

GameSpot Heroes V Q&A Questions November 2005

Question: Please introduce yourself (state your full name, first and last, and your official job title).

Hi, my name is Alexander Mishulin, I'm Creative Director for Nival Interactive and one of the *Heroes of Might and Magic V* lead game-designers.

Question: From what we can tell, the Academy town and its inhabitants seem very similar to the original Wizard town of Heroes II and the Tower town of Heroes III. Why was the decision made to keep the town similar to its original versions?

As *Heroes of Might and Magic V* is continuing the famous series, each game faction has something similar and familiar about it to the previous games of the series, and Academy is no exception. We are developing the game following the way of evolution, not revolution, so that all fans of the *Heroes of Might and Magic* series feel comfortable in the fifth game – yet have something new to explore. Besides, this (Wizard, Tower) army has always been differing from the other factions with its tactic focus on ranged attacks and magic, thus making it unique and interesting from a gameplay perspective. Plus, Titan is one of the all-time favorite creatures of the *Heroes of Might and Magic* series, so the world of the fifth game would not be complete without him. ☺

Still, we changed this faction a little bit, to make it more cohesive. Now Academy is the hometown for Mages, who summon or construct other creatures – djinns, titans, golems and so on.

Question: Could you tell us about how the unit upgrade system will work in Heroes V? Will players be forced to choose between two separate unit types of the same tier of development, similar to Heroes IV, or will they simply be able to build all units in a town, provided they have the buildings? Will existing units have to be upgraded manually by visiting a town? Will individual creatures earn experience points to gain levels instead, like heroes?

For the unit upgrade system, we chose the good old proven scheme of the previous games of the series: You need to upgrade a dwelling in your town (for which you need to meet certain requirements, such as owning enough resources or having built smaller buildings), after which you can buy upgraded units from this dwelling. To upgrade already acquired units, you need to enter the town which has a corresponding upgraded dwelling or to enter a special building on the adventure map – the Hill Fort. There is also a specialization that is exclusive to Haven heroes, who can upgrade any human-based Haven units to any other human-based Haven units (which of course requires godly amounts of recourses) – say, upgrade Peasants to Knights.

The creatures do not get experience – it's a hero's prerogative. Yet, you can increase the creatures' parameters by other means. For example, Academy heroes have the unique ability to create "mini artifacts" for their creatures, granting them better parameters of Offense, or Defense, or Speed.

Question: Could you explain how unit generation will work? Will new units become available from unit-producing structures daily, like in Heroes IV, or will they only be available weekly, like in Heroes I-III? Will there be random astrological weeks that will cause certain unit-producing structures to produce extra units, or "plague" weeks that will cause fewer units to be produced, like in the earlier games?

The generation of units happens weekly, as it produces an additional inside cycle in the game. Of course, some may say that visiting town every week in order to get an army is not convenient enough, but this also provides for a better balance. Weekly generation better fits the whole conception of the series: traveling, adventures, and fights. This way after a big army loss you will have to plan your actions – say, whether you should stick around to the closest city, gathering the resources and waiting for the next army generation, or whether you should ride full speed to another town, having an army available.

The number of units "being born" in the beginning of a week depends on many factors – on the buildings in the town (not only dwellings themselves, as there are certain buildings affecting the unit generation), on the captured buildings on the adventure map (say, if you have a Peasant dwelling on the map, it will also slightly increase the number of the Peasants in the town), and on "astrology". If a week is announced to be a week of a certain creature, the generation of these creatures will increase. There are also other pleasant and not so pleasant events, associated with the beginning of a next week.

Question: Seeing the different factions raises the question for us--how will morale and other factors affect different units in the game? Will armies still receive morale bonuses if they contain only units from the same town, such as all Academy units? Will morale bonuses still give units additional turns and luck grant units critical hits?

Heroes of Might and Magic V will certainly have Morale and Luck parameters beloved by fans of the series, although they will also face some changes. The gradation of these parameters will increase (in the previous games they had gradation of 3 maximum and -3 minimum). If an army consists of units of one faction, their morale increases, if there are units of different factions (or under a hero of a different faction) it will have some penalty on Morale. Amount of penalty depends on the relations between the factions – say, for an army mixed of Haven and Inferno units it will be relatively high. Morale can also depend on other factors – say, Undead units are generally not influenced by Morale.

As there are certain changes in the game mechanics, Morale does not give an additional turn – it affects the creature's initiative, giving it ability to move sooner next time (it kind of gives an additional half of a turn). And the Luck surely grants units critical hits, allowing them to make much more damage than usual.

Question: We see from the screenshots that Academy heroes will have the very colorful distinction of riding a caparisoned war elephant. Will Academy heroes have any other kind of distinctions...will they still be might or magic heroes that start out with either combat bonuses or a spell book, or will they have some other unique abilities?

All our heroes have colorful distinctions, both in their appearances and in their gameplay characteristics. We don't divide the factions into "strictly might" and "strictly magic" – they are more likely to be "more magic" or "less magic". And sure enough, an Academy hero, being a native of a Mage town, is "more magic": Say, he has a rather high Knowledge parameter that gives him more spell points. There is also a unique ability for heroes of each faction. I have mentioned the ability of Haven hero to retrain the units into other units. The unique ability of an Academy hero is to create small artifacts (we call them mini artifacts) for his creatures, increasing certain parameters of his army. There are also some special abilities that are available only for heroes of a certain class. For example, Academy heroes can increase spell points cost of their opponent's spells.

We really tried to reflect each faction's profile in the way it's played, and we feel that this really increase the depth and consistency of the whole game – both from the gameplay and universe perspectives.