

# Primordial Age

This age represents the aeons before any of the sapient races or the corrupting touch of chaos walk the earth; it is an age before time. Across the seemingly infinite years, and through incredible feats of godly power, the divine will of the gods shapes the land, giving it forests, mountains, water, and much more. This is your own personal Genesis.

The world now appears as an infinite meadow, with little or no features to speak of. To begin sculpting the surface of your world, roll 1d6 and consult the table below. This will reveal which kind of feature will grace the surface next. After this, roll 2d12 to find out the where to locate the starting hex. Once you have designated the location of the first hex, roll 2d6. The result of this roll will tell you exactly how many hexes of this feature to draw. Now look at the starting hex you just created. Around it you will see six other hexes. Roll 1d6 and starting with the hex above the first you located, and counting clockwise, locate the next hex depending on the result of the die. Then roll another d6, and using the last hex you drew on as the reference point, locate and fill the hex with the appropriate terrain. Keep doing this until you reach the number of hexes designated by the 2d6 roll. There is an example right after the tables to show you how this process works.

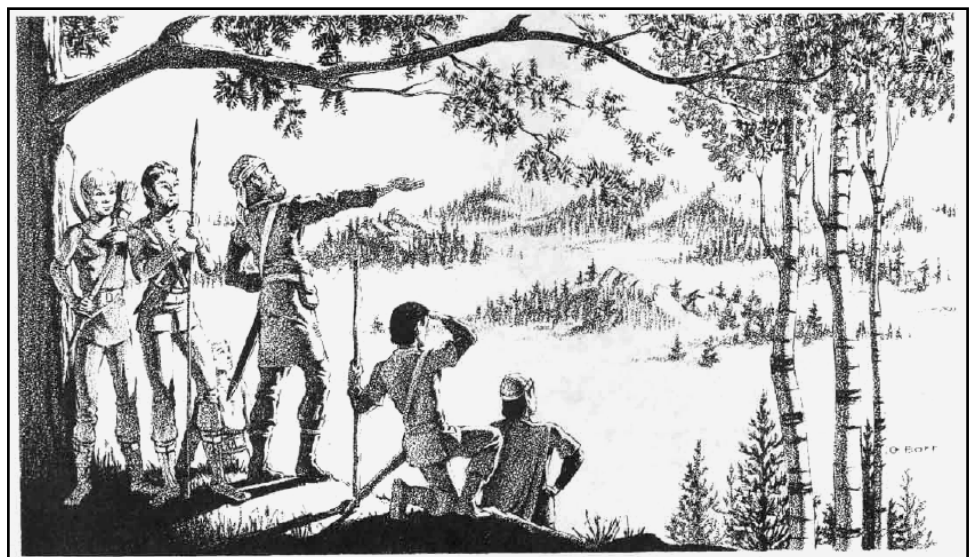
Congratulations! You have just created a natural feature that will stand as a testament of your power through the ages. Repeat this process until you consider the map is finished, and then go to the Precursors Age, to find out who inhabited the land first.

A few tips before you start wielding your godly powers, though. If you find that the result of a die roll ruins your map (for example, if you created a valley, with a river and a little forest nearby,

and really liked how the location turned out, and then get a mountain result right on top of it, that destroys everything to create a boring wall of rock), just ignore the location result and repeat the 2d12 roll to get a new location, or re-roll the whole thing. It is worth noting, however, that although sometimes the dice show confusing results at first, they usually create things you would otherwise not have thought of (or wouldn't have dared to do!), so give the dice a chance from time to time. Each feature has a special rule or two explained in their descriptions.

1	Forest
2	Hills
3	Mountains (1-5: surrounded with Hills, 6: no Hills)
4	Marsh
5	Water (1-4: River, 5-6: Lake or Sea)
6	Pick One

**Forest:** Gnarled woods, twisted trees, branches that get in the way of travellers, roots that seem to move to make the unwary trip and fall, lair of giant spiders and hungry lizards the size of horses; or mysterious pine forests, home of were creatures, druids, and dangerous fey, more than willing to slit the throat of anyone who dares to step into their sacred groves and fountains. In its most basic form, this terrain represents just a lot of



trees, one next to another, living happy and long tree lives (until someone chops them down, at least).

If you get a Forest result that overlaps with another Forest, this creates a really Dense Forest hex: adventuring parties will, most often than not, avoid this hexes, for it is way to easy to get lost in them, and, from time to time this places spawn the worst kind of forest-dwelling creatures chaos can summon. If you get a Forest result that overlaps with Hills, you get a Forested Hills result instead (these don't have any special rules, they just look pretty). Forests don't overlap on Mountain hexes, so ignore it and re-roll if this happens. If you get a Forest result that overlaps with Marshes, you get a Mangrove hex. Mangroves look like a regular Marsh, but with lots of water resistant trees with really weird roots. Forests that overlap with a River result don't create a special hex, this just means that the River runs through the forest. Forests can't overlap on Lake or Sea hexes, so ignore it and re-roll if this happens.

**Hills:** Beautiful rolling hills, crowned with tress filled with chirping birds and squirrels while the sun sets behind them. Looks like a great place to make camp, if it weren't for the goblin warren beneath that one, or the cursed tombs that occupy the earth beneath that one, the one with the really weird looking stones standing over it. These mounds of dirt and stone used to be proud mountains, back when the earth was young, or are going to be, sometime in the not-so-near future. These places are favoured by those who want to keep an eye on the surrounding terrain, and sometimes they are the preferred choice of those that want to build underground catacombs for their nobles or heroes.

If a Hills result overlaps with a Forest result, you get a Forested Hills result instead. If a Hills result overlaps with another Hill result, nothing particularly interesting happens, just re-roll. Hills don't overlap with Mountains hexes, so ignore it and re-roll if this happens. If you get Hill result that overlaps with a Marsh result, the Hill replaces the Marsh in that particular hex; it doesn't create a new kind of terrain. If you get a Hill result that overlaps with a River result, erase the river in that hex (the water goes under it and comes out of it in another place) or erase it in that hex and give the river a logical course. If you get a Hill result that overlaps with a Lake or Sea result, draw a Plains Hex instead.

**Mountains:** The mere sight of these mighty walls of stone, its peaks glowing with snow and ice, and with powerful winds soaring around them, makes the proudest and most battle-hardened warrior of the realm feel humble and weak, and the most powerful wizards feel mortal and ephemeral. Under its roots lie hidden the entrances to the Underworld, ripe with unspeakable monstrosities ready to plunder the surface, and the Dwarves worked (or used to, depending on how greedy they become and how deep they dig) the stone and the minerals the earth shares with them. All in all, mountains simply *rock*.



If a Mountain result overlaps with a Forest result, replace the Forest hex with a Mountain hex. If a Mountain result overlaps with a Hills result, replace the Hill hex with a Mountain hex. If a Mountain result overlaps with another Mountain result, you get an Impassable Mountains hex instead. This particular mountain range is impossible to go through, and its terrain its way to inclined to build anything over it (though Dwarves and other creatures more attuned with stone can build beneath it). If a Mountain result overlaps with a Marsh result, replace the Marsh hex with a Mountain hex. If a Mountain result overlaps with a River result, erase the river in that hex (the water goes under the mountains and comes out of them in another place) or erase it in that hex and give the river a logical course. If you get a Mountain result that overlaps with a Lake or Sea result, draw a Hills Hex instead.

Mountains ranges usually have Hills around them. Whenever you get a Mountain result, roll another d6 to find out if there are Hills around them. Draw all around the range, replacing any other hex as if you were placing

Hills (e.g., a Forest hex turns into a Forested Hills hex, etc).

**Marsh:** For the uneducated eye, these places might look putrid and lifeless, but druids know better. Marshes are filled with life forms of the toughest kind. If there is a place where "survival of the fittest" is a valid saying, it's in the humid, bubbling, misty, and ominous dominions of the Marsh. Home to lethal beasts like giant turtles, monstrous crocodiles, the savage lizard men, and the seemingly undying trolls. This is also the kingdom of the vile black dragon. All adventurers thread carefully, lest they want their rotting corpses to be an addition to the ecosystem.

If you get a Marsh Result that overlaps with a Forest result, you get a Mangrove result instead. If you get a Marsh result that overlaps with a Hills result, replace that hex with a Marsh hex; it doesn't create a new kind of terrain. If you get a Marsh result that overlaps with a Mountains result, nothing happens, reroll until you get a different result. If you get a Marsh result that overlaps with another Marsh result, you get a Death Swamp hex instead. Only the truly stupid dare to traverse a Death Swamp, as its ghostly lights and inhabitants, worthy of the nightmares of a crazy man, make the incredibly exhausting and confusing landscape an impossible foe to beat by mortal means. You might have the strongest armor in the realm, but it will be of no use when eight tentacles four times your size drag you down to drown you, as a reward for being such a "brave" traveller (colorful prose aside, Death Swamps work just like Dense Forests or Impassable Mountains: they can't be travelled through, and they can spawn really nasty creatures from time to time). If you get a Marsh result that overlaps with a River result, erase the river from that point onward: the river feeds the Marsh and dies right there. If you get a Marsh result that overlaps with a Sea result, replace the Sea hex with a Marsh hex.



**Water:** The building block of life. Without water there would be no trees for the elves, beer for the dwarves or "pipe weed" (whatever that is) for those lazy halflings. Waters with some depth can be the home of some curious monsters, like the mermen, tritons, the fierce krakens, and other creatures forgotten even by the gods themselves. The realm beneath the waves is one forbidden to the world of the surface, and the earth-dwelling creatures better pray that is the same the other way around.

**River:** Rivers are usually born in Mountain or Hill hexes. When rolling 2d12 for location, consider choosing the nearest Mountain or Hill range and beginning the river there, however, if you really want to, you can begin your river in any hex (sometimes water just springs out of the earth). You can choose to roll for the length of the river (2d6, as usual. This means the river runs strong for some time and then, for some reason or another, becomes weaker and weaker until people don't even bother mapping it anymore), or you can choose to keep rolling until the river gets to a Marsh, a Death Swamp, another River, or a Sea or Lake hex.

When rolling to find out in which direction the river goes, treat your d6 as a d3 (1-2: 1, 3-4: 2, 5-6: 3) and only choose the three hexes right in front of the direction the river is currently going (at its birth point, rivers usually go downhill, that is, away from its source, whether they are mountains, hills, or just a hole in the ground). This way, the river will usually go "forward". Repeat this process until the river is finished. If, for some reason, your river chooses to pick a really stupid course, re-roll for its direction from the beginning.

Rivers can only be crossed by low level parties in some points. For every three hexes the river runs strong, there is one point in which it can be crossed. Randomly determine in which hexes this fords and bridges are (e.g., if the river runs through 12 hexes, roll 1d12 four

times, if it runs through 5 hexes, roll 1d6 and re-roll if you get a 6, etc).

**Lake or Sea:** These two are not different in-game, mechanics wise; they are basically a big no-no for travelling parties, just like Impassable Mountains or Dense Forests. You can assume that any body of water of at least five or six hexes that at some point leaves the map is a Sea, anything smaller than or that doesn't leave the map is just a Lake.

If you get a Lake or Sea result that overlaps with a Forest result, replace the Forest hex with a Sea or Lake hex. If you get a Lake or Sea result that overlaps with a Hills result, replace the Hills hex with a Plain hex. If you get a Lake or Sea result that overlaps with a Mountains result, replace the Mountains hex with a Hills hex. If you get a Lake or Sea result that overlaps with a Marsh

result, replace the Marsh hex with a Lake or Sea hex. If a Lake or Sea result overlaps with another Lake or Sea result, nothing particularly interesting happens, just re-roll.

**Plains:** Beautiful meadows, ready to become the granary of the kingdom, or the harsh but rich steppes for horse riding cultures, this terrain is the preferred spot for humans to settle, especially when they want to build big, walled cities.

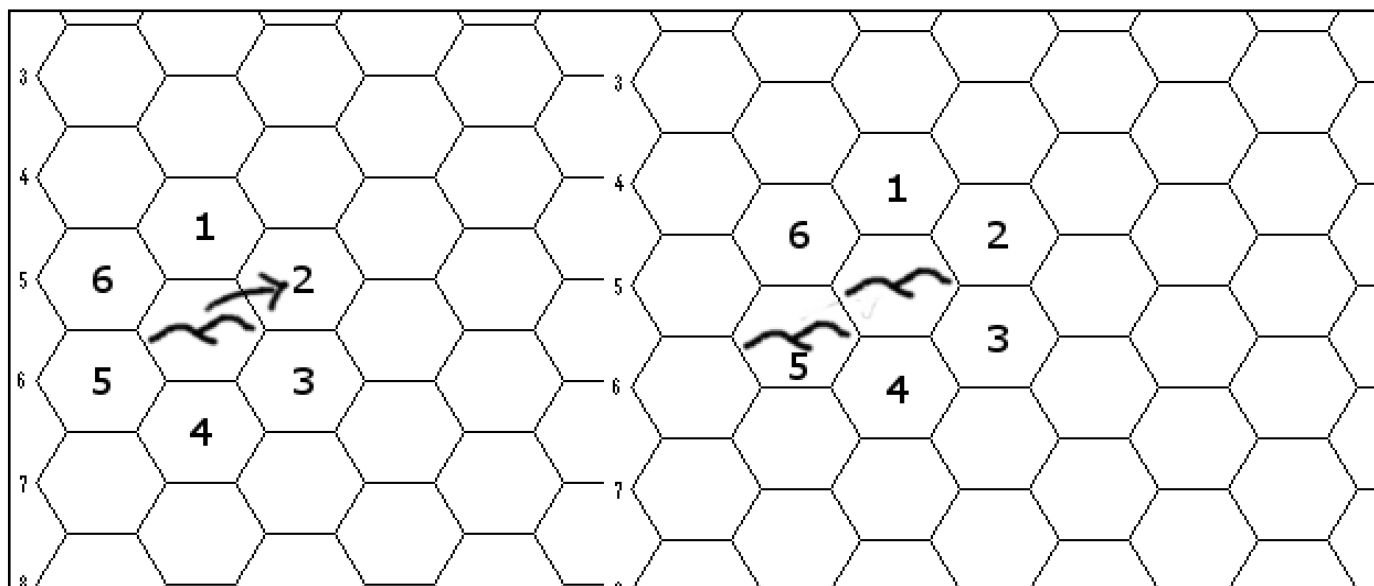
You surely noticed that there are no Plains results in the main Primordial Table. That is because generating Plains is *plain* (yes, you just read that) boring. Besides, the map begins as an endless plain, so any hex not filled by another type of terrain by the end of this age is considered a Plain hex.



## Primordial Age Example

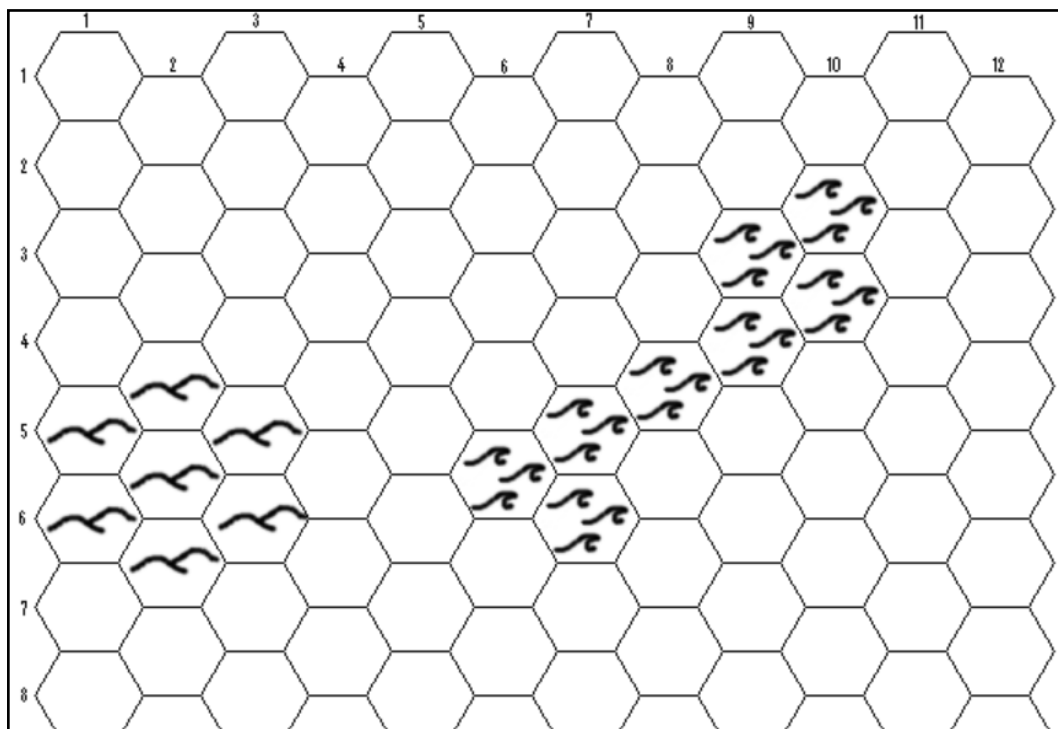
So, we have a barren wasteland, filled with lots of nothing. With a roaring thunder the gods start throwing water and rocks and seeds into the world, in the hopes of creating something that mortals might find awe inspiring.

We start by rolling 1d6 in the Primordial Table to find out what we are creating first. We get a 2. This means Hills. All right, now we roll 2d12 to determine the location of the initial hex, and we get 5 and 2. We place our hills where the dice gods dictated, and now we have to roll 2d6 to find out how many Hill hexes we are going to draw, and we get 3 and 3, for a total of 6.



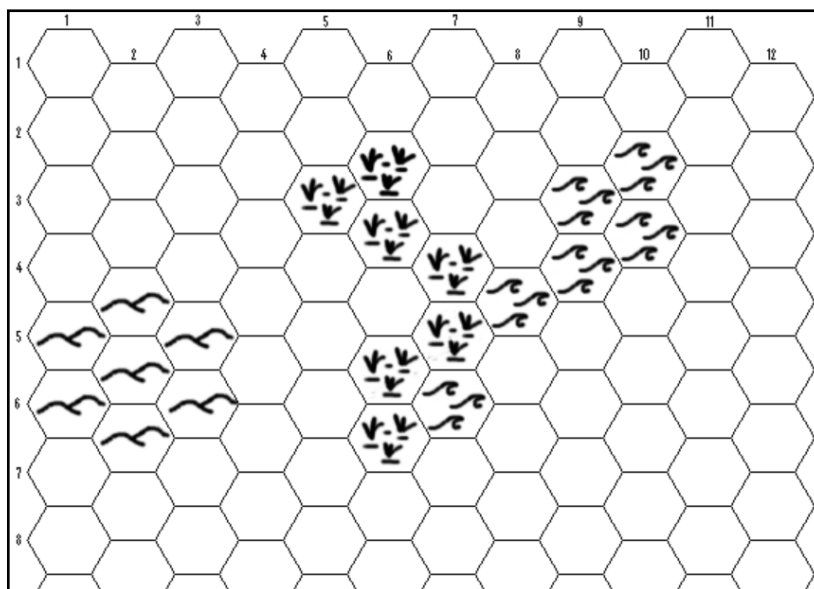
Now to the tricky part: we need to imagine that every hex around that first Hill hex has a number that goes from 1 to 6, starting with the one above the Hill hex and counting clockwise. Now we roll 1d6 to find out where to draw our second Hill hex, and the die shows a 2. This means we will now fill that hex (the one that is north-east of our first hex) with Hills and now use *this* hex as a reference point for the next, as seen in the image. Note that in this case, as we are placing Hills and these don't overlap with other Hills, if we get a 5 now we need to re-roll until we get something else. We have to repeat the same process until we have placed a total of 6 Hill hexes.

Once the hills are forged and firmly set into the ground of our land, we roll again in the Primordial Table to add a new feature to our barren earth. We get a 5, this means Water. We have to roll again to determine if it is a River or a Lake/Sea. A result of 6 tells us this is going to be a Lake or a Sea. We now roll 2d12 to determine its location. 2 and 10, yell the dice gods, so be it! We need the size of this body of water now. 2d6 gives us a total of 8 hexes. We now proceed to place each individual hex following the guides stated previously.



That is one weird looking lake! I'm tempted to reroll for its shape, but we will leave it like this for the time being and see where the dice get us later on.

We repeat the whole process again, and the final result is a Marsh, right in the middle of the map. Let's see if we can get it to overlap with the hills or the lake. Well, as you can see in the second image in this page, the swamp ate a lot of that lake, but left a smaller lake intact in the south. Note that, as Marshes don't combine in a new hex with the Lake/Sea terrain, the Marsh just replaced the Lake in the places where they overlapped.



After this, we would need to keep rolling until we are satisfied with the results. This might take you a couple more rolls, maybe three, twenty, or forty, it depends on when you think the map looks cool. When this happens, jump to the next age, the **Precursors Age**. A couple of hints before you move on, though.

You surely noticed that this way of randomly generating terrain is kind of like painting with the broad, wild strokes of a brush: some forests here, a big hilly region over there, a river that goes along the border of this mountain range in this corner, and some small swamps scattered all over the map. Sometimes the paint will mix and you will get a combined terrain. Sometimes it won't. Sometimes you will get an elegant, beautiful piece, like a Monet. Sometimes you will get a Pollock. None of them are *wrong*. You could theoretically play this game without generating any terrain, just using an infinite meadow as the setting, or play it with what it would look like a total mess of a map, with one hex of mountains next to a lake next to a swamp next to another mountain and so on... but, the latter would make a very difficult terrain for adventuring parties to traverse (and this means that the game will slow down anytime the adventurers leave the safety of civilization, which is like, the meat of the game), and the former would be simply boring.

The point of this Age, and of this whole game/simulation, really, is for you to watch a very particular kind of world (a classical, old school, D&D-esque milieu) unfold before your eyes, with the fickle yet always inventive roll of the dice as the only guide. It's supposed to be *fun*. As it was stated before, if you feel like deciding something for yourself, do it. Want mountains here? Place them! Think that a river over there would be silly? Don't place it, re-roll or pick what you want. This is *your* game, *your* simulation, do what you please! But be warned, every time you do this, every time you decide to ignore the dice and decide for yourself, you walk a little bit further away from where this author considers is the fun of this whole thing: not knowing what is going to happen and finding out as it does. You can try to predict it (after a couple of games you will surely get better at this), but the dice respect no one. Not me, the author, or you, the player, and there lies their beauty.

