

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons[®]

Dungeon Master's Guide 2nd Edition Rules Supplement

Campaign
Sourcebook
and
Catacomb
Guide

Sample file



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Printed in the U.S.A.

Distributed to the book trade in the United States by Random House Inc. and in Canada by
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Distribution in the United Kingdom by TSR UK Ltd.

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TSR Inc.
POB 756
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ISBN 0-88038-817-X



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The dungeon master's task is not an easy one. On his shoulders rests the responsibility for the whole game. It is the DM's job to make sure that everyone, himself included, has a good time when they play the AD&D® game. If you are an experienced DM then you are sure to know that there are times when this task is so daunting that you wonder why you didn't stick with a safe hobby like stamp collecting.

The AD&D 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook* and *Dungeon Master's Guide* give the referee everything he needs to set up and run a role-playing game—they are the tools. In this book, we will share with you a wide array of tips and techniques for weaving the tales of adventure, which fill your active imagination, into games which will grab the at-

tention of your players.

If you are new to the fine art of dungeon mastering, you will find that the information in this book can make you seem like a pro who's been doing it for years. If you are a pro who's been doing this for years, you'll find hints to help you get the most out of your existing campaign.

The first section of the *Campaign Sourcebook and Catacomb Guide* provides information on setting up a gaming group. We'll touch on a number of points ranging from good gaming manners (I brought the soda last week! It's somebody else's turn!) to dealing with disruptive players. After all, part of being a good dungeon master is managing relations with your players!

In the second section we'll offer

advice on how to pace the events of your games, set up campaign worlds, make better game maps, and reduce the amount of time you must spend to make ready for a game. In addition, we've included a section on making NPCs more realistic and important in your campaign.

Thirdly, we've included chapters about what it is that sets a dungeon based campaign apart from a wilderness campaign. Here, you'll find tips on making the most out of those gloomy passages that run beneath the surface of even the most pacific nation.

To close out the book, we present a number of maps for use by referee's when time is tight. Unlike the tradition "hole in the ground" dungeon, however, each of these is somewhat—unusual.





Designing a game world and plotting out the dynamic stories and spine-tingling excitement that takes place in it requires a great deal of imagination and more than a few creative skills. Yet the job of the DM doesn't end there. A good DM not only has to make a good adventure, he has to run a good adventure session and make decisions about his world that even the best rules can never adequately cover. The latter tasks go beyond mere creativity and enter into the realm of social etiquette and administration.

Gaming Etiquette

While one does not necessarily need to know which side of the plate a salad fork goes on to successfully entertain gamers, good gaming sessions, like other types of social gather-

ings, depend on having both the players and the DM observe a number of basic, but greatly appreciated courtesies. The DM should follow these "rules of etiquette" and encourage his players to heed them too.

Be Prepared

Probably the greatest mistake that a DM can make prior to a game session is to fail to prepare. Proper preparation can be summed up in two words, study and organization. Nothing spoils a game more quickly than a DM who hasn't studied his material beforehand and doesn't know the gist of his adventure, if not all the details.

Take the time to organize material in a logical manner. If players ask questions or go off in an unexpected direction, the DM should know where to find that informa-

tion without spending an hour looking for it.

Hosting a Game

It is not the DM's responsibility to provide a place to play. Nor should he be held responsible for bringing the food and drinks or even scheduling the time for the game and calling the players. That responsibility should be shared among the players, the DM included. Often, it should be enough that the DM provides the adventure.

However, the DM is responsible for setting up before a game, even though the game may take place in someone else's home or in a public place such as a lounge in a college dormitory. If possible, he should be the first to arrive and should have his game materials in order before the players arrive. If the game will take place in a public area, the DM



(or another player) should take it upon himself to secure a play area in advance, one that will accommodate the players and, just as importantly, not disturb others who may wish to use the facility.

The game session host should ensure that a clean play area and enough seating is available for all anticipated players. If at all possible, arrange for the DM to be seated at a separate table in the gaming area. It's very important that the DM keep his game notes and maps out of the players' sight.

Courtesy to the Host

At the end of each game session, clean up the play area, regardless of whether the game is played in a student lounge or at a player's home. Toss out food and drink containers (don't make the host responsible for returning empty beverage containers). Sweep up any mess. Offer to help put away excess chairs, books, tables, miniatures, etc. Failure to do so may result in your having to find another place to play next time.

Courtesy to Others

Every time a roleplaying game occurs in a public or semi-public place (such as in a school cafeteria, a dormitory lounge, or a student union), the players and DM involved become ambassadors for roleplaying games at large. People will judge the players, the AD&D® game, and all roleplaying games in general based on what they see. If an adventure is exciting or disappointing, players often get loud, possibly even downright rowdy. To say that loud noise or uncouth language can disturb others is an understatement.

A wise DM will encourage his players to keep verbal expression of excitement or dismay ("What do you mean he's dead! He's 16th level! He can't be dead!") to conversational decibel levels.

Prerolling Characters

Whenever possible, create new player characters ahead of time. Prerolling new player characters before the day or scheduled time of a game session is a small but greatly appreciated courtesy. Character creation, especially when any type of background development is involved, takes time. If the DM waits until the game session to roll up new player characters, valuable game time is wasted. Instead of playing the game, the other players must find ways to entertain themselves until the DM is ready to play. In this regard, the DM runs the risk of losing his players to whatever has distracted them.

Opening Ceremonies

Allow the players to get comfortable. This is a social time, friendly conversation relaxes players and gets them ready to play. Don't rush the start of the game. Give the players a chance to discuss the previous game session, go over mistakes, plan strategies, and decide on spells. If possible, have this activity take place at someplace other than the gaming table. Announce when the game is to start and request that non-essential conversation end.

Refreshments

Refreshments are something that everyone should provide for themselves, or better yet, bring to

share. As stated before, this is not the DM's responsibility. Commonly, refreshments are acknowledged "junk foods:" soda pop, peanuts, pretzels, cookies, and chips of all kinds, including the four basic gamer food groups: caffeine, sugar, salt, and carbohydrates. In deference to good eating habits and in an attempt to avoid pear-shaped bodies, try to balance the type of snacks provided. For long game sessions, suggest ahead of time that the players come prepared to participate in some form of deliverable food (like pizza).

Allow breaks for eating and, if possible, keep food and drink away from the gaming table. Don't let food disrupt the game or become a distraction.

Distractions

Anything that doesn't add to the playing of the game will detract from it. Where possible, eliminate all outside distractions. It is difficult to concentrate on roleplaying while a ball game or loud music is going on in the background. If a player can't concentrate on the game because he is more interested in a distraction, suggest that he leave and let other players enjoy the game.

For some gamers, young children (particularly their own) can be a distraction. If young children must be present during the game session, the players may wish to contribute towards the hiring of a baby sitter. The resulting peace may be well worth the price!

Be Kind to the DM

Accept that the DM is the final authority in the game. Don't cheat, even if it means a character



buys the farm (dies). Don't play favoritism games. Accept a character's death calmly, don't belabor it. The DM is human (really, it's true!) and will make mistakes. If a mistake is fatal, ask the DM to change his decision in good grace, without recriminations. Be sure to compliment the DM on a good game!

Be Kind to the Players

Be Fair. Assume they are not cheating if they haven't been caught at it. Let the players make their own decisions. Don't manipulate their characters as if they were part of a novel or railroad them into choosing predetermined paths. Don't punish them for being clever. If they avoid or foil the best trap in the dungeon, then reward them for it. Don't try to kill off the characters of unpleasant players or punish them if they miss a play session or have to leave early. Compliment players on clever actions. Ask their opinions on obscure rule interpretations. Treat players with respect, regardless of whether they know the rules or not.

The Administrative DM

Part of the job of being a DM has nothing to do with actually running adventures. What follows is a look at situations a DM may encounter between game sessions, or that may complicate the way he runs his world.

One World, Many DMs

What happens when several people in a group want to DM and everybody wants to keep the same player characters in each world? One solution is to share the world.

Most worlds are going to be big places. It should be a simple matter for each DM to take a part of the world, say a major country or wilderness area and continue to flesh it out and run adventures there. The player characters then physically travel from place to place, adventuring in the area controlled by whomever is DMing that session.

It can work and it can be fun. Still, drawbacks exist. Any secret information about a character, such as special abilities or independent actions that are usually shared only between a player and the DM soon become common knowledge as each player in turn takes over the duties of DMing. Second, the characters will end up doing a lot more travelling than might be realistic or reasonable.

A better solution might be to share the world, but have different player characters in each DM's campaign. This allows for the eventual possibility of teaming up player characters from different campaigns for particularly difficult missions, but keeps characters private.

One Player, Many Characters

Nowhere is it carved in granite that each player shall play but one character. If it suits the needs of the game, allow as many characters per player as the DM sees fit. Many players and DMs find it convenient to have multiple characters. If one hero is off on an unfinished quest, his backup character can go on another adventure in the same world.

If a player is competent enough to play each character as an individual (rather than elements of a group mind), he may even play more than one character within a

single adventuring party. This is tricky, but extremely useful when the number of players is far less than the number of characters needed for good adventuring.

In such situations, both the players and the DM must keep in mind that even characters controlled by the same player will not freely share or give up personal belongings. The player is encouraged to roleplay the persona of each individual character. If a player insists on playing his characters "out-of-character," remove one (or more) secondary characters from his control and make them into DM-controlled NPCs for the remainder of the adventure.

Visitors from Other Worlds

It happens to every DM and every campaign at least once. A new player joins the group and wants to bring Sigimund, his 14th level chaotic good barbarian fighter/thief with him. How should the DM decide the matter? There are no hard rules and it can be a tough call. Several "rules of thumb" can be applied to help the DM make his decision.

First, ask to see the incoming character's record sheet and any applicable notes. Everything the character possesses should be detailed here.

If the incoming character's experience level is much higher than the rest of the characters, do not allow the transfer. Stripping a player's favorite character of hard-earned (or otherwise) experience can only cause grief. Tell him the character must "wait in the wings" until the other PCs reach his power level, and have the new player create a new character.

Either disallow characters with