

# D&D. ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

## DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE

VERSION 2.1



### Credits

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# WHAT IS THE D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE?

The D&D Adventurers League is the official organized play system for Dungeons & Dragons. Players can create characters and participate in any adventure allowed as a part of the D&D Adventurers League. As characters adventure, players track those characters' experience, treasure, and other rewards, and can take those characters through other adventures that will continue their personal story.

## STORYLINE SEASONS

D&D Adventurers League play is broken up into storyline seasons. When players create characters, they can continue to play their characters after the storyline season has finished, possibly participating in a second or third storyline with those same characters. A character's level is the only limitation for adventure play. A player cannot use a character of a level higher or lower than the level range of a given D&D Adventurers League adventure.

## THE SETTING

D&D Adventurers League adventures are set in the Forgotten Realms, on the continent of Faerûn. The storyline for season 4 was set in Ravenloft, though characters traversed the mists from the Forgotten Realms to Ravenloft, and back again as part of that season's story. Hardcover adventures for previous seasons are set in the Sword Coast region—a savage wilderness dotted with powerful and iconic cities such as Baldur's Gate, Neverwinter, and Waterdeep. Adventures created for previous seasons of D&D Adventurers League play are set in the Moonsea region—a brutal land beset by bandits, monstrous hordes, and tyrants. Going forward, the adventures created to compliment the current story will also be set in the Sword Coast region in order to bring their story focus closer to that of the for-sale print products crafted by the D&D team at Wizards of the Coast.

## D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE PLAY

Dungeon Masters and players can engage with the D&D Adventurers League in many ways. These currently include D&D introductory adventures, D&D premiere play and playing through the published D&D adventure for any given storyline. Additionally, some convention organizers have been sanctioned to create approved D&D Adventurers League adventures that premiere specifically at their conventions. These adventures are set in the Moonsea region of the Forgotten Realms. This list of options may continue to change to meet the needs of D&D fans and event organizers.

## D&D INTRODUCTORY ADVENTURES

These adventures premiere at your local core hobby retail store and are meant to introduce you to the content of a new D&D print product, published by Wizards of the Coast. This free content typically supports twelve to sixteen hours of D&D play, and is made available for anyone to download from the [Dungeon Masters Guild](#) after its initial premiere. It is important to note that there will be an introductory adventure for each new release, not just D&D adventure releases.

## D&D PREMIERE PLAY

D&D Premiere Play adventures support Wizards of the Coast storyline product releases. They can be purchased from the Dungeon Masters Guild, and played as official D&D Adventurers League play. Once purchased by a Dungeon Master, Premiere Play content can be run as often as that DM likes in support of a given D&D storyline season. D&D Premiere Play can take place anywhere, both at a public venue such as a local core hobby retail store, or privately in your home or other location of your choosing.

## BEING A DUNGEON MASTER

Playing D&D Adventurers League adventures as the DM is easy and fun. The adventures can be prepared in a short period of time, and you don't have to worry about creating all sorts of background material.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO RUN A GAME

In order to run a game as a DM in D&D Adventurers League games, you'll need the following.

***The D&D Basic Rules.*** This PDF document is available for free on the Wizards of the Coast website. It contains all the basic rules of the game, and you can create a character with it. More options for characters are available in the *Player's Handbook* and the *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide*.

***An Adventure.*** If you're running games in a game store or at a convention, check with the organizer to see what adventures are available. The

organizer may be able to provide you with access to a copy of the adventure. Adventures are designed for a table of five players, but can be adjusted for three to seven players. Tables smaller or larger than those limits are not allowed.

***Dice, Pens or Pencils, and Paper.*** Don't leave them at home!

***A DCI number (OPTIONAL).*** This is an official Wizards of the Coast organized play number. It is obtainable at public events; ask the organizer for one the first time you play, or it can be obtained online.

### OPTIONAL ITEMS

These things aren't necessary to run D&D Adventurers League games, but might be nice to have.

***Dungeon Master's Guide™.*** This book contains indispensable advice on running games. It's great during preparation, but you don't have to bring it along to the game. The *Dungeon Master's Guide* also contains descriptions of magic items that might be awarded during the course of play, so it is suggested that you bring that information with you to the table if it is not provided in the adventure.

***Monsters.*** The adventure will specify where you can find statistics for the monsters you're using. Most monsters can be found in the *Monster Manual* or the *D&D Basic Rules*. Special monsters created specifically for a given season's published adventure are found in that product.

***Note Cards.*** Great for writing down initiative, handing notes to players, and as cheap table tents.

***Miniatures and Map Surfaces.*** If you and your players enjoy playing a more tactical game of D&D, you can use these to help depict combats and detailed areas.

***Dungeon Master Screen.*** Helpful to hide the adventure and conceal your notes from the other players. Rules for *Dungeon Masters The variant rules for "Playing on a Grid"* in the *D&D Basic Rules* and *Player's Handbook* can be used if you and your players wish. *Dungeon Masters* should feel free to use the *Dungeon Masters Guide* to

help run games if they so choose. However, D&D Adventurers League play does not use any other optional or variant rules as presented in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

### PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you show up to run a D&D Adventurers League adventure for a group of players, you should do the following to prepare.

- Make sure to have a copy of the *D&D Basic Rules* or the *Player's Handbook*.
- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in combat.
- Get familiar with any monster statistics in the adventure or its appendices.
- Gather together any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running the adventure, such as note cards, a DM screen, miniatures, battle maps, and so forth.
- If you know the composition of the group of characters beforehand, you can make adjustments as noted throughout the adventure.

### BEFORE EACH PLAY SESSION

If you are new to being a *Dungeon Master*, here is a useful guide to preparing. Before you start the adventure, spend some time familiarizing yourself with the locations, events, and characters. You'll also want to review the relevant statistics for any monsters or nonplayer characters (NPCs).

After introducing yourself to the players, ask them to provide you with a small amount of relevant character information. This typically includes (but is not limited to) the following.

- Character name
- Character race, class, and level
- Character faction
- Passive Perception—the most common passive ability check
- Anything notable as specified by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, and so on)

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a *Player* or *Dungeon Master*, but not with the same character (if applicable). Ensure that each

player has an adventure logsheet for their character (if not, get one from the organizer). The player will fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for XP, gold, downtime, renown, and number of permanent magic items. He or she will fill in the other values and write notes at the conclusion of the session.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the D&D Adventurers League Players Guide for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

### ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

In any D&D Adventurers League adventure, you might see sidebars to help you make adjustments to the adventure, accommodating smaller or larger groups, or characters of higher or lower levels than the optimal party size. Most of the time, this information is used for combat encounters.

You can also adjust the adventure on the fly, beyond the guidelines given in the adventure, or make other changes as you see fit in order to insure your players have a good time. For example, if you're playing with a group of inexperienced players, you might want to make the adventure a little easier; for very experienced players, you might want to make it harder. As such, five categories of party strength have been created for you to use as a guideline. Always feel free to use a different adjustment during the adventure if the recommended party strength feels off for the group during play. You can typically figure out a party's strength as follows.

1. Add up the total levels of all the characters.
2. Divide the total by the number of characters.
3. Round fractions of 0.5 or greater up; round fractions of less than 0.5 down. You've now determined the average party level (APL) for the adventure.

To figure out the party strength for the adventure, consult the following table and compare to the intended level for the adventure. Average party strength indicates no recommended adjustments to the adventure. Each sidebar might or might not offer suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered for your group, you don't have to make adjustments. However, a good rule of thumb is if it seems too hard or too easy in the course of play, you can totally make adjustments one way or the other in order to present an appropriate challenge to your players.

#### *Determining Party Strength*

Party Composition	Party Strength
3–4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3–4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3–4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6–7 characters, APL less than	Average
6–7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6–7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

Players that have characters outside the adventure's level range cannot participate in the adventure with those characters. If you're playing a tier one (levels 1 – 4) adventure, players with ineligible characters can make a new 1st-level character or use a pregenerated character.

While the adventure provides suggestions on how to adjust an encounter to provide an appropriate challenge for your players, they are just that— suggestions. You may, at your discretion, make other adjustments to the encounter by adding or removing monsters. While the monsters you add may be different from those listed in the encounter or the sidebar, they should be thematically similar. For example, if your players are encountering a group of zombies, adding a bunch of pixies doesn't make much sense. However, adding a zombie or a ghoul might. Keep in mind that while the characters earn XP for these new monsters, the maximum amount of XP they earn for the adventure does not change.

Remember to give them a challenge, but don't make the adventure unbeatable.

### **ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR THE DUNGEON MASTER**

As the Dungeon Master, the most important aspect of your role is facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You help guide the narrative and bring the words on the pages of the adventure to life. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play experience at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group: Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible. To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following.

***You Are Empowered.*** You get to make decisions about how the group interacts with the NPCs and environment within this adventure. It is okay to make considerable changes or engage in improvisation, so long as you maintain the original spirit of what's written.

***Challenge Your Players.*** Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience level of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

***Mind the Time.*** Watch for stalling, since play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience. Try to be aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.

***Keep the Adventure Moving.*** When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players so they can attempt to solve puzzles, engage in combat, and roleplay interactions without getting too frustrated over a lack of information. This gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues. The *Dungeon Master's Guide* has more information on the art of running a D&D game.

### **AFTER EACH PLAY SESSION**

As characters progress through an adventure, they'll earn treasure in the form of valuables like gold pieces, jewelry, and art objects, as well as magic items. In addition, there may be somewhat intangible rewards. Since a group's composition might change from one play session to the next, make sure the players update their logsheets before leaving the table. Each player is responsible for maintaining their own adventure logsheet. At the end of the session, each player should record any rewards earned on their logsheet. Some rewards are earned only at the end of an episode or adventure.

### **REWARD DISTRIBUTION**

Rewards are distributed at the end of a play session. Typically, the adventure will have the details on distributing certain rewards, but the general guidelines for doing so are provided below. You might choose to extend the play time of a given adventure because you are having fun. For example, you might take four hours to play a two-hour adventure. However, doing so does not increase the rewards of the adventure, which are always preset.

***Experience Points (XP).*** Award XP as noted at the conclusion of the adventure. If you're running one of the adventures published by Wizards of the Coast, it is up to you to calculate XP for your players. Otherwise, you'll be provided with a guide on how to do that in a standalone D&D Adventurers League adventure.

***Gold and Mundane Treasure.*** Coin, art objects, trade goods, and other found wealth are converted to a gold piece (gp) value at the conclusion of a session, episode, or adventure, which is then divided by the number of characters in the party. Each character should earn an equal share unless otherwise specified. As a general rule, items aren't sellable or able to be kept, unless it is described under a separate 'Treasure' subheading.

***Consumable Magic Items.*** Potions, scrolls, and other consumable, non-permanent magic items are divided among the characters at the conclusion of a session, episode, or adventure. Most adventures will contain a small number of consumable items and it is up to the players how they are ultimately distributed. A player notes the item obtained by recording it on their logsheet. Encourage your players to proceed equitably in the distribution of

consumable items. If more than one player would like to own a specific consumable item and they cannot resolve it, the item's owner is determined randomly by the DM.

**Permanent Magic Items.** Permanent magic items are distributed at the conclusion of a session, episode, or adventure. A player notes the item obtained by recording it on their logsheet. Permanent magic items have specific rules for distribution to promote equity. Each character's logsheet contains a column to record permanent magic items for ease of reference. Follow these steps to determine how to distribute permanent magic items.

1. If all the players at the table agree on one character taking possession of a permanent magic item, that character gets the item.
2. In the event that one or more characters indicate an interest in possessing a permanent magic item, the character who possesses the fewest permanent magic items gets the item.
3. If the interested players have the same number of permanent magic items on the characters they played during that session, the item's owner is determined randomly by the DM.

Some permanent magic items have charges or limited use and are destroyed or otherwise rendered nonmagical when the last charge is consumed. Other items have very specific circumstances under which they can be recharged. If an item loses **all** of its magical properties when its last charge is consumed (i.e., *Keoghtom's ointment*, etc.) or because it can't be recharged because the criteria are otherwise unachievable (i.e., *wingwear*, *balloon pack*, etc.) that magic item no longer counts as a permanent magic item for the purposes of determining how many permanent magic items a character possesses. Magic items that lose only some of their function (i.e., *luck blade*, *storm boomerang*, etc.) are still considered to be permanent magic items for this purpose.

**Awarding Renown.** Many adventures offer a renown award in the form of renown points for members of certain factions. Usually, this renown award ranges from 0 to 2 points. Award renown points at the conclusion of an episode or adventure. Characters can earn renown only from their own factions. A character can join a faction at any time in an adventure before renown awards are distributed.

Some adventures might offer additional benefits to characters of certain factions or ranks. If you are playing an adventure published by Wizards of the Coast, there is no system for awarding renown at this time.

**Awarding Downtime.** At the conclusion of each episode or adventure, award downtime days to each character. Adventures typically award either 5 or 10 downtime days at the end of the session, unless otherwise specified. Characters can spend downtime days (and as a result, pay lifestyle expenses) before or after the start of an episode or adventure. You do not award downtime after each session, unless that session is the end of an episode or adventure.

### SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Within the confines of the play session, any settlement the size of a town or larger can provide spellcasting services. Characters need to be able to travel to the settlement to obtain those services. If spellcasting services are being procured after the adventure has concluded, it is assumed they're able to make it to an appropriately sized city, town, or other settlement to do this.

Spell services generally available include healing and recovery spells, as well as information-gathering spells. Other spell services might be available as specified in the adventure. The number of spells available to be cast as a service (while playing the adventure) is limited to a maximum of three per day total, unless otherwise noted.

#### Spellcasting Services

Spell	Cost
<i>Cure Wounds</i> (1 <sup>st</sup> Level)	10 gp
<i>Identify</i>	20 gp
<i>Lesser Restoration</i>	40 gp
<i>Prayer of Healing</i> (2 <sup>nd</sup> Level)	40 gp
<i>Remove Curse</i>	90 gp
<i>Speak with Dead</i>	90 gp
<i>Divination</i>	210 gp
<i>Greater Restoration</i>	450 gp
<i>Raise Dead</i>	1,250 gp
<i>Resurrection</i> *	3,000 gp
<i>True Resurrection</i> *	50,000 gp

\*These spells require an additional expenditure of downtime days (150 for *resurrection* and 350 for *true resurrection*). This cost can be reduced by 50 days for each faction rank above '1' that the character possesses. This downtime is spent in community service for the church that provided the spell in question. The Acolyte Background feature does NOT reduce the gp or downtime cost for either of these spells.

**Acolyte Background.** A character possessing the acolyte background requesting spellcasting services

at a temple of their faith can request one spell per day from the Spellcasting Services table for free. The only cost paid for the spell is the base price for the consumed material component, if any is required.

Only some faiths are represented by temples large enough to provide this benefit. When playing any given adventure, the available faiths are determined by the season or region in which the adventure is set.

Season-Region	Deities
1-Phlan	Kelemvor
2-Mulmaster	Bane, Loviatar, Tymora, Velsharoon
3-Hillsfar	Chauntea, Lliira, Tempus
4-Barovia	NONE
5-Sword Coast*	
T1-Parnast	Mielikki
T2-Stagwick	Chauntea
T3-Beregost	Lathander, Waukeen

\*Represented by three locations within the region.

### CHARACTER DISEASE, DEATH, AND RECOVERY

Sometimes bad things happen, and characters get poisoned, diseased, or die. Since you might not have the same characters return from session to session, here are the rules when bad things happen to characters.

**Disease, Poison, and Other Debilitating Effects.** A character still affected by diseases, poisons, and other similar effects at the conclusion of an adventure can spend downtime days recuperating until such time as he or she resolves the effect to its conclusion (see the recuperating activity in the D&D Basic Rules or *Player's Handbook*). If a character doesn't resolve the effect between sessions, that character begins the next session still affected by the debilitating effect.

**Death.** A character who dies during the course of the adventure has a few options at the end of the session (or when arriving back in civilization during the adventure) assuming no one in the adventuring party has immediate access to a *raise dead* or *revivify* spell, or similar magic. A character subject to a *raise dead* spell is affected negatively until all long rests have been completed during an adventure. Alternatively, each downtime day spent after *raise dead* reduces the penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks by 1, in addition to any other benefits the downtime activity might provide.

**Dead Character Pays for Raise Dead.** If the character's body is recoverable (it's not missing any vital organs and is mostly whole) and the

player would like the character to be returned to life, the party can take the body back to civilization and use the dead character's funds to pay for a *raise dead* spell.

**Character's Party Pays for Raise Dead.** As above, except that some or all of the 1,250 gp for the *raise dead* spell is paid for by the party at the end of the session. Other characters are under no obligation to spend their funds to bring back a dead party member.

**Faction Charity.** If the character is of level 1 – 4 and a member of a faction, a patron from the faction ensures that he or she receives a *raise dead* spell. However, any character invoking this charity forfeits all XP and rewards for that session (even those earned prior to death during that session), and cannot replay that episode or adventure with that character again. The character takes a –4 penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks. Every time the character finishes a long rest, the penalty is reduced by 1 until it disappears. Once a character reaches 5th level, this option is no longer available.

**Create a New 1st-Level Character.** If the dead character is unwilling or unable to exercise any of the other options, the player creates a new character. The new character does not have any items or rewards possessed by the dead character.

### DUNGEON MASTER REWARDS

D&D Adventurers League adventures award the Dungeon Master XP, gold, and downtime days they can apply to a character of their own. Use the target level of the adventure as your guide when referring to the table below. Dungeon Masters running hardcover adventures published by Wizards of the Coast receive XP for every session, calculated in two-hour blocks according to the average party level for the session. This is roughly equivalent to the D&D Adventurers League rewards above.

Downtime rewards for both D&D Adventurers League adventures and the hardcover adventures is 5 days for every 2 hours of play. The Dungeon Master's character receives a number of gp equal to half the XP earned for each session, whether running a D&D Adventurers League adventure or a hardcover adventure.

### ***Dungeon Master Rewards***

<b>Target Adv. Level</b>	<b>XP (2 hr Adv.)</b>	<b>XP (4 hr Adv.)</b>
1	100	100
2	150	150
3	150	300
4	225	425
5	450	875
6	500	1000
7	625	1250
8	750	1500
9	950	1875
10	1125	2250
11	1325	2625
12	1450	2875
13	1675	3375
14	1875	3750
15	2250	4500
16	2500	5000
17	3125	6250
18	3375	6750
19	3750	7500
20	5000	10000

### **DM QUESTS**

Dungeon Master quests are a series of out-of-game quests that individual DMs can venture upon. Some quests are season specific, while others will carry on and renew each season. Whenever someone starts as a Dungeon Master for the D&D Adventurers League—whether at the beginning of a season or while the season is in progress—he or she can download the DM quests packet, which consists of a DM quests card and a DM quests rules document. To join the DM quests program, a Dungeon Master simply needs to download the DM quests packet from the Dungeon Masters Guild and print out the card. Whenever a DM finishes a quest, he or she checks it off on the DM quest card and applies the rewards as detailed in the DM quest rules. Permanent magic items earned through the DM Quest program can't be traded.

### **CHEATING**

D&D Adventurers League play is meant to be fun and inclusive; it's not really a competitive atmosphere. As the Dungeon Master, you should correct cheating players by quickly and discreetly (if possible) resolving the issue and make a ruling on

what happens. As Dungeon Master you are allowed to review paperwork (character sheets, adventure logsheets, and certificates) at any time. If you notice something amiss—either with the paperwork or during the game (fudging dice rolls, not checking off used items, and so on)—discuss it with the player and attempt to resolve irregularities. You can disallow a rules item that seem outside the official rules. You can ask a player to reroll a dice roll that isn't obvious to the table. Handle the corrections in a professional manner—never embarrass the player or assume wrongdoing. We're all here to have fun and enjoy the challenge of adventure!

## **ADDITIONAL DM RESOURCES**

### **D&D LINKS**

- [Official D&D Web Site](#)
- [Official D&D Community Web Page](#)
- [Wizards Play Network \(WPN\) Web Site](#)
- [Store and Event Locator](#)
- [D&D Adventurers League FAQ](#)

### **D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE LINKS**

- [Official Wizards D&D Adventurers League Announcements](#)
- [D&D Adventurers League Organizers Page](#)
- [D&D Adventurers League Twitter](#)
- [D&D Adventurers League Facebook Group](#)
- [D&D Adventurers League G+ Community](#)
- [D&D Adventurers League Online Tools](#)
- [D&D Adventurers League Wiki](#)
- [D&D Adventurers League Convention Locator](#)

### **OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS**

- [D&D Basic Rules](#)  
The rules document that contains everything you need to get started.
- [D&D Adventurers League Resources](#)  
Links to downloadable content for D&D Adventurers League play, including adventure logsheets and character sheets.



# D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE – CODE OF CONDUCT

## **BE INCLUSIVE, FUN, AND SAFE!**

All D&D Adventurers League participants are here to have fun and should feel safe and included at all times. All participants (players, Dungeon Masters, and organizers) are expected to adhere to the following **Code of Conduct**.

Participants must conduct themselves in a manner that is conducive to the enjoyment and safety of others at the event.

Avoid excessively vulgar, sexual, or overly mature language and themes.

Follow the DMs lead, avoid arguing with the DM or other players over rules.

Let other players speak, avoid talking over others.

Avoid excessive cross-talk that is not relevant to the adventure being played

Allow other players to get attention from the DM.

Discourage others from using social media to bully, shame, or intimidate other participants.

Avoid phone conversations at the table. If you must take a call, please excuse yourself from the table until your call is completed.

No tolerance is given for theft or aggressive behavior.

Theft and aggressive behavior are grounds for immediate removal from the play area and the premises.

Aggressive behavior includes threats of or actual physical aggression, using racial, gender, or cultural slurs against another participant, and otherwise harassing other participants.

## **WHAT TO DO?**

Participants who feel as though they are in an unsafe environment should notify the organizer of the event immediately.

Participants noticing disruptive behavior should make those responsible for the behavior aware of their actions.

If a participant feels uncomfortable bringing it to the attention of the disruptive individual, the participant should notify the Dungeon Master or organizer of the event immediately.

The Dungeon Master has the right to ask a disruptive player to leave the table and speak with the organizer.

The organizer has the right to remove a disruptive or aggressive player or Dungeon Master from the play area or premises.

## **WHERE FRIENDSHIPS ARE FORGED AT THE TABLE!**