

Necro Design & Rules Document

Abstract:

Necro is a strategic turn-based card game in which two players face off head-to-head in a battle of summoning and spellcraft. Assume the power of a legendary hero in necromancy. Take up the mantle of the Lich King and overwhelm your opponents through sheer numbers and momentum, or perhaps you'd like to don the armor of the stoic Dread Knight and turn the tides slowly but surely, building up your power and unleashing devastation on your foe at the opportune moment. Either way, long-term planning and quick-witted adaptation are the keys to victory. Powerful spells and minions can turn the tide of battle in an instant. Chip away at your opponent's health while maintaining your own by attacking with your army of minions. But beware the strength of the void... using blood magic fueled by the corpses of the dead, minions can be reanimated, back for a vengeance and stronger than ever!



Win Condition

Reduce your opponent's hero health to zero.

Materials

- ❖ 2 Tomes (binder containing your cards)
- ❖ 2 D20s
- ❖ 6 tokens (3 for each player)
- ❖ 20-30 damage counters

Setup

1. Both players choose a class corresponding tome of 40 cards. Only two copies of a card are permitted in a deck.
2. Designate an area for the Graveyard and the Abyss (the non-permanent and permanent discard piles, respectively).
3. Place the D20 with the 20 face-up to indicate your health, and 3 shield tokens adjacent.
4. Games are played open deck – all cards are available from the start and can be played at any time the player chooses.
5. Flip a coin to determine initiative.



Gameplay

On your turn, you may choose to do the following in **any** order, and can choose to forgo actions.

1. Play a minion card from your tome to the battlefield **OR** revive a minion from the graveyard using the specified amount of corpses. You can only summon/revive one minion per turn unless otherwise specified by a card.
2. Play a spell card. You can only play one spell card unless otherwise specified.
3. Attack with one of or more of your minions. More info on attacking below.



Attacking:

- ❖ When you attack an enemy minion, your Attack stat is subtracted from the defending unit's Health stat, and vice-versa. Damage dealt is simultaneous.
- ❖ After an attack, if the minion's health is not 0, place an appropriate amount of damage counters on the card to indicate its lost health. Each damage counter represents 1 point of damage.
- ❖ If a minion is non-Undead and its health is reduced to 0, put the minion in the Graveyard unless otherwise specified by a card.
- ❖ If a minion is in its Undead form (has been revived from Graveyard) and its health has been reduced to 0, put the minion in the Abyss discard pile. The minion cannot be used in play for the rest of the game.

Discard Piles:

There are two types of Discard piles in Necro. They are known as the Graveyard and the Abyss.

The Graveyard is the discard pile where minions are initially sent to upon death. When they are in the Graveyard, each minion counts as 1 corpse. If you wish to revive a minion, you must use the sacrifice the corresponding amount of corpses needed to revive it. The minion being revived cannot be used as a corpse. The sacrificed corpses are put in the Abyss.

The Abyss is the discard pile signifying that the card is out of play. Once put in the Abyss, a card cannot be used ever again during the game. Sacrificed corpses and minions that die in their undead form are sent to the Abyss. All spells go to the Abyss once used.

Minion Types and Definitions

There are three types of minions in Necro – Ground, Flying, and Water. This is indicated by the pip in the corner of the minion card; G, F, W, respectively.

- ❖ Ground minions have no special properties, but are the most common type of minion.
- ❖ Flying minions can bypass the hero's shields.
- ❖ Water minions ignore the Taunt effect.
- ❖ Taunt minions must be destroyed before the hero can be targeted again. Spells ignore this effect.
- ❖ Undead units have better stats than the original minion, and may have additional effects. All revived units are considered undead in addition to their original typing. Minions can only be reanimated by sacrificing the indicated corpse cost. Minion corpses that are used to reanimate another minion cannot be revived.



Spells:

One spell card can be played at any time during your turn. Different spells behave in a variety of ways so be sure to read them carefully. Some spell cards are one-time use cards that are immediately sent to the Abyss after their usage. Some spell cards are powerful enchantments that you use on your own minions which give them positive effects, called a **buff**. Likewise, negative curses and hexes placed on your opponent's minions are called **debuffs**.



Design Statement

From the onset, there was consensus among our group toward making a card game. However, avid card game fans, we wanted to make a game that was exciting and different from these tried and true formulas. We experimented with ideas such as attaching a roll-and-move board game, where squares on the board had modifiers that affected play (for example, a square that lets you deal and receive 2x damage). However, this proved to be rather cumbersome and gimmicky.

After some experimentation, we arrived at our open deck, manaless model. We chose to use an open deck and manaless system because it made for a game that played drastically differently from many popular card games, and was a breath of fresh air for us both as developers and players. Necromancy as a theme was attractive to us because it allowed us turn dead minions, usually an unexciting affair, into an interesting strategic element of gameplay, transforming them into a non-renewable resource and a potential source of big swing plays.

However, the unconventional model we decided to go with for Necro also created interesting advantages and disadvantages in terms of balance. On the one hand, because of the lack of a mana system, there was no need to balance for a mana curve, which would involve figuring out a logical baseline power level for each mana cost. However, the concurrent downside was the danger of homogenizing all the cards; since all cards can be played at any time in the game, they cannot have too much variance in stat distribution, so the only way to keep individual cards interesting was to give them effects, but determining the power level of different effects and adjusting the card's stats accordingly required extensive and repeated playtesting.

Given the time allotted for the project, we were acutely aware of the dangers of over scoping, and thus determined that we would aim to balance for three decks with specific playstyles, categorized under three different "classes," each of which would represent one of the staple deck styles - aggro, midrange (combo), and control. However, as we moved forward with the development process, it became increasingly apparent that we would have to either make so many concessions that the three decks would play very similarly, or we would have to cut down to two decks. Ultimately, we prized having distinct playstyles over a larger game, and still managed to incorporate some of the combo-esque elements into our aggro class, the Lich King.

From the very first decks we made, we painstakingly and meticulously documented the stats and effects of every card in a detailed spreadsheet, complete with changelogs between each iteration in the decks ([link to spreadsheet below](#)). The first two playable decks we created played fairly similarly, and used fairly standard minions and spell effects. By playing with these two decks, we were able to get a feel for the pacing of our game and the power level of different effects given our ruleset and overall game model. From there, we created cards with bolder designs that clearly defined our two playstyles; for example, Dread Knight's "Time to Reap", which allows the player to instantly put a powerful undead minion on the playing field. Naturally, balancing for these exciting cards were much more difficult because each of them held potential for swinging the tempo of the game, and required rigorous playtesting and constant consultation of our spreadsheets.

