

POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING HINTS AND TIPS

The road to omnipotence is fraught with many dangers; your enemies are cunning and their spells powerful. Only by learning new strategies can you hope to emerge the victor. This guide aims to teach you the devious tricks of the gods of Populous themselves.

BUILDING YOUR SETTLEMENT

When you start a new level of Populous, first cast an eye over the map and decide where you want to establish your settlement. Building next to the Reincarnation Site may not be the best option. If the world is cloaked in the Fog of War, you can still see the outline of the land, even though you cannot see the enemies, trees or Wildmen.

First toggle off all your spells except for the Convert spell (hold down Ctrl and right-click on the Convert icon). Convert is used to recruit Wildmen to your tribe and is very useful at the beginning of a level. Wildmen will boost your population without you having to build Huts. Bear in mind that Wildmen will slowly disappear during the game, so the earlier you can convert them the better. Wildmen can often be found near water (either small lakes or the larger sea), so send the Shaman off to look for some straight away. Convert as many as you can find.

While the Shaman is busy converting Wildmen (keep checking on her so she doesn't waste too much Mana), you can begin the construction of your first settlement. First find a flat and spacious area of land near plenty of trees. At the start of a level you won't have the Mana to cast any land-altering spells so the position of your initial buildings will be important. If this land is away from the Reincarnation Site, you will need to build a Guard Tower first.

Try to build your Huts in rows. This tactic will mean you can fit more Huts into less space. To achieve a large population, you will need to build twenty to thirty Huts or more so the less space you can use, the better.

Trees are very important during the early stages. Trees contain a maximum of four pieces of wood and Huts take three pieces just to construct the first stage. A good trick is to send three Braves to chop down a fully-grown tree and return with the wood to the construction site. If you do this to all the trees in the area, you will not destroy any trees and have lots of wood to construct your buildings. If you cut down a tree completely, you will have to wait a long time for it to grow back.

If you are running low on wood, try sending some Invisible Braves into the enemy settlement to steal some more. Destroying the enemy's Trees with spells or Spies can be a useful tactic in the early stages.

By now, you should have found most of the Wildmen on the world. Hopefully you won't need the Convert spell any more so charge it up and then right-click on it to turn it off. Then begin charging up your other spells like the Blast and Swarm spells. The Blast spell is very useful and should be kept charged at all times to save the Shaman if she is ambushed.

Because wood is a scarce commodity, only build a maximum of five or so Huts at once. Your Huts use a lot of wood and if you're not careful, you'll destroy all the trees in the area. Also, your other Huts will be continuously upgrading so they will also require wood. So long as you manage your wood resources carefully you'll have no problems.

Training buildings can be odd shapes and some don't fit very well if you are building your Huts as a grid. Enemy tribes like to attack training buildings first so be careful where you construct them. Construct them away from each other so when you are attacked, you have time to train some defenders. Also, since the enemy aim for them, place them away from your main settlement so your Huts will remain relatively safe.

DEFENDING

Once you have your settlement up and running, consider building some defences. The enemy will often be starting from scratch as well so they won't attack you straight away. Look around your settlement and the map and find your weak spots. Often, there will be tight causeways or valleys to your settlement that the enemy will be forced to travel through. If you build Guard Towers around these openings, and on high ground if it's available, you can get an advance warning of any attack (manned Guard Towers sound a warning when enemies approach). The most useful followers to place in Guard Towers are Preachers and Firewarriors. Preachers will stop any attack force in its tracks and convert them to your side. Firewarriors, especially on higher ground, have a large range over which to fire their Blast spells and will often destroy an attack force before they reach your perimeter. This is especially useful if you don't have as many followers as the enemy. A well-balanced defence of Firewarriors and Preachers will also stop any Spies who might try to sneak past. You can also right-click on enemy Guard Towers to see who is inside them.

Guard Posts can also provide an good defence, although you will get no warning of an attack. If you place Guard Post patrols behind your Guard Towers, you will have an extra level of security. A neat trick is to place a Hut or two near your Guard Towers. The enemy will often attack the Hut first, leaving the Guard Towers alone. If you place Firewarriors in the Guard Towers, they will keep firing on the enemy as they try to dismantle the building. Place some Warriors and Preachers inside the Huts to start with and you'll have an unpleasant surprise for any attackers.

Spells, especially the land-altering spells, are very useful for constructing defences. The Landbridge spell is one of the most useful. Not only can it join two pieces of land separated by water; it can also create a wall of land between two high peaks. The Landbridge spell basically averages out the land between two points, the point where the Shaman is standing and the point when the spell is cast. If you move the Shaman to a high point, she creates impassable walls by casting the spell on another peak. If you build these defences well, you can leave enough space for your settlement and also force the enemy to attack from a specific and heavily fortified entrance. Some maps have been created with this strategy in mind so keep an eye out for them.

You can use some of your other spells to defend your settlement. If the enemy has amassed a large army, and the Shaman is within range, cast a few Swamp spells under them. Also, use the Lightning spell on the enemy Shaman and on any large groups of followers. Swarm will scatter any enemy and reduce the effectiveness of the army. Be careful where you cast it though, as the enemy will soon return when the danger has passed. The Angel of Death can be cast anywhere and it will seek and destroy as many enemies as it can find.

ATTACKING

When attacking the enemy, take a good mix of followers with you. You will need to be able to respond to any number of different strategies, some of which can disable armies made up of just one type of follower. Warriors are especially vulnerable to Preachers and you will lose your entire army if you are careless. Take the Shaman with your army and guard her well.

First cast some spells at the enemy to confuse them, and then begin to attack their Huts. Keep an eye out for any Preachers or Guard Towers that could contain Preachers. You will need to respond quickly if your followers come under attack or stop to listen to a Preacher. You can group your followers together by selecting them and pressing Shift and a number key (up to 6). You can then press that number key again to select them later. Try and keep your followers together in a number of small

groups. Followers who wander off on their own will quickly become overwhelmed but a single large army can be easily taken out by a spell like Tornado.

Hypnotism is good to use at the start of an attack to give yourself even more followers. Remember to keep the hypnotised enemy away from your own followers so they won't start attacking them when they recover.

Use Tornado to completely destroy Guard Towers and other buildings. Guard Towers, once destroyed, will not be built again. Firestorm can also be useful when cast in the centre of a clump of buildings. Volcano is obviously a very destructive spell, so use it on highly populated areas.

When you are attacking an enemy, destroy as many of their Huts as you can. The less Huts they have, the less followers they can breed once the attack is over. They will take longer to recover and you can return later to finish them off. Often the Shaman can attack the enemy on her own using her Blast spell to kill as many enemy as possible.

FOLLOWERS

Each of your followers has a different strength and weakness. Learning these abilities can greatly improve your strategies and give you a head start over your opponents.

Remember to keep an eye on your followers. They are people, have minds of their own and will often chase the enemy. If you don't want them to, make sure you place your Guard Posts carefully so that the enemy will be always caught by your defences.

SHAMAN

The Shaman is the leader of the tribe and the character you play throughout the game. She is on a quest to become a god and only by defeating all the enemy tribes can she succeed. She is the only member of the tribe who can fire spells and only within a certain range. Luckily, although she can be killed, she can Reincarnate her soul and return on the Reincarnation Site. This can only happen if she has any remaining followers on the world; if she does not, she will die and the game will be lost.

She is immune to some enemy spells, including Swarm, but also unaffected by some of her own, such as Shield and Invisibility. She is as vulnerable as any other follower to the attacks of enemy followers is, although she is strong enough to win against a Brave. Keep an eye on the Shaman icon on the panel and make sure her health doesn't reach dangerous levels. She will regain her health if she is left alone.

You can protect the Shaman by guarding her with your followers. To do this, select some followers and press g. They will then surround the Shaman and attack any enemy who approaches. To stop them guarding, deselect any followers and press g again. A good trick is to surround her with Warriors or Firewarriors and then fire Shield on her. Although she won't be affected, her guards will and become even more formidable. You can defend against this attack by casting a Lightning spell on the enemy Shaman. Not only will the lightning kill her but it will kill her guards as well.

BRAVES

Braves are the foundation of your tribe. Only they can build, gather wood and maintain your Huts. They are quite weak but can still defend your settlement if attacked. Braves also generate four times more Mana than any of the other followers, but only when building or resting in Huts. Keep as many Braves as you can in your Huts, especially when your tribe is large, to produce as much Mana as possible.

WARRIORS

Warriors are the toughest of your followers but not blessed with any special abilities. They can be a formidable foe to any attacking force but one Preacher can disable them all. They should not be used on their own to either defend or attack active enemy settlements. If only one or two get converted, it can spell disaster for your settlement or other followers.

When defending your settlement, use Warriors as your last line of defence, behind the Guard Towers containing Preachers and Firewarriors. Also, keep a few Preachers guarding with them to stop any enemy Preachers slipping through. You can set down two Guard Posts either side of a valley opening and have the Warriors patrolling between them.

PREACHERS

Preachers, though weak, are a surprisingly powerful follower who can stop an attacking army in its tracks. If you are the attacking army, you should keep a sharp eye out for any Preachers that could scupper your plans.

Defensively, Preachers are best kept out of the way, but still close enough to convert the enemy with ease. Send them to your Guard Towers so they have a wider range and be away from the enemy during an attack. Also, put one or two in the Huts near your settlement entrances. Not only will they help defend when the enemy attack but they will also convert any Spies who try to sabotage your buildings.

If any Preachers have penetrated your settlement, they can cause havoc if not dealt with. Your Preachers are immune to enemy Preachers so command any nearby to attack them. When they do, any followers who were under the spell of the enemy will also start fighting and you will quickly kill the enemy Preacher. If you don't have any Preachers nearby either train some quickly before too many of your followers are converted or Blast them with the Shaman. Use either the Blast spell or the Swarm spell to stop them preaching but still keep an eye on them; they can survive the Blast or Swarm and continue preaching. You can also use Lightning but you run the risk of killing your own followers. The best thing to do is keep some Preachers in your settlement. Not only will they help your defeat any enemy Preachers who might invade but they will also help you convert any enemy forces that might attack.

Invisible Preachers are a good method of converting some of the enemy followers without his knowledge. You only need one Preacher to convert a few Braves, or better still Warriors, and you can begin to destroy the enemy buildings. Remember though, Invisible Preachers become visible as soon as they begin preaching. Make sure you have enough time to convert a few enemy followers before any retaliation.

FIREWARRIORS

Firewarriors are best placed a little away of any enemy followers. While their Blast spell ability is powerful, they are relatively weak and do not last long in battles.

When attacking the enemy, try to keep them away from the battle and on high ground where their range is greater. Keep about five or six together, as one on his own will do little damage to an approaching Warrior. If in doubt, construct some Balloons and place your Firewarriors inside. The enemy Warriors won't be able to attack them and they will be free to lay waste to the enemy settlements. Shielded Firewarriors in Balloons are even more formidable.

Firewarriors are better used as defenders as their special skill make them ideal for placing in Guard Towers. One or two Guard Towers around an entrance with Firewarriors inside will provide you with ample warning and defence in the event of an attack. If you command some additional Firewarriors and some Warriors to guard just behind the Towers, you'll have an excellent defence that can destroy any attacking army before it reaches you.

SPIES

Spies are sneaky followers who can cause massive damage to the enemy if used correctly. They are best used during the first half of the level when each player is still setting up their settlements. Spies will help delay the enemy's progress and lower his Mana rate. The only problem with Spies is that the enemy will often unmask them quickly and then your Spy will be doomed. Sending a Spy into an enemy settlement is often a suicidal mission. Groups of Invisible, Shielded Spies are probably your best bet, as the enemy won't see them until they reappear again and you'll have more than one should something go wrong. Keep them out of the way of Preachers, though.

Enemy spies, when masked, look like normal Braves. To unmask a suspected enemy Spy, right-click on him. You can tell if an enemy Spy is sabotaging your buildings because some will suddenly burst into flames. To find a masked enemy Spy, look around your base and try and find any Braves that shouldn't be there. Look for Braves running around to the back of Huts and stopping. Look for Braves that are running in the opposite direction from everyone else. If in any doubt, just right-click on any Braves you can see to make absolutely sure.

SPELLS

Your spells are very important and you should keep them charged at all times. The Spell Charge Rate bar is very useful and will tell you if you have too many spells charging at once (the bar is low) or if you are wasting precious Mana (the bar is flashing red). The bar can also be low if your followers, especially Braves, are idle and not creating Mana.

Right-click on a spell icon to toggle it on or off. Learn which spells are most useful to you and keep charging them after you cast them. Blast is very useful, as is Lightning. The more devastating spells such as Earthquake and Tornado should be fully charged before you attack.

The full list of spells is:

SINGLE PLAYER

BLAST

This is your simplest spell and also one of the more powerful. Although it has a short range, the Blast spell is more useful for defending the Shaman against attack. One Blast can usually kill a Brave, a Preacher and certainly a Spy. Firewarriors and Warriors take more shots and enemy Shamans can be dispatched with four or five. It is tactically useful near water where the shock wave will fling any enemy into the water. If any enemy followers are running along the coast cast the spell to other side of them so they are all blown into the sea. Be careful when using the Blast spell near your own followers as it can hurt them as well.

CONVERT

This is only really useful at the start of the level when you have plenty of Wildmen to convert. Keep it charged so that you can cast it on any Wildmen that might appear. Wildmen will often re-appear if one player suffers a massive loss of followers.

SWARM

Swarm can be a very useful spell to cast on the enemy if you are under attack, but it is only a temporary solution. Often it will just scatter the enemy and cause you more problems in the long run. When you cast Swarm on the enemy, they will be injured and run away in panic, but will return when the panic is over. The Swarm will also enter nearby enemy buildings and expel their occupants. Swarm is a good way of stopping your followers from being converted by Preachers if you have no other defence in the area. It is also useful to cast on Boats and Balloons as the enemy will jump out in terror and often drown. Shamans are not affected by the Swarm spell.

INVISIBILITY

Invisibility does not last a long time so you should only cast it on your target followers at the very last moment. Your followers will then appear ghosted and totally invisible to the enemy. You can cast the spell on any follower, apart from the Shaman and they will still be able to perform any task. Preachers, however, will become visible again when they start to preach to the enemy leaving them vulnerable to attack. Invisibility and Shield make an excellent combination. Shamans are not affected by the Invisibility spell.

SHIELD

Like Invisibility, Shield doesn't last very long. It can be very effective when invading a superior enemy's settlement, where their defences are solid and would immediately overpower any normal attack force. If you guard the Shaman with shielded followers, she will be reasonably safe from attack. Also, remember that any spell fired on a Shielded follower is bounced back to the enemy. Shamans are not affected by the Shield spell.

LANDBRIDGE

Landbridge is more useful than you think. Not only is it good for joining two areas of land separated by water, but it can also level hills and valleys that would normally make construction impossible. Landbridge averages out the land between the point where the Shaman is standing and point where the spell is cast. By placing the Shaman on one side of a hill and casting the spell on the other side, you will level the land. You can also cast it next to the coast to expand the coast a little further.

As well as levelling land, it can also be used to raise land and create impassable barriers. If you place the Shaman on one hill and cast Landbridge on another, you will create a barrier of land that the enemy will have to navigate around to reach you. With this in mind, you can force the enemy to attack from a specific, and heavily fortified, direction.

LIGHTNING

Lightning is a more powerful version of the Blast spell and will kill anything it is directly cast upon. It will also set fire to buildings and burn down trees. If you are attacking an enemy settlement, use the Lightning spell to burn down their Huts so that they cannot breed any more Braves. Also, use it to kill the enemy Shaman with one shot and gain a quarter of her Mana. The only way to stop the Shaman being killed by a Lightning spell is to keep her moving. If she is fired upon when she is walking, often the spell will just miss and throw her into the air causing her a little damage.

HYPNOTISM

Hypnotism is very useful at the beginning of an attack on an enemy settlement. When you attack, the enemy will respond and send over all the followers she can. If you cast the Hypnotism spell on them, they will become temporary members of your tribe and begin attacking their own people. You can also command them so you should send them as far into the enemy base as possible. Keep them away from your own followers so they don't start attacking them when the spell wears off. Enemy followers converted by hypnotised Preachers will be permanent members of your tribe.

TORNADO

Tornadoes, once cast, are very random and unpredictable. To make sure you destroy at least one target, cast it on a specific building. Hopefully that building will be destroyed and take one or two more with it. You can also cast it on an approaching enemy army to slow them down.

SWAMP

Swamp can be very useful when placed in the path of the enemy, especially in front of your defences. You can also cast it on Stone Heads to prevent an enemy from worshipping it before you do. There is little you can do against an enemy Swamp except sacrifice ten of your followers to fill it or erode the land underneath so it falls into the water. You could always try and trick the enemy into entering the Swamp. Remember that your followers are vulnerable to your own Swamps, although you can Shift right-click on them to remove them.

FLATTEN

The Flatten spell is similar to the Landbridge spell in some respects. Not only will it flatten the land around the point where it was cast but it can also lower the land into the sea. If you cast the spell right on the coastline, the land will lower and the water will rush in to cover it. You can also cast Flatten near enemy buildings to raise the land and cause the buildings to explode.

EARTHQUAKE

Earthquake is most effective on high ground where both the lava and the change in the earth can destroy many buildings. When the spell is cast, the pre-shocks will begin to destroy buildings in the immediate area. Any buildings caught in the path of the earthquake will be blown up or incinerated by the lava.

ERODE

Erode is a very useful spell against high ground and coastal settlements. When cast on a point, it accelerates time and causes the land around to collapse as if centuries of weathering were affecting it. If cast on high slopes, the land will sink and fall into the valley. If cast on the coast, the land will collapse and fall into the sea. If any buildings are caught in the erosion, they will either explode because the land underneath is unstable or roll into the water. The enemy will often find it hard to recover if their land is receding so you can use it to block them in or destroy their most valuable buildings. Try casting it on Guard Towers or any other enemy fortification to destroy it. The Erode spell is not very effective on level ground.

FIRESTORM

The Firestorm spell casts a shower of meteors onto the target. If you cast it in a heavily populated area, it will destroy any buildings and kill any followers who stray into range. It can be a very useful spell for permanently clearing away enemy fortifications.

ANGEL OF DEATH

The Angel of Death is similar to the Knight in the original Populous games. When you create one, it will fly around the world looking for any enemy followers. When it finds one, it will stalk them, swoop down, grab them and kill them.

You can only charge one shot of the Angel of Death spell at any one time. Therefore, you should always fire the spell at the earliest opportunity so you can begin charging again.

If you are attacked by an Angel of Death, there are a number of things you can do to survive. The first is to move the Shaman away from it. The Angel of Death will try and kill the Shaman at any opportunity and you will keep losing Mana if it does. Firewarriors can fire on the Angel of Death and damage it. It has only so much strength and the Firewarriors will destroy it, if it doesn't kill them first. Also, you can simply cast an Angel of Death of your own. If you do, they will attack each other and the weaker will be destroyed.

VOLCANO

The Volcano is probably the most destructive and certainly the most impressive spell of all. When you cast it the ground rises up and boiling lava flows over the land. Any buildings and followers caught by the magma are destroyed. New land is created if the lava reaches water although once the lava has cooled; the new land cannot be built upon. It is best to cast the volcano in the middle of a populated area. Also, bear in mind the lava will always try to flow downhill. If you cast it on the side of a mountain, you can direct the flow.

Volcanoes have short ranges so it will always be cast near a Shaman. If a Volcano is cast on you, there is little you can do but at least you will know where it will appear. Try and get all your followers away from the Volcano so the lava doesn't kill them. Just shift left-click on the Total Population icon on the Followers Panel and move them away from the buildings. A Volcano cast by a Shaman cannot kill her so you can always try the same trick on the enemy.

GUEST SPELLS

Guest spells do not have permanent icons on the Spells Panel. This is because they are very powerful and would upset the balance of many levels. They are also more suited to multiplayer games.

TELEPORT

Teleport can be cast anywhere on the world to transport the Shaman to that point. Obviously, the sneakiest tactic is to Teleport into an enemy settlement and cast a Volcano, Firestorm, or any number of spells, and Teleport out again. To guard against this, you should spread out your settlements and have more than one of each type of training building. You should also try and use this tactic before anyone else so they have to clear up the mess, not you.

BLOODLUST

Bloodlust can only be cast on your own followers and will turn them into battle-hungry savages. They will be stronger and faster, a formidable foe for any enemy. The spell is best used just before a battle to make sure it lasts longer. If you find yourself up against enemy followers affected by Bloodlust, you should use spells such as Swamp and Tornado against them. Warriors with Bloodlust will be especially hard to beat so keep them away from you as long as possible until the spell wears off.

ARMAGEDDON

Armageddon is a very traditional Populous spell. Each player's followers are transported to an arena where they fight for dominion over the world. As each tribe fights, the Shamans fire spells at each other. When a tribe loses, that tribe's Shaman is struck by Lightning and killed. The last remaining Shaman is the victor.

There is nothing you can do to stop an Armageddon, but you can influence it. If you think an Armageddon is imminent then train as many Warriors as possible. You can only take 120 followers to the arena with you so you need the strongest army possible. Preachers lose their powers of persuasion and are reduced to fighting hand-to-hand; Spies are actually weaker than Braves and are next to useless in battle. In such close-quarter fighting, the Blast ability of the Firewarriors is limited as the Warriors can easily reach them and kill them.

MULTIPLAYER

In multiplayer games, you are up against more unpredictable enemies than those in the Single Player game are. You need all your wits and cunning with you to defeat them. There are a number of extra features of the multiplayer game that you can turn to your advantage. Remember also that the maps are often symmetrical so you can often guess where the enemy will be if the world is fogged.

A useful trick is to build your Spy Training Hut early, train some Spies and dismantle it. Hopefully your opponents will not have seen it and won't realise you have the ability to sabotage their settlements.

FORGE WORLD

Forge World is an optional feature that gives you the change to alter the landscape before the level begins. You can turn this to your advantage if you cast the available spells wisely. Each spell has only five shots and a range around the Reincarnation Site. First look at the land around the site and use the Flatten spells to make room for your settlements. Then, around the perimeter, raise the land into small hills so you can construct Guard Towers on top of them and join them with Landbridges later. Then, look for a suitable spot to place the trees. Choose a place away from the settlement so that you don't have to build over the trees later. Lastly, when the timer reaches about 5, cast the Wildmen spell on the Reincarnation Site. When the level begins, any Wildmen caught inside the Reincarnation Site will be automatically converted to your tribe saving you Mana later on.

GHOST ARMY

Ghost Army is a multiplayer-only spell that creates six ghost followers depending where it is cast. The ghost followers have no strength and cannot build or perform tasks but to the enemy they appear as solid as your real followers. If you cast the spell on the ground, you will create ghost Braves. If you cast the spell on any other follow, even the Shaman, you will create six ghosts of that follower. Ghost Shamans can be especially useful for confusing the enemy. You can also use ghost followers to create a decoy army while your real army is attacking from the other direction.

TOP TIPS FROM THE TEAM

RICHARD LEINFELLNER

Busy people are happy people and happy people give you mana.

STUART WHYTE

Use invisible Warriors to sneak in and kill the enemy Shaman.

ALAN WRIGHT

Look out for any advancing armies and cast Swamp on them to reduce their numbers.

STEVE LENEY

Put Preachers in guard towers - they are better protected and will gather up stray enemy followers like flies to flypaper.

GARY STEAD

Use high ground to your advantage. Spells have a much higher range when cast from hills.

BEN DEANE

Steal enemy Boats and Balloons.

MICHAEL WILLIS

Landbridge everywhere.

PETE BLOW

Hypnotise enemy followers and send them to your Preachers. As soon as they recover, they are easy converts.

RAJAN TANDE

Deceive the enemy and make them waste their spells on a Ghost Army.

DAVID BRYSON

Don't waste your Mana and keep your spells charging. You may need to use them at any moment.

WAYNE FROST

Cast Swarm near Swamps so the enemy panic and run into them.

DAN RILEY

Never completely cut down your trees otherwise you'll run out of wood.

MARK PITCHER

Build Huts, Huts and more Huts to increase your mana flow.

ALEX GODSILL

Cast Lightning on enemy Guard Towers and use Invisible, Shielded Spies.

KEN MALCOLM

Shielded Firewarriors in Balloons can cause massive devastation.

ALEX CULLUM

Cast Landbridge from high peak to high peak to create impassable walls.

LAWRENCE DOYLE

Use Invisible, Shielded Preacher to infiltrate the enemy settlements.

JON RENNIE

Learn to use the Followers Panel well so that you can select your followers easily and quickly. Kill any enemy Shaman you see to gain a quarter of their Mana every time.

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