HPL3 Tips and Tricks

Experienced Members: Feel free to add to this page! Make sure you use Heading 2 for new sections and Heading 3 for sub-sections, thanks!

- 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 mid that you cannot zoom in or out infinatly. 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 lets 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 were 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**!

Don't use bold, underlines or italics when writing down a tip or trick. Also, try to put the tip/trick in a category that fits!

Select Tool Tips and Tricks

- Holding the Ctrl/Cmd buttons will select multiple objects in your map
- Pressing F while selecting a placed-down object will align the grid to that objects axis
- While placing down an object, hold the Left mouse to see the objects hitbox as you put it down in your map.

- Press the 1 key to shortcut to the Select Tool

Light Tool Tips and Tricks

Light Mask Tool Tips and Tricks

Billboards Tool Tips and Tricks

Lens Flare Tool Tips and Tricks

Particle Systems Tool Tips and Tricks

Sound Tool Tips and Tricks

Static Objects Tips and Tricks

Entities Tips and Tricks

Areas Tips and Tricks

Primitive Tool Tips and Tricks

Decal Tips and Tricks

Fog Areas Tips and Tricks

Static Object Batcher Tips and Tricks

Terrain Editor Tips and Tricks

Exposure Area Tips and Tricks

Combo Tool Tips and Tricks

Detail Meshes Tips and Tricks

Editor Misc. Tools Tips and Tricks

- The Magnet located at the bottom of the editor can turn on and off grid snapping
- The A button is for Ambient lighting, P for the Editors Point Lighting while I is used to hide the Editors icons in the map
- Maps are running slow? Go into Edit, Preferences and Performance to edit with the Editors rendering
- Ctrl/Cmd and F will pop up a window showing all the objects in the map. You can use this to select multiple objects and delete or focus on them
- Edit, Level Settings can edit if your map has a skybox, universal particle effects for the entire level and others like if the level is underwater
- Edit, Show Projected Memory Usage shows you how much space your map is making (measured in Megabytes)
- You can export certain objects in a map for reference in an animation or a custom model by clicking on the desired object(s) and selecting File, Export Objects. You can also import objects too