

EDITING IMAGES D&D – STYLE, USING GIMP

Below is a guide to creating Dungeons & Dragons style images in GIMP (Gnu Image Manipulation Program).

0. DOWNLOADS AND PREPARATION

GIMP can be downloaded [here](#) for free. All other materials (brushes, backgrounds) can be found [here](#).

To install your new brushes, simply select the brush files and drag them into the brushes selection panel in GIMP.

1. SELECT AN ARTWORK

Paintings work well for artwork, especially digital paintings. It's good ethics to ask and receive permission for homebrew art, and I *try* to gain permission for every artwork I appropriate. Here's the artwork I'll be working with: *Fantasy Armor* by Heavenwill on Deviant Art. I gained permission from them to use this artwork for D&D non-commercial homebrew.



2. SET THE STAGE

CREATE THE GIMP FILE

Open GIMP, and create a new file. Size the document to be 8.5" x 11", so you can gauge the proportions of your artwork. Make the document background transparent.

SET THE BACKGROUND

I like to drag and drop in the background image of the PHB or DMG, so I have a better idea of how the image will look in the document.

3. INSERT THE ARTWORK

MOVE AND RESIZE

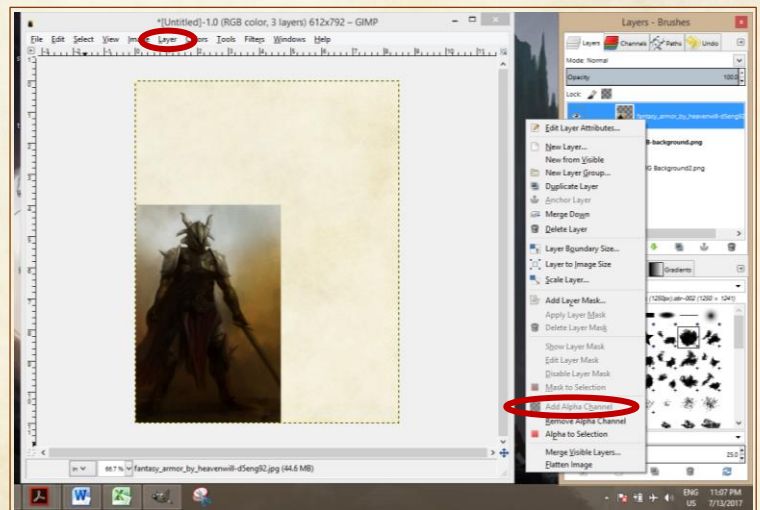
Insert the artwork, use the resize tool, and drag it to the place you want on page. Eyeball the margins - you don't want your finished artwork running into text. The opposite column is about 4.5 inches in from the other side.

ADD ALPHA CHANNEL

Be sure that your artwork has an alpha channel – this means that when you erase parts of the image, they become transparent. To add an alpha channel, right-click the image layer, and select "Add Alpha Channel".

EXPAND THE LAYER SIZE

Select your artwork layer, and navigate to Layer -> Layer to Image Size. This will expand the space you have to work with to the size of the page.



4. ERASE THE EDGES

SELECT YOUR TOOLS

Select a watercolor brush (right), and eraser tool (left). On the left, increase the size of the brush to *much larger than you think*, like 600.

BLOT ON THE EDGES

Click, don't drag, the brush on the edge of the artwork. Switch between brushes often, and be sure to get rid of all the hard edges of the artwork. Be sparing with your clicks; you want to be able to see the edges of each watercolor brush on the image.



5. ADD WATERCOLOR BLOTCHES

A: SELECT THE RIGHT COLOR

Select the artwork layer. Use the Color Picker Tool (O), and click on a part of the image near the border.

B: ADD BLOTCHES IN A NEW LAYER

Create a New Layer (Ctrl + Shift + N). Set this layer to be underneath your artwork. Select a watercolor brush, and the Paint tool (P). I had the brush size at about 500. Add in a few blotches, keeping in mind where your text will be on the page.

C. RINSE AND REPEAT

Repeat steps A and B until you finish all edges of the artwork. This artwork has three tones on the edges, so I'll have three different blotch layers.

D. ADJUST TRANSPARENCY

You can adjust the opacity of the blotch layers in the layers toolbar. I adjust them to somewhere between 25-90%, depending on my mood.



6. FINISHING UP

CLEAN UP SPACKLE

The brushes have a bit of extraneous spackle – clean that up with an Erase tool.

CROP IMAGE

Use the Select tool to select the general size of the image. Then navigate to Image > Crop to Selection.

HIDE BACKGROUND LAYER

Click the little eye symbol next to your background layer.

SAVE AND EXPORT

Save the document, then File -> Export it as a .PNG file.