

HPL3 Level Editor Tips and Tricks

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- TheDoctorPoo

"Hello!" So you want to make good HPL3 maps? Well here are a few tips and tricks to get you started on creating good HPL3 maps...

Before we start:

Please make sure you have followed these tutorials as **they are essential in developing a mod**:

- https://wiki.frictionalgames.com/hpl3/community/hpl3_getting_started - General Basics
- https://wiki.frictionalgames.com/hpl3/community/other/cs_setup - Setting up a Campaign Mod (the most common mod)

Level Editor Basics:

The Level Editor is the main program used when making a HPL3 map. Open it up from SOMA's main root folder. Four different areas will be seen. Hover over the bottom right area and press the space bar. Here you will be able to move around in two ways:

1. **Maya** - The primary modding tool for SOMA, Autodesk Maya, has a unique camera control used in this option
2. **Fly** - This camera control is used in most game development kits from Source Film Maker to Unreal Engine 4

Select one by clicking on **View** (located on the top left corner of the editor), hovering over **Controller** and clicking on the desired control. We will assume for simplicity that you know how to control the Fly controller.

Controlling the Maya Camera

To control the **Maya** view hold the **Alt Key** and **Left Mouse** to rotate the level according to your **axis**. Hold the **Alt Key** and **Right Mouse** to zoom the camera. Hold the **Alt Key** and the **Scroll Wheel** to scan the surface of the grid (it is also important to note that **you can zoom in using the Scroll Wheel**). Keep in mind that you cannot zoom in or out infinitely. The camera will slow down and stop until you zoom out/zoom in again.

Now you can move the camera in the Level Editor, so let's put down some stuff!

Placing Objects

Placing down static objects will **take up the majority of creating a map** so it is essential to get acquainted with the controls. **Note that these controls apply for most of the things you will use in the Level Editor.**

Click on the **red cube with the white outlines** on the left of the editor, once you have done that you will see a **window pop up** on the right side. Using the scroll bar locate the text **“station”** and **press the + button**. Make sure **not to click** on the **Station text itself**! From the dropdown menu click on **“floor”**. A notification will tell you that it needs to load the objects before you use them. On completion use the **new scroller** to locate **“catwalk_straight”** and click on it. You will notice a **white outline of a cube** follows your cursor, this shows where you will **place the object** itself. Click on **any area** to place it in your map. **Congratulations**, you made your first edit on your map!

If the object itself is **pitch black** press the buttons **“A”** and **“P”** on your **keyboard**. This lights up your level in the **Editor**, keep in mind it **doesn't** do light up your object in your **level just yet**. Now will be a good time to **save**.

Saving Your Map

Saving will be a constant habit, and a good one to have. Saving a map often means that **you will not loss progress** on a map **if something goes wrong** with the Editor or your computer.

Hold down your **“Ctrl/Cmd”** and the **“S”** to use your **saving shortcut**. A window will pop up showing the **SOMA root folder**. Navigate your way to your mod's **“maps”** folder. There, using the **blue folder with a green plus icon**, make a **new folder** called **“test”** without the brackets. Open the folder up and name the map to **“test”**. Your map is now saved securly in your mods folder.

When **using the saving shortcut from now on** you **do not** have to go into the **window again** unless you use the **“Save As”** feature located by clicking the **“File”** tab located on the top left of the Editor.

Basic Object Editing

Placing the object down in the map is a start but we want to **move, rotate or scale** the object to suit our mod's needs. Click on the **catwalk** you just placed down. Here you will see **three icons: A Four Pointed Plus, A Plus With Curved Arrows and a Four Squared Plus**. Click on the first icon. Here you will see green, red and blue arrows pointing in different directions. **Green goes up**, **Red goes front and back** and **Blue goes side to side**. **Click and hold** on the **blue** arrow and **drag it about when highlighted**: Notice how to **follows your mouse** and **changes direction** according to its direction. **You have now moved your catwalk.**

To undo and redo an action in the Editor use **“Ctrl/Cmd”** and **“Z”** to undo actions while **“Ctrl/Cmd”** and **“Y”** to redo actions. Keep in mind you have a limited amount of undos.

The **second icon will rotate** your catwalk and the **third icon will scale** it. *For now* lets just keep the object **straight and normally shaped**.

Setting Up A Player Start Area

Setting up a **Player Start Area** will make sure the **Player** will be able to **move around** in the game. Click on the **box with the dotted, white outlines** located on the left of the Editor. Click on the **drop-down menu** located on the top right corner of the Editor and select **"PlayerStart"**. Click in the **middle of the catwalk** to spawn in the **Player Start Area**. Using the **Move controls** from the previous section click the area and move it so that the area is not going through the **catwalk**. You can now spawn in your map. **Save the map**.

Play-Testing

Play-testing your map is **testing** your map to see what it looks like **in-game**. To do this go into the **"main_init.cfg"** file located in your mod's **"config"** folder. Open it up and edit the following part to this:

```
<StartMap
  File = "test.hpm"
  Folder = "maps/test/"
  Pos = "PlayerStartArea_1"
/>
```

Now open up the **ModLauncher** located in the **SOMA root folder**. Find your **mod's name** and select **OK**. Start a **New Game**, you can now **play your map**! The maps is **pitch black** so use your **flashlight** to look at the **catwalk** you are on.

Experiment!

As the name implies you can now **place down whatever you want** in your map as **you have learnt the basics**. **Play** with monsters, **pick** up items, **make** a chair mountain, **light** the sky blood red **it's up to you!** Go through **the rest of the symbols** on the left of the Editor and **play around** with the tools at your disposal, this is **your** map, it doesn't have to make **sense or have gameplay** yet. **Have fun with HPL3!**

WIP Would be happy if nobody touches this, thanks!

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