

One Against the Dead

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(Read my incredibly biased opinions and notes on game design at <http://meeplespeak.blogspot.com/>)

Players: 1

Game Style: Exploration, Survival, Tile Laying

Difficulty: Medium

Of course, you were told not to be driving in the middle of the night, in the middle of nowhere. But home beckoned. At least your car broke down in this little town. Too bad it appears that the power is out...

And there appears to be flipped over cars on fire down the road...

And there's moaning zombies shambling your way...

But there seems to be searchlights coming from the far side of town. And is that the sound of a helicopter you hear over the droning cries for "more....brains...."

What You Need:

Deck of cards.

Some dice (16 would be the maximum needed).

A bunch of quarters and nickels.

A beat up cup or mug.

Some poker chips in three colors.

A pawn.

A large tabletop.

Optional pad of paper for keeping track of how many zombies you've bashed and survivors you've rescued.

Notes on the stuff you need:

The coinage will be used to represent the Zombies. You will need to two types of coinage to indicate strength, a large coin and a smaller coin. They will be moved around, stacked, and flipped. Of course, you can use dimes and pennies, but these are awfully thin to stack and move around. The larger coin represents a **Greater Zombie**, which, when damaged, can become the smaller coin, which is a **Lesser Zombie**.

Since there is a potential to have a LOT of Zombies, it may be cheaper to buy a bag of plastic play coins at your local toys store. If you do this, make sure that the coins have a "heads" side and a "tails" side.

All zombies that are not in play are kept in a pile off to the side, known as the **Zombie Pile**.

The mug is used primarily to **flip many zombies at once**, and still keep them all in one area without chasing them down under the couch. When you are asked to flip multiple zombies, just place them in the mug, shake, and dump them out. Battling zombies is messy, and can damage fine china.

In this game, Aces, Jokers, and face cards have special purposes. These cards are called **Special Locations**. For the record, the face cards refer to the Jack, Queen, and King of each suit.

Poker chips come in many colors. In this game, I use the colors red, blue, and white (the standard cheap poker chip set you can buy at any drug store for a few bucks come in these colors). Feel free to substitute any colors you wish that you may have around the house.

How to Win:

The player will need to get to the other side of town before he gets overwhelmed by zombies. And if the player should decide to rescue a few remaining humans, that would be nice too.

How it Works:

The player will be playing cards on the table **constructing the city**, where each card represents a city block. Every time a player moves his pawn to a city block, he can **see what the neighboring city blocks look like**, by drawing and placing new cards to surround the block he currently is in.

When a card is added to the city, zombies are added to the new city block based on **how the cards next to it match up with either a matching suit or rank**.

Some city block will be unpassable, but include the opportunity to gain some typical zombie brain-bashing weapons.

“Weakening Zombies”:

Weakening is a term used in these rules that is used to explain the action of a player to reduce the life power of a zombie.

The strongest zombie is a face-up Greater Zombie; weakening it flips it to a tails-up Zombie.

A tails-up Greater Zombie gets weakened by being replaced with a face-up Lesser Zombie.

A face-up Lesser Zombie gets weakened by being replaced with a tails-up Lesser Zombie.

Finally, a tails-up Lesser Zombie that is weakened is killed, and removed and is returned to the Zombie Pile.

“Decrementing Dice”:

Dice are used to keep track of some supplies, and for the amount of time it will take to rescue a person or obtain a weapon. **To Decrement a die**, a player simply turns the die to the next lowest pip-count face. So, if a die is currently showing a 5, and a player is asked to decrement it, he must turn it so it shows a 4.

Decrementing a die that currently shows a value of 1 is placed back into the stock. If the die was on a weapon, then the weapon is discarded. If the die was on a location card, then the player either rescued a human or obtains a weapon, and the die is returned to the stock.

Getting Started:

To set up the game, you should...
Put all zombies into the Zombie Pile.

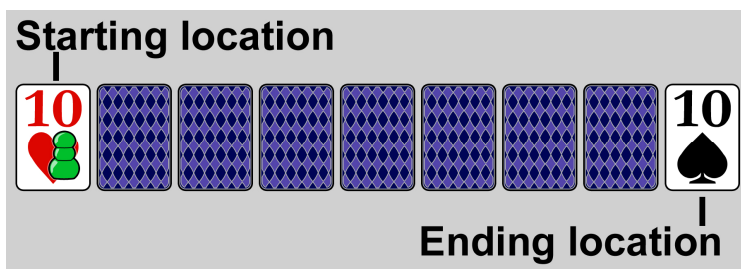
Gather 15 poker chips. These chips indicate your Strength.

Place 3 red, 3 blue, and 4 white poker chips into a stack. This is the Weapon Stack.

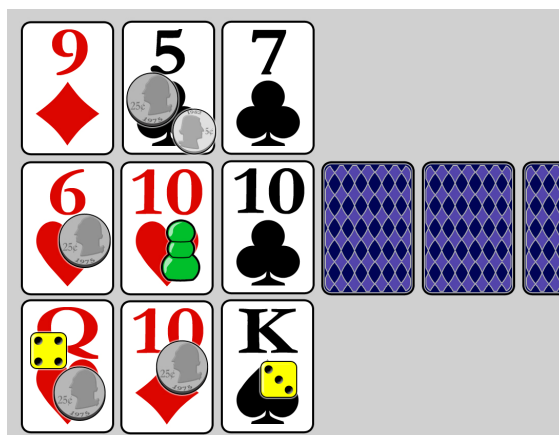
Shuffle the deck of cards. Include the 2 Jokers.

To set up the city, first draw the top card face up, if it is a Special Location, shuffle it back into the deck. Otherwise, place this card on one end of the table and place your pawn on it. This is the **Starting Location**.

Deal out 7 more cards face down in a straight line. The only use for these cards right now is as a placeholder for determining the correct amount of city blocks to the final location. Deal the 8th card face up. Again, if it is a Special Location, shuffle it back into the deck. Otherwise, place it at the end of the line. This is the **Ending Location**. The Ending Location is the card the player wants to move his token to. The image below shows what your result should be.



At this point, you will want to **Check Out Your Location** as described under the Moving rules below. Basically, this will seed the 8 cards that surround your Starting Position with City Blocks, Zombies and Barriers. When you are done, your starting area will look like something as shown below.



The Game:

The game is played in a series of rounds, and each round has a series of phases, which occur in the order shown below.

1. Player Actions.
2. Zombies Move.
3. Player Attacks (optional).
4. Zombies Attacks.

Player Actions:

You have three “action points” (AP) that you can spend during this phase. Certain actions cost 1 AP, while other may cost more.

Moving:

During this phase, you can move your pawn to a neighboring horizontal or vertical card. However, there are a few restrictions to this:



1. You CANNOT move on to a Special Location card (a face card, Joker, or Ace).
2. When moving to a card that matches the suit or rank of the card that you are currently on, you spend 1 AP.
3. When moving to a card that does NOT match the suit or rank of the card you are currently on, you spend 2 AP.

After moving to a new card, you will have to reveal the neighboring city blocks that you can see. This is called **Checking Out A New Location**. Basically, whenever you move to a new card, you need to be sure that it is surrounded by 8 other face-up cards directly next to it: the four horizontal and vertical directions, and the four diagonals.

Collect any face-down cards that are next to your new card (even diagonal) and shuffle it into the deck (it was just a placeholder anyway).

Draw the top card, flip it face up and look at it. You can place this card in any open “slot” that is next to the card you are currently at. The open slots are any area that does not currently have a card next to your current location horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. Repeat as necessary to make sure your current card is surrounded by other cards in all 8 directions.

When you place the card, make a note of all the face-up cards that are directly vertically or horizontally (not diagonally) next to the just-played card. For every card that is NOT either a matching rank or suit, add one zombie on top of the just played card. The first zombie that you add should be a Greater Zombie (a quarter), any additional zombies that needs to be added should be Lesser Zombies (nickels). These coins should be flipped to determine if they are heads-up or tails-up when being placed.

Jokers have no suit and rank, and therefore should be treated as if they do not match anything.

Additionally, if the card you just placed was a face card or an Ace, roll a die, and place it on top of the card.

You are done drawing and placing cards when all eight cards that surround your current location are shown face up, with the appropriate amount of zombies and dice on them.

(A Graphic example of Checking Out a New Locations is at the end of this document.)

Rescuing Survivors/Obtaining Weapons:

If your current location is next to an Ace with a die on it, that means there's a survivor trapped in some rubble! You may spend 1 AP to decrement the die 1 time. You may spend multiple AP on a single turn to decrement the die multiple times. Clearing out the die (by decrementing it down to 0) means you have rescued the survivor, which you can claim as Feel Good points at the end of the game, if you are playing it with Feel Good points.

If your current location is next to a face card with a die on it, that means there's a useful weapon in the location (but you don't know what it is quite yet). Again, you may spend 1 AP to decrement the die 1 time. You may spend multiple AP on a single turn to decrement the die multiple times. Clearing out the die (by decrementing it down to 0) means you have found a weapon!

Place all of the chips in the Weapon Stack into the mug, and select one at random.

If you drew a white chip, you found a baseball bat.

If you drew a blue chip, you found a chainsaw. Roll a die to determine the amount of fuel it has.

If you drew a red chip, you found a shotgun. Roll a die to determine the amount of shells it has.

You may only carry one weapon at a time. So if you currently have a weapon, you must decide to keep the one you have, or exchange it with the newly found weapon.

The weapon not selected is removed from the game and not discarded back into the Weapon Stack.

Place the weapon chip in front of you with the die sitting on top of it.

While you cannot "combine" fuel if you currently have a chainsaw and you found a new one, you CAN add the amount shells from a newly found shotgun to a currently owned shotgun by incrementing the die on the current weapon. You cannot have more than 6 shells, however.

Place the die on the chip (if you rolled a die).

Additional Action Point Notes:

In some cases, you may not be able to spend all 3 of your APs, due to your location on the board.

If you have a Joker played in your city, for every AP unused or spent to decrement a die (rescuing a survivor or searching for a weapon), add a Greater Zombie (face-up) on a Joker. If you have both Jokers in your city, you may choose which Joker gets the zombie.

Zombies Move:

Zombies want to move to the same location where the player is currently. Each zombie (or group of zombies) moves one card towards the player's current location (they do not move diagonally). If a zombie has a choice of moving between two different directions that will result in the same distance away from the player, the zombie should move to the space that will place it the most in-between the player's current location and the Ending Location.

Zombies on the player's location simply don't move. There's fresh BRAINZZZZ to be had!

The Player Attacks:

The player gets one attack, using his current weapon that he is carrying, or his Fists of Fury, which he is considered to always have. Each weapon performs a slightly different action, as described below.

Fists of Fury:

Select up to 4 zombies at your current location. Place them in the mug, shake, and “flip them out.”

Greater Zombies that show tail-up are replaced with randomly flipped Lesser Zombies.
Lesser Zombies that show tail-up are returned to the Zombie pile.

Return remaining zombies to your current location card.

Baseball Bat:

Select either Greater or Lesser Zombies. Weaken each zombie of the type selected at your current location.

Chainsaw:

Place all zombies at your location in the mug, shake, and flip them out. All tails-up Zombies are returned to the Zombie Pile.

Return remaining zombies to your current location card.

Decrement your fuel die on the Chainsaw chip. If you decrement the die down to zero, discard the Chainsaw out of the game.

Shotgun:

All Lesser Zombies at your location are returned to the Zombie Pile. Place all Greater Zombies into the mug, shake, and flip them out. All Greater Zombies showing tails-up are replaced with random flipped Lesser Zombies.

Return remaining zombies to your current location card.

Decrement your shell die on the Shotgun chip. If you decrement the die down to zero, discard the Shotgun out of the game.

The Zombies Attack (part 1):

Now you have to see if you have been overwhelmed. If your current Strength is less than the amount of Zombies at your current location, you lose. The game is over.

The Zombies Attack (part 2):

Zombies are pretty slow guys. In reality, they really don't attack, but wear you down.

For every 5 zombies at your location discard a Strength chip, rounding up.

Examples:

If there are 7 zombies, you must discard 2 Strength. If there is just one single Zombie, you still discard 1 Strength.

(The check to see if you are being overwhelmed always happens BEFORE you lose Strength, so at this point, you are safe from an overwhelm check until the next round.)

A Round is Over:

After zombies attack, a new round starts with your moving phase.

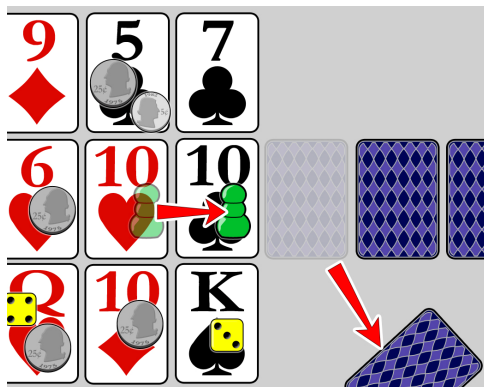
Winning the Game:

You win the game if you are on the Ending Location card and you have survived the zombie attack phase.

If you are keeping score, you get 1 Feel Good point for every Zombie you have returned to the Zombie Pile, plus 10 Feel Good Points for every successful rescue you performed (count up the face-up aces on the table that have no dice on them).

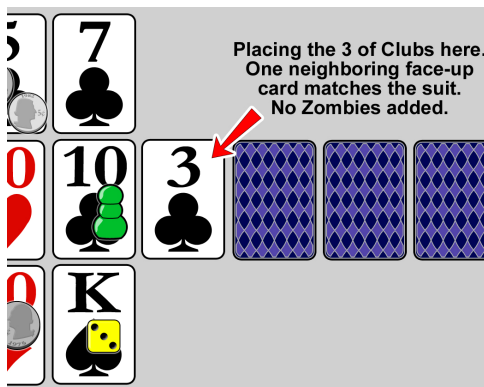
However, if you've left some victims to die on the board a horrible Zombie death, you subtract 20 Feel Good Points from your score. "Lunchmeat victims" can be counted by counting the amount of aces left on the table with a die still on them.

EXAMPLE "CHECKING OUT A LOCATION"



The player has moved from the 10 of hearts to the 10 of spades. This move only costs 1 AP because the ranks match. There is a face-down card next to the 10 of spades; that gets removed and shuffled back into the deck.

As you can see, there are now three open "slots" to the right of the 10 of spades that need to get filled up with some new locations now that the player can see them!



The top card is drawn from the deck, and it is the 3 of clubs. It is wisely placed next to the 10 of clubs. Since the 3 of clubs matches the suit of the only card next to it (remember diagonals don't count in this case, so it's only the 10 of clubs that one needs to check), no Zombies are added into this location.



The next card is drawn. It is the 3 of diamonds. The player places it to the upper right of where he currently is. Again, comparing the 3 of diamonds to the cards it is orthogonally next to (the 7 of clubs and the 3 of clubs), we see that while the threes match, the 7 of clubs matches neither the rank or suit of the 3 of diamond. So, there is one card that does not match the 3 of diamonds. This card gets a Zombie (the first Zombie added to a new Location is always a Greater Zombie, later additions are Lesser Zombies).



Finally, the next card drawn is the Jack of hearts, and it must go into the remaining open slot. It matches neither of the two cards it is next to, so it gets two Zombies; one Greater and one Lesser.

Also, since it is a face card, a weapon is hidden here! Roll a die and place it on the card. If the player moves next to the Jack, he can spend 2 AP to notch down the die twice to remove it, and to draw a weapon from the Weapon Stack. Well, if he doesn't mind being swamped with Zombies in the meantime while he spends his AP searching for it!