

# DUNGEONS & DRAGONS<sup>®</sup>

## DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE<sup>®</sup> 2



ROLEPLAYING GAME SUPPLEMENT

James Wyatt • Bill Slavicsek • Robin D. Laws





## CREDITS

**Design**  
**James Wyatt (lead),**  
**Bill Slavicsek, Mike Mearls, Robin D. Laws**

**Additional Design**  
**Andy Collins, Rob Donoghue, John Four, Greg Gorden,**  
**Yacine “Yax” Merzouk, Stephen Radney-MacFarland,**  
**Stephen Schubert, Matthew Sernett**

**Development**  
**Stephen Schubert (lead),**  
**Andy Collins, Stephen Radney-MacFarland**

**Editing**  
**Michele Carter (lead),**  
**Kara Hamilton, Miranda Horner, Cal Moore**

**Additional Editing**  
**Greg Bilsland, Torah Cottrill**

**Managing Editing**  
**Kim Mohan**

**Text Review**  
**George Strayton**

**Director of D&D R&D and Book Publishing**  
**Bill Slavicsek**

**D&D Creative Manager**  
**Christopher Perkins**

**D&D Design Manager**  
**James Wyatt**

**D&D Development and Editing Manager**  
**Andy Collins**

**D&D Senior Art Director**  
**Jon Schindehette**

**Art Director**  
**Mari Kolkowsky**

**Graphic Designer**  
**Soe Hemmi**

**Cover Illustration**  
**Wayne Reynolds**

**Interior Illustrations**  
**Steve Argyle, Ryan Barger, Kerem Beyit, Zoltan Boros**  
**& Gabor Szikszai, Nicole Ashley Cardiff, Chippy, Julie**  
**Dillon, Vincent Dutrait, Jason A. Engle, Randy Gallegos,**  
**Tomás Giorello, Ralph Horsley, Howard Lyon, Raven**  
**Mimura, Lucio Parrillo, Georgi Simeonov “Calader,”**  
**Amelia Stoner, Eva Widermann**

**Cartographer**  
**Jason A. Engle**

**D&D Brand Team**  
**Liz Schuh, Scott Rouse, Kierin Chase, Sara Girard,**  
**Martin Durham**

**Publishing Production Specialist**  
**Erin Dorries**

**Prepress Manager**  
**Jefferson Dunlap**

**Imaging Technician**  
**Carmen Cheung**

**Production Manager**  
**Cynda Callaway**

Game rules based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by **E. Gary Gygax** and **Dave Arneson**, and the later editions by **David “Zeb” Cook** (2nd Edition); **Jonathan Tweet**, **Monte Cook**, **Skip Williams**, **Richard Baker**, and **Peter Adkison** (3rd Edition); and **Rob Heinsoo**, **Andy Collins**, and **James Wyatt** (4th Edition).

*Dedicated to the memory of Dave Arneson*

620-24206000-001 EN  
9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1  
First Printing:  
September 2009  
ISBN: 978-0-7869-5244-1



U.S., CANADA, ASIA, PACIFIC,  
& LATIN AMERICA  
Wizards of the Coast LLC  
P.O. Box 707  
Renton WA 98057-0707  
+1-800-324-6496

EUROPEAN HEADQUARTERS  
Hasbro UK Ltd  
Caswell Way  
Newport, Gwent NP9 0YH  
GREAT BRITAIN  
Please keep this address for your records

WIZARDS OF THE COAST, BELGIUM  
Industrialaan 1  
1702 Groot-Bijgaarden  
Belgium  
+32.070.233.277

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, d20, d20 System, WIZARDS OF THE COAST, EBERRON, FORGOTTEN REALMS, *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, *Monster Manual*, *Adventurer's Vault*, *Arcane Power*, *Dungeon Delve*, *Draconomicon: Chromatic Dragons*, *Martial Power*, *Open Grave: Secrets of the Undead*, *Primal Power*, all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast LLC in the U.S.A. and other countries. All Wizards characters and the distinctive likenesses thereof are property of Wizards of the Coast LLC. This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast LLC. Any similarity to actual people, organizations, places, or events included herein is purely coincidental. Printed in the U.S.A. ©2009 Wizards of the Coast LLC.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT [WWW.WIZARDS.COM/DND](http://WWW.WIZARDS.COM/DND)

# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	4	Skill Challenge Examples .....	89	Emblem of Ossandrya .....	154
<b>1: GROUP STORYTELLING</b> .....	6	Closing the Portal .....	89	Rash and Reckless .....	155
Story Structure .....	8	Opening the Ninth Ward .....	90	Rod of Seven Parts .....	157
Branching .....	9	Hunting the Mastermind .....	90	Standard of Eternal Battle .....	159
Cooperative Arcs .....	12	Chasing the Bandits .....	91	<b>Organizations</b> .....	161
Your Cast of Characters .....	13	Traveling Through Gorgimrith... 92		Recurring Villainy .....	161
Cooperative World Building .....	16	The Restless Dead .....	93	Political Complications .....	162
Roleplaying Hooks .....	20	The Rushing River .....	94	Rivalry .....	162
Vignettes .....	22	War by Other Means .....	96	Belonging to an Organization .....	163
Drama Rewards .....	25	Moving Through Suderham .....	98	Shifting Relationships .....	163
What Your Players Want .....	26			Power Struggles .....	164
Companion Characters .....	27	<b>4: CUSTOMIZING MONSTERS</b> .....	102	Organization Elements .....	165
Making Things Level .....	34	Monster Themes .....	104	Examples .....	165
<b>2: ADVANCED ENCOUNTERS</b> .....	36	Using Themes .....	104	<b>Campaign Arcs</b> .....	168
Encounter as Story .....	38	Themed Groups .....	105	Breach Smashers .....	168
Player Motivations .....	42	Demogorgon Cultist .....	106	Pillars of the State .....	169
Encounters for Large Groups .....	50	Feywild Denizen .....	108	Blood and Treasure .....	171
Encounters for Small Groups .....	51	Goblin Allies .....	110	The Möbius Trippers .....	172
Encounters and Attrition .....	52	Legion of Avernus .....	112	Dungeoncraft:	
Pacing .....	52	Lolth's Chosen .....	114	The Campaign Arc .....	174
Drawing Characters Onward .....	54	Orcus Blood Cultist .....	116		
Creating Movement .....	56	Snaketongue Cultist .....	118	<b>6: PARAGON CAMPAIGNS</b> .....	176
Terrain .....	58	Those Who Hear .....	120	Paragon Status .....	178
More Fantastic Terrain .....	58	Tiamat's Red Hand .....	122	Reaching Paragon Tier .....	178
Terrain Powers .....	62	<b>Templates</b> .....	124	Crowns and Thrones .....	178
Designing Traps .....	64	Applying a Template .....	124	Masters of War .....	180
Elite and Solo Traps .....	66	Functional Templates .....	125	Down to the Depths .....	181
Sample Traps .....	66	Beast of Demogorgon .....	125	Darkness in the Light .....	183
Kissing Maiden .....	66	Champion of Bane .....	125	World Hopping .....	184
Falling Iron Portcullis .....	67	Chaos Warrior .....	125	Masters of Reality .....	185
Water-Filling Chamber .....	67	Cursed Guardian .....	126	Masters of Time .....	185
Crushing Walls Room .....	68	Dragontouched Destroyer .....	126	Sigil, The City of Doors .....	186
Giant Rolling Boulder .....	69	Grizzled Veteran .....	127	Origin Stories .....	186
Death Strangler Statue .....	70	Hellbound Soldier .....	127	The Impossible Place .....	186
Elemental Tiles .....	71	Mad Alchemist .....	128	Portals .....	188
Phantom Hunter .....	72	Slithering Idol .....	129	The Lady of Pain .....	190
Pain Vault .....	72	Spectral Assassin .....	130	Rules and Governance .....	191
Life Eater Haze .....	73	Spiderblessed Spinner .....	130	Sigil's Businesses	
Far Realm Star Trap .....	74	Terrifying Haunt .....	130	and Services .....	193
Maddening Mural .....	74	Victim of the Mad Dance .....	131	The Wards of Sigil .....	194
Pulling It All Together .....	75	Class Templates .....	131	Faces of Sigil .....	202
<b>3: SKILL CHALLENGES</b> .....	78	Creating Monsters .....	133	Typical Street Encounter .....	204
Skill Challenge Basics .....	80	<b>5: ADVENTURES</b> .....	134	Typical Sewer Encounter .....	206
The Skill Challenge		Alternative Rewards .....	136	Gate-Towns .....	208
Framework .....	80	Reward Types .....	136	A Conspiracy of Doors .....	210
Example of Play .....	80	How Rewards Work .....	137	Starting the Adventure .....	211
Ground Rules .....	82	Creating a Reward .....	137	Encounter D1:	
Skill Challenges in Depth .....	84	Divine Boons .....	139	Doorway to Danger .....	212
Time Frame .....	84	Legendary Boons .....	142	Encounter D2: Tradegate .....	214
Allow a Variety of Options .....	85	Grandmaster Training .....	144	Encounter D3:	
Prepare for Failure .....	86	Item Components .....	146	The Night Market .....	216
Progressive Challenges .....	88	Artifacts .....	147	Encounter D4:	
Branching Challenges .....	89	Adamantine Horse of Xarn .....	148	The Demon Caves .....	218
		Amulet of Passage .....	150	Encounter D5: The Warehouse .....	220
		Cup and Talisman		Ending the Adventure .....	222
		of Al'Akbar .....	152	<b>INDEX</b> .....	223



# INTRODUCTION

**PLAYER'S HANDBOOK 2** introduced eight new classes and five new races to the D&D® game. It presented racial paragon paths, character backgrounds, and new feats and rituals for every character.

*Monster Manual*® 2 presented over 300 new monsters to the game, covering every level and role. From the humble ankheg broodling to the mighty Prince of Demons, Demogorgon, it's full of monsters to challenge your players and add new life to your dungeons.

So what's in *Dungeon Master's Guide*® 2 that will make your game better?

## JUICY RULES BITS

Let's start with the juicy rules bits you can drop in your game right away—like the eight pages of new traps in Chapter 2. You also get solid guidelines for creating your own traps, covering everything from getting the numbers right to making sure your trap threatens the characters—not the fun of your game.

Chapter 2 also includes new types of fantastic terrain you can add to your encounters, as well as introducing the concept of “terrain powers”—attack powers built in to an encounter's environment.

Chapter 4 is about tweaking and adjusting monsters. It rounds out the rules presented in the first 4th Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide* with additional rules for making minions and refined guidelines for elite and solo monsters. It presents new templates, including class templates for the classes in *Player's Handbook*® 2, and introduces monster themes—a great way to tweak the flavor and powers of a monster to make it fit whatever kind of adventure you want to run.

You'll find new artifacts in Chapter 5, including old favorites such as the *Rod of Seven Parts* and the *Cup and Talisman of Al'Azkar* (both of which appeared in the original *Dungeon Master's Guide* back in 1979) as well as all-new artifacts designed to appeal to pairs or whole groups of characters.

Chapter 5 also sets out a new system of rewards you can use instead of (or as a supplement to) magic items. Divine boons represent gifts from the gods or their agents, legendary boons express the accomplishment of great deeds of power, and grandmaster training reflects what happens when a player character learns from a legendary master.

Near the end of Chapter 1, you'll find rules for companion characters—a great way to round out a small party or bring an important NPC along for the

ride with your player characters. That chapter also includes handy rules for altering a character on the fly so he or she can fit in with a party of characters of much higher or lower level.

## EXPERT ADVICE

*A Dungeon Master's Guide* isn't just about rules, it's about helping you be a better *Dungeon Master*. Whether you're a veteran DM or a first-timer, this book has ample expert advice to improve your game.

Chapter 1, “Group Storytelling,” focuses on the cooperative experience of creating a dramatic narrative. Whether you're looking to inject a little more drama into your game or you want a group-created story to drive your campaign, you'll find advice that will help you bring the characters at your table to life.

Chapter 2, “Advanced Encounters,” extends that advice to the level of the individual encounters that make up your adventures, offering advice to help make each encounter an important part of the plot. This chapter also includes advice on how to tailor encounters for different player motivations, how to deal with large and small groups, how to encourage movement in combat, and how to pace encounters to build dramatic tension. If you've wondered how to encourage characters to press on without taking an extended rest, or how to handle a long fight with wave after wave of onrushing enemies and no time for a short rest, this chapter has the advice you need.

Chapter 2 ends with a sample encounter that pulls many of the elements discussed in the chapter together into a single, dynamic fight.

Chapter 3, “Skill Challenges,” focuses on using skill challenges in your game, combining extensive, detailed advice with lots of examples. It sums up the basic rules of skill challenges (as already expanded and clarified in rules updates found on [www.wizards.com](http://www.wizards.com)), moves on to discuss five key elements of skill challenges, and wraps up with a series of examples.

In among the rewards and artifacts in Chapter 5, “Adventures,” you'll also find plenty of advice to help you build your campaign. Sample campaign arcs, including a hands-on example of how to build a campaign arc, help you form the skeleton of your campaign, and information about using artifacts and organizations can help you flesh out the details.

If the characters in your campaign have advanced to paragon level, be sure to take a look at Chapter 6, “Paragon Campaigns.” This chapter offers tips and

suggestions for campaigns set in the paragon tier, presents the city of Sigil as a home base for characters' adventures through the paragon tier, and includes a short adventure for 11th-level characters.

## D&D INSIDER

Throughout this book, you'll find excerpts of material from the pages of *Dungeon*™ magazine, particularly Stephen Radney-MacFarland's "Save My Game" column and James Wyatt's "Dungeoncraft" column. Some other material in this book originally appeared in the "Ruling Skill Challenges" column by Mike Mearls or in feature articles in *Dragon*™ magazine.

These columns and features are part of *D&D Insider*™, an online subscription-based service designed to bring new life and new ideas to your D&D game. *D&D Insider* is a suite of content and tools for better gaming, including:

- ◆ *Dragon* magazine, which features new material and expanded content to help make your characters and campaigns more fun and more compelling: character options, powers, feats, magic items, paragon paths, epic destinies, monsters, campaign setting source material, and more. *Dragon* magazine also regularly features material slated for inclusion in future print products, giving you the opportunity to share your feedback with the Wizards of the Coast design and development teams.

- ◆ *Dungeon* magazine, which provides three to five new adventures every month—something for each tier of play (heroic, paragon, and epic)—so you'll always have a game that's ready to run. Whether you run those adventures, or play your own homebrewed adventures and campaigns, *Dungeon* offers a continuous source of articles, features, hints, and tips, to help make the job of DMing even easier.
- ◆ The D&D Character Builder, a stand-alone application that puts information from every printed book and online article at your fingertips as you build and level your character. In addition to providing an updatable and easy-to-read character sheet, the Character Builder generates power cards for you to quickly reference and track your character's powers.
- ◆ The *D&D Compendium*, a searchable online database of the complete rules text for every race, class, paragon path, epic destiny, skill, feat, power, item, and ritual—from every D&D rulebook and online magazine article.

Wizards of the Coast is working constantly to expand and improve the tools and content available on *D&D Insider*, so be sure to check [www.dndinsider.com](http://www.dndinsider.com) for the latest updates. And if you like the excerpts from *D&D Insider* you find within these pages, become a subscriber and check out what you've been missing!

## PUTTING IT ALL TO USE

Since the release of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* in 2008, the D&D game has grown. Besides *Player's Handbook 2* and *Monster Manual 2*, you and your players might own *Martial Power*™, *Draconomicon*™: *Chromatic Dragons*, *Open Grave*™, *Adventurer's Vault*™, the *FORGOTTEN REALMS*® or *EBERRON*® *Campaign Guide* and *Player's Guide*, and any number of other supplements and adventures. How do you put it all to work for your game?

Start by knowing when to say no. If a player brings a new option to your table that doesn't fit in your game, it's okay to tell the player to hold on to that idea until this campaign wraps up and you (or someone else in your group) starts something new. Balance this, of course, with the advice to say yes as much as possible (see page 28 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), but know the limits you want in your game and don't be afraid to enforce them.

If your players are eager to try a new class or build they found in *Player's Handbook 2* or a power source book such as *Arcane Power*™, check out the sidebar on page 35, which discusses how to let players take on multiple characters. You should also feel free to let your players tweak aspects of their characters when new options become available. If the guardian druid in your party wants to become a swarm druid once *Primal Power*™ comes out, and the player can make that change without doing violence to the story of your game, let it happen.

The *D&D Compendium*, part of the *D&D Insider* suite of tools, is a great way to keep track of information that appears in multiple books. If you're trying to find the caller in darkness, the *Compendium* can tell you quickly that it appears in *Open Grave: Secrets of the Undead* (and that it's a level 19 elite soldier). Using the *Compendium* to build encounters keeps all the information from your books at your fingertips.

Loot freely. For instance, you don't have to be running a game set in the world of Eberron to find something worth using in the *EBERRON Campaign Guide*. Maybe the idea of characters with dragonmarks tied to a mysterious prophecy fits in with the ideas you have for your own campaign. Letting your characters take dragonmark feats—and then pitting them against agents of the Chamber and the Lords of Dust—makes everyone at the table happy.

Delves (short, three-encounter adventures), lairs, and even single encounters are easy to work in to whatever adventure you're running, whether it's a published adventure or one of your own creation. If you craft your own adventures but find yourself underprepared for a session, picking up a delve from *Dungeon Delve*™, a dragon lair from *Draconomicon*, or even a couple of encounters from one of the dozens of adventures found in *Dungeon* magazine is a great way to keep your game on track.

— James Wyatt

# GROUP STORYTELLING

THE D&D game offers a Dungeon Master and the other players the ability to craft a story out of each session and each adventure. Sometimes a gaming group creates a straightforward story, with sword-and-sorcery action and little character development or few plot twists. Other times, a group weaves a magical tale with dramatic layers of complex storytelling.

This chapter focuses on the narrative side of the game from the DM's point of view, offering techniques to encourage your group of players to help you shape the story of the game.

This chapter includes the following topics.

- ◆ **Story Structure:** The basic building blocks of narrative storytelling.
- ◆ **Branching:** Consider the narrative as a series of choices leading to multiple possible destinations.
- ◆ **Cooperative Arcs:** Consult with your players to build a campaign from the ground up.
- ◆ **Your Cast of Characters:** Help players work with you and each other to create dynamic characters.
- ◆ **Cooperative World Building:** The cooperative storytelling approach builds a story through joint improvisation. Players feel they have a stake in the story when they participate in building the plot.
- ◆ **Roleplaying Hooks:** Strong personality and plot hooks established at the start keep the characters involved throughout the life of the campaign.
- ◆ **Vignettes:** Short, directed scenes allow players to see events from a different point of view.
- ◆ **Drama Rewards:** Significant, dedicated roleplaying deserves XP rewards.
- ◆ **What Your Players Want:** Create surveys so you can adapt the game to your players'—and their characters'—requests.
- ◆ **Companion Characters:** Your story might call for an ally to join the PCs for a time, or maybe they need help in overcoming a challenge you want to use. These rules work independent of the storytelling style you adopt for your game.
- ◆ **Making Things Level:** Guidance for handling the situation when a character of higher or lower level joins the party.

HOWARD LYON

