

Q: What are the changes in this edition?

Whitehack development is an ongoing project where finished stuff eventually ends up in a new edition. Each time some changes are recent, while others have been maturing in the workshop for years. I make a new edition when I have enough finished material that I am excited about. This is simultaneously the tenth anniversary book and the game's fourth edition, released in April 2023.

The previous editions were released in August 2013, March 2015 and February 2021. Each has better rules than its predecessor. In this one, there are significant improvements in almost all areas, ranging from things like crits and saves to reputation rules and tools for Referee setting analysis. See for yourself for the full list below!

Fourth edition also broadens and deepens the scope of the game compared to all previous editions. New things like scale, 3D vehicle combat, the Clever class and important changes to the Strong, together make the game really great at more genres than fantasy, in addition to letting you run a cooler fantasy game. Fourth edition also has *macros*, which allow the group to generate and play out large-scale historical and societal change in the game world—stuff that is normally too complex to handle, but which nonetheless surrounds and affects the characters. Simply put, I think you can tell different and even more engaging game stories with this edition.

Layout & Format

- There is a new and more economic layout on a smaller page (novella size). Page count has gone down from 160 to 144, but the text has actually grown a bit, and there is more content.
- The character sheet is the cover.
- The only print alternative at release is a softcover. In essence, 4e is more hardcore than 3e, and the smallest Lulu book print of *Whitehack* to date.

New Additions

- There are now rules for *macros*—large setting phenomena and factions played as characters. This is a very powerful tool.

- There is a new rare class, called the Clever. In addition to its rare function, it might be used as a default class instead of the Wise (which could then be rare) in low magick campaigns.
- There are now rules for scale, such as when playing with mechas, AI or when handling vehicles of different sizes.
- Roguelike maps are used throughout the game for maps, examples of positioning and blueprints.
- Combat in ships and vehicles has been greatly improved with a way to handle “3d combat” (such as when fighting in space or underwater).
- Saves now have “color” in the form of double-edge modulations, like “Old” or “Paranoia.” This gives personality to the character and may affect some rolls.
- There are now rules for piercing ammunition.
- There is a section on magick interference and healing, specifying the cases in which Wise miracle workers do need potions and professional medicine.
- There are guidelines for corrupting magick.
- The parts on settings now include tools for structural analysis and design.
- There are rules and advice for handling reputation.
- Boss monsters have rules for *partitioning*—the ability to wall off a section of their stats.
- Monsters now have loot rolls.
- The previous rules for reaction rolls have been replaced by a more rigorous system for attitudes and parley.

Improvements

- The game uses the following attribute array per default: Strength, Agility, Toughness, Intelligence, Willpower and Charisma.
- All classes now require slightly less XP to advance.
- The Deft have been slightly altered through a specification of what happens to lost attunements and an emphasis on distinguishing between active and inactive attunements.

- The Strong have had their looting capacity reworked, making the application broader (conflicts, not just literal fights) and less dependent on the Referee. The Berserker ability is gone (you can still berserk though), replaced by a debilitating attack. The Strong are also more viable as a ranged fighter type, through a reworked flow ability. This in turn makes the Strong better adapted to non-fantasy genres.
- The Wise healing ability is better explained and rationalized through the concept of (magick) interference. While the class hasn't changed in itself, the rules for a few magick aspects have.
- Descriptions of magick effects and concentrations have been reworked.
- The Brave class has gotten a new quirk, removing a loophole that could previously be exploited.
- The Fortunate class no longer pays XP to raise their retainers. It happens automatically. There are some changes to the text as well, emphasizing that retainers have opinions about their own station.
- The crit-table and the rules for crits have been reworked.
- The special combat options and the weapons table have been tweaked.
- The rules for HP and death have been tweaked and clarified, including the penalty for failing a save against incoming damage.
- The rules for injuries have been tweaked.
- Building, code-breaking and hacking have been improved.
- The rules for species classes have been tweaked.
- The rules for scrolls have been tweaked.
- The rules for pushing stuck doors have been improved.
- The game doesn't require more dice, but in some cases, the d20 is read as a d10 and the d6 is read as a d3. This way, you can also use the d100 for foreign modules.
- The game now uses a "CR" standard for funds—CR standing for either Crowns or Credits.
- Prices have been given a do-over.
- Raises are used as a rules value, not just a literal number of attribute raises.

- Armor is now controlled by a Defense value, abbreviated DF. It works like before.
- The list of gear that you can purchase has been altered.
- There is now a third source of extra languages.
- XP for crowns (gold) has been altered, demanding that funds actually be paid in order to yield XP. This mechanism is also affected by affiliation groups.
- There is a new terrain type in the table for movement, and the rules for straining have been improved.
- The rules for reach, disengaging, flanking and attacking from behind have been strengthened.
- The example substances are now placed next to the rules sections (they were in the magick artifacts chapter before).
- Reputation plays into retainer morale and recruitment.
- The advice for true miracles has been altered to reflect changes in 4e.
- The section on other traditions has been tweaked.
- Corruption now includes less concrete sources, such as despair.
- Custom attribute bonuses now includes bonuses to MV.
- Beyond levels now includes save color.
- The text on bases has been tweaked.
- Dungeon construction now includes general keys for roguelike dungeons.
- Self-playing characters have been promoted from a footnote to its own section.
- The rock snail now comes with a map.
- The Tomb of Tunka Jinn is still in the appendix, as a more rigorous list of things to do.
- In the appendix is also a section on how to build setting using macros.
- The index has been expanded to include new concepts.
- Some core terminology has been gently tweaked.
- **A lot** of places have minor changes to phrasing, aiming to make the game clearer.

Things Removed

- There is no OGL.
- Helmets have no individual rules anymore.
- The monster table and the list of magick concepts have had a few entries removed or renamed.