



DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE
VERSION 9.0

AVERNUS RISING

A Campaign Supporting

BALDUR'S GATE: DESCENT INTO AVERNUS



Credits

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PART 1. GETTING STARTED

This document is a guide to getting started as a Dungeon Master (DM) for the Forgotten Realms campaign managed by 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 all sanctioned adventures can be played regardless of their season.

D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE PLAY

D&D Adventurers League play can take place practically **ANYWHERE**--whether at home, a friendly local game and hobby store, a library or school, or even a convention. The possibilities are endless.

DMs and players alike participate in Adventurers League play utilizing a variety of adventure content options. 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.

D&D Introductory Adventures. These adventures accompany new Wizards of the Coast print products and premier at participating friendly local game and hobby stores and are meant to introduce you to new content.

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 can run them as 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 on behalf of an event organizer, check with that individual to see what adventures they have available. Otherwise, adventures are available for purchase at your local gaming store (hardcover adventures only) or online at www.dmsguild.com.

- **Players.** Adventures League play is designed for a table of five players but can be adjusted for as few as three to as many as seven players. Tables smaller or larger than those limits not recommended as they promote an extremely suboptimal play experience.

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.

Dungeon Master Screen. Helpful to hide the adventure and your notes and schemes from the players.

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.

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 making a fair ruling on what happens. You can review paperwork (character sheets, adventure logsheets, and certificates) at any time. If something seems amiss or inappropriate—either with the paperwork or during the game—discuss it with the player and resolve irregularities. You can disallow something that seems outside the rules or have a player reroll dice. Be **professional**—make every effort to avoid embarrassing the player or assume wrongdoing. We're all here to have fun and enjoy the challenge!

PART 2. RUNNING ADVENTURES

You can DM one group of players at a time—each player must have their own character within the adventure’s level range. Characters that play a **hardcover** adventure can continue to play it if they advance out of its level range, but if they later play a different hardcover adventure, they can’t return to the first one.

PLAYING THE DUNGEON MASTER

You have the most important role. You provide the narrative and bring the words on the pages of the adventure to life. While telling the story, it is also your responsibility to make everyone feel welcomed at the table creating a fun and fair environment.

You’re Empowered. Make decisions about how the group interacts with the adventure; adjust or improvise but maintain the adventure’s spirit. You can’t implement new rules.

Challenge Your Players. Gauge the experience level of your **players**, as well as what they seem to enjoy in a game and attempt to deliver what they’re after. Everyone should be able to shine. You can 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 get frustrating. This gives players “little victories” for making good choices based on clues received. When playing within a given time constraint, such as at a convention, it is important to gauge the pacing of your game. It’s okay to make adjustments to the content when you get bogged down in order to promote a play experience that feels complete.

CHARACTER DISEASE, DEATH, AND RECOVERY

Bad things happen to characters; adventuring is a risky job. 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*). Dead characters or those afflicted with **lycanthropy** or **vampirism** can’t start a new session until returned to life or cured. 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 character to life or cure conditions that remove it from play themselves, the following rules apply:

- **The Character Pays.** Characters can use their gold to pay for a spellcasting service that would return them to play. Alternatively, the character can trade a permanent magic item (excluding common magic items) to an NPC that is capable of providing spellcasting services (see below)—who in turn returns them to life and removes any conditions (or in some circumstances, story awards) that removed

them from play—including those requiring a *wish*.

This option reduces their Magic Item Limit but is available even if their limit has been reduced to 0 or they have no magic items.

- **The Group Pays.** Other characters can contribute toward the **cost** for spellcasting services to benefit other characters. They can’t trade magic items for another character to receive these services, though.

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.

Magic Item Table	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*	1,000 gp
Resurrection*	3,000 gp
True resurrection*	30,000 gp

*Characters can instead receive these services by purchasing spell scrolls.

Spellcasting services provided by NPCs are limited to the spells on this list. However, characters can purchase *spell scrolls* which NPCs can cast for free, but **only** to benefit the character who purchased the scroll.

Season & Region	Acolyte-Friendly Temples
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
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
9: Baldur’s Gate	Gond, Umberlee, Tymora

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 can

receive **one spell** from the Spellcasting Services table for free (though they must provide the cost of any material component needed). Only some faiths are represented by temples large enough to provide this benefit. **During play**, the available faiths are determined by the region in which the adventure is set (shown above).

ADVENTURE REWARDS

Characters gain levels and earn rewards in the form of gold, magic items, and downtime. These rewards are recorded on their Adventure Logsheets—which they must maintain—**before** leaving the table. Most of these are awarded when you feel it's appropriate (although magic items can only be awarded if specifically mentioned in the encounter in which they're found).

Advancement. Characters gain a level once they've completed an adventure. In hardcover sessions, they advance as **you decide** (or when directed by the adventure) or after **four** hours of play (or **eight** hours at tier 2 – 4), to a maximum of one level per session. Characters advance to the next level at the end of the session.

Players can decline advancement if they choose—postponing advancement as long as they wish.

Magic Items. Characters keep any **permanent magic items** that their group finds during the session. At the end of the session, each character can keep the items found during the session—to a maximum number of items based on their tier (common items aren't subject to this limitation). **Consumable magic items** (potions, scrolls, ammunition, and *soul coins*) are equitably divided among the characters—resolving disagreements randomly if necessary. If multiple players want a *potion* that the group has found, for example, roll a die to determine which character keeps the item.

Tier	Magic Item Limit	Tier	Magic Item Limit
1	1	3	6
2	3	4	10

Mundane Treasure. Mundane equipment under a treasure subheading can't be sold or traded but can be used until the end of the session, upon which time it's lost. Any treasure with a monetary value (gp, gems, art objects, etc.) mentioned is **ignored**. Spellbooks and items without mechanical properties (such as trinkets or other objects without a specified value) found in the encounter are divided equitably among the characters. If more than one player wants the item, a randomly determined character keeps it.

Instead, you have discretion to award gold; each hour you can award each character an amount of gold based on their tier (see below). You have a lot of flexibility in how this gold is distributed and what form it takes, though you can use the treasure entries as cues to award gold and what form that gold might take. For example, a goblin might carry dirty copper coins, while a wealthy

merchant might carry writs redeemable for gold.

Alternatively, in a convention setting, you might want to wait and award the cumulative hourly awards at the end in the form of a chest of gold bars from a wealthy merchant. The campaign staff **strongly suggests** that characters be awarded the **maximum** amount of gold for their tier **per hour**. Otherwise, the characters earn a **minimum** amount for each hour of the session.

Once a character receives an amount of gold equal to their GP Limit, they can't earn more until they have gained a level when the limit resets.

Tier	Hourly GP Award (Min GP Award)	GP Limit/Level
1	20 gp (10 gp)	80 gp
2	30 gp (15 gp)	240 gp
3	200 gp (100 gp)	1,600 gp
4	750 gp (375 gp)	6,000 gp

Story Awards/Effects/Items. These items or effects—designated by the ALCC—are essential to a hardcover adventure's storyline and are only useable during sessions of the adventure in which they're awarded. These items don't count against a character's Magic Item Limit, but only one character can possess a given story item at the same table at the same time.

DUNGEON MASTER REWARDS

As you run adventures, you also earn DM Rewards. For more information see the D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master Rewards document.