# The NetHack Board Game

*Do you want your possessions identified?*

Descend into the Mazes of Menace in search of the fabled Amulet of Yendor! Acquire strangely useful treasures and encounter monsters of every description. Cope with Yet Another Stupid Death. And finally play against another player in The NetHack Board Game!

## Contents

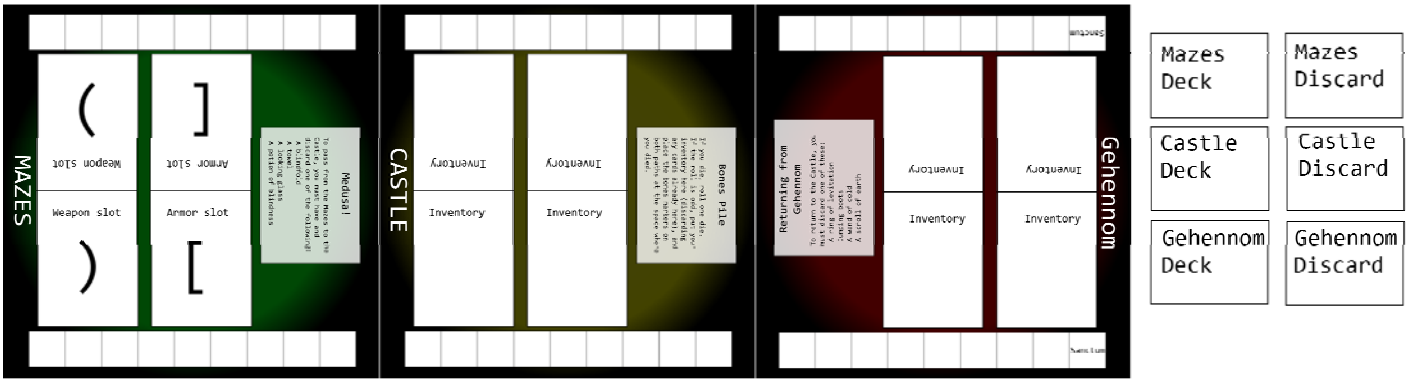
- Three game boards ("Mazes", "Castle", and "Gehennom")
- Three decks of 36 encounter cards ("Mazes", "Castle", and "Gehennom")
- One deck of 13 character class and 2 Amulet of Yendor cards
- Two 10-sided dice
- Two bones markers
- Rulebook

## Object of the Game

Get to the Sanctum at the end of the dungeon and bring the Amulet of Yendor back before your opponent.

## Setup

Shuffle each of the three decks of cards ("Mazes", "Castle", and "Gehennom") and place the game boards on the table between the players with the Mazes deck nearby. The boards should be laid end to end to form a continuous straight path for each player, with the Mazes of Menace board at one end, Gehennom at the other, and the Castle board in between, as shown in the figure. Each player should select a pawn and place it on the first square of the Mazes game board on their track (farthest away from the “Sanctum”)




Each player should also select one of the character class cards, and keep it in front of them. Place the Amulet of Yendor cards and bones tokens somewhere nearby. Place the three encounter decks at one side of the board. The space next to each deck will be its discard pile. The 6 marked card-sized spaces across the middles of the boards are used for each player's inventory – their collection of items.

Each player rolls one of the two 10-sided dice. The higher rolling place goes first. If both players roll the same number, re-roll as necessary.

## Starting The Game

Players take turns. On your turn, you can either move *quickly* or move *carefully*.

To move quickly, turn over the next card in the deck that corresponds to the game board your piece began on (e.g., if you are on the Mazes board, turn over a Mazes card). You must encounter this card (see "Encounters" below.) If your encounter is successful, move your piece two squares in either direction.

To move carefully, turn over the next card in the deck that corresponds to the game board your piece began on. You may choose whether you want to encounter the card or not. If you choose to encounter, and your encounter is successful, move your piece one square in either direction. If you don't choose to encounter, your turn ends and your piece stays where it is.

Regardless of the result (win, lose, or choose to avoid the encounter), the monster card from the encounter should be discarded at the end of the player's turn into a discard pile for that deck. If an encounter deck runs out of cards, shuffle the discard pile back into the deck.

## Encounters

Encounters come in two types: items and monsters.

### *Items*

Item encounters are easy. When you encounter an item, you may pick it up if there is room in your inventory, or may discard it. You may discard other items from your inventory to make room for a newly encountered item. When you discard an item, it always returns to the deck from which it came, even if you have carried it into another section of the board. You may rearrange your inventory at any time.

Although you may carry more than one weapon (which includes swords and blunt weapons) and more than one piece of body armor (cards marked "Armor" – this doesn't include boots or gauntlets), only one of each can be active. Inactive weapons and armor do not contribute bonuses to attack or armor class. The "weapon item" and "armor item" areas are used to indicate which weapon and armor is active. These areas can only be used to hold weapon and armor items; other kinds of items must share one of the four generic inventory spaces.

### *Monsters*

Monster encounters require you to fight, unless some item in your inventory allows you to skip the encounter. Each monster has a difficulty number on its card. Roll the two dice and add up the total. Add any attack bonuses provided by items in your inventory. If the total is higher than the monster's difficulty, you successfully defeat (and discard) the monster.

If you do not defeat the monster, roll one die and subtract the total armor class of all the cards in your inventory. If the difference is 0 or lower, you barely escape the monster – move your piece one square backward and discard the monster. ("Backward", in this context, means toward start if you are not carrying the Amulet of Yendor, or towards the Sanctum if you are carrying the Amulet of Yendor).

If the difference is greater than 0, however, you die. This is common in NetHack (see "Death and Bones", below). Some items in your inventory may be used to prevent your death or allow you to escape; see the text on the item card for details. Discard the monster at the end of your turn.

## The Game Boards

Both players start on the Mazes of Menace board. To win, you must pass through the Castle board to the end of the Gehennom board, and then turn around and go back to the starting square. As you progress from board to board, the monsters and items become more powerful.

To pass from the Mazes of Menace to the Castle board, you must pass Medusa, which requires that you have one of the following items in your inventory:

- A blindfold
- A towel
- A looking glass
- A potion of blindness

You must discard and shuffle the item back into the Mazes deck as you pass onto the Castle board. That is, if you are on the last square of the Mazes board and attempt to move to the Castle board, but are defeated in your encounter and barely escape, you don't have to discard the item; you only discard the item when you actually move onto the Castle board. If you don't have one of these items, you must stay on the Mazes board (i.e., some of your moves will have to be in the startward direction) until you can collect one and pass Medusa.

While your piece is on the Castle board, switch to using the Castle encounter deck until you die or pass to the Gehennom board.

Passing from the Castle board to the Gehennom board does not require any special items. Switch to the Gehennom deck, which you will use for the remainder of the game (or until you die).

Once you reach a Sanctum space at the end of the Gehennom board, pick up an Amulet of Yendor card for your inventory (which may require you to discard an inventory item). You must now return to the starting square to win the game. To pass from Gehennom back to the Castle, you must have one of the following items in your inventory:

- A ring of levitation
- Jumping boots
- A wand of cold
- A scroll of earth

You must discard and shuffle the item back into the Gehennom deck as you pass back onto the Castle board. If you don't have one of these items, you must stay on the Gehennom board (i.e., some of your moves will have to be in the sanctumward direction) until you can collect one and pass back to the Castle.

Passing from the Castle board to the Mazes of Menace board does not require any special items. Remember that you continue to use the Gehennom deck as long as you have the Amulet of Yendor.

## Other Actions

You may discard cards or rearrange your inventory at any time during your turn.

You may use magic items (scrolls, spellbooks, potions, wands, rings, and amulets) in your inventory at any time during your turn, but you may only use one magic item per turn for an active effect (any attack or armor class bonuses provided by magic items are always in effect, and don't count as an active effect). Follow the instructions on the card to use the card. Generally, scrolls, potions, and wands must be discarded after being used once. Scrolls that are cast onto other items (e.g. enchant armor, enchant weapon) are used on the turn they are cast, but their effect persists on the enchanted item until the item is discarded (lay the scroll card on top of

the item to remember that it is enchanted). Rings and amulets are generally not discarded unless used for an active effect (such as preventing death by the amulet of life saving). Your character class may limit or enhance the number of times you may use certain items. If your class is allowed to use “any spellbooks”, spellbooks may be used twice before being discarded; if your class is allowed to use spellbooks once, spellbooks are discarded after the first use.

## Winning The Game

The first player to return to the starting square carrying the Amulet of Yendor ascends into demi-divinity and wins the game.

## Additional Instructions

### *Death and Bones*

In NetHack, death means starting over, but not necessarily from scratch. First, if you have the Amulet of Yendor, put it back in the Sanctum. Next roll one die; if the number on the die is even, discard your entire inventory. If the number on the die is odd, place your inventory in the "Bones" area of the board and put one "Bones" marker on the square where you died and one on the same square on the opponent’s side of the board. If there are already cards in the Bones area, discard them before putting your inventory there. Finally, move your piece back to the start of the Mazes of Menace.

When you start again after death, you will be at the start of the Mazes of Menace, and you will use the Mazes of Menace deck. You still must travel all the way to the Sanctum and back; the Amulet of Yendor never stays in a bones pile.

If either player reaches a square with a bones marker, they may immediately take any or all of the cards in the bones pile into their inventory. Any bones cards they do not or can not take must then be discarded. The "Bones" markers are then removed from the board.

## Variations and optional rules

### *Mysterious Force*

This optional rule can be used to make the game harder, as well as to add additional balance when the players are mismatched. When at least one player has an Amulet of Yendor, the player who is closest to winning the game must role one 10-sided die at the start of their turn. If a "1" is rolled, a mysterious force returns the player's piece back to the Sanctum.

## Credits

**Game Concept:** Alan Schwartz
**Artwork:** Kurtis Rainbolt-Greene and Alan Schwartz
**Play Testers:** Ari Schwartz
**Production:** The Game Crafter LLC (http://www.thegamecrafter.com)

## Legal

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