk systems out there, so you create a variant of Dungeon Hack. After choosing a genre, the most important bit is to choose the name of the variant. A good name for a cyberpunk variant of Dungeon Hack, for example, would be Cyber Hack.

Then, you need to rename the classes and skills. One of the classes should be a physical combat type class, another should be able to do weird stuff, and the third should cover the rest. In Dungeon Hack those would be Fighting, Magic Using, and Herring Farming. In a cyberpunk world, they could be Soldiering, Hacking, and Herring Cyberfarming. Feel free to have the jack-of-all-trades skill be something about farming herrings, no matter how dissonant it may be in your chosen genre.

The final thing need to be done is to adapt the Holy Red Herring to the genre. It should be a genre specific (or genre savvy) macguffin. For Cyber Hack, the characters are all trying to acquire the REDHERRING.exe AI, for example. Remember, the point is to have fun at the expense of being serious!

## Other variant ideas

- Caveman Hack – Hunter, Chanter, Herringosaur Farmer
- Space Hack – Laserteer, Computer Expert, and Space Herring Farmer
- Warhacker 40k – Space Marine, Psyker, and Herringus Farmerator

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Dedicated to you, the player

Based off of a silly choose-your-own-adventure game  
I programmed for the TI-83+ calculator in high school,  
enjoy!

<http://memegenerator.net/Advice-Herring/>

