



DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE
VERSION 8.2

WATERDEEP

DRAGON HEIST & DUNGEON OF THE MAD MAGE



Credits

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Effective Date
30 August 2018

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PART 1. GETTING STARTED

This document is a guide to getting started as a Dungeon Master for the D&D Adventurers League. These rules are supplemented by the Adventurers League FAQ (also found in the Adventurers League DM's Pack).

STORYLINE SEASONS

Adventurers League play is broken up into storyline seasons, but adventures can be played regardless of their season.

THE SETTING

The majority of Adventurers League adventures are set in the Forgotten Realms, on the continent of Faerûn. Hardcover adventures are usually set in the Sword Coast region—a savage wilderness dotted with powerful and iconic cities such as Baldur's Gate, Neverwinter, and Waterdeep, and recently, Port Nyanzaru, a city bordering the dangerous jungles of Chult.

D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE PLAY

DMs and players alike participate in Adventurers League play in many ways. These currently include D&D Introductory Adventures, D&D Premiere Play, and playing through the published D&D adventures (called **hardcover** adventures). Additionally, many convention organizers have created approved D&D Adventurers League adventures called Convention-Created Content adventures (CCC) specifically for their conventions. CCC adventures are generally set in the Moonsea region of the Forgotten Realms.

D&D Introductory Adventures. These adventures accompany new Wizards of the Coast print products. They premier at local hobby retail stores and are meant to introduce you to new content. This free content is available for download from www.dmsguild.com shortly after its initial premiere.

D&D Premiere Play. These adventures support Wizards of the Coast storyline product releases. They're purchased from the Dungeon Masters Guild. Dungeon Masters purchasing Premier Play adventures may run them often as that DM likes.

BEING A DUNGEON MASTER

Being an Adventurers League 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:

- **Player's Handbook or the D&D Basic Rules.** The basic rules .pdf document is free on the Wizards of the Coast website and contains all the basic rules of the game.
- **Adventures.** If you're running games in a public venue, check with the organizer to see what adventures they have available. Otherwise, adventures are available for purchase at your local gaming store or online at www.dmsguild.com.
- **Players.** Adventures League play is designed for a table of five players, but can be adjusted for three to seven players. Tables smaller or larger than those limits aren't allowed.

OPTIONAL ITEMS

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

Dungeon Master's Guide (DMG). This book contains valuable advice on preparing and running games. The DMG 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.

Monster Manual (MM). While the statistics for most monsters can be found here, special monsters created specifically for a given season's published adventure are found in that product.

Index 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 your notes and schemes from the players.

CHEATING

D&D Adventurers League play is meant to be fun and inclusive—not competitive. As the DM, correct cheating players quickly and discreetly (if possible) by resolving the issue and make a ruling on what happens. You may review paperwork (character sheets, adventure logsheets, and certificates) at any time. If something is amiss—either with the paperwork or during the game—discuss it with the player and resolve irregularities. You may disallow something that seems outside the rules or have a player reroll dice. Be **professional** though—never embarrass the player or assume wrongdoing. We're all here to have fun and enjoy the challenge!

PART 2. RUNNING ADVENTURES

You may DM **one** group of 3 to 7 players at a time—each with their own character within the adventure’s level range. Characters playing in a **hardcover** adventure may continue to play to, but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they **can’t return** to the first one if they’re outside its level range.

PLAYING THE DUNGEON MASTER

You have the most important role—facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You provide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life.

You’re Empowered. Make decisions about how the group interacts with the adventure; adjust or improvise but maintain the adventure’s spirit. This doesn’t allow you to implement new rules, however.

Challenge Your Players. Gauge the experience level of your **players**, what they like in a game, and attempt to deliver what they’re after. Everyone should be able to shine. You may adjust the encounter by adding or removing thematically appropriate monsters.

Keep the Adventure Moving. When the game gets bogged down, provide hints and clues to your players facing puzzles or engaging in combat and roleplay interactions that might get frustrated over a lack of information. This gives players “little victories” for figuring out good choices from clues. Watch for losses in momentum when this happens, but make sure that the players are provided the full play experience.

CHARACTER DISEASE, DEATH, AND RECOVERY

Bad things happen to characters; adventuring is a risky job. Here are the rules on how to deal with it.

Disease, Poison, and Other Debilitating Effects. Diseases, poisons, and other similar effects last until removed, but characters can spend downtime days to receive spellcasting services or to recuperate (see *Player’s Handbook*). Characters with lycanthropy or vampirism can’t start a new session until cured.

Death. Characters returned to life suffer the effects from the ordeal as normal, but each downtime day spent reduces any penalties to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks by 1. Bodies are recovered unless otherwise specified in the encounter. If the group can’t return a dead character to life:

- **Dead Character Pays for Raise Dead.** Dead characters that can’t afford the gp cost of the service or treasure checkpoint cost of a spell scroll may incur a treasure checkpoint debt as needed to purchase one. This debt **must** be satisfied before treasure checkpoints can be used for anything else. Dead characters ignore availability restrictions on whatever spell scroll is needed to return them to life. For example, a *disintegrated* 5th-level character may

spend **sixteen treasure checkpoints** to purchase a *spell scroll of true resurrection*, even though it’s normally available only to tier 3 and 4 characters.

- **Character’s Party Pays for Raise Dead.** If they wish to do so, other characters may contribute towards the **gp cost** of paying for spellcasting services to return another character to life. Characters **can’t** use treasure checkpoints to lessen the cost of another character to return to life but can use them to purchase spell scrolls if useable by someone in the group.

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

During a session, characters can receive spellcasting services from an NPC located anywhere that is town-sized or larger but must be able to travel there. Otherwise, they’re available only between sessions.

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Magic Item Table	Point Cost
Cure wounds	10 gp
Identify	20 gp
Lesser restoration	40 gp
Prayer of healing	40 gp
Dispel magic	90 gp
Remove curse	90 gp
Speak with dead	90 gp
Divination	210 gp
Greater Restoration	450 gp
Raise dead ¹	1,000 gp
Resurrection ¹	3,000 gp
True resurrection ¹	30,000 gp

¹Characters may instead receive these services by spending treasure checkpoints to purchase spell scrolls.

Services provided by an NPC are limited to this list. Characters may purchase *spell scrolls* containing these spells using treasure checkpoints which NPCs cast for free to benefit the character who purchased the scroll.

ACOLYTE TEMPLES

Season & Region	Deities
1: Phlan	Kelemvor
2: Mulmaster	Bane, Loviatar, Tymora, Velsharoon
3: Hillsfar	Chauntea, Lliira, Tempus
4: Barovia	Jeny Greenteeth
5: Sword Coast	
T1: Parnast	Mielikki
T2: Stagwick	Chauntea
T3: Beregost	Lathander, Waukeen
6: Sword Coast	
T1: Mirabar	Dumathoin, Sharindlar, Tymora
T2: Neverwinter	Oghma, Selûne, Tyr
T3: Dagger Falls	Lathander, Tyr
7: Port Nyanzaru	Gond, Savras, Waukeen
8: Waterdeep	Any non-evil deity

Acolyte Background. Characters with the Shelter of the Faithful background feature can request spellcasting services at a temple of their faith. Once per day they may receive **one spell** from the Spellcasting Services table for free (plus the cost of any material component needed).

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 region in which the adventure is set, above.

PLAYER REWARDS

Characters earn rewards in the form of **advancement** and **treasure checkpoints**, magic items unlocks, and other rewards such as story awards or new downtime activities. These rewards are entered on their logsheets **before** leaving the table. Players are responsible for maintaining their own adventure logsheet.

REWARD DISTRIBUTION

Rewards are distributed at the end of a play session using the following guidance:

Advancement Checkpoints. Characters playing in a hardcover adventure earn one **checkpoint** for each hour played in pursuit of the adventure's stated goals (rounded down). **Other adventures** award checkpoints as determined by their season:

- **Season 8 and Later:** The characters earn one or two checkpoints for each **story** or **bonus objectives** they complete depending on the adventure's duration—as directed by its adventure's reward section.
- **Seasons 7 and Earlier:** The characters earn one checkpoint per hour spent playing the adventure (to a maximum of the adventure's **duration** in hours).

Treasure Checkpoints. Characters playing in a hardcover adventure earn one **treasure checkpoint** for each hour played in pursuit of the adventure's stated goals (rounded down). This reward is doubled for tier 3 and 4 characters. **Other adventures** award checkpoints as determined by their season:

- **Season 8 and Later:** The characters earn one to four checkpoints for each **story** or **bonus objectives** they complete determined by the adventure's duration and tier—as directed by its reward section.
- **Seasons 7 and Earlier:** The characters earn one checkpoint per hour spent playing the adventure (to a maximum of the adventure's **duration** in hours). This reward is doubled for tier 3 and 4 adventures.

Gold and Mundane Treasure. Any entry of a treasure or award with a monetary value is **ignored**. Other mundane equipment can be used (but not sold) by the characters until the end of the session but is lost at the end of the session. Some nonmagical items encountered in **hardcover** adventures may be unlocked for purchased using treasure checkpoints. The ALCC will contain adventure-specific information regarding these items as well as when to award rewards that serve as exceptions to this paragraph. Any spellbooks recovered by the characters may be kept by one character at the table (determined randomly in case of contention).

Magic Items. Unless stated otherwise in the ALCC, magic items specifically mentioned in an encounter become available for the characters in some fashion, depending on its type:

- **Consumable Magic Items.** *Potions, scrolls,* and magical ammunition **are kept** and divided among the characters—**encouraging equitable distribution**. If more than one player wants an item and the disagreement can't be resolved, determine the item's owner randomly (such as by rolling a die).
- **Permanent Magic Items.** Permanent magic items **aren't kept**; they're instead unlocked for purchase.

Story Awards/Effects/Items. Characters may acquire special items or effects (mundane or magical) that are essential to a hardcover adventure's storyline that are only useable of in effect during sessions of the adventure in which they're awarded. These are identified in the *Adventurers League Content Catalogue*.

Awarding Downtime. Characters earn **five downtime days** for every **two** advancement checkpoints they earn.

Awarding Renown. Characters earn **one renown** for every **four** advancement checkpoints they earn.

DUNGEON MASTER REWARDS

DMs earn advancement and treasure checkpoints at the same rate as players that they can then apply to their own characters. DMs don't earn magic item unlocks or other special rewards awarded by an adventure (such as story awards, downtime activities, etc.)

DUNGEON MASTER QUESTS

DM Quests are out-of-game objectives that you complete for additional rewards such as checkpoints, magic item unlocks, etc. The DM Quest packet contains a DM Quest card and other documents. Magic items earned by DMs through the DM Quest program **can't** be traded, but items that the players' characters receive, can.