



DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE
VERSION 8.0

WATERDEEP

DRAGON HEIST & DUNGEON OF THE MAD MAGE



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PART 1. GETTING STARTED

This document is a guide to getting started to be 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 more 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) 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:

- **D&D Basic Rules.** This .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.
- **A DCI number (OPTIONAL).** This is an official Wizards of the Coast organized play number. You can obtain a new DCI number may from the event organizer or by visiting accounts.wizards.com

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

To DM an adventure, you **must** have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character whose level is 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.

To facilitate this, keep in mind the following:

You’re Empowered. Make decisions about how the group interacts with the adventure; adjusting or improvising is encouraged, so long as you maintain the adventure’s spirit. This doesn’t allow you to implement house rules or change those of the Adventurers League, however; they should be consistent in this regard.

Challenge Your Players. Gauge the experience level of your **players** (not the characters), try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to deliver the experience they’re after. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine. 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.

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. Watch for stalling—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.

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 resolved, but characters may receive spellcasting services or spend downtime days recuperating (see *Adventurer’s League Player’s Guide*). Characters afflicted by lycanthropy or vampirism can’t start a new session until the condition is removed.

Death. Characters returned to life by magic 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 recoverable unless otherwise specified in the encounter.

If no one in the group can return a dead character to life, the character can receive such services from an NPC with the following guidance:

- **Dead Character Pays for Raise Dead.** Dead characters that can’t afford the treasure point 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 **twelve 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 as normal which can then be used as they wish.

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 only available between sessions.

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

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Spell	Cost
<i>Cure wounds</i>	10 gp
<i>Identify</i>	20 gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40 gp
<i>Prayer of healing</i>	40 gp
<i>Dispel magic</i>	90 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	1,250 gp
<i>Resurrection</i> ¹	3,000 gp
<i>True resurrection</i> ¹	50,000 gp

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

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 (they must pay the cost of any material component needed). This **can’t** be used to return a character to life.

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.

ACOLYTE TEMPLES

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: Bereghost	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

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. Adventurers League characters are awarded **advancement checkpoints** based on the duration of their adventuring session. For **hardcover** adventures, each hour of play spent pursuing the adventure's state goals (rounded down) awards one checkpoint. For **all other adventures**, checkpoints are awarded as determined by season:

- **Season 8 and Later:** The characters earn a number of checkpoints equal to the adventure's prescribed duration for completing objectives that are detailed within the adventure.
- **Seasons 7 and Earlier:** The characters earn a number of checkpoints equal to the adventure's prescribed duration (in hours) upon completing the adventure.

Treasure Checkpoints. They are also awarded treasure checkpoints based on the amount of time the characters play the adventure. Tier 1 and 2 groups (groups of characters with an APL of 1 - 10) playing a **hardcover** adventure earn one checkpoint for every two hours of play, while tier 3 and 4 groups (groups of characters with an APL of 11 - 20) playing a **hardcover**

adventure earns one checkpoint for each hour of play. For **all other adventures**, checkpoints are awarded as determined by season:

- **Season 8 and Later:** The characters earn **treasure checkpoints** for completing both of the adventure's main objectives or both of its bonus objectives.
- **Seasons 7 and Earlier:** The characters earn a number of checkpoints equal to the adventure's prescribed duration in hours (or every two hours for tier 1 and 2 groups) upon completing the adventure.

Gold and Mundane Treasure. Any entry mentioning a gp reward is **ignored**. Mundane equipment can be used by the characters until the end of the session. Unique nonmagical items encountered in **hardcover** adventures are, on occasion, unlocked for purchased like magic items. Details regarding these items (including cost and availability) will be provided in the ALCC.

Magic Items. Magic items specifically mentioned in an encounter become available for the characters, depending on what type of magic item it is:

- **Consumable Magic Items.** Potions, scrolls, and ammunition **are kept** and immediately divided among the characters. Encourage equitable distribution, but 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.** Any other magic items **aren't kept**. They're instead unlocked for purchase.
- **Awarding Downtime.** Anytime advancement checkpoints are awarded, the recipient (players and DMs alike) receives 5 days **per two checkpoints** earned.

DUNGEON MASTER REWARDS

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

DUNGEON MASTER QUESTS

DM Quests are out-of-game objectives that individual DMs complete for rewards. Some are season specific, while others are "evergreen" (from season to season).

The DM Quest packet contains a DM Quest card and other documents. As you finish quests, check them off the card and apply the indicated reward. Magic items earned by DMs through the DM Quest program can't be traded, but items given to the players' characters can be.